PIM 2024
New Framework, New Balance?

Looking forward by looking back: narrative analysis of U.S. university students'
reflection on their COVID 19 experience

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Background

- Hum 203 "Science of Storytelling"

- "Self-Story" (personal essay 750-1,000 words)

- Narrative Arc Theory

Purpose

- Analyze how students discursively constructed their COVID 19 experience ("Self-Story")

- Demonstrate how the narrative arc feature of LIWC-22 can be used in an EAP/FYW classroom

Features in LIWC - 22

Features	
LIWC Workbench	x
Contextualizer	x
Meaning Extraction	
Word Frequency	**X**
Compare Word Frequency	**X**
Language Style Matching	
Narrative Arc	**X**
Case Studies	**X**

Tech Writ: pos/neg

What does the narrative arc mean?

- Narrative arc in a story is the underlying structure/frame

- Narrative arc indicates the writer understands the meaning of their experience (Koenig & Hortsman, 2015)

- Trauma and narrative=storytelling alleviates psychological pain

CAMBRIDGE CRITICAL CONCEPTS

Trauma and Literature

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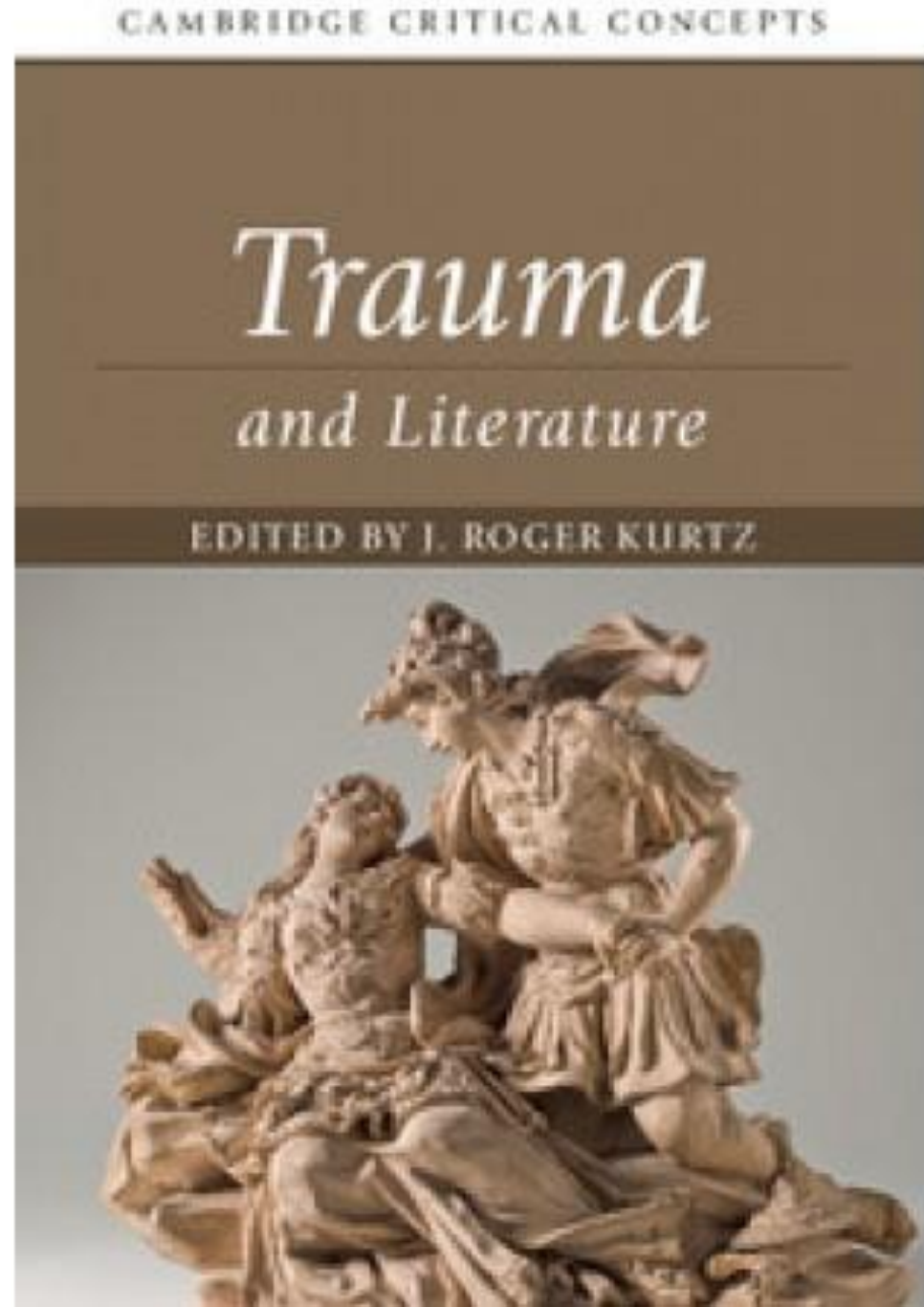
Studies using LIWC-22 (Narrative Arc)

