Seeing Shadows in New Light: A Procatalepsis on Narrative Inquiry as Professional Development

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Abstract

*Background***:** Cole and Knowles (2000) suggest that making sense of experiences and understanding personal-professional connections are the essence of professional development. These researchers posit that through personal life-history exploration, teachers make known implicit theories, values, and beliefs that underpin teaching and being a teacher. The teacher identities one aligns self to, and creates through experience, influences how one approaches teaching. Ayers (1988) believes educators hold a particular responsibility for self-awareness, clarity, and integrity because they are in powerful positions to witness, influence, and shepherd the choices of others.

Aims: This paper supports the research practice of narrative inquiry to catalyze re-conceptualist curriculum perspectives – a thinking about not only the official curriculum, but also the hidden curriculum, which includes thinking deeply about epistemological and socio-cultural perspectives in relation to teaching. The paper aims to challenge conformist teacher identities and suggests that narrative inquiry, as an artful means to seek personal teacher identity, leads to profound professional development and deeper engagement with the curriculum.

Suggestions: The author supports and provides examples of the practice of narrative inquiry within a teaching praxis based on 1) a dynamic curriculum of currere following the work of Pinar and Grumet (1976), Irwin (2003, 2004), and Daignault (1989, 1992); and 2)a pedagogy of parallax by Sameshima (2007a).

Conclusion: The practice of writing inquiry to better understand self-in-relation and to develop an embodied, renewed, committed, and authentic engagement with the curriculum enables teachers to ford stronger connections between students and curriculum, students and teacher, and teacher with curriculum. These connections have the potential to increase student achievement and decrease teacher attrition rates.

*Keywords***:** teacher identity, narrative inquiry, pedagogy of parallax

重新檢視陰影：以叙事式探索進行專業發展的自我檢討

撮要

背景: Cole 和 Knowles 在 2000 年 建议对过去经验和个人及专业关系的了解, 是专业发展的要素. 這些研究学者们认为藉着对个人生活经验探索, 教师可找到其内含的理论、价值观和理念, 来巩固其教学和位份。一位教师的自我身份定位，会開创出其经验,及影响對教学的进路。Ayers 在 1988 年指出因为教师们在见证、影响, 和带领人的巨大影响, 他们是在自知、清晰度、和正直感方面有重大责任.

目标: 此文支持对叙事体探索来加速对固有课程进行创新研究—此方面的创新研究不僅提出对传统教学课程的思考, 同时也更深入思考关于认识论和社会文化对教学方面所具影响力的课程. 此文的目地在挑战传统教师的身份, 建议使用有技巧的叙事体探索方法, 来表达教师个人的特性,进而导向宽广和专业的发展, 同时增加课程的参与感.
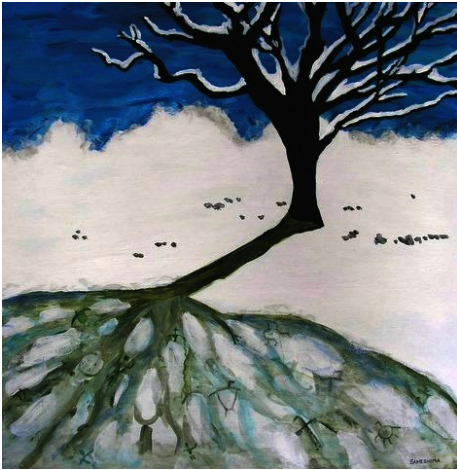
建议: 作者支持叙事体探索方法,而以教学练习的方式提出例子, 这是根据 1) Pinar 和 Grumet(1976), Irwin (2003, 2004), 和 Daignault (1989, 1992) 所提倡的 动态运作教学课程; 2) Sameshima (2007a) 的视差教学法。

结論: 叙事体探索写作练习可提高对自我关系的了解, 以及发展出一套具体化、更新、坚定、和可靠的参与课程, 使教师能把课程和学生生活、学生和老师、 以及老师和课程串联起来. 这些关系有极大潜能来提升学生的学习力、 以及减低教师的流矢率.

