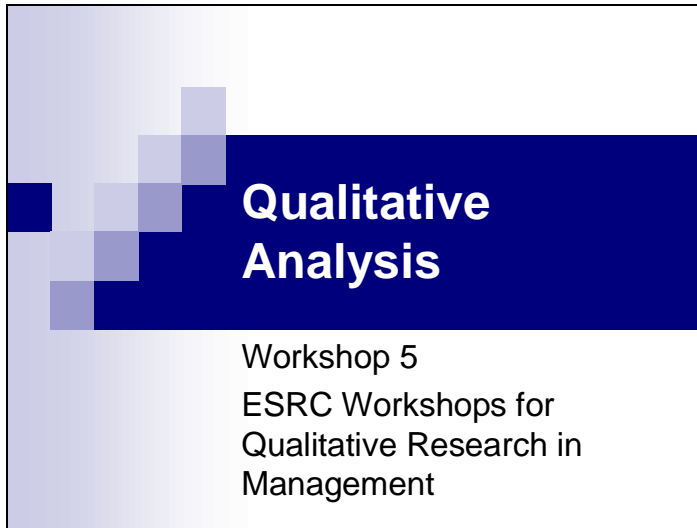


Slide 1



**Qualitative  
Analysis**

Workshop 5  
ESRC Workshops for  
Qualitative Research in  
Management

### **Qualitative Analysis: The Facilitator's Guide**

**Pre-reading:** Prior to attending the workshop, participants need to familiarise themselves with the data extracts on handout 1.

**Handouts:** Data Analysis Handouts 1,2,3,4.

**Target audience:** PhD Students

**Extra notes:** This is a lengthy workshop. The facilitator may wish to carry out portions of this workshop at separate times.

## Identification of training need

- n Current literature places great stress upon the methods used to go out and collect or generate the data, but there is much less written about the actual analytical techniques/ process.
- n There is much more training available for quantitative software packages (eg SPSS) than for qualitative software packages).

Training in analysis of qualitative research is reported to be the least developed in all of the research skills and under reported in the literature.

This training need was identified in the accompanying study carried out by Cassell et al 2005 entitled 'Benchmarking Good Practice in Qualitative Research'. For more information please see the website:

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/bgpinqmr/>

### **Workshop aim:**

- n To provide an introduction to the process of qualitative analysis and to use step by step examples to provide an idea of how the process of qualitative analysis actually works.
- n To provide an introduction to Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) and signpost further information sources.

### **Additional Comments:**

Qualitative analysis transforms data into theory. No formula exists for that transformation- guidance yes, but no recipe (Patton 2004). The final destination remains unique for each enquirer, nevertheless direction can be offered. This workshop hopes to provide some indication of how qualitative data analysis may actually be conducted and provide information on the different assumptions and approaches possible. Also this workshop aims to introduce Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) and signpost further information in this area.

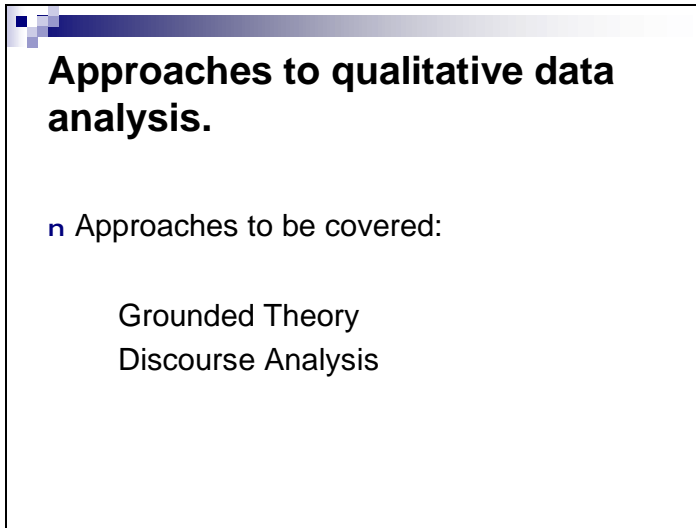
## Workshop objectives

By the end of this workshop participants should:

- n Be familiar with how the process of qualitative analysis may be conducted.
- n Be able to source further information on different approaches to analysis
- n Understand the basic function of qualitative software.
- n Be able to source further information on a variety of software packages.

## **Workshop outline**

1. Introducing different approaches to qualitative data analysis
  - Grounded Theory
  - Discourse Analysis
2. Computer Aided Qualitative Data Software Analysis (CAQDAS).
3. Further sources on CAQDAS
4. Further information on qualitative data analysis



**Approaches to qualitative data analysis.**

n Approaches to be covered:

- Grounded Theory
- Discourse Analysis


**Additional Comments:**

There is a vast range of approaches to qualitative research analysis. These cover the linguistic tradition – which treats text as an object of the analysis and the sociological tradition which treats text as a window into human experience (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). Examples include, conceptual analysis, discourse analysis, content analysis, reparatory grid analysis, account analysis, historical analysis, ethnoscience and structural ethnography, and ethnomethodology, taxonomies and mental maps, to name but a few! This no means an exhaustive list, but just provides an example of the wide range of qualitative analysis techniques available

This workshop draws on two traditions of analysis outlined above. These two examples have been chosen in particular due to both their popularity and their contrasting nature.

This workshop will largely draw on one of the most popular versions of grounded theory Strauss and Corbin's (1988) step by step guide. Although there are now many versions of grounded theory it was felt that this version is

used most widely, and therefore would be a good approach to explore. Equally this workshop will focus on critical discourse analysis which is one of the more commonly used approaches within management studies.




**Grounded theory is.....**

- n Theory which is derived inductively from the data which were systematically gathered and analyzed throughout the research process (Strauss and Corbin 1998).
- n Data collection, analysis and theory stand in a reciprocal relationship with each other. A researcher does not begin with a pre-conceived theory in mind, rather the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data.

**Additional Comments:**

The idea behind this is that theory which is constructed is more likely to resemble the 'reality' studied than theory derived from a series of ideas and concepts based on experience, or else pure speculation. Strauss and Corbin (1998) argue that 'grounded theories, because they are drawn from data, are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action' (p.12).





### **Grounded theory involves....**


1. An initial attempt to develop categories which illuminate the data.
2. Saturation of these categories with many appropriate cases in order to develop their relevance.
3. Developing these categories into more general analytical frameworks with relevance outside the setting.

*Glaser and Strauss (1967).*

**Additional Comments:**

Despite the impression of linearity given by the list above, it is important to point out that these techniques are procedures that are designed to be used flexibly and creatively. Strauss and Corbin (1990) emphasise that data analysis 'techniques and procedures, however necessary, are only a means to an end. They are not meant to be used rigidly in a step by step fashion' (p.14). The idea is to provide the researcher with a set of tools with which to approach their research and which will enhance both their confidence and their creativity. In qualitative research there are no clear cut stages and data collection and analysis will overlap. However, in grounded theory the literature review and data analysis should not interweave until the final stage of data analysis.

