

## Researcher Vulnerability in Doing Collaborative Autoethnography: Moving to a Post-Qualitative Stance

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**Abstract:** As educational researchers, we hold monthly meetings to discuss our methodological and personal feelings and uncertainties while transitioning from a qualitative to a post-qualitative stance, which involved using artistic/cartographic methods. This shift affected us, unveiling our professional and personal vulnerability. In an exercise of collaborative autoethnography, in this text we describe what it meant for us to engage in this type of study and how the resulting shift in our academic logic, which was originally grounded in more traditional orthodoxies, made us vulnerable and uncomfortable, thus allowing a more ethical investigation. Through these processes we reveal the effect of a research process that placed us in an uncomfortable situation, which in turn allowed new questions to emerge. Finally, we reclaim the need to make not only these professional tensions public but perhaps our failures as well.

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## 1. Introduction

For more than twenty years, the qualitative model has been our reference in our educational research endeavors and our work with present and future teachers. This model, based mainly on student teachers' and teachers' ethnographic narratives of when, where and how they learned their profession, has allowed us to shed light onto the intricacies of developing a teaching identity (CORREA GOROSPE, MARTÍNEZ-ARBELAIZ & ABERASTURI-APRAIZ, 2015; CORREA GOROSPE, MARTÍNEZ-ARBELAIZ & FERNÁNDEZ-OLASKOAGA, 2018; CORREA GOROSPE, MARTÍNEZ-ARBELAIZ & GUTIERREZ, 2014). However,

lately, and from different angles, we started feeling that this model was not satisfying our needs and that we were entering into an epistemological as well as a methodological crisis. We had not challenged the standard way of doing research since we were in graduate school, where by standard we mean the process of formulating one or several research questions, gathering data from teachers or student teachers, analyzing those data and coming up with results, and writing a discussion and a conclusion. At some point this packaged format felt like a straitjacket that our research project had to fit into and which did not afford the detail and nuance that we wanted to achieve with our inquiries. [1]

After reading, discussing, and finally digesting the postmodern concepts that DELEUZE and GUATTARI (1988 [1980]) developed in their text "A Thousand Plateaus," we were bold enough to invite concepts like rhizome to dialogue with our educational research. We were inspired by the book by JACKSON and MAZZEI (2012) in which they did precisely that: they distilled the main concepts of philosophers such as DERRIDA, FOUCAULT, BARAD and made their theories applicable to different educational scenarios. The seed of a radical change in our positioning toward research was planted in our heads. We were eager to find out more about this radically different form of doing research, inspired by the arts and sustained by philosophical bases that could be labeled as post-human, new materialisms, etc. The post-qualitative turn was slowly but steadily occurring in our research group. [2]

Once thing we did not anticipate, however, was that this turn was going to have consequences on our overall teaching, researching and personal lives. The article that follows can be viewed as an exercise in the reflexivity of discomfort (PILLOW, 2003) that is framed as collaborative autoethnography (CAE) but, crucially, from a post-qualitative stance. We reflect in a shared manner on a research project that shifted from a qualitative to a post-qualitative positioning. While we were modifying the theoretical bases of our research, we felt we needed to exchange our thoughts and feelings about what was going on. In an exercise in CAE, we focus on how this change has affected us, which has allowed us to challenge the research praxis that we had adopted up to this point. [3]

We focus on reflexivity of discomfort because we consider it to be a strategy for coping with not knowing, and with the uncertainty of not knowing where we were heading. We echo PILLOW's use of "uncomfortable reflexivity—a reflexivity that seeks to know while at the same time situates this knowing as tenuous" (2003, p.188). In this article, we try to reveal what is not shown in most other university-related academic reports, namely our discomfort and vulnerability when we face an uncertain situation, where we do not know. In other words, with this text, although we likely do not provide a solution to the research problem, we do propose that these shared reflections, which are seldom published, are in fact a very relevant part of the whole research process, which is in line with what RUSSELL and KELLY (2002) previously proposed in a qualitative framework. [4]

This article comes out of a larger, ongoing research project that studied how eleven early childhood educators and eleven primary school teachers learned.

The project was participative and collaborative (MANNAY, 2017 [2015]), and we used artistic methods to engage participants' data rather than to merely collect data about them. MANNAY (p.149) argued that educational researchers should pay more attention to data production, which implies more in-depth involvement with logical and practical considerations and ethics. Paying close attention to our data was the part of the research process that generated the most tension, as will be seen later in our discussion, and it compelled us to resort to CAE to seek "truths" from the dialog. We acknowledge that we started our research from our privileged position as middle class academics. None of us was in an untenured position, which gave us the freedom to challenge well established educational research methods but did not exempt us from experiencing circumstances that contributed to our professional vulnerability. At the same time, we can be considered "scholars in the periphery" (GONZÁLEZ Y GONZÁLEZ & LINCOLN, 2006, §22; see also HSIUNG, 2012), participants in a globalized model of the neoliberal, competitive university, which is increasingly obsessed with quantitative evaluation of excellence in terms of distinctions and publications and linked to economic incentives. Although for this study we read numerous sources in Spanish, as our reference list evidences, publishing in English helps minimize the core-periphery divide in (post-)qualitative research, but at extra cost and effort on our part; despite one of us being a returnee after many years in the US, we still require the help of a professional translator and editor to publish our work. In addition, the three of us are in the middle of our careers, direct theses and have ample experience with educational research. Two of us (JMC and EAA) come from the School of Education and the third author (AM) works for a university consortium. Our triad is truly transdisciplinary, with our individual and joint contributions spanning a range of fields, from arts education to educational technology to linguistics. In this text, we share how we became aware of the tensions and difficulties incumbent in the changes in our theoretical and methodological bases. Our aim is to portray what we experienced as we worked on a research project that evolved toward a post-qualitative stance and how adopting new research perspectives affected our research trajectories. [5]

As we carried out our research on how teachers learn, we saw that CAE had great potential in studying researchers' lives, professional development and empowerment and that it could help us as we tackled the post-qualitative turn and transited through an inevitable landscape of vulnerability. Here we mean vulnerability in two senses. The first is the vulnerability of the scholars whose dissatisfaction with academic culture places them in a changing and complex world and who question the way academics do research; the second is the vulnerability we feel as we transition toward the other research positionings that CAE invites us to inhabit and that demands that we accept new risks as we transform our role as researcher. [6]

