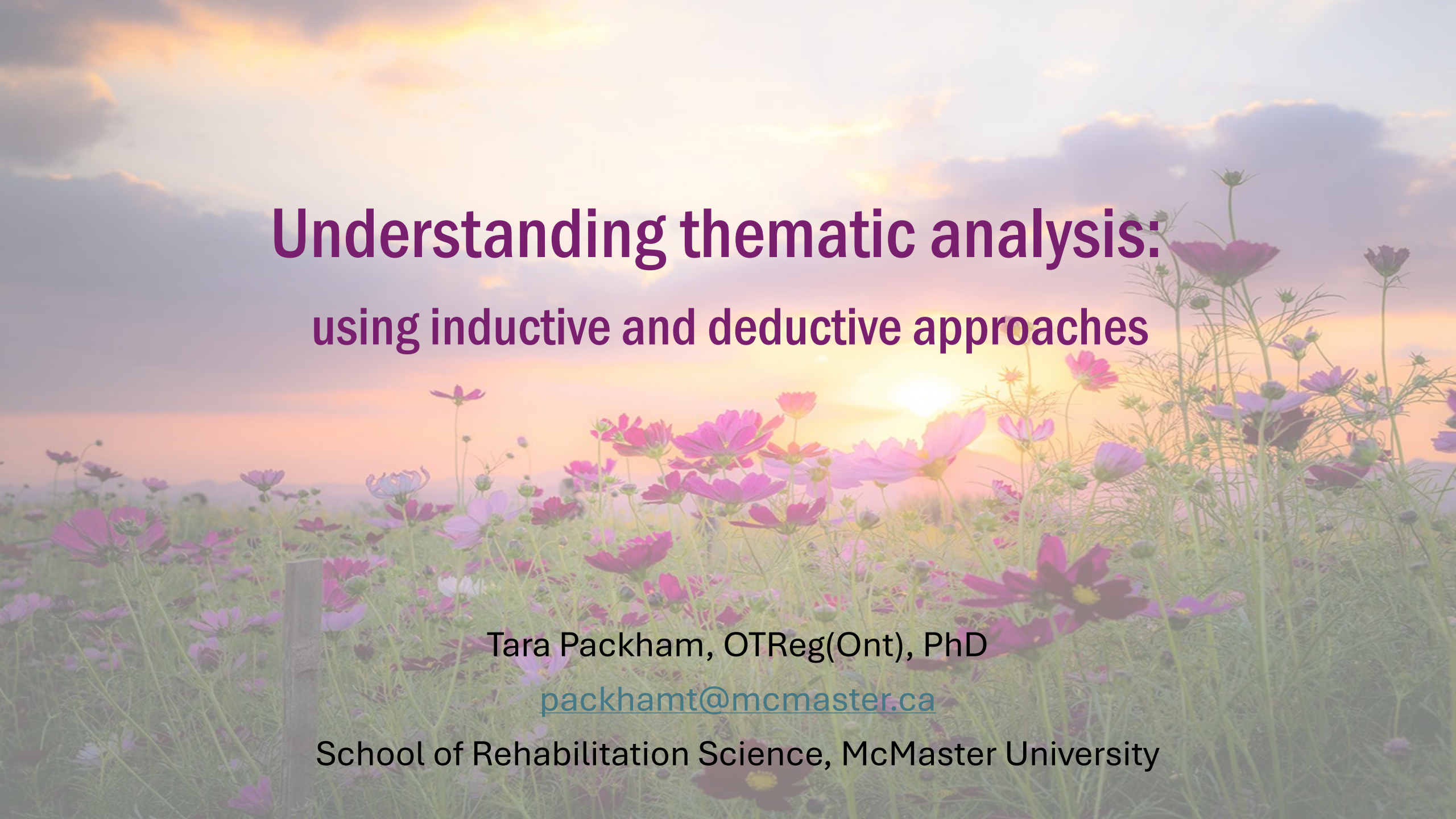




Understanding thematic analysis: using inductive and deductive approaches

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Positionality Statement



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Deductive vs. Inductive

Deductive starts with a framework or theory



Theory or framework is applied to data

Hypothesis driven

Can be useful in explanatory work

Can be helpful for novice researchers and larger teams

Inductive starts with the data



Question is a guide but other ideas and pathways can be explored

Exploratory in nature

Inductive Process Options

Allow research insights to emerge over the course of study without being limited to predefined factors/theories

