Sheffield Hallam University

The potential of the fractions of lifeworld for inclusive qualitative inquiry in the third space

HODGE, Nick <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5706-1865>, ANDREWS, Thomas and REDMORE, Ned

The Potential of the Fractions of Lifeworld for Inclusive Qualitative Inquiry in the Third Space

Thomas Andrews (a), Nick Hodge (b *) and Ned Redmore (c)

(a) The Bridge ILS [Integrated learning Space] 1 Dowery Street, N1 OHY, London

(b *) Corresponding author: Nick Hodge, Professor of Inclusive Practice, Sheffield Institute of Education, Sheffield Hallam University, Room 10402, Arundel bldg., Howard St, Sheffield S1 1 WB. n.s.hodge@shu.ac.uk @goodchap62 Nick Hodge: http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5706-1865

(c) School of Health, Wellbeing and Social Care, The Open University

Biographies

Dr Thomas Andrews

Tom is the Assistant Headteacher of The Bridge ILS [Integrated learning Space] in London. Previously he taught at the Bridge Secondary site where he coordinated Relationships and Sex Education [RSE]. Tom's work has focussed on exploring representations of sexuality and identity for disabled people, leading to him developing training on the delivery of RSE for students with learning disabilities through the Bridge teaching school. Tom's work at the ILS has led to the development of highly integrated forms of support for the families that he works with, challenging the ways in which professionals position themselves within support networks, exploring how person centred models can be generated that empower young people and investigating how the voices of differently articulate people are accessed. Tom's research interests focus on developing a Neurodiversity approach within person centred teaching models, and challenging the dominant discourses around autism and the ways in which disability impacts on labelled people. Tom is currently involved in exploring the ways in

which anxiety mapping can be developed for work with young people positioned on the autism spectrum and the personal impact of participation in research.

Professor Nick Hodge

Nick is Professor of Inclusive Practice in the Sheffield Institute of Education and co-director of the Sheffield Hallam Autism Research Partnership (SHARP). Prior to joining the University in 1998, he was a special education teacher, supporting disabled children and their families in schools for over 15 years. Nick's research interests focus on the lived experience of disabled children and their families. Much of Nick's work has involved challenging deficit led models of disability that mark children and young people as disordered and other. You can find more information on Nick at https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-us/our-people/staff-profiles/nicholas-hodge.

Ned Redmore

Ned is a PhD candidate at the School of Health, Wellbeing and Social Care at The Open University. This focuses on the experiences of young autistic adults within day support services. His research interests include autism, learning disability, inclusive methodologies and phenomenology.

Abstract

In this paper we introduce the lifeworld fractions (Ashworth 2003) as a methodological framework for inclusive research with autistic people 'with profound learning disabilities'. We first define the fractions and then evaluate their potential for enabling research within the 'third space' of inclusive research (Seale, Nind, Tilley, & Chapman 2015). Fundamental to the third space is the inclusion of the social and support circles of people with profound learning disabilities within research. Using the example of a recent study we illustrate how

the fractions are a useful enabler of this. We conclude by suggesting that a key value of the fractions is in how they take the research collective beyond the elements of experience that most obviously confront them to consider its full breadth and effects. We argue too that the fractions support the management of the collation and analysis of the copious amounts of data that are generated through qualitative research. We conclude by offering a new and critical dimension to the fractions through presenting them as a means through which those involved in the third space – autistic people, their social and support circles, and researchers - can come to more emic understandings of lived experience.

Keywords

Qualitative Inquiry; Phenomenology; Fractions; Lifeworld; Data Analysis; Inclusive Research

Introduction

Ashworth (2016) argues that within existential phenomenology there can be identified 8 definitive constituents of every lived experience (Ashworth 2003, 2016; Käufer & Chemero 2015; Luft & Overgaard 2014; Merleau-Ponty 1945, 1962). Ashworth (2016, 23) terms these as 'fractions' and describes them as the 'essential elements that cannot but be expected to show themselves' in any examination of the lifeworld: 'a person's subjective construction of reality' (Kraus 2015, 4). Each fraction gives meaning to a person's lifeworld, distinct in their own right but also merging with one another (Ashworth 2016). The fractions are identified as selfhood, sociality, embodiment, temporality, spatiality, project, discourse and moodedness. Ashworth (2016) asks why a resource as useful as the fractions has not yet become 'a routine element in our methodological armoury' (p.23). The answer to this might be that the fractions are rooted in phenomenology. To those unpractised in it, phenomenology

can feel contested, problematic and challenging to access; researchers are then deterred from engaging with it as a method (Van Manen 2014).

