There is no doubt that narrative is a mode of knowing in the professions. It is believed by many to contribute in unique ways to learning, not simply of useful but fundamentally necessary perspectives on a discipline, its clients, and its practitioners. This is true across professions and is achieved through narratives, read, created, and enacted. Key to this is the significance of meaning and interpretation. No growth or development, professional or personal, is possible without interpretation.

From Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology (chapter 23)
D. Jean Clandinin
Pub. date: 2007 | DOI: http://dx.doi.org.antioch.idm.oclc.org/10.4135/9781452226552
Narrative in the Professions

– What is the use and importance of narrative in your practice?
– How does the client’s, patient’s, student’s story allow the deepening your knowledge about that individual?
– How is the interpretation of narrative critical in your professional development?
Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. It is collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in the same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that make up people's lives, both individual and social. (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20)
What is real?

– Dewey’s (1938) pragmatic ontology is to narrative inquiry as positivism is to experimental inquiry.

– Pragmatic ontology of experience i.e. what becomes real for us, emerges from our transactions between the self and the world. The self is not a static entity but in continuous transformation through experience. Thus, there is in any moment a continuity between past experiences, present understandings of self and the lived experience which in turn leads to the experiential future.

– Thus inquiry is not to generate a representation of a reality independent from the knower.
Framed within this view of experience, the focus of narrative inquiry is not only on individuals' experiences but also on the social, cultural, and institutional narratives within which individuals' experiences are constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted. Narrative inquirers study the individual's experience in the world, an experience that is storied both in the living and telling and that can be studied by listening, observing, living alongside another, and writing and interpreting texts.
Narrative Inquiry *

Narrative inquirers explore the stories people live and tell.

Stories emerge from the influences of social experiences on self, on the environment, and on personal history.

Both personal and social conditions are of importance.

Personal conditions are feelings, hopes, desire, aesthetic reactions and moral dispositions of both the narrator and the inquirer.

Social conditions are environment, surrounding factors and forces of the context.

Levels of Representation of Story*

- Attending
- Telling
- Transcribing
- Reading
- Analyzing

Primary Experience

The Telling of Story

– How do you tell a story?
  – Temporally Sequenced Narrative
  – Causative Narrative

– What creates a plot?
  – Emerges from the unexpected turns in the story
  – Deviation from an expected order within the culture
Examples of research methods using narrative?

- Qualitative methods that use narrative as the foundation of inquiring about meaning include:
  - Phenomenology
  - Ethnography
  - Biographical
  - Case Study
  - Organizational Storytelling
  - Grounded Theory
  - Critical Incident Technique
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Epistemological Perspective</th>
<th>Theoretical Position on Power, Relationship, and Identity</th>
<th>Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| I. Post-Positivist: semistable truth in context | 1. Researcher directly controls content  
2. Identity of researcher is never considered in research design  
3. Brief relationships  
4. Power remains with researcher | a. Narrators are selected who represent the population  
b. Structured interviews or solicited narratives  
c. Structured observations and field notes  
d. Structured analyses; narrators give no feedback |
| II. Constructivist: unstable truth in context | 1. Co-constructed to maintain intentions of narrators  
2. Identity of researcher is considered in research design if warranted  
3. Varying relationship time with narrators, depending on design  
4. Power is shared between researchers and narrators | a. Narrators are selected who reflect the theoretical frame  
b. Semistructured interviews and conversations  
c. Semistructured observations and field notes  
d. Structured and open-ended analyses; narrators give feedback |
| III. Critical: no stable truth; temporal understandings situated in history and political relations | 1. Direction of narrative shifts between narrators and researchers  
2. Identity of researcher is always considered in research design  
3. Usually long relationships  
4. Power tensions are made explicit | a. Usually, narrators are those who meet and talk for regular life events  
b. Open-ended conversations  
c. Open-ended observations and field notes  
d. Critical whole-text analyses by researchers and narrators; semistructured analyses; narrators always give feedback |
## Classification of Narrative Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Holistic</strong></td>
<td>Focus on the story content in entirety</td>
<td>Structural components of story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Categorical</strong></td>
<td><strong>Categorical-content &amp; classification of text</strong></td>
<td>Stylistic or linguistic characteristics of defined units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Holistic Content

- Read the story several times and let it “speak to you”
- Write down your global impressions: unusual features, disharmony, episodes, issues, disturbances
- Decide on special foci or themes that emerged in the story
- Follow each theme throughout the story and note your conclusions regarding overarching themes and patterns of plotlines.
Categorical Content

- Read over the provided segment
- What story is being told?
- What are major themes that you notice in this story?
Stylistic or Linguistic Analysis

- And example would be identifying places of emotion in a story
- Attending to what is said explicitly and what is inferred from the phrasing, inflection, tone of the narrator
Many other approaches to narrative

- Values analysis
- Significance analysis
- Character mapping and time analysis
- Reference with further description of these approaches
Thematic Analysis & Structural Analysis

This approach is used in many constructivist methods.
What is thematic analysis?

