

Metaphors of Knowing, Doing and Being: Capturing Experience in Teaching and Teacher Education

Cheryl J. Craig, Ph.D.
Texas A&M University

Introduction

Bateson's idea of human beings thinking with metaphors and learning through stories provided the framework for five storied metaphors capturing knowing, doing and being



Cross-case analysis reveals the importance of narrative exemplars, along with the significance of metaphors serving as proxies for teachers' experiences



Value of metaphors in surfacing teachers' embedded, embodied knowledge is affirmed along with the deftness of narrative inquiry research method



Experience

Past
Experience

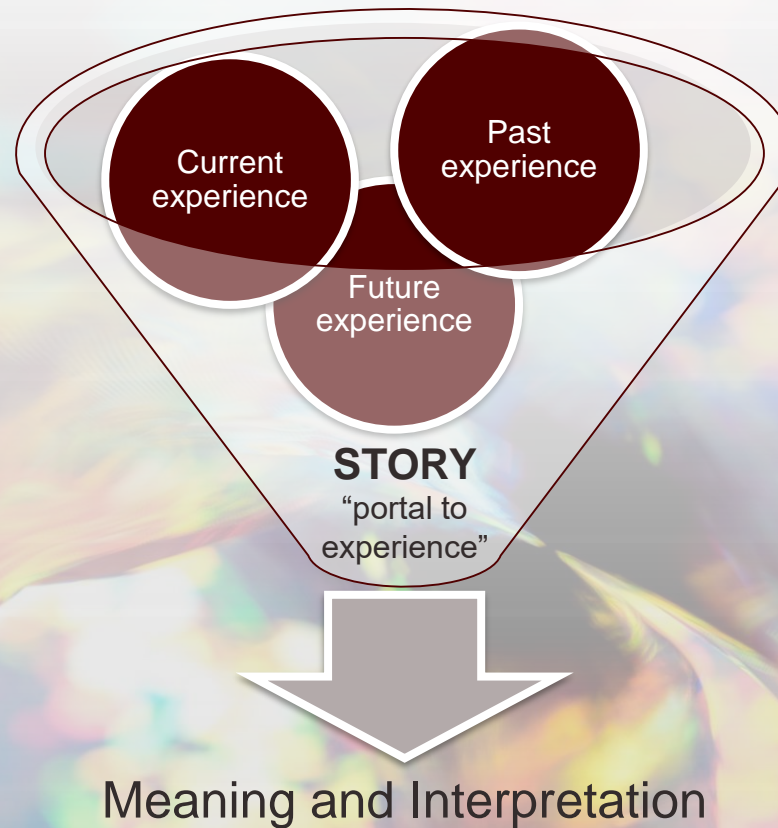
John Dewey
(1938)

Current
Experience


Future
Experience

Experience,
Education and Life

Story



Metaphor

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of several overlapping semi-circles in shades of brown and red, partially obscuring the text boxes.

Human beings use metaphors to story and make sense of life

Metaphors are valuable cognitive devices (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and represent the highest form of human intelligence (Bruner, 1996)

Metaphors are cross disciplinary and cross-cultural in scope and understanding

Types of Metaphors



Novel metaphors

- Imaginative quality and possess generative power (Schon, 1993)
- Compact, able to express the inexpressible... limitless in interpretation (Ortony, 1975)



Emergent metaphors

- Intuitively held (Breault, 2006)
- Naturally appear in the midst of explaining one's practice to oneself or someone else (Craig, 2005)

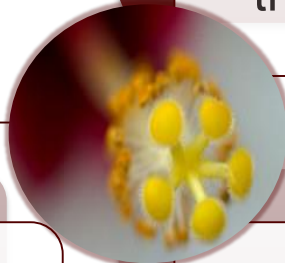
Research Method



Narrative Inquiry:
unpacks human experience through the use of story



Broadening—
setting the backdrop for their narratives



Burrowing—
explicating fine-grained details in their narratives



Storying and Restorying—
shows how change occurs over time



Serial Interpretation

Serial interpretation

“encompassing idea[s]”

to “talk across”

