CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is aimed at revealing how students experience and investigate on thesis writing, which includes the ups and downs experiences of having thesis writing in their study and their strategies for facing the complexities of thesis writing.

A. Research Design

> People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. The story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which, their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as a story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about the experience. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular view of experience as a phenomenon under study.[41] (Connelly & Clandinin)

The term narrative inquiry was first used in the educational research field in 1990 by Connelly and Clandinin.[42] They established the educational prominence of narrative as a research methodology. In other word, the philosophical tradition that claims education, experience, and life are interconnected. This approach is known to have "a long intellectual history both in and out of education", including in the discipline of anthropology, linguistics, literary theory, philosophy, theology, women studies, organizational theory, psychotherapy, geography, law, and medicine.

In this method, the researcher analyzes the stories of the participants. And in this study are undergraduate students who tell their experiences in thesis writing.

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[41] F. M. Connelly and D. J Clandinin, *Narrative Inquiry, Chapter 28, in J. L. Green, G. Camilli, P. B. Elmore, (Eds.), Handbook of Complementary Methods in Education Research (3rd Edition)* (Washington, D.C.: Taylor and Francis, 2006), 477.
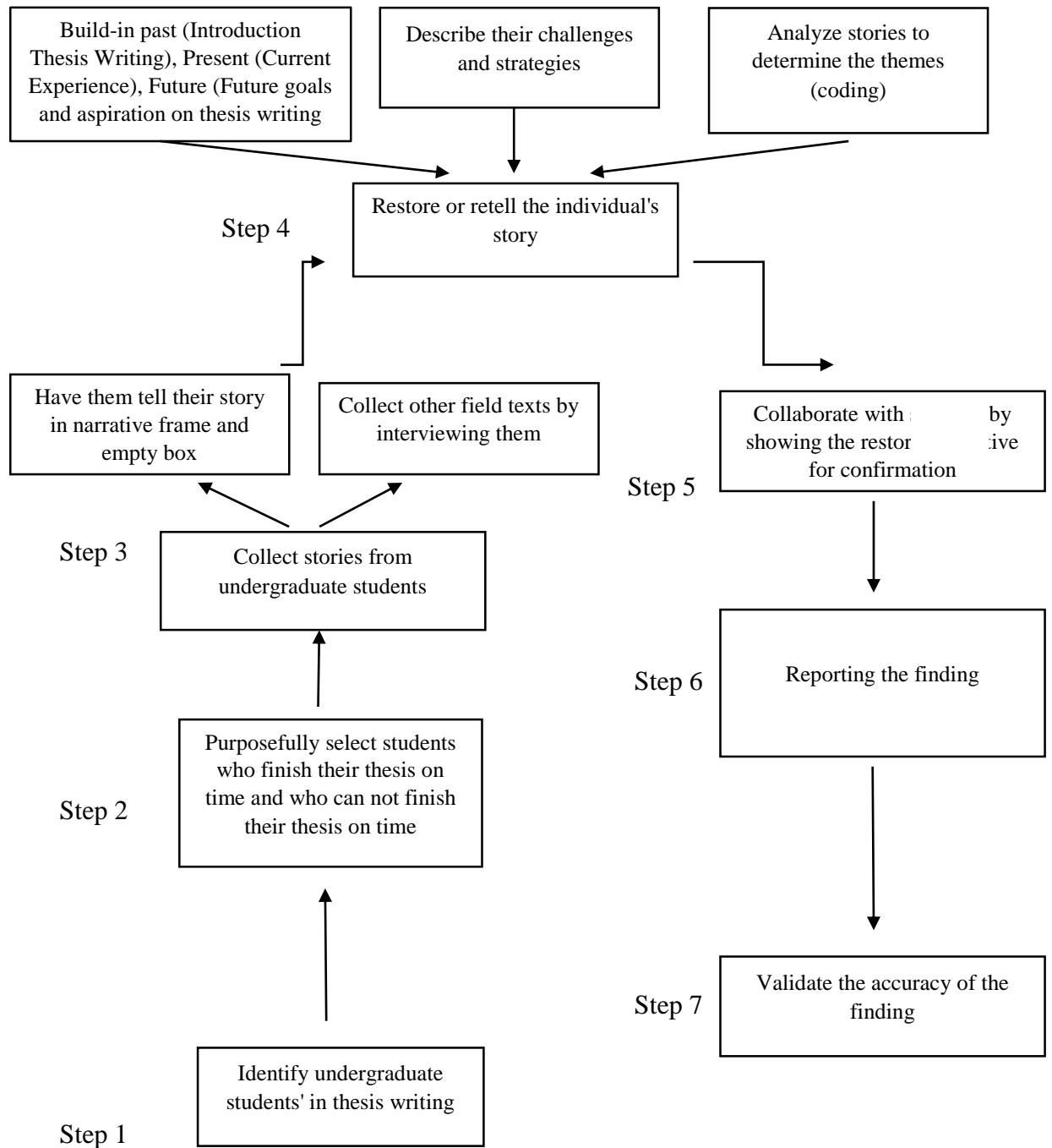
[42] F. M. Connelly, and D. J Clandinin, "Stories of experience and narrative inquiry", *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 19 No. 5 (1990), 2. DOI: 10.3102/0013189X019005002

