

Verification strategies to ensure reliability and validity in qualitative analysis

MNEA Webinar

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Presenters



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Agenda

- Introduction to article (Morse et al. 2002)
- Investigator responsiveness
- Verification strategies:
 - Methodological coherence
 - Appropriate sample
 - Collecting and analyzing data concurrently
 - Thinking theoretically
 - Theory development
- Evaluation and applied research applications

Based on what?

- The article: Morse et al. (2002) “Verification strategies for establishing reliability and validity in qualitative research.” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*.
- We read this article and liked it!
- In this session, we’ll tell you how we interpreted this article and give you some ideas about how we use the strategies discussed in the article in our own work as evaluators and applied researchers

Introduction: Key points from the article

- Rigor in qualitative evaluation has been largely left up to users/readers to judge
 - Focus for researchers is on how to document it
- Readers/users use after-the-fact criteria to judge value, based on “trustworthiness”
 - Credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability
- However, procedural rigor (reliability, validity) is desirable and feasible
 - Authors propose standards to use during the research

Related concepts

- Internal validity:
 - Does the research study / measure what it set out to?
- External validity:
 - Can the research can be replicated? generalized?
- Developmental evaluation:
 - Assess and apply learnings along the way
 - Adjust methods, or even research question, accordingly

Critique

- Assumes lots of resources and time
- Assumes we have “thick data”
- No mention of mixed methods
- Heavy emphasis on theory development, less on applied use
 - But, we argue that rigor is just as important for applied research!!

Investigator responsiveness as a mindset

A qualitative researcher should be...

- **Open, letting go of previously held beliefs**
 - Be aware of and reduce personal biases
- **Sensitive and adaptive**
 - New evidence should be able to change your mind
- **Creative and insightful**
 - Focus on problem solving and questioning

Investigator responsiveness as a practice

Qualitative research rigor is threatened by...

- **Over-adherence to strict instructions**
 - Ground the research in the data
- **Inability to abstract, synthesize, or go beyond the technicalities of the data**
 - Make meaning from the data
- **Working too deductively**
 - Don't over-apply existing models and constructs

Verification strategies

- The process of checking, confirming, making sure, and being certain
- Mechanisms to increase the reliability and validity of qualitative research
- Ultimately, improve research rigor and usefulness

Methodological coherence = Congruence

Verification processes ensure congruence (alignment) among the research questions, published literature, participants, data collection, and analysis

Design ↔ **Implementation** ↔ **Dissemination**

Interact Center for the Visual and Performing Arts

ART-MAKING APPROACH AND IMPACT Interact Center creates art that challenges perceptions of disability.



What is Interact's approach?

▶ PERFORMING ARTS

Devised Theater

Rehearsals
5.5 hours/day
3-5 days/week

Dramaturgy
Studying visual, audio, and print media and discussing as a company

Performance creation
Character-building, plot development, and script-writing through improv and theater exercises

Intensives*
6 intensives/year
- Improv
- Articulation
- Movement
- Singing
**Sometimes taught by guest artists*

▶ SERVICES COORDINATION

Daily needs and Adult Day compliance

Individual care
Each artist has an Interact advocate

Daily needs
Transportation
Medication
Coordination with case manager
Finance management
Communication with housing provider

Adult Day compliance
Monthly goal-setting and check-ins
Yearly meeting with case manager
Daily physical exercises
Adult Day billing
Up-to-date disability risk and management plan

▶ VISUAL ARTS

Guided artistic development

Individual praxis
5.5 hours/day
3-5 days/week

Workshops*
4 workshops/month
Various media, such as water color, ceramics, and others
**Sometimes taught by guest artists*

Group critiques
1 session/week
Discussing artists' own and others' work

What does Interact do?

▶ THEATER PRODUCTIONS

2 full theater productions each year (all Interact performing artists are featured)

20 performances for each production (40 performances total each year)

About 10 tours per year (1-2 performances and 1-2 workshops per tour)

▶ RESIDENCIES

2 domestic or international residencies per year at schools, hospitals, or art organizations

About 3 weeks of arts learning and 2 performances or exhibitions per residency

▶ VISUAL ART EXHIBITIONS

2 Interact exhibitions each year (all Interact visual artists are featured)

About 12 additional exhibitions at which Interact artists are featured (1-2 Interact artists are featured per exhibition)

What is Interact's impact?

