Narrative Inquiry in TESOL and Language Teacher Education

Wenli Zhang
The Ohio State University, Columbus, United States

Many scholars in social science have advocated and appreciated narrative inquiry as a useful research tool. Additionally, the pedagogical functions of narrative inquiry have been recognized and valued, and narrative inquiry creates a space for mediation from knowledgeable others and further enhances language teacher development. Studies have explored and affirmed the irreplaceable functions of mediation from teacher educators to ignite the transformative power of narrative inquiry for language teacher development. In order to comprehensively appreciate and properly adopt narrative inquiry in social science studies, language teacher education in particular, this article provides a review of narrative inquiry by exploring its application in the field of education, its usage in teaching English to speakers of other language (TESOL) and language teacher education, and its benefits as well as limitations in social science studies. This article highly advocates for the use of narrative inquiry and also provides suggestions and implications for future research and teaching.

Keywords: narrative inquiry, education, TESOL, language teacher education

Introduction

Inspired by the view that human beings live and tell stories about their lives, narratives have been employed in research for a few decades. In serious academic study, the use of narratives is developed from the field of psychology by Sigmund Freud, and his use of life narratives was mainly in the application of his psychoanalytic theory to studying individual lives (reviewed in Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2014; Chan, 2012). Based on the epistemological assumption that human beings make sense of experiences through stories, many scholars believe that the analysis of people’s narratives would make it possible to gain a deeper understanding of individual’s experiences (e.g., Atkinson, 1997; Bruner, 1987; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2005). Consequently, its value as a research tool has been highly acknowledged in social science, including the field of education. However, compared to its history in education, narrative inquiry has recently developed in the field of teaching English to speakers of other language (TESOL), and it has received increasing attention in the domain of language teacher education. In addition to its function as a research tool, narrative inquiry has also been promoted as an approach for language teacher development (e.g., Johnson, 2009; 2016). In order to comprehensively appreciate and properly adopt it in social science studies, this article provides a review of narrative inquiry by exploring its application in the field of education, its usage in TESOL and language teacher education, and its benefits as well as limitations in social science studies. Finally, suggestions and implications for future research and teaching will be provided. It is believed that this article will help researchers in social science, as well as teacher educators, make better decisions when adopting narrative inquiry for research studies and teaching activities.

Wenli Zhang, Ph.D. candidate, Foreign, Second, and Multilingual Language Education, Department of Teaching and Learning, The Ohio State University.
Narrative Inquiry in Education

The past three decades have witnessed a rapid growth in using life stories and other narrative approaches for research purposes, and narrative inquiry has gained popularity and been adopted in many academic fields, including anthropology, history, psychology, qualitative health research, and education (Atkinson, 1997; Connelly & Clandinin, 2005). As a methodology, narrative inquiry is used to explore life stories and experiences, and it is also used to make sense of and interpret these stories. Given the fact that humans are storytellers who lead storied lives, narrative inquiry performs a significant function in navigating humans’ experiences in the word, and in education, teachers and learners are considered to be tellers of their stories as well as others’. Narrative inquiry, therefore, is advocated to be a leading way to study educational experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Narrative inquiry shares several features with some other qualitative research methodologies, such as the emphasis on the social in ethnography and the use of story in phenomenology. Narrative inquiry, on the other hand, is also found to have unique and distinct characteristics, and Connelly and Clandinin (1990) identified some particular features of narrative inquiry. First of all, narrative inquiry is regarded as a collaborative process involving “mutual storytelling and restorying” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 4). In this process, stories of participants and researchers are exchanged, and voices from both sides are heard. Accordingly, it is difficult for narrative inquirers to detach from their studies. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) also recognized that the temporal orientation of narrative inquiry. Considering that previous experiences impact current and future experiences and actions, Connelly and Clandinin (1990) stated that in narrative inquiry, “The central structure of time is past-present-future”, in which “past conveys significance, the present conveys value, and the future conveys intention” (p. 8). Therefore, researchers are warned to be aware of the continuity of stories, and the previous stories might be reinterpreted and reconstructed with the occurrence of the current and future experiences.

