TEACHING, SUPERVISING AND EXAMINING FOR QUALITY THEMATIC ANALYSIS

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Chapter overview

This chapter is designed to accompany *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. The book provides knowledge and resources to nurture a reader who is learning about doing, and doing, *reflexive* thematic analysis (TA) – one particular approach to TA. But many learners are not alone in that journey – they are guided by others; their TA adventures and practice are facilitated (but sometimes impeded!) by lecturers and supervisors, and by assessors and examiners. We have written *this* additional, online-only chapter for those of us who *teach* and *supervise* TA, and who examine and assess TA theses and dissertations. Our purpose in writhing this is to provide tips, tools and resources that will help you facilitate *best practice* among your students. We have primarily written the chapter for people who have questions or uncertainties. But given that myths and misunderstandings of TA are flourishing (Braun & Clarke, 2021c), we encourage anyone supervising and teaching in this area, and anyone who is examining TA, to read this chapter. Our pointers for assessors and examiners recognise that these later-stage evaluations can also play a role in TA quality, shaping TA for the better, or mis-shaping it for the worse. We hope this chapter offers resources that will help you – through your teaching, supervising and examining – to empower others to do the best TA they can.

How *can* we encourage and support others to do good quality TA? This can be a challenge – and *especially* so if your own knowledge and experience of qualitative research are limited. The peer review process for articles using TA does not always ensure best practice, leading to the publication of articles that mix up different methodological processes, or that include instances of what we would consider to be 'poor practice' for (reflexive) TA (Braun & Clarke, 2020). This connects to a recognised issue of limited qualitative expertise among editors and reviewers (Levitt et al., 2018). It's similarly acknowledged that demand for expert *teaching* and *supervision* in qualitative research far outstrips the supply of teachers and supervisors with qualitative research *expertise* (Madill, Gough, Lawton, & Stratton, 2005; Wiggins, Gordon-Finlayson, Becker, & Sullivan, 2016) – in the UK context at least, and we believe this also applies in many others. When we first started offering TA training outside our own institutions, we reacted with uncontained astonishment at some of the things students told us they had been advised to do by their supervisors. We vividly remember a student on one of these early courses saying: "I can see from the look on your faces that that isn't good advice". What we have learnt is that students undertaking qualitative research are often supervised by academics with little or no personal experience of qualitative research. This can apply at all levels of study, be it undergraduate, Honours, Masters, Professional Doctorate, or PhD. Yet *some* of these supervisors are seemingly giving their students quite definitive, but problematic, advice about how to conduct (or not to conduct) TA research, connected to the myths and misperceptions around thematic analysis (see Braun & Clarke, 2021c).

> **FIND IT IN THE BOOK**   See Table 8.1 in Chapter Eight of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide* for a discussion of myths and misperceptions around thematic analysis.

We have been mindful as we wrote and edited this chapter – particularly in the latter stages of producing *Thematic analysis: A practical guide* when the pandemic hit and academia went into crisis mode – that our suggestions around teaching and supervision may feel impossible and overwhelming, especially if you approach this chapter as if it is telling you '*all* the things I *must* do to be a competent TA teacher or supervisor'. Far from it! We recognise the academic universe is not one where people have much, if any, time for professional development. We hope you can read the suggestions we – and other

contributors – provide in this chapter as they are intended – as *hopefully* helpful hints and tips, not as compulsory requirements! Just as we emphasise that a researcher should aim for a 'good enough' TA – rather than some mythical, impossible 'perfect TA' – you as teacher or supervisor only need to be *good enough*. We start the chapter with what we see as foundational for that 'good enough' practice: a reflexive, self-aware orientation to teaching and supervision.

BE REFLEXIVE, BE BE REFLEXIVE![1]

How then can you – especially readers with limited experience of qualitative research or TA – teach and supervise effectively?[2] We see *reflexivity* as vitally important here. Reflexivity is our best tool for understanding our strengths and our limitations, but also for recognising our implicit values and assumptions. Of course, understanding our positionalities and values is not necessarily easy. These things can sneakily hide from view if they align with the norms of the world we live in, or our discipline. We have found that *our* reflexive awareness – or what we might call our *reflexability*[3] – has been expanded by engaging with students and supervisees, and the questions they ask (Luttrell, 2019). This is one reason we encourage *questioning* ourselves – as well as our students – as a valuable pedagogical practice.[4]

We recommend if you're a teacher and/or supervisor, that you reflect on and assess – with as much brutal honesty as is possible – what we might term your *methodological bandwidth*. We find the concept of methodological bandwidth useful as a way of conceptualising and thinking about the range – the breadth, depth and diversity – of someone's knowledge and experience of qualitative research. Understanding *what you know* (and what you don't!) of the diversity and complexity of qualitative research is important for quality. Only acknowledging or recognising *part* of this diversity in qualitative research, both in terms of theorical foundations or methodological practice, connects to some of the common problems in TA research. For example, only using definitions of qualitative research that centre on a concern for subjective experiences – something that is very

> **FIND IT IN THE BOOK**   Chapter Nine of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide* starts with a discussion of common problems in TA research.

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[1]Our phrasing – "be reflexive, be be reflexive!" – riffs off the cheer in the 2000 cheerleading film *Bring it on*: "be aggressive, be be aggressive".

[2]This question of how to teach or supervise TA effectively is not just for the inexperienced! After two decades, we are still honing our teaching skills in this area, and feel we are still learning.

[3]We are adopting the term *reflexability* to capture the idea that an ability with reflexivity is something that we can grow and upskill on. The term inadvertently appeared as late-stage editing typo, possibly from Victoria's use of the voice recognition software Dragon, and we love it!

[4]We recognise that, especially for those who don't feel they have depth of knowledge, and rich experiential foundations for their teaching, encouraging questions might be particularly anxiety provoking. But *not* knowing something and admitting that is more important for qualitative practice, and for quality, than providing *some* answers without good foundation. We *still* feel anxious whenever we're asked a question about a particular qualitative method or theoretical framework that we haven't heard of – most recently *paradigmatic* data analysis!? – and have had to do lots of work to recognise that not-knowing is *okay*. There is simply more to know than can be known! Having a wider methodological bandwidth – having some understanding of the range and diversity of qualitative research – is not about knowing *everything* there is to know.

common – implicitly excludes the existence of *critical* qualitative approaches.[5] Similarly, to treat (post)positivist[6] concerns with accuracy, objectivity and reliability as *universal* quality considerations (Braun & Clarke, 2021c) effectively elides most *Big Q* qualitative research (Kidder & Fine, 1987).

A researcher with a *very narrow* qualitative methodological bandwidth could, for instance,

> **FIND IT IN THE BOOK**   We discuss issues that can arise from eliding (post) positivist and Big Q qualitative in *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. In Chapter One we introduce the notion of *Big Q*, and in Chapters Six and Eight, we go into more depth about theory and methodological variation in TA.

be someone who believes all qualitative research should adhere to (post)positivist standards of reliability. A researcher who explicitly or implicitly defines qualitative research in terms *experiential* qualitative research has a somewhat wider but nonetheless still limited methodological bandwidth. A researcher with a *wide* bandwidth would be someone who acknowledges the range and diversity of qualitative research, and who teaches and practices qualitative research in a located and reflexive way. If your reflection on your qualitative bandwidth suggests it's narrow(er), we encourage some general reading (see *Thematic analysis: A practical guide* for some recommendations to get you started). Not with the expectation of becoming *expert* at all things qualitative – we recognise that most academics are operating in circumstances of pressure and limited time and capacity, and such a suggestion is impossible! But so that you can better understand the locatedness of what and how you teach and supervise qualitative research, and – for those who feel outside their comfort zone – hopefully provide some surer grounding for teaching practice and supervision.[7]

TEACHING FOR QUALITY TA

TA is very widely taught at undergraduate level across the globe, and across different disciplines. Teaching undergraduates TA and qualitative methods poses some unique challenges – especially if they're steeped in a quantitative or (post)positivist dominated discipline (like our own, psychology). This section primarily offers suggestions[8] for teaching *practice*. It includes:

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[5]Due to this predominance of experiential understandings of what qualitative research *is*, it's less likely – but *possible* – that someone would understand qualitative research as *solely* encompassing *critical* approaches.

[6]We use the term (post)positivism instead of positivism. This intends to capture the way positivism doesn't exist in an idealised or pure form within disciplines such as psychology, but nonetheless the ideas and ideals of positivism remain entrenched in the mainstream of these disciplines, even when nuanced by the critiques of the impossibility of pure positivism. Furthermore, we view (post)positivism as the practical or 'working' philosophy for much of the mainstream of disciplines like psychology – capturing and underpinning the assumptions psychologists make about what constitutes reality, meaningful knowledge and the like when conducting and writing about their own research, and reviewing and evaluating others' research. One can, and some do, dispute the influence of positivism in psychology through considering philosophical texts and statements (see Robinson, 2021; Shadish, 1995). But *our* interest is always with theory as something we practice, we 'do' – knowingly and unknowingly – through our research, not with abstract philosophical discussions.

[7]Even reading a few different texts – from different authors, let alone different disciplines or geographic locations – will demonstrate the variability and diversity of ways of understanding the rich and complex field of qualitative research.

[8]Our suggestions here are particularly aimed at teachers who are not that *experienced* in qualitative research and TA specifically, and/or those with a narrow(er) bandwidth in qualitative research.

