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NARRATIVE BEGINNINGS: AUTOBIOGRAPHY, BIOGRAPHY AND FICTION

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Why Should You Read This Book?

This book provides an accessible text for anyone who is interested in the use of narrative in research. In particular, it is for those who are interested in the relationships between reflection, reflexivity and narrative approaches to research, in social settings of any kind. It tells the story of my experiences, and those of students I taught, in exploring narrative approaches to research that suited our professional situations. The book also discusses and highlights a range of suitable texts from which you can draw in supporting your own development in using narrative approaches to research. In this chapter, *narrative* generally means *spoken or written story*, but I also write about Barbara Czarniawaska's (2004) notion of a narrative approach, which has a flexible, broader meaning. For her, narrative in research is not just about stories or specific data collection and analytical methods; instead, narrative may be used in various ways and at

different stages of research as and when appropriate. Later, in Chapter 2, I explore the nature of narrative and different perspectives in more depth with reference to a range of different academics experienced in narrative research.

In addition to providing an appropriately accessible text for students who are novice narrative researchers, and anyone interested in knowing what narrative research might involve, *Using Narrative in Research* also aims to support tutors and supervisors who are new to the use of narrative in research in supporting their students. The requirement for students to engage academically with professional and social issues, to prepare them for employment, is generally present in a range of subject areas, and it is important to continue developing appropriate methods for contextual research about human activity. Narrative research is a growing area of increasingly acknowledged and accepted international research practice, although there is a range of differing views and approaches to its use. The challenge for any researcher is to choose the most appropriate methodology for the social context of the research, that is, it should be *fit for purpose*.

Using Narrative in Research thus provides a specialist text focused on supporting anyone interested in narrative research practices, in developing a theoretical and practical understanding of possible uses of a narrative approach when researching professional or other social contexts. I agree with Molly Andrews, Corinne Squire and Maria Tamboukou (2008) and others who assert that there are no overall rules about narrative approaches to research, and I emphasise that the meaning of the word *narrative* is in dispute amongst different groups of researchers (as discussed further in Chapter 2). Sometimes academics try to label or apply different approaches too rigidly, sometimes creating a mystique about research that prevents novice researchers engaging effectively with the conceptual process. Arthur Bochner (2001) expresses similar views and notes that most academic journals (and in my experience most university courses) generally require writers to provide a strongly analytical paper in a distanced academic voice rather than a personal narrative. Such emphasis on depersonalising academic writing serves to discourage narrative approaches to research, which often seem more subjective and personal in nature.

I would like to assure you that using narrative does not mean losing rigour in your approach to research. A narrative approach requires rigorous collection, collation and synthesis of appropriate data followed by critical analysis and reflection. It requires the ability to communicate, orally and in writing, the research story from first conceptions of an area of interest to thoughtful and thought-provoking conclusions. A narrative approach opens doors to alternative ways of conducting and disseminating research that is illuminative, novel and accessible to readers. Narrative is also a means of developing and nurturing the skills of critical reflection and reflexivity that are essential for anyone conducting research into their own practice, and therefore



very useful for action research projects. For the purpose of this text, I use the word 'reflection' in the ways that Donald Schön (1984) describes its different functions:

- 1 reflecting-in-action, while we work, thinking on our feet about how to react to situations and events – an automatic response in an experienced practitioner
- 2 reflecting-on-action, looking back at an event afterwards and considering how a response to it might have been different, how to modify and change it.

A third type of reflection based on this is the idea of reflecting-for-action, to think of the next steps that need to be taken. In general, reflection engages us in extended periods of thinking, seeking commonalities and differences and the relationships between actions. Critical reflection, as an extension of reflection, means that we challenge our underlying beliefs, values and assumptions when looking back at events. If we are critically reflective, we question actions and challenge accepted truths or claims and we consider various alternative ways of interpreting and analysing situations.

Reflexivity brings into the process a more personal dimension, a thoughtful self-awareness of the dynamics between you and the people you are researching (Linda Finlay and Brendan Gough, 2003). It means that you are aware of how others perceive you and how you perceive them, and involves all the attributes of critical reflection. Different researchers describe the skill of reflexivity differently in different contexts. Gergen and Gergen (1991) discuss one example of a researcher taking a stance towards a problem and gradually elaborating it through experience and the interactions with others. They link the approach they discuss to social constructionism but also emphasise the role of self-reflexivity. Mason's (1994) notion of researching from the inside is essentially the development of self-reflexivity. It is not just about knowing oneself but about knowing oneself through multiple ways of seeing the world. It is also about describing the world as seen through those reflexive eyes and according to Mason, creating a reaction in others, thus continuing the reflexive chain.

