



Editorial

Moving beyond text: Editorial for special issue

Language development, capturing or recording that language beyond the moment it was uttered, and then mass dissemination of the information and knowledge through recording and printing in written text have all been significant endeavours in human history. These developments are embodied in scholarly journals such as *Teaching and Teacher Education* (TATE), influencing how, what and why educational research is carried out, conceptualized and represented. More recently, the flexibility and capacity of digital technology has influenced the way educational research is carried out and at the same time has enlarged the possibilities for how we construct or collect field texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) or 'data' that are often multimodal, for what constitutes field texts or data, and for how we might analyse, recontextualize, report and disseminate our research. Still, the common presentation of scholarly work is the traditional exclusively written text based journal article. We've learnt to understand by and with text, a hegemonic technology.

In 2005, after several long walks with TATE Editor Jean Clandinin one of us (lisahunter) expressed her frustration in working in academia and with journals to get research published that better fit with her ontological and epistemological commitments. Her frustrations arose on the grounds that hegemonic practices were limiting possibilities juxtaposed with the loosening that increasingly accessible technology provided for us. At the time, just trying to have an article represented in such a way to reflect some of the points of that article in terms of its layout, physicality, images, authorship, order of information, and embodiment was disrupting the norms of many journals including TATE. To the credit of the TATE editors and reviewers they persevered with lisahunter's intentions, producing something that was somewhere between what she intended and what reflected the journal's history and positioning within the scholarly journal field. Some time later at an editorial board meeting, the second guest editor of this special issue raised the idea of a TATE issue that could capture some of the new technical possibilities. Consequently, Jean Clandinin and Mary Lynn Hamilton, TATE editors, discussed with us the idea of a special issue that would embody change and take up the critique that written text had colonized educational research. These early steps for TATE were small but significant as we talked of a special issue that could:

- embrace new ways of researching;
- be more inclusive of non-written text epistemologies advancing in fields such as the arts and media;
- recognize and legitimize ontologies within their own mediums, for example indigenous oral traditions;

- consider the digital platform possibilities opening up to academics/researchers; and
- create new ways of understanding and working in educational research.

For TATE, digital technology had increased our flexibility in the forms of representation, with capacity increasing beyond multimodal forms just being complimentary or supplementary. As TATE and other journals reinvent themselves to legitimate their presence amidst open source journals, self-publishing scholars, and instant information dissemination, reflexivity would seem necessary for journals to continue to exist. It is in this special issue that TATE has embodied such reflexivity.

The conceptualization of possibilities amongst the team (editors, special editors, journal manager) and authors' responses to the call for papers became concrete in discussions about the pragmatic reality of getting the issue published. This was within the given current technologies, systems, and capacities of the journal; in the boundaries of the scholarly field that encompassed what constituted quality criteria for TATE; in the processes of blind-peer review where visual media revealed so much; in the epistemologies and ontologies that drive the dissemination of scholarly work; in what constituted the nature of scholarly work, and in the relatively small volume of work being done in educational research that goes beyond written text and that could be submitted to such a special issue. This journal provided the possibility of decolonizing western scholarship, shifting the representation from print/written text, as being online enabled multimedia representations of scholarly work. The technology enables new relationships with and between data, analysis, and representation. However, it was an important point in time to unpack the taken-for-granted assumptions around what constituted a manuscript, a journal, audience range, accessibility to research by whom and for whom. It was also an important time to unpack the positioning of researchers within TATE specifically, but the scholarly field more broadly, the static linear and text bound worldviews, dominating modes of reading and writing, and therefore limited range of visual senses, related to educational research.

Making the necessary representation shifts and embracing the possibilities that digital media now offers meant we had new considerations to factor in decision making around the special issue. These included digital capacity and space limits, still being linked to a print form of the journal that needed to be able to stand alone without online access, continued inclusion for subscribers in geographic locations where print is still the only journal genre option, not going so far as to be entirely free of written text,

negotiating how much material needed to be 'seen' by reviewers, ethics of blind-peer review and research participant anonymity, new permissions for authors to submit non-textualised works on the web (e.g., video footage), and still of course a timeline!

The call for contributions for the special issue of *Teaching and Teacher Education, Scholarly Work Beyond Written Texts* mentioned:

"... we are inviting authors to submit 'manuscripts' that include scholarly work that goes beyond print and written text. We are envisioning scholarly work including representations of classrooms, schools and other teaching settings in the form of, but not limited to: videos, photographs, collages, cartoons, blogs/vlogs/vialogues, podcasts, auditory, artistic performances, interactive Google maps, animation sequences, non-linear or fragmented written text arrangements, and other artistic forms of representation. There may well be other possibilities that we have not yet imagined."

