

The Writing of Research as Artistic Practice

Dr Peter A. de Vries, *University of Technology, Sydney*

This paper examines how educational research can be presented in a creative way, through alternative modes of representation such as the novel, short story and poetry. Thus the writing of research becomes artistic practice, where the researcher-writer acts as novelist, poet, short story writer. The paper specifically addresses how this occurred in the writing of a short story titled *Leaving Teaching*, which centres on the issue of male primary school music teacher attrition. Issues about writing in this mode that are addressed include justifying such a presentation as “research”, relevance to a wide readership, and personal benefits for the researcher-writer.

David had a grade five class. The kids had just come into class from lunch. They were hot and sweaty, as was David. The city was going through a heatwave. “Okay,” said David, “we’ve got some maths to catch up on.”

Half the class groaned. The other half were too exhausted to groan. “Mr Williams, we’re always catching up on maths,” said Josh, who was one of his best when it came to maths.

“Tell me about it,” said David.

The class laughed. And David realised that he’d said this aloud – something which he’d only meant to say in his head. He wiped sweat from his forehead, realising he’d been wiping sweat throughout February and into most of March ever since he’d been teaching. Afternoons were unbearable, too hot to operate in. For him and his kids. But despite annual requests/demands from teachers and parents for air conditioning, none came. The school did not have the money for it, and despite endless promises the state government still had not come through with any funding.

“What about singing?” said Josh. “Instead of maths.”

Half a dozen children nodded, brightening up.

“Yeah,” voices murmured. Voices soon joined by others at the thought of something other than maths.

“I’ll get your guitar,” said Josh, standing up before David could put a lid on it.

“Okay,” he said, smiling despite himself. Despite knowing that Bob McDonald, his teaching partner, would not be happy. Bob had already begun a maths lesson with his class. David knew the sound of his class singing would soon distract the children on the other side of the double teaching area. “Sam, close the folding doors please,” said David.

Bob was not a fan of music. “It’s a frills subject,” he’d once told David. “Like art and dance and drama. They’ve got a place – the school concert at the end of the year, when we’ve finished with the real teaching.”

It wasn’t the most sensitive thing to say to David, considering the amount of music teaching he did in the school. Although he had a grade five class, he only taught them two days a week. The remaining three days he taught the rest of the school music; half an hour for each class. Meanwhile his grade five class was taught by two supply teachers on the three days he taught music. As much as David loved teaching music, he felt guilty about leaving his class in other hands for so long.

David moved to what his class called their “Music Space”, a corner of the room that was carpeted, with musical instruments in boxes and posters of musicians and musical instruments on the walls.

“Okay,” said David, “let’s warm up with ‘The Underwear Song’.”

It was a class favourite – a novelty song, an easy one to sing.

The class sung it once. Requests came to sing it again. David complied. But half way through the second rendition the folding door opened and in strode Bob. David stopped strumming the guitar, but his class kept singing until they reached the end of the song.

“Mister Williams, I am trying to teach next door. Could you please have the courtesy not to indulge in music at this point in time? According to your teaching timetable your class’s music time is nine on a Wednesday morning. You may correct me if I’m wrong, but I do not think it is nine o’clock on a Wednesday morning.”

David went red in the face. His voice caught in his throat. And before he could find it, Bob had left the room.

He looked at his class. Some waited for him to speak. Others were looking at the departing Bob. David was awash with embarrassment and humiliation. He briefly closed his eyes. When he opened them his embarrassment had turned to anger – at Bob’s pettiness, at the heat, at the lack of support he got from the administration team in trying to teach music in the school *and* run his own class.

It was at that moment when David first contemplated throwing it all in.

This is the beginning of a short story I wrote titled *Leaving Teaching*. It is my way of representing research in an artistic way. In this paper I will discuss issues relating to such representation, which means I am turning the conference theme upside down – rather than examining artistic practice as research I will be examining how research can be represented in an artistic way.

Leaving Teaching addresses the issue of male teacher attrition in primary schools, and specifically attrition of male music teachers. This is an issue close to my heart, as I spent ten years teaching music in primary schools and witnessed many male primary teachers – both generalist primary and music specialists – leave the profession. I am passionate about this issue and want to present it to as wider audience as possible. I believe in telling a *story* a wider audience of readers will engage with the subject matter than if the issue is “researched” and written up as an article in an academic journal. How many working teachers read such journals? How many school principals read such journals? How many politicians and education policy makers read such journals? And how many members of the community – the parents of children in our schools – read these journals? Simply put, academic journals have a very limited audience.