However, this is NOT an excuse to not draw on the literature at all.



## Glaser/Strauss split

- n Glaser's (1978, 1998) position assumes an objective external reality, a neutral observer who discovers data and an objectivist rendering of the data. Therefore Glaser's position is often perceived as close to traditional positivism (Charmaz 2000 ).
- n Strauss and Corbin argue for unbiased data collection, a set of technical procedures and the need for verification - therefore they also imply an objective external reality.
- n However, Strauss and Corbin also move away from traditional positivism through the acknowledgment that respondents views of reality may conflict with their own (See Strauss and Corbin 1998).

### **Additional Comments:**

Barney Glaser and the late Anselm Strauss (with Juliet Corbin) have since moved in differing directions and have conflicted on what they consider grounded theory should be.

### **Glaser and Strauss (and Corbin)**

- n Both realist in ontology and epistemology
- n Both follow the canons of objective reportage and engage in silent authorship and usually write about their data as distant experts (Charmaz 1994) thereby contributing to the objectivist stance.

### **Skills needed for the grounded theory research approach**

Important to minimise subjectivity by:

- n Maintaining an open disposition, a willingness to be surprised
- n Think comparatively; comparing incident to incident
- n Study multiple viewpoints of the phenomena in question
- n Researcher should periodically step back and ask 'what is going on here?'


#### **Additional Comments:**

Strauss and Corbin (1998) argue that what is important is to take appropriate measures to minimize the subjectivity in their analyses.

For more on researchers analysis skills see [Workshop 1: Skills of the Qualitative Researcher >>](#)

### **Glaser and Strauss (and Corbin)**

- n Both realist in ontology and epistemology
- n Both follow the canons of objective reportage and engage in silent authorship and usually write about their data as distant experts (Charmaz 1994) thereby contributing to the objectivist stance.



**Phase 1 - Initial attempt to develop categories which illuminate the data.**

- n Open coding: the analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions discovered in the data (Strauss and Corbin 1998).
- n Microanalysis of the data
- n Progressive refocusing in light of the data

**Additional Comments:**

The first stage of coding uses open coding which is the analytic process through which concepts and their properties are identified, forming codes. Within grounded theory data is studied by microanalysis. This means that all the data is examined in turn, document by document, line by line, word by word. After each data set categories are revised in light of the new data analysed. This alludes to the idea of 'progressive focusing' which runs throughout grounded theory.

Now ask audiences to read extracts on handout 1 and ask them to spend 5 minutes identifying basic broad codes.

**Phase 1 - Initial attempt to develop categories which illuminate the data.**

Categories:

1. Perceptions of management
2. Customer aggression

**Additional Comments:**

**Example**

**Extract 1-**

When looking at extract one, the researcher decided that it was referring to perceptions of management and she decided to make this a category and code lines 4-8 of this extract under this heading. The researcher could have coded it in many other categories, as well as or, instead of this one, but this was her subjective choice as a researcher. Point out that if members of the audience came up with varying categories that it is not wrong, but just a different interpretation of the data – something which is at the core of qualitative analysis.

So 4-8 would be coded in the category of 'perceptions of management' . The researcher decided that this code's dimensions would be any text which related to how employees viewed management. Therefore this piece of text can be coded in this way because it refers to employees views/ perceptions of management.

## **Extract 2**

Code: Perceptions of management- No perceptions of management are mentioned in this extract and so this should not be coded in this way. However the researcher felt that amongst many other things, this text shed light on customer aggression. Therefore the researcher decided to create a category 'customer aggression' and decided that the properties of this category were any text which refers to customer behaviour that is perceived by either the frontliner or the researcher as angry, aggressive, violent, threatening or irate). Therefore lines 13-44 were coded in this way.

For the purpose of this exercise, the data will be coded in relation to the two above categories only. Obviously many others could be created but only two will be used here for simplicity and manageability.

The facilitator should ask the audience to examine the rest of the data extracts in light of these categories. Give the audience 10 minutes to do this. Afterwards discuss with them why they decided to code each category in the way that they did. Stress that there is no right or wrong answer.

Give out handouts 2 and 3 which have broad codes of perceptions of management and customer aggression and the data which has been coded under these categories.



**Phase 2- Saturation of categories with many appropriate cases and further development of categories**

- n Axial Coding: further analysis and linking of the codes
- n Creating subcategories in categories
- n Linking categories according to properties and dimensions.

**Additional Comments:**

Whilst the use of categories allows the exploration of the data and a comparison of the similarities and differences, it can destroy the bigger picture. The categories' relationship with each other is important in maintaining the overall perspective.

This construction of categories leads to a refocus of analysis. Instead of viewing the data in its original context, it will now be viewed in the context of the categories (Dey 1993: 29). As the set of categories become established, they are able to be more precisely defined, meaning that as the analysis progresses only minor adjustments need to be made.

**Axial coding: creating subcategories**

Perceptions of management subcategories:

- n Perceived in a positive way.
- n Perceived in a negative way.
- n Perceived as neither positive or negative.

**Additional Comments:**

**Example**

The next step in this example is to use the broad code of perceptions of management and further the analysis through the creation of subcategories. Ask participants to look at handout 2- Broad Category of Perceptions of Management.

Walking through the data which are now coded into the category of perceptions of management (handout 2) in the first extract we see that management is perceived in both a positive and a negative way in this extract. Therefore subcategories were created as follows: perceptions of management (broad category)/perceived in a positive way (sub-category) and perceptions of management (broad category)/perceived in a negative way (subcategory). In light of a preliminary analysis of the data (which involved the creation of broad codes) it was decided that the dimensions of the first subcategory 'Perceptions of management/ Perceived in a positive way' should include any text which refers to views of management or their actions as positive. For the second sub-category 'Perceptions of management/

perceived in a negative way' it was decided that the dimensions should include any text which refers to management or their actions in a negative light.

To start with the first category (perceptions of management/ perceived in a positive way).

Extract 1 – Lines 1-6 can be included because although it makes reference to the negative perceptions of the manager, they are referring to generally what makes a positive manager (they are pointing out the positive by contrasting it with the negative).

Text to be included in the subcategory perception of management/ perceived in a negative way:

Extract 1 –lines 1-3 because this is where management is talked about in a negative way.

Extract 3 –lines 7-10 in this way because it fits in with categories properties, in that management is talked about in a negative way.

Extract 5 – 11-20 Here it is the managers *actions* which are perceived in a negative way, which fits in with the properties of the subcategory.

