Autoethnography, Self-Narrative and Teacher Education

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Autoethnography, Self-Narrative and Teacher Education examines the professional life and work of teacher educators. In adopting an autoethnographic and life-history approach, Mike Hayler develops a theoretically informed discussion of how the professional identity of teacher educators is both formed and represented by narratives of experience.

The book draws upon analytic autoethnography and life-history methods to explore the ways in which teacher educators construct and develop their conceptions and practice by engaging with memory through narrative, in order to negotiate some of the ambivalences and uncertainties of their work. The author’s own story of learning, embedded within the text, was shared with other teacher-educators, who following interviews wrote self-narratives around themes which emerged from discussion. The focus for analysis develops from how professional identity and pedagogy are influenced by changing perceptions and self-narratives of life and work experiences, and how this may influence professional culture, content and practice in this area.

The book includes an evaluation of how using this approach has allowed the author to investigate both the subject and method of the research with implications for educational research and the practice of teacher education.

Audience: Scholars and students of education and the education of teachers, researchers interested in autoethnography and self-narrative.
Autoethnography, Self-Narrative and Teacher Education
STUDIES IN PROFESSIONAL LIFE AND WORK

Volume 5

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Scope
The series will commission books in the broad area of professional life and work. This is a burgeoning area of study now in educational research with more and more books coming out on teachers’ lives and work, on nurses’ life and work, and on the whole interface between professional knowledge and professional lives.

The focus on life and work has been growing rapidly in the last two decades. There are a number of rationales for this. Firstly, there is a methodological impulse: many new studies are adopting a life history approach. The life history tradition aims to understand the interface between people’s life and work and to explore the historical context and the socio-political circumstances in which people’s professional life and work is located. The growth in life history studies demands a series of books which allow people to explore this methodological focus within the context of professional settings.

The second rationale for growth in this area is a huge range of restructuring initiatives taking place throughout the world. There is in fact a world movement to restructure education and health. In most forms this takes the introduction of more targets, tests and tables and increasing accountability and performativity regimes. These initiatives have been introduced at governmental level – in most cases without detailed consultation with the teaching and nursing workforces. As a result there is growing evidence of a clash between people’s professional life and work missions and the restructuring initiatives which aim to transform these missions. One way of exploring this increasingly acute clash of values is through studies of professional life and work. Hence the European Commission, for instance, have begun to commission quite large studies of professional life and work focussing on teachers and nurses. One of these projects – the Professional Knowledge Network project has studied teachers’ and nurses’ life and work in seven countries. There will be a range of books coming out from this project and it is intended to commission the main books on nurses and on teachers for this series.

The series will begin with a number of works which aim to define and delineate the field of professional life and work. One of the first books ‘Investigating the Teacher’s Life and Work’ by Ivor Goodson will attempt to bring together the methodological and substantive approaches in one book. This is something of a ‘how to do’ book in that it looks at how such studies can be undertaken as well as what kind of generic findings might be anticipated.

Future books in the series might expect to look at either the methodological approach of studying professional life and work or provide substantive findings from research projects which aim to investigate professional life and work particularly in education and health settings.
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<td>ATO:</td>
<td>Area Training Organisation</td>
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<td>CPD:</td>
<td>Continuing Professional Development</td>
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<td>DES:</td>
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<td>Further Education</td>
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<td>FWWCP:</td>
<td>Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers</td>
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<td>GTP:</td>
<td>Graduate Teacher Programme</td>
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<td>HE:</td>
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<td>Initial Teacher Training</td>
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<td>NQT:</td>
<td>Newly Qualified Teacher</td>
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

THE TELLING TALE

My parents had faith in education. It worked for them. They gained qualifications at school and trained as nurses. They met in Brighton where they had gone to complete their training in 1950. They liked reading and discussion and going to see plays and they believed that education was the route towards a better life for individuals and a better society for all. They were part of the post-war consensus which supported the welfare state. They voted for the Labour party and described themselves as socialists. My eldest brother was assessed as having learning difficulties during the early years of school and attended a special school from the age of seven. My other brother did well at primary school, passed the eleven-plus and went to a technical school. I started at a state nursery school at the age of 3 in 1963. There seems to have been a bit of a problem from the start. The only real memory I have of being there is the day the teacher gave me the job of painting something. I'm not sure what it was but it was made of wood and I remember the praise that she gave me for doing such a good job all day and how pleased my Mum was that I had been good that day. This was obviously unusual although I cannot remember the ‘bad’ days or getting into trouble at that time. Mum says now that I was pretty active and got easily bored and that some of the others may have ‘led me astray.’

This book is a study of the professional identity of university-based teacher educators in England. It is based upon my doctoral thesis research project which emerged from my personal, professional experience of working as a teacher educator in a university school of education. The study took an auto-ethnographic approach to examine my own narrative of experience alongside those of six other teacher educators. My intention was and is to illuminate the ways in which memory of our own experiences influences how we work with students who are preparing to become teachers. A key assumption underpinning the thesis and this book is that valuable insights into the work and identity of teacher educators can be gained by examining our own memories and beliefs and that the narrative discourses through which we understand ourselves and our work are a source of rich description and insight.

The processes by which we construct memory and the ways in which it informs practice are central themes here where ‘Telling’ works as both verb and adjective in relation to narrative tales of experience. Kierkegaard (1938) argued that while we can only live our lives forwards we can only understand them backwards. The principal purpose of this book is to investigate how we articulate our own selfhood as educators of teachers through narrative and how this informs and develops our professional
identities which we construct and re-construct in response to the continuing uncertainties and ambivalences within the initial education of teachers in England.

This raises a number of questions about what it means to be a university-based teacher educator in England during the first decades of the 21st Century. The book examines these questions through a number of themes which arose from the writing and sharing of self-narratives and interviews with six teacher educators with the focus of the study moving between how we use memories of experience to construct and perceive our own identities as teacher-educators; how this influences our practice; and how we adapt our personal pedagogies in order to negotiate external and institutional requirements and constraints which often contradict our own beliefs about teaching and learning.

I used various types of auto-ethnography such as narrative self-study writing and life history interviews as a lens with which to examine aspects of the memories, perspectives and experiences of university-based teacher educators such as how we came to be teacher educators, what it is like to be a teacher educator, how we see our role, why we believe what we believe about initial teacher education and how we think this, all of this, affects our practice and the practice of the students of teaching and learning with whom we work. These themes are picked up through discussion of both related literature and methodology and then through the narrative analysis and organisation of Chapter 5. I chose to use the analytic auto-ethnographic approach suggested by Anderson (2006) with a method of analysis based upon the progressive/regressive method proposed by Sartre (1963) which is discussed in Chapter 2.

The focus of this book is upon teacher educators who work in university schools of education partly because that is where my experience lies as a student and a tutor and also because I believe this remains one of the most important, contested and yet under-researched areas within education. The term ‘teacher education’ remains itself an area of significant dispute that to some extent represents the trends and developments of three decades of reform. While there is a growing body of research into the education and training of teachers, the voices of teacher educators themselves have until recently been largely absent from this literature.

A related and equally relevant purpose has been to contribute towards professional knowledge by using, developing, examining and evaluating a method of inquiry which began from the process of writing (Richardson 2000). I wanted to develop a research method where my own auto-biographical writing was shared and responded to by other participants as a method of exploring the ways in which professional lives develop. This in turn raises issues about the way people story and use memory, the role of others in the construction of identity through narrative and the nature of professionalism.

As Kurt Lewin put it ‘There’s nothing more practical than a good theory’ (Lewin, 1952 p169). This is especially pertinent for me in adopting definitions of professionalism where identity as formed by reflection and narratives of the self have a central role. To make these links clear requires some close examination of the areas in question and a consideration of my motives in the spirit of self-study and narrative inquiry.
‘YOU DON’T WANT TO DO IT LIKE THAT DO YOU?’

Well yes I did although I recognise that marrying together an examination of teacher education from the perspective of teacher educators with and through a collection of methods which come under the heading of autoethnography itself represents a sort of self-narrative which tells the story within the story that links my own experiences of writing, life history work and teacher education as a student, a teacher and a teacher educator. This could be the story of me trying to practise what I teach.

