

Guidelines to Conducting, Transcribing, and Analyzing Interview

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How to Develop an Interview Protocol

To develop an interview protocol, there are a few suggestions that might guide the type of questions, number of questions and how the research approaches the interview and interview protocol. These include:

- Start with the broader research question that guides the study.
- Develop a description of the broader research question to help with recruitment.
- Form a question that is related to the experience of the interviewee and which frames the interview and creates rapport.

The flow of the interview protocol can vary. I suggest starting with warm-up questions that are easier to answer and moving onto the more difficult questions and ending with easier questions. Warm-up questions might include asking about the interviewee's background (e.g., Where did you grow up?) The questions that are related to the experience of the interviewee and which you are most interested should be more towards the middle once the interviewee is more comfortable. The final questions should be similar to the warm-up questions in wrapping up the interview and providing easier to answer questions.

In developing the questions, here are a few tips:

- Focus on having questions that are open-ended and allow for the interviewee to provide a thorough response.
- Try not to include why questions which may place judgement or assume cause-effect relationships. Instead word questions like "Tell me more about..."
- Try to avoid double barreled questions and only ask a single question.
- Try not to include dichotomous yes/no questions but instead allow for open-ended questions. I suggest this because the interview is limited in time so each question should be important.
- Prepare follow-up questions and probes to get more clarity on something you don't understand or on some missing information, or if the interviewee brought something up that other interviewee's have not discussed. These questions can also be developed while doing the pilot testing because it may provide a general idea of what to further ask for clarifications.
- Try not to use jargon that interviewee's may not be familiar with and which might make them feel distant from you.

In the process of developing the interview protocol, there might be a few steps needed to refine the questions. First, develop the main questions of the protocol and make sure that they provide insight to the broader research question. Then develop transitions, introduction and conclusion paragraphs, and follow-ups and probes. After these steps, have others review the questions for feedback on the clarity of the questions, making sure they avoid some of the issues discussed earlier, and that they relate to the research question. Finally, pilot test the interview protocol with others that can provide feedback on the questions, and on the researcher's demeanor during the interview (Castillo-Montoya, 2016).

Tips to Conducting an Interview

Prior to an interview:

- Practice the interview to gain familiarity with the protocol
- Check the recording device to make sure it works properly
- Introduce yourself and provide relevant information about yourself related to the project. This can include why you might be doing the project.

During the interview:

- Be an active listener
- Treat the interviewee with respect and sensitivity
- Allow for silences (wait times)
- Provide emphatic responses that include summarizing what the interviewee said and possibly describing what they might have felt.
- If interviewee gets upset or cries, give them a moment to collect themselves or time to step out. Also provide the option to discontinue the interview or reschedule.

After the interview:

- Thank and debrief the participant to talk about anything emotional that they may have discussed during the interview and which you didn't get a chance to discuss. This is also the opportunity to share your own experience if you have any experiences that relate to the interviewee.
- Check to make sure the audio recorded properly. If not, write down as much as you remember from the interview.
- Log any reactions or thoughts because being reflective of the process might provide some insight during the analyzation and writing process. It also helps to reflect on how you reacted for each interview to understand how to be a better interviewer for the next interviewee.

References

- Castillo-Montoya (2016). Preparing for interview research: The interview protocol refinement framework. *The Qualitative Report*, 21, 811-831. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol21/iss5/2>
- Josselson, R. (2013). *Interviewing for qualitative inquiry: A relational approach*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2005). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (2nd ed.). <https://dx-doi-org.oca.ucsc.edu/10.4135/9781452226651>

Checklist for Transcribing

Before starting the transcription process make sure:

- Transcription process has not been started by someone else
 - If not, then write initials and start date in the transcription log
 - PGP, 7/1/19

During the transcription process:

- Play the video or tape a few minutes before you start actually transcribing. This will help you determine the pacing of the interview, so you can adjust the playback for the transcription and your typing speed. (*typically about .5x-.6x*)
- Include comment for any abbreviations, words you are unsure of, or portions of the transcription that were inaudible:
 - Note: Unsure of this abbreviation
 - Audio: 14:06

After the transcription process:

- If the transcription is not complete, then add a note of where you left off:
 - Left off: PGP
 - Audio: 10:03
- If transcription is complete, then sign off in the transcription log & add a short paragraph at the bottom of the transcript with reactions/thoughts
- Add or update a color tag to the file (see File Keys)
- Recheck the transcription once the other person has finished checking it

Other notes:

- If you see a theme or story emerge, then include the quote, theme, line number and page number in a separate word or excel document
 - Make sure to write a description of what the theme/story means to you so that others can find similar themes in other transcripts and so that you can refer to it to use in other transcriptions as well.
 - Look for themes after you're finished with transcribing (for the day). This allows for more time to think about the theme and what they mean before continuing to a different part of the transcription.

Checklist for Checking Transcript

Before starting the checking process make sure:

- You did not transcribe the interview
- Checking process has not been started by someone else
 - If not, then write initials and start date in the transcription log
 - PGP, 7/1/19
- Track changes is turned on in Microsoft Word

During the checking process make sure:

- Edit the format according to the formatting transcripts guideline
- Change identifying information on the transcript (see more info on transcribing guidelines). If you aren't sure of their relationship to the participant, then include a comment:
 - Unable to change ID info
 - Audio: 24:30

After the checking process:

- If checking the transcript is not complete, then add a note of where you left off:
 - Check transcript left off: PGP
 - Audio: 10:03
- If checking the transcript is complete, then sign off in the transcription log & add a short paragraph at the bottom of the transcript with reactions/thoughts
- Add or update a color tag to the file (see File Keys)

Formatting Transcripts

- Font should be Times New Roman, 12 point, single-spaced, and the document should have 1" margins
- Header should have:
 - Participant's ID number (PID #XX) in the left corner
 - Page number in the right corner
- Include line numbers that restart after each page

- Use *P* (*participant*) and *I* (*interviewer*), with a single space between each one.
I: Tell me more about your experience in college

P: Well, so far I'm having a great time in college.

I: Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

- Indentation should be 0 for each main question, 0.25" for responses to the main question, 0.50" for each sub-question, and 0.75" for each response to the sub-question. See example below

1. What was your favorite subject in high school?

P: Well, I liked both math and history.

I: Can you tell me more about the subjects you liked?

P: Yes, math wasn't easy for me, but I had a teacher that made it simple and she always gave us examples

Transcription Guidelines

Write exactly what they say, even if it is grammatically incorrect or doesn't make much sense.

Example: using "cuz" instead of because

Include interjections like "hmm", "uh", "woah", "yeah", "okay", "um", "ohh", "mmm"

Mmmm [no]

Mhmm [yes]

Include nonverbal communication (e.g., laugh, sigh, quietly) in brackets. These should be in present tense.

Example: (laughs) graduate school was an interesting experience.

Don't include repetitions of words.

Example: She-She didn't know what I was talking about.

Change identifying information

Make sure to change any information that they mentioned like their own name or names of other people. To do this, blank out the name (7 underscores) and add the relationship information on the side in brackets.

Example: I really did want _____ (sister) to complete her bachelor's degree.

Numbers less than ten

For any numbers less than 10, write out the numbers in words. However, for numbers greater than 10, write them out in numerical form.

Out of order questions

Keep the original question and include see above (or see below) and page #. Also if something was answered in a previous question and that's why it was not asked, then put Not asked, see above, or Not asked, see question or page #.

File Keys

Use to organize the files within each of the folders

File Keys

No dot = Needs to be transcribed and checked

 = Transcribing in progress

 = Transcribing completed

 = Checking in progress

 = Checking completed

 = Checking by transcriber in progress

 = Transcription and checking complete

Transcription Symbols

Comma (,)

Use to indicate a short pause of about 1-3 sec. *Example: So, when I was, umm, writing this guideline I was getting distracted, and then um I finally wrote it up.*

Ellipses (...)