We begin this article by describing the conditions of the constantly changing world that we live in and how they influence our research (Section 2), and we then detail our post-qualitative turn (Section 3). After that, we adopt a more narrative style and use the metaphor of the room, inspired by Virginia WOOLF, in order to tell the story of the process of inquiry we undertook using CAE (Section

4). We chose this metaphor as a way to transmit the idea of inhabiting research, something that affects us and matters to us. The room was where our exercise in honesty and reflexivity took place, where we exposed our limits and vulnerabilities when doing research in education. Each of us had our own room, where we individually meditated and engaged in self-reflection. But we also created a living room (Section 5), a space where we gathered together and collaborated, sharing our experiences, life stories, knowledge, discoveries and conclusions. It was the space we used to exchange and negotiate meaning, tasks that are essential in keeping a research group alive. We close our account by presenting our conclusions (Section 6), where we relate the questions that guided our inquiry with the findings that came out of this experience. [7]

## **2. The Influence of an Ever-Changing World and Transformation in Educational Research**

The acronym "VUCA" stands for *volatility* (rapidly changing contexts and conditions), *uncertainty* (missing information that is critical to problem-solving), *complexity* (multiple factors that are difficult to categorize or control), and *ambiguity* (vague data that are subject to multiple interpretations) (REEVES & REEVES, 2015, p.26). Our world is volatile and full of accelerated change, and uncertainty has become part of contemporary life (EDWARDS, RANSON & STRAIN, 2002), making it impossible to know what will happen tomorrow. Our world is complex; any area is made up of multiple connections, configurations, interpretations, and meanings. And there is ambiguity; as the pace of change increases, so does the amount of time that we need to analyze legitimate knowledge. This has resulted in change and an acceleration in the production and distribution of knowledge, in the expectations and demands made on schools and teachers, and in the increase in the complexity and diversity of educational contexts. The volatility of information, the uncertainty about the future and the complexity of education significantly increase the ambiguity of teaching conditions. Change in education is a constant rather than an isolated event (DAY, HARRIS, HADFIELD, TOLLEY & BERESFORD, 2000; FULLAN, 1997; HARGREAVES, EARL & MOORE, 2001 [2000]; LOVELESS & ELLIS, 2001), and adapting to change has become part of policy agendas, including educational policy agendas. While we have made advances in reflecting upon and discussing the effects that a constantly changing VUCA world and its underlying factors have on teacher training and education, there has been little reflection on how these aspects influence research on education, researchers, and the knowledge produced. The continual and unpredictable mutation that occurs when the very idea of knowledge—as well as its production, relationship, and representation—is transformed challenges current research methodologies and strategies in a context in which, as BRAIDOTTI (2014, p.163) noted, "old power relations are not only confirmed but in many ways exacerbated in the new geopolitical context." [8]

Knowledge is no longer conceived of as something that is durable; rather it is something that is changing and unpredictable (GIBBONS et al., 1994). The spectacular evolution of science and technology means that knowledge is produced at dizzying speeds. Rapidity, another important feature of the current

context, renders knowing, knowledge and information ephemeral and volatile. Society is changing so rapidly that it is continually challenging the veracity and relevance of knowledge, where even the best-informed people are always taken by surprise (BAUMAN, 2007 [2005]). In this context of fleetingness, all areas of life—ideology, emotion, sexuality, family, culture and politics—are surrounded by instability and fugacity. [9]

Thanks to the development of critical perspectives toward traditional paradigms, as scholars, our relationship with knowledge has been transformed, and as such we should also question its production status. Scientific knowledge is no longer something that is neutral, objective or unquestionable from an ethical and moral point of view; it is now subject to critical scrutiny in terms of its relationship to power, leading to new ideas about participation, communication, gender and the visibility of the participants themselves. [10]

New ways of generating, representing and disseminating knowledge have abandoned the traditional strategies and means. This transformation of knowledge moves researchers away from the tried-and-true strategies for learning in a stable and certain world and requires new creative approaches to educational research in a context of ongoing change. BRAIDOTTI (2019, p.52) summarized these ideas in her framework for the critical posthumanities, which "provides a theoretical grounding for the emergence of the critical posthumanities as a supra-disciplinary, rhizomatic field of contemporary knowledge production that is contiguous with, but not identical to, the epistemic accelerationism of cognitive capitalism." She argued that there is a proliferation of transdisciplinary discourses and fields. In this article, we echo these post-human times that BRAIDOTTI vividly described, and against this background, we narrate our collaborative, transdisciplinary movements. [11]

In our case this meant sharing our achievements, tensions, fears and limitations in the maelstrom we were immersed in, which we portrayed as a VUCA world that affected us personally and professionally. We shared our own significant experiences and life stories that were linked to the issue that we are studying within the complicated world of the academy and the research culture that we operated in. Various studies using CAE have highlighted the value this approach has for participants, as it is an opportunity to foster deeper learning about the issues and themselves through the collective and collaborative exploration of their own selves, their colleges and their contexts. There is a dual sense in how vulnerability affects us as researchers. [12]

On one hand, the focus of our study is researcher vulnerability in the face of the professional risks that are associated with the post-qualitative turn that we are experiencing as qualitative researchers from different disciplines in a VUCA world, a historic moment in which the act of generating, connecting and presenting knowledge is undergoing ongoing, accelerated and profound change. On the other hand, we researchers who participate in CAE face personal vulnerability, as it demands that we share with our co-researchers our own life stories, perspectives and meaningful details from our experiences. This risk is

present when we conduct research with co-equals or with others where the power differential allows a good relationship to be created among the participants, and this offers us an opportunity to review our praxis and to make sense of our individual and collective experiences and the issues that come to light with the support of our colleagues, exposing ourselves in a safe environment (HERNÁNDEZ, CHANG & NGUNJIRI, 2017; NGUNJIRI, 2014). [13]

### **3. The Post-Qualitative Turn in Educational Research**

While numerous motives support this new orientation toward research, the more important ones are a critical attitude toward ways of doing research and creating knowledge, the importance that the institutional structure gives to research and the researcher in the generation of knowledge, and the post-qualitative proximity to arts-based research methods. [14]

The term post-qualitative covers the research over the past two decades that rethinks the ontology and epistemology that are characteristic of humanist qualitative methodology (LATHER & ST. PIERRE, 2013) and which explores and attempts to re-imagine new ethical and onto-epistemological directions. For ST. PIERRE (2013) and following post-qualitative logic, research is not about revealing truths, voices or meanings or about mechanisms of emancipation, and it is even less about the idea of accumulating knowledge about the "same thing." From the post-qualitative perspective, the ways of knowing and representing are called into question in order to open up spaces for study, challenging the very concepts through which we perceive reality and that constitute us as researchers. This creates within the research itself critical spaces that question the real effects of a theory (SPIVAK, 2009 [1983]). [15]

