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Learning to Work Through Narratives: Identity and Meaning-Making During Digital Storytelling

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Abstract

This chapter provides insights into organisational storytelling, narrative learning and identity work in a socio-cultural context. Hakanurmi's research interrogates the meaning-making process during the story circle, what the single participant felt and learnt through digital storytelling and how the social aspect influenced the individual one. The theoretical position of the research is rooted in narrative theory and socio-cultural theory. Hakanurmi includes the discussions in the story circle as ethnographic data and observes how participants reflect on the past, present and future while storying. The dialogue is analysed in terms of how participants' contributions promote construction of narratives as open, closed or ante-narratives. Communication allowed the co-authoring of narratives, collaborative meaning-making and negotiation of identities.

Introduction

I was commissioned to contribute to a process of organisational change. Among my qualifications was my experience with running digital storytelling (DS) workshops. As I was also a doctoral student, I wanted to use this opportunity to explore the potential of DS as an intervention in an organisational development context and as a research tool. This study will be of interest to those concerned with narrative meaning-making through DS in organisations and those using story work as an alternative method of data collection.

In this chapter I explore the meaning-making process during the story circle in a work context. I use a case study approach to capture the complexities of how stories emerge. The

aim of this research is to consider how individual participants felt, what they learned throughout the process and how the story circle contributed to the stories and narratives, for instance, how the social aspect influenced individuals. I introduce a model for analysing stories as “closed narrative,” “open narrative” and “ante-narrative.”

My research results provide an increased understanding of ways of learning with storytelling and narratives. The intention is to show how DS can provide new insights into organisational development, and how using DS in this context can give us new insights into how the story circle affects the individual’s process and organisational meaning-making. It contributes to the Scholarship of Discovery in that it is empirical, explores theoretical positions and uses DS as a method.

My theoretical position has deep roots in narrative theory, the way people organise their ideas and how they participate in the social contexts of their lives by sharing stories, ideas, culture and communication. In terms of learning theory, this is rooted in socio-cultural theory as discussed by, for example, Vygotsky (Wertsch 1990).

The distinction between story and narrative is often unclear. Story with the function of meaning-making is seen as a narrative with a plot, whereas a story without any meaningful plot is seen as a chronicle or just noise (Czarniawska 2004, pp. 10–11). How researchers use these concepts varies. There is a stark contrast between everyday conversational narrative and sophisticated storytelling. The role of storyteller and listener is not always clear, whereas in the practice of cooperative storytelling, both the storyteller and the listener engage in a joint narrative effort. Oral and conversational discourse draws on many more resources linked to the face-to-face presence of the narrative interlocutors. In oral storytelling, physical presence and interaction are directly connected to the situation, the narrative event and environment, thereby enriching their expressive and communicative registers. Since participants in these highly contextualised narrative events interact in a variety of ways, researchers prefer to use the term “co-narrators” (Brockmeier 2015, pp. 208–209).

My chief aim is to explore how making stories and turning them into narratives give the participants motivation and direction, challenging their identities by challenging and expanding their narratives.

Theoretical Background

A sense of coherence is a prerequisite for learning at work. In order to maintain coherence, identities are continuously under construction, shaped through the way they express feelings and experiences. Individuals’ mediated narratives are rough reconstructions of the past and constitute ways of seeking the ontological security of ‘being themselves’ (Billett 2008, p. 53). Work identities and their renegotiations are necessary elements in professional learning, although it has been argued that workplace learning focuses on participation and building identity rather than learning (Eteläpelto 2009, p. 94, p. 97). Professional development is a collective process in which identity is negotiated and work practices are developed (Hökkä et al. 2014).

Today’s business models and management systems need a postmodern management paradigm. This includes the recognition of the relevance of people’s experiences, emotions and energy in shaping and influencing the quality and performance of organisations (Schiuma 2011, p. 9).

DS can be seen as an intervention to support learning at work because, as a creative and collaborative method, DS offers a forum for collective identity work based on the community's beliefs and cultural narratives.

A number of researchers have reported the impact of storytelling and narratives in learning (Clarke and Adam 2012; Maddin 2012; Yang and Wu 2012; Coventry 2008a, 2008b; Lundby 2008; Boje 2001; Yang 2013; Field and Biesta et al. 2011). Less attention has been paid to DS and learning in organisations where business stories have usually been oral narratives collected from interviews, discussions or observations (Orr 2006). Recently, there has been a renewed interest in narrative learning, which combines narratives, learning, identity and agency. Previous studies, such as the Learning Lives project in the UK, have shown the importance of stories as vehicles for learning from one's life. Life stories play a crucial role in the articulation of a sense of self, which means that narrative learning is also a form of identity work (Field et al. 2011, p. 110).

