

CHAPTER 4.

REVISING TEXTILE PUBLICATIONS: CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN TACTILE METHODS

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Paired readings:

- Arellano, Sonia C. “Quilting as Qualitative Feminist Research Method: Expanding Understandings of Migrant Experiences.” *Rhetoric Review*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2022, pp. 17-30.
- Arellano, Sonia C. “Sexual Violences Traveling to El Norte: An Example of Quilting as Method.” *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 72, no. 4, 2021, pp. 500-515.

When employing new methods of research in rhetoric and writing studies, researchers can face challenges aligning their methods with publication and university expectations. The reality for many scholars is that we must publish to maintain relevancy in the field and to ensure security in university positions. Therefore, this chapter discusses challenges of the composing and revising process employing a new tactile method of research, Quilting as Method (Arellano). Drawing from the experience of completing a tactile research publication (a research quilt), this chapter discusses the messy process employing Quilting as Method. This chapter details the complex revising/recomposing/restitching process of a material publication—incorporating new information, expanding the piece with new materials, and learning new skills to revise the piece. Additionally, this chapter considers the collaborative nature of such research methods involving animals and humans when working from home with physical materials. Lastly, this chapter suggests the field consider how mentoring, timelines and cost, and tenure and publishing requirements can facilitate or hinder innovative research methods. Overall,

this chapter illuminates the challenges researchers face and the labor necessary when employing innovative research methods in hopes that publication venues and universities consider how to better support faculty using such research methods.

As many researchers agree, our methods and methodologies are inarguably connected to what we value as research and as knowledge making. Therefore, the methods of research we are taught, often in graduate school, are methods deemed important by others. When starting my academic work in a Ph.D. program, my mentors and teachers presented research methods that prompted me to reconsider what methods researchers should value and why. Additionally, methods and methodologies are inarguably connected to how we choose to revise according to feedback. Giving thoughtful and thorough productive feedback for revision is hard and time consuming and receiving such feedback is dependent upon a community of colleagues. Often, scholars are left with anonymous reviewer feedback, which isn't always structured in a dialectical way. Considering how we choose methods for our research and how we learn to revise according to feedback, it is apparent that mentorship significantly influences these important parts of the research and publication process.

Therefore, in this chapter I consider the relationship between the research methods we employ and our revision processes through a lens of mentorship. While many challenges arise when employing new research methods, here I focus on the challenges of the composing and revision process employing a new tactile method of research, quilting as method ("Quilting as Method" 85). First, I situate myself and my research to provide context about how this method came about and why I decided to take the tough route of employing a tactile method. Next, I briefly discuss two publications referenced throughout this chapter. One article explains QAM (quilting as method) in practice, and the other is a research quilt demonstrating the product of QAM. Throughout this chapter, I draw from the experience of completing these two publications (focusing on the quilt publication). Then I discuss the incredibly messy process of revising a tactile research publication, pointing to two distinct ways this method challenges Western notions of research: the complex revision process, which meant expanding and recomposing in this case, and the collaborative revision process, involving animals and humans when working from home with physical materials. Lastly, I suggest ways that readers can prepare for such challenges, and I suggest ways for publications and institutions to better support faculty using nontraditional research methods.

SITUATING THE RESEARCH AND RESEARCHER

The CFP of this collection claimed to be a “call not only for more inclusive and diverse frames to guide our research, but one that is also driven by an ethical imperative.” In order to articulate how and why the QAM approach disrupts and diverges from traditional methods, I felt it necessary to begin with the origin story of my quilt project and this research method because as Gesa Kirsch previously stated, “[f]eminist researchers start with the premise that research methods are never neutral, impartial, or disinterested” (257). Although the impetus for my research may seem to be happenstance, it is part of my familial histories and my ways of knowing and being in the world.

As I was completing graduate coursework many years ago, I was emotionally affected by two seemingly disparate experiences: (1) losing my stepmother to a brief and nasty battle with lung cancer and (2) working with undocumented migrants in the Tucson, Arizona community. To cope with my stepmother’s death, I devoured as many readings, podcasts, and movies as I could to learn about death, grief, and memorializing and to learn from others who experienced a parent’s death at a young age. To channel the deep sadness and empathy I felt for the migrants I worked with regularly (both volunteer teaching English and working at a migrant shelter), I consumed as many readings, documentaries, and government documents that I could to better understand the plight of migrants entering the US during that time.