A post-qualitative research position is always multifaceted and woven from theoretical diversity, and as such it does not have a single perspective nor does it articulate a single proposal, nor can it be described in an orderly manner in a handbook on research. When our frames of reference disappear and our ideas become disordered, as researchers we feel the need to build new structures of representation in order to accommodate realities that were previously unimaginable. We also problematize certain hegemonic foundations of research practice, which go beyond the traditional arguments in the paradigm wars (GAGE, 1989) and call into question notions such as study design, data collection and representation, the meaning of interviews, observation, participation, etc. All of these emerge from the hegemonic and unchallenged foundations that have guided the production of knowledge in social and education research in recent decades. This alternative brings with it uncertainty, the unknown, and openness as a condition and form of knowledge. It leads to understanding, dislodging and undertaking research as a rhizome (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1988 [1980]) that moves in ever-changing directions, without beginning or end and causing frequent disorientation. Research is interpreted and narrated as an entanglement of dynamics, relationships and movements that relocate and displace researchers as well. [16]

JACKSON and MAZZEI (2012) contended that post-qualitative research tries to focus attention on the areas that traditional research does not notice, namely, what is new or what is not known, revealing concepts that should be re-thought through the research process. Research ceases being an accumulation of knowledge about what is known and instead presents a different perspective from which to focus on what we, as researchers in education, do not know (ROGOFF, 2007 [2006]) about teacher learning and the implications for education and the challenges to social change. [17]

As researchers and university faculty, we have been affected by the slow threat to qualitative research and the way that its potential for change has been diluted in the face of quantitative perspectives (ST. PIERRE, 2006). At the same time, we have been impacted by the research space that is opened by the post-qualitative perspective that continuously adapts to the most "post" or "new new" (LATHER & ST. PIERRE, 2013, p.629) and to the most critical emerging perspectives (GREENE, 2013). The appearance of this post-qualitative perspective is related to the push from new materialisms, new empiricisms (ST. PIERRE, JACKSON & MAZZEI, 2016) and post-humanism (BRAIDOTTI, 2014, 2015 [2013]), which makes it possible to open spaces that are creative and divergent and that challenge the very concepts used to read reality and that constitute us as educational researchers, thereby questioning the legitimacy of knowledge generated within the institutional structure. Our having adopted a post-qualitative stance places us at the margins of academic discourse and allows us to do what is not feasible from within the core of institutions of learning and knowledge. This attitude of resistance to institutionalization affects the questions that guide researchers toward what is not known; toward the theoretical frameworks that are established, their relationship with data, the procedures used for analysis (coding, grouping), the concept of voice and subject, and the very practice of research and its links with neoliberal academic practices. Furthermore, by employing artistic methods in educational research we were able to incorporate the liminal, the bodily and the sensory features that arts-based research demands, as such methods encouraged us to change the traditional ways of creating and disseminating knowledge. In transcending the limits of the dominant logic of academia, we feel better able re-imagine research and our relationship with knowledge. [18]

In a previous article (CORREA GOROSPE, ABERASTURI & BELATEGI, 2017) we discussed the epistemic proximity of the post-qualitative movement and arts-based research, which share an openness to more creative ways of relating to one another and representing knowledge (COLEMAN, 2017). The use of artistic and visual methods and post-qualitative positioning overlap in various ways. One is that both transform the research model by breaking down linearity to a certain extent and creating a rhizomatic framework made up of relations and processes (LATHER & ST. PIERRE, 2013), which invites researchers to imagine data analysis that escapes the banality of the coding and categorization that characterizes conventional qualitative research. Another point of overlap is that post-qualitative research echoes artistic methods in its critique of representational logic. Arts-based research makes it possible to go beyond traditional views and

representations of society and see things differently (BARONE & EISNER, 2012), and it avoids the efforts of language to be the reference of the negotiated, literal and real-world (ELLSWORTH, 2005 [1997]). Furthermore, arts-based research and the post-qualitative perspective both recognize the role played by new sensory ways to connect with the world, accept the role of the body and are open to other forms of knowledge and perception (LEYS, 2011). Lastly, both arts-based research and post-qualitative research promote other participation processes by questioning power relations and the legitimacy of knowledge that is produced in an institutional framework. [19]

Adopting arts-based research methods allowed us to go beyond the horizon of humanist qualitative research and create the circumstances for producing knowledge and understanding through the process of artistic inquiry (FELS & IRWIN, 2008). We sought to direct our questions and inquiry toward that which is not known or acknowledged in the traditional literature on teacher learning and toward finding alternatives that respond to the challenges that schools and teachers face. This approach led us to call into question our own research practices, from the role of collected data to rethinking the ways in which researchers participate in and commit to the research itself. [20]

As a developing methodology and because of the onto-epistemology and ethics that underpin it, post-qualitative research does not come to a neat close; instead it constantly evolves and leads to different ways of thinking, feeling and acting. Post-qualitative research invites educational researchers to think differently about data and how we analyze them, understanding that they do not exist independently of us. It involves reimagining data analysis such that it moves beyond the mere coding and categorizing that characterizes conventional qualitative research (JACKSON & MAZZEI, 2012). As ST. PIERRE noted in an interview,

"Qualitative methodology was invented in the 1970s and 1980s as a critique of positivist social science, but we've structured, formalized, and normalized it so that most studies look the same. The 'process' is the same: identify a research question, design a study, interview, observe, analyze data, and write it up. We can just drop a researcher down into that pre-given process and they know what to do, and we can pretty much predict what will come out. In this way, qualitative methodology has become predictive, like positivist social science" (GUTTORM, HOHTI & PAAKKARI, 2015, p.16). [21]

As a result, the whole idea of a research method, via which data is handled in accordance with specific, pre-established guidelines and processes, represents an attempt to systematize and formalize. And perhaps it is a way to semi-control the whole research process, which could be a relief for disciplines that are trying to legitimize themselves as science and still recognize the value of qualitative work. Within this post-qualitative framework, we understand CAE as a continuation of the reflection process, which is never faultless or finished. It is an ongoing process of visibilizing what happens during research, an act that is usually not recounted in research articles. [22]

