

## My Dissertation Journey

1. I had never written a dissertation
2. I had never done a study related to qualitative analysis
3. I had never used MAXQDA for my data analysis software
4. I began coding data using MAXQDA in March, 2017 – Completed coding/thematic analysis in one weekend
5. Completed my dissertation (writing chapter's 4-5) by June, 2017
6. I am now a 'champion' for this software and have run training programs on the use of this qualitative software for Grand Canyon University

## Introduction and Problem

Introduction: There is a high need for secondary special education teachers and transition specialists to collaborate as they make decisions regarding transitioning college-bound students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to higher education (Bjorkman Wade, 2014).

Problem: It was not known how secondary special education teachers and transition specialists perceived their collaborative efforts regarding the transition process as it spoke to the theoretical principles of situation and support.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how secondary special education teachers and transition specialists in the State of Arizona perceived their collaborative efforts regarding the transition process of college bound students with ASD from secondary to higher education as it spoke to the principles of situation and support.

## Research Questions

R<sub>1</sub>. How do secondary special education teachers and transition specialists perceive their collaborative efforts regarding the transition process as it speaks to the principle of situation?

R<sub>2</sub>. How do secondary special education teachers and transition specialists perceive their collaborative efforts regarding the transition process through the principle of support?

## Principles of Situation and Support

Based on Nancy Schlossberg's Theory of Transition (1984).

Situation: Individuals perception related to the transition

Support: Persons who are integral to the individual during the transition phase

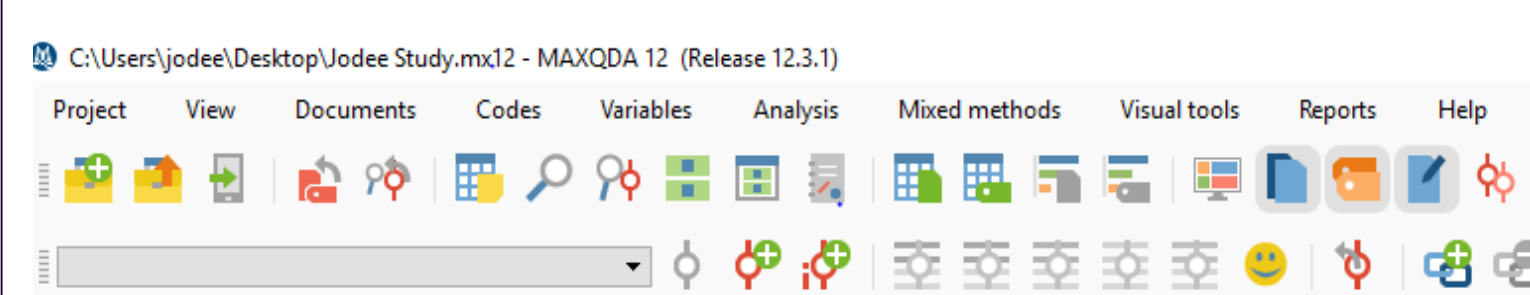
## Data Analysis

- The researcher used Miles, Huberman and Saldaña's (2014) recommendations to analyze this qualitative data.
- Data analysis launched with the review of the blank secondary transition plan document.
- Responses from 14 purposefully selected teachers and transition specialists were individually interviewed and also participated in two focus groups.
- Responses from interviews and focus groups were coded based on responses pertaining to perceptions of collaborative efforts.
- Themes were presented by their comparative findings that allowed the researcher to tell their story through the voice of the participants.

