

Social-Cultural Anthropology Research 101

The Essential Guide to Ethnography

Stages of Research:

1. Brainstorming
2. Planning
3. Research
4. Data Analysis
5. Writing
6. Revision
7. Finalization



Time Management For Essay Writing

A. Estimate a timeline. Rushed papers often give themselves away in poor presentation, wrong facts, or added-in 'fluff'.

B: Plan Ahead

- Example Schedule (small semester project):
 - Week 1: Brainstorm; Plan; Research
 - Week 2: Continue Research; Write First Draft
 - Week 3: Revise Draft Three Times
 - Week 4: Finalize/Submit/Present!





Stage 1: Brainstorming

Stage 1: Brainstorming

The Steps

- Step 1: Find inspiration. Consider what you've found interesting in the class, or what your interests entering the class were.
- Step 2: Pick a Topic.
- Step 3: Craft a research question



Stage 1: Brainstorming

Step 1: Find Inspiration

- What were your interests entering the class?
- Look back at the syllabus. What have you found the most interesting so far, or are you looking forward to the most?
- Consider current events or other niche subjects you find yourself drawn to. Does it connect back to our course content?



Stage 1: Brainstorming

Step 2: Pick a Topic

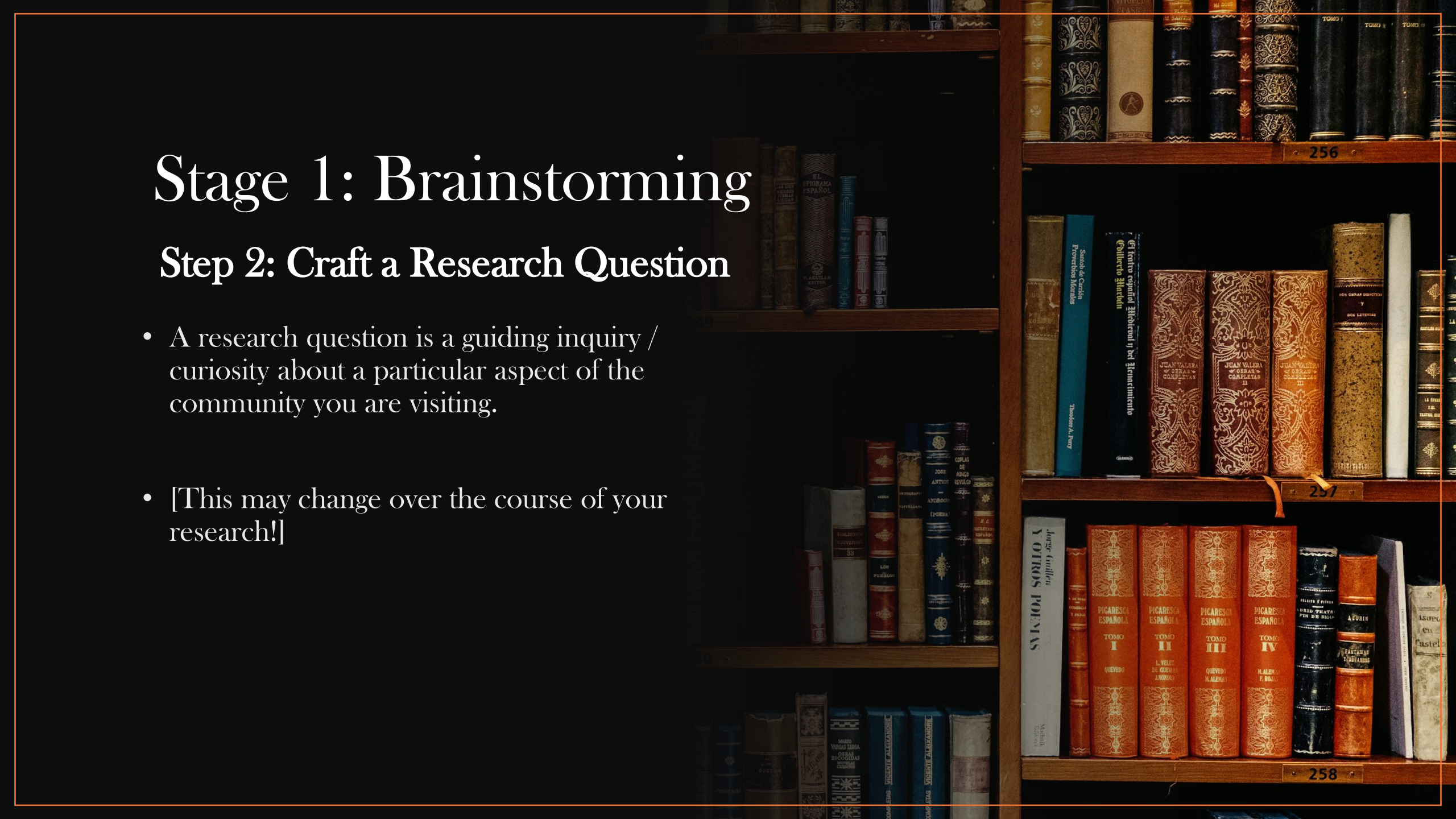
- Look at your list of interests. What is the most fascinating to you? What would you not hate spending your time digging into?
- Think about local community sites for participant-observation opportunities, such as headquarters or event space for a group, organization, or institution related to your research interest.



Stage 1: Brainstorming

Step 2: Craft a Research Question

- A research question is a guiding inquiry / curiosity about a particular aspect of the community you are visiting.
- [This may change over the course of your research!]



Stage 1: Brainstorming

Step 2: Craft a Research Question

- Determine your research question:
 - This is the central guiding focus of research project.
 - What is it that you want to know about your topic and/or community?
- Potential Topics:
 - structure, practice, identity, ritual, belief, meaning
 - public events, policy-analysis, social-change
 - social-construction, power, agency, resistance

Stage 1: Brainstorming

Step 2: Craft a Research Question

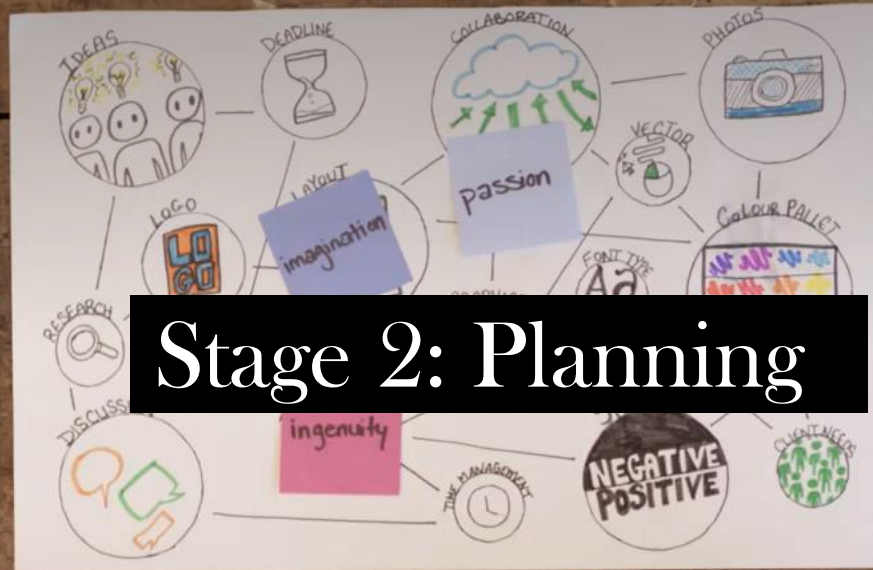
Review your initial proposed research question:

- Can this question be answered (or at least, expounded upon) with an ethnography?
- Is this something you can reasonably accomplish within the time parameters for your project?
- Do you have access to the resources and places necessary to perform participant observation and recruit participants for surveys/interviews?

Basic Ethnographic Methods:

- Interview, survey, literature review, participant observation

Stage 2: Planning



Step 1: Pick a research question from your brainstorm session.