An Outline of the Chapters

This section outlines the contents of each chapter. The chapters are presented in an order that aims to support the development of a research project involving a narrative approach.

Chapter 2 'What Is Narrative?', with reference to a range of authors from across different disciplines, explores historical and contemporary influences on the use of narrative in professional development and research.

Chapter 3 'Designing Research Projects with a Narrative Approach' aims to encourage readers to position themselves within the research project and plan



to choose appropriately from a range of ways to use narrative, including drawing and other media as illustrated in other chapters. The final section provides an example of a draft research proposal.

Chapter 4 'Ethics and a Narrative Approach' emphasises that ethics is about balancing the principle of reducing harm with that of providing benefits to all involved. Roles and relationships are important and ethical consideration goes beyond the completion of a checklist for an institution or society.

Chapter 5 'Narrative Thinking: Provoking and Sustaining Reflective Thought' focuses on the relationship between narrating and reflecting, the development of critical reflection and reflexivity. The first section illustrates and discusses the use of drawing or other creative activity to provoke reflective thought. Examples from reflective diary entries demonstrate the diary's value as a vehicle for sustaining reflective thinking in narrative research.

Chapter 6 'Collecting Narrative Data' includes the use of interviews to elicit stories in addition to a range of alternative approaches such as asking participants for written narratives, constructing observational narratives and collecting various images as narrative. The internet is also a source of useful narrative materials.

Chapter 7 'Analysing Narrative Data' focuses on two broad analytical approaches. First, it provides an overview of the structuralist approach that focuses on seeking common elements within stories, examining their structure rather than their meaning. Second, it considers a thematic experiential approach that focuses on the meaning within the narratives. Examples from undergraduate students demonstrate ways of moving from personal analysis to the development of a more critical stance.

Chapter 8 'Representative Constructions in Narrative Analysis' aims to introduce readers to the innovative use of fictional writing as a means of collating and analysing a set of data into a coherent, valid, reliable and accessible piece that represents the whole data set and begins the analysis in a realistic and formative way.

Chapter 9 'Reporting Narrative Research' pays some attention to the normative expectations of dissertations and theses but then explores some alternative ways to present narrative research. It draws on a range of articles from recent academic journals.

The chapters contain materials from three themes that emerged during my work with students as important for the development of critical reflection through narrative approaches:

- theme 1: autobiographical self-reflection
- theme 2: biographical data
- theme 3: representative constructions (or fictions).

Each theme emerges in the different chapters but in different measures. For example, Chapter 5 focuses mainly on autobiographical self-reflection but the

theme is not as strongly represented in Chapter 8. I describe the nature of the themes more fully later in this chapter. Each chapter contains an introduction sharing key ideas within the chapter and a summary that also outlines the connections between the themes throughout the text.

Most chapters contain extracts from students' research projects. To ensure that you can identify these clearly within the text they are numbered as figures and framed. I have placed them where I think they fit best as part of the discussion – indicating the points at which you ought to read the extract to understand more fully the ideas I present. References to other texts within the extracts are included within each frame rather than in my reference list at the end of the book. *Using Narrative in Research* thus provides empirical materials for discussion and debate in academic and professional contexts in addition to supporting a novice narrative researcher with some of the practicalities. Because it draws on literature from a range of experts in the field of narrative research and other useful sources, it will help you establish the links between critical analysis and reflection and narrative. The chapters take you through some possible approaches to identifying a project, establishing a sound methodology, becoming analytical and being able to communicate research in a rigorous yet interesting and unique way.

Introducing My Research Story

For parts of the book, I have chosen to write in autobiographical style because for much of it I am relating to you my own experiences through my own research and that of the students who have allowed me to include extracts of their work. For this purpose, the autobiographical style is important since I have no desire to depersonalise my own experience. For some of you, writing in a personal voice rather than a depersonalised voice might be contentious, or at least seem 'less academic'. Indeed, one of the major criticisms of using narrative in research is its subjective rather than objective stance. This is one of the criticisms that I wish to address within the book since I have a strong belief that a personalised approach to writing, where appropriate, is no less 'academic' than a depersonalised piece. For me the issue is one of criticality and the ability to present a critically reflective and analytical piece of writing in whichever genre is appropriate for the task. Critical thinking may be evident in any genre. You will therefore find that I do not maintain the autobiographical approach where it is not appropriate. I will begin with my story, which explains my reasons for wanting to write this book.

