**Interview questions with answers**

**Code table**

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| **Code** | **Meaning** |
| **Numbers against the margin** | Refer to the question numbers according to questionnaire |
| **P1** | Participant 1 |
| **P2** | Participant 1 |
| **P3** | Participant 1 |
| **P4** | Participant 1 |

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| 1. | How did you decide on the topic for your research project? |
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| 2. | Were you helped in any way in your master’s studies? Please explain. |
| P1 | Yeah, refer in general to the general challenges emotionally and cognitive challenges as well as planning, organization, just general academic challenges, planning organization, as well as logical rationalization.  writing with insight  I look at my challenges that experience in terms of word pronunciation, sentence construction  She helped me a lot in terms of the why it needs to be written. So I think her support was quite influential.  she assisted me a lot with language comprehension and also she assisted me with organizing my content so it can be acceptable as dissertation.  A lot of reading a lot of speaking to other people, to other researchers internationally as well and also really a lot of reading the methodology part of other students’ studies. |
| P2 | Yeah, there was a lot of support. The first one would be my supervisor. She always gave me the full support.  You know when you study, she was very critical in terms of whatever. When you’d use a manner of writing, she was best teacher in terms of being critical to you as a student.  But at the same time, when she marks the piece of work that I’ve written, later on we would have a meeting where during those meetings you would look at the comments and you would feel like what you have done is nothing based on the comments she’d written.  Even sometimes when you look at them or when you are at home, you look at those comments, and it is like this is the end of the road. I’m no longer going to… |
| P3 | Help through the cohort sessions. So actually I had no idea what the product should look like.  Now I can send recordings of proposals to my student. I can listen to all the other proposal recordings not necessarily in his field, but how's it proposes?  my Masters was alone and I felt like I'm lost.  So now it's it's more structured and there's this very system and support in place. And they give you, I think, three years for M then it must be done. If not, you need like a motivation was going on. |
| P4 | I think I was helped. Starting off with my family, they played a massive role in terms of igniting that spark for me to want to study further while teaching.   My supervisor - traditionally they help in terms of writing and topic construction. I had a topic and through discussions with the supervisor it starts to narrow down into a foundational topic that you can actually use to create your Masters study.  Then, my co-supervisor. Sometimes when you meet with your supervisor, you both get so caught up in discussions about what to add or remove that you do not remember that there is a focus you need to zoom in on. So, definitely my co-supervisor helped in this regard. |
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| 3. | Did you and your supervisor have different opinions about the way in which you organised and wrote your dissertation? Please explain. |
| P1 | *(supervisor 1)*Yes, and I think that is why my supervisor Prof Wassermann was totally different because he's allowed me now to make use of my personal ideas. He told me Emile, this is your study. You need to come up with the ideas. I will just help you to make it better. That was his opinion.  *(Supervisor 2)*Also a lot of support in terms of the academic structure but what I also found which was quite challenging. My supervisor didn't have a lot of knowledge of my specific field. So I would say basically like I was the teacher basically, and so we tended to have lots of discussions with regards to if it was relevant.  So I think in terms of that there was a couple of times where we discussed and we agreed upon the content I wrote and eventually we debated about it and she said OK, now we will go through with it.  But I'm in terms of general structure. If I wanted to do a figure of which explains my development, I figure she would basically change it because of the experience of mentoring somebody a couple of students previously back a couple of years ago. |
| P2 | Yes, you know that you would go into the field to collect data and then figure out the format or the structure of this particular chapter. And then by that time I thought that I did my best using the tables or whatever. Then, when it was presented, she just looked at everything and said this is not how I want it to be done. By that time, I took a few weeks and then I thought that I’ve have nailed it by the way I have structured it.  Yeah, you just present it and whatever and then with the papers that I did, you know, I couldn't get it in. And I needed to redo it from scratch. |
| P3 | Yeah, it did. It did change. I was more interested in the transition challenges and he was more interested in writing about the systems in place.  We had difficulties there, but at the end I made it clear I think I want to write out of the athletes’ mouth and my experience also.  *(Wrt to language help from S)*  I remember I wrote it in for example, in what you call it first, it’s almost like me telling the narrative, so I used the I the whole time. So at the end it was approved and my critical readers nailed me on it. They said I should be writing it in third person. It's like, yeah, the research or referring to myself as a researcher or the author. So I I got penalized in that so that's one of the challenges I picked up. |