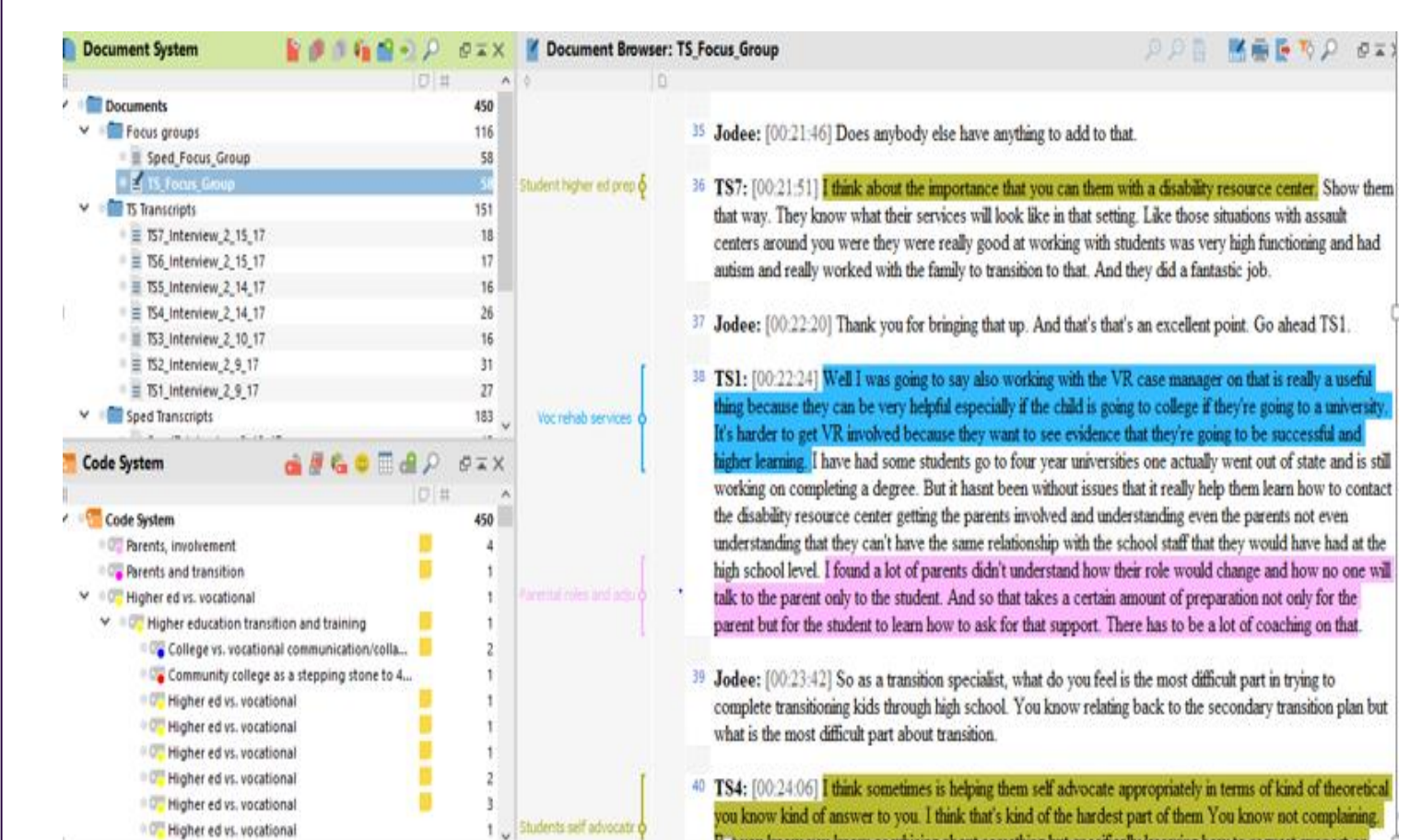
## Target Population

The target population of this study was 7 secondary special education teachers (Sped) and 7 transition specialists (TS) working in the State of Arizona.

## My Dashboard



## Example of coding



## Results

### RQ 1 Codes and Themes

- 76 initial codes
- 24 sub-themes
- Resulted in 4 themes to answer RQ 1

### RQ 2 Codes and Themes

- 46 initial codes
- 15 sub-themes
- Resulted in 3 themes to answer RQ 2

## Results (cont.)

- Overall findings for RQ1 resulted in all 14 participants noting collaboration being essential to successful student transition and largely dependent on the attitudes of team members as identified in the code matrix browser from MAXQDA:

- Self Advocacy
- Self Advocacy and Students with ASD
- Self Advocacy and students with ASD
- Strategies for specialists and students with ASD
- Socialization aspects of ASD
- Social skills, strategies and support
- Social aspects of ASD
- Self Advocacy
- Self-advocacy and strategies
- Self-advocacy Training
- Self-advocacy, strategies
- Self Advocacy Training
- Self Advocacy preparation for higher education
- Self Advocacy and the IEP
- Self Advocacy and socialization for ASD
- Self Advocacy and socialization
- Self Advocacy and preparation
- Self Advocacy and individual
- Self Advocacy and identification
- Self-advocacy and higher education
- Self-advocacy and determination
- Self-advocacy and collaboration
- Self-advocacy and appropriate social behavior
- Self-advocacy and accountability

- Overall findings for RQ2 resulted in trust, relationships and working together as a team to effectively transition students with ASD from secondary to higher education. All 14 participants noted the importance of building trust through communication.

## Sources of Data

Three sources of data provided information to address the research questions:

1. Blank secondary transition plan document
2. 14 semi-structured interviews
3. 2 focus groups

## Additional Analyses

- Findings were consistent with previous research noting a lack of collaboration among these specialists
- All 14 participants outlined the lack of transition knowledge in how to effectively transition students with ASD from secondary to higher education

## Future Research

- A future recommendation for research involves repeating this case study to focus on whether the years spent as a transition specialist has an impact on collaboration.
- Another recommendation would be to consider conducting a similar study exploring the transition into vocational rather than higher education.
- It is recommended that a future study includes how parental involvement throughout the transition process to impacts student with ASD's transition

## My Background

- 20 years as a certified special education teacher
- Seven years in higher education as adjunct professor
- Recent doctoral graduate (June, 2017)
- Currently work as a Research Specialist for College of
- Doctoral Studies, Office of Dissertation at GCU
- Provide training webinars on use of MAXQDA software for doctoral students

## References

- Jacobs, J. E. (2017). *Secondary special education teachers and transition specialists: Collaborative efforts*. (Doctoral Dissertation). Krell, M. M. (2011). *Defining college readiness for students with autism spectrum disorders: A Delphi study to guide school counselors*. (Doctoral Dissertation).
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