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Inarticulate Experiences in Qualitative Health Research: Bounds and Bounty of Expression Types

Paul Lindhout[1] , Truus Teunissen[2], and Merel Visse[3,4]

Abstract

Not all human experiences can be expressed in words. Arts-based expressions may be useful to qualitative researchers as they can disclose people's experiences with health, illness and disability. These expressions, which connect with non-linguistic and unexplored realms of experience, may support researchers' efforts to honor the complexities of their lives. In our study, we explored and identified modes of expression among those sharing their experiences in health care and wellbeing research and practice. We present an inventory of human expression types based on a hierarchical classification and a literature review. The expression types which involve modes of both verbal and non-verbal knowing, show a bounty of possible ways for researchers and others to extend their study designs beyond verbalized accounts. We contend that using non-verbal expression types can assist qualitative researchers in fostering the articulation of complex experiences. As drawing upon a variety of methods in the inventory of expression types comes with new methodological bounds, researchers need to explicate their paradigmatic point of departure. It is expected that researchers, other professionals, and the general public will increase their holistic understandings of a subject's experience by being open to a variety of expression types during data collection, interpretation, and presentation.

Keywords

qualitative research, arts-based methods, non-verbal, tacit knowledge, expression type, inventory, creativity, health research

Introduction

> This painting represents what I've been trying to put into words, though I do not have the words to describe what I see and feel. Just now I doubt words will ever be sufficient.
>
> (Ellis, 2004)[1]

Health researchers using qualitative methods in general and phenomenological- and art based research in particular, attempt to understand lived, perceived, generated, imagined, and otherwise expressed experiences and gain insight into what it is like to live with illness, disability or other physical and mental health challenges. Using solely verbal methods has limitations. Inspired by the rhizome work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1980), post-structuralist and post-qualitative researchers (Gregoriou, 2004) use a variety of data collection methods to connect with the range of experiences expressed by research participants, both verbally and in many other ways (Churchill, 2018; Denzin, 2019; Lather & St. Pierre, 2013; Le Grange, 2018; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Pile, 2010). Researchers who depart from this phenomenological stance

have also reported on the challenges involved in capturing the depth and breadth of experiences obtained through mainstream methods such as observation, shadowing, and in-depth interviews (Visse et al., 2019). Phenomena investigated by researchers "are often not to be found at the surface of the descriptions obtained, but rather in the 'depths' of those descriptions" (Churchill, 2018, p. 5). The implicit aspects of experiences need to be sensed and seen and, having appeared in

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our awareness, made explicit. Both a researcher and a respondent can benefit from better communication via more expression types and from increased awareness of subject matter otherwise remaining unexplored.

The insight, that more than words are needed to understand and connect with experience and phenomena, dates back a long time. As scholars from other fields did more than once, Butler-Kisber and Poldma (2010) concluded—quoting Eisner (2008, p. 9)—that "there must be more ... " Again others have addressed the limitations of the use of traditional methods, such as interviews, in understanding the experiences of participants regardless of whether or not these are hermeneutical interviews (Plunkett et al., 2013). Van Manen (2006) even noted the destructive effects that words may have when a verbal description is used to express a subtle meaning or sensation. Some experiences remain inaccessible to researchers, especially experiences that cannot be expressed verbally, as indicated by Halling and Hansen (2014, p. 8): "we must also be sensitive to that in human life and life as such, which scientific rigor, technical words, concepts and theorizing cannot capture."

Barbieri and Pantouvaki (2016), Connell (2003) and Popa-Blanariu (2013) claimed that there are other modes of expression in addition to verbal expression. Interpreting an interview or conducting a discourse analysis cannot be done without close listening (Arendt, 1978; Finlay, 2014). Goble (2013) emphasized that any phenomenological writing must contain some form of visual or poetic image and experience descriptions. Pre-reflective experience and pre-linguistic sensations not yet put into words, appear to be important but do not seem to fit into a phenomenological research framework whose aim it is to describe experience (Hansen, 2018; Varela & Shear, 1999; Visse et al., 2019). Researchers have noted that some aspects of experience cannot be expressed in words such as a story (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; Eisner, 1991; Richardson, 1995; Visse et al., 2019; Woods, 2011). Eisner (2008, p. 5) called this "something which cannot be articulated linguistically." Visse et al. (2019, p. 1) referred to this as the "unsayable."

Therefore, while qualitative and phenomenological researchers are inclined to engage in arts-based expressions the extent to which they do so is still a matter of debate (Finlay, 2009). The goal or intention of arts-based expression is to help the researcher approach experience as near as is possible, recognize it and be touched by it. The sensory aspects of various research methods address those: experiences that focus mostly on seeing and hearing. But then, how could we include our embodied ways of knowing and expressing, such as smelling, tasting, touching, and body movement via motor skills and proprioception (Bellerose, 2018; Dekkers, 2007)? The use of expression types that favor sensory and embodied ways of knowing would result in a more holistic understanding of experiences (Pink, 2015). Furthermore, phenomenologists perceive phenomenological research as a poetizing project in which they stress the collection of anecdotes and the construction of evocative ways of representation (Van Manen, 2014; Visse et al., 2019).

