Opening Spaces of Possibility:
The Enactive as a Qualitative Research Approach

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Abstract: In this jointly written article, reflexivity and subjectivity in qualitative research are addressed through an enactive view/approach incorporating embodied knowing. Inspired by MERLEAU-PONTY's (1962) concepts of embodied action, this approach implies that knowing emerges collectively through engagement in shared action. Embodied action brings forth an awareness of inquiry which is not attached to any one event or concept but is, rather, an un-grounding, as knowing is shaped by our actions with/in the world. Groundlessness is an exciting "space" where possibility arises for how we think about knowledge, cognition, and experience.

If knowledge and learning are not located in a body, but in the shifting movement of experiencing, new possibilities emerge for how researchers perceive, interpret, research, and interact within the world. We cannot imagine ourselves just "operating in" research settings, and then leaving the cultures of which we are part. Nor can we ignore the ethics of research, since research is also the site of an ongoing ethical event implicating all those involved.

Research informed by and respectful of complex worlds are instances of complicity where our research unfolds with/in communities-in-the-making. Opportunities for shared, relational, and embodied interpretation practices open as we share our research in situated contexts—the outdoors, within drama workshops, and in second language learning environments.

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1. Background: Experiencing the Middle Ground in Qualitative Research

Questions of subjectivity and reflexivity that encourage us to pay close attention to knowledge creation, can either limit or open opportunities for qualitative research. As a limit, these questions can induce paranoia around what the researcher brings to the research. The researcher's personal histories, preferences, cultural proclivities, and linguistic patterns, among other dimensions, are seen to be so rooted as to skew the research undertaking and, thus, to require constant epistemological vigilance. The irony in this frame of mind is that while it considers all knowledge creation or knowing to be partly a reflection of the researcher's subjectivity, the template against which the researcher's partiality is gauged is purely objective. In other words, the researcher's partiality is understood to be a failing or, at least, a concern because it inevitably achieves something less than complete objectivity. "A purely objective approach to qualitative research is impossible," this frame of mind seems to say, "but, as a standard, objectivity can tell us how to assess the degree to which the research is less than objective." The application of this frame of mind, what can be referred to as a "logic of objectivity," is unproductive. [1]

While close attention to the process of knowing through qualitative research is invaluable, when translated through a "logic of objectivity," it introduces unnecessary anxiety. If we take our partiality as researchers, the fact that we always influence the direction of our work, indeed, that our work is in many ways an expression of who we are and who we are becoming, we can interact with our connection to the research not as a liability to be guarded against, but as an opportunity to make the research more meaningful by more fully appreciating our part, as researchers, in it. [2]

When our partiality, that is, what makes our relation to our research unique, is understood as an integral aspect of our methodology and data, the research and the researcher begin to share a mutually supportive relationship. When one lets go of objectivity as an unattainable and constraining icon then we begin to see our connection to the research as an asset. That asset comes into view more exactly as one attunes oneself to the kind of scrutiny that questions of subjectivity and reflexivity introduce into qualitative research: In what ways are the researcher, the research participants, and the research setting shaping each other? Are they distinct entities, or only possible in relation? How do we under-stand their mutual interaction? As research? As knowing? As experiencing? [3]

In this jointly-authored chapter, we respond to these issues through an enactive view/approach incorporating embodied knowing. Our worldview and perceptions

of experiences are informed by VARELA, THOMPSON, and ROSCH's (1991) book, *The Embodied Mind*. The authors' views are pivotal to our views of the world being disrupted and yet offering possibilities for our research in thinking about human experience. The authors explore the possibilities that exist between human experience and cognitive science. They propose a new approach in cognitive science referred to as "enactive" where they are trying to recover a view of cognition as embodied action. They utilize the idea of embodiment first brought about by Maurice MERLEAU-PONTY (1962) in which embodiment has a double sense of the body as living and the body as the experiential structure or context of cognition. They refer to the "enactive view that cognition has no ultimate foundation or ground beyond its history of embodiment" (VARELA et al., 1991, p.xx). [4]

In trying to bridge the gap between cognitive science and what this means for everyday human experience, the authors offer an alternative orientation of the "enactive." The enactive approach is best expressed as

"the growing conviction that cognition is not the representation of a pregiven world by a pregiven mind but is rather the enactment of a world and a mind on the basis of history of the variety of actions that a being in the world performs" (VARELA et al., 1991, p.9). [5]

Research / re-searchers are not pregiven but enacting. In using Buddhist philosophy, the authors propose a middle way or a path of mindful, open-ended learning which they propose is profoundly transformative and embodied out of compassion for the world and not an ego-self. They mean to include in science the ideas of an enactive approach, where experiencing the everyday world is more than a desire to ground[1], objectify, and fix knowledge. [6]

Such an approach implies that knowing evolves not only within "minds," but emerges collectively through engagement of shared action. In this sense, if there is a "location" for knowledge, it is not an objectively precise place or space or tangibly concrete point. Collective action, which can be none other than embodied action, is yet an awareness which is not attached to any one body or event or concept but is, rather, an un-grounding that VARELA, et al., refer to as "groundlessness." In other words, if knowing is to be understood as "anchored" in any way, it is, perhaps counter-intuitively, anchored with/in an unfolding of events which is perpetually adrift in relational motion. This notion of groundlessness welcomes possibility and stands in contrast to a worldview which fixes knowing as permanent and able to be definitively positioned. Groundlessness is an exciting "space" where possibility arises for how we think about knowledge, cognition, and experience. [7]

If knowledge and learning are not located in a body, but in the shifting movement of experiencing, that is, in our inescapably complete immersion, inundation, absorption into the drift of being, then new possibilities emerge for how

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1   To ground is to set in stone a theoretical notion or set of experiences

researchers perceive, interpret, research, and interact with the world. As researchers we cannot imagine ourselves just "operating in" research settings, and then leaving the cultures of which we are part. Nor can we ignore the ethical import of our place in the research since the research experience is also the site of an ongoing ethical event involving all those in the research. [8]

Thus, research informed by and respectful of the complex worlds of schools/community are not just "interventions" but instances of complicity where our research unfolds with/in communities-in-the-making partnerships and interrelationships. In this article, the intertwining of bodymind and world will be shared through the varied experiences writers have had in qualitative research—first in the outdoors (HASKELL), second within drama education (LINDS), and third in second language learning environments (IPPOLITO). We will now each share how, by engaging in our research in situated and concrete contexts, opportunities arise through shared, relational, and embodied interpretation practices. [9]

2. Enactive Inquiry: Exploring the Flesh of Outdoor Experience (Johnna HASKELL)

> "The phenomenological world is not the bringing to explicit expression of a pre-existing being, but the laying down of being ... remaining faithful to its intention, never knowing where it is going ... the same demand for awareness, the same will to seize the meaning of the world ... as that meaning comes into being" (MERLEAU-PONTY, 1962, pp.xx-xxi).