(Kielhofner, 2006)

Start with a theoretical scaffold but allow it to be modified or deconstructed by the data

(Thorne, 2008)

Purpose of Analysis:

to answer the research question

Organize, manage, retrieve and interpret meaningful bits of data

Reduce the raw data by constructing codes, categories and themes

Start to identify 'pithy' quotes as key examples

**Sense-making... to answer the question:
what is happening here?**

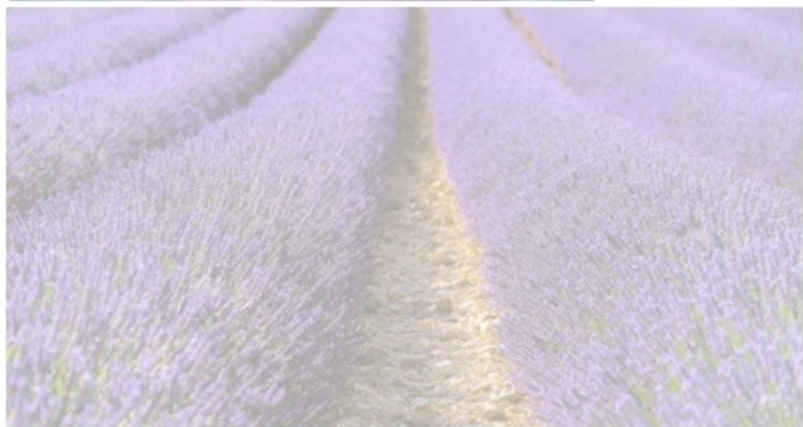
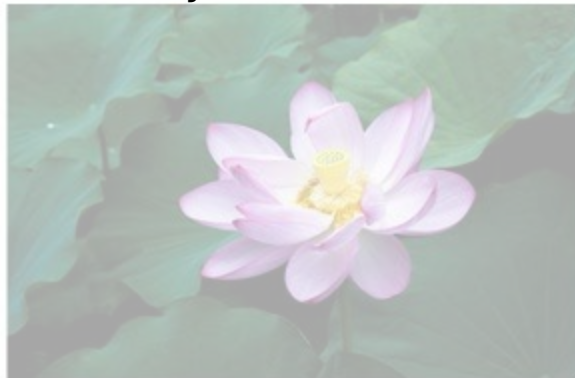




Initial data reflections



What were you thinking about as you looked at these images?





Data abstraction

Thematic analysis

Primary focus: *finding patterns of meaning*

Can be manifest (directly observable in the data) or latent (underlying the phenomenon) (Boyatzis, 1998)

A shared history with qualitative content analysis but not the same thing

Recognition → Encoding/Assigning → Interpretation

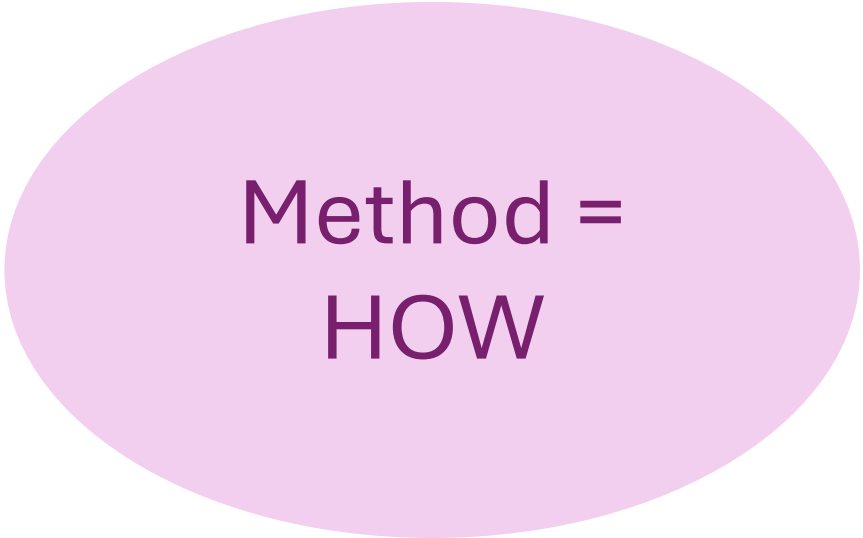
Is thematic analysis a method or methodology?

