MAXDAYS
MAXQDA VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

Teaching Qualitative Data Analysis with MAXQDA

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Course/Workshop Format

I usually use some combination of

- Lecture
- Discussion
- Software demonstration
- Analysis application

Example

- Overview lecture of tools and processes of analysis
- Discussion of articles with different analytic approaches
- Introduction to MAXQDA with fully built project
- Basic search with activation, review coded segments and memos (followed by discussion in pairs)

Laying the Foundation

Core lecture on Primary Data, Tools, Processes of data analysis

For Novice Learners

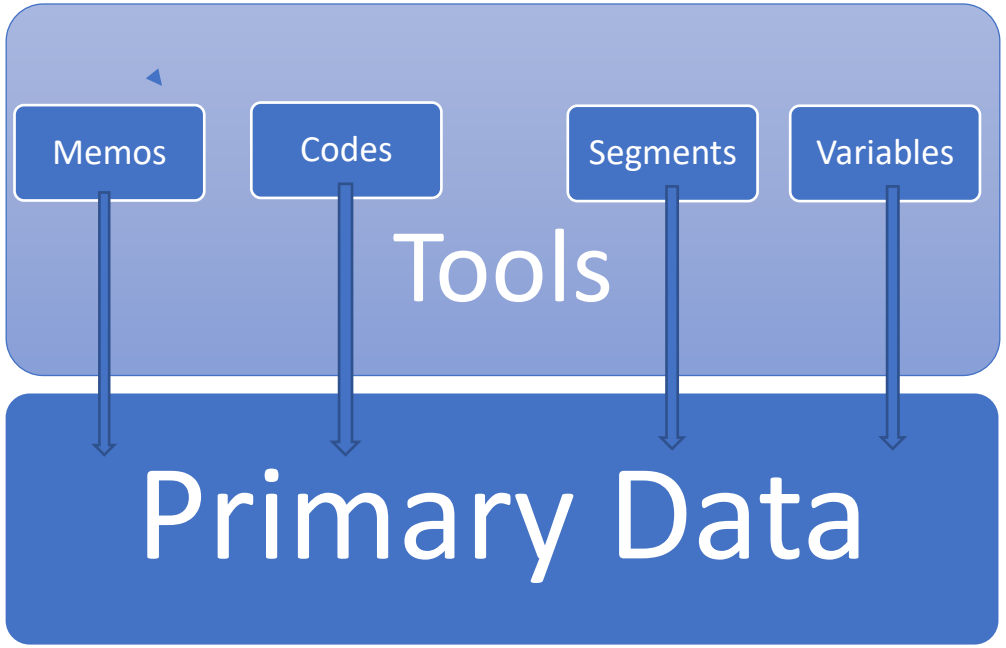
- Provides overview of content
- Explains key terms
- Introduces the notion of multiple processes of analysis (e.g. thematic analysis versus grounded theory)

For experienced researchers

- Establishes common vocabulary
- Makes explicit your approach and the potential for lack of consensus
  - What do we mean when we say “code,” “category,” “property,” “dimension?”

