Gwyneth James

Understanding the learning experiences of postgraduate Latin American students in a UK context: A narrative approach

Abstract: Researching the learning experiences of postgraduate students requires a different type of qualitative research to enable access to areas of their lives which may well remain hidden with more conventional methods of research. Narrative inquiry as both method and methodology allows such access. In this article, I focus on the use, appropriateness, philosophical underpinnings, discovered complexities and implications for my own teaching practice of the use of narrative inquiry in my current doctoral research. Focusing on Latin Americans, as the literature is surprisingly silent concerning such students' experiences in a UK context, I want to gain a deeper insight into what it is *really* like to have previously been a professional and to now be a postgraduate international student in the UK. My hope, therefore, is to gain a more comprehensive understanding of these students through their experiences to allow their voices to be heard. It is also expected that these experiences will shed light on how this understanding can be used in my syllabus and approach to teaching (see Dewey 1938/1997). As a practitioner researcher using narrative inquiry, reflexivity is key: when researchers are in the field, "they are never there as disembodied recorders of someone else's experience. They too are having an experience, the experience of the inquiry that entails the experience they set out to explore" (Clandinin and Connelly 2000: 81).

Keywords: experience, narrative inquiry, Latin American, postgraduate students

Gwyneth James: Language Centre, The London School of Economics and Political Science.
E-mail: G.M.James@lse.ac.uk

1   A snippet from a conversation

"So what exactly is it that you're researching?" a colleague asked me recently.

"Well, I'm interested in gaining a deeper insight into Latin American students' learning experiences – including their language learning experiences – during their Master's degrees here in the UK," I responded as succinctly as possible.

This seemed to pique his interest, despite my being less than forthcoming, primarily as I wasn't exactly sure myself how to describe, in brief, my fledgling doctoral research.

"Why Latin American students?" he persisted.

"Because I've discovered, through conversations with some of my Latin American and East Asian students, that the similarities between their learning experiences are, surprisingly, greater than the differences. Yet there is very little literature documenting Latin American students' experiences whereas there is a vast literature documenting East Asian students' experiences."

Somewhat to my surprise, he said "but that's because it's easier for Latin American students to adapt to the UK and to academic life here than it is for East Asian students."

Admittedly this had been my own (mis)perception prior to embarking on my research, but I was curious to know the reasons behind his assumption.

"Well, they speak in class and their culture is more similar to ours," was his rather black-and-white reply.

I baulked at this – had I really also thought this before starting my research? Could I really have been this presumptuous? Shocked at my naivety being held up to me like a mirror, I managed to stutter:

"Well, this is exactly what I'm aiming to dispute!"

As an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teacher at a UK university I teach a considerable number of Latin American (hereafter LA) students, which is what led to my interest in this research area. In my current doctoral research therefore, I am now collecting the stories of five LA students over the course of an academic year of study on a one-year postgraduate degree programme. These five students are also in my classes this year. They are studying a variety of Master's degrees covering subjects in Sociology, Social Policy, International Development and Social Psychology and as such, are competent[1] speakers and writers of English. So how do I, a practitioner researcher, research this vast and potentially problematic topic of "learning experiences"? The answer: use a narrative approach.

2 What is a narrative approach?

Narrative inquiry is an interdisciplinary approach to research, with its roots in various different disciplines and philosophical traditions (e.g. Squire et al. 2008;

---

1 Level C1 or C2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Clandinin and Rosiek 2007). It is "a field in the making" (Chase 2005: 651) and "is best for capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of a single life or the lives of a small number of individuals" (Creswell 2007: 55).

At its simplest, it is "the study of experience as story ... [and] is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience" (Connelly and Clandinin 2006: 479). It stems from the assumption that all life is storied and through those stories, we give meaning to our lives (Andrews et al. 2008). This makes it an interesting research method and methodology as it enables access to areas of our lives which may well remain hidden with more conventional methods of research while at the same time imbuing it with "colour and emotion" (Speedy 2010). Narrative inquiry is a form of qualitative research grounded in interpretive hermeneutics, seeking to focus on "participants' *experience* and the *meanings* given to them by that experience" (Cortazzi and Jin 2006: 28; emphasis in original).