关键字: 教师身份, 叙事体探索, 视差教学法

The past is always included in the present, implicated, inextricably
present with the present (Carl Leggo, 2004, p. 22).

The painting *Rooted Shadow* is a study in what we project. *The Aboriginal Rock paintings of the Churchill River* (1981) in Saskatchewan, Canada, by Tim E. H. Jones describes and documents the importance of rock art in sharing cultural beliefs and life experiences. We cannot remove ourselves from our cultural heritage and all that is in us from our past that creates who we are. Our past hides in our shadows even when we do not see the past in ourselves.

Rooted Shadow, P. Sameshima, 2005,
acrylic paint on wood, 16" x 16".

A procatalepsis, often less specifically named a prolepsis, is a rhetorical strategy in which the writer seeks to strengthen her argument by dealing with possible objections before the audience can raise counter-arguments (*Wikipedia*, 2008). For example, you might question why I use *Wikipedia* for this definition instead of a more familiar canonized encyclopedia or dictionary. *Wikipedia* is an online encyclopedia which is continually edited and expanded by its readership. I support representative realism, an epistemological belief which proposes that the external world cannot be viewed directly, but only through our perceptual representations of it. The *Wikipedia* concept proposes that meaning is never static. The world is seen only as it relates to humans in context, in time, and in combination with what is already known. I believe we should view curriculum the same way—it is never static, but changes in relation to the tensions, freedoms, and associations applied to it. The term *currere* is used to name this adaptive curriculum.

The world is rapidly moving toward dynamic interactive learning spaces, unlike spaces where official, systematic formulaic curricula have become outdated because the curricula is not permeable or malleable enough for diverse learning fields to connect to, or where many teachers do not have the skills to help students make connections. Take for example emerging digital worlds like *The Croquet Consortium* (www.croquet.org), an open source software development environment, which is developed by its users; or innovative books in the business world like *The Starfish and the Spider* by Brafman and Beckstrom (2006) which is about the power of leaderless organizations. Infrastructure-

light companies like Wikipedia, Skype, or Craigslist, are successful because they do not have one controlling "driver's seat." The power and responsibility is given to the user. If we take these ideas to the education forum, decentralize "power" by giving teachers control of the curriculum, we empower teachers to take authority to teach. Critical to the development of teacher authority is the teacher's understanding of personal teacher identity. Through narrative writing, teacher-researchers can develop better understandings of their teacher identities. This form of professional development enriches classroom teaching for it enables teacher-researchers to develop strong connections between self and curriculum, self and student, and between curriculum and student. This paper begins with a description of *currere*, followed by a discussion on a *pedagogy of parallax* which focuses on the authority of the user/viewer. The paper then provides background and two examples on *narrative inquiry* practice.

Currere: A Living Pedagogic Inquiry

The word *curriculum*, generally used to refer to a prescribed list of outcomes, objectives and content, is derived from the Latin word, *currere*, which means to run. The explanation of currere follows the work of Pinar and Grumet (1976), Irwin (2003, 2004), and Daignault (1989, 1992). Curriculum is static, while *currere* is dynamic. Curriculum is focused on "end products we call concepts, abstractions, conclusions, and generalizations we, in accumulative fashion, call knowledge" (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman 1995, p. 415). Researching, teaching, and learning through *currere* as formulated and practiced by Pinar and Grumet (1976) requires the researcher-teacher to actively create two phenomenological descriptions: 1) to know the self in context; and 2) "to

trace the complex path from preconceptual experience to formal intellection" (Pinar et al., 1995, p. 415). In other words, currere involves a *living pedagogic inquiry*—developing location of self in relation and iterating moments of understanding as knowledge construction along a learning continuum. Although understanding that curriculum as objectives and outcomes is important, I propose that teacher-researchers also attend to the *currere* root of curriculum in the classroom setting. Hence, *curriculum* refers to fixed content knowledge, while *currere* is a moving curriculum of the learning in the present. Currere is the content learning changing and molding with the learner, teacher, and environment. (see Sameshima, 2007a)

A Pedagogy of Parallax

This procatalepsis seeks to share the possibilities and potential of how narrative inquiry, as developed in a framework of a currere and positioned with a *pedagogy of parallax* can inform processes of scholarly inquiry and professional development.