Freire (1972) called upon his student collaborators to take possession of their learning as one of the steps towards taking possession of their lives and so I take possession of my experience here and try to make sense of it to explain how and why I got to a certain point in my research and where I wanted to go from there.

In 2004 having been a primary school teacher for 15 years I returned as a senior lecturer to the school of education where I had gained my qualified teacher status and where I was now in the early stages of the EdD. I was so glad to be there. It seemed like a dream job after a tough few years teaching children identified as having emotional and behavioural difficulties. Over the three years I worked at the university some of my own emotional and behavioural difficulties re-emerged and I felt increasingly as though I was acting, pretending to be someone else, saying one thing and doing another. My professed pedagogy did not match my actual practice which contradicted some of my deeply held beliefs at certain points. I felt like a fraud and as though everyone could see straight through me. While I felt my own confidence as a teacher draining away in what could be explained as professional menopause or a mid-life crisis as I approached 50, it was my growing doubt within and questions about the enterprise of teacher education itself that seemed to be feeding this most actively. My feelings of not being authentic and doubts about the authenticity of my profession led to anxiety and confusion and brought memories and feelings to the surface that had been buried long ago.

This feeling of dissonance was further compounded by the difficulty I was having in examining these questions, memories and doubts by ‘getting back to’ my work on my doctoral study which seemed to be slipping further and further away from me. I resigned from the job in an attempt to regain some sense of equilibrium by completing the Doctorate and working out what to do next. I wanted to read, listen, talk and write myself out of trouble and regain a sense of authenticity in my work. It had all got so complicated. Once upon a time when I had lived a different sort of life it seems in my memory at least that all that was required was to improve upon the blank page (Hayler, 2003). In some ways the blank page is perfect as it is: uncomplicated, unchallenging, and uncontroversial. Once you make your mark and begin to tell a tale of who you are things can seem to both open up and narrow down at the same time. You play your hand, reveal yourself and begin that story in one way or another. I had learnt of course that the invisible ink of expectation is always upon the page and I was interested to know where that came from.

Why stories? That is pretty much how I understand writing whatever the subject, the form or the style. As a reader I need to know where a poem ‘is’ and
what it does. I read research journals as narratives and search, sometimes in vain, for the voice within and behind the ‘findings’ and the analysis. To me this is the real ‘synthesis,’ a word much beloved by the authors of Higher Education assessment criteria: the coming together and connecting of information, ideas and theories within the experience and mind of the writer and then hopefully upon the no-longer blank page. I don’t mean by this that I only read fiction although to some extent all writing is a form of fiction of course. It can only aspire towards truth in its various forms. All writing is by definition ‘creative’, all reading as Denzin says, ‘interpretive’ (2001). What I mean is that the writing that I understand best, my favourite ‘non-fiction’, is often in the form of very definite narratives which take the reader through the labyrinth of ideas without sacrificing any of the higher order thinking of more ‘complex’ texts. So in this book I follow Freire and try to consciously make sense of my experience in collaboration with the experiences of others and then express that learning in the way I know best as a way of understanding more about teacher education.

The dream job was turning into a nightmare. I just couldn’t be myself. So how did other people manage in this key area of education? I got talking to people at conferences, on trains, in cafeterias and corridors. I wanted to tell that story. So I started with me and gathered some new ideas together.

REFERENCES

I do remember my first day at Primary school which was in September 1964. My Mum and elder brother left me in the playground before school and I started crying as they walked away. I remember that my brother laughed and Mum smiled at my distress. She said there was nothing they could do and that it would be alright. She remembers being surprised at how upset I was because I was used to being at nursery all day. But the school was different from the nursery which was fairly small and new and wooden. The school was old and big and made from red brick and flint with a high wall and an iron gate. It was opened in 1870, had steps and corridors and windows that you couldn’t see through. I worked there as an advisor forty years after that first day and, despite the excellent staff and all the efforts of planners and builders it still seemed to me like a place you might be sent as a punishment. I have an early memory from school of seeing the top of a bus going by above the wall and realising that ‘real’ life was continuing on the other side of the wall without me and that there was nothing I could do about it. That somewhat paradoxical feeling of being forgotten about and under the control of others, however nice they may be, seems to have been a source of anxiety for me throughout my time at school. After a few days in the infants I took a matchbox with somebody’s dinner money in it and went into the shop on the way home to buy some sweets. My brother told my mother and she took me back to the school where the money was repaid and both parent and teacher disappointment was made clear to me. On his return from work that evening my father said he hoped I was ashamed of myself but I do not think I really was. The elements which stand out for me now when I consider this incident after years of study and work with children’s emotional and behavioural difficulties are: the matchbox with an elastic band around it, which now seems like a strange way to bring your money to school; the fact that everybody walked home from school without their parents from the age of four onwards; and the complete lack of guilt on my part at being the first person ever in our family or either of my parents’ families to have stolen something. I may well have pretended to feel sorry for my actions but as far as I remember I felt very little regret. Looking back I can see that my parents and teacher were concerned and that I liked that at some level since it meant that I was getting some attention. I was not popular at home that week but I was not forgotten. They were talking about me and talking to me.

I made friends in the infants and later in the junior part of the school. We played mainly war games and rough games like bulldog and piggy back fighting in the playground. My friend broke his teeth on the climbing frame and I began to learn
how to read and write. It was slow going and there was some concern at my lack of
effort and progress. I used to get The Robin and then The Beano comics but
couldn’t read many of the words by the time I went up to the juniors aged seven. I
liked hearing the stories that my Mum and Dad read to me at bedtime such as Brer
Rabbit and Tarzan but I don’t remember bringing any books home from school or
reading to them. My play became more imaginative and then collaborative around
the age of seven and eight years old. I told my father about a game I was playing
with model cowboys which involved the ‘baddie’ being dragged along the desert
floor of our front room. Dad, a Quaker pacifist couldn’t hide his sadness and
disappointment at this sadistic streak in his youngest son. One of my best friends at
this time was Sandra who lived next door. We played out many exciting games of
adventure often based on the television programmes she had seen. She was three
years older than me. I became the friend of Tim, a younger boy who lived down the
road and we explored the neighborhood, local parks, woods and golf course
where we became ‘the two tornadoes’: a couple not dissimilar to Batman and
Robin and usually heavily armed. Some of these adventures of the imagination
found their way into my school work as I began to learn how to write. Towards the
end of my second year in junior school, when I was nine I managed to write a story
called ‘The Eskimo Singer’ which was about a girl who grew up in the wild arctic
and became a pop star. It was a bit like the day I painted the wooden thing at
nursery school in that it stands out for me as a time when I was praised for being
good and doing well, but it was not until my brother suggested that I must have
copied the story that I realised that I had made something that impressed others. As
well as a lesson in using and sharing imagination I may also have seen that I could
get the attention of the people I cared about in positive ways by doing something
good.

And I did care about that teacher. It was 1968 and she was the first teacher I had
met who was too young to be my mother. I really wanted her positive attention and
started to think about her all the time. She was also the first teacher I had who
didn’t hit me or anyone else. I soon got over the shock of being slapped on the legs
or struck around the head by adults for the first time when I started school, but
Miss Barcombe was one of the new generation of teachers: thoughtful, short-
skirted and interested in the development of the whole child, she was the Plowden
Report (1967) on stockingless legs and sandals. The school had made a good job of
taking authoritarian post-war austerity well into the 1960s but the sun shone in and
the Age of Aquarius began with her arrival. She must have found the head teacher
of the school very strange indeed. Close to retirement, he often ended
cconversations with pupils by hitting them casually around the head. His hands were
heavy and hard. Once, when my friend and I were being silly and noisy in class he
appeared at the doorway and asked Miss Barcombe across the room whether she
thought we should be sent permanently to ‘the backward class’ which silenced us
with terror as intended and left Miss Barcombe open-mouthed and unable to
respond. The ‘backward class’ was only a step away from ‘the backward school’
and therefore ‘the backward bus’ which was sometimes called ‘the spastic bus’ but
not often by me as my brother was on it. I would sometimes attack boys without
explaining why when they shouted or laughed at the bus in the street. Not many people knew my brother went to the special school but it occurs to me now for the first time that my head teacher and Miss Barcombe probably did.

