

Six phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006):

This should not be viewed as a linear model, where one cannot proceed to the next phase without completing the prior phase (correctly); rather analysis is a recursive process.

1) Familiarisation with the data: is common to all forms of qualitative analysis – the researcher must immerse themselves in, and become intimately familiar with, their data; reading and re-reading the data (and listening to audio-recorded data at least once, if relevant) and noting any initial analytic observations.

2) Coding: Also a common element of many approaches to qualitative analysis (see Braun & Clarke, 2012a, for thorough comparison), this involves generating pithy labels for important features of the data of relevance to the (broad) research question guiding the analysis. Coding is not simply a method of data reduction, it is also an analytic process, so codes capture both a semantic and conceptual reading of the data. The researcher codes every data item and ends this phase by collating all their codes and relevant data extracts.

3) Searching for themes: A theme is a coherent and meaningful pattern in the data relevant to the research question. If codes are the bricks and tiles in a brick and tile house, then themes are the walls and roof panels. Searching for themes is a bit like coding your codes to identify similarity in the data. This 'searching' is an active process; themes are not hidden in the data waiting to be discovered by the intrepid researcher, rather the researcher constructs themes. The researcher ends this phase by collating all the coded data relevant to each theme.

4) Reviewing themes: Involves checking that the themes 'work' in relation to both the coded extracts and the full data-set. The researcher should reflect on whether the themes tell a convincing and compelling story about the data, and begin to define the nature of each individual theme, and the relationship between the themes. It may be necessary to collapse two themes together or to split a theme into two or more themes, or to discard the candidate themes altogether and begin again the process of theme development.

5) Defining and naming themes: Requires the researcher to conduct and write a detailed analysis of each theme (the researcher should ask 'what story does this theme tell?' and

'how does this theme fit into the overall story about the data?'), identifying the 'essence' of each theme and constructing a concise, punchy and informative name for each theme.

6) **Writing up:** Writing is an integral element of the analytic process in TA (and most qualitative research). Writing-up involves weaving together the analytic narrative and (vivid) data extracts to tell the reader a coherent and persuasive story about the data, and contextualising it in relation to existing literature.