Tools of Analysis

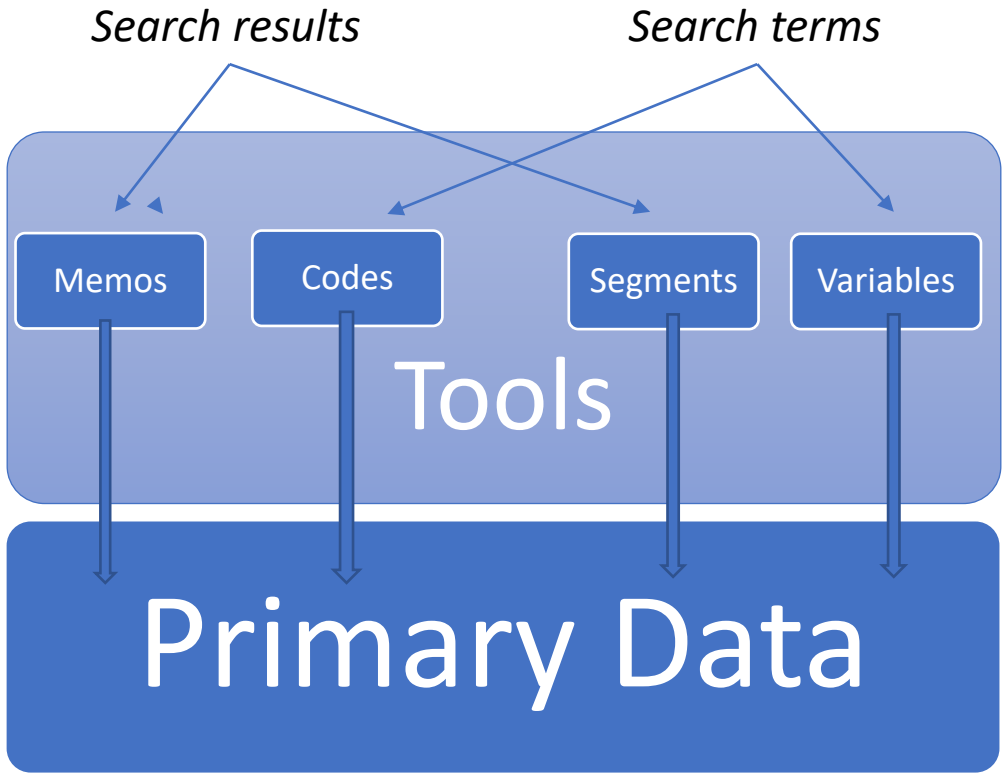
- **Memos**: Annotations – writing about the text you are reading – reflecting on meaning, themes, context, etc.
- **Codes**: labels you attach to text to index themes of interest in your data. *Search Terms*
- **Segments**: the block of text you highlight and then label with a Code: *the Unit of Analysis*
- **Variables**: Discrete information about participants or texts – not amenable to textual analysis. *Categories/types for Comparison*



Processes of Analysis

Retrieve, Review, Reflect, Reduce:

- Simple searches use **codes** as search terms to retrieve coded **segments** and related **memos** through *activation*
- Complex searches use **variables** as well as **codes** (and **code combinations**) to retrieve coded segments, compare the data to other groups (values on variables), and reduce patterns and variations into descriptive and comparative accounts



Empirical Articles

Demonstrate different approaches to analysis

- Memo-driven strategy
- Case-based analysis
- Thematic Analysis

Establishes different processes using same tools

Demonstrates transparent writing about analysis

Workshop strategies

In small groups

- Read in advance and discuss analysis in methods section
- Read methods section in workshop – small groups explain to each other

Overview of Fully Built Project

Allows full demonstration of key features and functions

- Don’t overwhelm! Not a full software review
- Overview – not a point and click demonstration
- Orient learners to the program

- Four windows – opening, closing, rearranging
- Codes and coding stripes
- Segmentation (changing)
- Memos (documents, codes, text)
- Activation (basic)
- Activation by variables

Practical Considerations

Course/Workshop Structure

Course/Workshop Data

It is essential for your students to practice skills with real data!

- I provide secondary data for at least the first half of a course
  - With their own primary data, learning depends on the quality of the data
  - Secondary data allows you to model team-based analysis exercises
- If using a client's data for a workshop
  - Is the data is rich/thick enough to demonstrate concepts and skills?
  - Can you become familiar enough with the data to develop meaningful exercises and discussion?
- I use a dataset with 4 life history interview transcripts.
  - Each learner focuses on one transcript (5-6 learners per transcript)
  - We alternate between individual software practice and team-based analysis discussions

Course Planning Logistics

I usually think in terms of 3-hour blocks

- Weekly for semester-long courses
- Self-contained sessions for short courses
  - 5-day course = Ten 3-hour blocks
  - 2-day course = Four 3-hour blocks

MIX IT UP!!!

