An exploration of autonetnography as an eResearch methodology to examine learning and teaching scholarship in Networked Learning

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Abstract: As an experienced face-to-face teacher, working in a small Crown Dependency with no Higher Education Institute (HEI) to call its own, the subsequent geographical and professional isolation in the context of Networked Learning (NL), as a sub-set of eLearning, calls for innovative ways in which to develop self-reliant methods of professional development. Jones and De Laat (2016, p.43) claim that NL is different from other eLearning sub-sets, for example, Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) and Computer-Supported-Collaborative-Learning (CSCL) because of its "focus on pedagogy and understanding how social relationships (and networked practices) influence learning rather than having a predominantly technical agenda for change in education". NL, rather than TEL or CSL, therefore, locates the context for this paper. My intent was to develop a bespoke professional development framework to facilitate independent and self-directed NL teaching development. To scaffold my professional development autonetnography (ANG) was chosen to facilitate my learning. The concept of ANG was introduced by Kozinets & Kedzior (2009) as an autobiographical extension to the ethnographic genre Netnography defined by Kozinets (2006) as an interpretive research methodology to examine online observations and interactions. Whilst recent researchers of digital learning claim that has potential to add to a growing body of knowledge that accepts the post-modern use of self as an insider researcher (Ferreira, 2012; Persdotter, 2013; Mkono, Ruhanen & Markwell, 2015) none have explained *how* to undertake ANG. There appears here, to be a theory-practice gap (Kessels and Korthagen, 1996) and the problem lies within the argument that there is no current theory upon which to practice ANG. This opportunity to examine more closely the subjective and reflexive insider researcher perspective of being an online scholar (as a learner or teacher) would respond to this gap in current eResearch knowledge. This paper uses meta-ethnography (Noblit & Hare, 1988) as a method to systematically examine methodology relating to autoethnography, with the purpose of working towards developing a framework for undertaking ANG as an emerging eResearch methodology. Seven phases of meta-ethnography formed the method for synthesising autoethnographic methodological data and translating these into ANG methodological data. Findings from this synthesis are reported through the autoethnographic tripartite scheme of mimesis, poiesis and kinesis (Holman-Jones, Adams, & Ellis, 2013a). From this synthesis, the *autonetnographic "I"* framework was developed and forms a methodological basis for future ANG studies to examine teaching and/or learning scholarship in NL and the potential for considering adaptation of ANG for use in eLearning more generally.

Keywords: Autonetnography; ANG; autoethnography; meta-ethnography; eLearning; networked learning; reflexivity; eResearch methodology; online learner and teacher scholarship; online professional development

1. Introduction

As a sub-set of eLearning, the context for this paper is Networked Learning (NL), which is defined as learning that takes place using information communication technologies, specifically "between one learner and other learners, between learners and tutors; between a learning community and its learning resources" (Jones, 2015, p.5). Jones and De Laat (2016, p.43) claim that NL is different from other digitally mediated learning opportunities, for example, Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) and Computer-Supported-Collaborative-Learning (CSCL) because of its "focus on pedagogy and understanding how social relationships (and networked practices) influence learning rather than having a predominantly technical agenda for change in education". It will be argued that despite the focus on NL, it is likely that the criteria interpreted as pertinent for ANG as an eResearch methodology, is transferrable to eLearning more generally, as the enabling paradigm for NL.

For those Higher Education (HE) teachers who wish (or are expected) to teach online, professional development is essential if they are to extend their teaching repertoire from face-to-face teaching to include digitally mediated teaching. As an experienced face-to-face teacher, working in a small Crown Dependency with no Higher Education Institute (HEI) to call its own, the subsequent geographical and professional isolation in the context of learning to teach online calls for innovative ways in which to develop self-reliant methods of professional development. In response to this situational dichotomy, my intent has been to develop a bespoke professional development framework to facilitate my NL teaching development. This paper reviews the

findings of a systematic examination of methodological literature relating to autoethnography, with a view to developing a framework for undertaking autonetnography (from herein presented using the acronym ANG to differentiate autonetnography from autoethnography) as an emerging eResearch methodology to examine learning and teaching scholarship in NL. ANG has a limited empirical evidence base (Ferreira, 2012; Mkono, Ruhanen, & Markwell, 2015; Persdotter, 2013) and the aim is to review autoethnography as the closest ethnographic genre to ANG, to adapt and characterise ANG as an extension of the myriad of genres claimed as online ethnographies: *Virtual Ethnography* (Crichton & Kinash, 2003; Hine, 2015), *Digital Anthropology* (Boellstorff, 2012; Horst & Miller, 2012), *Network Ethnography* (Howard, 2002), *Webnography* (Evans, 2010), *Internet Ethnography* (Sade-Beck, 2004), *Online Ethnography* (Androutsopolous, 2008), *Cyber Ethnography* (Akturan et al., 2009), *Digital Ethnography* (Murthy, 2008) and *Netnography* (Kozinets, 2006; Kozinets, 2010; Kozinets, Dolbec, & Earley, 2014; Kozinets, 2015). The increasing interest in online ethnographies in all of their forms leaves room for extension beyond online ethnography towards the consideration of how postmodern online autoethnography or *ANG* might highlight my own experiences of scholarship in the context of NL. My goal in this paper is "panoramic rather than partisan, [by examining] a range of autoethnographic scholarship to identify a set of features that such inquiry holds in common" (Anderson & Glass-Coffin, 2013, p.58) with ANG. The *autonetnographic "I"* framework emerged as a methodological guide to explore scholarship in NL and has the potential to be adapted as an eResearch methodology to inform eLearning research and other sub-sets of eLearning more generally.

