

“...and a box” : Working with Unstructured Comment Data

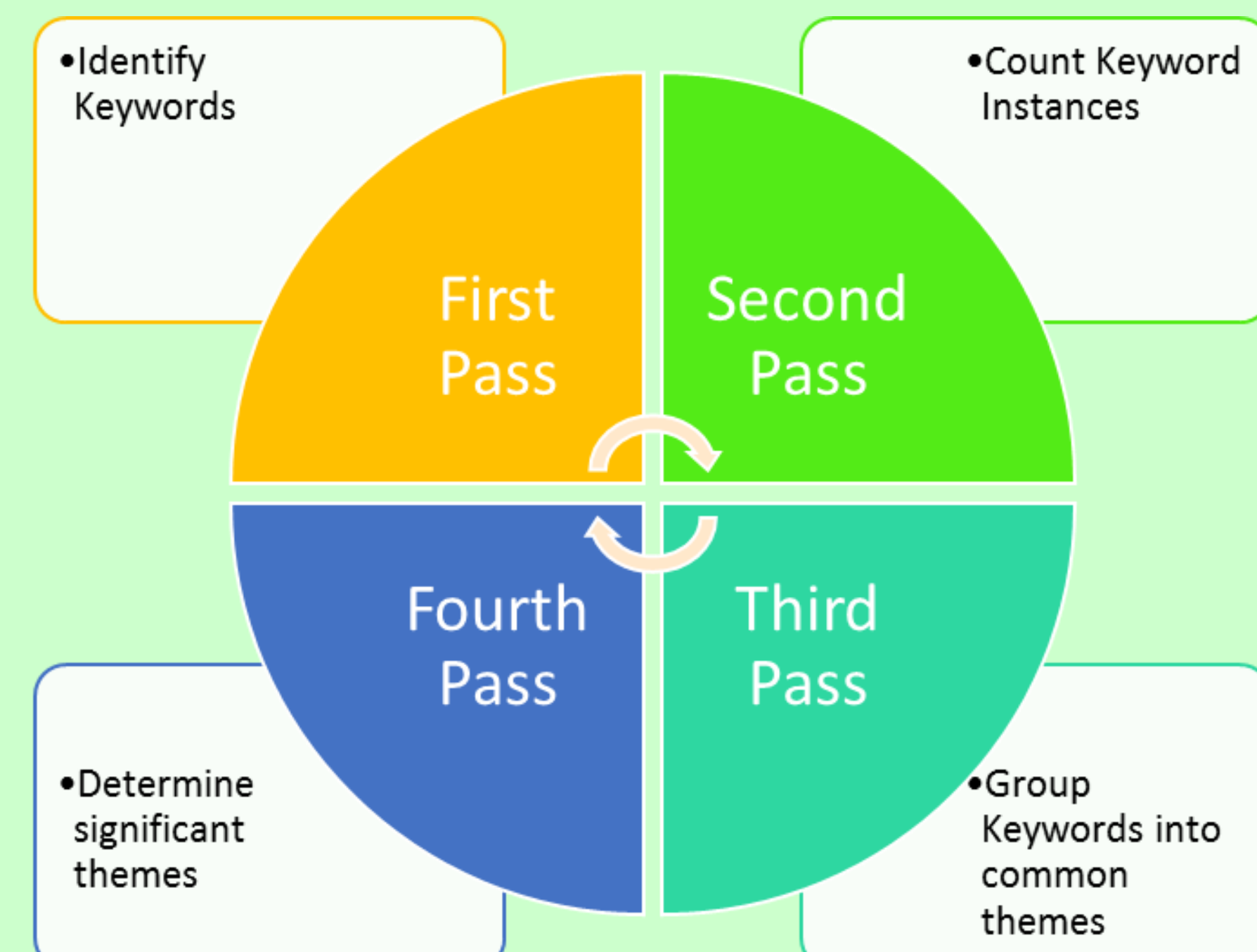
Poster Scope

Old Dominion University Libraries recently conducted the LibQUAL+ survey and received over 300 comments from respondents. This comment data presented a challenge for the volunteer group of librarians and staff tasked with designing, administering, and analyzing the survey. However, the richness and value that qualitative data adds to quantitative measures cannot be overlooked. Furthermore, qualitative data needs to be treated with the same rigor as quantitative data. So, how did we take seemingly disparate comments and use them to add depth and meaning to quantitative data? This poster depicts how the ODU Libraries answered that question. It highlights the methods used to work with that unstructured data, from initial, exploratory filtering and sorting to the ultimate creation of a codebook. The focus of the poster is on the process of creating a codebook for analysis of LibQUAL+ comments. Viewers can expect to leave with ideas to create a similar tool at their own institutions.

