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Narratives of experience: Senior registered nurses working with new graduate nurses in the intensive care unit

Susan Whittam

The University of Notre Dame Australia

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

> Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. It is collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in *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 (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.20).

A research paradigm guides a study's construction and choice of appropriate methodology and method. Elements of a paradigm include ontology, epistemology and methodology. In this chapter, this inquiry's qualitative paradigm, NI, is presented. Qualitative research methodologies and methods are applicable to nursing research, being congruent with the researchers' aims of exploring and presenting knowledge generated from experience and interactions with participants (Holloway, 2005). Narrative Inquiry's philosophical underpinnings, methodology and the methods used to generate and analyse the field notes (data) are described and discussed in detail. First, Dewey's (1938) understanding of experience is presented as it underpins Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) NI methodology. The researcher's reflexive stance, position and justification are offered followed by an explanation of the NI methods used.

3.1 Philosophical Underpinning: Dewey

John Dewey (1859–1952), a philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer, was integral to the foundation of the philosophical movement, Pragmatism. Dewey developed a philosophy of education to meet the needs of the changing democratic society in the 20th century. Dewey's goal was to promote human interests by creating a society of informed and engaged inquirers (Gouinlock, 2018). In his concise statement, 'Experience & Education', Dewey (1938) detailed his theory of experience.

Dewey's (1938) theory of experience and the philosophy of Pragmatism are fundamental to the ontology and epistemology of NI. The philosophical movement of Pragmatism seeks thought and the meanings of conceptions through their practical applications. Pragmatism is a tool for guiding action and solving problems and as a means of action (James, 1975; Pragmatism, n.d.). The pragmatist views experience as, 'always more than

we can know and represent in a single statement, paragraph or book. Every representation, therefore, no matter how faithful to that which it tries to depict, involves selective emphasis of our experience' (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 39)

Dewey's (1938) theory of experience asserts that experience and education are inextricably linked. Dewey writes, 'Every experience lives on in further experiences' (p. 27). This concept of *continuity* of experience describes how every experience modifies the person who has undergone, and been acted upon, by the experience. This modification affects the quality of subsequent experiences, whether one wishes it or not (Dewey, 1938). An educative experience is one that is conducive to physical, intellectual and ethical growth. Conversely, a miseducative experience is one that effects or distorts the growth and responsiveness of further experiences, thus limiting the possibility of having richer experiences in the future (Dewey, 1938).

Dewey's (1938) principles of *continuity* and *interaction* are central to the constitution of experience. Dewey's first principle, *continuity*, was depicted through a narrative continuum. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe this continuum: 'Wherever one positions oneself in that continuum – the imagined now, some imagined past, or some imagined future – each point has a post experiential base and leads to an experiential future' (p. 2). Dewey's second principle, *interaction,* was described by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), 'People are individuals and need to be understood as such, but they cannot be understood only as individuals. They are always in relation, always in a social context' (p. 2).

Dewey (1938) comprehends the concept of *situation* to be intertwined with the principle of *interaction.* People live in a world, meaning that they live in a series of *situati*ons. Therefore, interaction indicates the relationship of the individual with objects and other people. Further, the principles of *continuity* and *interaction* are intertwined: 'They intercept and unite. They are, so to speak, the longitudinal and lateral aspects of experience' (Dewey, 1938, p. 44). Dewey refers to a 'changing stream that is characterised by continuous interaction of human thought with our personal, social and material environment' (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 39).

Transforming the commonplace term, *experience*, into a term of inquiry; Dewey (1938) influenced the researchers Clandinin and Connelly (2000). Dewey's views of experience

formed the conceptual framework from which Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explored educational experience.

3.2 **Narrative Inquiry Methodology: Clandinin and Connelly**

Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (2000) are educational researchers who held a narrative view of experience based on Dewey's (1938) principles of experience. They established NI as a research methodology, writing a definitive guide explaining NI theory by creating a contextual definition of NI. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) show what NIs 'do' by 'using storied examples from NIs that address a range of research concerns' (p. xiii).

Stories are the way in which people create meaning in their lives and gain each other's support in establishing their lives and their communities (Clandinin, 2007). Stories are created by people in a particular place at a particular time while engaging in a particular experience (Clandinin, 2007). Polkinghorne (1988) describes narrative as being a 'kind of organizational scheme expressed in story form' (p. 13) that 'organizes events and human actions into a whole' (p. 18). To study narrative is to study the ways in which people experience the world (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

As a research methodology, NI is distinct both methodologically and ontologically from research practices that use stories as data [field texts] or view story and narrative as representational forms, as structure and as content analysis, or treat stories as the studied phenomenon. Narrative Inquiry is different from types of narrative analysis used in other methodologies, such as linguistic, structural and visual analyses. Stories and narratives are used as data in methodologies such as ethnography, case study and phenomenology, in addition to being used as forms to represent findings and results of studies. However, NI is a methodology with distinct differences from other uses of narratives in research studies (Caine et al., 2013).

In NI, the term narrative refers to the structured characteristics of experience to be studied as well as the method of inquiry for its study (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Therefore, it is equally accurate to refer to 'narrative inquiry' as it is to state, 'inquiry into narrative' (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). This delineation is preserved, defining inquiry as 'narrative' and the phenomenon as 'story' (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). People, by nature, lead 'storied lives and tell stories of those lives' (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p.

2). Narrative Inquiry researchers provide descriptions of lives, gather and tell stories of lives and compose narratives of experience.

Underpinned by a Deweyan view of experience, NI begins and ends with respect for the ordinary lived experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Ontology, 'the study of being' (Crotty, 1998, p. 10), is concerned with the nature of reality. Dewey's (1938) ontology is transactional, implying that the 'ideal for inquiry is not to generate an exclusively faithful representation of a reality independent of the knower' (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 39). Narrative Inquirers seek to generate a new relationship between a person and their environment, their social interactions and world (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Thus, 'Our representations arise from experience and must return to that experience for their validation' (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 39). A pragmatic ontology of experience places emphasis on both the temporal nature of knowledge generation and on *continuity*.

The individual's experience is the starting point for NI (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). However, NI explores institutional, societal and cultural narratives within which an individual's experiences are, 'constituted, shaped, expressed and enacted – but in a way, that begins and ends that inquiry in the storied lives of the people involved' (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 42). Through the study of a person's experience, NI researchers seek to enhance and transform the experience for other readers and themselves (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007).

Attending to the phenomenon of experience begins at the outset, and continues throughout the NI. 'Narrative inquirers understand experience as a narratively composed phenomenon' (Clandinin, 2013, p. 16). Epistemology focuses on the nature and forms of knowledge and the ways in which knowledge can be acquired and communicated to others (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011, p. 6). From an epistemological perspective, this NI research employs Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional NI space, which is discussed next and is referred to throughout the inquiry. The researcher 'thinks narratively' by considering the phenomenon under inquiry through the commonplaces of *temporality*, *sociality* and *place*. By thinking narratively, the researcher, 'highlights the shifting, changing, personal, and social nature of the phenomenon under study' (Clandinin, 2013, p. 38). Engaging in NI requires the researcher to think within the three commonplaces of NI throughout the stages of the inquiry: framing the research puzzle;

negotiating relationships with the participants; navigating entry to the research field; composing the field texts; and composing the research text (Clandinin, 2013).

3.3 Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space

Drawing upon Dewey's (1938) principles of experience—*continuity*, *interaction* and *situation* (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007)—and adopting Schwab's (1978) term *commonplaces*, a metaphor of a three-dimensional space was developed. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) identify, 'three commonplaces of narrative inquiry – temporality, sociality and place – which specify dimensions of an inquiry space' (p. 479). The three commonplaces were imagined as a checkpoint, a means to direct and reorient attention when conducting an NI. The three commonplaces provide a conceptual framework for NI.

