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Positioning the case to tell the story: developing the narrative or presentational account

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Abstract

This paper is drawn from a doctoral study (in its final stages) about the use and adoption of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to enhance the face-to-face teaching by six academic staff, who represent different disciplines and different campus locations, in a large, regional university in Australia. A collective case study was adopted as the framework for the study, and field data comprised semi-structured interviews, curriculum guides, teaching and learning resources, websites, and included results of a Teaching Practices Inventory completed by each of the research participants.

Case study is a popular choice of qualitative researchers. There are numerous examples in the literature of case study as the vehicle for examining issues concerning teachers' use of new technologies in teaching and learning. This paper situates the research study in the qualitative, interpretative research paradigm, and matches the choice of case as the research strategy to accepted characteristics of good case studies. The focus of the paper then moves to the practical, yet difficult problem faced by the researcher of ways of presenting the case, seeking a balance between the demands of prescribed, social scientific writing for an academic audience, and the need to create texts that are interesting, vital and that "make a difference"(Richardson, 2003). Using a sample case from the study, the paper examines approaches to constructing meaning from the field data to create the narrative or presentational account and, ultimately, the research text.

Introduction

I have always been interested in people's stories. In childhood, I was captivated by lives of kings and queens as interesting historical figures and as an adult I enjoy reading the lives of people expressed in biography and autobiography. In the early 1980s, after I had been teaching for over a decade, I was drawn to inform my practice through teachers' stories about their teaching, gaining inspiration from the work of Freema Elbaz's case study of a single Canadian high school teacher called Sarah (Elbaz, 1983). Through an entire text and a single case, the voice of a lone teacher provided explanation, interpretation and her understanding of educational principles in an engaging narrative about her teaching.

This paper recounts a methodological dilemma that I struggle with in the dissertation study that forms part of my Education Doctoral folio. My study focuses on the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) by academic staff to enhance their face-to-face teaching. The definition of ICTs used in this study is a broad one implying a wide scope of technology use defined by Hardy (2000) as "the range of tools and techniques relating to computer-based hardware and software; to communications including directed and broadcast; to information sources such as CD-ROM and the Internet, and to associated technologies such as robots, video conferencing and digital TV" (p. 3).

In this paper, I provide some background to my doctoral study, situate this study in a qualitative and interpretative framework, and outline the research design and the chosen research strategy, the case study. I then illustrate how I am starting to analyse and interpret the cases. Moving between the field text (transcripts, course documentation, and coding iterations) and the early drafting of the research text, I face issues associated with presenting the case: balancing the requirements of academic writing and the tradition associated with the case study, with my interest in creating texts that are interesting, alive, and as described by Richardson (2003) "make a difference" (p. 501).

Background

The broad intention of my doctoral study is to examine how individual teachers use information and communication technologies (ICTs) in specific contexts as teaching tools to enhance or supplement the face-to-face classroom experience of their students. My focus is on the 'early adopters' of ICTs in a single institution. The term 'early adopters' is derived from Rogers (2003) text *Diffusion of Innovation*,[1] originally published in the 1960s in a different technological era to the present, and yet an enduring theoretical framework for explaining adoption of information and communication technologies in higher education. I conducted this research in order to make a contribution to the knowledge and understanding of the way information and communication technologies are being used in flexible delivery contexts. The site of the research is Regional University, a major provider of off-campus education in Australia.

In the late 1990s my interest in undertaking doctoral research that focused on teachers' adoption of ICTs as an enhancement to face-to-face teaching in a post-secondary context was stimulated by the challenges I faced in my workplace leading a team of lecturing staff making the move to online enhancement of campus-based teaching. My interest in the blended mode of teaching involving a combination of ICTs with face-to-face teaching continued to grow and sharpen in focus, accompanied by a change in my employment from a private training provider context to a higher education context in 2000. As I turned to the literature to seek confirmation of my chosen area of study, I found multiple instances of evidence of the need for research in the area of how teachers in universities engage with the new technologies in their classrooms (Goodyear, 2002; Lewis, 1999; Windschitl, 1998; Willliams, 2002). In addition, I was attracted to publications (Taylor, Lopez, & Quadrelli, 1996; Thompson & Holt, 1996) based on academics' stories of their experiences in moving online and their responses to challenges presented by the impact of the new educational technologies on

