

A Teacher's Auto-Ethnography of Grit and Student Success in a High School Physics Classroom

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M.Ed. Educational Leadership & Admin (St.FX, 2017)

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B.Ed. Secondary Education (St.FX, 2009)

B.Sc. Physics & Mathematics (Dal, 2007)

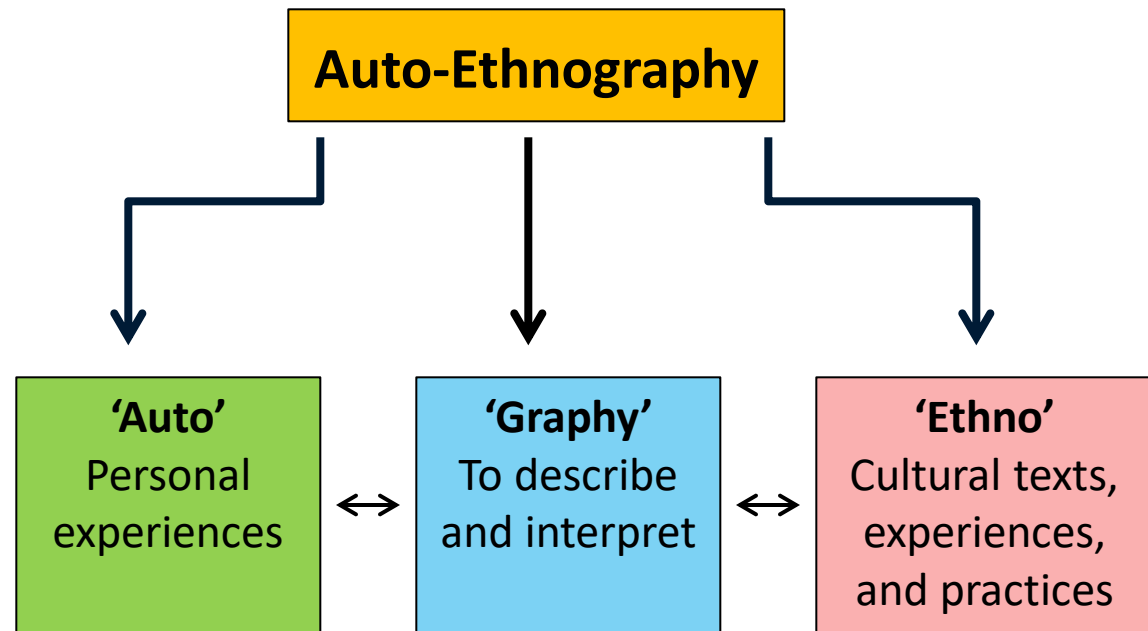
- 12 years teaching within the Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE)
- Recently involved with the YMCA Stories of 2nd Generation Immigrants Project
- Elected VP Internal Affairs for the Vietnamese Association of NS (2012-13)
- Was involved in two curriculum writing projects with Dr. Andrew Foran (St.FX)



What is an Auto-Ethnography?

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Auto-Ethnography is an intersection between an **autobiography** and an **ethnography**



Student Success

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What factors, situations, and contexts lead to the success of students in school?

Motivation & Interest

Initial interest and motivation, but later lost with time

Habits

Lack of effort or study habits

Supports

Lack of supports in place (e.g. school and family)

