

Research Space
Conference paper

Researching academic writing: a retroductive approach

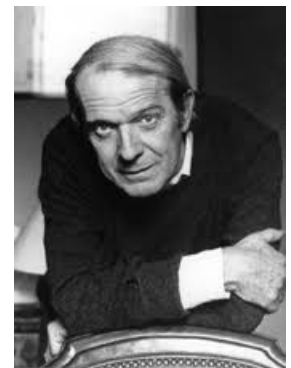
Beighton, C.



CLIER 9.12.20

Chris Beighton
Post Compulsory Education and Training

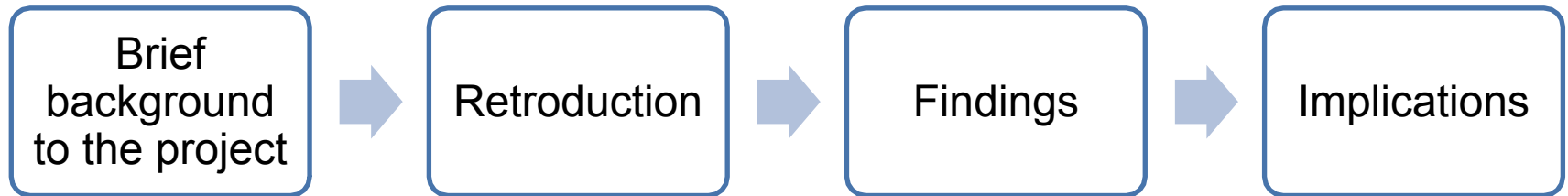
“one starts with a figurative form, a diagram intervenes and scrambles it, and a form of a completely different nature emerges from the diagram” (Deleuze, 2004a, p. 156).



In this session



content



Starting point

opportunity

- Conference call for papers
- Joint work with supervisor



purpose

- Find out about sthg important
- Move away from pure theory of PhD
- Apply my own ideas
- Develop a wider research profile
- Get some publications
- Get some empirical data
- Publish some stuff

... **learning the ropes**

Background: what's the problem?

Teaching

- Undergraduate taught programmes
- Teacher education
- Post graduate taught programmes
- Post graduate research supervision

Questions

- How should I teach writing?
- Why?
- What does the field say:
- What are the clichés, falsehoods, t