[1]This text is currently in its fifth edition. Rogers' theory of individual innovativeness suggests that people are inherently more or less predisposed to innovative behaviour. Individual adoption rates of innovation are usually distributed along a bell-shaped curve and can be grouped under five categories: innovators, representing 2.5% of the population; early adopters, representing 13.5% of the population; early majority, representing 34% of the population; late majority, representing 34% of the population, and laggards, representing 2.5% of the population.

higher education institutions in Australia. The interview was the primary way of collecting field data in these publications, and the words of interviewees were used extensively to illustrate particular themes and issues arising from the field text.

Locating the study in a qualitative and interpretative research framework

This study is located within a qualitative and interpretative research framework. Several authors address the characteristics of qualitative research (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Tesch, 1992). Denzin and Lincoln (2003) trace the complex history of qualitative research, offering an "initial, generic definition" against the backdrop of traditions and movements framing the landscape of this approach:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self…qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.(p.4)

A checklist of a "good" qualitative study (Creswell, 1998, pp. 20-22) supports the definition provided above: the use of rigorous data collection methods; the use of a tradition of inquiry (one of these being the case study); the identification of a single problem or issue that the researcher wants to understand; writing persuasively so that the reader can experience 'being there'; using verification procedures to ensure the accuracy of the account; moving through various iterations or layers of understanding in analysis; and finally, engaging the reader as the story is told.

Within the broad expanse of qualitative research, there are several paradigms or frameworks that guide and structure the researcher's action. One of these, the interpretative paradigm assumes the following (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003):

- The existence of multiple realities that people have constructed;
- The co-creation of understanding between researcher and participant;
- The use of methods and procedures that are available in a naturalistic or real-world setting;
- An emphasis on gathering and interpreting data from a subjective (researcher's) position;
- An emphasis on the shaping of the research findings by the researcher's background, intentions and experiences; and
- An emphasis on credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research findings

My study falls within this qualitative, interpretative framework as its objectives are to research teachers' use of information and communication technologies in a university setting. I collected data from face-to-face interviews and from curriculum documentation and websites and other resources provided to me by the participants in the study. I have interpreted this data through the literature relevant to the study and through my own understanding of the teacher's role from my own practice, using the participants' words from their interviews.

Research design

The research design of my study consists of three stages, each of which is described below: - focusing the study, entering the field, and writing the research text or presenting the case. Although research design is often described in the literature as a set of linear stages planned by the researcher, the reality is that once a study is focused and data gathering begins, there is movement back and forth between the stages of the design. This is through re-examination of the research questions, adjustments to interview questions and/or approach and, as analysis and interpretation begins, through a continuous examination and interrogation of the data collected.

Focusing the study (Stage 1)

This stage of the research addressed design decisions at the beginning of the study - forming the questions to guide the study, determining numbers of participants, locating academic staff willing to be a part of the study, gaining informed consent from those that agreed to participate, and selecting appropriate research strategies. Three questions focused my study at this stage, which were subsequently broken down into a series of questions to guide the semi-structured interviews held with participants:

- How are information and communication technologies being used by academic staff at the university to enhance face-to-face teaching?
- How are these technologies influencing the adoption of flexible delivery and flexible learning?
- How are these staff measuring the response of students to these uses of information and communication technology?

The site for the study, the university I worked in, was determined by the nature of the professional doctorate orientation that encouraged research of the researcher's workplace. I sought to choose participants who were representative of 'early adopters' of information and communication technologies because they had incorporated the online environment into their face-to-face teaching at an *early* stage in Regional University's adoption of flexible modes of delivery using ICTs. I was able to identify these staff through discussions with Heads of School and with educational designers situated in schools. In addition, a university-wide teaching and learning forum on converged learning environments provided me with an opportunity to review the work of some of these early adopters. In order to gain in-depth understanding of the ways in which ICTs are being used as enhancement tools in face-to-face teaching, I opted for purposeful sampling of six participants, that is, their study would illuminate the issues raised in the research questions (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002). My choice of sample was determined by the need to provide a spread of representative participants across multiple campuses and disciplines rather than a design to achieve a gender balance. Five of the six participants in the study were female. Although the gendered nature of ICT use by academic staff has been examined (Clegg, Conrad, & Tan, 2000), the focus of my study is not on a feminist perspective but on a sample of representative innovators. Trust and rapport was established with participants at the beginning of the study and interaction maintained throughout the data collection period by regular email and occasional meetings when visiting particular campuses of the university.