A narrative approach requires the gathering of stories, written or oral, and then an interpretation of them. The terms *story* and *narrative* are often used interchangeably, but my understanding from narrative research literature is that people do not tell narratives; they tell stories (e.g. Frank 2000). It is the researcher who will (co-)construct narratives through analysis and interpretation of those stories, so narratives are "produced and created within social relationships and between storytellers and their audiences" (Etherington 2007: 600). This interpretation gives rise to difficulties in terms of re-presentation and voice as we do not have "direct access to another's experience" (Riessman 1993: 8) and therefore the researcher's re-presentations of those experiences and their interpretations remain ambiguous at best. Time and memory also provide additional challenges when researching narratively; our memories are not static and they will change over time. A story told in one context at one particular time will undoubtedly change in its telling in a different context, time and to a different audience: "memory of the past is continuously modified by the experiences of the present and the 'self' who is doing the remembering" (King 2000: 33). By telling a story, individuals are remembering the past and, whether consciously or subconsciously, are attempting to make sense of the event. But this relationship between time, memory and the story itself is problematic, "for we revise and edit the remembered past to square with our identities in the present" (Brockmeier 2000: 56).

So at one level, narrative inquiry is "just" about stories. Yet it is also far more complex and critical in its nature than that, with narrative inquirers striving to "attend to the ways in which a story is constructed, for whom and why, as well as the cultural discourses that it draws upon" (Trahar 2009: 2).

3 "Trustworthiness" (Riessman 2008: 184)

Because of the uniqueness of narrative research and its focus, i.e. to examine meaning and experience of individuals – as opposed to phenomenology, whose basic purpose is "to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon [e.g. grief or anger] to a description of the universal essence" (Creswell 2007: 58) – it is generally accepted in the narrative research literature (e.g. Webster and Mertova 2007) that the criteria against which narrative is evaluated is not the same as more traditional qualitative and quantitative research methods. "Reliability in narrative research usually refers to the dependability of the data, while validity typically refers to the strength and analysis of data, the trustworthiness of the data and ease of access to that data" (Polkinghorne 1988 in Webster and Mertova 2007: 89). In order to persuade readers of the trustworthiness (i.e. "validity") of the re-presented data, researchers need to attempt to follow "a methodical path, documenting claims, and practising reflexivity" (Riessman 2008: 193). Narrative inquiry emphasises researcher reflexivity, my current understanding of which is as per Etherington's (2006: 81) definition: "the capacity of researchers to acknowledge how their own experiences and contexts (which are usually fluid and changing) inform the process and outcomes of the inquiry," i.e. how these influence the research process. The reflexivity of the researcher (see Mauthner & Doucet 1998) means "acknowledging the critical role we [as researchers] play in creating, interpreting and theorizing research data" (p. 121).

As Riessman (1993: 25) writes, "who determines what the narrative means and are alternative readings possible?" From my epistemological perspective, grounded in a social constructionist approach, meanings are shifting, unstable and fluid, "not fixed and universal" (Riessman 1993: 15), so each individual will bring their own particular interpretation to the narrative. In that regard, a good narrative – whether read or heard – constitutes an "invitation to participate . . . that case studies may be read, and lived, vicariously by others" (Connelly and Clandinin 1990: 8). My available test is to have other teachers read or listen to the accounts I co-construct and respond to questions like "what do you make of it for *your* teaching situation?" (Connelly and Clandinin 1990: 8; emphasis added). Examples of (many) other questions by which to evaluate narrative research (based primarily on Richardson 2000 and Speedy 2008) include: Is it sufficiently reflexive for me, the reader, to make informed judgements about the writer's views? Have ethics been addressed? Does it affect me emotionally and intellectually? Does it provide me with a sense of "lived experience"? (Richardson 2000: 937). Is it "evocative"? (Blumenreich 2004: 82).

4 Why is it the most appropriate methodology here?

In terms of my research into my LA postgraduate students' learning experiences, it enables me to examine more closely "lived experience – that is, lives and how they are lived" (Clandinin and Connelly 2000: xxii). This relates not only to experience in general, which includes language learning experience, but the destabilising experience for many of these students in coming from professional jobs in their own countries to now being postgraduate students in a UK context. These jobs have been, in the main, extremely high status (e.g. positions in various government ministries, lawyers in the largest firms in their country), and now the shift to being a student in a different continent and culture provides the opportunity for examination with a multi-layered approach which, arguably, only narrative inquiry enables.

