

Drawing on two methodological approaches: A collaborative approach to interview interpretation

Carmel Patterson

University of Technology Sydney, Australia

Suzanne Macqueen

University of Newcastle, Australia

Explicating interview approaches is significant for education research in understanding how the nuances of meaning from personal narratives uncover challenges and opportunities for investigating the lived experience across contexts. This paper considers interview approaches that focus on the reflexivity and meaning-making possible over a longitudinal timeframe for researcher and interviewee. Two methodological frameworks enabled a narrative oral history interview and a phenomenological lifeworld interview to establish variation in individual meaning-making, whilst eliciting understandings of shared social phenomena. We elucidate examples shared from the experience of teachers deemed as expert and interrogate the deliberations taken throughout a three-interview process. Reflexivity and the researcher's attendance to language, timing and open-ended prompting are some techniques considered for clarifying meaning in a small-scale Australian study. We argue that interrogating interview approaches for accessing deeper meaning-making of teacher professional learning further develops our understanding of interviewer-interviewee dynamics and the application of analytical frames.

Introduction

Considering interview approaches and techniques used to elicit responses from participants is significant for qualitative researchers because of the explicit meaning that is sought. Our purpose is to address issues encountered in interviewing teachers to ascertain meaning-making on their professional learning and development of expertise. In combining narrative and phenomenological interview approaches, the study sought to establish teachers' individual meaning-making on the development of their expertise and approach to professional learning within the context of shared social understanding. The focus of the paper is an analysis of the reflexive approach and some techniques for clarifying meaning used across an interview sequence with selected transcript examples from one Australian study.

The paper supports ongoing conversations for making explicit the deliberations in differing interview approaches. We discuss how the ontological disposition of individual meaning-making and shared social phenomena may be harnessed through the constructivist perspective of two methodological frameworks. We interrogate the intersection of narrative inquiry and phenomenological inquiry, specifically focusing on how interviews from these philosophical traditions are used to create new understanding of the phenomena under investigation. Secondly, we outline the study's research question and context, exploring the reflexivity accessible where the researcher is the sole interviewer through a longitudinal sequence of three interviews. Finally, we elucidate examples shared from the experience of teachers deemed as expert to consider the

reflexive and meaning-making dynamics across the interview sequence and ongoing analysis. We review the implications in using the interview approaches and techniques with the teachers presented here. Moreover, the paper presents possibilities for refining similar approaches within other studies.

Interview approaches for understanding individual meaning-making and shared social phenomena

Interviews are important for the rich representations of meaning they can provide, particularly when examining the complexity of lived experience. As language is a means to organise our perceptions and actions through thought (Bruner, 1986), interview-based approaches enable the construction of understandings (Lichtman, 2010). The ‘craft’ of interviewing requires attending to the practical and conceptual aspects of co-constructing understanding (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Listening to and telling stories is an everyday part of people’s lives, where some people are inherently better storytellers than others in their ability to paint a picture with words or entertain the listener (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). In the case of listening to stories for research, we need to acutely attend to the meaning spoken, heard and understood between interviewee and interviewer. The interview as a collaborative process requires researcher sensitivity to address the intersubjective nature of the understanding achieved, as well as the meaning that resides between the ‘turn-by-turn’ gathering of data (Roulston, 2014). This paper supports the view that interviews should not be perceived as unproblematic in the way they collect and present data (Clegg & Stevenson, 2013) and that the improved robustness in analysis of interview data is essential (Silverman, 2017).

Researchers need to acknowledge that ethnographic data is always embedded in the interview process. However, implicit meaning-making is not always accessed to enrich interpretations, or fully reported in journals due to genre constraints of journal writing (Clegg & Stevenson, 2013). For phenomenological researchers, engaging in ‘critical self-questioning’ (Bevan, 2014, p. 139) requires a self-consciousness of their own understanding and beliefs. Semi-structured interview questions and prompts, and subsequent interpretations require the setting aside of researcher ‘assumptions about the world’ (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005, p. 34) when using a ‘distinctive phenomenological approach’ (Creely, 2016, p. 16). In the case of narrative inquiry, researchers ‘may decide to use or adapt one or more existing analysis systems’ (C. P. Smith, 2000, p. 331) to understand the meaning embedded in interview transcripts. Additionally, researchers should attend to the co-construction that occurs (Bignold & Su, 2013) when creating an analysis characterised as story. The challenge of writing to express another individual’s story is supported by the use of narrative devices (Holley & Colyar, 2012) to represent the complexity of experience. Below we discuss the two methodological approaches used to guide the reflexivity during a sequence of semi-structured interviews.

