Challenging the Status Quo:

The Evolution of the Supervisor-Student Relationship in the Process of Potentially Stigmatizing and Emotionally Complex Autoethnographic Research

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Abstract:

Writing and reliving autoethnographic research is a complex process, both emotionally and intellectually. This is especially true when the focus of the autoethnographer's research involves experiences with stigma, discrimination, and marginalization in the presence of mental illness. Supervising this process, where students may find themselves feeling vulnerable and confused, presents a unique academic and ethical challenge. How far can a supervisor "push" the student to unearth personal experiences that draw meaning to the larger socio-cultural context to which those experiences took place? How do students confront emotionally painful issues to describe and systematically analyze as part of the academic process? By engaging in a duoethnographic process that pushed beyond surface learning to exploring depths of unconscious biases and hidden assumptions, this paper unveils how the academic relationship between a supervisor and student evolved in terms of understanding, influence, and inspiration, as part of the student's autoethnographic research. It serves to guide others in the academic supervisor-student relationship when students find themselves confronting emotionally painful issues in their learning. Specifically, the dialogic process of duoethnographic research, where sensitive lived experiences are brought to light and examined, has the potential for students and supervisors to reconceptualize their ways of knowing and being in relation to one another. If successful, this pedagogical framework may be used to support students in their scholarly growth.

Keywords: emotionally sensitive research; supervisor-student relationship; autoethnography; duoethnography; identity; aesthetic inquiry

Introduction

We live in a world of storied lives. Our lives are intertwined to and through one another in a dialogue of embodied performance (Frank, 1995; Spry, 2011). Story, according to Connelly and Clandinin (as cited in Clandinin, Pushor & Orr, 2007), "is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful" (p. 22). Through stories, we seek to make sense of our past, present, and future experiences. Experiences in the context of social, cultural, and political surroundings, stories, like streams, carve the topography from which meaning is made and new meaning flows.

Storied Self

Autoethnography, as a critically reflective method of storytelling, is a process that "seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience" (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011, p. 1). Our lived experiences—felt—remembered—and chronicled, are "where the past is recreated as a series of emotional moments and from the vantage point of the present" (Grant & Zeeman, 2012, p. 3). This results in what Denzin (cited in Grant & Zeeman, 2012) refers to as "improvised moral texts that continually revisit the old" (p. 3). As a method of research inquiry, "autoethnography appeals to the marginalized" (Grant, 2009, p. 112). Its reflexive storytelling in moral, political, and ethical positions is told from the viewpoint of an "embodied, lived experience, and in the project of promoting social justice" (Grant & Zeeman, 2012, p. 1). With "vulnerability and nakedness in writing about the self and others" (Doloriert & Sambrook, 2009, p. 37), the expression of voice, voice that might otherwise be silenced or overlooked, can resonant and evoke the sympathetic resonance of humanity. For many, this poses an intricate academic and ethical challenge, as the autoethnographic researcher becomes the researched—the exposed—a person who is no longer able to hide behind the anonymity of a faceless, nameless other. Students new to autoethnography "may feel a pull towards revealing a vulnerable, intimate, autoethnographic self, yet on the other hand [they] may be pushed away from this because the oral/viva voce examination process denies the student any anonymity" (Doloriert & Sambrook, 2009, p. 27). Likewise, supervisors of autoethnographic research may be concerned about the "risk of harm that they [students] may expose themselves to when revealing the highly personal and vulnerable self" (Doloriert & Sambrook, 2009, p. 40). For that reason, to understand the successful role of the supervisor and the student during the conduct of emotionally sensitive autoethnographic research, our duoethnography was born.

Storied Us

Susan, a first-year doctoral student in the Joint PhD Educational Studies Program at Brock University, had 20 years of adult education experience working in the fields of pharmaceutical quality systems, clinical research, and patient education, prior to entering her doctoral studies program.