Using Narrative in Research has its roots in my experience of teaching undergraduate and postgraduate students, mainly education professionals, about narrative methods of research from 2004 onwards. Initially, influenced by Gillie Bolton's (2001) publication on using stories to aid reflection, I encouraged students to use oral storytelling to explore their practice

and to make connections between personal experience and academic ideas. I promoted Bolton's (2006) idea of narrative, or storying, as a way of creating order and security out of a chaotic world. This notion appealed to a range of students from different cultural backgrounds who all worked in busy, ever-changing, demanding workplaces. They worked in unique professional contexts; for example, one was a bilingual support worker for children of several different cultures and languages, another was a learning mentor in a boys' secondary school. Their oral stories and subsequent discussion helped each member of the teaching group to interpret a range of professional contexts and experiences, thus enabling them to understand their personal story within a wider educational and societal context. Storytelling was also a way of developing student confidence in their writing skills, moving them from descriptive writing in telling story events, to reflective writing when reflecting upon their professional practice, to critical reflection and analysis of their own practice and others' scholarly works. Gradually the notion of telling stories became something that we used beyond the taught session, as a means of exploring practice in a systematic and rigorous manner – a valid research method, informed and influenced by Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (2000), Peter Clough (2002) and a thought-provoking article by Philip Chambers (2003).

Why Use Narrative Approaches to Research?

There is no simple answer to this question, but I must emphasise that you should choose narrative approaches when the purpose of the inquiry is best served by using them. Narrative is one research tool amongst a host of other methods and its use must be justified as fit for purpose, as any other method must be. In my work with students, the greatest challenge for me was to persuade students that narrative approaches were valid, reliable and just as rigorous as any other research when used well.

While working with both undergraduate and postgraduate students, in the field of education or training, over a number of years, I identified two recurring issues that seemed to prevent students from accepting qualitative research methods, including narrative methods, as valid and reliable, and usually more appropriate for the nature of their research projects. First, the overwhelming majority of students assumed that all research was about establishing facts and truths and many assumed that numerical data within a scientific 'fair test' environment were the normative expectation. Where they formed these assumptions was unclear, but for some it involved experiences of science at school level and observations of the nature of much reported research in the media, which often cites numerical data. Most students claimed that previous tutoring strongly encouraged these assumptions and so they rarely questioned the reliability, validity and truthfulness of numerical data. Students needed



convincing that numerical data are just as easily manipulated to support a particular interpretation and to sway people's opinion as qualitative data might be. Second, the students had generally experienced a limited number of research methods in previous learning activities, usually questionnaires, interviews and observations of various kinds.

A significant number of students mentioned the need for objectivity, before I had discussed such concepts with them, and they thought there was no room for subjective responses or anything that allowed subjectivity in research. These thoughts persisted, despite the fact that many of them were interested in researching issues that were necessarily subjective, for example, their own practice, other people's opinions, or children's responses to situations. Students with previous research or inquiry-based learning experience had often chosen a method without consideration of its fitness for purpose and with little real justification for its choice. None claimed to have been encouraged to explore research methods beyond those previously stated; for example, none of the students I have taught over the years had experienced ethnographic methods. Few, even at master's level, had explored the qualitative/quantitative debate and most assumed that analysis of results required graphical representations of data regardless of the research question and the need to use methods appropriate to the question and the context of the research.

While I recognise that a deliberate reduction in the range of student experience and choice introduces them to specific research methods, this approach could result in a weak understanding of research as an inquiry process designed to be fit for purpose. If the methods are not suited to the specific research contexts that students are engaging with, then the outcomes of their research projects are unlikely to be valid and reliable. At all levels, students can be introduced to the idea of 'fitness for purpose' in choosing and learning how to justify the choice of methods they consider most appropriate for their projects. In social and educational contexts involving research into people's lives, a narrative approach may be most appropriate, and therefore learning how narrative may be used as a valid and reliable research method is an important part of becoming a researcher in such contexts.