My research has centered around trying to interpret "meaning" or experiences with the outdoor world. In particular, I focus on the unexpected happenings and conversations that arise in educational adventures such as when winter camping with grade 10 students. If research methods are to illuminate the unexpected of qualitative experience, we must acclimatize to new worldviews around embodied knowing or researching. Such worldviews require a "radical shift in our perceptions, our thinking, our values" (CAPRA, 1996, p.4). A methodology of inquiry that embodies our actions and how we encounter our unfolding web of interactions or experiences in the outdoors requires a different and unique perspective of how researchers perceive and interpret the world. [10]

The flesh of outdoor experience is alive in the moment much like unfolding research in education. If inquiry is an entanglement of experiencing the world as it unfolds through our very living, breathing, actions, then I propose enactive inquiry provides an emergent, embodied way to approach research. Enactive inquiry is like writing poetry—paying attention to the words arising on the page—images emerging through the text and the reading of that text. A poet finds a space where they embody world/foster interpretation. This pedagogical act opens potential for learning, for experiencing, and for re-searching. An embodied inquiry allows the re-experiencing or the re-embodiment of me as researcher, the poet, and (co)inquirer. Communities of learning are complex demanding a theoretical framework which is open to the invisible and unexpected. The spontaneous

interplay of perception and actions are caught up in the living "flesh" of experience.

> "The flesh is in this sense an 'element' of Being ... if there is a relation of the visible with itself that traverses me and constitutes me as a seer, this circle which I do not form, which forms me, this coiling over of the visible upon the visible, can traverse, animate other bodies as well as my own" (MERLEAU-PONTY, 1968, pp.139-141). [11]

I experience the world arising as an intertwining of relations. I re-search the world through embodying actions and through the storying[2] of experience. As researchers, we need to remain open to the experiences and environment (world) like a kayaker dancing with a river. Furthermore, the storying (interpreting) of such experiencing comes into words like the poet bringing forth poetic inquiry through a poem. "We are interrogating our experience precisely in order to know how it opens us to what is not ourselves" (MERLEAU-PONTY, 1968, p.59). Opening spaces of possibility is an awareness that incorporates embodied knowing. Experiencing / re-searching is that space, an enactive approach. [12]

2.1 The enactive approach

The enactive approach draws on cognitive science, phenomenology, and Buddhist awareness practices which open paths to confront methodological concerns for researching human experience. Our relationship evolves and grows in our interactions of research, talking, sharing, and embodying an enactive inquiry. [13]

It is not my intention to view the enactive approach as another "ism," but to open approaches to research and how we experience and perceive our interactive world. The approach to researching experience is what I refer to as enactive inquiry, a mindfulness/awareness that helps uproot or to bring forth perspectives through learning to embody groundlessness. We need to embrace the unpredictable and unexpected moments, the unfolding we are immersed with/in yet not graspable, in that they are constantly arising through action and not located in a self. Although many will find this notion of groundlessness frightening, I see it as an exciting "chiasm"[3] where possibility arises for how we think about knowledge, cognition, and experience. If knowledge and learning are not located in the body or self but located in the shifting movement of experiencing, then this opens new possibilities for how we perceive, interpret and represent research. This space of intertwining, a shifting movement of perceiving and interpreting constantly changes like water moving down a river—always flowing a new—like the kayaker or researcher seeking to flow with the river. The presentation of such acts or embodied actions in itself require this same flow

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2 I use the "ing" to indicate the constant interaction of what we know and how we come to know through telling and re-telling, a simultaneous storying of our experience and experiencing of the story.

3 I borrow the word "chiasm" from MERLEAU-PONTY's (1968) work, where he refers to a chiasm between various senses, as a cohesive perceptual intertwining of human flesh and the flesh of the world. I prefer his term over chasm which is merely an opening or gap in the earth's flesh.

which kayakers or grade 10 students express through stories of unexpected moments. These moments are vivid in detail as if the teller would actually be there in the moment again. Expressing unexpected experiences opens representation of research to images, text arising as poetic interacting phenomena. Thus, experiencing research or the outdoors embraces the unexpected, embodies the interplay of body/mind/world, and opens us to the ungraspable. [14]

If in fact we are trying to get at the phenomena of experience, we must first realize that the interaction with phenomena is an embodied cognition. This embodiment is the essence of being that may be expressed through perception or conception. The conceptions of abstract and metaphoric thinking allow us to engage and bring forth the theories of our time. Theorizing is then an embodied experience which is not separate from our experiencing (HASKELL, 1999). Whether theorizing, kayaking down a river, or engaging in a science experiment, our interactions embody enactive inquiry. This is not to say that theory or enactive inquiry is fixed, but evolves with the coupling interactions of an unfolding world. Thus, our actions of the everyday embody worldviews of how we inter-stand[4] the world and influence our experiencing of the world. Experiencing, similarly, is re-searching and research in the making.

> "The same hidden mechanisms that characterize our unconscious system of concepts also play a central role in creating our experience. ... In other words, our cognitive unconscious plays a central role not only in conceptualization but in creating our world as we experience it. It was an important empirical discovery to find that this is true, and it is an equally important area for future research to discover just how extensive this phenomenon is" (LAKOFF & JOHNSON, 1999, p.509). [15]

Bringing the phenomena of experiencing into being is not separate from the "flesh of the world" (MERLEAU-PONTY, 1968), the "more than human world" (ABRAM, 1996), or the outdoor world. It is through the body interacting that we experience the passion of the unexpected where we encounter and bring forth a world hidden from our view. "The appropriate method for interpreting any phenomena [the unexpected] can only be disclosed by the phenomena [unexpected] itself" (SMITH, 1999, p.33). As SMITH reinforces, enactive inquiry can best interpret experiencing the unknown by students sharing unexpected moments through story or poetry. Enactive inquiry is not some position, or set of questions, but a way of being "present" or open to the non-concrete. The best way to "record," relay, or interpret such spaces of inquiry is through our embodied listening, storying through photographs, and story telling or writing images (interactions) as they arise. [16]

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4   I use *inter-stand* as a way to get at relational qualities which I take from TAYLOR and SAARINEN's (1994) work to describe understanding through their media presentation of words on the page.

2.1.1 The unexpected in enactive inquiry

> "Stories, like rhymed poems or songs, readily incorporate themselves into our felt experience; the shifts of action echo and resonate our own encounters—in hearing or telling the story we vicariously live it, and the travails of its characters embed themselves into our own flesh" (ABRAM, 1996, p.120).

As exemplified in an unexpected conversation with Jude, a student in my research, I listen to events and a pictograph representation of her entire experience of her outdoor trips within the program. My conversation with Jude changes research questions and interviews into an inquiry that my skills once again allow me to enact in the moment. [Luckily, I have my tape recorder close by.] Research genuinely occurs in the unveiling of invisible worlds unfolding. Re-searching or re-experiencing is a time where we couple our social histories, allowing us to enact a mindful approach, while asking who we can potentially become within the living world. [17]

Jude's voice infiltrates the room as she reads a journal entry she wrote while sitting out in the snow:

It's past dinner and I have just gotten back from going for a walk in the snow. ... It sparkles everywhere. The snow insulates everything. Everything is so still and quiet. I felt like an intruder because my stomach was gurgling and my breathing was loud. It took me a while before I could think clearly and have only one thing on my mind. I got to thinking, who am I? What is my purpose? How could I make use of my knowledge? What could I do for myself to be content and make a difference? What is the world? Who is to say earth is merely a speck in the great scheme of things? What is the great scheme of things?

