REFLEXIVE DIGITAL BRICOLAGE: THE ART OF DIGITAL REFLECTION

Imagination is more important than knowledge, (Albert Einstein Quote, cited from http://rescomp.stanford.edu/~cheshire/EinsteinQuotes.html)

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Reflexivity has emerged as the new gold standard for qualitative researchers who reject positivist methodologies and traditional criteria of rigor, reliability and validity’ (Gabriel, 2018: 137)
BRICOLAGE RESEARCH

• In Kincheloe's conception of the research bricolage, diverse theoretical traditions are employed in a broader critical theoretical/critical pedagogical context to lay the foundation for a transformative mode of multi-methodological inquiry. Using these multiple frameworks and methodologies, researchers are empowered to produce more rigorous and praxiological insights into socio-political and educational phenomena.

• Kincheloe and Steinberg theorize a critical multi-logical epistemology and critical connected ontology to ground the research bricolage. These philosophical notions provide the research bricolage with a sophisticated understanding of the complexity of knowledge production and the interrelated complexity of both researcher positionality and phenomena in the world. Such complexity demands a more rigorous mode of research that is capable of dealing with the complications of socio-educational experience. Such a critical form of rigor avoids the reductionism of many monological, mimetic research orientations (see Kincheloe, 2001, 2005; Kincheloe & Berry, 2004; Steinberg, 2015; Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2012).
ENGAGING IMAGINATION AND ARTISTIC IMAGINATION

• ‘Imagination is the key to human progress. Without the capacity to imagine a different world that is more beautiful than the one in which we live, change is impossible’ (James and Brookfield, 2014: 3)

• ‘our argument is not simply that the artistic imagination could play a larger role in professional learning, but is should do so (Winter, Buck and Sobiechowska 1999: 2).

• Notable theorists in this area are Saunders (2003), Burchill (2010) who used poetry and Hunt (2006) who used drawings

• Other forms of artistic imagination include Songs of Praxis (Armstrong, 2015) who used lyrics as a metaphorical visualisation of identity.

• Artful embodiment of identity (Barleet, 2013; Pelias, 2013; Ellis, 2005) informed the building of the lens of ‘Reflexive Digital Bricolage’ = the conceptualization of art based methodologies, digital reflection and professional identity as a praxis of understanding of reflexive consciousness.
The main challenge for Professional Identity from a research perspective is the rigid and prescribe nature of professional bodies descriptions of behaviours.

Furthermore the terms used by professional bodies make reference to professionals being a ‘Thinking Performer’ (e.g. CIPD) which implies a measurable and accountable element of being a professional. – this is located in the traditional view of experiential learning supported by notable authors including Kolb (1984) and is articulated as cycles of reflection (e.g. Gibbs Cycle; Kolb Cycle; Gardner Cycle) = this leads to a diagnostic approach to reflection and professional development.

Reflective practice is at the heart of professional development and or management learning. I argue for transformation of identity reflexivity and co-creation of praxis (Eikeland, 2013; Armstrong, 2015) is the Active Research Informed Transformation required for the embodiment of professional development (reflexive consciousness).
DEVELOPING REFLEXIVE CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH RESEARCH

• ‘Reflexive consciousness is ‘examination of the self’ and this is also referred to as ‘self-reflection’.
• This approach is methodologically referred to as ‘Self-Reflection as Method’ which can be described as;
• ‘the purpose of self-reflection as method is not focused on gaining insight or experiencing affect through a personal journey of self-discovery, but rather to enable the description of moments of self-discovery or insight. When we use self-reflection, our personal observations of our own journeys function to enhance shared knowledge about the ethnographic focus of self-inquiry’ (Franks, 2016: 49).
• Self Reflection Method is research based on ‘Me’ and the ‘Ethnographic I’ (Ellis, 2004).
• This can be through:
  1. Action Research (cycles of reflection e.g. Participatory action research (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005) or through Gibbs or Gardner’s cycles of reflection)
  2. Reflexive Dialogic Action Research (e.g. Ripamonti et al; 2016)
  3. Auto-Ethnographic Practices of emotional recall, systematic sociological introspection and therapeutic inquiry (e.g. Ellis, 2004; Goffman, 1959)
  4. Reflective Practice (e.g. Gardner, 2014; Fook, 2012; Hunt, 2010)
THE METHODOLOGY OF CRITICAL REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

• The methodology of critical reflective practice is based on the construction and creation of knowledge about self.
• This knowledge of self can be in terms of;
  1. **Personal Knowledge**: this includes, personality; values and beliefs; attitudes; attributes; qualities; morality; ethics
  2. **Professional Knowledge**: this refers to *phronesis* and *dialectics* (Eikeland, 2006; 2012). This is concern with ways of knowing which is normally referred to as *practical wisdom*.
• Critical Reflective Practice is research concerned with personal and professional knowledge (identity and or self-image) and can be as follows;
  1. Action Research
  2. Auto-ethnography
  3. Art-based research
  4. Reflexivity
REFLEXIVE DIGITAL BRICOLAGE: THE CREATION OF REFLEXIVE SPACE FOR ART

• Reflective space is considered by numerous commentators as the ‘process of critical reflection’ through the methodology and theoretical construction of personal and professional knowledge (e.g. see Burchill and Dyson, 2010; Gardner, 2014). This ‘space’ is possible through the use of personal cultural texts (Findlay, 2005; 2013; Armstrong, 2015).

