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Published online: 16 May 2023.

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'To be honest, it's complicated': training postgraduate students to work with emotions in qualitative research

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ABSTRACT

Emotion is an integral part of the knowledge production process, yet is rarely acknowledged within research methods teaching or textbooks. As educators, preparing students for fieldwork is essential, and should go beyond skill-learning, towards building confidence in their ability to react both ethically and appropriately during fieldwork. This paper reflects on supporting students to manage the disruptiveness of learning about their role within the research process while acknowledging research as an emotionally-driven practice. We outline why learning opportunities on emotion are essential within the context of a pan-social-science methods course for postgraduates. Consideration is given to how space is provided for students to consider their motivations, emotions, and subjective engagement with their research, and the broader consequences for knowledge production in action. Two examples are shared as a means to create space for careful consideration of emotions, and of potentially delivering a strategy for implementing a pedagogy of emotion.

Introduction

This paper begins, perhaps in an unorthodox way, with a personal account of practice and literature that has influenced us. We do this to orient you towards our teacher role and our personal emotional, political and feminist positions and to make the private practice of teaching visible, from the start. This, we hope, is consistent with Burke's thesis (2015) that 'being emotional' is a form of resistance to damaging neoliberal discourses in higher education in the UK. In this paper, we outline two learning experiences for postgraduate social science students, devised to help them grapple with emotion in social research. The learning sits within *Advanced Qualitative Methods* – a credit-bearing course for postgraduate taught students which aims to prepare them for their field of research by encouraging them to socially imagine the issues they may encounter

and improve their 'ability to negotiate the political economic and social dimensions of human experience' (Rhoads and Szelenyi 2011, 20).

We reveal our research practice(s) to students, to illuminate the difficult emotions that can be involved in the research process. By sharing how we have responded to difficult situations, both successfully and unsuccessfully, students garner an insight into the messiness and complexity involved in qualitative research. We highlight the gap in how emotions are harnessed in the scholarship of teaching and learning (Walker and Palacios 2016). Before presenting our teaching practice relating to two exercises the paper will examine the literature on emotion and research. The final section will critically engage with why emotion 'disappeared' from traditional methods of teaching.

Emotion and research

This section will define emotion as it relates to 'doing' research. In 2016, I had cause to think about the centrality of emotion to qualitative research when I was asked to revise an existing advanced qualitative course, delivered to postgraduate students across a large College of Social Sciences. As the course was a follow-on from a core introductory qualitative methods course, I had relative freedom to deliver the content I thought was valuable, knowing that traditional approaches to data collection, ethics and analysis were covered.

In developing the content, I spoke to a number of colleagues about how well they felt their qualitative methods training had prepared them for fieldwork. I wanted insight into what was missing. No one felt their training prepared them for fieldwork, further, no one mentioned emotion: either how to report data that had high emotional content, or how to deal with research that is emotionally challenging. This surprised me as emotions (self-doubt, anxiety and excitement) dominate my research experiences (Bartels and Wagenaar 2018; Wagenaar 2011). Creating a lecture on emotion was something of an innovation and a hunch; that I could make qualitative research training more useful (preparing students for the field) if I included a lecture dedicated to emotion.

As I was designing what a 2-hour lecture on emotion might cover, I found some allies who had written on the emotionality of research and of 'doing' higher education. I agree with Evans et al. (2017) drawing in turn from Hubbard, Backett-Milburn, and Kemmer (2001) that we are letting our students down by not acknowledging emotion in research, leaving them vulnerable and our data limited: 'understandings of the social world will remain impoverished' (Hubbard, Backett-Milburn, and Kemmer 2001, 119).