Laurel Richardson (1997) wrote, “for thirty years I have yawned my way through numerous supposedly exemplary qualitative studies” (p. 87). She is one researcher who has represented qualitative “data” in an artistic mode, namely poetry. For example, she has written a text of conversations/interviews that took place with an unmarried mother as a poem. In doing this, Richardson distilled the collected data into her very own personal text. Such a text was used because she found the writing style and reporting conventions in sociology texts to be “deadening”, with sociologists trying to “suppress (their own) life” (1992, p. 131).

Richardson is not alone. During the 1990s artistic modes of representing the many and varied experiences of teaching came about (e.g., Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Miller & Kantrov, 1998), allowing researchers to portray aspects of their own and others’ teaching experiences in the form of novels, short stories and poetry. Using such modes of artistic representation in telling teacher stories can allow the writer-researcher to “investigate the problematic rather than reduce it to a more manageable explanation of what occurs in the classroom” (McMahon, 2000, p. 138). Writing about teaching in such a way has the potential to provide “the reader with new ways of seeing” (Pirto, 2002, p. 441). That is, this form of representing teaching becomes more than observation, documentation, and data analysis.

Writing in these modes is artistic practice in its own right. I consider myself to be a writer as well as a music educator – of short stories, children’s fiction and novels. Half of my PhD dissertation was a novel that documented my experiences as a classroom music teacher. Thus wanting to write research in a mode other than a traditional research article format is something that appeals to me. I get to be the “creative” me as a writer as well as the “researcher” me, and hopefully the end result is something that will engage an audience and be relevant to an audience who have a vested interest in the issue being addressed, which in this instance is male teacher attrition.

The Research Issues

So where is the research question in this study? I would like to think that the short story generates the research question/s. That is, the reader can extract the question or questions from the story as it progresses. Let us not assume readers are unintelligent souls who need everything spelt out for them. Let the readers do some work! Suck them in with an interesting story and let them “make sense” of the story; let them situate themselves in the story and find the question/s.

And what about research method? This obviously needs to be addressed. It is not something that can easily be integrated into the story, so it is something that in this case has to be presented alongside the story. The dilemmas of the protagonist David are a synthesis of dilemmas I had experienced and that two other male primary school teachers who had also taught music in primary schools had experienced. The decision to combine the experiences of three male teachers who left the primary school classroom in the form of the one character, David, was made because as a writer I felt that the multiple experiences would enhance the possibility of the story touching universal chords with readers involved in the teaching profession.

Initially we individually wrote down dilemmas that we, as male primary – and specifically male primary teachers who teach music – faced, and which led to exiting the profession. Not surprisingly, a number of the issues we individually identified overlapped. However, there were still certain issues that were only identified by one or two of us. I wanted to “pack in” all of these issues so that the reader got as broad a picture as possible of issues effecting male teacher attrition. With these issues identified and

teased out, I sat down to write the short story. For this McMahon's (2000) criteria for judging an artistic account of teaching were adapted:

- 1) has an artistic mode of representation been used to capture the situation?
- 2) does the story have the capacity to elicit response? (e.g., is it aesthetic enough to warrant interpretation?)
- 3) does the writer's interrogation of the aesthetic rendering yield greater insights? (e.g., does the interpretation touch universal chords?) (p 138).

With the short story written, I asked the two ex-teachers to assess the story according to McMahon's criteria, and subsequently made modifications based on their assessments. In addition I wanted to know if my representation was a *credible* representation of their experiences. For the most part they agreed it was. Some parts of the story were "tweaked" – particularly dialogue between teachers.

With the short story finished my research was complete, ready for public consumption. Right?

"But what about data analysis and conclusions?"

What about them? An entire short story is presented as the "research." Again I say let us not assume readers are unintelligent – let them read the story and situate themselves in the story and take from it that which has personal resonance. That is, let the readers do their own analysis. It is not as if readers do not engage in such activities. When we buy a novel and read it we do not expect an "analysis" of the novel to be attached to the novel. We take what we want from the novel by analysing it ourselves. So why not engage a similar principle for the representation of research in the form of a short story, poem or novel? Why should the researcher be in that privileged position where s/he forces their interpretation on the reader? Instead of focusing on the researcher, let us focus on the potential audience for research.

