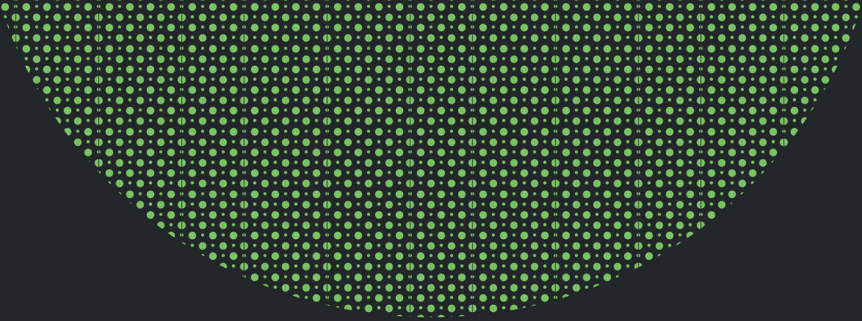


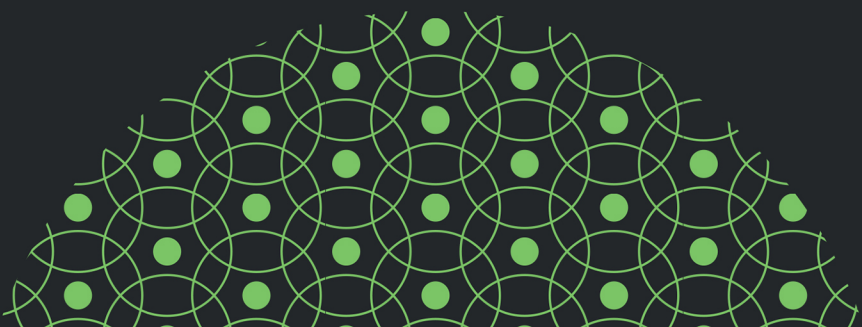


EMERALD POINTS

**THE DISCOVERY OF
INTERNATIONAL
DIGITAL
COLLABORATIVE
AUTOETHNOGRAPHICAL
PSYCHOBIOGRAPHY**

Knowing You, Knowing Me

**PATRICK HOPKINSON
MATS NIKLASSON**



THE DISCOVERY OF
INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL
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THE DISCOVERY OF INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL COLLABORATIVE AUTOETHNOGRAPHICAL PSYCHOBIOGRAPHY

Knowing You, Knowing Me

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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And, most importantly, we would like to thank Elaine Hopkinson and Irene Niklasson for your forbearance and patience during the months that we worked on this book. Thank you so much for your love, support and understanding.

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INTRODUCTION

This is a book about a new way of doing qualitative research. We call the method DCAP (Digital Collaborative Autoethnographical Psychobiography). DCAP combines autoethnography with psychobiography to study the life of another person using our own experiences, beliefs, interests and insights as research tools. DCAP involves placing ourselves in the position of someone else while experiencing what this also tells us about us. In this process of exchange, we learn about ourselves at the same time as learning about someone else. Hence the title of this book, 'Knowing You, Knowing Me'.

The method was discovered when one of us tried to answer research questions that defied other methodological approaches. Why might we refer to the discovery of DCAP? There are several reasons.

Firstly, the concept of DCAP and its International version, IDCAP, was not created in the abstract. It was found when it was needed.

Secondly, the method of DCAP was unearthed and demarcated in the doing. It was not perfectly conceived but instead was created as it was applied. This was an adventure of methodological discovery, a journey that has still to be completed. We are, however, sufficiently advanced for a waypoint to be marked, or perhaps better still a basecamp to be established, from which further explorations can be made and from which new quests can be embarked upon.

Thirdly, DCAP had a genesis, a defined point at which it came into existence in the mind of one person, but it required the involvement of many persons to develop it to its current state. This process was not preordained or planned. Instead, it was an organic progression dependent upon the personalities, knowledge, practice and enthusiasm of those who contributed to it.

The final reason is perhaps most contentious. In 1967, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, assisted by Jeanne Quint, published their book on the new

research method they had used. This book, and the method described within, became hugely influential. It became more important than the results of the research they had conducted. Its title was, of course, 'The Discovery of Grounded Theory'. By giving the book, you are currently holding in your hand, a similar title we do not in any way mean to equate the impact of DCAP with that of Grounded Theory. We can only hope that our work on DCAP will have a fraction of the significance of the work of Glaser and Strauss. However, we do mean to show that a research method can have a meaning beyond the results it achieves and that, like all discoveries, the journey is as fulfilling and important as the destination.

