Story and Narrative Inquiry in Music Teacher Education Research
Colleen M. Conway

Colleen Conway is assistant professor of music education at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

The *New Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning* (Colwell & Richardson, 2002) devotes 137 pages (an introduction and seven chapters) to research on "Music Teacher Education" (Wing & Barrett, 2002). Most of the chapter authors provide suggestions for music teacher education research. Collectively, these chapters help create a future agenda for music teacher education research. The purpose of this paper is to examine story and narrative inquiry as a methodological means to addressing the agenda for research provided in the *Handbook*. I begin with a brief review of *Handbook* chapters that directly address narrative inquiry. The next section provides an introduction to story and narrative inquiry as a research tradition within qualitative research. The paper's third section addresses specific narrative-inquiry research concerns: the role of theory, the timing of a literature review, data collection and analysis, trustworthiness, and ethics. In the final section of the paper, I connect the use of story and narrative inquiry to the agenda for music teacher education research provided in the *Handbook.*

In his chapter on "Philosophical Perspectives on Research," Elliott (2002) mentions "narrative inquiry" as part of a postmodern educational research emphasis on the "whole person" (p. 87). He suggests that this is a form of interpretivism where the "researcher's focus is on human *actions* that are meaningful to people in their social transactions with others. The goal of interpretive inquiry is to discover the beliefs, values, motivations, and attitudes of people's actions in educational contexts" (p. 92).

Pembrook and Craig (2002) devote much of their chapter to a description of narrative inquiry

in educational research. They consider narrative inquiry a "new approach" to studying the profession of teaching. They state:

> More recently, a new approach has evolved that inquires into the personal,
> experimental, narratively constructed world of professional educators ... research
> in this ... vein is written from an insider perspective and situates teachers'
> identities and their knowledge in their professional contexts. (p. 786)

Pembrook and Craig (2002) provide rich examples of studies done in general teacher education in which the teachers and the teaching contexts are central components of the research. They discuss the study of teachers' personal-practical knowledge, teachers' professional knowledge landscapes, teachers' knowledge communities, teacher identity, professional development, and the development of teaching practices as areas of study where narrative inquiry is used. They are unable to share any examples from music education literature, because, to date, there are no examples. It is hoped that the music education research community may use Pembrook and Craig's work as a model and begin to examine the use of narrative inquiry in music. In the conclusion of their review of research in the profession of music teaching, Pembrook and Craig suggest:

> teachers' professional knowledge landscapes are complicated places where much
> is known about its attributes ... and little is known about how the multiplicity of
> attributes—both known and unknown—come together to shape teachers'
> experiences and sense of themselves as professionals over time. (p. 809)

They suggest that music teacher education should consider the use of narrative inquiry as a way of thinking about research in order to "balance the proliferation of research" (p. 809) in music education that examined "historical and quantifiable conditions" (p. 809) in the lives of music teachers.

Story and Narrative Inquiry as a Qualitative Research Method

There are several terms used within qualitative research to suggest the use of "narrative" in research. These terms include "story" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), "biography" (Carter & Doyle, 1996), "autobiography" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994), "narrative inquiry" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), "narrative research" (Gudmundsdittur, 2001), "personal narrative" (Carter & Doyle, 1996), "autoethnography" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000), and "reflexivity" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Space will not allow for a discussion of the various uses of these terms and differences of approach within "narrative." Thus, I have chosen the terms "story" and "narrative inquiry" for the focus of this paper.

I chose "story" as it seems to be the most easily understood term and "narrative inquiry" because it seems the most widely used. With regard to the use of biographical stories in the study of teacher development, Carter and Doyle (1996) state:

> Overall, work that is grounded in a biographical perspective involves intense and extended conversations with teachers (see Woods, 1985) and is based on the premise that the act of teaching, teachers' experiences and the choices they make, and the process of learning to teach are deeply personal matters inexorably linked to one's identity and, thus, one's life story. From this perspective, a central focus on teachers' personal lives is considered essential in designing and conducting research, interpreting data, and formulating policy regarding school reform and the education of teachers at all levels of schooling and stages of their careers. (p. 120)

It is this focus on "conversations" with teachers as an essential element in music teacher education research that seems most important for the music education profession to consider. Ritchie and Wilson (2000) add:

> We argue that the development of a professional identity is inextricable from

personal identity and that when personal and professional development are brought into dialogue, when teachers are given the opportunity to compose and reflect on their own stories of learning and of selfhood within a supportive and challenging community, then teachers can begin to resist and revise the scripting narratives of the culture and begin to compose new narratives of identity and practice. They can begin to author their own development. (p. 1)

Ritchie and Wilson see collaborative research between traditional researchers and teachers as a vehicle for change in teaching. Narrative inquiry can provide a method by which researchers in higher education and music teachers may communicate, design research, and examine teaching practice.

Research Concerns

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) provide complete discussion of the issues associated with narrative inquiry as a way of thinking in research. This section provides an overview of that information with some specific suggestions for music education.

The Role of Theory. Many qualitative researchers approach their studies from a particular theoretical tradition (e.g., phenomenology, heuristic inquiry, symbolic interactionism, feminism). Editorial boards examining qualitative research often require authors to state the role of theory in the study. In narrative inquiry, the role of theory becomes less overt. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest that "Formalists begin inquiry in theory, whereas narrative inquirers tend to begin with experience as expressed in lived and told stories" (p. 40). Music teacher education researchers who use narrative-inquiry methods must be prepared to discuss this issue of theory in manuscripts presented for publication.

Timing of a Literature Review. In common music education research traditions, a review of

the literature takes place at the beginning of the study. Most graduate students are required to submit a literature review for any masters or doctoral thesis proposal. In narrative inquiry and other qualitative research traditions, the literature review often occurs simultaneously with the research itself: "The literature review may go on simultaneously with fieldwork, permitting a creative interplay among the processes of data collection, literature review, and researcher introspection" (Patton, 1990, p. 163).

