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Annual Conference of the Life History and Biographical Research Network  
Magdeburg, Germany
"My body has quitted, in fact completely" Disease-Related Disruptions in the Professional Biography. A Qualitative Study of Professional Reorientation in the context of a Chronic Disease

Susanne Bartel, Dipl.-Päd. (Rehab.), Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Individuals who are suffering from a chronic disease and can no longer work in their original profession are facing a major turning point in their lives which requires, on the part of patients and their families, enormous work to cope with this new condition (Corbin and Strauss 2004). Due to such a chronic disease a person is being compelled to reorient and rearrange his life in this new social situation.

This present doctoral dissertation examines the issue of how the process of a career change (by retraining, etc.), initiated by the illness, is being experienced and shaped in different cases. Furthermore, it will be explored how multifarious dimensions of individual lives e.g. previous educational biography, traditional model for crisis management, integration into a social network, the importance of family (family of origin and his own family), etc. are influencing that process of career change and coping with the disease.

The focus of the study lies on the analysis of the experience of oneself in career transition periods on the background of the disease and the related coping work. It is to be worked out, which role the nature and degree of the disease plays in this structure, and how the importance of employment prospects change in the context of a chronic disease.

The dissertation project is a qualitative study, in which narrative interviews are conducted at different times (over a course of about 2 years) with approximately 15 patients suffering from a chronic disease. The concept of the case contrasting method (Glaser / Strauss 2010) is the basis for the selection of interviewees. To evaluate the management of crises in a real life practice and in a further step to generate cross-case structure correlations, the sequence-analytic approach and case reconstruction (Oevermann 1981, 2000, Hildenbrand 2005) will be followed for analysis and interpretation.

In the presentation the following questions will be discussed:

- How is the career break being interpreted?
- How important is employment for the persons concerned and how is it changing in the context of a chronic disease?
- What future ideas do the persons concerned have?
- What strategies are being developed to realize these ideas?
- How do future ideas, perceptions and conceptions change over time?

The aim of this presentation is to reflect (professional) biographical histories in the context of biographical research approaches in line with the spirit of the conference.

References

Recherche biographique en formation des adultes et capabilité: La problématique des facteurs de conversion

Jean-Michel Baudouin & Christopher Parson, University of Geneva

La distinction proposée par les travaux d’Amartya Sen entre capabilités, fonctionnements et ressources interrogent la possibilité pour un individu de disposer véritablement d’un pouvoir d’action réelle:

A functioning is an achievement, whereas a capability is the ability to achieve. Capabilities, in contrast, are notions of freedom, in the positive sense: what real opportunities you have regarding the life you may lead (Sen, 1988).

Notre contribution abordera en particulier la problématique générale des facteurs de conversion à l’œuvre dans ce qui relie investissement dans une formation continue et transformation des parcours professionnels. Il s’agit de déterminer mieux et d’élucider ce qui surdetermine l’opérationnalisation effective d’une formation dans le parcours de vie des personnes.

La communication présente deux dimensions. (i) La première vise à clarifier la base empirique de ce qui définit et concrétise les facteurs de conversion, à partir de l’analyse d’entretiens biographiques et de récits de vie, qui consisteront la base empirique du travail présenté ; (ii) la seconde vise à déterminer ce qui dans l’entretien biographique et plus largement le récit de vie doit être pris en compte pour comprendre mieux l’impact des facteurs de conversion.

Nous nous inspirons ici de travaux récents menés en France et en Suisse (Fernagu Oudet (2012), Zimmermann (2011), Bonvin et Favarque (2007)) qui explorent le fonctionnement des facteurs de conversion dans le milieu du travail et de l’insertion professionnelle. En particulier, nous nous intéressons à la possibilité de proposer une approche alternative à l’approche par les compétences, qui est dominante dans le champ de la formation. Si les compétences renvoient à des savoir-faire quelque-chose dans un contexte spécifique, transférables ou non à d’autres contextes de vie, les capabilités relèvent « …du fait d’être en mesure de faire quelque-chose, elles sont donc un pouvoir d’être et de faire. » (Fernagu Oudet, 2012).

La base empirique de notre contribution est constituée d’entretiens biographiques d’adultes d’origine modeste, qui sont parvenus, au cours de leurs vies, à obtenir des qualifications professionnelles et à améliorer de manière significative leur statut socioéconomique et leur qualité de vie. Malgré des débuts qui ne laissaient guère présager de telles progressions, et en dépit de nombreux obstacles et embuches, ces personnes ont su tirer profit de situations souvent peu propices à leur avancement professionnel. Notre hypothèse est que ces acteurs, ont pu mobiliser des ressources – personnes, formations, embauches – rencontrées sur le chemin de la vie, dans le sens d’accroître leur liberté réelle et leur pouvoir d’agir. Notre objectif est donc de mieux comprendre les rapports entre ressources, fonctionnements et capacités et d’identifier les mécanismes à l’œuvre dans ces situations.

Références:


"Before, Beside and After (Beyond) the Biographical Narrative"
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Magdeburg, Germany


Biographical research in adult learning and capability: The issue of conversion factors

Jean-Michel Baudouin & Christopher Parson, University of Geneva

The distinction between capabilities, functions and resources proposed by Amartya Sen poses the question of whether and how an individual can actually achieve any meaningful form of self-empowerment:

A functioning is an achievement, whereas a capability is the ability to achieve. Capabilities, in contrast, are notions of freedom, in the positive sense: what real opportunities you have regarding the life you may lead (Sen, 1987).

Our contribution will discuss more specifically the general problem of conversion factors at work in the connection between investment and involvement in vocational training and transforming careers. We want to clarify what determines the effective operationalization of training in the course of peoples’ lives.

Our communication has two dimensions. (i) The first is to clarify the empirical basis of what defines and embodies the conversion factors from the biographical interviews and life stories, which will form the empirical basis of the present work ; (ii) the second is to determine what should be taken into account in the context of the broader life history in order to better understand the impact of conversion factors. We are inspired by the work of recent research in France and Switzerland (Fernagu Oudet (2012), Zimmermann (2011), Bonvin & Favarque (2007)) that explore the operation of conversion factors in the workplace and employability.

We are particularly interested in the possibility of proposing an alternative to the dominant skills-based approach in the field of adult education and training. If skills refer to knowledge or know-how, specific to a particular context, whether or not transferable to other contexts of life, capabilities invoke the idea of "... of being able to do something, so they are a power to be and do." (Fernagu Oudet, 2012).

The empirical basis of our contribution consists of biographical interviews of adults of modest origins, who have managed through the course of their lives to obtain higher professional qualifications and to improve significantly their social and economic status and their quality of life.

Despite difficult early life, and despite many obstacles and pitfalls, they took advantage of situations that were seldom conducive to any form of professional advancement. Our hypothesis is that these individuals have been able to mobilize resources - people, training, recruitment - encountered on the path of life, in a way that enabled them to increase their real freedom and power to act. Our goal is to better understand the relationship between resources, functions and capabilities and to identify the mechanisms at work in these situations.

References:


"Before, Beside and After (Beyond) the Biographical Narrative"
Annual Conference of the Life History and Biographical Research Network
Magdeburg, Germany
Research data: Travelling with the participant, travelling with myself

Doro Bechinger-English, University of Winchester, UK

As the population is ageing, more healthcare professionals will work with older patients. Older patients are more likely than younger patients to have multiple, complex and long-term health and social care needs. My doctoral study focuses on how healthcare professionals experience, and learn about ageing and old age and to work with older patients.

This presentation focuses on the collection, analysis and interpretation of biographical narrative interviews (Rosenthal, Fisher-Rosenthal 2004). Interviews with three to four healthcare professionals talking about their careers and lives including their work with older patients in different healthcare settings will be used to think about how to disentangle and make more explicit some of the strands which make up the fabric of data collection, analysis and interpretation. The analysis and interpretation of the data is a dynamic and ever changing process, yet it can be difficult to capture this when presenting and communicating data to an audience.

For the analysis of the data two methods are used: the listening guide (Gilligan et al., 2006) and hermeneutic text analysis of the transcribed interviews (Rosenthal, Fisher-Rosenthal, 2004). The auditory recording and text both help to gain an understanding of the subjective experience of the participant, and assist in interpreting the data in a holistic way.

Working with the data means “travelling” on one hand with the participant, but also “travelling” with myself as a person and a researcher. In their narratives, the participants talk about and tell stories about their professional and personal lives. They recount episodes of their professional practice, their work with older patients and talk about their experiences of illness and death.

Throughout the analysis and interpretation of the interviews, the researcher draws on different theoretical perspectives e.g. learning and life course theories, social, biological and cultural theories of ageing. But the researcher also brings professional and personal experience and emotional responses to the data. The rich descriptions and stories evoke during the interview semi-conscious responses, and the analysis and interpretation of the data is also shaped by these responses.

Reflexivity is essential in qualitative research, but for the researcher the reality of being reflexive can be difficult and complex, especially when the personal, the emotional, the uncomfortable and “difficult to talk about” topics meet. The interpretation of these data is affected significantly by past and present professional and personal experiences and life events. As I was transcribing and starting the analysis of the data, I became aware how closely some of the narratives resonated with my own experiences. While these responses can help to access the data; it also poses a considerable challenge in an academic environment. In this presentation I aim to disentangle, acknowledge and make visible the ways in which my thinking and feeling about the research influences the data collection and interpretation, and discuss this with examples of some of the research data.
Violence and "dissident behavior". Political imprisoned Women in the former GDR.

Frank BEIER, University of Chemnitz, Germany

As Ingrid Miethes (1999) study of the biographical background of former East German oppositional women has shown, there is a strange connection between experienced violence in the family and the genesis of dissident behavior in totalitarian systems like the former GDR. It is remarkable that one can find quite similar phenomena in our study of the biographical backgrounds from women who have been imprisoned for political reasons. There seems to be deep connection between violent social relationships mainly to male persons (which even leads to traumatic death threatening situations) and development of a dissident action scheme. In the presented paper will be argued that dissidence in totalitarian systems is not (only) based on a specific psychological character trait, but primarily a reaction based on biographical experiences (such as violence trajectories) and their relation with social frames, which occur in specific socio-historical situations. These frames are potentially built up by social discourses, like the socialist female stereotypes and are processed through biographical work (Riemann & Schütze 1991). The experience of violence influences the capabilities of this biographical work. For these women it is neither possible to adopt political indoctrinated worldviews (e.g. through the socialization in mass organizations as the FDJ) nor to emancipate from cultural stereotypes. This results in - as we call it - “damaged social frames”, which made these women incapable to find neither private niches, nor active actions schemes in the GDR. This is the reason, why they slipped into traumatic trajectories resulting being imprisoned under inhuman conditions in the sole central women prison “Hohenneck”.

Violence, this is the central thesis made here, can damage social frames and results thus in a disorientation and passivity. This leads to the strange consequence that a private crisis can lead to political persecution in dictatorships like the GDR. This connection is strange, because these women are actually not political in a strict sense.

References


Exploring Collage in Narrative Inquiry: Beside and Beyond Words

Elisabetta Biffi & Benedetta Gambacorti-Passerini, Università di Milano-Bicocca, Italy

This paper aims at providing a methodological reflection on the use of “collage practice” in educational research. The use of collage has been highlighted in some recent literature related to qualitative inquiry in the social and educational field, especially in visual research (Banks, 2007; Collier and Collier, 1986; Reavey, 2011; Stanczak, 2007) and in art-based methods (Knowles and Cole, 2008).

Within this framework, this paper seeks to explore the use of collage as an investigation strategy in connection to narratives. Using images, as a source for creating meaning in the form of metaphor, referent is made to Ricoeur’s perspective (Ricoeur, 1976), his idea of metaphor as an instrument to reconstruct meaning. This is what can allow a new comprehension of the world, based on imaginative functions. Similarly, the narrative, thought as the concept of mythos in the classical greek culture, is a paradigmatic way for creating meaning and comprehension of the world, using metaphors. For this reason, the use of collage in narrative inquiry can be a valid research instrument especially when participants involved are adults, in order to break the “fixed versions” of their stories, built during their lifetimes. The collage will be, in these contexts of research, an instrument to introduce something unexpected and unusual that allows them to think of their stories in a different way, producing different narrations.

Based on the above framework, the paper will discuss the collage technique, proposed as an instrument that can help participants at the research to go deeper into the meaning’s construction, before, after or beyond narrations related to lived experiences, as usually done in narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), and biographical research (Merril, West, 2009).

In order to clarify this issue, different examples of qualitative research, carried out by the authors during recent years in the educational field, will be presented and discussed, describing multiple modalities in integrating collage technique and narrative descriptions. Combining the use of images with moments of verbal narration (i.e. focus groups and interviews) the search for visual and imaginative metaphors based on images and verbal narrations can create forms of meaning about everyone’s experience, which otherwise would not be discovered.
Du récit autobiographique à l’auto-analyse d’un parcours de professionnalisation

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Mots clés: Événement, biographisation, récit, apprentissage transformateur
Cette communication porte sur l’expérimentation d’un travail d’autobiographisation à partir d’un récit de vie appliqué à une reconversion professionnelle volontaire et d’un récit d’une pratique de professionnalisation sur un temps long. Ce travail s’est fait dans le cadre d’une recherche doctorale qualitative sur l’innovation dans l’intention de l’auteure d’élucider son implication par rapport à l’objet de sa recherche et d’explorer les liens sujet-objet-projet. La démarche d’auto-analyse a été produite à partir de l’adaptation d’une grille de lecture, en reprenant les étapes d’élucidation de sens de la théorie de la transformation perspective et de la théorie de la conscience anticipante. Les transformations repérables ont permis de révéler un apprentissage transformateur dans et par l’expérience, catalyseur d’une nouvelle orientation professionnelle dans le champ de la formation des adultes. Des liens entre mobilité-altérité-identité ont également été mis en évidence et ont servi à interpréter comment les espaces transnationaux étaient investis par les acteurs de projets européens rencontrés, chefs de projet, formateurs, et jeunes adultes bénéficiaires. Tout en reconnaissant les limites liées à une auto-réflexion, ce travail a débouché sur un sentiment d’unité à partir d’une identité professionnelle faite de diversité et sur un modèle de professionnalisation.
Writing at school for better wellbeing – and for lesser discomfort?

Micaela Castiglione, Università di Milano-Bicocca, Italy

In the Italian context, and beyond it, numerous research – and research/training – activities have been set up and experimented in which the narrative-(auto)biographical approach is applied in the schooling context, incorporating (auto)biographical self-examination in the training of teachers, both new candidates and those already operating. These activities have covered the various scholastic levels as well as university and adult-learner courses.

Worth mentioning, in Italy, are the research and training projects by Aureliana Alberici (1997), Duccio Demetrio (2002) and Laura Formenti (1998), as well as those by Federico Batini, Loretta Fabbri, Loredana Perla and Maura Striano, to mention only a few. These are all experts and scholars whose epistemological outlook and procedural methodology place them in the narratavist constructivism category of cultural psychology, and that of phenomenology open to the “various existentialisms”.

I personally apply the practice of narration and of autobiographical and professional writing with teachers at the various scholastic levels in the context of research programmes and those of adult (self-)training, narratively oriented (Castiglioni, 2008 (edited by); 2011; 2013, etc.).

This perspective has enabled me, furthermore, to carry out activities of consultancy/monitoring with groups of teachers, educators, etc., who work for the most part in educational/scholastic environments characterized by the presence of children, young adults and adults belonging to other cultures and who are experiencing the effects of migration, inside and outside school (Castiglioni, 2001; see also the site www.ismu.org, for the Viaggi nelle storie project, curated by C. Bargellini and S. Cantù). In this case, oral narration was combined with the practice of writing and, especially, with the use of “cinematographic fragments” (Balboni, 2011; Diadori, 2011; Bargellini, Cantù, edited by, 2011; Castiglioni, 2011, Marangi, 2011).

This approach to research and education has enabled a good many questions to be raised, some of which I summarize briefly here:

- why should it be desirable for a teacher to get involved in his/her personal story of training, growth, learning and teaching?
- can writing down one’s own educational and didactic practice, and not only this, in a personal diary, help the teacher to develop a narrative sensibility which works hand in hand with relational sensibility?
- what does being a “narrative teacher” mean? To what procedural and methodological choices does this option “bind” the teacher?
- can the exercise of writing enable one to get closer to the nocturnal aspects of the professional ego? What effects does this have on the teaching/learning relationship?
- if autobiographical practice is, basically and before all else, the practice of personal research and conquest of sense, can the personal acquisition of this perspective help teachers and students, together, to re-discover the sense of educational experience in the schools of today, and in the Italian context in particular, plagued as it is by numerous scholastic difficulties at many levels?
is it possible to glimpse, then, a connection between autobiographical narration at school, self-education and care of the self? In what sense?

I believe we can give an affirmative answer to some of these questions, while it seems to me that others call for further investigation, not least in relation to the tools, languages and practices used in teacher training. It is this aspect that I propose to develop and examine further.
Not going there: a recognition of the subjectivity of interpretative research

Ann Chant, Canterbury Christ Church University, UK

Those engaged in auto/biographical research do, by definition, include their own perspective and reflect on their position within the research itself. I have heard it discussed, read about it in a range of literature and now I have experienced not only the anxieties of the interpretation of narratives but also of my place within that interpretation. This paper is about an acknowledgement of such bias and partiality.

The place of the researcher in auto/biographical research has been well documented; how the perspective of the researcher influences the topic itself, the relationship with the participant, and the analysis of a transcript (Merrill and West, 2009; Andrews, 2007; Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). However what I present in this paper is the notion of the subjectivity and preferences of the researcher based on their beliefs and values that, by including or excluding these from research may say more about the researcher than the researched. If the participant has the right to include and to exclude issues, topics and beliefs from their narrative, should the researcher also be permitted to give preference to some ideas over others? If not then is there a danger of a striving towards and implication of objectivity where there is none? I suggest that an acceptance of the subjectivity of the participant might also be extended to potential bias of the researcher. As expressed by Merrill and West (2009) ‘there are potentially rich interpretive rewards in making use of our own biographies and subjectivities when engaging with others’ (p.181).

During recent research I interviewed an adult Jewish woman. Her story of a post-holocaust family and their identity was rich with conflict, concerns over identity and pregnant with possible analysis. My analysis explored her apparent struggles with nationality, otherness, belonging and loyalty. These struggles are echoed in my own story. What I did not include to any great extent was the feminist perspective. This may have been significant in its absence. As a woman who has never felt restricted by my gender or animated by the feminist discourse, it did not seem to me to be a ‘must have’ in my analysis of this woman’s story, anymore than other, yet to be explored aspects of her story such as her love of the ballet. Another researcher may have begun with this perspective; others may have focussed perhaps on literature about the Jewish community in the UK. All of these foci could be justified. But it may be that the omissions of certain powerful discourses such as feminism are less justifiable. Far from being a rejection of the advances in social justice that feminism has achieved and continues to fight for; I am no less grateful as a woman for the life I live as compared to that of my grandmother, than I am for the advances in medicine and technology that also enable me to live a fuller, safer and healthier life. Post-feminist or treachery; this is part of my story.

My question in this paper is, what factors are involved in making decisions about which discourses to include and which to leave out in auto/biographical research?