The imaginative games were getting a bit out of hand. My friend had some matches and we set fire to a shirt inside an old car we came across on some waste ground. We knocked on somebody’s door to report the fire. When we got back to the car it was a blazing inferno and two fire engines came to put it out. We got some cautious credit for reporting the fire and Miss Barcombe got us to write about it when we were back in school. I felt guiltier about getting credit and being praised than I did about the car. I was uncomfortable with that sort of dishonesty, although not uncomfortable enough to make me confess and tell the truth.

My father took me away for two weekends. He had taken my brothers to Ireland and the West Country on cycling trips but I was too young to go so he and I went to the Isle of Wight and stayed in a youth hostel and on another weekend we walked and camped in Sussex. These trips may well have been a response to concerns that my parents had about my behaviour: “we thought that you might be feeling left out and it was your turn to have some time with Dad”, says my mother. She remembers that there were some concerns about the boys I was playing with outside of school but not any real worries about my behaviour at that stage.

A LITERATURE REVIEW CONCERNING SUBJECT AND METHOD

In this chapter I consider the sometimes problematic relationship between the area of research and my method of researching it through discussion of some of the key research and literature in the areas where these activities, concepts and methodologies meet and overlap.

This review of research and writing is organised into two sections on Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and autoethnography respectively and seeks some working definitions and illustrations of the terms as I understand and use them in this book. My intention is to illustrate some of the philosophical and ideological influences upon the field and the method of my study, and then use these in interaction with each other to establish a working conceptual framework that forms the basis of the chapters that follow.

Inevitably, things get messy here and, as I was taught to do as a teacher, I attempt illumination, clarification and explanation through example and demonstration in a number of places.

Separating and Reuniting: Reviewing the Literature in Subject and Method

Bruner decried the creation of conceptual boundaries between thought, action and emotion followed by the construction of bridges to connect what should never have been separated (Bruner, 1986 p106). We need to examine the ways in which actions infuse our representations of the world. Activities and conceptions may
need some degree of theoretical separation for examination and explanation but Bruner argues that they must remain connected and are made active and given meaning only in context with each other. It is the interaction and interdependence of these areas that Bruner considers as parts of the same whole (Bruner, 1986, 1990).

While this review of literature discusses the phenomena of Initial Teacher Education and the concepts of autoethnography, memory, narrative and identity as particular areas of activity and methods of research, my aim is to consider closely the ways in which they relate to each other through teacher educators themselves and the points where the borders become permeable and begin to overlap. This involves the pairing and infusing of content and method in research through the self-narratives of those who are responsible for the initial education of teachers within university schools of education in England.

**INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION (ITE)**

Lots of people are involved in the education of teachers. Learning to teach goes back a long way in the lives of those who teach. Our own education gives us a familiarity with the profession unlike any other. Lortie (1975) estimated that by the time a person begins a course of teacher education they have spent around thirteen thousand hours observing teachers. For those who choose to be teachers the partnerships between schools and schools of education or teacher training institutions have required students to work with a wide variety of people of all ages and from all walks of life (DfES, 2005). Education in and of education continues after qualification with an NQT year and then a whole career of Continuing Professional Development involving the gathering of experience and professional growth as careers and skills develop. This is a journey those who wish to teach set out upon and from which they are encouraged to continue until retirement. The process of learning and developing is required to never end and while some features remain consistent and grow at the core of practice, in education and in ITE change itself has been the centrally consistent feature of the last thirty years (DfEE, 1996; Bottery and Wright 2000; Burn, 2006).

The core study of this book takes place within the area of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) where abbreviations and acronyms proliferate (see list of acronyms) and which refers here to the undergraduate and post-graduate full-time and part-time courses that lead to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), where students learn to be teachers while completing a degree such as the Bachelor of Education (BEd), Bachelor of Arts (BA with QTS), Bachelor of Science (BSc with QTS) or the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). These are run by Higher Education Institutions (HEI) such as university schools of education in partnership with schools where students complete work-based placements.

All QTS courses are ratified and largely funded by the Training and Development Agency (TDA) and now referred to throughout all government literature as ‘teacher training’. There are a growing number of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses that lead to QTS such as the School-Centred Initial Teacher Training
(SCITT) programme, the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) and the Registered Teacher Programme (RTP).

The education and training of teachers through university schools of education is an important area of the education system. It can be seen as the place where higher education and the education of children meet and where differing ideas and beliefs about the purposes of education come under intensive scrutiny and contest (see for example Bailey and Robson, 2002; Brisard et al., 2002; Furlong, 2005; Hartley, 2000; Richards et al., 1998; Winter, 2000).

In 2011, as positions are again being drawn, and the proposed re-structuring of the system for the preparation of teachers provokes fiscal and ideological arguments around the concepts of ‘teacher training’ and ‘teacher education’ the need to hear the voices of those who teach teachers is of key importance.

How Did We Get Here?

It is possible to see how things have changed in teacher education in England and Wales during the last 50 years by considering developments in education policy as a whole (see Appendix 1 for a chronology of selected major events in teacher education 1960–2010). The McNair Report of 1944 had condemned the existing arrangements for the ‘recognition, training and the supply of teachers’ as ‘chaotic and ill-adjusted’ to the needs of the nation (McNair, 1944, p.18) and recommended the establishment of University led schools, institutes or centres of education for the local administration of the training of teachers. This had been adopted and developed in a number of guises and formats by 1960 through the Area Training Organisations (Dent, 1975). The 1950s saw a massive expansion of the permanent teacher training institutions fuelled by the Emergency Teacher Training Programme in response to a serious shortage of teachers (Lynch, 1979). The three-year teacher certificate course began in 1960 just a few months before Lord Robbins was appointed to review the pattern of full-time higher education and advise the government of the day on its principles and long-term development (Alexander et al., 1984). Published in 1963 the Robbins Report gave considerable attention to the education of teachers noting that the training colleges:

...feel themselves to be only doubtfully recognised as part of the system of higher education and yet to have attained standards of work and a characteristic ethos that justify their claim to an appropriate place in it (Robbins, 1963 p107).

From Robbins came an unprecedented expansion in the numbers of students studying to be teachers, a further rapid growth in the size and number of colleges and university departments now providing degree courses in education. The minimum length of undergraduate courses was increased to three years. In 1969 the first four-year BEd students graduated with QTS. Recognising the key role that ITE would play in the reform and restructuring of schools and pedagogical approaches, Plowden (1967) called for a full enquiry into teacher education. A
select committee of 1970 reported widely differing approaches, curricula and standards of practice in teacher education and training around the country and the James Committee was appointed to investigate and report on the content and organisation of courses. The committee’s report and proposals (DES, 1972b) demonstrate a view of teacher education as integrally linked with higher education. The need for teachers to be students and graduates of education as well as being trained and articulated is central to the James Report recommendations of three cycles of teacher education linking a 2-year Diploma in Higher Education with 2 years of focused preparation for the teaching profession and a statutory CPD sabbatical term during each of the first seven years of service. Economic instability meant that few elements of the responding white paper, *Education: a framework for expansion* (DES, 1972a), came into place:

For the teacher training institutions, the title of the white paper proved to be hollow – and the rhetoric of expansion was overtaken by the reality of contraction (Porter in Brock, 1996 p40).

Increasing emphasis on control of public expenditure by central government meant that while two areas of teacher education, the NQT year and the setting up of a statutory body to oversee ITE can be traced back to James, the absence and removal of key elements make the links remote. Succeeding administrations were to exercise unprecedented political control over education and the education of teachers in the 1980s and 90s (see Appendix 1). New Labour governments continued to demonstrate distrust for institutions concerned with the education of teachers through, for example, an increased emphasis on school-centred courses. England (England and Wales until the Welsh assembly took responsibility for education in Wales in 1999) led the way in these reforms which remain unparalleled elsewhere in Europe.

