

“Man, Have I Got a Story for You”: Facilitated Autoethnography as a Potential Research Methodology in Human Resource Development

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Abstract

Despite the potential value of narratives to inform and change workplace culture and practice, many stories from individuals at the margins of organizations often go untold or unheard. Based on a methodological framework of existing narrative approaches—autoethnography, guided autobiography, and narrative inquiry—we present in this article a new, emerging methodology: facilitated autoethnography (FAE). We suggest that FAE has the potential to offer human resource development (HRD) scholars and practitioners a new approach for exploring, collecting, and disseminating workplace narratives to a broad audience. The article concludes with a discussion of the emerging methodology and potential implications for its application in the field of HRD.

Keywords

autoethnography, narrative, research methodologies, human resource development, qualitative research

“Man have I got a story for you.” Those were my friend Jordan’s words as we sat at Starbucks one afternoon, after I asked how the new job was going. Between sips of coffee, Jordan wove a story about the trepidation and discomfort she felt on the job,

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being the youngest employee amid a group of colleagues of equal organizational status, but 15 to 20 years her senior. Jordan felt isolated at times by her colleagues, as well as dismissed for her age and relative lack of experience. She described instances where coworkers perceived her as a threat and intentionally kept her out of the loop to hold her back from advancement. I told Jordan that the experience was one that not only she could learn from, but others could as well. Jordan agreed that I was right, but she admitted she wouldn't know where to begin, besides, she said "Who would listen?"

This is not an uncommon scenario. Many researchers recognize that an experience an individual shares has the potential to inform and shape scholarship and practice, and approaches in narrative inquiry have made significant advances "fill[ing] our world with meaning and enlist[ing] one another's assistance in building lives and communities" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 35). Yet some still struggle with their role in the process as they seek to reconcile their desire to share the story with the view that it is "not their story to tell."

Human resource development (HRD) scholars need to push themselves to think creatively and draw from a broader array of disciplines and scholarship. This is particularly important because as Billett and Choy (2013) pointed out, workplace learning is simply too big to be addressed by a single concept or research approach. One way that HRD researchers are tackling this challenge is through the study and representation of employees' stories. And, although there is much to be understood about learning in the workplace and how significant or memorable experiences can inform HRD scholarship and practice (Eraut, 2011), current methodologies employed by researchers may not be sufficient to do so. Without new methodological approaches, researchers who do not wish to simply appropriate the narratives of others have few options.

Storytelling as a Form of Learning and Research

Individuals learn in and from work experiences, which are influenced in large part by organizational culture (Patterson et al., 2005) and social practices; these are often the foundation for employee storytelling (Kopp, Nikolovska, Desiderio, & Guterman, 2011), as a means for encoding and transmitting information and thinking (Gargiulo, 2006) about particular experiences. Stories or narratives are viewed by many as sense-making tools (see Weick, 1995), and as artifacts of learning experiences (see Peterson, 1991; Schwabenland, 2006) that can (re)shape practice and cultural norms.

Stories assist in making sense of our lives, including addressing "what we are, where we come from, and what we want to be" (Soin & Scheytt, 2006, p. 55). The workplace can be a source of rich experiences that form the basis of such stories (Cunliffe & Coupland, 2012). These stories from/in the workplace are not simply fodder for the water cooler. Guber (2011) described stories as "emotional transportation, moving people to take action" (p. 80), and others point to stories as having the potential to inform organizational practices (Boje, 1991; Lawler, 2012), facilitate identity construction in different social contexts (Horrocks & Callahan, 2006), and enhance workplace learning (Tyler, 2007).

