5 Building Blocks of Analysis

Identifying themes

Building and applying codebooks

Describing themes

Making comparisons

Building and testing models

Key Terms

Codes

Codebooks

Coding

Codes

Short-hand notation for themes

Codebooks

Organized lists and definitions of themes

Coding

Act of linking themes to chunks of qualitative data

Types of Codes

Structural Codes

Thematic Codes

Structural Codes
Describe characteristics of the data

Thematic Codes
Link themes with instances of data

Other Markup Tools

Memos

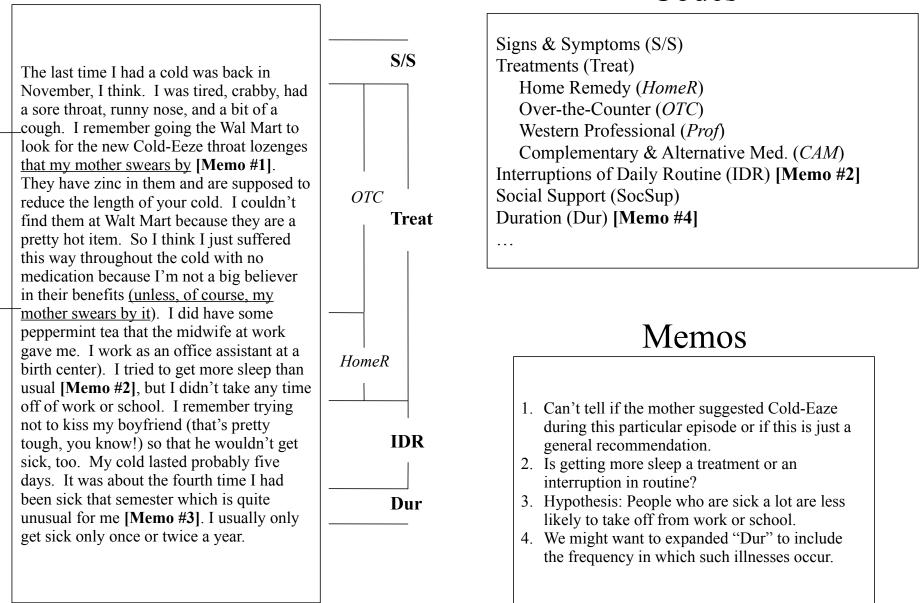*Used to annotate text with running thoughts of analyst*

Hyperlinks

Link one instance of data to another

Linkages Between Texts, Codes and Memos

Texts

The last time I had a cold was back in November, I think. I was tired, crabby, had a sore throat, runny nose, and a bit of a cough. I remember going the Wal Mart to look for the new Cold-Eeze throat lozenges that my mother swears by **[Memo #1]**. They have zinc in them and are supposed to reduce the length of your cold. I couldn't find them at Walt Mart because they are a pretty hot item. So I think I just suffered this way throughout the cold with no medication because I'm not a big believer in their benefits (unless, of course, my mother swears by it). I did have some peppermint tea that the midwife at work gave me. I work as an office assistant at a birth center). I tried to get more sleep than usual **[Memo #2]**, but I didn't take any time off of work or school. I remember trying not to kiss my boyfriend (that's pretty tough, you know!) so that he wouldn't get sick, too. My cold lasted probably five days. It was about the fourth time I had been sick that semester which is quite unusual for me **[Memo #3]**. I usually only get sick only once or twice a year.

hyperlink

S/S

OTC
Treat

HomeR

IDR

Dur

Codes

Signs & Symptoms (S/S)
Treatments (Treat)
    Home Remedy (*HomeR*)
    Over-the-Counter (*OTC*)
    Western Professional (*Prof*)
    Complementary & Alternative Med. (*CAM*)
Interruptions of Daily Routine (IDR) **[Memo #2]**
Social Support (SocSup)
Duration (Dur) **[Memo #4]**
…

Memos

1. Can't tell if the mother suggested Cold-Eaze during this particular episode or if this is just a general recommendation.
2. Is getting more sleep a treatment or an interruption in routine?
3. Hypothesis: People who are sick a lot are less likely to take off from work or school.
4. We might want to expanded "Dur" to include the frequency in which such illnesses occur.

