

Me, Myself, and I

Finding the Self in Self-Study Through Scholarly Personal Narrative

Tamar Meskin

Self-study of Creative Practice

Scholarly Personal Narrative

Personal History Self-study

Self-narrative

Writing Memory

As self-study scholars, we often engage in crafting narratives to reveal the stories and structures underpinning our practice. Such narratives are crucial for interrogating the self within self-study, and often provide the foundations for our research endeavours. How we might construct these narrative(s) is my focus in this paper. In my doctoral study of my practice as a director of formal theatre productions in a South African university, I employed Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN) (Nash, 2004) as a technique to investigate the evolution of my educational philosophy and my journey to becoming a director-teacher. In this paper, using my own research as an exemplar (Mishler, 1990), I explore the connections between self-study and SPN in order to interrogate the value and benefit of SPN as a method for self-study. Through a comparative discussion of SPN and self-study, and a close reading of my own SPN, I examine whether, and how, the tenets of SPN lend themselves to self-study purposes. I believe that SPN, which embraces a gazing inward (Ritter & Ergas, 2021) alongside an engagement with context and a recognition of contingency, offers a powerful tool for the interrogation of the ontological self that is central to self-study.

Context of the Study

This paper emerges from my self-study PhD research (Meskin, 2021), which considered my identity as a director-teacher of drama, and its relationship to my educational philosophy and creative/teaching practice as the director of formal theatre productions in a South African university context. Locating my director-teacher self “at the intersection between theory and practice, research and pedagogy” (LaBoskey, 2004, p. 827), I employed personal history self-study (Krall, 1988; Samaras et al., 2004) to frame my study, and utilised a bricolage approach (Pithouse-Morgan & Samaras, 2019; Rogers, 2012) that drew on multiple theoretical and conceptual ideas. Central to my study was an understanding of narrative in terms of how it shapes understanding and experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), navigates past, present, and future interactions (Clandinin, 2006), and crosses boundaries (Riessman, 1993). The way such narrative(s) can emerge is my focus here.

One of the ideas used in constructing my self-study story(ies), was the Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN) (Nash, 2004). As “an autobiographical story, rooted in the life experience of the writer” (Meskin, 2021, p.46), I used the SPN to develop and understand my own educational journey to becoming a director-teacher. In this paper, I explore the connections

between self-study and SPN, using my own research as an exemplar (Mishler, 1990), in order to interrogate the value and benefit of SPN as a method *for* self-study, and in particular, as a means for constructing personal history narratives. I am particularly interested in the potential SPN offers for the Self-Study of Creative Practice (S-SCP) (Meskin & van der Walt, 2022), a self-reflexive research engagement in which artists and practitioners can use self-study methods to interrogate how they work creatively, as well as the products of their creative work, which is my long-term research focus.

Aim of the Study

Hamilton and Pinnegar (1998) assert that “The value of self-study depends on the researcher/teacher providing convincing evidence that they know what they claim to know” (p. 243). In personal history self-study particularly, this evidence is framed by the researcher’s personal history narrative. Among the challenges of personal history self-study is first, how to construct this narrative, which relies largely upon (often elusive) memory (O’Reilly-Scanlon, 2002); and second, how to include and connect that narrative within the broader framework of a study. For me, SPN proved useful as a method for addressing these challenges. In this paper, therefore, I pose the question: how can SPN operate as a method for interrogating the self in self-study?

Answering this question involves understanding the parameters and guidelines of SPN as they intersect with, and offer alternatives to, the kinds of narrative conventions most often employed in self-study practice. I seek to draw out both the overlapping devices and the interstitial spaces between self-study and SPN, foregrounding an engagement with the ‘self’ in self-study, rather than how that self affects others (Ergas & Ritter, 2021). As a technique that recognises the centrality of the subjective ‘I’ to the research process (Nash & Bradley, 2011), SPN embraces openly a gazing inward (Ritter & Ergas, 2021) that seems especially pertinent in the light of these framings of self-study research.

