MM13 workshops

Handouts can be found at https://adrianholliday.com/handouts/

My publications can be found at https://adrianholliday.com/articles/

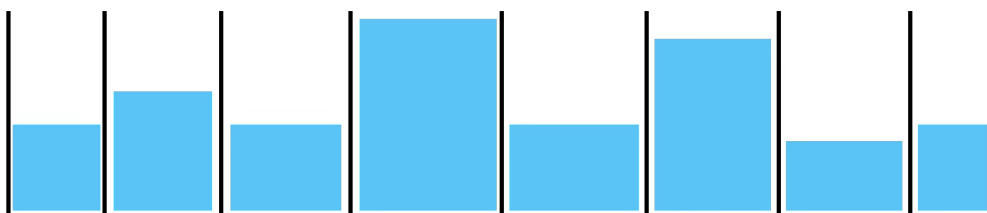## [1] Thesis writing

The whole process of researching and writing

How it all fits together (Holliday 2016: 99)

[2] Data analysis

Looking at the overall character of the corpus

Searching for natural divisions

Determining the character of each division

[3] Creation of themes

Finding headings that suit these divisions

1) ....
2) ....
3) .... etc.

Seeing how far the headings help make further sense of the data

[1] Corpus of raw data

Rationalised sections of messy reality

What the researcher sees and hears

What she finds to be important and significant

Researcher's hunches, agendas, theories, pre-occupations, biography

Being sincere and faithful

Principles of *emergence*, *submission* and *personal knowledge*

[4] Text of data discussion

Themes as headings

Argument gradually unfolding

Extracts from data presented as evidence

Discursive commentary telling the reader which bits of the data are significant

A developing sense of argument
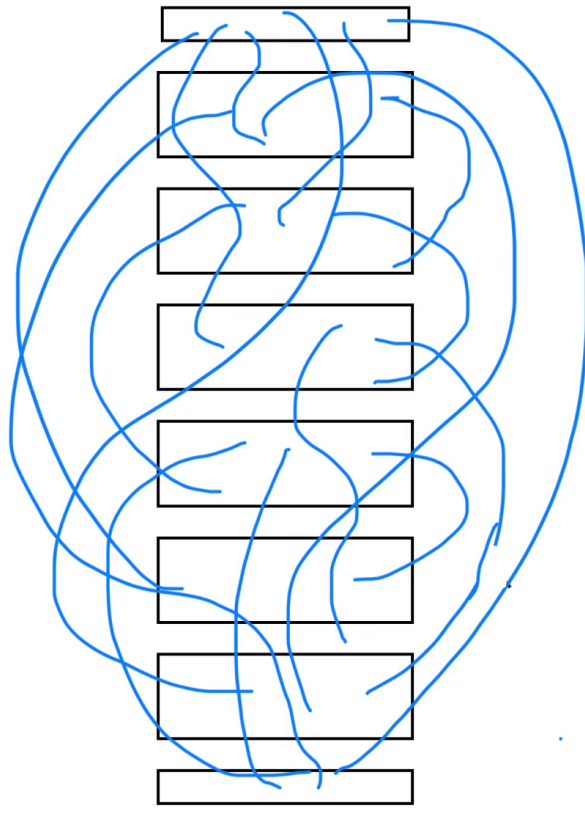
Working on the whole document

Put everything you have into the whole thesis document

Growing it gradually

Perhaps moving things to other places

Constantly editing beginnings and endings to reflect changes

The totally synced thesis

The whole thesis is a single moment time

The chapters are not chronological

The entire research process is in some respects present in every chapter

"The thesis grows out of a conflict between ... and .... which ... This conflict will therefore be the main focus of the first literature review chapter."

"The main finding, that ... contributes to an explanation of this conflict by ... Exactly how this emerges from ... will be demonstrated through ... in the data chapters"

"The choice of a ... methodology also emerges from this conflict in that .... This will be demonstrated in detail in chapter ..."

