Teamwork – Karen L. Andes, PhD.

Working in Teams can be an incredibly rich process for qualitative data analysis, particularly when your team members bring different disciplinary backgrounds, cultural and linguistic contexts, and life experiences to the project. It also brings some challenges in terms of data management; the teamwork functions in MAXQDA help to manage these nicely.

Merging versus Teamwork Functions

It is helpful to think of your MAXQDA project as containing two distinct types of information. First, your project contains primary data: these are the documents, transcripts, images, etc. that you are analyzing. Second, your project contains everything you have *added as you have interacted* with the primary data: memos, codes, segments, summaries, paraphrases, etc.

- **Merging**: When you merge two projects, you are combining the primary data and all of your additional interactions with the data.

  - ❖ This is most appropriate to use when each analyst is working with different primary data (e.g. Doc1, Doc2, Doc3 for analyst 1 and Doc4, Doc5, Doc6 for analyst 2). The resulting file will include Doc1-Doc6.

  - ❖ If both analysts are working with Doc1, Doc2, Doc3 and you merge the two projects, the resulting file will include 2 copies of each document.

- **Teamwork**: When both analysts are using the same primary data, you will likely want to export and import Teamwork rather than merging the files. The Teamwork function does not include the primary data – it merely transfers your **added interactions** with the data to those of the other analyst. (See Chapter 24 of the manual for a list of all possible information to be included in the exchange file.)

Exporting Teamwork

The basic process is simple: You have two MAXQDA projects – AnalysisA.mx18 and AnalysisB.mx18. Select one file to export teamwork, let's say AnalysisA.mx18.
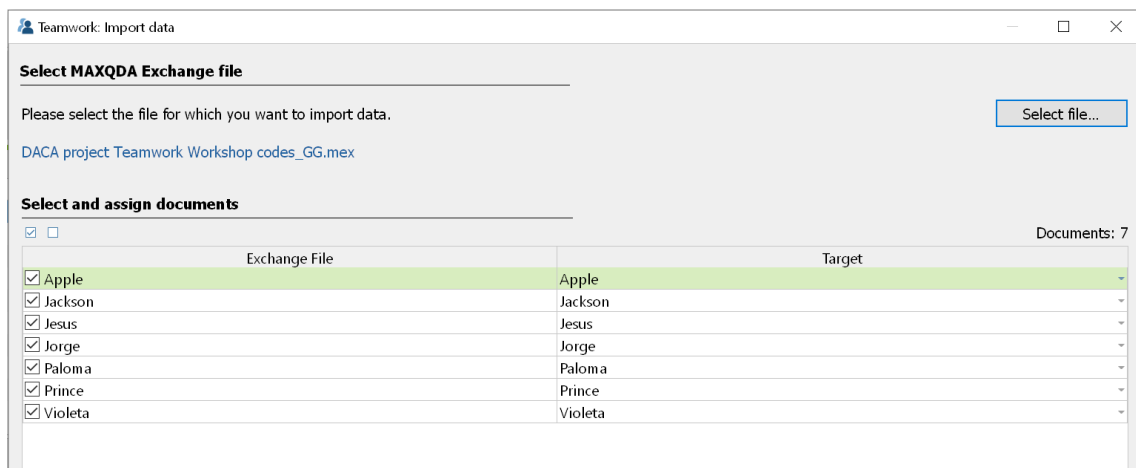
- From the **Home** menu, click on the **Teamwork** icon and select **Export Teamwork: Export Data to Exchange File**.

- Next, you will be prompted to select the documents you wish to include as well as the codes you wish to include in the export. By default, the file will be saved as an exchange file with the same name as the original project, but with the extension ".mex" (e.g. AnalysisA.mex).

Importing Teamwork

Then you will open the other project, AnalysisB.mx18. I recommend **Saving As** and giving it a new file name so you will maintain the original AnalysisB.mx18 file. You might call it AnalysisAplusB.mx18.

- From the **Home** menu, click on the **Teamwork** icon and select **Import Teamwork: Import Data from Exchange File**. You will then select the Exchange file you would like to Import (AnalysisA.mex).

- The next screen will display the alignment of documents between the two files. This is how you can confirm that the documents in both files have been match up so the analysts' work can be combined on each document.

- Once you have verified the alignment between documents, the next screen will show the codes available in both projects, with *new* codes (those in the file to be imported) shown in green font.

- Next, you will need to select exactly which data should be imported. The dialogue box will only display information that is available in the exchange file. In particular, you will need to decide on the following:

  ❖ **Coding Conflicts**: When the same code is applied to the same data in both projects, you will need to decide which segmentation to use. You can choose the segmentation from A, from B, the largest overlapping segment, or the smallest intersection segment.

  ❖ **Code Weights and Comments**: Choose whether to keep weights and comments (separately) from file A or overwrite with weights and comments from B.

❖ **Summaries**: Chose whether to keep summaries from A, overwrite summaries from B, or add imported summaries to existing ones.

❖ **Memos**: In-document memos will be imported unless there is an existing memo with the same name at the same location. Since only one document and code memo is allowed, these memos will only be imported if there is not an existing memo on the document or code. All free memos will be imported.

❖ **Paraphrases** will be imported unless there is already a paraphrase at the same location.

❖ **Variables** that do not already exist will be imported; if values on existing variables differ, the values from the import file will be kept.

TIPS!

Think carefully about your analysis process before beginning Teamwork processes!

- I always recommend having one team member serve as the Master File Administrator – the only person on the team who builds and distributes projects for other team members to work on, and the only one who merges and imports teamwork.

- It is really easy to suddenly have lots and lots of files when working in teams! Think about file storage and naming from the beginning. Add team mates' names to the files they have worked on and add the date at the end of the filename each time you work on it.

- Plan for aspects of the project that may be overwritten and develop alternatives that will facilitate *your* process.
  - ❖ For example, if both analysts will be writing document summaries to compare, consider putting those summaries in a separate document (e.g. Maria_Summary) rather than in a document memo.

- If you want to review coding from analyst A and analyst B on the same document – *without* any of the overlapping or intersecting segments being combined, add the analysts' name or initials to the end of the codename.
  - ❖ This allows you to review data where team members agreed or disagreed on code application in order to discuss code definitions and possible changes needed.