The uniqueness of narrative inquiry is further identified in some later work of Connelly and Clandinin. Borrowing the concept of “commonplace” from Schwab (1962, as cited in Connelly & Clandinin, 2005), Connelly and Clandinin (2005) systematically specified three commonplaces (referred as dimensions in this case) of narrative inquiry: temporality, sociality, and place. The simultaneous exploration of all three dimensions, hence, makes narrative inquiry differ from other forms of qualitative research. In their work, Connelly and Clandinin (2005) elaborated on the temporal orientation of narrative inquiry in a more profound manner, stating that in narrative inquiry, the events under the study are usually in temporal transition. They also emphasize and reiterate that experiences grow out of other experiences, and previous experiences shed light on future experiences (Clandinin, 2006; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2005). As is true for many other forms of qualitative inquiries that “give an accounting of a person or an event independent of time” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2005, p. 480), the temporal orientation of narratives requires narrative inquirers to think narratively and to understand the temporal history (e.g., the past, the present, and the future) of their participants. As such, narrative inquirers are frequently recommended to prepare interview questions respectively exploring participants’ past, present, and future experiences and actions.

Regarding the second dimension, with the employment of narrative inquiry, inquirers also need to account for both personal conditions (e.g., feelings, hopes, desires, reactions, etc.) and social conditions (e.g., environment, surrounding factors and forces, contexts, etc.). In other words, sociality, as one dimension,
implies that narrative research is highly contextualized and situated. Aligning well with Connelly and Clandinin’s claim, Atkinson (2007) criticized that the absence of social conditions in a large number of narrative research studies in the field of health, stating that “the narratives seem to float in a social vacuum. The voices echo in an otherwise empty world. There is an extraordinary absence of social context, social action, and social interaction” (p. 339), which indicates the significance of contexts in narrative analysis. Meanwhile, sociality also raises ethical issues regarding the relationship between researchers and participants. According to Connelly and Clandinin (2005), researchers cannot subtract themselves from the relationship with participants, and narrative inquirers bracket themselves into an inquiry. In this circumstance, narrative inquirers cannot be absent from their studies, which requires them to explicitly acknowledge their relationship with participants when presenting their studies to the audience. In this case, narrative inquirers are cautioned to keep a balance between their functioning as researchers and as friends with their participants (Barkhuizen, 2011; Connelly & Clandinin, 2005). Place is the final dimension that narrative inquirers have to consider. The concrete, physical, and topological boundaries of places, where the inquiry and events take place are believed to impact the current study as well. Connelly and Clandinin (2005), therefore, stress the crucial role of specifying particular locations, and they also recommend that narrative inquirers (suggest sb. do sth/recommend something/somebody to somebody) acknowledge the qualities and impacts of places on their studies when presenting to their audience.

Clandinin and Connelly are the pioneers employing narrative inquiry in general education, especially in the domain of teacher education, and their works have also inspired many other scholars in this field to adopt narrative inquiry for research studies (Craig, 2011). As a result, narrative inquiry has developed to become a (y/an undergraduate/umbrella) useful research tool, and its functions for professional development have also started to receive scholars’ attention (Conle, 2000, 2001; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). For instance, Gibson (2003) demonstrated the value of narrative inquiry as a research tool through the analysis of a pre-service teacher’s stories. Gibson explored the pre-service teacher’s professional development and pointed out a number of benefits in using narrative inquiry in teacher education research, stating that narrative inquiry made it highly possible to gain comprehensive information and responses from participants. In this study, narrative inquiry is also found to provide participants an opportunity to explicitly reflect on and make sense of their own experiences, which in this token, also revealed their future intentions. Gibson (2003), therefore, concluded that narrative inquiry can make teacher education researchers gain a better understanding of teachers’ growth and development. Regarding pedagogical functions of narrative inquiry, Chan (2012), in her study, provided an example of narrative curriculum in her teaching in early childhood education. Inspired by her personal experiences, Chan included two clusters, autobiographic session and self-inquiries into stories session, in her course. Through analysis of sample student reflections, Chan illustrated narrative inquiry as a valuable pedagogical tool in changing students from passive learners to active learners, who constantly and consciously reflect on their past experiences which influenced their future actions. Chan (2012) thus believed that the use of narrative inquiry boosted students’ thinking and self-reflection, emphasizing the transformative power of narrative inquiry in education.

Narrative inquiry, accordingly, simultaneously explores all three dimensions: temporality, sociality, and place. All three dimensions offer narrative inquiry unique features and distinguish narrative inquiry from other forms of qualitative research. Narrative inquirers are highly suggested to think narratively and constantly consider all three dimensions when designing, conducting, and composing their studies. Similar to many other social science fields, narrative inquiry has become increasingly popular in the field of education. Its functions
as a research approach have received sufficient attention, and its value in teaching has also started to attract scholars’ attention.

