

Editorial

This issue of *Reconceptualizing Educational Research Methodology* gathers together an exciting collection of papers that seek to make contributions to the field of educational enquiry by taking the reader on unexpected journeys that are intentionally provoking. Traversing multiple continents and geopolitical contexts together these papers offer a series of unlikely entry points, as well as myriad opportunities to pause and consider what approaching research differently can potentiate in the pursuit of more critical scholarship and deeper connections to life on/with this troubled planet. In various ways the authors in this issue of the journal work with methodological innovation as the means to activate ethics, ideologies and philosophical ways of knowing and acting upon the world – that are sensed, that reverberate, and that also hold the potential to disorientate – with generative consequences. Or as McKittrick (2020, 16) stresses, there is a burning imperative for researchers ‘to read outside ourselves, not for ourselves but to actively unknow ourselves, to unhinge, and come to know each other’.

Each manuscript in this collection pursues this project of unknowing and unhinging ourselves – from limiting research orthodoxies that produce more of the same, when in search of the already known. There is a discernible sense of frustration that threads throughout the research studies presented in these papers – a deep frustration with the current condition in which we find ourselves, and the urgency therefore to commit to ways to generate knowledge that asks difficult questions. In different ways, and through different methodological experimentations, the authors provide glimpses into hopeful world-making practices that hold the potential to open new ways to (re-)encounter that which might seem obvious and inevitable. This requires greater attentiveness, capacities to attune, and a willingness to persist in wrestling with the pressing (invariably unanswerable) questions that are posed by the crisis of life in late Capitalism.

As a series of philosophically informed, methodological experiments these papers offer the reader inspiration for ways to go about questioning what else research is, what else it might make possible, and how else we might understand ourselves as researchers. Weaving through the papers is a deep concern with stories – the sharing, listening, and hearing of stories that become animated when told in relation to the more-than, and other-than-human. Making space for more confederate and worldly approaches to educational research underlines the importance of care, collaboration, ethics and our abilities to respond, our response-abilities (Haraway, 2016) to be

active in world-making practices through our research. Each paper generates much to think-with and there is an implicit invitation woven throughout to wonder ‘what do we do with what research does?’ (Osgood & Scarlet, 2015). Readers might take this invitation to sit with the disease that is generated from research approaches that seek to reconceptualize what counts as educational research, and its activist potential to tell other stories. For Haraway (2017) stories are a secret weapon for earthly survival. Throughout her work she is constantly at pains to demonstrate how our sense of self is never an individualist fantasy about personal wants and desires, but rather the self is dynamic, constantly (re-)made, and endlessly transformed through relations with others. The papers in this issue respond to her call for world-making practices that require deep thinking that shapes our activist research-doings, as she states in the film: “thinking is what we need to do . . . thinking is what we are about, and thinking is a material practice with other thinkers, and some of the best thinking is done as storytelling.”

Stories hold the potential to move into other worlds, realms, and ways of being – and there has perhaps never been a time when we have needed storytelling for earthly survival more. As the ravages of late-stage Capitalism and the urgency of a global ecological crisis persist in making themselves felt through all aspects of daily life – researchers must respond to the call to go beyond the logics of the Anthropocene – to find ways to tell other stories. Or as McKittrick (2020, 6-7, cited in Elfreich & Weltsek, this issue) articulates:

‘telling, sharing, listening to and hearing stories are relational and interdisciplinary acts that are animated by all sorts of people, places, narrative devices, theoretical queries, plots...the story has no answer...but instead signals collaboration and collaborative ways to enact and engender struggle’.

Kvile and Murriss’ article, entitled: *attuning to what’s in/out of tune: from listening-as-usual to opening up more parts of the world to love in music education research and practice*, opens this issue of RERM with an invitation to question what human exceptionalism and a human-centred analysis has to do with music, education and educational research. They grapple with sticky data that is generated from the relationalities generated by a video clip of two boys performing a song on a beach in rural Norway. They offer a diffractive method of ‘Listening without Organs’ to trace the agencies of soundwaves to explore music education’s entanglement with everyday life. Through an agential realist analysis of the video clip as phenomenon, Kvile & Murriss make visible the porosity of taken-for-granted research concepts such as ‘data’, ‘research site’, ‘participants’, theories and methods. As they go on to illustrate, through storytelling and theorisation with the help of Barad, knowledge-making (as a worlding practice) actively troubles human exceptionalism and creates parts of the world to love in research. By extending the theory and practice of listening to include more-than-human and ‘lesser’-human sounds, concepts such as music, education and children are also expanded.

