

Lessons learned: Creative and embodied research methods in practice

Editors

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Call for Contributions

We invite contributions for an edited educational resource exploring creative and embodied research methods through the lens of experience and reflection.

Rather than providing methodological overviews or step-by-step guides, this collection focuses on a simple question:

What did you learn when you used a particular creative or embodied research method?

We are interested in contributions that share practical insights, unexpected discoveries, challenges, tensions, mistakes, surprises, and moments of transformation.

Your contribution may focus on any phase of the research process (project planning, data collection/generation, analysis, dissemination). The aim is to create a resource that helps researchers, students, practitioners, and educators learn from lived experiences of using methods in real research contexts.

Possible methods include (but are not limited to):

- Arts-based research
- Walking methods
- Body mapping
- Participatory visual methods
- Performance and theatre-based methods
- Dance and movement methods
- Storytelling
- Photovoice
- Creative writing
- Poetic inquiry
- Drawing and sketching
- Collage and assemblage
- Sensory methods
- Object-based methods
- Craft-based inquiry
- Digital creative methods
- Other creative, embodied, and experimental approaches

Contributions may be conversational, reflective, critical, narrative, or experimental in style. We encourage honest accounts of uncertainty and learning as well as success. The goal is not to present a perfect method, but to share experiences that can help others think creatively and critically about research practice.

We welcome contributions from researchers, practitioners, artists, educators, students, community researchers, and anyone who has experience using these approaches as research participants.

Contributions should:

- ...focus on one method or approach
- ...be written in the first person
- ...centre on lessons learned from actual practice
- ...highlight both successes and challenges
- ...offer insights that others may find useful
- ...be accessible to readers from different disciplines
- ...be 2,000 words max.

TEMPLATE

What I learned when I used [Method/Approach]

Example: What I learned when I used body mapping in a youth mental health project

Author name, Affiliation, Email

Introduction to [Method/Approach] in [Project] (400 words)

Briefly describe the method or approach that this reflection focuses on.

Describe the research, project, or setting in which you used the method.

Questions you might address: Why did you choose this method?, What was the project about?, Who was involved?, What were you hoping to achieve?

[Method/Approach] in practice (400 words)

Describe how you used the method in practice.

Questions you might address: How was the method introduced?, What activities took place?, How did participants engage with it?, What challenges emerged? Which ethical considerations did you navigate?

What I learned (800 words)

This is the core section of the contribution. Reflect on the lessons you learned from using the method.

Questions you might address: What surprised you?, What worked well?, What did not work as expected?, What assumptions were challenged?, What ethical, practical, or relational issues emerged?, How did the method shape the knowledge that was produced?

What I would do next time (400 words)

Looking back, would you change anything?, What would you keep?, What would you adapt?, What would you avoid?, What advice would you give someone using this method for the first time?

Key takeaways

Conclude with 3–5 short lessons learned. For example:

- Creative methods often require more time than expected.
- Participants may engage differently than the researcher anticipates.
- The process can be as valuable as the outputs.
- Embodied methods can generate insights that are difficult to access through interviews alone.

References

Further suggested reading (Optional)

Up to five references that readers may find useful.

Contributor checklist

Before submitting, please check that your contribution:

- Focuses on one creative or embodied method (you may submit several contributions!)
- Is based on actual experience
- Emphasises lessons learned
- Includes both successes and challenges
- Uses accessible language
- Does not exceed 2,000 words
- Includes 3–5 key takeaways