# Traveling theory: The dissemination and transformation of educational narrative inquiry in China

*PENG Cai-xia*

*(Research Institute of History and Culture of Education, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, Beijing 100875, China)*

**Abstract:** Educational narrative inquiry has gained popularity since it was exported to China at the end of 1990s. The journey of educational narrative inquiry from western countries to China experiences four typical stages of the way any theory or idea traveling, which was put forward by Edward W. Said in 1983. The new curriculum reform and the trends of teacher professionalization and teacher education integration, as well as the experiential and temporal characteristics of narrative inquiry itself, stimulate their dissemination in China, where they also encounter evitable resistance because of the tradition of quantitative and speculative methodology. Due to the different cultural backgrounds and the impact of translation, the educational narrative inquiry has been transformed to some extent. The transformation can be classified into five aspects: the modeling of procedures and forms; the presupposition of aims and too many voices from researchers; the lack of deep description and interpretation; the little reflection on the method itself and closing structure. The most important factor responsible for its transformation is the Chinese thinking mode, including holistic and intuitive thinking, "complete thinking", inveterate subject-object dichotomy thinking and the tendency of making value judgment before factual judgment. For its better development in China, more exploration and reflections is required.

**Key words:** educational narrative inquiry; dissemination; transformation

## 1. Introduction

One of the most outstanding contributions of Edward Said, an university professor of English and comparative literature and a founding figure in post-colonialism (Young, 1990), is that he put forward "traveling theory" which identified the four typical stages common to the way any theory or idea travels. In this article, the author will employ the theory to describe the traveling of educational narrative inquiry to and within China. The conditions for the dissemination of narrative inquiry in the field of education in China, how and why it has been transformed in the context will be the focuses.

## 2. What is traveling theory

Edward Said was prescient in pointing out the importance of theories circulating from one culture to another. In an essay titled Traveling Theory, Said wrote:

> Like people and schools of criticism, ideas and theories travel—from person to person, from situation to situation, from one period to another. Cultural and intellectual life are usually nourished and often sustained by this circulation of ideas, and whether it takes the form of acknowledged or unconscious influence, creative borrowing, or wholesale

PENG Cai-xia, Ph.D. candidate, Research Institute of History and Culture of Education, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University; research fields: educational narrative inquiry, curriculum history and curriculum policy.

appropriation, the movement of ideas and theories from one place to another is both a fact of life and a usefully enabling condition of intellectual activity. Having said that, however, one should go on to specify the kinds of movement that are possible, in order to ask whether by virtue of having moved from one place and time to another an idea or a theory gains or loses in strength, and whether a theory in one historical period and national culture becomes altogether different for another period or situation. (1983, p. 226)

According to Said, there is, however, a discernible and recurrent pattern to the movement itself, three or four stages common to the way any theory or idea travels.

First, there is a point of origin, or what seems like one, a set of initial circum-stances which the idea came to birth or entered discourse.

Second, there is a distance traversed, a passage through the pressure of various contexts as the idea moves from an earlier point to another time and place where it will come into a new prominence.

Third, there is a set of conditions—call them conditions of acceptance or, as an inevitable part of acceptance or resistances—which then confronts the transplanted theory or idea, making possible its introduction or toleration, however alien it might appear to be.

Fourth, the now full (or partly) accommodated (or incorporated) idea is to some extent transformed by its new uses, and its new position in a new time and space (1983, p. 227).

There are many important theories in every time and they are always in the process of traveling. The traveling of Said's "traveling theory" to the author is due to a friend who studies comparative literature. Consequently, in the following parts of the article the author analyzes the journey of educational narrative inquiry to and within China by the means of the viewpoint from Said on four stages.

## 3. What is the origin of educational narrative inquiry

Narrative inquiry has a long intellectual history in many fields such as literature, history, sociology, psychology and anthropology as well as education. As early as 1981, Mitchell (1981) wrote, "The study of narrative is no longer the province of literary specialists or folklorists … but has now become a positive source of insight for all branches of human and natural science".

