Q-Notes Script

As part of the National Center for Health Statistics, the Questionnaire Design Research Laboratory – or QDRL – conducts cognitive interviews for a wide variety of surveys. As demand for cognitive interview question evaluation has grown over the years, we have had to manage the challenge of increasing output without compromising the quality of our cognitive interview studies. One strategy we've used to meet this challenge is to develop Q-Notes: a qualitative software package that helps manage, document, and analyze cognitive interview data.

Q-Notes was designed to provide all interviewers and analysts real-time access to interview data, which encourages collaboration between users – even across multiple interview sites. Additionally, this allows project managers to easily monitor the status of their projects. Q-Notes also helps to standardize the documentation of interview notes to ensure that data can be easily analyzed.

Q-Notes was designed with qualitative data analysis principles in mind, including: the simultaneous pursuit of data collection and analysis, constructing analytic codes and themes from data, and making analytic comparisons during each stage of analysis. Users can easily sort the data multiple ways to perform analysis.

For example, Q-Notes makes it easy to analyze data by respondent. Data can be easily organized to show how each respondent answered all survey questions. With this function, analysts can identify contradictions in a respondent's answers, see how a respondent understood the survey question, and identify where response error may have occurred.

A second level of analysis uses the survey question as the unit of analysis. Q-notes easily allows data to be sorted in this manner, so that analysts can identify patterns of interpretation and patterns of response error for each survey question.

Finally, Q-notes allows analysts to build themes explaining patterns of interpretation and response error. Additionally, analysts can quickly and easily sort interview data to explore whether certain interpretations or response error were more common among particular sub-groups.

Each level of analysis offers a different type of understanding. Q-Notes allows you to quickly perform the type of analysis that answers the question you are looking for.

Q-notes also offers the advantage of providing an audit trail of each cognitive interview project. For example, after a project is completed, the data may be printed out to show how conclusions were reached and create a transparent research process.

If you are interested in learning more about Q-notes, please see a QDRL representative for more information!