

BRISTOL AUTOETHNOGRAPHY & NARRATIVE SUMMER SCHOOL

WORKSHOP TITLE

A true friend stabs you in the front: Friendship as autoethnographic method in the Paraversity

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DURATION: 2 hours

Summary

This workshop is a synthesis of theoretical, conceptual and empirical work (Grant, 2018; Klevan et al., in press a,b; Klevan et al., in review) emerging from our ongoing, friendship-based, collaborative autoethnographic relationship.

In the first part of the workshop, after initial sensitising participant exercises, we will present the content detailed below. The second part will open out to a large group discussion. Our overall aim is to help participants achieve an understanding and appreciation of the place of friendship in collaborative autoethnography that can inform their own work.

The workshop will proceed from a definition of the following key terms and concepts: *paraversity*; *friendship*; *friendship as method (FAM)*; *the New Public Managed (NPM)/Neoliberal Academy*; *trouble-nurturing*; *mentransgressing*; *becoming-researcher*.

We will go on to argue that the NPM/Neoliberal Academy is anti-intellectual, and politically and economically configured in ways antagonistic to non-positivistic forms of qualitative inquiry. In this context, we will contend that the Academy can fail to support doctoral autoethnographic work through its members being incurious, avoiding trouble-nurturing, and disparaging new and different ways of conceiving, exploring and developing experience-based and contextual forms of knowledge (Grant, 2018; Klevan et al., in press b; Klevan et al., in review).

In responding to this state of affairs, we will then consider the question: why friendship as a basis for autoethnography? Building on the seminal work of Tillmann-Healy (2003; Klevan et al., in press a), we will describe how we have experienced friendship as a safe, supportive mediator of trouble-nurturing and curiosity (Klevan et al., in press b). As a methodological resource, we have found it pivotal in challenging the often narrow and self-replicating onto-epistemological assumptions and practices which function to silence becoming-researcher forms of storied inquiry and knowledge (Klevan et al., in review).

On the basis of philosophical (Vernon, 2007) and organisational (Alvesson and Spicer, 2016) scholarship, and our own single- and co-authored writing and collaborative working experiences, we will bring the first part of the workshop to a close by discussing the following specific tips and issues for the management of collaborative autoethnographic friendships:

- Choose your autoethnographic friends wisely: temper serendipity with caution.
- Think beyond your institution.
- Accept the likelihood that true friends might fall out from time to time.
- Follow through on friendships, towards unfinalized futures.
- Strive for, and exercise, generosity of spirit.

References:

Alvesson M, Spicer A. 2016. *The Stupidity Paradox: The Power and Pitfalls of Functional Stupidity at Work*. London: PROFILE BOOKS LTD.

Grant A. 2018. Voice, ethics, and the best of autoethnographic intentions (or Writers, readers, and the spaces in-between). In: Turner L, Short NP, Grant A, Adams TE. (Eds). *International Perspectives on Autoethnographic Research and Practice*. London and New York: Routledge.

Klevan T, Karlsson B, Turner L, Short NP, Grant A. In press a. Aha! 'Take on Me's': Bridging the North Sea with relational autoethnography. *CAR (Creative Approaches to Research Journal)*.

Klevan T, Grant A, Karlsson B. Writing to resist; writing to survive: Conversational autoethnography, mentoring, and the New Public Management Academy. In: Moriarty J. (Ed). In press b. *Writing to resist, writing to know: Autoethnographies from Higher Education*. London and New York: Routledge.

Klevan T, Karlsson B, Grant A. In review. The color of water and the becoming of a researcher – An autoethnographically-inspired journey. *Qualitative Inquiry*.

Tillmann-Healy LM. 2003. Friendship as Method. *Qualitative Inquiry*. 9: 729-749.

Vernon M. 2007. *The Philosophy of Friendship*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.