Philosophical intersections of two methodological approaches

The construction of meaning within the ever-changing nature of context, time, and relationship to others is captured through the complementary nature of narrative inquiry

and phenomenological inquiry. Narrative inquiry allows for interpretation and explanation of each unique experience whilst mindful of the interaction between researcher and participant (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). A methodological construct afforded by phenomenological inquiry aims to elucidate the interrelationship of universal constituents of lived experience, with a focus on the ongoing writing as reflection and pre-reflection (van Manen, 1997, 2014). Generating understanding using both narrative inquiry and phenomenological inquiry is possible through the complementarity afforded by the philosophical intersections of phenomenological analysis and narrative interpretations. The use of two approaches provide a sensitive and creative response to the research phenomena by valuing and engaging with understanding difference (Greene, 2005) for the participants in the study.

The challenge for social inquiry since the founding of phenomenology is the translation of a philosophy focused on reflection and understanding meaning into harmonious research methodologies (Moran, 2000; J. A. Smith, Larkin & Flowers, 2008). There are essentially two ways of understanding phenomenology – either as the individual's philosophical thinking on their lifeworld, or as a methodology. On the one hand, there is the inseparable nature of understanding, language and reason in manifest forms (Gadamer, 1993) that is created through the individual's explication of experience and not through methodological constructs. Conversely, phenomenology as a form of social inquiry represents a distinct methodology that aims to represent subjective experience 'from the point of view of the subject' (Schwandt, 2007, p. 226). Understanding an individual's lifeworld – the intersubjective, lived experience as being in the world – requires creating representations of meaning of experience as lived towards and through the individual (Kvale, 1983, p. 174). In this sense, phenomenology as a methodology provides a framework for thinking about the lifeworld phenomena and generating meaning from experiences, to create understanding that is recognisable in and transferable to the lives of others.

In the study outlined here, interpretation of story and analysis of the contextual meaning is viewed as an ontological horizon of experience (Gadamer, 1993; Ricoeur & Thompson, 1981). These horizons were not synthesised but constructed into new understandings of teacher learning in both narrative and phenomenological findings. The investigation into language for understanding metaphor and narrative function seeks to represent the lifeworld as pre-reflective, in which 'there is always a *Being-demanding-to-be-said* (un être-à-dire) that precedes our actual saying' (Ricoeur, 2008, p. 19, italics in the original). The intersection of two methodologies develops understandings that incorporate the phenomenological pre-reflective meanings revealed through the context and relation of each teacher's experience. The approach acknowledges a methodological thinking that seeks insight into the 'understandings and discernments through the juxtaposition of different lenses, perspectives, and stances' (Greene, 2005, p. 2008). The interview approaches in this study ascertained representations of the realities experienced by teachers and expresses this meaning through complementary understandings. The reflexivity and contested meanings (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) associated with both verbal and textual representations necessitates an analysis of the deliberations and decision-making taken in the differing interview approaches.

Deliberations in differing interview approaches for understandings of expert teacher learning

Research question and context for the study

The study used narrative inquiry and phenomenological inquiry to explore expert teachers' perceptions of their developing expertise (Patterson, 2019). The overarching research question was: how do expert teachers construct meaning from their personal professional development and their approach to their own learning? The study's methodological approach supports the notion that 'No one lens can reveal both the individuality and the complexity of a life' (McCormack, 2000, p. 295). Therefore, the study sought teachers to construct individual meaning-making and to interpret understandings of shared social phenomena.

The qualitative principles of rigour along with purposive and criterion sampling used in the study (Patterson, 2018) enabled the interview interpretations to be considered reasonable and trustworthy. The teachers nominated by colleagues as experts suitable for inclusion in the research were representative of 'information-rich cases for studying in depth' (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005, p. 45). This type of selection using peer nomination had previously enabled new understanding of teacher professional learning needs and the development of expertise (Collinson, 2012). The process of gathering and analysing meaning representations (Patterson, 2018) was not linear but rather spiralling in nature. Analysis of interviews for each participant was sequential to avoid repetition that did not provide new insights (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). The saturation of findings relied on researcher awareness of 'no longer learning anything new' (Seidman, 1991) which led to five teachers being included in the study. The study supported the notion that small-scale studies enable enhanced researcher reflection on the meaning attributed throughout the stages of the research (Yates, 2003) as well as the approaches used to elicit responses from participants.

Below we use examples from a sequence of semi-structured interviews to interrogate interviewer and interviewee reflexivity over a longitudinal timeframe.

Reflexivity across a three-interview process

A distinctive three-interview process was fashioned on Seidman (1991) to gather interviewee responses face-to-face, and via phone and email. The narrative oral history and the phenomenological lifeworld interviews were conducted face-to-face with a duration of one to one and a half hours. An email provided the questions for a third phone interview taking half an hour to gather reflections on participation in the study. The semi-structured interview questions and prompts, along with the overall findings of the study are described in *Enacted personal professional learning: Re-thinking teacher expertise with story-telling and problematics* (Patterson, 2019). The study conducted interviews with each participant over a period of two years.

