Exploring Duoethnography in Graduate Research Courses

Darren E. Lund, Kimberley Holmes, Aubrey Hanson, Kathleen Sitter, David Scott, and Kari Grain

Introduction

This chapter explores the rich potential of duoethnography as a research methodology in the social sciences and humanities, with particular attention to its dialogic and pedagogic features that make it an ideal means of exploration in a range of graduate research courses. I have enjoyed a decade of experience working with the approach, and have published and participated in a number of early duoethnographies with a range of peers, students, and colleagues. The approach has informed my university teaching, and it has been particularly salient in the teaching of collaborative and participatory research methods. Students undertaking graduate and doctoral-level study of a range of qualitative research methods have found this approach refreshing and groundbreaking in many specific ways.

D.E. Lund (✉) • K. Holmes • A. Hanson • D. Scott
University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada

K. Sitter
Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador, St. John's, NL, Canada

K. Grain
University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada

The dialogic approach encourages deliberate self-reflection among students, and a critical examination of the beliefs and values underlying their practice. Further, there now exists a growing body of research and theory, including the seminal writings by the founders of this approach (Norris, 2008; Sawyer & Norris, 2013), and an edited collection that students can consult to feed their own understandings and articulations of this new lens for inquiry (Norris, Sawyer, & Lund, 2012). In this chapter I draw upon accounts of this work coming alive in the graduate research courses and seminars that I taught, through the invited voices of students who offer encouragement for more scholars to engage and extend duoethnography in their university classes. This approach also signals a dialogic and democratic way to resist and counter some of the current dehumanizing aspects of university life.

Resisting an Increasingly Neoliberal Academy

There is a disquieting trend in the academy that has had the effect of inhibiting authentic dialogue and intellectual inquiry, and is more about creating market-driven models of education that place profit, performance, and bureaucratic compliance above deep intellectual and ethical engagement (Giroux, 2010; Panayotidis, Lund, Towers, & Smits, 2016; Ritzer, 2014). Within this framework, students are seen as consumers, and faculties are tasked with maximizing profits while providing a service for money. As Jubas and Seidel (2014) describe current conditions in universities, "economic viability and purpose replace older scholarly values, including intellectual rigor, human development, personal fulfillment, and social justice. Rhetoric of commerce and industry infiltrates academic discussions, whether by intention or by accident" (p. 17). This tendency toward capitalist models of universities—as sites of standardized information delivery, testing, and credential granting—has also meant the devaluing of conversation, deep reflection, ethical collaboration, and authentic intellectual engagement.

Engaging in authentic dialogue with others—as afforded by duoethnography—is a richly rewarding endeavor that fosters a shared experience, one that is based on openness to others. As Freire (1998) explains it,

> To live in openness toward/others and to have an open-ended curiosity toward life and its challenges is essential to educational practice. To live this openness toward others respectfully and, from time to time, when

opportune, critically reflect on this openness ought to be an essential part of the adventure of teaching. The ethical, political, and pedagogical basis of this openness confers on the dialogue that it makes possible a singular richness and a beauty. (pp. 120–121)

I argue that such deep-seated beliefs require significant personal courage and a willingness to be more vulnerable than with more typically "neutral" intellectual and research activities.

In contrast to encouraging dialogue and collaboration, the new university focuses on top-down models of governance that tend to reduce individual efficacy in favor of larger-scale impersonal institutional measures of effectiveness and success. Giroux (2011) characterizes this movement as part of "casino capitalism," and describes its effect on universities as tending to "deaden the imagination by defining and framing classroom experiences through a lethal mix of instrumental values, cost-benefit analyses, test-based accountability schemes, and high-stakes testing regimes" (p. 114). Further, our new education models have inhibited "those spaces and pedagogical practices that provide the conditions for students to think critically, value their own voices, mobilize their curiosity, engage in shared learning … necessary for fostering a real democracy and taking responsibility for sustaining it" (p. 114). Within this context, individualism and competition are rewarded. The very notion of collaborative, dialogic approaches has been tainted by a neoliberal discourse into merely describing a way to improve a faculty member's success with securing large competitive research grants; as Glaser (2015) notes, "ultimately, resistance is impossible without collective solidarity: compliance is a facet of isolation. While 'collaboration' has become a buzzword of the grant bid, structural possibilities for cross-university cooperation remain woefully limited" (para. 10). I envision the role of highly collaborative and dialogic approaches such as duoethnography as providing a specific possibility for resistance, a glimmer of hope for shaping a better future for those of us in the academy and beyond.

