If I were Aladdin and I had three wishes free, I would...

...make my childhood fantasy come true, and quickly ask at first for an infinite number of wishes ;-) 

...ask for more time to follow up on all these ideas on research I have in my mind 

...ask for the technique of this conference to work out
Using Storytelling as a Tool for Introducing Narrative Analysis to Students in Executive Education

Or: How Ingvar Kamprad Still Haunts my Professional Life!

Prof. Dr. Doerte Resch
“Our values are rooted in the Småland region of Sweden, where people have a reputation for being thrifty and innovative with a straightforward, no-nonsense approach to problem-solving in general and to business challenges in particular”
THE DREAM

To create a better everyday life for the many people
"To create a better everyday life for the many people by offering a wide range of well-designed, functional home furnishing products at prices so low that as many people as possible will be able to afford them."
Simplicity vs. Complication – Effects of Storytelling

Inter IKEA Group Organisation

Inter IKEO Foundation
(Liechtenstein)

Inter IKEA Holding SA
(Luxembourg)

Board
Per Ludvigsson (Chairman),
Ingvar Kamprad, Mathias Kamprad,
Staffan Bohman, Lennart Sten,
Hans Gydell, Birger Lund
CEO
Sören Hansen

Group Services
Inter IKEA Holding Services SA
(Belgium)

Franchise Division
Inter IKEA Systems BV
(The Netherlands)

Retail Centre Division
Inter IKEA Centre
Group A/S*
(Denmark)

Property Division
Vastint Holding BV
(The Netherlands)

Finance Division
Various companies incl.
Inter IKEA Investment AB
(Sweden)

* 51% owned by Inter IKEA Group and 49% by INGKA Group
Agenda

- Introduction
  - Stories in everyday life of organizations
  - Elements of narration and storytelling
  - Reflection on stories and narrations

  *Break*

- Epistemological grounding of narrative analysis
  - Analysis of narrations in organizations
Reflection on Experiences of Storytelling

- Please tell us a typical / interesting story from your company!

- In your opinion, which message(s) get transmitted by those stories?
Reflection on Experiences of Storytelling

- When are you listening?
  - What makes a story a good story?

- What are elements of a good story?
Foundations of Storytelling: Construction of Narrations

• «Narratives with plots and characters, generating emotion in the narrator and the audience, through a poetic elaboration of symbolic material. This material may be a product of fantasy or experience, including an experience of earlier narratives. Story plots entail conflicts, predicaments, trials and crises which call for choices, decisions, actions and interactions, whose actual outcomes are often at odds with the characters’ intentions and purposes» (Gabriel 2000, p. 239 in Gabriel & Griffiths 2006, p. 115)

• By narrations «order» is established and «sense» is made

• Stories often tell the stuff, that is otherwise hard to communicate

➢ Storytelling means to make conscious and expertly informed use of stories in organizational life
To Create a Story*

• **Stories need central events**
  • Which is the core event?
  • Turning points of the story!

• **Each story has a message, concentrate on the crux of the message!**
  • How will you use the story?
  • In which context are your listeners?

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De-Construction of Stories – Narrative Analysis
Foundations of Narrative Analysis: De-Construction of Stories

• By de-construction stories, it gets reflected **how** «order» is constructed and «sensemaking» is produced

• Through de-construction, hidden «sensemaking processes» get revealed and are thus made accessible to further analysis and change

  ➢ By first actively construction and afterwards reflecting the active constructing, a first step of de-construction is done
Linguistic Turn

- Rejection of the concept of language as «mirror» of reality (structuralism)
- Instead: language as means to create realities, allocation of meaning is not fixed (post-structuralism)

Stories create realities

Analysis of stories, in order to understand (the creation) of realities

Research focus: how are realities created?!
Discourse & Storytelling

“A discourse is an extended expression of thought or knowledge on a topic that happens in a disciplined way. In discourse, there is an infinite play of differences in meanings enacted through socially and politically constructed, hegemonic practices (Laclau, 1983, 1988; Clegg, 1989: 178).

It is in the collective dynamics (Lang and Lang, 1961) of the storytelling that discursive practices construct our knowledge and power relationships.

Storytelling is a collective dynamic that scripts, sways and disciplines organizational learning.

Stories get disciplined in transmission, and very different sides of a story get told in various sites in the collective.

People do not just freely and openly engage in storytelling; they temper their storytelling, to present only a few sides of a discussion or a few voices in the governance of the enterprise.” (Boje, 1994, p. 435)
Analysis of Narrations and Stories in Organisations by Discourse Analysis

• Analysis of narrative practices and stories in organizations
• Embedded in larger activities and contexts
• Analysis of narrative practices through discourse analysis

«A discourse refers to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events.» (Burr, 1995, p. 184)
Epistemological Grounding

Relation to Dominant Social Discourse*

Dissensus

Dialogic studies, Postmodern, Deconstructionist

Critical studies, Late modern, reformist

Elite/A Priori

Interpretive studies, Premodern, traditional

Normative studies, modern, progressive

Local/Emergent

Origin of Concepts and Problems

Consensus

*Deetz, 1996, p. 198,
(How) Can Storytelling be Used as a Tool for Introducing Narrative Analysis to Students in Executive Education?!

- Replicating the simplicity vs. complication mode
- Connecting to and starting by individual experiences in organizational life
- Limiting the theoretical complexity
- Giving examples of applied research
- During “theoretical” input – always re-connection to individual stories

Challenges

- Just a first glimpse into complexity of narrative analysis
- Danger of oversimplification of a rather challenging methods in qualitative research
Storytelling – OR: Does Ingvar Kamprad (still) haunt my professional life?!

Thank you!

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