Reacting to the responses of each teacher relied on reordering, rewording or sometimes deviating from the sequence of questions during interviews. In this way, the interviewer was cognisant of maintaining balance in the leading and following during discussions, by avoiding interruptions whilst maintaining attention to nuanced language. Importantly, a break of a few weeks to months between the first and second interviews allowed each teacher to attempt some resolution of their first interview revelations. Time for interviewee reflection is necessary for providing the opportunity to create emotional and intellectual connections (Seidman, 2013). Additionally, allowing for researcher reflexivity to consider interviewer interactions with each interviewee. During this time, tentative analysis of teachers' meanings occurred along with reflections on the use and adaptation of interview questions and additional prompts. The meaning representations from the first and second interviews were used to create a professional learning narrative, comprising a story sequence and subsequent interpretation on the narrative modes of relating story (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Riessman, 2002).

Teachers provided feedback on their initial two interview transcripts and then on the first draft of their professional learning narrative. The subsequent third interview was conducted 12-18 months following the initial narrative and phenomenological analyses. The interview captured final participant reflections to further explore the coda for each teacher's story. Importantly, the interview process and prompts aligned to the chosen narrative and phenomenological approach to uncover the emerging constituents of the phenomena across the experience of the five teachers. Another approach, such as a longitudinal study or a large-scale study, might have asked different questions in different ways, which highlights the need to articulate the methodological deliberations guiding the research design and approaches (Patterson, 2018).

Interpretive tensions of metaphor

Interpretive tensions required researcher awareness for questioning, thinking and writing around the metaphorical nuances of interviewees.

The semi-structured guide for the first interview accounted for the metaphorical space evident in temporal, situational, and interpersonal interactions (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The interpretation throughout the interviews required unpacking the use of metaphors for each interviewee. The interviewer was mindful of not reducing nuanced experience into formulaic stories or into representative categories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The aim was not to overshadow the unique quality of their experience as expressed through metaphor. The semi-structured guide for the second interview required prompts for unpacking pre-reflective meaning to reveal constituent phenomena. The use of metaphors added to the complexity for the interviewer's interpretation of meaning representations that 'are fundamentally unstable and realized only through time and temporality' (Denzin, 1989, pp. 62-63). Consequently, the creation of a unique narrative required acknowledgement of a metaphorical mode of interpretation to capture teacher voice.

Throughout the interview process efforts were made to reduce the possibility of influencing teachers' reflections. Importantly, this included being mindful of avoiding references to researcher experiences so as not to confirm or contradict teachers' views while still acknowledging their meanings. An ethical stance of kinship throughout the interview processes used a 'selfother' approach through 'a participatory mode of consciousness' (Heshusius, 1994, p. 17). Therefore, attention focused on teachers' experiences whilst subsuming thoughts centred on the researcher's experience.

Reflexive and meaning-making dynamics of a three-interview process

Here we use examples selected from interview interactions with teacher participants to consider the reflexive and meaning-making dynamics throughout the three-interview process. We focus on how the approach as well as deviations may impact interpretations at the time of the interview and touch on some implications for subsequent analysis. Importantly, the interviewer's attendance to language, timing and open-ended possibilities required pausing, prompting and reassurance tailored to the interviewee. Ongoing interpretation of transcripts to understand implicit meaning highlighted the significance of deliberations across the differing interview approaches. In the excerpts discussed in the following sections, two teachers are identified using pseudonyms. A synopsis of their backgrounds at the time of the study is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Characteristics of two teachers who participated in the study

Teacher pseudonym	Jaxon	Chloé
Gender	Male	Female
Age range	35 - 45	< 35
School system experience	Non-government schools	Government and non-government schools
Teaching countries	Australia	Australia, New Zealand
Learning areas taught - Stages 4 and 5 secondary and Stage 6 senior secondary school	History, geography, English, mathematics, religion, economics, business studies	Personal development, health, physical education
Teacher leader experience	Student pastoral care and teacher learning leader	Student pastoral care and teacher learning leader
Years teaching	15	12
Current location	Metropolitan non-coastal	Regional coastal

Assumptions in language - narrative oral history experiences interview

During the first interviews, it was necessary to clarify the teachers' use of well-worn phrases or implicit assumptions to ascertain common understanding between teacher and interviewer.

For example, use of simple phrases by one teacher provided fruitful insights after prompting. Jaxon used metaphors to enrich his emotional expression and to communicate

the effect on him of his relationships and learning challenges. He had used the phrase “deep end” that required clarification to understand the implicit meaning-making on his experience.

Interviewer: What did the ‘deep end’ feel like?

Jaxon: It was actually like (both good humouredly laughing), I can remember ...
(Excerpt 1 - Jaxon).