Perhaps everything is simply nothing or maybe life, my life is a dream and I am at the center of it. Why is snow cold? Who decided that snow was snow? How did I get to be here? What is beyond? How did the earth become? Who is God? What is God? If there is a god, how did she, he become? Where did it all start? ... Was there once nothingness? What is nothingness?

Why am I here? What is my purpose? ... How can I help others? Am I an alien completing a part of a mission? Is this it? If so, how can I make the most of it? Why am I here? ...

Right now, I believe that religion is not the truth. It's impossible. Religion is searching for a way to answer such unanswerable questions ... such as those which are present in the century. I am not disapproving. What is approval anyway? And who

> *the hell is Merriam Webster? ... Is life a survival game? Am I a player? I've overcome many obstacles but many have yet to come. What a confusion.*
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> *What is a word? Who am I? What is life? Knowledge is useless unless it is used. Will any of this ever be clear?* (HASKELL, 2000, pp.52-54) [18]

Jude works so hard at being open to encounter and to get the most out of her experiences in the program. She certainly seems to be attempting mindfulness (clarity) and filling her journal with wonderful thoughts. My plans to inter-view[5] students are thrown out the door with the changing mountain weather and the unpredictability of finding enough time to talk to students alone. However, the moment where chaos and connections unfold, I am in a conversation (relation) that relates a wonderful story blurring perception with a conceptual dialogue while questioning the whole enacting flesh of the world. In preparing myself for an enactive inquiry, I became familiar with multiple methodologies and perspectives which enabled me to embody a bricolage[6] approach, using what I need in the moment. My methods were not different from most traditional qualitative research, including inter-views, jour(neys)nals, and participant observations. The act of participating through asking questions during interviews as well as observing allow me (and the students) to share experiences during and after rock climbing, canoeing, kayaking, and winter camping. These shared experiences over several months open me as researcher to relationships, an inquiry without planned questions and to the storying of an unexpected student's journey. However, the "methods" (inter-acting) evolved as I focused on my embodied awareness, enactively inquiring into the phenomena of experiencing and being open to the unexpected. I also found that, with the limited time we had to carry out the day to day activities of wilderness living, that journaling through the use of photographs allowed me to be in the moment. [19]

2.1.2 Enactive experiencing

Jude revolutionizes my inter-standing of research methodology as experiencing. This experiencing is an enactive inquiry arising through the doing and the dialogue or sharing of experiential stories. Jude's sharing of her open-ended reflections and writing is an experiencing of research, an enactive inquiry unfolding through the interaction, actions, and enaction of shared dialogue and questions. I follow the unfolding moments, enter into the sharing of conversation and remain open, yet mindful of what Jude is willing to share with me at this particular time through our living interactions. Enactive inquiry honors relationships, which develop depending on me as researcher and skilled outdoors woman, and the kinds of emergent interactions I share with students in the outdoor context. We enact inquiry without using formal questions, experiencing

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5   I use *inter-* as in TAYLOR and SAARINEN (1994) where interviews are more than a conversation but a view or perspective that arises out of the relational merging of researcher and student.

6   Bricolage is an approach of using multiple methodologies and methods at hand to complete the task of research. For an introduction to bricolage, and the bricoleur's approach, see WEINSTEIN (1991) and LEVI-STRAUSS (1962).

inter-views of our embodied interactions, while opening chiasmic worlds through our shared outdoor journeys. [20]

"The method is never frozen but is constantly responding to the creative shouts and whispers of the primary wisdom of the research itself" (CLEMENTS, ETTLING, JENETT, & SHIELDS, 1999, pp.2-3). Enactive inquiry is a process whereby intention and action blur into the flow of doing. Doing, experiencing, being are inseparable from the inquiry of embodied actions.

> "The role of the qualitative researcher, much like the artist/dancer's role, demands total involvement and commitment in a way that requires a total immersion of the senses in the experience. ... The researcher is connected to the participants in a most profound way, and that is how trust is established, which in turn allows for greater access to sources and which ensures an involvement on the part of participants that enables them to tell their respective stories. ... All researchers use a sixth sense, an intuitive sense [embodied awareness], to follow through on hunches that emerge from observing and interviewing in a particular social context. Researchers ought to have the opportunity in their training and in practice to sharpen their intuitive skills, which often opens up avenues of data previously unknown or hidden" (JANESICK, 1998, pp.61, 62). [21]

Perhaps enactive inquiry brings forth the invisible through embodying actions within the relational space of experience. Maybe the intangible is precisely the embodiment that we are trying to inter-stand with research? My purpose is to awaken the alien, the unknown, the flesh of experiencing. I don't claim that I can tap into the experience of participants, yet I intertwine with them and they with me, unfolding a space of perceptual awareness. Enactive inquiry requires us to lower ourselves off our comfortable web out into the alien, a space of opportunity. Our journeys into the unknown, in re-searching, in learning all embody inter-actions with mind, body, and world. The challenge is how to bring forth such experiencing in such a way that it continues to be enactive and not set in a step by step process. I suppose this is why we struggle to relate our enactive experiences by using exemplars to try to grasp the moments (the concrete). I am asking you to stay in the space of ungrounding (as you read this) as this is where we can truly inter-stand experience. This may mean doing research in a way that is unfamiliar; often like students who experience the outdoors as unfamiliar. [22]

2.2 The challenge of enactive inquiry

Consequently, enactive inquiry is important for education. First, it enlightens our perceptions of how to carry out research where we can focus on unrealized possibilities, or worldviews which are impassioned, alien and fraught with groundless spaces. I hope that through a more enactive, embodied approach to research and teaching, we can interrogate our own practices, relational aspects, connections with nature and use the body in the classroom. Secondly, how we experience the world, whether through the classroom or our adventures in the natural world, evokes an ecology of experience as a living interaction unveiling our stories of these experiences as part of an emergent, freefall pedagogy

(HASKELL, 2000). Teaching/learning/researching are intertwined in the flesh of experience, an inquiry that unfolds through en(act)ion. [23]

A world that unfolds through the research process as conversation, as inter-view, as interpretation, or flesh of experiencing embodies our inter(being)acting world. Dialogue, which co-emerges from reading theory or in conversation during research, enacts embodied inquiry. Whether storied, written, or voiced, imaging and questioning the unknown unveils a space for embodying awareness while sitting with the snow, mountain climbing, or moving with the tumbling of river rapids. [24]

This enactive inquiry probes into the flesh or experiencing where perception is intertwined with worldviews and theories that come into being through shared dialogue and living interaction. How we come to interpret experiencing through reading and re-reading of theorists, or experiencing is a slow process toward embodying perceptual clarity. [25]

In other words, the enactive approach to researching or studying experience does not separate our experience and ongoing actions. Rather, I argue, embodied awareness emerges through our actions during outdoor adventures and during acts of inquiry. As such, experiencing can not be represented as a fixed event, but as evolving through a continual interplay of perception and action.

