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NEGOTIATING DIGITAL TOOLS ON COMPLEX RESEARCH TEAMS: DILEMMAS FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AND QDA SOFTWARE

Session Fri 065

Noyes 217, 110:00 am – 12:20 pm

Negotiating Digital Tools on Complex Research Teams: Dilemmas for Qualitative Research and QDA Software

- Qualitative Data Analysis Practices in Complex Qualitative Research Teams: Troubling the Assumptions about Portability and Transparency
- Strategies and Tools for Complex Collaborative Projects: Emergent Literacy Research as Exemplar
- When worlds unite: Creating a complex team process across two QDAS programs, three disciplines, four researchers and 15 time zones
- Crossing Geographical and Cultural Boundaries : International Collaboration with Culturally-Specific Media Data using Transana

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS SOFTWARE PRACTICES IN COMPLEX QUALITATIVE RESEARCH TEAMS

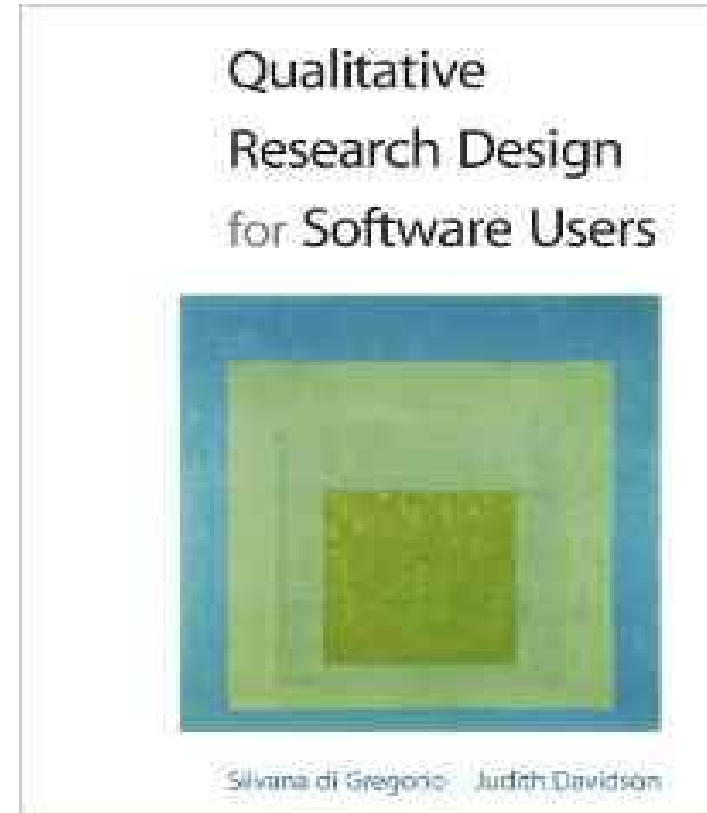
Troubling the Assumptions about Portability and
Transparency

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University of Massachusetts Lowell

My 2008 assumptions about QDAS.

“With the advent of these new electronic containers, for the first time really, the work of qualitative researchers becomes portable, and, simultaneously, transparent. Graduate students can email the entire contents of their dissertation research to an advisor, and research teams can carry their data back and forth for group consultations. This new freedom can make one giddy.”
(diGregorio and Davidson, 2008, p. 10)



Portability

- Pick it up
- Carry it anywhere
- Lighter than a file cabinet of papers
- Show it to anyone
- All you need is a computer
- Portability provides access!



Transparency

- No gimmicks; Nothing hidden: Honest and accessible
- QDAS lets everyone share in the methodological process
- In QDAS: you can see into the bowels of the e-project
- QDAS offers the colonoscopy of qualitative research
- Transparency serves as a proxy for trustworthiness!.



My assumptions about “Reading the QDAS Project”

- QDAS is a kind of genre with specific requirements like a novel or a textbook.
- Those who are adept at using QDAS can “read the project”. These are fluent readers.
- QDAS transparency is increased when you are an adept reader/user of QDAS software.



2008 to 2016: Complex Research Teams are on the rise!

- In complex research teams using QDAS, what is the nature of portability and transparency?
- On such teams, are portability and transparency working in the same way as I described in 2008?
- What components of this formula have I idealized?
- What kind of example or case would help me better understand this issue?

Definition: Complex research teams are those which include more than four individuals and possess structural diversity on many levels from geography and discipline to methodology and status.

Enter Kristi Jackson--qualitative research transparency theorist par excellence!

Transparency as an Ideal

- The “given”
- Something we strive for, but may never achieve
- Described in the literature,
- Ideas offered by experts.
- A lot of assertions out there, but little hard facts

Transparency-in-motion

- Transparency *in situ* or in practice
- Consists of:
 - Triage: emphasizing, sorting, classifying
 - Show: sharing, illustrating, holding up
 - Reflect—examine context and renegotiate meaning.
- Grounded in a specific community of practice.

Case Example: The Sexting Continuum

Building a Prevention Framework to
Address Teen Sexting: 2010-2012.

Funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice
Prevention of the Department of Justice

The inquiry: **How do teens, their
caregivers, and those others who work
with teens view the notion of teen
sexting?**

A Team with Multiple Forms of Complexity

- 3 sites in 3 US regions
- 3 institutions
- 3 sample audiences
- Different methodological backgrounds
- Different disciplinary training

QDAS (Nvivo)
was the central
organizing tool of
this project.

