
Analyze Data

I reread my personal history on why I felt the need to incorporate technology into lessons. My narrative was much more helpful after analyzing the other pieces because it helped me see ideas that were common throughout my other data. For example, I mentioned in my narrative my desire to help students understand how science could be used in the real world. A common theme in the way I used technology in class revolved around that theme. In addition, each of the teachers I surveyed mentioned real-world application as a way I used technology.

—Amos O. Simms-Smith (2009),
School Administrator, Fairfax County Public Schools, Virginia

CHAPTER DESCRIPTION

In this chapter, you will find both general and specific discussion for analyzing your data and with student examples. This chapter offers a general overview about analyzing data but not with the intention that this is all you need to know about qualitative research, which is a very broad topic. For an in-depth discussion about how to analyze data in qualitative research, I suggest you visit some of the seminal works on qualitative research listed in the Self-Study Resource Center. The self-study methodological component of the need for a transparent and systematic research process is again emphasized in this chapter in terms of describing your data analysis.

◆ Reading this chapter will provide an opportunity for you to gain a broad overview of data analysis and detailed steps in how to proceed.

Self-study research is a hermeneutic process: *a dance of data collection and data analysis*. Consequently, data collection and data analysis are not linear processes. Data analysis is not something that is done after you finish collecting all your data. To the contrary, it is recommended that you begin your early and preliminary analysis of data *as* you collect them so that you can begin to manage them systematically, store them for easy access later, and “see” and document what is happening as your research proceeds. You will return to the full data set in your data analysis, but beginning to reflect and take notes on what is happening *during* your research will serve you well in your final data analysis work.