### 3.1 Challenges and tensions in the adoption of a post-qualitative stance

One of the tensions that we experienced when beginning our research was related to methodology and data. We agreed to work from a post-qualitative perspective and use artistic methods. To create knowledge via an artistic method, we invited our 22 teachers to two cartography workshops, which were photographed and audio and video recorded. We also asked the teacher-creators for narratives, and we observed them at their schools. Given our unfamiliarity with artistic and visual products and the strangeness they evoked in us (GUREVITCH, 1998), our inclination was to classify, categorize, sort, and apply the same approaches that we had taken in previous studies. We were not able to move beyond the confines of the approaches that we had learned and internalized throughout the years. [23]

The sole previous experience that we had with artistic methods was the production of our cartography. Before working with the 22 teachers and organizing workshops as part of their professional development, we thought that we had to experience the process of using visual language to express our learning lives. These cartographies summarized how we as teacher educators and educational researchers learned and developed our teaching identity. This crucial step contributed to keeping the research process ethical since we were going through a reflexive loop that was similar to what our teachers were experiencing. The critical difference is that the students' reflexive process was more related to self-awareness and acknowledgment of how they had learned and how they had constructed knowledge, whereas in our case the discomforting reflexive act sought messy knowledge (PILLOW, 2003). [24]

In addition, when designing and talking about our own cartographies, we were engaged in an exercise of reflexivity. According to BERGER (2015), "reflexivity is commonly viewed as the process of a continual internal dialog and critical self-evaluation of researcher's positionality as well as active acknowledgment and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome" (p.220). In order to ask teachers to reflect on their own praxis and learning itineraries, we first had to clarify our own position regarding the research process itself. We were not surprised to see that the production of our cartographies made the two of us that did not have any experience in the arts feel insecure and uncomfortable. Thus, our process of creating cartographies and thereby engaging with arts-based research can be seen as a form of practice that connected some of us with the "reflexivities of discomfort" (PILLOW, 2003, p.188). PILLOW described reflexivity as "a methodological tool interruptive of practices of gathering data as 'truths' into existing 'folds of the known'" (p.192). However, she continued to view reflexivity as a way of creating knowledge without giving up the representational function of research, like previous researchers in a postmodern frame (RUSSELL & KELLY, 2002). [25]

Two research questions delimited our inquiry and guided the writing of this article:

1. What type of concerns, limitations, and tensions regarding academia and research did we experience while incorporating post-qualitative and artistic perspectives?
2. To what degree did collaborative autoethnography allow us to reveal our vulnerability as researchers? [26]

In order to answer these questions, we held monthly meetings. In answering the first question, we tackled our transition toward a post-qualitative perspective. Researcher meetings were an important part of the process, where we accepted dialogic and shared discourse as a means of constructing knowledge (GERGEN, 2007). In quantitative studies the thoughts and subjectivity of the researcher are rendered invisible, thereby giving the appearance of neutrality and objectivity and attempting to offer the most objective definition possible of what is occurring in that reality, whereas from a post-qualitative position, recovering the researcher as an individual has the greater value. This shift destabilizes the current research models that continue to perpetuate certainties and offers a potential way of looking at reality, which is inevitably subjective and biased. [27]

Our second challenge was to understand writing as a datum since, unlike the results of artistic methodologies or participant observation, we were not collecting products but instead we were writing based on our experience of the research. How, then, could we give an account of research that did not talk about what was happening to the Other but instead aimed to understand the ways that teachers learn from an investigative approach? How could we approach writing without falling into a linear description? This was something that we had previously addressed using narrative inquiry (CLANDININ & CONNELLY, 2000), where we resignified emerging issues through narrative reports. In a similar vein, VAN KATWYK and SEKO (2017) resorted to dancing to express themselves in a bodily language, but they wrote collaboratively about the vulnerability and frustration that this medium posed for them since their bodies turned out to be a foreign medium for conveying a message. Returning to our own experience, we were also interested in a type of expression that would pass through us in a physical way. Echoing Virginia WOOLF (1989 [1929]), we wanted to inhabit our research, with each of us having a room of our own while also engaging in collaborative writing. That is, we would allow ourselves to think about how we learn based on our relationship with Others and the concepts that might emerge in relation to the research question. This is the challenge that writing presented us with, as it demanded that we call into question our own research foundations in order to inhabit the research. In the nomadic writing proposed by BRAIDOTTI (2014), language does not relate to ethics and resistance as a simple tool for critical analysis and rational political intervention. Instead, language makes nomadic writers feel inhabited and passes through them. Therefore, the real challenge is to show the powers of language and discourse as they are expressed in the very task of producing subjectivity, knowledge, and meanings. [28]

We believe that taking up this narrative challenge also means exposing injustices in the way research is done, where the inequality between studies continues to be perpetuated because some approaches are not considered to have the same rigor and are given the same recognition as they move away from traditional scientific methodologies which situate the social science researcher as a non-responsible and neutral actor with regard to the subject of study. Nevertheless, from a nomadic position (*ibid.*), writing becomes a way to negotiate research positions and cultural resonances and affiliations rather than a way of making them invisible in order to arrive at statements that are far removed from reality and that widen the gap between the university and educational research. [29]

We agree with BRAIDOTTI's (1999) notion that this approach is one of the defining characteristics of the postmodern condition, which is based on the co-occurrence of contradicting tendencies that must cope with specific deadlines and time constraints, rather than permitting a slow research process. All this is tantamount to the end of the humanist tradition, thus bringing us to a more complex scenario where our physical self expands into a plurality of discontinuous disjointed locations; breaking with the humanist tradition means moving toward the complex and rich scenario that we move within when we learn. [30]

### **3.2 Adopting CAE to reflect on our research/teaching itineraries**

Given this context of profound change and transformation, we turned to CAE in order to interrogate, problematize and deconstruct the issue of vulnerability that we were researching in contexts such as the university, the community, and the schoolroom (NGUNJIRI & HERNÁNDEZ, 2017). LAPADAT defined CAE as an "autobiographical, autoethnographic, polyphonic approach to writing, telling, interrogating, analyzing, and collaboratively performing and writing up research on personal life challenges and on negotiating personal and professional identities" (2017, pp.597-598). We chose CAE for this study for three reasons: the freedom to present ourselves with transparency, our political commitment to the post-qualitative research model, and the tool's power for professional development. [31]

