

Transcript

12 March 2026, 01:00pm

JC **Jonathan Chow** 0:06

Hello everyone. Popular session today. Welcome to the 6th, I think, session of our data analysis webinar series. Good to see some returning names and plenty of new names as well. My name is Jonathan. I'm from the Southwest Doctoral Training Partnership.

And today we're looking at positionality and kind of how you consider that and negotiate that through your research. We've got a couple of really interesting presentations today. We've got Claire Hatfield, who is a lecturer and also just about to finish her Phd at Plymouth Marjon.

University. And then we've got Kim Collette, who is a lecturer in education at the Open University. So what we'll do today is each presentation will last about 20 minutes. And then after each presentation, we'll have about 5 minutes for you to ask questions. We don't have the chat function turned on today, but we have the Q&A function.

CH **Claire Hadfield** 1:04

Oops.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 1:09

turned on. So feel free to just leave your questions in the Q&A section as we go along. I will probably also allow you to unmute yourselves during the question time. So just raise your virtual hand if you would like to ask questions that way instead. Just a quick note, the captions are available in the top menu bar, but just be mindful that that is automatically generated. And I think that is it. So without further ado, then, can I invite Claire to start us off, please?

CH **Claire Hadfield** 1:47

Thanks, Jonathan. I'm really happy and excited to be presenting as part of this series, so thank you for that. As Jonathan said, I'm heading towards the end of my Phd journey at Plymouth Marjon University. I've been doing my Phd part time while also teaching at Maud John, primarily within teacher education. So and specifically on the

secondary PGCE, where I'm an English specialist, but teach across the PGCE. So I'm going to talk about the journey, I suppose, of becoming a researcher from my perspective, which is why I've got the three B's, beginning, becoming and belonging, and thinking about positionality from different perspectives and some of the terminology that we might associate with positionality and that journey of finding what works for me and reflects my identity as a researcher.

So probably helpful for you to know what I'm researching, first of all, and why it's important and how I'm going about it. So my Phd is looking at early career teachers and trainee teachers, their identity, professional identity, and how that evolves over time. So it's a longitudinal study.

And I'm researching this because unless you've been living under a rock, you probably know that teacher recruitment and retention has been in crisis mode for quite a while, not just in England, which is where I'm focusing my research, but internationally.

So I started my research, if you like, on the far side of this table I started in September 2020. And you can see that the three-year retention and the five year retention for teachers has been gradually becoming more and more into crisis mode over the last several years before I started my research. It hasn't massively improved since, but that's for later. So what I'm doing then is I recruited a set of participants from the secondary PGCE training course.

And those participants started in September 2021. They were doing the one year PGCE. And I recruited them, first of all, by sending out a whole cohort survey. We had around about 90 trainees that year on the PGCE. And I sent a general cohort survey trying to find out kind of basic biographical information about them, but also their routes into the PGCE because we have a lot of participants who don't come straight from university. We have a lot of career changes and we did in particular that year because you will remember what was going on worldwide in 2020. We had a lot of people who were changing careers, for example. Another reason why the timing of this was really useful is that the government in 2019 had launched the recruitment and retention strategy, a national strategy to try to improve teacher retention.

And as part of this strategy, they developed something called the Early Career Framework, which you'll see on my later slides abbreviated to ECF. And early career

teachers was in the new terminology that was to be used to describe what had previously been called newly qualified teachers.

And as part of that strategy, that recruitment and retention strategy then, there was an early career framework developed, which the intention of which was to continue to support newly qualified teachers, not just in their first year following their teaching, but in the first two years.

after they qualified as teachers. And that was presented to them and intended to be an entitlement. So that entitlement gave them more protected time, i.e. time when they were not teaching, but able to be doing things like planning and preparation, etc.

They had that over 2 years, that increased time as opposed to over one year. It was a kind of calculated amount of time rather than random. And the second strand of that was that they would have a mentor with whom they would meet either weekly or fortnightly for the whole of that two years as well. And that was something new that had been brought in.

Formalized.

And then thirdly, they had this framework, which was a kind of guidance document that lays out exactly what those teachers should be learning about and putting into practise over the course of those two years. And again, that's

It was seen as an extension of the teaching standards that they have to meet in order to pass and thus

Early career teacher identity was being conceptualised by the document as a continuum that would be structured and supported by that document, the extra time and the existence of a mentor. So that's quite a long contextual section about what I'm presenting on.

So these are the research questions that I'm asking. I'll let you read those for a moment.

And then I'm just going to move on then to think about exactly how I'm collecting the data. So I followed my participants for four years in total. The PGR year, the two years that they were following the early career framework, and then one more year, so until the end of their third year in teaching.

I also, and I'll come back to this, I've also just done a five year update using pen portraits, which I'll talk about later, as a way of kind of adding in a where are they now section into my data. From my initial cohort of 90 odd,

Roughly 1/3 of them returned the initial cohort survey, which gave them the option

to join the longer study. And I ended up with six consistent participants for the whole four years across maths, English and drama.

So, so that's my cohort.

The analysis method that I'm using is Browne and Clark's reflexive thematic analysis. And the reason I like this, firstly, is that it is flexible and adaptable across disciplines. It's, as some of you may know, it's used across health, education, psychology. And I like the fact that there's a not necessarily a prescribed way of doing it, but there are very kind of strong and robust guidelines as to how you might go about using reflexive thematic analysis, but with enough flexibility to apply in different contexts.

One of the other things that appealed to me about reflexive thematic analysis was it's very much focused on language. So I worked a lot with interview transcripts. The process of coding means that you become very, very familiar with those interview transcripts.

