

Research Methods for STEM Librarians: Perspectives from a Narrative Inquiry Lens

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OUTLINE

- ▶ Journeying with Narrative Inquiry
- ▶ Research Methodology used in top ranking LIS journals
- ▶ Results and Discussion on Gaps in the results
- ▶ Implications for LIS Research

Journeying with Narrative Inquiry

- ▶ Narrative Inquiry is the systematic gathering, analyzing and representation of people's stories (research) which challenges traditional and modernist views of truth, reality, knowledge and personhood. (Etherington, 2013)

Journeying with Narrative Inquiry

- ▶ Narrative Inquiry therefore gathers information for the purpose of research through story telling.
- ▶ Connelly and Clandinin (1990) posit that humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and collectively lead storied lives.
- ▶ They experience the world through collecting and telling stories of themselves and writing narratives of the experiences.

Journeying with Narrative Inquiry

- ▶ Unlike more traditional methods, Narrative Inquiry successfully captures personal and human dimensions that cannot be QUANTIFIED into DRY FACTS and NUMERICAL DATA. (Lincoln, 2000)
- ▶ Narrative Inquiry is not what happened so much as what meaning, did people make of what happened. (Howie, 2010, Connelly and Clandinin, 1990)



Background to the study

- ▶ Outreach activities at new faculty orientation last spring !
- ▶ Are Librarians faculty ? Do they do research and what kind of research ?
- ▶ Anybody can do a survey and write a paper
- ▶ What journals do they publish in?
- ▶ To who and how do we tell our LIS Stories?

Narrative Inquiry Method

I

► Sampling

Purposeful rather than representative sampling

1. Homogenous
2. Extreme or Deviant case : Of interest since they represent exact category or phenomenon we are interested in such as international students, STEM Librarians, Engineering faculty in the Academy of Science etc.

Narrative Inquiry Method II

- ▶ Criterion Sampling: Individuals who meet a certain criterion e.g. first year Masters students from developing countries or first generation college students or individuals with chronic illness

Narrative Inquiry Data Collection and Analysis I

- ▶ Surveys, Interviews - structured and semi structured
- ▶ Field Diaries or personal reflexive Journals
- ▶ Document analysis
- ▶ Transcribe interview with line numbers and interviewees given codes

Narrative Inquiry Data Collection and Analysis II

- ▶ Review transcribed interviews with questions in mind and adding notes / info (Constant comparison)
- ▶ Create stories in chronological order, reported in past tense, create plots and scene and insert reference to transcripts
- ▶ Let participants review story and correct as appropriate. (Rhodes and Dawson, 2012)

Results of Narrative Inquiry

- ▶ The beauty of Narrative Inquiry lies not only in the social construction of knowledge but also in our ability to present results in different genres such as narratives (Stories), poetry, performance art and art, ethnography, Autoethnography and Biography; thereby providing more points for connection and understanding, in order to reach a wider audience, with our Library and Information Science stories and lived experiences.

Methodology used I

- ▶ Reviewed Core journals in LIS Nixon (2014) and TTU Libraries P & T committee journal ranking
- ▶ Idea was to select top 5 journals and review research methodologies used in the last 2 years

Methodology used II

- ▶ See place of Narrative Inquiry as a method in published works or studies using certain keywords :- narrative inquiry, triangulation, constant comparison, crystallization etc.

Select Top Ranking LIS Journals from TTU P& T Committee 2014

- ▶ College and Research Libraries
- ▶ Journal of Academic Librarianship
- ▶ Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology (JASIST)
- ▶ Library and Information Science Research
- ▶ Collection Management
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- ▶ Science and Technology Libraries
- ▶ Issues in Science and Technology Libraries

Results from College & Research Libraries (WIP)

Keywords	Number of Hits	Data Collection Methods
Triangulation	4 articles and 2 book reviews	Article 1 - Historical analysis Interviews - (purposeful sampling) Secondary document/Content analysis /Narrative - (Code and Themes) Crystallization
		Article 2 - Critical incident Questionnaire (CIQ) Participant Observation, Questionnaire Critical Reflection, journaling/field notes; Group work (Focus groups)

Results from College & Research Libraries (WIP)

Keywords	Number of Hits	Data Collection Methods
Triangulation	4 Articles and 2 Book Reviews	Article 3 Individual Questionnaires via <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Snail Mail, email (list serves)- Transcription and coding- Content analysis and constant comparison
		Article 4 Survey/Questionnaire Pretested

Keywords	Number of Hits	Data Collection Methods
Qualitative Research	71	Multiple selections from above
Narrative Inquiry	1	Multiple selections from above
Content Analysis (Coding)	3	Multiple selections from above

Is Narrative Inquiry Scientific and How ?

- ▶ Elements of embellishment?
- ▶ Issues of trustworthiness and credibility comes into play. It is about the degree of confidence in the “truth” presented.
- ▶ Triangulation as it glens data/events from different sources and points of view and blends them into a coherent story

Is Narrative Inquiry Scientific and How ?

- ▶ Transferability such that the research can be replicated and there would be no significant variation in the results obtained.
- ▶ Audit Trail.....It is important that we have a visible and demonstrable trail of documents and development of themes etc. so that reviewers and others with second opinion would not discredit the work!

Implications for Research I

- ▶ Where do we publish our research and how do we promote our scholarly activity for greater visibility?
- ▶ What keywords do we use? Idea is to include appropriate words that bring our research to the forefront via the indexing and abstracting services

Implications for Research II

- ▶ Therefore to WHO, HOW and WHERE we tell the stories of our research endeavors IMPACTS our recognition and visibility beyond our “Choir Base” and Narrative Inquiry is a viable tool in our arsenal that could serve us very well.

Thank You

▶ Questions ?

References

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