Walking Practices in Higher Education:
An Inquiry into the Teaching, Writing, and Walking Practices
of Five Contemporary Academics

Veronica Kim Hotton

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Walking has been a practice and an essential component of the lives of many educators, philosophers, researchers and writers in both historical and contemporary times. However, little work has been done to explore what walking means to these people and how walking influences their work. In this project, I interview five people who have walking practices to explore their practice with a focus on teaching, learning, and writing in higher education. The participants come from a range of roles that includes emeritus faculty, research and teaching faculty, and a doctoral candidate. I conducted interviews while both walking and being seated with participants since walking, as a go-along interview method, was a secondary focus of the research. Through the interviews, six themes emerged: (1) walking as roots, (2) walking as experiential, (3) walking and metaphor, (4) walking pragmatics and practicalities, (5) walking in academia, and (6) walking as a method of research. I discuss these six themes through the literature, what the participants have offered, and my understandings of how walking is an under-researched aspect of academic culture and practice. The project concludes with the insights and implications of what walking practices offer to: educational philosophy in general, higher education, educational research, and my own practice.

Keywords: Ethnographic Research; Go-Along and Walking Interviews; Higher Education; Qualitative Research; Teaching, Learning, and Writing; Walking Pedagogy