You can look both at the surface, the semantic meanings, and also the latent meanings behind what your participants are saying. And that for me then generates depth and richness of analysis. And in particular for this longitudinal study, I'm able to really drill down as to

how the language that my participants are using to describe, for example, their identity or to describe how they experience the early career framework in the first year and the second year. I can really get into depth and detail there. And that then allowed me to kind of generate themes and have a rich discussion about that data.

So positionality, something that I only really started thinking about recently because someone asked me a good question, which was, to what extent do personal interest, ethos and values overlap with our position as a researcher? And how does that matter? Why does that matter?

So thinking about that in my own context, I'm particularly interested in language and the way in which people use language. And that predates me having started the PGCE. It might be just because I'm a really nosy person and I love to eavesdrop. But when thinking about starting this research, my starting point was the language that participants are using. For example, when trainee teachers first begin on placement, they might speak with more emotional distance about classes, for example, that they're beginning to teach.

they might talk about that year 10 group or those year eights. And then at some

point during the training year, what often happens is they start talking about my year eights, my year 10s, my group. So that was kind of a starting point for me, thinking about those shifts in language and everything kind of Gary from there.

So there were for me some very specific things to be considering when I was starting the research as well. I'd worked for a long time in secondary education. I've been a secondary teacher for kind of 17, 18 years. Then I moved into IT as a lot of people do. and felt in a really strange position in terms of being a very experienced teacher, but not in that context. So I absolutely had imposter syndrome, probably for the first maybe two to three years. So I started that job in September 2017 and then began the Phd

a couple of years later and then started gathering my data. So it was kind of, that was a shift in position for me that gave me some pause for thought. Other considerations were during the first year, my participants are on the PGCE, I'm teaching them, especially the English ones.

So there were ethical considerations there around how much power do I have over them in terms of grading them, for example. So I needed to think about ethical mitigations to put in place, for example, colleagues being the ones who visited those trainees on placement, colleagues doing their marking, colleagues having the final conversations with them.

at the end of the PGCE, so that I tried as much as possible to separate my professional identity, my own professional identity as a lecturer in authority from my research interest, even though they're completely enmeshed. So that's an interesting thing to think about.

I said about Pen portraits. So this was something, another data collection method that I came to later on, really, only about four years in. One of the things that emerged really strongly from the data in 2024, so when my participants had to come to the end of the early career framework, was

They were talking to me about the lack of agency that they were feeling within their working lives and the fact that they felt, some of them felt, de-skilled and de-professionalized and unable to be as creative or as free in their, for example, choices about the

pedagogy they were using or the curriculum that they needed to teach. And it came to me that if I only wrote up their experiences without any further input from them, I

was kind of playing into that silencing of them almost and it felt really strongly that I wanted to give them back a voice.

at the end of my main data gathering and get their feedback. So that's what I've done. I summarised roughly 1000 words per participant, sent it out as a pen portrait to them and invited some feedback as a kind of final way of kind of triangulating my findings, but

also giving them a little bit of agency back.

And to me, that was really important because it allied with my kind of axiology, my set of values. I believe really strongly that one should bring one's authentic self to work as much as you can. And to hear that that wasn't possible for my trainees made me

frustrated on their behalf. I'm very reflexive and it was another way in which I could reflect on the process and send it back out there into the world and then have it back again and reflect again. And yeah, so that's why I went for that.

So I'm just going to talk about a couple of terms that I was thinking about when I was working on the positionality section of my methodology. I came across this term *pracademic*, which for me I don't like. I think often a portmanteau term where you squish 2 words together to create a new one.

It can just sound really awkward and forced. And so just aesthetically, I don't like it.

But the main reason I don't like it is I think it perpetuates a false dichotomy between those of us who are practise based and those of us who are academics. And

and also kind of can be seen as reinforcing A hierarchy as well between academia and practise with academia sitting above. So for those reasons, I don't adopt that term for myself. Other people may feel perfectly comfortable with it and just not.

Perhaps I'm just overthinking it, but, you know, it's the point of a Phd is to overthink everything, right? So I, yeah, I think for me,

Practise and academia are kind of 1 and the same. So my practise is an academic pursuit. My academic identity grows from and is dependent on and feeds back into my practice. So for me, it's a bit like

I feel as though I'm like one of those sharks that has to keep swimming in order to kind of keep oxygenating their blood. I have to keep teaching, reflecting, being an academic, feeding that into my academic work and it's cyclical for me.

I also explored this term in *betweener*. I wondered whether that might be a better fit and in lots of ways that does apply to me, you know, in the ways that I've outlined above being a secondary teacher into a university context, to being a lecturer on the

PGC, but also trying to research some of my my trainees and also this idea of me as being an experienced teacher, but also an ECR, an early career researcher. So in some ways I feel more comfortable with that description of me as an identity, but again, I don't think it quite fits. I haven't come up with something that I'm perfectly happy with, but I feel more comfortable with inbetweener than with Pracademic because I think it encapsulates the idea of fluidity that I was alluding to earlier when I was talking about sharks.

Give me a second, just find my next page of notes.

Okay, so longitudinal study, I'm sure some of you have seen this graphic before. You know, we start off very confidential, like this is what I'm going to do, these are my questions. And that kind of almost takes for granted that nothing else is going to change, nothing else around us is going to change, but obviously lots of things do.

So A longitudinal study.

definitely advantages in that it allowed me to follow my participants, not just for those four years that I anticipated, PGCE plus three, but coming back to them now in the last couple of months when they're in their fifth year of teaching, I'm also able to capture their intentions about staying in the profession now.

And that's fantastic. My participants were the guinea pigs for this early career framework. So to have that data at three and at five years about their intentions in terms of staying in the profession and how they view themselves now as teachers is really valuable.

But quite a lot of things change along the way.

Oops!

So one of the things that we have to do is kind of adapt these shifting sands, adapting on the fly. So practical things such as my data collection methods, because I was reliant on colleagues in that first year to record the end of PGCE conversations with my participants, there were some technical issues there.

