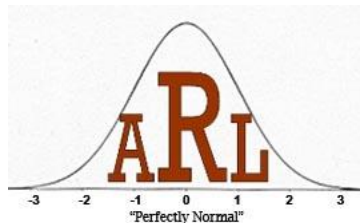# Using NVivo to Organize Literature Reviews
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April 20, 2012

Goals of Literature Reviews

- Literature reviews are a common feature of research in many different disciplines
- Literature reviews generally seek to
  - Describe methods and findings of previous research
  - Highlight significant themes
  - Note areas needing further research
- Accomplishing these tasks requires organizing what is often a large body of research

Choosing an Organizational Method

- Variety of options for organizing the literature
  - Some researchers create large tables in Microsoft Word
  - Another option is NVivo, a software program designed to assist with qualitative analysis
  - Personal preference matters
    - Use a system that makes sense to you

Literature Reviews as Content Analysis

- DiGregorio (2000) - in both content analysis and literature reviews, the researcher:
  - Reads and comments on the literature/data
  - Identifies key themes
  - Extracts the 'gold dust' quotes to be used when writing
  - Identifies contradictions in arguments
  - Compares dissimilarities in articles/transcripts

- NVivo is specifically designed for these kinds of tasks

Goals of this Presentation

- Describe how NVivo can help you organize the literature
- Briefly demonstrate the basic processes of NVivo
- Provide resources for future reference
  - Handouts with step-by-step instructions
  - Link to NVivo tutorials

NVivo Terminology

- Sources – content to analyze
  - Journal articles, researchers' notes, interview transcripts
- Nodes – organizational categories representing themes and other important points
  - "Buckets" for content
- Coding – process of placing pieces of sources into the nodes

Getting the Literature into NVivo

Three options for placing content into NVivo
1. Import articles
2. As you read, type notes in external documents, then import those documents
3. As you read, type notes in NVivo documents

Option One: Importing Articles

- Import journal articles and other sources
  - A copy is saved within the NVivo project
- Advantage
  - Can code the articles themselves, aren't required to type notes
- Disadvantages
  - Image .pdf files are not compatible with NVivo
  - You'll still end up typing some notes for image .pdfs and hard copy sources like books
  - Increases the size of the Nvivo file

Option One: Importing Articles
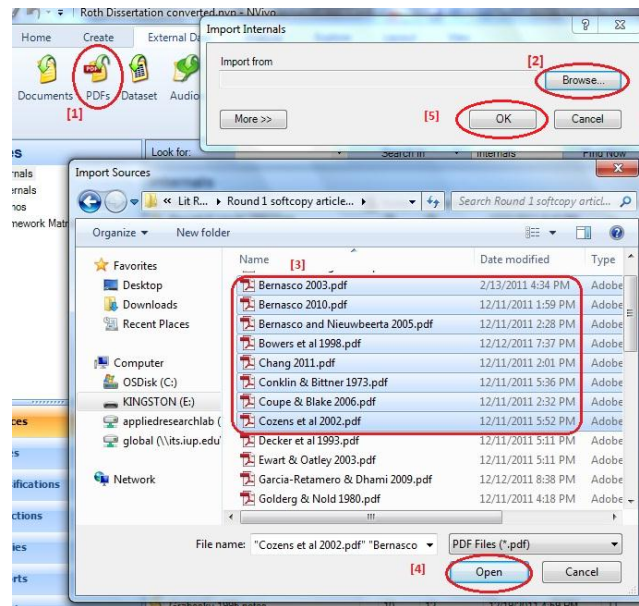
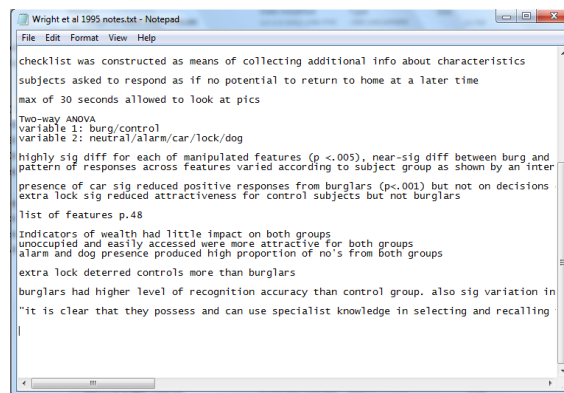[1] Select the type of file to import

[2] Click "Browse"

[3] Select the files to import

[4] Click "Open"

[5] Click "OK"

Option Two: Notes in External Documents

- As you read, note important information and type it into a text document
- Then import those documents using the same process as for articles

