

Two Approaches to Qualitative Coding

Deductive Coding

In deductive coding, the researcher pre-defines code categories that they expect to find in their data. These codes are informed by the researcher's theoretical framework, hypotheses, review of the literature, or domain knowledge/expertise.

Deductive coding can be seen as moving from **theory** to developing **codes**, and then to looking at your **data** and **coding** it with your theorized codes.

Visually, this process looks something like this:



Inductive Coding

In inductive coding, the researcher does not begin with pre-defined codes. Instead, they start with their data, immersing themselves in close readings of transcripts and analysis of their collected materials and developing codes and theoretical conclusions as they emerge from this iterative, repeated, process.

Inductive coding can be seen as beginning with your **data**, actively **coding** your data for important themes, developing refined **codes** directly out of the iterative coding process, and finally developing **theory** from your analysis.

Visually, this process looks something like this:

