Usage guidelines

SAVED BY MY ELECTRONIC DIARY! HOW TO TRUST YOUR OWN DIARY AS YOUR PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION METHOD.

Kate Duffy

Faculty of Education and Society, University of Sunderland (UNITED KINGDOM)

Abstract

This paper critically explores the use of personal reflective diaries as the primary research tool for an auto ethnographic PhD study into the moral dimensions of teaching. Auto ethnography, according to Ellis (2004) 'overlaps art and science…it is part of self (auto) and culture (ethnography)' (pg31). It is a methodology that seeks to understand the experience of the researcher as the primary participant in the research and it tells stories from lived experience to show the emotional, cognitive and cultural aspects of that concrete experience. The use of the personal diary was adopted in the first instance for its potential to be authentic, trustworthy and systematic due the very nature of the *researcher as participant* (Ellis 2004, 2009; Piper & Simons 2011) and secondly as a genuine method to interpret the extent of everyday actions as moral ones. Diaries, according to Aleskewski 2006, Holly & Altrichter 2011, Bold 2012, Bartlett & Milligan 2015, are able to gain a deeper insight into teacher behaviours, actions and decision making that may not be visible without such a contemporaneous record.

The results of the pilot study for trialling the diary (Duffy, 2013) cast doubts over its ability to be and to maintain authenticity and trustworthiness and it raised questions about the meaning of these concepts for the researcher, (Corusetta & Cranton 2004) both for and within auto-ethnographic research. The aim to be systematic in the data collection also proved a hindrance more than a help and challenged the researcher to reconsider wider ethical issues in the process of analysing the diary.

This paper will present the researcher's journey after the pilot study and towards the settling of some of these issues in order to rebuild her trust in the diary as a data collection method. It will trace the emotional and epistemological experience of this journey where a cultural and behavioural shift was made from what was arguably a traditional understanding of what is systematic and trustworthy in diary keeping to a more contemporary and ultimately more authentic approach.

Keywords: ethics; auto ethnography, diaries, education.

1   INTRODUCTION - MY STORY: DO YOU CHOOSE THE PARADIGM OR DOES IT CHOOSE YOU?

I honestly think that **my choice** (if it is a choice) to use narrative autobiographical methods for this PhD study is Karma for my earlier, naïve, attempts at research. My first methodological decision was during my undergraduate dissertation – there was never any question for me – I was always going to interview my participants, therefore accepting a qualitative approach to research. Like Wall (2006) I resisted traditional scientific approaches to research, quite possibly because I did not think I would be very good at them, but primarily because I genuinely wanted to know why people felt as they did and acted in the ways that they did. So much of the validated research into education, valued by those in power, put forward as 'what works' has emerged from the traditional approach that can only …*'create the illusion that the knowledge produced is more legitimate*..' (Wall, 2006, pg5). Wherever there is an element of qualitative research alongside the quantitative data, it often appears tokenistic. Placed there as a way of contextualising the quantitative data for the reader presenting a sometimes patronising and almost pointless, surface comment. There may be some reflection by the writers to explain how their engagement in the collection of the qualitative data could have affected the outcomes of the research process however, rarely is it truly reflexive. I did not want to engage in research like this and in the same vein as Ellis, (2004); Muncey (2010); Ellis & Bochner (2016) and Wall (2006), I was *'…not interested in disembodied research that aims to speak neutrally for everyone'* (pg 9). By making this decision, I knew that I would be expected to defend my research decisions in ways that are not always the concern of traditional scientific researchers. In order to try to explain why I felt this way and how I came to adopting auto ethnography as the approach for my PhD study, I will share my journey to this point;

"While doing my first degree dissertation, I read Germaine Greer, The Female Eunuch. My husband's life was made hell for 9 months while I took on board her view of women and feminism and was made to realise just how powerful women can be in their own right. Reading it changed my thinking and for a while - I had a campaign to promote – as I used to with my World Vision fundraising events. Until this point, I suppose I was unsure of whether I fully understood what Geertz (2000) was trying to suggest when he stated that 'thinking as a moral act…thought is conduct and is to be morally judged as such.' (pg21).

I spoke to my participants, in long interviews where personal information about their approaches to teaching and where they felt their pedagogical approach came from, was drawn out in the responses. My participants were so helpful, accommodating and shared some very personal information – I put this down to my having developed a trusting relationship at the time. Then came the analysis…

As I read the transcripts from one of my interviewees, all I could 'see' was exactly what Greer had been warning us of. My reading of the Female Eunuch was significantly influencing my interpretation of Helen's [not her real name] interview, almost eclipsing the education literatures I was also reading. I recorded it as such with a mixed feeling of pride that I had 'spotted' it [clever me!] and hesitation because I was not sure Helen would agree with me – it was, after all, quite brutal.

I spent the rest of the year avoiding the requests from Helen to read my dissertation. She was being so supportive and proud of me for completing it and I was hiding it from her for fear of what she would say if she read my analysis. I can't ever truly know if I would have 'come clean', or how she may have reacted, had she read it – she left the college shortly after my graduation and moved to Europe to follow her husband's promotion and career – for a short time it helped to validate my interpretation, but it haunts me still - my deceit. Is this what Geertz (2000) meant when he said thought is action? I allowed my personal values [at the time] to overly influence and manipulate the analysis and my decision not to let Helen read it was a recognition that I was guilty of a decision was less than moral.

I push this experience to one side and begin my Masters in Education. My critical friend moves on to another college, to the dizzy heights of management and I feel comfortable to continue on my own. This was uncharted territory for my support 'team' of old. The Masters would be a long 3 years with many bumps in the road from redundancy, to almost divorce and loss of friends. It was a very lonely experience when I look back.

*The Masters dissertation took on a similar focus – the identity of teachers. No female Eunuch this time though – the pressures of working in education, long hours and study had meant that my 'campaign' for social justice moved towards critical pedagogies and approaches to teaching and learning. I am not sure I had ever really been **that** radical as a feminist anyway. My work in this area of critical pedagogies and enquiry based learning with colleagues meant that I had many willing participants for my Masters study, all supportive and keen to share. I would NOT make the same mistake again. All of the interviews were transcribed, I followed, as closely as I understood, the grounded theory approach to analysis (Strauss and Corbin 1998), I shared the themes with them on a post card and asked them to respond to them. They didn't, other than to say, "it looks great Kate, that's fine with me!" almost as if they were giving a brief formative feedback account to one of their 17 year old students who they just wanted to 'trot along' and get on with it. So, I wrote it up with full consent and agreement, just as the literature tells you to.*

2   A NEW FOUND PERSPECTIVE

My Masters study had had the support of the academic literature, as required, and I had followed the ethical research code throughout, however I still felt a slight unease about the process of research. Especially interpretive approaches. My 'post card' submission had distilled their voices into three 'themes' and although they gave their consent for me to continue (Brooks, et al 2014), I could not get rid of the idea that had I had a different mood or had read different literature, or had more time, then I may have come up with a different set of themes or interpretations of their stories. I had still not resolved the first incident. It was a number of years before I could bring myself to seriously consider conducting research again. Then I came across Carolyn Ellis.

The preface to Ellis's (2004), methodological text book, 'The Ethnographic I' begins in her office where a potential PhD student is searching for supervisor to support her in researching the experience of

women with breast cancer. The student, or as the vivid picture left with me as the 'women in the floppy hat', initially wants to research this area from a position of great distance and objectivity to her participants. She states 'I was taught to keep my personal experience out of my research. If I want my study to be valid, I can't mention to my participants that I have had cancer, can I?' (pg xvi). Ellis (2004;2009) work on auto ethnography challenged the traditional view of the social sciences that the researcher should remain objective and advocated that the perspective of the researcher-as-participant is both a genuine and trustworthy endeavor (Ellis, 2004; Wall 2006). It was at this point that I realised that this might be the answer to ease my concerns. Instead of worrying about my research 'putting words into their mouths' or relaying their voices back to them in some sort of distorted echo, I would become the primary participant. After all, if I am not prepared to answer my research questions myself then what kind of educator or researcher can I ever hope to be? My decision was not taken lightly nor immediately, it would be four years before I would re-engage in research. This was not the easy option either. The profession was and still is, inundated with research papers and initiatives that claim to reveal the 'facts' of teaching practice. Many of which leave me sceptical and un-enlightened about *my* practice because their reach can only ever be limited with an endeavour that is driven so much by the context in which it is happening. Taking on an auto ethnographic approach, as Wall (2006) and Pace (2012) also discovered, would reveal much more about practice and my understanding of it than the 'facts' could reveal.

