Apply

# Exercise 15.1 Building a workflow

## Get started

Write a set of five scopes and questions for your next analysis sessions. Then build a workflow in QDAS that you can test in one hour. Check out the QualPal analysis card deck in the online materials to help you think about the concrete analysis tasks you need to engage in to answer the questions. You can find an example below.

 [Download the QualPal cards](https://study.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/15_qual_pal_card_0.pdf) *[here](https://study.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/15_qual_pal_card_0.pdf)* or access the digital QualPal prompt cards

 Next, Identify one step in your analysis that you want to design. For this you need to consult your methodological approach: What are the major steps outlined by the method? It could be tasks like: ‘Initial familiarization with the data’, or ‘Develop an initial coding scheme’, or ‘Organize data around existing themes’, or ‘Identify and make explicit the patterns between different concepts’

 For each of these major steps, flip through the QualPal cards, and choose 3–5 techniques that you will use to bring this process to life.

o For each technique reflect: What things (objects, features in software) will you use to go about these techniques? For example, you may use a piece of paper to note your hunches. You may use the memo function in QDAS to write up your summary. You might be torn about what ‘thing’ to use for what. Test a workflow and see if it fits, how it feels: Do you feel empowered as a thinker using this workflow using the ‘things’ you use?

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| **Analysis Task:** Initial familiarization of the data  **SCOPE for today:** My interview with Jesse.  **QUESTION:** What am I noticing in the data: What surprises me, and what connections to my research question do I see in these surprises? | | | | |
| Techniques used: | How will I use the techniques? | What digital or non-digital tools will I use? | Products needed to do this | Products I will make doing this |
| Read aloud or listen to the audio  Document Hunches as Hunches  Write in full sentences  Circle back to the research question | How will I listen? The audio player on the laptop? Or should I import the transcript into QDAS and play it from there? Will I need earphones? Especially if I do this in the lab?  While I read, I want to take initial notes and jot down ideas. Maybe some ideas I had during the interview will pop up again. I could print the transcript, and use pens to write ideas in the margins. Then, in a second step, I could elaborate my jottings into full sentences.  Finally, I also want to reflect on how my noticings could relate to my research question. This will help me discover patterns across some of my cases as I explore them. I could write that summary up in my paper-bound research journal, or I could make a document memo in QDAS. | I’ll print the transcripts with wide margins, and I’ll listen along to the interview using my laptop & headphones.  I’ll take notes in the margins, and I’ll use a yellow marker to highlight sections that surprise me.  Then I’ll start a case-level memo in my QDAS. I’ll review my notes and elaborate & synthesize them into full sentences, potentially with headlines that explain how the comments related to me answering my research question. | Transcribed data  Audio of my data | An annotated printout of my data  A document that summarizes my exploration of the data and connects my exploration with my research question. |

## Exercise 15.2: Writing in QDAS

Conduct a literature analysis for a class or research project in QDAS, and try writing your next paper in the software. You’ve probably already developed some strategies for writing literature reviews. Try to implement these strategies into QDAS to see how it looks and feels to read, annotate, summarize and synthesize in the software. Even better: Find a friend, classmate or colleague to do this together. Use different (or the same) software to do your literature reviews. Then meet to interview each other on how it felt to use the software, and show each other how you’ve used the tools in QDAS. Alternatively, schedule 30 minutes with a mentor or advisor, and walk them through your project file. Show and tell them how you went about writing your review, and ask them how they would have gone about this task (with or without QDAS). You’ll find additional instructions and sample questions in the online workshop materials.

Sample Questions for your discussion:

 Ask your partner what kinds of products they made in the software (e.g., collections of key quotes; summaries; first drafts of ideas). Then ask them to show you how they went about making those. Which features of the software did they use, to what effect?

 Ask your partner what other tools for thinking aside from QDAS they used

 Ask your partner how they would go about this process the next time around?

## Take it further

Read the two literature reviews below. Then open the QDAS that you are playing with or currently using, and try to construct a similar workflow, using just 2-3 articles.

Paulus, T., Woods, M., Atkins, D. P., & Macklin, R. (2017). The discourse of QDAS: Reporting practices of ATLAS.ti and NVivo users with implications for best practices. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology: Theory & Practice, 20*(1), 35–47. [https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2015.1102454](https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1080/13645579.2015.1102454)

Jackson, K., Paulus, T., & Woolf, N. H. (2018). The Walking Dead Genealogy: Unsubstantiated Criticisms of Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS) and the Failure to Put Them to Rest. *The Qualitative Report*, *23*(13), 74-91. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol23/iss13/6> (open access).

If you want to dive further into the process of Literature Reviews, check out:

Fink, Arlene (2010). Conducting research literature reviews: from the Internet to paper. 3rd ed. Los Angeles: SAGE