**Narrative Inquiry in Language Teacher Education**

There were early signs that narrative research was beginning to attract the attention of researchers and teachers in the field of TESOL, and TESOL has adapted narrative inquiry very quickly from the field of general education (Bell, 2002; Johnson & Golombek, 2002; Pavlenko, 2002). In the past decade or so, TESOL has seen a huge growth in both interest in narratives and the practice of narrative research (e.g., Barkhuizen, 2011; Golombek & Johnson, 2004). Considering those particular features of narrative inquiry, many scholars in the domain of language teacher education acknowledge that narrative inquiry offers researchers an appropriate approach. Widely appreciated as an effective research tool, narrative inquiry has been used to explore variety of topics including language teacher identity formation and construction (e.g., Liu & Xu, 2011; Tsui, 2007; Schultz & Ravitch, 2013) and language teacher professional development (e.g., Golombek & Johnson, 2004; Ma & Ren, 2011; Sarasa, 2014).

Tsui’s (2007) study has been acknowledged as the seminal work (Liu & Xu, 2011), in which she adopted narrative inquiry as the methodology and explicitly used the term “narrative inquiry” to explore an English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher’s formation of professional identity. In this study, Tsui (2007) argued that the lived experiences of this EFL teacher extensively and holistically articulated the process as well as the multiple dimensions and facets of identity formation, and the value of the participant’s stories was reflected. Inspired by Tsui’s study, Liu and Xu (2011) also took a narrative perspective in their study to explore how a novice EFL teacher negotiated her identity in the context of reform in an English Education Department at a Chinese university. Through the analysis of narrative data from interviews and reflective journals, Liu and Xu found that this teacher constantly negotiated her identity in order to survive the changes. They also explicitly presented the close relationship they established with the participant and how it allowed the participant to freely express her ideas, frustrations, and challenges. In this study, the authors provided detailed background information about the reform and described the context and setting of the study, which helped the researchers and their audience situate the study. Hence, the analysis of stories and experiences of the participant was highly contextualized (Atkinson, 1997; Barkhuizen, 2011; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Majority scholars, such as those mentioned above, are interested in examining the formation and construction of teacher identity from the perspective of the participants, whereas a relatively small number of scholars attempt to explore the identity construction and negotiation of researchers and to scrutinize how researchers’ identities impact their own studies (e.g., Menard-Warwick, 2011; Norton & Early, 2011). Given that researchers are always the “important stakeholder with considerable power, influence, and investment” (Norton & Early, 2011, p. 416) of their studies and in their research fields, attention has to be given to researcher identity, and the comprehension and recognition of researchers’ identities are equally important. Drawing upon their own experiences in conducting research, Norton and Early (2011) addressed issues regarding the complex relationship between “researchers who are also teacher educators and teachers who are also research participants” (p. 417). They analyzed narrative data emerging in a research project conducted in Uganda, and analysis confirmed that researchers’ identities were “subject to constant negotiation and change” (p. 432). Norton and Early affirmed that researchers’ negotiation and construction of multiple identities were illustrated in stories. Hence, Norton and Early asserted that narrative inquiry can function as a means to
investigate and understand researcher identity. This study indeed visualizes “the complex ways in which researcher identity impacts research and research impacts researcher identity” (p. 436), and to a large extent, it also explicitly demonstrates the collaborative nature of narrative inquiry and refutes the frequent absence of research identity in majority written reports in social science. Narrative inquiry, therefore, is a productive approach to scrutinize the identity of both participants and researchers.

Considering that narrative activities create opportunities for language teachers to consciously reflect on and make sense of their previous experiences, teacher cognitive development can be facilitated through teachers’ reinternalization of their updated understandings. The “transformative power” (Johnson & Golombek, 2011, p. 486) of narratives, therefore, has been articulated. Through the analysis of several ESL teachers’ narratives, Golombek and Johnson, in a couple of their works (e.g., Golombek & Johnson, 2004; Johnson & Golombek, 2011), strongly promote and demonstrate that engaging in narrative activities enables and elicits language teachers to organize, externalize, and articulate their understanding of teaching, as well as to reinterpret and reinternalize these understandings. Barkhuizen (2011), aligning with Johnson and Golombek’s point of view, also briefly mentioned her own experience in integrating narrative activities in her course, presenting her realization that writing and analyzing narratives enabled language teachers to “become more aware of, and thus (understand) better, themselves and their practices” (p. 394). Barkhuizen, thus, drew this conclusion that teachers make meaning of their experiences through narrative writing and analysis. Accordingly, narrative activities are believed to foster language teacher development, and the complex development process is reflected in teachers’ narratives.