Extract 9 – lines 21-24. This doesn't seem to fit in with either of the sub-categories and so a new category- perceptions of management/ perceived as neither good or bad will be created (see slide). The properties of this category will be anything which fits into the broad category of perceptions of management but doesn't fit into either subcategory. Usually in qualitative research, this type of 'miscellaneous' category will be redefined and better understood as the analysis progresses.

Above we can see that the categories have been linked together according to their properties and dimensions. First data is coded using a broad category with broad dimensions, and then following on from this, within this broad category, subcategories are created which further link data and define their

relationship according to properties and dimensions. Give out handout 3 so that they can see the subcategories on paper.

On analysing the quotes and examining similarities and differences in the subcategories we can see that:

Examining the subcategory 'perceived in a positive way' part of being a positively viewed manager for frontliners was being aware of their work and to being around to talk to. (extract 1 lines1-6)

On analysing the subcategory perceived in a negative way, it is clear that part of being a poorly perceived manager for frontliners was not being aware of their work (Extract 1, lines 7-8, extract 3, 12-15,) and not being around where they work (extract 1, lines 7-9) especially in the area of the frontline (Extract 3 lines 11-15,).

However, conversely on analysis of extract four it seems that they don't like a manager's presence or evidence of their actions to be around in the canteen.

It is now important to question why do frontliners seem to perceive management in this way? In examining this analysis we need to examine it in the context of the rest of the analysis. In exploring why managers are perceived in this way we should look to the wider analysis and the external relevance to other broad categories. In this exercise we can look to our other category of customer aggression and see if this helps us understand and interpret the situation better.

**Axial coding: creating subcategories.**

- n Customer Aggression Subcategories:
- n Verbal aggression
- n Physical aggression
- n Substance abuse and customer aggression
- n Lack of understanding and acknowledgement of customer aggression

**Additional Comments:**

**Example**

So first we must analyse the other broad category – customer aggression and create subcategories (axial coding). Ask participants to look at handout 4 - broad category customer aggression.

**Extract 2**

Analysing extract 2 (first one in this category) the researcher decided on the subcategory of verbal aggression. The dimensions of this category were to be any text which referred to incidents of verbal aggression, including raising of voice, shouting, swearing at the frontliner in an angry manner and any verbal threats. It was decided to include lines 1-14 of extract 2 in this way.

The researcher also decided that the subcategory of substance abuse and customer aggression in order to cover the drunken nature of the customer. The properties of this category are any text which refers to aggressive customers who are using any substance such as drink or drugs. It was decided to code lines 2-14 in this way.

Additionally on examining extract 2 closely the researcher decided on the subcategory of physical aggression. This subcategory includes any text which refers to physical actions of the customer which are perceived as aggressive by the frontliner or researcher. It was decided to code lines 18-24 in this way.

The last category that was developed from this extract was 'lack of understanding of customer aggression in training'. The properties of this category are any text which refers to both trainers and how they do not seem to understand the customer aggression experienced by frontliners and also training that frontliners have received that seemed inadequate. It was decided to code lines 25-29 under this subcategory.

#### Extract 3

The researcher decided that lines 33-40 could be coded in verbal customer aggression. It was decided that none of the text could be coded under substance abuse and customer aggression and that none of the text could be coded as physical aggression. However in response to the data in this extract, the researcher decided to broaden the final category of 'lack of understanding of customer aggression in training' to 'lack of understanding of customer aggression'. It was then decided to code lines 37-42. This provides an example of progressive refocusing in light of the data.

#### Extract 4

No text was considered relevant to be coded in the categories of verbal aggression, physical aggression or substance abuse and customer aggression. However lines 44-52 were coded as 'lack of understanding of customer aggression' because it links in with the dimensions of this category.

#### Extract 6

None of the text was seen to be relevant to the category 'customer aggression' or the category of substance abuse and customer aggression.

Lines 53-59 were coded as physical customer aggression. Lines 53-62 were coded as 'lack of understanding and acknowledgement of customer aggression', although only lines 61-62 refer to it directly the other lines have been included in order for the extract to make sense.

#### Extract 7

Lines 65-70 were coded as lack of understanding and acknowledgement of customer aggression. The other categories were not felt to be relevant to this text.



**Phase 3 - Developing categories into general analytical frameworks with relevance outside the setting.**

- n Selective coding: the process of integrating and refining categories.
- n Major categories are finally integrated to form a larger theoretical scheme.

**Additional Comments:**

In this phase, the research moves to selective coding which is the process of integrating and refining theory. In open coding, which takes place in the first stage, the analysis is concerned with generating categories and their properties. In the next stage, axial coding is used to develop categories which are systematically linked with sub categories. However it is not until the major categories are finally integrated to form a larger theoretical scheme that the findings take the form of theory. Selective coding is the process of integrating and refining categories.



**Phase 3 - Developing categories into general analytical frameworks with relevance outside the setting.**

- n In public sector workplaces, which deal with face to face interaction with potentially violent customers, the physical presence of management is desired by frontliners.

**Additional Comments:**

**Example**

To recap when exploring the perceptions of management data it was found that:

Part of being perceived as a good manager for frontliners was being aware of their work and being around to talk to. (Handout 3, extract 1 lines 1-6)

Part of being perceived poorly as a manager by frontliners was not being aware of frontliners work (Handout 3, extract 1, lines 7-8, extract 3, 12-15,) and not being around where they work (Handout 3, extract 1, lines 7-9) especially in the area of the frontline (Handout 3, extract 3 lines 11-15,).

Conversely on analysis of extract four it seems that they don't like managers or evidence of their actions to be around in the canteen (Handout 3, extract 4 lines 44-52).

This analysis threw up the question of why did frontliners perceive managers in this way? What's going on here?

This needs to be examined in the context of the rest of the analysis in order to see if this will help us understand and interpret the phenomena studied (or

indeed if more data collection is needed). This is the beginning of phase three.

If the way that manager is perceived is related with the other code of customer aggression it may be possible to draw on the subcategory of 'no-acknowledgement of customer aggression' to help build theory as to why management is perceived in this way. The conclusion may be arrived at that frontliners like managers in their working area because they feel that they are often unaware of the violence that they face- thus being present in their working area may mean that staff can see them acknowledging the difficulties experienced by frontlines in their work.

Another theory which may be developed is that the physical threatening nature of the violence may mean that it is actually a PHYSICAL PRESENCE that is liked by frontliners and not a written/ implied presence. The theory could then be built on to assume that in places where frontliners have a physical interaction with potentially violent customers they need physical support. This theory needs to be cautiously examined in light of the rest of the data.

A contradiction of this theory is that frontliners don't seem to like managers around in the canteen. Therefore with the tentative theory in mind, the researcher needs to reanalyse/ continue analysing/ the data. If this contradiction is still not explained the researcher may need to collect more data and perhaps develop new theories.

