

Case study

Qualitative datasets in the classroom at Cardiff University



The qualitative teaching datasets in *SAGE Research Methods datasets* fill a void in methods education

The datasets give practical, systematic, informed examples of the (often black-boxed) process of qualitative analysis by experts actually conducting research in the field."

—Jamie Lewis, PhD, Researcher and Lecturer in Qualitative Research, Cardiff University

Executive summary

Dr Jamie Lewis, SAGE Postdoctoral Fellow, and Dr Kate Moles, lecturer in Sociology, both at Cardiff University, use *SAGE Research Methods Datasets* to complement their teaching in methods courses in a variety of fields, allowing students at different levels to see real examples of data and analysis. Dr Lewis has also been actively involved in the creation of *SAGE Research Methods Datasets*.

Challenges

Finding examples of raw data for qualitative research projects is rare. When teaching qualitative analysis, professors need to show students what the data looks like, and they need sample data for homework exercises and exam questions. It often falls on the faculty members themselves to create sample data or to adapt data collected from their own research, which can eat up hours of valuable class prep time.

It is also rare to see a glimpse of how a researcher approaches the analysis of qualitative data. The conclusions are published in journal articles, but the process used to reach those conclusions is not always transparent, making it difficult for students learning to do qualitative analysis themselves.

How *SAGE Research Methods Datasets* helped

SAGE Research Methods Datasets includes raw data—ideal for teaching purposes—that demonstrates dozens of qualitative methods. Each dataset is packaged with an explanation of the method that is being applied and a step-by-step guide to analyzing the data.

“It allows students to examine the process and see that it is far from linear and straight forward, or even standard across qualitative data types, epistemological approaches, and theoretical alignments,”
says Lewis.

Dr Moles uses the datasets with undergraduates in the course Social Research Methods and in the Dissertation Module. She has also used them with Masters level students in a course on Qualitative Methods and with PhD candidates honing their research skills to complete their dissertation.

A single dataset is used during class to introduce a particular method or data type, such as field notes, to show students a tangible example of what the data looks like.

Results

Students are better able to grasp the various methods of qualitative data analysis after using the sample data in *SAGE Research Methods Datasets* and, most importantly, reading the detailed, step-by-step explanation of analysis that accompanies the data.

Once they’ve been introduced to the database in class, students can use it independently to master additional methods.

“It’s such a valuable resource,” says Lewis. ***“Students can go through one or two datasets in the seminars, but perhaps more importantly, this is something they can revisit themselves, in their own time.”***

Cardiff University is a public research university located in Wales, UK, established as one of Britain’s leading research universities.

Cardiff was ranked 5th amongst UK universities in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) based on quality, and is a member of the Russell Group, a group of 24 leading UK research intensive universities.

Famous researchers include Nobel Prize winners Professor Sir Martin Evans and Professor Robert Huber.

www.sageresearchmethods.com/datasets