2.   Why ANG?

An early proponent of online ethnographies is Rheingold (2000) and his exploration of *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier*, unambiguously founds him as not only a member, but also an "architect of the community of interest" (Gatson, 2013, p.248) that is suggestive of the emergence of ANG as methodology. Whilst recent researchers of NL have provided evidence for those who regard ANG as an extension of autoethnography and netnography as a possibility (Ferreira, 2012; Kozinets and Kedzior, 2009; Mkono et al., 2015), none of these authors have explained *how* to undertake ANG. There appears here, to be a theory-practice gap (Kessels and Korthagen, 1996) and the problem lies within the argument that there is no current theory upon which to practice ANG. This opportunity to examine more closely the subjective and reflexive insider researcher perspective of being an online scholar would respond to this gap in current eResearch knowledge.

My representation of ANG is not so focused on the self in terms of personal, life changing epiphanies, but more about "aesthetic moments … [incorporating] the habits of work" (Adams, Holman-Jones, and Ellis, 2015, p.69). I consider the importance of ANG as a lens through which to interpret my understanding, whilst acknowledging and celebrating my presence as an insider researcher of NL.

3.   Epistemological Stance

As an experienced eLearner, my epistemological stance is influenced by a firm belief that knowledge construction is a social process whereby online scholarship is enhanced through interactive collaboration, cooperation and critique of others' contributions. Although this interpretative, socially constructivist qualitative research paradigm is relatively recent, it is gaining increasing credibility within a hierarchically dominant positivist, quantitative empirical research base (Etherington, 2004). Muncey (2010) agrees, claiming "that knowledge of self and others develops simultaneously, both being dependent on social interaction; self and society represent a common whole and neither can exist without the other" (p.12). Currently, within the qualitative paradigm, and reflective of my epistemological stance, is an appreciation of postmodernism. Postmodern researchers (Clarke, 2005; Nash and LaSha-Bradley, 2011; Soukup, 2012) appear yet to convince those with a preference for earlier qualitative paradigms, that the reliance upon the self as the research tool is credible and trustworthy. I have experienced this rejection of the postmodern turn by colleagues and peers who argue that postmodernism is so far removed from the modernist qualitative researchers' objectivist worldview that the postmodern subjective, self-orientated paradigm is considered far too introspective to be empirically sound. The need, therefore, to expose my own philosophical stance, through a critique of the evidence-base to develop an informed perspective on the evolution of ANG is vital to ensure that the most robust and trustworthy evidence comes to the fore. The section that follows critically examines and defends meta-ethnography as an approach for synthesising autoethnographic methodology for translating into ANG as an emerging eResearch methodology.

4.   Meta-Ethnography

To gain a holistic perspective of any given phenomena, it is preferable to synthesise multiple evaluations of research findings. Meta-analyses of quantitative data have long been established as the 'gold standard' in the hierarchy of evidence that informs evidence-based practice (Aguirre & Whitehill-Bolton, 2014; Graham, Harris, & Santangelo, 2015) whilst the synthesis of qualitative research remains in its infancy (Walsh & Downe, 2005). Arguably the inclusion and exclusion criteria used to establish the quality and therefore appropriateness of specific quantitative research to undergo meta-analyses can afford to be more prescriptive, and agreement upon such criteria in the form of rating quantitative studies is well established (Higgins & Green, 2008). Due to the more interpretive nature of qualitative research, the application of inclusion and exclusion criteria based on the quality of the paper is more complicated (Toye et al., 2013).