naturalism

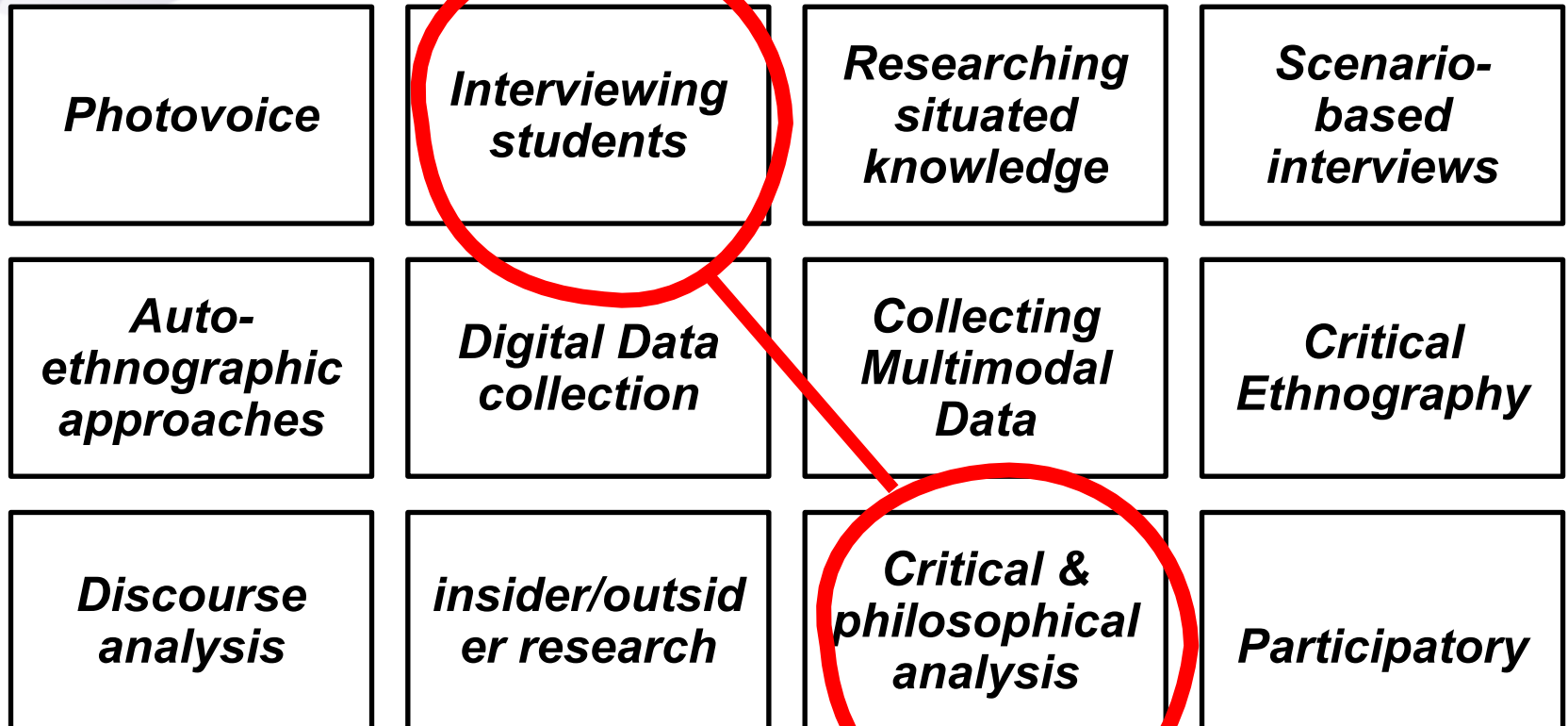
naivety

- Lazy constructivism?
- Superficial relativism?
- Theory envy?
- Caricatures other approaches?

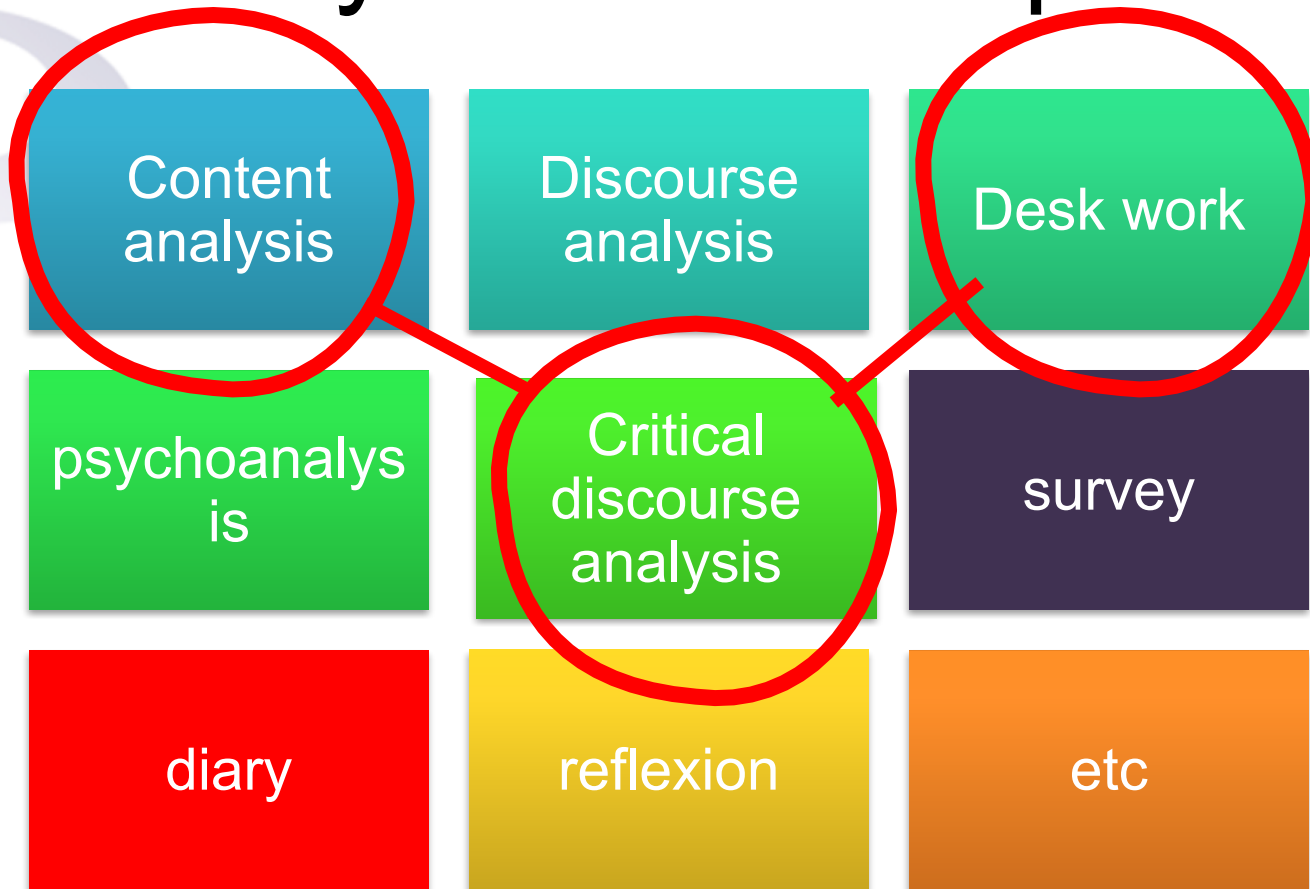
- Logos = ergon
- Logos = ontos
- Pomo wordplay e.g. "data"
- Sophistry and logical fallacy
- e.g. solipsism

