Qualitative Research Primer

an overview of the basics

presented by Josué Meléndez Rodríguez, MA, MSW

Introductions

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Michigan State University
MA in Higher, Adult, & Lifelong Education
MSW in Organizational & Community Practice

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BSW in Generalist Practice

Agenda

General Considerations

  Philosophical Considerations

Methodologies & Methods

Theories & Frameworks

UC Berkeley Resources

Reading Recommendations

Coding & Analysis

General Considerations

- Qualitative, Quantitative, & Mixed-Methods

- Differences of Opinion

- Requirements of Field, Journal, Etc.

- Systematic Flexibility

Steps in Research Project

1. Determine Question(s)
2. Conduct Literature Review
3. Determine Methodology & Methods
1. Collect Data
2. Code & Analyze Data
3. Determine & Write Findings
4. Frame & Write Discussion

Philosophical Considerations

Ontology

    subjectivist ----------------   constructivist ----------------   objectivist

Epistemology

Axiology

Methodologies & Methods

Methodologies

- Case Studies
- Ethnographies
- Phenomenologies
- Grounded Theory
- Narratives

Methods

- Case Studies
- Ethnographic Methods
    - Observations
    - Interviews
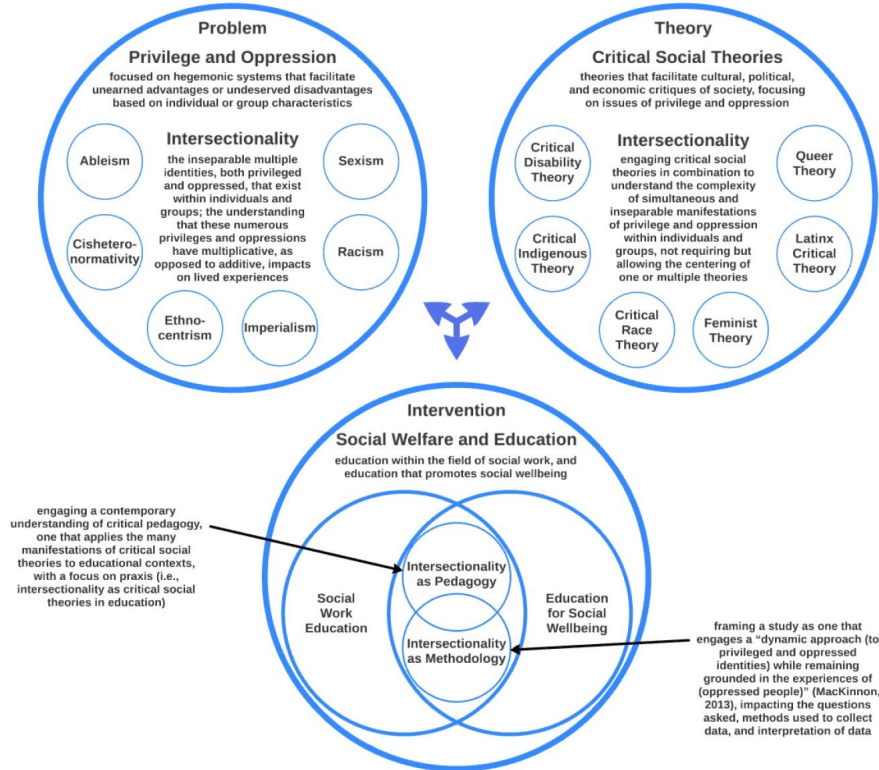- Text/Video/Picture Analysis

Theories and Frameworks

- Theories
    - Formal Theories (e.g., Intersectionality Theory)
    - Tacit Theories
- Frameworks
    - Structural Framework (e.g., Transformative Framework)
    - Conceptual Framework