3.3.1 Temporality

Inquirers attending to the temporal dimension consider that the people, places, things and events being studied have a past, present and future. Events under inquiry are in temporal transition (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Entities do not exist in one singular moment, independent from their past and their influence on the future (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, 2013). The importance of the temporality dimension in NI originates from philosophical views of experience, highlighting:

> As with all the particular narratives (experiences and actions) in which we consciously participate, to live this story is to tell it, to ourselves and possibly to others; and in this case to retell it again and again, revisiting it as we go along. (Carr, 1991, pp. 95–96)

When NI researchers attend to the dimension of temporality, they are attuned to both the participant's and their own lives. Attention is drawn to the temporal nature of places, things and events when engaging in the inquiry (Clandinin, 2013). In keeping with the temporal commonplace, NI frames a research puzzle rather than research questions and expectations of solutions. This puzzle is accompanied by a 'sense of a search, a "re-search", a searching again' (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 124). Narrative Inquiries conveys 'more of a sense of continual reformulation of an inquiry than it does a sense of problem definition and solution' (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 124).

3.3.2 Sociality

Narrative Inquiry researchers simultaneously attend to the personal and social conditions. The personal conditions of both the inquirer and the participant are defined by Connelly and Clandinin (2006) as being 'the feelings, hopes, desires, aesthetic reactions, and moral dispositions' (p. 480). Social conditions are deemed to mean the individual's context, including the environment, surrounding factors and forces, existential conditions and people (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Personal conditions can be internal or external. Inquirers turning internally focus on personal conditions, such as aesthetic reactions, emotions and moral responses; those turning externally attend to what is occurring, to the people and occurrences in our experiences (Clandinin, 2013).

Another aspect inherent in the *sociality* commonplace is the relationship between inquirer and participant, an important component in NIs. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) write, 'Inquirers are always in an inquiry relationship with participants' lives. We cannot subtract ourselves from [the] relationship' (p. 480). Narrative Inquiry researchers create research texts, which account for who they are in the study as well as who they are in relationship with the participants. This aspect of the *sociality* commonplace pays attention to the relational ontology of NI.

3.3.3 Place

The third commonplace is that of place or a sequence of places. Place is defined as 'the specific concrete, physical, and topological boundaries of place where the inquiry and events take place' (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 480). Recognising that events 'take place some place' (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 480) is the crux of this commonplace. When NI researchers write for others about the relevance of their work, they need to acknowledge the impact and qualities of place, on the study. The specificity of place is crucial for NI researchers because they consider stories, people and places to be intricately connected (Clandinin, 2013).

3.4 **Entering the Midst**

Working in the three-dimensional space, NI researchers are always *in the midst*, located in and, transecting, the dimensions of *temporality*, *sociality* and *place* (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Entering research relationships can be formed in the midst of

professional and personal lives; organisational or university narratives; and cultural, political and social narratives (Clandinin, 2013). When the participants' and researchers' lives intersect in the midst, they are shaped by the inquiry's attendance to the, 'past, present, and future unfolding social, cultural, institutional, linguistic, and familial narratives' (Clandinin, 2013, p. 43). Meeting in the midst occurs when researcher and participants meet at the beginning of the inquiry and while acquiring and negotiating field texts; researchers leave the midst on writing the research texts [theses]. Final research texts can refer to a variety of documents, such as academic publications, theses and dissertations; however, hereafter, the final research text is referred to as the 'thesis'.

3.5 **Field Texts**

Field texts are co-compositions that reflect the experiences of the participants and researchers and can include transcripts, documents, artifacts, photographs, field notes and journals. These co-compositions may direct the diverse ways in which theses represent the retold stories of experience (Clandinin, 2013). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) use the term 'field texts' rather than the term 'data', 'to signal that the texts we compose in narrative inquiry are experiential, intersubjective texts rather than objective texts' (Clandinin, 2013, p. 46). Throughout this thesis, the term 'field texts' is used, replacing the term 'data'. If the term 'data' is used specifically by another author, the term field texts is placed in square brackets as an explanation.

Howe and Moses (1999) discuss the ownership of field texts, suggesting consideration especially 'when the ownership passes from the participants to the researcher, and with what constraints, requirements, conditions and powers over the use and dissemination of the findings placed upon the data [field texts] by the participants' (p. 43). If inquirers respect the dignity of the participants, then there is need to treat participants as equals not as subordinates to the researcher (Cohen et al., 2011). This is particularly important since NI attends to relational aspects in all phases of the research; hence, field texts and interim texts were co-composed and negotiated throughout this inquiry.

3.6 **Telling and Living**

Connelly and Clandinin (2006) state that there are different approaches to co-composing field texts: *telling* and *living*. When considering the three-dimensional space at the outset

of the NI, the researcher can either consider the life as lived in the past, *telling*, or *living* the life under study as it occurs, *living* (Kim, 2015). Narrative Inquiry researchers may begin with either telling or *living*, yet most predominately begin with *telling*. One of the main ways of *telling* is storytelling.

In NIs focused on *telling*, the most commonly used starting point is conversation. Clandinin (2013) suggests allowing a space where both participants' and inquirers' stories can be created and heard. The conversations are marked by their equality, allowing participants the flexibility to introduce additional topics and set direction. Since conversations entail listening, inquirers may probe deeper into the story, resulting in a more extensive representation of experience. Probing occurs in an environment of mutual trust, whereby the inquirer cares about the experience described by the participant (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

In contrast to *telling*, Connelly and Clandinin (2006) suggest a more time-consuming, intensive method begins with *living* alongside participants who are in the midst of their lives. *Living* field texts are the researcher's observations and/or participants' observations (Kim, 2015). Connelly and Clandinin (2006) assert that although riskier for the inquirer owing to participant control over the aspect of *living*, it is rich with intellectual potential and interest. Researcher–participant relationships that are focused on *living* alongside the participant may be more intense and intimate than those that begin with *telling* (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). If the researcher shares similar experiences with participants in the inquiry, empathy and close relationships may develop.

Although this is a *telling* inquiry, I also live alongside the participants. Although I did not collect field notes since I lived alongside the participants, our shared knowledge of the commonplaces of *place* and *sociality* gave me unique insight into the co-composed narrative accounts (NAs). Further, I will continue to live alongside the participants after this NI thesis is written. Regardless of the beginnings, whether *telling* or *living*, NI researchers work collaboratively with the participants in the three-dimensional space. Narrative Inquiry researchers find ways of understanding participant experiences, as well as their own experiences, as they endeavour to co-construct experiences established through the process of relational inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). To better understand their own experiences, researchers may engage in a process of critical self-reflection throughout the inquiry.

3.7 **Reflexivity**

Being reflexive and demonstrating these reflections in the thesis are considered a key element of ethical, qualitative research (Bishop & Shepherd, 2011). 'Reflexivity requires critical self-reflection of the ways in which researchers' social background, assumptions, positioning and behaviour impact on the research process' (Finlay & Gough, 2008, p. ix). Although researchers may be honest in their reflexive accounts, there are factors that may not be immediately discernible by inquirers or may be distorted by temporality. Therefore, reflexivity occurs before, during and after an experience, as a form of continuing self-analysis and political awareness, often documented in a researcher journal (Lahman, Geist, Rodriquez, Graglia, & DeRoche, 2011). Since NI is attentive to the relational aspects of the methodology, a reflexive approach is essential as it:

> notices the reactions to a research situation and adapts in a responsive, ethical, moral way, where the participant's dignity, safety, privacy, and autonomy are respected. Additionally, the researcher pays special attention to the possible power imbalances between the researcher and the participants. (Lahman et al., 2011, p. 1403)

Narrative Inquiry researchers co-compose numerous field texts with the participants. What is eventually shared in this thesis comprises only some of these field texts. The process of negotiating and co-composing the interim NAs with participants, the researcher's analysis and the searching for resonant threads, through to the writing of the thesis, requires attention to the three-dimensional space. Some stories, characters and contexts will interweave and interconnect, while others will remain singular and incongruent. Elliot Mishler (1924–2018), a significant contributor to the field of NI, suggested, 'Narrative inquirers need to make visible in their research texts the process(es) by which they chose to foreground particular stories' (Clandinin, 2013, p. 50).

