How can we truly recognize the use of tools that facilitate deeper reflection on lived experience? Following on the success of our first special edition on innovative elicitation methods in 2018 (https://journals.sagepub.com/topic/collections-ijq/ijq-1-elicitation_methods/ijq), this second volume underscores the value researchers recognize in the use of these tools. As with the first, this value is tied to the ways in which elicitation methods facilitate deeper reflection on lived experience, augment participant articulation and sharing of that experience, and ultimately further the validity of the data we use to build our findings on (see also Liebenberg, 2009).

In “Connecting With Clinicians: Creating the 5 Minute Digital Download to Advance Interpretive Description in Healthcare Research,” Risling, Nussbaum, Martinez, and Risling (2019) detail the development, piloting, and potential value of the 5-minute digital download (5MDD). The authors explain how they developed 5MDD to address the challenges posed to qualitative researchers in recruiting health-care practitioners. In response to this challenge, they drew on video diary data collection strategies and mobile applications, to develop an innovative data collection strategy. In discussing 5MDD, they also reflect on the quality of the data collected using this tool. The authors are mindful that “The inherent nature of qualitative research to support rich explorations of participant views and experiences cannot be sacrificed in the pursuit of convenience and expediency that new technologies may afford” (p. ??). Accordingly, they are specific about the research purposes and contexts with which 5MDD would be well aligned. Their ensuing discussion illustrates how this tool facilitates an intensely focused, semistructured interview that allows for the engagement of “hard-to-reach” members of a specific population within a larger ongoing process of qualitative data gathering.

In “Co-Designing Services for Youth With Mental Health Issues: Novel Elicitation Approaches,” Mulvale et al. (2019) explain the creative ways in which they adapted experience-based codesign (EBCD) for use in settings where the preservation of participant anonymity is crucial. EBCD is a participatory action research (PAR) approach used to codesign service system change. It integrates the use of three elicitation approaches: experience maps, trigger videos, and prototype development. The authors use their work with youth living with mental health challenges as an exemplar, reflecting on the benefits of these three elicitation approaches. Their use of these methods is critically reflected on in the answering of two questions. First, how did participants respond to the use of each of the three methods? And second, what influenced the impact of these three strategies on participants and the data? Their candid reflection on the process provides not just a road map for other researchers hoping to use the approach but also important points of consideration in the application of these methods. Of note is their adaptation of trigger videos, to use animation rather than videos of participants themselves.

Bell and Cartmel (2019) expand on the existing discussion of photo elicitation in research with children in “Creating a Vocabulary About School Age Childcare Using Photography.” They highlight the ways in which this method literally facilitated the use of vocabulary the children would otherwise not have had access to or used. Additionally, they argue that the inclusion of children’s photos in the interview enhanced retention of their attention and engagement. This was especially important, given the location of the care setting—adjacent to the children’s school—in which the research was conducted. The authors conclude that the approach encouraged a thoughtful dialogue with the children that might otherwise have not occurred. Of particular value in their article is their discussion

Corresponding Author:
Linda Liebenberg, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Dalhousie University, 228 Silverbirch Dr., Hubley, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3Z 1L2.
Email: linda@lindaliebenberg.com
of research ethics when using photo elicitation with children in a service setting. Similarly, their discussion of the analysis process is also of value to those working with elicitation data. In this way, while their review of their experiences is a strong reminder of the value of using elicitation methods with children, the authors also add to our understanding of this value.

Martin’s (2019) “Draw(Me) and Tell: Use of Children’s Drawings as Elicitation Tools to Explore Embodiment in the Very Young” in turn extends the discussion of elicitation-based research with children. Using her research of reflexive embodiment in children with regard to childhood obesity, and more specifically, the social relations and contexts that impact a child’s sense of self and their related sense of body shape as an example, she furthers our thinking on related practical and ethical issues. Not only does Martin’s discussion explore a child-centric approach that focuses on “the relational dynamics impacting the children’s emergent embodied selfhood” (p. 2) but extends to the ways in which children’s drawings serve to address concerns related to agency, privacy, and sensitivity. As with Bell and Cartmel (2019), Martin includes a detailed discussion of her approach to her fieldwork that illuminates the process of working with the children in her study. Starting with a section she calls “Ethicality and research design” (p. 2), Martin expands on the conventional discussion of approval and consent procedures to include a broader and more critical reflection on the ethics of her work throughout the remainder of the article.

