

A Discussion about (a) Post-Qualitative Inquiry, Post-Humanism, and New Materialist Philosophies

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Abstract

To start at a beginning, one would have to be the humanist knowing subject that exists prior to what is begun. So, we would have to work under a conventional qualitative “assumption . . . that there is actually a beginning, an origin,” as Patti Lather & Elizabeth St. Pierre (2013, p. 630) say instead of a posthumanist subject that is “always already becoming in entanglement” (p. 630). We would have to be able to stand outside of whatever this thing with a beginning is and be able to move around it to analyze, interpret, and describe it with clarity. We (researchers, academics, educators) used to think that possible.

Post-qualitative, posthumanist, and new materialist philosophies help us disrupt conventional ideas about ontology and epistemology about qualitative research and the pedagogical objects and processes that have been for too long now, reliant on human-centric ideas, the knowing subject of modernity, and positivist and neo-positivist research (Lather, 2013; St. Pierre, 1997).

In this research presentation, we explore ways in which a Ph.D. student and his dissertation advisor, grapple with these relatively “new” forms of inquiry

in the field of art education, as a “methodology to come” and as a means to “produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently” (St. Pierre, 1997, p. 175) as opposed to the un(der)theorized work that stems from reliance on and adherence to conventional qualitative methods, like coding data and analysis (St. Pierre, 2011). These are possibilities by which one can radically reorient “research” and visual arts education.

Keywords

Post-qualitative research, Posthumanism, New materialism, Arts-based research, Transgender, Art education.