Boyatzis (1998) and Bazeley (2013) see it as a method

Braun & Clarke (2006, 2019) contend it could be a methodology



Method vs Methodology



Method =
HOW



Methodology =
WHY

Method vs. Methodology

Thematic analysis as a METHOD → finding patterns of meaning

Thematic analysis as a METHODOLOGY

- Coding reliability TA

- Reflexive TA

- Codebook TA

Coding reliability

TA

Independent coding to create thematic domain summaries

Ideal if one team member is removed from core focus to add objectivity

Reliability (kappa) is reported

May not have flexibility if data brings unexpected aspects

‘Scientific’ focus, positivist lens

Reflexive TA

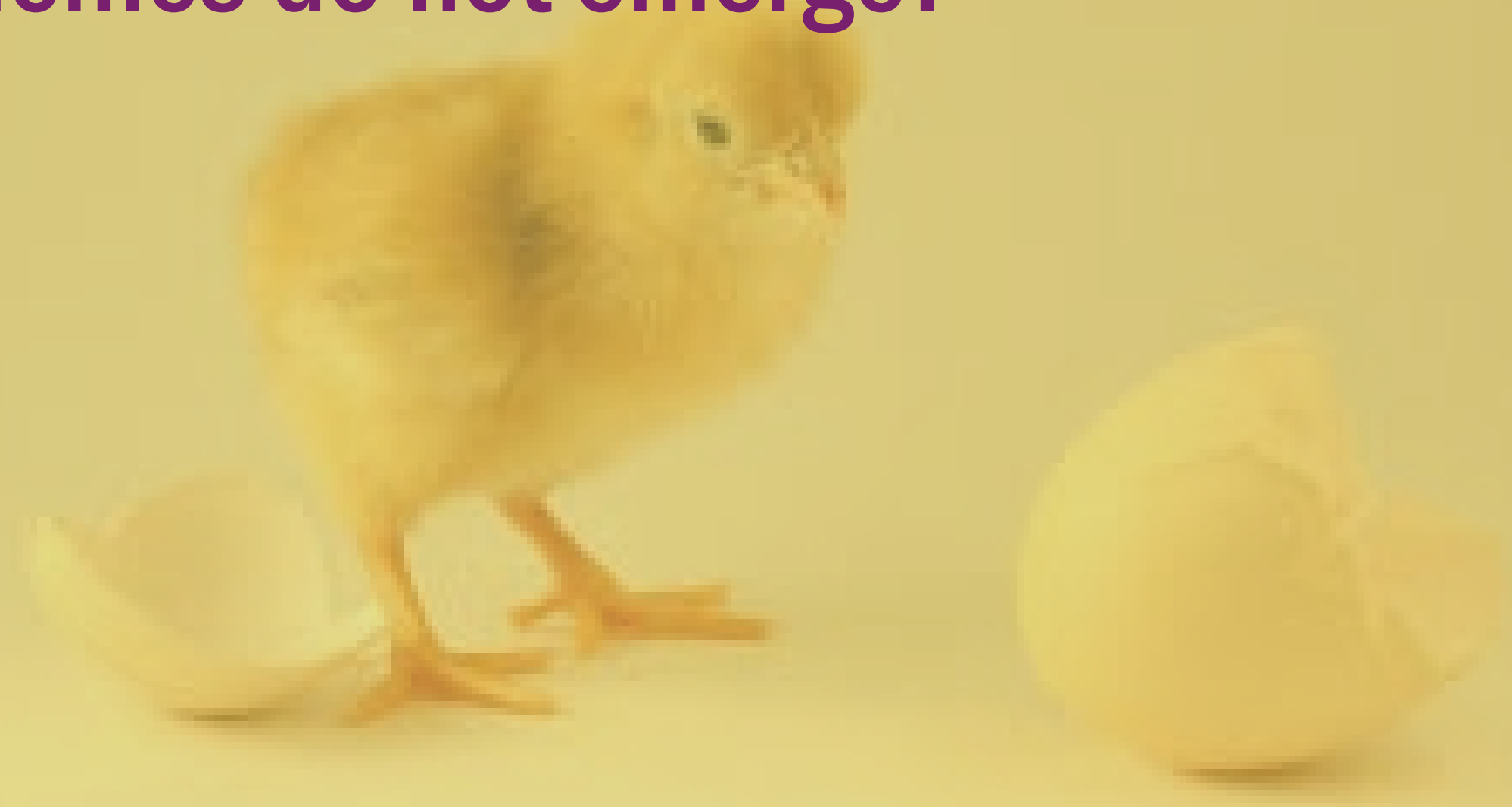
Codes can evolve and change –
an iterative process