A variety of verbal and non-verbal expression types have already been subjected to research, are accepted as legitimate methods of data collection and are integrated in health care and wellbeing research, education, therapeutic intervention and health care practice (Busch, 2009; Feder & Feder, 1981; Gils & Willekens, 2010; Gordijn, 2007; Samaritter, 1990; Teachman & Gibson, 2018; Veale, 2005; Wang et al., 2017; Wertheim-Cahen, 2007). As of this date however, we do not know of any inventory in the field of health related research that includes these creative and otherwise non-verbal expression types. Such an inventory may assist researchers in deciding how they gather, interpret, understand and represent their qualitative data in the context of health related research. Hence, we intend to create an inventory of verbal and non-verbal expression types and their combinations, further referred to as "mixed" expression types, in support of qualitative research method design.

In this article, we therefore collect and list the range of expression types and references to existing methods that have been mentioned in several academic research approaches that stem from a variety of disciplines. These disciplines include arts-based research, phenomenological and qualitative research, education-, health care-, therapy- and wellbeing research and in practice (Busch, 2009). To this end, the research question of our article is:

Which verbal, non-verbal and mixed expression types could be relevant to qualitative health researcher's attempts to gain a more holistic understanding of experiences and the phenomena that reside within those experiences?

We will begin with a description of the methodological approach (Methods section), after which we present the inventory of expression types, as discovered in our successive literature searches. We then construct a classification system and use a meta-synthesis to list how these types are currently used in research practice (Results section). This is followed by a discussion section in which we identify three problems that researchers may encounter in practice, as well as the limitations of this study (Discussion section). This leads to a recommendation and conclusion (Conclusions and Recommendations section).

Method

Design

Qualitative health researchers and their respondents can use methods other than exclusively verbal expression to elicit experiences. A literature study and meta-synthesis are required to explore and identify such expression types (Cronin et al., 2008; Polit & Beck, 2006). We carried out such a study, acknowledging that this is an area where a body of knowledge (Ören, 2005) has not yet been established and where terminology is not unified and settled. We did not aim for a systematic review, as we first needed to gain a deeper understanding of the area, including its major themes, terms and discourse. This inventory is, however, the first step toward a systematic review

of expression types in qualitative research. We focus on health oriented research methods.

Search Terms

We developed a set of search terms which does not exclude any of the relevant research areas. To this end, we assumed that any qualitative research aims at describing the experiences of people being investigated with regard to a theme or phenomenon. An experience may consist of more than a respondent can express in words. Both this non-verbal realm in qualitative research, and the inarticulate areas, is referred to by a plethora of terms denominating various aspects of the experiences which researchers are looking for (Wollheim, 2001). These aspects include: "unspoken" (Plunkett et al., 2013, p. 1), "unarticulated" (Wheeler & Early, 2018, p. 4), "evocative" (Van Manen, 2014, p. 249), "pre-reflective" (Varela & Shear, 1999, p. 4), "liminal" (Cronin et al., 2018, p. 18; see also Lapadat, 2017), "unconsciously gained," "unbeknown" (Uotinen, 2011, p. 1), "non-verbal performance experiences" (Barbieri & Pantouvaki, 2016, p. 5), "affects" (Pile, 2010, p. 1), "emotional feelings, bodily feelings, sensory feelings" (Blumenfeld-Jones, 2016, p. 6), the "apophatic" (Franke, 2007, p. 1; see also Arendt, 1978), "pre-linguistic" (Kapitan, 1999, p. 1; see also Hansen, 2018), "non-linguistic" (Woods, 2011, p. 8), the "unsayable" (Visse et al., 2019, p. 1; see also Leitch & Conroy, 2015), the "unspeakable" (Nguyen, 2018), and the "unviable and nonnarrativizable" (Lather, 2006, p. 41). Schick-Makaroff (2011, p. 6) also mentioned "ineffable" aspects, "too overwhelming or threatening to discuss," and separated the unsayable into to "not being able to be expressed in words" and "not being expressed" because the subject matter is "too controversial or offensive to mention."

In practice, some parts of an experience or phenomenon are known to the researcher. Other parts, as yet undiscovered or suspected parts are not fully known, they may even be—and will perhaps remain—completely unknown (Aydin, 2007; Peirce, 1868). Hence, the limitations of both the non-verbal and inarticulate realms are at the borders of the "unintelligible" (Lather, 2006, p. 38), "unknowable" (Levin, 2002, p. 1), "unfathomable" (Davey, 2016, p. 243) or "inexpressible" (Zimmermann, 2002, p. 205).