Auto ethnography, like grounded theory, is still an interpretive paradigm and it views the researcher as the primary participant, often in order to illuminate and make sense of the values that underpin the complex lives and experiences of those in the study. Auto ethnography, initially seemed like the ideal approach where I could make visible my decisions made in my practice as opposed to asking others to share theirs [*this was my first misunderstanding*]. Auto ethnography would give me the opportunity to view the context of teaching practice from an insider's perspective (Gobo, 2008, Madden 2010) as the approach aims to understand the self (auto), in this case me, the teacher educator, in relation to the cultural, political and social contexts (ethnographic) of the learning and teaching situation (McIlveen 2008, Ellis 2004, Sparkes 2007, Denzin 1997). By grounding the study in my personal knowledge and experience both as a teacher educator and as researcher (Whitehead 1989, McIlveen 2008) and as the primary participant, I am able to write my narrative as a personal 'truth' [*this was my second misunderstanding*]. I felt that the approach of auto ethnography had chosen me, it gave me a set of words and ways of looking at research that seemed to fit more comfortably with my values and put my mind at rest [*or so I thought..]*

3   COLLECTING THE DATA: THE DIARY

The method that I chose to illuminate my practice was my teacher's reflective diary. Diaries and self-narratives, according to Aleskewski 2006, Kennedy-Lewis 2010, Holly & Altrichter 2011, Bold 2012, Bartlett & Milligan 2015, are able to gain a deeper insight into teacher behaviours, actions and decision making that may not be visible without such a contemporaneous record. The diary which began as a paper document, was naturally occurring and as I had been used to keeping a reflective diary I did not anticipate any issues or problems. This, however was another unanticipated assumption. Recording regularly and systematically in the paper diary was a challenge and I was doubtful whether it would produce any useful data. I switched to an electronic ==diary== using a tablet device. The transition from the paper diary to the electronic one has already been documented in Duffy (2013) and in summary, the transition allayed my initial fears about confidentiality, security and general logistics for completing the diary systematically. The electronic diary was password protected, enabled me to record incidents and reflections quickly and easily, and to maintain an online backup. I was no longer fearful about editing and the desire to separate the data collection from the analysis. I explicitly allowed myself time to reflect and comment upon (although not change) previous entries as part of the ongoing analysis process. It all seemed to be going as planned until I came to the close of the pilot study and began to review the data I had collected. I soon realised that my ethical considerations had been far from fully considered. What follows are my reflections and deliberations for the ethical concerns of the next phase of my auto ethnographic study.

4   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS – IS IT ALL OR NOTHING?

For this PhD research I had referred in the first instance, as I had in my Masters study, to BERA (2011) guidelines for ethical advice. As with most generalised guidance on ethical issues, they are

vague on the practicalities and tend to take an overarching principled approach that the researcher still needs to further apply to their context. The guidance implies a *distance* between the researcher and the participant leaving the guidance for auto ethnographers, where the distance is limited or non-existent, more difficult to apply. The guidance (BERA, 2011) asks researchers to gain informed consent, protect participants from harm, and maintain their confidentiality and to report accurately the outcomes. On the face of it this appeared straight forward and I began thinking about how to gain consent from my students and those around me who may be mentioned in my diaries or become significant influences on my diary entries. For the pilot I designed a short seminar to explain to the pilot student cohort about my research and gave them assurance that they would not be made visible in the study. I think they grasped what my study was about, after all they were reflective teachers also, but I am not fully convinced that, just as with my Masters participants, they really understood what it means to be *visible* in someone's research or not. They knew I had a further five years of study for my PhD and I imagined them saying;

 "*I probably will never read the study anyway*", and in any case,

"*What would she be able to really say about me that I wouldn't be happy with? She has told us it is about her practice and not US.*"

However, for the time being, I had gained informed consent and all participants had the right to withdraw any information that I asked of them at any time.