Aim is to reflect how the
researcher is conceptualizing the
data as they immerse deeper
into engaging the data

‘Reflexive’ title emphasizes the
role of the researcher in
constructing the analysis,
generating themes

Social justice focus

Themes do not emerge!



Codebook TA

Structured approach

Themes may be 'domain summaries' - just a step away from a category

But...can be flexible, and themes can be developed with some deeper interpretation

A qualitative lens > positivist

Tends to be used in applied/pragmatic areas (like policy, nursing and rehabilitation)

How have you used or interpreted thematic analysis?



Disadvantages of thematic analysis

Smaller literature to draw on

Flexibility can be messy



Need to clearly locate epistemological position

(Nowell et al, 2017)



Digging into the
methods of this
methodology



Forms Of Data

In depth interviews: individual or group

Direct observations: participant & non- participant

Documents (charts, program handbooks, texts, books, newspapers, stories, poetry, blog posts, tweets?)

Peer-reviewed publications – conceptual scoping reviews

Journals (participants)

Field notes, memos, journals (researcher)

Audio-visual materials, objects (video, music, art)

When Does Analysis Begin?

During data collection
(iterative)

→ → shapes the ongoing data collection and allows the researcher to

- refine questions
- pursue emerging ideas

When data collection is complete OR useful data is identified



Starting Data Analysis

Read transcript through to get a sense of the story—write a short paragraph to summarize (*memo*)

Begin analysis by breaking data into small parts or bits (coding)

Decide what the right level of meaning construction is – Words? Sentences? Paragraphs?

Notice relevant phenomena, collecting examples of them, & analyzing the phenomena for commonalities, differences, patterns

Data Analysis (According to Domholdt, 2005)

Data management – organizing, sorting, coding

Generating meaning – themes, patterns, clusters
- relationships within those themes & clusters

Verification – triangulation, member checking, audit

What Is The Research Question?

Analysis process should link to the
research question and the
purpose of the study

THINKING INSIDE THE BOX

What Is The Research Question?

Once the main question/purpose is addressed, look for other ideas (surprises) that emerge from your data.

Future research?

THINKING
OUTSIDE THE BOX

Coding

Codes—“chunks” of data—words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs (facts)

Generate tags, labels

Preset codes/concepts based on theory, literature (theory before research, top down) *deductive coding*

Review “in vivo” codes grounded in data—words of participants (research before theory, bottom up) *inductive coding*

Expressed as ‘gerunds’ to be as close to participant perspectives as possible (i.e. *smelling the flowers, tasting the nectar*)

Result is many, many codes!

