

Resonances: A Postgraduate Conference on Qualitative Research



11 May 2016
The Coach House
University of Leeds



Conference Booklet

WWW.RESONANCESCONFERENCE.WEEBLY.COM

WELCOME

We are pleased to welcome you to the **Resonances Postgraduate Conference on Qualitative Research** taking place at the University of Leeds.

This one-day interdisciplinary postgraduate conference aims to promote the use of qualitative research methodology amongst postgraduate students and early career researchers. We endeavour to support all researchers interested in employing qualitative research methods by creating a forum for discussion and offering the possibility to meet other like-minded scholars. We are particularly interested in reaching those who belong to disciplines that do not have a tradition of conducting qualitative research.

The conference is intended to complement both the activities of the **Resonances Reading Group** (established Oct 2014), and the University of Leeds SDDU/LEAP research training on qualitative methods.

We are delighted to welcome **Prof Anna Madill** from the University of Leeds and **Dr Rosie Perkins** from the Royal College of Music as our keynote speakers for the conference. Many thanks to them for sharing their time and knowledge with us today.

The organising committee would also like to thank the **LUBS, ESSL, Arts & PVAC (LEAP) focused skills training team (part of the Staff and Departmental Development Unit (SDDU) at the University of Leeds)** for granting us the funds to organise this event. In particular thanks must go to Dr Jennifer Rivas Perez and Ann Barrass. Your continued support from start to finish has helped to make this conference a reality.

The organising committee is also grateful to the **School of Education** at the University of Leeds for granting us use of their beautiful venue, The Coach House. We would also like to acknowledge **Helen Barker** (School of Music, University of Leeds) for her tremendous help in managing our funds and assisting with all the administrative tasks.

Finally, a big thank you to all the presenters and attendees for participating in this conference. We hope that you will enjoy your day with us.

The conference organising committee:

Ana Benavides-Lahnstein (School of Education, University of Leeds)

Bing Wang (School of Fine Arts, University of Leeds)

Claire Castle (School of Music, University of Leeds)

Kate Blackstone (School of Music, University of Leeds)

Sylvia Jen (School of Music, University of Leeds)

PROGRAMME

9:30 Registration

9:45 Conference welcome

9:50 Keynote One: Prof. Anna Madill (School of Psychology, University of Leeds) – *'Data Collection, Data Generation, and the Dead (Qualitative) Researcher Test'*

10:35 Break

10:50 Session One: Standard Presentations

(Chair: Ana Benavides-Lahnstein)

1. Andrew Bradshaw (School of Biomedical Sciences, University of Leeds) – *'Methodological considerations for conducting semi-structured interviews with cardiac rehabilitation patients involved in an exercise referral scheme: A critical reflection'*
2. Sarah Mawby (School of Music, University of Leeds) – *'Devising interviews for participants with adapted communication needs'*
3. Lee Johnson (School of Law, University of Leeds) – *'Researching the Police from within: Experiences of a Police Officer Researcher'*
4. Kate Fox (School of Performance and Cultural Industries, University of Leeds) – *'Spontaneity and Creative Qualitative Methods - or When It Feels Like You're Making Up as You Go Along...'*

12:10 Lunch

13:00 Keynote Two: Dr. Rosie Perkins (Royal College of Music) – *'Challenges and possibilities in qualitative analysis and reporting: Insights from the intersection of arts and science'*

13:45 Session Two: Short Presentations

(Chair: Sylvia Jen)

1. Alex Prior (School of Politics and International Studies, University of Leeds) – *'Parliamentary Outreach and Education sessions as a means of exploring political (dis)engagement'*
2. Katucha Bento (School of Sociology and Social Policy) – *'Afrocentric Feminist Ethnographic-ness in the Fieldwork'*

3. Rasika Soman (York Management School, University of York) – *'Effectiveness of Vocational Education: Case Study of the Indian Urban youth'*
4. Kate Blackstone (School of Music, University of Leeds) – *'Tumbling into the Unknown? Using Tumblr to collect participants' accounts of their experiences leaving music college'*

15:05 Break

15:25 World Café:

(Chair: Kate Blackstone)

1. Introduction of Cafe Etiquette
2. Four rounds of 15-minute discussions:
 - Philosophical Underpinning
 - Transcribing
 - Data Management
 - Writing Up
3. Break
4. Feedback

