

Title: Some principles in doing autoethnography

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Abstract

Autoethnography is a popular research method in the understanding of lived experience in relation with cultural, social and emotional conditions. The paper is going to present a method of doing 'autoethnography' with reflective thinking in which 1. the author is a main participant 2. Use layers of reflective thinking 3. Devote to the understanding of culture and emotion in relation of teaching ethnic minority in the learning of Chinese in his or her life situation. At different stages of our life, there are episodes of life experience, which we would like to learn from it and invite others to share. Writing autoethnography is simply a promising way to help us learn from our lived experience. To achieve this purpose, an example of teacher's autoethnography will be reviewed. It is about

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Key words

autoethnography forgiveness identity
teacher emotion mentality theme
lived experience

Introduction

Humans make meaning of experience by endlessly telling and retelling stories about themselves. We keep these stories in our memory individually (to form and represent our own identity) or collectively (to form and represent our

collective identity). We look back at these memories of the past in thinking about our future.

Yet such memories are selective. “Why, for all of us, out of all we have heard, seen, felt in a lifetime do certain images recur, charged with emotions, rather than others? Such memories may have symbolic value but of what we cannot tell...” (Eliot 1933, quoted in Hayler 2015) We can make use memory (and its selection) as a method of researching ourselves. By looking at the memories of critical incidents in our lived experiences, we understand more about what form and represent our identity.

Some may say: we will write down all these memories and keep it. Writing down these memories may help us air out our emotions but this is not good enough as it does not shed light to our future life experience. Sometimes, these written memories may even end up in the bin. In writing autoethnography, we mostly write down our mess. Reflexivity is paramount to autoethnography. Through writing, reflection and rethinking, we organize and rethink our mess. Thinking of the interconnections of the mess is not a smooth process. Quite often it is a painful process and can be better achieved through different layers of rethinking and rewriting. But slowly, we find out new orientations as we try to understand interconnections between emotions and experiences as they are our blindness to our culture, identity, our social conditions and taken- for- granted cultural identity, which are previously invisible to us.

Autoethnography

What is autoethnography? As suggested by Ellis (2000), autoethnography has been regarded as the study that connects humans to the culture with several layers of consciousness thinking. Bochner (2000) draws attention to the three

axes of autoethnography: self (auto), culture (ethnos) and descriptive research (graphy). In autoethnographic study, the author deploys her own experiences to 'bend back on the self and look more deeply at the self-other interaction' (Ellis and Bocher 2000). However, the goal is not just to know the self of that person in particular, but the social structure and culture that is affecting the connection between self and others in the situation. Erica Franca de Souza Vasconcelos(2011) considers autoethnography helps her make sense of lived experience. In my doctoral study, I have used the method of autoethnography to reexamine my emotional ups and downs in intercultural teaching, and reveal certain part of my inner self. I have come to an understanding of the immense difference between teachers and students in terms of culture and positions and hence it helps me to teach better.

Aims of writing autoethnography

In 2007, I have finished my master degree in the University of Hong Kong and applied for a teaching post in a secondary school. I have got an offer from a prestigious secondary school and there I started my teaching career in teaching Chinese to non-Chinese students. Inside this school, there were lots of lived experience worth writing them down and gain insight from them.

One of the aims of writing autoethnography as communal endeavor is to share experience. The teaching of EM seems righteous but lots of teachers try to avoid. 'Objective' training without attending to the inner mental and emotional landscape of teachers will be superficial and unable to touch the deep issues on teaching Chinese to EM students. Therefore, using this lived experience of teaching on the writing of autoethnography will bring out the special value of promoting and developing this kind of research. In writing autoethnography,

we are writing our selective experiences. Inside some of these experiences, there are challenges and deep memories. We look back and find meaning from these deep memories. We learn more who we are in connection with culture and society and gain insight from the importance of others in the same culture and we would like to invite readers to share our selective experience and if possible resonate with them. Sometimes, readers may be able to find clues for their problems with similar features and background, for example: handling rocky relationship.

