

Chapter Five: Creating a Coding Scheme

Skills trainings in this chapter

Skills training 5.1: noticing and collecting – coding data for content

Skills training 5.2: Retrieving all quotations of a code

Skills training 5.3: developing sub categories

Skills training 5.4: building categories from descriptive labels

Skills training 5.5: comparing thematic to interpretive coding

Skills training 5.6: about comments and memos in ATLAS.ti

Projects for skills trainings

On the book's companion website (<https://study.sagepub.com/friese3e>), you can find and download several sample projects to use as you work through the skills trainings the book offers.

For this chapter, you can work with the following sample projects:

- **Your own project** created in Chapter 3 (skills training 3.1) for skills training 5.1 to 5.2 and 5.5 to 5.6
- **Building sub categories** for skills training 5.3
- **Building categories from descriptive labels** for skills training 5.4

Video tutorials

On the book's companion website (<https://study.sagepub.com/friese3e>), you can find links to video tutorials that offer step by step guidance about using ATLAS.ti so you can learn to master the software at your own pace.

Title: Two modes of coding: Codes as facts and codes as heuristic devices

URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLjE1bkvjcg&list=PLs_YczcegWF5t4CJWhL9N1wGdIM-gekm0&index=19

Title: Coding Part 2: Thematic coding by Graham Gibbs

URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_YXR9kp1_o&list=PL14E49EDF20613008&index=2

Title: Coding Part 5: The code list or code hierarchy by Graham Gibbs

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVpkuTdkZvA&index=5&list=PL14E49EDF20613008>

Title: ATLAS.ti 8 Windows: Coloring and Grouping the Codes

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aui51LRdKEk&t=4s>

Title: Building an efficient coding system: creating sub categories in ATLAS.ti 8 Windows

URL: <https://youtu.be/Obft1Alal34>

Title: Building categories from descriptive labels in ATLAS.ti 8 Windows

URL: <https://youtu.be/FpH--1EqByo>

Title: ATLAS.ti 8 Windows Splitting Codes

URL:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JeNYX8O0ktM&index=15&list=PL8CTEdsSSmZEdst4E2bJ06Gp9VeE3fouV>

Title: Grounded Theory: Open Coding Part 1 by Graham Gibbs

URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gn7Pr8M_Gu8&t=1s

Title: Grounded Theory: Open Coding Part 2 by Graham Gibbs

URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vi5B7Zo0_OE&list=PL8CB91CC62C1C2C7E&index=4

Title: Grounded Theory: Open Coding Part 3 by Graham Gibbs

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-EomYWkxcA&index=5&list=PL8CB91CC62C1C2C7E>

Title: Grounded Theory: Open Coding Part 4 by Graham Gibbs

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwmDRh5I7ZE&index=6&list=PL8CB91CC62C1C2C7E>

Title: Grounded Theory: Axial Coding by Graham Gibbs

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwmDRh5I7ZE&index=6&list=PL8CB91CC62C1C2C7E>

Title: Writing Memos with ATLAS.ti 8 Windows

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= RC0oV44F84>

Further reading

Here Susanne has carefully put together a selection of articles, chapters and other resources to help you successfully complete a qualitative data analysis project.

How to make the best of codes in ATLAS.ti, <https://atlasti.com/2017/03/16/make-best-codes-atlasti/>

In this article, I write about codes, all the things they can be, all the things they ought not to be, and the various blind allies one can find oneself trapped in if coding data just happens without first having planned how to approach it

Using Quotation Names for Coding: An Illustration From Grounded Theory, <https://atlasti.com/2014/03/26/1608/>

The author Nick Woolf shows how the Grounded Theory approach by Kathy Charmaz can best be implemented by utilising the quotation level for the initial coding phase.

If you want to read more on how to set up a hierarchical coding schema, I recommend reading the following articles. As you can see from the reference, the articles have been written over 20 years ago, but they are still not dated. The general principals that you need to observe when building a hierarchical structure are still the same.

- Araujo, Luis (1995). Designing and refining hierarchical coding frames, in Udo Kelle (ed.), *Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis*. London: Sage. <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/computer-aided-qualitative-data-analysis/book204361>
- Richards, Tom and Richards, Lyn (1995). Using hierarchical categories in qualitative data analysis, in Udo Kelle (ed.), *Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis*. London: Sage. <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/computer-aided-qualitative-data-analysis/book204361>

The following chapter discusses the dangers of getting lost in coding, or generally allowing yourself to be guided by technology instead of using it as a tool that you control.