However, within education, it was not until 1990s that systematic interpretation of narrative inquiry emerged. The Canadian researchers D. Clandinin and F. Connelly promoted the formation of education narrative inquiry as a kind of scientific research through their many narrative studies.

In 1990, they published their first major article on narrative inquiry titled *Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry*, in which various methodological issues of narrative inquiry are explored and they see themselves as outlining possibilities for narrative inquiry within educational studies. From their perspective, education is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories, teachers and learners are storytellers and characters in their own and other stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990). They define narrative inquiry as a method that uses the following field texts as data sources: stories, autobiography, journals, field notes, letters, conversations, interviews, family stories, photos (and other artifacts) and life experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Since Clandinin and Connelly's initial publications in the 1990s, narrative inquiry has become an accepted form of research. According to Conle, narrative is a method of inquiry as well as a means of personal and professional development, and it is this dual function of narrative that facilitated its use in educational research (2001).

Three current trends in research about teachers point to the importance of teachers' narratives (Martin

Cortazzi, 1993):

First, reflection is a concept which has been much discussed in teacher education. The act of narrating one's experience as a teacher focuses reflection on key classroom events and helps the teller of the story to make sense of what has happened. Thus at its best reflection through narrative effectively doubles the value of the original experience—an efficient approach to teacher development.

Second, the nature of teachers' knowledge has also been linked to teachers' narratives. Explorations of what teachers know, how they think and learn professionally or make decisions in the classroom are a clearly developing major strand of research about teaching.

Third, the current concern with teachers' "voice" has also been firmly linked to narrative. "Voice" is a term increasingly used by those concerned with teacher empowerment which emphasizes that teachers are key participants in education, that they should be heard and that they have a right to speak for and about teaching.

More and more people become interested in narrative inquiry. In America, the Narrative and Research Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association was established to contribute to supporting conversations about the place of narratives in educational research.

## 4. How narrative inquiry traveled to and within China

Educational narrative inquiry was introduced to China at the end of 1990s. In 1999, professor DING Gang (president of Education Collage of East China Normal University) began to plan the book series *China's Education Research and Review* in order to prepare for the experiment of educational narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry in educational research in China officially commenced after the paper of Ruth Hayhoe (professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto) *Modern Chinese Spirits: The Life Stories of Influential Chinese Educators* was published in the first series edited by DING Gang.

Then it has gradually become an important academic terminology in China since 2001, and has been highly praised and applied as a research method and a way of professional development. It is referred to as "moral narrative", "instruction narrative" and "teachers' life-story narrative". Contributing to the popularity of narrative inquiry has been:

The journal *Global Education* had "narrative inquiry" column in three consecutive issues in 2003, in which aside from translation and introduction, the application of narrative inquiry in teachers' professional development and curriculum studies was explored.

With the development of internet, information technologies bring new meanings to narrative inquiry, especially indicating the characteristic of "educational narrative inquiry based on blogs". A number of blogs have been influential in promoting narrative inquiry. For example, LIU Liang-hua not only analyzed the everyday educational activities of teachers in elementary and secondary schools from the perspective of narrative inquiry in some papers but also created a blog regarding educational narrative inquiry, with more than 10 million visits until now. LI Jia-hou established Jiahou's blog centered on reports of educational narrative inquiry. Among all the blogs with a theme of narrative inquiry within education, some active ones are the growth blog of Sanya in Hainan, the education blogs of Suzhou in Jiangsu, Haiyan in Zhejiang, Zibo in Shandong, Changshu in Jiangsu, and Zhangjiagang in Jiangsu. The combination of teachers' thoughts and global digital environment of communication unfolds a new world for the development of every common teacher.

Many publications have also contributed to understanding of narrative inquiry in the context of Chinese

education. For example, ZHU Yong-xin edited a series of *Library of New Education: My Educational Stories*, and LI Zhen-xi edited series of *The Diaries on the Growth of New Teachers* and East China Normal University Press published *Da-xia Series: Educational Essays.*

A lot of master and doctoral dissertations on narrative inquiry increase its attraction and promote its spread. Meanwhile, narrative inquiry is considered as an important aspect of teachers' in school training.

