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Article

Unveiling the stories that illuminate our path: The pedagogical significance of autobiographical study and the method of *currere*

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Abstract

In today's educational landscape, instrumentalist ideologies embedded in politically entrenched school curricula often overshadow the richness of diverse human experiences, perpetuating colonial shadows within educational experiences. In this paper, through the sharing of our juxtaposed autobiographical stories, we intend to exhibit the pedagogical significance of autobiographical inquiry and the method of *currere* as empowering individuals to transcend the limitations of an arrested self – a persona moulded by a factory-like schooling system that merely serves instrumental ends. We seek to address the question: How might the process of autobiographical study and the method of *currere* impact pedagogical praxis attuning it to individual lived experiences? By examining the specificities of each event in an individual's life and reflecting on the interplay between personal experiences and education, teachers and students can better comprehend their world through the lens of their lived experiences. Therefore, this paper underscores the pedagogical importance of autobiographical study and the method of *currere* encouraging educators to attune with an educational praxis anchored in personal experiences. Furthermore, it introduces the transformative potential of these methods to reimagine the different possibilities of praxis in education.

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Introduction

This paper emerges from a unique journey that began in a classroom of the Master of Education program, where our paths crossed for the first time – as teacher and student. We then embarked on a shared odyssey, delving deep into the intricacies of educational philosophy and practice. This collaborative venture has led us to explore and articulate the insights and understandings born from our intersecting journeys. Central to our quest is the concept of autobiographical inquiry and the method of *currere*. These method/ologies serve as ways for interpreting and understanding the complexities of our lived experiences. By braiding our narratives and reflections, as teacher and student, we intend to highlight the transformative power of intertwining personal situatedness with pedagogical insights. We intend to attune educators' attention to an educational praxis grounded in individual lived experiences by highlighting three pedagogical significances that we found through our journey of autobiographical study and the method of *currere*.

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While sharing the insight along our journey, we are mindful of not portraying our interpretive experiences as an exclusive claim that autobiographical inquiry and the method of *currere* are effective pedagogical "tools" for all individuals' self-transformation. Instead, we intend to present educators and learners with the pedagogical potentials of autobiographical study and the method of *currere* to reimagine the different possibilities of praxis in education, thereby enriching the educational discourse with our shared narratives and reflections. The central theme of our narratives is guided by an underlying thought about whether a curriculum can truly invite (Aoki, 1990/1991/2005) in a diverse classroom. Stemming from the central theme, we ask: What is the significance of autobiographical inquiry in understanding curriculum? In what ways do the lived experiences become pedagogical?

Can a Curriculum Truly Invite?

A Whole World in a Classroom

by Patricia

Life stories prompt pedagogical reflection (van Manen, 2015, p. 48).

Teaching is...a mode of being-with-others (Aoki, 1989/2005, p. 361).

Getting up in the morning, the first thing is free associate. Bill, my Doctoral Program supervisor, shared a practice he kept and encouraged me to pay attention to. Four years after graduation, I sat in my den, sipping a cup of tea in solitude and began writing. I freely associated with what came to me—allowing my thoughts to flow without judgment. Just being with my thoughts and freely associating with the continuous movement between my pen and thoughts. At this moment, pen, thoughts and I become one and flow through the movement. I closed my eyes and took a deep breath, entering a deeper state of my mind, tranquillity, and just sitting with the moment. After a few breaths, my shoulder dropped into a relaxing position. Thoughts emerged from this meditative moment—a moment of self and being with myself. Aged white tea fragrance lingered in the air, and questions arose: What is the significance of autobiographical inquiry in understanding curriculum? In what ways do the lived experiences become pedagogical? Can a curriculum truly invite?

With these questions lingering in my mind on the first day morning of the fall semester, a couple of hours later, I entered the campus. I was welcomed by the symphony of nature as I strolled along the campus: the rustling leaves, the gentle caress of the autumn breeze, and the golden sunlight shifting shadows across the manicured lawns. It was a familiar sight at the beginning of the fall semester, yet each year, a fresh beginning, a canvas awaiting the brushstrokes of discovery. Unlike the quiet summertime, the campus was now stirred with the promise of another academic journey. I stepped into the Arts & Education building amidst the bustling corridors, and students' excitement was palpable in the air. Backpacks slung over their shoulders, laptops clutched tightly under their arms, and students seemed to navigate the pathways of academia with a sense of purpose and anticipation. I took a few turns and walked into the classroom, welcomed by faces with smiles bathed in the soft glow of morning light filtering through the wall of windows. At that moment, I felt the weight of anticipation ripple through the room as the students' eyes lingered on my face and eagerly awaited the start of class – EDUC 5030 Curriculum, Teaching and Learning.

