Chapter 1
Narrative Research in Practice: Navigating the Terrain

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Abstract This chapter endeavors to map the terrain of the narrative landscape. In so doing we use two broad categories, firstly *methodological questions*, which includes the ontological and epistemological basis of the research, the nature of the relationship between the researcher and researched, and whether the research focuses on the individual or on societal contexts and concerns. Secondly *method questions*, which includes the nature of the evidence, the analytical processes used, and the representation of the research product. We seek to draw attention to the way the same terms are used by different authors in different ways. We hope this assists narrative researchers in the field further develop ideas in a continued commitment to the scholarship of narrative research.

Keywords Narrative • Methodology • Method • Epistemology • Ontology • Research design

Introduction

Telling stories as a way of making sense of the world is, as far as we can tell, a uniquely human trait. The stories people live and tell are a rich source of knowing and meaning making. Qualitative approaches to research that draw upon "stories" are numerous, encompassing ethnography, autoethnography, narrative inquiry, life history research, phenomenology, and others. Stories and narratives may themselves be the "data" for the research, the mode of analysis, or they may be the form in which the data is (re)presented (Polkinghorne 1995).

There is a wide range of divergent approaches that are described as making use of narrative methods. Stories may be fully formed by the participant then analysed by the researcher, or take the form of snippets of data that are "storied" by the

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researcher. The inquiry may focus on the experiences of the individual, or seek to illuminate larger scale social narratives. The wide variety of approaches are flexible and highly contextualised, meaning the researcher must make decisions about which approach is most suited to the specific study undertaken. This makes the journey of becoming a narrative researcher perilous and uncertain, with an absence of clearly defined rules or processes that can be learned and simply applied. Some of those writing about narrative research acknowledge the diversity of narrative approaches to research, while others overlook the differences in attempting to present a consistent field or a definitive approach. As others have said before us, policing the use of the terms is not appropriate (see Clandinin and Murphy 2007) and not what we want to do here; yet an absence of policing has lead to a state of immense confusion and contradiction, felt most profoundly for those new to the field. So, while policing boundaries is not our aim, we seek to draw up some form of map of the terrain of narrative methods that can be used as a navigation aid.

The question that underpinned the development of this chapter was ultimately selfish in nature: "what would I have wanted to read at the start of my journey with narrative research?" This is itself a daunting question: as Corrine Squire, Molly Andrews and Maria Tamboukou comment in the introduction to *Doing Narrative Research* (2013):

> … narrative research offers no automatic starting and finishing points…the definition of narrative is itself in dispute … as indeed is the need for having one in the first place … there are no self evident categories on which to focus … Clear accounts of how to analyse the data … are rare. There are few well defined debates on conflicting approaches … and how to balance them … narrative research offers no overall rules about suitable materials or modes of investigation … (p. 1)

This is hardly reassuring to the novice researcher, but in chaos there is opportunity: we propose that these open questions for narrative inquiry are also its strength.

Narrative research can be broadly divided into two waves: an initial canon of work that sought to establish a place for narrative knowing in the academy of human and social sciences (Bruner 1986; Labov 1972, 1997; Mishler 1999; Polkinghorne 1988, 1995; see Pinnegar and Daynes 2007 for a thorough review); and the body of work that followed, which outlines the principles, methods, approaches and processes of conducting narrative research. This chapter draws heavily on the methodological work of leading narrative scholars from this "second wave", some of whose names very rarely appear in close proximity: Molly Andrews, Michael Bamberg, Jean Clandinin, Michael Connelly, Alexandra Georgakopoulou, Corrine Squire, Catherine Kohler Riessman and Maria Tamboukou. The outputs of these scholars cover a diverse range of disciplines, and diverge in fundamental epistemological premises and in methods.

The task we have set for ourselves in this chapter is ambitious, probably too ambitious for a chapter of this size. As Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) caution:

> any attempt to organize these divergent views into a summary representation inevitably risks shortchanging one view in favor of the priorities of another. There are, however, real differences of opinion on the epistemological, ideological, and ontological commitments of narrative inquirers as well as real differences with those who do not identify as narrative inquirers. (p. 37)

However, as we find ourselves reading and re-reading the work of others who have attempted to synthesize the key ideas from sections of this sprawling, unbounded field (particularly Squire et al. 2013; Clandinin and Rosiek 2007) we are mindful of not repeating their excellent work here. Our intention is to piece those syntheses together in a way that provides a useful starting point, and assists in gaining an understanding of how the work of these various scholars fits together.

To organise the key ideas, we use two broad categories: *methodological questions*, which includes the ontological and epistemological basis of the research, the nature of the relationship between the researcher and researched, and whether the research focuses on the individual or on societal contexts and concerns; and *method questions*, including the nature of the evidence, the analytical processes used, and the representation of the research product.

We use this organisational structure as a way of creating something of a map of the landscape of narrative inquiry, discussing the similarities and differences between the work of various narrative researchers and highlighting the alignments, synergies and contrasts between them. Most importantly, we seek to draw attention to the way the same terms are used by different authors in different ways. In turn, we hope that others will take what we offer in this chapter and build upon it, further developing the ideas in a continued commitment to the scholarship of narrative research.

Methodological Questions

These methodological questions or concerns, including their underpinning theoretical drivers, in an ideal world, are the ones that would be considered first – at the very outset of the research. The position you adopt in response to these questions will underpin all the decisions you make about the research, including methodology, methods and representation.

