



Past Times

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No Previous Experience Using Analysis Software

When Donna Knowles, Claire Johnson's supervisor, offered Claire a position to work with her on a research project that utilizes qualitative research analysis software, Claire became very excited and anxious to begin her work. As Claire explains:

I had not used any software earlier [in previous research].

We used to have a computer person who designed our questionnaire things himself [and distributed them to us]. We hired this person to do the computer jobs where he would insert the codes, take out the tables, and put everything wherever we told him to. I, as a researcher, had never used computer software for this. (interview transcript)

Previous Quantitative and Qualitative Work

Claire has done quantitative as well as qualitative research in her previous work as a researcher. Before working for Donna Knowles, Claire had some familiarity with coding techniques, and she used specific codes most frequently in quantitative research. In past qualitative research, Claire indicates, "There was no requirement of using codes for qualitative work. I did my qualitative work manually and I did not use coding as part of my analysis."

Claire also indicated that during her past work in quantitative data collection, that when the information was collected they gave it to a computer operator to insert into the computer for analysis. The computer person would produce tables and from those tables, Claire [and her co-researchers] would try to prepare new tables and interpret the data themselves.

In her current work with Donna Knowles, Claire has learned about coding and its application in qualitative research. Claire indicates that she had never considered coding to be a "new word," as she was already using it in her quantitative research. However, since working with Donna, the word coding has new meaning for her. Claire explains, "Research means... coding. I never thought it to be a new word, as I was already using it [in my previous work]. So when I did my first assignment [with Donna's research] at that time, it [became] a new word."

Why did Claire Choose Education-Based Research?

Listening to Claire talk about her past work as a researcher, it became clear to me that Claire's interests in education were far-reaching. Claire views the term "education" broadly. When Claire initially explored the course offerings at Brock, she wanted her master's program to include other areas of interest such as social justice or child development because these were important to her past work. However, Claire also has an interest in Canada's education system and felt that enrolling in the M.Ed. program would teach her much about Canada and education. When she began her M.Ed. program, she realized that she had made a good choice for a couple of reasons. Claire describes, "When I started [the M.Ed. program], I realized that [the Education discipline] is very vast and covers everything. I can choose my topic on women's issues or child development because those are both a part of Education. Also, I am interested in conducting research in the area of Education so [my research assistantship] experiences are very valuable to me."

A New Research Lexicon

Id is new again. As indicated earlier, Claire has learned (or rather re-learned) new words and new research approaches because of her research assistantship experiences and her M.Ed. research course work. As Claire says, "Earlier, I had just one concept of research- only one word. Now I have so many words in my dictionary- qualitative, quantitative, ethnographic, historical, etc. So many words, new words have come up." As Claire's research language repertoire grows, so does her confidence and her appreciation for the research learning process. Her outlook on research has become new again as she continues her M.Ed. program at Brock University.

