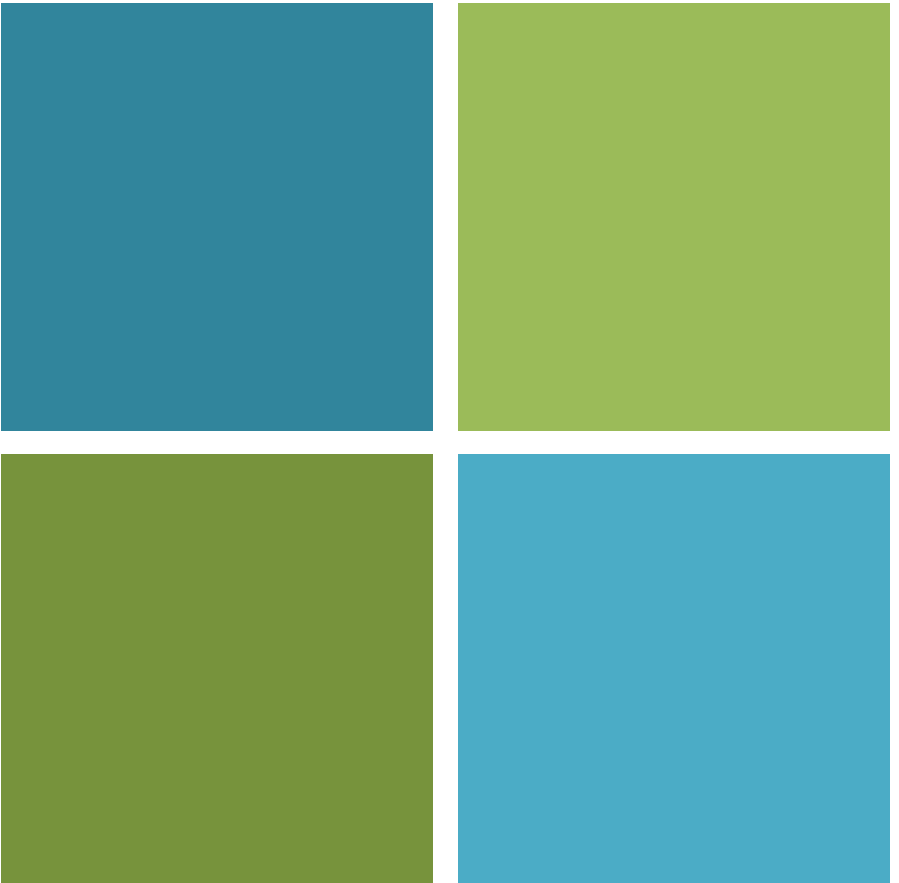


A Recipe for Success: Lessons Learned for Using Qualitative Methods Across Project Teams



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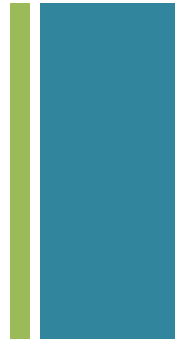
American Evaluation Association Conference
November 12, 2010

Presentation Overview



- Our Background
- Our Recent Experience
- Lessons Learned

About Our Center



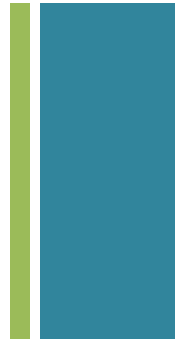
- Public health research and evaluation center
- Private and public funding
- Several large initiative-level evaluations
- Learning organization with a number of students and young professionals
- Majority of projects utilize a mixed methods approach

Why Qualitative?