First, CAE gave us the freedom to present ourselves in a transparent manner. CAE privileges researchers as subjects in their own inquiries in order to engage in critique of sociocultural phenomena (CHANG, NGUNJIRI & HERNÁNDEZ, 2013) by sharing their own experiences and life stories in contexts such as the university, the community and the classroom and with the aim of analyzing them collaboratively. In this methodology, researchers are rendered visible in the research; they are placed at the center of the inquiry in order to expose the internal workings of their thoughts. It demands that researchers be involved and analyze their own self in order to see how they are being affected by the issue under study. [32]

Secondly, our choice of CAE methods was a political stance taken to legitimize the use of post-qualitative methods in defining our research position. According to LATHER (2016), CAE is one of the top-ten lessons that have emerged in the

post-qualitative turn in the social sciences. CAE has the potential to democratize research, since it questions research practices that explain to participants what is happening to them from an intellectual and elitist position. Furthermore, it reduces power differences by collaboratively transforming the interrogation, interpretation and representation of issues. CAE is a more inclusive, which allows us to share our power of collective storytelling, create meaning through collaboration, and when possible, write and publish collaboratively. CAE is critically dialogical because it generates dialog between the researcher and his or her co-researchers (CHANG et al., 2013) and it invites the voices of all participants to create knowledge together. The dialog begins with the data gathering process, which depends heavily on conversation, moves through the process of creating meaning (data analysis) and culminates in the final act of writing up of the research product using fully collaborative approaches. [33]

Third, CAE provides strategies for creating and sustaining the research community, offering tools for examining individuals' experience and for relating them to one another. It works our empathy and affectivity and it gives value to the collaborative experience, making it an important tool for professional development through the sharing of life stories that are necessarily marked by differences in gender, age, race, language or professional status and reflecting different personal and professional situations. All of this provides knowledge about research practice and culture and the processes of change and transformation that we as researchers are subject to and that help us create collective meaning. [34]

After learning about CAE, we agreed to hold a face-to-face meeting roughly every month during the 2017-2018 academic year. These meetings continued for an additional academic year, where we decided to adopt a full collaboration model (ibid.). Together, we reflected on the research work we were doing, and from the very beginning, our emphasis was on how it was affecting us, jointly analyzing the two central axes of our research: the conceptual framework of the post-qualitative researcher and our discussion of the possibilities and limitations that we felt. After having taken part in a number of work sessions and having confessed our limitations and shared the difficulties that we had, we began to become aware of how we were being affected by the research we were doing, which moved our research focus to our vulnerability as researchers. [35]

Once the decision was made, we reviewed the material we had collected, the cartographies that we had created, and the author statements we had written explaining the scope of our cartographies. We then decided to write an evocative autobiographical text about our experience in moving from a qualitative to a post-qualitative perspective and how that change affected us. [36]

To process the material that was produced, we drew up a collaborative writing plan, assigning tasks and responsibilities for the process of writing, re-writing, and sense-making, in order to represent multiple voices in one text. We created a mixed-mode system that combined sequential writing with group single-author writing. Our resulting CAE is written in a mixture of styles, marrying what CHANG

et al. have called imaginative-creative writing, in that it takes the form of a dialog between our shared reflections, written in a confessional, emotive style rather than an analytic style. This gives our autobiographical texts personal resonance, as we have interjected our feelings, emotions, and opinions into the reports, often outing ourselves in the process of doing the research. [37]

#### **4. Doing CAE**

In order to present the results of our CAE and how we responded to the question of how we and our research questions were being affected, the text is organized as a series of rooms: each of us has a room of our own in which our thoughts are set down, and we come together in the living room, which is where our polyphonic dialog emerges. The individual rooms are a metaphor for the autoethnography, while the living room is where we share those reflections with our colleagues. In other words, the living room can be roughly equated with the concept of CAE. The sharing and negotiation of meaning that is necessary for keeping a research group alive and this exercise in honesty and reflexivity show the limitations and vulnerabilities of we three educational researchers. We agree with LAPADAT's evaluation of this method of inquiry when she noted that

"[t]he greatest strength of collaborative autoethnography, perhaps, comes from its focus on relationship building through shared vulnerability, flattening hierarchies, and establishing trust. Collaborators who trust each other begin to see themselves as members of a democratic community and make the shift from individual to the collective agency" (2017, p.600). [38]

Although we view ourselves as a coherent research group, like members of any community, we have to work at it; we have to practice being a research group member. By writing our thoughts, personal experiences and emotions in our individual rooms we were enacting "autoethnography." We needed the solitude of the Woolfian "room of one's own" (WOOLF, 1989 [1929]) to connect with our inner feelings, but in an additional step, we decided to share those texts. Having decided to embark upon this writing "project," we used the Woolfian metaphor not only to write about our CAE methodology but to also talk about it through dialog, which is congruent with ROTH's (2008) suggestion. The living room represents our collectivity, the act of making public and sharing our research stances. We were no longer protected by our anonymity and it was time to negotiate our thoughts with the other members of the research group. [39]

We present here the translation from Spanish of the reflection that each researcher engaged in in her or his individual room prior to meeting with the group. We believe that research situated within a VUCA context has spaces for writing in different times and places; research is liquid, uncertain and in constant change and movement. In the act of entering and leaving our individual rooms, of moving from the internal to the shared, we are forging the connections that make up our methodological foundation. We invite the reader to enter our individual rooms and then share in our group discussion in the living room, where the aim is to visualize the way in which we produce knowledge and meaning. [40]

In what follows we answer the first research question individually, which we repeat here: What type of concerns, limitations and tensions regarding academia and research did we experience while incorporating the post-qualitative and artistic perspectives? [41]

#### **4.1 Room 1: Estibaliz**

Right now, I can only hear the silence of my thoughts and I need this moment of private reflexivity to keep from confusing my ideas with the other researchers' ideas. There's no clear line between what I think, read and share with other people; they're probably part of the same thing, but coming into my room gives me a moment of calm. [42]

This is the second time I've participated in a research project where the researchers experience the methodology before using it with the teachers. Establishing a more ethically equitable relationship with the research and the participants is important to me personally. [43]

Also, this is a study that has unsettled me and I view it as a chance to disrupt our thinking, and from there learn new things. This is what we're talking about in this study, learning ... and I can't help wondering: if teachers tell me about the experiences they relate with learning, but none of them seems to think that what they learned during their university studies is important, then how and for what purpose are we training future teachers? [44]