- Box 1, where our UK-based TA colleague Nikki Hayfield (see Braun, Clarke, & Hayfield, 2019; Braun, Clarke, Hayfield, & Terry, 2019; Clarke, Braun, & Hayfield, 2015; Terry & Hayfield, 2020, 2021; Terry, Hayfield, Clarke, & Braun, 2017) combines practical tips with reflection on her experiences of teaching TA to psychology undergraduates. She also highlights some common student anxieties, and provides some strategies for managing these.
- Box 2, which provides general suggestions and tips for more effective TA teaching, based on *our* classroom experiences, which will be more or less relevant depending on the specifics of your teaching context.
- Box 3, where we focus on *practical* suggestions for 'hands-on' coding activities in teaching TA.
- Box 4, where our TA colleague Gareth Terry (see Braun, Clarke, Hayfield, & Terry, 2019; Terry, 2016, 2021; Terry, Braun et al., 2021; Terry & Hayfield, 2020, 2021; Terry, Hayfield et al., 2017) provides reflections and practical tips for teaching TA *online*.
- Table 1, where we identify common problems in published research to support classroom activities and assignments centred on the critical evaluation of published TA research.

None of these are strategies or activities that will guarantee success, but we hope there will be something useful for your pedagogical practice, which contributes towards teaching for quality TA.

Researcher Reflection – Box 1

Teaching (reflexive) TA to undergraduate psychology students, by Nikki Hayfield

My introduction to TA was during the second year of my undergraduate psychology degree, back in the early 2000s, when minimal published guidance existed. As a student, I was taught TA over two seminars.[9] After the first session we were sent away to code the data; after the second we wrote our assignment. When I went on to complete my final year dissertation using TA, there remained few resources. I searched library books and trawled the internet to try to find out what coding was, or how to go about it, and spent £80 on a book that one lecturer advised me would have all the answers (it didn't).

Thankfully things have changed for the psychology students I teach at the University of the West of England (UWE). In the time since Ginny and Victoria first outlined their approach to (reflexive) TA (Braun & Clarke, 2006), clear guidance on TA and numerous published examples to illustrate both good and bad practice in TA research have become available. The undergraduate students I teach first learn TA during the second year of their degree, as part of an in-depth introduction to qualitative methods. We focus on TA in more depth than other qualitative analyses, partly due to its theoretical flexibility, but also because it enables students to learn to code and develop patterns across data, both of which are foundational

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[9]Seminars here refers to small group teaching sessions that accompany lectures – in some countries, like Aotearoa New Zealand, these are called tutorials. (In the UK, the term 'tutorial' often references the Oxbridge tutorial system; a distinct mode of teaching unique to Oxford and Cambridge Universities.)

skills for qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013). TA is also widely used by UWE psychology students in their research – at all levels of study.

Undergraduate students are introduced to the 'many questions' and 'six phases' of reflexive TA across two lectures. They also attend workshops, where they begin to put into practice what they have been taught by working with data in smaller groups, on the early analytic phases of familiarisation and coding.

The most common challenge in teaching TA is managing students' anxieties, some of which arise from them having previously been taught mainly quantitative psychology, and in a way that does not frame it as a particular approach to research but rather as 'how research in psychology is done' (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Students particularly struggle with understanding ontology and epistemology, and we manage this by introducing these concepts early in the teaching and revisiting them regularly. I've found it particularly useful to provide a paper by British psychologist Celia Kitzinger and student Deborah Powell (1995) that demonstrates essentialist and constructionist approaches to analysing the same dataset. This helps students to understand how these seemingly abstract theoretical differences practically shape how we make sense of data and what types of claims we can make about them.

FIND IT IN THE BOOK *We describe and demonstrate the earlier analysis phases of reflexive TA in Thematic analysis: A practical guide Chapters Two (familiarisation) and Three (coding).*

In Thematic analysis: A practical guide Chapter Four Boxes 4.3 and 4.4, two of our students reflect on, and provide suggestions around managing, anxiety when doing TA.

Thematic analysis: A practical guide Chapter Six (Theory) tackles epistemology and ontology in depth.

Having been previously taught that objectivity is 'king' and subjectivity is a problem rather than a resource for research, psychology students find the uncertainty of producing their own (subjective) analysis and developing their own argument about the data particularly challenging. Using a phase-by-phase practical approach to teaching (Braun & Clarke, 2013) goes some way to alleviating their anxieties. For example, in workshops, students work together in small groups to *collectively code* a section of data, which enables them to support each other and develop competence in TA coding (see Box 3 for coding activity suggestions). They share their codes with the rest of the group, before the teaching team talk them through our own coding of the data. This allows us to show and discuss how we *all* code slightly differently. We can also highlight that there is not one 'right' set of codes, while also discussing weaker and stronger codes. This type of activity demonstrates to students just how in-depth – and time-consuming – coding can be.

Students then develop their coding and bring it to drop-in sessions to discuss their initial interpretations of the data with the teaching team. These drop-in sessions are invaluable in providing individual feedback to highlight potential issues, offer reassurance, and manage anxieties or concerns. They are also an opportunity to encourage students to see coding as the *foundation* of their analysis. It is especially important and necessary to reiterate key messages such as this time and time again. Students learning about qualitative analysis for this first time are trying to grasp so many new ideas (frequently ones that seemingly contradict what they have learnt in the past). Often they are keen to *just get their analysis completed*. They can be impatient to jump ahead to themes before they have fully engaged with the coding process. This needs to be discouraged, to avoid insufficient engagement with the data and shallow, surface-level coding (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

I find it helpful to provide students with data from my own – and others' – research to show concrete worked examples of codes and coding, moving from codes to themes, thematic maps,

theme definitions, and writing up. When looking for examples of TA for undergraduates and postgrads, I've found it frustrating to notice how many published papers report poor analyses. The most common issues include using themes that map too closely to data collection questions or report a *feature* of the data, rather than an analysis of it (Braun & Clarke, 2021c; Terry et al., 2017). Such published papers can be really useful to point out to students, to show 'what not to do' (see Table 1).

One of the questions most commonly asked by both undergrads and postgrads is whether their analysis is 'right'. This may stem from students' previous experiences of evaluating research based on quantitative criteria. The shift from viewing subjectivity as 'bias' to a resource for research and recognising the importance of researcher reflexivity often proves challenging. I encourage students to engage in reflexivity exercises and consider their own subjective positions in relation to the data. I share with them how my own perspectives have influenced the analyses that I have produced in my research (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015) – something I also discuss with colleague and book contributor Gareth Terry in a conversation you can read on this companion website. Use of the 'personal' in teaching in this way provides one of many opportunities to demonstrate my own *enthusiasm* for qualitative research. I have found this to be a hugely valuable tool, that helps students engage and become excited about qualitative methods and methodologies!

> **FIND IT IN THE BOOK**   Reflexivity and subjectivity in analysis are discussed in Chapters One and Two of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*.

Box 2

Tips for effective (reflexive) TA teaching

- If you haven't got 'hands-on' qualitative/TA experience, we suggest exploring whether you:
    - Might be able to co-teach with a more experienced colleague;
    - Can get a qualitative teaching mentor;
    - Can access some specialist training.[10]

We also encourage you to *do some of your own TA research* – starting small – so you gain a better understanding of the 'lived experience' of doing it (it's quite different from reading about it!). This might sound over the top, but this is about recognising the skill and nuance that TA involves, something often elided in contexts that are dominated by quantitative/positivist-empiricist approaches.

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[10]At the present time, we cannot offer specialist training in TA because of health constraints. Various other organisations and individuals – such as contributor Gareth Terry – do offer qualitative research training both generally, and focused on particular methods like TA. In taking any course, *do* remember the variability in qualitative research values and practices, let alone TA, noted in this book, and be wary of any *absolute* declarations.

- Appreciate that learning about TA for the first time is often anxiety-provoking for students, as Nikki noted in Box 1. The psychology students we have taught have to do some fundamental U-turns in their thinking about 'research practice and quality'. They have to:

  o Turn-off their 'stats brain' or quantitative-(post)positivist sensibility;
  o Rethink their understanding of subjectivity (from problem to resource);
  o Embrace the provisionalities and 'lack of rules' associated with TA; and
  o Sit with both uncertainty and the absence of a-single-answer.

- In our experience, this is a lot to ask! Even if students are less positivist-empiricist ~~indoctrinated~~ trained, this is still a lot to work through.
- If teaching in a discipline or field (like psychology) in which quantitative methods dominate and are the default, it is quite common for the fundamental assumptions embedded in quantitative research to rarely be acknowledged or discussed, as Nikki also noted in Box 1. We have at times been the ones who teach students about what (post)positivism means, for instance, so be prepared to do this. This is problematic if it creates a default norm you have to then set qualitative values and theory against. If you can, develop a shared teaching ethos with any quantitative-methods-teaching colleagues (and indeed, any other *qualitative* teaching colleagues), so that the team is on the same page in openly discussing the philosophical assumptions informing quantitative (post) positivism, and acknowledging that there are other values and paradigms underpinning research.[11]

  > **FIND IT IN THE BOOK** In *Thematic analysis: A practical guide* we introduce qualitative values in Chapter One and explore some of the 'big' theoretical frameworks underpinning qualitative research in Chapter Six.