Narrative inquiry is a means by which we systematically gather, analyze, and represent people's stories as told by them. The stories can be gathered in a variety of creative ways (e.g. narrative interviews, conversations, journals, memoirs, autobiographies, biographies, diaries, metaphors, poems, photographs, drawings, etc.). According to Clandinin & Connelly, narrative inquiry is "a collaboration between researcher and participants whose purpose is to gain insights of personal and human factors of experience over periods and takes account of the relationship between individual experience and cultural perspective".[43]

Narrative inquiry tells how students' experiences shape and inform their challenges and strategies in writing a thesis. For students writing a thesis is a challenge that must be resolved according to deadlines. Not all students can complete their thesis following the deadline. Hence, all those experiences could be only captured by narrative inquiry. It is in line with the capacity of narrative inquiry as a research tool that has shown its ability to holistically understand the day-to-day experiences.

The present research explores thesis writing experienced by undergraduate students. The researcher selects the students' experiences by chronologically arranging them into the experience (the first time students were situated in thesis writing), the present experience (the current situation with thesis writing), and the future experience (evaluation and aspiration for better thesis writing). Furthermore, a deeper understanding of students' experiences can be achieved through the following systematic procedures:

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[43] D. J. Clandinin, and F. M. Connelly, *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000).

| Build-in past (Introduction Thesis Writing), Present (Current Experience), Future (Future goals and aspiration on thesis writing | Describe their challenges and strategies | Analyze stories to determine the themes (coding) |

Step 4   Restore or retell the individual's story

| Have them tell their story in narrative frame and empty box | Collect other field texts by interviewing them |

Step 5   Collaborate with   by showing the restor   ive for confirmation

Step 3   Collect stories from undergraduate students

Step 6   Reporting the finding

Step 2   Purposefully select students who finish their thesis on time and who can not finish their thesis on time

Step 7   Validate the accuracy of the finding

Step 1   Identify undergraduate students' in thesis writing

(Taken from Creswell 2012:514)[44]

Figure 3.1 Steps in Conducting Narrative Inquiry

[44] J.W Creswell, *Educational Research. Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research. 4th*. (Pearson Education Inc., 2012), 514.

B. Research Procedures

The research procedures were taken from Creswell.[45] The procedures represent clear and comprehensive stages in conducting a narrative inquiry. Then, it was operationalized into the research context. The steps were described as follows:

Step 1: Identify a Phenomenon to Explore

This acknowledged educational phenomenon in English language education occurs at least every year. The supervisors at IAIN Kediri agreed that at least a small portion of their guidance students could not complete their thesis on time. The existence of academic data also proves that in college, especially at IAIN Kediri, not all students can complete their thesis on time. Researchers will explore the educational phenomenon of the thesis writing process. What challenges and strategies did students go through in the process of writing their thesis.