> "My perspective and values were flipped upside down.
>
> Impossible to sum up
>
> and the most influential
>
> yet incredible months of my life." (Expedition Annual) [26]

Inquiry is not just merely questions, but quests or "act[s] of experiencing" (DEWEY, 1929, p.18). The "act of experiencing," if done mindfully by involving all the senses (not just reflection where the body is still, but re-experiencing), is an enactive inquiry. The flesh of experiencing is more than just action. It is an embodied perceptual history of bodies interacting, intertwining the unknowns of everyday experience. [27]

Searching as enactive inquiry maps a road like "laying down a path in walking" (VARELA, et al., 1991). In research, we lay down a path to re-travel, so we can inspect the breathing landscape again and again. However, in laying down a path in experiencing, the world unfolds anew similar to the dynamic water of river rapids. Experiencing, as researching is fresh each time, like a new fallen snow cover or the growth of saplings in a field. Each time we travel down what would appear to be the same path, we journey into unknown waters and paths of inquiry or experiencing. [28]

With all actions and interactions, a certain amount of risk is inherent whether we are white water kayaking, researching, or enactively inquiring. As DEWEY (1916) points out:

"Thinking is a process of inquiry ... all thinking is research, and all research is native, original, with [whomever] carries it on, even if everyone else in the world already is sure of what [he/she] is still looking for. It also follows that all thinking involves risk. Certainty cannot be guaranteed in advance. The invasion of the unknown is of the nature of an adventure; we cannot be sure in advance" (p.148). [29]

Enactive inquiry is such an adventure which challenges perceptions, brings forth emergent living/being, encourages intuitive doing, and opens teaching/learning to an integration of bodies. Bodies of water or sensual mountainous landscapes all embody experiencing as becoming or evolving, illusionary, yet touchable only as we step, breathe, and enact it out of the very experience from which it arises. Much like Buddhist practice of breathing or an athlete seeking the zone, a researcher enacts inquiry perceiving, inquiring, experiencing, and interpreting. [30]

As Jude is theorizing about the world while sitting out in the snow, she is also experiencing this inquiry through the words she writes in her journal and also while interacting with the snow chaotically coming down all around her. We may experience theorizing as a writing, a reading, or a dialogue with theorists, where our experiencing of theory or our theorizing of experiencing can not be separate from our interactions with the world. Enactive inquiry is just such an interaction where we embody the awareness that comes forth whether sitting in the snow writing in a journal with gloved hands or sitting reading MERLEAU-PONTY on a porch pondering possibilities of our experiencing with the world. [31]

Interacting with the outdoor world opens us to living with the invisible, yet *laying down a path* of theorizing through experiencing. For educators, I hope the life breathed into enactive inquiry opens possibilities for experiencing the outdoors for all learning contexts. Human experience as such envisions a reflecting or re-experiencing of the ways in which experience emerges or possibilities arise as each moment is brought into being while researching, teaching or learning. [32]

3. (Inter) Playing With/in the Landscapes of Drama Facilitation/Research (Warren LINDS)

"... [I]n learning to take up the objective attitude of external observers, we have trained ourselves to attend away from (to dis-attend to) the spontaneous, responsive, unique, first-time understandings we create and develop between us, in the ceaseless, ongoing stream of life within which we are all embedded" (SHOTTER 1999).

I have been facilitating workshops based on *Theatre of the Oppressed* (BOAL, 1979) for the past fourteen years. *Theatre of the Oppressed* is a popular theatre approach which proposes that knowledge emerging aesthetically through a series of theatre exercises and games is already in itself the beginning of a transformation. [33]

My work involves enabling groups of people to create short plays together. Warm-up or tune-up exercises are used to develop a sense of community and trust.

These activities are also performative as they both develop, and carry, the relationship I have with participants as active sites of knowing and understanding. [34]

Such collective creation incorporates a participatory process that enables spaces for a way of "being" where self and world and bodymind are intertwined in partnership as an inclusive whole. The work reframes our experiences through dramatic forms, so that we may see our lives in a different light, opening us up to our senses, and enabling us to question what has happened to us. Such embodied texts become flowing sites of knowing, being, doing, and creating as patterns of interrelations are continually created and recreated through an "endless dance of co-emergence" (WALDROP, 1992, p.75). [35]

"What we do is what we know, and ours is but one of many possible worlds. It is not a mirroring of the world, but a laying down of the world" (VARELA, 1987, p.62). In this process the researcher/facilitator becomes an adventurer, an experimenter, and a catalyst who invites, encourages and dares exploration with others. The participant is also a researcher as, both individually and collectively, they explore through their bodies the themes that emerge. [36]

As facilitator/researcher I am capable of occupying many positions in the work, and don't rest with any. I am continuously learning with/in the workshop environment; I am not just directing participants on what to do. Rather, I am co-implicated in an exploration process and co-evolving alongside the participants in the process. Although I am a facilitator, and they are participants, I am co-implicated with them as a participant. I must be able to shift back and forth— facilitator as participant, participant as facilitator. The work is shaped by me and I am shaped by it in a circular process. [37]

How can such an enactive[7] view assist us in creating conditions where research continually takes into account the emerging networks of relationships that continually grow, change and respond to challenges? [38]

I will explore in this essay the implications for inter-subjective forms of qualitative research of how the shaping of a dramatic structure is intertwined with our play within it as knowing emerges through a variety of forms of actions which are simultaneously the *medium*, *subject* and *re-presentation* of research. [39]

3.1 Embodying research

The Australian theater teacher Judith PIPPEN (1997) has been exploring the mystery of learning to become an actor through voice and movement training. She re-evaluates this process by referring to an "ecological" approach to learning the craft. This approach, based on the theories of cognition of Humberto MATURANA, is grounded in "the dynamic inter-relationship of our bodyhood and its multidimensional relational space" (p.72), which overcomes bodymind, voice/movement splits in human relationships. It does this "because it postulates

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7   "The world that is enacted is inseparable from how we act in it" (VARELA et al., 1991, p.140).

the dynamic of our bodyhood-in-relation as generative of both moving and
languaging, rather than movement belonging to the body and voice as somehow
separated from it" (p.72). [40]

PIPPEN's approach (pp.72-73) has resonance for my own questions about
incorporating a performative approach to qualitative research:

- How aware are we as researchers of the ways we respond verbally and
  kinesthetically to what happens around us?
- Do we have an approach to research that recognizes the primacy of
  relationships, the braiding of language and the shifting emotional states in our
  behavior?
- How can we help others learn reflective and mindful awareness that
  empowers them to access their intuitive and embodied abilities, as well as
  fuel their interpretive and imaginative powers in their research practice? [41]

One approach to these questions is to explore the interplay between my learning
enactively, where I am part of a particular series of improvised dramatic experiences
which are shaped by, and unfold in, the drama workshop environment I am
working in; and through *embodied knowing*, where my research depends upon
having a bodymind[8] actively attuned in the world. [42]

3.2 (E)merging landscapes of research

In the exercise *Fill the Space* all the actors

> "must *walk around very quickly* trying to ensure that their own bodies are always
> more or less equidistant from everyone else's, and they are all spread out over the
> whole room. From time to time, the leader yells "Stop!" and everyone must come to a
> halt—it should not be possible to see an empty space in the room ...
>
> ...Whenever one sees an empty space, they go and fill it with their body, but they
> can't stay there, so a moment later it is empty again, except that someone comes to
> fill it, but they can't stop there either ..." (BOAL, 1992, p.116). [43]

As in this exercise, research is a dialogical and social process. Things happen
spontaneously as people play and inter-play with each other, finding and filling
spaces for dialogue and interaction. Can we also play with the idea that these
spaces are also spaces of the possible, enlarged through our interactions? [44]

Biologist Jack COHEN and mathematician Ian STEWART (1994) write about the
space of the possible as an ever-evolving, ever-dynamic, ever-expanding web of
interrelationship. This "space" is dynamic because the living world and our
bodyminds, are always evolving and developing through interaction with one
another. Spaces of possibility evolve through our interactions with/in the world.