## 5. Under what historical conditions has narrative inquiry been accepted

There are some favorable conditions for the popularization of educational narrative inquiry during a short period in China.

Firstly, at the beginning of the new century, China has started the largest curriculum reform of basic education since the founding of the People's Republic of China. An exchange platform is urged by school teachers for the translation of modern abstract instruction notions which are advocated in the new curriculum reform into understandable ideas and real instruction actions. Most teachers support educational narrative inquiry through which they can share their lived stories and real experiences. The new ideas are understood and disseminated through these stories. Teachers can also gain resonance and encouragement under the pressures and challenges from the new curriculum reform.

Secondly, the national training of "Trans-century Gardener Project" has been implemented since 1990s. The trends of teacher professionalization and teacher education integration in the world have a significant impact on teacher education in China. The focus of teacher education turns from pre-service training to post-service, from meeting the needs of quantity to improving the quality of teachers. The training of teaching concepts of new curricula aims not only to change their habitual teaching methods and behaviors, but also to promote the awareness of teachers as researchers and active interpreters. Narrative inquiry comes to be valued as an opportunity for professional development.

Thirdly, compared to the complicated and strict scientific research paradigm such as controlled experimentation and statistical measurements, narrative inquiry is more easily grasped and applied by school teachers because of its humanity and experiential characteristics (WANG Nan, 2006a). In addition, it takes a research path of "from down to up" (from fact to theory). Meanwhile, to become better acquainted with their own stories was indeed interesting for these busy teachers who had little time to carry out intensive research as scholars. The majority of teachers show a passion for critically reflecting on their experiences to understand what central premise and principles about teaching have been at work in their classroom life, and viewing their experience in specific context.

## 6. What is the inevitable resistance?

> We are so used to thinking of research as providing a special kind of methodologically validated knowledge about society … for the same reason, it's not easy to accept the notion of research as story-telling. We think of story-telling as "unserious", as fictional, whereas our image of research is that it is about "truth" and is therefore an altogether more serious business. Equally, it's not easy to accept that an account of research is an example of telling a story. To attempt to explicate the "nature" of research through a story does not somehow seem appropriate. (Usher, 2001)

Similarly, especially due to the quantitative and speculative tradition of methodology and a narrow methodological orthodoxy in China, narrative inquiry attracts some opposition and skepticism. These criticisms

focus on the function and validity of narrative inquiry.

Firstly, the opponents emphasized the weakness of objectivity and scientific nature in narrative inquiry. They argued that any scientific research aims to seek the theories with more general explanatory power, and the discoveries of genuine problems within education rely only on scientific methods, thinkings and spirits. It will be "Arabian Nights" if we count on the itemized account of educational stories to discover the existing problems and "effectively" solve them. For example, XU Xi-liang (2004) remarked that narratives carried a strong taste of pseudo-science, and that teachers will neither have a promotion in theories, nor a qualitative leap if we only require teachers to participate in research through narrative while lacking abstract theories with stronger explanatory power. More likely, the scientific knowledge, methods and spirits we once gained will be returned to the pre-modern era by the pseudo-scientific narrative. YU Wei (2006) highlighted that what we most need is not the pre-modern kind of narrative but the rational analytic method with objective evidence, rigorous reasoning and clear logic used in western classical books.