The teachers

The participants who agreed to be a part of my study included teaching staff from four of the five faculties at Regional University - Arts, Education, Health Studies and Science and Agriculture. Helen (Case 1) was an experienced academic with over 32 years of teaching in

secondary and higher education institutions and a passion for ensuring that young teachers are well prepared to use technologies in the classrooms of the 21st century. Stephanie (Case 2) was a young, career academic exposed early in her teaching to the use of technologies in science teaching at one of Australia's research universities. Elizabeth (Case 3) was a textile artist and experienced teacher in secondary, adult education and higher education contexts for whom the new technologies had breathed life into the teaching of art history. Philippa (Case 4) was an award winning teacher who used ICTs in a variety of ways, including fostering communication between students scattered around the globe on clinical placements. Sharron (Case 5) was an enthusiastic science teacher facing the challenges of teaching in Regional University's technology-focused campus who made extensive use of CD-ROM to enhance the learning experiences of mature-age nursing students. Finally, James (Case 6), an experienced computer teacher, used technologies to bring the on and off-campus students studying the same two subjects closer together and is the only one of the six teachers in the study that confronted the challenges of converged learning environments on a daily basis.

Finally, I chose the case study as the research strategy. Case study is well defined in the literature (Bassey, 1999; Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1998; Sturman, 1997; Yin, 1993). Table 1 below shows a summary of ten case studies from the literature about the impact of ICT on teaching, focusing on data collection and reporting methods. The most common method of reporting case research in these studies is by thematic discussion supported by quotations from interview data. An article by Hara and Kling (1999) from this table stands apart from the others in its use of multiple ways of reporting the case study data. These researchers used thematic analysis to illustrate and discuss findings, using data from interviews with students and teachers, joined by the researchers' voice in a commentary section.

Table 1: Summary of case studies

Author	Description of study	Data collection methods	Reporting the case
Anderson & Joerg (1996)	The early use of Internet tools to support classroom instruction	Focus group Interview Questionnaire	Discussion of questionnaire results under general headings No use of quotations from interview data
Berge (1996)	Teachers' perceptions of their teaching in online settings	Interview	Use of large sections of interview transcript with summary overview
Canning (2002)	Examination of a collaborative, technology-based work-based vocational education program in Scottish higher education	Interview	Thematic discussion supported by direct quotations from transcripts
Fox & Hermann (2000)	The costs of moving online in terms of the management of change and the attitudes of online technology users towards the use of online approaches	Email discussion Interview Reviews of online sites	Case accounts called 'stances' supported by direct quotations from transcripts
Goodyear (2002)	The work of virtual education tutors in the online classroom	Interview Transcript analysis of online discussions Video observation of tutor working online	Discussion under themes and use of direct transcript material
Hara & Kling (1999)	Students' frustrations with web-based distance education	Document analysis Interview Observation	Description with narratives drawn from transcripts as illustration, followed by researcher commentary supported by literature
Housego & Freeman (2000)	Meaningful uses of learning management systems for teaching and learning	Analysis of authors' own teaching experiences Anecdotal evidence of teachers in various situations	Fictional case accounts created as individual portrayals of range of responses to challenge of using ICTs
Tearle, Davis, & Birbeck (1998)	IT-assisted teaching and learning in higher education in the UK	Interview Observation Questionnaire	Case reports summarizing data obtained on individual institutions with no direct use of transcript material
Thompson & Holt (1996)	The impact of espoused views of pedagogy by academic staff on their use of ICTs	Interview	Individual case reports drawing on transcripts occasionally
Wolcott (1993)	Instructional planning by academic staff using ICTs in distance education	Document analysis Interview Observation	Discussion of results under categories supported by direct quotations from transcripts.