Early Duoethnographic Studies

In the past decade since first learning about duoethnography at a curriculum conference on the west coast of Canada (Norris & Sawyer, 2005), I have been fortunate to spend a lot of time with the method and its creators. This time has included some very fruitful conversations with

Rick and Joe, and with a number of other scholars who have adopted this dialogic mode of inquiry in their academic and aesthetic work. Each year, more people learn about this approach, and the growing cadre of engaged scholars continues to add great richness to the constant growth and advancement of the field. At conferences on educational research, qualitative methodology, critical pedagogy, and curriculum studies, people gather to talk about how they conceptualize, plan, and use the method in their work. The constant push and pull of debate, the crossing of boundaries in our sense of identity as people and as researchers, and the robust discussions about tenets of the approach all contribute to a rich discourse on innovative forms of ethnographic research. Meaningful dialogues with colleagues, reviewing each others' writing, and sharing our findings at conferences are all lovely additional benefits of bringing a vibrant new methodology into being. I was honored to play an editorial role in the production of one of the collaborative volumes featuring an exciting range of examples of duoethnography (Norris et al., 2012). In each instance, my understandings of the method have been filtered through the lens of my own experimentation with the approach in collaborations with colleagues and graduate students.

Introducing Graduate Students to Duoethnography

Over the years I have regularly shared examples of duoethnography as part of my teaching at the university, and in talks and guest lectures with undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students, as a way of opening up possibilities to consider emerging methodologies. I have given talks about duoethnography to graduate students in social work, education, nursing, medicine, sociology, and law. I have also encouraged students to take up the approach for course assignments and tentative field experiences with research methodology. For example, graduate and doctoral courses I have taught over the years have included Qualitative Research Methods, Participatory Methods in Education, and Ethnographic Research Approaches, and in each course I have included an assignment that encourages students to undertake an independent research project that may include either observation or interview. As part of the course we cover duoethnography as one of the methodologies, often with a guest lecture from a student or colleague who has used the approach. Just this

past semester in an education doctoral seminar with school and school district leaders, I invited three guest lecturers over the semester who each shared their experiences with dialogic methods, including duoethnography. All three of them had published their work in scholarly journals and books, and all were very articulate in sharing both the joys and challenges of their collaborative meaning-making through this approach. My doctoral students were eager to ask them specific questions in class about undertaking this work, including on ethical considerations, vulnerabilities, boundaries and self-disclosure, emotionality, editing and revising, and publishing, among other topics.

A number of students have chosen to engage in a duoethnographic dialogue as part of their coursework, and some have also undertaken them outside of the course for their own interest, to assess the relevance to their own theses or dissertation research programs, or for generating insights on topics of interest to them. One of my assignments involved undertaking field work using a specific approach, and each semester, some students choose duoethnography. The intention is not to undertake research that they will publish or disseminate, but to explore their comfort with dialogic meaning-making, and to check the fit of an approach they have read about. Their understandings of methods and methodology become so much deeper when they actually get to jump into the field themselves in this tangible way, bringing their readings into the light of their lived experiences with this approach. Students sometimes tell me that they get the impression when reading academic literature that everything significant has already been invented or discovered, and that the widely known research approaches we know and use seem like a finite and closed set of options. Learning about a new and exciting form of ethnography that builds on autoethnography seems to fracture this way of thinking for graduate students; it indicates to them that there remains much more to learn, and that they can perhaps discover a new approach—or application of an approach—through their own research.