- In our experience, it really helps if the teaching team are 'on message' – students become understandably confused and anxious if different members of a qualitative methods teaching team provide different 'takes' on TA (e.g. one team member critiques the notion that themes passively emerge from data; another team member talks about themes emerging). For reflexive TA, this is about understanding what constitutes good practice (see Braun & Clarke, 2021c). This is not some diktat where a singular approved view is mandated! Instead, it's about being knowing and reflexively aware, so you understand which messages you need 'unity' on (e.g. themes *not* emerging; themes as meaning-based patterns *not* topic summaries), and where explicitly-acknowledged and openly-discussed divergence is not just possible, but good.

  > **FIND IT IN THE BOOK** In Chapter Eight of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide* we discuss different versions of TA, including different conceptualisations of themes; Chapter Four focuses on understandings of and process for theme development.

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[11]Although we don't think it's particularly helpful to draw hard (battle) lines between 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' methods and approaches, this *is* sometimes how they are effectively framed in teaching contexts, as oppositional/fundamentally different approaches. To us, more important are the broad research values and theories that underpin and legitimate any particular mode of research practice.

- Use practice to teach *theory*: we have found that having some *practical* handle on the application of TA techniques (e.g. reading data analytically; coding) can often help students to understand the philosophical, theoretical and methodological foundations of TA research (see Braun & Clarke, 2013). From this practical foundation, students can grasp that theory is something we 'do', rather than something abstract and separate from the process of *doing* research. Often, there's a temptation with qualitative teaching to move *from* theory *to* practice. For novices, we've found that starting with practice, and coming back to theory, can both alleviate anxiety, through helping students to understand the TA process, and build confidence in *doing* reflexive TA.

  FIND IT IN THE BOOK Our 'practice first' approach is exemplified in Section One of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*, which offers practical guidance for *doing* reflexive TA. We provide our in-depth discussion of theory in Section Two (Chapter Six).

- Encourage reflexivity early on. Many of us struggle with reflecting on our positionality and assumptions, so it's good to get students into this mode of thinking and practice at the start of teaching. Initial reflexivity may be confined to fairly superficial observations, but introducing reflexivity at an early stage is, we think, the most effective way to support students in developing their reflexive engagement with data. We also suggest you model reflexivity for students by providing examples from your own experiences (as Nikki described in Box 1) – students seem particularly to enjoy hearing about when things go *wrong* for us!

- Acknowledge the messy, anxiety-provoking reality of TA research, and emphasise how this *differs* from the usually-seamless accounts students read in journal articles. Be brave and share your own research 'mess', screw-ups and anxieties (as we did in Braun & Clarke, 2013). Normalising analytic anxiety for students can help them learn to tolerate a degree of anxiety and uncertainty in the process of doing TA (while bearing in mind this will be far more challenging for some than others).

- Don't be a textbook, be a person! As part of displaying reflexivity, we encourage you to 'teach from an explicit position', rather than suggest a neutral stance is possible. Locate yourself in relation to qualitative (and TA) theory and practice (like we do, when we 'assess' different members of the TA family, and indeed qualitative approaches; see Braun & Clarke, 2021a). Model the importance of knowingness and reflexivity, by acknowledging your own positionality in the landscape of qualitative research. Include your research experiences, and theoretical commitments, and even questions or uncertainties, in your teaching.

- Discuss the things that can go wrong with TA and instances of poor practices. Teach about these using *real-world examples* – some examples are provided in Table 1 (more can be found in Braun & Clarke, 2021c). Real-world examples can also form a basis for practical activities, where students try to unpack what's stronger and weaker in a paper's description and/or use of method (but see our caveats in Box 3). Our *Reflexive TA Bingo card* offers a fun way to critically evaluate TA practice; it could easily be adapted for classroom activities evaluating published papers – or indeed as a tool for students to use in their own TA practice.

  FIND IT IN THE BOOK The Reflexive TA Bingo card is contextualised in Chapter Nine of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*.

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- Alongside illustrations of best practice, provide *concrete* examples of poor practice and common problems – even if these are made up, like our 'topic summary theme' example in *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. **FIND IT IN THE BOOK** Our made-up 'topic summary theme' can be found in Box 4.6 in Chapter Four of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*.
  Concrete illustrations give students yardsticks to judge their efforts against.
- Use *real* data and worked examples of coding, thematic maps, theme definitions, etc. whenever possible (as Nikki described in Box 1). Real examples – especially if they are ones *you are* deeply familiar with – show students concretely what these practices *can* look like. If you don't have access to data you can use in teaching, working with students to *collect* a small dataset can be a great learning opportunity. Alternatively, draw on the two datasets we provide *on this website*, or others that are available for wider use (we note some at the end of the chapter). Gareth Terry's (2015, 2021) worked example of TA, which is accompanied by a published small (two interview) dataset, provides another option.
- To support good teaching practice for reflexive TA, we have developed a wide range of practical learning activities and teaching resources for you to use and adapt as suits.

Structured activities for teaching TA

Using structured exercises to teach practical analytic skills is a useful way to build students' sense of confidence in understanding, and their ability to do, reflexive TA. By providing some structure through a series of practical activities, the task of reflexive TA can feel less daunting. With reflexive TA, all phases can be practically demonstrated in the classroom, if time permits.

If time is limited – as it often is – we find coding to be one of the fundamentally important tasks to get students to engage with, as it demonstrates the skill involved in treating data analytically and interpreting meaning in relation to data. As one example, we have used a coding exercise that involves a short but very rich and complex data extract (one-side of A4 paper) from an interview with a gay man about his experiences of university life (see Clarke et al., 2015). Box 3 offers an example of a coding activity we use with this, and other single rich data extracts – although it could easily be adapted for a dataset of multiple items. In other teaching, we have used small datasets comprised of multiple small items – such as media data, like the Facebook comments we used in our worked example in *Thematic analysis: A practical guide* (that dataset is available on the companion website, as is the small media dataset related to men and healthy eating referred to in various end-of-chapter exercises), or story completion data (see Braun, Clarke, Hayfield, Moller, et al., 2019). Small datasets, often comprised of many shorter data items, enable students to work with an entire dataset, getting a sense of diversity and patterning around meaning. That aspect is *particularly* useful if teaching will include theme development activities.

Box 3

Structured familiarisation and coding exercises for teaching reflexive TA

This activity is based on the familiarisation and coding process of reflexive TA. We give students a single but relatively long (1 or 2 sides of A4 paper) and rich data extract to work with.

- First, we invite students to reflect on their assumptions about, and positioning (e.g. outsider/insider) in relation to, the topic of the data extract and broader project.

  FIND IT IN THE BOOK   We discuss concepts like insider/outsider in Box 7.3 In Chapter Seven of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide.*

- Next, we get students to read the data *individually*, and note down their initial observations, responses and insights. Sometimes we give them a research question to broadly orient to; sometimes we work 'developing a research question' into the activity.

- Then we ask students to share their responses and observations with others, in a small group of 3–5 students. Depending on the nature of the data, personal reflexivity may or may not be appropriate (e.g. if it relates to a marginalised identity, students might not feel comfortable sharing their positionality, and we should not require it. In our experience, however, if the teaching environment is 'safe' some *will* choose to).

- Students then work *in these small groups* to code the extract, aiming to develop *at least* one semantic code and one latent code that capture something of relevance for the research question (ideally, they would develop more than just two codes!). During this coding activity, we circulate, talking to each small group, answering questions, offering clarifications – most students seem to particularly struggle with what constitutes a *latent* code – and whatever else is needed. We encourage each group to reflect on what assumptions they are making in their coding of the extract. As an important point for this activity, we emphasise that 'objects' like latent codes and semantic codes are not ontologically real things to identify, but heuristic tools for developing the analysis, for gaining different understandings.

- We follow small group coding with whole-class discussion where students in each group share some of their codes and code labels,[12] and we discuss and evaluate the codes. We consider where the codes fall in relation to a semantic to latent continuum. We discuss how well the codes evoke something *analytically* relevant for our research question, something that isn't just a simple descriptive reiteration of the data content. These conversations are designed to explore possible ways to improve each code's 'fit' with both the data and the research question, and alignment with 'good code (label) qualities' in reflexive TA.

- We share *our* coding of the extract *as a tool for learning* (something Nikki also discussed in Box 1). When we do so, we emphasise that our coding does not reveal the 'correct' or 'right' way to code the extract. Rather, it

  FIND IT IN THE BOOK   Chapter Three of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide* contains an extensive discussion around codes, code qualities and code labels.

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[12]We use code label to refer to the concise 'tag' that describes a code, and is attached to segments of coded data.

reflects our particular positioning and theoretical commitments. For more advanced students, we might also ask them to reflect on *our* assumptions in coding the extract, and consider ways our coding could be improved – the latter activity emphasises there is no such thing as 'perfect TA'.

- If there's time in the teaching session, we'd finish our structured coding activity by getting each group to revisit their coding, after the collective discussion. Again, we would emphasise that the purpose of such re-coding is for developing *better* coding, and the potential for different, more nuanced interpretations through repeated data engagement (and hearing others' takes on the data).

The value of structured exercises is not limited to coding. If you have *more* time for practical activities, the other activity we find particularly useful for students relates to theme generation. This activity involves working across codes (e.g. those generated by the entire class in the coding activities in Box 3) and exploring ways to cluster them into provisional themes, considering the key requirements for themes in reflexive TA. This activity is useful as it reveals the complexity and more-skilled-than-it-appears nature of theme development in reflexive TA, as well as the many traps people can unwittingly fall into.