Story and Narrative – An Ontological Concern

One of the most frequently posed questions in the burgeoning field of narrative research in the social sciences is the simple ontological one: "What is narrative?" (Tamboukou 2008, p. 283) Narrative is a word that is used across a broad range of contexts, and its meaning varies accordingly. As Riessman and Speedy (2007) note:

> beginning in the late 1960s and continuing at a hectic pace, the idea of narrative has penetrated almost every discipline and school. No longer the sole province of literary scholarship, narrative study is now cross-disciplinary, not fitting within the boundaries of any single scholarly field. (pp. 426–427)

The terms "story" and "narrative" are words that come freighted with common-sense meanings and further, with several definitions in different research contexts. Some research uses the terms "story" and "narrative" interchangeably; others make a clear distinction. For example, because it is a focal point of their analysis, Carpenter and emerald (2009) make a clear distinction between "stories" and "narratives" in their *Stories from the Margin*. They utilise the understanding of a story offered by Poirier and Ayers (1997) and Sarbin (1986) to inform their definition of story as a structure used by an individual for the communication of an experience and as a re-presentation of action. For them, stories, in the main, provide meanings for past events, that is, they are a context for knowledge production. Whereas they use the term narratives as "a scheme used by people to give meaning to their experience" (McAllister 2001, p. 391). This distinction is important in Carpenter and emerald's work as they trace the relationships between individuals stories of their mothering and cultural narratives of "good motherhood".

Together with a definition of story and/or narrative, as researcher, the question of what a story is an ontological one. For example, Squire et al. (2013) note that one division in thinking is whether stories are social, dialogically constructed artefacts, or individual expressions of internal states (p. 5). It is almost customary now to open a narrative inquiry with a quote from Jerome Bruner about the centrality of story to human existence; often suggesting that narrative knowing is a primary act of mind (1986). Claninin and Rosiek (2007) position stories as central to human meaning making, they see narrative inquiry is the study of experience as evident in story:

> The only thing that keeps us from floating off with the wind is our stories. They give us a name and put us in a place, allow us to keep on touching … lived and told stories and the talk about the stories are one of the ways that we fill our world with meaning and enlist one another's assistance in building lives and communities. (p. 35)

Huber et al. (2013) position story as central to identity making:

> Throughout the ages and across cultures story continues to express the fundamental nature of humanity. … Our very identities as human beings are inextricably linked to the stories we tell of ourselves, both to ourselves and with one another. (p. 214)

Each of these positions on the nature of story and narrative speaks to the ontological foundation of research and has implications for research design.

What Counts as Knowing? Epistemological Concerns

Just as there is a need to understand the ontological question of what story and narrative are, there is also a need to consider how you understand the "nature of knowledge" (epistemology): what counts as knowledge, where/who does it come from, and the criteria that it needs to meet to be considered knowledge. Epistemology has a direct correlation with the types of methods and techniques used in the research; it will determine the ways in which evidence is gathered, interpreted and presented. Lincoln et al. (2011) describe epistemological standpoints using terms such as

objectivist (singular "truth"[1]), transactional/subjectivist (knowledge is created in social contexts), value-mediated findings (researcher uses theories to reach findings, particularly critical/feminist/post-structural theories), and co-created findings (findings are a result of the contribution of both researcher and participant, including the researcher's personal history). Qualitative research in the social sciences typically necessitates the researcher adopting a reflexive stance, whereby they acknowledge, question and reflect upon the ways in which their presence has shaped what is occurring. This reflexivity cuts across all research and is not limited to narrative work. As Bourdieu (1999) explains:

> The positivist dream of an epistemological state of perfect innocence papers over the fact that the crucial difference is not between a science that effects a construction and one that does not, but between a science that does this without knowing it and one that, being aware of the work of construction, strives to discover and master as completely as possible the nature of its inevitable acts of construction and the equally inevitable effects those acts produce. (p. 608)

In simpler terms, knowledge generated through social research can never be entirely objective, but acknowledging and attending to the ways in which the researcher's presence contributes to and affects the construction of the knowledge means that the level of transparency is increased.

Narrative work is typically within a transactional frame – focused on the way knowledge is created in social settings, whether that is in the interactions between the researcher and participants and/or between participants and others. However, the way findings are developed, along with the relationship between researcher and participants, influence the epistemological stance.

In recognizing the variety of epistemological approaches to narrative research, Bamberg (2009) describes three approaches: Psychoanalytic, Phenomenological and Discursive. Consideration of these is a useful broad sweep entry in to the field; they are by no means exhaustive, but provide a means of illustrating how epistemology shapes research design and processes. In brief, psychoanalytic approaches seek access to a truth behind the story, or a deeper truth, perhaps not even known the teller of the story. Psychoanalytic approaches search stories for the internal motivations of the storyteller and seek the conflict at the core of the story. Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou see this take on narrative inquiry as interpreting research materials almost as if they were materials from an analytic session (2013, pp. 10–11).

Phenomenological approaches adopt a constructivist/interpretivist epistemology, to glimpse in to the lived experience of individuals, which brings with it a respect for the participants' perception of reality; a belief that reality is multiple and situational. The research takes the form of an in-depth understanding in pursuit of the essence of experience, and so is interested in fine-grained descriptions. In some ways Clandinin and colleagues' approach can be understood in these terms. For example, in the research reported in the book *Composing Diverse Identities* (Clandinin et al. 2006), the seven-member research team lived alongside teachers, students, administrators and families for 18 months in order to "understand diverse

[1] Not commonly associated with qualitative research.

individual's experience as they lived out in dynamic relation to people, places and things, in and outside of school" (p. 2). Their investigation entails a rich, detailed and extended account of the research site.

Bamberg (2011) works within the discursive approach, which recognizes that the story and the telling of the story are in relationship. Storying is a pervasive strategy in social interaction and this approach notices how story is remade in the telling, and as such, the telling itself requires as much attention as the story. For example, in *Narrative Practice and Identity Navigation*, Bamberg (2011) examines the storying process: that is, "what speakers tend to accomplish when breaking into narrative and making use of narrative performance features" (2011, p. 100) in the discursive construction of the self in the context of identity research. He opens this paper with an example from a movie in which the character has misunderstood the routine structures and purposes of storying practices in an anger management therapy session. He then uses extracts from three different interviews in which the question of "who are you" was pertinent, to examine routine storying practices, how they are used and resisted or subverted, and what they achieve. The analytic unit for Bamberg in this case, is not the story, rather the story in context, as co-constructed. His focus is the practice of storying (p. 107) and he uses close-grained conversation analytic techniques.