I welcomed students with a self-introduction and invited students to introduce themselves. After a brief pause, a gentle yet firm voice broke the silence, "My name is Dai-yai-ri Mu-i-vah, and I am Tangkhul-Naga." With a radiant smile illuminating her face, a student gracefully introduced herself with a clear pronunciation of her name. She explained that a single English word could not encompass the meanings of her name, and she continued sharing the significance of her name that marked her grandparents' retirement. Her voice was a harmonious blend of gentleness and firmness, echoing her deep-rooted connection to her heritage and community. Touched by Daiyairi's brief and yet profound self-introduction, I continued to listen to the story from each student, coming from diverse backgrounds; some were sitting comfortably, their eyes wide with curiosity and apprehension, while others looked around and perhaps with their minds racing with the unknown possibilities that might lie ahead. With the "whole world in one classroom" (Hasebe-Ludt, 1999, p. 39), the questions arose in the morning, beckoning my attention, and I wondered, in what ways can a curriculum truly invite? How might a curriculum become a lived experience of the world in one classroom?

Genesis of an Academic Odyssey in Canada

by Daiyairi

> We are awash in stories. (Hasebe-Ludt et al., 2009, p. 152).
>
> Life stories and autobiographical writing…have the potential to become transformative curriculum inquiry (Hasebe-Ludt et al., 2009, p. 205).

After a gruelling shift at my part-time job, I trudged to the university, my mind heavy with thoughts of the upcoming Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning class. I thought back to when I arrived in Canada on April 19, 2022—Kamloops had greeted me on a cloudy day, casting a muted light over the small, quiet town. The landscape, tinged with brown from the trees to the buildings, was still shaking off the remnants of winter. A chilly spring wind welcomed me, stirring a mix of fear and excitement. I had come to Canada with a desire to write a thesis; however, I didn't know why I wanted to write one. Education had always seemed to me like a means to an end—a tool to secure a good job. As these thoughts ran through my head, I followed my usual route to the Arts and Education building, still unsure about the reasons behind the academic path I had set for myself. Turning away from my thoughts, I noticed that the familiar trees lining the road, once a uniform green, had now burst into a spectacular display of fall colours. It was a breathtaking transformation I was witnessing for the first time—a vivid palette of amber, crimson, and gold.

I made my way to class, panting as I climbed the stairs. Once in the classroom, I chose a seat by the window, still captivated by the fall colours outside. Looking around, I recognized a few familiar faces from other classes. EDUC 5030: Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning—I wondered what the course would be about. When the professor prompted us to share a bit about ourselves, I felt a small spark of excitement. I decided to share my full name, Daiyairi, and the story behind it. Introducing myself in this way made me feel seen—and made me want to be seen. Perhaps the distance from home encouraged me to speak about it, or maybe it was a response to the lack of space for personal stories within the Indian education system I had been a part of where my stories and origins were never acknowledged or valued; instead, they were often dismissed or ridiculed. Breaking away from that environment might have given me the courage to share my story—or perhaps it was the atmosphere of that day and the sense of safety in the classroom. I'm still not sure. But at the time, I didn't realize how significant that moment would be for my journey.

Three Emerging Pedagogical Themes from Autobiographical Study and Method of Currere

Attunement as a Journey Home

Notion of Attunement and the Method of Currere by Patricia

> *Currere* is a method by means of which students of curriculum could sketch the relations among school knowledge, life history, and intellectual development in ways that might function self-transformatively (Pinar, et al., 1995, p. 515).

> Understanding is primarily grounded in the future; attunement, on the other hand, temporalizes itself primarily in having-been (Heidegger, 1953/2010, p. 325).

While attuned to the "whole world in one classroom" phenomenon and keeping the questions of how a curriculum can truly invite? How might a curriculum become a lived experience of the "whole world in one classroom? In the periphery, I intentionally invited students to attune to their lived experiences in the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning classroom. To attune students' attention to studying their lived experiences and understand the educational significance subjectively, as an initial course assignment, I invited students to write autobiographically to reflect critically on their lived experiences and their relationship to the greater socio-cultural and/or geopolitical context in their first-course assignment.

As a critical reflection of the past, this intentional attunement directs students' awareness of what has been taken for granted in everydayness and to investigate, analyze and seek meaning from the process. Such attunement carries a phenomenological ring that transfers moments in everydayness to moments of "seeing-meaning" that help students "in-seeing" into "the heart of things." (van Manen, 2007, p. 11). Different from the instrumentalists' educational view of understanding education as standardized aims and goals that prompt students to seek unceasing external engagement, the praxis of attunement engages students innerwordly and subjectively by questioning how one finds oneself in the world. The praxis of attunement to lived experiences is drawn from Heidegger's (1953/2010) notion of attunement.

