

# Qualitative Research Methods

**Inês Faria**

07/04/2026, 18:00-19:30

**FRANCESINHAS 2, Room 2.03**

# Research Methods and Masters Project

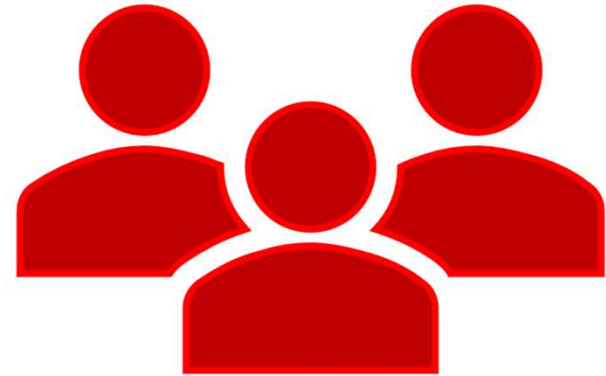
## *Qualitative Research Methods*

### **Objectives:**

- **Learn about Ethnography;**
- **Learn about the Semi-Directive Interview;**
- **Learn about Focus Groups;**
- **Experiment Semi-directed interviewing and journey mapping;**
- **Explore Ethical issues in the collection of qualitative primary data.**

## What we will cover:

- **Ethnography**
  - Characteristics
  - Process
  - Positionality (ethics)
  - Observe and register: writing and image
  - Field notes and diary
- **Semi-Directive Interview**
  - How to do it
  - Experiment
- **Focus Groups**
  - When and how to do it
- **Journey Mapping**

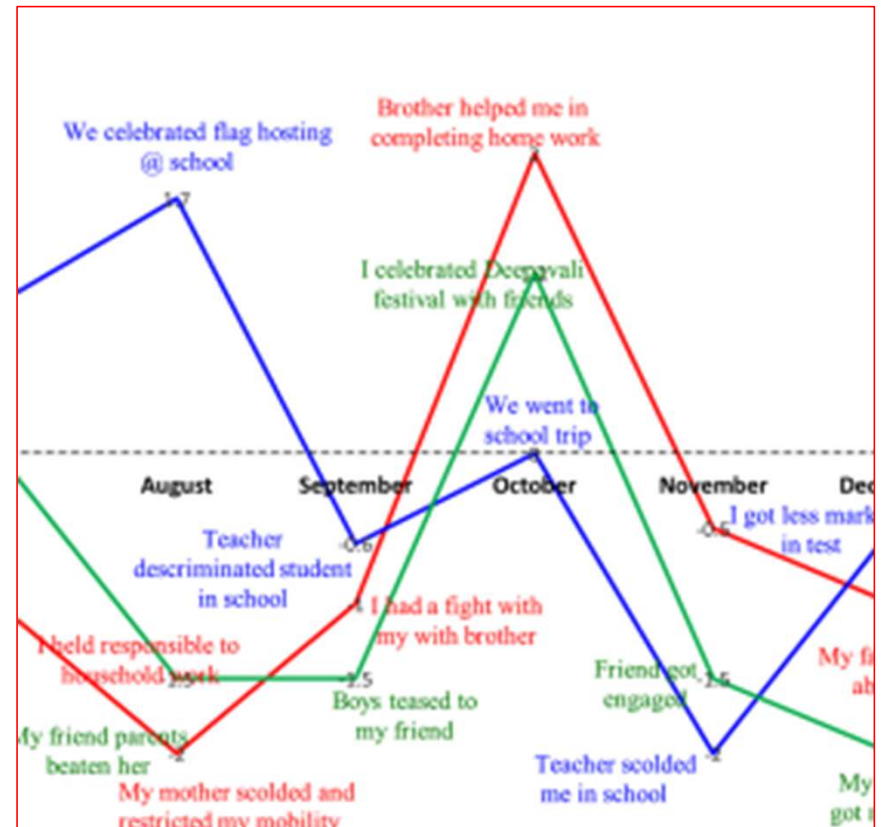


### **Qualitative Methods in Innovation Research:**

- **Nuanced approaches to problems;**
- **More depth in understanding what people think/why;**
- **Human focused design;**
- **Engage participants in the research;**
- **More ethically sound proposals adequate to each public/interlocutors/situation**

### Ethnography ([Mason 2002](#))

from observation to  
semi-structured Interview



[Ramanaik et al. 2018](#)

## Characteristics

- **How to things function in a particular context?**
- **How does this context relate to the wider socio-cultural, political and economic configuration where it exists?**

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### Characteristics

Data is rich, nuanced, sheds light into the complex multidimensional configurations of researched contexts

Emphasis on everyday life and social processes

Sensitive to processes of change, particularities, meaning, subjectivity and ambiguity...