To address the complex nature of qualitative synthesis, Noblit and Hare (1988) as early proponents of using meta-ethnography in educational research, introduced meta-ethnography to synthesise their understanding of ethnographic accounts. This paradigm-specific synthesis is resolutely grounded through an interpretivist as opposed to a positivist lens. Meta-ethnography is defined as "the translation of one study into another that encourages the researcher to understand and transfer ideas, concepts, and metaphors across varied contexts while emphasizing the preservation of meaning" (Kinn, Holgersen, Ekeland, & Davidson, 2013, p.1287). With this definition in mind, Noblit and Hare's (1988) meta-ethnography framework has since been claimed an appropriate tool to synthesise multiple forms of qualitative research, for example, in the contexts of education (Hoover & Harder, 2015), healthcare (Ho & Chiang, 2015) and health technology (Campbell et al., 2011). My intention is to take meta-ethnography beyond the synthesis of research papers, towards the synthesis of research methodology. The emphasis on meta-ethnography being an iterative process, rather than one that is linear (Aguirre & Whitehill-Bolton, 2014) draws my attention towards synthesising research methodology related to autoethnography. Arguably, the skills of Levi-Strauss' conceptualisation of a 'bricoleur' (Hatton, 1989) are required of the synthesiser, as they move away from the "linear step-by-step processes" (Kinn et al., 2013, p.1287) and towards an iterative one. The bricoleur's synthesis of methodology through meta-ethnography will "go beyond narrative and systematic reviews" (Britten et al., 2002, p.209) to develop deeper conceptual understanding of the autoethnographic methodology under review. Significantly, Atkins et al., (2008) suggests that meta-ethnography has the potential to afford an elevated level of analysis, engender new research questions, and diminish duplication of research studies. My aim is not to (re)create, (re)write or (re)work data gathered from autoethnographic research methodology, rather to focus upon the reported methodology to find synergy among the variants of autoethnography which "creates a new, deeper and broader understanding" (Aguirre & Whitehill-Bolton, 2014, p.283) of ANG as the topic under review. I argue that the principles of meta-ethnography can be adapted as a framework to examine autoethnographic theory and the pragmatics of undertaking autoethnographic research, in an attempt to synthesise then translate my findings to the context of ANG. Whilst I contend that caution should be taken when transferring the principles of one methodology to inform another, I argue that to gain an in-depth understanding of autoethnography as a methodology from which to define and interpret ANG, meta-ethnography will act as a useful tool to proffer a meaningful thematic synthesis. Meta-ethnography is not without criticism in that "a meta-ethnographic synthesis reveals as much about the perspective of the synthesizer as it does about the substance of the synthesis" (Noblit & Hare, 1988, p.14). Arguably however, in the context of identifying a new perspective on ANG, meta-ethnography fits not only with a review of ethnographic texts, but also the philosophy of autoethnographic methodology that strives to acknowledge the value and expertise of the researcher as participant as they write with others' in mind (Adams et al., 2015; Denzin, 2014). Whilst I recognise and concur with the strength of the argument made by Anfara and Mertz, (2015, p.15) that "no theory, or theoretical framework, provides a perfect explanation of what is being studied", my perspective remains valid and will be open to critique like any other.

Noblit and Hare (1988) devised a seven-phase approach for conducting meta-ethnography, to guide the synthesiser through the iterative process (figure 1), and the findings reported throughout each phase follow hereafter.
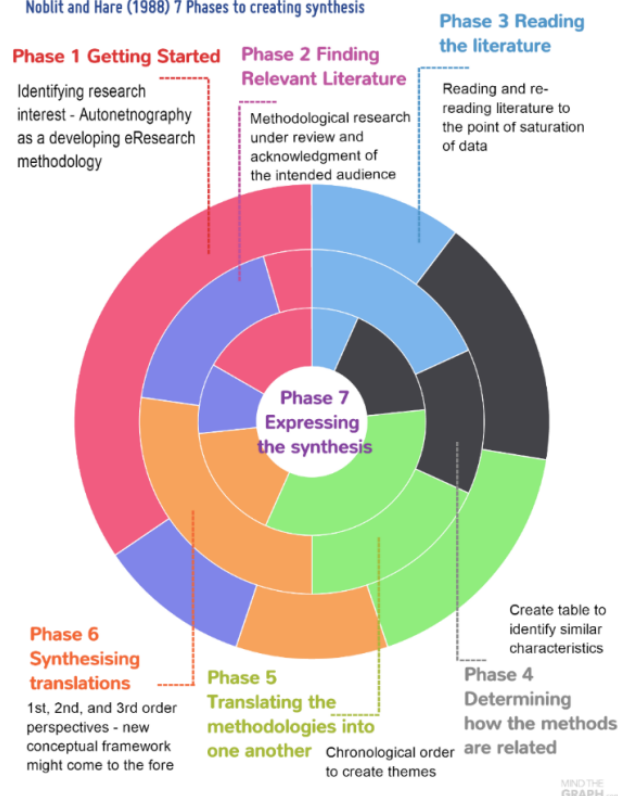
Figure 1: Model developed from Noblit and Hare (1988) Meta-ethnography 7 phases to creating synthesis

5.   Synthesis through meta-ethnography

Phase 1: Getting Started. In a recently published second edition, Kozinets (2015) reiterates the potential of ANG as methodology and claims that the rapid evolution of technology development in conjunction with the exponential outreach of the internet on a global scale has radically altered the way in which humans communicate. An examination of data from Miniwatts Marketing Group (2015) on world internet usage and population statistics indicates that on the mid-year update in June 2015, the world population was estimated at 7,260,621,118 with the number of internet users at 3,270,490,584. The penetration of internet users within the global population was 45%, with data from Europe, North America and Oceana/Australia indicating that there was more than 70% penetration of internet users apiece. The growth of internet usage, claimed between 2000-2015 is 806%. If this data is accurate, then there are significant implications for the future of NL field research as a way of examining more closely the relationships and experiences of those who learn online, in addition to the ever-changing dynamics of global cross-cultural interaction, communication, collaboration and cooperation of those learning together.