As I was deciding on a dissertation topic, my mentor Adela C. Licona pointed me to a quilt project that memorialized migrant deaths. The Migrant Quilt Project makes quilts from migrant clothing left behind in the desert, and each quilt names migrants (or lists them as unknown) per year who die in the Sonoran Desert crossing into the US. When I first saw the quilts, immense emotion came over me, as they are incredibly evocative. This was the starting point of my research that brought together the rhetorical power of memorializing textiles and the incredible travesty of migrant deaths at the southern US border. Without realizing it, this research was influenced by familial knowledge of sewing; I come from a family of feminist seamstresses.¹ Additionally, I come from a family of migrant farmworkers who traveled to the northern US each summer to work the fields. Therefore, the creative capacities and the knowledge base necessary for sewing projects, as well as the knowledge of working the land and the difficulties of migration within the US, are a familiar part of my family history. The ability to engage in these areas and learn these skills came from a place of necessity in my family history.

1 See “Heart, Mind, and Body in Quilting Research” for a guest blog about this.

By the time I came to my research with the Migrant Quilt Project, I knew more about the complicated story of migrant deaths expressed in the quilts as well as the rhetorical prowess necessary to create such quilts. As I embarked on my dissertation research, I chose safe, established methods: visual rhetorical analysis of the quilts and feminist semi-structured interviews of the quilters. Although my Ph.D. program discussed accepting nontraditional genres and methods for a dissertation, the college would only allow a written dissertation, which of course dictated how I would conduct and present my research. However, a chance encounter changed the trajectory of my research significantly. While interviewing a quilter, she asked if I would like to contribute a quilt to the project because they needed someone to complete the 2003-2004 quilt. I said yes without much thinking that I was also completing a dissertation. I knew how to sew but did not know how to quilt. With a grant from my university, I was able to take a beginner's quilting class and purchase materials for the quilt (along with the clothing given to me from the Migrant Quilt Project). As I completed this quilt, I gained experiential knowledge of just how difficult completing a quilt was, not just theoretical. I realized the process of completing this quilt had to be a part of my dissertation research because it was too much work and there were too many composing parallels to simply leave the quilt as a "side project" to the dissertation. The dissertation chapter I wrote discussing quilting as method was underdeveloped because, although I knew there was something there, I couldn't thoroughly articulate it. However, the more I learned about migrant deaths, the more I knew this method was an ideal method to study a phenomenon that is complex to understand and lacking the type of data other areas of study may provide.

The point of this background story is to inspire others and situate myself by explaining the context I was working within, including university expectations and norms of our discipline. I did not initially intend to disrupt or challenge traditional Western notions of research when I took on this work. However, as I dove into the research and attempted to convey it through the quilt, I knew traditional methods would leave the data, the story, and the exigency underdeveloped and incomplete. As I've stated elsewhere referencing a powerful quote by Malea Powell, "I believe that QAM—as a method that produces a visual and verbal material object—provides the potential to facilitate flowering meanings, particularly about complex and traumatic stories" ("Quilting as Method" 24).

Although I was challenged—a committee member told me, "This isn't a thing"—and not everyone I've encountered has been supportive of QAM, thankfully my dissertation chair was. She mentored me through the challenges and doubts because she believed in this work, and for that I am thankful. The importance of mentorship is paramount, especially for graduate students and junior scholars who are using nontraditional methods in their research. In

completing my research with the Migrant Quilt Project, I knew that the lives and experiences of migrants was only partially conveyed through alphabetic writing. Our field is logocentric, but my life and my family history are not. I knew I had to draw from those embodied knowledges to figure out a method that would try to provide dignity and voice to the dead. I kept asking myself, how do you tell the story of those who leave behind no written record, of those who you cannot interview, of those whose bodies disappear in the desert without a trace? These questions informed the ethical imperative calling me to think beyond established methods in rhetoric and composition.