Secondly, reliability and validity is lacked in narrative inquiry, so it is hard to win place in the palace of research. The reasons are: First of all, it is impossible to test the authenticity and objectivity of narrative inquiry. In the research process, the participants may have private and secret areas that can not be brought to light or they are unwilling to reveal, or not tell the true stories, and they may "fabricate stories", provide "beautiful stories", and the events so all these possibilities have an negative effect on the quality of data (ZHANG Xi-xi, 2006). LIU Wang-hai (2005) refers to some scholars who think that educational narrative inquiry is divorced from the guidance of scientific theories so it will aggravate the wind of falsehood in educational research. The second reason is that narrative inquiry lacks explanatory power and generalizes value. Narrative inquiry focuses on minutia—micro-narrative, and it always takes the form of case study and depends on the description of special events in specific context, so it can not answer the general questions nor can it establish general theories. The third one is that the inquiry is impossible to be neutral and easily get strong subjective tone, because researchers' personal tendency makes quite an impact on the determination of research questions, the explanation of results and so on (WANG Nan, 2006b). The enormous amount of controversy over educational narrative inquiry is a bit similar to the situation in America. As Carter said, the trend of telling stories about teaching and teacher education, rather than simply reporting correlation coefficients or generating lists of findings, has been upsetting to some who mourn the loss of quantitative precision and, they would argue, scientific rigor (1993). Even more, Barone (2007) noticed that there is a movement toward a narrowing of officially sanctioned methodological spectrum, and the passage of the "No Child Left Behind Act" of 2001 is the most obvious of these moves. The law calls explicitly and exclusively for the use of scientifically based research (a phrase used 111 times within it) as the foundation for many education programs and for classroom instruction. He indicated that the narrative approach is now in danger of marginalization.

## 7. How narrative inquiry is transformed

In this part, the author makes a detailed analysis of how educational narrative inquiry is transformed during the process of dissemination in China. In the discussion that follows, the author explores several leading factors responsible for its transformations to some extent.

Its transformation can be classified into five aspects according to their different features.

### 7.1 The modeling of the procedures and form of narrative inquiry

Firstly, the procedures are fixed. The typical course is that researchers design and ask some questions, then the objects narrate and researchers describe, classify, summarize and assess these narrations in the text (DING Shu, 2005).

Secondly, prompt reflection and interaction is absent and researchers have no immediate reaction nor do they interrogate certain important relationships and plots in order not to break the fixed model. How does one evaluate the reliability of their so-called comments if they cannot capture the key parts and pursue them?

Meanwhile, the interaction between the storytellers is ignored. Take a representative narrative inquiry case (WANG Li-qin & CAI Fang, 2004) for example:

Their research topic is "from normal university students to key teachers—a case investigation on the roles of educational research plays in teachers' professional growth". In their paper, they present four teachers' stories according to their different growth stages. Every teacher's narrative is unfolded respectively and combined with comments from researchers. We know that the researchers only conduct individual interviews without providing an opportunity for the four teachers communicating as a narrative community or group.

There is no doubt that individual interview has its advantages, however, it is conducted in a different time and space, and lack of interaction between person and person, text and text. When these storied texts are analyzed, they always remain in a static state and the connections between them are not examined fully so that the research cannot reach a certain depth. If the four teachers had the chance to discuss together, the research will be more representative and profound. They can correct and complement each other and broaden the views, and every group member would give impetus to progress the narrative inquiry process. So the conclusion of the inquiry would be different and include more deeper or valuable information.

Thirdly, when narrative inquiry follows a fixed framework and narration is single, it has little aesthetic interest and real emotional experience. While it introduces interesting material, it misses the opportunity to explore deeper meanings and possibilities that occur when there is genuine interaction between researcher and "researched" and the boundaries between the two are blurred.

### 7.2 The presupposition of aims and too many voices from researchers

First, about selecting the case, researchers employ the method of aims-oriented sampling. They determine the "study subject" in advance rather than providing enough evidence for the choice. So the process of the case choosing indicates obvious subjectivity.

Second, "artificial narrative" occurs. The researchers presuppose the questions through which the logic of storytellers is led and controlled so that some valuable information may be overlooked in the inquiry.

Third, there are a plethora of comments from researchers in the narrative text. Researchers label themselves as "imparter", conveying something to the readers intentionally, and dedicate themselves to "explain" (but not "express") in order to make the texts accurate and objective while actually increase subjectivity.