Ways of writing autoethnography

Writing autoethnography is a powerful way to understand our inner self in relation to others. First writing provides a platform for exposing subjectivity without hurting anybody. It is connected with emotions, understandings and cultural perceptions. For example in my doctoral thesis, I have explored my emotions and cultural difference with students. The ups and downs during the interaction with students are often related with cultural perceptions. From the difference in cultural upbringings, emotions creep in. After writing the autoethnography, I come to understand myself and my students come from different walks of life, social and cultural background. We need to be objective and emerge ourselves into their culture. After exposing my subjectivity, I become more able to reflect on it in a more detached way. For example: on the complain of my students' parents after the Chinese test, I have written it down very soon after the complain. At the initial stage, it helped me to air out my emotions. When I look back later, I became more calm and I was able to make more in-depth reflection.

Writing autoethnography is a way of doing reflection, planning better for future

In general, writing autoethnography is a way of doing reflection of the past, learning experience of the present and planning a better life for the future. The writing of autoethnography is a writing of our retrospective lived experience in which we think it is worth mentioning and share it with others. It is not just a story telling of the past. There is some wisdom to be learned from the lived experience. To achieve this intent, we need to collect our data: our lived experience through different means such as reflections in multiple progressive layers, instant note writing of the incidents, observation at different stages, interviews and document review. Our personal memory of critical incident has an important role. Throughout the selection of critical incidents, we remember some more vividly. Why? Because they are regarded as more important in our perception and we think they are worth writing them down. Then we verify and analyze our data through triangulation of different resources. I have used different layers of reflective writing of lived experience as it gives me a cooling period between each writing of the same lived experience. It allows me to have a more objective view. The progressive layers differ in purpose, focus and importantly the multiple layers create a distance between the big I and the small I. At first, the writing is an auto observation with emotional narration and later on it will be replaced with self-observation and self-confession to the readers. From this kind of writing, researcher can touch readers' heart through the hot air and heavy emotions in the incident and also through the sense of painful thinking. Hence readers can follow researcher's lived experience more easily.

Reflective thinking for improvement: positive attitude

In reflective thinking, it can often go negatively, as lived experience can be unpleasant to us. The main aim of reflective thinking is for improvement. Here

being positive is important. We would like to learn from the lived experience and become a better self. Mentality is important. Improvement cannot take place if we are not positive and do not learn from our lived experience. Some of the experiences may be painful. But we need to have the courage to face the painful experience, able to recall and with an attitude to improve ourselves instead of destruction. This is based on our ideas on values. Everyone has different ideas on values. Values guide us how to think and treasure. What we value most is the issue we treasure most. Somehow, I think peer and coach support are important. Telling them our critical lived experience can help us express more. When they are good listener, there is likely some therapeutic purpose in the painful recall or thinking of the lived experience. There is also the idea of Ghaye's positive reflection. His idea aims at positive thinking and clues for improvement. His ideas is not used for fixing problems, it can also be used to amplify our strength. In lived experience, we pick out what works is very important but we often take it lightly as if the good elements will take good care of themselves. It is not true. We need to keep these good elements. If we have failure, we still value where the mistake might lie. From the fact that we feel hurt, we understand ourselves and we know what we really want. Follow his ideas help us experience the joy of success.

Writing a meaningful autoethnography

Fix a period of collecting raw experience

During the journey of writing, we need to fix a period of lived experience, which is to be studied. This is rather crucial in the collection of raw experience.

Otherwise, we may end up in a collection of a long never-ending story. We also

need to fix a goal to write in the analysis: what do we want to find out with readers in our lived experience? This will form the domain of the study.

Researcher is the major informant

In this kind of writing, the researcher is the main and major informant. In autoethnography, the researcher is highly visible in telling his or her story and reflection. In this way, the collection of primary and secondary data is more readily available and it helps researcher revisit the data, connect the data and explore it more in depth. Thus a deeper understanding of our inner self and the connection of others in the society will be made more viable.