By the end of Stage 1 of the research design process, the doctoral study had been defined as a collective (multiple) educational case study, focusing on six participants or cases. Drawing on the characteristics of the case study (Bassey, 1999; Creswell, 1998; Sturman, 1997), I

show how the study as designed matches these characteristics of a case study in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Characteristics of case study matched to research study

Case study characteristics (Bassey, 1999; Creswell, 1998; Sturman, 1997)	Research study
A bounded system. The case can be a program, event, activity, individual	Academic staff , early adopters of ICTs in face-to-face context, working within the university are the individual case
Bounded by time and place	Data collection undertaken between July 2001 to December 2002 Study located in Regional University context
Draws upon multiple sources of information: observations, interviews, documentation, electronic media, literature (journals, texts, reports, etc.)	Sources of information in the study included: ▪ Two interviews with each participant followed up by email, telephone and face to face discussions ▪ Data comprising course materials such as subject outlines, quizzes, access to publishers' websites used by students and staff ▪ Subject websites, teacher's personal websites ▪ ICT tools utilised - eg. Discussion boards, chat, CD-ROM, online learning journals, MOOs. The latter stands for Multi-user Object Orientated, a text-based virtual reality site that allows users to create characters, objects, and rooms. Users can interact synchronously. (Haughey & Anderson, 1998). ▪ Literature relating to teaching and learning with ICTs
The case as intrinsic or instrumental. An intrinsic case, because of its uniqueness, requires study to increase understanding of it as a particular case. An instrumental case is examined to illustrate a particular issue.	Instrumental case focusing on the issue of enhancement of face-to-face classes using ICTs
Analysis type: holistic or embedded. Holistic analysis involves examination of the entire case. Embedded analysis involves examination of a specific aspect of the case.	Holistic type of analysis is used for each of the cases, as data from the entire case is analysed.
Products of the case study can include a description of the case, analysis of the themes or issues, interpretation of the cases	Portrait of each teacher provided (description) Major themes or issues from each case analysed, eg. change in teacher role (within case analysis) Interpretation of the themes within and across cases linked to themes in literature relating to online teaching. This is called cross-case analysis.
Purposeful sampling. This involves selecting information-rich cases central to the purpose of the inquiry. There are different strategies for purposeful sampling.	Cases selected because they represented a range of disciplines and campuses amongst staff considered as 'early adopters'. Sampling done with constraints faced by the researcher.
Action research Educational Ethnographic Evaluative	This study is an educational case study, located in the field of educational research, designed to enhance understanding of educational action (Bassey 1999; Sturman 1997)

Entering the field (Stage 2)

Stage 2 provided me with an opportunity to test certain questions in the interview schedule, examine how documents collected during this stage related to the interview data and how they might shape the study, and make adjustments to data collection arrangements I had determined in the previous stage. I began Stage 2 with an initial 'pilot' interview with one of the six participants. This process showed that it would be necessary for me to undertake *two* interviews with each of the participants, one with an overarching focus on the pedagogy associated with the use of ICT tools, and a second interview that focused on aspects of flexible delivery. For both interviews I used a semi-structured interview schedule which I sent to each participant well in advance of the interview. I tape recorded all interviews on the campus where each participant was located, usually in the individual's office, and, occasionally, on other campus locations such as a quiet room in the library or an empty staff room at the end of the teaching day. Kvale (1996) advises the choices available to the researcher regarding the form the transcripts of interview can take – verbatim transcripts that include pauses, emphases on intonation, laughter, etc or transcripts which summarise parts of the interview that contain little relevant information. I chose to transcribe all interviews verbatim, returning the transcripts to each participant, and seeking agreement to the record of interview. Once I had received endorsement of the transcripts, I made a summary of the issues arising from each interview, noting particular statements, phrases, etc. that illustrated particular issues. I then began an initial coding of the data using NVivo software, seeking clarification occasionally from participants of various points or issues in the interview data by email or telephone. Now, as I move through Stage 3 of the research design, my focus is on how to best describe, analyse, and interpret each case.