Successive Searches and Databases

We carried out Google Scholar, Academia, and Research Gate searches for expression types in qualitative research, phenomenological research, health care, therapy and wellbeing research, and arts-based research (Blumenfeld-Jones, 2016; Butler-Kisber, 2002, 2007, 2008; Minello, 2014; Neilsen, 2008; Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014; Wang et al., 2017). For arts-based research we included areas such as third space methodology (Buttimer, 1976; Taylor, 2008) and community, public, and social art (Cartiere & Willis, 2008; Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014; Vaughn et al., 2013). A suitable main classification for structuring the results of our search on expression

types was developed by Wang et al. (2017), who presented five main emerging artistic expression type groups within arts-based research: 1. visual, 2. sound, 3. literary, 4. performance, and 5. new media. Since we found that combinations of all of these might exist, we extended the latter category, renaming it "new media and multiple forms."

Inclusion/Exclusion

As we were primarily interested in expression types used in the context of research methodology, we excluded those sources that lacked a method section. This study is limited to sources dealing with a setting that involves researchers and their respondents who exchange a variety of expression types, in qualitative studies in general and in phenomenological studies in particular. We included primary and secondary scientific sources (Cronin et al., 2008). Several tertiary sources, also referred to as "gray literature" (Pandita & Singh, 2011; Wessels, 1997), were included.

We limited our search period to the years 1990–2019, although several sources outside of this time period were admitted because of their particular relevance to this study. Several additional sources originating from the counseling and psychotherapy fields were admitted since these complete the range of expression types being used in practice. We found no strict separation between verbal- and non-verbal expression types as both are often mixed. Hence, both verbal and other-than-mere-verbal expression types were included. Using verbal and non-verbal as a split line in this study necessitates a clear definition of the term *verbal*. For the purposes of this study, *verbal* includes written text, the spoken word, writing, and sign language.

Results

Search Results, Analysis and Classification

We conducted several consecutive literature searches with a successively adapted and refined set of search terms to ensure that no relevant sources would be missed. In the first search we focused on critical observations of research quality in relation to the use of expression types. The results of this search are used to underpin the introduction-, method- and discussion sections of our present study.

In the second search we focused on the identification of expression types and their classification. This resulted in a range of expression types, structured in categories according to Cronin et al. (2008) which were then allocated to the five groups in the main classification in as adapted from Wang et al. (2017). Using elements from other currently used classification systems in health care[2] and in education (VVKSO, 2011a, 2011b), we then refined these groups into subcategories. However, several sources listed expression types not mentioned in any of these classification systems (Bjormaekmo et al., 2018; Crowther, 2017; Gillenwater, 2012; Nguyen, 2018; Perruzza & Kinsella, 2010; Reynolds, 2002; Savin-Baden & Wimpenny,

2014; Strauven, 2003; Tilroe, 2003). Hence, we used these sources to further elaborate the subcategories. The result is a classification structure for expression types, shown in the left hand column of Table 1.

In the third search we focused on the usage of expression types in qualitative research and in health-, social- and education-related practice. We have set the search terms as: research, phenomenology, expression, painting, drawing, singing, dance, drama, sculpting, dressing, collage, pointing, music, concept mapping. We conducted this search as a series of sub-searches using multiple combinations of the search terms, all containing *research* and *phenomenology*. We subsequently searched their references and bibliographies for significant sources.

Meta-Synthesis

We screened all resulting literature sources for the manner in which the expression types are used in the research described (see Table 1). Five expression categories are shown in the first, left-hand column of Table 1, headed *Description of expression*. These categories are: 1 visual—2D & 3D expression, 2 sound—music & singing, 3 literary—words & drama, 4 performing—body & movement, and 5 new media—mixed & multiple forms. In The second and third columns of Table 1, headed *Senses* and *Storage*, respectively, we show the practical aspects of which senses are implicated and which storage medium is usable for the researcher. In the fourth column we indicate *Research usage*. In the fifth, right side column, headed *Literature sources*, we list references, as applicable.

Expression types are used in a variety of ways. They can be used as a means to invoke or recall experiences, and to create connectedness between researchers, the experiences under investigation, and the people involved. Some are used as a means to focus on understanding particular kinds of experiences. Others can be used to assist researchers with recognition of experiences and meaning and to bring insight. There are also instrumental uses of expression types, for example, to help to make contact with others in a group, to activate people, to provide a way to express themselves and as a means of communication or to provide additional research information. Teachman and Gibson (2018) and Biklen (2005) call this "augmentative communication."

Table 1 constitutes a hierarchical classification of expression types and their usage, linked to resources for existing methods and method development.

Next, we developed a visual and complementary tree-diagram indicating the dynamics of expression type interconnections (see Figure 1). We have drawn a trunk branching in two, with the two branches representing verbal and non-verbal expression. Further up the tree, we added branches and twigs to provide a place for allocation of all expression types encountered during our literature search. As expression types evolve, more twigs might be added. New combinations of expression types might be depicted as fruits. We have depicted multiple

form types as fruits either on, or—the richer ones—fallen off the tree.