1. Abstracts (Guizzardi et al., 2023)

- Main finding: NA in Reviews different from Primary studies

2. Narratives in creative writing class (Nicholes, 2024)

- Main Finding: NA in SF closer to normative arc than CNF
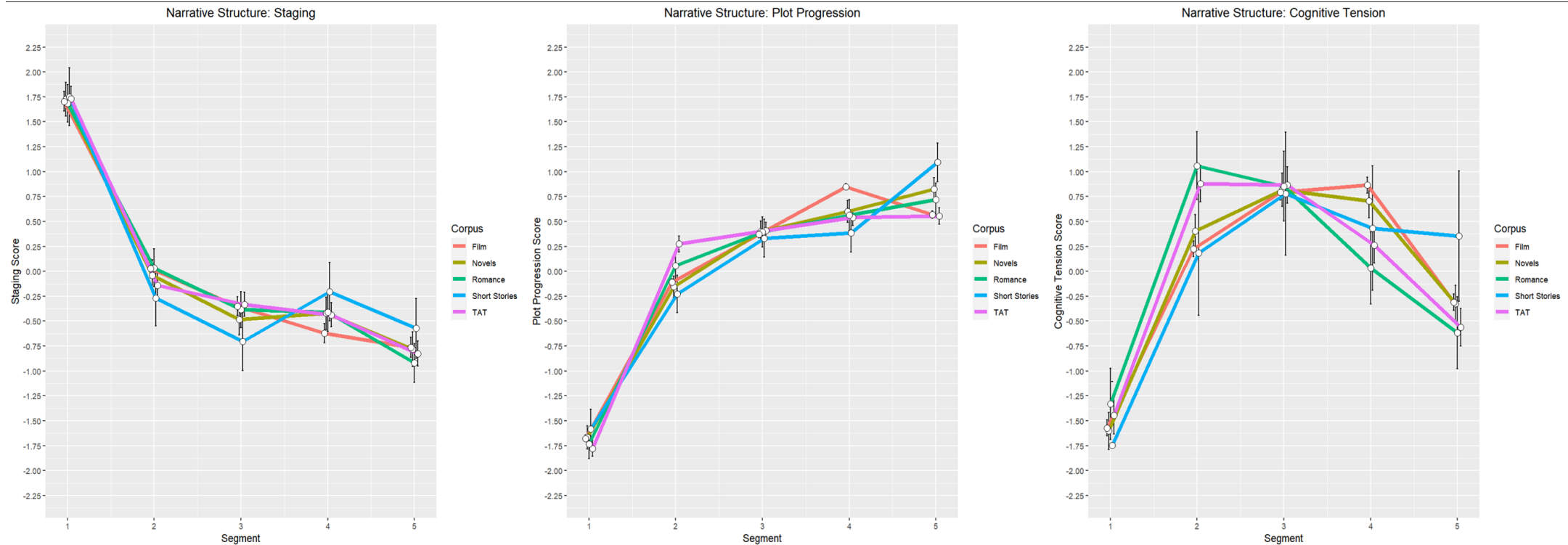
3. Music Lyrics (Alberhasky & Durkee, 2024)

- Main Finding: music lyrics of Pop, Rap and Country genres follow normative NA structure; Country (highest staging)/Pop (highest plot prog and Cog Ten)
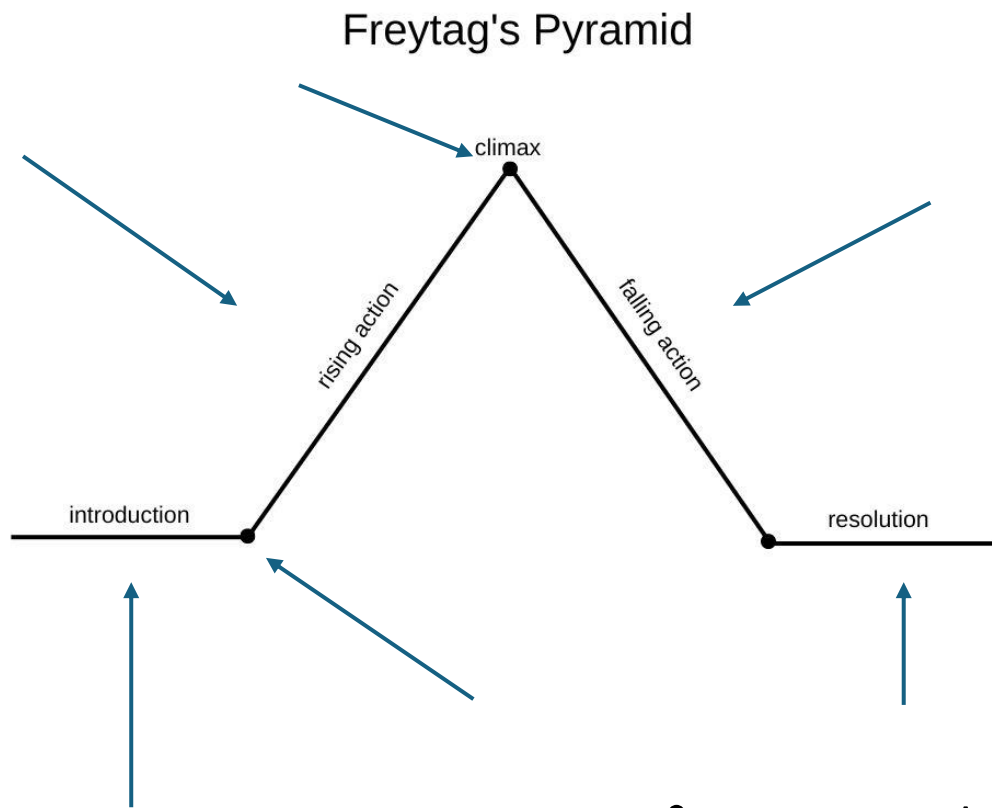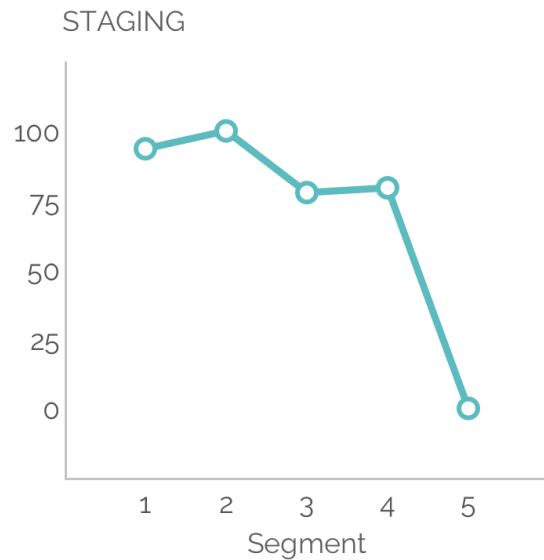
Narrative Arc in LIWC 22