References

At the margins of biographical narratives. Reflections on two different settings of autobiographical storytelling

Bettina Dausien & Daniela Rothe, Universität Wien, Austria

According to linguistic theories, a narrative can be understood as a communication pattern that is suited to present something which has happened, could have happened or will happen to a listener or reader or any other (virtual) audience. One core feature of narratives is their temporal structure: several events are connected formally by a sequential order (before-after-structure) which creates at the same time a meaningful, more or less coherent story which explains the why and how of events in the past, present and future. In the case of autobiographical narratives the account refers to something, which has happened in the narrator’s own life or is at least somehow related to it. Telling stories from one’s own life, and particularly telling one’s own life story is therefore a reflexive mode of constructing social meaning and of creating one’s own individual sense and Gestalt in view of the infinite number of events during the course of an individual life. Autobiographical narratives are a complex cultural pattern closely related to the idea of identity and becoming, and to the education and development of an individual subject. In other words, autobiographical storytelling is an important social means of self-construction, which can be called ‘biographical work’. This work is both an individual and a social process, located in social situations, usually done together with others, and embedded in a more or less shared horizon of stories which have already been told, could be told or are expected to be told. Unsurprisingly, storytelling and biographical narratives are important concepts and methods in social research as well as in educational practice. They provide an insight into the social world and self-construction of others as well as to their cultural contexts. They provide the “stuff” of which our mutual understanding is made. Usually, life stories are told in a face-to-face setting in which the researcher or the professional together with the autobiographical narrator construct “the story”. In this situation they interactively define the beginning and the end of the narrative and thus create its Gestalt and meaning. Researchers are used to “cutting the story out” of the process by taping and transcribing the interview which they subsequently analyse. They usually do not know much about their interviewees’ biographical work before and after the interview. Compared to them, professionals working with biographical methods are more sensitive to the processes before and after a biographical narrative, but they are also limited in their perspectives. They are used to interpreting the biographical work of their clients through the lenses of the “pedagogical situation” and tend to overestimate the impact of their pedagogical intervention.

In our paper we discuss the question of how we consider the processes before and after the autobiographical narration in relation to our professional/research perspectives and purposes. We compare two different settings: the autobiographical interview in a social science research context and biographical storytelling in an adult education context. We are particularly interested in how the interaction partners frame the biographical narrative and how these framings are considered of in different professional contexts.
Biography research beyond the Ivory Tower\textsuperscript{1}. Transforming / translating a scientific approach of biographical research in an operative tool making sense for the narrator himself in the real world

Katja DiCarlo Vanini & Nicolas Perrin, University of Teacher training Haute Ecole Pédagogique du Canton de Vaud, Suisse

Arriving at the conclusion of a doctoral biographical research (Vanini De Carlo, 2013), we are interested in exploring in the ESREA conference 2014 a dimension that particularly makes sense in our comprehension of the “beyond” level expressed in the call of the annual conference on biographical methods. It can be expressed by the following question: how can we make our biographical approach become operative, useful and open to be creatively, concretely used, explored, by the narrator themself, out of the academic and plenty part of the real world?

This contribution will nevertheless have the form of a dialogue between two voices. We are both active in research and practice for and around teacher training, sharing many common matters of intellectual and scientific interests, and our different epistemological and theoretical approaches – the biographical approach on one side, the activity analysis in an enactive approach – are often crossed in a heuristic and productive interaction. As for our proposal to communicate in this conference, our aim is to once more take advantage of this profitable exchange.

We have explored in our doctoral research how a pluri-documental method of biographical research can be heuristic to study the construction of identity. We have studied more specifically the construction of professional identity of beginning teachers, but stressed some results that we hope to be able to mobilize in a broader perspective.

This intent of making our scientific efforts useful for our further work – beyond the doctoral research – is opening our field of reflections in the direction of what we expressed in our title as bringing our work beyond the Ivory Tower. What is meant hereby?

Our epistemological background has leaded us to claim for a posture of research that includes the “subject” – interviewed person narrating his life to us – as a collaborators in the researche, quitting therefore the term of “subject of the research”. We refer ourselves to what Oddone et al. (1981), cited by Champy-Remoussenard (2013) define as an enlarged scientific community made of co-researchers. We believe in that position in an ethical way very clearly, but want to go further that a declaration of intent, and are wondering how to avoid it from becoming a hollow claim and an illusion.

Dubar (2013) offers us a subject of reflection in that sense, in a contribution where he analyses the contradictions between self-narration (narration de soi) and identity. Through the analysis of the autobiographies of four literature figures, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir and Richard Hoggart, he stresses that

\begin{quote}
 ils mettent l’accent prioritairement soit sur les déterminations sociales de leur parcours,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{1} Ivory Tower – the term originates from the Biblical Song of Solomon, but from the 19\textsuperscript{th} Century it is designating a context where intellectuals engage in pursuits that are disconnected from the practical concerns of everyday life. It therefore has a pejorative connotation of a wilful disconnect from the everyday world (over-specialized or useless research, academic elitism, if not outright condescension).

soit sur les décisions signifiantes de leur projet, mais rarement sur l’articulation des deux. Or, leur identité personnelle ne peut être redéfinie, conformément à ce qu’écrit Passeron (1989, p. 20), que comme « le produit logiquement croisé de décisions subjectives (transactions, conflits, abstentions…) et de l’objectivité de contraintes de cheminement (cursus préétabli dans des institutions biographiques) », ce qui paraît, à première vue, plutôt contradictoire (Dubar, 2013, p.14).

We wonder: if even in the case of intellectual personalities, as a narrator it is difficult to perceive the complexity of that double dimension of auto- and hetero-determination of the life-course, whereas the researcher has the scientific approach and can make the connections, how can any narrator be really involved in a partnership in the research? How can he integrate the researchers methods and theoretical tools in order to have a meta-vision on his own biographical material? The question of unequal distribution of the capacity to narrate oneself is also brought through this consideration, and we will try to treat it in parallel.

We consider this a really sensitive and important problem for us. And we want to be clear about our aim: we are not considering it in terms of need of simplification or vulgarisation – this would make us fall into the same Ivory-Tower-complex we want to fight – but more in order of translation, mediation between different languages that need to get together. In other words: in order to become real partners in research, narrator and listener/researcher (French terms distinguish the narrateur, who tells the life story, and the narrataire, the one who listens to the narration) have to come together through real share of visions, perspectives and frames of thinking.

The question of temporalities seems central to us: on one hand, the narration is articulated around long temporalities, whereas the narrator is immerged in the hic et nunc of the story whilst telling it. Becoming a subject and an author means in our sense build coherence, link together similarities-regularities, and this needs space and a diachronical view on one’s own life, quitting the flow of the narration and search for coherence, been both an actor and an observer (Perrin, 2012). And this construction of coherence can be made only through transformation of the subject.

We consider therefore of major importance to understand how to interact, work, write with the co-authors of the biographical research, in order to get to understand each one’s own causality conception, and really work in this “espace relationnel ouvert par la mediation du récit partage” (De Villers, 2013, p. 95).

The aim is to become able to really write in the form of “me in the relationship with the other”, finally in a form of “we” that is not a simple scientific form but a real plural voice in the act of building new knowledge.

References


‘Wiser than God? Older artists and life-long learning

Leo Delfgaauw, Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen, The Netherlands

Research questions:

- How does ageing affect artistic practice and what does it mean for the artist to grow old?
- How does this process influence possibilities, opportunities and choices in the artistic career?
- What does the concept of lifelong learning mean for the elderly artist?
- How can the art academy contribute to an artistic career on the long term and how can elderly artists contribute to the curricula of art-education?

This research focuses on the development of careers of visual artists. Aging as a social development and ageing as a personal experience are important frameworks for the artistic and professional positioning and for giving purpose to individual artistry. By means of literature study and narrative interviews I will try to analyze the working conditions and professional opportunities of elderly artists. Their artistry and careers will be related to the cultural infrastructure (such as exhibitions, grants, reviews and so an) that stimulates mostly ‘young’ and ‘upcoming’ talent. Main interest will be the question of how artists learn and develop their work as they grow older. A theoretical framework will be made out of the concepts of ‘situated learning’ (Lave& Wenger) and ‘workplace learning’ (Illeris). In my research I want to connect concepts of artistic practice, ageing and learning. Narrative research is used for in-depth interviews with visual artists. Their stories about life, experience and expertise are central. By using ‘grounded theory’ and ‘coding’ the texts are analyzed and will provide important data. These data are crucial in the further exploration of my topics (artistic practice, ageing and learning) and will help building a hypothesis about the hidden career of artists as lifelong learners.

A short study of the iconography of ageing will help to illustrate and understand -the history of- the ‘stages of life’.
Searching together for our learning theories. Questions on co-operative reflective practices in Higher Education.

Gaia Del Negro, Canterbury Christ Church University, UK

How can we interrogate our embodied understanding of the world? What (untold) theories/stories inform our practices of learning, being and becoming? My Ph.D research will look beyond the established discourses of higher education and questions the kind of learning produced on the fringes between HE and professional worlds.

At this point of my journey, to set the scene from an auto/biographical viewpoint I will present how my research questions emerged beforehand; through my experience of being: as a student, as a young professional in adult education, as a traveler in the East and now as a researcher in the West. A constructivist, systemic understanding of human learning (Bateson 1979, Maturana & Varela 1987, Fabbri & Munari 2005, Heron 1996) is the theoretical framework that I am finding promising with which to address issues as the relationships between: theory and action, epistemology (as logos on the world) and embedded ontology (as being in the world), the cognitive and emotional, and collectivity and the self.

Posing such questions, I relate my research to the current debate about the idea of “the university”: what kinds of learning are being developed in HE, and what can we imagine might be generated (or “propitiated”) for an unknown and uncertain future (Barnett, 2000, 2011). It is a debate which comprises a dominant discourse on employability and counter arguments of social power and epistemic understanding (Doyle, 2003). I am taking a position in line with Barnett’s call for a participative, self-ironical, holistic “knowledge of being” as part of a re.foundation of the “university’s” aim. This theoretical, ethical, and political background certainly lies besides (even within) the narratives of learning that will be generated. What could graduates and professionals actually have to say? How do academic and professional knowledges relate in their life experience and sense-making processes, and what kinds of identity struggles might be told? A “good enough” research space will need to be constructed, within the university, where dominating discourses in the professions (and in HE) can be questioned and insiders’ voices can be heard and mutually interrogated.

I wish to develop a richer understanding of the theories of learning of graduates and professionals through a systemic, constructivist and auto/biographic approach (Formenti, 2013). By generating a ‘spiral of praxis’ comprising authentic experience, aesthetical representation, propositional understanding and engaged action, I hope to celebrate the complexity of human being/knowing and explore what might fall beyond established discourses on learning in HE.
Impacts of adult and continuing education of the lives of low-skilled, non-traditional learners

Will Denayer & Seamus O'Tuoma, Centre for Adult and Continuing Education, University College Cork, Ireland

In depth-interviews were taken of thirty women from deprived areas in Cork city, Ireland. None of the respondents had a diploma from secondary school, all had a history of long-term unemployment and all of them had followed one or more courses at the Centre of Adult Education of University College Cork during the last five years. The purpose of the study was to measure the non obvious impacts of adult and continuing education on the lives of these low-skilled non-traditional learners. The study highlighted important results. Given the economic crisis, an activation discourse has become prevalent in Europe. The goal is to increase the employability of long-term unemployed by letting (or forcing) them to acquire new marketable skills. However, the literature indicates the need for fresh thinking about the role of education in social and economic development, which goes beyond simplistic reliance on single measures, such as growth in qualification, increasing employability or procuring employment. Indeed, the exclusive emphasis on growth of qualification may very well lead to sub-optimal results and risks wasting resources. In our study, we paid specific attention to adult education as an unique and efficient tool to increase social capital (networks) and identity capital (self-worth and confidence) for non-traditional learners. The traumatising effects of long-term employment were documented in great detail. The attempt to bring long-term unemployed, low-skilled people back to employment (or, in some cases, employability) cannot succeed without letting people gain confidence, a renewed sense of self-worth and without giving them chances to build up heterogeneous networks. If this is done, the results are significant in terms of employability and employment. There are positive effects on kinship and positive neighbourhood effects, such as reciprocal relationships. Opinion formation, political interest and knowledge and involvement are also effected.
Telling a mindfulness experience

Maria Rosa De Simone, Università Federico II, Napoli, Italy

The present work aims to describe, through the analysis of the narrative in the form of a logbook, the path of a group of young university students participating in a workshop on mindfulness practices done in the framework of the activities of the LEPE of the University of Naples Federico II. In the last few years we are seeing the flourishing of numerous research aimed to investigate the effects of such practices on the psycho-physical well-being in general and/or aspects of the psychological functioning of various populations of individuals (Baer, 2012). Few studies have used, however, qualitative instruments, and his paradoxical result, if one consider the enormous difficulties on the one hand to grasp the uniqueness of a transformative experience with self-assessment questionnaires or attentional tests, on the other hand to grasp the changes in "perspectives of meaning" (Mezirow, 2003), which means "reflexive", such as cultivating the self-as-context, that techniques for de-centering or de-fusion (Harris, 2011), have the intent to promote.

Which becomes even more interesting at the moment in which we realize that the writing of the logbook from instrument purely evaluative (check if there was a "change") becomes itself an instrument of awareness metacognitive, which is intrinsically connected to the main purpose of a path of mindfulness, namely the cultivation of the "presence", the "awareness and intentional attention, in the present moment, moment by moment, without judging" (John Kabat Zinn, 2011).
Stories of mystery and loss told by parents from care backgrounds

Carmel Digman, Canterbury Christ Church University, UK

The paper describes a qualitative study which took place in a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service with parents who had been maltreated in childhood and spent some time in care. The study aimed to explore how these parents interpreted their experiences, their constructs and values as parents and what factors they felt had enabled them to parent. Three fathers and three mothers with an age range of 25-65 years, were invited to tell stories of their experiences as children, as young adults and as parents. These autobiographical narratives were recorded, transcribed and analysed using a narrative analysis approach which identified coherence, genre and interaction. Literature searches showed subjective experiences of parents from care backgrounds were a neglected area.

Throughout the study, from the planning stages to its conclusion, a research log was kept to monitor and reflect on the development of the research process, the author’s responses to the stories, and the analysis of recordings and transcripts. This log recorded the before, beside and after experiences of conducting the research and as such represents a secondary narrative; the story of the research itself. For example, it detailed the stages of enquiry and learning before the recruitment, with practice interviews and consultation with a service user.

Working beside the participants the analysis revealed the process of co-construction of stories where the researcher’s interest and attention enables and shapes the story. The researcher entered the narrative space with the parent where experiences of living with traumatic memories, mysteries surrounding adult choices made without reference to the child, and expressions of loss and abandonment were remembered. Narrative coherence explored the ways of telling, the tones, genre and language; while narrative interaction considered the participants yearning to understand and make sense in a context of culture, family and personal values.

Results illustrated the long-term impact of disrupted childhood care on parenting, the participants’ capacity for self-reflection and continuing difficulties with transitions beyond adolescence. Parents struggled to make meaning of the mysteries and confusions present in their narratives. They expressed positive opinions of their care experiences, showed a lack of self-pity and a determination to break the cycle of maltreatment in their own families.

After the research, limitations, practice implications and future research were considered. Narrative analysis privileges the agenda created by the storyteller, without direction or interruption, but small sample numbers do not allow for the development of theory that can be generalised to a wider population. Practice implications included raising awareness among care professionals, of the stigma associated with care history and the impact childhood experiences may have on subsequent parenting. Further research might include fathers’ experiences, long-term impacts on parenting and possible single case studies of the individual transcripts. Where possible the parents were informed of the findings of the research and some showed interest in how the research would support others with similar experiences.
Roles of life history and biographical research in voluntary professional retraining

Aurélie Dirickx, Université de Genève

This presentation interrogates the contributions of life stories in the process of voluntary professional retraining. Starting this year a doctoral thesis on reorientations and bifurcations in careers, I chose to collect autobiographical narratives in order to investigate on topics such as career guidance throughout life, reorientation genesis, subjective relationship to work and facilitators of retraining (training policies and institutions, sociological factors, etc.).

As already highlighted by Negroni (2005), life stories are a rich analysis support to explore the personal and social dynamics of people implicated in a career reorientation. In addition, they provide valuable tools for self-reflection, insofar as they seek in the ability of individuals to take stock of their present and their history, helping them to know where they go. It is on this dimension of life stories that my contribution will focus. In other words, I will try to define how the autobiographical narratives – here discussed in their function of "beyond and after" – can induce self-projections into the future when individuals are involved in a process of voluntary professional retraining.

Bernard and Simonet (1997), authors of a method called "Autographie - Projets de vie®", agree that the process of producing life stories is most of the time chosen during phases of retraining and reorientation, but also during career guidance, job search and preparation for retirement. For them, life stories are thus a starting point to work on the meaning of career choices, and they can help make plans for the future in continuity with change.

My contribution will therefore be based on the idea that biographical approaches give the individuals the opportunity to meet their own history and to position themselves in relation to their achievements and aspirations. I will consequently try to highlight, thanks to biographical narratives, the processes of grieving, change, adaptation, maturation and ultimately self-projection resulting from a professional reorientation initiated by the subject.

La place et l’impact de la formation dans les parcours de vie des femmes adultes d’Afrique subsaharienne orientées vers les formations et les métiers d'aide et de soins aux personnes: une recherche exploratoire

Agnès Dussard, Université de Genève

À Bruxelles, de nombreuses femmes venues d’Afrique s’orientent et/ou sont orientées vers les formations et les métiers d’aide et de soins aux personnes. Dans le cadre d’une recherche exploratoire, poursuivie actuellement dans un projet de thèse, nous avons choisi de partir à la rencontre de ces femmes arrivées à l’âge adulte de différents pays d’Afrique subsaharienne et ainsi tenter de cerner la place et l’impact de la formation dans leurs parcours de vie. Ces femmes ne sont pas venues pour faire des études, elles ont parcouru des milliers de kilomètres dans l’espoir d’une vie meilleure, pour fuir un pays en guerre... avant de devenir aides familiales et/ou aides-soignantes en Belgique.

Errance et itinérance plutôt que longue route tranquille, elles se sont trouvées face à de nombreux choix, à des croisées de chemins… Elles ont fait des rencontres, vécu des événements qui ont marqué leurs vies, traversé des épreuves qui les ont transformées – parfois dans leur corps. Lorsqu’elles font un récit de leur vie, ce ne sont pas les multiples faits du quotidien, mais les événements, les moments marquants, saillants, les épreuves qui constituent la trame de leur récit. Le concept d’épreuve, tel qu’il nous est proposé par Baudouin à la suite des travaux de Greimas et de l’analyse structurale, est ce qui constitue le « pivot central de la narration » (Baudouin, 2010, p. 292).

À ce jour nous avons rencontré une dizaine de ces femmes. Le nombre de rencontres n’a pas été fixé préalablement mais laissé à l’appréciation des narratrices, en fonction du temps passé ensemble, de ce qui a été dit, de ce qui n’a pas été dit, de ce qu’elles souhaitaient dire encore… Les entretiens se sont déroulés en journée, en soirée, en week-end, pendant des congés scolaires. Nous nous sommes adaptée aux situations telles qu’elles se sont présentées, la plupart du temps différemment de ce qui était prévu : la présence des enfants, les changements de lieux, les rendez-vous oubliés, le temps passé à parler du passé, à recréer le lien, à regarder les albums photo, les invitations à partager le repas…. Ces moments avant les récits ont été extrêmement riches et chargés d’émotions.

Des choses importantes sont tues ou parfois justes effleurées lors de la première rencontre. Ainsi Sati, lors du premier entretien, ne fait qu’évoquer en une phrase, en fin d’entretien, l’épreuve – peut être la plus douloureuse de son parcours de vie – l’excision vécue à l’âge de 17 ans avant de nous demander un entretien supplémentaire, le troisième, dans lequel elle nous en parlera longuement (en 17773 caractères).

Nous nous sommes laissée surprendre et toucher par les récits de ces femmes, qui suscitent et provoquent en nous des émotions diverses. Le récit biographique nous éprouve, nous fait ressentir des sentiments et des sensations, il nous met à l’épreuve et cette épreuve transforme le regard que nous portons sur l’autre et nous transforme. Ainsi, après le récit, je ne suis plus tout à fait la(le) même et « je ne regarderai plus jamais les aides familiales et les aides-soignantes africaines de la même manière ». Cette phrase, plusieurs fois, nous a été dite.
Toutes, à un moment de l’entretien nous ont remercié de leur avoir donné la parole en espérant qu’un jour on sache, qu’on reconnaîsse qui elles sont et ce qu’elles ont vécu, les aides familiales et les aides-soignantes africaines.