Step 2: Choose appropriate research methods

Step 3: Collect preliminary information on site, community

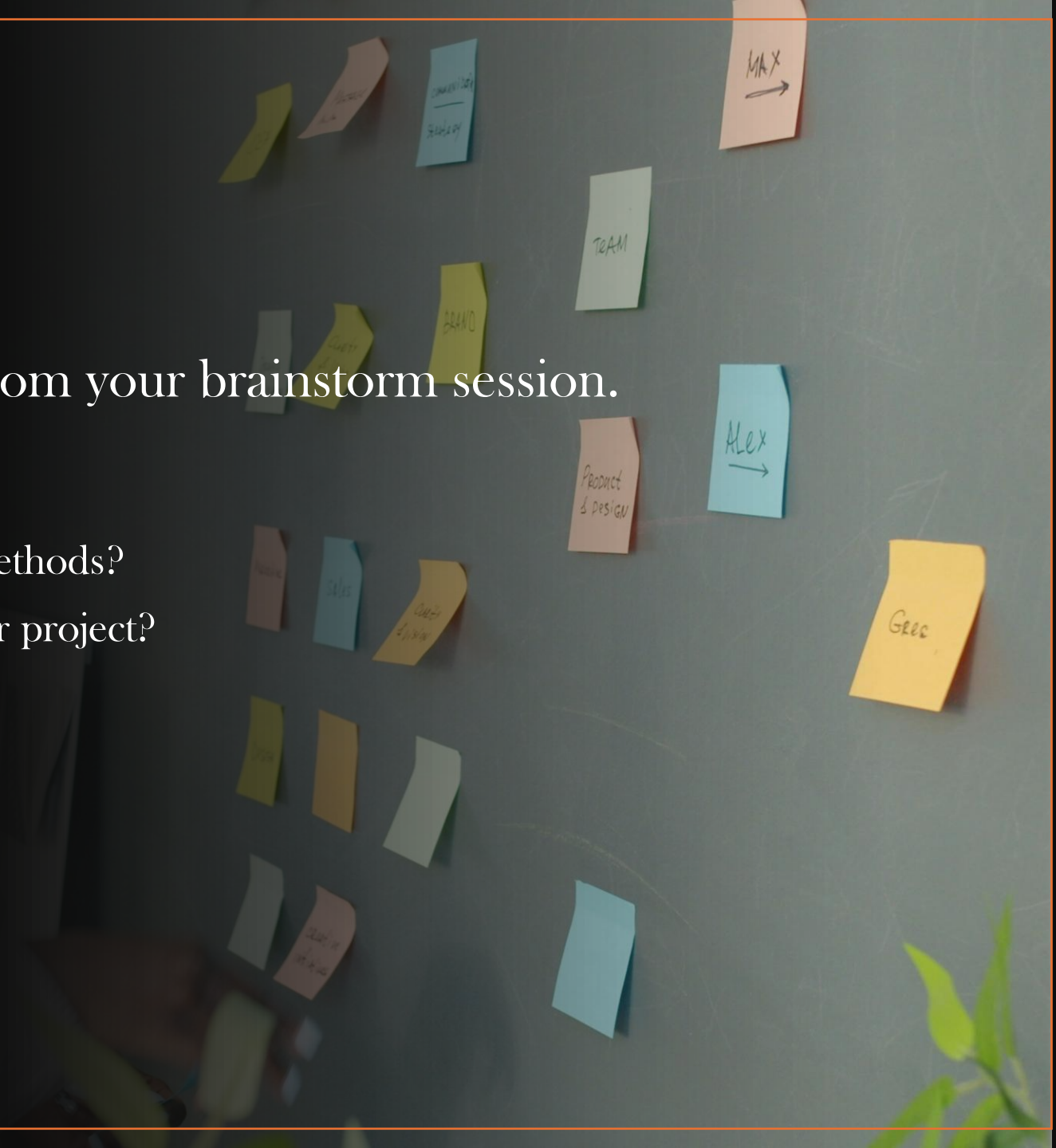
Step 4: Plan a set time to go to the site to attend.

Step 5: Do the paperwork / bureaucratic pre-study necessities.

Stage 2: Planning

Step 1: Pick a research question from your brainstorm session.

- What stood out to you most?
- What is answerable using ethnographic methods?
- What is feasible for the time frame of your project?
- What can you gain the easiest access to?



Stage 2: Planning

Step 2: Choose appropriate research methods.

- Literature review: All research should include a literature review whenever possible.
 - Gives context to community, event, or topic.
 - Allows you to learn what research has already been done
 - Grants an idea of where there might be a vacuum space for more investigation.
- Participant observation
 - Going to witness event(s), rituals, special occasions, or daily activities can give vital observation notes for an outsider perspective.



A chalkboard with various colored sticky notes and faint chalk drawings. The sticky notes contain handwritten text: 'MAX' with an arrow, 'TEAM', 'BRAND', 'Product & design', 'Alex' with an arrow, 'Geo', 'Sales', 'Customer', 'Marketing', 'Finance', 'Operations', 'HR', 'Legal', 'IT', 'R&D', 'Manufacturing', 'Distribution', 'Retail', 'Support'. Faint chalk drawings include a large arrow pointing right, a large arrow pointing up, and a large arrow pointing down.

A chalkboard with various sticky notes and faint chalk drawings. The sticky notes are in different colors (yellow, blue, orange, green) and contain handwritten text. The chalk drawings include a large arrow pointing right, a small diagram of a person with a speech bubble, and some faint text. The overall scene suggests a brainstorming or planning session.

-
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[illegible][illegible]

- [illegible]

[illegible]

- [illegible]

[illegible]

- [illegible]

Stage 2: Planning

Step 5: Do the paperwork / bureaucratic pre-study necessities.

- Informed Consent Forms:
 - Give participants all necessary facts to make a choice whether they want to participate or not.
 - Let them know how the information will be gathered and used
 - Inform participants of all possible risk factors to the safety of themselves, their information, and anything that might be uncomfortable throughout the process.
 - Include any waiver signings.
- IRB Proposal
 - Submit your research proposal to the internal review board with all necessary documentation included.
 - Be prepared for possible return questions or amendment needs.
- If applicable, research and apply for study funding.



Stage 3: Research

Stage 3: Research



What my friends think I do



What my parents think I do



What my teachers think I do



What society thinks I do



What I think I do



What I really do

Cultural Anthropologist

Stage 3: Research

The Steps

Step 1: Collect information / data

Step 2: Craft a literature review

Step 3: Gather Data, Part I (Participant Observation)

Step 4: Gather Data, Part II (Qualitative interviews and/or surveys)



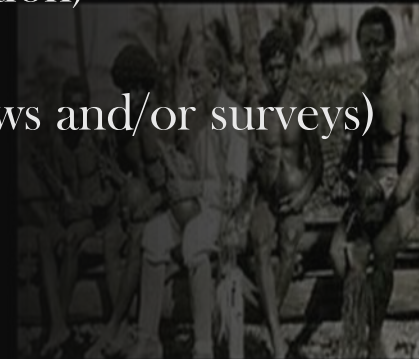
What my friends think I do



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What I really do

Cultural Anthropologist

Stage 3: Research

Step 1: Collect information / data

Collect preliminary information on topic

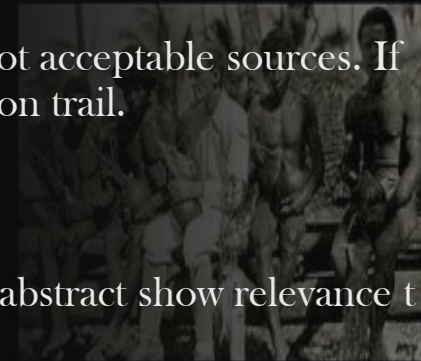
- Perform a search of scholarly journals
 - Best done through your school's online library, google scholar, researchgate, or other reputable resource.
 - Consult appropriate material/narrative evidence via ethnographic, ethnohistoric, and archaeological records
 - Wikipedia or articles from random sites are not acceptable sources. If you find something elsewhere, follow it's citation trail.
- Gather articles
 - Pick an array of articles whose titles, tags, and abstract show relevance to your chosen topic.
 - Make note: What has already been discovered about on your topic? What claims have been asserted, on what evidence?



What my parents think I do



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What I really do

Cultural Anthropologist

Stage 3: Research

Step 2: Craft a literature review

Craft a comprehensive literature review.

- Read the articles you've collected.
 - Skim/read cover-to-cover to ensure relevancy.
 - Go back and read slowly while highlighting / taking notes.
 - Remember to jot page numbers down for later citations.
- Summarize articles and synthesize.
 - Write a summary of each article as you go / loose connection of your notes.
 - Synthesize summaries into coherent narrative that introduces and connects back to your research topic.



