



PNI Practicum I: Smaller-scale PNI

Syllabus

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Before (or as) you start this course

Skim all of the course materials so you have an idea of what you will be doing in each part of the course. In the Activities file, pay special attention to the “if you don’t have time” and “stretch challenges” sections. Doing this is particularly important if:

- You want to learn as much as you can in the course.
- You are not sure that you have enough time to do the course.
- You expect either a lot of participation in your project or very little.
- You are doing a paid project for the course.

Decide who will facilitate the sandbox sessions that require some preparation time before the session begins. One or two people can facilitate all of these sessions, or you can rotate facilitation, singly or in pairs.

Find a way to create fillable spaces (screens, walls, or tables), share documents (online or on paper), and use sticky notes (real or virtual).

Part 1: Introduction, Fundamentals, Planning

Readings

Read or skim before the seminar meeting:

- a. WWS-S (*Working with Stories Simplified*), Chapter 1 (“Introduction”)
- b. WWS-S, Chapter 2 (“Story Fundamentals”)

Meetings

- a. **Seminar:** Review and discuss the “Description” presentation for this course. Discuss your meeting schedule and your facilitation plan for your sandbox sessions. Use the prompts in the description to tell each other a little about yourselves and about the projects you plan to carry out.
- b. **Sandbox:** Go through an exercise in observing conversational storytelling. No one needs to facilitate this first sandbox session. You can just go through the exercise together.

Outside-of-meeting activities

- a. Observe a story-sharing conversation **among 2-4 people who are not taking the course.**

Part 2: Collection I

Readings

Read or skim before the seminar meeting:

- a. WWS-S, Chapter 3 (“PNI Fundamentals”)
- b. WWS-S, Chapter 4 (“Project planning”)
- c. WWS-S, Chapter 5 (“Story collection”), up to (but not including) “Facilitating Story-sharing Sessions”

Meetings

- a. **Seminar:** Talk about your observations of story sharing; discuss the readings; talk about the upcoming planning activities.
- b. **Sandbox:** Practice conducting individual interviews. You can choose facilitators during this meeting. No preparation is required beforehand.

Outside-of-meeting activities

- a. Answer some questions about your participants.
- b. Tell some project stories.
- c. Answer the PNI Planning Questions.
- d. Build your privacy policy.
- e. **Prepare to spend 5 minutes describing your plans to the group.**

Part 3: Collection II

Readings

There are no readings in Part 3. Use the time to gather and transcribe your first stories. You might want to go back over some of the previous readings, especially from the chapter on story collection.

Meetings

- a. **Seminar:** In this meeting, during the report-in time, each student should give a 5-minute pitch for their project, as if they were asking the group to fund, allow, or participate in the project. (If you want to, challenge each other as if you were distrusting, reluctant, or unconvinced.) Then discuss the readings and talk about your interview plans.
- b. **Sandbox:** Practice facilitating group interviews. You can choose facilitators during this meeting. No preparation is required beforehand.

Outside-of-meeting activities

- a. Choose and adapt a story form.
- b. Gather stories in at least one individual interview with someone who is not taking the course.
- c. Transcribe your collected stories.
- d. Improve your story form.

Part 4: Collection III

Readings

Read or skim before the seminar meeting:

- a. WWS-S, Chapter 5 (“Story collection”), starting at “Facilitating Story-sharing Sessions”

Meetings

- a. **Seminar:** Talk about what happened in your individual interviews; discuss the readings; talk about your plans for group interviews.
- b. **Sandbox:** Practice facilitating a story-sharing exercise. You will need to choose facilitators before this meeting starts, as there is some preparation required.

Outside-of-meeting activities

- a. Gather stories in a group interview with 2-4 people who are not taking the course.
- b. Transcribe stories.
- c. (Optional) Create and promote a web-based or paper survey.
- d. Prepare at least one story card to show to the group.