Each 3-hour block:

- Maximum 60-75 minute lecture (shorter is better!)
- 10-15 minute structured software demonstration (follow along)
- 15-60 minute software practice (use class/workshop time wisely!)
- 10-30 minute discussion
- *10-15 minute break!*

Linear versus Iterative Processes

Learners often want a linear description of how to do qualitative data analysis

- Of course the actual process is much more iterative
- It can be helpful to note that the process is not linear, but outline the course in linear fashion for the sake of teaching and practicing skills.
- Also return to the more iterative nature of the process toward the end of the course and re-contextualize what they've been learning in terms of other approaches and processes
  - E.g. Grounded Theory versus Thematic Analysis

Starting with Memos

Memos are perhaps the most under-used tool of QDA, but this is a great way to get learners to interact with course data

- Interactive lecture with oral practice, write-down exercises, and discussion
- Lab: 5-10 minute demonstration of how to write text memos only
- I give learners a “clean” project – with data only and they practice writing memos on one transcript for ~30 mins
- Briefly describe the difference between Merge and Teamwork functions. Have them export teamwork and then save *both* their project and teamwork file in a shared folder.
- After combining all the files, learners review and discuss memos with others reviewing the same transcript (beginning to think about themes)

Developing Concrete Examples

Many analysis tasks are relatively abstract and can be difficult for learners to understand when framed in the abstract.

- Don’t be afraid of developing concrete examples – especially if they are a little bit silly and will be memorable later!

My favorite example: Hawaiian Shirts

- I use this example after discussing themes in the data to illustrate the importance of code definitions
- The scenario: You are the costume designer for a theater production of an old Elvis movie. Your buyer is going to a nearby city to purchase Hawaiian shirts for the projection and needs instructions on what to buy.

What is a Hawaiian Shirt?

Hawaiian Shirts!

Hawaiian Shirts!

Hawaiian Shirts: Defining Codes

I use this example after discussing themes that we have begun to identify in the data and an attempt to define codes.

- White Board: Ask learners to generate a list of criteria and decide which elements must be present for the buyer to identify appropriate shirts
- Interact with Data: Provide pictures of a number of Hawaiian Shirts (e.g. according to google), and ask learners to discuss why they would or would not “buy” each shirt for the production.
- Interact with More Data: I like to also prove examples of shirts **on people** to demonstrate that context matters.
- Finally, I change the scenario: You are holding a themed birthday party for your 75-year old uncle. Who would you turn away from the party? (The research question also matters)