Some of the work in the field of Discursive Psychology presents something of an overlap – as it uses the discourse analytic techniques of, for example, conversation analysis or critical discourse analysis, to look at how people deploy commonsense psychological ideas. "Rather than taking those ideas out of context and finding that they amount to a messy, contradictory and inaccurate theory of mind, we explore how people actually put them to use in their everyday lives, when accounting for actions and events" (Spears et al. 2005, p. 546). The field of Discursive Psychology might take stories that people produce to understand the ways that routine storylines or story structures might be used construct the world in certain ways.

Clearly then, the epistemological position of the research shapes the way data is collected, analysed, interrogated and presented, all of which are research design questions to be unpacked later in this chapter.

Relationships Between Researcher and Researched

Questions of epistemology are deeply connected to the question of the relationship between the researcher and the researched. The adopted epistemological position shapes the types of questions that the research can seek to answer, and what you can take "inquiry" to be – and these both influence, and are influenced by, the nature of the interactions between researcher and participants. Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) describe the change of relationship between the researcher and "the researched" as the most significant shift in the "turn" towards narrative inquiry. Human "subjects" in social sciences research are no longer treated as fixed in place, that is, as static, atemporal, and decontextualized. When drawing on the methodology of narrative

inquiry, which explores stories, narratives of experience, as the phenomenon of interest, narrative inquirers “embrace a relational understanding of the roles and interactions of the researcher and the researched” (Pinnegar and Daynes 2007, p. 15). This section focuses on the complexities that arise in negotiating relationships between researchers and participants when moving beyond a distanced, objective stance.

Many narrative researchers take on a highly “relational” perspective on how they interact with their participants. For Clandinin and Connelly (2000), “relationship is key to what it is that narrative inquirers do” (p. 189). In a phenomenologically informed narrative inquiry, the desire for deep understanding of the people and context, the researchers’ presence in the field will likely take on roles other than a non-participant, “fly-on-the-wall” observer. Their presence may influence what takes place, but a richer and more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon is made possible where research relationships are trusting and lasting.

The relationships between researcher and researched influence the types of data that are generated, and level of depth to which the data can be interrogated. In Rachael’s (Dwyer 2016) work with four teachers, each of the participants differed in the level of openness during the research process; with some there was a level of defensiveness about interpretations of the data, with others those interpretations sparked reflective cycles that may not have otherwise occurred, and this reflectiveness enriched the narrative. The differing relationships resulted in widely varying degrees of depth and criticality in the four narratives.

Another aspect that can complicate research relationships is when the researcher needs to balance multiple roles and/or there is a need for the relationship to last longer than the research itself. Flynn (2014), in her work with bereaved parents, balanced a dual role of music therapist and researcher with these highly vulnerable participants. For Kennelly (2013) and Ledger (2010), their professional colleagues formed the participant pool, requiring research relationships to be negotiated in a way that would maintain positive relationships beyond the course of the research. Jackie Smith (2015) was a therapist for the organization in which she conducted her research. While not therapist to the research participants themselves, she has maintained an ongoing “support group” type of relationship with those who asked for an ongoing connection with the support group that developed around the research.

In addition, it is necessary at times to attend to the specific needs of a particular group of participants. In her chapter, Sol (Rojas-Lizana, Chap. 8 this volume) explored the co-constructed nature of interview data when conducted by an “in-group” interviewer. Michelle (Ronksly-Pavia and Grootenboer, Chap. 9 this volume) attended to and problematized the interview process of working with children with exceptional needs, to ensure that the research was both ethical and inclusive.

Research relationships, as well as being underpinned by epistemological concerns, are closely connected with ethical considerations. University ethical clearance processes are generally designed to deal with research conducted under a positivist framework, but work that falls outside that paradigm may be significantly more complex. Research informed by post-colonial and feminist research ethics seeks to avoid the colonial/imperialist model of plundering a research site for “data”

and leaving. The feminist concern to create genuine relationships, respect participants social and cultural context and "give back" to the participants in some way has informed many research designs, although a desire to respect cultural practices can sometimes bring ethical questions. For example, Cassim et al. (2016) felt they could not conduct their research without abiding by the cultural necessity to both accept food when they visited people in their homes (despite the intense discomfort of accepting food from impoverished and traumatised people) and to bring a small gift to their participants, even though the research ethics committee might consider such a gift an "inducement".

Another important ethical decision that is tied to the relationships with research participants is the decision of whether to engage in a process of member checking. Member checking is the process of going back to the participants and asking them to check the accuracy of the texts. This can include only interview transcripts (which is usually considered desirable by ethical review boards), but can be extended to asking participants to read, comment on and clarify your interpretations and analysis so they can "check" it is the "truth": that it is the whole story, or the story they wanted to tell. This process might elicit more detail and elaboration on the themes, and through this process the researcher might access a deeper, more reflective response.

Some researchers take member checking to be an ideological/philosophical stance that aligns with their concern to treat participants respectfully as co-researcher. Yucel and Iwashita (Chap. 10, this volume) developed narrative accounts that were treated as interim texts (Clandinin and Connelly 2000). These were shared with the participants for the purpose of "verification" as an accurate account. Dwyer (2016) also shared narrative accounts with participants, and the conversations about the interpretations they contained were written into the final versions of the narratives.

In some cases, member checking may actually pose a significant ethical risk to participants. For example, in her work with bereaved parents, Flynn (2014) asked participants to read the interview transcripts shortly after the interview, but by the time the narrative accounts were developed several years later, revisiting their grief through reading the narratives posed a potential risk of retraumatisation, which may have a negative impact on their psychological state.

Another perspective on member checking is that it is a pointless exercise. If you understand that a story is not the truth or not itself an experience, but rather, what someone said about the experience, then a member check is simply another step back from experience again – that is, what someone said about what they said about the experience. Therefore, your stance on member checking will have its foundations in your epistemological commitments to what counts as knowledge and knowledge production, and your ontological commitments about the nature of story, as well as being concerned with the nature of the phenomenon under research and the vulnerability of the participants.