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8   I use *bodymind* or *BodyMindSpirit* to indicate the integration of feeling and thought that emerges
    from/within experiential knowing by our "sensing and sentient" (ABRAM, 1996, p.45) body. Our
    awareness of this knowing exists only in the interactions it has with the world.

When spaces interact, delightful possibilities spring forth. "The separate beings of audience and performers can disappear, and at such moments, there is a kind of secret complicity between us" (NACHMANOVITCH, 1990, p.101). [45]

This idea of complicity that NACHMANOVITCH identifies arises when simple systems interact in ways that change one another. Although there are patterns, the interrelationships of the parts within the whole are such an intricate and convoluted ball of intertwined threads that "any attempt to dissect its internal workings and past history just leads to a Reductionist Nightmare" (COHEN & STEWART, 1994, p.415). We need to look at the parts and the spaces as systems that are reiterated like fractals, "where simple systems interact in a way that changes both and erases their dependence on initial conditions" (COHEN & STEWART, 1994, p.416). These systems include our living experiences with/in the world of our research. [46]

This idea of complicity doesn't fit with fixed binary distinctions. It emphasizes relations that are intertwined and fluid while alerting us to a contrived and over-determined simplicity. Complicity—*being implicated in/with*—moves us as researchers from managing a simplistic system of designed input-outcome-based inquiry towards one of dynamic engagement and interaction. This requires an attentiveness to our participation through events, engaging in *knowingbeingdoing* in a complex and forever unfolding world. [47]

These distinctions between simplicity and complicity are similar to Fritjhof CAPRA's (1998) contrast of designed structures with emergent ones. Designed structures are formal structures and content, while emergent ones are the informal network of relationships that "continually grows, changes, and adapts to new situations" (p.47). An emergent structure incorporates a different form of relationship than that of a designed structure. Whereas a designed structure is based on rules and procedures, an emergent one facilitates the continual emergence of new structures by encouraging questioning and rewarding innovation. This fits in more with the idea of complicity which I have outlined whereby facilitating emergence requires us to pay attention to how the system operates in order to continually create conditions for it to flourish. [48]

As researchers we cannot think of ourselves as just "operating in" particular settings, planning, theorizing, leading, learning, teaching and then leaving the cultures of which we are part. Research informed by and respectful of the complex worlds of these settings are not just "interventions" but instances of complicity whereby our research unfolds with communities-in-the-making through partnerships and interrelationships. [49]

Thus, research means becoming attuned to such complicity, to be able to improvise within it and to realize that control doesn't reside with the researcher all the time, but is distributed *amongst* the participants from moment to moment. We have a responsibility to embody awareness of the intentions, values and beliefs emerging *through* such partnerships. [50]

Creating the conditions for interactive inquiry in this light means that research is not the "finding" of some passive knowledge, preconceived, believed to be known in advance, "believed to be (exclusively) a given" (FELMAN, 1995, p.56). Research then becomes an "open space through which thing-flows are distributed rather than plotting out a close space for linear and solid things" (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1988, p.361). Such spaces are always emerging, but we must be aware of them when they do, attending "closely to my nonverbal experiences of the shifting landscape that surrounds me" (ABRAM, 1996, pp.59-60). [51]

Exploring the idea of complicity in research partnerships open us to spaces flowing with rich interactions. Our body is our medium for being in the world. Bodily experience forces us to acknowledge an imposition of meaning which is not of the world nor of consciousness. Something "happens" that is pre-cognitive, something that is a "spontaneous form of understanding given to us in our bodily reactions to events that surround us" (SHOTTER, 1999). This is the unique realm of the body, not as an object in the world but, through its spatiality and motility ("capable of moving spontaneously and independently"), expressing itself in the world through complex interactions. In a drama workshop, this entanglement is actually an *intertwining* of humans and the spaces of interaction. This is best illustrated by leading this drama exercise:

> *Participants speak only numbers as they walk around the room interacting with each other. Playing with emotion and feeling and communicating through the . A harsh six ... A soft o ... n ... e. Explore which number fits which feeling ... Which consonants, which vowels express power, anger ... I feel the power of the feeling in the room, sometimes as though I am watching a performance, sometimes feeling a part of everything as I make a suggestion and a ripple of actions and emotions move through the room as we interplay in a kind of secret complicity between us. I am amazed at the effect and the seriousness and tension in the room. Excited, in fact, but also very aware of feeling fear of the intensity of the work and responsibility for it, too. Where to go with it, what next? And envy I can't be "playing" in the midst of it ...* [52]

I offer suggestions for actions as I guide the group. Not only do these actions bring forth an awareness of feelings in the group, they also bring me into contact with my own senses as the ripples of group action echo back to me. These senses are "translated" into each other, or at least understood in terms of the other senses, as a unity provided by the body (MERLEAU-PONTY, 1962). The visible resonates with the sayable; the light is capable of eliciting a tactile response; hearing can be visualized. Senses combine their effects with each other. Each sense meshes with the other "sensory worlds." [53]

I hear the sounds of the numbers and, simultaneously, see their effect. And, in a split second, I respond intuitively with new suggestions for focus as I swim in the flow of interaction between my instructions and their actions. [54]

This kinesthetic sense (what Clive BARKER [1977, p.29] calls "body-think") means that sensing and being sensed do not happen separately; they function

and flourish in bodies of interaction, flowing (CSIKSZENTMIHALYI, 1997)
together. Flow is "autoletic," that is, it seems to need no goals or reward. Action
and my awareness of it are experienced as one. To flow is its own reward ...

> *Sometimes feeling a part of everything, I watch my suggestions ripple through the
> room. Actions and emotions intertwine in a kind of secret complicity between us.*
>
> *I hear numbers and at the same time see the feelings/feel the seeing of the
> numbering ...*
>
> *Wasn't I also playing in the vortex of this flowing interplay?* [55]

This exercise in collective creation captures nicely the sense of what VARELA et
al. (1991) call structured coupling in a co-emerging of the world and the entity.
One does not exist without the other as "organism and environment enfold into
each other and unfold from one another in the fundamental circularity that is life
itself" (p.217). [56]

3.3 Embodying intuitive action

> "Two lines of the same number of people face each other on opposite sides of the
> room. Each line numbers from 1 on up. The numbering off should begin at opposite
> ends of the two lines. Participants are told they are standing at the edge of a plate
> and an object you have placed at the centre of the room is the center point of the
> plate. The object of the game is to keep the plate from tilting out of balance. Number
> one is called from one of the lines, and when s/he steps onto the imagined plate, the
> Number one from the other line has to step forward and move to balance the plate.
> The first person called is the leader but eventually you can ask them to work together,
> keeping a straight line between themselves and the centre of the plate. Adding other
> pairs means all have to be aware of each other. Working together at varying speeds
> and different ways of moving to find maximum equilibrium" (adapted from ROHD,
> 1998, pp.15-16).

