



EDITORIAL

Slowing down in neoliberal times: Engaging in deep pedagogical listening as resistance

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In early childhood care and education, neoliberalism often shows up as checklists, outcomes, and a constant pressure to be efficient for ‘success’ (i.e., becoming workers in the unnamed capitalist system). This issue offers another pace: deep pedagogical listening (Rinaldi, 2001). You are invited to engage in this special issue, which shares five pedagogical narrations across a wide range of topics; each includes “an ethical and creative event composed of ongoing communication and processes of re-living and re-enacting experiences” (Kim, 2023, p. 4). These pedagogical narrations ask us to consider how we can allow ourselves to slow down and engage in deep listening, which is the foundation for any reciprocal relationship, human and more-than-human, and an “active verb that involves interpretation” (Rinaldi, 2001, p. 80). I invite the reader to think about how this slowing down and attuning to our context can be a process of resistance against the “neoliberal regimes” that are evermore present in our work in education (Davies, 2005).

These five pedagogical narrations didn’t start as PowerPoint or PDF files, but as deep, reciprocal thinking, listening, and imagining with theories, humans, and more-than-humans. This process of curriculum making asks us to linger and take time to attune, even though we are living within a neoliberal system that urges us to keep pace with the colonial and capitalist society and quantify our ‘successes’ with children. Given that, it is considered an ethical and political act to “dwell with what is becoming” (Kim, 2025, p. 43), including with these pedagogical narrations which invite us into provisional and partial theories of events. These inquiries are unfinished, created through the situated and becoming lenses of the authors, and ask each reader to interpret and deeply engage with each through their own perspective and contribute to its continual formation (Kim, 2025). The pedagogical narrations in this issue invite us to ask more questions about relationships, histories, power, place, and possibilities, rather than providing answers (Rinaldi, 2001). They are a reminder for us to make space for the

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revisitation, becomings, and collective work of these pedagogical processes (Kim, 2025).

In the first pedagogical narration, Lavina Tam and Leoma (Thy) Vo share their “Ecologies of Making: Reimagining Place, Construction, and More-Than-Human Entanglements” with the children of Morningside at Simon Fraser University. We are invited to engage with their questions about what happens to bugs during construction projects and the mysteries of the underground. Their collective relationship with and to place is reimagined as they take time to listen to bugs’ stories, respect the forest not as a static and taken-for-granted space but as interconnected and agentic, and cultivate a sense of responsibility between humans and more-than-humans to deeply think with the meaning of co-existence. In this pedagogical narration, we are reminded of the importance of learning *with* place, rather than learning about place, as we attune to and take seriously the ethical implications of the children’s relations with the more-than-human world.

Next, Dr. Catherine-Laura Dunnington asks us to think about the overlooked nature of clothes in the work, “‘Still, No One Was Naked’: Amplifications of Textile/Children Entanglements.” Drawing on sociomaterial studies, the author invites us into an inquiry through the metaphor of a knit sweater, where each stitch is necessary for the sweater to exist and where no stitch can possibly exist alone. The author asks us to consider clothing as an agentic material and curriculum, repositioning the ‘ordinary’ as pedagogically potent, and artfully shows what became possible when textile was engaged with as curriculum and agentic material. Readers are encouraged to dwell in their own definitions of curriculum and material to uncover what might seem mundane or ‘ordinary,’ challenging us to notice what has been there all along.

The last three pedagogical narrations invite us out of the four walls of a centre and into forests, beaches, and other more-than-human worlds. In “Narratives of Eagles Transcending European Ideology,” Francine Donati and Jessica Peterson bring us onto the beaches of the Salish Sea. From a posthumanist and anti-colonial perspective, the authors engage in essential questions related to the impacts of colonialism on the more-than-human on and around the beaches. We are challenged to unsettle the human and more-than-human binary and division that colonization has forced upon the lands, lingering with the impacts of colonization and capitalism on the more-than-human. The authors call us to engage in a relational, co-constructive inquiry with the histories and current-day impacts of colonization, which you are invited to think with in your own contexts and histories.

We are then transported to the forest, where Catherine Samson, Elysia Raimondo, Jenny Rae Wilder, Lyndsay Parrott, and Amanda Fuller, share “Becoming Conscious of One's Own Limits Within Nature to Live Sustainably” through shinrin-yoku,

or forest bathing. The authors engage in self-reflective processes as they negotiate their personal boundaries in nature, tracing how socialization has shaped their knowledge and comfort of the more-than-human. They ask us to contemplate the riskiness and embodiment of outdoor pedagogies, encouraging us to confront and push our own limits or discomforts with the more-than-human. In this engagement, we are welcomed into a collaborative sense-making with nature as a co-educator, to see sensation as a way of knowing, and to reflect on how we can respond to the outdoors in sustainable and ethical ways.

Lastly, we are brought back to the beach with Francine Donati's "Emerging with Rocks." The author moves with intention to linger with rocks, prompting us to reflect on how we engage with the more-than-human and what such encounters demand of us. Through her inquiry, we witness how rocks moved her to think with place, attuning to its layered histories and ongoing relations. This pedagogical narration bids the reader to collaborate with and pay attention to place, history, and the more-than-human as co-participants in learning processes, shifting our understandings to see the more-than-human as agentic participants.

This issue offers us opportunities to consider the pedagogical openings in the refusal of neoliberal demands for efficiency and asks: what might it mean to linger and attune to the entanglements around us including the bugs underground, the eagle on the beach, the clothes on our backs, and the rocks beneath our feet? Each and all move us to engage with our environments and learn with materials and place in ways we may not expect. This process asks us to suspend our expectations and instead break away from our checklists, schedules, and pressures of neoliberal understandings of 'success' so that we can really stay with what we are attuning to and take care of our pedagogical intentions and noticings. This is not only necessary, it is political. As explained by Shahjahan (2015), this deliberate slowing down means being present and embodying our pedagogies, which is also part of social justice and equity, and moving beyond Eurocentric, capitalist understandings of time and urgency. We invite you into an unhurried engagement with these pedagogical narrations, attune to their messages, and notice which moments refuse to let you go.



Photo credit: Catalina Baeza Hidalgo

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