Methodology and Methods

In this paper, I focus primarily on methodological issues, rather than offering a self-study *per se*. That said, self-study principles underpin this work and I argue that SPN as method facilitates the “simultaneous focus on. . . self as it enacts practice” (Ovens & Fletcher, 2014, p. 6). In doing so, it creates space for discoveries about the self, the self-in-practice, the practice itself, and the experience of that practice. Given that practice “emerges from our narrative history as humans and names the things we have learned that have become intuitive and instinctive” (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 21), SPN seems an apt approach.

As method, SPN highlights the value of narrative as a means of revealing the self, recognising that “we know the world through the stories that are told about it” (Chase, 2005, p. 641); in self-study, those stories are our own personal ones, where “the researcher becomes the research subject” (p. 645). Thus, a narrative becomes “a way of understanding experience” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. xxvi), synchronically and diachronically, facilitating the exploration of past, present, and future, and the intersections between them, as we look backward to move forward.

The primary data for this paper emerges from my own SPN as personal history, which I use as a case study to explore how SPN functions in developing the self-narrative. To frame my study, I offer a brief review of personal history self-study and its key components, before embarking on a discussion of SPN and its strategies. I use a close reading of my doctoral SPN as an example of SPN within self-study. I then offer a comparative discussion of SPN and self-study, interrogating how the tenets of SPN lend themselves to self-study purposes. Finally, I explore how SPN materialises the self so as to allow for an unpacking of those interior mysteries that drive so much of who we are and what we do, permitting insights into the ontological self. These insights are particularly useful when thinking about using self-study to interrogate the creative, artistic self, and the connection between self and creative practice.

Understanding Personal History Self-Study

As noted above, self-study encompasses multiple possible methods, many of which adopt narrative form. Among these is personal history self-study, which has a long history of application in the self-study lexicon (Graham, 1989; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1994; Krall, 1998; Samaras et al., 2004). As described by Samaras et al. (2004), personal history encompasses “the historical or life experiences related to personal and professional meaning making” (p. 909-910). Looking at oneself historically enables “critical insight into both the nature of her/his relationship to individuals,

institutions, cultural values, and political events, and the ways in which these social relationships contribute to . . . identity, values, and ideological perspectives” (Britzman, 1986, p. 452). These claims resonate strongly with me since I have no doubt that my lived experience has shaped, and continues to shape, the way I live in the world, and everything I do both personally and professionally.

For me, the key challenge of personal history self-study is its focus on memory as key to the writing process. Inevitably, when we write about our past, it must be “retrospectively interpreted, in terms of the meaning that life is now seen to hold” (Graham, 1989, p. 99). To navigate memory, we often use “nodal moments” (De Lange & Grossi, 2009; Graham, 1989; Tidwell, 2006), disentangling each moment like a “knot, which requires reflection and working through to get it ‘undone’ in the memory” (De Lange & Grossi, 2009, p. 204). We must remember, though, that any history is written at a particular moment in time, and consequently, “The dominant autobiographic truth . . . is the vision or pattern or meaning of life which the autobiographer has at the moment of writing his *[sic]* autobiography” (Weintraub, 1975, p. 827). Thus, personal history self-study must navigate a looking forward-looking back dynamic. It was largely the necessity to engage with the vicissitudes of memory and how it plays out in the narrative present that led me to SPN. What emerges is a prismatic view of selfhood, where each turn reveals a different facet to contribute to the complex construct that is the ‘self’.

Understanding Scholarly Personal Narrative

There are remarkable overlaps and similarities between personal history self-study and the SPN approach; both are invested in recovering the past in order to make sense of the present and shape the future, and both are concerned with the individual’s personal story as a means to engage with broader discourses. Nash and Bradley (2011) describe SPN as “a methodology that allows for the “subjective I’ of the writer to share the centrality of the research along with the ‘objective they’ of more traditional forms of scholarship” (loc. 294). SPN is thus an autobiographical story, rooted in the life experience of the writer, which “tells the story of the author in such a way as to analyze, interpret, and reflect upon some larger idea, event, or important figure in the writer’s life” (Nash & Bradley, 2011, loc. 350).

