

Cultural Research Network

Virtual Study Group #3

With Johnny Saldaña, Arizona State University

1/13/2014 2:00pm EST

The presentation was based on Saldaña's contribution to *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods*, edited by Patricia Leavy

The chapter and presentation slides were provided by the author and can be accessed by clicking [HERE](#).

The following section summarizes the question and answer period at the end of the presentation:

Q1. Could you take a little time discuss the longitudinal survey of theater and speech education referenced briefly in your presentation?

A1: For this study we asked theater and speech teachers to contact their former high school students to ask them how their experience back in high school might have affected their career decisions or trajectories. Respondents ranged from 18 years old to 70. We asked them about their fondest memories; what they learned about people; how it helped them in their occupations; etc. What we found was that 40% were involved in theater professions, ranging from university faculty to professional actors and even an SNL cast member. But across respondents one of the key outcomes reported by was improved self-confidence.

Q2: You talked about thematic analysis as a different method from qualitative coding. Could you discuss this more?

A2: They are not mutually exclusive. And they can be mixed and matched. Grounded theorists develop coding processes that move from the data to short categories to themes. But some themes are developed in different methods. Phenomenologists attempt to characterize the structure of phenomena based upon the essential meanings that are present in the descriptions of the participants. It is not uncommon for them to read entire interview transcript to establish broader themes to get a global sense of the whole.

Q3 How do you do this type of qualitative work as a team?

A3: There are many different methods (and terms) used to characterize group coding: inter-rater reliability; simple consensus; paradigmatic corroboration, etc. A team can establish a coding scheme ahead of time that is followed by all researchers or they can also develop a scheme iteratively. Often it helps to have one principal coder and have others serve as auditors. This worked for me in one of my projects. It was especially useful because team members were dispersed across the country.

Q4: In a team setting, when you are moving from coding to theme, do you keep your data in Microsoft Word to build themes around narrative or do you use Excel. What is your (personal) preference?

A4: I often keep excel documents open and use the rich text function. There are many different strategies. I find that success in teams can be less about method and more about team dynamics.

Sometimes (emotional/communication) problems between team members translate into problems of interpretation.

[Q5: missing]

Q6. You referenced the work *Theater of the Oppressed* in your presentation. Does your work factor into the making of theater? If so, how does that work factor into the creation of theater?

A6. The research I referenced in the presentation was an action research project designed to improve the conditions in the school. We gathered information from artists; teachers and students to “triangulate” the data and assertions. We always need to be careful about the assertions we make. We do not want to overstep the data. For me, all research is an act of persuasion. I provide quotes to let people know that my interpretations are grounded.

Q7: How do you feel about quantifying qualitative data? Is it something you do?

A7: I am not a big fan of transforming qualitative information into quantitative data. The language of codes can often maintain better what is going on than summary statistics. Mixed methods research is quite common now. But I feel that numbers are one type of paradigm, but qualitative data represents a different paradigm and can address different types of questions. I feel they should be kept separate and we should not mix or transform the genres.

Q8 Can you discuss how you developed these different coding systems you write about?

A8: In the coding manual [Saldana, J. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*; Sage Publications] there are 32 different methods profiled. Many came from other researchers/methodologists. I also developed my own methods, such as “emotion coding” and “values coding”. I learned about values, attitude, and belief systems from a psychologist. Social scientists talk about values but they didn’t have a coding scheme for it. I encourage people to develop their own coding systems. I am an advocate of creating your own coding systems to suit your needs.

Q9: Coding anecdote provided by a CRN Member: I was involved in a study where 3 faculty members oversaw the work of four graduate students. For this project the graduate students collected the data and the faculty oversaw the work. All seven team members then reviewed the material and the groups developed a master codebook. The graduate students then coded the data and the faculty provided oversight for that process.

The session wrapped up at following this comment.

Thank you all for your participation.