In doing the writing, we can write in a language that allows us to narrate our lived experience and express our emotions so as to make it more friendly for readers to read. In other words, it is better to write in a language that we often use in daily communications. Quite often, it will either be our first language or practice language of which we have used it frequently and that will make us feel comfortable to write and express our feeling.

Before we move on, there is a need to explain the key terms of reflection in action, reflection on action and reflection for action. In order to take a reflexive turn in looking at one's experience from a distance, writing is a useful tool in autoethnographic research. However, there is no common agreement on exactly how the autoethnography can be done. Following is one simple model to be considered. Through the different layers of writing, the researcher becomes more able to look back at her experience from a distance. The researcher can follow a sequence of steps of writing, as '**reflection in, on and for action**' proposed by Donald Schon, the author of the book 'The Reflective Practitioner:

How Professionals Think In Action' (1994), and later on strength based reflection.

First we can do a '**reflection-in-action**' writing – we re-live the incident as much as possible and write what we see and feel or think within that incident. We try not to judge whether we did the right thing and whether our perception was accurate. What important is that we try to put down what was experienced rich and truthfully. The only thing we must remind ourselves is that in this writing we must also include the context and the others who were present to us in that experience.

Then you can do a '**reflection-on-action**' writing after you have written the critical incidents. You read and think about what you have written. The language you used can also be part of the object for your reflection at this stage. Words are cultural, and so are their choices. It should be the culture that has been affecting you. Try not to change the words used in the 'reflection-in-action' narrative. During the reflection-on-action, you can add endnotes to the 'reflection-in-action' narrative to elaborate or clarify if there are points in the text that happen to be difficult to understood by others, or declare errata if there are points clearly deviate from what could be true (as enlightened by other sources).

In this 'reflection-on-action' writing, you try to analyze and give meaning to the 'reflection-in-action' narrative (what important things can the experience tell about you and the others; what could have happened otherwise in the situation, like you or the others taking a different course; what could have caused you to such way of noticing or feeling or acting in the experience; what do the experience mean to you subsequently). You may not be able to arrive at definite

conclusions. But it will certainly give you some focus questions and tentative answers.

In general people can do analysis to give meaning to a piece of lived experience through connections in 4 directions. Beginning from a particular incident at a particular time, we can go 'forward' to see the consequence (anticipated or actually happened), 'backward' to analyse what in the past which could have lead to such experience or the anticipated consequences, 'inward' to go deeper into the situation to see the other alternatives which could had happened instead what actually did, and 'outward' to look at other incidents that can be compared to this experience for similarity or contrast.

After you have done your reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action writing, you can let other members of your cultural group read your writing and hear their responses. By sharing your own story in honest and reflective way, it helps others understand your concerns (much better than the usual kind of 'impartial' question one get from interview or questionnaire survey). Your story can also be ice-breaker to encourage them to contribute their own stories. Hearing others' experiences will help you remove some 'take-for-granted-ness' of your own interpretation and see more possibilities. Based on their responses, you can think and read more. You can also (re)visit some relevant literature on the concepts that you and the other participants have pointed to in discussion. Then you can start writing reflection for action.

Overall speaking, we need to write the incident with a clear mind (though it may not be very clear from the outset as it may be clouded with emotions), stating the background and how the incident is triggered. Otherwise, readers may not be able to grasp a thorough understanding of the incident, as readers were not