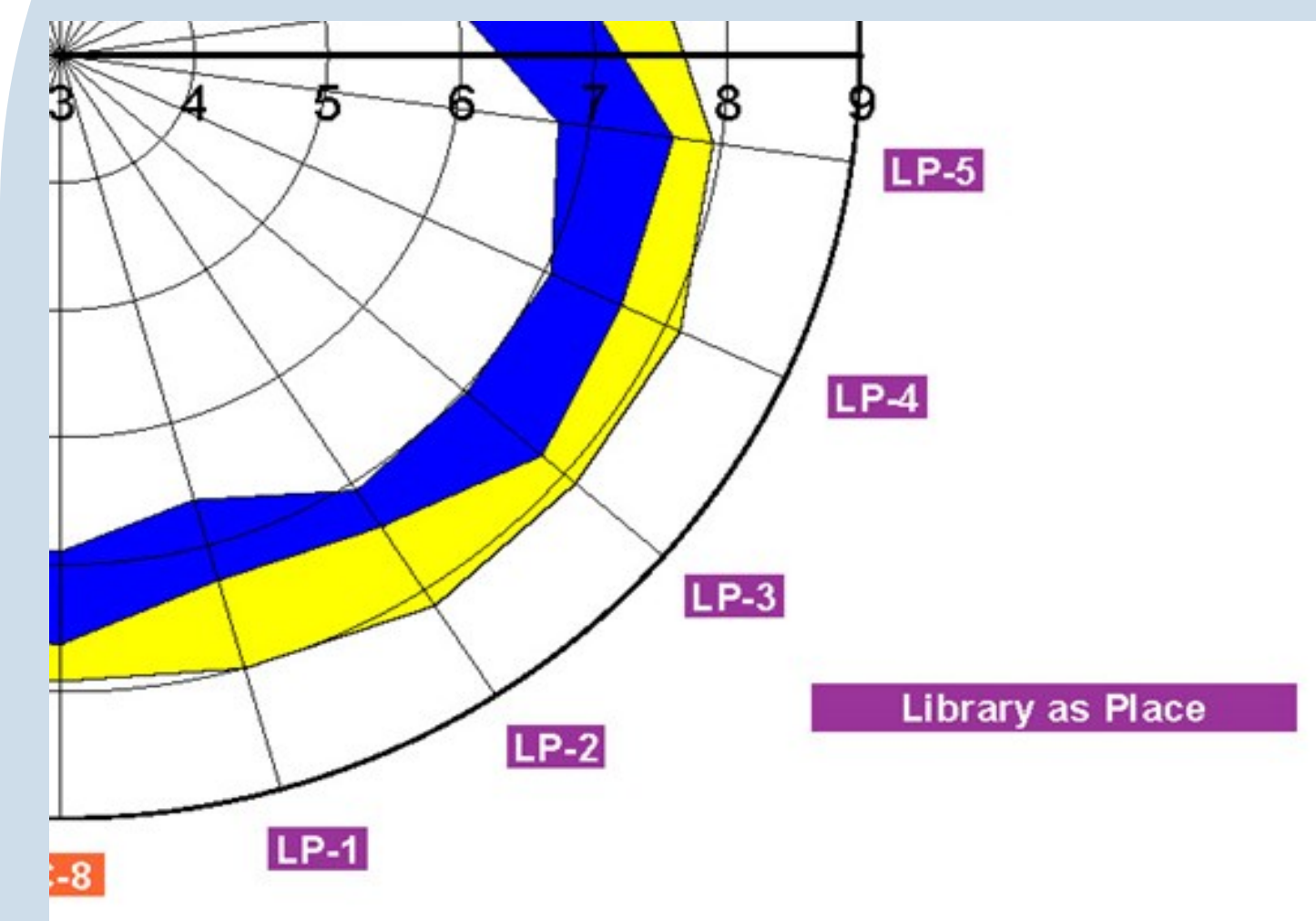
Initial Pass

Out of 827 valid responses, 341 survey respondents made use of the comment box.