As mentioned before, one of the impetuses for narrative inquiry with education is to approach classroom reality in terms of the teachers' voice by using the teachers' narrative account. The term "voice" "emphasizes the need for teachers to talk about their experiences and perspectives on teaching in their own words" (Martin Cortazzi, 1993). Although the situation of absence of the teachers' voice has been changed, their voices are too weak in current narrative inquiry.

So the role of researchers in the inquiry must be re-positioned clearly because the significance of narrative inquiry is to face things themselves or search for inner structure from the things themselves instead of distorting or abusing facts with external frame intentionally or unintentionally (LIU Liang-hua, 2007).

### 7.3 The lack of deep description and interpretation in narrative text

Conle (2000) pointed out that what counts in narrative inquiry is the meaning that actions and intentions have for the protagonist. However, some researchers in China can clearly present experience stories and life scenes of teachers in plain language, but they do not dissect the important events and dig deeply about the significance that the events mean to them and how they impact the occupational lives of individuals.

Meanwhile the interpretation from researchers is often placed after the stories as a form of commentary rather than immersing it into the stories. As a result, the stories and interpretation is totally separated so that the subjectivity of researchers is conspicuous and the research loses some of the explanatory strength and depth.

### 7.4 The little reflection on the method of narrative inquiry itself

Usually, the research is terminated with the conclusions and sometimes with a reflection on the topic. However, the research method is always ignored. Although researchers often set out from the method, they rarely return to the starting point, critically discuss the meaning and limitations of the method itself such as: Does the method totally suit the nature of the research? What are the possible gaps and vulnerabilities? What might be improved or strengthened?

### 7.5 The closing structure of the inquiry

The presupposed questions lead the process and then researcher obtains the conclusions from narratives. In addition, they often finish the interpretation of meaning once, so that the whole inquiry demonstrates a closed structure of "from process to result". There is not enough space left for the free and pluralistic thinking of readers.

In fact, the interpretation and conclusion of meaning should be open, varied and never finished. As Crites (1986) wrote, a good narrative constitutes an "invitation" to participate and Peshkin (1989, p. 280) said, "When I disclose what I have seen, my results invite other researchers to look what I did and see what I saw. My ideas are candidates for others to entertain, not necessary as truth, let alone truth, but as positions about the nature and meaning of a phenomenon that may fit their sensibility and shape their thinking about their own inquiries".

## 8. Why narrative inquiry is transformed

How we gather information, process, rationalize, justify and communicate our ideas are culturally determined. Because of the different culture in China, narrative inquiry is transformed through tempering or assimilating into other approaches as researchers learn, imitate, and localize the design. The way of thinking as an important component of culture plays a crucial role in the transformation. The reason can be simplified as an old Chinese saying, "Wearing new shoes to walk on the old path", timely, applying new methods while using the old thinking way. The following are ways that Chinese researchers approach their work and explain how narrative research is adapted.

### 8.1 Researchers are used to holistic and intuitive thinking which is different from analytical thinking

We always pursue the whole framework with the style of impressionism as well as the subtle experience which can be sensed but not expressed in words or description. So the research focuses on "description" without deep interpretation. This is different from the analytical thinking of westerners. They analyze the problem step by step with strict logic, and unfold it layer by layer until the essence is reveled.

### 8.2 Researchers are used to the "complete thinking" mode while the mode of narrative inquiry is the "becoming thinking"

The educational narrative inquiry directly deals with teaching practice, interpreting the understanding and

explanation of education by means of narrating, which not only displays the real educational life, perceives different sorts of relations between the multitudinous accidental phenomena, but revels the reality behind the phenomena as well. The thinking mode of narrative research is "becoming thinking". But due to researchers' mode of thinking, practicing the new theory by means of the former "complete thinking" mode causes changes in narrative inquiry.

Specifically, "complete thinking" is to ask "what it is". Everything which can and may be finished has been finished, and the rules, which have nothing to do with persons, are presupposed outside of specific instruction activities, and are used to analyze instruction. Objectivity and certainty is pursued and the subjectivity and historic nature of instruction is excluded. Researchers measure and request real instruction by absolute rational criteria rather than interpreting the meanings of instruction from specific instructional lives and human meaning.

