

Qualitative Methods - Phenomenologically-informed thematic analysis.

M5X02252

Overview

- ▶ Today's work through an example of qualitative research called Phenomenologically-Informed Thematic Analysis.
- ▶ The source for this example is: Willig, C (2013) *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology*: Buckingham: OUP. Chapter Eight.



What is Thematic Analysis

- ▶ Thematic Analysis is a widely used qualitative psychology tool in analysing interview, focus group or diary based data.
- ▶ “Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data”. (Braun and Clarke, 2006)
- ▶ It is a method of processing and analysing the data in rich detail , interpreting various aspects of the research topic (Boyatzis, 1998).
- ▶ Despite being widely used, its methodology can be considered unclear (supporters might call this flexible) – and more recently researchers have adopted a hybrid approach of thematic analysis, combining it with other qualitative method of analysis.

Thematic Analysis (Clarke et al 2015).

- ▶ Familiarisation – reading and re-reading the transcripts.
- ▶ Coding – is the first step in the process of identifying patterns in the data because it groups together similar data fragments.
- ▶ “Searching for themes” – the researcher cluster together codes to create a credible mapping of key patterns in the data.
- ▶ Reviewing the themes – the researcher check whether the ‘candidate’ theme exhibit a good ‘fit’ with the coded and the entire data set, and each has a clear, distinct ‘essence’ or central organising concept.
- ▶ Defining and naming the themes – writing theme definitions and selecting a theme name or label.
- ▶ Writing the Report – produce a narrative (organising framework) showing the analytical journey.

What is Phenomenologically-Informed Thematic Analysis.

- ▶ Braun and Clarke (2006) – It is a branch of thematic analysis in which the researcher is interested in the lived experiences of the participant within a particular context at a particular time.
- ▶ Based very closely to another branch of qualitative analysis Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA, Smith, 1996).

Phenomenologically-Informed Thematic Analysis

- ▶ Through qualitative data, such as diaries or transcripts of interviews, Phenomenologically-Informed Thematic Analysis seeks to examine an individual's **perceptions (feelings, understandings)** about a situation or event.
- ▶ Phenomenologically-Informed Thematic Analysis then seeks to understand how these feelings are structured around **themes** (i.e. regularly reoccurring ideas or concerns).

The Key Steps

1. Choosing a topic/research question

2. Constructing an interview schedule

3. Locating participants

4. Conducting an interview or interviews

5. Transcribing the interview material

6. Analysis of data

7. Writing Up

Conducting analysis

- ▶ Phenomenologically-Informed Thematic Analysis involves searching for themes in interview or other qualitative data.
- ▶ Themes are: “recurrent ideas or topics which can be detected in the material which is being analysed, and which come up on more than one occasion in a particular set of data.” (Hayes 2000:173)

Phenomenologically-informed thematic analysis (Braun and Clark, 2006).

- ▶ Stage 1 – Reading and Re-reading.
 - ▶ Read the transcript a number of times to become intimate with the account.
- ▶ Stage 2 – Initial Noting
 - ▶ Use right hand margin to document interesting data / thoughts in the form of key words / phrases.
- ▶ Stage 3 – Developing emergent themes.
 - ▶ Emerging themes identified in the left hand margin in a chronological manner
 - ▶ Themes checked back with primary source material
- ▶ Stage 4 – Searching for connections across emergent themes.
 - ▶ Connections looked for between themes – **Superordinate themes identified**
 - ▶ Table of themes produced and Superordinate themes given a name / label.
 - ▶ Identifier added to each instance in the table.

Lets Break this down further....

Analysing data for themes involves three main steps:

1. Making brief notes indicating points of interest in the data (use right hand margin)
2. Indicating any reoccurring themes that arise in the interview.
3. Grouping the themes under wider headings or categories. These are 'superordinate themes'

Similarities vs Differences between IPA and Phenomenologically-Informed Thematic Analysis.

Similarities

- ▶ Both attempts to analyse an individual's experiences in order to understand the world from their point of view.
- ▶ Both try to discover how individuals organise their perceptions.
- ▶ Both assume perceptions are themed.
- ▶ Participants may or may not be aware of the themes.
- ▶ Interviewee NOT the interviewer is the expert

Differences

- ▶ No reflexive account (personal evaluative account) with Phenomenologically-Informed Thematic Analysis.