For Heidegger (1953/2010), *Befindlichkeit*, attunement is existential and concerns *Dasein's* awareness of itself in the world. Heidegger's concept of *Befindlchkeit* has been translated in many ways, including attunement, state of mind, and disposedness. However, tracing the German root, *befinden*, of the word *Befindlchkeit* can reveal the actual sense of what Heidegger suggested. *Befinden*, its literal meaning is something like the state in which one may be found. In German, the conversational question "*Wie befinden Sie sich*?" How are you? contains the root of the word *Befindlichkeit*, and the question itself literally means How do you find yourself? So, for Heidegger (1953/2010), attunement is an existential concern of *Dasein's* awareness of itself in the world. Moods are modes of attunement. Heidegger (1953/2010) spoke of being in a mood; he did not offer a psychology of feeling when using the term mood. Instead, Heidegger (1953/2010) referred to moods as an account of *Dasein's* fundamental awareness of its actual existence through the moods of attunement to the world matters to and affects *Dasein*. It is much under the influence of Heidegger's (1953/2010) notion of *Bedindlchkeit* that I attune students' awareness to their life world(s) and the situatedness of oneself in their autobiographical assignment.

Alongside the influence of Heidegger's (1953/2010) notion of attunement, this critical, reflective autobiographical assignment was grounded in the study of lived experiences. The study of lived experiences informed by various philosophical traditions, such as phenomenology, existentialism and critical pedagogy, has existed for some time in the field of educational research, and autobiographical inquiry has gained increasing attention in North America. The autobiographical inquiry includes a variety of practices, such as free writing, life writing (Chambers, 1994; Hurren, 2016; Hasebe-Ludt et al., 2009; Liu Baergen, 2024), narrative inquiry (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990), and others. In the field of curriculum studies, William F. Pinar and Madeleine Grumet introduced the concept of *currere* in 1975 as an alternative approach to the prevailing focus on strict behavioural science rationale that dominated U.S. education (Pinar & Grumet, 1976; Pinar, 2012; Pinar, 2011, Pinar, 2022). Pinar and Grumet's concept of *currere*, derived from the Latin root of curriculum, meaning a running course, highlighted the significance of personal experience and inner reflection over rigid educational standards. Their 1976 critique challenged the traditional systemic education approach, prioritizing predefined curricula and standardized thinking. This approach views the curriculum as a linear sequential progression, encouraging students to seek truths externally while neglecting opportunities to understand their unique life experiences through reflecting innerly. This often results in a profound lack of self-awareness, alienating students from their internal truths and genuine feelings.

The consequences of such a systematic approach in curriculum as"years of programming" in education diverted students' attention "away from [their] interior reality, to keep it fixed on the exterior world," both by concealing inner conflicts and directing any that arose towards "socially preferred behaviour" (Pinar & Grumet,1976, p. 5). Curriculum then becomes a part of the social machine that produces "good citizens." In turn, Pinar and Grumet (1975) advocated for a more introspective and authentic approach to education, emphasizing "learning to take ourselves as data... bracketing what is observed, typically taken for granted, and seeing it as it is" (p. 23). Therefore, the concept of curriculum as the running of the course allows for exploring the self and one's *Lebenswelt* or lived experience. In this sense, *currere* transforms the curriculum into a conversation that prioritizes individual lived experiences over a mere list of objectives and guidelines. With a grounded understanding of curriculum through the notion of *currere*, educators can facilitate discussions or activities that open up space for classroom experiences embodied in the personal experience. The notion of *currere* becomes a pedagogical praxis – a curriculum that can truly invite a complicated conversation (Pinar, 2005) emerges from a diverse classroom.

Furthermore, the process of *currere*, regressive, progressive, analytical and synthetical is profoundly pedagogical – the progressive step invites the students to free associate with the past. The initial movement of revisiting the past through regressive writing attunes students' awareness of their situated subjectivity, such as their worldview and their life history. This regressive writing process is profoundly pedagogical. As a journey home, the regressive reflection and writing illuminates the path of what happened in the past and simultaneously invites students to ponder the future. The present resides in juxtaposing the critical reflection of the past and imagination of the future possibilities. In turn, knowledge is not obtained externally but as a journey home through an internal process of analyzing and synthesizing one's mode of being. Attunement as a journey home is attuning to the past through progressive reflection, and writing becomes a journey home, which is what students' autobiographical assignments have taught me. In addition, I realized the powerful

pedagogical significance of this critical reflective writing can manifest for both students and teachers. More specifically, the pedagogical significance of the autobiographical study through the method of *currere* reveals the essence of understanding one's alterity (Pinar, 2015) as a remembrance of finding one's way home. Home is not only a physical dwelling but also a space where the process of remembering through autobiographical inquiry can unfold, a deeper awareness of one's existential situatedness.

