

Critical incidents through narrative inquiry: Stories of pre-service teachers' teaching practicum

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Abstract

This paper aims to present the value of two methodologies, narrative inquiry and critical incidents, as determined by an analysis of qualitative data to gain insight into Thai EFL pre-service teachers' self-efficacy during teaching practicum. Saliency of the data was identified through critical incidents and narrative enquiry was employed to explain the saliency. The study was conducted during a 16-week period of teaching practicum, in the first semester of the academic year, at different practice schools in a province near Bangkok. The participants of the study were six Thai EFL pre-service teachers who enrolled in the teaching practicum course in the final year of their study. The qualitative data were collected by using teaching diaries, semi-structured interviews, and monthly seminars. Then, narrative inquiry and critical incidents were employed to analyse the data. Details of the incidents in the forms of narratives provided meaningful insights into factors that influenced the participants' self-efficacy. The combination of two methodologies allowed the researchers had more insight into what the participants thought and felt.

1. Introduction

Pre-service teachers' teaching experiences are considered to be important for teacher development. Teacher development means the opportunities that one is given to progress or to grow as professionals in teaching (Underhill, 1986). During the practicum, pre-service teachers have an opportunity to apply teaching theories they have learned in their teacher education programme to the actual practice in the classroom (Iaochite & Costa Filho, 2016; Köksal & Genç, 2019). Experiencing teaching practicum could be considered as a formative time for a pre-service teacher to develop his or her conception of teaching (Richards & Farrell, 2011). It is also a period when a pre-service teacher constructs, deconstructs and reconstructs his or her understanding on what it means to be a teacher (Daud, 2017).

It is widely known that teaching practicum relates to self-efficacy (Atay, 2007; Iaochite & Costa Filho, 2016) which refers to "people's belief in their capacity to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to exercise control over given events" (Ozer & Bandura, 1990: p.472). Self-efficacy is considered a crucial motivation for teacher development. It is one of the key factors affecting teachers' success or failure (Jaafari, Karami, & Solemani, 2012). Teacher's self-efficacy is a relevant feature for the effectiveness of the teaching activities (Barni et al., 2019) because it is a powerful motivation influencing teachers' teaching behaviour and effort put into the endeavor (Klassen & Tze, 2014). Bandura (1997) suggested that teachers with high self-efficacy persevere in their instruction to contribute to student achievement. In contrast, teachers with low self-efficacy are more likely to decline in their instruction which affects students' learning outcomes. Therefore, development of teacher's self-efficacy is crucial for the teaching profession.

Most previous research of pre-service teachers' self-efficacy were conducted in quantitative and mixed - methods approaches, (Arslan,2019; Hernandez ,2020; Martins et al., 2015; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016) focusing on the level of pre-service teachers' self-efficacy, sources of self-efficacy, and the relationship of pre service teachers' self-efficacy and student achievement. The findings mostly revealed the quantities, percentages and the positive or negative relationship of teachers' self-efficacy and students' learning achievement. However, the findings could not reveal the process of dynamics of self-efficacy. In addition, in most qualitative studies (Can, 2015; Iaochite and Costa Filho, 2016; Arcelay-Rojas, 2018), the researchers "pre-determined" and grouped what they wanted to study, such as an influential source of teachers' self-efficacy, situations affecting teachers' self-efficacy, and perception of teachers' self-efficacy, from the collected data. For better understanding and more meaningful insight about self-efficacy, critical incidents and narrative inquiry were suitably employed in the study to analyse the data.

2. Critical incidents

Critical incidents usually refer to an unanticipated and undesirable event or a challenge in a certain context (Brookfield, 1990) "which marks a significant turning point or change in the life of a person or in some social phenomenon" (Tripp, 1993, p. 24). The thick descriptions of the respondents' critical incidents allow for a deeper understanding of the details and factors influencing such behaviours (Bott & Tourish, 2016).