▶ IMPACT FOR INTERACT ARTISTS

Artistic impact

- Improved artistic skills
- Increased knowledge of art form(s)

Impact on artists' sense of self

- Artist identifies as an artist and positive contributor to community
- Increased self-esteem or self-worth
- Increased confidence/Increased self-determination to learn and try new things
- Improved ability or capacity/Increased autonomy

Social impact

- Improved sense of belonging or social acceptance
- Deepened social network/More relationships with others
- Improved relationships with family and friends
- Increased socialization/Increased interactions with others
- Improved social skills/Improved communication skills
- Increased interactions with wider community

▶ IMPACT FOR GUEST ARTISTS

Impact on artistic practice

- Deepened artistic capacity
- Increased commitment to making own art accessible
- More relationships with artists with disabilities

Understanding of disability

- Improved perception of disability
- Increased understanding of disability

▶ IMPACT FOR LEARNERS

Artistic impact

- Increased knowledge of art form(s)
- #### Understanding of disability
- Improved perception of disability
 - Increased understanding of disability

▶ IMPACT FOR AUDIENCES

Artistic engagement

- Engaged by art/Recognizes value in art
- #### Understanding of disability
- Improved perception of disability
 - Increased understanding of disability

What are Interact's values?

▶ RADICAL INCLUSION

Interact produces excellent art because of its artists' diverse ability levels -- artists with and without disabilities, from the mainstream and the margins, create art together.

▶ PROFESSIONAL QUALITY

Interact holds its artists to professional standards in artistic output as well as in behavior and conduct.

▶ FOCUSED ON STRENGTHS

Interact recognizes and builds on each artist's individual creativity, potential, and ability.

▶ ENRICHING LENS OF DISABILITY

Interact values the unique perspective of its artists with disabilities, and highlights that perspective through theater performances and visual art exhibitions.

Appropriate sample

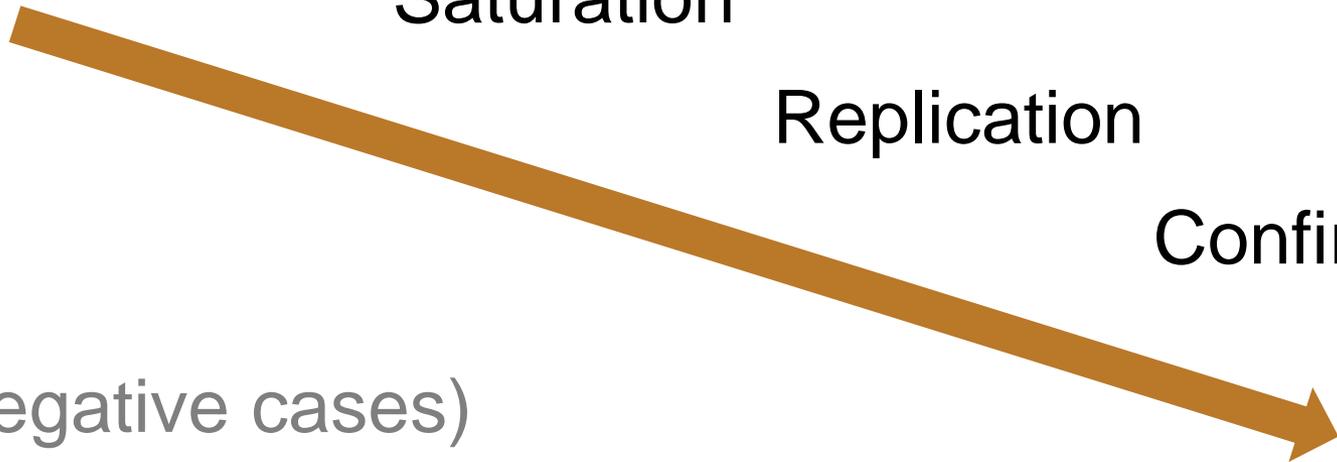
Categorization

Saturation

Replication

Confirmation

(Negative cases)



Theater Mu – theory of change “learning overview”

What we want to know	Mu leadership (1)*	Mu board	Mu staff	Mu artists (2)*	Mu audiences (Asian American) (1)*	Mu audiences (not Asian American) (1)*	School partners (1)*	Community partners (1)*	Community partners (2)*	Corporate training participants (2)*	Funders	Theatres of Color Coalition
The context of Mu's work												
The experience of Asian Americans in Minnesota			X					X	X			X
The experience of Asian Americans in the theater community			X							X		X
Mu's approach to making art												
How does Mu choose what it produces?	X	X	X					X	X			
How does Mu develop its programs/productions?	X	X	X					X	X			
What Mu does												
Productions and artist development	X											
Community outreach and residencies	X											
Corporate training and retention	X											
The impact of Mu's art												
For Asian American audiences / community		X			X			X				
For audiences who are not Asian American		X				X						
For students				X			X					
For Mu artists/artists that participate in MTI				X								
For corporate training participants/corporate partners										X		

