

7.1 How to edit texts

This question can be answered quickly: *Within* AQUAD you *never* edit a text! AQUAD is a program dedicated to the analysis of texts; you should refrain from any changes of texts, which form the basis of your analysis, during the process of analyzing them.

However, there may be good reasons not to treat the data base too orthodoxly! Maybe you detect one or another typing error, which you prefer to correct instead of preserving it for the final report. Sometimes you may feel that some additional information would support the interpretation, for instance, some hints of nonverbal behavior in a transcription of a videotaped discussion (well, with AQUAD 6 you will transcribe at the most crucial scenes of a video for quotation in your report). Or you would like to exclude some text segments from further analysis, for instance questions or comments of an interviewer, data describing the speaker, the site, etc., (see chapters 5 and 9). In all of these cases you have to edit the text base. This can be done *outside* of AQUAD without any limitations. Please, follow the guidelines for the preparation of texts in chapter 5 and take care

- (1) to save your texts in RTF or in ANSI format again after editing them in your text processor, and
- (2) not to change any line numbers!

If your texts are already coded *and* if you are going to insert or to delete complete lines, you will get a problem, however! The sequence of line numbers will be damaged, and maybe some code entries will be wrong. Therefore, you should prepare your texts carefully for coding and not change them after you started to attach codes to them. Of course, changes within a line, even adding text longer than your screen can show, will not interfere with your prior work.

7.2 How to edit codes

Remember, codings are composed of code words and associated line numbers (or their equivalents: 1/10 of seconds, frames, pixel coordinates). Maybe there was a typing error during coding, maybe you want to differentiate a very general code like "emotion" later and want to enter instead "joy" or "fear", etc., later. As was already described in chapter 6, these codings can be edited in case of texts as data in "*One-step coding*" as well as in "*Two-step coding*"; in case of audios or videos editing is more or less the same as in "*Two-step coding*":

- Within the text modes "*One-step Coding*" and "*Two-step coding*" (see sub-menu "*Coding*") as well as within the data modes "*Picture*", "*Audio*" and "*Video*" you can delete codings and attach new ones – code entry by code entry.
- Within "*One-step Coding*" and "*Two-step Coding*" of texts as well as within the data modes "*Picture*", "*Audio*" and "*Video*" there is a special button "Codes" in a field labeled "Search" on the right side of the window. This button gives access to retrieve and replace functions (see chapter 6.5.2), which will help you to edit all codings of a particular kind at once.

Please, keep in mind: AQUAD allows only editing of codings attached to data segments, not the content of these data segments! By the way: Most people would not think of "editing" a video recording while analyzing it in AQUAD, so do the same if texts are your data base. More details about how to edit codes can be found in chapter 6.

This paragraph is interesting *only* if you are coding texts: Because you get an overview primarily on the codes in the main window, we suggest that you edit codings, if necessary, from within the option "*Two-step coding*" – even if you preferred to use "*One-step coding*" until now. Remember: If you want to check the validity of a code entry by scrutinizing the corresponding text segment within "*Two-step coding*", a mouse-click on the code name opens an additional text window.

It is important generally to remember that you can check each code entry within each data mode (texts, pictures, audios, videos), if you click on the code name in the column "Codes" of the list of code entries (table on the left side of the screen). This opens a small window, where you confirm, edit, or erase the code entry. Additionally – in case you are working with texts – a text window opens that allows to compare easily the code entry and the text segment, to which this code was attached. In case you are analyzing audios or videos, you click the button "*Loop*" below in the green operation panel of the audio player or video player and listen to or watch a particular scene of the recording again. In graphic presentations, for instance drawings, clicking on a code name will show a frame around the coded part of the presentation.

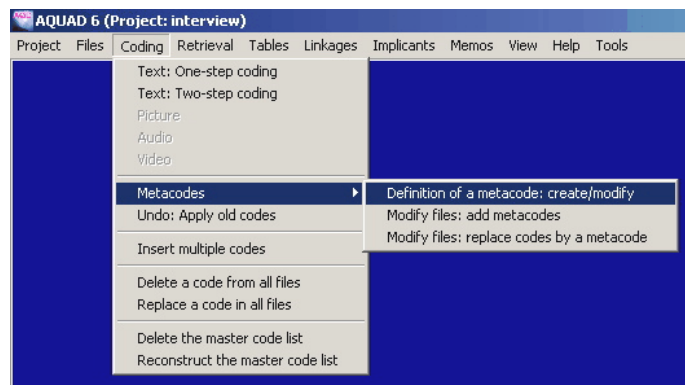
7.3 If editing is not enough: producing meta-codes

If you apply the strategy of generalization described in chapter 2, you will invent many different codes while reading and interpreting your data for the first time. Soon you will reach a point where you have to compare your various codes and their corresponding data segments to find commonalities and fundamental differences. This point is reached very soon, if you start your work without any particular strategy, but just openness for the meanings hidden in the data. From the very beginning you will find many interesting data segments, and you will mark them with meaningful codes. However, without permanent comparison the danger would be too great to get lost in details and to apply different codes for similar units of meaning in the data files. Therefore, we need to alternate between analysis of details and putting details back into their context – and consequently re-organize our system of codes again and again.