Analysis of the field texts occurred within the three-dimensional space. Interim texts 'are partial texts which are open to allow participants and researchers opportunities to further compose storied interpretations and to negotiate the multiplicity of possible meanings' (Clandinin, 2013, p. 47). The interim research texts were 'open' to participants since they allowed further negotiation regarding unfolding threads of experience; this process was essential when writing the thesis. The process of shaping and analysing the field texts into interim and thesis occurred in two stages: co-composing the NAs and the search for resonant threads. As detailed in the next paragraph, Mishler's (1995) 'reconstructing the

told from the telling' (p. 95) was employed to compose the tentative NAs. Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis method was used to seek resonant threads across the final negotiated NAs.

Mishler's (1995) method of 'reconstructing the told from the telling', guided the development of the interim texts. In Mishler's (1995) article, 'Models of Narrative Analysis: A Typology', the models are ordered in a series of 'sets'. The first set focuses on the 'correspondence between the temporal sequence of actual events and their order of presentation in the text or discourse' (p. 90). In this 'set', analysis places the 'told' into a temporal order or a reordered storyline. Participants may not always tell stories of experience in a temporal or conceptual order, deviating from storylines and making general comments that do not have clear temporal signposts (Kim, 2015; Mishler, 1995). By rearranging the 'told' from the conversations into chronological or thematically coherent stories, the researcher reconstructs a story from the '*tellings*'. The reconstructed story becomes, 'the narrative for further analysis' (Mishler, 1995, p. 95).

Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analysing and reporting threads (themes) across the NAs. Focusing on the particular plotlines of the individual NAs, 'resonant threads or patterns' (Clandinin, 2013, p. 132) are sought across the NAs. The plotlines, which weave and thread over time and place through the participants' NAs, are termed 'threads' (Clandinin, 2013, p. 132). Metaphorically, the NAs are laid alongside one another, searching for 'resonances or echoes that reverberated across accounts' (Clandinin, 2013, p. 132). These resonant threads convey an important meaning about the field texts in relation to the research; representing a degree of patterned meaning or response across the five NAs (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis is not a linear process but one more recursive in nature. It is a process that develops over time with movement back and forth between the phases. Teachers and researchers in qualitative psychology, Braun and Clarke (2006) present a method of thematic analysis that organises and describes field texts in rich detail via a six-phase process: familiarising yourself with your data [field texts], generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report [thesis] (p. 87). A summary of the six-phase process is presented in the appendices (see Appendix B). Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach aligns with NI methodology owing to the recursive nature of the analysis process. The backwards and

forwards movement through the phases echoes the commonplace of temporality with its sense of continual searching and reformulation.

Narrative Inquiry research texts do not presume to provide answers to the research puzzle in the thesis. Narrative Inquiries are less concerned with generalisability and more concerned with a deeper understanding of the research puzzle (Tolley, Ulin, Mack, Robinson, & Succop, 2016). Rather, stories of experience are presented so that readers may 'rethink and reimagine the ways in which they practice and the ways in which they relate to others' (Clandinin, 2013, p. 51). By presenting the findings of the NI in a narrative format, readers 'can access rich layers of information that provide a more in-depth understanding of the particulars of the participant's points of view' (Wang & Geale, 2015, p. 195).

Josselson (2007) proposes that there is an inherent ethical conundrum in narrative research. The narrative researchers have a dual role—they are in a research relationship with the participants but also in a professional role within the academic community. Relational ethics requires a responsibility towards dignity, respect, cultural awareness, reflexivity, well-being and confidentiality of the participants (Josselson, 2007; Lahman et al., 2011). These responsibilities may create tensions with the academic obligations of analysis and interpretation, accuracy and publishing of the thesis (Josselson, 2007; Park, Elly, Vera, David, & Joanne, 2016). Balancing both ethical and academic responsibilities simultaneously was challenging. Rather than attempting to untangle and resolve tensions that occurred during this NI, they were acknowledged and made visible in the thesis (Clandinin, Murphy, Huber, & Orr, 2010; Huber, Clandinin, & Huber, 2006; Josselson, 2007). Tensions encountered in this NI, such as level of smoothing requested by a participant, use of pseudonyms, inclusion of research processes in the NAs and inclusion of one participant's career trajectory, are discussed throughout section 3.10 Methods.

3.8 Researcher's Position

I chose NI methodology because I consider life to be interpreted and experienced by people via *interactions*, in a constantly changing complex world (Cohen et al., 2011; Tuli, 2011; Wang, 2017b). I focused on the phenomenon of lived experience and the individual's development of knowledge via experience. In this NI, I sought to honour the experience of the SRNs who work with NGNs in the ICU, focusing on SRNs' lived

experience, via the telling of stories as an important source of knowledge and understanding.

The relationship between participants and inquirers may add richness and depth to the narrative field texts and potentially lead to deeper insights into the context under inquiry (Tuli, 2011). The pre-established professional relationship between the participants and me allowed a greater understanding of the commonplaces of *place* and *sociality* as explained in section 3.6 Telling and Living.

My personal and professional experience highlights that as 'narrative inquirers we work within the space not only with our participants but also with ourselves' (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 61). Consequently, throughout this inquiry, to ensure transparency, my voice is made visible and integral to the story. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state, 'It is impossible (or if not impossible, then deliberately self-deceptive) as researchers to stay silent or to present a kind of perfect, idealized inquiring moralizing self' (p. 62). The inquirers' voice has been made visible in other NI research texts (Lindsay, Schwind, Papaconstantinou, Smye, & Cross, 2016; Wang, 2017a).

3.9 **Justification**

To justify an NI, Clandinin and Caine (2012) suggest 'responding to the questions of "so what?" and "who cares?"' (p. 174), in three ways: personally, practically and socially or theoretically. These justifications were imagined at the outset and revisited throughout the inquiry during the composition of the tentative NAs and thesis.

Personal justification was demonstrated through my reflexive stance. Inquirer reflexivity does not consider research neutral in relation to values or ethical conduct to be simply a matter of complying with a predetermined set of rules. Hammersley and Traianou (2012) suggest that reflexivity highlights the 'value-rich' rather than 'value-neutral' nature of social research. Reflexive judgement must be applied to the whole research context, 'including the identities of the researcher and of the researched, and the forces, of various kinds, operating upon and within the situation' (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012, p. 34).

Since NI is an ongoing reflexive methodology (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006), I considered my interest in, and relationship to, the inquiry through a 'Narrative Beginnings Account' (see Appendix C) and reflexive journal. Narrative inquirers begin their research

journey by inquiring into their own stories of experience. Engaging in autobiographical NI, inquirers frame their own narrative beginnings. My 'narrative beginnings account' made 'evident the personal, social, and political contexts that shaped our understandings' (Clandinin, 2013, p. 55). Processes, ideas, tensions and dilemmas were contemporaneously recorded in the confidential, reflexive journal (Clandinin, 2013).

Practical justification was evidenced by the discovery of a gap in the literature exploring SRNs' experiences of working with NGNs in the ICU. In response to the 'so what' question, I contemplated issues of equity and social justice (Clandinin & Caine, 2012). In the absence of the SRNs' voice, I considered, 'alongside participants, how their and our experiences might be shaped differently in the future' (Clandinin & Caine, 2012, p. 174). Providing insight into the SRNs' experiences through stories told and shared, readers of this research may in future desire to tell and share their own stories.