Each member of the Survey Task Force was assigned a section of the comments to code. The comments were broken into User Sub-Groups, except for Undergraduate Student which needed to be sub-divided due to size. For each section, a first pass was conducted to start identifying keywords. A second pass was conducted to count instances of the identified keywords. Then, all of these keywords were grouped together into common themes. The keyword count was used as a baseline to determine which themes were of significance.



Adding Value with Comment Data



Undergraduates—195 comments out of 341

Library as Place—108 out of 195

Among Undergraduate respondents, this is the dimension that showed the largest gaps between the perception of services and the desired service levels.

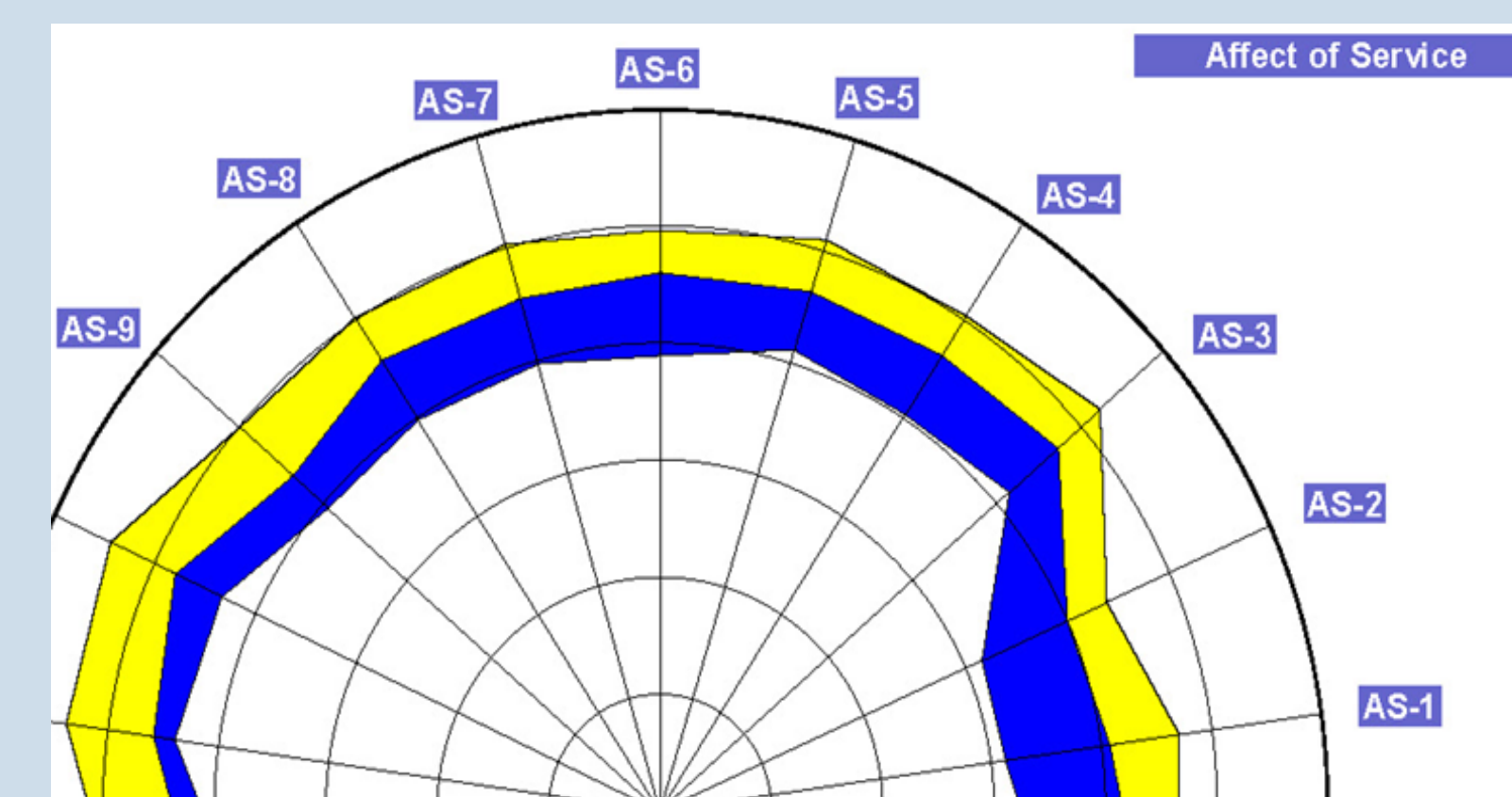
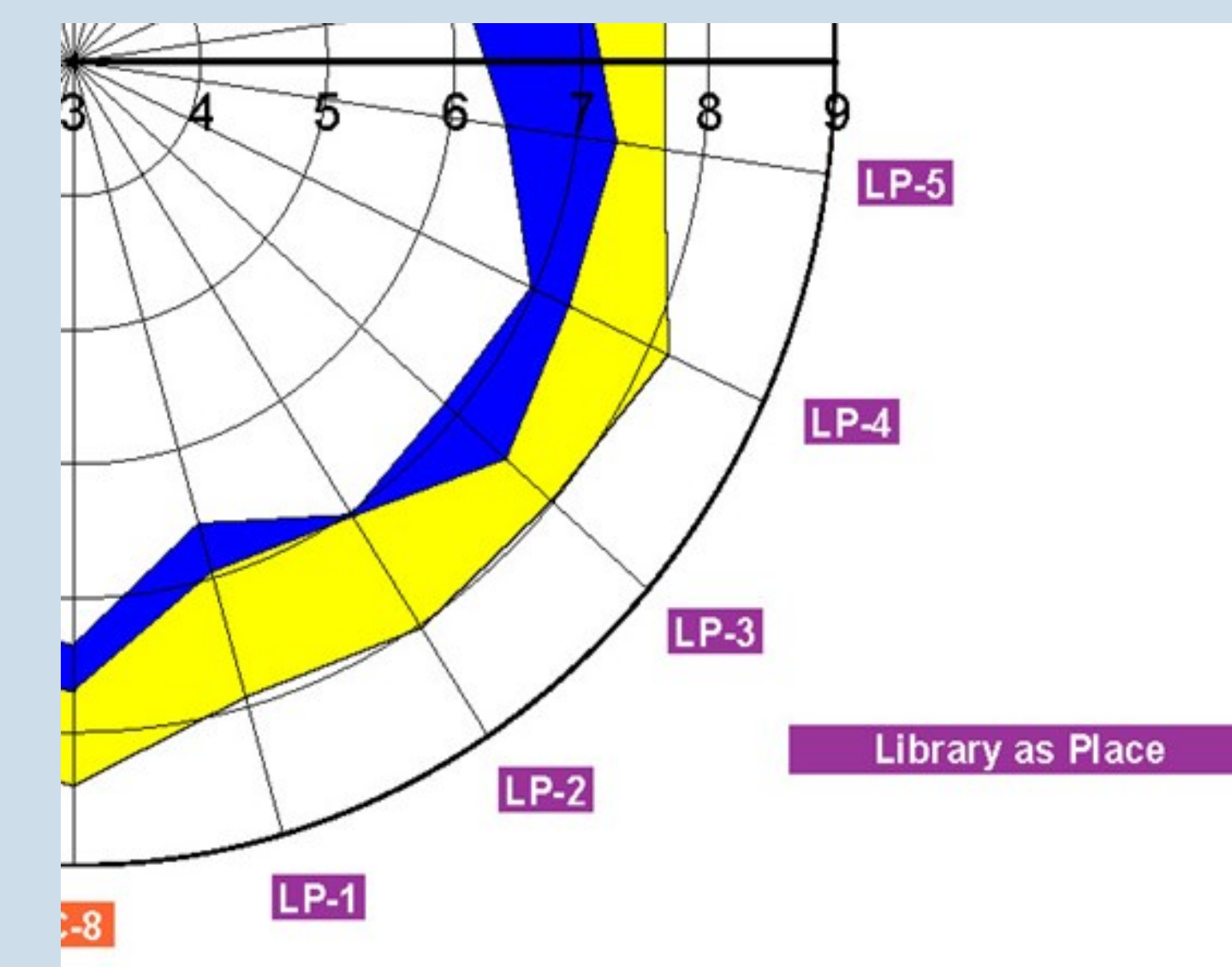
- 108 focused on Library as Place, with over half additionally coded as suggestions.
- Areas of focus:
 - Additional individual and group study spaces, furniture of various types, and plain additional space.
 - The need to address noise levels in our physical spaces.