Their stories will be collected over a period of one academic year and through various methods, as data for narrative research does not comprise stories alone. Most commonly stories are gathered in interviews (Riessman 2008) but also the researcher's field notes recording "actions, happenings and doings" (Clandinin and Connelly 2000: 79) as well as conversations that "just happen" (Trahar 2006: 122) and unanticipated stories occurring through e-mails, in class or at the end of an office hour appointment are vital to the inquiry. Once these have all been collected, the wider context needs to be taken into account, i.e. within the research participants' personal and cultural experiences and within their historical contexts (Creswell 2007). This inclusion of context is vital, not only because stories do not exist in a bubble divorced from reality but also in order for the listener/reader to understand and make sense of these narratives. So a rich description of these contexts needs to be provided (Trahar 2013a). Many people may be familiar with the geographical context of much of Latin America, as well as its colonial past/history. Yet I would question how familiar we are with the educational system there, for example, or the political, economic and historical context of specific countries within that large and diverse continent. As the researcher, I cannot assume that those who read my research are familiar with the context – LA students themselves have told me that they are generally not familiar with (multicultural) contexts of other countries outside their own and neighbouring countries, as the following extract from a focus group, conducted as part of the pilot study for my doctoral research in January 2012, illustrates:

> in our country [i.e. Chile] you see Chilean people and Peruvian people and sometimes you get to meet people from another country, but it is not like you have a lot of people from another country so that's also I think a huge difference (24.1.2012).

The four students (three from Chile and one from Ecuador in this particular focus group) also mentioned the fact that it is easy to travel within Europe, and even to Asia this can be achieved overland from the UK. Yet in Latin America the majority tend not to travel between countries because "it is really extensive"; "we stick to our country, we stick to our roots" (24.1.2012).

5 What ontological and epistemological assumptions underpin this methodology?

My understanding of the word *experience* is taken from Dewey's (1938/1997) conception of experience. Dewey sees experience as both personal and social; people are individuals but cannot only be apprehended as such as they are always in relationships with others. Particularly germane is his notion of continuity, namely that experiences both develop from and lead to other experiences, whether positive or negative. This is especially relevant to my research, in that students are not "blank sheets" (Sawir 2005: 570); they come to the UK and their course of study with a past, which includes prior learning and work experience, and their lives will continue when they leave. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000: 64) acutely observe of research participants: "their lives do not begin the day we arrive nor do they end as we leave. Their lives continue."

According to Dewey, experience arises from the reciprocal action between continuity and interaction. The latter refers to the situational influence on one's experience, i.e. present experience is a function of the interaction between a person's past experiences and the present situation, particularly applicable to my research.

Epistemologically, my view of knowledge is that it is co-constructed, containing the following "tenets" of social constructionism (Burr 2003). Firstly, a critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge, i.e. we cannot assume that things are as they are just because we observe them to be so. This links back to my opening conversation with my colleague who believes that it is easier for LA students to adapt to studying and life in the UK "because their culture is more similar to ours and they talk in class." Inherent in this assumption, which admittedly had been my own prior to starting my research, seems to be the view that "because this is what I observe, therefore it must be so."

A second tenet I adhere to is that the way in which I understand the world is historically and culturally specific, so my understandings are not tied to a specific culture or period but are rather products of them. Interestingly, until recently

I had failed to take into account the influences on my background, so despite reflecting on the background of my research participants I had never reflected on my own. Why had it never occurred to me that I am a "white" practitioner researcher conducting research with people from different historical and cultural backgrounds? Because they are also "white"? Because, growing up in London and going to school here, admittedly before it became the multicultural melting pot it is now, I did not warrant this worthy of attention? Because I have spent most of my working life with "international" people? Because my ancestry is not only English but Welsh, German and Czech? This is undoubtedly worthy of closer attention as I progress through my research and links into the notion of reflexivity.