On the other hand, investigating through the use of artistic methods was one of the things that I found really attractive about this study. The idea of approaching research in a way that was close to my training in fine arts was appealing. But I was apprehensive of the claim (BARONE & EISNER, 2012) that art could reveal things that otherwise would not emerge. Was it really the case? I had the feeling that I needed to experience and feel it, and be able to make sense of it and give it meaning. However, it seems strange to me that artistic products can have meaning in research in education when the arts have been part of a discipline which, until very recently, seemed to have nothing to contribute to "science." And I feel so strange when my fellow researchers turn to me, waiting for me to shed light on the project that we're involved in when in point of fact the Other cannot experience processes in the art for you. [45]

There were two key moments in making the cartographies: one was when I made my own cartography and the other was when the teachers were making theirs. When I was a participant in the cartography workshop, what a pleasure it was! And when the teachers made their cartographies, the process was familiar to me and very close to art workshops. This pleasure is contrasted with our perception of what happened; what did it allow us to think? Did it really allow us to reveal something that we didn't know? To what extent did we initiate processes that we were unaware of? I need to leave my room to share this; this is not something that I can or should resolve on my own. [46]

## 4.2 Room 2: José Miguel

In line with the dominant scientific research paradigms from the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century (ST. PIERRE, 2006), my early training as a researcher took place in an academic environment that invisibilized qualitative work. It was a context in which priority was given to following a logical order and structuring processes under the mathematical protection of complex formulas in order to understand research issues in education and pursue a policy position. Later, as my professional evolution continued, this hegemonic view actually encouraged rather than dulled my interest in seeking out critical and creative research practices. [47]

I agree with PINAR's (2004) claim that not all research models have the same capacity or use the same method for resisting the established hegemonic view. There are certain research stances that are bolder and more transgressive, although they make us more vulnerable. There was a period during which qualitative methods represented an alternative trend, one that could disrupt the dominant narratives of the quantitative models of research which tried to perpetuate a top-down style of research. [48]

When we started the research project using post-qualitative and arts-based interpretations, the first step was to share the tensions, uncertainties, and gaps I felt with the teachers participating in the research, thereby exposing the vulnerability of my position as a researcher. But at the same time, I distanced myself from the space of institutional comfort and safety that often accompanies the pre-established scripts that we researchers follow. For me, this alignment (IÑIGUEZ-RUEDA, 2003) with scientific rationality is the result of academic performativity, which is itself the result of particular scientific policies and institutional practices, not only in the evaluation of research activity but also in the evaluation of teaching, since this also affects the work of teachers in the university classroom and when doing and defending their final degree projects, Master's projects, etc., where certain ways of researching, relating to knowledge and representing it are undervalued. The space of influence is thus broader than just the research space, given that it also affects us in the classroom as well as the predominant strategies of relating and representing knowledge in undergraduate and Master's degree programs. [49]

For CLARKE (2009) this process of identity construction is closely linked with the narratives and the communities that we work with. Identities are the result of a process of discussing, negotiating, arguing and justifying that integrates to some extent the lives and practices of professors. Our research identity is closely related to the means of control and power since power relationships constitute us as individuals. The work of analyzing the construction of our research identity requires that we examine how we commit ourselves socially and how we take different paths and make different personal choices. [50]

### 4.3 Room 3: Asunción

My first response to this proposal was to arrange my cartography in terms of my physical movements: that is, I tried to represent my travels and the places I've lived in scenarios and landscapes, cutting out and pasting maps of Europe and the different states in the United States where I had lived, studied and worked. I thought that in making reference to my physical movements, I was connected with my "mental deployments." But can we equate traveling with learning? My recent studies of narratives written by Americans who come to Spain to study language and culture highlight how uncomfortable we are with the smells, tastes, different looks and of course the sounds of a language that we are not accustomed to. How do we represent the accumulation of physical and fully felt personified sensations that we perceive when we travel within a foreign environment? My work so far has consisted of asking for a composition in which students, through words, reflect upon their feelings and the changes to their identity due to moving to another place and using a different language. However, as KRESS (2010, p.79) pointed out,

"[t]he introduction of the concepts of mode and multimodality produces a challenge to hitherto settled notions of language. After all, if all modes are merely a kind of duplication of meanings already made in, say, speech or writing—may be for relatively marginal reasons such as 'illustration' or for aesthetic reasons such as 'ornamentation'—or whether they are 'full meanings', always quite distinct from other modes. If the latter is the case, then 'language' has to be seen in a new light: no longer as central and dominant, fully capable of expressing all meanings, but as one means among others for making meaning, each of them specific. This amounts to a profound reorientation." [51]

Thus, my cartography was merely a way to represent my journeys through a medium that is as lacking in multimodality as a cutout from a map. Just after I had finished my cartography, I came across the controversial article by SEFTON-GREEN (2017) in which he asserted that all the metaphors for learning, such as "journey" and "trajectory" (p.112) maybe a simplification, although that does not mean that learning is not quantifiable or observable. [52]

Thinking of my travels as representations of my learning did not add anything new to what was already obvious: Are my nomadic transitions reflections of my learning, or was I simply solving my "problem" of explaining cartography by identifying it with a physical movement rather than thinking of it as something that is intangible, invisible or difficult to identify, which happens to everyone when they learn something? What have I learned from all this research? It is an exercise in jumping without a safety net; it is an exercise of naked honesty. At the moment there are no colleagues to engage with, there are no sounds to imitate, there are not even any earlier texts to inspire us. Have I really learned something? Have I really given up the word as the principal method of communication/expression? Stripped of the distractions of the journey, of the outside world, we find ourselves forced to look within ourselves for the keys to what it means to learn. [53]

From the three reflections that emerged from our individual rooms show, it can be seen that Estibaliz is concerned about teacher education and what an arts-based perspective can contribute; her training in fine arts and itinerary as a teacher trainer led her to focus on those questions. José Miguel, who has 35 years' experience as a teacher educator and researcher, puts the pursuit of his research and his role as a researcher on hold by seeking to resignify other onto-epistemological positions in the wake of critical and creative research practices from a perspective of personal involvement. And Asunción, who comes from linguistics, is interested in representations that go beyond the written word and seeks other strategies for communicating. Because we come from different positions, we consider our meetings in the living room to be very valuable for discussing these differences with an eye on other collaborative approaches to research. [54]

## **5. Living Room: Where Has the Post-Qualitative Stance Taken Us?**

Having addressed our research challenges individually from a post-qualitative perspective, we shared the resulting texts in a session of CAE. Among other feelings, at least two of us expressed a sense of vulnerability and uncertainty. An atmosphere of trust was crucial for our mutual support in times of a difficult transition, while we acknowledged that we had the feeling of stepping into very uncertain territory. It was not only our research in education that was going through those metamorphoses but, as we explain in this section, our whole teaching and learning constructs were going through relentless transformations. [55]

