Chapter 8: Case Studies

Case Study – Being Aware of Your Preconceptions

Misha did her study on what makes children happy in nursery. She was interested in the idea that children's happiness was related to their relationships and social interactions, as well as their achievements. She placed her findings in a chart showing how the children had shown that break time and time for play and other potentially social times were causes of happiness. However, Misha told her supervisor that she was concerned that her findings were not what she had expected. She went back and looked at them again seeking new themes, which were there but had not yet emerged. In fact, Misha's findings showed that the children in the study related happiness to activities and parts of the day where they could make their own choices and decisions freely. Misha's findings were not what she expected, but this made them even more interesting and original.

Case Study – Vik's Thematic Framework

- **Theme: Structure of support**
  - Sub-theme: Policy
  - Sub-theme: Classroom organization
  - Sub-theme: Deployment of teaching assistants/bilingual teaching assistants
  - Sub-theme: Curriculum differentiation
- **Theme: Pedagogical practices**
  - Sub-theme: Gestures and signs to convey instructions
  - Sub-theme: Using words from the child's home language
  - Sub-theme: Correcting language use
  - Sub-theme: Working in small groups/pairs
- **Theme: Partnership with parents**
  - Sub-theme: Regular feedback
  - Sub-theme: Formal meetings
  - Sub-theme: Using interpreters
  - Sub-theme: Communication problems

Case Study – Extract from Vik's Data Summary Chart

Theme: Structure of support	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
(a) Policy	5.4 Not seen any EAL policy	7.11 Policy seen but contents not remembered	4.32 Policy discussed on INSET day but not seen recently
(b) Classroom organization	9.20 Children with EAL seated together	10.17 Children with EAL seated together with teaching assistant	
(c) Deployment of teaching assistants/ bilingual teaching assistants (BLTA)	10.5 BLTA sit with small group of children with EAL	10.20 BLTA works with small group or sometimes with individual children	8.29 No BLTA in this class

Case Study – Cara's Questionnaire

Questions from Cara's questionnaire and codes assigned on completion

1. How old are you?   *Code*
   13 years   (13)

2. Are you male or female? **(please tick)**
   Male   Female   (1) 2

3. How often do you use ICT to do homework? **(please tick)**

   Always   (4)
   Usually   3
   Rarely   2
   Never   1

   (if you ticked never – please go to question 7)

4. How frequently do you use ICT to do homework? **(please tick)**

   Every day   5
   4–6 days per week   (4)
   2 or 3 days per week   3
   Once per week   2
   Less than once per week   1

5. When you use ICT to do homework, how often do you use the internet? **(please tick)**

   Always   (4)
   Usually   3
   Rarely   2
   Never   1

6. When using ICT to do your homework, how many minutes do you spend on each occasion on average? **(please round up to the nearest 5 or 10)**
   20 *Minutes*   (40)

7. Do you use other sources to assist you in completing your homework (e.g. the library, help from parents)? **(please tick)**
   Yes   No   (1) 2

Case Study – An Abridged Version of Cara's Survey Data

	Q 1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7
A	13	1	4	4	4	20	2
B	12	2	3	4	2	25	1
C	12	1	3	4	3	30	1
D	11	1	4	3	4	20	1
E	11	1	3	3	4	20	1
F	11	1	3	3	4	45	1
G	14	2	3	3	4	10	1
H	12	1	3	3	4	10	1
I	13	**0**	4	3	4	30	1
J	13	2	2	**0**	**0**	**0**	1
K	11	2	3	3	4	15	1
L	12	2	3	3	3	20	1
M	12	1	3	3	4	35	1
N	13	2	4	3	3	20	1
O	12	1	4	3	4	15	2
P	14	2	2	4	4	10	1
Q	14	1	3	3	3	**0**	1
R	13	1	4	4	4	10	1
S	12	1	3	3	2	15	1
T	11	1	3	4	4	20	2

Chapter 8: Points to Think About

Points to Think About – Audit Trail

An audit trail consists of

- evidence of the consistency and accuracy of each stage of the research process;
- transparency and openness about the way in which the analytical process is presented;
- reflection on that process to highlight any issues that may have affected the outcomes.

Items that may appear as part of the audit trail could include

- annotated transcripts showing where themes have been identified;
- thematic frameworks showing the themes that are being used to analyse the data, including earlier versions as well as the final version;
- charts showing how themes have been identified in each part of the data, including earlier versions as well as the final version;
- descriptions of how the data will be analysed;
- reflection on how the analysis was conducted and any issues arising from that process.

Points to Think About – Central Tendency

Measure of central tendency	When should it be used?
Mean (arithmetic average)	To summarize interval/ratio data
Median	Used primarily in relation to ordinal data but also appropriate for interval/ratio
Mode	Can be used when summarizing any type of variable

Chapter 8: Recommended Reading and Further Sources of Information

Flick, U. (2014, 5th edition), *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. R. (2015, 6th ediiton), *Designing Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M. and Saldana, J. (2014, 3rd edition), *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook.* London: Sage.

Neuendorf, K. (2017, 2nd edition), *The Content Analysis Guidebook*. Los Angeles, Sage.

Punch, K. and Oancea, A. (2014, 2nd edition), *Introduction to Research Methods in Education.* London: Sage.

Robson, C. and McCartan, K. (2015, 4th edition), *Real World Research*. London: Wiley.

Useful websites

About.Education http://www.about.com/education/

Analyse this http://archive.learnhigher.ac.uk/analysethis/index.html

Oxford Bibliographies http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/obo/page/about;jsessionid=B3 C4B61410FF77B8FEDD80AFC974C231

Chapter 8: Reflective Tasks

Consider the question, Do you watch TV often?

This will most likely generate an answer of yes or no – which is nominal-level data and thereby only lends itself to a very basic level of analysis.

Now consider the questions, How often do you watch TV? or When do you watch TV?

Such questions allow the researcher to provide a list of categories from which participants can choose; for example, every day, every two to three days, once per week, etc. This would generate ordinal-level data that lend themselves to more sophisticated techniques than nominal data simply because once the categories are coded there will be a difference in amount (see Chapter 7 to recap)

Now consider how you could go a step further and asking, how many minutes per day on average do you watch TV?

This would generate ratio-level data that have a higher level of sophistication because there are now equal distances between possible answers (e.g. the distance between 30 minutes and 31 minutes is the same as the distance between 40 minutes and 41 minutes). This allows for more mathematical activity and more sophisticated tests (again, you can refer back to Chapter 7 to recap your knowledge and understanding of different levels of data sophistication).

Chapter 8: Summary of Key Points

- Plan ahead, include your analytical approach in your methodology.
- Leave enough time to analyse, write up your findings and discuss them.
- A good literature review will stand you in good stead when you start to analyse your data.
- Conclusions and recommendations should be in line with the size of the study. You should avoid making too many generalizations beyond the context of the study.