

REPORTING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AS PRACTICE

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The purpose of this chapter is to encourage researchers to experiment with using a narrative format in reporting their studies. In the conventional format, which is mandatory for publication in most research journals, researchers are required to assume the voice of a logician or debater. By changing their voice to storyteller, researchers will also change the way in which the voices of their "subjects" or participants can be heard. As logicians and debaters, researchers codify, objectify, and fragment what their "subjects" have to say into factors and themes. As storytellers, "subjects" appear as actors in a research narrative. They are given their own speaking roles in the drama and interact with the researcher protagonist as contributors to the story's denouement.

Researchers are practitioners; that is, they engage in a human activity carried out over time in order to accomplish a purpose. The purpose of social science research projects is to produce knowledge and understanding of the human condition. A narrative account is the appropriate form of expression to display research as a practice. The production occurs over time and has a beginning, middle, and end (Aristotle, trans. 1954), the essential elements of a story.

The format of the research report is a fundamental artifact of the social science disciplines. Suggestions for experimentation and change in the format needs to take into account the "web of delivered discourse, social practices, professional requirements, and daily decisions" (Schrag, 1986, p. 4) in which this discussion takes place. One does not begin anew, but within his or her historical situation. The tenacity and power of the conventional approach to doing and reporting research, as well as the possibility of its evolutionary change, has been recently illustrated by its assimilation of qualitative research into its orthodoxy (LeCompte, Millroy, & Preissle, 1992, p. xvi). In this assimilation process,

qualitative research accommodated the conventional approach by adapting for its own the standard format for reporting research. This format confines the presentation of research to a logically ordered justification of results and disregards the processes of discovery and decision that are essential to the actual production of research. Development of more appropriate formats for reporting qualitative research may also advance the acceptance of diverse reporting formats for research using quantitative methods. The acceptance of qualitative methods into the mainstream allows for encouragement that a change in the research report formats is possible.

Research Reports as Knowledge Claims

The conventional format of the research report is a convenient design to allow "the community of scholars" to judge the validity of the knowledge claim presented by a researcher. It provides efficient access to the determination of whether or not the claim was the product of an approved methodological algorithm. The assumed primary function of research is to create new knowledge. Social science researchers engage in research in order to have something to say about the human condition; that is, to produce a true statement about human affairs. As a result of carrying out the inquiry, the researcher claims to have found out something about human reality. The research report states the claim and presents information to justify it. Its function is not simply to inform editors about what the researcher is claiming, but to convince them of the validity of the claim. Researchers submit their reports to the scholarly community (represented by journal editors and reviewers) for its review and judgment. The editors and reviewers determine whether or not the claim will be added to the discipline's body of knowledge; that is, whether or not it will be published in a research journal.

The audience for the conventional report is the expert reviewers who decide on the validity of the knowledge claim, not the general reader or the discipline's practitioners. The conventional format is not designed to communicate the knowledge claim, but to communicate its validity. It is not surprising that practitioners, whose interests focus on the usefulness of knowledge claims, do not find the conventional format of the reports a useful means for displaying the significance of the knowledge for practice (for example, Morrow-Bradley & Elliott, 1986).

Many knowledge claims that are submitted to journals along with support for their validity (research reports) are judged to be not acceptable. Those that do not pass the muster of the review process are not

added to the discipline's body of knowledge. What was claimed to be knowledge in those reports has not been accepted as, in fact, knowledge. The reports that are published have already passed the review, thus, publication of a knowledge claim signifies it has been accepted by the caretakers of the discipline's body of knowledge. The purpose of publication is not to present the claim for judgment regarding its validity by the readership of a journal; judgment has already taken place by the expert reviewers. The journals serve to distribute and communicate what their editors and reviewers have already accepted into the body of knowledge. When writers reference published articles, they generally assume the validity of the article's knowledge claim. When journals publish the articles that have passed their review, they do so in the same report format in which it was presented for review. A report format that would be most effective for communicating accepted knowledge is not the same format that was designed to facilitate reviewer's judgments. Yet this is the format our journals conventionally use to make the newly accepted knowledge public.

Within the conventional approach, successful knowledge claims, that is, those that pass the muster of the journal review process, serve other functions beside adding to a discipline's body of knowledge. They are used as an index for promotion and tenure decisions. A researcher's career advancement is often tied directly to the number of knowledge claims that have made it through the review process to publication. Thus, tampering with the conventional format and presenting one's research to reviewers in a different format is serious business.