Emotionality lies at the intersection of the person and society. Emotion is 'integral to transformative learning' (Walker and Palacios 2016, 187). As Denzin states 'to be human is to be emotional' (Denzin 1984, x). In teaching methods, it is vital to also help students learn that they will operate emotionally in their research field; and however, they operate, behave or perform, this will trigger an emotional reaction in their participants. Further, this is inherently what we are trying to achieve in producing new qualitative data. This quote is from Barford's (2017) piece where they are quoting Anderson and Smith (in italics):

> Emotions are important for understanding the interconnected yet unequal social world to the extent that neglecting the vocabulary of emotions '*leaves a gaping void in how to both know and intervene in the world*' (*Anderson and Smith 2001*, 7; Barford 2017, 25)

Emotions are relational (Olson, Bellocchi, and Dadich 2020) or embodied (Denzin 1990) manifestations that can be understood physically and performed in social inter-actions (Williams and Bendelow 1998). Emotion can also be understood as the 'psychology of personal reactions' (Wyer et al. 2017, 3), speaking to the interactions that can trigger emotions within us and between us (within social life, between us is understood as interactions with friends, relationships, community interactions and within qualitative research it can be understood as the interaction between researcher and researched).

Perhaps because of the fluidity of these definitions of emotion (Pernecky 2016) academics have sought to understand aspects or fragments of emotion: a form of reductionism (Olson, Bellocchi, and Dadich 2020). For example, Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2013) aimed for a holistic capture of how emotion has been acknowledged mapped against research paradigms to develop a 4-factor typology (physiological/post-positivist; interactionist/social constructionist; critical/emancipatory). This is useful to help those with some awareness of methods and research to organise their thinking but doesn't help methods learners prepare for or manage emotion during fieldwork.

The ethical process could be a space to practice our social imaginations (Mills 1959), and empathetically imagine the (emotional) experience for our participants, and for us as researchers. The process though isn't presented to students as a learning space for research practice, but as a bureaucratic process. As Olsen (Olson 2021) describes, ethics guidelines have moved from ignoring emotions to declaring them to be 'superfluous, harmful, risky and threats to decision making' (Olson 2021, 1). Diminishing risk and harm in research practice is ethically sound, but this conflation with diminishing emotion is a leap of logic (Olson and Dadich 2019). Respecting participant's capabilities to give informed consent includes trusting them to consent to share emotions, not just words. Invalidating participants' consent when it comes to emotional content amplifies vulnerabilities (Feltham-King, Bomela, and Macleod 2018; Macleod, Marx, and Mnyaka 2018) and for Olson, is a form of epistemic violence (2021). Rather, Shaw and colleagues share our view that we should recognise emotions as 'a normal part of doing research' (Shaw, Howe, and Beazer 2020, 289). Doing emotionally challenging research is a form of risk (Stahlke 2018) that students need to be aware of, and supported to navigate, if they are to meet the ethical threshold of minimising harm (so often reduced to risk to participant), and risk in travelling to and from the field (Israel 2015; Resnik 2018) and safe-guarding self.

In my own practice, I was struggling with the paradox of fully embracing the principle of respecting participants, with the idea of 'no harm'. Emotional harm is a form of exploitation unless consent is informed. Emotions, including negative emotions are a part of life (Olson 2021). Any method that separates participants from the context of their experience, for example, by diminishing emotion, disappears knowledge (Wyer et al. 2017). There is a difference between exhibiting distress about a life experience and feeling distressed with the interview/research participation. The former is not inherently harmful for the distress already exists (Scheff 2015).

Lather and St. Pierre (2013) as champions of the post-qualitative movement have argued for 'affect' to be recognised as essential to the inter-play between researcher and researched. The dynamism of the intersubjective exchange of emotion is fundamental to the exchange of knowledge. Capturing experience depends on the 'capacity to affect and be affected' (Fox 2015, 301). When I was developing the lecture on emotion, I had just finished a large project working with families impacted by Motor Neurone Disease, conducting interviews that

were full of emotion. I heard about structural issues that could be resolved (long waiting times for diagnosis; policy-related delays in adaptations). If I hadn't been able to hear the anger from the families I talked with, then I would have had to conclude that the social situation I was investigating was not anger-inducing. It seemed clear to me, that emotion could be and should be built into core methods teaching. Helping emergent researchers acknowledge the value of emotionally reflexive labour would help them safeguard themselves and participants. Emotionally reflexive labour was defined by Olson et al as moving from guidelines and formal ethical processes to develop the capabilities to draw on inter-personal cues and the research context to determine the 'right' behaviour (Olson et al. 2021). This paper is formed from my critical engagement with the idea of pedagogy of emotion (Walker and Palacios 2016) and constructed in conversation with the co-author. It moves from the idea of doing research well, to teaching research methods usefully.

