The Use of Autoethnography in Educational Research: Locating Who We Are in What We Do

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Abstract

Autoethnography is a research method that engages the individual in cultural analysis and interpretation (Chang, 2008). The resultant self-analysis can have purposeful implications for the preparation of teachers and schools leaders. The process of self-exploration and interrogation aids individuals in locating themselves within their own history and culture allowing them to broaden their understanding of their own values in relation to others. In this paper, the methodological implications of autoethnography as well as its value as a research method is discussed in the context of understanding the self/other dialectic. Further, the relationship between autoethnography and the philosophical and practical implications relating to identity within education is examined.

Introduction

The modern era of public schooling has emphasized a gridlock of planning, design, implementation, and evaluation in education (Eisner, 2004); leaving much said about the structure of schooling and less about the agentic roles within it. In Canada, birth patterns and immigration have changed the face of the student population; as a result, complex diversity has become a cornerstone of public education (Ryan, Pollack, & Antonelli, 2009). Teachers, administrators, and school personnel face unprecedented socio-economic, religious, and ethnic heterogeneity in the student population. However, those who guide students have yet to occupy a similar space; that is, diversity amongst teachers is significantly underrepresented in school settings (Ryan et al., 2009). A postmodern paradigm accentuates interrelatedness across the divides of age, gender, and culture as part of a new and necessary consciousness (Bowers, 1993), reflecting a socially constructed reality of education that is based upon relationships between constituents and pedagogy. In order to traverse existing divisions of age, gender, culture and their associations, the identity of the educator warrants, perhaps even demands, analytical exploration. For teachers to be effective in a climate of layered and complex diversity, they must become reflexive educators (Banks, 2001).

A dialectical relationship between teachers and students is therefore one based in a cultural conflict of identity. In light of the represented multiplicity of difference in Canadian classrooms, Britzman (1991) described the process of becoming a teacher as one of biographical crisis, involving more than "applying decontextualized skills or of mirroring predetermined images; it is a time when one's past, present and future are set in dynamic tension" (p. 31). Such a conflict requires that those involved in teaching take a critical stance towards the social relations created within difference. Taking such a position generates more authentic knowledge of "personal educational experiences, core beliefs and ideologies" (Alsup, 2006, p. 127) and how that personal knowledge informs educational philosophy and pedagogical practice (Alsup, 2006; Hickey & Austin, 2007). Autoethnography provides educators with the opportunity to take such a stance. Through the interrogation of one's identity and the locations and interactions pivotal in the formation of identity, the result is increased consciousness and "conscientising of social positioning" (Hickey & Austin, 2007, p. 24). This awareness makes teachers better equipped to help students become "thoughtful, caring and reflective in a multicultural world society" (Banks, 2001, p. 5).

As a methodology, autoethnography draws on the concept of *conscientization* (Freire, 1971), which involves the individual becoming aware of one's position and creating a space to change the perception of the resultant reality. It is a study of the space between self and culture that engages the individual in experiences that cultivate an authentic

cycle of "action based on reflection, and reflection based on action" (Blackburn, 2000, p.7). The cycle of enlightenment, reflection and action as a critical process of self-analysis and understanding in relation to cultural and social discourses makes autoethnography a valuable tool in examining the complex, diverse and sometimes messy world of education. The lens through which this paper is presented is decidedly postmodern where understanding of "the cultural, historical, political, ecological, aesthetic, theological, and autobiographical impact of curriculum" (Slattery, 1995, p. 152) is embedded. Autoethnography mirrors the postmodern overlap of embedded understanding in its exploration of the multiple layers of identity, the meanings associated with them and the contexts in which they occur. In this paper, I discuss some of the methodological implications of using autoethnography, as well as its value as a research method from a postmodern perspective. Further, I examine the relationship between autoethnography and the philosophical and practical implications relating to identity within education.

The Role of Autoethnography in Educational Research

Knowledge construction is not so analytical or linear that in answering a question the result becomes absolute, no longer worthy of further questioning. While researchers focus on the specific, the advancement of knowledge comes from the researcher's ability to relate the micro details of a study to the macro implications of ideas and concepts. Under the umbrella of *self-study*, or the study of self in relation to other, autoethnography suits the ends of such research in the intersection of biography and history where the study of the self has both a relationship with and pertinence to the "context and ethos of a time" (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 15).