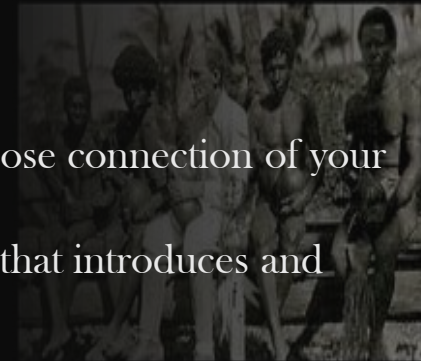
What my friends think I do



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What I think I do



What I really do

Stage 3: Research

Step 2: Gather Data, Part I (Participant Observation)

Collect preliminary information on site of PO

- Is it open to public? Invite only? Available to enter upon request?
 - What are the hours/days it's open that fit in your schedule?
 - Are there any upcoming events or community rituals you could witness and/or experience?
- Visit site
 - For larger project, ideally make visits regular
 - Observe with all your senses
 - Take notes during or directly after attendance
 - If permitted and appropriate to the project, consider recording audio or video



Stage 3: Research

Step 3: Gather Data, Part 2.1 (Rapport & Recruitment)

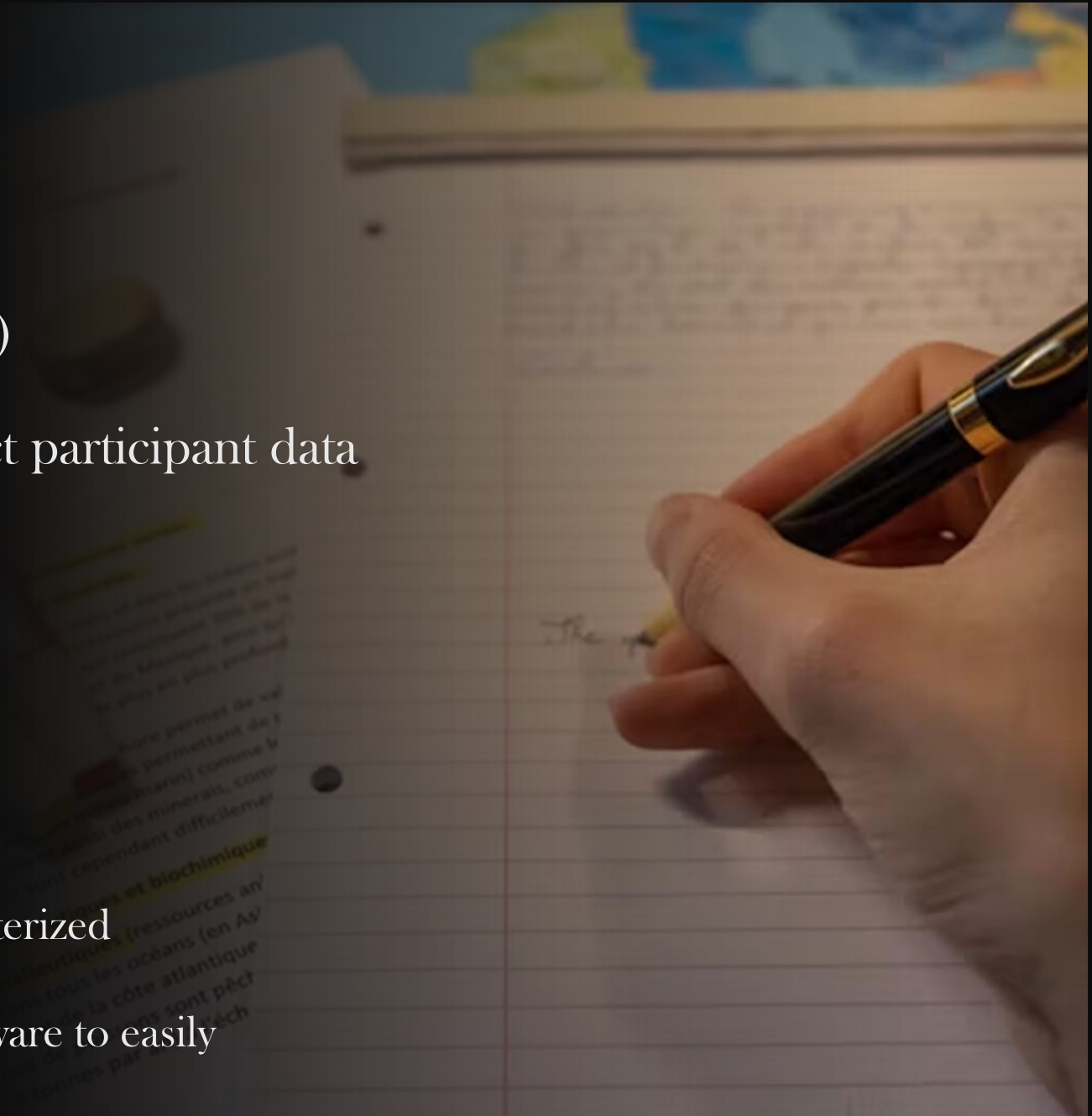
- During participant observation
 - Build rapport and connection
 - Generate interest in research
 - Recruit participants from community members
- Give informed consent forms to potential participants
- Obtain consent for participation and recording



Stage 3: Research

Step 3: Gather Data, Part 2.2 (Survey)

- Ask pertinent questions to collect participant data
 - Demographic data
 - Community specific data
 - Research-question-related data
- Structured questions
 - Pre-planned
- Survey can be on paper or computerized
- Ideal to use excel or research software to easily compile data

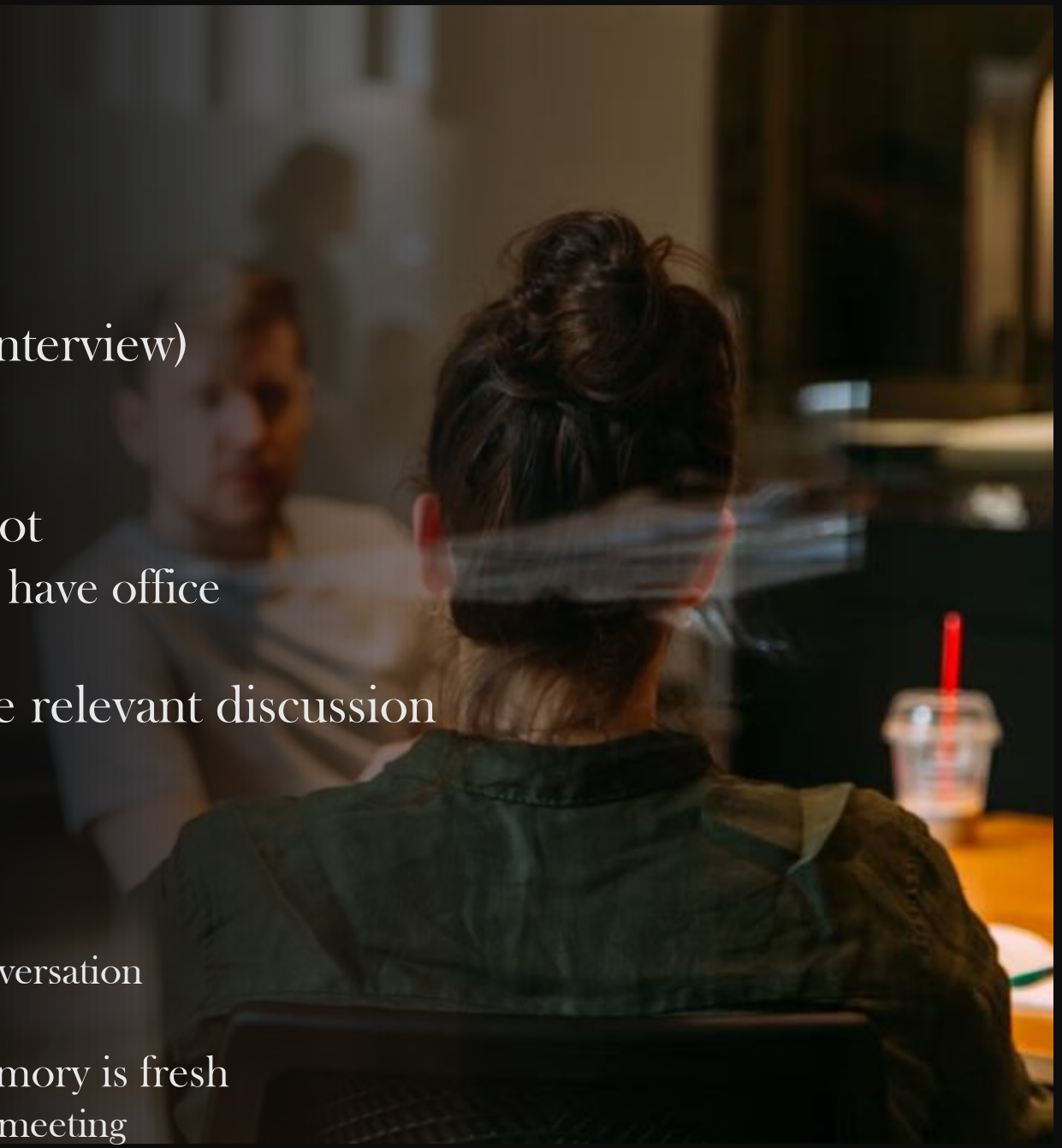


Stage 3: Research

Step 3: Gather Data, Part 2.3 (Qualitative Interview)

During interview:

- Meet in quiet or quiet-ish public spot
 - Library, Coffeehouse, if you don't have office
- Ask pertinent questions to stimulate relevant discussion
 - Structured questions
 - Pre-planned
 - Unstructured questions
 - Let the participant interest guide conversation
 - Take notes during or after / while memory is fresh
 - After allows greater presence during meeting