> **FIND IT IN THE BOOK**   Chapter Four of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide* focuses on the phases of theme development, including discussion of the qualities of (good) themes in reflexive TA, reflexive review and development of themes, and some traps to avoid.

We have developed and use a range of *structured* exercises in our teaching, and offer PowerPoints of the full exercises, and any accompanying handouts, on the *Thematic analysis: A practical guide* companion website. These exercises relate to a range of concepts, processes or outputs that we find students can struggle to grasp. These exercises provide students with concrete examples of aspects of the TA process and outputs; things that can seem rather abstract or difficult to pin down ahead of practically doing analysis. They also usefully demonstrate the messy, blurry boundaries around things like semantic/latent codes, and help emphasise that reflexive TA is not about either/or binaries, but nuanced and situated interpretative practice. The exercises on the companion website are as follows:

- *Themes or codes* – providing names or labels, descriptions and data examples; asking students to judge whether what is being described and evidenced seems like a theme or a code, and justifying their assessment. This exercise helps students to understand the differences between a single faceted code and a multi-faceted theme.
- *Semantic and latent codes* – providing code labels and data examples for different codes; asking students to determine whether the code is more latent or more semantic, and why they think that. This exercise is intended to support students' understanding of the differences between semantic and latent levels of analysis. But also to understand that the distinction between semantic and latent codes is not binary and fixed; that they are more like two ends of a continuum rather than two distinct and separable categories.

- *Topic summaries or themes* – providing 'theme' names and extracts from the results sections of published research reports; asking students to determine whether each is a topic summary or a shared-meaning based theme. This exercise is intended to help students to clarify their understanding of the difference between a topic summary and a shared meaning theme.
- *Illustrative versus analytic treatment of data extracts* – providing extracts from the results sections of published research reports; asking students to identify whether the data have been used illustratively or analytically. This activity supports students to understand what illustrative and analytic treatments of data extracts look like *in practice*.

> **FIND IT IN THE BOOK** Illustrative and analytic treatment of data are covered in Chapter Five of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*.

- *Contextualising data* – providing extracts from the results sections of published research reports; asking students to determine whether the data and analysis are situated in relation to wider contexts and, if so, *how* they are contextualised –

> **FIND IT IN THE BOOK** Contextualising practices in Chapter Five of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*.

  in relation to policy, ideology, the wider sociocultural context, etc. This activity is intended to support students in understanding something that is quite complex to explain and understand in the abstract – *how we* contextualise our data and analysis in relation to relevant wider contexts.
- *Theories of language* – providing extracts from the results section of published research reports; asking students to identify the authors' explicit or (more likely) implicit theory of language. This activity will support students' understanding of the different theories of lan-

> **FIND IT IN THE BOOK** Different theories of language are covered in Chapter Six of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*.

  guage underpinning different approaches to qualitative data. This exercise is also useful for understanding the differences between experiential and critical orientations.
- *Evaluating published TA* – providing guidelines for critically evaluating reports of TA research, and suggestions for journal articles to evaluate (we include those papers on the companion website).

All of these exercises – not just the final one with evaluation of published TA as its explicit focus – are also valuable for increasing students' research literacy, and their ability to effectively harness their knowledge of TA to critically evaluate published TA research (see 'Facilitating TA research literacy' later in this chapter).

How can I teach TA online?

We wrote *Thematic analysis: A practical guide* before 2020 necessitated a rapid 'pivot' to online teaching[13] – and therefore our text in that book and in this chapter imagines an in-person classroom. Much of what we discuss is relevant for online teaching, but practical activities and exercises may take some reframing and rethinking. Timeframes may need to be extended; materials may need to be distributed earlier; students may need to do more preparation; discussions may need more pre-prepared guiding structure. In the physical classroom, we

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[13]For various reasons, we have had to do relatively little online teaching during the pandemic, and none related to qualitative research (at the point of book completion anyway).

appreciate the value of a mix of individual and small group work, and whole class discussion. Small groups work can be managed online (e.g. through 'breakout rooms'), but whole group discussions may require more structure and pre-organisation than with a physically present group. Book contributor Gareth Terry, who has years of experience teaching 'doing TA' workshops across in-person, online and blended (online *and* in-person) modes, offers some useful reflections and tips in Box 4.

Researcher Reflection – Box 4

Teaching reflexive TA online, by Gareth Terry

I have run reflexive TA workshops for a number of years. These have mostly been day-length workshops, which I split into two mornings of three hours each, in order to allow participants to absorb material more readily. I also teach undergraduate courses that offer a more condensed versions of workshop material in 1.5-hour classes. The workshops tend to be pitched for postgraduate students, supervisors of various levels of experience who are needing to engage with their students' choice of methods, and researchers who are dipping into qualitative work for the first time. I've mostly taught these workshops and undergraduate classes in person, but have recently been teaching both online-only and blended versions (i.e. with some participants physically present and some online). I've found both formats can work well for practical skills-based teaching. In all cases, I use a mix of delivered material, illustrative exemplars of each of the phases of TA using my own work, and group and individual practice with real data. The online aspects of the teaching have changed some of the dynamics of the environment, but overall my focus remains on providing a framework for people to locate reflexive TA within qualitative research generally.

Consideration of the mental split between technology for delivery and the teaching content, and the intensity of screen time, have been the most significant issues in the recent shift to introducing online components. I've found it helpful to have support from a colleague or teaching assistant, so I can focus exclusively on content delivery. If you're teaching alone, you need to be able to manage both technology and teaching content simultaneously – which can be done. It just needs a lot of practice, clarity, and fluidity around the software *and* content. I have found that existing rapport with the student group or a more informal setting can mitigate some of this, but this can be harder to do in a specialist/professional development workshop context. I will often ask students to turn on videos initially and chat with them briefly before a workshop begins, and emphasise that communication through chat functions of the online learning software is useful throughout the workshop. Breaks in flow can be disruptive, so it is worth 'preparing' your audience to be forgiving of this, as well as considering whether you will need someone to help ensure these disruptions are minimised.

I have embraced the use of Miro as a tool for teaching, primarily for breakout group activities. I provide access to a single Miro whiteboard a day or more in advance of the session, for participants to familiarise themselves with the software. I also send them the data we will use, something I wouldn't normally do for in-person workshops. Both pre-sending data and time for Miro familiarisation help reduce the cognitive burden for participants, which is important as we know that online formats are demanding. I also have found having semi-regular breaks, even for a one-hour session, can be quite important for ongoing concentration. Anticipate these

breaks and build them into your timing and content, as students aren't always going to identify the need for them.

When teaching familiarisation and coding, I ask participants to do work on their own for a period of time, then get them together in small groups in breakout rooms to discuss. The individual work time creates a break from the burden of screen-based interaction; the group activity fosters collective skills learning. I will warn them in advance that I will be dropping into breakout rooms so I don't just 'appear' and unsettle them – I can then move around the groups offering advice and clarification. At the end of coding sessions, I ask each group to post a short list of codes on the Miro discussion board – one code per Miro post-it note. As I use one shared board, this provides resources the whole class can access and use.

I generally ensure a break between coding and theme development activities, so I can work through the whole board, offering further advice on the codes using comment bubbles (in person, I would do this as a group, but I've found that comment bubbles are less stressful for everyone in online spaces). As people begin theming activities in the workshop, they can copy and paste from other groups' codes, and further develop their own, to ensure they have enough high-quality resources to construct candidate themes.

One thing I emphasise throughout these workshops is that they are a 'dipping your toes in' exercise – that time devoted to group work will be very constrained, and that codes and themes will often be 'rougher and readier' than you'd want to get to in actual real-world research practice. This helps frame the workshop or class as enabling the participants to gain a *sense* of the TA process, and start to develop some initial skills and resources they can follow up on.

Facilitating TA research literacy: Evaluating published TA as a classroom activity or assignment

Research methods teaching often has a dual focus, covering the 'what' and 'how' of research methods, while *also* teaching students research literacy – their ability to comprehend and critique reports of research (the latter shaped by the norms and reporting conventions of particular academic disciplines). To support classroom activities and assignments centred on the critical evaluation of published TA research, we have highlighted some common problems in published TA research (see Table 1; Braun & Clarke, 2021c). As previously mentioned, we have also developed guidance for a classroom activity around evaluating published TA for research literacy.

Published TA research can also be used to provide concrete examples of weaker or poor (and good![14]) practice in reporting. When we share such examples with our students, they often express frustration that published research is flawed – asking 'how did this get published?'. They struggle to comprehend how research that evidences conceptual confusion and misunderstanding about, and even misrepresents, *our* writing on TA (let alone that of

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[14]Students often contact us asking for good examples of TA research in their particular field, or using particular data collection methods or methodologies. As TA is used so widely, this is not something we are able to track. In our experience, the 'search within citations' function in Google Scholar is useful for finding particular types of examples of published TA.

other TA authors) makes it through the peer-review process. As we have noted elsewhere, this is partly on editors and reviewers to do better (Braun & Clarke, 2021c), but it's also partly on us as scholars to do better work, *and*

to recognise and resist pressures from editors or reviewers that might lead to problems.