This contradiction may be explained away by the idea that in the public sector, employees' response to a manager's presence is largely affected by the nature of the control system that operates independently of the physical presence of the job centre managers (the data would need to be examined in light of this idea). Such a control system means that a manager's physical presence will not be connected with organizational control and hierarchy and




### **Phase 3: Developing categories into general analytical frameworks with relevance outside the setting**

- n use of literature in this final stage of analysis in order to confirm findings and to illustrate where the research differs from the literature.

#### **Additional Comments:**

Grounded theory encourages the use of literature in this final stage of analysis in order to confirm findings and to illustrate where the research differs from the literature. In this way existing theories and typologies can be 'tested' against the data. Hammersley and Atkinson argue that the coding will not be sufficiently established to allow 'testing' in this way until the final stages of analysis. They argue that 'the process of testing requires considerable further development of the theory or explanation' (p.124).

The theory that a managers physical presence is desired in public sector workplaces which deal with potentially violent customers face to face can be examined against the literature and then considerably developed. This finding differs from previous arguments in the literature which state that a manager's presence is disliked as a symbol of control. Here the researcher can start to think about adding to the literature.



## Criticisms of grounded theory

- n Failure to acknowledge theories which guide work at an earlier stage.
- n Rejoinder: Recognition of impossibility of tabular rasa. However, Strauss and Corbin acknowledge that every piece of research (quantitative or qualitative) has an element of subjectivity. Instead they stress the importance of taking appropriate measures to minimize the subjectivity in their analyses

**Additional Comments:**

*'any researcher no matter how unstructured or inductive, comes to field work with some orienting ideas, foci and tools' (Miles & Huberman 1984:27).*

## Criticisms of grounded theory

- n Concentrating on the generation of theories at the expense of their quality and usefulness. A major problem of grounded theory is that if the researcher has no knowledge of the literature, they risk re-inventing the wheel.
- n Rejoinder: Strauss and Corbin (1998) argue that these procedures are supposed to be followed with creativity, flexibility and intelligence. They explain that it is the construction of new insights and understanding which are *significant* and *useful* that is at the heart of this method.


**Additional Comments:**

*used unintelligently it can degenerate into an empty building of categories or a mere smokescreen used to legitimise purely empiricist research'*

*Silverman 2000: 145*

*'It is entirely possible to complete a grounded theory study, or any study, yet not produce findings that are significant. If the researcher simply follows the grounded theory procedures/canons without imagination or insight into what the data are reflecting – because he or she fails to see what they are really saying except in terms of trivial or well known phenomenon – then the published findings can be judged as a failing on this criterion [i.e. of being significant]'*

*Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 256*



## **Criticisms of grounded theory**

- n Postmodernists and poststructuralists dispute obvious and subtle positivistic premises assumed by grounded theory's major proponents and within the logic of the method itself
- n Response: Creation of constructivist grounded theory which stresses emergent, constructivist elements such as an interpretive understandings of individual's meanings

### **Additional Comments:**

In response to these criticisms, Charmaz (2000) offers the notion of constructivist grounded theory. Constructivism assumes the relativism of multiple social realities, recognises the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed and aims towards interpretive understandings of individual's meanings. She argues that we can adopt a more open ended practice of grounded theory without embracing the positivist leanings of earlier proponents of grounded theory

## Further sources on Grounded Theory

- n Charmaz, K., (1994) Grounded Theory: Objectivist and Constructivist Methods in Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (ed.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- n Glaser, B. and Straus, A. L. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*, Chicago: Aldine.
- n Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1998) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.




## Workshop outline

1. Introducing different approaches to qualitative data analysis  
Grounded Theory  
**Discourse Analysis**
2. Computer Aided Qualitative Data Software Analysis (CAQDAS).
3. Further sources on CAQDAS
4. Further information on qualitative data analysis

### **Additional Notes:**

The workshop will now move on to consider discourse analysis.



## Discourse analysis


- n Discourse analysis focuses on language as a social practice in its own right and is concerned with how individuals use language in specific social contexts
- n Enables researcher to gain an understanding of *how* individuals use language to construct themselves and the world around them
- n Enables researcher to understand *why* individuals use language to construct themselves and the world around them
- n Enables researcher to understand the ideological effects of individuals constructions.

### **Additional Comments:**

Discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary approach drawing on insights from sociolinguistics, cognitive psychology, communication studies and other language philosophy (Schwandt 2001).

Discourse analysis is concerned with the ideological effects of these constructions- that is how texts contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation (Fairclough 2003).

Discourse analysis works on the assumption that individuals construct the world in order to make sense of it whilst also reproducing or challenging ideological systems of belief that exist in society at large.' (Dick 2004: 203).



## Discourse analysis


Huge variation in types of discourse analysis:  
*'the only thing that commentators are agreed on in this area is that terminological confusions abound'*  
(Potter and Wetherall 1987:6)

In approaches such as ethnomethodology and conversation analysis discourse is concerned with the more linguistic aspects of the structure of talk and the processes used by speakers to construct their worlds (Schwandt 2001).

Foucauldian approaches consider discourses as systems of power/knowledge which are socially and culturally located and which construct subjects and their worlds (Dick 2004).

### **Additional Comments:**

The label 'discourse analysis' has been used as a generic term for virtually all research concerned with language in its social and cognitive context as a description for studies focusing only on linguistic units above the level of the sentence (Stubbs 1983), as the correct term for research concerned with cohesion and connectedness across sentences or turns of talk (Tannen 1984), and to cover developments stemming from structuralism and semiotics (Foucault 1971:). It is a field in which it is perfectly possible to have two books on discourse analysis with no overlap in the content at all (Potter and Wetherall 1987).



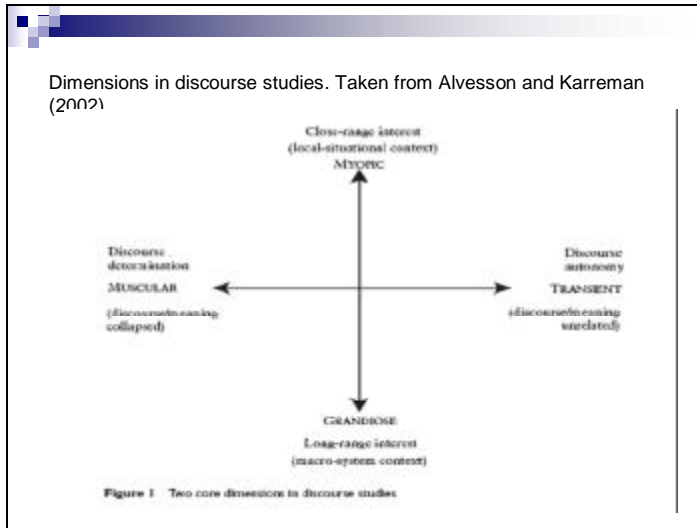
### **Levels of discourse**

- n Analysis at the micro, context specific level of discourse and the more macro level of Discourse.
- n Analysis of discourse as reflecting meaning or analysis of discourse as constructing meaning.  
(Alvesson and Karreman 2002).