In the educational field, critical incidents are not necessarily sensational events. They might be minor incidents that happen in every school. However, to classify something as a critical incident, it depends on the value judgment teachers make; based on the significance and the meaning that the teachers attribute to the incident (Angelides, 2001; Tripp, 1993).

Critical incidents, developed by Flanagan (1954), has become the widely used analytical method for collecting participants' feedback which identifies either the success or failure of an incident. This method has been used in various disciplines, such as nursing (Byrne, 2001), psychology (Caldwell & Vera, 2010), hospitality (Callan, 1998), and teacher education (Epperly, 2017).

In the education arena, Richards and Farrell (2005) mentioned that critical incidents are unplanned and unanticipated events that occur during a lesson. Critical incidents are used to "trigger insights about teaching and learning" (Richards & Farrell, 2005: p. 113). Richards and Farrell asserted that critical incidents were analysed so that teachers could learn from them, leading to an improvement in their teaching. Such incidents could be a reflection that provided an opportunity for teachers "to learn more about their teaching, their learners and themselves" (ibid, p. 114). A critical incident is used as a means for the teachers to perform self-reflection (Mohammed, 2016). Critical incidents can obviously provide some benefits for teachers and pre-service teachers; they may affect teachers' professional development as they may lead teachers to select one action over another when encountering similar situations (Measor,1985; Woods,1993). Moreover, critical incidents were employed to examine the development of pre-service teachers' reflective and critical thinking skills during their teaching practicum (Griffin, 2003). Critical incidents helped pre-service teachers explore their beliefs and develop enthusiasm to teach (Wilson & Thornton, 2007). Goodell (2006) analyzed math pre-service teachers' reports of critical incidents and found that pre-service teachers insightfully addressed significant aspects of teaching, such as factors facilitating teaching and barriers to teaching. Bozdin and Park's (2002) study on pre-service teachers also revealed that critical incidents were helpful in preparing pre-service teachers to be better prepared and reflect on the situations that they would encounter during their classroom teaching.

It has been an important approach in teacher preparation to stimulate “better classroom practices” and teaching in schools (Watts et al., 1997, p. 1,025). Richards and Farrell (2005) mentioned that critical incidents may activate insights of students’ learning and teachers’ teaching profession.

According to the previous studies, it can be found that critical incidents can be used effectively for qualitative and in-depth studies in teaching and teacher education areas. They can reveal deep understanding, especially abstract features, such as development, beliefs, enthusiasm, and insight of pre-service teachers towards teaching profession. Critical incidents are an analytical methodology to discover the significance of being better teachers and having effective teaching, resulting in positive student achievement. From this methodology, it can be said that critical incidents form valuable data for reflection and they are related to something that pre-service teachers have learned and perhaps have brought about changes in their professions and lives.

3. Narrative inquiry

Narrative inquiry is an approach that focuses on the use of stories as data. The idea of narrative inquiry is that stories are collected as a means of understanding experience as lived and told. When using narrative inquiry, it is important that the researcher is not only able to ask questions that elicit stories but also that she/he is able to position her/himself so that stories can be analysed effectively (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007).

In the area of teaching and teacher education, narrative inquiry is acknowledged as a powerful tool to reflect on what practical knowledge teachers have and to find out how that knowledge is formulated (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Besides helping teachers to reflect on their prior instruction and beliefs about being a teacher (Rushton, 2004), narrative inquiry seems “especially useful to capture the situated complexities of teachers’ work and classroom practice” (Lyon, 2007: p. 614). Narrative inquiry can capture the richness of teachers’ experiences as a central focus for conducting research (Carter, 1993). Narratives can provide and expand upon rich background for understanding the situations in which teachers come to know what they know and make the decisions that they do (Rushton, 2004). In the context of teaching practice and pre-service teachers, through narrative inquiry, pre-service teachers could develop their understanding and knowledge of teaching, and could have an image of the type of teachers they wanted to be (Olson, 2000). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) stated that using narrative inquiry could indicate the importance of the events when pre-service teachers and their students meet in the teaching-learning environment. Narratives provide insight into the pre-service teachers’ practical knowledge and experiences in teaching contexts. With narratives, pre-service teachers are exposed deeply to teaching professional views, issues and knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000).

