

# Different ways to incorporate software training into your research grant

By Neville Li July 26, 2014

Using qualitative data analysis software can be outside of the comfort zone of some researchers because of lack of knowledge of how to use the software, lack of time to learn a new software while balancing the multiple demands of academic and managerial duties, and a limited budget for software-related expenses. Here, I offer a few tips researchers have used to most effectively request money in your research grant proposal (e.g., for CIHR, SSHRC in Canada and NIH in the United States) with regard to software training and licenses:

1) *Include a budget line in the research grant proposal for purchasing one or a few licenses of the software.*

-If you are seasoned in writing research grant proposals, chances are you have already included a budget line for software purchase. The costs of the most useful qualitative data analysis software are comparable. Be sure to factor in the costs of license renewal for multi-year projects because some licenses are valid for one or two years only.

2) *Include a budget line for bringing in an outside consultant to assist with data collection, analysis and output.*

-Much like a systematic review that should include a librarian, qualitative researchers can bring in an outside trainer for practical advice on data collection, analysis and interpretation for the particular software you are using. In the grant, you can write a per hour fee and the estimated hours you will need for the project. This will not cost you much but it will help you TREMENDOUSLY with an expert to guide you through and to point out the red flags. However, this is not always possible because of the ethics requirements of universities or governmental departments.

3) *Include a budget line for a training workshop for the entire team of researchers, graduate students and trainees.*

-This is the most cost-effective method to justify in a research grant proposal. If ethics requirements prevent you from letting an outside

consultant access the data, or your research budget is tight, you can write in a training workshop for your entire team for once. Faculty, post-doctoral trainees, graduate students, research assistants can all attend the workshop and learn everything they need to know. These workshops are typically one day or two days and demonstrate that you are dedicated to training future researchers. They cost a couple thousand dollars and you can invite as many people to attend as you want.

Qualitative research should be systematic, rigorous and not any more “simply” than quantitative research that traditionally stresses mathematical precision and numerical logics. By incorporating software training in your project and clearly understanding how to approach data collection and the possibilities to analyze those data, qualitative research will continue to evolve into a well-respected research stream that can stand the test of logics and rigour.