QUILTING AS METHOD, EXPLANATION AND EXAMPLE

Years after writing the dissertation chapter that discussed quilting as method (QAM), I took a very long revision journey (expanded into a book chapter that didn't work out, then majorly revised and cut down to a journal article, then revised and resubmitted, and then revised one last time and submitted), before publishing it in *Rhetoric Review* in early 2022. "Quilting as a Qualitative, Feminist Research Method: Expanding Understandings of Migrant Deaths" is a thorough explanation of quilting as method with examples of how the method functions in my own research with the Migrant Quilt Project. In the article, I support the claim that quilting is a qualitative, feminist research method: qualitative as it fills the gaps that quantitative research leaves; feminist as it values experience, equity, and risk-taking; an arts based research method as a non-discursive knowledge creation to better understand phenomena. Drawing from arts based research (Barone and Eisner) and feminist rhetorical practices (Royster and Kirsch), I explain how QAM functions as a three-fold scaffold in practice: employing critical imagination through tacking in and tacking out, crafting a narrative, and gaining a better understanding of the phenomenon at hand. The "Quilting as Method" article draws from my experience making a quilt for the Migrant Quilt Project to provide examples of how the method functions using Royster and Kirsch's concept of critical imagination through tacking in and tacking out.

As I was in that long revision process with the "Quilting as Method" article, I decided to take on the task of demonstrating QAM with another quilt project. My goal this time was to intentionally use QAM and publish the quilt as the final research product. The quilt piece was initially created in response to a special issue CFP that didn't work out, but I found a home for it with *College Composition and Communication*. I never imagined a flagship journal would publish a textile research project. However, the editor had seen the beginning stages of the quilt and asked me to consider *CCC*. Published in 2021, "Sexual Violences Traveling to El Norte: An Example of Quilting as Method" is a quilt

publication with a short, written piece to accompany it. While the quilt is the research publication, the written piece is akin to a footnote providing a bit more context. The quilt publication chronicles the state-sanctioned violences migrant women experience crossing from Central America, through Mexico, and into the US, mostly based on Oscar Martinez's book *The Beast*.

Fortunately, these two research publications came out within a few months of one another because they work together. While one explains the method, the other is an example of the method, which reifies the argument that the quilt is the completed research product (not a written paper). Although the argument is a hard one to make in our logocentric field, and despite the limitations of printed publications with material research products (even photos of the quilt), I was fortunate to be mentored through the process of these publications so they could significantly contribute to the field of rhetoric and composition. Although these two publications inform one another, for this chapter I will focus mostly on the process of composing and revising the published "Sexual Violences" quilt. Lastly, I'll mention because it supports many points of this book chapter, both publications were awarded for being the best publication in that journal in that year—"Sexual Violences" was awarded the 2022 CCCC's Richard Braddock Award and "Quilting as Method" was awarded the 2022 Theresa J. Enos Anniversary Award for Best Publication.

COMPLEX AND COLLABORATIVE REVISION EXPERIENCES

Through the process of completing the "Sexual Violences" quilt, it became more apparent that completing textile projects with tactile methods challenge some salient Western notions of research in our field. For example, the idea that the research process is completed and written by one person, with a singular, clear answer in the form of an article or book, could not be more different than the process of completing this quilt publication, which was incredibly messy to say the least. Although the ways that this tactile approach to research about sexual violences is multifaceted in challenging Western notions, I will focus on two ways here: the complexity of revising a textile project and the collaborative nature of such work.

COMPLEX REVISING/RECOMPOSING/RESTITCHING

As scholars in rhetoric and writing studies continue to expand the field putting forth research methods and methodologies to consider, a complication that scholars face is aligning their research methods with expectations of publication venues and universities because the expectations of publication venues and

universities tend to value and understand traditional and established methods. The reality for many scholars is that we must publish research to maintain relevancy in the field and to ensure security in university positions. Additionally, because publication expectations are often on set timelines, like tenure, such expectations may discourage or even hinder the work of new methods.

What follows is a discussion of the challenges I faced during the revision process of “Sexual Violences” because of external expectations that did not necessarily understand or align with this textile project. Importantly, I must mention that my university, flagship journals in our field, and colleagues were supportive of my research using this new method, but I’m sure that is not the case for many scholars. My tenure guidelines did not require a monograph, and they clearly articulated the value of collaborative research. Additionally, both *Rhetoric Review* and *College Composition and Communication* editors and reviewers were encouraging and provided productive feedback. Lastly, colleagues who were skeptical of this work still took the time to thoughtfully engage with it to help me improve my argument and demonstrate the value of this research. My point is that even in ideal situations with lots of support, employing messy and nontraditional methods still bring challenges.