So then I haven't necessarily got great transcripts for every interview. Those kinds of things, capacity from my perspective, really problematic when working full time and attempting to do a Phd as well.

Reflexive thematic analysis is an iterative process. It's something that you keep going back to. That appeals, but also that can be challenging because as I have progressed through the PGCE, I've conceived myself differently, I think, as a researcher.

And at some point, you have to draw a line and say, I have captured all of my data.

I've analysed as much as I think I'm going to analyse, even though I could keep going with, for example, the pen portraits and a back and forth with my participants.

Drawing a line has to happen somewhere.

Policy context shift, especially we've had changes of government during the time that I've been doing my PGCE. The ECF itself, the first iteration, didn't last long. It became quickly evident it wasn't working well. And there's another version of it now that's just coming online.

and the Labour government also impacted the wider context for my participants.

There was a shift in focus. And then I guess I put shape-shifting there because I was thinking about how my...

confidence and enjoyment of the PGCE has shifted according to not just when I was working, across that long timeline, starting by diving in, getting ethics really quickly so I could start with the cohort I wanted to start with and not having then done enough reading to then need to keep going back to the reading, etc, etc. And the bits that I've loved and the bits that I've

hated have really affected how I felt about myself as a researcher. I didn't enjoy methodology and it took me ages, but now I'm really proud of what I came up with in terms of my positionality statement. I didn't think I was going to like doing policy analysis and I love it. So

Anyway.

I think if I were to be offering advice, it would be about holding your nerve. So thinking about what do I want to research? Why is it important? How am I going to, how am I going to go about it? And I kind of thought about these three phases of becoming a researcher. Beginning, which might be quite uncertain and have various false starts, becoming for me has been that whole process, an iterative process for me of collecting data, analysing data over time, and then belonging. makes, I included this because I was thinking about that journey towards becoming a researcher and feeling that I will have earned a place in whatever we call this academia through this journey. And my journey has mirrored that of my participants. So again, coming back, it's another example of in between a status, if you like. I'm not a fully fledged researcher yet, whatever that looks like, but I'm not at the beginning of my journey either.

So I'm going to stop here and see whether there are any questions.



Brilliant. Thank you very much, Claire. Yeah, I will encourage you to leave questions or to raise your virtual hand if you do have questions. There is one in the Q&A which we can start with, and it's from Roberto, who asks, have you or are you planning to use Bron and Clark's RTA?

CH **Claire Hadfield** 24:07

Thank you.
Yeah.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 24:25
reporting guidelines.

CH **Claire Hadfield** 24:28

Um...
In what way? Do you want to say a little bit more about that?

JC **Jonathan Chow** 24:35

Roberto, if you're happy to just enable your mic, you can raise your hand and I'll do that.

If you're typing, then we can come back to it. So by looking out for your hand. Okay, I'm assuming, I don't see a hand, so I'm assuming you are typing a follow-up question. I did see another hand as well. I think was it from, I think it was Pooja, which, so I'm just going to enable to allow Mike Pooja if you're able to now.

CH **Claire Hadfield** 24:57

Okay.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 25:10

to unmute yourself and feel free to ask your question.

PL **Puja Lama** 25:14

I'm sorry, that was by mistake. I wanted to call you up actually, because it was a great presentation. Thank you.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 25:16
Ohh.

CH **Claire Hadfield** 25:20
Thank you. Thank you. I don't know about Browne and Clark reporting guidelines. Do you mean, I think to further clarify, I wondered whether you meant the way in which I'm structuring my Phd, the way in which I'm going to structure specifically the discussion.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 25:21
Hannah.

CH **Claire Hadfield** 25:41
So I'm happy to address that question, Roberto, but I kind of just need a little bit more of a steer, if that's okay. Anyone else? Or we can come back to it later.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 25:51
Yeah, well, we'll come back to it if we see it. Oops, suddenly we've got a few more questions that's coming.
Okay, there's one from Anna. Anna asks, what is your position on personal disclosure and field work and outside of it?

CH **Claire Hadfield** 26:07
Well, that's interesting.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 26:08
I'm conducting overtly feminist decolonial research and I am myself a member of one of the activist groups I will be interviewing.

CH **Claire Hadfield** 26:18
Ha.
I, if it were me not knowing what your topic is, I would disclose, I think, membership of the group to the people you're interviewing. But on the other hand, you need to think about that kind of anthropologist dilemma, you know, like, are you going to

then impact their reactions and to what extent you're going to. So then you might need to think about how you would mitigate that. But I think if you're researching an area that's potentially emotive, which this sounds as though it is, I would want to approach that from a position of openness.

 **Jonathan Chow** 27:01

Oh, lots of questions. I'm going to have to be a bit selective now, I think. However, there is a, there's a comment from Daniela who says that the terms you are discussing aligns with the concept of liminality, which is fascinating. There's a question from

 **Claire Hadfield** 27:05

Yes.

Yeah.

 **Angeline Mbogo Barrett** 27:10

Yeah.

 **Claire Hadfield** 27:17

Three.

 **Angeline Mbogo Barrett** 27:19

Can I just say something here, because I think it's actually quite a common experience for PGR, this experience of liminality. Sorry, I'm Angeline, I'm the deputy director and as experienced academics, that's quite really why we love talking to PGR. Sometimes we deliberately go and seek out people who are a little bit

 **Jonathan Chow** 27:22

Okay.

 **Claire Hadfield** 27:26

Mm.

Yeah.

 **Angeline Mbogo Barrett** 27:40

closer to that practise experience. I also like the term praxis, and I thought that what you were describing aligns really well with how Freire defines praxis, where rather than it being a separation, actually the integrity of the research is about how those two things work together.

CH **Claire Hadfield** 27:46

Mm.

Yeah, yeah.

