

## Welcome to the Spring 2019 Newsletter!

For the Spring newsletter our two co-chairs have provided a day-by-day schedule of the Qualitative Research SIG's events for the AERA conference in Toronto. This includes cutting edge sessions on methods, and opportunities for you to meet and consult with mentors. QR's business meeting will feature refreshments, time to socialize, and a talk by Dr Leigh Patel, entitled, "Troubling Categories in Qualitative Research".

The Chair, Jessica Lester shares further news of our SIG in her "Note".

Besides updates, this newsletter features some exciting research. In *Spotlight on a New Text* we introduce two books; Aaron Kuntz's work on materialist methodologies and Hayriye Kayi-Aydar's volume on theory in applied linguistics. In the *Methods News and Notes* column, Noah Goodman interviews Stephanie Shelton about reflexivity in the transcription process. and Karen Ross and Meagan Call-Cummings discuss ways to democratize data through collaboration. Finally Abdulghani Muthanna writes about interviewing as a means for changing participants' perspectives.

Sincerely  
 Lucinda Carspecken

### *Inside This Edition...*

<b>A Note from the Chair</b> , Jessica Nina Lester	p. 2
<b>Preview of the AERA 2019 QR SIG Program</b> , J. Wolgemuth & C. Kuby	p. 3
<b>Spotlight on a New Text</b>	
Aaron Kuntz	p. 6
Hayriye Kayi-Aydar	p. 7
<b>Methods News and Notes</b>	
Interview with Stephanie Anne Shelton by Noah Goodman	p. 9
"Democratizing Research", K. Ross and M. Call-Cummings,	p. 14
<b>The Long Look</b>	
"Critical Qualitative Research and Methodological Awareness", A. Muthanna	p. 16

**QRSIG Colleagues,**

I hope you are each doing well and enjoying a new year.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at the 2019 AERA annual meeting. Over the last several months, the QRSIG Executive Committee has been engaged in various activities to prepare for the upcoming gathering. We have also begun to identify new initiatives aimed at growing our membership and community further. For instance, in 2020, we will begin offering a select number of travel awards to graduate students interested in attending AERA. Further, in the coming months, a new ad hoc Graduate Student Committee will be formed to focus on expanding and supporting the QRSIG's growing graduate student community. I hope you plan to join me at our annual business meeting in Toronto to learn about other exciting initiatives on the horizon.



As always, I invite you to reach out to me with ideas for how we can continue to build an inclusive and diverse qualitative community. Thank you for your continued support and participation in the SIG.

*Kind regards,*

*Jessica Nina Lester*

## **Mark Your Calendars! A Preview of the AERA 2019 QR-SIG Program**

**by the Program Co-chairs, Jennifer Wolgemuth (University of South Florida) & Candace Kuby (University of Missouri)**

The Qualitative Research-SIG is excited to host 17 provocative and cutting-edge sessions at this year's AERA. The program features 7 symposium sessions, 8 roundtable sessions, 1 mentoring session, and 1 business meeting, showcasing the work of phenomenal thinkers in our qualitative community. The sessions are deep dives into methodological, conceptual, and theoretical topics in qualitative research such as post-truth, activism, new materialism, post-humanism, affect theory, race and racism, post-colonialism, ethnography, qualitative writing and more!

Our business meeting on Sunday, April 7 (from 7:05-9:05pm) includes drinks, snacks, time for mingling, and the much anticipated annual invited Egon Guba speaker. We are thrilled this year's honored speaker is Dr. Leigh Patel, Associate Dean of Equity and Justice in the University of Pittsburgh's School of Education. Dr. Patel's activist focused qualitative scholarship with marginalized youth and teacher activists foregrounds education as both a site of social reproduction and transformation. The provocative title of Dr. Patel's Egon Guba Lecture is: "Troubling Categories in Qualitative Research."

New to the business meeting this year, Drs. Michele Fine and Kakali Bhattacharya will deliver prepared responses to Dr. Patel's invited address. We will also honor the recipients of the dissertation and book awards at the business meeting.

We include a full list of the Qualitative Research SIG program below. We encourage you to review the full program at [www.aera.net](http://www.aera.net) and mark your calendars!

We look forward to seeing you all in Toronto!

## Qualitative Research SIG Complete Program for AERA 2019 Annual Meeting\*

### Friday, April 5, 2019

---

*Mentoring Session* (Closed Session, by Application and Invitation Only)

12:00 to 2:00pm Metro Toronto Convention Centre, 200 Level, Room 205C

### Saturday, April 6, 2019

---

*Artistic Methods of Qualitative Research: Poetry, Photography, and TENACHI-SHE*

8:00 to 9:30am, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Lower Concourse, Osgoode Ballroom

*Caring and Being There: Complicating Qualitative Research With Youth of Color in School Settings*

10:25 to 11:55am, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Lower Concourse, Grand Centre

*Methods and Narrative Ways of Inquiring*

12:20 to 1:50pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Lower Concourse, Grand Centre  
Critical Qualitative

*The Danger of a Single Image? Methodological Explorations of Visual Research in Education*

2:15 to 3:45pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Second Floor, Dominion Ballroom North

*Rethinking Ethnography in the Posthuman Turn*

4:10 to 6:10pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Second Floor, Dominion Ballroom North

### Sunday, April 7, 2019

---

*Post-Qualitative Inquiring: Discussions on Transcripts, Writing, Fields, and Research*

9:55 to 11:25am, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Lower Concourse, Osgoode Ballroom

*Performing Dissertation Research and Liberating Academic Writing*

11:50am to 1:20pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Second Floor, Civic Ballroom South