Narrative stories, which are translated from lived experienced, are useful and advantageous for teaching profession and research. Drawing upon previous works by several researchers, Knight (2009) used narrative inquiry to help pre-service teachers prioritize the events in their lives during teaching practicum. Through pre-service teachers’ reflective writing, she asserted that when pre-service teachers were in the process of deciding which events to discuss, they knew the priority and the significance of the stories. Noel (2020) employed narrative inquiry to reveal that a teacher preparation program influenced pre-service teachers’ self-efficacy. Besides, three strategies should be provided for enhancing teacher preparation, namely: increasing pedagogical application, implementing classroom management into teacher education curricula, and incorporating opportunities to explore the extensive demands of the teaching profession.

Using narrative inquiry, Yuan and Lee (2016) analyzed the emotions of one male pre-service teacher, finding that both positive and negative emotions through narratives contributed to his self-belief as a pre-service teacher. They emphasized the need for additional studies to “explore the transition from the pre-service to in-service context, with a focus on the emotions new teachers might experience and how these emotions relate to their learning and identity formation in the real teaching context” (Yuan & Lee, 2016, p. 838).

Narrative inquiry helps researchers and participants understand their lived experiences deeply. Moreover, the researchers can use the approach to discover how to help pre-service teachers improve their teaching, as well as their emotions. The participants could reflect on themselves, about what they have done and why they have made those decisions. Using narrative inquiry can be advantageous for both researchers and participants, especially for professional development.

When critical incidents and narrative inquiry are employed together, the more insightful findings can be revealed more clearly. Digging deeper into their critical incidents, people can make better sense of their experiences. The combination of two methodologies allows the participants to reflect on critical points that influence how they conduct the practice of teaching, and the thinking and problem-solving they employ during said practice. As it can be seen in this study, focusing on the pre-service teachers’ self-efficacy during teaching practicum, the employment of the two methodologies effectively reveals that information.

The two analytical tools in this study are related to each other due to the relationship of “life events”, professional growth, and meaning making processes. Critical incidents help reveal important events or turning points in participants’ lives while narrative inquiry provides details of the situation. Webster and Mertova (2007) recommend the use of narratives because “narrative is well suited to addressing the complexities and subtleties of human experience in teaching and learning” (p. 1). The use of the integration of the two tools supported the researchers to more clearly understand the study and to develop more insightful findings.

4. Research context

This study was conducted in the context of a 16-week teaching practicum which is the crucial period of pre-service teachers. The participants of this study were six Thai EFL pre-service teachers who enrolled in a teaching practicum and taught in different practice schools in a province near Bangkok. They were all females and taught English as a foreign language at their different practice schools. All their names were pseudonyms: Nancy, Michelle, Anna, Marissa, Fiona, and Ginger. Four participants: Anna, Fiona, Michelle and Marissa, were assigned to teach in secondary schools, one participant; Ginger, was assigned to teach in vocational college and one participant; Nancy, was positioned to teach in a primary school. Their practice schools were different in terms of school size, level, and the English proficiency of the students. The participants’ teaching methodological knowledge and English proficiency were at a high level. They were considered the best pre-service teachers of the 17 pre-service teachers. During teaching practicum, the participants worked closely with their mentor teachers and other school teachers. The data of this study were collected using narratives from diaries and told stories of the participants from semi-structured interviews and monthly seminars.