Mutual laughter followed the interviewer’s use of a quizzical expression in querying the “deep-end” metaphor. The interviewer intention was to indicate a possible shared yet different understanding. The subsequent explanation revealed the teacher’s thinking behind his choice of metaphor. Jaxon elaborated on the idea that opportunities offered may have been seen by some as “over his head” in terms of his expertise. However, it was the nature of the experience in being challenged beyond his perceived competence that was an essential aspect of his learning. He continually reinforced that he “enjoyed” challenges, viewing these as opportunities and acknowledged that others may feel scared in similar circumstances. The continual unpacking of the “deep end” metaphor led to a different image as portrayed in the following quote.

Interviewer: ... you used the word scares for other people, and you use the word enjoyment for you, what’s at the core of that do you think?

Jaxon: I think ... I want to learn things and I want to take things in, I don’t want to be in that position where I’m just in cruise control and go ‘no, I know everything’.
(Excerpt 2 - Jaxon).

Further unpacking of Jaxon’s language enabled an unfolding of meaning on the idea of challenges being enjoyed rather than feared. He then indicated that revelling in opportunities requires resilience. Further interviewer prompts led to an explanation for his approach to learning that he had modelled for his students.

Interviewer: What do you mean when you say resilience?

Jaxon: ... I haven’t really thought about it before, but hopefully I can make mistakes and say, ‘oh well, it didn’t work out’ and they can see that and have the same attitude towards that.
(Excerpt 3 - Jaxon).

For Jaxon, the textual and spoken context of the interview offered representations of a metaphorical "universe" that contained the challenges that Jaxon valued. Interviewer reflection on prompts along with the tentative interpretation of revelations enabled the negotiation of the language used by both the interviewee and interviewer. Each teacher’s experience was further drawn out on aspects for analysis in the initial interpretations. Furthermore, the additional prompting on his use of metaphor illuminated the overall orientation of Jaxon’s story in risking serendipity.

Finally, an open-ended question at the end of the first interview was able to draw out additional reflections on experience that were not pre-empted by the interviewer as shown below.

- Interviewer: ... so is there anything else that you can think of that I haven't asked you, like hit the nail on the head with a question?
- Jaxon: Yeah. A couple of times I was thinking, and it just didn't come around to it ...
(Excerpt 4 - Jaxon).

In Jaxon's case, he continued explanations on his experience for an extra 12 minutes. He was able to highlight the essential beliefs and understandings he held on what makes a good teacher. In this way, ongoing reflexivity by the researcher assisted in unpacking the use of metaphors to interpret how teachers construct understanding on practice (Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2010; Munby & Russell, 1990).

Obstacles in confidence of expression - phenomenological lifeworld interview

Maintaining the previously described methodological constructs of the phenomenological lifeworld interview is akin to metaphorically entering uncharted waters. Mutual experience in teaching and learning allows for the navigation of the conversation whilst encountering unfamiliar obstacles in meaning between interviewer and interviewee.

For instance, lacking words to express existing pedagogical prowess or emerging insights on learning through practice can impact teacher confidence in their acknowledged expertise. The interviewer was puzzled by the interviewee's use of a repetitive phrase – was it a verbal habit to avoid articulating their genuine meaning or was it to allow time for further reflection or indeed to seek encouragement? The tensions became evident in the second interview with Chloé as shown in the following excerpts.

- Chloé: I don't know if this is answering it properly, but ...
- Interviewer: Maybe think about how you talk to parents or a non-teaching audience.
- Chloé: [extended explanation] ... I don't know, is that right?
- Interviewer: [good humoured coaxing] I told you ... there are no right answers.
- Chloé: I know sorry; I don't know [teacher sighs] ...
(Excerpt 5 - Chloé).
- Chloé: ... But I don't know if that's answering your question again.
- Interviewer: No, it is!
- Chloé: I don't know yeah so that's all.
(Excerpt 6 - Chloé).

During Chloé's second interview, uncertainty regarding the relevance of her answers became more apparent. She sometimes questioned her authority to respond. The interviewer offered support in sensing an insecurity from the phrases used in Chloé's colloquial idiom. This approach was reinforced by subsequent analysis of the transcripts from the first two interviews showing that Chloé had used the phrase "I don't know" 74 times while "I guess" appeared 32 times. Therefore, unscripted interviewer prompts were often a reassurance for Chloé's responses or a reiteration of the importance of her individual experience. Chloé also used "conscious of" 13 times and "conscious effort" three times. The language appeared to offset her doubt by supplying an authenticity through an observational awareness of her own actions as well as those of her mentors and colleagues.

