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Conference or Workshop Item

Title: Research is not so black and white: exploring how the emotional self colours the research process

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http://nectar.northampton.ac.uk/8200/
Qualitative research, unlike quantitative research, acknowledges the reflexive role of the researcher. More recently, focus has been paid to reflecting on emotions (i.e. Emotional Reflexivity (ER)) within the research process.

However, the use of this ‘emotional’ reflection in research has been positioned differently; with some arguing these reflections are for the purpose of ‘controlling for’ or, withdrawing the researchers’ influence from the ‘researched space’, preventing the researcher tainting the researched. This practice in turn prevents the researcher from becoming ‘over involved’. And so, for some, ER is for the purpose of obtaining access to this ‘pure’ experience, and for self protection.

Similar to Ian Burkitt, I argue that I ‘colour’ my research; I am present and within this ‘researched space’. Therefore, I have dedicated a whole chapter of my PhD to my ‘emotional journey’, treating my reflections as data, and as an extra layer of experience I can draw upon.

My PhD is phenomenologically exploring how Fire Fighters make sense of emotion and feeling in their work. Using blog entries, field notes and written reflections, I am documenting my felt research journey to compliment that of my interviewees.