I return to my original series of questions. How does one learn to research this
type of emergent learning? How might research move beyond "facts" and "rules
of inference" to the type of intuitive action I have described which is mindful of a
complex (inter)playing requiring common sense, wisdom, and mature judgment? I
move within the space/time of my working not as a detached observer but as
someone implicated in a spell of involvement in the here and now. In this way,
skills aren't something I just turn to, but I experience the enactment of drama as
the drawing the movements out of me (DREYFUS, 1999, p.15) thus ensuring that
my skills are in equilibrium with the situations I encounter. [57]

As I have outlined, these skills emerge through engagement as
participant/facilitator within the structure of a theatre workshop. I have described
how the Theatre of the Oppressed workshop process enables us to re-connect
with, and re-discover, others. There we rediscover our senses through exercises
that enable us to "feel what we touch" (blind walks, massages, gravity); "see what
we look at" (images, the memory and integration of the senses, object games);

"listen to what we hear" (sounds, melody, rhythm, breathing internal rhythms) ...
There are over two hundred exercises of the first three alone in *Games* (BOAL,
1992). This is a process of collaborative research, as the workshop enables an
awareness (including mine) of all our senses as we interact with others, the room
we are in and the lives we have outside the workshop space. We tap into our
evolving emotional states, becoming creative and imaginative as our bodies
(including all our senses) express our stories of interaction in the world. [58]

I have been engaged in the facilitation of learning for at least twenty years.
Though some of that time didn't involve theater work, I recognize how a variety of
situations to which I responded enabled me to become more and more skillful[9].
These situations as seen from the common perspective of facilitator who is a part
of a circular process of inquiry, each require different tactical decisions, enabling
me to adapt what has worked in the past. Using such an intuitive approach
means that researchers need to develop, (as part of the research process), and
pay attention to, their sensing/ being sensed abilities. Thus the system of drama
creation becomes a site of the enactment of research and, simultaneously, a site
where embodied interactive research skills are continuously being developed:

A complex series of improvised interactions

spirals into

Being Doing Knowing ourselves as

becoming sensing/being sensed researchers/facilitators. [59]

4. Enactive Approaches, Languages in Contact, and Ethics (John IPPOLITO)

In *The embodied mind* (1991), VARELA et al. suggest that we "call into question
the idea that the world is pregiven and that cognition is representation" (p.140).
This suggestion has been pivotal to my own thinking around language—
particularly in the context of qualitative research into second language classroom
learning—and I want to use it as a starting point for my remarks. I then want to
illustrate how, in my view, the implications of this enactivist suggestion lend
themselves remarkably well to a consideration of language from the perspective
of ethics. Indeed, in my own research, an enactive approach has sensitized me to
the interrelational significance of language in second language classrooms, a
significance that I now call ethics. [60]

4.1 From representation to co-emergence

In suggesting that the world need not be viewed as pregiven and in suggesting
that cognition need not be viewed as representation, the authors make a
fundamental critique of the Cartesian distinction between *thinking being* and
material being. René DESCARTES (1996) points to this distinction when, in *The
Meditations*, he says, "it is certain that I am really distinct from my body and can

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9   Here I am referring not to skills as a set of rules but where "acting is experienced as a steady
    flow of skillful activity in response to one's sense of the situation" (DREYFUS, 1999, p.10).

exist without it" (p.54). When the nature of being is shaped in this way, that is, by a distinction between our thinking selves and that which we think about, it becomes possible to characterize mind as an internal faculty whose primary function is to represent the external world. So-called *representative theories* do just that, they propose a correspondence between aspects of the external world and our efforts to make those aspects comprehensible. So, for example, in a representative theory of language, particular objects in the external environment correspond to particular words as symbolic representations. These symbolic representations further correspond to an idea in the internal mind. In this sense, a representative theory of language is premised on the distinction between thinking being and material being. [61]

In linguistics, this view is perhaps nowhere more entrenched than in the generativist school for whom, as its most well-known spokesperson, Noam CHOMSKY, puts it,

> "[B]ehavior and its products [which would include language] ... [are] of interest insofar as they provide evidence for what really concerns us, the inner mechanisms of mind and the ways they form and manipulate representations, and use them in executing actions and interpreting experience" (1997, p.17). [62]

Here you can see how Chomsky's account of language is quintessentially Cartesian in that internal, *thinking being* is held to be "manipulating representations" of external, *material being*. [63]

In laying the groundwork for a re-characterization of the gulf between external world and internal mind, the authors of *The embodied mind* tread a middle ground between the Cartesian extremes of realism (external world) and idealism (internal me). As VARELA et al. express it, "[t]hese two extremes both take representation as their central notion: In the first case representation is used to recover what is outer; in the second case it is used to project what is inner" (1996, p.172). The value of this suggestion for qualitative research into second language classroom learning is that, at a very basic level, it challenges the view that language is solely a tool for representing the contents of external worlds to internal minds (or for internal minds to project those contents back on to an external world). The possibility is thus enabled for language to be understood as more than a code, more than a set of instructions encapsulating literal meaning. For example, as a qualitative researcher, I begin to see the languages of second language learners as part of their embodied being, that is, as a manifestation—rather than a representation—of themselves. In this way, my research participants accrue an immediacy and inevitability as language-enactors, rather than language-repre- senters, of their world. The possibility is thus enabled for language to be understood as more than a code, more than a set of instructions encapsulating literal meaning. For example, as a qualitative researcher, I begin to see the languages of second language learners as part of their embodied being, that is, as a manifestation—rather than a representation—of themselves. In this way, my research participants accrue an immediacy and inevitability as language- enactors, rather than language representers, of their world. [64]

In thus contesting representation as a means of coming to understand language, the middle ground between realism and idealism is not a patchwork of realist and idealist positions. It proposes a real alternative by pushing an understanding of language away from either extreme. In other words, the middle ground pushes me into a position where, on the one hand, it is impossible to imagine language which can exist prior to my experience of it—a disembodied representational code that can be switched on and off as required. On the other hand, the middle ground also makes it impossible to imagine a hypothetical speaker without regard to his manifestation in language—an alinguistic inner mind with only the potential to speak. In a second language classroom, this means that I, as researcher, and students, as learners, are not at some objective distance from the language or languages being studied, but are, in fact, the very embodiment of those languages. [65]

My evolving view of language takes its cue from this challenge to so-called representative theories and the realist and idealist extremes to which they can give rise, and it places a pronounced emphasis on language as part of the simultaneous coming into relation of interlocutors. The term I have come to use for this phenomenon is co-emergence[10]. When language is seen as part of a co-emerging relation between speaker and hearer in a second language classroom, it becomes more than a system of representations. While it retains its ability to refer to things, as it does in a representational framework, it points to something beyond its strictly referential signification. In this sense, my research into language and language learning is more than the study of how students do or do not acquire proficiency in a system of symbols. The stakes are far higher than this—as I now explain. [66]

4.2 Co-emerging as ethics

So, what lies beyond language's strictly referential signification? Of what consequence is it to imagine language as part of a simultaneous coming into relation of speaker and hearer? Specifically, of what consequence is it in second language classroom research, where many (and in some cases most) of the research participants speak a language in addition to or other than the language of instruction which, in my work, happens to be English? These are some of the questions I ponder in exploring the possibilities for language in the middle ground between realism and idealism and its implications for my research. [67]

