

## **RECOUP III: Qualitative Data Writing workshop**

### **Health Research and Social Development Forum and University of Edinburgh**

**3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2016- 8<sup>th</sup> April, 2016**

#### **A Report**

##### **Introduction:**

Health Research and Social Development Forum (HERD) and the University of Edinburgh organized a 6 day practical workshop on writing papers from qualitative data. It was a residential workshop held from 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> April, 2016 at Khawa, Kavre, and was facilitated by Dr. Alice Street and Dr. Jamie Cross from University of Edinburgh.

The goal of the workshop was to produce a first draft of an article to submit for publication in a relevant journal. In doing so, the workshop also aimed to demystify the process of writing as insurmountable task, rather combine different approaches --individual writing, peer feedback, group discussions-- to make everyone feel that writing academic paper is a doable task. The workshop involved a combination of structured workshops and writing retreat sessions. The format was practical, participatory and interactive. The participants worked through their findings to develop an argument and structure their paper while engaging with the relevant literature. The process was broken down to specific sessions to help participants learn about the various aspects of paper-writing. A total of 17 participants from a number of research organisations from Kathmandu and Achham attended the workshop.

This is the third and final workshop in the series of qualitative research workshops<sup>1</sup> we have been conducting in the earlier years.

##### **Workshop Proceedings:**

The proceeding of the workshop is summarized in the table below for a quick glance. There are also detailed notes of the workshop as it happened.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.herd.org.np/resource/qualitative-research-workshops-recoup-workshops>

Topics	Methods	Issues/Discussions/Observation	Facilitators
<b>Day 1: 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2016</b>			
<b>Introduction/ Background to RECOUP Workshops</b>	Presenting the context of the RECOUP workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 3-series workshop designed within the Wellcome trust funded research study</li> <li>• Adapted from the Qualitative Research Skills Manual developed by Research Consortium on Educational Outcomes and Poverty (RECOUP)</li> <li>• RECOUP I focused on understanding qualitative research and developing proposal</li> <li>• RECOUP II focused on data management and analysis</li> </ul>	Rekha Khatri
<b>Introductions</b>	Participants introduced themselves and their research along with their expectations from the workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants working on various issues in health sector, climate change, earthquake, Dailt issues etc</li> <li>• Expectations mostly about being able to write a good paper</li> </ul>	Alice Street/Jamie Cross
<b>Findings and contributions</b>	<p>Participants asked to write key findings of their research</p> <p>Participants to work in pairs; tell each other about their research and findings; discuss potential contributions of the research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need other people to be interested in what we do</li> <li>• What kind of debates are we hoping to contribute?</li> <li>• Academic community; policy community; practice community</li> <li>• Identifying a field for an article important to expand and scale the impact of the project</li> </ul>	Alice Street
<b>Identifying a journal and audience</b>	Presentation and discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important to think of audience before writing</li> <li>• Different journals: broad</li> </ul>	Alice Street

		<p>journals; regional journals; topic specific journals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing journals: scope of journals; requirements; journal conversations</li> </ul>	
<b>Structure of Article</b>	Participants divided into two groups and asked to look through how the two pre-circulated articles are structured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two articles structured differently</li> </ul>	Alice Street
<b>How do we write?</b>	Group discussion and presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types of writing we have done</li> <li>• Integration of literature</li> <li>• No templates to writing but there are good practices</li> <li>• Hour glass structure:</li> <li>• Bringing out what is unique to our research; what is being contributed to the existing body of literature</li> <li>• People have different ways of writing; making writing part of everyday work is important</li> <li>• Writing in small intensive bursts</li> </ul>	Jamie Cross
<b>Day 2: 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2016</b>			
<b>From evidence to argument</b>	Participants make a spidergram of themes from their study AS showed her piece of incomplete writing as an example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing process in not linear</li> <li>• As we write, there could be shifts in what we are thinking about sections; sometimes there may not be enough evidence or the engagement with literature might give other ideas</li> </ul>	Alice Street
<b>Structured writing</b>	Participants work on their thematic heading by pulling in		Alice Street

	data from their interviews, observations etc		
<b>Key words</b>	Group work: looking through pre-circulated articles; coming up with keywords from their studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinking about contribution of article to the field</li> <li>• Keywords being used for: fields; global conventions/documents; concepts; metatags for themes; reflects title; country focus</li> </ul>	Jamie Cross
<b>Incorporating the literature</b>	Group work: looking through pre-circulated articles to see how the literature has been incorporated and for what purpose Presentation and discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature to set a context; drawing linkages; for comparisons; for justifications; for supporting the argument; locating the argument in the wider literature</li> </ul>	Jamie Cross
<b>Literature search</b>	Discussion Group Work [searching through google scholar; pubmed; science direct]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Searching using keywords; searching existing databases; through online repositories; setting parameters of search; list of references of the article</li> <li>• Use combination of keywords; put phrases in inverted commas</li> <li>• Advanced search options in google scholar</li> <li>• Set up a Mendeley group</li> </ul>	Jamie Cross
<b>Day 3: 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2016</b>			
<b>Literature review: structured writing</b>  <i>Simultaneous one to one sessions</i>	Discussion Participants were asked to write about their literature review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples of how literature is organized in different papers</li> <li>• Combining and synthesizing different kind of literature</li> </ul>	Jamie Cross
<b>How are we reading?</b>	Discussion and reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading differently; reading is also not a linear process</li> <li>• Reading twice; figuring out</li> </ul>	Alice Street