In this paper we seek, therefore, to present the fractions as a methodological framework that can be accessible to all qualitative researchers. We claim that they provide researchers with a phenomenological analytic method to increase participation in inclusive research for autistic and other people 'with profound learning disabilities'. We recognise that this is the term that is often applied to the research participants whom we discuss in this paper. We employ it here, however, with reservation as we believe the effects of the label can be restrictive and that it is not always representative of how a person engages with the world. For example, some disabled people may be categorised as having a profound learning disability only because an accessible means of communicating their understanding has not been made available to them. They appear as having a profound learning disability and so are responded to by others in this way (Baggs 2007; Biklen 1990; Foley & Ferri 2012). We use the term, therefore, to represent the participant for whom accessing the meanings of their lifeworld, for whatever reason, requires the researcher to turn for support to those who share the participant's life.

We aim, here, to challenge the continued marginalisation of people whose communication methods do not suit traditional data collection approaches by building upon the 'third space' of inclusive research (Seale et al. 2015). This approach argues for the importance of involving, in the research process, people with learning disabilities, their social (family and friends) and support (educational, social and health care professionals) circles; we term this here as 'the research collective'. To develop our argument, we will explore some of the issues surrounding research in the third space, such as those that stem from the socially constructed nature of disability, who should be included within the research and potential ethical barriers,

before illustrating the method with an example study that focused on how 5 autistic adolescent males experienced a developing sexuality.

The Fractions

Ashworth (2003, 2016) has assembled what he argues are the 8 omnipresent components of any event that appear within phenomenological research and developed these into a methodological framework. In every event all of these 8 interconnected features of the lifeworld can be found. No event can come into being without them. The fractions are therefore the essential characteristics that constitute any and every event (Edwards & Telford 2011; Finlay & Molano-Fisher 2008; Friberg & Öhlen 2007).

Ashworth (2003) employs the term 'fraction' to illustrate how these are not 8 distinct categories. Instead they are intertwined for the effects of an event will be felt across all of the fractions (Berndtsson et al. 2007). Some of the fractions may present themselves as more dominant within a particular situation but all will be present. Our intention here is to display the fractions in as accessible form as possible whilst still retaining the foundational philosophical principles that brought them into being. We summarise the fractions as:

(1) Selfhood - the autonomy that we are able to exercise within an event; our agency, voice and the control that we can exert on a situation. The nature of how, and the extent to which, others recognise and/or permit our presenting selves. The value that we place on ourselves and the worth that is attributed to us by others.

(2) Sociality – the roles that others perform in how this situation is experienced and how this affects the relationships that we have with them. How power is held and exercised within these relationships. How we affect others and how they affect us.

(3) Embodiment - how this event affects us physically and emotionally. The characteristics of the body that come into play such as sex, sexuality, disability, age, ethnicity.

(4) Temporality - how this event is related to our biography, to our past, our present and our future. The temporal flow of this event: when it began and ended.

(5) Spatiality – how this event affects the places that we go and the spaces that we inhabit. The social and cultural norms that we encounter there and the meanings that we make of these. Who controls access to these spaces; where we are permitted to be and where we are excluded from.

(6) Project – how this event affects and is affected by the things that we do that are central to us and that we are committed to.

(7) Discourse – the discourses that we draw upon to speak of this event and those employed to talk about us; the behaviours through which we express ourselves when speech is unavailable to us.

8) Moodedness or mood as atmosphere - the affective tone that imbues and surrounds the event; how what happens makes us feel towards the experience.

The 'Third Space' of Inclusive Research

Inclusive research was developed to democratise research for people who have been, and continue to be, excluded or ignored (Nind 2017). The term identifies research in which participants represent their own 'voices' (to greater or lesser extents) and variations in concept and design can be found within numerous areas such as feminist or youth research (e.g. Coghlan and Brydon-Miller [2014] and Ozer and Wright [2012] respectively).