Because of the extraordinary power of storytelling as research, it has been advanced as a means for creating social change within critical race theory (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002), critical disability theory (Peers, 2012), and queer theory (Adams & Jones, 2011) research. For example, Adams and Jones (2011) described the utility of reflexivity and queer theory for “telling stories you can’t tell” in order to “create a little knowledge, a little humanity, a little room to live and move in and around the constraints and heartbreak of culture and categories, identities and ideologies” (p. 109). The authors argued that “(re)turning, again and again, to stories” (p. 111) creates possibilities for engaging with particular ways of knowing, and acknowledging their existence and value, “without grabbing on to sure or fast answers” (p. 114). Work such as this demonstrates how storytelling can help individuals, especially those at the margins of society, to make sense of their own experiences and then convey that meaning to others.

Despite these inroads, it is still necessary to ask, how do individuals go about sharing their stories in meaningful ways that is valued not just by a team, department, or organization, but by an industry or field of research? One approach for addressing this question is the application of autoethnographic methods (Grenier, 2015). HRD and adult education researchers such as Boje and Tyler (2009), Callahan (2009), McCormack (2009), and Sykes (2014) are among those who have conducted autoethnographic research to explore issues of self, place, and professionalism based on their own experiences. Autoethnography is a means for researchers to critically and reflexively examine their own experiences, beliefs, and perceptions on a particular subject (Wall, 2008) and provides an opportunity to use a rigorous, emotional, and creative methodology while seeking to improve society. It has been described as promoting transformational learning (Boyd, 2008; Glowacki-Dudka, Treff, & Usman, 2005) and cultural identity (Boyd, 2008; Ferdinand, 2015), as well as “vulnerability, nakedness, and shame in order to heal psychological and emotional wounds” (Custer, 2014, p. 3). However, many stories remain untold.

Problem Statement and Purpose

Countless stories, like Jordan’s experience of isolation and maltreatment in the workplace, go untold. Regardless of the potential of autoethnography to transform, many narratives are abandoned, silenced, or lost because some scholars and scholarly practitioners are not confident in, or well-prepared for, designing and completing this type of research. One reason may be the need for vulnerability on the part of the storyteller (or researcher) and a willingness to reveal secrets that allow for new understandings of reality and truth (Tierney, 1998). Not only does this self-disclosure surface concerns related to the researcher’s comfort, but also related to the ethics of telling stories that may depict or describe specific events, interactions, or people from the vantage point of one person (Wall, 2008).

Despite attempts by scholars to provide guidelines for conducting autoethnography, including Hughes, Pennington, and Makris’s (2012) evaluation of autoethnography through the existing publication standards for empirical research established by the American Education Research Association (AERA), the issue of confidence or

competence in conducting this form of research persists. Autoethnographers are often called upon to counteract the notion that autoethnography is unscientific, biased, and not generalizable. Moreover, confusion persists around the involvement of others in an autoethnography and the struggle to decide how much to reveal about those, beyond the researcher, involved in the experience (Berger, 2001; Medford, 2006). This may lead to an author's fear of being seen as self-indulgent or not scholarly, as well as contribute to a lack of exposure to and preparation in autoethnography in many graduate programs.

In order to begin to confront these issues, we introduce in this article the conceptualization of what we believe is a new form of co-production methodology (Hartley & Benington, 2000) that can expand the potential application of autoethnographic work in HRD in particular, and other fields more generally. A conceptual article such as this brings together research, theory, and speculation to advance the construction of the methodology (Salomone, 1993). We do this first by presenting a methodological framework that draws upon the existing methodologies of autoethnography, guided autobiography (GAB), and narrative inquiry. In doing so, we aim to demonstrate the current narrative-dependent methodological practices that help to provide a foundation built on existing modes of inquiry. From there we propose a new qualitative methodology: facilitated autoethnography (FAE). The introduction of the conceptualization of FAE is derived from the strengths of the methodologies presented in the framework, as well as recognition of the gaps these approaches sometimes fail to address. The article concludes with a discussion of the potential applications and implications of such a methodology for HRD research and practice.

