

# A story about stories: An investigation into the role of storytelling in professional education

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor in Philosophy at Birmingham City University

October 2021

Faculty of Health Education and Life Sciences



**BIRMINGHAM CITY**  
University

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## Abstract

Storytelling affords many benefits for professional education, but it is not an instinctive craft. Its usage is often under-valued, under-utilised, under-researched and enmeshed in contention. Yet storytelling can be employed to challenge orthodoxies: “Through narrative we construct, reconstruct, in some ways reinvent yesterday and tomorrow” (Bruner, 2002: 93). I propose that storytelling is a form of embodied capital, situated within cultural capital and social capital, and that nurturing storytelling capital helps to develop professional skills and understanding. A core of advocates testify to storytelling’s suitability for use in professional education, however, my research shows that its usage is more nuanced and complex. It is opaque, lying on the periphery of our pedagogical toolkit, with anecdotal stories, in particular, often dismissed as having little pedagogical value. In this sense it is hidden practice.

This thesis investigates the professional landscape of storytelling in one university in the Midlands, England, within a socio-cultural context. I explore how practitioner educators use stories by mapping story incidences against a story typology and analysing pedagogical interactions. Through this research I witnessed the intricacies of pedagogical storytelling, leading to the discovery of new categories of “historical”, “conglomerated” and “fractured” stories. Employing a narrative ontology and narrative inquiry epistemology, I introduced Story Circles for Research as spaces for practitioner educators to reflect on their storytelling practice. Methodologically, and in line with the focus on oral storytelling, I developed Trickster Methodology, employing trickster archetypes as research “partners” and provocateurs to analyse and articulate my empirical “noticings”. Previously, practitioners’ views on storytelling had been virtually unexplored. This research unearthed fascinating new perspectives on benefits, challenges, and dangers of using storytelling, revealing deep complexities and tensions, alongside their vulnerabilities and tentativeness in using storytelling productively and safely. Despite these complexities and challenges, participants had never received any training or guidance in storytelling techniques.

My research calls for storytelling practices to be unveiled and reclaimed in the twenty-first century, revitalised to create new imaginings for teaching and learning. I propose practitioner educators work towards employing a Trickster Pedagogy, that centres on



storytelling and trickster-thinking. Ultimately, the versatile characteristics of stories allow them to be used for multiple purposes to benefit students' development, their elusive nature potentially creating a counterpoint to the grand narratives of performativity, neoliberalism and capitalism.

## Acknowledgements

A PhD journey is often said to be life transforming, and I can testify to this. My journey has been thoroughly enjoyable in the main, with moments of elation, but there have also been significant challenges, and I could not have done this without the support of many individuals.

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisory team: Dr. Victoria Kinsella; Professor Alex Kendall; and Dr. Julia Everitt. They have supported me throughout by encouraging, challenging and pushing me to do better. They encouraged me to “embrace the chaos” of doing a PhD, and I have tried to do this.

I give my heartfelt thanks to my husband, Aidan Garbett. For years he encouraged me to embark on a doctorate. He has supported me throughout these four and a half years, sacrificing many things so that I could dedicate myself to my studies. He has cooked many meals, done the housework, and put up with my worries and angst. He has also encouraged my growing fixation with Tricksters, pointing out articles and providing gifts of books and items connected with ravens and wolves.

I would also like to thank family and friends who have given me encouragement and support throughout this time, particular thanks to my stepdad, Philip Parsons and his partner Helen Morton.

Sincere thanks to my research participants who allowed me to “sit in” on their lectures, and to those who gave up their own time to take part in Story Circles for Research. All of your contributions have been vital in enabling this research to take place, and I am extremely grateful.

I would also like to thank my PhD colleagues and the PGR community; the Doctoral College; and BCU colleagues. They have engaged me in many serendipitous conversations that have sparked an idea, or a new perspective and they have also been my support network, offering encouragement and a “listening ear”.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all those storytellers who have inspired me over the years, from family members to friends and teachers, through to professional storytellers. Your stories have entertained and inspired me, they have become a part of me, and are therefore an integral part of my journey and this thesis.

## List of Abbreviations

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
AEI	Approved Educational Institute
AIDS	Auto Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AL	Adult Literacy
ACL	Adult and Community Learning
BERA	British Education Research Association
CBT	Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
CP	Clinical Practice
CPD	Core Professional Development
DfE	Department for Education
DS	Digital Storytelling
EBP	Evidence Based Practice
ECMO	Extracorporeal membrane oxygenation
ELL	English Language Learners
EOLD	English Oxford Living Dictionary
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ETF	Education and Training Foundation
EYE	Early Years Education
FE	Further Education
FENTO	Further Education National Training Organisation
FLLN	Family Literacy Language and Numeracy
FS	Formalised Storytelling
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
IfL	Institute for Learning
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
MA	Master of Arts
MRR	Initial Teacher Training Market Review Report
NMC	Nursing and Midwifery Council
NMO	Nursing and Midwifery Order
NHS	National Health Service
NSS	National Student Surveys
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
OS	Oral Storytelling
PCE	Post Compulsory Education
PCET	Post Compulsory Education and Training
PFSI	Pedagogical Framework for Story Incidences
PICU	Paediatric Intensive Care Unit
PIS	Participant Information Sheet
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PIAAC	Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate of Education
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
S&L	Speaking and Listening
SCR	Story Circle for Research

SE	Secondary Education
SET	Society of Education and Training
TEF	Teacher Excellence Framework
TP	Teaching Practice
WW1	World War One

# Forethought

## Trickster Tale - First Meeting

The sun shone brightly through the leaves, a golden backdrop to the mottled dark green, dazzling and beautiful. I took a sip of water, the coolness of the liquid refreshing me in the baking heat. Mr. Wolf – he was back again, back in my thoughts, back in my life – guiding or misleading me? Why was he here?

I was first aware of meeting Mr. Wolf as a young child – about five years old, I think. I was listening to my Nan reading me Fairy stories, “just one more!” I had pleaded.

“Ok, just one more, but then I shall have to stop because my voice is going, and you need to sleep. Now, which one shall we choose, one from this book?” The big green book of Fairy Tales was inviting, but I had spotted something different on the shelf.

“Can I hear one of these stories?”

“These?” Nan picked up a battered book, faded with age and use. “This was one of your mom’s favourites... yes, I think these will be ok for you now.” She opened the book to the first story and started to read “One day there was a rabbit ... he was a very clever rabbit ... his name was Brer Rabbit\* ...”

My Nan pointed to the words as she read and showed me the pictures: the proud rabbit dressed in his red jacket; the cunning fox and the strange “tar baby” ... Brer rabbit getting stuck to the tar baby and covered in feathers ... thinking hard, he sought to escape his predicament. It was so funny, I chuckled as I listened, delighted at the pictures and the way one small rabbit could outwit the sly fox and escape his trap.

Despite the excitement of the tale, I could feel my eyes shutting as I tried to stay awake. I opened them wide again when a movement across the banister caught my attention – was there something there? I rubbed my eyes. A strange shadow seemed to shift and sway across the room melding into the dark corners behind the wardrobe.

“The End!” My Nan announced, just as the shadow moved closer, working its way behind her; briefly it was illuminated by the standard lamp, and I could see it was ...

“A fox!” I shouted.

“Yes, that’s right, Brer Fox. Have you enjoyed that story?”

“Yes, but he’s right there, in the room, behind you!” The figure had frozen in position, and was looking at me quizzically, his head half cocked, one ear upright and twitching slightly.

My Nan looked over her shoulder, and then back at me, her hazel eyes peering intensely, “I think these stories have got you a little excited when you’re supposed to be getting ready to sleep. Come on now, lights out, and I promise I will read you some more tomorrow. Goodnight and God Bless. Sleep tight and don’t let the bugs bite.” She finished with her usual refrain.

As Nan kissed me goodnight and tucked me in, over her shoulder the fox was grinning, it winked at me as I heard it whisper in a deep husky voice “Not a fox, thank you very much, ... I’m Mr. Wolf, pleased to make your acquaintance ... and really, Brer Fox has been misrepresented!” With a wide yawn exposing his long pink tongue and sharp white teeth, he leapt backwards and disappeared over the banister, back into the shadows of the eaves.

\*Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby (Enid Blyton) - First published 1925

## Chapter One: Narrative Beginnings

This thesis has gradually emerged through four and a half years of studying, researching, and writing about the role of storytelling in professional education, but it also represents a lifetime's immersion in stories and nearly twenty years working as a tutor in adult education. On a personal level I have always enjoyed reading and listening to stories, I was a "bookish" child, and was often found reading quietly to myself. I was also surrounded by family and family friends telling stories, including my grandparents' wartime reminiscences, and my mom's tales of her rebellious youth, making friends with local rock stars. I enjoyed studying English at school and college and nurtured a reading habit into adulthood. It is hardly surprising that after changing careers and obtaining my PGCE in Further Adult and Higher Education, I was drawn to specialising in English. Initially I worked as a Community Tutor in Wolverhampton, teaching a variety of subjects, including basic literacy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). At this time (in the early 2000s) there was still scope for non-accredited learning, which afforded opportunities to explore teaching literacy in imaginative ways, focusing on the needs and interests of learners, rather than being confined to set curricula or exam criteria. In retrospect, this allowed me precious freedom to experiment creatively with teaching, that would be more restricted in later years.

Meanwhile, paralleling my early teaching experiences, I became interested in oral storytelling. This was sparked by seeing performances of "Beowulf" and "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" at The Green Man Festival in Clun, Shropshire - I was enchanted by the tales, atmosphere, and oral presentation. In hindsight, this experience launched a long-standing involvement with oral storytelling. I started attending storytelling clubs and events, becoming progressively involved in the storytelling community. I am now on the organising committee of Festival at the Edge, a three-day international storytelling festival that takes place in Shropshire (see [www.festivalattheedge.org](http://www.festivalattheedge.org)). Over the years, therefore, I have developed a deep-seated interest in storytelling, and I recognise that I need to be mindful of this in relation to my research, to guard against any potential bias.

My fascination with storytelling started to seep into my professional practice, as I wondered if it could be used in conjunction with teaching adult literacy. However,

during this period, non-accredited classes started to decline as the focus was increasingly on learning for employability. In 2003-4 I undertook a Level 6 qualification to specialise in teaching literacy. This was significant as it encouraged me to think critically about English, particularly in respect of how language acts to limit or empower us within society, this included my first brief introduction to Pierre Bourdieu's philosophies. I was also introduced to Paolo Freire's (1985) literacy circles, which focused on facilitative learning and equal participation for those living in poverty, with the target of enabling people to develop their political understanding alongside literacy skills. Coming from a working-class background I felt an affinity to these approaches, which became firmly embedded in my teaching philosophy.

I enjoyed using my new skills for teaching English, but soon became frustrated by the increasing emphasis on functionality (often at the expense of everything else), with rapidly diminishing opportunities for creative methods of teaching literacy. This has been an ongoing bone of contention, especially as, over the years, neoliberal policies and changes in government funding have gradually eroded non-accredited provision in favour of that which focuses on employability and vocational skills. These tensions drove me to investigate the potential for storytelling in relation to literacy, which resulted in securing a bursary for an action-research project (from the University of Wolverhampton), shortly followed by research for my Master's degree into: the effects of oral and aural stories in the home (Garbett, 2005a); and the impact of introducing storytelling into Adult Literacy (AL) and Family Literacy Language and Numeracy classes (FLLN) (Garbett, 2005b), investigating it as a means for developing core literacy skills as prescribed in the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (Basic Skills Agency, 2001). These studies culminated in a dissertation in which I argued that an individual's literacy and educational attainment is directly impacted by experiences of storytelling and/or listening to stories as a child (Garbett, 2007).

Following completion of my Master's degree, my experience of the education environment continued to grow and expand. I moved from Literacy Co-ordinator to Assistant Manager, developing my knowledge of the sector and gaining many new experiences, including mentoring PGCE students and teaching on various teacher-training courses (e.g. Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training). Working with student-teachers encouraged me to think about education from a different perspective, leading me to consider student-teachers' experiences of training, and how they develop

their skills. My teaching practice has continued to grow, I have taught on PGCE and Master's courses in HE, alongside my studies. My PhD has, consequently, emerged from these perspectives and experiences, which have shaped, and contributed to, my research interests and methodological choices.

## 1.1 Research Paradigm

From early in my PhD studies, I was drawn to qualitative paradigms, focusing initially on narrative research (or the narrative turn as it is sometimes known) which uses social contexts for meaning-making, where language is seen as a key element in social interaction (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012). I aimed to gather rich information and analyse emotions and experiences, where the research is:

... set in human stories of experience. It provides researchers with a rich framework through which they can investigate the ways humans experience the world depicted through their stories (Webster and Mertova, 2007: 3).

Due to my background in English, I initially considered employing an analytical literary approach, analysing discourses as if they were literary works; this had been identified by Reissman (2008a: 152) as a "curious" gap in narrative research given the method's drama roots. This would have combined close reading of transcripts, including identifying "ambiguity, irony, paradox and 'tone'" together with considering historic, social and political contexts (Reissman, 2008a: 153). However, as I delved deeper into methodology, I was drawn to Clandinin's (2016) narrative inquiry as a more suitable epistemology, as it combined narrative approaches with considerations for the situational context, in particular focusing on working with education and nurse practitioners. I particularly valued the emphasis on viewing participants' stories holistically, together with the focus on researcher and participants as co-producers of knowledge, which suited my Freirean principles.

As a separate but complementary approach, I developed an interest in the use of tricksters as a different way of thinking-about, thinking-through and writing-through my research. I was eager to include creative elements, reflecting the creativity of storytelling, in a way that merged academic writing with traditional story traditions. I started to formulate a notion of developing Trickster Methodology, that is, using archetypal tricksters as playful research "partners" to engage me in dialogue, questioning me about my research. Tricksters are associated with the "sixth and



seventh moments of qualitative inquiry” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) and I was attracted to the idea of these “elusive figures” taking up “unstable spaces between boundaries” (Maclure, 1996: 274). However, I deliberately resist saying more about Trickster Methodology here, as it gradually emerged and evolved as a “work in progress” throughout the thesis. When tentatively proposing it, I had a notion of what I wanted it to achieve, but details of how this would work in practice were still hazy. This, consequently, has been a journey of experimentation and discovery, as I worked through the research, actively “figuring it out” as it progressed. However, as a starting point, my Trickster Methodology employs two tricksters, a wolf and a raven, as my companions, eagerly provoking me to think differently about my work. In chapter four, I discuss my ontological and epistemological positioning in depth, explaining how this has framed my research.

In line with my narrative paradigms, I have used the term “empirical noticings” rather than “data”. Data is too positivist and mechanical for my research which is rooted in organically collated qualitative findings and would therefore be incongruent with Trickster Methodology. Empirical denotes that findings are collated by observing the situations and participants, and “noticings” focuses on these being things that I have noticed, as a lone researcher, with acknowledgement that another research might have focused on different areas and noticed different things.

## 1.2 Research Puzzle and Objectives

Nurse and teacher education combines theoretical knowledge with practical experience, a key component being reflective practice, which is seen as “an essential competence” (Sanders et al., 2008). Moon (1999) first proposed using storytelling to enhance reflective practice and critical thinking in professional learning, and other educators (e.g. McDrury and Alterio, 2003; Moon and Fowler, 2008; Sanders et al., 2008; etc.) have subsequently supported this, indicating a common thread between the two professions and storytelling techniques. Consequently, my original focus, drawn from a tentative grasp of relevant literature, was to examine storytelling by working with practitioner educators to introduce storytelling techniques into appropriate sessions, monitoring the impact on lecturers and students. However, as my view of the literature became more sophisticated, I began to ask what the field of storytelling in professional education actually looked like. I wondered whether storytelling was being used more in

some areas than others and questioned exactly what storytelling was taking place. This is discussed in chapter three, but in brief, the field seemed somewhat “messy” and confused, with no clear picture apparent. In particular, I felt that empirical evidence for using storytelling was “patchy”, and I started to wonder if storytelling was taking place but was hidden practice. I also noticed that although there had been several small studies on using storytelling methods, focusing on students, there was minimal commentary on practitioner educators’ perspectives. These factors shifted my focus considerably during my first year of study. In line with narrative inquiry, I formulated my research puzzle:

Title: A story about stories: An investigation into the role of storytelling in professional education.

- What is the current “professional knowledge landscape” of storytelling in nurse and teacher education in HE?
- What are practitioner educators’ perceptions of the use of storytelling in professional education?

Objectives:

- To contribute to theoretical understanding of storytelling and to develop recommendations for best practice concerning storytelling in professional education.
- To use semi-autobiographical, semi-fictional approaches both in storytelling encounters with practitioner educators to gather “authentic” practitioner experiences of storytelling, and to write the story of the research.
- To use a narrative inquiry epistemology combined with Trickster Methodology whilst applying Bourdieuan and Freirean lenses to analyse empirical noticings.

### 1.3 Setting the Context

There is constant demand for newly trained teachers and nurses who are competent and confident to join the professional workforce. Currently most student-teachers (100% of undergraduates and 70% of postgraduates (Clarke and Parker, 2021)) access courses in HE. Practitioner educators teach, guide and mentor students to gain

knowledge and competencies needed to acquire their qualifications. Storytelling, both oral and digital, has been established as an important pedagogical tool for reflective practice in professional learning (e.g. Moon, 1999; McDrury and Alterio, 2003; Moon and Fowler, 2008; Hartley, 2009; Jenkins and Gravestock, 2009), which is a key requirement for teachers' and nurses' development. Meanwhile other literature (e.g. Andrews et al., 2009; Beattie, 2017; Kalogeras, 2013) argues that storytelling has a wider pedagogical potential. However, it is still under-researched, and there are few empirical studies on these wider areas, making it difficult to understand the current landscape of storytelling in professional education. In addition, storytelling techniques are barely mentioned in teacher-training manuals, Core Professional Development (CPD) programmes, or texts on teaching in HE, with nurse researchers Attenborough and Abbott (2020) claiming it is hidden practice. This potentially leaves a void between those who are advocating the benefits of storytelling in professional education and what is happening more widely in practice. This has several important implications, firstly, if practitioner educators read about storytelling and want to use it, where do they go to learn these skills and how do they develop them? Secondly, practitioner educators may not recognise the pedagogical potential of storytelling and/or may not recognise the opportunities for using it. Lastly, practitioner educators may attempt to use storytelling without understanding potential pitfalls. This last point involves two key issues: first, storytelling is a craft, that needs to be practiced and developed (Benjamin, 1999; Hartley, 2009) to be used effectively; and second, some stories are very sensitive which may require careful management (Flanagan, 2015; hooks, 2009). This creates the potential for creating unforeseen problems, where lecturers start using storytelling without fully understanding its possible impact, which may create additional difficulties for them and their students.

In chapter three, I examine the literature in depth to identify current debates, however, these factors mean that it is important that we get a better understanding of the role that storytelling currently plays. In particular, we need to understand: when and how practitioner educators use stories; what types of stories they use in different circumstances; and what their views are on these practices. These explorations will enable a more complete view of storytelling in professional education, which is currently lacking, and provide insights into supporting practitioner educators who want to use storytelling in their practice.

A note on terminology: for the purposes of this thesis, I use the term “practitioner educators” or “practitioners” to mean professionals working in HE, who are teaching on nurse or teacher education programmes. “Nurse educators” refers to professionals teaching on nurse programmes, and “teacher educators” refers to professionals working on teacher programmes in HE. I also use the broader term “lecturer” to mean anybody who teaches in FE or HE, including practitioner educators. I use student-nurses and student-teachers to refer to those who are studying on nursing and education programmes respectively, but I also employ the wider term “students”, for those on FE or HE courses. I use the umbrella term “professional education”, in preference for professional learning, and Initial Teacher Education (ITE) rather than Initial Teacher Training (ITT) except when directly referring to other authors’ work or specific government documents. I have actively resisted using “trainers”/“trainees” and “training”, as these are reductive terms with connotations of reducing the status of educators/students to that of technicians.

#### 1.4 Contributions to Knowledge

In this thesis I map out the storytelling landscape of nurse and teacher education in one university in the Midlands, England. This has enabled the first in-depth examination of the range of stories that lecturers tell, and how they use storytelling pedagogically. This has led to a proposal for new story categories, including “conglomerated”, “fractured” and “historical”. Mapping provides a unique view of the role of storytelling in these fields, providing a detailed analysis of the similarities and differences between the two professions. Teasing out potential reasons for these, I examine how socio-cultural contexts have impacted on the way that storytelling is used, thus providing a new way of looking at the role of storytelling which adds significant new knowledge to the literature in this field. In chapter four, I propose that storytelling capital is a form of cultural capital crossing over into social capital (Bourdieu, 1986), which is integral to students developing their professional skills and knowledge.

As explained above, lecturers’ perspectives on storytelling are scarcely discussed in the literature. This is particularly the case for “anecdotal” or “spontaneous” stories, which are acknowledged as playing a part in lectures, but are often dismissed as unimportant (hooks, 2009). In the second phase of my study, I provide the first in-depth analysis of practitioner educators’ perspectives of their storytelling practice;

views were gathered from four teacher educators and two nurse educators over six story circle meetings. This unearthed a wealth of fascinating empirical “noticings”, providing considerable new understandings of practitioner educators’ experiences of using storytelling. In analysing these findings, I used Bourdieuan and Freirean lenses, situating them within a socio-political context, thus providing new perspectives.

Methodologically, I conceived of using Trickster Methodology as a new way to analyse empirical material, using trickster-thinking to unravel and scrutinise noticings. Combining this with semi-fictional approaches within the main body of the analysis provides a novel way of presenting research. This epistemology has required me to be brave, as I have battled with tensions created between using creative methodologies and needing to produce a thesis that conforms sufficiently with traditional PhD requirements. Trickster Methodology pushes the boundaries of academic writing, deliberately creating areas of disruption and uncertainty that challenge, in order to provide new ways of thinking, writing, analysing and presenting empirical noticings.

### 1.5 Intertextuality and Thesis Structure

In order to provide a suitable framework for bringing different elements of the thesis together, I have adopted an “intertextuality” approach. Developed by Lather and Smithie (1997) in “Troubling the Angels,” intertextuality enabled the reader to “hear” the voices of women with HIV/AIDS alongside, but distinctive from, researchers’ own voices. They grappled with the issue of doing “justice” to women’s stories, laying them out as “transparent” (Lather, 2007: 28). Therefore, rather than disaggregating accounts, they presented them holistically and unaltered, “sitting” metaphorically and visually on the page, in a format that resisted “constraining the researcher’s analytical voice” and “manipulation” of their words (Lather, 2007: 28). I have employed this approach within the limitations of this thesis, with a selection of participants’ stories appearing unaltered alongside my analysis.

The thesis also includes interludes in the form of “Trickster Tales”, which act as deliberate disruptions and interruptions, supplying “provocative extensions” to academic writing (Koro-Ljungberg, 2015). These are used in a similar way to “irruptions” which “aim to disturb the flow and linearity” and “also offer a sort of escape”

(Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2017: 6) from main themes. Lather and Smithie (1997) combined interludes, (interviews with researchers, and participants' writing), and vignettes (about AIDS related medical/historical/cultural information) to enable an intermingling of perspectives. I have used a similar approach, however, here the interludes and vignettes are also intended to deliberately puncture the flow of the traditional thesis, while enhancing the impact of Trickster Methodology. Trickster Tales are purposefully reminiscent of traditional tales, however, they also include formal references, thus linking the academic to the alchemical, where "familiarity becomes strange and attractive" (Koro-Ljungberg, 2015: 6). Tales are meant to entertain, to inject humour, whilst also providing insights into my research journey. There are two types of vignettes: personal vignettes reveal autobiographical and familial inspirations behind my writing, giving insights into my thinking and influences in creating Trickster Tales; and participant vignettes (or artefacts), are stories told by participants in story circles, that provide insights into their storytelling practice.

Intertextuality is suitable both for narrative inquiry (which values holistic stories, but paradoxically recognises that all research stories are often incomplete (Clandinin, 2016)) and Trickster Methodology (which serves to disrupt and create chaos in order to produce a coherent whole). These techniques strive to represent, as authentically as possible, a multiplicity of voices whilst retaining the interconnectedness of stories and participants. Different type faces, colours and design features have been used to help distinguish the writing, guiding the reader through the various sections.

Intertextuality combined with Trickster Methodology demanded a creative, fluid and innovative way of working which is sometimes contrary to traditional expectations of a doctoral thesis. Trickster provocations play an integral role, particularly in the analysis chapters (five and six); tricksters impose themselves in the "margins" and in-between spaces, but they should be read as inseparable from analysis writing and methodology. It has been joyful to write these sections, tapping into a creativity that had been repressed by years of teaching English to meet exam criteria, and writing formal academic assignments. The semi-fictional approach has provided a medium to (in)advertently expose my frailties as a researcher, highlighting challenges, struggles and moments of inspiration. However, the fictional aspect, by its very nature, is the opposite of succinct language. In order to develop engaging characters and curious scenarios, I have needed to "play" with language, allowing it to flow, finding its own

shape. This created tensions with the PhD format, necessitating compromises; there is some regret in this, as tricksters by their very nature test the boundaries, transgressing their limits.

The thesis is divided into eight chapters: **chapter one** gives a brief introduction to the scope and background of the research; **chapter two** considers the political context of professional education, including examining teaching cultures within nurse and teacher education; **chapter three** reviews literature relevant to storytelling and education, particularly professional education; **chapter four** introduces my ontological and epistemological approaches, this also includes research design and ethical considerations; **chapters five** and **six** present empirical noticings and analysis; **chapter seven** is a discussion of the findings; and **chapter eight** draws conclusions and offers my recommendations for practice, policy and future research.

## 1.6 Unexpected Happenings - Corona-Virus Pandemic

We are currently in uncertain and disrupted times in education, as the Corona-Virus pandemic has wreaked havoc on everyone's lives. Since the end of March 2020, England has been living under various stages of "lockdown" entailing imposed restrictions of movement for individuals, with organisations closed, or working under restricted operations, in an attempt to reduce the spread of Covid-19. Initially, the majority of educational establishments were closed, with only children of key workers permitted to attend schools, while all other university and college courses were moved to online delivery. Educators had to respond rapidly, adapting to teach in different ways via various digital platforms. Although in England restrictions have gradually eased ("full" lockdown was lifted on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021) at the time of writing, universities are still operating on a semi-lockdown basis, with online learning remaining a prominent part of provision. These challenges have significantly impacted on every aspect of teaching and learning, including the way that storytelling is used in professional education.

Conducting research in the middle of a pandemic has been an interesting and challenging experience which has directly impacted my research, including fieldwork. Covid-19 has brought considerable, long-lasting, possibly permanent, changes to

society as a whole, including for education. Almost two years after the pandemic emerged, we are still struggling to cope with its consequences; the full implications are unknown, but likely to be immense. Where appropriate, I have attempted to give this situation due consideration.



## Chapter Two: Higher Education Policy and Context

This thesis investigates the use of storytelling as a pedagogical tool by practitioner educators within teaching and nursing. This chapter examines literature on the political background of the relationship between HE and professional education outlining main debates. It also briefly discusses Secondary Education (SE) and Further Education (FE) as teacher educator participants are training students to teach in these sectors. I particularly focus on themes of globalisation and neoliberalism; performativity and managerialism, including the impact of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF); and debates surrounding de-professionalisation. In building the background story, I consider the impact of policy and professional standards on practitioner educators' everyday teaching practice as this influences the pedagogical tools they employ, including whether they use storytelling approaches. By juxtaposing historical educational contexts, I introduce the notion that differences in policy within nurse and teacher education have impacted on socio-cultural aspects of these professions, which has, in turn, affected pedagogical values and strategies, thus determining the extent to which storytelling is used.

### 2.1 The Relationship Between HE and Professional Education

There has been, and continues to be, a marked difference in trajectories between nursing and teaching professions and their relationship with HE, which have taken place against a changing political landscape. Historically teacher education has had closer links with universities than nurse education, however, this picture has reversed over the last forty years, with “a steady move **towards** academic professionalisation” for nursing during this time period (Childs and Mender, 2013: 102 [*italics my emphasis*]). Since the 1970s, there has been a strategy to bolster nurses' underpinning theoretical knowledge (Warren, 2018) and understanding of research-based evidence (Willis, 2012), which has necessitated closer partnerships with universities to enable training to draw on academic expertise. The majority of nursing training up until the 1970s had taken place within health and clinical settings, such as hospitals, where learning had focused on “procedural or ward management skills” taught by physicians (Macleod Clark et al., 1997: 162). Although provision for theoretical underpinnings for nursing courses started to move to universities in the late 1970s (Warren, 2018), academic qualifications only started to gain importance from the

1980s (Carpenter et al., n.d.) with the requirement for nurses to hold a degree creating significant change (Willis, 2012). This initially slow shift towards making nursing a graduate profession gained pace in the 1990s with a series of white papers published by New Labour on health reforms (Lord, 2002). These included a key document: “Making a Difference: Strengthening the Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting Contribution to Health and Healthcare” (DoH, 1999) which proposed a new training model. This, in turn, resulted in the introduction of Project 2000 in 1986 (Lord, 2002), which served to implement “wide-ranging nursing reforms”, with the directive that all pre-registration programmes in the UK would be degree level from September 2013 onwards (Willis, 2012). This also meant that the main locus of nursing education shifted from clinical workplaces to universities (Lord, 2002).

Meanwhile, successive government policies (whatever the political party) have gradually repositioned teacher education away from universities towards schools-led provision (Helgetun and Menter, 2020; Mincu and Davies, 2019; Whiting et al., 2018); this trend has recently been further solidified by the new Initial Teacher Training Market Review Report, (henceforward referred to as MRR) (DfE, 2021) that calls for a strengthening of schools-based training. Previously, there had been an association between universities and professional education for primary and secondary teachers throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Collini, 2012), with universities and colleges dominating teacher education into the 1980s (Robinson, 2006). However, moves towards schools-based provision, even before the MRR, had been undermining universities’ historical dominance in this sector (Robinson, 2006; Collini, 2012) and can be viewed as a significant threat to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (Mincu and Davies, 2019). While the history of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) over the last thirty years has been highly complex and in constant flux (Whiting et al., 2018) the overall momentum has increasingly shifted away from HE towards schools-based training, developing into a schools-led training system (Childs and Mender, 2013; Mincu and Davies, 2019; Whiting et al., 2018). This can be seen with the introduction of new routes into teaching (such as Schools Centred Initial Teacher Training and Teach First) that gradually mushroomed, so that there were only five thousand less students studying on non-HE routes in 2015-16 to those studying in HE (Whiting et al., 2018). These policies have been seen as deliberate moves towards curtailing universities’ dominance of ITE (Mutton et al., 2018). Meanwhile, FE, like nursing has had a much shorter duration in universities, as there was no formal training for teachers until after World War II (Bailey, 2007), with no mandatory requirement to obtain teaching

qualifications until 2001 (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005). Once this became policy, teachers were able to pursue their studies at universities (Bathmaker and Avis, 2006), but mandatory certification only lasted until 2011 (Fazaeli, 2013).

The political context and policies of different governments all profoundly influence education, impacting on the way in which teachers and nurses are educated. Consequently, these policies affect the way practitioner educators work as they adapt and respond to multiple policies. In the 1980s nurse educators had to physically move into universities to carry on teaching their protégés, while teacher educators in HE had to adjust their practice, including working in partnership with other organisations. All of these policies create tangible changes in the way that practitioner educators work. Over the last forty years the training trajectories for the two professions have seemed to converge and then diverge again. However, despite the recent erosion of HE's role in ITE, the association of nurse education with universities and formalised teaching is much shorter overall than in teacher education. Historical differences in delivery are helpful for providing insights into education cultures and pedagogical approaches currently used by practitioner educators in the two fields. These different histories, as I argue later in the thesis, have impacted on practitioner educators' exposure to storytelling practices, and, therefore, their likelihood of using them.

## 2.2 Globalisation and Neoliberalism

This thesis centres upon how storytelling is used as pedagogy in a single university in England, but whether storytelling techniques are used at all, depends on the way that educational policies are encountered within the classroom. "Local" universities' policies and operations are "shaped by national governments" (Jones, 2016: 3), so it is first necessary to gain a broader understanding of education before we can understand the particular influences and restrictions. Likewise, "pressures and requirements of globalisation" (Ball, 2008: 1) play a central role in education policy, and these policies, encountered in each layer of education, originate from the drive to produce a well-skilled workforce to contribute towards making Britain a world-class economy (Duckworth and Smith, 2018; Molesworth et al., 2009). By viewing the macro, we can better understand the micro, and see whether this creates an (un)comfortable environment for storytelling.

Since the 1970s, successive UK governments have increasingly portrayed education as a means to enhance productivity and global performance (Duckworth and Smith, 2018). This has led to a situation where currently “neoliberal policymakers in England ideally wish to see higher education leading to vocational expertise and employability” (Ingleby, 2021: 91). FE, in particular, was initially coupled with business and enterprise in Labour’s Great Debate speech of 1976 (O’Leary and Smith, 2013), and a plethora of policies followed, focusing on vocational learning and skills developments (Duckworth and Smith, 2018; O’Leary and Smith, 2013). One of these: the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (1983) was the “largest curriculum intervention ever by a government” (Armitage et al., 2016: 270) and focused on instilling fourteen- to eighteen-year-olds with personal and enterprise skills for the workplace, thus, also emphasising the emerging cross-over between secondary and FE. Considering these vocational pressures, Duckworth and Smith argued that FE students are subjected to a “triple lock” of education; firstly, they suffer “objectification” where they learn a set of skills primarily for employment; secondly, they are limited to the “binary” choice of academic or vocational pathways; and thirdly, they are seen in monetary terms, where they become “bums on seats” and a source of funding (2018: 7). In HE these pressures are increased by hefty annual tuition fees, where courses are seen as a “commodity purchased” in order to obtain profitable employment (Molesworth et al., 2009: 281). Student objectification, caused by marketization and neoliberal ideologies, means that student choice is limited and compromised, resulting in reduced agency (Duckworth and Smith, 2018). Meanwhile teachers and lecturers find their priorities impinged upon by these ideologies. This environment limits teaching practices to those that are seen to directly deliver vocational skills, leaving little scope for more creative pedagogies such as storytelling.

The UK government instigates educational policy and strategy for England (Green, 1997 in Czerniawski, 2011), but globalisation and neoliberalism are key factors in the formulation of education policies themselves (Duckworth and Smith, 2018). There have been significant increases in centralised control in England since the 1980s, as government agencies introduced a national curriculum for schools, and teaching standards for schools and FE (Robinson, 2006). This further intensified in the 1990s and has been described as an “ideological struggle”, which is not confined to teacher educators in compulsory education but has a wider impact within HE (Furlong et al., 2000: 2), thus also affecting nurse educators and those teaching on PCET courses. While PCET and nursing programmes do not follow a national curriculum, they have

other elements in common with compulsory education: professional standards must be taught, and universities are monitored via The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and TEF, additionally nursing provision is audited by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). The effects of prescriptive standards combined with monitoring of assessment outcomes "all contributed to a climate of uncertainty, anxiety, hostility and ideological polarization" that were intensely felt in HEIs that conducted teacher training (Robinson, 2006: 20). Furthermore, changes to the structure of HE following the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act that led to polytechnics becoming universities (now commonly referred to as post-92 universities), gave institutions more financial autonomy but, in practical terms, made them even more answerable to government (Jones, 2016).

The economy was of primary consideration in Browne's report: "Securing a sustainable future for Higher Education" (2010), which reviewed the UK's performance of HEIs against their global counterparts. This directly linked gaining a degree to higher earning occupations, and therefore, to a successful economy. Browne forefronts the importance of maintaining the UK's educational reputation as a world leader (with a significant proportion of the "best performing" HEIs in the world) against a backdrop of increasing global competition, with other countries investing heavily in their own education systems and thus threatening the UK's status (Browne, 2010: 2). Browne's recommendations instigated significant changes resulting in: a new financial structure in the sector; a greater need for universities to compete for students; and the introduction of university fees. These measures all reinforced the marketization of HE. The narrow focus on education for employability can be seen as a consequence of the pursuit of improving the UK's economic performance, cementing its position firmly within a culture of globalisation, neoliberalism, performativity and managerialism. These practices enforce an instrumentalist agenda on educators, meaning that teaching anything outside of these boundaries becomes problematic, where the freedom to use creative techniques, such as storytelling, are regarded as an unnecessary luxury, or even a distraction from "real" education, and are, therefore, discouraged.

Alongside teaching, the nursing profession has been subjected to the same pressures of globalisation and neoliberalism which focus on the need for cost-economies, performativity and accountability (Krol and Lavoie, 2014). In this rapidly changing

environment, old cultures need to “harmonize” with “the possessive individualism of a capitalist system” (Frank, 1995: 148). However, a significant difference between teacher and nurse educators, that may make nursing education more resistant to neoliberal trends, is that nurse educators continue to retain strong links to their clinical practice (Attenborough and Abbott, 2020). Baldwin et al. (2017: 2) argue that nurse educators draw heavily on “their clinical-self” in providing role-models for students within this climate; this includes creating a “context for authentic rehearsal through sharing the narratives (storytelling) of their personal and professional experience”. As I will argue later in this thesis (see chapters three and seven), nursing culture is steeped in storytelling, particularly in relation to professional love (Rollings, 2008) and gossip (Laing, 1997), and these fundamental nursing practices may be significant in the ability of nursing to better resist some of the pressures that neoliberalism presents. Frank (1995) argues that listening to stories enhances doctors’ and nurses’ relationships with patients, restoring humanity to nursing. Although Frank does not specifically discuss nurse educators, he emphasises the circularity of stories as they are witnessed by professionals and re-told to other professionals. This circularity of nurse educators’ stories that are rooted in clinical practice enables a flow of experience to pass to student-nurses.

It is also significant that neoliberalism thrives on metrics and evidence-based practice, and in nursing, since 2003, the use of patients’ and healthcare stories has been promoted as evidence-based practice (Patient Voices, 2021) in order to restore care and compassion to nursing. As will be seen in Chapter three, this story-based evidence has become a key tool for nurses and nurse educators. Paradoxically, while becoming a basis for evidence-based practice, patients’ and healthcare stories (which have long been part of the culture of nursing), have become a justification for incorporating storytelling into clinical settings. Subsequently, these creative practices can provide a firm basis for countering neoliberal pressures in nurse-education.

Meanwhile, globalisation has been described as the “complexity of processes and events that connect people and ideas around the world” (Czerniawski, 2011: 2). It directly influences education at national through to local levels where policy is “the product of a nexus of influences and interdependencies” (Ball, 2001: xxviii). Locally acquired pedagogical theories combine with global factors creating a tangle of compromises and policies (Ball, 1994; Czerniawski et al., 2018). Neoliberalism which

“promotes privatization, commodification, free trade and deregulation” has been the dominant global ideology since the 1980s, and influences all stages of education (Giroux, 2014: 1). The neoliberalist agenda has resulted in market economics being applied to the public sector, including education, where emphasis is on “individualism” (Giroux, 2014). This requires individuals to become “entrepreneurial” or “manipulatable”, meaning that professionals are coerced into performing for business ideals, which are ultimately state controlled (Olssen, 2011: 360). These policies create a situation where education has become focused on its value to the economy, and HE operates like private enterprise (Olssen, 2011). Since the 1980s universities have increasingly taken on neoliberal values, Collini (2012) refers to the development of “HiBizEd” (combining HE with a business approach), meaning that universities have become orientated around business, profoundly shifting them from institutions that **serve** businesses, to ones that function fundamentally **as** businesses (Jones, 2016). The “dispiriting” cyclical nature of the argument is that in order to justify receiving more funding, universities need to show that they also generate income (Collini, 2012). Financial pressures have become even more critical since March 2020, due to the pandemic, which is likely to considerably impact upon teaching both short and long-term. While arguments over how schools will operate seems to be an ongoing battle, colleges and universities have largely been left to their own devices, with more freedom to respond to the situation. While this may seem positive, universities also face challenges in finding their way safely through this period of uncertainty, as the way that we teach fundamentally shifts. In addition, the recent MRR (DfE, 2021) is likely to create further significant changes. The full impact of these situations on pedagogical storytelling will require further research, however, this thesis will draw attention to some early indications that this environment, (especially the MRR review and turn to online learning), may create even more challenges for pedagogical storytelling.

### 2.3 Performativity and Managerialist Culture

The effect of globalisation and neoliberalism can be seen in the measurement and performativity culture that currently pervades education at all levels (Ball, 2003).

Performativity can be defined as:

a technology, a culture, a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, attrition and change – based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic). (Ball, 2003: 215).

The compulsion to quantify education is evident in this definition, with “regulation”, “judgement” and “comparison” sitting (un)comfortably next to “rewards and sanctions”, serving as a reminder that failure to produce required standards will result in punishment for the transgressor. Immersion in performativity in recent decades is manifested in the obsession with league tables (Collini, 2012) and international comparison studies (such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) or Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)), which are “**assumed** to indicate who is better and who is best” [bold my emphasis] (Biesta, 2009). However, it is dangerous to equate factual information gained from performativity with quality of education (Ball, 2003; Biesta, 2009) because “means becomes ends in themselves so that targets and indicators of quality become mistaken for quality itself” (Biesta, 2009: 35). The relentless attention to league tables and performativity measures has met with criticism (e.g. Ball, 2003; Collini, 2012, O’Leary et al., 2019). Ball refers to the “tyranny” of numbers, where “We are subject to numbers, and [we are] numbered subjects” (2015: 299), where everything is governed by measurement and the UK’s position internationally. This performativity culture represses educators’ freedom in the classroom, including their use of methods such as storytelling, because of the focus on “pre-conceived outcomes”, which deny educators the chance “to seize those unanticipated moments” which can inspire creativity and imagination (Doecke, 2013: 13).

Within the current climate, educational policies, inspection frameworks and standards are constantly being revised. Performativity already creates conflict between time teachers expend between actually teaching and recording/monitoring what they are doing (Ball, 2003). So, what greater effects might constant re-vamping, re-moulding and re-focusing these have on lecturers? Courtney (2016) argues that continuous changes that school leaders and practitioners must comply with, particularly with repeated alterations to inspections, creates a situation of upheaval and constant “flux” that is difficult to endure. Implementing new measures and criteria, must consequently, take time, attention and energy away from day-to-day teaching, as everyone seeks ways to acclimatize to new measures, requiring the altering of resources and planning documents. This leads to the question - how much additional pressure does this create for practitioner educators, who also have to amend teaching programmes and resources to accommodate these changes?



Performativity, alongside “managerialism” is the “new mode of state regulation” (Ball, 2003: 215) where the public sector moves ever further towards privatization and “commodification” of students (Ball, 2003; Giroux, 2014). Students are seen as paying clients, a source of income, with rights to “value for money”. In this environment, lecturers are businesspeople, striving to meet the needs of their “clients” to provide “best value”; this is particularly the case where students pay large fees, compelling universities to demonstrate that their provision is worthy of money spent (Collini, 2012; Giroux, 2014). As indicated earlier, this will become even more difficult should changes due to Covid continue to impact on provision, thus forcing institutions to rely on increased online learning and consequently threatening their attractiveness to students looking for the full university experience. Currently, social-distancing rules are being relaxed, but constantly evolving strains of the virus may mean further reversals.

Performativity not only impacts on universities, but also on individual educators, Ball argues that while some teachers flourish within this environment “for others it portends inner conflicts, inauthenticity and resistance” (2003: 215). Teachers are walking a tightrope, striving to please students by providing excellent “service”, and managers by hitting their targets (Ball, 2003). Although Ball is referring primarily to schoolteachers, practitioner educators similarly find themselves having to grapple with their professional identities as they attempt to balance the pressures of teaching alongside responsibilities of monitoring, recording, and meeting targets and benchmarks (O’Leary et al., 2019). Performativity puts additional pressures on educators to conform to traditional and accepted ways of teaching, inhibiting them from experimenting with using techniques such as storytelling.

## 2.4 De-professionalisation

Government policies have had a considerable impact on professionalism. A significant proportion of educational literature discusses whether policies of the last forty years have significantly eroded educators’ status (see Ball, 2003; Collini, 2012; Czerniawski, 2011; Furlong et al., 2000; Giroux 2014; Kennedy, 2014; Ozga, 1995; Sachs, 2001). Jones emphasises strong parallels between loss of status and autonomy for teachers in schools and FE, and lecturers in HE, including “loss of radicalism, new levels of intensification [and] a milieu of increasing competitiveness” (2016: 179).

These trends can be traced back to the arrival of “Thatcherism” (during Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher’s period in government, 1979 - 1990), and the subsequent move away from Keynesian towards neoliberal economic policies (Czerniawski, 2011; Olssen, 2011), where Keynesian policies promoted the concept that direct government intervention is crucial for creating “optimal economic performance” (Ashford, 2020). This coincided with the transition from welfare state to market-led economy resulting in a “reduction of professional power and status” (Ozga, 1995: 23) and the questioning “in some quarters” of whether teachers should retain their professional status (Sachs, 2001). Paradoxically, the requirement for teachers to be autonomous in decisions that employ professional skills and values would seem to refute all arguments for de-professionalisation, as there is a growing need for professionals to obtain specialist knowledge and navigate increasingly involved and changeable circumstances (Furlong et al., 2000). However, the move towards “instrumental, managerial approaches” (Kennedy, 2014: 691) has repeatedly undermined this perceived agency and instead, changes have emphasised “craft” and “technical” skills over professional judgement (Furlong et al., 2000: 15). All teachers are subjected to a plethora of “judgements, measures, comparisons and targets” (Ball, 2003: 220) that effectively renders them as always accountable and diminishes their role as professionals (Ball, 1994: 62). Teachers, in these circumstances, have to reinvent themselves, to submerge their own values and principles to those of their employers, where the emphasis is on outcomes and output (Ball, 2003). However, storytelling can provide a “counter-point” to these restrictions, as storytelling is an imaginative and adaptable “craft” which can be employed to “reconceptualize” teaching, allowing educators to reinvent themselves via “shar[ing] experiences ... that take them beyond the here and now” (Doecke, 2013: 13).

Biesta’s (2009) exploration into changes in language relating to educational processes adds an interesting dimension to this debate, as he sees language as not just reflecting an altered perception of education, but in turn **altering** education. This means that language both mirrors society and shapes the way people think and act. He specifically highlights “a shift in the vocabulary that is used to talk about educational processes and practices” resulting in “the new language of learning” (Biesta, 2009: 37). In particular he notes “education” is commonly replaced with “learning”, so that “adult **education**” becomes “adult **learning**”; “**students**” and “**pupils**” are replaced with “**learners**”; and “**permanent education**” becomes “**lifelong learning**” - he classifies this shifting lexicon as “learnification” (2009: 38). Here the evolution of language

parallels the movement in attitudes to educational theory, including the emphasis on students having ownership of their learning, effectively positioning the educator as facilitator (Biesta, 2009). Educators find themselves needing to satisfy “learnification” as they respond to and incorporate the changing values within their own practice. Education moves towards learning as **process** rather than learning about **content** - where **what** is learned, becomes less important than **how** it is learned (O’Connor, 2018). In some respects, “learnification” can be seen as diminishing educators’ status, as they rescind their traditional position as the “omniscient” fount of all knowledge, to become “merely” enablers, assisting learners to discover knowledge for themselves. The fact that this type of facilitation is likely to involve more planning and more complex skills is lost in the stark and commonplace texture of the language itself. However, this effectively diminishes collaborative aspects of the educational process and distracts from the central concept that “it also matters **what** pupils and students learn and what they learn it **for**” (Biesta, 2009: 39).

Under the influence of neoliberalism, language evolves further, integrating with enterprise, as educational terms become merged with business argot, with a focus on “cost effective policy outcomes” and “productivity targets” (Ball, 2003: 218) rather than learning and achievements. Educators effectively need to become “enterprising subjects” and “neo-liberal professionals” (Rose, 1989 in Ball, 2003). Ironically, while “learnification” takes hold in teaching, Nash (2019) identifies the potential problems of commodification on students’ expectations, especially the ongoing increase in university fees, “What some of us worry ... is that many students will be concerned **only** with getting good marks” (2019: 184). This can be seen as symptomatic of the marketisation of education, where the expectation is that anything can be bought - including knowledge and skills - without the need to expend any real effort. In this environment, “**having**” a university qualification is seen as more important than “**being**” a student, as it provides the means to obtain lucrative employment (Molesworth et al., 2009: 279). This commodification, therefore, gives rise to students feeling they can purchase a good qualification without personal investment, where “students come to see themselves as consumers who are buying a certain kind of experience, a good (2.1 or above) degree, and a well-paid job afterwards” (Nash, 2019: 184). Unfortunately, this thinking is misguided as it stultifies deep cognitive engagement and is likely to only produce surface knowledge. It puts us in danger of reverting back to “banking” education (Freire, 2003) where students learn facts without acquiring the deeper skills of processing, analysing or synthesising. As Biesta points out:

education can, and in a sense even **ought to be difficult and challenging** rather than it is just (depicted as) a smooth process which aims to meet the supposed 'needs' of the learner (Biesta, 2009: 39) [bold my emphasis].

This complements the idea that student dissatisfaction may be a better indicator of teaching quality than satisfaction, as creating dissonance in students ignites their curiosity and pushes them to work harder. In this way they can question where they feel dissatisfied, enabling progress in their own learning and self-reflection, rather than focusing on whether they enjoyed the course (Collini, 2012).

Performativity and accountability measures impact deeply on education and have the effect of downgrading learning to a set of skills, to be captured, recorded, and measured. Collini uses the analogy of learning to play the violin, asking - what if the only justification for learning the violin is to improve "manual dexterity, [as it is] useful for typing" (2012: 91)? This example questions the reductionist teaching environment and suggests that education policy misses the point of what learning can and should be. In trying to pin down specific skills or knowledge acquired, education loses sight of spontaneous, aesthetic and creative aspects of learning that pedagogical techniques, such as storytelling, can provide, which are essential in creating knowledge, critical thinking and holistic learning experiences.

## 2.5 Accountability Measures in Universities

TEF was introduced into HE in 2016 with the aim of instigating change in the quality of teaching and learning and also enabling an "informed" conversation about quality (O'Leary et al., 2019). However, a DfE (2017a) report into teaching excellence and student outcomes states that it was introduced to provide students with better information on which university to choose, again highlighting the tension between improving teaching quality and providing a consumer-style comparison report for students. Additionally, the idea that teaching quality can be measured forms the possibly dubious basis of the framework. TEF constructs its information on data (including retention rates, employment destination etc.) and NSS "metrics" (which are the analysis of student responses on teaching, assessment and feedback (DfE, 2017a)). Despite TEF participation being voluntary, it now defines the landscape of measurement and performativity in HE, and even while still bedding in, was meeting with resistance, as evidenced in O'Leary et al.'s (2019) comprehensive report on its

impact. The University and College Union (UCU), who actively opposed the introduction of TEF, commissioned the report because it was concerned that: (a) “core metrics ... student satisfaction via the NSS, retention rates and graduate outcomes ... are poor proxies for measuring teaching excellence”; (b) it fails to take into consideration the multifaceted and diverse range of teaching in the sector; and (c) it does not actively support teacher development (UCU, 2017). These factors are particularly important when considering the role of storytelling in professional education, as they limit teaching to a set of narrow outcomes curbing its diversity and scope. Educators are also restricted in the range of development opportunities, as education that does not obviously fit into these narrow views of teaching is unlikely to be encouraged if it does not seem to contribute positively to core metrics and NSS statistics. Consequently, unless storytelling techniques can be shown to directly contribute to these areas, they are unlikely to be included in CPD opportunities.

The NSS has itself been criticised as “seriously flawed” in its usefulness for measuring educational attainment, because it focuses on students’ choices and information received about courses, rather than experiences of the quality of teaching and learning (Nash, 2019). These criticisms and suspicions of measurement methods concur with views that there is more “opacity” in the system where evidence and data are specifically and deliberately selected to present a positive portrayal of the situation (Ball, 2003: 225). Moreover, the data itself suffers from the need to capture “complex and elusive” outcomes in a way that can be simplified into a meaningful format for the “non-expert public” (Collini, 2012: 107). Sub-sequent rankings that are produced from surveys create additional competition, at both departmental and faculty level, and between institutions, thus undermining collegiality and collaboration, and contributing to de-professionalisation (Olssen, 2011).

O’Leary et al.’s report, which surveyed 6000 lecturers, highlights the introduction of TEF as a “key turning point” as:

never before has the ‘quality’ of HE teaching been subjected to such external scrutiny, culminating in high stakes assessment outcomes ... through the TEF’s medal categories of bronze, silver and gold (O’Leary et al., 2019: 3).

They question the validity of TEF assessments, whilst clearly stating that most HE lecturers would appreciate a system which could more accurately assess and reward

excellent teaching. Additionally, they convey the HE workforce's overwhelming dissatisfaction with TEF, particularly the emphasis on individual activity over collective working and the medal system, which is viewed as promoting harmful competition and a marketized sector (O'Leary et al., 2019). Despite these pressures, maintaining core values in the face of marketization and performativity is vital to lecturers "despite policies that seem designed to destroy [them]" (Nash, 2019: 181). TEF emphasises the commercialisation of the HE sector at the expense of lecturers' autonomy and professional status, and is therefore another curb on storytelling pedagogies.

## 2.6 Professional Standards and Educational Culture

In this section I outline the current situation concerning professional standards for teaching and nursing. These are important because they provide the backbone of content of professional courses that practitioner educators need to cover within their sessions. If storytelling is to be used pedagogically, it must be able to be used either within these standards, or as a supportive tool for students to be able to learn about these standards, so that they can assimilate them into their professional identities. In addition, practitioner educators must be able to demonstrate that they uphold the standards themselves, acting as role-models for their students. Any deviation from these may be seen as problematic and contradictory to practitioner educators' professionalism. I have included information on SE and FE professional standards for teaching, and pre-registration standards for nursing, because my participants are teacher educators teaching students in these sectors, and nurse educators teaching on pre-registration nursing courses.

### 2.6.1 Teaching

Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) is the mandatory teaching requirement for anyone wanting to teach in SE in England, in state-funded, maintained schools (currently the main provision). Teachers working in academies and non-maintained schools do not need QTS, however, student-teachers undertaking ITE programmes, (university or school-led), work towards QTS alongside teaching qualifications (DfE, 2020). Student-teachers are assessed on their ability to meet professional standards, and teacher educators are required to teach and uphold the standards (DfE, 2011). The current standards, which came into effect in September 2012, aim to ensure that:

Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils (DfE, 2011).

Standards are split into two sections and are generic (that is, they do not focus on subject specific knowledge): “Standards for Teaching” contains eight sub-sections and thirty-five separate standards; while “Standards for Personal and Professional Conduct” focuses on ethics, responsibilities and behaviour. In addition, teachers in maintained schools must follow the National Curriculum (DfE, 2014) which includes detailed specific guidance on what subjects should be taught, and what content should be taught within each subject.

The Carter Review (2015) which examined ITE and professional standards, concluded that while much of the system was performing well, there were significant gaps in provision. In particular, concerns were raised that having a good degree was “not a guarantee of good subject knowledge across the breadth of the national curriculum” (2015: 26). To address this, Carter recommended that a new sector body, responsible for ITE, be established, which would develop a new core content framework to include subject specific knowledge and pedagogy. The government’s response to the report (DfE, 2015: 2) supported the recommendations, including the call to cover “important areas of content” within programmes. However, the timing was problematic, being published just prior to the 2015 general election, thus many of the recommendations did not come to fruition (Mutton et al., 2016).

Professional Standards were introduced for PCE relatively recently, with the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) being given the remit of instigating and monitoring provision (Armitage et al., 2007). These standards, implemented from 2000, formed the basis of new mandatory qualifications for post-16 teachers, which aimed to address the issue that an estimated 43% of part-time, and 40% of full-time teachers in the sector lacked higher level qualifications (Armitage et al., 2007). The standards can be seen as a direct consequence of New Labour's Learning and Skills Act (2000) which sought to extend Ofsted's powers from inspecting compulsory education to include PCE (Hammond, 2004). FENTO aimed to:

provide an agreed set of standards that can be used to inform the design of accredited awards for FE teachers, validated within the national qualifications framework or by higher education institutions or other awarding bodies. ... To provide standards that can be used to inform professional development activity (FENTO, 2001: 1).

Similar to SE, the standards highlighted a set of core values which included: "reflective practice and scholarship ... collegiality and collaboration ... learner autonomy ... [and] entitlement, equality and inclusiveness" (FENTO, 2001: 2). It is interesting that values included learner autonomy but omitted to discuss teacher autonomy, and while collegiality and collaboration are included, they seem to run counter to neoliberal values of individualism and competition. Like SE standards, they are generic, but this initial iteration was also detailed and highly prescriptive and seemed to "cover every eventuality ... a checklist of what (in the opinion of FENTO ...) makes a good teacher" (Hammond, 2004).

Over the last twenty years the situation for teaching qualifications and standards in PCE has continued to fluctuate, for example teaching qualifications were mandatory for just five years between 2008 to 2011 (Fazaeli, 2011) despite a prolonged campaign by the Institute for Learning (IfL). This government reversal appeared to respond to neoliberal policies, which relied on the notion that colleges, as businesses, would voluntarily set their own standards, and "police" their own industry. This ethos has continued with the Education and Training Foundation (ETF), and its corporate partner, the Society for Education and Training (SET), taking on the CPD role. Working with stakeholders across the sector, they were responsible for developing revised standards, which came into effect in 2014:

This deregulated context has provided an opportunity to develop new approaches to professionalism. Since there is an expectation that the sector



will define and regulate professionalism for itself, it is essential that the sector owns the 2014 standards (ETF, 2018).

This statement affirmed the notion that FE was governed by business values, setting its own agenda and self-regulating, but while Ofsted monitored outputs and effectively controlled funding, this was still a veneer of autonomy covering a reality that was still very much centrally controlled by government. Current standards, formulated in extensive consultations with stakeholders (ETF, 2018), seemed to launch a major change in approach, if only from the obvious fact that there are a lot fewer standards for teachers to navigate, mirroring those in SE. These are split into three areas of: professional knowledge and understanding; professional skills; and professional values and attributes, however, as previously, they do not address subject specifics, as these are currently tackled via other channels (e.g. exam boards' requirements).

However, the recent MRR (DfE, 2021), if adopted, will significantly change the landscape of ITE for all sectors. Amongst a broad range of recommendations, it revives the focus on shaping specific content of ITE programmes, as well as stipulating how they are organised and delivered. Several prestigious universities are leading challenges to the report, saying it takes a “wrecking ball” to current provision, with Professor Susan Robertson, Head of Education Faculty at The University of Cambridge, describing it as having a “highly prescribed curriculum” (Adams, 2021). Several universities have completely rejected the report, believing it to be extremely damaging to ITE, and have called for the consultation to be halted and reassessed, with more input sought from the sector. The MRR represents major change that, if implemented, will drastically transform ITE for teacher educators, including what and how they teach. The government is now seeking to control the specific content of ITE courses, which is especially concerning as, according to University College London, the MRR oversimplifies teaching, “present[ing] teaching as general, easily replicated sequences of activities” (Adams, 2021). These prescriptive measures are highly likely to seriously impact on practitioner educators' autonomy, reducing teaching to concentrating on technical skills and further restricting opportunities to use alternative teaching strategies such as pedagogical storytelling.

## 2.6.2 Nursing

The last twenty years have seen dramatic changes in nursing education. It has evolved from three-year diploma courses and apprenticeships set in training colleges, to university degree courses with integrated clinical practice. This shift also required a significant change for nurse educators as they moved into academic settings, needing to acquire teaching qualifications and research profiles (Willis, 2012). In 2001 the Nursing and Midwifery Order (NMO) was passed which required NMC to create and regulate education and training standards for pre- and post-registration nursing to ensure the delivery of high-quality care (NMC, 2019). In 2008, the NMC stated that a degree would be the minimum qualification for all registered nurses to “meet the needs of complex care delivery” (Willis, 2012: 13) with new standards released to accompany these changes (NMC 2010). In order to deliver NMC programmes, universities had to strictly comply with standards and undergo thorough quality assurance processes to become Approved Educational Institutions (AEIs). The Willis Report (2012) examined the impact of the 2010 standards and their future capacity for creating a “compassionate and competent” workforce, by looking at a wide range of literature and consulting with stakeholders (Willis, 2012:10). It concluded that there was “compelling evidence” demonstrating the standards’ success, however, it also recommended that standards were given time to “bed in” (Willis, 2012). The NMC subsequently approved a greatly expanded set of new standards which came into effect in January 2019 (NMC, 2019). The focus on compassion and care of recent years has created a new focus for nursing that prioritises patient experience and caring behaviours. As I will argue later in the thesis, this has created an opening for healthcare stories, and, consequently, impetus for storytelling to be embraced in nursing practice and education.

The new standards comprise three documents in one, “Realising Professionalism: Standards for Education and Training” stipulates how the framework should be implemented by HEIs. This in turn incorporates “Standards Framework for Nursing and Midwifery Education” and “Standards for Supervision and Assessment” (NMC, 2019), the first document focuses on core standards for HEIs to deliver, and the latter refers to placement supervision. Professional standards are referred to as “The Code”, which all health professionals must comply with, and it is intended that these will “help nursing and midwifery students achieve proficiencies and programme outcomes” (NMC, 2019: 2). AEIs must meet a specified set of standards to be eligible to deliver NMC

programmes but are allowed flexibility in their delivery approaches (NMC, 2019). The standards concentrate heavily on “developing a broader range of clinical skills” so that nurses will be “competent and proficient” upon qualification (Francis and O’Brien, 2019: 452).

Up until August 2019, pre-registration students for all nursing specialisms studied the same programme for their first year, which included generic professional standards. Nurses then specialised in their field (years two and three), choosing from: adult nursing, child nursing, learning disabilities or mental health. The new programme shifts the emphasis, with the first two years now focusing on generic nursing, including an expanded portfolio of skills. This expansion is in response to a fast-moving health sector with “challenging environments” and “shifting demographics”; it aims to create an enhanced “future nurse”, who can deal with patients from birth to death, who has “the confidence and ability to think critically, apply knowledge and skills and provide expert, evidence based, direct nursing care” (NMC, 2019: 3). An additional document “Future Nurse: Standards of Proficiency for Registered Nurses” (NMC, 2019), to be used in conjunction with “The Code”, lays out the structure of proficiencies as comprising seven platforms: “1) Being an accountable professional; 2) Promoting health and preventing ill health; 3) Assessing needs and planning care; 4) Providing and evaluating care; 5) Leading and managing nursing care and working in teams; 6) Improving safety and quality of care; and 7) Co-ordinating care”. There are also two “annexes” - “Communication and management skills” and “Nursing procedures” (NMC, 2019: 6). Each of these contains between twelve and eighteen detailed outcomes that nurses need to understand and adhere to, alongside “The Code”. Trainee nurses will now undertake specialist field training in the third year only; the four field specialisms also have their own set of detailed standards. This change in emphasis to produce generic nurses in the first two years, with specialisation occurring in the final year, creates an increased challenge for nurse educators (Appleby and Roberts, 2019), with implications for the way in which programmes are organised, including specific content. This directly impacts on the pedagogies that nurse educators use, including the stories that they tell. In addition, platform one, concerning nurses’ professionalism, holds nurse educators to account as they need to demonstrate that they are upholding The Code and presenting themselves as appropriate role-models, which also directly impacts on their storytelling practices.

These standards constitute the first major changes to nursing programmes for approximately fifteen years, coming at a time of considerable changes in health, care and education (Appleby and Roberts, 2019). While universities are still adjusting their delivery to accommodate these changes, there is currently little written about the new standards. However, nurse educators Appleby and Roberts, welcome them: “it is refreshing to see a clear vision from the NMC as to what is required to become a proficient, safe and knowledgeable practitioner” (2019: 188).

## 2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has given an overview of the context and key policies that affect practitioner educators working in professional education. It outlines key current debates in the sector and highlights some challenges in the current climate. It attempts to give a flavour of the many considerations that practitioner educators need to navigate when planning and delivering lessons. While there are potentially many more factors impacting on practitioner educators, I have focused on areas which have specific bearing on everyday operations, and which ultimately affect choices for lesson planning and teaching strategies, including whether storytelling is used, and how it is used.

The constant fluctuations in policy discussed here were further underlined by the publication of the MRR in July (DfE, 2021), which coincided with the final stages of writing this thesis. With a title that includes the word “market” - which, in itself, points to neoliberal qualities - the new document is causing a considerable stir in ITE, with Schools Week (2021) reporting “this has not gone down well in the sector”. At the forefront of proposals is the requirement to make all ITE providers re-register for accreditation in 2022 and introduce new ITE training courses from 2023, in a process which increases regulation, thus aligning it more closely with nursing provision. In addition, providers who are “unable or unwilling” to meet new stipulations will lose their accreditation, and subsequently their mandate to run ITE provision (DfE, 2021: 29). This is despite strong evidence from the DfE itself that university provision is of the highest standard, with all organisations offering ITE being awarded outstanding or good by Ofsted in 2018-20 (Clarke and Parker, 2021). The MRR is highly prescriptive, with far-reaching plans that call for a “significant market reconfiguration and the development of new capacity” (DfE, 2021: 27). Key recommendations include

strengthening academies and schools-based training (including a focus on schools' hubs and partnerships); the introduction of an evidence-based training curriculum; and an increase in the frequency of Ofsted inspections. These are momentous changes that firmly reinstate neoliberal ideologies including re-focusing on schools-based provision, and renewed erosion of universities' status in leading ITE. It also brings a tightening of government control with specific stipulations for curriculum, partnerships (including placement arrangements, and demands for the training of placement mentors), together with increased "quality" assurance processes (DfE, 2021). Clarke and Parker (2021) argue that these proposals expose a "fundamental conflict" as to whether teachers are "educated or trained", bringing us back to earlier debates on de-professionalisation. Once again, if these measures are adopted, these considerable changes will have to be responded to, and accommodated into, teacher educators' everyday practice.

This chapter has discussed the pervading influences of the neoliberal climate, where globalisation and performativity are factors that impact on practitioner educators' practice. Business terminology suffuses every part of education making it seem an environment that is entirely oppositional to one which can accommodate storytelling. The context raises significant questions concerning the role of storytelling including: how can storytelling, an ancient craft, imbued with social and creative aspects, be accommodated by a professional landscape where language is geared to performance targets and "learnification"? Is storytelling too nebulous and collaborative to merit a space in this climate of commodification with impact measures that focus on individualisation? And how can educators have the freedom to use stories effectively when they are so constricted by subject content and the need to demonstrate their own compliance with professional standards. Questions concerning policy and context are highly pertinent to the role of storytelling in professional education and will be explored further in chapters three and seven. However, as will be discussed below, there is a small chink of light, that compassion and caring - central to nursing standards - supplies opportunities for valuing stories in nursing practice, and therefore storytelling pedagogies in nurse education. The context does not currently provide similar reassurance for storytelling pedagogies in teacher education, but by considering the professions together, we can see that there are potential opportunities for the future.