Such problems do, however, present a *teaching opportunity*, a space to encourage critical, reflexively-aware TA understanding and practice. There are a number of caveats for students to keep in mind when critically evaluating published qualitative research and it's important to highlight these when teaching. Foremost are the constraints of academic journal publishing. What is considered *good* practice can vary widely from journal to journal. Furthermore, limited word counts can mean content deemed non-essential by the editor, such as researcher reflexivity, is often left out, or restricted to a few terse sentences (see Levitt et al., 2018). Given the constraints of journal publishing, no TA report is ever likely to be 'perfect' in all respects – ours included! There is always room for improvement, especially as we emphasise reflexive TA is a process of analysis where you reach a *good enough* point to stop at. That said, other types of poor practice in published research, such as those documented in Table 1,[15] are *not* simply the result of limited word counts.

Table 1   Some common problems in published TA research

Problem	Published instance illustrating the problem	Commentary
Various problematic assumptions about what TA is and what it offers		
TA treated as a singular approach, with one standardised set of procedures. Not clearly acknowledging *which* version of TA has informed the analysis (because TA is assumed to be singular).	"The investigators sought to identify and describe the themes within the participants' narratives and followed *the standard peer-review process* for thematic analysis" (Vroman, Warner, & Chamberlain, 2009, p. 978, our emphasis).	These assumptions about TA perhaps reflect researchers' lack of awareness of, or under-appreciating, the range of types of TA, and the flexibility and possibilities of TA.

[15]By including published examples in Table 1, we don't mean to 'name and shame' the specific authors – they are far from alone in evidencing these problems or weaknesses in their analysis (see Braun & Clarke, 2021c). Nor do we intend this to suggest that TA must *only* be done one way – as we emphasised throughout *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*, *knowing* and conceptually coherent practice are what matters to us. Rather we hope to aid dialogue about what good TA research looks like *in practice* through exploring actual examples of poor practice.

TA treated as *only* descriptive, summative, inductive, realist, and/or essentialist. TA is used in an *atheoretical* way. TA treated as needing supplementing with other methods and approaches to move beyond data reduction and summary, or an inductive orientation. The possibility of latent (more conceptual/researcher-directed) or deductive coding is overlooked.	"…as the focus of this study was to find out what comes out of the data and apply theoretical ideas to describe the data, thematic analysis only could not satisfy this purpose (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Using ideas from both thematic analysis and grounded theory in the analysis, we were able to use theoretical ideas to systematically describe and interpret what is in the data but without seeking to produce an explicit theoretical model" (Kassavou, French, & Chamberlain, 2015, p. 1331).	TA is being positioned as if it has nothing interpretative to offer on its own, but the same approach and analysis could have been achieved using TA alone. If a paper claims to use reflexive TA but supplements it with additional procedures and approaches, ask why. Are the authors making unwarranted assumptions about TA? It's not that adaptations or additions can't be effective, but they should be justified and consistent with the underlying assumptions of TA .
TA is treated as a *structured* method that cannot be used for more exploratory analyses.	"For the more structured questions, data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis. For the exploratory questions, the methods described by Strauss and Corbin were used in order to ensure themes emerged inductively from the data" (Lewis, Hill, Skirton, & Chitty, 2012, p. 1128).	The potential of TA is again under-realised; TA *can* be used for exploratory analysis! If the goal is simply to analyse data inductively to generate themes, grounded theory doesn't, in our view, offer researchers anything more than TA does (see Braun & Clarke 2021a).
TA is a method for uncovering truth and accurately representing data. Themes taken to represent the *truth* of the data. Consensus coding is treated as more accurate and reliable than the coding of a single researcher; 'bias' in coding is problematic and to be avoided.	TA "allows for the discovery of the true meaning of the data" (Stevens, Dahlen, Peters, & Jackson, 2011, p. 511). "To help reduce the potential for bias, all four team members individually undertook a thematic analysis, and then met together to compare results, resolve any points of divergence in interpretation of the data, and reach consensus with the themes. On completion of this process, the team reached agreement and all concurred that the resultant well-defined themes accurately represented the data collected" (Stevens et al., 2011, p. 511).	These assumptions and practices apply to some forms of TA, but not all. Researchers should use TA knowingly, and explicitly acknowledge the assumptions informing the *particular* approach they have used. If multiple (divergent) TA sources are cited, tensions and contradictions should be explicitly acknowledged and discussed.

Conceptual absence, confusion and/or incoherence

Not locating the analysis theoretically. Not describing the particulars of the 'form' of (reflexive) TA being used – described by us originally as 'the many questions of TA'.	It's tricky to provide an example of an absence (without quoting the entire paper to show definitively that the theoretical underpinnings of the research and TA specifically were not discussed), so you'll need to take it on trust when we say there are countless examples of this!	Too often authors don't describe the theoretical bases for their work. Authors should reflect on what their data represent, how they understand the role of language, what they theorise data as giving them evidence of, and so on. Authors should make theoretical foundations clear so their practice and analytic output can be evaluated for coherence and quality.

(Continued)

Table 1 (Continued)

Unknowing, unreflexive, unacknowledged and untheorised 'mash-ups' of divergent TA approaches, or TA and other qualitative approaches (e.g. grounded theory). Conceptual confusion – claiming one approach or orientation but practising another or treating various quality criteria as conceptually coherent with an approach when they are not (e.g. coding reliability and reflexive TA). Positivism creep/realism creep.	In a paper on young gay men's initial experiences of online dating, Pingel, Bauermeister, Johns, Eisenberg, and Leslie-Santana (2013) described their analytic approach as TA and cite one source – our 2006 paper. However, they describe analytic procedures that have little relationship to reflexive TA (such as consensus coding), and similarly sit uncomfortably with their theoretical orientation (social constructionist), as does their treatment of language. Language is treated as a straightforward tool for communicating experience, and experience – a fraught concept in critical qualitative research (see Henriques et al., 1984) – is a focus of the developed themes.	This seems to be an example of citing without reading (see Braun & Clarke, 2021c), where authors claim to follow our procedures but then outline procedures that are completely different, or combine a selection of different procedures (associated with other forms of TA) without justification. What is particularly problematic is the lack of acknowledgement of divergent philosophical/theoretical underpinnings; these 'mash-ups' appear to be unknowing.

Other types of problems

Not acknowledging the researcher has an active role in TA – presenting themes as self-evident in, or 'emerging from', the data.	"Four dominant themes emerged from the data" (Trajkovski, Schmied, Vickers, & Jackson, 2012, p. 2480).	If you take one message from *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*, it's that themes don't passively emerge from data.
Themes are poorly named. Themes are conceptualised as topic summaries. Themes don't appear to have a central organising concept.	In research on 'obese' people's perception of the thin ideal (Couch et al., 2016), the three themes – reflecting on the thin ideal as the social norm; personal responses to the thin ideal; the impact of the thin ideal on others – captured domains or topics of interest, not shared-meaning. For instance, "personal responses to the thin ideal were varied and nuanced…" (p. 64).	There are different conceptualisations of themes in the TA family of methods; topic summaries should be avoided in reflexive TA (or used with a clear and strong rationale). Themes should have a central organising concept and a name that captures this 'essence'.
Themes aren't easy to identify or locate in the report. Themes *appear* to be conceptualised as topic summaries, but it's ultimately unclear what or where the 'themes' are.	Despite Hunt (2014) describing her method as (reflexive) TA and noting that themes were identified, defined and named, there was no explicit indication of what those themes were, no overview of the analysis for the reader in her report. Results (qualitative and quantitative) were separated into two sections (experiences of: (a) seeking; and (b) receiving counselling). Subheadings within each section focused on topic areas (it was not clear if these were 'themes').	This should be obvious! Don't leave the reader to work out what or where the themes are. Thematic maps, overview tables or a simple list of theme names can be used to help the reader understand what themes are reported.

We end this section by noting two key elements we cannot emphasise enough in teaching TA in the classroom (which also apply in supervision, which we discuss next):

1. Doing TA takes a *lot* longer than you expect – the exercises do a good job of illustrating this;
2. Doing TA is *not* a linear process. Going 'backwards' is often not just necessary, but an invaluable part of the process (we emphasise this point repeatedly in Section One of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*).

Repeating these messages in the classroom is important to interrupt the sense of failure that can arise for some students if their analytic process is taking a long time, or longer than they expect it should, or if they need to restart some aspect, or let something go.

SUPERVISION FOR QUALITY TA

We view the task of supervision for effective TA as involving a range of activities:

- Teaching practical research project and data management skills;
- Teaching analytic and writing skills;
- Encouraging reflexivity; and
- Managing anxiety and stress – particularly when encouraging students to move beyond their initial levels of engagement (especially if relatively superficial or descriptive/summative).

Learning about TA, and conducting a TA study for the first time, can be hugely anxiety provoking. We have found many students who are new to qualitative research often struggle to move their analysis beyond a superficial or descriptive engagement with their data. Most students' first attempt at reflexive TA usually consists of a descriptive mapping of the data, with a fairly 'thin' analytic narrative; first attempts often evidence some of the 'common problems' in TA (e.g. Braun & Clarke, 2021c). With feedback and encouragement, such students usually progress to a more interpretative analysis, with a richer analytic narrative. The challenge for supervision is how to facilitative students in moving from superficial to deeper analytic engagement.

FIND IT IN THE BOOK   Two of our students reflected evocatively on anxiety and TA in Boxes 4.3 and 4.4 in Chapter Four of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*.