*New Possibilities, Traditional Methodologies*

11:50am to 1:20pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Lower Concourse, Osgoode Ballroom

*(Post-)Qualitative Affects*

3:40 to 5:10pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Lower Concourse, Osgoode Ballroom

*Qualitative Research SIG Business Meeting*

7:05 to 9:05pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Second Floor, Dominion Ballroom North

Dr. Leigh Patel, Egon Guba Invited Speaker. Title: Troubling Categories in Qualitative Research

**Monday, April 8, 2019**

---

*(Re)thinking Auto-Ethnography and Biography*

8:00 to 9:30am, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Lower Concourse, Osgoode Ballroom

*Bad Girl Theory and Practice: Qualitative Research in Post-Truth Times*

10:25 to 11:55pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Second Floor, Civic Ballroom South

*Reading and Inquiring With/in/Through Post-Theories*

12:20 to 1:50pm, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, 800 Level, Hall G

*Examining the Complicated Relationship Between Evidence and Ethnography*

12:20 to 1:50pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Second Floor, Civic Ballroom South

*(Re)Imagining Narrative Inquiry: Dis(s)/Trust in the Peer Review Process*

2:15 to 3:45pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Second Floor, Simcoe

*Common Worlding Methods: (Im)Possibilities of Post-Qualitative Research*

4:10 to 6:10pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Lower Concourse, Sheraton Hall E

- These are the dates, times, and locations as of February 20, 2019. Please check the online program for any changes or updates. [www.aera.net](http://www.aera.net)

*Qualitative Inquiry, Cartography,  
& the Promise of Material Change,*  
by Aaron Kuntz, 2018  
London: Routledge Press.

## Spotlight on A New Text: I

**What are the problems to which materialist methodologies are posed as a solution?** In this book, Aaron M. Kuntz maps the impact of materialism on contemporary practices of inquiry in education and the social sciences. As such, Kuntz challenges readers to consider inquiry as a mode of ethically engaged citizenship with implications for resisting our contemporary moment towards a more equitable future.

Kuntz advocates for inquiry as radical cartographic work, drawing forth distinctions between dialectical and dialogic formations of materialism in order to develop what he terms *relational materialism*—an engaged orientation to living situated in the entangled relations of affirmative ethics and enduring practices of resistance and refusal. Utilizing examples from higher education and contemporary culture, the author considers how we might generate living alternatives to the contemporary status quo through inquiry. In response, Kuntz advocates for practices of *virtuous inquiry* (future-orientated ethical assertions of what one should do) that orient inquiry as materially ethical activity.

Despite the often-overwhelming state of inequity and exploitation in our contemporary world, Kuntz generates an affirmative ethical stance that we can become relationally different, guided by a virtuous determination to articulate inquiry as the cartographic work of disruption and imagination.

## Spotlight on A New Text: II

*Positioning Theory in Applied  
Linguistics: Research Design and  
Applications,*  
by Hayriye Kayi-Aydar

<https://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9783319973364>

This book is about Positioning Theory (Davies & Harré, 1990) and its potential applications in bilingual and multilingual contexts involving teachers, learners, speakers, and users of a second/foreign or additional language. By using Positioning Theory as a theoretical lens and analytical approach, Kayi-Aydar illustrates how various social and poststructural concepts in applied linguistics and language teacher education, including identity, agency, language socialization, classroom participation, and intercultural communication, can be investigated and better understood. The book adds a new perspective to the growing body of multidisciplinary literature in the areas of L2 teacher education and classroom learning, and includes step-by-step guidelines for positioning analysis, insights and implications for classroom practice, as well as suggested directions for future research. It will be of particular interest to language teachers and teacher educators, as well as students and scholars of applied linguistics more broadly.

### **Reviews:**

“This book is one of the first to focus upon how to link Positioning Theory to empirical research. As such, it is very much welcomed source-book to the growing community of scholars and practitioners that aim to use Positioning Theory as a theoretical framework for the analysis of different professional practices and societal problems. At the same time Kayi-Aydar’s book also contributes to the refinement of the discursive basis of Positioning Theory.”  
(Luk Van Langenhove, Vrije Universiteit Brussel.)

“This book offers a coherent, informative account of positioning theory and its applications in applied linguistics. It brings together for the first time multiple disciplinary strands in a way that makes positioning theory evidently relevant

and important for applied linguistics research. The book is very well-written, well-constructed, and immensely readable.” (Gary Barkhuizen, University of Auckland.)

“This is the first book to offer a comprehensive discussion of the theoretical and analytical relevance of positioning theory for applied linguistic scholarship. Kayi-Aydar has produced an accessible overview of the key components of the theory and offers practical guidance for applying it to one’s research with language learners and teachers. As such, it will be a highly sought after text by both new and seasoned scholars in our field.” (Elizabeth R. Miller, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.)

“This innovative, clear, very well organized book demonstrates the applied power of positioning theory in the educational setting. Hayriye Kayi-Aydar has added in exciting ways to the fast-expanding literature on positioning theory by demonstrating how positioning processes underlie changes in identity as second-language teaching and learning takes place. I strongly recommend this book to both teachers and students interested in second language learning, as well as positioning and identity.” (Fathali M. Moghaddam, Georgetown University.)

“Kayi-Adar’s conceptualization and application of positioning as both theory and method provides useful insights into investigating classroom discourse and narrative texts. This book is an excellent resource for applied linguists and teacher educators who are committed to understanding how power dynamics play out in second/foreign language learning and teaching.” (Peter De Costa, Michigan State University.)