Sample Conceptual Maps 1 of 3

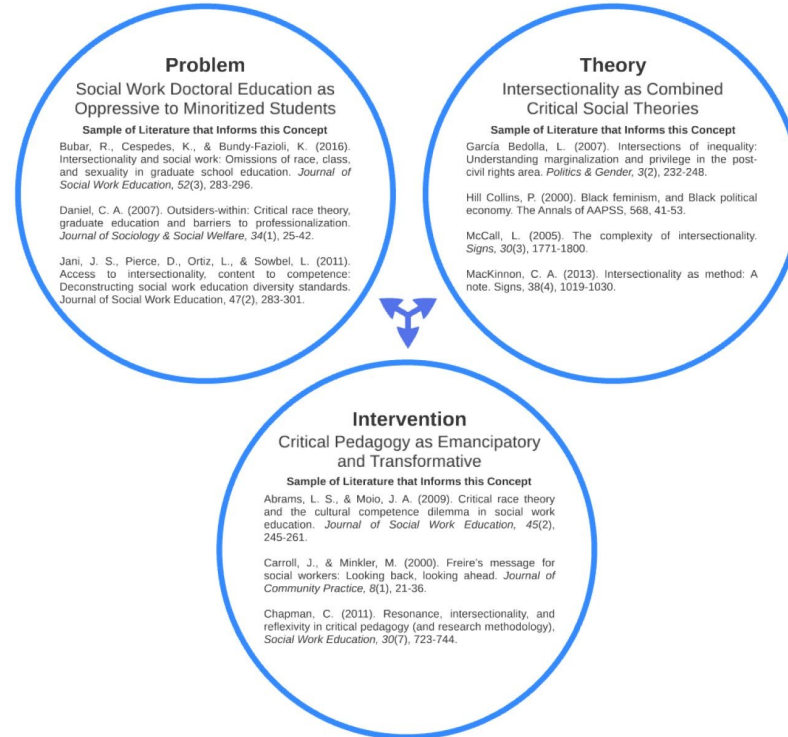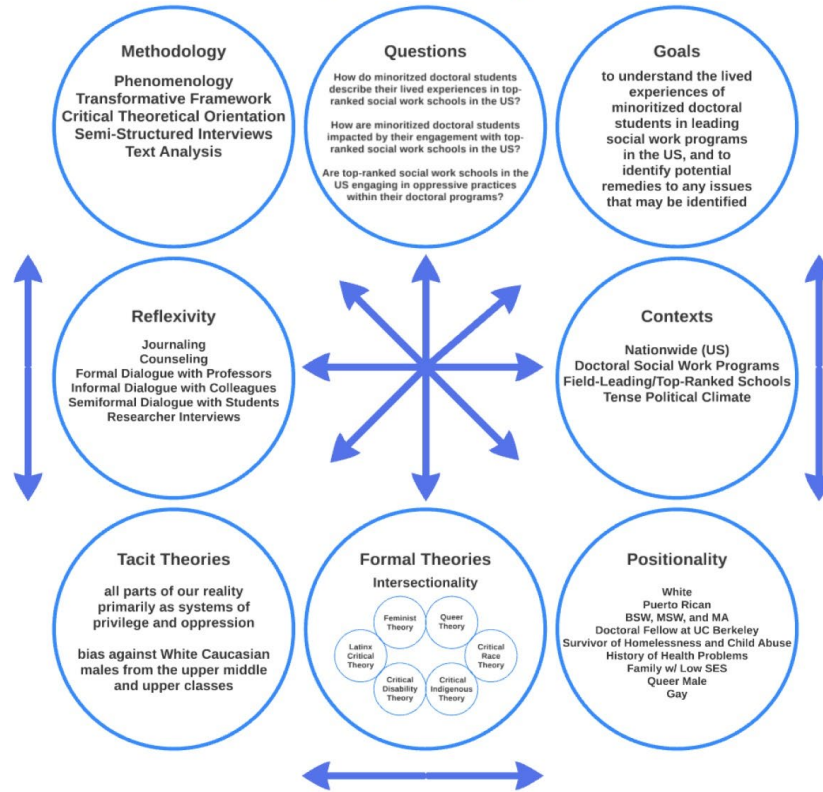Intersectionality as a Guiding Concept for Identifying, Understanding, and Impacting Social Problems

Sample Conceptual Maps 2 of 3

Literature Samples for Ethnoracial Minorities in Higher Education: Case Study from a Doctoral Program

Problem

Social Work Doctoral Education as Oppressive to Minoritized Students

Sample of Literature that Informs this Concept

Bubar, R., Cespedes, K., & Bundy-Fazioli, K. (2016). Intersectionality and social work: Omissions of race, class, and sexuality in graduate school education. *Journal of Social Work Education, 52*(3), 283-296.

Daniel, C. A. (2007). Outsiders-within: Critical race theory, graduate education and barriers to professionalization. *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare, 34*(1), 25-42.

Jani, J. S., Pierce, D., Ortiz, L., & Sowbel, L. (2011). Access to intersectionality, content to competence: Deconstructing social work education diversity standards. Journal of Social Work Education, 47(2), 283-301.

