

Qualitative Research

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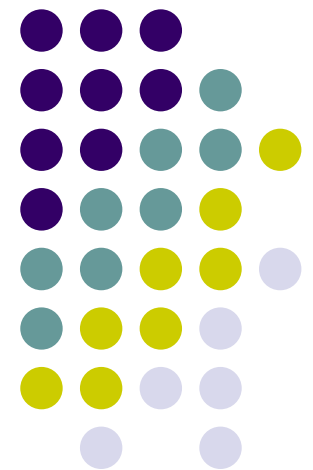
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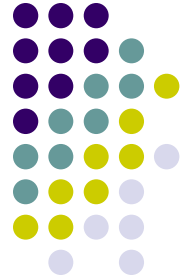
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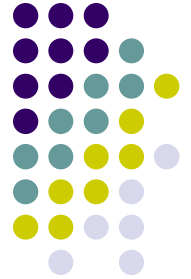


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Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.

Albert Einstein



What is qualitative data?

Types of Qualitative Data



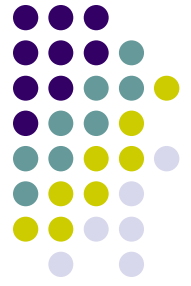
- **Observations (outside vs. participant observer)**
 - descriptions of the environment, activities, behaviors, conversations, social processes
 - *data*: field notes, meeting minutes
- **Interviews**
 - open-ended questions with probes
 - *data*: text documenting experiences, perceptions, opinions, knowledge in respondents' words
- **Documents**
 - written materials and photos (program records, reports, letters, newspaper articles)
 - *data*: documents or photos that record context

Observation



*What you see and how you interpret
what you've seen depends on where
you've been*

“You are the instrument of observation”



Skilled Observation

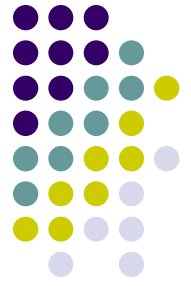
- Although seeing may be “natural”, systematic research observation requires practice
e.g. “Windshield survey”
- Recording detailed field notes is essential, memory is selective and unreliable
- Requires that the observer understands one’s own lens, acknowledging the strengths and limitations of one’s own perspective which requires both self-knowledge and self-disclosure



Interviewing is rather like marriage; everybody knows what it is, an awful lot of people do it, and yet behind each closed door there is a world of secrets

A. Oakley (1981)

Interviewing



- Basic premise: perspective of others is meaningful
- Requires of art of hearing
- Quality of the information is largely dependent upon- the interviewer's ability to:
 - create an comfortable, safe atmosphere soliciting an open response
 - to use relevant probes
- Interview styles
 - Capturing stories
 - Informational conversational interview
 - General interview guide approach
 - Standard open-ended interview questions



Types of Interviews

- One-on-One interviews
- Paired interviews
 - spouses
 - friends
- Group interviews
 - focus groups
 - natural groups
 - expert panel
 - consensus panel



Sample Size and Type

- Recommended sample selection to the point of redundancy
- Sampling is terminated when no new information is adding to or is challenging the developing framework or picture
- Non-random sampling justifiable, e.g. *purposeful sampling*, selecting key informants



Interviews

Validity, meaningfulness and insights generated from qualitative inquiry depend more on the selection of information rich cases and the observational/analytical capabilities of the researcher than with the sample size

Patton 2002



Purposeful sampling

- Objective of purposeful sampling is to select information rich cases
- Information rich cases are those from one can learn a great deal, gain insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations
- Considered a weakness in quantitative research, is a strength of qualitative research
- Can be followed by snowball or chain sampling
- Not convenience sampling



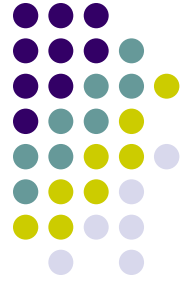
Documents

- Systematic review of materials used by target audience
- Systematic review of materials developed by target audience, e.g. newspapers, ads, announcements of community events, educational information
- Photographs of community events, community leaders, community assets, e.g. “safe places”

Assuring the Quality of Qualitative Data



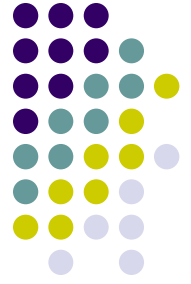
- Qualitative research can not be replicated, it can be audited (rigorous documentation)
- Goal is “to leave a trail of data and analysis that another investigator can follow” (successful exploration)
- Use of triangulation techniques to validate data and their interpretation in analysis
- Systematic analysis



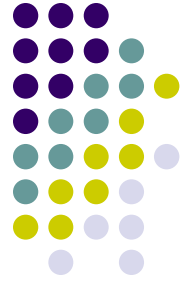
Triangulation

- Not to yield the same result, different methods will yield different results, yet outcomes are complimentary – **develop a complete picture**
- Data triangulation: use of a variety of data sources
- Investigator triangulation: use of several different researchers in data collection and analysis
- Methodological triangulation: use of multiple methods to study a single program

Content Analysis

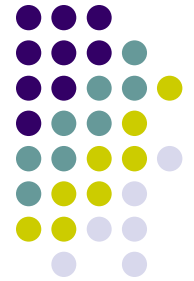


- Searching “raw data” or text for recurring words, concepts or ideas in transcripts, notes and/or written responses
- Identifying core consistencies and ideas