While relationships with participants can be carefully cultivated, unexpected occurrences can present challenges for the researcher. Vera Caine and Andrew

Estafan (2011) are researchers who are sincerely concerned with honouring and respecting participants as co-researchers. Each of them had the disquieting experience of a participant leaving the research. In Vera Caine's research, the participant, quite literally, disappeared, with the ensuing police investigation finding no trace. Andrew Estafan had a participant simply fall out of contact, no longer answering emails, but then, when he did reappear years later, he said he was simply done with the research, he felt he had had his say and did not feel he needed to participate any more. Caine and Estafan rather wryly remind us that participants are not always as excited as we are about our work. Caine and Estafan faced an ethical dilemma as they wondered over the ethical way to treat these people's stories, given that their routine, ethically driven, member checking was not possible.

Whatever decisions are made, it is essential that there is a congruency between the epistemology, desired and possible relationships with participants, and the questions that the research seeks to answer.

So What? Who Cares? What Next? The Question and Purpose of the Research

It is possible for narrative research to fulfill a wide range of purposes. As Squire et al. (2013) identify, the divisions between these positions are often treated as more rigid than is truly necessary, and complementary and dialogical movement between them is appropriate at times. However, each brings with it a set of ontological, epistemological and ethical assumptions, and it is therefore useful to have a clear conception of the purpose of the research (or the work that it produces) from the outset.

It is possible for a narrative approach to yield richly detailed accounts of a single person or case study, with a focus on the particular, the unique and the individual. Don Polkinghorne (in Clandinin and Murphy 2007) suggests that narrative focuses on individual lives, as a means of understanding human existence (p. 633). This aligns with the approach to narrative research that has its roots in phenomenology, and also connects strongly to a life history biographical tradition.

While this focus on the individual may be the primary purpose of the research, all narrative research acknowledges the way individuals are situated in social contexts. As described more fully in later sections of this chapter, a focus on the micro-linguistic features of talk in social settings has the potential to illuminate social identities (Bamberg 2007; Georgakopoulou 2007), drawing attention to the ways in which linguistic interactions between agents shape and are shaped by identities.

It is also possible to take a more encompassing look at the social interactions, by examining the ways in which individual experiences align with or resist broader social attitudes. Clandinin and Connelly (1998) use the expression "stories to live by" to describe the way roles, tropes or "master narratives" shape identities and are used to make sense of the social world. Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) draw comparisons

between social theorists and narrative researchers. They posit "narrative inquirers and Marxist-influenced scholars working in the applied social sciences often share an interest in analyzing the way large institutions dehumanise, anesthetise, and alienate the people living and working within them" (p. 47). As well as this shared ontological starting point, they suggest that both have a shared goal of "generating scholarship that transforms the ontological conditions of living" (p. 49). The difference between them comes with how these ontological commitments are approached, with critical theorists being primarily concerned with the macrosocial impact on individuals, while narrative inquirers are concerned with the experiences of individuals and how this influences the macrosocial. Social theorists use different terms to describe these macrosocial narratives or forces: Bourdieu adopts the classical notion of *doxa* to describe the unquestioned and unquestionable values of the dominant members of a field and how these shape the experiences of individuals; Foucault writes of a *regime of truth*, an invisible web of power; Lyotard uses the concept of *master narrative* to describe a story that is beyond interrogation, one that is intended to represent the experiences of society rather than individuals (cited in Barone).

Many have identified the potential for narrative research to give voice to the marginalised (Andrews, 2004; Barone 2000, 2001, 2009; Clandinin and Murphy 2009), and to draw attention to power relationships and issues of justice and injustice within social contexts (Barone 2000, 2001). Molly Andrews (2004) draws attention to the potential for narrative research to give voice to "counter-narratives", personal stories that "go against the social grain" (p. 11). For example, Austin and Carpenter (2008) and Carpenter and emerald (2009) heard women's stories of mothering and the ways these aligned with or contradicted the cultural narratives of "good mothering". They heard women's counter narratives of their good mothering in the ways they sometimes stated mothering practices that might be understood in the metanarratives as "bad mothering", as evidence of their "good mothering". In one example, in the context of their work the question of medication for ADHD was a lively and often fraught debate—and some women declared medicating their children as evidence of their good mothering in the face of accusations that is was evidence of their poor mothering.

Taking this a step further, Barone (2000) suggests that narrative (fictional and non-fictional) texts may provide opportunities for readers to engage in "acts of conspiracy" (2000) and critical analysis (2001). Barone (2009) draws on the work of Rorty (1989) and Sartre (1949), both of whom identify the power of storytelling to be emancipatory, mind-changing, and political, or what Sartre labelled *littérature engagée* (Barone 2009, p. 593). While not always identified as narrative research, rather, research presented as narratives, arts-based research is underpinned by the idea that artistic works have the potential to produce texts that inspire transformative experiences for readers (see Leavy 2015; Sleeter 2014).

Whatever you desire the purpose of your research to be, it needs to be informed by your ontological and epistemological position, and align with the selected methods of gathering evidence, drawing meaning from evidence and (re)presentation.

Method Questions

Once the decisions regarding methodology have been made—especially those regarding the question/s you are going to address and your preferences for interacting with participants—the design questions of the research methods should be easier to answer. In reality, designing research is seldom a linear process, often itself iterative. You may find yourself questioning your decisions or assumptions and cycling back to redesign your method until you have coherence across the design stages.

Much has been written about the need to distinguish qualitative research from quantitative through the use of distinctive terms, rejecting the use of terms such as "data", "analysis" and "writing up". Clandinin and Connelly (2000) use the terms field, interim and research texts to describe three moments in the research process. They use the word "moment" to capture something of the ongoing flow of research and the permeability of research phases. In a narrative inquiry it may not be easy, or even sensible to delineate "phases" of data collection, analysis and presentation, especially when the research design is deliberately iterative or cyclic.

In this chapter, we will think about methods in terms of evidence, analysis and (re)presentation. While you are coming to understand the ontological and epistemological foundations of your research, you will be facing a pivotal question in understanding your narrative inquiry design: "where in the research is the narrative?". Story or narrative could be an integral element of any or all of these moments of research (see Fig. 1.1) and as such, there are a myriad of research designs.

What Counts as Evidence? From Whence Does It Come?