In the light of recent research on the close connection between identity and agency at work, this issue has assumed greater importance (Eteläpelto et al. 2013; Billett and Pavlova 2005) but there is a lack of research into the use of narrative in work. Educational research has usually concentrated on the finished narratives of learners, employees or teachers, but the storytelling process itself has elicited relatively little interest. Earlier research reveals qualitative differences in life stories, such as the extent of narrative intensity, descriptive–evaluative quality and differing learning outcomes. There appear to be important relationships between styles of narration, forms of narrative learning and agency (Field et al. 2011, p. 110). In closed narratives the meaning-making and reflection are mostly finished; stories represent the existing identity and social impact has a minor role. In open narratives and in ante-narratives, however, narratives are born during the storytelling process, and identity expressions are more co-authored (Boje 2001, 3; Field and Biesta 2011, 68; Brockmeier 2015, 125-126).

Socio-Cultural Theory of Human Learning

Social theory under the influence of Vygotsky provides a rich potential source for understanding and developing processes of social transformation such as education (Wertsch 1990, p. 113; Daniels 2001, p. 9). A Bakhtinian “space of authoring” is to a great extent a particular “zone of development; and one that is extremely important in an explication of the development of identities as aspects of “history-in-person” (Holland 2001, p. 183). The position of storytellers and the context of their narratives are constantly changing. Each story is part of an ongoing dialogue with local, societal and global contours that rearticulate meaning in embedded acts of retrospective sense-making (Boje 2001, p. 78). At the same time, humans are part of figured worlds that consist of human history, the changing positions of humans and an unknown future. Humans also actively modify the social and cultural ecology to which they belong. These figured worlds are socially organised and reproduced (Holland 2001, pp. 41–42).

In the research underpinning this chapter, humans are seen as having an internalised culture within which individual and organisational identities are inextricably linked and affect each other. It is not only the interaction and transformative representations that reshape the understanding of things and individual and social identity but also the joint construction itself that gives shape to expression. Narratives can be seen as an intersubjective attitude to the

joint construction of meaning; a commitment to find common ground on which to build shared understanding (Palinscar 2005, pp. 290–294).

Narrative Learning Through Storytelling

Stories give our lives structure, coherence and meaning. To a large extent, we are the stories about our lives and ourselves. The story is not merely a description of life and self: it constitutes the life and the story. The construction of the story—the storytelling of the life and self—is a central element of the way in which we can learn from our lives through storytelling. This is narrative learning. It is more than learning from stories, it is learning while storying. With stories we often build future-oriented narratives unconsciously and as a by-product of our ongoing actions, interactions and conversations (Field et al. 2011, pp. 50–51).

Narrative learning theory is interested in the role of stories and storytelling in learning processes, the possible relationships between the characteristics of the stories themselves and the potential of narrative and narration for learning and action (Field et al. 2009, pp. 50–51). Narrative learning operates at the intersection of “internal conversations” and the social practices of storytelling. For many, the social opportunities for narrating one’s life story are vehicles for narrative learning. A number of studies have emphasised the importance of a “social practice pedagogy” establishing common ground where people’s narratives can be heard and valued (Field et al. 2011, p. 111). The telling of stories is a future-oriented activity as telling stories is the currency of knowledge-making and knowledge negotiation (Boje 2001, p. 8; Czarniawska 2004, pp. 10–11).

Narratives as Representations of Identity and Reflections of Experiences

Narratives are representations of identities whereas storytelling is a meaning-making tool for constructing identity; narrative is the language of our identity (Brockmeier 2015, pp. ix, 119). Identity is composed of representations about oneself developed in relation to other people and their own systems of representation. Representation of an identity is a dynamic reality, never fully realised and always in a process of reformulation. Different discourses existing in society and organisations make identity construction a creative endeavour (Glăveanu and Tanggaard 2014, p. 14).

Reflection is a key to learning from experience; a process of internally examining and exploring an issue of concern triggered by an experience that results in a changed conceptual perspective. Theories of workplace learning and professional development have stressed the role of social exchange in professional learning (Billett and Somerville 2004). Reflection as an individual activity is often considered to be less effective than reflection in the context of social interaction underpinned by shared knowledge (Hetzner et al. 2012, pp. 548–549). Dewey saw people as belonging to a “common world,” in which the co-construction of knowledge inevitably involves shared understanding and meaning, rather than the diverging individual stances (Field et al. 2009, pp. 20–21).