Bibliographie
“The Critical Autobiographical Narrative and the Professional Doctorate”

Christine Eastman & Kate Maguire, University of Middlesex, UK

We will present our findings from our research following a year-long series of workshops for Professional Doctorate candidates at Middlesex University, London. The workshops used autobiographies, biographies, novels, science articles, journalism, poetry and essays from the 18th century to the 21st century and discussions of these in relation to each candidate’s style, tastes and context, to develop writing skills appropriate to practice knowledge. These included bridging academic, reflective and professional writing; deepening critical thinking and expression and understanding and practising critical autobiography which are core components of professional/practitioner based doctorates.

Our sessions were underpinned by our belief that a life accounted for – examined, interpreted, justified and shaped into a transmissible account – is central to the culture of a doctorate that is concerned with professional/practitioner knowledge and the requirements of such doctorates to be of benefit to all the stakeholders.

The views, voices and experiences of candidates shaped the series and contributed significantly to our understanding of the autobiographical experience of learning in the professional/academic context. Among our observations were: i. an emergent sense of self as the workshop participants approached their own autobiographies/stories in the spirit of cultural anthropologists. They came to recognise that the capacity to construct narrative deeply reflected a more cohesive sense of identity ii. the role of uncovering feelings and emotions through literature and captured in the act of writing had transformative qualities including making explicit that which is implicit for researcher and research participant in their research projects iii. in terms of the ethics of research, the researcher in any research undertaking has the responsibility of the metonym for the research participants and for truths revealed which requires a writing style by the metonym that speaks congruently for and to all stakeholders. iv. confidence to critique developed in parallel with the confidence to write and the confidence to write emerged from critical autobiographies assisted by a range of writing styles which were explored in all forms of literature.

We aim to contribute to the discussion on the relevance of identity to professional learning. We suggest that professional learning is not solely about acquiring professional knowledge, skills and competencies but concerns the renegotiation of ourselves: our voices, our expressions, our relationships, our quests and their interaction with the people we engage with in our professional lives and the organizations in which we work.

Topics covered will include:

- critical autobiographic writing in the context of a doctoral level award concerned with personal and professional development
- literary works as revealing mirrors of our many identities, and writing skills and criticality as the means of cohering them.
- literature as a vehicle for the development of criticality and clarity within the autobiographical mode of reflection and reflexivity
- the benefits and challenges of such an approach
We hope to make a contribution to the research on the education of adults and adult learning and further close the gap between practitioner and academic knowledge.
Systemic models as stimuli for new methodological approaches in person-centered biography work in the sphere of adult and continued education

Saskia Eschenbacher, Universität Augsburg, Germany

According to the ancient Egyptians, the tongue is the repository of the mind. The tongue functions as a type of rudder, which enables humans to navigate through the currents of the world. As the fundamental structure of humanity, language has two fundamental functions; it not only enables movement through the world but also determines direction and purpose. The peculiarity of language becomes clear at this point; it is a type of bridge that can connect the mind and communication. The self-reflexiveness of language results in social actions and individual ideas. In this socio-communicative process, language not only functions as an organ of perception for the abstract acquisition of a social reality but also actively changes this reality in terms of a circular process – which is one of the central assumptions of systemic theory.

Because language has a central, constitutive function in our experience of reality, it has been chosen as the starting point. These relationships are highly relevant to adult education. Adult education is about helping people realize their potential and facilitating their learning. In order to prevent adults from being held back by self-imposed limits, (new) models are being sought to increase the likelihood of broadening their sphere of influence. Models originally used in the context of systemic theory and therapy could be utilized to guide adults in primary educational contexts. But what can be expected from the use of these systemic models in the sphere of adult and continuing education?

Is it possible and advisable to provide new stimuli for person-centered biographical work? Why are new stimuli even required in the first place? Starting with the current challenges, what each participant in adult and continued education can be offered in the context of biography work should be elaborated upon. It will not, however, be concrete advice. It is more about presenting content-independent (and therefore transferrable) models of decision making, which then make key competencies accessible to the participants in order to make the participants responsible for their own learning.

In addition to questioning adult education identity, the question of why the biographical approach is suitable for self-reflexively correlating the past, present and future in order to manage present resource-oriented developmental tasks in learning-oriented confrontation using their own life stories should also be addressed. Some systematic models that can inspire person-centered biography work in adult and continuing education should then be outlined. Using these models, two examples should be given to show the extent to which metaphors can be applied as tools in educational language games in order to stimulate problematic behavioral patterns within the communication between adult educators and students and change them if necessary.
Yearning to learn - biographical narratives of learning in changing spaces

Rob Evans, Universität Magdeburg, Germany

The discourses, governmental and academic, about the 'empowerment' of learners and 'flexibilisation' of learning paths and learning careers, about 'competitiveness and employability' (practically any EU document) of adult learners, about the responsibility, too, of the learner to equip themselves with specified skills and knowledge, and the pressure on individuals - and indeed, whole populations in the throes of system change in an enlarged Europe – to 'refurbish' their qualifications or make haste to 'acquire' (or assume) a suitable career biography while there is yet time, are in our ears and are the siren songs of the new 'liquid' modernity which is deservedly the object of much critical research writing (Alheit & Dausien 2002; Bauman 2008; Field 2001; Jarvis 2000, 2006). Traditional notions of learning, i.e. the acquisition of skills and qualifications that would 'last a lifetime', have long since been superseded by the educational and training needs of a 'knowledge society' (Drucker 2005) with the neo-liberal imperatives of supply and demand (available skills, age, gender, health) and opportunity costs (the return on investment) which increasingly decide on the availability of spaces in which recognised learning may justifiably take place. 'Valued' learning is determined, sometimes across a whole working life, according to the movements of the market or the fortunes of management. Likewise skills, knowledge, experience (Karen Evans 2001)

In order to examine how formal and non-formal learning are fought for, and how learning experience – positive and negative – acquired or claimed across the life-course is transformed by, and transforms the individual biographies of learners, this paper will examine discourse(s) of learning and professional identity elicited in depth-interview talk with adults narrating their learning at work.

To pick up the concerns of the conference about the before, beside and after or beyond of, and in, biographical narratives (of learning), and to understand better why people carry on learning in the complex learning environments in which learning today is often shaped and expressed as biographical learning, as gendered learning, and so on, the paper will consider the following: 1. the intersecting local/global spaces in which people live and learn and through which they move while building relationships and careers; 2. the language(s) that constitute(s) these spaces as knowable and accessible and which form the basis of communities of experience and practice; 3. the individual rhythms of narrative and 'grammars' of experience that they develop in order to build their learning into their changing lives and the lives of the communities they are active in. My particular attention will be given to the permeation of interview talk by the lives led in the intersecting spaces of experience and learning, which are "awash", flooded by biographical resources. The narratives bring these resources to life, sometimes against all the odds.
Before, beside and beyond – a narrative of change

Rozalia Ligus, University of Lower Silesia, Wroclaw, Poland & Rob Evans, Universität Magdeburg

In biographical narratives of learning in the language which unfolds in the interaction examined in qualitative interviews, narratives emerge as evolving accounts of motives, choices, renunciations, and change. They are stories of the self, and they chart the difficult process of reflective construction of a (potentially) more secure, cohesive self (Ochs & Capps, 2001). In these biographical stories which we as researchers ‘collect’, the context of the research interview is a learning space in which the many stories of experience can be tried out, and new attempts at coherence and security can be made (Ochs & Capps, 2001, p. 7).

Our understanding of the biographic interview starts from the understanding that interactive context (social, institutional, physical, or emotional, and so on) and meaning are built in and through talk and are radically local in their construction. Micro-discourses of experience and the language through which adult learners incorporate differently grounded pieces of their lives – institutional learning, everyday life-course experience, crises, stops and successes – go to make up an ongoing biographical narrative (Alheit, 2007; Alheit & Dausien, 2002). This process is, according to Charlotte Linde, a process of creation of coherence in an individual’s life story. Linde stresses the element of process and change inherent in the oral life history: "As a linguistic unit, the life story is a rather odd unit: it is temporally discontinuous; and at any given telling of one of its component parts, it is incomplete" (Linde, 1993, p. 25).

Ambiguity, therefore, and incompleteness characterise the biographical narrative. The individual has access to a range of discourses and constitutes her narrative self through the medium of language and interaction. The discontinuous and unfinished oral narrative is embodied therefore in the discourse employed by the narrator, and in this discourse the words spoken, following Erving Goffman "are often not our own, at least our current 'own'" (Goffman, 1981, p. 3). Whose words they are (or were), and for whom they are spoken, is not fixed at all. Thus embedding makes it possible to 'enact' numerous voices over space and time within the interactive frame of the oral narrative and narrative interview (1981, p. 4). This is a central feature of interactive talk in the research interview. Indeed, for the development of ‘own’ discourses within an emergent learning biography, the ‘converted’ and ‘enacted’ words of others or a non-present ‘self’ are an important device for contextualization of talk.

This paper will consider the narrated story of a Polish school teacher collected by Rozalia Ligus in order to discuss how biographical resources – many intangible and very much "beside" or "beyond" the straight narrative of events – are woven into an interactively emerging narrative of experience and becoming.
Enacting Life as social mediation

Feldhendler, Daniel, Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt/Main, Germany

How can one develop the kinds of social bonds which take into account the singularities and self-expression of the individual, while at the same time acting as catalyst for a dynamic of mediation focusing on reliance, relation building and synergy between the individual and the society?

The process presented can bring fruitful answers to these questions. It allows the creation of a privileged space, a place to tell one’s own story and see it in relation to those of others. Using a theatrical form catalyses the process of putting personal experience into context. Our approach is here that of a theatre where we tell our personal life stories so as to talk to each other and see one another; a theatre where we become both agent and subject of our story. The playing out of our life stories is both dynamic anthropology as well as cross cultural hermeneutic and opens up a social imagination rich in transformative dynamic.

Through the sharing of biographical moments in narrative form and through their immediate transformation into a dynamic mirroring, what is shared becomes incorporated into one's resource for self-knowledge or perception of oneself and others. The method shows itself to be an important tool for identity work: it enables and promotes the formation of a "narrative identity" between the individual and the community. The method Enacting Life demonstrates its value increasingly as a tool for dynamic learning and for cultural and anthropological exploration. It offers heuristic qualities in the encounter with the Other. The underlying dynamic of mirroring through staged scenes works as a catalyst for hermeneutical learning stemming from an aesthetic interpretation. The processes of deepened understanding open up dimensions of the “collective consciousness and collective unconscious” between the individual and the society. Enacting Life is a forum for interpersonal dialogue, a vehicle for memory/remembrance rooms and awareness of history; it provides the opportunity to be the author of one's own story and of one's self, and in addition, to develop a collective identity.
Siblings, Suffragettes and Sisterhood: The Auto/biography of Career Development

Alison Fielding, Canterbury Christ Church University, UK

In this paper I will explore the different ways that careers develop, with a particular focus on women’s career development. That this differs for women from the established career patterns for men was recognised by Donald Super (Super and Bohn, 1971) early in the history of career development, but has only recently been researched further relatively recently (McMahon et al, 2012). I will use Kerr Inkson’s Nine Key Metaphors (Inkson, 2007) and Mark Savickas’ notion of ‘career as story’ (Savickas, 2011:23) to examine the career narratives of three women.

I will consider career development in relation to my own autobiography as well as to the career narrative of my younger sister, drawing on a research interview and subsequent informal discussions with her. I will also consider the wider historical context through the autobiography of Annie Kenney (Kenney, 1924), who has had an influence on my own life through family narratives – she was a former mill worker who became a militant Suffragette, and who was our great-grandfather’s cousin. The words ‘Annie Kenney said…’ have echoed through our lives as guiding principles for thought and action. This has particularly influenced my political awareness, as Andrews (2007:2) suggests ‘the stories people tell about their lives and the political frameworks which form the context for those stories’ are inextricably linked.

In exploring women’s career development, the political dimension is inescapable, and I will critique established, still largely male-oriented, career development theory from feminist theoretical standpoints, embracing the plurality of viewpoints (Hughes, 2002). Examination of the three women’s narratives will place their ‘lived experiences’ at the centre of the discussion, drawing out possible ‘alternative ways of thinking’ (Brooks, 2007) about the career development of women. My own place in this auto/biographical study is also fundamental and I am aware that espousing reflexivity means being both ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’ the process, essentially experiencing ‘self as other’ as a means of creating meaning (Hunt and Sampson, 2006:4).

This exploration of three women’s career development brings together siblings – my sister and me; suffragettes – Annie Kenney; and sisterhood – the feminist approach, to illustrate the complexity of career in the context of their lives.

References
‘Lets get critical’: biographical research, critical realism and the challenge of producing emancipatory knowledge

Fergal Finnegan, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, Eire

What, if anything, is the role of biographical research in producing critical and emancipatory knowledge? The paper will explore this question through a historical overview, a philosophical engagement and an intervention in an ongoing social scientific debate and make a case for a critical realist form of biographical research.

The paper will argue that within the broad family of oral history, life history and biographical research there is a deeply rooted commitment to emancipatory forms of inquiry and knowledge (e.g Fraser, 1994; Mills, 1959 Portelli, 1991; Thompson, 1982 etc.). Consequently uncovering hidden social experiences, documenting subaltern agency, giving voice to the marginalised groups and examining how social inequalities impinge upon and enable action in everyday life has shaped the ethical horizon and practice of biographical research including educational scholarship using these methods (Alheit, 1999; Merrill & West, 2009; West, 1996).

One of the main contentions of the paper is that this commitment needs to be constantly scrutinised, rethought and renewed and that critical realist ideas (Bhaskar, 2008; Harre & Madden, 1975; Sayer, 2000) can be fruitfully used to further elaborate and sustain an emancipatory version of biographical research. The paper will outline some of the theoretical and methodological implications of this argument. Following this I will also identify some of the difficulties and limits of using these ideas in practice by discussing my research on education and a critical realist studies based on life histories (Archer, 2007, 2010).

Building on this I will then explore in greater depth how biographical research might contribute to producing emancipatory knowledge by analysing two varieties of critical realist work which employ very distinct conceptualisations of structure and agency and arrive at very different answers to what constitutes critical knowledge (Archer, 2010). The paper will conclude with some reflections on what this might mean for the conduct of biographical research.

References

Professional training and identity: writing and beyond in a group of psychologists

Laura Formenti, Università di Milano-Bicocca, Italy

The paper explores the potential of autobiographic practices in a group of professionals, to raise knowledge about the building of professional identity, to enhance self-awareness, critical thinking and “deuterolearning” (Bateson, 1972) or “transformative learning” (Mezirow, 1991).

Data for this study come from a corpus of 13 writings, produced after a process of cooperative inquiry, whose participants are psychologists specializing as psychotherapists; the inquiry (Heron, 1996) began by asking them to become researchers of their own life; they worked together in 6 occasions (full day) over 8 months, and each of them composed an autobiographic text.

Biographical practices in professional learning have their own tradition in Southern Europe, where “permanent education”, very strong in France in the Seventies, along with self-educational and critical approaches, brought some adult educators and scholars (just to name some of them: Gaston Pineau, Guy de Villers, Pierre Dominicé, Marie Christine Josso, Vincent de Gaulejac...) to become interested in learning lives, and to create places for reflection, critical thinking and empowerment. Research and intervention are strongly linked within this tradition, still very alive in many countries, although marginalized in the hegemonic discourse of lifelong learning (Formenti, Castiglioni, 2014).

Most of these practices imply both conversations and writing, within a group of learners. A good reason for it is that oral and written words are qualitatively different: the materiality of the medium – voice vs. hand; presence vs. distance; here-and-now vs. there-and-then - brings about a different physical, mental, relational, aesthetic situation. To use both media is a way to create a “double description” (Bateson, 1972) of one's life, hence a deeper understanding of it, and possibly a leap in learning. Besides words, an exploration of other languages, such as drawing, photography, drama, dance, collage, masks, allows to go beyond “dead words” and to build “living metaphors” (Ricoeur, 1975; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). The quality of presence calls the body and voice into one's narration, and offers the possibility to express feelings and ideas more authentically, to explore the unconscious and bring “radical memory” (Heron, 1996) into the research process, to live moments of deep sharing in the group, but also to become critical in relation to some determinants in life. This brings, eventually, to develop new meaning beyond one's own boundaries. A highly desirable learning for a group – as it is here the case - of future psychotherapists, as well as for teachers, educators, health professionals, counselors, who need to develop themselves as “tools for care”.

This kind of research also brings new questions and insights in relation to words, their authenticity and epistemological meaning in narrative research, as a word-based activity, aimed to understand adult learning by fixing meanings in interviews or texts, when the body is often silenced, relationship is taken for granted, and the context of research is underrated.
The research aims to investigate the process of change in the international operators in international cooperation and intercultural competence acquired by workers in the course of personal and professional life. In this regard were involved in the research some operators that work for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in developing countries, the Italian international operators working in UN Agencies - OMS and UNDP in Geneva - and the Heads of NGOs Lombardy. The research aims to deepen intercultural aspects of cooperating and to provide guidance for the training of young people and workers who want to work in the international dimension. Some authors of reference for the study were Martine Abdallah-Pretceille for intercultural aspects, Darla K. Deardorff on intercultural competences, Jack Mezirow for the process of transformation and Robert Atkinson for the autobiographical method. A part of the study, which will be proposed for the presentation, involves the experience reported by eleven international operators of the United Nations, through the narrative interview and the chronological history of the person's life. The latter instrument was used in the first interview as a basis for the “unveiling” of the individual's life moments. The textual analysis has been useful for identifying the themes that emerged during the interviews and that are the subjects' central focus in relation to their experience in international cooperation. It appears that the professional history and the personal history are highly intertwined, so much so that it is difficult to identify the boundaries. In this central corpus of the research, people have shown intercultural competence that they believe they have acquired in the course of their existence, as well as resources and difficulties they perceived to be present in some moments of life. During two meetings with the researcher, respondents were asked to recall episodes of real life in which they think they have activated intercultural competence, not necessarily in a situation where things have gone well, but in a condition where the person has been able to learn something that has been used later in their professional practice. The participants were asked to describe in detail the situation and that precise moment that has been determinant for their further experience. In the presentation of the study, fragments of texts and analyses will be reported. The presentation will highlight the connections and differences between narratives in order to establish bridges the will allowing to grasp peculiar and general dimensions of the stories. Finally, it will discuss a real life episode that has been turned emblematic for the subject, since it has implied the development of an intercultural competence in trying to understand the situation.

References:
"Before, Beside and After (Beyond) the Biographical Narrative: the acquisition of Wisdom"

Wilma Fraser, Canterbury Christ Church University, UK

‘Human becoming and the quest for wisdom’ The more one knows, one realizes the limits of one’s knowledge; within scarcity there is abundance; to lose oneself is to find oneself. Paradoxically, losing our identity as a field may also be a way to find it anew. (Tisdell, 2011, p.10)

Tisdell’s comment about the decline, over the last two decades, in the academic spaces we might loosely term adult education have been well documented as a distinct feature in the universities of the United Kingdom, The States and Canada (Grace, 2000; West et al, 2010). My research is concerned with the impact that such closure has had on the ways in which certain epistemological traditions, or avenues of expression, have been couched, espoused and expressed; and particularly in relation to the spaces where the acquiring of wisdom (as a pedagogical expectation) might have been assumed to reside.