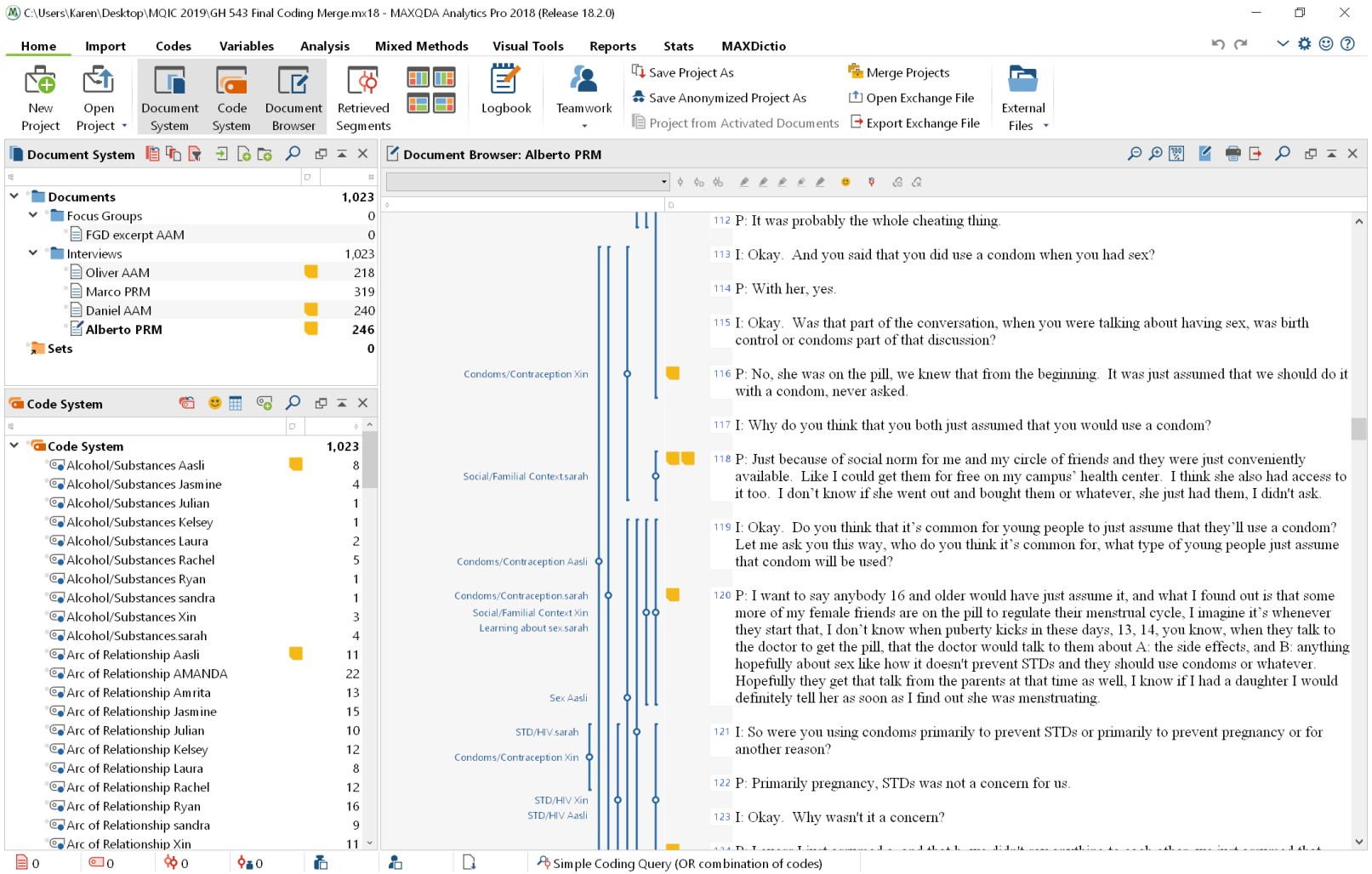
Codebook Development

Brainstorm themes and discuss possible codes and definitions

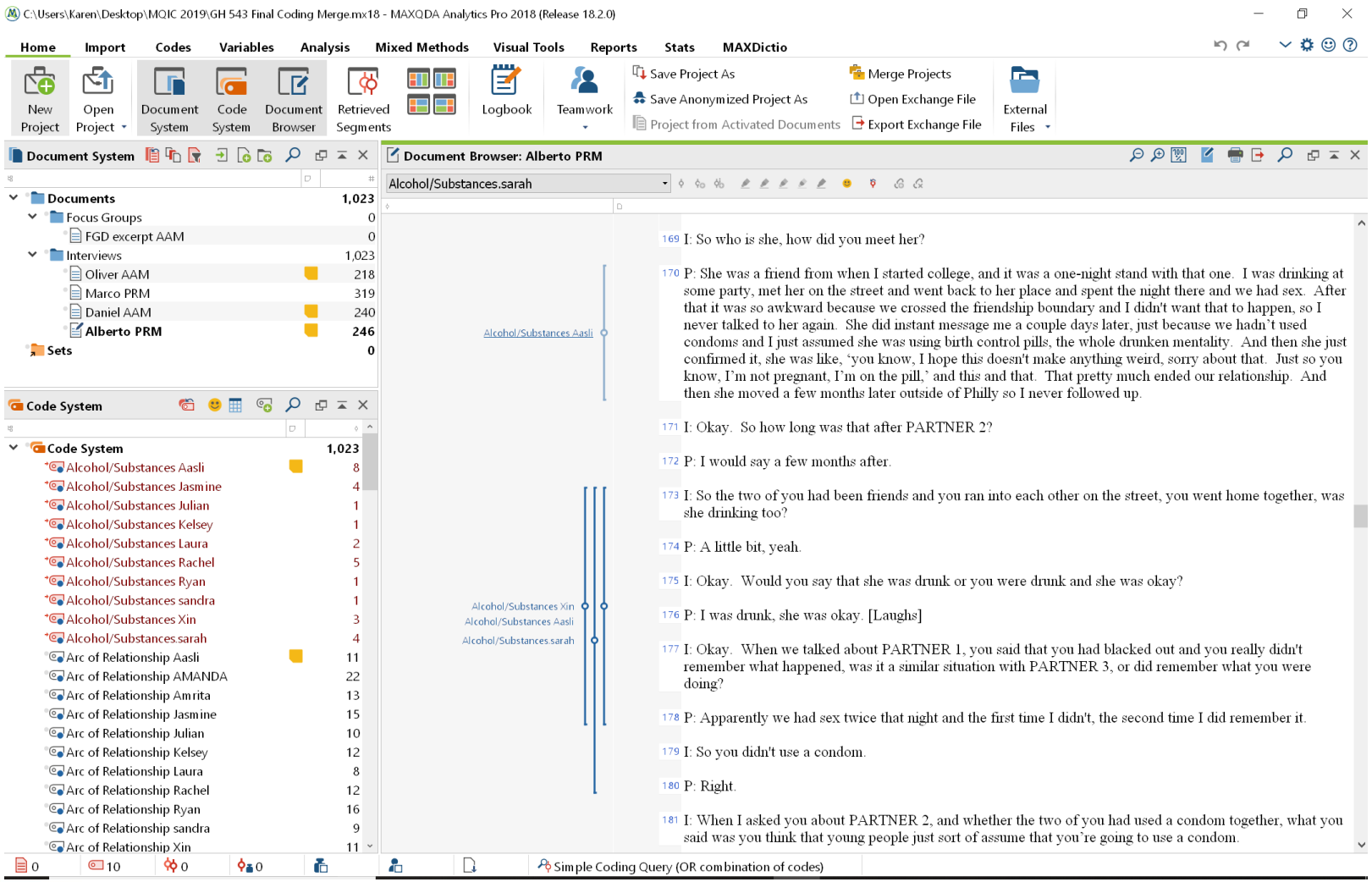
(Reiterate: Codes *operationalize* themes)

- I aim for 8-10 codes in a regular class. I often propose that we use some codes/definitions that were originally developed for these data
  - Definitions are generally good, but vary in simplicity/clarity
  - We always identify 2-3 “new” codes; I work to develop relatively “bad” definitions for one or two
  - It is important to learners to know what it feels like to try to apply poorly defined codes!
- Learners code their transcripts, export teamwork, and then when all files are combined, they review and discuss discrepancies in code application and ways to improve definitions (and inclusion/exclusion criteria)

“Messy Merge”