Nind (2017, 279) states that '(t)he term inclusive research has a relatively short history in its explicit use pertaining to doing research *with* people with learning disabilities'. The conceptualisation of the Social Model of Disability resulted in an emergent shift in the focus of research. This involved a move away from identifying the effects of bodies made different to an exposure of the societal barriers that impede the lives of disabled people (Oliver 1996). In the adoption of this approach, learning disability researchers have attempted to reveal and challenge these social discriminations by developing methodologies that involve people with learning disabilities as 'instigators of ideas' (Walmsley & Johnson 2003, 10). This means facilitating their collaboration as designers of research, data collectors, analysists and disseminators in order to create research that responds to and benefits their experiences (Nind 2017). Although this has resulted in a field that is rich and diverse with the voices of people with learning disabilities, researchers such as Mietola, Miettinen, and Vehmas (2017), Simmons and Watson (2014) and Seale et al. (2015) argue that people with profound learning disabilities have historically been, and continue to be, excluded from many qualitative inquiries due to the challenge of accessing their views and perspectives.

We recognise and value methodologies that have been developed to give meaningful participation to people with profound learning disabilities through methods that are inclusive to a variety of communicative abilities and knowledge capacities. These include methodologies that utilise collage and narrative diaries (Ridout 2016, 2017; Ridout, Guldberg & Macleod 2011), talking mats (Stewart, Bradshaw & Beadle-Brown 2018), facilitated typed responses (Ganz, Katsiyannis & Morin 2018), multimodal approaches (Doak 2018) and in depth participatory observation (Goode 1994; Mietola, Miettinen & Vehmas 2017; Simmons 2018). Indeed, we encourage researchers to assume capability and seek out methods that can maximise participation in research and which challenge assumptions of knowledge and understanding surrounding people with profound learning disabilities. However, as part of a

researcher's tool-kit of inclusive methods, we argue that for many, participation in research can be enriched through close engagement and collaboration with research collectives that include family members, friends and support staff. Goode (1992) distinguishes between etic and emic perspectives on people with profound learning disabilities. The etic perspective is objective, clinical and analytical. It positions the disabled body as deficit and unwanted and seeks out what is in need of repair or modification. Within this approach a researcher would assume someone with profound learning disabilities to be incapable of communicating their own experience. The researcher working within the emic perspective however assumes capability and seeks to interpret the person's experiences by observing how they engage with the world and being attentive to their idiosyncratic methods of communication. We argue that in doing so the support of those who have intimate knowledge of the person with profound learning disabilities can be an invaluable support. We position these people as insider experts who, by virtue of their relationships with people with profound learning disabilities, possess knowledge of unique and distinct ways in which individuals can be listened to and understood (Bogdan & Taylor 1989; Goode 1992). This is not to suggest that the accounts of significant others will necessarily always reflect the meanings that a disabled person makes of their experience. However, we do propose that knowledge gained through many years of intimate care enables parents (and carers) to become skilled recognisers and interpreters of their child's communications, in whatever forms these are made. Even the most committed ethnographic researcher is unlikely to be able to replicate this knowledge and skill in the time available to them (Bogdan & Taylor 1989). Traditionally the etic perspective has predominated within clinical services. Parents are presented with accounts of their children that are focused on deficits (Goode 1992). These professional accounts, even when they conflict with how parents naturally understand and appreciate their child, are powerful in effect and hard to challenge (Goode 1992). Working collectively within the third space of

research can offer resistance to these reductive interpretations by development of the emic perspective through the facilitation of shared reflections on a person's communication and experiences. We illustrate that process later in this paper within our case study example. This project also demonstrates that in some cases, ethical barriers result in researchers being unable to have any direct engagement with people who are positioned as 'vulnerable' and lacking capacity to consent to participate. Researchers may then find themselves with no option but to turn to those best placed to interpret the experience of those they care for.

In arguing for the benefits of collaborating with collectives when researching with people with profound learning disabilities, we position ourselves in the 'third space' of inclusive research (Seale et al. 2015). This concept has its origins in research with Indigenous populations. Hall (2014, 384) conceived of a 'third space of understanding' as a site where the different worldviews of Indigenous people and western researchers might meet and negotiate with respect and in balance. The concept was then adopted by those seeking to research more inclusively with people with learning disabilities after a series of five seminars that sought to address the continued exclusion of some people with learning disabilities from research. The seminars included input from a range of affected social groups: people with learning disabilities, their families, researchers and practitioners. The third space is where the boundaries between different research philosophies, practices and experiences across these social groups can be shared and negotiated. Within this space, new collective ways of working can emerge that might better expose the barriers that have traditionally limited and reduced the research process for people with learning disabilities: power, paradigm and access. It was also hoped that, through the enablement of collectively theorised and developed participatory research, the perceived marginalised status of inclusive research might be overcome, in relation to funders, ethics boards and the wider research field (Seale et al. 2015). Within the third space of inclusive research it is mandated that researchers work