Stages of analysis

- ▶ Both Braun and Clarke (2006) and Willig (2013) identifies four stages:
- ▶ The researcher's initial encounter with the text
- ▶ Identification of themes (Subordinate themes)
- ▶ Clustering of themes (Superordinate themes)
- ▶ Production of a summary table

Worked Example

Stage 1: The researcher's initial encounter with the text

- ▶ The diary was written by the young man in order to document his experience of change in his life.
- ▶ Over the next ten minutes, read the extract and make brief notes about:
- ▶ **The style of writing**
- ▶ **The way the young man characterises his thoughts**
- ▶ **The concerns that the young man feels are important to his life.**
- ▶ You may work in groups. After 10 minutes you will be asked to share your ideas with the rest of the class.

Task

- ▶ You can work in groups or work alone (you have all been given the same extract).
- ▶ I want you to work through this worked example as outlined by Willig (2003).

Stage 1: Willig's comments

- ▶ 1. Style
 - ▶ The author uses powerful metaphoric images ('I am on a train', 'hungry')
 - ▶ The first part of the diary entry (lines 1-5) employs lively and colourful language, the remainder is written in a calmer style
- ▶ 2. The Way the young man characterises his thoughts.
 - ▶ Reference to psychological concepts ('manic states')
- ▶ 3. The concerns that the young man feels are important to his life.
 - ▶ The relationship between freedom and control ('move with the change')

Stage 2: Identification of themes

- ▶ After an impressionistic first encounter with the text, analysis becomes more systematic.
- ▶ The text is organized into themes

Themes

- ▶ Willig Identifies 7 Themes.
- ▶ 1. Strong feelings (of arousal, of hunger, of excitement, of movement)
- ▶ 2. Psychopathology (concerns about mental health)
- ▶ 3. Hunger (for stimulation, experiences, impressions, for the world)
- ▶ 4. Life Stages ('youth' vs. 'later in life')
- ▶ Before moving on to the final three themes, take ten minutes to identify examples of the above in the text. You may discuss your ideas in small groups.
- ▶

Themes continued

- ▶ You can find the examples Willig identified in her book.
- ▶ Here are the final three themes.
- ▶ 5. Need for movement and change ('for me, there has to be movement all the time') [line 12]
- ▶ 6. Need for freedom ('I don't want to plan ahead or commit myself', 'I need to feel free to change') [lines 10 and line 13]
- ▶ 7. Control/agency ('a little out of control; on the edge of control', 'freedom and control together...') [line 2 and lines 14-15]

Stage 3: Clustering of Themes

- ▶ When first analysing a text, the researcher may identify a great number of themes. Often, some of these themes will have common reference points. Perhaps they may express a common underlying concern or topic. The next stage is to cluster the themes into 'super ordinate' themes.
- ▶ According to Willig these super ordinate themes, or clusters, "capture the main categories of meaning that the author is using in his account of change and transformation" (Willig 2013: 90)

Cluster of Themes

- ▶ Willig identifies three clusters:
 - ▶ Cluster 1: Psychological states
 - ▶ Cluster 2: Needs
 - ▶ Cluster 3: Control
- ▶ Look at the initial list of themes. Discuss in groups which themes fit under which clusters.

Clustering themes - Willig's suggestions:

- ▶ Cluster 1: Psychological states

- ▶ Themes 1, 2 and 4

- ▶ Cluster 2: Needs

- ▶ Themes 3, 5 and 6

- ▶ Cluster 3: Control

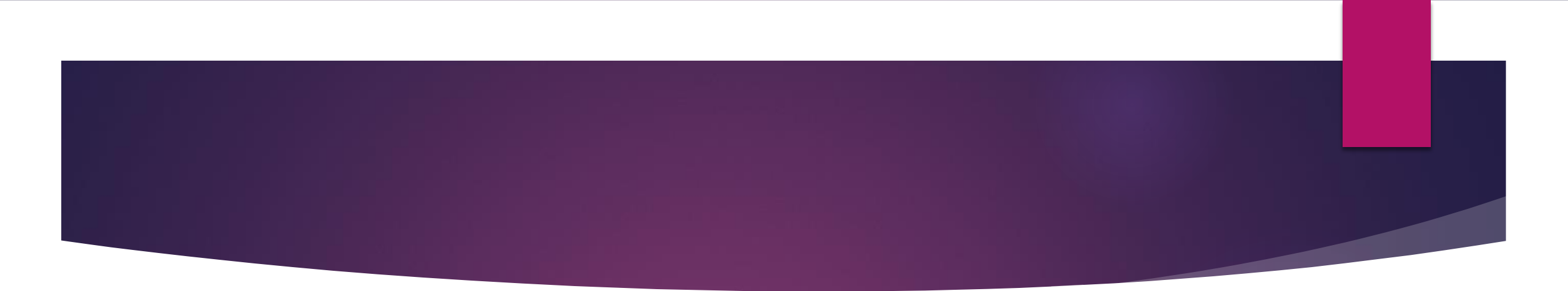
- ▶ Theme 7

Stage 4: Production of a summary table

- ▶ A summary table is produced to obtain a clear overview of clusters, subordinate themes and related quotations
- ▶ If you write up a thematic analysis report, the results/discussion section should contain a summary table.
- ▶ An example of a summary table is provided by Willig (2013:90) also on slide 49 of this powerpoint.

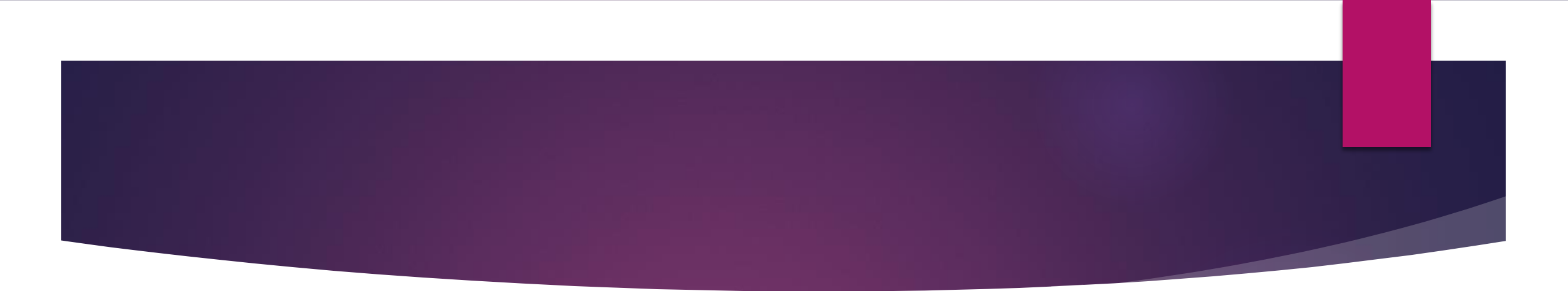
Answer the Research Question

- ▶ Looking at the clusters of themes, write a couple of paragraphs answering the research question:
- ▶ How does the young man experience the process of change in his life?
- ▶ The paragraphs **should refer to the themes and be supported by quotations from the data.**

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- ▶ This approach is known as ‘inductive thematic analysis’
 - ▶ Inductive thematic analysis allows the themes to emerge from the data.
 - ▶ Inductive thematic analysis does not test hypotheses. It seeks to answer a general research question that is often descriptive in nature.

Your research!

- ▶ **Formulate a research question that will guide your analysis**
- ▶ You may change the question as you go along if, for instance, the data suggests a different one is more appropriate or you can't find any themes relating to your question

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- ▶ You will then follow the steps suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006)
 - ▶ These are:
 - ▶ The researcher's initial encounter with the text
 - ▶ Identification of themes
 - ▶ Clustering of themes

Identification of themes:

- ▶ What ideas, concerns, emotions, etc. recur throughout the article?
- ▶ How do they help you address your research question?

Clustering of themes:

Can you group the themes you've identified under more general headings?