Relevance

In presenting to pre-service teachers short stories and excerpts from novels that address teaching issues, I have found a willingness on their part to engage in such texts that is not apparent in their reading and critiquing of traditional research-based articles from academic journals. A case in point is the issue of teacher attrition. I recently presented students with six research articles that examined the issue, as well as the short story *Leaving Teaching*. In group discussions on this issue students continually referred to the short story rather than the research articles. Comments such as "I've seen teachers like David out on prac, I know that sort of teacher"; and "When I get my first teaching position I'll have to watch out for things that David had trouble with like managing his time between teaching and his personal life." From the story students identified issues specific to the Arts in primary schools with comments like, "We've got to be advocates for the Arts so that our children *and* other teachers know how important they are in schools." Finally, male students identified issues specific to male teachers such as being careful not to "touch" children – even in the context of holding hands to play a music chase game – because of current media focus on pedophilia.

When students were asked which piece of writing – out of the six research articles and short story – they "got the most out of", 100% of the cohort indicated the short story. When asked why, students indicated they could "relate" to it, it was easier to read than the research articles, "it was interesting", and it "addressed lots of different issues." In short, the pre-service teachers found it to be a relevant text that engaged them in the issue of teacher attrition.

Personal Benefit

On a more personal level, the writing of the short story was specifically beneficial to me. In incorporating my own experiences into the story I was able to "make sense" of my teaching experiences and understand my experiences in a deeper way. That is, the writing was something that meant something to me. It specifically dealt with issues that I had experienced.

But what about generalising these personal experiences to the wider teaching community? Eisner (1981) suggests that

artistic approaches to research have no comparable mechanism for generalization. But this should not be interpreted to mean that generalization is not possible ... Generalization is possible because of the belief that the general resides in the particular and because what one learns from a particular one applies to other situations subsequently encountered ... Consider literature as an example. Is it the case that Saul Bellow's novel *Mr Sammler's Planet* is simply a story about Arthur Sammler and no one else? Is Shakespeare's portrayal of Lady Macbeth simply about a particular Scottish

noblewoman who lived in the later part of the 11th century? Hardly. What these writers have done is to illustrate significant, common human attributes by the way they have written about particular individuals. Artistic approaches to research try to locate the general in the particular. They attempt to shed light on what is unique in time and space while at the same time conveying insights that exceed the limits of the situation in which they emerge. (p. 7)

More than traditional research writing forms, the short story, novel and poem provide a mode of representation that has the potential to “locate the general in the particular” of autobiographic research and case study research, and in addition such modes of representation allow for focus “on any number of issues”, and may “concentrate on a personal issue or a topic that situates a problem in a broader social context” (Tierney, 2002, p. 397).

Conclusion

We are “writing up” research in a period when artistic modes of representation are in their infancy. Saunders (2003), who has been examining the relationship between poetry as “creative” writing and research writing, poses more questions than answers about this relatively new territory: “What is other colleagues’ experience of the opportunities for truth-telling, self-expression and ‘coming at things aslant’ which the writing of a poem offers to the writer that the composition of a research report does not – and *vice versa*?” (pp. 185-186). How much further can we stretch the boundaries as to what we have traditionally thought of as “research”? For example, is it necessary that what is written be so-called non-fiction? What is wrong with the possibility of presenting fictional accounts of teaching as research, as Mason (2001) suggests, “since the accounts are merely to provide entry to experience, it does not matter whether they are fictional or factual ... What does matter, is whether they trigger recognition of other specific experiences ...” (p. 52).

Ultimately we need to be thinking about why we conduct educational research. I believe we conduct educational research to provide a better climate for all parties engaged in education. This may be through traditional research, artistic representation of research as outlined in this paper, or through entirely creative works such as fictional novels, artwork, or music. We have an opportunity to explore these more “unconventional” types of research, particularly seeing as the Higher Education Research Data Collection (2002) has finally defined research as including “creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of humanity, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications.” So let us write our stories and poetry and songs about education and draw new audiences to issues that effect all those involved in this thing we call *education*.

About the Author

Peter de Vries lectures in education at The University of Technology, Sydney. His current research interests include primary school music education; multi-arts approaches in education; the portrayal of teaching in other media (e.g., film, literature); and teacher autobiography. Peter has authored and co-authored several research and conference papers, as well as publishing music for use in the primary school classroom.