Even more significantly, the focus of duoethnography on dialogue and narrative, the complete engagement of two people on a topic, and the inclusion of deeply personal biographies on a curriculum of learning about an issue can be a very humanizing endeavor. Students report that this dialogic approach, undertaken in concert with another, has a way of fostering deeper reflexivity and self-critical understandings—as well as insights about the chosen research topic at hand—all of which are essential as precursors to undertaking any qualitative or interpretive research.

The experiences remind them that engaging in dialogic forms of research offers human connection and a sense of care for the other that too often seems missing in the scholarly world, and, many would argue, in the world at large. Ayers (2001) highlighted the tremendous power and excitement of using dialogue in education, writing that "while in every dialogue there are mistakes, misperceptions, struggle, and emotion, it is the disequilibrium of dialogue that leads to exploration, discovery, and change" (p. 138). Indeed, it is an admittedly messy but highly democratizing effort. Dialogue, according to Ayers,

> is undertaken with the serious intention of engaging others. This means we speak with the possibility of being heard, and listen with the possibility of being changed. … We commit to questioning, exploring, inquiring, paying attention, going deeper. … All of this is based on an unshakable faith in human beings. (p. 139)

It is through the shared engagement, the caring about others, and the genuine effort to understand another perspective on an issue of importance to the educative endeavor that the significance of adopting dialogic approaches such as duoethnography is elevated. As Pauline Sameshima (2013) writes in her essay review of the two major texts (Norris et al., 2012; Sawyer & Norris, 2013) that have been published on duoethnography to date:

> The reader of a duoethnographic study engages in a complicit conversational *currere* with the texts and is challenged to name and negotiate discursive contradictions which in turn encourage deeper questioning. … [These two books] create their own dialogue in support of politically engaged, socially complex and cosmopolitan, and inherently democratic curriculum theory. Duoethnography pushes our field forward by legitimizing a space to revive repressed, embodied knowing, challenging our socially constructed frameworks. (p. 16)

It is this shared extension of a larger, educational democratic project that enriches both the participants and the social world in which it takes place.

Former students of mine from various graduate courses and commitments over the past few years have contributed the accounts below. When invited, they each offered these thoughts on their experiences with duoethnography, and granted permission for their inclusion here. Rather than offering critique and analysis of their narratives, I prefer to let them speak

on their own terms as a compelling testimonial to their particular research and learning experiences, with some summary comments at the end.

Graduate Students' Accounts of Duoethnography

Kari was an MA student of mine whom I invited to attend an ethnography workshop organized by Joe Norris and Rick Sawyer as part of a qualitative methodology conference in Banff in the fall of 2008. We attended with Sonia Aujla-Bhullar, another MA student whom she mentions below. She is currently a Vanier and SSHRC Bombardier Doctoral Scholar in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia, and has published the duoethnography she co-wrote with Sonia.

Kari Grain: As for my experiences with duoethnography, the chapter Sonia and I wrote together (Aujla-Bhullar & Grain, 2012) was a way for me to understand that formative experiences as a teenager were directly related to how I worked with, in, and through social justice issues as an adult. Duoethnography showed me that discussing and unpacking these lived experiences with a colleague could actually serve as an activity that constructed new meaning and developed new data. I was raised to see "data" as numbers and "history" as a factual truth, so the duoethnography with Sonia was a way to acknowledge how my own history informs my current learning, and how face-to-face conversations are legitimate sources of data. It seems to bring the human back into the research process. I still struggle at times with the vulnerability of duoethnography, but I see vulnerability as essential to learning. How can we expect students and readers to embrace vulnerability if we are not willing to write and publish with some of that ourselves? It makes for a more honest and transparent research process.

