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Student Voice in Postgraduate Distance Education – Thematic Analysis

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Course changes due to student voice

- Trainees are now given earlier feedback on their teaching from UoS staff on PGCE Education. This has changed after the last round of student voice feedback
- Reduced requirement for lesson planning evidence – quality over quantity.
- Increased flexibility for accessing subject specialist sessions (PGCE iQTS only)
- Reduced academic content on practice and theory module.
- Completing second school experience (PGCE iQTS only) at any point in the year
- Adapting frequency of seminars in semester two (PGCE Education)

Research Questions

How is student voice is experienced and enacted by distance education students?

What does an effective student voice design for distance education look like?

PEO framework	
Population (who is the question focused on?)	Distance education students
Exposure (what is the issue being explored?)	Student voice
Outcomes/themes (What is to be examined?	Experiences and effectiveness

Questionnaire creation

- Co-creation with DE students
- Open questions moved to interviews
- Student Voice preference as ranking. Six options: 1. Verbal feedback via Teams, 2. Feedback via a course representative, 3. Written feedback submitted via email, 4. Online discussion board dedicated to feedback, 5. Online survey (multiple choice, Likert scale), or 6. A combination of these methods
- Trialled questionnaire with feedback from Centre for Teaching Excellence team, a former DE student working in software development and a colleague with a lot of experience of the University Ethics Committee