Thesis, structure and functions

Standard organisation (ready for change, but containing similar functions) adapted from Holliday (2016: 45)

Abstract:
- Summary of your basic argument - what you did and what you found

Introduction:
- Your statement of topic and focus, including who the people are and where the setting is located, and your basic argument about them
- Your vision and motivation for the research and how you locate it within broader work, your research questions and where they come from
- Your rationale for the choice of research setting and overall data collection strategy
- How you plan to proceed within the rest of the written study

Literature review:
- Your conceptual framework - based on:
- What you have learnt from and how you position yourself in relation to current and past discussions within which (a) your topic and (b) your research methodology are located
- Evidence that you are well-informed

Methodology:
- How you chose your core setting and relevant peripheral data sources
- A description of what we need to know about the setting
- How you developed a research strategy that relates appropriately to the setting, and the decisions you made about approaching the people there
- How you proceeded in gaining access and collecting data
- A catalogue of research activities and data collected
- How you structured your analysis and arrived at your choice of the themes and headings
- Your system for presenting data (e.g. coding, referencing, anonymising)

Discussion of data:
- Structured with the themes and headings described above
- What you have learnt from the data and how this relates back to issues arising from the literature
- How the data provides evidence for what you have found

Implications:
- A summary of what you have found throughout the written study, referring back to key elements of the data
- What you think it all means - perhaps with reference to the original research questions

Conclusions:
- Your final comment on all the basic points in your argument

Themes becoming chapters and sections

Examples

Which parts of the thesis do these extracts come from? What makes them work?

> The structure of my data chapters is generated directly by the themes that emerge from the analysis of the data.

> The following quite long extract from my research diary, which is in effect a piece of auto-ethnography, helps me to make sense of the interview extracts presented in the section so far. It needs to be quite long because I need to show a development of thinking; but I will break into it with comment on how it relates as I go.

> The theoretical perspective that I developed in the previous chapters now enables me to make sense of both my methodology and my data in a way that I had not thought about before. Just to summarise here, the perspective is that …. This means that I can now …

> The personal account in the previous pages is clearly highly subjective. However, when juxtaposed with what … said in …, and with the theory coming out of …, it does now make it possible to see that …

What is important to note in the following … is that …. This will then serve to frame … by showing that …

The … is organised in the way that it is because I want to show that …. Therefore, first there is … which will provide an introduction to … This is then followed by … because I want to show immediately the connection between … and …