Teaching emotion

The most common argument we have heard, for why we don't teach emotion, is that it's not what academics do. Journalists (those motivated by populism and excluding the more self-challenging investigative journalist) manipulate with emotion, but academics have perceived their work to be above this, to have distance and/or objectivity. This is not how we think about qualitative methods. Their subjective nature does not translate to biased or manipulative knowledge production though one must be careful to use transparency to demonstrate credibility. I'm undoubtedly influenced by my discipline. I come from the discipline of disability studies where we start with the political position that disabled people face discrimination and unfair treatment, and that research should always aim to remove barriers to being and doing. To unpack that statement a little, many of us feel anger at the barriers faced and frustration that evidence produced is largely ignored by those with power to remove barriers. So, there is something emotional and subjective about our approach and our political will must be acknowledged as a potential bias. Within this context, rigour has never been synonymous with objectivity but rather is situated in foregrounding the voices of disabled people, as authentic and dependable experts, recognising that they are not hard to reach or quiet, but that those in power are resistant to listening. Rigour comes through making our political position transparent, so it is very easy to critique, and designing research that permits us to be proven wrong.

Even in disability studies, there is a limit to the emotion that is conveyed through our published peer-reviewed journal articles. For a student, learning about qualitative methods from textbooks, and through reading journals, they could easily be forgiven for thinking that emotions are not an academic concern. Thus 'the literature' becomes an example of Burke's 'disciplinary technologies' (Burke 2015, 391) that regulate, control, and diminish the value of emotion.

From this standpoint, I began work developing two exercises for the Applied Qualitative Methods course and adapted for use with post-graduate students. They were designed to show students that the decisions they make about how they produce data, have an emotional quality to them. The exercises are experiential and practice-based in nature (Bartels and Wagenaar 2018). The first exercise makes transparent practice and draws on the first authors engagement with their own data, the second, invites students to see their own practice and to engage critically with the decisions they make.

This paper then, argues that emotions are an academic's concern, and we need to find new and better ways to help students engage with this learning. In qualitative research, traditionally emotion is separated from the data during transcription. This is an ethical issue. It would not be ok for researchers to arbitrarily transcribe only half an interview. Participants give us their emotions just as they give us their words, and only using one is reductionist. This makes us nervous too when we consider research integrity. Are words distorted without their emotional context? The first exercise makes visible my own struggle with disappearing emotions.

Exercise 1: emotion in data collection, taught via fieldnotes

Patsy, a pseudonym she chose, was discussing her experience of being diagnosed with MND. Here is a quote that has been used in a conference paper: 'Patsy (sob) "I just didn't feel like I count"' (Ferrie, Robertson-Rieck, and Watson 2013). A delegate at this international conference criticised the paper for being too emotional, leading to the quote above, and two others being removed from work that has subsequently been published. The comment had a paralysing impact because producing writing while minimising the emotional quality of the work was a misrepresentation of the data.

I had spent time struggling over whether the word 'sob' should be used. The tension came from the term 'sob' being a subjective rather than objective engagement with the research experience. Had I not been there, sharing the emotion, and clear about what was experienced, the word 'cried' may have been chosen. The word 'cried' felt more factual. The voice recording was listened to again and again and Patsy did more than cry. In an attempt to arrest the uncertainty, extended field notes were written to explore and defend the choice of 'sob'.

With the aim of making this kind of research visible, the field notes were developed into an exercise within the emotion lecture. The objective was to demonstrate the emotional labour involved in doing research as much as in disseminating work. Equally, the learning experience aimed to show that some issues in research and data production are not easily resolved. As a practicing researcher, this is a common experience and this aids students in appreciating what we mean then, when we ask them to write a 'defence' of their project management, data collection and analysis. In the lecture, students are asked 'Was *sob* a good choice of word? How would you read that quote differently, if I'd used the word *cried*'?