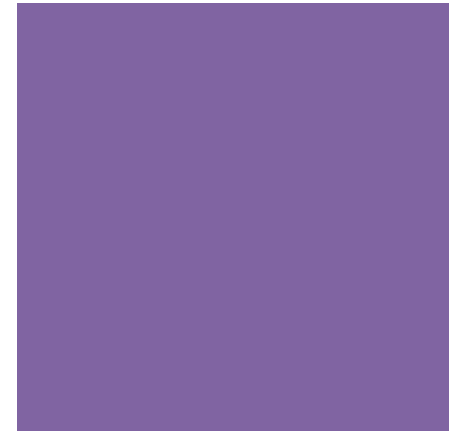


- Part of a broader tool box for evaluation
- **Strengths**
 - Puts participants' experiences in their own words
 - Adds context to the program's "story"
 - Complements quantitative data
- **Challenges**
 - Time consuming
 - Large amounts of data
 - Perception of subjectivity

Our Recent Experience

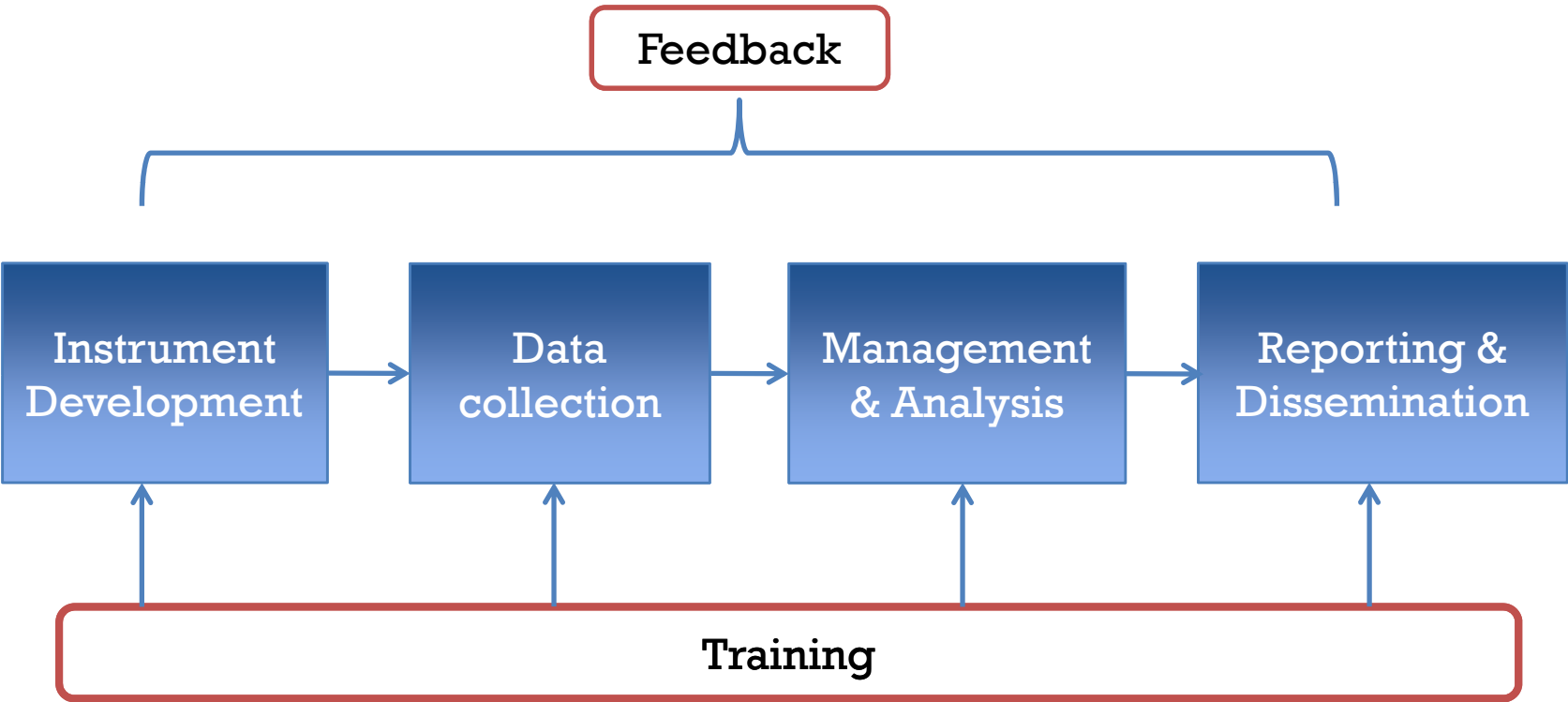


- **Four evaluation projects focusing on:**
 - Obesity prevention
 - Tobacco prevention and cessation
 - National Tobacco Control Networks for Priority Populations
 - State tobacco control programs
- **All in qualitative phase at same time**
- **Young staff with limited experience in qualitative methods**