involved in the incident. We invite them to participate. Sometimes, readers may have faced similar situations or they can put themselves into the researchers' positions and experience the situation. During the first instant writing, lots of emotions may have recalled and written down. But at this stage, our perceptions are quite blurred as it is clouded with feelings and emotions. Thus, there is a necessity to go back sometime afterwards and write down what we have reflected on this recently. Here we may need to add background information so that others would be able to understand. Our emotions may have changed due to the changing of our positions, influence of others and the passage of time. We possibly will go further from our first instant response and we will see the difference in response. Here, we do not need to change or cross out the emotions or subjective perception we have first written down. We could make annotate so as not to confuse readers. It is not enough to base on the difference on emotions and feelings as these emotions are often negative if we want to learn from lived experience. We need to advance a bit more. If the lived experience worth to be written down, there is an indication that we may want to learn something from the experience or the writing itself serves a kind of therapeutic purpose and writer tries to recover from the pain of the lived experience. To achieve this purpose, there is a need to do a self-strengthening reflection.

In my doctoral study, I have written down one of the unpleasant experiences I have to deal with when a mother of my student who gave me a series of bombardment about their daughter's test result. 'Excuse me, how do you teach? My daughter never fails in her tests, how come she fails in your paper? Do you know how to teach? ... If you do not know how to teach, let me teach you how to teach.'

My reflection in action is like this: My first instant response is anger and feeling embarrassed. The first thing that came into my mind was: like mother, like daughter. How come they behave like this? Did they know how to respect others? Did they know how to speak so as not to hurt the others so deeply? The statement: 'Let me teach you how to teach' really hurts. I felt extremely embarrassed as my dignity of being a teacher was being ripped off. Here, I could recall my own childhood as my past often affects my judgment and perceptions and at the time of the incident, I often make comparison with my past personal experience and my present self is related with my past experience.

I was cute when I was small but I was very talkative. I would start talking once my teacher finished teaching and gave me some homework to do. Knowing this, my teacher intended to give me a lesson. After the mid term exam in primary three, she said there were two students who had scored the same mark and she would observe the behavior of these two students in class and assessed who deserved the third place. In the end, I became fourth in the class.

Though I realize the cause and consequence later, I did not get annoyed with the teacher because it was my fault of being so talkative. My parents realized this and they accepted the results. I accepted my teacher's judgment without bitterness or resentment though I felt a bit bad afterwards.

How come it was totally different now? What have been changed?

The purpose of different layers of reflection

Using several layers of reflections: reflection in action, reflection on action, reflection for action and strength based reflection. Each reflection has got their purpose. This method offers me by examining feeling alongside with thinking, we learn to be understanding and learn to be kind. Kindness is not something that can just come naturally; it has to be learnt, so that one can be kind to oneself and to be kind to others.

Reflection in action provides readers with a detailed useful description of the lived experience, which is often filled with emotions.

For example: On the complain of my student' parents after the Chinese test,

'Excuse me, Mrs. Ras, how do you teach? My daughter never fails in her tests, how come she fails in your test? Do you know how to teach? How many people failed in your test? ... If you do not know how to teach, let me teach you how to teach.'

The first thing that came into my mind was: like mother, like daughter. How come they behave like this? Did they know how to respect others? Did they know how to speak so as not to hurt the others so deeply?

Reflection on action is done after a cooling period of the lived experience. At this stage, we may be more calm and rational to think over the experience and provide us with a more in-depth analysis. On the parents' complain, a reflection on action is made afterwards.

After second thought and casual talk with my husband and his relatives (they were Pakistani), I realized grades and marks are important in the eyes of Asian parents especially for the middle class Asians. They put lots of emphasis on

children's academic attainment and make comparison among parents themselves. As a teacher, there is quite a lot of mental pressure. One of the pressures will be meeting the demands of parents and I feared. I was afraid of their complain. Fear comes in all directions, at anytime and settles in anyone's heart. For me, I don't feel good because the response of my student's parents is a kind of humiliation and a threat to my career prospect since most of the principals at school would not like to hear complains from parents. As a teacher, I would not like to hear statement given by parents like 'let me teach you how to teach.' I feel it is a downgrade to my teaching ability. For parents, she was obviously displeased with the test result of her daughter. She had felt the failure of her daughter was a kind of humiliation to them. In some ways, I understand my fear and I revert it to understand their fear.