## Chapter Three: Storytelling in Education

While the previous chapter concentrated on overarching policy and contexts of professional education, this chapter considers literature on the uses of storytelling in education, particularly focusing on professional contexts. A range of literature focused on books and articles on storytelling in professional education, journal articles on storytelling by nurse and teacher educators, and academic texts and articles that highlighted wider perspectives of storytelling as pedagogy. There is also an in-depth focus on educational cultures of these professions, considering how these directly influence the use of storytelling, in addition, I highlight tensions in the literature that surround the use of storytelling in education, drawing on a range of views that support the notion that storytelling in education is, historically, a contentious topic, finding itself “sitting uncomfortably” within educational practice.

This chapter is divided into four main themes: 1) a brief introduction to historical perspectives of storytelling, including definitions of story/storytelling, and the emergence of digital storytelling; 2) storytelling in professional education, exploring the current landscape of storytelling within HE; 3) storytelling as pedagogy, examining theoretical discussions of storytelling, including wider uses of oral storytelling (OS) and digital storytelling (DS) in academia; and 4) the contentiousness of using storytelling in education. Together, these provide an overview of relevant areas to enable an understanding of the storytelling “terrain”. Finally, this chapter identifies “gaps” in existing literature and areas where research is currently lacking or “thin”; my research attempts to address these in order to contribute to the current knowledge of storytelling in professional education.

### 3.1 Historical Perspective - A Brief Introduction

Storytelling surrounds us in our everyday lives; communicating, listening, watching, interacting with stories has been an ongoing process since ancient times (Haigh and Hardy, 2011; Kalogeras, 2013; Pelowski, 1977). Anthropologist and social scientists Graça da Silva and Tehrani have traced the origins of oral stories back thousands of years across cultures by using a new scientific technique which they called “phylogenetics” (2016: 1). They established that oral traditions pre-date literary records and were able to track one tale “The Smith and the Devil” back to the Bronze Age, thus

demonstrating that stories have been integral to human interactions and communication for many thousands of years.

Storytelling was an established way of teaching pre-dating writing (Yoder-Wise and Kowalski, 2003) with a long history of being used in education (Hartley, 2009; Pellowski, 1976; Schwartz and Abbott, 2007). In medieval times OS played an important role in teaching subjects which equated to law, history, literature, genealogy, and science, as seen in the European Bardic Schools, where it was the main vehicle for the transmittance of information (Hartley, 2009). Indeed, a bard (archaic term), refers to someone who recites poetry and epics “associated with a particular oral tradition” (English Oxford Living Dictionaries (EOLD), 2019). Hartley proposed that Bardic Schools employed the “bardic function” in order for people to make sense of their world, where “bardic function” is the ability “to textualize the world meaningfully for a given language community” (2009: 23). However, these oral teaching techniques gradually started to decline in the seventeenth century with the rise in the availability of printed materials (Pellowski, 1976).

In modern times, stories started to gain a resurgence in children’s learning in the 1950s, leading to several books focusing on their importance in education, recommending how to select stories and explaining how schoolteachers could develop storytelling techniques (e.g. Colwell, 1991; Livo and Rietz, 1987; Rosen, 1988a; Zipes, 1995). This suggests that storytelling for literacy was well-established for younger children by the 1980s, however, it was less common for older age groups, with Rosen (1988a), a former primary school teacher, deciding to “try it out” with older disengaged pupils to try to connect with, and motivate them. Likewise, there has been less emphasis on the role of storytelling for adult (particularly professional) education. Despite this, Hartley (2009) sees storytelling as a useful pedagogical tool for adults, believing it to be important for the modern era; he stresses that storytelling is a craft that needs to be carefully taught and nurtured within communities via social practices.

According to professional storyteller, Ben Haggarty, storytelling per se started to regain popularity in the 1990s in the UK. He traces this “resurgence” via performances and workshops, stating that in 1981 there were approximately twelve professional storytellers but by 2003 there were 340 professional and semi-professional tellers. His

unofficial survey of storytelling found that most events took place in primary schools, with fewer in secondary schools, and a minimum amount in HE, where it mainly seemed to be taught in connection with humanities subjects. Haggarty also mentions storytellers delivering inset training sessions in SE, however, he notes a decline since 1992, with newly qualified teachers, in particular, not aware of it (Haggarty, 2004). This anomaly between the increased popularity of storytelling culturally and the decline over a similar time-period in education is likely to be due to the neoliberal climate in education. The focus on narrow learning outcomes limits opportunities for using spontaneous teaching methods such as storytelling even in English classes (Doecke, 2013; Heinemeyer and Durham, 2017) despite the growing interest in storytelling outside of education.

Meanwhile, DS emerged in the 1990s in America, when technology's popularity was in the ascendance. Technology's increasing availability, together with social and cultural factors, opened up new seismic possibilities for changing how people communicated (Hartley and McWilliam, 2009). In 1993, Dana Atchley used emerging technologies to create DS, which has been defined as "a workshop-based practice in which people are taught to use digital media to create short audio-video stories" (Hartley, 2009: 3). These centred on specific personal experiences (Rivera, 2011 in Daniels, 2009) of three- to five-minute videos, fashioned by linking digital images, graphics or photographs, with a voiced narrative (Hartley and McWilliam, 2009). Although DS was initially developed as a tool to enhance community cohesiveness, it has subsequently been adapted into a variety of educational settings around the world. It can be used in many different ways to support learning, either with teachers creating digital stories as an instructional tool, or with students being supported to create their own stories (Robin, 2006).

Storytelling in education overall has fluctuated in usage, however, use in academia appears even more sporadic. Haggarty's (2004) survey indicates a rise in popularity for OS in schools in the 1980s and 1990s, which subsequently declined. It is likely that this is due to the influence of the policy contexts, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Meanwhile DS emerged as a new and potentially powerful teaching tool, however, as we shall see later, it does not appear to have reached its potential in education in the UK.



### 3.1.1 Definitions of Story and Storytelling

Stories can be real or imagined, they can adhere closely to facts, be entirely invented, or be a mixture of factual and imaginary components. Dictionary definitions of “story” focus on written or oral communication of a real or imagined event, where “stories” can be factual or fictional:

An account of imaginary or real people and events told for entertainment (EOLD, 2017);

A description, either true or imagined, of a connected series of events (Cambridge Dictionary, 2017).

The first definition suggests stories have a social and/or cultural role for the purpose of entertainment. Pellowski refers to story as an “art or craft”, emphasising entertainment as a key function, where it is “performed ... before a live audience; stories narrated may be spoken, chanted or sung” (Pellowski, 1977: 15), hence ballads also suit this description.

The second definition that says it is a “description” is somewhat more confining than the general “account”, however it outlines similar parameters in stating that stories can be “true or imagined”. The addition of “a connected series of events” suggests that stories need to have a sense of sequence, which is not apparent from the first definition. However, in the second definition the entertainment factor is omitted, perhaps suggesting that entertainment is not a necessary characteristic.

“Storytelling” is:

The activity of telling or writing stories (EOLD, 2017);

The art of telling stories (Cambridge Dictionary, 2017).

In the first definition, “storytelling” involves the communication of stories in written or oral formats, whereas the second does not specify this, though “telling” would seem to indicate a focus on oracy. The use of “art” in the second definition is interesting, alluding to storytelling as a skilful process that is learned or acquired.

Alternatively, an informal definition is:

A piece of gossip; a rumour (EOLD, 2017);

a lie, a fib, an untruth (Collins, 2017).

These highlight the ambiguity of storytelling which becomes a vehicle for spreading disinformation, perpetuating rumours, with the potential for disseminating “fake news” (Harris, 2018). Stories are dangerous (Frank, 2010) they can tell lies as well as truths, therefore storytellers may be unreliable. In ancient Greece, Plato (1998) discussed the value of stories for educating children, but also expressed the importance of ensuring that they were only exposed to “morally sound stories” to enable them to “gain the appropriate social attitudes” (Plato, 1998: 70), implying that some stories have undesirable qualities. In the Middle Ages, male storytellers even acquired the derogatory term “harlots” (Mohr, 2013). Perhaps this capricious trait underlying storytelling’s history, its potential to mislead and distort, undermines its status as trustworthy for education.

Much of the literature reviewed acknowledges that definitions of story/storytelling differ considerably. For example, Greene (1996) sees it as primarily oral, while Moon (2010) tends towards the opinion that there should be an oral aspect; meanwhile Pellowski (1977) includes prose and written formats where the specifics of story are fixed on the page in perpetuity. Livo and Rietz (1986) propose that oral stories are not static but constantly changing, details shifting with each telling providing “evolving, flowing language of the community” (Livo and Rietz, 1986: 19). Here, stories are co-constructed with a flexibility that appeals to the needs of different listeners and situations. This is potentially a key benefit for its usage in academic settings, as story is capable of being adapted to meet the demands of diverse and multi-cultural students (Lin, 2014) who are increasingly entering professional training. Phillips and Bunda widen these perspectives further, viewing story as all encompassing, where it is:

the communication of what it means to be human, that tells of emplaced, relational tragedies, challenges and joys of living. Stories are spoken, gestured, danced, dramatized, painted, drawn, etched, sculpted, woven, stitched, filmed, written and any combination of these modes and more (2020: 3).

The evolving aspect of story functioning within a social milieu is redolent of definitions of “narrative”, a term which is often used interchangeably with “story” (Moon, 2010; Flanagan, 2015). Narrative, however, has its own specific set of definitions, with a distinctive field of academic debate on what it comprises (Bal, 1997), including “a prodigious variety of genres” (Prince, 1982: 1). Phillips and Bunda argue that “narrative implies a specified genre structure”, which conforms to set rules, whereas in story “form” is less rigid, and invites people to share their “retellings of connections to people and places” (2020: 4). Despite these distinctions, story and narrative are often regarded as “closely linked” (Flanagan, 2015: 147) and “(virtually) synonymous” in much of the literature (Taylor, 2006: 193; see also Bruner, 1996; Kara, 2006; Webster

and Mertova, 1987). Like story, narrative also “resists straightforward and agreed-upon definitions and conceptualizations” (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 1). However, it is interesting that “narrative” is used by some writers to essentially mean “storytelling”, but Moon (2010) asserts her own active resistance to “academising” it, suggesting that she feels that the term narrative is seen as more valid and respectable in academia, than storytelling. These are important distinctions as they give nuanced insights into how story/storytelling is viewed in education.

A prominent theory of narrative was developed by Labov who approached narrative from a linguistic perspective. He defines it:

... as one method of recapitulating past experiences by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events [and at a minimum a] sequence of two clauses which are temporally ordered (Labov (1972) cited in Andrews et al., 2009: 7).

This linguistic analysis chimes to an extent with the Cambridge Dictionary definition that focuses on sequencing and is a technical way of identifying stories and storytelling. However, while this is a useful benchmark “two clauses ... temporally ordered” seems insufficient to create an “account” or even a “series of events”, instead, these definitions point to something more developed and complete. The confusion around what story/storytelling actually is means that there is a danger that it becomes over-used, referring to anything and all things so that it becomes virtually meaningless (Moon, 2010), where “every sign, every snippet of conversation, every image and every cliché” is referred to as story (Gabriel, 2000: 3). A verbal sequence of two clauses hardly seems to have the capacity to form a story as we would normally think of it, and yet, there are many “six-word stories” in circulation. Perhaps the most famous being: “For sale: baby shoes, never worn.” (Attributed to Ernest Hemingway but has roots predating his first usage of it (Budanovic, 2017)). Considering this as “story” by Labov’s criteria is problematic, as temporality and sequence is implied, but not actively present. However, as we are told it is a story, our minds attempt to fill in the blanks. The possibilities of what came before to necessitate the sale of **new** baby shoes, thus creating a feeling of past and present, is intriguing. Despite its brevity, it conjures up various possibilities concerning why the shoes are being sold having never been worn, with people often assuming that there is tragedy hidden within. Perhaps it is this stirring of the imagination that pushes it into the realms of story. However, these concepts distil story to an ultimate minimalism, which challenge the definitions, and our innate sense, of what story is.

The difficulties surrounding definitions of “story” and “storytelling” are both intriguing and frustrating. They demonstrate that story/storytelling is subject to shifting concepts and this may hinder its position and status in education. In academia, these confusions become magnified; story and storytelling are hazy, intangible entities, difficult to “pin down” because of the vast diversity of potential uses and conflicting notions of what story/storytelling comprise (Moon, 2010). These debates are important when identifying story usage in educational contexts and will be revisited later.

### 3.1.2 Digital Storytelling

In the last thirty years DS has emerged alongside OS as a popular way of sharing stories, particularly with communities who want to create a record of their personal histories. Although this thesis does not focus specifically on DS, these are significant developments that both widen the scope of storytelling in education and demonstrate how it easily accommodates modern technologies, which is potentially even more relevant in the current climate of online learning. As indicated above, the original DS concept follows a specific model, which the “Story Center” has actively promoted via workshops globally - though it now refers to the use of “participatory media” signifying the enhanced social media options available (Storycenter.org, 2019). While this model remains popular, there are a myriad other possible interpretations of the phrase “digital storytelling” (Hartley and McWilliam, 2009), reflected in developments that combine storytelling with other technologies in innovative ways.

Technology is ubiquitous, it plays an increasingly integral part in our everyday lives: we can now follow news on smart phones; share information via Twitter™; and use social networking sites to interact with global audiences. The importance of narrative and telling our stories becomes enmeshed with enhanced opportunities of the latest technologies. Storytelling is at the heart of this shift from using information to being actively engaged with it (Kalogeras, 2013). Recently, Facebook™ added a feature which prominently encourages us to “add to your story” whenever we log in, to create ongoing but ephemeral digital images combining photographs and commentary that can be shared with family and friends. These, and other developments enable us to effectively build our own digital history, curating our personal digital collections (Kalogeras, 2013). The outbreak of Covid-19 has accelerated this process, subsequent widespread and lengthy lockdowns have necessitated that technology

undertakes an even greater role in people's lives. Our social, work, and educational activities have moved online as normal physical interactions have been suspended.

Hartley and McWilliam's (2009) "The Story Circle" is a seminal book that seeks to demonstrate the impact of DS globally. It features extensive data and comprehensive information on DS projects across the world. McWilliam (2009) includes information on several major community and educational projects in the UK, starting with "Capture Wales" (run in conjunction with the BBC, 2001-2008), which was so successful that it generated over one-thousand spin-off projects, some of which involved collaboration with educational bodies. A particularly prominent spin-off was Read and Write (RaW), a BBC national adult literacy campaign. However, only eight projects took place in HE settings (e.g. DS workshops at London and Gloucester universities); whereas there are notably more educational projects listed in Australia, Canada and the USA. This raises several questions: is DS less popular in HE in the UK than in other countries - if so, why? Or is it taking place, but not recorded, so is it hidden practice? And, has this situation changed since the data was compiled? There seems to be a deep contradiction between the popularity of technology, the popularity of DS as a community and educational tool (for lower levels of education), and its apparent failure to be widely adopted in HE settings.

### 3.2 Storytelling and Professional Education

Storytelling techniques were first proposed as a specific teaching tool in professional education relatively recently (late 1990s). Practitioner educators McDrury and Alterio (2003), produced the first substantial book linking storytelling to learning theories for nurses and teachers. Building on reflective models, including Moon's "map of learning" (1999) and "Entwistle's surface and deep learning approaches (1988, 1996)", they developed "Formalised Storytelling" (FS) (McDrury and Alterio, 2003). Drawing on their personal experiences of teaching in New Zealand, they argue that it is important for students to be able to share personal stories, as this enables them to engage in critical self-evaluation with peers.

FS comprises two formal processes that harness storytelling to reflective practice (see Figure 1) each with four storytelling pathways:

[The first] incorporates oral, written and dialectic reflection ... [with] individual and joint reflective phases ...the second ... is group focused and involves a facilitator who encourages collaborative reflection (McDrury and Alterio, 2001: 63).

Practitioners are steered towards using formal pathways five to eight, which incorporate extra stages and more constraints on the process. Whilst they allow that spontaneous stories (that is, stories which have not been prepared or “predetermined”) and informal settings may have a place in reflection, they feel that greater value and more critical reflection can be gained from using pre-determined stories in formal settings. While the model provides a useful framework, we might ask - are pathways five to eight too formalised? Is making storytelling a formalized process too restrictive? Does inhibiting the naturalness and freedom of spontaneous and informal storytelling remove the elusive charm that makes it engaging as an educational tool?

Figure 1: Formalised Story Pathways

<p>Note: Information is taken from the article by McDrury and Alterio (2001: 66-67) and represented in table format.</p>	
<p><b>Informal Settings</b></p>	
<p><b>Process 1</b></p>	<p><b>Process 2</b> Includes a facilitator</p>
<p><u>Pathway 1:</u> Informal setting, single listener, spontaneous story. Likely to achieve the greatest level of catharsis. One listener can provide undivided attention to the story. Provides freedom for the teller to express unedited ideas and feelings.</p>	<p><u>Pathway 3:</u> Informal setting, multiple listeners, spontaneous story. Various listeners, sharing their stories. Can be jointly cathartic.</p>
<p><u>Pathway 2:</u> Informal setting, single listener, predetermined story. Involves an initial reflective phase prior to the telling. Still likely to contain a strongly affective element.</p>	<p><u>Pathway 4:</u> Informal setting, multiple listeners, predetermined story. Involves an initial reflection phase. Various listeners, sharing their stories. Likely to be more focused than Pathway 3.</p>
<p><u>Informal stories:</u> There is a danger with informal settings that the story sharing will not be sufficiently focused, which can minimize the effectiveness of the process.</p>	
<p><b>Formal Settings</b></p>	
<p><u>Pathway 5:</u> Formal setting, single listener, spontaneous story. There is an agreed agenda, with both partners having a responsibility to contribute. There is a desire to explore the meaning of the story. The listener should provide thoughtful questions and comments to encourage deeper reflection.</p>	<p><u>Pathway 7:</u> Formal setting, multiple listeners, spontaneous story. Reflective group process in which a story is shared, a practice situation examined and alternative approaches and possible consequences explored. Multiple listeners allows for multiple perspectives.</p>
<p><u>Pathway 6:</u> Formal setting, single listener, predetermined story. Both parties engage in an initial reflection phase. There is an agreed agenda, with both partners having a responsibility to contribute. There is a desire to explore the meaning of the story. The listener should provide thoughtful questions and comments to encourage deeper reflection.</p>	<p><u>Pathway 8:</u> Formal setting, multiple listeners, predetermined story. Teller engages in an initial reflection phase. Reflective group process in which a story is shared, a practice situation examined and alternative approaches and possible consequences explored. Multiple listeners allows for multiple perspectives. Likely to result in significant learning.</p>

Since the early 2000s, a small but significant body of articles have supported McDrury and Alterio (2003) and Moon's (1999) recommendations for using storytelling for engagement with critical reflection (e.g. Jenkins and Gravestock, 2009; Maclean & Tuite, (n.d.)) particularly for nursing (e.g. Haigh and Hardy, 2011; Mann et al., 2007; Sanders et al., 2008). Reflective approaches where student-nurses and student-teachers are required to critically evaluate their placement experiences have become "de rigeur" (Sandars et al., 2008) but critical reflection is a difficult skill for learners to acquire (Brookfield, 1995; Moon, 1999; Schön, 1983). Doecke (2013), writing on teaching in Australia, focuses on using storytelling for autobiographical reflexive writing as CPD for qualified English teachers, as he argues that storytelling provides a means of tackling complex issues. The literature, therefore, confirms that storytelling can be effectively linked to reflective learning models and is a beneficial strategy for promoting deep reflections and criticality in education and nursing - yet, storytelling techniques are barely mentioned in textbooks on teaching or lecturing. Reflective assignments form a major component of many professional courses, so promoting storytelling with practitioner educators could positively impact on student motivation and consequently learner outcomes.

More recent studies have started to consider the affective aspects of storytelling in professional education. Flanagan's (2015) small-scale empirical study, with Early Years Education (EYE) students, provides an interesting example that considers social and emotional dimensions. She observed students' responses to personal and "work related" stories told by tutors, examining the impact and circumstances of story usage. Flanagan emphasises the importance of stories having entertaining qualities, noting that students often found listening to stories pleasurable. This complements the view that storytelling is useful for new educators as storytelling engages an audience (Moon, 2010). Meanwhile, Maclean and Tuite (n.d.: 11) found that "personal, humorous and professional stories" were particularly effective teaching methods in their small study with social care/health students, and Attenborough and Abbott (2020) found entertainment as one of the main reasons that nurse educators gave for using storytelling in their small-scale empirical study on the uses of storytelling. However, the affective qualities of storytelling are largely overlooked in the literature.

Since storytelling's emergence in the 1990s as a tool for professional education, McDrury and Alterio (2003) and Moon's later (2010) book on "Using story: In Higher



Education and Professional Development” have provided the most detailed and thorough explorations of storytelling in professional education, focusing on rationales for its usage, and exploring links with learning theory and reflective practice. They also guide practitioners in how to use storytelling in their own practice. However, both texts draw solely on personal experiences, so lack empirical evidence. Articles detailing small studies have provided empirical research on its use in a variety of situations, largely agreeing with the benefits for using storytelling for critical thinking and reflection. However, Flanagan’s (2015) study, interestingly offers empirical evidence that rejects the need for formalised approaches. She explains that she was unable to find any additional benefits in using “pre-prepared” stories over spontaneous stories for reflective learning, highlighting this as a significant finding.

### 3.2.2 Types of Stories

Moon and Fowler’s (2008: 233-34) systemic study categorizes different types of stories in their “Conceptual Story Framework for HE”. It is split into six broad categories (see Figure 2) “Personal Story”; “Known Story Told in a Professional Workplace”; “Non-Fiction but not Personally Known Story” (which includes case-studies); “Fiction and Fantasy”; “Stories that are Grouped” and “Storytelling”. They note that “storytelling” is included because the process of telling may be more significant than the actual content (Moon and Fowler, 2008). This is intriguing as it implies that oral processes - physical and mental - are more important than whether the story itself has merit. It is interesting that the framework includes fictional writing, which, it is argued, can help students work with sensitive topics because “made up stories can be twisted and turned to serve their purposes” (Moon and Fowler, 2008: 236). Thus, this framework highlights the potential for introducing more creativity into HE programmes. Using fictionalised stories may help students to develop their professional identities as they can safely “play” with imagined scenarios and personas that might otherwise be difficult to explore. Story has also been used for affective/emotional aspects of learning; growing critical thinking skills; and even developing an epistemological stance (Moon and Fowler, 2008; Moon, 2010). These are useful starting points for thinking about story types in education and require further development (Moon and Fowler, 2008).

Figure 2: Framework for the Conception of Story in Higher Education and Professional Education. Adapted from Moon and Fowler, 2008

<i>Personal Story</i>	Stories based on specific personally experienced events that have some unity and coherence.
<i>'Known' Story told in a professional workplace, educational or similar setting</i>	Stories told formally or informally amongst people who share experiences (e.g. within a profession or workplace). The stories are about events or experiences that relate to the common interests of the tellers or those who listen.
<i>Non-fiction but not personally known story</i>	These are the material of education (elements of the curriculum) and the media – they are stories that are at a distance from individuals, but that are taken to be true or authentic accounts, with a real experience or context.
<i>Fiction and Fantasy</i>	Accounts of events that have not actually happened as described [where the story] is made up of elements of experience that are interpreted and reinterpreted by the presenter of the story and re-interpreted by the listener in relation to some elements of the experience.
<i>Stories that are grouped</i>	Sometimes a group of stories is deliberately combined to produce a greater value than the sum of the parts. Component stories may be fiction as well as fact and there may be an effort to summarise or reflect upon the collection. This form might be described as a portfolio.
<i>Storytelling</i>	We add storytelling as a category because the very act of telling has educational value and may be more significant than the content.

### 3.2.3 Storytelling and Technology

In professional education, several articles propose DS as suitable for engaging students in reflective practice for teaching and nursing. Daniels (2013) carried out a case-study with pre-service teachers in an elementary school in North Carolina, where they were asked to create digital stories to critically reflect on teaching experiences. While DS was found to be highly beneficial in enhancing reflection, Daniels noted that the project's success relied on the provision of effective technological support for student-teachers. Kocaman and Karaglu (2016) carried out a small research study with a cohort of thirty-eight pre-service teachers in Turkey, employing DS within one university module, to encourage students to reflect on their personal experiences and perceptions. They found DS to be an engaging, student-centred approach, which enhanced the exploration of personal emotions, encouraging reflection and creativity. Students were able to successfully develop their technical skills but complained about

the heavy workload that activities generated. Meanwhile, Jenkins and Gravestock (2009) carried out a systemic review of literature on DS, resulting in them recommending it for a very broad range of subjects, including accountancy, business studies, cultural studies, humanities, maths, religion and science. An interesting proposal for taking DS a stage further comes from Kalogeras (2013: 119) in the form of “Transmedia edutainment” (TmSE). Kalogeras posits this as a “critical-creative pedagogy” combining DS with multi-media platforms to engage HE students, enabling an “holistic” approach that opens up new perspectives and meanings (Kalogeras, 2013: 119, 117), however, this is presented as a “hybrid theory”, and there are no details on whether this has been used with students. In nursing, Haigh and Hardy (2011) carried out a systemic review of storytelling in health and education between 1975 and 2007. They outline overall developments of using storytelling in education, and, for nursing focus on patients’ stories and how these can be used for nurses’ development and conveying health messages. In particular, they discuss the benefits of the development of Patients’ Voices, a project which created digital stories of patients, providing student-nurses’ with insights into patients’ experiences. These are interesting developments however, the difficulties associated with using technology including time factors, the complexity of the technology, and (when involving social media) concerns about public image, can be significant barriers for students developing their own DS (Ventola, 2014). Although it is not specifically discussed, we might also wonder whether another hurdle is the technological skills of educators in creating their own stories, and in supporting DS.

Taking a wider perspective, Andrews et al. (2009) explain how innovative technological developments have sparked new ways of integrating story for educational purposes. Gaming and virtual reality platforms are employed for enhancing various aspects of learning, from critical analysis of situations (e.g. soldiers reacting to war situations in virtual reality games) to full-scale simulations in healthcare settings. They offer persuasive examples that include using story film and virtual reality software (e.g. the Army’s Battlemind Program, USA) where “story” is integral to the programmes. Andrews et al. (2009) propose four instructional methodologies for use with various media: “case-based”; “scenario-based”; “narrative-based” and “problem-based”, arguing that these methods engage learners with chronologically sequenced materials, enabling deep engagement. They reason that:

A story ... facilitates instruction directly through verbal or linguistic means and indirectly by aiding in the mental construction of a sequence of events enacted for or by the learner (Andrews et al., 2009: 7).

This is highly relevant to professional education as digital programmes enable students to safely immerse themselves in realistic scenarios, which is particularly important for inexperienced students in situations where it would be dangerous and unethical for them to practice on real patients (Gobbi et al., 2011; Hedges et al., 2020). Andrews et al.'s (2009) instructional methods, particularly "case-based" and "scenario-based", use factual information and have some similarities with simulations, which enable student-nurses to develop their clinical practice and problem-solving skills safely (Francis and O'Brien, 2019; Mills et al., 2014) alongside teamwork (Gobbi et al., 2011). Simulations enable students to familiarise themselves with complicated technical equipment, such as radiographers setting up machines for taking scans, or delivering radiotherapy treatments (Hedges et al., 2020). They often centre around case-studies, which have become more popular for improving student-nurses' critical thinking skills, and their understanding of how to apply theory to clinical contexts (Karadag et al., 2016). Using real-life scenarios and patient histories, they may involve "virtual patients, live actors, and artificial models" (Karadag et al., 2016: 88). Since the 2000s there has been a surge in the use of "high-fidelity simulations" for training student nurses and professionals (Gobbi et al., 2011) with many hospitals and universities in the UK now having simulation suites. These are highly complex environments that portray a range of realistic situations including clinical or surgical wards, or military settings. They employ sophisticated mannequins that can "reproduce or mimic human physiology" including having measurable vital signs (for example variable breathing, heart rates and temperatures) (Healthy Simulation, 2021). Despite this recent proliferation in simulation usage, this is still an under-researched area (Gobi, 2011, Hedges et al., 2020).

With this selection of literature, I have endeavoured to show key developments and relationships between DS and professional education over the last thirty years, as well as previous studies that recommend DS. The continuing advancement in technologies, and the increased use of digital tools and online learning means that pedagogies that use DS are likely to have substantial implications for the role of storytelling in professional education, and these are all areas which are currently under-explored.

### 3.2.4 Patients' Stories, Gossip, and Professional Love in Nursing

Since 2003 there has been a focus in healthcare settings on the use of first-hand experiences, in the form of patients' stories. These are increasingly seen as important as they provide "meaning, context and perspective" on patients' own illnesses; nurses need to be able to listen to patients' stories in order to understand them and know how to treat them (Greenhalgh and Hurwitz, 1998: 6). There have been several initiatives promoting patients' stories within the National Health Service (NHS). An overview of this practice by McIntyre et al. (2015) found that it was already widespread in the Midlands and East regions of England, having been linked to the "Compassion in Practice" (DoH, 2012) strategy, but subsequent surveys found that this practice was more "ad hoc" on a national level. McIntyre et al. (2015: 21) called for a more systemised approach with sharing of storytelling practice between Trusts, including the provision of video databases and forums, stating that the NHS had a "strong" commitment to using patients' stories for developing nurses' caring and leadership skills. Such commitment can be seen in the "Patients' Voices" project, co-founded by Pip Hardy and Tony Summer in 2003. They create three-minute digital stories of healthcare experiences and hold regular DS workshops for NHS staff; the online database contains over one thousand stories on a huge range of topics (Patient Voices, 2021). Meanwhile "Care Opinion" (formerly "Patient Opinion") is the UK's "main independent feedback site" (Tevendale and Armstrong, 2015: 15), which invites people to "share ... experiences good or bad" pledging to ensure stories reach the "right people to make a difference" (Care Opinion, 2021). These projects aim to address quality issues by increasing responsiveness to patients, together with opportunities for self-reflection and improvement of practice. Additionally, these organisations encourage stories from healthcare workers, from carers through to consultants, as they believe that everyone's perspective is a valuable learning tool (Patient Voices, 2021). While these initiatives are encouraged for qualified healthcare staff in the workplace, there is evidence that they are also influencing uses of stories for pre-registration nurses in HE settings. Tevendale and Armstrong (2015) analysed the use of patient video-stories with student-nurses at Edinburgh university; student-nurses were given access to Patient Opinion - they then discussed videos in "interactive" lectures. The technique was found to be beneficial for deepening student-nurses' understanding and increasing problem-solving skills, which helped "close the gap" between theory and real-life experiences (Tevendale and Armstrong, 2015: 15).

These story initiatives seem connected to the current drive towards using evidence-based practice (EBP) in healthcare. The NMC Code (NMC, 2015) requires nurses and midwives to use EBP in their training and subsequent revalidation, creating an environment in which healthcare professionals are actively encouraged to collect “patient narratives” (Buckley et al., 2016). They are given access to resources (such as story databases) and training opportunities. The NHS have also produced in-house materials that give guidance on collecting stories from patients and colleagues via written, audio and video accounts (see Shropshire County Health Trust, 2015). Another example of patients’ stories being used in HE comes from Schwartz and Abbott, who explored how student-nurses and nurses were taught to collect information (clinical, social and family) from the patient and medical team and assemble it into “a cohesive story” (2007: 186). They found these methods to be powerful tools for improving nursing practice. While they focused on the responses of nurses working in clinical practice, they also briefly commented on the usefulness of nurse educators relating their own practice experiences to student-nurses in academic settings.

A significant factor in the impetus for stories in nursing recently has been a series of highly troubling scandals, such as the “serious failings” in provision at the Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust (Francis Report, 2013: 3). These were only revealed because of “persistent complaints” by patients and their families, which led Francis to recommend that more feedback from multiple perspectives (including families and healthcare colleagues) should be sought, to increase (or perhaps restore) “commitment, compassion and caring for patients” (2013: 78). While listening to and sharing good practice stories is seen as motivating and inspirational, it is now recognised that stories highlighting mistakes and failings are crucial for learning how to rectify errors and make positive changes for the future (Buckley et al., 2016; Tevendale and Armstrong, 2015).

Storytelling is also a means of encouraging professional group identity by instilling “tacit values” (Haigh and Hardy, 2011: 409). This is examined in Laing’s (1993) provocative article on the role of gossip in the socialization of neophyte nurses. She uses extensive literature to illuminate aspects of nursing culture, including the historical use of storytelling within healthcare environments. Laing claims that gossip is a form of “purposeful communication with specific social functions” (1993: 37), identifying storytelling as an important feature of gossip. Although she acknowledges the potential

for gossip to be used maliciously, she sees a role for “healing gossip” (1993: 40) which develops amongst groups of nurses over time. Gossip’s three main functions are: “information”; “influence or social control”; and “entertainment”. These are transmitted during standard procedures, rituals and social aspects of nursing, such as shift handovers, coffee and lunch breaks (Laing: 1993: 37). Gossip, including the sharing of stories, therefore, enables student-nurses to naturally learn about a range of aspects, as well as cope with emotional dimensions of their role (Waddington and Fletcher, 2005). It seems likely, therefore, that nurse educators will have experienced healing gossip themselves in clinical practice, and this may have implications for them using storytelling in their own teaching. Gossip is also linked to storytelling by Chinn (1990), who actively sets out to “reclaim gossip” for positive reflective purposes for her graduate nursing students. She instigated weekly “SOPHIA ... (Speak out, Play Havoc, Imagine Alternatives)” (1990: 320) meetings at university in order to share stories about experiences. These sessions included a detailed set of rules to ensure that gossip was purposeful, focused on the “self”, and safeguarded individuals involved. In this formalising of procedures, there are some resonances with McDrury and Alterio’s (2003) FS. Chinn reported that sessions were transformative for many who took part, allowing for in-depth explorations, bringing issues to a more overt consciousness. This small but significant set of articles points to the ubiquity of gossip in nursing practice and consequently to the possibility that storytelling, as one of the components of gossip, may be widely accepted in nurse-culture and education.

Another area where storytelling may be important for developing nurse identity is that concerning “professional love”. This is defined as a combination of:

Agape - love which is altruistic in nature ... [and] filia - a form of brotherly love, as an expression of friendship and affection ... [where] caring that nurses give is often bound with love (Rollings, 2008: 53, 54).

Nurses are under considerable work pressures which are exacerbated by funding deficits, staff shortages and unstable employment, issues which have led some to claim that nurses have moved away from professional love (Adib-Hajbaghery and BolandianBafghi, 2020: 114; Cooke, 2015). This situation has almost certainly been exacerbated by the on-going Covid-19 pandemic. Recent public inquiries, such as “The Francis Report”, have highlighted an erosion of core values in some areas of the health sector due to inadequate leadership and staffing, leading to the call for a system which encourages an “increased focus on a culture of compassion and caring in nurse recruitment, training and education” (Francis, 2013: 72). Despite these present

difficulties, caring relationships are still seen to be at the core of current nursing (Adib-Hajbaghery and BolandianBafghi, 2020), where “love and caring exist side by side” (Dowling, 2004: 1292). Caring is “intrinsic” in all fields of nursing, but particularly evident in some, such as palliative care (Rollings, 2008). Student-nurses on placement learn about caring for others via a mixture of observation and communication that combines technical knowledge with understanding values, which is crucial for their development (Cooke, 2015). However, in busy placements there is often insufficient time for student-nurses to ask detailed questions (Francis and O’Brien, 2019). In addition, student-nurses may not want to reveal they do not understand something, deterring them from asking questions, meaning nurse educators need to bridge this gap (Cooke, 2015). Cooke (2015) suggests that skills and knowledge surrounding professional love are transferred from nurse educators to students via communication and socialization practices, additionally, nurse educators who can demonstrate strong links with clinical practice gain more respect from student-nurses. It seems likely that this may be achieved through storytelling, especially as Schwartz and Abbott explained that clinical practice stories can be “woven” through the “didactic portion” of lectures in order to illustrate good and bad practice (2007: 185).

The importance of stories in conveying patient voice and the reality of people’s suffering is explored in detail by Frank (1995) in “The Wounded Storyteller”, in which he examines the story of his own illness (testicular cancer) alongside other published stories of illness and suffering (e.g. Audre Lourde writing about breast cancer and Lawrence Langer’s testimonies on the Holocaust). Frank (1995: 25, 49) argues that that in post-modern times we need “an ethics of listening” where a person’s body communicates its suffering with others through stories, thus inviting others to find a sense of “alignment” and develop empathy with the teller. Sharing stories in this way, therefore, promotes a deeply ethical relationship which creates a profound mutual understanding between patients and medical personnel, in which patients move from being passive recipients of treatment to agentic beings, promoting their own survival and restoring their humanity. While Frank concentrates on published memoirs, he also emphasises that ill people often tell oral stories in many situations to different people, including friends, family, colleagues, and health professionals. He posits that stories have a healing quality that help to reaffirm relationships, however, while these types of stories are often “uncomfortable” for the listener, this is even more reason for them to be told. He explains: “a senior surgeon wrote ... he is finally learning the difference between taking a history and **hearing the patient’s story**; until recently the medical history was considered to **be the story**” (Frank, 1995: 58 [bold my emphasis]). Stories



that are told through the “wounded body” are, therefore, able to counter the dominating “medical narrative” (Frank, 1995: 5) because of the focus on patients’ personal experiences told in their own words, as opposed to the clinical perspective using medical terminology.

Frank’s arguments affirm the relevance of encouraging nurses to take time to listen to patients’ stories, however uncomfortable this may be for them. However, he also notes that illness stories can be seen as “living testimony” and that those who hear these stories also become witnesses, where “the witness makes a witness of others” enabling stories to be passed on in a “cultural milieu” (1995: 140, 142, 145). This seems to align with Laing’s (1993) healing gossip, where stories are shared between nurses for positive purposes. Frank argues that sharing stories benefits the patient, as well as medical staff as “when any person recovers his voice, many people begin to speak through that story” (1995: xiii).

There was very limited reference in the literature to feelings and perspectives of practitioner educators on circumstances around **when** they use storytelling and **why** they tell stories. Attenborough and Abbott’s (2020) article appears to be the first significant piece to address these questions in nursing. Their small-scale study involved interviewing twelve lecturers teaching on pre-registration and post-qualification courses, focusing on lecturers’ use of anecdotal stories either from clinical practice or “life” experiences. They examined reasons why lecturers tell stories and found four key themes: 1) to help with engaging learners and enlivening the lecture; 2) to link theory and practice; 3) to provide a role-model or examples of good practice; and 4) to help students imagine their future nursing roles. They conclude that: “although storytelling is widely practiced by nurse lecturers, it remains a hidden and not explicitly identified part of the curriculum” (Attenborough and Abbott, 2020: 6). This provides a unique and intriguing perspective, testifying to widespread use of story in nurse education, while also proposing it is hidden practice. It gives empirical views of advantages and disadvantages of using anecdotal stories. However, it is, as they acknowledge, a very small study that is unable to take a wider view on the full range of storytelling that might be used by nurse educators.

### 3.2.5 Positive Relationships and Professional Love in Teaching

While themes concerning gossip, professional love and professional identity gradually emerged from literature on nurse education, these were less apparent in literature on teaching. There seemed to be no corresponding literature on gossip, and I struggled to find much discussion of storytelling and professional identity. However, by casting wider, I found an interesting study undertaken by Baskerville (2011), in New Zealand, with year 10 (aged thirteen and fourteen) drama students. Baskerville explores the impact of introducing storytelling with the aim of encouraging a more “culturally inclusive” environment through a series of four workshops run over two weeks. In the first session, teachers told personal stories about themselves, and then encouraged students to join in. Reflective feedback was captured via journal entries written by students. Baskerville (2011: 110) posits that sharing stories between teachers and students, and students with peers, gradually built mutual trust, sympathy, empathy and “positive relationships”, in which students said that they “understood” each other better. In particular, she noted that this reduced barriers between students, changing classroom “dynamics”, and creating a “shared power relationship where students and teachers were co-learners” which “privileged students’ voices” (Baskerville, 2010: 111). Baskerville felt storytelling enabled students to become more mutually supportive and to cohere better as a group, as they connected over common experiences, helping them to understand each other’s cultural differences. Opportunities for students to share their own stories was seen as crucial for this process. While progress was tentative, with some students reticent to tell stories initially, they increasingly “warmed” to this once they felt that they were in a safe space. Baskerville felt that teachers had built an “ethic of care”, around storytelling, and teachers sharing their stories **first** was significant in creating this trusting environment (2011: 110). This resulted in several recommendations for using storytelling, including: teachers need to select stories carefully, as this influences the tone of sessions and what stories are subsequently shared; that confidentiality boundaries need to be carefully set, (including that students need to be asked to be mindful about what details they are disclosing and whether it is appropriate to share them); and finally, that students need time and support in developing story techniques. These are interesting recommendations that are not generally given much attention in wider literature, suggesting a need for more in-depth explorations.

While not referring to professional love, Flanagan's study with EYE students, (mentioned above), noticed a similar effect with her participants, as she felt that storytelling had a strong social function, which "facilitate[d] group cohesion" and also enhanced "professional/group culture" (2015: 160). Similar to Baskerville's observations, she believed that "swapping" stories by both teachers and students contributed to this, making the teaching experience more enjoyable. However, she also identified that emotions were an important consideration, saying that stories often generated emotional responses such as laughter, sadness, and anger, and that these seemed to help students develop a shared empathy.

Themes of professional love and reciprocity in nurturing relationships are also found in some literature concerning EYE but it is mainly absent from formal education (Cousins, 2017; Lanas and Zembylas, 2015). Cousins (2017: 17) defines "love" in EYE settings as: "to *have* and express, or show affection for someone" whereas Page (2015) argues that professional love occurs when professionals can "de-centre" themselves in order to see the child's viewpoint to promote "deep, sustaining, respectful and reciprocal relationships" (Page, 2011: 313). However, the term "love" is seen as problematic for educators, especially in more recent times, due to concerns over child abuse; meanwhile the "neoliberal context" creates tensions due to the need for educators to comply with performativity and accountability measures, as Cousins asserts "love does not fit into this" (2017: 18). While these studies demonstrate the need for practitioners to engage in professional love in EYE settings, they do not directly discuss storytelling as being part of this process.

### 3.3 Storytelling as Pedagogy

Since 2010 there have been several educators (e.g. Beattie, 2017; Kalogeras, 2013; Lin 2014) who have taken more philosophical and theoretical approaches to storytelling in academia, situating it within the current political, social and economic context. They explore philosophical justifications underpinning storytelling as pedagogy, providing nuanced perspectives, as well as looking at the potential for using storytelling to disrupt and refute neoliberalist ideologies in the classroom. Storytelling is congruent with the socio-cultural paradigm, meaning that it can be successfully used across disciplines in HE (Beattie, 2017; Kalogeras, 2013; Lin 2014), they concur that it is effective due to its flexibility and can be employed to challenge perspectives.

Using story as an “inquiry tool”, Lin (2014: 67) takes a linguistic approach by giving her college history students, who are also English Language Learners (ELL), a foothold to acquiring academic discourse. This tool merges discussion, reflective writing, and fictionalised writing - where students write from the perspective of historical figures. She draws on Bourdieu’s concepts of language and power and the idea that “mastery of academic discourse skills is hence closely associated with academic achievement and material reward” (Lin, 2014, 56-57). She also refers to Bakhtin’s heteroglossia “which Bakhtin defines as “another’s speech in another’s language”” (Lin, 2014: 62). Lin uses these perspectives to argue that the current limiting of genres taught in the USA excludes narrative formats, which is detrimental as it increases barriers to learning. This directly parallels the situation in the UK – with literacy teaching in schools side-lining the story itself to focus on decoding phonics and grammatical constructions (Rosen, 2017), where the focus is on a positivist approach to learning and neoliberalist ideologies (see Context and Policy Chapter). Although Lin refers here to working in colleges, she moves her discussion to HE, arguing that academic discourse has traditionally taken a depersonalizing stance which is detrimental to research as it limits interpretation, resulting in “lost perspectives ...[which] can only be recovered with the help of a marginalized voice” (2014: 65). She links academic discourse to “Cultural Capital” (Bourdieu, 1986) arguing that ELL students are disadvantaged because of their difficulty in communicating in this complex discourse; she sees storytelling techniques as valid ways of making language more accessible. This concurs with Simons’ (2014) proposal of employing storytelling in business to empower minority groups. Simons believes that using fictional approaches (e.g. fairy tales) can enable “silenced voices” to be heard and provide ways of exploring and exposing hidden power.

Meanwhile, Beattie utilizes Freire’s critical pedagogy (2003) as her theoretical framework - she teaches “political theory narratives” for empowerment through reflective and collaborative learning, focusing on the potential for them to challenge constricting aspects of HE classrooms (2017: 37). Beattie asserts that lecturers are constrained to conform to capitalist globalist systems which necessitates they acquire “subject mastery”, focus on publishing articles, attending conferences and securing funding; she sees these demands culminating in an attempt to “master time” (2017: 34, 33). However, this leads to detrimental effects on political agency within education that limits opportunities for creativity and innovation. Beattie proposes that using narrative/storytelling approaches (particularly reflexive narratives and

autoethnographies) can enable lecturers to resist these burdens. She argues that current pressures contribute to an unequal relationship between student and lecturer, where the lecturer's voice dominates and the affective, social aspects of teaching are diminished. To restore these, she calls for the co-production of knowledge, via sharing stories in the classroom, which become a tool for changing the status quo.

Autoethnography and transformative learning are at the heart of Beattie's narrative teaching, requiring her to "reveal multiple identities, stories and lived experiences" (2017: 38). This is, however, a very demanding way of working, while self-examination is integral to the auto-ethnographer, is it reasonable to expect this depth of personal unveiling from lecturers on an everyday basis? The strength in Beattie's views lies in her theoretical arguments and detailed explorations of using stories with her students, while she reports valuable developmental outcomes, she expends considerable time on developing and teaching the course. This brings into question the practicality of these methods: do storytelling approaches always necessitate this time expenditure; would the methods fail without this amount of support; and given the already demanding time pressures, is this teaching approach (however valuable) simply unworkable? These inquiry-based methods used by Beattie and Lin appear to be quite distinctive from other types of storytelling in education, could "storytelling as inquiry" be a new type of storytelling pedagogy? If so, these are additional areas that would benefit from further exploration.

While Beattie (2017) and Lin (2014) use oral and written storytelling methods, Kalogeras (2013) discusses multi-media platforms and DS for TmSE which she links to reflective learning and Freire's dialogical action (combining reflection with action), claiming that blending TmSE with "story circles" (Freire, 2003) enhances reflection. She parallels Freire's orally-based circles to digital networks, but despite DS's roots, these are, surely, very different concepts. By using oral communication, Freire made learning accessible to the poorest in society, whereas digital technology may increase the barrier to learning due to its complexity, expense, and necessity for technical "know-how" (Lowenthal, 2009). Kalogeras sees the entertainment aspects of storytelling as essential for engagement and motivation, arguing that fiction and creativity are fundamentally important.

Kalogeras concludes with somewhat unconvincing arguments for TmSE, focusing on the role of the unconscious brain in learning processes, learning styles and Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1993). The idea of the brain having a large untapped area that is used to learn subconsciously has been challenged (Shanks and St. John, 1994; Vadillo et al., 2016) and learning styles have been discredited so they are no longer seen as acceptable teaching approaches. This undermines her claims for the use of metaphors to speed the process of transformational learning via unconscious learning. Whilst acknowledging that there is no definitive data for learning styles' effectiveness, Kalogeras fails to offer justification for their consideration, simply stating that she is "disconcerted" (2013: 119) by the lack of evidence, offering emotion and engagement as an alternative rationale. This change of justification is not fully explained, and it is not clear how "emotive presence and engagement ... underscores storytelling" (Kalogeras, 2013: 119) in her article. However, the notion that storytelling engages emotions concurs with Moon's (2010) view that there is a strong affective element to storytelling, which may be a factor in its ability to hold students' attention.

These three educators present deep theoretical and philosophical arguments for using storytelling in innovative ways in HE, which serve to challenge and disrupt the status quo. Lin (2014) uses Bourdieuan and Bakhtian concepts to demonstrate how storytelling can challenge teaching constraints and widen participation, thus helping to reduce barriers to learning in academia. Beattie and Kalogeras adopt critical pedagogy to confront neoliberalism in academia. They also share concerns that students and lecturers may not easily adapt to these approaches, which may expose lecturers' vulnerabilities due to the demands of narrative reflexivity and collaborative learning. Beattie, Lin and Kalogeras use philosophy to explore underlying principles of using storytelling pedagogically. However, they also emphasise the struggle that they feel is involved in using these techniques in academic settings, discussing tensions that have not previously been highlighted. These challenges bring the discussion to the premise that storytelling itself, may be seen as contentious in the current educational climate.

### 3.4 Contentiousness of Storytelling in Education

In reviewing this literature, it has been noticed that there are tensions detectable that hint to the notion that storytelling methods lack robustness and viability. While literature has provided examples of strong advocates for using stories in various ways,

there appears to be an underlying resistance or suspicion of using storytelling in education. The most detailed discussion surrounding contentiousness is provided by Heinemeyer and Durham (2017). They highlight significant difficulties encountered in introducing storytelling/narrative techniques alongside the English National Curriculum (DfE, 2014) and question “whether the cumulative effects of English education policy may have unwittingly led to a[n] ... exclusion of narrative” (Heinemeyer and Durham, 2017: 32). If storytelling meets such resistance and is seen as an inappropriate teaching method in schools with children (which might seem to be the natural home for storytelling) how can it be seen as legitimate for adult students in HE? Heinemeyer and Durham also claim that developments such as the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1987 have been detrimental, not just to the use of storytelling but to “everyday communication”, effectively stifling a practice that was beneficial in engaging pupils and piquing their curiosity in subjects that they might otherwise find uninspiring. Doecke (2013) argues against parallel constraints on teaching practice in Australia. He explains that there is an increasing focus on narrow targets, phonics, and rote learning, where the “fetish of ‘data’” (2013: 12) and standards-based reforms limit the scope of what teachers are able to do. He calls for a “reconceptualization” that embraces the sharing of stories in the classroom which allows teachers the freedom to encourage students to use their imagination.

There is evidence that resistance to storytelling methods in schools is deep-rooted in England. In the postscript of Betty Rosen’s experiential account of teaching disengaged children in an English secondary school, her husband and fellow educator, Harold Rosen comments:

I became increasingly aware that as yet no major work has appeared which presents a coherent educational theory of narrative. Even more significant, perhaps, we have no full accounts of narrative in the classroom by **teachers who believe in it as a pillar of the curriculum and who have translated that belief into practice – the educational world doesn’t accept that telling the tales of teaching as richly and honestly as we know how is a totally valid means of teaching each other.** (Rosen, 1988b: 164 [italics my emphasis]).

This is fascinating, the frustration is palpable and strongly suggests that storytelling was being practised widely by teachers and was highly valued by them as a “pillar of the curriculum”, yet it still struggled to be acknowledged as a viable tool by education authorities. Betty Rosen’s account refers to 1985 - 1986, just pre-dating the National Curriculum. In addition, there is a noted dismissal from the “educational world” of

teachers sharing storytelling techniques with each other. Changes in educational policies in the 1980s onwards, particularly with the introduction of the National Curriculum and performativity targets, appear to have further diminished opportunities for using storytelling. Pertinently, Heinemeyer and Durham (2017) point out that for trainee teachers today, there are no role-models experienced in storytelling techniques, which affirms Haggarty's (2004) observation that storytelling in secondary schools has declined since 1992, with new teachers being unaware of it. This sense of practice knowledge and craft being lost is corroborated by Jones' assertion that "A generation of teachers had grown up knowing only the procedures and objectives of the post-1988 system" (2016: 194).

Although these sources specifically refer to compulsory education, they underline a suspicion towards storytelling in general, which may also explain the resistance noted by Beattie (2017), and Lin (2014) in academic settings. In particular, Lin felt that while storytelling was valued as a teaching tool for ELL learners, it is "slighted" in mainstream education, including HE. The prevalence of the existence of this suspicion from some individuals is noted by bell hooks (2010) in her autobiographical reflections on her own teaching experiences in HE. She says that teaching practice that encourages personal stories may be seen as unacademic and lacking intellect. She forcefully disputes this, believing that stories, particularly anecdotes, are used widely and effectively.

The contentiousness of storytelling in education over-spilt into the public domain in January 2017, when David Davies (then Conservative MP for Monmouth, South Wales) criticized the University of South Wales for advertising for a "Professor of Storytelling", demanding that the post be "scrapped". Davies, quoted in the Daily Mail, said:

Storytelling is for primary school children not university students. And what students ought to realise is that there [sic] fees are going towards paying for this nonsense (Dunn, 2017).

He emphasised his objections saying:

We need scientists, doctors and engineers - you don't get those qualifications by sitting around reading Ladybird books. A professor of storytelling is ludicrous - the university is living in cloud cuckoo-land (Dunn, 2017).

Although the University of South Wales robustly refuted his comments, Davies' views are testament to the existence of a deep misunderstanding of the role of storytelling in education, (including at government level). In particular there is a misconception that



storytelling is only suitable for children, which can clearly be seen in the reference to ladybird books which are aimed at emerging readers.

Despite this general negativity towards storytelling, there has been a recent call for “narrative” methods to be used in primary and secondary schools. In her blog, Counsell (2018), a history academic and teacher educator, proposes that schoolteachers use “hinterland” to provide historical background and context on the origination of concepts and ideas for a range of subjects, including maths, science and history. Although she does not specifically define it, she refers to hinterland as comprising the important historical, background or periphery knowledge about a concept that situates it contextually. She argues that “narrative works through gaps or spaces that set the mind whirring about what is not yet known” (Counsell, 2018). Hinterland can include case-studies, oral storytelling and anecdotes told with “the art of a storyteller” (Sherrington, 2019). Yet, hinterland also seems to have similarities with Reason and Heinemeyer’s (2016: 571) “storyknowing” where “to know within and through story ... is to know something in a situated and relational manner”. Heinemeyer and Durham (2017) explain that storyknowing enables pupils to learn facts and information through stories, because of their contextualisation within a broader narrative. These approaches demonstrate a need for storytelling within core curricula in compulsory education.

This small range of sources has shown that contentiousness towards storytelling is felt not just in the core of academia, but extends to secondary education, and higher levels of government. It seems storytelling is to be mistrusted, to be regarded as “fluffy”, irrelevant, and not serious enough for genuine consideration, thus storytelling is eroded from all arenas, even primary and secondary education. The pressures of performativity and accountability mean there is an increasing need for educators at all levels to justify what they are teaching. This literature brings attention to the notion that storytelling is contentious, subjugated by its more acceptable “cousin” narrative, but this juggling of semantics sidesteps the real issue of the role that storytelling does, can, and should, play in education. The undercurrent of contentiousness is important in considering the role of storytelling in HE, as there is a sense of a struggle, an enthusiasm from some educators, but a sense that there are not always easy ways to incorporate it. While there are a small number of sources that may act as guides for using storytelling in professional settings, there is no wider consensus on when and

how it can, or should, be used, and only scant empirical studies on practitioner educators' use of storytelling or their perceptions of storytelling.

### 3.5 Conclusion

The literature discussed in this chapter has highlighted debates surrounding the use of storytelling in education, giving a brief overview of its history, and focusing in particular on its use in professional education and academic settings. Key texts on using storytelling in professional education (McDrury and Alterio, 2003; Moon, 2010) concentrate largely on providing a theoretical rationale for storytelling for reflection and critical thinking, whilst also focusing on practical aspects of introducing storytelling into teaching. However, there are still relatively few sources that provide empirical studies on the use of storytelling in professional education, or that provide deeper philosophical discussions of its wider role. Whilst literature is gradually growing, there are several areas where storytelling is still under-researched, with many puzzling questions yet to be explored. Central to these issues is the confusion about perceptions of storytelling, with conflicting definitions and a general difficulty in making tangible the tacit nature of story. Storytelling has potential as an empowering, engaging pedagogy in professional education, but there is limited theoretical or empirical research to underpin these claims. The literature reviewed often felt "patchy", with noticeable gaps, for example views relating to practitioner educators' perspectives of storytelling were sparse, with just one study available on nurse education (Attenborough and Abbott, 2020), and no similar studies available on teacher educator perspectives. In addition, while some nursing literature referred to storytelling for wider purposes, for example, promoting group cohesiveness and professional identity, and for use with simulations, these discussions seemed largely absent from literature on storytelling in teacher education. This review has provided an in-depth discussion of current debates surrounding the role of storytelling in professional education and has identified significant gaps in the literature, thus informing the key issues to be explored in this thesis.

## Chapter Four: Methodology

In this chapter I explain the ontological and epistemological perspectives that guide my research. I discuss my rationale for using a narrative ontological and epistemological approach, focusing on narrative inquiry. Congruent with storytelling, I introduce concepts of “Story Circles for Research” (SCR); “Storytelling Capital” and “Trickster Methodology”. I also set out the rationale behind the inclusion of semi-fictional writing to “sit alongside” traditional academic writing. This section, therefore, starts to employ intertextuality discussed in chapter one, including vignettes about the inspirations behind my trickster companions - Mr. Wolf (Vignette 1) and Merelina (Vignette 2), and the First Interlude introducing the Tricksters. I also explain my research design including timescales and recruitment of participants. Ethics is integral to this research, and this is discussed in “Ethical Considerations”.

I strive to understand both storytelling itself, and its relationship to professional education. In attempting to understand the ““how” and “why”” of social phenomena (Yin, 2014: 4) I am using a case-study, situating the research in a single post-1992 university in the Midlands, England, in order to examine both the “holistic and real-world perspective” (Yin, 2014: 4). Case-based methods are integral to narrative inquiry and enable a coherent picture to be formed of research, whilst also preserving participants’ agency (Mishler, 1991).

### 4.1 Ontology and Epistemology

*“We live in a sea of stories” (Bruner, 1996: 147)*

Stories and storytelling are social constructs that serve to connect people. They have been an essential part of human communication and education for thousands of years (Bettelheim, 1976; Colwell, 1991; Donald, 1998; Pelowski, 1977; Zipes, 1995). My “Story about Stories” seeks to unearth personal stories of practitioner educators to understand how story is used in professional education and to investigate the impact of story on practitioner educators themselves, their teaching practice and ultimately their students. Social interaction and communication are key tenets of social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978, in Palincsar, 2005), where people working together are able to develop their skills and understanding of the world around them (Palincsar, 2005).

Storytelling relies on social communication; human interaction is a vital component of the storytelling process. Likewise, educators and students are not working in a social vacuum, but are part of a community, sharing concepts via language (Andrews, 2012).

As discussed in the literature review, storytelling and narrative are intricately linked, and often viewed as synonymous, Spector-Mersel proposes that narrative is a paradigm in its own right, it is “a unique philosophical infrastructure” of individuals’ interactions with(in) the world, in which narrative is not merely a way of **reflecting** the world, but a way of **constructing** it, where reality is “largely invented by narratives” (2010: 204, 208). Thus, stories enable us to communicate, share and consider our experiences, but they are also integral in shaping those experiences, from formulating memories, to making sense of life events, to moulding our own “autobiographical narratives” (Bruner, 1987: 10). Human beings are “story-telling machines” (Donald, 1998: 18), we are immersed in narrative throughout our lives, destined to live out our stories, as we intertwine and interact with other humans: “the human child is already positioned as the referant in the story recounted by those around him in relation to which he will inevitably chart his course” (Lyotard, 1979: 15). We are, therefore, born into the world as “the human child”, we enter into the midst of that world where we are already part of someone else’s story. We start to create our own stories, at the same time that we intermingle with others’ stories. It has also been claimed that the ability to tell and understand stories is a crucial part of being human (Frank, 2010; Harris, 2018). Narrative is now viewed by psychoanalysts as being so entangled in the core of our being that it is seen as part of “personhood”, where having “an insufficient, incomplete or inappropriate story about oneself” is seen as contributing to “neurosis” (Bruner, 1996: 40).

Furthermore, it can be argued that narrative is the very fabric of societies and culture, it has always been a part of human life and is present in all peoples; it is “transhistorical, transcultural” (Barthes, 1975:237 in Prince, 1982: 1). Society is steeped in stories, which “bestow legitimacy upon social institutions”, and enable society to justify and evaluate itself (Lyotard, 1984: 20). In recent years physiological investigations have established a close link between story and social interactions (Flanagan, 2015). All of this storying, however, happens within social constructs; stories are fundamentally embedded into our social and cultural worlds (Reissman, 2008b). Stories and society are, therefore, interdependent, working “symbiotically” to draw people together in

“mutual dependencies” (Frank, 2010: 14). Narrative is at the root of knowledge, we learn about the world through “cultural metanarratives” (Spector-Mersel, 2010: 212); myths, legends and folktales form a cultural platform through which we understand, critique and evaluate our world (Lyotard, 1979).

Within the field of narrative research, narrative inquiry was developed as an epistemology and methodology by Clandinin and Connelly (1990). It centres on the premise that “humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives” (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990: 3). Ingrained in educational experiences, it was originally utilised to explore the lives and practices of teachers and teacher-practitioners and draws on the “Deweyan (1938) notion that life is education” (Clandinin et al., 2007: 22). Clandinin sees narrative inquiry as located within a Deweyan ontology where:

Dewey’s two criteria of experience – interaction and continuity enacted in situations – provide the grounding for attending to a narrative conception of experience through the three-dimensional narrative inquiry spaces with dimensions of temporality, place and sociality (Clandinin, 2013: 13).

Therefore, narrative inquirers primarily study experience through stories that people tell. They examine interrelations between researchers and participants, their environment, and their experiences within that environment. These factors enable researchers to create new approaches and ways of building, understanding and validating knowledge to create a perception of experience that is embedded in narrative and represented “narratively” (Clandinin, 2016: 15). However, Spector-Mersel proposes that this approach is itself a narrative paradigm because it creates a “clear vision of the social world” encompassing our thinking, feelings and behaviour (2010: 209). Thus, narrative and Deweyan paradigms dovetail together to complement each other, providing a strong basis for exploring storytelling in education.

Whilst Deweyan and narrative ontology provide a solid basis for making sense of practitioners’ world as a whole, the current neoliberal climate creates considerable tensions impacting upon professional identities. Critical and emancipatory theories are compatible with narrative paradigms which contribute to the notion of researchers giving participants their own “voice” (Spector-Mersel, 2010), but in addition they encourage a more pro-active interaction with the socio-economic and political aspects

of working in this climate, enhancing an individual's agency (Mishler, 1991). The macro pressures on education were explored by Freire (2003); his critical pedagogy centres on the notion that "Truth is many and constitutes a system of socio-political power" (Lather, 2006: 38). Freire argues for education having a liberating facet in which teachers and students should act together to actively influence society and "fight for their emancipation ... [through] humanist and liberating praxis" (Freire, 2003: 86). He believed that knowledge is inseparable from social practice and that critical theory and pedagogies are essential for enabling people to formulate their own voices (Giroux, 1985). Freire's cultural and literacy circles are central features of critical pedagogy for teaching literacy and empowering individuals thus storytelling is seen as a fundamental tool. Critical theory, therefore, is a suitable lens through which to examine the role of story within the current HE climate, with potential for initiating change in the way that storytelling is viewed and ultimately used. Employing critical theory perspectives enables a consideration of the political context of story's role in professional education.

Additionally, I draw on Bourdieu's theories of forms of capital (1986) to examine wider cultural and social aspects of storytelling, which are currently under-utilized for exploring the role of story in education. As discussed in the literature review, the somewhat idealised picture of universities as places for unfettered philosophical exploration and independent research has potentially been eroded (if, indeed, it ever existed) by neoliberalist and capitalist ideologies (Collini, 2012; Giroux, 2014). Bourdieu's (1986) views on capital, particularly cultural and social capital, are important considerations here. Cultural capital concerns "distinctive forms of knowledge and ability" that a person acquires from their family or through education (Bennett, 2010: xviii). It is encountered in three different states: "embodied ... in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind or body"; "objectified ... in the form of cultural goods" and "institutionalized ... academically sanctioned by legally guaranteed qualifications" (Bourdieu, 1986: 17). A person is born into their cultural heritage, from birth onwards they are surrounded by their parents' and families' cultural capital which is dependent on an individual's social status and educational experiences (Bourdieu, 2010).

While the word "culture" is a loaded term where "to be cultured" is often equated with being refined and well-educated, Freire argues that culture embraces many forms, that it is:

just as much a day doll made by artists who are his peers, as it is the work of a great sculptor, a great painter; ... that culture is the poetry of lettered poets and also the poetry of his own popular songs - that culture is all human creation (2008, 41).

I, therefore, propose that stories are a form of cultural capital, which have just as much value and significance as more obviously prestigious forms of culture. We learn through stories, and we are steeped in our families' personal and cultural stories, (for example, fairy stories, myths, legends, folk tales, etc.), that may have been handed down over many generations. Yet our access to these is dependent on social variables, including our families' accumulation of different forms of capital (cultural, social, economic), where cultural capital is of vital importance to a person's economic and social status (Bourdieu, 1986).

#### 4.1.1 Storytelling Capital

I define storytelling capital as: **the personal accumulation of stories, particularly of oral stories, that form an individual's internal story knowledge, where storytelling capital is a contributing factor to cultural capital, and in turn social capital.** Stories are part of the "embodied state" of cultural capital where we slowly learn and absorb stories in "a labor of inculcation and assimilation" (Bourdieu, 1986: 17), that is, over time we gradually accumulate our stories through work or effort. Stories become part of us, integral to our very being. Storytelling capital, as part of cultural capital, builds gradually. As adults, we might not remember details of original stories we were told, but perhaps the central message, or just a small detail, stays with us and influences our response to, and understanding of, the world. As "objectified state", it is supplemented by our access to physical cultural goods, including physical books or artefacts. This can be seen in stories that are read to us as a child, thus the process of listening to stories, particularly if readings are repeated, transforms them into a format that allows us to assimilate them, so that they contribute to our embodied experience of stories and story-worlds. The stories we accumulate, those we ourselves retell, or new stories we create, or adapt, might also be said to be our storytelling capital. The ability to acquire storytelling fits with Bourdieu's (1986) notion of capital's role of a person acquiring status, as those individuals who have access to enriched cultural and social capitals have more opportunities to acquire economic capital.