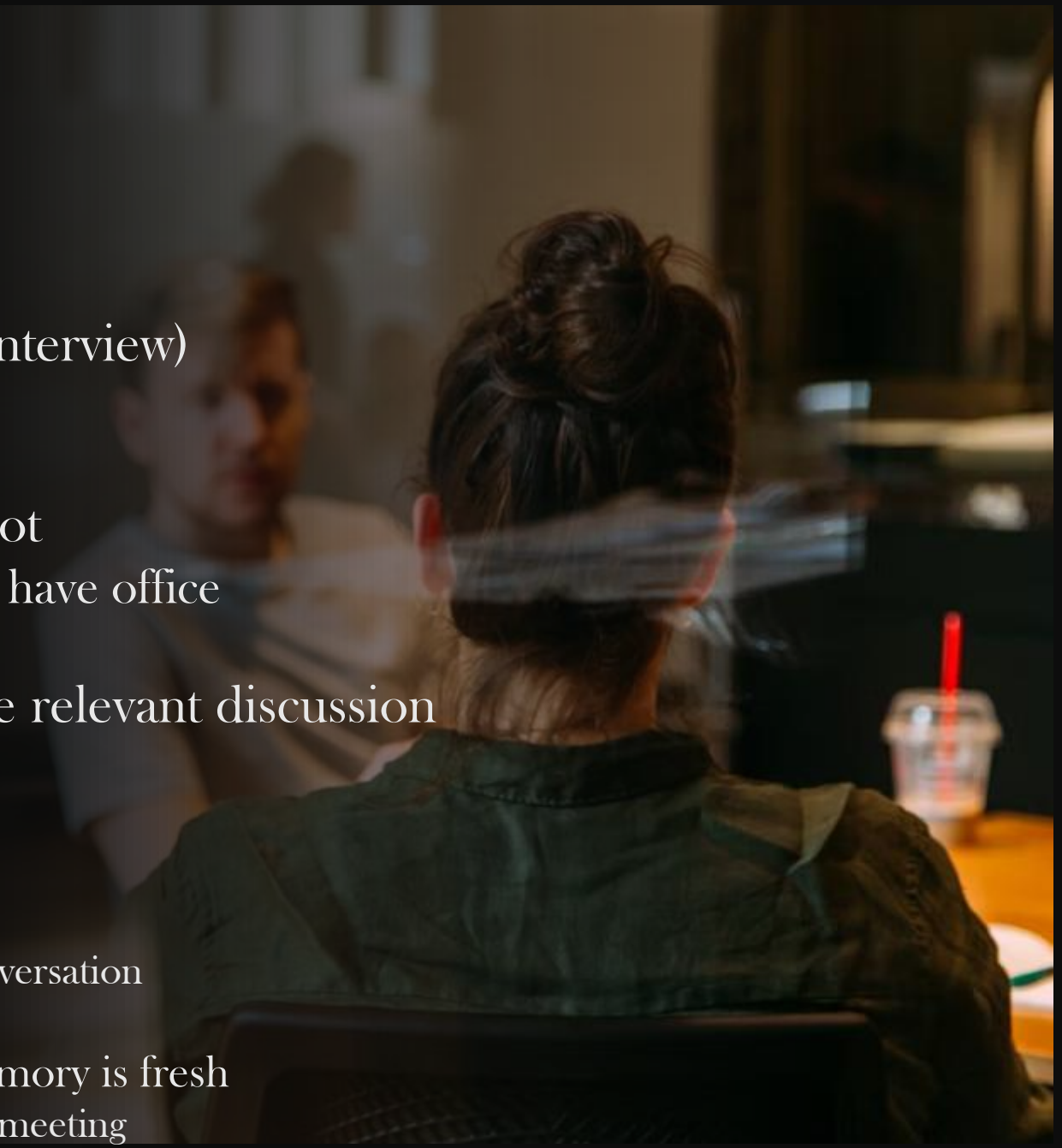


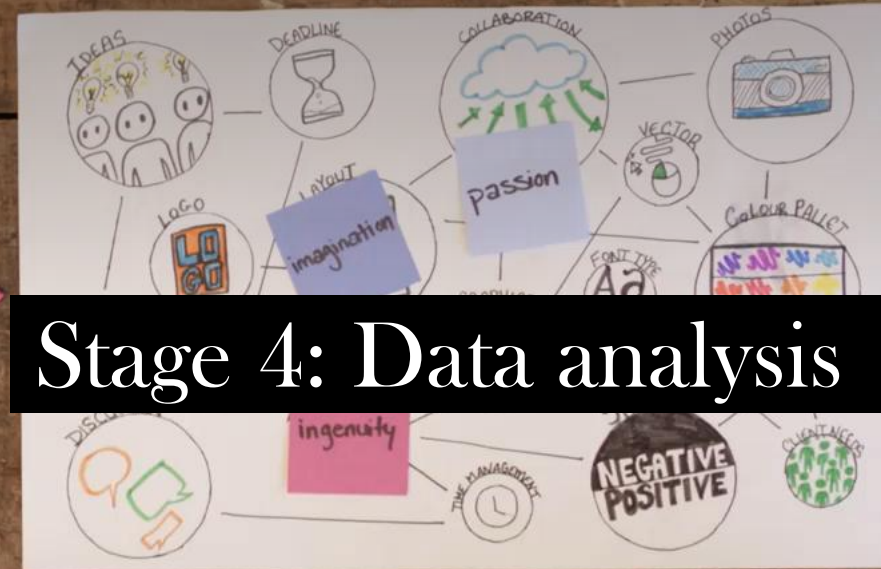
Stage 3: Research

Step 3: Gather Data, Part 2.3 (Qualitative Interview)

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Stage 4: Data analysis

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38 I: So you're saying there's a difference maybe between a crown court and a
39 magistrates' court?

40 R: Yeah. I mean the magistrates' court's sort of very just like skirty issues really,
41 it just looks at getting things through quickly because it has such a build up of
42 cases to get through.

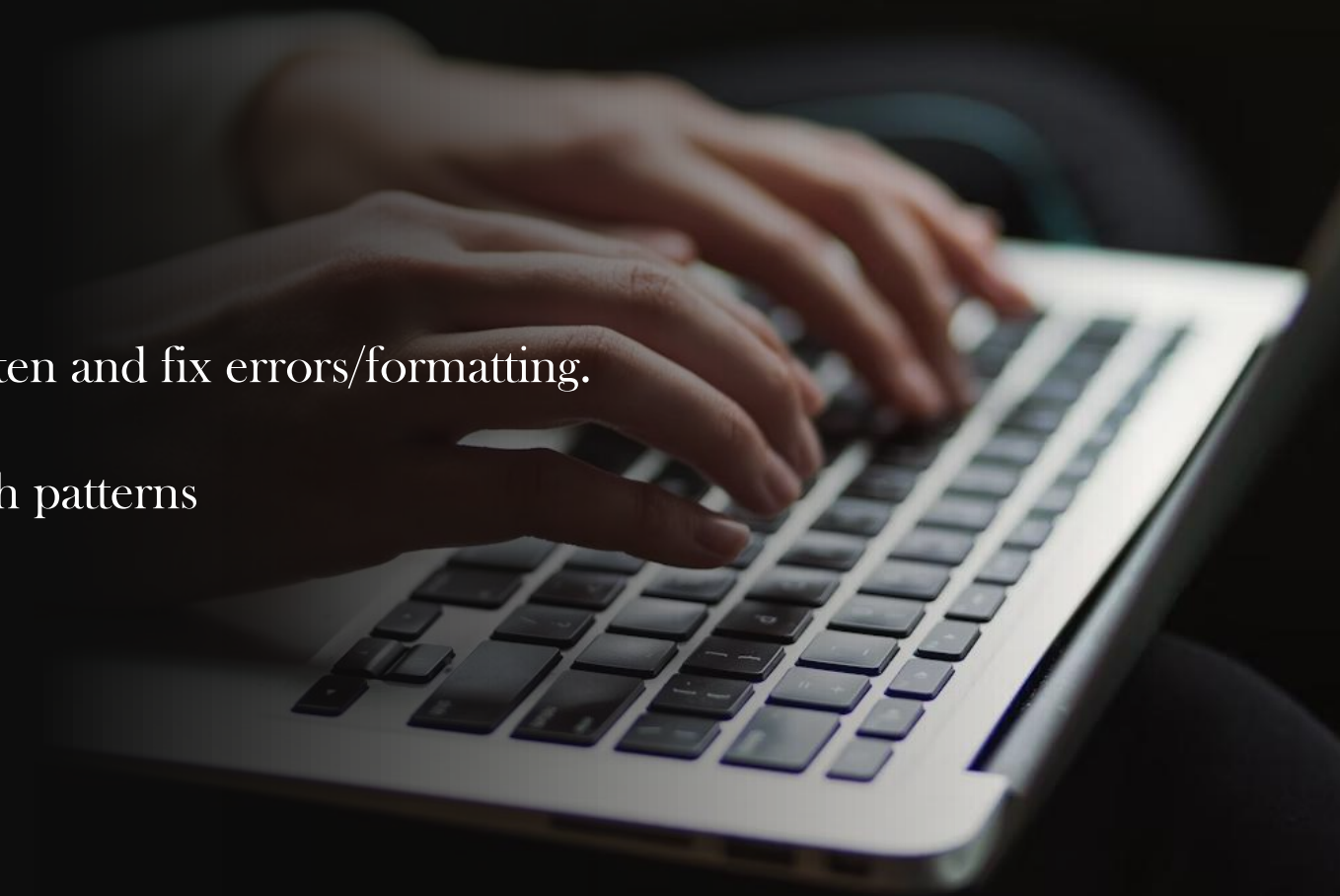
43 I: Do you think they're effective in the way they work?