Then we come to **reflection for action**, which can be an overall reflection with an aim for future guidance, hypothesis for consideration and new idea for future researchers. When I made a reflection for action on the issue of parents' complain, I understand myself more. For me, negative emotions will emerge when being scolded by harsh parents. Here, positive emotion plays a significant role as it helps us to guide our behavior. In the past, few researchers have done on positive emotions. Mostly it was focused on negative emotions. Those who experience positive emotions and benefits from this kind of attitude were able to regulate negative emotions and convert them into positive thinking. This ability is very important for front line workers who will constantly meet negative emotions and must learn this capacity to turn it around. As a result, it helps them face adversity and cope with problems. They will be able to move on with their life journey and recover from stressful conditions. Besides, the

accumulative of positive and negative emotions should facilitate the handling of negative environment. Thus, if we want to make progress in teaching Chinese, we need to look more carefully in emotions and use it to improve the personal and emotional growth in ourselves.

As for **strength based reflection** on the same issue, I did not know how to handle my emotions in the beginning. This introspection helps me let go of my hard feelings. In teaching, we have to deal with people and conflicts are likely to emerge when there is a difference on our values. Here, we need to have the courage and calmness to face. No doubt, each of us wants everything to be on our side but in reality it may not be so. Learning how to give and take and developing the courage to face conflict may help us in having a more harmonious teaching and learning environment. There is a need to develop the kindness to become a bigger self. Understanding cannot exist if I still hold all the unpleasant memories tight in our heart. Reflection on action also requires me to pick up the little or transient happiness that come along with my experience. Because of this, I have tried to learn forgiveness as it can bring peace in my mind. It indicates I will be in good control of my emotions. It is a sign of maturity.

Here, I am using layers of reflective thinking which is a development of progressive depths in understanding self and others. In between each layer of thinking, there is a cooling period so as to make myself more objective. It can be regarded as a confession in front of readers and self in which auto observation is required. In short, in the process of autoethnographic study, I have learned from lived experience. In lived experience, there are slight moments of true kindness from the other side such as the understanding from school and the change of

good behavior from students to me. All these uplift me emotionally from despair, and I had made it into strength for moving on to think and to do right.

Having multiple ideas and opinion from others

Sometimes, we may invite others to participate in our writing by having a talk or interview with the related persons in lived experience or unrelated persons who have heard of this lived experience. Having multiple ideas and opinion from others are more likely to provide a broader view of the lived experience of others. Sometimes, they have similar lived experience in teaching and this makes me feel better as I have realized I am not the only one who have faced this and thus it may have lead me out of despair and it may also affect the writer's perspective towards the writer's lived experience.

When we start writing a meaningful autoethnography, we do not just write down the incident only and thinking that is enough as it will not help us grow. We need to tell the story in a truthful way. Because of the truthful writing, our feelings and emotions will be expressed in a more genuine way. When lived experience happens, it is always sensible to write down the experience as soon as possible and by doing this, it projects the lived experience in a more accurate way.

Once the lived experience happens, the memory is very clear in the first place, writing it down will help us focus more on the main issue. At this moment, our experiences are clouded with emotions. Our memory will usually fade away with time. For significant lived experience, the memory usually is much more clear and vivid when it just happens. Writing the lived experience in a rich descriptive way will help better reflection or consciousness thinking. But just telling the experience is not enough as it will look like story telling without further

illustration of what we experience and it is likely to defeat the purpose of writing autoethnography. During the writing process of autoethnography, an in-depth reflection is required.