Reflective Writing as Remembrance of Finding Way Home by Daiyairi

> …writing autobiography-ically, we remember where we have been, attend to where we are, imagine where we might go (Hasabe Ludt et al., 2009, p. 97).

> The method of *currere*… asks us to slow down, to remember, even re-enter the past, and to meditatively imagine the future. Then, slowly and in one's terms, one analyzes one's experience of the past and fantasies of the future to understand more fully, with more complexity and subtlety, one's submergence in the present (Pinar, 2004, p. 4).

In the Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning course, Patricia tasked us with reflecting on the philosophical foundations of our educational experiences and critically examining how these beliefs are shaped by broader historical, societal, and cultural influences. As I delved into this assignment, a palpable tightness gripped my chest—a physical manifestation of the emotional weight that came with articulating my personal history, the cherished experiences of my loved ones, and the trials we endured.

As an Indigenous person in India, I was uprooted from my homeland at a young age due to armed conflict, and the trauma of loss and violence deeply shaped who I was and how I thought. This introspective exercise became a profound moment of attunement, aligning me with both my internal realities and external influences. The writing process began as I sat observing the world blur around me, lost in thoughts of home. Vivid images flooded my mind: my mother's wrinkled nose as she smiled, my father's hunched back in prayer, my grandmother's worn hands in her garden, my grandfather's mischievous smile, my grandmother's bougainvillea trees in full bloom, and the hills I once called home. Overwhelmed by nostalgia, I realized how impossible it felt to capture the entirety of the past in mere words. Yet, as I began to write, I found myself embarking on a reflective exploration of pivotal moments in my memories.

For a long time, I reduced my name to "Dai" or avoided using my surname altogether. I feared that my full name, Daiyairi Muivah, would be too long or difficult for others to grasp. But as I wrote my name on the cover page of my assignment, I remembered the times my father would sit across from me at the dining table and remind me of its significance. "Your grandmother chose this name to commemorate your grandfather's retirement from civil service," he would say, "symbolizing the end of their laborious journey and the onset of peaceful rest." My name Daiyairi means the the essence of peace, satisfaction, and the subtle joy a farmer feels when gazing upon a field of freshly transplanted rice saplings. It also resonates with the Bible verse from Mark 4:39, where amidst a tumultuous storm, Jesus commands, "Peace, be still." The stillness and calmness reflected in that moment are held within my name—Daiyairi—a marker of the peace and leisure that entered my grandparents lives. That was the beginning of an unravelling of memories for me.

As I continued writing my assignment, this introspection deepened on a serene day in the horticulture gardens at Thompson Rivers University. Sitting alone on a weathered bench beneath the flowering trees, I allowed long-suppressed emotions to surface, confronting the painful parts of my past. Just as I had once hidden my name, I realized I had lost much more. Forced out of my homeland, I felt as though my identity had been stripped away.

The weight of these emotions gradually transformed into words—words that wove themselves into a poem, capturing the essence of my experiences. Losses that once felt irretrievable found their way onto the page:

The Things I Lost

The things I lost, I cannot reclaim,
A piece of me, forever in pain.
A childhood home, left behind,
My safety shattered by violence unkind.

In Ukhrul, I found a new connection,
To the land and its stories, a reflection,
But soon, we had to leave again,
My heart torn, another home in vain.

In Delhi, I felt out of place,
Bullied and teased for my unique face.
My culture and history, ignored,
In textbooks and classrooms, I was bored.

No sense of belonging, no place to fit,
My identity, lost bit by bit.
But a globe and my father's words,
Gave me hope, like the singing of birds.

Yet, in boarding school, I lost my last tie,
My name and my identity, a painful goodbye.
Studying history, far from my own,
I felt alone, like a seed unsown.

The things I lost, they shape me still,
A story to tell, a heart to fill.
My experiences, unique and true,
They make me who I am, through and through.