44 R: I think the magistrates' is the least effective. I think it's hard to expect sort of
45 it to operate when it has somebody with not much legal training making
46 decisions on law. I mean you wouldn't get that in the crown court say because
47 they value the legal training of the judge in those places...so you have like a
48 lesser court so it's just like an appointed position that anyone can have.
49 There's obviously going to be less justice there.

Stage 4: Data Analysis

Step 1: Transcription

- Type up audio file
 - Ideally verbatim / word for word
- If you use transcription software, re-listen and fix errors/formatting.
- Consider significance of pauses, speech patterns
 - Include in typed up version.



Stage 4: Data Analysis

Step 2: Coding Data

Highlight interview data of related/chosen categories of focus

- Use different colors for:
 - Research question
 - Dialogue themes
 - Event mentions
 - Shared ideas among participants
 - Community relationships / network mapping details
- Work smarter, not harder
 - Utilize NVIVO, advanced excel methods, or other data software.

Coding Strategies/Methods

Sorting

Synthesizing

Theorizing

After First Cycle Coding

Categorizing codes and generating themes – based on:

- a. Relationship between codes
- b. Code frequencies
- c. Underlying meaning across codes

Second Cycle Coding Method

1. Pattern coding
2. Focused coding
3. Axial coding
4. Theoretical coding

Abstract
or
General

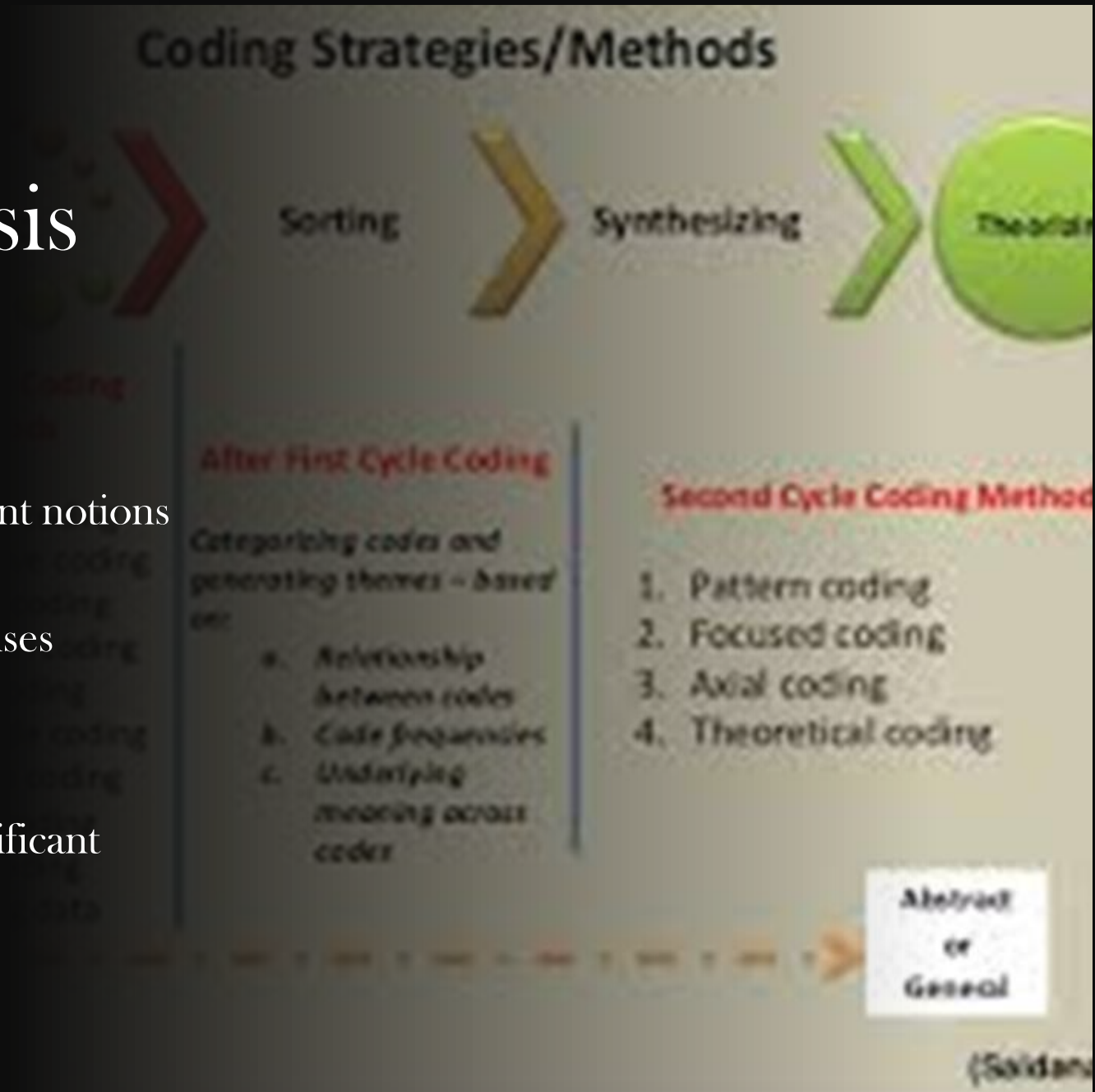
(Solidano)

Stage 4: Data Analysis

Step 2: Coding Data

Look for, and analyze, patterns

- Notice when there are repeat or divergent notions
 - From your original question
 - From / between participants responses
- Take into consideration:
 - Your research question
 - Anything newly apparent to be significant