The final tenet is that knowledge is sustained by social processes. So if we cannot gain our knowledge of the world from its nature or by observing it, social constructionists would say that it is co-constructed: "it is through the daily interactions between people in the course of social life that our versions of knowledge become fabricated. Therefore social interaction of all kinds, and particularly language, is of great interest to social constructionists" (Burr 2003: 4).

This also takes into account the view that language is socially constructed with meanings that are contestible and context-specific and leads on to another facet of my epistemology, namely that of poststructuralism. "Poststructuralism names a theory, or a group of theories, concerning the relationship between human beings, the world, and the practice of making and reproducing meanings" (Belsey 2002: 5).

How these meanings are made and reproduced is most clearly seen in contrast to structuralism. Whereas structuralism, originating with Saussure (1916/1974), views meaning as fixed, constructed through difference and binary opposition (e.g. man/woman; good/bad), poststructuralism views meanings as shifting and unstable. Both structuralism and poststructuralism share the view that through language we construct who we are, i.e. language enables us to create our identity (Burr 2003). Yet how we represent our experiences and our identity is not done in isolation from other people – the key point here is that our identity is constructed with and by other people because "language is a fundamentally social phenomenon" (Burr 2003: 53) and we do not exist in a vacuum. Where these two theories differ is that poststructuralist notions of identity see people as diverse, dynamic and changing over time (Norton and Toohey 2002).

So if language constructs who we are, then it also follows that it can challenge or change who we are (Burr 2003). What it means to be a postgraduate LA student in the UK "could be transformed, reconstructed, and for poststructuralists language is the key to such transformations" (Burr 2003: 56). It is important to remember though that this does not mean that language is the *only* way in which we can transform who we are. "What people say and write is not divorced

from the things they do, either as individuals or as groups (social practices), or from the way that society is organised and run (social structure) . . ." (Burr 2003: 56).

6 How will this particular research "lens" contribute to studying my topic (i.e. implications)?

An important question to ask here is "what *does* narrative inquiry help us to learn about our phenomenon that other theories or methods do not? (Clandinin and Connelly 2000: 123; emphasis in original). Fundamentally, it helps us to look out at the world through others' eyes. As previously mentioned, it enables experience to be researched, and in my research context, it allows potentially destabilising and multi-layered experiences to be researched, namely those which LA students have had coming from professional and high-status backgrounds. My aim, therefore, is to understand the meanings of their experiences, rather than dilute those experiences through theory (Trahar 2013a). This is not to say that narrative inquiry is atheoretical; I would argue that it is anything but, considering its varied and complex roots. But people and their stories do not always fit neatly into a theory. I also want to hear stories of these students' experiences, and in doing so potentially raise questions about how a "deficit model" of international students (Montgomery 2010: xvi) shapes both my understanding and practice. There is so much research on international students, particularly those from East Asia, and the *problems* they experience in adjustments (e.g. psychological, sociocultural and educational) to the UK (see for example Spencer-Oatey and Xiong 2006; Wu and Hammond 2011; Zhou and Todman 2009), but very little on how to *deal with* those problems.

To that end, I want to look in depth at *students*' perspectives of difficulties experienced and *how these difficulties that are experienced are resolved* in areas which arise in the course of the research. Postgraduate LA students' experiences in the UK are largely silent, and I want to position my narrative research within this silence to allow their voices to be heard. This would be achieved by "systematically tell[ing] the stories of international students" (Montgomery 2010: xv) which she advocates as vital empirical research in order to develop a "positive image that counteracts a deficit model that may sometimes be applied to [such] students" (p. xvi). In doing so, and by focusing on their experiences and adjustments, it is important not only to highlight difficulties with English language and culture, as these can affect their adjustment (e.g. Andrade 2006), but also be-

cause I as a teacher need greater understanding of these challenges in order to adjust and inform my own teaching and curriculum.