Classroom

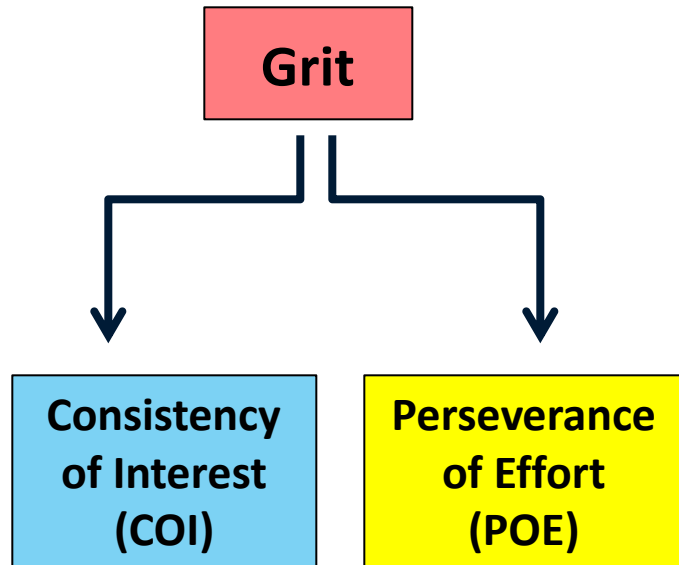
Poor classroom management and resources

Why?

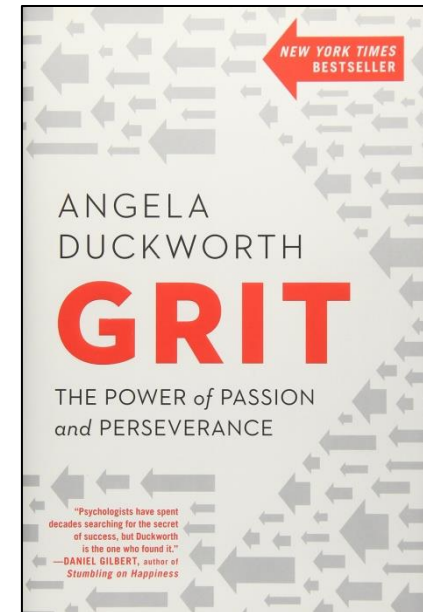
Why?

Grit

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Original 2007 grit test (Grit-O) was a 12-item survey. Revised 2009 grit test (Grit-S) is a 8-item survey.



Results of Having a Higher-Degree of Grit:

- Grittier students outperformed less gritty peers (including grades)
- Grittier individuals tend to have higher educational achievement
- Greater chance of success in graduating high school
- Reduction in absenteeism and excellent productive behaviors

Disagreement in the Literature

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- Duckworth and Quinn (2009) seem hesitant about labelling grit as domain-specific but notes further investigations are also needed
- Some research indicate that the domain-specific nature of perseverance of effort showed significant correlation to success than consistency of interest
- Grit itself should be used for very narrow and focused goals
- Deficit versus structural ideologies



Experience #1: Caleb

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Brief Description of Caleb: Typical high school Bad-boy. Incredibly disruptive, non-complaint of rules, poor academic efforts, socially isolated from other peers, low motivation, and comes from a low-income household. Initially, no support from home. He typically cared more about his self-image as a Bad-boy than academic success. Conditional pass in Grade 11, but exceeded expectations in Grade 12



Contribution to Knowledge of Grit:

1. Lack of self-control and other personality factors
2. Feelings of inclusion, genuine positive feedback and encouragement
3. Maturity and being in control of the situation
4. Social anonymity
5. Poverty



Experience #2: Adhira

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Brief Description of Adhira: 1st generation Indian-Canadian. Very hard working; consistently demonstrates a high-degree of grit. Speaks Telugu, Hindi, and English. Both parents do not speak English and often requires Adhira to be their translator. Bonds very well with other native-born Canadians while proud of her Indian roots.

Contribution to Knowledge of Grit:

1. “Cultural straddler” (Adaptability between cultures)
2. Social adaptability as a non-Native Canadian
3. Familial issues and obligations (e.g. Translator)



Experience #3: Violet

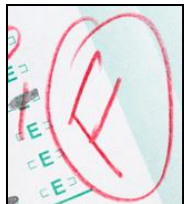
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Brief Description of Violet: Introverted, but attentive student. Experienced significant failure in grade 10 math. Very neurotic (e.g. Poor self-esteem, self-confidence, easily stressed and frustrated, and poor coping mechanisms). She wanted to please others and was under pressure to perform with excellent grades.



Contribution to Knowledge of Grit:

1. Improving mindsets and behavior modification
2. Changing the attitudes and perception around success
3. Supportive parent(s), guardian(s), and families





Questions?



THANKS