There is no set form for the SPN, but the essential criterion is that “SPN writers intentionally organize their essays around themes, issues, constructs, and concepts that carry larger, more universalizable meanings for readers” (Nash, 2004, p. 43). Thus, while SPN foregrounds the researcher’s self in the narrative, the intention is to use the narrative to draw broader conclusions. Like self-study, therefore, the intention of SPN is not simply to narrate the story of one’s life, but to do so in order to make an impact on both the researcher and the world. As with self-study, then, a transformation and improvement agenda, which “puts stories in the service of ideas” (Nash, 2004, p. 110), is present.

In SPN, we write “under the influence of our context bubbles” (Nash, 2004, p. 39), requiring a clear explication of context and an awareness of the perspective of the writer at the given moment in time. This influence means that “the research language [we] use . . . comes through the prisms/filters/screens of the ways we view the world” (Nash & Bradley, 2011, loc. 1365). Since I see the self as prismatic, reflecting many different facets depending on perspective, prismatic writing seems appropriate as a method.

A key feature of SPN is the need to explore larger implications arising from the researcher’s personal story, a process Nash (2004) refers to as “Universalizability” (p. 6). The personal story becomes a catalyst for something that goes beyond the singular researcher experience, facilitated by the intersubjective connections between self, other, and the world, through its “applicability, extension, commonality, consensus, and relevance” (Nash, 2004, p. 161), which extend the story’s ramifications beyond the self.

This is not to suggest any idea of singular universal truth. Rather, universalizability enhances “narrative truth” (Nash, 2004, p. 41), in which “there is only interpretation, perspective, point of view, and personal preference” (p. 41) and “the universal plot line of contingency, choice and chance” (p. 39). In accepting this reality, as writers, we recognise, as is the postmodern precept, that there is no singular meaning or truth, only meaning and truth for that particular moment. Awareness of how this temporal specificity shapes meaning is an important signifier in self-narratives.

The concept of “proof-texts” (Nash, 2004, p. 65) is important in SPN. These proof-texts can provide support, critique, or simply illuminate the writer’s narrative in some way. Elsewhere, Nash and Bradley (2011) refer to these as “lit embeds” (loc. 2194) to contrast with the conventional notion of a literature review, arguing for “referenced scholarship” to be “embedded within the writing, not set apart from it” (loc. 2197). For me, embedding the “referenced scholarship” in the narrative provided a way to integrate my academic and writerly voices.

Like self-study, SPN rejects the conventional notions of generalisability and replicability as measures of research validity. Instead, Nash & Bradley (2011) suggest using criteria that arise out of the researcher’s ontological positioning, which Nash (2004) describes as, “trustworthiness, honesty, plausibility, interpretive self-consciousness, introspectiveness/self-reflection, and universalizability” (p. 5). These expanded validity criteria seem to me especially useful in the self-study realm.

Examining My SPN

In my doctoral thesis, I used SPN to excavate my personal educational philosophy by exploring the various phases of my lived experience as a learner and teacher. All of this, as with this paper, engaged a critical friend in the writing process. While there is no space here to examine the whole SPN, I highlight some examples to show how the recursive writing and thinking process of SPN operates to open windows into the self.

