CODING

UNM Evaluation Lab Summer Institute

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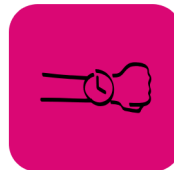
Data Collection

Evaluation Questions

Participatory Evaluation

Mission Time

Measuring What Matters

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To learn how to code qualitative data:
  - What is coding?
  - Coding steps
  - Presenting results

- To practice coding

Charmaz's Metaphor (2006)

Coding generates the bones of your analysis . . .

Integration will assemble those bones

Into a working skeleton.

What does Coding do?

Coding serves as a tool to analyze qualitative data

Coding condenses large amounts of data into manageable units of analysis

Coding separates material so that it can be classified

What is a Code?

- At its simplest, a code is a label or name attached to a chunk of text. Codes link related groups of words (or text).
- "A code is a word of phrase that assigns a summative, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute to a portion of language-based or visual data.
- Coding is a method to organize data as a first step to analysis
Codes > Concepts > Themes > and sometimes Theory

Source: Saldana, Johnny (2013). The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers. SAGE

What are Descriptive Codes?

- Descriptive codes store information about data items (respondents, events, contexts). This information can provide knowledge about the respondents (gender, age) the setting (meeting, program, home) or the context (year, question answered).

- Descriptive codes do not require interpretation and are used for asking questions (how did children's responses differ from or mirrored their parents?)

What Is Topic Coding?

- An analytic activity used as a first step of interpretation.
- A "critical link" between data collection and explanation of its meaning.
- Entails creating a category, reflecting on where it belongs among your growing ideas and continuously reflecting on the data.
- First step to more interpretive coding

Cycle of Coding

Coding is linking from the data to the idea and back to other data

From concrete data, transcripts, notes to

Familiarization with data: time to reflect and order data, to

Extraction of key concepts, to

Looking for patterns

Before Coding and as You Code

Keep in front of you:

- A copy of the evaluation question(s)
- The goals of the evaluation

Coding Steps 1

- First, transcribe all responses into a spreadsheet
- Second, code each unit individually by identifying its main idea(s) or concept(s). Review all responses.
- Third, review first codes and either expand them, change them or group them into more comprehensive categories (second coding).
- Fourth, reach consistency and consensus among coders.
- The practice of coding each response ensures inclusion of all responses
- Coding by multiple readers and subsequent consensus building reduces
- the chance of overlooking ideas

Coding Steps 2: deduction of themes

- Fifth, deduce themes from the codes. Review and/or rename the themes

- Themes result from reflection about codes to find patterns, trends or concepts

- Sometimes codes may suggest themes and material for quotations (keep notes or memos about these)

- Themes are phrases or sentences that capture the meaning of coded data.

- Finally, write the results of the analysis.

Example of a Topic Code

This data contain information from a set of field notes about a neighborhood

Data	Code
I notice that the grand majority of homes have chain link fences in front of them. There are many dogs (mostly German Shepherds) with signs on fences that say "Beware of the dog"	Security

Another Example of a Topic Code

Excerpt from an interview with a mother about her son's middle school years

Data	Code
My son, Barry, went through a really tough time …at the end of fifth grade and went into sixth grade	Middle school hell
When he was growing up in school his teachers loved him to death	Teacher's pet

An Example

- Recent Analysis of data from one question in a focus group with clients from an affiliate organization.

- Respondents included parents and children.

- Let's Code!

Thank you!

Questions?

Comments?