Multiple Reports for Different Audiences

One solution to the problem of using the conventional format in publications intended to distribute and communicate the new additions to a discipline's knowledge is to experiment with alternate formats when presenting accepted claims to other audiences. Researchers could continue to use the conventional format for presenting their knowledge claims for judgment by peer reviewers and journal editors. An example of the use of alternate formats for distribution of research generated knowledge to audiences other than reviewers, is Fischer and Wertz's (1979) study of the experience of being criminally victimized. They produced five different reports of their findings. The first was a conventional research report addressed to reviewers. The purpose of this report was to convince reviewers of the validity of their findings. Even though their research was a qualitative study employing phenomenological methods, their report used the conventional format with its pattern of literature review, method section, results of analysis, and

discussion. They stated that this report was too dense and technical for use at public presentations and nonprofessional discussions. Because a major purpose of their study was to affect policy changes, they produced additional reports using other formats designed to communicate their results clearly and meaningfully to community members and policymakers. Their second report consisted of a collection of individual case synopses which were intended to provide the audience "with concrete examples that reverberate with their own lives" (p. 143). The third report was in the format of an "illustrated narrative." In this report they placed the experiences of the victims into five sections ordered in a temporal sequence. The first section was about "living routinely," the middle three sections described the life changes participants went through as a result of being assaulted, and the final section was the denouement which described how victims "got on" with their lives after the trauma of the assault. Their fourth format was a collection of individual case materials in a shortened form. The fifth format was prepared for an audience of psychotherapists and was a more technical discussion of their findings as they related to the psychological dynamics of trauma experiences and a presentation of the implications of their results for counseling the criminally victimized.

The use of a variety of formats by Fischer and Wertz issued from their desire to communicate their findings to audiences that could make most effective use of them. They presented to neighborhood groups, police departments, and therapists, as well as to journal reviewers. The usefulness of multiple formats for the communication and distribution of results seems an obvious and necessary addition to the conventional format used to present knowledge claims to reviewers. In this chapter I want to make a stronger proposal than merely the use of multiple formats for reporting research. The understanding of the nature of knowledge and its validation have undergone change as we have passed from a positivistic philosophy of science to a period of "posts"—postpositive, poststructural, and postmodern. The formats in which research is reported are not neutral and transparent, but reflect particular epistemological commitments. The conventional social science research report format was designed to allow an efficient judgment about the validity of knowledge claims as they were understood within a positivist framework (Bazerman, 1987; Madigan, Johnson, & Linton, 1995). In the positivist framework the determination of validity of research results was based on the judgment that prescribed methods had been correctly followed. My stronger proposal is that the use of a narrative format for reporting research should be privileged over the conventional format, even in presenting knowledge claims for reviewer judgment. The nar-

rative provides a more epistemologically adequate discourse form for reporting and assessing research within the context of a postpositivistic understanding of knowledge generation.

Report Format and Types of Proof

The conventional format mandated for social science research reports has been conditioned by how the disciplines came to understand the properties of their knowledge and how this type of knowledge was to be ratified. The stance regarding the properties of knowledge mandated the "voice" and grammar employed by the report writer. In the heyday of positivism, knowledge was held to have the property of a logical conclusion, akin to a mathematical derivation. Knowledge statements were products of a hypothetical-deductive process. In this process the consequences of a knowledge claim (a hypothesis) were logically deduced, and then observations were made to determine if, in fact, the consequences followed the hypothesized conditions. If they logically followed, the claim was held to be demonstrated (or inductively verified, see Gordon, 1991). A true knowledge statement has logical certitude because it was the product of a formal process. As was the case with mathematical solutions, the validity of research conclusions were understood to be independent of both the person making the claim and the audience to whom the claim was presented.

More recently, the property of knowledge has been reconsidered. Instead of a logical certainty, knowledge is understood as an agreement reached by community of scholars. Knowledge is the best map or description of reality about which the community has reached consensus (Habermas, 1979). This shift in the understanding of the property of knowledge reflects the change in the philosophy of science from a "hard" or naive realism to a "soft" or subtle realism (Hammersley, 1990). No longer are knowledge statements considered to be mirrored reflections of reality as it is in itself; rather, they are human constructions of models or maps of reality. Through exchanges with the world, these constructions evolve (Campbell, 1974) toward more useful depiction. The more evolved models are not necessarily more accurate descriptions of reality, but their use provides a more successful interaction with the world than previous models. Research reports informed by this understanding of knowledge may be presented as arguments (Nelson, Megill, & McCloskey, 1987; Perelman, 1982) or as narrative accounts. Their purpose is to convince reviewers of the pragmatic reasonableness of their knowledge claims. In this mode, the members of the audience are crucial, because they are the ones who need to be convinced by the report.