Whilst researchers of NL have provided evidence of those who regard ANG as an extension of autoethnography and netnography as a possibility (Ferreira, 2012; Kozinets & Kedzior, 2009; Mkono et al., 2015), none of these authors have explained how to undertake ANG. My aim is to forge a path towards articulating ANG as an emergent framework for NL researchers, with the purpose of providing not a prescriptive approach, but "a map of the [autonetnographic] terrain to guide those seeking to learn more, who [wish to] benefit from specificity and instructions" (Ellingson, 2009, p.4). To continue in the words of Ellingson (2009, p.4) as she describes her intent to introduce crystallisation as a qualitative framework, the following applies to my intent to develop an autonetnographic framework: this emergent autonetnographic framework seeks to combine "multiple forms of analysis and multiple genres of representation into a coherent text … building a rich and openly partial account of a phenomenon that problematizes its own construction, highlights researchers' vulnerabilities and positionality, makes claims about socially constructed meanings, and reveals the indeterminacy of knowledge claims even as it makes them".

Phase 2: *Deciding what is relevant to the initial interest* includes acknowledging the potential audience. The aim of this meta-ethnography is to inform other postmodern researchers within the NL field of the potential for ANG as an eResearch methodology to examine scholarship. I also aim this paper at those researchers who are less convinced that ANG can offer a credible and trustworthy perspective of the self that has the capacity to inform others in the NL field. This is not to persuade those who are cynical of the value of ANG as methodology to convert their perspectives to assimilate mine, rather to be transparent in my claim for ANG as methodology from my own equally legitimate lens of postmodern social constructivism. If Mkono et al., (2015, p.167) unique claim that "parallel to autoethnography in philosophy and practice, [ANG] is located within an interpretive paradigm that responds to the debate about reflexivity and voice in social science, by allowing a more active authorial voice to emerge" is deemed credible, then I argue that peer-reviewed autoethnographic methodology is the most relevant to my interest in conceptualising the potential for ANG as methodology to examine scholarship in NL.

Table 1: Literature search strategy

Literature Search strategy	
Database	Lancaster University One Search
	EdiTLib Digital Library
	EBSCO HOST
	CERUK
	Education Resource Information Centre,
	Google Scholar
Keywords	'autonetnography', 'autoethnography', 'auto-ethnography', 'auto-netnography', 'online autoethnography', 'netnography', 'virtual ethnography', 'network ethnography', 'cyberethnography', and 'webnography'.

A literature search (Table 1) highlighted a significant volume of literature exemplifying the use of autoethnography as methodology. This literature was appraised until saturation was reached (Anderson and Glass-Coffin, 2013; Anderson & Braud, 2011; Burnier, 2006; Custer, 2014; Davis, 2005; Denshire, 2014; Ernst and Vallack, 2015; Hall, 2012; Hansson and Dybbroe, 2012; Henning, 2012; Holt, 2003; Hoppes, 2014; Keefer, 2010; Mitra, 2010; Mizzi, 2010; Ngunjiri, Hernandez, and Chang, 2010; Pace, 2012; Pelias, 2003; Peterson, 2015; Spry, 2001; Struthers, 2012; To, 2015; Truong, Graves, and Keene, 2014; Wall, 2006) to identify the authors who were considered leaders in the field of autoethnographic methodology. Of these perceived leaders, I searched for methodological texts to inform a deeper understanding of what constituted autoethnography as methodology, and arrived at eleven published literature relating to autoethnographic methodology, and four papers introducing the notion of ANG as methodology (Table 2).

Table 2: Methodology relating autoethnography to ANG

Autoethnographic methodology texts in ascending chronological order		
Autoethnographic methodology	**Author(s)/Year**	**Title**
	Hayano (1979)	*Auto-Ethnography: Paradigms, Problems and Prospects*
	Reed-Danahay (1997)	*Auto/Ethnography*
	Ellis (2004)	*The Ethnographic I*
	Roth (2005)	*Auto/biography and Auto/Ethnography: Praxis of Research Method*
	Chang (2008)	*Autoethnography as Method*
	Muncey (2010)	*Creating Autoethnographies*
	Holman-Jones, Adams, and Ellis (eds) (2013b)	*Handbook of Autoethnography*
	Short, Turner, and Grant	*Contemporary British Autoethnography*

	(2013)	
	Denzin (2014)	*Interpretive Autoethnography*
	Boylorn and Orbe (2014b)	*Critical Autoethnography*
	Adams, Holman-Jones and Ellis (2015)	*Autoethnography: Understanding Qualitative Research.*
Autonetnographic methodology	Kozinets and Kedzior (2009)	*I, Avatar: Auto-netnographic Research in Virtual Worlds*
	Ferreira (2012)	*The American Dream: Narratives of Space and Place in Second Life*
	Persdotter (2013)	*Countering the menstrual mainstream: A study of the European Menstrual Countermovement*
	Mkono, Ruhanen and Markwell (2015)	*From Netnography to Autonetnography in Tourism Studies*

Phase 3: *Reading the studies.* Familiarisation with each of the texts cited in Table 2 occurred through reading the whole text and highlighting specific areas of text that appeared informative. Preliminary notes were made about the broad understanding of autoethnography as methodology and saved in a spreadsheet. Extensive attention was paid to each methodological text (Aguirre & Whitehill-Bolton, 2014), whereby reading and re-reading the text gave me a level of saturation of the data to inform the next phase.