DCAP is, fundamentally, a collaborative method that synthesises personal experiences, professional perspectives and different narrative identities and styles.

This book will set out how autoethnography and psychobiography could be combined into DCAP. It will show you how to do DCAP and will give you some examples. DCAP can be applied to any topics that are amenable to qualitative research methods.

So far, we have used DCAP to explore creativity, music, mental health problems and recovery. We have done this in studies which have included contributors from various research fields in a conversation with each other. While other research methods have provided important new information from a single perspective, DCAP is uniquely democratic in that no one perspective dominates and no attempts are made to privilege one account over another or to subsume one into another. Instead, differences are presented and explored further. We do not know of any other research method that could bring together such a range of collaborators.

DCAP is also inclusive since one of its aims is to be accessible to people with little or no formal training in research. While the participation of people with mental health problems in research has increased, DCAP can include reflections on the experience of mental health problems in the research conversation rather than as data points. Additionally, and equally importantly, the collaboration and contribution of people with mental health problems is based on their interests, strengths and humanity. No one is reduced into being a representative of their pathology.

In this way, multiple angles can be provided on complex and multi-factorial phenomenon that are likely to defy simple explanations. Another value of inter-disciplinary collaboration is that it acts against over interpretation, misapprehensions and excessive selection and manipulation of resources to achieve personal aims. The research team can challenge, inform and correct themselves in a process of shared learning without one voice dominating.

Although DCAP is a qualitative method, the members of the research team can include quantitative researchers. The opportunity for conversations between empirical experimental findings and phenomenology is unlikely to be offered by other research methods.

This broad-based, pan-stylistic approach helps to capture the subjective, nonlinear, and socially and historically located nature of experience.

In line with this pluralism, DCAP is at once introspective and extrospective. Such a methodological approach may be necessary given the complexity of mental health problems and recovery and also of music composition, performance and impact.

Unlike other forms of research, DCAP does not produce obvious results that can be easily summarised. In many ways the process is as impactful as the outcome. The learning and change come from reading the autoethnographical psychobiographies rather than from extracting findings from them. Themes that have been explored using DCAP include alienation; creativity; the nature of, and recovery from, mental health problems; what it means to be a fan; the impact of social class and wealth; the role of mental health services and families in maintain mental health problems or supporting recovery from them; the value and pitfalls of relationships; the use of music as an physical or an emotional escape route; human development, competence and confidence; the role of drugs and especially of cannabis in causing and maintaining mental health problems; and song writing and transcendence. Some of these topics may be familiar in discussions about the relationship between mental health problems, music and recovery. Others will not be.

In keeping with the collaborative and wide-ranging nature of DCAP and IDCAP, this book has two main authors but many contributors. It is now time to introduce ourselves.

Patrick Hopkinson is the Managing Director and founder of Apollo Eagle Consulting Ltd, which supports public service organisational learning. Patrick has worked in the management of adult health and social services for most of his career. However, he also led double life as an informal academic at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, Kings College London.

Mats Niklasson (PhD) is the founder and former director of the Vestibularis Clinic, a Centre for Sensorimotor Training and Research based in Kalmar, Sweden. Presently, Mats is affiliated, as a Visiting Research Fellow, to the School of Psychology at the University of Greater Manchester, Bolton.

Individually, we took the lead on specific chapters in this book, in which we write in the first person. This enabled us to use our own unique voices and styles, an approach which is consistent with the method. Despite this, each

chapter is very much a joint endeavour in terms of content and coverage. During the process of writing each chapter, we provided each other with stylistic suggestions and advice.

We have included two chapters that are examples of DCAP one of which is National, Chapter 6, and the other International, Chapter 7. These were written in collaboration with the following co-authors:

Peter Bryngelsson has for more than 50 years been, and still is, a renowned Swedish multi-musician.

Hans Gurstad-Nilsson has a background in rock music and archaeology, but later in life, he shifted to become an appreciated Swedish composer of contemporary classical music.

Elin Kanhov (PhD) has a background in musicology, the environmental humanities and poststructuralist philosophy and is presently a researcher in music and artificial intelligence at The Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Stockholm, Sweden.