Responses in the 5 years this exercise has appeared in lectures and workshops have been consistent.
Sob is different to cry, it indicates more distress.
Sob would indicate even more distress if Patsy had been cis-gender male.
Sob engages more with the emotions of the reader.

These responses are so interesting to us. One takeaway is that cried has less impact on the reader/student and that less impact would be better because this is consistent with objective research. The students recognise that they have become uncomfortable being exposed to 'feeling' within a classroom or having 'feelings' triggered by academic work. Almost always, students appreciate this revelation and engage critically with

why universities have eliminated emotion to the extent that this learning experience feels innovative, disruptive and even risky? More experienced students can identify the 'pain' they have felt in diminishing the emotional content of their work in preparation for publication.

Students are then read an excerpt from unpublished field notes (see Evans et al. 2017 for a useful account of bias, emotion and field diaries).

> Patsy broke down. Emotion flooded from her. Her face crumpled. Tears came. She bent over in her chair. She gasped for breath in order to speak. Not so distressed that she couldn't speak, but distressed enough that her speech lost its earlier fluency, she stuttered each word and losing a range of intonation as her energy went into articulating each word. (Ferrie's, unpublished fieldnotes).

It may have become apparent as you read this, that the author was significantly impacted by the emotional depth of interviews. Yet a careful read of the above excerpt reveals that the language is descriptive and objective, and care had been taken to avoid writing a subjective account: there isn't a single emotional word there. Within the learning experience, we are careful to see students reflect on this point and they agree, this writing is descriptive rather than interpretive. The students read more,

> Patsy battled to get her words out. I said I was turning off the tape recorder. She sobbed 'no', she wanted her emotion captured for THAT is what she'd signed up to. Her [adult] daughter reacted, her face crumpled. I felt mine distort too. Her daughter moved forward mirroring her Mum's bent position. I sat back to give them more space, more time and room to react, to let them decide what happens next. And I cried, differently, quietly. We co-constructed that emotion. We shared it. I felt it. Patsy understood that she was being listened to. I absorbed some of her fear, in understanding and listening and emotively connecting, I began a process of becoming a Guardian of this data, and its emotional value. To give you her words without this emotional value doesn't just undermine the message, it undermines her. If I allow my reader to be unaffected, then I have lost my opportunity for change. I have failed in my Guardianship. For to really tell you what life is like with MND I need you to feel distressed, fearful, anxious. I needed to be upset. And I need to upset you (Ferrie's unpublished fieldnotes).

This has been a powerful teaching device and students are affected. Here then, the learning experience moves beyond clinical observation, and in so doing, aims to capture what research is really like. The excerpt makes the case for emotions being stronger than using words only. Words are restricted, they are the dance moves. Emotions are us dancing. They are a device, just as words are, they are part of the performance.

Within the class, we discuss what field notes are for and move beyond a textbook account of practice. An aide to memoir in preparing a methodology section perhaps? A recording of deliberations and micro-decisions that can be written into a defence? In my practice, I transitioned from writing notes to recording them. I found speaking my notes altered what I captured. The recordings had an emotional quality to them that usefully marked my subjective engagement. There was also something about the oral delivery that expelled some of the difficult emotions that I had absorbed through the process of speaking with families. Camacho, reflecting on his role as a trauma social worker based in a hospital as much as his research role, captures the traumatic response,

> Day in and day out, I listened to my clients' compelling stories of heartache, struggle and resilience, while encountering many patients in crisis. I learned to keep calm, but the transference from patients to me was inevitable. (Camacho 2016, 688)

As a class, we can unequivocally face the emotional labour involved in doing qualitative research. We can thus avoid what Hume (2007) termed as 'failure', as she encountered violence during her fieldwork

> On some levels, however, I did not view my fear as 'acceptable' for a researcher since it was so rarely talked about. Instead, I felt that it was some sort of sign of weakness and a reflection of my own inability to cope with the not so nice elements of reality. (Hume 2007, 154)

Field notes then, are one way that we can acknowledge the emotional content of our research. We can chart its impact on our research and on us as researchers.

