

7-23-2012

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A CASE STUDY OF A TAIWANESE TEACHERS' GROUP EXPLORING
NARRATIVE PEDAGOGY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Ruo-Wan Lei

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August 2012

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Taiwanese college students regard writing as the most difficult part of their study of English. Teaching writing then becomes a daunting task for Taiwanese college teachers. Narrative writing has been used as a method to enhance student interest and to improve ESL students' English writing. Few studies talk about Taiwanese college teachers' beliefs about and experience with teaching narrative writing. This study aims at explicating Taiwanese college teachers' views of narrative. A teacher narrative study group was set up to explore the gap between narrative theory and its application in the local Taiwanese context.

This qualitative research includes individual interviews, focus group interviews and classroom observations. Four Taiwanese college teachers were recruited to participate in the group discussions. The group discussions were divided into two rounds. In the first round of group discussion, we discussed what narrative is and whether narrative writing is academic writing. After that, I went to observe how each of my participants taught narrative writing. In the second round, group discussions mainly focused on what they had learned, what impressive stories they remembered and what problems they encountered in teaching narrative writing.

The research findings show that discussing narrative writing is distinct from teaching narrative writing. Before my participants started to teach narrative writing, we discussed the narrative theory, and after they taught narrative writing, we reflected on teaching narrative writing grounded on practical concerns related to the Taiwanese composition context. The four

participants' classroom teaching tells that the language barrier does stand in the way of Taiwanese college students' storytelling. The use of first language, code-switching and drawing are tools which can assist students with their language issues in storytelling. It is not the English proficiency of the students which plays a crucial role in applying narrative writing to a Taiwanese context, but rather the anti-narrative views of the teachers. Though this dissertation research has limited progress introducing storytelling to Taiwanese composition, it brings us a step forward in establishing the significance of storytelling in Taiwanese academics.