Storytelling capital is not static, but shifts over time, as personal circumstances change; Bourdieu likens a person's cultural and social position to a "game" where people, can "play to increase or to conserve their capital" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 99), exchanging one form for another. We can thus choose to actively increase our storytelling capital by acquiring more stories, for example by exposing ourselves to situations where we might encounter stories; by encouraging others to tell us their stories; or even seeking out stories through professional, social or cultural events. Additionally, in this technological age, there is increased access to oral stories of all types online (e.g. digital stories, podcasts). Each story encountered intertwines with and "rubs up" against other stories, spinning a storytelling web, linking together and contributing strands to our storytelling knowledge. Thus, storytelling capital, as a component of cultural capital, gains depth, breadth and substance as each new thread is assimilated. Each individual's experiences of story will be unique to them, with some able to acquire a large and rich repertoire of stories, while others may have far fewer and different story experiences. These influences stay with us, forming the basis of stories that we have at our disposal to help us with our social interactions and knowledge of the world, thus also contributing to tools to increase our social capital. Storytelling capital changes shape as our life experiences and exposure to new stories reinforces, or changes, our views, and ultimately alters the way we tell our stories to others. We add to our storytelling capital throughout our lives, accumulating new stories from multiple sources, and adapting or inventing stories, which we tell and re-tell, adjusting with each re-telling (Schank and Morson, 1990; Moon, 2010). In the process we create our "personal mythology" that tells "to some extent who we are, [and] what we have to say about the world" (Schank and Morson, 1990: 44).

As the term "storytelling" is often used interchangeably with "narrative", it is important to acknowledge that theories of "narrative capital" have already been proposed by Goodson (2007) and Takacs (2020), however, these are markedly distinctive from my proposal for storytelling capital which focuses on oral stories that we accumulate, develop and create in our lives. Although narrative capital also seeks to complement Bourdieu's symbolic, social and cultural capital, it is defined as: "the narrative repertoire that can assist us in navigating change and transition in our lives" (Goodson et al., 2010: 127) and focuses on an individual's developing life story and the influence that it bestows on the person (Goodson, 2004). Goodson particularly considers this within business and politics, explaining how politicians use narrative capital as part of their rhetoric in persuading the electorate of their viewpoint. For example, former U.S.



president Barack Obama's success in gaining political support with slogans such as "Yes we can" is contrasted with former UK Prime Minister, David Cameron's failure to promote his "Big Society" (Goodson et al., 2010). Goodson claims that Cameron's previous privileged connections at Oxford and Eton, rather than providing an "authoritative narrative" become a liability, resulting in Cameron's failure to convince the public (Goodson, 2004). According to Goodson, narrative capital contributes to people's ability to create a coherent and persuasive narrative, and this is a significant factor in the success of prominent figures.

Recently, Takacs (2020) has put forward an alternative theory of narrative capital which also draws on Bourdieu's cultural capital and is closer to the notion of storytelling capital. He defines this as "the library of a person's experiences capable of being turned into interesting stories, and their skill at constructing and deploying these stories to signal social status" (Takacs, 2020: 257). Takacs ethnographic study of undergraduates in an elite American research university explores how students' cultural capital influences their future prospects. He proposed that becoming adept in telling or writing stories about their experiences was prominent in students being able to create powerful narratives for demonstrating their skills and abilities. Narrative capital was enhanced by taking part in networking activities, such as joining college clubs in which students shared stories, mainly informally. While the creative writing club provided a more tangible sharing of written stories, other groups, (such as hiking and rock climbing, or music appreciation), engaged in more tacit anecdotal sharing. Takacs noted that students' former privilege influenced, not only their ability to "narrativize" their experiences, but also the quality of their experiences which created their "interestingness" (Takacs, 2020: 266). Those who lacked these experiences struggled to share appropriate stories in groups, actively withdrawing from story sharing opportunities. Additionally, those reticent to share often seemed not to recognise the value in practising these skills, concentrating their efforts on their academic performance instead. This discovery led Takacs to assert that college narratives, such as narratives about travel, leadership and wider interests "are a stratified form of narrative capital" (2020: 268). While these aspects are akin to storytelling capital, the focus is firmly on students being able to narrativize their personal experiences, whether verbally or in writing, and thus there is no consideration of people accumulating oral stories from others throughout their lives, and the influence these have. There is also no consideration given to the notion that individual's may

learn from other's stories and take elements of them into their own story knowledge, or of the embodied nature of stories.

The embodiment of stories is, however, important in "narrative habitus", a concept proposed by Frank (2010) which draws on Bourdieu's notion of "habitus". Exploring psychological aspects of story, Frank argues we are attracted to, or repelled away from, stories according to our "narrative habitus", which he defines as our predisposition towards or against stories. When we are attracted to stories, they become embodied within us:

the intuitive, usually tacit sense that some story is for us or not for us; that it expresses possibilities of which we are or can be part, or that it represents a world in which we have no stake (Frank, 2010: 53).

He specifies four components of narrative habitus: "repertoire" where an individual knows a set of stories (but in the world there are more stories to be known); "competence" involves understanding when it is appropriate to tell a story and being able to tailor it to the situation; "taste" refers to an individual's personal preference for stories; "predictable plot completions" where an individual is able to predict an ending from their tacit story knowledge (Frank, 2010: 54). These aspects chime with Schank and Morson's (1990) proposals that knowing when to tell the right story in conversation is a form of intelligence, and Takacs (2020) observations on university students' ability to share stories in college clubs.

Frank also draws on Bayard's belief that humans contain an "inner library" where, **as readers** we accumulate stories, arranging and curating as we go: "it is not any specific book that counts, but the totality of books... people make sense of a story by placing it among similar stories" (Bayard, 2007: 30-31 in Frank, 2000: 54). While narrative habitus focuses on written texts, storytelling capital comprises oral stories that we encounter or create, that we hear or tell, which complement our narrative habitus containing stories that we have read, that populate our "inner library". Whether we are repulsed, enchanted or ambivalent, our understanding of, and familiarity with stories combines to enable us to create our ontological perspective. Our storytelling capital and narrative habitus is dependent upon our social situation, and the stories we encounter as we mature. It is dependent on our family, social connections,

experiences (social, work, leisure, professional, etc.), and education. These, in turn, influence the stories we create and tell, in whichever form.

While social aspects are integral to storytelling, they are also important for educators who work with people in a variety of social contexts and situations. Social capital is:

... the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition (Bourdieu, 1986: 21).

Educators, at whatever stage of their career, need to work with others to develop their networks; they cannot be solipsistic, but require liaison with a variety of people to carry out their wider work, as well as teach students. Novice practitioner educators have already gained professional capital within their specialisms but need to acquire additional skills and knowledge associated with working in academia (Czerniawski, 2011; Willis, 2012). Likewise, they are teaching students who also need to acquire a new social capital: that of their proposed professions; communities of practice; and academia, communicating and writing using strict conventions. Storytelling in HE has a social function, where it is seen to “facilitate group cohesion” and contribute to “professional culture” (Flanagan, 2015: 160). It is my contention that stories, and consequently storytelling capital, play a vital role in the acquisition of social capital; they have an influence on who we are, how we learn and how we assimilate our professionalism. Aspects of Frank’s “narrative habitus”, particularly “repertoire” and “competence”, point to the concept that the way in which a person interacts socially, depends, at least partially, on them being able to respond appropriately to stories and, in turn, to tell the most suitable story to fit the situation. It seems likely that practitioner educators can, therefore, expand their storytelling capital by listening to stories from students, colleagues, and wider networks, but can also help their students to increase their storytelling capital by incorporating storytelling in their teaching, and encouraging students to “swap” stories, which, can help them to “generate ideas and new knowledge” (Flanagan, 2015: 160).

A final factor to consider in using a narrative ontological approach is the relationship of stories to professional education and issues of societal and workplace hierarchy. Lyotard (1984) discussed “grand narratives” and “petits recits” (little stories) in analysing power dynamics within society, in which he viewed stories as a “site of

potential resistance to the social and political status quo” (Jones, 2014: 130). Grand narratives are stories that dominate in society, they are created, controlled and perpetuated by “corporate leaders, high level administrators, [and] heads of the major professional ... organisations”; these established and powerful stories, are “narratives of legitimation” (Lyotard, 1984: 14, 32). In professional education grand narratives can be seen as state-sanctioned “stories” for practitioner educators to convey in their classrooms, such as: current curricula; professional standards; official policies, etc. Legitimated by the state, they provide teachers with a framework for delivery of their subjects. However, while educators work within this framework, they also tell their own stories, personal and practice stories – “petits recits”. These run alongside, within, and even contrary to, the grand narratives, producing variations and tensions. Lyotard argued that an accumulation of petits recits have the capacity for completely disrupting, and resisting legitimized narratives:

this breaking up of the grand narratives ... leads to what some authors analyse in terms of the dissolution of the social bond and the disintegration of social aggregates into a mass of individualised atoms thrown into the absurdity of Brownian motion (Lyotard, 1984: 15).

This scientific metaphor of “Brownian motion” enables us to view each story as an atom which randomly mixes and collides with other stories, each collision creating a new pathway and change in direction. The mass of small stories (or atoms) creates ever-changing and unpredictable landscapes impacting on and challenging legitimized narratives. Thus, grand narratives are “porous” (Jones, 2014: 144) or “leaky”, susceptible to being infiltrated and dislodged by the aggregation of jostling petits recits with the increasing possibility of them becoming unstable. These personal and practice stories become “language-games” with the potential to challenge the “nature of the legitimacy of decisions” (Lyotard, 1984: 62). They provide counterbalances to prevailing bureaucracy, and a way of agitating and resisting neoliberal and capitalist ideologies in academia. My research endeavours to unpick areas that highlight these “jostlings” and “tensions” that potentially arise in the professional storytelling terrain, examining whether practitioners’ petits recits might be employed as counterpoints to the grand narratives of performativity, neoliberalism and capitalism.

### *Vignette 1: Introducing Mr. Elisha John Williams*



When developing the character of Mr. Wolf, I realised that I was seeing him as intelligent, who would be able to challenge me, but who was also adaptive – someone who could be strong and stand up for himself (and me!) and who needed to have multiple skills and understanding. After all he needed to be a trickster, someone who could pick up on alternative views, questioning and challenging my pre-conceptions around my research. It occurred to me that my paternal Great-Grandfather, who had died before I was born, might be a good role model. He was real, yet elusive, a family myth, known to me solely through the tales that my Grandmother had told. Clandinin (2016) talks about the importance of familial stories (that is family stories handed down or within the family) to a person’s identity, and to a researcher’s understanding of themselves, and my Great-Grandfather has loomed large in my upbringing. There were so many anecdotes and intriguing stories – sayings and snippets of wisdom “Dad used to say ...” Grandma would start the tale, elaborating with gusto.

From my memory, in a photo now lost, he is an austere Edwardian gentleman with a bowler hat and a large moustache, but I also knew that he was tall – 6’2”, and physically impressive. He served in the army and became Regimental heavyweight boxing champion. Grandma said she was delighted as a girl when he made the tattooed flags on his chest “wave” as he rippled his muscles. Not quite the austere Edwardian his formal photo seems to portray.

There were harrowing accounts of WWI, where he had fought at the battle of Mons (August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1914), and forever after had nightmares about bayonetting people. The battle was the first defeat suffered by the British Army, resulting in the deaths of 1,638 British soldiers (Budanovic, 2016). There was much mythologizing about the battle – a short story, written by Welshman Arthur Machen, where a soldier gave testimonies of seeing ghosts of bowmen from the battle of Agincourt of 1415, was printed in “The Evening News” in London on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1914 (Budanovic, 2016).

Many took it as factual, the legend grew and was widely believed - bowmen became angels, and the corpses of German soldiers supposedly displayed arrow wounds. The myth became a vehicle for propaganda, for lifting British morale, giving Britain “proof” that “God was on their side”. Grandma said, in bitter tones “he said *he never* saw any angels!” Later, Machen himself tried to set the record straight, to discredit the story and prove that he had made it up. However, to some extent the myth still prevails (Budanovic, 2016). Following the war, he became a pacifist saying the only army he was willing to join was the Salvation Army. However, he wasn’t called up for WWII, because he had been mustard-gassed, and subsequently suffered from severe asthma. Grandma told me about his terrible struggles, gasping for breath as he fought against the attacks.

Great-Grandad was an engineer, who rose to middle-management levels, a draftsman who also painted for leisure - Grandma said he was a skilled painter, though unfortunately none of these paintings have been passed down. He read constantly, apparently anything and everything, from the Bible, to heavy (both in content and physically) engineering texts, to the back of cornflake packets. He regularly read to the family from the Bible, “penny dreadfuls”, and Victorian novels including Charles Dickens and “Her Benny” (Silas Hocking, first published 1879). Grandma told me that he was fascinated by spiritualism - which was very popular at the time - reading a lot about it, but was deeply sceptical. He had read about Houdini’s pact with his wife that if the afterlife was real he would return to her, they had a code word so that she would know it was really him. Great-Grandad had the same pact with Grandma, promising that if it was possible to return to her as a spirit, he would find a way. I could always sense her sadness that he had not done so, though actually she never visited a medium, feeling that they were mostly charlatans. Another surprising aspect was his knowledge of herbs, acting as herbologist to the local community, making up creams, tisanes and lotions.

There are so many stories, sadly, many of which I have probably forgotten. But all of these tales are seen through Grandma’s eyes, heard through her words - these stories, mixed with other stories, form my storytelling capital. Occasionally, Grandad would join in, concurring or adding snippets, and when we met up with my Grandma’s cousin, Margaret, they would inevitably talk about Great-Grandad. It was very obvious to me that she had a great deal of respect and affection for her “Uncle Jack”, who she would refer to as “a proper Edwardian gentleman”. So, I suppose that gave me some corroboration of his character and the stories I had heard.

A final tale that has stuck with me, is a dark tale. A cousin had married, but it wasn’t long before there were rumours that she was being beaten by her husband, and she had been seen with a bruised face. Apparently, Great-Grandad paid the husband a visit, they had sat by the open coal fire and Great-Grandad had broached the issue. It had, naturally, been denied, but Great-Grandad had picked up the poker from the fireplace, and said calmly that if “one finger” was laid upon the woman again, that the husband would have him to answer to. Apparently, there were no more incidences heard of after that. This story is so powerful. In those days, as I understand it, domestic violence was kept within the household, no-one else interfered, even when it was obvious that it was going on. So, hearing this story, if true - and I have no reason to doubt its veracity - gives me a picture of my Great-Grandfather as an upright gentleman, willing to stand up for others, willing to use his own strength to protect. A man of principle.

In an interesting twist, I had always thought my Great-Grandad’s name was Elijah, and therefore named my wolf Mr. Elijah John Wolf in my first Trickster Tale written for RaPAL journal, but I came across his marriage certificate with the photo, and discovered he was Elisha, hence the amendment here. Perhaps this points to the ease of oral accounts being misheard, or memories being distorted. There are other stories, little philosophies that I am reminded of, from time to time, but the accounts here give a flavour of this surprising and complex Edwardian gentleman who, in my mind, holds many trickster qualities, and is therefore, my inspiration for Mr. Wolf.

#### 4.1.2 Researcher Positionality

As a researcher it is important to reflect on positionality, that is, my position in relation to my research and research participants. Being a researcher is often seen as a privileged position, imbued with authority, however, narrative inquiry and Trickster Methodologies promote a more nuanced and flexible relationship, that of researcher-participant. This demands that researchers put themselves on an “equal footing” with participants, working alongside them, rather than treating them as impersonal research subjects. Thus, how I was perceived by my participants was important to research relationships, as I wanted to promote mutual trust and respect, so that participants would feel comfortable to participate. Merton, a sociologist, defined the notion of “insiders and outsiders” in which insiders belong to “specified groups and collectivities” including social status, whereas outsiders are “nonmembers” (1972: 21).

In reflecting on this and previous experiences (see chapter one), I felt that my situation was a mixture of insider-ness and outsider-ness. This fits with Hellowell’s notion of an insider-outsider continuum, in which there are “subtly varying shades of ‘insiderism’ and ‘outsiderism’” (2006: 489). My past experience as an experienced qualified teacher in ACL, and more recent work as an Assistant Lecturer in HE, was helpful in creating a commonality of experiences with my participants, giving me “insiderism”. This included knowledge and experience of the practitioner educator role in ACL and HE, meaning I shared certain experiences which helped to equalize the researcher-participant dynamic, particularly with teacher educators. For example, I could relate to observing student-teachers in placement, mentoring, and grading them on their progress. I was also able to relate to educational issues including professional standards, Ofsted inspections, and recent educational developments. However, I was an outsider in my relationship to nurse education, as the clinical aspects were outside of my experience. This meant that I did not understand a substantial portion of what it meant to be a nurse educator, I could only relate to the educator part of the role, from my teaching background. This became evident as I needed to look up terminology I encountered in lectures, research areas (such as simulations), and find out about the scope and depth of the Nursing Code. Crucially, I had also never experienced nursing or caring for patients, which is central to nurse educator identities. Although, I was able to learn theoretically about some aspects by researching them, it was harder to fully relate to these in the way that I could with teacher educators’ roles.

I was also an outsider, initially, as a researcher. Practitioner educators are often also experienced researchers, and I was aware that I was at the beginning of my research journey. Although I already had a Master's degree, I felt a novice at doctoral level, in particular needing to work hard to broaden my philosophical knowledge. However, as I worked on my thesis, I started to gain confidence and to feel that I was becoming more comfortable with my researcher role, tentatively moving towards more of an insider position. Consequently, I felt more confident in being a researcher in the fieldwork, as I gradually increased my understanding of researchers' perspectives. This meant that my insiderism shifted throughout the PhD journey, and I became more of an "insider".

## 4.2 Methodology

Having discussed my ontological and epistemological approaches I now concentrate on methodology, explaining my choices and rationale. I have employed two key approaches in this thesis - Narrative Inquiry and Trickster Methodology, but I also discuss my use of semi-fictional and autobiographical writing which serves to bring these approaches together, presenting the research in a way that is congruent with the thesis focus of storytelling.

### 4.2.1 Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry, which has grown in popularity in recent years (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012), focuses on investigating stories that are encountered in our professional lives, thus enabling in-depth analysis of people's experiences through their personal accounts (Webster and Mertova, 2007). While it was originally developed for educational research, it was later adapted for use with medical practitioners, particularly to investigate identity (Clandinin et al., 2017).

Narrative inquiry is defined as:

... a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in the same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that made up people's lives, both individual and social (Connelly and Clandinin, 2000: 20).



Collaboration and social interaction are, therefore, key tenets of this approach. Instead of trying to maintain objective separation, researchers work alongside participants where researchers and participants' stories can be seen as inevitably influencing each other. Narrative inquiry does not restrict itself to a single encounter but utilises a series of encounters and social interactions with participants in their own workplaces and settings, within the "milieu". There is a strong emphasis on the lack of beginning or ending - although the inquiry may eventually stand as a single piece of work, there is a sense that it is part of a continuum of activity and thought, "in the midst" of people's lives. We experience and understand the world through narrative, through sharing and listening to stories, and as narrative inquirer, I endeavour to understand these experiences through narrative. Whereas narrative research has a variety of approaches and no specific rules (Patterson, 2008), narrative inquiry has a distinctive framework which utilizes "three commonplaces" (Clandinin et al., 2007). These are: "temporality" where "events under study are in temporal transition"; "sociality ... the milieu, the conditions under which people's experiences and events are unfolding"; and "place" - the physical space(s) where inquiry events occur. Narrative inquirers must pay attention to these simultaneously "backward and forward, inward and outward" (Clandinin, 2016: 39-40). These are suitable to a case-study situation where the fieldwork takes place within educational settings where practitioner educators work.

The narrative inquiry framework necessitates thinking "narratively" about the study as a "research puzzle" (Clandinin et al., 2007). This entails ongoing contemplation of phenomena studied; careful consideration of participants' reflections; and awareness of the interconnections with the researcher's own experiences. The method is attentive to ever-changing perceptions and feelings as we move through the inquiry, responding to each other and external events. It also extends to researchers' personal lives and work, where research becomes integral to our lives. Analysing these fluid views together enables them to become a way to "conceptualize the ever-shifting life space of a ... professional knowledge landscape" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1998: 161). Thinking narratively about my research led me to formulate the following research puzzle, questions, and objectives:

Research puzzle:

Title: A story about stories: An investigation into the role of storytelling in professional education.

- What is the current “professional knowledge landscape” of storytelling in nurse and teacher education in HE?
- What are practitioner educators’ perceptions of the use of storytelling in professional education?

Objectives:

- To contribute to theoretical understanding of storytelling and to develop recommendations for best practice concerning storytelling in professional education.
- To use semi-autobiographical, semi-fictional approaches both in storytelling encounters with practitioner educators to gather “authentic” practitioner experiences of storytelling, and to write the story of the research.
- To use a narrative inquiry epistemology combined with Trickster Methodology whilst applying Bourdieuan and Freirean lenses to analyse empirical noticings.

Mapping out this landscape seeks to bring the wider context into relationship with the three commonplaces, creating:

“a storied landscape, where ... stories ... are shaped not only by the stories of teachers and teachers’ stories but also what is sent down a metaphorical conduit from theory and policy to practice” (Clandinin and Connelly, 1996: 164).

Thus, narrative inquiry needs to consider not just the local situation, but also the political context including the impact of neoliberal ideologies on policies and theory in educational environments, and how the individual practitioner “sits within” a social and political professional landscape.

The features of narrative inquiry mean that researcher positionality is seen as inseparable from research. Self-reflection and positionality are referred to as autobiography, where the researcher starts by writing their “narrative beginnings” and continues to self-reflect in relation to their participants, however, these writings might not feature in the written research (Clandinin, 2016). This focus on participants, guards against researchers concentrating too much on themselves to the detriment of participants’ stories (Trahar, 2009), however, it also risks obscuring deeper reflections and connections. As a way of balancing this process, I adopted semi-autobiographical writing using distinctive narrative threads in the analysis, written with the use of

Trickster Methodology. This mitigates tendencies for the autobiographical to dominate by overlaying stories to create multiple perspectives, enabling them to “sit” together. As discussed in chapter one, this enables the reader to view distinct voices and approaches thus facilitating an “intertextuality” of ideas that embraces an interweaving of perspectives and holistic stories.

#### 4.2.2 Trickster Methodology

“It is told that there is a place in the desert where the spirit of women and the spirit of wolves meet across time.” (Pinkola-Estés, 2008: 22)

When considering my methodology, a “trickster” character kept surfacing in my thoughts, a trickster wolf (See Appendix 1). Later, when discussing my studies, a friend recommended “The Women Who Run With the Wolves” by psychoanalyst Pinkola Estés (1996), who analysed the role of myths and stories in empowering women, helping them to rediscover their soul via their “inner wolf”. The wolf was beginning to stalk me! He started to appear in my thoughts when I was trying to focus on my writing; nagging at me as a potential research device. As my ideas developed, Merelina, a raven, joined Mr. Wolf. She serves as counterbalance and companion, a female bringing another dynamic to the relationship and an alternative perspective. Meanwhile, the contentiousness of storytelling in educational settings, as discussed in chapter three, puts it in conflict with formal approaches. This seemed to mirror tricksters’ qualities, their reputations as paradoxical creatures and catalysts for effecting change by challenging established beliefs (Hyde, 2008). These were appealing traits that I felt suited my research, opening up fresh perspectives for investigating my research puzzle. I decided to develop Trickster Methodology, which I now define as: **the employment of archetypal trickster characteristics and trickster-thinking in order to carry out empirical research. This involves trickster companions who act as research “partners” and provocateurs to drive the analysis process and make visible the researcher’s internal dialogue and decision-making.**

According to Vizenor (1990) (an American whose father was Canadian Anashinaabe) social scientists started to take an interest in Native American tricksters in the 1970s. They related their disruptive and transformative characteristics to postmodern and comic “holotropes” where: “trickster is a communal sign in a comic narrative” meaning “the whole figuration” which “is a consonance in tribal discourse” (Vizenor, 1990: 282). This comic aspect is important as it allows a reflection of human behaviour and has the ability to make us regard ourselves “sceptically”. These characteristics enable researchers to examine themselves and their work from different perspectives. Priyadharshini (2012: 552) suggests using tricksters as a “thought-tool” for methodology and ethics, to use small moments thinking like a trickster to create

alternative ways of thinking about research. To be truly critical of ourselves, we need to somehow gain the ability to see ourselves through other's eyes (Bourdieu, 2000; White, 2007). Having a sense of humour, especially when things seem to be going wrong, is also beneficial. I considered Trickster Methodology to be an approach that "embraces the chaos" of research; trickster embodies disruption and discombobulation, but humour helps us to accept this. Trickster's transgressions, therefore, act as a model for researchers in using multiple viewpoints and crossing boundaries (Frentz, 2009; Kamberelis, 2003). Tricksters are liminal creatures, living and acting on the edges of humanity (Hyde, 2008; Priyadharshini, 2012) and constantly challenging those boundaries (Szokolczai, 2021). They interact with a huge variety of entities and nature, with the ability to transcend their environment (Hyde, 2008). Trickster Methodology, therefore, provides new and different ways of approaching empirical noticings.

It should be noted that as tricksters are often anthropomorphised animals there is a kinship with the "animal turn". Animal turn researchers encapsulate the political and natural history of our relationship with animals, and endeavour to bring this to bear on their research (Pederson, 2014). Trickster Methodology uses tricksters' characteristics that are rooted in mythological depictions of animal behaviours. However, I developed my characters -Merelina and Mr. Wolf - by learning not just about the cultural significance of these animals in myths and folklore, but also their natural behaviours (see Vignettes 1 and 2 for discussion on Tricksters' development). Combining these enabled me to understand my Tricksters, and to see things from their perspectives. For example, ravens can: mimic speech; display curiosity; solve puzzles; and they like to collect miscellaneous objects (Woolfson, 2009). As researcher, I require similar traits and skills. Meanwhile, wolves are excellent teachers and nurturers, who work in teams to both hunt and raise their young; they are highly adaptable animals, able to change to new circumstances and strike out on their own (such as the lone wolf Staqeya, a forest wolf who learned to fish) (Collins et al., 2019). These insights informed my understanding, helping me to think how they might have become embodied in mythological tricksters, and therefore, how tricksters might respond to a researcher. Getting "into the mind" of mythological animals enables me, to some extent, to inhabit the raven and the wolf through my writing. Thinking like tricksters puts my researcher perspective under their scrutiny, urging me to question myself, to push my thinking in new directions, to follow paths that I might not, otherwise, have taken. Animal turn researchers seek to respect animals as a means to understand and

make sense of the world (Pederson, 2014), meanwhile magical tricksters are inherently entangled in humanity, crossing boundaries between nature and humans. Therefore, similar to the animal turn, Trickster Methodology draws on cultural and natural symbiotic relationships.

Tricksters enable the merging of the mythological with the academical - an alchemical combination. Here they are used to provide a framework and cultural touchstone for readers, who can tap into universal stories and archetypal characters (Campbell and Moyers, 1988; Jung, 1986) to find familiarity in the tone and rhythm of Trickster Tales. Trickster conversations enable insights into decision making, providing a window into research processes, increasing transparency of work that is normally opaque, obscured by the formally written academic prose and tidy presentation.

Tricksters fit “snugly” with the storytelling focus as they are archetypal figures that feature in myths and folklore throughout the world, known in every culture (Hyde, 2008; Szokolczai, 2009). They complement the concept that oral stories are a key means of transmitting information and knowledge. Additionally, they provide inspirational material for writing creatively, drawing on earlier precedents of using semi-fictional dialogues to convey research and autobiographical perspectives (e.g. Kara, 2013; Reardon, 2012; Warren, 2018).

Finally, my Tricksters link my personal history, my autobiography (particularly my Mom, maternal Grandma, paternal Grandma and paternal Great-Grandad), by way of the familial and mythical, to my current situation. Stories encapsulate my history, my storytelling capital informs and shapes my present and influences my future. Stories are my roots, my family stories have made me who I am, they are the foundations of my storytelling capital. My past, whether I embrace it, or resist it, informs and shapes my present. Trickster Tales and vignettes link me to my research. My storytelling capital enables me to tell my research story.

## First Interlude: Introducing Merelina and Trickster Methodology

I walked towards mom's grave, I had already put flowers on Nan and Grandpa's grave in another part of the cemetery. It was quiet, the wind rustled the trees; grey clouds made the day sombre. There were only a couple of other visitors around, yet as I approached the grave, I heard raised voices ... I slowed down, listening, it seemed incongruent to hear arguing in a cemetery.

"So, what was that lot of old balderdash you were spouting yesterday about Tricksters' history? Mmmm?" A harsh, mocking voice, somewhat cracked around the edges, came from the depths of a horse-chestnut.

"I really don't know what you're referring to," came the reply, carried clearly on the wind. I knew that voice!

"Yes, you do, telling Georgina that you were the most important of all the tricksters, I heard, I have my sources - you said that you were impermeable to getting tricked yourself, what a lot of nonsense - you're just as susceptible as the rest of us. *And* it's about time you introduced us, so I can put her straight on a few things."

"Well, I might get into the odd spot of bother, but I am rather better at getting out of ..."

".....scrapes are you going to say? ... You! Huh, all those times *I've* rescued *you* and *you* reckon *you're* the bright spark, eh?"

As I drew nearer, I could see Mr. Wolf behind the gravestone, rubbing his head with his paw. Something flew through the air, he ducked, it bounced off his shoulder and rolled through the grass, landing at my feet. Mr. Wolf nodded at me and then turned his attention upwards to the horse-chestnut.

"Please stop throwing nuts at me, Merelina!"

"Nuts! Hah! And nuts to you! ... Shows how much you know, not nuts, conkers!" She squawked, triumphantly.

Mr. Wolf stepped towards me, "Ah - Georgina, just in time, I would like to introduce you to my friend, this is Merelina, the trickster Raven." There was a rustling in the leaves above, and an impressively large black bird landed on top of the headstone. She shook her wings and settled, swaying slightly.

"Well, good afternoon, pleased to meet you at last." She extended her wing towards me, bowing her head.

I became aware that I was staring, open-mouthed ... "Er, very pleased to meet you, too." I muttered. I turned to Mr. Wolf, in puzzlement - "Another trickster?"

"Well, you didn't think there was just me, did you? Anyway, I told you there are lots of us tricksters. Of course, I don't call them all friends, but for Merelina, I make an exception ... at least, when she's not throwing nuts at me."

“Conkers!!” She corrected, adding “Oh - an exception, that’s great of you - thanks very much!”

“Now then, you know I hold you in high esteem”, his voice was deep and smooth as velvet, “even if you are sometimes over-talkative. Anyway, I understand that you had some further questions, Georgina, and I thought Merelina could help.”

“Ah ... really?”

“Yes, you were wondering about developing “Trickster Methodology” in your research - an absolutely splendid idea I think.”

“Do you?” I shook my head. Talking to one trickster was odd enough, but two? However, if they could help, why not? Anything to find my way through this muddle. But what a strange duo.

“You’re thinking that it’s strange...” Mr. Wolf was looking at me questioningly.

“What?”

“A wolf, friends with a raven, but it’s quite natural you know. We make great hunting companions....”

“Yes,” Merelina agreed, “we do well together, although, of course, I do the hard part, finding the prey.”

Mr. Wolf looked amused... “Well, actually I think you’ll find it’s a symbiotic relationship (Woolf, 2009), and I have the hardest job actually catching the prey, all you do is pick through the bones after.” He glared at her, somehow managing to look smug at the same time, but she was preening her wing, and seemed to be ignoring him.

I sat down on the nearby bench, pulling my coat around me for extra warmth, and tried to focus. “Ok, well, yes, I think it might help if I could talk this through, thank you.”

“Jolly good!” Merelina flew from her perch and settled near me. “So, how are you planning to use this “Trickster Methodology”?”

“Well... I propose using “Trickster Methodology” to facilitate and illuminate my research autobiography, and to enable me to articulate my internal research dialogue. I will also use it to analyse empirical “noticings”, looking at my research alongside participants’ stories through “trickster eyes” and sensibilities.”

“Mmmhmm... what are “empirical “noticings”?” Asked Mr. Wolf.

“The findings that I collate, from mapping story incidences, and research story circles... remember I told you about those ... well, all of the writing from those - my notes, transcripts, are the empirical findings - and I settled on “noticings” rather than “data”, as really that’s what they are, I am “noticing” things as I am observing or analysing. I suppose “noticings” are things that I think are significant or interesting ... of course, another researcher might *notice* something different.”



“So, research and an autobiography, in which we’ll be appearing, I like that! Where did the idea of using tricksters first come from?” Merelina asked, leaning her head to one side.

I thought back to what had sparked all this. “Initially the term trickster was used in a conversation with a lecturer who said she liked to play “the trickster” with her students. I mentioned this to my supervisor, who encouraged me to find out more.”

“She sounds like a very wise person!” Mr. Wolf interjected.

“Well, yes, she is.” I replied, “So, that’s when I discovered that coyotes were prominent tricksters in Native American folklore, their deeds have been passed down in tales such as: “The Tar Baby”, which is Cherokee; “Coyote proves himself a Cannibal,” which is Jicarilla Apache; and “The Big Turtle’s War Party,” which is Skidi Pawnee (See Thompson, 1995). And, then I stumbled upon Native American theories of tricksters being used as philosophical interrogators (Lather, 2006).”

Merelina nodded, “Yes, I’ve heard about tricksters finally regaining some attention among philosophers. Of course, Karl Jung (1986) commented on it, I remember having several conversations with him a few years back, an interesting chap - he later claimed that tricksters were part of “universal consciousness,” deeply embedded in the psyche, helping *humans* to make sense of the world.” She shuffled and bobbed, plumping out her chest feathers, adding, “of course, the trickster archetype is an important figure in many different cultures (Hyde, 2008; Jung, 1986; Kamberelis, 2003).”

It was Mr. Wolf’s turn to nod, “Yes, though me and Merelina had more dealings with the Norse and Celtic gods - Lord Odin ... remember him, Merelina? He was known as “The Lord of the Ravens” and was accompanied by your kin, Hugin, and Munin (Sax: 2017).” Mr Wolf looked wistfully at Merelina. “Of course, Odin and the gods valued us greatly because we are clever, cunning and resourceful.”

Merelina rose up and tutted loudly, “Yes, but let’s be honest, we can also make a right mess of things from time to time. I know you’ve been caught out a few times ... Oh wise one ...” this last part was muttered sarcastically, as she bowed herself down in mock reverence. “I heard that tricksters think themselves clever, but their own stupidity undermines their efforts and catches them out (Kamberelis, 2003)” She cackled, it sounded very much like she was laughing.

“Well, yes”, Mr. Wolf retorted, “but that is when we are gainfully employed as the fool, or harlequin. We know what we’re doing really, we are just injecting some humour and entertainment into serious situations (Priyadharshini, 2012).”

“Aha ... well, if that’s how you want to make it all sound, ok, you keep telling yourself that, but *I* know when it’s better to actually *admit* to *your* mistakes ... You know, trickster’s experiments bring great results, but at other times, *his* actions and reactions only hurt

*himself* – *he* shows *himself* to be the fool – and *some* of us tricksters know and admit it ... “these defects are the marks of *his human* nature.” Jung (1986: 144) said that!” She was hopping up and down, Mr. Wolf’s hackles started to rise, as they stared intensely at each other. I felt I needed to say something before they started fighting again, “Ahem, thank you, this is all very interesting, and ... useful,” I said. They both shuffled and settled down a little.

“What else have you read about tricksters?” Mr. Wolf asked.

“Well, they have been used as “troubling agents”, who can both question and disrupt but also create “order out of chaos” (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018).

“Right, yes, that’s all very well, but how are you going to *use* Trickster Methodology?” Merelina pierced me with her bright black eyes.

“Well, Priyadharshini (2012) wrote that researchers have employed tricksters in academic research, particularly postmodern, for reflexive practice and to promote different perspectives, for inspiration and illumination. So, by incorporating tricksters I intend to illustrate challenges and unsettling aspects of my PhD journey, providing alternative views and highlighting contradictory discourses that emerge along the way.” I paused, but the tricksters remained silent, “I thought that if I could tap into some trickster characteristics it would help me to analyse and think about my research....”

Merelina cooed softly, “yes, well, that sounds reasonable, but *what* characteristics, what do you mean?”

“Well, I’m still working it out, and I guess that I won’t really know until I’m actually doing the analysis, but this ability to look at my research and what I’m doing in multiple ways, using different perspectives seems useful. Researchers need to be truly critical of themselves.”

“Yes, we can certainly help you with that.” Grinned Mr. Wolf.

I referred to my notebook again, “Ah, yes, here it is: “Seeing ourselves as others see us requires us to grow eyes on stalks that can look back at us with scepticism” (White, 2006: 31). So, it’s that looking at ourselves from a different place. It seems to me that tricksters are all about disruption, but setting things “upside down” so to speak, enables us to see things afresh and really get to the heart of something. And as researchers we learn from watching others, experimenting with ideas, and in writing about research, we have a chance of creating our own impact. Tricksters change the world by their actions (Hyde, 2008) ... and researchers strive to do that through their work. The transformative qualities, they’re really important too. According to Kamberelis, tricksters can be viewed as “pre-modern avatar[s]” or “embodied praxis” (2003: 675) of research. Whilst researchers don’t undergo physical transformations, they do need to be able to adapt mentally to work with and alongside participants. I think that as I strive to be a co-researcher, this will be really important for me, also...” I checked my notebook,

“Kamberelis argues trickster is an ideal device for bricoleur researchers, who themselves become “shape-shifters” as they use whatever strategies (Kamberelis, 2003) are available to them. So, I think that Trickster Methodology will be useful in educational settings, where it pushes against “restrictive situations... entrenched conventions and relationships” (Priyadharshini, 2012: 547).

Mr. Wolf stretched, and yawned, “Yes, being able to transform oneself does give a new perspective on things, embodying a different creature, enables you to find out from the inside, so to speak, it’s most useful.”

“Anything else? Merelina asked, clacking her beak.

“Well, tricksters are liminal characters, and as a narrative inquirer I need to do something similar, navigating myself through a range of different situations and spaces.”

“Mmmm ... sounds good to me!” Mr. Wolf sounded reassuring.

“And,” I wrote in my notebook as I talked, “trickster-like aspects are needed to fully engage with the research landscape: we need to immerse ourselves in the research; transform our language to communicate in varying situations; and shape-shift into different identities as we travel through the terrain and become embodied within it.” I stared at what I had written, deep in thought. Merelina squawked, making me jump.

“Goodness! You are keen on tricksters, aren’t you ... interesting...” Merelina paused, “Jolly good! Well, I can’t spend all my time sitting around in graveyards, too gloomy by far. Nice to have met you, I shall expect regular updates.”

There was soft swoosh of wings, and I found myself alone – Mr. Wolf and my new acquaintance had disappeared into the murky weather. I was cold, very hungry, and developing a headache. Is this what Tricksters do to you? I thought.

As I finally arranged the flowers on my mom’s grave, I realised that I had answered all of their questions, and not got to ask any of my own. Typical! Mr. Wolf and Merelina were supposed to be helping me, not interrogating me, I mused. However, another thought entered my head, what was it Priyadharshini (2012) said? I checked my notebook, but I had not written it down. It was something about being careful of Tricksters, that they were slippery, unscrupulous characters who always have their own agenda. So, if that is the case, what is their agenda in helping me? I gathered up my bag and trudged to my car, my head spinning.

### 4.2.3 Trickster-thinking

Trickster characteristics form the basis of Trickster Methodology and trickster thinking, research/researcher, position/positionality become inseparably entwined. Considering my role as a researcher working with participants and analysing empirical noticings, these characteristics can be broken down into the following aspects:

**Multiple perspectives:** focusing on my own perspective and those of my participants. These encompass different aspects of our respective roles, I encompass multiple identities, which I switch between (depending on circumstance) including researcher, co-producer, fellow teacher, lecturer, PhD student (and former student-teacher), emerging storyteller and writer. My participants also have multiple identities as lecturers, researchers, nurses, teachers, participants, co-producers. In addition to professional identities, personal identities may be influential – for example, I am a qualified Tai Chi instructor, and this, undoubtedly has an impact on my perspective and how I apply myself in everyday work and activities. Participants may be parents, carers, or have other roles, which, influence their thinking, their response to situations and professional views. Using Trickster Methodology requires awareness of different perspectives and different ways of being.

**Communication:** oral stories involve communication, each person's way of communicating is unique, we have our personal linguistic traits which form our idiolect. When analysing it is important to pay careful attention to specific language, making note of particular phrasing, vocabulary choice and parallels between participants' words. Additionally, paralinguistic features (gestures, facial expressions, etc.) provide information on interactions and intensity of feeling which can enable additional insights.

**Learning from others:** as a researcher I learn from others, in collating and analysing material, watching lectures taking place, and listening to participants talk about their experiences, I can learn how storytelling is used in professional education. Embedded within this is the need to be a **Team-player**. Employing narrative inquiry entails becoming co-producer, and in becoming integral part of the research process. I anticipated needing to share my own stories and experiences, as well as being willing to be the listener. I would need to utilise my storytelling capital and story competence (Frank, 2010) to contribute appropriate stories, judge carefully when to speak, when to hold back, and when to listen.

**Liminality:** This term was originally coined by anthropologist, Van Gennep, to describe the space (both of location and time) of transition encountered within a rite of passage;

thus, these spaces represent “thresholds”, with liminality being the position held between boundaries (Szakolczai, 2009). As researcher there is a requirement to work on the borders, occupying awkward spaces, trying to observe and put participants under scrutiny, but also working as co-participant and team-player in line with narrative inquiry. I would need to be mindful of the “edges” as researcher-practitioner meeting participants, including my insider-outsider status. Overlaps and commonalities between experiences in participants’ accounts, the identification of “resonances” would be important in understanding participants’ experiences. Additionally, looking at how stories might create (un)comfortable spaces, asking whether stories evoked familiarity and solace, or alternatively forced people out of their comfort zones (either in telling or receiving stories) would be important aspects. Emotional dimensions are hard to make tangible, putting them on the periphery of our understanding, but trickster-thinking helps tease out and make visible these elusive threads.

**Transformation:** This will be employed in thinking about the whole research process narrative inquiry changes participants and researchers alike (Clandinin, 2016), therefore, as researcher-participant this process is even more pertinent to transformation. Finally, in undertaking this research, I intended it to contribute to the understanding of the storytelling professional landscape, transforming what is known about it. However, its potential impact and any final transformations, will only be known after completion of the thesis and its emergence into the world.

**Chaos/disruption:** Tricksters create chaos, and from this comes order (Kamberelis, 2003). No matter how carefully research is planned, it is inevitable that there are surprises and upsets – the trick is seeing opportunities in these events. Researchers need patience, to resist attempting to restore order to empirical findings too early, and instead let questions “sit” a while, for example, cogitating whether anomalies are significant. I was prepared to follow enquiry paths and my curiosity rather than looking for easy explanations and was ready to challenge my own thought processes. Empirical materials have a certain chaos themselves as they take different shapes during the research process. They begin chronologically, as ordered recordings of events, however, when analysing, they need to be unpicked to find meaningful nuggets amongst the mass of words. Eventually, information is re-ordered and threads re-woven to form a coherent research narrative.

Trickster Methodology adds an invaluable dynamic to this thesis by alchemically combining storytelling with the academic, tapping into traditional oral practices that

have inspired this study. The critical fictional challengers enable alternative ways of working with empirical noticings, they enable a reflexive approach where the tricky, intangible, tacit aspects of research can be presented. Research tricksters act as helpers and hinderers - interlocutors and disruptors. They are an ongoing quixotical presence encouraging and exhorting us to greater engagement with empirical noticings.

## Vignette 2: Introducing Janet Joyce Parsons



### Janet Joyce Parsons (Née Spittle)

One Sunday I visited my mom's grave at the crematorium. It was peaceful and full of wildlife and birdsong. Magpies, crows and pigeons chattered and cooed, squirrels chased each other up, down and round tree trunks. While tending the grave I became aware of a fox watching me from a distance. As I drove slowly through the grounds, it walked along, keeping pace with the car. The fox had watched me intently, I almost felt it knew me, it was a haunting experience. Later, I thought about my encounter and pondered what my mom would have thought about my research - I started to see a raven and a wolf (the wolf representing the fox), in conversation.

I had been contemplating introducing a female trickster to accompany Mr. Wolf, to create a feminine counter-balance, and thinking a lot about corvids (the crow family). When talking about my tricksters to my husband, Aidan, he reminded me that ravens and wolves are important in Norse mythology, and so, after some investigating, I started to think about introducing a raven trickster. I did not see the raven as serene but mischievous and feisty. I started to find out more about ravens and pictured her as a fighter - although ravens are big birds, they are relatively small compared to wolves and so my raven had to be fierce to get her point across. I visualised her as she chattered, fluttered and hopped around indignantly, and suddenly I realised I was seeing my mom as the raven. My mom - spirited, indomitable, unappreciative of authority and order - I realised she had been a trickster all her life! She was always curious and contrary, always ready to challenge and question, and to play a trick or two - the perfect inspiration for my second trickster character.

I had seen a photograph of a raven at the Tower of London, named Merlina. She was captivating, the slightly ruffled head, contrasting with sleek black body feathers and beady, intelligent eyes gave her an inquisitive demeanour. I noticed the serendipity, as in later life, my mom became fascinated by Arthurian legends, reading several novels based around those stories, I felt she would approve the name. However, I decided to make a slight adjustment and so, Merelina came into being.

My tricksters, therefore, are rooted in my familial history and located in the Black Country where I was raised. They are not omnipresent demi-gods but everyday tricksters deep-seated in the working class and industrial Midlands, and yet while their influence lives on - they have the ability to transcend time. Ordinary people with surprising stories and trickster qualities. Mom was a secretary and P.A. for most of her working life, able to take shorthand at speed, whilst thinking about what she would have for dinner! Merelina has mom's characteristics, talkative, unfazed by authority and able to converse with anyone, always interested in learning new things (e.g. birdwatching, astronomy, languages, Latin plant names, etc.). I remember when I was living in Valencia, Spain, on returning home to the apartment, my landlady, Amparo, told me that my mom had called. She proceeded to tell me what my mom had been up to that day, what she had bought at the shops, etc. They had obviously had quite a conversation - but this was astonishing as my mom spoke no Spanish (I had only taught her how to say "hello" and how to ask for me), Amparo, spoke only Castillian Spanish and Catalan, yet somehow, mom had managed, with a small smattering of holiday Italian and schoolgirl French to engage in a detailed conversation. I never knew how she managed that!

In later years I realised she had a phenomenal memory, recalling in detail things that I only vaguely remembered. When I was younger, I felt she was more like an older sister than a mom - feeling that we could get up to mischief together! She was always able to surprise me, often responding differently to what I had expected, but also able to make me see myself and whatever situation I found myself in, from new perspectives. The true embodiment of a trickster.

#### 4.2.4 Semi-fictional and Autobiographical writing

"The distinction between narrative fiction and narrative truth is nowhere near as obvious as common sense and usage would have us believe" (Bruner, 1991: 18).

Trickster Methodology brings with it imagination and creativity. Stories, even personal stories, have elements of fiction within them (Moon, 2010; Schank and Morson, 1990). The notion of using fiction to clearly communicate concepts and ideas in academic writing has precedent but is not widely used. Fictional writing may not only enhance academic writing, but traditional academic writing may be "disempowering" and constrict the research process (Kociatkiewicz and Kostera, 1999: 49). Kara argues that fictional writing is a vehicle for: incorporating "messy" dimensions of research; enhancing "our sense making as researchers" (2013: 80); and making emotional/affective aspects less opaque. This fits well with narrative inquiry, which allows for literary formats and emphasises the personal nature of research.

Semi-fictional approaches, including using different voices for research dissemination, make academic writing more accessible (Kara, 2013; Warren, 2018) by virtue of it being more entertaining and readable. Warren's thesis (2018) employed an auto-ethnodrama to present participants' stories and research analysis. She used deliberate



“irruptions” (Koro-Ljungberg, 2017: 6), providing alternative textures and playful layers to the thesis to disrupt the academic tone.

Utilising dramatic or story elements together with everyday language, intentionally emphasises the story of the research, and increases accessibility to the research process. However, semi-fictional writing might be seen as overly simplistic, by reducing discussions to essentials and removing or obscuring important details; conversely it might be seen to be an unnecessary embellishment, having no real substance or functionality. I have been mindful of these potential drawbacks, endeavouring to make the Trickster Tales purposeful, and to make the research **live** on the page. Trickster Tales and vignettes are employed to enchant, entertain and entrance in the same way that folktales, myths and fictional writing do - enticing us to read a little more to find out what happens next. I strived to evoke commitment to “characters” encountered in order to engender curiosity, to understand their teaching, and thus to appreciate more about the storytelling landscape, and challenges encountered in practice. My thesis aimed to entwine stories collated and created with academic writing, to deliberately add a disorientating dimension.

In actively using story writing as part of my process, I sought to understand the use of story in developing self-reflection, using tricksters to represent helpers and challengers in conversation with my “doubting self”. Greimas’s “actantial model” (1966) uses plot analysis to examine the roles of narrators from varying viewpoints. It particularly focuses on those who “assist or frustrate the narrator’s projects” (Gertsen and Sørderberg, 2011), story characters include “actants” who may aid or obstruct the protagonist. A difficulty in research is to “think in a completely astonished and disconcerted way about things you thought you had always understood” (Bourdieu, 1991: 207). Tricksters help me to think differently, to look through “fresh” eyes. They are catalyst actants guiding me and throwing obstacles in my path. As obstructers and helpers, they create thinking points, challenging me to question myself, my analysis and interpretations, provoking me to “dig deeper”, ultimately aiding me with my investigation.

Tricksters can be interlocutors, examining and challenging the researcher (Priyadsharni, 2012). Reardon, an art and design lecturer uses an imaginary

interlocutor, to incorporate “a creative voice” (2012: 127) as a reflexive tool, in her ethnographic methodology. She presents a dialogue between herself and her PhD supervisor, using the interlocutor’s fictional third voice as “go-between, one who interprets meaning for others, an insider reporting to the outside” (Reardon, 2012: 128). Interlocutor has two meanings: firstly, “A person who takes part in a conversation; and secondly, “A performer in the middle of a minstrel line who engages others in talk” (Audioenglish dictionary, 2018). The main definition is prosaic and adds little to the methodology, but the second as “performer” and “minstrel” incorporates the creative aspect that Reardon aspires to utilise. This blurring of reflection with fictional characters enables articulation of the turmoil of inner arguments and research process in a readable and accessible format, effectively conveying the intricacy of arguments explored. This also has ethical advantages which will be discussed below.

### 4.3 Ethical Considerations

Ethics is crucial for underpinning research and has been given considerable thought at all stages during the research process. In addition to standard requirements for ensuring anonymity and confidentiality for all participants, the narrative inquiry researcher endeavours to work alongside participants as co-producer, extending collaboration into the analysis stage as part of a deeper ethics. These considerations necessitated planning extra steps which will be discussed below.

In line with university requirements and following British Education Research Association (BERA) guidelines (BERA, 2018), I obtained approval from the university Ethics Board before recruiting participants or carrying out primary research activities. This involved submitting a comprehensive ethics application together with permission of access letter for the chosen university, participant information sheets (PIS) and consent forms. The application included a thorough justification of: my research aims; methods; the recruitment of participants; measures taken to protect participants’ anonymity, confidentiality and well-being; actions to ensure secure collation and storage of research materials; and consideration of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

My first priority was to protect participants' anonymity and confidentiality. No-one was referred to by name, and care was taken not to make reference to any potentially identifiable information. When combined, the health and education departments of the university were very large (with approximately 8000 students), but the education teaching teams were quite small, risking individual teacher educators being identified. While only referring to the selected university in broad terms, case-study approaches within one institution potentially risked the location being identifiable. To mitigate this, the research scope was broadened from focusing on post-compulsory PGCE, to include secondary PGCE. This significantly increased the pool of teacher educators, therefore enabling individuals to be anonymised effectively.

Although phase one and two had some shared ethics concerns, each phase had specific considerations which are discussed below.

#### 4.3.1 Phase One - Mapping of Story Incidences

In order to maintain anonymity and protect participants' identity, I omitted any identifying features of sessions (e.g. programme, module, session title, date, etc.), instead referring to lectures only as nursing or teaching. Participants were referred to by code in fieldnotes (e.g. TE1 = Teacher Educator, NE2 = Nurse Educator), and later given pseudonyms in the analysis phase (see chapter five). Mapping of story incidences focused on practitioner educators rather than students, as my primary focus for story incidences was on pedagogy. However, to understand the pedagogical interactions it was important that I recorded students' generic responses. In order to protect individuals, however, I did not record specific details or quotes of any student response stories, focusing instead on story types - this also meant I did not need to obtain students' consent.

I was concerned that my presence in lectures should not put additional pressures on participants or impact on sessions. I, therefore, clearly outlined what participation would entail in the PIS, and offered to answer any questions prior to participants deciding on participation. The PIS outlined important points about mapping story incidences including: my aim to be as unobtrusive as possible; taking only handwritten fieldnotes; not participating; not requiring any follow-ups with lecturers outside of

sessions; and a reassurance that I would focus only on storytelling incidences and story interactions.

#### 4.3.2 Phase Two - Story Circles for Research

This phase involved more complex ethics due to the requirement for participants to share personal and professional stories, necessitating a multi-layered approach. Firstly, to protect anonymity, pseudonyms were used. Participants elected their own, so that they were represented in a way that they preferred, increasing their agency (Mishler, 1991). The key document containing participants' real names exists only in one file on the university's secure files server - in all other materials (transcripts, drafts, writing, etc.) pseudonyms were always used. These measures also ensured that research complied with GDPR.

Storytelling involves the affective domain (Moon, 2010) and so can be emotionally charged; stories are often used for therapeutic purposes and can be a vehicle for promoting catharsis (Gersie and King, 2003). Whilst my research did not specifically seek deeply emotional stories, there was the potential that issues could have arisen. These potential occurrences were difficult to anticipate as the organic flow of SCRs may have taken the process in unexpected directions. As a researcher, I was prepared to signpost participants to appropriate university services (such as counselling), where necessary. Participants were also able to withdraw from participating at any point of the process (either temporarily or completely). I was also mindful that I needed to take care of my own health and well-being and seek support if needed. As SCRs brought together practitioner educators to develop and share stories, there was a small possibility that differences of opinion or conflicts could have occurred. To mitigate this, I was prepared to set group rules to ensure an "emotionally safe environment for participants" (Kara, 2006: 63), with particular attention to equality and diversity, for example focusing on respectful communication; the importance of valuing all comments and stories; and agreement that sensitive comments or stories would not be repeated outside of sessions.

A feature of narrative inquiry is that participants are fully involved in reviewing transcripts not only review for accuracy, but also to discuss if they have been

interpreted accurately (Clandinin, 2016). This makes the process deeply ethical as it increases participants' agency over how they are presented. Fully involving participants enables them to be collaborators in the analysis (Mishler, 1991). This process ensures they take an active role in commenting on interpretations, and correcting misinterpretations, thus helping to equalise the researcher/participant relationship (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007). Allowing a time period to elapse after SCRs, before reviewing transcripts, also gives participants time for further reflection. This mitigates concerns that participants may be tempted to "overshare", for example, tell a story that is very sensitive, that they might later regret having told (Garbett, 2005). Finally, it was possible to remove specific comments following the analysis stage because accounts are not disaggregated in narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2016), meaning details could be easily traced back and amended or removed up until final writing stages.

These ethical dilemmas required in-depth considerations, but at each stage I have endeavoured to be diligent in giving due respect towards finding the best approach for balancing the needs of my participants with the needs of the research. Further ethical considerations that emerged as the research progressed are discussed later in this chapter.

## 4.4 Research Design

In this section I explain the two key phases that comprised my primary research. Phase one sets out how I mapped the professional storytelling landscape within the selected university, addressing the first part of my research puzzle. Phase two, introduces the use of SCRs, addressing the second part of my research puzzle.

### 4.4.1 Phase One - Mapping Story Incidences

In order to establish what storytelling practices were being used within targeted courses, I planned to visit a series of lectures and "map" any story incidences that took place against a typology, enabling me to investigate what storytelling methods were used and what types of stories were told. This approach provided empirical noticings of what was happening within professional education. Mapping entailed "sitting in" on

lectures and making fieldnotes to capture story incidences and categorising these against a story typology (Figure 3). I created the typology by drawing upon literature for storytelling in professional education (as discussed in chapter three), providing a selection of categories that I expected to find within these settings. However, being conscious of the difficulties in defining stories and storytelling, I was also mindful not to limit research parameters to only those categories, thus risking discounting incidences that might be interpreted as storytelling, but which did not meet existing definitions.

Whilst I tend to agree with the premise that storytelling is a diverse phenomenon that defies categorisation (Moon, 2010) it was important that I was able to identify the range of characteristics of stories encountered, to enable me to practically manage, and make sense of, information collated. In providing a series of descriptions of different stories, the typology's purpose was to aid my understanding enabling me to unpick story incidences as I encountered them. Thus, I could ascertain where stories fitted with existing definitions or whether I was encountering something new.

*Figure 3: Typology of Storytelling in Professional Education*

Adapted from McDrury and Alterio's "Formalised storytelling outline of processes and pathways" (2003); Moon and Fowler's "Framework for the conception of story in higher education and professional development" (2008), and Moon's concept of "Strong and broad story forms" (2010), I have created the following typology for categorising story incidences in professional learning.

<p><b>Strong story</b></p> <p>This is an account, varying in length, with a self-contained coherence, which conveys a happening or event. It has a beginning, a middle and an end (though it is not necessarily chronological). During the course of the story something is changed or resolved. Strong story's key purpose is to engage or entertain. It employs literary devices, and when told orally, performative techniques (gestures/tone of voice for effect etc.)</p>	<p><b>Broad story</b></p> <p>This is an account, varying in length with a self-contained coherence, which conveys a happening or event. These are often personal or accounts of specific events. Their key purpose is to convey information or engage through content rather than to entertain.</p> <p>Both story types can be written or orally presented, or may be presented in other formats (e.g. digital)</p>
<p><b>Formal</b></p> <p>There is a set agenda/storytelling is confined to a specific format, for example students are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• given close instructions/directions on who can tell and when (e.g. listen to whole story and reserve comments/questions to the end);</li> <li>• given a sequence or framework;</li> <li>• given a timeframe;</li> <li>• asked to include specific questions/points to address</li> <li>• asked to formulate specific questions or comments etc. (e.g. story is told in order for certain points to be elicited or explored such as reflecting on practice)</li> <li>• working with a facilitator – another student or the lecturer.</li> <li>• Single or multiple listeners</li> </ul>	<p><b>Informal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no set agenda,</li> <li>• No specific guidelines given.</li> <li>• May arise out of general conversation.</li> <li>• Can involve a single listener or multiple listeners.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">/continued...</p>

**Within these categories:** Stories can be further divided into oral, digital and text-based. There are often overlapping features between these categories, so a feature that applies to an oral story, may also be applicable to a digital or text-based story, however, typical features are given below.

<p><b>Spontaneous</b> “Off the cuff” a story that is told “in the moment”, a story that is not planned/prepared in advance.</p>	<p><b>Pre-determined</b> Person has thought about and prepared the story in advance, possibly written it out, or written out key points that they want to cover.</p>	<p><b>Response</b> When a listener responds to a story with a story of their own. This type of story is likely to relate to the initial story in some way, either to add similar ideas to the first, or acts as a contradiction to the first. These are likely to also be spontaneous stories.</p>
<p><b>Oral</b> Refers to stories that are told orally – either scripted or unscripted. Short – less than 2 minutes Medium – 2 – 5 mins Long – 5 – 10 mins Extended – 10 mins +</p>	<p><b>Text based</b> Stories that are in text formats that are accessed by reading. Can be any length from a few sentences, to a full-length novel.</p>	<p><b>Digital</b> DS – Students developing stories told through digital media, may include videos, games etc. Short – less than 2 minutes Medium – 2 – 5 mins Long – 5 – 10 mins Extended – 10 mins +</p>
<p><i>Anecdotes</i> Centred on personal experience Centred on professional experience (e.g. practice story, or critical incident) <i>Semi-fictional</i> – story is based on experience but something has been deliberately altered. <i>Fictional</i> – stories that have been invented, may have elements of truth (disguised). <i>Literature</i> – extracts from written fiction – read/told orally <i>Factual but not personally known</i> (stories that are taken to be true/authentic, not first-hand experience) <i>Mythological/fable/legend</i> Other – specify</p>	<p><i>Case-studies</i> <i>Fictional stories</i> <i>Practice-based stories</i> Patchwork texts “Patchwork texts” (Richardson, 2000 in Moon 2010), developed as a method of inquiry to encourage students to think through specific problems (e.g. nurses prioritising bed allocation). <i>Multiple grouped stories</i> – e.g. portfolio <i>Literature</i> – e.g. novels, play scripts</p>	<p><i>Digital stories</i> – pictures with an overlying spoken narrative <i>Video or audio stories</i> (e.g. patients / teachers) <i>Simulations</i> <i>Interactive games</i> <i>Multiple platforms</i> (e.g. Transmedia edutainment)</p>

The mapping process relied on handwritten fieldnotes and an endeavour to capture incidences in sufficient detail for later analysis. The purpose of the typology was purely to provide a research framework and was not intended to be a comprehensive typology for storytelling in professional education. I designed a form to capture these details, with simple tick boxes and categories to circle, with some room to note specific details. However, when piloting the form, I found it was more manageable to have story categories and details as prompts with a large blank space for free-writing. Being a lone researcher, I found I needed to spend my time writing a running commentary of



key incidences so that no incidences were missed while trying to categorise them. The forms were altered accordingly (see Appendix 2).

As well as categorising stories, there were other factors to consider in viewing the potential pedagogical impact of story in education settings. For example, the physical arrangement of the group; performative aspects of orally told stories; and students' reactions to stories encountered, were all important in understanding pedagogical interactions. Thus, I created a Pedagogical Framework of Story Incidences (Figure 4), incorporating these into the fieldnote template (See Appendix 3). Noting performative aspects of orally told stories was designed to provide insights into the way in which stories were conveyed and potentially how well they were received. For example, stories told in monotone or staccato styles were likely to be less engaging than those told using varying tones and accompanying gestures. Oral storytelling is a craft (Benjamin, 1999; Hartley, 2009) and the more skilfully a story is told, the more likely students are to connect with that story (Flanagan, 2015). Therefore, it was important to gauge students' overall response to stories, including overall dynamics of the group, and whether students showed a particular interest in a story or seemed disengaged.

Figure 4: Pedagogical Framework of Storytelling Incidences

<p><b>Group Arrangement</b></p> <p>There are a wide number of possibilities for how the class could be arranged, but it is anticipated that the main arrangements are likely to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole group – Lecturer addressing whole group and delivering the story (either themselves orally, or showing a digitally based story such as a video story).</li> <li>• Small group activity led by lecturer visiting groups and telling story within that group.</li> <li>• Small group activity – students working in small groups responding to a story (e.g. case studies, digital, simulations, etc.)</li> <li>• Students encouraged to share stories themselves in small groups, either informally, or formally with a facilitator.</li> <li>• Other - E.g. simulations, role-play</li> </ul>	<p><b>Story purpose</b></p> <p>Note: It may be difficult to determine from simply listening to the story told and without specifically knowing what the lecturer intended.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As an exemplar – to provide a model of practice or an example</li> <li>• To illustrate a specific point, e.g. telling a story to explain something else</li> <li>• To entertain – to liven up the lecture and engage the listener/s</li> <li>• To encourage reflection / participation</li> <li>• Used as part of an activity or task</li> <li>• To provoke an emotional e.g. empathic response</li> </ul>
<p><b>Performative aspects of story incidences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read out – monotone or with expression?</li> <li>• Performed:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Are gestures/facial expressions used?</li> <li>○ Tone of voice / character “voices”</li> <li>○ Are Props used?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Presented as part of a role-play/performative dialogue</li> <li>• Told in a particular style – e.g. sombre, building up the tension, deliberately funny/provocative etc.</li> <li>• If it is a written text (e.g. case study) is it read out to emphasise any part, or are the students are left to read stories for themselves?</li> <li>• Does the teller directly address the audience, e.g. ask questions – ask them to contribute – prompt them to say a word / phrase?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Effect of story on audience:</b></p> <p>How the audience is responding to the story, do they appear to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interested</li> <li>• bored/disengaged</li> <li>• smiling</li> <li>• laughing</li> <li>• upset</li> <li>• angry</li> <li>• moved/emotional</li> </ul> <p>Do they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tell a response story</li> <li>• comment on the story</li> <li>• engage in discussion</li> </ul> <p>Note – it is likely that there will be a mixed response, especially in larger groups – for split responses e.g. some members engaged, others not listening - I will give a rough split, e.g. most people listening, but two people using the mobile phones).</p>

#### 4.4.2 Phase Two - Story Circles for Research

A key factor in this thesis is the HE environment. Students and lecturers form part of a wider community and social hierarchy, fundamentally impacted by social, political and

cultural environments. It was, therefore, important to investigate practitioner educators' personal opinions and experiences of storytelling, an area which has previously received limited attention. Mishler argues that traditional research techniques (such as interviews) may suppress "natural and pervasive modes of communicating meaning", whereas encouragement of participants' stories enables richer, more in-depth investigations of their experiences (1991: 68). Therefore, I aimed to invite participants to tell stories about their experiences via planned encounters in Story Circles for Research (SCRs).

SCRs were inspired by Freire's literacy and culture circles (1985). Literacy circles were initially a means of empowering people living in poverty by improving their literacy skills in non-didactic ways. Here, learning "is characterised not by individualism, but by fellowship and solidarity" (Hickling-Hudson, 2014: 525qqe). Replacing the "banking" style of teaching, where a teacher "filled" students with knowledge (Freire, 2003), literacy circles were formulated in which facilitators provided the group with prompts and opportunities to discuss issues that were important to them. Freire attempted to give students access to "transformative literacy", talking, reading and writing about their own world in order to understand it, where they could gain awareness of their own social and political situations (Freire, 1985). They would learn to read and write about texts relating to these issues, so literacy learning focused entirely on their needs as adults and members of the community, rather than on prescribed and remote literacy teaching schemes.