Telling an appropriate story is a means of gaining validation of one’s identity from listeners. The function of narrative can vary from gaining approval of the social group to the renewal of culture. Here, the position and ecological condition of one’s field of action have an impact. In the course of their [own] development, human beings actively shape the very forces that shape them (Daniels 2001, pp. 1–2). Experiences and stories do not simply happen to us; it is we who make and remake them (Brockmeier 2015, p. 116, p. 119). Similarly, digital stories

as a narrative product do not simply represent our existing identities. Instead, storytelling is closer to dialogue, communication and social co-authoring where audience, context and individual spaces of authorship interact. Identity is constantly being performed and reshaped within performance and in the way we react to others (Glăveanu and Tanggaard 2014, p. 13). Stories do not pre-exist in our minds to be expressed as digital stories but they are actively constructed during the storytelling process. In order to tell narratives, stories with meaning, storytellers must go through an active reflection process exploring their experiences in the past, present and future.

We Don't Find Narratives But Make Them

Narrative is of crucial importance in understanding the complexities of human meaning-making. It is the primary way of investing human experience with meaning. Human behaviour is generated from, and informed by, this meaning. Brockmeier proposes that the intricacies of autobiographical meaning-making are not just represented or expressed by narrative but also that they only come into being through narrative. Stories emerge during the storytelling process. Brockmeier calls this the strong narrative thesis. The strong narrative is a kind of action that takes place in acts of narrative meaning construction. A case in point is the capacity of narrative to create complex temporal scenarios that are typical for the autobiographical process. Another phenomenon illustrating the strong narrative thesis is the “what’s-it-like quality” of conscious awareness, which Brockmeier describes as a critical property of narrative experience (Polkinghorne 1988, p. 1; Brockmeier 2015, pp. ix, 116, 118–119).

Storytellers may speak from different perspectives by separating the narrating and narrated event as far as possible, describing parts of the event in question impartially. They may align narrating and the narrated events, omit the here-and-now from the narrating event and speak from the perspectives of enacted characters inside the narrated events there-and-then. Speakers engage in meta-narration—the overtly and explicitly social interactional elements of discourse—bridging the gap between the narrated event and the storytelling event. When a group or an audience have an impact on the story, co-authoring takes place and it is during the reflection of the storyteller that the narrative is created (Koven 2007, pp. 151–154). The availability to study this co-authoring process, first of all in not only the story circle but also other phases of the production process towards the construction and sharing of the stories, represents one of the most interesting qualities of DS in the context of the scholarship of discovery. This is also discussed in Chaps. 9 and 10 in this book.

Context and Methodology

This chapter takes the form of a case study and narrative analysis of story circle discussions and interviews. The DS project was organised at the end of a two-and-a-half-year organisational staff development project lasting from autumn 2011 until the end of 2013. The aim of the project was to improve customer services, interpersonal and management skills. The company chose a representative sample of storytellers, including men and women, different age groups and positions, such as managers, staff working in customer services, support services, web and call services, contact persons, business services and insurance sales. Some employees over the age of 50 refused to participate because of their limited technical skills and therefore the older age group is under-represented. The stories were produced during February–March 2014 and the premiere took place in April, during the annual celebration of the preliminary report. At this event, 300 employees, including

members of the management group, watched the eight stories which lasted 25 minutes altogether.

The workshop started with a one-and-a-half-hour story circle comprising seven storytellers, two HR employees and two facilitators. I was one of two independent workshop facilitators. Storytellers were instructed to tell a story about a learning experience during the staff development project. Each story was discussed for 12 minutes in the story circle. The story circle of 11 people and 7 interviews performed after the screening were audiotaped and transcribed. The research framework is summarised in Table 11.1.

