

# Reconceptualizing Educational Research Methodology

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## Editorial

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Celebrating curiosity, craft and courage, this last RERM issue in 2025 brings together five articles that all reimagine what educational inquiry can be. Through methodologically inventive studies and arts-based experiments, the contributors offer counter-maps of traditional scholarship, material and playful engagements with texts and data, multimodal practices that render and contest racialized structures, and posthuman provocations that attend to plants and other more-than-human actants. Together they constitute an invitational provocation to attend to perhaps unexpected agencies and relations in educational research.

This issue opens with Mary Cathrine Garland's article exploring what she coins *thesising*. Despite their initial plans, Garland's thesis became a body of writing that was always on the move and becoming with artfulness, and, thus, challenged traditional writing conventions. In this piece, Garland offers insights into some of the challenges encountered in the landscaping of her doctoral thesis by engaging with speculative and experimental approaches to writing as research, asking not 'what 'is'', but 'what if''. However, Garland's work not only invites thesis writing to become wanderlines writing into the not-yet-known, but also stresses the importance of moving beyond rigid ways of supporting students' writing within educational settings.

In the second article of this issue Alexandra Nordström, Jenny Renlund, Jenny Byman, Heidi Höglund, Katrina Åkerholm, Sofia Jusslin, and Charlotta Hilli critically engage with the often-overlooked thing-power of literature within higher education. More specifically, the authors analysed what course and children's literature set in motion in the learning diaries of nine student teachers in a university course on children's literature and drama in early childhood teacher education in Finland. Employing postqualitative theories and arts-based practices, their study acknowledges and explores the vitalities, agencies and forces of literature in teacher education. The study demonstrates a new approach to following the contours of

literature's vital materialism. Furthermore, it suggests that student teachers, as part of their education, could benefit from mapping assemblages that they are involved in, to identify other agents and different effects on teaching.

In the third article Abby C. Emerson does a critical visual inquiry into whiteness. Emerson argues that the field of critical witness studies needs arts-based research methods as they offer ways of resisting the positivist criteria such as "value neutrality" and overreliance on the written word that is so aligned with the predominant whiteness of educational research. Through her artistic work and critical deconstructions Emerson highlights the complexities of engaging with whiteness, acknowledging both the complexities inherent in such endeavors, the limitations of the project, and the transformative hopes and possibilities such arts-based deconstructions harbor.

In "Becoming Scholars with Data: Exploring Collage as an Arts-Based Method," Meaghan Dougherty, Gillian Judson, and Sarah Pazur write about an inquiry process anchored in a shared desire to cultivate imagination more explicitly in their research. And a common yearning to explore the sense-breaking power of imagination to unlearn some of the deeply rooted humanist concepts of research. Here the authors work/think/play with/in interview transcripts from within a more-than-human ontology, while also putting different cognitive tools to work. This playful process included writing poetry, drawing, collaging, mindmapping, exploring silence and paraverbals, and putting stories from the transcripts into conversation with one another. One of the questions they explore are: What does engaging with data imaginatively teach us about research and about ourselves as researchers? In the paper they share how their engagement allowed the data to work on them, as they worked on the data, producing them differently as researchers and as scholars. And further, how the process both opened up for moving beyond dominant ways of knowing and produced tensions they continue to navigate as becoming-researchers.

In the issue's final article, "Post-ethno-botanic inquiry for researching plant-human relations", Sneha Parmar, Karen Malone and Tracy Young's, advances a timely and provocative agenda at the intersection of plant studies, pedagogy and decolonial scholarship. Situating their work within the contemporary vegetal turn, from mycorrhizal intelligence to communicative forest ecologies, mother trees, fungi and lichens, the authors offer a collaborative, practice-based inquiry that foregrounds situated human-plant relations. As scientists and educators, they describe a slow process of unlearning colonial, anthropocentric and positivist legacies in botany and ethnobotany, and chart a move toward what they term post-ethnobotany. Their aim is to decolonise ethnobotany through post-qualitative and posthuman approaches that recognise plants as active participants in multispecies ecologies. Building on work mapping relational vegetal ontologies, they extend toward post-ethnobotanical inquiry grounded in symbiotic, entangled, and reciprocal understandings of plant life.

We hope you enjoy this rich issue of RERM!