Discussion

In this discussion we address three topics: 1. the need to broaden the scope of this inventory so we may learn from other non-scholarly fields that work with expressions, 2. the risks of using these expression types in research, and 3. the methodological limitations of this inventory.

Scope of this Inventory

With this inventory, we illustrate that the field of qualitative research is showing increasing interest in non-verbal approaches to gain insight into accounts of participants' experience. We aim to add to the body of knowledge (Ören, 2005) about arts-based and arts-informed research. Use of types other than mere verbal expression reveals more about experiences, as was illustrated by for example the expression of clothing (Popa-Blanariu, 2013), collage making (Vacchelli, 2017), music therapy (Ridder, 2003) or dance (Bellerose, 2018). We generated a preliminary inventory of expression types used in the diverse field of qualitative research and infused it with experiences from related fields. We should note that arts-based research follows a long, strong tradition of considering methodology, rigor, and quality. To date, however, we have not been able to find an overview of expression types providing guidance for qualitative researchers as to which one(s) to use for a specific situation.

Many researchers would probably consider these expression types to be methods that are commonly used in arts-based research (ABR). However, since expression types are used in multiple disciplines, we feel the need to distinguish the expression types listed in this inventory from the constraints posed by ABR as a methodological approach. While the expression types can of course be part of ABR, as they already are, their meaning for particular kinds of qualitative research—such as for ethnographies, and poetic approaches to research—is growing. This is due to the growing acknowledgment in the field of other modes of knowing, especially non-verbal modes of knowing that point toward non-linguistic realms of being and knowing (Visse et al., 2019).

With this inventory, we aim to contribute in particular to the field of qualitative health research. Researchers can start from existing methods as listed in Table 1, or they can use the classification to verify other options for their study method design. Solely verbal modes of knowing can make accessing illness experiences particularly challenging, as people's experiences fluctuate significantly, depending on the moment of diagnosis, the severity of their situation, time issues and other complexities involved in dealing with their "place in the world" (Biklen, 2005). Numerous researchers have argued that an illness experience begins with having to struggle with uncertainty (Miller, 2007), which is itself a black box that can hardly be grasped through verbal expressions alone. In contrast, what does it

Table 1. Expression Types Inventory.

Description of Expression	Senses[1]	Storage[2]	Research Usage	Literature Sources
1 VISUAL—2D & 3D EXPRESSION				
Visual work forms/symbolic expression	Ey	Im	Instrumental, gain insight, therapy	Bagnoli (2009), Butler-Kisber & Poldma (2010), Creswell (2014), Heywood & Sandywell (1999), McNiff (2008), Rose (2001), Savin-Baden & Wimpenny (2014)
Painting	Ey	Im	Instrumental	Gillies et al. (2005), Kirkham et al. (2015)
Painting	Ey	Im	Joint interpreting	Ellis & Scott-Hoy (2004), Persons (2009), Scott-Hoy & Ellis (2005)
Drawing	Ey	Im	Instrumental, ease communication	Piliere (2018), Reynolds & Prior (2003), Wainwright (2017)
Signs/symbols/graffiti	Ey	Im	Symbolic expression	Bloch (2018), Reynolds & Lim (2007)
Painting/mural/drawing	Ey	Im	Meaning	Boydell et al. (2015), Crowther (2017), Tucker-Raymond et al. (2011)
Painting/drawing	Ey	Im	Avoid artefacts	Borgdorff (2012), Ellis (2004), Henry (1988), Merleau-Ponty (1959), Visse et al. (2019), Welten (2010)
Painting/drawing	Ey	Im	Multiple perspectives	Hatch & Yanow (2008), Henry (1988), Kandinsky (1994), Merleau-Ponty (1959), Wentworth (2004), Wollheim (2001)
Painting/drawing	Ey	Im	Reduction of reality	Slatman (2003)
Painting/drawing	Ey	Im	Different interpretations	Dahl (2010), Ingarden (1962), Wentworth (2004), Wollheim (2001)
Painting/drawing	Ey	Im	Expression or disclosure? Gain insight	Bagnoli (2009), Dahl (2010), Gadamer (1960), Hatch & Yanow (2008), Merleau-Ponty (1959), Visse et al. (2019)
Painting/drawing	Ey	Im	Boundary with aesthetics	Crowther (2017), Derrida (1978/1987), Jacquette (2006), Marion (2002)
Graphic images/photography/ photocomics	Ey	Im	Make contact (care), Social art	Capous-Desillas & Bromfield (2018), Savin-Baden & Wimpenny (2014), Teachman & Gibson (2018), Toroyan & Reddy (2005), Wainwright (2017)
Collage	Ey	Im	Instrumental	Butler-Kisber & Poldma (2010), Davis & Butler-Kisber (1999), Savin-Baden & Wimpenny (2014), Vacchelli (2017)
Concept mapping	Ey	Im	Instrumental	Daughtry & Kunkel (1993)
Mind-mapping	Ey	Im	Instrumental, data collection	Noonan (2013)
Sculpting	Ey, SoT	Film, PO	Data collection, connect researcher/subject/ phenomenon, focus	Blumenfeld-Jones (2016), Or (2010), Sabo & Thibeault (2012)
Play/build/tinker/sand tray	Ey, SoT	Film, PO	Activate, expression, means of communication (care), therapy	Davis & Butler-Kisber (1999), Lloyd et al. (2007), Perruzza & Kinsella (2010), Piliere (2018), Ramsey (2014), Reynolds (2002), Reynolds & Prior (2003), Roesler (2019), Stickley et al. (2007)
Textile art	Ey, SoT	Film, PO	Data collection (care, therapy)	Reynolds (2002)
Digital animation	Ey	Film, Im	Social art	Vaughn et al. (2013)
Expression via cookery	Ey, Sm, Ta	Film, Im, Txt	Data collection (Education)	VVKSO (2011b)
2 SOUND—MUSIC & SINGING				
Make music, make/play instruments	Ea	Sou	Data collection	GGZStandaarden.nl (2018), VVKSO (2011a, 2011b)
Playing with sounds	Ea	Sou	Researching own experience, recognize experience/ meaning	McIntosh (2006)
Music	Ea	Sou	Make contact	Randles (2012), Ridder (2003)
Experience music	Ea	Sou	Perception and expectation	Klein & Jacobsen (2012)