with participants in a manner that is respectful and understanding of their perspectives, cultures and customs (Hall 2014). Achieving this will require the development of ideas and methodologies that respond to the intersectional nature of learning disability. One such intersection is that of profound learning disability and autism. We wish to add to the third space by contending that lifeworld fractions (Ashworth 2016) are an accessible methodological framework within which research collectives – while using methods that are inclusive to the participants - can challenge and expand how they, and we, understand the experiences of autistic people with profound learning disabilities.

Issues Surrounding the Third Space.

Before we demonstrate the fractions as a methodological framework, we will first look at how the socially constructed nature of disability can impact our capabilities for considering the experiences of people we understand to be autistic or learning disabled.

Autism and learning disability can signify very different meanings dependent upon the particular paradigm in which it is understood. If we are to include autistic people with profound learning disabilities in phenomenological inquiry we must find ways to interrogate our understandings of autism and learning disability and negotiate within the research collective how these diagnostic labels affect how we understand their lifeworlds. To begin, we argue that this requires an immersion into their everyday lives by all members of the research collective, interpreting together what observable communication and actions might say about internal views and experiences (Bradley, Caldwell & Korossy 2015; Simmons & Watson 2014.). We accept that this is problematic as the views of disabled young people and their parents do not always coincide (Garth & Aroni 2003). However if the perspectives of parents are never held to be sufficiently informative then some people with profound learning and/or communication difficulties will always be excluded from the research agenda and the

accounts of their experience, in any form, will remain neglected and discounted (Barrett 2017; Bogdan & Taylor 1989).

Whether, and if so how, a person can really come to know and interpret their own experience, never mind that of others, is a fundamental challenge generally within qualitative inquiries with a particular focus on being (Mackenzie and Leach Scully 2007; Schutz 1932/2012). Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) assert that through the creation of descriptions of experience by listening to and observing a person in situ, it is possible to begin to understand experience, 'so long as they are good descriptions from the perspective of everyday life…' (p.31). A 'good' description is defined as one that allows 'for a rich analysis of the experience' through the detail that it provides (Giorgi, Giorgi and Morley 2017, 183). For Schutz (1932/2012) detailed knowledge of the other and an understanding of the context of the life under scrutiny is critical to being able to appreciate what the communication and actions of the other could be telling us about how they might be experiencing an event.

In researching as a collective we are contending that the phenomenological concept of lifeworld fractions (Ashworth 2016) offers a particularly useful inclusive method for research that explores the experiences of people with profound learning disabilities. We base this claim on two key factors. Firstly, the fractions maintain a focus on the lived experience of participants. This requires being able to interpret the ways in which participants convey their experience. Secondly, the fractions are not prescriptive in the use of particular methods and so can accommodate the whole range of inclusive research methods. In the following sections, we will demonstrate how the inclusive potential of framework of the fractions can be realised in practice.

Employing the Fractions within the 'Third Space'

The fractions are dependent upon their relationship with two fundamental principles of phenomenology. We identify the first of these principles as being: a researcher's commitment to capturing and describing the meanings that participants make of an experience, as reported by them or, as we argue here, as interpreted by the research collective. Within this process the researcher is as interested in the peculiarities of experience as in the elements that are shared across participants: 'the irrevocable tension between what is unique and what is shared' (Van Manen and Adams 2010, 450). The second principle is that, researchers strive to be mindful of, and continually reflecting on, their assumptions and pre-conceived notions of what the experience might mean for themselves (Ashworth 2003, 2016).