Aubrey is a continuing doctoral student and new faculty member in the Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary, and took a doctoral course on ethnographic research approaches from me in the winter of 2013:

Aubrey Hanson: As you know, I came to duoethnography in your ethnographic approaches to research course. I had not studied ethnography in any previous courses, and duoethnography actually helped ethnography make sense to me. That is, coming from a literary studies background and focusing on interpretive education research, duoethnography felt more familiar to me than ethnography generally. (Which is also likely because I was coming in with several interfering ideas of what ethnography might

be; your course helped me grapple with those.) The kind of critical conversation that two people could have, pushing to understand each other's perspectives and making connections to experiences, readings, and social contexts, struck me as being both highly generative and personally responsible. Honestly, this kind of conversation is exactly the kind of deep conversation I would hope to have with colleagues on a good night out: not only to be engaged, but to really dig into something and find out how other people come to a topic. I left the class very excited to try a duoethnographic study of my own with a fellow graduate student. I believe that we can understand a topic better, and each other better as collaborators or critical interlocutors, if we make space for the kinds of explorations that duoethnography allows.

I also feel that learning about duoethnography has increased my appreciation of what interpretive education work brings to my own research. My research is on how Indigenous literatures connect to Indigenous communities, for instance, on how the narrative and pedagogical processes involved in taking up Indigenous literatures contribute to communities' resurgence and wellbeing. In many ways, this research is about strengthening the connections between academic work in Indigenous literary studies and Indigenous education. I did not initially intend to incorporate duoethnography into my research plan, but it came up unexpectedly for me when I was articulating the importance of understanding my own positioning. This emphasis on examining and explaining how one is situated in relation to a topic is prominent in Indigenous and interpretive approaches to research.

As I wrote this part of my dissertation proposal, I realized that duoethnography was one of the clearest examples from my graduate study in curriculum studies of how to examine one's own positioning critically, openly, and personally. Duoethnography enables scholars to do this work while building a relationship with each other; this process invokes interpersonal accountability, as each partner is interweaving critical perspectives with deeply personal experiences. I have much more digging to do in this area, but I know that duoethnography will influence how I understand critical reflexivity and positioning as I proceed with my doctoral research.

Kathleen is a former social worker whose doctoral program I supervised at the University of Calgary. She now holds a faculty position in Social Work at Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. She undertook a duoethnography with a colleague in social work around

the topic of professional boundary issues with clients and it was eventually published in the first edited volume on the approach.

Kathleen Sitter: The strengths of duoethnography, including how we create new knowledge through discussion (and approaching a topic from differing social locations), became really apparent. The thoughtfulness of the dialogue and consciously keeping myself "open" to learning in this space was heightened during my own experience with writing a chapter with a colleague (Sitter & Hall, 2012). The power dynamic was also another key piece; it challenges the "researcher/researched" dichotomy, and in social justice research (and community-based action research, participatory, and collaborative approaches) where mitigating power is always a topic, I think this is an exemplar of how it is done on various levels.

The vulnerability is something that I found uncomfortable, especially since there is not an anonymous component; I often thought about this throughout the work. I particularly remember one point in our duoethnographic discussion where we began talking about religion. We were moving into an area that I found very personal, and I was cautious (and very purposeful) in how I framed my response. I have wondered if we had explored the option of anonymity in the work, might I have been more open to unpacking other ideas, or different areas about the topic?

This idea of being uncomfortable also reminded me of power, in particular having decision-making power in this context, which created a safe space. Part of the process Sean and I went through involved recording a conversation, transcribing, and going back and forth on building, reworking, and creating new paths in the conversation. I found this process empowering: I could change my mind on how I expressed my thoughts, and I had time to reflect on what it was I wanted to say, as well as my reaction and understanding to what Sean was saying. For me, it was a very thoughtful form of engagement, which I really appreciated, especially as I found it required that aspect of vulnerability.