Phase 4: *Determining how the studies are related.* Supportive of Noblit and Hare's (1988) focus on iteration for this phase, I followed the suggestion from Britten et al. (2002) to create a table to formalise the characteristics of autoethnography I had acquired from saturation of methodological data within phase 3. To enhance trustworthiness and credibility of the meta-ethnography, I incorporated quotations from the original texts, as suggested by Aguirre and Whitehill-Bolton (2014). The meta-ethnography table, when complete, contained in excess of 33,000 words of quoted text, which prepared the ground for undertaking phase 5.

Phase 5: *Translating the studies into one another.* In response to limited evidence to guide the meta-ethnography synthesiser, I followed Atkins et al. (2008) suggestion to place the autoethnographic texts in chronological order in the table. This allowed me to translate Hayano's (1979) early text into Reed-Danahay (1997), and so on, until I reached Adams et al., (2015) as the most recent autoethnographic methodological text, and Kozinets, (2015) as the most recent theoretical acknowledgement of ANG.

Phase 6: *Synthesising translations.* Using the table created in phase 4, themes were synthesised from the 1st (originator of autoethnographic methodology) and 2nd (others' interpretation of the original methodological perspective) order constructs, which in turn determined a 3rd order construct whereby I have synthesised and interpreted a framework to guide my own autonetnographic studies in the future.

Phase 7: *Expressing the synthesis*, in a form that makes sense to the reader is essential. This paper will be one form of expressing the findings from a meta-ethnography to inform other NL field researchers about the potential for ANG, so that they too might consider using ANG as a methodology to explore and enhance their understanding of scholarship within NL. A framework (figure 2) illustrates the significant (to me) aspects of ANG for use in future research, which will be supported by explanation of the potential value of ANG as methodology.
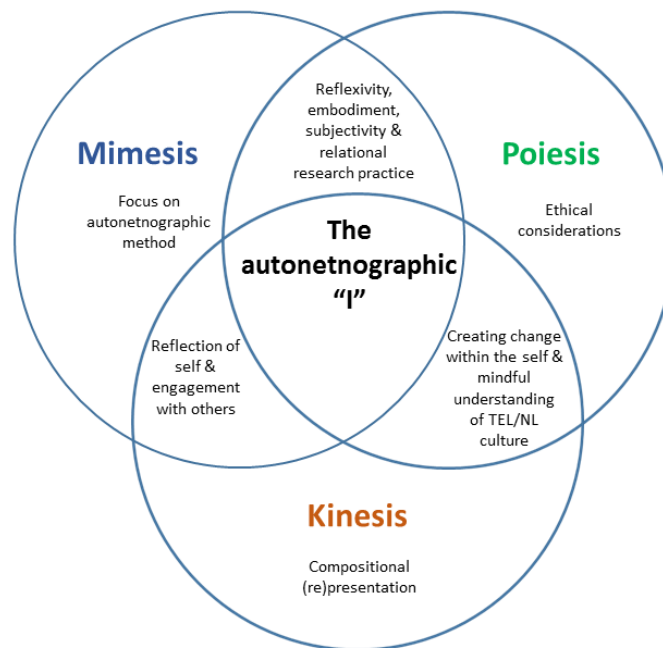
Figure 2: My autonetnographic "I" framework

Having introduced the concept of the autonetnographic "I" framework, the latter part of this paper will shift focus from the predominantly third person theoretical development of ANG towards the first-person conceptualisation of ANG. At this juncture, I wish to make it clear that the way in which I express ANG herein is not prescriptive; it is my interpretation of the way I intend to glean a deeper understanding of what it is to be an online learner and teacher developing her academic voice. However, for those who might prefer a more focused methodological guide to ANG, I have developed a methodological model (Figure 3).
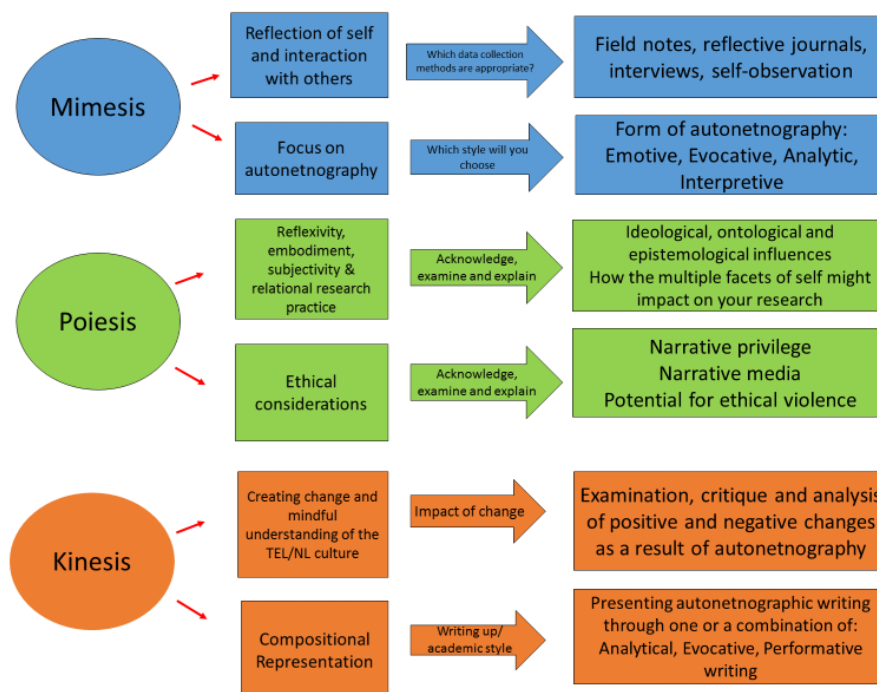