Despite some changes in the rhetoric of inspection Initial Teacher Education remains an area of intense scrutiny and tight control. The last 30 years has seen increasing political involvement in ITE as the changing face of education has had an increasingly direct effect upon ITE. This was accelerated in the 1990s with some of the most significant and challenging educational reforms of the decade taking place in ITE itself in the shape of the introduction of a statutory national curriculum for the training and education of teachers (DFEE, 1998) and continuing into the next decade with a revised ITE curriculum (DfES, 2005) and a new continuum of Professional Standards for Teachers in England at all stages of their education and careers (TDA 2007). Quality control structures and systems have been introduced to ensure the implementation of these policies and legislation as part of the effort to ‘raise standards of achievement’ in state schools through ensuring the ‘competence’, ‘standard’ and ‘quality’ of those who enter the teaching profession, defined by what Miller (2007) describes as a “tight, singular model of curriculum, of pedagogy and of assessment” (p.101).

The cultural transmission of both epistemology and pedagogy within these requirements made upon ITE has been highlighted over several curriculum areas
INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION AND AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

(Gilroy, 2002; Miller, 2007). DfEE Circular Number 4/98 stated the standards which all ‘trainees’ must achieve to be awarded QTS containing sections on ‘Pedagogical knowledge and understanding required to secure pupils’ progress’, ‘Effective teaching and assessment methods’ and ‘Trainees’ knowledge and understanding’ (DfEE, 1998 p66).

Alongside these requirements came the system of inspection and the criteria of the OFSTED quality assurance framework within which ‘providers’ of ‘teacher training’ continue to operate and under which it has been argued opportunities for alternative epistemologies, curricula or pedagogies are constrained in a way never before seen in UK universities (Miller, 1998, 2007; Ball, 2003). Miller (2007) uses Foucault’s analytical tools and terms in a study of student experience and development, to illustrate how technologies of surveillance have developed in teacher education and how a discourse of ‘training’ and ‘trainee’ attempts to reduce and restrict the process of becoming teachers within ‘technicist managerialism’.

Although the details are as yet unclear, the 2010 Education White Paper (DfE 2010) and comments from education ministers indicate that in the near future ‘teacher training’ will be based largely within schools, around a model of ‘apprenticeship.’ (e.g Minister of Education Michael Gove in The Daily Telegraph, 22 November, 2010)

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As ‘training’ is used instead of ‘education’ throughout these documents and ‘students’ became ‘trainees’ in the late 1990s so the teacher educators were constructed here as ‘teacher trainers’ and schools of education became ‘providers’ of ‘teacher training’. There has been some resistance to this nomenclature of re-branding from within the profession but it continues to represent and play its part in the reconstruction of power in teacher education away from the more autonomous situation in universities before 1998.

Accounts from the participants in my research presented in Chapter 5 confirm the significant influence upon the work of teacher educators of their own perceptions of what Ball sees as the dominant force of managerialism in higher education being exerted through:

…a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change – based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic). The performances…serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of ‘quality’…(Ball, 2003 p.216).

It could be argued that like teachers, those working in teacher education were never very autonomous individually and that pressure has always been exerted by students, by institutions, by local authorities and by society as a whole (Bottery and Wright, 2000; Smethem and Adey, 2005). Indeed, as Maguire’s (2000) examination of UK teacher education in the nineteenth century
demonstrates state regulation of this area was not invented in the 1980s. However, the wide ranging changes arising from and driven by direct government involvement in the details of ITE in the late 20th century, particularly in the 1990s, meant that those tutors based in university schools of education faced a number of personal and professional dilemmas similar in some ways to those faced by teachers in primary and secondary schools following the 1988 Education Reform Act.

Peter Gilroy (Edwards et al., 2002) concluded that by 2001 his own professional life “consisted of negotiating a series of ambivalences – and indeed outright contradictions” (p1) between what he professed in his teaching and writing and his actual experience and practice within teacher education. He describes an academic life where he needed to accommodate the fact that teacher education was being fixed into apparent certainties along with his work on the contingent and shifting nature of knowledge in professionalism and teacher education. Such sensations of dissonance arise in all professions in times of change but are rarely as apparent as they can be in teacher education where the articulation of beliefs about teaching and learning is a central feature of the job.

Korthagen, Loughran, and Lunenberg (2005) illustrate that as well as supporting student teachers’ learning about teaching, teacher educators also model the role of the teacher through their own teaching. This is a point developed by Lunenberg, Korthagen, and Swennen (2007):

In this respect, the teacher education profession is unique, differing from, say, doctors who teach medicine. During their teaching, doctors do not serve as role models for the actual practice of the profession i.e., they do not treat their students. Teacher educators, conversely, whether intentionally or not, teach their students as well as teach about teaching (p588).

Tillema and Kremer-Hayon (2005) examine the dilemmas faced by teacher educators in complying with external standards on the one hand while trying to maintain and develop the pedagogy of teacher education on the other. As my experience and my data for this research confirms, belief can come head to head with practice in such a situation where the ‘dilemmas constitute a powerful means of ascertaining a professional’s perspectives on action’ (Windschtl, 2002 p132). Lunenberg, Korthagen, and Swennen (2007) examine if and how teacher educators model new visions of learning in their own practice and concur with Putnam and Borko (1997) that while the ‘notion that students of teaching should be treated as active learners who construct their own understandings’ (p587) has become almost a mantra in teacher education, the reality of practices in teacher education is much more complex.

This is an analysis that has also led to doubts about the extent of the influence that teacher education has upon the practice of students once they become teachers. Having analysed the effectiveness of teacher education from a more general angle, Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon (1998) conclude that the impact of teacher
education on practice seems to be unclear, due largely to a significant absence from the existing research:

One aspect that appeared to be missing from the research was the teacher educators themselves. We found very few studies that thoughtfully examined the work of the university education professor (pp.169–170).

It appears that not much had changed in this area since Howey and Zimpher (1990) noted that very little is known about the characteristics of teacher educators even though they are perceived to be responsible for the quality of teachers. Lanier and Little (1986) note that:

...teachers of teachers—what they are like, what they do, what they think—are systematically overlooked in studies of teacher education. Even researchers are not exactly sure of who they are (p528).

It seems that those who have been most involved in teacher education have themselves been least prominent during what has been a period of radical change: “we hear the voices of university researchers” wrote Fenstermacher in 1997, “of law makers, and of policy analysts about what teacher educators do or fail to do, but we do not often hear the voices of teacher educators” (Fenstermacher in Loughran and Russell, 1997 p3). Edited volumes from Russell and Munby (1992), Loughran and Russell (1997), and Brock (1996) give space for these voices from an international perspective. Britzman (1991) makes a critical study of learning to teach in the USA and uses narratives of students to examine the ‘structure of experience and the experience of structure’ within school placement work in particular. Furlong and Smith (1996) and Furlong (2000) consider the professional education of teachers in the UK from the perspective of students in ITE. The distinctive contribution of higher education as a partner in this professional preparation forms the framework of studies by Burn (2006), Ellis (2007) and Morrison and Pitfield (2006) as they focus upon the implications of developing pedagogy, and subject knowledge for practice.

While life-history approaches have been widely and productively employed in researching student, beginning and senior teachers’ lives (e.g. Bullough, 1989; Bullough et al., 1992; Cohen, 1991; Goodson, 2003) and have often examined central issues such as gender, race and class in relation to education, culture and identity through this lens (e.g. Basit, 1997; Merrill, 1999; Osler, 1997; Weber, 1998) they have rarely been employed to examine the lives of teacher educators. Ball and Goodson (1985) advocate life history research methods in education because they can highlight the political and ideological climates in which teachers’ lives are embedded. For Antikainen et al (1996) the subjective life history located within context holds the key perspective ‘through which, and also in which, the social finds expression’ (p17).

If as argued throughout this book, identity and pedagogy are constructed through a self-narrative of lived experience within all its historical, social and cultural contexts, it follows that the experiences of teacher educators offer insight and illumination in this key area of education.
Teacher educators can sometimes be heard reflecting upon their careers in schools within the research and writing about the professional lives of school teachers (Goodson, 1988, 1992, 2003; Hargreaves, 1998; Sikes et al., 1985) but these studies do not follow the story through to examine participants’ work in ITE, the focus being upon their former careers in schools. Noel (2006) does examine the experiences of those new to working in teacher education in the learning and skills sector, while Murray (2005) and Murray and Male (2005) also draw on evidence from novice teacher educators themselves when considering the process of induction into higher education.