Can be articulated with quantitative methods

Demands reflexivity and awareness of positionality – researcher has effects in study terrains

Deals with specific questions in a micro context

Ideally, it takes time.

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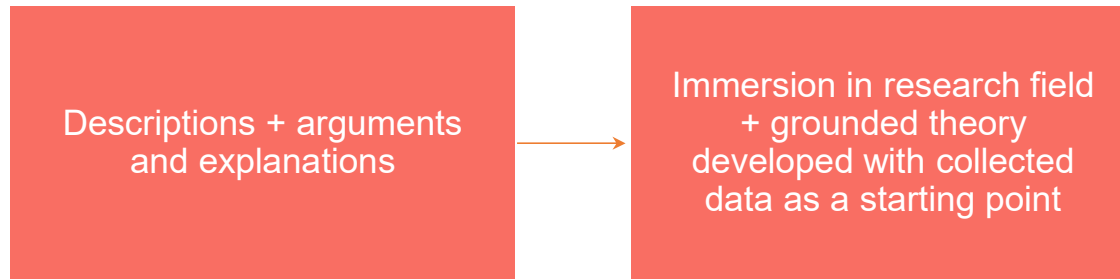
### Process

Descriptions + arguments  
and explanations

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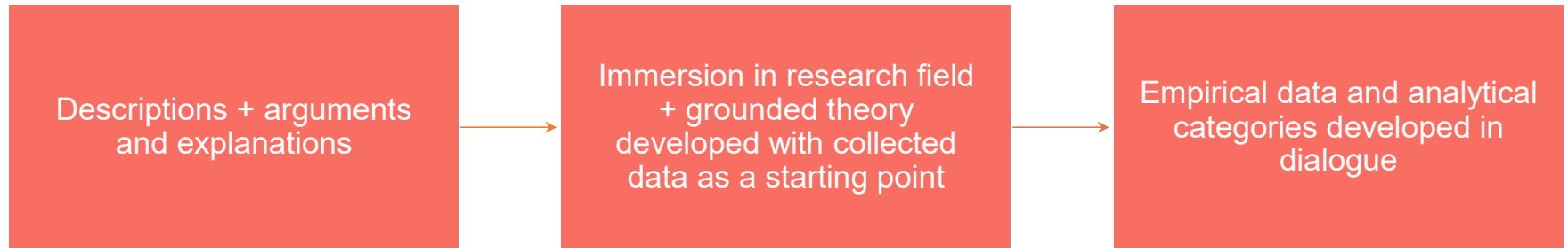
### Process