Hilary, an Associate Professor in the Teacher Education Program, had 27 years of educational experience. Prior to her tenure at Brock University, Hilary taught an integrated curriculum program for adolescent-aged students in the public education system for 16 years. Since that time, she has been teaching and researching in both the Teacher Education and the Graduate Studies Programs at Brock University. Hilary was both Susan's master and doctoral supervisor.

When they found themselves attempting to retrospectively analyze the successful role of the supervisor-student during the conduct of graduate level autoethnographical research regarding student experiences with mental illness, the seed took root for Susan and Hilary to conduct duoethnographic research. At the beginning of her master's studies, Susan struggled to find her academic voice. She had experienced a significant personal and professional set-back due to a relapse of mental illness. Even after Susan had recovered from her illness, her past experiences concerned her. She felt troubled when trying to make sense of those experiences, and searched to re-create her academic identity—something she feared had been lost. Hilary, having gone through the experience of autoethnographic research in her own doctoral studies, suggested it as a method for Susan to make sense of her experiences and to reclaim her lost academic identity. Hilary shared her own experiences of not being identified as an intelligent learner. When her authoethnographic journey began, the theme of Hilary's wounded child emerged as a way that helped her understand learning in a different context. Hilary explained, having been through the process herself and knowing what it felt like to experience a disorienting dilemma, that when she encourages others to move through the discomfort, she can support them in that process.

Duoethnography, as both process and product, is a collaborative method of research that traces and places alongside the narrative performance of "two or more researchers of difference . . . to provide multiple understandings of the world" (Norris, Sawyer & Lund, 2012, p. 9). In a protected space where meaning may be constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed, individuals engaged in a duoethnographic process learn about their selves through other(s), in a dynamic interplay of dialogic reflection (Sawyer & Norris, 2012).

Method

Susan and Hilary wanted to explore the dynamics of their supervisor-student relationship, and how that relationship successfully evolved in understanding, influence, and inspiration, as part of the autoethnographic research process. Duoethnography was their methodology of choice since "duoethnography embraces the belief that meanings can be and often are transformed through the research act . . . [as] fluid texts where readers witness researchers in the act of narrative exposure and reconceptualization" (Sawyer & Norris, 2012, p. 9). Using duoethnography as both method and process to disrupt the status quo at both the supervisor and student level, Susan and Hilary delved into their living, breathing, and multi-layered curriculum. This allowed them to enter a dialogic third space where theory and practice had the potential to be reconceptualized. Pinar (2004) refers to this process as currere, an "autobiographical method [that] asks us to slow down, to remember, even re-

enter the past, and to meditatively imagine the future" (p. 4). This process created a safe, protected space, where Susan and Hilary could ask questions of themselves and each other. The questions they deliberated during their duoethnographic inquiry were: 1) How far can a supervisor "push" a student to unearth personal experiences of stigma, discrimination, and marginalization related to mental illness, to draw meaning to the larger social-cultural context to which those experiences took place? 2) How does a student living with mental illness, confront emotionally painful issues to narrate and systematically analyze curriculum inquiry as part of the academic process?

Methodologically, this paper is presented as a duoethnographic dialogic artifact, the culmination of a three-part narrative performance "that invites readers to 'breath' (spire) 'with' (con) parts of the text that resonates with them" (Barone as cited in Sawyer & Norris, 2012, p. 10). First, preliminary data was generated in the form of a dialogic text, primarily e-mail discussions between Susan and Hilary (text in italics). Within this text, they recollected and deconceptualized autobiographical experiences within the cultural and academic institutional frameworks in which those autobiographical experiences took place. Conversations grew in depth and understanding about how Susan and Hilary's beliefs, personalities, and life decisions have been shaped by past personal and professional experiences. Embodied writing that "drops the external witnessing perspective customary for conventional, 'objective' science ⋯ [and] speaks for itself through the vehicle of words . . . inside the body as it lives" (Anderson, 2001, p. 7) shaped the basis of Susan and Hilary's dialogic text. This helped to convey "the living experience of the human body . . . [inviting] readers to encounter the narrative accounts for themselves and from within their own bodies through a form of sympathetic resonance" (Anderson, 2001, p. 2). To demonstrate the centrality of voice within text, in this paper, Susan and Hilary's personal narratives have been written as layered accounts merging story within story. A "third space" (Bhabha, 1994) outer story surfaced that reconceptualized their held beliefs. Questions posed and thoughts considered throughout their layered account are highlighted in bold to allow for moments of narrative pause and critical reflection. These bolded questions were posed within the text of Susan and Hilary's email exchange and became the catalysts that deepened both their individual understanding of the lived experience shared and their communal understanding.