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Description of Expression	Senses[1]	Storage[2]	Research Usage	Literature Sources
Singing	Ea	Sou	Data collection	GGZStandaarden.nl (2018), VVKSO (2011a, 2011b)
Soundscape	Ea	Sou	Social art	Kasat (2014)

3 LITERARY—WORDS & DRAMA

Description of Expression	Senses[1]	Storage[2]	Research Usage	Literature Sources
Conversation	Ea, Ey	Sou, Txt	Interaction and meaning layers	Weiher (2014)
Listening and action spaces	Ea, Ey	Sou, Txt	Multivocality	Gilligan (1982), Gilligan & Eddy (2017), Leget (2017), Savin-Baden & Wimpenny (2014)
Digital storytelling	Ey	Ea	Social art	Mumtaz (2015)
Typed words/prose/essay/anecdote/narrative/story telling/letter/reflective, descriptive, critical, dialogic-writing/fiction	Ea, Ey	Sou, Txt	Data collection/finding identities/augmentative communication/psychological diagnostics	Ashby & Causton-Theoharis (2012), Biklen (2005), GGZStandaarden.nl (2018), Savin-Baden & Wimpenny (2014), Teachman & Gibson (2018), VVKSO (2011a, 2011b)
Poetry	Ea, Ey	Txt	Data collection, invoke/recall experiences	Piirto (2002), Tucker-Raymond et al. (2011), Ucok-Sayrak (2017), Van Manen (2006, 2014)
Theater, puppet show, musical	Ea, Ey	Film, Txt	Data collection, invoke/recall experiences	Andersen & Larsen (2015), Piirto (2002), Sloane & Wallin (2013)
All literary expressions	All	All	Initiate expression, connect researcher/subject/focus on/phenomenon/invoke/recall experiences	Andersen & Larsen (2015), Blumenfeld-Jones (2016), Butler-Kisber (2002, 2007, 2008), Cole & Knowles (2008), Gillies et al. (2005), Jipson & Paley (2008), Kirkham et al. (2015), McNiff (2008), Minello (2014), Neilsen (2008), Or (2010), Piirto (2002), Reynolds & Lim (2007), Sabo & Thibeault (2012), Smith (2004)

4 PERFORMING—BODY & MOVEMENT

Description of Expression	Senses[1]	Storage[2]	Research Usage	Literature Sources
Mime	Ey, Pr	Film	Empathize with someone or something	Andersen & Larsen (2015), Piirto (2002)
General movement	Ey, Pr	Film	Data collection (care)	Bjorbaekmo et al. (2018), Gilsen & Willekens (2010), Samaritter (1990), Veale (2005), VVKSO (2011b)
Posture	Ey, Pr	Film	Objective/subjective body	Dekkers (2007), Merleau-Ponty (1959)
Non-verbal behavior	Ey, Pr	Film	Non-verbal communication (care)/body language/therapy	Ashby & Causton-Theoharis (2012), Connell (2003), Feder & Feder (1981), Gordijn (2007), Wertheim-Cahen (2007)
Non-verbal expression	Ey, Pr	Film	New words needed, connect researcher/subject/therapy/phenomenon/	Arnheim (1969), Blumenfeld-Jones (2016), Freeman & Vagle (2013)
Choice of clothing	Ey	Im	Data collection	Barbieri & Pantouvlaki (2016), Popa-Blanariu (2013)
Pointing	Ey	Film	Data collection	GGZStandaarden.nl (2018), VVKSO (2011a, 2011b)
Touching	SoT	Film	Data collection (care)	Van Manen (1999)
Movement and gestures	Ey, Pr	Film	Data collection, somatic experiencing	Connell (2003), Payne et al. (2015)
Movement, dance, play	Ey, Pr	Film	Recognize experience/meaning	Bjorbaekmo et al. (2018), McIntosh (2006), Parviainen (1998)
Dance	Ey, Pr	Film	Instrumental, gain insight, therapy	Bellerose (2018), Pentasugglia (2017)
Touch	SoT	Film	Data collection	GGZStandaarden.nl (2018), VVKSO (2011a, 2011b)