5. Identifying critical incidents

Due to the aim of this study, which is exploring the factors affecting the pre-service teachers' self-efficacy, critical incidents must be correctly identified. In this study, it can be found that a number of critical incidents occurred during the teaching practicum. This is because teaching practicum is an open situation in which unexpected and unplanned events can happen. Even though the data collection instruments were diaries, semi-structured interviews and monthly seminars, the data from the instruments were complex and could not be predicted. Thus, critical incidents were employed to analyse the complexity of the qualitative data. Critical incidents were revealed from the diaries which were written to describe the events happening in the classroom, activities employed, the participants' feelings, and their teaching confidence. The researchers first identified the critical incidents from the diaries and cross-checked with the participants to ensure the identified critical incidents in the diaries were perceived as critical by the participants. In this study, critical incidents were defined based on the following criteria: 1) they were unusual events, and 2) they affected the pre-service teachers' feelings and teaching confidence. After the diaries were handed in, one of the researchers read them several times to identify critical incidents, to expand upon critical incidents from the diaries, and monthly seminars, and semi-structured interviews were used to gather more information. Additionally, the researcher contacted the participants through telephone calls and line messaging, if the data was unclear and lacked information. The interpretive methodologies were used when the participants were asked to retell the critical incidents found in the diaries and initially identified by the researchers. During phone interviews, if the participants still focused on the stories and confirmed the criticality of the stories, the incidents were regarded as critical incidents. If the participants denied the confirmation of the incidents, they were deleted from the data. The participants' confirmation was the key in identifying critical incidents. Some incidents were deleted when the participants did not agree with the researchers' interpretations. For example, after finished reading Anna's diaries, the researcher found that she put some 'crying emoticons' in her diaries. The researcher interpreted this event to be one of her critical incidents. During the semi-structured interview, Anna mentioned this event and the 'crying' symbols again. However, when checking with her, she did not think it was critical. Another example was from Ginger's case. After reading Ginger's diaries, it was found that she was nervous on the teaching examination day because an American instructor came to her class. From the researcher's interpretation, it should be one of her critical incidents. Nevertheless, when she was interviewed and telephoned, she said that she was fine with that situation; nothing serious happened on that day. At first, she was just nervous, but later, she could control her emotion. She did not confirm that this incident was critical, so it was not selected and then was deleted from the data.

In sum, it could be considered that the qualitative data gained from critical incidents provide real and salient information. That was because the information was revealed and confirmed from the participants themselves.

6. Narrating stories: digging deeper into the incidents

In this study, narrative inquiry was used in forms of oral and written information. The written data were gained from the teaching diaries while the spoken data were presented in semi-structured interviews and monthly seminars. After the critical incidents were identified, they were further investigated through narrative inquiry to reveal more insightful findings which were factors affecting pre-service teachers' self-efficacy during their teaching practicum, all of which was confirmed to be critical incidents through telephone calls. Through narrative inquiry, it was obvious that the participants had the opportunity to reflect on what they had experienced in their lives.

In the narrative inquiry process, the researchers asked the participants to keep teaching diaries. The teaching diaries were compulsory of teaching practicum; the participants had to make an entry in the teaching diaries, either in Thai or in English, after they finished teaching each class. The teaching diaries were weekly sent to one of the researchers. The semi-structured interviews occurred after the researcher read the diaries, listened to the monthly seminars several times and created some clarifying questions for the participants concerning sources of self-efficacy. The semi-structured interviews were conducted once a month, for 45 to 60 minutes, in a supportive environment.