After the email exchange was saturated, the deconstruction of Susan and Hilary's discussions spiraled back on each other, and themes were repeated. Using open coding, as described in Sawyer and Norris' (2012) tenets, Hilary derived a preliminary grouping of overarching themes that emerged from the dialogic text. Then, stemming from Tuan's (1989) "Surface Phenomena and Aesthetic Experience," Susan used water as a central metaphor and juxtaposed the themes with the living text. This allowed for a more sophisticated level of analysis, as themes were stratified according to narrative depth and investigational reformation—representational steps excavated through the unfamiliar terrain of the duoethnographic process. To create different entry points for analysis into Susan and Hilary's evolving dialogic conversations, paired with each theme, Susan selected photographic images of water as visual representations of their embodied learning moments. All

photos were carefully chosen from open-source internet websites, where photos are licensed under the Creative Common Zero license.

Use of the water metaphor and photographic images helped inform Susan and Hilary's face-to-face dialogues, which unveiled a new hybrid text residing within an interactive third space (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). By creating this third space, Susan and Hilary—as both researchers and researched—challenged each other "to reflect on their own life in a deeper, more relational, and authentic manner" (Norris & Sawyer, p. 10). The way in which image and text were used to express embodied knowing was intended to conjure the conceptualizations of surface to depth as an aesthetic experience in Susan and Hilary's learning. Tuan described this aesthetic experience in knowledge as

> a matter of the pleasure of the senses, varyingly informed by the mind. At one extreme, it can be a shudder of delight that is predominantly physical in character; at the other extreme, it is a mediated response, cool yet intense, of intellectual appreciation. I have used the words "surface," "sensory impression," and "directly apprehensible," but these words have come into existence and have meaning only in relation to "depth," "abstract understanding," and "mediated apprehension." (p. 234)

Reflections surfacing within the third space outer story, which had bridged further insight into the successful relationship between supervisor and student in both influence and inspiration, have been captured as embedded text and photographic images.

Duoethnographic Dialogic Artifact

Living on the Surface

"When I first started my autoethnographic voyage, I felt like I had been submerged back in time . . . to a space and a place where surface and depth were entities of distinction."

Figure 1. Hugo Kerr (n.d.). Unnamed. Digital photograph. This photo represents "surface living" where dialogue takes the form of information exchange.

The surface (refer to Figure 1) is calm, crisp and clean—no waves to disrupt—no depth to distract. On the surface, dialogue takes the form of politeness—information exchange—learning and sharing of "facts" about self and other.

*Susan: When I first started my autoethnographic passage, I felt like I had been submerged back in time. I was submerged to a space and a place where surface and depth were entities of distinction. I remember being a child of about seven or eight years of age growing up in a strict Presbyterian family. My father was the church minister, and my mother was an elementary school teacher. I was never encouraged to use my body—or view my body—in the way that I would now describe as an articulating body, "a body that knows what language constructs," (Spry, 2011, p. 107). I was dressed in clothes that were conservative, restrictive, and body modest—heavy wool kilts, wool tights, blouses that buttoned up to my neck, with either a wool cardigan or vest over top. My hair was pulled back in a pony-tail or it was held in place with two tiny braids pulled from the side of my face and pinned in the back. I hated getting my hair done. I had to stand still in front of the bathroom mirror while my mom teased a comb through my tangled curls. Sometimes I would cry. At church, I sat on the hard-wooden pews while the wool from my tights, kilt, and cardigan itched me like crazy. Standing on the surface of my knowing—how I viewed myself and the world around me—**I question myself and my ability to take the plunge—to go beneath the surface.***