The word *parallax* stems from the Greek word *parallagé* which means alteration and from *parallassein,* "to change." Parallax is the apparent change of location of an object against a background due to a change in observer position or perspective shift. For example, if you look at a cup on your office desk, you will see the cup in the foreground of its surroundings. Perhaps you will see your computer monitor in the background and the entrance doors to your office. However, if someone entered your office through those doors, they would see the back of your computer monitor, the cup in the mid-ground and you in the background. The cup appears to be in two very different surroundings based on the perspective of the viewer. If the cup

represents "curriculum", we begin to see that learners will see the cup in all different ways, dependent on their past experiences, age, gender, culture, and so forth. If we accept the concept of parallax and acknowledge that the curriculum is seen and learned differently by each individual, then we can begin to let go of the "power" attributed to the static curriculum, and reposition the power with the learner and teacher. Consequently, learning moves from an image of a ball ricocheting between teacher, student, and curriculum; to an image of teacher and learner playing a ball game "within" currere.

I demonstrate that sustained attention and engagement with personal writings, in other words, textual *understandings and experiences* (see Irwin, 2004; Sameshima, 2008: Springgay, 2008), can enable underlying assumptions and oft times, problematic conceptions to surface. In the examples I provide, I demonstrate the power of multiple metaphoric modalities for engaging with shifting subjectivities and situatedness of the researcher-teacher. From my writings, I have seen the power of poetic text and imaginative non-fiction's ability to create compound realities and hybrid meanings which in turn, have the potential to generate surprising possibilities for relational significance.

Narrative Inquiry
Narrative inquiry is a sub-type of qualitative inquiry. It comprises theoretical approaches and narrative analysis in human interaction across the fields of psychology, linguistics, anthropology, sociology, and other disciplines. Susan Chase (2008) defines narrative as retrospective meaning making and narrative inquiry as an "amalgam of interdisciplinary lenses, diverse

disciplinary approaches, and both traditional and innovative methods—all revolving around an interest in biographical particulars as narrated by the one who lives them" (p. 651).

The qualitative research form of narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 1994) can be used to reveal constructs of the teacher identity. Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research method supported and grounded by scholars such as Bresler, 1992; Cole and Knowles, 2001a, b; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Leggo, 2002; Richardson, 2000; Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005; and Woodlinger, 1989. Through the process of writing and reflection, the narrative process provides an uncovering and formulation of understanding for self, and through presentation, for others (Bresler, 2006). Connelly and Clandinin (1988) support that in the relating of telling and retelling of stories, or in this case writing, re-writing, and revising, curriculum is co-created between the writer and the audience or the teacher and the learner. In acknowledging the inner life, transformational education benefits the learner as well as the encountered world (Miller, 2005; Sameshima, 2006, 2007a).

Cole and Knowles (2000) suggest that making sense of experiences and understanding personal-professional connections are the essence of professional development. They purport that through personal life-history exploration, teachers make known implicit theories, values, and beliefs that underpin teaching and being a teacher. Ayers (1988) believes that educators hold a particular responsibility for self-awareness, clarity, and integrity because they are in powerful positions to influence the choices of others. The teacher identities one aligns self to,

and creates through experience, influences how one approaches teaching. Engaging in personal life narratives can reposition and reframe pedagogical perspectives by acknowledging stances, rooted foundations, and common fears (Cole & Knowles, 2001a, 2001b; Knowles, 2004, 2005). Leggo (2008), Bullough, and Pinnegar (2001) all agree that self study is the study of self in relation. The stories of one's life are a way of constructing the experiences themselves; for creating routes for memory retrieval; and for directing life narratives into the future. Understanding self further provides a means to more easily locate connections between self and others (Bruner, 1976).