A lifeworld approach requires researchers to embed themselves in the context of the lifeworld in order to learn of it *in situ* (Berndtsson et al. 2007). Hodge (2008, 31) describes a circular process in which the researcher must 'listen, feedback, check with the participants that the experience was 'captured' accurately, amend (if required), feedback, etc.'. For lifeworld research within the third space, this requires a fieldwork approach across a number of stages. First the researcher must negotiate and gather, through engagement with the participants and the research collective, interpretations of the participants' experiences, analyse these and then return to the research collective, share and repeat. During this circular process, the application of the fractions to the analysis may offer an additional inclusive element as they can highlight particular, and potentially exclusionary, accounts of experience. For instance, if service support staff consistently focus in their description of a participant's experiences on the fraction of project (i.e .talking about how the person spends their time and what they achieve), this may suggest that the support service environment leads staff to understand those whom they support predominantly through the activities they partake in and the skills they develop. From this, a researcher may then draw upon the other fractions to direct the support staff to consider different areas of experience that may be important to those whom

they support but which the staff have not have previously reflected upon. In this way the fractions serve a very useful function in how they emphasise the impact of context on human experience. Being alert to this is especially critical when considering the lives of those whose access to experience is often mediated through significant others.

llustrating the Fractions at Work

Brinkmann (2015, 163) argues that within qualitative research '(s)howing rather than simply telling should be an important ideal'. To this end we use here an example from a recent qualitative inquiry, designed by one of this paper's authors, to illustrate how the fractions can work in practice to aid researchers in formulating an inclusive research design and maintaining rigour within the structuring of data collection and analysis. The focus of this inquiry was the experience of a developing sexuality for young autistic men with profound learning disabilities who would be described within an etic perspective as 'non-verbal'. The research took place within a single special school. Originally the researcher intended to develop and trial innovative methods to attempt to access from the young men themselves the meanings that they were making of their experience. However it was not possible to secure agreement for this from the governing ethics review committee which was concerned about members of a group, categorised within the process as 'vulnerable', being 'asked' about issues concerning a developing sexuality. To provide an alternative route to understanding experience a research collective was established with the researcher working with parents and school staff to develop interpretations of the experience of the young men. The 19 parents of the students who met the criteria for inclusion in the project were initially sent a letter that set out the intention and design of the inquiry and, if interested in knowing more were invited to a meeting with the researcher. This led to 5 parents and 1 carer participating. In doing so they

consented on behalf of their sons to them becoming the focus of the research. The parents agreed to this in the hope that the research might lead to more enlightened understandings of their son's experience which might then inform more enabling support. Similarly staff were recruited via letter with the offer of a further meeting. 12 received the letter out of which 6 agreed to participate. Therefore, 5 parents and 1 carer took part in a series of 1:1 interviews (combined total of 8). 5 staff attended 3 focus group sessions and 3 of these staff also elected to take part in 2, 1:1 interviews. 1 staff member chose not to take part in the focus group but was interviewed 3 times. The names of the young men and the research participants as referred to within this article are pseudonyms.

Inquiry Design

The focus of the inquiry was kept broad so that it would not be restricted by any pre-inquiry assumptions that sexual development would only affect particular aspects of being. Within the philosophical underpinnings of the fractions it is critical that researchers remain open to the possibilities of experience that might be beyond their anticipation or those that have already been recorded within the research literature. As Van Manen (1997, 53) states 'we need to search everywhere in the lifeworld for lived-experience material that, upon reflective examination, might yield something of its fundamental nature'. In this inquiry the fractions proved very useful in providing space for a wide range of aspects of experience to emerge. They provided a framework that supported the researcher with developing a structure through which the very broad research question, of how experiencing a developing sexuality affects these young autistic men, could be thoroughly investigated. This led to an exploration of the bodily, including emotional, changes that a developing sexuality was engendering (embodiment); whether, and if so how, established relationships were altering and new ones forming (sociality); how what was happening in the present related to events of the past and an anticipated future (temporality); what agency the young men could assert on what was

happening to them, how the process (a developing sexuality) might make them feel about themselves and others feel towards them, and what understandings others had of how the young men might be experiencing these effects (selfhood); whether this event led to avoidance or different use of places previously visited and to engagement with new spaces (spatiality); what activities that were previously engaged with had now ceased and what had replaced them (project); how others conceptualised and discussed the event (discourse) and what the overall atmosphere of the event was for the young men - calm, tense, positive, oppressive, enabling or restrictive etc. (moodedness).

