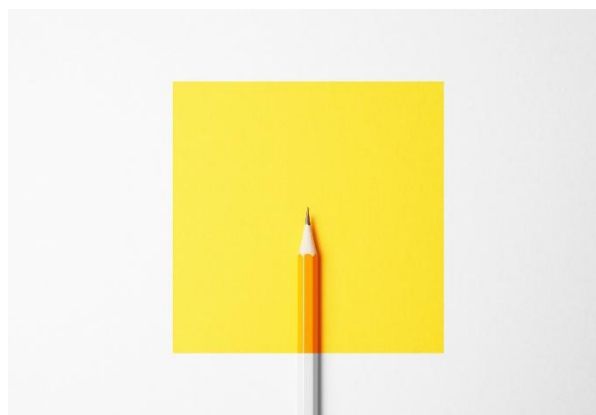




Call for papers - Special Issue:

A Critical Look at Methods, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science in Educational Research



Guest Editors: Fredrik Stenhjem Hagen (Western Norway University of Applied Sciences) and Hilde Hjertager Lund (University of Bergen)

The field of education has in recent decades been characterized by extensive reforms with a focus on testing and assessment, and performance management that affects school practice. Testing and performance management in schools have been criticized for narrowing the research focus to what is measurable and directly applicable, which can challenge more holistic approaches in and at school (Biesta, 2007). Educational research is growing rapidly, partly because of the introduction of mandatory master's education for teachers and the growth of associate professorship programs at universities. As a result, many researchers and teacher educators have received educational research as part of their work. These changes require critical reflections related to how educational research is conducted, and how methodological choices affect knowledge production.

Despite increased production within educational research in the Nordic countries, recent research nevertheless points to a methodological lag, where both theoretical grounding and critical methodological reflection need development and criticism (Bergersen & Sønsthagen, 2025; Drageset et al., 2025; Hofslundsengen et al., 2024). This special issue therefore aims to respond to an identified need for systematic knowledge development on methodological and epistemological issues within educational research. An ongoing, unpublished scoping review on social inequality in kindergarten also reveals that there is a need for increased methodological diversity and epistemological breadth and more focus on the researcher's role, positioning and bias (Lund et al., unpublished).

With this special issue, we wish to shed light on and problematize methodological and methodological approaches that dominate educational research and the challenges associated with this. By educational research, we mean research on and in education at various levels from kindergarten and primary school to higher education.

We divide the challenges for the field into two main categories: Methodological challenges and analytical challenges. The methodological challenges are about the practical work of collecting data from the field; challenges related to access to the field, to sampling, to one's own positioning and ethical issues. The analytical challenges are about how data from the field should be processed,

about the relationship between theory and practice, and about power and knowledge production. We want articles that develop both categories.

With this special issue, we want to raise the discussion to a higher level. Everyday life in schools is characterized by challenges because today's generation of children is diverse, the world is changing rapidly and the field is in a continuous political tug-of-war.

The originality of the special issue lies in putting methodological and epistemological issues at the center. In line with the professional profile of the Nordic Journal of Comparative and International Education (NJCIE), the special issue will be a contribution to illuminating methodological and epistemological questions comparatively, interdisciplinary and across different academic and geographical contexts.

The research field is also characterized by high interdisciplinarity, where researchers from sometimes very different professional traditions meet and publish in the same journals. Research has pointed to methodological weaknesses in the field of education such as methodological poverty and lack of critical reflection on power and positioning in research (Bergersen & Sønsthagen, 2025; Drageset et al., 2025; Guldbrandsen et al., 2025; Hofslundsengen et al., 2024). It is therefore necessary to have an epistemological awareness in which researchers must acknowledge their preconceptions and at the same time create an analytical distance from the social field being studied (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1995; Gubrium & Holstein, 1997).

What does this reality do to the field? Method, methodological and scientific theory questions are less often raised as the central theme in articles themselves. With this special issue, we therefore want to draw attention to how educational research methods, methodology and scientific theoretical foundations can be challenged and further developed to meet new demands in a complex and diverse field. We also want to draw attention to educational research studies of “the others”, students and teachers with minority backgrounds, and how the researcher's position, background and intentions affect data and analysis (Crenshaw, 2013; El-Tayeb, 2011). We believe there is a need for analyses that critically reflect how this type of study constructs and represents those being researched, and how this can have an impact on research findings and conclusions (Hammersley, 2005).

The increasing politicization of the educational field affects both teachers and students, while setting the premises for how research should be conducted. This touches on important methodological questions related to research methods, data collection, analysis and knowledge production. Concepts such as power and capital can be an entry point to understanding how different methods become dominant and others are marginalized (Bourdieu, 2003). The question of the methods used in the field and how methodological choices can contribute to maintaining or challenging existing power structures are central to this thematic issue.

We welcome both theoretical and empirical contributions that both discuss dominant approaches and challenge them. We welcome contributions that address key methodological, methodological and scientific theory issues in research on subject didactics, pedagogy, teacher education and teachers' professional development in a Nordic, international and comparative context – areas that are central to NJCIE's professional profile. Because the journal accepts English-language articles and

articles in Nordic languages, contributions to this thematic issue will be able to reach a wide audience both in the Nordic region and internationally.

Researching in the field of education is both a political and ethical issue that requires critical and analytical skills and competence. In line with NJCIE's interdisciplinary and comparative profile, we welcome contributions from different disciplines that can help to further develop the methodological, methodological and analytical (scientific theory) perspectives of the field of education.

Current issues that can be explored in this special issue are:

- Problematizations of interview and observation as methods
- Challenges related to action research and research on one's own practice
- Positioning and self-understanding as a critical entry into the field
- Alleged methodological poverty among master's students in teacher education
- The influence of power perspectives on analyses in educational research
- Testing and political governance in the school field
- Challenges with text analysis, curriculum analysis and textbook analysis as methods
- The role of quantitative methods in the field of education.
- Researching "the others" - issues related to data collection and selection in the education sector with a focus on diversity and racism
- The role of post-colonial theories in the field of education

Submission and deadlines

Deadline for submission of manuscripts: **June 30, 2026**

Peer review by October 2026

Publication of accepted articles: January – March 2027

All submissions must follow the [NJCIE Author Guidelines](#).

For questions, please contact the guest editors:

Fredrik Stenhjem Hagen: Fredrik.Stenhjem.Hagen@hvl.no

Hilde Hjertager Lund: hilde.b.lund@uib.no

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