Focus group study – saturation observed

W I L D E R **RESEARCH** C E N T E R

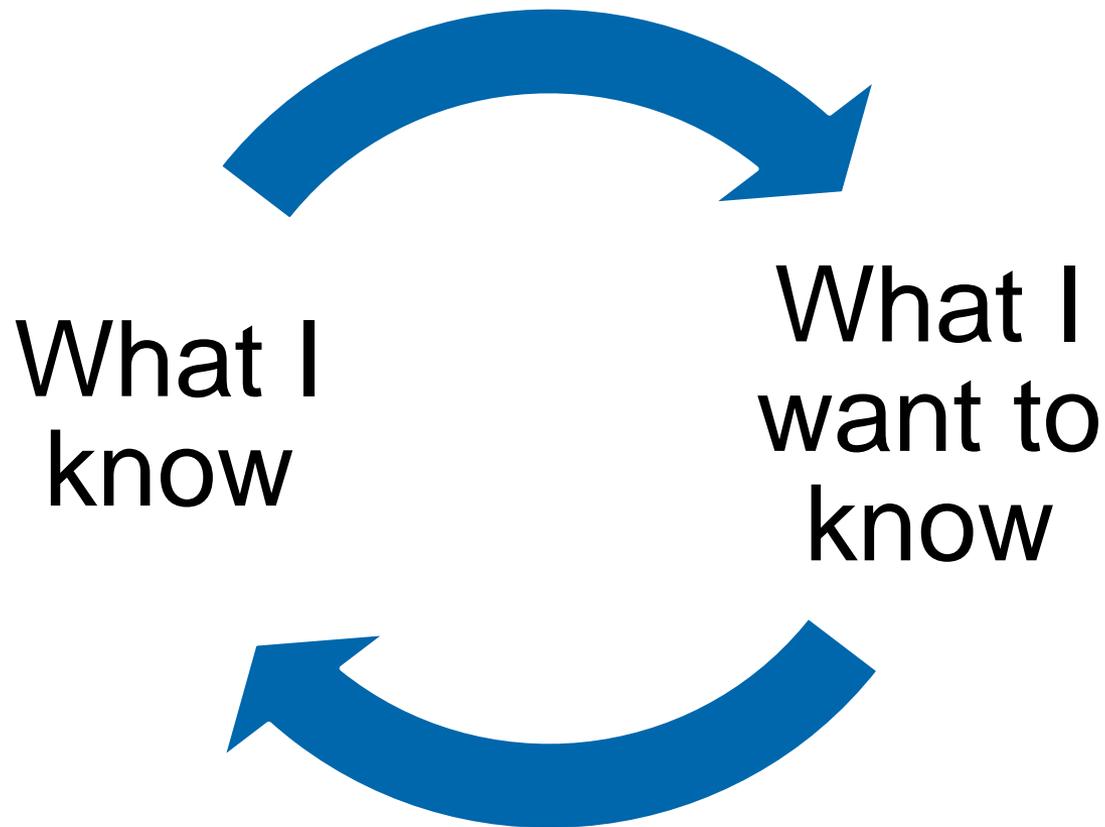
S U M M A R Y

The issues behind the outcomes for Somali, Hmong, American Indian, and African American welfare participants

Focus group participation, by location and cultural population

Cultural population	Metro groups	Non-metro groups	Total number of groups
American Indian	4 Minneapolis 3 Duluth	3 Leech Lake Reservation 2 Red Lake Reservation	12
African American	4 Minneapolis 3 St. Paul	2 Duluth 2 Rochester	11
Hmong	3 Minneapolis 4 St. Paul	1 Winona	8
Somali	4 Minneapolis 3 St. Paul	2 Rochester	9
Total	28 groups	12 groups	40

Collecting and analyzing data concurrently



Example – iterative data analysis

- Interact Center's theory of change – a 6-month consultation project

<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Before Interact</i>	<i>During Interact</i>	<i>Interact's impact</i>
<i>Artists</i> →	Why do these stakeholders begin their journey with Interact? How do these stakeholders begin their journey with Interact?	What are the major activities that these stakeholders experience while involved with Interact? How do these activities highlight the values or messages of Interact?	How are these stakeholders changed because of their involvement with Interact? How are these changes connected to Interact?
<i>Family</i> →			
<i>Audiences</i> →			

Thinking theoretically

“Inching forward without making cognitive leaps.”