Hilary: Certainly, the juxtaposition of our respective upbringings is quite stark. I was not compelled to adhere to any kind of "bodily" code—certainly not in the way you have described in

your experience. I was not expected to wear certain attire—in fact I did not wear a dress from probably grade four onwards except for the school choir when it was mandatory to wear a skirt for the Christmas concert performance. I hated wearing that skirt so I can fully appreciate your weekly Sunday routine. My hair was never "done" or talked about. Make-up was never discussed except for the fact my older sister was told that she wore too much. Suffice to say I was not a girly girl! When you write about your church experience there seems to be a silencing of Susan there. You could not fidget, you could not express discomfort, you had to wear certain clothing, you had to have your hair done a certain way and so forth. ***What did that upbringing teach you?***

Susan: Growing up, I feared making a mistake—of getting into trouble and disappointing someone. I wanted to stay above the surface where everything was neat and tidy—where everything was safe—where I wouldn't come undone. Being "undone" was something that only happened to me when I was sick. During those times, I hid. I stayed away from others—as much as I could. I poured myself into school—schoolwork, reading, writing, and math—to escape. As I grew through my teenage years into a woman, sometimes still those feelings resurface. They make me feel uncomfortable—I don't like being "undone".

"I wanted to stay above the surface where everything was neat and tidy—where everything was safe—where I wouldn't come undone."

Testing the Waters

Figure 2. Tim Marshall (n.d.). Unnamed. Digital photograph. This photo represents "testing the waters" where the teacher goes in first—teaching the student how to feel safe while going beyond surface considerations.

To illustrate the human experience of aesthetic appeal, sensory impressions, and intellectual understanding, Tuan (1989) used the relational metaphor of surface and depth. In his example, "that which lies beyond or behind it [the surface], between appearance and underlying reality [the 'truth']" (p. 233), the over-arching human desire to unearth that which is covered is paramount. To unearthing treasure, uncover secrets, and discover the "truth" when delving underneath, one must be willing to acknowledge depth beyond the appearance of surface superficiality—of shallowness. Tuan styled surface considerations as nearly always being comprised of triviality, "as in the politeness of good manners" (p. 237). Tuan wrote that

> although a beautiful physical environment can promote happiness, good human relations are usually considered even more important. They too are built almost entirely on surface cues. Civility is public—a matter of observable manners, but even in some of our deepest relations with other another, appearance is almost all. (p. 235)

Before taking the plunge to go beneath the surface, the waters must be tested (refer to Figure 2). In this example, the teacher goes in first, teaching the student how to feel safe while going beyond surface considerations and superficiality. Questions, both in their framing and answering, become the impetus for sharing and for the development of trust.

Susan: *In class, you shared with us a story about what it was like for you to grow up with two mothers—Mom and Mary. What was that like?* ***Did you ever feel "judged"—especially by those who had influence over you—your teachers and friends?***

"I guess the surface can be skimmed and pierced but maybe the true depth not explored to its fullest—until the time is right."

Hilary: *I am fully aware, now, that Mom living with Mary was against the Catholic doctrines. At that time, mid 60's, gay and lesbian terminology was not in the mainstream. When my Mom told us we would not be going to church anymore, she did not mention her relationship with Mary as the reason. Likewise, when Mary started living with us, I was told that Mary was my Godmother, and should anything ever happen to my mom, Mary would be there to take care of me. As a child, I felt comforted by this truth—yet at the same time there was more to it than that. I guess the surface can be skimmed and pierced but maybe the true depth not explored to its fullest--until the time is right. When I was growing up I never felt judged since there was no label for my family unit at that time.* ***Knowing and feeling that I wouldn't judge you, did you feel safe when you decided to go beneath? What did that feel like?***