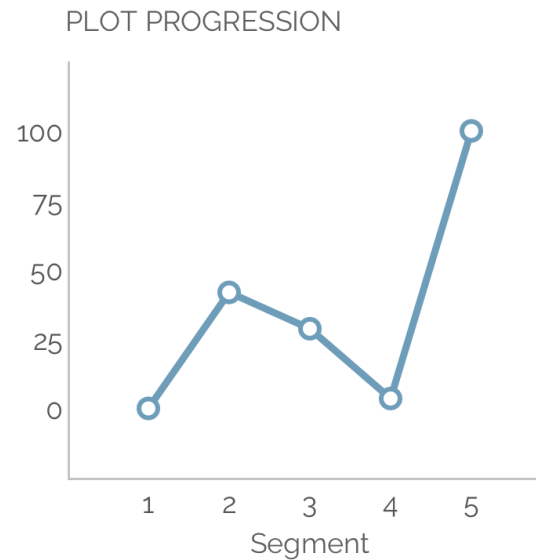# Narrative Arc in LIWC-22 (Boyd et al. 2020)

- Over **40,000** texts (novels, short stories, movie scripts, TATs)
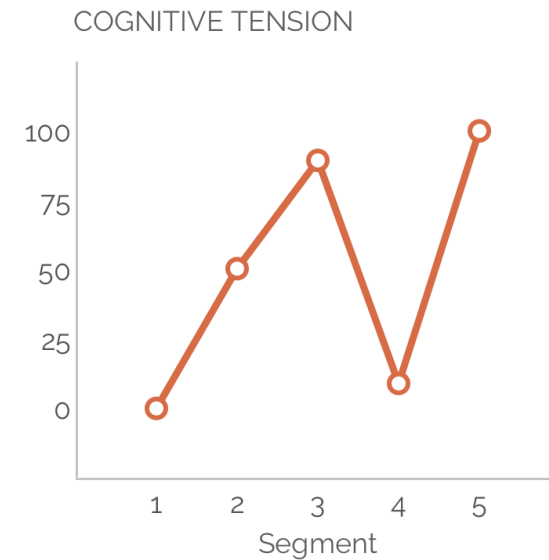
Story Type: sporting event

Narrative Score= 18.3475

STAGING

PLOT PROGRESSION

COGNITIVE TENSION

Staging= 38.225

Plot prog= 14.38125

Cog. Tension= 2.43375

Method/Materials

- 211 personal narratives ("Self Story" assignment)

- Group by story type and compare

- SPSS **Kruskal-Wallis** (.050 recommended for sig.)

- IRB approval (T.U. May 15, 2024)

- Special thanks to Jonathan Dallman

Description of Corpus by Story Type

250 word min.

Story Type	Description	# Essays	WC (AVG)
COVID	Stories of COVID experience	9	869
Personal Challenge	Bullied at school/colleague at work, sports, relationships, giving birth	33	808
New Experience	Learning an instrument/sport, driving, starting college, first job	50	728
Death	Family member, friend	27	836
Accident	Car accident, workplace	22	783
Fear	Childhood (spiders, animals), getting lost, natural disaster	19	852

- RQ 1: How do COVID 19 stories compare with the group?

- RQ 2: How do the different story types compare with each other?

