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# Module 5

## Guidebook

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Module 5 details approaches to analyzing and representing data as *evidence*. The first section of the Module covers an approach for the analysis of data via the identification of themes within the collected data-set. Themes stand as indicative ‘bits’ of data that can be used as representative of the views drawn from the wider data-set. Importantly, it is this analysed data that provides the evidence-base for your research inquiry.

From here, attention turns to the ways that this evidence, drawn from the analysed data, might be represented. In particular, attention is given to the ways that reports and other ‘outputs’ from the analysed data might be compiled and made available to a range of audiences, including those in community and local government.

An example report is included in the Module 5 Resources to provide a reference for how a report might be compiled. Although there are many ways to compile the outcomes of research, and it most certainly will be the case that your local government setting will have prescribed ways for doing so, considering the best way to connect with your audience is a fundamental part of research.

### Module 5-1 Analysing Data

Collecting data using the data collection techniques detailed in Modules 3 and 4 is only half of the equation. Making sense of this data and translating this into meaningful *evidence* is the other.

The first section of Module 5 considers the process of ‘sifting and sorting’ the data to identify themes. Themes stand as indicative ‘bits’ from the data- a concept drawn from the data that stands as representative of what the data is suggesting. Typically, a theme will be represented by a single term- a *keyword*- that describes the general sentiment of the data, and against which selected bits of the data will be collated as points of evidence.

For example, if you have noticed that several interview participants have said something similar in response to a specific question, and that this

### Module Content

Module 5 explores the final stages of the research process by detailing the analysis of data and the representation of research findings. Attention is turned to ‘thematic analysis’ and the process of identifying ‘themes’ within the data that stand as representative points of ‘evidence’.

From here, consideration is given to the way research findings might be presented.

In considering the final stages of the research process, this Module focuses on:

- analysis of data and the identification of ‘themes’
- the translation of ‘themes’ into ‘evidence’
- the presentation of research findings to best connect with your audience

Module 5 offers insight into the culmination of the research process. Gaining meaningful insights from the data and presenting this in ways that resonate with your audience represents the outcome of the entire research process.

### Module Activities

5-1 Analysing Data

5-2 Presenting Research

Social Research Toolkit:

using social research in local government  
community engagement

relates to responses provided by respondents in a survey, which in turn relates to something you identified and photographed during a field observation, then you have a selection of data drawn from a range of data collection techniques that stand as a theme. When combined together, these 'bits' of data represent the sentiment of views drawn from the community. You will of course need to determine how widely this theme is held by your research participants and respondents, but if it occurs that the sentiment suggested by the theme is present in the data gathered from several data collection techniques, then you can be confident that this is an expression of what the community feels.

In short, analysis is the process of gathering together 'like' data, organized into themes.

### **Module 5-2 Reporting Research Findings**

This final stage of the research process is perhaps the most important. It is with the reporting of research findings that the insights into the phenomena explored during the research inquiry come to fruition, in a form that can be understood and acted upon by the audiences intended for the findings.

There are of course multiple ways that research can be presented, but considering how the audiences of the research will access and make sense of the analysis you have undertaken is key. In fact, consideration of the audience of your research should be given right through the research process- from initial planning, to the collection of data and preparation of findings.

Who your audience is, how you will connect with this audience, and what needs to be detailed within the outcomes of research are the considerations that need to be given at this stage. It may well be that several versions of the findings need to be produced; for instance, a formal report might be prepared for presentation to your local government organization, while community consultation sessions and information brochures accompanied by a social media campaign might be prepared for a community audience. The important factor to consider is how effectively the findings from the research can be translated to meet the expectations of your audiences.