**About the Author:**

*Hayriye Kayi-Aydar is Assistant Professor of English Applied Linguistics at the University of Arizona, USA. She teaches in the MA ESL and PhD SLAT programs. Her research encompasses discourse, narrative, and English as a Second Language (ESL) pedagogy, at the intersections of interactional sociolinguistics and poststructural approaches to Second Language Acquisition (SLA). She has published in journals such as TESOL Quarterly, System, ELT Journal, Critical Inquiry in Language Studies, Classroom Discourse, Teaching and Teacher Education and Journal of Language, Identity, and Education.*

Methods  
News  
and  
Notes: I  
NGoodman@edc.org

**Interview with Dr Stephanie Shelton  
Noah Goodman, Researcher  
Education Development Center**

*Dr. Stephanie Anne Shelton is an assistant professor of qualitative research in University of Alabama's college of education. Maureen A. Flint is a PhD candidate, also at University of Alabama. In this interview, Shelton discusses a Sage Research Methods Case she and Flint co-authored in 2019 entitled The Value of Transcription in Encouraging Researcher Reflexivity. The interview here is excerpted from a longer phone interview conducted in January of 2019.*

**N: Maybe we can start by you explaining how you understand reflexivity.**

In terms of how I understand it, there are a lot of elements that people typically invoke. For example, you should be very thoughtful about your role in the process, and transparent about your own subjectivities. All that is just reflection though.

Reflexivity has this extra component of being aware of the *other* people involved in co-constructing the research. It requires you to be mindful of the multiplicity of identities that are at play, and how they're shaping what's happening—who is participating in the research, who is being encouraged to speak, how you're responding to them when they speak, and how that shapes how they respond to you. Reflexivity is this reciprocal, iterative concept that is very much about being very mindful of yourself, but also being mindful of yourself contextualized within the mindfulness of another.

**N: Your paper mentions that researchers who practice reflexivity often use methods like member-checking or memoing. Can you discuss these methods**

**and where you feel they fall short as ways to help researchers become more reflexive?**

I think that there are ways for those methods to be very successful modes of reflexivity. The problem is they're often presented as if just doing them is a solution. But memoing or member-checking are not forms of reflexivity in and of themselves. Exactly how to do reflexivity is a challenge for folks, and even people like Pillow and Fine—like people who really talk about these concepts—will themselves acknowledge it's not clear how to teach others to be reflexive.

I did tons of member-checking when I started out as a researcher, but a lot of that was really just about checking that box so I could say I had included participants and their approval. But that wasn't particularly reflexive, because I wasn't actively engaged in examining and considering what it meant to involve them, or the degrees to which their voice mattered relative to what I was choosing to do.

So, it's not that those techniques cannot lead to successful reflexivity. What matters is the intent. Because you can member check and memo and make it very researcher-centered, but that's not the point.

**N: In your paper, you focus on transcription—and particularly re-transcribing, or slowing down the transcription process—as a method for reflexivity. Could you discuss how you feel transcription is valuable for reflexivity?**

One of the reasons I think transcription is useful for reflexivity is because the bulk of qualitative researchers do it. So it's not really asking people to layer on one more thing. Transcription is a laborious process. I mean there are few people who would say, oh my god, I love to transcribe. But because it's so laborious, it really does force you to revisit and relive moments that just zoomed by during the interaction. It forces you to revisit and relive the things that were said, the ways you said them, and ways that participants said them.

I think that the mindset is what's important though. If you go into transcription in the way that I did initially, just trying to get through it, no reflexivity is going to

happen. There's nothing inherently reflexive about transcribing. You have to make the deliberate decision to be thoughtful about the ways that your interactions with the participants mattered, or shaped, what was said and what wasn't said. And so, for me re-transcribing, provided that opportunity.

**N: To what extent do you understand reflexivity as something that's happening in the moment vs. something that's happening in retrospect?**

I think it's both. Reflexivity is a researcher skill that needs to be learned like anything else, and the more that I've engaged in being reflexive retrospectively, the better I've got at doing it in the now. It's also helped me plan to be reflexive in the future, by thinking how I'm going to interact with, approach, or include participants. I do think it's important—especially for novice researchers—to understand that if you have an interview or a research moment where you realize you were not reflexive, that's not necessarily a failure. It presents a valuable opportunity to think about how you would re-approach the moment. That's the bulk of my dissertation data frankly.

**N: In the paper, you discuss a specific interview you re-transcribed using Jeffersonian conventions, which use symbols to note details such as pauses or intonation. Can you talk a little about this process and what you learned?**

I think the reason that Maureen and I felt this interview was a good example of reflexivity was because when I initially transcribed the interview I felt I had killed it. And then I had to transcribe something for a class using Jeffersonian conventions, and since I was using the interview for a manuscript, I figured I'd just go back and re-transcribe it and see if I found something new.

When I started re-transcribing the interview though—because part of what I had to attend to were where there were pauses, or sighs, or inhalations of breath and so on—I realized that a lot of the sections where the interviewee seemed confident, were actually moments riddled with long hesitations, or where the volume of her speech would drop as if she was questioning what she was saying. It helped me realize I wasn't being reflexive in the ways I had thought, and it gave me a greater appreciation for how much the interview cost her—how hard it

was for her—and how much she had been willing to be uncomfortable for the purpose of engaging with me in that interview. It also gave me a greater degree of respect and appreciation for the work that she was trying to do in her classroom. Because on the surface, she wasn't that successful of a teacher relative to the research project. But, when I started being mindful of *the other*, and recognized the ways who she was and where she was mattered, I realized the ways she was killing it.