**Additional Comments:**

Alvesson and Karreman explain that discourse analysis can explore discourses at differing levels. They explain that there is a spectrum of analysis from micro, specific organizational contexts to the examination of the use of more macro discourses which pervade society more broadly. They term these discourses and Discourses (with a capital D) respectively. They explain that it is often (not always) the researchers aim to start off exploring the micro discourses and to link these to more macro discourses exploring the relevance of their research outside of the specific context.

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**Additional Comments:**

Alvesson and Kärreman (2002) point out that discourse analysis can be positioned along a spectrum between the study of discourse as separate rhetoric uncoupled with meaning, (except from highly limited and temporal effects of discourse on meaning) to discourse as *reflecting* meaning and then further still as the study of discourse as a structuring, constituting force which *determines* meaning, practice and subjectivity.

Acknowledging that there is no one discourse analysis method, this workshop provides an example of one of the many different and varied approaches to discourse analysis. This workshop will outline general procedures of an example of discourse analysis, using practical examples to illuminate these ideals. This workshop loosely follows an approach which is often termed 'critical discourse analysis'. (For more on Critical Theory see [Workshop 2: The philosophies that inform qualitative research](#)). >>

This workshop explores discourse analysis as a method to gain understanding of how and why individuals use language to produce explanations of themselves, their relationships and the world in general' (Dick 2004). The use of discourse in this workshop therefore situates itself at the more 'muscular' end of the spectrum where meaning and discourse are very closely related (Alvesson and Karreman 2002). This approach does not examine language as a reflection of meaning but explores it as creating meaning itself.


This workshop is also concerned with the study of more micro discourses and explores discourses used within the specific context of the Public Employment Service. Therefore exploration of discourses in this workshop can be said to be situated at the myopic end of the spectrum although analysis does sometimes relate it to wider more macro Discourses.

## Critical discourse analysis

- n Language plays an active, constructive role.
- n Unit of analysis is language and not the individual.
- n Anti-essentialist -individuals draw on alternative versions of reality according to the situation.
- n (Marshall 1994).

### **Additional Comments:**

Discourse analysts make the argument that any person, policy or event can be described in different ways and that speakers draw on alternative variations of reality according to what they are doing.



## Doing discourse analysis

- n Identification of interpretive repertoires
- n Identification of social constructions which have regulatory effects.
- n Consistency in discourse is not seen to illustrate some underlying reality, but is used to signpost a particular repertoire.

### **Additional Comments:**

Within this approach of critical discourses analysis, the researcher is concerned with both regularities at the level of language (Marshall 1994) which to some extent are presented as self evident, common sense understandings of the social domain that is being researched (Dick 2004).


In this method consistency within a particular interview or across different interviews was not seen to illustrate some underlying reality, or a personality trait but was used as a signpost to the particular repertoire.

### **Example:**

Ask workshop participants to take five minutes and to read extract 2 from handout 1 and to identify specific repertoires.

After they have thought about this discuss suggestions and why they decided upon these repertoires. Explain that there is no right/wrong answer but for the purpose of this workshop the repertoires surrounding customer aggression will be used.





## Doing discourse analysis

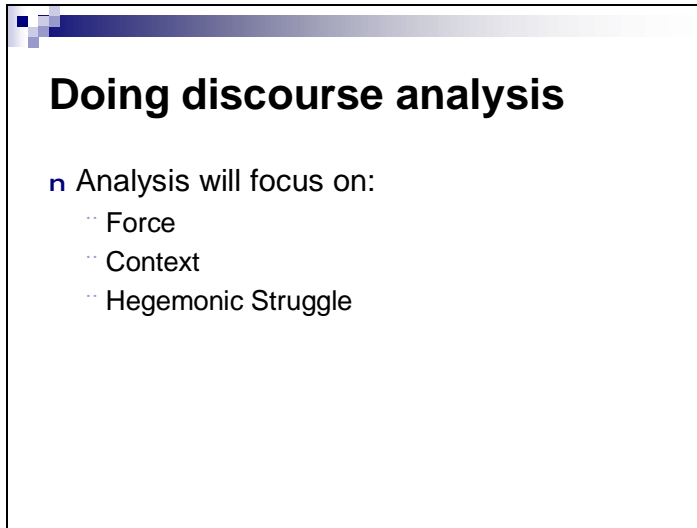
Discourse can be confirmed by:

- n Referring to instances of its use in other texts.
- n Illustrating its dominance in any specific socio-cultural context.

### **Additional Comments:**

It is important for the researcher to demonstrate that the discourse exists as a constructive resource within a social domain. There are a number of ways of doing this including referring to instances of its use in other texts (for example see Dick and Cassell 2002) or simply by pointing out its dominance in any specific socio-cultural context (for example Hollway 1989).

Critical discourse analysis does not present these stabilities as objective features of this domain, but instead carefully examines how these stabilities are reproduced or changed (Dick 2004).

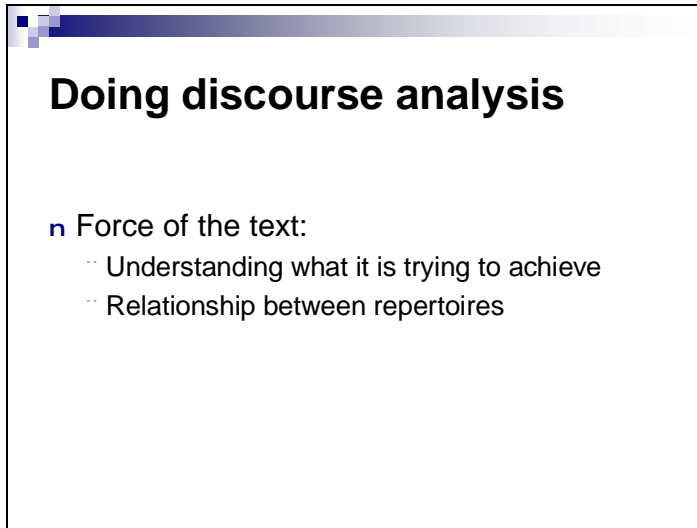


## Doing discourse analysis

- n Analysis will focus on:
  - .. Force
  - .. Context
  - .. Hegemonic Struggle

**Additional Comments:**

After the specific repertoires are identified they are examined for force, context and hegemonic struggle. This workshop will consider each one in turn in relation to extract 2 and the repertoire surrounding customer aggression.