The initial submission of the “Sexual Violences” research quilt to *CCC* consisted of four written pages along with photos of the drafted quilt (Figure 4.1). The first draft of the quilt top was about 24 by 16 inches and consisted of four small blocks and two large ones. As a draft that needed to remain malleable, the top was mostly complete, but the backing, binding, or quilting of the layers was not. I was unsure how the reviewers² would understand and interpret the quilt, which was not so different from how I felt about the QAM written article. I was unsure if readers (especially those who do not quilt) would understand the argument. I was pleased to receive an “accept with revisions” decision from *CCC*, with generous reviewer feedback.

As I read through the reviewer feedback, I realized a lot of the comments were about how to better articulate the value of this work to *CCC* readers in the written portion, which was helpful. However, I did not receive much feedback on the quilt itself, which was the research product. The response from the reviewers is common in our field; although we say we value multimodal work, what counts and how it is assessed has not expanded to accommodate that multimodal work. Conversations concerning this conundrum have been ongoing concerning grading within composition classrooms, concerning nontraditional

2 It’s important for me to mention that the reviewers were sent photos of the quilt, not the actual quilt. Without starting a discussion about material genres that is beyond the scope of this chapter, I will simply state that a photo of the quilt is not the same as seeing the quilt in person nor feeling the quilt in person.

genres of dissertations in graduate programs, and concerning digital, community, and creative research and other types of labor within tenure and promotion requirements. I am thankful that CCC gave the research quilt a chance, but I also hope the journals in our field continue to expand the parameters for effective feedback on multimodal publications.

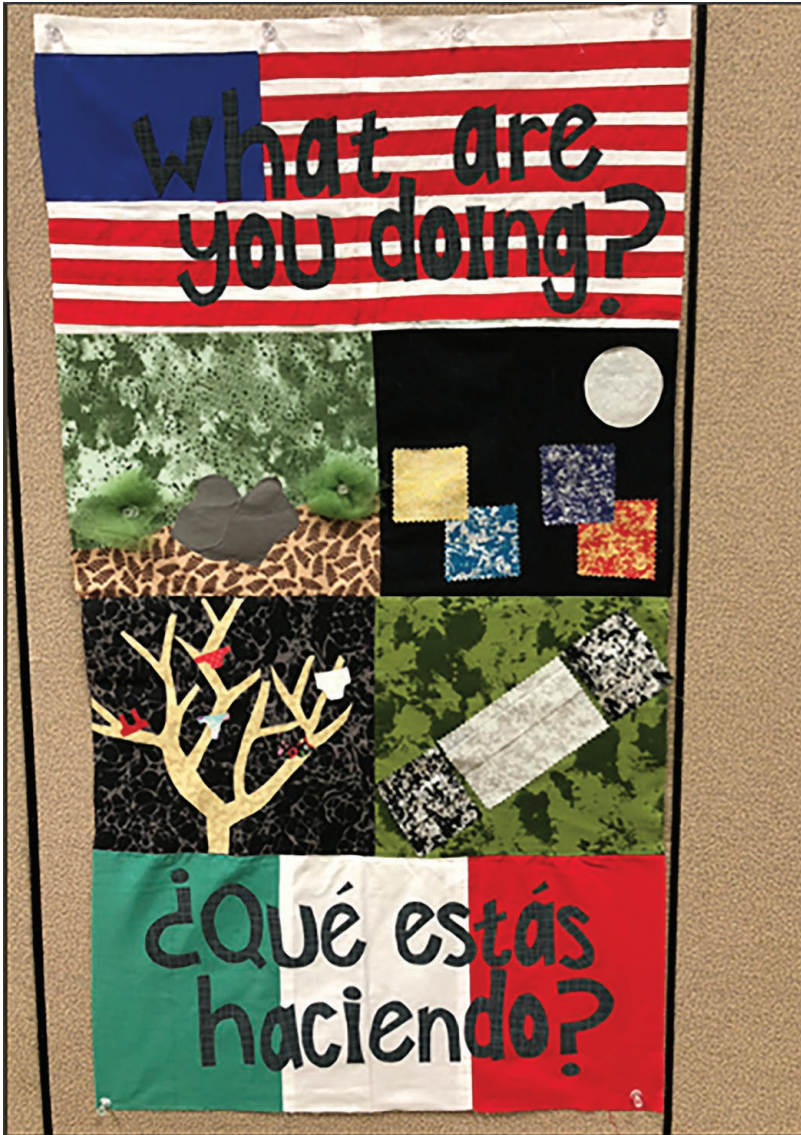


Figure 4.1. First Draft of "Sexual Violences" Quilt Publication; Photo by Author Sonia C. Arellano.