- My guess is that COVID 19 stories will be significantly different given the impact on daily life/closer to normative arc than the rest of the group

Results and Analysis

Narrative Score
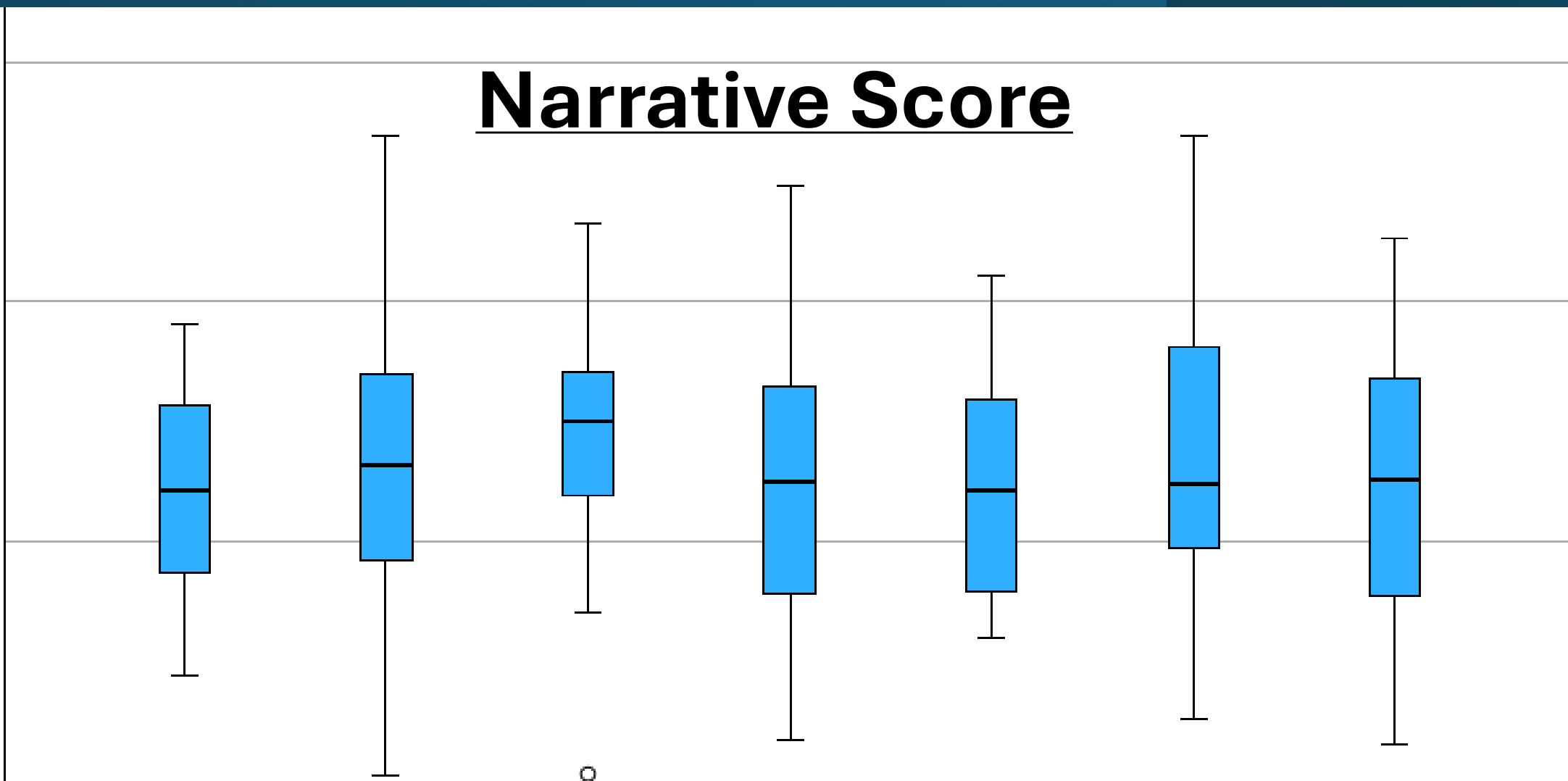
Comparing Story Types

|	
COVID–Death	.915
COVID–New Experience	.855
COVID–Fear	.717
COVID–Trine	.529
COVID–Accident	.571
COVID–Personal Challenge	.179