Step 2: Purposefully Select Undergraduate Students

In this research, thesis writing is the object. And the researcher aims to find out the process that is passed in thesis writing from students who have worked on the thesis. In selecting students who will become participants, the researcher looks at existing data in academics. The data regarding graduation in 2020. In this data, the researcher can see from the Student Identification Number (NIM), which is the identity of the student during college.

Student Identification Number (NIM) is a number representing the faculty, study program, student number, and year of study. From there the researcher chose students who graduated above 2016. These students were in accordance with the provisions of the participants in this study, what challenges and strategies they went through until they finally accomplished their thesis. However, the researcher does not only look at students who postpone the

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[45] Ibid., 514.

completion of their thesis but also know the challenges and strategies of students who can accomplish their thesis on time.

To select students who graduated on time and who did not graduate on time as the research participants, purposeful sampling was also applied. Student participants were selected based on their accomplishment in thesis writing. It means that they simultaneously held up the thesis writing process. From 79 students who accomplished writing thesis, there were 2 types of students who met the criteria, graduated on time and did not graduate on time. Those who graduated on time were 59 students. They registered as students in 2016. They have registered for graduation and graduated in the 2020/2021 school year. Which means they have accomplished their thesis writing process in accordance with the existing curriculum limits, which is in the 8th semester.

Meanwhile, there are 20 students who do not graduate on time. The criteria for these students are the same as for students who graduate on time, namely that they have registered for graduation this year which of course has gone through the thesis writing process. The difference is that they are listed above in 2016, the researcher does not limit any year as long as he meets the requirements that he has graduated this year. There are 2 students who entered in 2013, 2 students in 2014 and 16 others in 2015. They also meet the third criteria, namely in semesters above 8 and not more than 14 of course.

With these involvement, they are considered as informants who can share the richness of experiencing thesis writing process. The four of them were intentionally selected to understand the central phenomenon with the basis of selection is whether they are 'information rich'.[46]Then, they were contacted to have further interaction.

In the academic data, the names of students in the English study program are listed, along with their Student Identification Number (NIM), and even a telephone number that can be contacted. The researcher can contact the students

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[46] Ibid., 206.

and ask them for their willingness in the research from the data. In the current situation, taking into consideration the deadly COVID-19 and in its endeavor to avoid its spread governments worldwide have put in place stringent measures such as national lockdowns and social distancing initiatives. These restrictions have led many universities and HE Institutes to opt for online learning to curtail the spread of the Corona Virus.[47] Therefore, data retrieval in this study was also carried out online through the WhatsApp application.

Table 3.1 Participants' Profile

Participant	Gender	Year of Entry	Year of Graduation	Learning Period
SGN1	Male	2013	2020	14 semester
SGN2	Male	2015	2020	10 semester
SGO1	Female	2016	2020	8 semester
SGO2	Female	2016	2020	8 semester

As stated at the previous part, the students were selected based on their writing thesis accomplishment and the year of entry and graduation and the learning period betwen 8th smt-14th smt. It could be noted that the gender contrast did not cause any effects to the research.

Step 3: Collect the Stories from Undergraduate Students

Collecting the stories was a process when the undergraduate students were asked to write their stories/experiences about their thesis writing experiences. The time for collecting stories was after the students finished accomplishing their thesis writing to ensure that they have rich stories to share. To collect the stories, I used two research instruments namely narrative frame and interview guide.

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[47] Wahab Ali, "Online and Remote Learning in Higher Education Institutes: A Necessity in light of COVID-19 Pandemic", *Higher Education Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (2020), 22. DOI: 10.5539/hes.v10n3p16

Step 4: Restory the Students' Stories

Because narrative inquiry is one of the forms of qualitative research, it often employs qualitative data analysis. The data analysis was begun with the step when I made the sense of the whole data by examining the narrative data from narrative frame and narrative empty box, and the non-narrative data from interview transcription. Then, the researcher identified elements of a story and organized the elements into a logically ordered narrative based on literary elements of setting, characters, actions, problem, and resolution. This step also allowed the researcher to build past, present, and future experiences. In this stage, both narrative frames and narrative empty box were combined by firstly adding similar points from narrative empty box to narrative frames. Then, some new stories were added to the narrative frame. When it was done as a completed narrative frame, I moved to interview transcripts to find any similar stories and any elaborated stories to be compiled in the narrative frame.