Going through a duoethnographic "journey" and reflecting on these two ideas of vulnerability and power have impacted how I approach other forms of research, and my engagement with participants. I work in arts-based methods, where the work often finds itself in public spaces, such as exhibits and various digital platforms. When working with participants, the discussions about what it means to share visual stories are woven throughout the process, right from the beginning, so there are opportunities for people to change their mind about how or what they display or communicate in their visual stories.

David is an SSHRC Bombardier doctoral candidate in the Werklund School of Education, and is a Director of Student Experience in the B.Ed. program. He also took my course in ethnographic research approaches.

David Scott: Over the course of the 2013 winter term I was introduced to the methodological approach of duoethnography for the first time. As part of my final assignment I engaged in a duoethnographic dialogue with an Indigenous scholar, in which we explored the K-12 curricular directive in Alberta to take up social studies from Aboriginal perspectives (Alberta Education, 2010). During our conversations, we drew on our differing life histories and identity positions in order to explore the question of how a largely non-Aboriginal teaching community can meaningfully and ethically engage Aboriginal perspectives with their students.

Particularly for White Anglo-Canadian educators like me, in being asked to do this, we are in something of a Catch-22. We want to engage Aboriginal perspectives with our students in honorable and respectful ways; however, we have been educated within institutions of education that have sought to deny ways of knowing and being in the world unique to Indigenous oral traditions, communities, and peoples. As a result, social studies educators in Alberta are being asked to do something they do not necessarily know much about (Louie & Scott, 2016).

Below, I share three reasons why I think duoethnography is uniquely suited to grappling with difficult curricular questions like these, and can provide a viable alternative to what I see as the problematic nature of some prominent research methodologies in the field of education.

1. Duoethnography provides a way of doing research where participants are not treated as objects on which one's favored methodological approach is applied. Rather, it offers a more ethical participatory approach of doing research with, not on, other people;

2. Duoethnography does not seek to achieve the impossible task of bracketing out one's subjectivity in order to provide an account of "another's" point of view strictly from their point of view. Rather, this approach honors the voice of others on their own terms, in their own language and, moreover, foregrounds the subjectivity of the researcher. This can push both parties toward new transformative possibilities; and

3. Duoethnography does not arrive in the situation with the truth already known, as can be the case with some critical researchers who

primarily seek to inform others of their victimization and oppression, rather than how we might work together to create a world that does justice to both of us.

Kimberley is an educator and doctoral candidate in the Werklund School of Education; she took my research course in ethnographic research approaches.

Kimberley Holmes: I was drowning in the depths of doctoral research courses, in phenomenology, hermeneutics, qualitative, quantitative, measurable, evidence-based data that needed to be analyzed, interpreted, and broken down into something that might one day resemble research to be used to actually make change in the world. Frankly, it was overwhelming, under-stimulating, and did not make a lot of sense to my storytelling heart. I am an English teacher, an aspiring poetic scholar, and a seeker of the human story and I was stuck among traditional methodologies that did not allow for creative voice and energy to emerge from an antiquated process of how things are done. I was attempting to be a doctoral student but the daunting rules and regulations surrounding the research process threated to keep me permanently submerged underneath the surface, struggling to find an open space to allow both me and my research to breathe. I needed a research methodology that allowed me to have control of my own learning, reflection on the process, and collaboration with others. I hoped to "enter into a conversation by revisiting my own school narratives, stories that when juxtaposed, may transform understanding and engender new insights" (Krammer & Mangiardi, 2012, p. 44). I had hoped for a creative, open space and was suffocating in the sea of rules, regulations, and protocol mandated by the past.