Methodological Framework

To begin, our methodological framework was informed by an investigation of existing qualitative methodologies. We considered all qualitative approaches rooted in a common epistemology—one that recognizes the construction of knowledge and truth through an individual's meaning making and storytelling. This led us to focus on autoethnography, GAB, and narrative inquiry as approaches that contribute to the emergence of a methodology that encourages and facilitates the sharing of stories from those not trained or confident in their use of autoethnography.

Autoethnography

Ethnographic methodologies are a chief approach for studying culture (Boyle & Parry, 2007). One form of reflective ethnographic research, autoethnography, has been described as “research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political” (Ellis, 2004, p. xix). As a methodology, it connects an autoethnographer's common, everyday experiences to political, social, and organizational implications, while highlighting the tacit knowledge and memory not easily accessed through traditional methodologies (Grenier, 2015).

Autoethnography is different from other self-narratives, including autobiographies and memoirs, because it calls on the author to move beyond the personal story into the

analysis and interpretation of a culture (Chang, 2008). Moreover, the autoethnography is unique in that it embraces a subjective lens, and the subject of knowledge and observation are one and the same, allowing for the researcher to be both subject and object (Richards, 2008). Through interpretation and analysis of their own reflective narratives, autoethnographers express personal experiences in order to analyze cultural beliefs and social interactions that influence identities (Wall, 2008).

In recent years, there has been an offshoot of autoethnography that, while consistent with the self-reflective process, allows for more than a single researcher/participant, each sharing their own story in relation to the stories of the other researchers/participants. These variations on the traditional autoethnography have been applied to dyads and small groups of researchers. For instance, a co-constructed autoethnography involves two or more researchers/participants sharing their personal version of a shared experience, and then collaborating to integrate those into a co-constructed narrative (Ellis, 2004; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2010; Grenier & Burke, 2008). Similarly, a collective autoethnography (Lapadat, 2009) involves a group of researchers writing individual narratives based on prompts and then analyzing and interpreting each other's work to identify themes arising across narratives. Likewise, Chang, Ngunjiri, and Hernandez (2012) described a collaborative autoethnography (CAE) that brings together a group that write, reflect, code, and outline their writing at an individual level, and at the same time sharing, probing, engaging in meaning making, and writing as a group. For example, a group of scholars might come together to collect, share, query, analyze, and write about their shared experience as a first year faculty member in an R1 university. The distribution of the production of the work is distributed evenly across all and each is a full participant in the process. Finally, Ellis and Rawicki (2013) described a relational autoethnography, in which a researcher and a storyteller engage in dialogue with one another about an experience or event until the two "roles [overlap] so that analysis [joins] with story-telling" (p. 367) and researcher becomes storyteller and vice versa. In the end, both stories are told.

In co-constructed and collaborative autoethnography (CAE), two or more researchers pool their autobiographical materials related to an "agreed-upon topic of social phenomenon and analyze and interpret the collective data to interpret the meanings of *their* [emphasis added] personal experiences within their sociocultural contexts" (Chang, Longman, & Franco, 2014, p. 376). With regard to relational autoethnography, one author provides the story, but both are collaborative witnesses, "sharing as fully as possible both the construction of the stories and their meaning" (Ellis & Rawicki, 2013, p. 377). In other words, all involved in CAE and in relational autoethnography contribute in order to act as both participants and researchers simultaneously.

Guided Autobiography

Guided Autobiography (GAB) was originally designed by Jim Birren to assist older adults in recalling, organizing, and sharing their life experiences in a therapeutic manner. More specifically, it is a process "of bringing one's understanding of the past into the present in order to integrate the experiences of a lifetime" into one, meaningful

narrative (De Vries, Birren, & Deutchman, 1990, p. 4). GAB is a structured, group process guided by a leader (Birren & Deutchman, 2010). Individuals in the group traditionally write two-page autobiographical essays on selected themes; some of these narratives include family history, the role of money, work life, health, sexuality, and spirituality (Birren & Cochran, 2001). In this process, individuals may focus on smaller experiences or events, more significant ones, or both. Usually, this choice is made based on multiple factors, including the relevancy of past learning or experience to the question or issue at hand (De Vries et al., 1990), as well as the extent to which the individual remembers the minute details (Birren & Deutchman, 2010).