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This paper examines how educational research can be presented in a creative way, through alternative modes of representation such as the novel, short story and poetry. Thus the writing of research becomes artistic practice, where the researcher-writer acts as novelist, poet, short story writer. The paper specifically addresses how this occurred in the writing of a short story titled *Leaving Teaching*, which centres on the issue of male primary school music teacher attrition. Issues about writing in this mode that are addressed include justifying such a presentation as “research”, relevance to a wide readership, and personal benefits for the researcher-writer.

David had a grade five class. The kids had just come into class from lunch. They were hot and sweaty, as was David. The city was going through a heatwave. “Okay,” said David, “we’ve got some maths to catch up on.”

Half the class groaned. The other half were too exhausted to groan. “Mr Williams, we’re always catching up on maths,” said Josh, who was one of his best when it came to maths.

“Tell me about it,” said David.

The class laughed. And David realised that he’d said this aloud – something which he’d only meant to say in his head. He wiped sweat from his forehead, realising he’d been wiping sweat throughout February and into most of March ever since he’d been teaching. Afternoons were unbearable, too hot to operate in. For him and his kids. But despite annual requests/demands from teachers and parents for air conditioning, none came. The school did not have the money for it, and despite endless promises the state government still had not come through with any funding.

“What about singing?” said Josh. “Instead of maths.”

Half a dozen children nodded, brightening up.

“Yeah,” voices murmured. Voices soon joined by others at the thought of something other than maths.

“I’ll get your guitar,” said Josh, standing up before David could put a lid on it.

“Okay,” he said, smiling despite himself. Despite knowing that Bob McDonald, his teaching partner, would not be happy. Bob had already begun a maths lesson with his class. David knew the sound of his class singing would soon distract the children on the other side of the double teaching area. “Sam, close the folding doors please,” said David.

Bob was not a fan of music. “It’s a frills subject,” he’d once told David. “Like art and dance and drama. They’ve got a place – the school concert at the end of the year, when we’ve finished with the real teaching.”

It wasn’t the most sensitive thing to say to David, considering the amount of music teaching he did in the school. Although he had a grade five class, he only taught them two days a week. The remaining three days he taught the rest of the school music; half an hour for each class. Meanwhile his grade five class was taught by two supply teachers on the three days he taught music. As much as David loved teaching music, he felt guilty about leaving his class in other hands for so long.

David moved to what his class called their “Music Space”, a corner of the room that was carpeted, with musical instruments in boxes and posters of musicians and musical instruments on the walls.

“Okay,” said David, “let’s warm up with ‘The Underwear Song’.”

It was a class favourite – a novelty song, an easy one to sing.

The class sung it once. Requests came to sing it again. David complied. But half way through the second rendition the folding door opened and in strode Bob. David stopped strumming the guitar, but his class kept singing until they reached the end of the song.

“Mister Williams, I am trying to teach next door. Could you please have the courtesy not to indulge in music at this point in time? According to your teaching timetable your class’s music time is nine on a Wednesday morning. You may correct me if I’m wrong, but I do not think it is nine o’clock on a Wednesday morning.”

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He looked at his class. Some waited for him to speak. Others were looking at the departing Bob. David was awash with embarrassment and humiliation. He briefly closed his eyes. When he opened them his embarrassment had turned to anger – at Bob’s pettiness, at the heat, at the lack of support he got from the administration team in trying to teach music in the school *and* run his own class.

It was at that moment when David first contemplated throwing it all in.

This is the beginning of a short story I wrote titled *Leaving Teaching*. It is my way of representing research in an artistic way. In this paper I will discuss issues relating to such representation, which means I am turning the conference theme upside down – rather than examining artistic practice as research I will be examining how research can be represented in an artistic way.

Leaving Teaching addresses the issue of male teacher attrition in primary schools, and specifically attrition of male music teachers. This is an issue close to my heart, as I spent ten years teaching music in primary schools and witnessed many male primary teachers – both generalist primary and music specialists – leave the profession. I am passionate about this issue and want to present it to as wider audience as possible. I believe in telling a *story* a wider audience of readers will engage with the subject matter than if the issue is “researched” and written up as an article in an academic journal. How many working teachers read such journals? How many school principals read such journals? How many politicians and education policy makers read such journals? And how many members of the community – the parents of children in our schools – read these journals? Simply put, academic journals have a very limited audience.