Exercise 2: transcription

The second exercise involves transcription and is provided the week before the lecture on emotion and students are encouraged to send in their transcription of one of two 5-minute clips from the movies Sophie's Choice or The 25th Hour (Lee 2003). These clips were chosen because of the high discourse and emotional content: understood, as emotion expressed by the actors; and the emotion felt by the audience. The students were encouraged to transcribe the emotion and to be aware of their emotional response to this activity (Dickson-Swift et al. 2007). Trigger warnings were given because the scenes chosen are emotional, and readers of this work may also want to take care in reading the excerpts. The exercise was not mandatory. Two days before the lecture, students were encouraged to watch the clips even if they did not intend to complete or submit a transcription in recognition that the exercise may not feel accessible to some (Griffiths, Winstanley, and Gabriel 2005). Students were told that anonymised excerpts from the transcription would feature in teaching materials. There are links to the clips in the references, though only examples from Sophie's Choice transcripts are used here.

Trigger warnings and taking care for students' emotional well-being has been criticised for avoiding disruption, discomfort and critical engagement (Ecclestone 2004). As Walker and Palacios (2016) argue, care must be taken to ensure this isn't seen as a leftist gesture or therapy, but rather as the start of a politically inclusive conversation about when it is, and is not, legitimate to avoid information that is difficult to engage with. Such decisions, like empathy, cannot be switched on or off. They require practice, '[empathy is] a skill we can practice that takes effort and commitment' (Walker and Palacios 2016, 179). Ultimately though, the trigger warning is not there to sanction avoidance, but to alert students to the effort that may be required to participate in the learning process, and to give them control over whether they practice this in private completing the exercise for themselves, or in public and submitting their transcript for use in the lecture. Trigger warnings legitimate emotional responses and are central to a pedagogy of emotion (Walker and Palacios 2016). They permit students to be affected by the stories and inequalities that they find challenging affording them control of how this is performed, and this is vital for them to see their wellbeing as central to their concerns. Rather than taking on a therapist role, we are simply acknowledging: this work is going to take emotional labour (Hochschild 1983) as well as intellectual labour.

During the lecture, students are encouraged to reflect on their experience of transcribing (even in an advanced qualitative methods class, many had not transcribed before); talk through how they identified emotions and how they wrote this up. Students were also encouraged to talk through their emotional labour and whether they had thought research would 'be like this?'.

Here are some excerpts of the same line in the movie so that comparison is easy and used here with the permission of each student. Each bullet point is a different students work, their structure and font are retained, and these excerpts were produced by different students studying the course in the same year:

Male:	you may keep one of your children, the other one must go (demonstrating his power/feeling powerful/mighty)
Female:	(Desperate, scared, confused) you mean, I have to choose?
Male:	You are Polack not a Yid: That gives you a privilege, a choice.
Female:	(Desperate, begging) I can't choose! I can't choose!
Male (Aggressive) Be quiet.	
German Officer:	You may keep one of your children. The other one must go.
Sophie:	You mean, I have to choose?
German Officer:	You are Polack not a Yid. That gives you a privilege, a choice.
Sophie:	I can't choose [almost whimpering], I can't choose! [shaking head, pleading]
German Officer:	Be quiet.
Nazi Officer:	You may keep one of your children. The other one must go.
Sophie:	You mean, I have to choose?
Nazi Officer:	You are Polack not a Yid. That gives you a privilege, a choice.
Sophie:	I can't choose. I can't choose!
Nazi Officer:	Be quiet.
SS Officer:	You may keep one of your children. The other one must go away.
Sophie:	(disbelieving) You mean I have to choose?
SS Officer:	You are Polack not a Yid. That gives you a privilege, a choice. [His tone is softer, gentler. He things he's doing her a favour. Sophie would know that whichever of the children isn't chosen will die in one of the camps. The realization of what the SS officer is telling her to do seems to overwhelm Sophie all at once.]
Sophie:	I can't choose! I can't choose!
SS Officer:	Be quiet.