| P4 | The Honours degree prepares you to be a researcher, but when you get to Masters, you feel like you know almost nothing. So, any information or bits of knowledge that I could squeeze out of my supervisors, I did so very obediently.  I found my voice in terms of my standpoint in my Masters throughout that journey, when I became more confident in myself as a researcher. I would write up ideas and sections and it would make sense to me, but my supervisor would have a totally different thought on it. I would take on her idea rather than voice my opinion, because I trusted her knowledge more than mine. It was definitely different, but I don't think I was ready to take it on and say, “I'm confident about this, I know this.”  I certainly did highlight my view. If she did not follow the communication of my idea, I would go through it again and say, “But this is what I actually mean. And how do you feel if I did this?”.  So, it was more of a questioning of how she was going to receive that. And if she gave me the go-ahead and said, “Wow, I didn't think of it this way”, then yes, I went that way.  But much of the time, they would say that the markers would not like that standpoint, and I would then follow their lead. So, yes, in that sense, I think I was more obedient and more willing to accept their advice. |
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| **4.** | **Did your supervisor encourage you to express yourself and be original in your dissertation? Please explain.** |
| P1 | I think this is where Prof Wassermann is totally different, because he said Emile this is your study. You need to if you want this PhD, you basically need to contribute to the field and you need to write, but you need to see the gap in the field and you need to write about it. I would just come in to support you and I will give you advice, but at the end it is your study. |
| P2 | She would want you to be original. You must be yourself when you write so that she can read something different from other students. That's what education and academic writing is all about.  She did not want anyone to copy whatever other scholars had written about or anything that you have read. She wanted your voice presented in a way that was original in whatever you are writing. |
| P3 | Definitely yes and to be myself and also the type of language I used. Of course you can also hear I'm English Second Language and he also encouraged me not to try and tell the story. So he did encourage me to keep it as original as possible.  *Did he give you ideas on how to be original?*  Not really, no. |
| P4 | I remember hearing, “We need to hear your voice more.” I think I would take other authors' ideas and references so often that I would lack my own standpoint in the argument that I was proposing. So, I definitely heard, “I need to hear your voice. I lack hearing your voice.” And that is what stuck with me a lot of the time. That is the feedback that comes to mind when you ask that question. I think I struggled to find my voice and found it hard to integrate it into my arguments throughout my dissertation journey. |
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| 5a | What are the qualities of a good dissertation?  P3 If it's original and also if it's something new and fresh.  P4 If a person outside of your faculty or department, an ordinary person who is not an academic can understand your work, that is the basis of research. If we fail to bring that aspect into our purpose of research, then we fail at research. One of the main things I have learned throughout my research journey is that you can make it sound as intelligent and as knowledgeable and use all these theoretical terms, but if someone who is not an academic cannot understand your work, it has minimal value.  P1 A good dissertation basically refers to the uniqueness it brings to the field  P2 firstly, the layout of your master’s dissertation - how you have presented it and the language you use. Plagiarism, research, |
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| 5b | From where did you get these ideas? |
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| 6. | Is English your mother tongue? If not, how long have you been using it as an academic language? |
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| 7a | Do you feel that you would have been more confident in expressing yourself if you had written your dissertation in your mother-tongue? Why do you say so?  Were you confident in the type of English you used for writing your dissertation? Explain. |
| P1 | I don't think so. You know why it is because of the field that we are working in.  The reason why I chose English is because I wanted to contribute to the field as much. And remember, also, I think you look at Afrikaans language is also limited to a number of people living in our country instead.  So for me in terms of my personal development as somebody wants to become a specialist and also someone who wanted to contribute to the literature in my own unique way, it was the choice  So I don't think it would make a difference because of the type of study that I had number one and also because of the more personal experiences that I had. |