Research question	Data	Concepts used in analysis
1. Individual experience of storytelling What kind of learning and identity work was done during the storytelling? Difference between written and digital stories?	Interviews	Identity Identity work (Eteläpelto 2009)
2. Social co-authoring of stories At what stage were the narratives when they were presented in the story circle? What kind of meaning-making and co-authoring took place during the story circle?	Story circle discussions	Strong narrative thesis (Brockmeier 2015), ante-narrative (Boje 2001), open and closed narratives (Field and Biesta 2011) and functions of discussion episodes (Iiskala et al. 2010)
3. Time dimensions of storytelling Were stories told from the perspective of past, present or future?	Story circle discussions	Here-and-now, there-and-then (Koven 2012), next-in-future (own addition)

Individual Experience of Storytelling

Common to the discursive spaces was the experience that the story was based on storytellers' own voice. This is a big narrative of our time; a narrative of the individual over the social and at odds with the idea that our minds are outside our bodies, but in the world (Brockmeier 2015, p. 232). It is a social construct to see life in Western culture mainly through individuals; we live, experience and learn as individuals:

It was my own story without anyone else's imprint. (Neil, 29)

Personal experiences also acquired meaning from the group and storytellers were conscious of the social presence, context and audience:

Since this was done at the work place I naturally took certain things into consideration but the story is entirely mine. (Sheila, 56)

The possibility to tell stories with a voice-over and visuals was considered more attractive than written stories. The emotional dimension became natural and things that would otherwise have been difficult to express became part of the stories. Without the visuals the storytellers thought an important and powerful aspect would have been missing. They transformed the workshop into an emotional learning environment, as described by the HR expert of the organisation: “there was a highly charged emotional atmosphere and this made a difference compared with other kind of trainings.”

This visual aspect added more depth to the story. (Paul, 34)

There was a far greater feeling of intimacy and the atmosphere was more personal. ... I mean I'm a pretty extrovert person and so I wouldn't want to show to the whole organisation what my home is like or how I was as a child or anything like that but here I had the courage to lead them into my story. (Olga, 28)

The DS workshop allowed an opportunity to reflect on one's own work and identity. All storytellers found DS fruitful and were grateful to have participated.

at a certain point I didn't really know why we were doing these stories but when we had finished them and especially afterwards when I was discussing the topic with other people I thought that in the end perhaps the aim was to clarify things for myself and say things aloud in public. (Paul, 35)

There were a lot of emotions involved in the storytelling. If I had considered the big audience during the process I might have left something out of the story. On reflection it was just as well we had so little time and it was done at full speed. It was not too purpose-oriented. So it wasn't just like a sales pitch. (Neil, 29)

Social Co-Authoring of Stories as Ethnographic Data Collection

Numerous scholars with an interest in conversation analysis and ethnographic studies have criticised interviews as a mode of data collection, arguing that interviews are, by definition, artificial and lack interaction. By using individual interviews for studying storytelling, I found myself, as researcher, a part of this criticised individualistic paradigm. Based on this self-criticism, I added the one-and-a-half-hour discussion of the story circle as an additional source of data in order to analyse the storytelling process and its social co-authoring elements. Stories told to others are often heteroglossic, and participants' comments connect to each other differently—either facilitating or inhibiting discussion (Koven 2007, p. 165). The story circle discussions include a total of 448 comments, laughing or a short “hmm.” I analysed comments according their function, described in Table 11.2.

Table 11.2
Functions of discussion comments. Modified from the functions of episodes used by Iiskala, Vauras et al. (2011)

Function	Description	Example
TO FACILITATE	The direction of the discussion remains the same and gets stronger during the episode	
Activate	Activating new constructs in line with previous direction	“The client comes and the computer doesn’t work.”
Confirm	Confirming that the previous direction is correct	“Yes working with the client must be difficult if there is no picture in the data-projector and you have to rush round looking for another data-projector so these are live experiences”
TO INHIBIT	The direction of the previous discussion is interrupted during the comment	
Slow	Returning to a previous direction presented in discussion	“and still we have several support services helping us”
Change	Changing the direction of the discussion	“Yes we are like enablers in the background and play an important role so evaluation should not be limited to sales”
Stop	Stopping the direction of previous discussion but a new discussion does not follow in the same direction	“It is good. It is personal”

Based on the analysis, storytellers presented three types of narratives during the story circle, as described in Table 11.3.

Table 11.3 Different forms of narratives during the story circle			
	Closed narrative— narrative with a plot	Open narrative— narrative without a clear plot from the start	Ante-narrative— missing the theme and/or the plot
Description of the narrative process	Meaning-making was to a large extent already done by the storyteller while the role of the other participants was to listen, confirm and ask questions about the story	The narrative was created during the discussion and there were changes in the discussion. Meaning-making was done collaboratively	Discussion comments were still unrelated to a clear plot or meaningful narrative. Meaning-making was done while the storyteller and other participants were reflecting together on things
Function of meaning – making in story circle	Social meaning- making of the personal story	Social and personal meaning-making of personal experiences	The impact of social meaning-making on the experiences of

	Closed narrative— narrative with a plot	Open narrative— narrative without a clear plot from the start	Ante-narrative— missing the theme and/or the plot
			storyteller's and colleagues'

During the story circle, the narratives were at different stages and the quality of social co-authoring varied, as shown in Table 11.4. The anti-narratives and open narratives had more changes, slowing and stops than the closed narratives. Collaborative co-authoring and social meaning-making weaved the open stories into closed narrative plots infused with meaning. In open narratives, there was more space for co-authoring when meaning-making was done between the storyteller and the listeners.