Consequentially, it was necessary for the interviewer to bolster Chloé's belief in the trustworthiness of her answers by recognising shared understandings of another teacher's common experience. The unique responses within this interview context required deviations from the semi-structured interview guide representative of the "therapeutic value" (Elliot & Bonsall, 2018) that might result from the interviewer-interviewee research relationship. Further comparison of Jaxon and Chloé's transcripts did not indicate experiences to highlight gender bias or inequity. It is also worth noting that the sole interviewer was female that might suggest gender equity for Chloé's interview context, albeit a possible power differential between academic researcher and teacher. However, Chloé often referenced her continued non-permanent appointment as a teacher leader which could attribute to her uncertainty as a teacher leader in developing relationships and influencing colleagues and the broader school community to improve practices (Poekert, 2012).

The first and second interview prompts deviated from the examples of planned prompting. Indicative of probing questions, participant reflection, and counterfactual imaging or perspectives (Way, Kanak Zwiier & Tracy, 2015) the dialogic approach encouraged interviewee reflection. Reflexivity on the interview interactions with each participant required thoughtful diversions from semi-structured guides by the interviewer to uniquely address their responses. Importantly, interviewer reflexivity also focused on the tentative interpretations occurring in situ along with the ongoing analyses throughout the longitudinal timeframe to posit emerging phenomena on the interviewee's lived experience.

Uncertainty in expertise - reflections on professional learning interview

The expectation for the third interview was a clarification on the previously supplied draft of the participants' narratives and reflections on participation in the research. However, teachers expressed uncertainty in their acknowledged expertise as well as continuing to question their next stage of development (Patterson, 2019). The unexpected aspects of teacher reflection and meaning-making required the interviewer to clarify teachers' verbal and emailed responses, and to revisit deliberations across the interview sequence.

At the time of the third interview, Jaxon had taken up a new leadership role in another school as an opportunity to avoid “stagnating”. He clearly perceived his development of expertise lay in learning from mistakes, which he now found difficult to integrate as a school leader and very different to the “range of experiences” he had previously described. Jaxon’s experience demonstrated the need for self-determination in the decision-making for developing his teaching practice (Lloyd, 2019) but that connection was not available in his current context for developing as a teacher leader. Referring to the narrative constructed by the researcher Jaxon said:

I loved the story. ... Every once in a while, I open it up and read through it again. ... I really enjoyed the picture that got built ... I don’t really feel that this school understands who I am or knows who I am. There’s a part of me who wants to give that to them and say ‘here, here’s who I am; here’s a picture of the person that I am’. ... I would love for that to be in my resume. ... I feel really understood by that piece of writing.

Excerpt 7 - Jaxon.

For Jaxon, the interview as a site of reflexive practice reaffirmed the ongoing dissonance in perceptions of his own and others’ understanding of his expertise. His overwhelmingly positive response to his professional learning narrative provided impetus to take on a challenge in a new environment. The interviewer was also able to question Jaxon’s ongoing conundrum in harmonising how he is seen by others with how he views himself. As the first of the five teachers, Jaxon’s uncertainty was reiterated by subsequent participants, with differing implications for researcher reflexivity.

Chloé had moved into a permanent leadership role in her existing school but was unable to resolve the previous dissonance she experienced from several temporary relieving roles. She still believed her developing expertise was:

... partly being in the right place at the right time and having a changeover of very experienced staff. I was really fortunate to have that mentoring and someone showing a genuine interest in bettering my capabilities in the classroom. I think also obviously having a desire to improve and learn continually myself attributed to it. And a genuine desire to want to do the best for the kids.

Excerpt 8 – Chloé.

Chloé attributed her development of expertise to chance and the influence of colleagues. She placed this ahead of motivation for her own learning and improved outcomes for her students. For the interviewer, identifying similar factors influencing developing expertise for Chloé, Jaxon as well as another two teachers, bolstered the writing of their professional learning narratives. These clarifications from the third interview supported the phenomenological writing emerging from the analysis, which was fore-fronting the notion of uncertainty as a central constituent phenomenon. This is supported by a ‘conscious competence’ in understanding the challenges for improvising practice in the ongoing development of outstanding teachers (Sorensen, 2016).

The third interview presented each teacher with another trajectory for their professional learning. Changes in perspective over time allowed teachers to consider their story

characterised to date within their current circumstance. Significantly, the benefit of multiple interviews over time was incorporating participant reflection throughout the meaning-making dynamics and reflexivity of interviewer as researcher.

Concluding comments on elucidating interview approaches and techniques

Based on the examples provided in this paper, we argue that delving for deeper meaning through interviewing requires interrogation of interview approaches and interviewer techniques. Examining what is reported as representative meanings gathered through interviews should inform future research design and interview practice. In conclusion we reinforce the implications of the interview approaches critiqued here, highlight considerations for future research in continuing the conversation on interview approaches, and remark on our co-authored writing.