17:00 Finish

ABSTRACTS

KEYNOTE ONE

Data Collection, Data Generation, and the Dead (Qualitative) Researcher Test

Qualitative research is a vast and heterogeneous cluster of methods which can be thought of as a 'fuzzy set'. This means that there are many different kinds of phenomena that can be considered 'data' in qualitative inquiry. This presentation will explore three overarching conceptualisations of data in qualitative research, linked explicitly to the role of the researcher in the research process. Each kind of data will be illustrated in a long-term, on-going research project on Yaoi manga and its associated fandom. When data is conceptualised, usually implicitly, as phenomena that exists separately from the researcher in a relatively objective way, we can talk about data *collection*. This theory of data is consistent with many different kinds of qualitative data from observations, interviews, and open-ended survey questions. On the other hand, when data is conceptualised as co-constructed by the researcher it is more properly thought of as *generated* in the process of research. Hence, this position seeks to understand the ways in which researchers, unavoidably, contribute to and shape what they find. Finally, modes of qualitative inquiry that accept the inherently subjective process of research, may seek material for analysis that would have taken the form it does whether or not the researcher existed, thereby meeting the '*dead researcher test*'. This presentation will explore when each of these orientations towards data may be appropriate.

Prof. Anna Madill is Chair of Qualitative Inquiry and Deputy Head of the School of Psychology, University of Leeds. She is Co-Founder and former Chair (2008-11) of the British Psychological Society Qualitative Methods in Psychology Section and is Associated Editor of the British Journal of Clinical Psychology. Anna received British Academy funding (2011-2013) for 'Understanding Japanese Boys' Love manga from a UK perspective' (<https://leeds.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/blfandomsurvey>).

SESSION ONE: STANDARD PRESENTATIONS

1. Andrew Bradshaw (School of Biomedical Sciences, University of Leeds) - *'Methodological considerations for conducting semi-structured interviews with cardiac rehabilitation patients involved in an exercise referral scheme: A critical reflection'*

Within healthcare, it is currently a priority to improve the quality of care by advancing our understanding of the benefits of treatments and therapies, using a patient-centred approach. Subsequently, the use of qualitative techniques such as interviews are becoming an increasingly popular method of data collection, in order to elicit patient's views and perceptions of their personal rehabilitation journey. Conducting interviews with special populations involves navigating through numerous methodological dilemmas, especially for novice researchers who are new to using this type of approach. This presentation focuses on five interrelated methodological considerations that I faced when conducting interviews with cardiac rehabilitation patients (n=4), currently involved in an

exercise programme. The purpose of my study was to explore individual and gender differences in patients' experiences of quality of life, in the context of exercise rehabilitation, using a case study approach. Topics to be discussed will include: (1) Deciding on appropriate interview questions, (2) Exhibiting reciprocity, (3) Establishing a friendly rapport whilst maintaining transparency of my role as a researcher, (4) Ensuring reflexivity throughout the entire interview process, (5) Dealing with sensitive topics, (6) Working with gatekeepers. These issues will be discussed from the perspective of a critically reflective novice researcher with hindsight. The value of such critical discussion, using contextual examples of the methodological challenges faced and how they were resolved, will be twofold. It will assist other researchers engaging in interviews with special populations, alongside supporting those seeking to offer advice and guidance to inexperienced researchers on collecting interview data in similar contexts.

Bio: My current PhD research project is centred on exploring how exercise can be utilised as a complementary therapy for advanced disease sufferers in a palliative care setting. The specific focus of this research is how Tai Chi impacts quality of life and end-of-life illness experiences in a hospice setting. An ethnography will be used to achieve this. My 3rd year dissertation was investigating gender differences in the effects of an exercise programme on perceptions of quality of life in cardiac patients. The methodological issues that I faced during this research project is what will be the focus of my presentation today.

2. Sarah Mawby (School of Music, University of Leeds) - *'Devising interviews for participants with adapted communication needs'*

Traditional interview techniques in qualitative research involve a standard question and answer format, usually with the researcher asking the questions and the participant answering them. Speech is an imperative component of this means of data-collection. However, what happens when a participant cannot speak or communicate using standard methods of communication? How do we go about adapting interview techniques so that they are inclusive? Recent government statistics report that 2.2 million people living in the UK have some form of communication impairment. Failing to recognise the need for potential changes in approach to standard research-interview practice alienates this population and prevents their voices from being heard in qualitative research.

This presentation will draw upon the researcher's experience of devising adapted interviews for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEN/D). The researcher will reflect on some of the challenges faced when devising adapted interviews. How do you tailor the interview to meet each individual participant's needs? How can you assess the validity of adapted interview data? How can you ensure that data is comparable between participants? With the power of hindsight and drawing upon recent research in this field, several tips for including people with communication impairments will be presented.

