



Understanding Community Needs: Conducting Needs Assessments for your Museum

Thematic Analysis

Goal: *"The goal of a thematic analysis is to identify themes, i.e. patterns in the data that are important or interesting, and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue. This is much more than simply summarizing the data; a good thematic analysis interprets and makes sense of it."* (Maguire & Delahunt 2017)

When to use it: You can utilize a thematic analysis when you have collected qualitative feedback from interviews, surveys, focus groups, etc.

Braun & Clarke's (2006) Six-Phase Framework for Doing a Thematic Analysis:

1. Become familiar with the data	Read through all the qualitative data and write notes about initial impressions
2. Generate initial codes	Based off the initial reading of the data, determine some key words/topics that come up throughout the data. These will become codes that you can use to analyze your data.
3. Search for themes	Examine the codes you have generated from the data and group them into themes. A theme can be a pattern that captures something significant within the data. If there is a small set of data, there might be some overlap in codes and themes.
4. Review themes	Review themes to ensure they are concise and not redundant. Ensure that there are themes that capture all the initial impressions you had about the data in step #1.
5. Define themes	You can create maps that show the relationships between themes and codes, or you can create a theme definition list. The goal of this step is to truly understand and identify what all the themes mean and how they relate to one another.
6. Generate a final report	Create a final report that reflects the data analysis. This report could look different based on the goals of the analysis and how it will be used.

Interested in learning more?

- Moira Maguire & Brid Delahunt. 2017. "Doing a thematic analysis: A practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars" *Ireland Journal of Higher Education*. <https://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/view/335>
- Karen Peel. 2020. "A Beginner's Guide to Applied Educational Research using Thematic Analysis" *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*. <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/pare/vol25/iss1/2/>