The final justification required a consideration of social or theoretical justifications. Social justification can be thought of in two ways, 'theoretical justification as well as social action and policy justification. Theoretical justification comes from justifying the work in terms of new methodological and disciplinary knowledge' (Clandinin & Huber, 2010, p. 436). Social justification was demonstrated through giving voice to the SRNs and making visible their stories of their experience, working with NGNs in the ICU context (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). Additionally, theoretical justification was determined via expanding nursing disciplinary knowledge resulting from the findings of this inquiry and presenting NI as an appropriate methodology when inquiring into SRNs' experiences.

3.10 **Methods**

In the following section of this chapter, I present and describe the methods used when generating and analysing the field texts co-composed with the participants of this current inquiry. I make visible aspects such as relational considerations, ethical tensions and participant collaboration to ensure absolute process transparency.

3.10.1 Receiving Ethical Approval

Inherently collaborative, NI is a relationship-focused methodology, whereby ethical considerations are commonly viewed as responsibilities negotiated throughout the phases of the inquiry. Narrative Inquiry researchers consider ethical research relationships to be

ones that show awareness: of respect, the negotiation required with participants regarding the collaborative nature of the research and the trust formed between inquirer and participant (Clandinin, 2006; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Therefore, ethical considerations beyond those required by institutional human research ethics committees become important (Clandinin, 2013). Additional ethical considerations result from the NI perspective of the researcher arriving in the midst of participants' lives, requesting participant help to understand the research puzzle (Josselson, 2007). This stance guides ethical dilemmas that may occur during the ongoing relational aspects of the research processes (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, 2006). This inquiry received ethics approval from a metropolitan Level 6 hospital (Health System Planning and Investment Branch, 2018) Human Research Ethics Committee, reference number LNR/16/SVH/170 (see Appendix D) and received cross-institutional recognition of this approval from the University of Notre Dame, Australia.

3.10.2 Enrolling Participants

A research advertisement was displayed on ICU notice boards (see Appendix E). Screening occurred when potential participants contacted the inquirer in person. The inclusion criteria were: SRNs were permanently employed in the ICU; they had worked with NGNs within the last three months; and they were willing to give written and informed consent and participate in and observe the inquiry protocol. As this inquiry had an ideographic approach (Robinson, 2011) a participant sample size of between four to eight participants was proposed. This number of participants allowed for individual participants to have a locatable voice within the inquiry whilst allowing for intensive analysis of each participants' narrative account (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

When potential participants approached me, I gave an overview of the inquiry, a hard copy of the participant information guide (see Appendix F) and the consent and form of withdrawal of participation (see Appendix G). I felt it important to discuss the relational and collaborative nature of NI methodology early in the enrolment process. Although I would continue to work alongside the participants throughout the inquiry period, the potential participants and I would be in an inquiry relationship, co-composing the NAs. I was transparent regarding the relational aspects of the NI, since it may have affected potential participants' willingness to participate. They were encouraged to ask questions, ensuring full understanding of the inquiry methods.

A purposive sampling strategy was employed. All five potential participants who showed interest in the project met inclusion criteria and were enrolled, with none being excluded or withdrawing. Consequently, the sample had demographic homogeneity (Robinson, 2014). All participants were female, anglophone and Caucasian, with an average 13 years of nursing experience in this ICU. The sample size allowed scope for developing resonant threads across the narrative accounts, whilst preventing the inquirer from being submerged in field notes (Robinson & Smith, 2010).

3.10.3 Maintaining Confidentiality

Confidentiality protected the participants' right to privacy by the nondisclosure of information that may have identified them (Cohen et al., 2011). Although aware of who had provided information, I did not share this publicly. Field texts, NAs and the thesis were safeguarded to protect participants' confidentiality (Josselson, 2007). I maintained confidentiality by using pseudonyms, omitting time and dates in the NAs, participants' review of their tentative narrative accounts and storing a pseudonym for participant identifier on one non-networked, password-protected computer.

To ensure confidentiality, the use of pseudonyms is often appropriate in research texts; however, the imposition of biomedical human research principles on participants may remove autonomy (Lahman et al., 2015). The use of pseudonyms seems at odds with some participants' desire to use their own names. I took a responsive approach, creating pseudonyms with participants rather than automatically assigning pseudonym names that I selected. To remain attentive to the participants, I chose human names rather than numeric identifiers (Lahman et al., 2015). Since I was unable to predict whether participants may want to choose their own pseudonyms or allow me to choose them, I made these options available on the consent form. The five participants requested that I choose their pseudonym. However, as detailed later in the chapter, one participant negotiated an alternate pseudonym post reading their tentative NA.

All proper names were changed because participants may be identified via association (Josselson, 2007). Pseudonyms replaced names of participants' family members, friends or colleagues. Specific places and education programs were obscured. However, Poland (2001) warned 'Removing too much identifying information could compromise future researchers' ability to contextualize the testimony of the respondents adequately as a basis

for analysis' (p. 634). In this inquiry, contextual information remained intact as a way of understanding the commonplace of *place*. The participant's NAs contained specific details regarding lengths of time and dates. These details were 'blurred' in the final NA to protect participant confidentiality. As an example, the phrase, 'She had been in the hospital for many years' was used rather than the specific number of years mentioned by the participant, attending to NI's commonplace of *temporality*.

The tentative NAs were negotiated, providing an opportunity for participants to highlight any concerns regarding confidentiality. One participant requested that I change their assigned pseudonym to one of their choosing. Another insisted I leave information regarding their career in their NA. I had concerns this information could potentially be attributed to the participant; however, the participant argued the information was essential to the story of experience. The concerns were acknowledged and resolved and are discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

3.10.4 Locating Conversations

Staying true to the collaborative nature of NI, I aimed for the meeting places to be mutually decided. I emphasised with participants that they were doing me a favour; therefore, anywhere they chose to meet, be it a café, their home or the workplace, would be suitable. However, all participants asked what would be convenient for me, when negotiating where to meet. In each case, I emphasised that the choice of location was their decision. I took this approach because I wanted a convenient and comfortable location for the participants, seeking to reduce possible tensions in the research process (McDowell, 2001). Additionally, I sought an equitable relationship with the participants during the conversations. However, Hunter (2005) counters this view, suggesting research situations were synonymous with participant anxiety.

Some locations may be more prone to interruptions and distractions than others. I was conscious of the fact that if the participants chose a noisy location, the quality of the digital audio recording may be negatively affected, potentially affecting the quality of the research transcripts (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). Chosen for its unobtrusive size, longevity of recording time and quality of recorded sound, the digital audio recorder had been pre-checked for functionality, clarity of recording and power life. This ensured the conversation was recorded clearly and without unnecessary interruptions.

All participants chose to meet in the ICU, either before or after a shift. I found it intriguing that all participants preferred to meet at work. Herzog (2005) suggests that the chosen setting of the conversation 'is not only a technical matter of convenience and comfort but should be examined within the social context of the study being conducted' (p. 25). The participants' choice was respected. They were not asked to explain their decision. I wondered whether the ICU location was simply convenient to the participants and therefore a pragmatic choice. Thinking temporally back to this time, I wished I had asked participants to discuss their decision. On the day of conversation, I chose the location in the ICU. The variable nature of the activity in the ICU and the need to protect the confidentiality of the participants meant I could not pre-book a location. We were meeting 'in the midst' of our working lives. To ensure privacy and confidentiality, I chose rooms without windows and with lockable doors, which were co-located with the ICU but away from the clinical area.

I believed the participants were giving me a *gift* of their time and stories of experience. 'It is useful to conceptualize the interview [conversation] as a *gift* of time, of text, and of understanding, that the interviewee gives to the interviewer' (Limerick, Burgess-Limerick, & Grace, 1996, p. 458). Although I felt comfortable when requesting this *gift*, I did feel a strong sense of obligation towards the participants. I was aware that I wanted to value their *gift* and do it justice. This feeling of obligation permeated the inquiry from the moment that the participants showed willingness to participate. Therefore, in the spirit of hospitality, the participant was asked whether the space was suitable before entering the room. I deliberately let the participant enter the room first and choose where to sit. I did this to acknowledge the agency of the participant and to 'disrupt conventional notions of power in the interview relationship' (Limerick et al., 1996, p. 458).