I started my revision process by reading the scholarship reviewers suggested, which further informed the written portion, but not the quilt piece itself. At the time, the *CCC* journal asked if the author would like to be mentored through the revision process, and I was fortunate to work with a senior colleague Raúl Sánchez, who was supportive of this research quilt. As he was generously mentoring me through the revision process, he said that if my point is to provide an example of QAM, maybe I didn't need more writing, but I needed more quilt. This set off a lightbulb for revision. At this same time, a news story came out about a nurse whistleblower who claimed that undocumented migrant women in detention centers were being forced to have hysterectomies. Her claims reinforced and extended the argument of the quilt: state-sanctioned sexual violence that migrant women experience does not stop at the border but continues long after they enter the US. My mentor's comment and this news story were central to my revisions.

After reading more scholarship suggested by reviewers as well as government documents and news stories about migrant hysterectomies, I began to revise the research quilt by recomposing the quilt top from scratch. While I kept the story of the four main blocks, as well as the top and bottom flags, I decided to add a block to reflect the recent news story and to add a centerpiece of Mexico. I sketched a visual draft and now had the opportunity to add more details because the quilt would be bigger. With the blocks that maintained their stories, I added more maps and more details so that the flow of the journey and the argument could be understood through the movement within and between the blocks. Maps have been incredibly important in this work because the geography tells stories and histories. The central map of the US, Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize reflected important additions, as I stated previously:

I chose the color purple because it has been used world-wide in marches, movements, and protests against femicide and gender-based violence . . . The United States, Belize, and Guatemala are in an iridescent light purple to represent the beautiful home country of a migrant's past and the idealized potential future in the United States. ("Sexual Violences" 512)

None of the fabric from the original first draft was reused. I had to recompose the quilt top because the organization and the content were both expanded. The final revised draft research quilt (Figure 4.2) is about 60 by 48 inches, and the written portion is about 15 pages.³

³ See "Sexual Violences" in *College Composition and Communication* for the final draft version. The final version is not included here to reify that it is research already published elsewhere.



Figure 4.2. Revised Draft of “Sexual Violence” Quilt Publication; Photo by Author Sonia C. Arellano.

This long and arduous revision process supports my argument that the quilt is the research product because similar to completing major revisions with a written article, the revision process for the quilt maintained the same argument and basic support, just refined and revised to be clearer and more impactful.

However, one aspect that is entirely different from more traditional research methods and products are the difficulties brought about because of the material nature of a tactile method. As I mention in “Quilting as Method,” time and particular skills are necessary to employ this method, but it’s also important to consider the time and money it costs. During fall 2020 while revising “Sexual Violence,” I was teaching one online course, so thankfully, I had the time to engage in thoroughly revising the quilt. I did not ask for funding to help facilitate the revisions (for more material and other needs) from my department, because our funding is clearly marked for travel, technology, and books. However, if I had the chance again, I would have advocated for funding for this textile project.

With a textile revision (really recomposing and restitching), I needed new and more material. As with many things during this time,⁴ there was a shortage

4 In fall of 2020 COVID-19 was still new, and we did not have a vaccine available in the US.

of pre-cut fabric squares, and I tried to take selective trips to the store because the pandemic was new with still so much unknown about it. Such difficult access to resources is quite different from a written piece. If you need a specific scholarly source, there are ways to access it with interlibrary loan and libraries able to scan sources. If you need a certain amount of purple fabric and the store is sold out, good luck trying to get it elsewhere or in small amounts. This is rhetorical though, identifying and working with the available means.

The available skills to draw from can present challenges as well. I intended to quilt this project myself with my sewing machine. Often quilters outsource the quilting part (sewing through the top, batting, and backing layers) of their quilt to someone with a large quilt machine. With smaller quilts, a regular sized machine will suffice. The quilt I made for the Migrant Quilt Project was too large to fit in my machine, so I quilted the layers through another method—adding buttons at key parts of the quilt to hold the layers together. For the “Sexual Violences” research quilt I wanted to incorporate free motion quilting because the quilt was small enough to do so on my machine. However, I did not know how to free motion sew, so I watched a lot of YouTube videos and practiced enough to incorporate this design aspect into the quilt, which was a rhetorical design element. Again, this is different from a traditional method because scholars do not usually need to learn new skills in the middle of revising a research product.