Option Two: Notes in External Documents

- Advantages
  - You can include your own commentary on the article in these files
  - Reduces size of NVivo file
  - Notes will be accessible on computers without NVivo installed
- Disadvantage
  - Creating notes about each article
    - Copy/paste from small pieces from the articles when you can

Option Three: Notes in NVivo

- You can also type notes directly into NVivo
- Advantage
  - Bypasses the import process
- Disadvantage
  - Still required to create notes on each article
  - You will be unable to open these notes on computers that do not have NVivo installed

Option Three: Notes in NVivo
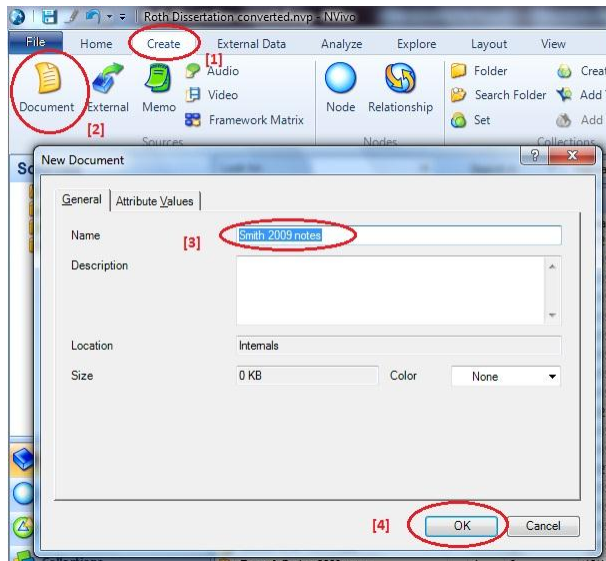
[1] In the "Create" tab

[2] click "Document"

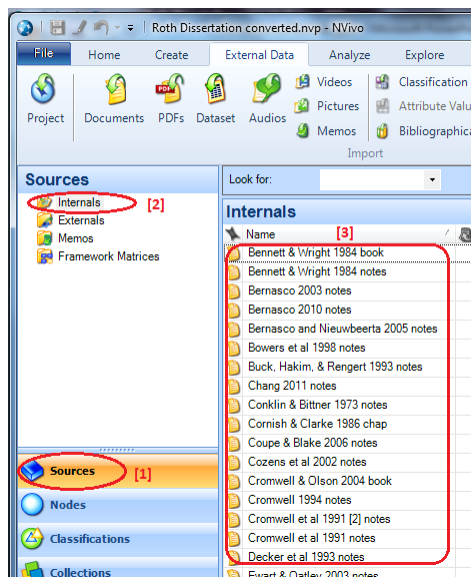[3] name the document

[4] click "OK"

Coding the Literature

- Sources or notes are into NVivo. Now what?
- Organize the content by placing pieces of text into buckets
- In NVivo, the process of placing text into buckets is called "coding," and NVivo calls these buckets "nodes"

Coding the Literature
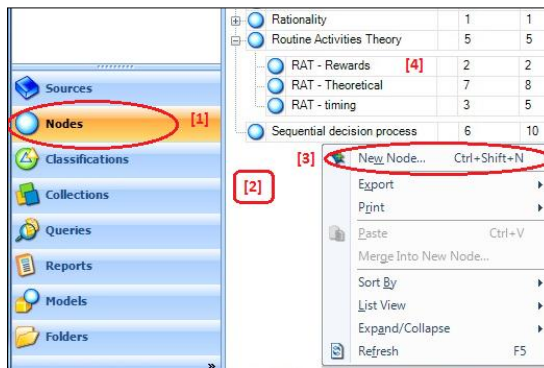
- To create nodes, click the "Nodes" group [1], then right-click in the white area [2], then select "New Node" [3]

- If you right-click on an existing node, the new node will be created as a sub-node of that existing node [4]

Coding the Literature

- To code, first open a source

- Regardless of which method you used to place content into NVivo, you can open a source by clicking the "Sources" group [1], then the "Internals" folder [2], and then a particular source [3].