Finally, I would want to "challenge or trouble established ways of thinking" (Trahar 2013a: xiv), including the well-documented dominant discourse which exists of international students in general having *problems* adapting to studying in the UK. The research given above as examples focusing on this does not give much attention to students' voices. These established ways of thinking may (inevitably) also include misinterpretation by faculty of "the behaviours of international students" (Andrade 2006: 149), which has also unfortunately been true of my own experience, despite having spent time living and working in a culture vastly different from my own. This will in turn entail a more internationalised curriculum, not just "token efforts that merely provide 'add-ons' such as the inclusion of international examples to university curricula" (Webb 2005 in Ryan and Louie 2007: 406). How this is done will naturally take time, but it is my sincere hope that in my context, my research will provide a first step in this direction.

7 Complexities discovered while using narrative

My initial unquestioning acceptance of narrative inquiry as unproblematic when researching those from outside a European context led to my overly simplistic understanding of narrative inquiry being just about "telling stories". On one level of course it is, but on another it is far more than that. It is about the "actions, happenings and doings" (Clandinin and Connelly 2000: 79) mentioned earlier, and conversations that "just happen". I was so mesmerised by narrative as a completely different way of doing educational research from what I had previously known that I took a somewhat unproblematised view of narrative and its ideologies, which are still rather Eurocentric. I need to ask questions about the cultural appropriacy of using narrative in my research context and defend its "validity" in a research world which tends to favour more positivist approaches to research.

In addition, activation of narratives (Gubrium and Holstein 2009) has been a problem in that I had naïvely expected my research participants to "burst out with stories" (Gubrium and Holstein 2009: 41) in my conversations with them, as well as in my pilot study interviews where I asked them about their learning experiences. But they did not. In interviews, I recognise that no language is a transparent or neutral medium (Talmy 2010) and in line with Holstein and Gubrium (1995 in Talmy 2010: 131), I also consider the interview as "a fundamentally social encounter rather than a conduit for accessing information." But was it really a research "interview" that I wanted to conduct? Maybe my use of the term *interview* was misleading as the term often implies "the model of a 'facilitating'

interviewer who asks questions, and a vessel-like 'respondent' who gives an-
swers" (Riessman 2008: 23). Perhaps research "conversation" would lessen the
formality (and power imbalance) associated with being in a room with a teacher
and a digital recorder, although my participants will still need to know what these
"conversations" are and what I understand by them and why I am using this par-
ticular term. Yet *training* or *preparing* my research participants for an interview
seems to go against what I know of narrative inquiry's ethos. Perhaps "training"
is not the correct word, however. My aim in these conversations is to provide a
safe space for my research participants to share their experiences with me rather
than what they think I want to hear. I want them to share their *own* experience,
not what "generally happens", so maybe I will have to explain a more "narrative
style" of interviewing to them, rather than training them in this per se.

These complexities then led me to try this more narrative form of interview-
ing, an unstructured form of interviewing where meaningful stories are "invited"
from the narrator as a discursive accomplishment (see Mishler 1991) rather than
assuming that he/she has the answers to any questions which I, the researcher,
may pose and where I can share my own experiences as appropriate (see also
Scheurich 1997: 61–79). "The goal in narrative interviewing is to generate detailed
accounts rather than brief answers or general statements" (Riessman 2008: 23).
Yet how exactly do I *do* narrative interviewing? I realise that it is a form of inter-
viewing which demands not that I get "right" data but rather that I get "different"
data. I discovered that I am not alone in my puzzlement, as Knibb eloquently
observes of her own experience in this same struggle: "I had to contend with the
notion that there is no such thing as 'right', just what *is*, what *emerges*" (2013: 25,
emphasis in original). In practice I needed to "follow participants down *their*
trails" (Riessman 2008: 24; emphasis in original) and this meant letting go of my
question guide. But there is something fundamentally embedded in me that made
this difficult to do. Is it the notion of power and control that I was reluctant to re-
linquish? Or, more likely, the need to put my research participants at ease in
showing them that I did have questions? Since my pilot study a year ago I have
started my "actual" data/story collection and have begun by asking my research
participants to describe their first term of study using adjectives and the conver-
sation then developed around those initial adjectives. Such research "conversa-
tions" require sophisticated skills in listening and probing meanings (Trahar
2013b).