3.10.5 Gaining Consent

Informed consent is the foundation of ethical behaviour because it respects the rights of individuals to exercise control over their life and make decisions for themselves (Howe & Moses, 1999). The principle of informed consent originates in the individuals' right to self-determination and freedom (Cohen et al., 2011). Self-determination requires participants to evaluate the risks and benefits before consenting. The right to participate also infers the right of refusal and the right to revoke consent after the research has commenced (Cohen et al., 2011). Since NI is a collaborative methodology, informed

consent and the right to revoke consent was sought iteratively throughout the research process. None of the participants chose to revoke consent.

Iterative consent is a dynamic process, with the inquirer committed to obtaining ongoing consent rather than seeking a one-off consent at the start of the research project. The inquirer seeks confirmation from participants at different research points to confirm that they still wish to be involved as well as regarding the use and naming of information within the field texts. Iterative consent may prove challenging if participants change their minds about the use or naming of field texts (Lahman et al., 2015). However, this did not occur in the current inquiry and hence did not need to be addressed.

Narrative Inquiry is a relational and collaborative methodology, requiring the inquirer to gauge participants' comfort levels with all facets of the study. Process responsiveness is a comprehensive ethical stance committing the inquirer to a reflexive practice (Lahman et al., 2011). This was demonstrated when: negotiating entry to the field and creating relationships with participants, negotiating meeting times and places to hold conversations, co-composing the NAs and seeking participant consent to present the NAs in the thesis.

The inquiry's protocol was reiterated with the participants before the consent form was signed. To ensure informed consent, the participants were given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the inquiry's aims, methods and potential risks, including their right to refuse and withdraw without prejudice. The consent form was signed and a copy given to the participant. The researcher's copy was stored in a locked desk drawer within a locked office. All participants signed the consent form immediately before individual conversations commenced.

3.10.6 Conversations with Participants

In qualitative research, there are three main types of interview: structured, semi-structured and unstructured interactive interviews (Corbin & Morse, 2003). The difference between these interviews is the degree to which the participants of the interview have control over content and process (Corbin & Morse, 2003). The unstructured interactive interview may also be referred to as narrative interview, open-ended interview or as interview as conversation (Clandinin, 2013; Corbin & Morse, 2003). Clandinin (2013) suggests interview as conversation predominates in NI since it

makes space for both the participant and inquirer to create and hear each other's stories. Riessman (2008) suggests two active participants co-construct narrative and meaning. The aim of NI is to create richly detailed accounts of experience rather than general statements or short answers. Therefore, in this NI inquiry, I chose to engage in conversation because not only did this reflect the experience of co-composing stories with the participants but also aligns most closely with NI methods.

Research conversations often start with what Spradley (2016) calls a 'grand tour question' (p. 62). By asking the participants to tell me a story of their experience, they determine where to begin, elements to include or exclude, the order in which elements are included and how much detail they wish to share (Corbin & Morse, 2003). Although the participants were central to the process of telling their stories, I played a role in the conversation via the use of focused listening and responding (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). I did this by giving my full attention to the participant, trying not to analyse conversation content or consider whether it aligned with other participants' stories.

Valuing the participants' *gift*, I anticipated that I might need a 'conversation guide' when engaging with the participants in conversation. The use of a conversation guide (Chase, 2011; Liamputtong, 2013; Wang, 2017a) is intended to prompt the inquirer's engagement with the narrators' story of experience and track progress through the conversation, discovering the rich and varied complex elements of each story (Chase, 2008; T. Kelly & Howie, 2007). The guide was brought to all conversations; however, it was only used during the first conversation. During the first conversation, I found the guide to be distracting and I realised that I was being less attentive to the participant. In subsequent conversations, I was more focused on its presence than being fully attentive to the participant. When this occurred, I discarded the guide and allowed the conversation to flow naturally.

Corbin and Morse (2003) explore four phases of unstructured interactive interviews [conversations] as a way of explaining that conversations, when held in a caring and sensitive manner, present an opportunity for reciprocity and psychological risk mitigation. The four phases of conversation are: *pre-interview*, *tentative*, *immersion* and *emergence*. In the following paragraphs, my experience of each of the phases is described.

It is during the *pre-interview* phase when the participants and inquirer establish a degree of comfort and trust. This initial period is important and should not be rushed, setting the tone for the forthcoming conversation (Corbin & Morse, 2003). Although I believe I had created a degree of trust with the participants in my substantive role of ICU CNE, establishing comfort and trust in my additional role as inquirer was important. This was done by: reiterating the purpose of the conversation, ensuring that concerns or questions about the research protocol and confidentiality had been resolved and ensuring that the consent form was signed. During this phase, iterative consent was sought to digitally audio record the conversation. Participants were reminded that they were free to withdraw from the research at any time, without consequence.

Additionally, a degree of 'small talk', light, agreeable, and safe verbal conversation (Flemming, 2018), precedes the formal start of the recorded conversation (Corbin & Morse, 2003; Johnson & Rowlands, 2012). The content of the small talk in this NI differed between participants. Some discussed their workday or events in their home life, while others chatted about personal lives or shared recent photos taken on mobile telephones. However, one participant told me a poignant personal story of own experience with digital audio recorders. This story, associated with the research topic, extended well beyond what would be considered 'small talk'. On hearing the story, I realised the reason that the participant was so insistent that I ensure that the audio recorder was turned on and recording correctly. I was humbled and grateful that she trusted me and took time to share such a personal story. Her insistence in ensuring the digital audio recorder was capturing her story was indicative of both her care and collaboration throughout our research relationship.

It is during the *pre-interview* phase that the basis for reciprocity is established. Corbin and Morse (2003) suggest 'An interview [conversation] is an exchange. The participants sometimes share intimate information, but the researcher gives something in return…' (p. 342). An overt discussion or mention of reciprocity between the participants and me did not occur during the *pre-interview* phase. However, during other stages of the conversations, participants sought reciprocity via asking questions and, as an inquirer conscientious to relational responsibilities, I provided answers once the conversations had concluded (Corbin & Morse, 2003).

Corbin and Morse (2003) suggest that the *pre-interview* phase gradually merges into the conversation; however, the transition between the two phases is not always perceptible. In this inquiry, this did not occur. With all participants, I clearly stated that I would turn on the digital audio recorder, transitioning the *pre-interview* phase into the *tentative* phase. Turning the digital audio recorder to 'record' mode was the point at which the interview transitioned to the *tentative* phase.

The *tentative* phase is a period where participants build trust in the inquirer. Corbin and Morse (2003) state, 'There may be some testing of interviewer response as participants wonder what and how much can be told' (p. 342). As participants told their stories, they not only took their own emotional responses to what was being shared into account but also my verbal and non-verbal cues as the inquirer. Participants may adjust their stories but as trust develops, more of the story unfolds. I believed that eye contact, facial expressions and body language of the participants were ways in which trust was confirmed (Johnson & Rowlands, 2012). Usually, the slow unfurling of participants' experiences leads to the *immersion* phase. However, in this inquiry the *tentative* phase rapidly progressed to full *immersion*. It could be conjectured that trust between inquirer and participants was pre-existing or that participants were keen to share their stories of experience.

In the *immersion* phase, the conversation does not always follow a predictable linear configuration. Participants may talk about topics unrelated to the research topic or they may move back and forth in time and between experiences. They may at times pause to collect their thoughts or contradict themselves. These contradictions and pauses do not necessarily negate the story being told. They may be an indication that the participants are reflecting and trying to make sense of significant experiences in their lives, providing a new clarity that may not have been visible previously (Corbin & Morse, 2003). Conversations can vary in length and perceived quality because some participants may naturally be better able to convey or express themselves via storytelling while others may just limit themselves to the facts: 'First this happened, then this, then that' (Corbin & Morse, 2003, p. 343). The conversations in this inquiry lasted between 30 and 55 minutes, with some participants speaking almost without break while others required probing questions and prompts to encourage conversational flow. The variable linear flow and length of the conversations was not reflective of the rich nature of the participants' storytelling.