My response to these questions begins with the term I use to describe the simultaneous coming into relation of interlocutors in language, namely, *co-emergence*. As the middle ground between realism and idealism, co-emergence suggests that language is part of a simultaneity, an *at onceness* between speaker and hearer. Nonetheless, it is a simultaneity involving at least two distinct entities —and the prefix *co-*, in co-emergence, implies just that. Two distinct entities that

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10 The term *co-emergence* is also used by DAVIS and SUMARA (1997) in their discussion of complexity theory and action research in education. For an intriguing discussion of action research as a *mutually specified* relationship, see their Chapter "Enlarging the space of the possible: Complexity, complicity, and action-research practices."

maintain their separate status as speaker and hearer, but who emerge in simultaneity, highlight the relational nature of spoken language. For instance, when I, as an educational researcher, listen to students and teachers speak about their experience of education, neither my listening nor their speaking are experientially isolated from each other. My ears need their voices just as their speech needs my attentiveness. In this way, I, as listener, and they, as speakers, are distinct parties to a dialogue that yet emerges as a relation. [68]

Language as relation, then, is the route I follow in searching for that which lies beyond the strictly referential signification of language. And in that search I have encountered the work of the philosopher of ethics, Emmanuel LEVINAS (1998a/1981, 1998b/1961). LEVINAS' work provides the conceptual means for building on a critique of correspondence theories—which embodied awareness makes possible. This is to say LEVINAS can be used to bring embodied awareness to a next level of fruition. This development is possible since, for LEVINAS, a world enacted in speech is a world enacted by a self and an other, and the relationship between a self and an other as it takes place in spoken language is integral to ethics. In other words, the world enacted by interlocutors is the very site of an ethical engenderment between speakers; that is, it is an expression of the self's responsibility for the other. For this reason, language is inextricable from ethics. [69]

What is crucial here is that the self's entry into this world it shares with the other is also the event whereby the self is differentiated, where the self, as a self, is actualized. In the case of my own research context, namely, the second language classroom, the objective, shared world that LEVINAS suggests language puts in common between the self and the other is an extraordinary place. [70]

As a place where selves and others from diverse linguistic pasts both enter a shared world and encounter obvious difference, it is a shared world that is yet less than defined, less than certain, less than familiar. In this sense, it is within the second language context that the self is especially well placed for being called into question by the difference of the other. [71]

The second language classroom in which my qualitative research unfolds is the ethical milieu *par excellence*. I say this because the speaking across languages which is part of my research focus always involves the unknown, always involves uncertainty, always threatens the self from beyond the comprehensible. For these reasons, the second language classroom enacts a stark calling into question of the sameness of the self by the difference of the other. It may be the case that the ethical engenderment in speaking across languages is heightened, and perhaps made more poignant, because incomprehensibility—the struggle invariably experienced when speaker and hearer are from different linguistic backgrounds—is accepted as a given. This acceptance is part of the shared world where speech is stripped of the complacent sense of comprehension one can find between a speaker and hearer who speak the same first language. [72]

The appeal of LEVINASian ethics for the study of second language classrooms lies in the fact that language is inextricable from ethics. As I have mentioned, for LEVINAS, language is linked to nothing less than the creation of a shared world between the self and the other, which is, in its turn, the ground of possibility for ethics. This explicit and necessary connection between language and ethics means that the language spoken in a second language classroom will be significant on at least two levels. One level is linguistic or *referential*, as I have previously alluded to it, and the other is ethical. LEVINAS acknowledges this dual signification with the terms *the said* and *the saying*: *the said* refers to empirical speech—what I am calling its linguistic or referential signification, and the saying refers to the relation between the self and the other, what I am calling its ethical signification (1981/1998a, p.5). The fact that language presents an ethical aspect in addition to its more commonly accepted linguistic or referential aspect holds at least three potential implications for the classroom second language learning I imagine myself to be researching. [73]

4.3 Implications for qualitative research into second language learning

In the first instance, the ethical aspect of language suggests that my research focus, second language learning, need not be understood as a progression between fixed starting and end points, with the end point constituting so-called *target-language* mastery. Since second language learning would be understood as a perpetual enactment of the ethical relation between the self and the other—a relation that, as I have explained, is a necessary consequence of language—stable points of departure and arrival would be nonsensical. The ethical aspect of language implies that, with every utterance in the second language, the second language learner is pulling herself out of sameness and toward the difference of speaking across languages. In this sense, second language learning is never a matter of occupying a specific point. It is, however, always a matter of coming into relation with the other. This being the case, less than native-like language production in a target second language need not be understood as inadequate. So, research into second language learning need not be viewed as research into the correction of a deficiency. It is, rather, research into the experience of a new language and the self/other relationships it makes possible. [74]

A second potential implication of the ethical aspect of language for my research focus is that a standard form of the second language becomes problematic. This is to say that because language makes possible a unique ethical relation between the self and the other, the construct of a standard form becomes conceptually unworkable. This uniqueness may seem improbable in a linguistic sense. This means to say it is pedagogically improbable the second language classroom could ever treat each and every single linguistic exchange as irreducibly unique. However, in an ethical sense, the relation between the self and the other is quintessentially unique and thus ill-served by the notion of a standard second language. In an ethical context, the exchange between the second language speaker and the native speaker, for instance, would be taken as singular. Thus, it is neither closer nor farther from a standard form of the target language. Under these circumstances, I would be researching not relative distance from a

standard form of the target language, but rather linguistic differences or variation without a fixed point of reference. [75]

A third potential implication of the ethical aspect of language concerns research into second language pedagogy. My research position need not assume that teaching is meant to simply move language learners to specifiable outcomes. In this sense, while the concerns of language learning continue to be salient, the teleological or goal-directed nature of second language learning begins to shift. In other words, second language teaching becomes less a matter of getting students to where it is felt they need to be and more a matter of opening spaces for them to enter relations with others. In this way, my research focus shifts from identifying optimal strategies for second language acquisition to the particularities and nuances of the second language learning experience. [76]

4.4 The importance of a shift in research focus

The ethical significance of language is one of the possibilities that emerge from the enactivist critique of a correspondence theory of language. In treading a middle ground between realism and idealism, this critique makes room for both the linguistic or referential significance of language and its significance for the relation of self and other. In so doing, it enables me to see ethics in second language classroom learning. This is of very real importance to my work as a re-searcher since it shifts my research focus. In other words, it recreates what it is I imagine myself to be researching. This rethinking is crucial at a number of levels:

- At the level of conceptualizing a research focus

  For example: *Am I going to assess language proficiency against measurable learning outcomes or am I going to address language proficiency as part of a self and other relation?*
- At the level of interacting with the research participants

  For example: *Are these individuals only sources of data or are they entities to whom I am inextricably and ethically bound?*
- At the level of interpreting the data

  For example: *Am I expected to only present my conclusions objectively or do I recognize my dissemination of the findings as a part of an ongoing re-creation of a world?* [77]