In addition to its function to foster conscious deliberation, narrative activities can also situate individual language teacher as functioning within a zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Golombek & Johnson, 2004; Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2011), according to which teacher educators can strategically provide appropriate mediation to scaffold language teacher professional development. With regard to language teacher professional development, many works in the domain of language teacher education point toward a narrative and socio-cultural turn. Therefore, narratives are viewed as the most authentic way to understand teaching from teachers’ perspectives and to effectively investigate language teacher professional development (e.g., Golombek & Johnson, 2004; Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2002, 2011; Ma & Ren, 2011; Sarasa, 2014). From a socio-cultural perspective, learning to teach is socially mediated, and language teacher development is not automatic, direct, or linear (Johnson & Dellagnelo, 2013). The developmental process, as a result, is believed to consist of the transition from socialization to internalization of understanding of new pedagogical tools and concepts, and it requires explicit mediation from more knowledgeable others, e.g., experts and peers, to assist teachers to develop. In this vein, teachers’ narratives create a space for strategic mediation from more knowledgeable others, especially teacher educators (Johnson, 2009; 2016).

The mediational space created through language teacher narratives has also been demonstrated in Johnson’s later works (e.g., Johnson, 2015; Johnson & Dellagnelo, 2013). Johnson (2015) noticed that language teachers’ articulation of their knowledge is reflected in their narratives, which enable teacher educators to scaffold individual teachers with strategic mediations based on each individual’s needs. It is, therefore, believed that “inquiry into experience enables teachers to act with foresight. It gives them increased control over their thoughts and actions; grants their experiences enriched, deepened meaning; and enables them to be more thoughtful and mindful of their work” (Johnson & Golombek, 2002, pp. 6-7). Considering that the mediation from teacher educators lies at the center of teacher education, it also claims the essentiality of teacher
education in promoting and facilitating language teacher professional development (Johnson, 2015; 2016). In their recent work, Golombek and Johnson (2017) reconceptualized that teachers’ narrative inquiry as professional development. Taking a Vygotskian socio-cultural perspective, Golombek and Johnson asserted the crucial role of teacher educators in creating mediational space, dialogic interactions, and pedagogical tools for teachers’ narrative inquiry to flourish as professional development. In particular, Golombek and Johnson maintained that “teachers may engage in narrative activity without engaging in narrative inquiry” (p. 27), meaning that narrative activities will not lead to professional development without the educational mediation from teacher educators. Therefore, Golombek and Johnson reclaimed the irreplaceable role of language teacher education. According to Golombek and Johnson (2017), mediation from teacher educators ignites the transformative power of narrative inquiry for teachers to develop their everyday knowledge to true/scientific knowledge. As a result, narrative activities make a great deal of contribution as a pedagogical tool in language teacher education, raising teacher educators’ awareness of the developmental path of individual language teachers to provide suitable mediation to individual teachers.

In conclusion, in spite of the relatively short history in the field, especially in the domain of language teacher education, the unique and particular characteristics make narrative inquiry an effective research methodology in TESOL. Scholars in language teacher education become increasingly aware of and appreciate the functions of narrative inquiry in the exploration of language teacher identity formation, professional development, and other topics. A few scholars also repute narrative inquiry as a productive means to investigate researcher identity. The pedagogical functions of narrative inquiry have also been well recognized and valued in language teacher education, and narrative inquiry makes significant contributions to create a space for mediation from knowledgeable others and to further enhance language teacher professional development.

**Benefits and Limitations of Implementing Narrative Inquiry**

In comparison to other types of qualitative research approaches, narrative inquiry has a fairly short history in the field of social science. Nonetheless, the unique benefits of narrative inquiry make it competitive and attractive enough to appeal to social science researchers, including these in education and language teacher education.