The first extract from my SPN comes from my early schooling:

Figure 1

SPN Extract 1 (Meskin, 2021)

I never studied drama at school, so the lessons for my drama-teacher future came from other sources. My history teacher, to whom I shall refer as Mr. W, provided one of the earliest of these lessons in the art of teaching, learnt from having it modelled for me by someone who loved learning, and taught us to do the same. If I had to name the single most important educational influence on me as a school girl, it was my three years studying history with Mr. W. Mr. W was a maverick and he was one of those teachers who make space to imagine an infinity of possibilities. For my final two years of high school, we studied in his completely redecorated classroom, complete with armchairs and coffee, and learnt the art of argument, the importance of independent thinking, and how to challenge what constituted ‘truth.’ Above all, he would say, “Think for yourself, don’t just accept what is told to you – make your own decisions, be informed, stay outside the crowd.” What he taught me went beyond a history lesson and I will never forget those lessons and that experience. He made me realise that learning is not about how many facts you can remember and regurgitate back; instead, it is about providing the tools to make sense of your world. Or, as I have discovered in later years, what education icon John Dewey articulated as his mantra: “Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.” This lesson has stayed with me longer than any specific piece of content.

Key here is the detail provided since “Being explicit in your findings. . . and using examples. . . shifts the reader’s lens from ‘this is the writer’s narrative’ to ‘this is our shared narrative’” (Nash & Bradley, 2011, loc. 1822). The way the memory is framed from the perspective of now evidences the dual dynamic of past and present existing simultaneously: I tell the story in the present and so it reflects the way the memory is viewed from the perspective of now.

The reference to Dewey constitutes a proof-text, provided to locate the SPN in the literature of the relevant field. Finally, like any good narrative, it contains location, character, action, and dialogue – the elements of story that make someone want to read it. This is crucial in SPN (Nash & Bradley, 2011), where such literary devices as interesting characters, conflicts, climaxes, and resolutions are vital, to demonstrate “the imaginative touch of a creative artist as well as the scholarly touch of a vigorous thinker” (loc. 1457).

In an echo of the idea of a critical friend in self-study, I added a second voice to my SPN, using a “layering” (Ronai, 1992) technique to indicate a dialogue between my past self (the remembered self) and my present self (the researcher). I used italics here to denote the different voices. Here is what followed the above section:

Figure 2

SPN Extract 2 (Meskin, 2021)

*It might seem that this learning is not related to directing or teaching theatre in any way, but for me, that history class changed how I knew the world. I think that the way I direct, my fascination with context, and with how events fit into a broader frame than may be presented in any given play, stems from these years. In addition, the significance of being told to think for myself, to make my own informed decisions about what was happening around me, cannot be overstated. I often think that who I am as an educator is rooted in those lessons, modelled on a pedagogy that taught **how** to think, rather than **what** to think, and that finally, content matters less than process. If I think about my philosophy of learning, that is as close to a basic principle that I can come, and that principle is translated into my directing practice in my desire not to dictate, but to evoke; not to give answers, but to ask the right questions to elicit the students' own answers.*

This is an example of universalization— bringing the story into a broader research framework and making connections that resonate not just for the researcher, but for those reading the research, as it is disseminated and presented to the wider world.

It is important to note how the narrative always engages with those others who form a crucial part of the lived experience as well as the telling of it. While not the participant experience of self-study, this nonetheless reflects a similar injunction: that our stories are not solo acts but examples of intersubjectivity in action. This technique resonates with the notion of creating an “inner relationship”. . .that takes place within the confines of the ‘self’” (Ritter & Ergas, 2021, p. 8), rather than the more conventional external ones of self-study, a crucial distinction from my perspective.

A second extract discusses the key concept of learning through failure and reflects my decision, while living in Los Angeles, to abandon the pursuit of a career as an actress:

Figure 3

SPN Extract 3 (Meskin, 2021)

It was at a Hollywood party—a very fancy one, high up in the Hollywood Hills, with A-list celebrities as guests and vast quantities of alcohol and any other substance you might imagine flowing free—where I found myself ‘working the room,’ making conversations with agents and casting directors, trying to sell myself as someone with whom they needed to work, that I felt a seismic shift in my sense of self. I remember so distinctly the moment of decision, when I let go of my Oscar dream, realising that while acting was my passion, I didn’t want to spend my life playing the role necessary to make it in the soul-crushing industry that is acting in America, where talent counts less than looks, and who you know matters more than what you know. I stopped playing the Hollywood game. I still acted, but I withdrew from the constant pressure of agent-hunting and audition-stalking that is the life of the average unemployed actor.