Similarly, culture circles brought together small groups to discuss a variety of "problematical situations"; participants were invited to write down a simple phrase or reaction which then provided a prompt for group discussion (Freire, 1985). Written material was then collated to form an "anthology" of texts for future sessions, where facilitators enabled discussions with the goal of "provid[ing] pedagogical spaces in which students can develop their voices in a human environment of respect and affirmation" (Chaib, 2010: 43). Both literacy and culture circles were tools for creating "conscientização" or "consciousness awakening" (Freire, 1985: 16), as they provided the means to discuss, examine and analyse personal realities, and with this understanding gain the potential of changing situations (Freire, 1985).

The original literacy and culture circles have subsequently been used for a variety of other purposes in diverse situations, demonstrating their flexibility. For example, key features were retained, but the idea successfully adapted, into ‘tertulias dialógicas musicales’ (dialogical music listening circles) to enable the “demystification of classical music” (Chaib, 2010: 42) in a Spanish project. Meanwhile, “story circles” were developed by the Center for Digital Storytelling with community groups as a means of engaging individuals to share personal stories prior to transforming them into a digital medium (Hartley and McWilliam, 2009). DS adopted Freire’s notion of cultural circles, within “a community of learning that situates the story circle at the heart of the practice with everyone having an equal opportunity to receive and provide feedback” (Lambert, 2009: 88). DS has shared values with Freire’s critical pedagogy, particularly its emancipatory and collaborative underpinnings, with DS educators actively identifying with Freirean ideologies to empower individuals, encouraging them to “take responsibility for their own lives, their own stories, as the first step to larger awareness” (Lambert, 2009: 82). While DS circles have been used for social studies research, there is limited research utilizing oral story circles which concentrate purely on “the story circle process and data that is collected in story circles” (Herbert et al., 2020: 2). The focus on facilitating people to build consciousness of their personal situations, together with sharing ideas and stories is quintessential to story circles (Freire, 1985). Freire further adapted culture circles for professional development workshops for teachers and community workers in Grenada in the Caribbean (Hickling-Hudson, 2014). Sessions took place shortly after a military coup, in a climate where education was seen as essential for “radical, socialist-oriented rethinking and restructuring of relationships” (Hickling-Hudson, 2014: 526). This transference of culture circles for different goals with diverse social groups is indicative of their potential to be used for a variety of purposes with people with vastly different educational experiences. The fact that Freire, himself, used culture circles with practising teachers for professional development, sets a precedent for their suitability with practitioner educators. However, rather than focusing on pedagogical aspects of culture circles, I proposed using story circles for research purposes, providing an environment for egalitarian and focused discussion for the fermentation and fabrication of stories relating to professional practice.

In the same way that culture circles promote “a collective, dialogic exchange of reflections” (Hickling-Hudson, 2014: 525) where the facilitator is an equal participant in discussions, participants’ stories needed to evolve organically. Freire’s culture circles

effectively bestowed agency on their participants by giving them their own voice. I wanted to do this for my participants, providing a safe space for the sharing of stories that normally would be unlikely to be heard outside of the immediate professional environment, enabling them to be accessible to a wider audience. Due to accountability, there are few outlets for educators to express their personal views and experiences (Czerniawski, 2011) therefore, it was important for participants to have opportunities for telling these stories to re-establish their professional voice.

It was intended that in addition to sharing perceptions of storytelling, that participants would be encouraged to produce “authentic” semi-fictional stories about an aspect of their practice, over the duration of workshops, which would help participants to share more sensitive stories. Kara (2003) found that fictionalising stories enabled participants opportunities to tell stories that they would not, otherwise, have been able to share. Using “authentic” but “untrue” stories enabled them to “weave a tale” that created a coherent, but disguised story of their experiences. Participants felt it was emotionally easier to examine and express their feelings within the research group (Kara, 2003: 65). Similarly, Heinemeyer (2018) believed that a semi-fictional aspect was helpful when carrying out research with refugees, as when participants re-told stories it was unclear to listeners which elements were imagined and which were drawn from personal experience.

#### 4.4.3 SCR Prompts and Workshop iterations

A key consideration was the type of prompts that would be suitable for SCRs. Freire used pictorial and photographic prompts in literacy circles to provoke discussion (Freire, 1985), whereas culture circles required facilitators to formulate comments and questions (Hickling-Hudson, 2014). A similar process was used by Herbert et al. (2020), with story circles employed to explore young women’s experiences of gender inequality in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. Facilitators encouraged women to respond to broad prompts and questions by telling a short story about their experiences. “Multiple such rounds of storytelling and reflection” (Herbert et al., 2020:3) stimulated further semi-structured discussions within the groups. Researchers felt that using broad prompts gave participants greater agency over their responses meaning that they told stories that “mattered to them, that were not limited by the researchers’ preconceived notions” (Herbert et al., 2020: 8).

Meanwhile Reason and Heinemeyer developed “story as method,” (2017: 559) to explore how different groups of people (from six- to sixty-years-old) responded intrinsically to oral storytelling. Their iterative process comprised a series of three- to six-hour long workshops combining storytelling with drama and art; workshops took place over two-years, and engaged participants from a wide variety of community groups and schools. Heinemeyer facilitated the process where emphasis was on “sharing” stories and encouraging participants to move from story **listener** to story **teller**, developing their own story voice. This approach utilised focused strategies and sophisticated story prompt techniques.

Inspired by these approaches, I planned SCRs to take place over several iterations, with participants attending between one and three times (depending on availability), allowing stimulus prompts and structures of circles to be changed in response to research needs. While broad prompts were likely to provide a good basis for opening up dialogue and were akin to asking questions or prompts in interviews, I considered alternative approaches with more affinity to storytelling. One option was to tell a traditional oral story, as Reason and Heinemeyer (2016) had done in their research, which they felt provoked rich discussions amongst participants:

the distance of the mythological storyworld allowed them to map parallels between the story and their own experiences and beliefs about the world around them (Reason and Heinemeyer, 2017: 568).

The connection between “mythological” and “real” is particularly impressive because there were over 700 participants, from a considerable breadth of backgrounds, including diversity of age, occupations, and ethnicity. Whatever the participants’ individual circumstances, researchers noted that these types of stories were beneficial for prompting participants to discuss varied, and sometimes difficult, issues in a safe space. This encouraged participants to think about their own situations without specifically directing them to any particular topic or issue. However, traditional stimulus stories needed to be judiciously selected, as the starter story impacted the way people were able to develop their own stories (Reason and Heinemeyer, 2017). They, therefore, sought out stories with a strong plot and potential for complexity, but which also had lots of ambiguities within them. Distilling these down to the “bare bones” (Heinemeyer, 2018), resulted in a story framework which allowed participants to explore areas that interested them, with topics arising naturally from gaps and uncertainties. In this they took inspiration from Benjamin’s (1969) view that the

“compactness” of traditional tales enables a “bendable fluidity” (Reason and Heinemeyer, 2017: 562) where listeners can reposition themselves within stories, thinking of their own contexts and perspectives - these “re-tellings” became their research data.

The “less is more” approach for stimulus stories was appealing. In practical terms short stories would take up less time while keeping the main focus on participants’ stories. By telling the “bare bones” participants were less likely to take detailed cues from prompts or feel constrained by them. Likewise, using traditional tales of a nebulous time and place, has the effect of distancing participants in time and location from their own situation (Reason and Heinemeyer, 2016), again expanding their choices. There was a danger that using traditional tales could be seen as introducing qualities that were irrelevant to modern-day education, but Reason and Heinemeyer’s experiences testified to the suitability of this approach; as one of their participants said “I think the material needs to have an element of myth - so people can interpret aspects of it for themselves, relating it to their own experience” (2016: 562).

Another option was to tell a Trickster Tale which fictionalised aspects of my personal research journey, which I felt might be useful in giving an example of how real and imagined aspects could be merged together. Kara used “fictionalised” stories as Multi-Story Method, instructing participants to prepare a short “authentic” story about their experiences (i.e. fictional stories that were rooted in real experiences). She found this to be a successful technique for sharing experiences and felt it likely that it would be useful for other peer groups (Kara, 2006). However, the risk of doing this, was that the tale would be too focused on me and would incorporate too much detail, which would not afford participants the opportunity to find their own space within the story, as they would in a traditional tale. Having considered these options I decided to employ a mixture of traditional and semi-fictional tales, leaving some flexibility in which I chose depending on the response from participants.

#### 4.5 Research Methods: Recruitment, Participants and Timescales

Research was carried out in a university with an established reputation for delivering a large range of professional education courses. It was, therefore, an ideal setting in which to gather empirical noticings as it enabled fieldwork for both nursing and

teaching within one institution within the same timeframe. As highlighted in chapter three, currently parallel empirical studies of storytelling in nurse and teacher education are not commonly available in the literature.

#### 4.5.1 Nurse Educators

When designing the research, I was mindful that nursing programmes were in a transition phase in response to new nursing standards being introduced (NMC, 2019). This was important for the research schedule, as the changeover created new challenges for nurse educators (Appleby and Roberts, 2019). I was aware that there had been a major re-organisation of lecturing teams and teaching programmes in the chosen university, with nurse educators in the first two years now teaching the same set of standards across field specialisms. I, therefore, aimed to target lecturers delivering on pre-registration nursing programmes. From a practical perspective, I was mindful that the changeover could have created additional difficulties: there was a possibility that changes could confuse the issues being studied, and there was a risk that lecturers would be so enmeshed in programme adjustments that they would have little time to partake in the research. However, potentially this could add an interesting dynamic, as they might want to reflect on these changes in SCRs. The majority of lecturers taught across pre-registration nursing sessions, which provided a very large pool of potential participants to draw upon for both phases of the study.

#### 4.5.2 Teacher Educators

Initially, I focused my context on PCET programmes, primarily, because my previous experience in adult education gave me knowledge and confidence in this area. However, as I started to investigate the literature, I considered broadening the scope to examine ITE at secondary level. Recent changes to professional qualifications for PCET meant student-teachers are now qualified to teach students of fourteen-years and above, (whereas previously they were not allowed to teach students below sixteen years of age), creating a cross-over between sectors. Enlarging the scope to include SE necessitated considering another set of professional standards, as a result, there could be a danger of my study becoming broader and shallower in its scope. However, the focus of the study was not the standards themselves but how teacher educators



use storytelling, so focusing on pedagogical interactions meant that research would not become diluted. This also increased the potential impact for my research as it made it relevant to a wider group of teacher educators within the two sectors, thus broadening the professional landscape.

#### 4.5.3 Timescales and Participant Recruitment

**Phase one mappings** focused on visiting lectures, and permission for this was sought in advance, however, the precise timing of my visits was kept “ad hoc” rather than scheduled, where participants knew the time window during which I would potentially visit, but a precise appointment was not made. This was intended to provide a more genuine, organic view of what storytelling was (or was not) taking place. Arranging a specific time may have meant that lecturers deliberately or subconsciously added story into their teaching, which was problematic both ethically and for the research findings. Firstly, lecturers might have felt under pressure to include storytelling, causing them stress; secondly, they might have used storytelling where they would not normally have done, thus giving a false “professional landscape”. The ad hoc approach improved chances of seeing organically occurring storytelling, and an absence of storytelling was as interesting and important as seeing it taking place.

**Phase two SCRs** were planned to take place in a suitable location within the selected university, and the opportunity to participate was open to all lecturers on target programmes. I aimed to recruit between four and six participants in each SCR, as this was considered the optimal size for encouraging interaction (Kara, 2006). This was also manageable, both in terms of practicalities of sessions, and subsequent management and analysis of empirical noticings. It was intended that each participant would attend between one and three SCRs, each of one hour’s length, scheduled at approximately fortnightly intervals. This kept the time commitment to a reasonable level, as it could be fitted into a lunchtime, or late afternoon timeslot, whilst also providing time for development of “authentic” stories. Ideally, I would have preferred to have stipulated participants attend at least two sessions, but I was wary of making the commitment too onerous which could have reduced interest.

## 4.6 Reflections on Fieldwork and Methodology

Narrative inquiry focuses on the “three commonplaces”, my case-study attended to “place” as fieldwork was situated in and around one university, in the educational spaces where practitioner educators taught, where students attended lectures. I observed practitioner educators in their own workplaces, carrying out everyday teaching and interacting with students in the social milieu of academia. Initially, the university setting also provided meeting places for SCRs, until Covid-19 forced a rescheduling to a “virtual” space.

Attending to “sociality”, I interacted with practitioner educators in SCRs; as a group we told, created, retold, and listened to stories together. In both of these commonplaces, I entered into “the midst: moving into living alongside” (Clandinin, 2016: 43). My insider-outsiderness was important to these interactions, my teaching experiences helping to equalise the researcher-participant relationship, which is vital to narrative inquiry epistemology. I needed to eschew my privileged status as researcher and present myself as an equal participant in order to give participants sufficient freedom to talk freely and develop their stories. In addition to story prompts, I occasionally shared brief practice stories in order to establish a feeling of reciprocity and mutual trust. Researchers, Duckworth and Smith (2018: 7) shared personal stories to initiate discussions with participants and noted that this helped to “establish openness and informality” within the “broader social encounter,” as well as mutual respect. This approach also enhanced the opportunity for co-production of stories which is important to narrative inquiry.

In SCRs I worked with participants, both sharing my own stories and discussing theirs. Attending to “temporality” – the study took place over a specific timescale. Despite the various delays, fieldwork took place within a nine-month time span. As narrative inquirer I was mindful of participants’, and my, prior experiences, and that collectively our individual narratives were situated within “social, cultural, familial, linguistic, and institutional narratives” (Clandinin, 2016: 46). I had followed my own path, distinct from those of my participants, I was at a certain point of my research when I carried out my fieldwork. Likewise, they were at their own particular points in their lives and professional careers, so our interactions created crossovers, a short period where our

lives and experiences met and intersected each other's. Once fieldwork ended, our paths diverged again. It is possible that our paths will cross again, in other circumstances, but the direct researcher-participant relationship has ended. As narrative inquirer, I am aware that while our shared research experience will remain in a separate sphere to the rest of our lives, there may well be experiences, on both sides, which will impact our futures. We have heard and engaged with each other's stories and reflected together, and these stories will feed into our experiences to create new stories and fresh understandings. Additionally, SCRs were designed to be workshops, to help participants reflect on their use of story, and to be creative in developing semi-fictional stories. These experiences might have affected the way that they think about or use stories in their own practice in future.

Having deliberated on the most appropriate story prompts, I settled on using traditional tales for most sessions. I deliberately chose tales that were outside the European canon, as I wanted them to be new to participants, so that they would come to them fresh, without pre-conceptions. The first tale "Meat of the Tongue", a Swahili moral tale, centres on the art of communication and the value of telling stories, which seemed an appropriate focus. The second tale was a Yoruba trickster tale, again of African origin, "Eshu and the Hat". This tale is primarily about people's (mis)perceptions and (mis)understandings, and friendships. I told tales from memory (unscripted), having rehearsed them in advance, firstly to improve my confidence, but also to rehearse the timings. This left 55-minutes to focus on participants' responses to prompts and discussion around their own experiences. For later sessions I told an abridged "Mrs. Wolf" Trickster Tale (See Appendix 7) that was semi-autobiographical, which I had previously performed in research environments. In this case, I read the story out loud, using performativity techniques, such as changes in tone of voice, "character voices", facial expressions and hand gestures, this was slightly longer at six minutes. Prompts achieved their aim in provoking interesting discussion, and good starting points for thinking about stories. Some discussion directly related to stories and themes/morals of tales and ideas generated in relation to teaching and storytelling, but others were around the experience of hearing the tales, including emotional responses and memories these had triggered for some of the participants.

SCRs were audio-recorded enabling me to actively take part in sessions as research-participant. Therefore, stories and relevant discussions could be accurately captured.

I created verbatim transcripts, making notes on tone of voice, pauses, and other details (See Appendix 6). Virtual SCRs were recorded using the video-recording facility integral to Microsoft Teams™. Having video added another dimension, as I was now able to accurately note anything that was visually interesting, such as facial expressions and paralinguistic features, which Mishler (1991) emphasises as being an important part of the process.

Immediately after each SCR, I scheduled time to scrutinise recordings and make additional notes on anything else that I felt was pertinent. This formed the first part of the analysis process, which in narrative inquiry is ongoing and iterative. Re-listening to recordings is essential for “metaphorically put[ting] myself back into the feelings I had” (Clandinin, 2016: 107). I reviewed each session, including how well it was received and whether it fulfilled the needs of participants and my needs as researcher, deciding whether any changes were needed. Follow-on meetings (online) were arranged to go through transcripts. As discussed above, this was a vital step, allowing participants to revisit accounts and comment on my interpretation, actively agreeing or disagreeing, or adding further clarifications.

As with fieldnotes, once transcripts had been reviewed they were brought together to see if there were any common “threads” running across them; commonalities between participants’ stories were then further analysed. In this process I sought out the “resonances or echoes” between accounts, but also the “bumping places” or “moments of tension” (Clandinin, 2016: 132); I strived to understand the role of stories in the experiences of practitioner educators. In line with narrative inquiry, stories were kept intact, rather than dissected and merged for coding purposes. The process of coding accounts, taking “snippets” often results in the original context being lost which risks eroding individual agency (Mishler, 1991; Reissman, 2008). Throughout this phase I aimed for depth and provenance and endeavoured to allow stories to unfurl organically, so new understandings naturally emerged.

Trickster Methodology developed, solidifying as a practical method throughout the fieldwork and analysis phases. Initially, I found myself employing trickster-thinking as I sat mapping incidences or reflecting on SCRs, however, the main development was in the analysis of empirical materials. I employed trickster characteristics as an analysis tool, as a way of thinking-through my material and writing the analysis chapters. Tricksters visibly impose themselves into the analysis, both helping by pointing out

interesting noticings and giving their perspectives, but also hindering by interrupting and distracting. Trickster-thinking helped me notice subtleties and contradictions, writing and re-writing adding extra layers to the analysis. The tricksters, therefore, prod and provoke me into making sense of my noticings. They are metaphorically and literally within the borders of my academic writing, breaking out of interludes and vignettes and imposing themselves into the main body of the analysis. Philip Pullman describes the relationship between readers and writers as a “borderland” saying it is “a space that opens up between the private mind of the reader and the book they’re reading” (Pullman, 2020: 259). I have endeavoured to utilise tricksters to enhance this relationship, making research processes more visible and offering a window into my thought-processes, frustrations, discoveries and dilemmas encountered along the way.

## 4.7 Challenges and Limitations

Challenges and limitations are to be expected with any research study, and these are discussed in this sub-section. However, new ethical challenges emerged during the fieldwork and analysis phases which are discussed at the end of this section.

### 4.7.1 Scheduling Issues

A number of difficulties meant that I had to shift my schedules. For phase one I had to abandon using set time windows, instead visiting sessions as opportunities arose, though I was able to retain an ad hoc element to some extent. The issues were threefold: firstly, I initially did not get a strong response from callouts for participants, necessitating additional recruitment; secondly several lecturers who were willing to participate were not delivering regularly on target programmes throughout the semester, meaning there were fewer suitable sessions available; lastly, there were large time blocks when students were in placement with no lectures taking place. In order to see a good range of sessions, therefore, I abandoned my plan to use set time windows. By being flexible, I was able to visit fifteen separate lectures of varying types, split across nursing and teaching, by mid-February 2020.

Following the first two SCRs, Covid-19 started to impact upon original fieldwork plans. Universities were shut down from the end of March 2020 and face-to-face research

was prohibited from this time forward. The remaining three scheduled SCRs could not, therefore, go ahead as scheduled, and instead were adapted to take place online as Virtual-SCRs, conducted using Microsoft Teams™. This required an amended ethics application, a short delay in scheduling, and some adjustments to the SCR set-up. Although this changed the aesthetics to some extent, the “virtual” space successfully enabled participants to take part, with no significant changes noticed in the level of engagement.

#### 4.7.2 Practicalities of Capturing Story Incidences

During phase one fieldnotes were rapidly written as I strived to accurately capture story incidences. Filtering “in the moment” inevitably meant that I was vulnerable to making mistakes in recording incidences as I quickly had to decide what did and did not qualify as story. I had to rely on my own sense of what I felt story to be, and I was aware that these incidences might well have been viewed differently by another researcher. Consequently, there were occasions when I noted that something felt “story-like,” or had characteristics of story,” but I was not sure “in the moment” if they fully qualified. Throughout the process, I was conscious that I might be over-interpreting something as story and seeing patterns that were not really there. Gabriel (2000) and Moon’s (2010) admonitions to be wary of treating every “snippet” as storytelling was at the forefront of my thoughts. I was equally mindful that I did not want to erroneously discount something that might be considered story but that did not neatly fit the typology. This was further complicated by stories that seemed fragmented into different parts, or where several small “stories” seemed to be linked together. Detailed fieldnotes mitigated this challenge by enabling me to carefully review incidences later and make informed decisions. In addition, I decided to include discussion of remaining “grey areas” within the analysis chapters.

The fast pace of lectures was also challenging for capturing as much as possible around a story incidence. Fieldnotes enabled me to record the “flavour” of stories and interactions which helped in understanding their pedagogical role. By re-visiting fieldnotes later (within 24 hours) I was able to add details and reflections that might otherwise have been forgotten. Despite these challenges, handwriting fieldnotes was a flexible approach allowing me to capture rich detail of incidences in context.

#### 4.7.3 Story circles - Recruitments and Withdrawals

Initially I had planned for up to six participants per SCR and it would have been desirable to have a balance between nurse and teacher educators, especially as this was achieved for phase one. However, fewer people responded to the phase two callout than expected. This may have been partly due to operational pressures identified above.

By February 2020, there were potentially eight participants in total, but unfortunately one participant became ill and was withdrawn after the first SCR. Other lecturers had expressed an interest, and signed consent forms, but were unable to take part due to work pressures, and/or illness. This may have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 lockdown which created extra demands on lecturers' workloads. Another problem was the move to Virtual-SCRs, which necessitated a reliance on wi-fi, which prevented one participant from attending one session. Low responses to callouts and subsequent withdrawals were initially disappointing, requiring constant reviewing, however, SCR's were generating substantial amounts of rich and interesting empirical noticings, and I realised that I had substantial material to draw upon despite the small numbers.

Small numbers overall, however, meant lower numbers for each SCR. Following discussions with my supervisors, it was decided to go ahead with just two participants in SCR1 to see if this was viable. I was concerned that this would be less conducive to a free-flowing exchange of ideas, however, SCR1 was rich in discussion and stories. The dialogue flowed so well that I needed to point out that we had reached the hour mark; this pattern was repeated in subsequent sessions.

#### 4.7.4 Space Limitations

It had been intended that participants' whole stories from SCR's would be included, and this was achieved to some extent in the form of vignettes. Included stories were represented verbatim as artefacts, as they were told by participants, and include other participants' reactions. However, some participants - particularly Elaine, Angharad and

Colin - told multiple stories within the circles, which have not all been included. In Colin's case, some stories were more personal and could have revealed his identity if represented holistically. However, there was also the limitation on space, requiring me to select those stories that I felt were most illustrative of participants' perceptions and experiences of pedagogical storytelling.

#### 4.7.5 Additional Ethical Considerations

In the early stages of phase one, I became aware of difficulties in fully ensuring confidentiality and anonymity for some participants. Although I took precautions detailed above, there were occasions when content and delivery of a lecture was specialized and distinctive, meaning that if someone knew of a particular lecturer's work or background, they might possibly have recognised them. As this only applied to a minority of participants, whose sessions might be viewed as "outliers," due to their differences, I considered whether the most straight-forward strategy was to completely remove them from empirical noticings. However, I felt that this would have contradicted my stated intentions of mapping the storytelling landscape as I encountered it. For this reason, I decided to retain them in the study, but to further anonymise by omitting or disguising specific delivery aspects which may have rendered lecturers identifiable. While losing some details, therefore, I preserved the range and diversity of story incidences encountered whilst also honouring my ethical stance. Adjustments included: further blurring delivery context and/or mode and generalising some details concerning content. This challenging and unexpected dilemma was carefully considered, with guidance sought from my supervisory team.

As explained previously, narrative inquiry requires a meeting with each participant to scrutinize transcripts and researcher's interpretation. Unfortunately, one participant could not take part in this process, Angharad was unexpectedly diagnosed with a serious illness before her second scheduled SCR. This meant that she could not take part in checking the transcript. I was left with an ethical dilemma as to whether I should include her contribution from SCR2, leading me to discuss the situation in depth, on several occasions, with my supervisors. I initially felt that I should remove the transcript entirely as I had not been able to complete the process, but on reflection, I wondered if it was actually unethical to do this and would potentially be against Angharad's wishes. Angharad, had not only taken part willingly, but had been really



interested, even excited, about my research, and had said how much she was looking forward to seeing the finished thesis. She was one of the first to give her consent, immediately signing up to three sessions, and seemed to enjoy participating in the SCR, saying she was looking forward to the next one. The adjustment to Virtual-SCRs meant that we needed to check her home set-up allowed her to participate, so she was ready to join the virtual-SCRs. However, it was at this stage that she became ill and could no longer take part. Crucially, she had not asked me at any point to withdraw (which she could have done via email). On reflection, therefore, I believed she would not have wanted to have the transcript withheld, and that in withholding it, I would also be repressing her views and her voice. Consequently, the transcript was included.

#### 4.8 Conclusion

My methodological approach has been driven by the research and considerations of how best to investigate my research puzzle, within the constraints and practicalities of doing a PhD disrupted by a pandemic. It has been a fascinating journey thinking about my ontological and epistemological perspectives and fathoming the most fruitful ways in which to carry out empirical research which best suits these perspectives. As indicated in chapter one, in the very early stages of my research journey I had contemplated different approaches, but as the research progressed, these choices shifted. In particular, the decision to focus on practitioner educators' perceptions of storytelling, and my developing interest in tricksters, led me to different methodological choices.

The two-staged approach was designed to better understand the range of storytelling taking place in professional education, whilst also enabling me to explore the pedagogical interactions that storytelling afforded. Phase one mappings aimed to establish the storytelling terrain, and whether there were differences between nurse and teacher education. Phase two was designed to provide opportunities to delve deeper into practitioner educators' opinions of storytelling including their experiences of using it in practice, what stories they told, and their intentions and reasons for using, or not using storytelling techniques.

While I utilised established methods and applied them to my specific research puzzle and context, I have also endeavoured to develop Trickster Methodology and trickster-thinking. In the early stages I investigated the notion of using a trickster perspective and have then worked through each stage thinking what Trickster Methodology means for my research, and how this brings new and different viewpoints to my process and analysis. This has been a tentative process, where I have often felt unsure of exactly where it would take me, but I have gradually worked through my doubts, encountering moments of inspiration and clarity. Each small discovery has changed, or solidified my thinking, enabling me to become more comfortable and confident in using it. The methodology will reveal itself further in the analysis and discussion chapters.

## Second Interlude: Corvid Murmurings

"Ow bist?"

"How what?"

"No! - Ow bist? You know, ow bist me wench?" Merelina bobbed up and down excitedly.

"I'm sorry, I don't ... is that German? I don't speak German."

"No - well ... actually ... maybee ... after all, a lot of English derives from Frisian because of the Vikings, yes, I think that's where I first heard it, talking to Odin. I remember those days, they were such fun ..."

This was confusing, and curious, but she was muttering so low and so fast, I could hardly understand.

"I'm sorry, Merelina, I still don't follow."

Merelina fixed me with her beady stare, "Call yourself a Black Country girl, and you don't know it? Well, how strange is that?! ... "Ow bist, me wench" is Black Country dialect for "How are you, my girl?" It's obvious! Do you like it? I think it has some oomph to it!" She formed her wing into a fist and shook it firmly in front of me. It was so comical; I repressed a grin.

"Ah - how interesting. I shall try to remember that."

## Chapter Five: Empirical Noticings (Part I)

The next two chapters present empirical noticings from primary research, and chapter seven discusses these noticings. This chapter provides an overview of story incidences encountered against the typology (Figure 3), specifically addressing the first research puzzle question:

- What is the current “professional knowledge landscape” of storytelling in nurse and teacher education in HE?

In the first section, I outline overall categories of stories seen in different contexts, identifying whether they are: broad or strong; formal or informal; pre-determined, spontaneous or response; oral, text-based or digital. I also identify in which contexts they appeared.

The following section introduces second phase noticings from SCRs which address the second part of the puzzle:

- What are practitioner educators’ perceptions of the use of storytelling in professional education?

These noticings are used to afford insights into story mappings, and specific types of stories encountered in lectures are analysed together with the “work” of stories using the Pedagogical Framework of Story Incidences (PFSI) (Figure 4). Examples are given of stories encountered and I examine how and where stories fitted into the context of lectures and how they were presented to, and received by, students.

Chapter six focuses on story incidences that were not easily categorised and which required re-thinking; I propose that these are new story types, and, where possible, link these to practitioner educators’ perceptions from SCRs. I also explore key themes that have arisen from the two phases, including surprises and uncertainties that have emerged.

*Trickster noticings and provocations* intertwine with accounts of story incidences and participant reflections to enable application of *Trickster Methodology*. Tricksters interact with noticings, making visible less tangible research aspects and provoking alternative

perspectives. Where tricksters' words appear within academic writing, they are represented by different typefaces to make them easily distinguishable (e.g. *my thoughts*, *Mr Wolf* and *Merelina*). Vignettes are used throughout these chapters to present stories that participants told in SCRs. These artefacts are examples of stories that participants have used with students, (and illustrate how they use stories). In keeping with intertextuality, they enable participants' voices to be heard alongside the analysis.

## 5.1 Phase One: Mapping the Professional Knowledge Landscape of Storytelling

Between November 2019 and mid-February 2020, I visited fifteen lectures - seven nursing and six education (Table 1). Class sizes ranged from small sessions (from eleven students) to large formal lectures with approximately 185 students attending, while the majority comprised between 20 and approximately 45 students. Whilst most had only one lecturer delivering, larger sessions were co-delivered. Consent was obtained from all lecturers in co-delivered sessions enabling me to record all story incidences.

*Table 1: Overview of Lectures Visited*

Number	Lecture type	Lecturers (Pseudonyms)	Format	Cohort size (approx.)	Duration	Portion seen
1	Nursing	Nancy	General Teaching	30	2 hours	2 hrs
2	Education	Thomas	Workshop	12	All day	2 hrs
3	Nursing	Elaine	General Teaching	11	3 hrs	3 hrs
4	Education	Ina	General Teaching	40+	2 hrs	2 hrs
5	Education	Thomas / Toby	Workshop	12	All day	2 hrs
6	Nursing	Nancy	Workshop	19	All day	2 hrs
7	Nursing	Nadia / Noreen	Formal Lecture	180+	2 hrs	2 hrs
8	Education	Tammy	General Teaching	30	2 hrs	2 hrs
9	Education	Tara	General Teaching	30	1 hr	1 hr
10	Education	Tara	General Teaching	40	2 hrs	2 hrs
11	Education	Colin	General Teaching	20+	2 hrs	2 hrs
12	Education	Tara	General Teaching	30+	2 hrs	2 hrs
13	Nursing	Naomi / Nicholas/ Nanette	Simulation Session	24	All day	3 hrs
14	Nursing	Naomi / Nicholas	General Teaching	40+	2 hrs	2 hrs
15	Nursing	Nathan	Formal Lecture	180+		

Lectures varied in duration, but most were between two or three hours and were part of regular teaching programmes, taught by a team of practitioner educators. There were

also some workshops and one nursing simulation session (half and full days), that were outside the regular delivery in that they focused on specific aspects of programmes and were often led by “guest” lecturers - that is, lecturers delivering on specialist subjects (e.g. nursing field specialisms), who may not normally have taught these students. However, these sessions were core elements of programmes rather than providing optional or supplementary content; I stayed two to three hours, seeing whole or significant portions of sessions.

### 5.1.1 Phase One: Frameworks and Stages of Analysis

As outlined in my methodology, the first stage of filtering and categorisation took place while writing fieldnotes (Figure 5). It was a conscious decision not to record everything that occurred, but instead to only focus on capturing incidences of story. This meant that I did not have to write continuous accounts and could immediately filter out extraneous material. Therefore, anything that was obviously not storytelling was omitted, and I recorded incidences that were obviously storytelling incidences, or that might qualify as storytelling. Consequently, fieldnotes varied between two sides of A4, up to sixteen pages (See Appendix 4). When analysing fieldnotes of nursing lectures I realised that I needed to make an additional distinction between clinical practice (CP) and teaching practice (TP) to reflect nurse educators’ distinctive dual roles and the difference in stories told.

The next layer of analysis involved reviewing fieldnotes immediately after sessions, reflecting and noting my immediate response. This layer was completed by typing up notes, providing another opportunity to reflect.

Figure 5: Stages of Analysis

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field notes – writing notes “in the moment”</li> <li>• Filtering of story incidences</li> <li>• Post session reflection – annotating field notes</li> <li>• Typing up field notes – additional reflection</li> </ul>	<p>Applying frameworks and coding fieldnotes using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Story typology</li> <li>• Pedagogical Framework of Story Incidences</li> <li>• Creating an overview – Story incidences tables</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revisiting annotated fieldnotes and overview table</li> <li>• Applying Trickster Methodology</li> </ul>

The second stage of analysis involved reacquainting myself with fieldnotes and categorising incidences against the typology. Although I had made preliminary categorisations in order to gain a general overview, I now reflected on story incidences in detail. I was not trying to “pigeon-hole” stories, but instead aimed to gain an understanding of characteristics of types of stories encountered. While the purpose of using a story or storytelling technique was interesting, it was not possible to definitely ascertain this from simply listening to stories. Instead, I considered the **work** of stories and how they had manifested in pedagogical interactions between practitioner educator/s and students, matching them against the PFSI. I, therefore, examined how stories were used, lecturers’ performative approaches to telling stories, and students’ responses. This necessitated close reading, annotation of fieldnotes and colour-coding text (See Appendix 5). The final layers brought practitioner educators’ story incidences and a record of student stories together in visual and table overviews, creating a “mapping” of story-types encountered.

Stage three consisted of writing up the analysis and applying Trickster Methodology. The process of writing enabled a thinking-through of research and has been an important part of applying trickster-thinking.

## 5.2 Phase Two: Story Circles for Research

*Table 2: Story Circles for Research by Date*

Story Circle Date	FTF / Virtual	Participants	Prompt
25.2.20	FTF	Ina Elaine	Meat of the Tongue Traditional Tale (Swahili)
9.3.20	FTF	Colin Angharad	
2.4.20	Virtual	Willow Colin	Eshu and the Hat (Traditional Trickster Tale)
8.4.20	Virtual	Elaine Willow	
14.4.20	Virtual	Elaine Ina Butterfly	Trickster Tale - Mrs Wolf. (by researcher - Semi- autobiographical)
23.4.20	Virtual	Colin and Willow	

Six SCRs took place between February and April 2020, two were face-to-face and four were Virtual-SCRs (Table 2). There were two nurse educators and four teacher educators. Elaine, Ina and Colin had taken part in phase one, while Butterfly, Willow and Angharad were new to this phase (Table 3).

Despite the small number of participants in each circle, presenting myself as participant-researcher enabled me to participate in story-sharing which helped create the collaborative story circle atmosphere of shared reflections and in-depth discussions. The use of prompts supplied interesting stimuli as well as being conducive to storytelling ambiance. I told folk tales for the first four SCRs, using traditional techniques, including telling unscripted stories from memory. The final prompt was a Trickster Tale, which I read out, using performative techniques to enhance the telling.

Table 3: Story Circles and Participants

Participants (Pseudonyms)	Nursing or Teaching	Number of Story Circles attended	Face to Face or/ Virtual Story Circle	Produced a semi-fictional story based on their practice	Comments
Butterfly	Nursing	1	Virtual	No	
Elaine	Nursing	3	1 x FTF 2 Virtual	No	
Angharad	Teaching	1	1 x FTF	No	Withdrew due to illness
Ina	Teaching	2	1 x FTF, 2 x Virtual	No	
Colin	Teaching	3	1 x FTF, 2 x Virtual	Yes	Told story in Story Circle 6
Willow	Teaching	3	3 x Virtual	Yes	Told story in additional Virtual meeting with Researcher only

SCRs generated focused and detailed discussions in which participants shared views on using storytelling and explained why, when, and how they used stories, thus providing key empirical evidence of participants' perceptions of storytelling.

### 5.2.1 Phase Two: Frameworks and Stages of Analysis

Figure 6: Phase Two: Stages of Analysis

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typing up transcriptions from audio or video</li> <li>• For video, going through and adding annotation on body language/gestures /expressions etc.</li> <li>• Post circle reflection - annotating alongside</li> <li>• Revisiting transcripts and adding in early noticings and interpretations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revisiting transcripts with participants - checking for accuracy of transcripts and getting comments on interpretations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying narrative inquiry analysis and coding fieldnotes by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• looking for resonances and dissonances</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Looking for common threads and surprises Merging Phase one and two to look for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resonances/</li> <li>• Dissonances</li> <li>• Common threads and surprises</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revisiting the analysis and applying the Trickster lens</li> </ul>

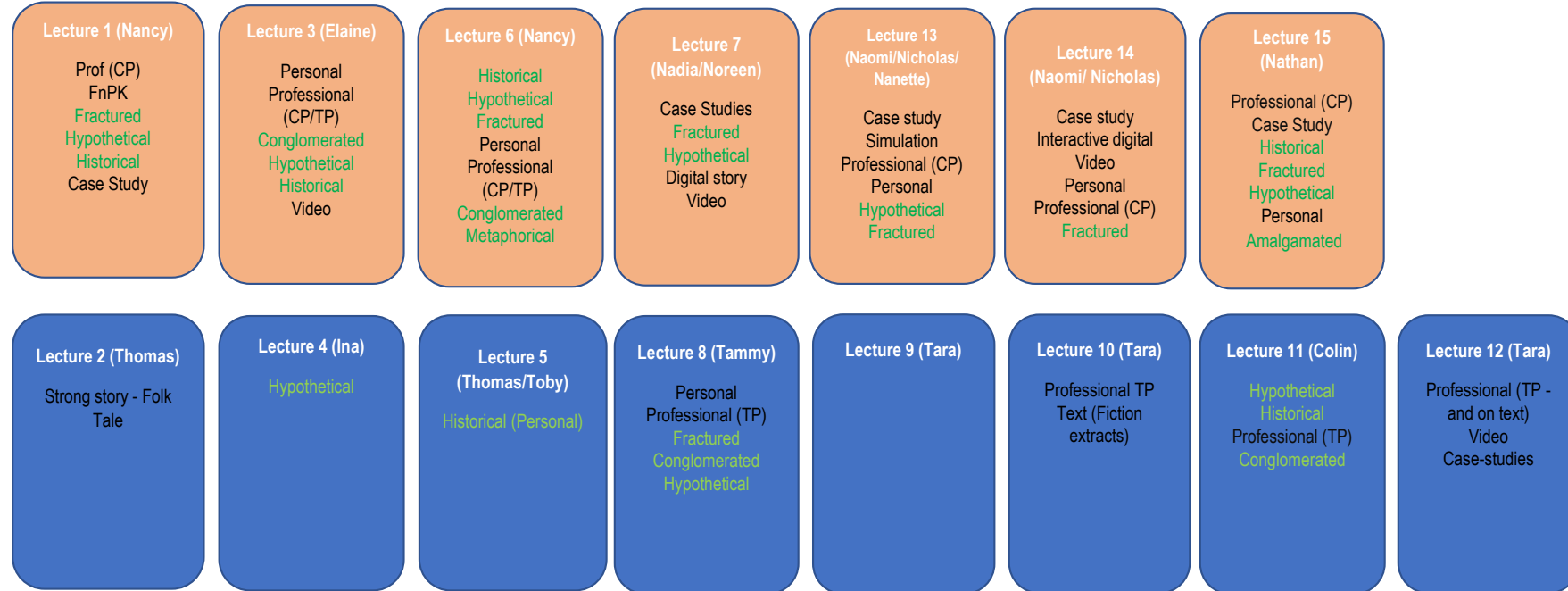


As with phase one, different stages and layers of analysis were employed (Figure 6). The first stage entailed transcribing audio and video recordings. As story circles maintained a tight focus on storytelling, there was very little that was not transcribed, thus this resulted in six transcripts of between eight- to ten-thousand words each. I transcribed verbatim, going through firstly to capture words spoken, and then re-listening to check accuracy and to add emphasis (italicising text). This detailed process helped me to start to understand and scrutinize transcripts. The unexpected benefit of moving online was that I had video of participants and was then able to add accurate details of facial expression, body language, etc. The next layer involved reflecting on each transcript and annotating it by adding questions, comments, noticings and interpretations.

In stage two I revisited transcripts with participants in one-to-one meetings, sharing transcripts on screen, and giving participants control of documents so they could amend, delete, or add comments. I also made handwritten notes of discussions surrounding questions or clarifications, which were added to the main transcript (in a different colour) immediately after discussions.

At stage three transcripts were analysed from a narrative inquiry perspective - resonances and dissonances between accounts were noted and I looked for common threads or themes as well as anomalies or surprises. As with phase one, the final stage involved writing up the analysis while applying Trickster Methodology.

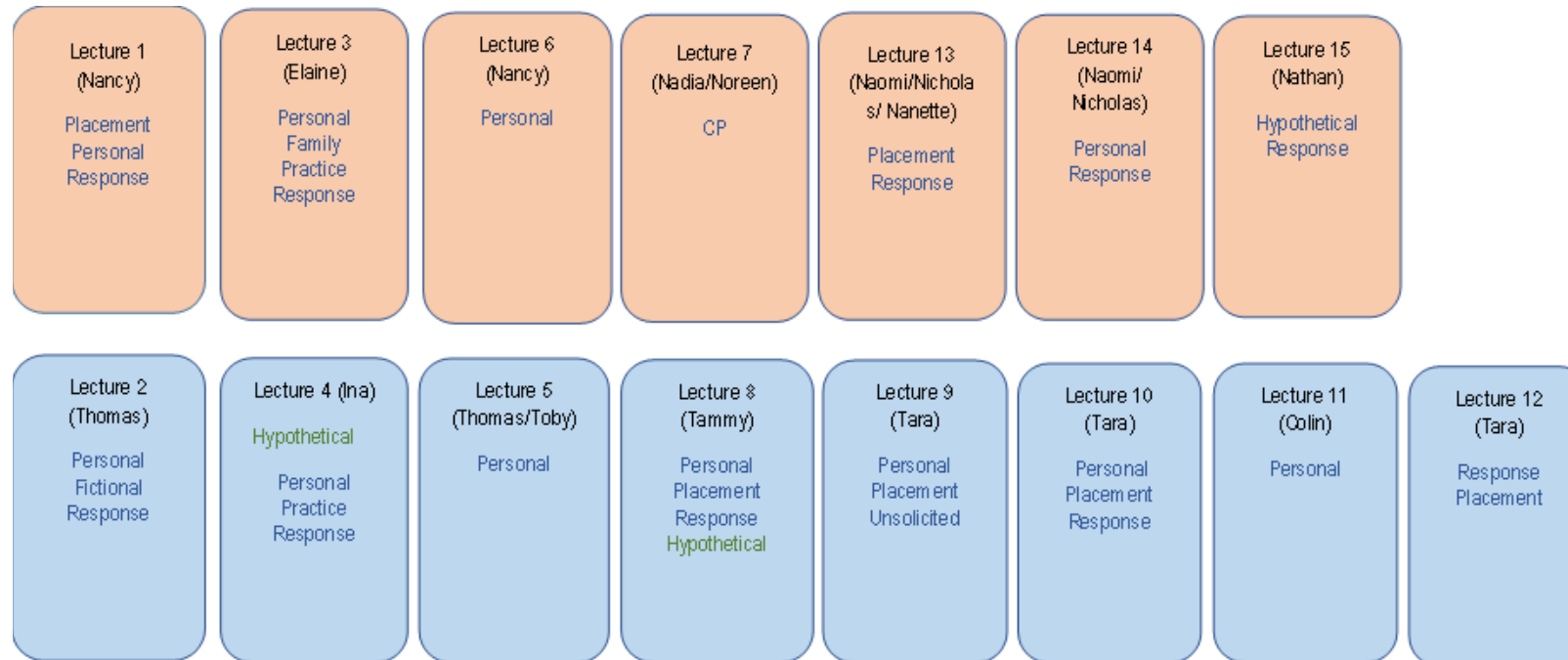
Figure 7: Story Incidences - Practitioner Educators



**Key:**  
 Pink boxes - Nursing lectures  
 Blue boxes - Education lectures  
 Black text - story types from typology  
 Green text - potential new story categories  
 CP = Clinical Practice  
 TP = Teaching Practice  
 FnPK = Factual not Personally Known

**Pseudonyms:**  
 Nursing lecturers start with N.  
 Teaching lecturers names start with T.  
 Except for Colin, Elaine and Ina, who also took part in Phase 2 and chose their own pseudonyms.

Figure 8: Story incidences - Students' Stories



**Key:**

Pastel Pink boxes - Nursing lectures

Pastel Blue boxes - Education lectures

White text - story types from typology

Green text - potential new story categories

Placement – student practice story on placement

**Pseudonyms:**

Nursing lecturers start with N.

Teaching lecturers names start with T.

Except for Colin, Elaine and Ina, who also took part in Phase 2 and chose their own pseudonyms.

### 5.3 Story incidences - Mapping Stories Against the Typology

Figure 7 provides a visual mapping of stories as **told by practitioner educators** within each lecture visited, with Figure 8 showing a visual mapping of types of stories **told by students** within the same lectures. As a reminder, my ethical approach was to record generic responses from students, including types of stories that they responded with. This was approved by the Ethics Board, as long as I did not include any quotes or details of story content, as this would have required student consent. Participants were allocated pseudonyms to enable easy identification of context, nursing educators' names begin with "N" and teacher educators' with "T". The exception is Ina and Colin (teacher educators), and Elaine (nurse educator) as they also took part in phase two, and so had chosen their own pseudonyms. I have not specified the number of times each story type was encountered (a story type only had to appear once to be included), however, I have provided an indication of the frequency of story types, stating whether they were rare or seen regularly. It is important to note that there are often crossovers between categories, for example, a personal story might also have been fractured, and a professional story might also have been conglomerated. These all relate back to the typology in chapter four, however, for easy reference the main definitions of categories are presented in figures at the top of each sub-section.

#### 5.3.1 Strong and Broad Stories

*Figure 9: Definition - Strong and Broad Stories*

<b>Strong story</b>	<b>Broad story</b>
<p>This is an account, varying in length, with a self-contained coherence, which conveys a happening or event. It has a beginning, a middle and an end (though it is not necessarily chronological). During the course of the story something is changed or resolved. Strong story's key purpose is to engage or entertain. It employs literary devices, and when told orally, performative techniques (gestures/ tone of voice for effect etc.)</p>	<p>This is an account, varying in length with a self-contained coherence, which conveys a happening or event. These are often personal or accounts of specific events. Their key purpose is to convey information or engage through content rather than to entertain.</p> <p>Both story types can be written or orally presented, or may be presented in other formats (e.g. digital)</p>

These categories distinguish between stories for entertainment and those that have more focused purposes. Broad stories include personal accounts, and because their purpose is to convey information, they usually do not contain literary devices, and may not closely adhere to sequencing but should have a self-contained coherence. Conversely, strong stories are primarily for entertainment purposes and therefore have distinct sequencing and literary

devices. Broad stories featured heavily across lectures, being the majority of stories encountered. However, strong stories featured in lecture 2, which was based around a folk tale and lecture 10, which included excerpts from English literature texts.

### 5.3.2 Formal and Informal Stories

*Figure 10: Definitions - Formal and Informal Stories*

Formal	Informal
<p>There is a set agenda/storytelling is confined to a specific format, for example students are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• given close instructions/directions on who can tell and when (e.g. listen to whole story and reserve comments/questions to the end);</li> <li>• given a sequence or framework;</li> <li>• given a timeframe;</li> <li>• asked to include specific questions/points to address</li> <li>• asked to formulate specific questions or comments etc. (e.g. story is told in order for certain points to be elicited or explored such as reflecting on practice)</li> <li>• working with a facilitator – another student or the lecturer.</li> </ul> <p>Can involve a single listener or multiple listeners.</p>	<p>There is no set agenda, no specific guidelines given. May arise out of general conversation.</p> <p>Can involve a single listener or multiple listeners.</p>

Formalised stories were not encountered in lectures visited, while students were sometimes encouraged to share personal or placement experiences, they were not asked to follow any formats that might be classed as formalised storytelling beyond the more general request to spend a certain amount of time on the overall task. Therefore, all oral storytelling incidences have been categorised as informal storytelling - that is, storytelling without an identifiable agenda.

### 5.3.3 Pre-determined, Spontaneous and Response stories

Predetermined stories are planned in advance and may be in text format, for example case-studies, whereas spontaneous and response stories are not planned in advance but are told “in the moment.” Spontaneous and response stories were prominent in most lectures, with pre-determined stories also appearing regularly, but there appeared to be few orally told pre-

determined stories. However, there is a caveat, as some pre-determined oral stories may just be more difficult to identify and stories that appear to be spontaneous may actually be planned. As well as case-studies, which were heavily used in nursing, there were some clear instances of pre-determined stories being used in education: Thomas told a folk tale (L2); Tara read out a personal practice story from a typed handout (L12); and Toby and Thomas told detailed “true” stories (L4) as the basis for exploratory activities. In addition, both nurse and teacher educators appeared to tell pre-determined stories to provide historical perspectives, closely linking to slides or videos.

As pre-determined stories are prepared and planned, it seems logical to also view Digital Stories (DS), including most video stories, in this category. Videos featured someone telling their story, and, often contributions had been prepared ready to be filmed - for example, in one video a mother told of her personal experiences as part of a speech delivered at a conference (See L14). Similarly, digital stories can be seen as pre-determined as they are designed to feature a series of images or animations with a narrated voice-over. While DS were pre-planned, practitioner educators had also pre-planned using these tools, for example, web-links to videos were set into slides rather than being searched for within sessions.

Spontaneous storytelling appeared to be widely used, however, as mentioned above, it is possible they were pre-determined in some cases. In several instances, (particularly in nursing), stories fitted very closely to presentation slides or handouts, and although stories seemed to be told on impulse, they were used strategically, offering enhanced views of topics or situations (e.g. L1, L6, L14, and L15). However, teacher educators seemed to make more use of spontaneous stories that were told around planned topics, but which did not always seem to directly link to slides or activities (for example L11).

Students often told stories (See Figure 8 and Tables 4 and 5) when asked questions, or when asked to discuss personal or placement experiences. These were all spontaneous stories as they never told a story they had been asked to prepare in advance. There were also several unsolicited stories, for example, where students were asked to complete a task but responded by first sharing stories about their experiences around a topic.

*Figure 11: Definitions of Pre-determined, Spontaneous and Response Stories*

<b>Pre-determined</b>	<b>Spontaneous</b>	<b>Response</b>
Person has thought about and prepared the story in advance, possibly written it out, or written out key points that they want to cover.	"Off the cuff" a story that is told "in the moment", a story that is not planned/prepared in advance.	When a listener responds to a story with a story of their own. This type of story is likely to relate to the initial story in some way, either to add similar ideas to the first, or acts as a contradiction to the first. These are likely to also be spontaneous stories.

Response stories are unplanned and told in reaction to someone else's story, picking up on some elements of the original. Students often told these, either responding to stories told by educators (or video stories) or exchanging stories in small groups. Occasionally lecturers responded to comments or questions from students with a story (for example, L3), or by expanding further on a story that they had told - as in lecture 13, where students asked for more details. Sporadically, practitioner educators told a story in response to a student's story.

### 5.3.4 Oral, Text-Based and Digital Stories

*Figure 12: Definitions of Oral, Text-based and Digital stories*

<b>Oral</b>	<b>Text based</b>	<b>Digital</b>
Refers to stories that are told orally – either scripted or unscripted.	Stories that are in text formats that are accessed by reading.	Stories told through digital media, may include videos, games etc.
Short – less than 2 minutes	Can be any length from a few sentences, to a full-length novel.	Short – less than 2 minutes
Medium – 2 – 5 mins		Medium – 2 – 5 mins
Long – 5 – 10 mins		Long – 5 – 10 mins
Extended – 10 mins +		Extended – 10 mins +

Oral storytelling was regularly encountered and featured in some form in all lectures (although in L9, stories were told **only** by students); OS is a highly adaptable way of conveying stories as it does not require supplementary resources or equipment. However, there was significant variety in the types of OS within different settings. Most were brief, less

than two minutes, but there were several medium length stories (four- to six-minutes) told in both contexts.

Text-based stories were regularly referred to in nursing lectures (L1, L7, L13, L14 and L15), and in one education (L12), in the form of case-studies. Students had received case-studies prior to lectures. Several nursing lectures were based largely around case-studies and involved nurse educators giving supplementary information within sessions and asking students to consider different aspects of their studies. A significant proportion of student-nurses' assessment centred on case-studies. Text-based stories also occurred in lecture 10 where text extracts of fictional stories were given out for students to use in activities - these comprised a short section from the novel "1984" (George Orwell) and the play "An Inspector Calls" (J. B. Priestly).

Digital stories were mainly employed by nurse educators, though education lecture 12 included video stories about behaviour management. Several nurse educators (lectures 3, 7 and 14) employed a variety of videos including some with testimony from professionals. Lecture 7 included a digital story, comprising animation and voice-over about how "Isabella" could make better life choices. Lecture 14 was completely based on a case-study which was presented on a digital ward.

*"Good morning, Merelina."* Mr. Wolf's smooth tones floated through the air.

*"Ow bist?"*

*"Very well, thank you... Georgina - you are up bright and early and doing your analysis I see?"*

Mr Wolf's voice permeated my thoughts and I felt something gently tap my shoulder, "Mmm?" - I looked up from my screen and became aware that the Tricksters were talking to me; they stood expectantly, looking eager to please. "Oh, hello! Sorry, I wasn't expecting you to turn up here, you usually pop up outside somewhere."

*"Well yes,"* Merelina replied *"not sure I like the indoors too much - but, needs must, as they say - you are stuck in here with all these papers and that computer-thingy, so we need to be here too."*

*"Exactly, we are at your disposal."* Mr. Wolf bowed low and doffed his bowler hat.

"Well, thank you - but ... actually, I wonder if you can just wait a while and be quiet for a bit, I was just in the middle of writing, and I need to concentrate, else I shall lose my train of thought."

*"Yes, of course."* Agreed Merelina.

*"Definitely, we understand. We'll just sit here and be on-hand when you need us."* Mr. Wolf started moving some papers and books to one side.

"Ok - well, thank you, but please be careful of all those papers, they need to be kept in order."

*"Of course, don't worry about us, we won't disturb anything, will we, Merelina?"*

*"You can count on us!"* She agreed.



### 5.3.5 Range of Stories - An Overview

Many of the story categories outlined in the typology were encountered to some extent in phase one. Here I provide a brief overview of what was seen, indicating similarities and differences in stories told between nurse and education sessions.

The most common story type was professional stories, these focus on lecturers' professional practice, and were encountered regularly across lectures. However, there were a large variety of formats, with considerable variation in usage. Students also often told stories about their practice in placements or workplaces. Teacher educators told professional stories in four lectures (L8, L10, L11, L12). For example, Tammy (L8) told several short anecdotes in relation to behaviour management centring around her teaching practice while Tanya (L10) told an anecdote about how she had used a specific resource with different students, and how this had been received. Nurse educators mainly told CP stories however, there were three instances when they also told TP stories. In two separate sessions, nurse educators shared some of their own research, giving information on how they had carried this out and what they had found. Although only encountered occasionally, these incidences indicate nurse educators use TP stories to share wider aspects of their roles, linking teaching and research to clinical practice. CP stories featured regularly in nursing sessions, being encountered in six out of seven lectures visited and often there were several stories told within each lecture - they were only absent from L7.

Personal stories are anecdotes that focus on lecturers' personal, as opposed to professional, experience. They were used regularly by four nurse educators and occasionally by two teacher educators. Despite being personal in nature, anecdotes closely linked to the lecture focus. Stories were mainly very brief (under 2 minutes), but some were longer, up to medium length (4 - 5-minutes). They were based around lecturers' own experiences, or those of family, or friends. They were often funny and sometimes self-deprecating or emotional.

Case-studies are usually text-based narratives that concentrate on individuals or groups of people, presenting their circumstances in depth as a study focus. These were a primary tool in nursing being referred to in five out of seven lectures, with three sessions completely focused on case-studies (L7, L13, L14). They were a key component of lectures,

(sometimes used across modules), and assessments, portraying individual patients' medical histories and detailed back-stories (context, family, social etc.). They were often used to frame or provide focus for other topics, or to pose practical problems for student-nurses to solve, in contrast, case-studies were only used in one education lecture (L12). While nursing case-studies all appeared to have been developed by lecturers, education case-studies were taken directly from an on-line Ofsted report about behaviour management in outstanding schools (DfE, 2017b). In all circumstances students had received case-studies as text-based documents prior to lectures. In nursing, role-plays were often used in combination with case-studies, particularly for simulation (L13) and multi-media sessions (L14). Students acted in response to medical situations or role-played as patients. In contrast, in education they were not linked to case-studies but featured heavily in two lectures (L2 and L5) in combination with fictional and historical stories, where they were used to demonstrate pedagogical techniques.

Videos featuring stories, and one digital story, were used on several occasions in nursing, however video was only used in one education lecture (L12). Video clips often mixed information with stories: for example, a 10-minute YouTube™ video on behaviour issues by Bill Rogers, (a teaching "guru") mixed general information and strategies for classroom management with Rogers' own practice stories about challenges he had faced. Some personal stories within videos used in nursing were very powerful. Elaine (L3) showed a moving account of the use of advanced techniques for dealing with Alzheimer's in which Naomi Feil, (a founder of Validation Therapy) told the story of Alzheimer's sufferer Gladys Wilson. Captions at the start gave personal information on Gladys, followed by a video of Naomi giving testimony on how she used the therapy. The video provided student-nurses with an insight into the world of dementia and an awareness of how advanced therapies could help soothe patients and enhance their quality of life. Potentially, it also provided information on techniques that student-nurses might want to research and use in their own practice.

Fictional stories were rarely encountered: text excerpts from novels were used by Tara (L10) and Thomas told "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," - a folk tale (L2) as a framework for investigating different pedagogical techniques, but these were the only examples.

It can be seen that there was a range of story types used across lectures visited. However, although professional stories were encountered frequently in both contexts, there was a

distinct difference in other types of stories used, with some appearing in nursing that were not used in education. This will be discussed in chapter seven.

### 5.3.6 Student Stories

Students' use of stories has often been the main focus of previous research (see chapter three), and so I did not seek to specifically analyse this, however, I was interested in examining the circumstances surrounding students' use of stories, exploring the interplay with practitioner educators and how these affected group dynamics. These are interesting as they show what types of lecturer stories, (or actions) resulted in student stories, and these vary greatly. An overview showing the frequency and flow of stories is presented in Tables 4 and 5. These are analysed and discussed in relation to practitioner educators' use of stories in the next section, rather than independently, as their significance is integral to this.

**Table 4: Student Stories - Nursing Lectures (1, 3)**

Note: Column 2, R = Student Response Story - indicates stories where elements of the story share some features with the preceding story. US = Unsolicited Story - where a lecturer had set a task that did not ask them to share experiences/stories. Column three gives a brief description of the event that prompted the student's story; and column four provides information about the story type and an

Lecture	SR/US	Tutor input leading to story	Student Response
1 Nancy		Question	Personal Story
		Questions / challenging ideas	Clinical Practice
		Questions / challenging ideas	Placement Story
	SR	CP story about a hospital being "hacked"	Placement Story
	SR	Historical/fractured story about drug errors	Placement Story about drug error.
3 Elaine	SR	Generic story about family members talking about people with dementia	Personal - Family story (3 mins) [Student A]
	SR	Validation form lecturer on previous student story	Personal Family story (2 mins) [Student B]
		Validation from teacher that it's "very interesting story"	Expansion of story from Student B.
		Teacher told metaphorical story (bookcase and memories)	Expansion on earlier story. New personal story.
	SR [C]	Teacher tells personal story about her father using hearing aids	Student [c] Personal story
		Gives examples of cognitive therapy	Student [A] Personal family story
	SR	Historical story about study of Alzheimer's	Student [A] Personal family story, expanding.
	SR	Student [A] asked [B] about her experience	Student [B] personal family story
	SR	Followed from B's personal story.	Student [A] and another student co-creating a story about what they had seen on TV relating to previous family story.  3- 4 minute exchange.
	SR	Showed Video (John Clees) talking about the brain	Student [A] responded with personal experience, expanded into story.
	SR	Story about patients displaying particular symptoms	Student [A] told story - used story to frame/contextualise a question.
		Asked for tips on dealing with dementia patients	Student [A] CP (2 mins)
		CP example/semi-story about "contented dementia"	Student [B] personal story.
	SR SR	Historical story about Tom Kitwood	Student [D] Clinical Practice - mixed with general comments.  Student [A] - extended personal story (3 mins). Animated in telling, students laughing - enjoying the story.
	SR	Hypothetical example about attachment theory	Student [D] 2 mins  Student [B] 1 min  Student [A] 2 mins
SR	Hypothetical	Personal Story (2 mins)  TP (1 min)	

**Table 4 (continued): Student Stories - Nursing Lectures (6, 7, 13, 14, 15)**

Note: SR = Student Response Story; US = Unsolicited Story.

Lecture	SR/US	Tutor input leading to story	Student Response
6 Nancy		Question on whether small companies had to employ people with mental health issues.	Personal story (30 secs)
7 Nadia/ Noreen Formal lecture (180+)		Asked students to share practice experiences of interventions	Clinical Practice Story
	SR	Personal	Personal story
13 Naomi/ Nicholas/ Nanette	SR	Plenary - discussing escalation language - when to use it.	Placement experience - Brief.
14. Naomi/ Nicholas	SR	Naomi told personal story related to Down Syndrome. Asked if they had any experience of Down Syndrome.	4 brief (1 minute) personal stories, interspersed with discussion on issues around attitudes to Down Syndrome and the need to be sensitive.  1 personal story - Naomi validated - student expanded with more detail.
	SR	Nicholas - discussing concept of "perfect" babies v. health defects.	Practice story Practice story (responding to first student's story) (1-2 mins)
		Asked for experiences of visiting PICU	Personal story (30 secs).
		Nicholas talking about case-study and potential hallucinogenic effects of drug	Practice story (1 min)
15 Nathan Formal lecture (180+)	SR	Clinical Practice story	Hypothetical Response story. (1 min.)

**Table 5: Student Stories - Education Lectures (2, 4, 5, 8, 9)**

Note: Column 2, R = Student Response Story - indicates stories where elements of the story share some features with the preceding story. US = Unsolicited Story - where a lecturer had set a task that did not ask them to share experiences/stories. Column 3 gives a brief description of the event that prompted the student's story; and column four provides information about the story type and any other pertinent details.)

Lecture	SR/US	Tutor input leading to story	Student Response
2 Thomas		Starter activity - "What makes a family"	Personal story
	SR	First section of Pied Piper Tale	Offered alternative ending
4 Ina	SR	Hypothetical scenario (not full story)	Hypothetical scenario - on how they might change practice to deal with a situation.
	SR	Hypothetical scenario (not full story)	Personal Story (2 mins) TP (1 min)
5 Thomas/ Toby		Asks if students had personal stories to share	Personal story (30 secs)
		Teacher directs students to discuss personal/family stories that they can use as a pedagogical tool for their students.	Sharing personal stories in groups
8 Tammy		Teacher asked if students had received a letter from a school about behaviour management	Personal story - detailed
	SRs	Personal experience - amalgamated anecdotes	Personal stories. Practice stories.
		Discussion task set for students to feedback experiences	In groups sharing personal experiences.
	SR	Practice story.	Hypothetical Response Story Personal story (40 secs)
	US	Discussion task: What are problems working with parents	Personal stories / own experiences.
		Talking about strategies, asked students to share their experiences.	Practice story (to whole group) - detailed, expanded twice when prompted.
		Practice Example	2 Placement stories.
	SR	Practice Story	2 personal stories
	SR	Personal	Personal story
	US	Task to prepare role-play for communicating with parents (parents evening)	In group discussions - telling Personal stories of experiences.
9 Tara		Discussion task to share personal experiences of OFSTED	Sharing personal/practice experiences in groups.
		Teacher asked students to feedback positive experiences to whole group.	4 personal stories 1 told a negative story. 1 story - funny
	US	Teacher asked students to discuss aspects of Common Inspection Framework.	Students in group discussions - 1 nearest to me telling a personal experience story.
	US	Teacher asked students to share feedback on CIF.	Placement story (1 minute).

*Table 5 (Continued): Student Stories - Education Lectures (10, 11, 12)*

Note: SR = Student Response Story; US = Unsolicited Story.

Lecture	SR/US	Tutor input leading to story	Student Response
10 Tara	SR	Task set on Assessing Oracy and using benchmarks.  Talking to one group - brief TP story	Personal story - Brief
	SR	Same task.	In different groups - Students telling each other practice stories
11 Colin	S	Task set to work through ethical scenarios.	Personal story (in discussion group)
	S	Taking feedback on scenarios	Personal story (30 secs)
12 Tara	SR	Extended TP story  Immediately set task - then expanded on story.	Personal story (in response to a question about the teacher's story (30 secs).  Practice story
	S SR	Tara asked if anyone had a strategy for dealing with the issue raised by the student's practice story.	Practice story – Detailed, quoting things and using voice changes. Other students enjoying story.  Practice story - brief/focused Practice - Detailed – 1 min Practice - 1 min
	S	Tara validating and encouraging more stories	Practice - 1 min  These 3 blocks of stories followed on from each other.
	US	Task (pairs / threes) - discuss how to deal with low level disruption.	One group – telling practice stories in groups. (“acting out” e.g putting arms in air, mimicking their own students – excited voices. (I could not hear other groups).
	US	Bill Rogers Video - with practice story. Task set to discuss applying the strategies to own practice.	In groups - some telling personal stories - prompted by video.
	US	Ofsted Framework/expectations. Asked for examples from practice.	Practice story (brief).
	US	Task to discuss case-studies (pre-sent) and pick out key points to present to group.	In groups - 2 groups exchanging practice/ placement stories before working on task.

