ATLAS.ti 5.5: A Qualitative Data Analysis Tool

Part VIII: Basic analysis tools: quotations and coding

At this point, there is no particular order of commands to follow. Once you have a PD open, you will see your workspace change to an environment that enables you to apply principles of qualitative methodology.

The following steps represent one approach to analyzing and interpreting your data, but the flexibility of the program allows you take the approach that works for you.

Quotations

Quotations are defined by the program as any selected text (coded or uncoded) within your HU. Researchers who begin the process of analysis by highlighting passages of interest would likely begin with using free (uncoded) quotations.

1. Open the PD you want to work with from the drop-down menu.

2. Select the piece of text you would like to code by highlighting it or using a series of mouse-clicks.

    ⇒ One double-click in the text will select a single word.
    ⇒ Another double-click on the same text will select the entire sentence.
    ⇒ A third double-click will select an entire paragraph.

3. At this point, you can create a free quotation (uncoded), until you have decided its code OR you can create a quotation and code in the same step.

4. To create a free quotation with the highlighted text, go to the main menu and select **Quotations – Create Free Quotation** or use the ⬚ from the toolbar on the left side of the workspace.

    Remember, a quotation is simply a piece of text you are selecting for analysis. The fact this is "free" just means that it is not currently coded.

   When you create a "free" quotation, you will see it listed in your quotation menu.

These numbers tell you the origin and order of the quotation.
So this is PD 1, quotation # 1.

These numbers designate the beginning and ending lines of your quotation.
This quotation starts in line 12 and ends in line 13 in your PD.

5. Your quotation will now appear in the quotation drop-down menu and in the

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"margin" of the document. When you are ready to code this quotation, you can click on this bar, and it will select (highlight) that text for further analysis or editing.
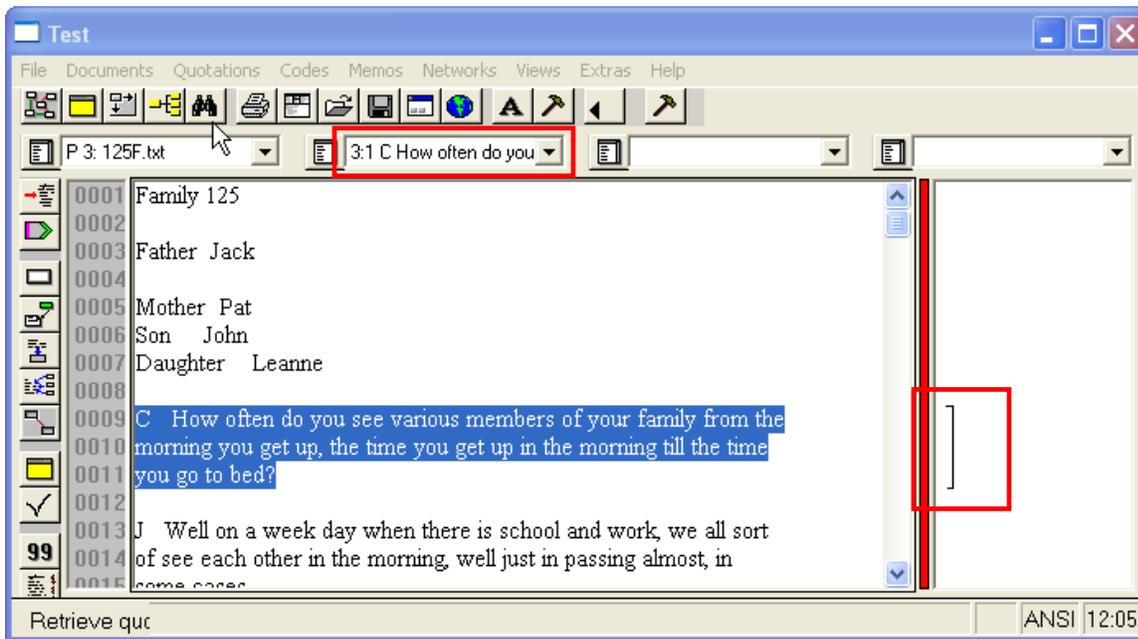
6. If you already know the code you would like to use, then you may use one of ATLAS.ti's coding options.
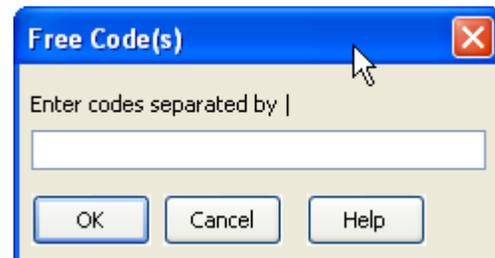
Coding