New Experience-Personal Challenge .048*

Staging

- Frequency of art., nouns, prepositions

- No sig. difference between types

- Good staging scores as a group
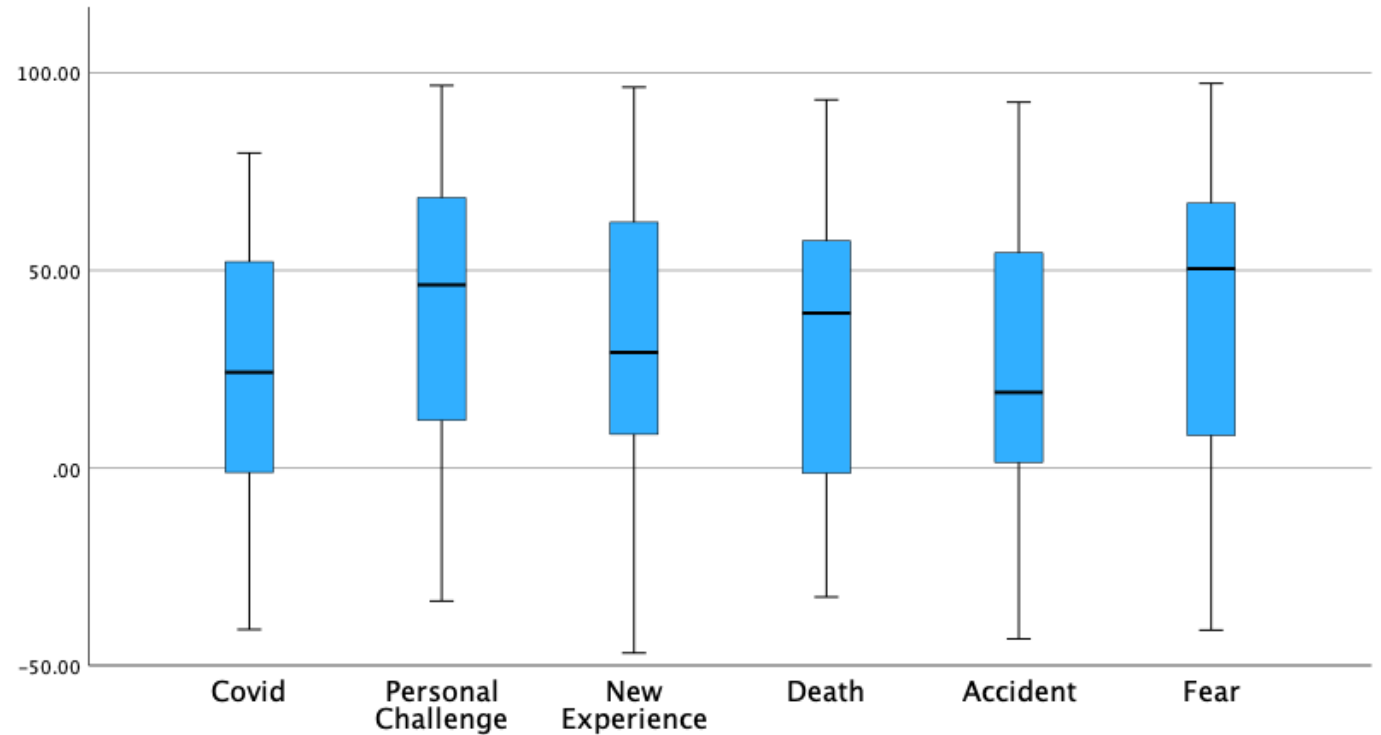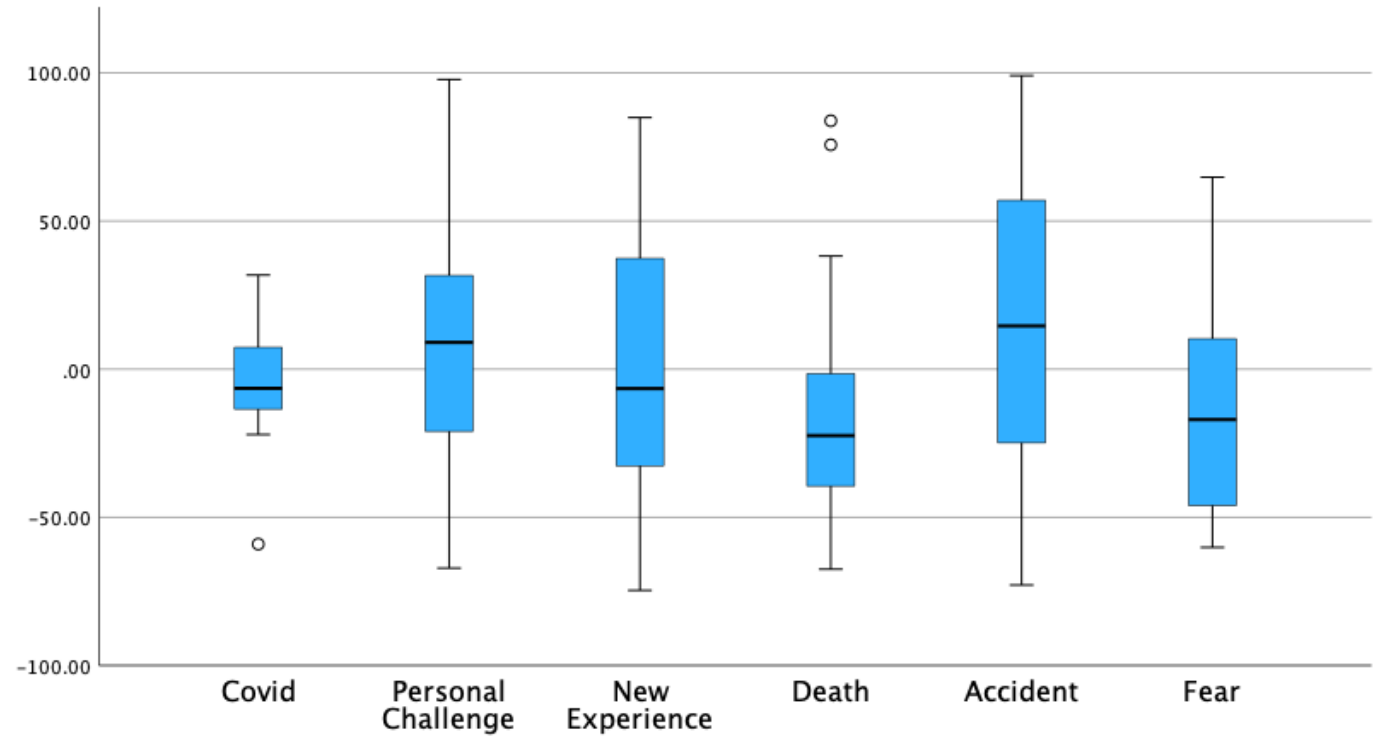
Plot Progression