Now it's over to you:

- ▶ Data preparation
- ▶ Formulating a research question
- ▶ The researcher's initial encounter with the text
- ▶ Identification of themes
- ▶ Clustering of themes

Writing Up a Qualitative Report

M5X02252

Qualitative Reports

- ▶ Can deviate a little from the format required for quantitative reports
 - ▶ Can write in the first person
 - ▶ HOWEVER, CONSIDER IF THIS IS NECESSARY?
 - ▶ More flexibility in presentation of method and results sections
- ▶ However clear and precise account is still very important

Structuring the Project

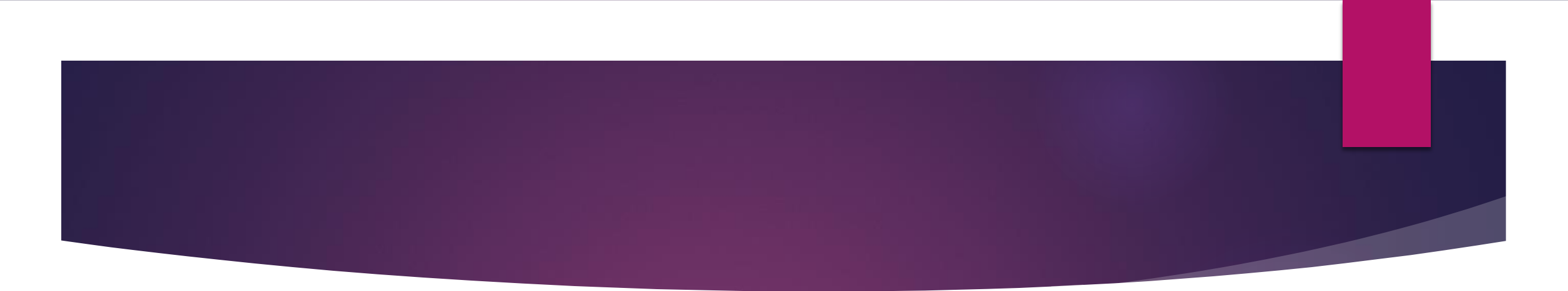
- ▶ Still need the following details
 - ▶ Clear and Precise Title
 - ▶ Abstract
 - ▶ Major sections
 - ▶ Introduction
 - ▶ Methodology
 - ▶ Results/Discussion
 - ▶ Conclusion
 - ▶ References
 - ▶ Appendices

Title

- ▶ Aim to be informative, yet as precise and concise as you can. Make sure it makes sense.
- ▶ Remember with qualitative research it is not considered an experiment, you might not even have a hypothesis (this is quite common), it is often an investigation or exploration (use these words!).
- ▶ If a case study, or a focus group state this in title (for the purposes of assessment 2 for M5X02252 then you are analysing a diary extract).

Titles - Example

- ▶ An investigation into the impact of a cyber bullying on dating confidence: A focus group approach.
- ▶ Exploring the impact of cyber bullying on dating confidence: A case study of a victim of cyber bullying.

- 
- ▶ Abstract (placed directly underneath your title).
 - ▶ Summary of report. Try to be as succinct as possible. Include the following details:
 - ▶ Background to your study
 - ▶ Method - a brief statement of design and sample
 - ▶ Results - the main findings in words (just brief note of the themes)
 - ▶ Conclusion - in one line if possible.
 - ▶ 150-200 words maximum.

Introduction / Literature Review

- ▶ The background to your study derived from the psychological literature.
 - ▶ Begin in broad terms -set the context for the study
 - ▶ Then outline some relevant evidence using studies from the literature
 - ▶ Give the rationale for your study
 - ▶ Conclude with the specific aim of your study, including the research question
 - ▶ As stated a qualitative report is largely investigative and should not have a hypothesis.

Structuring the report

- ▶ Introduction / Literature Review
 - ▶ Same format as with any report
 - ▶ Start by stating the general area
 - ▶ Review relevant research and theory
 - ▶ Quite often it can be appropriate to complete (not write up) your analysis first then complete your introduction / literature review.
 - ▶ **Rationale for your study**
 - ▶ End with statement of research question
 - ▶ Not with a hypothesis

Method

- ▶ Should include all of the practical information necessary for someone else to replicate your work.
- ▶ Divided into the following subsections:
 - ▶ Design
 - ▶ Participants
 - ▶ Apparatus/Materials
 - ▶ Procedure
 - ▶ Ethical Considerations

Method cont'd

- ▶ Design
 - ▶ the logical framework of the study, all of the planning required prior to carrying it out.
 - ▶ In terms of a qualitative report as it is non-experimental you only need to state:-
 - ▶ That a non experimental, qualitative approach was taken.
 - ▶ State what approach was made, focus group, case study, multiple interviews, longitudinal.