Tolich (2010) has since challenged many respected auto ethnographic research projects such as Ellis (2007;2009, Richardson 1990) for the apparent ease with which they justified why they had not asked for consent from the 'others' within their stories prior to the data collection or to publication. I was struggling with the same tension. The pilot had gained consent, but I was skeptical as to whether it had been fully informed. I found myself worrying about whether the students, my colleagues, my family and friends behaviour may change if they fully understood that potentially every conversation, every interaction and utterance could be entered into the diary and open to analysis. The electronic diary now made sure that my entries were secure and I felt less inclined to worry about them finding it accidentally and being able to read my thoughts and reflections 'raw'. Tolich (2010) recognises that protecting the privacy of others in auto ethnographic stories is more difficult than in other research methodologies and that to a certain extent, researchers could argue that they own the story because they are telling it. He would most certainly see this assumption as incorrect. Although I needed to consider the ethical considerations for myself as primary participant in this study, I could not forget about protecting the other as I would in any other qualitative research. Where I had initially thought that focusing upon myself would be the ultimate protection for the other, I was beginning to see there was a flaw in my reasoning. I cannot write my narratives about teaching without writing about the 'others' in the situation. I had to consider ethics not only to protect the 'other' but also to protect myself. As primary participant I started with me.

5 HOW DO I GIVE MYSELF INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY?

I thought about this principle in a few ways. Firstly, I could argue that I gave consent simply because I chose the methodology and the mode of data collection as being my diary. I gave consent almost by default – I am the researcher, by its very nature, consent is a *given* in this situation. However, the multiple roles of *researcher as participant* (Ellis 2004; Muncey 2010) in this study prompted me to think more widely about this principle. Is it possible to give the same consent as a participant and as a teacher? Kennedy-Lewis (2012) described the same confusion between her role as a researcher and as a participant-teacher. I can give consent to use my diary as the data collection tool, that bit feels easy, however when it comes to what will be shared from the content of those diaries it will come down to the potential ambiguity between the ethical principles as researcher and as teacher and this is where I need to also consider the 'other'. Kennedy-Lewis (2012) stressed the value of teachers as researchers, as does Kincheloe (2003) and explained that the dual role and the use of self-narratives can explore practice '*that might otherwise remain tacit and inaccessible'*. (Pg107). However being unable to clarify these ambiguities either with yourself, or more to the point the 'others' in your narratives, as to when you are wearing the researcher hat or the teacher hat is problematic. At what point can this confusion affect the data?

The danger is, that I may know how a particular diary entry might 'look' like to the reader after it has been interpreted by me in my role as the researcher. This may cause me to edit the entry in order to

protect myself as the teacher. This was my greatest concern – how to ensure I am being honest with myself. Rappert (2010) refers to exactly this issue when he writes openly and honestly about the negotiations that researchers have about what to reveal and what to conceal and he puts much of this deliberation down to the '*delimiting ethics of exposure'* promoted through auto ethnographic research. Giving consent, as a teacher, to share 'warts and all' was going to be more complicated and challenging than I first imagined and had the potential to put the whole study at risk. Bold (2010) and BERA (2011) both state that the researcher should not agree to conditions that might undermine the integrity of the research therefore seeking a blanket catch all 'informed consent' without fully being aware of how it could risk the validity and therefore trustworthy, was not going to be sufficient in this case.

6   HOW WILL I PROTECT MYSELF FROM HARM AND MAINTAIN MY CONFIDENTIALITY?

Tolich (2010) stated that where you cannot minimise the risk to self or others in auto ethnography then you should use a nom de plume (pg 1608). Changing my name or referring to myself as 'the teacher' throughout was not only going to be detrimental to my health (after five years), it is also not in the true spirit of auto ethnography (Ellis 2004, 2009; Wall 2006) as I understood it. The spirit of auto ethnography is to make genuine and authentic human connections between researcher and reader therefore hiding behind a pseudonym or nom de plume did not seem like an option. The risk to self and others had to minimised. Where the readers are also the participant others in the narrative accounts, Tolich (2010) advised a careful consideration toward 'internal confidentiality' (pg 1607). Visibility is less likely to be an issue with outsiders reading the auto ethnographic study but more likely to come from the participants reading the study and reading my accounts of them or the situation.

