The Routledge International Handbook of Autoethnography in Educational Research

Emilio A. Anteliz, Deborah L. Mulligan, Patrick Alan Danaher

Identifying implications and issues

Publication details
Patrick Alan Danaher, Emilio A. Anteliz, Deborah L. Mulligan
Published online on: 10 Nov 2022

How to cite: Patrick Alan Danaher, Emilio A. Anteliz, Deborah L. Mulligan. 10 Nov 2022, Identifying implications and issues from: The Routledge International Handbook of Autoethnography in Educational Research Routledge
Accessed on: 15 Aug 2023

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR DOCUMENT

Full terms and conditions of use: https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/legal-notices/terms

This Document PDF may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproductions, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The publisher shall not be liable for an loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.
29
IDENTIFYING IMPLICATIONS AND ISSUES

Selected lessons learned from intersecting autoethnography and educational research

Patrick Alan Danaher, Emilio A. Anteliz and Deborah L. Mulligan

Introduction

As the editors’ first chapter in the Routledge International Handbook of Autoethnography in Educational Research highlighted, and has been underscored in varied ways in the intervening chapters, contemporary autoethnographic research abounds and is flourishing. This is a testament to the far-sighted vision of the progenitors of autoethnography, and to the enthusiastic adoption and adaptations of autoethnography by diverse researchers around the world. These widely ranging applications and extensions of autoethnography attest to its capacity for empowerment and transformation of individuals and groups alike, and to its power to facilitate new understandings of ourselves, others and the world that we all share.

As we also emphasised in the editors’ first chapter, and in the context of the broader scholarly corpus of autoethnographic studies, the handbook is located at the meeting point between autoethnography and educational research. Given the vast dimensions of the latter, we anchored the investigations presented here by clustering them in four themes, and we also identified three organising principles that we contended enhance the analytical power of that meeting point. We return to both sets of themes and organising principles below.

This concluding chapter to the handbook is intended to fulfil two specific purposes, each aligned with one of the two main sections in the chapter:

• To provide a necessarily selective summary of the preceding chapters in the handbook
• To revisit our respective chapters in the handbook to identify broader implications and issues related to autoethnography and educational research.

Selectively summarising the handbook chapters

At this juncture, it is both appropriate and pleasing for us as editors to thank the contributing authors of the preceding chapters more fully and fulsomely than we were able to do in the list of acknowledgements in the handbook’s preliminary pages. We are profoundly grateful to
Patrick Alan Danaher et al.

every author for investing the time and scholarly energy needed to write each chapter; in combination, the chapters constitute a highly diverse, significant and timely expansion of current understandings of autoethnography in alignment with educational research.

Even more importantly, we acknowledge and salute the courage and generosity of spirit that are evident in every chapter. In multiple ways, the chapters convey the authors’ and others’ ongoing struggles against all manner of challenges and obstacles. Despite the poignant and sometimes traumatic experiences that the contributors convey, the strategies that they have put in place to continue to learn, and through their learning and writing to teach to others, about the world are what also shine through like beacons of hope. This commitment to sharing understandings of self and multiple others, and to learning from and with those others, is a defining feature of the best research in both autoethnography and education, and as editors we salute the authors whose chapters make this commitment manifest.

Against this backdrop, and as we highlighted in the first chapter, the handbook chapters were grouped around four themes, each of which is a scholarly subfield in its own right, and each of which afforded distinctive understandings of the interface between autoethnography and educational research. We have summarised the 27 chapters in the handbook in the context of these four themes and scholarly subfields.

Enhancing teaching and teacher education with autoethnography

In Chapter 2, Karen Barley emphasises that storytelling is vital to imparting information in the area of education and research. The author hypothesises that autoethnography enables the writer to provide valuable insight into human behaviour, and that retelling stories can pull at the heartstrings. As a provider of face-to-face and online professional development, she is often given a ‘common’ piece of feedback: “Your stories caused me to have a light-bulb moment.” An integral component of her autoethnography is the epiphany as method, whereby the stories evocatively ask the audience to reflect on their own views of disability and inclusion. The author has long been fascinated with the concept of the epiphany and how that epiphanic moment can cause us to shift our beliefs or attitudes, and she began writing about the epiphanies that altered her perceptions. This then caused a shift in her teaching practice.