This process of autobiographical inquiry enabled deep reflection on my sociocultural and political position within the curriculum landscape, catalyzing a liberating remembrance of my past. Although what I wrote may seem like a beautiful story unfolding in an idyllic setting, the reality was far more complex. As I revisited moments in my life that I had once dismissed as ordinary, I found myself reconnecting with the idea of home—a place I had been separated from for so long, both geographically and culturally. That separation left me feeling alienated.

It struck me that working on a thesis was, in some way, an attempt to prove myself worthy of returning to the volatile, conflict-ridden landscape I called home. I carried the weight of guilt for having left my people behind. As I started attuning to my lived experiences I realized that critical reflection of the past served as a journey home—an attunement to an educational praxis grounded in individual lived experiences. Soon, this assignment evolved into the desire to write a thesis.

Currere, Temporality and Understanding as a Mode of Being

Temporal Journeys: The Pedagogy of Currere by Patricia

> How might we teach to restore students' sense of temporality – a sharp sense of the past, enabling discernment of the present and foreshadowing of the future – to the complicated conversation that is the school of curriculum (Pinar, 2015, p.27)?
>
> Understanding is never free floating, but always attuned (Heidegger, 2010, p. 324).

I was profoundly touched after reading and re-reading Daiyari's poetic and insightful autobiographical assignment. I was also immensely grateful for Daiyairi's generosity in sharing her lived experiences. My responsibility as a teacher was reminded by a surging sense of privilege in "listening" to these compelling stories. When Daiyari approached me to supervise her thesis, I was delighted to agree. We met regularly in my office or strolled over the campus for lunch and talked about my comments on what Daiyari had shared with me in her reflective notes. In our initial meetings, I prompted Daiyari to expand on her autobiographical assignment by delving into her past, reflecting on it, and writing down her everyday life back home in Ukhrul.

As time passed, Daiyari retrieved her past and shared more stories of her "everydayness." These autobiographical narrations began to reveal that "private life takes on the very qualities of the anarchic social order from which it [is] supposed to provide refuge" (Lasch in Pinar, 2015, p. 27). As I sojourned with Daiyairi by attuning to her stories from the past, in our conversations, I sometimes felt her hesitation in revisiting her dramatic past as a "human agency is lost amidst a myriad of complex power structures and relations" (Magrini, 2014, p. 75). Not to rush her, I encouraged Daiyairi to study and reflect on the dynamics between her lived and planned curriculum worlds (Aoki, 2005). As Daiyairi's narrations became longer with critical reflections on the dynamics between the lived and planned curriculum, I suggested she explore the possibility of critically examining her narrations of everydayness through the method of *currere* (Pinar, 1994, 2004; Pinar & Grumet, 1976).

While re/visiting, re/writing, reflecting and examining her "everydayness" through regressive, progressive, analytic, and synthesis—the four stages of currere—the created distance between self and world, and the everydayness of the past became temporal moments. These temporal moments, the temporality of *currere*, heightened the centrality of questioning the presumed totality of the grand narrative and made it possible for Daiyairi to study her past subjectively, to reflect, contemplate, and render the experiences the world disclosed to her. Attuning to the temporality of *currere*, Daiyari journeyed inwardly, and these temporal moments became a distant yet pedagogical site that manifested from a dialectic between Daiyairi's interpretation and her in-the-world being. Mundaneness no longer permeates the particularity in her

everydayness. With this vivid awareness, history became an "authentic unfolding" via "a dialectic interchange between the human and the word" (Magrini, 2014, p. 76) that reveals the individual's situatedness. In turn, *currere*, as a research method/ology, embodies the pedagogical significance that encouraged the "moment of vision where the past and the future are the horizons of the individual's present so that [one's] own potentiality for being is grasped" (Hubener, 1990, p. 138-139). Also, the past became "the means by which the individual can project his own potentiality for being" (Hubener, 1990, p. 139). Through the essential feature of temporality in *currere*, learning became an existential understanding of an individual's mode of being and its in-the-world-being (Liu Baergen, 2021).

The Past as a Site of Pain and The Future as a Site of Understanding by Daiyairi

> Under-standing the past's presence functions as a midwife to the birth of the future by enabling agency (Pinar, 2015, p.127).

> ... the quest is not so much to rid ourselves of tension, for to be tension less is to be dead like a limp violin string, but to seek appropriately attuned tension, such that the sound of tension strings string resounds well (Aoki, 1991/2005, p. 382).

I was overwhelmed with emotions, lost in a flurry of memories and guilt as I tried to do the exercises of autobiographical inquiry that Patricia had suggested. In that space, I found the method of *currere* to be a structured guide for channelling my thoughts. Hence, I decided to pursue writing a thesis following the four steps of *currere*—regressive, progressive, analytical, and synthetical. I asked Patricia to guide me on this journey, and our sojourning together started a journey inwards as I traced the contours of my personal and educational journey, eager to remember home and find a way back that was not ridden with guilt.