The philosophies of knowledge are quite different for those who understand knowledge as a certain product of logical operations and those who understand it as a map or model of aspects of self, others, society, or the material realm. Nevertheless, researchers committed to the recent shift in the philosophy of science have retained the general format for reporting research; even though this format reflects the principles of a positivistic understanding of science. Both groups of researchers continue to employ the standard format which is designed to display a formal demonstration of the research conclusions and to recount the correct use of acceptable methods of data collection and data analysis.

One consequence of retaining the conventional format by those holding the new understanding of knowledge is that their research reports continue to display the knowledge process from a synchronic perspective. Saussure (1907–11/1966) contrasted two approaches to the study of language—the synchronic and the diachronic. The diachronic (through-time) study of language, which had been the way language was studied before Saussure, investigated the development of language through time. Its focus was on the changes that occurred in words, grammar, and vocabulary through history. The synchronic (same-time) study called for a slice through a living language as it existed at a particular time. By approaching language synchronically, Saussure exhibited the structural relations that existed among the signs of a language system. He found that the meaning of a sign was dependent on its differences from other signs, not on an evident connection to a reference. Saussure's discoveries were recovered by Lévi-Strauss (1958/1963) and were foundational for the structuralist movement in France.

A synchronic research report presents its support for its knowledge claim in stop-time. The data and analysis are presented without temporal depth. The report submits its information as if it were all present at the same time. The order of the presentation is determined by the structure of a validity demonstration, not the actual sequence of progressions and regressions in which the research project unfolded. The blocks of a synchronic report are expected to fit into the structured cut outs of the format board. The order in which the blocks were collected is not considered as significant as the fact that each block can fill its place in the demonstration. For the positivist reviewer the concern is whether or not a part fulfills the requirements of its particular place in a formal argument; for the postpositivist reviewer the question is whether the journey by which the knowledge was accumulated was productive.

In the next section I address the use of a diachronic or narrative form of report. I hold that the synchronic presentation of research misses the crucial temporal dimension through which research projects

develop. The meaning of research results is not independent of the process that produced them; research findings retain the traces of the productive activities that generated them. In the spirit of experimentation, I propose that qualitative researchers use a diachronic type report to present their research. The format of such a report is a diachronic account of the events, happenings, actions, and choices through which a research project moved.

Diachronic Research Reports

The diachronic research report is based on the understanding that research is a practice, a product of human action. Research practice shares with other human practices movement through time. Researchers are the protagonists in the drama of their quests for understanding. The drama consists of a sequential composition of decisions, actions, chance occurrences, and interactions with subjects and colleagues. Values, desires, inadequacies, skills, and personal characteristics make their appearance at various points in the researcher's performance.

Action is the basis for creating meaning (Valdé, 1991) and a knowledge claim is an accomplishment that comes through a researcher's actions or performance. To cut the claim off from the actions and happenings that led up to it is to strip it of its full meaning. The research process needs to be reported as a temporal whole in which the knowledge claim is a conclusion whose meaning is dependent on the developing actions and events of the whole research process. As temporally sequenced actions, research follows the logic of practice; not the formal logic of a positivistic approach to research, nor the argumentative reasoning of the constructivist approach.

Narrative is the discourse form which can express the diachronic perspective of human actions. It retains their temporal dimension by exhibiting them as occurring before, at the same time, or after other actions or events. "Perhaps the most essential ingredient of narrative accounting (or storytelling) is its capability to structure events in such a way that they demonstrate . . . a sense of movement of direction through time" (Gergen & Gergen, 1986). Narrative, however, not only retains the temporal sequence of actions, but links them together as contributors to the accomplishment of a common purpose.

Approaching research diachronically emphasizes that research is composed of a connected set of human activities and that the discourse form which is best suited for reporting human actions is the narrative. The next two sections concentrate on these aspects of diachronically conceived research, that is, action theory and narrative discourse.