The study under consideration drew on interviews to explore the lived experience of expert teachers. The constructionist conceptions of interview (Roulston, 2010) underpinned the theoretical frames of narrative inquiry and phenomenological inquiry. A structured and responsive approach in the planning of questions and prompting across the three-interview process supported ongoing interviewer reflexivity. Rather than assigning elemental meaning to simplistic sections of transcribed talk, we concur with Rapley's (2012) approach that requires interrogating the subjectivities constructed by interviewer and interviewee throughout an interview sequence. The approach of the study presented here encouraged imaginative variation in individual meaning-making of interviewees whilst enabling interviewer interpretation of the understandings of shared social phenomena. We considered examples on interviewer-interviewee interactions as well as how the participatory approach presented here is a way to describe 'realities that are created by both the participants and the research' (Lichtman, 2010, p. 20).

Interviews used in different research paradigms provide varying experiences for research participants. Approaches should allow for participant reflection on interview experiences, considering the sensitivity of the topic explored and the number of interviews conducted (Wolgemuth et al., 2015). The timeframe of a multiple interview process is also significant for enabling interviewee and interviewer reflections. Commonalities in critical examination of interviewer reflection are evident in interviewing examples from varying qualitative traditions. Roulston's (2010) comments on the importance of quality in research resonate with the constructionist conception of interviews unpacked in this paper. The two methodological frameworks of this study enabled a narrative oral history interview and a phenomenological lifeworld interview to focus on establishing variation in individual meaning-making whilst eliciting understandings of shared social phenomena. The examples considered here were selected to interrogate the deliberations taken throughout the semi-structured interview process.

For teachers nominated at high levels of expertise, the notion of being considered an expert can impact their confidence in expressing their beliefs and professional

understanding of their own development (Patterson, 2019). Therefore, researcher reflexivity is required on the difficulties that arose for interviewees throughout the process. This paper supports the call to explicitly address variance according to the mode of interview, subject and context (Harvey, 2011). The interviewer's attendance to language, timing and open-ended possibilities enabled individualised prompting to interpret implicit meaning from teacher responses. The study supported the importance of identifying and linking 'subtleties' (Mills, 2001, p. 289) and the interactional elements (Potter & Hepburn, 2012) of interview. Importantly, researchers should ensure that meaning representations during iterative analysis are considered as to their influence on the future design and enactment of interview processes.

A cautionary element relates to the levels of expertise possessed by the researcher and participant within the field under investigation. Either or both may have already formulated statements or philosophical views within their field and in relation to the research questions. The piloting of research questions conducted for the study in this paper highlighted the difficulties of interviewing people known to the researcher. Additionally, interviewer techniques should consider the interview situation as presenting a post-reflective platform for regurgitating established statements or views rather than an opportunity for more open pre-reflection. The examples presented in this paper highlight that interviewers need to be cognisant that prompting should resemble 'provocations possibly leading to new insights' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 147). Therefore, continued use of prompting questions or challenging of statements need to allow for pre-reflective meaning-making. The complexities of interviewee responses can reveal disparities and missed opportunities in interviewers' questions. This paper supports the sharing of researcher critique on interview approaches and techniques in order to influence thinking and subsequent development of future approaches to interviewing (Roulston, 2014).

In this paper, the analysis may be transferrable to qualitative research using similar methodological frames, but cannot be generalised across contexts. Interviewers working in fields other than education research in Australia should deliberate on the socio-cultural characteristics pertinent to their context. We concur that further attention is needed when considering research participant experiences of interviews drawn from different qualitative research paradigms (Wolgemuth et al., 2015).

The co-authored writing process enhanced the ideas presented from the study conducted by the first author of this paper. As co-authors we encountered the 'complex discursive, social and emotional work' required (Kamler, 2010, p. 81) for unpacking our arguments on approaches across two methodological frameworks. The ongoing process informed our re-writing and refreshed our ideas on critiquing interview techniques for this paper as well as another on reflexivity in longitudinal studies (Macqueen & Patterson, 2020).

References

- Bevan, M. T. (2014). A method of phenomenological interviewing. *Qualitative Health Research*, 24(1), 136-144. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732313519710>