The stories are read during group meetings to encourage life review and reflection. Thus, past learning and experience is often filtered in GAB through both time (Birren & Cochran, 2001) and personal perceptions of what occurred and the meaning made in the process (Birren & Deutchman, 2010). Being aware of and disclosing these filters is an important aspect of the individual's responsibility in reporting evidence and findings. After reflecting on past experience and establishing a sense of how time and personal perceptions may influence thinking, the reflection process produces new knowledge that represents a more cohesive view or interpretation of a set of learning or experiences (Birren & Cochran, 2001). The leader is responsible for facilitating the process, including organizing the group, setting goals, and encouraging interaction, as well as maintaining trust and group boundaries. While this is a strength for those engaged in GAB, it can be a shortcoming when applied to other contexts. The leader's significant control over the process and the requirement of participating in a group that calls for sharing deeply personal experiences, coupled with its therapeutic goal, make it less than ideal for researchers and scholarly practitioners.

Narrative Inquiry

Although there are several approaches to using narratives within the social sciences (Brockmeier, 2012), narrative inquiry as a research methodology is derived from human stories of experience gained through a negotiated research method. In this method, researchers and participants share the responsibility of telling the story and telling it as accurately and descriptively as possible (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Narrative inquiry attempts to record the human experience through the process of construction and reconstruction of personal stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Viewed as the primary medium through which meanings are made and communicated about experiences, thoughts, emotions, and identity, these stories are elicited, analyzed, and written up by a researcher to answer a research question, as such it limits the role of the research participant. Despite this, narrative inquiry is well-suited to address issues of complexity and human centeredness because of its capacity to record and retell events that have been of most influence on us. The use of narratives as data has gained acceptance across a range of disciplines, including education (see Tsui, 2007; Zeek, Foote, & Walker, 2001), and has found a place within the fields of adult education (see Al Hamdany, & Picard, 2015; Daniels, 2008; Gola, 2009; Misawa, 2014) and HRD (see Pettersson, Bolander Laksov, & Fjellström, 2015).

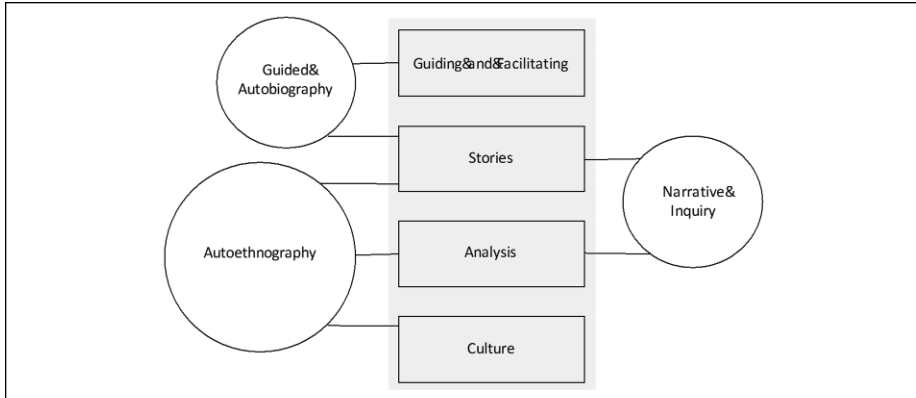


Figure 1. Methodological components: Methodologies informing the conceptual development of facilitated autoethnography.

