

Lecture 5 (Narrative Research & Ethical Considerations in Qualitative Research)

Introduction : Human beings are storying creatures. We make sense of the world and the things that happen to us by constructing narratives to explain and interpret events both to ourselves and to others.

Narrative Inquiry

It was initially used as a methodology to describe the personal stories of teachers.

Additionally, explicitly mention that Glaser and Strauss developed Grounded Theory, not Narrative Research.

- Origin: First used by Connelly & Clandinin to describe the personal stories of teachers.
- Method: Conducted through dialogue between the researcher and the participant.
- Features:
 - Collection of narratives (stories) from individuals or small groups.
 - Collaboration with the researcher as storytelling engages the audience.
 - Exposes the researcher to the identities of individuals. ■ It is a compassionate methodology.
 - Often collected through interviews, but can also include observations and documents.

Definitions

- Narrative (story): An account with a beginning, a sequence of unfolding events, and an ending. It integrates characters, events, actions, and context to make sense of them, generally following a recognizable form (e.g., clinical case).
- Narrative Inquiry: Gathering stories about a certain theme to discover information about a specific phenomenon, including social, cultural, and environmental influences on health.

Goal of Narrative Inquiry

The inclusion of social, cultural and environmental influences on illness understandings makes narrative inquiry very suitable for research in health as it incorporates all dimensions that impact the individual's health experience.

- To uncover the meanings of individuals' experiences as opposed to objective, decontextualized truths.
- Narrative researchers aim to understand and present real-life experiences through participants' stories.

Reasons for Popularity

- Increased emphasis on teacher reflection, knowledge, professional development, and decision-making.
- Listening to teachers' stories helps them understand the social, cultural, and institutional stories shaping their experiences.

Benefits of Narrative Inquiry

- Provides rich layers of information for a more in-depth understanding of participants' viewpoints.
- Offers deeper insights that readers can apply to their own contexts.
- Disadvantage of triangulation: costs.

Narrative Research Data Collection

- **Procedures:** - Focus on studying one or two individuals.
 - Gather data through their stories.
 - Report individual experiences and order them chronologically or by life course stages.
- **Techniques:**
 - Interviews, journals, autobiographies, oral history, and field notes. Systemic analysis is also used.

Oral History

- Collect data by asking participants to share their experiences.
- Development Methods:
 - Structured or unstructured interviews.
 - Annals & chronicles: Participants create a timeline of significant events or memories.

Analysis of Narratives vs. Narrative Analysis

1. Analysis of Narratives:

- Collect stories as data and analyze them into themes that hold across all stories.
- Themes are the outcomes.

2. Narrative Analysis:

- Construct narratives from descriptions of events collected through interviews and observations.
- Amalgamate multiple interviews/conversations into one narrative, presenting events in a sequence to create a plot.
- Member check involves asking participants to comment on the account of the information.

Key Features of Narrative Research

- Focus on individual experiences.
- Chronologically report experiences.
- Collect stories through field texts (autobiographies, interviews, journals).
- Describe the context or setting for the stories.
- Include the people involved and the physical setting.
- Collaborate with participants throughout the research process.
- Participants are actively involved, minimizing the gap between the told and reported narrative.
- Consider temporality (time), sociality (personal, social, and cultural influences), and spatiality (environment).

- Case Study is not exclusively concerned with qualitative methods

Example

- Living with a chronic illness or surviving an acute illness can be life-changing. Narratives of illness reflect individuals' experiences and surroundings, providing detailed views of their experiences and informing future care.

Trustworthiness

- Enhance narrative quality through persistent observation and multiple data sources.
- Verify interpretations with participants and make necessary adjustments.
- Use thick descriptions to contextualize the data.

Strengths

- Stories are sense-making devices, nonlinear, evocative, memorable, and perspectival.

Limitations

- Institutional contexts may constrain and distort stories.
- Some narratives cannot be told if the individual has lost the ability to narrate.

Challenges

- Collect extensive information about participants and understand their life contexts.
- Collaborate actively with participants and reflect on personal and political backgrounds.

Steps for Performing Narrative Research

1. Identify a phenomenon to explore.
2. Select an individual purposefully.
3. Gather and retell the individual's story.
4. Collaborate with the participant storyteller.
5. Write a story about the participant's experiences.
6. Validate the accuracy of the report.
7. Case Study and explanatory narrative research can study cause-effect relationships.

Final Product

- The narrative contains temporal (past and future experiences), social (cultural and social environment), and spatial (description of surroundings) dimensions.

Ethics in Research

Introduction

- The World Medical Association's Declaration of Helsinki (1964) stressed establishing Research Ethics Committees or institutional review boards.

Ethical Principles

- Studies should be designed safely, preceded by careful risk assessment.
- Informants must be recruited voluntarily, fully informed, and provide informed consent.

Researchers' Responsibilities

1. Ensure participants are well-informed about the research purpose.
2. Clarify potential risks.
3. Obtain informed consent with comprehensible language about:
 - Study nature
 - Participants' roles
 - Researcher's role
 - Data publication and usage
 - Research risks

Ethical Problems

- Access to a community may affect participants.
- Risks to researchers, including aggression from participants or unfamiliar fieldwork premises.
- Participants can withdraw at any time.

Four Domains of Ethics

1. Procedural Ethics:

- Dictated by institutions (e.g., IRB mandates: do no harm, avoid deception, negotiate informed consent, ensure privacy).
- Secure personal data.

2. Situational Ethics:

- Arise from specific context considerations.
- Reflect on, critique, and question ethical decisions based on each situation.
are the harms of the research practices outweighed by its moral goals?

3. Ethical Relationships:

- Value mutual respect, dignity, and connectedness.
- Allow participants to help define research rules.

4. Exiting Ethics:

- Ethical considerations continue in data presentation and dissemination.
- Avoid unjust or unintended consequences in presenting research.

Ethical Challenges in Qualitative Research

1. Researcher-Participant Relationship:

- Close relationships must be handled carefully to avoid ethical risks.
- Ensure anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent.

2. Data Gathering:

- Participants should be aware of and consent to recorded information.
- Expect amendments to research protocols.

3. Subjective Data Interpretation:

- Address potential misinterpretations.
- Include member checking in informed consent.