

# Class 5 - Oct 5

Thursday, October 5, 2017

8:36 AM

## In-depth vs Standardized Interviewing

- **Standardized** elicit responses to pre-determined answers, trying to get info re a large number of people, basic info that they can get some sort of standardized idea re that group.
  - Usually, the person conducting the interview is just reading a script and don't diverge from it
  - If they diverge, they may influence/bias the research
  - However, even this standardized testing can be biased
  - Close-ended questions
  - Quantitative, meant to get through aggregate data
- Goal as qualitative researcher is to obtain complex participant-identified data and understand the rich narratives of their experiences.
  - **In-depth interviews** are typically one-on-one interactions in which the researcher poses questions to elicit responses from the participant.
  - In-depth interviews are characterised by deep exploration into a narrow area.
  - Small amount of people - maximum 30 people
  - Trying to get the interviewee to explain their experience, give details re. attitudes, feelings and define the situation in a way that's meaningful to them - directed conversation
  - Get them to tell us re the meaning their actions/experiences had for them and sentiments/feelings that underlined their experiences.
  - Trying to shed light on this puzzle - why do we criminalize in certain ways etc.

Issues w interviewing:

- Can't ever get a true sense about the individual - need humility in that you can't fully get that from people

### **Types of in-depth interviews (choose one of these for research paper):**

- *Informal, conversational*: Opportunistic interviews that take place “on the spot” with relatively little structure.
- *Semi-Structured*: Interviews organised around an “interview guide” with flexibility for probing and exploring new paths. Interviewed and you walk away and try to make meaning. Rarely want to ask questions that have the interviewee conduct the analysis - you do that after the fact.
- *Standardised, open-ended*: Scripted interviews that follow a set interview schedule with no flexibility.
- *Dialogic*: Unstructured interviews that aim at collaborative meaning creation through “talk”. Trying to make meaning together
- In-depth interviews need to involve more one-sided conversation. Researcher should say a lot less. Interviewer can never engage in passive listening, whereas in regular convo you can do that. It's not just the *what* of what's being said, but the *how* too.
- Always going to be interpreting the interaction. You're interpreting the interaction - was the interviewee hostile, what was their body language, what words did they use to refer to you? Did they interrupt you?

#### **Strengths of In-Depth Interviewing**

- Yields rich data quickly.
- Empowers participants to articulate meanings and experience.
- Enables follow-up,

#### **Weaknesses of In-Depth Interviewing**

- Quality of data depends on developing a relationship of trust.
- Hard to construct questions that produce rich data.
- Researchers may lack adequate interpretive

clarification and new  
paths of inquiry.

adequate interpretive  
knowledge.

If you have good data but can't interpret it properly,

You're helping formulate ideas/opinions that interviewee might have never known that they possess - very generative process

### Conducting In-depth Interview

- Avoid random sampling, consider snowball sampling
- choose people for the qualities they have - the ones w the greatest insight into the topic
- choose participants who may help to undermine the hierarchy of credibility - how did you choose pop? **Include on paper.**
- try to remain flexible
- Typically snow-balling - conduct interview w one member of group of interest and let the word spread - choose ppl for the qualities they have
- Sample method might include gatekeeping.
- Need to always think about the gaps in data
- Need to give yourself a doable amount of interviews - 30 max

### Interview Guide 1

- The interview guide is a set of pre-determined interview questions.
- The relationship between the interview guide and your research question/objective is fundamental.
- Make sure your interview questions address your research question!
- What are the broad areas of interest? What are the larger research Qs?
- You need to write down a whole list of possible questions, including probing

questions. All of them must be open-ended and you need to think re how they're structured for interviewees

- Probe is a follow-up questions: "you mentioned \_\_\_\_\_, so tell me more about that"
  - What about key markers?
  - If they keep coming back to a specific place, keep bringing attention to those markers
- End it with "is there a question I should have asked and didn't"
- You want your guide to have questions that have a logical sequence - conversational art
- *Logical Sequence*: Your interview guide must organise questions in a logical sequence, in which questions build on each other cumulatively.
- *Conversational Arch*: Your interview guide should follow a conversational arch:  
*"easy" questions → "grand tour" questions → challenging questions → closing question(s)*

### **Interview Questions:**

- *The principles of good qualitative interview questions also must be applied to your probes!*
- *Openness*: Questions should promote exploration.
- *Neutrality*: Avoid leading or loaded questions.
- *Straightforwardness*: Questions should not be complicated. Therefore, avoid:
  - academic jargon, (inappropriate) technical language, convoluted phrasing, questions with a preamble, "big" words, and double-barrelled construction.
- Need to make sure your participant feels empowered.
- Don't let participant know your mind is made up about something already
- Always ask simple questions - don't ask them about sub questions
- Before you commence the interview:

Express gratitude.