Roger and Blomgren (2019) add to the discussion of photo elicitation, arguing for Elicitation as a Mindset: for researchers throughout the research process. Underpinning their argument is five separate studies with adults in rural and Northern Canadian communities situated within a Participatory Action Research (PAR) framework. They use these case studies to illustrate their argument of the ways in which an elicitation mindset can augment engagement, knowledge production (accounting for historical trauma, stigma and diversity), knowledge translation, and research ethics (in particular, knowledge ownership). In research with Aboriginal women, the use of photography is able to transcend both participant fatigue and colonial histories of research findings being used to further marginalization and stigma. Their second case study highlights the value of creative pictorial work (rather than photographs per se) in transcending communication boundaries and providing a means of translation through co-construction of stories between diverse groups of participants and researchers. Conversely, the use of images in a study with older men of volunteerism brought into focus questions around diversity and inclusivity. A photovoice project with men living with depression and suicidality illustrates the far-reaching impact of effective knowledge translation impacting the taboo topics. Astute use of a photovoice study with people living with Parkinson’s draws our attention to the challenges of anonymity versus knowledge ownership in research ethics.

In “Unveiling the Unspeakable: Integrating Video Elicitation Focus-Group Interviews and Participatory Video in an Action Research Project on Dementia Care Development,” Li and Ho (2019) explore the ways in which participatory video-based methods can be used in research of lived experience with elderly people living with dementia. Noting the exclusion of elderly with dementia (EWD) from research due to their limited communication capacity, the authors argue that video approaches offer a means of overcoming these challenges in ways that are inclusive, engaging, and empowering for participants. Video provides both verbal and nonverbal data, drawing daily interactions of nonspoken events into the research focus. Consequently, greater awareness of interactions of EWD in social and practitioner contexts can be established, creating a platform from which to gain improved understanding of EWD experiences and needs. Embedding this process within a PAR framework feeds well into the related change process, where those surrounding EWD can benefit from the findings, integrating this knowledge into their engagement and interactions with EWD. Moreover, using participatory video in innovative ways has allowed the Hong Kong–based research group to integrate a community education component about dementia and those living with it, extending dissemination to local communities.

Shurbring, Mayer, and Thiel (2019), in “Drawing Careers: The Value of a Biographical Mapping Method in Qualitative Health Research,” illustrate the value of multidimensional time lines as a graphic elicitation tool when conducting narrative interviews that involve memory work. As a mapping technique, they argue that time lines visually reflect key moments in developmental experiences. In their review of the literature, the authors detail the ways in which maps have facilitated richer data, enhancing the structure of life stories, aiding in recollection of forgotten or suppressed memories, and highlighting connections between experiences and events. Their astute use of a research example with a young athlete shows that despite the linear nature of the approach, the stories time lines elicit (both visually and narratively) show flux and change that is anything but linear and structured. More importantly, the use of these time maps allows for participants to include the role of social structures, cultural norms, and values in their choices and experiences.

Continuing the discussion of time lines, Kriger (2019) includes the use of sculpting and imagination in exploring the link between representation and embodiment. In “Malleable Methodologies: Sculpting and Imagination in Embodied Health Research,” she articulates situates the flexibility of sculpting alongside the “unstable and dynamic predicators of health research” (p. 3). The openness and flexibility of the method creates space for participants to wrestle with critical experiences in new ways. This reflection is enhanced by the sculpting process that slows down their thinking on the research question. The uncertainty in the act of sculpting mirrors uncertainty about health futures. This process impacts the researcher–participant interaction, which Kriger explains, can become “dis- or re-ordered” (p. 7), creating space for participants to tell “whatever stories they wanted to tell” (p. 7). This freedom becomes critical in the ontological process where “imagination allows for ontological multiplicity” (p. 9) within and across participants, speaking back to the various
dimensions of embodied subjectivities. The richness of the process is enhanced by the inclusion of creative time lines, where participants could more freely reflect on key health moments, related choices, and alternate or unlined life possibilities.