As I entered the *regressive,* I realized that I had viewed the past as a place to visit briefly and forget, not realizing how persistently it shaped my present. The past was where my first home stood, crowned with lotus pads on its pond, and the well where tadpoles swam that I could never visit again. It held my grandmother's beds of daisies, my home in Ukhrul, which once housed my family but now serves as a resting place for sparrows in the rafters. It preserved the memories of days spent with my grandfather, sitting beside him on the porch as he penned his thoughts in his journal, not far from where he rests forever now. Each memory was a place I could never return to in the present, gone forever. The past also held fear as we fled our home amidst whispers of an escalating war and a rising death toll. It was also where my teacher in Delhi—a city a day's journey and a four-hour flight, approximately 1,180 miles away—told me that the region of India where I came from was irrelevant to what we were studying in class.

Such areas of my life I had previously compartmentalized for the sake of efficiency. Yet, as I oscillated between writing, reading, rewriting, and rereading, I began to dissect and comprehend the complexities that haunted me. In this process, autobiographical writing through the method of *currere* served as mirrors, allowing me to engage in a complicated conversation (Pinar, 1975) with myself, wherein I consider different parts of my experiences, feelings, and thoughts—evaluating how close or distant I feel from these experiences and seeking meaning from them. Furthermore, as I delved further into my inquiry and revisited memories of longing and displacement, I started recognizing how they echoed throughout my life. Thus, even in the progressive stage, as I tried to look toward the future, the guilt I carried from the past clouded my vision. Despite the access to education and freedom I now had, I couldn't see beyond the immediate need to help others. My decisions were often driven by guilt and the desire to give back, rather than an acknowledgement of my evolving aspirations.

The analytical stage allowed me to dissect these patterns, examining how guilt and survival had steered my choices. As I synthesized these insights, I realized the enduring influence of my past, the mundane experiences that I had called "*just my life*". Memories, once isolated, began to connect like dots along a line, each pulling the next into clearer focus. Through the method of *currere*, I pieced together the scattered fragments of my identity. This inquiry became more than just writing a thesis; it was about coming home to myself—embracing the fullness of my story and allowing it to shape my path forward. Reflecting on my past became not merely an academic exercise but a pathway to deeper self-awareness and transformative learning. Autobiographical study goes beyond merely sharing my stories; it reveals the societal influences and the ever-changing selves, demonstrating that interpretations are never truly complete. Despite the challenges of comprehending our evolving selves, autobiographical inquiry offered me an avenue for deep introspection, illuminating the unique intersections of personal life experiences and education. As Wang (2017) elucidated, the intertwining of academic knowledge and life experience through the complicated conversation of *currere* bridges the gap between individual experiences and collective understanding and "also creates opportunities to consider the particularity of each event" (p. 112).

The method of *currere*, as Pinar (2012) emphasized, allowed me to learn from everyday moments of my past and reconstruct them through thought and dialogue, leading to profound understanding. It encouraged me to explore my past through regressive writing, illuminating the path of what had happened and inviting me to ponder future possibilities. This process of critical reflection and imagining future possibilities was profoundly pedagogical and transformative. The shift from forgetting to remembering, initiated by the structured autobiographical inquiry using the method of currere, enabled me to engage deeply with my sociocultural and political situatedness within the curriculum landscape. According to Kincheloe and Pinar (1991), such deep reflection on one's past could catalyze liberation, alleviate suffering, and foster happiness, a process they termed "remembrance" (p. 3). Even now as I write these lines I am still on a journey of liberation.

This reflective method of *currere* was like examining a map instead of walking the streets; it provided a clearer view of where I had been and where I was going, helping me to understand my subjectivities more objectively. These personal views and feelings transformed into objects that I could examine, turn around, and understand from different angles. As I began visiting these sites more frequently through my writing, I came to a dawning realization that my past was not just a location to visit when convenient; it was an integral part of me, holding keys that have immensely affected the paths I have taken in life.

Tensionality as Generative Pedagogical Site

> Historical facts are primary, but it is their capacity to invoke our imagination that marks them as allegorical. Their meanings are confined to the past; they leak into our experience of the present. Those meanings...cannot be definitive, as they do not belong to the present. Bringing the past into the present while rigorously refusing to conflate the two incurs that "creative tensionality" inherent in a historical sensibility (Pinar, 2015, p. 28).