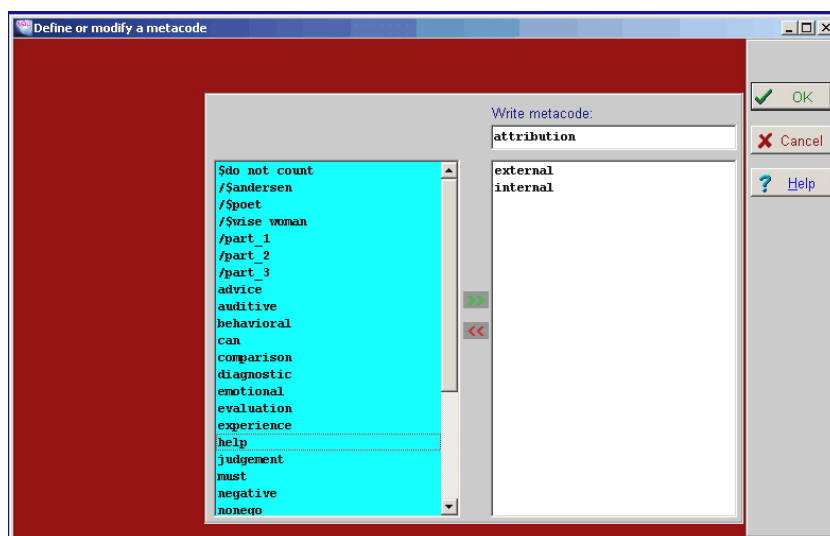
An efficient approach ordering codes is comparing them permanently (see principle of "permanent comparison" in chapter 5) and generalizing them tentatively. We check each code, whether it represents similar phenomena as some other codes. If so, we can perhaps understand these other codes as sub-codes, or we can subsume all of them under a new super-ordinate code. This type of super-ordinate codes is addressed in AQUAD as *meta-codes*. If you get a hunch that meta-coding may support your overview and structure your work, you should print the code catalog, that is the list of all codes introduced in your work until now (see chapter 6), and mark all those codes, maybe with different colors, which belong together under some meaningful concept. Then you should invent a name, that is a meta-code for each of these new groups of codes.

After these preparations you choose from the sub-menu "Coding" the option for creating (or later: modifying) meta-codes:

"Definition of a metacode: create /modify".

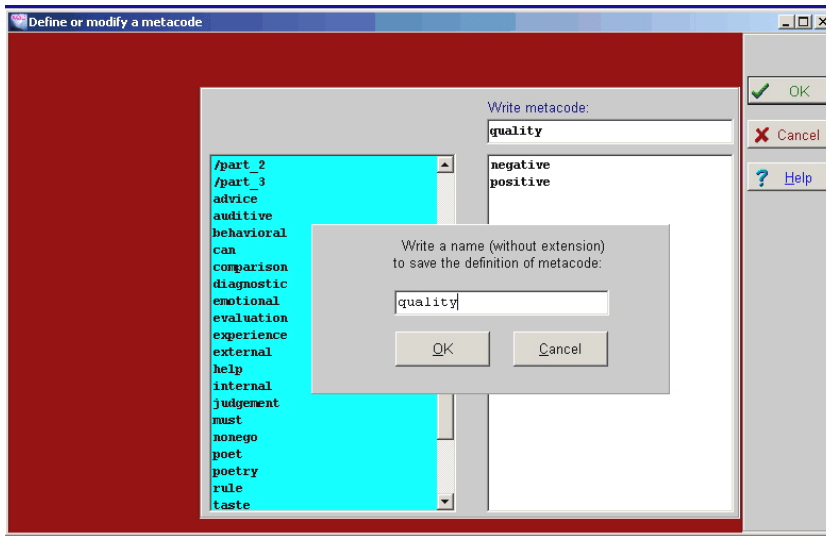


This opens the following window:



As regards the slot labeled "Write metacode" you do exactly that: Write a new code name – a *metacode* – into this slot. Later this new code will replace some existing codes or be added to their data segments.

Then you select these codes by clicking on these codes in the light-blue box on the left (master code list). Of course, you can undo any selection by clicking on a code in the white selection box.