Inclusive research practice and adapted interview techniques are areas of qualitative research which still have yet to reach their full potential. This presentation will raise awareness of the needs of those with communication issues in relation to qualitative research practice. Furthermore, it is hoped that additional avenues of discussion on this topic will be revealed, leading to further consolidation and enrichment of adapted interview techniques in the future.

Bio: Sarah Mawby is a second-year PhD student working within the School of Music, University of Leeds. Her research explores what constitutes 'best practice' in music education in schools for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. She is co-supervised by Dr Karen Burland and Dr Alinka Greasley and her research is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the White Rose Consortium of Arts and Humanities (WROCAH).

3. Lee Johnson (School of Law, University of Leeds) - *'Researching the Police from within: Experiences of a Police Officer Researcher'*

Studies into police are often conducted by researchers from outside of the police and therefore face problems relating to access, understanding of the social world and occupational culture as well as the development of trust and rapport with police officers. When a police officer conducts a study into those officers with whom they work, many of these problems are bypassed. However, there are difficulties to be overcome and challenges to be faced if rich and valid data is to be generated. This paper draws upon a research study conducted within a police force in England. The subject matter was assaults against police officers and the study employed both participant observation and interviews. The force studied was where I was employed as a serving police officer throughout the research period. The paper will focus on the problems associated with "Going Native" and the decision whether to undertake an overt or covert study into policing. It will draw on my experiences of conducting research in my own police force and officers. It considers the potential drawbacks of this style of research as well as the strategies employed to overcome them throughout the study. It also considers the benefits of the methodology employed and how having an understanding of the social arena in which study takes place can be important to the development of detailed analysis of the research topic. The paper concludes by looking at the potential impact of insider research on data collection when using qualitative methodologies and how this position can be useful in uncovering previously hidden aspects of social worlds.

Bio: I am a part-time PhD student based in the School of Law at the University of Leeds. I have been employed as a full-time police officer for six years. I previously completed my undergraduate and postgraduate studies in Criminology at the University of Leeds. My current research interest is the police, the nature of their role and the interactions between police officers and the public. My PhD study is focused on the escalation of incidents towards aggressive non-compliance to the order applied by the police at incidents with the public.

4. Kate Fox (School of Performance and Cultural Industries, University of Leeds) - *'Spontaneity and Creative Qualitative Methods - or When It Feels Like You're Making Up as You Go Along...'*

Participant observation, autoethnography, audience research methods like "Deep hanging out" and the creative audience research methods advocated by Matthew Reason, can sometimes make it feel like you're collecting data in an ad hoc way, especially when opportunities to collect data arise when you're not expecting them. Kate Fox outlines how some of her spontaneous data collection has been the most useful, and how it fits into the theories and methodologies of other "Opportunistic" data

collection methods. From “Flash” focus groups, to audience drawings and two-header interviews, she shares the methods she never thought she’d be using- and the methodology underpinning them.

Bio: Kate Fox is a second year PhD student in the Performance and Cultural Industries School and professional stand up poet who has facilitated many writing and performance workshops and projects. She is researching class, gender and regional identity in solo stand up performance.

www.katefox.co.uk

KEYNOTE TWO

Challenges and possibilities in qualitative analysis and reporting: Insights from the intersection of art and science

Qualitative analysis is creative, interpretative and yet also systematic: it strives to do justice to context and specificity, focusing on in-depth comprehension rather than large-scale generalisation, and prioritising participants’ experiences and realities. For novice and experienced researchers alike, qualitative analysis raises a number of critical questions, three of which will be discussed in this presentation. Focusing on the analysis process, the first question concerns how best to marry the inherent messiness of qualitative analysis with the need for transparency and, in many cases, a linear account of the analysis procedure. Moving to the *write-up* of data, the second question focuses on how to report qualitative data without losing their rich complexity, bearing in mind the current dominance of written, peer-reviewed journals for research dissemination. Finally, the third question turns to the impact of qualitative research, addressing how to convince potentially diverse (and sometimes unwilling) audiences to trust and believe in qualitative findings. Throughout, the discussions will be illustrated with examples drawn from a recently completed qualitative investigation into the impact of group drumming on the wellbeing of mental health service users.