I had to accept to trust the readers of my study – to trust that they would not judge me for what I present but to respect me for the fact that I was courageous in sharing it. I had to accept that I would have little or no control over this but approach the study as an 'inked' tattoo' and anticipate that I would be vulnerable in this situation (Tolich 2010) and to protect myself as Chatham-Carpenter (2012) had had to by sharing a perspective of herself that would protect her from harm while not editing the real her out of the story. Would they be able to read my study as a piece of research independent of the fact that I am an employee of the University where I am completing my research degree? Or as their teacher? Or as their friend and colleague?

One of my supervisors, at the time of the pilot study, was also my line manager – what conflicts could emerge here? My thoughts and decision making at work, up until now had always been a private affair, now potentially, my employers could know more about me than I even know of myself. In the early days of my proposal it was determined that because I was the main participant, supposedly of sound body and mind, there was no need to take this to the ethics committee for additional approval although ethical considerations of the 'others' in my study are reviewed at annual monitoring points. At the time I agreed, but in hindsight, for auto ethnographic studies, perhaps this needs to be reviewed as even topic choice can harm the researcher (Tolich 2010; Chatham-Carpenter 2010). If I am to be presenting accounts of my work as a teacher in this organisation, to enable me to be fully protected from harm [at the worst case, perhaps losing my job or entering into disciplinary] after sharing some of my deepest concerns, conflicts and dilemmas in my work may mean some additional 'protection'. In addition, auto ethnography is often referred to by critics as 'naval gazing' (Silverman and Atkinson, Richardson 1990) and often results in the researcher being so self-critical and self-deprecating that they could lose confidence in their abilities after stripping away all that they know about themselves (Chatham-Carpenter 2012). Teachers traditionally, find it easy to take the blame for things that their students either do or do not do. My aim in this study is to become a better teacher and I want to understand more deeply the decisions I make and the consequence of those decisions. This position ultimately comes from the premise that I already think there is 'room for improvement' therefore the potential is there for me to look, and possibly only see, the gaps and the deficit in my practice. Supervision and support must be able to help auto ethnographic researchers see context and situation holistically and realistically, to limit the effects of this.

One the flip side, this approach can also be therapeutic and consciousness raising (Ellis 2004; Kennedy-Lewis 2010; Wall 2006; Chatham-Carpenter 2012). Deepening self-awareness and self-understanding to increase confidence in yourself and certainty of who you are as a person, teacher and researcher. This could also cause issues of criticality in the research and become so personal that

the reader is unable to connect or relate to the writer/researcher therefore defeating the point of auto ethnography as a being research as Wall (2006) would attest.

7   HOW WILL I ENSURE THAT I REPORT THE OUTCOMES ACCURATELY AND ENSURE THAT I DON'T DECEIVE MYSELF?

Reporting accurately, a rather positivist approach to data collection, was a difficult one to fully address and as I write this, it still is one that I wrestle with. My diary entry is my recollection and interpretation of that event or situation. How then, can I be certain how accurate it is? I can either say categorically that it *is* accurate because the philosophical underpinning of the study is to accept that I can know the world from my experience of it (Kincheloe, 2003) and take an anti-positivist stance that values cannot be separated from facts and that my view of the world *is* the world. Therefore, it is accurate simply because I say it is. However, the conflict comes with me as the participant and the researcher. I am going to know if I have held back on some information or focused in on one incident more than another. In reality, this is the aim of auto ethnography; to make the usually invisible, more visible (Ellis 2004, Richardson,1990). Reporting accurately will depend upon how honest and open I can be with myself (Rappert 2010, Ellis 2004, 2009, Wall 2006, Chatham-Carpenter 2012). The use of the electronic diary enabled me to feel more confident about the ongoing analysis that will occur in diary writing. Narrative analysis, as summarised by Bold (2012) in its expected form, is a way of enquiring deeply into situations and contexts, usually with small numbers of participants and for a specific social purpose. It can begin at any time during or after data collection and she notes that there is not one single way of approaching the analysis of narrative accounts. I followed Ellis's (2004, 2009) guidance to see analysis as a 'moving back and forth' between data collection and analysis, actively looking for omissions or misrepresentations. Prior to each new entry, I read and reflected upon the last one and without making any changes to the entry itself, I noted if my recollection of that entry was missing anything, had changed now in hindsight or if my actions since that entry had resulted in any developments. Allowing myself the opportunity to analyse as I was collecting the data, may seem an obvious point to some, but to me it released the pressure to try to conform to more traditional approaches to research. The consciousness of diary writing is an analysis in itself as you become more acutely aware of what you said *yesterday* and begin to 'see' connections that you may not have seen otherwise (Ellis 2009).