In Chapter 3, Brian Andrew Benoit finds himself thinking about how autoethnography has contributed to reconceptualising and reimagining his work and his current identity, as well as about its impact on his future research. As a teacher, teacher educator and researcher, he has had the opportunity to combine his work on critical autoethnography with his teaching as an elementary resource teacher as well as a teacher educator in three Canadian universities. Using student evaluation forms, the author attempted to expose some of the ways in which power operates in classrooms through both the official and the non-official curricula. The act of going back allows him to understand his contemporary self so as to improve his future teaching. He explores the notion of autoethnography allowing a greater understanding of the nature of teaching and of learning about teaching, as well as aiding in the development of a greater sense of professional pride. The author asks: “Could I have done better at understanding some of the biases that I have pertaining to my own teaching and understandings? What role can and should these artifacts play in my own personal and professional development?”

In Chapter 4, Anne Bradley poses the question: “How do I improve my teaching practice?” This led her on a journey of self-examination and reflection-in-action. The chapter describes the manner in which autoethnography has become foundational to her academic life, impacting
Identifying implications and issues

Identifying implications and issues on her research and teaching practice alike. The author examines what it means to be an educator in a postcolonial landscape in which the disadvantages experienced by colonised peoples represent a grim reality. She discusses how autoethnography differs from other forms of educational research, and she provides an overview of the processes that she follows. She then examines some of the issues and outcomes that she experienced, including the transformative potential of what she describes as the autoethnographic ripple effect.

In Chapter 5, Shelley Hannigan, Jo Raphael and Peta J. White offer a narrative account of how three academics from diverse disciplines in a school of education across multiple campuses came together to focus their practice over seven years. They utilised the imperative of reform to develop a collaborative arts-based autoethnography (CABAE) as a methodological frame to scaffold interactions, and to enable deeper and more profound reflection on their teacher education practice. The authors find that arts-based inquiry generated joy and enthusiasm as well as deeper reflection and consideration. Additionally, they found that the autoethnographic practices, when managed in a collegial attitude of trust and genuine interest, created a generative space to explore new ideas together, and to publish. The value of others seeing and reflecting on their practices was key to being able to imagine and then to practise differently when reform was required.

In Chapter 6, Nadia Mead hypothesises that action research is a common practice used in schools owing to its practicality and ready source of data. Thus, in a workplace where time is a scarce and precious commodity, the lure of action research is obvious. The author further posits that action research can also marginalise and exclude teachers and make their experience invisible. Nadia believes that autoethnographic research embodies values that align with teaching as its driving force as a desire to share expertise and to help others to learn. It also validates teacher experience at any stage of a career, connecting with others who share the same level of experience and who will learn from the autoethnographer’s insider perspective. Using autoethnography as a research methodology, instead of action research, reconceptualised the author’s teacher identity, validated her experiences and transformed her attitude towards a system that the author views as one that silences teachers. At a time when attrition rates reflect low morale in teaching, autoethnography restored her voice as a teacher, renewed her direction and purpose, and prevented her from leaving education.