Susan: *At first—the thought of going beneath the surface made me nervous. I wondered if I would get lost—if I would drown—or get tangled in the ugliness. I was scared that I might not resurface. I wondered if I had the resilience to swim to what lies beyond and within. As my supervisor, you helped me through this process—leading by example. I saw it, heard it, and felt it in the way that you taught and listened. You revealed yourself as a person of strong conviction and*

integrity. It helped me feel safe. ***From an invitational learning perspective, you created the space for which I could engage myself in deep learning. Did you do that intentionally?***

Hilary: When someone close to me shares her/his vulnerability, I do not pass judgment. Instead, I lead my thinking with an open heart. Perhaps this is what people feel when they're around me and share their lives with me—even trust me. You asked if I am intentional in my actions—I am not. This is genuinely who I am and what I believe. I think this is why I am a good fit to supervise autoethnographic research. Over the years, many focused topics have emerged from my students' writing. I am open to their experiences and do not put my values on them but rather I encourage them to let go of their preconceived societal notions about what is "right" and what is "wrong"—so that they may free to let their stories emerge.

Letting Go and Delving Beneath

Figure 3. Jeremy Bishop. (n.d.). Unnamed.
This photo represents "letting go and delving beneath"—safe to feel, safe to be real.

Letting go and delving beneath is both frightening and exciting. Black and Loch (2014) have written about the academic potential of unveiling "hidden" identities in that "we each have our own reasons for wanting to unveil hiddens to bring greater visibility to our lives/work/identities" (p. 61). Letting go and delving beneath is the rising action to the climax of discovering hidden beauty. To truly delve beneath, both Susan and Hilary had to have the trust and humility to let go. Letting go of one's self, through the subjective experiences of emotions, as perceived through the self in relation to others and others' perceptions of that self, was critical. Cooley (2009/1902) stated that "the thing that moves us to pride or shame is not the mere mechanical reflection of ourselves, but an imputed sentiment, the imagined effect of this reflection upon another's mind" (p. 184). By letting go, Susan

and Hilary were able to experience different phases of identity deconstruction and reconstruction.

Susan: "Letting go" had a huge impact on my ability to go beneath the surface and unearth emotionally sensitive subject matter—to write about my experiences with mental illness, stigma and discrimination. "Letting go" helped me to reach a level of academic maturity that I don't think would have been possible without your support and encouragement. I remember sitting at the coffee shop for our initial meeting. I showed you some of the photos that I wanted to incorporate into my paper, photos that some might perceive as evocative or haunting, alongside the words that I wrote. At first, I was nervous to share my "Bloodline" poems with you and the photo of what I interpreted as a woman—naked and bleeding—floating dead—underwater. I was worried that you might think I was morbid, or that my thinking was too "messy." Once I felt that I had your "permission"—your understanding to let go of my previous way of thinking, I could explore myself as academic in a totally different light. It was almost as though I had to get "naked"—in solitude, darkness, and uncertainty. I had to learn how to "let go" of preconceived ideas and images of myself as someone who was both weak and strong. To understand what it means to be a huntress, I had to let go, dive beneath, and allow myself to be vulnerable (refer to Figure 3).

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Hilary: Going beneath the surface is not easy. It requires a huge level of trust and a shred of courage, too. When I was encouraging you to explore the direction you wanted to pursue (photographs and poetry) it was first because I saw you as an academic. Second, I saw this embodied creative knower in you, and last, I knew you could bridge the two both emotionally and academically to find your way. What I did not know was how much you needed to do it for yourself. That came out much later. ***Did you find the process therapeutic?***

Susan: For me, the autoethnographic process was restorative. It allowed me an opportunity to find my voice and express it in a way that made meaning to me in the larger context of the world around me.

Getting Past the Ugliness—Discovering Hidden Beauty

Figure 4. Jakobs Owes (n.d.). Unnamed.
This photo represents "getting past the ugliness and discovering hidden beauty."