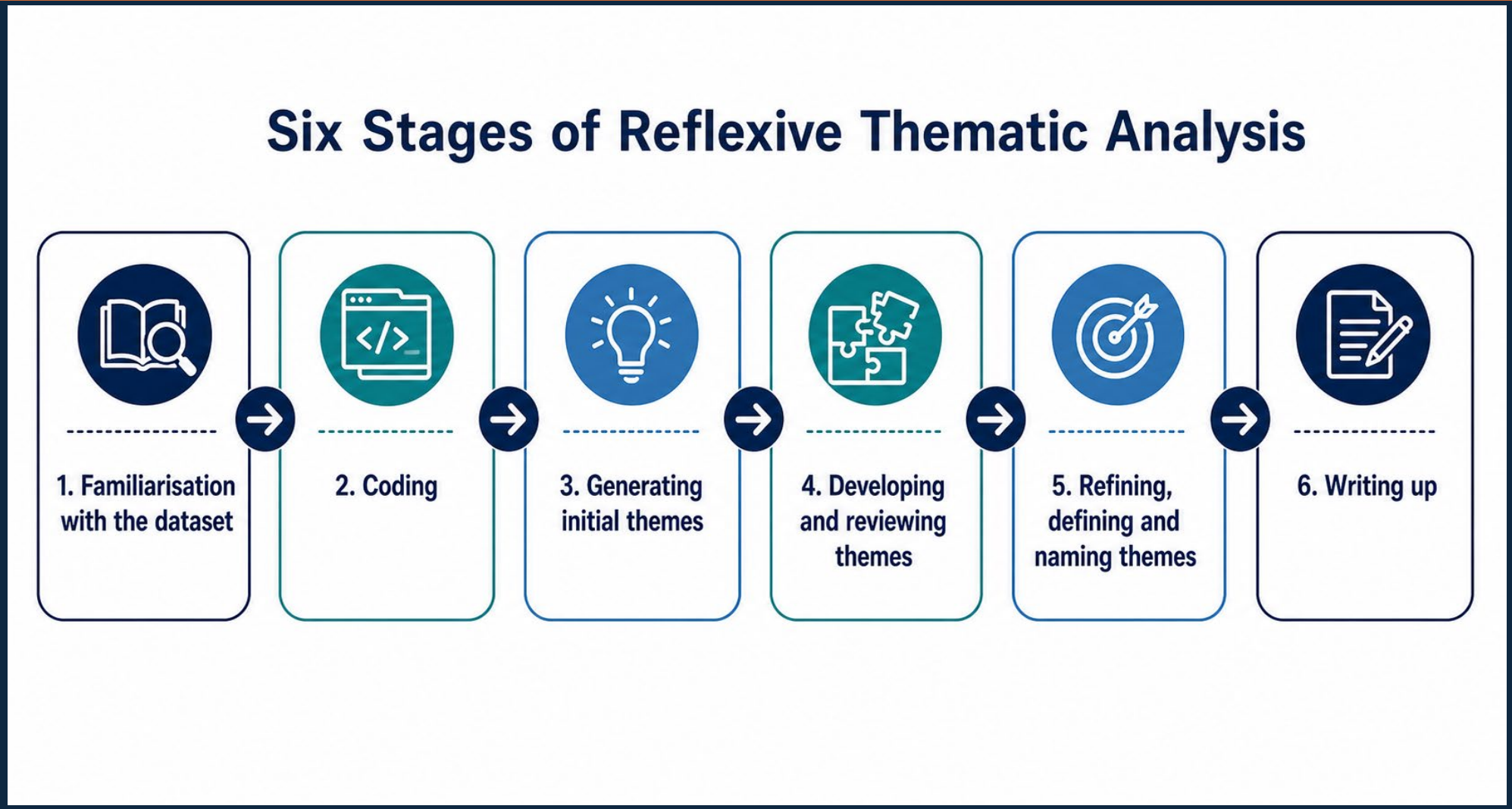
Questionnaire and initial analysis

- All students studying at distance.
- Three different forms of distance education: 1. Fully asynchoronous, 2. Combination of asynchronous and live online seminars. 3. Combination of asynchronous learning, live online seminars and in person mentoring.
- 305 responses from 61 different countries
- Ten areas of study including: Teacher Training, Law, Nursing, Business, Computing, Psychology and Engineering
- 166 interested in being interviewed. 16 interviewed across three forms of distance education

Initial analysis

- Online survey and written feedback via email were the most popular choices.
- It is worth noting that feedback via a course rep was particularly unpopular. Put most commonly as 4th,5th,6th choice.

Braun and Clarke (2022)