(Re)Focusing interviews

The design of the inquiry evolved, therefore, as a complex hermeneutical project in which the researcher co-constructed with other members of the research collective interpretations of the meanings that the young men might be making of their experience (Kinsella 2006). The research was conducted through a process of mediated reflection that was designed to open up current perceptions, of the research collective, about the participants' experiences, to new possibilities. This required members of the research collective to be disciplined about reflecting on what the event might mean to the young men rather than on what it meant to them. For example, when asked about what the act of a young man now closing the door to his bedroom could mean to the participant, a parent might describe first how she finds it frustrating as she cannot now see what is happening in the room. The researcher would then offer a prompt such as, 'so you find it frustrating but what do you think it means for your son, why do you think he does it and what do you think doing it means to him?' For the parents this act of reflecting on and interpreting what meanings an experience might have for the young men rather than for themselves proved both easy and highly challenging to do. Easy as they had years of experience in interpreting how and why their son was behaving in particular ways (Bogdan & Taylor 1989)**;** highly challenging as putting aside your own experience of a

situation to fully try and access the experience of another is, in fact, very difficult to do (Hodge and Runswick-Cole 2016; Mackenzie and Leach Scull 2007).

The interview methods, therefore, were formulated to work in ways that would support parents and staff with moving away from thinking about how they themselves were experiencing the situation and instead would prompt them to bring together all that they know about their son/pupil and what it means to him to be in the world. The fractions proved useful in providing structure to the interview whilst still allowing for a flexible and fluid account of experience to emerge. To illustrate how this appeared in practice, an interview might start first during an exploration of Sociality with a question such as 'How do you feel a developing sexuality is affecting Raj's relationships with others?'. Later the researcher might ask about Spatiality through the question, 'How is a developing sexuality impacting on the places Raj goes at home/school and outside?'. Many qualitative researchers who are unfamiliar with the fractions might well ask such questions anyway. However, we have found that working with the fractions provides a safeguard framework that helps to ensure that the full breadth of experience is explored.

Maintaining the central focus within the interview on parents and staff reflecting on what the event of a developing sexuality might meant to and for the young men rather than themselves appeared to be a valuable and meaningful process. It led to interviewees challenging previous assumptions and arriving at different interpretations of the meanings that the particular experience might have for the young men. One staff member, for example, reported, in relation to one pupil Mahmud who was now more rejecting of emotional closeness:

'I see that I am different for him now, and that coz of that I can't be like I had been with him before, which is a shame coz I loved that'.

The staff member identifies their own experience of this changing relationship as one of loss. The researcher then directs the participant to reflect beyond their own experience and to refocus on to what it might mean for Mahmud:

'What do you think that change (to a less intimate relationship) will mean for him'?

Staff member: 'I don't know really, he's becoming a man now, and I suppose I have to help him with that, cos that's gonna be a big journey for him, I suppose I've been on that journey with him as a kid, now I'm gonna do that again with him but it'll be different for him and for me'.

In this way the interviewee moves from conceptualising the evolving relationship as a loss and perhaps, therefore, something to be regretted and resisted and instead begins to embrace the change as a positive development for Mahmud and an expression of his desire for greater independence.

In doing so the parents and staff in this inquiry became aware of how they were constructing and interpreting experience, the effects that this could have on their son or pupil and that there are other ways of coming to know and understand behaviour. Ashworth (2016) contends that our experience is constituted through 'taken-for-granted meanings' (p.20). These are for the most part pre-reflective, so elucidating them can often be a revelation. Coming to know experience is a complex and challenging task for which an external body such as a researcher acting as facilitator might be useful:

> The assistance of an interlocutor, who has a different lifeworld, in a
> research process in which one's taken-for-granted perceptions,
> imaginings and emotions can be held up to the light and subjected to

more intense imaginative variation, may lead to a more rigorous and
profound description (Ashworth 2017, 56).

Fractions as an Analytic Method

Analysing copious amounts of data from interviews can be a daunting task as the researcher
seeks to develop a system of organisation (Goulding 1999). This study, for example, required
management of 50000 words that had been collated within the interviews and focus groups.
Structuring the interviews around the 8 fractions meant that when it came to the analysis and
the identification of themes, related material had already been collated together under the
headings of the different fractions. Some fractions had more content than others depending
upon how those around the participants interpreted the key meanings of the experience for the
participant.

Dey (2005, 16) states that '(d)ata are not 'out there' waiting collection, like so many rubbish
bags on the pavement. For a start, they have to be noticed by the researcher, and treated as
data for the purposes of his or her research'. We suggest that using the fractions aids this
process of interrogating data. The researcher can first sort data: examining and coding the
phrases, words, sentences or expressions and assigning them to the most relevant fraction:

'......I mean he never (temporality) jumps up out of bed (spatiality, project), you know
Arran...you've (sociality) got to coax (moodedness) him, I mean he knows (selfhood) he's
got to get up – but you've got to give (sociality) him time and it might take ten minutes
(temporality) before he actually gets out of bed (spatiality), but he will (selfhood) do it
eventually (temporality).....'