"Becoming thinking" is to ask "how it is". Everything is becoming, and everything is in constant changing process. The criterion of truth is dependent on the context (LU Xin-yu, 2007).

We have a long history of speculative educational research under the influence of "complete thinking" mode. From statistical results of the study on the educational research methods in journal articles published from 1981 to 1998, the percentage of speculative research is 83.5 percent (ZHEN Ri-chang, 2001). We like to imagine and solve problems through speculative inquiry which often deviates from practice and is of little help to educational practice. Meanwhile, too much attention is drawn to grand narrative and the logic structure of the theory itself which enables educational research to disregard real life filled with grand narrative.

### 8.3 Researchers have the inveterate subject-object dichotomy thinking

Subject-object dichotomy thinking is deep rooted in traditional educational studies. Narrative inquiry cannot be carried out based on equal terms, because the subject, the researcher, is viewed as superior to the object, the person being studied (XU Qin-ling, 2006).

### 8.4 Researchers prefer to make value judgment before factual judgment

The researchers tend to give priority to value judgment while evaluation criteria are also determined by themselves. They measure the problems on the coordinate of value so that necessary skeptical, critical and empirical spirits in the inquiry is weakened.

It is different from the tendency of western scholars engaged in narrative inquiry. They consider factual judgment as a basis point which value judgment is built on. This kind of "beyond utilitarianism" is embodied in the research process in which the objectivity of stories is respected and some parts of stories may be not divided, assessed or discarded according to subjective likes and dislikes.

## 9. Conclusion

The conclusion refers to some inspiration from the traveling process of the educational narrative inquiry and several suggestions for its development in China.

Drawing on Said, this paper has thought about how "theories sometimes 'travel' to other times and situations, in the process of which they lose some of their original power and rebelliousness" (2000, p. 436). We can find that over-interpretation sometimes occurs due to different needs of acceptors during the migration of theories. These phenomena unintentionally display that the meanings of theories may be lost or strengthened in cross-culture exchange.

The traveling process may also help us understand the notions of "prior images", "misreading", and "subject

of accepting" in cultural exchange. In addition, it seems that the pursuit of "original juice and taste" is a rational arrogance, and the misreading during the traveling process maybe the charm of culture. Sometimes the impact of culture, or conceptual systems may release unconsciously, as an ancient Chinese proverb "the willow-trees with huge shade in the garden have been the result of serendipity".

Second, narrative inquiry provides another way of thinking education. So we need to change the thinking mode if we employ this method in our studies. We can not use the criteria of natural science and quantitative research to judge narrative inquiry.

As a kind of qualitative research designing form, the applicable scope of educational narrative inquiry has certain limitations which are suitable for some fields but not applicable for all. The experiential expression style can not replace the theoretical expression style. Meanwhile, it may go along well with the other methods and an equal dialogue between them is necessary.

As YE Lan (1999), a famous education professor in China, said, "In educational research, we can not only choose one kind of method while categorically reject another one. The principle we should follow is to select appropriate method in terms of the nature of the problem, the task of the research, and which level the problem stays in the whole structure of the objects as well as necessary amendment".

In 1990, Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly asked, "Which makes a good narrative?". Ten years later, they (2000) changed their question into "Which makes a good narrative inquiry?" Good narrative inquiry is hard. We need broaden the academic view, pursue the essential qualities and purposes, and establish the orienting principles. Furthermore, good educational narrators should have wide mental dimension, life scope and soul depth.

Furthermore, we need more explorations on narrative inquiry itself so that its capacity to interpret and construct meanings can be promoted. We also need strengthen its training of academic standard such as academic morals, academic collaboration, equality and criticism. So that narrative inquiry can obtain continuous impetus for growth, and it can not only reflect and change the teachers' everyday lives, but also accomplish educational reform through its attention paid to everyday educational experiences.