That transcription was a big learning moment for me as a researcher, because this was an interview where I got really great data. The whole transcript was just so important for my research project. But there's a lot of humanness to this interaction that I completely missed in my initial effort to turn it into useable data. In some respects, I think that's the core of reflexivity: recognizing the humanity—and not just your own humanity or your own subjectivities and actions, but theirs too. As well as recognizing the ways that who they are and what they're bringing really matter.

**N: Can you talk about how practicing reflexivity has affected the research that you do?**

The process of re-transcribing that interview was such a learning experience for me that I started to go back and revisit a lot of the data from that study. I wouldn't necessarily re-transcribe it, but just revisit, and sort of sit with it. I started to realize, for example, there were a number of focus groups where racism was really an issue. But I wasn't attuned to that initially, because I was more focused on getting the data and being a good thoughtful researcher.

One of the things that I realized I wasn't doing, because I was not being mindful of the other people involved, was I'm a white woman, and I was blind the predominance of whiteness in the research moment. I identify as a queer woman, and that's something I was always mindful about, and that I was always probing. But as I became more reflexive, I recognized how my forms of identity that occupy privileged spaces mattered. And I started to interrogate, how does this person being white matter? How does this person not being white matter? How does it matter that I'm white?

That lead me to be thoughtful about what that means beforehand, relative to the questions I chose to ask, or the people I chose to recruit. What that meant in the moment, relative to the ways I interacted with participants, and who I encouraged to have talking space, or the degrees to which participants felt able to talk about particular topics. And then after the fact, being thoughtful about how I communicate my own internalized assumptions. So, I've learned to be thoughtful in how I interrogate those things.

Because of this, racial identity has become a bigger part of my research. And a lot of the recent publications I've had have examined my own racial identity in relation to participants. That's come from reflexivity, not from some extensive lit review I did, or some sudden wokeness. It's because I was better able to appreciate the degrees to which who the participants are, don't just matter in the research, but also matter relative to the interactions that they and I have.

**N: What advice might you give someone who wanted to try using transcription as space to practice reflexivity?**

A great place to start is approaching transcription as iterative, as a revisitation, as a re-examination and return to moments and encounters—as we did through our article. This approach might be useful to re-examine moments that really “worked,” or moments when something felt “off,” while intentionally considering how those moments were co-produced between you and the participant(s).

**References**

- Cannon, S. O. (2018). Teasing transcription: Iterations in the liminal space between voice and text. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 24(8), 1–12.
- Pillow, W. (2003). Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16, 175–196.
- Shelton, S. A. & Flint, M. A. (2019, in press). The spacetimemattering and Frankenstein-esque nature of interview transcriptions. *Qualitative Research Journal*.
- Shelton, S. A. & Flint, M. A. (2019). The value of transcription in encouraging researcher reflexivity. *SAGE Research Methods Cases*, 1-11.

**Methods  
News  
and  
Notes: II**  
NGoodman@edc.org

**"Democratizing Research through Collaborative Data Analysis – A Proposal"**

**by Karen Ross, University of Massachusetts, Boston, & Meagan Call-Cummings, George Mason University**

Over the past year or so, the two of us have been discussing and writing about issues related to collaborative research practices that democratize the inquiry process. Through our work, we have read through much of the literature on reflexivity and participatory research, which primarily addresses two areas of emphasis: the importance of, and researchers engaging in, reflexive practice, in order to better understand where/how their research has missed opportunities for more democratic practice; *or* the collaborative nature of data construction, that is, co-construction of data.

What seems to be missing from most of the discussion about collaboration, however, is a focus on data analysis. In other words: how can *data analysis* be undertaken collaboratively? And how can we call our research collaborative if collaboration takes place primarily at the level of research design, or through data collection, but without opportunities for engaging in analytical or interpretive practices in a way that authentically engages our research participants and reallocates or redistributes power within the research process?

Some of this discussion does exist, of course. Indeed, there is a fair bit of discussion about the *need* for more collaborative data analysis. Yet, there is little written about what can be done in order to make the analysis process more equitable among all participants in the research process. We are encouraged by a few standout examples of fully collaborative research undertakings, including the work undertaken by the *Public Science Project* [PSP] ([www.publicscienceproject.org](http://www.publicscienceproject.org)), the NYC-based collaborative that

supports community-based research initiatives and engages in, among other things, collaborative statistical analysis, “sidewalk science” efforts, and community analysis of data collected. As researchers who share the values and commitments of PSP, we argue that more emphasis needs to be placed on finding concrete opportunities and frameworks for collaborative analytical processes.

Our own work over the past year has explored possibilities for collaborative reconstructive horizon analysis, drawing on work by Phil Carspecken (1996), but we are aware that more options are needed for engaging actively in collaborative analysis. Thus, we raise the question here: how might we as qualitative scholars engage more collaboratively with our research participants throughout the research process? What activities or concrete tasks can help us make the research process as a whole more democratic by opening up the space for analysis to take place more collaboratively, in a way that centers relationships among co-researchers rather than continuing to reinforce a researcher/participant binary?

We are aware that just as there are possibilities that collaborative analysis can create, there are ways in which it may stand in tension with needs for a project to be perceived as “rigorous,” “high quality,” or “valid,” according to standards of other researchers, professional organizations, or whole disciplines. Thus, along with our call for more concrete collaborative analysis options, we call for an expanded view of how we might judge the rigor of such work. Indeed, we believe that a more robust set of frameworks and options available for engaging in authentic analysis *with* others, can lead to stronger findings that are based in the experiences and interpretations of all co-researchers.

## References

Carspecken, P. F. (2013). *Critical ethnography in educational research: A theoretical and practical guide*. Routledge.