+ Our Approach

Our Approach

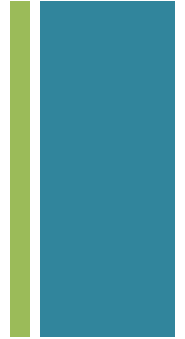


Planning



- **Conduct formal trainings**
- **Facilitate “learning groups” across projects**
- **Assign experienced leader in qualitative methods to each project**
- **Share templates and resources across projects**

Instrument Development



- **Limit duplication of efforts**
 - Make templates & examples easily accessible
 - Take time to share with teams

- **Collect realistic amount of data**
 - Evaluation questions drive interview topics
 - Kept focused on primary questions
 - Complements quantitative data

Data Collection: Interviewer Training



- Start as notetakers, assistant moderator
- Encourage listening to recordings
- Practice interviews
- Teams with mix of experienced and beginner

Data Collection



- **Consistency across interviewers**
 - Limited the number of interviewers/project
 - Developed a script for all interviewers to follow
 - Made sure it is conversational
 - Prioritized interview questions
 - Discussed the type of information needed for each question

Data Collection (continued)



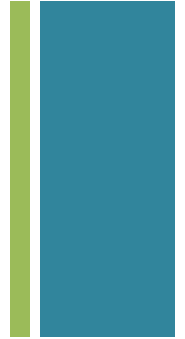
- Consistency across interviewers (con't)
 - Practice
 - Role playing
 - Reading script aloud
 - Debrief after interviews
 - Take field notes
 - Identify initial themes
 - Discuss ways to improve interview

Data Management



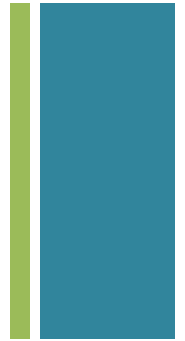
- **Outsource transcription**
- **Use common qualitative software across projects**
 - Assign one person/project responsible for management
 - Provide software training
 - Purchase limited number of licenses and use across projects

Analysis



- **Develop a codebook**
 - Provides consistent guidance
 - Create initial codes based on evaluation questions and/or theoretical framework
 - Test and review codebook as a team, make sure everyone understands what is written

Analysis (continued)



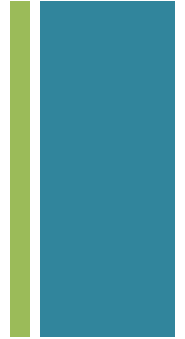
- **Consistent coding by multiple coders**
 - Train on a subset of transcripts
 - Check inter-coder reliability
 - Degree to which coders assign the same codes to the same text unit
 - Once achieve acceptable reliability, allow for coders to work on their own

Analysis (continued)

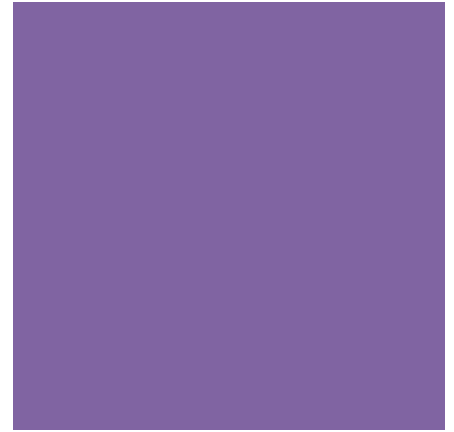


- **Analyze in pairs**
 - Code individually and then compare
 - Use report themes in a consistent manner
- **Regular team check-ins about findings and process**

Reporting & Dissemination



- Discuss the “story” of findings
- Develop report template
- Identify one person overseeing layout
- Ensure take home messages are clear
- Stakeholder input is critical



+ Summary

Summary



- Take the time to assess your team's capacity
- Foster collaboration across projects
- Utilize existing resources and experience
- Provide regular feedback and opportunities to share
- Engage stakeholders throughout process

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