There are six basic coding options in ATLAS.ti: free, open, list, auto, in-vivo, and quick. They are all equally easy to use and some appear to execute the same task, but it is really a matter of preference and approach.

Free Coding

If you already have an idea of the codes you will be using, then you can create a list of free codes to associate with quotations as you analyze your data. You can import them, which is only recommended if you have a long list. See your help guide for more information.

You can also create your list in ATLAS.ti as well.

1. Select **Codes — Create Free Code** from the main menu.

2. You will see the following window, where you can type in codes.

3. Type in your code(s) and select OK.

   Note:

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The | symbol, shown in the picture at the bottom of the previous page, is usually located above your **Enter** key.

Open Coding

When you have selected a quotation and you know the code you want to use, you want to apply open coding. Using this feature will: create both a quotation *and* code and associate them in the HU. To apply **Open Coding**, you may:

1. Highlight the data (text) you want to code.

2. Select **Codes – Coding – Open Coding** from the menu OR use the appropriate button on the toolbar (see page 6).

3. You will see the same window as that shown above.

4. Type in your code and select OK.

5. Now you have a coded quotation. Both the quotation and code menus are now activated and have this information listed.
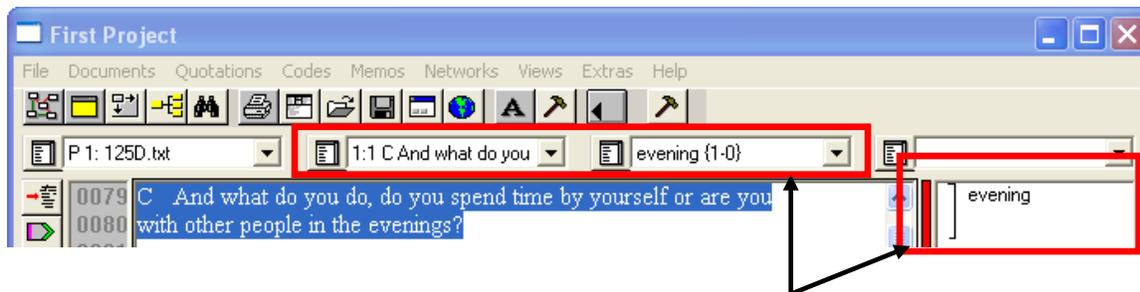
List Coding

Once you have an established list of codes, you can use them to analyze more data. This option will create a new quotation, if it does not already exist, and assign an existing code from you list. To apply **List Coding**, you may:

1. Highlight the data (text) you want to code.

2. Select **Codes – Coding – Code By List** from the menu OR the button from the toolbar at the left side of your workspace.

3. A window will appear with a list of your codes.

4. Choose the code(s) you want to apply and select **OK.**

Auto Coding

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This option allows you to create and code quotations in an entire PD or all PDs within an HU. You must have an established code to use this function.