| P2 | I would have written, my dissertation much better in my mother tongue than in English because I know the words  My mother tongue comes naturally to me and I would have even used better words to express whatever I wanted to say if I were using my mother tongue, rather than any other language or English which is a second language.  with my own language, I would be much better expressing myself in writing because of my rich vocabulary. |
| P3 | Definitely. But then again they fit in. But if I can turn it back I would rather go to the English classes in Bloemfontein. So if I can turn back, it would help me a lot. Now then, to learn English way easier.  So what I did was if I had an idea for my Masters. You know, sometimes at night at 3:00 AM you wake up and then you've got idea you know I wrote it normally in Afrikaans and then I would maybe send it to Evans. She will translate it but she will give me like guidance in the English language for your study.  So to write in your mother tongue it will be essentially been more beneficial.  Yeah, so often after a few times of editing. I think that this is my idea, but if I've done it in Afrikaans it will, look different. I don't think so no. |
| P4 | Mother English speaker |
| 7b | Please give examples of the difficulties you may have experienced. |
| P1 | I had challenges in writing in English.  Yes, sentence construction, word pronunciation. Also the changing of writing from Afrikaans to English  But in terms of academic writing, dissertation writing, it was such a tremendous challenge which I needed assistance with that.  The fluency of my sentences was a tremendous challenge. I needed someone to read through it and to assist me with writing and general sentences. It was a process. |
| P2 | One of the difficulties that I encountered when writing my dissertation in English is the fact that sometimes you lack the necessary vocabulary to express yourself. You may have in mind what you want to write and how to express it, only to find that you're thinking in your mother tongue and you’re writing in English – and there is an incongruence. You end up with a different meaning. That is the most difficult part.  The other thing is that academic writing is not very easy. You learn it over a period of time. What makes it difficult is that all the articles you need to consult or use are written in English and they are written by different authors from different countries.  You also find that the level of language being used is not so easy to understand. But if they were written in your mother tongue it would be much easier to understand and comprehend. |
| P3 | It takes way longer. So ten of my 12 interviews were in Afrikaans and another two in English. So the coding took way longer to transcribe in Afrikaans and then to translate it and to make sense of it. Of course, it was time consuming and also it’s just about your confidence. I was writing and the language editing is coming back the whole time with just red marks and also it breaks your confidence if you get this feedback from a reader that is fluent. Why am I doing this? So confidence- wise it's challenging. |
| P4 | *Although English speaking*  Definitely. I am linking this back to the previous question. I definitely struggled with verbosity because in my mind that's what I thought English academic writing was meant to be.  I also experienced difficulty in terms of my structure because you have to understand what you want to say first, before you can structure it well-enough for somebody to understand the thoughts coming across through your writing.   So, the structuring and the grouping of common terms and common ideas was definitely something that I have learned |
|  | It takes way longer. So ten of my 12 interviews were in Afrikaans and another two in English. So the coding took way longer to transcribe in Afrikaans and then to translate it and to make sense of it. Of course, it was time consuming and also it’s just about your confidence. I was writing and the language editing is coming back the whole time with just red marks and also it breaks your confidence if you get this feedback from a reader that is fluent. Why am I doing this? So confidence- wise it's challenging. |
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| 8. | Do you believe that a master’s dissertation is a place for a student to share his/her personal beliefs based on his/her research findings? Please explain.  P4 |
| P1  Emile | I believe that a master’s student must give their opinion in this study.  I believe that because they chose a field in which they are passionate about. They chose a field and we say that they can contribute in their unique data. And also I believe that they should have had some sort of experience in the field otherwise they would not have chosen it. They saw the gap and therefore your opinion is relevant because remember also and I think this is way Schumacher and Merlin Schumacher right in the in the in one of the in the book called Qualitative Approaches. The 2011 version. |
| P2  Metsing | Yes, I believe that they must, as this is a place for a student to state his personal beliefs or his research findings. |
| P3  LJ | Definitely. Otherwise, it's not his or her study, so they must be obviously the literature part, but there must be also the author’s or student’s opinion and his view as well. That gives me an idea of whether the student did reading deep reading and also gives a comprehensive opinion or a statement of his implementation of this idea. |