## 5.4 Practitioner Educators' Use of Stories

Having outlined stories encountered against main typology categories, I now discuss story incidences considering them against the PFSI (Figure 4). I examine how stories “sat” within teaching contexts, analysing how practitioner educators presented and used stories, and exploring the “work” of stories, considering how they interacted with other elements in lectures including students' responses. I provide examples of the content and presentation of stories encountered and examine how they were used. In addition, I employ perceptions on the use of storytelling from SCRs to offer further insights into these noticings. Extracts from fieldnotes are included: **blue text** represents fieldnotes taken “in the moment”; **purple text** indicates additional reflections made later. Wording in square brackets indicates commentary about what I viewed, for example detailing performativity aspects, or giving clarification on particular points.

### 5.4.1 Providing Specific Examples or Learning Points

Practitioner educators frequently used practice and personal stories to illustrate specific examples. In nursing lectures, stories often focused on discussions around clinical issues, symptoms, or behaviour of patients that student-nurses might encounter. Elaine (L3) told a story from her early nursing career:

Elaine described coming across an elderly woman ... who had her dress on upside down. [Held her arms above her head to show how the woman looked. Used hand gestures and descriptive language.] - The dress was stretchy [moving hands back and forth in a stretching motion]. Elaine explained the woman said she was going to find her mom. Elaine had asked her [how] old she was – the woman said she was 10. [Students all listening, interested, smiling.]

Although each tale was unique, stories enabled discussions about how nurses might deal with a range of diverse situations in clinical practice. In other instances, stories provided insights into why a person might display particular behaviours, for example, depending on what type of dementia they were suffering from. This gave student-nurses ways of recognising and understanding behaviours and to be prepared for them.

Butterfly (SCR5) stressed:

“Culturally – stories are important to nurses. **All** nurse educators use stories from their own clinical practice and tell these to their students.”



Butterfly told a story that she uses regularly as an example of how student-nurses can develop psychomotor and kinaesthetic skills (Vignette 3). The story associates how hard to hit mannequins with how firmly to hit a baby to dislodge an object. She said:

“Learning this type of skill can be frightening, it is important to pick up the correct technique – this story gets the message across well.”

Angharad and Ina also said that they used stories to give specific messages or create “thinking points” for students. Angharad felt she told stories that were “to the point”, that were contextualised to support learning:

“...short, sharp, making a point, rather than you **discovering** the point.”

Ina (SCR1) said that she tells stories in order to impart specific messages. While reviewing transcripts, she clarified that when she tells a story, she is “quite instrumental” in that she is giving student-teachers a message with a “clear purpose” and emphasises different parts of the story accordingly. Angharad (SCR2) gave an example of a story in which her colleague Colin had prompted her to think differently about a specific situation:

“I don’t tell them what Colin told me, I tell them about why I was in this position ... and [how] it made me, ...he just made me think differently. ... I do it from the point of view of saying this is what happened to me, perhaps this is something to consider in the same way, and I suppose that for me, is a more powerful way of using that experience to support them.”

This seems to be a “show not tell” technique - that is the situation is presented as a story, but students can decide for themselves as to the significance of it, or what it means to them. Angharad is deliberately giving them a “thinking point”, that encourages students to apply to their own situation.

#### 5.4.2 Sharing Mistakes or Examples of Good or Bad Practice

Practitioner educators used stories as examples of mistakes they had themselves made in their practice, so that students could reflect on these and learn from them. Tara’s extended practice story (L12) was particularly interesting, where she talked about teaching a very challenging English class, having recently qualified:

Tara announced she would “Start with a little story...” about a fresh-faced teacher ... [who was told] this is the “sink” class ...

She went on to detail the problems the teacher had faced, the disastrous attempt to teach the session ... and how distraught the teacher had felt, thinking she wouldn't last the week, let alone succeed as a teacher.

[Tara read the story from a written text, ...also displayed on the IWB. Read through quickly, but with tonal changes, pauses, and laughing at one point.]

At the end she declared it to be an extreme example, but "a real life one."

Afterwards, Tara gave student-teachers two discussion points, asking them to decide what the teacher and school could have done differently. The story was, therefore, used as a concrete example of what could go wrong, with student-teachers being asked to identify alternative approaches and analyse the situation from different perspectives. Presenting the story initially as being about an unidentified teacher allowed student-teachers to talk unrestrained.

While student-teachers were carrying out their task, Tara came over to talk to me and explained that:

She had been thinking that it would be good for students to hear a real example of a trainee who had had a disaster, she was keen to reassure them that they were already more knowledgeable and confident now than she had been when she had that experience.

Thus, Tara's intention for telling the story, as well as providing discussion points on dealing with challenging behaviour, was also to boost student-teachers' confidence in themselves and their abilities early in their training.

This resonates with reflections from SCR participants, who talked about telling practice stories about previous mistakes and using these as examples. Butterfly's story (SCR5) about the mannequin clearly shows her mishap as a new nurse educator - she felt that these types of stories were important as they help students to realise:

"...we're all human, things do go wrong. It's a reality of life, things don't always go to plan..."

### Vignette 3: Butterfly's Story

#### Vignette 1\_ Butterfly

One of the things that I teach quite regularly is life support, and as a teaching student, when I was doing my erm, degree, I was being observed teaching, and had picked up this baby mannequin, and was teaching how to do back blows, when a baby is choking, and hitting the baby on the back of the shoulders. And the mannequin must have been quite old, and as I hit it, the head, shot off this mannequin and crossed through ... like an Exocet missile, and I thought "What do I do now?" But it's a story and anecdote that I will now use when I'm teaching that about the importance about supporting the jaw and the head [demonstrating by but her hand to her jaw and nape of neck] because you don't want it to ricochet on the baby's back to clear the obstruction... er but also important that the head doesn't fall off, as per my previous experience. And I was a junior nurse teacher, and it was, a complete nightmare. Well, often the question I get is "What did you do?" with a headless body, but thankfully there was another mannequin available, so I was able to put that to one side and send it for surgery. But whether it was something that could be repaired, I don't think so. Terminal illness of the mannequin! [Everyone laughing]

Angharad and Colin agreed that they often told this type of story:

Angharad (SCR2) "Nearly all of mine are about things that I have done wrong [pause] and I created....I create [Colin laughing] a scenario around it to {show why it is wrong}"

Colin: {"Yeah that's mine ... yeah..." [laughing]} [{} overlapping speech]

Angharad: "The whole point for the stories that I tell, is it's relating them to experience that you, my students, might see parallels, that you can use that in order to make the different choice and decisions, that I might make, and then you would be more effective than I was, I suppose."

Elaine's accounts also resonate with these, as she often felt her stories were about things going wrong, or times when she had done things differently:

Elaine (SCR1): "There was a very worrying situation, this is what I did which went against all the rules, everything went wrong, but luckily I survived."

While most participants were confident that their stories relating mistakes were of benefit to students, Colin (SCR2) expressed reservations that stories might not always connect with students at the time of telling them, but that they prompted students to realise that student-teachers would themselves make mistakes and that they would need to learn from them:

"...but actually, you [the student] probably won't listen to that, it's more of a case of these things will happen, and you *must* learn from them..."

Willow also had some doubts about these types of stories. While she had told them in the past, she was guarded about doing this now, feeling they might reflect badly on her, or that student-teachers might feel that her stories were “unprofessional”. She also worried about whether stories would “connect” to students.

However, Elaine (SCR1) was more circumspect:

“But sometimes I say, well this is a story about when I did things wrong but there is a sub-text that I did lots of things right, and you can notice them while you’re at it.”

*Quite right too!*

Echoing Colin, she felt that stories demonstrated that she had learnt from her mistakes and that this provided good modelling for students.

#### 5.4.3 Promoting Empathy and Collegiality Through Shared Experience

Where stories were used as a vehicle for sharing personal or practice experiences, they often generated lots of discussion and student response stories, and it is possible that this enabled lecturers to foster empathy in students, or collegiality within the cohort.

Tara’s story (L12) about being an inexperienced teacher generated significant discussion and suggestions about what the teacher could have done differently and what support measures the school should have implemented. Students conveyed strong empathy towards the teacher in the story, and subsequently for Tara when they realised it was about her. Following Tara’s extended practice account student-teachers offered their own stories, which Tara used as a basis for further discussion, resulting in yet more stories. The complexity of this exchange can be seen in Table 5. Stories told here, and throughout the lecture, were validated by Tara, who sporadically agreed with points made and gave encouraging comments.

Validation of stories seemed to be important in supporting more students to share their experiences, these exchanges were given “space” by Tara and stories flowed organically, one story seeming to spark another. In SCRs, Ina (SCR1) explained that she used stories to connect with students, to show them that there was a commonality of experience:

“I talk to my students about my own processes that I’ve gone through to learn something, and how I understand it ... And it’s about telling them the story, showing them, I’m your tutor, but I’ve also gone through it, I’ve also experienced it.”

Angharad (SCR1) agreed:

“And it’s a way of, sort of saying, this might be easier for you to accept. This is why you do it this way, by saying, I’ve made those mistakes ...”

This was seen in lecture 8, where Tammy told student-teachers stories of challenging behaviour so they could consider how to deal with them. Some resulted in student response stories, including one brief personal story which created a lot of excitement in the group, with lots of gasps and laughter.

*Mmm - interesting, lecturers’ stories do not necessarily result in students sharing placement stories, instead they respond with personal ones - I wonder why?*

Additionally, stories had the effect of encouraging student-teachers to share their own experiences - either personal or practice. This provided concrete situations for students to

*What is the effect on the teaching experience? Do you think stories make situations more relevant to students because this is what they are experiencing, or are they a distraction?*

explore so that they could think about their own experiences and how they might respond in similar situations.

Practitioner educators’ experiences are valuable, authentic stories, but may be somewhat remote from students, the events portrayed may have been in the distant past under different situations.

When practitioner educators show interest in students’ stories or encourage them to tell or expand on stories, they are validating their experiences, this may help students feel more confident in sharing further.

*So, students are able to discuss their own situations, or their peers, creating a shared current experience?*

*Yes, students hear different stories from various sources, providing them with a wider bank of authentic experiences to draw upon, therefore ...*

By encouraging feedback within the group practitioner educators facilitate reflection, especially when students’ stories result in different comments from others, thus enabling multiple perspectives.

*“They help them to create a bond, then?”*

*“Yes, that makes sense - it gives them a feeling of “commonality”, a shared identity.”*

However, this sharing of stories was seen more often in nursing; Elaine opened her session (L3) with accounts of family members dealing with dementia, and this provided an environment that became “steeped” in stories (Table 4), with several members of the cohort

(two in particular) sharing very detailed personal stories throughout. Elaine welcomed contributions, using them to develop discussions on patient behaviours and considerations of how they might deal with situations raised. This was a very small group which may have been more conducive to story sharing. Butterfly commented that it was easier to encourage students to share stories in smaller groups (fifteen to twenty) students, especially:

where more complex stories were shared, and they needed to delve deeper [transcript meeting]

Naomi's stories (L14) relating to amniocentesis and the video story about a mother's experience of Down Syndrome also resulted in several sensitive stories being shared by students despite the larger group size. However, it was apparent that the cohort knew each other well, which may have enabled these types of emotional stories to be shared.

#### 5.4.4 Providing a Professional Role-Model

Practitioner educators frequently told stories that portrayed themselves or colleagues, providing examples of how to navigate various circumstances. This included how they had responded to situations and how their profession was perceived by others, which accentuated aspects of their professional identities and presented them as role-models.

Nadia (L7) talked about her partner ignoring her advice after he suffered a health scare, because, although she was a qualified nurse, he was thinking of her as his partner and therefore dismissive of her views. She described him being diagnosed with a health condition:

She gave details of food intake, lack of exercise ... how she had needed to "drag him" to appointments ... he had ignored the advice ... "his little bag" ... putting it to the side, saying he didn't need it. She explained it took 2 weeks to get him to take his pills.

"Stop nagging me woman!" ... it was too personal, ... Back to the consultant ... what happened? ... Consultant told him off. ... "So now he's taking his pills" ... sometimes forgets... so, "takes 2 the next day."

This is a personal example of someone who had been diagnosed with a serious illness, but who did not follow health advice despite Nadia's reinforcement. The fact this was the nurse-educator's partner provided a more intimate insight. It illustrates that patients may not follow medical advice when they have serious health conditions, despite potentially disastrous consequences. Nadia stressed her partner was specifically not taking her advice because

he was not seeing her as a nurse, asking her to stop “nagging” him, showing that he was not thinking of her as a health professional, but as his “nagging” partner. She pointed out that her advice became too personal, so he ignored her, however, when the consultant reprimanded him, he listened. This story highlights nurse identity and relationships - whilst on the course, student-nurses are developing their medical knowledge and skills, their status will impart them with some authority to advise and make decisions with patients, but also, even when qualified, their advice might be ignored.

Nadia asked students lots of questions, prompting them to engage, reflect and think through the implications of the story:

asking what happened? why he ignored her and took notice of the consultant?

[Lots of diagnosis. Questions interspersed in the story ... prompted answers which allowed the next stage of the story.].

Despite the formal lecture setting, two students responded with personal stories. Nadia then gave her own analysis enabling students to understand her perspective.

Naomi and Nicholas (L14) also told stories about their careers, focusing on how they came to work in a Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU), they talked about substantial challenges and rewards of working in that type of environment.

Naomi had thought she wanted to be an oncology nurse ... “in my head” ... it was working with families ... then ... she went into PICU and thought it was like being “in a cockpit ... language was like double-dutch ... all really alien to me.” [using gestures/tone of voice/pauses].

[Students laughing] ...ICU allowed her to work with families.

Nicholas: “I was in PICU with an ECMO\* patient, ... thick tubes coming out of their chest, tubes everywhere” ... but then he realised he wouldn’t have to look after the patient on his own.

[\*ECMO - Extracorporeal membrane oxygenation – takes over the work and heart of lungs].

These stories portrayed nurses needing to work with complicated medical equipment but also encapsulating the need to be emotionally resilient. They encouraged student-nurses to think carefully about their own career choices and field specialisms. Stories highlighted how different types of nursing offered a range of rewards and challenges that they needed to think about in choosing their

roles. Nicholas explained that he had considered leaving PICU because of high death rates. He said that he sought out mentoring, and then saw this was normal in PICU and he was making a positive, not a negative, difference. Student-nurses were fully engaged in these stories, often responding with empathetic “aahs” and “oohs”. Stories, therefore, familiarised trainees with different types of challenges, but in particular, prepared them for emotional burdens that they were likely to experience. In addition, sharing stories gave students the opportunity of making experiences their own, allowing them to vicariously learn from nurse educators’ stories and apply them to their own practice. Teacher educators’ stories were less “intimate” on the whole, as they focused on educational situations. Nurse educators, however, did not “overshare”, they seemed to still keep tight control on how much they disclosed.

*“How curious, looking at these fieldnotes, nurse educators’ stories are much more personal than teacher educators’ - why is that? They’re really opening up about their own difficulties and challenges.”*

*“Yes - I’ve noticed nurse educators often talked about their own health, or sensitive personal situations. Whereas teacher educators’ stories seem less “intimate” because they focus on teaching. Tara’s is the most open, but that, in itself, seems a bit of an anomaly for the education sessions.”*

*“Nancy’s stories give a lot of personal details too - how fascinating. But - oh look, Georgina’s in full-writing mode - we’d better remind her of this later.”*

*“Yes - good idea, Merelina.”*

*“Could that be because they are pre-planned?. It’s easier to control something that’s planned, than being drawn into telling something spontaneously.”*

*“Ooh - yes, interesting thought...”*

#### 5.4.5 Enhancing and Enlivening Teaching

Stories often had the effect of enlivening a lecture in some way. They were frequently amusing, shocking, or dramatic, with students reacting to stories with laughter, gasps, empathetic sighs, excited chatter and sometimes even crying when emotional stories were shared. In SCR2 Angharad shared an amusing story that was rooted in her practice, that she would often share with students (Vignette 4). Her descriptions and performativity brought the story to life, vividly portraying an example of poor teaching.



#### Vignette 4: Angharad's Story

##### Vignette \_\_ Angharad (SC2)

I was, for 20 years, I was running observation systems .... , so I've seen a lot, and especially, you know, those members of staff who, may have been qualified, but who were, in effect, failing, and then you had to put in all the processes, and all the support, and some of the things that I have seen ... you know ... erm ... you know, one where I stopped a class midway because it was dangerous, in engineering. Another one where I saw an engineer who was doing his best to follow all the things I'd said to make his lesson more exciting, ended up getting his guitar out and singing [to] his 14-year old students from \_\_\_\_\_ school, which was a rough school, a song that was so *excruciatingly* embarrassing nobody knew what to do, even the young lads, in this ... were open-mouthed, it was so awful, God, I can see him now as well... and again, as soon as I go into that, I can go into that classroom with all those 14-year olds from \_\_\_\_\_ in this excruciating, ...and it was to remember capacitors, you know, the colours on capacitors, and he made up this song. [GG: A song about capacitors?], yeah, and he'd go Blum, blum, blum [miming strumming a guitar] and the red ones go to zero and the blue ones go to something, and he'd change the chord, and Blum, blum, blum and the yellow ones... [Angharad half sang these words], and it was so gobsmackingly awful, and you know, it was, I was gripping the table underneath going [gripped table, and grimaced] "Oh! please stop!", and then, you are right, there is the kernel of truth in that, I saw that happen, I can see that man now to this day, I can hear his voice, and I can see a couple of lads sitting next to me, open-mouthed with horror, erm at that incident.

Nadia's story (L7) about her partner was also deliberately presented to be entertaining, causing students to laugh. This was enhanced by performativity aspects. Dramatic pauses, a deepening of tone to indicate "character" voices, gestures and facial expressions all animated the telling. These points could have been relayed as a series of facts, but they would not have had the same impact. Story neatly combined key messages in a natural, accessible, and entertaining format.

In SCRs participants revealed that they deliberately used stories to enhance lectures and make sessions less "dry", or to make theory easier to "digest":

Elaine (SCR1): "I consciously use it to break up too much theory or, ... something that's a bit too demanding, or to help people settle down. ... or just to make, something different happen, so at times ...- 'Shall I tell you a st....? I think even, by the time I get to that they're ... 'yeah, yeah, yeah' [said fast], and they like it, they like it!"

Stories were seen as practical tools for making sessions engaging, varying delivery style and pace, as well as conveying information in interesting ways. Elaine (SCR4) takes her cue

from students, saying they enjoy hearing stories, and that as soon as she starts to tell (using a traditional story opening), they are eager to listen. Participants all use stories to inject humour:

*Stories really help to change the flow of the lecture then ... livening up sessions. Lecturers almost become performers don't they?...*  
*Making them "more digestible" I like that - very appropriate.*  
*However, it's making me hungry again...*  
*Elisha, Elisha - Oh darn it, asleep again!*

Elaine: "I would try and make them a little bit funny as well, whereas usually, maybe the joke was on my [hand gestures to indicate herself], well, on me making the wrong assumption, I suppose ... There's an element I need to keep them entertained for 2 hours."

Angharad (SCR2): "Yes, ... there is something that will grab attention."

Willow: (SCR4) "... maybe add some humour to it, or just make it that little bit more digestible."

Performativity techniques were often seen in sessions during phase one, enhancing the entertainment value of stories told. This was particularly noticeable in nursing lectures, for example Nancy's (L1, L6) told stories in a "gossipy" style with dramatic revelations, and Nathan (L15) used varied performance techniques.

#### 5.4.6 Specialised Sessions - Immersion in Stories

Some lectures encompassed stories at a more integral level, meaning that they were quite distinctive from other sessions, creating immersive storytelling environments. Two education sessions used stories as ways of demonstrating how they could be used pedagogically, employing role-plays and other activities (these will be discussed in chapter six under Fractured and Historical Stories). Here, I discuss two nursing sessions in detail to give a clear picture of the situation and how stories intertwined: 1) a full day simulation session (L13); and 2) a session combining role-play with oral and multi-media stories.

**The nursing simulation** comprised a series of five linked immersive role-plays. In this university, simulations were regularly scheduled for training and assessment purposes. Student-nurses were split into groups, with role-players working in a "ward", while the remaining student-nurses watched at a small distance. The lecture focused on a new-born baby - J; the scenarios focused on his first few hours on PICU as he awaited surgery. This specific case-study was briefly referred to in the lecture for first year students (L7) which may indicate that studies were developed or re-visited over the course of the three-year programme rather than just appearing in specific modules. Here, student-nurses were

already familiar with J's background. Each group, in turn, dealt with different scenarios, with each updating information about J's medical status and family situation.

The classroom was fully equipped as a nursing ward with patient-bays and healthcare equipment, including an incubation unit and robotic baby mannequin, which "cried", moved its arms, and had a "pulse". Student-nurses were asked to suspend their disbelief and imagine it was a real situation with a living baby. Three lecturers took it in turns to remotely operate the mannequin and act as various members of the family and nursing team (junior doctor, midwife, PICU nurse, etc.). After each role-play (approximately 25-30 minutes) the whole group were "debriefed", discussing what they had experienced and reflecting on whether they could have taken different actions. Student-nurses had a variety of difficult situations to deal with including: a flustered "gossipy" midwife, who was somewhat disrespectful of the parents; a nervous junior doctor; and tensions on the ward due to discrepancies in medicine logs.

*"Rat's biscuits - Gossipy midwife! How authentic is that? Always portraying women as gossipers, how rude, there is no real proof that women gossip more than men!"*

*"No, so I've heard. Entertaining though, isn't it?"*

*"Oh, finally woken up, have you? Enjoyed your snooze while I've been working hard?"*

*"Snooze, what snooze? Merely resting my eyes, Merelina, that is all."* Mr. Wolf yawned and stretched luxuriously.

*"Hrrumph!!"*

*"As I was saying, I think the gossipy midwife is most interesting - she presents an authentic portrayal of the potential for gossip with the handover from midwife to PICU nurses. I agree, she is being quite negative and judgmental - but that gave the role-players something useful to react to - did it not?"*

*"Hrrumph!! Resting my eyes! I'll say!"* Merelina muttered and chuntered to herself. I tried to ignore her, but Mr. Wolf's comments had piqued my interest.

"Yes, that's right Mr. Wolf, the role-players had ignored her comments and focused on getting key information, which was praised by nurse educators. In the debrief, they discussed her attitude - its inappropriateness was highlighted, so student-nurses understood this was something they should not be engaging in, that it was unprofessional. They also discussed how they could challenge her assumptions in a professional way."

*"So - this scenario helps the student-nurses understand the importance of setting clear professional boundaries - demonstrating what was/is (in)appropriate in terms of gossip?"*

"Well, yes, I suppose so." I thought about how this was different to nurse educators' personal and CP stories, although these sometimes felt "gossipy," they were carefully presented to make clear and important points on practice.

"The midwife's story was negative gossip, with an aspect of sensationalism, so this demonstrated behaviour to avoid."

*"And therefore - it shows them how this behaviour is perceived from the outside, so to speak, allowing them to challenge their own views and assumptions."*

"Of course," perceived from the outside - that was *exactly* what it allowed them to do. "Yes, that makes sense. Meanwhile, others, such as Nathan, use negative CP stories to show how thinking in medicine has moved on, and now embraces more enlightened values, again it sets the negative against the positive. As you said - "setting clear professional boundaries. Yes - that's useful, but also nurses' CP stories - positive stories - could be seen as a form of "healing gossip" (Laing, 2003). Thank you, Mr. Wolf, that's really helpful!"

*"You are most welcome!"*

*"Hrrumph!!"*

Student-nurses were encouraged to use their training and knowledge to attempt to respond to each situation, working as a team to resolve issues. The role-plays incorporated a wide range of skills. In the field notes I reflected:

I was amazed at how ... much ground was covered. ... there was a wide variety of skills and knowledge areas: sourcing and preparing and using specialised equipment; carrying out routine observations; hands-on medical care; understanding and deciding on ... interventions; working out medicine requirements; responding to various testing situations with parents/doctors/nurses - involving communication skills, including escalation language and de-escalating tense situations; and taking into consideration tricky situations; also team-building, leadership and delegation.

These were all pre-determined stories, each scenario had been planned and lecturers role-played specific problems for student-nurses to respond to. However, lecturers could not predict how students would react, or whether they would remember their training and apply it effectively. This became apparent when lecturers reflected back to student-nurses during de-briefs. In particular Nanette noted that simulation needed everyone to play along to work, and that the students had driven the simulation, forcing her to respond differently to them. She said that they had calmed her down so she could take bloods from the baby.

*"Were these the first-year students then?"*

*"No, Elisha, look here, it says they were third years - who had already gained experience working on the wards, including ICUs and PICUs."*

*"Yes, but here Georgina says they were quite nervous - was it because it was new, or was it due to being watched by their peers or lecturers? They aren't being assessed here, are they?"*

*“Mmm?? - how odd! - Georgina, petal, sorry to interrupt - we are a little confused - why were they nervous when they already had experience?”*

I leaned back on my chair, rolling my shoulders to ease the stiffness, as I considered Merelina’s question.

“I’m not sure really. They weren’t being formally assessed, but it may be that they felt this was an additional pressure and may have perceived that they were being *informally* assessed, I suppose. Alternatively, perhaps the role-play itself was quite daunting. When I used role-plays in teaching, I found students can find it quite challenging, a bit frightening even, because it pushes them out of their comfort zone.”

*“So - it can be a bit of a trial then?”*

“Maybe, for some. But they did seem to settle down with it. The nurse educators worked with students, getting them to reflect on their actions - they enabled students to analyse how they had responded and considered alternative strategies, so they would know how to react next time.”

*“So, it’s all about boundaries - only here, they need to be given a little push over them to get them to grow - with support, of course.”* Merelina strutted across to the other side of the room. She gazed out of the window and appeared to look somewhat pleased with her contribution.

This highlighted the need for student-nurses to fully participate in order to get the most from simulations. This was the first time this group had taken part in a simulation, and some had initially seemed quite nervous. Nicholas explained that research suggests that students often make the same decisions in simulations that they would in real life situations - emphasising that it did not matter if they got it right, but that they were able to reflect on what they did.

The success of scenarios was reliant on nurse educators’ professional experience, as this enabled them to portray a series of “authentic” situations. They had depth of knowledge and experience to respond flexibly, and authentically, to student-nurses who could practice their skills in safety. Simulations provided a range of opportunities to explore difficult situations that nurses need to be adept in handling. In one debrief, two lecturers role-played alternative ways of calming situations down by using escalation and de-escalation language, thus giving student-nurses practical advice, while developing their communication skills and confidence. Student-nurses appeared to be fully engaged in scenarios. Nurse educators told several practice and personal stories during debriefs and the plenary. These supplemented role-plays, anchoring them in reality, supporting the notion that case-studies were rooted in clinical practice and real-world experience. However, it is also interesting that there was an absence of student stories during this session, with just one brief student placement story being told in the plenary.

**A multi-media platform** was encountered in only one lecture (14), which used an interactive technology platform combined with videos. It focused on the case-study of Daisy, a girl with Down Syndrome. Student-nurses had already received the case-study, but extra details were added during the session; Naomi and Nicholas explained there would be another simulation on Daisy later in the course, linking to assignments. In the early part of the session a YouTube™ video was shown of Hayley Newman, mother of Natty, who was born with Down Syndrome. Hayley told her story, highlighting traumatic experiences surrounding his birth and early diagnosis:

Hayley: “We don’t mind what the sex is, as long as they’re healthy, we all say it, it trips off the tongue – but what if one of them wasn’t?” Hayley struggling – obviously emotional.

[Some sighs from students “aahs”].

Hayley’s ... story is interspersed with opinion/thoughts/commentary on her feelings, and societal attitudes. [Students all listening – intently].

Hayley now struggling to continue – taking deep breaths, going more into “story mode”, talking about the birth (in detail) of her baby on the bathroom floor... baby being blue.

[Students looking serious/sad/sympathetic].

Hayley interspersed story with comments “baby should always be present when the diagnosis is given.” [Nearly all students looked to be in deep concentration.]

The clip was approximately ten minutes long, with students being asked to watch the rest at home. Afterwards, the room was hushed, looking round I noted several student-nurses wiping their eyes, visibly upset. This was a powerful and emotional account of a mother vividly sharing her traumatic experiences. It encouraged student-nurses to think carefully about the mother’s situation. Hayley’s words, “We don’t mind what the sex is, as long as they’re healthy ... but what if one of them wasn’t?” and “baby should always be present when the diagnosis is given” were startling, promoting student-nurses to consider their own language use with parents. Full implications of this and the way nurses can influence parents’ attitudes towards their babies was picked up again later when discussing feelings around “birth defects” or “congenital issues”:

Naomi: emphasising – inappropriate comments from midwives could start to drive a wedge between parents and child – could lead to rejection [paraphrased]

Immediately following the video Naomi told a personal story relating to these topics.

*“These are very moving stories aren’t they Merelina? Merelina?”*

*“Sorry, I just,” Merelina blinked and coughed, her eyes glistening. “Yes, they certainly are - they feel completely different to the teacher educators’ stories, I think, or even some of the other nursing*



*stories that were quite humorous - these are very emotional. Yet the focus is always on improving practice. What do you think Georgina?"*

"I agree, there was noticeable difference, I was recording the incidences, but I was completely wrapped up in the stories. I was gripped by them, and it seemed students were too. The stories were so touching."

*"But nurses have to deal with big events in people's lives, don't they? They are there for the triumphs - healthy births - but they are also there for the traumas, the tragedies, the struggle to survive, and the messy and visceral nature of being human. Blood and guts, bed pans and vomit bowls - Nurses see it all!"*

"Yes - they know the intimacies of people's lives in ways that virtually no-one else does. I remember when I was undergoing treatment, I shared the most personal details with nurses - it was essential in order for them to know how to treat me and care for me, and I felt completely comfortable telling them. They made me feel that it was fine to do that, so student-nurses need to learn how to enable patients to open up ..."

*Merelina nodded vigorously. "It is essential for patients' welfare - survival even. Nurses need patients to share these intimate details in order to do their jobs, and they need to learn to really listen to patients. Nurses need to really care for, even love their patients to be able to deal with all that. Whereas it doesn't seem that teachers are in quite the same position, does it?"*

*"Teachers can be close to their students, but it's not at that same instinctual, intimate level."*

"No, people's lives aren't at stake as they are in nursing. And all the additional pressures of safeguarding - there is a different focus, a need to put a "professional" distance between themselves and students. That personal connection, I feel, is actively discouraged these days - and you can understand the reasons for that - but that must affect the student-teacher relationship."

*"And the way to prepare nurses is by stories maybe, by sharing those personal experiences?"*

"Yes, Merelina, storytelling is important in communication - now, what was it I read about nurses and love?" I quickly pulled up some articles on my computer and scanned the paragraphs I had highlighted.

"Here it is...from "Love in nursing, a systemic review." It says: "Love as a moral act is the basis of communication and makes the person more... intimate with himself and others. In communication, love acts as a stimulant and creates a sense of solidarity and unity" (Adib-Hajbagheryn and Bolandian-Bafghi, 2020: 113). And here, Rollings talks about "Professional Love" in nursing, saying that "the caring that nurses give is often bound with love" (2008: 54).

*"Ooh - how interesting, was there much more about this?"*

"Not really, Merelina. They are quite scarce articles, but there are even less in education - I could only find one article on love in relation to early childcare practitioners, Cousins (2017) points out that discussions on professional love occur infrequently in relation to educational policies and practices."

*"I see, so professional constraints on teachers may be relevant...perhaps this is why they tell stories less?"*

"Yes, maybe, Mr. Wolf." I looked again at the articles, there was just so many variables to consider, it was quite bewildering.

*"But what about this bit - where you say the students were laughing?"*

“Perhaps that’s part of balancing everything out? Naomi finished her story on a really positive note, that had student-nurses smiling. In fact, in the video Hayley did this too – she was crying one moment, then started using gentle humour.”

*“Tears mixed with laughter - so does humour help to temper the darker stories, helping people to face the challenges of their situations?”*

“Yes Mr. Wolf – I expect there is something in that, but now I must get back to my analysis!”

Although Naomi’s story finished on a lighter tone, releasing tension, it also gave personal insights into theoretical discussions around congenital birth defects, reminding student-nurses that these conditions impacted on real people and their families. It is interesting that these very emotional stories resulted in response stories from four student-nurses (Table 4); one student sounded upset and nervous telling her story but expanded when encouraged to continue. These seem, therefore, to have been conducive to strengthening bonds between students and lecturers.

The second video was filmed in PICU in a local hospital. Nurses discussed daily processes, decision-making on medical priorities, and their roles, including brief stories about children on the ward. The video supplied first-hand testimonies of working in PICU, which may have enabled a deeper understanding of those roles. Afterwards, nurse educators encouraged student-nurses to give feedback, leading to discussions on the benefits of PICU wards. This was used as a springboard to discuss a range of topics, raising awareness of working in ICU environments.

The latter part of the session was built around an interactive platform; a virtual PICU ward featured an animated Daisy. Each student had their own log-in so they could access the platform from home.

Video of nurse [approx. 10 minutes. Not animated] ... handing over to the next nurse [each student].

Nurse goes through medical details e.g. intubation/oxygen/heartbeat/neurological/recent procedures/medicines. Very detailed. But framed to give personalised feel. e.g. “She’s trying to pull out her wires a little bit .... And this has made mum smile.” [some Aahs from students].+ info on family – how the mom is physically, mentally and family situation – Dad and brother.

“She’s pretty straight forward so I’ll let you crack on.”

[Lots of laughter, excited chatter]

Nicholas: Getting them to think about simulation with baby J, and handover with the midwife.

*“So that’s how it should be done!”  
“Yes, Merelina, this nurse was professional and enthusiastic - but kept to the facts. No malicious gossip here!”*



This video and digital platform was used in a similar way to the simulation session in that it emulated an authentic situation and encouraged direct interaction. Daisy had a detailed back-story, and student-nurses were encouraged to think of themselves as working on the ward and needing to connect with Daisy to care for her complex needs. Daisy could be “visited”, and students could then access additional information, for example by clicking on her medical chart or patient noticeboard.

Although Daisy and Down Syndrome were the overarching focuses, accompanying discussions and stories conveyed what it was like to work under pressure in P/ICU environments. However, it was particularly interesting that nurse educators supplemented interactive platforms with their own stories. Student-nurses heard personal and practice stories as first-hand testimony from their own lecturers, enlivening and adding depth to multi-media stories, cementing them in reality. Student-nurses also exchanged sensitive stories in response to these topics. Digital simulations and video stories were technologically sophisticated, but nurse educators’ experiences seemed to both ground these techniques and bring stories to life.

It is curious that while I only encountered multi-media storytelling in one nursing session, in SCRs Angharad (SCR2) was the only participant to discuss using multi-media platforms with students. She described an early platform that had been developed specifically for student-teachers which provided scenarios and choices that they might need to make in placement.

“...a lot of it came from \_\_\_\_\_ where you have a scenario and you make a choice about what you’re going to do..., and depending on which choice you make, the software package... would then give you a result of that outcome, so it was a way of safely exploring choices, ... within an environment.”

From her description the basic concept sounds like a basic version of the multi-media platform that was used in nursing sessions. Angharad viewed the platform as providing “sophisticated” scenarios and choices, but also felt that she had developed her own more straight-forward anecdotes to imitate the way the computer game worked:

“I would use anecdotes in that way, so not saying so much - ‘learn from my experience’ - as in ‘this was the choice I made. And this was the impact it had. And this was the outcome. You might want to ponder on that and think’.”

This supports reflections made throughout this section, that while technology is useful in presenting case-studies in an interactive format, the nurse educators' personal and CP stories were a vital factor in helping students understand the issues presented.

This chapter has mapped story incidences against the typology, categorising types of stories encountered, and giving examples of when and how stories were used. It has examined practitioner educators' use of stories against the PFSI and looked at the interplay between stories told by lecturers and students. Perceptions of practitioner educators from SCRs have been used alongside story mappings to provide more detailed understandings of the work of story. In the next chapter, I continue to present empirical noticings, discussing stories that could not be easily categorized against the typology, together with key themes that arose from SCRs.

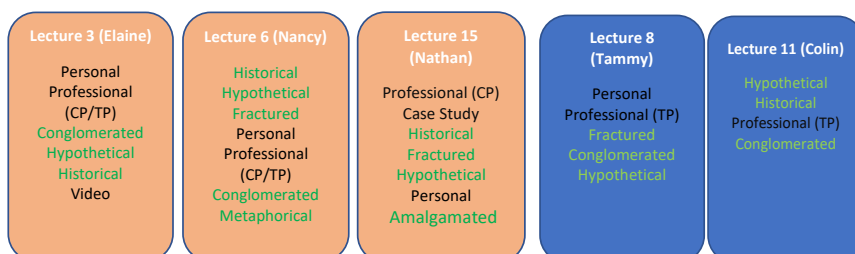
## Chapter Six: Empirical Noticings (Part II)

This chapter continues to discuss empirical noticings gathered in phases one and two, in order to deepen investigations into the research puzzle. I consider new categories of story that were identified in phase one, again using the PFSI, and consider these alongside practitioner educators' perceptions of how they use story. In line with narrative inquiry, I highlight resonances and key noticings identified in SCRs to further explore important issues for practitioner educators concerning their use of storytelling. In addition, I start to consider dissonances and tensions around the use of storytelling in professional education, along with places where storytelling appears to be employed by practitioner educators as counter-narratives, providing a means of expressing alternative views which challenge students' perceptions of themselves and their chosen professions.

### 6.1 New Story Categories

First, I turn to story incidences which defied easy categorisation against the typology, which I am proposing as new categories of story. The first ones discussed - **conglomerated**, **fractured** and **historical** featured several characteristics of stories and were presented in a "story-like" format, with performative features, and sometimes even dramatic twists. The latter categories - **hypothetical** and **metaphorical** - had some story features, but sometimes lacked overall coherence, however, they were also presented in story-like formats and therefore merit consideration as occupying a space somewhere between a coherent story and a piece of information, or an example.

#### 6.1.1 Conglomerated Stories



In five lectures (L3, L6 and L15 - nursing, L8 and L11 - education) I encountered partial or complete stories that were presented together, which I have called conglomerated stories,

(see chapter seven for further discussion). This can be seen with Nathan's (L15) story about clinical depression which combines short anecdotes about two different people to show a range of psychiatric symptoms. Stories all appeared to be drawn from his own clinical experience:

Talked about a gentleman ... "it was like he was trying to walk, but ... had forgotten how to walk" [motion ... rolling, not able to walk properly] ... One lady ... "began to believe" ... aged 60 ... "she was pregnant ... fascinating experience ... she was completely absorbed in this ... as her mood stabilised ... psychiatric symptoms disappeared completely."

Here, two "mini" stories are merged together with no pause to separate them, creating a feeling of a larger, more complete story. They are linked because they illustrate different examples of psychiatric patients' behaviour. The second mini story is more complete, as it gives brief details about the woman, her situation, and her behaviour at different stages, and even contains Nathan's evaluation that this was a "fascinating experience". Nathan used this technique at various stages throughout the lecture.

Elaine (L3) used conglomerated stories on several occasions. Here, she explained behaviour that Alzheimer's or dementia patients might display, saying some people start talking in languages they have not used since childhood, and that their family or friends might not realise they spoke:

... talked about working with Asian patients – family said they only spoke English, but ...had reverted back to their childhood language.

Can happen with Welsh people ... family may not have known that they spoke Welsh. One friend started speaking English with a French accent – no-one could understand why – but he was brought up by someone who was French as a child, so reverted back to this. [summarised].

[Quick stories, told, very fast – approx. 4 x 4 minutes.]

Brief stories are "rolled" together, often with other illustrations or information, to form a more substantial mass of experience, sometimes, personal and CP stories were blended. When lecturers used these techniques, some mini stories were more expanded than others, but the overall effect was to supply a corpus of practice and/or personal experience.

This mingling of stories was commented on by Angharad (SCR2):

"...mostly they're embellished because they're all muddled. They are sometimes lifetime little bits that have been put into one whole."

Angharad explained how she merged stories, in particular, she remembered drawing examples of very poor or dangerous teaching from separate observations, witnessed over many years, into one anecdote:

“... they can all go into one, there, and I tell them different parts of the whole in order to make the point in different contexts.”

She noted that this has the additional advantage of automatically anonymising situations and people, because they become a mixture of different incidents rather than being distinct episodes that are “factually” told. So, anonymisation was effectively achieved via the conglomeration process. However, Angharad did not feel that these qualified as being stories:

“I wouldn’t have called it a story, I would have called it an incident, as an anecdote really.”

*“Ooh - that’s nifty, isn’t it?”*

*“Yes - it’s semi-fictionalising, it’s blurring details together so people can’t be identified.”*

*“Isn’t that what happens in “data collection”? It all gets mashed together so that individuals’ information is obscured?”*

*“Yes, I do believe you are right. So, this makes stories much safer to tell - A very handy technique.”*

*“Isn’t it strange that she says it isn’t a story, because, it’s an anecdote - which is a type of story!”*

It is interesting that Angharad sees these as incidents rather than stories as, an anecdote is categorised as a broad story. This may be an indication of lecturers not always recognising they are using storytelling in their practice.

In SCRs, Colin acknowledged that he merges different events and people together into one story:

Colin (SCR2): “Well, ... I would suggest that there are probably things that I have added from other students within that same group or... from that particular group there are definitely two stories, there are two different people I think of ... and one is a one-off incident, and one is over a long period of time, erm and I tell ... both stories, and I know they are different people, erm, but then there must be other things that I have added to the longer story...”

While reflecting on this, Colin emphasised that he amalgamates “my experience through the years” and that it “involves development over time”, adding:

“I’ve blurred, and I don’t realise that I’ve blurred them, so...  
... it may have been 5 people that did all those things.”

This is similar to the conglomerated stories above as it fits with the notion that conglomerated stories bring different elements together, to form a greater whole - however, this is slightly different, as Colin fully merges the people and incidents together, so that they become one whole story about one person so they can no longer be separated out into their different components, moving this towards a semi-fictionalised story. In SCRs, Colin further developed one of these stories into a fable about a shopkeeper (See Vignette 5).

There was a mixed response in the amount of student stories generated from conglomerated stories. Elaine’s accounts at the start of her lecture resulted in student stories, however Colin’s, Nathan’s and Nancy’s use of them did not have this effect. However, this may have been due to other factors, for example Nathan’s session was in a large formal lecture, and Colin’s subject matter (ethics) may have been more difficult to respond to.

Conglomerated stories serve a variety of purposes:

- They provide a range of practice/personal experiences, examples from practitioner educators’ amalgamated experiences are “rolled together” to make specific points and show different contexts.
- Stacking brief stories together makes a point more strongly, it shows it is not an isolated event, but something that happens often, albeit in slightly different ways. It is therefore more likely that students will encounter similar occurrences in practice.
- They provide a useful way of blurring details and anonymising people and incidents.
- Students are provided with several examples, which might have little impact if told independently, but by being framed together they are potentially more memorable.

## Vignette 5: Colin's Story

### Vignette Colin \_The Boy with the Devil Behind his Eyes (SC6 - Semi-fictionalised)

So, once upon a time [you see I've started there. Pointing and smiling]... so once upon a time, there was a shopkeeper who lived in a small village. He sold essential supplies to his customers, and on the whole, he was well regarded by them. The other shopkeepers in the village also had great respect for him, as he was regarded as an expert in *all* that he *did* and *sold*. And this gave the shopkeeper great pride. He felt that he was a good shopkeeper, and often he was the person, the shopkeeper, that other shopkeepers went to when they needed advice. So, he had a very high esteem of himself, brought on by this idea that other people wanted his guidance, advice, erm and to know how to improve because they recognised that he was very good. Many customers came through his doors, and over time he learnt what *each type* of customer was looking for. *Often*, he learnt to know better *than them* what they *needed*, which was sometimes different to what they *wanted*. So, he was able to listen to their requests and say, well actually, now I don't think you need this, I think that is not where you want to go, the product that you want to buy. And occasionally a customer would come in that would cause concern, but, sometimes it was just because they weren't listening, they weren't listening to advice and they'd go off with the wrong product, [heard Willow's phone ringing] but eventually they would come round and they would realise ... that he actually ...he knew *exactly* what they wanted ... they eventually realised that the shopkeeper knew best, essentially.

Then *one day* a new customer came in and began to act in a strange way. He spoke to the other customers, but he didn't really *listen* to the advice of the shopkeeper, and he was quite rude to him, on occasion, and the shopkeeper just thought it was strange, but knew eventually that the customer would come round and realise that he knew best, and that he would listen to his advice. After a while though, the customer came in, and he turned up and he caused great commotion in the shop. [10 sec pause] He chatted to other people but actually disrupted their shopping as well, so they couldn't get what they wanted. He also started to mess up some of the shelves [waving hand in front of face], so he'd be incredibly disruptive, and then he'd leave. And this kept on happening, from time to time, the customer would come in, ignore the shopkeeper, disrupt, distract everyone else in the shop, mess about and then just leave, and the shopkeeper didn't really know what to do. He began to resent the customer because he was the one customer that *obviously* wasn't listening to what the shopkeeper was telling him. [using hand gestures more frequently now to emphasise points in story] And he began to refer to the customer, because of the way he used to *look* at the shopkeeper, he used to refer to the customer as having the devil behind his eyes, [Willow – smiling] because he just *looked* evil, [Colin smiling] and he was a *ne'er do well*, I suppose is another way of describing him, [Willow and GG smiling/laughing] he was a *bad apple*. There were even times where, he'd throw him out, and he'd just got to get rid of him, and say "I'm sorry, you've just got to leave, get out." And he thought, actually that's probably the best way to deal with this particular customer because, he's coming in, he's not er paying attention to other people, he's messing about, he's not *buying* [looking into video, opening eyes wide] anything, er, he's making a mess of all my shelves and just leaving, and sometimes he just needs to *get out* [hand gestures] so other people can actually just shop in peace and quiet.



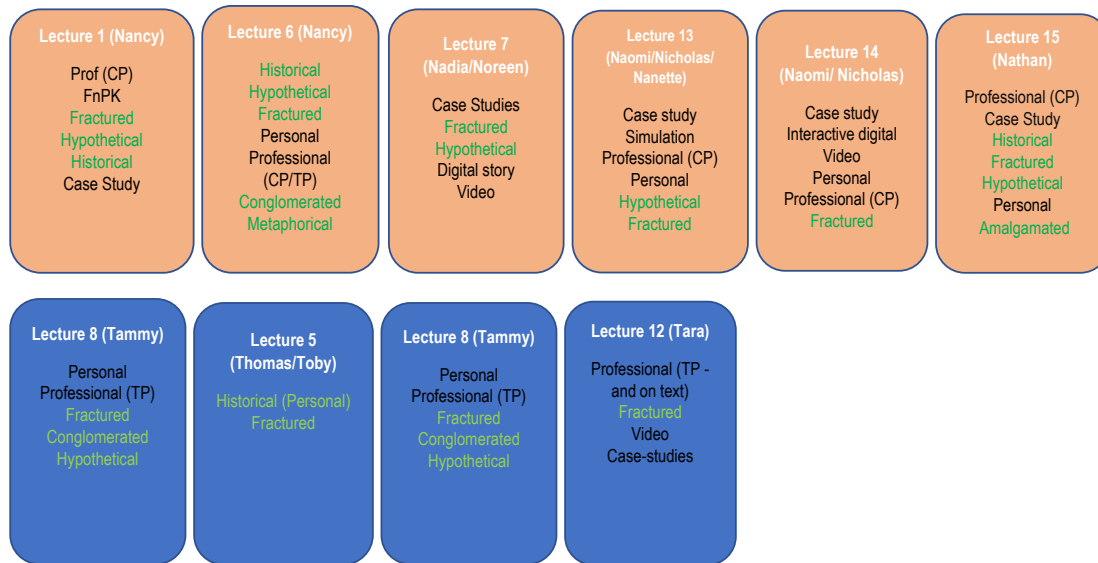
This went on for a long time, and... the shopkeeper just chose to ignore the customer altogether, after a while, so even when the customer came in, the shopkeeper would just let him crack on, and do what he wanted, it wasn't worth his bother. And he felt that it was the *customer*, who was in the wrong,... and behaved like that, because you know what, the shopkeeper just didn't have time to help him, he clearly didn't want to listen. Erm,...[5 sec pause] in the shopkeeper's opinion he had these devil behind his eyes and it was simply part of his bad character, he was disruptive. And, because it wasn't worth his time, it wasn't the shopkeeper's fault, [using one hand towards chest to indicate himself] nothing to do with that, it was all about him. And many months later, another shopkeeper, who he was friends with in the village, he just *happened* to mention this customer in passing, and the shopkeeper explained his feelings about this horrible customer, describing the devil behind his eyes and how he'd come in, be disruptive, he wasn't really worth the time, [dismissive gesture] waste of space really, ...and he said that believing that everyone else would agree with him, because the shopkeeper as we said, was a very well-respected shopkeeper, knew his stuff, other people would go to him, so if he thought that of the customer, then probably everyone else did, and he was certainly not in the wrong. But to his surprise, the other shopkeeper, who owned a shop *much* smaller than his, he replied that he found the customer to be *incredibly engaging*, and a *very nice character, very friendly*, always spoke to them when he went in, he was very polite.

And this *shocked* the shopkeeper, because he just couldn't understand why the customer was nice in one environment and not the other, [Willow: nodding] why was he nice to one shopkeeper but seemingly horrible to him? So, actually he went back to consider what he'd done, and how the situation had occurred. .... Being the person that others had gone to for advice, it had not occurred to him to discuss the behaviour of this particular customer before, because if he thought it, it must be true. And it was because the other shopkeeper had mentioned that the customer was actually a *very nice person*, that he started to consider that *maybe* it was something else at play, and maybe it was *his* attitude, and how *he* dealt with the customer that caused the problem in the first place. ... Now he knew that the customer behaved differently? [slightly muffled] in different situations,... he considered that there was a way of working with the customer to change the behaviour of the customer within *his* shop and learn *more* about what the customer needed. [Willow nodding]

And that's where the story ends.



## 6.1.2 Fractured Stories



While conglomerated stories brought small stories together, fractured stories occurred when one story was split up and told in stages. In some cases, there was a short gap between parts of the story, with other items interspersed (e.g. questions posed to students, or explanation of a concept or theory), in others, there was a significant gap, where stories seemed to have finished, but were then added to much later in the lecture.

I noticed this tendency of stories to fracture in the first lecture visited, where Nancy talked about a patient who “appeared to have slept well” in official patient logs. Nancy asked students to reflect on this. She then told the next part of the story and asked them to consider it in terms of professionalism. Thus, there were two “breaks” in the narrative as student-nurses considered and discussed implications. Finally, the last part of the story was added, that the patient “wasn’t even in the hospital” and that the incident “caused big issues.” Nancy portrays the incident as factual - hearing that the patient was not in the hospital comes as a shock - and is an indication that there are serious issues with the hospital’s systems. This was a dramatic twist, capturing students’ attention, which was heightened by the emphatic tone of voice, repetition of “**appeared** to have slept well” (said sarcastically) and an exasperated “wasn’t even in the hospital!” - delivered with force and energy. I noted:

These stories feel spontaneous - chatty, even, gossipy - but they are told very rapidly, as if practised - the telling is assured/confident.

On reflection, this “gossipy” style of delivery was, at least partly, due to the sense of providing a revelation together with the dramatic way the story was conveyed. The “scandalous” disclosure provided an example of very poor practice that had serious repercussions. This was, therefore, a vivid, engaging, and memorable means of highlighting bad practice and possible consequences of not following correct protocols around patient checking and recording.

The fracturing of Nancy’s story was difficult to convey on paper, it felt disjointed because of questions posed to students, and discussions about professionalism that interspersed the flow. Other stories were more obviously fractured, Nathan’s (L15) approach was more deliberate, with stories’ sequencing broken to link closely to topics on slides. One story told of a woman who donned a dressing gown as an outward symbol of feeling ill, this was discussed in relation to Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) near the start of the lecture. Nathan returned to the same woman about halfway through when discussing medications and “Big Pharma’s” role in healthcare:

“The lady in the dressing gown ... seem to have lost the ability to be happy or sad ... she was, she said, being labelled ... I don’t think that’s healthy ... that’s right.”

This appeared, therefore, to be a single CP story that had been deliberately fractured to align with distinctive sections of the lecture. A more compelling example occurred when Nathan talked about a woman suffering from agoraphobia:

[slide - Agoraphobia]

Recounted him and a colleague visiting a lady ... “hadn’t been out of the house for 3 or 4 months” – issue ... afraid she was going to meet her ex-husband and he was going to kill her ... when she went to the front door, “she would have a panic attack.” “...we did some CBT” ... these are extremely disabling phobias.

Nathan showed slides on obsessive compulsive disorder and talked about “germaphobes” before returning to this story:

“...the lady from before – adamant her husband was going to kill her. ... he did used to beat her up”

[Details of the case] ... “come to the door ... see if he’s there” ... they went with her ... 2nd time ... they walked ... to the gate ... 3rd time ... they walked to the shops. Each time challenging her belief ... she would see him... “Applying rationality shows they aren’t going to have that problem.”

[Story approx. 8 mins – detailed. Included gestures/tone of voice.]

*“What a dramatic story - like a soap!”*

*“The rhythm of the storytelling comes through, even though the notes are truncated - 1<sup>st</sup> time, 2<sup>nd</sup> time, 3<sup>rd</sup> time - it’s the rule of three - vital for a classic tale.”*

This was followed by a detailed explanation of how CBT can be used to support patients and another CP story, before the final instalment where the woman was much more confident about going out.

The story was structured in three distinct parts, each illustrating different mental health issues and treatment processes: the introduction links to agoraphobia and how it might manifest in a person; the second (detailed) part explains more about reasons for the woman's agoraphobia and how CBT was used to help her; the ending shows how she learnt to manage her phobia and that CBT can change a patient's "core beliefs". Although this was delivered in three mini stories, when viewed overall, it has a distinct story arc, with beginning, middle and end. There is a clear sense of coherence and resolution, as the woman regained her health and independence. Student-nurses are presented with a developed CP story and the practical benefits of using CBT.

*"Mmm-hmm - this is great - it really builds through the stages." Mr. Wolf's voice rumbled low, echoing around the room.*

*"I like the way Nathan lets us think the woman might be imagining it initially, but then we find out later that her fears are real, and understandable because of her previous experience - good misdirection that!"*

*"Yes, I agree, it is really interesting - very dramatic - and seems deliberately crafted to build the tension. Let's see, at the start she fears that she will be attacked by her ex-husband, at this point we are not given any background, but we know she is a mental health patient, so there is a possibility that her fear could be irrational."*

*"We've already had the story of the woman who regularly had phantom pregnancies!"*

*"And the explanations about irrational fears..."*

*"Exactly, so we think this might be the same, but in the second part, we find out that her fear is rational...and finally, she learns to cope with her fear and overcome her illness."*

*"Such a compelling story, with a genuine sense of jeopardy. And Nathan and his colleague are the heroes, don't you think? Effectively rescuing the woman from her plight."*

*"Ah, yes - CBT is portrayed as the remedy, and in some respects, the woman's "rescuer," but Nathan and his colleague could be seen as heroes of the story as their expert use of CBT, their patience and persistence - that really comes through - gradually helping to restore her to her former confidence, and that enables her to cope with her illness."*

*"Mental health nurses - to the rescue! Fantastic!"*

I blinked and stared at Merelina.

*"What? What's the matter now... what have I said?"*

"You've just reminded me of an article that I read in "The Guardian" about concerns over the decline in the number of mental health nurses. Hang on!" I entered a quick search on Google and found it: "Ah - actually it's "The Observer" ... "NHS loses 6,000 mental health nurses in 10 years" (Savage, 2019). It says there has been a 10.6% reduction in the workforce since 2009 so they need to recruit more nurses."

*"So - what's your point?"*

"Don't you see?" Merelina shook her head.

*"I think you need to explain."* Mr. Wolf said.

"Well, if mental health staffing is in decline, it really needs a boost. The students in this lecture were first years - they don't officially choose their pathway 'til later, so... So, these stories might help to put the sector in a better light, and persuade more nurses to specialise in it?"

*"Ah, yes - it gives a positive portrayal and demonstrates the concrete difference that mental health nurses can make to people's lives, and Nathan is demonstrating it as a rewarding sector in which to work."*

"Yes - maybe..."

*"Mmm - that's certainly an interesting possibility - good work! Well, all that discussion has made me hungry, I'm going to look for dinner."*

*"At last - about time, I'm famished. Hang on - I'll come with you for a bit of foraging, Elisha...Don't worry petal - back in a jiffy!"*

Deliberate fracturing was also noticed in two education sessions. Student-teachers were invited to explore stories (L5 and L7) in a series of activities; each new section added more details and thinking points that enabled students to carry out activities in controlled stages. Thomas presented "The Pied Piper" in this way, while the majority was told at the start of the session, the rest was split into sections. Students worked on tasks focusing on key elements, exploring them thoroughly before moving on.

In lecture 5, Thomas and Toby told stories about a soldier serving in World War I (WWI) and a woman who lived through the Spanish Civil War. Thomas introduced the soldier's story, showing student-teachers slides of photographs and documents relating to him, and verbally providing background information. Student-teachers discussed information before Thomas told the next part of the story. The remainder was not told orally but was presented as a series of artefacts to be investigated in group tasks. This allowed the story to gradually unfold, each stage building on previous details, enabling student-teachers to speculate about the soldier and reconstruct his story. Thus, it evolved over the space of two orally told sections and a series of activities.

In these examples, the fracturing of stories was deliberate, however, sometimes stories were added to later in lectures, either in response to students asking questions (for example Tara's story, L12), or where it appeared to be an afterthought when something else was mentioned later on. This was noticed in lecture 13, where nurse educators discussed using escalation and de-escalation language after one role-play:

Nicholas: "First time I had to do this ... a cardio-consultant was arguing ... [I'm a] student nurse ... I'm trying to look after my patient and ... [I said] "I'm really concerned that everyone is listening, and this is not the right place' ... they were really grateful to me for defusing the situation."

In the plenary Naomi asked student-nurses what their key learning point was from the day. One responded with a placement experience leading to them revisiting escalation language, with Nicholas adding extra details:

explained about being fearful, not wanting to do it, but feeling great after that he'd dealt with it.

This addition can be seen as spontaneous as it is unlikely that it would have been told had student-nurses offered a different response story, however, it strengthened the message of the earlier story and directly addressed the issue raised by the student-nurse's story.

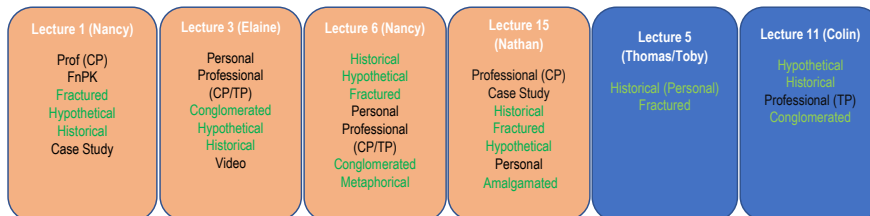
In general, fractured stories did not result in students telling stories, though the exception was where Nancy's (L1) fractured stories generated two very brief student stories. Tara's (L12) fractured story may have encouraged students to share their own stories, however, this was immediately followed by a task, which also often generate stories, so it is impossible to separate these out.

Fracturing stories have several uses, they:

- enable students thinking time to answer questions and discuss points with peers;
- illustrate particular points of practice, "chunking" them for easier understanding;
- enable different parts of a story to be analysed and explored;
- enable extra details to be added to an earlier story, and/or allow a reminder of the earlier story;
- may enhance the "gossipy" feel of some stories;
- allow stories to unfold dramatically, making them memorable, enabling unexpected "twists" - which may help to "fix" the story;

- deliver stories in distinct “instalments”, creating a sense of “soap-opera” drama - instalments may engage students as they leave students wondering what happens next, which they find out in the next part.

### 6.1.3 Historical Stories



There were instances in both nursing and education where practitioner educators told stories that were historical in nature, in that they related events that were factually documented or that were presented as being “true” stories that happened in the past.

Historical stories were told in four nursing lectures (L1, L3, L6 and L15). Elaine (L3) told several historical stories (Vignette 6) on the development of medical understanding and treatments for a range of diseases including Alzheimer’s and Senile Dementia. They included stories about people who had first studied these syndromes and were told alongside presentation slides containing photographs and bullet points.

[Elaine told Alois’ story – Alzheimer’s wife – who had dementia. He studied her after putting her into an asylum. Story of 2 people who first studied senility \[3 mins\].](#)

Later, Elaine introduced student-nurses to Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, explaining how people had started to become ill in the 1990s and how this was eventually linked to people eating contaminated beef. Elaine’s final historical story was about Tom Kitwood and how he had studied people with dementia in the 1970s and 1980s, developing a person-centred approach as an alternative way of caring for patients. These stories illustrated medical developments and individuals’ advancement of the understanding of diseases and syndromes which had led to new ways of treating or caring for patients. Students told personal and practice stories in response to two of Elaine’s stories making links with treatments and developments. One 3-minute story was told with energy and expression and generated positive responses from others, who seemed to enjoy it.

### Vignette 6: Elaine's Story

#### Elaine (SC5) Rosenfeld Research

It was at the time when, the mental health services in America, there was a big anti-psychiatry movement, and there was a movement of people who thought that psychiatry was just a made-up thing, or just a way of selling drugs, or controlling people, that kind of thing, and there's no such thing as mental illness really, it's just made up. And erm this guy was a believer in that and so he got, I think, eight pretend patients and he sent them to psychiatric hospitals in America, all different hospitals, and they had one symptom which was to say, "I'm hearing a voice" say "Thud!", and that was just one symptom. They all got admitted with a diagnosis of schizophrenia, and then it's the story of how they eventually managed to get out, erm and how the psychiatric world really objected to him publishing this research, but showing really that they couldn't recognise these pretend patients, all the other patients recognised them [Butterfly smiling], but the actual psychiatrists and the nurses didn't recognise that they were pretend patients, and it was all the story of what they observed when they were there, the pretend patients. But then afterwards there was a big hoo-hah, because they thought it was unethical to be made, in a way to participate in his study without saying, and without signing up to it, so he said, "OK, to be fair then, I'll do it again, and we'll talk again in 6 months". And in 6 months he said, "OK", and these was all the psychiatric services in North America, and he said, "OK, tell me how many pretend patients you spotted," and they all gave numbers of how many they had spotted, fifteen, whatever it was, quite a lot of pretend patients. And he said, "Oh, well it's funny that, because actually this time, I didn't put any in." [All laughing]. So erm, he proved that not only could they not recognise sanity, but they couldn't recognise madness either, so it was, kind of, a very powerful thing ...

In story circles Elaine (SCR5) talked about using historical stories in her teaching (Vignette 6):

"I tell the story of Rosenfeld research, who's the guy who put pretend patients into hospitals in America, ... so I tell that story quite often. ... I think that the Rosenfeld one is particularly powerful, .... and telling it like a story does make it, sort of - I mean it is like a great story anyway - but telling it like a story does, I think, probably does make them remember it, and certainly enjoy the experience of finding out about it."

This is intriguing as it clearly shows that Elaine is not just relating key information, but that she is deliberately "telling it like a story":

"It was quite dramatic anyway, but I play on that element of it."

She knowingly "plays" on story elements, emphasising the drama, and feels that relating these events as stories adds to their usefulness as teaching tools, increasing engagement.

Complementary to these, Nancy (L6) told a story which illustrated controversial approaches to health research in America in the 1950s.

Nancy described how: In America ... Jewish mothers with triplets. They separated them at birth and sent ...to different families - one to a wealthy family, one to a middle-class, one to a



poor family. Then they were monitored for 14 years... Two ended up at the same college and discovered they were related. ... 3rd child in NY saw it [in the news] and thought the same thing – checked to see if they were related – they were. ... Genetically the same – “did they have problems? Not yet!” Got married had ... successful life together... in their mid-40s tried to find out about the experiment – one got depressed. ...  
“Do you think they were from the wealthy, middle-class or poor family? Middle ... ended up killing himself! Why?”  
Because he couldn’t get answers about the experiment. ... He couldn’t cope with not knowing. [5 mins]

This tragic story was used to discuss implications of unethical medical research and the importance of having sound ethical approaches. Nurse educators’ stories mainly concentrated on the development of medicine, ethics and attitudes towards different aspects of patient care, giving student-nurses factual contexts in which to understand the methods and treatments that they may be using themselves. Stories referred to documented facts and were employed to help student-nurses ground their current practice and understand the origins of their practice.

Historical stories were seen less often in education, however, Thomas’s (L5) story appeared to be an historical story, albeit used in a different way. Thomas invited student-teachers to discover more about a WWI soldier’s situation, presenting them with authentic looking “artefacts”, containing correspondence between the soldier and his family. Thus, these were presented as factual, with regular reinforcement that this was a “true story”.

Each group were given a set of items. Students reading letters out to each other. Asking questions – trying to work out the story.

It was not until the plenary, when Thomas and Toby recapped on techniques they had modelled, that it became apparent that stories had been semi-fictionalised. Teacher educators explained that they had combined semi-fictionalised oral stories with artefacts, combining facts and fiction to create a story that had “integrity”. The soldier and woman were real people, and were the teacher educators’ ancestors, Toby explained further:

“... diary actually exists ... there is an actual artefact.”  
[He] had read the original but had given the students a “sanitised” version.

“... used photos, diary extracts and artefacts.”

Therefore, although originally presented as factual, these stories had been altered and embellished. The original diary had been “sanitised” removing (unspecified) parts, with fiction written about the same period inserted, thus blurring facts with fiction to create stories which could be used for pedagogical purposes. Teacher educators suggested student-teachers use this technique in their teaching, as a way of getting their own students to explore a variety of situations. Activities here, not only modelled those that student-teachers could use in their practice, but also demonstrated how they could construct semi-fictionalised



stories from their family histories. It is curious that despite discovering that stories were fictionalised, student-teachers pursued questioning teacher educators about their ancestors:

Thomas invited students to think about Personal Stories – or whether they had some personal old photos that they can use to create a story.

Rather than discussing this, some students reverted to asking Toby more about his ancestor. Toby – [told] some of the story. Thomas – didn't know more than the basics, already revealed.

Intriguingly, Thomas asked student-teachers what difference it made to them that the people were their ancestors. They responded that although they had accepted stories as true, that this personal link was fascinating. Student-teachers had been engaged and enthusiastic to investigate the “true” stories, but this intensified their curiosity, as they felt closer to the stories, perhaps making them more tangible. Thomas explained that revealing the personal link earlier was not a good strategy because students would just ask lecturers about the ancestors, rather than engaging with the tasks. This highlighted the potential difficulties of using personal connections, as they can also distract from learning as well as enhance it, and therefore require careful management.