This decline has taken place within an increasingly instrumentalist framing of lifelong learning that is shaping both design and delivery (Biesta, 2010). I suggest that the pedagogical pursuit of wisdom has not simply fallen foul of ‘the relentless tendency to reduce education’s purpose to employability’ (West, 2010, p. 328), but also to a shift in emphasis towards greater attention upon particular framings of reason and rationality; what Dirkx calls the ‘rationalist doctrine’ (2001). I shall argue that such reductionist framings have had, and continue to have, the most deleterious consequences for a pedagogical imperative seeking to nourish the ‘potential for becoming’ at the heart of much ‘traditional’ adult education ethos and practice.

By adopting an autoethnographic approach to certain narrative material, I shall hope to illustrate the importance of paying attention to the silences between the words we both hear and speak; of critiquing the circularity within which so much adult teaching and learning provision is couched, and of nourishing spaces where alternative framings might be nurtured and encouraged. I shall draw upon recent developments within my own institution where the early roots of certain initiatives are beginning to push their leaves towards the light.

I am not suggesting an idealised return to some kind of prelapsarian golden age of adult teaching and learning provision, but I am urging a radical rebuttal of many of the discourses which both frame and constrain our practices as adult educators. And I shall draw upon one of the West’s most foundational narratives by way of elucidating my conclusion: My understanding of the ‘Fall’ does not share Augustine’s emphasis upon the sins of the flesh; rather I see its symbolic power as testament to the agony of exile. Perhaps this is the nature of sin: the extent to which evil might be measured is the degree to which violence is visited upon a people or a psyche to tear them asunder from their sense of belonging. I argue that a similar violence can be perpetrated at the symbolic and psychic levels when the limiting tyrannies of certain pedagogic practices are privileged over alternate and more meaningful ones.
Behind the scenes? Dealing with auto/biographical dimensions in a Ph.D research.

Andrea Galimberti, Università di Milano-Bicocca, Italy

How to deal with auto/biographical experiences in research? How to integrate this dimension, make it an explicit assumption and maintain a “scientific” style required by an academic product? The topic of my Ph.D research is deeply rooted in my biography. I chose to interrogate the experiences of non traditional students, who are defined in literature as under-represented in higher education (HE) and whose participation is constrained by structural factors. This wide category includes, for example, students whose family had not been to university before, students from low-income families, older students and students with disabilities. They are considered at risk in terms of access, retention, active participation, academic success, and social integration.

In line with international literature, there is some evidence that these students have a higher risk of non-completion due to different kinds of difficulties related to their "a-typicality" (Alheit & Merrill, 2004; Longden, 2006). The challenge is to integrate identities that are not only different, but experienced as opposite (student vs. worker, or adult, or parent...); the social feedback (generally negative) to the learning choice; the way they dealt with previous experiences in education.

I could define myself a “non-traditional” student from different points of view in different times of my learning career. I come from a working class family, I re-entered in education as adult after a work period, I had been student and worker at the same time (even during the Ph.D).

As a researcher I could claim a neutral and “objective” stance in relation to the participants and research materials and push my personal “unwritten story” behind the scenes of the scientific work. But I was aware that my interests and ways of making sense were not divorced from my experiences. The complexity theories helped me in asserting the principle of relationship between the observer/designer and the object of study (Morin 1990). I was also inspired by Bateson’s idea of self as “our own metaphor” (Bateson 1977) representing the hearth of a network of relations/metaphors through which we recognize the world and interact with it. In line with these assumptions I chose auto/biographical methods for my research in order to to give voice to the students’ experiences but also to my own. This stance implied making my epistemological choices explicit. My biography partecipated on a plurality of levels in the co-construction of the narrative materials and in building the analytical frame.

In the final step of the research I decided to engage some participants in order to reflect together upon our experience at university, our representations, our theories and their consequences on education, generating a shared and participatory hermeneutic circle. I based this phase on the co-operative inquiry paradigm.
Choosing the Ending, Evaluating the Process: Biographical Approaches to Evaluating Interventions with Young Adults at Risk of Substance Abuse.

Lesley Gornall, Sheffield Hallam University, UK

In 2011, the UK Government closed the last remaining residential rehabilitation centre for young people under 18 suffering from issues related to substance misuse. Instead, Choices, a short term programme of holistic, personalised interventions was introduced. Choices was a £4 million grant programme for 2011-12 funded by the Home Office. It was aimed at the voluntary and community sector to help them prevent and reduce substance misuse and related offending by vulnerable groups of young people aged 10-19 years.

The funding was made available to national voluntary and community organisations to support the delivery of targeted prevention and early intervention programmes as well as the transfer of skills, expertise and knowledge to other providers through dissemination activities. Whilst this represented a significant cut in funding, the commitment to evaluation offered an opportunity to build on the ‘multiple vulnerability’ approach used by national charity Compass, and develop a biographical evaluation method. By evaluation partners Sheffield Hallam University.

This method was centred around in–depth one to one semi structured interviews with 20% of participants in the programme, at the beginning and end, and commitment to representing the life stories behind the life choices, and any subsequent change.

In line with COMPASS’ commitment to focus on young people’s journeys, this evaluation was designed to concentrate on young people’s experiences, their perceptions of substance misuse, why and how it became part of their lives, and those factors which prevent or help them in taking control of their own futures, and a biographical interview was undertaken with over 20% of the participants at the beginning and towards the end of their involvement in the programme. Interviews used a series of open – ended prompts which were developed following an initial analysis of COMPASS’ innovative Multiple Vulnerability approach and data. Interviews were recorded and analysed using computer software. Trends from the first interviews were identified to inform the design of second interviews.

Young people involved in the evaluation were very open and honest, and although experiencing serious problems and challenges in their lives, they demonstrated a great deal of resilience and willingness to share their experience in the hope that it will serve to help others. The multiple vulnerabilities of lives outlined in the report is often out of the control of the young people affected, substance use often the by-product of early exposure, or as a perceived antidote to other issues.

These are complex lives, with a range of challenges, and the authors hope that the detail included in the main report will support services and policy makers in formulating successful strategies for future interventions, and demonstrate the value of the biographical approach. Challenges related to the design, acceptance, rigour and value of a fundamentally qualitative approach in an environment focussed on quantitative analysis, will form the basis of this methodological paper, and represent a further development of the evaluation report.
Selective and Layered Storytelling: Writers and their Writing Lives

Patricia Gouthro, Mount St Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Drawing upon a Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) study on lifelong learning, citizenship, and fiction writing, this paper explores learning trajectories of writers’ lives through life histories. It begins by looking at the selective process of storytelling, then considers how biographical research with authors is a layered process, and concludes by examining the editing process and how this may affect findings.

When authors write fictional novels, they make decisions not only about the characters and plots that they create, but also about what merits a lengthy discussion and what needs to be discarded. As Martin (2005) notes, one of the main characteristics of quality fiction writing involves authors being selective about what is included in a story, and what gets left out. In much the same way, when authors agree to talk about their “writing lives”, they selectively choose what stories they will share and how they will be told. In multiple ways the information that is shared in life history interviews is partial, selective, and purposeful – included for a reason, whilst other aspects of the “story” is withheld. This raises questions about truth(s) and fiction, and of the story that is told and the story that is untold.

Doing biographical/life history research with writers involves dealing with two levels of story – the books that the authors write, and the stories that they tell about themselves. These different levels of story both disclose and obscure the significance of various learning events in writers’ lives. As Rovit (2011, p. 32) cautions, there is a “constant danger of identifying the voice of text with that of the author”. Yet at the same time, he points out that one cannot ignore that biographical events often shape the decisions around what fictional tales authors will create.

During a life history interview, the author may provide a rationalization or explanation for certain decisions or experiences that may be disclosed, whilst others may be surmised by the researcher in examining the transcripts and reading the author’s novels. However, neither approach guarantees that the insights discerned are completely accurate. The added layer of having a body of fictional work to review as well as transcripts when interviewing authors can both enhance and complicate the research process. In asking questions not only about the writers’ lives, but also by making connections to the stories that they choose to tell, there is an another dimension to consider when tracing their learning trajectories.

Writers are used to crafting words carefully to tell their stories. Their interview responses are often elegantly composed, particularly when the writer is well-established. Allowing participants to edit transcripts may mean that they will speak more freely (Merle-Jaffe, 2011). Yet as writers, they often do extensive editing of their transcripts. How much does the story change when words become a carefully crafted representation of dialogue? These are some questions to be explored in doing life history research that involves interviews with fiction writers.
Etudiants en soins infirmiers et processus de professionnalisation

Myriam Graber, Haute école de Santé Arc, Neuchâtel, Suisse

La pénurie de personnel soignant, en Suisse comme dans la plupart des pays d’Europe se fait sentir, est inquiétante (Jaccard Ruedin et al., 2009 ; Jaccard Ruedin & Weaver, 2009) et accentue une problématique récurrente pour les politiques de santé. Cet état de fait pose la question non seulement de la prise en charge des patients, de la qualité des soins mais interpelle également les conditions permettant de favoriser l’engagement dans cette profession, ainsi que les conditions contribuant à pérenniser cet engagement (Haberey-Knuessi, Graber & Baudouin, 2013). Nous nous posons la question comment ces étudiants arrivent à construire leur processus de professionnalisation et à rester motivés dans un monde ou les restrictions budgétaires, de personnel et la mise en place de nouvelles technologies dans les institutions de soins ont de fortes incidences sur le travail infirmier.

La formation est en effet un endroit privilégié pour cerner les tensions entre deux logiques, celle de la professionnalisation relevant de logiques institutionnelles et celle de la professionnalité entendue comme construction du sujet dans sa profession (Haberey-Knuessi, Graber & Baudouin, 2013). Il s’agit dès lors de repérer ce qui pourrait favoriser l’articulation de ces deux logiques et permettre à l’étudiant de développer une motivation et un engagement professionnel dans une plus longue durée au service de la profession qu’il avait alors choisie.

Dans la recherche, mise en place auprès d’étudiants Bachelor en soins infirmiers, grâce en particulier, à des entretiens de type biographique, nous avons pu mettre en évidence les raisons du choix professionnel, leurs motivation et leur processus de professionnalisation questionné au travers de ses quatre piliers : la professionnalité, l’engagement, la motivation et la reconnaissance (de Ketele et Jorro, 2013).

Au niveau méthodologique, nous avons étudié les documents « rapport de stage : référentiel de compétence » des six stages de formation pratique de plus de trente étudiants en soins infirmiers de troisième année bachelor ainsi que d’autres documents tels que leur projet professionnel, ou les portfolios qu’ils ont construit. Nous avons également fait des entretiens de type semi-directif selon Kaufmann (2011) à caractère biographique (Baudouin, 2010).

Dans cette communication, nous souhaitons présenter les premiers résultats d’analyse d’entretiens à caractère biographique. Nous désirons démontrer en quoi ces étudiants, en fin de formation, se sentent prêts c’est-à-dire professionnels ou non pour commencer leur travail en tant que professionnel. Nous souhaitons également démontrer ce qu’ils disent concernant leur processus de professionnalisation, ce qui les a soutenu ou au contraire, ce qui a entravé ce processus tout au long de leurs études.

Les résultats des analyses des entretiens de type biographiques démontrent la nécessité de quelques ajustements au niveau de la formation, ce que nous montreront également.

Bibliographie


"Before, Beside and After (Beyond) the Biographical Narrative"
Annual Conference of the Life History and Biographical Research Network
Magdeburg, Germany
Discursive shaping of intimate relationships as a research field

Monika Grochalska, University of Warmia and Mazury, Olsztyn, Poland

The main goal of this paper is to make a critical overview of intimate relationships research in Polish pedagogy and sociology. Moreover I’d like to suggest an alternative research direction, which treats intimate relationships as the effect of discursive shaping.

The key issue is the definition of intimacy. Despite its importance, intimacy is a very difficult research subject. Especially interesting area of exploration are ways of creating and shaping intimate relationships by women, because of specific social expectations towards them. Polish research within sociology of family, social pedagogy and gender studies are full of cultural biases and schemes, which are usually harmful for females. Their main source is public discourse.

In Polish public discourse there are various patterns which determine ways of understanding family relationships, marital happiness, intimacy and other similar concepts. These various discourses penetrate also scientific environment. These are kinds of “reference points”, which set the direction of further research. But researchers hardly recognize their own social and cultural determination.

However, it is really important to acknowledge that “intimate relationship” is a social construct, which is variable in time and created by social actors in relations with their environment.

Most Polish studies on intimate relationships are focused on particular problems within the family, excluding or at least marginalizing the issue of intimacy. The conference presentation will contain a critical analysis of main Polish studies within pedagogy and sociology of family published in the last 10 years. Deconstruction of social assumptions ascribed into these studies can show the main constraints of such approach. Such a critic enables rethinking intimate relationships as an effect of discursive learning, which is understood as a phenomenon of social cognition in the discursive reality.

Key words: intimacy, women, discourse, family, CDA
Uncovering the Gifts of Inner Wisdom Through Silence: An Autobiographical Account of Seeking Wellness and Congruence as an Adult Educator

Janet Groen, University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada

I lay in my bed wondering what I had done. The implications of engaging in a nine-day silent retreat washed over me. Here it is – only the end of day one- and in one week, I would still be in silence! I felt overwhelmed, worried and intimidated. I berated myself for signing up for such a long retreat – why didn’t I start with something a little easier? Perhaps the toe-dipping three-day retreat would have been a better starting place.

In the midst of fear, trepidation and some excitement, this nine day silent retreat where I would learn Vipassana meditation marked the beginning of a new journey. Starting an intentional meditation practice marked my quest to find a deeper congruence between my inner being and my outer persona. I came to this stage of my life as someone who was already deeply immersed in her spiritual journey and as an adult education researcher engaged in linking spirituality and adult learning with various contexts such as higher education, workplaces and now environmental adult education. This was no longer enough. I was feeling restless and anxious in my work as a faculty member. As Jarvis (1987) indicated, I was experiencing as disjuncture; I was no longer feeling at home and felt the need to revisit the deeper questions of meaning and purpose. Now, four years into this journey, I see that this time marked a turning point for me where I heightened my pursuit to live an undivided life “where meaning and purpose are tightly interwoven with intellect and action, where compassion and care are infused with insight and knowledge” (Zajonc & Palmer, 2010, p. 56). As Tisdell (2011) indicated, by striving for congruence, I was engaging in the paradox of wisdom, engaging in the inner and transcendent cultivation of wisdom in order to reflect practical wisdom in my daily life. Furthermore, I believe that taking up this quest was a counter-response. In our rapidly changing world and more specifically within our universities, where the pace and expectations have heightened, competition for dollars is increasing and the stability previously offered faculty members is gone, I felt buffeted about. Despite and because of the turbulence, I wanted to be anchored in something steady and nourishing. I was seeking a solid foundation, a place that I could return to in order to draw on an inner wisdom to live more wisely and holistically. Drawing on wisdom, meditation and adult learning literature, as well selected personal writings representative of my experiences, I offer an autobiographical account of cultivating an intentional space of silence in my life and increasing my trust in inner wisdom. In turn I also consider if and how this inward journey has manifested itself, referred to as practical wisdom, in my daily life as a mid-career professor (Tisdell & Swartz, 2012). Finally I reflect on the potential implications for our work as adult educators.
“The ‘self murderer’ from Orminge”: A bereaved daughter’s remonstrance to “rescue” her Self

Anneli Silvén Hagström, Linköping University, Sweden

Introduction: In the autumn of 2011 a single woman’s play “The self murderer from Orminge” was performed at a small theatre, located at a youth recreation centre in an eastern suburb of Stockholm – Orminge – in Sweden. The audience consisted of about 20 persons and there was an intimate and intense atmosphere in the room, only the actress’s voice and one or another of the spectators’ sobbing broke through the silence. The experience resembled sitting in the young woman’s own living room, taking part of her most personal emotions concerning the loss of her mother to suicide two years previous. After, I contacted the actress and asked if the material could be part of a research project, in which I want to study how young people communicate about their experiences of parental suicide with others, in different social and cultural contexts. The theatre play was certainly a context of its own and unlike other ways of communicating, e.g. in research interviews, self-help- or professionally led bereavement groups, or chat rooms on the Internet. The young woman stood there all by her self, giving us – the audience – her story about the loss of her mother to suicide; exposing her vulnerability (even crying at times) and at the same time negotiating in public how her self was affected by the suicide incident. An initial understanding was that a latent message was sent to the audience: the suicide act that is subtly morally condemned by the society – represented by us – ultimately affected how the woman would come to see upon herself, as the remaining daughter of a “self-murderer”.

Aim and research questions: The aim of the study is to explore what and how the actress is communicating through her theatre play. The main question is: What do the visual narrative illustrate (i.e. what narrative themes/storylines are actualized) and how is the story narrated and special incidents portrayed, not only verbally, but also through the embodied narrative – by the use of gestures and voice, as well as the organization of the scene? Of special interest is how the performed narrative entails processes of both meaning making, regarding the actress’s own reflection on why her mother committed suicide, and self-formation, that is how the actress reflects upon her self in the light of the suicide incident. This paper focuses on methodological issues related to the analysis of the theatre play as a case of a visual life-history material.

Methodology: The analysis departs from an explorative approach and uses narrative methodology to get close to the actress’s telling of her story. Narrating a story is here understood as a process of constant “becoming”, rather than a representation of an objective reality – where time, space and action are central in the process.

Contribution: The study contributes with new knowledge about how a mother’s suicide during the adolescent years can be integrated into the daughter’s life history and shaped by the negotiation of her own identity.
Kindergarten workers teaching children about nature. How a group of semi-professionals develop understanding and language though their life and their professional education.

Marianne Hoyen, Aarhus University, Denmark

This paper describes how we have set up a research project with life histories as a central component. The life story interviews are made with kindergarten workers, and our direct aim is to analyse how the interviewee deals with a specific aspect of their job: How do kindergarten workers deal with nature and how do they teach the children about nature? In the long run the research project will discuss how this group of semi-professionals though their life and their professional education develop understanding and language within this specific area of their job.

Doing life story interviews are part of a voluntary offer for students who want to participate in research projects to get a better grasp of qualitative methods. Students from University College as well as from University participate together with their teachers. Some bring their professional colleagues, too. Major parts of the research group have a personal background as unskilled kindergarten workers.

Besides doing life story interviews we work with documents from kindergarten institutions, from kindergarten workers' professional unit, legal requirements, and teaching materials.

In our country we have a self-understanding that our view on children and children's development is quite unique. This is a widely held view in kindergartens and in elementary schools, too. In 2004 this understanding was challenged, as it became law that children - contrary to the previous understanding - should be introduced to focused learning in kindergarten and therefore learning schedules were introduced. As a consequence each kindergarten institution as part of a general schedule should describe its pedagogical work in writing and present this to amongst others the children's parents. Eight subjects should be addressed, and amongst those how to work with nature and nature phenomena in relation to the children. An evaluation few years later reviled challenges: For some of the subjects the kindergarten workers did fine but overall there was a lack of professional language for didactical thinking. This was especially the case for the work related to nature and nature phenomena.

On this background we raised the question about how kindergarten workers handle the question about nature in general and when working with children? Inspired by life story research which had shown how important the childhood socialization was to how the school teacher as adult understood and carried out their job as teacher it became obvious to pose a similar research question: How can we analyse the kindergarten workers' understanding of nature? As I through ESREA in Canterbury, UK, had met a researcher who works with a similar question it became interesting to make a comparative project in a Danish context.

The opportunity for doing this came in autumn 2013 where a group of students, through political university boards had called for possibilities to join research projects. Together with a colleague we announced an open project where students as well as former students could join our project about 'kindergarten workers and nature'. The project was set up collectively together with seminars in view on nature and interviewing methodology.
Initially the project became a great success with 20 participants each doing life story interviews with at least 2 persons this autumn and they continue this spring. For some of the participants the work became too demanding to contribute to, parallel to their own studies, but during this first 4 months we now in November 2013 have a number of interviews ready for analysis together with various documentary material.
In the paper I will present the project, and the ideas behind doing research this way, especially how we use the comparative aspect with the UK researcher.
Goethe and the Study of Life History

Ian Jasper, Christ Church University Canterbury

The way in which the world is viewed hugely influences what is seen and the way in which it is understood. The German poet, playwright, scientist and polymath Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) devoted much of his life to an approach to forms of research and the communication of the results of this work which ran counter to what were becoming the established norms of ‘science’. Most famously Goethe developed a view of colour which ostensibly was very much at odds with that of Isaac Newton.