	Closed narratives	Open narratives			Ante-narratives	
	Sheila	Berit	Neil	Mia	Paul	Cathrine
Confirming	68% (61)	76% (44)	65% (48)	67% (49)	57% (34)	63% (59)
Activating	23% (20)	10% (6)	15% (11)	12% (9)	10% (6)	11% (10)
Slowing	6% (5)	5% (3)	9% (7)	11% (8)	8% (5)	9% (6)
Changing	3% (3)	9% (5)	11% (8)	10% (7)	22% (13)	17% (16)
Stopping	–	–	–	–	3% (2)	3% (3)
	(n= 89)	(n = 58)	(n = 74)	(n = 73)	(n = 60)	(n = 94)

Below I give examples from the comments in the story circle of the various forms of narrative.

Closed Narratives: Individual Re-Evaluation of the Experience

Closed narratives were presented in the story circle in a narrative form, with a sequence of events and meaning-making of the experience.

it was easy for me [to start storytelling] and with the given materials I was able to start right away and I almost needed to control a bit myself in this [writing]. Then I had to check the number amount of words so that it wouldn't be too long but basically I just let it go and then afterwards started to count the words and take off some parts so I mean it was a great experience. (Sheila, 56 years)

Open Narrative: A Forum for Social Meaning-Making

When there was a theme for the story without a clear plot, the storytelling process was creative and reflections were shared in a social interaction. Discussions provided different options for the story. Other participants in the story circle were able to identify with the what's-it-like—feelings and expanded on the reflections with aspects the storyteller hadn't thought of before:

- Berit: Do you ever find that you think you have to be better at listening but then, as you are thinking this you find you are no longer listening? (all laugh together)
- Berit: So, oh my God...
- Neil: Exactly! I think I'm listening but in reality I am concentrating on trying to listen and so I can't listen properly!
- Berit: That's what I've found a couple of times
- Neil: Well yeah. That's why I wrote that you shouldn't just listen. You need to really stop and think what the other person is saying, and what their words really mean. So really you should listen and not have to think about how well you are listening.
- HR- trainee: Yeah, it is really good to realize this.
(all laugh together)
- Mary (HR-employee): Do you also find that thinking about what you are going to respond actually stops you from listening properly?
- Neil: Yeah, yeah. That's the thing especially you are in a hurry and need to do a report in a certain way. You start thinking about how exactly you're going to do it and then you don't listen properly to what the air traffic control man is saying and what he actually wants you to do (all laugh together). And my answer isn't what the air traffic control man actually asked me about and then I have to go through it all over again and it's dialogue up there in the air and all kinds of Finnair and others have to wait there when this guy has finished (raucous laughing together) so that they can give their flight report too.

The group reflected on the difficulty of listening, the reasons for this and how one might listen more effectively. The discussion allowed the deconstruction of the expertise and listening skill to take place. It is a skill to know when to listen on a one-to-one basis and when to listen to the customer as a salesman. Laughing together was a strong expression in confirming the direction of the emerging story.

Ante-Narrative: From Discontinuity to Co-Authored Meaning-Making

Ante-narratives leave space for the renewal of the identity. Catherine found it hard to find a story to tell. She worked in the organisation's support services. In the story circle the group tried to define the identity for this unit:

I'd just like to say that many people working in the support services probably think what has this got to do with us [the staff development project]. (Cathrine 56)

During the discussion, there were 16 changes such as new beginnings, points of views, examples and suggested visuals. The process of meaning-making was not a linear and continuous trajectory, consisting of an accumulation of signs, which are organised progressively (De and Francesca Freda 2016, p. 139). Other people in the group found several concrete instances where the role of support services could be demonstrated: "Without you customer service and selling would just not be possible." "And although you are in the background of every single web-meeting you are still there even though you can't be seen."

