

Selected software packages provide a powerful toolkit for research into VET

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VET is a particular research context in which it is essential that the complexities of the workplace are taken into account. We contend that a number of sophisticated software packages are available to facilitate such research. Providing that sound theoretical and methodological frameworks are not neglected, computer-assisted research in the VET sector has the potential to produce results more quickly with greater depth of analysis. Software packages on their own, but especially in combination, provide powerful tools for analysis of quite large multi-method studies. For example, the use of the *NUD*IST* software package facilitates a more in depth analysis of qualitative data. *NUD*IST* also has the facility to import base data tables from *Excel*. Output tables of quantitative data produced by *NUD*IST* can also be introduced into *SPSS* for analysis. *SPSS* can also be teamed with *QUEST* for Rasch analysis for a comprehensive analysis of quantitative data. Research on Dual Accredited Vocational Courses in New South Wales to illustrate the power of these combinations.

Software packages can also facilitate greater collaboration between researchers. *MSPProject* also provides a tool for developing and sharing tasks and time goals. *Merge* allows different *NUD*IST* projects to be merged so that researchers working on the same data set can do so independently but later can occur. *MSWord* with *NUD*IST* allows ease of report writing. The use of these packages will be illustrated in a large multi-method, recently completed project in which similar hardware across researchers in a developing country context proved to be extremely beneficial.
***Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Search and Theorising**

Topic area: Research and technology - using technology in research - implications for researchers and the researched.

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