- More pronouns, auxiliary verbs, adverbs, conjunctions/linkers

- Weak for all groups especially COVID
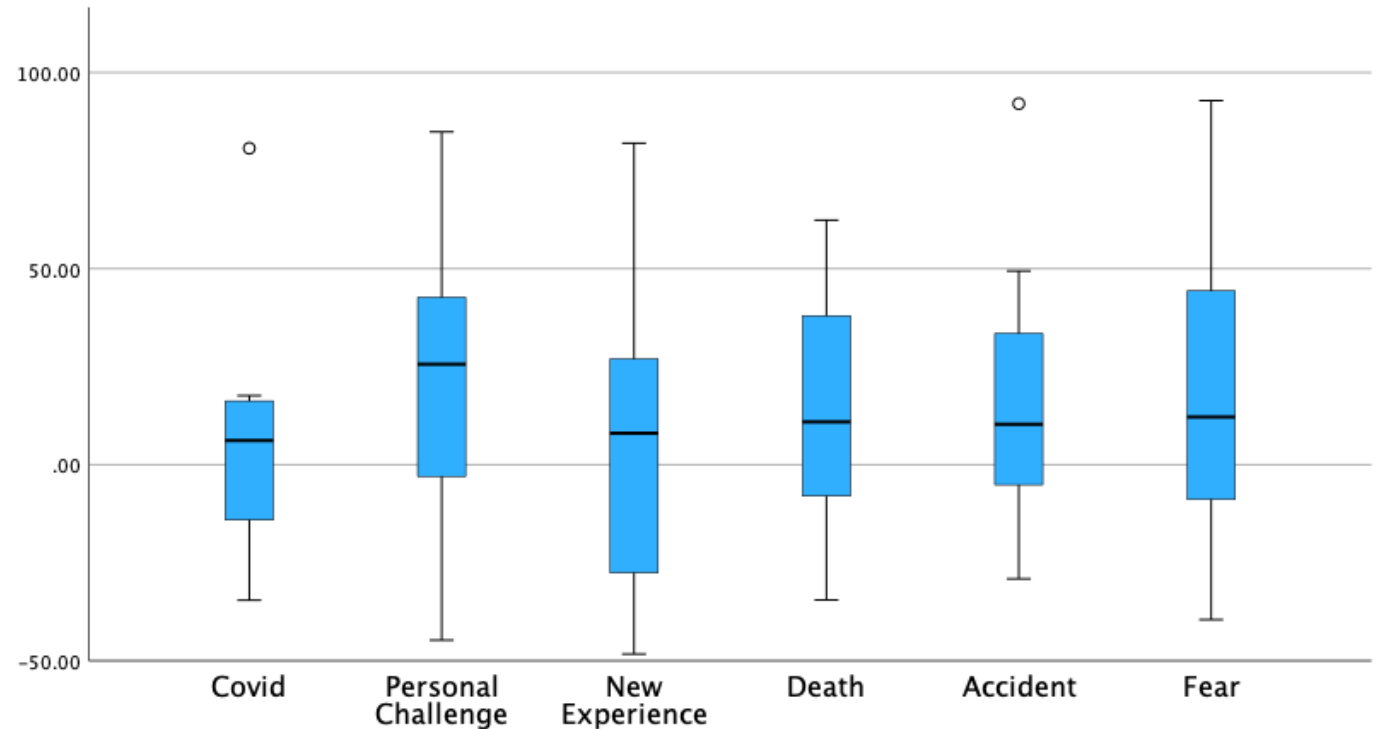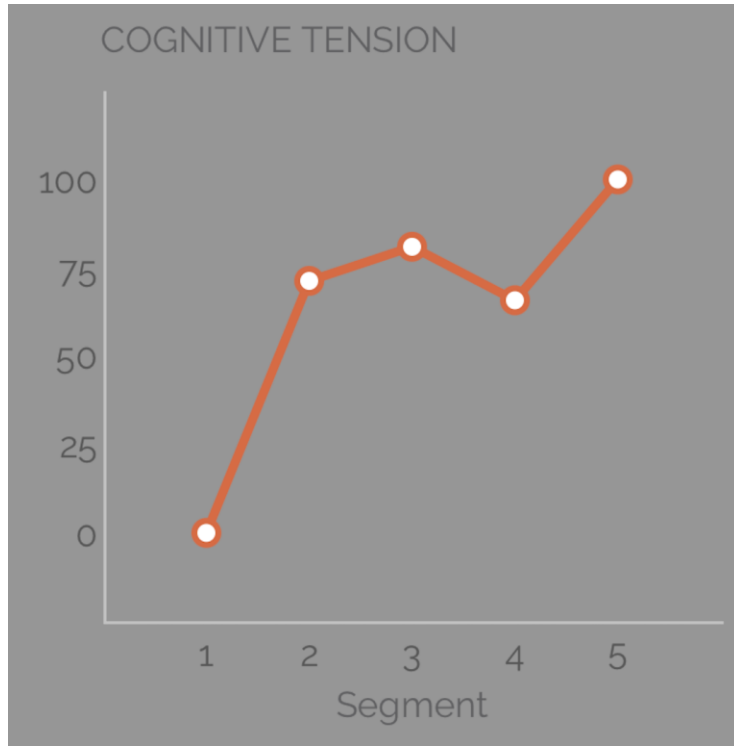