Next, a collaborative research-creation project that pursues storytelling through art and poetry is offered by scholars located in Canada, North America and Spain. Riley, Goode, Varga, Eaton, Salvador-García, and Byers collectively laboured over a piece entitled: *Entangled Ekphrastics: proliferating modes of (post) qualitative inquiry through liminality and research-creation*. In their

article, the researchers perform a research-creation process they have conceptualised as *entangled ekphrastics* which is described as an emergent response to *-isms*: *racism*, *capitalism*, *colonialism*, *heteropatriarchalism*, *speciesism*, and *nationalism*. The article makes transparent the messy processes involved in generating critical responses to *-isms* that shape all aspects of all life, although how they are encountered and by whom/what is always asymmetrical and so makes fresh demands for response-able and ethical post-qualitative research. The authors gathered virtually, engaged with artwork, and co-created (entangled) poems. The interwoven research-creation processes that are presented in the paper reveal a shared commitment to disrupting conventions of traditional qualitative inquiry. This disruption is not merely for the sake of novelty and innovation, rather the authors argue that they are in pursuit of an activist objective to push the boundaries of what counts as *activism* and how *artivism* might take shape when the difficult questions are kept in play. Through their world-making research-creation project the authors contemplate the potential for *entangled ekphrastics* to move educational research towards theoretical liminality, where critical engagements with the crises of the Anthropocene might lead to more hope-full futurities.

Another collective piece, crafted by scholars in North America, Japan and Finland, similarly draws upon the urgency to act, through research innovation, to imagine worlds otherwise. Koro, Strange, Chakaborty and Sorsa present an account of *scaling as methodological and material activation technique*. They propose that knowledge production and worldbuilding creations hold capacities for research to become more animated and urgent. The paper focuses on scaling as a possible activation technique for qualitative inquiry that builds on specific worlds, relationalities, and the emerging '(dis)order' of the Anthropocene. They propose that scaling, as an activation technique, and the concept of *scale* can enable researchers to consider their relationalities with others, to identify within themselves relationalities regarding their areas of study, to consider how close or far data, knowledge, and participants are and become, which theories and practices are foregrounded and backgrounded, and how relationality within scales and scaling might operate. The paper begins by presenting the relational nature of scaling and how scales are situated in relational spaces. Then it goes on to draw from past scaling traditions to situate scaling in the context of mountains and mountain matter(ings). Carrying out research with mountains provoked a series of methodological questions related to scale. Taking scaling practices seriously led the authors to grapple with complexities and multi-dimensionality that far exceed human perception. Finding themselves at the foothill, the shoulder, the summit of a mountain, or next to a small rock prompted scaling explorations that shaped qualitative world-building and illuminated the messy relations that humans have with the world. They wondered with evolving human approximations and perceptions, affective capacities, and ways of understanding to encounter mountains from afar, up close and even on top. Two scaling activation examples are shared which leads the authors to conclude with a discussion about boundaries and the limits of humanely perceived relationalities and scaling. They propose that nonhuman and/or more-than-human 'scales' are useful for understanding the limitations of human knowledge and various forms of relationalities.

The issue then takes up the stories of teacher-educators and trainee teachers in a paper entitled: *Storying as curriculum: critical performance pedagogy and relational identity emergence in an arts-based teacher preparation course*. The ideas presented in this paper written by Elfreich and Weltsek, hold resonance with others in this collection. The paper recounts artistic, relational, and embodied ways of knowing as they are enacted through an arts-based curriculum that creates space to critically examine conceptual, empirical, and pedagogical discourses on justice-oriented education. A critical performative pedagogy is recounted and reflections offered about its capacities for world-making practice through ideas of becoming, identity emergence, and acting to creatively and dialogically engage with what it means to teach. Drawing upon McKittrick and others, the authors recount the generative possibilities available in storying, as a methodological approach to (re-)imagine ways of seeing and acting in and upon the world in relation. Care is taken to present the intimate communal narratives that emerged from these pedagogical and methodological innovations. They conclude by arguing that enacting curriculum and pedagogy as a collaborative storying process creates possibilities to (re-)imagine futurity through relational invitations to hold taken-for-granted assumptions and knowledges in tension with novel opportunities to experience the world differently.

Finally, this issue of RERM concludes with a paper from Tarisayi, writing in the South African context in relation to Zimbabwean migrant teachers. The paper, entitled: *Navigating the hyphen: reflexive positionality in migrant research* explores the complexities of researcher positionality within migration research. An autoethnographic approach allows the author to tell stories that illuminate the fluidity of insider-outsider dynamics that come to shape overlapping relationalities in distinct socio-political contexts. Drawing on translocational positionality and intersectionality, the research highlights how shifting positionalities influence both the research process and knowledge production. The paper argues that addressing power dynamics and ensuring epistemic justice must be carefully attended to by hearing the stories of marginalised groups. The paper problematises traditional insider-outsider binaries by emphasising the ethical significance of transparency. Who we are as researchers matters; and the stories we hear, the stories we tell, and how they come to matter, matters. This paper offers a nuanced understanding of undertaking research and the implications of being a researcher for generating credible and inclusive knowledge that is both respectful and ethically response-able.

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(Editor)

References

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