The first step to acknowledging or recognizing personal stances is to express understanding. Expression can be accomplished through writing or making. It is through the making, both in the midst of construction and in reflection, that new understandings and knowledge are acknowledged (Sameshima 2007a, b). Eisner (1994) discusses this referential structural corroboration of linking to arrive at cohesive understandings (also see Slattery, Krasny& O'Malley, 2004. This task is not necessarily a simplistic undertaking. Eisner (2008) explains that the material experience must be disclosed through a medium, "something that mediates the researcher's observations and culminates in a form that provides the analogous structure" (p. 7). He goes on to explain Rudolf Arnheim's (1974) idea that "What is created is the structural equivalent of emotions recollected in tranquility but expressing powerfully what an individual has undergone by virtue of the way the forms of the work relate to each other" (p. 7). The articulation of the *unsaid* is the first step. The teacher-researcher must create something, must write, in order to acknowledge or notice

the questions which arise. This is the beginning of a movement toward growth and change.

Through the creation of narrative, both in the moment and after the fact —thinking through my journal writing, my lyric writing, poetry, and in particular the 700 pages of text used to shape and design a fictional novel that would be become my dissertation and book titled *Seeing Red* (2007), I have continually constructed and reconstructed my teacher identity. I use the texts to analyze deeply embedded unconscious perspectives which have guided my professional practice. Carl Leggo (2008), a leading scholar and avid promoter of autobiographical writing offers that to grow professionally, one needs to grow personally.

> Writing about personal experience is not only egoism, solipsism, unseemly confession, boring prattling, and salacious revelation. We need to write personally because we live personally, and our personal living is always braided with our other ways of living—professional, academic, administrative, artistic, social, and political. (p. 5)

Elliot Eisner (2008) says, "Words, except when they are used artistically, are proxies for direct experience. They point us in a direction in which we can undergo what the words purport to reveal. Words, in this sense, are like cues to guide us on a journey" (p. 5).

Narrative and autobiographical work are not merely about keeping a diary. Mezirow's (1978, 1996, 1997) work on transformational learning stresses that the learner must diverge from the path of regular learning trajectory in order to be

truly transformed. One must be willing to ask the difficult questions, to write the difficult thoughts, and to be open to playing with texts. This living in the liminal space of *learning through experience* is risky (Sameshima & Irwin, in press). This space of learning is where a/r/tographers reside. (see Irwin, 2004; Springgay, Irwin, Leggo & Gouzouasis, 2008; Sameshima & Irwin, in press). An a/r/tographer is one who merges the identities of Artist (one who lives artfully and creatively), Researcher, and Teacher together. The a/r/tographer seeks to think through his or her profession and life purposefully merging these identities in a layered interconnectedness. For more description of this methodological approach, please see http://m1.cust.educ.ubc.ca/Artography/ Drawing the identities of personal creativity, research mindset, and curriculum developer together opens up wide relational possibilities which lead to deeply transformative professional development. Norman Denzin(2008) explains, that in writing stories and memories, we connect ourselves "to others, to community, to the morality, and the moral self" (p. 119) which he explains is a rethinking of how we express critical pedagogies of hope, liberation, freedom, and love. These are all deeply epistemological tasks, intricately woven into the teacher identity.

I share the process of thinking through the analysis of formation and continuous reformation of the teaching identity which occurs through reflexive narrative inquiry practice with the intention of sharing one means to reconceptualizing the teacher identity.

Example 1: Graduate student journal entry

In my graduate seminar today, I leaned toward two other students as we discussed citizenship, morality, and the societal expectations of teachers. They talked about the concerns they had as graduate teacher assistants— about the lack of respect some of the young pre-service teachers show for learning and for people. My legs were crossed and my folder, on my knee, was pressed up under my peer's writing desk. When I started to move away, my folder was stuck. I pulled it hard and found a wad of gooey blue chewing gum stuck to my folder. I tried to use a tissue to remove it. It would not scrape off – it spread out and looked worse. This classroom, in the Education building, is only ever used by teacher candidates and teachers. I tried desperately not to cry.