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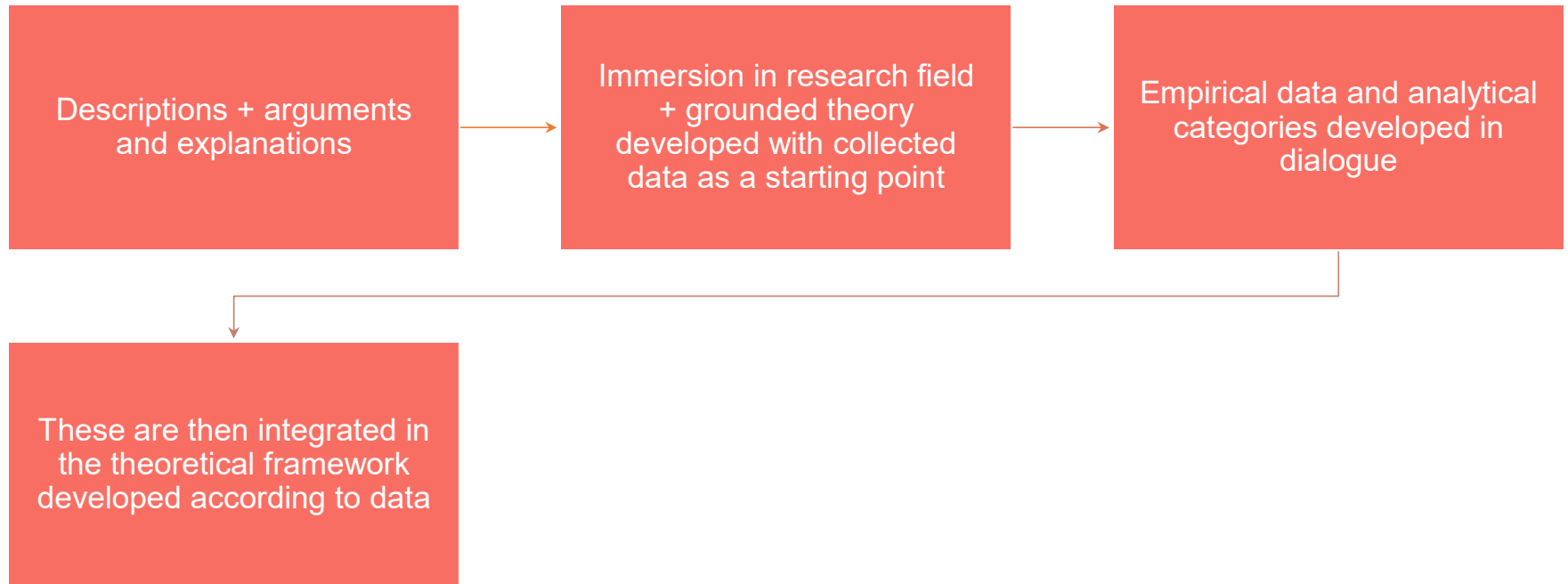
### Process



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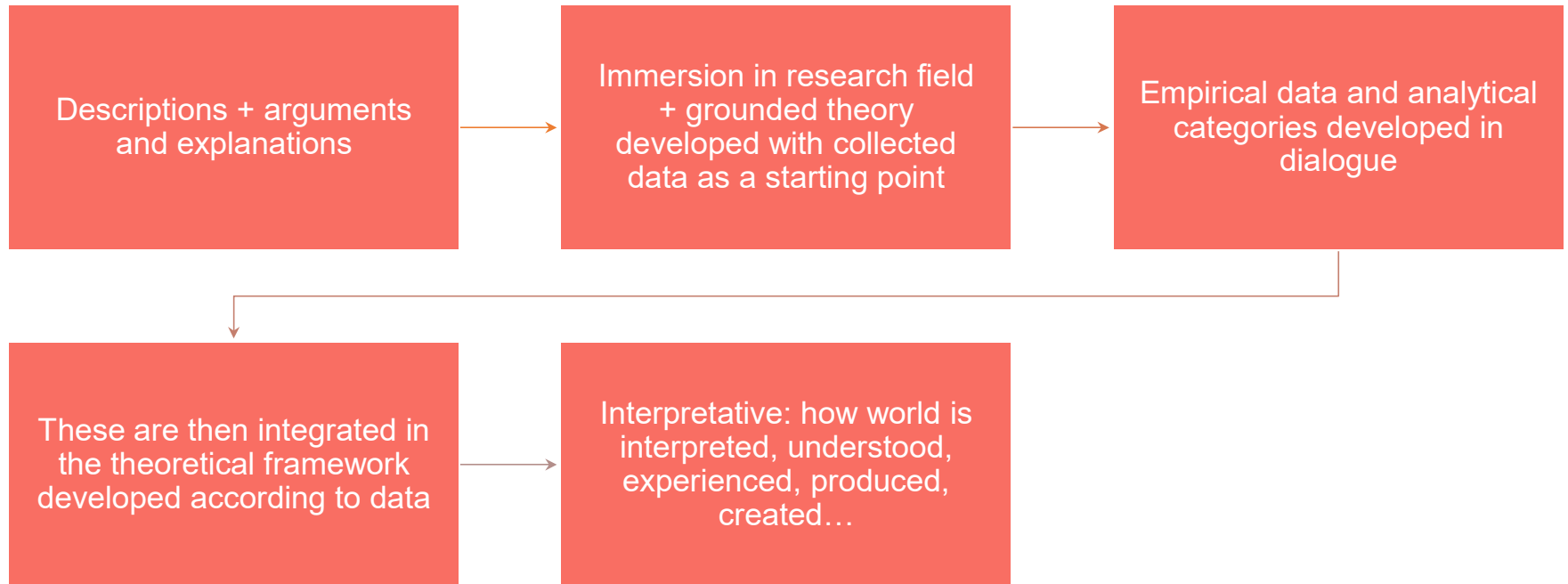
### Process