From Reflection to Aspiration by Patricia

Before I knew it, the tall evergreens, dusted with frost, stood as silent sentinels against the pale blue sky, their branches heavy with the weight of winter's touch. A year passed by, and my sojourn with Daiyari's thesis journey arrived at its final destination. Reflecting on this journey, departing from my call to students' attunement to their lived experiences through an autobiographical curriculum course assignment. Listening to students' autobiographical narrations, I responded with my obligation as a teacher to create an educational environment to invite possibilities for students to explore further (Huebner, 1999).

As Daiyairi shared in her journey, through the exploration of the method of *currere* in seeking the existential meaning of one's present circumstance by studying the past, as the past has been brought into the present, the future is simultaneously projecting its possibility; temporality in the method of *currere* became pedagogically distinctive. However, this process may not be an easy path as one confronts the totality of the grant narrative when the "individual is thrown into a world, not necessarily of [one's] own making, but an embodiment of the past" (Hubner, 2008, p. 139). Responding to the past becomes an authentic act of the individual in "reinterpreting the past, drawing on the collective ethos of [one's] society (Magrini, 2014, p. 76), and such an authentic act is often lived in between the tensions of the two curriculum worlds.

While sojourning with Daiyari, listening carefully to the heartfelt stories of her struggles in between the tensioned worlds of curriculum-as-plan and lived (Aoki, 2005), and seeking the existential understanding of her being and in-the-world-being, tensionality became "the rich soil for nurturing generative intellectual seeds" (Liu Baergen, 2021, p. 128). Tensionality between the consciousness of her Indigeneity and the suppressed historical truth marked the beginning of her *currere* (Pinar, 1975)—a complicated conversation with oneself about the relationship between history, knowledge, place, and educational experience. Once lived grief through reactive and reinterpretation then became an "intellectual gift in conceptual advancement" (Liu Baergen, 2021, p. 128). Tensionality becomes a generative pedagogical site that provokes awareness to unveil the particularity eclipsed behind the everyday mundaneness.

It was a sunny winter day. The sun, hanging low on the horizon, cast a gentle, golden light that sparkled off the snow. As students made their way across campus, their breath formed clouds in the air, and the sound of laughter and chatter echoed in the stillness, bringing warmth to the chilly day. The air was crisp and carried the faint scent of pine as I walked to the Scratch Café, a luncheon place on campus where Daiyari and I often met. After our talk about the preparation for defence, I asked Daiyari: What is the next step? What is your aspiration to move forward? Working alongside Daiyari for a year, I see the great potential for her to further her scholarship. Daiyari took a pause, and with a big smile on her face, she shared with me her aspiration of becoming a counsellor to work with her community. To do so, she had planned to take another Master's Degree in Counselling. Daiyari was radiant in the glow when she spoke about her aspiration to become a counsellor and the possibilities of being able to work with her community.

After our lunch, I returned to my office. Looking out the window, the Thompson Rivers, visible from my office, glistenins under the sun, a ribbon of ice winding through the snow-covered landscape. In the distance, the rugged mountains were capped with snow, their peaks

against the clear sky, capturing a picture-like winter essence. While dwelling on Daiyari's aspiration, I was reminded of Huebner's (1999) interpretation of Heidegger's *Dasein* in speaking about student's future as a projection of their own potential for being. The future makes sense only as the horizon of the individual's present (Heubner, 1999). It is not "a future 'now' that can be described. Rather, it is *Dasein* coming toward itself in its own potential for being" (Heubner, 1999, p. 139). In other words, it is the projection of the past, "having-been onto the present to create the 'moment of vision'"(Heubner, 1999, p. 139). Moreover, the individual is always situated within the existential structure, world, and community, so the existing understanding of an individual's being and becoming can not be removed from the dwelling of the world, the community. Lingering with Huebner's insight, I began to understand the profound meaning of Daiyairi's aspiration – her future projects her "personal transcendence into 'accepted patterns of social transcendence'" (Huebner, 1999, p. 139) that is always situated and involved the "interaction between the individual and the community" (Heubner, 1999, p.139). The individual's being resides in the twilight of the having-been and becoming, and such becoming is always embodied with the individual's being-with and being-in-the-world.

At Peace With Being in Between by Daiyairi

I walk between two places,
One old, one new, both mine,
In each, a piece of me remains,
In each, a light will shine.

The past calls out in whispers,
The future waits its turn,
I stand within the middle ground,
With much to live and learn.

Dai and Daiyairi, both are true,
In prayer, in life, in song,
A blend of who I've been and am,
As I journey, strong.