# The Long Look

## **"Critical qualitative inquiry and methodological awareness: The effectiveness of face-to-face interviews in changing/ enhancing participants' beliefs and practices"** by Abdulghani Muthanna

Reprinted from *International Journal of Research Studies in Education*, 2019, Volume 8 Number 2, 59-66

### **1. Introduction**

The outset of 2009 marked the author's critical qualitative inquiries about different life issues, particularly academic matters! Without prior knowledge of the 'philosophical fieldnotes' (Bridges-Rhoads, 2018), the author took down field notes with attempts to connect them (Cleave, 2018) together as well. The beginning of publication of scholarly articles in 2011 encouraged the author to keep analyzing published research, consequently increasing the inquiries. One critical inquiry concerned the use of interviews. This was at the time when the author was trying to find logical reasons behind the use of interviews for data collection for a master thesis. Conducting interviews is not an easy activity, which demands sound knowledge about sound interview practices. Reading different articles and books, particularly the book by Seidman (2005), was very helpful but also led to noting down some critical inquiries that kept resonating in the author's mind. The author kept on triangulating data (observations, interviews, and documents/content) to strengthen the data and the findings. However, the main question regarding the use of interviews remained unanswered. Why do researchers use interviews? The author also recently posed this question on the web platform ResearchGate. The answers he received all conveyed a similar idea that, it is to collect sufficient data, which assist researchers in answering their main research questions. 'Using interviews in critical qualitative inquiry is not merely for collecting sufficient data': this was/is the author's thought.

Critical qualitative inquiry serves many purposes, among which the understanding of social phenomena is a priority. Such inquiry focuses on exploring and providing insights concerning poverty, social injustice, inequality, and human oppression issues, to name a few. Critical qualitative inquiry is widely used in educational research (e.g. Kandiko, 2012; Muthanna & Sang, 2018b). In this critical qualitative inquiry, researchers can employ a variety of techniques to collect data. The most prominent data collection tools are observations and interviews. Interviews are an effective critical qualitative technique for studying institutions' educational policies and their implementation processes, research activities, and learning and teaching practices through exploring the lived

experiences of affiliates (administrators, teachers, and students). Researchers of different academic disciplines can employ interviewing for various academic purposes (Fontana & Frey, 1994). Differently put, interviews are employed by researchers in conducting phenomenological, grounded theory, feminism, case studies, etc. During the interviewing interaction, respondents' communication of their experiences, thoughts and beliefs departs from their stream of consciousness that informs the 'reality' ultimately sought after by researchers (Seidman, 2006).

Some researchers might argue that this is the mission of action research. Of course, action research urges self-reflections but this first depends on researchers' collaboration and reflections towards addressing research objectives (International Collaboration for Participatory Health Research [ICPHR], 2013; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000 as cited in Cordeiro, Soares, & Rittenmeyer, 2017). Further, action research publications do not reach every teacher, student or administrator. In addition to action research, researchers also use interviews in conducting feminist, phenomenological, hermeneutic, or ethnographic studies. The main purpose of conducting such interviews is to collect sufficient data, or to develop knowledge through an 'epistemic interview' according to Brinkmann (2007). The development of a strong methodological self-consciousness is important for qualitative researchers in collecting and analyzing the sources and quality of data (Charmaz, 2017).

In addition to the methodological self-consciousness (Charmaz, 2017), this article intends to raise a strong critical, methodological 'self-awareness' ('awareness-raising interview') among critical qualitative inquirers towards making a change in or enhancing participants' beliefs and practices. This methodological 'self-awareness' of making a change in participants' beliefs and practices (during the interview(s)) critically needs to be established as a very critical goal of every educational research. Instead of merely collecting data from participants, educational researchers need to leave positive impressions on their participants, and through interview discussions, interviewees can elicit or learn some significant points/solutions about their present and/or future challenges or problems. Not only can educational researchers learn from their participants, but participants can also learn from their interviewers. With this in mind and in practice, this mutual interaction will eventually have a very positive impact on interviewers and interviewees, leading to a positive reform in the overall educational processes. Therefore, interviewing can be an effective and immediate methodological technique for changing the behaviors and attitudes of teachers, students, administrators, and many others.

Educational researchers working as instructors also need to instill this important methodological awareness in the hearts and minds of their student researchers to gain the quickest impact of their studies. In other words, assisting participants in positively changing their educational/teaching beliefs and practices, or enhancing and advancing

them should be the first goal of any educational research- adopting the approach of critical qualitative inquiry and the face-to-face in-depth interviews. Further, interviewing has a quick influence on reforming some educational policies, or their implementation. For example, when researchers ask interviewees about a particular law or strategy that does not exist at their own institution, this may encourage interviewees to stipulate or formulate and implement such a law or strategy at their institution, or at least suggest its presence at the institution. Further, when researchers interview teachers about, for example, their teaching philosophy statements (which they do not have), the interviewers can provide several examples of teaching philosophy statements, highlighting the importance of developing one for every teacher educator and teacher student. By so doing, the interviewees will consciously learn to develop their own teaching philosophies and this is an immediate change leading to a positive change in teaching practices.

## **2. Research Design**

This article follows a critical qualitative design, reflecting the author's experience in conducting qualitative studies. Reflecting upon one's experience is critically important in the development of research methods and their application. The author also made use of some of the formal and informal interviews he had with many participants. Using the participants' quotes in supporting the argument is valuable in enhancing the truth after which researchers are seeking in all research fields. Below is a brief reflection of the interview types according to applicability and structure.