SELF-STUDY IN TEACHER EDUCATION

From 1986 Clandinin and Connelly have highlighted the use of narrative and story in the education of teachers in Canada. Drawing from both Polkinghorne’s psychological research (1988) and from the philosophical ideas of Paul Ricoeur (1984, 1985, 1988) Connelly and Clandinin (1990) developed their research to demonstrate how practitioners’ narrative ways of knowing become the primary form by which they make meaning of their experiences. This body of research shows how teachers use and construct knowledge that is experiential, narrative and relational, and how this shapes and is further shaped by, the contexts of their professional lives (e.g. Clandinin and Connelly, 1986, 1987, 1991, 1995, 1999; Connelly and Clandinin, 1988, 1990, 2001; Connelly). The role of narrative is central:

Narrative for us is the study of how humans make meaning of experience by endlessly telling and retelling stories about themselves that both refigure the past and create purpose in the future. Deliberately storying and restorying one’s life or a group or cultural story is, therefore a fundamental method of personal and social growth: it is the fundamental quality of education (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, p24).

The focus upon the use of students’ and tutors’ own narratives of experience and self-study in order to make meaning of that experience relevant to themselves as teachers and teacher educators led to the formation of the Self Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP) special interest group in 1993. The focus here has been largely upon the use of narrative to support the education and professional development of teachers through reflective self-study (Russell and Munby, 1992: Russell and Loughran, 2007). The narrative approach makes transparent and active the ways in which a personal/professional past is linked to a personal/professional future for students preparing to be teachers. Clandinin sees this as a particular kind of knowledge:

We see personal, practical knowledge as in the person’s past experience, in the person’s present mind and body and in the person’s future plans and actions (Clandinin in Russell and Munby 1992, p125).
Recent research using S-STEP methodology has included seeking to develop practice by placing teacher educators’ own narratives at the centre of the process in order to examine the role of collaboration in self-study (Chryst et al., 2008; Crafton and Smolin, 2008) and exploring the tensions between teaching, methodology and theory in ITE (Hamilton, 2008). Kitchen’s (2008) study of his own experiences of moving from school teaching towards tenure as a university professor reveals the struggle of balancing teaching and scholarship for teacher educators which was a prominent issue for the participants of my own research as discussed in Chapter 5. These lines of research argue for recognition of alternative theories of knowledge including relational, narrative, and embodied ways of knowing and stress that teacher development policies and practices should recognise and support teachers’ and teacher educators’ inquiries into practice.

While my approach has been strongly influenced by the ways in which the methods used in the S-STEP special interest group bring narrative inquiry together with teacher education, my central aim is not as theirs is to directly investigate and change methodology within the practice of teacher education (Heston et al., 2008, p10). My aim is rather to develop an understanding of how the professional identity of teacher educators is both formed and represented by narratives of experience. Clearly this has implications for practice and policy informing my work as a teacher educator and educational researcher. I also wanted to contribute towards professional knowledge by using a method of sharing and gathering responses to my own auto-biographical writing as a way of exploring how professional lives develop. Like Clandinnin (in Russell and Munby, 1992, p125) I have come to believe that our personal, practical knowledge lays in our past experience, present mind, future plans and actions.

To bring these elements of past and present together in order to illuminate and understand belief and practice in ITE, I needed to choose and develop methods of autoethnographic research.

MAKING MEMORY METHODOLOGY

Memory…produces at the opportune moment a break which also inaugurates something new. It is the strangeness, the alien dynamic, of memory which gives it the power to transgress the law and the local space in question; from out of the unfathomable and ever-shifting secrets, there comes a sudden ‘strike’…details, intense singularities, which already function in memory as they do when circumstances give them an opportunity to intervene: the same timing in both occasions, the same artful relation between the concrete detail and the conjecture, the latter figuring alternatively as the trace of a past event, or as the production of some new harmony (de Certeau, 1980 p41–42).

How the ‘artful relation’ between detail and conjecture inaugurates new harmonies of understanding in ITE will be demonstrated and examined in Chapter 5. In this section of Chapter 2, I discuss memory, autoethnography and finally analytic autoethnography as a methodology in the context of narratives of learning, and
explain my reasons for selecting some of the powerful if unwieldy tools from this particular research toolbox.

Memory and the Self

Memory and the past should here be immediately distinguished from nostalgia which as Dennis Potter said in a BBC interview in 1991:

…puts things safely in the past. What I say and what I know we do with our own lives is we know that the past is suddenly standing smack in front of us, not behind us and we know that it can infiltrate into the very future or the present in ways that don’t permit nostalgia. Nostalgia says ‘oh those dear dead days, those golden days oh how I felt on x day’ – which is safely putting it back. Whereas if it’s jogging alongside you, and nodding at you and grinning at you and pulling at you and then suddenly standing and gibbering in front of you then you know that you are one piece with what you have been and what you will be. That doesn’t permit nostalgia (BBC, 1991).

Whereas Kundera (2002, p.5) defines nostalgia more bleakly as ‘the suffering caused by an unappeased yearning to return’, Potter famously uses elements of nostalgia as a way of beginning this dialogue with the past in his plays, although he never leaves it there:

You can use nostalgia to suddenly hit. I would sometimes seek to use a cheap little song to suddenly go ‘wham’ with what was actually being felt which is always more complicated than that. But the song gives you the access to it, it strips away something and stings and then you realise what it was you were feeling (BBC, 1991).

Potter’s description of his intention and technique illuminates both the power and the seemingly arbitrary nature of memory. While we may seek to understand ourselves and others through the past by knowing that we are ‘one piece’ with what we ‘have been’ the power of memory comes not from precision or accuracy but from how we relate to our constructions and reconstructions of the past as we are now. Eliot identified the working of unconscious selection in the process when he asked:

Why, for all of us, out of all we have heard, seen, felt in a lifetime do certain images recur, charged with emotion, rather than others?…such memories may have symbolic value but of what we cannot tell, for they come to represent the depths of feeling into which we cannot peer (Eliot, 1933 p148).

Peering into those depths to extract meaning and to examine the process itself has become more popular and possible than it seemed to Eliot although some of his literary peers were exploring this in his day: Woolf begins The Waves (1943) with a series of what Craig Raine (2008 p.22) describes as ‘ordinary epiphanies’ and Joyce opened a new era for the novel with an anthology of almost subliminal memories like snapshots in Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916). Nabakov who argued that the true purpose of autobiography is to follow thematic designs
through ones life (1951) evoked the past through what Field (1977) calls ‘puppets of memory’ such as his own teachers who became characters in his books. Deploying the fictional with the factual in retelling differing versions to create the ever-shifting text of his autobiography Nabakov suggested that the ‘reality’ of a life retold cannot be possessed by ‘the esteemed visitor’ of the reader and is continually revised and recreated by its author. This suggestion of a recursive dialogue between the ‘core’ and the situated self as between the self as individual and the self within a community resonates throughout this book.

My own research technique and intention has been to construct and then to share my own story with other teacher educators as a way of gaining access and new understandings of our experiences, beliefs and practice. Our discussions and writing revealed the ways in which we gain ‘access’ to memory and how that makes us who we think we are.

Rousseau recognised the possibilities and the limitations of using only memory as he addressed the purpose of education in his Confessions of 1781:

I have only one faithful guide on which I can count; the succession of feelings which have marked the development of my being…I may omit or transpose facts, or make mistakes in dates; but I cannot go wrong about what I have felt, or about what my feelings have led me to do; and these are the chief subjects of my story. (Rousseau, 1781/1953 p262).

Rosen develops the concept of ‘making memory’ from Stephen Rose (1992) and the role of social memory from Fentress and Wickham (1992) through his own stories of childhood (Rosen 1993) and the wider study of autobiographical discourse (Rosen 1998).

I might here attempt to make another distinction between memories of personal experience as the focus of this research and memories of personal experience as a lens through which to view the subject of teacher education. It can be argued that while autoethnography draws upon autobiography as a genre of writing and research it is not autobiography; it is not ‘about’ the researcher or writer as such. From this perspective this research is not about me or the other participants. The variety of approaches that have personal experiences at the centre may look at a range of issues and phenomena through the lens of life experience but by using these methods researchers and writers such as me also indicate that those experiences, those lives whether they are our own or the lives of others, or a combination of both, do, to a certain and central extent, make the phenomena. After all what else is there but memory? Being forced, to return to Kierkegaard’s image (1938), to live our lives forwards we seek understanding through memory. Seen from this perspective what else are we other than our history and what else is teacher education in universities other than the experiences of teacher educators and the people they work with? How else could you look at this and begin to know what it is like?