Classroom second language learning becomes a fluid, particular, and open-ended process. As a researcher, I have to adjust my orientation and expectations to accommodate this phenomenon. This is to say I must learn to accept an object of study which is never static and never fully graspable; I must learn to appreciate its unique aspects which cannot be generalized; and I must be content with conclusions which do not definitively comprehend second language learning. I dare say that a form of deference emerges for the focus of study, second language classroom learning, and a form of respect emerges for the research participants, second language learners. This kind of deference and respect is

appropriate enough for a researcher who is co-emerging in the research process
and thereby implicated in an ethical relationship of self and other. [78]

5. Conclusion: Opening Spaces of Possibility

Johnna: In essence, in our work as researchers we opened spaces for how to be
open to the research process. We became mindful of our own bodies meshing
with the research, literature, and participants in our studies. [79]

Thus, the interpretation of our research is not a representation of the research but
lives through the reader experiencing our stories (in this text) as they connect
with their own embodied histories. The enactive is our approach, yet it also opens
our approach to qualitative research to a space that is often invisible and
forgotten. This is the space of the possible, rich with the unexpected, that unfolds
through experiencing, en(act)ing, and languaging. [80]

John: Your point that "the interpretation of our research is not a representation of
the research" is very important. It highlights the fact that the lived experience of
research, as it happens, is not compelled to correspond to an abstract interpretive
system. When this kind of correspondence is mandatory, the act of research and
its significance are separated, and it becomes more difficult to be mindful of what
we are doing and how we are doing it as we are doing it. As such, the experience
of research becomes a set of "research findings" which do not mean anything
until they are verified in a broader framework or generalized across multiple
contexts. The immediacy of the research, its unfolding significance in and of
itself, does indeed often become "invisible and forgotten." [81]

Warren: I find it interesting that the emphasis in each of our sections emerges
from the field of study we are implicated in as researchers. Our research method
is intertwined with the content of our research. This is a phenomenological
approach to research method, not as a series of steps but one where I must
listen (in an embodied way) to the content or focus of my research and the
appropriate method will emerge through my interaction with the research I
engage in. Isn't the traditional approach that your research question determines
your method. I think what we are suggesting is a much more interactive and
holistic process. [82]

For example, drawing from my own work, I see the immediacy that John speaks
about is what is present in performance. Performance theorist Peggy PHELAN
explains performance as "honoring the idea that a limited number of people in a
specific time/space can have an experience of value which leaves no visible trace
afterwards" (1993, p.149). How would one research such a thing? How would one
write about it? Performance's challenge is to discover a way for our research to
also become performative and then, through our writing, be written into being.
Writing as simply a "representation" of our research is problematic. It means
attempting to reproduce the world we engage in, but it doesn't bring us into
contact with the multiple layers of meaning in the world of our engagement. On
the other hand, the word representation also might move us from the English

sense of the word (descriptive fidelity, to "stand-in" for something) to one of the French senses (performance), and beyond approximating or substituting for experience (and experience not as something separate from me, but part of my life). [83]

John: When experience is understood as part of one's life (and not a separable, measurable data set, as it so often becomes in more quantitatively and positivistically inclined research traditions) research really does undergo a metamorphosis. For instance, in my research around second language learning, it's no longer an investigation, but more a matter of recognizing my interaction with others—and the responsibility that accrues from that bare fact. So, rather than having the research question determine the method, my interaction with teachers and students informs my approach and specifies my direction. While I can always resist this effect and hold fast to the belief that I am autonomous, the ensuing research would be, in my view, impoverished and irresponsible: impoverished for ignoring a rich layer of data and irresponsible for denying the potential for my interactions with others to transform me. [84]

Johnna: It is the unexpected that we attempt to control through a research method and in doing so, we are not open to its interplay. If experiencing is always ongoing and evolving, we can't resist the process, the "effect," or the interplay. As researchers we are not the limit to be discarded. Such embodied knowing and interplay is inclusive of the phenomena of research. If we are mindfully aware through embodied undertaking—the research—we also enact the research. [85]

Therefore, it is not only our research approach that opens possibilities, but our embracing of the space which we embody with/in the inter-view, the inter-play and the re-search. This embodied knowing also helps us embrace the unexpected moments of teaching and learning environments (what I refer to as freefall pedagogy) that we each find in our respective educative environments (research contexts). I use the term "freefall" to refer to the pedagogy or act of acclimatizing through experiencing. "Freefall" is a moment where embodied awareness arises out of unexpected happenings rather than simply falling down as referred to by the separation of the words—free fall (HASKELL, 2000). Thus, the research lives not as "research findings" but as an opening to pedagogical possibilities. [86]

Warren: This brings us back to the origins of the word research. One root of the French word (rechercher) is the old (1080) word "recerchier", meaning "parcourir en cherchant" ("to travel while searching"). Research as such a journey into knowing means, as John puts it, there are no fixed start or ending points—we are always in the middle of something. This also connects us to ethics as ethics must move beyond "facts" and "rules of inference" to intuitive action in the texture of the situations that emerge in the research, an approach that is based on continually developing common sense, wisdom and mature judgment. [87]

What journey(s) are we presently in the middle of in our own research? What questions emerge for both of you, John and Johnna as we move on from what we have written in this essay to new possibilities for research? [88]

John: Well, in my case, my doctoral "research" or, as you so expressively put it, "my traveling through while searching," explores the interface between teachers and students as an ethical encounter. I am trying to move beyond this or that good or bad pedagogical intention, and attempting to situate ethics in a co-emergent pedagogical event where educators are always already implicated ethically. Of course, if I am to take co-emergence seriously, I must also factor myself into that event. I, as a researcher, am also integral to the ethics at issue in my interactions at the research site, in my interpretation of what I am seeing and hearing, and in my written accounts. In the end, and with good fortune, I will move closer to this "enaction of ethics," and, perhaps, catch a glimpse of what you refer to as "wisdom and mature judgment." [89]

Johnna: The "enaction of ethics" is a wonderful way to view research. Our journey is open to this embodied wisdom, a perception and interpretation of research inquiry that may expose us to a fresh research process. How does enaction of ethics or enactive inquiry gain the credibility to open research to new spaces? How might this research open our inter-standing of the research process, interpretation, or the pedagogical possibilities in education? For instance, how could I research the phenomena of unexpected experiencing as a continually unfolding journey? How can we open our inter-standing of pedagogy to help students reach their potential if we do not pay attention to our interplay? How do we become mindful of our interplay with the outside world and the expression or the ineffable experiencing of the flesh of a world in the making? How might this inform or open teaching and learning environments? Our research process is key to opening qualitative research—to a new space of possibility essential to education and pedagogy. [90]

Warren: I am interested in how others may learn this. I came upon these ideas as a result of an integration of theory with my practice. This enactive approach "spoke" to me, it resonated and amplified my experiences, and it opened new vistas for exploration. [91]

However, every opening or space of possibility also has the potential of closing. So research like we have shared here always is in tension with how we may limit the possibilities during the process of inquiry. However, we must search for openings with/in the path of research instead of focusing on the constraints. What other fields are "out there," on the margins, in those spaces of difference? How might those fields also inform, and be informed by, questions of inter-subjectivity and enaction in qualitative research? [92]

We have opened a space for dialogue, discovery, and possibility for enacting research ... Who will join us in our journey? [93]

Acknowledgments

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