

The (Secret and Password Protected) Diary of a Web 2.0 Novice Doing Subtextual Phenomenology

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Abstract: This paper presents a new methodology for examining reflective data. It is called Subtextual Phenomenology. It is authentic phenomenology in the true Husserlian sense, and it taps into the subtext of the data, using psychological techniques akin to psychoanalysis. At Central Queensland University, we are doing research into *Personal Learning Environments* (PLEs) as they are enabled through Web 2.0 technology. The governing *group-approach* for the project is Action Research, in which the researchers are required to reflect on the issues, plan together for new action, implement that initiative, and then reflect again: Plan; Act; Reflect. This is the ongoing Action Research cycle. Subtextual Phenomenology is the methodology I use to make sense of the *reflective phase*. Like autoethnography (Boucher 2002) and Heuristic Inquiry (Moustakas 1990) it requires the user to be both researcher and research subject. As such, I record my experiences as a novice practitioner using Web 2.0 social media tools. I write my impressions and observations of this process in my blog. When I switch to analysis mode, I then analyse the candid, autoethnographic blog using the research paradigm of Subtextual Phenomenology (Vallack 2005). The approach strives to reveal archetypal, mythical forms, which act as analogies for the research issues. At the end of the first reflective phase in the Action Research spiral, Subtextual Phenomenology has shown that the plight of the Web 2.0 Novice is akin to that of the unfortunate protagonist in the Greek myth of *Echo and Narcissus*.0

Keywords: Subtextual phenomenology, blogs, Web 2.0, personal learning environments, action research