Structural Codes				Thematic Codes & Memos
Work Group	Interview Topic	Speaker's Gender	Speaker	Transcript
Work Site 1	Topic 1		Moderator	If we were going to offer a parenting program, what would you like to hear that would catch your interest or make you want to attend this type of program? How could we market it?
		M	1	I think you'd have a hard time marketing it to men. I don't know....I know my wife would like it a lot. She would lead me into it, but ....
		F	2	Probably stressing the communication, somehow portraying that and the problems communicating because that's a universal. We were talking yesterday, that that's the biggest challenge, or one of the biggest challenges, so somehow portraying that well and grabbing attention that way. [This is Part II of a 2-day session. During previous day, participants discussed how they communicated with their adolescents about sex and relationships.]
		F	3	I think you'd have to sell the success. What is it that you plan on accomplishing with this. If you can tell me that at the end of this thing, our relationship will be better, my daughter will be a better achiever, you know, I won't loose my temper as often, that would do it.
		M	4	Money back guarantee.
	Topic 2		Moderator	If we said, "OK, tonight we want you to have a conversation with your child about sex." What would be hard or easy about that?
		M	4	I've taken a couple of classes through the years, and my kids get a kick out watching me sit and do homework. And so if I let them...

Red = Theme 1, Blue = Theme 2, [Green] = Memo

Codebook Development

- Approach can be deductive, inductive, or both

- Often, but not always, organized hierarchically

- Can be defined as inclusive or exclusive

- Code with a purpose; beware of proliferation

- Keeping codebooks to a manageable size helps accuracy and reliability

Edited by
Greg Guest and Kathleen M. MacQueen

HANDBOOK FOR
TEAM-BASED
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

> The transition from empirical observation to interpretation and model building is chock-a-block with subjective pitfalls for all research. How can we demonstrate a link between the volumes of data we collect and the elegant models we develop to represent and explain the patterns and relationships observed in the data? We have found that use of a structured codebook fosters a reflexive approach to documenting the necessary links throughout the coding process.

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Greg Guest and Kathleen M. MacQueen, eds. (2008) *Handbook of Team-Based Qualitative Research*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

> "The structured codebook continually prompts us to ask whether, how, and why this chunk of information is similar to or different from other chunks of information in the database. . . . [T]he definitional structure serves as a reflexive guide: What evidence in the textual data are we drawing on to identify the expression of a particular theme? Are there criteria we can use to distinguish closely related themes? How is a theme expressed in the vernacular of different populations?

Greg Guest and Kathleen M. MacQueen, eds. (2008) *Handbook of Team-Based Qualitative Research.* Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

Examples of Structured Codebook Descriptions

Mnemonic	**OTC**
Short Description	Over-the-Counter Drugs
Detailed Description	The use of pharmaceutical products purchased over-the-counter without a prescription with the expressed intent of alleviating signs or symptoms.
Inclusion Criteria	Nonprescription medications purchased over-the-counter for a current illness
Exclusion Criteria	Medicines that have been recommended by a doctor or other professional for the current illness episode. Medications purchased for the preventative purposes.
Typical Exemplars	Aspirin, decongestants, laxatives, cough medicine.
Atypical Exemplars	Prescription medication that was left over from a previous illness episode.
Close but no	Vitamins

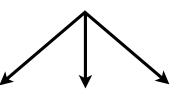|	
Mnemonic	**HomeR**
Short Description	Home Remedies
Detailed Description	Remedies made at home to alleviate signs & symptoms.
Inclusion Criteria	Remedy must be administered internally or applied externally.
Exclusion Criteria	Products sold in pharmacies for specific purpose of stopping illnesses. Behavioral modifications such as going to bed early, avoiding cold water. Preventative treatments such as regular vitamin intake.
Typical Examplars	Hot teas, chicken soup, compresses, massages, rice water
Atypical Exemplars	Large doses of vitamins
Close but no	Behavioral modifications like bed rest, not going to school, going to bed early