It is curious that this session, heavily based on story, only generated a few student stories shared within groups when they were specifically directed to do this. In the final task they had been instructed to discuss their own stories that they could adapt for teaching, however, instead pursued questions about Toby's ancestor. It seemed that while there was still potentially more to discover from Toby, they were unable to focus on thinking about their own stories.

*Ooh - how strange! What do you think, Elisha?*

*“Perhaps they were so immersed in their activities and role-plays, that this took up all of their focus, leaving them little “space” for their own stories?”*

*“Well - maybe - but - Were stories too far removed from students' personal experiences for them to be able to contribute? For the lecturers they were stories from previous generations, - but students were younger weren't they - so perhaps they wouldn't have had those types of stories to tell?”*

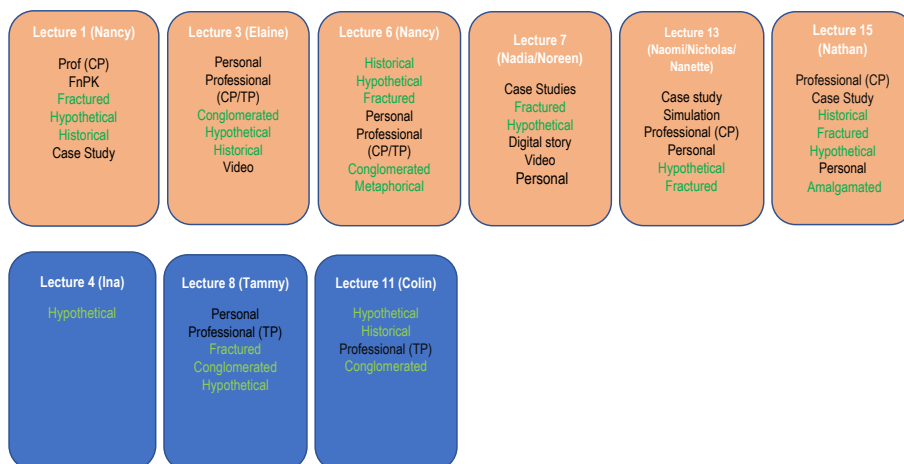
This historical storytelling was unusual, it had blurred truth with fiction and served to further highlight difficulties in identifying semi-fictional, (or even fully fictional) stories used in teaching, as mentioned in chapter five. It would not have been possible to know that these stories were not “true” if lecturers had not disclosed this. However, in other sessions

practitioner educators mainly kept to documented histories but presented them as stories to make them more engaging for students.

Historical stories were used to:

- provide historical contexts for medical developments and treatments;
- enable a focus on changes in attitudes over periods of time, or to track changes in policies and/or approaches;
- enable safe investigation of emotional and sensitive subjects through historical framings;
- enhance factual information, making it more engaging and accessible;
- enable exploration of a range of political and social issues by looking at them through an historical lens;
- help students make links between past and present - using the present to understand the past, which enabled the past to illuminate the present.

#### 6.1.4 Hypothetical Scenarios



These were scenarios where events were framed in a hypothetical way, where practitioner educators encouraged students to consider how they would react or feel in a particular situation - they often had “story-like” qualities. Although scenarios were encountered in three education sessions, these were very brief, and in two sessions were just used to set

tasks, for example Tammy used scenarios as a means of asking student-teachers to think about behaviour management and how they might need to work with parents.

Other hypothetical scenarios were more developed, containing story characteristics such as sequencing and changes in perspective. For example, Colin discussed his experiences of teaching within the wider context of professionalism:

“You will hear about teachers being criticized for failing schools... being low on the league table ... Ofsted reports.” [2-3 mins] ...

“You will drive past schools with posters that say, ‘Ofsted outstanding’. ... No teacher values Ofsted until they get a Grade 1...” [2 – 3 mins]

Colin’s use of the future tense (“will”) in combination with “you” seems to prompt students to put themselves into this situation. As these events have not yet happened, they behave as hypothetical possibilities; there is a strong suggestion that student-teachers are likely to experience these situations in future.

Naomi (L13) also used this technique, but the modal verb “might” is more tentative:

“When you go into practice... you might encounter ... doctors who look stressed ... you might want to give them a drink ... give them a genuine compliment ... make them ... smile, ... that stays with you.”

However, the final part “and that stays with you” suggests that Naomi is reflecting on her own experiences and incorporating these into the scenario.

Some hypothetical scenarios are more “story-like” in that they have more shape, with clearer sequencing, such as:

Elaine (L3): “You have gone abroad to a foreign country, with a group of people. ... But find one morning you wake up, you don’t know where you are ... sitting down, only one shoe on, no bag, phone or identifying documents – you don’t recognise anyone or anything. What would you do – How would you feel? Have you ever got into this situation?”

Direct questions prompted student-teachers to discuss how they might respond, and again resulted in several response stories. Elaine used these to promote empathetic responses to the experience of dementia patients.

Nancy (L6) used questions and discussion to shape the scenarios. In this example, Nancy asks students to think about the impact of them being ill:

“If I broke my leg?” [Some discussion.]

“Let’s assume my leg has healed, but now I have diabetes ...”[details].  
[Getting students to think through situation].

“Who here has ever thought – Oh, I woke up this morning ... I can’t be bothered to go in?  
[pause] Ok as a student? [pause] What about a staff member? [pause] What would you say?  
– I’ve got a dodgy stomach...”  
[Asking if this was ok? Teasing out why not.]

Questions and pauses allowed the parameters of the scenario to be rapidly changed and re-set, enabling Nancy to re-direct students, for example, from thinking about physical illnesses to mental health issues.

In the simulation session (L13), Naomi focused on emotions and tacit knowledge, framing this hypothetically:

“You might get there [the ward] and can’t find anything wrong but you *feel* that something’s wrong.”

This might be a means of challenging the view that all knowledge needs to be evidence-based. While nurses are expected to use evidence-based practice in the NMC standards, these scenarios tap into a more instinctual way of working. Naomi urges student-nurses to be aware of their feelings, and act on them, for example investigating a situation more closely when they feel something is amiss.

*“Ooh - she’s talking about gut feelings - I like gut feelings, always good to go with your gut instinct, that’s what I say.”*

*“Yes, Merelina, but gut instinct, you’re talking about sixth sense there, that doesn’t sound very clinical to me, that’s a strange thing for a nurse to be promoting, isn’t it?”*

*“No - sixth sense is tacit - that’s just fine, I reckon!”*

Similarly, Nathan’s scenario (L15) focuses on feelings, encouraging student-nurses to consider how people with neuroses might feel.

... OCD and hand-washing. “In America, they’ve put hopscotches on the street... it might be you’re walking down the street and you might have to miss all the cracks ... you might go back ... but if you keep doing it until you keep going back on yourself ...”

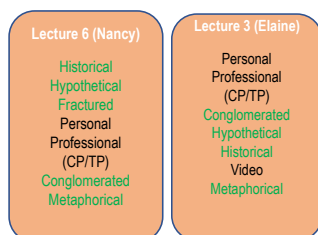
This emphasises the fine line between healthy and neurotic behaviours. Nathan uses “might” to indicate tentativeness, however, the use of the direct address “you” invites student-nurses to imagine themselves in the scenario.

In nursing, hypothetical scenarios were frequently used to encourage student-nurses to empathise with their patients/colleagues, but also to interrogate their own feelings and to think of situations from alternative perspectives.

Hypothetical scenarios are, therefore, used in a variety of ways, they encourage students to:

- think as professionals - to think through how they would respond/act as a professional;
- think through their actions and consider their consequences and wider impact;
- empathise - to consider something from an alternative perspective, thinking how they would feel in a particular situation;
- question situations and analyse them;
- project how something might be in the future, or how they might cope with something in the future.

### 6.1.5 Metaphorical “stories”



Metaphors were used in two nursing sessions. Metaphors are literary devices that directly compare one thing to another, and often feature in strong stories. Metaphorical “stories” were usually employed to explain concepts or emotions, and examples encountered contained some story characteristics.

Nancy (L6) used metaphors on three occasions as a way of thinking about different emotional states. They sometimes appeared alongside, or within a personal story, but at

other times were unconnected. Here, metaphors were used to guide students in thinking about stress:

“[Likened] too many stresses [to an] overflowing bathtub, turn the taps on, leakage everywhere, very messy, out of control.”

“Or ... put it into a pressurised container, compress it ... in the shop, someone asks if they can jump the queue [mimes turning on them and yelling] yayayayaya ... it's emotional seepage ... the bath ... or explosion ... pressurized containers.”  
[using a bottle of water to illustrate, hand gestures, tone of voice, pauses].  
[Students listening/watching.]

The accumulation of stress is compared to “an overflowing bathtub” and “pressurized containers”, Nancy shook a bottle of water to visually emphasize her verbal metaphor. She highlighted there was a limit to how much stress a person can experience before they reach a critical point and are in danger of emotions “exploding” or “spilling” out. Putting these into a sequenced “story” enables students to think about their own experiences in relation to the example.

Elaine (L3) also used metaphors to explain how people with dementia are able to better retain their oldest memories, forgetting newer memories first:

Talking about a bookcase ... earliest memories formed sit on the bottom shelf (as a baby growing up), .... moved up the bookcase giving examples of more memories ... latest things are on the top shelf, if the bookshelf is shaken, the books of the top shelf fall off first, the most recent memories are lost first, and the bottom books/memories and the safest/last to be lost. [summarised].

Elaine framed the metaphor as a story as she asked student-nurses to visualise a baby growing up alongside the bookshelf, where books represent memories. Those books at the bottom of the bookcase are more secure, therefore, less likely to fall off the shelf, so the earliest memories are the ones that are retained the longest. It is interesting that this “metaphorical story” was told in response to a student’s story, in order to illustrate the process of memory loss in dementia. However, metaphorical “stories” did not generally result in student stories.

In another part of the session Elaine specifically referred to metaphors in explaining what having dementia was like:

“[Dementia] has been described through metaphors ‘adrift in a foreign country’. One woman said it felt as if she had been kidnapped.”

This then linked to the hypothetical scenario where students were asked to imagine they were lost abroad, likening this to how dementia patients feel. Metaphors were used by nurse educators to explain intangible concepts, or, to use another metaphor, to encourage student-nurses to “put themselves in another’s shoes”. They provide a concrete way of explaining emotional and mental states, making them more tangible for student-nurses so that they can better understand what patients may be experiencing.

In general, metaphorical stories are used to:

- explain/explore intangible concepts/theories;
- help students visualise or understand situations;
- promote empathetic responses.

## Third Interlude: Going Around in Circles

*“Do you know, Georgina, I think this idea that certain types of stories encourage students to tell stories is a bit of a red herring.”* Merelina flew up and settled on the chest of drawers, tapping the laptop screen with her beak.

*“Yes - you might be barking up the wrong tree there!”* Mr. Wolf agreed, nodding sagely.

“Really? Do you? Why do you think that?”

*“Well, I can see what you’re trying to do, looking at whether certain story types generate more student stories than others, but isn’t it the ...”*

*“...situation rather than the story that counts? So, maybe it’s the type of lecture or the lecturer that makes the difference?”* Merelina was now hopping excitedly from one foot to the other.

*“Thank you, Merelina, I was managing quite well on my own without you butting in!”*

*“What?! You interrupted me!”* The crest of feathers on Merelina’s head started to rise, and she puffed out her chest.

“Ok - both, please don’t start squabbling, I won’t be able to think, erm, Merelina, I understood your questions, thank you, Mr. Wolf - what was your point?”

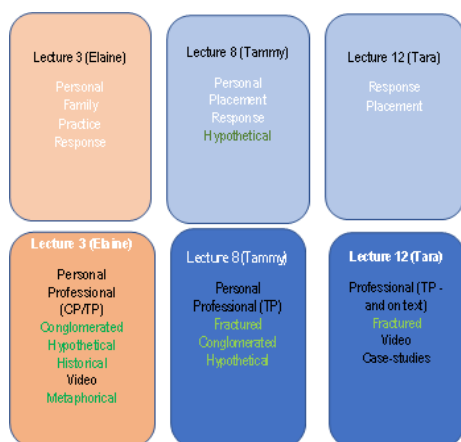
*“Well, that it could even depend on the group of students themselves, surely it depends on their willingness to tell stories, and to have a good story to tell, and how comfortable they are in telling their stories...?”*

“... yes, but ... I’ve established that role-plays and simulations don’t seem to generate student stories, in fact, if anything, they seem to stifle them.”

*“Yes... I can see that, but why? And look at your tables - there are three lectures which have an abundance of student stories ... do they use all the same story types, or not? And are those different from the lectures where there are fewer student stories?”*



“Well, I don’t know...” I frowned and looked again at my tables. Now that they had pointed it out, I could see what they meant – three lectures – L3, L8 and L12 – really stood out as having the most student stories. I pulled them together.



Three different *lectures*. Three different *lecturers* – one nursing, two education, had resulted in the most student stories. Lecturers were using a range of stories, but no particular story type seemed to create a story response, but this did not give me enough detail – I needed to go back to the original fieldnotes. I pulled out the appropriate documents, and pored over them, checking through coding and comparing them to the tables, scribbling ideas and links, but it was so confusing. I tried vocalising my thoughts to fathom it out: “Looking through these, I think that most story types can generate stories, but I think there is a stronger correlation between

lecturers’ practice stories and student stories.”

*“That makes sense - didn’t you say that response stories echo the originals in some ways, so they would generate more stories?”*

*“And students would have something they could respond with, that relates to the CP/TP stories - because they will be starting to have similar experiences in their placements.”*

“Yes, exactly, fractured and conglomerated stories are an extra layer really – they are a way of telling personal and professional stories, pulling them together, or splitting them apart. ... but, the historical stories and video stories, sometimes did generate student stories, and sometimes didn’t ...”

*“Fascinating ... why are these lectures so much richer in student stories then?”*

“Well – Mr. Wolf, you asked earlier how comfortable students were to tell stories in certain situations, and I think you have something there. It’s almost as if in certain sessions students are given “licence” to tell stories, as if they’re comfortable to tell them because they feel welcomed. And, in these sessions, the more stories told, the more stories were generated. I’ve written in my notes:

**Do stories breed stories?**

So, there were situations where they seemed to feed off each other, first one telling, then another responding ...”

*“Hah! A story duel, - what a lovely thought!”*

“Well, no, Merelina, more a story exchange than a duel, I think; there was...”

*“...a momentum for telling stories.”*

“Yes, that’s it, Mr. Wolf, and in these lectures, once students felt comfortable, the story could pop up anywhere, at any time. I think one thing they had in common though, was that lecturers all welcomed and validated students’ stories. That’s not to say that other lecturers didn’t value students’ stories, but perhaps in these situations it was more obvious ...”

*“It’s all about space!”*

“Yes! ... There has to be sufficient space for stories to be told! In formal sessions, simulations and those featuring role-plays, there was no space for students to tell their tales. Even when they were technically given space, when asked to share their own stories for instance, they were still emotionally immersed in the

lecturers' stories, so maybe there was space - in terms of time - but they didn't have enough "space" in their minds to focus on their own stories."

*"Very good! That all seems plausible so far- but what about these sessions where there weren't many stories - what's that all about?" Mr. Wolf wrinkled his nose, his whiskers quivered.*

"What? - Well - I don't know ..."

*"Of course, didn't you say in your methodology that an absence of stories was as interesting as there being stories - but you haven't said anything about that - conveniently forgotten, I suppose."*

Merelina looked pleased with herself.

"No, not forgotten, I remember saying that ... but" - What did it all mean? There was just so much to consider! Lecture 6 was very strange, thinking about it. Nancy's earlier lecture had generated several student stories, but this one, although containing similar types of stories, had only resulted in one very brief student story. This group was smaller, which might be expected to provide more opportunities for interactions, and less pressure to speak out in front of a large group but...but. ... I became aware of something pulling at my hair, "What, Merelina?"

*"Well - what is it, what are you thinking? I can't hear your thoughts you know!"*

"Oh, sorry, I drifted off there...Look here -"

Students responded to group discussions and answered questions but didn't tell their own stories. This group included students who were already in work, not on placement. Did this inhibit them? Nancy had encouraged them to share experiences and actively contribute. There were several group discussions, so they may have been sharing stories in these, but I was not able to hear.

*"Yes, so - what - what are you saying?"*

"Perhaps the situation of the students inhibited them. They were not on placement, but already in work, and had loyalties to their employers, perhaps this inhibited them, despite the reassurance from Nancy...or, perhaps the students were less comfortable with each other."

*"Well - why would that be?"*

"Because they weren't together regularly as a group in the same way that the other groups were. I'm not sure, but I know that they had been released from their respective workplaces to attend, so maybe they didn't know each other as well and so felt less comfortable sharing stories."

*"Yes, that sounds reasonable!"*

"Oh, but ...Look here -"

Or - was the fast pace of the session part of it? Delivery was very fast - almost stand-up comedian, entertaining, perhaps that didn't allow space for student stories.

*"Ooh, that sounds possible too - no space for stories again! What great progress we are making!"*

Great progress? I sighed and shook my head. Great progress, indeed! There were just so many possibilities. I felt more like I was just going round in circles. I stood up and picked up my jacket.

*"What - where are you going?"*

"I need a break - I need to get some food, have a walk and clear my head."

*"Well," said Mr. Wolf, "Really, that's the most decisive thing you've said all day!"*

### 6.3 Practitioner Educators' Perceptions of Stories

This section specifically examines participants' views that were expressed in SCRs, drawing out themes that resonated across participants. It analyses these in relation to story incidences and noticings, highlighting curiosities or surprises. However, I start by reflecting on the effectiveness of SCRs themselves, focusing on story prompts.

SCRs were employed as ways of encouraging participants to share stories of teaching and reflections on storytelling in order to explore the second of my research puzzle's aims. Story prompts were an important part of these as they provided starting points for sessions, setting the tone, and giving participants a focus point for discussions. Although I allowed flexibility at the research design stage for choosing and altering prompts in response to participants' needs (see chapter four), I followed my initial plan of using traditional stories in the main, reserving one Trickster Tale for the last two sessions. Telling oral stories chimed well with Trickster Methodology as participants were presented with novel prompts that they would not have expected within a standard research setting. The prompts also allowed me to "play the trickster" as stories introduced different thinking points, enabling them to respond to these, however, it also allowed participants to take the discussions where they wanted.

Participants commented on each other's stories, enabling them to drive the direction of discussions.

Story prompts essentially achieved their aim, in establishing a "storytelling atmosphere" and a useful, but open, focal point. However, responses to the different prompts were fascinating in their variety. Firstly, traditional stories seemed to achieve their aim of putting participants into a story mindset, with most participants commenting that these transported them back to times when they listened to stories as children. Ina related this back to listening to stories in church, and Willow, associated it with telling stories to her children. However, Elaine revealed that she did not really "like" traditional stories, as she did not "buy into" them, and was unable to "suspend her disbelief". So "Eshu and the Hat" was problematic, as she could not understand why farmers on either side of the lane could only see one half of Eshu and his attire - reasoning that it could only happen on one specific angle, but as he approached and moved away, they would see all of him and his trick would be uncovered. She was aware that she was unusual in this, saying that her friends were enchanted listening to these sorts of stories, but they did not "work" for her. This is

interesting as it might also relate to her resistance to fictionalising stories, as she did not see any reason for doing this. It is also a pertinent reminder that not everyone responds to stories in the same way.

The “Meat of the Tongue” story produced general discussion but did not provoke much comment around its central message. This was surprising, as the key message is that sharing stories nourishes the mind, and therefore the whole person, whereas depriving people of stories may mean they struggle to thrive. However, Colin (SCR6) did comment on the way that the story was structured, and likened it to his semi-fictional story (Vignette 5), noting its usefulness for discussion:

“yes there was a thread, but actually there were lots of things that sprouted off it that you could have started using.”

Conversely, “Eshu and the Hat” generated a lot of discussion on perceptions, which was a useful starting point because participants linked this into students’ perceptions of events, such as undergoing teaching observations, and how students’ perceptions of themselves might differ considerably from those of the teacher educators who were observing them. This also prompted discussions on how students receive and perceive stories differently from each other, with the realisation that stories may be misconstrued, and that no two people may take exactly the same message from a single story.

The story that had most impact on participants, surprisingly, was my semi-fictional Trickster Tale, Mrs. Wolf (See Appendix 7), which seemed to resonate more with participants than traditional tales. Ina (SCR5) commented on some of the themes, including the cross-dressing wolf, and themes around identity. She felt it would be a useful story to encourage interesting debates, and had said she had not thought of using stories in this way before:

“I felt that there is an awful lot that you can use to discuss the nature of society, the idea of citizenship, multiculturalism, and the concept of perceptions that we have or that we hold about other people.”

Butterfly commented:

“You’ve sent my brain fizzing. There’s just so many different aspects, aren’t there”.

She added that the tale was intriguing, as it seemed to give an insight into my positionality and experience, but she also wondered if there were hidden messages within it. It encouraged her to think about how students responded when she told personal stories, and what messages they “heard”. She said that it was interesting to be the “receiver” of the tale,

rather than the “deliverer”. Ina and Willow said that they could associate various aspects of the tale to their own professional journey, in particular the notions around overcoming fears of standing up and teaching a class. Interestingly, Elaine preferred this story to traditional tales, despite the fairy tale elements:

“I really enjoyed this one, more this one really, today and I realised then what you wanted us to do about making our story into a story, I hadn’t really understood what you were getting at. In a broad way I did, but in a – how to go about it and what it might feel like, I hadn’t got a clue really. So, I think it helped me to get my head around it a little bit. “Oh that’s what you mean!”... really.”

Elaine’s comment made me wonder whether I should have told this tale in the first SCR, however, I had decided against it, as I had thought it might be too prescriptive, making them feel they needed to do something similar. I discussed this with Colin and Willow, asking if they felt “Mrs. Wolf” would have been too prescriptive as a story prompt early on. Colin felt that this probably would not have restricted him:

“... I think that wouldn’t necessarily have made me think “Oh, my, I can’t present like that because I’ve got to present it like you’ve presented.” I think you’ve already set out this idea that there are, because it’s the oral narrative, it isn’t a prescriptive, you know.”

However, he also seems to indicate here, that he knew he did not need to do that because it sat alongside the oral stories, that the groundwork of explaining this had already been done by telling the traditional tales first.

These responses, perhaps, suggest that giving an example semi-fictional tale might have provided a better model for participants to develop their own stories, although, another consideration is that this also put the focus on me to some extent, which might create difficulties in teasing out participants’ stories. These are, however, interesting responses and it would be interesting to try different types of prompts in future.

### 6.3.1 Story Repertoire and Authenticity

During story mappings it was noticed that stories told often “fitted” very neatly into lectures, suiting context and learning points, and even following the flow of lectures in some cases (as was seen with fractured stories). It seemed that while stories slotted into lectures in an apparently spontaneous fashion, on closer examination they often appeared to be more practised, as if told on many occasions, possibly even crafted to suit learning situations. Support for this was found in participants’ reflections on their use of personal or professional

stories. In particular, participants discussed having a set of stories, or story “repertoire” that they drew on regularly for specific situations:

Angharad (SCR2): “I just have a whole store cupboard of ‘em, which just come out at the right time within the contexts...”

Elaine (SCR5): “I’ve got a little bunch of stories that I use again and again ...”  
Willow (SCR5): “Yeah, I’m the same, I will use a bunch of stories ... because they’ve served me particularly well.”

Elaine explained that several of her stories might be told for different purposes:

“Sometimes the story will do for different situations, like you can learn one thing from one day, and [get] another thing out of it from another day.”

Although Elaine might change the emphasis slightly, she felt that she mainly told them in the same way. However, others said they sometimes changed details to suit situations, for example, Angharad (SCR1) adapted stories slightly depending on context and purpose for telling, so that each story:

“might never be repeated exactly in that same way again.”

Willow (SCR5) said she would sometimes tell part of a story:

“...I just use a bit ... it doesn’t have to be the whole story ... just a little bit ... to get the point over.”

Ina (SCR1) was less sure of whether she changed details, but on reflection, thought she sometimes changed some aspects to emphasise different points, depending on the group of students and the purpose.

“Gosh, it’s incredible, I’ve realised that ...I think I change the story, always, a little bit, accordingly... the story’s always the story, but I change it to suit the audience.” [laughing].

But she still seemed unsure, and emphasised that the story maintained its core content:

*This all fits nicely with oral traditions - stories that change with each telling. The heart of the story stays the same but ... it’s about making it relevant for that specific time and place - good storytellers don’t have to stay with a script - they adapt.*

“The story doesn’t really change, but what I use it for, does.”

Colin and Angharad discussed this in depth (SCR2), where Colin was confident that he “embellishes” stories, because “I couldn’t possibly remember every single aspect”, he makes up details to compensate for things he has forgotten, to enable a coherent story to be told:

“... every time we tell stories, we’ll tell them slightly different, because of the context, because of the need to tell them. .... So ... it’s not “truth” in the sense that every single thing I said about it actually happened, but in my memory it kind of did, even though I know it didn’t, but that if I say it without authenticity, it doesn’t carry the same message across.”

Part of the need to substitute details, therefore, seems to stem from a desire to make the story feel more authentic, for it to be **believable** and **believed**. Participants agreed that if stories were too vague, they would not have the same impact, and therefore would not work as needed:

Angharad: “[what] drives your narrative in that situation, so the embellishments [and] changes that you might make will be linked to making your story as authentic as possible.”

Colin: There needs to be an assuredness/certainty in the story for students to take the key message from it. [Transcript meeting].

Willow (SCR5) was less worried about changing details as long as the core stayed the same:

“It doesn’t really matter that much that it’s changed shape, the nub of it is still the same, but it’s just the way of delivering it ... so it’s ... become a bit blurred and fluffier, but the meaning is behind it.”

While all participants had a range of stories to draw upon, most participants said they told stories spontaneously. However, there were exceptions where certain stories were told in particular contexts or to illustrate specific points. Ina used one story about carrying out initial assessments when she wanted student-teachers to understand how to reflect in depth on their practice (Vignette 7), and Colin said that he told a story about “nurture-nature” to student-teachers when discussing ethics. Elaine (SCR4) regularly drew on certain stories when covering particular topics, however, despite her stance on telling stories without alterations or embellishments, she preferred to present stories as **if they** were spontaneous:

“I quite like to pretend that I’ve just remembered this story from the past, when I’m teaching \_\_\_\_\_ nurses, and there’s something theoretically, and I say, ‘This reminds me of something from practice ... shall I tell you the story?’ .... but I just tell them a truthful story.”

She admitted that sometimes her deception was exposed, for example when she taught different groups, as occasionally there may be a crossover of students who heard the same story twice in different classes, undermining her subterfuge.

From noticings in story mappings and discussions in SCRs, it can be seen that practitioner educators draw on a repertoire of stories that they use in a variety of situations. One story might be told in different circumstances, and, with the exception of Elaine, participants felt they changed their stories to suit the purpose and audience. The concept of embellishing or altering stories too much

was problematic for some participants, as they did not want students to perceive their stories as inauthentic. Paradoxically Colin and Angharad agreed that some embellishment was often needed to recreate authenticity where details had been lost, to increase the impact of the story and make it believable.

*"How clever - what a good trick - I like that!"*

*"Yes - but - why does she do it? And, more importantly, do other lecturers do this?"*

*"Well - it makes sense, doesn't it? Stories break up the lecture a bit, add some excitement, provide the personal touch - much better than a load of dry facts theories. Much more fun!"*

*"But if the students see it as planned ..."*

*"It might lose its spontaneity and fun factor and the students might not be as interested..."*

*"Yes - exactly what I was about to say!"*



## Vignette 7: Ina's Story

### Ina (SC1)

I was involved in a diagnostic assessment, so the idea is that you would have quite a few students and you needed to really assess them, their rough level of their spo... well, their English, to make a decision whether they should ..., what class they should join – pre-entry, entry, and then within the entry, what level, and I once had a student who, you know, joined us in the morning and I had a very quick chat with that particular person, and the first thing you normally do, you ask them to just write their name and address, their personal details on a piece of paper. And we shouldn't use it as any form of assessment, but actually, a lot ... do, because it gives us a really good idea about, you know, the starting points, so it's things like, erm, you know, even the alphabet, do they recognise lower and upper case, these real basic things, ... whether they distinguish between b and p, er 'cos that's quite a common mistake, so we can gauge quite a lot from just that very short assessment. I came across this student who absolutely refused to write his name down, erm and found it [a] really traumatic experience, and with my kind of ... sort of, pre-taught experience, I straight away made my assessment, saying OK – “pre-entry, *done, sorted, dusted,*” you know. And that's what I did, and then during the break-time, I observed the same student, and I remember vividly thinking, this just doesn't make any sense, because there he was, using this clearly, possibly functional skills level English, so, nowhere near categorized as an ESOL student. English was his second language, but he spoke this *beautiful*, well not fluent, but upper/intermediate level. And I just thought, what's happened? And I remember ... this sense of just total confusion, possibly one of the very first times when I felt so helpless in the situation, that it obviously hasn't been resolved. So, I went to the student, I started talking to the student, and you know, yet again, it was confirmed to me that there was absolutely nothing wrong with his English.

So, I went back to ... and decided, there was no time for me to do any other assessment, I went back to more experienced tutors and kind of shared this ... “what's just happened?” And one of them, I remember asking me, erm “Did it cross your mind that he could ... he might be severely dyslexic?” [laughing] [Elaine – Aah, GG: Ah ... yeah]. And that, of course, never crossed my mind, more so, you know, we'd never taken that into consideration during diagnostics, you see. So, I went back, we'd invited this particular student around to do a totally different assessment, and yes it was, and one of the most frightening experiences for him, was actually, not writing a short story, you know, the letter, the .. I don't know ... to see, to assess what a letter looks like etc., but actually, it's the most basic things like their name and their address and that was, for whatever reasons, the most challenging thing to do, so the kind of ... so I remember reflecting on that, and the idea behind it was, that sometimes as practitioners, you know, we get absorbed by routine, and for whatever reasons, you know, we take on and we make decisions, because of, you know, not having enough time, or resources or whatever, we take on those practices, that [have] never been really researched, i.e. you know actually asking them to write their name or address that is supposed to be treated as some sort of assessment. It shouldn't be. But I carried on with the practice of my other colleagues, and it's not to blame them or anything, but that's just what you sometimes do, and they actually taught me a lesson, that actually you shouldn't do that, and maybe, you know, invest .. make a slightly more thorough investigation, whatever that might be.

### 6.3.2 (Co)Development of Stories

In phase one it was apparent that some stories were complex and consciously created, rather than being “spontaneous” anecdotes. It seemed likely that some of these may have originated from lecturers working together, for example, case-studies, multi-media platforms, or simulations. In education, Thomas and Toby’s historical stories may have involved a degree of collaboration.

Elaine discussed co-development of a complex role-play she had used regularly over many years. This centred around a character named “Albert” (Vignette 8) and had been developed from a “suite of case-studies” originally used for Viva assessments. Elaine explained the case-studies had been “very in-depth”, combining text-based scenarios and “talking-head videos”. What was perhaps surprising, was that Albert was played, not by another lecturer, but a trained actor. Elaine talked about working with him:

“I explained to him what dementia was like ... the strengths of people with dementia, so when he was communicating, these would be good, what would be more difficult ..., erm, ... how he might respond to certain situations. And I gave him links from the Alzheimer’s society and various other places.”

“So, he had a whole back story from that, but we then embroidered it and C\_\_\_\_\_ himself has embroidered it over the years as well.”

*Vignette 8: Elaine's Story*

**Elaine (SC5).**

So, Albert is erm, someone who helps with role-playing and he's a trained actor. ...But when he's with me he turns into Albert and he's in role as Albert, and he comes to the students to talk to them.

So, I break my big group into little groups, ... so in each group there's probably about fifteen of them, at a time. And I tell them in advance, "we're having someone coming for you to talk to, to learn about his experience of living with dementia, to practice your communication skills, and just kind of get some feedback from each other on just how it went", and that kind of thing really. And, I don't make a big deal of it, and ... they're used to people coming in the classroom, erm, but when we're there, I'm in role as the person who is, I suppose, I'm sort of managing Albert, in the sense that if he were to get lost, he would be lost, erm, and I introduce him and say,

"And you don't mind Albert, you talking to these students?" and I introduce them to him and vice versa, and then I say,

"Oh right, OK, I expect you could do with a cup of coffee?"

And he'll say, "Ooh yeah!" and he's very Black Country, Albert, he's extremely Black Country, and he's very keen.

And so, I say, "Ok, I'll go and get you a coffee," And then I say to him, "Oh, keep an eye on them for me."

And he says "Oh, I will," and they start laughing.

And so I leave the room then, so they will start talking to him, ... and I do get him a cup of coffee, and so I come back, I suppose 5 or 10 minutes later, at which point he's usually telling one of his stories from his back story, which we worked on extensively, he's got a massive backstory and he's a fantastic actor, so he can tell these stories from his past over and over, in as many different ways as he wants to. And of course, people with dementia, their back stories are kind of more in their memories than a recent thing, so that's kind of congruent, and so, and then he helps them practice their communication skills. So, if they say something that's not understandable to someone with dementia, he will kind of call them out on it, but in an "in-character" way. So, if they say, "So what medications are you on?" He'll go "medications?!" and so they'll go "Oh, tablets." And then, "oh, right, ok", so they learn that point without him saying what the point is, and lots of different things. And he also talks about his life, how stressful it is having dementia, and he'll talk about his wife, and he's very attached to his wife, whose called Vera, and the whole story about the here and now comes out quite often, and he can get a bit tearful, and he quite often will make them, in the classroom, go a bit tearful because it is so ... they can have a lot of empathy with him by this stage, and he is a completely engaging and likeable character. /contd...

And so anyway, this happened, and each little group is with Albert for about 40 minutes, and it's quite enough time actually, and I've come back by this time and I just sit back, and anyway this one time they were talking about family holidays, and he was talking about family holidays and how much fun him and Vera and the kids had, and they used to go to Western and blah di blah di blah. And anyway, this one group, they were so in love with Albert, they decided to hire a mini-van, and take him on holiday to Western.

And they were all into this, like "yes, we're gonna do it!" "When d'you wanna go?" "Where's Vera? We're gonna talk to Vera, we're gonna.." and I'm thinking, "oh no, what's gonna happen, you know?"

Because, towards the end of this, there's a nasty let down moment really when I say, "Well, thanks very much to Albert, so it's time to say goodbye to Albert, and is there anything else you'd like to say?" and they're all,

"Oh, thanks, thanks, and blah di blah."

And I say, "And now it's time to say "hello" to C\_\_\_\_\_." And they're [open mouthed], and they're ... he, C\_\_\_\_\_ is very posh, and it's such a shock!

And he says [putting on a posh voice] "Yes, some of you may have guessed it, but I am actually an *act-or*" [Ina: aww!]

And some of them are so upset, because they've fallen in love with Albert, and he's gone. [All laughing, looking surprised]. And so, I say to them, "I'm really sorry for tricking you, but the trick was with a good purpose. If we did role-play it would never work, you wouldn't go along with it, none of us would, and I could see you were using your communication skills, and Albert or C\_\_\_\_\_ says, "yes, you did this, this, and this right, this is how you could have done this better," And I say, "I'm really sorry for tricking you, but I did it with the best intention, please don't tell anyone else, but in the next lesson about ethics, you can have a go at me and we can talk about the ethics of what I did and what might have been right about it." You see. But on this one occasion when they were going to take him to Western, it got completely out of hand, and I felt very wicked.

It is evident from the vignette that this role-play involved a huge amount of detailed development, and the character of "Albert" had evolved over time. Elaine explained that student-nurses felt they were getting a "real" experience, enabling them to practise specific skills to deepen their understanding of Alzheimer's in a controlled environment. Using an actor avoided issues of student-nurses working with patients who may become distressed. This role-play may be an unusual example, but it illustrates the type of detailed collaboration and work needed to create such a complex story.

None of the teacher educator participants discussed collaborative working in HE, however, Angharad (SCR2) had worked with a company to provide role-plays for CPD when training

in-service teachers. In this case teachers knew they were taking part in role-plays, but again, actors were used:

“we hired a company ... who would do acted scenarios ... in groups, and they would ... act the scenario with the outcome, and then they would start it again, and you would go: ‘Stop! [paused and put her hand up in a “stop” motion]. What if you said this?’ So, they would... and they would then go with your suggestion, and the other person would react, and you would see what the outcome was. And it was quite a powerful way of exploring, in a very safe environment.”

Angharad picks up on role-play’s usefulness in enabling teachers to explore diverse situations in safe ways; with actors responding to suggestions from teachers.

Another variation of collaborative working occurred where nurse educators drew on patients and their families to help student-nurses understand how health issues and experiences of receiving health care impacted on them. This was seen to some extent in story mappings, as patients’ stories often featured in case-studies, practice stories, and some video stories. However, Butterfly and Elaine had worked with patients’ families in getting them to tell their stories directly to students. Butterfly (SCR5) described the situation with one specific family, whose child had significant health problems. The child was chronically ill for many years and had been in and out of intensive care. Family members were asked if they would share their experiences, and:

“answer questions how to support parents going through all these different things ...”

However, there were difficulties with this approach:

“...I became acutely aware ... that each year, even though as a family they’d moved on, they were having to revisit all of those experiences, and erm, and I thought maybe in the ethics of it, it perhaps wasn’t in their best interest to keep doing that.”

She felt that although student-nurses benefitted greatly from hearing first-hand experiences, the emotional toll on the family was too great. This resulted in a compromise where one session was videoed so that it could be used with subsequent cohorts, while she felt this was not quite as powerful, it presented stories safely; initially the family’s experience in sharing stories was cathartic but it got more difficult as they repeated the story as they were “re-living” it each time.

Elaine expressed similar concerns, she had invited a woman, who had cared for her husband for many years, to talk to student-nurses. Initially she told her story without any issues, however, once her husband had died:

“... each time it’s a little bit more upsetting. And each time I say to her ‘really, I’m really worried about this, [it] is really like, triggering horrible memories, it’s making you really upset, I don’t know if we should carry on doing this, you know. ...’  
‘Oh no, I must do it! I must do it!’”

“And she really wants to do it, and get her point across, and although she gets upset, she gets something out of it as well.” [Transcript meeting.]

Like Butterfly, Elaine worries that telling the story repeatedly is stressful, however, here it is evident that the woman feels compelled to tell it, and that in some ways this helps her. These types of collaborations enable student-nurses to hear experiences first-hand, and to directly interact with patients, families, or carers, asking questions that are important to them. However, the reflections here show that it is crucial that these situations are handled carefully and sensitively by nurse educators and that they are mindful of challenges involved in people sharing their experiences.

A different type of collaborative story development was mentioned only by Butterfly (SCR5) concerning collectively selecting practice stories that could be delivered in large lectures to the whole cohort. Butterfly explained:

“one of the modules ... I’m involved with at the moment, is erm, across all our fields of nursing so, adult, mental health, learning disability and child, ... called the core lectures, so you’ve got students from all of those health aspects potentially in the classroom, and trying to find a story that engages the students in some of the ethical and legal challenges that we have where all of the students can relate to it, is really quite challenging.”

It becomes apparent that this is a collective approach, and that stories were chosen carefully to complement case-studies shown in lecture slides:

“... one of the ones that we ended up with is from er, a colleague from adult community practice who looked after a young girl, ... who had got some issues with her mental capacity as a result of a congenital problem, erm, and the story is from this colleague’s experience of meeting her in her community nursing perspective.”

The nurse educators co-delivering the session chose this story from one of the team. It was deliberately prepared and planned to be told alongside a particular topic - this supports my earlier conjecture (chapter five) that some of the apparently spontaneous stories in nursing lectures might be pre-planned. Several nursing lectures were co-delivered, and therefore



may have contained these types of planned stories. Butterfly feels that co-delivered stories are “really useful” because:

“It challenges lots of perceptions for all of the different fields, for all of the groups that are there.”

However, there was a drawback as Butterfly found the prospect of telling a colleague’s story challenging. She worried that if the story was not her own, she might not be convincing:

“...you don’t necessarily feel quite as comfortable or confident with that information, partly because its somebody else’s story, but also, because it’s from a very different area of practice ... it’s not something that I’ve worked in clinically, so as a teacher I find that really very challenging.”

Not only is this problematic for Butterfly because it is not **her** story, but she is also unable relate it to her own clinical experience.

It can be seen from these examples that practitioner educators put considerable time, effort, and resources into planning and developing certain types of stories. This development may include collaboration with colleagues in their team, or with people external to the university, (e.g. outside companies, actors, patients and their families). Case-studies are intricate narratives that may be developed and adapted over different iterations. They are used for teaching theory and developing students’ problem-solving abilities, and, when connected to role-plays, to developing practical aspects, such as communication skills. This complexity often requires careful and deliberate collaboration. Meanwhile bringing in people to share personal experiences can be a rewarding process for all parties, but it has to be carefully planned and sensitively managed to balance students’ needs with the feelings of those who are sharing their stories.

### 6.3.3 Storyteller Vulnerabilities

During story circles several participants discussed various degrees of feeling vulnerable in telling personal or practice stories to students, with this varying at different stages in their teaching career, or in specific situations, resulting in a change, over time, as to what they were prepared to disclose.

In SCR1, Elaine shared a very sensitive story in which, as a young nurse, she was put into an extremely difficult situation. This involved an elderly patient who disclosed to Elaine that her family were members of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), that they had been involved in terrorist activities, and that the woman was in danger from them because of what she knew. The woman pretended to have dementia to protect herself from her own family, who, she said, had already attempted to kill her on one occasion, resulting in her ploy of faking her dementia. Elaine had faced a dilemma as she knew that she should report this to the police but was worried that it would endanger herself and her family, so even when the manager of the care-home called the police, she refused to tell them:

“... and they sent a policeman to talk to me, and I said to the policeman, ‘I have been told something by a patient, but it’s confidential and I don’t intend to tell you, if there is something where I feel there is an immediate danger, then I will tell somebody.’”

The sensitivity of this story, and Elaine’s vulnerability in telling it, was striking. She knows that this is a fascinating story for students, and that it portrays an ethical and moral dilemma that they could benefit from hearing, however, she has not always been willing to share it. As a new lecturer she did not tell this story, then, as she became more confident, she told it for a while, but subsequently she has become increasingly cautious about when she tells it:

“[I] wouldn’t tell them at the beginning of the module, and I don’t tell all groups. And some groups are smaller, which makes it easier, and some groups are more sensitive, which makes it easier, and some groups ... I don’t bother to tell them anything.”

This reflection seems to indicate that she needs to feel that she can trust students with this tale before she is willing to share it.

Ina (SCR1) agreed telling personal stories could make her feel vulnerable and some students might, therefore, take advantage, but mainly she found storytelling beneficial because it helped them to “see the human part of me”. Although Elaine only identified one story as being troublesome, Willow and Colin also discussed being cautious in telling some stories:

Willow: “I will gauge for my own protection, whether ... I’m going to share it, erm rather than assuming that other people have the same *values* and erm you know, *morals*, if that’s the right thing to say, not to misuse that information.”



The phrase “for my own protection” suggests she feels that there is a real danger in sharing some stories. Colin agreed with Willow that there were occasions when telling stories could make him feel vulnerable. He implies here that he is careful when choosing to tell stories:

“It is that sensitivity, it is that judging the room, ... it’s the gist, of erm, ...my exam results over the years and things I’ve failed, and it’s like Willow was saying it’s making those judgements for the story to be done at the right time, with the right group, understanding who you’re actually with, and telling them in the right way, as well.”

Colin indicates that these types of stories need to be prudently framed - practitioner educators might tell stories to motivate students, to show that failures can be overcome, but lecturers are apprehensive that students could misconstrue these acknowledgements of failure, exposing lecturers’ vulnerabilities.

When going through transcripts Willow expanded further, saying she felt it was even more pertinent now because “values are changing”. She had become particularly conscious of the impact of social media because whereas before stories might have been shared with relatively small groups of students, now it was possible that students could broadcast them widely. She felt that “everything is for public consumption”, describing her surprise when she was sent her own feedback of a student’s work by another friend who had seen it on Twitter™, who said, “Is this you?” It was a positive post, but Willow was taken aback that the student had made this personal information public. This had prompted her to wonder what else they might share.

Participants in SCRs all seemed to see value in telling personal and practice stories, however, their vulnerabilities played a significant role in **how** they shared stories, or even **whether** they shared stories. At the beginning of their careers as Visiting Lecturers both Elaine and Willow had told very “factual” stories, but they had become more cautious over time. Elaine was still confident in telling most stories but acknowledged that there were some that she would now only share with a few trusted students. Willow, however, was much more cautious, and now only told stories occasionally to a few students who she felt were more “mature”. By the end of the sessions Willow had created a semi-fictional story (See Vignette 9) which tackled a particular issue that she had encountered as an educator, which is disguised by the story’s format.

It is difficult to know whether lecturers in phase one were withholding personal or practice stories or changing stories to protect themselves.

*Is it indeed??!*

Personal and professional stories seemed to be told both spontaneously and with authenticity, but there were no story incidences in story mappings that indicated this type of vulnerability,

*Really - none...? ...*

.... but it is evident that stories are often manipulated by practitioner educators in many different ways to suit their purposes.

*“But what about Tara? Lecture 12 - your fieldnotes - What about Tara!!”*

I looked up from my laptop. Merelina was hopping up and down, bobbing her head, and tapping her beak on the notes so violently I thought she was going to punch a hole in them.

“Please stop doing that Merelina - what’s the problem? What’s your point?”

*“I will tell you if you will just stop typing and listen for a minute ...I think this is important...”*

I looked across at where she was indicating. What was she getting at?

*“You’re talking about vulnerabilities in story circles - have you forgotten Tara’s story? Isn’t she vulnerable in telling this tale?”*

I rubbed my eyes and tried to make sense of what she was saying.

*“What do you think Elisha?”* There was no response, Mr. Wolf looked like he was dozing.

*“Oh, well, never mind him!”* She waved her wing dismissively.

I took a long swig of coffee and tried to think back, “There is something curious about this.” Now I thought about it, I was not at all sure who Tara had been talking about initially when she introduced her story. Reading out the text made it seem like this was a case-study, someone distant from Tara, especially as she had displayed it on a slide, but - it **was** about Tara, she had hinted at this to students, without completely revealing it, until **after** they had discussed and fed back to her. I remembered thinking that she seemed a bit flustered initially, and thought it was odd, as she is a very experienced lecturer.

“Mmm,” I mused, “Telling a story about yourself, and one that highlights an inability to cope with a situation, that’s making yourself vulnerable, isn’t it? It’s taking a risk because it’s exposing your inner frailties (albeit in the past). It could even put a doubt in their mind about your professionalism, and/or it could be misinterpreted ...”

*“Exactly! I knew you’d come round to it! It’s a very brave thing to do in many ways - but she hedged her bets, didn’t she?”* Merelina cackled, *“She started off by presenting the piece as not being about herself, eh?”*

“Yes, but she did tell them after, perhaps she always intended to do that?”

*“Of course, but, ... if they hadn’t responded well - she could have pulled back, not said that it was her, and they would have been none the wiser.”*

There was something in this – teachers can certainly feel vulnerable. I had felt it myself plenty of times. I remembered teaching GCSE English, I was aware that I should be a role-model, able to present myself as a writer, but actually felt a bit of a fraud because I did not write creatively at that point. When I did create a piece of writing as an exemplar, I didn't tell them it was my writing – I had intended to, but when it came down to it, I was slightly nervous about it – it felt too *personal*. Was that the sort of professional vulnerability that Tara had experienced? And this story was even more personal.

It was emotional, too, she had admitted that she could easily have given up teaching after it. But when she got positive and supportive comments, she seemed much more confident and natural in expanding on her story – responding as you would to a normal conversation, no lack of confidence or looking nervous at that point. Perhaps next time she would be less nervous to share it ....

*“And another thing ...”* Merelina interjected, pointing at a different section with her wing extended *“...what prompted Tara to think about telling a story in the first place?”*

“Well, I told you, she said it was a “last-minute” decision to let the students know how well they were getting on in their studies.”

*“Yes, but why now, why a story? She said she hadn't done it before - was it because she was expecting you to be there - a story researcher?”*

“What?! Well, **no**, because ... she hadn't *expected* me to be there. I had already been to two of her sessions. I was supposed to go to Tammy's lecture, but she was off-sick, so at the last-minute Tara said I was welcome to go into her class instead.

*“Ah - I see, how serendipitous, strange how things turn out - what a stroke of fortune that you should end up in that one!”* She almost seemed to wink, *“but as for her being influenced by you ... nothing in it then!”*

“No, but ...” I hesitated ... “What if it subconsciously prompted her to tell a story? There Tara is, thinking about me having visited her sessions, looking for story incidences, possibly thinking about how her session went, and considering her next session... I suppose the idea of using a story might have occurred to her because she had been thinking about storytelling, so I might have inadvertently prompted her to take that approach...”

*“Yes! Yes, that makes a lot of sense, all sorted then!”*

“But ... that's no good to me!” I pushed myself back from my desk, exasperated.

*“Why, what's the matter, poppet?”*

“Where's my evidence? It's just an assumption ...”

*“Ah ... there's always a downside to what seems to be progress.”* She shook her head sadly and shrugged her shoulders, with a look that seemed to say it was not her fault.

These concerns around vulnerability point to the need for lecturers to have an awareness of the difficulties and challenges that telling personal and professional stories can bring.

Participants had either found their own solutions or decided to withhold some stories, but there was obviously some regret that they could not share their experiences more openly.

Practitioner educators, therefore, would benefit from being made aware of these potential issues around storytelling, so that they can consider how to choose and use stories both effectively and safely in their practice.

### *Vignette 9: Willow's Story*

#### **Vignette Willow\_Slaying the Dragon (Semi-fictionalised)**

Once upon a time there was an old lady who lived so quiet and quaintly in a small place so tidy, she considered it saintly, far from the madness of crowds she lived, knitting and spinning to fill her days. There was no need to travel until one day, her spinning and knitting was stopped. Whatever can I do? She thought, I cannot knit or spin but I enjoy this so much. Spinning and knitting is what I enjoy so I had better be replenishing my supply.

She beckoned my good steed who stood by my side, and they trotted along a country lane for mile upon mile until they were stopped by a dragon before them. Where did he come from and where was he going? As he blocked the view, they could not seem past him, the journey became slow and endless. They tried to go behind a hedge but this was thick with bramble. Up came a cow who tried to befriend us, but this only made it difficult for him to pass us. They tried a gallop to overtake the dragon but his huffing and puffing was fierce with fire. They tried to canter to see where to go and a little dog popped out from a low hedgerow.

"Where are you going?" we asked.

"To get some wool to make a coat to keep me warm." They said, "please join us on our way", but the little dog laughed and said he would rather stay. They carried behind the dragon but we became quite hot, they wanted to stop. They stopped and drank from a dirty puddle but the dragon carried on still huffing and puffing.

Eventually the dragon became very tired and lay down by the side of the road, they waited until dark, when he fell asleep. They crept round the dragon and came by quite swift, no sound they made or altered their drift. They entered the shop to get the wool and started to make their way back. They scurried up and down lanes, now lit by the moonlight and of all things something red, yes it was the dragon lighting up their way with his fiery tongue; "Oh! he did have a use," they said, "he lights the way to home," as they sped.

That night the old lady sat in front of her fire and thought of the dragon. Was he really that bad and frightening and did he really pose a threat? The more she looked into the flames of the fire, she realised that everything had its place in life and that sometimes you have to accept those things that frighten us, after all couldn't the flames of the fire be just as dangerous as the dragon, but that gave her warmth on that cold and bitter night. After all, the fire in her hearth was just behaving as a fire would do and the dragon was just behaving ... well ... like a dragon!!

### 6.3.4 Counter-narratives

There were several instances where stories told by practitioner educators provided students with potentially troubling counter-narratives portraying alternative experiences of working within their professions. These seemed to be used to demonstrate the existence of unpalatable attitudes and unprofessional behaviours in practice, or to show that wider influences (e.g. policies and funding issues) might be detrimental to their work. Practitioner educators presented the practicalities and realities of working within their professions, and these seemed to be employed to prepare students for their future roles.

These stories were particularly noticeable in Nathan's lecture (L15), initially he highlighted the stigma around mental health:

“One person – a brilliant salesman ... had first major breakdown, ... so I went to see his boss ... who was only interested in the business ... couldn't get over the diagnosis, couldn't see that person he had known for 20 years was still the same person.”

Nathan built on this portrayal of stigma, showing that it could even come from medical professionals, detailing the story of the poor treatment he witnessed of a woman who was drunk. His stories illustrated behaviours that mental health patients might display, alongside health sector workers' behaviour towards patients. He emphasised kindness and patience as essential qualities for nurses, whilst alerting student-nurses to the possibility of encountering unprofessional practice. The shock elements of the stories made them memorable, with Nathan testifying to witnessing “horrendous practice”. Despite the apparent rarity of the situation, the second account is troubling as it is clear that it was not one “rogue” member of staff, but several. These stories provided student-nurses with broader, more nuanced views of the realities of practice, helping them to prepare them for working in the sector. Student-nurses effectively learn from nurse educators' accumulated experiences and knowledge, including the darker, possibly hidden aspects of the profession, by listening to their stories.

Nathan's historical stories were also used to demonstrate how attitudes to mental health had changed over time, and how they differed globally.

Slide – a photo - Lake in Uganda and island in Lake Albert.

Described how in 1970s women who had children were left to die on the island...



“...this is horrific ... then [I] thought about our own history ... in UK, we locked them up in psychiatric units...” [detailed 3 – 4 minutes - comparing attitudes to mental health globally with UK].

“Also ... the former leper colony in Lake Albert ... school was opened for these women to be educated.” [Some shocked “aahs”.]



*“That’s good - he’s clearly acknowledging that Britain’s track-record on treating mental health is just as bad as everywhere else.”*

*“Quite right- it’s a good counter-balance, ensuring that everyone knows that Britain was not better than everywhere else.”*

These stories were emotive, with Nathan interspersing them with his own reactions and comments, he emphasised that mental health should be considered in broader political, social, and historical contexts:

“mental health care is never neutral ... it is steeped in stories from history.”

In presenting this more problematic history, Nathan provides a counter-narrative to views of Britain as a proud innovator of nursing and health treatments, suggesting the story is a lot more complicated, and urging student-nurses to investigate this further, with additional reading. He was, therefore, providing alternative histories, encouraging them to delve deeper and critique situations.

Colin’s lecture (L11) also included several counter-narratives. In one part he reflected on challenges that teachers may face:

talked about teachers isolating themselves and not interacting with other parts of their organisation ... not engaging in best practice ... and new teachers getting the classes that no-one else wanted to teach ...

*Ooh, that sounds like Tara’s “sink” class!*



Colin’s views on working in education, also bore witness to several situations which presented student-teachers with perspectives on the types of challenges they might encounter, which may be contrary to official presentations. He gave interesting insights into the realities of working as a teacher, telling stories about teaching that student-teachers were unlikely to find in teaching textbooks, warning them about the difficulties that new teachers might face. However, it is interesting that he was careful to emphasise that these negative stories were not his personal experience, instead, these were stories acquired from his contact with external organisations via his teacher educator role. This emphasis is



interesting as it may relate to his comments in the story circle, that it is important to frame stories carefully, so they are not misconstrued.

In another story, Colin shared an experience about attending a training session about learning outcomes, in which the trainer was a headteacher from an organisation that had received a grade 3 or 4:



“it was so demoralizing because he was saying, ‘you are not good teachers’... saying how they needed to change. ... explaining that “Similar things” often occur in education.

*“Well, this is most curious - being trained by someone who does not sound very good at it, that sounds a bit rum to me!”*

This presented a negative and troubling training experience, and again seemed to prepare student-teachers for being sent on potentially sub-standard or worthless training.

*“It reminds me of a house of cards - building up high and looking impressive, but no foundations, so the whole thing will come crashing down with the slightest*

*“I agree Merelina, it sounds like the trainer, in this case, was not as knowledgeable or skilful as their entrepreneurial status would seem to suggest, what does this story say about education?”*

*“So, Colin, as a lecturer with wide experiences, is quite cynical about the state of “approved training” and CPD providers?”*

*“Yes- he’s...”*

*“Do you think you two could be quiet for a bit - I’m losing my thread ...”*

*“Hrrmph!!”*

It was difficult to judge how student-teachers were reacting to these stories, there were “a few laughs” when Colin revealed the trainer had received a low Ofsted grade, but otherwise there were no obvious reactions.

There is a fascinating undercurrent to these stories, which serve to challenge the status quo, questioning various aspects of professional practice and how CPD is disseminated. Colin presents a very different view of teaching from the “official line”, where CPD is not rewarding but “demoralizing”. In presenting these stories he is effectively asking: who decides what is valuable and useful; who decides what policy/strategies work; and - is there a lot of wasted



money? Colin highlights that this experience is not isolated, but part of the educational environment, something, therefore, that student-teachers can expect to encounter.

Like Nathan talking about the nursing profession, Colin, indicated that student-teachers might encounter others who behave unprofessionally. He emphasised they may meet people who do not uphold values of equality and might even meet teachers with unpalatable views. These serious and difficult topics surrounding professionalism were presented as ethical dilemmas in line with the main discussion themes of the lecture. However, they also presented troubling counter-narratives to the official presentation of education.

## Fourth Interlude: The Tricksters Cause Trouble



I stood in the doorway, stunned into silence as the voices reached a crescendo of excitement. Merelina was hopping all over my draft papers, excitedly picking them up with her beak, flailing them about, while Mr. Wolf seemed to be doing some kind of mad jig as he shuffled on top of them.

*“Where’s the one I want?”* he yelled, *“it’s here somewhere!”*

He started pawing through another pile, scattering papers around the room, as he did so, his tail swept around and caught my coffee cup, which went flying up into the air and came down on the floor with a thump, spilling everywhere. But, in their ebullience, the tricksters did not seem to notice, they hopped and heaved, circling each other in a frenzied flurry of fur and feathers, furiously scrabbling and scrambling to find what they were looking for ...

“STOP!! – STOP right now!” I strode into the room and yelled in my loudest teaching voice. “Look at the mess! For goodness sake, STOP!!”

Silence descended. Mr. Wolf and Merelina turned to look at me, quizzically.

*“Well, what a loud voice! What’s the matter, Petal?”* Asked Merelina, somewhat tentatively.

“What’s the matter! Good grief – you two are really frying my brain! Look what a mess you’ve made of my papers, they’re all over the place. Look at the room! I thought you were supposed to be helping, not sabotaging my work and making my life harder, good grief!”

Mr. Wolf, tilted his head to one side as if weighing up my outburst and assessing it. Merelina started to shuffle from one foot to another, gently nibbling at her ruffled feathers, smoothing them, one feather at a time. A glance passed between them before Mr. Wolf broke the silence:

*Well, that’s gratitude for you!”* He sounded indignant. *“After all we’ve done for you.”*

Merelina joined in, with a more conciliatory tone, *“We were only trying help, Flowerpot.”*

“Well, you’re *not* helping – how is this behaviour helping?” I challenged them, continuing “all you’re doing is running around making a mess of my work that I’ve tried so hard to be meticulous with, you’re upsetting everything. This can’t go on! I really can’t cope with you disrupting everything.”

*“Surely, it’s not that bad,”* said Mr. Wolf, looking around at the papers and wriggling his nose, *“this is easily fixed!”*

“Really? You think this mess is easily fixed, I mean, look! You’ve crossed things out all over the place, spilt my coffee on half of my papers, you’ve muddled everything up.” I picked up a clump of soggy papers, which

dripped their brown liquid onto the carpet. "And, now there's paw prints and bird prints all over them, how am I supposed to sort out this? This will take me ages to put right."

*"But these are just copies - you can always print more."* Mr. Wolf sounded indignant, *"soon mended!"*

"No! No! It isn't!" I sat down again, my head was pounding. I looked at the floor littered with my scrunched-up work. I felt utterly exhausted and overwhelmed, I shook my head, screwing up my eyes to hold back the tears. This was really no good, I needed to take back control, take back ownership of the situation...

I took a deep breath and using a more measured tone, I tried to explain. "It's no good, yes, this physical mess can be sorted out, but you are causing me to be so confused - instead of helping me to think through the issues, you're imposing your own ideas and leaving me with no space to think through my research for myself. I just, .... I just *really need some space to think.*"

They stood stock still, serious but affronted. I could not bear to look at them any longer! I sat down on the futon, blinking away my tears, closed my eyes and breathed deeply as I tried to calm down. In the periphery of my thoughts, I heard them shuffling, but I tried to concentrate on my breathing.

*"Well, if that's how she feels..."* said Merelina, sounding hurt, *"I suppose we'd better leave her to it."*

*"Yes,"* Mr. Wolf agreed - *"I suppose you're right Merelina! We don't stay where we're not wanted ... but..."*, his tone changed, becoming harsher, *"my girl, just remember this, don't come crying to us when you're struggling to meet your deadlines. You've made your choice and now you will need to live with it!"*

The room was suddenly filled with silence, it *felt* empty. I opened my eyes - a single black feather floated gently down in front of me, settling on top of the soggy papers.

The Tricksters had gone!



## 6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented empirical findings, concentrating on new story categories and key themes that emerged in the two research phases in order to provide further unravelling of my research puzzle. In several areas participants' reflections and discussions have served to illuminate the noticings of phase one, enabling a richer and more nuanced understanding of practitioner educators' pedagogical use of stories. This has resulted in some fascinating noticings including the unveiling of challenges and areas of tension concerning storytelling usage, in particular, varying views on the need for authenticity in lecturers' stories, balanced with a need for storytellers to provide safeguards for themselves against their own vulnerability. Noticings of story incidences in some lectures have led me to propose a number of new story categories, and, where possible, these have been presented alongside lecturers' perceptions that add insight into their usage, together with the notion that some of these story types (particularly historical and conglomerated) have been knowingly developed by lecturers to enhance their teaching.

Another particularly interesting noticing is that many apparently spontaneous stories are often pre-planned to some degree. From lecturers having a story "repertoire" to draw upon when needed, through the collaboration of nurse educators in selecting specific stories to be told in cross-field lectures, to the development of simulations and multi-media stories. This analysis has discovered that a significant proportion of storytelling is pre-planned to some extent, and the development of certain stories often involves considerable and detailed work, either on an individual or collaborative level. These preparations are, however, often not immediately obvious to anyone outside of the process, and so this may be viewed as hidden practice.

Finally, noticings from phase one support the notion that practitioner educators sometimes use stories to offer counter-narratives to the prevailing climate, they are a way of presenting the realities behind the official stories, the perceptions, opinions and experiences that point to a different picture of the professions. These counter-narratives provide students with

more nuanced and complex portrayals that help to prepare them for the reality of their new careers. These empirical noticings and analysis will be discussed further in the next chapter.

## Chapter Seven: Discussion of Storytelling Encounters

This thesis has discussed that the role of storytelling in education is directly influenced by wider socio-cultural and political contexts, as these directly impact practitioner educators' choice of pedagogical approaches, including whether they use storytelling or not.

Neoliberalism impacts not just on policy and the over-riding shape of education at national level (Ball, 2001; Jones, 2016) but also on how lecturers make pedagogical decisions. The focus on individualism and competition in education (Giroux, 2014) directly affects practitioner educators' everyday teaching practices as they navigate policy demands.

This chapter considers empirical noticings (as defined in chapter one) within a broader discussion, situating them within socio-cultural and political educational contexts.

Bourdieuian and Freirean lenses will be put to work to explore storytelling as pedagogy in relation to these contexts. In line with narrative inquiry, storytelling is placed within the "three commonplaces" of "temporality", "sociality" and "place" (Clandinin, 2016: 39-40).

Participants' perceptions of storytelling are also viewed narratively within these contexts, with consideration given to resonances, differences and tensions. I examine these perceptions drawing from empirical noticings to show that storytelling, rather than being spontaneous and anecdotal, is often deliberately planned and knowingly used by practitioner educators, and is therefore, often integral to their practice. However, this research reveals significant differences between nurse and teacher educators' use of storytelling, and I discuss these in light of cultural and pedagogical traditions within these professions. I also explore: practitioner educators' (un)conscious use of stories as potential counter-narratives to prevailing neoliberal discourses; challenges associated with using storytelling pedagogically; and implications for practitioner educators' education and CPD.

In addition, this chapter will highlight how noticings complement, challenge, or offer new insights to existing literature. It, therefore, addresses the puzzle's aims to use empirical noticings to add to existing knowledge about the role of storytelling in professional education and to uncover practitioner educators' perceptions of storytelling in practice. What I propose in this thesis is that practitioner educators use storytelling in a wide variety of ways that are

often more diverse and nuanced than current literature suggests. This fits with the notion that pedagogical storytelling in professional education is often hidden practice which, therefore, has implications for the education of practitioner educators' and their ongoing development. However, before discussing empirical noticings, I first consider Trickster Methodology and the role that this has within this thesis.

## 7.1 Trickster Methodology

A PhD journey is a period of liminality (Szakolczai, 2021), a transitional period; doctoral candidates gradually become a new version of themselves. This involves a truly transformative experience, a "letting go" of former selves, immersion into a new way of being, and the embracing of "a genuine Alice-in-Wonderland experience", where "almost anything can happen" (Szakolczai, 2009: 149). I embarked on my PhD journey with hope, enthusiasm, and some trepidation. I have developed skills and knowledge, learnt to face my fears, overcome challenges and trials, and started to transform; my rite of passage culminates with a Viva Voce, and if I am successful, an official graduation ceremony.

My liminal journey thus far has been accompanied, for the most part, by trickster companions. I became fascinated by tricksters early in my PhD as I considered their potential. Tricksters have "hopped" in and out of my thoughts, as I deliberately focused on them, or serendipitously found myself thinking of them, producing moments of insight, or piquing my curiosity. Tricksters, it seemed, were everywhere, appearing in books, films and magazines. I was also reminded of them in real-life animal encounters: watching crows and magpies capering on the ground or flying above me, even encountering an inquisitive fox who watched and followed me in a graveyard. These noticings of tricksters in culture, together with trickster mannerisms and mischievous behaviours, have become central to my research process.