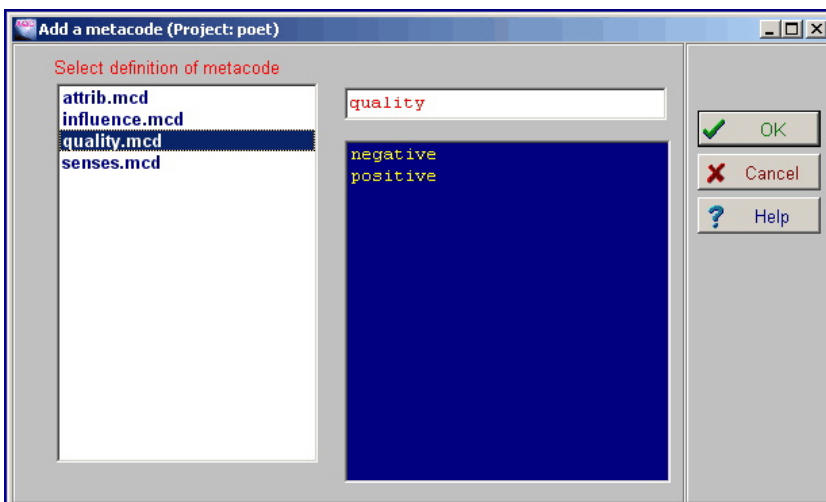
After clicking on the button "OK" the definition of your new metacode will be saved. That is, AQUAD will create a file containing the new code name and the list of sub-ordinate old codes for later application. That is why you are asked (see figure on top of the next page) to write a file name (without extension!) for the metacode definition:

In our example we defined a metacode "quality" (see entry slot), which will replace the codes "negative" and "positive."

We found it quite helpful to save the definitions always under the same name as the defined metacode. That is why you wrote "quality" again as file name into the entry slot.

7.3.1 Modify files: add metacodes

At this point you should be familiar with the difference between *replacing* existing codes by a newly introduced meta-code and *adding* a meta-code to your existing codes. To add a metacode, you select in the group "Coding" the option "Metacodes", then "Modify files: add metacodes."



In the box on the left we see the list of available metacode definitions (compare the extension: "mcd"). Supposing we want to apply the newly saved definition "quality.mcd", we click on this name – and the file name appears in read on top of the blue box, where the content is shown, that is, the list of sub-ordinate codes.

After clicking on the "OK" button, the new meta-code is *added* to each of the old, grouped codes. Thus, your original codes are not lost. However, your code files get longer and longer, particularly if you play with the possibility of generalizing by introducing meta-codes – what you should try to do! Therefore, if you intend to use this option frequently, you better apply the function "Replace by a meta-code", which also keeps care that your original code files are saved for subsequent analyses.

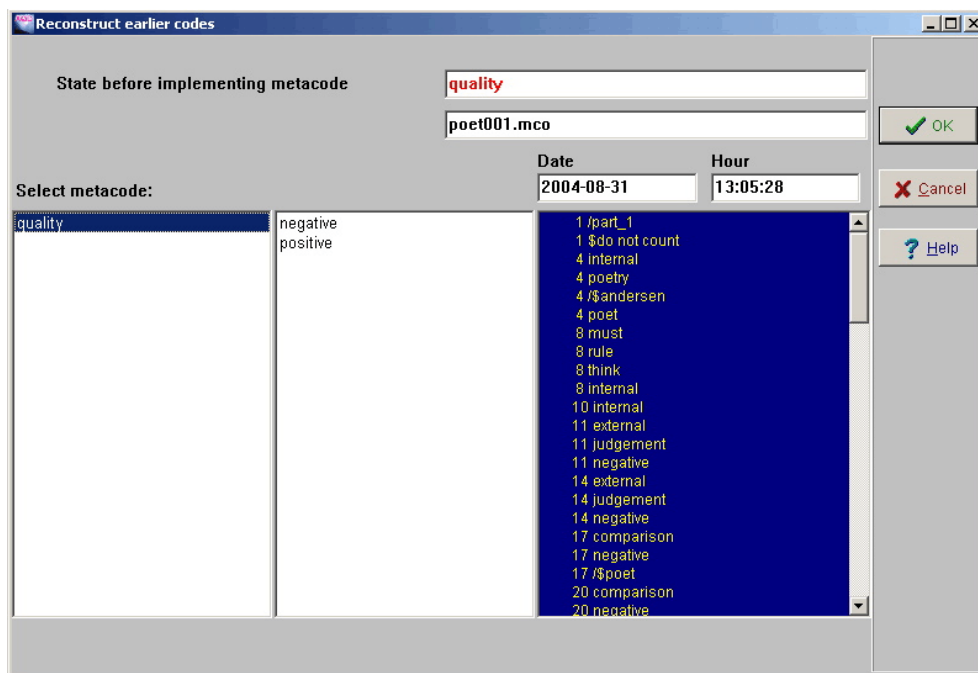
7.3.2 Modify files: replace codes by meta-codes

The procedure of selecting a particular metacode is exactly the same as shown above in paragraph 7.3.1. However, after clicking on the "OK" button, the sub-ordinate codes disappear from the code files and listings, and are *replaced* by the metacode you selected. Don't worry: Your old code files are not erased or overwritten, but saved separately in the directory `..\mco\` together with information about date and time of their construction. Thus your initial codes are not touched and may be retrieved for later use.