Seidel, John (1991). *Methods and madness in the application of computer technology to qualitative data analysis*, in Nigel G. Fielding and Raymond M. Lee (eds), *Using Computers in Qualitative Research* London: Sage. pp. 107–116. <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/using-computers-in-qualitative-research/book203215>

Gläser, Jochen & Laudel, Grit (2013). *Life With and Without Coding: Two Methods for Early-Stage Data Analysis in Qualitative Research. Aiming at Causal Explanations* [96 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 14(2), Art. 5, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs130254>.

The authors Gläser and Grit think that coding might be avoided completely. They cite my work as one of the reasons why coding is problematic: “The first problem often results from the step called “open coding.” (...). This bottom-up process of coding may easily lead to large numbers of codes that cannot anymore be memorized and handled (the “code swamp,” FRIESE, 2011. I would argue that they have misunderstood what I wrote about the code swamp because I either did not explain it properly or they have ignored the solution I describe for the “problem”. In my opinion, it sure can be handled if you know how. But read for yourself. The authors do provide some interesting ideas on how to handle qualitative data and you might find them useful as well (even though I hope you do not give up on coding data in ATLAS.ti).

In the further reading section for chapter 1, a number of articles and books were already listed that describe various methodological approaches. Here are a few more related to the approaches discussed in this chapter:

- Guest, Greg, MacQueen, Kathleen M. and Namey, Emily E. (2012). *Applied Thematic Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, SA: Sage. Chapter 3. <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/applied-thematic-analysis/book233379>
- Attride-Stirling, Jennifer (2001). *Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research*, *Qualitative Research*, 1(3), 385–405. <http://journals.sagepub.com/stoken/rbtf/xCgrK9d9gESg5vEdVwFz/pdf/10.1177/146879410>

[100100307](#) This article details a technique for conducting thematic analysis of qualitative material, presenting a step-by-step guide of the analytic process

- Kluge, Susann (2000, January). *Empirically grounded construction of types and typologies in qualitative social research* [20 paragraphs]. Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 1(1), www.qualitative-research.net/fqs-texte/1-00/1-00kluge-e.htm.

In case you didn't find the time yet to look at the two ATLAS.ti specific articles on thematic analysis and grounded theory, it might be the time now to take a look:

- Friese, Susanne (2016). CAQDAS and Grounded Theory Analysis. *Working Papers WP 16-07, October 2016b. (MMG Working Papers)* <http://www.mmg.mpg.de/publications/working-papers/2016/wp-16-07/>
- Friese, Susanne, Soratto, Jacks and Pires, Denise (2018). Carrying out a computer-aided thematic content analysis with ATLAS.ti. MMG Working Paper 18-02. <http://www.mmg.mpg.de/publications/working-papers/2018/wp-18-02/>

The following two articles give you some further perspectives how you can approach computer-assisted qualitative data analysis from an interpretive angle:

- Bong, Sharon A. (2002, May). Debunking myths in qualitative data analysis. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 3(2), www.qualitative-research.net/fqs-texte/2-02/2-02bong-e.htm.
- Evers, Jeanine C. (2016). *Elaborating on Thick Analysis: About Thoroughness and Creativity in Qualitative Analysis* [38 paragraphs]. Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 17(1), Art. 6, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs160163>.

Translating the Process of Open / Initial Coding In Grounded Theory,

<https://atlasti.com/2017/07/01/gt>

In this article, I explain the process of open coding in the Grounded Theory sense using ATLAS.ti. It is more than just clicking on the "open coding" button. Read for yourself.

Review questions

When you have worked through all skills training, you should be able to answer all of the following questions:

- 1 Explain the puzzle analogy and how it relates to qualitative data analysis.
- 2 Are there any rules regarding the length of a coded segment?
- 3 What options do you have to structure the list of codes in the ATLAS.ti?
- 4 What are code groups useful for?
- 5 How would you go about developing categories?
- 6 How would you go about developing sub categories?
- 7 How can the code swamp be avoided? What are common pitfalls?
- 8 After having gained some personal experience with coding, what type of coder are you? Are you a lumpner or a splitter? Or do you mix both styles?
- 9 How would you explain the difference between a tag and a code in a methodological sense?
- 9 What are the advantages of a well-sorted and structured code list?
- 10 Explain thematic and interpretive coding.
- 11 What is the difference between a memo and a comment in ATLAS.ti? When would you write something into a comment field? For what purposes do you create a memo? Why is it important to know this difference? You might remember that I asked you this question already at the end of chapter 3. In the meantime, you have gained some more experience in working with the software. What are your answers now?
- 12 Thinking about your own research project, what kind of memos would be useful to you and why?