FIND IT IN THE BOOK   These 'common problems' are laid out in Chapter Nine of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*.

FIND IT IN THE BOOK   Interpretative depth is covered in Chapter Seven of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*; developing the analytic narrative is a key focus on Chapter Five.

Before we discuss some strategies for supervision, we will briefly consider what we've learned from students who don't struggle (as much) with developing their analytic depth and nuance. Occasionally, you work with a student who seems to take to the task of qualitative analysis like the proverbial duck to water; they seem to almost have an 'instinct' or 'knack' for it. We both fit into this group – it was qualitative love at first sight for us! – and so acknowledge that our understanding of students' struggles comes from teaching and supervising others, not from our *own* experience. In Box 5, we reflect on what

skills and 'dispositions' seem to distinguish these 'intuitively qualitative' students from others, and hope this can be useful for reflecting on what particular orientations or skills might best be fostered through supervision, to support and facilitate success for students who feel more challenged by TA. This list is not exhaustive, and it's definitely not about 'mandatory requirements'. Instead, we consider it a tool for developing our supervisory practice. What are some of the useful tools and techniques we can use in supervision to foster the characteristics we identify in Box 5, and to support the development of analytic skills for TA in the students we work with? Reflecting on our experiences in supervising, talking to others, and engaging with research students in teaching sessions, we offer a range of suggestions for practice in Box 6.

Box 5

A 'natural' affinity for qualitative research

Even though we put inverted commas around a 'natural' talent, because we don't think this is a particularly useful concept for a teaching and learning context, we recognise that some students do have a seemingly intuitive affinity with qualitative data analysis. We're talking here about the students who 'get it', almost instantly; students who, with little to no experience, craft data analyses that are creative, insightful and compelling (e.g. one of our former students, Matt Wood, presented an almost 'fully formed' analysis from his undergraduate research project to Victoria). What seems to distinguish those with a seemingly 'natural' talent or affinity from those who find the conceptualisation and practice of analysis more challenging?

FIND IT IN THE BOOK Matt's research is summarised in Box 6.2 in Chapter Six of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*.

Recognising that 'analytic noticing' can vary hugely, depending on the dataset you're working with (it's not a decontextualised skill), we have found such students seem to be characterised by, or approach the task of analysis with, some combination of:

- A general approach to academia (and indeed life) that tends to be critical and questioning.
- A sense of excitement about the *possibility* that qualitative research offers; excitement at the thought of reading and analysing qualitative data.
- Some sense of confidence in the possibility that they will be successful with qualitative research – such students don't seem to feel the anxious sense of 'paralysis' that the subjective, no clear rules or answers aspect of qualitative data and analysis seems to produce in many.
- A creative and imaginative orientation. We have found they typically don't struggle with generating ideas for research topics or questions; their struggle is usually settling on one idea.

FIND IT IN THE BOOK The concept of Big Q qualitative is introduced and discussed in Chapters One and Six of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*.

- An inclination towards asking (research) questions that suit Big Q qualitative research.

━━━━━━━━ **Box 6** ━━━━━━━━

Tips for effective supervision at all levels of student research

- If you haven't already, apply reflexivity to yourself; reflect on your assumptions, values and experiences in relation to qualitative research and TA specifically. This is useful not only to demonstrate reflexivity and teach it to students, but also to try to identify and interrogate the values you might not realise you have (as we reflected on in Braun & Clarke, 2019a). To facilitate your own reflexivity around TA, we encourage reading our paper on *quality* in TA (Braun & Clarke, 2021c) as well as our paper on saturation (Braun & Clarke, 2019b), both of which unpack some common assumptions about good practice in TA.

- It's good practice not to supervise *far* beyond your skillset (e.g. we don't supervise quantitative projects, unless working with experienced quantitative co-supervisors). However, pushing beyond the boundaries of your 'comfort zone' – such as with research design and qualitative data collection (e.g. Braun, Clarke, & Gray, 2017; Kara, 2015; Reavey, 2021), or theory – is useful for encouraging methodological creativity and growth. But do ask for training, mentoring and other forms of support as you expand your methodological bandwidth.

- If you don't have 'hands-on' experience of TA or qualitative research, seek out specialist training and/or work with an experienced mentor, and ideally undertake your own TA research, so you have direct personal experience to draw on in supervision. The latter is *particularly* important for doctoral supervision.

- Work with and learn from more experienced qualitative researchers – co-supervise or group supervise students if possible.

- If students have had limited training in qualitative methods, encourage them, especially postgraduate students, to seek out further training (within or beyond your institution).

- Emphasise how *long* (good) qualitative research takes (Braun & Clarke, 2021d) and encourage careful time planning. Most students consistently underestimate the amount of time involved in coding and analytic development, and indeed many other aspects of the research process (e.g. data transcription). Encourage them to set achievable goals and map out a realistic timeline for their research (Wiggins et al., 2016), always leaving 'extra' time at the end (which always gets used).

  FIND IT IN THE BOOK Chapter Nine of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide* contains a section dedicated to time/planning for quality TA analysis.

- If the student has a tight time limit for their project (e.g. a UK undergraduate or NZ Honours dissertation), use creative thinking around possible datasets. Try to encourage datasets that can be generated quickly (e.g. see Braun et al., 2017), leaving the student more time for the analytic phases.

- Don't *unquestioningly* advocate the use of various analytic programmes designed for coding and to facilitate analysis – often referred to by the acronyms CAQDAS or QDAS. Question the assumption that the use of these is an indicator of better-*quality* coding and theme development.

  FIND IT IN THE BOOK We discuss technologies for coding in Chapter Three of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. The chapter also contains reflections from two other researchers on using/not using different QDAS programmes.

(Continued)

- If your student is collecting interactive data, review pilot data or early interview/focus group data with the student, and provide tips on, for example, how students can improve their interview technique to generate richer data. Most novice interviewers need encouragement to allow silences to develop, prompt and probe, and to not retreat from more sensitive topics and questions (see Braun & Clarke, 2013; Wiggins et al., 2016).

- Read some of your student's data, then meet to discuss your initial impressions and emotional responses, your questions, and potential avenues for coding (this is the fun part of supervision! We love a free-wheeling discussion about data). Use this space to reflect back on each other's assumptions when making observations about the data. As supervisor, hold back initially, to give your student space to express their ideas first (we recognise this can be a struggle; we can get carried away with our enthusiasm for data!). If you're an experienced qualitative analyst, this is really important. Not only might students be daunted and overwhelmed by your expertise (Wiggins et al., 2016), they might want to abandon their ideas and pursue yours because they seem so much 'better'. You need to work hard to allow space for them to also identify *your* assumptions, rather than treat what you say as 'truth'.

- Set up group data engagement sessions – either with your students, if you have more than one, and/or team up with other supervisors and their students. Running regular collective sessions can be a manageable way of providing students with extra support, building student confidence and facilitating understanding of the provisionality of analysis. It also builds a research community. When we've participated in these (as students) and organised them (as supervisors), the feedback has been really positive.

- Be careful not to focus too early on potential *themes* – students may need to be pulled back from thinking about themes in the early analytic stages, as you want to keep the analytic possibilities as open as possible.

- Discuss and review coding relatively *early* on in the student's coding process. Novice researchers usually need support with moving beyond the superficial and descriptive. If a student is really struggling, work through coding *together*, separately coding some segments of data (in relation to a research question) and then exploring what you each did and didn't capture in your codes. Avoid the misperception that there's only one way to code and you need to get it 'right'. Don't follow a consensus coding approach (unless you're using a 'coding reliability' approach to TA; see Braun & Clarke, 2021c).

- Get students to *map* and plot out their candidate and developing themes. Although we talk about theme definitions later in the process, trying to write 'early' theme definitions can be a useful tool – alongside thematic mapping – to help students explore what the boundaries of a potential theme, and its central organising concept, might be.

FIND IT IN THE BOOK   Theme definitions are covered in Chapter Four of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*.

FIND IT IN THE BOOK   Visual mapping is discussed in Chapter Four of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*.

- Discuss the student's early attempts at developing and mapping themes. Getting them to verbally explain the connections and clusterings of codes can be a very useful way for them to identify points of confusion and salient potential patterns.

- Give feedback throughout the process. Once students have a good sense of what their themes might be, we suggest they focus on working up one theme, in draft form, for feedback and discussion. Getting feedback when a theme is still loosely developed is useful for helping determine whether the analysis 'works'. Discourage students from thinking a theme has to be 'fully and perfectly formed' before they get feedback from you! This is important both to facilitate them 'being prepared to let it go' (and even to start again), and to help avoid them being too devastated by critical feedback about an analysis that they have invested a lot in. Getting critical feedback on something you conceptualise as a rough initial plan is quite different from getting such feedback on something you conceptualise as 'done'.[16]

- If relevant, encourage students to engage with existing literature to deepen their analytic engagement with the data; teach them explicitly about what interpretation is, and why it matters.

FIND IT IN THE BOOK   Ways to engage with the literature to deepen analytic insight is discussed in Chapter Five of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. The whole of Chapter Seven focuses on interpretation.

- Expect doubts, confusions, crises of confidence and so on, and be on hand to deal with these. Reassure students that these are 'normal' responses to the uncertainties and messiness of the analytic process (Wiggins et al., 2016). Share your own and other students' experiences here, alongside resources that situate research in real-world terms (e.g. Boynton, 2016). It can be profoundly comforting for students to learn that it's not just them, that other students and even their supervisor experiences these things too.