Action Theory

Research is a performance carried out by investigators. As a performance it takes place within the context of social norms and scripts; that is, it is social practice. Bourdieu (1990b), a noted French anthropologist, has presented a theory of social practice that I have found helpful in situating the practice of research. Jenkins's (1992) excellent review has provided a guide for my reading of Bourdieu.

Bourdieu holds that through the business of everyday life people learn and construct models of how the world is, of how the world ought to be, of human nature, of cosmology. These models do not simply fulfill purely theoretical or cognitive functions; they are about doing, as much as they are about knowing. Only as one does things is it possible to know about things (Bourdieu, 1977).

Bourdieu describes three features of practice: (1) it is located in time and space, (2) it is most often guided by tacit understanding instead of rational decisions, and (3) it has purpose and strategies for accomplishing its goal.

First, practice is located in space, and, more significantly, in time. It is something that can be observed not only in three dimensions, but also from moment to moment. Temporality is an basic feature of practice.

Time is both a constraint and a resource for social interaction. More than that, practice is "intrinsically defined by its *tempo*." Time, and the sense of it, is, of course, socially constructed; it is, however, socially constructed out of natural cycles—days and nights, seasons, the human pattern of reproduction, growth and ageing. Similarly, and more immediately, interaction *takes* time—and it occurs in space. Time and space are both capable of being modeled in different ways, and are thus equally social constructs, but movement in space always involves movement in time. Practice as a visible, "objective," social phenomenon cannot be understood outside of time/space. Any adequate analysis of practice must, therefore, treat temporality as a central feature of its very nature. (Jenkins, 1992, p. 69)

Second, practice is not wholly consciously organized. "Nothing is random or purely accidental but, as one thing follows on from another, practice happens" (Jenkins, 1992, p. 70). Bourdieu holds that practice follows the practical sense or "a feel for the game."

The practical mastery of the logic or of the imminent necessity of a game—a mastery acquired by experience of the game, and one which works outside conscious control and discourse (in the way that, for instance, techniques of the body do). (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 61)

Bourdieu's notion that practice is not primarily guided by logically derived decisions places it in what Epstein (1993) refers to as the *experiential* system. Epstein contrasts the experiential system with the rational system and proposes that the experiential system is holistic, makes associationistic connection, and its processes occur "instantaneously and normally outside of conscious awareness . . . [with the result] that people are generally unaware of intervening interpretative and affective reactions and assume that they react directly to external events" (p. 403). Thus, actions in the social world are experientially guided and responsive to changing contexts without the necessity to "stop and think" before the act. Research practice can be characterized as a dance in which investigators' respond to the opportunities and challenges of their projects through "felt meanings" (Gendlin, 1991).

The coincidence of the objective structures and the internalized structures which provides the illusion of immediate understanding, characteristic of practical experience of the familiar universe, and which at the same time excludes from that experience any inquiry as to its own conditions of possibility. (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 20)

Actions, of which practice is composed, would not be possible unless it were taken for granted most of the time. "We don't spend our time questioning the meaning of life because we cannot afford to and social imperatives do not allow—in both senses of the word—us to do it" (Jenkins, 1992, p. 71).

Practice is characteristically fluid and indeterminate. It is "the 'art' of the *necessary improvisation* which defines excellence" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 8). Social life, in all of its complexity and variety, is not accomplished on the basis of rules, recipes and normative models. "We cannot have 'on file' a rule or prescription for every conceivable situation which one might encounter in routine social life. The depiction of practice as an improvisatory performance reemphasizes the importance of recognizing the temporal dimension of practice. Improvisation is the exploitation of pause, interval and indecision. The delay or, its opposite, the swift exe-

cution of the surprise move—is manipulable as a strategic resource” (Jenkins, 1992, p. 71). Bourdieu is critical of decision and game theory that picture human action as intrinsically rational and calculating.

Third, practice, even though accomplished without conscious deliberation for the most part, has purpose. Practice is not the product of structural rules, but of actor’s strategies. Actors have goals and interests and use strategies to accomplish them. In his ethnographic analyses, Bourdieu describes “the inter play of culturally given dispositions, interests and ways of proceeding” and “individual skills and social competences, the constraints of resource limitations, the unintended consequences which intrude into any ongoing chain of transactions, personal idiosyncrasies and failings, and the weight of the history of relationships between the individuals concerned and the groups in which they claim membership” (Jenkins, 1992, p. 72).