One year after enrolling in EDUC 5030 Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning, I found myself nearing the completion of my thesis titled *Exploring the Aokian Curriculum-as-Plan and Curriculum-as-Lived: An Autobiographical Tangkhul-Naga Study via Currere*. In the midst of this academic endeavour, I received a phone call that would stir up some old wounds. It was an old friend from back home; their voice was a sudden reminder of the world I had left behind. They asked if I planned to return and work within our community. Their question carried an implicit inquiry about guilt: *Did I feel remorseful for not contributing directly to our society?* My response was tinged with the weight of self-awareness. "Of course I do. If anyone feels it, it would be me," I admitted. I explained that my ability to aid was greater from afar at this stage, away from the cycle of violence and trauma that still haunted our homeland. I realized that I must heal myself before attempting to mend a broader landscape.

Previously, in my younger years, I had clung to a naive hope that returning to the familiar environment of home would heal my traumas and ease the complexities of my identity. However, each summer, as I ventured back, this hope was challenged. The green paths of the forest, once quiet and untouched, were now congested with new houses, altering the landscape I had cherished. The old pond, a childhood sanctuary, had been filled in, and the familiar cottages I loved were scorched to ashes during outbreaks of conflict. With each return, nothing remained the same; each alteration exacerbated my sense of loss. This kind of return brought no healing; instead, it deepened the crevices of alienation and disconnection from a place that was no longer the home I remembered.

Now, as I walked up a hill that did not bear the name of home yet housed my current life, I pondered my place within these two worlds. The hills of my childhood, those I once called home, had faded into the realm of memory, no more tangible than shadows. I found myself suspended in a tensional existence, rooted neither fully here nor there, inhabiting a threshold between worlds. In this moment of reflection, I resolved to pursue another master's degree in counselling. This new path was chosen not just for personal fulfillment but as a means to assist others stranded in similar between-states—those grappling with the dichotomy of 'here and not here.' I did not know whether I would return home soon, but I knew that my journey was not only about serving my community in the present moment. I recognized that violence, upheaval, and dislocation are struggles many face, each in their own way. I did not need to serve my community immediately, but instead, I could focus on building the skills that would one day take me home. Perhaps then, I could begin the journey of healing alongside my people.

This location, neither fully home nor wholly foreign, had evolved into a generative site for my life's decisions. The pressures of guilt and displacement, while potent, were no longer forces that demanded resolution. I accepted that a part of me would always yearn for the land I left behind, and when ready, I would return to contribute meaningfully. Yet, my educational journey and subsequent career choices were defined by a broader purpose: not merely to serve or to prove my worth but to forge a path laden with intrinsic significance to my existence, aligning with the greater purpose for which God created me. The tensions I experienced were not problems to be solved but spaces to be inhabited, as Aoki (1986/1991/2005) suggests. They became a dynamic site for learning where I could explore the multiplicity of my identity. Through this reflective journey, I have come to understand that my hybridity, suspended between different cultural and educational worlds, is a source of strength.

I am Daiyairi Muivah, I am Daiyairi, but as much as those are me, so is Dai. Dai—the name that my friends call out to when we gather to worship at church on Sundays, the name that loved ones call out in our quiet moments of prayer. Dai is still me too. This duality within me plays a symphony of identity—a rich blend of my past, present, and aspirations, each note contributing to the music of who I am.

An Echoing Resonance

As the sounds of past, present, and aspirations blend and echo the journey we embarked on together as student and teacher, we hope to unveil the transformative pedagogical possibilities of autobiographical study and the method of *currere*. Through the intertwining of our personal narratives, we sought to illuminate how these pedagogical approaches empower both students and educators to transcend the confines of an education system often fixated on rigid objectives, embracing the richness of lived experience. By asking how autobiographical study

and *currere* might attune a pedagogy that contributes to the symphony of existential-phenomenological understanding, we found three resonant themes emerged: attunement as a journey home, *currere* as a temporal exploration of being, and tensionality as a generative pedagogical site. Attunement invites a reflective return to one's essence, where past experiences, no longer dormant, weave into the present circumstances to imagine future possibilities. Through *currere*, the temporal essence of past, present, and future unfolds, transforming tensionality into intellectual possibilities. Tensions, once seen as barriers, become catalysts for profound understanding, where the interplay of past and present, personal and communal—can lead to a richer, more nuanced understanding. It highlights the pedagogical potential of embracing tensionality as a dynamic site for learning. Rooted in the stories of students' and teachers' life worlds, autobiographical study and the method of *currere* reimagine pedagogy as a living dialogue enrich the journey of learning with authenticity and subjective meaning. It is with these aspirations that we share the stories of our journey.

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