- Thematic analysis is not a method
- Thematic analysis is a tool of method
- Thematic analysis is a process for making meaning from qualitative information
- If desired, the qualitative information can be translated into quantitative data
Developing Codes

- The development of codes follows the purpose of the study and the method being used for the study
  - Creating large thematic or conceptual understanding from emergent coding
  - Using emergent thematic codes (empirically driven) to develop a coding scheme or taxonomy
  - Using a coding scheme developed by research and published in the literature
  - Using a coding scheme that has been developed from theory
Doing It Reliably

- Reliably may be interpreted in many different ways dependent on the method being used
  - It can mean inter-rater reliability based on the degree of agreement between two different coders for the same message
  - It can mean consistency of focus on manifest or latent meaning
  - It can mean bringing multiple perspectives to the message and finding consistency in the essence noticed
What is structural analysis?

- Attention to the unfolding of story
- Recognition of the elements of how a story is formed and related
- Identification of plotlines
- Creation of the grand narrative of many stories on a shared life event
- (see handout)
Approaches to Structural Analysis

- Connecting *plot lines* across stories: Causal sequence, turning points of ideal and real, the counternarrative. Analysts look for commonalities and differences in the sample.

- Core narrative of story segments that are linked throughout the narrative. Each segment analyzed for *Abstract, Orientation, Complicating Action and Resolution*.

- Overarching narrative with subnarratives with attention to emotion, linguistic turns, structure of story.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plot Element</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character – primary, plot crucial secondary</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Initiating Action</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Complicating Action</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>High Point (turning point, climax)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Resolution strategy(ies)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ending</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrator Stance</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Software for Coding

– [www.dedoose.com](http://www.dedoose.com)
– [www.qsrinternational.com](http://www.qsrinternational.com)
Comparing Structural & Thematic Analysis

- Consider life story of individuals that have experienced a traumatic event. How do they stage their stories? What is the complicating action? What is the resolution?
- Consider story of a returning veteran with TBI and PTSD. What broad themes emerge from the stories? Where do the story lines intersect across entities?
Abstract: What is the story about?
Orientation: Who, when, where, how?
Complicating Action: Then what happened?
Evaluation: How or why is this interesting?
Result/Resolution: What finally happened?
Coda: Final clause which returns narrative to the time of speaking
Interviewer: DOES THIS SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AFFECT YOUR DAILY LIFE?

– Yes. It [sense of responsibility] does [affect daily life] because I feel keenly things I always think would I feel this less if I didn't know some things. You know like when I sit in a faculty meeting and people are functioning in a way that shows that they are totally unconscious of even a working class, let alone communities of color and I sit there and I think you know my Uncle who is cleaning the hospital, he's got this horrible job and he's just hurt his back. I think of all these people, or the place where I do my shopping in the market and I ..... the rage that I feel, that's how it affects me..... it's hard to get through faculty meetings sometimes. The way in which people from dominant groups can be so unconscious! They can just sail through their lives and talk about their gardens and their cottages and it ..... it doesn't matter to them that so many people are out of work for instance. That kind of ...... it does affect my daily life and I tend to feel .... I always have to keep giving myself little speeches in faculty meetings or in you know meetings with the government or something, little speeches like, 'hold it, you can't give vent to these feelings, you have to think them through intellectually' but I feel like I know something that people in that room don't know. And it ..... what I know is a responsibility. I know something about the lives of people out there because I come from those people. It's ...... they don't notice and it's very very strange to observe that. So it does affect my daily life a great deal.
- **Abstract**: What is the story about?
- **Orientation**: Who, when, where, how?
- **Complicating Action**: Then what happened?
- **Evaluation**: How or why is this interesting?
- **Result/Resolution**: What finally happened?
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