Mind mapping in Qualitative Research

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Aim

To stimulate discussion (not necessarily here!) about the value of mind mapping as a tool in qualitative research.
Mind mapping

- A technique which can be applied to every aspect of life where clearer thinking will enhance performance, such as in:
  - Note-taking.
  - Brainstorming.
  - Memorising.
  - Analysing.

- Little has been discussed regarding qualitative research.
Qualitative research involves attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Derived from Creswell 1998
Phenomenology

Conceived by Husserl to:
‘investigate consciousness as experienced by the subject’

In phenomenological research, an attempt is therefore made to interpret people’s perceptions of reality.

Preconceived ideas about the subject in question should be suspended by the researchers, in order that the true phenomena can be revealed. This concept is termed ‘phenomenological reduction’, or ‘bracketing’.
How mind mapping can help?

- Bracketing
- Transcribing / Analysing
Bracketing

**Phenomenology**

- ‘free imaginative variation’ (Giorgi 1997)
- ‘awaken possibilities’ (Giorgi 1997)

**Mind mapping**

- ‘To clear the mind of previous assumptions about the subject’. (Buzan 2003)
Transcribing / Analysing

- Reduction in time between interview and analysis.

- Analysis begins when transcribing.
  - With transcribing and analysis being the mind map in one, produced as each interview is listened to.

- Potential to mind map in real time?
An MSc project conducted by a Chronic Condition Nurse was used as the vehicle for assessing the difference between mind mapping and traditional analysis.

Ethical and NHS research agreement for the study (including the use of a novel analysis process) was obtained in January 2008.

The interviews were semi-structured and conducted by a nurse not known to the patients and audio recorded on a sensitive mini-disc recorder.
Study:
Comparing mind mapping with traditional analysis in qualitative research.

- **Novice researcher (JP).**
  - Conducted the interviews.
  - Inexperienced in qualitative research
  - Inexperienced in the use of mind maps.
  - Analysis by mind mapping.

- **Research Manager (CT).**
  - Experienced in quantitative research
  - Experienced in mind mapping.
  - Analysis by mind mapping.

- **Clinical Psychologist (JS).**
  - Experienced in traditional qualitative research methods.
  - Interviews analysed using IPA (Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis).
Study Results

Method 1:
- Psychological support.
- Education / Advice.
- Access / Advocacy.
- Clinical skills.
- Patient dependency.
- Confusion over role definition.

Method 2:
- Contact
- Liaison
- Support

Method 3:
- Positive ‘practical’ aspects of the service.
- ‘Human’ side of the service.
- Emotional Impact on the client.
- Interaction between ‘practical’ and ‘human’ aspects of the service.
# Study Results

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<tr>
<th>METHOD 1</th>
<th>METHOD 2</th>
<th>METHOD 3</th>
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<td>Method</td>
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<td>Method 3</td>
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Discussion

- All aspects of the themes derived from traditional analysis were identified by both researchers using mind mapping.

- Large variety in the theme descriptions, but easily comparable.

- Novice researcher found an additional theme.
  - Due to subjective nature of the research?
  - Not truly thinking freely? Would also occur with traditional analysis?
  - Can one comment make a theme?
Rigor: Trustworthiness

- Reliability (reproducible under similar conditions?)
  - Qualitative research is subjective, reliability is therefore needed to be defined as much as possible.
  - Mind mapping however may reduce this.

- Internal Validity (true reflection of reality?)
  - Using mind mapping the researcher has a relatively quick methodology with excellent internal validity.
Conclusion

Mind mapping is a rapid and valid phenomenological tool in the analysis of qualitative data.
Key References


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