For Bourdieu, the logic of practice consists of these three features—it occurs in space and time, it is guided by tacit understanding which neither wholly conscious nor wholly unconscious, and it is purposeful and strategic. Thus, practice is a mixture of constraint and freedom.

Using Bourdieu’s theory as a guide, the practice of research has: (1) temporality as its central feature; (2) proceeds by way of “necessary improvisation” and tacit knowing, rather than by its own rationality and powers of decision-making; and (3) is strategic and goal-oriented. The description of research as practice differs significantly from the descriptions given in research textbooks or presented in conventional research reports. Instead of a performance choreographed according to logically ordered algorithmic methodical steps, the research process consists of often tacit strategic improvisations in the service of a guiding purpose. From my own and my colleagues’ research experiences, I hold that the flowing logic of practice more accurately describes the texture of actual research practice than does the logic of formal demonstration.

In the new philosophy of science, knowing the actual unfolding process of the research is important to the understanding the meaning of the results. Thus, it is important that the research be reported in a form that can communicate the complex and fluid unfolding of the performance. The conventional reporting format reconstructs the actual research performance into a series of rationally calculated actions that moved the process straight forward toward a knowledge claim. More closely aligned with the diachronic and improvisational characteristics of the logic of practice is the narrative form. When constructing their

reports of the temporal, tacit, and purposeful dimensions of their research endeavors, researchers need to use a format that can communicate the depth, complexity, and contextuality of their knowledge generation.

The Discourse Form of Narrative

The discourse form that is most appropriate for describing human action is narrative (Ricoeur, 1984). Bruner (1990) has argued that narrative is the natural mode through which human beings make sense of lives in time. Narrative discourse produces stories whose subject matter is human action. Stories are concerned with human attempts to progress to a solution, clarification, or unraveling of an incomplete situation. Narrative transforms a mere succession of actions and events into a coherent whole in which these happenings gain meaning as contributors to a common purpose. The research narrative draws together into a story the diverse actions and events that contributed to the research outcome—the findings.

“Other things exist in time, but only humans possess the capacity to perceive the connectedness of life and to seeks its coherence” (Vanhoozer, 1991, p. 43). Stories are linguistic expressions of this uniquely human experience of the connectedness of life (Ricoeur, 1992). The ground of storied expressions is the phenomenon of individual protagonists engaged in an ordered transformation from an initial situation to a terminal situation. The capacity to understand stories derives from the correlation between the unfolding of a story and the temporal character of human experience and the human pre-understanding of human action (Ricoeur, 1984). Although the protagonists of stories can be expanded by analogizing to institutions, organizations, or groups of people and by anthropomorphizing to animals (as in fairy tales), the story form retains its primary character of an imitation of personal action (Aristotle, 1954).

“People do not deal with the world event by event or with text sentence by sentence. They frame events and sentences in larger structures” (Bruner, 1990, p. 64). Plot is the narrative structure through which people understand and describe the relationship among the events and choices of their lives. Plots function to compose or configure events into a story by:

1. Delimiting a temporal range which marks the beginning and end of the story,
2. Providing criteria for the selection of events to be included in the story,

3. Temporally ordering events into an unfolding movement culminating in a conclusion, and
4. Clarifying or making explicit the meaning events have as contributors to the story as a unified whole.

Plots mark off a segment of time in which events are linked together as contributors to a particular outcome. The segment of time can range from the boundless (the story of God's creation of the universe), to centuries (the story of the settlement of the United States), to lifetimes (biographies), to daily or hourly episodes (the story of going shopping). In each case the plot establishes the beginning and end of the storied segment, thereby creating the temporal boundaries for the narrative gestalt.

Plots also function to select from the myriad of happenings those that are direct contributors to the terminal situation of the story (Carr, 1986). When the plot of the story concerns a researcher's production of a knowledge claim, those events and actions pertinent to the production of the claim are selected for inclusion in the highlighted figure of the story. Other events, such as the clothes worn, the room in which the analysis was undertaken, the eating of breakfast, and so on, because they are not central to the plot, may be included as background.

Narrative thinking is the most effective method of organizing action (Robinson & Hawpe, 1986). In a narrative approach, action is viewed as an expression of existence, and "its organization manifests the narrative organization of human experience" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 142). As the syllogism is the appropriate form for expressing a formal logic demonstration, and argument is appropriate for using evidence to convince an audience, narrative is the appropriate form for displaying the logic of practice.