| P4  Tanita | I think so, to some extent, because the topic was so closely related to my experience and my being in the classroom. I was in direct contact with learners, which is what my study entailed. So, in some ways, yes. But it was challenging because I thought that this was not really allowed unless it was backed up with literature. There is a sweet spot that is difficult to get to because you have to be structured in terms of what you are trying to say versus what the literature says. Also, how do you balance your beliefs and someone else’s beliefs and how do you get that across to a reader? When that all comes together, that's research, but to get there is one of the most challenging things about research. |
| **9.** | **What do you understand by the term “voice”?** |
| P1 | I have a voice. As a researcher, your voice is very important and I think it is your manner in which you can position your study and I think it's your manner in which you basically give your standpoints and basically challenge your opinion, challenge other people’s opinion and also what you read and also making it relevant.  So I think in terms of my personal opinion, is that having a voice is to basically sharing your opinions, sharing your experiences, and understanding your process. |
| P2 | you must be able to come up with something new that contributes towards the body of knowledge that is already there. That is the purpose of research,  You should be able to critically analyse that and be able to come up with your own understanding of what it is all about |
| P3 | If you ask me, a voice system, so my interpretation of a certain idea then. If I need to explain it, that is my voice.  I was thinking in a dissertation and also your title. I think this is for my opinion about something. |
| P4 | Voice is bringing my opinion to light through an informed platform. So, my voice is backing someone else’s research up by using their literature to support my belief. But I should also take my experience and bring it to life through the idea that I am trying to relay.  I have a voice as a teacher as well. You find that what I say usually goes in my classroom. Bringing that into research is not the same thing because it needs to be an informed backup of my voice. |
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| **10.** | **Is your voice evident in your dissertation? Please explain.** |
| P1 | All of the achievements chain about the personal experience you give the voice of your  personal experiences and you share it.  Yes, it is evident because I am the main participant and I think that I need to be diplomatic in  that sense because I gave my voice to my other participants in my study |
| P2 | Yes, my voice is there in my dissertation. It is very clear and has been presented in terms of  my findings.  The findings have clearly indicated my voice especially in the chapter that deals with the  significance and implications of the study. I have ensured that my voice is clearly outlined  there, and, at the same time, I have ensured that I have supported my voice with work by  other scholars from all over the world. |
| P3 | Yes definitely, especially my recommendations and my conclusion. So I made it very clear  this is my understanding, this is my view as a summary. |
| P4 | If I compare how I write now to my Masters, I do not know If I used my voice effectively in order to portray what I was thinking or what I was feeling or what I was trying to get across to the reader. So, in terms of using my voice effectively in my dissertation, I do not think so. As a writer, I am better equipped today to use my voice than I was in my Masters.  I think I was a little scared because I did not know what research entailed. Masters is so different to what they prepare you for in Honours and that is where I went off. In that state, you are trying to find who you are as a researcher, who you are as a person and who you are as a teacher and you try to bring that all together because essentially that is what my study was. It was taking different aspects of myself and bringing it into research. That was part of my journey in research writing and finding my voice. |
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| **11.** | **Are there other voices evident in your dissertation? If yes, please explain.** |
| P1 | Well, participants yes: my parents, my brother, the psychologist, and the therapists that came in. |
| P2 | Definitely. There are other voices in my dissertation and these voices are from other scholars that I used in order to support my findings. I was able, through my extensive reading, to have many scholars that I used. |
| P3 | Yeah, so all my 12 interviews I wrote like I think it was about one page narrative about the same challenges I experienced and also that specific athlete also experienced and so the voice is also very clear in my study, fellow athletes, 12 of them.  Uh, my literature review I looked at specifically South African athletics, but also in my little review. There's also voices from Australia and New Zealand. |
| P4 | The two voices there were my own and that of other researchers that I used to support my ideas. |
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| **12.** | **Did you try to create a specific type of voice in your writing?** |
| P1 | Well, for me personally one of my biggest challenges was to write on an academic level. I believed voice will automatically be heard.  Now because I need to position myself as autistic student as autistic child, so I need to write as an autistic person in my study.  In the process of writing my narrative, I was just ashamed. I was quite frightened to write because I don't know if it will be acceptable. I wanted to avoid any form of prejudice so I was afraid to share my voice. Personally, you know the fear of being excluded.  I created my own voice in my master’s degree but it was for me personally. |