In order for a theory to find its place in education, that theory must inevitably have practical value that is constructed through personal experience. As an example, one can look to the reconceptualist work of Pinar (1984) for evidence of self-exploration he termed *curerre*—derived from the Latin infinitive verb meaning to *run* the racecourse where the process, the running, is emphasized over the product, the racetrack itself. Schubert (1986) recapitulated this view in his interpretation of curriculum. In order to reside and function within the social nature of curriculum, one must first locate him- or her-self as a curriculum inquirer.

> The individual seeks meaning amid the swirl of present events, moves historically into his or her own past to recover and reconstitute origins, and imagines and creates possible directions for his or her own future. Based on the sharing of autobiographical accounts with others who strive for similar understanding, the curriculum becomes a reconceiving of one's own perspective on life. It also becomes a social process whereby individuals come to greater understanding of themselves, others and the world through mutual reconceptualization. (Schubert, 1986, p.33)

Thus, self exploration has its place in curriculum study as evidenced by Pinar (1984) and Schubert (1986); however, autoethnography extends beyond self study. The focus of autoethnography is not the literal study of self but the space between the self and practice. Autoethnography requires parity in data gathered from the self and others as well as in how they are brought together to create meaning (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). Neumann (1996) asserted that autoethnographic "texts democratize the representational sphere of culture by locating the particular experiences of individuals in a tension with dominant expressions of discursive power" (p.189). Because the personal is the domain for autoethnography, a study using this methodology provides evidence and analysis in research relevant to a context that extends beyond a reconstruction of lived experience into the deeply personal and transformative (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). The importance and value of autoethnography will be revisited throughout this paper but of particular note is the capacity of autoethnography to initiate positive change. For individuals engaging in autoethnography as well as those who read such accounts, the process of engagement can be transformative. I will share examples to illustrate later in this paper. While a statement like positive change may be methodologically weak, the real, pragmatic implications cannot and should not be ignored. As researchers, we must question the purpose and potential outcomes of scholarly research. While there is no definitive or universal response to such a query, in the constructivist context of a self-study methodology like autoethnography, researchers are challenged to move beyond hegemonic research practices grounded in western epistemology at the expense of local knowledge (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). By deeply questioning the personal acceptance of social and academic hegemony and further analyzing the subsequent ramifications upon action, research methods like autoethnography provide a framework for disciplined inquiry that bridges the tensions between personal/social, theoretical/practical, and the self/other to inform theory and to highlight the lived experience and the struggles within it (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; Lather, 1991).

What defines an evocative, personalized piece of autoethnographic writing as scholarly research as opposed to simply interesting text? On a personal level, there is the belief that research has an ethical obligation to initiate or contribute to positive change based on evidence heuristically generated from within, and that this research be articulated in such a way that both the evidence and its subsequent value have genuine application. It is not enough for research in education to serve the world of academia without deference to the profoundly pragmatic demands of education. Addressing the academic purpose of research warrants further discussion in order to establish a context for the examination of autoethnography.

Illuminating Autoethnography

Autoethnography is generally understood as providing for the critical engagement of the self as it has been socially constructed, reconstructed and deconstructed (Hickey & Austin, 2007). More specifically, autoethnography is both an interdisciplinary method and text that constructs a self-narrative where the purpose is to reflexively critique the *situatedness* of self in relation to others in a social construct (Reed-Danahay, 1997; Spry, 2001). The researcher's own experience is the focal point from which a new understanding of the culture in question is revealed through a holistic view that encompasses the research, writing, analysis and dissemination as a bridge between the personal and the cultural/political/social. Jones (2005) adds further to the holistic view of the process by stating that the personal autoethnographic text creates a specific, perspectival view of the world and is committed to a space where dialogue leads to catalytic change.