Yeah.

 **Angeline Mbogo Barrett** 28:01

Um...

CH **Claire Hadfield** 28:01

Absolutely, thank you. Yeah, Ferrari is coming into the lit review at some point. But yeah, thank you for reminding me about that term, Lim and LC. I will come back to that.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 28:12

I will, there's a couple of other questions I think we can address now. I will leave T's question and Hayley's question for after the second presentation. But let's go to Therese's question and then I think Josetta had their hand up for a while. If I don't see her hand anymore, if you still want to ask a question, can you leave your hand up and then I will make sure to get to it. Theresa asks, so you mentioned 17 years experience as a secondary school teacher. In terms of personality, how did your views and attitudes, positive and negative, impact on your data analysis?

CH **Claire Hadfield** 28:48

Oh, that's an interesting question. Thank you. Yes, that's a really interesting question. I really valued and enjoyed, for example, creative pedagogies when I was teaching. So I think one of the things that I was asking my participants about was about pedagogy and the amount of kind of autonomy agency they had over those pedagogical choices. And that's partly context driven because I know that within lots of multi-academy trusts, there's very little choice, but absolutely conflates

with my personal interest and enjoyment. That's a great question. Thank you for making me think about that.

JC Jonathan Chow 29:30

Right, and then just as well, your mic is now enabled, or you can unmute your mic.

MJ MALCOLM, JOSETTA (THEY/THEM) (PGR) 29:36

Great. Thank you. Thank you so much. And yeah, you got it right the first time, Jonathan. My pronouns are they, them. Thank you. Amazing. Thank you. Really, really interesting presentation, Claire. And I had two sneaky questions, so you can pick either or both. Firstly, more of a quick one that I'm really interested in doing member checking and I hadn't heard of

JC Jonathan Chow 29:38

But.

Exactly.

CH Claire Hadfield 29:48

Okay.

MJ MALCOLM, JOSETTA (THEY/THEM) (PGR) 29:55

pen portraiture, pen portraiture. Just wondering if you had any references or any words about how effective that is or why you chose that method. It sounds like a great one. Thank you. I can see your references slide, maybe it's on there. And then my second question was around

CH Claire Hadfield 30:12

Um...

Ye.

Yeah.

MJ MALCOLM, JOSETTA (THEY/THEM) (PGR) 30:25

on your research and their experiences.

CH Claire Hadfield 30:28

Great. Pen portraits quickly point you to Glynis' cousin, which was the member checking stuff came from there. So this idea of relational validity, so using those additional collection and analysis methods, I guess, as a way of co-creating the meaning.

MJ **MALCOLM, JOSETTA (THEY/THEM) (PGR)** 30:29

Thanks.

CH **Claire Hadfield** 30:49

with my participants. Pen portraits, I can't remember where I came across that idea initially.

But yeah, sorry, can't remember. And then marginalised identities, yes and no. I think in my initial cohort questionnaire, I had amongst those biographical questions, I had kind of sexuality as a question and also whether my participants had been first generation uni. That was something I was interested in in terms of their motivations. But that's as far as that went. But that's a good question too.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 31:29

Perfect, lovely. Right, I do know a couple of other questions, but let's go now to Kim and then we can answer new questions and come back to revisit these ones. Kim, please.

CH **Claire Hadfield** 31:35

Ye.

K **Kim.Collett [she/her]** 31:55

Okay, sorry, just trying to get the slides to come up. Hi, everybody. Bear with me a second. It didn't want to do it.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 32:05

Um, you're quite quiet. Is it just me or are you? Is everyone else? Can everyone else hear Ken?


K **Kim.Collett [she/her]** 32:06

Let's try again.

Can you hear me okay?

CH **Claire Hadfield** 32:16
Yeah.

K **Kim.Collett [she/her]** 32:16
Yeah, you can.

 **Angeline Mbogo Barrett** 32:17
Just about, you are very quiet.

K **Kim.Collett [she/her]** 32:23
Just cheque this on.
Okay, does that make, am I clear enough to hear?

JC **Jonathan Chow** 32:32
Yeah, that's a little better. Thank you. Yeah.

K **Kim.Collett [she/her]** 32:33
Yeah, okay. Okay, so thank you. So I am going to talk to you about my Phd research. So I graduated just over a year ago from the University of Exeter and now work for the Open University. And the
The thing I want to talk to you about is a specific element of my research project. So I'll briefly tell you what it was that I was doing for a bit of context. And then the bulk of what I want to talk to you about in the next 20 minutes or so is this idea of using advocacy in research, because that was something that some of my participants asked for. And what that then does to our notions of voice
and how we can then incorporate that third voice in the research and what that means for our data analysis, for the presentation of our findings and so on.
So my Phd thesis focused on comparing experiences of inclusion in the classroom. So focused on secondary school classrooms, and my participants were young people with special educational needs and disabilities, young people without, and teaching staff. And I used researcher driven photo elicitation interviews, which is where you use a photograph to be the catalyst for the conversation that you had.

And within all of that, I found out the different experiences and thoughts of the individual groups, and then I compared those groups to see what the similarities and differences were. So the methodology behind what I did was interpret this research, and the data analysis that I used was reflective thematic analysis.

So in terms of positionality, which is kind of the theme for today's session, when I first started off my Phd research, I thought positionality. I know that. I know who I am. I've done research before. That should be quite straightforward. I have picked this particular topic because I was a student with SEND at school.

and I had negative experiences of inclusive education. I also work in education, so I thought, I know this, I know that's my positionality, that's where I'm coming from, and I know that is going to influence what I'm doing. It influences the very topic, and I know it's going to influence the conversations that I have with my participants, what I read in to the experiences they share, and how I then interpret the data.

