

English Secondary Methods Intro Class: Duoethnography Exercise

Duoethnography is a research technique in which you explore the autobiographical and cultural events and influences that have shaped your beliefs, personality, and decisions which will impact your role as a teacher. In this assignment you are going to use an abbreviated version of this technique to help you think about what you believe about curriculum, teaching and assessment in order to begin considering how those beliefs might influence your actual practice and how, if necessary, you might begin to reshape some of those beliefs.

Duoethnography requires at least one conversation partner and, preferably, a voice recorder. This process can go on for many, many hours but you will be asked to devote only one hour to it. The process is also usually a little more open-ended but in this case there are some specific questions or influences I will ask you to consider. The specific instructions are as follows:

1. Find a time when you and your partner can devote one uninterrupted hour to the conversation. You can go longer if you want but you must spend at least one hour.
2. Have a recorder or other device suitable for recording your conversation available. If you have a Mac, you can use Garage Band. If you have a PC or Mac, you can download Audacity (it's free) and record and save as a .wav file. Your internal mic on your computer will work fine. <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>
3. During your hour-long conversation try to talk about as many of the following topics as possible (in no particular order or priority):
 - For how long have you wanted to be a teacher? Did you seriously considered other career paths? If so, what are/were they?
 - What was it that appealed to you about teaching?
 - What do you see as your strengths and weaknesses as a teacher?
 - Share some memorable stories from your time as a student.
 - Talk about your favorite teachers.
 - Talk about people who were influential in your decision to teach or who tried to talk you out of becoming a teacher.
 - What do you see as the purpose of schooling and as the job of the teacher?
 - What were your best and worst times during your own school experience?
 - Did you attend private or public schools, or both?
 - What do you see as your most important beliefs and influences in becoming the type of teacher you will or want to be?
4. Avoid treating the process as a series of questions and answers. This process works best if you let it happen as a natural conversation. One of you can begin the process by addressing one of the topics above. Then, ideally, the other members of the conversation will ask for more details, offer their comments/interpretation/questions about your story, share parts of their own responses that connect or contrast to yours and so on. The stories and responses should be shared, to whatever extent possible, in a natural conversational style— as if you were a group of friends talking about a recent personal or professional event.

5. After finishing the conversation, you listen to what you recorded. Take notes as you listen. Reflect upon what was discussed, and then in 500 -750 words (these words can take any form you wish- an essay, a letter, a poem, a song....), summarize whatever valuable insights you gained about your own beliefs related to teaching and learning. This can be in the form of questions you want to ponder, things about yourself that you didn't know, thoughts about the motivations, beliefs, and experiences of your peers, goals you have for yourself, things you want to change, and so on.

6. Finally be prepared to informally present your findings to the class, sharing an excerpt from the writing you produce.

(I would love to give full credit to the author of this assignment as I am an ethnography researcher who was trying to find a way to integrate this method into my course, but the only reference I can find is breault3302.wikispaces.com/file/view/Duoethnography.doc. Thank you, breault3302!)