

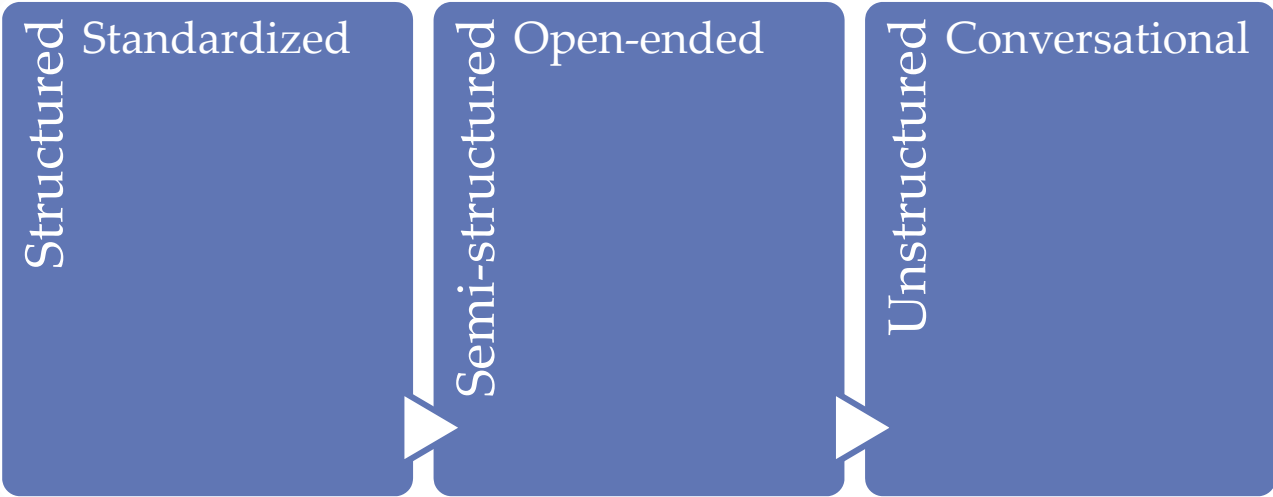
Qualitative interviews reconsidered

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IIQM-ATLAS.ti Webinar series, April 14, 2016









Semi-structured interview

- Questions-answers
 - Open questions
 - Follow-up questions/probes
 - You mentioned ____ tell me more about that.
 - You talked about _____, describe a specific example of that.
 - Closed questions



Open question

- Non-directive questions that allow participants to choose their own terms to provide descriptions

Purpose:

- Generate data in which participant describe topics in their own words
- Elicit participants' initiation of topics

Assumptions:

- Make no assumptions about participants' answers
- Interview subject may highlight what they take to be important



Examples of open questions

- Invitations to tell stories
 - Tell me how you came to be involved in long-distance running.
- “Grand tour” and “mini-tour”
 - Describe a typical training routine for preparing for a 10K run.
 - Describe what you usually do when you run each day.

Reference: Spradley, J. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Closed questions

- Provide possible responses in the question
- Request specific facts or information
- Limit interviewees' responses

Purpose:

- Generate data in the researcher's pre-established categories
- Avoid participants' initiation of topics

Assumptions:

- Researcher is "neutral"
- Interview subject is a "vessel of answers"

Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. F. (1995). *The active interview* (Vol. 37). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Implicit closed questions

- How many minutes a week have you exercised in the last week?
- What time of day do you usually exercise?



Explicit closed questions

- Do you agree or disagree with the idea that joining a gym will increase your activity levels?
- How frequently have you engaged in 5-K fun runs over the last 12 months: Never, 1 or 2, 3 or 4, 5 or more?
- How would you rate the information on integrating exercise into your life provided by X program on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is very poor, and 5 is excellent?



Use of closed questions in qualitative interviews

Purpose of clarification, e.g.,

- Earlier you talked about XXX..... Would it be correct to say YYY.....?
- You mentioned XXXX.... If I've understood you correctly



Types of interviews

- Phenomenological interviews
- Hermeneutic interviews
- Ethnographic interviews
- Feminist interviews
- The reflexive interview
- Intraviews



Phenomenological interviews

Interviews are conducted to generate:

- detailed and in-depth descriptions of participants' experiences about a phenomenon
- studies informed by phenomenological theories

deMarrais K. (2004) Qualitative interview studies: Learning through experience. In: DeMarrais K and Lapan SD (eds) *Foundations for research: Methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 51-68.

Vagle, M. D. (2014). *Crafting phenomenological research*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Ontario, Canada: The Althouse Press.

Van Manen, M. (2014). *Phenomenology of practice*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.



Hermeneutic interviews

- researchers and participants play the role of co-inquirers, and engage in a shared dialogue that evolves through questions and responses.
- greater emphasis on the shared dialogue (rather than non-directive questioning)

Dinkins CS. (2005) Shared inquiry: Socratic-hermeneutic interviewing. In: Ironside PM (ed) *Beyond method: Philosophical conversations in healthcare research and scholarship*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 111-147.