In this presentation, aspects of Goethe’s attitude to science will be discussed and these will be linked to an approach to ‘Humanism’ with which he is also closely associated. This, in turn, will be linked to the rationale of much life story work. Before, around and within much work with life history narratives, I will argue, a scientific attitude to the ‘particular’ like that proposed by Goethe, can be an aid to our work.

Few ‘scientists’ today would support Goethe’s view of colour, but it is probably fair to say that much of what he said would, and indeed does receive a sympathetic hearing among artists. It has been argued that what Goethe opposed in Newton was that ‘the kind of science which was organising behind the banner of Newtonianism would establish itself as the one true model of natural science’ (Blunden 2010 p.24). In this presentation it will be argued that Goethe and the method of systematic enquiry which he supported should be viewed very much as a resource and philosophical justification for much of the type of work carried out within Life History and Biographical research today.

At the core of much of Goethe’s work is the dialectical relationship between the particular and the general. Goethe very much believed that the thorough study of the particular was the best indeed the only way through which to gain an authentic appreciation of the general.

   What is general?
   The individual case
   What is specific?
   Millions of cases
   (Goethe 1833 p.7)

This aspect of Goethe’s approach to science resonates happily with the proposition supported by many working in life history that a few examples examined in depth are intrinsically more valuable than many studied only superficially. Indeed Goethe argued that the study of ‘variables’ in isolation to the ‘whole’ encouraged ‘mechanistic modes of explanation’ which in turn led to some forms of science ignoring problems ‘which can only be explained dynamically’ (Goethe 1988 p.309). Again this reminds us of the rationale of much life story work.

Goethe was closely associated with the movement known today as ‘Weimar Classicism’. As the cultural theorist Raymond Williams has pointed out ‘Weimar Classicism’ is associated with an approach to Humanism which, whilst secular, proposed an understanding of the term ‘humanism’ as a positive alternative to the wholly negative idea of ‘atheism’ (Williams 1976 p.151). It will be argued in this presentation that this approach to humanism is much closer to
the spirit of life history and biographical research than is the bleak ‘anti humanism’ of many post modern theorists.

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Mimesis and Cultural Learning

Jeong, Mi-Gyeong, Yi, Byung-Jun & Lee, Yu-Ree, Pusan National University, S. Korea

Today, new concept and model which will convert the paradigm for learning are suggested. For the existing learning paradigm focusing on individual recognitive development, dynamic, social and cultural parts of human learning started to be focused. Under the background, cultural learning theory appeared and it intends to try to analysis human learning activities through the interaction with environment and historical and social context including human. Cultural learning says that learning is understood as the participation in social practice process rather than simply inner cognitive phenomenon of each person. People participate in various social practices and through them, experience formal, informal and non-formal learning during the daily life. Through the cultural learning, we can analyze various learning processes which are occurred in daily life, school education, science-technology, culture-art, work-organization, community, etc. and grasp social and cultural context and various levels or patterns of human practice or development, so the understanding of human learning can be improved.

To understand the context of cultural learning, the concepts of Mimesis, formality and formalization are significant. Formality is educationally meaningful and important because practical knowledge required for formality is acquired by Mimesis (Wulf u.a. 2001: 335). The potentiality of formality's educational meaning is in creative, symbolic and performative characteristics and the formality has filtering function of social and cultural learning process. If accepting the cultural learning results of Wulf theory which analyzed learning in social and cultural context, the situation of pedagogical studying should be changed. Firstly, the concepts of educational practice and educational experience should be expanded. The expansion means educational meaning of untypical practice such as performance, exhibit and direction should be focused by getting out of the interests in learning of institutions and systems, called as 'education'. It's same as the field of artistic education. The interests in learning and cultivation process in performative and formal behavior can be made by pursuing individual experiences and memories which were acquired by individual physically, tacitly and practically. Mimesis process creating learning and cultivation process showed discussion and context which are same as them of biological constructivism theory which shows contingency, emergency, etc. At this time when educational horizon is getting out of the field, studies on the interests in changing process of media in modern society and acquisition process of aesthetic experience of various subcultures and formal behavior and educational context of lively direction process are expected to improve pedagogical studies. To achieve it, it's difficult with only existing culture of academic community. At present, pedagogical study is combined by differentiations based on the modernity, but it is not applied by various academic concepts and approaches for characteristics and phenomena of education and learning. Now, studies on education and learning need an exchange of various academic viewpoints and it's required to apply concepts and methods of combined study based on the active exchange among them (Byung-Jun Yi, 2006a).
Composing Educators' Biographies. An Experience of Image-ographies with Students of Science of Education.

Federica Jorio, Università di Milano-Bicocca, Italy

This contribution presents an experience with the students of Science of Education from the University of Milano-Bicocca which took place from March to June 2013. For my doctoral project I created an educational life narrative workshop for students in order to provide them the opportunity to suspend their activities connected with their education and take a distance from what they were doing during their first year of university to start reflecting on who they were and are as people living an education process. The purpose is to investigate the idea of education, which future educators have both theoretically and empirically experienced until their present situation.

I want to present this methodology of self-reflection through life narratives describing the single steps which compose the entire process of composing the representations of education mediated by visual metaphors chosen and built by the participants.

I wanted to facilitate the students to the final act of writing their education biographies starting from approaching the topic without using verbal tools and using visual material as a support for their narratives.

The first step was choosing images which could tell something about their past and present story of, and relationship with, education, narrating it, and sharing with the other participants.

The second step was creating a mental map which could describe the personal idea of education, choosing a theoretical or an autobiographical approach to it, giving the liberty to create the map according to personal choices, tastes, desires, ideas, and intentions.

The third step was a collaborative moment of map-building, starting from the single maps presented by the participants: negotiation and informal conversations were here used to increase the feeling of being a learning group and to discover analogies and differences between the individual products and the collective one. In the collective map they presented seven metaphors of components of their idea of education. They renamed education “education, body and mind” and they discovered a meta-level of analysis which guided them to construct this map: the perspective of their single visions.

The fourth step was building personal movie-montages as cinematographic metaphors of their representations of audiovisual education autobiographies.

After that, they created texts which narrated their workshop experiences and their personal reflections on their portfolios made of pictures, maps and movie-montages, considered here as a self-reflective tool to see themselves in their images.

I called here these texts generated by this workshop experience “image-ographies”: single texts presented as diaries, reports, resumes, graphs, letters, and cross-medial productions according to how they wished to present their education biographies.

This paper will show a brief analysis of what has emerged until now (since the analysis is still ongoing) from their texts, compared to the contents of the portfolios and the collective map, revealing already the underlying idea retraced within this group that education is not simply a part of life but a way to consider the entire life experience: education biography as biography itself.
‘The letters remind myself how I am’: Writing past wrongs, closing distances, mending lives and building a self through epistolary relationships

Mark Jury, Siena College, Loudonville, New York USA

Drawing first on Bruner’s ‘narrative model of self construction’ (1997, 2004) as well as Stanley’s (2011) work on the gift basis of epistolary exchanges, this paper analyzes the autobiographical project of an adult student—a 48-year-old Filipina immigrant in the United States—and three epistolary relationships that have formed the foundation of that project. Specifically, I examine the role of letter writing in her efforts to reconstruct and reclaim a lost childhood, reconnect with relatives, tease out truths about herself beyond and beside those that live in the single photograph she has from childhood, in shadowy memories, and in shards of stories about a mother who had abandoned her and her brothers, a father who was poisoned, an uncle who took her in and then abused her, and an aunt who kept her out of school and pressed her into service as a housekeeper when she was a very young girl. I further examine the exchange value of the three epistolary relationships: with the student’s volunteer writing tutor (the author of this paper and a professor in the college where the student is a night-shift custodian), with her son, and with a genealogically and geographically more distant set of relatives. Each of these relationships is mediated multimodally: through notes written daily (in English) and left on the tutor’s desk to guide the student’s studies, through instant messaging/chat functions and traditional ‘snail mail’ (in English and Tagalog) with relatives in the Philippines (whose family stories, histories and old photographs are of dubious authenticity and arrive at a cost), through conversations with her US-born son as he helps translate her letters and prods her for family stories she does not have, and in audio recordings she makes of her letters and journal entries in order to practice her reading and writing, but also to build the set of narratives she grew up without.

Didactic biography as an alternative strategy of research experiences at school

Agnieszka Koterwas, University of Gdansk, Poland

In the perspective of didactics, biographical research is an uncommon method used in the study of school experiences. In this field, the scientist usually use an action research, experimental or diagnostic studies. Therefore the purpose of this speech is to present a new application of biographical research in education, modification of the educational biography begun by P. Dominice'a. Previously educational biography was rather used in the andragogy. My concept is based on cooperation between andragogy and didactic. It allow to present school from a new perspective.

Didactic biography is a source of knowledge about human interpretation of education reality, which he was involved. It is focused on a story about live, relevant experiences, changes and crisis in context of school. Examined – adult graduates different types of school are the authors of meanings given to the school and didactical process. Based on reconstruction biographical story I will show colloquial didactic concepts.

Didactic biography is defined in two ways. On one hand, it examines their future, which locate themselves in the surrounding reality and how they perceive it. On the other hand, it presents their interpretation of the various elements of the learning process, both "then" in school and "now" in retrospect (as consequences in adulthood). This interdisciplinarity integrate research of andragogy and teaching is based on the reconstruction of the meanings which graduates various schools (including alternative) attribute the institutionalization of education and its implications in their further live. In other words, through retrospective related to the teaching reveals the didactic aspect of their biographies. This method is significant in terms of teaching and exploration of the learning process. It is an attempt to know the process of learning from students directly involved in the educational process.

The fate of graduates often depend on education thus from the school. Biography education in this approach contributes to research school effectiveness, therefore it is a qualitative method of didactic research, which is devoted to the evaluation of school.
PARENTALITÉ ET RECHERCHE BIOGRAPHIQUE   «Comment JE deviens PARENT?»: du récit d'expérience au parcours de parentalité.

PIERRE-ALAIN LUTHI, UNIVERSITÉ DE GENÈVE

Notre communication portera sur la méthode d'analyse d'une recherche doctorale que nous réalisons actuellement. Cette recherche a pour but d'éclairer les épreuves majeures de la parentalité. Au travers du parcours de parents ayant participé à un dispositif de soutien à la parentalité « Histoires de PARENTS ». Cette recherche est fondée sur le récit de leurs expériences parentales et a pour but de répondre à la question : Comment JE deviens PARENT ?

Nous cherchons à éclairer ce que nous apprend la recherche biographique du devenir parent? Quels récits, quelles scènes, quelles temporalités, quelles valorisations, quelles ressources individuelles ou collectives, quels actants, quelles contraintes sociales, émergent du discours des parents. De quelle manière se construit, au travers de l'expérience individuelle, la parentalité? Nous cherchons à mieux cerner quelles épreuves, initiations, rencontres, références sociales, culturelles les parents mobilisent dans leurs discours, sur la manière, dont se construisent leurs choix et leurs convictions?

Nous avons choisi de compléter notre cadre d'analyse en mettant en lumière les dimensions sociales qui constituent le décor du récit des expériences parentales. Cet apport issu de la sociologie de la famille et de la sociologie des parcours de vie nous permet de dépasser la simple addition ou audition d'expériences individuelles inscrites dans le récit autobiographique des parents. Nous cherchons ainsi à faire émerger l'articulation entre les expériences individuelles et les épreuves standards du parcours de parentalité des participants de notre étude. Notre activité quotidienne auprès des parents au sein du dispositif de soutien à la parentalité nommé « Histoires de PARENTS », nous amène à vouloir mieux comprendre de quelle manière concrète se constitue la parentalité pour les parents aujourd’hui.

Nous présenterons dans cette communication un tableau synoptique qui nous permet d'articuler les épreuves standard du parcours de parentalité, le déroulement du parcours de vie du parent et l'économie cinétique du récit des expériences biographiques parentales.

Mots Clés: Parentalité, Biographie, Réseau familial, Parcours de vie.
Landscapes of life – emerging from narrations, read from portraits - What came after the biographical narratives (?)

Małgorzata Malec Rawiński, University of Wrocław

The aim of the paper is to present the methodological possibility of combining the biographical perspectives in a research strategy and showing its cognitive results. It is in some way an invitation to reflection on two different views of the world of Polish senior immigrants’ in Sweden - the outlook of a researcher researching the immigrants through interviews and of a photographer portraying them. It is a trial to join the world of academic research with the experience of art.

The idea of the article is to present the possibility of using the photos/portraits of researched people to deepen the research and to show the potential meanings of photography in a biographical approach to research. The paper proposes a model of coherent biography as a result of the combination of the biography of narration (heard from the narration) with a biography of the photo (life history of researched people ‘read’/produced from the portraits by addressers of the portraits). The other assumption of the paper is to show the fruitful dialogue between the researched people, the researcher, the photographer and addressees of the portraits of researched people. The analyzed data came from research done among a group of Polish senior immigrants in Sweden.

I would like to put some research questions to be considered in the course of the presentation of the paper:

What can we read from the portraits of researched people?
What is the meaning of photography/portraits in a biographical approach?
Is it possible to uncover in images what is covered in narratives?
Does the combination suggest itself as being useful/productive for the research?
Does it make sense?

Maria Cristina Nuñez Madrazo, Universidad Veracruzana, Mexico

From an anthropological perspective, life history can be interpreted as a narrative experience that comes from a dialogical encounter between the researcher and people -the object/subject of anthropological inquiry-. At the same time, from a methodological transdisciplinary point of view, life history can be analyzed as an ideal source for bringing out different levels of Reality of culture and social life and different levels of Perception of the so-called Transdisciplinarity Subject (Nicolescu). Life History can be seen as an inter-thread, where we find, at the same time, individual and society, objectivity and subjectivity, myth and memory, and the multidimensional levels of Reality that cohabits in any individual or person. Through memory and narrative we co-create our identity and self-image. And in this co-creation we...

In this paper I will explore this ontological and epistemological dimensions of narrative experience in anthropological life history practice of research from a Transdisciplinary point of view, based on my own experience in this field.
Les incidences subjectives de la sollicitation d’entretiens biographiques auprès de jeunes, anciens décrocheurs, en situation de raccrochage dans un lycée expérimental, le Micro-Lycée de Sénart (France)

Valérie Melin, Université deLille 3, France

Cette communication revient sur une recherche de doctorat, effectuée dans le contexte d’une structure expérimentale de lycée où j’ai enseigné pendant 13 ans la philosophie et qui est dédiée au raccrochage scolaire de jeunes, âgés de 17 à 25 ans, ayant arrêté leurs études en cours de cycle et communément désignés par le terme de « décrocheur ». Etre « décrocheur » constitue une identité négative, porteuse d’une stigmatisation qui enferme dans un étiquetage. Les discours médiatiques envisagent très souvent les jeunes déscolarisés comme des sauvageons ou comme des victimes. Dans une société marquée par l’importance du diplôme, l’inachèvement du parcours scolaire évoque un échec, signe d’une forme d’incompétence, et nécessite sa réparation par le raccrochage. La fréquentation quotidienne de ces jeunes anciens décrocheurs, jeunes adultes, en reprise d’études m’a rendu sensible aux comportements et aux discours qui témoignent de l’intériorisation des constructions sociales péjoratives associées au décrochage. Le raccrochage, en effet, ne constitue pas la négation du passé et l’émergence d’un monde nouveau au sein duquel le jeune comme par la magie d’une amnésie opérée par la fréquentation d’une nouvelle structure scolaire, différemment aménagée, aurait définitivement oublié l’expérience douloureuse qui l’a mis une fois en dehors de l’école. Le processus de raccrochage s’inscrit au contraire dans la temporalité d’une biographie individuelle interrogeant l’articulation entre le passé et l’avenir, et mise en demeure de réfléchir le passé dans l’acte même de construire le projet qui dessine les contours de son devenir. C’est en m’appuyant sur les cadres théoriques et sur la démarche d’entretien de la recherche biographique développée par Christine Delory-Momberger que j’ai travaillé à immerger la réflexion sous les désignations sociales qui affectent ces jeunes au parcours différent afin d’aller à la rencontre de la singularité de leurs histoires individuelles et de rendre compte de leurs cheminement biographiques. Il a fallu tout un travail préparatoire et la mise en place de conditions psychologiques et éthiques particulières pour réaliser les entretiens biographiques avec les jeunes qui tout en étant volontaires avaient du mal à s’y engager. Dans le cadre de l’entretien construit autour de leur récit biographique, il fallu encore par le choix des questions, par les rebonds et les détours, offrir au jeune la possibilité d’explorer une autre parole sur lui-même que celle que les entretiens institutionnels lui ont appris à développer. Ces récits biographiques aux enjeux identitaires ne sont donc pas restés sans incidences dans le processus de subjectivation des jeunes concernés. Je me propose ainsi d’analyser comment la situation de l’entretien biographique a permis l’émergence d’une parole qui s’émancipe de l’étiquetage intériorisé par le jeune en situation d’élève, quelles résistances ont été rencontrées dans l’effort d’apprivoisement d’un sujet qui refuse de se donner à connaître pour se préserver, et enfin quels ont été les effets formatifs de l’entretien réalisés avec les différents jeunes.
Behind the scenes, and into the messiness of European collaborative research

Barbara Merrill, University of Warwick, UK & Linden West, Canterbury Christ Church University, UK

This paper focuses on what ‘goes in’ to, and on, in the processes of doing biographical narrative research by drawing on our experiences of our involvement in an European research project entitled ‘Access and Retention: Experiences of Non-traditional Learners in HE (RANLHE). In doing so we want to talk about the ‘messiness’ of undertaking research and take a closer look at what happens behind the scene. This is a story which researchers rarely write about as research accounts are presented in a polished and unproblematic way.

We were a team of eight partners from seven countries (England, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Scotland, Spain, Sweden) and consisting of eighteen researchers. While we are all biographical researchers we do not share a common approach to biographical narrative interviewing. This situation led to discussions and dialogue during team meetings in order to find a way of working together to allow us to do comparative research. In reality we reached a consensus based on non-consensus because of our different cultural and intellectual traditions. In practice this meant agreeing on a common approach to interviewing and then each partner largely doing their own thing. Different interviewing techniques were, therefore, used to obtain the same result – rich in-depth stories which were still comparable.

There were two notable tendencies within the project team, alongside the wish to be eclectic and work with difference. One tendency was more psychological and the other sociological, although psychosocial perspectives, discussed over time, bridged some of the gap (West, Fleming and Finnegan 2013, in press). If the sociology at work within biographical forms of enquiry tends towards an inter-subjective orientation – placing normalizing cultural processes at the core, and resistance to them – psychology, or at least psychoanalysis can focus more on the subjective, or internal world, alongside the intersubjective. However, there were distinct overlaps between these differing orientations.

Engaging in European research also raises issues of language, particularly when native English speakers are involved in the team as English has become the language of research in European projects. The biographical interviews are undertaken in the language of the country but then have to be translated into English for the purposes of sharing stories and interpretation and writing. Not only does this create more work for non-native English researchers but it also raises questions of how much of a story gets lost in translation in relation to nuances, feelings and emotions for example. The dominance of the English language can also bring issues of power and powerlessness to the forefront, in team meetings, for instance. Explaining what you are trying to say about biographical narrative approaches or a particular theory in another language is difficult. There is a constant need for English researchers to be sensitive to this.