Autoethnography, GAB, and narrative inquiry each contribute to the conceptualization of a new way of doing co-constructed autoethnography. Each of the three methodologies contributes to new ways of thinking about and organizing a qualitative approach built on the non-participatory guiding and facilitating component found in GAB, the focus on stories found in all three, the rigor and process of analysis in autoethnography and narrative inquiry, and the central role of exposing cultural experiences found in autoethnography. The emergent methodology proposed in this article combines the four components (highlighted in gray in Figure 1) to create a participatory, qualitative approach we call facilitated autoethnography (FAE).

Facilitated Autoethnography: An Emerging Methodology

Although qualitative research generally begins with a purpose, problem, or question that is addressed through data, the beginning of FAE is likely more serendipitous. Similar to the scenario presented at the beginning of this article, a researcher may “find” stories and experiences that need sharing or an individual may be passionate about a social or cultural condition they have experienced and seek out a way to share that passion with others—like contacting an author after reading an article or meeting at a conference. Regardless of the trigger, FAE brings together two people. First is the person with the experience and story to share, whom we call the *lead*. The lead is similar to a participant in traditional qualitative studies. They come to the process with a story and insights derived from that experience, and with an understanding of other players in the story and the situational context. The other is a researcher committed to guiding the process, a person whom we call the *facilitator*. The facilitator does not add data (their own story) to the research, but instead brings skills in methodology, theory application, and writing, and acts as a critical listening ear as the lead describes, analyzes, and interprets their own story.

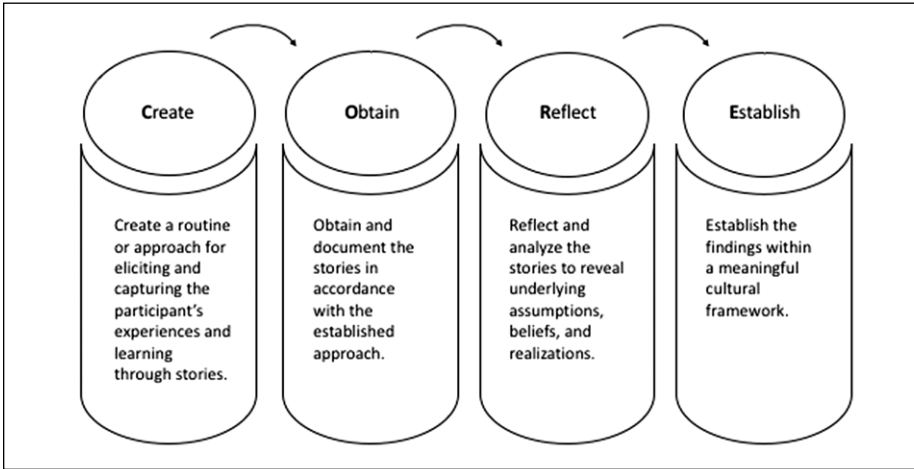


Figure 2. CORE process: Four CORE steps for facilitating autoethnographic inquiry.

FAE Process

Much like a critical friend (Rallis & Rossman, 2000), the facilitator is heuristic and critical, maintains reciprocal interactions with the lead, and has a mutual commitment to sharing the lead's story with scholars and practitioners. The facilitator supports the lead through the CORE process (Figure 2) that involves (a) creating a routine or approach for eliciting and capturing the lead's experiences and learning, (b) obtaining and documenting the stories in accordance with the established process; (c) reflecting on the stories to reveal underlying assumptions, beliefs, or realizations; (d) establishing the findings of analysis within a meaningful cultural framework.

The CORE is visually represented in a sequence to demonstrate the overall trajectory we anticipate a FAE might follow, but we recognize that like other forms of qualitative inquiry, the process is not as simple as following steps. As the lead and facilitator work through the process of creating, obtaining, reflecting, and establishing the lead's stories, both might expect to move forward or backward through the steps at various stages of the research process. For example, as the stories are established within a meaningful cultural framework, it is possible that the lead and facilitator may uncover some aspect of the relevant culture(s) which had not previously been considered, necessitating the pair to revisit possibilities for eliciting, recording, and contextualizing additional stories or information that becomes relevant. Thus, the process is inherently dynamic and influenced by multiple perspectives, mental models, and context. In Table 1, we present in more detail the CORE processes for both the lead and the facilitator.