| P2 | I did not necessarily try to create a specific type of voice in my writing, but it was based on my findings and what I wanted to support through various scholars.  So, I did not deliberately want to put across a particular voice. It came across based on the findings and what other scholars are saying. Then I was able to say, ‘According to me, this is what should happen based on the environment and based on the extensive research that I did on education in correctional facilities.’ |
| P3 | No, the critical reader, I had to make slight changes but at the end some of the criticism I ignored it because if it changed my style of writing that would've changed the whole study and also somebody from the outside would see this is not me. So I had to make it my study how I understand in my view. |
| P4 | Maybe. I do not know if I analysed it to that extent. Maybe it was my researcher voice coming out that I mimicked someone. I may have I liked the way they voiced their opinion, and I may have mimicked that in my research and my writing.  There definitely were moments of blockage in my writing when I felt I could not be that open in my research and I needed to find a different way of writing something. I would go and look at other articles and see how they were structured or written. I would feed off their ideas and bring it into my research. |
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| **13.** | **How did you combine your research with your own voice?** |
| P1 | I need to read a lot of case studies with regards to autism.  And then what I did was basically I write first my narrative before I read the literature, and I think this is the one of that. Prof Wassermann guided me when he took over as a supervisor. He said start with a narrative although I had these three chapters that were already written, he said leave that for now, start with the narrative. |
| P2 | I did the reading which will inform my study when I go into the field. So, I knew what other scholars were saying about my field of study.  So, then I was able to put on my voice to say, based on this, this is what I am saying and recommending based on the findings and supported by the scholars.  Then I would come up with my voice (recommendation) for that situation. |
| P3 | Yeah, it was challenging because a lot of my articles was international and I had to break it down in smaller pieces to make it fit in into my study. There was very limited of research and also literature on my topic and field. So I needed to bring it out really wide to make it relevant to my study. |
| P4 | Where I felt I was permitted, I allowed myself to flow freely with my voice. But at other points, where I would get challenged about how I knew a certain thing, or where the fact was from, despite it being my own experience, it might need to be backed by another researcher’s in order to make my voice substantial enough. In marrying the two, there were moments where I felt less confident in showcasing my voice. I would use someone else’s voice to back me up. |
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| **14.** | **Has your supervisor or any other academic reader ever asked you about your academic voice? (E.g. Where is your voice?). Please explain if you were asked this question.** |
| P1 | Not the feedback discussion that I had was basically compliments with regards to my writing as well as the manner in which I interpreted my voice. The manner in which I shared my personal experiences and also for me being in the field. And I think there were a lot specifically for examiners as they enjoyed it. |
| P2 | Yes. My supervisor always told me that I must not write what she has read before.  I must ensure that every time I write, I must put across my own my own thoughts, my own opinion, my own voice about the subject matter at hand. We must not just repeat what other scholars out there have written because it would look like we did not do any research in terms of our own academic writing. |
| P3 | No, not that I can recall. |
| P4 | Yes, I did get feedback saying that my voice was lacking and that they would like to hear my voice in certain sections. Also, that I need to write more confidently and to bring in my own experiences. I have definitely heard that, and I think that made the argument stronger. But I also think you have to know when and where to add in those types of elements, because there is a time and place for it in research. You cannot necessarily frame your whole research study with just your voice. Striking that balance between informed writing and then bringing your own voice through informing it with other references and other literature is a massive concept to understand and to put down on paper. |
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| **15.** | **Did you receive any help with academic writing from your supervisor, a writing centre, writing workshops, a language editor, etc.?** |
| P1 | So my supervisor assisted me a lot but in terms of the manner in which the study was situated in a manner which auto ethnography is written answers perfectly the methodology as such or we needed to consult an expert.  Prof Eleanor Lemmer which I mentioned previously, was also my language editor who assisted me a lot just to make sure that that yes, she checked the language and yes, she edited most of the language imports but also to make sure that we are abiding according to the order. |