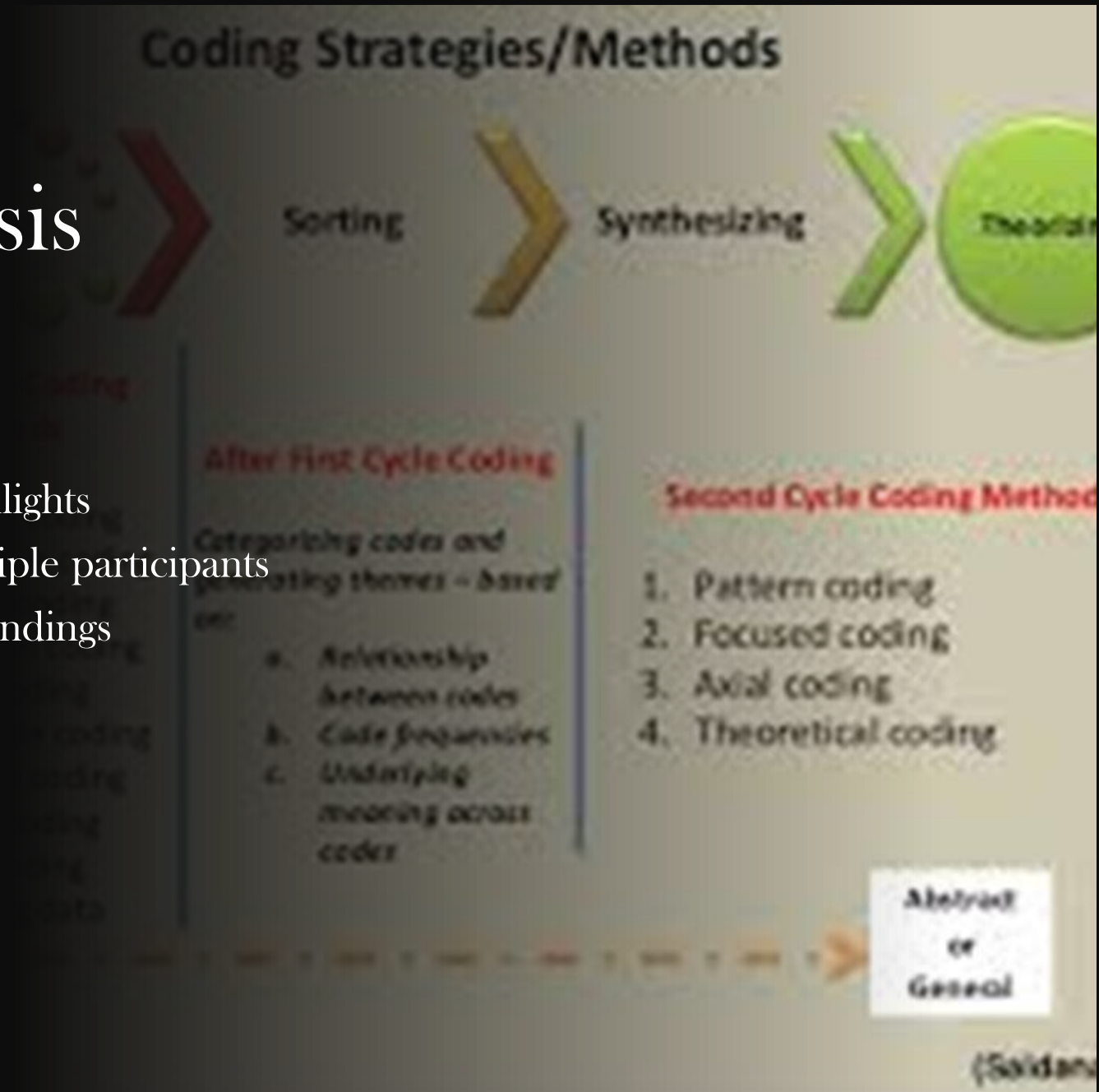


Stage 4: Data Analysis

Step 2: Coding Data

Synthesize findings into narrative

- Summarize each participant's story highlights
- Summarize into larger narrative of multiple participants
- Note similarities, divergences, general findings



Stage 4: Data Analysis

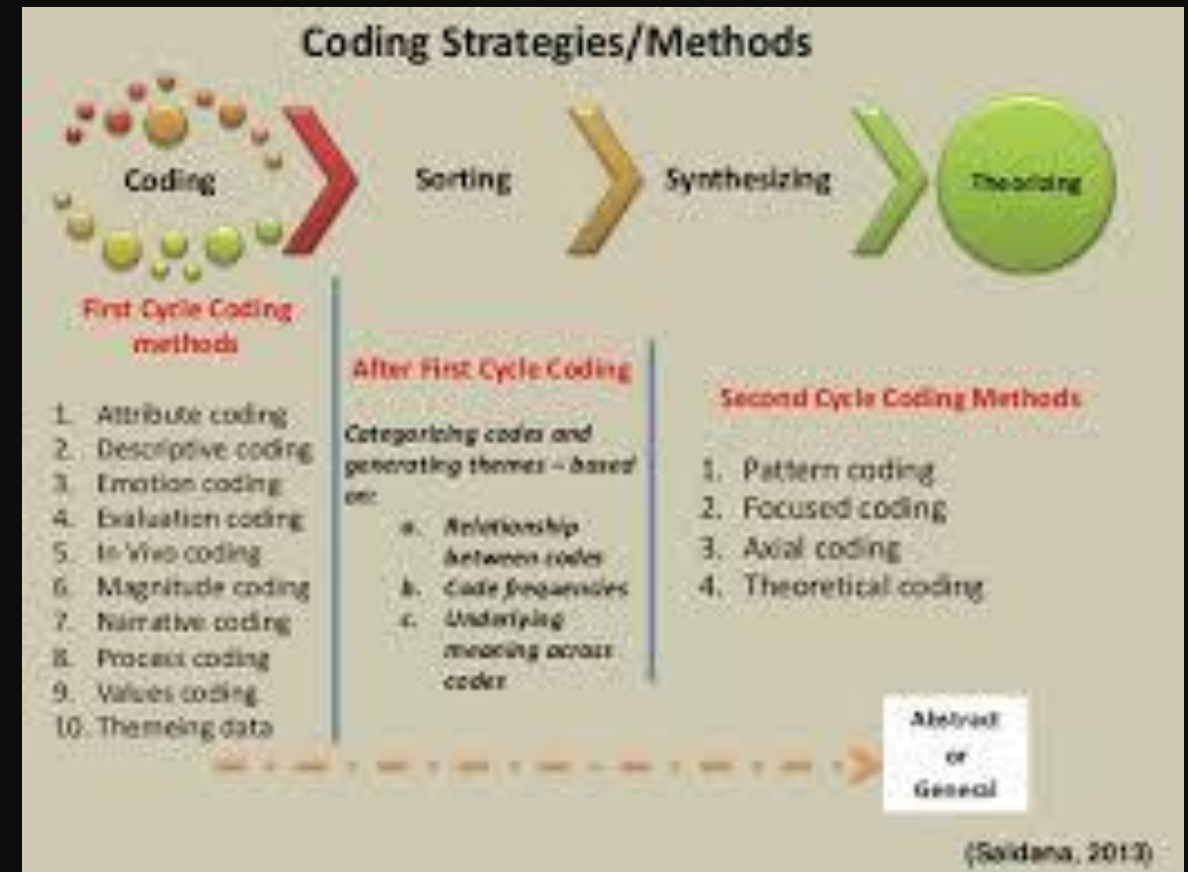
Step 2: Coding Data

Coding: Example

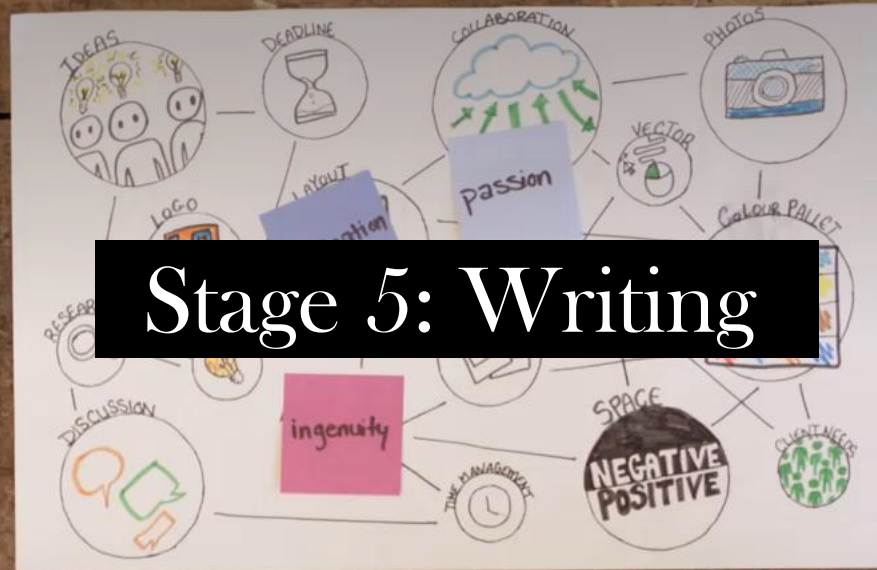
A: We have an **upstream delivery method**, primarily to retailers, a 3rd party vendor keeps track and sends the bulbs out. The idea is to lower the price on shelves. The major **constraint is its difficult to know our customer**- hard to evaluate who is buying the bulb and what sockets they are putting them into. However there are some advantages. We can **control consumer choice**, working with retail partners, we have dominant displays of incentivized bulbs. Yet we think **EISA is going to really impact future savings**...

Respondent	Excerpt	Code	Themes or Categories
1	Upstream delivery method	UP	Type of Program
1	Constraint is its difficult to know our customers	NEG	Weaknesses of Program
1	Control consumer choice	POS	Strengths of Program
1	EISA is going to really impact future savings	EISA	Impact of EISA