Part 5: Sensemaking I

Readings

Read or skim before the seminar meeting:

- a. WWS-S, Chapter 7 (“Narrative Sensemaking”)

Meetings

- a. **Seminar:** Talk about what happened in your group interviews. **Each student should show at least one prepared story card to the group.** Then discuss the readings and talk about your plans for your story-sharing sessions.
- b. **Sandbox:** Practice facilitating a sensemaking contact exercise. You can choose facilitators during this meeting. No preparation is required beforehand.

Outside-of-meeting activities

- a. Facilitate a group story-sharing session **with 3-12 people who are not taking the course.**
- b. Transcribe stories.
- c. Finish preparing your 24+ story cards.

Part 6: Sensemaking II

Readings

There are no readings in Part 6. Use the time to run your first sensemaking session and plan your second. As you do this, you might want to go back and look over the sensemaking chapter again.

Meetings

- a. **Seminar:** Talk about what happened in your story-sharing sessions; discuss the readings; talk about your sensemaking plans.
- b. **Sandbox:** Practice facilitating a sensemaking exercise. **You will need to choose facilitators before this meeting starts, as there is some preparation required.**

Outside-of-meeting activities

- a. Facilitate a story-contact task **with 2-12 people who are not taking the course.**

Part 7: Sensemaking III

Readings

There are no readings in Part 7. Use the time to go back over what you have learned about sensemaking and use it to run your second sensemaking session.

Meetings

- a. **Seminar:** Talk about the contact task you facilitated; talk about your plans for your next sensemaking sessions.
- b. **Sandbox:** Practice facilitating a full (though short) sensemaking workshop, with a contact task, a story exercise, and a wrap-up task. **You will need to choose facilitators before this meeting starts, as there is some preparation required.**

Outside-of-meeting activities

- a. Facilitate a sensemaking exercise **with 2-12 people who are not taking the course.**

Part 8: Intervention and Return

Readings

Read or skim before the seminar meeting:

- a. WWS-S, Chapter 8 (“Intervention and Return”)

Meetings

- a. **Seminar:** Talk about the sensemaking exercise you facilitated; discuss the readings; talk about your upcoming full workshop.
- b. **Sandbox:** Practice carrying out a narrative intervention (by building and testing a narrative simulation). **You will need to choose facilitators before this meeting starts, as there is some preparation required.**

Outside-of-meeting activities

- a. Facilitate a full sensemaking workshop (with a contact task, a sensemaking exercise, and a wrap-up task) **with 2-12 people who are not taking the course.**
- b. **Prepare to present an account of your project to the group.**
- c. Do some optional wrapping-up things:
 - Plan and carry out a narrative intervention.
 - Return the stories you collected to your group, community, or organization.
 - Create a written project report.
 - Reflect on your project.

Part 9: Course wrap-up

Readings

There are no readings in part 9.

Meetings

- a. **Seminar:** In the last seminar meeting, each student should make a 10-minute presentation to the class about their project: what they wanted to do, what they did, what happened, and what they learned. End the meeting with a wrap-up discussion of the entire course.
- b. **Sandbox:** There is no sandbox meeting in part 9.

Outside-of-meeting activities

There are no activities in part 9.

Medium-length and long readings

Notes

- These medium and long readings are optional. Consider them a menu rather than a checklist. Dip into whatever seems useful to you, during or after the course.
- Parts 3, 6, and 7 have no readings. I did this for two reasons.
 - Some of the outside-of-meeting activities take longer than others. Taking a break from absorbing new information in those parts will give you more time to focus on the activities.
 - Some parts of the course start new project phases (like Collection and Sensemaking). For those parts, I want you to have all the information you need for the whole phase. You can go back and review those readings again later.
- On references:
 - *WWS* means *Working with Stories*, which you can find at <https://workingwithstories.org>.
 - *WWS-S* means *Working with Stories Simplified*, which you can find at <https://workingwithstories.org/morewws.html>.
 - *MWWS* means *More Work with Stories*, which you can also find at <https://workingwithstories.org/morewws.html>
 - For the long readings, when I do not specify a book chapter, it means I think the whole book is worth reading. (It's usually a short book.)