I also knew that as a researcher, I had a passion for inclusive research. I had a passion for voice. I wanted to make sure that the voices of the participants were at the centre. That is what we were hearing. That's what we were basing it on. The strong belief that research should be about lived experiences

and we should do all that we can to make sure that those are represented and not filtered through the lenses of me, the lenses of other people. So that was very clear to me from the start that I wanted to make sure voice was central and it also wanted to make sure that my research was inclusive. I've done disability research in the past and we know that there are certain groups of people who are generally marginalized, not just in society,

but also from research. We tend not to hear the voices of those who are disabled or have different communication styles and we also don't hear the voices of young people enough either.

Perhaps that was naive, me thinking that I knew what I was doing in terms of positionality. But the thing that threw that into question and that made me question all that I thought I stood for in terms of research was when two of my participants asked for advocates to be present during the interviews. So 2 of the young people with special educational needs and disabilities said they wanted a family member with them during the interviews, otherwise they wouldn't take part. So Taylor and Ocean, these are the pseudonyms. They had, so Taylor had autism and specific learning difficulties, which meant that they were uncomfortable with unknown people and unknown activities. They communicated verbally.

but processing information was sometimes difficult and sometimes they chose to be non-verbal in certain situations. And then Ocean, they had autism and social, emotional, mental health needs. And again, discomfort with unknown people and activities, different ways of communicating, quite literal, and also emotional regulation.

could be difficult, especially in unknown situations. So both of these participants wanted to have advocates. And this was a really difficult decision for me. I had never in a million years thought that advocates would be one of the adjustments people would ask for. I'd planned for all sorts of different things. I made sure my language was free of idioms. I made it straightforward. I thought about what the font looked like.

I thought about sign language interpreters. I thought about what would I do with photographs if someone had a visual impairment. But advocates wasn't something that I anticipated people asking for. So a big part of me thought, well, I don't want to say no to this because I want my research to be inclusive. And if I say no to them having advocates, then I immediately stop them from taking part in my research. And if by any chance they decide to try it without an advocate, then I may well not be able to get much information from them, or I might cause them distress, which obviously ethically is not a good place to be either.

But another fundamental part of me, as I said before, is that voice is so important to me as a researcher. It's so important to me that participants are able to communicate their lived experiences and for it not to be shaped by somebody else's lens. And interpretive research, which is my methodology, supports that. It talks about how we should listen to and represent the authentic voices of participants, we should do what we can to reduce the additional lenses filtering their voices, such as practising reflexivity, thinking about oppositionality, thinking about our method choice in terms of what that can and can't do in terms of voice.

So this was my biggest issue. How can I maintain voice if I'm not only adding my lens as a researcher, but I'm also going to add another lens in terms of the advocates? There's going to be three of us there that are shaping this conversation. And does that actually marry up with what I'm trying to do in terms of voice and lived experiences?

So advocates can add an additional lens because they are potentially communicating what the participant is saying. They are also telling the participant potentially what

I'm saying if a participant doesn't understand my questions and so on. They can misrepresent participants in doing that as well as the researcher if they haven't quite understood what it was that either of us wanted to say.

But advocates can also dominate a conversation. Depending on who the advocate is, what training they've had and so on, they may be the dominant voice in that conversation and the participant sidelines, so you don't get to hear their voice. They can also have their own agenda or they can bring their own experiences to it. Both of the participants wanted family members as their advocates, which adds an additional layer.

which I'll talk about in a second, but that makes it much easier for the advocacy role to suddenly turn into the advocate talking about their own experiences of the situation rather than representing the participants. They may also have power over the participant, especially if we think about it in terms of a family member.

You know, there may be certain things that you wouldn't share if you were sat next to your mum that you might do if you weren't.

You might not want them to know certain things, or you may be worried about their judgment.

So I had to re-evaluate my idea about what voice was and what that meant in terms of research.

And I sort of looked at quite a lot of stuff and there's not really much about using advocates in research out there. There's not much literature that tells me that other people have done it and how they found it and how they went around it, especially in my field of inclusive education. But I was having a look at this idea of voice to see kind of how that married in then in terms of this research.

And I came to the understanding that my problem with this, my worry with it, was because I had a very normalised view of what voice is. So I try and pride myself on being somebody that is a disability advocate, that does inclusive research, but I had to come to this understanding that actually my idea of what voice was, was normalised and therefore quite exclusionary.

So often in society, and it philtres through into research, when we talk about voice, we mean speech and text. That is what we think about. We think about people being able to talk. We think about people being able to write. That is what we tend to think about when we think about voice. It comes directly from an individual person. It's autonomous and independent.

especially in the sorts of societies that we live in, in places like the UK, where we have

quite a neoliberal idea of society, where it's all about autonomy and independence. So as soon as we add in things like an advocate into that, we suddenly get this nervousness about whether that's the right way to do things, whether that changes somebody's voice, whether that is a lesser form of communication.

But the trouble with having that normalised voice is that actually we risk alternative communication being seen as invalid. We sort of see it as a lesser form of communication and it doesn't have the spaces or the emphasis that we have on other styles of communication. And that means communities or individuals that use alternative forms of communication, including things like using advocacy, can be marginalised and silenced even further.

So this reinforced to me that actually I should be saying yes to these advocates. If I don't use those advocates in the research, those two participants are being marginalised further, they're being silenced further, and I'm not being the inclusive researcher that I thought I was.

So I said yes to the advocates. So how they worked, it was a little bit of a trial and error because like I said, there is hardly any research out there or advice out there on how to use advocates in research. I found a few bits and pieces that helped inform me, but a lot of it was just down to a trial and error. So like I've been saying throughout, I really

think it's important that participants are being researched with, not on. So that idea that they are part of the process. So I didn't want to dictate how the participants use the advocates, because I didn't know the participants well enough to know, you know, whether they would want to use them for reframing questions, whether they would want

them for reassurance, whether they would want them sat next to them, whether they would want them leading it or just chipping in. So I decided to leave quite a lot of that up to the individual participants. They are their best kind of person to knowing who they are and what they are and who the advocate is. So the participants chose who their advocates were and they were directed by the participant.

