This is the first videocast about creative research methods.

I wrote a book on this which was published in 2015. It's a fast-moving field and quite a lot's happened since then but nevertheless I think what I wrote is still quite relevant. So when I was writing the book I really looked for examples of creative methods and I read about 800 research reports I think about 500 made it into the book and about 100 were used as detailed boxed examples. So quite a big body of knowledge to draw on and as I was doing that work, that reading, I became aware that the research that I was reading really fell into four broad categories. They're not mutually exclusive of course and some research falls into more than one or falls into three or in a few cases even all four. But essentially these categories are as you can see: arts-based research – some people think that is creative research methods but actually it's just a subset, although an important subset. There's also some very creative work being done using technology in research. Mixed methods research is perhaps one of the most mature examples and then there are transformative research frameworks such as feminist research, participatory research, and activist research and so on. I've also become aware since the book was written that Indigenous methodologies are a pillar of their own so I'll bring those into this presentation as such.

We will be looking now at arts-based research then in the next videocast I'll be looking at research using technology and mixed methods research and then in the last videocast I'll be covering transformative research frameworks and Indigenous methodologies.

So people often think that arts-based research equals the visual arts but again that's not the whole story. Of course the visual arts are included but so are the performative arts such as the arts of theatre and dance and song, comedy even, and the written arts so fiction, poetry, playwriting, screenwriting and music is included. I've already mentioned song but there are other forms of including music as a facet of research. Also the technological arts and this is of course where there is crossover with research using technology so video and film can be included in arts-based research, and storytelling; in a sense all research is made up of stories. Stories are how we learn as human beings. We learn from stories that we hear from other people and we tell stories to explain things to people we're talking to. And every research project is a story is made up of many stories, whether its quantitative qualitative or mixed methods. Numbers tell stories just as much as words do, and researchers need to write stories around the

numbers, the words, the images, that they collect and interpret. There's a key debate within the Euro-Western paradigm around arts-based research about how skilled you need to be in the arts techniques you want to use and this is a kind of spectrum of debate really. And at one end there is a researcher such as Professor Jane Piirto in the United States who will not supervise doctoral students doing arts-based research unless they have been peer-reviewed to a similar level with the arts that they want to work with as with the research that they want to work with. So peer review in the arts works differently from how it works in research, it's not just about writing and publishing in journals, it's about perhaps if you're fine artists being exhibited in public, having an exhibition that people will attend or maybe even pay to attend; if you're a musician it's about playing in a group, playing for other people, getting bookings, maybe producing CDs that people will pay money for, and so on. So these forms of peer review within the arts are about other artists recognizing you as an artist of worth. And for Jane Piirto that's hugely important and I think that is a defensible position, and an understandable position, but it's certainly not the only position. At the other end of the spectrum we have Katrina Douglas in the UK and her view is that the arts are egalitarian, should be accessible by everyone, and you can have a go; that you don't need to have ever written a song before, but you might decide you want to write a song about some data that you're analyzing, and that by doing that you will learn something so it won't be wasted. If you've never written a song before you're highly unlikely to write a very good song, but it will still be a song. It might not be a song you ever want to share with anyone but you will learn something from the process, you will see your data differently and it's absolutely fine, Katrina Douglas would argue for you to do that if you choose. My own position is around the middle of this debate so for me it depends on the context. If I'm using the 'draw and write' technique with year one school pupils I don't feel I need a massive level of artistic skill to administer that technique, to have children draw me a picture in response to a prompt and add a few words which they may write themselves if they're able or ask an adult to write for them if they're not yet ready to do that themselves. And I don't think I need a massive level of skill to interpret those drawings because I can use a form of content analysis. They're not going to be particularly sophisticated images although I do recognize that if I had input from a fine artist they might well see things differently from the way I would see them. Alternatively if I was perhaps as I have been in the past working with young people who want to present finding using drama, I have minimal drama skills, I could do it but I probably couldn't do it very well. So in that context I would ask a drama worker – a young people's drama worker – to join the

research team and to put in their expertise around producing drama. I would bring my expertise as a researcher, the young people would bring all their young people expertise and together we could produce a good result.