The analyst can then look more deeply at how each fraction relates to the experience and what it might mean for the experiencer. For instance, the previous passage informs the 'Spatiality' fraction as it relates to:

- Bed as a space intruded on by time, the demands of the day and others.

- Bed as a desirable space.

But this passage also relates to certain features that can be categorised, through the interpretation of the researcher, within the 'Selfhood' fraction, as it presents the experience as:

- An expression of Arran asserting his will

- Arran accepting engagement with the world

- Exercising preference

- An attempt at controlling a certain area of his experience [getting up].

This can be done individually for each participant and then copied and pasted to a collective record so that all comments relating to that particular fraction are then located together. Once grouped, the researcher can analyse the data more deeply to ask what exactly these units of meaning might tell us about the experience under consideration, such as the effects of time on the experience or what it means to the self. The researcher can then look across all accounts to identify in what particular ways the event was constituted by temporality, selfhood, sociality etc; always looking for the elements that were idiosyncratic as well as those that were shared. In this way the fractions can be described as acting as 'thematic markers' because the assignment of units of meaning to the specific fractions is the first step to elucidating the potential relationships between them (Andrews 2017).

Illustrating the Process

Below is an extract from one of the transcripts to illustrate further how the process of identifying units of meaning and then grouping these within themes was carried out within the study. We use the term 'unit of meaning' to describe something that was said within an interviewee's account that seems to the researcher to inform the research questions in some way.

Parent (P): At home (spatiality), we've always been (temporality) very, perhaps too relaxed about it [nudity] (moodedness), we see it as a natural thing (discourse), he's been around in the morning (temporality) when I've been getting ready for work, using the toilet and so on.

Researcher (R): How do you think he deals with this relaxed attitude now that he is an adolescent?

P: Well there's been a change I suppose, we have to be more careful (sociality) and that's created tensions for us and for him (moodedness), things are different now (temporality), and the way that Gerry comes and goes in and out of the rooms (spatiality), it's different. That's created problems for sure (moodedness).

R: what type of problems?

P: Well we can't be (sociality) like we were before (temporality), he's older now (temporality and discourse) and I miss that closeness and relaxed way of being with him, and I think he's picked up on that (sociality and moodedness). Sometimes he reacts to that (selfhood), and then I panic and it's a spiral. A nightmare (moodedness). Now we lock the doors (spatiality and selfhood) and this has definitely had an impact on Gerry, his biting (selfhood) has started up again (temporality) and his spitting (selfhood).

After assigning units of meaning to the relevant fractions the researcher must then decide what are the critical messages about experience that are conveyed within the group of related units of meaning. In this example one of the critical messages was interpreted as the changes in access to rooms since Gerry appeared to be experiencing a developing sexuality. This has

changed the atmosphere of home from one of closeness and relaxation to the tensions of problem and nightmare. Gerry's agency is restricted by the precautions taken and his apparent frustration manifests itself in how he resorts to old behaviours that others, and perhaps Gerry too, find challenging:

> (T)he way that Gerry comes and goes in and out of the rooms, it's different. That's created problems...' and '...now we lock the doors and this has definitely had an impact on Gerry, his biting has started up again and his spitting...

Quotations are used in this way, within the record of the analysis, to maximise the transparency of the interpretation. This is intended to enable readers to evaluate for themselves the trustworthiness and reliability of the account; the extent to which this feels a transparent and credible research claim in relation to the data provided (Kvale 2007).

In this study, in addition to the traditional presentation of quotations from the transcripts, the interviewees' statements were also developed into summaries that convey what the researcher interpreted as the critical meanings of experience for the young men. From the extract above the critical meaning for Gerry is interpreted as a struggle with the changes that are taking place at home. Where previously Gerry had free access to roam from room to room, things have altered. The spaces within the house now represent something different for both parents and for Gerry; this has resulted in stress and tension. The parents now lock their doors and Gerry has lost the spatial freedom and physical closeness that had previously been a feature of his world. Gerry is communicating his emotional reaction to this by biting and spitting. The assumed 'meaning' that his parents are making of the way in which Gerry is processing the current situation is: For Gerry a developing sexuality has led, in effect, to changes in how physical spaces are managed and accessed. Locks and restricted areas have entered Gerry's

life. These changes have created tensions that are barriers to emotional closeness. Gerry's behavioural reactions to this would suggest that his quality of life has been reduced by the locks and restrictions on space that have accompanied a developing sexuality. He now experiences people acting differently toward him and is more separate from those with whom he used to enjoy intimacy. Gerry has little control over what is happening to him and he can only express his discomfort through behaviours that others experience as challenging.