All researchers make decisions about the evidence they gather. There is more or less room for flexibility in these choices depending on the traditions associated with particular disciplines. The possibilities for forms of evidence in narrative research

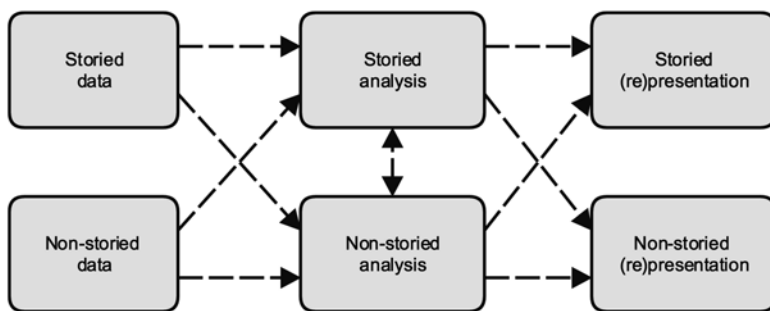

Fig. 1.1 Position of narrative research design (Copyright 2016 R. Dwyer & e. emerald)

are many: field notes, observations, stories, scripts, interviews, films, photographs, conversations, walk-a-longs, collages, photo elicitation interviews and so forth, and likewise, the medium can be written, spoken, film, audio, and more. In this section, rather than focusing on what can be done and how, we explore the issues associated with determining what evidence will be the best suited for your research questions, and problematize the often-tacit decisions about "data collection".

The question of what evidence to gather, create, collect, select or generate, and why, is driven by the underlying tenets of the research itself, founded in your epistemological and ontological commitments. For example, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest that use of the term field text helps us shift the concept of "objective reality" embedded in the notion of "data" and acknowledge, "how imbued field texts are with interpretation" (p. 93). For Clandinin and Connelly, field texts constitute the evidence upon which claims are made, what others might call "data".

Another question to be considered is whether the evidence would have existed without your intervention as a researcher. David Silverman (2007) refers to this as a distinction between naturally occurring or "manufactured" data (data that only occurs because the researcher is there). Coming from the theoretical foundation of ethnomethodology, Silverman (2007) makes a strong argument for the use of naturally occurring data, and demonstrates some of the pitfalls of manufactured data. He alerts us to procedural consequentiality—that is, how the way we gather data influences its "reliability" (p. 58). He makes the important point that researchers must "attend to and demonstrate that they have thought through the extent to which their findings may simply be an artefact of their chosen method." (p. 58).

This distinction between naturally occurring and manufactured evidence resonates with the conversation about using "big stories" or "small stories" as evidence (see Bamberg 2007). Small stories are small conversational exchanges and big stories are life stories and autobiographical accounts (Georgakopoulou and Bamberg 2005). Bamberg (2007) notes that the differences between "big" and "small" stories denote very different approaches to narrative inquiry, claiming that re-positioning big story approaches as grounded in dialogical/discursive approaches such as small story research will theoretically and methodologically enrich narrative inquiry in a radical way. As Freeman (2007) identifies, "big stories" (evidence generated in settings such as interviews, clinical sessions, written reflections) are a step removed from the action itself and are reflective by nature rather than a "true" account of the action. In contrast, "small stories", which take the form of spoken dialogue and other forms of communication (e.g. text messages, emails) in unmediated (or less mediated) social interactions, might be understood as naturally occurring and hence a more authentic reflection of social life as the evidence was generated with less intrusion from researchers (Bamberg 2007).

The evidence you gather may or may not themselves be stories or narratives. As previously described, non-storied evidence can be storied in later parts of the research process. One of the most common ways of generating qualitative data is through interviews. New researchers often, quite innocently, turn to the interview, approaching it as if it is somehow a neutral means of extracting information, without recognizing the contested and debated territory on which interview as a research

method sits (Holstein and Gubrium 2004; Honan 2014). Alerted to David Silverman's caution of procedural consequentiality mentioned above (Silverman 2007), many narrative researchers strike something of a middle ground in narrative interviews. For example, Wendy Holloway, uses the "free association narrative interview method" (Spears et al. 2005, p. 545), hoping to avoid constraining respondents by the assumptions embedded in interview questions, as a way of reaching beyond the constraints of the structured interview:

> to elicit deeply felt and difficult emotions, possibly conflictual, as well as taken-for-granted issues like identity and identifications… The resulting narratives are developed by follow-up questions following the ordering and wording of the interviewee, based on the principle that the researcher should elicit participants' experiences meanings and free associations, imposing as little as is possible of their own. Analysis of data involves, among many other things, noticing signs of the affect and potential conflict interviewees show in their narratives. (Spears et al. 2005, p. 545)

Narrative researchers might open an interview with a broad question such as "tell me about your experience of …" This may allow the respondent to set the agenda, and as an interviewer you may or may not then have some probes on hand to examine a point of particular interest to the research. In her work with music teachers, Rachael (Dwyer 2016) used themes from the literature to prompt the teacher participants to speak to particular themes. Carpenter and emerald (2009) took a slightly different approach. They started with open interviews, and as their work progressed over time and number of interviews, they identified several developing themes that powerfully spoke to their research topic. These themes came up in most interviews unprompted, but if they didn't, Lorelei or elke would introduce them towards the end of the interview, with a statement something like "Many other mothers have spoken about … Do you have any thoughts on that?". As such a reflective and reflexive cycle developed. Aware of procedural consequentiality, in their analysis, Carpenter and emerald noted where this topic was prompted and when it arose unbidden.

Every introductory research text will have a taxonomy of interview types and a "how to" section including such terms as structured, semi structured, conversational, and focus groups. Qualitative researchers have fruitfully employed a range of other story gathering techniques: walk-a-long interviews (that create a conversational space that may well be responsive to the space you are walking through) photo elicitation (either historical photos—say for life history research or asking participants to respond to photos they have taken) and digital storytelling. Both big story and small story research use stories as the evidence, focusing on the way the storytellers (participants) structure their stories and make use of linguistic devices. However, evidence need not always be collected in storied form. Clandinin and Connelly (2000; Connelly and Clandinin 2006) describe generating evidence through "telling", where more often than not, the "tellings" are storied in at least some sense, but also through "living alongside". Living alongside participants includes observing interactions in the field as well as informal conversations that naturally occur when the researcher is a presence in the field setting. These pieces of evidence are not coherent, structured stories in themselves, but are "storied" by

the researcher, or by the participant and researcher together (this will be discussed in more depth in the next section).