"Resonance" (see Conle 1996) has also been influential in these research
"conversations". This is something which appears to be very important in a nar-
rative approach to research. Conle's functional and practical definition of this
word is "a way of seeing one experience in terms of another" (1996: 299). Yet my
attempts at engaging in conversation when what my participants had said reso-

nated with me received lukewarm or very little response. This again raises questions about whether the participants need to be told in advance what a narrative style of interviewing is, and whether they need to be trained in such a style in order to elicit the stories I need. It may be that that is the route to follow; or it may be that I need to be asking different questions. Etherington (2012) suggests that we need to help people tell stories by beginning from a "not knowing" position, rather than from the position of "expert". It would be disingenuous for me to do anything other than this, as I cannot know the stories which my research participants have experienced or are experiencing. A classic beginning would be "Tell me what happened when . . ." (Riessman 2008: 25) and as Etherington (2012) suggests, we need to ask questions that pay attention to the following:

- *cultural context*, i.e. giving details of values, beliefs and habits (e.g. "why do you think that happened?")
- *beginning, middle and end*, i.e. structuring a story so that it does not seem chaotic (e.g. "where does your story begin?")
- *significance of other people*, i.e. how do the participant's relationships affect the events mentioned (e.g. "what did your family think of that?")
- *historical continuity*, i.e. as mentioned previously, the participant's life does not exist in a vacuum and will continue once they leave the "interview" (e.g. "what year was that?")
- *embodied nature of the teller*, i.e. their engagement in the events (e.g. "how did you cope with that?")
- *choices and actions of the teller*, i.e. agency of the person telling the story (e.g. "why did you do that?")

Ethical issues also are foregrounded here, as there needs to be both trust and openness in the research relationship, as well as reflexivity of the researcher throughout.

A final "discovered" complexity, which leads on from the gathering of stories, is how to analyse these stories. There are many and varied forms of narrative analysis, some focusing on stories' content and others on stories' meaning. Four of the most common forms are thematic, structural, dialogic/performance and visual (Riessman 2008). Yet meaning making (i.e. the analysis itself) in narrative approaches to research occurs throughout the research process, not just in the separate and arguably somewhat reductionist stage of "data analysis" following "data collection" (Gehart et al. 2007). Based on the philosophy that underpins my research approach, co-construction of meaning between myself as the researcher and my participants is also of great importance in narrative analysis. So representations will focus on using the actual words spoken by both the researcher and the participant in order to convey the depth and messiness and richness of

the experiences. Ely (2007: 586) describes re-presentation as both "the rhetorical forms we use [in narrative research writing and] to re-present, evoke, and discuss what we have lived and learned in doing narrative research. This business of creating forms that come closest to the essence of our understandings and presenting them in trustworthy ways is a crucial, ongoing, interactive dance."

Yet "clear accounts of how to analyse the data . . . are rare" (Squire et al. 2008: 1) and this is another struggle which many narrative novices such as myself have to deal with as we embark on this kind of research.

8 Concluding thoughts

Narrative inquiry is a fascinating, even beguiling form of research which has been making great inroads into language learning research and educational research more generally. Examples of the use of narrative methods in the former can be found in the employment of autobiographic narratives in the form of diaries (e.g. Norton 2000); life histories (e.g. Kanno 2000) and language memoirs (e.g. Kinginger 2004; Pavlenko and Lantolf 2000). Pavlenko (2007) also writes a compelling critique of frameworks with which to analyse bi- and multi-linguals' narratives as data in applied linguistics research. In addition, research on learner identity particularly highlights the use of narrative (e.g. De Fina 2003; Ros i Solé 2007; Simpson 2011) and De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2012) call attention to a language and discourse-oriented perspective on narrative which blends both narrative as "textually and discursively constituted" and as "a social practice shaped by and shaping multiple social contexts" (p. ix). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) remain a seminal example of the latter.

Narrative inquiry enables facets of a person's experience to be researched and, up to a point, "known", something which other forms of qualitative research have not had scope for. It is challenging, innovative, messy, creative, colourful and more besides, but learning should address the *whole* person and this kind of research is vital as the data collected from it, i.e. stories, complements other, more quantitative and more traditionally qualitative kinds. There are many "layers" to people, not just their language or their education, and it is anticipated that this research is an eventual step towards uncovering some of those.