Benefits to Participants

Through the research process parents and staff came to reflect on the connected nature of their lifeworlds with those of the young men and of the potential value at times to tease out where one might begin and the other end (Andrews 2017). For example, in relation to Gerry, how his parents thought about their son's behaviours appeared to change as they engaged with the facilitated reflective process through the research. This took on a greater emic perspective as they became more able to separate what a behaviour meant to them from what it might mean to Gerry. In doing so they came to recognise and value more the creativity of their son's behaviours as modes of negotiating the huge impact that adolescence was having on him.

In turn, this led to commitments from parents and staff to respond differently, in what they now conceived of as more enabling and supportive ways, to certain behaviours or methods of communication that to date had been responded to restrictively and prohibitively.

As a result of using the fractions to explore the different meanings that the pupils make of their experience, it is hoped that the staff and parents have become more conscious of and

reflective on the meanings and intentions that they first attribute to the behaviours of these young men. We acknowledge the expertise of, and value in, parents and carers intimate knowledge of their child. However, as human beings, when confronted with challenging situations we also have to manage how these make us feel. The discipline of the fractions in their insistence that the research collective always returns to the experience of those we are focused on, is therefore a useful contribution to method. The exploration in detail of how experience impacts on different aspects of the lifeworld seemed to enable those around the participant to reach new understandings of how these then merge together within the emergent and developing personhood of a young adult. We are optimistic that the practice provided through the research project with members of the research collective in analysing previously held assumptions will lead to different responses that the young men might experience as more enabling and empowering.

Conclusion

In this paper we have argued a case for the value of using the fractions of lifeworld as presented by Ashworth as a supportive framework in the development of inclusive research within the third space. Within them are embedded philosophical principles that discipline researchers towards a particular orientation within research and demand a certain set of practices. We suggest that these require of researchers a focus on lived experience, the commitment to capture and describe the meanings that experience has for others and a recognition that every phenomenon will be experienced across a set of features that are comprehensive and interrelated (Ashworth 2003, 2016). We would also argue that there should be a further essential dimension to the fractions: namely, that within the research process the fractions ought to demand of researcher, and other members of the research collective, a degree of reflective practice sufficient to enrich their own understanding of the meanings that they make of the experiences of those whom they are representing. Ashworth's

fractions are not widely known even within phenomenology let alone across other traditions within qualitative research. We hope through this paper to promote greater knowledge of, and appreciation for, the potential of the fractions to increase participation of autistic people and others with profound learning disabilities in lifeworld research. We have employed the example of a particular qualitative study into lived experience to illustrate the applicability, flexibility and value of the fractions in the design, organisation and execution of data collection and analysis.

We have also used this example study ourselves to help us with formulating what, for us, seem to be the most significant ways in which the fractions can serve the requirements of inclusive researchers working within the third space. We have identified five. First, the fractions provide an accessible framework that supports the researcher with the art of research into lived experience. Second, utilising the fractions to reflect on the full breadth of a phenomenon can support a research collective with developing broad and diverse insights into, and understandings of, participants' experience. Third, the fractions aid the research collective with bringing into view factors that affect experience that they may not immediately have considered. Within this study, for example, concerns around the exclusive control that a young man is now demanding over once shared spaces may mask other effects that a developing sexuality might have on relationships with others or be expressions of anxiety made apparent by the experience of new and different feelings. The fourth mode of support provided by the fractions is within the process of analysis as significant amounts of related data can be readily collated within the fraction headings. Finally, the fractions can support parents and support staff with enhancing an emic perspective. This can enable them to resist the dominant etic representations of their child that they will have been exposed to repeatedly and to embrace their own intuitive and learned understandings of how their child experiences the world. Through this explication and illustration of the nature and value of

the fractions we hope that we will have introduced researchers to a new framework that may well prove useful to them in developing research that gives meaningful participation to people with profound learning disabilities and their social and support circles.

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