Part 1

Medium-length readings

- Introduction to PNI, planning projects
 - *WWS*, Chapter Six (“Introducing Participatory Narrative Inquiry”), pp. 85-92.
 - *WWS*, Chapter Seven (“Project Planning”), pp. 93-107.
- Fundamentals
 - *WWS*, “What is a Story,” pp 15-22.
 - *WWS*, “The best stories for story work,” pp 22-23.
 - *WWS*, “Stories in conversation,” pp 35-45.
 - *WWS*, “Functions of story sharing in communities and organizations,” pp 63-72.

Long readings

- On the foundations of PNI

- MWWS, “PNI Justified,” pp 8-24.
- On the nuances of PNI
 - MWWS, “PNI Opportunities and Dangers,” pp 39-66.
 - MWWS, “Planning projects with stories in personalities,” pp 100-104.
 - MWWS, “Ethics in PNI work,” pp 104-124.
- On what it’s like to do PNI projects
 - MWWS, “PNI Stories,” pp. 224-284.
- On story form, function, and phenomenon
 - Story form
 - *Story* by Robert McKee, especially Chapter 7 (“The Substance of Story”) and Chapter 13 (“Crisis, Climax, Resolution”).
 - Story function
 - *Tell Me a Story: Narrative and Intelligence* by Roger C. Schank, especially Chapter 1 (“Knowledge is Stories”) and Chapter 2 (“Where Stories Come From and Why We Tell Them”).
 - *Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions* by Gary Klein, especially Chapter 5 (“The Power of Mental Simulation”) and Chapter 11 (“The Power of Stories”).
 - Story phenomenon
 - *Story, Performance, and Event* by Richard Bauman, especially Chapter 2 (“A contextual study of expressive lying”) and Chapter 3 (“The management of point of view in personal experience narratives”).
 - *Memory, Identity, Community: The Idea of Narrative in the Human Sciences*, edited by Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman, Chapter 2 (“The Narrative Quality of Experience”), Chapter 4 (“Storytelling in Criminal Trials: A Model of Social Judgment”), Chapter 8 (“Narratives of the Self”), and Chapter 11 (“The Virtues, The Unity of a Human Life, and the Concept of a Tradition”).
 - *On the Origin of Stories* by Brian Boyd, especially Chapter 11 (“Narrative: Representing Events”) and Chapter 12 (“Fiction: Inventing Events”).
- On how stories flow in conversations
 - *Conversational Narrative: Storytelling in Everyday Talk* by Neal R. Norrick, especially Chapter 3 (“Formulaicity and Repetition in Storytelling”).
- On how stories flow in communities and organizations
 - *Storytelling in Organizations: Facts, Fictions, and Fantasies* by Yiannis Gabriel, especially Chapter 1 (“Same Old Story or Changing Stories?”) and Chapter 2 (“Storytelling and Sensemaking”).
 - *Narrating the Organization: Dramas of Institutional Identity* by Barbara Czarniawska, especially Chapter 2 (“On Dramas and Autobiographies in the Organizational Context”).
- On narrative inquiry
 - *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry*, edited by D. Jean Clandinin, especially Chapter 6 (“Talking to Learn: The Critical Role of Conversation in Narrative Inquiry”) and Chapter 21 (“The Ethical Attitude in Narrative Research: Principles and Practicalities”).
- On action research
 - *Do It Yourself Social Research* by Yoland Wadsworth
 - *Participatory Action Research* by Alice McIntyre
- On oral history
 - *The Oral History Reader*, edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson

Part 2

Medium-length readings

- WWS, Asking People to Tell Stories, Asking Questions About Stories, pp 122-157.
- WWS, Stories and Personalities, pp 45-50.
- WWS, On Transcribing Storytelling, page 183.

