

A Literature Review on Transcendental and Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Christine Daley

c.daley@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Content of Presentation

- Rationale for literature review
- What is phenomenology?
- Two schools of phenomenology
- Conclusions

Rationale for Literature Review

A search for a suitable methodology for Professional Doctorate in Education entitled:

The experiences of students undertaking a part-time, postgraduate professional course without an undergraduate degree

What is Phenomenology?

“A theoretical point of view that advocates the study of direct experience taken at face value and one which sees behaviour as determined by the phenomena of experience rather than by external, objective and physically described reality.”

(Cohen et al, 2011, p.18)

Phenomenological study:

“describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon...describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon.”

(Creswell 2012, p.76)

Two Schools of Phenomenology

Transcendental phenomenology

(also known as pure, descriptive or Husserlian phenomenology or just phenomenology)

Hermeneutic phenomenology

(also known as interpretive, existential or Heideggerian phenomenology)

Transcendental Phenomenology

- The study of the lived experience or 'Lebenswelt'
- Allows the development of a perspective inclusive of external, physical, isolatable stimuli
- 'Bracketing out' of stimuli
- Capturing the 'essence' of the phenomenon

(Laverly, 2003)

Integral Events in Transcendental Phenomenology

The Transition

moving beyond everyday experience to the hinterland of the pure ego and entering a state *“where everything is perceived freshly as if for the first time”*.

(Moustakas, 1994, p.34)

The Epoche

The researcher must set aside prejudice, prior knowledge, judgements and preconceptions about the phenomenon to hear the contribution of research participants with an open mind.

(Husserl, 1977; Moustakas, 1994)

Transcendental Phenomenological Reduction

moves beyond the everyday to the pure ego where everything may be perceived as if for the first time, going back to the source of the meaning

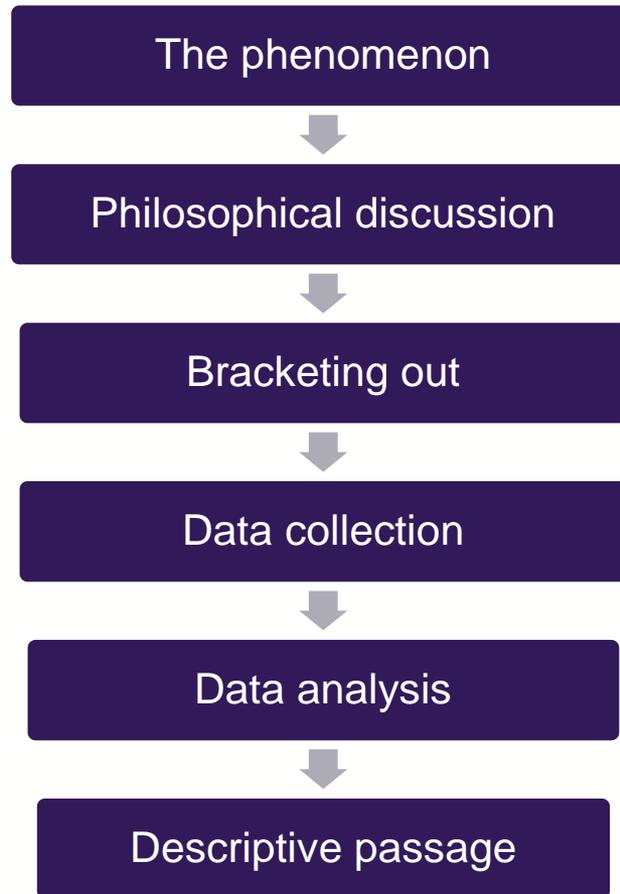
Imaginative Variation

allows the researcher to encompass the:

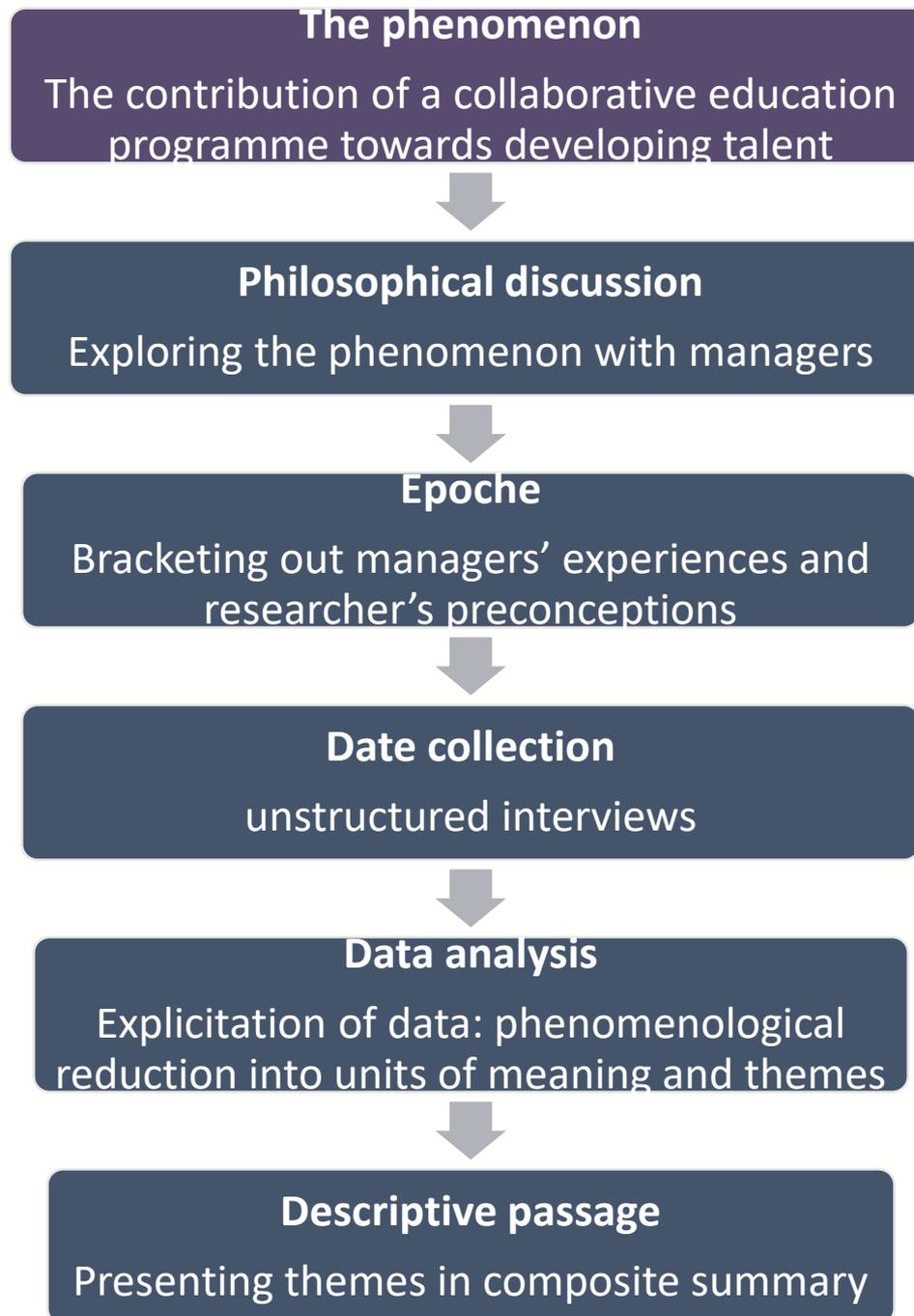
“infinite multiplicities of actual and possible cognitions that relate to the object...and can thus somehow go together to make up the unity of an identifying synthesis” of meanings and essences.”

(Husserl, 1977, p.63)

Stages in a Transcendental Phenomenological Study



(Creswell, 2012)



**Groenewald,
(2004)
Research Project
using
Transcendental
Phenomenology**

The Challenge for the Researcher in Transcendental Phenomenology

“describe the lived experience in a language as free from the constructs of the intellect and society as possible”

(Groenewald, 2004, p.12)

But how to do this?

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Hermeneutics:

Theory and methodology of interpretation

“interpreting the texts of life”

(Creswell, 2012, p. 79)

“the meaning of phenomenological description as a method lies in interpretation”

(Heidegger, 1962, p.37)

Not just as a means to understanding but about clarifying the conditions under which understanding would take place.

(Gadamer, 1976)

The researcher is integral to the research and her previous understanding and knowledge 'fore-structure' helps interpretation.

(Finlay, 2008; Tuohy et al 2013)

The past informs the present, because historicity of understanding aids interpretation and thus plays a positive role in the search for meaning.