I can speak of this decision dispassionately here, but it was difficult giving up on something that had been so important to me. At the time, I had no positive response to the experience but in thinking about it years later, and in particular about how it altered the trajectory of my life, I have realised that while it certainly was painful, it was also liberating. I had held on to a singular vision of myself for so long that I was unable to recognise other options. Letting go opened up the doors of possibility for me. This has also become a very important aspect of my teaching: I believe that we learn from our (perceived) failures as much as from our successes. The important thing is to recognise that ‘failure’ is also opportunity.

I include this to show the kind of vulnerability and openness required of the researcher in SPN, highlighting the inherent risk in telling our stories. These are key factors in narrative truth – authenticity emerges from the honesty of the storyteller made evident within the construct of the story.

The final example from my SPN explores my evolution as a university teacher, and describes a nodal moment from early in my teaching career:

Figure 4

SPN Extract 34 (Meskin, 2021)

I was asked at short notice to teach a section on DIE and, specifically, the work of Dorothy Heathcote. I had about four days in which to prepare a double lecture (one and half hours) on Heathcote's DIE theory. Since I knew (at the time) almost nothing about the subject, I began reading. About four books later, I felt I had enough material to try to prepare a lecture. Terrified I would forget something important, I wrote out my whole lecture word for word; it came to 63 pages! When, after half an hour of the period, I had covered only seven pages, and the students were restless and disengaged, I knew I was in trouble. And so, taking a deep breath, bracing myself, and mentally reminding myself about what lecturers I liked had done, I closed the folder, stepped out from behind the lectern, and began to teach them. I didn't cover nearly as much as I should have, and there were large gaps in the theory that I didn't have time to explain, but I believe they left the lecture knowing something about Heathcote and her ideas on drama as methodology. My overwhelming feeling at the end was relief at having gotten through it; but after my heart rate had slowed, I thought about what had happened and made some early decisions about the kind of teacher I was going to be. It was the first time that I called myself a teacher without mentally adding an asterisk to the title to note that it wasn't my real job, just something I was doing because I couldn't think of anything else. It was the first time I saw teaching as opening up my world rather than as a second choice that constricted it.

The experience outlined above remains vivid in my memory; I still have the notes on Heathcote: The folder is dirty and torn in places from lots of use, and the handwritten 63 pages are still there, although slightly yellowed with age. I keep it as a reminder of how I began to learn how to become a teacher.

This section of my SPN marked a pivotal shift in my thinking about myself. Two important considerations for self-study emerge: "ethical truth" (Nash, 2004, p. 137), which requires "being as honest as possible about what one remembers, feels, knows, and senses about events and people, both from the past and in the present. . . and ... has everything to do with an author's motives, intentions, and attempts to be accurate" (p. 137). Ethical truth underpins the integrity of the researcher and the study, thus adding another level of validity to the work. Second, this speaks to the need for self-study researchers to "turn inward to inquire into, discover and reaffirm our inwardness" (Ergas & Ritter, 2021, p. 8) and, in so doing, embrace "a stance that celebrates 'self' rather than seeks ways to constantly validate its authority" (Ritter & Ergas, 2021, p. 6). These ideas are especially significant in imagining S-SCP.

Narratives, for Nash (2004), exist as "Constructivist Circles" (p. 49), in which "Each of us is both constructivist and constructed. The stories we construct then turn around and construct us, and we them... forever" (p. 49). These circles of stories, told from different perspectives, shape and re-shape each other to construct the intersecting, multi-storied self that is central to the self-study approach. Bringing the constructivist circle into self-study offers rich possibilities for navigating ourselves in practice.