Figure 3: ANG Methodological Model

I begin within each findings section by defining the concepts of *mimesis, poiesis* and *kinesis* then examine in more depth how each of these concepts can act as a guide to utilising ANG as an eResearch methodology to explore scholarship in NL.

Mimesis

Mimesis in the context of autoethnography has been defined as the "idea that autoethnography acts as a mirror or reflection of life and living in ways that are useful for contemplation as well as a mode of engagement with understanding" (Holman-Jones et al., 2013a, p.38). Within the context of online learning, mimesis affords an opportunity for me to focus on ANG as an eResearch methodology to explore and reflect my online scholarship and interactions, how those interactions are influenced by my connection to others within my online learning group, and the subsequent implications of online social change. Here, I explain the way in which I intend to follow a theoretical, analytical and interpretive (Anderson, 2006; Denzin, 2014) pathway on the axes of the auto (self), net (NL culture), and graphy (research process).

6.   Reflection of self and engagement with others

Chang (2008) recognises the importance of self-reflection as a form of data collection, and this can result from analysis of field notes, reflective journals, auto[net]nographic interviews and self-observational behaviour. It has been argued by Anderson and Glass-Coffin (2013), that those who do not view the world through a postmodern lens, might dispute the oxymoronic nature of an auto[net]nographic interview, whereby the researcher becomes the researched. They go on to claim, however, that "as life-story scholars have long recognized, our memories of the past are filtered through the interpretive lenses we bring to our self-reflections" (p.69). This claim is supported by Chang (2013), who posits that whilst memory and recall might encapsulate autobiographic data, self-reflection upon such data is likely to echo the auto[net]nographer's current perceptions and attitudes, which might in future autonetnographic studies, expose explanation for my own and others' online engagement habits. Nash and LaSha-Bradley (2011) claim that auto[net]nographers as a top priority, utilise ethnographic cultural methodologies that are accepted more readily by the majority in the qualitative field of inquiry, to examine the self in relation to the culture under review. I recognise and embrace the argument that ANG is a "highly self-reflective and introspective process, [and] unless there is a methodological way of keeping a distance from this process, [I could] easily fall in to self-absorption" (Chang, 2008, p.96). As I focus on ANG I limit the likelihood of self-absorption, through my preferred (re)presentation of ANG combining an analytic and interpretive stance.

7.   Focus on ANG

If claims by proponents of autoethnography (Adams et al., 2015; Allen-Collinson, 2013; Chang, 2008) that autoethnographies are (re)presented within varying emphases on the triadic axes that inform the balance of the self (auto), culture (ethno) and research process (graphy), then I argue that it is reasonable to suggest that autonetnographers might follow suit. Having synthesised autoethnography as methodology, my current worldview and interest in *being* an online scholar as both a learner and teacher within the culture of NL favours less the emotive (Jago, 2002) or evocative (Muncey, 2010) perspectives of autoethnography through excessive use of autobiography, and values more the analytic (Anderson, 2006; Anderson and Glass-Coffin, 2013; Anderson & Braud, 2011) and interpretive (Denzin, 2014; Denzin, 2004) exploration of my online learning experiences as primary data. Analytic ANG would call for incorporating the five key features proposed by Anderson (2006, p.378): 1) "Complete member researcher status" through researching my own online scholarship; 2) "Reflexivity" will be interwoven throughout my research; 3) "Narrative visibility" of myself as a researcher represented through my writing; 4) "Dialogue with informants beyond the self" through reflexive interviews and peer debriefing, and 5) "Theoretical analysis" of my data by interpreting (Denzin, 2004) and analysing my findings compared with peer reviewed literature. One of the difficulties of adopting this form of ANG is the dichotomy I will face as a native member of an online learning group, developing my understanding of the internal language and functioning of the online culture (emic perspective) at the same time as being the researcher who is required to translate my findings through the theoretical analyses of relevant peer reviewed literature (etic perspective) (Kozinets & Kedzior, 2009). This potentially complicated dual stance may be representative of the aforementioned literature that critiques autoethnography as too subjective, whereby the researcher may be too close to the emic perspective to be able to form one that is etic.