Method cont'd

- ▶ Participants
 - ▶ You should give the details of your sample and your sampling procedure. Give the mean age and number of males and females and how your participant group was assembled.
 - ▶ Sometimes, you may also need to give specific information about participants that is relevant to your particular study e.g. first language, handedness, etc.

Method cont'd

- ▶ Things to avoid
 - ▶ Describing type of sample:
 - ▶ 'Random sample' - if you say this, be sure it really was 'random'
 - ▶ opportunist sample - you mean *opportunity sample*!
 - ▶ When participant sample is divided into different groups:
 - ▶ 'participants were split in half randomly'
 - ▶ 'participants were both male and female'

Method cont'd

- ▶ It might be that your report might be an empirical but with no participants as such...
 - ▶ E.g. your task for this module
- ▶ In that case you would need to replace the Participants section and give details of the researcher (e.g. you) and also the data (e.g. the extract).

Structuring the Report

- ▶ Materials
 - ▶ Give the Following Details.
 - ▶ Describe any physical equipment used
 - ▶ E.g. Dictaphone, Computers etc.
 - ▶ Describe any stimuli used
 - ▶ E.g. Interview schedule, Diary Extract, Consent forms etc.
 - ▶ Interview schedules should go in Appendices.

Method cont'd

- ▶ Procedure

- ▶ Describe how the study was carried out.
- ▶ Where were participants interviewed, how long were they interviewed.
- ▶ What did you do next – Transcribe the interviews.
- ▶ The type of analysis (e.g. Phenomenologically-Informed Thematic Analysis). Go into detail about HOW you analysed the data – the stages etc – do not mention the results.
- ▶ The procedure can go into the appendices to save on word count.

Method cont'd

- ▶ Ethical Considerations.
- ▶ It is considered good practice to outline the ethical considerations that you carried out when conducting your study.

Structuring the report

- ▶ Results/Discussion
 - ▶ Combine these two sections
 - ▶ Produce and include a summary table of themes
 - ▶ No quantitative analysis, so distinction between results and discussion is less clear cut

Results/Discussion

- ▶ 1. Initial Encounter with the text.
 - ▶ Based upon initial notes, what were the initial views about the text.
- ▶ 2. Summary Table.
 - ▶ See next slide
- ▶ 3. Discussion of the Results.

Example of a Summary Table.

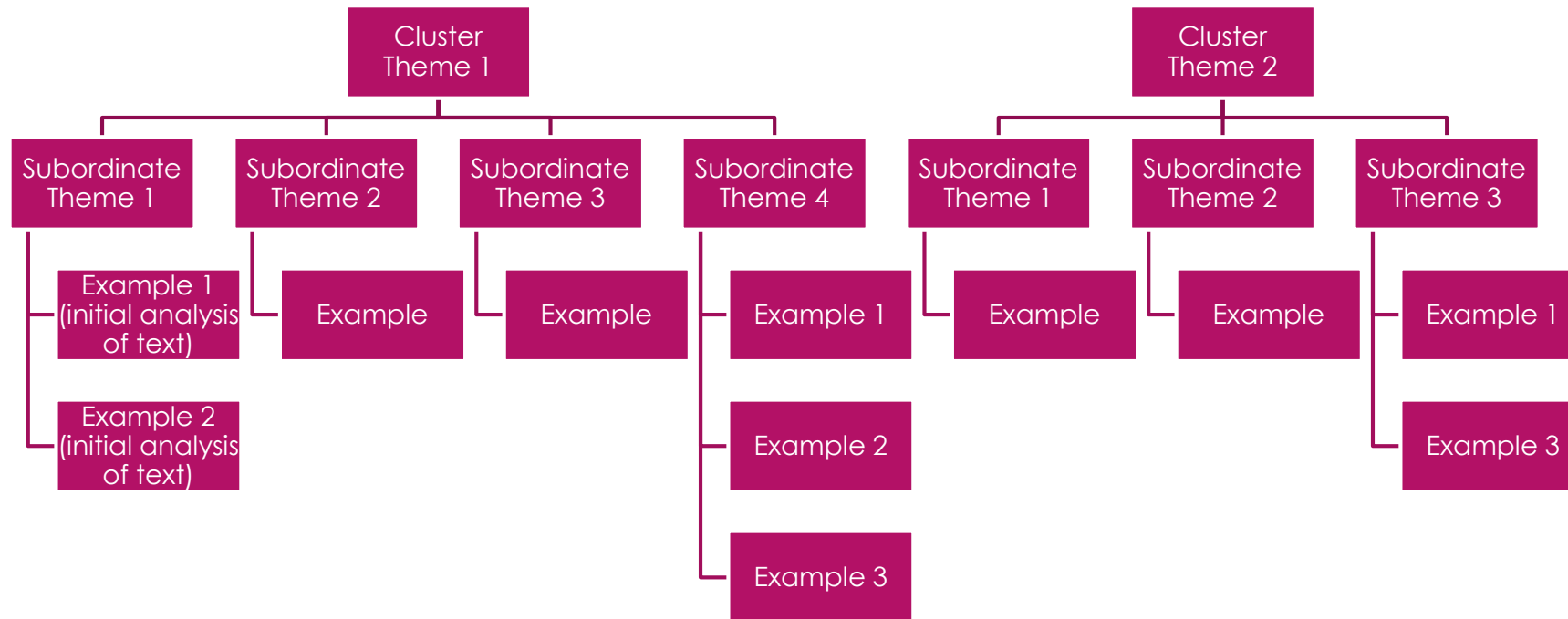
Remember to
Present your table
in APA format (As
shown here) and
also label your
table.