Ongoing Data Analysis: Coding Processes

Word by word: attend to structure or flow of document

- helpful when working through documents or internet data

Line by line: naming each line of the written data

- detailed observations of people, actions, and settings that reveal telling scenes

Coding Processes (con't)

Incident by incident:

- exploration of incidents or events
- aim to compare incident to incident, then compare incidents to conceptualization of incidents
- identify properties of emerging concepts



Coding Processes (con't)

Codes that share common properties or elements are combined into categories (content-based) or subthemes (ideas & interpretation-based)

Reduce many codes to a smaller number of categories or themes

Read and re-read data, selecting segments of data (coding), labelling and sorting (categories), and interpreting meaning and concepts

Ongoing Data Analysis: Themes

Move beyond codes and categories and look at the whole picture
(*via abstraction*)

Data display - modelling relationships, linkages

Interpretation of data

moving from some categories to a few themes or one theme

theory building

Comparison Of Data

From one participant to another

One idea across all participants

Ideas within one interview / focus group

Similarities or differences in relevant subgroups



Memo Writing

Writing ideas and questions that occur to researcher during the process of collection and analysis

Purposes

- explicate pre-existing assumptions
- record methodological decisions
- speculate on and analyze data

Memos are explicitly linked to the data

Journaling

Writing about the research process

Reflecting on personal assumptions

Reflecting on the big picture – situating self and research project in the larger field of research

Recording personal “aha” moments

Journaling is focused on the researcher and is NOT explicitly linked to a particular piece of data

Analysis Process: Codes to Categories

Coding typically conducted by multiple team members:
may be lots of codes!

Codes are defined, and illustrative quotes selected

Entire research team usually reviews transcripts, starts to develop codebook and may code several transcripts together

Primary coders may continue with coding activities, meeting regularly to debrief, achieve deeper meaning (or consensus) and update codebook