Auto/biographical, life-history and narrative methodologies have moved from the margins to become established, although not unchallenged, within educational research. Pioneering studies with teachers in various contexts by for example Ball
CHAPTER 2

and Goodson (1985), Elbaz (1990), Huberman (1993) and Erben (1998) among others form a rigorous and widely-respected foundation in demonstrating the valuable insights that are gained into teachers, students, schools and pedagogy through the examination of participants’ life-histories. Through her longitudinal study of primary school teachers Nias (1989) demonstrates that practitioners’ lives are not easily separated from their craft, making the now well-established argument that ‘the self is a crucial element in the way teachers themselves construct the nature of their job’ (Nias, 1989 p13).

West et al., (2007) argue that by questioning the ways in which we conceptualise knowledge and learning, educational research approaches which focus upon the auto/biographical challenge both policy and practice in education as they foreground notions of agency and the making of meaning from experience in opposition to deterministic instrumentalism:

In education, biographical research has combined with more humanistic ways of theorising learning, education and pedagogical practices, focussing for instance on personal development and growth (West et al., 2007 p12).

The various approaches that come under the auto/biographical, life-history and narrative banners commonly challenge forms of research which marginalise and abstract the perspectives of participants. Life history approaches have been used to illuminate relationships between learning, identity and race (Basit, 1997), class (Merrill, 1999) and gender (Weber, 1998). They have been employed to examine learning in traditional and alternative settings and in studies of learning and professional identity (Brookfield, 1995; West, 1996). While each of these studies carries a different emphasis and preoccupation and draw upon a range of various intellectual sources they hold in common an interest in the participant as person. As an investigation of teacher educators’ identity and their perceptions of their work this book shares in that tradition.

Brookfield (1995) links the lens of autobiography with the skills of becoming a reflective teacher by making the individual’s role in the shaping of professional identity and the phenomena of education a central focus. The biographical perspective clarifies the understanding of learning and teaching with a view to empowerment rather than measurement. Learning is re-conceived as a subjective process realised in specific historical and cultural contexts. Weber and Mitchell (1995) and Mitchell and Weber (1999) invite teachers to use a variety of life-history informed methods to revisit their past, their attitudes and their beliefs so that they can examine and reinvent themselves as teachers. From this perspective teachers are agents in the building of knowledge and the development of pedagogy, however prescribed it may have become:

...they are once more both creators in, as well as created by, the social and cultural worlds they inhabit (West et al., 2007 p32)

The processes in which we construct memory and the ways in which it informs practice are central themes here and therefore I and the other participants are part of both the topic and the method of research. Our narratives become both method
and data that is empirically derived from our own articulated experience and observation.

Autoethnography: Self-culture Research

Autoethnography has increasingly become the term of choice for a range of methods of research, analysis and writing that employ personal experience as a way of investigating and understanding the sub-cultures and the wider cultures of the societies we live and work within. I imagine autoethnography as a toolbox within the qualitative research workshop. In common these methods and research tools focus upon the memories of events, feelings, thoughts and emotions which contribute through varying methods of recall, collection and analysis towards different types of systematic introspection in order to illuminate and to facilitate understanding.

Debates continue about where the toolbox sits and what that systematic introspection should entail. The current discourse of the genre refers almost exclusively to what Anderson (2006) critiques as ‘evocative autoethnography’ which draws upon postmodern sensibilities and rejects realist and analytic ethnographic traditions. Anderson proposes the term ‘Analytic Autoethnography’ as a way of reframing and reclaiming autoethnography within what he terms ‘the analytic ethnographic paradigm.’ His intention is to re-open and develop a research approach in which the researcher is deeply self-identified as a member while maintaining the qualitative principles of traditional symbolic interactionism.

Hayano (1979), who coined the term ‘autoethnography’, used it to refer to the work of ‘insider’ anthropologists, researching their ‘own people’ (p101) arguing that in a post-colonial era ethnographers need to study their own social worlds and sub-cultures. It has evolved and widened from there to include a sometimes bewildering rubric of research approaches, methods and techniques such as ‘narratives of the self’ (Richardson 1994), ‘personal experience narratives’ (Denzin 1989), ‘first person accounts’ (Ellis 1998), ‘reflective ethnographies’ (Ellis and Bochner 1996), ‘evocative narratives’ (Tillman-Healy 1999), ‘collaborative autobiography’ (Goldman, 1993) and, as applied to teacher education by Clandinin and Connelly (1994), ‘personal experience methods’, to name only a few (see Denzin and Lincoln, 2000 for a comprehensive summary and Anderson et al., 2006 for a critical debate). Within all of these approaches the researcher is deeply self-identified through explicit and reflective self-observation.

Bochner (in Ellis and Bochner, 2000) describes a variation of emphasis among autoethnographers as they move along what he calls three axes of the self (auto), culture (ethnos) and descriptive research (graphy) adopting one and/or other of these many available terms and tools within the autoethnographic approach. My approach has been to use a number of research methods that come from this particular toolbox and to which several of these sub-categories can be applied, because I wanted to examine some of the commonalities that arise in the experiences of teacher educators while recognising the individual nature of experience. I wanted to examine and construct my own story towards and within
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ITE in collaboration with and reference to others. I also wanted to experiment with and attempt to introduce more reciprocity within the process of the research itself for reasons identified above concerning authenticity and identity. As the study developed and I continued to examine the various tributaries which feed into the autoethnographic stream, I was drawn towards Anderson’s (2006) concept of analytic autoethnography as a framework within which to examine and present my research.

Using Autoethnography

I describe and explain the phases and strategies of the research in detail and in context within Chapter 3. In this chapter they provide a framework for the narrative story of the research as a way of exploring my reasons for using them. I began the research by writing a self-narrative of my own memories of learning; a process Bochner describes as using one’s own experience to examine a culture or sub-culture where the author deploys their own experiences to ‘bend back on the self and look more deeply at the self-other interactions’ (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p740). Here the researcher’s own memories of experience illuminate and allow access to the sub-culture under study; in my case the sub-culture of teacher educators.

Anderson (2006) also sees full membership in the research group or setting as a key element of analytic autoethnography. Sharing the self-narrative with six people who work as teacher educators in university schools of education was the way in which I attempted to situate and contextualise the narrative alongside others. I wanted to draw out some commonalities as well as stimulate contrary perspectives. Ellis and Bochner describe a similar process of ‘reflective ethnography’ starting research from one’s own experience, developing to ethnographies ‘where the researcher’s experience is studied along with other participants’ (Ellis and Bochner in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000 p. 740). Anderson (2006) agrees that because of its direct and unfettered character, self-narrative can be used to develop and refine understandings of social processes and situations while taking the reader to the depths of personal feeling in a way that no other research method can, but he warns against self-absorbed digression and insists on the ‘ethnographic imperative of dialogic engagement with others in the social worlds we seek to understand’ (p 385).

While my own story forms a central part of the investigation because that is the story of teacher education that I think I know best, I was always keen to engage the voices of others as a way of questioning and developing that understanding and to share and compare experiences so as to extend that understanding further. Our relational narratives are both method and data that acknowledge Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont’s warning that:

We must not lose sight of the ethnographic imperative that we are seeking to understand and make sense of complex social worlds of which we are only part (but a part nevertheless) (2003, p57).
Distinctions between the personal and the cultural are easily and deliberately blurred by such a process. Indeed the blurring seems to me to be a central aspect of the relationship between the individual and the culture which they contribute towards as they are shaped by it. Ethnographic reflexivity itself is, as Davies (1999) observes, most appropriately seen as a relational rather than a purely subjective activity where ‘interrelationships between the researcher and other inform and change social knowledge’ (Davies, 1999 p184). Following the principles of analytic rather than evocative autoethnography in this aspect of my research, my method was grounded in self-experience but reaches beyond it as well.