In order to deal with and bridge the messiness of different biographical and disciplinary approaches we identified three sensitising concepts to enable the voices and stories of non-traditional students to be heard, as well as some dialogue and development to take place in the team. These were Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, Winnicott’s psychological work on
transitional space and self-negotiation, and Honneth’s critical theory/intersubjective approach to recognition. We will reflect on the messiness of the whole process that easily gets lost in the formal representations of a project.
The personal in the professional in end of life care: Methodological reflections on a biographical-narrative case study.

Kjetil Moen

Abstract  How is it possible to extrapolate from a biographical narrative account how encounters with death and dying may inform the self-understanding of the narrator? This is the main question pursued and discussed in the paper. The context for the enquiry is an ongoing biographical narrative study which is exploring whether working with death and dying is changing, or not changing, the self-understanding of health professionals. The issue of self-understanding and end of life care is addressed in the current literature primarily in regard to the patient, but almost not at all in relation to the professional (Moen et al. Forthcoming). The intention of the above named study is to contribute to fill that gap.

The attempt to explicate the self-understanding of the twelve health professionals participating in the study is done by use of Biographical Narrative Interpretative Method (BNIM) (Wengraf 2001). BNIM, particularly its interpretive protocols, is about extrapolating the situated and evolving subjectivity from biographical accounts. Hence it correlates to a great extent with the central research aim in the end of life care study; explicating present and evolving self-understandings from biographical narratives. Many BNIM studies have been undertaken, but to my knowledge there is no BNIM studies that have had end of life care as it’s empirical context and narratives from various end of life care professions as its central research object.

What may be an even more important contribution of this inquiry and paper, both in general and in regard to BNIM, is the discussion of how encounters with another’s death and dying may inform the biographical account and self-understanding of the biographical agent. Death may be the one basic condition we are most defending us against (Becker 1973, Yalom 1998, Heidegger 2002, Yalom 2008) and hence a testing stone for any method trying to research defended and conflicted subjectivities not totally transparent to themselves (Hollway and Jefferson 2000). How the witnessing of death and dying may inform the self-understanding of professionals is, as far as I know, yet to be explored by a BNIM study.

Through the analysis of “Dina”, a head physician on a palliative care unit at a hospital in Norway, the paper discuss both how BNIM served to pursue the research question, but also the challenges ran into trying to elicit Dina’s present (at the time of the interview), and evolving, self-understanding the BNIM way. As is already pointed out above the paper presents, discusses and will contribute to the discussion of called for themes in next year`s ESREA conference, hereunder not least “methodology, methods and data analysis”.

References
The biographical-narrative turn in Spain: between local and global.

José Gonzáles Monteagudo, University of Seville, Spain

Abstract: This paper discusses the biographical-narrative turn in Spain. I offer a review of the changes happened during the decade of the 80’s from an international dimension, stressing the innovation of narrative approach in order to reconsider the epistemological and methodological foundations of psychology, anthropology, history, education, and other social sciences. The moment of transition specifically related to the narrative turn (understood as the growing interest in narrative in both research and practice) occurred over the course of the 80s, which according to Bruner is when the idea of self as a narrator or a storyteller became more evident. This new momentum was reflected in a short space of time in various influential books from different disciplines: oral history (P. Thompson, F. Ferrarotti), anthropology (C. Geertz), sociology (D. Bertaux, K. Plummer, N. Denzin), philosophy (P. Ricoeur), education (I. Goodson, G. Pineau), and the humanities (D. Polkinghorne). Constructivism, postmodernism and literary studies on their part have influenced the development of these tendencies.

The Spanish context has been influenced by these global trends, mostly from the Anglo-Saxon sphere. At the same time, the specific historical and national context has structured the agenda, the themes and the perspectives on narrative practices, both in research, social spaces and education. The dictatorship of general Franco ran from 1939 to 1975. The authoritarian power of general Franco was characterized by a patriotic focus, by the predominance of the national-Catholicism and the ideological control of culture, education and research. In the 1970s, Spain began a process of modernization, clearly visible in politics, economy, culture, education, values, and lifestyles. This particular context has provoked that the debates on historical memory have been crucial. Besides oral history, this paper will focus on Spanish biographical turn in formal and informal education, stressing the need of establishing networks and partnerships.

Finally I conclude with some reflections on the current moment of the biographical field in Spain as well as some perspectives for the future, regarding key issues such as the criteria for interpreting and analyzing narratives, the role of social actors and participants as potential collaborators in forming interpretations and analyses, the need to work across different disciplines using different approaches, and the richness of our linguistic, national and disciplinary diversity, to be explored and deepened.
The Many Times I Saved The World (Or Died Trying)

Luca Morini, Università di Milano, Italy

This paper aims to discuss a specific aspect of how Information and Communication Technologies force us, as educators, researchers and human beings, to rethink our epistemologies and the mediatised construction of our self-narratives.

The exponential growth, in recent years, of the interactive entertainment industry has re-shaped the audiences' role in media fruition, as an ever growing number of people takes an active part in the construction of epic narratives and achieves the possibility of experiencing vicariously (and safely) through their avatars great power and great responsibility, repeated failure and the highest of triumphs. And while this triumphs can be often expressed as the worn-out narrative clichè of “saving the world”, the massification of such experiences, even if virtualized, is not without philosophical consequences.

From this starting point, I will draw on modern authors such as Jesper Juul, Ian Bogost and Jane McGonigal, on a transdisciplinary web of established scholarly works on games and play, on an epistemological framework rooted in ecological media theory and (most extensively) on personal autobiography, to argue that it is possible to trace, within this growing medium, three implicit, pervasive rhetorics, arguments made not through words but through process and metaphor, and therefore paradoxically promoting analogic thinking through digital means.

The first and most recognizable rhetoric, even for “non-gamers”, is that of empowerment, the feeling of control and self-determination that can be achieved within virtualized spaces, a feeling from which learners and workers of every age are often excluded through the hierarchical structure of traditional teacher-pupil/employer-employee dynamics.

The second rhetoric, accessible through deep and prolonged gameplay, is persistence, a sense of learning and achievement through and not despite repeated failure, feeling that, again, is almost impossible to achieve within traditional, institutionalised evaluative processes, both in educational and workplace contexts.

Last but not least, and contrary to popular perceptions of the medium, in video games lies a rhetoric of responsibility, as in a necessary awareness of the deep (if bound within the game's “magic circle”) ramifications of one's own choices, choices that in videoludic narratives are often dramatically high in their stakes, taking on a political and ecological scope that is denied to us within our post-ideological “ordinary life”.

Within this paper these three rhetorics will be analyzed from a variety of points of view, thoroughly exemplified through personal narratives and finally weaved together to propose an exploration of the tropes and the ethical implications of these new spaces of self-narration, which, standing beside our “real” biographical narrative, can work as lenses to make its boundaries less transparent, and, therefore, more available to critical reflection.
Un/welcome to the academy: An autoethnographic art quilt journey of a feminist scholar

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Ellis (2004) describes autoethnography as a research method that connects the personal autobiographical self to the social and cultural context. The autoethnographic research in this session features an art gallery exhibit of five 16” x 12” art quilt squares depicting the academic socialization experience of a female student in a US educational leadership doctoral program. The researcher/artist utilizes imagery, embellishment, and thematic fabric prints in the feminist folk art of quilting to represent the disempowering personal experience of being a female/outsider in an androcentric academic culture. The five quilt squares depict gendered academic socialization in the areas of teaching and learning, research, policy and leadership. Each square offers a feminist critique of the preparation of educational leaders.

Academic socialization is the process in which a newcomer acquires the norms, values and behaviors of the established academic culture (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996; Weidman, Twale & Stein, 2001). Academic socialization is often perceived as disempowering and problematic by females (Kerlin, S., 1995; Kurtz-Costes, Helmke, Ule-Steiner, 2006). Unsatisfactory socialization experiences can often be understood by examining who has the power and privilege to determine norms. Academic socialization in the US occurs in an androcentric, male-privileged culture (Minnich, 1990).

Art quilting is a uniquely appropriate medium for a feminist critique of androcentric academic socialization practices. Quilting has a long history in the United States as a creative mode of expression for women. Additionally, Clover and Markel (2003) inform us womens’ arts and crafts have also historically been allocated to the margins.

Autoethnographic representations must also communicate more than a personal story to be useful as an educational and transformational tool. Bullogh and Pinnegar (2001) state it is the integration of personal perceptions and experiences with the sociohistorical issues and troubles of a specific time and place that elevates an individual’s story into research. The session’s exhibit will also include the artist’s description of each quilt square with a written integration of corresponding academic socialization literature.

References
The Proustian ‘memory boom’: how writing the self can be used to write the nation

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Marcel Proust’s À la recherche du temps perdu is as much a search for lost time as a search for the self. In this autofictional work, Proust is concerned with the (re)construction of the self through fiction. However, beyond the linguistic boundaries of the French language and beyond the introspective use of fiction for self-exploration, contemporary Spanish writers engaged in re-writing their country’s past through fiction have found in Proust a model for their own literary enterprise.

Spain’s transition from dictatorship to democracy has brought in its wake a flourishing market of fictional works on the subject of the Civil and Post-War. This literary output responds to the perceived necessity for the country to re-evaluate its politically expedient ‘pacto del olvido’ – the decision made by legislators during the transition to disregard crimes committed under Franco – and to attempt to recover the memory of the country’s recent past, thereby alleviating the trauma of civil war and dictatorship.

Proust’s use of memory is relevant to a study of contemporary Spanish memory fiction to the extent that À la recherche du temps perdu offers a response to two questions that confront any novelist who seeks to write about the past. First, why strive to recover the past through fiction? Proust’s novel represents a justification of this process of recovery as an instrument offering an unparalleled comprehension of the self. Contemporary Spanish writers, no longer confining the use of such an instrument to the contours of the individual, but expanding their area of enquiry to the history of a people, have found in Proust a means of understanding a nation. Second, how can a writer recover the past through fiction? Proust essays a number of techniques: his narrator explores the past using the practice of association, recording his memories in a digressive narrative style; he relates his narrator’s involuntary recollection of the past; he invents the past by translating reality into art. These same techniques are used and developed by the contemporary Spanish writers of the ‘memory boom’. Proust’s À la recherche is, in this regard, a paradigm which writers have followed both to write about the past and to explore memory.

Through a close textual analysis of a number of autofictional works published in Spain since the death of Franco by writers such as Carmen Martín Gaite, Javier Marías, Antonio Muñoz Molina, and Javier Cercas, I intend to demonstrate how Proust’s writing of the self becomes, in the literature of the ‘memory boom’, the embryonic first stage of writing the collectivity. I intend to outline, in a comparative analysis of these Spanish writers and Proust, how the writers of the ‘memory boom’ harness Proust’s use of the past to explore the self and how in their work exploring the past becomes a means of serving the polis.

Le ‘boom de la mémoire’ proustien: de l’écriture de soi à l’écriture de la nation

El ‘boom de la memoria’ proustiano: de una escritura del yo hacia una escritura de la nación
Long-Term Activity Analysis: Reliving the flow of own past experience or (re)constructing a new coherence

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The call for proposals for the conference in Magdeburg focuses on biographical approaches. However, it seems to us that it interrogates fundamental questions linked with the analysis of activity. Since the early works of French language ergonomics, researchers have aimed to study "activity" as a theoretical object (Theureau, 2006). Doing so, they paid particular attention to avoid a posteriori reconstruction. Indeed, as a first approximation, the activity corresponds to a dynamic that is set “here and now” (Barbier & Durand, 2003). In this perspective the aim is to document the retrospectively analyzed "here and now" without transforming it. This is very different from some biographical approaches that assume and exploit such a reconstruction as constitutive of the narration itself (Vanini De Carlo, accepted).

However, it is not to be taken for granted that the analysis of the activity completely eludes reconstruction. The self-confrontation of continuous episodes does not seem to pose significant problems. The actor is "merely" put into a dynamic situation using a video device. Theoretically, the latter allows him to verbalize his experience "here and now". Although this point remains to be discussed, it can be taken as an acceptable assumption.

Problems arise when the analysis focuses on long timescales. The study of the theoretical object "course of life related to a practice" (Theureau, 2010) is therefore more problematic. It is not possible to refer to a continuous video recording. Setting an observatory of it consists then in collecting different material traces of the activity. These traces make it possible to put an actor in a dynamic situation if an appropriate methodological device is implemented (Hauw & Lemeur, 2013; Theureau, 2010; Theureau & Donin, 2006). It takes the form of a collection (Perrin, Theureau, Menu, & Durand, 2011) or a "multi-documentary" approach comparable to that of a biographical portfolio (Vanini De Carlo, 2013).

This methodological device poses problems that are fully consistent with the theme of this conference. We have the following questions: 1) From the perspective of the actor, in what ways is the practice considerable as a unit? To what extent does it correspond to a post-event reconstruction? 2) The enactive approach considers each unit of activity as an emergence rather than something “that we do” (Maturana, 2013) ; yet an interview that gets back in a dynamical situation by the material traces (Theureau, 2010), by the use of language, consists in a natural semantics of action that takes a teleological perspective (Quéré, 2001). 3) This device cannot use a video recording which is an audiovisual temporal object, characterized by its flow (Stiegler, 2004). How is it possible to create the conditions to put the actor in a retrospective dynamic situation and in what ways are his elicited verbalizations different from the narration of a story? Is it sufficient to rely on the constraint by physical evidence and the nature of the interview? 4) If the actor knows the outcome of his action (Roth, 2013), can he really re-experience and describe the stream of past experiences without being guided by his current knowledge? 5) What is the role of memory in the processing of a
continuous dynamics into a discontinuous dynamics related to a practice, whatever the nature of this unit is?
The presentation will propose a theoretical and a methodological questioning, illustrated by empirical situations. In order to interact with the biographical approaches and the activity analysis, this presentation will consist in a double-voice dialogue.

Reference
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Temps et causalité dans les parcours de diplômés d’écoles d’art

Juan Carlos Pita, Université de Genève

Nos travaux se sont par le passé intéressés aux relations entre récit de vie et espace habité (Pita, 2013a). A l’occasion de ce colloque, nous désirons cette fois prolonger une réflexion déjà amorcée sur la question des liens entre temps et causalité, en nous appuyant sur une recherche dont l’empirie était constituée de récits à dominante autobiographique produits dans une situation d’entretien (Pita, 2013a, à paraître). Il y s’agissait de rendre compte de parcours de diplômés d’écoles d’art ainsi que de la formation de l’identité d’artiste.


Evacuer la question de la causalité sous prétexte d’une dérive déterministe, c’est s’empêcher de penser des dimensions importantes pour la compréhension biographique. Il s’agit cependant d’abandonner l’opposition récurrente « entre approches « balistiques » et approches fondées sur le sens construits par les acteurs » au profit d’une « démarche fondée sur l’élaboration de formes temporelles de causalité » (de Coninck & Godard, 1990, p. 23). C’est très exactement cette démarche que nous désirons explorer dans ce colloque. A la suite de de Coninck et Godard, nous distinguerons et mettrons au travail trois formes temporelles de causalité : la forme archéologique, la forme processuelle et la forme structurelle. Nous plaiderons pour une complémentarité entre elles dès lors qu’il s’agit de rendre compte de parcours de vie dans leur complexité. Nous prendrons pour ce faire appui sur des récits autobiographiques.

Notre contribution veut interroger les modèles d’interprétation sollicités par le chercheur dès lors qu’il s’agit de rendre compte, à partir de données autobiographiques, de parcours de vie dans leurs dimensions causalo-temporelles. Elle se situera auprès du récit dans la mesure où elle portera sur l’acte interprétatif du chercheur dès lors qu’il s’agit de produire de la connaissance.

Bibliographie
Emotions in language learning: mature adults' stories

Joanna Pitura, University of Warsaw, Poland

Key words: mature adults, language learning, emotions, narrative inquiry

Emotions are now recognized as significant in learning, second/foreign language learning and use including. Regrettably, to date the research has focused on negative states (e.g. anxiety), whereas positive emotions (e.g. pride, joy) that foster the process of learning have been largely neglected. Moreover, since mature adult learners (50+) - due to biological and social factors - may be especially susceptible to experiencing negative emotions that hinder learning, research into the matter seems to be indispensable.

The paper sets out to report on the results obtained at the exploratory stage of a larger study concerning the role and specificity of emotions in foreign language learning. At this stage, epistemological, theoretical and methodological assumptions are tested, which is the reason why only four interviews are conducted and analysed. Additionally, addressing the conference theme, the paper seeks to present the emotions that appear before, in and after the narratives.

The constructivist stance is adopted in this study, where social and historical contexts are taken into account, in order to get insight into participants’ language learning experience and its meaning in their lives, paying special attention to the emotions that accompany the process. Drawing on the psychological theories of specific emotions, e.g. Izard’s differential emotions theory (1991), as well as Fredrickson’s broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (2001), a tentative attempt is made to examine a range of emotions that appear in learning lives (i.e. foreign language learning), with particular reference to mature adults.

To study this, a narrative approach was employed as a strategy of inquiry to gather (1) stories of learning a language in the context of personal history and (2) the conditions in which specific emotions (e.g. sadness, anger, joy, pride, etc) make their presence. The data come from four Polish mature (50+) female learners of English, collected by means of biographical interviews (to elicit stories of language learning), assisted by additional open-ended questions (to explore the circumstances in which specific emotions emerge).

It is hoped that the findings will contribute to advancing our understanding of the significance, impact and specificity of emotions in learning lives in a mature age.
In search of integration between the conscious and the unconscious in biographical research – Exploring the idea of using mindfulness-based interviews to bridge over the two worlds

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In this article I wish to draw attention to the possibility of combining the principles of mindfulness-based psychotherapy with the technique of life-story interview. Such integration offers the possibility of integrating conscious and unconscious materials and enrich the building blocks of conscious memory which a life story is typically based on, thus making it even more significant for the person who is telling his/her life story.

There are different methods to produce biographical materials including life stories (Haigt 1995). Whether the raw material is based on written material or personal interview (e.g. Beechem 1998; Atkinson 1998; Winston 2012; McAdams 2008), it is usually based on a completely open question, on a structured framework of questions or a combination of both. The assumption of qualitative narrative research is that the story teller is the authority on his story, and telling the life story involves a complex set of choices, expansions, reductions or omissions that serve the central need behind the creation of a life story, which is focusing it around giving a meaning to the narrator's life story, and delivering messages through it (Bruner 1990; McAdams 2001).

As a researcher of life stories who is also a therapist which had been influenced considerably by the psycho-dynamic approach, I often felt trapped. On one hand, as a therapist my observation of life stories and biographical material that come up during therapy is accompanied by the idea that the materials of the story are shaped by a complex psycho-dynamic system, consisting of various unconscious processes (such as unconscious defense mechanisms). As a therapist, at least when starting out, observing the unconscious parts of the story was at least as significant as referring to the conscious materials, and sometimes carried more meaning and weight. On the other hand, as a narrative researcher my attention and analysis were focused solely on the visible and conscious levels of the story. As a researcher I was lead to assume that any interpretation concerning unconscious layers of the story or those that the interviewee does not confirm were seen as illegitimate in the field of narrative research (Hollway & Jefferson 2000). In this sense, the therapist and the researcher coexisted in me as separate entities.

My motivation to describe the personal process I went through in connection with that separation is partly due to my belief that others may face the same complex dilemma. Not only many of the researchers studying life stories are also therapists, many of them have a psycho-dynamic therapy training background, which is quite natural in view of the significant place occupied by biographical stories in the therapeutic process. However, one doesn't have to be a therapist who relies on the psycho-dynamic approach, to be influenced by this approach. It holds such deep roots in the western culture that it seems to play a key role in how all of us observe and perceive the interpersonal world around us. So my assumption in writing this article is that the personal process I went through, in search of integration...
between the narrative and the psycho dynamic approach, may also be relevant to other researchers.
“What hat am I wearing?” Navigating the boundaries between research and counselling in narrative research with young unemployed people.