References

Andrade, Maureen Snow. 2006. International students in English-speaking universities: Adjustment factors. *Journal of Research in International Education* 5(2). 131–154.

Andrews, Molly, Corinne Squire & Maria Tamboukou (eds.). 2008. *Doing narrative research*. London: Sage.

Belsey, Catherine. 2002. *Poststructuralism – A very short introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Blumenreich, Megan. 2004. Avoiding the pitfalls of "conventional" narrative research: Using poststructural theory to guide the creation of narratives of children with HIV. *Qualitative Research* 4(1). 77–90.

Brockmeier, Jens. 2000. Autobiographical time. *Narrative Inquiry* 10(1). 51–73.

Burr, Viven. 2003. *Social constructionism*, 2nd edn. Hove: Routledge.

Chase, Susan E. 2005. Narrative inquiry: Multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*, 3rd edn., 651–680. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Clandinin, D. Jean & F. Michael Connelly. 2000. *Narrative inquiry – experience and story in qualitative research.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Clandinin, D. Jean & Jerry Rosiek. 2007. Mapping a landscape of narrative inquiry: Borderland spaces and tensions. In D. Jean Clandinin (ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*, 35–75. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Conle, Carola. 1996. Resonance in preservice teacher inquiry. *American Educational Research Journal* 33(2). 297–325.

Connelly, F. Michael & D. Jean Clandinin. 1990. Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher* 19(5). 2–14.

Connelly, F. Michael & D. Jean Clandinin. 2006. Narrative inquiry. In Judith L. Green, Gregory Camilli & Patricia B. Elmore (eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research*, 3rd edn., 477–487. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Cortazzi, Martin & Lixian Jin. 2006. Asking questions, sharing stories and identity construction: Sociocultural issues in narrative research. In Sheila Trahar (ed.), *Narrative research on learning – comparative and international perspectives*, 27–46. Oxford: Symposium Books.

Creswell, John W. 2007. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*, 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

De Fina, Anna. 2003. *Identity in narrative: A study of immigrant discourse.* Amsterdam: Benjamins.

De Fina, Anna & Alexandra Georgakopoulou. 2012. *Analysing narrative: Discourse and sociolinguistic perspectives.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dewey, John. 1938/1997. *Experience and education.* New York: Touchstone.

Ely, Margot. 2007. In-forming re-presentations. In D. Jean Clandinin (ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*, 567–598. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Etherington, Kim. 2006. Reflexivity: Using our "selves" in narrative research. In Sheila Trahar (ed.), *Narrative research on learning – comparative and international perspectives*, 77–92. Oxford: Symposium Books.

Etherington, Kim. 2007. Ethical research in reflexive relationships. *Qualitative Inquiry* 13(5). 599–616.

Etherington, Kim. 2012. *A view of narrative inquiry*, PowerPoint presentation. www.cprjournal.com/documents/narrativeInquiry.ppt (accessed 21 September 2012).

Frank, Arthur W. 2000. The standpoint of storyteller. *Qualitative Health Research* 10(3). 354–365.

Gehart, Diane, Margarita Tarragona & Saliha Bava. 2007. A collaborative approach to research and inquiry. In Harlene Anderson & Diane Gehart (eds.), *Collaborative therapy: Relationships and conversations that make a difference*, 367–387. London: Routledge.

Gubrium, Jaber F. & James A. Holstein. 2009. *Analyzing narrative reality*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kanno, Yasuko. 2000. Bilingualism and identity: The stories of Japanese returnees. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 3(1). 1–18.

King, Nicola. 2000. *Memory, narrative, identity – remembering the self*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Kinginger, Celeste. 2004. Alice doesn't live here anymore: Foreign language learning and identity reconstruction. In Aneta Pavlenko & Adrian Blackledge (eds.), *Negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts*, 219–242. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Knibb, Jenny. 2013. Private lives, public property: Narrating the lives of mothers whose children have significant special needs. In Sheila Trahar (ed.), *Contextualising narrative inquiry: developing methodological approaches for local contexts*, 20–43. Abingdon: Routledge.

Mauthner, Natasha & Andrea Doucet. 1998. Reflections on a voice-centred relational method. In Jane Ribbens & Rosalind Edwards (eds.), *Feminist dilemmas in qualitative research*, 119–146. London: Sage.