Dr Rosie Perkins is Research Fellow in Performance Science at the Royal College of Music London, where she leads research in the social and cultural sciences of music. Rosie’s research has been supported by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the Arts and Humanities Research Council and Arts Council England, and her current interests lie in the impact of music on mental health as well as musicians’ wellbeing and career development. Rosie is an honorary Research Fellow at Imperial College London, a Fellow of the Institute of Mental Health at the University of Nottingham and a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

SESSION TWO: SHORT PRESENTATIONS

5. Alex Prior (School of Politics and International Studies, University of Leeds) - *'Parliamentary Outreach and Education sessions as a means of exploring political (dis)engagement'*

A primary concern within my research topic ('Parliament and Public Engagement') is establishing a representative image of attitudes towards the functions and relevance of Parliament, in order to explore ways of strengthening the perceived 'connectivity' between Parliament and public.

Considering this emphasis on representativeness, I have given thought to the influence that certain interview formats would have on the responses I receive and, as a result, the danger of relying on a single type. I therefore intend to conduct semi-structured interviews with small groups of people, beginning with one-on-one sessions and followed by group discussions.

I have gained commitments of assistance from both the Outreach and Education services within Parliament, which will be a significant asset to my research. The facilitatory benefit is considerable since both organisations already run public engagement sessions, allowing me to interview participants that have already been assembled. Attending both Outreach and Education sessions also means that I can study groups that are traditionally hard to reach, as well as those who are either engaged or part of a proactive educational institution, since these are the respective 'audiences' of the Outreach and Education services.

For each of the sessions I audit, I will be discussing conceptions of Parliament with the staff members who are present as well as the participants. From my initial readings I have seen that it is useful to establish the attitudes of the engagement practitioners themselves; their views of the current state of political engagement, and what they hope to achieve. I believe that this will constitute a fully joined-up approach that will allow many different points of view to be highlighted.

Having previously attended a Resonances talk I already know it to be a welcoming and instructive environment. I would greatly benefit from a discussion with the Resonance conference attendees regarding potential interview structures, as well as the group discussion formats that would be most useful. I am currently researching ways in which to explore public conceptions of Parliament through personal associations and connections; the opportunity to deliberate my methodology within a discussive academic environment would be immensely valuable.

Bio: Alex Prior is a first-year PhD student at the School of Politics and International Studies at the University of Leeds, researching Parliament and public engagement. His academic interests include democratic narratives, symbolic representation and the role of affect in political engagement.

6. Katucha Bento (School of Sociology and Social Policy) - '*Afrocentric Feminist Ethnographic-ness in the Fieldwork*'

My doctoral research is on emotions of black Brazilian women as migrants in the United Kingdom (UK). I aim to understand how they perceive their condition as migrants and how they enact agency through emotions. This paper is based on my current fieldwork in Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester aiming to put into perspective the epistemology of Afrocentric Feminist ethnography and its practice. I intend to problematize my epistemological approach as a tool to engage with participants as an interested listener, as a familiar face promoting dialogues of the everyday life in which we (the participants and I) present the conscious and unconscious aspects in sense making. The title of this paper paraphrases Patricia Hill Collins's (1991) discussion about the Black Feminist Thought. The Afrocentric Feminist Ethnographic-ness is a standpoint centred in two factors. First, the African values permeating cultural and social structures, and community life of Blacks in varying parts of Africa, the Caribbean, South America, and North America. These values represent elements of African system before colonisation. Second, the common experience of oppression as a result of enslavement, apartheid, racism and its peculiarities against black people. The standpoint in this

research, therefore, comprehends an alternative element to rearticulate knowledge production through blackness, womanhood, nationality of subordinated groups and from situated conversations. So said, my intention is to show the dynamic of dialogues, continuous reflexivity in different moments of my afrocentric ethnographicness as a method to capture the black woman in the centre of knowledge production by making a detailed description and interpretation of their emotions. I will focus the paper based on the challenge of my fieldwork: how to be consistent with Afrocentric Feminism when dealing with our subjective, intersectional and sometimes –according to the context – changing ideas of “race”, gender and nationality?

Bio: Katucha Bento - PhD researcher in Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Leeds. Based in the Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies (CERS), my research is looking at emotions of Black Brazilian Women as migrants in England. I am interested in how "otherness" and agency are constituted in the everyday life of these migrants expressed through their narratives of the everyday life. Her areas of interest are black feminist epistemology and activism, coloniality, and dialogical relationships (from a Paulo Freirian perspective). I also deliver workshops on samba and the Brazilian National Identity; and run a project on women's solidarity with the Brazilian community in Birmingham.