Theory

Intersectionality as Combined Critical Social Theories

Sample of Literature that Informs this Concept

García Bedolla, L. (2007). Intersections of inequality: Understanding marginalization and privilege in the post-civil rights area. *Politics & Gender, 3*(2), 232-248.

Hill Collins, P. (2000). Black feminism, and Black political economy. The Annals of AAPSS, 568, 41-53.

McCall, L. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs, 30*(3), 1771-1800.

MacKinnon, C. A. (2013). Intersectionality as method: A note. Signs, 38(4), 1019-1030.

Intervention

Critical Pedagogy as Emancipatory and Transformative

Sample of Literature that Informs this Concept

Abrams, L. S., & Moio, J. A. (2009). Critical race theory and the cultural competence dilemma in social work education. *Journal of Social Work Education, 45*(2), 245-261.

Carroll, J., & Minkler, M. (2000). Freire's message for social workers: Looking back, looking ahead. *Journal of Community Practice, 8*(1), 21-36.

Chapman, C. (2011). Resonance, intersectionality, and reflexivity in critical pedagogy (and research methodology), *Social Work Education, 30*(7), 723-744.

Sample Conceptual Maps
3 of 3

Conceptual Framework for Ethnoracial Minorities in Higher Education: Case Study from a Doctoral Program

Methodology

Phenomenology
Transformative Framework
Critical Theoretical Orientation
Semi-Structured Interviews
Text Analysis

Questions

How do minoritzed doctoral students describe their lived experiences in top-ranked social work schools in the US?

How are minoritized doctoral students impacted by their engagement with top-ranked social work schools in the US?

Are top-ranked social work schools in the US engaging in oppressive practices within their doctoral programs?

Goals

to understand the lived experiences of minoritized doctoral students in leading social work programs in the US, and to identify potential remedies to any issues that may be identified

Reflexivity

Journaling
Counseling
Formal Dialogue with Professors
Informal Dialogue with Colleagues
Semiformal Dialogue with Students
Researcher Interviews

Contexts

Nationwide (US)
Doctoral Social Work Programs
Field-Leading/Top-Ranked Schools
Tense Political Climate

Tacit Theories

all parts of our reality primarily as systems of privilege and oppression

bias against White Caucasian males from the upper middle and upper classes

Formal Theories

Intersectionality

Feminist Theory
Queer Theory
Latinx Critical Theory
Critical Race Theory
Critical Disability Theory
Critical Indigenous Theory

Positionality

White
Puerto Rican
BSW, MSW, and MA
Doctoral Fellow at UC Berkeley
Survivor of Homelessness and Child Abuse
History of Health Problems
Family w/ Low SES
Queer Male
Gay

UC Berkeley Resources

D-Lab
- Workshops & Presentations
- Working Groups & Consultants
- Workspace

Institute for the Study of Societal Issues (ISSI)
- Presentations
- Trainings
- Fellowships

Graduate School of Education (GSE)
- Introduction to Qualitative Research
- Advanced Qualitative Research
- Year-Long Qualitative Research Seminar

School of Public Health
- Introduction to Qualitative Research
- Participatory Action Research (PAR)
- Critical Theories in Social Science Research

African American Studies
- Interdisciplinary Research Methods

References & Reading Recommendations

Paradigms of Research for the 21st Century: Perspectives & Examples from Practice edited by A.Lukenchuk

Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches by J. Creswell

Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook by M. B. Miles, A. M. Huberman, & J. Saldaña

Qualitative Research: Bridging the Conceptual, Theoretical, & Methodological by S. M. Ravitch & N. Mittenfelner Carl

Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach by J. Maxwell

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy at plato.stanford.edu

The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers by J.Saldaña

Thinking Qualitatively: Methods of Mind by J.Saldaña

Other recommendations may be available based on specific areas of interest.

Coding & Analysis

What are Codes? What is Coding?