Data chapter?
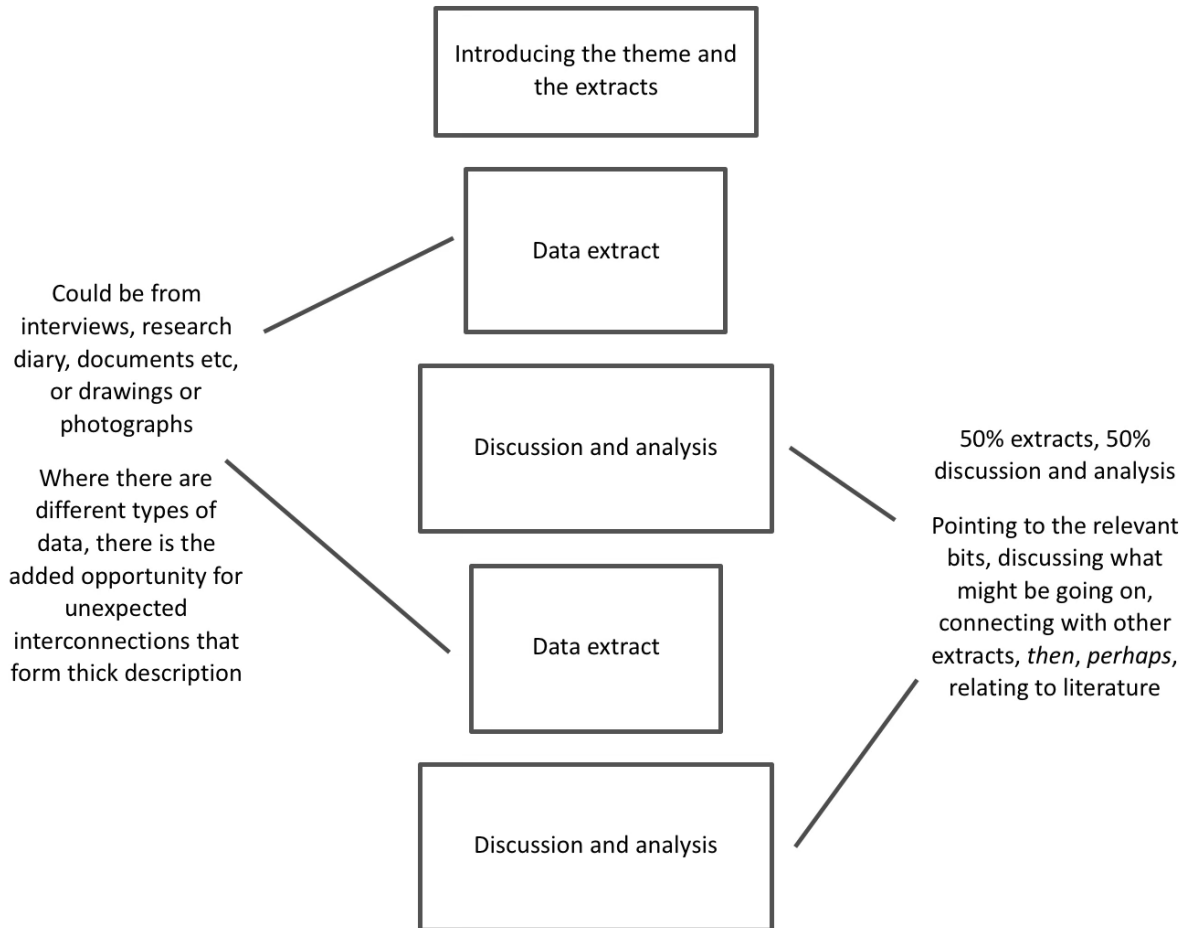
Demarcation

DATA: what can be seen and heard. Used as an extract to provide evidence. **COMMENT:** what this means, why it is significant. Contributes to the **ARGUMENT** - what you are generally saying

'No one assigns you. It's just if you walk in and one is there and it looks like ... someone needs to feed them so you just do it. You use your common sense and get behind the feeding table.'

'It makes sense. I have to feed all these people so I get behind the feeding table.'

I interpreted these comments to mean that NAs were constantly assessing the situation and reacting accordingly. When a resident was not actively engaged in feeding or was known as a 'feeder', any competent NA would recognise what was needed to be done and do it. Feeding a helpless resident does not happen until the

NA makes that assessment and begins the feeding. Feeding, like all other interactions is 'indexical' and 'reflexive'. Its practices are 'embodied', 'circumstantially contingent', and 'unwittingly' performed (Garfinkel 1967; Lynch, Livingston, and Garfinkel 1983). (Pierson 1999: 128)

(Holliday 2016: 92)

Multiple voices

- Personal narrative (what happened to stimulate the research)
- Data
- Comment at the time of data collection
- Comment on 1-3 at the time of writing
- Overarching argument, attaching it all together

[2] Ethics and research

Researcher culture

Technologised professional discourse

'Participant-centred' concepts of rights, voice, power, privacy, accountability, involvement & ethics

Esoteric language & actions

The real worlds of the 'participants' could be elsewhere

Not really 'participants' at all

Ethical approval is not the end of being ethical about one's research

The whole research process, from defining 'the setting' to imagining the 'participants' is constructed by the researcher

The relationality of all cultural contexts (Holliday 2013)

'Researcher' and consent might be a totally alien concepts

What is ethical in a research setting is to be discovered as part of the research process

Not being allowed to sit at the back of the class (Holliday 2016: 166)

Co-researchers 'causing a disturbance' (Holliday 2016: 167)

The head of department asking to come into the class (Holliday 2016: 167)

Shamim and Herrera needing to take on unexpected persona to get access (Holliday 2016: 153)

Participants not wanting to be 'asked' or 'told'