Green and Denov (2019) discuss the ways in which “Mask-Making and Drawing as Method: Arts-Based Approaches to Data Collection in Research With War-Affected Children” engages marginalized youth as active agents in the process of knowledge production. In response to the growing recognition that war-affected children need to be included in research more actively and in more ethical ways, the authors propose the use of mask making combined with drawing as effective research tools. Importantly, their discussion of these tools includes integration of youth as coresearchers, adding a vital dimension to their work. Working with children and youth born into the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda, the authors situate their own work against a detailed discussion of the broader array of arts-based tools that have been used in research with war-affected children. Their discussion highlights the value of this approach as both culturally congruent (both in terms of the dynamic collective group work it required and the focus on masks), yet simultaneously tactile and creative, echoing the work of Kriger (2019). As the authors state “ Masks hold cultural significance for the Acholi and offer security and anonymity while exploring difficult feelings and memories” (p. ??). Consequently, the approach established trust between a group of participants that are ordinarily highly isolated and marginalized given the stigma surrounding children born into the LRA. The end result was a rich data set illuminating the experiences of participants.

In “Using Comics for Participatory Validation of Research Results,” Darnhofer (2019) embeds comics in an iterative and collaborative research process. He uses the comics as a means of validating findings, while simultaneously gaining additional data through commentary on the findings reflected in the comics. As a transdisciplinary research team generated product, the process of designing the posters inadvertently lead team members to reflect further on their assumptions underlying their research practice. Darnhofer notes the value in a drawn depiction of findings rather than a photograph in that it naturally invites commentary on the artists’ (and researchers’) interpretation of findings. Specifically, the constructed nature of the cartoons, combined with the specificity of the medium, challenged the research team to think carefully about which findings they would be including in the posters and how. This reflection in turn facilitated critical reflexivity on subjectivities and what each were bringing to the research process, including their own “unspoken ideologies of objective, scientific research.” Additionally, comics could capture experiences reflected across participant narratives and make use of exaggeration to emphasise certain points within the findings. Combined with the medium of drawing, the style invoked more spontaneous commentary from participants.

Taken together, the manuscripts in this new volume echo those of the first: highlighting the role of varied elicitation approaches in exploring tactile evocation in understanding health (Kriger, 2019) and fostering embodied understanding of experiences (Kriger, 2019; Martin, 2019). Many papers reflect the value of using multiple approaches and the ways in which these varied approaches are able to augment one another (Kriger, 2019; Li & Ho, 2019; Mulvale et al., 2019). Once again, considerations of context (Li & Ho, 2019), culture (Green & Denov, 2019), and engagement are prominent (Cartmel & Bell, 2019; Green & Denov, 2019; Li & Ho, 2019; Mulvale et al., 2019; Roger & Blomgren, 2019).

This volume expands discussions on fieldwork, data analysis, and ethics (Cartmel & Bell, 2019; Darnhofer, 2019; Martin, 2019; Mulvale et al., 2019). It also provides critical reflections on the interactions of researcher and participant in these elicitation processes (Darnhofer, 2019; Kriger, 2019; Roger & Blomgren, 2019). Complimenting but adding to the first edition, the elicitation methods discussed here are either different in-and-of themselves or used in quite different ways. Consequently, taken with the first volume, this new collection of articles “encourage other researchers to tap into the full potential of visual methods in their varied forms” (Darnhofer, 2019, p. 10). This is definitely a good conversation to continue.

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