The discussion was interactive and elicited negotiation while making Catherine see her role in support services differently. At times, it was hard to determine who the primary storyteller was because events were experienced by everyone. The discussions suggested a place for support services in the chain of customer services, and Catherine found her own voice based on a professional identity which was different from that of the others. The value she herself placed on support services became visible. Catherine created a story about the role of support services and the responsibility of each individual to learn to use information technology. This she did by using her own voice.

Stories from the Future

Narratives involve multiple events and sets of participants and are thus inherently interdiscursive. The storyteller must negotiate at least two speaker roles: narrator (of the narrating event) and a character (in the narrated event). There are a number of ways of orchestrating events and roles, resulting in different types of narrative performances. A speaker’s sense of having a coherent “identity” in a narrative emerges from the multivoiced orchestration of different here-and-now, there-and-then, self-and-other roles. When determining which speaker roles are present in a narrative discourse, the general question is “Who is doing the talking?” (Koven 2012, pp. 151–154). “Who” means here an identity of the past, present or future.

Discussion around stories was partly future-oriented, even though the stories dealt with past experiences. A future-oriented way of talking is an extension of reflecting on the present. There are comments on how identity is now and how identity will be in the future. This kind of identity work provides a basis for agency with an impact on practice. The difficulties of the past were helping the next form of identity become visible. A sense of coherence was represented when past, present and future were described, and reflected on, as mixed (Table 11.5).

Table 11.5
Story circle comments classified according to time-scale. The same comment could include several time-scales

	Sheila	Berit	Neil	Mia	Paul	Cathrine
Then-and-there	8% (8)	19% (13)	9% (8)	14% (12)	14% (14)	7% (8)
Here-and-now	84% (82)	74% (50)	74% (62)	74% (61)	60% (59)	82% (90)
Next-in-future	8% (8)	7% (5)	17% (14)	12% (10)	26% (26)	11% (12)
	n= 98	n = 68	n = 84	n = 83	n = 99	n = 110

In the following comment, past, present and future are mixed (present in cursive, past as bold and the future underlined):

“ Perhaps you just don’t understand what the other person is saying, or with customers you think, “is the meeting successful? Will there be any sales or not?” Or it may be a situation with a friend—a situation where the other person thinks you aren’t even listening you still don’t get it so it was the kind of situation where in reality it suddenly became clear when my friend—who I have known since childhood said that out of all his friends, I am the worst listener. It was a situation I hadn’t understood up till then and suddenly I found myself talking about why it is like this and then you get hurtful criticism. And in this [staff development] project we were talking about the differences between people and how the

ways you can face the facts can differ so much. This was discussed several times and this inspires you to undertake a development project on yourself.

Discussion

Narratives provide a rich forum for learning. Moreover, they enable individual identity work to be carried out while renewing the values and practices of work. The story circle as a social practice within DS supports the co-authoring of narratives and is also a rich source of data when we seek to understand both the individual and the collective learning processes. Interdiscursive groups provide a forum for social meaning-making. For facilitators it is important to understand that learning occurs while storytelling—not only by the telling of and listening to closed stories. The core of narrative is social, and the more open participants are in the story circle, the more they challenge the existing identities and enable the discovery of new aspects of identity. Telling stories in a group helps them to see and tell more than when alone. Coherence increases at individual and social level when co-authored discovery is part of the process.

The data of this research comprised transcribed discussions, but it is obvious that co-authoring is more than just spoken words. Laughing together, for instance, meant conforming to the narrative, belonging together as a group and sharing similar values. Analysis of video data would highlight further nuances of interactions and co-authoring. The nature of meaning-making in, for example, online interaction, which plays a crucial role in modern working life, is a subject for further research. Storytelling may also differ in groups were people with different backgrounds, values and cultural narratives meet.

In order to be innovative, organisations need to find new ways to support employees in identity work and in the remaking of their own agency. If we extend an educational culture based on individualistic and cognitive practices so that it embraces socio-cultural and embodied practices, storytelling should have a place in the education of adults throughout their working life. It may be beneficial for organisations to consider how they can promote storytelling as part of the organisation's culture. It is not enough to simply organise individual psychologically orientated sessions with therapists or clinical supervisors, or to increase knowledge and skills. Simultaneously, a sense of coherence should be fostered and the identity work of employees should be valued. It is not a question of individually produced stories but rather of co-authored reflections, and knowledge acquired through social discovery of narratives (Boyer cop. 1990, p. 24).

Reformulation of identity is an essential process when employees and organisations are developing their agency and practices. There is evidence that DS has potential in promoting a sense of coherence and a renewal of identities. Telling stories about work at work, works.

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