Laurel Richardson (1997) wrote, “for thirty years I have yawned my way through numerous supposedly exemplary qualitative studies” (p. 87). She is one researcher who has represented qualitative “data” in an artistic mode, namely poetry. For example, she has written a text of conversations/interviews that took place with an unmarried mother as a poem. In doing this, Richardson distilled the collected data into her very own personal text. Such a text was used because she found the writing style

and reporting conventions in sociology texts to be “deadening”, with sociologists trying to “suppress (their own) life” (1992, p. 131).

Richardson is not alone. During the 1990s artistic modes of representing the many and varied experiences of teaching came about (e.g., Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Miller & Kantrov, 1998), allowing researchers to portray aspects of their own and others’ teaching experiences in the form of novels, short stories and poetry. Using such modes of artistic representation in telling teacher stories can allow the writer-researcher to “investigate the problematic rather than reduce it to a more manageable explanation of what occurs in the classroom” (McMahon, 2000, p. 138). Writing about teaching in such a way has the potential to provide “the reader with new ways of seeing” (Pirto, 2002, p. 441). That is, this form of representing teaching becomes more than observation, documentation, and data analysis.

Writing in these modes is artistic practice in its own right. I consider myself to be a writer as well as a music educator – of short stories, children’s fiction and novels. Half of my PhD dissertation was a novel that documented my experiences as a classroom music teacher. Thus wanting to write research in a mode other than a traditional research article format is something that appeals to me. I get to be the “creative” me as a writer as well as the “researcher” me, and hopefully the end result is something that will engage an audience and be relevant to an audience who have a vested interest in the issue being addressed, which in this instance is male teacher attrition.

The Research Issues

So where is the research question in this study? I would like to think that the short story generates the research question/s. That is, the reader can extract the question or questions from the story as it progresses. Let us not assume readers are unintelligent souls who need everything spelt out for them. Let the readers do some work! Suck them in with an interesting story and let them “make sense” of the story; let them situate themselves in the story and find the question/s.

And what about research method? This obviously needs to be addressed. It is not something that can easily be integrated into the story, so it is something that in this case has to be presented alongside the story. The dilemmas of the protagonist David are a synthesis of dilemmas I had experienced and that two other male primary school teachers who had also taught music in primary schools had experienced. The decision to combine the experiences of three male teachers who left the primary school classroom in the form of the one character, David, was made because as a writer I felt that the multiple experiences would enhance the possibility of the story touching universal chords with readers involved in the teaching profession.

Initially we individually wrote down dilemmas that we, as male primary – and specifically male primary teachers who teach music – faced, and which led to exiting the profession. Not surprisingly, a number of the issues we individually identified overlapped. However, there were still certain issues that were only identified by one or two of us. I wanted to “pack in” all of these issues so that the reader got as broad a picture as possible of issues effecting male teacher attrition. With these issues

identified and teased out, I sat down to write the short story. For this McMahon's (2000) criteria for judging an artistic account of teaching were adapted:

- 1) has an artistic mode of representation been used to capture the situation?
- 2) does the story have the capacity to elicit response? (e.g., is it aesthetic enough to warrant interpretation?)
- 3) does the writer's interrogation of the aesthetic rendering yield greater insights? (e.g., does the interpretation touch universal chords?) (p 138).

With the short story written, I asked the two ex-teachers to assess the story according to McMahon's criteria, and subsequently made modifications based on their assessments. In addition I wanted to know if my representation was a *credible* representation of their experiences. For the most part they agreed it was. Some parts of the story were "tweaked" – particularly dialogue between teachers.

With the short story finished my research was complete, ready for public consumption. Right?

"But what about data analysis and conclusions?"

What about them? An entire short story is presented as the "research." Again I say let us not assume readers are unintelligent – let them read the story and situate themselves in the story and take from it that which has personal resonance. That is, let the readers do their own analysis. It is not as if readers do not engage in such activities. When we buy a novel and read it we do not expect an "analysis" of the novel to be attached to the novel. We take what we want from the novel by analysing it ourselves. So why not engage a similar principle for the representation of research in the form of a short story, poem or novel? Why should the researcher be in that privileged position where s/he forces their interpretation on the reader? Instead of focusing on the researcher, let us focus on the potential audience for research.