From this entry, written a number of years ago, I had questioned why I felt such a welling-up inside. What do I expect of teachers? What images do I have of the "teacher" identity? Where are the roots of my teacher identity? After 17 years as an elementary school educator, five of those years as a teaching administrator, and now as a teacher of teachers, I acknowledge that the teacher-identity is continually shaping and morphing with experience. But what are the teacher identities I seek to present to the teacher candidates I work with? And what are the intuitive processes for coming to understand the critical influence that teacher identities have on pedagogy? Through narrative inquiry, specifically autobiographical writing in this case, I have come to recognize that the many teacher identities "indoctrinated" in me actually reside beyond me as North American cultural

constructs which are adopted or encouraged by the teaching profession. Interestingly, I did not have answers to my questions then. It was not until I looked at the lyrics of a song I wrote that made me go back to the journal entry and the questions I had about my response to the chewing gum.

Example 2: Analysis of song lyrics
At a later date, I wrote the lyrics to a song titled "A Place of Hope[1]," for a social responsibility workshop organized by the school district I was working for. The song was also used in the Philippines for a tsunami relief fundraiser. When examining the lyrics reflectively, I was surprised to see how the song revealed some of my deep-seated teacher identities.

A Place for Hope 🔊 Play Song

I hear the children's hungry cries
Their silent voices left behind
Can't you hear the echo of their empty world?
No hope, forgotten and all alone
I see the children from broken homes
Their hearts are pure but love has not been shown
I know they look to me, for my eyes to show I care
I think of them and I can only hope that

I can make a difference
I can change the flow within the stream of life
And I can change the world right now
I know I can, if I tried
No need for words, no empty promises or hopeful lies
I know that I can change the world right now
Give all the children a chance to shine

I can make a place for hope

I am but one in is this golden land
Just one woman, just one man
Will I make a difference to those in need
Or will my eyes refuse to see?
Will I hear laughter, see tears of joy?
From these children, each girl and boy?
Will their barren faces light up with hope?
Let's stand together then we will know that

We can make a difference
We can change the flow within the stream of life
And we can change the world right now
I know we can, if we tried
No need for words, no empty promises or hopeful lies
I know that we can change the world right now
Give all the children a chance to shine

Yes, we can make a difference
We can change the flow within the stream of life
And we can change the world right now
I know we can, if we tried
We can make a place for hope

Looking at these lyrics through a critical perspective and cultural studies lens, I note that my private synonyms for the word *teacher* are *healer, savior,* and *protector*. To me, the ideal teacher is a champion of rescue and recovery missions. I would even go as far as to say that I view the world as wounded, and my job is to save, repair, and bandage. This salvaging identity conflicts, however, with my articulated goals of wanting to liberate, push forward, and inspire the students I teach. I speak about radiant learning – a notion of teaching that focuses on provocation which sparks further investigation – yet my teaching frame is at odds with this notion: The salvaging

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[1] The musical arrangement was written by my music production partner, Juliet Dizon with vocals by Clint Madrid.

teacher seeks to return the inadequate student to a specified norm or to a predetermined benchmark of normalcy, so he/she can be "mended." The healing teacher wishes to bandage the wounds, restore shortfalls, and ensure that all students catch up. So I say I promote diversity, enrichment, or expansion beyond the norm (and authentically believe in these goals); but my silent pedagogic framework limits my main intention to bringing students *up to par*—a superficial benchmark designated by arbitrary performance standards.

Another confining attribute of viewing the teacher as a savior is the notion that the teacher is always above, or stronger than, the "needy" student. This perception of student passivity perpetuates the identity of a teacher as an "all-powerful" figure. In line with this pattern, a pre-service teacher in my math methods course wrote to me: "So, I'm putty in your hands. Mold me into an effective teacher of mathematics." The teacher's role, according to this metaphor, is to shape the natural useless lump into a useful container. This construct of the teacher identity further draws attention to the limitations of learning possibilities within this particular construct of mentorship; the teacher is the uppermost conceived limit of educational knowledge while the student remains a passive learner.