## Doing discourse analysis

- n Force of the text:
  - Understanding what it is trying to achieve
  - Relationship between repertoires

**Additional Comments:**


Firstly, the text is analysed with the aim of understanding what it is trying to achieve, this is termed the 'force' of the text' (Faircough 1992). Discourse analysts are concerned not only with the identification and description of various repertoires used in particular contexts, but also to examine the consequences of the use of that repertoire. One of the concerns is whether the relationship of one repertoire serves to undermine another.

**EXAMPLE:**

Tell workshop participants to read and think how they would analyse extract 2 according to force of the text. Put participants into pairs and give them 5 minutes. Go through the notes below on force of the text with the group as a whole and ask them how it compares to their analysis throughout. Ask them why they analysed the data as they did.

## Notes on force of extract 2

Ask what is text trying to achieve? Explain that amongst other things, in this text the frontliner is trying to justify finding a customer hard to serve and justify his actions when serving this customer. He does this in a number of ways. Firstly by illustrating how difficult the customer is on lines 13-22 (drunk at 10 in the morning, nits in hair, throwing leaflets, blowing spit bubbles, use of expletive. These all go against regulatory discourse of how a 'normal' person should behave in this situation, thus constructing her as a deviant from this). Secondly by explaining how inadequate training is with regards to difficult customers (lines 37-41). Thirdly by alluding to the limitations of job centre role (lines 41-44).



## Doing discourse analysis

- n Importance of context of text production.
- n Interview transcripts usually involve an indication of previous comment or question.

### **Additional Comments:**

Discourse analysis can also be concerned with the 'context' of text production. This allows the analyst to infer the kinds of interpretation that might be made from the text and therefore is extremely important. For example the question how old are you? is likely to be interpreted differently if asked by a bartender to a young man than if asked by a social science researcher. Due to the emphasis on context, discourse analysis argues for working with extended segments of discourse rather than short decontextualised extracts.

### **Example:**

Point out how the text reflects the request from the researcher for a story about a 'difficult' customer. The participant will have certain interpretations of this question (ie is the researcher asking this to obtain an example of how terrible the customers can be, or maybe to understand which sorts of customers frontliners find difficult , or perhaps in light of the customer culture described below it could be interpreted as a way of seeing how good the

frontliners customer service skills are with difficult customers) and will answer the question with this interpretation in mind.

Explore the context of extract 2 with participants. Refer to the context of Employment Service. Writers on the public sector who emphasise consumerism (Harrow & Shaw, 1992; Potter, 1994) argue that the idea of the customer has become a focus in the public sector, representing a shift towards service orientation (Wilcocks & Harrow 1994, Kirkpatrick et al 1995). This labelling implies different connotations for the service recipient (Korczynski, 2002) evoking ideas of customer sovereignty through customer orientation. This broad trend can be seen throughout the ES where the term 'customer' has recently been adopted in lieu of 'claimant' or 'client'. This helps explain why the frontliner feels that he has to justify his actions. The interaction he describes deviates from the promoted customer/ server relationship where the frontliner treats the all important customer as sovereign and gives good customer service, thus he tries to justify this deviation from the regulatory norms. He illustrates how it was the customer who is the deviant from this norm and nothing that he has done/ is.

## Doing discourse analysis

- n Example of context of extract:
  - .. Request from the researcher for a story about a 'difficult' customer.
  - .. Neo-liberalist trend of service/customer orientation in the public sector.

**Additional Comments:**


**Example:**

The text reflects the request from the researcher for a story about a 'difficult' customer. The participant will have certain interpretations of this question (ie is the researcher asking this to obtain an example of how terrible the customers can be, or maybe to understand which sorts of customers frontliners find difficult , or perhaps in light of the customer culture described below it could be interpreted as a way of seeing how good the frontliners customer service skills are with difficult customers) and will answer the question with this interpretation in mind.

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## Doing discourse analysis

- n Analysis of hegemony- extent to which a proposition is challenged or anticipated to be challenged.
- n Hegemonic struggle – when different ideologies compete for dominance.

### **Additional Comments:**

Thirdly, discourse analysis can examine the text for 'hegemonic struggle'. This level draws very heavily on Foucault's idea of discourse and power. Here it is important to examine the extent that the text 'gets away with' using a specific proposition without being challenged, or anticipating being challenged. Statements that remain unchallenged are consequently easy to 'get away with' and are frequently taken from a dominant ideological discourse that is generally taken as 'true'. (Dick 2004).


Propositions that are challenged or which are defended in the text are defended as examples of hegemony, which Fairclough (2003) describes as the process through which contested views of reality are dealt with in order to secure ideological consent.

Fairclough (2003) suggests that hegemonic struggle is when different ideologies compete for dominance. The extent to which the text appears to justify or defend the position is an indication that competing discourses exist in that competing domain (the hegemonic struggle).

## **Exercise 2**

Ask participants to take 5 minutes to analyse extract 2 in light of hegemonic struggle. Participants can do this exercise on their own, or in pairs, then go through it with the class as a whole using the notes below.

Firstly the respondent anticipates being challenged about the failure of his customer/ frontliner interaction and the fact that he found this particular customer difficult to serve as he spends time justifying the situation. He mentions 'handling difficult situations course' and how this did not provide any insights into how he could have handled it in a better way and how it was the customer that was difficult and not him. In defending his proposition that this customer was difficult to serve he suggests an alternative variation on this repertoire, which competes for dominance. He may be referring to the discourse of customer service. So here this justification (or hegemonic struggle) signposts the presence of a competing discourse. This helps identify *why* he constructed this experience in this way – in order to absolve himself of responsibility for the customer violence.



### **Criticisms of discourse analysis**


- n Accusation of moral nihilism: unethical acts are dismissed as having no material reality.
- n Countered by argument that discourse analysis does not deny material reality, but focuses on the way our understandings of such practices are constructed through discourse.

#### **Additional Comments:**

The social constructionist, Foucauldian underpinnings of discourse analysis are often the subject of debate (For example see Reed 1998, or Newton 1998). People sometimes assume that discourse analysis denies the existence of the world 'out there'. They question discourse analysts' focus on language to the detriment of studying 'real world issues' such as people being murdered by oppressive regimes, or domestic violence. However this real world/ world of discourse formulation is not a natural and neutral construction but a philosophical construction with a long history in Western Societies. The real world/ discourse world construction implies that the world is somehow independent of human affairs, a realm removed from constructive realities, something which critical discourse analysis refutes (Fairclough 2003).

Linked in with the above idea is the criticism sometimes leveled that this sort of approach encourages a moral nihilism whereby harmful and unethical acts (such as rape) are simply dismissed as discourses with no underlying material reality. However Dick (2004) counters this argument by the idea that discourse does not deny a material reality to social practices such as sexual

activity, but rather focuses on the way that our understandings of such practices are constructed through discourse, and are therefore open to change. She points out that proponents of this approach would argue that the existence of discourses that construct certain acts (in this case rape) illustrate the unpredictable, imprecise and fragmented nature of the construction of reality. Such discourses have been produced by 'resistance' to social practices, such as sexual activity' but it suggests that our understandings of such practices are constructed through discourse and are therefore always open to change.