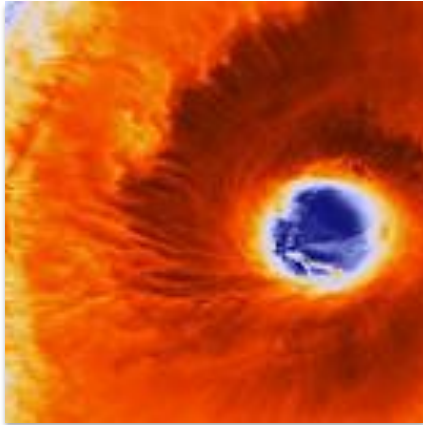
“look across” stories

Research Backdrop



Five Metaphors

1. Anna's Coming to Know in the Eye of the Storm metaphor



2. Laura's Butterfly under to a Pin metaphor



3. Helen's Teaching as a Strand of Pearls metaphor



4. Teacher Research Group as a Braided River Flowing In and Out of Community metaphor



5. Lydia's Reforming School as a Rainbow Fish metaphor

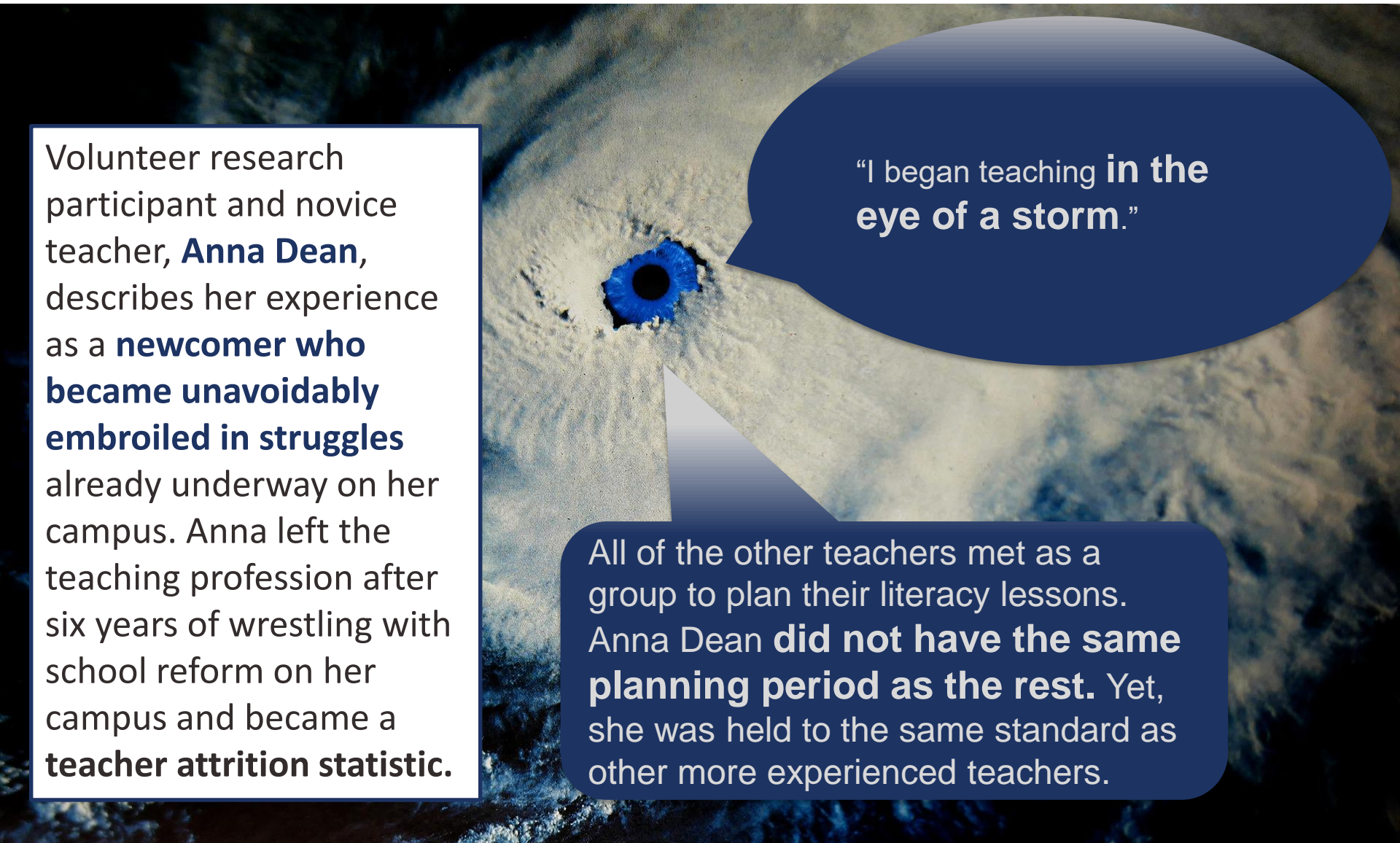


Metaphor 1: “Coming to Know in the Eye of the Storm”

Volunteer research participant and novice teacher, **Anna Dean**, describes her experience as a **newcomer who became unavoidably embroiled in struggles** already underway on her campus. Anna left the teaching profession after six years of wrestling with school reform on her campus and became a **teacher attrition statistic**.

“I began teaching **in the eye of a storm.**”

All of the other teachers met as a group to plan their literacy lessons. Anna Dean **did not have the same planning period as the rest**. Yet, she was held to the same standard as other more experienced teachers.



Metaphor 2: “Butterfly under a Pin”

Experienced teacher Laura Curtis’s image of **teacher-as-curriculum maker** was intentionally changed to **teacher-as-implementer** through external and forced intervention

“I became unhappy when I realized it [the reform] was being forced on us and I began to **feel like a butterfly under a pin.**”

“It was making me feel **not in charge of my own teaching** when throughout my career I have felt in charge.”

Metaphor 3: “Teaching as a Strand of Pearls”

*“It’s all about the pearls. You make a pearl necklace. You **add a few pearls each year**...The strand of pearls **keeps growing**... Teaching is a strand of pearls...”*

*“Nobody wants to talk about keys on a chain... They want to **talk about something valuable**...Pearls are **valuable**...”*