While some scholars eschew autoethnography as self-indulgent personal writing that bears limited significant impact on the scholarly genre (Anderson, 2006; Coffey, 1999), it is the capacity for social change and the creation of dialogue that are arguably the most valuable yet least understood aspects of autoethnography. As Sparkes (2002) stated:

> This kind of writing can inform, awaken, and disturb readers by illustrating their involvement in social processes about which they might not have been consciously aware. Once aware, individuals may find the consequences of their involvement (or lack of it) unacceptable and seek to change the situation. In such circumstances, the potential for individual and collective restorying is enhanced. (p. 221)

The potential for autoethnographic inquiry to be transformative or catalytic for the author, the reader *and* the social construct to which they belong is simply too powerful to be labeled self-indulgent. Through autoethnographic inquiry, discourse is created between the subject and the relevant experiences in which they have engaged in socially, culturally and personally. By a process of *systematic sociological introspection* (Ellis, 1991), the subject interrogates his or her experiences through memory work and meaning-making resulting in conscientization. The resultant increased awareness of the self, and of the past and present worlds surrounding the self, primarily has the power to transform and emancipate the participant, but since the research is disseminated to a wider audience, it can also have a powerful impact on the reader. In education, pedagogy and curriculum development derived from previously unquestioned social practices is also in a position to be transformed as a result of such introspective analysis (Hickey & Austin, 2007).

Understanding Autoethnography as a Branch of Ethnography

In terms of labels, autoethnography is derived from *ethnography*, a research method primarily concerned with studying the other. Ethnography and related research methods aid in developing "specific understanding [of a phenomenon] through documentation of concrete details of practice, as well as elucidating the local meanings that happenings have for the people involved in them" (Bricker et al., 2008, p. 1). Although ethnography emphasizes elements of the self, it is the representations of *self* in autoethnography versus the concentration on the *other* in conventional ethnography that epitomize the most significant difference between the two forms. Autoethnographies typically "tend to communicate personal experiences and dialogues regarding oneself or one's interaction with others" (Gurvitch, Carson, & Beale, 2008, p.249). Both ethnography and autoethnography are related in terms of the research process but the distinct difference is in the role of the incorporated and integral self as the lens through which we gain new knowledge relating to culture and society (Chang, 2008).

While both ethnography and autoethnography reside in constructive inquiry, as a qualitative research method autoethnography is more firmly rooted in the postmodern where the individual's study of one's self within a culture replaces the researcher-as-observer stance present in more traditional ethnographic forms. Autoethnographic study is reality-based in that conventional evaluation standards of validity, reliability and objectivity are a consideration, though admittedly from a more constructivist perspective. The methodological rigours of evidence required of scholarly research will be discussed in later sections. For now, I note that autoethnography speaks to the reality and importance of the seemingly mundane because rich details excavated are essential to the authenticity of autoethnographic study; those details are not structured, linear or even logical, but they are very much drawn from the reality of practice (Patton, 2002).

The emergence of ethnographic derivatives like autoethnography are consequently driven by the questioning of a scientific or objectivist stance to emphasize the power and significance of the individual in creating new forms of knowledge where identity is central (Hickey & Austin, 2007). Knowledge in a postmodern sense is therefore an active construction predicated on the social, historical, moral and political (Howe, 2001). Moreover, an emphasis on the social construction of such knowledge falls in line with the preeminence of the individual in the postmodern paradigm that allows a direct connection between the self and the social context to take place (Reed-Danahay, 1997).

The Value of Autoethnography in Education and for Educators

Because autoethnography revolves around the exploration of self in relation to other and the space created between them, disciplines like education are ripe grounds for autoethnographic study because a social construction of knowledge, identity and culture is inherent. As a form of critical pedagogy, autoethnography often places emphasis on a transformative or emancipatory process for the individual and in the more widely constructed social relations in which the individual participates. Exploration of identity is not a straightforward process when considered from a postmodern perspective: identity demands a process of infinite interpretation, reinterpretation of experiences, circumstances and conditions emphasizing the interconnectedness of past and present, lived and living. As identity changes, adjusts and questions itself to form meaning, it is viewed as contextual and adaptive; a creation of fluidity whose movement is based on the demands placed upon it (Slattery, 1995). Sumara, Davis, and Laidlaw (2003) acknowledged that, "ideas emerge from people who are situated in particular contexts, and who are influenced by particular histories" (p. 158). The transformative value of autoethnography in education comes from the in-depth analysis of the complexity of the lived experiences of the self, the nature of the ebbs and flows, then goes further to examine the emergent identity in relation to others and the culture in which we dwell. Schools maintain a "delicate, complex, and subtle process of cultural transmission and self-actualization" (Eisner, 2004, p.301) as well as a myriad of *locations* within education. Those who are immersed in the construction of education, and more importantly are responsible for its direction, benefit from locating themselves within the educational system in order to build a foundation for transformative learning and emancipatory pedagogy (Eisner, 2004).