I have thus encountered students who had not become aware of, or been encouraged to explore, methods such as narrative that would have been more effective for the purpose of their chosen research questions. This might be due to previous tutors not having enough research experience or knowledge and understanding of a full range of methods. Tutors may also prefer to support students who are using familiar research methods, that is working within their zone of research experience, which is quite understandable and generally desirable. In some cases, students have reported that they had requests to alter their research questions to suit a tutor's preferred methodology and this resulted in a complete change of focus in the students' research. In such circumstances, a student has to be very confident and competent in their preferred research question and methodological choice to



provide clear justification. Of course, a tutor might advise a student to change a research question for a variety of valid reasons, and in general I advise students to heed their tutors' suggestions.

Where students have two supervisors, it is possible that students feel pulled in different directions – with each supervisor professing that their approach to the research is the best. For example, a recent doctoral level student felt torn between a supervisor who supported a narrative approach to the research and one who was rather sceptical and questioned the validity and reliability of such an approach. When I observe such events, I sometimes begin to wonder who owns the research, the student or the tutors. Of course, it is the student's research, and having two supervisors with different perspectives should enable the student to develop strong powers of critique and justification of the chosen methodology.

At all levels, students ought to be encouraged to demonstrate the ability to choose and adapt methods to suit a research question, or the area of interest and the specific context. Ideally, a tutor *should* supervise students working with methods within their own experience; if one is mostly used to qualitative methods it can be challenging to supervise someone using advanced quantitative techniques. However, a flexible approach and a willingness to learn new methods, such as narrative, when students justifiably apply them to appropriate questions and contexts, are essential. Although my experience is mainly within the field of education, with a student body mainly involved in school teaching and learning, it easily translates into other academic disciplines and professional practices, such as social work or nursing, where the emphasis is on researching social activity of any kind.

In summary, over the past few years I have increasingly engaged with narrative approaches to learning, professional development and research. I have done so because such approaches have enabled the development of critically reflective practitioners. I chose narrative initially as a vehicle for learning about practice and for developing skills of critical reflection, and subsequently as a valid, reliable and most appropriate research method for students in professional educational and other social contexts to use. Narrative offered the students new ways of exploring their professional worlds in a rigorous and critically reflective approach to their practice.

Early introduction to appropriate methods of research, for example a narrative approach, within the students' research contexts is essential in order to develop rigour in clearly justifiable and relevant academic projects at undergraduate level and beyond. Barbara Czarniawska (2004) summarises the narrative approach in social science research as an ample bag of tricks, making use of any relevant approaches such as deconstruction (the active interpretation of meaning, raising questions and problematising), without rigidly applying a set procedure in the mistaken belief that it will provide 'testable' results. According to Czarniawska, a narrative approach is a set of

devices that should lead to more inspired reading and writing about social contexts including a range of caring, educational and other organisational settings. I agree with this description of a narrative approach and embrace its adaptability as a useful quality for researchers devising research projects within unique social contexts. I also acknowledge that some researchers have devised specific methodological approaches to collecting and analysing narrative data that are appropriate choices in a range of projects.

The challenge for anyone new to using narrative in research is one of finding, justifying and using a method, possibly adapting a method, or even devising one's own. The range of practice emerging across different disciplines and professions is varied and potentially confusing to the novice narrative researcher. However, I believe that students ought to engage with the broad range of available literature and be prepared to explore approaches used in unfamiliar contexts. For example, education students may learn much about approaches to narrative research from academic papers in nursing or social care. Education as topic of academic study draws from other disciplines, and educational practice has parallels with many other professional practices in the medical profession or business world. This book aims to bring together ideas developed in different research communities in support of the novice narrative researcher in any field of study trying to make sense of the differing perspectives on narrative in research.

The next section introduces the narrative themes around which the book is developed.

Narrative Themes

Theme 1: autobiographical self-reflection

Autobiographical self-reflection is one of the most important forms of narrative for developing skills of critique about one's professional practice. It forms the basis of analytical thought about the relationship between the researcher and the context of the research. Acknowledging and understanding the researcher/context relationship is essential in any research, but particularly in action research.

Chapter 5 includes discussion of a range of different authors' perspectives on the use of narrative in supporting autobiographical self-reflection. Too often a novice researcher, and even those more experienced, will rely entirely on discussing the written thoughts of others in their field of interest without extending and expressing their own knowledge and understandings of the explored context. John Mason (1994) discussed the importance of 'researching from the inside' – the importance of the researcher's 'self' within the research process. He identified the need to develop one's sense of 'attending to' or 'noticing' those practice incidents and theoretical insights

when they occur and to keep them available for re-questioning in the future. Researchers may also fail to acknowledge their own beliefs, values and assumptions in conducting and presenting their research, and in many higher education programmes the exploration of the self as part of the research process is lacking.