12



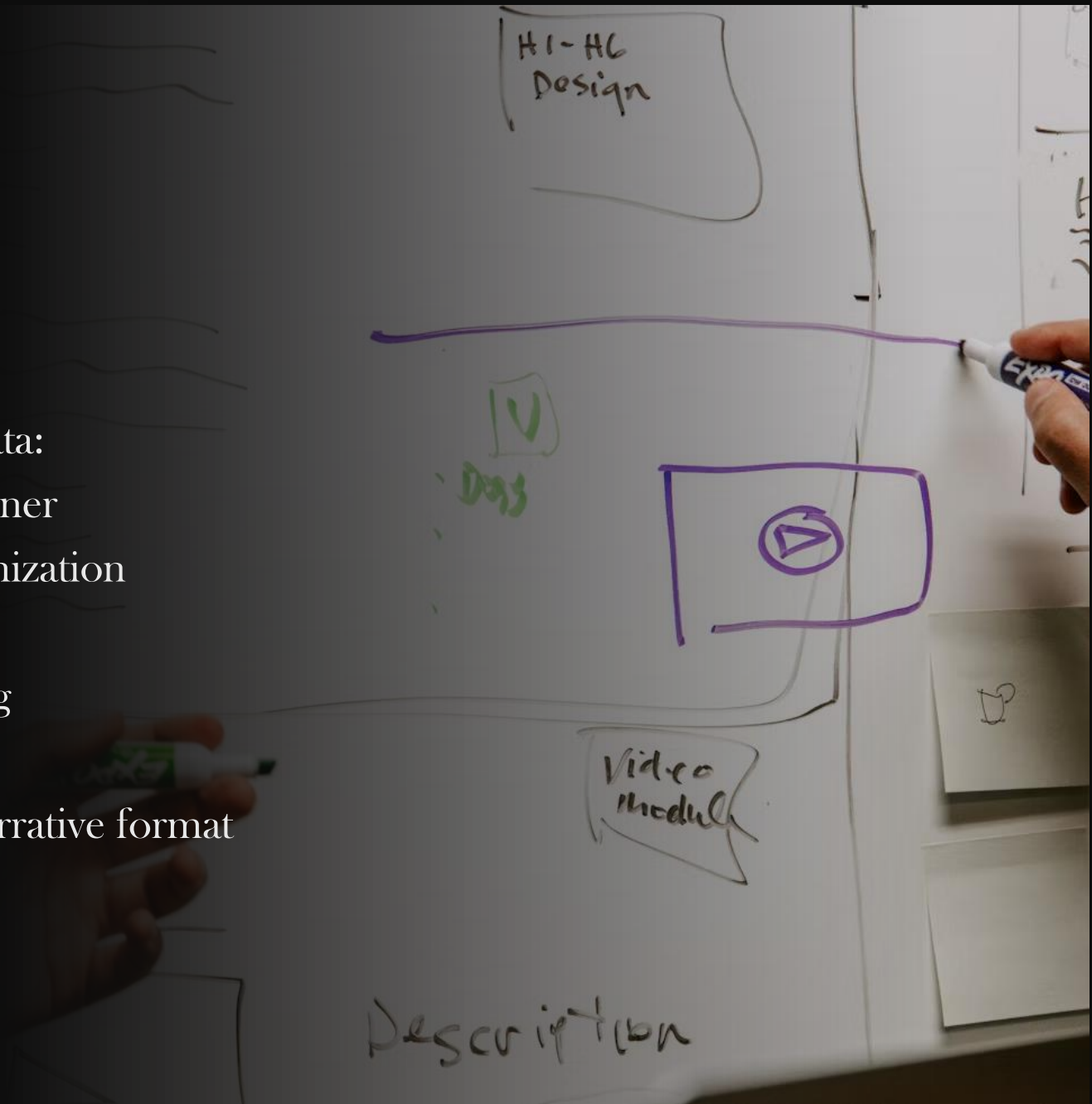
Stage 5: Writing



Stage 5 : Writing

Step 1: Pre-writing

- Create a plan to connect and organize data:
 - Traditional outline: use word, scrivener
 - Helpful for section / Flow organization
 - Concept map:
 - Helpful for visual brainstorming
 - Abstract:
 - Helpful to put overview into narrative format



Stage 5 : Writing

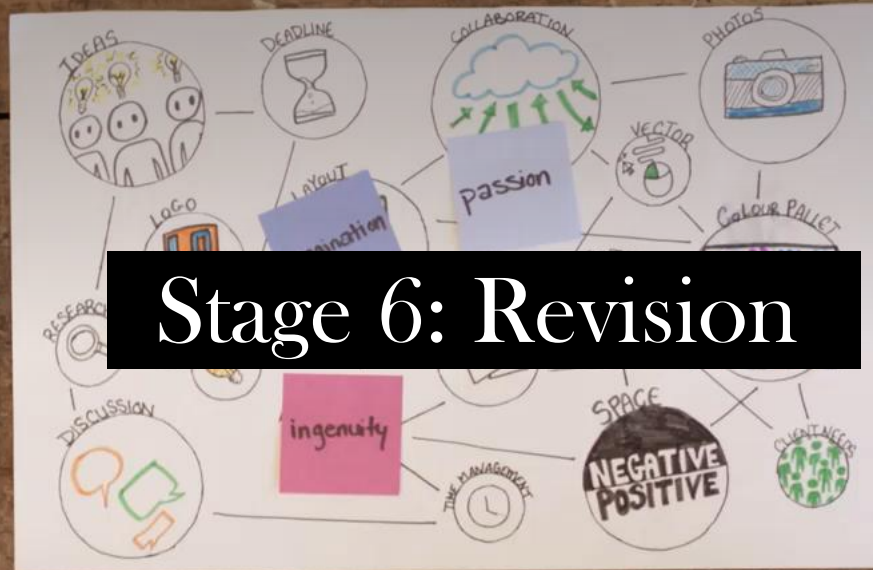
Step 2: Writing

First Draft Composition Advice:

- Write first, edit later
 - Focus first on getting the information down on the page.
 - Worry about revision and edits later.
- Use your earlier summaries / notes / data organization to your advantage!
 - Write in sections. Use the outline.
 - Take your time. Don't procrastinate and then rush.



Stage 6: Revision

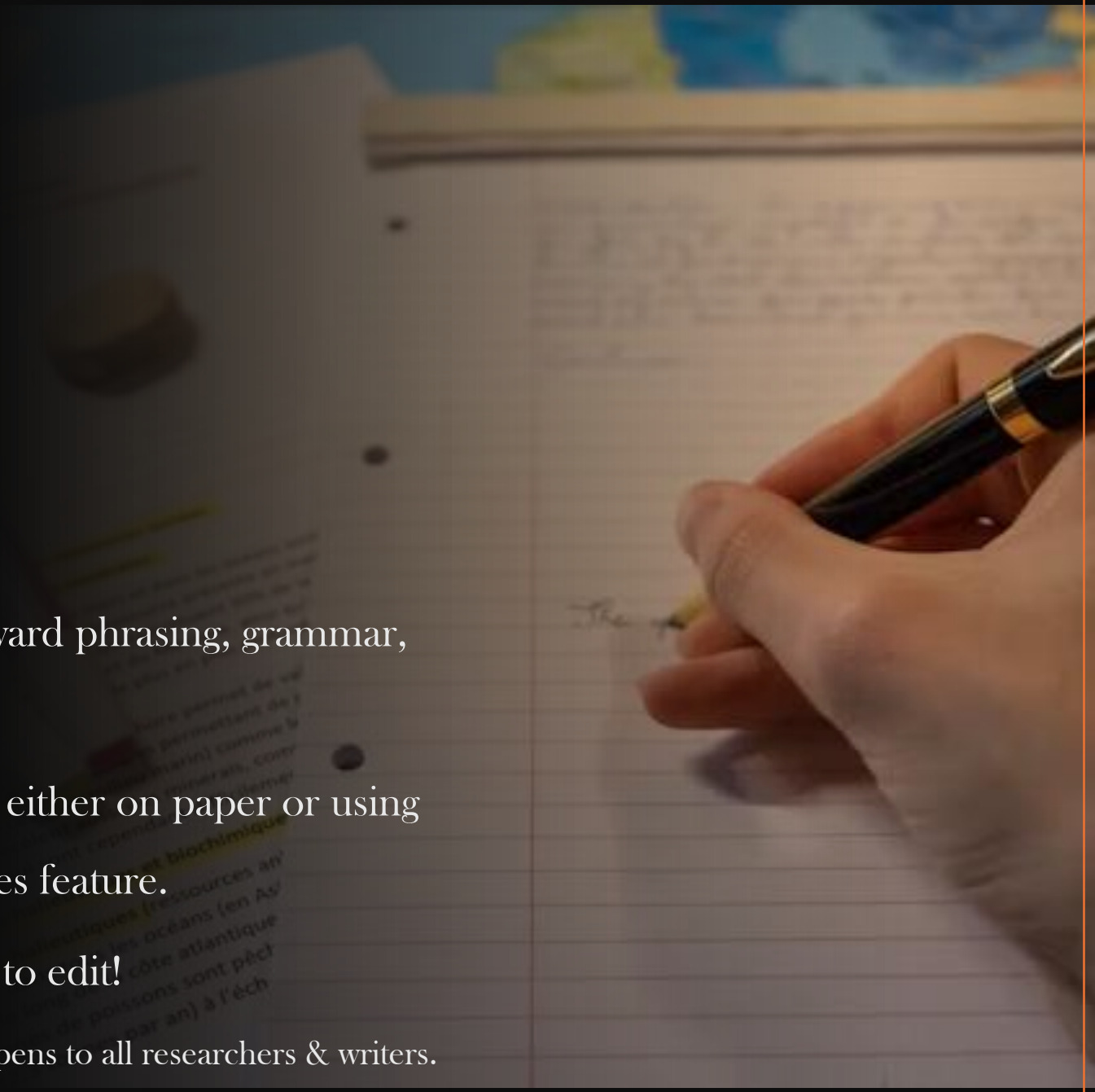


Stage 6 : Revision

Step 1: Review

Review process:

- Run a spelling/grammar check.
- Read your paper backwards for awkward phrasing, grammar, and spelling.
- Make as many markings as needed – either on paper or using Microsoft word/software Track Changes feature.
- Don't be disheartened if there's a lot to edit!
 - This is a normal part of the process - happens to all researchers & writers.

