



Editorial: General Issue – 2023

Judith Enriquez,¹  David Allan,²  Craig Hammond,³ 

¹ School of Education, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool, UK (J.G.Enriquez@ljmu.ac.uk)

² Faculty of Education, Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, UK (allandav@edgehill.ac.uk)

³ School of Education, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool, UK (C.A.Hammond@ljmu.ac.uk)

Published: 09/03/2023

1. MABUHAY! Be Alive!

I greet you with this Filipino greeting – the country of my birth ... 'Mabuhay!'. 'Be alive!'. This is most apt, as I intend to bring 'life' into the sphere of my first encounter as a new member of the *PRISM* editorial team. I invoke in this introduction a short bio (life) of the absent-present connections that 'bind' me here. I gather my senses to reconcile them with the prism of life. One that does not rely on a point-of-view that is intellectually bound by the mind-energy of theorists, philosophers, and scholars. But instead, to cast a ray of light onto the life-energy of a point-of-being. It is the possibility of a *poiesis*, of the unconceived, unperceived, and ultimately unbound thought that I or we, with Dave and Craig (though they do not know this yet), along with the reviewers and authors – or contributors – to this general issue, that we are animated with being alive.

I am a theory-hoarder, citation-seeker, data-collector, and problem-maker. Maybe you are too. Such inscriptions bound me to an identity, keep me tuned in and institutionalised but not necessarily alive. I have many viewpoints about agency, voice, literacy and other objects, subjects and not a word about life. The spaces for conversations, encounters and inquiries have hardened surfaces, rigid standards, and stifling knowledge bases. They are not conducive to life. We

have been bound by learning and graduate outcomes, by employability and transferable skills (see Scott, Bennett, and Hammond's paper '[Silence is the sentence': adult learners' experiences of a co-created curriculum constructed through free writing tasks](#), in this issue). No matter how we try to analyse viewpoints and embrace their intersectionality, they remain or become inanimate, and ultimately, dead in our hands. It is time to commit to the living.

"Life will not be confined with bounded forms but rather threads its way through the world along the myriad lines of its relations, probing every crack or crevice that might potentially afford growth and movement" (Ingold 2011, p124).

I invite us to follow the many life-threads that emanate from the papers published here as part of this issue; and, in my case, be a kind of water-whisperer. I used to make paper boats when I was a little girl and watch these go downstream in the polluted (always fighting to flow) creek just behind the house where I grew up. My relationship with water is of course within me, running through me and keeping me alive, and yet I traversed a path away from its bio/hydro systems. Instead, my research plugged me into the world of computing and technologies, of machinic and mechanistic information systems. Frameworks, models,

methods, and approaches that are allegedly 'enlightened'. Modernity made sure of this; and yet, they are far from 'enlivened'. Lucy Harding's paper [Researching in prison education-spaces: Thinking-with Posthuman, Post Qualitative, Feminist Materialism 'beings' to disentangle methodology](#) (published in this issue) traverses prison spaces, by utilising visuals, textiles, and affective experiences; these facets accumulate to loosen and break away from more traditional and bureaucratic habits, that perpetuate the tendency to bind subjects – and agency – to stasis. The repetition and perpetuation of routine that entrenches forms of analyses that constrict, rather than invert inquiry. The creative, non-predictable, and creative elements of diffractive writing – addressed here in this general issue – feature, and mutate, in a number of ways across the array of papers. For example, Mollie Baker's paper [Beyond binaries and before becoming: Reconsidering resistance in UK higher education](#), utilises diffractive notions of resistance that take form within and across Higher Education environments – not least of which, the notion of affective resistance.

I was in Iloilo, Philippines in July 2022. I have a community literacy project in a remote farming community there. It's not easy to accept the generosity of water in the islands of the Philippines. I have been confronted with the precarious life of communities who live near water and the child labour of corn planting and hand washing clothes. Drinking water is always in a bottle. Water is life-threatening there. I have seen colourful seashells and the water produce - lobsters, a variety of fishes, crabs, clams, oysters, etc.- taste delicious. Seafood reminds me of my father who died in 2003. He was a fishmonger. Water has given me life, loved ones, stories to tell, memories to remember and dilemmas to come to terms with or simply feel with, all at once. I have many attachments (life-threads) with water, a *hydrophilia* perhaps. I want to attend to these attachments. How do I proceed when I am entangled with the wares and wires of technologies, habits of the mind and ways of unliving?

Mabuhay is an invitation, a refraction of being towards living systems that bind me (us) to a biosphere.

2. The emergence of stories

Pete Atherton's paper [Leaving the chasm behind: Autoethnography, creativity and the search for identity in academia](#), represents the increasingly popular theme of autoethnography (as research method) across various *PRISM* papers and issues. Atherton presents and analyses qualitative primary data in the form of an autoethnographic study, with a view to helping educators understand digital literacies in a time of uncertainty and flux. This research approach is further reflected in the Paula Stone et al., paper ['Care-less whispers' in the academy during COVID-19: A collaborative autoethnography](#). In this paper, the authors raise important (and often *hidden*) questions – through autoethnographic dialogues – about social justice, diversity and inclusion, and the intersectionality of class and gender. These experiences and narratives are further filtered through the lens of female academics with / from a working class heritage.

The theme of academics with / from a working class heritage extends from – and across – the Stone et al., article, to the Emma Gilaspy et al., paper [Hard Graft: Collaborative exploration of working class stories in shaping female educator identities](#). As with the Stone paper, Gilaspy et al., adopt a collaborative autoethnography approach to share the stories of seven female educators (drawn together from a variety of health and social care disciplines). The revealing insights share the lived experiences of female academics with working-class roots, and the ways in which this heritage shapes (and has shaped) their values and identities.

This *PRISM* general issue also includes two articles that address and discuss the impact of forest schooling and outdoor education with Ange Garden's piece [Constructions of Space: Exploring Photographic Images in Forest School](#) using and exploring unstructured interviews in relation to children's feelings and meanings associated with images captured during activities in a Forest School space. The Think Piece by Ziad Dabaja and Simge Yilmaz Uysal on [Forest School and its effect on the community: A brief review](#). In this short manuscript, the authors draw on contemporary literature to develop and emphasise a demarcating and

associated differentiating characteristics between forest schooling and outdoor education. Furthermore, they briefly introduce the benefits and impact of the outdoor educational concept for the children involved, but the ways in which it can positively affect educators and their pedagogies, along with wider family dynamics.

Finally, we have a review by Anne-Marie Smith of Anke Schwittay's book [Creative Universities: Reimagining Education for Global Challenges and Alternative Futures](#) (2021). As Smith tells us, the pages of this book 'buzz with hope', creative vision and radical possibilities, and invite academics and educators to do teaching differently; to shake up our learning spaces and keep asking questions. Both the review and Schwittay's book are well worth a read, as they both articulate a call to arms, to have courage, take risks, cause disturbance, be creative, and reshape the ways in which we engage in and with education.

3. Disclosure statement

The author(s) declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

5. Acknowledgements

Dave Allan and Craig Hammond would like to welcome Judith Enriquez to the *PRISM* editorial team, and to thank her for the enchanting and evocative contribution to this editorial. The editorial team would like to thank all of the *PRISM* section editors, reviewers and authors for their dedication and support in bringing these eclectic academic papers to fruition.

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7. References

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