Participants may be distressed while telling stories that provoke strong emotion. Researchers can give the participant the choice of regaining composure, changing the topic or ending the conversation. Regardless of the option chosen, the ethical and relational responsibilities of NI should constrain the researcher from leaving a participant in a state of distress (Corbin & Morse, 2003). Leaving a participant in emotional distress after a conversation without sufficient support or appropriate safeguards is immoral (Smith, 1992). I did not sense distress from the participants at any stage in the conversations. Two participants demonstrated concern, wanting to know whether their stories were useful to me as an inquirer. Another participant seemed apprehensive, worrying that she mumbled too much and went off on tangents. In each of these cases, the cause of the concern was discussed and remediated by both the participant and inquirer.

In the fourth and final phase of *emergence*, conversation shifts back to less emotional and sensitive levels, although the topics discussed may be just as relevant. During this phase, the researcher may provide advice, validation or information (Johnson & Rowlands, 2012) to the participant without interrupting or influencing the storytelling flow. Since conversations involve collaboration between the participant and the researcher, Johnson and Rowlands (2012) argue that the researcher should engage in reciprocity. Researchers may share with the participant their own beliefs, feelings and reflections on the topic of conversation. Reciprocity occurred throughout some of the conversations, and once some of the conversations had ended and the audio recorder turned off. I was asked my thoughts on the NGNs, such as whether I thought they should 'come to ICU'. I spoke to some participants, explaining my thoughts and experiences as well as sharing knowledge of existing ICU transition/education models.

 As part of the *emergence* phase, both the participant and inquirer negotiate an exit to the conversation while achieving a level of comfort before parting (Booth & Booth, 1994). Limerick et al. (1996) suggest that research participants are active collaborators in creation of knowledge and that neither the participant nor inquirer is without power during the interview process. 'Contrary to traditional perspectives on interviewing, the researcher does not always control the closure of an interview, even after a winding down-period' (Limerick et al., 1996, p. 456). Although the researcher may attempt to exit the interview, the participant may actively resist the suggestion. One participant seemed to

resist ending the conversation. After asking whether they had anything else to add, the participant replied, 'no,' yet continued to emphasise areas she had covered previously.

Ethical considerations are just as essential at the conclusion of the conversation as they are at the start. Corbin and Morse (2003) remind us 'Qualitative interviews can be very demanding of researchers. They become involved in the story and research out of empathy to participants. In a way, they become part of the story' (p. 344). Returning the conversation to an emotional level that is less intense before ending the conversation is recommended (Corbin & Morse, 2003). Josselson (2007) advises ending the conversation positively, recognising that in some ways the ending of the interview is somewhat like ending a process in psychotherapy, where it, 'becomes important for both people to voice how they felt about the experience and to note its meaningfulness' (p. 544). I ended the conversations by thanking participants for their *gift* of time and experiences shared, and turning off the digital audio recorder. After turning off the recorder, I reminded the participants that I would be writing their tentative NAs and that they would receive a copy. I sought iterative consent to meet with them, after they had time to read and review their account; continuing the co-composition of their final NA.

3.10.7 Reflecting on Conversations

Although conversation skills may be taught in the classroom in disciplines such as social work, psychological counselling and nursing, and then subsequently transferred to research interviewing, 'Interviewing [conversation] skills seem to develop with experience' (Corbin & Morse, 2003, p. 347). As a novice researcher, I was concerned that I may not have had the required conversation skills and I wanted to ensure that I respected the *gift* that I had been given. My concerns originated from my perceived lack of experience, since I had not engaged in research conversations before commencing this NI. However, I had engaged in specific education and professional practice over my career, with a focus on debriefing, active listening, appraisal delivery and feedback skills.

Novice researchers may engage in first conversations that are awkward, with interjections and questions that interrupt storytelling flow owing to researcher uneasiness with silences and pauses. Inadvertent questions may disrupt the flow of participants' thoughts and feelings (Holloway & Freshwater, 2007). I perceived the first participant conversation to be interrupted and non-linear. I rationalised that this may have been because of the

nervousness that the participant and I both exhibited. After reflecting on the first conversation and after reading the interview transcript, I adjusted subsequent conversations, interjecting less often, using questions differently and limiting 'talking over' participants. My experience mirrored the views of Corbin and Morse (2003) who suggest novice researchers can learn from initial conversations. When the participant had left and I was alone, I turned the digital audio recorder back on and recorded my immediate reflections of the conversation process, including my own discomfort on certain aspects of my actions as a novice researcher in the conversation as well as reflections on experiences raised by the participants.

3.10.8 Transcribing Conversations

The audio-recorded conversations and my post-conversation verbal reflections were uploaded as digital files to my password-protected computer. The files were sent by 256-bit SSL encryption to a service that specialises in academic, government and legal transcriptions. The audio files were treated in the strictest confidence, with an assurance that all transcription staff and contractors had signed the company's confidentiality agreement. On receiving the transcribed files, I saved and named these using the participant's pseudonym.

I requested a legal hearing, strict verbatim transcription service. This type of transcription included every sound and vocalisation, such as 'umms' and 'aahs', interruptions when they occurred and interviewer interjections. I considered this form of transcription valuable in ensuring accuracy when composing the NAs and when seeking resonances across NAs during analysis. Additionally, Halcomb and Davidson (2006) state that the 'Existence of verbatim transcripts can be beneficial in facilitating the development of an audit trail of data [field texts] analysis by supervisors or independent persons' (p. 40)

Once I received the transcript, I checked for transcription errors to ensure accuracy of the transcript. This involved listening to the audio recording while simultaneously reading the transcript. This was a lengthy process and involved listening to sections of transcripts many times. The transcription service had highlighted (via time stamps) potential inaccuracies or audio that was less clear in transcription. The highlighted sections were listened to repeatedly until transcription accuracy was ensured. However, several

potential inaccuracies could not be resolved by this method and were highlighted for review and consideration by the individual participants.

Owing to the use of terms, acronyms and jargon highly specific to the ICU context, there were unavoidable errors in the transcript. My in-depth knowledge of the ICU context and medical acronyms ensured errors were noted and resolved. For example, VLAD was changed to LVAD and VECMO was changed to V-A ECMO (see Glossary).

3.10.9 Composing Interim Field Texts

Working within the three-dimensional NI space, field texts are embedded within the research relationship. Either alone, or with the participants, field texts are shaped into interim research texts. Composing interim research texts allows inquirers to continue to engage in relational ways with the participants, offering opportunities to co-compose and negotiate meanings. The process of returning interim texts to the participants, for further engagement and negotiation of unfolding narrative threads of experience, is a central component of the composition of research texts in NI (Clandinin, 2013).

My field texts were the recorded digital audio files of conversations (including my Narrative Beginnings Account and my reflections post conversations), my reflexive journal and notes taken during meetings with my supervisors. By reading and re-reading the field texts, I formed an initial perception of what was contained within the texts, in relation to the three-dimensional NI space.

3.10.10 Composing Tentative Narrative Accounts

Narrative Inquiry researchers frequently engage in writing a variety of interim texts (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). These texts exist between the field texts and the final thesis. They are shared, negotiated and co-composed with participants. I chose to name the interim texts, 'tentative NAs'. Clandinin (2013) used this term, when showcasing exemplars of interim texts, in the textbook, Engaging in Narrative Inquiry.