Enlarging doctoral study and supervision with autoethnography

In Chapter 7, Aruna Devi provides an enquiry into how the effective use of autoethnography can enhance researchers’ self-efficacy and their preparedness to be transformed into effective researchers. The author, as the researcher in this context, explored and reflected on her teaching experiences and the self-efficacy developed to teach students with special needs, particularly those diagnosed with autism. With an inquiry into her own self-efficacy, she became curious to learn about what other teachers felt about their self-efficacy related to teaching students with autism. This curiosity led her to explore the phenomenon more broadly within the context of a doctoral research program. The author believes that adherence to an autoethnographic inquiry is expected to enable other researchers to contribute to educational researchers’ self-efficacy in exploring their views and experiences, and to enrich further their stories to be attractive to the other readers. This may assist in shaping one’s self-efficacy beliefs in order to enhance the possibilities of implementing effective educational practices. The impetus to undertake this research was an important incident in her career development, leading to the researcher who she is today.
In Chapter 8, Karl Matthews considers how his analysis of visual autoethnographic data enabled deeper insight into the context, human, technology and process dimensions of a knowledge management case study. One visual representation, the Mandala method, worked as a data-gathering tool to interface between ethnography and autoethnography within his PhD thesis, by reflecting on the participants and also on his own interpretations of the situational dynamics to develop his understanding of the subject. The chapter discusses his retrospective autoethnographic analysis of his doctoral study and supervision experience through his extension of the Mandala method into what he terms “the Jungian Alignment Mandala (JAM) method”. The author presents three examples of the JAM method: the first example considers his autoethnographic insight that doctoral supervisors are “terrific teachers that teach the teachers that teach the teachers” or “T10s”; the second example explores an analogy of the doctoral research candidature process being “like climbing a mountain”; and the third example contemplates the evolution of KM technologies in doctoral study and supervision. This chapter promotes the value of the Mandala method for analysing visual autoethnographic data within academic research.

In Chapter 9, Nona Press and Dolene Rossi illustrate the use of two qualitative research methodologies and offer suggestions about the “methodological fusion” of phenomenography and collaborative autoethnography within one study. The focus of this research is doctoral supervision, about which heightened scholarly interest is apparent. Understanding and experiencing doctoral supervision render a methodological focus towards phenomenography, which investigates the qualitatively different ways of thinking about or understanding a phenomenon of interest. However, the study also renders a focus towards collaborative autoethnography, as the research uses the authors’ personal data as participant-researchers to describe, analyse and understand individuals and their collective experiences. The authors set out to elicit their conception of this phenomenon, and to interrogate how such conceptions reflect their actions and influence their expectations. This chapter presents a journey from ‘fusing’ two methodological approaches in a single study, and offers practical considerations with cautions and implications concerning the practice of collaborative autoethnography with phenomenography. This research contributes towards an evolving knowledge of the two methodological traditions, and demonstrates that, when ‘fused’, they can present a good ‘fit’ with specific aspects of research while maintaining the integrity of each approach.

In Chapter 10, Deborah L. Mulligan presents a reflexive overview of the emotional process of her thesis writing. She links an autobiographical incident with the paradigm of autoethnography, and views this through the lens of self-narrative as a tool for meaning construction. Connections of relationality are drawn among the event of thesis writing, the aftermath of the death of her son, the anthropomorphising of a beloved family pet and herself as both a researcher and a grieving parent. The author posits that, even though research into the elements of doctoral achievement has begun attaining international interest, there are still considerable gaps in ‘coal face’ knowledge – e.g., the complex minutiae of the lived experiences of doctoral researchers as they go about earning the right to be awarded the highest of educational accomplishments. The author seeks to relate her personal narrative with the understanding that all Higher Degree by Research students’ inspirations and aspirations are unique in time and place. In her case, the thesis was an intentional performance of grief work, and it was begun as a self-transformative act.

In Chapter 11, Meg Forbes employs autoethnography to explore her personal journey through post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and then to transcend these negative experiences through education. Initially unable to attend university following a violent assault, she entered university as a mature-aged student while engaged in psychotherapy, seeking
Identifying implications and issues

to transcend her experiences by empowering herself and others. After ten years of study, and with a PhD, she began to lecture and was approached by students whose struggles resembled her own of a decade earlier. Reflecting on her prior experiences strengthened her ability to encourage her students on their own journey while maintaining academic boundaries. The author’s story demonstrates that mental health challenges in academia can be overcome with encouragement and patience from those in positions of power, and highlights the importance of remaining cognisant of this for those of us who are privileged to supervise and teach.

