



Section1: Introduction to the journey

It's hard to know where to begin writing this, so I will begin from where I am now, in an airport lounge waiting to fly home. Outside on the tarmac there is a lot of activity; planes leaving and arriving, vans and smaller trucks scurrying around, picking up and delivering. Yet we are here, in a 'fish bowl' environment, waiting for someone to give the message it is time to move. I realise that I have been waiting for this moment in my study, for someone else to give me the instruction to point the way. In fact, what I need to do is get up, walk on and steer my own plane. As I begin on this journey I see this is the beginning of the end-or the end of the start- not sure which. It seems I am at that point of looking back to where I have been, but also to where I am still going. Anyway its time to write and write I must....

The process of this study has evolved over time. It has been a 'journey', and continues to be, as I question what I am doing and read more. In this I identify with Cathy Guthrie (2007:2), who describes her experience of PhD research as feeling like:

a journeyman craftsman working on the masterpiece which will decide whether or not I will be accepted into the guild

The journey of this study has moved between absorbing others' written work and listening to 'experts', formulating the steps that are required in order to complete a work that is acceptable to the guild of doctoral studies. As a reflective piece of 'art' the study includes reference to excerpts from the journal I kept as researcher, as well as created art work, relevant to the study. Different colours and font distinguish the journal from the body of the text. I have also chosen to call the data collected 'material', as it does not just include 'words' and 'material' provides a more inclusive term. This term further captures the notion there is no essential 'truth' in the data; rather it is shaped in various ways to reflect different possible interpretations.

The choices I have made on the journey have been led by the questions of the study, my underpinning ontological assumptions and philosophical perspectives and my responses to the material as it has emerged. It is a journey that is not a straight line, but rather exists as layers upon layers, of starting and going back and beginning again; of going round or stopping for awhile, changing direction or even standing still. I began the programme intending to consider the education of

midwives about the nature of spirituality. Over time this has shifted to using holistic and creative methods to explore multi-dimensional meanings and experiences of being a midwife, evolving an understanding of the art of midwifery, along with the development of creative educational methods to increase awareness of this art. The initial research questions that focus this study are:

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- What are the meanings ascribed to being a midwife and the art of midwifery practice by a small group of qualified midwives using creative inquiry?
- What is the impact of creative inquiry on the meaning they ascribe to being a midwife and the art of midwifery?

An organic, holistic and creative approach using the concept of bricolage (Denzin and Lincoln 2008:5) has been used throughout. As the study progressed two further questions evolved:

- What meanings emerged through adopting a creative, bricolage methodology?
- What is the impact on the researcher of this study?

How this shift in questioning took place and the rest of the process of the development of the study will be explored later in this thesis. It is also the case that the beginnings of this process were long before I enrolled on the EdD programme.

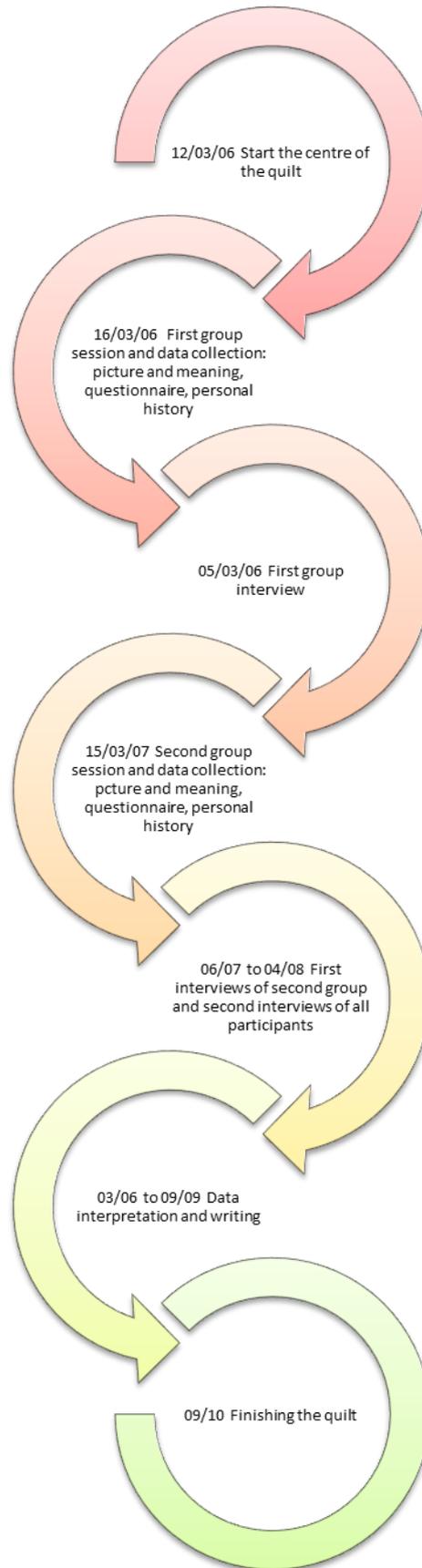


Figure 1: Timeline for process of the study