Ethnographic interviews

- explore the meanings that people ascribe to actions and events in their cultural worlds, expressed in their own language
- informal and formal interviews that draw on participant observation in extended fieldwork

Heyl BS. (2001) Ethnographic interviewing. In: Atkinson P, Coffey A, Delamont S, et al. (eds) *Handbook of ethnography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 369-383.

Spradley J. (1979) *The ethnographic interview*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.



Feminist interviews

- used to advance women's causes in a patriarchal society.
- researchers aim to work with participants in respectful and ethical ways and to allow women's voices to be heard.
- recognition of the importance of language and discourse

DeVault ML. (1990) Talking and listening from women's standpoint: Feminist strategies for interviewing and analysis. *Social Problems* 37: 96-116.

DeVault ML and Gross G. (2007) Feminist interviewing: Experience, talk, and knowledge. In: Hesse-Biber SN (ed) *Handbook of feminist research: Theory and praxis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 173-198.



The reflexive interview

- Interview as a vehicle for producing performance texts and performance ethnographies about self and society

Denzin N. K. (2001) The reflexive interview and a performative social science. *Qualitative Research* 1: 23-46.

Denzin, N. K. (2010). *The qualitative manifesto: A call to arms*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.



Intraviews

- resituate the interview as a process-based, embodied and emplaced “intra-active event”
- the interview is a co-creation among multiple bodies and force.
- *intra* = “within” *displaces inter* = “between” (p. 733).

Kuntz AM and Presnall MM. (2012) Wandering the tactical: From interview to intraview. *Qualitative Inquiry* 18: 732-744.



Preparing for interviews

Formulating
interview guides

Reflecting on the
topic

Ethical review

Technology

Recruitment



Conducting interviews

Gaining informed consent

Asking questions

Contextual issues:

- Cross cultural interviewing/translation
- Special populations



After the interview

Transcription

Data analysis and representation



“Good” interviewing

- appropriate preparation
- demonstration of respect for interviewees
- intensive listening by the interviewer
- development of thoughtful interview guides
- interview guides that include fewer questions
- formulation of short, open-ended questions
- flexibility on the part of the interviewer to deviate from prior plans when necessary
- effective use of follow up questions to elicit extended descriptions
- the ability to help participants tell their stories

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Terry Gross
Fresh Air, National Public Radio
<http://www.npr.org/programs/fresh-air/>

Challenges *in* interviews

Engaging in interviews

- Difficult topics, risky research
- Unexpected events, problematic locations
- Reluctant interviewees
- Interviewee-interviewer relationships
- Reliability of interview data



Challenges *after* interviews

Data analysis and representation

- Representation of the “other”
- Negotiating conflicting interpretations
- Working with sensitive data
- Anonymizing data



Research design

- Interviews as stand-alone or mixed method
 - Documentary sources to verify oral history accounts
 - Visual methods to support elicitation of data
 - Photo-elicitation
 - Photos as illustrations
 - Participant observation/ethnographic interviewing
- How many interviews?
 - One-off interviews/multiple interviews over time

Source: Baker, S. E., & Edwards, R. (2012). *How many qualitative interviews is enough?: Expert voices and early career reflections on sampling and cases in qualitative research*. Retrieved from http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/2273/4/how_many_interviews.pdf

Critiques

- Interview data as evidence
 - Co-construction of interview data
 - Socially situated nature of interview data
 - Reliability of data (memory)
- Analysis and representation of data
 - Omits questions/interviewer's work
 - Does not attend to details of production of talk

Potter J and Hepburn A. (2012) Eight challenges for interview researchers. In: Gubrium JF, Holstein JA, Marvasti A, et al. (eds) *The SAGE handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft*. Los Angeles: Sage, 555-570.

Silverman, D. (2007). *A very short, fairly interesting and reasonably cheap book about qualitative research* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Silverman D. (2013) What counts as qualitative research? Some cautionary comments. *Qualitative Sociology Review* 9: 48-55.



New developments

Australia's foreign affairs minister, Julie Bishop, simply loves **using emojis to make a point**. In a BuzzFeed News exclusive, we sat down with her for the world's first political emoji interview.



Lukas Coch for BuzzFeed / AAP Images

February 15, 2015

New technologies

- Synchronous online interviews
- Email interviews
- Text messaging

Deakin, H., & Wakefield, K. (2014). Skype interviewing: reflections of two PhD researchers. *Qualitative Research*, 14(5), 603.

Salmons, J. (2010). *Online interviews in real time*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.



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Roulston K., deMarrais K. and Lewis JB. (2003) Learning to interview in the social sciences. *Qualitative Inquiry* 9: 643-668.