### **Criticisms of discourse analysis**

- n Voicing concerns for groups who do not consider themselves to be oppressed or disadvantaged.
- n Subversion of oppressive discourses may lead to alternative suppressive discourses for other social groups.
- n Difficulty of identifying interpretative repertoires when research is not independent of linguistic resources needed to construct discourse.

#### **Additional Comments:**

When engaging with political issues, discourse analysis can be criticised for trying to speak on behalf of groups that do not consider themselves to be oppressed or disadvantaged (Burr 1998).

Another problem linked in with this is that in seeking to subvert dominant, constructions of reality there is a danger that alternative discourses and constructions of reality will arise that will oppress and disadvantage other social groups than those with which the researcher is concerned.

Finally, when using discourse analysis to identify repertoires the research has to stand back and question the assumptions being made. This is made particularly problematical because the researcher draws on a similar pool of linguistic resources as the participants.

There are no easy answers to these criticisms – but the researcher who chooses to use this method, must not only acknowledge these issues but also must be prepared to engage with them (Dick 2004). For more information on

philosophical assumptions and debates please see [Workshop 2: The Philosophies that Inform Qualitative Research](#) and [Workshop 7: Qualitative Assessment Criteria](#). >>

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## Further sources on Discourse Analysis

### Discourse Analysis

- n Dick, P., (2004) Discourse Analysis, in Cassell, C., and Symon, G., (eds) *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*, London: Sage
- n Alvesson, M., and Kärreman, D., (2002) Varieties of Discourse: On the study of organizations through discourse analysis, *Human Relations*, 53(9): 1125-1149
- n Fairclough, N., (2003) *Analysing Discourse, Textual analysis for social research*, New York; Routledge

## Workshop outline

1. Introducing different approaches to qualitative data analysis
  - Grounded Theory
  - Discourse Analysis
2. **Computer Aided Qualitative Data Software Analysis (CAQDAS).**
3. Further sources on CAQDAS
4. Further information on qualitative data analysis

### **Additional Notes:**

The workshop will now move on to consider CAQDAS



### **CAQDAS: Data organisation**


- n An 'indispensable tool for storage retrieval and manipulation of the text '(Kelle 1995).
- n Allows the researcher to sort the data into easily accessible categories to enable quick retrieval of data
- n Comparison of segments
- n Refinement and development of codes
- n Examples include NVivo, Atlas, ethnograph, hypersoft and code-a-text

**Additional Comments:**

Basically the computer can replace manual cut and paste techniques and be an 'indispensable tool for storage retrieval and manipulation of the text '(Kelle 1995). These types of packages allow the researcher to sort the data into easily accessible categories to enable quick retrieval of data coded according to single or multiple codes, comparison of segments and most importantly refinement and development of codes. This saves time and effort which might otherwise be expended on boring clerical work, perhaps involving mounds of photocopied paper, colour coded, sorted into piles on the floor, cut up, pasted and so on. This should give the data analyst more time to think about the meaning of data, and hopefully qualitative data analysis becomes more devoted to creative and intellectual tasks and less immersed in routine (Silverman 2000).

Examples of CAQDAS include, NVivo, Atlas, ethnograph, hypersoft and code-a-text (this is not an exhaustive list). More information can be found on specific examples of these on the websites provided at the end of the workshop. Point out to participants that although they should discover which

package suits them individually, NVivo and ethnograph tend to be the most commonly used packages.



### **What does CAQDAS actually do?**

Aids mechanical data management techniques such as:

- n Cutting and pasting into codes
- n Creating subcategories
- n Notes in the margin

#### **Additional Comments:**

This workshop does not set out to explore exactly how to use each individual qualitative data software package (for more on this see the websites referenced at the end). However this slide should help give an idea of the general principal.

CAQDAS is usually used as replacement for manual mechanical analysis techniques, such as cutting and pasting notes in the margin.

Cut and Paste techniques.

Documents (i.e. interviews, field notes, any written text) are imported into the software. Then as the researcher reads and analyses these documents any segment of the text can be highlighted by the researcher and placed under whichever code the researcher decides. Exactly the same segment (or part of the segment) can be put into as many different codes as the researcher chooses. There will be a list of code headings within the computer program and the researcher can click on each code heading to bring up all the data

which he/she has coded under that heading. The original documents will still be left intact and can be re-read/ reanalysed whenever the researcher chooses.

If the researcher decides that some codes should be split into subcategories the researcher is able to do this. The software program will display code headings and how they are linked to sub-headings in the list of codes (often in the style of a tree diagram). The researcher can click on any code, or sub-category to see the data coded underneath this heading or subheading.

#### Notes in the margin


The researcher can attach a 'note' to any bit of text. The researcher highlights a segment of text and then follows the necessary procedures to allow some sort of note symbol to appear by that segment of text. The researcher can click on this symbol to see the attached comment.

## **Additional uses of CAQDAS**

- n Atlas also allows the storage of audio recordings.
- n Code-a-text allows the researcher to work with sound, video and transcript concurrently.
- n Atlas also allows pictures to be scanned in and used as data, allowing handwritten notes to be scanned in this way.

### **Additional Comments:**

Some packages have other attributes that can vary from the basic storage and retrieval function.



### **Additional uses of CAQDAS**

- n Hypersoft strives to avoid decontextualisation of data through hyperlinks.
- n Use of CD ROM to record research which could provide the opportunity for multiple readings of the text.

#### **Additional Comments:**

The package 'Hypersoft' allows the analyst to click on a word or icon and go to a link which has previously been made. This has been promoted as avoiding decontextualisation of the data that can occur in simple code and retrieval packages. This is because hypertext link does not retrieve just the relevant segment but shows it in context of the whole data unit- e.g. a whole interview.

Research could be written up on a CD ROM not a book allowing the reader to explore the original data in as much depth as needed, thereby being free of the need to only attend to the exclusive presentation of a single author and allowing for the possibility of multiple readings of the text. This seems particularly relevant for post-modern sensibilities.

### **Debates surrounding CAQDAS**

- n Assertion that software packages seem more suited for objectivist grounded theory than more social constructivist approaches (Charmaz 2000).
- n Accusations of overemphasis on coding and promote a superficial view of qualitative research (Coffrey et al 1996).
- n Use of computer fragments data

**Additional Comments:**

Charmaz (2000) argues that software packages may not fit in with qualitative ideas as they may unintentionally foster an illusion that interpretive work can be reduced to a set of procedures.