Issues of Trustworthiness and Rigor

We would be remiss if we did not address strategies to enhance trustworthiness and rigor in the FAE process. As Le Roux (2016) pointed out in her exploration of autoethnographic

Table 1. Description of the CORE Process for the Lead and Facilitator.

Create a routine or approach for eliciting and capturing the Lead's experiences and learning		
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express their goals/motivations for the FAE and final outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain what FAE is to the Lead
Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine how much time will or can be committed to this process Select a focus, theme, problem to be addressed for the FAE Decide how stories will be elicited Decide how stories will be shared by the Lead and captured by the Facilitator Determine how to share the FAE with others Determine how Facilitator and Lead will communicate and how often 	
Obtain and document the stories in accordance with the established process		
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spend time thinking, reflecting, talking with others involved in the experience(s) to be shared to enhance recall Recall and capture the stories and anecdotes If applicable, collect related artifacts 	
Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide prompts, encouragement, and/or support to the Lead 	
Reflect on the stories to reveal underlying assumptions, beliefs, or realizations		
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share the stories (data) with the Facilitator Share related artifacts 	
Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to Facilitator probes and questions Format and organize the stories (data) Discuss stories and artifacts Probe for further detail and clarification Make recommendations for additions based on Lead responses 	
Establish the findings of analysis within a meaningful cultural framework		
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolve remaining questions or gaps in the story (data) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to Facilitator interpretation
Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss what was learned from the story Write-up the findings and interpretations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret and analyze the stories using a theoretical framework consistent with intent

Note: FAE = facilitated autoethnography.

rigor, scholars should attend to genre specific assessment criteria and sound academic judgment. Standards of narrative truth, resonance, subjectivity, reflexivity, aesthetic merit,

and plausibility have previously been addressed in the study of autoethnography (Duncan, 2004; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Loh, 2013; Medford, 2006; Ragan, 2000).

Of course, the use of any form of autoethnography presents inherent challenges to trustworthiness and rigor, but we believe there are some steps the lead and facilitator can take to increase the credibility of the FAE process and the representation of findings. In particular, we wish to stress the need for being mindful of the application of reflexivity, which we argue is fundamental to the CORE process of FAE. Reflexivity requires consideration of the multiple identities and perspectives of those in the research process and recognize how those support and alter the collection, analysis, and representation of the research. In our process, the lead and facilitator are reflexive in order to deconstruct who they are and how their own beliefs, experiences, and identity intersect with each other (MacBeth, 2001). We believe the lead and facilitator must also acknowledge that their actions and choices will influence the meaning and context of the resulting narrative and interpretation (Horsburgh, 2003). Closely related to this reflexivity is the use of member checking, which allows the lead to confirm or challenge the accuracy of the work (Creswell, 2003). This is another way to establish trustworthiness by giving authority to the lead's perspectives, therefore managing the facilitator's bias.

Furthermore, with respect to transferability, we agree with Lincoln and Guba (1985) who proposed that readers, rather than researchers, determine if findings can be applied to other settings or contexts. To enhance the possibility of transferability, the lead and the facilitator should seek to provide rich, thick descriptions about the lead and to a lesser extent descriptions of the facilitator, and methods of data collection and analysis. Moreover, we see value in the facilitator taking part in peer debriefing during the process. This entails engaging in dialog with colleagues who have experience with the topic, context, or method being utilized (Creswell, 2003). Doing so can help to enhance the perception of findings and the presentation of stories as useful to readers.