Initial Thematic Analysis

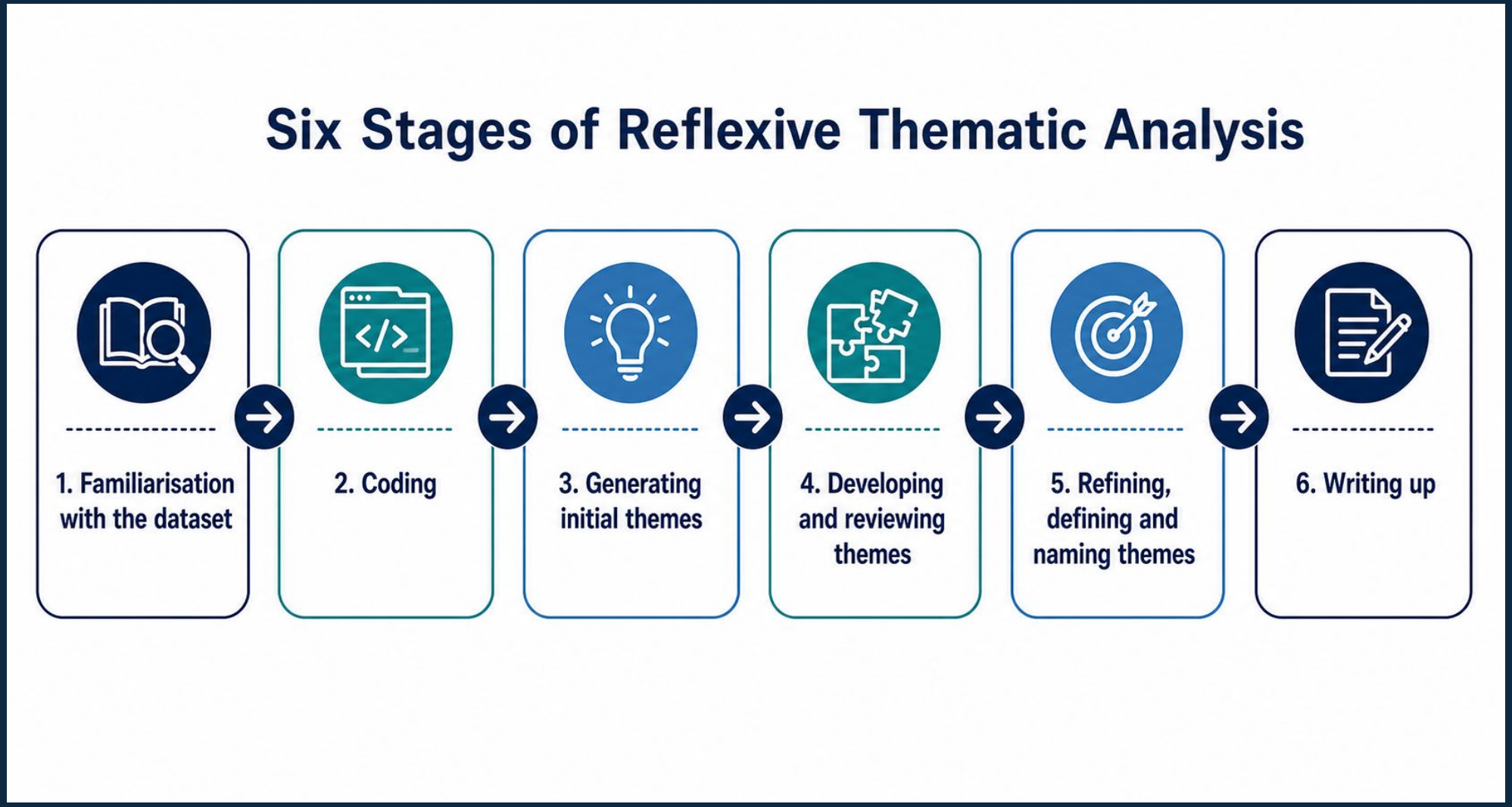
Interviews

16 Interviews were conducted with students learning across different forms of distance education

Initial themes

1. Strong preference for asynchronous feedback
2. Co-creating surveys to ensure relevance and buy-in
3. Anonymity and psychological safety
4. Course reps are not suitable for distance education
5. Close the feedback loop
6. Inclusion and parity of treatment

Braun and Clarke (2022)



Reviewed Themes

Interviews

16 Interviews were conducted with students learning across different forms of distance education

Theme Revision and Development – Overall

- Student voice designed specifically for distance education.
- Creating the conditions for authentic feedback.
- An entanglement of technology, environment and people
- Human connection at distance enables student voice

Reviewed Themes

Reviewed Theme One. Student voice designed specifically for distance education.

This theme is about students wanting more control over how and when they give feedback. Traditional student voice models, especially course reps, do not work well for distance education. Especially as they may not know each other, study asynchronously, share modules for a limited period of time or exist in very different contexts.

Reviewed Themes

Reviewed Theme Two. Creating the conditions for authentic feedback.

This theme focus is about whether students feel psychologically safe in order to to give honest feedback. It includes areas such as anonymity, fear and two way feedback.

Reviewed Themes

Reviewed Theme Three. An entanglement of technology, environment and people

Voice is more than individual students and is shaped by wider life circumstances and environments. It is an entanglement of actants (Latour 2005), such as technology, platforms, study spaces, employment, caring responsibilities, language and time. They influence opportunities to speak.

Reviewed Themes

Reviewed Theme Four. Human connection at distance enables student voice

Human connection helps students use their voice. Trusted staff members such as module leaders or Personal Academic Tutors (PATs) can enable students to raise concerns, highlight what is working well, ask questions and feel seen.