Qualitative Research Methods

Odum Institute for Research in Social Science, Chapel Hill, NC
August 3-5, 2016
ICPSR Summer Program in Quantitative Methods of Social Research

Instructor: Paul Mihas, Odum Institute for Research in Social Science

Course Objectives

This workshop presents strategies for analyzing and making sense of qualitative data. Both descriptive and interpretive qualitative studies will be discussed, as well as more defined qualitative approaches such as grounded theory, narrative analysis, and case study. The course will briefly cover research design and data collection but will largely focus on analysis. In particular, we will consider how researchers develop codes and integrate memo writing into a larger analytic process. The purpose of coding is to provide a focus to qualitative analysis; it is critical to have a handle on your coding practices as you move deeper into analysis. The course will present coding and memo writing as concurrent tasks that occur during an active review of interviews, documents, focus groups, and/or multi-media data. We will discuss deductive and inductive coding and how a codebook evolves, that is, how codes might emerge and shift during analysis. Managing codes includes developing code hierarchies, identifying code "constellations," and building multidimensional themes. The class will present memo writing as a strategy for capturing analytical thinking, inscribed meaning, and cumulative evidence for emerging meaning. Memos can also resemble early writing for reports, articles, chapters, and other forms of presentation. Researchers can also mine memos for codes and use memos to build evocative themes and theory. Coding and memo writing are discussed in the context of data-driven qualitative research beginning with design and moving toward presentation of findings. One module of the course will be devoted to learning a qualitative analysis software package, ATLAS.ti, but other software programs will be discussed, and, time permitting, briefly demonstrated. The methods discussed in the course will be applicable to qualitative studies in a range of fields, including the behavioral sciences, social sciences, health sciences, and business.
August 3

**Morning Session**

I. Introduction
   a. Qualitative perspectives
   b. Qualitative continuum
   c. Descriptive & Interpretive studies

II. Research Design
   a. Dimensions
   b. Typologies
   c. Triangulation

**Afternoon Session**

I. Qualitative traditions
   a. Grounded theory
   b. Narrative analysis
   c. Case study

II. Qualitative traditions (Cont’d)
   a. Grounded theory
   b. Narrative analysis
   c. Case study
August 4

Morning Session

I. Memos
   a. Key-Quote memo
   b. Document reflection memo
   c. Methods
   d. Positionality
   e. Theoretical memo

II. Coding
   a. Deductive coding
   b. Inductive coding
   c. Descriptive coding
   d. Interpretive coding

Afternoon Session

I. Using Qualitative Software: ATLAS.ti
   a. Early stages of engaging data
   b. Diagrams: Episode profiles
   c. Coding

II. ATLAS.ti
   a. Diagrams: Code connections
   b. Analysis strategies
August 5

Morning Session
I. Revisiting qualitative traditions
   a. Grounded theory
   b. Narrative analysis
   c. Case study
II. Data collection
   a. Interviews
   b. Focus groups

Afternoon Session
I. Qualitative research products
II. Class discussion

Suggested Readings


(http://www.wou.edu/~mcgladm/Quantitative%20Methods/optional%20stuff/qualitative%20description.pdf)


Paul Mihas is the Assistant Director of Education and Qualitative Research at the Odum Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is the former managing editor of Social Forces, a journal of sociology published at the University of North Carolina Press. He has been with ResearchTalk since 2001 as a qualitative analysis consultant. He has lectured on qualitative methods, software, and strategies for analysis at several universities, including the University of Puerto Rico and the University of St. Gallen. His interests include mixed methods and approaches to incorporating memo writing in analysis; his qualitative research focuses on cancer survivors and metaphors for illness and the body.