Parts of the revision process with QAM parallel the process of revising more traditional products with more traditional methods. However, scholars can face many difficulties revising when using tactile methods such as this one, and they can end up recomposing in order to address reviewer feedback and clarify their argument. Just a few challenges (to which I offer suggestions at the end of this chapter) researchers may face when employing such methods and revising include time and space for revising, reviewer expertise, cost and availability of materials, and knowledge of all skills needed for revisions.

COLLABORATIVE NATURE OF COMPOSING AND REVISING

In addition to the complex process of revising with tactile methods, the “Sexual Violences” research quilt also confronts Western notions of research by demonstrating the collaborative nature of revising with tactile methods. Although most revision processes are collaborative, the collaboration with quilting as method may look different because the relational human component

Many jobs and classes were still fully remote. Many materials and types of labor were unavailable for various reasons.

is more apparent. Personally, I never send out any piece of important writing without having someone look at it first. Although we may not always cite our collaborators (who provide feedback and inspiration throughout our writing process), we often thank them in our acknowledgements or a footnote.⁵ However, in the final product itself, academics typically only include citations, not daily inspirations.

When using tactile methods, the human relational component is much more apparent and spans far outside of my immediate academic circle. During the fall of 2020 as I revised the “Sexual Violences” quilt, I turned my dining room into my quilt workshop. The dining table was the only place I could have the quilt fully laid out with my sewing machine at the end of the table. My setup faced the living room TV, with the iron and ironing board situated between the dining table and the dog bed. I needed the space and time to work in my home, so my work involved everyone and everything in my home.

I often had to use the tile floor to draft pieces and see how they looked before sewing them together. Anyone who lives with cats knows it is impossible to put something new on the floor, especially a square piece of fabric, without them jumping on it. The dog and cats were collaborators in that my workspace was their daily living space. The cats joined me on their window perches right behind where my sewing machine was set up and on the dining chairs, always nearby while I worked, often messing up my materials. My docile and lazy dog (he’s a puggle) stayed sleeping in his bed nearby as well, with constant snoring providing a soothing sound along with the sewing machine.

As Laura Micciche claims in her book about writing partners, “[c]ompanion animals are most certainly not objects but subjects who contribute in significant ways to writerly identity and persistence” (93). Her study showed that many scholars thank their pets for facilitating sustained periods of writing or much needed breaks. Micciche also cites her Facebook feed full of pictures of people writing (mostly at a computer) with their animal companion nearby (86-88). My Facebook feed is similar with other academics posting photos of their animal writing companions nearby with books spread across the floor or sleeping near a laptop keyboard. However, one aspect is different when using tactile methods: the remains of this collaboration are apparent in the cat hair left behind on the research project. The cats rolling on fabric drafts literally leave their mark on the final product, the quilt.

5 For example, Laura Gonzales’ book *Sites of Translation* has a beautiful acknowledgements section that thanks many people in her life and includes her dog. And *Rhetoric Review* has an established practice of acknowledging the two reviewers in a footnote within the first sentence of the article.



Figure 4.3. Carlos overseeing the composing of “Sexual Violences” while also lying on part of the quilt publication; Photo by Author Sonia C. Arellano.]

In addition to the non-human actors who take part in this messy method, human actors in my household did as well. First, my non-academic partner was a big part of the process as he was working from home and watching the daily progress. He offered input when asked and even when not, often about visual design choices.⁶ He is in IT, so it’s always refreshing to gain perspective

⁶ Similarly, my mom often reads my writing intended for people outside our field. I ask her to highlight the parts she doesn’t understand because if she can’t understand it, then I’m not writing well.