Superordinate Themes	Subordinate Themes	Quote Keyword	Page / Line Number
Superordinate (Cluster) Theme 1	Subordinate Theme 1	Blah Blah	Page 4; Line 20.
	Subordinate Theme 2		
	Subordinate Theme 3		
	Subordinate Theme 4		
Superordinate (Cluster) Theme 2.	Subordinate Theme 1	Blah Blah	Page 10; Line 3 etc.
	Subordinate Theme 2		
	Subordinate Theme 3		

Diagrammatical Representation of Results

- ▶ Not compulsory, but can look good.
- ▶ Use of flow charts to display hierarchical nature of analysis.
- ▶ From the superordinate themes (at the top of the diagram) through to the initial analysis of the data, via the subordinate themes.
 - ▶ You will have this information at hand anyway (with the table).

Example



How to do Flow Charts quickly and effectively.

- ▶ Microsoft Word is your friend.
- ▶ Insert Smart Art Graphics
- ▶ Then when in SmartArt – just click on Hierarchy and flow chart options will appear.
- ▶ The previous slide took less than 2 minutes!

Results/discussion cont...

- ▶ Describe what you found
 - ▶ Plenty of examples to illustrate the points you are making
 - ▶ Link back to the Introduction and previous theory/research.
- ▶ Can use different sub-headings if you think this might be helpful.
- ▶ Use your superordinate themes as subheadings.
- ▶ Implications, Limitations and Future Research.

Conclusion

- ▶ After you have finished your results / discussion then you should have an overall conclusion summarising your research.

References

Should be listed in alphabetical order (by author surname) in the APA format as follows: Use your reference guidelines.

Journal

Logie, R.H. (2006). Visuo-spatial processes in working memory. *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 38A, 229-247.

Book

Levelt, W.J.M. (1989). *Speaking: From intention to articulation*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.

❑ NB Don't divide references into separate book and journal sections.

Appendices

- ▶ Reference material that may be useful to the reader: For qualitative studies these may include
 - ▶ Interview Schedules
 - ▶ If you a diary extract, then include that.
 - ▶ Consent forms / debrief forms (just an example not the signed version).
 - ▶ Additional analysis not part of your main results.
 - ▶ For example, you may have interviewed 2 participants on 3 different occasions but only looked at common themes amongst the 2 participants. You could include in your appendices your analysis tables/figures for each individual interview.
 - ▶ Procedure

So respective word count for a 2500 qualitative empirical research project

- ▶ Title is NOT part of the word count.
- ▶ Abstract – 150-200 words (maximum).
- ▶ Introduction / Literature Review – 1000
- ▶ Methodology section (all subsections combined) – 300
 - ▶ Remember tables and direct quotes from transcripts not part of word count.
- ▶ Results / Discussion and conclusion - 1200
- ▶ Total = 2700, but remember you have the +/-10% rule.

Finally

- ▶ Reference list is not part of the word count
- ▶ And neither is information placed in appendices.
- ▶ You may place your “procedure” (and only “procedure” section) in your appendices if struggling for word count.
- ▶ Remember to write in the past tense, this is a report of what you did.