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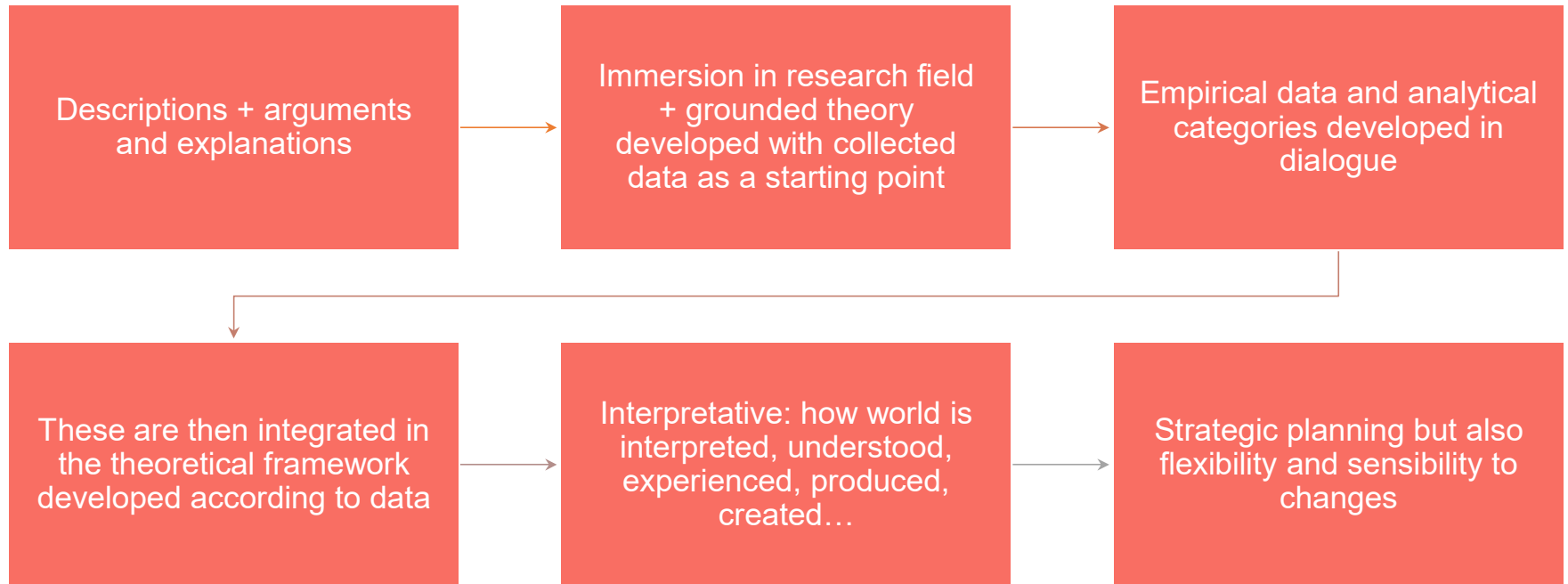
### Process



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### Process



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**Empirical research relationships are not easy to develop**

## **Positionality**

Depend on social life mundane norms and attitudes: i.e. niceness, being kind approaching potential research interlocutors, etc.

These relations are not always easy to develop especially if interlocutors are difficult to empathize with.

Constant negotiation. Creating trust relationships that are reciprocal and respectful are central pieces of qualitative research – they are part of the data collection process.

Additionally: having all senses on in observation and practicing active listening in interviews.