from an average viewer about design choices. Additionally, various visitors would ask about the quilt piece on our dining table including neighbors who were appalled by the content of the quilt. Once while visiting, my mother-in-law asked about the quilt, and when hearing the stories of migrant women, she referenced her knowledge about women experiencing sexual violence back in her home country of Venezuela. She drew from her own background and knowledge about the subject to engage in conversation about my research. Normally when I'm at a social gathering and someone asks about my research, my answer tends to shock them into awkward silence. However, in these instances, visitors offered insight, knowledge, and thoughtful engagement, perhaps because they were in my house, or perhaps because they had a visual and tactile method of understanding my research. These conversations and responses were undoubtedly a part of the collaborative revision process for this quilt. The humans in my life helped me to articulate the argument clearly and thoughtfully, repeatedly. The input and imprint of others, particularly non academics, involved in the physical space of research was even more pronounced than in other types of research products that employ other research methods.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ENGAGING THE MESSINESS OF QAM

Overall, this chapter intends to illuminate the challenges (even in the most supportive environments) researchers face and the labor necessary when employing innovative, messy methods of research. I hope that this information helps other scholars consider how to prepare for these challenges, and I hope that publications and institutions consider how to better support faculty using nontraditional research methods. I leave readers with a few suggestions for both researchers and institutions (universities, departments, journals, and university presses) to promote employing complex, messy, and innovative methods.

CONSIDER MENTORING TO FACILITATE MESSY METHODS AND METHODOLOGIES

My first suggestion is to consider what type of mentoring you can provide as a mentor and what types of mentoring you need as a mentee to facilitate successful completion of courses, degrees, and publications, because successful completion can depend on the methods and methodologies we learn and put forward. Scholars in our field often reference their own mentors when discussing their own experiences as mentors. We can learn from some of these

instances to be contentious of how we mentor students and junior colleagues and how we can ask important questions of ourselves as mentors. Additionally, we can consider how we need to be mentored whether it's through a graduate program or to meet tenure requirements. For example, in an interview about her own writing practices, Jessica Enoch mentions that she teaches students about genre to pull "back the veil a little bit"; she works on a calendar basis with her students; And she claims, "the biggest thing I think I do helpfully, I hope, is to teach graduate students how to revise from comments" (69). She references learning a lot from her mentor, Cheryl Glenn, such as asking students to revise multiple times. Enoch discusses where her mentoring practices come from, and she also explains how to help students tangibly and specifically in their writing and revision process. Although she doesn't mention method here, undoubtedly that is part of the conversation when she's helping them through revisions and feedback.

Considering how to help students with their writing is just as important as helping them with bigger picture questions that also are related to their methods and methodology, like how or where do they fit in an academic conversation? Fatima Chrifi Alaoui and Bernadette M. Calafell discuss how their mentor/mentee relationship developed as Calafell helped Alaoui embrace a methodological "homeplace." As Alaoui claims that "[t]raditional research methodologies have always left out the expressions and stories that make up the whole meaning of the text I write and the experience I live" (70). Calafell not only demonstrated the practice of mentoring through love and care, but also helped Alaoui find a method that worked to give meaning to her struggles and embodied experiences (70-71). Additionally, Calafell writes elsewhere about mentors who helped her find her own homeplace in academia (Calafell).

Another instance of a mentoring relationship is a story about indigenous rhetorical practices with Andrea Riley-Mukavetz and Malea D. Powell. Not only do they discuss the relationship between one another, but also to their students as they collaboratively taught a graduate seminar. The layering of practice in this piece is important as they make visible "how stories function methodologically and theoretically" because they piece together their own stories as well as stories about the course in order to demonstrate "story as methodology is one of the common features of indigenous rhetorical practice" (146). They recount the challenges faced putting into practice the approaches they were teaching as well as the difficult decisions they had to make based on restricting parameters such as time and money. Their chapter provides some important questions and challenges of putting into practice the methods, methodologies, and theories that guide our research, our teaching, and our lives.

It's important to remember as scholars that the approaches we teach, we write about, and we practice will be the approaches that our students take forward with them. As Barone and Eisner argue, graduate students need support from faculty because:

[i]t is demanding enough to do a dissertation well using conventional forms of research method, let alone a research method that is at the edge of inquiry. Yet it seems to us to be particularly important to encourage students to explore the less well explored than simply to replicate tried and true research methods that break no new methodological grounds.