C:\Users\Karen\Desktop\MQIC 2019\GH 543 Final Coding Merge.mx18 - MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2018 (Release 18.2.0)
Home
Import
Codes
Variables
Analysis
Mixed Methods
Visual Tools
Reports
Stats
MAXDictio
New Project
Open Project
Document System
Code System
Document Browser
Retrieved Segments
Logbook
Teamwork
Save Project As
Save Anonymized Project As
Project from Activated Documents
Merge Projects
Open Exchange File
Export Exchange File
External Files
Document System
Documents 1,023
Focus Groups 0
FGD excerpt AAM 0
Interviews 1,023
Oliver AAM 218
Marco PRM 319
Daniel AAM 240
Alberto PRM 246
Sets 0
Code System
Code System 1,023
Alcohol/Substances Aasli 8
Alcohol/Substances Jasmine 4
Alcohol/Substances Julian 1
Alcohol/Substances Kelsey 1
Alcohol/Substances Laura 2
Alcohol/Substances Rachel 5
Alcohol/Substances Ryan 1
Alcohol/Substances sandra 1
Alcohol/Substances Xin 3
Alcohol/Substances.sarah 4
Arc of Relationship Aasli 11
Arc of Relationship AMANDA 22
Arc of Relationship Amrita 13
Arc of Relationship Jasmine 15
Arc of Relationship Julian 10
Arc of Relationship Kelsey 12
Arc of Relationship Laura 8
Arc of Relationship Rachel 12
Arc of Relationship Ryan 16
Arc of Relationship sandra 9
Arc of Relationship Xin 11
Document Browser: Alberto PRM
112 P: It was probably the whole cheating thing.
113 I: Okay. And you said that you did use a condom when you had sex?
114 P: With her, yes.
115 I: Okay. Was that part of the conversation, when you were talking about having sex, was birth control or condoms part of that discussion?
Condoms/Contraception Xin
116 P: No, she was on the pill, we knew that from the beginning. It was just assumed that we should do it with a condom, never asked.
117 I: Why do you think that you both just assumed that you would use a condom?
Social/Familial Context.sarah
118 P: Just because of social norm for me and my circle of friends and they were just conveniently available. Like I could get them for free on my campus' health center. I think she also had access to it too. I don't know if she went out and bought them or whatever, she just had them, I didn't ask.
119 I: Okay. Do you think that it's common for young people to just assume that they'll use a condom? Let me ask you this way, who do you think it's common for, what type of young people just assume that condom will be used?
Condoms/Contraception Aasli
Condoms/Contraception.sarah
Social/Familial Context Xin
Learning about sex.sarah
120 P: I want to say anybody 16 and older would have just assume it, and what I found out is that some more of my female friends are on the pill to regulate their menstrual cycle, I imagine it's whenever they start that, I don't know when puberty kicks in these days, 13, 14, you know, when they talk to the doctor to get the pill, that the doctor would talk to them about A: the side effects, and B: anything hopefully about sex like how it doesn't prevent STDs and they should use condoms or whatever. Hopefully they get that talk from the parents at that time as well, I know if I had a daughter I would definitely tell her as soon as I find out she was menstruating.
Sex Aasli
STD/HIV.sarah
Condoms/Contraception Xin
121 I: So were you using condoms primarily to prevent STDs or primarily to prevent pregnancy or for another reason?
122 P: Primarily pregnancy, STDs was not a concern for us.
STD/HIV Xin
STD/HIV Aasli
123 I: Okay. Why wasn't it a concern?
Simple Coding Query (OR combination of codes)

Clean look at Single Codes



Identifying Properties and Dimensions

Novice analysts often have difficulty imagining different ways to describe/characterize coded data

- We discuss patterns and variations (typical patterns, spread)
- Properties and Dimensions are more difficult – describing “aspects” that can characterize coded data

Fruit Exercise: Can be done on paper or in MAXMAPS

On paper: print out put pictures of fruit on index cards. Ask students in groups of 3-4 to do two things:

- Sort the fruit into piles representing categories (or properties): e.g. types (berries, citrus) or how they grow (tree, vine, ground)
- Identify an aspect that could be described on a continuum (dimension): e.g. sweetness or edibility of the skin

Fruit: Properties and Dimensions

Closing Workshop Activities

You have covered one example of analysis procedures (e.g. thematic)

- Talk through other procedures (e.g. Grounded Theory, Narrative Analysis)
- Review strategies for presenting data
- Return to analysis papers (from beginning) and assess analysis
- Assess the workshop (please do!)

Final Assignment

Brief Analysis of 4 transcripts

1. Write up overview of one code
2. Identify and describe one property or dimension of the code
   - Using MAXMAPS
3. Compare the data for two groups on that code
4. Describe an intersection with another code in the dataset

Thank You!!

Comments and Questions

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