5 NEW MEDIA—MIXED & MULTIPLE FORMS

| Description of Expression	Senses[1]	Storage[2]	Research Usage	Literature Sources
Color-music	Ea, Ey	Film	Data collection	Strauven (2003)
Graphic novels/sequential art	Ey	Im, Txt	Data collection	Gillenwater (2012), Savin-Baden & Wimpenny (2014)

Table 1. (continued)

Description of Expression	Senses[1]	Storage[2]	Research Usage	Literature Sources
Gesamtkunstwerk, installation art	All	All	Data collection	Nguyen (2018), Tilroe (2003)
Photo-voice projects/ autophotography	Ea, Ey	Im, Sou	Data collection	Capous-Desillas & Bromfield (2018), Moreland & Cowie (2005), Plunkett et al (2013), Savin-Baden & Wimpenny (2014), Wang & Hannes (2014), Wang et al. (2017)
Virtual reality	All	All	Social art	Lally & Sclater (2013)
Multiple forms	All	All	Data collection	Skinner & Masuda (2013)
Social media/blogs	All	All	Data collection	Duneier & Carter (1999), Hookway (2008), Murthy (2008), Nardi et al. (2004)

[1] Senses: Ea = Hearing, Ey = Eyesight, SoT = sense of touch, All = All senses.
[2] Storage media: Sou = Sound, Txt = Text, Im = image, Film = Film footage, PO = Physical object, All = All storage media.
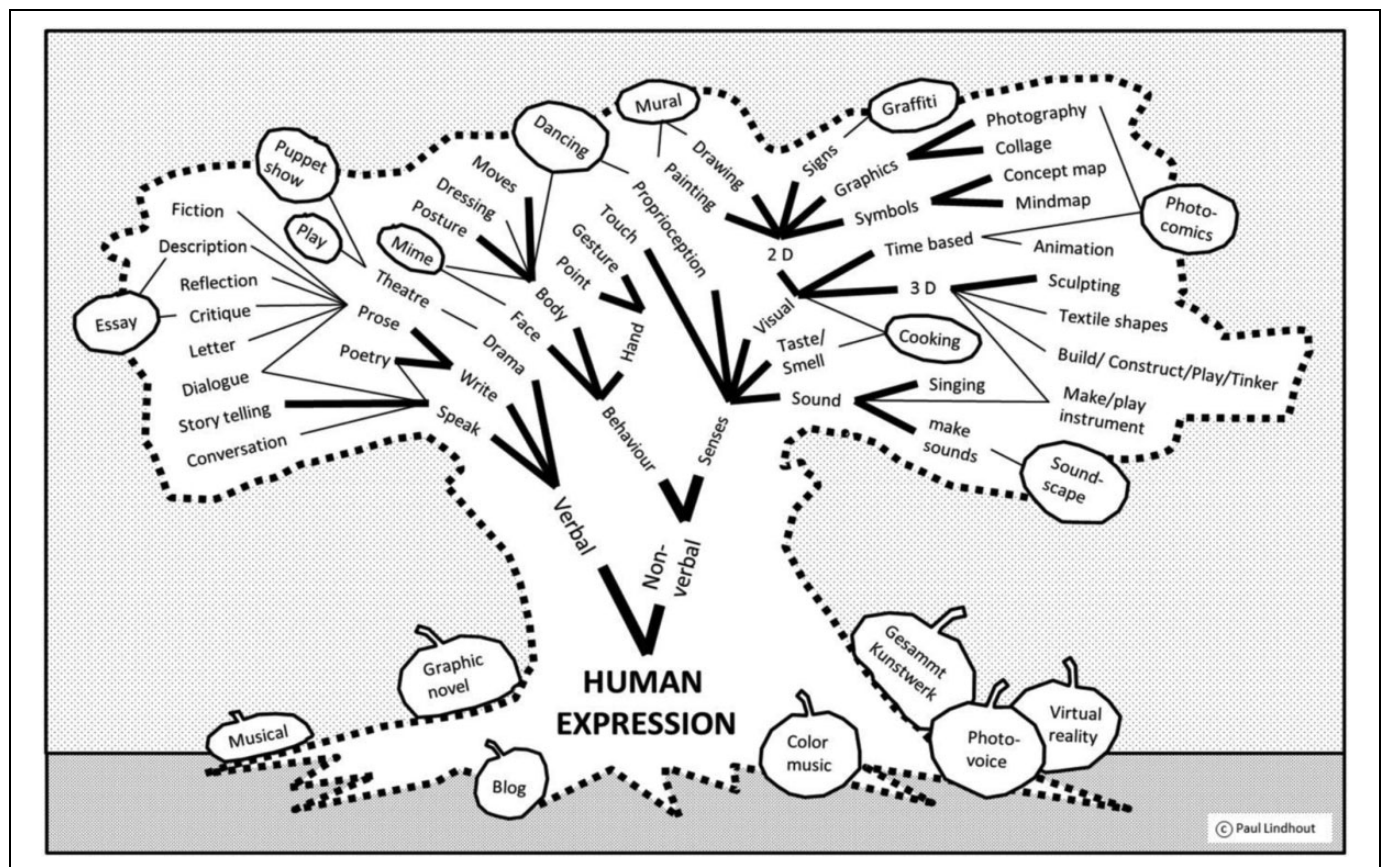
Figure 1. The expression types tree: A hierarchical classification structure.