Comparing SPN and Self-Study

Self-study as a method is framed by the following key tenets (Meskin & van der Walt, 2018):

1. It is personal and self-initiated
2. It is aimed at improvement of practice
3. It is a collaborative, interactive process
4. It uses transparent, multiple qualitative methods
5. Validation of research is through examples and through making the findings and the knowledge generated public

These ideas, drawn from LaBoskey (2004, p. 842-853) and Samaras (2011, p. 72-82), encapsulate the self-study approach, and can thus be used to compare self-study with SPN.

To create a similar encapsulation of SPN, I suggest, in summary, the following key tenets:

- Focus on self, context, and practice
- Search for narrative truth
- Integration of relevant literature through proof-texts
- Universalizability and making the personal public
- Requirement to be explicit and detailed, with a systematic, transparent process
- Alternative validity measures

The close parallels between the two approaches are apparent: both self-study and SPN are personal, context-specific, and engaged in the examination of practice. They both require an engagement with relevant literature and texts. Both insist on transparency and providing an explicit, detailed account of the research process. In both, there is a clear demand to disseminate the research into the public sphere. Finally, validation in both instances is achieved through means that are alternative to the objective requisites of conventional research.

Less immediately apparent connections are also evident. For me, the injunction to ensure universalizability speaks both to the improvement agenda that is key to self-study and to the interactive element. The implication is that the personal narrative only has efficacy once it moves into an arena in which it interacts and resonates with others – the “universe”, which “consists of persons outside the author’s field of vision with multiple fields of interest, diverse disciplinary identifications, unique personal and professional lives, and a vast array of communities of belonging” (Nash & Bradley, 2011, loc. 1879).

There are also areas of overt difference between self-study and SPN. In particular, in SPN there is less focus on the direct engagement of participants and on the use of critical friends. That said, Nash and Bradley (2011) offer this exhortation: “It takes a village to offer ongoing support to the SPN writer. . . . [This] village can be a small group of people, or just one person who knows what you are embarking on, and who is willing to assist you at all times in the process” (loc. 737). This resonates with the notion of critical friends and the need in self-study to build a like-minded community of scholarship. Similarly, the ultimate test of SPN is not in the narrative itself, but in the connections it makes beyond the narrative.

The SPN As Method for Self-study

In summary, we can look at the four main components of SPN:

1. Identification of key themes
2. Connecting these themes to the writer’s personal stories in order to exemplify and explicate the points being made
3. Draws on relevant, pre-existing research and scholarship in order to ground and enrich the personal narrative
4. Ends up with universalizable ideas and applications that connect with all readers in some way. (Nash & Bradley, 2011, loc. 2515)

These components are equated with the concepts “pre-search, me-search, re-search, and we-search” (Nash & Bradley, 2011, loc. 2515). All these phases may be equally applied to self-study, which moves in a “hermeneutic spiral of questioning, discovering, framing, reframing, and revisiting” (Samaras, 2011, p.72). We can identify in the four components exactly this spiral: pre-search (questioning and discovering); me-search (framing); re-search (reframing); and we-search (revisiting). With the recursive nature of the work, the need to draw larger implications, and the recognition of the significance of prior experience and knowledge, the SPN process offers unique synergy with the self-study endeavour.

The similarities and differences between self-study and SPN produce a rich, complex framework in which to investigate and reflect on the self; the different foci make for deeper insights and more surprising moments of storytelling, which can give personal narrative/s more weight and relevance, as well as offering a three-dimensional portrait of the researcher-self. There is great potential for enriching both self-study and SPN approaches through considering the parallels and dissonances between them, using SPN as a method *for* a method (e.g., personal history self-study), facilitating writing oneself into the story.

Three key observations support my argument for using SPN in self-study. First, and specifically in regard to personal history self-study, the challenge with writing personal history is always to find ways to move beyond the perceived limitations of memory and to situate the narrative within the broader framework of the more conventional and formal research endeavour. By embracing the philosophy of SPN and, in particular, its willing acceptance of the centrality of the personal within the scholarly, I was able to navigate a pathway toward both personal understanding and scholarly awareness. This, for me, seems to embody the spirit of self-study as one “writes oneself into the story” (Meskin, 2021, p.46).

My second observation concerns SPN’s acceptance of contingency within narrative and the understanding of the backward-and-forward dynamic that is often at the heart of a historical narrative. Rather than discouraging retrospective narratives (like mine), SPN recognises that the past and present are never entirely dis-entwined. Indeed, as Nash (2004) notes: “as we try to recall our pasts, we inevitably reconstruct them. . . We remember *then* according to what we need, feel, and think *now*” (p. 140). This was particularly liberating for me in my research experience.

Lastly, SPN offers useful and unique ways to address the constant challenge to self-study researchers to find ways to demonstrate validity and trustworthiness, through the use of proof texts, universalizability, and narrative truth (Nash, 2004). All of these offer to self-study researchers the potential to engage in research that is both “me-search” and “we-search” (Nash & Bradley, 2011), an articulation of the research endeavour that seems uniquely suited to the self-study project.

Looking Forward

Finally, I wonder how SPN might intersect with reimagining self-study as a “non-instrumental approach” (Ritter & Ergas, 2021, p. 11), making it “more self-focused as opposed to merely self-initiated” (p. 11). In such a reframing, the potential applicability of self-study in multiple contexts is expanded, a view that lends itself to facilitating S-SCP. The particular significance of SPN for me is that it “integrate[s] scholarly discourse and content (re-search) into the self narrative (me-search)” (Nash & Bradley, 2011, loc. 44). This is exciting to me in the same way that self-study is exciting: creating a space for the personal story to be valued within the research arena.

For S-SCP, this is especially important since, as creative practitioners, we are always navigating the complex, often uncomfortable dissonances between creativity and academic discourse. Such methodologies allow me to imagine building a self-study community of creative artists/scholars through providing a palette of narrative possibilities that might shatter the perceived boundary between creativity and scholarship. By highlighting the power of stories, SPN offers one such approach within the broader realm of self-study scholarship.

Nash (2004) claims that “We are storied selves who write our own realities based on these unique stories” (p. 22). How might we tell those narratives using our artistic voices? How might my story speak outwards? How might the very experience of telling my stories change my own – and others’ – perceptions? These are the wonderings that excite my artistic-researcher self and frame my hopes for future explorations.

References

- Britzman, D. (1986). Cultural myths in the making of a teacher: Biography and social structure in teacher education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56(4), 442-456. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.56.4.mv28227614l44u66>
- Chase, S. (2005). Narrative inquiry: Multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In N. L. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 631-680). SAGE.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. Jossey-Bass.
- Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative inquiry: A methodology for studying lived experience. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 27(1), 44-54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X060270010301>
- De Lange, N., & Grossi, E. (2009). An arts-based thesis: Reflections on the how and the who and the why of 'I'. In K. Pithouse, C. Mitchell, & R. Moletsane (Eds.), *Making connections: Self-study and social action* (pp. 187-206).

Peter Lang.