Narrative inquiry allows researchers to comprehensively present participants’ experiences, and thus, to portray holistic profiles of their participants (Bell, 2002). For instance, Liu and Xu (2011) adopted narrative inquiry in their study, and it allowed for a constant track of the participant’s identity shifting. Moreover, in the domain of teacher education, narrative activities are found to promote teachers’ understanding of themselves and their experiences (Barkhuizen, 2011; Johnson & Golombek, 2002). In other words, teachers make meaning of their teaching and learning experiences through narratives (e.g., Golombek & Johnson, 2004; Johnson & Golombek, 2011), and narratives, as a result, are believed to engage teachers to reflect on their stories and previous experiences and to compel them to gain better understanding of themselves and their experiences, which consequently impacts their future experiences and actions (e.g., Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2005; Barkhuizen, 2011). Many researchers adopt narrative inquiry and explicitly state these advantages in their own studies. Sarasa (2014), for instance, used narrative inquiry to explore the course Overall Communication (OC) in an undergraduate foreign language teacher education program (EFLTEP). Through a narrative analysis, this study describes the narratives from pre-service teachers, and it found that narrative activities in this course gave pre-service teachers opportunities to share stories with peers. Through narrating stories, these students gained a
better understanding of their and others’ life experiences, and this process inspired the reconstruction of identity and their development as teachers. In a similar vein, Liu and Xu’s (2011) study also demonstrate a change of self-perception and identity through self-reflection.

What is more, narrative activities can also be great resources for teacher educators, and its pedagogical functions have been applied in teacher education programs. Through narratives, pre-service teachers can externalize their understandings of concepts, challenges, and contradictions, and as a consequence, a space for mediation is established where teacher educators are believed to “play a key role within the mediational space by serving as expert other(s)” (Golombek & Johnson, 2004, p. 324). As such, narratives can provide evidence of pre-service teacher development and make the developmental process visible to teacher educators. Alternatively stated, narrative inquiry provides teacher educators access to “recognize and nourish the unique path of professional development that each teacher pursues” (Golombek & Johnson, 2004, p. 325), building on which teacher educators can provide responsive and strategic mediation. The mediation, then, plays a catalytic role in fostering pre-service teachers’ reconceptualization and reinternalization of new understandings of themselves and their practice, which always results in development.

Moreover, many researchers strongly believe that narrative inquiry is an important approach to make a change in contemporary education. Clandinin (2006) briefly presented using narrative inquiry in curriculum making. She illustrated that “narrative inquiry gives us a research methodology for engaging in this study of people’s experiences” (p. 51), and she maintained that curriculum making takes consideration of teachers’ and learners’ lives, and thus, narrative inquiry increased the possibilities of understanding how individual’s experiences are shaped by social and institutional narratives. Hence, a deep understanding of the entwined relationship between individual experiences and social factors affects the curriculum-making process, and this relationship can be revealed and presented through narrative inquiry. Clandinin (2006) affirmed that engaging in narrative inquiry helps to make schools more educational for learners, and students’ learning is strongly promoted. Teachers can also benefit from narrative activities as narratives enable them to “make sense of their professional worlds and to make worthwhile changes in themselves and their teaching practices” (Golombek & Johnson, 2004, p. 309), and they will gain better understanding of themselves to become better teachers (Johnson & Golombek, 2002; Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2011). Childs (2011), for example, presented a study on a novice English as a second language (ESL) teacher, and she found that self-reflection stimulated this teacher to externalize his challenges and struggles and to effectively seek mediation from multiple resources to enhance his development. Teacher development, in return, will positively impact their students’ learning.

In spite of these recognizable advantages, narrative inquiry also has limitations that researchers and teacher educators need to be aware of. For one thing, considering the purpose of conducting holistically exploration of research participants’ experiences, narrative inquiry is time consuming and demands lengthy a data-collection process, and thus, it requires researchers’ effort and devotion to their research projects (Bell, 2002, 2011; Connelly & Clandinin, 2005). Secondly, since narrative inquiry is still in its infancy, the criteria of guidance and assessment are still under discussion (Barkhuizen, 2011; Bell, 2002, 2011; Connelly & Clandinin, 2005), and it is recommended that narrative inquirers develop criteria appropriate to their own studies. The third concern is regarding researcher identity and positionality. As discussed above, narrative inquiry is a collaborative process and narrative inquirers are intimately involved in the research activities (Bakhuizen, 2011; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). It is difficult for researchers to keep balance in the relationship with their
participants. Although a close relation will yield abundant data, it might also encourage more confidential data that is not appropriate to be included in the final reports (Bell, 2011). For example, regarded as a friend, Bakhuizen was given more insights by her participants, and some confidential information shared by these participants cannot be used in the final reports, impeding her ability (not impede the person/can impede abilities) to holistically analyze and present stories and experiences of her participants (Bakhuizen, 2011).