- Bignold, W. & Su, F. (2013). The role of the narrator in narrative inquiry in education: construction and co-construction in two case studies. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 36(4), 400-414. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727X.2013.773508>
- Bruner, J. S. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press. <https://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674003668>
- Clandinin, D. J. & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc. <https://www.wiley.com/en-au/Narrative+Inquiry%3A+Experience+and+Story+in+Qualitative+Research-p-9780787972769>
- Clegg, S. & Stevenson, J. (2013). The interview reconsidered: Context, genre, reflexivity and interpretation in sociological approaches to interviews in higher education research. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 32(1), 5-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2012.750277>
- Collinson, V. (2012). Leading by learning, learning by leading. *Professional Development in Education*, 38(2), 247-266. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2012.657866>
- Connelly, F. M. & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2-14. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189x019005002>
- Creely, E. (2016). 'Understanding things from within'. A Husserlian phenomenological approach to doing educational research and inquiring about learning. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 41(1), 104-122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727X.2016.1182482>
- Denzin, N. K. (1989). *Interpretive biography*. Newbury Park: SAGE. <https://au.sagepub.com/en-gb/oce/interpretive-biography/book2877>
- Elliot, M. L. & Bonsall, A. (2018). Building stories: Exploring participant experiences and research relationships. *Narrative Inquiry*, 28(2), 330-345. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ni.17069.ell>
- Gadamer, H.-G. (1993). *Truth and method* (2nd rev. ed.). London: Sheed and Ward. <https://mvlindsey.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/truth-and-method-gadamer-2004.pdf>
- Greene, J. C. (2005). The generative potential of mixed methods inquiry. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 28(2), 207-211. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01406720500256293>
- Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 191-215). Thousand Oaks: SAGE. [5th ed.] <https://au.sagepub.com/en-gb/oce/the-sage-handbook-of-qualitative-research/book242504>
- Harvey, W. S. (2011). Strategies for conducting elite interviews. *Qualitative Research*, 11(4), 431-441. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794111404329>
- Heshusius, L. (1994). Freeing ourselves from objectivity: Managing subjectivity or turning toward a participatory mode of consciousness? *Educational Researcher*, 23(3), 15-22. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189x023003015>
- Holley, K. & Colyar, J. (2012). Under construction: How narrative elements shape qualitative research. *Theory Into Practice*, 51(2), 114-121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2012.662866>
- Kamler, B. (2010). Revise and resubmit: The role of publication brokers. In C. Aitchison, B. Kamler & A. Lee (Eds.), *Publishing pedagogies for the doctorate and beyond* (pp. 64-82).

- New York: Routledge. <https://www.routledge.com/Publishing-Pedagogies-for-the-Doctorate-and-Beyond/Aitchison-Kamler-Lee/p/book/9780415480192>
- Kvale, S. (1983). The qualitative research interview: A phenomenological and a hermeneutical mode of understanding. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 14(2), 171-196. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156916283X00090>
- Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE. [3rd ed.] <https://au.sagepub.com/en-gb/oc/interviews/book239402>
- Liamputtong, P. & Ezzy, D. (2005). *Qualitative research methods* (2nd ed.). South Melbourne: Oxford University Press. [5th ed.] <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/qualitative-research-methods-9780190304287?cc=au&lang=en&>
- Lichtman, M. (2010). *Qualitative research in education: A user's guide* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. [3rd ed.] <https://au.sagepub.com/en-gb/oc/qualitative-research-in-education/book235144>
- Lindqvist, P. & Nordänger, U. K. (2010). Encounters in metaphors: Connecting the bridgeheads of teachers' practical knowledge and professional language. *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning*, 6(1), 49-61. <https://doi.org/10.5172/ijpl.6.1.49>
- Lloyd, C. A. (2019). Exploring the real-world decision-making of novice and experienced teachers. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 43(2), 166-182. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2017.1357070>
- Macqueen, S. & Patterson, C. (2020). Reflexivity in a longitudinal narrative inquiry: In pursuit of clarity of interpretations. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, online first. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727X.2020.1724279>
- McCormack, C. (2000). From interview transcript to interpretive story: Part 1—Viewing the transcript through multiple lenses. *Field Methods*, 12(4), 282-297. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822x0001200402>
- Mills, J. (2001). Self-construction through conversation and narrative in interviews. *Educational Review*, 53(3), 285-301. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131910120085883>
- Moran, D. (2000). *Introduction to phenomenology*. London: Routledge. <https://www.routledge.com/Introduction-to-Phenomenology/Moran/p/book/9780415183734>
- Munby, H. & Russell, T. (1990). Metaphor in the study of teachers' professional knowledge. *Theory Into Practice*, 29(2), 116-121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405849009543441>
- Patterson, C. (2018). Constructing narrative and phenomenological meaning within one study. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 18(3), 223-237. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-D-17-00033>
- Patterson, C. (2019). *Enacted personal professional learning: Re-thinking teacher expertise with storytelling and problematics*. Singapore: Springer. <https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9789811360060>
- Poekert, P. E. (2012). Teacher leadership and professional development: Examining links between two concepts central to school improvement. *Professional Development in Education*, 38(2), 169-188. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2012.657824>
- Potter, J. & Hepburn, A. (2012). Eight challenges for interview researchers. In J. F. Gubrium, J. A. Holstein, A. B. Marvasti, & K. D. McKinney (Eds.), *The SAGE*

- handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft* (pp. 555-570). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452218403.n39>
- Rapley, T. (2012). The (extra)ordinary practices of qualitative interviewing. In J. F. Gubrium, J. A. Holstein, A. B. Marvasti & K. D. McKinney (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft* (pp. 541-555). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452218403.n38>
- Ricoeur, P. (2008). *From text to action: Essays in hermeneutics, II* [trans K. Blamey & J. B. Thompson]. Cambridge University Press. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/language-in-society/article/abs/paul-ricoeur-from-text-to-action-essays-in-hermeneutics-ii-kathleen-blamey-john-b-thompson-trans-evanston-northwestern-university-press-1991-pp-xvi-346-4295-pap-1795/AC0174E032D57ED1A5154A4D81F6396E>
- Ricoeur, P. (1981). *Hermeneutics and the human sciences: Essays on language, action, and interpretation* [trans J. B. Thompson]. Cambridge University Press. <https://www.cambridge.org/au/academic/subjects/philosophy/political-philosophy/hermeneutics-and-human-sciences-essays-language-action-and-interpretation-1?format=PB>
- Riessman, C. K. (2002). Narrative analysis. In A. M. Huberman & M. B. Miles (Eds.), *The qualitative researcher's companion* (pp. 217-270). Thousand Oaks, London: SAGE. <https://au.sagepub.com/en-gb/oce/the-qualitative-researchers-companion/book7103>
- Roulston, K. (2010). Considering quality in qualitative interviewing. *Qualitative Research*, 10(2), 199-228. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794109356739>
- Roulston, K. (2014). Interactional problems in research interviews. *Qualitative Research*, 14(3), 277-293. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112473497>
- Schwandt, T. A. (2007). *The SAGE dictionary of qualitative inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE. [4th ed.] <https://au.sagepub.com/en-gb/oce/the-sage-dictionary-of-qualitative-inquiry/book237361>
- Seidman, I. E. (1991). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Seidman, I. E. (2013). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press. [5th ed.] https://www.tpress.com/interviewing-as-qualitative-research-9780807761489?page_id=323
- Silverman, D. (2017). How was it for you? The Interview Society and the irresistible rise of the (poorly analyzed) interview. *Qualitative Research*, 17(2), 144-158. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794116668231>
- Smith, C. P. (2000). Content analysis and narrative analysis. In H. T. Reis & C. M. Judd (Eds.), *Handbook of research methods in social and personality psychology* (pp. 313-335). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [2nd ed.] <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511996481>
- Smith, J. A., Larkin, M. & Flowers, P. (2008). *Doing interpretative phenomenological analysis: A practical guide to method and application*. London: SAGE.
- Sorensen, N. (2016). Improvisation and teacher expertise: Implications for the professional development of outstanding teachers. *Professional Development in Education*, 43(1), 6-22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2015.1127854>

- Van Manen, M. (1997). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy* (2nd ed.). London, Ontario: Althouse Press. <https://www.routledge.com/Researching-Lived-Experience-Human-Science-for-an-Action-Sensitive-Pedagogy/Manen/p/book/9781629584164>
- Van Manen, M. (2014). *Phenomenology of practice: Meaning-giving methods in phenomenological research and writing*. New York: Routledge. <https://www.routledge.com/Phenomenology-of-Practice-Meaning-Giving-Methods-in-Phenomenological-Research/Manen/p/book/9781611329445>
- Way, A. K., Kanak Zwiier, R. & Tracy, S. J. (2015). Dialogic interviewing and flickers of transformation: An examination and delineation of interactional strategies that promote participant self-reflexivity. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 21(8), 720-731. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800414566686>
- Wolgemuth, J. R., Erdil-Moody, Z., Opsal, T., Cross, J. E., Kaanta, T., Dickmann, E. M. & Colomer, S. (2015). Participants' experiences of the qualitative interview: Considering the importance of research paradigms. *Qualitative Research*, 15(3), 351-372. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794114524222>
- Yates, L. (2003). Interpretive claims and methodological warrant in small-number qualitative, longitudinal research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 6(3), 223-232. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1364557032000091824>

Carmel Patterson *PbD* (corresponding author) is an Industry Fellow of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Technology Sydney. She presents and publishes in her research areas of qualitative methodology and teacher professional learning. Carmel encourages Enacted Personal Professional Learning (EPPL), consulting to schools, universities and private enterprise.
Email: carmel.patterson@uts.edu.au

Suzanne Macqueen *PbD* is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Newcastle and a member of the Global Education and Research Team. Her research focus is on equity. She has published on between-class achievement grouping in primary schools, and the experiences of non-traditional students at university.
Email: suzanne.macqueen@newcastle.edu.au

Please cite as: Patterson, C. & Macqueen, S. (2021). Drawing on two methodological approaches: A collaborative approach to interview interpretation. *Issues in Educational Research*, 31(1), xxx-xxx. <http://www.iier.org.au/iier31/patterson.pdf>