Hazel Reid, Canterbury Christ Church University, UK

In a current research project, my co-researcher asked if we could discuss the boundaries between narrative interviews in research and in counselling. As an experienced youth counsellor, she had not anticipated having problems with interviewing young unemployed people who were likely to be experiencing a range of complex and possibly traumatic issues. She was surprised by her confusion and anxiety within the interviews, and on reading the transcripts, she was unsure if her questioning was appropriate. Before the interviews we had discussed our focus and approach, and shared this, appropriately, with the participants. Working beside the young person, my colleague was unsure of her position “Who am I now: what hat am I wearing – am I a counsellor or a researcher?” The boundary was troubling and the uncertainty between roles, she said, made her responses clumsy. Should she have focussed on “finding out things – to do with the research questions” – more structured maybe?

In our recorded discussion, it is clear that she contained the stories – the young people were heard and the relationship gave them space to express painful issues. But where could she take her anxiety? In our discussion she says “I keep wanting to call them my clients – this conversation with you, feels like supervision.” We agreed that the important aspect was that she recognised the boundary, but ‘held’ the traumatic account she was hearing. In a counselling session she would have said “We can explore this further now or in future sessions.” In a research setting, we agreed a helpful response might be “Would you like to say something more about this?” The latter, we thought, gives the participant the opportunity to pause, say more or change direction.

In comparing our transcripts she felt my interviews were more dynamic, related to the research questions, and perhaps the young people had less complex lives. Did that make my interviews superficial, I wondered? In the second interview, my young woman, who in the first interview appears to have ‘moved on’ successfully, is no longer attending college – things have gone wrong and she senses my confusion. She reveals a story of rape and how the offender is back on the scene. We had not planned a third interview, but she is 18 and soon will not be receiving help from the youth agency. Within the interview I was ‘comfortable’ in hearing her painful story and current ‘paralysis’, and was reassured she had spoken to a counsellor at the college. But where is the boundary now, for me? Beyond this interview, we will share the transcript, but then what – do I abandon her – she is not my responsibility, and yet..?

The paper will discuss such relationships in narrative research and consider the boundaries in hearing and acting on stories of loss and pain in challenging lives. It will draw on the work of Hollway and Jefferson (2000); Andrews (2007); Reismann (2008) and Merrill and West (2009); in raising important questions around this theme. It will also uphold the importance of such work; if we wish to understand the impact, within individual young lives, of a social problem: i.e. youth unemployment.

How Psychoanalysis Helps Learning as a Way of Thinking: A Perspective for Adult Education

Alper Sahin, Maltepe University, Turkey

Freud theorized Psychoanalysis as a way of thinking those ideas and feelings which are not in the field of conscious thinking. By this way Freud expected to free the psychic energy which was spent not to think about unconscious material. This unconscious material which is kept away of thinking ability also bloks all thinking activities, as a result learning becomes very limited. Basing on Freud’s ideas this study aims to search on psychoanalysis as a way of learning to think about what can not be thought. For this purpose, a case study of a psychoanalysis of a teacher and psychoanalytic processes of teacher training groups will be discussed. Vignettes from a psychoanalysis of a teacher will be presented in order to understand how the thinking process of unthinkable helps learning of the teacher not only for his life but also his relations with his students. In other words psychoanalytic processes not only allows the individual to think about his unthought thoughts but also ro imagine about the others’ feelings and thinking as Bion calles “reverie”. This highly efficient ability of thinking facilitates learning process as well as learning processes. Besides another case study of group teacher training process will be discussed in terms of how thinking processes are activated for creating crusoty and learning of the teachers. Teacher training programme for two years worked in as a case study group for the students problems nevertheless the programe inevitably became a self help group where the personal issues of teachers were discussed. Then the group moved from external problems to internal ones specifically on understanding what is going on inside the mind. This point was very helpful to discuss the unthinkable for the teachers specifically their denials, splittings on love and hate issues. Thus a comparison will be possible between “before and afterward” as well as the process investigation. In this sense the biographical stories of the analyst and analysand will be discussed together in order to understand more about their unconscious processes. The interrelating parts of the unconscious of analyst and analysand will help to review and understand by creating a more compleate and meaningful autobiography to have a psychologically healthy life. As a result this study investigated thinking and learning processes in adult education in terms of psychoanalytic theory and intends to provide an insight to adult education from unconscious processes.
Symposium: Duoethnography: A Collaborative (Beside) and Transtemporal (Before and Beyond) Methodology

Richard Sawyer, Washington State University Vancouver, Olenka Bilash, University of Alberta, Laura Formenti, University of Milan, Joe Norris, University St Catharines Ontario

Duoethnography is a recent addition to the narrative life history genre that is dialogic in both process and product. Usually, two people of difference assist each other in reconceptualizing their life histories around a particular phenomenon (sexual orientation, racism, immigration, beauty, teaching, et cetera). Written as script, readers witness the duoethnographers’ quests for both revealing and reinscribing their lives. With this style, readers cannot align with a single metanarrative; rather, a third space is created between the juxtaposed stories enabling readers to situate their own history beside the text. In this session we describe the methodology and give three examples. We conclude by critiquing duoethnography with this question: Is duoethnography a method to build satisfying theories?

In the first example, two multilingual globalized researchers engaged in a six-month duoethnography about the globalization of researchers. In 1994 Falk identified five categories of global citizens: global reformers, elite global business people, global environmental managers, politically conscious regionalists, and trans-national activists. We discuss a duoethnography that perhaps adds a sixth category, global citizen. After exchanging readings, reflections and insights about Western and non-Western interpretations of everyday life phenomenon, the duoethnography uncovered resistance, questions, challenges and issues of conducting research at home and abroad.

The second examines the personal process of socialization into a (global) narrative of colonialism in the United States. We focus on a duoethnography of colonial framings to classroom curriculum, as a means to enact and reconceptualize the ways that socialized beliefs and values underpin and focus curriculum engagement.

The third tells stories of writing of two successful academics, one an avid reader/writer and the other a self-identified extrovert. Stories span early school experiences with print texts and ‘extra’ curricular encounters that enabled voice and inspiration. Themes that emerged were, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, sources of inspiration, sense of audience. It concludes with a reflection on how they continue to apply their insights in their teaching, moving the duoethnography from a critical analysis to the beyond.

We conclude this session by examining some epistemological aspects of duoethnography, as a new development of narrative methods towards more relational, constructivist and systemic perspectives. The notions of "double description" (Bateson, 1972) and "othervision" (Caruso, 2002), as well as "structural coupling" (Maturana, Varela, 1985), will be used to think about the kind of knowledge that is developed (both in contents and in processes) through this very special kind of conversation, where researchers do not only exchange "speech" (oral words), but they write, and they compose their writing, hence they use a material/extracorporeal device to build a satisfying theory or an intelligent understanding (Heron, 1996) of their experience. How do their radical differences work in this conversation? Do they blur, do they mix, do they challenge "given" discourses and bring fuel to our understanding of the human
condition? At which conditions does this method bring to (new) learning and knowledge? What is its value, in epistemological terms, and what are the risks or limits?
The Pedagogy of Occupy Wall Street: A Self-Reflexive Examination of Collective, Non-Linear Democracy

Richard Sawyer, Washington State University, Vancouver, Canada

This presentation takes a reflexive, arts based approach to examine photography that I took at the Occupy Wall Street protest at Zuccotti Park in New York City one day in October, 2011. Engaging in the occupation myself on a “visual level,” I experienced difficulty finding words to describe the experience: a new generative, place-based yet trans-national collective space of working, thinking, living, and being together with others within a deep sense of humanity. The collective gathering of people from around the world at Zuccotti created a powerful site for a new form of community, involving an evolving form of place, peace, dialogue, and non-hierarchal participatory democracy.

In this “photo essay” I present a range of images of the event in order to explore Zuccotti Park as pedagogical space of new ways of being and acting. Specifically, in this presentation, I (1) discuss an arts-based methodology as a way to begin to examine a visual epistemology; (2) share photos of Zuccotti Park I took, discussing discourses and themes within them; (3) discuss how this embodied research process allows me to examine and reconceptualize my own biases (especially in relation to democracy); and (4) discuss possibilities of disruption with this methodology. Given that the narrative of the occupy movement both in the United States and in other countries has itself been occupied by the mainstream, conservative media, this presentation allows me to return to images of the actual event as text for a revisiting and restorying (reoccupation) many of the meanings of the event.

This site (and the photos) may be read at multiple levels, including that of resistance and agency, but the site may also be read as a pedagogical space of new ways of being and acting. After discussing emergent discourses, I then examine my own reactions to these discourses, focusing on meanings that are counterintuitive and destabilizing to my own socialization to democracy within the United States (a view more of “market democracy, a conflation of democracy with capitalism and corporatism). This examination is then followed by a discussion of ways to consider the future “in a new key,” to reconceive of democratic spaces in a humanitarian, not a neoliberal, corporate way.

I use an arts-based methodology in order to (attempt to) subvert the imaginative process, creating a context for reflexivity and praxis. Arts based research can be used to challenge, dislodge, and transform beliefs and stereotypes. As Prikryl (2010, p. 29) notes, “The way a photograph lops off a slice of reality, severing it from the narrative flow of time, is a seductive thing: it acts like a little hammer to the reflex in our brain that wants to tell stories.” Thus it is hoped that the presentation itself will generate a reflexive learning space for other participants.

References
Reading yourself while you read

Mariaelena Scotti, Università di Milano-Bicocca, Italy

This paper will explore the experience of fathers who read aloud to their 3 to 6 year old children.

Bruner (1992) states that reading and listening to the stories is a way of giving meaning to ourselves and our world; my purpose is to understand the link between reading narrative and narrating ourselves in the experience of an adult who reads books aloud to his children.

I made ten biographical interviews, choosing fathers with different ages, qualifications, professions and also with different numbers, genders and ages of children.

According to my research project, in these interviews it is possible to identify three levels of autobiographical narrations linked to reading.

In the first level we find the narration of themselves as readers of narrative. When the fathers tell the researcher their experiences of reading aloud to their children, their narration is focused on the reading practice. However from this perspective they can review the life history of their children and their family, their relationship, habits and beliefs, using a new point of observation that allows them to discover unexpected links or to find unusual aspects (Demetrio, 1996).

In the second level, the reading aloud practice becomes autobiographical. The fathers, as they read, remember their childhood, rediscover forgotten tales and offer their memories to their children, sometimes speaking directly but most at all giving them their old books or telling them their favourite stories (Dallari, 2000).

At last, the children books create a relationship between the fathers' narration and my biography: when they talk about books, they ask me if I know them, they want to know my opinion. Their questions allow me to narrate myself. Like them, I also can remember my favourite tales and my own history of narrator. My fondness for children's books appears evident and involves me in a research dialogue: knowledge becomes a shared process (Denzin, 1989b).

In my research project I will try to analyse these different levels and their connection, referring to current reflection on biographical and narrative research (Merrill & West, 2009).
Reflections on Prosopography and Community Biographies

Kaaren Sephton, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia

The aim of this paper is to reflect on the main investigative tool of prosopography and other theories supporting key themes used to analyse the agricultural community of Mia Mia, located 41 kms west of Mackay in North Queensland, Australia.

The object of this paper, based on my doctoral thesis, is to record the social and cultural history of Mia Mia, a sugar growing agricultural community; to document changes that occurred between mid-1910’s to 1970’s; to identify the extent to which the community benefitted from the sugar industry and to uncover any historical events that have gone unrecognised, using the lens of biography.

The idea for this thesis topic was generated from the re-discovery of two old cane knives that had been relegated to a tool box at the end of the cane cutting season in 1957. The once lucrative hard-working life style of cutting sugar cane seems to have benefitted those people who lived in sugar growing areas of Queensland. Mia Mia is a small close-knit agricultural community of cane farmers, millers, growers, cutters and harvesters who worked the land to produce sugar, one of Australia’s most important rural industries. For my purposes, community is defined to mean those people who have lived or worked in the geographic area of Mia Mia, and were associated with the sugar industry during mid-1910’s to mid-1970’s.

The investigative method used as the research tool to uncover the many social layers of the Mia Mia community is known as prosopography. This investigative tool seeks to identify the ‘common background characteristics’ of a group of people at a certain time in history by way of a collective study of their lives. These characteristics can be identified by asking a set of uniform questions about family relationships; demographic information (such as mobility, employment status, location); and information about affiliated groups or associations. These characteristics once identified can provide a biographical analysis of a social community.

The key themes to be pursued in this thesis will include the changes that have taken place over time to transportation; the sugar industry itself (legislative and regulatory); impact of disease and chemicals on the sugar cane; the role of women; ownership of properties; social stratification, mobility and status; family ties; migration; and economic development.

The use of prosopography to study an agricultural community may establish whether or not to what degree this community has benefitted within the designated time frame from participating in this industry and community. Reflections as to the effectiveness of using such as tool in an agricultural community will be discussed.
Student narratives of school science experiences

Shaista Shirazi, Canterbury Christ Church University

A number of authors (e.g. Boe 2012; Lyons 2006; Hampden Thompson & Bennett 2011) have written about the reasons that students are encouraged or discouraged from taking up science past compulsory age (post-16). Concurrently, a number of official publications and records have documented and discussed the many factors involved in the operational decisions taken by secondary age students. However, there is a gap in knowledge about the role of school science experience in the decision to take up science further. The current study makes use of the storyline tool adapted from the field of training teachers and health services to explore the narratives of the key actors – students who have just made their decisions to take science or not post-16. Analysis and interpretation of interviews and surveys form the core of this study and it is recognised that there is value in conducting a small number of interviews and surveys with individuals who are involved directly with the experience of school science. The storyline method (Gergen 1986) is a tool used in this study to elicit student experiences of each year that they spent in secondary school (between ages 11 – 16). The high and low points of their experiences are highlighted in a survey questionnaire (n=569) followed by individual interviews of a sample of the cohort (n=53). These key individuals are provided the opportunity to reflect on their school science experience over a course of six years and the reasons why they chose to take up science or not at A-level. The recorded narratives facilitate exploration of informal links between various factors which are not always evident from documentary sources. While there are some nuances of interpretation, there is an overwhelming view that the factors playing a key role in the decision to take up science or not are shaped by experiences of school science.

The emergence of interrelationships between the key influences on decisions to take science or not post-16 and the finding that most students do not make their decisions to take science until their later years in school makes it clear that this research could potentially play an important role in convincing current policy-makers that investment in early careers guidance would benefit society and the economy by reducing the risk of young people drifting through secondary school without career aims and leaving school with qualifications that limit their future careers.
While the Music Lasts…on Music and Dementia

Rineke Smilde, Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna

…you are the music
While the music lasts.
(T.S. Eliot)

This paper will detail an ethnographic research that has been conducted into the practice of ‘Music for Life’, managed by Wigmore Hall in London. The aim is creating interactive music workshops for people with dementia and there carers in residential care homes in the UK. Throughout one eight-week project with a particular group of eight residents and five members of care staff, three professional musicians aim to build new relationships and insights using person-centred musical improvisation as a catalyst. The project focuses on communication in a broad sense, and musicians and care staff work together as a team, using a range of verbal and non-verbal approaches to support individuals and the group as a whole. Individual and group involvement of both residents and staff is encouraged; staff participation, enjoyment and reflection are seen as vital components of the work. The motivation, observation and insights of care staff will determine the longer-term effects of the work.

One particular eight week project in the UK has been researched, where our main question was “What happens in this practice and what is learned by everybody involved?” This paper will detail the (qualitative) research process which we undertook, where we worked with various methodological approaches, consisting of observations, narrative (biographical) interviews with the musicians and staff development practitioner as well as reflective journals.

Using the grounded theory method for data processing, during the coding process four conceptual entities emerged, being ‘Identity’, ‘Communication’, ‘Participation’ and ‘Development’. These four core categories illuminated the importance of the interaction between the musicians, the care staff and the residents with dementia. The relationship between these four key areas showed a learning process of musicians, care staff and people with dementia which was highly informative, not only for future training of professional musicians who would like to specialize in this field, but also about the way in which society can deal with people with dementia.

The paper will highlight outcomes of the analyses of the data, in particular with regard to the learning processes of those involved. It will draw on the work of Ricoeur (‘Oneself as Another’, 1992), and will discuss findings of situated learning (Lave and Wenger (1991), and transitional learning, which is self-referential, changing both the learner and the social context (Alheit and Dausien 2007).

At present the research has been finished and has been processed in a book under the title ‘While the Music Lasts – on Music and Dementia’, which will shortly appear.
Recueillir, mettre en mots, diffuser des récits : l’entour de la production d’entretiens biographiques

Samra Tabbal, Université de Genève, Suisse

Notre contribution propose de partager une réflexion sur certaines questions qui émergent autour de récits produits dans des entretiens biographiques. Ceux-ci sont recueillis dans le cadre de notre recherche de doctorat qui porte sur le processus d’alphabétisation d’adultes migrants non scolarisés dans l’enfance et qui ont appris à lire et à écrire à l’âge adulte. Cette recherche s’insère tout d’abord dans le champ de la formation de base des adultes et de la recherche sur la littératie. Elle est aussi ancrée dans le champ actuel de la recherche biographique en formation des adultes. Elle se situe enfin dans le champ de la formation linguistique en contextes d’insertion.

En ouvrant une focale large sur les entretiens biographiques que nous avons menés, nous distinguons trois sphères qui entourent les récits produits à cette occasion : (i) la démarche de recueil du récit («avant le récit»), (ii) le contexte de production du récit («autour du récit») et (iii) le devenir du récit après l’entretien («au-delà du récit»).

Avant le récit:

Le chercheur peut être confronté à des difficultés dans l’accès à son public et doit parfois franchir différents obstacles avant d’être en contact avec celui-ci. Recourir aux institutions pour trouver des personnes engagées dans un processus d’alphabétisation signifie passer différentes étapes (directeurs, responsables de formation, formateurs) avant de rencontrer les adultes en formation. Il faut ensuite les convaincre d’accepter d’accorder un entretien à un chercheur inconnu, s’assurer qu’elles s’engagent à se présenter au rendez-vous, être sure que la personne ait bien compris ce que le chercheur attend de l’entretien… Autant d’obstacles qui font partie intégrante de la recherche.

Autour du récit :

Nous nous référerons ici au contexte de production du récit, c’est-à-dire aux circonstances dans lesquelles se déroule l’entretien. Selon le lieu de l’échange, les personnes présentes, la façon dont la personne interviewée interprète les attentes du chercheur, des éléments perturbateurs interfèrent, interrompent, brouillent la communication. Par ailleurs, la façon dont la personne s’investit dans sa relation avec le chercheur (crainte, retrait, amitié) implique pour ce dernier de gérer des tensions entre l’instauration d’une confiance génératrice de parole et la démarcation d’une limite claire entre le statut du chercheur et celui de la personne interviewée. Le « produit fini » – l’entretien retranscrit – n’est pas vierge de toutes ces interférences. Il est non seulement constitué de ce que la personne a choisi de partager de son parcours de vie, mais il est aussi le reflet de cet entour de l’entretien. De plus, la subjectivité du chercheur, par ses interventions, participe également à la co-construction du récit.

Au-delà du récit:

La question de la restitution de l’entretien retranscrit est également liée à cet entour du récit. Sous quelle forme le restituer: brut, corrigé (erreurs de langue), exempt de «bafouillages»? Pour qui fait-on de la recherche? Nous pensons ici à l’importance de la vulgarisation en vue de sa diffusion sur le terrain, au-delà d’une communauté scientifique. Et finalement, quel est
le statut de l’entretien retranscrit? A qui appartient ce récit? Qu’en est-il de son utilisation ultérieure? Quelle éthique adopter pour la diffusion du récit?
Nous souhaitons rendre compte ici de ce qu’implique pour un chercheur d’enquêter auprès d’un public migrant socialement démuni et mettre en évidence la spécificité d’entretiens biographiques dans lesquels une voix est donnée à des «acteurs faibles». Ayant déjà travaillé la question de l’accès au public («avant le récit»), nous choisissons pour cette contribution de nous focaliser sur l’entour du récit lors de sa production («autour du récit»). Quant à «l’après récit», il pourrait enrichir de nouvelles perspectives d’investigation.
That which is not: An exploration of the tacit and its effect on the research relationship.