The oral narratives, interview questions based on self-efficacy and additional information from each participant, revealed the factors affecting self-efficacy of the participants. The researchers employed both deductive and inductive method to analyse the data. Deductive method was used to categorize the factors affecting self-efficacy from the written and oral narratives. For example, a participant's teaching confidence was low because her teaching was not effective (behavioural factor). The researchers also used inductive method, re-reading and listening to the interviews, to look for new themes. Moreover, one of the researchers had to check with the participants to confirm the data. From the oral and written narratives, the researchers received more real and more in-depth information from the participants. The narration in the diaries, during the semi-structured interviews, and in phone conversations could identify the criticality of the incidents. The researcher employed questions, e.g., "Could you give more details about the event on that day?", "Can you remember what happened during the lesson?", "Can you tell me again about it?", "How did the event affect your feeling and your teaching confidence?", and "Is that event really important for you?", to guide the participants narrated their stories. Accordingly, their storytelling was a reflection which provided an understanding of how narrative inquiry indicated the factors affecting the pre-service teachers' self-efficacy. The information from the participants' teaching diaries and semi-structured interviews described the pre-service teachers' teaching experiences relating to self-efficacy.

7. In-depth understanding from narratives

According to the data analysed in terms of critical incidents and narrative inquiry, the saliency and the depth of the data were revealed. In order to get the salient data, the two methodologies needed to be used alongside each other. It can be seen from the following sample excerpts.

The first excerpt was from Anna's diaries. She revealed her feeling of successful teaching which was resulted from the students' participation and classroom atmosphere.

*"I really appreciated my students' behaviour. On that day, they tried to help me by being super good students. I was so delighted that my lesson was successful. 😊😊
In the end, my students got sufficient knowledge from my teaching." (Anna, Diary, Week 4)*

The excerpt above was one of Anna's critical incidents since the event affected Anna's emotion and her teaching confidence. It could also be seen in the emoticons in her entry. It means that she was really impressed with her students' behaviour on that day. To make sure that this event was really critical for Anna, the researcher got back to her again by asking her why she thought the students' participation was very important for her teaching. Then, she gave the researcher the answer and retold the story on that day. After checking, Anna confirmed and gave more information about her successful teaching.

The other two excerpts below were parts of Michelle's and Fiona's diaries. They revealed their positive emotion towards the verbal encouragement from significant others.

“After the first observation, the effect of the observation made me happy. I felt really pleased when I was praised by my supervisor. It made me feel more confident in teaching. My weakness, observed by my supervisor, didn't affect much on my teaching confidence. I would be careful and would employ what my supervisor advised me for my next lesson.” (Michelle, Diary, Week 4)

“After receiving the encouragement from my mentor, my teaching confidence was higher. My mentor teacher was excellent. She supported me every time I taught in my class. Besides, she gave me an encouragement on the day that I was uncertain about my teaching exam.” (Fiona, Diary, Week 13)

For Michelle and Fiona, the excerpts above were considered critical incidents. The incidents revealed pleasant emotions when Michelle was praised by her university supervisor. Likewise, when Fiona was encouraged from her mentor, she felt more confident. Also, what they wrote down on their diaries exposed positive feelings and teaching confidence. It can be noticed from the words, phrases, and sentences, such as 'happy', 'pleased', 'more confident in teaching', and 'my teaching confidence is higher'. Again, to make sure that the researcher and the two participants had the same agreement about the critical incidents, interviews over the telephone were conducted. Michelle and Fiona were asked to retell their stories. Moreover, they confirmed that the incident was critical because it made their teaching better. One day later, the researcher realized that some details were missing from Fiona's account. The researcher contacted her and asked her a few more questions: why she thought that the encouragement from her mentor was very important, and how the mentor's encouragement could boost her teaching confidence. Therefore, the researcher needed to call Fiona twice to ask her for missing information about encouragement from her mentor.

The use of critical incidents and narrative inquiry revealed the other perspectives of the verbal feedback from the significant others. Negative comments would not always make a pre-service teacher feel discouraged.