### *2.1 Interview Types: Applicability and Structure*

The interviewing type differs according to its 'applicability' and 'structure'. For applicability, telephone calls, social media programs (e.g. Skype, IMO, Facebook, etc.), face-to-face individual or group, audio-recorded interaction, and/or self-administered or emailed questionnaire are types of interview. Concerning the structure and the depth of exploration, an interview can be 'structured', 'unstructured' or 'semi-structured'. Structured interviews contain standardized questions with no intention to collect in-depth data. Unstructured interviews are open-ended, general questions with a possible emergence of specific questions (probes). In these two types, the participants are asked the same questions and in the same order. On the contrary, semi-structured interviews include questions seeking in-depth details, and several specific questions arise based on the participants' responses (Fontana & Frey, 1994). The questions of any interview type are preferred to be in the form of Wh-question.

Regardless of the different approaches under the umbrella of the qualitative tradition, and the different types of interviews based on structure and applicability, this article focuses on the use of face to face, in person semi-structured interviews. Researchers use semi-structured interviews with the main purpose of collecting sufficient data to answer their research questions or to test their research hypotheses. By realizing the reality of the

participants' self-reflections on their interview questions later, and the occurrence of true conversations with their souls and minds, many researchers conduct second and third interviews with the same participants and with the same purpose of collecting more data that can help saturate their inquiries.

### **3. Critical Points (findings) and Discussion**

Below is a brief discussion of the critical points (findings) to be considered by researchers while conducting semi-structured, in person interviews.

#### *3.1 Conducting a semi-structured interview: Critical points*

Researchers need to develop critical questions that do not harm the participants psychologically or irritate them in any way. Having good knowledge of interview construction (asking good questions), and some training is essential for interviewers (Yin, 2009). In the phenomenological approach, Schuman (1982) reported on the presence of three interview series: first interview establishes the context of participants' experience; second allows respondents to reconstruct their experience; and third urges them to reflect on the meaning of their experience (Schuman, 1982, as cited in Seidman, 2006, p. 17). The author argues that these interview series relate to the way of structuring the interview questions; the number of interviews depends on the agreement between the interviewer and the interviewee, and the scope of the interview topic. Researchers can ask all these questions within one interview session, though.

After piloting one's interview questions, selecting participants, getting their consent, deciding on time and place (mostly by participants), the interviewer needs to strengthen his or her rapport with their participants. This strengthening may take several informal meetings prior to conducting the face-to-face, in person semi-structured interview. Such meetings are designed to gain the interviewee's trust, to enhance data quality, validity and reliability (Punch, 2005) and to ease the process of interaction. Checking the audio-recording tools ahead of time and ensuring that all is well is essential for interviewing. Possessing good listening and note-taking skills is also significant as they lead to understanding and inquiring about any clarification of certain expressions/thoughts, or asking further questions (See Seidman, 2006 for details of other roles). Seidman (2006) advises interviewers to avoid reinforcing the participants' responses. The author argues that this is applicable in some contexts but not all. In other words, this actually depends on the participants' culture. In some cultures, nodding one's head or moving one's eyes is a sign for the participant to continue their discourse regardless whether it is right or not. In some other culture, some silence should prevail after one's talk. We are aiming to engage with participants to collect sufficient data so we need to relate to the participants in all ways possible. Otherwise, the interviewees might feel they are not being followed and/or that their expressions are of less value. Using such techniques, however, does not prevent the researcher from inquiring or asking for clarifications when appropriate.

Researchers need to not only aim at collecting as much data as possible but also focus on building full understanding of the issues discussed. This is important for both researchers and participants. When an issue has been clarified, and both researchers and participants understand it well, they consciously or unconsciously help raise self-awareness and reflections that come into practice sooner than later. Below is a living experience example of how such an interview helps change participants' beliefs and practices:

- *Why do you teach only one course of 'English Language Teaching' in the undergraduate English Program?* - Interviewer.

- *Well, our program focuses on teaching English literature and linguistics but recently, the program developers have thought it is better to teach undergraduates such a course that gives students some information on the process of teaching. Such a course is taught in the second semester of the fourth year. I think one is better than nothing, right? What do you think?* - Department Chairperson.

- *I agree that teaching such a course is a good idea but I am afraid that one course is not sufficient at all. Teaching knowledge is very wide and teaching its basics needs to be taught in several courses. For example, in level three, there should be at least two courses: the course of 'Introduction to English Language Teaching I' is taught in the first semester of level three, and the same but advanced one is taught in the second semester. In level four, it is valuable to provide students with two 'practicum' courses; one course in each semester. I think that such planning will help students get some theoretical and practical knowledge about teaching..., Otherwise, the students' reflections will be negative, leading to constructing weak teaching identities, ...* - Interviewer.

- *... I value your idea and I think it sounds great to be applied in our program if they want to really help undergraduates gain some theoretical and practical knowledge of teaching. I will put your idea on the table for our next departmental meeting.* - Department Chairperson.

The interviewer needed to highlight the idea that initial teacher education program students should be critically reflexive on their immediate situational practices (Smith, 2013), and that when such reflections are positive, they would enhance their identities as good prospective teachers. This notion of critical reflexivity cannot be gained within one course. Therefore, the above discourses show the critical importance of sharing thoughts and providing the interviewees with some logical, appropriate response that raises their immediate self-awareness about the issue under discussion.