332 individual cases

123 youth;

92 caregivers;

117 other adults

Interviewed in multiple
segregated focus groups

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
Boys_GenderBook	0	0	1/30/2014 10:00 AM	JD	1/30/2014 10:00 AM	JD
Sexting	0	0	7/24/2012 9:33 AM	JD	6/29/2011 3:17 PM	JD
Feelings about sexting	4	6	7/24/2012 9:33 AM	JD	12/3/2011 10:09 AM	JD
I heard about sexting...	14	55	7/24/2012 9:33 AM	JD	12/3/2011 10:09 AM	JD
not just the photo but also the technology	1	1	7/24/2012 9:33 AM	JD	1/23/2014 9:30 AM	JD
Reasons for Sexting	20	216	7/24/2012 9:33 AM	JD	12/3/2011 10:10 AM	JD
Sexting and Age Prevalence	1	2	7/24/2012 9:33 AM	JD	1/23/2014 9:30 AM	JD
Sexting and Gender	2	4	7/24/2012 9:33 AM	JD	1/23/2014 9:30 AM	JD
Sexting and Online Encounters	3	14	7/24/2012 9:33 AM	JD	2/4/2014 11:31 AM	JD
Sexting Consequences	0	0	7/24/2012 9:33 AM	JD	7/8/2011 12:06 PM	JD
Sexting Definitions and Representations	0	0	7/24/2012 9:33 AM	JD	6/30/2011 10:02 AM	JD
Stories of Sexting	3	10	7/24/2012 9:33 AM	JD	2/4/2014 10:15 AM	JD
Talking About Sexting	0	0	7/24/2012 9:33 AM	JD	7/8/2011 12:06 PM	JD
What should be done	1	1	7/24/2012 9:33 AM	JD	1/23/2014 9:30 AM	JD
Technology	0	0	7/24/2012 9:33 AM	JD	6/29/2011 3:17 PM	JD
Youth Focus Groups Autocoding	0	0	7/24/2012 9:33 AM	JD	10/7/2011 3:50 PM	JD

The One and the Three

One Team: UMass Lowell

- had access (site license to Nvivo)
- had adept QDAS readers
- had a senior project member who was an adept reader
- uploaded data to NVivo, coded, and used Nvivo's tools to build meaning

All Three Teams (including Umass Lowell)

- Conducted focus groups,
- wrote memos,
- reviewed transcripts,
- participated in joint discussions by phone and in person
- Examined Nvivo e-project together in face-to-face meetings

The Continuum of Sexting Emerges

Triage: emphasizing, sorting, classifying	Show: sharing, illustrating, holding up	Reflect—examine context and renegotiate meaning
<p>We coded answers to the question, “Why do youth sext?”</p> <p>We realized that some practices were benign and some dangerous, but there was a large middle ground that was ambiguous.</p> <p>We realized that youth didn’t use the term “sext”. They talked about what they actually did.</p>	<p>We examined the codes and their organization within NVivo</p> <p>We drilled down through codes to examine raw data and quotations.</p> <p>We looked at models built from codes.</p> <p>We compared everything</p>	<p>Our discussions were informed by multiple disciplinary lenses.</p> <p>Developmental arguments begin to gain weight.</p> <p>We began to build a more youth centric perspective of sexting.</p> <p>We recoded the “Why do youth sext” to reflect the continuum of sexting notion. Learned more as we did so.</p>

How did QDAS use unfold on this complex research team?

Long durational and incremental practices behind the scenes.

Everyone hears, reads, writes, and thinks about the focus group interviews.

Nvivo data base developing in parallel to interpretive activity around interview transcripts.

After Continuum of Sexting theme identified, re-coding takes place.

Episodic, sudden, and punctuated activity in full view.

In face-to-face meetings, Nvivo codes examined and discussed.

E-project shown. Bits extracted.

Discussions proceed around Nvivo coded material.

Continuum of Sexting notion emerges.

What I learned about QDAS and Complex Qualitative Research Teams from this case:

- The presence of QDAS alone does not guarantee portability (access to the software) and transparency (access to the methodological processes)
- QDAS use can vary widely in practice across complex teams and still be good, meaning that it is used thoughtfully and appropriately to support interpretive activities.
- The QDAS data base can only be integrated with interpretive activities if it is developed in tandem with the full project.
- Opportunities to use QDAS appropriately across the course of the project, require the inclusion of a senior project member who is an adept user of QDAS
- Even without full, constant QDAS access and use by all project members, punctuated use of QDAS (guided by adept readers) can provide GREAT benefit to a project's interpretive activities.

Specifically, does QDAS contribute to or increase transparency on complex teams?

- **Under certain conditions** QDAS capacities can support greater transparency, meaning the ability to review the full methodological process of the project and, by extension, provide a means of making evaluations about the trustworthiness of the results.
- **Complex research teams using QDAS will increase transparency if they:**
 - Have team members who are adept at reading QDAS (including senior members).
 - Commit to using QDAS to develop a robust qualitative research database, regardless of whether or not there is full or partial access to the QDAS tool for all team members.
 - Use QDAS as part of a community of methodological practice that employs QDAS to further the triage, show, and reflect components of *transparency in motion*
 - Integrate the long slow task of data base building with episodic and punctuated interpretive opportunities to work the data base for all it's worth.