“My first observation was in the weakest class but my students helped me to please my supervisor. They gave me really good participation in class. I used 'timeline' as a teaching technique for my grammar lesson. I tried to make my lesson less complicated by using some Thai as a medium in my English class. That was because my students were not good at English and the lesson on that day was quite hard for them to understand. They were going to have a mid-term test soon. So, I needed to explain the content in Thai. After that period, my supervisor gave me a comment. He was not pleased with my instruction in Thai. But my students understood well what I taught them. The comment from my supervisor didn't make my teaching confidence low. Most of them could make complex sentences correctly. I was pleased with their learning achievement.” (Ginger, Diary, Week 4)

As soon as the researcher finished reading Ginger's diary, this event was marked as a critical incident because the confidence of Ginger's teaching was generated from her own teaching ability. The researcher considered this event critical because it made Ginger proud of her teaching and her students' achievements. As can be seen from the sentences, such as 'The comment from my supervisor didn't make my teaching confidence low', and 'I was pleased with their (students') achievement'. The negative feedback could not make her feel down. When Ginger was asked to have an interview, she still mentioned this event. After a one-on-one interview, the researcher called Ginger to retell the story on that observation day. The story was still the same. To give some time for Ginger to contemplate this event, on the next day, before this incident was decided to be critical, the researcher texted Ginger and asked her to make sure if this event was really critical for her. Then, she admitted it was one of her critical incidents.

Regarding the excerpts above, it was found that the critical incidents through the participants' narratives can express different perspectives towards the verbal feedbacks from the significant others. These two methodologies can reveal that pre-service teachers' teaching confidence seems to be higher when they get positive verbal feedback. However, negative feedbacks from university supervisors could not lower pre-service teachers' teaching confidence.

The next excerpt belongs to Marissa. According to Marissa's interview, the school activity had an impact on her feelings and her teaching attitude. Her teaching was unsuccessful, but she could not do anything to make it better. She expressed her bad feelings towards the school activity.

*"On that day, I felt frustrated that my lesson was intervened by a **school activity**. My students ran down quickly to the field. I was in the class room alone, and didn't know what to do. I could not finish my lesson. I had no time to check whether my students could answer the questions from the audio they had listened or not. I could say that my teaching was not as good as I planned. It was unsuccessful. **The school system**, again, made my teaching problematic. It was not fair for me. Instead of gaining English knowledge for the final exam, my students did something less important. I was really bored with it. I was afraid that my students couldn't reach the goal of listening comprehension."* (Marissa, Interview)

The excerpt from Marissa's interview was one of her critical incidents. That was because this incident affected her feelings and her teaching ability. The researcher noticed from her tone of voice that she felt really bored and hopeless when she talked about this incident. She felt more upset when she talked about the shortage of time for her lesson and her students' final exam. The critical incident was initially identified from the diaries by the researcher. Then, it was asked about again when Marissa was interviewed. She seemed to agree that it was one of the critical incidents during her teaching practicum. However, after the interview, the researcher made that the incident indicated in the interview was really critical for her. Then, she confirmed that it was a critical incident.

The data above present the use of critical incidents through narrative inquiry during teaching practicum. Not all incidents were critical; some of them were critical in the researcher's opinions but they were not critical for the participants. For instance, in the case of Anna's "crying emoticons", the researcher thought it was critical for her. However, when the researcher confirmed with her, she did not think it was critical. Thus, critical incidents only read from the data by researchers may not be accurately identified. Rather, the critical incidents should be selected carefully with the confirmation and consideration of the participants after they are asked to retell their stories.

8. Discussion

The use of critical incidents and narrative inquiry as analytical tools was useful and proper for this qualitative study. The critical incidents which happened during teaching practicum were narrated through narrative inquiry. After the data were analysed, it was found that critical incidents alongside narrative inquiry exposed deep and meaningful insight from the participants. These two methodologies are helpful for qualitative studies. The main point is that they can be used to make sense and clearer pictures of abstract matters in many research fields.