In Chapter 12, Naomi Ryan and Deborah L. Mulligan examine the issue of doctoral supervisory praxis and life as a doctoral student. This chapter views the act of supervision through the experiential lens of a supervisor (Naomi) and a student (Debbie). It is their contention that building and maintaining a healthy doctoral relationship are the responsibility of both parties and that, at the heart of the matter, there are really only three essential questions that should be asked of both supervisor and student: “What do you bring to the doctoral relationship?”; “What do you bring to the doctoral process?”; and “What are you most afraid of?” Naomi tells her story from the perspective of a novice doctoral supervisor who values her connections with her students, and who seeks to widen her skillset. Debbie is a relatively experienced doctoral student in that she is currently undertaking her second doctorate.

In Chapter 13, Jennifer Clutterbuck offers her chapter as a way of interrogating innovations around the understanding of ourselves and of the governance of data infrastructures. Her doctoral research centred on exploring a student information management system, a data infrastructure built and used in government or state schools in Queensland, Australia. When she visited participating schools, she was introduced as: “This is Jen – she’s OneSchool”. She maintains that those who worked on the School Management Systems project became so connected to one another and so associated with the project that in some ways they became synonymous with the system. Exploring the diffracted/intra-active becoming of Jen-as-OneSchool allows her to reflect on other identities that she developed and shed along the way. In doing so, she alerts those who seek to research within their own spaces of the benefits and risks of being an insider researcher or autoethnographer. Jennifer further encourages educational practitioners to explore the impact of their own diffracted professionality on their relationships with one another, with students and with data infrastructures and data more broadly.

In Chapter 14, Sheila Trahar explores the expectations around the usage of autoethnography. She posits that there continues to be an expectation that those who use it – in particular, in doctoral research – will explain in detail their methodological rationale and justify and elaborate the approach’s limitations as well as its affordances, much more so than those who use other methodologies. The author utilises autoethnography to reflect critically on her experiences of supervising and examining doctorates, and of reviewing articles and other texts submitted for publication, all deploying autoethnography in different ways. She employs the metaphor of perils and threats that abound in snowy landscapes to write about how her interpretation and use of autoethnography enable her to evaluate others’ work using criteria that she synthesised from a range of sources, and that reflect her own values and expectations. The chapter foregrounds, in particular, the ethical complexities inherent in autoethnography and, in addition, proposes how it can augment the decolonial possibilities of higher education through its challenges to dominant research approaches and to privileging particular knowledges. The author concludes by proposing that autoethnography, when used wisely, strengthens educational research, thereby rendering it more authentic and relevant for our complex worlds.
Conducting identity work and relationship-building via autoethnography

In Chapter 15, James Akpan explores his years spent in educational spaces in Nigeria and the United States. He discusses how his identity has been influenced through critical incidents in these contexts. His experience opens a new dialogue around the abuses of female students by ‘powerful’ Nigerian male professors. All of these are tied within the theoretical framework of “uncomfortable sweetness”. Autoethnography as a methodology invites developing self-in-contexts. His chapter queries if the education received in Black Africa is shifting consciousness for the better. He also discusses White Western ideologies, alienation and how colonial English, as cultural capital in academia, has minimised his true voice.

In Chapter 16, Patrick Alan Danaher offers autoethnography as a capacity, in concert with sense-making, to facilitate productive and sustained critical reflection on complex and sometimes troubling events experienced by individuals and groups. He builds a case for reflection as an indispensable linking of subjective experiences with broader economic, political and sociocultural trends, thereby accentuating autoethnography’s significance in bringing into alignment the otherwise contradictory forces of personal and communal, private and public, and self and other. The author demonstrates this proposition by presenting selected susurrations of his potential swansong as an Australian education professor. While this transition generates feelings of fearfulness and uncertainty, those feelings are ameliorated by the chapter’s deployment of autoethnographic analysis in concert with sense-making. In particular, the analysis is clustered around his present identity shift, informed by his longer-term identity work and relationship reshaping, and also by traversing the personal–communal, private–public and self–other divides.