Just as surface can hide, it can also reveal—the "true" nature of character. With surface comes depth and with depth comes what lies beneath—both the ugliness and the beauty of the unseen. In this regard, Tuan (1989) explained that

> often, humans have the desire to uncover that which has been concealed—to expose the hidden underside of life and to offer ego-deflating explanations of aesthetic surfaces is justified. . . . Humans are naturally inclined to bury unflattering aspects of themselves, and it may be that these should be brought out into the open in the name of comprehensive truth. (p. 237)

Attractive surfaces can sometimes be deceptive in that they can hide the ugliness of thoughts, memories, and emotions, yet they can also mask reflections and desires of even greater attraction. The ugliness that lies beneath and the beauty of the unforeseen are parts of the same autoethnographic lens for which experience of depth wave in and out. To delve beneath the surface, one must be ready to untangle the weeds and debris from body and mind before swimming freely to discover the perfect tranquility and unforeseen beauty of what lies beneath (refer to Figure 4).

Hilary: I could see so clearly why the images of water—with head above or submerged beneath the surface, floating, and sinking are used in both the telling and sharing of your story. The freedom to explore this metaphor in your writing was a highlight for me. Time and time again, I have observed academic supervisors who want to control their students' research direction—I don't. I want my students to explore and find a way that makes meaning for them. You did just that.

Susan: When I was nervous to "go beneath the surface" and look at myself in a different light, you shared what it was like for you when you did your PhD and how you once viewed yourself as an "unintelligent learner." I remember you used those exact words. You described how some of your teachers had categorized you as a "jock," as a sports person who would be a good at physical education, but not someone who could be an academic. You shared how you saw yourself differently than you do now and how it was necessary for you to journey into a new way of understanding what intelligence is. You told me that being an academic means being able to be rigorous and to "force" yourself to go through a process that was both pre-defined and coveted by "gatekeepers." You shared what it was like to go through that process—what it was like to struggle within the academic regime—what it was like to stand up alongside your peers and defend your research and to prove yourself as the intelligent learner you are. You shared with us that the hardest part of this was learning to see yourself differently.

"Letting go is a huge theme in my personal life and my teaching life. Guiding students to let go of preconceived knowledge though an embodied process is challenging at best."

Hilary: Susan, my eyes are welling as I read through your memories of how I shared my story. Letting go is a huge theme in my personal life and my teaching life. Guiding students to let go of preconceived knowledge though an embodied process is challenging at best. I think letting go provides the space to reconceptualize our previous beliefs and to make room for new ones to emerge. I did let go of the unintelligent learner label after coming to understand that there are other modes of teaching, assessing and evaluating that are in direct competition with traditional teaching. I adopted a teaching style that suited my learning needs. I know what it feels like to personally experience a disorienting dilemma, so when I encourage others to move through this same type of discomfort, I understand what they are experiencing. When I "pushed" you into those what I call "autoethnographic spaces" I did not know at the time that I was pushing you per se. I would never have asked you to do anything I would not do myself. Perhaps you sensed that when I invited you to delve into those areas I was doing so with love, care, integrity, and honesty. I was there beside you every step of the way, ready to catch you if you needed and ready to encourage you to swim a bit further if you needed that. When supervising students undergoing this type of work, I feel it is my responsibility to be there in mind, body, and spirit but most certainly never just in mind. Does that make me unique? I'm not sure. But what I do know, that is the center from where I feel the need to operate from.

Susan: Hilary, I so appreciate the confidence you had in me. You just didn't allow me to find a place and space to explore my ideas, you also kept me focused, and you continually challenged me.

You made me self-reflect and you pointed me in directions that encouraged me to uncover artifacts, through narrative, that led me to appreciate academic differences. Hilary, I know how very deeply you care about your students and how you truly strive to help them throughout their learning journey. ***How do you "let go" of situations when student learning outcomes may not seem positive? When students seem disengaged or disheartened...or even disgruntled?***

"I see myself simply as the catalyst in that particular moment in their lives."