After the restorying process finished, I gave the restoried version to undergraduate students to verify whether my version really represented their stories. They were also invited to provide further information or make alternations of their stories. When all participants agreed with my version, the researcher segmented the narrative data into themes as suggested by Creswell that narrative researcher typically presents the themes or categories after restorying-retelling the story.[48] However, at the initial stage, the themes were built into the research questions leading to a search for evidence related to them. Meanwhile, the nature of qualitative research which is interactive (repeated readings on the narratives, emergent (open possibility to new details), and interpretive (researchers' subjectivity),[49] required the researcher to move back

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[48] Ibid., 511.

[49] Z Dörnyei, *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics. Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methodologies*, (Oxford University Press: 2007), 243.

and forth between the narrative, its codes, and categorized form in order to re fone themes and theoretical relationship.[50]

The themes were based on theoretical bases and pedagogical aspects. It means that to have the themes, I did a review of the literature on collaborative writing and review on empirical relevant findings. The themes were segmented based on the chronology of the experiences to elicit teachers' and students' past, present, and future. The themes had a significant role in this narrative study. It led to finding the commonalities among participants' narrative and helped. The restoried version of the narratives was coded and categorized based on the themes. The coding was focused on the key meaning of the participants' narratives in which I had to pay attention to making understandable signs to represent every single experience.

I moved to the next step of data analysis was that coding. The process involves identifying narratives, placing a bracket, and assigning a codeword or phrase that precisely describes the meaning of the narratives.

Table 3.2 Coding System

The Challenges Experiences		The Strategies Experiences	
Code	Meaning	Code	Meaning
SGN1	Student who Graduate Not On Time 1	SGN1	Student who Graduate Not On Time 1
SGN2	Student who Graduate Not On Time 2	SGN2	Student who Graduate Not On Time 2
SGO1	Student who Graduate On Time 1	SGO1	Student who Graduate On Time 1
SGO2	Student who Graduate On Time 2	SGO2	Student who Graduate On Time 2
PF	Psychological Factor	DBPS	Dealing with Blank Page Syndrome
SF	Sociocultural Factor	DWB	Dealing with Writer's Block
LF	Linguistic Factor	AP	Addressing Procrastination
		DD	Dealing with Deadlines
		UAD	Understanding Actual Deadlines
		PPT	Procrastination Part Two
		MW	Maintaining Work/ Life Balance
		DA	Dealing with Angst

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[50] G Barkhuizen, Revisiting narrative frames: An instrument for investigating language teaching and learning. *System.*, (2014), 76.

Table 3.3 Blueprint of Data Analysis

No.	Research Questions	Data Analysis	Questions	Results
1.	What challenges do undergraduate students face when writing their thesis?	Identifying undergraduate students' challenging experiences.	Narrative Frame (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12) and Interview Guide (A1, A2, B1, B3, B5)	Findings on selected past, present, and future challenging, sad and happy experiences
2.	What strategies that undergraduate students have carried out to accomplish their thesis?	Identifying undergraduate students' strategies experiences.	Narrative Frame (2, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14) and Interview Guide (B2, B4, B5, C1, C2)	Findings on the way students solving the challenges in writing thesis.

Step 5: Collaborate with the Participant-Storyteller

The aim of the collaboration with undergraduate students during the research process was to validate the data source. At the initial stage, I started to closely work with undergraduate students in collecting the narratives. Before asking them to write the narrative, they must have a good understanding of what story to tell. I ensured them that both pleasant or unpleasant stories were welcome as far as the stories were relevant to the frames. My collaboration with the participants was continued to the interview session.

When restorying process occurs, it referred to the time when I write the narratives in my words which potentially can abolish the real meaning conveyed by undergraduate students in their original narratives. In my situation, I did not totally reword the narrative because the written narrative in the narrative frames was the data. What I did was combining information from the interview to narrative frame to have completed narrative frame. During the process of combining, I added and changed some points. Therefore, I have to share the result with them whether my retold narratives still represent their narratives or whether I made not a clear message to their original stories.