(4)

Therefore, I suggest that faculty consider how they can mentor students and junior colleagues to support diverse methods in research and to ensure that we welcome scholars with diverse methods into the field. Additionally, I suggest that (of course if they are comfortable) students and junior faculty find and ask senior faculty for support when they are engaging in messy and not well-established methods. For example, while working on the QAM article for *Rhetoric Review*, I was on a national grant committee with Dylan Dryer, a senior scholar with expertise in research methods and design. I casually asked if he would look at my article, and he agreed. He provided the most thorough feedback I've ever received on my writing. Although his research has to do with writing programs, he was able to provide incredibly useful feedback to refine my argument to better reach the readers. This key mentor was a random encounter and he owed me nothing. However, he took the time to provide this crucial feedback to develop my work, and his honest and kind feedback gave me confidence with my seemingly risky argument in the article. I only hope to pay it forward (Ribero) in the future to junior colleagues who are trying to innovate with nontraditional methods.

Lastly, I suggest that publishers (journal editors and university press editors) make room to consider innovative methods and work with scholars to make their research legible for the audience. For example, the journal *constellations: a cultural rhetorics publishing space* has a practice of asking the reviewers if they'd be willing to mentor the author through revisions and asking the author if they'd like a mentor to help with the revision process. Additionally, when I worked with CCC, they practiced the same process under their editor Malea Powell, who was also the founding editor of *constellations*. When journals encourage these types of mentoring practices during revision, the idea of journals shifts from a selective, gate keeping space (which can discourage risky, innovative research) to a space that facilitates a dialectical process of revision and ensures that important research is shared with the discipline.

CONSIDER TIMELINES AND COST OF MESSY METHODS

As explained here, the timeline for messy, tactile methods can look very different from traditional research methods. Time and space can seriously affect the ability to compose and revise. Additionally, there are many aspects beyond the researcher's control—availability of materials, cost of materials, and access to those materials—that can affect the timeline of employing such methods. Just as community-based research must work on the timeline of the community and their needs, not the scholar and the scholar's needs, tactile methods can present such challenges that pay no mind to our institutionally imposed deadlines. Therefore, scholars and their institutions need to consider this when working with messy methods. Although I've seen scholars unreasonably pressured to adhere to institutional timelines when completing longitudinal human subject research, I believe that institutions should consider the timelines they impose and whether it facilitates innovative methods. A university cannot simultaneously claim to value innovative methods, while maintaining incredibly high teaching loads, high publishing expectations, and a universal timeline for tenure regardless of the research or field.

Additionally, what counts for funding should be considered. A previous department chair once asked a question about what kind of technology I would need, assuming I didn't do any work with technology based on the understanding of technology as only digital. I responded very confused because, of course, sewing machines, needles, and thread, are all technologies to me. Maureen Goggin has thoroughly articulated the argument for the needle as pen (Goggin). Therefore, I suggest university departments consider how and when they allocate funding to scholars who are using messy methods.

CONSIDER TENURE PUBLISHING REQUIREMENTS

One last and large suggestion is for both scholars and institutions to consider their tenure publishing requirements. Scholars should consider how to make the argument for their work with messy and innovative methods and consider how can we expand what we see as "publishing." The composing process of quilting is parallel to other more traditional research methods and products in our field, so I've been able to at least make the argument. However, as I recently submitted my tenure dossier, I realized that meeting the requirements was dependent upon journal editors being open and supportive to my research.

It's worth mentioning that the current editors of *College Composition and Communication* and *Rhetoric Review*, two incredibly important journals in our field, are BIPOC scholars who saw the potential contribution of my work with

quilting as method.⁷ Without their support and encouragement, I would not have published such nontraditional research in these venues. I depended on journals being open to publishing this research instead of my tenure requirements accepting a quilt publication. In other words, the venue validates the research and argument, not the tenure definitions. I suggest that departments evaluate how their current requirements (I know many still require a monograph) do not facilitate innovative and messy research.

In considering the relationship between the research methods we employ and our revision processes, I hope that academics think about how we've learned both of these processes and what values are reflected in those processes. As Gesa Kirsch asked previously, "[t]he question, then, is whether scholars are willing to break from a relatively rigid adherence to their disciplinary orientation in order to entertain alternative methodologies" (256), and I believe we continue to grapple with this question in our field. In response to my work, I've been asked "when does the expanding of our field lead us to something that is no longer a field?" And I've been told, "if everything is rhetoric, then nothing is rhetoric." However, the more important points in my work consider who established norms for fields, methods, and research? Who gets to say those established norms are best, right, or accurate? I believe good research should lead to more questions or a more nuanced understanding, not singular answers. And that, I hope, leaves you reader with a snapshot of my research process in between design and publication: Revision.

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