What really surprised us, and this has happened every year since, different people transcribe different words. The words we hear and the words we record in a transcript are part of our subjective relationship with the data. Sharing this observation with students allows us to collectively acknowledge how post-positivist objectivity is assumed for many research practices (Olson, Bellocchi, and Dadich 2020). This comes to the fore with transcription which all students assumed to be mechanistic until the emotional qualities of that work were experienced.

In discussion, we collectively acknowledge the emotional response we have to transcriptions that use male/female versus those that use German Officer/SS Officer/Nazi Officer/Sophie. Using the term Nazi helps set the context as a concentration camp, something we might not get from the male/female descriptors in the first excerpt. Relative to being a female, being named Sophie humanises this character and this is

a good lesson for how we should use pseudonyms in our research and might help us critically evaluate other people's research that chooses not to humanise in this way. Using codes or initials rather than names is not always a bad choice, but it is a choice that dehumanises participants. It may well be that reducing participants to numbers or initials dehumanises them in ways that help researchers 'handle the data' and maintain emotional distance. In our view, this lost opportunity to disrupt ourselves is something to be grieved: disruption is a form of learning (Curry-Stevens 2007). In any case, the point of raising these questions is not for the students to agree with us, or to position our way as the right way of doing research. Students are also encouraged to use peer discussion carefully, actively avoiding a consensus. Rather they are encouraged to work with peers to explore the range of options available, to critically reflect on their standpoint and to reach a defence on the position they personally feel comfortable taking.

The final transcript excerpt produced from Sophie's Choice is particularly useful for teaching. In this final excerpt the student shares their emotional response, as they explain the heart-breaking exchange between Sophie and the officer: the emotional richness of the scene is captured only because this student intervened and conveyed more than a verbatim script. Students are encouraged to reflect over whether they feel more comfortable with the more neutral first excerpt or the more interpretative final one (or even one of the middle examples) and to think through why they have made the choice that they have. Students are encouraged to consider how they may employ reflexivity and think how they might approach their fieldwork, including transcription in the future? Finally, students are encouraged to think through how much of their decision is informed by their discipline? Why do different disciplines construct emotion, or transcription or pseudonyms or anonymity in such different ways? What this exercise aims to achieve is to make transparent such disciplinary constructions. And again, cross-disciplinary methods teaching is a great place to engage with this learning as one of the few places where students aren't constrained by disciplinary norms. Students may choose to maintain their disciplinary norms, but they will no longer defend this as the 'right way' of doing research, they will understand more that this is a decision that they have made, and a decision that they can defend.

It is hoped that this exercise delivers something of what Bartels & Wagenaar were describing when they wrote:

> We need a minimum of embodied experience with the task at hand to act as a 'hook' on which to hang and integrate the new insights and experiences that we obtain in the learning process, or, more precisely, to be able to discern those new insights and experiences in the first place. (Bartels and Wagenaar 2018, 195)

In the next section, we will consider some arguments about why emotion is still such a tricky issue for qualitative researchers. There are three key arguments that are derived from the literature. First, emotion hasn't appeared explicitly in methods teaching because it is still dominated by the scientific approach (even if qualitative researchers don't adopt it, they tend to invest a lot of time in explaining why); second, that emotion is gendered; and finally, that there are circumstances when there are very good reasons for hiding our emotional response.

The absence of emotion: critically engaging with the literature

This section moves from reflexive engagement with teaching practice, to consider academic literature related to the absence of emotion in research methods training and begins by examining the dominance of the scientific approach.

Qualitative methods emerged from a contesting of quantitative and positivist reductionism and their rejection of 'evidence' that could not be seen or objectively measured. As Fine stated, the dominant positivist discourse served to 'neutralize personal and political influences' (Fine 1994, 14). As qualitative approaches emerged, in order to be seen as credible, and to be publishable in peer-review journals, tended to be captured in frameworks reminiscent of statistical equations (Breuer and Schreier 2007; Hood 2006; Wagenaar 2007). Potter and Wetherall's guide to discourse analysis (one of the most useful texts we've ever engaged with) for example gave us the concept of interpretative repertoires (Potter and Wetherell 1987) and the axial codes of Glaser and Strauss's grounded theory, similarly divorce qualitative methodology from our everyday narratives (Glaser and Strauss 1965, 1967). When these methodologies are followed uncritically, they work like a recipe. Just as we feed numbers into our regressions, we enter words into our chosen qualitative framework and allow the process, with as little interference from us as possible, to deliver the findings.