Autoethnography allows the educator the opportunity to effectively acknowledge the pragmatic demands of teaching and of everyday life to take stock of experiences and how they shape who we are and what we do. The subsequent process becomes one of conscientization and moves individuals towards a practice and pedagogy of emancipation at micro and macro levels (Austin & Hickey, 2007). Spry (2001) argued that such emancipation can liberate one from the deeply personal constraints, such as those imposed by family or culture that form identity in the overlapping worlds of the personal and professional. The self-reflexive critique of one's location is the beginning of the bridge between self and other while inspiration of the readers to examine their authentic knowledge and history results in the reconstruction of existing social relations (Ellis & Bochner, 1996; Spry, 2001).

As acknowledged earlier, writing from the personal perspective is not without its detractors in social science research, mainly for what some view as its overly subjective and personal nature. Autoethnography is subject to the traditional criteria of validity, reliability and generalizability in that the validity of autoethnographic research "relates to how well the writing will 'evoke in readers a feeling that the experience described is lifelike, believable, and possible" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 751). The reliability criterion is applied in the social construction of knowledge derived from the analysis of personal experience in relation to culture where a high degree of reflexivity is essential (Gurvitch et al., 2008). Changes that arise as a result of methodological, evaluator-driven decisions are excluded because constructions are continually evolving and being reconstructed. Such changes are paramount to

successful autoethnography but must be conscientiously documented so that readers can "explore the process, judge the decisions that were made, and understand what salient factors in the context led the evaluator to the decisions and interpretations made" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 242). The criterion of generalizability comes from the reader's ability to identify with the experiences of the writer and in terms of his or her own life, which relates to conceptions of validity or credibility that will be discussed in the next section of this paper. Despite Ellis and Bochner's acknowledgement of the necessity for trustworthiness criteria like validity, reliability and generalizability, these terms are drawn from positivist inquiry of which autoethnography is decidedly not a member. As a result, using validity, reliability and generalizability generates a veil of ambiguity relating to conventional notions of methodological trustworthiness that needs to be resolved. While this is a task far beyond the scope of this paper, in the following section I outline criteria for authenticity in autoethnography, which can be used to judge autoethnographic studies.

Authenticity in Autoethnography

Ellis and Bochner (2000) made an important point regarding the legitimacy of autoethnography, asserting that the placing and maintaining of the rights of those researched be at the heart of the inquiry. However, this point does not fully address the requirement for authenticity in research. In response to this and in keeping with the tenets of constructivist inquiry, Guba and Lincoln (1989) advanced four authenticity criteria essential in autoethnographic study: *fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity* and *tactical authenticity*. To allow the reader to locate instances that may 'ring true' to their own experiences, in the following sections, I present examples from educational research which have addressed each criterion.

Fairness refers to "the extent to which different constructions and their underlying value structures are solicited and honoured within the evaluation process" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 245-246). Fairness is achieved through identification of stakeholders and the construction from within the group; this identification is most transparent in the presentation of conflicts over claims, concerns and issues. An example of fairness is illustrated in an autoethnographic study of teacher development conducted by Austin and Hickey (2007). In the initial stages of the study, students were asked to engage in memory work to recollect evocative events. Some students expressed frustration that their conception of race was limited by their self-professed whiteness. One student through a series of guided discussions was able to identify her home space as being one impacted by race and class differences. The eminent and previously unrecognizable conflict not only highlighted her family and home constructions as raced spaces but further emphasized the presence and plight of Indigenous Australians but only when referenced through violation of White cultural mores. This example illustrates that fairness in autoethnography lies in (1) the examination and subsequent communication of the multiple emergent values systems and in (2) the detailed account of the conflicts between value constructions and the groundings that differentiate them.