Autoethnography as a method of research has been seen as both the toolbox and a tool within the box. Van Maanen (1988) sees it as a sub-method of ‘impressionistic accounts’, while Tedlock (1991) refers to it as part of ‘narrative ethnography’. Denzin (1997) includes autoethnography as a sub-category of ‘interpretive ethnography’. In 1996 it was still part of the ‘new or experimental ethnography’ for Ellis and Bochner but they champion it as the wider generic term for the ‘post-modern ethnographic approaches’ of Tyler (1986) and others by 2000 (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Anderson (2006) links it closely to a stream of work flowing from the 1920s Chicago School that have continued to incorporate aspects of self-related study into analytic ethnographic practice.

A collection of connected methodological strategies has also been developed as autoethnographic projects have been used more widely in anthropology, education, sociology and communication studies. The proliferation of terms, methods and strategies represent the post-structural splintering of qualitative research approaches and definitions in what Lincoln and Denzin describe as the ‘seventh moment’ of qualitative research (Lincoln and Denzin, 2000). Lincoln and Denzin (2000) led the call for a wholehearted move into this seventh phase where a ‘broad, interpretive, post-experimental, post-modern, feminist and critical sensibility’ (p.1050) can find its place alongside the positivist, post-positivist, humanistic and naturalistic conceptions and analysis of human experience. They offer no easy solutions for resolving the tensions within this paradigm, but counsel acceptance and transparency in dealing with the crises of representation and legitimacy.

Smith and Deemer (2000) attempt to move the discussion on from the unproductive arguments about paradigms and the site of dispute may have shifted in recent years. Flyvbjerg (2001) calls on all social scientists to stop competing on self-defeating terms and to embrace different but equally valid forms of rigorous research. In fact, as Lincoln and Denzin make clear, we have little choice:

It is not that we might elect to engage in work that is postmodern. Rather, it is that we have inherited a postmodern world, and there is no going back. We do not ‘choose’ to be postmodern. The historical moment has chosen us. (Lincoln and Denzin, 2000, p1060).

Within this ‘moment’ the researcher can find or create a new tool of use for each of the elements and methods of their research and writing. Qualitative researchers draw on experience to assemble the ‘bricolage’ envisioned by Levi-Strauss (1966) where context is everything and the bricoleur, ‘a Jack of all trades or a kind of
professional do-it-yourself person’ (ibid p.17), produces an emergent construction that takes on new forms as new tools and materials are added to the picture. Central for the bricoleur is an understanding of the interactive nature of the research process and how this is shaped by their personal history and those of the people they work with in making a complex, reflexive, collage-like creation that represents the researcher’s images understandings, and interpretations of the phenomenon under analysis (Weinstein and Weinstein, 1991 p.164).

Although there are many epistemological questions beneath it I think that autoethnography may be the toolbox of the bricoleur precisely because of its loose and changing application. As Ellis points out:

Perhaps the loose application of the term autoethnography only signifies a greater tolerance now for the diverse goals of ethnography and a better understanding of the fallibility and indeterminacy of language concepts (Ellis and Bochner, 2000 p.743).

Definition becomes more difficult within this loose application which aims to objectify the subjective to an extent through reflexivity. My aim here is to explain and demonstrate my method so perhaps I need to open the toolbox and choose a different way. If splintering definitions or fragmenting codes of language will no longer do and personal experience is at the centre of this literature of method then a moment of reflection is called for where the process might be made more transparent through a different voice. I wrote the following section as I wrestled with these ideas and the competing definitions of autoethnography.

**REFLECTION**

As the text slips away from me I read through what I’ve written again and start to think about how I would assess it and respond to it as a tutor if someone had sent it to me. Why? Is that what this is all about? Am I trying to write for an external set of standards and in a particular way? I could take the writing above and chisel and shape it and make it more and more like the chapters and the articles and the books I’ve been reading for the last year and less and less like me. Less and less like me. Some of the books and the notes I’ve written are lying around me on the floor and on my desk. I want to breathe them all in and then breathe them out and onto the page as my own. I reach down and pick up something I copied from Maria Antoniou’s (2002) thesis a month ago:

> ‘We need to support each other in rejecting the limitations of a tradition – a manner of reading of speaking, of writing, of criticizing – which was never really designed to include us at all.’ (Rich, 1987, 1981, p.95)

My scribbled note is squashed against the quote: ‘we?’ ‘us?’

Then my notes paraphrase Maria as she writes of how ‘this disturbs the myth of the objective academic’ (p39) and how she took a new turn on her literature chapter from there, how she made a new approach, made a new beginning that was open about the partiality of her reading, that got down to what mattered in her thesis and stopped pretending to be ‘complete’ or ‘objective’.

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I look up from my notes. Across the room I can see my reflection in the computer screen. The words I’ve typed cover my face like a mask. Less and less like me. I think I’d better take a new turn here. I may not be able to be wholly part of the ‘we’ and ‘us’ that Rich refers to and Antoniou identifies with but I don’t seem to be able to join the tradition they both reject without wearing a mask of words and I’m not sure I’ve got the skills or the motivation to make one that fits. That’s not why I’m doing this. Just the opposite if I remember rightly. This is my attempt to make connections between my past and my future, to understand how identities shift and are used in belief and in practice, and to find my way back to a sense of myself.

I gather up all the notes and put them on the desk. Put the books and the articles in a pile in the corner. That gives me some space. The floor is clear. On the shelves around the room are so many books, all sorts of books that have led me here. There’s a story here somewhere:

Lots of stories in fact but what use are they to me now? How can they be part of this story? What sort of story is this? Maybe it’s a mystery, a detective story. I go to the shelf and find some old Raymond Chandler books hidden behind a picture of my eldest son. Stories of how the dark ‘truth’ of human beings emerges the more you look beyond the surface. Left along the shelf I can see the collection of stories by Raymond Carver Where I’m Calling From (1993). One of the stories inside has that title. The narrator in that story knows it is time to be honest as he prepares to telephone his wife from the drying out clinic:

‘She’ll ask me where I’m calling from, and I’ll have to tell her.’ (p242)

That’s what I want to do now with the rest of this chapter: tell you where I’m calling from amongst all these words.

Towards Analytic Autoethnography

Carver made art that left space for the reader to make meaning from the routine and the problematic moments in his characters lives. I think that qualitative sociological research must allow space for the bricolage of meaning and the in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. I agree with Denzin and Lincoln (2000) that there can be no clear window into the life of another. We are seldom able to give explanations even if the story we tell is our own.

At some point during my EdD study I moved into the uncertain, messy, multi-voiced, multi-texted world or worlds of the qualitative interpretist paradigm. I’d been heading that way for a while. For my first piece of ‘independent research’ as a ‘mature’ undergraduate I chose to research and write A Publishing History of QueenSpark Books (Hayler, 1989) the community writing and publishing group I became part of in 1988. I traced the history of the group as it emerged from local campaigns and handmade leaflets into a publishing collective making books of local stories and autobiographies which illuminated a history of Brighton constructed from the memories of working people. It was not so much that these stories from memories contradicted the ‘official’ history of the town but rather that
the stories were transformed by being told from a different perspective. It wasn’t that the stories of working experience were more ‘true’ than the stories about the powerful and famous of Brighton’s past but they found an audience who related to them directly as stories about their town and about them. Nostalgia played its part inside this mix of what Stephen Yeo describes as a ‘critique of Now running through a channel of Then’ (Yeo, 1988, p46).

For me the foundations of certainties about the past and the self were being undone. My own story started to change as I looked back and followed Yeo to QueenSpark. He had moved on but there was another trail to follow. The trail went out into the town and beyond to the other groups that formed the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers (the Fed), in as I reconnected with my past and made links to the idea of being a teacher and an academic of sorts in some sort of congruent identity, back into other stories of the past and the ways they are formed and used, and then forward as I researched and wrote about the Fed and the power of memory and prepared to prepare to be a teacher.

I read two books that had a particular impact on me at this time.