The participant made all the choices in terms of whether they were sat next to them, when they spoke and so on.

But to ensure that the focus was still on the participants, I made sure that all the questions were directed to the participant, not the advocate. And when the advocate spoke, I looked to the participant for verbal and non-verbal confirmation to see whether they agreed or not with what the advocate was saying. Now, this wasn't

always easy, and I'll talk about that a little bit more shortly.

because I didn't want to stop that natural flow of conversation to say, do you agree with your advocate? And even if I did do that, I think that could be awkward for some people. You know, they might not want to sit there and go, no, I don't agree with what the advocate said. They're talking a load of rubbish. You might not want to say that in front of your advocate. So you may end up just nodding or saying, yes, I agree when directly questioned. It can make it feel quite uncomfortable, as well as disrupting that natural flow of conversation.

But if I felt the conversation was diverting off into the advocates' experiences, then I would bring the conversation back on focus to the participant by adding in a different question or talking and asking the participant what they sort of experienced in whatever topic we were talking about. So like I said,

both of the advocates that they chose were family members. And in terms of advocacy, family members can be really helpful because they tend to understand the person quite well, which means that they understand how they communicate quite well. And also they can be witnesses to the experiences the participant has. So it means they've got a little bit of knowledge perhaps about some of the stories or some of the feelings that the

participants want to share. So it might be easier for them to be able to encourage and support that. And also, I haven't put it on the slide here, but family members, depending on your family, it's not the same for everybody, could be quite a reassuring presence for people if they're with somebody that makes them feel safe and loved. However, on the other hand, family members being advocates can be a little bit tricky.

because sometimes it makes it about their experience. If you have an objective, independent, trained advocate, then you may find that they are better at keeping it objective and keeping it focused on the participant. Whereas, you know, I was talking to the participants about their experiences of school, and some of them shared some tricky situations with me.

And occasionally the advocate might say something like, oh, it's so frustrating. I've been to school so many times to talk about my child and try and get support, but the teachers keep fobbing me off. So it becomes kind of much easier for them to suddenly start talking about it as their own experiences. And it can be sometimes tricky to try and bring that.

And like I said before, it can prevent participants from being honest. There are certain

things that you might not want your mum to know or your dad to know or whoever it might be. So there might be things that the participants wanted to say but didn't say because of that.

So how does this all fit into data analysis then? Because this is our sort of big overarching theme, isn't it, for these sessions. So this was another thing that I wasn't sure how to do. So even though I'd agreed to advocates and I was challenging my idea of voice, I still in the back of my mind had this niggle about what voice was. And when it came to data analysis, and I used reflective thematic analysis, I thought, how do I get around this thought of voice in my head when I am doing my analysis? Reflective thematic analysis, as interpretive methodologies also promote, are verbatim transcripts going through

the actual words that participants said. And this idea about the importance of that and the importance of voice kept coming back to the fore. So I thought I had three options, really. I could remove the advocates from the transcripts and just focus on the participants' voices. I could leave them in, but not code them. Or I could include them and code them.

Now for the first one, I thought if I get rid of all the advocate voices out of there, it does remove that lens potentially from the transcripts, but it does also mean that I miss out on all the insights and all the context that the advocate added in for us. If I left them in and not code them, then it helps me, I guess, understand the context when I'm analyzing, but it doesn't help in terms of being able to include the insight that that gives us in the coding. So I decided that I was going to include them in the coding.

I was going to treat the transcripts as a whole document.

My nervousness around voice and my temptation to take the advocates out, I thought actually...

The third lens that the advocates add into my data has already happened because they were in that conversation. So it didn't make much more sense to try and remove them at this transcript level.

So this is a little example here. Hopefully you can see that. It's a screenshot of one of my coded scripts. So what I made sure I did with the transcripts was make it very clear who was talking so that I knew when it was the advocate and not the participant. So it was very clear to me in terms of being able to determine whose voice it was. But apart from that, it was coded in exactly the same way as I would have done if there were no advocates. So all

included in my coding. And then what I did to make sure that it was still about the participants is I looked through all of it on their agreement or disagreement. So sometimes that was really obvious. So sometimes there would be something that the advocate said, and then the participant would say, oh, yeah, that's exactly how I feel. And it was very clear cut. Or they say, no, I didn't agree with that. And sometimes they didn't agree with what our advocate said, and they said it, which was brilliant. It showed me that hopefully that power imbalance was not too bad in that point. Now, sometimes there was no verbal agreement. So I had to go back to the recordings.

of the interviews, because my interviews were recorded audio and visual, so I had a visual recording too. And I was able to look for non-verbal agreement or disagreement, such as nods. And this little screenshot here of when the advocate was talking, there's a nod from the participants to show that they agreed. And also, I looked for continuity from other parts of the conversation. If there, you know, it might have been something that we were talking about earlier on or later on, in the conversation that really mirrored what the advocate had said, then I'd be able to say, okay, this seems to be like a general experience the person had. So that again helped inform me. But sometimes there was no confirmation from the participant. And again, that was difficult to know whether to include or not include. Was there no confirmation because the participant didn't agree with it?

or what was happening there. I decided to include them, and I'm still on the fence as to whether that's the best thing to do or not, but I decided to include them. I went full throttle and included everything. But I needed to make sure that I was very clear that this was the advocate's voice. So it added insight, it added some information, it added some context,

but it really important to make sure that it was very clear that this was the advocate speaking without confirmation from the participant. I didn't want to misrepresent their voice. I didn't want the use of advocacy to lead to a situation where they were being misrepresented through the way that

I portrayed what we said and how that fed into my themes.