• Reflexive space is ‘the visualization of the layers of conscious and subconscious understanding of self through; creative expressions including one or more of the following: drawings, photographs, poetry, proverbs, lyrics, dance and sculpture through the media of text, artefact, video and audio collage and such creative expression will be capable of facilitating: emotional recall, systematic sociological introspection and therapeutic inquiry’ (Armstrong, 2015: v).
METHODOLOGIES OF REFLEXIVE PRACTICE

AUTO-BIOGRAPHICAL, ARTS BASED, ACTION RESEARCH
AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHIC PRACTICES

- **Emotional recall**: this is drawn from the work of Ellis (1999; 2004; 2007; 2014) who suggests a *‘heartful’* auto-ethnography approach. This is where insider researchers explore the traumatic events of life and how they affected them.

- **Systematic Sociological Introspection**: this is drawn from the work of Goffman (1959) and then developed by (Ellis, 1991; 2004) who suggest emotional recall is only possible if you make sense of emotions (this is referred to as systematic sociological introspection).

- **Therapeutic Inquiry**: by making sense of emotions and through the construction of personal and professional knowledge critical reflective practice can provide the reflective and reflexive space for writing therapeutically (Ellis, 2004; 2007; 2014).
• Personal Reflexivity ‘involves reflecting upon the ways in which our own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, political commitments, wider aims in life and social identities have shaped the research’ (Willing, 2001: 10)

• In this context research = you; your story; your autobiography; your ethnographic I

• There are different auto ethnographic approaches including personal ethnography and reflexive ethnography which is often referred to as ‘systematic introspection, narrative inquiry and biographical method’ (Ellis, 2004: 45)

• ‘auto-ethnography is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural’ (Ellis and Bochner, 2000: 739)
• Action research is often referred to as ‘intervention’ and ‘collaboration’ or ‘applied research’ or ‘praxis research’ (Eikeland, 2012: 10).

• It is concerned with *living inquiry*, ‘how might we change things at the same time as studying them?’ (Wicks, Reason and Bradbury, 2013: 21).

• An example of action research and critical reflective practice is *participatory action research* (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005). This is concerned with cycles of critical reflection.

• This approach was central to the construction of ‘Songs of Praxis’ (Armstrong, 2015).
ART BASED RESEARCH AND CRITICAL REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

• The increasing recognition of art as a form of critical reflective practice (Armstrong, 2015; Finley 2005; 2011; Pelias, 2013)
• The visualization of identity or ‘my story’ is a form of critical reflective practice;
• ‘mystery performances are personal cultural texts (e.g. narratives, paintings, poetry, music) that contextualise important personal experiences and problems within the institutional settings and historical moments where their authors (e.g. painters, collagists, dramatists) find themselves’ (Finley, 2005: 690).
• This relates to poetics and interpretive poetics = the term poetic means art or production and relates to the Aristotle concept of metaphor (Wall, 2003: 317).
• Notable art based critical reflective practice commentators include;
  3. Hunt (2006); metaphors ‘travels with a turtle’
  4. McIntosh (2008; 2010); artistic impressions and reflective practice
• Reflexivity is ‘to find a way of standing outside the self to examine’ (Bolton, 2010: XVIII)
• Reflexivity is ‘a stance of being able to locate oneself in the picture, to appreciate how one’s own self influences (actions). Reflexivity is potentially more complex than being reflective, in that the potential for understanding the myriad was in which one’s own presence and perspective influence the knowledge and actions which are created is potentially more problematic than the simple searching for implicit theory (Fook, 2002: 43)
• Reflexivity ‘generates understanding about the complexities of how workers and their service/communities perceived themselves and each other, the value of understanding that all of who we are (physically, emotionally, mentally, socially, spiritually) influences how we perceive others and are perceived by them’ (Gardner, 2014: 35-36).
• Reflexivity as a research approach is determined by how you understand why you research the way you do (it gives you your identity as a researcher/Professional).
METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

READINESS FOR REFLECTION: ETHICAL CHALLENGES AND SUBJECTIVITY
READINESS FOR REFLECTION

• The main methodological consideration is ‘readiness for reflection’ which is a criticism of auto-biographical approaches to research. This is due to the potential of vulnerability of the researcher. Therefore to overcome this an ‘invitation to reflection’ (Armstrong, 2015: 101) recognises this as follows;

1. Provide support and space for reflection and reflexivity through text or digital
2. Ensure informed consent, confidentiality and privacy
3. Give guidance, tools and emotional support to facilitate readiness
4. Do not harm or allow vulnerability which compromise emotional recall, systematic sociological introspection which can lead to therapeutic inquiry

• Recognise the subjectivity of the research, it is personal, it is a capture of a particular moment in time
• When using personal triangulate data; use more than one source and when using diagnostics have multiple responses to increase validity and reliability of the data.
DIGITAL REFLEXIVE BRICOLAGE

EXAMPLES OF ART OF DIGITAL REFLECTION
EXAMPLES

• Example 1:  
  https://eportfolio.sunderland.ac.uk/view/view.php?t=ZQnWdPVqN6740kvo bJzO

• Example 2:  
  https://eportfolio.sunderland.ac.uk/view/view.php?t=bMAJvnR4f13ZWUsNOdlj

• Example 3:  
  https://eportfolio.sunderland.ac.uk/view/view.php?t=cmFLz7SH34hUGiaZYXw9