Presenting the case (Stage 3)

This stage involves moving through the processes of description, analysis and interpretation, (Wolcott, 1994), turning the field text into a research text. Questions arise as to how best to present the data, where and when to draw directly from the field data for evidence, and how and where to make interpretative commentary. There are many ways of presenting the case. Stake (1998) argues that "it is the researcher who decides what is the case's own story, or at least what of the case's own story he or she will report…[*the results*] may be the case's own story, but it is the researcher's dressing of the case's own story" (p. 93). Patton (2002, p. 450) presents three steps in the process of constructing case studies: assembling the raw data, which is all the information collected about the case itself, constructing a case record, a condensing of the raw case data that has been organised, classified and edited into a manageable file, and, finally, writing the case narrative, presenting the narrative either chronologically or thematically, sometimes combining the two. Challenged by the metaphor of the researcher as a crafter of stories, a weaver of a skilfully crafted tale (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Patton, 2002), I turned to the area of narrative and story to seek guidance in ways of presenting each case.

The meanings of narrative

Narrative as a term has a range of meanings. In its broadest sense, it can mean the interview data, field notes and transcriptions that make up qualitative research projects (Polkinghorne, 1995). Narrative can also refer to the final case report, or research text, that is produced (Bassey 1999). Clandinin and Connolly (2000) wrote about the *narrative inquiry* approach to research and the constructing of research texts, particularly in relation to teachers and teaching. Casey (1995) focused on *narrative research* that includes a range of research practices such as life writing, personal narratives, narrative interviews, life stories, oral history and ethnopsychology. Zeller (1995) concentrated on *narration*, a narrative writing

strategy used by dramatic novelists as a way of solving reporting problems in case studies. Examples of devices from the 'new journalism' open to the case reporter included characterisation through dialogue, rendering of details, interior monologues and composite characterisation.

A more limiting definition of narrative refers to the story. Stories consist of "events, characters and settings arranged in a temporal sequence implying both causality and significance" (Carter 1993, p. 6). They are also often used as a way of telling about a person's life experiences (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). In the interpretative tradition, stories present a way of explaining phenomena. In constructing stories from interview data, the researcher is imposing structure and meaning on events, engaging in interpretative processes (Riesmann, 1993), "dressing the case's own story" (Stake 1998, p. 93). Examples of stories constructed from data relating to research of teachers' use of ICTs include Fox and Hermann's (2000) use of 'stances' or case accounts of variation in teachers practices and ways of thinking about technologies, and Housego and Freeman's (2000) fictional stories that were a composite portrayal of a range of responses by teachers to the challenges of using ICTs. While my interest in teachers' stories may have stimulated me to undertake my doctoral study, I find myself confined in the way I can use stories to present each case. This is due largely to the limitations of the data-gathering techniques that I used which did not specifically request the research participants to 'tell a story' in response to my questions. I also did not undertake participant observation, which would have enabled me to present participants with a further set of data from the initial interviews, which could stimulate dialogue about similarities and differences found.

In seeking to present the case, firstly, I have constructed a 'case record' (Patton, 2002) or overview of each of the cases from the interview data, using the third-person researcher's voice. Then, as I reviewed my initial coding of the interview data and re-read interview transcripts particular themes in the data emerged. I used a form of story, the vignette, to produce initial, interpretive accounts to illustrate these themes. Vignettes are described by Ely, Vinz, Anzul, and Downing (1997) as:

> narrative investigations that carry within them an interpretation of the person, experience or situation that the writer describes…vignettes are compact sketches that can be used to introduce characters, foreshadow events and analyses to come, highlight particular findings or summarize a particular theme or issue in analysis and interpretation (p. 70).

Vignettes are compiled and crafted by the researcher from the field data. Ely et al. (1997) argued that as an interpretative tool, vignettes provide an opportunity for the researcher to question how the participants in the study are being represented, and what form the final research text might take. Bassey (1999) also advised the use of vignette in compiling the case report, describing it as "a short descriptive piece that crystallises an important aspect of a case" (p. 88).