The three of us left our own rooms and gathered in the living room to talk together and reflect on our research process. We wanted to address the second research question: Where has the post-qualitative stance taken us? When researchers work from certainty and from paths defined by a methodology, researcher meetings should occur during the entire research process and penetrate the researchers themselves, giving rise to a number of mutually negotiated key concepts that each researcher may subsequently relate to their lived process, revealing what the concepts have allowed them to think. Our meeting in the living room is an example of making visible the need for these conversations among researchers and the wealth of ideas that come from them. [56]

Estibaliz (E): The idea of social change in this study worries me. Research can propose changes, but what happens if we accept that the research question shifts focus toward us and our transformation as researchers and teacher trainers? Doesn't this drift in research reveal a situation that we didn't foresee and that moves us toward ourselves, calling into question research epistemology and initial education for teachers? Isn't this in itself a social change? Won't we be discovering other ways of relating pedagogically with teachers, making it possible for us to change together? [57]

Asunción (A): The cartographies can bring about change, although for social change we probably need to walk down the path together. At any rate, a similar process happens in linguistic systems. Changes are not perceptible because

although language changes in each generation, we still understand each other. [58]

E: Our researcher meetings and the readings that we're sharing are helping me understand the process and the changes better. Right now, in terms of the researchers, I'd say that the biggest challenge is writing from a post-qualitative stance (RICHARDSON & ST. PIERRE, 2005).

We began by revealing each researcher's concerns and interests. In linking Estibaliz's interest in arts-based research methods and Asunción's concern for language, RICHARDSON's creative analytic processes are essential and unifying, providing a space where the two researchers' interests can converge. [59]

José Miguel (JM): For me, in terms of what you're saying, a key part was the researcher becoming part of what is researchable.

A: Are you referring to the idea of reflexivity?

JM: Yes, the idea of coming back to oneself and experiencing it as a change, as something that affects you and leaves a mark. By this, I mean that we stop studying a question that is external and we connect ourselves to the research question. [60]

E: I agree with the concept of reflexivity as the moment of disruption where I've had to stop and understand.

Together we discovered that the researcher becomes part of the research. We realized that from these post-qualitative positions we could question, add to or modify the research questions laid out at the outset and we could even think of ourselves as being part of the research question. [61]

A: I agree, though it clashes with a research paradigm that binds us to deadlines and deliverables, which doesn't give us the option to do that.

JM: And in terms of that problem, I think that it leads to a reduction of data, but nevertheless a post-qualitative study opens us up to the possibility of staying involved and being able to expand the research question in multiple directions.

A: In listening to what you're both saying, I think that we're talking about "inhabiting" the study, a notion that goes beyond answering the research question.

JM: I think the concept of immediacy versus transcendence could be related to this. I connect it to the idea in inhabiting the research, of staying present in the time and place that the research experience takes place.

A: Yes, a study that goes on and isn't over with the writing of an article. On the contrary, writing allows us to make sense of and give meaning to the research, to continue formulating new questions and forging new paths. [62]

JM: Being in the field has an impact on me and makes me wonder what happens if we stay in the now? What happens if I have to stay and wait for something to

happen? Spend time with the teachers and take the time to explore the experience of being a teacher with them?

I have been lost in this study, partly due to finding myself faced with artistic research methods, which were previously unknown to me, and partly due to the difficulty of making the research question mine. And in this being lost, writing has supported me and allowed me to give an account of what I have done.

From our collaborative dialog, our fears about how to position ourselves emerged and we gradually realized that we only had dialog and writing as our refuge for small certainties. But, as RICHARDSON and ST. PIERRE (2005) proposed, our aim was to do it in a creative way, using the metaphor of the living room. [63]

E: Another question that has vexed us quite a lot is the notion of data. Who are we to say what the reality of the Other is?

A: In fact, it seems to me that in this study we have not dealt with data as something that is externalized as if it had value in itself and reifies the problem.

JM: This study has allowed us to dismantle the simulacrum of research. Also, it's not the case that in our previous studies we were so rigid and we put our ethical principles aside; what happened is that we did not leave any room for vulnerability in what we were dealing with. But from a post-qualitative position, we give ourselves permission to revise and accept that what we took for granted, settled or true can be questioned. [64]

E: Working toward a post-qualitative position has been as strange for me as working with artistic methodologies has been for you both. I find that there are many intersections, but I am especially interested in one of the issues that we are trying to address through this article: namely, that the research question is not only what is formulated at the outset and that we accept new research questions as we proceed.

This shift to a post-qualitative approach presented us with a new challenge, which was to speak about ourselves without appropriating or resignifying what others told us. In order to make sense of this, we used the idea of accompanying, just as is done in an art gallery, and to that end, we made our cartographies as explained in Section 3.1. Examining data in light of what it makes us think instead of interpreting the other was difficult for us. The discussions and debates around research were intense. [65]

A: Do you remember the first paper where we started to talk about feelings and emotions? And the rejection that got from the others in our research group?

JM: The transition that we're going through as researchers is causing us to upset the system and we've perceived that the methodologies used in social science need another approach.

A: Along those lines, it's important to consider that the world is also changing and this is affecting research processes. It's difficult to reconcile results and package knowledge that's expanding in different directions thanks to new technologies.

Reality continues to change and it's being affected by important problems in politics, migration, ecology, environment, etc.

JM: It's a world with new problems and a new need to address them from diverse perspectives. Still, as researchers, we play a role that subordinates us and makes us docile, which doesn't bring about social change and that tends to accept any philosophy. Upsetting the research paradigm has helped me understand how we're affected by the subordination that academia expects from us. [66]

A: Given this situation, it's true that undertaking research from a post-qualitative position is a risky proposition since we don't know how it will be understood or where it might fit in terms of publication. However, I think that we're addressing the concept of agency (JACKSON & MAZZEI, 2012) by resisting and thinking about what we can do to defend our research position within a system in order to be able to advocate for change.

In this meeting, we were able to perceive the tension that we, in our enthusiastic and heated debate about research, were dealing with in confronting a research tradition in Spain that is still anchored in the past and does not offer many opportunities for diffusion and transference for those who stray from more traditional principles. [67]

E: Establishing connections with concepts requires another level of development that is labor- and time-intensive, which is difficult to do in a commodity system of academic degrees and accreditations.