Step 6: Reporting the Findings of the Participants' Experiences

This step refers to the time for reporting the findings. In narrative inquiry, the theme is prioritized to be placed in the first part of the findings. There is no single arrangement to present the report, however, this research arranges the report using thematic analysis through a single case meaning that narratives of participants are analyzed individually. Later, the discussion section wraps up all narratives into a comprehensive point of view about the challenges and the strategies in thesis writing. The outline of the findings section is in the following model as suggested by Barkhuizen et al.:[51]

Section: The Challenges	Section: The Strategies
Subsection: Theme	Subsection: Theme
Discussion	Discussion
Excerpt of data	Excerpt of data
Discussion	Discussion
Excerpt of data	Excerpt of data
Discussion	Discussion
etc.	etc.
Subsection: Theme	Subsection: Theme
Discussion	Discussion
Excerpt of data	Excerpt of data
Discussion	Discussion
Excerpt of data	Excerpt of data
Discussion	Discussion
etc.	etc.
The same pattern repeated two more times	The Same pattern repeated two more times

Step 7: Validate the Accuracy of the Report

To maintain the accuracy and credibility of narrative account, I kept collaborating with the participants throughout the process from the time of collecting, restorying, and reporting their narratives. The report on finding is finished after the validating process such as member checking, triangulating the data source, and searching for disconfirming evidence.

C. Research Instruments

The key research instrument was the researcher herself because she was the one who explores and develops a detailed understanding of a personal the

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[51] Ibid., 78.

phenomenon, who collects data in the forms of words from individuals, and who analyzes and interprets the data which include her subjective reflexivity and bias.[52] In addition, to collect the data, narrative frame, and interview were used.

1. Narrative Frames

Narrative inquiry has become a crucial tool for academic research on language teaching and learning. One of its research instruments is narrative frames. These are sets of written story templates, consisting of sentence starters followed by blank spaces and conjunctions, that prompt participants to write down their ideas in a narrative form.

The frame should reflect the chronology of the experiences, therefore, Creswell suggests that the frame must have the three-dimensional space narrative structure consisting of interaction (information how they feel, hope, react, and think), continuity (now and then), and situation (context, time and space). The narrative frame in this study was adapted from Hiratsuka.[53] The original version was to ask students' experiences in observing a video clip taped from the last-team teaching class. In terms of the narrative frame structure, I followed the original version because it has thoroughly represented the narrative elements starting in the past, moving to the present, and looking to the future.

To anticipate the limitation of narrative frame such as restricting undergraduate student's stories (who wants to write more) and the researcher's accessible data, the researcher includes an empty box with appropriate prompts at the beginning and end of the actual sentence-starter frame for participants to write freely any additional information they wanted to share.[54] The narrative empty boxes also followed the above narrative elements.

One important aspect to be concerned as they were allowed to do flexibility and free meaning no specific word numbers to write as far as they can recollect

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[52] Cresswell., 16.
[53] Takaaki Hiratsuka., 178.
[54] G Barkhuizen., 49.

fruitful experiences. The narrative frames were considered as narrative data that were ready to restory. The data that was gained from narrative frames and narrative empty box were three elaborated experiences about the past, present, and future.

2. Interview

Soon after finishing narrative frame and empty box, the participants were invited to have one individual semi-structured interview, each lasting around 60 minutes. During the interview, they were first asked to elaborate on the written narratives (narrative frame and empty box) and next was invited to talk over questions concerning their experiences, reflections, and aspirations in thesis writing. The interview was conducted in English, however, they were allowed to use Indonesian just in case they faced difficulty to express some feelings, emotions, and others.

The first part of the interview covered the life history, the contemporary experiences, and the reflection on the thesis writing as well as their aspirations. Move to the second part, the researcher mainly focused on making some clarification on unclear stories written the narrative frames.