Limitations

There are limitations to FAE as we describe it. First, its conceptual contribution is a small first step and is at this point an idea in its infancy. The CORE process is merely a textual explanation and is open to wide interpretation, potentially to its benefit or detriment and there are at this time no studies applying this methodology that we can present as cases.¹ We recognize the strong possibility and even the need for expansion and refinement of the CORE. For example, we acknowledge that at this time there are unanswered questions such as, *must this be a one-on-one relationship or is there a form of FAE involving a facilitator and multiple leads?*

The CORE process needs more detail and examples from its application to better understand its value for both the lead and the facilitator, as well as for the field of HRD, and to establish some norms at each of the steps. Some of these norms may be commonly employed in other types of qualitative research already, and others may develop as a natural outcome of implementing FAE. And, like all methodologies, FAE is based on an approach, which is relevant to some research questions and contexts, but not others. As noted previously, we believe FAE will be most useful in the examination of deep

personal and cultural experiences in a specific context. FAE may be less useful for examining experiences of a group or organization rather than the individual.

We also wish to bring attention to limitations related to power and “ownership,” both between the lead and the facilitator, and the lead/facilitator and contexts, events, and/or other people described, critiqued, or interpreted in the work. Jacobson, Callahan, and Ghosh (2015) pointed out that “social structures consist of both dominant and non-dominant configurations which generate scripts that actors draw upon for behavioral guidance in different situations” (p. 464). We believe this statement can be applied to the social structure inherent in research methods—with a researcher and a participant as actors and we acknowledge that FAE is limited by our current understandings of the power-laden behaviors by lead and facilitator. How to address power relationships and how those are managed in the CORE process raise a number of yet to be explored issues given the conceptual nature of the emerging methodology. When publishing a FAE, who is listed as first author? Is there a moral and/or ethical obligation to, in all cases, reveal the identity of the lead? How are contexts, events, and/or other people besides the lead represented in the FAE and what might the repercussions of those representations be for both the lead and facilitator? These are some of the important questions those wishing to undertake FAE might confront. We hope that with application and refinement of the process, these can be addressed in the future.

Discussion

To some, facilitated autoethnography may appear to be just another form of narrative inquiry, but this would be a shortsighted categorization. We argue FAE is different from existing forms of guided and/or narrative-based qualitative inquiry in three ways. First, the potential success of FAE lies with the lead. Where existing forms of narrative inquiry are directed by the researcher—who decides the purpose, elicits meaningful narratives from participants, and interprets the data—in FAE the intention is for the lead to hold the power to determine content and data, thus replacing the researcher’s ownership of the research with the lead’s (Wolf, 1996). The facilitator’s role is largely to encourage the lead, monitor the processes, and add scholarly context only to what the lead produces. This is consistent with both constructivist and critical paradigms of understanding which call for the redistribution of power in the research process to rebalance the relationship between the traditional researcher and participant and focus on marginalized understandings and experiences (O’Connor & O’Neill, 2004).

Second, FAE is about more than mere life review and reflection as in GAB. FAE enhances the guided, narrative-based research approach by situating stories and narratives within a meaningful cultural framework—it serves a greater purpose for the sharing of the narratives by addressing a larger or possibly even systemic social issue, problem, question, or concern. It takes the lead’s stories out of the coffee shop to a larger audience. The result is stories that are not only shared and recorded, but situated within theory and research in order to inform scholarship and practice.

Finally, FAE may be differentiated from traditional autoethnographic approaches in that it utilizes the knowledge of a facilitator to challenge, question, critique, and

enhance the extent to which the lead explains and reflects upon their narrative. One of the main critiques of autoethnography as a methodology is that it is too centered on the thoughts and ideas of one individual. FAE's introduction of the facilitator role helps to mitigate potential issues which may arise from the consideration of only one person's interpretation of the narrative by employing the facilitator as a form of critical friend (Rallis & Rossman, 2000) or peer de-briefer (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Implications and Conclusions

We have presented here an emerging qualitative methodology with potential application to HRD research. Based on a need for sharing narratives in ways that value the storyteller's ownership of the experience and the researcher's commitment to exposing larger audiences to these narratives, we have developed an emerging model for a facilitated autoethnographic process. In doing so, we have sought to address how scholars might support the development and dissemination of autoethnographic research from individuals who are unfamiliar with the methods or lack the tools or confidence to share their stories with larger audiences. FAE contributes to research development in a number of ways that are important to both HRD practitioners and scholars, and we challenge researchers to add facilitated autoethnography to their methodological repertoire.