Use to indicate when the participant is trailing off or has a longer pause (3+ seconds) at the beginning of a sentence. Because this is generally used to indicate that information is missing in APA, then make sure you only include it at the beginning or end of a sentence. *Example: So when I was writing this guideline I was getting distracted...*

(pauses)

If the pause is long and in the middle of a sentence (3+ seconds), then use this symbol instead of the ellipses. *Example: I had never thought about grad school (pauses) well actually I did think about it a little when I was in high school.*

Em dash (–)

Use to indicate change in the speech, like repeating the same word, or abruptly change the language. There should be no space either before or after an em dash. *Example: I want– needed to take this class my senior year but the school didn't offer it.*

Underline (_)

Used to emphasize certain words. *Example: The class was really difficult because I didn't feel like I could as others for help.*

Brackets []

Used to indicate words added to the transcription that the interviewee did not mention, to explain certain abbreviations, or translate a word in another language into English. If the participant mentions this abbreviation multiple times, only use it the first time the participant mentions the abbreviation. *Example: I participated in the CITL [Center for Innovations in Teaching and Learning] program my first-year of graduate school.*

Slashes (//)

Used to show that the participant and interviewer overlap in the time when they talked to each other. *Example: That sounds difficult that... // It was difficult especially during graduate school.*

Quotes (“ ”)

Used to demonstrate what someone said. Do not use when the person was only thinking of something, but didn't say anything. Also, remember to capitalize the first word of the quote, regardless of where it is in the sentence, and to add commas, periods, and questions marks inside the quotation marks. *Example: I told my sister, “You should really tell the professor that the TA didn't show up.” But she said she didn't care anymore.*

(Inaudible- time in audio)

Used to indicate that it was difficult to understand the participant. Make sure to include the time in the audio recording. *Example: I did go to class but for some reason my teacher said (inaudible- 15:10) and so I just didn't care anymore.*

Common Spelling of Words

Will change depending on each study

Common Abbreviations

Will change depending on each study

PID	Transcribing in Progress	Transcribing Completed	Checking in Progress	Checking Completed	Checking by Transcriber in Progress	Transcribing and Checking Completed	Notes
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							
14							
15							
16							
17							
18							
19							
20							

Thematic Analysis Guidelines

The purpose of thematic analysis according to Braun & Clarke (2006) is to identify, analyze, and report overall patterns. This method can be used to best understand the overall stories and patterns across various qualitative data (e.g., interviews, focus groups, open-ended questions). This method is not used to understand individual stories (i.e., narrative analysis) or develop a theory (i.e., grounded theory). Doing thematic analysis is an active process in which the researcher's values and beliefs relate to the patterns or themes they identify. Themes are also not necessarily prominent in the entire dataset but might be more relevant in some data items more than others, it is more about whether they are related to the research question. Additionally, when identifying patterns this may be done either inductively, which is more driven by what the data, rather than deductive which is driven by theory or interest in certain aspects of the data.

Step 1: Getting familiar with the data

- Read each of the transcripts at least once
- Take notes while reading the transcripts
- Ways to familiarize yourself with the data
 - Be an active member of data collection (e.g., conduct interviews)
 - Transcribe or check the data transcripts
 - Repeated readings of the data

Step 2: Generate initial codes

- Initial codes relate to the basic segments of the data
- If coding transcripts, you can use Microsoft word to include comments for each theme or with Adobe, highlight and include comments for each pattern. Additionally, a software program that helps with coding is Dedoose, where you can code for patterns and then pick the excerpts that relate to that pattern
- Code as many patterns as possible
- Able to code data piece into as many patterns as possible
- Keep context of the data

Step 3: Search for themes

- Sort all the codes into themes or subthemes
- Thematic map or visual representation might be easier at this stage
- Keep all the codes, don't delete any of them