Arts-based research isn't just about data gathering. As I've hinted it can be used at all stages of the research process. So when you're designing research some people think visually, some people prefer to think visually, find it very useful to use visual methods such as spidergrams where you write a problem or a word in the centre of a big piece of paper and then spin off with other thoughts in all directions, and mind maps which is similar with perhaps a little bit more flow to them, or timelines where you might draw a long timeline on a big piece of paper and plot different points at which you want different things to happen to figure out whether your timing is realistic, whether it's manageable in the context of perhaps other commitments that you may have. Then when you're reviewing literature, so you can take a broader view of literature if you include arts-based research. Some people like to look at novels if they're studying sociology or if they're studying history of a certain period to look at the creative literature from that period. Personal documents such as diaries if you can get access to them can be very revealing and self-published literature is gaining prominence. There is literature such as zines which are being collected by some universities now such as Mount Royal in Canada or the University of Iowa both have collections of zines which I think you can view online. Graphic novels; all sorts of things that you can bring into literature review that are arts-based types of literature.

Then of course when you're gathering data you can enhance interviews by using photography so photo interviewing, photo elicitation, photo voice – there are a number of names for it but this is perhaps one of the more common ways of doing arts-based data gathering. Poetic inquiry is also gathering momentum. People are asking research participants to write poems for them, keep journals, do maps, draw pictures, and so on and so forth. Then when you're doing analysis you can use arts-based techniques for this as well. So again poetic inquiry: you might write a poem about your data , you might create a poem from your data. You might create an 'I poem'. This is something that was devised by Susie Weller and Rosalind Edwards from the University of Southampton where you take every statement from an interview transcript that begins with I or has I prominently within it, put them each on a line of their own and they form a kind of poem that may tell you something really useful about that person's identity or how that person sees the subject under investigation.

Analyzing metaphors can be very interesting. If you're looking at how people see the world and how they represent the world for themselves and to other people, and writing screenplays with snippets of dialogue from participants, all the kinds of dialogue participants might be using, and then you can check that back with participants to see if it fairly represented them authentically. Of course when you're writing, writing is a form of the arts, even nonfiction writing is creative: I would argue you're creating writing that wasn't there before, you're making a new argument, you're putting together words to make new sentences and sentences to make new paragraphs. That is a creative act. But you can also bring in techniques from so-called creative writing so techniques from fiction, techniques from poetry, techniques of description, techniques of storytelling and of course you can add in snippets of video if you're working with multimedia or if you're going to be publishing online. Examples of arts-based data you may have collected and photographs of some which will bring what you're saying perhaps more to life.

Then when you're presenting research there's loads of scope for using arts-based techniques for using illustrations on your PowerPoint slides, using diagrams graphs and infographics and so on, for using short videos for people to watch and if you're feeling brave or you have the skills for using some drama or some saw more interpretive dance, If you haven't come across this you might like to look up 'Dance Your PhD' on YouTube where natural and social scientists do present their PhDs in dances. It's really quite entertaining and quite instructive. And then again when you're disseminating findings of course creative writing but also exhibitions or installations, multimedia and so on.

There are various circumstances in which arts-based research is particularly helpful. I've never yet met a child who didn't respond positively to the question "Would you like to draw me a picture?" and being presented with a some paper and some pretty coloured crayons. It's also useful where there is verbal language barriers so if you're working with people who don't speak or don't fluently speak a language in common, or people who have difficulty communicating, there's been some great work done using arts-based techniques with people who have dementia or people who have brain injuries or post-stroke survivors so on and so forth. Also useful with mixed ability groups where some may take more easily to the verbal or the textual than others, and it's also useful when you're working with particularly sensitive topics or emotive topics that might be hard to talk

about but much easier to draw a picture about or model about in clay or create a song about or whatever it may be.

However not everyone is comfortable with the arts. Some people are quite resistant. Some people feel they're not good at it. Some people feel it's well outside their comfort zones and they feel very challenged by the idea. Some people will love the idea of doing arts-based work but others will be reticent, perhaps really uncomfortable, and it's not okay to make research participants feel uncomfortable. So it's really worth having a second option in case you do come up against someone who's very reluctant, clearly feeling uncomfortable, have another option for those people in case of need.

So that's a quick introduction to arts-based research and next I'll be looking at research using technology and mixed methods research.