nonsense

Qualitative Methods of **Data Collection**



Analytical Techniques



Deduction

- Apply a theory to the data
- Can prove an existing hypothesis

Beighton, C. (UR) *Toxic epistemology? Convergent correlationism, academic literacy and educational excellence*. The Journal of Higher Education.

Induction

- Analyse the data with open eyes
- Find a theory
- Can prove an existing hypothesis with an existing theory

Beighton, C. (2021, in press) *Theorising work-based learning: analysing interview data with deductive reasoning*. Sage.

Retrodution

- Analyse the data
- Reinterpret in new ways
- Develop a new theory or understanding of the data

Beighton, C. (2019) *Reasoning with Qualitative Data: Using Retrodution with Transcript Data*, Sage Research Methods Datasets.

Abduction and retroduction

“**abduction** involves analysing data that fall **outside of an initial theoretical frame** or premise.”

Retroduction entails the idea of going back from, below, or behind observed patterns or regularities to discover what produces them”

- Used in conjunction, these forms of inference can lead to the formation of a **new conceptual framework or theory** ([Danermark et al. 1997](#))



Developing a Methodology

Philosophy

- Relational ontology
- Sui generis construction of entities
- Bio-Mechanics of complexity (G. Simondon, A.N . Whitehead)

Methodology

- Creation of knowledge through
- Complexity theory
- Qualitative approach

Method

- 4 simple questions
- Pilot study n= 10
- Writing day (Bristol)
- Informal settings n = 30



Data sample A: deficit model



1. "it's like learning a new language.
2. *I know that I'd be expected to also use these terms, but I thought I was learning about education, not a foreign language. "*
3. "they told us not to write like that at school...it seems so childish"
4. It creates a selective, advantaged pool of individuals

- Foreign
- Infantile
- Distant

Data sample A: so, alienation?



Definition:

But

- a distinct kind of psychological or social ill; namely, one involving a problematic separation between **a self and other** that properly belong together.
- **even the mildest of sceptics** could reasonably worry that a range of difficult empirical, and other, questions, are evaded rather than answered here.
- <https://plato.stanford.edu/en>

Data sample B: but what about...?

“By writing about something you are expressing ideas, putting some structure and form into your ideas

- *“So whenever I read anything, to write about that in my own way, almost explain it to someone else”*
- **No deficit**
- **Productive**
- **Connections between self and other**
- **Flat ontology**

Is there a word for this positivity?



Deliberately looking **elsewhere** for explanation: beyond the usual suspects

- ~~Marx~~
- ~~Bourdieu~~
- ~~Derrida~~
- ~~Deleuze~~

- "foreign limb syndrome" or BIID (Body Integrity Identity Disorder), subjects believe that one or more of their limbs is "an alien appendage" and seek amputation of diverse body parts (Upadhyaya 2018, 34 see also Krafft-Ebing, 1894, 162'; (Brugger, 2013 et al).
- a desire without lack, not limited to sexual gratification, a feeling of bodily "overcompleteness" and is thus a case of "**less is more**" (Maccauda et al 2017).

Is there a word for this positivity?



- Xeno + melia

Foreign limb

- Xeno + lexia

Foreign writing

- “While alienation refers any production of meaning to lack, xenolexia does so by expressing an ontology of things which explains entities by **positivity rather than deficit.**”