7. Rasika Soman (York Management School, University of York) - *'Effectiveness of Vocational Education: Case Study of the Indian Urban youth'*

The importance of education for achieving social, economic and political development and for poverty reduction is being recognized by the International Development bodies through the Millennium Development goals. Vocational Education in particular is being declared as an instrument to reorient the purposes of education from a knowledge building approach to a practical and problem-oriented approach. It is believed that such a type of education will prove as learning outcomes in order to achieve the Millennium Development goals. It is on this background that the researcher in this paper tries to investigate the effectiveness of vocational education programs in poverty reduction and building livelihoods amongst the unemployed Indian urban youth. A case study research method is employed where the researcher investigates a CSR program of a company whose objective is to achieve sustainable livelihoods by imparting vocational education. The problems that the researcher faces in this project is with regards to data collection. Collecting data from a population who is uneducated, unaware of their needs and unable to articulate what they want is the major problem that the researcher has faced during this project. Also, how to overcome the lack of trust of the respondents towards the researcher even though interviewing the respondents from the home country is another problem that the researcher faces. The researcher has devised solutions such as probing techniques in order to get accurate data from the respondents. In order to develop the trust factor, the researcher has come to the solution that more time needs to be spent with the respondents in general which is exclusive of the time that is spent on the research process.

Bio: Rasika is a postgraduate research student from the University of York. Research for her is more than a profession, it's her passion and she enjoys doing it. Her research interests include but are not limited to Capacity Building, Community Development, Sustainable Livelihoods and Rural development. Rasika has presented her work widely in National and International conferences and

recently her blog is being published at the Center for Global Development at the University of Leeds. She has also worked as a Research Officer and a Development facilitator which helps her achieve success in her work.

8. Kate Blackstone (School of Music, University of Leeds) - *'Tumbling into the Unknown? Using Tumblr to collect participants' accounts of their experiences leaving music college'*

In 2014, a study investigating the differences between creative students' imagined careers and their actual careers five years later, concluded that tertiary level programmes do not provide adequate career preview to their students (Bennett & Bridgstock, 2014). Research suggests that the transition from a creative higher education degree, such as one offered by a music college, and into employment of any type, is a time fraught with uncertainty (Burland & Pitts, 2007; Creech et al., 2008; MacNamara, Holmes, & Collins, 2008). Investigation into the experiences of music college graduates could provide a greater understanding of the challenges faced by young musicians as they begin to build their careers, and could inform future curriculum design and aid educational institutions in preparing their graduates for a changing musical landscape.

This presentation will concern a 'letters to my younger self' project, where participants will be invited to share their experiences of building a music career, on a public blog, Tumblr. Research using social media platforms to collect social science data is becoming increasingly widespread. Lack of face to face interaction, and the opportunity to remain totally anonymous on sites such as Reddit and Tumblr means that the qualitative researcher is presented with a new avenue for data collection, which is especially beneficial for the discussion of sensitive topics (Hipp et al., 2015). Additionally, the ubiquity of social media in today's society could mean the process of participation in a research project of this type feels unthreatening to the participant. My presentation will explore issues such as anonymity and confidentiality: is redacting names and places enough, when the classical music world is so small? Is a blog open to all participants risking prank responses, and is it possible to separate genuine accounts from those falsified? Could the nature of submission make participants take the research study less seriously than if the method were more traditional? Answering these questions will enable the research community to move towards a social media research method that is both scholarly and ethical.

Bio: Kate is a first year PhD student in the School of Music at the University of Leeds, exploring the ways in which music college graduates first build their professional careers. Her research is co-supervised by Karen Burland and Luke Windsor, and supported by the University of Leeds Stanley Burton Scholarship. Prior to PhD study, she completed her Masters degree part time in Leeds whilst working as a freelance musician across the North West, work that she continues as far as possible.

What is a World Café?

A World Café is a simple, effective, and flexible format for hosting large group dialogue. The process begins with the first of several rounds of conversation for a small group seated around a table. Each table is prefaced with a topic specific to that table. At the end of the each round, members of the group move to a different new table to discuss a new topic. This is repeated until all rounds are completed. At the end of the session, individuals share insights from their conversations with the rest of the large group.

Looking for more support?

Join the Resonances Reading Group

The Resonances Reading Group meets on a monthly basis to discuss articles related to Qualitative Methodology. It is a group led by PG students for PG students, aimed at supporting each other through our research journey. Recent discussions have included Thematic Analysis, Philosophical Assumptions, What is Quality in Qualitative Research, Grounded Theory, and Interviews.

If you would like to join the Reading Group, please email Sylvia Jen at mcsjsj@leeds.ac.uk to be placed on our mailing list.

We are also on Facebook! Search for us: Resonances Qualitative Research Reading Group

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