It seems that this process-led approach, which we champion for building researcher confidence and delivering rigour, was cautious about dealing with emotion, as though this would be an argument too far, to convince the male-dominated academy (Leathwood and Hey 2009) and quantitative dominated journals of the time. Qualitative researchers were able to champion words as a form of data but not emotion. We can forgive our qualitative ancestors for not pushing the emotion card. Their foothold in the academy was uncertain, but we live in different times. Yet our ethics systems continue to imply that our emotions should be suppressed (see Bellas (1999) for similar arguments). We argue that in the field, our emotions should be secondary to those felt and exhibited by our participants', but they still matter, for example, we also teach our students to build rapport. There is a clear paradox/manipulation there: use emotion to get them to like you but don't have actual emotions.

The rise of qualitative approaches coincided with the mainstreaming of women into academic research and teaching positions. There are signs of both before the 1970s, but significant advancement through the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. There was a degree of resistance to there being more women in the academy (Olson 2021). A favourite example of this is that until Sociology became established as a discipline in our own institution, in 1969, (and indeed for the first few years after this despite the best efforts of the sociologists now on staff) if a female academic was in a promoted role, such as senior lecturer, and got married, they were immediately demoted to lecturer. Women were not welcome, and rather than say this so bluntly, the academy instead rejected emotion. It became unprofessional to be emotional in the academic workspace. Indeed, Kleinman and Copp argue that 'fieldworkers share a culture dominated by the ideology of professionalism or more specifically, the ideology of science' (Kleinman and Copp 1993, 2). Qualitative methods are about using empathy and trying to see the world from another's position (Dickson-Swift et al. 2009). What is this if not an emotional exchange? With reference to exercise 1, should JF not have cried in their

interview with Patsy? She/I cried in nearly every interview she/I completed for that project. She/I honestly don't know how else she/I could have shown the families that she/I was listening to them.

Women in the academy can be unfairly held to account for their emotional engagement (Aitchison and Mowbray 2013), thus emotion in research is a gendered issue (Boler 1999). This is particularly risky for postgraduate students where emotionality can undermine perceived capacity to undertake their degree (Craswell 2007). Button (2010) discusses the example of Page Spencer who was criticised for their public demonstration of grief following the Exxon-Valdez oil spill in Alaska and Wright (2008) wrote about the criticisms against her after she publicly fought against injustices experienced by women. Scholars who get emotional about the injustices they evidence are gaslit (Ecclestone 2004; Hoover 2014; Schulevitz 2015). Routledge (2012) explored how protesters avoid violent behaviours for fear it will delegitimise their cause (Groves 1995), and then paradoxically this restraint is used against them for those in power conclude that they can't care too much. Why shouldn't academics care? What are we doing as academics? Producing rigorous research and then moving on, disciplined towards disinterest (Dirkx 2001)? Or trying also to remove the barriers that violate and restrict?

In our teaching, we have become champions for exposing the emotion in our research, because it strengthens the data and as we will conclude, it is one route to promoting wellbeing in the academy. We are also swayed by arguments that some regulation of emotion is required. Sometimes we do research with people we don't like. Sometimes our research is specifically about behaviours we don't like. Dickson-Swift et al. (2009) produced an invaluable resource for our learning on emotion when writing about doing qualitative research. In their project, Dickson-Swift et al interviewed researchers and explored the way professionalism allowed them to fulfil their obligations under ethics of treating participants with dignity and respect. Sometimes (as we hope we have argued above) this involves showing emotion, but other times it requires restraint. This quote comes from one of their research participants:

> I could feel myself physically reacting to her description, at times I felt physically ill whilst she recounted her story and I found myself, I mean I had to be very very conscious of how I physically reacted, how I reacted to her at the time, my posture and so on, I had to be careful that I didn't make any judgements by looking horrified. (Dickson-Swift et al. 2009, 68)

When the new lecture on emotions was created and the literature drawn together for students, we had been visiting people in their homes to do qualitative interviews over a collective period of 25 years, and we had never read, or seen a learning environment, that encouraged consideration of how to respond to difficult ideas or people (see Stahlke (2018) for a recent contribution).