The question of "standards of evidence" is alive in all research, and perhaps moreso in a space like narrative inquiry, which encourages a range, richness and variety and, depending on the approach you take, is unlikely to adhere to fixed procedures. The question of how we determine whether evidence is rigorous and reliable and valid has been approached in different ways. Freeman et al. (2007), the five authors themselves not agreeing, review some of the ways that issues a research 'validity' and 'reliability' have been addressed in qualitative methods and give particular attention to how we determine 'good' evidence; For example, they summarise Wilson (1994) and Lincoln (2002) as two possible criteria for evaluating the nature of evidence. Wilson offers:

> evidence should be consistent with a researcher's chosen epistemology or perspective;
> evidence should be observable;
> evidence should be gathered through systematic procedures;
> evidence should be shared and made public, and,
> evidence should be compelling (Wilson 1994, pp. 26–30)

Whereas Lincoln (2002) offers:

> researchers should have been deeply involved and closely connected to the scene;
> researchers should achieve enough distance from the phenomenon to permit recording action and interpretations relatively free of the researcher's own stake;
> claims should be based on an adequate selection of the total corpus of data;
> data should come, at least partly, from publicly accessible observation records, and,
> data and analysis should include consideration of inferences and interpretations, as well as concrete phenomena (Lincoln 2002, p. 9).

Criteria such as these draw our attention as researchers to how we operationalise our epistemological, ontological and ethical commitments. As a researcher you will be called upon to justify your evidence as part of the work of validating your research outcomes. It is wise to consider this question deeply and carefully before you start gathering/collecting/creating data/evidence.

While the approaches described thus far in this section present a range of methods, they are commonly used in combination, as a bricolage. What follows is a series of examples of how evidence has been generated in a range of narrative inquiries. It is essential to note that the methods selected for generating evidence are guided by both the research questions and the field context: planning and reflexivity replace hard-and-fast rules.

Examples of Evidence

elke emerald and Fiona Ewing (2015) capture something of the notion of lived stories as data sources. elke and Fe have been friends for nigh on 30 years. They have spent many days and nights storytelling their lives to each other around Fe's kitchen table. For the purposes of research though, they spent three deliberate days, around that same table, but this time with a recorder, and in walk-along "interviews", recounting Fe's stories of life at sea. The depth of a 30-year relationship sat behind

the storytelling, which deliberately set out to examine the one phenomenon under study—life at sea for a "woman in a man's world".

Cassim et al. (2016), examining the use of Western and Indigenous psychology, gathered the life narratives of five Sri Lankans affected by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami using semi-structured and walk-along interviews. The walk-along technique enabled richly layered stories as participants interacted with community and responded to the environment—eliciting stories and memories that might otherwise not have been available. The memories and artefacts, and interactions with community members enriched the stories. Further, as community members related their stories in talking "incidentally" with the passing researcher and participant, a richly layered story of the tsunami and its consequences and the subsequent healing journeys emerged.

Vera Caine (2010) gave 6th grade students cameras to take home with only one brief instruction—to photograph "community". These photos were used to elicit discussion with students about what community meant to them. This method elicited a variety and depth of perception that may not have otherwise emerged. Students explored the concept in their own spaces, rather than being influenced by some predetermined definition of community, with one student even contributing photographs of his home's resident ghost.

A stark question/answer interview technique would elicit little or no response in some cultural settings. Susan Faoagali, Eileen Honan and Timote M. Vaioleti use talanoa, a Pacifica storytelling dialogue as the conversational platform for gathering narratives (Faoagali and Honan 2015; Vaioleti 2006). The talanoa is a storytelling dialogue itself and the ritual sharing of stories and cultural passing of permission to speak from one member to another facilitates iterative and layered storying.

In his exploration of the lives of boys with ADHD, Brenton Prosser (2006) uses the boys' poetry and stories to present their lives. He also presents a story that several boys wrote together about the experiences at school of a fictional composite character. This collaborative writing arguably allowed the boys to express a richer story than any one boy could tell.

Pithouse-Morgan et al. (2012), in their exploration of student life for one international student in a South African University, used interviews and collage making. The collages expressed an element of experience and also facilitated a relaxed and open talking space. Their aim was not ascertain the number of participants who had similar or different experiences, but rather to "re-present and make meaning from the texture, depth, and complexity of one participant's stories of lived experience" (p. 77).

Georgakopoulou (2007) argues that conversational small stories are "crucial sites of subjectivity" (p. 89), that have the potential to illuminate social identities. Small stories data may be from research-driven events (group interviews) or naturally occurring data such as verbal exchanges or text messages, and allow the researcher to attend to the social interactions between participants in ways that individual interviews do not. In her work with school students, Georgakopoulou (2014) used ethnographic observations, radio microphone recordings of students' in-class and playground talk, formal interviews, "playback sessions", in which the researcher

and student participant listened to and discussed selected excerpts of the recorded data, as well as demographic information about students and the school. This rich dataset allows for a focus on the micro-linguistic features of social interactions, as well as providing opportunities for those interactions to be contextualized.

What Does It Mean? How do I Know?

Approaches to analyzing or interpreting research evidence are perhaps the most contested aspect of narrative research. There is an inherited view from the "hard sciences"/positivist/quantitative disciplines that analysis must be rigid in order to be rigorous; that evidence must be "proven true" in order to be considered knowledge. It is important to recognise that there are several ways to understand the value of research, and all research should be evaluated in terms of its own parameters. Many of the concepts and words we are used to using come from the positivist paradigm, and make a lot of sense in quantitative research—but perhaps are not so applicable to qualitative research. Guba and Lincoln (2005) suggested that the concept of research 'rigour'—with the associated criteria of validity, generalizability, reliability and objectivity, which harken to the assumption that inquiry is objective and value free—be rethought for the qualitative context. For example, they suggest the use of the concept of trustworthiness in place of rigour, with criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. They developed this as something of a mirror of positivist criteria, but recognising that inquiry is contextual and value laden. In their publications in the late 1980s Lincoln and Guba (see a more recent version in Lincoln, Lynham and Guba, 2011) asked qualitative researchers to take on the challenge of considering how we evaluate qualitative research and move the field forward. Lively debate has moved qualitative research well beyond justifying itself, with frameworks for evaluating research directly responsive to the nature and goals of the research itself.