Hilary: As a teacher, I try to guide students to find the mode that works best for him or her, in that given situation. Nothing is set in stone—everything is fluid. I see myself simply as the catalyst in that moment in their lives. It is quite a responsibility. Letting go of situations when student learning outcomes may not seem positive? Earlier on in my career I found that difficult, but not anymore. I have come to realize that some people never get to the point of letting go and going beneath the surface, and that's okay. What I say to myself is simply, "Well now this individual has had a different opportunity to learn, and that in and of itself is perhaps what they needed, nothing more than that." And that seems to get me through it. I can honestly say that there have been more positive experiences than negative, so that also guides my practice.

"Connecting through those experiences, I felt the teacher and learner roles pivoted back and forth."

Susan: I am so glad I was ready for the call to take a chance and traverse a territory of unfamiliarity. When I chose to discuss and write about my sensitive experiences, I always felt there was a "safe" emotional distance that kept me from losing sight of the academic rigour in my research. I felt that our relationship as teacher and learner was reciprocated. When I shared with you stories surrounding my experiences with mental illness and stigma, you reached out to me and shared your own experiences with stigma. Connecting through those experiences, I felt our roles as teacher and learner pivoted back and forth. Both academically and emotionally, having gone through the autoethnographic process, I feel I am in a safe place and ready to continue to move forward into my doctoral studies.

Reflections—Surface to Depth

In Susan and Hilary's duoethnography, metaphoric stages of narrative have been paralleled thematically according to the experience and depth of delving beneath the surface in narrative reconceptualization. Surface represents what is in plain sight to the naked eye, whereas depth explores the unconscious biases and hidden assumptions that we hold. Although presented linearly for ease of reference, it is important to consider the metaphor of narrative stages as being dynamic and interactive—living, breathing, and constantly evolving. One can delve beneath the surface without ever testing the water, and likewise one may be unwilling or unable to plunge into the

darkness, past the ugliness, to discover hidden beauty. Others may be content to live on the surface only to quickly bob beneath and resurface again.

According to Sawyer and Norris (2012), there are eight tenets that make the duoethnographic process "distinct and strong" (p. 24). These eight tenets were present in Susan and Hilary's duoethnography and served as their guiding principles they endeavoured to adhere to in their research. Susan and Hilary's initial email exchange drew upon the first tenet, Pinar's (1975) notion of currere, where the duoethnographer's life embodies a living, breathing curriculum and where life stories become the site of the research. Within their personal scholarship, Susan and Hilary connected with their selves through each other, as they questioned their past in light of their present, and with a desire to transform their future. Next, Susan and Hilary's duoethnography was polyvocal and dialogic, where the multiplicity of voice was made prominent during the research process. This led to the third tenet of duoethnography, disrupting the metanarrative. The juxtaposition of Susan and Hilary's two distinct histories unveiled an inherent duoethnoraphic "third space" (Bhabha, 1994), where their stories could be re-storied. Re-storying in this third space occurred because the differences between Susan and Hilary's distinct stories gave them the opportunity to question "meanings held about the past and [to] invite reconceptualization" (Sawyer & Norris, p. 24), the element of the fifth tenet. The sixth and seventh tenets were present in the notion that reconceptualization was quintessential as "universal truths [were] not sought" (Sawyer & Norris, p. 24) and that Susan and Hilary's reconceptualization was a "form of praxis where theory and practice converse" (Sawyer & Norris, p. 24). The final tenet reflected the conciliated space one enters when undergoing a duoethnography along with an ethical posture that requires participants to be purposely attentive.