- Ensure participant is comfortable; try to put participant at ease.
- Be friendly, polite and act appropriately for the person you're interviewing.
- Get comfortable and set up.
- Remind participant of the study goals and process.
- Obtain informed consent, including addressing participant's questions or concerns.
- If you have permission, inform participant that you will begin audio-recording, and start your recording device.

Doing your interview:

- *Posing questions*: Loosely follow interview guide, but avoid reading off it. Use probing questions to follow-up, seek deeper understanding, pursue new paths.
- *Conversational approach*: Aim for conversational dynamic.
- *Jottings*: Discretely make jottings on your observations, themes etc.
  - If you are not audio-recording, jottings should be more detailed and systematic. Make jottings on paper, never with a computer/tablet.
  - Reciprocity is key = helps develop trust by showing vulnerability
  - *Active listening*: Demonstrate visible, respectful active listening. Important for interview dynamic, but also enables better probing etc. Don't be afraid of pauses. Allows to compose or
  - *Power*: The interview relationship is one of unequal power. Be aware of power dynamics and interact to ensure respect for participant autonomy.

Ending the conversation

- Closing question(s): Pose a wide open question that respects participant knowledge and priorities.
- Express gratitude.
- Stop the recording device (resume when relevant, with permission)

- Stop the recording device (resume, when relevant, with permission).
- Provide any relevant debriefing material (see ethics lecture).
- Remind participants how to contact you (or, for this course, how to contact me).

## Footnotes

- If you are not permitted to audio-record, you will generate interview fieldnotes instead of a transcript.
- The fieldnotes should faithfully represent the responses of your participant, as well as your questions (incl. probes) and observations about the interview.
- Use your jottings to jog your memory.
- Interview fieldnotes should be:
  - *Thick*: Richly detailed and descriptive.
  - *Narrative*: Complete, grammatically correct sentences.
  - *Organised in sequence* as accurately as possible.
  - Include *close paraphrasing* and, when feasible, *verbatim quotes* in quotation marks.
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  - Asking re their experience

## Focus Groups

- Another way of “talking with people . . . in [a] way that [is] self-conscious, orderly and partially structured’. (Longhurst (2003, 118)
- Method in which a **group** of people are asked about their experiences, perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards a practice, experience, issue, idea or concept.
- Areas of considerations:
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Group Size</li> <li>□ Group Composition</li> <li>□ Location</li> <li>□ Timing</li> <li>□ Context (Social, Political, Cultural, Economic)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Sensitivity of topic</li> <li>□ Identity of Participants (Age, Gender, Race, Religion, Class)</li> <li>□ Identity and positionalities of researcher</li> </ul>
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## Transcription

- Transcription involves typing up the interview/focus group from the audio-recording, including all researcher and participant vocalisations.
- Open-ended interviews are VERY wordy, can take a lot of time. You have to type out verbatim everything you hear word for word
- You will do a “denaturalised transcription”:
  - Verbatim reproduction of the spoken word.
  - Do not correct for grammar or edit what was said (even for clarity).
  - Include only significant verbal and non-verbal cues (i.e., laughter, *lengthy* pauses etc.).
  - Exclude speech patterns (i.e., inflection, stammering, involuntary vocalisations [like “um”], regular pauses etc.).

## Guest lecture:

- Women of colour within the sex industry - easy access to these women

- Ethical considerations - will they think you have the power to change their circumstances?
- Sense to give back as motivation to keep going
- Sex workers asked her to tell their sad stories too
- Use of social media to find candidates
- Had to get ethics approval from sex worker orgs AND Carleton ethics board
- Tracked online ads
- 40 interviewed from 40 mins - 2.5 hours in 8 cities, 2 phone interviews and 5 skype interviews
- Interview guide approved by ethics - probing questions if clarification was needed
- After 5 interviews, transcribed and had to readjust probes to accommodate overlap in interviews
  - Transcribed verbatim
  - Stripped all identifying information
- Quality of data and developing truth
  - Couldn't use data where incomplete sentences were used in interviews
  - Needed to include important analytical things because she didn't have the data to back it up
  - Power struggle between women and interviewer
  - Revealed personal info to women
- Self-care super important
- Open ended questions:
  - They say people of colour are victims, but what do you think about it?
  - We have this new law - do you feel like a victim?
- Interrupting and cutting it off
- Imposing his opinions on the person he's interviewing
- Strongly pushing the interviewee to answer the questions even when he says he doesn't have anything else to say