If you are developing new research skills and techniques then I believe that you should formulate your own reflective thoughts about your developing research so that you may compare these with others in developing your analysis and powers of critique. You need to identify your place in the process, develop reflexivity and be open to changing your perspectives as you gather more data and identify emerging patterns. Having self-knowledge and belief helps you defend your research position to others.

Autobiographical self-reflection supports research in different ways, briefly outlined as follows.

Identifying or clarifying a focus for enquiry

This is especially useful if you are involved in researching your own practice as in action research or in autoethnography, developing a personal narrative focusing on your subjective experience. If you are studying for a professional higher degree you will most likely have an aspect of your practice that you wish to explore when you enter your programme of study. However, if you are an undergraduate, maybe within a professional or work-based degree programme and possibly with significant life experience, you might require some university-based activity to encourage a deeper reflective focus. In either case, identifying a clear focus may involve creative approaches such as drawing, poetry and humorous tales of observed events, which all support self-reflection. For example, John White (2006) used painting and drawing to identify a focus for an MA dissertation researching educational management. John's supervisor introduced him to the idea of using creative activity, creating a picture that told a story, to stimulate reflection. I followed John White's example and introduced drawings to undergraduates to support their initial reflections, with some interesting outcomes and varied levels of success; some students found the process of drawing less helpful than did others (Bold, 2008c).

Drawing can make you feel vulnerable in some way; you might have experienced limited success with art at school, or it might not be your preferred way of thinking through your ideas. I found that drawings, completed in class, were most effective when students followed up the drawing activity by working in pairs to interpret the story behind each other's drawings. Thus you might find working with a reflective partner very helpful to encourage joint reflection on professional issues and support the identification of areas of interest for research. I discuss in more detail the use of imagery and drawing in conjunction with narrative writing in Chapter 5.

Providing autobiographical data

Autobiographical data consist of accounts about the communicant's own life. Collection of such data is not limited to the researcher producing autobiographical accounts. The participants in the research might each provide an autobiographical account from their own perspective. Their reflective accounts or stories might form the main data of the project. For example, patients with life changing illnesses may provide stories in which they describe and reflect upon the changes to their lives. Different professionals working collaboratively in the same setting may each keep a reflective diary in which they record and reflect upon events in their work situation. Children may keep a record of their responses to lessons, or patients their responses to treatment. Some examples of different kinds of autobiographical data collected by students in their research are presented in later chapters. However, one type, the oral history, which will undoubtedly include some self-reflective elements, is not evident. In my students' projects the collection of oral histories, or life stories, has not been appropriate, yet such histories are a valuable data set in some types of historical, political and social research.

Oral histories might be very relevant in your own research projects, especially if you are interested in other people's experiences over time.

Deeper analysis of initial reflections

In reflecting on one's performance, or another person's social situation, several sources of information – observations, conversations, artefacts – might support the creation of a personal reflective narrative about that performance or situation. A research diary usually contains some information such as logs of events, immediate thoughts about those events and other notes. In keeping a diary you may later reflect on individual entries and develop deeper thoughts about the event in retrospect. Alternatively, you might explore a set of diary entries by writing an additional reflective piece from a personal point of view, and with brief reference to other sources of information, enabling deeper reflection on a set of original thoughts. In addition, the 'living theory' approach to action research, promoted by Jack Whitehead and Jean McNiff (2006), often results in an autobiographical style of research reporting (including photo and video) which is becoming more widely accepted in professional research communities such as nursing and teaching. Examples of such living theory doctoral theses are accessible by a link on the ActionResearch.net website (www.actionresearch.net).

Theme 2: biographical data

Biographical data are collected and constructed by the researcher with the intention that they be as realistic as possible within the context. Collection of biographical data is common in social research. For example, Peter Clough (2002)

uses a conversational approach to interviewing, and Czarniawska (2004) discusses the processes of collecting stories and producing stories from interviews. Jane Elliott (2005), another influential writer about narrative research in social science through interviews, includes researching through focus groups, while ethnographic replication of the scene was Paul Atkinson's (1990) discussion focus. Paul Atkinson has written extensively on the subject of narrative research over the past 20 years. Ethnography, which is a way of recording biographical data as lived events, has been a research method for a significant period, such as the studies of adolescent behaviour in a Polynesian society by the anthropologist Margaret Mead (1928). Mike Crang and Ian Crook (2007) bring ethnography into the modern world with their consideration of filmic approaches to data collection. Young children or other vulnerable people with oral communication difficulties might use photography or drawing to support the telling of their stories about their experiences.