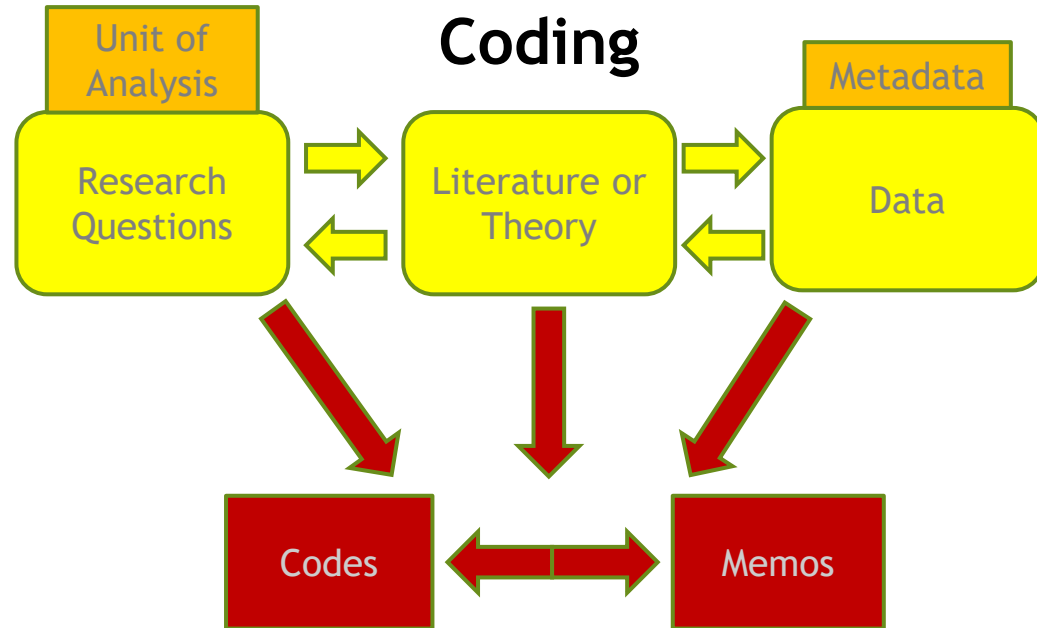Coding is a way to organize data around common ideas, concepts, or categories ACROSS sources.

A   B   C

Coding & Analysis

Coding

Unit of Analysis		Metadata	
Research Questions	→	Literature or Theory	→ Data
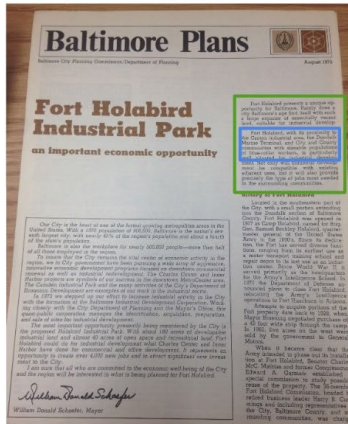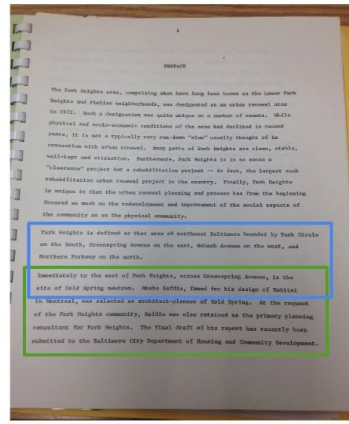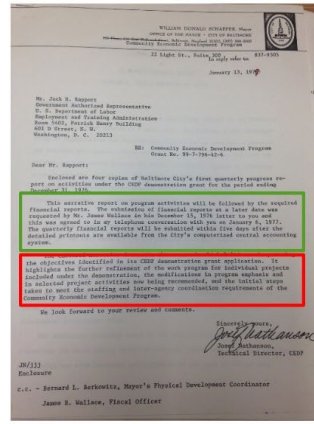
Codes ←→ Memos