For example Laurel Richardson (2000) suggested consideration of whether the research:

makes a substantive contribution,
shows aesthetic merit,
demonstrates reflexivity,
has impact, and,
expresses a reality.

Tracy (2010) suggested we consider evaluative criteria in terms of:

whether is it is a worthy topic,
demonstrates rich rigor,
shows sincerity,
demonstrates credibility,
has resonance,
makes a significant contribution,
is ethical,
and shows meaningful coherence.

Freeman et al. 2007 suggested research reports be read with attention to thorough description of design and methods in reports, adequate demonstration of the relationship of claims to data, and thoughtful consideration by the researcher of the strengths and limitations of the study.

Clandinin and Caine (2012) turned their attention very specifically to their rendering of narrative inquiry to develop their touchstone criteria for evaluating the rigor of a narrative inquiry:

Attending to relational responsibilities.
Recognition of being in the midst.
Negotiation of relationships.
Narrative beginnings.
Negotiating entry into the field.
Moving from field to field texts.
Moving from field texts to interim texts and final research texts.
Representing narratives of experiences in ways that show temporality, sociality, and place.
Relational response communities.
Justifications.
Attentive to multiple audiences.
Commitment to understanding lives in motion.

As they appear here, these may just look like empty lists. Each of the authors of course articulates these criteria in some depth. We do not have space here to unpack all the frameworks, but take it as our task in this chapter to alert you to this consideration in your research. A clear sense of your commitments to research quality can drive your project in productive ways.

Again, the epistemological foundation of the research will drive the choice of approach to analysis, along with the research questions and purpose.

Polkinghorne (1995) puts approaches to analysis into two broad categories: "analysis of narratives", which he considers to be a form of qualitative research more generally, and "narrative analysis", where the analysis is a "storying" of the evidence by the researcher (Clandinin and Murphy 2007, p. 635). For Polkinghorne, the point of narrative is not to find the commonalities, but rather the particularities of experience; the temporal development and unique histories, looking for things that are common across people. This focus understands that the knowledge we get from narrative is knowledge of the particular rather than general.

However, there are many researchers who call their work "narrative" who fall outside of Polkinghorne's definition. Approaches are varied, ranging from highly structured linguistics-informed approaches (Bamberg 2007; Georgakopoulou 2007; Labov 1997), more thematically-informed approaches, research guided by dimensions of temporality, sociality and place (Clandinin and Connelly 2000; Connelly and Clandinin 2006), narrative as a synthesis of evidence (Polkinghorne 1995) or a myriad of others. Again, and as always, approaches are informed by the research questions and underlying theoretical and methodological tenets of the research.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to articulate the processes of analytic methods, so here we'll describe a number of studies by way of example. First though, it

may be pertinent to consider thematic analysis, as it is often the "go to" analytic for first-time narrative inquirers. The question of how themes (sometimes called narrative threads) are analytically derived from the research evidence will be, again, driven by your research methodology and underpinning philosophical tenets: systematic "highlighter and sticky note" coding as described by Brene Brown (2007); a "reading and re-reading" approach (Clandinin and Connelly 2000); software driven analysis (NVivo for example); careful coding, cross-coding with independent coders and cateorising described by Boyatzis (1998) and Braun and Clarke (2006).

By way of example, Megan Yucel and Noriko Iwashita (Chap. 10, this volume) gathered student stories through several interviews and then created narrative accounts which they reflected on in terms of the major themes arising from students' experience of engagement in the IELTS examination system. They use Barkhuizen's (2008) model of three interconnected stories to frame their analysis:

story—a particular individual's story.
Story—the wider context, beyond the personal level such as the school or workplace
STORY—the broader socio-political context in which teaching and learning takes place.

This distinction is important for Yucel and Iwashita as it enables an understanding of the layers of context in the stories of international students studying for IELTS (International English Language Testing System) tests: how the educational experience of English language proficiency is inherently connected with the students' sense of past, present and future selves, and the ways in which the learning is part of larger social and political structures.

Molly Andrews (2004) listened for the counter narratives—the moments when participants countered or resisted their culture's driving narratives. She spoke with people in their eighties, recounting their experience of being mothered around 70 years prior to the interview. She found that rather than deferring to simple plotlines and explanations that cultural narratives might provide as explanations for, for example, "negligent mothering", they would at times challenge these cultural narratives, recognising circumstances and contexts as complicating factors. Andrews found that "speakers in my study dip in and out of dominant cultural scripts of motherhood, manipulating and reformulating them in ways that are not always immediately apparent. The end result is a very subtle subversion of the well-worn tale, with the mythology of motherhood at its centre (Andrews 2004, p. 9).

Carpenter and emerald (2009) used a systematic and rigorous method developed from Boyatsis (1998) to find the themes arising from their interviews with women and then scanned media, movies and blogs to find the abiding cultural narratives of motherhood. They then examined the way that women confirmed or resisted these narratives in their stories of mothering.

Taking the understanding that narratives can give meaning to and structure life events, and further, that the structure and form of a life story is as important as the content, Cassim, Hodgetts and Stolte (2016) analysed features of narrative in their endeavor to understand healing after tragedy. They explored the form and structure of the stories of Sri Lankan tsunami survivors and considered the "plotlines" that

connected and organised experiences into episodes. They recognized that narrative structures differ across cultures, therefore adapted and combined Western narrative methods in a way that successfully translated and applied to the Sri Lankan cultural setting. In addition to listening to and analysing verbal accounts of participant life narratives, they also focused on, and interpreted, the everyday practices of members of the community. Informed by practice theory, they understood that one of the ways that individuals and communities come to understand the world around them is through the routine doing of everyday social practices. This analytic enabled Cassim et al. to understand the individuals and the community as skilled agents in managing their healing after tragedy.