FIND IT IN THE BOOK   We offer suggestions around students creating their own support-networks in more depth in Chapter Nine of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*.

- Connected to this, encourage students to build up support-networks with each other, to talk through challenges, and to read and give feedback on each other's work.

- Be prepared to support your student through some late-stage 'radical' changes to their analysis – for example, collapsing two or more themes together – because things often don't work out *quite* as expected when doing final 'writing up'. Encourage them not to shy away from such changes if they will improve the overall analysis.

FIND IT IN THE BOOK   In Chapter Seven of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide* Box 7.1 describes a project from one of our students, Sophie Sills, where the 'final' analysis evolved radically after Sophie had first developed a 'full-but-not-quite-satisfying' analysis.

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[16]We acknowledge that getting critical feedback that analysis 'doesn't quite work' from supervisors can be emotionally challenging, no matter at what point in the process it is received!

In Box 6 we noted that a challenge can be giving the student space to develop their own tentative, sometimes at least initially superficial, analytic insights, without them being overwhelmed, excited or discouraged by your different supervisory 'takes' on their data. Supervisors experienced in qualitative research need to be mindful of overwhelming their students with their own – potentially casually-expressed – insights. With experience, we often notice a lot more in datasets – at least initially – than students, and this can inadvertently have negative impacts.[17] We have found this is especially a risk if a student feels they're struggling to engage analytically, or if interesting or viable analytic pathways are eluding them. This can also be a particular challenge if our analytic orientation is (generally) different from that of the student. In Box 7, we reflect on Victoria's experience with one student whose analytic take was quite different from her 'natural' (critical) inclination when working with data. We use this to explore how such different insights might fruitfully be combined in a supervisory context.

Box 7

Managing different analytic interpretation of data in a supervisory context

Kevin Hogan's research on heterosexual men's experiences of intimate partner violence provides a good example of how it is possible to analyse the same data in different ways (e.g. through an experiential or a critical lens) and how students and supervisors might notice different things in the same data. Here we reflect on how to manage that in the supervision process. Kevin completed this research for his counselling psychology professional doctorate. Counselling psychology, in the UK at least, emphasises phenomenological

FIND IT IN THE BOOK Experiential and critical approaches to qualitative research are covered in Chapters Six and Seven of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide.*

modes of inquiry and the importance of subjective meaning. Thus, qualitative research, and particularly experiential qualitative research, predominates. Kevin's concern as a trainee counselling psychologist was to 'give voice' to a hidden and often stigmatised group of men – straight men who are abused by their female partner – and to explore how the men made sense of and experienced the abuse. This approach felt important in the context of limited research on (straight) men's experiences of intimate partner violence, and the controversy surrounding this topic (e.g. the frequent assumption that domestic violence doesn't happen to men; that men who experience violence are 'weak' and not 'real' men; Men's Advice Line, 2017).

From the outset, Kevin's analysis centred on the men's manifest experience of abuse, its nature and emotional impact, as well as their experiences of help-seeking. Coding was largely inductive and semantic, although also oriented to some of the 'myths' discussed in the literature and in the wider sociocultural context (which the men's accounts firmly challenged). This is an

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[17]Our supervisory insights don't only have a *negative* impact; they can also have positive impacts, as our student Gina Broom noted in Box 4.4 in Chapter Four of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide.*

appropriate and meaningful 'take' on the data. What 'grabbed' Victoria, however, when reading the data, through her lens as a critical *gender* researcher, was the ways in which the men became tangled in and negotiated dominant norms around masculinity, the feminised nature of 'victimhood', and how they made sense of and constructed the relationship between masculinity and violence. This again is an appropriate and meaningful 'take' on the data, one that would illuminate something about straight men's abuse experiences, but not perhaps in terms the men would recognise or feel comfortable with.

This 'take' would also be rather different from Kevin's analysis in its aims and purpose, pulling the focus away from individual sense-making and experience, and towards the wider social context, and the ways individual accounts of abuse are socially situated and shaped by social discourses of masculinity. It would therefore not fulfil Kevin's purpose of 'giving voice' to the men's lived experience of abuse in any straightforward way.

FIND IT IN THE BOOK We discuss ethics and interpretation in Chapter Seven of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*.

Victoria and Kevin discussed her observations in supervision, alongside his. Kevin decided to develop and incorporate a more *latent* theme in his analysis, focused on the men's conceptions of masculinity ("Grown men don't cry"), with a subtheme that captured the way the men's perceptions of violence were shaped by masculine norms. The theme spoke to the ways in which the constant pressure to maintain a sense of (normative) masculinity seemed to tie many of the men into knots, and added additional layers to the trauma and shame they felt – connecting their personal experience to the wider context. Kevin's final analysis thus remained focused on the original purpose of 'giving voice', while incorporating some of the critical gender insights into the overall story.

ASSESSING AND EXAMINING: EVALUATING A FINISHED PRODUCT

We conclude this chapter with a focus on the moment when we evaluate the 'end product' of a TA: when we assess and examine student work (dissertations, theses).[18] With examining, we not only assess, but have the potential to intervene *in*, and hopefully *for*, TA quality. We make judgements about quality, and often the assessed 'end TA product' can – or sometimes must – be revised based on our assessment. We frame examination as a time of *opportunity* – to promote quality – and of *responsibility* – to be reflexive and knowing evaluators, operating with integrity. We hope that by providing some cautions, and some resources, we collectively can work *for* TA quality (Braun & Clarke, 2021c).

Most academics will recognise that 'peer review' for publication is not always a guarantee of quality (Smith, 2006). Just like in peer review, unreflexive and unknowing assessing and

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[18]This moment also comes when we review and make editorial assessments of TA reports submitted for publication – for this reason, this section is also relevant to reviewers and editors (although we use the language of assessing and examining).

examining can lead to declarations about, and impositions of, quality criteria for TA that fail to recognise the diversity of the approaches called TA (see Braun & Clarke, 2021c). Writing around journal reporting standards, Levitt et al. noted that "editors and reviewers face challenges when they lack training in qualitative methods" (2018, p. 28).[19] Evaluating (as well as conducting) qualitative research *well* "requires a familiarity with

<div style="float:right; border:1px solid #ccc; padding:1em; background:#eef;">
FIND IT IN THE BOOK   Chapter Eight of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide* provides in depth discussion of different approaches to TA, including similarities and differences in procedure, underlying philosophy and the conceptualisation of key concepts such as the theme.
</div>

the method used, the form selected of that method, and the process of adapting methods and procedures to the goals, approach to inquiry, and characteristics of a given study" (Levitt et al., 2018, p. 28). We recognise that many people assessing and examining TA research have not had the benefit of rich and in-depth training in qualitative research that we were privileged to experience during our PhDs (Braun & Clarke, 2019a; Braun, Clarke, & Hayfield, 2019; Jankowski, Braun, & Clarke, 2017; Lainson, Braun, & Clarke, 2019), and that we have built on in the decades since. Furthermore, given the complexity of qualitative research, and the circulation of competing and contradictory claims about various aspects of qualitative research, it's not surprising that confusion often abounds, and (problematic) declarations get made.

Can we offer any basic, baseline 'rules' to guide readers in their evaluation of TA dissertations and theses? First up, judgements about quality should be based on sound understandings of the (divergent) range of approaches to TA and the (divergent and convergent) practices associated with each. Key to this is being a reflexive scholar, recognising that you have your own particular and located values about qualitative research, and understanding what is and is not appropriate to apply as quality criteria. Second, we found British nursing researcher Caroline Bradbury-Jones and colleagues's (2017) discussion of the alignment between a researcher's reported methodological and philosophical orientation, and the process and practices *enacted* in their research, provides useful general questions to consider when assessing and examining TA research:

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[19]We concur with Levitt et al.'s recommendation that: "at a minimum, one of the reviewers should have expertise and experience as a qualitative researcher, preferably in a method similar to the one in use" (2018, p. 31). Similarly, building qualitative expertise on editorial boards and reviewer pools is vital. We encourage editors to explicitly commit to maintaining or increasing standards in the reporting of qualitative, and specifically TA, research in their journal – either adopting generic standards, such as those outlined by Levitt et al. (2018), or by developing reporting standards particular to the journal, such as those of the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* (Cassell, n.d.). We also encourage editors to direct reviewers to our tool for evaluating TA manuscripts for publication (Braun & Clarke, 2021c). Further, we support calls for editors to provide *longer* page limits for qualitative papers (Levitt et al., 2018; Levitt et al., 2017). Quality expectations and contextualisation, researcher reflexivity and illustrating results with data extracts (or *analysing* extracts) *demand* more manuscript pages. Hearteningly, we are increasingly encountering journals that do provide longer word counts for qualitative empirical manuscripts.

- What claims are made about philosophical and methodological assumptions?
- What design and methods are used?
- To what extent are assumptions and methods in alignment?