### *3.2 Interview and analysis: Interrelated processes*

It is critically important that researchers review previous studies systematically. Among many purposes, the review helps accumulate knowledge, find some literature gap, or/and

prepare research interview questions. Experienced interviewers with a firm grasp of the issues under study, and with high flexibility and sensitiveness can easily deal with newly encountered situations or contradictory evidence (Yin, 2009). While constructivists confirmed that going to the field with some preconceptions derived from literature review is inescapable and necessary (e.g. Charmaz, 2014a, 2014b) and reflects that of 'theoretical agnosticism' (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003), objectivists confirmed the opposite (e.g. Glaser, 2013). Instead of using the concept of 'preconceptions', the author of the current article proposes the use of 'accumulative knowledge' that is critical to conducting an effective interview.

Effective interviewers, based on the accumulative knowledge, are critical inquirers who can differentiate between the truths and lies immediately. In other words, this accumulative knowledge of the topic to be studied is essential for preparing the initial interview questions and for immediate self-reflections during and after the interview. This high reflexivity of researchers helps scrutinize their understanding of the issues studied in comparison with previously accumulated knowledge (Harding, 1991). With this in mind and in practice, the author confirms that the analysis process starts from the point of reviewing the literature, preparing the interview questions, and during and after the interview conduction. With the application of these research data collection critical procedures, researchers would gain critical findings and convincing conclusions. Differently put, the processes of interview and analysis are interrelated and support each other. Of course, a deeper analysis strictly follows the conduction of interviews, but this also depends on the development of strong self-reflections researchers have made during and immediately after the interview. For further trustworthiness of the data and findings, researchers can conduct the same interview after some period.

### *3.3 Evidence of raising participants' self-awareness*

Research is conducted for many academic and/or personal purposes, ranging from gaining higher education degrees, receiving financial support, showing deep research interests, securing jobs, to getting academic promotions (e.g. Feng, Gulbahar, & Dawang, 2013; Lee & Lee, 2013). Regardless of these different purposes, all researchers actually go to the field in quest of answers to their research questions. This is normal, as this is the nature of social and educational research. However, with the abundance of publications that might not be read at all (See Završnik, Kokol, del Torso, & Vosner, 2016 for details), researchers critically need to upgrade their research purposes. Critical qualitative inquirers have the opportunity to meet and critically inquire participants about certain issues. In the end, they report 'life documents that [for example] speak to the human dignity, the suffering, the hopes, the dreams, the lives gained, and the lives lost by the people we [they] study' (Denzin, 2017, p. 15). However, before reporting to the scholarly community, qualitative inquirers face challenges related to the criticality of the issues

under study, the approaches for addressing socio-political problems, and the conduction of empirical qualitative research (Flick, 2017).

As a result, qualitative inquirers need to critically think of how to help their participants critically raise self-awareness upon the issues to be discussed. This does not prevent critical qualitative researchers from continuing their research and reporting it to others, though! It, however, helps them achieve one important research purpose immediately; that is raising their methodological awareness and the participants' self-awareness towards appropriate thoughts and practices. They need to aim to help participants think critically and clearly point out to different solutions that might interest the interviewees immediately. Therefore, the researchers' first main aim should be to help change or enhance the beliefs and practices of participants, and at a later stage, the researchers can disseminate their findings to those who (have access) might apply in their similar situations. Said this, the researchers achieve what they actually seek: changing of practices and beliefs or enhancing and advancing them positively.

Meeting with some participants after a long period of conducting face-to-face, in person interviews, the author was glad to learn that the interviews were helpful in changing their beliefs and practices. Following are some of their conversations:

*- You know, I thank you for that in-depth interview about teaching philosophies. It raised my awareness about the high importance of conceiving a good teaching philosophy, and practicing it as much as possible - Interviewee 1.*

*- Welcome back! ... When I see you, I remember that interview we had. It was effective in making me reflect upon my teaching practices. I learnt a lot from that interview and I feel I am a different teacher now. All thanks are due to you - Interviewee 2.*

*- ... Your interview changed my beliefs about many issues including the proper treatment of teachers and administrators. I needed to change some practices that go well with the nature of our institution. I applied that concept of 'reward or punish technique' and it worked well in the institution. With strict application of rules and regulations, as you mentioned in the interview, I am sure that the outcomes are greater - Interviewee 3.*

The above quotes clearly refer to the positive impressions the interviewees have conceived about the interviews. They also report the most important point related to changing beliefs and/or practices concerned with their policies and/or practices of teaching, research or administration. It is critical that researchers, critical qualitative inquirers in particular, need to help their participants critically think of how to change a particular belief or practice or enhance it in the quickest, possible ways.

#### **4. Concluding remarks and implications**

The world is changing and it is unfortunate that some societies still hold traditional beliefs concerning, for example, teaching and administration activities and/or practices. Scholarly writings are significant and create awareness and responsibility among writers and readers (Smislaert & Jalonen, 2018). Readers (administrators, teachers and students) also need to read as a response to the ‘calls to order’ or ‘useless reading’ (Cleave, 2018). However, the main problem is that not all administrators, teachers and students all over the globe are researchers (or even good writers/readers) or have chances to attend conferences or read publications for the sake of updating their knowledge. Further, many societies suffer from internal and external conflicts that have led to the abundant existence of many socio-political problems, and the power cuts, (e.g. Muthanna & Karaman, 2014; Muthanna & Sang, 2018a) including the unavailability of internet connection to at least surf those journals with free access.

The consideration of the above-mentioned dilemmas forces researchers to rethink their main mission towards helping such participants (students, teachers, or administrators) who need a change or enhancement. Before studying educational issues and sharing their findings in conferences or journals, researchers, critical qualitative inquirers in particular, need to upgrade their key research purposes to include the notion of having ‘methodological self-awareness’ that assists in changing or enhancing participants' beliefs and practices. Instead of waiting for the findings to be published in journals to which such participants might not have access, the achievement of such proposed research goal will have an immediate positive impact on both the researchers and participants' beliefs and practices. Having sound knowledge concerning the issues to be studied, and the employment of critical qualitative inquiry using face-to-face, in person semi-structured interviews will lead to better research achievements.