Additionally, within this *Florence Nightingale Model*, the teacher, although perceived to be the holder of knowledge, is actually only the conduit of the prescribed curriculum. She is the worker who nurses and cares for the educational process but she does not, like the doctor has, have the authority to prescribe medication or perform complicated operations. The teacher in this model is passive, submissive to the curriculum, just as is the student. A significantly healthier teacher identity would support ownership of learning and teaching in both the student and teacher at the most fundamental construction of the teacher identity.

In *A Place of Hope,* although there is a focus on collaborative effort as a means of transformation in the song, the root emphasis is that it is still my personal responsibility to do my part in saving the world, often at any cost to myself. I now recognize the martyr complex as one of my teacher identities (Sameshima, 2005)—a pervasive teacher identity, and seek to move toward a congruent outer and unarticulated inner view. And yet, can these identities, many of which are culturally engrained be unlearned? The teacher identity of the "good" female has profound roots in the way young women are acculturated to be "nice" (Bettis & Adams, 2005). An extensive study across public, independent, and Catholic schools in 1989 found that only one out of ten book-length works prescribed in high school English was written by a woman and none by members of minority groups (Applebee, 1989). Positive steps to changing this trend have taken place since that time; however, the majority of experienced teachers and teacher educators have developed their teacher identities through that time period. How do young females conceive of the heroine figure? Further, can the female teacher identity be divorced from the societal female identity which culturally uses "the female body to advertise everything from toilet cleanser to truck tires and where the approved female roles remain service-oriented[?] The so-called 'womanly' values of caring for and connecting with others", although admirable; continue to be the most strongly promoted female traits (AAUW, 1992/ 2004, p. 218).

Conclusion: Narrative Inquiry as a means of Professional Development

This paper supports narrative inquiry as a means to developing understandings of personal teacher identity. Conceptualizing curriculum as currere and thinking through a pedagogy of parallax enables the teacher to weave teacher identities through prescribed curriculum. Narrative inquiry catalyzes a parallaxical view of a living curriculum and encourages teachers to not only think about the official curriculum, but also the hidden curriculum, which includes thinking deeply about epistemological and socio-cultural perspectives in relation to teaching. The paper challenges conformist teacher identities, drawing attention to cultural creations of teacher identities which do not support teaching and learning practice, and which must be critically challenged. Norman Denzin (2008) heartens:

> We need to re-narrate the past. We need to tell the past and its stories in ways that allow us to disrupt conventional narratives and conventional history. Such disruptions help us to better understand how racism and social injustice have been seamlessly woven together" (p. 119)

A teaching praxis based on a dynamic curriculum of currere, the curriculum that is developed in the moment with the teacher, class, and consideration of environment; with the conscious implementation of an openness to a pedagogy of parallax or the ability to notice multiple perspectives, serve to create an approach to narrative writing practice. This practice which will no doubt lead to increased learning achievement and lessen climbing teacher attrition rates (see Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). This Alliance states that the single most important factor in determining student performance is teacher quality, further supporting the importance of teachers finding personal ways to engage with curriculum through artful reflection and developing understandings of their teacher identities.

Student achievement is also directly influenced by classroom management which itself is based on the teacher-student relationship and the learning environment (Marzano, Marzano & Pickering, 2003; Wright, Horn & Saunders, 1997). Thus, a critical aspect of successful teaching and learning is being able to make relationship connections with students through conversation and experience, and through a deeper understanding of personal teacher identity. The use of writing inquiry to develop an embodied and renewed commitment and connection to the curriculum, enables teachers to ford connections between students and curriculum, students and teacher, and teacher with curriculum. Last, Graeme Sullivan (2008) suggests that at the heart of artful inquiry is critical intelligence to "see possibility within what is not obvious and creative insight is crucial to move from the unknown to the known." (p. 233). To carry out critical narrative inquiry is to develop the artful creative identity which thinks about curriculum as currere and approaches learning and teaching through a pedagogy of parallax. Professional development of this type will provide teachers insight in seeing their own shadows in a new light.

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