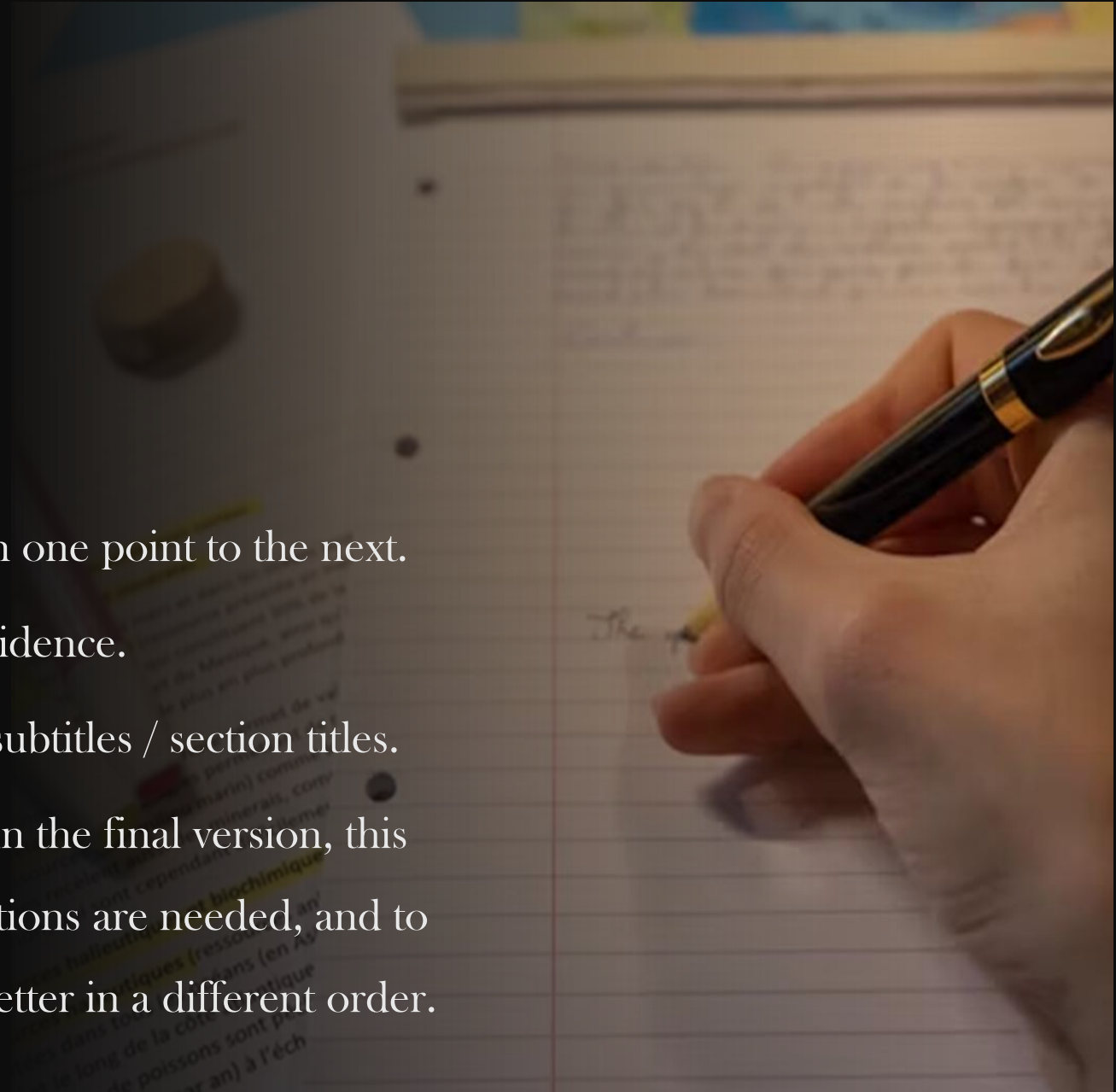


Stage 6 : Revision

Step 1: Review

Organize sections:

- Ensure paper moves logically from one point to the next.
- Make sure all claims backed by evidence.
- Consider ordering the 'flow' with subtitles / section titles.
 - Even if you don't keep them in the final version, this can help you see where transitions are needed, and to rearrange sections if they fit better in a different order.

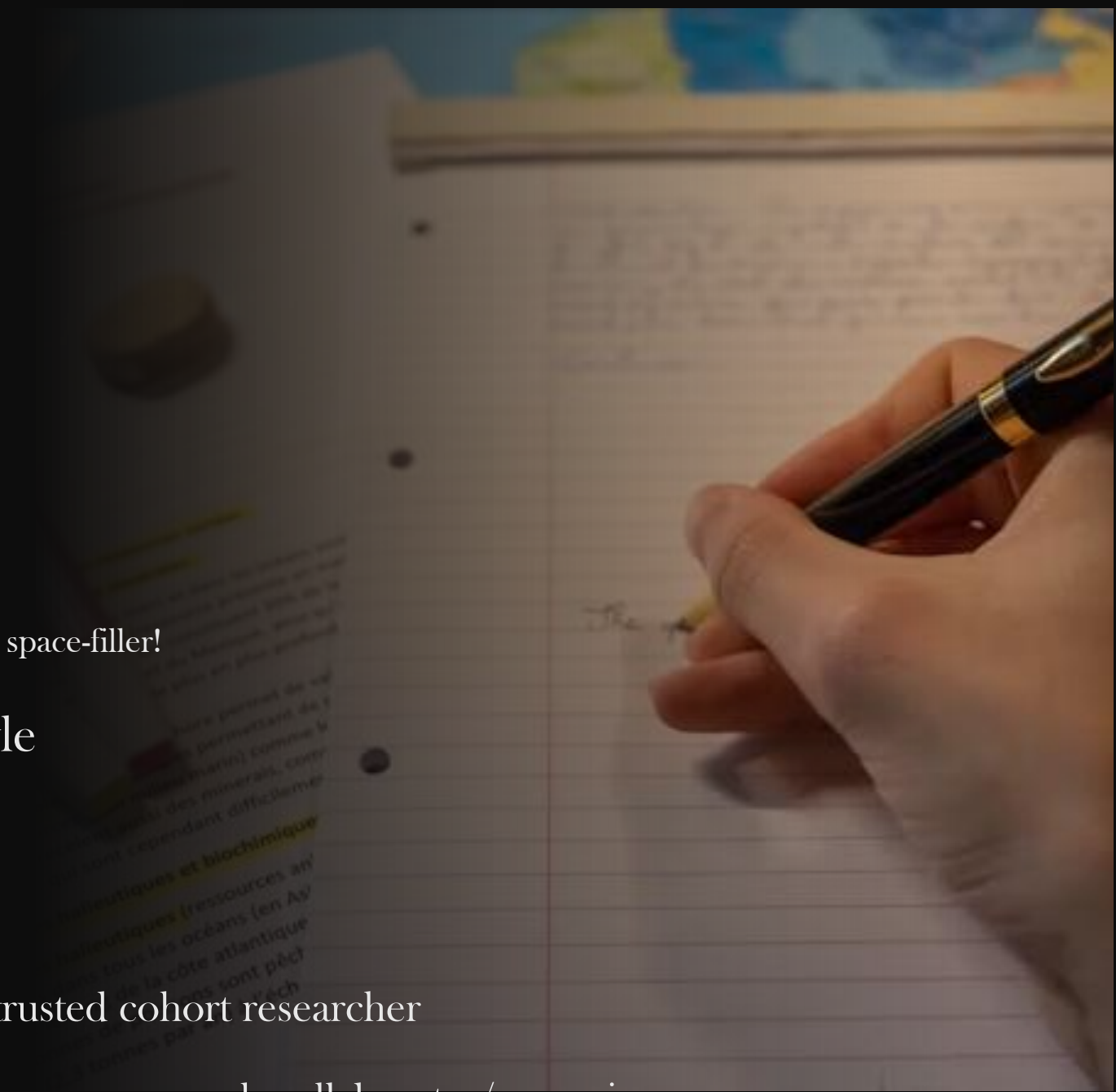


Stage 6 : Revision

Step 2: Rewrite

Rewrite as needed:

- Kill your darlings
 - Condense information that is ‘fluff’ / space-filler!
- Rewrite for flow / clarity / style
 - Take time between drafts
 - See things with ‘fresh eyes’
 - Consider trading editing with trusted cohort researcher
 - Take advice of academic advisors or research collaborator/supervisor



Stage 7: Finalize



Stage 7 : Finalize

Step 1: Submit

Submitting your paper:

- Be aware of deadlines.
- Do not underestimate time necessary to be fully polished before submitting work.
- Make sure everything is in correct format.
 - Document type (Word, PDF)
 - Citation formatting (MLA, APA, Chicago)
 - Other required documents by professor/journal/publication.

Stage 7 : Finalize

Step 2: Present

- Take deep breaths if nervous
- Speak clearly and loudly
- Include relevant information
- Lengthen or shorten based on time allotted