Reflection and broader implications

This paper aims to do more than illuminate practice. It argues that how and what we teach impacts on students' welfare. As more women have joined the academy, so too have people with direct experience of injustice and what we do research on, has changed. Anderson and Smith's (Anderson and Smith 2001) argument that emotions are private and research is public may hold true for some topics but not for others.

Increasingly we are researching in private spaces. Camacho's wonderful (2016) paper on caring and research challenges the argument that omitting emotions allows for unbiased interpretation of data, by highlighting that data is not collected, nor should it be reported in an emotional vacuum. Within post-graduate study, there has been an increase within the social sciences of students studying injustices they have personal experience of seeing their research careers as a route to challenge injustice and this is impacting on their well-being (Ferrie et al. 2022). As supervisors, we have been approached by students who articulate the risk of doing research that has such an emotional impact on them. Their concern is not the research itself, but the fear that this will limit their career progression as their data is viewed as biased regardless of the quality of their research design, data collection or analysis. As an educator, it feels like another kind of injustice. As researchers, we can evidence the gaps between those in power and those without, yet we have to be very careful in how we display our engagement with this data. Why must we hide our anger and frustration at injustice we have evidence of because we also have lived with the injustice?

There is also a growing mental health crisis in higher education and, in our view, this is linked to the increase in research on social injustices and the lack of acknowledgement within university structures that research is emotional. To continue investing in much-needed research, we need to engage with well-being and emotionality within our learning spaces. We should explicitly acknowledge, with our students, that practicing research, as well as the more general practice of being an academic, is emotional. Failing to acknowledge this impacts disproportionately on those students for whom higher education is inherently emotional. Students who identify as widening participation students, for example, recognise the university as a place of risk, both culturally and socio-economically.

Conclusion

Whether or not this paper has convinced you that we, as qualitative researchers, could do more to have emotion appear in our written work, it is imperative that we acknowledge as a sector, that research work is emotional work (Cowles 1988). Not acknowledging this, places undue pressure on those doing emotionally difficult research work (including quantitative work, and those that support us as researchers including transcribers and data entry assistants).

For students to be confident in their knowledge production and their operation within their field of research, they first had to 'see' how they engaged emotionally and subjectively to a social environment. This is a core facet of reflexivity as we explore how the research has grown or changed through the course of the project and should extend to consider how we as people and researchers have grown or changed through the research (Reinharz 1988). To do this, we need to understand what our 'mind' looks like at the start of our work (Ribbens and Edwards 1998), and set up a plan to reflexively engage with changes. This idea informs the first of 3 assignments on the Advanced Qualitative Methods course: students are asked to deliver a 1500-word essay on their positionality. Such careful reflexive work can also usefully check for signs of countertransference or vicarious trauma, and with care, students can be supported to avoid a major impact on their well-being. If we continue to sideline emotion, we risk missing this.

Methods learning is a unique opportunity to validate emotion, and to support students to harness their emotions and protect their wellbeing (Burke 2015). Given the established and increasing literature and practice-knowledge speaking to the emotional burden our students face (see Austin (2002) and Parsons (2001) for early contributions), embedding emotion in core learning feels like a positive step. In closing, we wish to acknowledge the significant contribution made by supervisors in creating spaces for learning about doing emotional research.

Movie clips

(Lee 2003) 25th Hour using clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TgL_5QcZCMo Sophie's Choice using clip: https://uk.video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=nectar-tb-v3&p=sophies+choice+death+scene#id=2&vid=3421ce093e64329ad1e879f626318970&action=click

Disclosure statement

Funding

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