However now, as I am to begin the process of analysis to find themes in the data, coding each line of text and breaking apart the narratives line by line, word for word, does not seem appropriate or useful. After all, the point was not to distil and distort my own identity and that of the participant 'others' in the same way I had felt in my Masters, the aim was to find a new way of understanding and interpreting. The analysis was meant to be able to illuminate the moral dimensions of my practice. Narrative, according to Richardson (1990) is both a mode of reasoning and a mode of representation and in doing so is closely related to morality. Therefore the analysis of my diary entries needed to be considered as such in their analysis. However, Wall (2006) challenges the need for 'systematic' and 'consistent' analysis. She states, similarly to Ellis (2010) and Muncey (2010) that the point of auto ethnography is not to engage systematically but to engage personally. As I try to ensure that I am presenting myself in an authentic way rather than looking for an accurate analysis of my account, I reflect upon Wall (2006) and Ellis's (2009) questions,

'*can the author legitimately make claim to this story?*

Did the author learn anything new about themselves?'

I really struggled to find a process of analysis that would suit what I was trying to accomplish by using auto-ethnographic methodology. I began with Pace's (2012) suggestion that a *form* of grounded theory is possible within auto ethnography. I felt daunted and overwhelmed by the amount of data I had and the complexity of it – there was a new theme on every line if I was to code it and the unstructured nature of the accounts, since I had ditched the question format, meant that the text 'jumped' around a little in its own stream of consciousness. No two entries followed the same format therefore I intended to use conversational analysis (Bold 2012) of the narrative accounts in the first instance. Focusing in on the language and content used in my diary entries as the first stage of the analysis then the second phase of analysis would be to note what was omitted or missing from the diaries (Bartlett and Milligan 2015), for example noting where a week had passed without an entry and looking to other evidence that may suggest a reason for this. The third phase of analysis would include reflections and observations of what I didn't say in my diary entries. Bartlett and Milligan (2015) and Bold (2012) both note that this is a limitation of collecting solicited diaries as a form of research. However in this study,

with the researcher being the participant also, this is the distinctiveness of this data. The *researcher* has access to the *participant* after the data collection period is over and can illuminate what was omitted or not shared. It is this process that is the most important according to Tolich (2010), he stressed that auto ethnographers must assume that all people mentioned in the study will read it one day (pg1608)

8   CONCLUSIONS AND MOVING FORWARD

This paper aimed to illuminate the complexities of using personal diaries within auto ethnographic PhD research. During the pilot stage of the study, the ethical considerations for the use of a personal diary became significantly broader than first anticipated in the use of self-narrative. I began with the incorrect assumption that I owned my story because I was the one telling it and had not fully been aware of the rights of the 'others' in the narratives I was constructing (Tolich 2010). My initial struggle had been towards ensuring that the accounts were systematic in their collection and were recorded as accurately as possible with minimal editing and drafting of the 'self' (Duffy, 2013). To address this issue, I made the transition from a paper based diary to an electronic one. This move helped satisfy the need for confidentiality and privacy of the data and gave me a systematic process for ongoing analysis that helped me accept the inevitable natural editing of narrative accounts (Ellis 2009) and recognise them as part of the analysis. Without the distraction of the diary process, I was able to fully reflect upon the wider ethical considerations for the study and realised that I had made several assumptions about conducting auto ethnographical research as a novice researcher.