Fragments may take on a life of their own, irrespective of context and seem objective as if from outside our interpretation.

Charmaz (2000: 520) argues that part of interpretative work is gaining sense of the whole- 'the whole interview, the whole story, the whole body of data' . Even if computer program are helpful for managing the parts, we can only see their fragments on screen. It is therefore argued that these fragments may take on a life of their own, irrespective of context and seem objective as if outside our interpretation.

### Debates surrounding CAQDAS

- n The central analytic task in qualitative research – understanding the meaning of text cannot be computerised. Using CAQDAS is no substitute for thinking hard about the meaning of data.
- n Only the more mechanical task of data management can be aided by a computer.
- n Use of software package reflects choices of the researcher.


#### Additional Comments:

The criticisms outlined previously reflect the idea expressed by many qualitative researchers, particularly those working in the interpretive tradition, that using computers for analysis of text is inappropriate if not wholly absurd (Kelle 1995). However, this reflects a misunderstanding of qualitative software packages based on preconceptions gained from quantitative software packages. The central analytic task in qualitative research – understanding the meaning of texts *is not* and *cannot* be computerised (in the way numerical data are). Qualitative software packages only aid mechanical data management, e.g. the cutting and pasting technique and data storage/retrieval. Software programs cannot analyse the data and help the researcher decide which bits to code as what and why, they do not help in building theory.

It is important to point out that software packages are only a research tool and will reflect the choices of the researcher. For example, in the same way, that when using manual cutting and pasting techniques the researcher has a choice of where to cut up the data (if at all?) the researcher using the



software packages has the same choices. The data will only become as fragmented as the researcher chooses.




## In summary

- n Choose software to fit research not research to fit software!!
- n Overall CAQDAS tends to be used as tool for intelligent management of research data.

**Additional Comments:**

So in summary different packages offer different things, so obviously don't just limit your analysis to what the computer can do, but decide on what you want to do and find the computer package that can help.

CAQDAS tend to be used as an 'electronic filing cabinet' , not as a tool to actually do the analysis, but for easy, quick management of data.



## Conclusion


*'Qualitative enquiry depends, at every stage, on the skills training, insights, and capabilities of the inquirer. Qualitative analysis ultimately depends on the analytical intellect and style of the analyst'*  
(Patton 2002: 436).

### **Additional Comments:**

Whilst there may be guidance, unlike much of quantitative research there are no hard and fast rules or formulae for qualitative analysis. Applying guidelines requires judgment and creativity that means qualitative researchers need considerable skill in transforming data into theory. For more on the skills needed to do qualitative research, see [Workshop 1: 'Skills of the Qualitative Researcher'. >>](#)

## Further reading on CAQDAS

- n Fielding, N. and Lee, R. (1991) 'Using Computers in Qualitative Research', Newbury Park: Sage
- n Kelle, U., (1995) 'Computer- Aided Qualitative Data Analysis: Theory, Methods and Practice'. London: Sage.
- n Richards L. and Richards, T., Using Computers in Qualitative Analysis, in N. Denzin, and Y. Lincoln (2000), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks. Sage: 445-62.
- n Kelle, U. (1995) Computer-Aided Qualitative DataAnalysis: Theory, Methods and Practice. London:Sage:



## Useful websites

- n AnSWR ([www.cdc.gov/hiv/software/answr.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/software/answr.htm))
- n Atlas ([www.atlasti.de/](http://www.atlasti.de/))
- n Code-a-text ([www.code-a-text.co.uk](http://www.code-a-text.co.uk))
- n CDC EZ-Text ([www.cdc.gov/hiv/software/ez-text.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/software/ez-text.htm))
- n Decision Explorer (devoted to conceptual mapping) ([www.banxia.co.uk/banxia](http://www.banxia.co.uk/banxia)).
- n Ethnograph (<http://www.qualisresearch.com> )
- n HyperResearch ([www.researchware.com](http://www.researchware.com))
- n QCA (Qualitative Comparative Analysis) ([www.nwu.edu/IPR/publications/qca.html](http://www.nwu.edu/IPR/publications/qca.html))
- n QSR NVivo/Nudist ([www.qsrinternational.com](http://www.qsrinternational.com))

### **Additional Comments:**

CAQDAS continues to develop very rapidly. Therefore for the latest versions and updates on specific products it is best to consult the frequently updated websites.

## Further sources on data analysis

### n General analysis references:


- Bloor, M. (1978) On the analysis of observational data: a discussion of the worth and uses of observational techniques and respondent validation, *Sociology*, 12, pp. 542-55.
- Becker, H.S. (1998) *Tricks of the trade: How to think about your research while you're doing it*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bulmer, M. (1979) Concepts in the analysis of qualitative data. *Sociological Review*, 27, 651-677
- Dey, I (1993) *Qualitative data analysis: a user friendly guide for social scientists*, London: Routledge.
- Miles, M. B. and Huberman, A. M. (1984) *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

## Further sources on data analysis

### n General analysis references:

- Miles, M.B. (1979) Qualitative data as an attractive nuisance: The problem of analysis. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24, 590-601
- Ryan, G., and Bernard, R., Data Management and Analysis Methods, in Denzin, N., Lincoln, Y. (2000) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks: Sage
- Silverman, D. (2000) Analysing Talk and Text, in Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y., (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage
- Taylor, S.J. & Bogdan, R.C. (1984) *Introduction to qualitative research methods: The search for meanings* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). New York: John Wiley

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n For further information on similar other workshops in qualitative analysis please see our web site:  
[www.shef.ac.uk/bgpinqmr/](http://www.shef.ac.uk/bgpinqmr/)

There is a space on our website for feedback on the training workshops. Please use it to record any feedback including modifications/ adaptations made to the original workshops>>.



## References

- n Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (ed.) (2000) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- n Foucault, M. (1971) 'Orders of Discourse', *Social Science Information*, 10: 7-30.
- n Harrow, J. and Shaw, M. (1992) 'The manager faces the consumer', in L. Wilcocks and J. Harrow (eds.), *Rediscovering Public Services Management*, Berkshire: McGraw-Hill.
- n Patton, M. (2002) *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, London: Sage
- n Potter, J. (1992) 'Constructing Realism- 7 Moves (Plus or minus a couple)', *Theory and Psychology*, 2, 2: 167-173.

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- n Potter, J., and Wetherell, M. (1987) *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour*, London: Sage.
- n Schwandt, T. (2001) *Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*, Thousand Oaks: Sage
- n Wilcocks, L. and Harrow, J. (1992) *Rediscovering Public Services Management*, Berkshire: McGraw-Hill
- n Stubbs, M., (1983) *Discourse Analysis*. Oxford: Blackwell
- n Tannen, D. (1984) *Coherence in Spoken and Written Discourse*. Norwood: Ablex

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