In Chapter 17, Gustavo González-Calvo presents his journey as a Spanish researcher who seeks to write in an evocative, critical and committed way. He explains the story of how he began to write autoethnographies, and how these allowed him to undergo a series of deepening personal, social and professional experiences that could lead to debating broader cultural issues. Since the scientific literature on qualitative and ethnographic methodologies was relatively scarce in his early formative years, his beginnings were mainly self-taught and experimental. In addition to scientific literature, he soon realised that events in his life were also an important source of data. With this in mind, he directed his research gaze to what really (pre)occupied him, what made his life meaningful, what excited him, what made him anxious and what mattered to him. Thus, the author presents a spirit of dialogue and connection between the reader and himself. In doing so, he discloses the manner in which autoethnographies can be a wonderful resource for research, for social criticism, for resonating in the minds of readers and for being re-membered (in Spanish, re-condado, from the Latin re-condi: to pass through the heart again).

In Chapter 18, Arturo Pérez López and Patricia Varas interrogate the processes arising from the grant that Arturo had received to explore the multiculturalism of the Mexican American and Oaxacan, the positive and negative effects, and their mental, physical and spiritual toll. He wanted to dig deeply into the struggles and challenges of interacting with three cultures daily and with the dilemma of determining one’s identity, as it has affected his life. As a first-generation student, he felt conspicuously visible on campus. Arturo’s autoethnography is an exercise of self-reflection to discover his ethnic identity. The research methodology allowed the articulation of his voice through a personal narrative, while at the same time it welcomed objective information from academia and other sources. Through his writing,
Arturo constructed a narrative built of memories and experiences, supporting it with readings on language, music, ethnic identity formation and cultural patterns of socialisation and interaction, among others. In this autoethnography Arturo embarked on an inclusive and informal method of learning, and he made important connections with cultural, political and social sources that will prove important to him as a future researcher.

In Chapter 19, Ashley Simpson is inspired by the Russian philosopher and literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin. The author hypothesises that Bakhtin’s influence on educational research is widespread, yet the translation, interpretation and application of Bakhtin’s work from Russian to English have often been problematic. The self and the other were integral to Bakhtin’s work, and these notions have also become synonymous with the dialogical and reflexive research methodologies in education. But what is meant by self and other? Through problematising Bakhtin’s notion of the crisis of “outsideness” (vnenakhodimost), this chapter discusses the reflexive merits of autoethnography by problematising the precariousness and limitations that can inhibit the approach. The author argues that autoethnography is besotted by an overspill of self, and can perpetually violate the other in research and practice. The author explores an engagement with Bakhtin’s crisis of outsideness to propose a dialogical approach for critical autoethnographic studies in education.

In Chapter 20, Devi Akella examines study abroad programs. She proposes that they offer unique and novel opportunities for educators by forcing them out of their comfort zone, and by challenging them with new situations that can transform their overall personality. The author suggests that these opportunities allow the educators a chance to learn from others, build partnerships and share this expertise with others once back home. She argues that educators then reflect on these experiences and integrate them into their curriculum, classroom lectures and pedagogies in the form of informative material from another culture. This chapter presents an autoethnographic narrative of the author’s visit to the conflicted region of Palestine as a Fulbright Specialist for a duration of 42 days. The research method of autoethnography is used to illuminate her personal story of how she reacted, understood and responded to new situations, places, people and events in Palestine.

In Chapter 21, Lynelle Watts and Rebecca Waters posit that some kinds of research may be conceptualised as identity-making ventures, especially for emerging scholars. The authors aim to outline different kinds of critical reflection in relation to autoethnography, and to explore some philosophical conceptions of practical identity. They consider how these might inform understandings of the self at the heart of autoethnography. The chapter begins by tracing the self-reflective nature of human social being back to the conception of what the enlightenment entailed, and how this relates to the method of autoethnography. They then move to discuss conceptualisations of practical identity, outlining the connection between its personal and social aspects. They describe the role of narrative as essential to the formation of practical identities. They then present a case study that illustrates the workings of practical identity and narrative within the context of an intersubjective encounter in Occupational Therapy practice. The chapter concludes with the implications for how the self might be accounted for within autoethnographic inquiry to provide deep and rich explorations of human experience and social conditions.