In short, this pilot has helped me to settle (although I felt I knew this before I started!) that trying to be 'objective' by attempting to separate the recollections (data) from the analysis is a false situation in this methodology, probably emerging from my previous understandings about 'being a researcher' and what would be expected by the wider academy. This resulted in the process having the potential to disrupt and harm the relationships that I was trying to understand more deeply and other areas affecting internal confidentiality (Tolich 2010). Ellis (2009) in her 'shower scene' (pg 11), evocatively explains the anxiousness of doing auto ethnography and sharing it with your students. The feelings of exposure and whether we should 'grab a towel' to cover ourselves and the hope that they will understand and know why we are doing this. She worries about their confidence in her after they read her work and wonder whether they will [hypothetically] give her towel. Custer (2014) views auto ethnography as '*reaching deep down into the soul and pulling up the trash and scum…the results of engagement with oneself are the act of courage and clarity of purpose*' (pg4) he goes on to say that '*auto ethnography is a test of one's ability to be vulnerable to his or herself…old wounds are reopened and exposed to the world.' (pg4).* This is precisely what Tolich (2010) is trying to alert auto ethnographers towards. To raise researchers awareness that not only are they are making themselves vulnerable but the others in their narratives have rights to have their vulnerability protected too. Kennedy-Lewis (2012), Chatham-Carpenter (2010), Rappert (2010) would support Tolich's (2010) position by describing how they came to those decisions about what to share and what not to share and the motivations for this. Kennedy-Lewis (2010) saw her role as a teacher would over-ride her role as researcher when it came to the safety of her students and I whole heartedly agree. After all, what would I be able to say about the moral aspects of my practice, were I to do anything other?

8.1   What next: post pilot

As I now plan to move into the post pilot stage of the study I am anticipating the ethical considerations from the outset, not to 'tame auto ethnography' as Ellis (2009) might worry but to accept my vulnerability as a researcher in an auto ethnographical study as Tolich (2010) would recommend. Although Tolich's (2010) position is taken from one of medical ethics, his practical application for those of us who are novice auto ethnographic researchers and who have to report to annual monitoring boards is very useful and practical for our training.

Recognising and protecting the 'others' in the construction of the diary entries will be my first priority. Collecting documented informed consent from students and colleagues who may be participating in the narratives. In addition, as both Ellis (2007) and Tolich (2010) suggests, I will practice 'process consent' where students and colleagues are regularly asked whether they still wish to continue in the study and this will be coupled with the opportunity to comment upon areas of my practice that I am noticing during stages of analysis. My aim is that the final narrative accounts will be co-constructed (Ellis 2004) by me, the participants and my analysis of those versions of events and interpretations. This process of co-construction will also protect me, as the researcher, from harm.

Following the guidance from Tolich (2010) and like Kennedy-Lewis (2012) and Rappert (2010) it is my responsibility and ethical duty as both the teacher and the researcher to, make the professional decisions about what to include to ensure that even though some of the accounts may be 'difficult to read' from my point of view, neither of us are being harmed in the reporting. Annual review boards should be made aware of any analysis that is potentially harmful and should make the appropriate protection for the researcher should I want to continue to include it. Supervision should focus upon the learning that can increases confidence rather than doubt through the deeper understanding of practice and the influences upon it. Seeing my narrative accounts as 'accounts of practice' similarity to how Chatham-Carpenter (2010) saw her anorexia as something she could control but did not have to define her response to it, can increase internal confidentiality (Tolich 2010) while accurately reporting the themes emerging.

Using the method of an electronic diary, limits editing, in the typing up, that can change how the practice is seen and understood by others. It enables ongoing, transparent analysis to occur where omissions are noticed rather than filled or ignored. My focus for the remainder of this PhD study will to be to strive for authenticity rather than accuracy and Wall (2006) and Ellis's (2009) questions will be referred to at every opportunity as I hold myself, as researcher to account for both myself as participant and the participant others in the narratives.

Can the author legitimately make claims for this story?