To illustrate my approach to analysis and interpretation, I provide the example of Helen (Case 1). The case record – Helen's portrait – is limited to broad details that I have organised under headings or categories drawn from the interview data, taking care not to include too much detail that will be discussed later in a thematic analysis. Then I present one of the themes common across all the cases in the study – 'talking about pedagogy' – and show how

Helen as a teacher created a learning context for her students, introduced them to the technology tools they will be using in studying her subjects, and how she saw her role in online discussion forums. The vignettes that I compiled are used to give Helen a voice, to explain the pedagogic practices she has adopted. I also show how I am trying to integrate these themes with the wider literature that addresses pedagogical practice in relation to ICT tools, and draw conclusions about an individual academic's teaching practices.

Early analysis and interpretation – Case 1

Case Record - Helen

Background

Helen's teaching career stretches across 32 years, beginning as a high school English and History teacher but also including teaching experience in primary and early childhood education contexts, teaching in prisons and in a Folk High School in Denmark. Her academic career began in 1979 in a College of Advanced Education, later to become a University. She had a brief stint in the mid 1990s teaching in a university in the southern United States. Helen completed her doctorate in 1998 and moved to her current position in Regional University in 1999. Most of her workload was teaching on-campus students at one of Regional University's major campuses.

Teaching organisation

Helen currently teaches two on-campus subjects which are web-enhanced. One of these focuses on family, the broader society and social policy. The second is an education research subject. Helen plans and coordinates both these subjects and is supported by another staff member in each subject who provides content input for several weeks of the semester and helps to monitor forum postings. Both subjects have a weekly face-to-face meeting time and a scheduled computer work time, when the computer lab is booked to allow students access to computers to undertake their assigned work. Students are divided initially into small groups and work in these groups throughout the semester. The semester is only eleven teaching weeks, as students then move out into the community for their practicum work. Helen encourages the use of email for private messages to the lecturer, or between students. The subject forum, however, is used for posting of analysis and synthesis of particular topics discussed in face-to-face sessions and for dissemination by students of their group research to others in the class, with groups responding critically to other groups' work.

Learning tasks

Helen plans a variety of learning tasks for students for the face-to-face sessions, ranging from library research work, presenting workshops and/or listening to a lecture. Computer work each week is devoted to students communicating on the subject forum, emailing, doing Internet searches relevant to in-class and assignment tasks, database searching and sometimes meeting in small groups. Each student completes a print-based learning journal over the course of the semester. Entries into this journal are guided by a number of tasks set by Helen that students must complete each week. One of these tasks includes completing set readings each week so that students are prepared for the following week's tasks. This reading also provides the basis for a final, open-book examination.

The first few weeks

Helen organises the first two face-to-face sessions of semester as an introduction to the technology. In the first session she introduces students to the use of the forum, email, the chat facility, and the class listserv. In the second session Helen organises a library session run by her school's support librarian, who focuses on electronic searching, database use and resources specific to the discipline and subject. During this session students engage in a task that is related to an essay topic they have chosen, so the session has a very practical focus.

As the semester progresses

Following these two introductory sessions, Helen is available through the semester during the scheduled computer lab time each week to look at some of the students' forum postings, and respond to some. Students are encouraged to conduct web-based research on particular topics and deliver a role-play on their chosen topics during their face-to-face workshops. Helen provides extensive resources in the form of journal articles on special reserve in the library and encourages students to follow up articles and websites found in these journals. Students are encouraged to find their own articles on the Internet and distribute them to the rest of the group of students. Helen also provides them with criteria for evaluation of websites which is a task linked to one of their assessments.

Student reaction to ICTs

Evaluation of all internal subjects at Regional University is required on a rotational basis. Helen has used these mandatory subject evaluations to gain feedback from students on both subjects she teaches. She has also used the optional teaching evaluation with specific questions included at her request that gauge student reaction specifically to the use of subject forums. Helen also gains feedback from students on the broader use of ICTs through her reading of reflections on their learning students place in their learning journals on a weekly basis. These reflections have shown a shift in some students from a fear of technology at the beginning of semester to feeling more comfortable with ICTs as the semester progresses. Helen implements student suggestions for improvements to the use of ICTs in these subjects, such as an increase in the use of discussion forums for posting of presentation materials that would otherwise have been delivered in a face-to-face context. She believes that students are becoming more accustomed to peer learning and applying peer pressure to fellow students to make their group work more public on the discussion forum.