Graduates—88 comments out of 341

Library as Place—34 out of 88

Graduate students also cared very deeply about Library as Place, coming close to perceiving current service levels as lower than the minimum acceptable level in the case of noise levels.

- 34 focused on Library as Place, with half also coded as suggestions.
- Areas of focus:
 - Additional space
 - Noise concerns
 - Individual study spaces.



Affect of Service—42 out of 88

Graduate students had high expectations regarding the Affect of Service dimension.

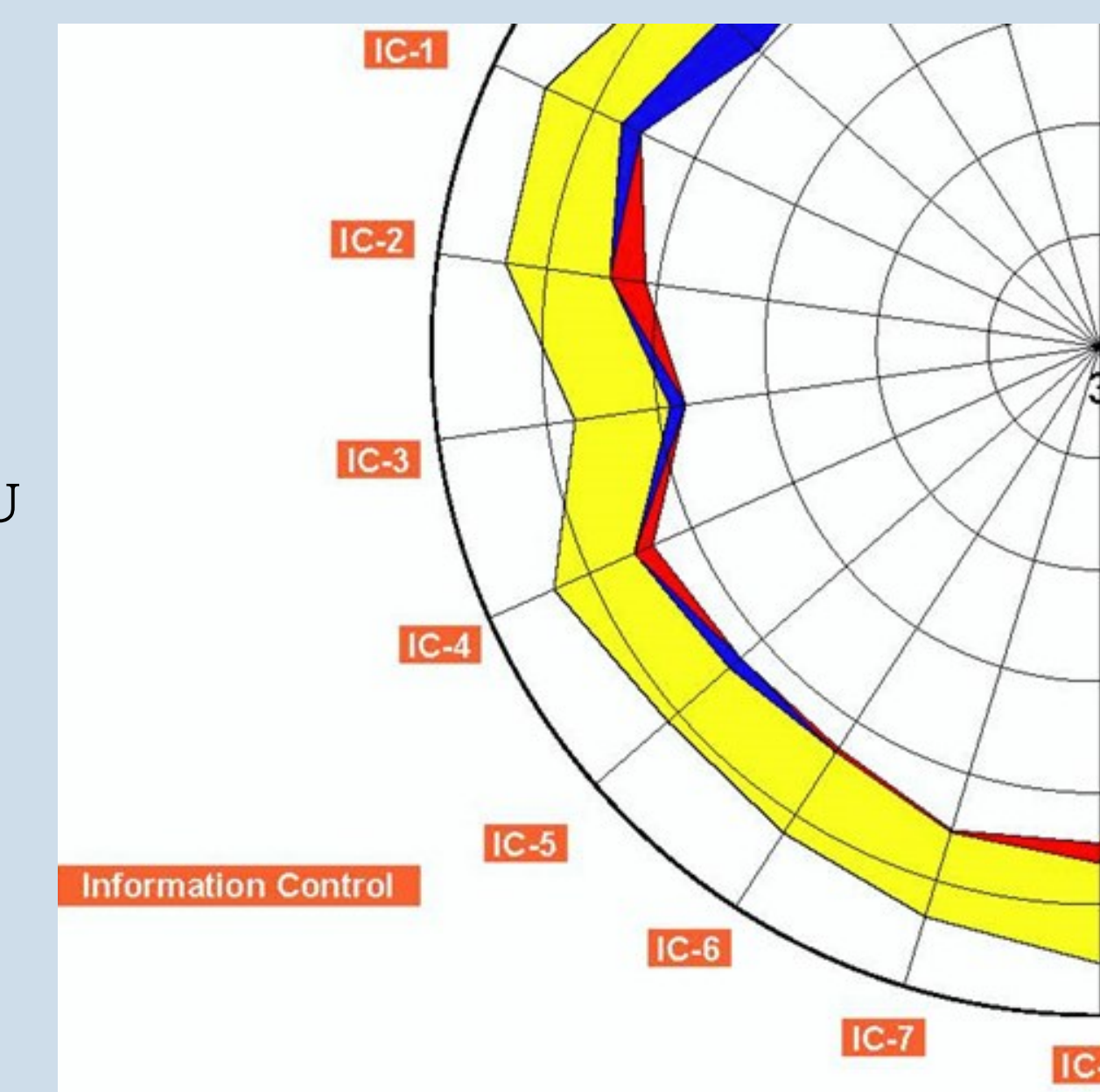
- 42 comments focused on Affect of Service, with only four also coded as suggestions.
- Areas of focus:
 - Library-Personnel, and the library instruction program
 - Access to physical and virtual materials, distance services, noise, and the libraries' hours.