After resolving errors in the transcripts, I started to compose the tentative NAs. I then began the process of listening to the audio of the conversation while reading a hard copy of each transcript. The purpose of listening to, and hearing, each person's digital audio transcripts while reading the transcript was to facilitate immersion in the field notes and start the process of analysis (T. Kelly & Howie, 2007; Kim, 2015; Law & Chan, 2015).

Thinking temporally about the conversations between the participants and me, the backwards and forwards processing that occurred allowed me to better understand the participants' stories of experience and of the context in which it was situated. Lugones (1987) explored concepts of 'worlds', how 'We inhabit "worlds" and travel across them and keep all the memories' (p. 14). Lugones (1987) suggests that it is possible to move into and between worlds as our lives unfold. '… As we "'world'-travel across "worlds" we construct images of who we are and what we are about as well as images of who others are and what they are about' (Clandinin, 2013, p. 59). I wanted to '"*world*"-*travel*' (Lugones, 1987, p. 11) to the time and place where the conversations had occurred.

Working within the three-dimensional space, I made comments in the margins of the hard copy of the transcript, writing down my thoughts regarding *temporality, sociality* and *place*. When re-reading the transcript, I was attentive to other characters and stories that I had not listened to as carefully on the initial reviews. These components were highlighted in the margins as possible plotlines and narrative threads.

Following Mishler's (1995) 'Models of Narrative Analysis: A Typology', I used the 'Reconstructing the Told From the Telling' (p. 95) method and began writing tentative NAs for each participant. Since the conversations with the participants were not always linear, with participants telling stories that zig-zagged depending on what was being perceived as important at that one moment (Kim, 2015), I reordered the storylines from the *tellings* gained in the conversations with the participant into coherent tentative NAs. I did this by using a temporal and thematic grouping in a way that I hoped would make sense to both the participant and reader. The effects of *place* on the narrative and the complexity, contradictions, tensions, possible plotlines and emotion inherent to each participant's story were captured in the tentative NAs (Law & Chan, 2015). Relational aspects between the participant and me were made visible throughout the accounts. To remain immersed and engaged in the conversation, I chose to type each of the participant's words, rather than copying and pasting sections of transcript into the tentative NAs. As a researcher, I found this to be another way of remaining attentive to participants' stories of experience. Since NI begins and ends with respect for the lived experience, the NAs predominantly consisted of participants' own words. The reconstructed NAs at this stage were still tentative. Eventually, after further collaboration with participants, the NAs became the 'narrative(s) for further analysis' (Mishler, 1995, p. 95).

After composing each tentative NA, I reread each individual account. By *world-traveling* back to the time of conversation, it became apparent that meanings that had appeared clear at the time of conversation were now ambiguous. Additionally, there had been errors in the transcript, marked by time stamps, that could not be resolved through repeated listening to the digital audio files and reading of the transcripts. I was also concerned that despite using pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality and defining information such as career length, previous place of work and qualifications broadly, readers might be able to deduce the participant's identity. Concerns within the account were highlighted using red text.

Downey and Clandinin (2010) reveal the importance of understanding narrative coherence when progressing from field texts to interim accounts and the thesis. It is tempting to compose 'smooth' texts, intimating lives that are also narratively coherent and smooth. Narrative smoothing is a method used by researchers to make participants' stories coherent and interesting to the reader (Kim, 2015). Alternatively, narrative smoothing can be considered problematic since this method involves acts of omission. For example, narrative smoothing might involve the selective reporting of field texts or the removal of context owing to the researchers' assumption that what was apparent to them will also be apparent to readers (Kim, 2015). Clandinin (2013) suggests that NI researchers need to make visible the ways in which researchers and participants, successfully and sometimes not so successfully, struggle for coherence. In the composing and co-composing of the interim NAs and thesis, researchers must, 'make visible the multiplicity, as well as the narrative coherence and lack of narrative coherence, of our lives, the lives of participants, and the lives we co-compose in the midst of our narrative inquiries' (p. 49).

3.10.11 Reviewing Tentative Narrative Accounts with Participants

Being mindful of how relational ethics permeates NI, I had extended invitations to each participant to continue to collaborate and to co-compose their final NA (Clandinin, 2013). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) articulate a poignant moment in NI—the experience of sharing research texts with the participants. From their own experience, they suggest that there is always concern that sharing the research text will alter the working relationship between the participant and researcher. Fear behind the concern may originate from losing a research site, to the research document possibly upsetting the participant or losing a

friendship or respect between participant and researcher. The sense of continually moving backwards and forwards between living in the midst of, and being in, the field, field texts and the research texts is present in NI. Awareness of these considerations returns NI researchers back to the ongoing negotiation of relationships with participants. Knowing the participants personally and professionally, I was anxious about sharing the tentative NAs with the participants because I wanted to represent their experiences accurately in the accounts (Clandinin, 2013).

When each tentative NA was complete, I printed a hard copy that contained a cover page with the participant's pseudonym and returned it personally to the participants to continue the co-composition of their accounts. All participants requested a hard copy of their individual tentative NAs, rather than a soft copy. After giving them their copy, I suggested a time and date to meet again to discuss their tentative account. I expressed my desire for them to read the tentative NAs and note any concerns, misrepresentations, errors or requests to add or clarify information contained in the account. I emphasised that I valued their story of their experiences and wanted to represent it accurately.

Guided by Clandinin (2013), I had a copy of the tentative NA identical to the one that I had given each participant. The use of red text to highlight sections about which I was unsure gave a sense of its 'in-the-making' format. All participants had bought along their copy of the tentative account to the meeting. I read the entire tentative account with each individual participant, noting the sections that I thought were unclear, asking the participant to clarify and confirm my interpretations. I had a pen and made immediate changes to my hard copy as they were suggested by the participant. I incorporated all the marked suggestions in their copy of the account. I made a point of asking whether I had accurately represented their experiences in the tentative NAs. Each participant had the opportunity to continue the conversation, adding other stories to their narrative. I explicitly asked whether they wanted to add anything else. None wished to discuss other stories.

When co-composing the NA, minimal narrative smoothing (see section 3.10.10) was used. I removed some repeated utterances, such as 'um, um, um' from participants' quotations. A participant requested that I change 'At least if they've done some ward work, then they're learning time management and about drugs and, and, and, um, yeah' to 'At least if they've done some ward work, then they're learning time management and

about drugs'. I acquiesced for two reasons: Since we were co-composing the account, I felt a relational ethical obligation to honour her request, and I believed that it did not alter the meaning or context of the statement.

Reading excerpts of transcripts may be embarrassing and discomforting for participants (Hagens, Dobrow, & Chafe, 2009; Mero-Jaffe, 2011). Of interest, all participants, including myself as the inquirer, voiced or felt discomfort at the poor grammar reflected in our speech patterns in the tentative NAs. During our meeting, some participants expressed their discomfort, saying 'Do I really sound like that?' One participant requested that I 'smooth' one section of text to counteract the perception of poor grammar. The participant SRNs made comments and suggestions and highlighted perceived errors in their individual tentative NAs. I was appreciative of their time and attention to detail, believing it to be evidence of the truly collaborative nature of the NAs' co-composition.

During this stage, a participant requested that I change her pseudonym to another since it might be attributed to her by deductive reasoning. The participant elected to use a pseudonym of her choosing. This pseudonym was changed in all research texts and field notes. Another participant was unable to provide clarity to a section of transcript. Although the meaning had seemed clear during the conversation, neither the participant or myself could provide adequate clarity to this section of discussion. I made the decision to remove these sentences from the tentative NAs.

One participant queried why I had included certain descriptions of the research process in the tentative account. Once I explained that I thought they were evidence of participant trust, collaboration and a 'flat' power differential, the participant agreed to their inclusion in the NAs. The same participant, after reviewing her stories, chose to change some phrases to more accurately represent her meaning. When we were sitting together in a locked and private office space, she shared some of her reflections when reading the tentative account. She realised that when talking about the NGNs, she collectively called them, 'they'. She had written in the margins, 'They [nurses] doesn't sound good'. It seemed to concern her that she spoke of the nurses collectively—that maybe this was disrespectful. Nonetheless, this quotation remained unchanged in the NAs. One participant, on reading and affirming the account, commented that it captured her experience correctly. She thanked me for writing the account, wished me well and offered encouragement regarding the completion of the thesis.