Step 4: Review themes

- Level one: Read extracts to see if they fit a pattern and whether the theme best captures that pattern
 - If yes, then move to level two
 - If no, then figure out if some extracts do not fit that theme or if the theme/pattern needs to be revised
- Level two: Read themes to see if they represent the entire dataset
 - Reread the entire dataset and recode if necessary
 - If themes represent the entire dataset through analytic and theoretical concepts then continue to Step 5

- If themes are not fully representative, then go back and refine and review your coding
- Continue to the next step when recoding process does not add anything substantial

Step 5: Define and name themes

- Organize each of the extracts so they are consistent and display a narrative
- Identify what and why the extracts are important
- Identify the story the theme is trying to tell and how that relates to the research question
- Identify if there are subthemes that organize the broader theme
- Refining the themes is complete when you can provide scope and content of theme in one sentence
- Note: names of themes should be short and immediately let the reader know what it is about

Step 6: Write the report

- Provide an interesting story about the data with the extract illustrating the story
- Should provide an argument for the research question, not just a description

Things to avoid

- Summarizing the data and just stating the experiences from the interviews rather than providing interpretations of the data
- Using interview questions as themes
- Unconvincing analysis
 - Themes unclear or there are some themes that overlap
- Analysis and interpretations are unsupported by the data such that the interpretations may not match with what was said by the interviewees
- Mismatch in type of analysis and research question

Table 2 A 15-point checklist of criteria for good thematic analysis

Process	No.	Criteria
Transcription	1	The data have been transcribed to an appropriate level of detail, and the transcripts have been checked against the tapes for 'accuracy'.
Coding	2	Each data item has been given equal attention in the coding process.
	3	Themes have not been generated from a few vivid examples (an anecdotal approach), but instead the coding process has been thorough, inclusive and comprehensive.
Analysis	4	All relevant extracts for all each theme have been collated.
	5	Themes have been checked against each other and back to the original data set.
	6	Themes are internally coherent, consistent, and distinctive.
	7	Data have been analysed – interpreted, made sense of – rather than just paraphrased or described.
	8	Analysis and data match each other – the extracts illustrate the analytic claims.
Overall	9	Analysis tells a convincing and well-organized story about the data and topic.
	10	A good balance between analytic narrative and illustrative extracts is provided.
	11	Enough time has been allocated to complete all phases of the analysis adequately, without rushing a phase or giving it a once-over-lightly.
Written report	12	The assumptions about, and specific approach to, thematic analysis are clearly explicated.
	13	There is a good fit between what you claim you do, and what you show you have done – ie, described method and reported analysis are consistent.
	14	The language and concepts used in the report are consistent with the epistemological position of the analysis.
	15	The researcher is positioned as <i>active</i> in the research process; themes do not just 'emerge'.

Notes

Reflexivity is important for the process, so consider documenting any reactions, experiences or initial themes that arise. In the writing process see guidelines on qualitative research (Levitt, Bamberg, Creswell, Frost, Josselson, & Suárez-Orozco, 2018) which includes discussing your epistemological viewpoint (Madill, Jordan, & Shirley, 2000). To make the writing process easier, during the process of conducting interviews and analysis, keep notes of the process to include within the paper.

Relevant readings

- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Levitt, H. M., Bamberg, M., Creswell, J. W., Frost, D. M., Josselson, R., & Suárez-Orozco, C. (2018). Journal article reporting standards for qualitative primary, qualitative meta-analytic, and mixed methods research in psychology: The APA publications and communications board task force report. *American Psychologist*, 73, 26-46. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/amp0000151>
- Madill, A., Jordan, A., & Shirley, C. (2000). Objectivity and reliability in qualitative analysis: Realist, contextualist and radical constructionist epistemologies. *British Journal of Psychology*, 91, 1-2. <https://doi.org/10.1348/000712600161646>