Helen became a “good teacher” because she was focused on **pedagogical growth**, using the “classroom...to reflect upon education as a whole..., as a laboratory...to translate reflections into actions and thus test reflections, actions, and outcomes... (Schwab, 1959/1978)





Metaphor 4: “Braided River Flowing In and Out of Community”

- The novel metaphor **concept of a braided river** employs the to understand a teacher research group’s shared twenty year history. Members of the group were **continually shaped and reshaped** by the group’s interactions and the stories given back to them as a result of their collaboration.
- They used four words to describe their collaborative work:
 - *interconnected*
 - *inter-related*
 - *interwoven*
 - *Intertwined*
- “It reminds me of **the braided rivers** that I saw in Alaska...multiple streams diverging and converging repeatedly over the landscape.”



Metaphor 5: “School as a Rainbow Fish”

- Lydia Thomas came to Destiny High School as a beginning principal. When she arrived, she said she had been assigned **“a rainbow fish”** school to lead. Lydia “coaxed” the rainbow fish metaphor into **somatic and allegorical relationship** with Destiny High School faculty.
- Lydia asked faculty to describe Destiny’s **beautiful design features** (scales). They also described the **problems** (scales) that were making Destiny a very unhappy workplace environment.
- Lydia provided the Destiny faculty with the opportunity to elucidate their school’s story in their own terms.

Meta-Level Analysis



Metaphors
serving as
containers for
meaning



Novel
metaphors as
proxies for
experience



Strong moral
dimensions of
teachers'
knowing
(Estola, 2003)



No one truth,
but metaphors
are truthlike
(Bruner, 1986)

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Importance and Relevance



This research confirms “metaphor is... not our way of ornamenting reality but our most important way of making it” (Booth, 1983, p. 619).