In Chapter 22, Emilio A. Anteliz and Paolo Maragno present a co-authored collaborative autoethnography of their shared experiences in designing and developing a series of university continuing education programs for working engineers in Venezuela. They employ a conceptual framework, clustered around lifelong learning, identity, relationships and autoethnography, to frame their recounting of initiating and sustaining the programs between 1999 and 2006 in
the Faculty of Engineering at the Central University of Venezuela (UCV). They also recall the politised dimension of these programs, including both support and opposition from different faculty and university colleagues. They then reflect critically on the experience of co-authoring the chapter as their first foray into collaborative autoethnography, and they share their interest in continuing the process in future publications.

**Promoting social justice through autoethnography**

In Chapter 23, Mery Diaz, Irma Cruz, Katherine Legarreta, Mercedes Lopez and Bethany Vazquez write from the perspective of five Latinx women from working-class families, immigrant families and different generations. They examine the statistics around the attendance and the success of Latinx college students, and they draw from critical race theory and feminist standpoint positionality to co-construct an educational *testimonio*. Through this method, they reflect, analyse and tell about their schooling histories, their positionality, the role of mentorship in their academic trajectory and thereafter, and the solidarity that they forged along the way. The authors’ stories seek to counter dominant narratives that often privilege private and elite White college experiences, and that focus primarily on academic outcomes as measures of success. Instead, they highlight the relational self, personal connections and sense of belonging as critical aspects of the college experience to redefine success.

In Chapter 24, Julie Keyantash Guertin addresses racial microaggressions that are present in classroom interactions between White teachers and students of colour. She posits that White teachers, however, may be oblivious to the racial microaggressions that they exhibit and to how they perform them in classrooms. The author asserts that autoethnographic research methods are key to exposing implicit racial bias in explicit moments of teacher decision-making, transforming dysconscious racism into conscious, concrete thoughts, and interpreting previously unseen racist acts as seen and recognisable perpetrations. White teachers can utilise autoethnography to detect and examine racial microaggressions towards students of colour, and critical self-reflexivity can promote an evolving anti-racist teaching identity. The author notes that the teacher-as-perpetrator approach is intended not to replace the voice of the victim of racial microaggressions, but rather to pledge to it and offer a different kind of requisite insider perspective on racial inequities within the classroom.

In Chapter 25, Cecelias Parnther posits that autoethnography as influence is primed to transform civility education through social media engagement. The author suggests that influence through social media relies on personal connection and storytelling, but that it may impact on authentic representation. Social media represents a self-reflective opportunity to make sense of events. The author utilises current literature on activism and identity development to highlight social movements and to identify common themes bolstered by autoethnographic research. Specifically, she identifies exemplar pieces that galvanise communities to act, highlighting the possibilities for scholarly connection, desire for activism and power of influence. She argues that for many marginalised communities the proliferation of autoethnography as a method provides a sense of belonging in spaces that systematically exclude minority perspectives. The best practices of such research demonstrate possibilities of responsibility, and the reach of social media activism is emerging as a necessary component of autoethnography as accessible and impactful research. A proactive, rigorous and collaborative approach to supporting the work emerging from these perspectives is crucial in assisting future researchers using internet platforms at every stage of engagement.