| P2 | Yes, I received a lot of support from my supervisor.  I also received a lot of support from the University. I do not think that there is any better university. I have studied at other universities but UP has showed me that it is one of the best universities. We had sessions with local and visiting academics, some from as far away as Australia, the US and the UK. They would host free sessions about research methodology for master’s and PhD students. Other sessions would be about how to write your findings, especially if you struggle with writing and presentation of your study.  We were referred to language editors by our supervisors. They have the academic knowledge of how language should be written. This was very important for a second language speaker when it came to the finalising my dissertation. |
| P3 | Prof Evans helped me and then she was also my language editor. |
| P4 | I think my supervisor helped me here and there with grammatical issues and content, so definitely, yes, from my supervisors. |
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| **16.** | **Did you have a specific reader in mind during your writing?** |
| P1  Emile | Well, personally, as this is an auto ethnography about autism my target audience is basically the service providers. With the field we works in the field referring to lectures referring to teachers referring to students referring to autistic adults themselves, referring to parents referring to grandparents, referring to national disability organizations and nonprofit organization that works in open field. |
| P2  Metsing | I did not have any specific reader in mind, but in having gone through some books, I knew that this is one of the things that I will have to incorporate into my study. The reading that I did during my study helped me become able to identify good and bad research work that was being done.  Also, through guidance from my supervisor, who always gave me a few articles to look at. When I did my research, I was able to look at the research articles that my supervisor would prefer. I was also able to find others that are related to my study and I would use them because there is a certain way that your supervisor would like you to write. |
| P3  LJ | OK, school athletes that is on their way to transition to senior track and field athletics  So that audience, let's say sport not only athletes, sports people from the age 17 to 20-21 that gap, and also parents, because they are one of the role players in my study. Lot of pressure, lot of expectations. Yes, also parents of sports of sports people.  I had no idea. I thought this, by the way it's only internal marking. I thought maybe just one of our fellow colleagues were going to mark it and that's it. |
| P4  Tanita | Teachers, certainly, were my main audience target audience. Possibly principals or HODs and then other academics who are writing in the Faculty of Education, specifically Humanities. But, then again, it was largely based on credibility; anyone researching the topic of credibility could have used sections of the study that I had created. So that was my main target areas that I intended to write for. |
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| **17.** | **How did you try to engage or draw your reader in?** |
| P1  Emile | So you try to engage your reader by storytelling. |
| P2  Metsing | What is it that should happen? How am I going to synthesise it? What are the things that are needed? Those were key areas of my study. When I went into the field, I had to have the methodology in mind so I would know what it is that I was going to look for. |
| P3  LJ |  |
| P4  Tanita | Keeping it simple and keeping it to the point draws readers’ attention holistically. So, that was one of the things I tried. I do not know if I succeeded in that because that puts another element to writing. You know, having your thoughts, putting it on paper and then still trying to figure out how you are perceiving it and how others are going to take on your writing is a lot of information for you to deal with. |
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| **18.** | **Do you think that voice for dissertation writing can be taught?** |
| P1  Emile | Yes, and I think we need to go back to undergraduate study as well as postgraduate referring to the period of I would say between four years, your 4th year and your masters |
| P2  Metsing | I do not think that the voice for a dissertation can be taught. It comes through a lot of reading. One can come up with your voice when you have gone through a lot of reading.  So, it cannot be taught. You learn and then you are able to use the resources that are available to support your findings with work of other scholars that is very important. Your voice will just remain an opinion if it cannot be authenticated by people that have gone through the process of research.  If your view is not supported by research of other scholars, it will just be a voice that will not carry any weight. |
| P3  LJ | I think so, and I think, as you said that voice can be taught yes.  I think it must be addressed at the cohort so he's his voice must be clear from started. |
| P4  Tanita | I think so. Maybe through workshops or seminars, I mean virtual seminars now because of Covid. I definitely think that is needed because the jump from Honours to Masters is massive.  That little project that they give you an Honours is nothing compared to what you are expected to complete in two years. And it is not two years, it is basically one-and-a-half years. All that editing and language and transcribing is a lot that you are not prepared for when you come from an Honours to a Masters. So, I think we could really benefit from hearing a thing or two about what to expect in Masters and how to relay your voice, and little techniques and bits of information that could support us in completing the study. |