**References:**

Barone, T. (2007). A return to the gold standard? Questioning the future of narrative construction as educational research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 13*(4), 454-455.

Carter, K (1993). The place of story in the study of teaching and teacher education. *Educational Researcher, 22*(1), 5-12.

Conle, C. (2000a) Narrative inquiry: Research tool and medium for professional development. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 23*(1), 49-63.

Conle, C. (2001). The rationality of narrative inquiry in research and professional development. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 24*(1), 21-33.

Cortazzi, M. (1993). *Narrative analysis.* London: Falmer Press. 6-10.

Crites, S. (1986). Storytime: Recollecting the past and projecting the future. In: T. R. Sarbin. (Ed.). *Narrative psychology: The storied nature of human conduct*. New York: Praeger.

D. Jean Clandinin & F. Michael Connelly. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 98-115.

DING Shu (2005) Narrative abnormal and countermeasures: How to carry out educational narrative inquiry. *Ideological and Theoretical Education*, (3), 49-52. (in Chinese)

F. Michael Connelly & D. Jean Clandinin. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher, 19*(5), 2-14.

LIU Liang-hua. (2007). Educational narrative research: What's for and how to do. *Educational Research, 330*(7), 84-88. (in Chinese)

LIU Wan-hai. (2005). A review of studies of educational narratives produced at home and abroad during the last two decades. *Journal of the Chinese Society of Education,* (3), 9-14. (in Chinese)

LU Xin-yu. (2007). Wearing new shoes to walk on the old path: The illogical change of narrative educational research. *Journal of Tianjin Normal University (Elementary Education Edition), 8*(4), 5-8. (in Chinese)

Mitchell, W. J. T. (1981). *On narrative*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, ix.

Peshkin, A. (1985). Virtuous subjectivity: In the participant-observer's eyes. In: Berg, D. & Smith, K. (Eds.). *Exploring clinical methods for social research*. Beverly Hills: Sage, 280.

Robin Usher. (2001). Telling a story about research and research as story-telling: Postmodern approaches to social research. In: Carrie Paechter, Margaret Preedy & David Scott and Janet Soler. (Eds.). *Knowledge, power and learning*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd., 47.

Said, Edward W. (1983). Traveling theory. In: *The world, the text, and the critic*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP.

Said, Edward W. (2000). Traveling theory reconsidered. In: *Reflection on exile and other essays*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP.

WANG Li-qin & CAI Fang. (2004). From normal university students to key teachers: A case investigation on the roles of educational research plays in teachers' professional growth. Unpublished material which was presented in *the First National Exchange Forum of Education Science*, Suzhou. (in Chinese)

WANG Nan. (2006a). The rising, popularization and argument of educational narrative research. *Educational Research, 321*(10), 13-17. (in Chinese)

WANG Nan. (2006b, April 21-23). The reflection on educational narrative inquiry. Unpublished paper which was presented in *Senior Seminar of National Committee of Educational Theories*, Fujian, China. (in Chinese)

XU Qin-ling. (2006). On the problems, causes and countermeasures of the educational narrative research in China. *Journal of Educational Development,* (9), 56-58. (in Chinese)

XU Xi-liang. (2004). Comments on "whatever is OK": Rational reflection on educational "narrative inquiry". *Educational Research and Experiment*, (1), 5-11. (in Chinese)

YE Lan. (1999). *The preliminary exploration on educational research methods*. Shanghai: Shanghai Education Press, 327. (in Chinese)

Young, R. (1990). *White mythologies: Writing history and the west*. New York & London: Routledge.

YU Wei. (2006, Jan. 7). It is unthinkable if rationality education is neglected in modern society. *China Education Newspaper*, (3). (in Chinese)

ZHANG Xi-xi. (2006). What is educational narrative research. *Educational Research, 313*(2), 54-59. (in Chinese)

ZHEN Ri-chang & CUI Li-xia. (2001). Review and reflect on educational research methods for twenty years. *Educational Research*, (6), 17-21. (in Chinese)

(Edited by Nicole and Lily)