New Experience-Personal Challenge .024

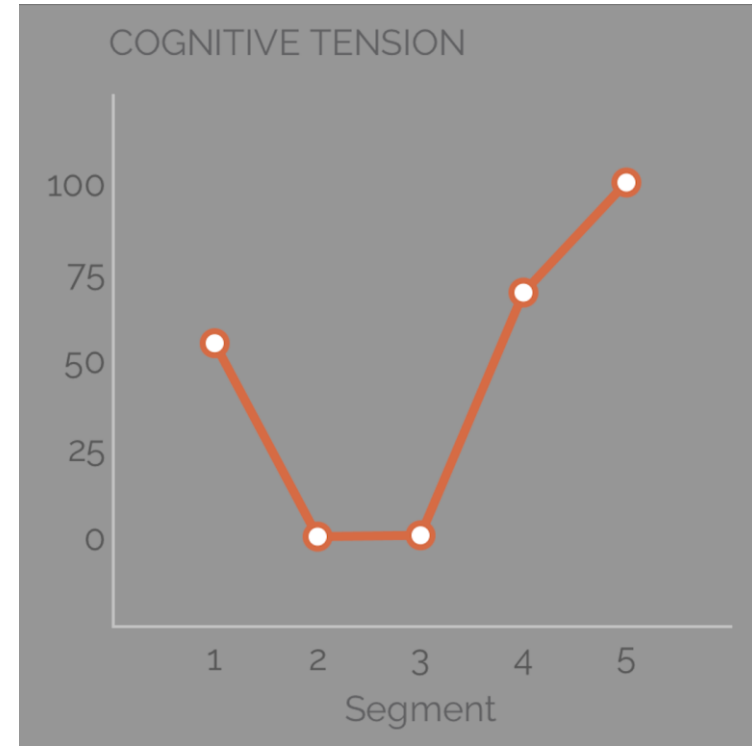# Cognitive Tension

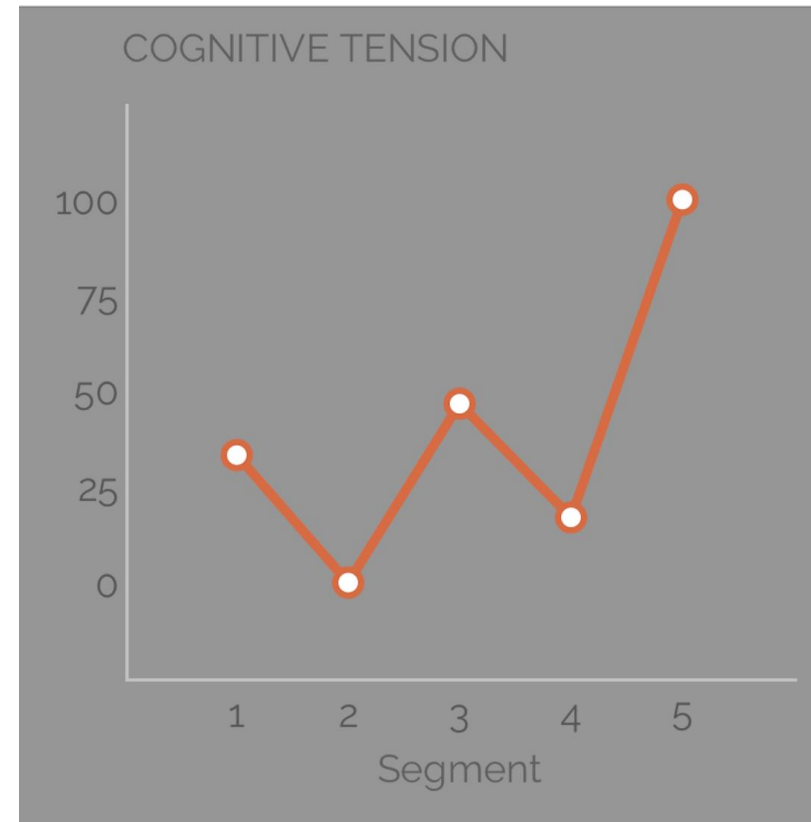- COVID/Death stories lack narrative arc

Comparing Story Types

Story Type	Sig*
Death-Accident	.039*
Fear-Personal Challenge	.057
Fear - Accident	.027*