Critical incidents with narrative inquiry revealed the factor affecting pre-service teachers' self-efficacy. Therefore, using critical incidents through narrative inquiry is a main focus for this study. The use of these methodologies provides a valuable and insightful tool for getting at the core aspect of the study. As presented in the findings of the study, the participants realized how they felt in the situation of teaching practicum which provided them unexpected or unplanned events; using critical incidents to analyse the data was suitable for this study. When the participants retold the critical incidents that they encountered through narrative inquiry, they profoundly exposed their lived-experiences, such as their reaction towards unexpected events, with in-depth information which were related to the factors that affected their teacher's self-efficacy. That was because those incidents were memorable and considered as important events for them. For example, Anna revealed her experience when she was praised by her university supervisor. The reaction towards that experience did not only express her positive feeling but also reflected the factors of her self-efficacy. With the use of the combination of the two methodologies, the in-depth information of the incidents was critically reflected from the participants (Farrell, 2013). Also, meaningful findings of the study which were abstract issues and more difficult to assess with other tools (Serrat, 2017) were more clearly depicted.

Critical incidents through narrative inquiry could narrate the perspectives and feelings of the participants towards teacher's self-efficacy. Critical incidents are not intended; however, when they are employed with narrative inquiry, they can provide a person with reflection which in turn results in the construction of deep understanding (Lengeling & Mora Pablo, 2016). Particularly, when data and information are collected, researchers can obtain deep information about the emotions, feelings, and actions of individuals, and find new meaning (Serrat, 2017). The two analytical tools exposed rich and real information about participants' lived-experiences, including their feelings, their confidence, their beliefs in teaching ability, and perception of teacher's self-efficacy. The deep feeling and sources of self-efficacy of the different participants could be revealed through the employment of narratives of critical incidents. Normally, positive feedback makes pre-service teachers happy, and negative feedback lowers their teaching confidence. For some pre-service teachers, negative feedback from their supervisors could not destroy their teaching confidence. On the contrary, they revealed their real emotion that they were satisfied with their teaching and their students' learning outcomes. The use of these methodologies revealed this outstanding and unconventional result, concerning pre-service teachers' real feelings towards sources of self-efficacy. As seen from Michelle's and Ginger's feeling towards feedback from university supervisors. Both of them reiterated their stories with their emotions, and gave details which enabled the researcher to analyse the factors which affected self-efficacy. Critical incidents accompanied with narrative inquiry can accommodate the teachers to express their actual emotions (Chien, 2016) to others.

9. Suggestions on the use of the combined methodologies and Conclusion

The results of the study presented in this paper can lead to suggestions on the use of the two methodologies.

Narratives can be analysed through highlighting and capturing critical incidents contained in stories of experience. The stories narrated by the participants themselves provide the researchers much valuable data and will reveal in its own way the critical events of those involved (Webster & Mertova, 2007) and can be properly used to analyse the qualitative and complex data, resulting in more insightful findings. They can be employed with other aspects which are difficult for quantitative research methodologies to consider. Besides, the study with the use of the combination of two methodologies need to have the validity of the data. The data of the study should be approached from an interpretive (critical incidents narrated through narrative inquiry) paradigm, which accepts that researchers and participants have the participatory stance and the same understanding of the collected data. Adapting these two research methods in the research process could promote a collaborative relationship between participants and the researchers. Therefore, both the researchers and participants learn together.

However, there are some warnings to researchers who are interested in using these approaches. These approaches rely on a complexity of data sources. Since the data for these approaches are self-reported, the reliability of the data may be limited by the participants' ability to remember the accuracy of the incidents. Therefore, the data analysis process should be conducted right after the researcher gets the main data so that the researcher can analyse and check with the participants to identify the critical incidents as soon as possible so that the memory would still be fresh in their minds and the story would be more detailed.

Critical incidents through narrative inquiry are proper analytical tools for qualitative studies, particularly in the context where a specific framework for analysis is not prescribed. It allows for any emerging data. When these two analytical tools are utilized together, they support each other to reflect lived- experiences of people, leading to more in-depth information and more insightful findings. They have been useful in navigating deeply through the challenges that educators, including pre-service teachers, encounter in the teaching context, leading to professional judgment and improvement.

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