Faculty—41 out of 341

Information control—18 out of 41

Faculty saw multiple questions within the Information Control dimension where the ODU libraries' perceived service level was below the minimum expectation of service.

- 18 comments focused on Information control, with eight also coded as suggestions.
- Areas of focus:
 - Desired additional access to virtual materials, with physical access a secondary concern.



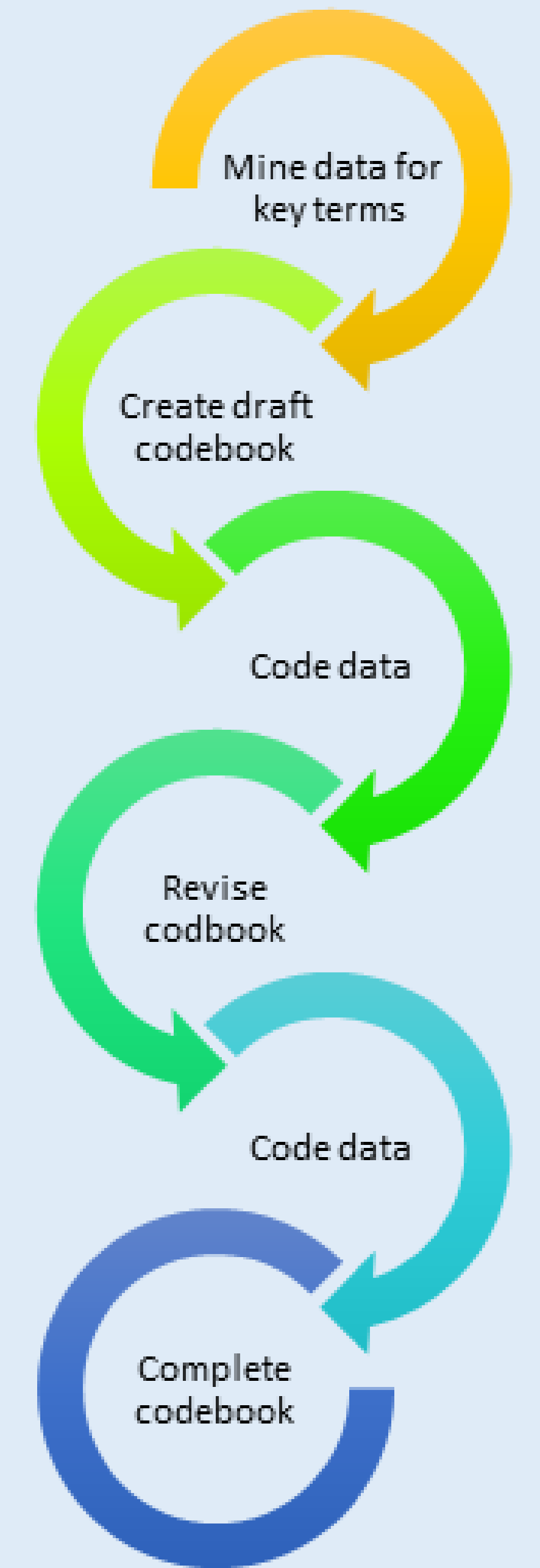
Codebook Design

The first step was to read through the comments and find key terms. The data from the initial pass was helpful in starting this process. Then, those key terms were collated into a draft codebook. The key terms were grouped, defined, and expanded to create the draft. They were grouped into three large categories: Content, Tone, and Theme.