- Ergas, O. & Ritter, J. K. (2021). Expanding the place of self in self-study through an autoethnography of discontents. *Studying Teacher Education*, 17(1), 4-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17425964.2020.1836486>
- Graham, R. J. (1989). Autobiography and education. *The Journal of Educational Thought*, 23(2), 92-105. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23768385>
- Hamilton, M. L., & Pinnegar, S. (1998). Conclusion: The value and the promise of self-study. In M. L. Hamilton (Ed.), *Reconceptualizing teaching practice: Self-study in teacher education* (pp. 264-277). Falmer Press.
- Knowles, J. G., & Holt-Reynolds, D. (1994). An introduction: Personal histories as medium, method, and milieu for gaining insights into teacher development. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 21(1), 5-12. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23475532>
- Krall, F. R. (1988). From the inside out - Personal history as educational research. *Educational Theory*, 38(4), 467-479. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5446.1988.00467.x>
- LaBoskey, V. K. (2004). The methodology of self-study and its theoretical underpinnings. In J. J. Loughran, M. L. Hamilton, V. K. LaBoskey, & T. L. Russell (Eds.), *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices* (pp. 817-870). Springer.
- Meskin, T. (2021). *Theatre roots, learning routes: Educating through formal theatre production in higher education - a self-study*. [Doctoral Dissertation: University of KwaZulu-Natal]. UKZN Research Space. <https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/handle/10413/21388>
- Meskin, T. & van der Walt, T. (2018). Knowing in our bones: Interrogating embodied practice in theatre-making/theatre-teaching through self-study. *South African Theatre Journal*, 31(1), 36-47. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10137548.2017.1413951>
- Meskin, T. & van der Walt, T. (2022). "Looking for anchors": Using reciprocal poetic inquiry to explore the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our educator-artist selves. *Studying Teacher Education*, 18(3), 240-257. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17425964.2022.2079622>
- Mishler, E. (1990). Validation in inquiry-guided research: The role of exemplars in narrative studies. *Harvard Educational Review*, 60(4), 415-443. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.60.4.n4405243p6635752>
- Nash, R. J. (2004). *Liberating scholarly writing: The power of personal narrative*. Teachers College Press.
- Nash, R. J., & Bradley, D. L. (2011). *Me-search and re-search: A guide for writing scholarly personal narrative manuscripts* [Kindle Paperwhite].
- Ovens, A., & Fletcher, T. (2014). Doing self-study: The art of turning inquiry on yourself. In A. Ovens & T. Fletcher (Eds.), *Self-study in physical education teacher education: Exploring the interplay of practice and scholarship* (pp. 3-14). Springer.
- O'Reilly-Scanlon, K. (2002). Muted echoes and lavender shadows: Memory-work and self-study. In C. Kosnik, A. Freese, & A. P. Samaras (Eds.), *Making a difference in teacher education through self-study. Proceedings of the fourth international conference on self-study of teacher education practices, volume 2* (pp. 74-78). OISE/UT.
- Pinnegar, S., & Hamilton, M. L. (2009). *Self-study of practice as a genre of qualitative research: Theory, methodology, and practice*. Springer.
- Pithouse-Morgan, K., & Samaras, A. P. (2019). Polyvocal play: A poetic bricolage of the why of our transdisciplinary self-study research. *Studying Teacher Education: A journal of self-study of teacher education practices*, 15(1), 4-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17425964.2018.1541285>

Riessman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative analysis*. SAGE.

Ritter, J. K. & Ergas, O. (2021). Being a fish inside and outside the waters of self-study. *Professional Development in Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2021.1902841>

Rogers, M. (2012). Contextualizing theories and practices of bricolage research. *The Qualitative Report*, 17(48), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2012.1704>

Ronai, C. R. (1992). The reflexive self through narrative: A night in the life of an erotic dancer/researcher. In C. Ellis & M. Flaherty (Eds.), *Investigating subjectivity: Research on lived experience* (pp. 102-124). SAGE.

Samaras, A. P., Hicks, M. A., & Berger, J. G. (2004). Self-study through personal history. In J. J. Loughran, M. L. Hamilton, V. K. LaBoskey, & T. L. Russell (Eds.), *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices, part one* (pp. 905-942). Springer.

Samaras, A. (2011). *Self-study teacher research: Improving your practice through collaborative inquiry*. Sage.

Tidwell, D. (2006). Nodal moments as a context for meaning. In D. Tidwell & L. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Self-study and diversity* (pp. 267-286). Sense Publishers.

Weintraub, K. J. (1975). Autobiography and historical consciousness. *Critical Inquiry*, 1(4), 821-848. <https://doi.org/10.1086/447818>



Tamar Meskin

Durban University of Technology

This content is provided to you freely by Equity Press.

Access it online or download it at https://equitypress.org/pausing_at_the_thres/jtwUNvwa.