In general, there are different ways in autoethnography writing. For example, Erica selected some snapshots of her lived experience which had evoked strong feeling during her teaching and learning process together with some analysis after each lived experience. For me, autoethnography by nature is a research that requires deep reflective thinking. Reflective thinking can occur at different stages. It can be happened in the middle of the lived experience, or it can be happened after the lived experience at different timing. Each time the reflection could give some vestige of wisdom. Reflection in the lived experience can be referred as 'reflection in action' suggested by Schon. Afterwards, there are the reflection on action and reflection for action. The first one is obvious, filled with heavy emotion while the second one: reflection on action is made after a cooling period and the third one: reflective for action is a kind of systematic and organized and analytical thinking. How one organizes the reflective thinking is a matter of individual preference. Some may do it one by one while some may blend it into each other to form a continuous line of thoughts.

Issues to think about before choosing a topic for autoethnography

(1) Is the theme to be set before the autoethnography, or to be left for free emergence in the process?

In general, it must start from something that the researcher wants to find out. It is usually about something that the researcher concerns but does not quite know

how to handle, and through the study, he or she wishes to make some self-discovery and to know the experiences or perspectives of other people about it as well. So there must be an initial object of inquiry (the main topic or question) to begin with, and the researcher should choose the other informants (people to read and respond to the story) such that they should also have some own experience about the object of inquiry.

Based on that object of inquiry, some related critical incident can be identified. Then through the reflection-in-action writing and its analysis, and the sharing and interaction with readers, underlying themes may emerge and be identified. (For example, your topic may be about relation with students. Then in your incidents in relating with students, fear may be one theme that emerges, and you see you were fearful of a number of things, but another person may feel difficult about handling distance, and so on.)

(2) What kinds of topics would likely be better to addressed by the method of autoethnography?

These are some topics of autoethnography that I know: emotional challenges in teaching culturally diverse students; uncertainties in promoting students' social political participation; satisfying and frustrating moments in teaching; freedom and control in education. These seem to be related to relation, identity, tension, value judgment, and so on. But topics could also be about knowledge, concept and thinking. There can be questions like 'are we really teaching them to think?' 'can these students think?' or 'Do they have their own views and concerns on certain things?' and so on.

It is true that all these topics can also be handled by other methods like interviews, questionnaire, or action research. But the interesting thing is that if

you use different methods, your focus may change. In other word, if you use different method, you may see the different faces of the reality. Here in autoethnography, you look more at your action and perception from inside, and discern the influence by the surrounding culture and system on you, as well as your own agency as a human.

No matter what topics you have chosen, in order to do autoethnography about the topic, you need to have some specific related memories as entry points. If you already have some memory, which comes back to you often, and they seem to relate to the topic, then you can begin from them. But if you have a topic you think important, and the memory is vague, perhaps you will need to do some journal writing next time when the related experience may come about.

Getting literature reference

Apart from talking or having an interview with related or unrelated others in the lived experience, it is rather crucial to get some opinion from literature references as it can offer us a more analytical view from different angles and distances. During my doctoral studies, I have included some ideas from significant writers and tried to match my personal feelings with their ideas. It helps me realize I should care not only the student and the subject but also their emotions and outer conditions of teaching. Here, I understand the success of teaching depends on mutual accommodation, acceptance of cultural diversity and reduction in prejudice.

The need to follow the above requirement

During our writing of autoethnography, we need to follow the above requirement in order to give a rich description from all angles. This helps to give an objective overview of the experience. In my case, I have used lived experience

to make reflections on my emotions and cultural understanding in relation with my students. After several layers of progressive reflections, I gradually acquire the ability to see things from different perspectives which is conducive to my teaching and understanding to ethnic students.

After writing, we invite readers to share

After writing the autoethnography, sharing is important. We invite readers to share but we do not ask for their agreement with our feelings as each one of us is different in our thinking and background and every situation can be different. We let them think about their own situations and possibly from there, they may be able to derive some ideas or solution to their own lived experiences.