So one of the key things that I needed to do alongside this was reflexivity, which is what I was going to do anyway, because it's often a big part of things like interpretive research. But not only did I need to make sure that I practise reflexivity on my own positionality and my own influence onto the research, but I also needed to do it in terms of the advocates. I needed to use that reflexivity

space in order to reflect on the impact that the advocates may have had in the research and also my decisions around advocacy and also my views on voice and how that might influence what I did with the advocacy voice and lens. So I kept a reflective journal as part of my reflectivity practises and I made sure that I did entries in that after every interview and also after every data analysis session, making sure that I explicitly focused on advocates. And I also made sure I had regular discussion during my supervision on this because it is something different that I'd not done before, that there wasn't much literature about. I felt it was very important to make this one of the key things that I talked to my supervisors about.

And then presenting this in the findings, I thought it's got to be really clear whose voice it is. So everywhere in the findings where there are quotes or things that are referenced back to the participants, which is a lot because that's the type of research that I did, I made sure that it was very clear who was talking. So the examples on screen here show when it's the advocate, who the advocate was, and also made sure that I included the confirmation, whether it was verbal or non-verbal, and if there wasn't any, then I stated that there wasn't any, just to make it very clear.

So was it all a good idea to do this? Well, there are strengths and limitations to this kind of additional lens that might occur in research. The strengths are that it enabled voices that were often silenced and enabled me to elicit more detail from those participants and learn more about their experiences. They helped to reassure and encourage my participants.

It might not be the same for every participant, but it was for mine. So I got that additional insight and it helped provide the context and including them in the data analysis and the transcripts allowed for that insight and context and detail to stay in the research and the data. In terms of the pitfalls, it's not always easy to check whether the participant agrees with what the advocate is saying or not. It can divert focus away from the participant and the research needs to work a little bit harder to keep on track of that. It is a threat to normalised ideals of voice. I found that quite difficult to grapple with as a researcher, but also you need to bear in mind that there may be other people that are reading your research such as, you know, different people in your kind of Phd teams or your viva, but also if you want to publish stuff, there might be ideas in there that people have on voice that it might be a threat to. It's also an unknown approach, so it means that we don't have a lot of advice around it.

So, would I use them again?

Absolutely. I fully support this idea of using advocates. I think it needs more research. It needs more kind of looking at to see whether we can make it a stronger way of working and so on. But I think it in my case has worked out to be a tool that has really helped to make research accessible and inclusive. And I'm going to explore it in more detail in the future. Thank you very much.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 54:31

Fantastic. Thank you so much, Kim. Really wonderful presentation. We've got quite a few questions to go through, so can I just cheque with Kim and Claire whether you're happy for us to overrun a little bit or have you got anything? Yeah, okay, cool. Right, I promise I won't overrun too much, but it'd be nice to

K **Kim.Collett [she/her]** 54:32

Okay.

CH **Claire Hadfield** 54:44

Yep.

K **Kim.Collett [she/her]** 54:44

Yeah.

Thi.

CH **Claire Hadfield** 54:47

Yep.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 54:51

to go through a few more of these questions because there are some really excellent ones. First one for Kim then, since you did sort of end on kind of reflecting on using advocates again, we've got a question from Celine about how you view the presence of advocates relative to the presence of an interpreter. So for example, for British Sign Language or another spoken language.

K **Kim.Collett [she/her]** 55:15

Yeah, that's a really good question. And actually, there is an interesting article by Dee Price, and they talk about how advocacy should be seen on par with translators. And they call for research to look at advocates in the same way that they would do for a BSL interpreter or a language interpreter. So I think that's a really good connexion to make. And seeing it as one of the tools that we can use to make research inclusive, rather than thinking of it as this new unusual thing that doesn't align with anything else that's ever been done before.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 55:55

I will go back to Roberto, who obviously asked a question regarding RTA earlier and has provided a little bit of a follow up. And this question now applies to both Claire and Kim. And let me find it. It's just that there has been a 2023 publication that sort of gone further, I think, into just scrolling to it, going back to it now, goes back into kind of defining some of the some of the terms, I think, more clearly and recommendations as well. It's a guideline, essentially, I think, supplementary material. I mean, have you two sort of seen this 2023 publication? Have you got any thoughts on it? Will you be applying things that are mentioned within?

CH **Claire Hadfield** 56:48

I did respond in the chat a little bit as well, but yeah, I think it's 2024, these reporting guidelines.

Reflexive openness, I think, is something that I'm, as one of the kind of core principles. And I think I have to the best of my ability addressed that in terms of returning to my positionality at various points during the study and ensuring that the version that I present is the most kind of open and if you like up to date version. I kept a methodology diary as well during the course of the research and I imagine I'm going to put in some extracts from that as appendices towards the end. Research and visibility, I think my presence is absolutely there and any potential bias acknowledged.

So I'll stop there.


K **Kim.Collett [she/her]** 57:55

Yeah, and I just, yeah, say that that latest one was one that I reviewed and used as well. And it's things like terms like emerging themes and stuff like that and being very careful about sort of the power connotations and also whether we're viewing


things that are emerging or whether we actually are reflecting the fact that we're actually co-constructors in what's coming out of


 **Jonathan Chow** 58:02
Edd.

 **Claire Hadfield** 58:05
No.


 **Kim.Collett [she/her]** 58:18
data and stuff like that as well. So I think it's really important for anybody thinking about doing reflective thematic analysis that they look at the up to date work that's been done on it and the advice from Browne and Clark and not just looking at their original stuff. And I have heard people who've gone to their vivors who have only used the original stuff and that has been pointed out to them.