Sample Code Creation Process   - 4+ steps in 3 timeframes

1. Prior to Data Collection
    1. Generation of Deductive Codes
2. During Data Collection
    1. Generation of Deductive Codes, cont.
    2. Generation of Inductive Codes
3. After Data Collection
    1. Generation of Inductive Codes, cont.
    2. Organization of Codes into Preliminary Coding Scheme
    3. Test Application of Preliminary Coding Scheme & Editing into "Final" Coding Scheme
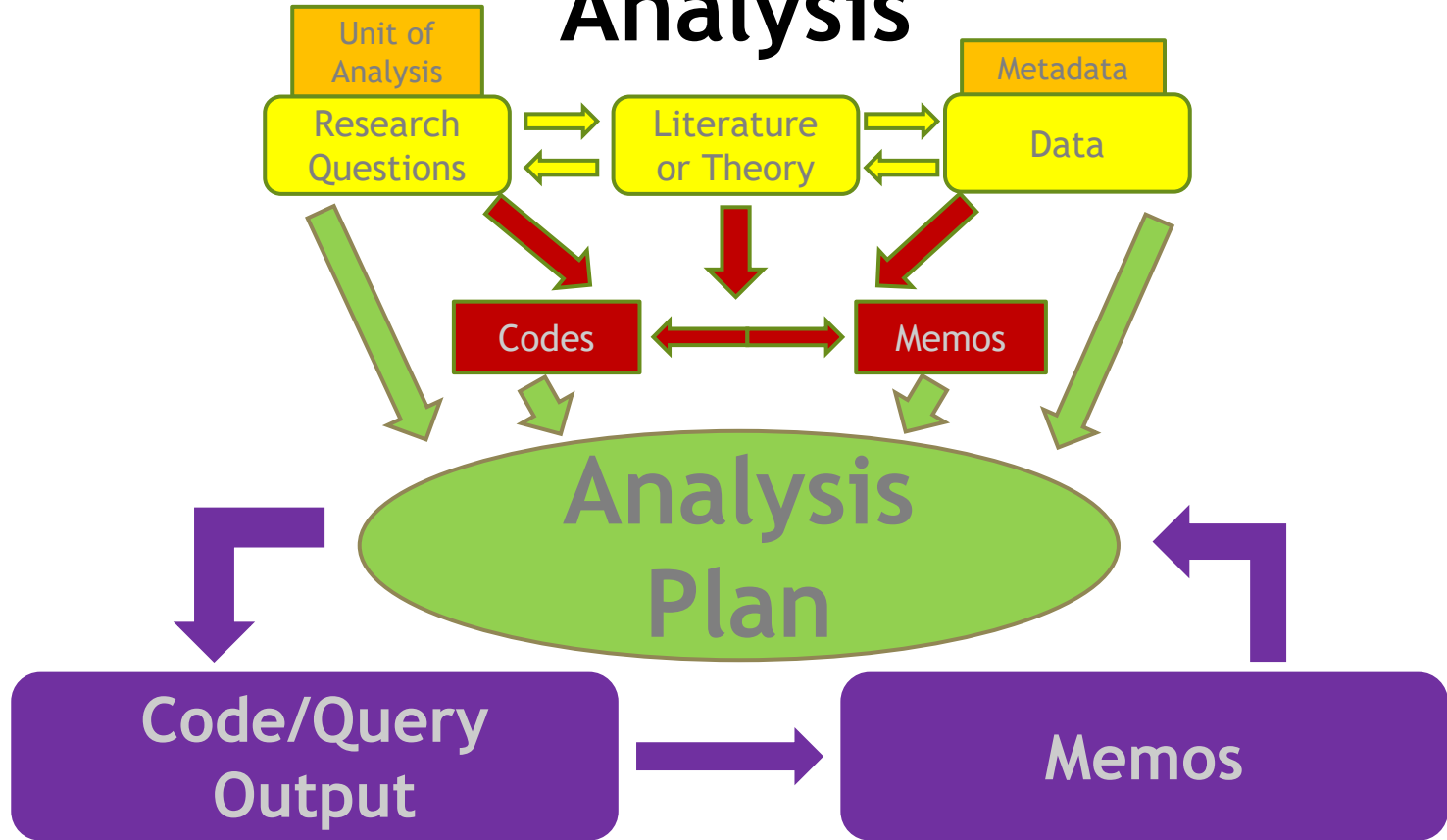
Coding & Analysis

What is Analysis?

The process of identifying themes related to your research findings. This is different than identifying ideas/concepts/topics that come up throughout your data set. It's "bigger picture" stuff…

- ○ Overarching Themes
- ○ Subgroup Themes
- ○ Typology Themes

QDA Software as a Tool for Organization & Engagement

What It Does
- Structure Data & Codes
- Code Manually & Automatically
- Explore Data & Coded Segments
- Memo Generally & Specifically
- Create Visualizations & Summaries
- Quantify Qualitative Data
- Export Almost Everything

What It Does Not
- Eliminate Bias
- Error-Free Autocoding
- Analytic Thinking
- Advanced Quantitative Analysis
  (MAXQDA can do some quant analysis)

Potential Benefits
- Frees Time to Focus on Analysis
- Can Deal with Large Data Sets
- Improves Auditability
- Improves Credibility
  (among some audiences)
- Allows for Easy Transition to New Projects

Potential Drawbacks
- Can Produce Erroneous Findings
- May Create Pressure to Engage Excessive Features &/or Use Large Data Sets
- Requires Learning the Software