Reflexivity: self-awareness and reflection from the part of the researcher on position in the field and relationship with research interlocutors

## Observe and register

- **writing**

### Observe

- What do I see? What is this place?
- Counting and noticing: space, people, groups, actions, behaviors,
- But also the unexpected.....
- Sensory data: sounds, smells,...

### Register

- Take notes and write field diary
- Be clear and thorough: describe site and what goes on there to someone that has never been there...

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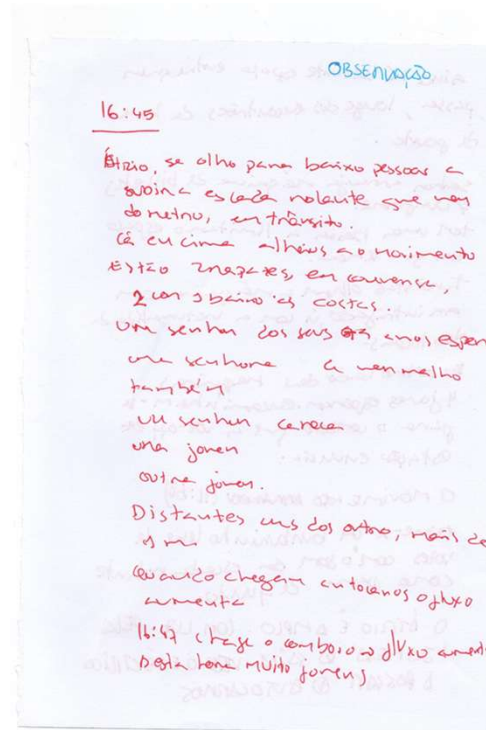
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**Observe and register . Other kinds of recording (in addition)**



### Field diary

- Narrative and thorough;
- Systematized:  
**Who? What? When? Where? Why?;**
- Detailed description that the researcher will interpret in the analysis process, write it close to the observation day.
- Need to create categories for analysis, this process – in dialogue with the data – should start now



28 de Fevereiro de 2019

Observação: Interface de transportes do Cais do Sodré  
16:45 – 17:10



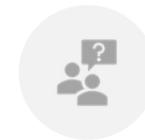
São 16:45, encosto-me ao muro em forma de "U" que interrompe o átrio do interface de transportes do Cais do Sodré, conheço bem este local, por onde já passei inúmeras vezes em trânsito para vários lugares. Hoje olho para ele de uma forma diferente, porque paro e porque presto atenção consciente a este espaço, a quem por aqui passa, como passa e quem sabe porque passa. Passam e param pessoas de várias origens, tipos, idades, géneros, que se cruzam brevemente neste espaço enquanto fluem para outros lugares.  
Do meu lado esquerdo, a uma distância de alguns metros, tenho as portas electrónicas por onde transitam, depois de validarem os bilhetes, os passageiros que entram e saem dos comboios que chegam. Se olhar em frente vejo a entrada para a estação que dá para a Avenida 24 de Julho (avenida). A entrada consiste numa abertura rectangular ampla, encaimada por um placard anunciando o novo álbum do Branko. Para mim funciona como uma janela para a avenida, de onde posso ver autocarros, eléctricos, carros e múltiplas pessoas a passar. Logo em frente da saída dos passageiros dos comboios estão 6 máquinas de vender bilhetes, situadas paralelamente a uma barraca de venda de enchidos que se encontra do lado esquerdo da entrada da estação (da minha perspectiva). Como que sai, na entrada do edifício do interface, há dois multibanco. A estação tem luz e tetos altos, de onde pendem candeleros industriais de grande dimensão. Estão agarrados a uma estrutura de metal composta por várias vigas. Há um relógio pendurado na parte desta estrutura que encima e saída da plataforma dos comboios e vários ecrãs onde estão assinaladas as próximas partidas.

## Semi-structured/directed Interviews

**Coghlan, and Brydon-Miller 2014;  
Bryman 2012**



A conversation...with preparation – ideally it should be recorded



Script: open questions for reflection: more than a questionnaire, a series of topics to cover in conversation



Narrative, fluid...



Structure can be organized by topics, biographically, chronologically,...