You might be interested in biographical data as a way to try to create a record of the experiences of others that is as true to life as it can be at a particular point in time. In later chapters I will highlight some of the challenges faced in attempting to remain impartial either when recording events or in the interpretation of interview transcripts.

Theme 3: representative constructions (or fictions)

Representative constructions or fictions may provide a stimulus for research, support reflexivity or enable initial analysis of a range of different data. Fiction as a stimulus to inquiry can be very useful, enabling you to establish a clear focus. It may be your own fiction, about your working life for example, or one chosen from another source. Bolton (2006) used fiction to encourage medical practitioners to become reflexive about their practice. For example, doctors created stories that helped young patients understand the doctor's role. This placed them in a position of needing to understand what it would be like to be a child and what that child needs to know. This type of activity can become a highly relevant part of a data set for an action research project where the purpose is to review and change practices. Representative constructions are also beginning to emerge as a means of capturing and collating a range of data from different sources, enabling the researcher to analyse and make choices about the materials that create the narrative of the context and people in the research project. I have explored them in my own research (Bold, 2005; 2006b; 2008b) and in Chapter 8 I draw on other examples.

The Narrative 'Turn'

Using Narrative in Research challenges the boundaries to the *acceptability* of a broad base of narrative approaches within the broader research community and

seeks to establish clear justification for using them with students at all levels, in appropriate situations. The relationship between narrative and other methodological approaches such as ethnography will emerge across the chapters as appropriate. Because of its purpose and length, the book will not include comprehensive discussion of the qualitative versus quantitative debate except within the context of the materials covered and the examples provided.

Interest in narrative research across several professions and disciplines is gaining momentum as researchers break through the traditional, generally positivist, boundaries that appear to constrain them. The use of narrative has clear links with postmodern thought since narrative creation usually encourages reflexivity and acknowledges that truth and certainty are unstable. Alan Bleakley (2004), a professor of medical education, emphasises the postmodernist requirement that researchers scrutinise the conditions under which they validate their knowledge claims. Although use of narrative cannot ensure that such scrutiny occurs, it usually does because narrative researchers require a strong awareness of their position within the process. Pat Sikes and Ken Gale (2006) suggest that there has been a narrative 'turn' within the social sciences that is associated with postmodernism, thus opening up possibilities to research social contexts by using a most appropriate and purposeful communication – the narrative. My research interest is in constructivism and constructive interpretivism; I am interested in how people construct meaning of the world around them, and how researchers make sense of what they see. I believe that narratives of various kinds help people to construct and understand their social world. Ethnographic researchers also tend to work within an interpretivist paradigm; they wish to capture, describe and understand the world around them (Robert Gephart, 1999). Narratives therefore have a place in several different research paradigms. I am sure you will have your own particular interests and theoretical bases, possibly from experts in the field not cited in this text, underlying your own professional practice and research. A common factor among many who use narrative in research is a belief in the importance of subjective meaning and emotion in making sense of social events and settings, together with the need for reflexivity in that sense making.

Summary

Using Narrative in Research is grounded in my work with students and my own research experiences. The emphasis is on using research methods that are appropriate and justified, that is fit for purpose, with transferability across different disciplines and fields of inquiry. Each chapter has a distinct purpose in helping readers understand and make use of narrative within their research as appropriate to the situation and people involved. The chapters support the development of three core themes: autobiographical self-reflection, biographical data and representative constructions. Examples from either student

unpublished or academic published research exist throughout the text, with the aim of demonstrating particular uses of narrative drawn from my own experience and a comprehensive range of other texts. My aim is to provide materials that are relevant to any discipline or field of study.

Suggested Reading

Chambers, P. (2003) 'Narrative and reflective practice: recording and understanding experience', *Educational Action Research*, 11 (3): 403–14. A thought-provoking article that discusses different types of narrative writing from different professional contexts, with a focus on using story as a medium for facilitating understanding and generating new knowledge.