Accident

Fear

COGNITIVE TENSION

COGNITIVE TENSION
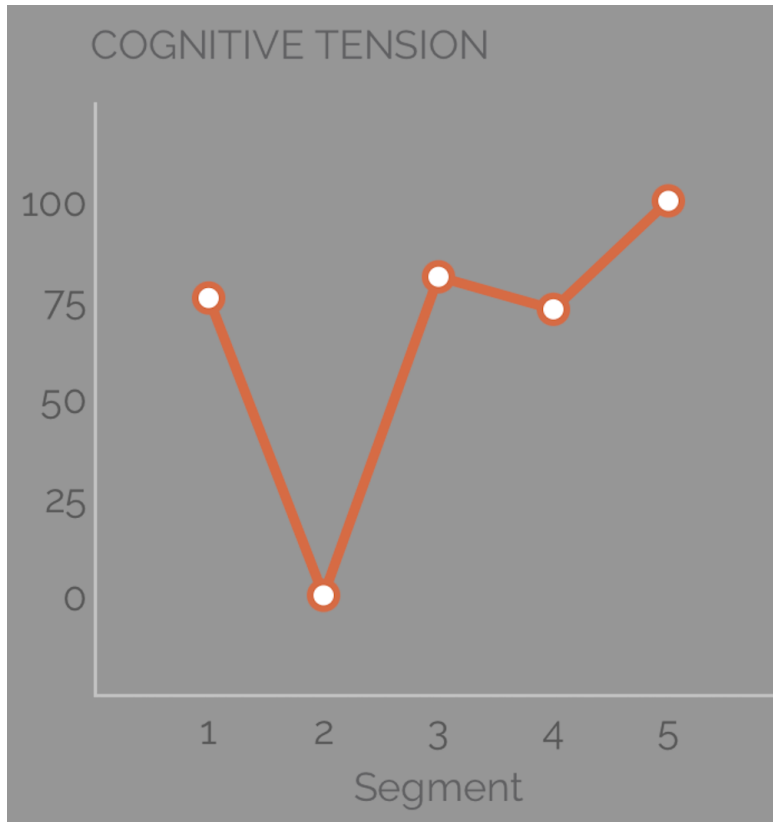
COVID _____ Death

Discussion:

1) The structure of COVID stories align closely with New Experience and Death narratives; not close to normative arc; students seem to struggle in making sense/meaning of their COVID 19 experience

2) Personal Challenge type is closest to the normative arc (different although not statistically different than the rest of the group)

Implications for Teaching:

- Plot progression= weakness in class

- Differences in story types (weaker/stronger)

- EAP/FYW
  - NA feature in LIWC 22 useful for assessing narrative writing
  - charts/graphs/stats appeal to STEM field students
  - curriculum development

Looking Ahead

- Crisis narratives (ex. compare COVID with 9/11)

- Intercultural comparisons

Recommended Resources

Arc of Narrative

https://www.arcofnarrative.com/
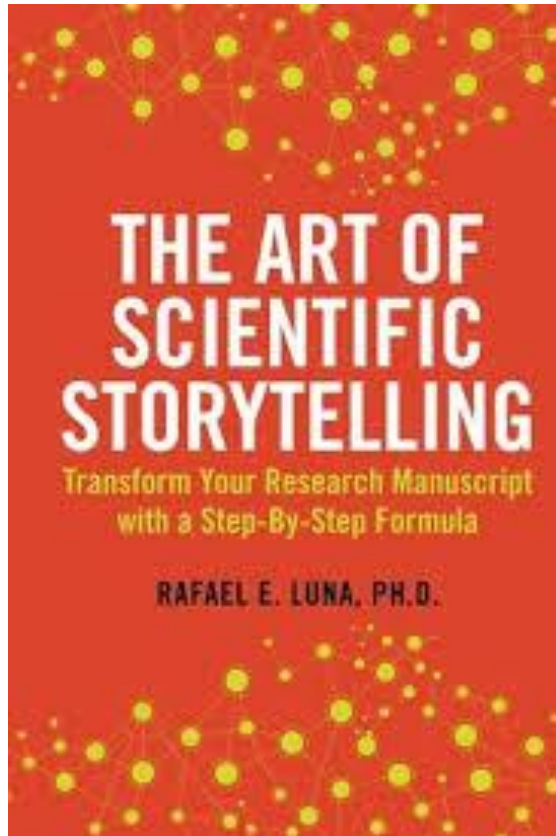
Thank you!

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