I contest the argument, however, that "the methodological focus on self is sometimes misconstrued as a licence to dig deeper in personal experiences without digging wider into the cultural context of the individual stories comingled with others" (Chang, 2008, p.54). As an indigenous member of an online learning

community, I will use my own experiences "reflectively, to look more deeply at self-other interactions" (Holt, 2003, p.19). The concept of culture in this respect is fundamentally based upon co-present online interactions between the self and others, because culture is dependent upon humans interacting with each other (Chang, 2008). Specific to the evolution of digital globalisation, the highly public potential for online interconnectivity of self with others, is reflective of Geertz' perspective on ethnography where he contends that "culture is public because meaning is" (Geertz, cited in Chang, 2008, p.19). As an online scholar in the NL culture, I am required to learn the cultural terms of engagement (or rules), whereby the way in which I interact may exhibit different meanings (Kozinets & Kedzior, 2009). For example, the rules of netiquette explored by Clouder et al. (2011) suggest that learning to communicate online involves establishing ways and means of working through agreeing and disagreeing with peers, and argue that once the rules of netiquette are well established, that healthy disagreements might lead to a "greater understanding through co-construction of knowledge" (p.113).

Poiesis

Poiesis is defined by Schrag (2003, p.19) "as artefactual production is distinguished both from the sphere of human action and from theoretical philosophizing". This is a way of considering ANG as an eResearch methodology that guides reflexivity relating to self, subjectivity, and the online learning culture to indicate how I make meaning and construct relationships with others in NL. Indeed, Holman-Jones et al. (2013a, p.39) posit that poiesis contributes to the "creation and shifting of various auto[net]nographic subjectivities (selves, audiences, and communities), the practice of auto[net]nography as a relational … endeavour, and auto[net]nography as a doing that creates, marks, and makes visible various voices and ways of knowing". This relational research practice is centred in a lived, embodied experience of online learning. Here too, the ethical considerations and obligations of autonetnographic methodology will be considered.

8. Reflexivity, embodiment, subjectivity and relational research practice

Researcher reflexivity has been defined as "the capacity of the researcher to acknowledge their own experiences and contexts (which might be fluid and changing) [to] inform the process and outcomes of inquiry" (Etherington, 2004, p.32). To meet the academic rigour required of good qualitative research, I must be cognisant about how my thoughts, feelings, life-culture, epistemological and ontological influences (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003), inform me as I interact as an online scholar with others. Reflexivity is a process through which I can acknowledge my role within my ANG research, with awareness that my findings are open to the interpretation of others (Kozinets, 2010). A requisite of reflexivity is that I reflect back on my experience and current understanding of my identity as an online teacher and part-time online PhD student, and the relationships I have with my peers and learners (Adams et al., 2015). To make sense of how these experiences influence my research, then I need to consider to what "extent am I included, relevant, and essential in this description of culture and to the various audiences who engage my work" (Berry, 2013, p.222). I will need to consider then, not only how my membership as a learner and teacher within the NL culture, influences my sense of self (Boylorn and Orbe, 2014a) and interactions with online peers and tutors, but also how my offline 'selves' as a professional (nurse and lecturer) and in my private life as a wife, mother, grandmother, daughter and sister might influence my research behaviour. In addition, reflexive behaviour should take into account how findings from my ANG research represents or construes the online learning and teaching culture and the potential risks of claiming to speak for others (Berry, 2013; Etherington, 2004). For example, the claims that I make based upon my own experiences of online scholarship may not be reflective of other online scholars and I must be cognisant of this when reporting my findings.

I contend that reality is only a perception based upon the subjective understanding of one's bio-psycho-socio-spiritual existence combined with the historical, cultural and genetic predisposition of embodiment. This perception of self in 'reality' is both interpretive and intersubjective. Human subjectivity, therefore, "is a source of knowing, not dismissible as solipsistic expression or opinion" (Anderson and Braud, 2011, p.64). Grant, Short, and Turner (2013, p.4) agree that "subjectivism is welcomed and seen as a resource" and that the "subjectivist stance in autoethnography is predicated on quite the opposite: that culture flows through the self and vice versa, and that people are inscribed within dialogic, socially shared, linguistic and representational practices through their daily occupations". Acknowledged by Ching, Carter and Foley (2012), subjectivity, in the context of self-construction through engagement with text in a virtual learning environment, is a critical factor in making sense of the digital world within which one interacts, co-constructs, collaborates and cooperates. Schrag (2003) argues against those whose philosophical stance claims to reject the permeation of self (and therefore subjectivity) into the research process. From my perception of what constitutes reality, I

suggest that one might struggle to detach the self from the subjective in the form of objectivity. Thus, subjectivity is essential to autonetnographic (re)presentation.

