

**Centre for Narrative Research in the Social Sciences  
University of East London**

***To Think is To experiment***

**Thursday, 29th April, 2010, Docklands Campus,  
East Building-First Floor, Room: EB 1.39**

**Abstracts:**

***Young Fatherhood on the Isle of Sheppey***

***Gemma Mansi, the University of Greenwich***

**I am studying young fatherhood on the Isle of Sheppey. The aim of my research is to focus on the concept of young fatherhood and whether the concept has changed throughout two-three generations on an isolated island. My research also aims to explore how closely tied communities can affect decisions made by young fathers and whether the changing nature of the community has had an overall effect upon the transition and identity of a young father living on Sheppey. I wish to contribute to the research day via poster. The poster will show the various phases and issues of my research including: The use of oral history and grounded theory, historical documentation, pilot studies and life story interviewing and where I currently am with my research.**

**Our lives through embroidery: Narrative accounts of the Intuthuko women's project**

***Puleng Segalo***

***Graduate Center, City University of New York***

**For a long time in South Africa and many other parts of the world 'no one' was interested in what women had to say. Their contribution was never sought or even acknowledged. The present paper aimed to get an understanding of the lives of women involved in a community embroidery project called Intuthuko, to explore why these women have made the decision to be part of the project, and also how the project has impacted their quality of lives and the way they view the world. Qualitative research approach with narrative inquiry as a method was employed, and data was collected through personal narratives and a focus group, and these were gathered by means of semi-structured interviews. Data analysis was conducted**

using Lieblich's narrative analysis model which highlights four important parts of the narrative, namely, content of whole, content of parts, form of whole and form of parts. The preliminary results reveal that being part of the Intuthuko project has a positive impact on the women's lives and contributes to their increased sense of independence, collective identity and enhanced quality of life.

*"I feel bottom of the heap": Disabled sexual stories and gendered telling*

*Kirsty Liddiard, University of Warwick*

Disabled people are de-gendered and de-sexualised within society (Shakespeare 2000; Morris 1991; Thomas 1999). This paper considers the performance of sexual identities by disabled people through an in-depth analysis of one interview with a severely disabled young male, drawn from my PhD research. I use this analysis to explore the role dominant discourses which frame disability have within the disabled (sexual) identity creation process.

Using a performative approach (Langellier 1989) based upon the dramaturgical metaphor proposed by Goffman (1959), I focus on the ways in which the main character's sexual identity is constructed through the telling of the setting, plot, storylines, the casting of actors and in relation to an audience. The analysis showed that story-telling was functional for the main character; for example, story-telling was used to construct counter narratives of resistance and sexual agency in the face of ablest master narratives of disability. It was also used to negotiate and mediate issues of morality when talking about buying sex. Overall, the paper explores the ways in which the telling of a story acted as a masculinising practice, a way to present a preferred self and to (re)construct a sexualized and gendered identity.

**References:**

Goffman, E. (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. USA: Anchor Books

Langellier, K. (1989) 'Personal Narratives: Perspectives on Theory and Research', *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 9:4, 243-276.

Morris, J. (1991) *Pride Against Prejudice: Transforming Attitudes to Disability*. Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers

Shakespeare, T. (2000) 'Disabled Sexuality: Toward Rights and Recognition', *Sexuality and Disability*, 18: 3, 159-166

Thomas, C. (1999). *Female forms: experiencing and understanding disability*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

*Journeys to Engagement with the UK Global Justice Movement: How, What and Why?*

*James Trewby, Development Education Research Centre, Institute of Education*

My research is an attempt to begin with individuals who are taking action on global justice issues and trace their journeys backwards from this point, looking for information which may help engage others in the future.

**In this contribution I will present ‘the story so far’ in my research, including an exploration of how individuals come to engage with the Global Justice Movement’ in the UK and a new model for discussing forms of engagement generated from reading literature around social movements and contentious politics.**

**I will then share my (Tentative) plans regarding the use of narrative research methods to investigate these journeys and ask for comments from those in attendance.**

***Dynamics of change in families dealing with severe parenting problems: IFPS in Flanders.***

***Hubert (Bert) Van Puyenbroeck, Vrije Universiteit Brussels***

**This study on the impact of an Intensive Family Preservation Service (IFPS) intervention in families focuses on (the changes in) the perspectives of family members on staying together as a family from two points of view, namely (the changes in) their perception of the IFPS intervention on the one hand, and (changes in) their perception of their family situation during and after the crisis intervention on the other hand.**