Trickster Methodology, from tentative beginnings, has become a driving force, trickster-thinking and trickster-writing has carried me through the fieldwork, through analysis and now to this discussion chapter. During this time, I have strived to think like a trickster, asking myself - what would they do? What would they say? How would they encounter the research? Tricksters are, themselves, liminal entities, occupying "borderlands" and yet they are also "validated by the structures [they] simultaneously mock and contest" (Conroy and

Davis, 2002: 269 in Priyadharshini, 2012: 551). In this thesis they have visibly manifested themselves, being both within and outside of, the academic writing, in the form of Trickster Tales. They have interrupted academic writing in analysis chapters, imposing themselves and making their voices heard. They have gently mocked each other and me, vying for my attention and that of the reader. Their voices have mischievously questioned proceedings, thus facilitating an untangling of empirical noticings, as they have argued over key points, and challenged me to pay attention to areas that I might not, otherwise, have noticed, pushing me to think deeper.

My tricksters have become a part of me, but through this research I have come to realise my family voices are also here because they are at the heart of my storytelling capital. The stories that members of my family have told me over the years, have become part of my being. They sit beneath the surface of my consciousness, ready to inform my thinking, providing a familial perspective through their eyes, reminding myself of my heritage. In using these stories in my research, by putting them into the characters of my Tricksters, my family stories live again through my writing. These are my embodied storytelling capital.

While my Tricksters have informed my research becoming my principal methodology, suffusing every part of the process - going forward, Trickster Methodology will mean different things to new researchers who are drawn to this approach. My Tricksters, Merelina and Mr. Wolf, will not mean anything to them, they will need to find their own trickster companions. My tricksters cannot be their tricksters because our influences, our heritage, our storytelling capitals are distinctive. However, tricksters are common to every culture (Hyde, 2008; Szakolczai, 2009) and therefore available to everyone. Core trickster characteristics that are employed in the methodology, are there to be utilised, to enable researchers to think from new perspectives, providing a means of challenging oneself, ready to disrupt the traditional boundaries of research in order to create new understandings.

To some extent, my Tricksters buck the trend, they appear to be relatively benign, to help more than hinder, which may seem incongruent with their traditional counterparts. However, as discussed in chapter four, tricksters are not malevolent creatures, sometimes they show “genuine compassion” for others, “even risking her/his own safety (and life) to secure for them the essential commodities of life” (Kamberelis, 2003: 679). However, they live in a state of liminality, constantly pushing at the boundaries of what is possible and, therefore,

they often cause trouble (Szokolczai, 2021). This is an essential way in which tricksters inadvertently re-make the world as alchemists (Hyde, 2008) upturning and challenging old thinking and practices so that new insights and ways of being can be discovered. Tricksters “create chaos out of order and order out of chaos” (Kamberelis, 2003: 679). By embracing disruption, researchers can unpick and make sense of empirical noticings, allowing them to be re-ordered and re-made.

## 7.2 Storytelling Capital and Socio-cultural Contexts

Throughout this thesis storytelling has been discussed in relation, not only to education as a pedagogical tool, but also as a social phenomenon integral to human communication (e.g. Frank, 2010; Haigh and Hardy, 2011; Pellowski, 1976). In chapter four, the concept of storytelling capital was proposed, where stories are an important part of professional identity-making for both practitioner educators and their students. This is an aspect of cultural and social capital which enables us to acquire “embodied”, “objectified” and “institutionalized” states (Bourdieu, 1986: 17). By learning through stories, we bolster our storytelling capital, gradually assimilating our new professional identities and enhancing our social capital. In empirical noticings we saw that stories are absorbed into our “narrative habitus” and “repertoire” (Frank, 2010), thus becoming “embodied state”, dynamically lodged within our being and ready to be put to work. Stories are there to be called upon, dependent on the situation, our interactions, our response to our surroundings, and the messages that we want to convey. Stories form an integral part of our (professional) identity, so that by telling stories we portray ourselves as we want to be seen.

Practitioner educators acquire new stories to add to their repertoires from their social interactions in academia and their professional roles, as well as their personal experience, and develop these into stories that they tell students, which become part of their storytelling capital. In addition, by being exposed to text-based, case-studies or other physical story materials, students accumulate stories as “objectified” state. Finally, storytelling capital enables us to make sense of our experiences and learning, thus contributing to our “institutionalized state”, enabling us to gain certification and recognition as professionals. In this thesis, I make the case that personal experience of stories augments our storytelling capital (whether listening to, being immersed in, or telling our own stories) and consequently our social capital. Practice stories, in particular, help to render difficult concepts and theories



more accessible and methods which increase accessibility also help to democratise learning, enabling critical pedagogies to be enacted (Giroux, 2010). Stories also enable students to adjust to using technical and academic language, enabling them to assimilate and master “legitimate language” (Bourdieu, 1991: 61) for functioning in their new social environment and future professions.

In this thesis I show that practitioners often consciously use stories to encourage students to re-think situations, or to question their perceptions, corresponding with Freire’s (2003) call for educators to engage students in critical pedagogies which provoke them to think deeply and politically about their situations and challenge the status quo (Giroux, 2010). In this way stories contest hierarchies and equalize differences in status. As discussed in chapter four, dominant narratives of education and nursing are effectively state-sanctioned stories, and in this chapter, I discuss how stories function as “petits recits” (Lyotard, 1984) challenging these narratives by providing counter-narratives. Stories used in this way (whether consciously or not) disrupt students’ thinking and challenge their pre-conceptions, helping them to question dominant discourses of institutional spaces. Practitioner educators who encourage students to share stories, or who validate their stories, are encouraging an environment of critical discourse, and peer learning. Collaborative and reflective practice, which values equal contributions from students, is another important consideration in Freire’s pedagogy (Kalogeras, 2013), and this can be facilitated by educators valuing personal and practice stories, using them as a way to further explore issues or to illustrate points. Therefore, learning points and topics can emanate from students themselves rather than practitioner educators, in a manner that echoes the core philosophy of Freire’s cultural circles (1985). As discussed in chapter four, these involved educators working as facilitators, where students’ personal interests and situations drove the themes of each session empowering students to control the direction of their own learning. Valuing of students’ stories, together with critical pedagogy, also imbues importance in students’ experiences (Lin, 2014), building on collaborative relationships. Here students can recognise their own value and understand that “the instructor is not a sole, or absolute authority on the subject matter” (Kalogeras, 2013: 114).

### 7.3 Story Types and Impact on Learning

Practitioner educators knowingly chose stories that worked for them, and these were employed to do various pedagogical “jobs”. This largely supports literature that identifies

multiple uses of storytelling in education (e.g. Andrews et al., 2009; Kalogeras, 2013; Moon, 2010; Moon and Fowler, 2008). Participants in SCRs discussed using personal and practice stories in multiple ways, including: giving concrete examples or illustrating concepts; sharing mistakes, or giving examples of good or bad practice; encouraging empathy and collegiality; modelling professional behaviours; and to entertain. This chimes with Flanagan's (2015) research, which highlights that early years' education (EYE) students value stories for their entertainment value. Meanwhile Attenborough and Abbott's (2020: 3) research with nurse educators concurs that key reasons lecturers told stories was to "engage students", "to link theory and practice", as well as to model good practice and help students see themselves as professionals. In addition, my empirical noticings found these key reasons were transferrable across to teacher educators' use of personal and professional stories. While Attenborough and Abbott (2020) briefly note that nurse educators commonly share mistakes with students, they mainly focus on storytelling for positive role-modelling. However, a particularly strong thread, that extends discussions in the existing literature, was that practitioner educators deliberately told stories about mishaps, challenges or making errors, with all participants emphasising the importance of sharing their mistakes or struggles as shared learning opportunities.

From the literature, it was anticipated that student stories would be encountered, particularly formalised storytelling (FS) and digital storytelling (DS), hence their inclusion in the typology. The literature review identified strong advocates for using formalised approaches, which set specific boundaries on story sharing to increase students' critical reflections (Moon, 1999; McDrury and Alterio, 2003). However, there was a complete absence of these across phase one, with no instances of students being asked to share pre-prepared stories, or to engage in formal steps for sharing stories, or creating digital stories. Despite this research taking place within a single university, this absence was surprising, as it was completely contrary to expectations from reading the literature. It may be significant that Butterfly was the only participant in SCRs to mention FS, which she had used when researching storytelling in nurse education, perhaps indicating that these methods are not more widely known.

Alternatively, the absence of FS might be due to time factors, participants referred to the constant time pressures affecting their teaching, meaning that there was not always time for encouraging students to share stories. It was noticed that story sharing was slotted neatly into lectures, woven between activities and didactic sections; stories flowed naturally within these, thus reflecting Schwartz and Abbott's (2007) findings in their study with nurse

educators. Conversely, FS focuses on stepped processes, involving specific tasks and detailed instructions, setting stories apart and significantly lengthening time required for the process. Time needed for FS is likely to be a disincentive in HE's time-pressured environments, where lecturers have to justify their pedagogical choices against performativity and accountability measures (Ball, 2015; Collini, 2012), pressures that have become even more problematic since the introduction of TEF (O' Leary et al, 2019).

In phase one, stories that appeared to be "spontaneous" were seamlessly embedded in-between other sections and activities (suggesting they may actually have been planned), meaning they did not conspicuously take up precious time. While FS helps students to "dig deeper" into their personal reflections, it may become an impractical affordance in this time-pressured environment. Flanagan (2015) found that while EYE lecturers valued students sharing stories to encourage deeper reflections, pre-prepared stories (including FS), were not seen by lecturers as being any more beneficial than those that were unprepared. This may help to explain the favouring of "spontaneous" stories, where opportunities for students sharing stories can be naturally and efficiently incorporated, enabling their employment whenever they might be useful, rather than adhering to time-consuming formalised stages. The neoliberal context of modern academia renders time a valuable commodity (Beattie, 2017), making it difficult to justify setting aside large sections of lectures in order to accommodate FS. This is compounded by the increasing amount of content that is needed to be covered within professional programmes. Therefore, although this research supports a wide range of pedagogical storytelling, including formal methods, it acknowledges the value of pragmatically using "spontaneous" stories, as a means of "making space" for storytelling in pressured HE environments.

Time challenges might also account for DS being notably absent from sessions visited. The only DS (keeping to the key definition of a series of images with a narrated voice-over) encountered was a five-minute animated story obtained from YouTube™. It is interesting that there were no activities for students to develop and produce their own digital stories, which was viewed as beneficial for encouraging critical reflection in the literature (Andrews et al., 2009; Daniels, 2013; Kocaman and Karaglu, 2016, etc.). This absence may also be due to the substantial difficulties (noted in chapter three), to effectively incorporate DS, due to the sophisticated technology and technical skills required by lecturers and students (Lowenthal, 2009; Ventola, 2014). Yet the potential scope for using DS was apparent from the employment of it in the NHS for healthcare stories. Here, staff were sent on intensive three-

day courses to coach them to develop three- to five-minute stories. The courses combined identifying a suitable story, developing a story script and then transforming this into a digital story with technical support given (Patient Voices, 2020). This shows that when the potential and power of storytelling is acknowledged and supported, the barriers to using and producing DS can be overcome.

In addition to these story types, in chapter five a range of story incidences were matched to the typology (such as case-studies, videos, fictional stories) and discussed in context of lectures visited. These are considered below in discussion of the similarities and differences between usage within nurse and teacher education. However, first I turn to stories that were not easily categorised, which I proposed as being new story categories (see Chapter Six), these are discussed in the next sub-section.

#### 7.4 New Story Categories

The identification of new stories is a key contribution that this thesis makes to the knowledge landscape of storytelling in professional education. My analysis leads me to propose that there are three main categories: conglomerated, fractured, and historical, and two semi-story categories: hypothetical scenarios and metaphorical “stories”.

I have labelled the first type as conglomerated stories, where “conglomerated” is “a thing consisting of a number of different and distinct parts or items that are grouped together” (lexico.com, 2021). Moon and Fowler (2008: 233) explain that there can be “stories within stories, like Russian dolls” and propose that there is much educational scope for grouping them. They suggest: students generating stories to explore a situation; stories collated in qualitative data; and patchwork texts (which bring together five or six short texts around a common theme, often linked by a reflective narrative, but with no set conclusion) (Moon and Fowler, 2008). Grouped stories encountered, however, did not fit with these situations, and they were not stories within stories, but instead were “mini” stories “stacked” together, sometimes with examples and information slotted in-between. These gave a more coherent picture of a situation or brought together diverse illustrations. These grouped stories resonate more with Burnett and Merchant’s (2019) exploration of “stacked stories” for research purposes, where they collected children’s stories together as a way of gaining a greater understanding and shedding new light on their data. In particular, they question

“What happens as stories meet up with other stories, and with readers?” (Burnett and Merchant, 2019: 1). Here, educators “stacked” stories deliberately to provide an amalgamation that intensified the significance of each mini story told, creating a more intense mass of stories for their listeners’. In empirical noticings, conglomerated stories combined information with “mini” stories that had distinctive story features, such as “temporally ordered” clauses (Labov (1972) cited in Andrews et al., 2009) and plot twists or “complicating actions” (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012: 29), thus complying with minimum requirements to be termed a story. In SCRs practitioners were aware of merging different elements, though there was disagreement on whether these were “incidents” or anecdotes (Angharad), or stories created from separate elements (Colin). As can be seen from the examples in chapter six, these mini stories were often very brief, and taken separately might be dismissed as examples, incidents or information, but the massing of elements together around a common theme made them more substantial.

Fractured stories are the opposite of conglomerated stories, as they are whole stories fractured into separate sections. In sessions visited, sometimes these were briefly interrupted, for example by a short discussion around an aspect of story, but at other times were strategically fractured throughout a lecture, sometimes separated by significant time periods. As with conglomerated stories, initially these fractured pieces, when viewed independently, did not appear to qualify as complete stories. It was only when taking an overview that the “whole” story arc emerged. This corresponds with Mishler’s (1991) observation that participants often told stories in fragments in research interviews. He noticed a tendency for researchers he was working with to view a theme in transcripts as being finished too early, failing to notice that the thread of the theme was often picked up later. These seemingly disparate comments, when brought together, formed a whole story which afforded additional insights. Although the purpose for storytelling was obviously different in lectures, the parallels with this phenomenon can be seen with stories emerging gradually, being added to at different points. However, these were also often carefully placed alongside key topics (e.g. Nathan and Nancy’s sessions), and, in some cases, the fracturing of stories provided a framework for activities, as in Thomas and Toby’s sessions. This fracturing of stories is not commented on in the literature on storytelling but may have been influenced by lecturers’ overall pedagogies and needs of their students. For example, stories that were used to provide a framework for lecture content may draw on scaffolding approaches, such as Ausubel’s theories of “concept learning” where “optimal learning is the placing of newly learned facts within a context for meaning” which are crucial for “anchoring concepts” (Curzon, 1997: 102). Story, then, helps to provide a learning structure and

context in these cases. Storytelling is already seen as being a useful “framework” to support cognitive and constructivist learning approaches (Moon, 2010), however, fracturing techniques harness story in different ways to strategically support learning.

The third new category is historical stories. Nurse educators used these to provide contextualisation for medical treatments or clinical practices, providing background information. Meanwhile, teacher educators used them to explain changes in teaching policy and practice over time. While there was nothing in the literature on professional education and storytelling that corresponded with this type of story useage, this category appears to echo concepts of “storyknowing” (Reason and Heinemeyer, 2016) and “Hinterland” (Counsell, 2018) that are proposed for compulsory education. These methods were discussed as being ways of using narrative practices that situate subject content within a wider context. In phase one, historical stories were seen to supply background for approaches that student-nurses might use, giving them additional insights into concepts or methods. Counsell (2018) argues that reducing a concept to a particular set of core points or facts, decontextualizes it making it harder to understand, whereas giving a broader “narrative”, provides an in-depth perspective, making learning points more easily understood and/or remembered. Participants knowingly and deliberately presented historical facts as stories in order to make them more enjoyable for students, and therefore more memorable. Heinemeyer and Durham (2017: 49), emphasise that “embedding events within a storyworld absorbed [pupils’] interest and helped them to remember things”. Historical stories used by practitioner educators, tap into these notions, forming a naturalised dimension of their practice.

In addition to these categories, I propose that hypothetical scenarios and metaphorical “stories” are semi-stories that occupy a “grey” area, in that they contain key story characteristics, but they do not always fully meet the requirements of a whole story. These may be tied into other types of stories (e.g. personal anecdotes), but they have a slightly different focus in the way that they are used.

“Hypothetical” is defined as something “that is based on possible ideas or situations, rather than actual ones” (Collins Dictionary, 2021). Hypothetical stories concentrated on events that have not yet, and might never, happen, encouraging students to imagine themselves in specific situations. Moon (2010) highlighted fictional stories as useful for stimulating the

imagination, and hooks (2010: 49) stated that “fictional stories ...help us understand one another”. These stories served this purpose by focusing in on students’ potential future realities and their future professional identities. This technique also enables students to envisage situations from different viewpoints so that they “enter the storytellers’ reality” in order to understand and “make sense of that reality” (Haigh and Hardy, 2011: 410). Stories are also seen as promoting collegiality and empathy (Attenborough and Abbott, 2020; Haigh and Hardy, 2011), and hypothetical stories were used in this way in some lectures, to encourage students to think how they might feel, or how they would respond to given situations. This was sometimes reinforced by direct questions asking students to consider what they would do.

The second semi-story category is metaphorical “stories”. Drawing on Bruner (1990), Moon (2010) notes that metaphors can be powerfully used in stories, as they encourage the imagination and aid meaning-making. However, in empirical noticings metaphors seemed to take a more significant role. On some occasions extended metaphors were particularly prominent as they were framed as stories, themselves featuring story characteristics. Practitioner educators used these to explain abstract concepts, or link theory to practice, stories that made these types of links were seen as valuable in Attenborough and Abbott’s (2020) research.

The identification of these new story types adds further range and depth to the knowledge of stories used in professional education. These were not incidental or accidental uses of stories, but deliberately employed to enable students to better understand different learning points, or to make more tangible aspects of their future professional roles.

## 7.5 Similarities and Differences between Storytelling in Nurse and Teacher Education

Empirical noticings highlighted that storytelling was employed more often, with wider use of different story types and techniques in nurse education than teacher education. This was curious, as nursing is strongly associated with clinical and evidence-based practice, whereas teacher education is traditionally more associated with qualitative approaches, which might appear to be more congruent with storytelling. However, this thesis has illuminated that differences in storytelling usage are influenced by historical and socio-cultural differences between pedagogical approaches in nurse and teacher education, as outlined in chapter

two. Teacher education has a long history of more formal approaches within universities (Jones, Armitage et al., 2007) firmly embedding it in neoliberal values, which appear to instil formality and constraints on workplace cultures. While neoliberalism also impacts upon nurse education, its origination in healthcare settings, and relatively recent move into academia (Warren, 2017; Willis, 2012) may have enabled an environment that is more accommodating to storytelling. Nurse educators maintain strong links to clinical settings due to their revalidation process, meaning they retain connections to clinical nursing culture (including practices such as “gossip” and “professional love”). This section focuses on these debates.

Mapping of story incidences illuminated storytelling as being used often in both nurse and teacher education, in particular, both professions used professional stories to convey various aspects of their teaching. The significant difference between story incidences within the two professions is fascinating because a small but significant section of the literature (e.g. McDrury and Alterio, 2003; Moon, 1999; Moon and Fowler, 2008; Sanders et al., 2008) places these professions together in discussions of storytelling and reflective and critical learning skills, thus giving an impression of commonalities in approaches in these areas. In this thesis I examine several potential reasons for differences centring on the three “common-places” of narrative inquiry, stemming from location, timing, and socio-cultural contexts.

There were substantial differences between types of stories told by the two professions. In particular, case-studies were a key pedagogical tool in nursing, used in nearly all lectures, whereas they were rarely used in education, despite Moon and Fowler’s (2008) view that case-studies can be equally used for education studies. This empirical imbalance in story encounters within the two professions corresponds with the literature, as there is much more literature available on the use of narrative, or storytelling-based case-studies in medicine and nursing (see McDrury and Alterio, 2003; Moon, 2010; Moon and Fowler, 2008) than in education. Moon and Fowler’s systemic review (2008: 235) outlines case-studies’ usefulness in medicine, explaining that they can be used to “capture holistic experience”, to help students make sense of whole situations. However, there was less commentary in the literature on how these were employed in these contexts, which this thesis has explored.



In phase one, case-studies encountered were primarily text-based, however, they generated the use of additional stories and other types of storytelling, including oral, role-play and multi-media platforms. A key noticing from mapping incidences was that case-studies often formed the basis of core lectures and assessments. Maclean and Tuite note that case-studies are used to “present realistic, complex, and contextually rich situations” (n.d: 8), and it was evident that this is how they were used here, providing realistic scenarios for student-nurses to explore and solve problems. Outcomes of case-studies were deliberately left open, as student-nurses needed to suggest interventions or solutions in their final assessments. This differs from case-based instruction (Andrews et al., 2009) where students studied the original outcomes. Case-studies provided details to enable immersion in “real” life situations, so student-nurses could consider what they would do if presented with similar problems in clinical practice. In SCRs, Elaine and Butterfly discussed using (and developing) case-studies for nurse education, however, reflecting their low occurrence in education sessions, and scant mentions in the literature, none of the teacher educators discussed using case-studies for teaching on PGCE programmes. It is curious, then, that although Angharad had previously produced and used case-studies for teaching undergraduates and in-service teachers, seeing them as valuable tools, she did not associate their use with pre-service student-teachers. In education lectures case-studies were almost completely absent, while in nurse education case-studies were “de riguer”, their usage was accepted and expected by lecturers and students, and these generated further storytelling opportunities in sessions visited.

### 7.5.1 Spontaneous and Pre-planned Stories

The importance of case-studies in nursing also appeared to encourage collaborative working and co-production of stories, which was rarely discerned in education settings and not discussed in the literature. Collaborative working is seen as positive and effective in teaching, but a practice that is under threat from neoliberalist values that promote individualism (Olssen, 2011). In SCRs it became apparent that some oral stories were collaboratively pre-planned for particular points of specific lectures; this was seen in some nursing lectures, but again, was not generally perceived in education. The exception was Thomas and Toby’s lecture that had clearly been pre-planned in detail and may have involved collaboration of story development. Thinking from a trickster perspective, working collaboratively increases communication between practitioner educators, encouraging them to learn from each other. While pre-planned stories are discussed in the literature in relation to FS (Alterio and McDrury, 2003) they are rarely mentioned in respect of personal or

professional stories, as there is a general assumption that these are largely spontaneously delivered. Therefore, my empirical noticings contradict this assumption and show that there is a more complex and nuanced situation surrounding these practices.

In chapter five it was highlighted that some personal and professional stories that appeared to be spontaneous might, in reality, be pre-planned, and this was confirmed by some participants in SCRs. Personal and professional anecdotes that are seen as spontaneous are considered to have less pedagogical value (e.g. McDrury and Alterio, 2003), although this has been disputed (Flanagan, 2015; hooks, 2010) there is still little focus in the literature on how lecturers plan, develop and execute stories pedagogically. This research unearthed interesting details with significant differences in approaches between teacher and nurse educators. Whereas teacher educators mainly told anecdotal stories spontaneously (with minimal exceptions), nurse educators were more likely to know in advance which particular professional or personal stories they would tell for a specific topic or context. It was intriguing that Elaine, liked to make it **appear** that her stories were spontaneously told, which suggests that other lecturers may use this tactic, which in some cases may contribute to the “gossipy” feel of some stories. This is a trickster-ish act. Elaine realised that there were some risks involved in doing this, as students sometimes heard the same story twice, so realised that it was a regular part of her teaching, but in the main, by “playing the trickster” she, and other lecturers, introduced intriguing or novel stories that better engaged or challenged students.

Often, stories in nursing lectures appeared to be impromptu but dovetailed neatly with learning points in lectures suggesting they were carefully planned. This style of conveying stories was also reminiscent of stand-up comedians, who appear to be talking to their audience “off-the-cuff”, but have, in reality, meticulously planned, developed, and rehearsed their performances. Attenborough and Abbott (2020) discuss the entertainment aspects of storytelling in nursing, with one participant mentioning that they sometimes felt like a “comedian”, while another said that she often told “humorous” stories, though these comments were not further explored. However, the trickster can be seen in these acts, tricksters are often associated with humour, and this is a means of conveying deeper, sometimes more controversial subjects as there is an “opportunity to hide multiple layers of meaning under the jest of story-telling” (Priyadharshini, 2012: 553). The illusion of spontaneity that Elaine pursues helps to make stories feel more exciting, as she lets students into her “secrets”, revealing things about herself and her practice. These stories,

therefore, act as a supposed diversion from facts and theory, which enhances their entertainment value, while actually adhering closely to planned learning.

### 7.5.2 Simulations and multi-media platforms

Simulations, interactive platforms, and virtual patients that utilized storytelling, featured heavily in nursing lectures but this was not reflected in education sessions. Simulations are seen as providing safe environments for student-nurses to practice clinical skills and engage in problem-solving (Karadag et al., 2016). They “mimic real-life situations” (Mills et al., 2014: 12) and therefore work well with evidence-based approaches required by nursing standards, but they are also flexible in that they can be fictionalised to suit different purposes and contexts (Moon, 2010). Simulations enabled students to try out different roles, to “become” other people and practise their developing skills. Practitioner educators engaged in the role-plays, donning cardigans and base-ball caps, presenting themselves as young parents, grandmothers, or gossipy midwives. In this, they invoked trickster characteristics, transforming themselves into entertaining “actors”, to engage in scenarios, and using this to enable the student-nurses to temporarily transform themselves into fully fledged P/ICU nurses, dealing with challenging situations. This crossing-over of characters enabled student-nurses to immerse themselves in scenarios, gaining multiple-perspectives and increasing their empathy with patients and their families.

Simulations and multi-media sessions seen in phase one were complex with detailed planning and development. This reflects the literature, for example Karadag et al. (2016) describe a simulation with an experienced actor, who was given a scenario to study fifteen days in advance of the simulation, which was then rehearsed on the day before the session. He was presented to look like a patient with spinal injuries “as if ... receiving intravenous fluid ... and ... a urinary catheter” (Karadag et al., 2016: 88). This comprehensive preparation corresponds with simulation sessions viewed, and Elaine’s story about working with “Albert”. Simulations are increasingly used in nursing training (Karadag et al., 2016; Mills et al., 2014), suggesting that this in-depth working with stories is also widespread. Simulations and multi-media platforms were, however, not seen in PGCE programmes, and teacher educators did not discuss using these with pre-service teachers, which corresponds with literature. However, role-plays were used by two education lecturers (Thomas and Toby), who again invoked this immersion in multiple-perspectives from student-teachers,

setting them scenarios to imagine themselves as different characters, encouraging them to experience a range of emotions including joy, worry and grief.

With mounting evidence that simulations are highly beneficial in nursing and valued by students (Mills et al., 2014), this thesis raises new questions as to why these techniques are not present in PGCE programmes. Their absence is especially puzzling as simulations have successfully been used in a wide range of occupations, including programmes for soldiers, aircraft pilots and cyber security personnel (Andrews et al., 2009). However, time needed for including these activities could be one possible reason. Nursing qualifications take place over three years, whereas PGCE provision is just one year. With time on placement removed, this leaves considerably less time for these enhanced activities to take place, within already intense PGCE programmes. Educators need to justify their teaching methods against increasing prescriptive professional standards, against a backdrop of performativity and accountability (Ball, 2003; Giroux, 2010) further limiting their opportunities for using more ambitious or time-consuming approaches. Collini (2012) emphasises that education has become reductionist, where teacher education is limited to a narrow set of skills, this means there is less opportunity for using more exploratory techniques, however, useful. The MRR (2021) is likely to further limit opportunities for using these types of teaching strategies, as it is seen to be highly prescriptive and to focus on technical aspects of teacher education (Adams, 2021), thus, making these questions even more pertinent.

### 7.5.3 Nursing - A Profession Steeped in Stories

Story mapping (see Figures 7 and 8) highlighted that nurse educators used stories more regularly than teacher educators and drew on a wider variety of story types, for example nurse educators were more likely to use personal stories, video stories and case-studies. Nurses have “always listened to patients’ stories” (Schwartz and Abbot, 2007: 185) and some aspects of storytelling appear to be embedded in nursing culture. This idea was strongly supported by Elaine and Butterfly’s reflections on their story usage. As was discussed in chapter three, in the last twenty years the focus on stories for nurses’ pre-registration education and revalidation has received a significant boost from various NHS backed initiatives, such as “Patients’ Voices”. While these were not encountered during phase one, other patient and practitioner video stories were, and, as was discussed in chapter five, they appeared to have a significant emotional impact on student-nurses. The shifting emphasis towards employing stories for nurse development and clinical improvements in the NHS points to an increasing impetus for, and positivity towards,

storytelling within healthcare as a whole. This shift is reflected in the literature with a small “flurry” of articles on storytelling appearing recently (Attenborough and Abbott, 2020; Buckley, 2016; McIntyre, 2015; Tevendale and Armstrong, 2016) that focus on patient and healthcare stories. These validations of the use of healthcare stories encourage a culture where storytelling is valued, thus providing precedents, and therefore justification, for nurse educators to develop and use stories in their teaching practice within a supportive environment. This is reflected in the large amounts of stories encountered in nursing lectures. Healthcare stories are seen as crucial in evidence-based practice (Buckley et al., 2016) and are encouraged in the nursing standards (NMC, 2018) again making it easier to justify their use in academic settings. This thesis argues that it is not just evidence-based practice in the form of patients’ and healthcare staff’s stories that are important for nurse education, but also that nurse educators’ own experiences that they convey through stories, are important in nurse education. The varied use of personal and CP stories is also crucial for modelling storytelling to the next generation of nurses, some of whom may eventually become nurse educators themselves.

As discussed in chapter three, “gossip” is an important communication tool for nurses that has evolved as a natural way to convey information on patients and incidents, and storytelling is an important feature of gossip (Laing, 1993). Laing discusses the widespread prevalence of gossip in clinical settings, demonstrating that it is integral to nursing culture. As nurse educators start their careers as nurses in clinical settings, they are immersed in nursing culture, including the use of gossip. Although gossip was not discussed by participants as being part of their practice, they did emphasise that storytelling was a part of the natural learning process for nurses. It was also noticed in lectures that several stories felt “gossipy”, where most of the nurse educators told personal and professional stories that delivered surprises, revealed shocks and “scandals”, and made students laugh, gasp or sigh. Laing suggests that sharing stories or “healing gossip” can encourage bonds between nurses, so that they gain a sense of “solidarity” and communal professional identity, as they belong to a group of peers who share mutual experiences and values (1993: 41). Gossip, in particular, encourages the “free flow of information from teacher to student, experienced nurse to neophyte, or ward nurse to newcomer” (Laing, 1993: 40). I propose that stories within academic settings, help to create a commonality of experience, whilst also aiding the induction of student-nurses into nursing cultures. Bourdieu (1986: 12) argues that “social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources” of a “durable network” where being part of a group provides them with “collectivity-owned capital” which strengthens the relationships within the group. Student-nurses listen to, and acquire stories from peers,

colleagues in placements, and nurse educators, thus they actively acquire storytelling capital, which contributes to their social capital. Stories told by nurse educators or student-nurses in lectures, thus become collective experiences and shared knowledge that helps to bind them in mutual understanding and shared practice.

#### 7.5.4 Nursing and Professional Love

As discussed in chapter five, nurse educators' stories sometimes contained very personal or emotional aspects and they tended to share experiences more openly than teacher educators. For example, sharing stories concerning their family's experiences, personal health, and times when they had struggled with nursing roles. The use of patients' stories was identified as being effective in promoting nurses' compassion and caring skills (McIntyre et al., 2015) with a call to expand this practice to healthcare professionals, but there has been far less discussion on the effects of nurse educators' personal stories. In sessions visited it was seen that nurse educators' personal and CP stories conveyed how they had responded to, and helped patients cope with, their illnesses and treatments, providing a rich tapestry of experiences. These can be viewed in terms of developing an environment of "professional love", as defined by Rollings (2008), where caring is central to nurses' identities, as they need to be able to extend "professional love" to their patients in order to inhabit these aspects of their role. It was seen that student-nurses often responded emotionally to intimate stories, suggesting that sharing such stories in the classroom enables nurse educators to "connect" with students. It also models the importance of listening to and sharing stories within clinical practice, which are seen as crucial in creating an environment of professional love. Additionally, this encourages a supportive environment for student-nurses to talk openly about their own experiences or responses to stories. This supports Attenborough and Abbott's (2020: 5) findings that storytelling can help student-nurses become "less judgemental" and more empathetic towards patients.

According to Cooke, nursing values such as caring and compassion are difficult to teach, she draws on Eraut (2007) to explain that transference of caring values is problematic due to their "tacit nature, the importance of implicit learning and the complexity of situations" (2015: 24). She argues that these values are acquired implicitly from nursing practice rather than by "explicit teaching", and that nurse educators hold the knowledge of caring and compassion which they pass from one generation of educators to the next via social practices. I propose that stories are part of this process. Practice stories are told by nurse

educators to student-nurses where they become embodied in their storytelling capital. These are then supplemented by student-nurses' own experiences and accumulation of stories from other sources (colleagues, patients, etc.), creating a revised repertoire of stories. These will continue to grow as student-nurses qualify and gain further clinical experience as nurses. Finally, this revised body of stories can be passed on (via the social practice of storytelling), to the next generation of student-nurses. This process, then, is integral to clinical practice, where ward nurses gossip and share stories with colleagues, including neophytes (Laing, 2003; Chinn, 1990). However, some of these nurses will eventually become nurse educators, able to pass on stories they have acquired to a new generation of student-nurses. The accumulation of storytelling capital, via social practices, supplements and builds on the storytelling capital that has been inherited from family and earlier educational experiences. Bourdieu states:

... the specifically symbolic logic of distinction additionally secures material and symbolic profits for the possessors of a large cultural capital: any given cultural competence (e.g., being able to read in a world of illiterates) derives a scarcity value from its position in the distribution of cultural capital and yields profits of distinction for its owner (Bourdieu, 1986).

Nurse educators, then, who have acquired storytelling capital from their nursing practice, are the "possessors" of storytelling competence (see Frank, 2010), which they can then distribute to their own students via the sharing of stories. Bourdieu argues that transference of cultural capital, is often subtle, and may be carried out unconsciously (1986), in the case of storytelling capital, much of this is transferred tacitly via socio-cultural practices such as gossip or practices linked to professional love.

The intimate stories that nurse educators tell enable the transference of care and professional love via personal habitus in which "emotions are embodied history internalized as second nature" (Lanas and Zembylas, 2015: 38). Thus, student-nurses accumulate and absorb stories into their own storytelling capital, which they can draw upon when needed, starting off the cycle of storytelling afresh. This facilitates their learning about values of working within clinical workplaces, aiding them in making better choices in an environment where stories "open up moral complexity" (Frank, 2010: 36). Additionally, this expands their knowledge, enabling them to consider stories when problem-solving, and improve their response to new situations: "The accumulation of experience, through countless individual cases, builds into recognition and thus into knowledge of how to act" (Cooke, 2015: 24). However, the stories we tell constantly change and evolve depending on who we are telling and what we want to emphasise (Frank, 2010). Nurse educators talked about revising and

updating stories as years passed, in response to changing needs of students, and updated worldviews, including changes in modern sensibilities. It was apparent that oral stories told by educators were rarely completely static, instead evolving on a number of levels. Consequently, student-nurses' and nurse educators' narrative habitus alter as they acquire and create new stories in response to their experiences where "dispositions are subject to a kind of permanent revision" (Bourdieu, 2000: 161).

In the literature it was discussed that student-nurses may be inhibited from asking questions in their placements (Francis and O'Brien, 2019). Although she does not use the term storytelling or narrative practices, Cooke (2015) suggests that nurse educators can bridge this gap by sharing practice experiences with students. In phase one it was seen that storytelling plays a significant role in this, as nurse educators tell stories about situations and challenges which can then be explored as to how and why they acted in a certain way. Thinking from a trickster perspective, nurse educators can be viewed as working across spaces, that is "liminally", as their roles act create a link between clinical practice and academia. As they teach in universities, remote from clinical workplaces, student-nurses cannot directly observe their practice, but their experiences can be conveyed and open discussions encouraged (Cooke, 2015). Stories, therefore, enable nurse educators to transport the clinical context to the classroom, providing a metaphorical conduit between nursing practice and the academic environment.

Professional love is dependent upon "interpersonal relationships" between nurses and patients where "reciprocity is a central attribute of intimacy in nursing" (Dowling, 2004: 1290). In phase one it was seen that by sharing personal stories and encouraging and valuing students' stories, nurse educators modelled how to foster caring dialogues, encouraging reciprocity in storytelling exchanges. This was especially the case where students were supported in telling emotional and sensitive stories. Like gossip, sharing stories, therefore, creates "a common bond" (Schwartz and Abbott, 2007: 184), which promotes honest dialogue and respectful relationships both in practice and classrooms. In lectures visited, nurse educators used story interactions to create a nurturing environment of shared experiences, thus preparing student-nurses for their clinical practice. Storytelling used in conjunction with professional love, can, therefore, help people to connect emotionally, whether nurses to patients, nurse educators to students, or students with peers.



It was noticeable that despite their sharing of sensitive stories, professional boundaries were always maintained, with nurse educators keeping close control over stories, student-nurses did not press nurse educators for additional details, which is in contrast with noticings in some education lectures. Empirical noticings suggest that nurse educators were able to maintain more control over what they shared because stories were pre-planned, as they knew in advance exactly what they would tell and how much they were prepared to share.

#### 7.5.5 Education and Professional Love

Although moments of sharing deeply personal stories were seen often in nursing lectures, they were only encountered once in education, when Tara told her story about her experiences as a newly qualified teacher. Student-teachers actively asked for more details and expressed empathy towards the teacher in the story, making supportive comments, so Tara's apparent risk in sharing it was rewarded. However, in SCRs teacher educators expressed reservations about being too open with student-teachers, feeling they made themselves vulnerable. This paucity of intimate stories from teacher educators is reflected by a lack of discussion of "professional love", or care, relating to formal education in the literature. While care and "professional love" are increasingly seen as central to nursing values, in education they come into conflict with neoliberalism and professional standards, sitting uncomfortably in a culture of dispassionate target setting and individualism (Cousins, 2017; Lanas and Zembylas, 2015). Participant teacher educators expressed concerns about sharing personal stories, and/or presenting themselves in ways that might be construed as unprofessional, perhaps making them reluctant to share experiences about making errors or stepping outside of expected constraints (this will be discussed further later in this chapter). This contrasts to Baskerville's (2011) account of the benefits of teachers sharing personal stories (with year nine students) within a nurturing environment, feeling that this created deeper understanding between students and teachers.

Intimate stories are important as they demonstrate alternative ways of being professional; student-teachers need to know that there are other ways of working and "being" in the classroom that may not fit with prescribed standards. The reticence expressed by teacher educators in SCRs to share intimate stories contrasts strongly with nurse educators in phase one who appeared to tell these types of stories with confidence. When considering Baskerville's (2011) experiences with schoolchildren, this is curious, as it might be expected that teacher educators would be more able to share personal stories with student-teachers

who are also adults. However, participants were wary of doing this, with some making specific comments concerning “lack of maturity” in students as being a reason for not sharing stories. As can be seen from the literature, intimate stories matter and can have a significant impact on students. Therefore, the reluctance of practitioner educators to share such stories is concerning, as it may limit opportunities for developing professional care and empathetic relationships. The empirical findings therefore raise questions as to how teacher educators can be supported (for example by changes to policy, or access to CPD) to confidently share sensitive stories with students, and whether they could benefit from using the approaches that nurse educators were seen to employ.

## 7.6 The Storytelling Lecturer

“To see yourself as a storyteller is to plump yourself in the midst of the social world of the class-room, alive to everything that is going on there.” (Doecke, 2013: 17)

Doecke presents storytelling as central to social interactions within the classroom, inviting teachers to see themselves as storytellers, able to actively respond socially to their surroundings and students. However, Doecke (2013) also points out that the teacher is only **one** storyteller in the classroom, in which students are also storytellers, each having their own distinctive views and stories to tell. This supports the notion that we are all storytellers, and therefore all lecturers/practitioner educators, have the potential to be storytelling lecturers, that is lecturers who see storytelling as integral to their pedagogical approach. From a trickster perspective, classroom story exchanges shift relationships between educators and students, enabling increased mutual understandings (Baskerville, 2011), where practitioner educators can become their colleague/confidante/gossiper/friend. In this way practitioner educators also shape-shift to some extent, displaying another aspect of trickster liminality and transformative powers. This alters the affective dimensions of the classroom, enhancing it as a social space and supportive environment.

Empirical noticings highlighted that storytelling was regularly used in professional education, and that several practitioner educators used stories as a natural part of their practice. This was supported by participants’ perceptions of their pedagogical storytelling usage in SCRs, as they talked about knowingly using stories to enhance their practice. There are several themes to be explored when considering the “storytelling lecturer” focusing on how and when practitioner educators used stories and developed their techniques.

### 7.6.1 Pedagogical Story Repertoire

Building on Frank's (2010) notion that "repertoire" is a facet of "narrative habitus", I propose that lecturers often have a **pedagogical story repertoire**, that is: a personal range of professional and/or personal stories lecturers tell students for pedagogical purposes. A repertoire is "a stock of plays, dances or items that a company or a performer knows or is prepared to perform" (Lexico.com, 2021). Participants revealed that they had a "stock" of stories that they had developed over the years. This thesis illuminates practitioner educators regularly using an established set of stories in their practice, adapting them "in the moment" to situations and students' needs. Angharad, Elaine and Willow, in particular, said that they had stories they used repeatedly, referring to them as a "store cupboard", and "a bunch of stories". This resonates with Frank's (2010: 54) notion of "narrative habitus" where each individual has an "inner library" of books they have read, and "repertoire" of stories that they can draw upon. Practitioner educators' narrative habitus, therefore, includes all the text-based stories they have accumulated in their lives, both within and outside of their practice, while their storytelling capital includes oral stories that they have accumulated inside and outside of practice. Their pedagogical story repertoire, however, is **their personal collection of stories, in whatever format, that they have chosen and/or developed as being suitable to share with students, which they may tell "straight" or semi-fictionalised**. Further, practitioner educators are constantly mindful of changing stories according to different circumstances and learning needs. These, then, are different from anecdotes that are told in general conversation as they have a purpose that is pedagogically driven. Selecting the right story also fits with the concept of narrative "competence", so that when stories become internalised, individuals can judge when to tell the right story for the situation (Frank, 2010; Schank and Morson, 1990). Having story competence, therefore, takes on an enhanced role for lecturers as they need to be able to select appropriate stories, deciding if they are apt for particular students, and how to use them pedagogically. Selecting the "wrong" stories, or not adapting them appropriately, may result in failing to connect with students, and therefore, not conveying the learning points for which they were intended.

As discussed in chapter six, participants adapted stories regularly to reflect modern values, omitting or changing details as needed. Teacher educators were conscious that practice stories may quickly become outdated, with Willow being particularly concerned that she had "lost touch" with her non-academic teaching practice. This directly impacted upon her practice, so that she now only tells stories to individuals or small groups. This is a key

noticing as it suggests that teacher educators become more wary of sharing practice stories that are “out-dated”. Unlike nurse educators, who are required to revalidate their clinical practice, teacher educators do not renew their teaching practice in their former sectors (e.g. schools, colleges). Attenborough and Abbott (2018: 440) found that revalidation for nurse educators enhanced their “connectedness” with “colleagues in clinical practice” which helped increase nurse educators’ validity and credibility for student-nurses. Teacher educators’ fears that their stories may become outdated, therefore, resonates with this situation. As discussed in chapter three, there are constant pressures on teacher educators to update their subject knowledge and teaching practice, however there is presently no requirement for them to go through a similar revalidation process (however the MRR (DfE, 2021) may instigate these types of changes in future). However, teacher educators are constantly renewing their teaching competences by lecturing, so revalidation is not appropriate. Consequently, this issue needs to be tackled in other ways, for example, by making use of co-developed stories (as nurse educators discussed doing) and potentially making use of semi-fictional approaches to renew stories’ relevance for a fresh audience.

#### 7.6.2 Story “Authenticity” and Practitioner Educator Identity

The “authenticity” of stories told by practitioner educators was an interesting thread that resonated across research phases but was rarely discussed in literature on professional education. This sub-section unpicks the complexity of issues of “authenticity” and practitioner educators’ use of storytelling in connection with their professional identities. In SCRs, participants focused on whether personal or professional stories were “truthful” or “authentic” and whether they held credibility for students. There were differing opinions, but all participants felt it was important that stories held a “core” of authenticity, in that they should appear to be factual, grounded in real events. However, stories are slippery, and experience of events is “unique and fleeting” both “subjective” and “manifold”, (Szakolczai, 2009: 145) therefore, storytelling based on experience will also be reflective of these complexities. Consequently, the notion of treating stories of experiences as “factual” and objective, is problematic.

In phase one, professional and practice stories were repeatedly presented as being true, but it would be impossible to ascertain the degree of “truth” without quizzing lecturers. Even then, whether a story is true is subjective and depends on an individual’s perspective (Frank, 2010; Moon, 2010; Moon and Fowler, 2008). It is therefore possible that some, or all, stories

told were semi-fictionalised to some degree, though they were overtly presented as “true”. SCR discussions underlined the likelihood that the degree of supposedly “factual” content varies considerably. Some participants strongly resisted altering stories (see chapter six), while others focused on stories **appearing** authentic, although there were more nuanced views on how to achieve this. For example, Elaine and Ina tried not to deviate from their original stories, while Colin and Angharad felt that changing elements actually made them appear more genuine, and therefore increased their relatability for students. Doecke’s observation on the way that stories work in social interactions sheds light on this complicated situation:

...rather than securely anchoring us in the present, the stories we tell one another are partly imaginary, driven by other impulses than simply to give an honest account of actual events. And with each retelling of a story, we get better at it. The story becomes more dramatic, the characters more vivid, the speech more pithy, the irony more palpable, as we reshape it in response to our audience’s reactions (2013: 11).

Lecturers may strive to present stories “authentically”, impelled to give an “honest account” of their experiences, but other aspects of telling stories counter this, leading them to change or embroider them. This creates hidden tensions where “authenticity” needs to balance the story’s work, the context, and those aspects that make it suitable as a teaching tool.

Some participants were aware of these trickster-like subterfuges, that they deliberately altered stories, even making fundamental changes. Participants talked about merging stories or using a “muddle” of “factual” memories that were “truthful in effect” but were linked in hybrid fashion to recreate coherent accounts. Telling stories of our own experiences is inevitably wrapped up in ambiguity because these rely on our personal interpretations, where our subjectivity “renders the understanding of our own experiences one-sided, opaque” (Szokolczi, 2009: 145). Given Elaine’s stance on truthful stories, it is ironic that she acknowledged that she had inadvertently semi-fictionalised one of her own stories over many years, resulting in an exaggerated tale where her aunt had inherited “several million” pounds, instead of “several hundred-thousand pounds”. Later, she realised “I had **fictionalised** it, and I actually **believed** my own fiction.” This illustrates the unreliability of memory, that when we tell stories, however much we might want to tell a “true” story, we are susceptible to altering details; the further back our memory has to reach, the more likely we are to twist reality and deceive ourselves (Frank, 2010). Schank and Morson argue that our memory is not always reliable, and therefore our stories are “all fictions”, however, they are based on “real experiences”, and provide the only access to these experiences, therefore

our interpretation of these “open our realities up to others when we tell our stories” (1990: 44).

This also seems to correspond with Doecke’s (2013) observation, as educators’ stories had evolved through many tellings, being gradually exaggerated or altered in response to students’ reactions. The exaggeration makes stories more sensational and dramatic, but Elaine’s inflation in her story, to an inheritance of several million pounds, would have more resonance with students used to hearing about millionaire lottery wins. Re-shaping the story, therefore, while technically exaggerating the details, actually enabled it to maintain its original impact. In other words, it needed to evolve to retain its power when presented to a modern audience. Adapting stories to suit different audiences, elaborating them with each telling, is a natural impulse (Schank and Morson, 1990); stories ebb and flow within the environment in which they are told (Livo and Rietz, 1986). Understanding that stories need to be authentic rather than “true” is crucial for stories to be used effectively in teaching. These skilled communications mean that, whether, consciously or not, practitioner educators adapt stories responding to students’ reactions, emphasizing details that provoke reactions, and changing, reducing, or eliminating parts where the reaction is ambivalent. Apart from the natural instinct to alter stories, there is also the pragmatic need to change stories to suit circumstances, audiences, and learning points, which all participants agreed that they did.

These considerations challenge us about the role of storytelling and professionalism. There is an expectancy that lecturers tell the truth, for example, Beattie (2017) talks about feeling the need to tell authentic stories to her students, but empirical noticings suggest that many stories may well be fictionalised at least to some degree. Authenticity was central to Butterfly’s dilemma when faced with the prospect of telling a colleague’s story, she worried it was not her story, and she could not relate it to her own clinical experience, whereas “you embody it more when it’s your own”. This concern corresponds with observations that nurse educators, who are able to draw on current clinical practice, gain more respect from students (Attenborough and Abbot, 2020). However, Thomas and Toby’s “true” stories, still captured students’ attention and engaged them in tasks, even when student-teachers were told that they were semi-fictionalised. This leads us to ask whether students suspect that lecturers are semi-fictionalising their stories, and whether this matters, or whether stories are allowed to have blurred elements because when we are in “story mode” we are less likely to analyse them (Kalogeras, 2013: 118). Additionally, this raises questions in terms of empathy and shared collegiality, which may be based on stories that are only partially based in fact.

“Gossip” also has dubious elements, and yet this, paradoxically can increase bonds and collegiality (Laing, 1993). Uncovering practitioner educators’ perspectives on their use of authentic and semi-fictional stories, makes palpable new challenges concerning their identity in the classroom, their relationships and impact on students. Empirical findings suggest that the apparent need for factual stories is misguided, practitioner educators are at liberty to fictionalise their stories, as long as the key messages and learning points remain pertinent to the lecture. As proposed by Moon and Fowler (2008) fictional aspects of stories open up new avenues, extending their usefulness as a pedagogical tool. The slipperiness of stories allows them to be manipulated in order to convey the “authenticity” of the situations.

### 7.6.3 Misunderstandings and Pedagogical Risks

Stories that are misconstrued may be problematic in terms of messages that students receive, meaning they may fail to connect and subsequently deliver the learning point, therefore students may not grasp important concepts, or miss out on other areas. The potential for stories to “miss the mark” is supported by Frank (2010), who argues that not every story will relate to every individual. Doecke (2013: 19) emphasises that writers cannot know how stories will be received, explaining that any individual story may result in a mixture of responses “depending on the values and beliefs” of the receiver, suggesting that no two people will be affected by a story in the same way. This means that practitioner educators’ use of stories is risky, as there is a danger that they will be badly received, create difficulties, or that precious teaching time may be squandered. Although there is acknowledgement in some of the literature that certain personal stories need to be carefully introduced (e.g. Baskerville, 2011; Attenborough and Abbott, 2020), the pedagogical risks of stories failing to connect with students are not discussed, instead there is more focus on students’ positive responses (e.g. Baskerville, 2011; Beattie, 2017). Doecke’s (2013) solution for written stories is to put the onus onto readers to be more discerning about a writer’s intentions, but this unhelpful for practitioner educators trying to engage students. Despite this lack in the literature, participants’ reflections on using stories highlighted that they are aware of these difficulties, and the need to manage them. They do this by being judicious about **what** stories they tell, and **when** they tell them, as well as adapting stories in the moment, reining in, expanding and changing details as necessary. Practitioner educators recognised the need to be consciously sensitive and use their teaching experience to notice when a story is having a negative effect. By employing storytelling “competence” (Frank, 2010) they can

respond to situations; as oral storytelling is infinitely versatile, practitioner educators can rapidly make adjustments.

Some participants felt that stories would fail to engage students if they were too vague or appeared to be inauthentic, conversely, a story that was too specific might have relevance to just one or two students. Colin reflected that a “degree of ambiguity” might be preferable as students could mould it to their own situations, while Angharad felt that students needed to see “parallels” between their own situation, and that of the lecturer telling the story, which could be aided by “slight twists and turns” to make them “relevant”. These views echo Reason and Heinemeyer’s (2016) belief that stories need to have “gaps” and ambiguity to allow people to see themselves in relation to the story and place themselves within it. Although they were discussing mythical and traditional stories, this can equally be applied to students listening to personal or professional stories. This is interesting, as it suggests that stories that are too factual, and/or specific, while being factual or “authentic”, might fail to work pedagogically because students struggle to connect with them. However, this accessibility of anecdotal stories is not generally discussed in the literature. While stories are adaptable to a variety of situations, allowing individuals to “locate themselves” within them (Frank, 2010: 39), there is skill involved in judging how much detail to include to make stories relatable to students.

#### 7.6.4 To tell or not to tell? Storytelling Confidence and Vulnerability

In chapter six it was noticed that most participants in SCRs said they had often felt vulnerable sharing stories, yet this issue was barely mentioned in literature on storytelling in professional education (being only found in Attenborough and Abbott’s study (2020)), as lecturers’ perspectives were rarely discussed. This is a significant gap in the literature. This research explored this further by analysing participants’ perspectives and considering how these impacted upon their pedagogical storytelling.

Initially, it was noted that practitioner educators seemed to gain confidence from including storytelling in their practice as they entered academia. Elaine had found storytelling helpful in navigating the transition from nursing to lecturing, believing her strength came from practice and that she felt on “solid ground” with stories, whereas she had initially felt “a bit nervous on the theoretical side”. Beattie (2017: 35) describes the situation where



inexperienced lecturers often seek to “disguise” their lack of expertise by over-reliance on didactic approaches in order to give an illusion of subject “mastery”. Thus, knowledge is “transferred” from lecturer to students, in a method that seems reminiscent of Freire’s (2003) “banking” learning, leaving no room for deeper, more meaningful interactions (Beattie, 2017). However, Elaine, feeling this insecurity, had drawn on her own experiences, telling stories to bridge the gap and increase her confidence. This corresponds with Beattie’s (2017) claim that using narrative approaches, such as sharing personal stories, can help mitigate vulnerabilities, as they enable increased interaction with students and co-production of knowledge. Willow and Ina had also used stories to connect with students on entering academia, with Willow extending this practice from previous, non-academic teaching. These reflections bring us back to the neoliberal context where lecturers are under pressure to demonstrate their individual effectiveness (O’Leary et al., 2019), but storytelling helps to restore the personal to sessions, helping lecturers connect better with students. This is particularly effective where students also share and reflect upon their own experiences to make sense of their learning. It is interesting that participants had turned to stories to overcome early challenges in their academic career, especially as none of them had ever received any training or guidance on using stories, and none mentioned any other inspirations for introducing it, other than finding stories useful. Butterfly was the only participant who had read about storytelling techniques when writing her Master’s dissertation, however, despite the promotion of developing storytelling practices in the NHS (McIntyre, 2015) nurse educator participants also did not mention any training in this area. In all cases, the initial adoption and ongoing development of using storytelling pedagogically had been an organic but individual process, with participants agreeing that a storytelling “style” had gradually emerged over years of teaching.

It was fascinating that participants’ perspectives on using stories had changed over time in that they were now more reticent to tell certain stories, with Colin saying it was important to “frame” some personal/professional stories carefully. This apprehension again resonates with Beattie’s (2017), brief comments on feeling vulnerable in sharing personal stories with history undergraduates. Similar concerns are briefly mentioned by Attenborough and Abbott (2020), who found that nurse educators were mindful about what personal information they shared, with one participant saying she withheld or changed aspects of stories that made her feel emotional, so that they seemed to be about someone else. This may explain Tara’s tactic, of initially presenting her personal story as if it were an anonymous case-study. It is clear that while practitioner educators value stories, they may withhold, change, or disguise details of stories to protect themselves. This vulnerability is a significant noticing as it

potentially curtails lecturers' willingness to share valuable experiences. Stories that highlight mistakes or that expose vulnerabilities are important because they demonstrate to students that taking risks is positive and necessary (hooks, 2010). However, participants' recent reluctance also contrasts with the situation discussed earlier, where stories seemed to give new lecturers more confidence in their teaching. This reluctance may stem from changes in professional standards and the perceived need for lecturers to demonstrate that they always act professionally (this is discussed further later in this chapter). However, the real "trick" for practitioner educators is in knowing how much to share, how far to take these stories, to know when and what to tell and how to tell them.

Performative techniques are a crucial aspect of oral storytelling, and it was noted in phase one that lecturers often used these, including: paralinguistic features (for example hand gestures, or body language); changes in tone of voice (including talking in "character"); and facial expressions. Some even used exaggerated body movements (e.g. Nathan impersonated the way patients walked, Elaine acted out someone wearing a dress upside-down). Benjamin asserts:

storytelling, in its sensory aspect, is by no means a job for the voice alone. Rather, in genuine storytelling the hand plays a part which supports what is expressed in a hundred ways with its gestures trained by work (1999: 107).

Performative aspects affected story presentation, tending to enliven it, but this was hardly discussed by participants in SCRs, so did not seem to be something they consciously considered. However, video recordings of Video-SCRs confirmed that participants naturally used gestures and facial expressions when telling stories, despite the restriction of needing to be in the "frame" of the computer camera. Elaine was initially surprised when I commented that she used performative techniques but acknowledged that she did "act out" some parts to give a "visual representation" for students. It is intriguing that participants were largely unaware of their performativity. Telling stories is part of our natural behaviour, to tell stories is integral to being human (Bruner, 1996; Frank, 2010; Lyotard 1979), so these aspects may be so ingrained that most lecturers are not consciously aware of them. While professional storytellers rehearse and hone these skills for an audience, in everyday storytelling we instinctively use gestures and facial expressions to enhance communication as part of normal human-to-human interaction. However, lecturers are, in a sense, performing their stories to their students, often repeating stories to different sets of students. As was discussed in relation to Doecke's (2013) observation, this repetition allows them to

naturally reflect and “reshape” stories, including reshaping the physical aspects of storytelling, whether consciously or unconsciously achieved.

#### 7.6.5 Valuing and Managing the Story Environment

Stories need appropriate “space” to develop, where space relates to time, physical location and a supportive emotional environment. Students regularly told stories, occurring specifically when asked to share experiences and/or materializing spontaneously in response to lecturers’ stories or tasks set. As discussed in chapter six, some sessions generated patterns of story sharing (see Tables 4 and 5), where stories seemed to “breed” stories. This phenomenon has been noted previously where one story may result in a response story, or exchange of stories (Doecke, 2013; Flanagan, 2015; McDrury and Alterio, 2003). However, in empirical noticings it was noticed that conditions need to be right for storytelling to take place and story incidences occurred primarily where lecturers invited (or provided time for) students to share experiences; these opportunities could easily have been discouraged or prohibited. Beattie (2017) discusses storytelling having the ability to “re-configure” time in the classroom, slowing it down, because stories change the environment and allow interactions on multiple levels. However, in SCRs, Butterfly commented on difficulties in encouraging storytelling in large groups and the lack of time to “share and tease issues out”. Large groups are commonplace in HE as it is often seen to be an “efficient” way of teaching, but this has an impact on time available to give individual students a voice. However, where time is provided, the organic, “non-linear” pathways of stories enhance time/space as they inject alternative experiences into the traditional order of events within the classroom (Beattie, 2017). As supernatural entities, tricksters have magical powers (Priyadharshini, 2012), they constantly test the boundaries (Szokolczai, 2009) and therefore they have abilities to alter and subvert time. In using storytelling to manipulate time, practitioner educators can invoke this trickster characteristic in their teaching practice.

Space, in terms of location, is a related factor. Student stories were noticeably absent in sessions in lecture theatres, which are not conducive to group interactions due to their layout and formality, with students static, sitting in rows. In addition, large sessions can inhibit storytelling, as Butterfly noted, as some students “don’t feel that they have anything to contribute or are worried about contributing”. This is the antithesis of Freire’s (1985) literacy and culture circles which encourage free-flowing exchanges of ideas and discussion amongst small groups of participants, where everyone has equal opportunities to contribute.

Programme managers within faculties can facilitate more appropriate learning environments by considering space issues when allocating courses, getting more input from practitioner educators on what type of physical space will best support their needs.

In the empirical analysis it was noted that practitioner educators often actively provided a space that nurtured and validated stories, for example by making positive comments, or encouraging students to elaborate on their stories. This supports Baskerville's (2011) observation that teachers need to create a positive caring environment, so that students feel safe in sharing stories. Validation gives students reassurance that their stories are valued, thus building confidence. The more that students engage in telling stories, the more opportunity they have for developing story competence, thus knowing when and how to share appropriate stories (Frank, 2010; Schank and Morson, 1990), adding to their storytelling capital and social capital (enabling them to accumulate and exchange stories related to their professions).

It was noticed that some students seemed nervous sharing stories but became confident with gentle coaxing. This is particularly important for sensitive or challenging stories, where shared experiences can promote "an atmosphere of cooperation and deep listening" (hooks, 2010: 58). There were also several occasions where poignant and emotional stories were exchanged; as was discussed above, sharing practice stories creates a "bond" between students (Laing, 1993; Schwartz and Abbott, 2015). Frank (2010) suggests that belonging to a group depends on having a commonality of shared stories. This is especially pertinent with personal or "autobiographical" stories as they enable students to place themselves within their community enabling positive connections (Beattie, 2017; hooks, 2010). In addition, lecturers sharing personal stories enhances this nurturing environment, where stories "provide a different lens for students to view [teachers'] lived experiences and a different context to understand more about them" (Baskerville, 2011: 110). This potentially supports students with their emotional responses, helping them to develop empathy, while also developing closer relationships within the cohort. Communication is a key trickster characteristic, exchanges of sensitive stories enhance the ability to build relationships and foster empathy, bringing with them greater mutual understandings. In all of these exchanges there is a focus on learning from others, another trickster characteristic, as storytelling enhances social interactions and professional understandings. "Gossip" and professional caring thrive on such stories, as these provide the ideal medium for sharing experiences and feelings.

Managing an environment conducive to storytelling involves more than simply asking students to talk about their experiences. Practitioner educators were often seen to manage the story environment by allowing appropriate time in lectures for student interactions, and helping students feel comfortable and confident in telling stories. However, in one session it was noticed that storytelling was dominated by two student-nurses, with a restlessness emerging later on amongst others in the group. This may just have been because it was a long session, but it may also indicate story “overload”, or that student-nurses were unhappy with particular students dominating the session, indeed, Elaine started to gently curb stories in this lecture. McDrury and Alterio (2003) noted the potential for response stories to deflect the focus from critical reflections, resulting in their proposals for FS, which formalises the storytelling process by not allowing response stories to take place. However, empirical noticings supports the value of allowing response stories, as long as these are managed, particularly as there is a possibility that some students may use storytelling opportunities as a form of “exhibitionism” (hooks, 2010: 57). The notion of stories “breeding” stories, leads to the possibility that the focus could be lost without being controlled, meaning that storytelling could get “out-of-hand” if not managed effectively. While storytelling facilitates exciting and unpredictable possibilities for lessons, that can be desirable (Doecke, 2015) there is a fine balance to be struck between stories enhancing or hindering learning, the latter of which could result in bored or disengaged students. Thus, it is important that stories are welcomed and validated when they are useful and sensitively curbed if they become distracting or upsetting. Despite these challenges, this thesis supports the encouragement of student stories, including response stories, that are sensitively managed, and supports hooks’ (2010) perspective that the positives of encouraging story sharing outweigh the negatives.

#### 7.6.6 Storytelling - A Hidden Practice?

Lectures that focused on case-studies, role-plays or simulations were essentially immersed in story practices. There was also extensive use of anecdotes and professional stories, and students were encouraged to tell their own stories, but they were often referred to in other ways, for example as “experiences”. This language choice seems to remove “storytelling” from practice, effectively hiding it. Butterfly commented that there was a “stigma” around the term storytelling, which she felt people saw as “childish” and that practitioners referred to it in other ways (e.g. “case-studies”, “clinical scenarios”, “patient experience”) when they essentially meant storytelling. She emphasised it was seen as:

“either ‘Jackanory’ style or indigenous storytelling. People aren’t seeing it as being other forms ... In academia, why would you be telling a story? – It’s not evidenced based!”

This last comment chimes with literature that saw storytelling as childish (Dunn, 2017) and contentious in education (Heinemeyer and Durham, 2017; Rosen, 1986). Butterfly’s comments highlight the mismatch between what is happening HE, with nurse educators using stories “a huge amount”, and how they refer to this practice. As noted above, the growing momentum for using patients’ and healthcare staff’s stories in the NHS (McIntyre, 2015) suggest that these attitudes may be changing in nursing. Projects centred on stories, that encourage nurses to gather stories as EBP, are shifting perspectives. Some nurse educators overtly referred to “story/stories” in lectures, suggesting story is increasingly valued and gaining wider acceptance. However, despite this shift, there are still recent calls for stories to be a “more explicit part of curricula” in nursing education (Attenborough and Abbott, 2020: 6), indicating that there is still some way to go towards full acceptance. There was a similarly complex picture in education, with some lecturers (e.g. Tara, Thomas and Toby) referring specifically to story/stories/storytelling. However, in SCRs Angharad talked about certain “anecdotes” as being “incidents”, rather than stories, which seems to indicate that sometimes practitioners use stories in their practice, but do not recognise them as storytelling. Elsewhere, students were encouraged to share “experiences” which meant they were essentially sharing stories, but the terminology did not reflect this. This brings us back to definitions of story/storytelling, where terminology is seen as ambiguous and difficult to “pin down” (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012; Moon, 2010). Despite the encouraging developments in nurse education, the employment of diverse terminology (particularly in teacher education) effectively presents these practices as something other than storytelling, perpetuating storytelling’s status as a hidden practice.

Storytelling’s struggle to become seen as a key pedagogical tool impacts on the attention it is afforded in CPD for practitioner educators. As already discussed, participants had not received any training or information on storytelling as part of practitioner educator CPD, instead, they had primarily used storytelling by instinct, trial and error. This situation is paralleled by limited literature or development opportunities referring to storytelling practice. It is interesting, therefore, that empirical noticings uncovered nurse educators discussing co-developing stories, particularly case-studies and simulations, and they often co-delivered lectures containing storytelling. These collaborations provide opportunities for learning storytelling techniques tacitly from peers however, this was not commonly seen in teacher

education. This historical issue, therefore, is ongoing. Harold Rosen (1988b) was frustrated that schoolteachers were not encouraged to share storytelling techniques with each other, even though he felt this was “totally valid”. More recently, Heinemeyer and Durham (2017), were concerned that numbers of teachers using stories in schools were diminishing rapidly, thus impacting on future teachers, leaving a dearth of experienced storytelling role-models. In phase one it was seen that teacher educators used a more limited range of story techniques than nurse educators which seems to provide support for their observation. As discussed above, nurse educators may pass on storytelling practices via socialisation and storytelling capital, but if practice is not evident or is limited in teacher education, then there are no role-models to draw upon. Therefore, this situation raises the question - how can teacher educators develop storytelling practices if they do not encounter them in their teaching and there are no CPD opportunities available to them? Education sessions that focus on these skills for student-teachers (such as Thomas and Toby’s lectures), seem to be “bucking the trend”. This research calls for practitioner educators to be given opportunities to experience how storytelling is used in other areas, so that they can develop these practices for themselves.