The final participant raised an ethical tension. I was uncomfortable with some sections of this participant's story since I thought it possible that readers of the NAs may be able to identify the participant via deductive reasoning. Kaiser (2012) discusses the confidentiality risks associated with conducting research within a group or community. Owing to unique occupational, geographical and other characteristics, social groups can be identifiable to outsiders. In addition, members within these groups may be able to recognise themselves and others in final research accounts (Kaiser, 2012). I felt that some plotlines within this participant's story might reveal the participant's identity. Conversely, the plotline seemed essential when thinking about the commonplaces of *temporality* and *place*. When the participant and I sat down to continue the co-composition of the tentative NAs, we discussed this tension. The tension was negotiated from my perspective as a researcher wanting to ensure the participant's confidentiality and from the participant's perspective, who felt that her career trajectory, although potentially an identifier, was an important aspect of her story and gave insight into her experiences. After much reflection, I chose to respect the wishes of the participant and honour her narrative authority. I included this plotline in the final NAs (see Kath's NAs).

3.10.12 Composing my Narrative Beginnings

The 'Narrative Beginnings Account' (see Appendix C) allowed me to consider myself in relation to the research phenomena, participants and research literature (Clandinin & Caine, 2012). I chose to write my autobiographical NA in the form of a 'Narrative Beginnings Account' much later in the research process. This delay was owing to the time taken to ponder and resolve the puzzle of how to compose my account and where my account might be made visible in the thesis.

Ultimately, I chose to self-interview. World travelling back to when I started my postgraduate study, I recollected some of the questions I had been asked by my supervisors. I answered these remembered questions aloud, digitally recording my response. The digital file was sent to the same transcription service to be transcribed verbatim. Using the three-dimensional approach, along with Mishler's (1995) 'Reconstructing the told from the *telling*', I sought potential plotlines as I wrote my own 'Narrative Beginnings Account'.

This inquiry's *place*, the ICU, is integral to the participants' and my stories. Each ICU has its own culture and its own area of medical speciality and is situated in its own organisational and political milieu. The specificities of this ICU affect, and are integral to, the stories that the participants and I told. Therefore, these were made visible in the thesis (see section 1.2).

3.10.13 Analysing the Narrative Accounts

The participants' finalised co-composed NAs were the source of the 'narrative(s) for further analysis' (Mishler, 1995, p. 95). Narrative Inquiry methodology begins and ends with respect for ordinary lived experience. Since NI researchers study experience as story, I chose to leave the NAs 'whole' (see Appendix H), respecting and honouring the participants' voices and stories of experiences (Wang, 2017b). I did not recreate the stories of the participants or use other narrative representations once I had completed the thematic analysis.

There are numerous methods of analysing field texts, although Gergen (2004) suggests an 'analytical method of deconstructing stories into coded piles' may challenge the research's aims (p. 272). Narrative Inquiry research texts do not present final answers to research questions in the thesis. However, I did aim to present to readers of the thesis the SRNs' stories of experience so that they may engage the readers, encouraging a reimagining and a reconsideration of the ways in which they practice (Clandinin, 2013).

Thematic analysis was employed to identify and analyse the resonant threads. An active participant in the process, I sought to present a rich thematic description of the threads. The threads within the NAs were identified inductively. A semantic approach was adopted, with threads identified 'within the explicit or surface meanings of the data [field texts]' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). There was a progression in the analytic process: from a description phase, whereby the threads were organised and summarised to show patterns in the semantic content, through to an interpretation phase, where the significance of the threads and the implications and broader meanings were placed in relation to the existing literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The thematic analysis process used in this research was guided by the six phases method outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). These phases are titled: *Familiarising yourself with your data* [field texts], *Generating initial codes*, *Searching for themes*, *Reviewing themes*

[threads], *Defining and naming themes* [threads] and *Producing the report* [thesis] (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). The analysis followed a recursive approach, with movement through the phases happening in a 'back and forth manner'.

In phase one, *familiarising yourself with the data*, I immersed myself in the NAs. The immersion was a time-consuming process of reading and re-reading the NAs and *world-traveling* back to the time and place where my conversations with the participant occurred. During this phase, I hand wrote notes in the margins of the hardcopy of the individual NAs, noting an initial list of ideas and points of interest. In practice, I had already started contemplating some initial thoughts and possible threads since this phase was similar to the process used when writing the tentative and final NAs.

The second phase, generating initial codes, involved the creation of initial plotlines from the NAs. The plotlines identified aspects of the NAs that resonated when considering the phenomenon under inquiry. There was a systematic approach taken to each NA. At this stage, I had moved back to a soft copy of the NAs. Each line of text was read and potential plotlines were inserted in the margins. The plotlines were systematically organised into groups, with verbatim field texts extracts exemplifying each plotline. Each section of verbatim field tests was identified with the participant's name and line numbers from the NAs. The verbatim extracts use this referencing and are presented in the Findings and Discussion Chapters. This was a manual process; software was not used because of the time required to learn to use a software program effectively and accurately. I created as many plotlines as possible so as not to limit potential threads and retained as much of the surrounding field text extracts that I considered relevant to maintain context. As noted by Braun and Clarke (2006), field texts contain inconsistencies, and 'It is important to retain accounts that depart from the dominant story in the analysis' (p. 89). The tensions and inconsistencies were not 'smoothed' in the analysis process.

Phase three, searching for themes [threads], began when I had collated and created plotlines across all NAs. The focus of analysis moved back to a broader view. The plotlines and relevant field texts extracts were sorted into potential threads. The plotlines were combined and reduced and were placed into electronic textboxes, which allowed the creation of an initial thread map. This thread map made visible the relationships between plotlines, threads and overarching threads. A revisit of the field text extracts was required to ascertain whether the threads should be discarded, separated, merged or refined (Braun

& Clarke, 2006). This phase ended with a collection of potential threads and overarching threads, along with the NA extracts that supported them.

Phase four, reviewing the themes [threads], involved a refinement of the threads, which occurred in two levels. The first level of refinement occurred when all the collated extracts for each thread were read and consideration was given as to whether they formed a consistent pattern. Since the threads were consistent with the NA extracts, a similar process was repeated for all the NAs. The NAs were reread to determine whether the potential thread map truthfully echoed the meanings in the NAs. The re-reading allowed for missing additional NAs extracts within threads to be reviewed and new plotlines to be added. The reviewing and refining process continued until there was a robust thread map (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase five, defining and naming the themes [threads], involved defining and refining each thread and then writing a detailed analysis of each thread and overarching thread. Each thread's NA extracts were organised into an internally consistent and coherent account, with accompanying analysis. The analysis also identified the story that each thread told and considered how it fits into the broader discussion being told in relation to the research puzzle. At the end of this phase, there was a clear definition of each thread, along with a sense of how they resonate across all NAs.

The final phase, 'producing the report' was writing the thematic analysis for the thesis. Selected vivid and compelling quotations from the NAs (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which captured the essence of the thread, were related back to the analysis, to the research puzzle and to the literature. These vivid examples provided evidence of the threads' prevalence within the NAs to convincingly illustrate the analysis in relation to the research puzzle (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

I was confident I had completed the collection of field texts, and co-composed and negotiated the NAs with the participants as guided by Clandinin and Connelly (2000). I then transparently analysed the NAs following Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach. The completed NAs are presented in Appendix H; I finalised phase six by producing this thesis.

In the next chapter, the findings are presented in the form of main overarching threads containing minor threads that add depth of meaning to the main threads. Each thread is further elucidated using participant quotations from the NAs.