I needed to find some way back to storytelling and then seek a way to share that story with others, for our stories are not written in isolation but a collaborative chorus of many voices singing together. The melody would only emerge if my voice could be blended with others to create new patterns of understanding, new ways of being, and new ways of walking together in the world. I have always written a journal and documented the story of my own life. For me, writing is an intuitive process that allows a portal to my soul to be opened, purged, and then cleansed for renewal. It is a mindful, reflective process that allows me to come to a deeper understanding, so in some ways I have always been an autoethnographer—although I had no idea what that term meant when I started the doctoral journey. However, I had never considered the process of autoethnography as something that

could be undertaken with another, although the concept made absolute sense to me. Indigenous societies have always known the value of sharing stories of our personal and collaborative cultures. Traditionally, this was how wisdom came into being, yet somehow this concept had eluded me in the digression of doctoral studies.

Hence, just when I was ready to go under the swirling sea of research methodologies the voice of the story called out to me again to be recognized as a catalyst for research data, and an opportunity to hear the human experience through the process of duoethnographic research. I was seeking something that was "soul searching, soul wrenching, and rewarding" (Norris et al., 2012, p. 11). I was tired of measuring and calculating, but on a quest for something deeper, more meaningful. My research question was looking at making change in pedagogical practice and I needed something to "inspire compassion and a sense of humanity" (p. 11). I needed something to call teachers to action, to allow them to recognize the faces of the learners and to bring us forward in this new educational paradigm. I needed somehow to access the "heart of wisdom" (Chambers, Leggo, Hasbe-Ludt, & Sinner, 2012) that would allow both my research participants and me to learn together what that might be.

I knew intuitively that this was how I needed to work and what I needed to do. My voice needed to merge with others around the sacred storytelling circle without a fixed design and predetermined destination. I needed to trust the process and let the story evolve. Duoethnography opened a space for this to happen. It allowed for "the dynamic interplay of two critically, questioning minds [to] transform, create, and expand each participant's understanding" (Krammer & Mangiardi, 2012, p. 43). It allowed me to return to my roots as a storyteller. Then it presented the opportunity to learn a new story, revisit the plot line, and find new meaning. I surfaced from the deep waters of doctoral research methodologies with a gasping breath of recognition. Another was sailing toward me in a raft gracefully gliding, without struggle or predetermined route. A smile crossed my face as I recognized the common vision. I swam strongly toward the other, and together through duoethnography we shared our stories and forged a new path to understanding.

Working with students has always been the most positive perk of my job as an educator, formerly as a high school teacher for 16 years, and for the past dozen or so as a university professor. Learning about the new methodology of duoethnography alongside a former high school student was both humbling and revelatory. Together, Rachel Evans and I recounted

and analyzed our mutual experiences of forming the first gay–straight alliance high school program in the history of our province (Lund & Evans, 2006), in a piece that stands as the first refereed journal article using the approach. I was a new assistant professor at the time, and Rachel was an undergraduate student at another university. The methodology allowed us both to go beyond a retelling of the events as we remember them, to the critical examination of some of our own lived understandings of gender identity, sexuality, and activism. Our coming from different identity positions and discrepancy in age and life circumstances enhanced the quality of our conversation. Unpacking our biographical baggage allowed a deeper way of uncovering the topic, and opened a vulnerability that is arguably unusual in academic work. Rachel and I used email correspondence to open up and organize our dialogue, and our conversation continued intermittently over a few months. Our reciprocal research project proved to be a highly personal and intellectually engaging experience at the same time. We have since co-presented our findings at conferences, and recently revisited our earlier collaboration to write duoethnographically about our understandings of ethics in teacher–student advisory relationships (see Evans & Lund, 2013). I have also invited Rachel on occasion to speak to my diversity-themed courses in a B.Ed. program and we continue to keep in touch. Our ongoing collaborations and friendship serve for me as an illustration of the many benefits and spinoff perks of a duoethnographic research approach.