Codes are clustered into conceptual categories

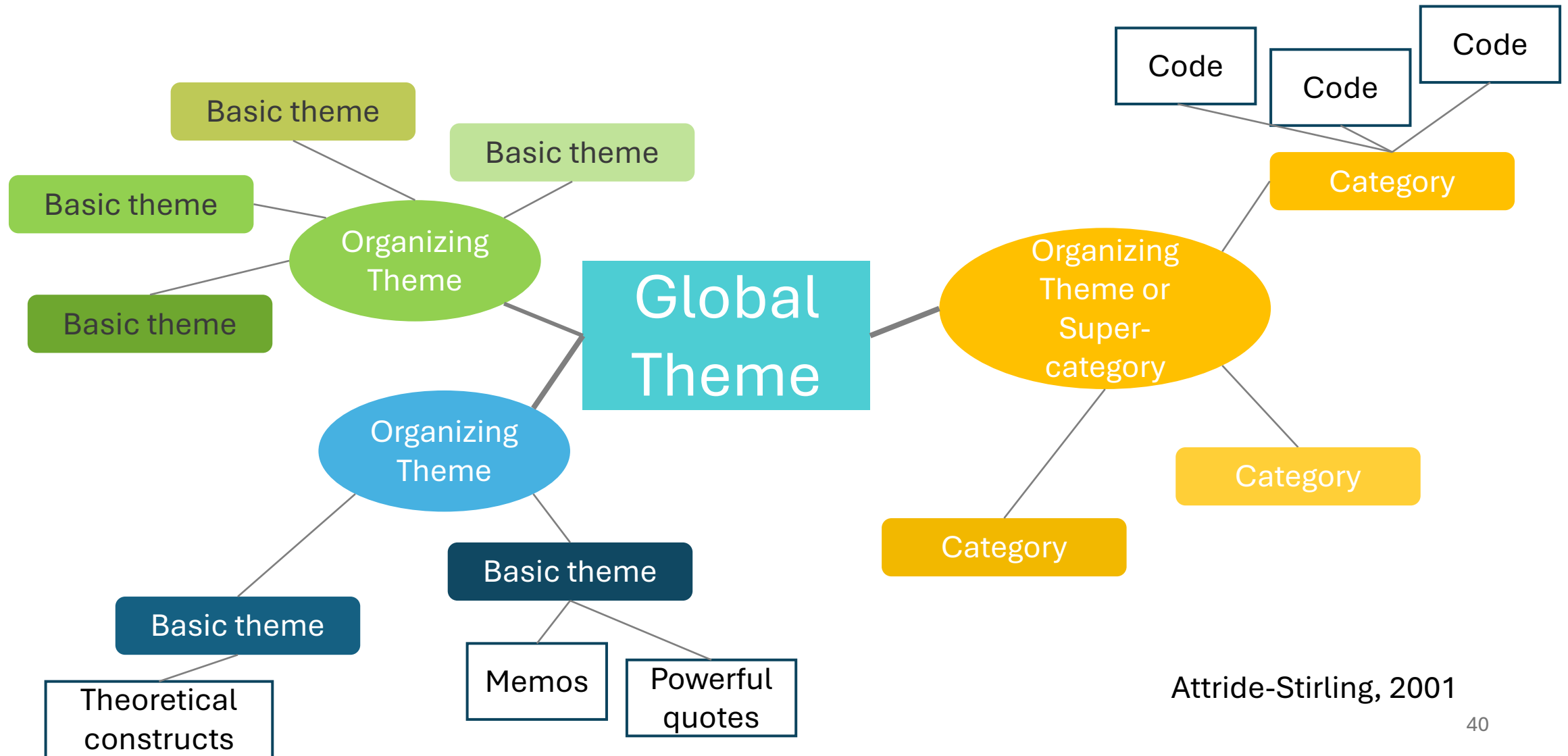
Analysis Process: Categories To Themes

Themes developed by entire team after discussion, looking for relationships between categories

May draw on memos and journaling

Themes should [may?] represent ideas expressed and emphasized by most of the participants

Thematic analysis variants



Reporting Results

Remain close/faithful to participant voice

Include quotes (soundbites or extensive) but don't end a section with a quote...always wrap up with your interpretation of the overall category/theme

Avoid misrepresenting, distorting or deleting findings

Use a transparent process

Quality In Qualitative Research

Credibility

Transferability

Dependability

Confirmability

(Henderson & Rheault, 2004)

Trustworthiness strategies (Nowell et al, 2017)

Phases of Thematic Analysis	Means of Establishing Trustworthiness	
Familiarizing yourself with the data	Prolonged engagement with the data	
	Document theoretical and reflective thoughts	Document thoughts about potential codes and themes
	Triangulate with different data collection modes	Store raw data in well-organized archives and keep records of all data field notes, transcripts, and reflexive journals
Generating initial codes	Researcher triangulation	Document all team meetings and peer debriefing
	Peer debriefing	Use of a coding framework
	Reflexive journaling	Audit trail of code generation
Searching for themes	Researcher triangulation	Diagramming to make sense of theme connections
	Keep detailed notes about development and hierarchies of concepts and themes	

Trustworthiness strategies (Nowell et al, 2017)

Phases of Thematic Analysis	Means of Establishing Trustworthiness	
Reviewing themes	Researcher triangulation	
	Themes and subthemes vetted by team members	Test for referential adequacy by returning to raw data
Defining and naming themes	Researcher triangulation	Documentation of team meetings regarding themes
	Peer debriefing	Documentation of theme naming
	Team consensus on themes	
Producing the report	Member checking	Peer debriefing
	Describing process of coding, analysis and audit trail in sufficient details	Thick descriptions of content
	Report on reasons for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices throughout the entire study	

Questions?



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Video on evaluating quality in qualitative research: [A Primer on Reviewing Qualitative Research - MacVideo](#)

Video clip of Victoria Clarke

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4voVhTiVydc>

Thematic analysis:

What is it, when is it useful, and what does 'best practice' look like?