

Teaching qualitative research methods using the reanimation data project archive

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Research methods are a core component of most degree-level programmes, but nonetheless renowned for being students' least favourite component of their course. Tasked with the role of developing new content to teach qualitative research methods, within the Faculty of Education at Manchester Metropolitan University, I was keen to demonstrate the usefulness and real-world implications of key qualitative methods and analysis to inspire my students. In doing so, I came across the 'reanimation project' funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (for more information see: <http://reanimatingdata.co.uk/about/>), which gave us what we needed and 'reanimated' our students.

In Week One, students firstly learnt about the importance of archival data-digitising, sharing and re-using data, in addition to ethical considerations to take into account when conducting such work. This led on to Weeks Two and Three, where, following lectures on qualitative data analysis and more specifically Thematic Analysis, the students had the opportunity to conduct their own Thematic Analysis on real-world extracts taken from two interviews collected as part of the Women, Risk & AIDS social research study conducted in Manchester in 1988-90. The students' research question was 'What are young women's perceptions and experiences of sex education in the 1980s?'. From our analysis as tutors, two main themes emerged: *Basic or limited sex education* and *Gendered Double standards*. We presented the students with one table for each theme, with the codes and supporting quotes, as well as a short write-up of the theme *Gendered double standards* as an example. Students were then asked to write up the other theme.

Basic or limited sex education was a semantic theme, in other words it described explicit, surface-level meaning within the data. This theme included talk about the basic and limited sex education the young women received within the 1980s. For example, sex education lessons were selective, passive and detached, teachers only focussing on the biological aspects of sex and discussions about emotions and the relational aspects avoided. These gaps were in part shaped by teacher embarrassment and their assumptions of hopelessness, which meant that, as a result, sex education lessons had little impact, students instead having to take their education into their own hands and seek out magazines as a source of better information.

In contrast, *Gendered double standards* is a latent theme and looks beyond what is said to identify deeper-level implicit meaning within the data. *Gendered double standards* were evident in that boys and girls faced different pressures in relation to sex in the 1980s, girls particularly fearful about being labelled as 'loose', a 'slag' and acquiring a negative reputation if they engaged in sexual behaviour or discussed sex. This ultimately underpinned young women's perceptions, experiences and relationships during this time.

It was clear through the students' write up of the *Basic or limited sex education* theme that they had engaged well and become immersed within the data. In providing them with just a few pages from each transcript, there was such a depth to the data, which enabled us to provide students with a simple but constructive task to get them enthused and engaged in qualitative data analysis. They can take this learning with them and apply it to a different dataset for their assignment. Students discussed similarities and differences between the sex education they received and that of the young girls within the transcripts. However, with hindsight we could have done more of this and perhaps used it to teach

students about 'reflexivity'. It has been great to be part of this project and use the data to the benefit of our students, and I am looking forward to involvement in further projects stemming from reanimating data.