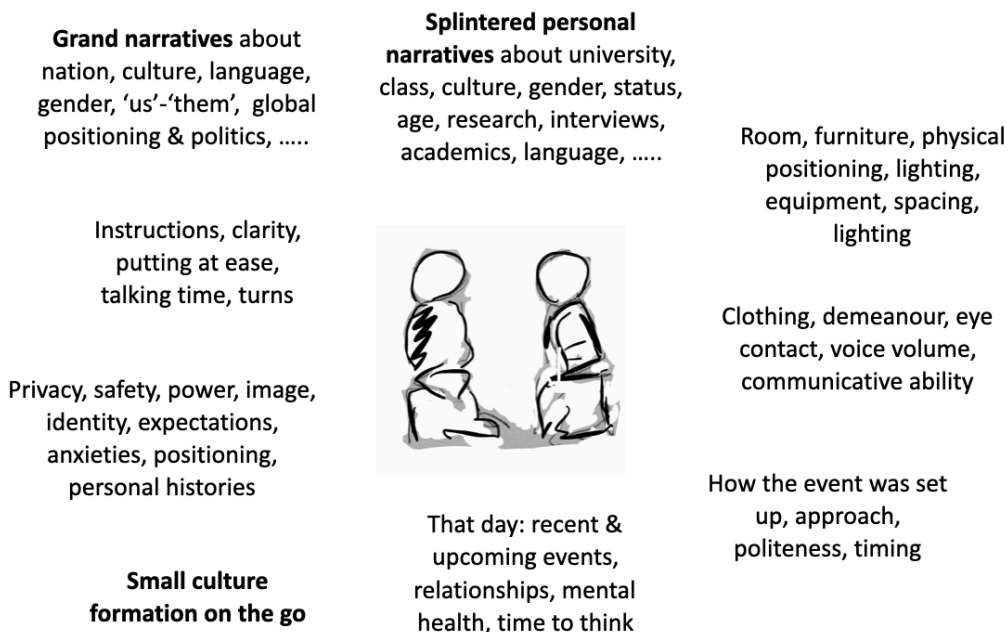Who has the right to presume what is beneficial to the participants?

Who has the right to interpret what is going on?

Whose' interpretation is it

'This participant believes that ...'

'My interpretation is that ...'

The complexities of the research event

Grand narratives about nation, culture, language, gender, 'us'-'them', global positioning & politics, ...

Splintered personal narratives about university, class, culture, gender, status, age, research, interviews, academics, language, ...

Room, furniture, physical positioning, lighting, equipment, spacing, lighting

Instructions, clarity, putting at ease, talking time, turns

Clothing, demeanour, eye contact, voice volume, communicative ability

Privacy, safety, power, image, identity, expectations, anxieties, positioning, personal histories

That day: recent & upcoming events, relationships, mental health, time to think

How the event was set up, approach, politeness, timing

Small culture formation on the go

Why the Egyptian participant chose to say what she did (Holliday 2016: 4)

Needing to describe the power dynamics

Also as already described in Amadasi and Holliday (2017), the setting was the university office in the UK of R2 with R1 on Skype in her home in Italy. Despite the constraints of the Skype arrangements, the setting was intended to be informal, with the researchers and student sitting in a circle with three chairs and the computer screen on the desk nearby. This format resulted from fairly lengthy negotiation with the larger student group. Seven had responded to an invitation to attend two focus group meetings that were unrecorded; and it was several of these students who said that they preferred to be interviewed individually. There was some evidence in email correspondence that several of the students felt uncomfortable speaking in front of the others. An initial open invitation for them to sign up to a range of possible dates and times was unsuccessful, and was followed by some

students requesting to be assigned specific appointments. In two cases, they chose to come to the interviews in pairs. In anticipation of what emerged in the interviews, there was a strong sense of a narrative of agentive and individualist sense-making. (Amadasi & Holliday 2017: 246)

Belief in the agency and expertise of the people being interviewed strengthens the licence of the researchers to intervene where it is felt that this expertise needs to be encouraged or supported. (Amadasi & Holliday 2017: 245)

Bibliography

Amadasi, S., & Holliday, A. R. (2017). Block and thread intercultural narratives and positioning: conversations with newly arrived postgraduate students. Language & Intercultural Communication, 17(3), 254-269.

Holliday, A. R. (2013). The politics of ethics in diverse cultural settings: colonising the centre stage. Compare, 43(4), 537-554.

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