9. Ethical considerations

Despite a focus on the self within autonetnographic research, ethical considerations for undertaking ANG are extensive. Divulging personal data, for example, collected through journals, field-notes, autonetnographic interviews and conversations with others, can implicate others (Turner, 2013) in a way that they may not appreciate nor have the power to challenge. Even strangers can become connected to the self "through membership of common experiences, if not through personal contacts" (Chang, 2008, p.65). Muncey (2010, p.106) suggests that three interrelated ethical responsibilities should be considered by the autoethnographic author: "Acknowledgment of narrative privilege" whereby the author should protect those who (by the very nature of the author's declaration of self-examination) are implicated as co-participants; "Acknowledgment of narrative media" by considering whether or not those affected by the autoethnography are able to engage with the medium in which the author's narrative is presented (whose interests such presentations are intended to serve); and, "Acknowledgment of ethical violence" whereby the author's "interpersonal obligations affect [their] work" with the potential of leaving those implicated within the autoethnography at risk of harm. Etherington (2004) and Tullis (2013) call for a process of consent, where the author shares their findings and checks with participants (where possible) that each phase of the research is accurate from the participant perspective. Indeed, ethical consideration within ANG does not finish with exploring potential risk to the self and/or others. Authors must also be cognisant of the audiences who read their work (Tullis, 2013) and the effect the content of such research may have on the potential audience.

Kinesis

Kinesis is claimed as the point at which mimesis (reflection) and poiesis (meaning) "now invoke intervention and change" (Madison, 2012, p.188). Kinesis as a "dynamic practice that creates movement and change" (Holman-Jones et al., 2013a, p.39) empowers the autonetnographer to understand their voice and identity as on online learner and/or teacher, and create change within the self in the context of their membership to the NL community. Here, ANG is fundamentally different from other forms of NL research that has tended towards a more objective view of online learners' and/or teachers' perceptions and experiences through utilising, for example, Activity Theory (Conole, Galley, and Culver, 2011), Actor Network Theory (Fenwick and Edwards, 2012) and Case Study (Dodds, 2011). By utilising ANG in NL research, I can explore the development of mindful, autonetnographic knowledge in relation to *being* an online learner and teacher as part of an academic community, in the context of *doing* ANG.

10. Creating change and mindful understanding of the NL culture

It is feasible to suggest that self-transformation through exploring the *autonetnographic "I"* (Figure 2) makes visible ways in which the "I" has been changed by the process of inquiry (Anderson and Glass-Coffin, 2013), and is reflective of the way in which self-transformation impacts on interactions with others within the NL culture. Indeed, Berry (2013) postulates that the "possibility for change, the chance to understand ourselves more closely, and to re-reflect on what was and who we were, in contrast to what is and who we are now, is one of auto[net]nography's greatest gifts" (p.216). Changes that occur through self-examination, by the very nature of self being inextricably linked to others, will impact on interactions with the communities and cultures of which one is a part. For example, an examination and critique of positive or negative ways in which I collaborate and cooperate with other online scholars as a result of autonetnographic research, is likely to elicit a response from those with whom I interact. Depending on what my interactions are, such changes may be perceived by my peers/tutors/learners as detrimental or beneficial to the learning culture within NL.

11. Compositional (re)presentation

> Have I as a writer created an experiential text that allows me (and you) to understand what I have studied? Understanding occurs when you (and I) are able to interpret what has been described within a framework that is subjectively, emotionally, and causally meaningful. This is the verisimilitude of the experiential text, a text that does not map or attempt to reproduce the real (Denzin, 2014, p.82).

Traditional academic writing is often characterised (and criticised for) being laden with jargon (Holman-Jones et al., 2013a) and exclusive to the academic reader. With a capacity and requirement for reflexivity, a

heightened sense of awareness empowers autoethnographic authors to re(present) their findings in many different ways (Muncey, 2010). Within the myriad of compositional representations employed by autoethnographers (including for example, analytical, evocative or performance writing), authorial voice is considered significant, not only as a way of connecting with others through our chosen (re)presentation (Adams et al., 2015), but as a source of knowledge (Kozinets & Kedzior, 2009). The authorial power held by any researcher, to control how our stories are represented, necessitates that "we need to be relationally responsive in telling them [and] the cost of our autoethnographic narratives must never be higher than the benefits to ourselves, others, and the communities we represent" (Hernandez & Ngunjiri, 2013, p.279).

12. Implications for practice

This meta-ethnography set out to examine the potential of ANG as an eResearch methodology to examine scholarship in NL. My findings indicate that through the lens of meta-ethnography, methodological data specific to autoethnography can be synthesised into the online context to extend the theoretical emergence of ANG to build on, and contribute to, eResearch methodology specific to the field of NL. This paper provides additional insights into ANG as a theoretical lens through which to interpret experiences as an online participant in any form, indicating the potential for its adaptation to inform eLearning research more broadly. The development of my *autonetnographic "I"* framework (Figure 2) in conjunction with a practical guide to undertaking ANG developed from my findings (Figure 3) will serve as a guide for future research exploring how I perceive online learning and teaching scholarship is experienced as different from other forms of scholarship. In keeping with the purpose of autoethnographic accounts to share experiences and perspectives that might resonate with the reader, this paper extends the knowledge of learning in the context of NL scholarship by introducing the potential of ANG as an eResearch methodology to other NL researchers who may be interested in extending this, or other sub-sets of eLearning fields of inquiry. Whilst I argue that ANG has the potential to be applied in eLearning the focus for my meta-synthesis has been NL in keeping with my interest in online connectivity and interaction between students, their teacher and online resources. I am, therefore, unable to claim direct transference of ANG to eLearning, although I do believe ANG could be adapted for use as an eLearning research methodology.

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