In his groundbreaking book In Search of a Past (1984) Ronald Fraser manages to combine his own recollections with the testimony and collected interviews of many others who knew him as a child to produce a many-voiced autobiography as a way of becoming the historian of his own past while gaining insight to his present self. Drawing upon sometimes competing methods of constructing past and self through oral history and psychoanalysis, Fraser weaves a series of encounters together to create a fragmented, reflective, reflexive narrative where no simple unified self emerges. Contradictory meanings are not resolved as Fraser acknowledges that: ‘the difficulty of writing about the past…is part and parcel of the past’ (p104) and that the past is a collective as well as an individual experience. Carolyn Steedman makes sense of her own childhood as she reflects upon her mother’s life in Landscape for a Good Woman (1986), questioning whether the intellectual constructs she learned at university can adequately make sense of real lives and feelings and demonstrating that imagination, self-reflection and emotion are the critical if repressed faculties in the project of social theory. These books reconnect the authors with their own past as a way of understanding themselves after the long journey away from home that we know as education. Here perspectives are often defined by tensions, contradictions and hesitations which are acknowledged, as they often are in autoethnographic studies, as key aspects of the research. There is no attempt to ‘iron out’ the confusions or contradictions which stand, as they do within this approach, as key elements of our experience.

I have wanted to go back more than once. To step out of the mess onto a more certain, steady, at least near-positivist world where I might remove myself from the research or at least disguise myself in the text. But the more I have tried to do that the less and less it seems like me and the more I have realised that writing is always a story of the self in one way or another.
Some stories can stand alone and allow readers to make their own analysis to a certain extent. Here I need to share my methods of analysis and share the ways in which these stories can be viewed.

Analytic Authoethnography

Anderson (2006) makes the case for Analytic Autoethnography rather than what he calls ‘evocative autoethnography.’ Writing with research students who may be contending with the pull of various approaches to qualitative inquiry partly in mind, Anderson argues that there has always been an autoethnographic element in qualitative social research citing classic studies from Chicago School ethnography such as Nels Anderson’s *The Hobo* (1923), Roth’s *Timetables* (1963) and Davis’s study of *The Cabdriver and His Fare* (1959). However these authors did not explicitly identify themselves as reflective self-observers in the style of contemporary autoethnographers. Deegan (2001) agrees that the Chicago school students often lived and worked in the settings they studied while acknowledging that the self is not the primary source or focus within these studies in the ways suggested and demonstrated by more recent evocative autoethnographers such Ellis and Bochner (2000, 2006).

Anderson (2006) proposes three key principles that inform the five distinct features of analytic autoethnography that are grounded in self-experience while reaching beyond it as well:

- Complete member research
- Analytical reflexivity
- Narrative visibility of the researcher’s self
- Dialogue with informants beyond the self
- Commitment to theoretical analysis

This is the methodological framework I adopted and adapted for my own research.
CHAPTER 2

Chapter 3 describes how I applied and tested this approach through a description of the conduct of the research.

Making Meaning from Stories of Experience

How can the data gathered by the inevitably messy personal experience methods of autoethnography be analysed in an attempt to bring news of one world to another? While Denzin has stated that there is only interpretation in social science and criticises both Goffman (1959) and Garfinkel (1967) for attempting to extract abstract generalisations from auto/biographical data, he recommends Sartre’s (1963) progressive/regressive method of analysis which he reframes as ‘critical interpretive method’ (Denzin 2001 p.41).

The concept of the individual, defined as a praxis that both produces and is produced by social structures (Sartre, 1982) forms the basis of the progressive/regressive method as it combines psychological and sociological explanations of human action.

Here narrative is located in a particular historical situation. Sartre (1963) structured an analysis that first looks forward from a particular point towards a conclusion of sorts as well as back to the historical, cultural and biographical conditions that moved the narrator. This situates the memory and interpretation of actions in time and space, illuminating the uniqueness of the individual while revealing commonalities of the sub-culture.

The narrative analysis and organisation of Chapter 5 draws on the ideas of Sartre’s method of analysis and pursues what Denzin (1997) calls the ‘conjunctural, contextual, performance-based, “messy” approach to reading (and writing)’ (p246). This is clearly not an approach that attempts to capture the totality of an individual or a group’s way of life. The focus here is upon:

...interpreted slices, glimpses and specimens of interaction that display how cultural practices, connected to structural formations and narrative texts, are experienced at a particular time and place by interacting individuals (ibid p247).

In Chapter 5 I have strategically selected sites for interpretation and presentation that constitute points at which the narrative texts of our stories intersect and interact. This is a model that works upward and outward from the individual self-narratives gathered through writing and through interviews, towards the larger set of meanings that operate in the particular context of teacher education within university schools of education, offering a picture of what Fiske (1994 p195) describes as ‘culture in practice’ within ITE by placing one set of experiences and perspectives alongside others.

Employing a version of Sartre’s (1963) progressive/regressive method of analysis allowed me to remain within the framework of analytic autoethnography without turning the stories told by me and the other participants into merely stories analysed and sacrificing meaning for particular notions of analytic rigor. These ethnographies are empirical in the classical sense of the word as they are based
upon the articulated experiences of the participants in real and particular situations and places (Denzin, 1997). While not known as an ethnographer Sartre (1963, pp85–166) constructs a method that emphasises memories and the consequences of particular decisions and actions by looking first forward to the conclusion of a set of acts and then working back through the ‘subjects’ interpretations of the conditions and situations that shaped the decisions and actions in question. In his famous biography of Flaubert, for example, Sartre (1993) uses this method to demonstrate how individuals internalise and express social events and values by illuminating those structures, firstly from the lived perspective of Flaubert (from his private and published writing) and then by investigating and describing the relevant social structures such as class, family and era themselves.

The problem is to recover the totalising movement of enrichment which engenders each moment in terms of the prior moment, the impulse which starts from lived obscurities in order to arrive at the final objectification (Sartre, 1963 p147).

This forwards and backwards movement in time (see Appendix 2), characteristic of oral history and life history interviews and writing (e.g. Thompson, 1978; Goodson, 1992; Thomson, 1994) locates the participants and their actions (‘subjects’ and their ‘projects’ in Sartre’s terms) within culture as a set of interpretive practices. The uniqueness of participants’ experience is illuminated in the episodes revealed alongside similarities and commonalities with others. In this book my own memories of being threatened with the ‘special class’ by my head teacher when I was ten, Jan’s recall of her feelings of disillusionment as a teacher of English, or Brian’s recollection in the same chapter of his Father’s pride in him as a learner, all illuminate social structures and behaviours through our individual perspectives. While the parallel review and discussion situates and connects those experiences within the wider context of the relevant structures such as family and the education system, the fact that we have chosen to tell these stories in the way we do is equally telling. The presentation and discussion of data in Chapter 5 begins as it were, in the future by considering the experiences of being a teacher educator through a number of themes or ‘sites’. Subsequent sections move backwards in time through our perspectives on being teachers and being learners. While my own story presents a more chronologically conventional narrative it too follows this forwards and backwards perspective through my own narration (Appendix 2).

It was Dewey’s (1903/1976) conception of analysis that develops into four analytical directions of inward, outward, forward and backward through the individual, the social/cultural, the future and the past, that helped me to consider Sartre’s methodology in terms of this research. Pinar (1981) provides an example that offers links between Dewey’s framework of analysis and Sartre’s progressive/regressive method which he uses as a way of considering narrative autobiographical stories of the self ‘harvested’ through interview. Through this example (Pinar 1981) Dewey’s four directions become ‘regressive’, ‘progressive’, ‘analytic’ and ‘synthetic’. This maintains the continuity of analysis that Dewey
CHAPTER 2

saw as essential and links with notions of researcher ‘signature and voice’ as championed by Geertz (1973). A method of analysis that suits the narrative data and purpose of my study emerged from this ‘bricolage’ (Levi-Strauss, 1966).

de Creteau (1980) suggests that meaning emerging as narrative is one means of opposing institutional power. The ‘intense singularities’ of storytelling challenge the scientific discourse as it attempts to eliminate ‘time’s scandals:

Nonetheless they return over and over again, noiselessly and surreptitiously, and not least within the scientific activity itself: not merely in the form of the practices of everyday life which go on even without their own discourse, but also in the sly and gossipy practices of everyday storytelling…a practical know-how is at work in these stories, where all the features of the ‘art of memory’ itself can be detected…the art of daily life can be witnessed in the tales told about it (p.42).

Whether they are collected by others or we record them ourselves, if the researcher remains visibly central the tales are always autoethnographic, and that’s where I’m calling from.

REFERENCES


CHAPTER 2


CHAPTER 2


INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION AND AUTOETHNOGRAPHY