Did the author learn anything new about themselves?

REFERENCES

[1]   Ellis, C (2004). *The Ethnographic I*: A methodological novel about auto ethnography California. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Ltd.

[2]   Ellis, C (2009). *Revision: auto ethnographic reflections on life and work*. California. Left Coast Press.

[3]   Ellis, C (2007). Telling Secrets, Revealing Lives: Relational Ethics in Research With Intimate Others. Qualitative inquiry. Vol 13, No 1, pp3-29.

[4]   Piper & Simons 2011 IN Somekh, B & Lewin, C (2011). Theory and Methods in Social Research. London. Sage.

[5]   Aleszewski,A (2006) Using diaries for social research. London. Sage.

[6]   Holly & Atrichter (2011). Reserch Diaries. IN Somekh, B & Lewin, C (2011). Theory and Methods in Social Research. London. Sage.

[7]   Bartlett , R & Milligan, C (2015) What is diary Method?. London. Bloomsbury.

[8]   Bold, C (2012). Using Narratives in Research. London. Sage.

[9]   Duffy, K (2013) Evaluating the use of a *Teacher's Diary* to illuminate the moral dimensions of a teacher educator's everyday work. Presented at the Conference of the Association of Moral Education, Montreal, 23rd October 2013 – 26th Oct 2013.

[10]   Wall, S (2006) An Autoethnography on Learning about Autoethnography. International Journal of Qualitative Methods. Vol 5, issue 2.

[11]   Muncey, T (2010). *Creating Autoethnographies*. London. Sage.

[12]   Ellis, C & Bochner , A (2016). Evocotive Autoethnography: Writing Lives and Telling Stories. London. Routledge.

[13]   Geertz, C (2000) Available Light: Anthropological Reflections on Philosophical Topics. Princeton University Press.

[14]   Brooks, R, Riele, K & Maguire, M (2014) Ethics and Education Research. BERA. London. Sage.

[15]   Pace, S (2012). Writing the self in to research: using grounded theory analytic strategies in autoethnography. TEXT Special Issue: Creativity: cognitive, Social and Cultural Perspectives. April 2012.

[16]   Gobo, G (2008). Doing Ethnography. London. Sage.

[17] Madden, R (2010) Being Ethnographic: A guide to the theory and practice of Ethnography. London. Sage.

[18] McIlveen, p (2008). *Autoethnography as a method for reflective research and practice in vocational psychology.* Australian Journal of career development vol 17, pp 13-20.

[19] Denzin, N (2000). Interpretive Ethnography. Ethnographic practices for the 21st century. London. Sage.

[20] Whitehead, J (1989) creating a living educational theory from questions of the kind,' how do I improve my practice?' Cambridge Journal of Education, Vol. 19.

[21] Kennedy-Lewis, B L (2012). When a teacher becomes a researcher: Using self-narrative to define one's role as participant observer. *Theory into practice.* 51:107 ppg 107-113

[22] BERA (2011) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research. BERA.

[23] Tolich, M (2010) A critique of current practice: ten foundational guidelines for Auto ethnographers. Qualitative Health Research. 20 (12), ppgs 1599-1610.

[24] Richardson, L (1990). Wriitng Strategies: Reaching Diverse Audiences. Qualitative research Methods Series, 21. California. Sage.

[25] Pelias, R J (2003) the academic tourist: an autoethnogrpahy. Qualititaive inquiry 9 (3) 369 – 373.

[26] Kincheloe, J (2003). Teachers as researchers: Qualitative paths to empowerment. Routeldge.

[27] Rappert, B (2010) Revealing and concealing secrets in research: the potential for the absent. Qualitative research.

[28] Chatham- Carpenter, A. (2012) "Do Thyself No Harm": Protecting Ourselves as Autoethnographers. Journal of Research Practice. Vol 6, Issue 1, Article M1, 2010.

[29] Anderson, L (2006). Analytic auto ethnography. Journal of contemporary ethnography. Vol 35 No4, pp 373-395.

[30] Custer, D (2014) Autoethnography as a Transformative Research method. The Qualitative Report 2014, Vol 19, How to 21, ppgs 1-13.