In the academic supervision of students engaged in emotionally sensitive autoethnographic research, the process that Susan and Hilary describe could be adapted by another supervisor-student pairing. At first, both the supervisor and student must start on the surface, a place and a space where both the student and supervisor position themselves. The surface may be difficult to penetrate at first. Once the waters are tested however, and the supervisor goes in first, by sharing her/his story, the platform is created for which deep learning may occur. In turn, just like learning to swim, this allows the student to develop confidence and to feel encouraged to share her/his story. Both participants must ask questions, be open and invite reciprocal sharing with a feeling of safety—not judgement. Using story, while simultaneously considering the probing questions, the student and supervisor are then positioned to delve beneath the surface to discover what lies beneath. For Susan and Hilary, this involved becoming vulnerable, developing trust, letting go, and taking on responsibility. At that point, fully immersed over-head, the ugliness of the unseen maybe be traversed. Here, hidden deep within the ugliness, there may be feelings of anger, shame, or fear. Fear in confronting the truth of one's past, fear of seeing the past reflected in the present, and fear of an uncertain future. For Susan, although she understood the social, cultural, and political constructs of identity theory as it related to persons who experience mental illness, she struggled to personally

apply those theories in order to make sense of her experiences. As an academic, Susan needed to confront her own fears and self-stigma about mental illness, to propel her studies further. Hilary taught Susan how to get beneath the surface by sharing stories of her own struggles to understand the "unintelligent learner" identity by which she had been labeled. Down below, past the ugliness, there is an invitation for the student and supervisor to swim closer towards the hidden beauty of truth, of critical reflection, and, ultimately, of transformation. Here, in the safety of tranquility and perfect calmness, a potential shift in identity may be explored. As new knowledge is considered, both the student and supervisor continue to ask questions, for clarification and critical probing, while at the same time being open to the shared response.

Implications for Future Teaching and Learning

Duoethnography has the potential to move the supervisor-student partnership beyond a superficial role of supervisor as mentor and student as mentee, towards one of teacher as learner and learner as teacher. In doing so, duoethnography becomes emblematic of what it means to look internally into all that matters in a teacher-student relationship. It has the potential to break down the power differential and create a more open and caring relationship. Noddings (2010) describes this act of caring as one in which those "who know that they will serve as models . . . have a special responsibility. They show what it means to care by caring, by demonstrating caring. . . . We do not 'care' in order to model caring; we model care by caring" (p. 147).

The duoethnographic example provided in this paper, clearly demonstrates how the development of trust, openness, and caring between supervisor and student respectfully encourages students to look at academic challenges differently, in order to get past obstacles impeding students' academic growth. This assists students to overcome difficulties, such as writer's block for example, that often hold students back from making timely progress during their independent work phases. When academic challenges are uncovered, discussed, and collaboratively worked through, a student's academic identity may be formed in a more positive and dynamic manner. This identity is one not formed individually, but rather it is formed dialogically and requires careful consideration and response to the ethical dimensions of the caring relationship itself. Noddings (2010) explained that

> care ethics demands a well-developed capacity for reasoning because it does not depend on axiomatic rules and principles. Carers must think well in order to assess and to respond appropriately to the expressed needs of the immediate cared-for while considering the likely effects of their decisions on the wider web of care and on the caring relation itself. Both reflective and instrumental reasoning are required. But feeling motivates our action and moral reasoning at every step. (p. 148)

By privileging listening over talking, by caring, and by building on what each other shares during the dialogic process, both the supervisor and student then create the space to delve beneath the surface and move towards a deeper understanding of each other's past and how one's living,

breathing curriculum influences what is researched in the present. Hence, learning how to listen through dialogic engagement becomes a key characteristic of how to approach this complex and, at times, tenuous relationship. If the student has a good experience within the supervisor-student relationship, as this paper has demonstrated, we suggest that more caring supervisors will enter the academic workplace and more egalitarian academic partnerships will emerge as the student will be partial to using this teaching strategy when s/he takes on the supervisor-teacher role. In conclusion, when students find themselves confronting emotionally painful issues in their learning, if duoethnography is properly applied in the supervisor-student relationship, it may be used as a pedagogical framework to support and further encourage students in their scholarly growth.

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