In Chapter 26, Sharin Shajahan Naomi explores her experience of decolonising feminist perspectives and pedagogy to teach feminist issues in an international women’s liberal arts
university, located in Bangladesh and aiming to empower women from different countries of Asia and the Middle East. In an autoethnographic note, she reveals the intimate relationship between a teacher's subjectivity and pedagogy in the classroom. The author realised that feminism in the class is not separate from how we interpret feminism in personalised contexts. Instead of holding fast to a fixed and categorised feminist school, the author developed a bricolage of feminist perspectives and pedagogy under decolonial feminism to address real-life questions, to break the hegemony of White Western feminism and to assess critically the application of postcolonial feminist thoughts to certain contexts (for instance, Afghanistan). This autoethnography opens up a conversation about teaching decolonial feminism in the Global South that can resonate with individuality, particularity and the need for time and contexts to challenge patriarchy, colonialisation and religious extremism.

In Chapter 27, Skye Playsted utilises autoethnography to highlight critical issues in English language teaching (ELT), viewed through her eyes as a teacher working with refugee-background English language learners in an Australian adult migrant English program (AMEP). She begins with a brief introduction to autoethnography, and she discusses recommendations made in recent literature for this methodology in ELT to adopt a more critical approach. The author then reflects on the two-year period that she taught in the AMEP, and on incidents that prompted her to reconsider the assumptions that she had held about her position and privilege as a teacher. The author discusses some practical applications of critical reflection in her teaching practice, and she considers possible ways forward for teachers and researchers in AMEP seeking to engage in collective inquiry and dialogue around critical issues.

In Chapter 28, Georgina Tuari Stewart advocates a Kaupapa Māori approach to autoethnography that has untapped potential as a useful methodology for Māori researchers and communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. So far in research, Māori and Indigenous education has mostly relied on ‘traditional’ qualitative methodologies, especially interview research. Interviews are seen as an effective way to collect the voices that represent Indigenous communities, who have been historically disadvantaged in education, and silenced in research. The author posits that autoethnographic methods can add to the existing research toolboxes of Māori and Indigenous researchers, but that it still faces opposition as ‘not scientific’. This attitude is highly problematic given that the whole premise of qualitative research is non-scientific. The author maintains that autoethnography is one form of qualitative research to consider when the primary researcher is embedded and experienced in the context of her research question. Autoethnography makes a powerful approach for investigating Māori identities and ideas, and it combines effectively with other methodologies. A concept of Kaupapa Māori autoethnography recognises the potential of autoethnography to support research in education conducted by Māori researchers, with Māori involvement and for Māori in uplifting the political and personal interests of Māori students, families and communities.

**Revisiting our respective handbook chapters**

We turn now to revisit our respective handbook chapters in order to identify some broader implications and issues related to autoethnography and educational research. In doing so, we do not seek to privilege our experiences and voices above those of the other contributors to this handbook. Instead, we desire to link the autoethnographic dimension of those chapters with our role in this chapter as handbook editors pondering some of the wider lessons, not just of our chapters but of all the chapters constituting this volume. This revisiting is framed by the three organising principles that we enunciated in the first chapter.
in the handbook – pedagogies, positionality and power – that we argued highlight the distinctiveness of working at the intersection of autoethnography and educational research.

In Chapter 10, Debbie explored her conversations with her dog El as a crucial part of her first doctoral study, and also as a key element of her continuing grief work related to her teenage son Rory’s death from cancer. Methodologically, Debbie analysed those conversations as a form of anthropomorphising self-narrative, thereby generating fresh insights into who and what constitute ‘self/hood’ and ‘other/ness’. For Debbie, educational research incorporates at least two parallel projects. The first project is the learning and life experiences of older men, which was the topic of Debbie’s first doctoral study. The second project is how completing a doctorate functioned as a type of grief work arising from her son’s death, which is the topic of her second and current doctoral study. As with the comment presented above about the handbook chapters as a whole, Debbie’s autoethnographic work has manifested considerable courage and commitment, and a generous sharing of her experiences with others, including scholars in grief studies and doctoral research alike.

In Chapter 16, Patrick presented what he called selected “susurrations of a swansong” in his present role as an Australian professor of education. These susurrations referred to his current identity shift, away from being a full-time academic, to a future profile whose contours are not yet clear. This transition has been prompted by his perceived incapacity to fulfil his academic, research and service duties to the standard that he expects of himself in the available time. His continuing identity shift has been accompanied by significant reshaping in his key relationships, including his mother’s death in September 2021, and also in how he sees himself and others.