You should plan the interview for each specific interviewee

## Focus-groups

**Coghlan, and Brydon-Miller 2014;  
Bryman 2012**



Not a collective interview, the researcher facilitates a discussion about a topic



Open questions for reflection/provocations: pay attention to participants and stir the conversation when needed



Dynamic, not more than 10 people, can become chaotic



Should have structure but very flexible...



Information in context, different from interviews...group/debate/metadata beyond the content

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## ACTIVITY

### PART 1

**WHO:** Groups of 2

**WHAT:** Interview you colleague.

**Subject:** your day yesterday.

**HOW:** prepare script **5**. Interview **5**. Organize notes **5**. Change places.

**HOW LONG:** 30 Minutes

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## ACTIVITY

### PART 2

**WHO:** Groups of 2

**WHAT:** Make a timeline of your colleague's day:

- Register wake up time, eating, interactions, movement, physical activity, work, leisure
- Register main events
- Register feelings – happiest moment, most boring moment, highs and lows.

**HOW:** based on the notes ask for the info above and draw a day journey map **5**. Change places. Discussion **10**.

**HOW LONG:** 20 Minutes

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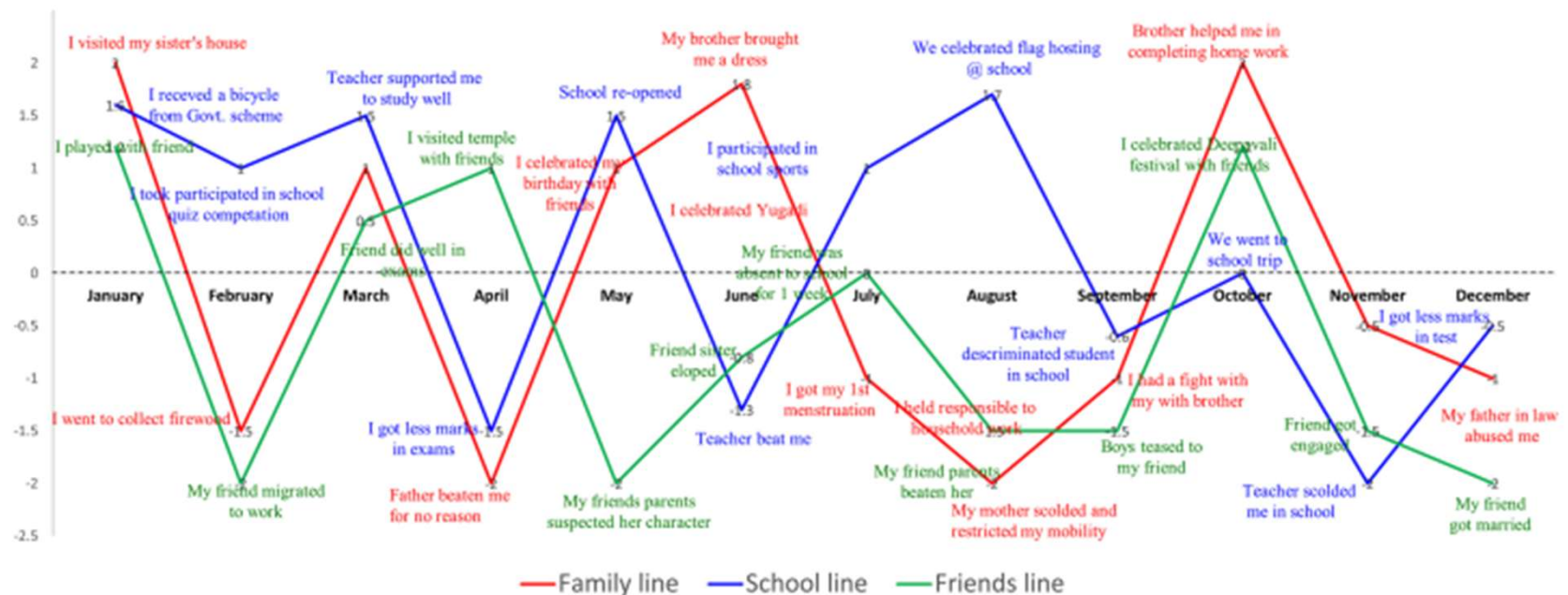
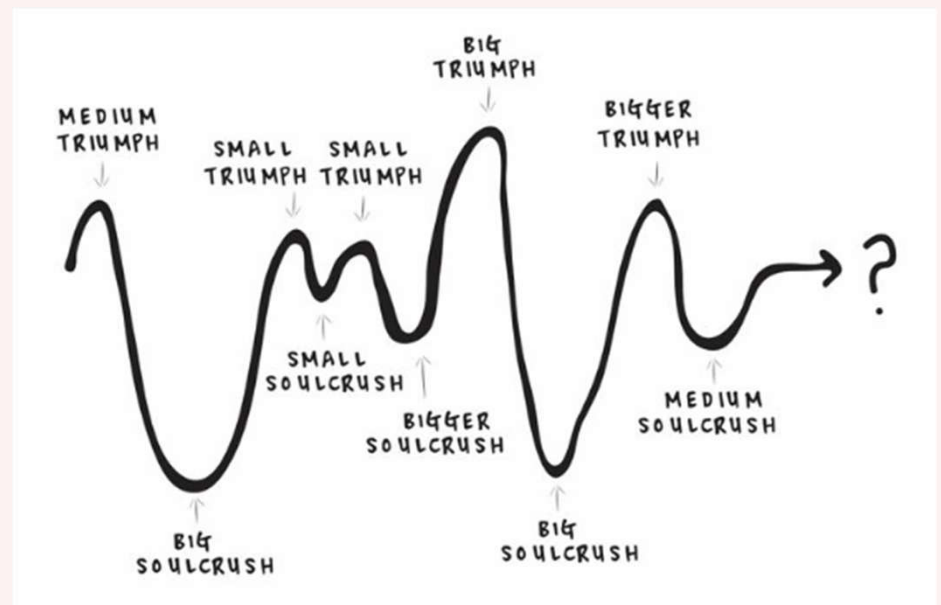
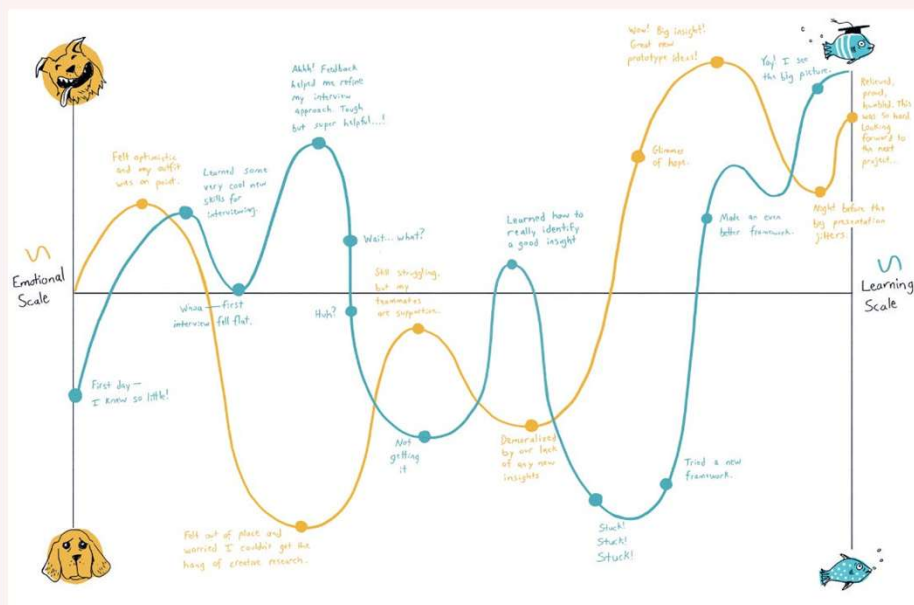


Fig 1. A sample lifeline chart as part of the study.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0202470.g001>

Ramanaik et al. 2018

# LOOKS LIKE THIS:



Greenberg 2021 + [here](#)

[Here](#)

## ACTIVITY

### DISCUSSION

**You did a Journey Map about each other's days as part of a semi-directive interview, what did you think?**

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### Ethics

Sources:

[Mason 2002](#)

[Cohglan and Brydon-Miller 2014](#)