1. Select **Codes – Coding – Auto-coding** from the menu.

2. Make certain you select the code you would like to use from the drop-down menu.

3. Pick a search term or expression and type it in **Enter or select Search Expression**.

4. If you want to only search for capital or lower-case instances of your search term, check the **Case Sensitive** option.
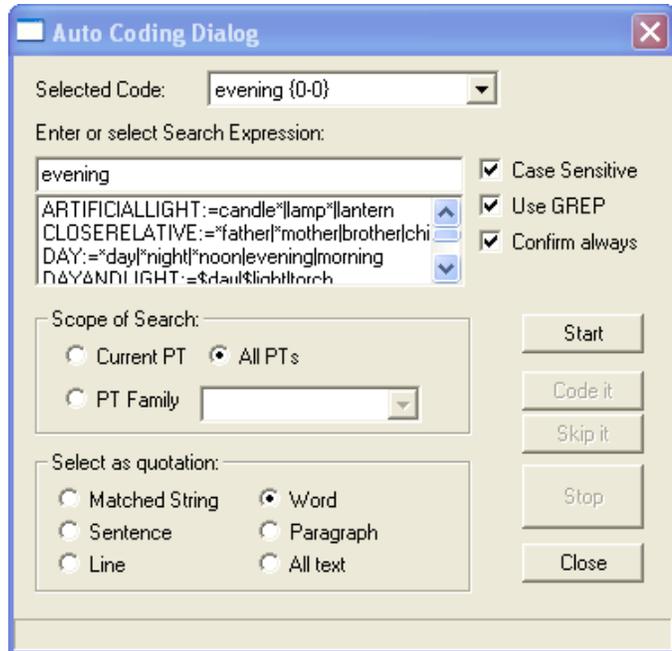
5. If you want to search for variations on the search term, for example, evening and evenings, check **Use GREP** option.

6. If you want to view each instance BEFORE it is coded, check **Confirm Always**.

7. Decide where to search in the **Scope of Search** box.

   Note: if you only want to search one PD, it must be open in the workspace.

8. Decide how much of the text should be used in the quotation by selecting your preference from **Select as quotation**.

9. Once you have chosen your auto-coding options, select the **Start** button.

10. In this example, the program found and coded 56 instances of evening or evenings. This information can be found in two places.
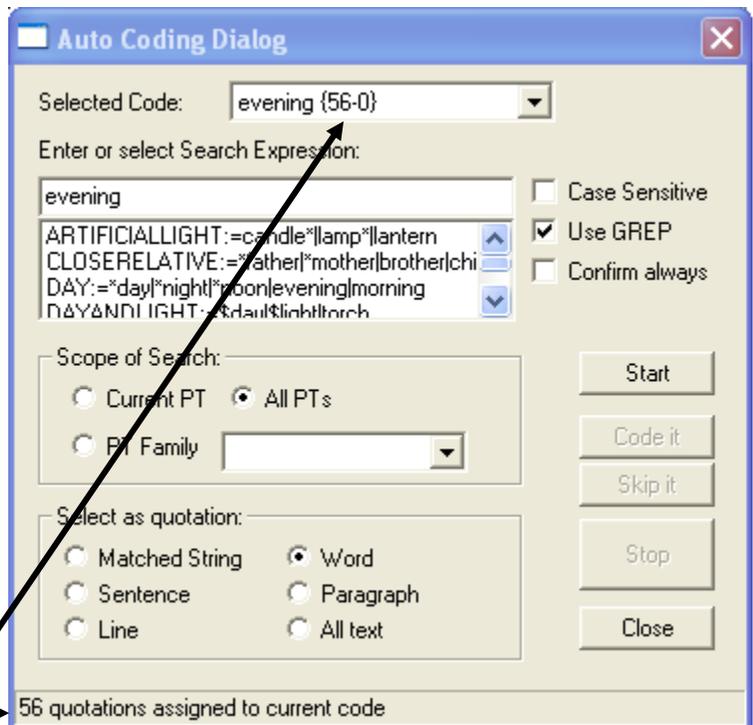
11. When you close this window, you will see that the program has coded and created quotations for all 56 instances.