First, if we believe McGuire and Garavan's (2013) contention that the development role of HRD has transformational potential, with effects beginning with individuals and reaching as far out as society—and that such development can empower individuals to expand perspectives, create conscious and unconscious learning and grow, support, and challenge an individual's experiences—then we must ask, in what ways are we getting to a meaningful level of development? As Joyner (2012) pointed out, one role of HRD is to support individuals and organizations in moving toward some form of action, and stories are effective in this process. Likewise, Gubbins and Rousseau (2015) encouraged HRD researchers to work with practitioners to identify, and seek out ways to inform problems of practice. FAE may be valuable in moving the participant-storyteller toward personal or professional action and navigate the complexity of the experience. FAE could be a useful tool for establishing a methodologically sound outlet in which untold stories relevant to HRD can finally be told by those best able to do so. Instead of creating an unrealistic expectation that HRD researchers should leave who they are at the door when conducting research with/in organizations, we argue the field may benefit from shifting its sight to methodologies that are more wholly inclusive of experiences and perspectives that have been historically discounted or undervalued and are empowering. Furthermore, many HRD practitioners are concerned with helping people in organizations to make sense of their learning and to develop avenues for sharing knowledge (see Svensson, Ellström, & Aberg, 2004). Such practices include knowledge management, succession planning, and mentoring programs, among others. These aspects of a HRD practitioner's work could be enhanced by FAE by providing a methodology to help organization members to capture their own vital

knowledge about experiences, policies, and procedures in a way that makes the most sense for them, yet promotes the importance of evidence-based practice (Hamlin, 2007).

From a methodological standpoint, FAE broadens the application of common forms of autoethnography to individuals who, despite having experiences that can contribute to bettering our understanding of workplace culture, might otherwise remain silent because of a lack of methodological understanding or fear of how to begin. We in HRD need to not only be aware of the discourses that reinforce the unequal balance of power in the researcher–participant relationship (Gubrium & Koro-Ljungberg, 2005), but actively pursue opportunities for empowerment.

We believe the emerging methodology of FAE has the greatest potential in providing another tool for scholars seeking ways to give voice to those at the margins—those whose experiences are counter to the organization’s majority—and then add that voice to existing scholarship. Tyler’s (2006) research pointed to a need for more storying in the workplace and calls for methods that encourage creativity, experimentation, and rigor. Moreover, Hartley and Benington (2000) argued for more co-research where knowledge is jointly created through dialogue and inquiry. FAE attends to both Tyler and Hartley and Benington by creating a methodological space for facilitated storytelling, wherein individuals who may be less inclined to share their stories from the margins of organizations and society could be encouraged and aided to do so.

With FAE bringing together two people, each with particular skills and strengths (Hartley & Benington, 2000), and with a facilitator guiding and aiding the lead through an autoethnographic process, the hope is that barriers such as access, language, and presumed status may become less intimidating, less complex, and more manageable. This means a collaborative approach to the story production and representation that enhances the lead’s control over the learning, growth, and meaning making that can be derived from the storytelling and interpretation process. The result is a lateral status between lead and facilitator where each role, and the product of those roles, are valid, valued, and relational.

There is an increasingly great demand on researchers to attend to self-knowledge and better understanding of how research is shaped by the self and influences the creation of knowledge and affects biases, experiences, and beliefs. We believe the proposed FAE process tends to these demands in meaningful and creative ways and has the potential to forge/shape a new body of research in the field of HRD.

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Note

1. The authors are currently piloting the methodology and intend to report the findings.

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