Ethical Principle	Ethnography	Focus Groups	Interviews
<b>Informed Consent</b>	<b>Clear communication</b> obtaining verbal and/or written consent	Obtaining informed consent from all participants before the focus group begins. <b>Participants should understand the purpose, procedures, and potential risks.</b>	<b>Full information</b> about the research/project, <b>knowing their rights.</b>
<b>Confidentiality</b>	Ensuring the <b>anonymity and confidentiality</b> of participants, <b>protecting their identities</b> and personal information in reporting and dissemination.	Anonymity outside groups, <b>data storage protocol</b> , personal information shared during the discussion <b>remains confidential within the group.</b>	<b>Data storage protocol and anonymizing responses</b> during analysis and reporting.
<b>Respect for Participants</b>	<b>Respecting the cultural norms and values of the community</b> under study, involving participants as <b>collaborators in the research process.</b>	<b>Respecting</b> participants' opinions and viewpoints during discussions, fostering an atmosphere where <b>all voices are heard and valued.</b>	<b>Time, empathy, active listening</b>
<b>Beneficence</b>	Ensuring that the <b>research benefits both the participants and the community</b> , striving to minimize harm and maximize positive outcomes.	Designing focus group discussions that <b>are meaningful and engaging for participants</b> , offering opportunities <b>for self-reflection.</b>	<b>Sensitive to participants' well-being</b> , minimizing discomfort or distress during the interview process.
<b>Transparency</b>	Being transparent about the research objectives, methods - <b>honest and accurate information about the study.</b>	Being transparent about the <b>purpose and structure of the focus group</b> , address any conflicts of interest.	Maintaining transparency in the interview process, <b>ensuring participants understand how their data will be used.</b>
<b>Accountability</b>	Taking <b>responsibility for the ethical conduct of the research</b> , <b>addressing any ethical concerns</b> or conflicts that arise during the study.	Ensuring that the focus group process is conducted ethically and professionally, <b>addressing any participant concerns or conflicts that arise during the discussion.</b>	Being <b>accountable for the ethical conduct of the interviews</b> , addressing any ethical dilemmas or concerns that arise during the research process. <b>Share interview script and transcript</b> is an option.

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### Databases and search services available at ISEG (most of them...)

Database	Coverage	Subjects	Best For
Academic Search Ultimate	Multidisciplinary, broad coverage	Humanities, social sciences, STEM	General academic research
b-on	Multidisciplinary, Portuguese focus	Various, strong in health & social sciences	Portuguese academia, research institutions
Business Source Ultimate	Business, management, and economics	Business, finance, marketing, accounting	Business and economic research
Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)	Open-access, multidisciplinary	All disciplines	Open-access research
EconLit	Economics and related fields	Economic theory, macro/micro, finance	Economic and financial research
Emerald Insight	Business, management, social sciences	Management, education, health, engineering	Business, management, and social sciences
Clarivate (Web of Science)	Multidisciplinary, citation index	Sciences, social sciences, humanities	High-impact research tracking
JSTOR	Humanities, social sciences, arts	History, literature, political science	Historical and theoretical research
ProQuest	Multidisciplinary	Social sciences, business, health	Comprehensive literature search
OKR (World Bank)	Development and policy research	Economics, governance, social issues	Development and policy research
SAGE	Social sciences, humanities	Psychology, sociology, education	Qualitative research, social sciences
Scopus	Multidisciplinary, citation index	Sciences, technology, medicine	Broad academic research, citation tracking
EBSCO	Aggregator of multiple databases	Various, depending on collection	Access to various academic databases
Web of Science	Multidisciplinary, citation index	Sciences, social sciences, humanities	High-impact research tracking, citation analysis

### References:

- **Bryman, A. (2012). Social Research Methods. New York: Oxford University Press.**
- **Corbin, J and Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded Theory Research: procedures, canons and evaluative criteria. In Qualitative Sociology 13(1). 3-21.**
- **O'Reilley, K. (2004). Ethnographic Methods. London (UK): Routledge.**
- **Coghlan, D. and Brydon-Miller, M. (2014). Sage Encyclopedia of Action Research. London (UK): Sage.**
- **Mason, D. (2002). Qualitative Researching. London: Sage.**