Narrative discourse functions to transform a list or sequence of disconnected research events into a unified story with a thematic point (Polkinghorne, 1988). Narrative grammar performs this transformation through the operation of "emplotment" (Ricoeur, 1984). In emplotment actions and happenings are "grasped" together into a temporal whole and displayed as contributors to a particular outcome or achievement. Emplotment has a gestaltlike organizing quality that draws attention away from individual research events and draws attention to the unfolding of the whole project. The interest of Gestalt psychology is in the formation of spatial elements into whole figures (for example, the mental operation whereby by three non aligned dots take on the appearance of a triangle). Narrative grammar operates to configure research events into elements of a temporal whole that is located between the

beginnings of a research project and its final denouement. Although emplotment can operate as a single thread that serves to draw all the elements together, it often employs multiple threads or subplots which are woven together into the complex and layered whole. Because of the synthesizing operations of emplotment, a narrative research report is able to accommodate and integrate the multiple elements that affect the progress of the project. Dispositions, values, emotions, purposes, deliberations, choices, chance events, and bodily and physical processes are synthesized into a single research story.

The narrative research report is a history of the research project. It is not, however, an unedited motion picture depicting the process as it happened. Stories are recollections and recreations of past episodes. The meanings of events flows from their appearance in the researcher's reflections on them from the perspective of what has happened (Schön, 1983). Stories select from the myriad instances of the research process as it occurred. Not all the elements will be used for the telling of the story. As mentioned above, elements which do not contradict the plot, but which are not pertinent to its development, do not become part of the narrative research report. This process has been called narrative smoothing (Spence, 1986). An actual research project does not match a carefully crafted, congruent story. It consists of extraneous happenings and everyday distractions (Carr, 1986). The very act of bringing these happening into language imposes a higher level of order on them than they have in the flux of the everyday experience. The move to narrative configuration extracts a still higher order from the fullness of lived experiences (Kerby, 1991). Narrative configuration, however, cannot impose just any emplotted order on the selected events. The final story must fit the events while at the same time bringing an order and meaningfulness that was not necessarily apparent in the event as it happened.

Through the use of narrative, researchers can integrate the three themes of the logic of practice described by Bourdieu. The temporal unfolding of the project in which prior actions and events affect, limit, and contribute to subsequent actions can be expressed by using a narrative format. The meaning and significance of actions that were improvised or guided by tacit understanding at the time of their occurrence can be retrospectively clarified in light of subsequent developments in the project. Narrative can select and organize the various acts and events of a research endeavor from the perspective of their positive or negative contribution to the accomplishment of the purpose for which the project was undertaken.

In the narrative research report, researchers speak with the voice of the storyteller rather than the impersonal voice of the logician or the

arguer. They speak in the first person as the teller of their own tale. Stories are told to (written for) audiences and can be adapted to the interests and needs of the hearers (readers). When addressed to reviewers of its knowledge claim, stories can be framed to speak to their interests. A narrative report, however, displays the acceptability of a claim rather than argues for it. The display operates by eliciting the kind of trust that accompanies observing a person's performance. The voices of the subjects who participated in the research are allowed to speak in the narrative report. What they had to say need not be fragmented into brief supporting examples for themes; but as characters in the story, they appear as co-actors affecting and contributing to the unfolding research process.

Examples of Narrative Research Reports

Over twenty years ago Golden (1976) published a collection of twenty-one narrative research reports titled *The Research Experience*. Each narrative report was preceded by the original article, which was published in the conventional synchronic format. Golden, in describing the narrative reports wrote:

[The narrative reports] take into account the unplanned as well as the planned aspects of discovery. These first-person accounts are intended to provide a broader perspective of the research experience than is usually found in the professional literature of the field. The contributors review some of the considerations and constraints—theoretical, practical, and personal—which influenced their decisions at crucial choice points in the research experience.