Then the data was coded for Content and Tone. During this process, it was realized that Theme would need to be addressed separately and coded differently.

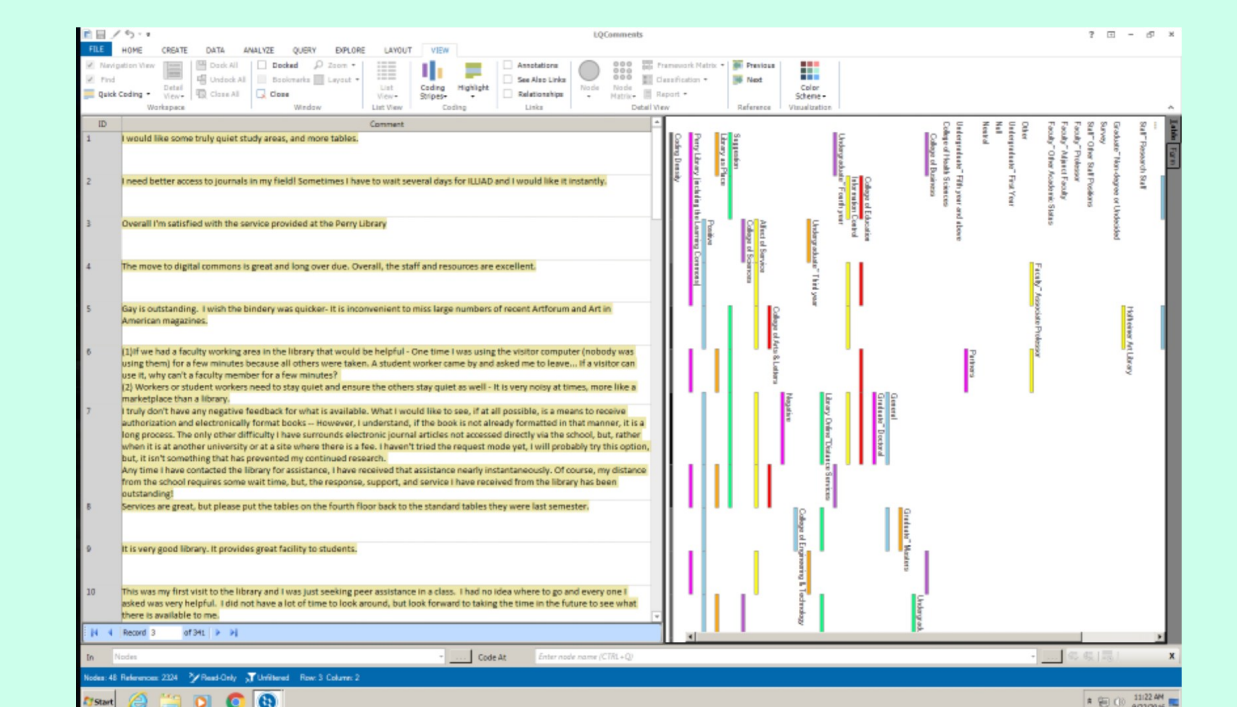
The codebook was revised to reflect these changes. Both coders then applied the codebook separately to the dataset. The data was then compared and any area of disagreement was discussed and resolved. The resolution of those disagreements resulted in changes, additions, and re-definitions in the codebook.

This final process culminated in the completed codebook.



Tools

NVivo - NVivo was used for the first pass of the coding to code the data for Content area and Tone. NVivo made this process quick and allowed for breaking up the comments into smaller sentences/thoughts.



Excel - Excel was used to code for theme. Both coders made a copy of the data, which allowed for individual coding. Then the separate spreadsheets were combined to compare and find areas of disagreement. Finally, Excel was used to filter, and count the coded data.