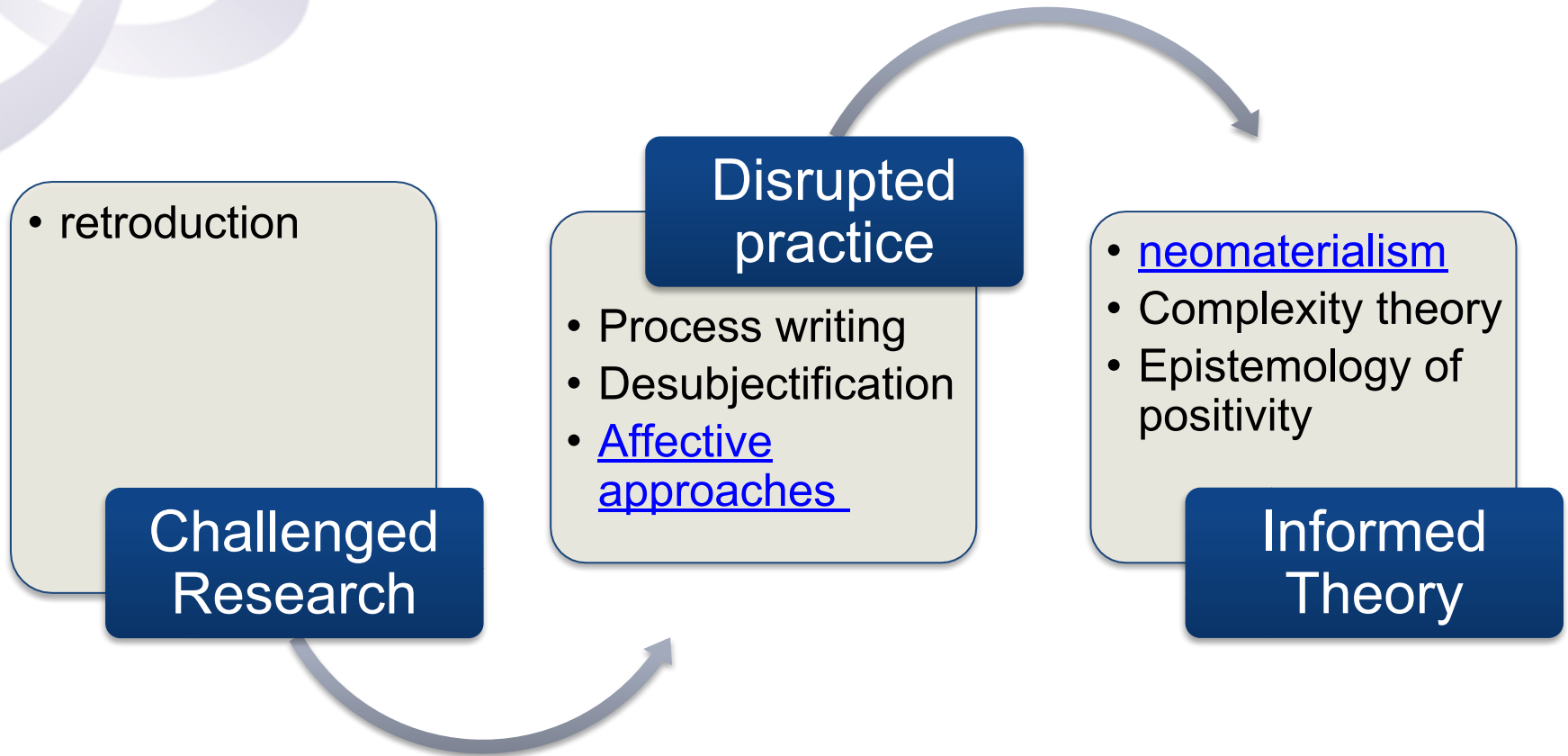
- “Treating matter as a **processual, heterogenous multiplicity**, neo-materialism places **creativity and excess** at the heart of being as heterogenous multiplicities within and **outwith experience.**”



Findings: Specifically

1. pedagogies of **recipes or “firefighting”** techniques cannot provide an appropriate level of knowledge.
 2. **Current technology** exacerbates these superposing needs. Quasi-interactive apps etc still represent a linear, two-dimensional medium for display, turn-taking and banking knowledge.
 3. a **high degree of pedagogical expertise** is required from the teacher of academic writing.
 4. Implications for on **recruitment and training**
1. Expertise is needed to counter the **obvious disparity in beliefs** about exactly what it is that students are learning to do, why, and how
 2. expertise goes beyond “process” knowledge (formalism, learning management, administration or facilitation) and must respect **content**.
 3. Teaching cannot **improvise** sessions of academic writing e.g peer work, loosely planned “discovery learning” or simply copying other texts will fail
 4. Extension of pedagogical theory into forms of realism, complexity theory etc (anti-correlationism)

Conclusions: what has retrodution done?



Publications (Retroduction)

- Beighton, C. (2021) *Theorising work-based learning: interview data &*

sources

- Danermark, B, Ekstrom, M, Jakobsen, L, and Karlsson, J C (1997)
Generalization, scientific inference and models for an explanatory social

