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This is a story about living-with-multimodal-data as a process of diffractive analysis (MacLure, 2013). By diffractive analysis, I follow Maggie Maclure's (2013, p. 660) understanding of the relationship between data-and-researcher, where researchers "are no longer autonomous agents, choosing and disposing [of data]. Rather, we are obliged to acknowledge that data have their ways of making themselves intelligible to us." This is a relationship where meaning emerges from an embedded context of data-with-researcher, yet how this process occurs within research is challenging. I discuss a process where data did not stop, stable and steady once it was collected, nor wait calmly for the analysis to be done. Rather, data-lived-with-me as a human-researcher; data travelled with me, and, together, the data and I danced to co-create something intelligible. Here, the challenges and possibilities of embracing a relationship of data-and-researcher, and how this sense-making analysis process has occurred, are explored, as is how this sense-making analysis process has occurred. The story calls for more research to be conducted about relational data analysis, owning the presence and influence of the humans involved and recognising the value of keeping curiosity visible during the analysis process.

The research explored here is a visual narrative study, examining the career stories curated with four early childhood professionals to offer an intimate view of how these professionals came into their roles. The multimodal data included a visual map drawn by a participant and was used as a basis for a reflective discussion about their life and career, prompting consideration of how they navigated factors shaping their professional transitions and how their life was affected by the work they do. Having collected the primary data for the research study, I initially felt a sense of pride and control that the data was there waiting for me, sitting neat and tidy until I was ready to dissect it in any way I chose. Yet, this visual narrative data was rooted in a poststructural and new materialist study (Smith 2019), meaning data was not viewed as inert and motionless but active within an emerging relationship-with-the-researcher. Despite embracing a research methodology that encourages challenging truths and familiarity (MacLure, 2013; Sakr and Osgood, 2019), in the analysis I was waiting to gain a sense of familiarity with the data. I thought the data was still and fixed; I thought I could submerge myself in the details and gain familiarity with its content before choosing where to begin with 'my' analysis. Yet I began to realise the data had not stopped, stabled or steadied. The data was embedded within my lived experiences. As I travelled, I took the data travelling with me; data weaved through my thoughts and daily experiences, creating the production of knowledge. Sometimes my mind wandered into the data and sometimes the data haunted me (Wilson, 2018),

appearing with a fright during the most mundane of tasks. It is through this context of living that embedded meanings emerged, which I interpret as MacLure's (2013) relationship of 'data-and-researcher.'

The idea of data becoming intelligible, rather than me making sense of inert data, is exemplified through extracts from Tony's visual narrative. Firstly, Tony's visual map (figure 1) wound around in a continuous and gradually tightening curve. Mathematicians call this shape a logarithmic spiral, or a self-similar spiral, and I felt it unflattened Tony's narrative, offering a sense of movement to his professional career trajectory. Whilst Tony discussed many transition points in his career—such as gaining a degree qualification, or moving workplaces to school and later higher education teaching—because of the spiral shape, there were no assumptions that these transitions were a linear process, or a linear progression (see also Leach, 2016). Alternatively, the spiral imagery could be interpreted as embracing a "humbling recognition" that there is always an unknown (Arndt et al., 2018, p. 6). It is this notion of continual movement that lived within my mind alongside Tony's comments about getting dressed and choosing his shoes. Here, Tony began describing how the shoes he wore were part of a network of forces, interweaving and re-dressing him for life and work (Taguchi, 2007; Osgood and Robinson, 2019; Pulsford, 2016).

"professionalism dictates I must look a certain way. ... I try to differentiate myself from me before. I don't even go to the supermarket in a pair of shorts in case I bump into someone. ... It's time I grew up. I am proud of what I do. This is reflected in what I wear now. I haven't bought a pair of trainers in 12 months; I love trainers. I walk around in shoes; my feet hurt constantly. But I prefer to look smart..." (Verbal data extract: Tony)

This visual narrative data created with Tony was living with me, unconsciously surfing my mind, and it connected in a meaningful way to my own moment of (literal) re-dressing. I do not think I was consciously considering the story of Tony at the time of getting dressed, but the data and my actions combined. This was a moment of analysis, where my relationship with the data and the living of my life all combined, creating rich knowledge production that I may otherwise not have recognised. I align with MacLure (2013) in that this was not data being treated as inert—analysis was not 'done to' data. The data lived with me, and it was through this process that 'meanings were produced' (Deleuze and Hurley, 1988; Pulsford, 2016; Osgood and Robinson, 2019). The data was with me, and I was with the data. Sometimes the data took a step forward, dominating my thoughts, and at other times data could take smaller steps, making its presence felt as we danced slowly together.

I accept that embracing analysis as a process in this way, where diffractive readings are encouraged, would lead to different interpretations for different researchers and readers. This analysis is specific to me; it creates a rich multiplicity of meaning and depicts my experience of using a data-and-researcher approach to analysis. This approach to living data may be a challenge in some research or for some researchers. It was not an easy process: data haunted me, a source of guilt when I was not considering it and a source of bewilderment when I was. Barad (2007) calls this the practice of knowing-in-being, or, for MacLure (2013), it is experimenting and seeing where it leads. Either way, I join the proposals for further research about relational data analysis, sharing how these experiences occur, and owning the influence of the humans involved, ultimately recognising the value of keeping curiosity visible during the research process.

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