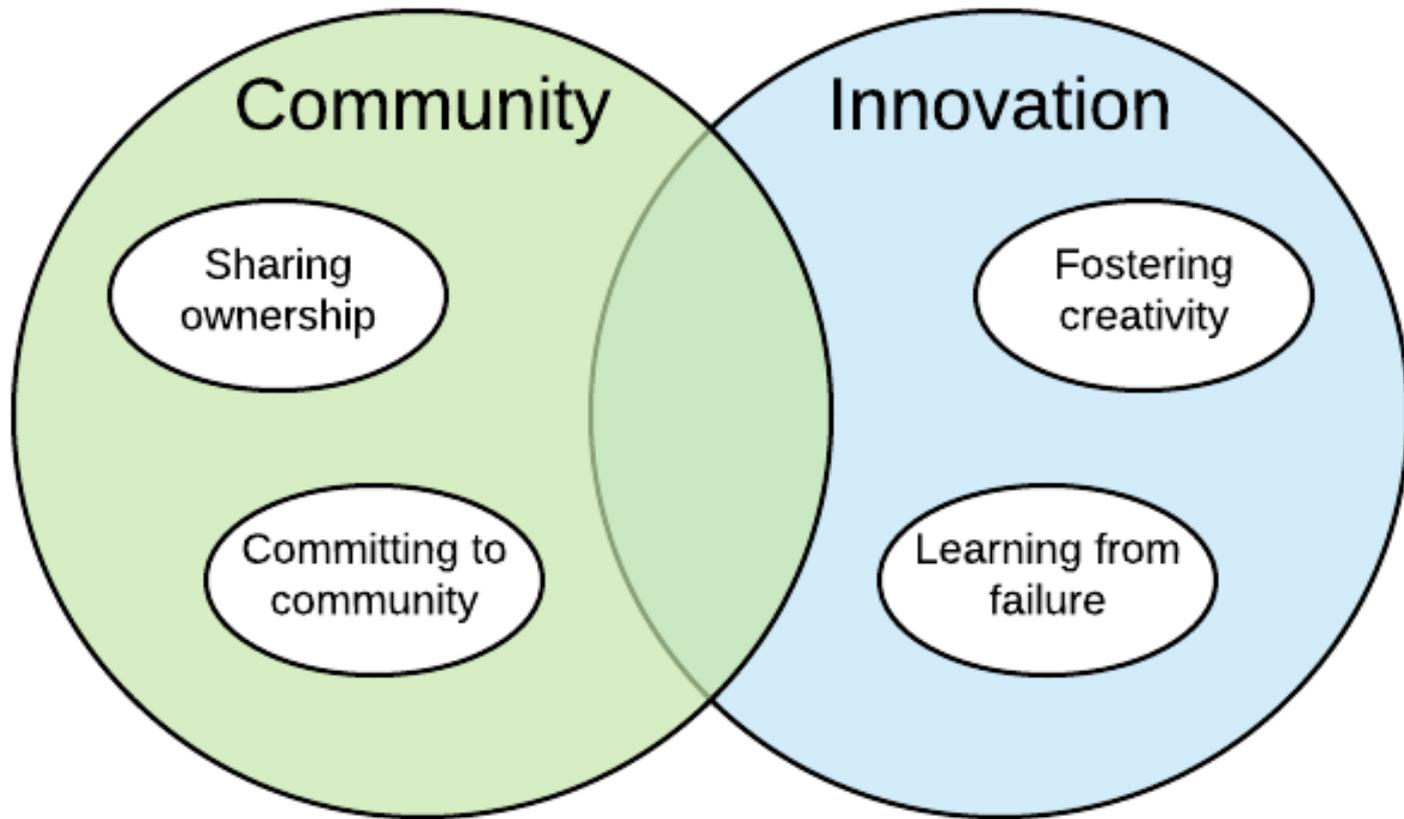
- Ideas generated from the data are reconfirmed with new data
- Constantly checking and re-checking

Theory development

(if applicable) Theories should:

- Be developed by moving deliberately between a micro perspective of the data and a macro theoretical understanding
- What does this mean for program improvement?
(in our applied world)

Bush Prize community innovation theory



Combining a priori and grounded theory

WILDER RESEARCH CENTER

S U M M A R Y

The issues behind the outcomes for Somali, Hmong, American Indian, and African American welfare participants

Codes based on data

Alternative to job

Child care

Disability (self)

Family needs

Health care

Housing

Job quality

Language

... and others

A priori codes/structure

Location of factor

Personal
MFIP
Employers
Community

Kind of effect

Helped
Hindered
No effect

Goal or accomplishment

Get/keep job
Exit MFIP
Survive/stay even
Other

In summary

- Strategies to improve reliability and validity need to be done during the research process
 - Post hoc processes can assess reliability and validity but they can't improve them
 - “Reliability and validity are actively attained, rather than proclaimed by an external reviewer.”
- Be proactive!! Take responsibility and own your rigor!
 - Lack of investigator responsiveness is the greatest threat to validity in qualitative research

Wrap-up

- Questions – feel free to email us (or tweet)!
- Nicole: nicole.martinrogers@wilder.org
[@nmartinrogers](https://twitter.com/nmartinrogers)
- Ellen: ellen.shelton@wilder.org
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Thank you!!