This call raised a lot of interest but it is striking that the call mentioned many more potential representation forms than those that were eventually submitted. The accepted submissions include videos, photographs, cartoons, drawings, and animation sequences. Even as we look across the unsuccessful submissions only blogs as an educational tool would have been added to the array of potential representational forms. We were surprised that the exhaustive discussions of editors played out as several suggested representations were not included in the submissions and no further additions appeared. Perhaps the conservatism of the education field, or indeed the scholarly field, is being highlighted. Or was it that we were not attracting those who are doing such work? Was it possible that ethical constraints kept authors from using representational forms that were not approved by their original ethical approvals? The Elsevier *article of the future site* (www.articleofthefuture.com) has given several exciting examples of the use of multimedia representations, that apparently at the moment seem to be more apt for the natural sciences than for the domain of educational research.

The call then continued:

"A form of exegesis should be integral part of the work, that is, the 'manuscript' will include explanatory written/print text. The basis of a submission is such that peer reviewers can evaluate the scholarly (i.e. theoretical and methodological) quality of the work. We imagine that both in representation and analyses of the data and the results alternative forms for the traditional use of only words and numbers are enriching the traditional manuscripts."

Although this paragraph made clear that we intended to invite reports on scholarly work, several submissions stood out in delivering excellent graphics, photographs or videos, but were not reporting on a theoretical or empirical study that had a theoretical framework and in the case of empirical work some reference to systematic data collection and data analyses. These were for example descriptions of the use of visual data in reflections or of educational programs employing all kinds of (multi) media (e.g. blogs) to facilitate students' or teachers' learning. These seemed to lack adequate theoretical underpinnings or evaluations of the results.

Finally the call read:

"We are encouraging the alternative representation as integral to expressing the scholarly work rather than simply complementary or supplementary. As such, the electronic version of the article may be the focus and carry additional material to the print version but the print artefact will need to be informative

with written text that points to the digital platform. Topics will be open within the TATE purview."

Clearly this part of the call was for us, as editors, reviewers and potential authors the most challenging. A scholarly text with supplementary materials would already comply with the title of the special issue, but asking for integration put the bar higher. It is for the readers to judge to what the degree the authors succeeded in this mission. We did not make this paragraph of the call a decisive criterion for acceptance of manuscripts published in this issue. We have, however, put energy into the reviewing process to encourage such integration. Submissions, for example, offered as one author in a cover letter on revisions explained, "visual evidence about the contexts, participants, and activities of our work as we aim to engage readers with images as coherent, independent texts". Based on the comments of reviewers and editors these authors were urged to add narrative interpretations in order to make clear what the authors' interpretations were, not withstanding that readers might develop their own understandings. This, and associated debates, are not new (see for example Curtis (2009) on visual representation and scholarly work; Graham, Laurier, O'Brien, and Rouncefield (2011) on shifting boundaries and new visual technologies). They were ones we had as editors when we began. For example, continuing with the illustration above, one editor was willing to go with 'images standing AS scholarly work' but this was not the consensus. Thus, the authors' ideal to have images stand alone did not comply as 'scholarly work' in the context of the special issue where "images and descriptions are intended to come together to create a coherent picture of our research contexts and approaches" (revision letter). It is clear that the struggle to find ways of representing scholarly work, and as scholarly work, in conjunction with but not subservient to written text certainly has not ended.

The review process raised concerns in addition to what is common in organizing the reviewing process for TATE. First, finding reviewers is an awesome task anyway, but in addition, the list of available reviewers is organized according to their content and research methodological expertise. For this specific issue knowledge about alternative forms of representation and multimedia was also needed but was difficult to identify through the database. Second, ethical issues were different and, to some extent, more pronounced in this special issue. Seeking new participant permissions of participants post data collection because of the possibility of taking away their anonymity in videos and photographs was an issue. Some authors resolved the issue through having situations replayed by other participants. This raised other issues of authenticity. A second issue was associated with guaranteeing authors blind review, when an author/interviewer was recognizable on the video. This required further negotiation between editors, reviewers, and authors.

The final result of the work on this special issue is a fine set of five papers and a book review with a video interview. Due to time constraints and in an effort to meet the special issue deadlines this editorial is anything but a representation of 'beyond written text'. Such a paradox sits uncomfortably for the hopes we had but our imaginations are thinking 'next time' in our quest to challenge written text's epistemological security. One step at a time, and a call to those working in visual design, documentary-as-research, soundscapes, oral narratives, virtual domains and sensory ethnography, to name a few, to take the next step within TATE. We feel that the papers present innovative work but certainly the issue is more quality than quantity in terms of the number of submissions. It seems that the field of research on

teaching and teacher education is not (yet) full of energy to engage in taking advantage of new possibilities to present the methods and results of scholarly work. We very much hope that this issue will set the stage for future inclusion of alternative representations and ways of doing scholarly work, as part of the regular issues of TATE.

References

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