Support from within the university

The first year Helen taught her online subjects, both she and her students experienced considerable problems with the technology, specifically associated with the students not being able to access the discussion forums and having to employ excessive use of passwords to access the university's website. These problems have diminished over time as the university's IT infrastructure improves. The university has provided support to Helen and other staff through the creation of positions within the school to provide support to staff undertaking online teaching. In addition, professional development has been available through formal workshops offered by the university's teaching and learning centre, and on an informal basis from the educational designer in Helen's school. Helen has also benefited from attendance at conferences outside the university that focus on online learning and teaching. At this stage, she recognises she needs more advanced professional development in specific areas to be able to extend her use of the new technologies in the online environment.

The future

Helen plans to continue modifying and improving on her approach to online teaching in both these subjects. Already she is planning changes to assessment in two ways - reducing the amount of assessment required of both subjects, and introducing an online component to the learning journal both she and her students find of value.

Talking about pedagogy

After writing this portrait, I am now in a position to begin an early analysis and interpretation of themes that have emerged across the cases. One of the most important themes is teachers' pedagogy, ways in which teachers use information and communication technologies in their teaching. At this stage of my analysis, I am using the heading 'talking about pedagogy' but this may be refined or changed in another iteration.

There are several examples in the literature of frameworks to support analysis of pedagogical approaches used by teachers (Bonk, Cummings, Hara, Rischler, & Lee, 1999; Bonk, Kirkley & Hara, 2002; Collis, 1997; Collis, 1998; Collis & Moonen, 2001; Reeves & Reeves, 1997). I chose the framework developed by Collis (1997, 1998) specifically because its focus on the *enrichment* of a subject or course using technologies fitted with the focus of my study. Collis argued that the pedagogical profile of a course is made up of seven elements or instructional components:

- Teacher presentation of concepts and information;
- Communication between teacher/student and student/student;
- Communication involving discussion among learners and teacher about learning materials;
- Self-study, primarily involving reading;
- Individual practice and consolidation activities (essays, exercises) that involve feedback;
- Group activities, and
- Assessment and testing activities.

'Pedagogical enrichment' is a term defined by Collis when the profile of a course does not change in terms of overall balance of these components, but when one of the components is 'enriched' or made better. When technology is involved in this extension, this is defined as 'pedagogical enrichment via telelearning'. Enrichment using ICTs can also mean increased flexibility for the learner. Collis argued that providing students with an email link direct to the lecturer can also provide the opportunity for more reflective and personal communication between student and teacher than what may take place in a face-to-face consultation.

Placing Helen's use of technology alongside Collis' framework allowed a mapping of enrichment or enhancement approaches used in both her subjects. As shown in Table 3 below, six of the seven categories in Collis' pedagogical profile were enriched through the use of ICT tools. Helen's plans to extend the reach of ICT tools into online assessment would extend this enrichment to all seven categories.

Table 3: Helen's case showing enrichment approaches

Collis' (1996) framework	Enrichment approach
Teacher presentation of concepts and information	Very detailed subject outline provided, made available on subject website. Teacher also provided websites as resources for the learners.
Communication between teacher/student and student/student	Communication was through email and subject forum.
Communication between teacher/student about learning materials	This occurred in the face-to-face sessions and in the discussions on the forum, also by email contact.
Self-study, primarily involving reading	Learners were required to undertake self-study in terms of research work on the web, reading of textbook and entries into their learning journals.
Essays/exercises that involve feedback	Learners were required to undertake group-based activities and feedback to learners was by forum and email.
Group activities	Learners were required to work in groups. They posted to the subject forum summaries of their group presentations.
Assessment activities	There was no online assessment but preparation for their assessments was done through group activities, and these activities involved online participation and presence. Helen planned to extend ICT reach into online assessment in subsequent semesters.

