CONTENT ANALYSIS

TIPS, TRICKS & RESOURCES

First: DO NOT FREAK OUT. This is your first paper, and likely your first content analysis. It is unlikely everything will go 100% according your plan. Your coding manual probably won't be great, you will likely struggle to properly define & apply the concepts & equations presented in class, and your limitations will be plentiful... and ALL of that IS OK! This project - and the class! - is about trying different methods and learning from mistakes (not producing a perfect study and flawless paper). That being said, here are some tips, tricks and resources that we think you may find helpful:

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Thoroughly review Dr. D's notes on your lit review & make necessary adjustments. Adjust your RQ/H to fit the content analysis process as simply as possible.

DATA & TRANSCRIPTION

- It is probably easiest to use your data form your qualitative project.
- A website service called "Temi" will transcribe audio (your 1st transcription is free, then it is 10¢/per audio minute).
- If you use Temi, or a similar service, be sure to check the transcript once for accuracy by listening to the audio and reading along and making corrections.
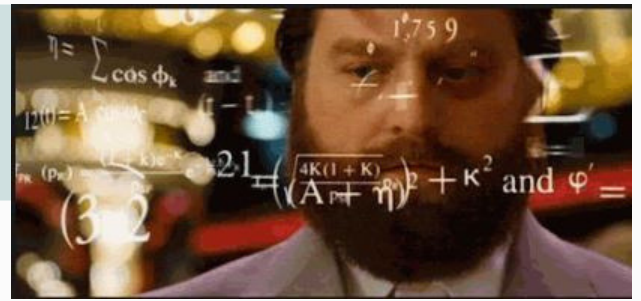
DEFINING YOUR UNIT

This will probably be the most difficult part of building your coding manual, and maybe even of your entire project. Try to keep units & categories as simple as possible.

- A unit can be a: word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, entire response/post
- It is unlikely you will want ALL of your data coded (i.e. data not relevant to the RQ/H)
- A unit can also be a "mention", "reference" or an "articulation" of a specific topic/subject, or even "a complete thought".
- Try to define units so that they are easily identifiable in the data, though this is often much more easily said than done. If you are not working with a concise, definitive unit (like a Facebook post) you will likely not do this perfectly, and your coders will identify different units, and THAT'S OK!
- Note that your coders will be identifying units as you have defined them, NOT you.

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SCOTT'S PI

Scott's Pi is a measure intercoder reliability... YOU MUST RUN SCOTT'S PI BEFORE CONVERGING YOUR TWO CODERS' DATA.

- It's easiest to plug your data into the website provided to do your math for you,
- If you get a really strange number (i.e. negative or really large), ASK DR. DIXSON... (Remember, .7 is the general standard for social sciences).
- This number will be reported in your Methods section (just the number, not the math!)
- If your Scott's Pi reflects low intercoder reliability THAT'S OK! This doesn't mean you suck & will not impact your grade if you properly report it & discuss it as a limitation.

CONVERGE YOUR DATA

AFTER running Scott's Pi you will need to converge the two coders' data sets into one.

- You can have your coders work together & make decisions about differences or you can choose an unbiased method to select data from either coder (i.e. rolling a dice or using Coder A & Coder B's data is in an alternating fashion when discrepancies occur.

CHI-SQUARE

You can only run Chi-Square AFTER you have converged your coders' data into ONE SET.

- "Chai" is a latte. It's pronounced "/kaɪ/" (hard "K" & long "I", like "Kite" w/out the "t",
- Again, use the website provided to your math for you (GraphPad).
- The website will spit out a p-value, but you can also find critical values (p<.05, p<.01 etc.) at another website provided (web.ma.utexas.edu).
- The Degrees of Freedom (df) = (# of rows - 1) * (# of columns -1).
- If the Chi-Square statistic is LARGER than the critical value, the null hypothesis can be rejected (it is unlikely that results of your sample occurred by chance).
- Chi-Square statistics go in the Results section. Restate your H/RQ, & include the df & critical value.
- Again, if you get a really crazy number for your chi-square, check in with Dr. Dixson!

Remember.... DON'T FREAK OUT! You are smart, this is hard.

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PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Give yourself some time to include all of the parts of a full research paper:

- Use the "Social Science Paper Contents" webpage as a checklist.
- You need to include a cover page, abstract, introduction, lit review, rationale, H/RQ, method (including participants, procedures/instruments), results, discussion (including limitations and implications for future research) a conclusion & an appendix.
- Include your interview/focus group questions or any questionnaire you used etc. to gather data as well as your coding manual in the appendices.
- Double check that you have everything & check current APA rules for formatting.

MISCELLANEOUS

- If you are not the first group to present, listen to & incorporate feedback previous groups get about mistakes/adjustments.
- If you use your thematic analysis to make your categories, be sure to mention that and cite yourself as an unpublished manuscript.
- Avoid words like "significant", "prove", "correlation", & "determine" unless you truly mean them in a purely scientific sense. Instead use "suggests" or "supports".
- Be careful not to make claims beyond what the data shows.

JUST ASK MARCIA!

Check in with Dr. Dixson via email or set up a meeting as you set up your RQ/H & design your method & analysis (and at any other point that you feel lost or frustrated or stuck or panicked or scared or unsure or stressed or just plain dumb!). It's not expected that you know & understand all of the material & can produce a perfect paper. It is about doing & learning & putting forth effort. There will be times where you think you have a handle on a concept only to realize you actually still have some gaps in understanding when you sit down to do it. It's all part of the process, JUST ASK MARCIA!!

It's fine. You're fine. Everything's fine.