		<p>argument of the paper; picking up points on what is relatable for our paper</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making comments in the margins, underlining important lines, putting comment box</li> <li>• Looking through reference list to figure out more articles to read</li> <li>• Important to think of our paper when we read other articles to know where the information might fit</li> </ul>	
<b>Peer feedback on papers</b>	Working in pairs: Sharing the skeleton of our article and providing feedback to each other		Alice Street
<b>Day 4: 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2016</b>			
<b>Structured Writing</b>	Participants work on their papers; share plan with their partners and do the writing	.	Jamie Cross
<b>Structured Writing</b>	Participants work on one section of their article.		Alice Street
<b>Group Feedback</b>	Working in group of four; reading one another's section that they worked earlier and providing feedback collectively		Alice Street
<b>Structured Writing</b>	Participants incorporate feedback from group sessions in their writing		Alice Street
<b>Structured Writing</b>	Participants make writing plan for the next day (which sections will they work on)		

**Day 5: 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2016**

<b>Structured Writing</b>	Participants work on one section of the article that they are having trouble with.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading articles and making notes and incorporating them to the paper</li> </ul>	Alice Street/ Jamie Cross
<b>Peer feedback</b>	Participants read each other's papers in pair and give feedback Everybody also make points for themselves on their paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking at if the paper is clear; well-structured; engages with wider literature; has clear arguments; has clear findings; meets scholarly standard</li> </ul>	Jamie Cross
<b>Group sharing</b>	Participants share what they will have to improve on their paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging more with literature</li> <li>• Need re-reading of data again</li> <li>• Work needed on background/ methodology;</li> <li>• Work on discussion section</li> <li>• Clarify rationale;</li> <li>• conceptual clarity and operational definitions;</li> <li>• Revise literature search</li> <li>• Revise focus of paper</li> </ul>	Jamie Cross/Alice Street
<b>Reflections on learning</b>	Participants shared what they have learnt so far in the workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling confident with discussion</li> <li>• Normalized writing process and it is doable</li> <li>• Hour glass structure</li> <li>• Accepting that writing process in not linear</li> <li>• Clarifying focus</li> <li>• Keywords and usages</li> <li>• There are many ways to write.</li> <li>• The cycle of reading and writing</li> <li>• Engaging more with literature</li> <li>• Writing on a regular basis</li> <li>• Non-judgmental learning environment</li> <li>• Importance of peer review</li> </ul>	Jamie Cross/Alice Street

**Day 6: 8<sup>th</sup> April, 2016 (half day)**

<b>Structured Writing</b>	Participants share what they are going to write in pairs and do the writing		Alice Street
<b>Working on title</b>	Participants brainstorm on their title, share it with their partners and provide feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important to state the focus of the paper</li> <li>• There could be main heading to indicate broader area and sub heading for specific focus and argument of the paper</li> <li>• Main idea in the topic itself</li> </ul>	Alice Street
<b>Referencing</b>	Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important to know the guide for authors</li> <li>• Read through reference list to check if there are any errors</li> <li>• The software like Mendeley has automatic formatting options to change the citation style</li> </ul>	Jamie Cross/ Alice Street
<b>Authorship</b>	Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good practices are there even though there are no definite standards</li> <li>• How to handle authorship disputes: a guide for new researchers</li> <li>• If everybody has contributed equally, then alphabetical order</li> <li>• Or based on the contribution of the article</li> <li>• Negotiating authorship can sometimes be tricky</li> </ul>	Jamie Cross/ Alice Street
<b>Rights and acknowledgement</b>	Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important to acknowledge who funds, who supports; use of datasets, archives or other</li> </ul>	Jamie Cross/ Alice Street

		<p>resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important to acknowledge institutions where one was based during the study</li> <li>• Data ownership lies with the PI</li> </ul>	
<b>Journals and Submission</b>	Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signing up to a journal, creating an account and uploading papers</li> <li>• Expect to hear from editors; they check if the papers meet the standards</li> <li>• Paper goes for peer review</li> <li>• Need to explain in response papers about the changes made in the manuscript</li> <li>• Don't have to agree on everything said by the reviewers but important to explain why you stand your ground</li> </ul>	Jamie Cross/ Alice Street
<b>Careers and opportunities</b>	Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several PhD programmes</li> <li>• PhD is difficult; have to be sure of doing it</li> <li>• Different countries have different systems</li> <li>• Identifying a supervisor is very important</li> <li>• Have to look for funding; funding application requires details about your projects</li> <li>• PhD is doctoral training; doesn't have to be experience based</li> </ul>	Jamie Cross/ Alice Street
<b>Why do we write?</b>	Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It can be satisfying</li> <li>• Making difference; intrinsic motivation</li> <li>• The continuum of reading and writing</li> </ul>	Jamie Cross/ Alice Street



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing for visibility</li> <li>• The idea of imagined communities</li> <li>• It is difficult but have to hold to that motivation</li> </ul>	
<b>Moving ahead</b>	Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group formed after RECOUP I but couldn't quite gain the momentum</li> <li>• Requires lot of effort to practice what we imbibed from this workshop</li> <li>• Individual and institutional networks and collaboration</li> <li>• Peer support mechanism is a great resource</li> </ul>	Sushil Baral