**From earlier implemented research we learned about the outcomes of an IFPS intervention in Flemish families whose children face imminent removal to out of home services such as state funded residential care or foster care (Loots, G. et al., 2006; Van Puyenbroeck, H. et al., 2007). By means of a qualitative (multiple) case study design the study at hand focuses on the dynamics of change during IFPS intervention. Qualitative analysis used look into the data gathered by means of video taped intervention and examines what processes are at stake.**

**Personal trauma as a formative development experience: A narrative perspective**

***Amy Armstrong,***

***Aston Business School, Aston University, Birmingham***

**The idea that people can achieve personal growth as a result of great suffering is not a new concept. Stories of people’s triumphs over tragedy have been well-documented over many years. Evidence from academic research in this area suggests that experiences of personal trauma, while painful, can also result in positive growth at an individual level (e.g. Affleck & Tennen, 1996; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2006). This concept is well documented in the psychology literature and carries many different labels; ‘transitions’ (Dotlich, Noel & Walker, 2004); ‘thriving’ (Carver, 1998; O’Leary, 1998; Saakvitne, Tennen & Affleck, 1998); ‘post-traumatic growth’ (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2006); ‘benefit finding’ (Affleck & Tennen, 1996); ‘stress-related growth’ (Park, 1998); and ‘flourishing’ (Keynes & Haidt, 2002). For the purposes of this presentation, the term ‘growth through trauma’ will be used.**

**Traumatic life experiences can be personal or professional. For example, in one’s personal life, it may include bereavement, critical illness or family breakdown. In one’s professional life, it may be redundancy or a major career setback. In this**

**presentation, it is the personal dimension that will be explored, since it is those experiences that are often hidden from the world of work, but may possess some of the greatest development value for an individual.**

**This doctoral study aims to understand how the experience of personal trauma may act as a catalyst to change the way an individual thinks and behaves at work. Furthermore, this research project seeks to understand the role of the person's workplace in supporting or hindering their journey post-trauma, in order to identify the characteristics of 'resilience promoting environments' (Lepore & Revenson, 2006) or 'climates of care' (Klein & Bowers, 2000). Finally, this study aims to explore the composition, structure and role of the personal narrative in the coping and growth process, by focusing on Calhoun & Tedeschi (2006) five posttraumatic growth themes (personal strength, new possibilities, relating to others, appreciation of life, and spiritual change).**

**Personal narratives underpin this entire study, since they are a vehicle through which private experiences, thoughts and feelings can be made public, so that trauma stories can be told. They are also a way of helping the teller to re-shape their identity as a result of their trauma in order present the workplace 'self' they wish to portray.**

**The aim of this conference presentation to provide an emergent conceptual framework, which has been developed as a result of reviewing the literature and to gain feedback on the research design for this doctoral study, which is underpinned with narratives as a tool for data collection and analysis.**

**Some questions will be posed during the presentation in order to guide forthcoming empirical work. They are:**

- **How might approaches to data collection be honed to ensure a 'natural' narrative emerges?**
- **How might I flex approaches to data analysis given that the trauma narratives I receive may be 'broken' and therefore do not fit with what constitutes a 'normal' narrative structure or form?**

***Managed migration: Improving the supply of mathematics teachers by recruiting mathematics graduates and teachers from outside the UK***

***Alan Benson, London Metropolitan University***

**The supply of mathematics teachers in the UK has long been a matter of concern and in recognition of this special legislation passed in November 2008 exempted foreign born mathematics teachers together with other occupations in short supply from restrictions placed on other workers seeking employment in the UK. This initiative together with the free movement of graduates within the European Union increases the supply of teachers available to fill the perennial shortages in teacher supply. This paper reports a pilot study which uses biographical methods to explore the experiences of two mathematics graduates in the first years since their arrival in the UK as well**

**as evaluating the methods used. One participant arrived in the UK from India under the auspices of the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme and the other as an EU citizen from Romania. The analysis is based on two in depth interviews with the participants. It describes how they are positioned by the national discourses surrounding race and immigration and how both manage to feel comfortable in this context by achieving their goal of 'fitting in' which in turn allows them to look forward to the next stage of settlement in UK from their new found professional status as teachers.**