Remember: AQUAD stores only up to 100 modifications of your initial code files. From modification no. 101 on already stored files are overwritten, beginning with the oldest file (*-001.cod). AQUAD will show a warning in this case, so you can decide about saving all your previous code files manually in a different directory.

7.3.3 Reconstruct previous codings

If you decide to return to a former state of codification, select in the menu-group "Coding" the option "Undo: Apply old codes:"



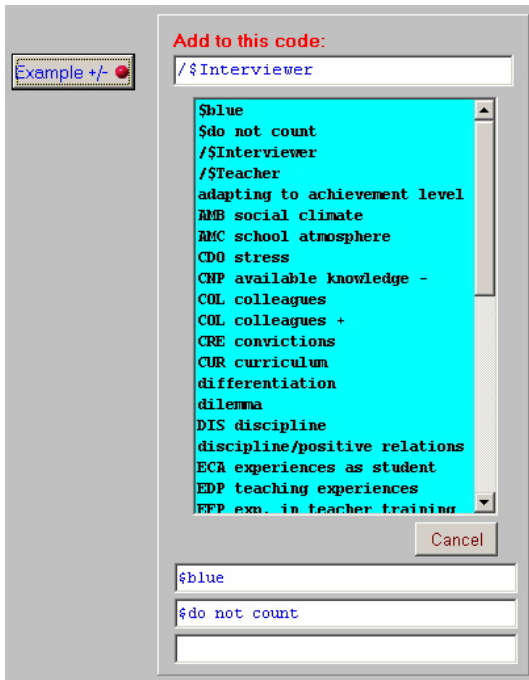
You click in the box on the left on the name of a metacode, which you want to undo in your code files. If you applied more than one version of the same metacode, there will be a list of identical metacode names. To make sure you find the metacode you are looking for, the box in the middle shows the components (sub-ordinate codes) of the selected metacode. (In the example we have only one metacode definition to select ...), and in the blue box on the right you find the beginning of the code file attached to the first data file (here: "poet001") in your project (here: "poet"). Above this box you see date and hour, when you replaced codes in the then actual code files by the selected metacode. Now you may restore the former state by clicking on "OK."

It is a good idea to use the memo function, when you apply metacodes. Particularly you should create a sort of research diary and note exactly, at what day and time you implemented which metacode in your system of codification. Memos of this kind will make it easy to retrieve the critical state of coding among up to 100 different states of modification.

7.4 Insert multiple codes

This option allows to add up to four codes at the same time to a specific data segment (marked lines in text, a scene in a video, etc.). This is very helpful, for instance, if you want to code simultaneously the parts of a particular speaker with a speaker code (e.g., /\$Interviewer), highlight these text segments in a specific color (e.g., \$blue), and exclude the content from counting on the level of words (\$do not count). Just click in the coding window on the button "*mult. codes*" in the middle (cf. chap. 6.5.1).

However, sometimes you are not aware from the very beginning of coding that particular data segments need multiple codes, but only later you are confronted with the necessity to add in many files to many segments of a particular code some additional codes, probably control codes. Of course, the retrieval functions for codes both in the main menu or within a particular coding mode (like "*One-step coding*") would give rapid access to all critical data segments – but then you would have to enter the codes manually and start the function for entering codes again and again. A more convenient possibility would be to apply the function "*Modify files: add metacodes*" (see above) creatively to insert automatically additional codes at defined locations within the data files. From a point of view of conceptual clarity we preferred to add a specific function "*Insert multiple codes*," which does exactly and straightforwardly what we just described:



First we select (double click) from the master code list (light blue window) a code to which we want to add multiple codes. That is precisely, these multiple codes are added to the data segments already coded with the selected, "leading" code. Then we enter the additional codes by selecting or writing them into the entry slots at the bottom of the window. Clicking on the green button "*Insert code/s*" starts the operation.

This button appears to the left of the button "*Cancel*," but is not visible at the moment in the screen shot, because we activated the "*Example +/-*" function: Clicking on this button inserts an example of leading code ("/\$Interviewer") and multiple codes ("\$blue", "\$do not count"); clicking a second time clears the entry slots again for your particular codes.