In Chapter 22, Emilio co-authored with his friend and former colleague Paolo Maragno an account of their shared experiences of designing and developing a series of university continuing education programs for Venezuelan working engineers. That work entailed considerable agility of thought and practice, as well as a determination to push ahead with the initiative in spite of opposition in several quarters. For both Emilio and Paolo, their first experience of collaborative autoethnography helped them to generate new understandings of a former period in their professional and personal lives, and in doing so to glean fresh insights into themselves, into their core values as professional colleagues and into their aspirations for their ongoing lifelong learning.

In some ways, our three chapters represent something of a microcosm of the broader range of occurrences and analyses presented in the other chapters in this handbook; in other ways, as with all human experiences, each editor’s situation is distinctive and indeed unique. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify both commonalities and differences among them, using the lenses of the three organising principles referred to above, that simultaneously highlight autoethnography’s wider resonance beyond each individual person.

With regard to pedagogies, at one level, Debbie worked for many years as a primary school teacher, Patrick’s current position description is professor (educational research), and the programs designed and developed by Emilio and Paolo were directed at engineering education. At another level, all three chapters explicated the educative intentions and effects of their respective accounts. Debbie hopes that other grieving parents, and other doctoral candidates and their supervisors, will discern some potential lessons for themselves from her experiences, while at the same time emphasising that her approaches to grief work and to doctoral study worked for her but are not necessarily applicable to others. Similarly, Patrick wrote what is otherwise a personal and private reflection with the intention of assisting other academics who might be experiencing burnout. Relatedly, despite the passage of time since they worked together, Emilio and Paolo see value in sharing with others their efforts to circumvent opposition in order to deliver carefully contextualised education programs.
In relation to *positionality*, all three editors acknowledge the privilege attached to the working roles that we have occupied and to the opportunities for formal education that we have enjoyed. At the same time, all three editors have been the recipients of both microaggressions and more serious instances of bullying and hostility. We have also all experienced personal trauma of varying kinds that has left its mark on our psyches. Despite the considerable differences among us, we are united by a commitment to educational research as a vehicle for personal and communal empowerment and transformation, and we share as well the conviction that autoethnographic research can likewise be educative and liberating.

In terms of *power*, we accentuated in our respective chapters specific events or conditions that reduced our sense of agency and autonomy, and that restricted in different ways our capacity to function fully. In Debbie’s case, the death of her son Rory radically altered her previously planned life trajectory, and caused her to question otherwise taken-for-granted assumptions about who she is and what her purposes in life are. For Patrick, the seemingly unrelenting stress occasioned by academic work intensification made him challenge his capacity to perform work that previously he loved and to which he assigned high value. Both Emilio and Paolo found the opposition of some of their colleagues frustrating and at times overwhelming, even though they pressed on with their initiative. Yet in all three situations, we have found strategies for reclaiming some of that lost agency and autonomy. And one of those strategies has entailed the use of autoethnography, in concert with our particular educational research projects, to analyse events often characterised by complexity, and also to develop specialised language to render those analyses even more percipient.

**Conclusion**

In compiling this handbook, the editors wished to present a range of perspectives specifically to do with the use of autoethnography as it pertains to educational research. We sought multiple and diverse voices to highlight that our stories, although unique to each author, have resonance with the greater theme of storytelling as a relational endeavour. In these uncertain times, it is reassuring to acknowledge that other academics continue to think deeply about the constraints, challenges and contributions pertaining to educational research, and how it affects us as scholars as well as society as a whole. This connection between meaningful research and community is authentically portrayed through the application of autoethnography as a methodologically sound and rigorous practice as exemplified within the pages of this handbook. The editors wish the authors well in their future endeavours and hope that, in sharing these stories, readers will be inspired to conduct their research in this manner, and also to be comforted in the knowledge that others have walked, and are walking, this path.