The coding activity gave me a deeper sense of how much data needs to be organized, and interpreted so that my action research will shine light upon my questions. Since my action research will be in my classrooms, student input will be very important. Some of my data will be from interviews and recording of conversations of student. How can I analyze these types of data? Coding will allow me to quantify and see a correlation whether positive or negative, with the data and problem.

I had an assumption that you start labeling your data without any sense of organization. Seeing how a coding scheme works will help me observe patterns and themes. Working with someone else’s data was very frustrating because my group interpreted the exercise differently and more importantly we analyzed the data differently. Coming up with a consensus to a category was difficult. The frustration level rose when it came to deciding how to label it. I will do my own organization in my action research because I understand my own logic and to have someone else interpret it on their own terms will only lead to confusion.

One of the mistakes that my group made was to look at one piece of data (one survey) and figure out categories. As I’m going through my research, I will try to look at the data as a whole and then decide how to organize, so that I do not base my coding scheme based on one response. With such a short amount of time, the activity did a disservice to the coding scheme step. Mertler (2006) says that “this process of coding data necessitates reading, rereading, and rereading all of your narrative data” (125). The activity highlighted that this step of the analysis is “not automatic … and overtly apparent in your data” (Mertler, 2006,125)

The level of frustration was due to the fact that my group jumped into the second step without being completely done with the first step. We wanted to prematurely “make connections between the data and the original, or emerging research questions” (Mertler, 2006,127).
Connections cannot be made if we do not understand the data. For my action research, I need to be comfortable with my data, recognize a pattern before making the connection. From there I can ask myself, “How does the information in this category help me to understand my research topic and answer my research question?” (Mertler, 2006, 128).

My group wanted to interpret the data before we saw the relationships and similarities across all of the surveys. It was a frustrating experience because we had only observed one response rather than taking a look at all of the surveys.

Coding allows my research to be manageable to organize and interpret. It is not such a daunting task. It does raise several questions. Do I crossover between different types of data and use the same categories and coding scheme? What if my observations reveal a new set of coding scheme compared to my interviews? What if I don’t see a pattern?