In a similar manner, I have developed a very positive and productive research relationship with Dr. Maryam Nabavi, whose community work in youth activism brought our research together. She was coordinating a highly successful local student social justice group called "Youth ROAR (Reach Out Against Racism)" and I was on the advisory committee to the group for about six years. After she had completed a master's degree in the area, we undertook a few collaborative projects together interviewing students and teachers who had undertaken social justice activism in schools and communities. Beginning a duoethnography on approaching this work from two very different identity positions allowed us to arrive at some important insights into how our own positionality has affected all aspects of our antiracist work. As Maryam remarked, "it is interesting how we can access these parts of our memory and with the lens through which we live our lives now see those conversations—positive or negative—about race as subsequently forming our respective racial identities" (Lund & Nabavi, 2008, p. 29). Our candid reflections were rooted in our life experiences,

and brought us to understandings that we could not have reached on our own. When we had a chance to conduct a further duoethnographic conversation for the first edited collection on the methodology, we welcomed the chance to delve even further into our own life histories to trace our personal curricula of difference growing up in Canada. In our case, it was a dialogue on identity and belonging between a woman of color who arrived as a refugee and a member of the dominant White European identity with a childhood rife with unflattering experiences with difference. Our conversation went places that opened up new ways of seeing ourselves today; at one point I wrote, "our complex notions of citizenship and belonging have many layers, but often these are unspoken and unexamined; even this conversation feels strained and discomforting" (Nabavi & Lund, 2012, p. 182). We decided to leave such moments in the account, as a way of noting these points of self-consciousness, discomfort, and, in some cases, regret and shame. These personal examples of racism from both the perpetrator and receiver angle helped us to ground our broader discussions and analyses of systemic and institutionalized forms of oppression, situating our lived experiences within a larger sociopolitical context.

Discussion

Each of the invited co-authors to this chapter has shared personal perspectives of engaging with duoethnography in some manner as part of a graduate studies program. Attending to their perspectives can help us learn how this dialogic approach to research has opened up new ways for them of understanding their research and themselves. Perhaps the most salient and frequently echoed theme is around building interpersonal accountability through collaboration. In using duoethnographic dialogue, students were able to find ways to build empathy with others who had diverse life experiences and views. Their efforts toward discussing a common topic or theme and making connections afforded them a chance to critically examine their own history and their own positions, all within the framework of their own identity. The approach requires an articulation of one's belief systems at some point, and highlights subjectivity. Therefore, rather than having to "bracket out" their individual differences, duoethnography encourages participants to "bracket in." As Sawyer and Norris (2013) explain, "central to bracketing in is that subjective identity and personal epistemology are foregrounded as a focus of analysis" (p. 15). Presuppositions and

biases are not ignored or set aside but exposed and articulated as part of the site of collaborative dialogic inquiry.

Research is the creation of new knowledge and this approach fosters the co-creation of new understandings and insights that would have been impossible to gain without the other participant. Both are co-researchers, creating new knowledge through dialogue. As Willis and Siltanen (2009) discovered in their own collaborative research, "our multiple and constantly shifting 'voices' provided an essential interpretive resource, enabling us to develop a thick and common understanding of the subject/object of research" (p. 109). This shared meaning-making involves both collective and individual reflection, and a necessary focus on one's own biography, identity, and positionality from the outset. Just as with any form of ethnography that employs a critical sensibility, with social justice and equity at its heart, duoethnography requires some often challenging self-reflection throughout. In describing ethnography more generally, Madden (2010) reflects that,

> in my case, a critical appreciation of positionality is a tool with which to check my ethnographic baggage for resumption and prejudice; to remind myself I bring just one perspective to ethnography and that perspective is informed by my own upbringing, education and history. (p. 22)

With the dual nature of duoethnographies, it is essential that both parties understand this from the start and build this difficult work into the process.