She noted that the personal journals (narrative reports) took into account "the unplanned as well as the planned aspects of discovery." They showed the "feeling, thinking component—the human side—of research." The narratives "confront the disorderly, the overlooked, the unpredictable, and even the boring and routine aspects of research" (p. 30). In one of the narratives Doob and Gross (1976) include in their story incidents that changed their design. Their research called for a car remaining still when a traffic light turned green. Their frustration measure was to be the time it took before the driver in the car behind the stopped car began honking. Because the researchers couldn't get their car washed before beginning the experiment, several of the drivers thought the car was broken down and never honked; on the other hand several others chose to crash against their bumper instead of honking. The narrative format promotes the inclusion of this kind of

detail and rich description; elements neglected in the contemporary demonstration format.

Golden, who wrote before the new philosophy of science had made inroads into American social sciences, depicted the narratives as describing the process of discovery, and saw the conventionally formatted reports as serving the process of justification. She writes, "science tells us what ought to be done" (Golden, 1976, p. 30). The new philosophy of science proposes that the bifurcation of research into a context of discovery and context of justification is a misunderstanding of the reciprocal influence these two contexts have on one another. The storied presentation of the research process allows for the integration of both notions within the diachronic perspective of research as practice.

The narrative research reports collected by Golden remain as exemplars for contemporary qualitative researchers. The reports are in the form of a story in which the researcher is the protagonist whose purpose is to generate knowledge. The story includes a presentation of a setting in which the action takes place, marks the beginning of the drama (the reason for the researcher's interest in generating knowledge about a particular question) and the denouement or ending of the drama (the accomplishment of the project). Between these beginning and ending points, the stories weave together: (1) the accidental and planned happenings; (2) the motives, strategies, and actions undertaken by protagonist and other characters (research participants, assistants, administrators, and others) who affected the outcome; and (3) the weight these factors had in moving the research process toward the goal or away from the goal.

There is increasing interest in the use of narrative data in qualitative research. Cortazzi (1993) and Mishler (1995) give overviews of the many uses of narratives in current research. Nevertheless, most of these narrative inquiries continue to report their results in the conventional form. Van Maanen (1988) and E. M. Bruner (1986) propose that organizational and anthropological research results be presented in narrative form. Although I support the increased use of narrative data and analysis and presentation of results in narrative form, the focus of this chapter is on a different issue—the format of the research report. Reporting research in narrative form is appropriate for the many types of qualitative investigations (as well as, quantitative investigations). Examples of research reports in narrative form more current than Golden's 1976 collection are relatively rare. An early example of a narrative report of a qualitative study is Moustakas's (1961) investigation of loneliness. Moustakas relates the story of his inquiry beginning with the illness of his daughter and moving through to the conclusion of his increased

understanding of the experience of loneliness. More current examples of narrative reports of research are included in McLaughlin and Tierney's (1993) collection of studies of the experiences of people who have traditionally been left out of the educational mainstream. The contributors to this volume tell the story of how their research was conducted, including their connections with the participants that are the focus of their studies and the process by which their engagements with the participants produced the results. Wells, Hirshberg, Lipton, and Oakes (1995) provide another exemplar of narrative reporting of research. In describing their report they write: "This article presents the story of our research team's efforts to conduct a multisite case study of 10 mixed schools engaged in efforts to reduce ability grouping or tracking" (p. 18). The report is a narrative of the deliberations and choice-points made throughout their evolving project.

Conclusion

The next step in the development of a qualitative research informed by the new philosophy of science is to move out from under the conventional format for reporting research. Although there is continuing experimentation in data collection and analysis by qualitative researchers; in the main, less experimentation has been undertaken in the format for reporting results. However, in a recent symposium (Tierney, Lincoln, Denzin, Kincheloe, Lather, Pinar, & Polkinghorne, 1994), new experimental forms for reporting research were presented. Lather described a report format in which different columns are used to display interview protocols and researcher interpretations. Denzin presented the possibility of reporting research through performances in which research reports are transformed into scripts that are enacted by the authors who play themselves.

In this chapter I have argued for experimentation with a narrative format for reporting research. I have contrasted the conventional synchronic approach to report formats with a diachronic format and suggested that research should be understood as a human practice, and, thus, is best presented in a diachronic format. The synchronic approach displays the structure of a research project; the diachronic captures the human actions and temporal character of the research process. Yet I do not believe that the disciplines must choose between these two approaches. Both are useful and the strengths of one are often the weaknesses of the other. However, I believe the diachronic perspective expressed through the narrative discourse is the more privileged form for reporting research in the context of the new science. I encourage

social science researchers to conceive of their research endeavors as journeys whose destination is increased understanding of human beings and to use the narrative format to report their investigative travels.

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