Rebecca Tee, Canterbury Christ Church University

(Three key words: auto/biography, discourse, relationships.)

An unexamined life is not worth living.
Socrates (c.470 BC – 399 BC)

We are all essentially researching ourselves. We examine areas that interest us, explore shady corners of otherwise familiar territory and try to access new places with those people with whom we are acquainted. Many researchers use opportunistic research situations when they conduct research, whether with regard to the subject areas of the enquiry, the arenas in which research is conducted or based, or with the participants themselves. It could be for very good reasons: the people and places are known to us; they can easily become available; they are straightforward to access; these familiares will be sympathetic to and interested in our research; if we work with them, they may already be involved in the activity concerned; they may even have volunteered to take part.

Merrill and West refer to opportunistic sampling:

Researchers engage with those willing to participate, or who are interested or can be persuaded to be so ... People could also have a particular experience they really wanted to share. (2009: 79).

Such prior relationships produce familiarity, or even intimacy, which can oil the wheels of the interchange and by doing so, can enrich a research encounter. Although most people will acknowledge the opportunistic aspects of their research topics and contacts, it is often only a brief explanatory mention, merely describing the nature of the relationships.

This paper intends to explore that which is often not made explicit in the methodology: the ways that such previous relationships may affect our research. Knowledge of those with whom we are researching, before, beside and beyond our research activities, can be significant. Familiarity can, of course, bring ease of communication by travelling along known tracks; friendship could facilitate an extra depth and honesty to conversation and fellowship may provide a relaxed entree to shared experience and the discovery of meaning. Alternatively, issues of objectivity and distance; power relations between interviewer and interviewee; secrecy and lies; congruency and comfort, could all come in to play, thus distorting our understandings and findings. What we know of our topics, our participants and our themes needs to be taken into account, analysed and assessed. Otherwise there is a danger of our taking short-cuts and making assumptions that could have a big effect on our research data and our analysis.

In the words of C. Wright Mills:

What this means is you must learn to use your life experience in your intellectual work: continually to examine and interpret it. ... To say that you 'have experience,' means, for one thing, that your past plays into and affects your present, and that it defines your capacity for future experience. (2000: 196)

References
"Beneficial life stories” indicators in moderation of the life-review process

Urszula Tokarska, Pedagogical University of Krakow, Poland

I want to contribute the conference debates on two interconnected levels: in oral presentation & in illustrative workshop activities, both concentrated on the topic of “narrative vehicles in theory and practice”. The theoretical oral presentation will be centered around the role of so-called “beneficial life stories” indicators as the meaningful & useful direction for moderating narrative integration of biographical experience’ process. Psychologically “good stories” (in the meaning: individually effective, supporting energy and dealing with life difficulties, increasing health etc.) could be described on some interconnected levels. There will be taken into consideration such empirically proven formal (complexity & structure) and content (thematic) indicators of “beneficial function” of life stories like: the complete self-narrative cognitive pattern; the degree of narrative structuring (formal aspects of narrative structuring & the frequency of key word categories); differentiation, coherence & flexibility of autobiographical narration; the content rules of the narrative interpretation of experience; the subjective and existential aspects of life stories; interconnections with other people’ stories and with the culture’ macro-narratives.

One of the most important dimensions of well functioning personal narratives are regarded as story’ s hero characteristic: individual reach auto-representation including self-perceiving as the evolving story hero and its co-author at the same time. The story’ s hero is expected to present an autonomic & strong enough position in the relation to others allowing him to transcend (or create new) rules of being in the word. The question to consider then is how to apply this knowledge step by step in the real moderation life-review process to gain finally the narrative account which brings important & interesting data for investigator and multi-plot, coherent and meaning-making autobiographical narration for the storyteller at the same time.

Key words: narrative psychology; life review; beneficial life stories, supporting development strategies
Sandor Ferenczi: body language and clinical sensitivity

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The work of Ferenczi - mayor psychoanalyst of the first generation, one of Freud's most brilliant students and close collaborators, besides being his friend and confidant - has been rediscovered in the last decades, revealing a man of great personality, passionate temper and sharp sensitivity, whose work went well beyond the mere traditional psychoanalysis. At the time his thought was perceived as being on the edge. Too audacious and vital not to be criticized and considered suspicious by Freud himself who, after years spent together as friends and collaborators, distanced himself from his former student, disapproving his clinical audacity and theoretical and technical creativity, so that his work went forgotten for over sixty years. It was only in the middle 80s that it was rediscovered and brought to new life.

What appeared to be too open-minded was his research between knowledge and self-knowledge, psychoanalytic science and autobiographic knowledge. With his life and divergent therapeutic practice, that strictly removed any ambition of orthodoxy, he intended to prove that therapy is the space to investigate first the unconscious of the care provider, then the unconscious of the patient. No cure is possible if therapists don't express through their therapeutic style the unconscious journey in search of buried images of their childhood. What emerges after this journey is a therapist that has conquered new sensitivity and perspective and knows how to be, on the scene of therapy, a presence still capable of vibrating.

We would like to go deep into some extracts of his last work, Clinical Diary (1932), a work that is difficult to define, placed on the edge between scientific knowledge and self-knowledge. His sharp thoughts over the body and physical dimension of the therapeutic scene offer important inspirations to professional care providers.

Through the clinical practice Ferenczi came across the power of dramatization as a channel to express the unconscious conflicts and discovered the importance of the body as a therapeutic subject. Ferenczi believed that, since the idea of suffering is not discursive, neither can be the process of the cure. Communication gets first through the quality of contact, rather than through the verbal record. The body action steps in to force the rigidity of the therapeutic setting that, just like an elastic, becomes wider, extending and flexing itself according to the needs, continually evolving, of the patient and the process itself. He is a witness who invites us to reflect upon how sensitivity – meant as the ability to embody a certain knowledge and be able to experience it within the relationship – is kind of a more sophisticated knowledge of self and of the external world.
A Narrative Inquiry into Adult Educators’ Work Related Experiences

Özlem Unluhisarcikli, Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey

Adult educators are the practitioners who provide for the educational needs of adults in various fields and institutions. Yet there are few studies investigating adult educators’ work related experiences including the development of their occupational identity, and developing a sense of professionalization. The data in this paper come from the in-depth interviews carried out with several adult educators on their work related experiences in Istanbul, Turkey. The interviewees are full-time adult educators who work for Public Education Centers that function since 1960. These centers provide three types of educational programs for adults: vocational and technical programs, complementary programs and socio-cultural programs.

The status of the adult educators who work for Public Education Centres is categorized as: full-time teacher, permanent master instructor, and paid master instructor/expert teacher. Full-time teachers are appointed by the government and have permanent staff positions. Currently there are around a thousand such centers and around 6500 full-time teachers work at these centers.

Narrative analysis with a thematic approach is used in analyzing the data. The narrative approach allowed for following the adult educators’ development of professional identity, means of learning and changing as an adult educator, the challenges, as well as gaining insights into the interpretation of their work related experiences. The findings of the study might be of value for understanding the work related experiences of adult educators—the difficulties, challenges, and benefits --and how these experiences influenced the development of their occupational identity, and developing a sense of professionalization.
The experience of adoption in biographical narrations of adoptive parents

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Key words: adoption of a child, biographical narration, established theory, autocreation

Biographical narration is a special kind of source of the insight in oneself and self-understanding. The title of the conference „Before, Beside and After (Beyond) the Biographical Narrative” symbolizes the human ability to have an understanding insight in one’s own life made from many perspectives that are identified with the alternative “projects” of the “past” self and the “future” self. Undertaking the reflection on who one is and who one can become if he only wants to, enables individuals to discover the crucial meanings and purposes of their own life.

The interpretative and cognitive character of biographical narration gains a particular meaning in case of significant events and experiences identified with the states of loss and pain, as well as of opening to another human being and presenting them with love. These situations surely include the experience of infertility and adoption of a child. It is then, when a man facing the key choice between the alternative and often excluding one another, “projects” describing himself in the future must opt for one of them. This choice is impossible to make without constructing the complex biographical narration that facilitates the intellectual work through the difficult experiences and the re-construction of oneself.

The choice of adoptive parenthood depends on achieving the inner readiness to undertake existential challenge. In general, this challenge involves accepting oneself and one’s spouse in the context of infertility as well as the new quality of parenthood as one needs to find in oneself love towards, initially, a stranger and hope it will be returned.

It seems that in the diversity and unpredictability of the individual biographical narrations, which are the “project” of personal autocreation of childless spouses who are oriented to acquire the readiness to adopt a child, the particularly inspiring cognitive value may be found.

After all, the constructed descriptions, interpretations and explanations are rooted on the original narrations of the spouses that are articulated in their language, operate their semantic categories, are based on their life experiences and systems of values. The complex and expanded material gained this way, is unique and exceptional. It reveals spouses’ own experiences, their attitude towards the events (primary and secondary ones), understanding of their role in them, the meanings assigned to the changing emotional states. It is completed with the individual explanations and interpretations of the whole sequence of experiences regarding the infertility and child adoption. The narrations become the authentic, vivid pictures of the past events and experiences that construct a coherent story, the couple’s life story. Its advantage is the explanatory-interpretative layer that enriches facts with the depth of the individual meanings and personal logos of the spouses.

This presentation will cover the selected aspects of the quantitative analysis of the biographical narrations obtained during the narration interviews conducted with adoptive parents. This analysis will serve to formulate the general categories, according to the methodical assumptions of the established theory.
Beyond our texts: telling stories, and being storied; an interdisciplinary, psychosocial perspective on a history of workers’ education

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Why we tell particular stories, at specific times, personally and academically, and how they, the stories, and we, the authors, may change, and what shapes such processes, is a preoccupation in auto/biographical narrative research. The dynamic interplay of history and specific biographies, of the socio-cultural and inner lives, in shaping our stories, or perhaps, even, in storying us, are familiar if still under-interrogated themes. This is partly because of the continuing tendency, albeit challenged to the core by interdisciplinary psychosocial perspectives, to explain stories in either/or terms: as either socio-cultural phenomena, (this includes the role of discourse in storytelling), or psychological. In the former, the workings of inner worlds, including unconscious processes, can remain largely un-theorised; in the latter, on occasions, the socio-cultural and or discursive, as in some psychoanalytic case studies, is marginalised. Sometimes, perhaps, we need a shock to shake us out of disciplinary cages and to consider, more dynamically, the complexity of our auto/biographical material. A sense of shock haunts this paper: about contemporary politics and growing social inequality, and its psychological consequences; but also because of reflexive work on how a particular historic period – the 1960s – shaped negative interpretations of particular aspects of the history of workers’ education in the United Kingdom. However, changing times have evoked something of a reassessment of that history, and of what and why particular historians might have produced the texts that they did.

In 1972, I wrote a paper on R.H.Tawney, once described as ‘the patron saint of British adult education’, and what was termed the tutorial class movement. The latter was to occupy a central, much hallowed place in the history of British adult education. The tutorial classes emerged out of an alliance, at the beginning of the last century, between workers’ organisations and progressive elements in universities. About 20 or so worker students would meet weekly with a university tutor, in a spirit of equality, over a period of 3 years or more. The idea spread rapidly from 1908 into industrial cities in the Midlands and North of England. The classes were free from examinations or prescribed curricula, and its members could explore and interrogate issues in their working lives from the perspectives of history, politics, economics and literature etc. Fortnightly essays were required, and the standard of some of these was remarkably high. At least, this was the dominant story told about the classes.

Tawney, himself, was considered an inspirational tutorial class teacher, and he thought the tutorial class ‘movement’, and the wider Workers Educational Association (WEA), was an important and successful ‘experiment in democratic education’, which had a profound effect on the positive development of British social democracy. My own study acknowledged aspects of this, if begrudgingly: the tone of the text, however, tended to be dismissive towards what had been achieved and of its relevance to debates about renewing workers’ education in the 1970s. In retrospect, the article was part of a wider disdain, forged in the 1960s, for the shortcomings, as some of us saw it, of a highly paternalistic welfare state, of which the tutorial classes were a symptom, in their deference towards universities and high culture. Some Marxist historians – schooled in the 60s - went as far as to accuse people like Tawney...
and aspects of the tradition he represented – as against the more overtly Marxist National Council of Labour Colleges, (NCLC), for instance - as castrating working class radicalism: channelling proletarian energy into the smothering embrace of the university, particular forms of knowledge, and consensus politics. Whilst I never agreed with all of this interpretation, nonetheless, I too accused Tawney and some of his students of a simplistic faith in the social democratic project and university education.

Then, in 2001, Jonathan Rose produced his ‘paradigm changing’ work on the intellectual history of the British working classes: using, among other things, diverse personal testimonies and a range of life writing (although some of his sampling has been criticised (Holford, 2013). Rose chronicled, in fine-grained detail, the importance of relationships in the tutorial classes, and in workers’ education more widely – between tutors and students, and among students, but also to the world of ideas - for challenging bigotry and fascism, for instance, and for cultivating agency at an individual as well as collective political level. If not all was sweetness and light, the movement was nonetheless central, Rose maintained, to the post Second World War settlement and the consolidation of the Welfare State. Many worker students told stories - and this included many socialists and communists - of how selves, agency, and more confident engagement with the world of ideas as well as politics, found expression in and through adult education of the kind represented by the WEA as well as the NCLC. The earlier, perhaps ideologically driven critique seemed presumptuous in the light of the depth and subtlety of such testimony.

Moreover, history is always constructed in the light of the present, which, nowadays, encompasses 30 years or more of neo-liberal experiment and the dismantling of the welfare state. Tawney’s experiment in democratic education was being rescued, in effect, from the enormous condescension of particular historians, in a post-Thatcher world. I had also begun a study of education, democracy and fundamentalism in the city where I was born, and where the tutorial class movement was once strong. Evidence of ‘post-industrial’ economic, social, political but also emotional distress was abundant, as was discord within and between particular ethnic communities. The stories of diverse people living in particular parts of the city – white working class and Muslim communities - were redolent with lost hopes, pessimism about politics; and disturbing signs, among some of the white working class, of xenophobia and racism; and, among groups of Muslims, of anger at Islamophobia and of what Axel Honneth terms ‘intuitive notions of justice violated in the everyday’: of racism, ‘fuck off home’ and physical attacks on people and mosques. And, perhaps in response, there was evidence of small pockets of Islamic fundamentalism.

Moreover, there seemed an absence of suitable public space in a more individualised culture – of the kind once represented by the tutorial classes - in which diverse people (although clearly the earlier experiment was more mono-cultural, if not exclusively so) could meet and work together to consider difficult issues in a spirit of democratic co-operation and openness to others and otherness. This led me back, inexorably, to that earlier text, and the psychosocial roots of my – and perhaps others’ - dismissiveness. This had partly to do with the culture, politics and idealism of a 1960’s generation of activists: not all bad, but not all good either. Some of us tended, at times – given that the future seemed, illusorily, to belong to us - to forget or minimise our parents’ struggles and achievements. Ironically, this was forged in the
security of that self-same welfare state, full employment economy, and educational opportunity we often disparaged. Yet there could also be struggles of a more personal kind that need to be brought into any explanation: we could get lost – as first generation university students from working class families – with the university habitus and in crossing the fine-grained class contours of English education. We could also wrestle, more narcissistically, and maybe, to an extent, unconsciously, with wanting to be accepted; and in my own case, to separate from aspects of a previous background in an attempt to work out who I was and what I really wanted. Parents could be rejected in patronising, even arrogant ways, now much regretted. They and their achievements were, metaphorically, annihilated, finding expression, in my particular case, in a negative story about the history of adult education. We are storied, as well as story tellers, for diverse psychosocial reasons, including in our academic texts.
Learning through discursive transitions and uncomfortable silences: Conducting multimodal life history narrative interviews with SEN teachers

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The key question addressed in the paper is: what can be learnt from the context and process of conducting life history narrative interviews? This question emerges from an impact research project conducted with primary and secondary school teachers studying one of two professional development programmes designed to enhance special educational needs (SEN) provision in schools. Having discussed the main impact and research findings in previous papers, this paper is an investigation of the context and process of conducting narrative interviews and the varying forms of communication that occur, rather than the content of discussions. Specifically, I reflect upon my pedagogical, multimodal methodology and the use of a drawn life history line, to make a multi layered discursive analysis of visual, textual and audio data derived from twelve individual interviews with teachers. These interviews are of particular interest to me because nine of the twelve teachers describe having a personal investment in the area of SEN: three self-disclosed they were dyslexic and can have memory difficulties, two struggled at school for health reasons and four said they struggled academically for other reasons.

In my analysis of the data I explore how using a drawn line facilitates communication and understanding between interview participants to consider how multimodal interviews can become events of meaningful exchange between two individuals within which identities are (re)constructed. In particular, I investigate how this construction is apparent in the narrative resources and discursive transitions enacted by interviewees as they talk as well as the actual topics they discuss. I therefore pay specific attention to the uncomfortable moments that punctuate discussion such as switches in style and topic, displays of emotion and the occurrences of silence. I also reflect upon the process of conducting research that invites the researcher to think about communication that is not in the content of what is said and discuss the possible advantages, for interviewees and researchers, of using a visual multimodal methodology.

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Reading the context

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Drawing on research with adult students, this paper examines how psychosocial techniques can assist a deeper level of investigation into people’s beliefs and feelings. It shows how it is possible to help participants to develop new understandings through the shared experience of the interview if the researcher shifts from listener to active co-constructor of people’s narratives. When responses are sifted for hesitations, contradictions and odd juxtapositions of ideas even as the participant is speaking, it leads to a higher level of questioning. The research technique develops ideas proposed by Hollway and Jefferson (2000) in their seminal work Doing Research Differently, which itself extended strategies already common to some psychotherapeutic approaches. However, as the interviews are intended to excavate meaning and co-create new understanding rather than prompt changes of belief or practice, the emphasis is subtly different. The interviewer, listens closely, offers suggestions, and helps to create the narratives when the participant finds this too difficult alone. Timing is essential to this process: pauses for reflection are monitored and the interviewer offers prompts just before the participant starts to lose focus. There is no benefit within a single-interview process from leaving unfinished ideas to be assimilated later.

Hesitations are important. They may signify that the participant has not thought clearly, or perhaps recently, about a subject and may offer an unrehearsed explanation that more closely approximates the truth than a later reworked version. Contradictions are revealing, leading one to question why there is confusion, which versions are the more plausible, why there is a need to rethink and re-present an idea even as it is first uttered. Juxtapositions may signal hidden connections, a sharing of content or emotional response that introduces new material for co-examination.

On analysis, however, the co-construction process can prompt questions of authenticity. From viewing transcripts in isolation it is difficult to determine whether the interviewer is supporting or leading the activity. An outsider may feel that the balance of power too strongly favours the expert interviewer and that some of the probes are actually leading questions rather than truly exploratory.

One way to refute such claims is to present the interviews as a form of speech-as-action, and incorporate methods from the field of conversation analysis. Coding interviews using the conventions of CA, as Ten Have (1991) directs, is a time-consuming process but if the intention is to use the process as a tool rather than as an end in itself it is acceptable to use this tool selectively. In any particular interview, there may be large sections of the conversation that require no additional clarification. Often there are other areas where the visible portrayal of inflection, change of pace, uncertainty or denial, is very illuminating. This paper will present examples from real research to demonstrate the benefits of mixing two such different methods. To do so effectively can create new contexts for understanding.

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