Coding Info for Rose

Provisional Coding Frames - examples showing revisions

Hi Rose, I have paper copies in my PhD that i can copy and post to you. I haven't managed to get the right data carrier yet to transfer my hard drive files onto new computer. Not sure if i can get it sorted to meet your deadline but will try.

Examples of Data coded using NVivo

I should have that on my old hard-drive - will see what i can do to retrieve it for your deadline. I might have some hard copy print outs - are they any use?

Partial Drafts and evolving versions of written work

Again this would be on my hard-drive - perhaps you might have some old versions?

I would probably say here that it is so important to write - even when you don't see the bigger picture of how it will finally be organised.

I know my PhD may be different in a sense that the delays with ethics and things meant that a chunk of time was spent on that and writing it up.

I'm not sure i envisioned that piece of writing on ethics would become a whole chapter in the thesis but now when i look back at it (with less panic in my eyes!) I can see it's overall relevance in a thesis dealing with the challenges of health services research and practice. I am glad you and Brian advised me to do it that way.

I think your advice and Brian's about the ways in which i could organise the chapters in my thesis at the latter stages was invaluable. I can see now how important it must be for supervisors to have something decent to work with!! I also know how much help you gave me with trying to organise my thinking and provide clarity. I do really appreciate all that time and advice!

I can see that it could have been organised in different ways - it's a bit like finding a narrative thread which links the chapters and guides the reader through - the best fit with what you have.

I think i indulged myself on sections within the thesis - particularly within the methodology section - partly because i really did view the PhD as my chance to explore these debates in greater depth.

The insights offered by the examiners were also really useful as i think it enabled me to liberate my thinking - on reflection i think i was so caught up in the fact that recruitment had not worked out the way i had hoped (and therefore the original design was not not possible) that i hadn't really stood back and thought - 'right what do i have and what does it tell me?' - because now i read my thesis i can see that it told me alot - and when i now read about patient and public involvement - i am always struck by the additional insights my thesis might bring. There are still big gaps in the literature. The rhetoric is still there. Mental note!!! I really should finish the drafts for publication!! Is it too late?

Reflections on acquiring qualitative research experience

I think i learned alot from all your training - and actually seeing the process in action in your workshops and being involved in some of your research meetings with colleagues from Glasgow when you were developing coding frames. I think it helped remove some of the mystique. Also highlighted the importance of team input and different interpretations

The workshop looking at focus group data from your infertility study really sticks in my mind too. This one really highlighted to me the potential in making comparisons within datasets - sampling purposively and following this up when looking for patterns.

Applied health research is often challenging - continually changing context, key personnel and policy changes within the project lifetime. Importance of keeping notes throughout and documenting decisions along the way - amazing what you forget - why you did things certain ways and not others.

Difficulties in doing research in niche areas within the NHS where everyone knows each other - particularly case studies - dilemmas around providing rich enough description while preserving the anonymity of participants.

I have said in my thesis that dead-ends and setbacks led to inevitable deliberations causing at times, more anguish than was strictly necessary, and at other times, less worry than the benefits of hindsight might have bestowed. I think this is very true

One of the strengths of my study was the potential to make comparisons at different levels - your idea of the comparative potential being important. I had different comparisons to make between MCNs, stakeholder groups, different group structures etc. However, it is also challenging to manage multiple datasets and look for patterns and common themes.

I've just re-read p.124 in my thesis where i talk about over-coding the minutiae of transcripts at the beginning, which was time consuming and made seeing the bigger picture difficult. This was borne out of a desire of not wanting to miss anything. This was also despite your warnings of 'coding fetish'!!

I've also talked about attempts to develop a common coding frame from the outset proved difficult because of the different ways the questions were framed and issues raised within each of the methods. However, the individual coding frames from each of the methods were used to develop a common coding frame at a later stage which explored the key issues arising across all the datasets.

Multiple methods were an asset but also required time and effort considering the underlying assumptions, benefits and limitations and writing all of these up.

I have written that the process of moving conceptually from description to explanation is difficult to characterise - there is the element of creativity (your idea of the 'craft') but also systematic procedures and transparent audit trail. Providing sufficient links between the findings and the data on which it is based. Seale's 'reflexive methodological accounting'

Notes/ excerpts from supervision sessions

It would be good to look back on these as i did take very detailed notes. I also kept a little research book about my thoughts at different stages throughout the PhD - i haven't been able to locate it but will keep looking - i know your deadline is pressing - if i find it in next couple of days and anything useful (or funny!) i will let you know.

Questions that exercised me when doing my PhD

I guess one of the major issues was locating my work within an overarching theoretical framework - I'm not sure why that was such an issue now i look back, except to say that i needn't have worried so much about it! I know you did say this!

I am glad in retrospect about how much reading i did around it and the understanding i gained about different perspectives and the implications for research and practice. I liked Seale's (1999:26) argument that tensions and debates can be used constructively as 'resources for thinking' without needing to resolve the nderlying disputes and inconsistencies.

I also think at earlier stages of PhD i didn't grasp the possibility of having an overarching 'macro' framework - say subtle realism or social constructionism, and using the data to interrogate various 'micro' theories of involvement - the extent to which the findings fit or don't.

Issues of methodology - the extent to which you need to be dogmatic and stick to the letter of the law - e.g. Yin's idea of Case Study research as a distinctive research strategy - or adapting methods to suit particular purposes - using them as conceptual and organisational tools. Requires confidence and supervisor support.