JM: When I think about my trajectory during this second year of research, I've focused on reading and writing, on trying to understand and make sense of research. In every text that we write, we say similar things but add a small contribution each time. And I must admit that I enjoy it and I take greater ownership of my research each time.

A: It is true that you need to make your research. [68]

JM: Delving into other positions and having a connection with a researcher like E., who comes from the field of Fine Arts, has helped me make this move. I've felt the need to share and experience a dialogued meeting in order to come closer to the familiarity that you have with the artistic model, and that has helped me understand it. [69]

A: That is where brokering comes in within a mixed group of researchers from different fields, which is necessary for tackling the research question in all its complexity from different perspectives or views. Sharing this dialog enriches us.

By unveiling the above conversation, we seek to place the reader before the position of each researcher, facilitating new connections from our collective encounter. In addition, the uncertainty, the lack of clear certainties, that the researchers worked with can be discerned. The reflections in the individual rooms evolved toward broader concepts, allowing us to connect the drift toward the post-qualitative with writing and creative and artistic practices. The metaphor of

the living room helps reveal the processes involved and make the conversation visible; it is a space of encounter, of ups and downs, which becomes delimited through the readings, dialog, and new connections that creative practices offer us. [70]

## 6. Final Reflections

We are now at the end of this text, in which we narrated our research journey, with its dilemmas and tensions, where we have taken on the challenge of writing openly about our research efforts. Our post-qualitative turn has led us to scrutinize the role that theory, data, subject and methodology (along with many other dimensions of research) have traditionally played in our work. This new kind of positioning has led us to explore, using the so-called "post" theories (ST. PIERRE, 2013), the territory of epistemic diversity that we were seeking to address in our work; where diverse theoretical positions co-exist but in logical coherence with a scenario that requires new research approaches (COLEMAN, 2017). The opportunities to imagine research, following JACKSON and MAZZEI (2012), led us to analyze our ethical position of using more inclusive procedures in research in order to make room not only for the voices, viewpoints, and concerns of all research participants but also to pay attention to the limitations we researchers face in a world that is complex and where research practice is continually changing, requiring us to constantly transform and learn. [71]

The support provided by CAE has been instrumental in the analysis of our vulnerability as it relates to our analysis of the type of concerns, limitations, and tensions regarding academia and research we experienced while incorporating post-qualitative and artistic perspectives, because CAE has offered us the possibility of maintaining a collaborative relationship with the Other, in this case, our fellow research team members, in order to learn more (with the others) about ourselves (DENZIN, 2016). With regard to the first question that guided our inquiry, we analyzed the vulnerability of researchers denied any vision of reality other than that claimed by Western hegemonic epistemology, which hides its class, cultural, political and gender origins and which has served to justify the actions of the groups that subscribe to them. The post-qualitative turn has led us to revise our research ethics and power relationships, as well as the scientific prejudices that dichotomize knowledge and access to it. It has compelled us to fight against certain widespread stereotypes in educational research that encourage the continued separation of the researcher from that which is researched, perpetuating the systematic search for scientific objectivity. In questioning our academic subordination and accepting our peripheral status and vulnerability as researchers, we have committed ourselves to the process of transforming knowledge by making it situated, corporeal, transitive, based on the relationship between the researcher and the researched, horizontal, dialogic and inclusive. In rendering an account of our processes of resistance, we have reflected on the epistemological colonization (SANTOS, 2017 [2014]) that invalidates all alternative knowledge that falls outside the standards set by hegemonic science, built from the needs of capitalist and colonial domination and the quashing of any other vision of reality. [72]

With regard to our second research question, the role that CAE has played in our inquiry has made us more aware of researchers' vulnerability in these times of change and transformation thanks to its deconstructive, democratic and decolonizing practice. It is deconstructive because it elevates the voices of the participants themselves as co-researchers and co-generators of data about their own lived realities and it makes us aware of the implications associated with the use of research approaches, methods and strategies. The practice is democratic in that analyzing and uncovering power differentials made us aware of the power relationships that support certain research practices, thus fostering transformations that are more inclusive and participatory. And the practice is decolonizing in that it has helped us link our experiences and life stories to the structural and systematic problems that deny researchers voice, access, power and privilege. CAE has given us tools for collaboration, thereby fostering empathy and creating a safe space for exchange and connection and supporting our inquiry into the academic, social and cultural context within which we as educational researchers study personal and institutional resistances in light of the ethical and onto-epistemological change that we face in this ever-changing world as well as the interests and motivations to which they respond. [73]

With this article we do not aim to present a model; instead, we describe an exercise of CAE in which we moved toward a research position that is still precarious and under construction. We believe that visualizing this transition is an act of honesty that can help other researchers understand their own processes and perhaps apply some of the ideas presented here to their own research. It is not our intention to present a way of doing, but rather we want to show how we are going about addressing our own research question using post-qualitative positions and the personal and collective consequences that they have brought about. [74]

In this regard, the biggest challenge was writing, where we used the individual rooms and the living room to create subjectivity, knowledge, and meanings (BRAIDOTTI, 2014, 2019), always keeping our researcher selves present. In addition, we situated our research within a postmodern and VUCA society, accepting the challenge to change our research questions in response to what is happening socially. We experimented with artistic research methods, accepting that the products we have are not data that the researcher collects or handles. We also accepted the immediacy of what occurred and that in moving from here we adopted LINCOLN and GUBA's (2003) concept of reflexivity in order to critically interrogate our research subjectivities. [75]

As we stated at the outset, the process is appealing and has awakened our interest in getting closer to post-qualitative discourse. Although we started with different motivations and from different disciplines, we were all interested in assuming a critical attitude toward the ways research is done and how knowledge is generated, represented, and disseminated. We acknowledged the importance that the institutional framework has for research and researchers and the importance of a post-qualitative approach to arts-based research. As teacher educators, we spent too many years looking for other forms of pedagogical

relationship in research and teaching, and we advocated work processes that take into account the textures and nuances of the people who work in education, in all their complexity. Taking on researcher vulnerability has been difficult because it required us to adopt a critical awareness of our research subjectivities and accept that conducting research will not allow us to remain disengaged. [76]

We have unveiled a research tension that makes us vulnerable as researchers but nevertheless brings us toward a more ethical position in research. We believe that established researchers should be the ones to engage in this way, as we wonder whether a novice researcher could really unveil this tension, given that it would heighten his or her position of vulnerability. In sharing these fractures in research, we are coming closer to a richer and more valuable way of doing research, especially in social and educational contexts, where this kind of encounter is needed. [77]

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