(Annells, 1996)

Integral Concepts in Hermeneutic Phenomenology

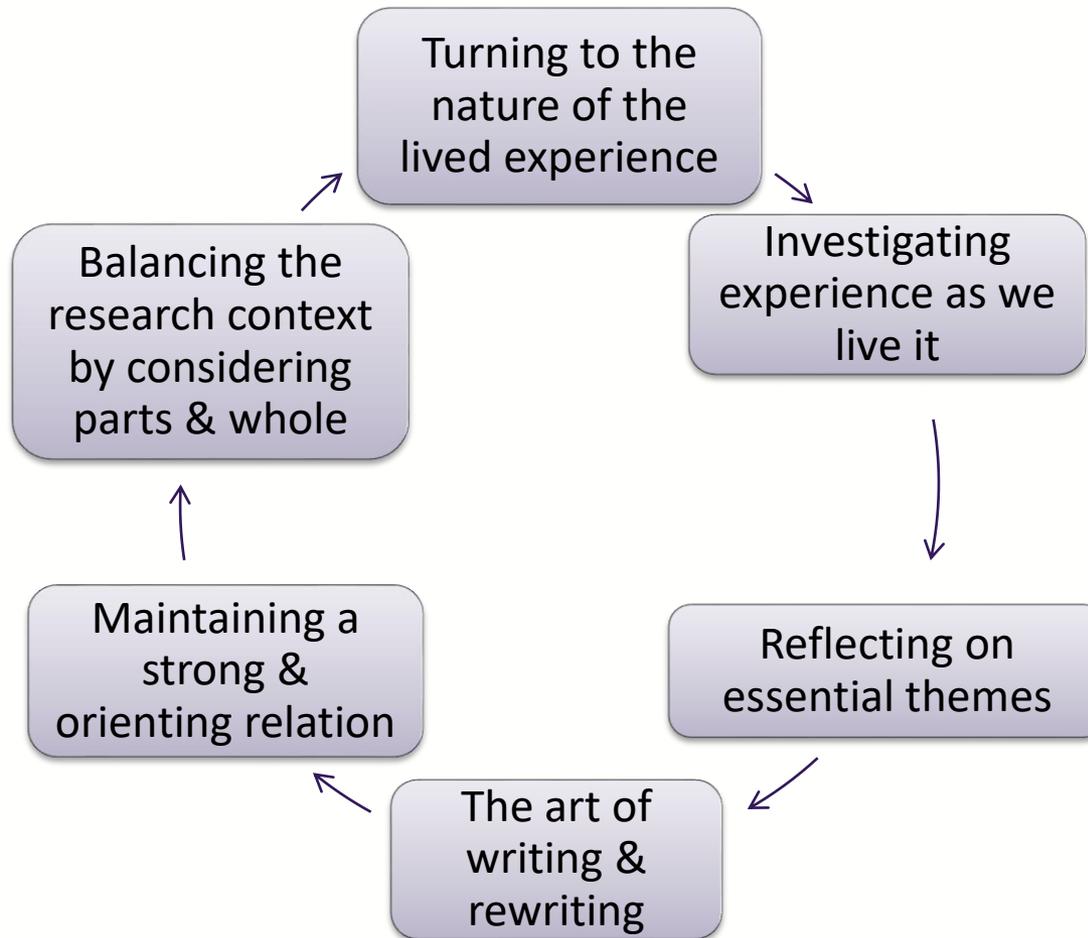
- The study of the lived experience or ‘Lebenswelt’
- the concept of ‘Dasein’ which is the mode of being human
- The ‘hermeneutic cycle’

(Heidegger, 1962)

- Not a summative process , but ceases when a “*place of sensible meaning*” has been reached, “*free of inner contradictions, for the moment*”

(Lavery, 2003, p.9)

A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Framework: (van Manen 1990)



“a dynamic interplay between six research activities”
(van Manen, 1990 p. 30)

A Research Project using Hermeneutic Phenomenology (Sloan & Bowe, 2004)

Turning to the nature of the
lived experience:
**Identify the essence of the
phenomena of curriculum
design**

Investigating experience as
we live it: **interviewing two
groups of lecturers**

Balancing the research
context by considering
parts & whole: **thematic
statements reduced to
phenomenological themes**

Reflecting on essential themes:
**researchers employing
reflexivity**

Maintaining a strong &
orienting relation: **24
hermeneutic reductions
into 7 thematic statements**

The art of writing &
rewriting: **structures
of experience written
into statements**

The Challenge for the Researcher in Hermeneutic Phenomenology

The methodology may become more of a labyrinth than a cycle and the danger of getting lost in the “*obtuse*” and “*incomprehensible*” is a real one.

(Laverly, 2003, p. 15)

Conclusions

1. Transcendental and hermeneutic phenomenology not polar opposites
2. Common features:
 - Thematic reduction
 - essence
3. Key differences:
 - **Transcendental phenomenology** is “**foundationalist**” in that it seeks a correct answer and a “valid” interpretation of texts independent of factors in the interpreter
 - **Hermeneutic phenomenology** is “**non-foundationalist**” in that it focuses on the meaning that arises from the interpretive interaction between historically produced texts and the reader.

(Allen, 1995)

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