Relevance

In presenting to pre-service teachers short stories and excerpts from novels that address teaching issues, I have found a willingness on their part to engage in such texts that is not apparent in their reading and critiquing of traditional research-based articles from academic journals. A case in point is the issue of teacher attrition. I recently presented students with six research articles that examined the issue, as well as the short story *Leaving Teaching*. In group discussions on this issue students continually referred to the short story rather than the research articles. Comments such as "I've seen teachers like David out on prac, I *know* that sort of teacher"; and "When I get my first teaching position I'll have to watch out for things that David had trouble with like managing his time between teaching and his personal life." From the story students identified issues specific to the Arts in primary schools with comments like, "We've got to be advocates for the Arts so that our children *and* other teachers know how important they are in schools." Finally, male students identified issues specific to male teachers such as being careful not to "touch" children – even in the context of holding hands to play a music chase game – because of current media focus on pedophilia.

When students were asked which piece of writing – out of the six research articles and short story – they “got the most out of”, 100% of the cohort indicated the short story. When asked why, students indicated they could “relate” to it, it was easier to read than the research articles, “it was interesting”, and it “addressed lots of different issues.” In short, the pre-service teachers found it to be a relevant text that engaged them in the issue of teacher attrition.

Personal Benefit

On a more personal level, the writing of the short story was specifically beneficial to me. In incorporating my own experiences into the story I was able to “make sense” of my teaching experiences and understand my experiences in a deeper way. That is, the writing was something that meant something to me. It specifically dealt with issues that I had experienced.

But what about generalising these personal experiences to the wider teaching community? Eisner (1981) suggests that

artistic approaches to research have no comparable mechanism for generalization. But this should not be interpreted to mean that generalization is not possible ... Generalization is possible because of the belief that the general resides in the particular and because what one learns from a particular one applies to other situations subsequently encountered ... Consider literature as an example. Is it the case that Saul Bellow’s novel *Mr Sammler’s Planet* is simply a story about Arthur Sammler and no one else? Is Shakespeare’s portrayal of Lady Macbeth simply about a particular Scottish noblewoman who lived in the later part of the 11th century? Hardly. What these writers have done is to illustrate significant, common human attributes by the way they have written about particular individuals. Artistic approaches to research try to locate the general in the particular. They attempt to shed light on what is unique in time and space while at the same time conveying insights that exceed the limits of the situation in which they emerge. (p. 7)

More than traditional research writing forms, the short story, novel and poem provide a mode of representation that has the potential to “locate the general in the particular” of autobiographic research and case study research, and in addition such modes of representation allow for focus “on any number of issues”, and may “concentrate on a personal issue or a topic that situates a problem in a broader social context” (Tierney, 2002, p. 397).

Conclusion

We are “writing up” research in a period when artistic modes of representation are in their infancy. Saunders (2003), who has been examining the relationship between poetry as “creative” writing and research writing, poses more questions than answers about this relatively new territory: “What is other colleagues’ experience of the opportunities for truth-telling, self-expression and ‘coming at things aslant’ which the writing of a poem offers to the writer that the composition of a research report does not – and *vice versa*?” (pp. 185-186). How much further can we stretch the boundaries

as to what we have traditionally thought of as “research”? For example, is it necessary that what is written be so-called non-fiction? What is wrong with the possibility of presenting fictional accounts of teaching as research, as Mason (2001) suggests, “since the accounts are merely to provide entry to experience, it does not matter whether they are fictional or factual ... What does matter, is whether they trigger recognition of other specific experiences ...” (p. 52).

Ultimately we need to be thinking about why we conduct educational research. I believe we conduct educational research to provide a better climate for all parties engaged in education. This may be through traditional research, artistic representation of research as outlined in this paper, or through entirely creative works such as fictional novels, artwork, or music. We have an opportunity to explore these more “unconventional” types of research, particularly seeing as the Higher Education Research Data Collection (2002) has finally defined research as including “creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of humanity, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications.” So let us write our stories and poetry and songs about education and draw new audiences to issues that effect all those involved in this thing we call *education*.

About the Author

Peter de Vries lectures in education at The University of Technology, Sydney. His current research interests include primary school music education; multi-arts approaches in education; the portrayal of teaching in other media (e.g., film, literature); and teacher autobiography. Peter has authored and co-authored several research and conference papers, as well as publishing music for use in the primary school classroom.

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