Long readings

- On interviewing
 - *The Oral History Reader*, Chapter 10 ("Ways of Listening"), pp 114-121.
 - *The Oral History Reader*, Chapter 14 ("Learning to Listen"), pp 157-171.
 - *MWWS*, "Habits of story collection," pp 135-138.
 - *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative* by Elliot G. Mishler, Chapter 4 ("Language, Meaning, and Narrative Analysis"), pp 66-116.
- On facilitating story sharing
 - *Reflections on Therapeutic Storymaking* by Alita Gersie, Chapter 5 ("The Intricacy of Listening and Responding to Stories"), pp. 113-153.
- On asking questions about stories
 - *MWWS*, "The story fundamentals questions explained," pp 140-162.
 - Essay, "The Story-Sharing Journey (or, Stories and Nonviolent Communication)" (PDF file).
 - Essay, "Stories, narratives, and hasty generalizations" (PDF file).
- On transcribing stories
 - *The Oral History Reader*, Chapter 32 ("Perils of the Transcript"), pp 389-392.

Part 3

There are no readings in part 3.

Part 4

Medium-length readings

- WWS, Facilitating Group Story Sessions, pp 166-183.
- Readings for particular exercises
 - Twice-told stories - WWS, pp 187-190.
 - Narratopia - narratopia.com
 - Timeline - WWS, pp 190-199.
 - Landscape - WWS, pp 199-211.
 - Ground truthing - <https://workingwithstories.org/GroundTruthingWithStories.pdf>
 - Local folk tales - <https://workingwithstories.org/LocalFolkTales.pdf>

Long readings

- b. On group story sharing
 - *Storycatcher* by Christina Baldwin
 - *A Safe Place for Dangerous Truths* by Annette Simmons
 - *MWWS*, PNI skills, pp 76-92.
 - *MWWS*, What to expect when expecting stories, pp 173-198.

Part 5

Medium-length readings

- WWS, Chapter 11 (“Narrative Sensemaking”)
- WWS, Chapter 12 (“Group Exercises for Narrative Sensemaking”)

Long readings

- On sensemaking
 - *Sensemaking in Organizations* by Karl E. Weick, especially Chapter 2 (“Seven Properties of Sensemaking”)
 - *Sense-Making Methodology Reader: Selected Writings of Brenda Dervin* by Brenda Dervin and Lois Foreman-Wernet, especially Chapter 8 (“Sense-Making’s Journey from Metatheory to Methodology to Method”)
 - “The cost structure of sense making” by Daniel M. Russell et al, *ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (1993), accessible at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235961374_The_cost_structure_of_sense_making
- On narrative sensemaking
 - *Three Native American Learning Stories: Who Speaks for Wolf, Winter White and Summer Gold, Many Circles* by Paula Underwood
 - *Narrative Life: Democratic Curriculum and Indigenous Learning* by Neil Hooley, especially Chapter 11 (“Participatory Narrative Inquiry”)
 - *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* by Augusto Boal
- On facilitation
 - *Participatory Workshops: A Sourcebook of 21 Ideas & Activities* by Robert Chambers
 - *Small Groups as Complex Systems* by Holly Arrow, Joseph E. McGrath, and Jennifer L. Berdahl, especially Chapter 3 (“Groups as Complex Systems: Overview of the Theory”)
 - *Using Conflict in Organizations*, edited by Carsten De Dreu and Evert Van De Vliert, especially Chapter 4 (“Mitigating Groupthink by Stimulating Constructive Conflict”) and Chapter 10 (“Productive Conflict: Negotiation as Implicit Coordination”)

Part 6

There are no readings in part 6.

Part 7

There are no readings in part 7.

Part 8

Medium-length readings

- WWS, Chapter 13 (“Narrative Intervention”)
- WWS, Chapter 14 (“Narrative Return”)

Long readings

- On narrative therapy

- *Narrative Therapy in Practice: The Archaeology of Hope* by Gerald Monk et al., especially Chapter 1 (“How Narrative Therapy Works”)
- *Maps of Narrative Practice* by Michael White, especially Chapter 2 (“Re-Authoring Conversations”)
- On participatory theatre
 - *The Applied Theatre Reader*, edited by Tim Prentki and Sheila Preston, especially Chapter 6 (“Provoking Intervention”), Chapter 18 (“Introduction to Participation”), and Chapter 24 (“The Complexity and Challenge of Participation”)
 - *Telling Stories to Change the World*, edited by Rickie Solinger et al. (read the chapter titles of this book and find an example that connects to what you want to do)

Part 9

There are no readings in part 9.