#### 7.6.7 Troubles with Grand Narratives

From the discussions above, it can be seen that engaging in pedagogical storytelling practices can be a risky undertaking, as there is always a degree of uncertainty about where stories will take students. This is problematic in the neoliberal context of professional education, which promotes individuality over co-production and stifles spontaneity or practices that do not conform to the narrow requirements of performativity and accountability (Ball, 2003; Biesta, 2009; Giroux, 2010). In chapter four, I introduced Lyotard’s (1984) concepts of “grand narratives” and “petits recits” in relation to professional education to provide a useful perspective for considering the way in which practitioner educators use stories. While stories were often employed in ways which conformed or supported the official “state-sanctioned” narratives, (for example, in relation to professional standards) there were occasions when practitioner educators employed stories in different ways, that challenged grand narratives and encouraged students to think more critically about their learning, the educational context, and their new professions. Language is a “powerful tool” for challenging “falsehoods and injustices” (Giroux, 2018: 2090). Freire (2008: 5) stresses that an ability to challenge dominant “myths” is vitally important so that people are not “manipulated” and “without even realizing the loss” become ostracized from making their own decisions.

Practitioner educators often told stories to share aspects of their own practice, or broader professional contexts that were contradictory to legitimised portrayals of their professions, or that challenged other misconceptions. These enabled wider, more nuanced, potentially more realistic views, that included pitfalls and troublesome behaviours, enabling practitioner educators to naturally incorporate critical pedagogies into their teaching. Practitioner educators encouraged students to question their encounters and to think about values they will adopt in their practice, thus they employed “scepticism” and “potential”, which are central to Freirean approaches (Giroux, 2010). These “little stories” then worked in troubling the dominant discourses.

Using challenging stories in academia also fosters honest discussions, where students have the opportunity to express opinions that run counter to prevailing discourses, raising the potential for “critical consciousness”, where lecturers think of students as not just being “in the world”, but “engage in relations with the world” (Freire, 2008: 39). Stories increase the impact of these discussions as they contextualize situations, making them more tangible, whilst also appealing to students’ emotions. For example, Nathan’s vivid storytelling employed emotive language which demonstrated his repugnancy for situations and attitudes he had encountered in relation to mental health. In sharing these stories, he invited student-nurses to empathise with the patients portrayed, considering these carefully. Highly emotive stories can alter people’s views and understanding (Frank, 2010). When practitioner educators use counter-narratives, therefore, they encourage students to think critically. By exposing alternative perspectives, they help to puncture students’ underlying understandings or beliefs, thus leading them to change their views and judgements (Frank, 2010).

The multiple perspectives encouraged by trickster-thinking opens up spaces for sensitive and difficult conversations, allowing questions to be asked of both historical and current situations. Practitioner educators use of stories to challenge students’ perceptions, including their understanding of Britain’s past histories (such as how it treated mental health patients), and America’s former ethical disregard for the consequences of a social experiment, were central to this. Stories were also used to encourage students to think critically about racism and abuse through stories based on ethics, and through role-play explorations of “The Pied Piper”. These opportunities are highly significant in the current era, which strives to open up debates on a number of challenging issues such as decolonising the curriculum, #BlackLivesMatter, #MeToo, #LGBTQI+, and other sensitive discourses. Storytelling opens up these multiple-perspectives and conversations by encouraging empathy and nuanced



understandings, and therefore it becomes a powerful pedagogical tool for these current challenging times.

The potential of counter-narratives to open up honest dialogues is also important for critical pedagogies, as peer-to-peer dialogues help to create “horizontal relationships” that engender “loving, humble, hopeful, trusting [and] critical” interactions (Freire, 2008: 40). Butterfly explained that she used stories to challenge perceptions and felt that setting up sessions where patients told their own stories was particularly “powerful” and “transformative” for student-nurses. She was, however, aware that these might be emotionally traumatic for students, or that stories might be challenging to listen to, especially where they highlighted mistakes or uncaring behaviours. However, as discussed in chapter three, these negative insights into patient experience, including medical errors, are increasingly recognised as being important for nurses’ development, however challenging they may be (Haigh and Hardy, 2011; Cooke, 2015). Participants’ reflections demonstrated that practitioner educators knowingly use stories in order to appeal to students’ emotions and challenge their thinking. Thus, empirical noticings highlight that stories are employed strategically to deliberately unsettle situations (Beattie, 2017) and overturn or challenge students’ prior opinions.

Doecke (2013) highlights significant constrictions on English teachers in Australia from the imposition of neoliberal values, including professional standards and standardized literacy testing. In phase one noticings, paradoxically, a session on teaching English seemed to both comply with neoliberal ideologies and at the same time resist them. Tara’s session on oracy curiously, featured virtually no storytelling, instead focusing on written excerpts, technicalities of language, and oracy frameworks. It seems likely, however, that the lack of stories or spoken language is rooted in the recent erosion of the status of speaking and listening (S&L) within GCSE English, and the bestowment of “greater capital” on reading and writing (Snape, 2020: 56). Indeed, this reflects the recent and ongoing Conservative ideology which venerates traditional pedagogies and didactic methods (including rote learning) as more effective than those that encourage peer engagement and dialogue. This emphasises that students should listen, not talk, because they do not learn by talking (Gove, 2013). Therefore, this provides an insight into the way that oracy is marginalised in education, which directly impacts both GCSE exams and ITE training. Previously, students received a separate grade for S&L elements of GCSE English language which contributed twenty percent of the overall mark. Currently, while some S&L tasks remain, these do not

count towards the overall grade and are only rewarded with “a cursory ‘P’ if they pass” meaning that motivation for teachers to spend time teaching this is diminished (Draper, 2021). In turn, this creates a situation where teachers (and therefore student-teachers) are more focused on reading and writing elements of English (Isaacs, 2014), effectively forcing teacher educators to also focus on these elements at the expense of oracy. This lack of value for oracy, resonates with the contentiousness of storytelling in education, previously discussed.

Tara, therefore, needed to conform to teaching oracy in this way to ensure that her students could successfully comply with teaching frameworks and standards to ultimately meet Ofsted’s requirements. However, it is fascinating that despite the text-based tasks, students naturally and repeatedly reverted to telling their own personal and practice stories about their experiences in group discussions, thus restoring oral stories to the session, despite not being directed to do this. These unsolicited stories, ironically, “bubbled” up repeatedly, persisting in making themselves heard and providing organic resistance to the restrictions of the curriculum framework. This reveals the power of little stories in action, always present and ready to naturally, but randomly, puncture the grand narratives, agitating, disrupting, and working to counteract them (Lyotard, 1994).

## 7.7 Towards a Trickster Pedagogy

So far, this thesis has seen tricksters as research companions, Trickster Methodology has provided a new approach for carrying out research, analysing and writing about empirical noticings. Tricksters re-make their worlds (Hyde, 2008) and trickster-thinking enables us to see the world anew, bringing with it exciting and positive possibilities, empowering us to challenge our former thinking and have a more tangible impact on our world. However, tricksters often resort to playing their tricks because:

the action cannot be achieved through more direct means; that is, the trickster may be oppressed or subject to limitations, prejudices, controls that prevent him or her from initiating efforts that are necessary for his or her own freedom or others’ liberation (Jurich, 1999, p. 69 in Priyadharshini, 2012: 551).

In parallel to tricksters, practitioner educators are restricted by their neoliberal contexts, they have to work within the constraints of performativity and accountability finding the best ways forward to both conform with professional standards and regulations, while also resisting

limitations and controls on their freedom to teach as they want. This chimes with critical pedagogies which seek to highlight educators' struggles and provide a protected space where they can challenge students to "think against the grain of received opinion" (Giroux, 2018: 2087). I propose, therefore, that practitioner educators can benefit from using Trickster Pedagogy, by **using storytelling techniques in order to be true to their own values and resist the restrictions of neoliberalism**. Throughout this exploration of storytelling as pedagogy, there have been examples of practitioner educators "tapping" into trickster characteristics (see chapter four) by employing stories in multiple ways that challenge and subvert their surroundings and interactions within academia.

Firstly, practitioner educators use stories to open up spaces for **multiple-perspectives**, employing a range of story types within their sessions to encourage students to see things from new viewpoints, whether those of children, grieving parents, seriously ill patients, or other professionals.

**Liminality** is at the core of Trickster Pedagogy for professional education. Student-nurses and student-teachers are also in a liminal space, training to become fully qualified professionals. In order to successfully navigate periods of liminality we need guidance from a "master of ceremonies" (Szakolczai, 2009), and this role is carried out by practitioner educators, who employ stories to model professional qualities. Additionally, they supply cautionary tales of what to avoid, either as students, or on qualifying in their new professions. Students can absorb these and use them to shape their understanding, vicariously learning from stories so that they can **transform** into fully-fledged professionals, ready to embark on their new careers. Stories provide a means for practitioner educators to cross boundaries, moving them into a different space that challenges orthodox teaching. In particular this is seen where practice stories from education or nursing become part of the academic story landscape, transporting practice into the classroom.

Stories also enable educators to **transform the relationship with time**, for example, by conglomerating mini stories, and fracturing stories, they expand the value and scope of storytelling and the information and learning points that can be covered. Using multi-media story platforms and directing students to access video stories and work on case-studies at home, extends the potential for stories to filter into students' lives outside of the classroom. Meanwhile simulations, based on case-studies, work by using a central story to explore

multiple issues, whilst simultaneously enabling students to develop their knowledge and skills. All of these have the effect of getting “double, or triple value” from story-based activities, therefore stretching time, in a way that would not be possible with other techniques. This is a truly trickster-ish quality which enables added value, essential for practitioner educators needing to provide students with skills and knowledge efficiently in the time-pressured environment of the modern neoliberal classroom.

The final trickster characteristic in Trickster Pedagogy is **chaos and disruption**. Practitioner educators were often seen to “play tricks”, justifying these because there was a deeper purpose, for example, in enabling students to have a more “authentic” experience, or change perspectives. However, it is important to remember that tricksters are often caught out by their own actions (Hyde, 2008), therefore care is needed with Trickster Pedagogy to know how far to take things. Several practitioner educators acknowledged that their storytelling had sometimes led to issues, or their tricks had backfired and left them feeling uncomfortable and worried about their impact. So, while the chaotic aspects of tricksters can be effectively and productively employed in some instances, it is an area that needs to be treated with great caution.

In telling stories, particularly personal or practice stories, educators give something of themselves. In allowing students to tell their stories they cede some of their control over the classroom, as they can never be sure where these stories will lead. Again, this is like tricksters, pushing at the boundaries of what is acceptable in neoliberal environments (Doecke, 2013). However, appealing it is to push at these boundaries, these challenges must be prepared for, so that they can be mitigated to maintain “safe” teaching environments. It is important to remember that stories can manipulate, storytellers can be manipulators, for good or bad (Harris, 2018). Trickster Pedagogy means being willing to “go with the flow” but also being prepared to deal with situations that may backfire. Practitioner educators who have rehearsed, thought-through, planned their stories, and have a strategy on when and how they will use them, are likely to have more control over their storytelling and their Trickster Pedagogy. Being mindful of the dangers of stories enables practitioner educators to be forearmed and prepared.

Storytelling’s role in professional education has proved to be a slippery entity, it is a hidden practice, often hiding in plain sight. Stories are difficult to define and tricky to categorise

(Moon, 2010; Moon and Fowler, 2008). Practitioner educators use stories knowingly in their practice, but also, at times, seem to mislabel, misunderstand, even mistrust them. Stories themselves are nebulous, while practitioner educators strive for authenticity, the stories shift and change, they are both a useful tool, and a hazard that sometimes trips them up, making them feel exposed and vulnerable. Stories and storytelling are tricky “beasts” which demand careful handling. We are living in difficult and challenging times, “a state of crisis” in which democratic practices in education are “under siege” (Giroux, 2018: 2085, 2086). With practitioner educators constantly constrained by neoliberal ideologies, Trickster Pedagogy presents itself as a new and exciting opportunity for reclaiming storytelling and re-establishing it to a place of prominence in professional education.

## Chapter Eight: Conclusions and Recommendations

### 8.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, I revisit my research puzzle, confirm my contributions to the field of storytelling in professional education and discuss research implications, including recommendations for policy and practice. I also consider the potential for future research.

### 8.2 Research Puzzle Revisited

My research puzzle emerged from my previous experiences of storytelling and teaching, as well as readings of relevant literature, to ascertain the gaps in the research. From this, I realized that there was no substantial empirical research that mapped out the storytelling landscape in professional education to show how storytelling was being used pedagogically by practitioner educators. Crucially, I discovered that practitioner educators' perceptions of their use of storytelling had previously received scant attention.

I have used a narrative ontology and methodology, focusing on narrative research. Clandinin's (2016) narrative inquiry approach emerged as being most suitable for this, in particular, due to its emphasis on thinking "narratively" and working with practitioners as co-producers of knowledge. I have also developed Trickster Methodology as a way of thinking about my fieldwork, and for analysing and writing about my empirical findings. My research puzzle was entitled:

"A story about stories: an investigation into the role of storytelling in professional education".

This focused on two key components:

- What is the current "professional knowledge landscape" of storytelling in nurse and teacher education in HE?
- What are practitioner educators' perceptions of the use of storytelling in professional education?

I set out three main objectives:

- To contribute to theoretical understanding of storytelling and to develop recommendations for best practice concerning storytelling in professional education.

- To use semi-autobiographical, semi-fictional approaches both in storytelling encounters with practitioner educators to gather “authentic” practitioner experiences of storytelling, and to write the story of the research.
- To use a narrative inquiry epistemology combined with Trickster Methodology whilst applying Bourdieuan and Freirean lenses to analyse empirical noticings.

These objectives and methodological approaches have enabled a deep exploration of my research puzzle, resulting in rich and fascinating empirical noticings. This has unearthed new knowledge about storytelling in professional education, allowing me to draw conclusions about its role in education, and how practitioner educators view and use storytelling in their practice.

The fieldwork, taking place over nine months, involved two phases: mapping practitioner educators’ use of stories; and gathering their perceptions of stories and the value and function of stories to their practice.

### 8.3 Trickster Methodology and Semi-fictional Writing

Trickster Methodology together with weaving semi-fictional stories into my thesis is one of my main contributions to new knowledge. Throughout this research I have developed Trickster Methodology and have used semi-fictional writing to convey trickster-thinking and trickster aspects of this work. This has evolved into a deeper approach, seeping into my research practices as I carried out my fieldwork. To some extent I became a trickster, embodying trickster characteristics. I was a liminal researcher, entering practitioner educators’ territory, working on the periphery of their sessions, taking on multiple perspectives to gain deeper understandings.

Trickster Methodology was also present in the free-flowing nature of story circles for research (SCRs) and the novelty of story prompts, which facilitated rich discussions. This approach had unexpected impacts as it proved a fertile ground for participants not just to reflect on their current and past storytelling practices, but also to consider how they might change their practice in future. I, again, embodied trickster characteristics by being agile in

my responses, “juggling” my approach and finding ways to: be a traditional storyteller; maintain an overview of the session and my purpose (in particular being aware of the way that stories were unfolding); watch for opportunities where I could follow up on comments; keep in mind protocols and ethics; and finally, to be a timekeeper. Trickster-thinking reminded me to not just look for “answers”, but to follow interesting paths and allow myself to be open to different and opposing ideas. When meeting resistance to creating a semi-fictional story, I suspended my desire for participants to carry this out, and instead “embraced the chaos”, using this as an opportunity to explore the reasons for the resistance. This curiosity led to deeper discussions on authenticity of stories for students, which has been a key new noticing in this research. Thinking by using trickster characteristics: multiple-perspectives, communication, learning from others, transformation and liminality, afforded fruitful explorations of noticings.

Trickster Methodology became central to my research methodology, analysis and writing processes. My trickster companions have troubled me throughout the analysis, undermining my authority and questioning my practices and work, offering alternative perspectives, and even red herrings. They have caused me to pause and reconsider the empirical noticings through trickster characteristics, including using tricksters to explore students’ responses to stories, and to think more deeply about emotional aspects of stories. In the same way that stories often provide counter-narratives in lessons, crucially, tricksters have enabled alternative imaginings, their “small” stories making visible the story-making processes behind them. Trickster Methodology has, therefore, transformed the thesis and evolved into a critical practice.

Semi-fictional writing has been employed at various points in this thesis in the form of Trickster Tales as Interludes, and within the Trickster irruptions in the analysis chapters. These have been crucial for conveying the workings of Trickster Methodology, making them visible to readers of this thesis. Trickster Tales have also provided parallel narratives to illuminate my perspective as a researcher who is grappling with the challenges and tensions of writing a doctoral thesis. Semi-autobiographical dimensions enable a window into my reflections that are not normally obvious in traditional academic writing, making visible the underlying hidden narratives of the research.



## 8.4 Research Contributions and Implications

There are several ways in which my research contributes to new theoretical knowledge about the role of storytelling, with consideration given to the implications for this.

### 8.4.1 Storytelling is a Central Pedagogical Practice

This research has examined the role of storytelling in professional education from a socio-cultural perspective. This extends the small body of literature that discussed storytelling in education from deeper philosophical perspectives (e.g. Beattie, 2017; Kalogeras, 2013; Lin, 2014) including the impact of policy (Doecke, 2013) on storytelling in the classroom. In particular it re-focuses these debates specifically on nurse and teacher educators. Empirical noticings (phase one) illuminated that storytelling was an important pedagogical tool that was often used in practice to enhance learning, and that it was valued by participants (phase two). Storytelling is complex and multi-faceted, when contemplated through a narrative ontology, stories are seen not just as reflecting but as constructing the world (Specter-Mersel, 2010). Pedagogically, they are highly adaptable to multiple situations, from being the mainstay of teaching sessions, such as when they can be used as over-arching frameworks (e.g. simulations), to supplying supportive elements (e.g. anecdotes). They make theory and concepts more accessible and digestible, while also making lectures more engaging. Storytelling is central to social practices, and therefore, is intrinsic to teaching. Stories are integral to us as they help us to “mould” our own autobiographies (Bruner, 1987) and are, therefore, important for our identities. They make us who we are, and thus are vital to pedagogical interactions. Whether educator or student, stories enable deep pedagogical discourses, opening out new lines of communication which enable rich learning interactions.

In the empirical noticings, a significant new finding was the differences noted in storytelling usage between nursing and education, which I have argued stems from socio-cultural backgrounds of education in the two professions. In particular, nursing has a rich cultural practice of using storytelling (such as through practices surrounding “gossip” (Laing, 1993) and “professional love” (Cooke, 2015)), while more recently healthcare stories have become central to evidence-based practice, and for addressing quality issues and nurse development (McIntyre et al, 2015). Clinical stories, simulations and role-plays were employed by nurse educators to bring clinical contexts into academic settings, however, similar practices were often absent in teacher education. While potential reasons for these

differences in practice were discussed in chapter seven, this raises further questions concerning main discourses in practitioner education, including what merits inclusion in ITE and how is knowledge effectively gained by student-teachers?

This research has discussed how storytelling was used successfully for multiple purposes, including modelling practitioner identity and engaging students in different ways to think holistically and empathetically about themselves and their careers. Thus, storytelling, as a pedagogical practice, is crucial for students' development as professionals. In addition, storytelling was used by some practitioner educators as a way of challenging dominant ideologies and students' preconceptions. I have proposed that these practices can be seen as a Trickster Pedagogy, working on multiple levels. It is important, therefore, that practitioner educators are able to continue with these, as engaging students in critical thinking and honest dialogues enable these critical pedagogies to be employed. It is acknowledged, therefore, that this story usage may need to remain "on the edge", somewhat hidden to practice, where it can continue to trouble the status quo by providing counter-narratives. This may mean that story practices are not overtly presented in neat packages (such as formal storytelling practices), but that they remain fluid and adaptable, ready to be slotted in as "spontaneous" thinking points.

It was also noted that current pressures on practitioner educators, particularly the need to conform to professional standards, impacts their use of storytelling, eroding and stifling their natural inclination to tell stories. In striving to be the "professional" role-model and conform with strict notions of professionalism, educators are deterred from sharing stories that would provide students with informative and valuable learning points. In turn these restrict classroom discourses, preventing students from having access to a wealth of practitioner educator experience and knowledge. These are continuing threats to the use of storytelling in these settings, and these pressures are likely to increase in teacher education with the new reforms in ITE; the MRR (DfE, 2021) adds new layers of prescriptive and restrictive requirements into ITE which increases accountability and performativity on those working in the sector. This policy proposal, if adopted, potentially reduces ITE to a technician profession, employing a reductive set of skills (Adams, 2021), which further curtails teacher educators' freedoms in what they teach, and consequently how they teach, including whether they use storytelling or not.

Practitioner educators need to be able to be confident and brave to be able to use stories and Trickster Pedagogy, however, they also need support to do this, as is discussed below. It has been argued here that extensive use of stories in nurse education, stems both from historical nursing cultures, and the more recent positivity towards stories as evidence-based practice. These initiatives appear to have given storytelling a boost, raising its kudos in some areas. While teacher educators mainly used a more limited range of story types and techniques, there were some story practices that utilized stories in exciting new ways, including using historical and fractured stories. These developments highlight the effective practice that is already taking place in professional education and give cause for optimism that these innovative practices can provide ongoing inspiration for practitioner educators in future. However, much of this practice appears to be unreported to a wider audience, so opportunities to share these practices outside of the classroom or department need to be maximised.

#### 8.4.2 New Story Categories

On embarking on this research, I initially sought an appropriate definition of storytelling in practitioner education, however, having encountered considerable complexities, I revised my aims to creating a typology and mapping the storytelling landscape in professional education. The typology I developed as a research tool (chapter four) was not intended to provide a comprehensive typology of storytelling in HE. Indeed, using this for fieldwork highlighted additional complexities of the terrain, both unearthing a puzzling absence of some “main” story types (FS and DS) and the identification of stories that did not “fit” with the typology. The new story types and uses were not present in literature on storytelling, and therefore, contribute to new knowledge about the professional storytelling landscape. I am, however, eager to develop a revised typology post-PhD, as a guide to help educators to have a better understanding of their practice, and to know that there are a range of story possibilities.

As detailed in chapter six, I have identified three new main story types: conglomerated, fractured, and historical, alongside two semi-story types: metaphorical stories and hypothetical scenarios, these are semi-stories because they occupy an uncertain area somewhere between a fully complete story and information, or examples. These new stories

are, however, important, as they demonstrate innovative new ways that practitioner educators develop and use stories to support learning processes. For example, fracturing stories by delivering them in instalments provides a context and framework to guide students through key learning points, while hypothetical scenarios invite students to visualise themselves in different situations, or from another person's perspective. Thus, these categories extend both the types of stories that make up the professional education landscape, and the ways in which stories are used pedagogically.

The mapping of story incidences also highlighted some commonalities in the use of specific story types that matched to the typology, in particular, professional and personal stories, however, there were considerable differences between nurse and teacher education. In both areas stories were used pedagogically to: provide specific examples or learning points; share mistakes or examples of good or bad practice; promote empathy and collegiality through shared experience; provide professional role-models; and enhance and enliven lectures. While this largely corresponds with the literature, this thesis extends the details surrounding these practices and highlights the subtleties. It also illuminates the differences in storytelling practices between teacher and nurse education, which has not previously been discussed in the literature. In particular, nurse educators made much more use of stories to promote empathy and collegiality, and they also made extensive use of case-studies and role-plays, and some use of simulations and multi-media platforms, especially where stories were central to assessments. In nursing these stories were central to these pedagogical practices, providing contexts and examples for student-nurses to explore, thus making theory and clinical practice both tangible and accessible to them. By engaging with case-studies, particularly through interactive media, students could also explore and experiment, trying out the skills and knowledge they had learnt in theory. Differences highlighted by the mapping led me to consider the reasons for these differences in relation to socio-cultural contexts, thus, these discussions add new knowledge to the cultural influences on the use of storytelling in these professions.

This thesis has discussed how storytelling can be used as a multi-functional, multi-faceted and highly adaptable pedagogy; this is part of the usefulness and charm of storytelling, which needs to be valued and nurtured. The power of storytelling as a pedagogy lies: firstly, in its ubiquitous appeal as a communication medium that increases accessibility and engagement; secondly, in its adaptability and suitability for diverse situations; thirdly in its potential for opening up new discourses and challenging dominant narratives. Storytelling is

more than just a means for transferring information and knowledge to students. Baskerville (2011) says that sharing stories enables students and teachers to be co-learners, however, storytelling is more than this, as storytelling pedagogies invite students to become co-producers of knowledge. Students, by engaging in storytelling environments, (whether shared stories, or being immersed in stories via simulations) can develop their new professional identities expanding their storytelling capital and therefore their social capital. These wider story pedagogies, therefore, must be encouraged, conversely any attempt to prescribe or limit storytelling to one set of rules or standards should be resisted. It is important that we embrace the benefits and flexibility that storytelling can bring to education, and further investigate different ways in which practitioner educators can be supported to develop their own storytelling techniques that suit them, their students, and their contexts (suggestions for this will be discussed further below).

#### 8.4.3 Practitioner Educators' Perceptions of Storytelling

Previously studies had either focused on students' responses to storytelling, systemic reviews of storytelling in education, or studies written from the point of view of practitioners who had introduced storytelling techniques into their teaching. There were minimal empirical studies that examined how stories were used by practitioners, and in particular, that focused on their views of using storytelling, apart from two small studies (see chapter three). This thesis, therefore, contributes new knowledge that supplements the significant gap in the literature concerning practitioner educators' perceptions of storytelling. This is important, because it provides insights into the hidden work of practitioners concerning storytelling practice, highlighting that it is a mindful practice and revealing the considerable planning and development that storytelling practices entail. It also illuminated tensions and vulnerabilities concerning sharing stories, that are rarely mentioned elsewhere. In addition, as was discussed in chapter two, practitioner educators' opinions on their teaching practices are rarely heard (Czerniawski, 2011).

In this research I have discussed key themes that emerged from SCRs, including: practitioner educators' use of a story repertoire and "authentic" stories; co-development of stories; practitioner educators' vulnerabilities and challenges in using stories; and their use of stories as counter-narratives. In chapter seven, I introduced the notion of "a storytelling lecturer", that is, a lecturer who uses stories as an integral part of their practice. This draws on the premise that we all naturally tell stories (Frank, 2010) and that lecturers are

surrounded by other storytellers (their students), who all have their own stories to tell (Doecke, 2013), therefore all lecturers/practitioner educators have the potential to become **storytelling** lecturers. However, whilst participants in phase two were able to talk confidently about their current storytelling usage, they had not always been confident or knowledgeable about how to approach this, finding their way by “trial and error”. As noticed in the analysis, they also expressed concerns that had emerged over time about their vulnerabilities in sharing stories. This highlights the need for CPD in storytelling techniques so that practitioner educators can develop and use stories “safely”, that is, so that they continue to use stories in their practice without making themselves feel vulnerable. This may require carefully selecting suitable stories, being mindful of audience and circumstances, or it may mean needing to change or disguise aspects of stories (for example semi-fictionalising them), to distance them from their own personal situations. There will always be an element of risk in using stories, but there are measures that can be taken to enable stories to be told while also mitigating the risks. I, therefore, recommend that measures are needed in order to better support educators to use storytelling effectively and safely.

#### 8.4.4 Development of Training and CPD

The noticings here have highlighted that there are many complicated facets to be considered by practitioner educators who want to use storytelling, including: choosing and developing stories suitable for the learning environment and context; considering lecturer authenticity and semi-fictionalising stories; the use of performativity techniques; and the emotional impact of telling and/or hearing stories (both by lecturers and students). While we all tell stories in everyday interactions (Frank, 2010), storytelling is a craft that takes time to develop (Benjamin, 1999; Lambert, 2009), yet none of the participants had received any CPD on this area of their practice. The additional complexities of using stories pedagogically, as outlined in this research, highlights the need for more formalised support and guidance in using stories in these contexts. Not only do practitioner educators need to be able to know how to develop and use their own stories effectively, but they also need to know how to: manage storytelling environments; set up a suitable “space” for stories to be told (see chapter seven) and manage student contributions carefully. It is also important that practitioner educators pay attention to students’ responses to stories and are ready to intervene if issues emerge. While managing student interactions is already part of a lecturers’ role, stories can potentially involve a variety of additional considerations, particularly due to the sensitivity of some stories, potential emotional aspects, impact on others, the potential for exhibitionism, and so on. Stories have a vital role to play in

professional education, therefore, it is imperative that practitioner educators have access to a range of guidance and support for using and developing their storytelling practice and Trickster pedagogy.

## 8.5 Recommendations

Having discussed my main conclusions and implications that have been drawn from my empirical noticings, I now offer my key recommendations. Firstly, I focus on ways in which storytelling practices can be strengthened and made visible in practitioner education; secondly, I make recommendations for sharing the good practice that is already taking place and further supporting practitioner educators in developing their storytelling practice. In the sub-sections below, I focus on three key stakeholders: policy makers, universities and practitioner educators themselves.

However, first, I would like to propose that a logical starting point would be to develop this thesis into a publication, or series of articles that are suitable for practitioner educators' CPD. This would build on the earlier instructional texts on storytelling as it would enable an updated understanding of these practices highlighting the socio-political contexts. The text would examine key points raised concerning the value of storytelling in different contexts, including the importance of students developing their storytelling capital. It would introduce the new typology of storytelling including new story types, and it would share the main themes surrounding practitioner educators' perceptions on their use of storytelling. A pedagogical tool could be developed within this, so that lecturers "rate themselves" on what story techniques they already use, and what they would like to develop in future. The publication/s would provide a useful resource for practitioners who want to become Storytelling Lecturers, and also enable practitioner educators' perceptions of storytelling to gain a wider audience. Main themes would include: the value of anecdotal stories; the development of story repertoires and "authentic" stories; co-development of stories; and how to manage sensitive stories safely. This would also be a call for practitioners to consider using Trickster Pedagogy, including the use of stories for challenging perspectives. Afterall, storytelling is, in itself a trickster practice, sitting on the boundaries and in-between places, being both valued and contentious.

Ideally, this publication would be accompanied by a series of CPD workshops, enabling practitioners to explore and develop their storytelling practice, with the opportunity to try these out for themselves in a safe space.

### 8.5.1 Policy Makers

Despite the importance of storytelling practices in education, it remains a largely hidden practice, with its educational benefits often undermined by scepticism and misunderstanding. I propose that in light of the many benefits of storytelling, that it should be reclaimed for educational purposes, restoring storytelling to its former prominence. A simple, but effective, way of starting this process is for educators, practitioner educators and policy makers to acknowledge its importance by using the terms “story/storytelling”, thus making transparent the techniques being used, as I have done in this thesis.

Changing the terminology seems a small step but using the terms “story/storytelling” would highlight when these techniques are being used. This would also help lecturers and students recognise that practice experiences, incidents, case-studies, simulations and role-plays, etc. are rooted in storytelling practices. This straight-forward, but powerful, measure would increase the recognition of storytelling practice thus helping to make it more prominent in education.

### 8.5.2 Universities

It is important that universities encourage opportunities for collaborative development of stories both within departments, and across departments/faculties, so that practitioner educators can work together as teams to develop story resources and storytelling opportunities. This way ideas can be pooled, shared and swapped, and tried out within a supportive environment.

I also call for universities to make space and resources for establishing **Story Circles for Reflection and Development (SCRD)** which would provide opportunities for practitioner educators across faculties to develop their storytelling practice in a safe space. The model for this comes from SCRs which proved to be both illuminating spaces for sharing practice, and for fomenting ideas on developing new techniques. Although there are benefits for physical meetings, these could also be set up as Virtual-SCRDs. These would provide an opportunity to share reflections on storytelling practice, ideas and techniques. Crucially, it would also provide peer support and problem-solving opportunities for issues encountered.



### 8.5.3 Practitioner Educators and CPD

Looking to the increased impetus for storytelling practices in the NHS as inspiration, there are several areas where support could be developed:

- I recommend the inclusion of storytelling techniques in CPD programmes for practitioner educators, with an increased availability for resources on storytelling practices to be made available.
- The establishment of a **Community of Practice** for storytelling and Trickster Pedagogies. Taking inspiration from Patients' Voices, and the Center for Digital Storytelling, this would be a central digital hub for practitioner educators to access, and would provide a range of aspects, including the following:
  - A website that would be a central store of storytelling resources;
  - An online forum where practitioner educators could access advice on storytelling and make contact with interested peers. This could include:
    - arrangement of peer observations between universities to explore story practices
    - sharing good practice on storytelling techniques and story development
    - sharing resources
    - opportunities for educators to discuss challenges or areas of concern, including the best ways of presenting valuable but sensitive stories in safe ways
    - a series of storytelling workshops that would focus on the key aspects of storytelling practice and range of story types available in the professional storytelling landscape (as discussed in this thesis)
    - Lecturers could "rate" themselves on their storytelling practice, for example on which storytelling practices they currently employ, and which they feel they would like to develop.
    - Stand-alone story development sessions could be provided in collaboration with Professional Storytellers, (who often work with educators in schools).
    - Virtual Story Circles for Reflection and Development

### 8.5 New Questions Emerging and Potential Future Research

Since March 2020 the world has undergone a rapid change due to Covid-19 presenting significant challenges for society. Education was severely impacted by initial lockdowns and ongoing restrictions to normal working practices. However, as the crisis evolved, it became

apparent that this had caused a momentous shift for education with long-term implications for how education is delivered in future. Because this research was already well underway when Covid-19 struck, it was not designed to specifically focus on the impact of Covid-restrictions on storytelling practices in education, or the subsequent sudden increase in online teaching. Phase one of the fieldwork was carried out in physical spaces, where teaching was all face-to-face, and although participants were starting to deliver lectures online when Virtual-SCRs took place, it was too early for participants to start contemplating these changes and make sense of them.

However, in subsequent transcript meetings in July 2020, one participant, Butterfly, highlighted a new, potentially significant problem. She had recently co-taught an online lecture to a large cohort (180+ students) in which nurse educators told planned stories to provoke consideration of issues concerning law and ethics. These were sensitive and challenging stories, but she was surprised to find that students were more willing to make potentially “controversial” and “explosive” comments in chat boxes (that could have been upsetting or offensive to others) than they would have done in lectures delivered face-to-face. This situation had to be carefully managed by lecturers, a challenge that was also made more difficult by the online environment. These issues correspond with media coverage that people are more willing to post aggressive and insulting comments on social media, possibly because they dissociate their online persona from their physical self (Mint, 2021).

This raises questions concerning the increase in online teaching as a result of the pandemic, and whether it will drastically impact lecturers’ use of storytelling, even when carefully planned. Might this dissuade educators from using some types of stories in online situations as the risks of telling stories raise new concerns around protecting students’ emotionally? Dunford (2020) trialled an online DS workshop with a group of 36 participants in March 2020, noting limitations of being online for interaction. She felt that it was harder to help people to “maintain perspective” and deal with sensitive stories than when working face-to-face. In particular she highlighted the difficulty of being able to pick up physical cues from people and to judge when they felt uncomfortable, when interacting via video screens. She concluded that there was a need to “establish what stories can be told [online] and how to calibrate their telling” (Dunford, 2020), thus supporting Butterfly’s concerns about the difficulty of sharing some stories online. In addition, these issues are likely to be more problematic in sessions delivered to larger groups where students’ cameras are usually switched off.

Finally, this also raises questions for practitioner educators' vulnerability in sharing personal or practice stories. Willow had expressed her concerns in SCRs that stories told in the classroom could be broadcast by students on social media. This possibility increases with online lectures where stories become shared via the computer screen into students' home environments, with the potential of being overheard by the wider public. Also, lectures may be recorded in order for students to access them at different times, thus leaving a semi-permanent record of stories, which may be an additional deterrent. It would be detrimental to the learning environment if practitioner educators' use of stories was curtailed by these concerns. It is, therefore, imperative to ask: in what ways do virtual learning environments change the relationship between practitioner educators and their students, and what impact does this have on the pedagogical use of storytelling? Given the importance of pedagogical storytelling, as illuminated by this thesis, further research into these emerging concerns is imperative.

## 8.6 The Story continues ...

Although I am coming to the end of my PhD journey, this is not the end of the story. I sincerely hope that my research will inform future storytelling practice in professional education, and that I might have further opportunities to continue to explore these areas and work with some of these recommendations post-PhD.

I also feel that there are much wider implications for this research. I have focused here on professional education and called for increased CPD and Communities of Practice on storytelling techniques for these professionals. However, the thesis has also touched on the breadth of storytelling and its potential impact in wider areas, including compulsory education. Storytelling techniques that were historically used in compulsory education have been "squeezed out" of the classroom, despite strong advocates for their use for many areas of teaching (e.g. Hartley, 2009; Heinemeyer and Durham, 2017; Livo and Rietz: 1986; Moon, 2010; Moon and Fowler, 2008). As discussed in chapter seven, stories that open up dialogues in classrooms have never been more urgent, providing the means for debating the important and sensitive topics of the current education era. I therefore propose that teaching of storytelling pedagogies is also trialled within ITE courses, extending these techniques to new student-teachers at all educational levels. While I agree with Snape (2020) that ITE courses have limited timeframes, and so not every technique can be incorporated, storytelling is a vital pedagogical tool for many areas, which would greatly benefit new teachers. This would also

help to destigmatise storytelling practice, rendering it more visible, as well as rebuilding the pedagogical storytelling landscape.

I hope that my research will impact on policy and practice, contributing to the reclaiming of storytelling as a valid, important, and flexible pedagogical tool that can be used confidently by practitioner educators. Central to these practices is the continued imagination and bravery of practitioner educators who employ these techniques, in the future, it is imperative that policy makers and universities to allow sufficient “space” and support for these to be used.

Finally, I hope that other researchers might be inspired to try out Trickster Methodology for themselves, whatever their research topic, bringing more trickster provocateurs into existence who they can engage in thinking-with, thinking-through and writing-through in order to analyse their research from new and enlightening perspectives.

## Afterthought

"Well, she's done it!" Merelina looked at the bound thesis, neatly packaged and ready to be sent to the examiners.

"She certainly has," Replied Mr. Wolf, proudly. "Of course, we have been instrumental in her accomplishment, without us, she would never had managed to make sense of all of those noticings."

"Mais oui, certainement," agreed Merelina, sounding pleased with herself. "Or even known how to get started!" She added, "there were times when I thought she wouldn't get there, so a bit of help from us was essential. And even when she thought she had "taken back ownership" as *she* said, we were still helping her." Merelina snapped her beak and made a purring sound deep in her throat.

Mr. Wolf widened his mouth into a grin, his pink tongue protruding through his teeth. "Yes, I think the more subtle approach probably worked better in the end, a bit of a nudge here and there, a few interesting dreams that she seemed to have forgotten on waking, but ..."

"She still acted on our advice!" Merelina chuckled and nodded.

"So, what next?" Asked Mr. Wolf?

"Well, I suppose we need to bide our time and see what she does. I'm sure when she's settled down again, she'll be wanting to use more of her Trickster Methodology and promote her ideas for Trickster Pedagogy in future...."

"I should hope so after all our hard work!! We can help her with her papers, spin-off publications... As long as they feature *us*. We need to restore our place in the world - and this work, just might help us to do that." Mr. Wolf grinned and winked at Merelina.

"Mmmm" she replied, thoughtfully "I think we'll be sticking around for a while, after all, we are essential to her methodology!"

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: A Trick in the Tale.

(With grateful thanks to RaPAL for giving permission to reprint full article.)

A Trick in the Tale: working with Trickster Methodology (Summer 2019) RaPAL (Research and Practice in Adult Literacies Network): Creative responses to literacy policies. Volume 98. Pp 8-11.

Georgina Garbett

*I am a PhD candidate and graduate research teaching assistant at Birmingham City University. I have over 15 years teaching experience in adult and community learning, specialising in teaching literacy and GCSE English.*

#### Storytelling and Education

I became interested in using oral storytelling for educational purposes in the 2000s, first introducing it in my community learning literacy classes and then researching how it could be used to encourage better communication and writing skills. My interest piqued, I continued to research the impact of storytelling/oracy on an individual's literacy journey for my MA dissertation. My research concluded that storytelling should be included in educator training programmes. I have now embarked on a PhD, in which I seek to discover "*What is the role of storytelling for practitioner educators in nurse and teacher training?*" Whilst I am still at the research design stage, I am planning to use *Trickster Methodology* alongside an autobiographical, semi-fictional approach, to explore and disseminate my findings. In this article, the tricksters, a wolf and a raven, will explain how they are helping me to develop my ideas. They will discuss their role as provocateurs and research partners. There is a task at the end of the article, for anyone who wants try out the Trickster Methodology for themselves.

#### Tricksters at play

"What are you doing skulking around the back there? That is you, isn't it, Mr. Elijah John Wolf? Always slinking about, hiding in the shadows, behind bushes." The raven squawked, defiantly.

"Oh, and you think you're better?" A muffled voice emanated from the depths of greenery.

"Yes - I don't skulk!"

The wolf slunk out from behind the bushes and stood glaring at the raven. He was actually much bigger than she was – but she had fluffed her feathers and spread her wings wide, making her look formidable. Mr. Wolf's nose and whiskers twitched, hackles raised. They sized each other up, jockeying for the upper position.

"Merelina – we seem to have got off to a bad start, again," he tried, in an appeasing tone. "I was only seeking you out to discuss how we are going to help the young one." The tension was broken as they contemplated the situation.

"Oh – ok – the young one? I think she's past that now ... in human terms anyway!" She cackled – "but you're right, I suppose, well first I propose we let her know that we *can* help her – after all, we're tricksters, we can do anything, of course ... I don't think we should necessarily tell her everything though, she has to find out things for herself, don't you think?"

“Yes – certainly, we mustn’t be too obvious about it ... a bit of a history lesson on how the wolf is the most important of the tricksters, our fine heritage, the wonderful things we have bestowed on the ...”

“Whaaat! Hang on biscuit minute! You’re not just going to use this as an opportunity to gloat, I hope.” She clicked her beak and advanced menacingly towards him.

“No, ok, Merelina, calm down ... Let me think... Ah yes ... there was a time when tricksters were revered by folk, they were celebrated in myths, legends and folklore (Hyde, 2008).”

“That’s more like it ...” Merelina shuffled back cocking her head to one side, swaying from left to right as she settled down to listen.

“...hmmmm, yes, ... so... tricksters, in all our various forms, are seen as important in many cultures (Kamberelis, 2003), of course we are often animals: my cousin coyote; Eshu, the hare; Anansi, the spider; but let’s not forget the demi-gods: Krishna; Loci (now he *is* a tricky chap); Hermes – always rushing about carrying messages ...”

“Don’t forget the females! What about Apate?”

“Well, yes, of course, there are a lot of female tricksters, we just don’t get to hear about them very often. These matriarchal societies like to keep things to themselves (Hyde, 2008), I gather. I think *you* will have to enlighten her on that side of things, Merelina.”

“It will be my pleasure ... carry on, it’s getting interesting hearing *your* take on things.” Mr. Wolf looked at her sideways, his long salmon tongue licking his nose as he contemplated just how sarcastic she was being.

“Right, well, the thing about being male or female isn’t that important is it? After all, we are all shape-shifters, we can become what we want: male, female, fish, bird, stone or seed (Kamberelis, 2008). We are the ultimate transgressors, humanity can’t pin us down! It’s so useful, being able to change like that. When I change genders, I get such a different perspective on things, it really helps me to not just think what it must be like, but to actually *become* the embodied other.” Mr. Wolf looked at Merelina for confirmation.

“Yes, I remember that’s how man got to learn how to hunt, when Loci was on the run and turned himself into a fish. By living as a salmon, he understood how they spawned, and how he could trap them as they swum up river (Hyde, 2008). He was a bit miffed though, when the demi-gods found out his little ploy and passed his ideas on to humanity, especially as they didn’t give him any credit.”

“Mmmm, exactly, exactly. Of course, we are very *generous* creatures, we often give of ourselves, and we don’t let anything stop us. Do you remember when Prometheus stole fire from the gods, crossing the boundary between heaven and earth to ....” His voice trailed off. Merelina was hopping up and down, clicking her beak. “Something wrong ...?”

“Prometheus gets all the glory, *Mon dieu!* It was me that took the light from the heavens in the first place so that man could see\* (Hyde, 2008), but no-one remembers me!” She squawked and chuntered to herself “*¡Que lastima - Pobre Merelina!*” (What a pity, poor Merelina).

“There, there, I know what you did, and you can tell Georgina all about it,” he soothed, his voice mellifluous. “Of course, we are also great communicators, we can speak to anyone, everyone, and anything. I have some fascinating conversations with trees and plants, you can feel so connected if you really try. But, how is all of this history of us going to help with the research?”

“Waaat?!!” Merelina drew a long breath and clacked her beak, shaking off her earlier indignation she pierced the wolf with her jet black eyes. “Well, I’ve been doing a bit of research of my own, actually.” She started to explain slowly, then excitedly, all at once “there’s something called the post-qualitative, and the narrative turn, where tricksters can be used to help researchers understand the world (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). They like our liminality, our ability to work on and around boundaries. Apparently social scientists started to take an interest in our transgressive and transformative character (Vizenor, 1990). Our comic aspect is key to our success as disruptors (Syphor in Vizenor, 1990) as it reflects human behaviour and makes humans look at themselves “sceptically”. Though, actually, I don’t know if I’m insulted by that bit ... our comic side, what’s so comic about us?” She hrrumphed, clacking her beak again.

“Huh! We’re not comedians.” Agreed Mr. Wolf.

“Well, it said that humans accept our efforts to disrupt and discombobulate because of the humorous way in which we go about our business ... oh well, that’s ok then, *that* sounds much better.” Merelina nodded her head, and stretched her wings, the bright sunlight shimmering off the iridescent purple and teal undertones of her feathers. “It also said that researchers have used tricksters in postmodern research for “reflexive inter-professional practice”; “sporadic illumination in moments of need” and to “jolt the world out of established or habitual modes of being” (Priyadharshini, 2012: 549, 548).” Merelina stopped, breathless after the torrent of words.

“I suppose that’s another language we’re going to have to learn ... academic discourse!” Mr. Wolf stretched himself, indicating he was ready to move on. “So to sum up, as mythological creatures we are rooted in humanity, we are imitators and innovators, a force for good and disruption. We are the intuitive analyst, and the complete idiot. We teach people how to grow and learn from our mistakes. What lovely, benevolent creatures we are!”

Merelina concurred, adding “Indeed, from chaos comes order! At least we’re getting some attention again, I like the “intuitive analyst”, not so sure about “complete idiot” though! Ah well, there’s work to be done, let’s go help the young one embrace the chaos!”

\*Note: this is from a Tsimshian tale.

### **Trickster Reflective Task**

- Choose an aspect of your teaching practice or action research where the use of trickster might be helpful (e.g. a knotty problem, or something that has a controversial element).
- Choose some trickster characteristics to focus on (see below).
- Write about your practice or research by putting yourself in the role of trickster. Or, try to imagine what obstacles or questions trickster might use to trick/challenge you.

Trickster characteristics:

- Mischievous: play tricks, deliberately deceive.
- Disruptive: upsetting the status quo, ultimately benevolent.
- Liminal: appearing on boundaries, roaming the earth, with the ability to cross boundaries.
- Transformative: taking on new qualities, e.g. changing gender; changing into objects such as stones and seeds.

- Adaptive communicators: able to converse with all of nature (including inanimate objects).
- The wise fool: learning, or teaching others, through their own mistakes, sometimes suffering great hardships/physical harm by their actions.

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Appendix 2: Fieldwork Forms

<p><b><u>Overview Story Incidences</u></b></p> <p><b>See page 2 for breakdown of each story incidence</b>                  (See accompanying sheet for clarification of terms)</p>	
<p><b>Date:</b> _____</p>	
<p><b>Setting:</b> Nursing Teaching</p>	
<p><b>Session Type (Circle):</b>                  Formal Lecture / General Teaching / Seminar / Workshop Other _____</p>	
<p><b>Approx Teaching Group size:</b> _____ <b>No. of Lecturers</b> _____</p>	
<p><b>No of story incidences in the session:</b> _____</p>	
<p><b>Comments:</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Each story incidence encountered – Detailed Breakdown</u></b></p>	
<p><b>Delivery Format:</b></p> <p><b>Story type:</b></p> <p><b>Story Length:</b></p> <p><b>Audience Organisation:</b></p> <p><b>Performative Aspects:</b></p> <p><b>Audience Response:</b> (All, most, some?)</p> <p><b>Story Category:</b></p> <p><b>(If text-based attach copy if possible)</b></p> <p><b>Story Theme / Topic.</b> Brief details.</p> <p><b>Story Purpose</b> (if known – eg. Exemplar, encourage reflection etc.)</p>	

### Appendix 3: Typology Prompt Sheet

<b>Each story incidence encountered – Detailed Breakdown</b>			
<b>Delivery Format:</b>	<b>Story Type</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Audience</b>
Oral	Strong / Broad	Short (<2 mins)	Whole Group
Text based	Spontaneous / Pre-Determined	Medium (2-5 mins)	Small Group
Digital	Formal / Informal	Long (5 – 10 mins)	One-to-one
Other (e.g. stories as role-play/simulations)	Response	Extended (10 mins +)	

<b>Performative Aspects (Oral Stories)</b>	<b>Group arrangement and activity Focus</b>
Voice / Tone	Whole group
Facial expressions	Small group activity
Gestures	Role play
Props	Simulation
Direct Address/inviting audience interaction	
Role-play / performative dialogue	
Other	

**Audience Response**

Disinterested	Interested
Angry	Smiling
Worried	Asking questions
Upset/emotional	Laughing
Interrupting	Joining in
Talking among themselves	Supply response story
Not listening (e.g. on mobile phone)	Provokes discussion
Serious	Thoughtful
Crying / tearful	Other

<b>Oral stories – Categories</b>		<b>Text based stories - Categories</b>	
Anecdote	Semi-fictional	Case studies	Multiple grouped (e.g. portfolio)
Centred on own personal experience	Fictional	Practice-based stories	Literature
Centred on own professional experience	Literature	Patchwork texts	Fictional
Factual but not personally known	Mythological/fable/legend		
Multiple / amalgamated	Other		

Appendix 4: Mapping of Story Incidences - Sample of fieldnotes

Story records	
<p>Story Category: (If text-based attach copy if possible)</p> <p>Story Theme / Topic: Brief details.</p> <p>Story Purpose (if known eg. Exemplar, encouragement, reflection etc.)</p>	<p>Another student offered her own story. Interesting whole people laugh. Teacher responded - very interesting story. Teacher continued. Student listening, smiling &amp; interested. Teacher used bookend analogy about memories - is a memory rather than a story - but explained it by talking about a baby growing up and acquiring things then later on the things on the top they fell off - so most recent memories are left. Tutor used this to understand the student's story - The prompted the student to expand + tell another story - her family member. Student listening, smiling, laughing. Teacher telling a story from her early nursing → same hand gestures, descriptive language → compare/contrast. Arms above to show her getting her dress on over her head → The woman (elderly) said she was going to find her man → She asked how old the man - woman said she was 10 Student - interested - smiling.</p>

Project number: PHD-E 1617-03 GG 0086



## Appendix 5: Mapping the story incidences - Sample of field notes - coded

<p>Practice experience. Delivered quickly.          Student offered a comment on the story. TE5 agreed and then extended the story, adding a bit more detail. [Fractured story].</p> <p>TE5 – talking about parents evening and parent insisting on something they had read meant that they were right (and she was wrong) – illustrating challenging behaviour. Practice story.</p> <p>Student gave [qualitative brief response] story</p> <p>Another student commented with a [personal] story from school (40 secs). Story created a buzz – surprise – a few gasps and laughter.</p> <p>TE5 response with a story (1 min) about a friend whose child had autism, who had very different behaviour at home to at school – used this to illustrate it could indicate a SEND issue. Personal</p> <p>Slide – What are the problems working with parents.          Small group discussions. Again I could hear (closest) students discussing personal stories, or drawing on their own experiences.</p> <p>TE5: Going through strategies for working with parents. Asking for students to share their experiences – on if they had contacted parents. 1 responded with [practice] story. Quite detailed (3 mins). Other students all listening despite quiet voice – expanded more on the story. TE5 nodding to encourage story + commented + student carried on with more details (extra minute).</p> <p>TE5 used this story to ask about barriers – used as a discussion point – gathered comments from group.</p> <p>TE5: Example “When I worked in [redacted] there were 250 pupils in a year group, which is</p>	<p>There is a lot of encouragement to share personal and practice stories, and validation of stories that help students to expand on their stories. She also used the stories as a platform to further discuss issues they might encounter in their teaching.</p>
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<p>NE10: Going into [online case-study / virtual PICU], where Daisy Lewis is the patient. (put this up on big screen – but students all have individual log ins, and can go to the ward at anytime from their own devices).          They can see her in the ward [digital animation], they can click on different objects in the ward to find out more – e.g. her medical chart. And there are other things that they can interact with.</p> <p>NE10: Clicked on “bedside handover”          NE9: All going to do this and think about Activity 10.          Video of nurse (not animated), giving Daisy’s history – doing a handover to the next nurse (each student). (approx. 10 minutes)</p> <p>Nurse goes through medical details e.g. Grade 1 intubation / oxygen / heartbeat / neurological information and recent procedures and medicines. Very detailed.          But framed to give a personalised feel (not just medical facts).          e.g. “She’s trying to pull out her wires a little bit .... And this has made mum smile.” [some Aahs from students].          + info on family – how the mom is physically, mentally and family situation – Dad and brother. “She’s pretty straight forward so I’ll let you crack on.”          Lots of laughter and excited chatter at this point.</p> <p>NE10: Quick to reassure them that they wouldn’t get all this in one go in a real situation. Getting them to think about the simulation with baby Jaydon, and handover with the nurse then.          Talked about them being able to take in the info.          NE9: “Structured and thorough” Did talk about the limitations of the video – info in one go, the actual video is not interactive, in a real situation they could stop her and ask questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talked about importance of checking charts and equipment while the nurse is there handing over.</li> </ul>	
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## Appendix 6: Story Circles for Research - Transcript Samples

	traditional elements in there. It's different because I've read it out rather than telling it from memory as I've done in the previous occasions, but what sort of ... er, what do you think about some of the things that were raise in that tale, what sort of stood out for you?	
Elaine:	Er ... the wolf as a kind of a mirror to the other side of your thinking, as a challenger to your perceptions of yourself, and as an engaging kind of a character, who can challenge someone in a fun way, but make them think differently maybe?	
GG:	Yeah, yeah, so there's that idea that, yeah, it's a reflective piece of writing almost, because of the wolf challenging ... yeah. Any other thoughts?	
Butterfly:	I'm intrigued by your choice of that particular fairy tale. I don't know whether that's going too deep as to why you went with that one, the whole idea of being eaten up [laughing]... erm, that sometimes in some of the teaching experiences that we have, or I've had, that you do feel er... threatened, er, yeah, who is the teacher? Possibly as well... I don't know where my thoughts as going.	Seems to have found lots of things in the tale to consider – and sees lots of parallels with teaching perhaps?
GG:	Mmm ... that's really interesting, a really interesting thought..	
Ina:	Erm... I would, er, just going back to my times in further education colleges, and you know, teaching er British Values, I don't know if you remember, it still is an incredibly hot topic, and a topic that a lot of tutors felt incredibly challenging to teach. And when you were telling me the story, I felt that there is an awful lot that you can use to discuss the nature of society, the idea of citizenship, multiculturalism, and the concept of perceptions that we have or that we hold about other people ... can you hear me?	So – Ina is thinking of the use of stories for teaching aspects of Teacher training – such as British Values –
GG:	Yes, you're going a little bit muffled, but I can hear you.	
Ina:	Yeah, yes, so I think it's well, it's almost like a well-known story and you could use it to encourage a really interesting debate, that's what kept popping into my mind, really.	thinking that traditional stories could be a useful way of conveying aspects of the teaching?

<p>Colin: And that's where the story ends.</p> <p>[Willow: Erm, that's very good, <i>smiling</i>... and I'm not quite sure how to end <i>[rg]</i>? It. But I thought also, that there are ... it's not just that it's ?? <i>[muffled]</i> in the shop, you've got that link to customers, there's the customer always knows best, but actually they don't, erm and then there's, you know which links to students as being customers, "I've come in here, you've got to give me what I want." [Willow: yep] Erm there's links to having this expertise and that's certainly connected because I was introduced, I remember being introduced as "the expert", and for 2 years no-one helped me [laughing. Willow, nodding and smiling]. Cos no-one helps an expert, you know you don't give advice to experts. And it dawned on me, much sooner than it did to everybody else that I wasn't an expert in the slightest [laughing]. I didn't have a clue what I was on about. Erm, and so there's elements of that which actually fit in with the whole, erm the whole being somebody who engages with people, <i>knowing</i> what's best, <i>learning</i> about their needs which is different to their wants, and having an expertise in a particular area, so it works quite nicely in that sense. The end, I think, maybe that should just be tied up [hands together doing a tying motion] right at the end just with nothing else other than, well what do you think, what do you think? Because then that opens up to the vast range of possibilities that could have occurred ... 'cos what happened in reality is we just got on a little bit better together, but <i>he</i> wasn't quite as horrible, and <i>I</i> wasn't quite as dismissive. It wasn't that <i>he</i> was amazing, and <i>I</i> was amazing, it was just that "Ah right, he just wasn't as bad as I thought he was. Ah well...[GG: mmm, yeah]. So that the outcome is kind of a ... it's not a damp squib, but you know, there isn't, there isn't a happy ending where, we became, we became <i>amazing</i> friends and he passed <i>everything</i> ?? <i>[rg]</i> ... but on the flip side, it did improve, it did get better.</p>	<p>Interesting comments – that students are customers / using the shop analogy to emphasise that aspect of teaching. Subtle messages about the Shopkeeper knowing best (because he knows his customers), and the clients (students) thinking they know best, because they are paying for the service.</p> <p>Also this idea that the teacher/lecturer is expected to be the expert, but actually, they may not know everything. – Cos no one helps an expert – but they still need advice/help? Who does the teacher turn to for support? Is this indicating that they are expected to find the answers themselves, without that support? Was this throughout teaching career, or any specific time?</p> <p>Colin also points out the on the commodification of learning - likening students to customers. - "you've got to give me what I want" - rather than -we're here to put in effort to learn something.</p>
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	that's is something to think about, it's that kind of ...	to tell his own story, and doesn't feel that would be right to tell their stories.
GG:	So ... does that sort of simplify the story? [Colin: mmm.] Because you're not adding new characters in, so it gives more ...	
Colin:	Yeah, because it makes ... it actually just end up making one point...	
Angharad:	yeah, that makes sense...and I think any stories, or anecdotes... cos I never think of them as stories, because I never think of them as that long, but stories are anecdotes, and it's exactly the same as Colin's described really, in that erm they are to make a particular point. Nearly all of mine are about things that I have done <i>wrong</i> [pause] and I created... <i>I create</i> [Colin laughing] a scenario around it to <i>show why it is wrong</i>	This is interesting - so she uses the nub of the story, but situates in an anecdote to get the point across?
Colin:	{Yeah that's mine ... yeah... [laughing]}	
Angharad:	... to do it, you know. This is my experience and I did this, and part of the reason I do that a lot is that it's like trying to identify with somebody, sort of saying – "you're doing this wrong, you shouldn't be do this", it's saying, "I've done this as well, I've done this wrong, this is the reasons why it's wrong, this is the reasons why we suggest this as an outcome. And it's a way of, sort of saying, this might be easier for you to accept this is why you do it this way, by saying, <i>I've made those mistakes</i> ...[pause]	
GG:	Oh, I see... So you're being very open with <i>them</i> ..	
Angharad:	yeah ... so like Colin suggested, some of them I've embellished, maybe purposefully, mostly they're embellished because they're all muddled. They are sometimes lifetime little bits that have been put into one whole. Which for the purpose of what it's been used for, is not a problem, and it probably just as well, because as you say, you don't have to deliberately hide detail, of ... you talked about GDPR ... <i>because</i> , it doesn't make any ... it has no cognisance to the, what we're talking about anyway. Erm, and,	

## Appendix 7: Story prompt - Trickster Tale - Mrs Wolf

**Abridged from “Mrs. Wolf”, first performed at Research Xchange Cafe at BCU, March 2019.**

“Hello Mr. Wolf, I expected you to pop up at some point.”

The Wolf grinned engagingly, his pointed teeth showing all the way to the corners of his mouth, his pink tongue just visible around the edges of his back teeth. But there was something different today, I scanned his whole body, from the pointed ears all the way down to his shiny Mary Jane shoes ... just like the ones that Grayson Perry wears ... I mused ... but ... hang on ...

“You normally wear boots, and ... what’s with the dress?”

“Ah – you’ve noticed...” He grinned, coquettishly. “I thought I would try a different look today, I felt I needed a bit of a change. Do you like it?”

“Yes, it’s ... very fetching... the pale blue gingham really suits your eyes... erm.” A panic started to rise in my heart and into my throat as his appearance began to sink in.

“You’ve not been going for walks on Cannock Chase, have you?” I looked searchingly into his dark brown eyes, “you’ve not been looking for Grandma’s cottage?”

“Grandma’s cottage – who *is* Grandma, and *whose* Grandma? Why would I be looking for Grandma’s cottage?” He looked puzzled, then “Oh ... I see ... How could you think that of me? I’m living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, not a 17<sup>th</sup> century fairy tale you know. How could you stereotype me in that way?”

I looked down at my feet, still seeing the Mary Jane shoes with little purple hearts on the front. It was, somehow, very disturbing “I’m sorry... I shouldn’t have ... but you just reminded me of...”

“Yes, well, as a researcher I would have thought you would be more discerning.” He was the same wolf, but this new guise seemed to uncover a different aspect of his identity that I hadn’t seen before. What was the reason behind this unveiling? There’d been no indication previously that he had a feminine side. Was he finally feeling that we were friends and able to show me his true identity, or was this another one of his tricks, another test?

“So, what are you working on?” His question cut through my thoughts.

“Well, I was trying to figure out these issues of identity ...” I couldn’t take my eyes off the ribbons and the delicate lace around the collar.

“Ah – how interesting ... and here’s me in my best party frock ... Well now, what a coincidence...” He grinned, knowingly, but then snarled “... and here’s you assuming I’m going off to attack little girls and grandmas ... I hope you are going to be a bit more careful in your treatment of your research participants than you have been with me.”

“I am sorry, Mr Wolf, I didn’t mean to offend you, but I was so shocked. I suppose it is a shock when we see someone in a way that we hadn’t expected, when they show a different side of themselves. After all, we can even surprise ourselves sometimes.”

“Well, that doesn’t sound very realistic, does it? How can we surprise ourselves? Are you saying that we don’t know ourselves? What a ridiculous premise!” Mr Wolf started plaiting the pink ribbons on the sleeves of his dress.

“Well, I know it sounds odd, but, yes I think we can surprise ourselves. Especially if we take on a particular challenge or find ourselves in a crisis. You often hear of people acting heroically in situations and then saying, “I surprised myself, I didn’t know I could do that.” It’s not on the same scale, but I surprised myself in becoming a teacher. I didn’t know that I was capable of standing up in front of a group of people and talking to them about anything, let alone teaching them, and yet I was thrown into a situation at work once, where I had to address about 200 people in Chinese, and because I’d managed to do that, even though it only lasted a minute, I realised I could push myself and do it again. I realised that teaching was actually feasible after all. And, yes, it surprised me.”

“I see what you mean, I suppose.”

“And ... it surprises me every day at the moment that I am doing a PhD. I keep having to pinch myself to know it’s really happening.”

“Well, why would that surprise you, you’ve got a Master’s...”

“Yes ... but ... I’m from an ordinary family, working class, no qualifications. I was the first one to go to university, the first to get a master’s, and – when I get to the end of this – the first to get a doctorate. And I was such a quiet little girl, lacking in confidence, I wouldn’t say boo to a mouse, let alone a goose!”

“Really? I remember you kicking my shin when I upset you when you were a child. So cruel, I still have a tender spot ... here...” he rubbed his ankle, and pouted. “So, what you’re saying now is that you have been able to progress, able to develop your character, to become something, *someone*, who you weren’t before?”

“Yes ... well ... no ... I don’t think that’s quite true.” The wolf had done it again. I was now feeling guilty about kicking him when I was a child, on top of feeling guilty about his appearance. It was all very disconcerting. I tried to clear my thoughts.

“But you just said you have surprised yourself by becoming someone who can teach...”

“Mmmmm – but I *was always* that person, I just needed to have the confidence in myself to let that person emerge.”

“That makes no sense at all!” Mr Wolf stopped plaiting and stared at me.

“Yes, it does. You’re right, as a little girl I had a strong streak, I was able to withstand difficult circumstances and illness, and although I was shy, I would stand up for myself - for what I thought was right when I felt it really mattered.”

So ... are we who we are from the start? Are our characters due to nature or nurture? And just think of the influence that fairy tales and stories must have had on our identities.”

“Indeed, they can make you jump to the wrong conclusion....”

“Well, maybe, but do you remember “The Little White Horse\*”?”

“Yes – your stepmother read it to you, wasn’t it one of her favourite books?”

“Yes, it was a beautiful story about the Moon princess, an orphan child with a destiny ... courageous and compassionate. She stood up to the evil men, and protected the hare and Wrolf, the dog, who turned out to be a lion. As an adult, looking back... I’ve always thought that it had a deep influence on me.”

“So, you think you’re the Moon Princess. Well, I would have thought you would have had more compassion for the poor downtrodden wolf then ...I feel quite jealous of Wrolf!”

“But, you’re not downtrodden...and, no, of course I don’t think I’m the “Moon princess” but I did admire her, and maybe a little bit of that crept in when I was standing up for myself.”

“No! You’re wrong! You’re just like your paternal grandmother, or possibly your mother, and you get more like them all the time! ... I wonder which one of them would have made the tastier meal... I missed out there!”

“Mr. Wolf! How could you?”

**6 minutes.**

\*The Little White Horse - Elizabeth Goudge, 1946.