Activity: Practice analyzing qualitative data using sample survey and dataset

Example: You conducted a pilot study of a reading intervention called Multiple Reading Advances Functions (MRAF) for students with disabilities in grades 1-6 in schools across two participating districts. The reading intervention boosted student achievement as measured by pre- and post-content assessment. The reading intervention was then scaled up to prepare for statewide implementation. Four districts participated in the scale-up. However, the results of the content assessment in the scale-up were not as positive as they had been in the pilot study. In fact, scores went down in some schools and stayed flat in others. You have decided to send a survey including qualitative data questions to teachers in the scale-up districts to ask them about their experiences implementing MRAF so that you can understand why the scale-up was not as successful as expected.

1. **Using the sample survey and dataset from scale-up schools where scores declined, work independently to analyze the qualitative data**

Steps involved in analyzing qualitative data (this will involve taking several passes through your data)

    I. Identify the themes in your data[1]
        a. First, read through all of your data for an overall sense
        b. Next, go back through the data methodologically to group comments into similar categories
            1. Consider responses by question
            2. Look for themes within responses to each question
            3. Label the themes
            4. Continue assigning responses to themes and creating new themes until most responses are captured
    II. Identify patterns and associations
        a. Select
            1. What should be emphasized?
        b. Transform
            1. Identify relationships
            2. Turn individual responses into patterns, stories

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[1] Nimkoff, 2010.

       3. How do these stories illuminate why scale-up was not as successful as expected?

   c. Simplify

      1. Find commonalities, differences, themes

      2. How do patterns or themes help illuminate why scale-up was not as successful as expected?

      3. What do deviations mean?

      4. What factors might explain deviations?

III. Take what you learn back to the data

   a. Do the qualitative findings support qualitative analyses?

   b. If not, what might explain these discrepancies?

   c. Do findings suggest additional data should be collected?

   d. Do any survey questions need to be revised?

2. **After you have analyzed your data, discuss the following questions with your small group**
   - What themes did you identify?
   - Did you all identify the same themes?
   - What patterns and associations emerged?
   - Did you all identify the same patterns?
   - Do the qualitative findings support the quantitative findings?
   - Do you have any hypotheses for why the scale-up was not as successful as expected?
   - Is additional data collection warranted?
   - How might you present the qualitative and quantitative data together?

3. **Share out with the whole group**
   - What was difficult about this?
   - What was unexpected when you discussed your findings with the group?
   - What did you find? What does it mean?
   - How might you present the qualitative and quantitative data together?