mean when someone feels well, and experiences a homelike existence in the world? The emerging interest in using one or more expression types in health related research is highlighted not only by the growing number of publications, but by the rich variety of keynotes at conferences on health, illness and well being.[3] Researchers aiming to understand illness, disease, disability, and health have been working with a wide variety of non-verbal methods for many years (Nguyen, 2018; Wang et al., 2017). Thus, while the types listed in our inventory are not new, the synthesis is.

Using Expression Types in Research

There seems to be a vast gap between the scholarly fields of qualitative and arts-based research, and how the arts are practiced and theorized in the context of art academies (De Oliveira, 2013). In art academies, artistic research focuses on the process of knowledge generation of the artist-researcher by learning *through* the arts. Here, researchers of both the scientific and art academies share a similar aim: enhancing their understanding through diverse forms of knowing. We carried

out this inventory primarily for those who work in the field of scholarly qualitative research, but we acknowledge that much can (and should) be learned from artistic researchers who are based in the art academies (Visse et al., 2019).

Recently, artists, like Finnish arts-based health researcher Kaisu Koski,[4] are entering the medical and health humanities field; some seek collaborations with academic scholars. This illustrates how the boundaries between universities and art academies—or, to phrase it differently,—between scholarly research practices and studio/performance spaces—are slowly dissolving. In a future version of this inventory, developments in both fields might be included. At this stage, the expression types may facilitate the emerging understandings between researchers and participants of qualitative health endeavors. They may assist researchers in reaching a more subtle and nuanced understanding of respondents' health related experiences, perceptions, and issues. Example are photo-voice (Wang et al., 2017) and autophotography, in which the photographs that participants take of their environment are used as data. Autophotography captures the participant's experiences (Moreland & Cowie, 2005). The photos are used during interviews to discuss the meanings of the photographs and can be interpreted more than once to add new viewpoints to what a participant would usually share by merely telling his or her story (Bigante, 2010). Photo elicitation interviews create "deep and interesting talk" (Harper, 2002, p. 23).

Methodological Limitations

On a more epistemological and methodological note, we should address three reliability issues that need to be taken into consideration when designing methods for research based on these expression types. Use of these expression types may lead to the inclusion of *too much* insight, *too little* insight or *distorted* insight into the experiences of participants.

Firstly, while analyzing any expression type (e.g., a drawing) a researcher might infer *too much* meaning, thus reaching outside the perimeter of the collected data (Borgdorff, 2012; Ellis & Scott-Hoy, 2004). Using arts-based expressions, researchers can reveal more than the work was intended to convey (Merleau-Ponty, 1959). Here it is worth elaborating upon the difference between expression and disclosure (Gadamer, 1960; Visse et al., 2019). Both the subject and the researcher may introduce any kind of expression and accept—yet not identify—imagination (Crowther, 2013) or fantasy (Ucok-Sayrak, 2017) as part of the data. This is why we need to learn how phenomenological scholars theorize about a phenomenon reaching saturation.[5]

Secondly, a researcher might obtain *too little* insight from an expression of the experiences under investigation. Here, the experiences would be only partly explored, this may be because the expression is found to contain little meaning, or due to methodical omissions in data collection, such as superficial interviewing or too-selective shadowing. In such a case, the use of physical, psychological, social, and spiritual layers of meaning, as proposed by Weiher (2014), may be of help to a researcher in

carrying out a deeper data collection process. Next, using observation techniques for listening "for what is unspoken" (Gilligan & Eddy, 2017, p. 76) may increase the quality of the insights into the experiences (Arendt, 1978; Finlay, 2014). Moreover, in order to get closer to a comprehensible expression of the experience,[6] researchers could increase the choice and quality of expression types by gathering multiple perspectives on experiences in a particular research setting (Hatch & Yanow, 2008; Ingarden, 1962). However, this provides no guarantee that the experience is actually expressed. Looking at a picture, a painting, an architectural building or listening to a music performance, are no linear activities with a sender and receiver. There is not one and the same piece of music, not even for one and the same person listening to consecutive performances of that piece (Ingarden, 1962). This has methodological implications (Wentworth, 2004; Wollheim, 2001), since these notions could lead to too much reduction—reduction caused by overemphasizing an artistic expression, or by using metaphors because these put the researcher's every day perceptions of the world aside (Slatman, 2003). Van Manen (2014) implied the need for a minimum requirement by disqualifying a short, intense, one-off experience as too small to be considered a lived experience.

Thirdly, any method, if incorrectly applied by a researcher, or if having a flawed design to start with, might *distort* the insights into experiences. Scientific rigor is necessary to reduce the uncertainties and increase reliability and validity of empirical results obtained. Proper research quality starts with the critical attitude of the researcher while shaping the results. This is done by following quality procedures, interacting, interpreting, and communicating the data, whether obtained verbally or non-verbally through non-verbal types of expression. We contend that there is a need for advancing quality procedures such that non-verbal expressions are being considered as findings. Such procedures are available in arts-based research and can be applied in qualitative health related research.

Before we conclude, we need to mention that this study has methodological limitations. It is restricted to primary and secondary scientific sources and may therefore have neglected forms of expression that have not yet been subjected to scientific study. We contend that such an expression would likely comprise either a combination of the types identified in this study or a further variation within one of these types. Searching the so-called "grey literature"—i.e., non-scientific but credible publications—may add detail and depth to this expression types inventory (Pandita & Singh, 2011, p. 1; see also Wessels, 1997).

Researchers who draw upon these expression types share their results with others, such as participants, clients, and other stakeholders. Research reports are still the primary way of communicating research findings. Other forms of (re-)presentation are contested due to issues concerning evidence and rigor. Creativity is needed to find practical ways to share the insights that emerge from working with a plurality of expression types in reports. Here qualitative health researchers could draw inspiration from the artistic researchers who are seeking alternative modes of representation by experimenting with practice-led research.[7]

Practical limitations in recording, storing and sharing of dynamic and unique non-verbal expression—via sound, images, film footage, smell and physical objects—may constrain the quality of such research. Although repeatability may be limited due to the specific context changing in time (Fielding, 2004), we believe in the promise of experimentation that artistic researchers have already embarked upon.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This inventory provides qualitative health researchers with an overview of the plethora of expression types enabling the gathering, interpreting, understanding and (re-)presentation of data about the experiences of participants. The inventory can be used as a source of inspiration to enhance the quality of one's research methodology via methodological and data types triangulation. It can also be used as a frame of reference for researchers to verify whether they have taken into account the complexity and ambiguities of everyday experiences regarding the themes or phenomena under scrutiny. Using a variety of existing and newly conceived combinations of expression types opens up new possibilities for researchers hoping to obtain a more holistic insight into experience.

As discussed, we recommend further research, firstly in order to learn more from existing practice in health care, education, therapy, psychology and counseling, and secondly on how artistic researchers work with and report on non-verbal expression types (painting/drawing, sculpting, dressing, cooking, collage, theater, dance, music). Building bridges between qualitative health researchers and artistic researchers opens up new possibilities to enter the tacit, sensory and unspeakable realms of our experience. These approaches can assist us in finding solutions to both methodological problems in qualitative research (too much, too little, distorted insights) and issues of data collection and (re-)presentation (recording, storing and sharing). We contend that taking steps in this direction adds depth to how qualitative health research insights are developed and communicated. In this way, the depth of our insight into experiences will hopefully increase while we continue to honor the ambiguous realms of our existence.

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Notes

1. See: Scott-Hoy & Ellis (2005, p. 9). Carolyn Ellis said this when first seeing Karen Scott-Hoy's painting "Autoethnography" in 1999. It later became the front cover of their joint 2004 book titled "The Ethnographic I."
2. We used GGZStandaarden.nl (2018). Vaktherapie in de zorg [Professional therapy in healthcare].https://www.ggzstandaarden.nl/generieke-modules/vaktherapie/vaktherapie-in-de-zorg [Accessed: November: 16, 2019].
3. Examples are: International Human Research Science Conference [Accessed: May 16, 2019], Qualitative Health Research Conference [Accessed: May 16, 2019], Medical and Health Humanities Conference [Accessed: May 16, 2019], Arts in Health Conference [Accessed: May 16, 2019].
4. This artist collaborates with several European and US based scholars, including the third author of this article.
5. "One and the same phenomenon can occur in manifold degrees and levels of saturation of givenness" (Gschwandtner, 2014, p. 193), see also Marion (2002).
6. In search of a "saturated phenomenon" (Marion, 2002, p. 227), see also: Van Manen (2014).
7. E.g. through https://scalar.usc.edu/works/creative-practice-research/what-is-pbr [Accessed: May 14, 2020].

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