



Centre for Narrative Research, University of East London

Narrative research and participatory methods for social transformation:

**A workshop with National Centre for Research Methods Visiting Scholars, Professors
Jill Bradbury and Michelle Fine,**

Friday November 4, 2-5pm, Room EB1.41, Docklands Campus

Narrative research is a dynamic and growing field in the social sciences. It frequently engages with issues of social justice and social change, particularly in the current context of global inequalities, conflict, mobility and precarity. How to address these issues in our methods, for instance through the involvement of research participants, and through relating research processes and analyses to social transformation, is a common and complex question.

In November 2016, graduate students and researchers will have the opportunity to develop their work in this field with NCRM International Visitors, Professor Jill Bradbury and Professor Michelle Fine, at UEL. **Jill Bradbury:** Visual methodologies are relatively commonplace as a means to collect data (e.g. photo voice or body mapping) and often used in combination with narrative interviewing, but less typically utilised in the analysis of data. Using examples from my own work, I will first show how and why these techniques are particularly helpful when stories are difficult to articulate and how they might facilitate new perspectives. Secondly, we will: 1) explore the argument around theory-method and possibilities for action; 3) study workshop data and analysis from different empirical studies, all of which are focused on transformative possibilities for marginalised groups in unequal contexts of intersectional asymmetries, e.g. Marikana youth, school leavers, black women scientists, informal women traders, young unemployed men, young homeless people, child-headed households.

Michelle Fine: Drawing on the cognitive ‘mapping’ practices of both Winnicott and then Milgram and Jodelet, we will explore how critical qualitative research can be ‘opened’ with an activity that engages the aesthetic (as in Dewey’s sense of aesthetic methods — provocative, generative), inviting the ‘IRREAL’ in Husserl’s language, and exploring the borderlands in Anzaldua’s texts - to understand identities, relations and movements over time. Cognitive or identity maps have been used in our research with women experiencing domestic violence, low income graduates from schools of concentrated poverty, immigrant youth formerly incarcerated women, and most recently students of colour in the university to trace the gifts, and the struggles, of young people

Participants will be asked to read preparatory papers from Bradbury and Fine, that we will provide, and to bring 2 pages (with ethical clearance) of transcripts or images for discussion, or to consult about other material they might bring (in this case, please email Corinne Squire c.squire@uel.ac.uk)

To register, please email Elizabeth Shrimpton e.shrimpton@uel.ac.uk

Biographical notes

Jill Bradbury is Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand where she is co-ordinator of postgraduate studies. She has worked extensively on action-research projects engaged with transformation in South African higher education and more recently, her narrative work focuses on questions of youth identities, (dis)continuities between traumatic histories and possible futures and the ways these interact in the present. She has been the lead researcher on several large scale research projects: 1) *Fast Forward* action research programme at UKZN (2003 -2009); 2) *Youth Identities* (2012-2014) and 2) *REAP* (Reaching for Excellent Achievement Programme, 2011 – 2014). She has twenty-five years of teaching experience in the South African higher education sector and has supervised approximately 50 postgraduate students, many of whom have utilised narrative methodologies to focus on multiple dimensions of inequality and possibilities for individual and social change. She is the founding lead researcher on the South African NEST (Narrative Enquiry for Social Transformation) network launched in 2015, connecting and facilitating interdisciplinary research from psychology, literature, film, music, politics and sociology.

Michelle Fine is a Distinguished Professor of Critical Psychology, Women's Studies, American Studies and Urban Education at the Graduate Center, CUNY. Fine is a university teacher, educational activist and researcher who works on social justice projects with youth, women and men in prison, educators and social movements on the ground. Fine taught at the University of Pennsylvania from 1981 – 1991, when she was co-director of the Philadelphia Schools Collaborative, a member of Women Organized Against Rape and the National Coalition for the Defense of Battered Women. She has authored many 'classics' – books and articles on high school push outs, adolescent sexuality – called the 'missing discourse of desire,' the impact of college in prison, the struggles and brilliance of the children of incarcerated adults, the wisdom of Muslim American youth. She writes on the injustice of high stakes testing, the racial abuse of mass incarceration of people of color and queer youth, and she loves to conduct research with young people who know intimately the scars of injustice and the laughter of surviving the streets of New York. A pioneer in the field of youth Participatory Action Research, and a founding faculty member of the Public Science Project, Fine has been involved with a series of participatory studies with youth and elders, from across different racial, ethnic and social class backgrounds, to investigate circuits of dispossession, and circuits of critical resistance.