Data Collection and Analysis. Narrative inquiry may include a variety of data-collection devices. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) list field notes of shared experiences, journals, interviews, storytelling, letter writing, and autobiographical and biographical writing. The analysis of such data in narrative inquiry includes collaborative reflection on the data between all participants. There is no template for making meaning from narrative-inquiry data. Finding one's way through the data is part of the journey. In music teacher education research, there has been very little of this type of collaborative, reflective inquiry.

Trustworthiness. Criteria such as validity, reliability, and generalizability are not focused upon in narrative inquiry. Instead, narrative inquirers work to present their reports in a way that reflects the care and collaborative efforts maintained in the inquiry. This is often referred to as "trustworthiness." Connelly and Clandinin (1990) suggest: "Like other qualitative research methods, narrative relies on criteria other than validity, reliability, and generalizability. It is important not to squeeze the language of narrative criteria into a language created for other forms of research" (p. 7). Although I agree with this quote, music teacher education researchers must keep in mind that qualitative approaches are still fairly new to music education. In the effort to communicate with other music education researchers, narrative inquirers may need to inform and educate readers as to how concepts such as validity, reliability, and generalizability

are interpreted within narrative-inquiry research.

Ethics. All researchers in university settings are bound by institutional review board rules. However, it is often difficult in narrative inquiry to describe all research interactions at the outset of a study. "In many ways, this process of obtaining ethical approval for our research proposal prior to beginning to negotiate our inquiries works against the relational negotiation that is part of narrative inquiry" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 170). In addition, when researchers and participants are working closely to understand the personal stories of teachers, there are inevitably clashes. Issues of ownership of stories and how to best represent the voice of participants and researchers are constant challenges in narrative inquiries. Anonymity of teachers and children is also problematic for narrative inquirers in educational settings. Music teacher education researchers looking to examine narrative inquiry must be conscious of ethical issues in all phases of research.

Addressing the Agenda for Music Teacher Education Research

Story and narrative inquiry, as introduced in this paper, may provide a way to approach many of the components of the music teacher education research agenda embedded within *The New Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning.* In this last section of this paper, I outline the ways in which this methodology may be used to meet some of the suggestions provided in the teacher education section of the *Handbook.*

In the introduction to the teacher education section of the *Handbook,* Raths (2002) suggests:

> Perhaps it is more reasonable to see research less as providing road maps for practice and more as suggesting alternative views that serve to make our conceptions more complex and complicated and to prompt our reconsideration of

our own current views and practices. (p. 758)

If music teacher education researchers begin to tell the stories of music teachers in real classrooms, it will be complex and complicated. The issues faced by music teachers are not easily categorized using traditional research approaches, whether quantitative or qualitative. If, as Raths suggests, we can be prompted to reflect on our current views and practices, this would be an important occurrence in music teacher education.

Thiessen and Barrett (2002) focus on the experiences of music teachers regarding school reform. There is no research base within music education, thus, they provide a review of literature outside of music and situate their discussion of the issues within music in a fictional letter. Narrative inquiry may help researchers to design studies to examine music teachers engaged in school reform. Thiessen and Barrett suggest:

> The research community in music teacher education clearly needs to turn its attention to the changing roles of music educators within the landscape of educational reform. ... As expectations for school reform heighten, so does the need to conduct research that situates music education and music teachers as integral elements in the "change story" of schools. (p. 781)

The profession needs stories of music teachers engaged in change. Reflective papers that analyze the challenges of school change to music education are important as well.

Nierman, Zeichner, and Hobbel (2002) provide an overview of teacher education program models within music. With regard to the research base for this topic, they state that "There is a need for more case studies describing the 'how to' of music teacher education from a broad perspective" (p. 833). Once again, narrative inquiry may have a place in that suggested agenda. Narrative collaborations between music teacher educators for the purpose of examining music

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teacher education practice are needed. Telling the stories of teacher educators may start a healthy dialogue between music teacher educators.

Leglar and Collay (2002) devote their chapter to the discussion of collaborative inquiry between K–12 teachers and teacher educators and to action research by teacher educators. Although they do not discuss "narrative inquiry" directly, all of the concepts presented in this chapter are supported by the narrative-inquiry approach. They state:

> In the current teacher research movement, an important impetus is the voluntary invention of "new configurations of collaboration and partnership among teachers and university-based faculty" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 16). Important to the encouragement of partnership is the creation of new opportunities for exchange. By participating in lively conversations as members of a diverse and inclusive community, music teacher educators expand and enrich the way their think about their craft .... By adopting a stance as reflective inquirers, they create their own craft knowledge and stamp their professional performances with their own interpretive creativity. (p. 869)

Teacher research as presented in the Leglar and Collay chapter could be conducted using narrative inquiry.

The chapters on student teaching (Rideout & Feldman, 2002) and professional development (Hookey, 2002) both provide areas where narrative inquiry could be used to examine specific contexts and complexities. The research base regarding professional development in music is extremely small. The research in student teaching could benefit from the presence of the narrative voice of student teachers, cooperating teachers, and supervisors.

I am encouraged by Hookey's (2002) comment that "music education research is moving beyond what has been described as a limited epistemological and methodological stance (Bresler, 1998)" (p. 897). This trend should pave the way for the acceptance of alternative research approaches even within qualitative research. As stated in the beginning of this paper,

the focus of narrative inquiry on the conversations between teachers and teacher educators provides an important link to all components of the music teacher education research agenda. Researchers who become informed about and apply narrative inquiry can inform the profession by using narrative inquiry as both a framework for research and a way of thinking about music teacher education.

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