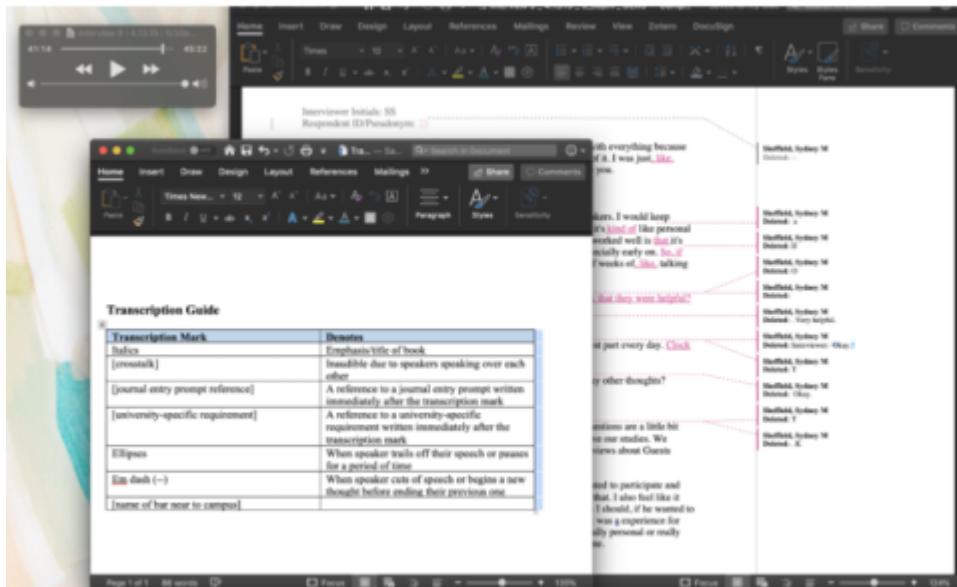


Practicing Patience

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|
newcomb@tulane.edu

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At the end of our most recent meeting, one of the principal investigators I worked under leaned back contentedly and said something along the lines of, "It's finally starting to feel like we're getting somewhere." We had compiled an internal report including our methodology and our results thus far, were nearly finished with cleaning our interview transcripts, had begun coding our first interviews, and had analyzed our final pieces of survey data. Through the course of the past year I have spent assisting with the GESS 1900 research project, one of the aspects of research I have come to understand most clearly has been the patience demanded by the process.

Moreover, from cleaning several interview transcripts, I learned that research often requires repetition of tedious tasks to get to the fun stuff: the results. Getting through the less exciting parts—particularly when working on my own time rather than in an office setting—necessitated breaking the work into smaller pieces, setting deadlines, and exercising self-discipline. I frequently neglected these strategies and fell short of the level of efficiency I was capable of, drawing out the interview cleaning all the way to the end of the summer.

And because it seemed that each step forward was just a fraction of the tasks we had yet to complete, it did not occur to me until reviewing the learning objectives I had written down at the beginning of the summer that I had already learned so much in the execution of each step. Since the beginning of this summer, I have had many firsts. I wrote my first blog post! I cleaned my first interview transcript. I compiled my first transcription guide. I wrote my first methodology blurb. I learned how to create a coding scheme. I took my first Nvivo tutorial course, and I coded my first interview using what I learned. I have developed more marketable skills that will serve me in conducting future research, writing my honors thesis, and applying to graduate school than in any summer prior. Further, I have been inspired by community members, invited to speak with us through the program, who are also fighting for reproductive rights and reproductive justice, allowing me to broaden the scope of my work in the future.

I am excited to take future steps forward to finish our data analysis, start writing manuscripts, and begin to prepare presentations of our work for conferences. I am endlessly thankful for the opportunity NCI, Dr. Daniel, Dr. Johnson, and Dr. Lederer have given me to continue challenging myself and nurturing both soft and hard skills.