Peter Degerman (PhD) is a senior lecturer in comparative literature at the Mid Sweden University, and the author of several academic papers, book chapters and most recently a book about literature and mental illness, 'The Dark Side of the Moon' [In Swedish].

Alicia Danielsson (PhD) is the Head of the Centre for Contemporary Coronial Law at the University of Greater Manchester, where her work primarily focusses on death investigation and inquest systems. With a background in Human Rights Law and European Criminal Justice, her research bridges legal frameworks and lived experience, particularly in relation to state accountability and procedural justice.

We are deeply indebted to Peter B, Hans, Elin, Peter D and Alicia for answering our call for fellow authors. Only Peter B had previous experience of International DCAP. For everyone else, it was a new adventure of discovery.

Now that you have a better understanding of who we are, it is time to take you through the contents of this book.

CONTENT

Chapter 2. Autoethnography

Mats will consider autoethnography as means of developing self-understanding. We might consider ourselves in abstract, but our true selves are enacted, developed and transformed in exchange with others. This transaction takes

place within cultural contexts that further influence and sometimes define what we are and what we can be. This interaction, between ourselves, others and our context, extends beyond those who are present to include the lives of others that we can relate to only through the evidence of their existence, their own words or works and the recollections and reflections of others about them. In this way, autoethnography exists in association with others. Furthermore, it provides a means of exploring our relationships with ideas as well as with people.

Chapter 3. Psychobiography

Patrick will introduce psychobiography from an autoethnographical perspective. Psychobiography applies psychological theories in order to better understand the lives of other people. Patrick will explore the method of psychobiography from a critical and historical perspective located in his own professional and academic background. This will set the scene for the situation that led to the discovery of DCAP.

Chapter 4. What Digital Collaborative Autoethnographic Psychobiography Presently Is and What We Wish It to Become

In this joint chapter, we will bring autoethnography and psychobiography together to form DCAP. The chapter is in Mats' voice but very much a joint effort with Patrick. We will both explain how to conduct research using DCAP and we will further develop its philosophical foundations and possible applications.

Chapter 5. Music and Madness

Patrick will establish the position of DCAP within the context of research, theory and writing about music and mental health problems. By doing this, he will show that DCAP can make an important contribution to this area of study.

Having laid the foundations, we will present two chapters that showcase the benefits and opportunities that wide multi-disciplinary collaboration can provide.

Chapter 6. Going Forward by Moving Backwards: A Perpetual Dialectic Movement

Mats, Peter B and Hans will explore their friendship while at the same time examining Hans' life in terms of music and his experience of archaeology. Further perspectives are provided by Elin and Peter D, to offer a rich, multi-faceted and compelling analysis of creativity, relationships, change and persistence. This is an entirely novel use of DCAP by exclusively Swedish collaborators in which Hans is both the psychobiographical subject and a fellow author.

Chapter 7. Goldilocks and the Three Bears: An IDCAP of Kurt Cobain's Suicide

Patrick, Mats and Alicia will consider the suicide in 1994 of Kurt Cobain. This chapter will show how human developmental-, legal- and public health perspectives can be used to understand and support interventions in suicide. Despite Kurt Cobain's very considerable fame and influence, as a member of the band Nirvana, there have been few formal academic studies of his life. This chapter will highlight how DCAP can be used to study topics of interest that have not been approached before.

In this book, you will also find three original art works by two internationally renowned Swedish artists, Bertil Vallien and Markus Åkesson. Both were, when asked, delighted to have their work included to symbolically represent the DCAP process of seeing *another* to better understand *oneself*.

Bertil Vallien has contributed his charcoal drawing 'I see you' (2019) (Fig. 1) and the combine 'Jordmänen' ['The Soil'] (2025) (Fig. 2). 'The Soil' is intended to be a symbolic illustration for the importance of cultivation in order for something to grow. Markus Åkesson is represented with 'Now you see me', oil on canvas (2021) (Fig. 6). Both artist's work can be found in museums, galleries and private collections around the world.

Chapter 8. Conclusions

In this final chapter, we will draw the book together by providing a brief summary of progress so far and some suggestions of the way forward. All there is for now to say is, thank you for joining us on this journey. We hope that you'll find this book helpful and entertaining and we wish you calm seas and fair weather as you continue the discovery of DCAP.



Source: By kind permission of Bertil Vallien.

Fig. 1. 'I see you' (2019).