- Notice that file name becomes the document name in NVivo, and so "Author_Year" format for file names is recommended

Coding the Literature

- Once a source is open, highlight a piece of text to code [1]
- Type the beginning of a node name in the coding bar at the bottom and select the appropriate node from the list that appears [2]
- Then hit the "Enter" key or click the green check mark [3]
- Pieces of text can be coded to multiple nodes
- See illustration on next slide

Coding the Literature

Coding Recommendations

- You may find that after a first attempt at coding, some of the nodes contain too much text to be very useful
- In these cases you can create sub-nodes under the larger node, recode material to these sub-nodes, and uncode it from the larger one

Re-Coding to New Nodes

- Double-click on a node to open it [1]
- Highlight a piece of text to recode [2]
- Right-click on the highlighted text, and in the pop-up menu select "Uncode selection" [3]
- At this point you have two options
  - Clicking "Uncode selection at existing nodes" [4a] will uncode the selected text from all nodes
  - Clicking "Uncode selection this node" will uncode the selected text only from the current node [4b]
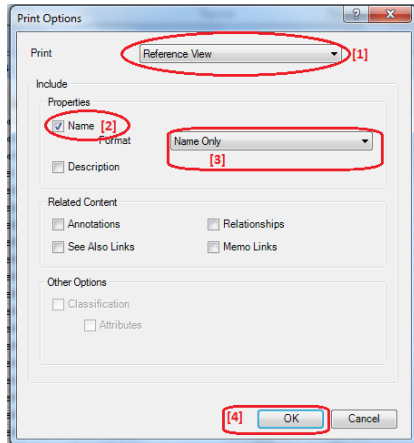
Re-Coding to New Nodes
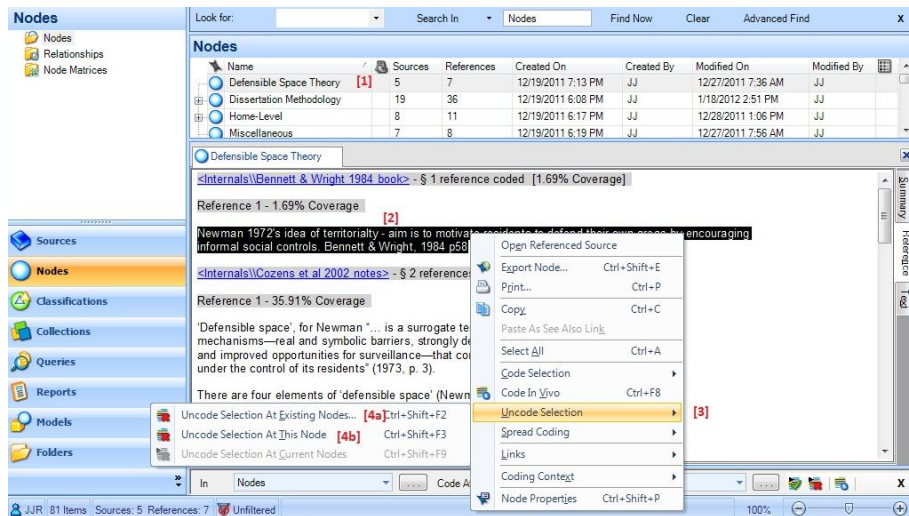
Printing Nodes
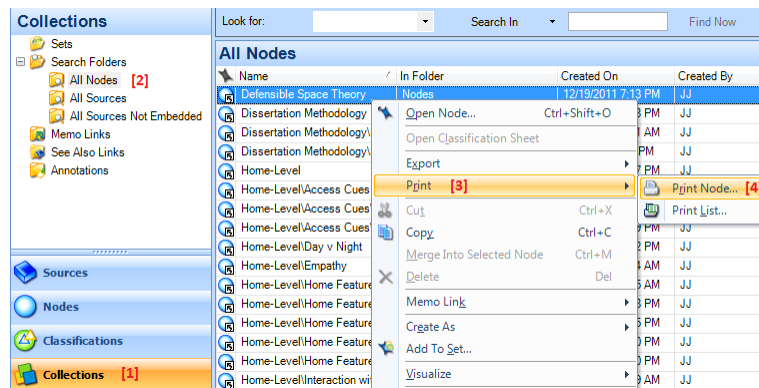
- Click the "Collections" group
- Then select the "All Nodes" folder
- Right-click on the node you want to print, then select "Print" followed by "Print Node"

Printing Nodes

- The "Print Options" window appears
- Select "Reference View" [1]
- Check the "Name" box [2], and select "Name Only" [3]
- Then click "OK" [4]
- NVivo will then ask you to select a printer before printing the node

Additional Resources

- Short video tutorials for NVivo are available at http://www.qsrinternational.com/support_tutorials.aspx?productid=20

- NVivo can be downloaded at no cost by IUP students and faculty from http://www.iup.edu/itsupportcenter/howto.aspx?id=87835

- NVivo is also installed on public computers on IUP campuses

Acknowledgment

This presentation was inspired by:

> di Gregorio, S. (2000). *"Using NVivo for Your Literature Review."* Paper presented at Strategies in Qualitative Research: Issues and Results from Analysis using QSR NVivo and Nud*ist conference at the Institute of Education, London.

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