The second criterion, *ontological authenticity*, is concerned with "the extent to which individual respondent's own emic constructions are improved, matured, expanded, and elaborated, in that they now possess more information and have become more sophisticated in its use" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 248). In an autoethnographic description drawn from education, ontological authenticity is generated through teaching and modeling. Feldman (2003, as cited in Pennington, 2007) cited the importance of self-study, of which autoethnography is regarded, as a means to improve the practices of teacher educators by facilitating change in how we teach and who we are as teachers.

In terms of generating positive pedagogical change, Austin and Hickey (2007) asserted that examination of the space between reflection and action in the form of emancipatory practice represents the significance of autoethnography in achieving transformational practice and subsequently, meeting the demands of ontological authenticity. Austin and Hickey provided the following example:

> By actively engaging her memories of race as a child, locating herself within a racial- social dynamic and then reflexively engaging more recent memories, Maryanne has moved from the recall and telling of a tale, a story from her life, to actively and critically engaging issues of race in her professional practice. … At this point in her life, Maryanne has not only summoned up the courage to transgress the racialised borders that had operated with decreasing strength to contain her within safe white space, she is now actively dwelling within the space of the Other. (p. 7)

The third criterion, *educative authenticity*, refers to "the extent to which individual respondents' understanding of and appreciation for the constructions of *others* outside their stakeholding group are enhanced" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 248). Educative authenticity bears similarities to what Saukko (2005) described as *dialogic validity*. Through self-reflexive awareness and dialogue, greater understanding of self is mediated by a closer examination of the experience of the other. Another example of an autoethnographic study drawn from an educational context is by Pennington (2007), who focused on the issue of race while participating in a pre-service teacher placement. Through self-reflexive analysis, participants were able to develop an honest and genuine understanding of how their White privilege was viewed by parents and families in the community. In addition, assumptions held by pre-service teachers about children belonging to essentialized groups were revealed leading to greater insight and strengthened relationships.

The fourth criterion, *catalytic authenticity*, is "the extent to which action is stimulated and facilitated by the evaluation process," (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 249) where the purpose is some form of action or decision-making. This emphasis on energizing participants to engage in conscientization in dissemination mirrors Lather's (1981) call for *catalytic validity* in social research, where the degree to which the process is transformative or empowering is a criterion. According to Lather, the research should have "reality altering effect and channel impact so that participants gain self-understanding and, ultimately, self determination through research participation" (p. 68). Boyd (2008) provided a description of how his autoethnographic research facilitated a transformative learning experience on a personal and professional level:

> The difference now is that I am aware of those tendencies coming out of my place of White privilege, and I am seeking to forge a new way for myself. I am trying to live in that tension between cautious action and critical reflection, between the need to engage in dialogue for mutual understanding and the need to actively listen to the experiences of colleagues and friends of color. (p. 223)

Another example of catalytic authenticity in autoethnography is demonstrated in Pepper and Hamilton Thomas' (2002) examination of leadership style and its impact on the school climate. Pepper, a school principal, engaged in an autoethnographic inquiry observed and studied by Hamilton Thomas. Using journal writing as a data collection method allowed Pepper to reflect upon the ineffectiveness of her leadership style. In her analysis, Pepper identified that she was subscribing to and had been enacting an authoritarian leadership style with negative effect. As a result of Pepper's self analysis, she repositioned her practice towards a more transformational, and arguably a more effective, style of leadership. The process had a positive impact on her ability to lead but also helped the author create a more positive and caring school environment. A climate of collaboration including a cycle support and feedback was instrumental in establishing realistic, attainable school goals that stakeholders were willing to invest in. Pepper's experience also reflects Guba and Lincoln's (1989) final criterion for authenticity in research, *tactical authenticity* where it is not enough to want or need to act, one must be empowered to do so. As well as the four criteria for authenticity, Guba and Lincoln (1989) also speak to seeking authenticity in terms of methodological and aesthetic rigour.