Having completed this analysis of enrichment approaches used by Helen, I returned to the original transcript and compiled this vignette that captured Helen's preparation of her subject before semester begins. The 'story' focuses on her compilation of electronic resources for her students. It also illustrates how she saw her role as a teacher:

> Students get a very detailed subject outline, much more detailed than your ordinary subject outline, which has a weekly schedule for them, and they can actually do the work completely without me because I have done all my work first, all of my preparation has gone in first, I have looked up all the databases, I have checked out a whole pile of websites, I have looked at the content that they are supposed to cover, I have looked at the outcomes that I need for each weekly

> session and I have devised activities and workshops around outcomes that I need for each week. We don't do a lot of lecturing in this program, we make it possible for students to find the information, and through their reading and through their research themselves, and through workshops, we are there to guide students. It's not often these days that we would give a straight-out lecture, because I perceive giving a lecture as doing the work for the students.

I continued to show how Helen organises the first few weeks of semester to prepare students for their use of the ICT tools. In the vignette below, Helen describes the actions she took at the beginning of the semester to introduce students to the technologies:

> During the first two weeks of the program students have workshops in the face-to-face sessions to familiarise themselves with the technology. They do a session on Using the Forum and the Chat Room. I don't use the Chat Room any more but I wanted them to have the experience of it because it is the kind of thing you do on the web all the time, enter a Chat Room and have a chat. So, they do forums, we talked about chat rooms, mainly forum, email and web searching.

I then focused on Helen's role in relation to the discussion forums in both subjects. In this vignette Helen explains her involvement in these forums. After the first two weeks of being in the computer room with the students, she uses the regularly scheduled computer sessions for the rest of the semester to respond to student questions on the forum, looking occasionally at student forum activity. Workload issues faced by academic staff using ICTs are also hinted at here:

> After the first two sessions for the other nine weeks I am here in my office physically online during the time they are doing their computer work, and that is when I actually look at their forum postings, which means I don't get through all of them. I simply cannot look at all of them. My responses to their postings when I make them is usually to try and make them involve their reading, there are particular tasks that they are supposed to be doing. I don't just leave it up to them to have a chat on the forum. Generally, I stay out of the forum. You just don't have the time to read every forum posting. It is impossible to be an important part of that scene.

Finally, I draw some conclusions about the Helen's approach to teaching with ICTs. Using a mapping of course components drawn from Collis (1997, 1998), Helen clearly has enriched her face-to-face teaching using online components. Her teaching practice I have characterised as very structured, evidenced by the way she meticulously planned student learning activities for the first eleven weeks of the semester, including resources in the form of Internet sites and databases for her students. Within this structure there is evidence of a scaffolded process that allowed students to acquire the skills in use of ICT tools at the beginning of the semester that students continued to use on a weekly basis. Like all academic staff in universities who have moved online, Helen was pressured for time and sought to find ways of remaining in touch with student work online, while not having to respond to all their forum postings. She had rejected the lecture as a form of 'doing the work for the student' and saw her provision of resources for students as a way of guiding them in their learning.

Conclusion

Exploration of the theme 'talking about pedagogy' continues within this case and across each of the five remaining cases in my study. This analysis will be extended to include the role of the teacher in a blended learning environment (Bennett & Lockyer, 2004; Bonk et al., 2002; Goodyear, Salmon, Spector, Steeples, & Tickner, 1999). Once this same level of analysis for the theme is complete for all cases, I will then be in a position to examine this theme through cross-case analysis.

I began this article with my account of how my interest in teachers' stories and the questions I seek to answer in my research provided a rationale for my choice of case study as the research strategy for my doctoral study. I have located my study in a qualitative, interpretative framework, and explored each of the stages of my research design. Bocher (2001) wrote that "we each must decide what calls us to stories" (p. 154). In seeking to find ways of presenting each case, and interpreting the themes emerging from the data, I have turned to the area of narrative, and its subsets stories and vignettes. My first efforts at analysis of the data in relation to one of the larger themes 'talking about pedagogy' has led me to seek and apply frameworks that support analysis of pedagogical practices.

In the early analysis stages of my study, I have sought to compile vignettes to illustrate particular aspects of a teacher's pedagogy, conscious that 'for all narrative, the subject matter is brought to the reader through the filter of the narrator's consciousness' (Ely et al. 1997, p. 78). My challenge is to make the product of my research, the dissertation, both authoritative and interesting at the same time. I am realising the complexity of what constitutes the 'telling of the story' and I am challenged as a qualitative inquirer by the processes of producing the final research text.

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