It is imperative that such an ultimate research goal of raising ‘methodological self-awareness’ in changing or enhancing participants’ beliefs and practices demands its inclusion into the educational programs’ policies and activities. Developing and implementing this research notion would drive researchers/inquirers to have an immediate impact of their research in actuality. Differently phrased, this would lead to visible activities and practices related to the issues to be investigated. These improvements would strengthen the overall quality of the basic and higher education institutions.

##### *4.1 Research significance*

The significance of this article lies in the fact that it addresses the importance of raising 'methodological awareness' among qualitative inquirers of any research field, especially those who would employ face-to-face, in person semi-structured interviews. With this in mind and in practice, the beliefs and/or practices of participants can be changed or enhanced immediately without the need for attending conferences or reading published

works as many participants in the world have no access to both conferences and journals! Further, many nations in this world suffer from internal and/or external conflicts, leading to power cuts, and absence of internet connection. This action also prevents researchers or even teachers and students from accessing journals with free access. Therefore, this article motivates all qualitative inquirers to bear in mind that they need to have solid knowledge so that the interaction with their participants becomes of value to their participants. While it is clear that researchers aim to collect data from their participants, it is also important to raise their methodological awareness towards the need for providing their participants with some data (critical suggestions and recommendations) related to the phenomena under study.

## References

- Bridges-Rhoads, S. (2018). Philosophical field notes. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 24(9), 646-660. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800417733498>
- Brinkmann, S. (2007). Could interviews be epistemic? An alternative to qualitative opinion polling. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13(8), 1116–1138. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800407308222>
- Charmaz, K. (2014a). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Charmaz, K. (2014b). Grounded theory in global perspective: Reviews by international researchers. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20, 1074-1084. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800414545235>
- Charmaz, K. (2017). The power of constructivist grounded theory for critical inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 23, 34-45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800416657105>
- Cleave, J. V. (2018). Engaging uselessness: Philosophical reading and dwelling in the excess. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 24(9), 681-686. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800417732092>
- Cordeiro, L., Soares, C. B., & Rittenmeyer, L. (2017). Unscrambling method and methodology in action research traditions: theoretical conceptualization of praxis and emancipation. *Qualitative Research*, 17(4), 395-407. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794116674771>
- Denzin, N. K. (2017). Critical qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 23(1), 8-16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800416681864>
- Feng, H., Gulbahar, H. B., & Dawang, H. (2013). From 'import' to 'import-export' oriented internationalization; the impact of national policy on scholarly publication in China. *Language Policy*, 12, 251-272. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-013-9285-8>
- Flick, U. (2017). Challenges for a new critical qualitative inquiry: Introduction to the special issue. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 23(1), 3-7. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-013-9285-8>
- Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (1994). Interviewing: The art of science. In Denzin & Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 361-376). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Glaser, B. (2013). *No preconceptions: The grounded theory dictum*. Mill Valley, CA: The Sociology Press.
- Harding, S. (1991). *Whose science? Whose knowledge?* Milton Keynes, England: Open University Press.
- Henwood, K., & Pidgeon, N. (2003). Grounded theory in psychological research. In P. M. Camic, J. E. Rhodes, & L. Yardley (Eds.), *Qualitative research in psychology: Expanding perspectives in methodology and design* (pp. 131-155). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10595-008>
- International Collaboration for Participatory Health Research (ICPHR). (2013). Position Paper 1:

- What is participatory health research?* ICPHR, Berlin.
- Kandiko, C. B. (2012). Leadership and creativity in higher education: The role of interdisciplinarity. *London Review of Education*, 10(2), 191-200.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14748460.2012.691283>
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (2000). Participatory action research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 567–605). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lee, H., & Lee, K. (2013). Publish (in international indexed journals) or perish: Neoliberal ideology in a Korean university. *Language Policy*, 12(3), 215-230.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-012-9267->
- Muthanna, A., & Sang, G. (2018a). Conflict at higher education institutions: Factors and solutions for Yemen. *A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 48(2), 206-223.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2017.1298434>
- Muthanna, A., & Sang, G. (2018b). Brain drain in higher education: Critical voices on teacher education in Yemen. *London Review of Education*, 16(2), 296-307.  
<https://doi.org/10.18546/LRE.16.2.09>
- Muthanna, A., & Karaman, A. C. (2014). Higher education challenges in Yemen: Discourses on English teacher education. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 37, 40-47.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2014.02.002>
- Punch, K. F. (2005). *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches* (2nd ed.), London: Sage.
- Schuman, D. (1982). *Policy analysis, education, and everyday life*. Lexington, MA: Heath.
- Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social Sciences* (3rd ed.) Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Smissaert, C., & Jalonen, K. (2018). Responsibility in academic writing: A dialogue of the dead. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 24(9), 704-711. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800417734008>
- Smith, H. J. (2013). A critique of the teaching standards in England (1984-2012): Discourses of equality and maintaining the status quo. *Journal of Education Policy*, 28(4), 427-448.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2012.742931>
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.) Washington DC: Sage Publications.
- Završnik, J., Kokol, P., del Torso, S., & Vosner, B. (2016). Citation context and impact of 'sleeping beauties' in a pediatric research. *Journal of International Medical Research*, 44(6), 1212-1221. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03000605166721>