Methodological Rigour

Guba and Lincoln (1989) articulated a fourth generation of evaluation standards that is more closely aligned with socially constructed knowledge evident in constructivist inquiry including autoethnography. While these standards are now 20 years old, Guba and Lincoln's criteria provide an articulate bridge between more traditional conceptions of validity, reliability and generalizability and standards for methodological rigour that are more reflective of interpretive inquiry generally and autoethnography specifically. In applying these standards, it is my intent to demonstrate that autoethnography falls well within the rigorous standards expected of scholarly research but is also reflective of the continuous negotiation throughout evaluation, analysis and interpretation. Whereas traditional standards for methodological rigour limit interaction between participant and researcher to a linear, transactional exchange of communication and disclosure, constructive inquiry relies on a more cyclical exchange. Further, traditional evaluation standards dwell in the scientific, experimental relationship of cause/effect that is not present in interpretive, responsive methods; isolating cause or effect is not a function of constructivist inquiry like autoethnography, nor does the cause/effect relationship account for the humanistic perspective sought in autoethnography. Guba and Lincoln (1989) justified the importance of this point: "ascertaining what people think exists and why they think so is at least as important as verification of some a priori postulate about cause-effect

relationships that *the evaluator thinks exists*" (p. 232). Values and beliefs central in autoethnographic study, and increasingly recognized as relevant in social science research, have limited place in positivist inquiry or evaluation. Guba and Lincoln's (1989) view moved beyond traditionally understood evaluation methods as externally imposed, generalized rules or procedures that overshadow specific research. In the traditional sense, the voice of the external researcher replaces the voice of the internal participant, at times diminishing and even negating the value of personal experience and knowledge to contribute to "a more complex process of understandings" (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, p. 127). When autoethnography adheres to the methodological rigour expected of constructivist inquiry, this research can yield daily praxis that is more reflective, culturally relevant pedagogy. Curriculum content, pedagogical strategies and interactions with stakeholders, and pursuit of new learning/knowledge serve to strengthen the foundations of community.

Aesthetic Rigour

While Guba and Lincoln's (1989) evaluation standards spoke to methodology, one cannot ignore the aesthetic requirements of autoethnography. "Good autoethnography is … a provocative weave of story and theory. The tale being told, writes Denzin (1992), should reflect back on, be entangled in, and critique this current historical moment and its discontents" (Spry, 2001, p. 713). Richardson (2000) addresses standards of literary quality that further legitimize autoethnography in its juxtaposition between scholarly research and evocative literature. Distinctly applicable to the aesthetic requirements of autoethnography in making such research accessible and evocative is the necessity for autoethnography to be a satisfying, complex and intriguing literary piece. Additionally, autoethnography must maintain *impact*, where it speaks to the overall effect of the text on an emotional and intellectual level and the ability of the text to inspire or motivate the reader to some form of action. Finally, *expression of a reality*, requires the researcher to ensure that the text is a true and credible representation of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of what is real (Richardson, 2000). The methodological and literary criteria peregrinate the distance between the scholarly and the creative, both of which have a place in research and are essential to the success of autoethnographic work.

Conclusions

Regardless of the chosen definition, characterization or criterion, autoethnography is accepted as a research method capable of powerful examinations of the relationships between self and other from the perspective of self. This implied emphasis on enlightenment and therefore greater understanding, makes autoethnography a valuable tool in examining the complex, diverse and sometimes messy world within education where we stress cooperation, teamwork and distributed leadership but are mired in hierarchy and power tensions. Autoethnographic examination of dialectical relationships in education, such as the structural relationships between teacher/student, teacher/leader, parent/teacher as well as the agentic relationships between, individual/collective, oppression/emancipation, privileged/disadvantaged result in the collision of discourse and self-awareness with "larger cultural assumptions concerning race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, class and age" (Spry, 2001, p. 711). Chang (2008) provided a more holistic view of the benefits of autoethnographic work in emancipatory and transformative pedagogy:

> The "forces" that shape people's sense of self include nationality, religion, gender, education, ethnicity socioeconomic class, and geography. Understanding "the forces" also helps them examine their preconceptions and feelings about others, whether they are "others of similarity", "others of difference," or even "other of opposition". (p. 52)

Autoethnographic investigation has the potential to address some of the tensions that exist as a result of the cultural multiplicity present in Canadian schools (Chambers, 2003). A country like Canada has forged an international reputation as a multicultural society. Autoethnography allows the introspective exploration for enhanced cultural understanding of self and others and has the potential to transform self and others in building cross-cultural alliances, thus reflecting Canada's culturally complex social realities.

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