

Follow the Bricolage Road

Walking-Writing Research Tools for Cultural and Civic Engagement

kristacarson@connect.glos.ac.uk



Introduction

The methods described here are for a doctoral-level practice-led research project that adopts a bricolage approach mainly comprised of auto-ethnography, walking methods, and poetic inquiry. These methods foster intricate and meaningful creative practice/praxis and highlight personal embeddedness within social, environmental, and cultural contexts.

Methodology

Bricolage involves intentionally weaving together various qualitative methods to solve a problem (The Association for Qualitative Research, 2022). It allows for a deep and responsive exploration of complexities that are part of the large issues of today. The researcher's approach to bricolage methodology includes adopting methods described below, which share unique qualities that can be useful tools for cultural and civic engagement.

Autoethnography...

- uses autobiography and ethnography (Ellis et al., 2011, sec. 2)
- situates personal narrative within sociocultural contexts (Poulos, 2021; Wall, 2006)
- reveals power dynamics / disrupts social issues (Keleş, 2022)
- emphasizes thoughtful approaches to relational ethics (Ellis, 2007)

Poetic Inquiry...

- uses poetry in some/all stages of research process (Prendergast et al., 2009)
- helps us understand affective and relational aspects of experiences (Görlich, 2023)
- acts as embodied, evocative, and resonant tool to actively speak to social justice causes (Faulkner, 2018)
- has empathy-building potential

Walking...

- has numerous research applications (O'Neill & Roberts 2020; Springgay & Truman, 2019)
- taps us into the pulse of our communities and the world around us
- aligns with ethic of social/environmental care
- creation of cultural artefact about walking contributes to cultural milieu of places explored and brings ideas to audiences beyond the academy

Conclusions

The pivoting the bricoleur does between/among methodological constructs resembles the actualities of life and represents a responsive, tailored, and reflexive approach to addressing contemporary social and environmental issues. The information presented here suggests that the methods used in this bricolage approach have the potential to expand and elevate epistemological understandings and acts in a practice-based sense and beyond.



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