In their studies of curriculum, Anne Murray Orr and Margaret Olsen (2007) found that Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three dimensional narrative inquiry space—the temporal, the personal/social (a continuum between the two), and place—provided a scaffold for analysis and interpretation that allowed them new to see their curriculum moments from varied perspectives, leading to "possibilities for seeing differently" (Murray Orr and Olsen 2007, p. 821).

In contrast to these relatively open and flexible frameworks, analytical approaches that have developed out of linguistic traditions can provide much more systematized processes for analysis. Labov's (1972) approach to analyzing narratives focuses on the description of particular events. Labov's six-part model categorises each clause of the text according to its function: abstract, orientation, complicating action, result, evaluation or coda, allowing a detailed understanding of the structure and function of clauses within the narrative. The purpose of this approach is to gain a sense of how people use narrative devices to make meaning and construct their identities. As Patterson (2013) identifies, this approach is most meaningful when used to analyse stories that are produced naturally rather than in research-driven situations.

Bamberg (2004) proposes a narrative inquiry method by suggesting that each of the narrative elements—form, content and function—can be put to work in terms of three levels of positioning analysis: Level 1: the characters in a story world. Level 2: Interactive positioning, and Level 3: the story's intersection with dominant discourses. Bamberg and colleagues are concerned to notice the ways that all these elements of analysis are a function of interactional engagement—important insights are available when we consider the interactive context that enables and constrains a story. So, for example, Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008) explore of the detail of four 10 year old boys' storytelling in a conversation by layering their inquiry in steps:

Step one: Who are the characters and how are they relationally positioned? (Positioning Level 1)
Step two: the interactive accomplishment of "narrating"? (Positioning Level 2)
Step three: How is the speaker positioned within the interactive flow of turns that constitute the situation as "research"? (Positioning Level 2)
Step four: How is the relation between the four boys managed? (Positioning Level 2)
Step five: Who am I in all this? (Positioning Level 3)

While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a thorough review of analytical processes, the examples above illustrate the diversity of approaches, and the possibilities for developing methods that suit the individual project.

(Re)presenting the Research

The question of how, when and in what form to present the research will be informed by questions of audience, context, theory, methodology and epistemology. And again, the research text may or may not be in the form of a narrative or have narrative elements. Options abound for (re)presentation, both within and beyond print genres. Narratives researchers have presented research as narrative within traditional, text-based academic outputs (journal articles, books or chapters), as well as in other mediums, such as performance, art works, music, drama, creative writing (fiction and non-fiction), poetry, and film. The chapter in this volume on sensory narrative describes examples of performance, installations using sound, vision and movement, and arts-based (re)presentation.

A fairly common and effective format in a journal article or chapter, is to intersperse elements of story with commentary and analysis. As Pithouse-Morgan et al. (2012) remind us:

> Researchers who use alternative methods of data re-presentation acknowledge the value of facts and interview quotes, but see these as raw material for constructing evocative re-presentations that "deploy literary devices to recreate lived experience and evoke emotional responses (Richardson 2000, p. 11)" (Pithouse-Morgan et al. 2012, p. 77).

The question of (re)presentation can require the consideration of ethical and methodological concerns. Alison Ledger (2010) found in her study of music therapists' experiences of clinical supervision, that the stories participants wrote of their own experience would have been too ethically dangerous to print as they were; as they may have implicated others or revealed participants to readers, being part of a small professional community. Alison asked participants to prepare a written or oral narrative, which were treated as interim texts, and then wrote her own poetry inspired by each of the narratives (see Kennelly, Ledger and Flynn, Chap. 4, this volume for an example).

It is in the question of (re)presentation that many narrative inquirers may feel frustrated by the limitations of the printed word, although many print publications allow limited photographs and visuals, and electronic formats are loosening the boundaries and creating new opportunities for (re)presentation of research.

Examples of (Re)presentation

In an ideal world with unlimited space, we would reproduce full, "real" examples of innovative approaches to presenting narrative research. However, we hope that the wonders of technology will put these examples within easy reach.

Pithouse-Morgan et al. (2012) peppered their journal article about "Jack's" experiences of racism at University with narrative vignettes—these were brief evocative scenes or accounts that re-presented the field texts of unstructured interviews and collage-making in storied form. These vignettes invite the reader to see and hear through the sensibilities and emotions of this one focus character "Jack". They interspersed the vignettes and interpretive discussion, which drew on literature to consider what we can learn about a university campus as a pedagogic setting from Jack's experience and then caste a forward looking glance to the possibilities for fostering different sorts of pedagogic settings, where stories such as Jack's were not possible.

emerald and Ewing (2015) use a similar threading of story, interpretation and theory to tell Fe's stories. The chapter is framed in the story of 3 days of storytelling, during which many stories are told, so the focus moves back and forward in time, and is interleaved with interpretation and theorizing, often framed in the story world as elke's ruminating on Fe's stories.

Concluding Thoughts

As we attempt to somehow sum up this chapter, we feel that we have perhaps attempted to cover too much ground. Our intention was to shine a light across the landscape of narrative research, to provide an introduction to what is there, and some useful signposts to mark areas that may be worthy of closer examination. While this chapter might be seen as something of a map, it is important to note that a map is not the terrain itself. Detailed study of those who have come before is an essential part of the process of researching, and allows for more informed, and more likely successful, innovation. As we have stated repeatedly throughout this chapter, the decisions about what, why and how to undertake a research project are both personal and contextual. Thorough consideration of each of the seven key issues that we describe in this chapter, we believe, will set a course for coherent and rigorous research.

Discussion Questions

1. Map your own research (or a project you have read about in a journal article, book or dissertation) on the 'position of narrative' diagram (Fig. 1.1). Consider what this means in terms of what the data/evidence, analysis and (re)presentation of the research.
2. Choose the author/s cited who you think aligns best with your own ideas about narrative and research. Write a paragraph explaining your choice.

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