Bradbury-Jones et al. argued that alignment between philosophy and practice is "an important indicator of rigor" (2017, p. 13), and an 'anything goes' approach can harm the credibility of particularly methodologies and methods – as well as being confusing for readers. The meaning of terms such as 'TA' is broad, sometimes vague, and potentially references *quite* different approaches. When, in a written report, the term 'TA' is not anchored by *details* of the philosophical assumptions and procedures guiding a specific piece of research (Braun & Clarke, 2021c), it has limited meaning and utility. We support Bradbury-Jones et al.'s call for "honesty and clarity" (p. 13) in the reporting of qualitative methods, specifying the what, how and why of TA. We encourage assessors and examiners to support researchers using reflexive TA to embrace the complexity, messiness and subjectivity of Big Q qualitative research in their writing, and in resisting falling into claims based on any residual (post)positivist anxieties – such as how they avoided bias in coding, reached consensus, or that 'saturation' justified the size of the dataset (see Braun & Clarke, 2019b). Finally, you might find our comprehensive 'checklist-style' list of 20 questions to *guide* you in evaluating (reflexive) TA (Braun & Clarke, 2021c) a useful tool for assessing and examining practice.

> **FIND IT IN THE BOOK**   Chapter Five of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide* addresses questions of reporting reflexive TA.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this online-only chapter companion to *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*, we have focused on readers who are facilitating the quality of *other people's* TA – through teaching, supervision, and assessing and examining. Primarily, we have written for academics who teach TA in classroom settings, and/or supervise students doing qualitative research using TA. Based on our own experiences of teaching and supervising, and learning from others, including students, we – and some colleagues – have provided suggestions and tips to alleviate some of the anxieties and hurdles those learning about, and learning to do, TA often encounter. While retaining acknowledgement of the contextual flexibility of reflexive TA, we have suggested various *practical* classroom activities and supervisory practices that can facilitate depth of analytic engagement. Finally, we emphasised the important role examiners can have in enhancing or diminishing the quality of TA work, and invited them to be critical, reflexive, located, and *knowing* evaluators.

A STARTING POINT FOR READING FURTHER…

Thematic analysis: A practical guide discusses the material and concepts covered in this chapter – beyond the teaching and supervising focus, and each chapter includes a range of 'starting point' references we recommend as further reading. Focusing more specifically on teaching, supervising and quality matters, we recommend a few readings here.

We have emphasised the centrality of reflexivity for quality TA teaching and supervision (as well as one's own research). We have published various papers in which we seek to ***demonstrate our reflexivity, and interrogate the values which inform our understandings***:

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 11*(4), 589–597.

In this paper, we reflect on the – often unacknowledged, at the time – research values that informed our development of a TA approach and explain why we decided to demarcate it as a specific type of TA – *reflexive* TA.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). The ebbs and flows of qualitative research: Time, change and the slow wheel of interpretation. In B. C. Clift, J. Gore, S. Gustafsson, S. Bekker, I. C. Batlle & J. Hatchard (Eds.), *Temporality in qualitative inquiry: Theories, methods and practices* (pp. 22–38). London: Routledge.

Here we reflect on some of our research experiences – specfically around data collection – and how temporality is an important context for qualitative research. We also consider time as a resource for research and contrast the emphasis in some contexts on speed and efficiency, with our valuing of the 'slow wheel of interpretation'.

Braun, V., Clarke, V., & Hayfield, N. (2019). 'A starting point for your journey, not a map': Nikki Hayfield in conversation with Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke about thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. Advance online publication https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2019.1670765

In the first of three interviews – this one with book contributor Nikki Hayfield – we reflect on the research values that informed our orginial articulation of TA and our subsequent demarcation of it as reflexive TA. We also discuss common myths and misperceptions of TA.

Jankowski, G., Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2017). Reflecting on qualitative research, feminist methodologies and feminist psychology: In conversation with Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke. *Psychology of Women Section Review, 19*, 43–55.

In this interview with Glen Jankowski, following our keynote address at the British Psychological Society Psychology of Women and Equalities Section annual conference, we reflect on how our PhD training shaped us as researchers and methodologists and discuss the important contributions of feminist researchers to the literature on qualitative methods.

Lainson, K., Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Being both narrative practitioner and academic researcher: A reflection on what thematic analysis has to offer narratively informed research. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy & Community Work,* 4, 86–91.

Finally, in this interview with narrative therapist and research Kristina Lainson, we reflect on our research values and how these informed the development of our TA approach; the paper starts with Kristina's reflection on her own research journey as a narrative researcher and ends with some pointers for researchers using TA in narrative research.

For a brief discussion of ***teaching TA*** in the classroom, see:

Clarke, V. & Braun, V. (2013). Teaching thematic analysis: Overcoming challenges and developing strategies for effective learning. *The Psychologist*, *26*(2), 120–123.

To understand some of the challenges facing ***supervisors*** of qualitative projects (in psychology, in the UK context), see:

Wiggins, S., Gordon-Finlayson, A., Becker, S., & Sullivan, C. (2016). Qualitative undergraduate project supervision in psychology: Current practices and support needs of supervisors across North East England and Scotland. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 13*(1), 1–19.

For an accessible paper that provides a guide to ***when you might use TA*** in contrast to other patterns-across-data analytic methods, and which can be useful for engaging students in discussion around methods, see:

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). Can I use TA? Should I use TA? Should I not use TA? Comparing reflexive thematic analysis and other pattern-based qualitative analytic approaches. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research, 21*(1), 37–47.

For a comprehensive guide to ***conceptual thinking for, design of, and quality in TA research***, which also highlights differences across TA approaches, see:

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). Conceptual and design thinking for thematic analysis. *Qualitative Psychology*. Advance online publication https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000196

For an interrogation and critique of the concept of ***saturation as a design and quality measure for TA***, see:

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). To saturate or not to saturate? Questioning data saturation as a useful concept for thematic analysis and sample-size rationales. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, *13*(2), 1–16.

For a more thorough discussion of ***quality in TA***, and our evaluative guidelines related to TA, see:

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis? *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *18*(3), 328–352.

For a good discussion around ***quality and evaluation in qualitative research*** generally, see:

Levitt, H. M., Motulsky, S. L., Wertz, F. J., Morrow, S. L., & Ponterotto, J. G. (2017). Recommendations for designing and reviewing qualitative research in psychology: Promoting methodological integrity. *Qualitative Psychology, 4*(1), 2–22.

DATASETS AVAILABLE FOR USE IN FOR TEACHING

For datasets not related to this book, that can be used for teaching activities, see:

- The companion website for *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners* (Braun & Clarke, 2013): https://studysites.sagepub.com/braunandclarke/.
- The UK Higher Education Academy's TQRMUL (teaching qualitative research methods at undergraduate level) dataset: www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/tqrmul-dataset-teaching-resources-user-guide.
- *SAGE Methods* – if you have access – also contains datasets.

ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT TEACHING AND SUPERVISORY PRACTICE

Reflexive practice activity: Our main recommendation is to develop your reflexive practice. First, determine a dataset/topic you will use in teaching TA (such as the childfree or men and healthy eating datasets), or a student topic for supervision. Then have a go at the reflexivity activity discussed in Chapter Two:

- Spend about 15 minutes reflecting on the *topic*, and thinking about where you 'sit' in relation to it. Write as you reflect. Writing is an important tool *for* developing reflexive depth. Start with identifying your own experiences, understandings and views, but then also try to interrogate those. Ask yourself questions like: what assumptions am I basing my thinking on? What values are informing my thinking on this? How might these be connected to me as a person, my (social) positionings, my experience in relation to the topic, and my community enmeshments?
- Consider the ways this positioning might impact how you engage with the data topic for teaching or supervision. What analytic paths might you be drawn down (see our reflections on Victoria's experiences in Box 7)? What might you notice – and *not* notice – 'in' the data? How might you respond to (very) different readings of the data? How might you push yourself to read the data differently than your 'instinctual' read. We recommend considering these questions ahead of classroom teaching (and indeed supervision); they can facilitate a deeper interrogation of students' engagement with the data/topic.

Do reflexive TA – Option A: If you haven't had any experience of *doing* TA – or, having read this chapter, now feel less confident of the TA you *have* done than you were before (if so, sorry!) – select a small dataset; it could be your own, or one of ours, such as the men and healthy eating dataset. Then follow our instructions through Section One of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*, and work up an analysis of that dataset. This exercise, though time-consuming, will give you 'lived experience' of what TA feels like, while doing it: from the joys to the frustrations, and the moments of uncertainty and confusion. Our advice would be to work with a dataset you intend to teach with, as this adds to the teaching experience (see Box 1). But: don't use one you might get students to work with to develop analysis/do an assignment around, as you ideally want to generate some 'worked examples' of processes and outputs to use in teaching. In developing your analysis, keep a very solid 'paper trail' of all the different aspects of the process, including reflexive journaling around your thinking and decisions, to use as illustrative examples to enrich your teaching.

FIND IT IN THE BOOK Chapter Nine of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide* discusses 'paper trails' within the framework of quality.

Do reflexive TA – Option B: A different but also fruitful way to tackle this activity would be work through the process outlined in *Option A*, but in a small group with one or two other inexperienced or experienced TA researchers. If doing so, we would recommend independently tackling the different phases, and meeting to discuss your developing analysis through each phase (see Section One). Any different 'takes' you have can also feed into your reflexive process. One crucial caveat: if you do this activity with others, your engagement around coding (especially) and theme development is not about reaching *consensus* so much as enriching your understanding (something also discussed around the worked example we used in Braun & Clarke, 2013). If there's an experienced TA researcher in the group, be wary of treating their analysis as the 'right' one!

FIND IT IN THE BOOK We discuss the use of multiple coders in TA and how the task can be conceptualised in different ways, in Chapter Eight of *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*.

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