Part of the nature of this kind of highly personal engagement with another person in a research relationship are the additional elements of the researchers' vulnerabilities and risks, issues not as strongly associated with other forms of academic research. However, as Freire (1998) reminds us, "coherent democratic authority recognizes the ethical basis of our presence in the world and necessarily recognizes that it is not possible to live ethically without freedom and that there is no such thing as freedom without risk" (p. 87). A high degree of trust is required between participants, and both are mutually responsible for the creation of the collaboratively composed duoethnography. This reciprocally driven research has the effect of putting both participants on a much more level playing field. Power and positionality are not erased or downplayed, but, rather, are foregrounded and addressed directly throughout the engagement. The accounts above confirm my own experiences of an approach that seems more effective

at mitigating power and privilege differentials in an open and deliberate manner. Inevitably, this orientation allows for a much more consciously ethical treatment of both research participants than a typical object/subject orientation in top-down academic research models.

Perhaps even more than most qualitative research approaches, duoethnography privileges and elucidates individual subjectivity, requiring a "bracketing in" as mentioned above versus the more common efforts to "bracket out" idiosyncratic viewpoints, cultural influences, historical situation, and other dimensions of the social context in which all research takes place. The rich complexities of our lived worlds are not stripped of nuance or subjectivity, but elucidated and held up more transparently to analysis along with our personal narratives within those settings and identity positions. In a related way, duoethnography also requires and values storytelling, and encourages listening intently to the human experience around particular topics. In this manner, the collaboration of two or more people toward this end offers rich interpretive possibilities. As Steeves et al. (2009) argue, "if dialogue enables the opening up and restorying of the selves involved in research and of interpretive possibilities, then collective approaches to research ought to be valued highly" (p. 122). Avoiding a priori truth claims and remaining open to new insights into human experiences and new understandings of shared topics allow duoethographers a rich opportunity to co-create knowledge within a trusting dialogic relationship.

Conclusion

Through the accounts and discussion in this chapter, I situate this promotion of duoethnography and other forms of dialogic research and inquiry as an approach that has the courage to create a counterstory that resists neoliberalism. Steeves et al. (2009) describe their collaborative narrative work in just such a manner:

> We see this as a way of composing a counterstory of what matters in research, a counterstory threaded not around funding, publications and ownership, but around the possibility of creating educative spaces … to imagine and live out what seems impossible on our own, but becomes possible within these relational spaces. (pp. 58–59)

Drawing on their own experiences and perspectives, each of the graduate student contributors above used specific instances and illustrations to share what worked for them in this dialogic approach. Also included was the recognition of some of the challenges associated with the approach. I trust that their articulate descriptions of the joys, vulnerabilities, and promises of duoethnography may stand as a strong incentive for others to include this research approach in their graduate teaching, to make use of this and other robust and ethical research models in creating a more humane and authentically collaborative climate within the academy.

With each university course I teach, and with each of the students who takes up a duoethnographic approach in his or her own way, I am encouraged by the wide range of possibilities for its application in social science research. As attested to above, and elucidated in each of these accounts, there are many forms it can take and the myriad ways that its dialogic nature can draw people together to create more meaningful engagements across difference. Echoed in each account is a recognition of how this approach stands in opposition to dehumanizing discourses and practices that are all too common in our increasingly market-driven and neoliberal institutions.

In many ways, I wish for the duoethnographic approach to represent a signal of hope for the new McUniversity, as coined by Ritzer (2014). He concluded:

Hope, if there is any, lies in the objects of education: the students. They can be seen as engaging in a fatal strategy by seeming to accept all the changes the postmodern educational system throws at them. While we usually think power resides with the educational systems, it could be argued that it is the mass of students who have the power. (p. 195)

One way that students and other scholars can exercise their power to resist the neoliberal market forces of the academy is to engage in deliberate acts of humanizing dialogue to reclaim this space. Borrowing the words of Hedges (2010), I believe researchers can adopt duoethnography and other dialogic research approaches "to continue to fight the mechanisms of that dominant culture, if for no other reason than to preserve, through small, even tiny acts, our common humanity" (p. 217).

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