Chapter 5
Autoethnography and Other Self-Inquiry Methods for Practice-Based Doctoral Research

Crystal Lewis
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6912-160X
Northcentral University, USA

Robin Throne
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3015-9587
Independent Researcher, USA

ABSTRACT

For some doctoral practitioner-researchers, the methods used within autoethnography and other self-inquiry-based research methods are appropriate for a practitioner dissertation as the phenomenon of inquiry is a central human, intrinsic, and experiential self-focused construct. The tenets of autoethnography and other self-as-subject research support the view that new knowledge can be discoverable from within the individual lived experience, and this chapter presents current trends and scholarship for the use of autoethnography and other self-inquiry research methods for practice-based doctoral research. The chapter also presents one case from a recent doctoral autoethnographer to illustrate the experience of a practice-based autoethnographic dissertation study within a practitioner doctoral program.

INTRODUCTION

More and more practitioner doctoral programs allow for qualitative autoethnography as a specific research approach for dissertation research. In autoethnography, new knowledge is discoverable from the individual lived experience and as a research design, autoethnography may offer societal implications to enhance the meaning of the phenomenon or lead to further insights that may inform others' experiences (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). In the use of self-inquiry research methods at the doctoral level, the lived experiences of individuals can illuminate an understanding of numerous constructs across disciplines that often lead to new insights for better understanding to inform societal and practice-based problems.

Previously, the authors have noted the need for a more consistent operational definition for research supervisor agency and the personal competencies necessary for a high-mentoring ethos and non-hierarchical doctoral research supervision (Throne & Oddi, 2019; Throne & Walters, 2019). In addition, doctoral research supervision has nuances for practice-based doctorates that often differ from the supervision of research doctorates as these frameworks may allow for specific guidance for practitioner research that may differ from the Ph.D. (Burrington et al., 2020; Perry, 2016; Storey, 2017).

In this chapter, these considerations for the doctoral researcher-research supervisor relationship are considered from the unique perspectives of autoethnography as a practice-based dissertation research design choice. New insights are presented for doctoral research supervisor engagement within online environments for practitioner doctoral programs using self-inquiry research methods. The authors have also previously called for continued collaboration to achieve a consistent framework for quality practitioner dissertation research supervision of autoethnography to allow for individuals to more deeply consider the insights to facilitate further meaning and understandings to improve these aspects of dissertation completion. Thus, the current literature specific to the supervision of practitioner doctoral self-as-subject research is appraised and models to foster effective practitioner research supervision for self-as-subject research methods are presented in the context of deep individual explorations of various phenomena.

Finally, the authors have previously noted practitioner-researcher agency may be enhanced through self-examination and introspection to reduce unequal power relationships and further develop a high mentoring ethos necessary for the doctoral dissertation writer's success and dissertation research completion (Throne & Oddi, 2019). Lewis (2020a) noted autoethnographic research allows for a deeper understanding of the researcher-participant from a specific sociocultural context and to consider the interconnectedness of the individual amidst complex sociocultural settings. This then may lead to an enhanced understanding of a doctoral researcher's

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