Mishler, Elliot G. 1991. *Research interviewing: Context and narrative*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Montgomery, Catherine. 2010. *Understanding the international student experience*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Norton, Bonny. 2000. *Identity and language learning: Gender, ethnicity and educational change*. London: Pearson Education.

Norton, Bonny & Kelleen Toohey. 2002. Identity and language learning. In Robert B. Kaplan (ed.), *The Oxford handbook of applied linguistics*, 115–123. New York: Oxford University Press.

Pavlenko, Aneta. 2007. Autobiographic narratives as data in applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics* 28(2). 163–188.

Pavlenko, Aneta & James P. Lantolf. 2000. Second language learning as participation and the (re)construction of selves. In James P. Lantolf (ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning*, 155–177. New York: Oxford University Press.

Richardson, Laurel. 2000. Writing: A method of inquiry. In Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*, 2nd edn., 923–948. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Riessman, Catherine K. 1993. *Narrative analysis*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Riessman, Catherine K. 2008. *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ros i Solé, Cristina. 2007. Language learners' sociocultural positions in the L2: A narrative approach. *Language and Intercultural Communication* 7(3). 203–216.

Ryan, Janette & Kam Louie. 2007. False dichotomy? "Western" and "Confucian" concepts of scholarship and learning. *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 39(4). 404–417.

Saussure, Ferdinand de. 1916/1974. *Course in general linguistics*. London: Fontana.

Sawir, Erlenawati. 2005. Language difficulties of international students in Australia: The effects of prior learning experience. *International Education Journal* 6(5). 567–580.

Scheurich, James J. 1997. *Research method in the postmodern*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Simpson, James. 2011. Telling tales: Discursive space and narratives in ESOL classrooms. *Linguistics and Education* 22(1). 10–22.

Squire, Corinne, Molly Andrews & Maria Tamboukou. 2008. What is narrative research? In Molly Andrews, Corinne Squire & Maria Tamboukou (eds.), *Doing narrative research*, 1–19. London: Sage.

Speedy, Jane. 2008. *Narrative inquiry and psychotherapy.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Speedy, Jane. 2010. *Time*, lecture, University of Bristol, 8 November.

Spencer-Oatey, Helen & Zhaoning Xiong. 2006. Chinese students' psychological and sociocultural adjustments to Britain: An empirical study. *Language Culture & Curriculum* 19(1). 37–53.

Talmy, Steven. 2010. Qualitative interviews in applied linguistics: From research instrument to social practice. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics (2010)* 30. 128–148.

Trahar, Sheila. 2006. *Roads less travelled: Stories of learning and teaching in a multicultural higher education environment.* Bristol, UK: University of Bristol PhD thesis.

Trahar, Sheila. 2009. Beyond the story itself: Narrative inquiry and autoethnography in intercultural research in higher education [41 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 10(1). Art. 30. http://nbn-resolving. de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0901308 (accessed 29 October 2012).

Trahar, Sheila. 2013a. Preface. In Sheila Trahar (ed.), *Contextualising narrative inquiry: Developing methodological approaches for local contexts*, xi–xxi. Abingdon: Routledge.

Trahar, Sheila. 2013b. *An introduction to narrative inquiry*, lecture, University of Bristol, 25 February.

Webster, Leonard & Patricie Mertova. 2007. *Using narrative inquiry as a research method: An introduction to using critical event narrative analysis in research on learning and teaching.* London: Routledge.

Wu, Wenli & Michael Hammond. 2011. Challenges of university adjustment in the UK: A study of East Asian master's degree students. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 35(3). 423–438.

Zhou, Yuefang & John Todman. 2009. Patterns of adaptation of Chinese postgraduate students in the United Kingdom. *Journal of Studies in International Education* 13(4). 467–486.

Bionote

Gwyneth James teaches English for Academic Purposes at the London School of Economics and Political Science. She is currently working on her doctoral research in Education and Applied Linguistics at the University of Bristol. Her research focuses on international students, particularly: their learning experiences, transition into postgraduate study and constructing and negotiating identity in a new Community of Practice.