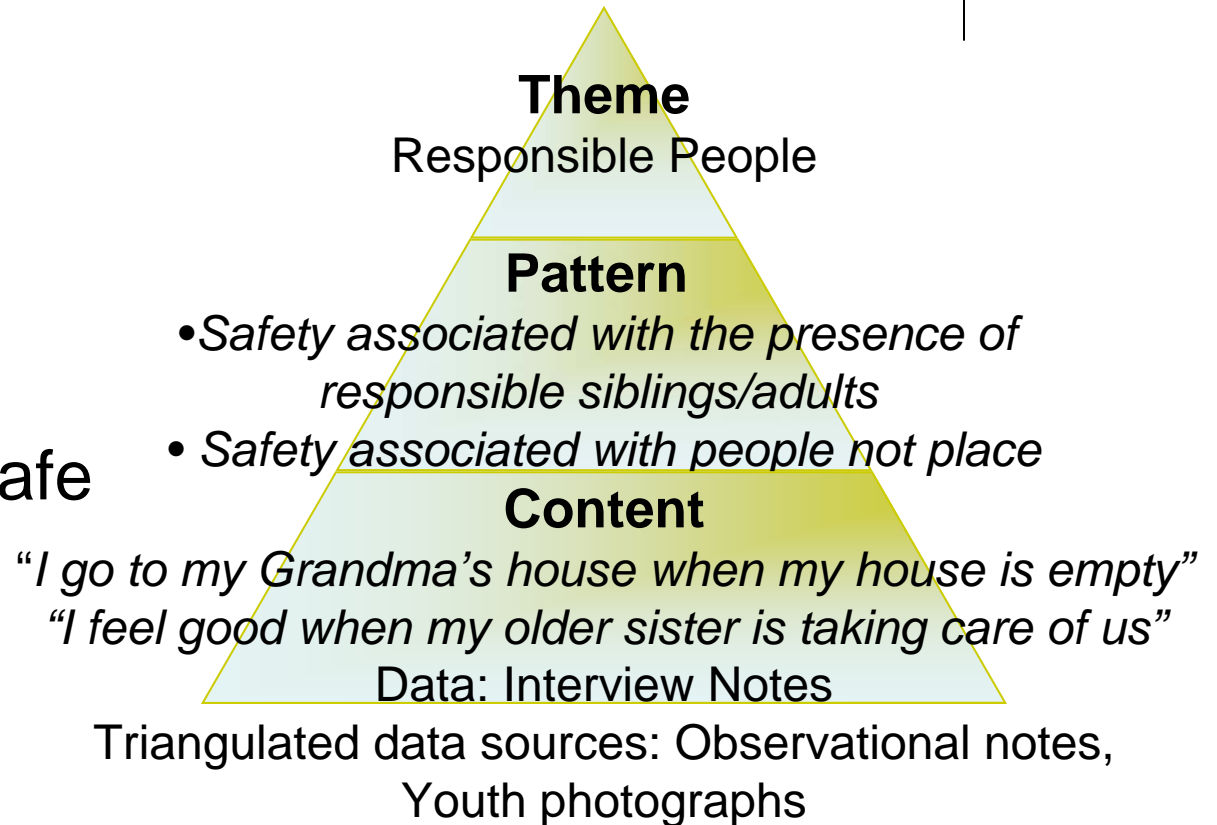
Pattern Identification

- Group phrases and observations of similar content to reveal a descriptive pattern



Thematic Analysis

- Identification of themes takes a categorical or topical form
- Example from “Safe Places” Project

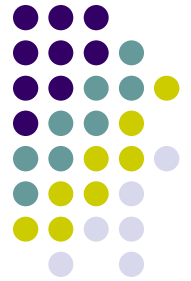


Why is this type of data useful to understanding health issues and conducting program evaluation?

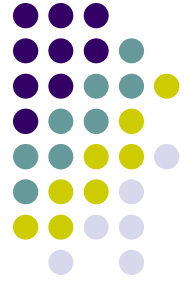


Teufel-Shone, UA MEZCOPH 2007-2008

Uses of Qualitative Research

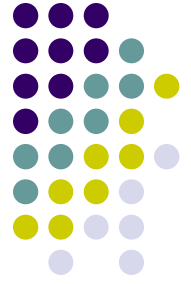


- Formative Assessment to understand the context of health conditions and health behaviors, including local attitudes and beliefs
- Process Assessment to reveal unexpected strengths and weaknesses in a program
- Evaluation to reveal unexpected outcomes or aid in the interpretation of results



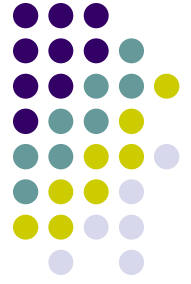
Formative Assessment

- To support program design
- What do you observe?
- Who do you interview?
- What documents or photographs do you review or collect?



Process Assessment

- To collect perception of the program
- What do you observe?
- Who do you interview?
- What documents or photographs do you compile?



Outcome Evaluation

- To document the impact of the program
- What do you observe?
- Who do you interview?
- What written or photographic documents do you compile?



Additional Resources

- Patton MQ. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods, 3rd edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications; 2002.
- University of Kansas Community Tool Box
<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/>