Justification on writing my autoethnography

When I started writing my autoethnography, I first selected some critical incidents which had great impacts on my emotions, and then progressed through 3 qualitatively different layers of data collection, analysis and writing, which were analogous to Schon's idea of 'reflection in action, reflection on action, and reflection for action' (1983). In the first layer of reflective writing, I recollected my first personal experiences, with all the emotions and subjectivity in the situations. In the second layer, I analyzed the experiences from a distance to review the cause of my emotions and cultural perceptions. I also discussed the stories with some others in the profession. In the third layer, the focus was on developing my future direction of intercultural teaching. In this third layer of writing, I also interviewed my students to gather their perspectives on the past incidents and their aspirations for the future. Literature about second language education, teacher emotions, and intercultural education was studied and useful concepts were borrowed into the analysis at different stages. It is also important

to note that I also followed Ghaye's idea (2010) of positive reflection. I picked up any small things that worked, besides dwelling on those that did not, and tried to be forgiving. This was proven to be important in order that I could maintain the energy to continue the reflective journey without being too depressed.

Points to pay attention:

Excessive thinking on self

Some people may say there may be excessive focus on self in this kind of research and therefore may lead to a neglect of understanding others in the lived experience. But in any lived experience, there is the connection between self and others. Understanding self can help us understand others more. Yet during this kind of autoethnographic writing, we have to bear in mind that careful attention should be given to others, as self and others have different positions in the lived experience affecting the flow of the lived experience since lived experience is not a pure individual story.

To protect the identity of others

In writing autoethnography, there is a need to protect the identity of others, sometimes it may be necessary to hide the identity of writers as the lived experience may disclose the identity of others. Others may not want their identity to be exposed and as such it may cause inconvenience and more seriously harm to related others, which we would not want to see.

Besides, it may also look like revenge in disguise as exposing the identity of writers or others who are involved in the lived experience will sometimes make

others feel bitter or guilty.

To reduce the issue of subjectivity

In autoethnographic research, the primary data is self and that includes self-past and self present at different stages with emotions towards lived experience. Because of this, there may be the issue of subjectivity. To reduce this, literature reference is a good solution. Through literature review, we can gain ideas from different writers with different perceptions. Thus, it may help to reform our preconceptions in lived experience and be more objective. In some ways, it helps us understand our subjectivity.

Getting a second opinion from others

Getting a second opinion from others through interviews and talks can also reduce the problem of subjectivity. It can also clarify my ways of seeing the whole lived experience through different timing or stages.

The issue of validity and reliability

On the topic of validity and reliability, there is the issue of whether the lived experience is a truthful and reliable presentation of the reality. Are they supported with strong evidence? Unlike other research methods, if readers can make connection and resonate with researcher's lived experience, then we can conclude that there is validity and reliability in the themes brought up in the research. We need to be truthful to our lived experience, which is not an imagination. To achieve this, we need to give a detailed recall of the lived experience, revisit with different layers of reflection at different stages and include a variety of field notes and multiple levels of description and argumentation. We then can understand more self and others.

How to avoid generalization

Unlike in other research method, there is often only one subject to be studied in autoethnographic writing and as such it does not help generalization. Therefore, to overcome this problem of generalizability, we report the lived experience with rich essential details. Thus we allow readers to resonate and assimilate the meaning and importance of the parts of the lived experience that match with their own experience.

Conclusion

Know how to handle

In the process of writing autoethnography, we will learn from reflecting on lived experience. One of the useful points in reading and writing autoethnography is when similar scenario comes up, we (both me and others) may know how to handle the reality and are more likely to know how to handle without causing too much disturbance and give a more objective overview to the scenario. Others with similar experience may resonate with your experience or when similar experiences come up, we will know how to handle them more smoothly. But in actual reality, not many people may want to do this. People may even try to avoid it, because it is often emotionally uncomfortable. Here, we need some right method to create space to understand ourselves, and slowly we develop some kind of transformation in ourselves. Autoethnography with a structure described in the paper can be a promising way. In my own interpretations, it is a recall of lived experience and answering special questions when one contemplates to face the future with an aim of understanding our inner self and others in the area of spiritual, social and material exchange of others.

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