Table 3.4 Blueprint of data Collection

Data	Data Collection	Method Instrument	Procedures in Collecting Data
The Challenges and the Strategies in Writing Thesis	Writing a story by recollecting their experiences in writing thesis	Narrative Frames and Narrative Empty Box	Undergraduate students were asked to fill the frames based on statement starters and empty box for additional information. They wrote at any preference time and place.
	Semi-structured interview for exploring more experiences and for clarifying unclear stories written in narrative frame	Interview Guide	After finishing with narrative frame, undergraduate students were invited in 1 face-to-face session equipped with a recorder discussing students' first engagement with thesis writing (past),

			current thesis writing (present), and aspirations (Future).

D. The Quality of the Study

All forms of qualitative research, including narrative inquiry, aim at describing, exploring, and discovering realities that are subjective and personal as well as socially constructed.[55] To maintain the quality of my research, I pay attention to the issues proposed by Barkhuizen et al on rigor and trustworthiness.[56] To achieve the rigor, I systematically analyze the data by reading and coding repeatedly to figure out the themes, to find the fruitful experiences that can be lesson learnt for other, and to share undergraduate students' narratives to be heard by others.

To build the trustworthiness of this narrative inquiry, I referred to the highly influential and much cited classic work of Lincoln and Guba[57] and current systematic list provided by Loh.[58] The four criteria of trustwortiness were used, namely 1) credibility, 2) transferability, 3) dependability, and 4) confirmability.

1. Credibility

Among seven techniques to establish the credibility proposed by Lincoln and Guba,[59] tringulation and member checking was used.[60] Tringulation was conducted to improve the probability that findings and interpretations could be found credible. Two tringulation were applied in this study, namely data source and methods tringulation. Data source tringulation in this study resulted from studying four subjects being asked to narrate their experiences in the narrative frame and the interview about thesis writing process. This was done in order to

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[55] B. Johnson and L.Christensen, *Educational Research, Quantitative, and Mixed Approaches*. (Boston: Person Ed. Inc; 2004), 31.

[56] Barkhuizen, G.. "Revisiting narrative frames: An instrument for investigating language teaching and learning", 13.

[57] YS. Lincoln & EG. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*. (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1985)

[58] J. Loh, "Inquiry into Issues of Trustworthiness and Quality in Narrative Studies: Perspective", *The Qualitative Report*, Volume 18 No. 33 (2013), 4. DOI:http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol18/iss33/

[59] YS. Lincoln & EG. Guba. *Naturalistic Inquiry.*, 25.

[60] J.W Creswell, *Educational Research. Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research, 4th edition.,* 259.

tap the chronology of the experiences. Meanwhile, methods tringulation resulted from using two kinds of research instruments for data collection. This study used narrative frames and interview guide. Those two kinds of instruments were to compensate for other potential shortcomings. The narrative frame could restrict students in narrating the stories especially for those who wanted to write more. Therefore, combining narrative frame with interview helped to collect rich data.

The second technique to achieve the credibility was member checking. Conducting step 4 and 5 represented member checking because after I finished to restory (combining narrative frame and interview transcription), I gave it back to the undergraduate students to ask whether the restoried version still represent their narrative or whether the change the researcher made clear to them or not. As suggested by Loh that peer validation was done to keep trustworthiness and to provide more insight to the interpretation the interpretation of data.[61]

2. Transferability

To establish the transferability of this study, data base that makes transferability judgments possible on the part of potential appliers should be provided. Therefore, a thick description of the subjects, of research procedures, of research instruments were provided in detail of this master thesis. In addition, the materials, the narrative frame for undergraduate students, interview guides, undergraduate students' narratives, coding-categorizing lists, and the summary of the findings are presented as appendices.

3. Dependability and Confirmability

To fulfil dependability and confirmability of this study, the researcher maintained: 1) a dependability audit examining the process of inquiry: how data were collected, how data were kept, accuracy of data) and 2) confirmability audit (examining the product to provide that the findings, interpretation and recommendations are supported by data). To meet the two kinds of audits; a) every finding was supported by with data. For example: In contrast, students who do not follow the schedule of the curriculum will make

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[61] Ibid., 6.

their thesis writing unable to be accomplished on time. Fortunately, students realize that they only have a little time to accomplish the thesis. As stated by students who did not accomplish their thesis on time;' I have to finish my thesis because the limit is over ' [SGN1], and b) potential auditors were provided access to trace all data.