 **Claire Hadfield** 58:19
Pen.

 **Kim.Collett [she/her]** 58:39
by their examiners. So yeah, I think it's really important.

 **Jonathan Chow** 58:44
Cool. We have a comment asking for recommended literature. I won't ask you to list them here. I think there was, I think Claire provided us with a quick list at the end of her slides. And then if Kim and anyone else who would like to share any literature, perhaps send me an e-mail after this and I can send that around to everyone. There are a couple...

 **Claire Hadfield** 59:07
Mhm.

 **Angeline Mbogo Barrett** 59:12
Can I just add that there's a couple of comments commenting, Roberta, thank you for sharing an article and just if anyone else has some really good literature they'd

recommend on this theme of positionality, do just like drop it in the Q&A to share with others.

JC Jonathan Chow 59:18

Yeah.

I do want to get to a couple of questions that are a little bit more kind of the nuts and bolts of doing research. And these questions come from Haley and from Nicola. On the one hand, regarding positionality statements, kind of what was the process of that, of drawing those up as part of your research?

Is it something that you kind of went along with or was it something you thought about towards the end? And then also, particularly in the case of Kim, consent in terms of the advocates.

CH Claire Hadfield 59:54

Thj.

Should I talk about positionality statements quickly and then pass to Kim?

JC Jonathan Chow 1:00:10

Yeah.

CH Claire Hadfield 1:00:12

So positionality for me was something that I absolutely flummoxed me to use a Yorkshire term at the start of the process. I'd done a master's before, but it was literature based. So I hadn't had to think about epistemology and you know, all of those that terminology. So that

that's where I started was like, what are these things? Once I'd worked out what they were, then I had to kind of think about where am I? What am I doing? What does that make me? What do I believe? What does that make me? And started to, I think I did that initially as a like a Q&A to myself.

just to clarify. And then partway through, kind of around about the same time I went back to Browne and Clark and wanted to cheque in, okay, I think I'm doing RTA, that's what I'm saying, doing, I'm doing, am I doing it? And that kind of evolved my positionality.

Then, as I mentioned in the talk, when I got to the point that my participants were saying, we feel we have reduced agency, that also made me reflect on how I was

presenting their data and that co-construction element, which clarified for me My positionality.

K **Kim.Collett [she/her]** 1:01:34

So in terms of consent and the advocates, well, in my research, the consent process, I had signed consent from parents and signed consent from the young people themselves in terms of taking part in the research. And then because I knew that I potentially was going to have to make some adjustments to research, I also had a supplementary slip of paper in there that asked them to sort of state any of the adjustments that they might want the research to do. So that formed part of their kind of consent signing process. I think in terms, if we're thinking about consent, then I think we also need to think about assent and think about actually in terms of the advocates, is potentially could be a tricky area to ensure that the participant is always constantly agreeing to the advocate being there. You know, in my experience, it seemed fine. There were no signs of dissent. There were no signs that it was an uncomfortable experience, that participants didn't want them there. they'd chosen them, they'd set them up kind of thing. But I think in terms of if you were looking at using advocacy, it would be something you would need to consider in terms of dissent and whether the participants would feel comfortable in being able to show that they were no longer comfortable with the advocate being present or wanted to change who the advocate was or something like that. So yeah, definitely full of complexities from that point of view too.

CH **Claire Hadfield** 1:02:45

And.

K **Kim.Collett [she/her]** 1:03:04

But I don't think that should put us off from thinking about it and considering it as a potential tool to make research inclusive.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 1:03:13

Cool. I'm aware of time. I just wanted to read out a comment of thanks as opposed to Kim in particular in this case, too. This says, you put words to the feeling, thoughts, tensions I've been experiencing, wanting to centre my research around the authentic

voice of people with dementia when they may want a care partner present. present to support. So clearly very helpful contribution from you there. And then I've got another question. Perhaps one of our last questions of the day, I think. But can you expand on the idea of a method

K **Kim.Collett [she/her]** 1:03:34
Afaf.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 1:03:52
methodology diary and then kind of if I if I can invite trying to link this up to a previous question from T in for Claire specifically kind of thoughts on and challenges to from doing a longitudinal approach of research.

CH **Claire Hadfield** 1:04:13
So my methodology diary was, firstly, it was kind of an outlet for some of the big feelings I was having about the research journey. So it wasn't necessarily all intended to be included, but it was ways in which I could, a place where I could reflect on the processes that I was learning, for example. So I remember when I first started coding, it's not something I'd done before. So I took a text that was completely out of my area, that was an interview text and went through that and had a kind of a dry run, if you like, at coding. So aspects of that are in its own reflecting on that process. And then because of the nature of the way I was doing the Phd, I kind of had these very short windows of time. And so often it would take me a while to get back into what I was doing, you know, away from the everyday. So sometimes that would be a little vent at frustrations about that or like a return to basics. So it was kind of a big picture methodology, I suppose. And also I would note down how I felt about the data, for example. So yeah, I mean, it was useful to me.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 1:05:40
Fantastic, thank you. I think we will wrap up there for today. We're 5 minutes over time and we've still got over 90 people in this session. So this is wonderful, wonderful to see. Thank you ever so much to Kim and Claire for your fabulous presentations. Thank you to everyone who's contributed to this very lively and sometimes hard to keep up with.



Angeline Mbogo Barrett 1:05:48

Yeah.



Jonathan Chow 1:06:02

questions, Q&A. I have put a link at the very top of that Q&A to a survey, really helpful for us as the SWWDTP to sort of understand what training you're after, and then also a link to register to our upcoming sessions as well if you haven't done so.



Claire Hadfield 1:06:04

Thi.



Jonathan Chow 1:06:22

But for now, I will let you go. Lovely to have you all here. I hope to see you at the next session. Thank you, everyone.



Claire Hadfield 1:06:30

Thank you.



Kim.Collett [she/her] 1:06:32

Thank you so much.

□ stopped transcription