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New Hermeneutic Unit

File   Documents   Quotations   Codes   Memos   Networks   Views   Extras   Help

P 4: 125S.txt | 4:11 evenings (923:923) | evening {56-0}

```
0916  without the other one.
0917
0918  C   Right, well you've said a bit about your dad, but what do you
0919  think he gets outs of being in a family?
0920
0921  J   Pretty much the same as my mum, I think.  He likes seeing us
0922  grow up and he er, and he that close to my mum and everything.  And
0923  I think from both of them as well, in the evenings, they have had a     ] evening
0924  hard day's work, and they just like to come home and see everyone
0925  "How is your day?" you know.
0926
0927  C   Right, so he gets pretty well out of it very similar sorts of
0928  things as your mum?
0929
0930  J   I would imagine so, yeah.
```

Set the Primary Text's display font. Use Setup for permanent settings

Optimizing Documents for Auto-coding

When analyzing textual data from a focus group, questionnaire, or interviews, you may have data that includes multiple speakers.

Data can be marked-up with unique identifiers that will optimize your documents to work with the auto-coding feature.

Simple examples are:

  ⇒ **P:** or <Peter>for a respondent with the name Peter
  ⇒ **07-01-03letter** for a letter written on the first of July 2003.[1]

The use of a unique identifier for a respondent will enable a user to select an entire section by a particular respondent without selecting other instances of Peter, mentioned in other respondents' answers.

To force the Auto-Coding tool to recognize an entire respondent's section, a **section delimiter** is required. So the section would begin with a unique identifier, as shown above, and end with either a hard return or an empty line, denoting the end of that respondent's section.

  ⇒ It is recommended that two hard returns are used to delimit sections, reserving a single hard return to denote a respondent's section into paragraphs.
  ⇒ When auto-coding such a document, you would choose **Multi Hard Returns** for extending the matched text.

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[1] ATLAS.ti Help Menu

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⇒ Using <Peter> as the search pattern would then yield a quotation including everything from <Peter> up to the empty line. [2]

In-Vivo Coding

In-vivo coding uses the text itself to create a code. This option is limited to 40 characters.

1. Select the passage (40 characters or less).

2. Select in-vivo code from toolbar OR select **Codes – Coding – Code In Vivo** from the menu.

3. The text appears highlighted and is translated into a code in the margin and code menu.
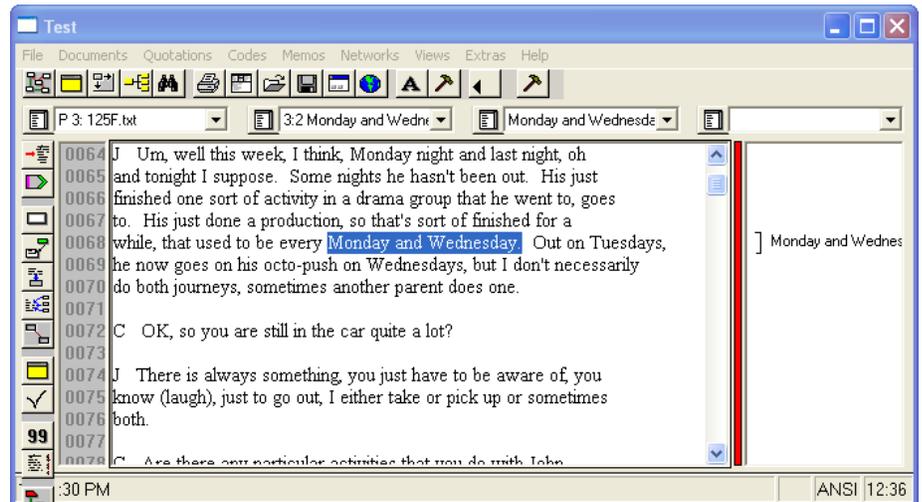
Quick

Quick coding is really only quick if you use the toolbar to code; the menus can be cumbersome to this process.

Quick coding is best used when you have a single code that you want to use to analyze an entire document. In order to use this function, you must have an existing code in your project.

1. Select the code you would like to use from your drop-down menu.

2. Select the text you would like to associate with the code.

3 Select the Quick Code button from the toolbar or go to **Codes – Coding – Quick Coding.**

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[2] ATLAS.ti Help Menu

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