5 Benefits of Using Multiple Coders

Reliability

Validity

Construct definition

Identifying core-periphery constructs

Identifying exemplary quotes

Types of Coding

Tagging

*Indicate where themes occur
in (possibly overlapping) text*

Value Coding

*Assign value to fixed,
non-overlapping segments*

Nominal Ordinal Interval

Exploratory   Confirmatory

Unstructured   Structured

Tagging

Value Coding

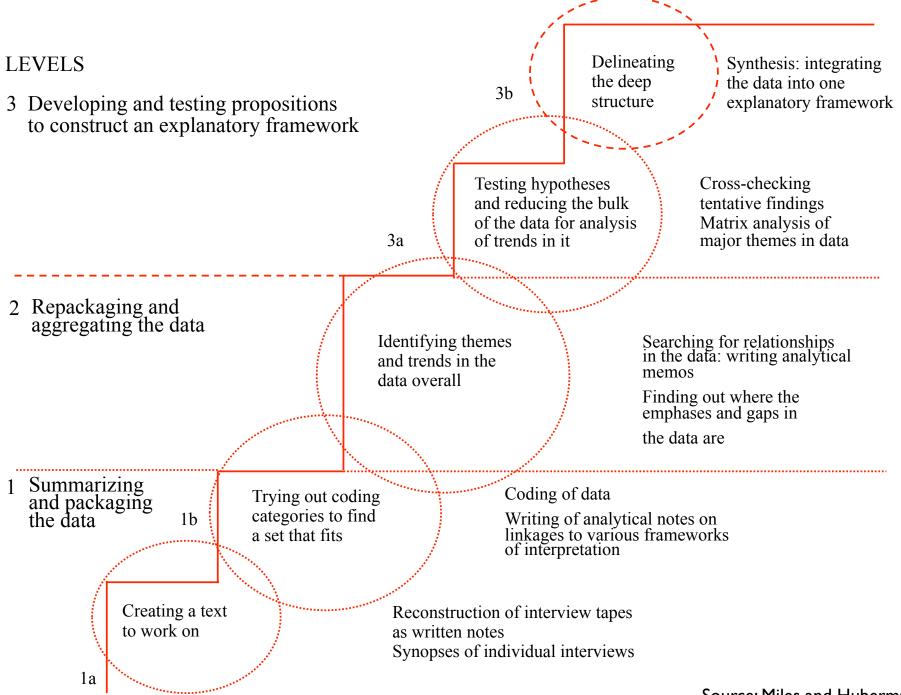| ID	Sex	Narrative	Sore throat	Nausea, vomiting	Severity
		The illness episode was preceded by a period of 'running down my system' which occurred from studying and working to a point where my sleep was being sacrificed. I recall feeling very tired and somewhat 'achy' at first, which was later accompanied by difficulty in breathing and swallowing. This was related to sinus congestion and a sore throat. I also recall that the skin around the openings of the nasal passages began to feel raw and irritated from the constant wiping. My throat felt sore as I mentioned earlier. This makes swallowing difficult and somewhat uncomfortable. There were also periods when I had phlegm which necessitated me to have to spit. The phlegm also had a greenish-yellow color to it, which confirmed the significance of this illness. I think I kept swallowing it and it made me queasy and eventually I puked	Y	Y	6
		It began with a slight headache behind the eyes and nose, almost stinging and then a dull pain. My head became heavy and I grew a little more irritable. For a while I became chilly, the hallmark that sickness was on the way. I called in the vita It began with a slight headache behind the eyes and nose, almost stinging and then a dull pain. My head became heavy and I grew a little more irritable. For a while I became chilly, the hallmark that sickness was on the way. I called in the vitamins to combat the initial siege and the orange juice made me feel better (at least in my head.) It wasn't too bad, and since it was Christmas vacation and I had little else to do, I got out my Agatha Christi book		N	3

5 Building Blocks of Analysis

Identifying themes

Building and applying codebooks

Describing themes

Making comparisons

Building and testing models

Ladder of Analytical Abstraction

LEVELS

3 Developing and testing propositions
   to construct an explanatory framework

3b Delineating the deep structure

Synthesis: integrating the data into one explanatory framework

3a Testing hypotheses and reducing the bulk of the data for analysis of trends in it

Cross-checking tentative findings
Matrix analysis of major themes in data

2 Repackaging and aggregating the data

Identifying themes and trends in the data overall

Searching for relationships in the data: writing analytical memos

Finding out where the emphases and gaps in

the data are

1 Summarizing and packaging the data

1b Trying out coding categories to find a set that fits

Coding of data
Writing of analytical notes on linkages to various frameworks of interpretation

Creating a text to work on

Reconstruction of interview tapes as written notes
Synopses of individual interviews

1a

Source: Miles and Huberman (1996)

Characteristics of Good Descriptions

Range

Central tendency

Distribution

Details

Context

	Range	Central tendency	Distribution	Details	Context
Themes					
Cases					
Groups					
Cultures					