In addition, narrative inquirers also face particular tensions when trying to compose and publish their studies. Bell (2011), resonating with Connelly and Clandinin (1990), pointed out that the contradictions between the nature of narratives and the composing process. Despite the acknowledgment that participants live on and their stories continue, inquirers have to decide when to terminate data collection, and it conflicts with the epistemology beliefs of narrative inquiry. Researchers are usually able to recognize the dynamic nature of narratives and believe that new events and experiences will foster reinterpretation of past experience (Bell, 2011; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). However, the writing stage forces them to fix their participants’ stories (Bell, 2011), and thus, inquirers have to make decision to terminate data-collecting at a certain point.

Contrary to researchers of other qualitative inquiry forms, few narrative researchers discuss the limitations of narrative inquiry in their own studies, whereas the benefits and advantages of narrative inquiry are often mentioned and highly recommended with the majority of attention being given to findings and implications of their studies (e.g., Norton & Early, 2011; Liu & Xu, 2011). As a comparatively new research methodology, researchers must present the rationales by using it in their studies for justification. Since narrative inquiry is still a controversial approach in social science, it is also essential for researchers to provide sufficient explanations when using it to promote its legitimacy.

**Conclusions**

So far, this article has reviewed particular features of narrative inquiry and its contributions to the field of TESOL, language teacher education in particular. It also explores the advantages and limitations of using narrative inquiry. Despite its short history, narrative inquiry has attracted more and more attention from scholars in the field of TESOL. In order to appropriately adopt narrative inquiry in research studies, researchers have to gain sufficient understanding of the features, advantages, as well as limitations in the use of narrative inquiry. Moreover, the pedagogical functions of narrative inquiry have also received ample attention in the field of TESOL, especially in the domain of language teacher education. Following the discussion above, this paper concludes with suggestions and implications for scholars and researchers.

As is stated, the criteria for guiding and assessing narrative reports are still under discussion, considering which many researchers propose and advocate that criteria, particularly those for narrative inquiry, should be scrutinized (Barkhuizen, 2011; Bell, 2011; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Therefore, it is highly important for scholars in social science to establish agreed-upon norms and criteria for narrative inquiry. Meanwhile, it is equally important for journal reviewers to gain solid background knowledge and understanding of narrative inquiry to be able to fairly assess submitted narrative reports. Those criteria are believed to provide guidance for assessment.

In terms of publishing narrative research, it always requires more space for narrative researchers to holistically present and show a comprehensive understanding of participants and researchers themselves (Bell, 2011). The sociality dimension of narrative inquiry also requires detailed background and contextual information. In narrative reports, inquirers are significantly dedicated to justifying their adoption of narrative
inquiry in their own studies, whereas little space and attention are given to the data analysis session, resulting in very ambiguous and vague descriptions of how narrative data is analyzed. In addition, academic journals typically only allow limited space for submitted manuscripts, which discourages narrative inquirers from publishing their studies. In consideration of the unique needs for comprehensive report of narrative studies, a couple of alternative options for narrative inquirers to consider for publishing their work are publishing book chapters, writing a book, and so forth. Bell (2011) asserted that these strategies will increase the chances for narrative inquirers to publish their works. Therefore, it is important for narrative inquirers to identify suitable publication venues.

In addition to the implications to researchers, narrative inquiry also has considerable implications for teacher educators. Given its pedagogical functions, teacher educators are highly recommended to integrate narrative activities in their teaching (e.g., Chan, 2012; Johnson, 2015; Sarasa, 2014). These activities allow for teachers’ externalization of their understandings and individual teacher’s construction of ZPD becomes visible to teacher educators. In the view of the collaborative nature of narratives in order to provide appropriate mediation for individual teachers, teacher educators have to put efforts to collaborate with teachers in narratives to receive more information from individual teachers. Considering that narrative inquiry promotes teachers to reveal their intentions for future actions and experiences, teacher educators are likely to gain a better understanding of individual teacher’s anticipations about themselves, teacher educators, and university programs. As a consequence, teacher educators can adapt their curriculum and teaching based on teachers’ anticipations and intentions to thoroughly prepare them to become better teachers.

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