Affords razor-sharp glimpses not often shared



Insights provide new ways of imagining and re-imagining lives of participants



Constitute promising catalysts of change in teaching and teacher education

Interim Conclusion



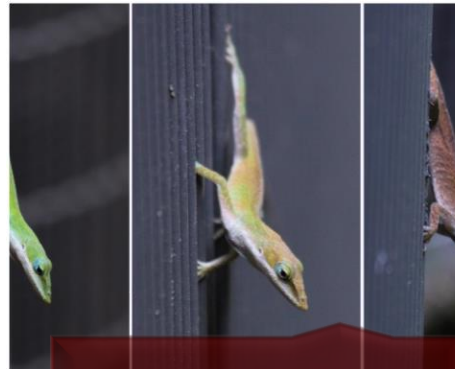
Emergent, novel metaphors bridge experience and meaning (Pope & Gilbert, 1983)



Work's metaphors are generative, not reductive, in their outlook (Pineau, 1994)



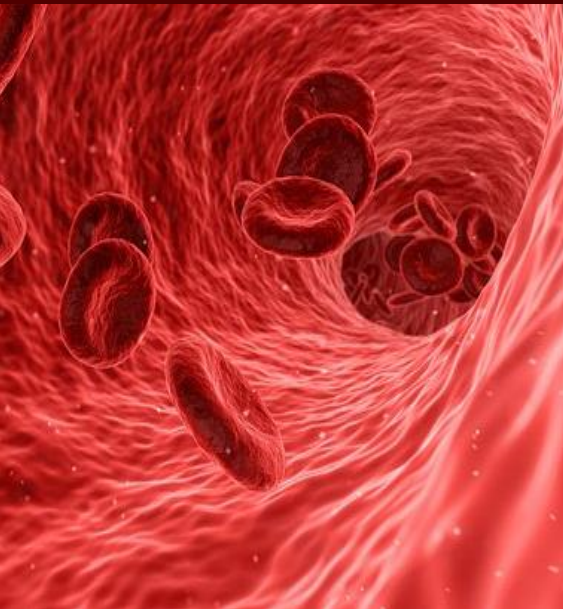
When embraced, metaphors have the ability to "heal and transform" (Greene, 1993)



Metaphors constitute promising catalysts of change



Metaphors of Reciprocal Learning???



An aerial photograph of a complex multi-level highway interchange in a city. The roads are filled with cars, and the surrounding area includes residential buildings with red roofs, green trees, and a circular park area. A large, semi-transparent white circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the title and two text blocks.


Types of Metaphors

Stock metaphors-

metaphors culled from an inventory of commonly available comparisons

Ascribed metaphors-

metaphors chosen by someone else or by you from the available stockpile



What novel, emergent metaphors will you encounter at this Reciprocal Learning Conference?

Novel metaphors

- Imaginative quality and possess generative power (Schön, 1993)
- Compact, able to express the inexpressible... limitless in interpretation (Ortony, 1975)

Emergent metaphors

- Intuitively held (Breault, 1986)
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How will novel metaphors you make up or encounter convey the ideas that:

- ***“Human beings are immersed in webs of reciprocity...”*** (Buber, 1970)
- ***“Each learns from the other, each teaches the other and all are changed....”*** (Bateson, 1994)
- ***“Relationships...are always at least two-way, back-and-forth”*** (LeGuin, 2016)
- ***“Relation is reciprocity”*** (Buber, 1970)
- ***Enables one to “see from the other side”*** (Buber, 1970)



Which novel metaphors will convey the idea that:

“We humans are an infinite network of connections, simple or complicated, direct or hidden, strong or delicate, temporary or long-lasting. A web of connections, infinite but locally fragile, with and among everything...” (LeGuin, 2016)

A large, oval-shaped graphic with a white border. The background is a complex network of glowing orange and yellow lines, resembling a fiber optic or neural network, with several bright starburst points where multiple lines intersect.

How will you capture “relational engagement”:
“the shared moment in which people [find] a way
to look at something together?” (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005)

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<https://teara.govt.nz/en/photograph/18195/braided-river>

<http://pinxpets.com/rainbow-fish-seen-it-while-snorkeling-in-the-red-sea-was-stunningly-beautiful/>

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