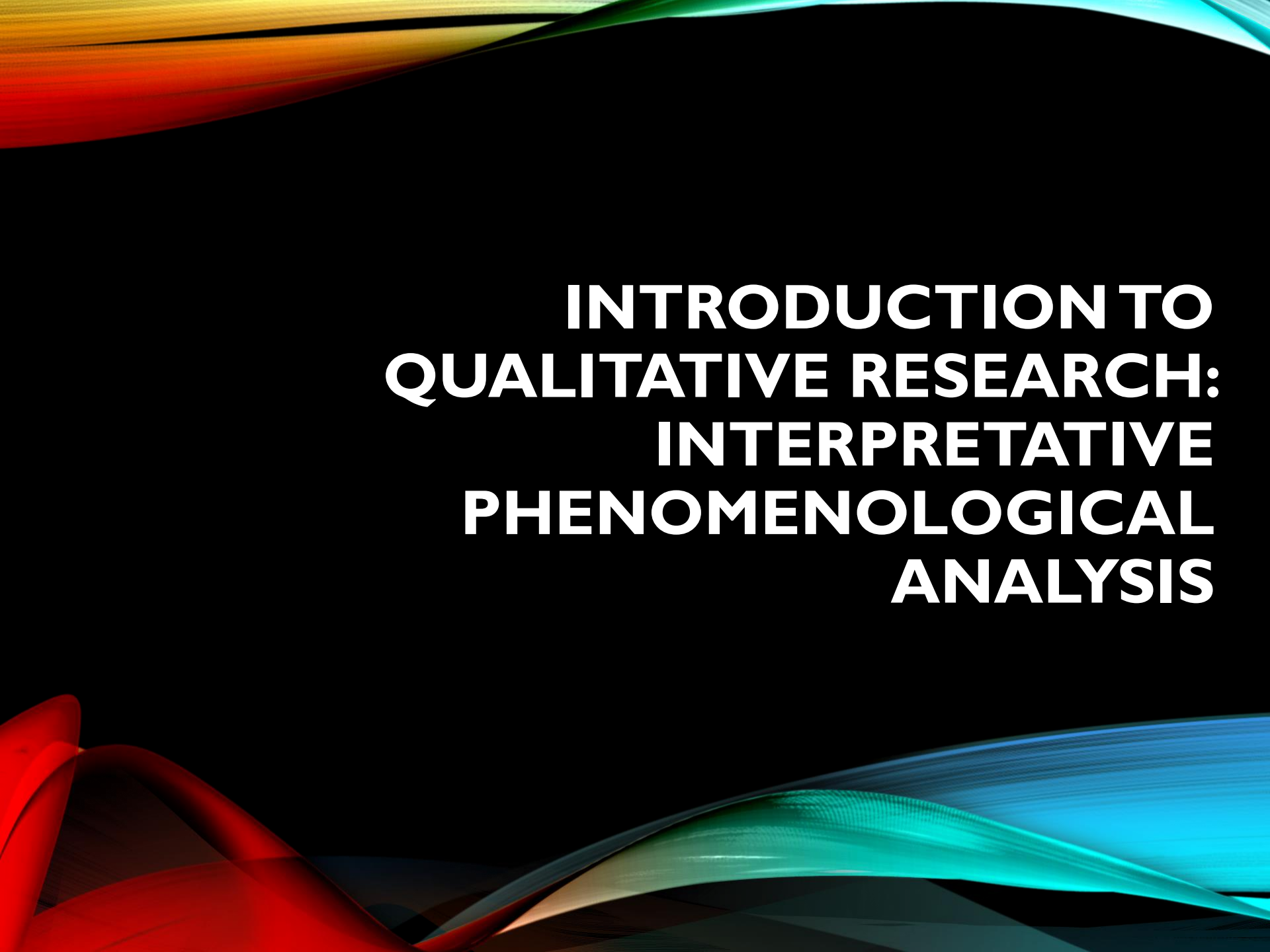




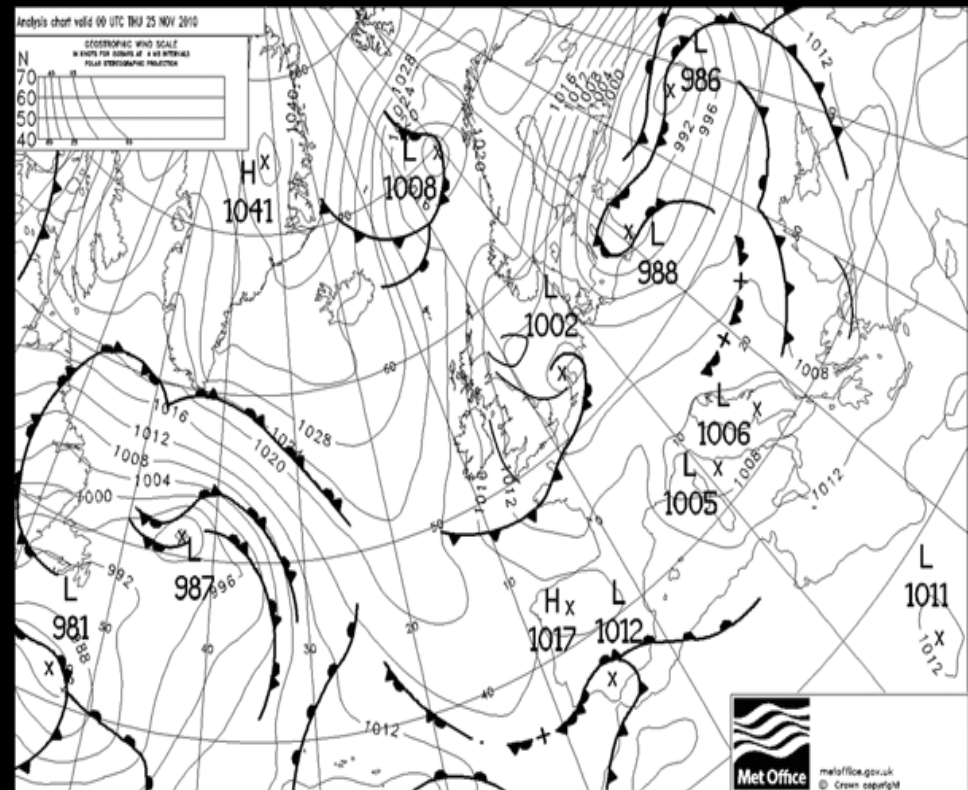
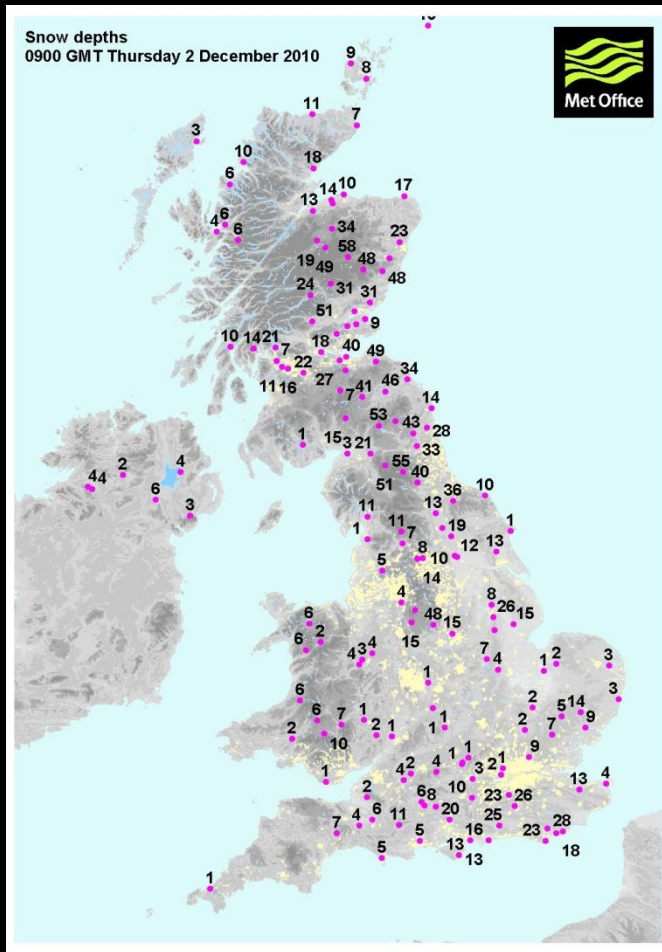
INTRODUCTION TO QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS



OVERVIEW OF LECTURE

- A brief history of qualitative research
- Key features of qualitative research
- Validity in qualitative research
- IPA theoretical underpinnings

THE QUANTITATIVE VS. QUALITATIVE DIVIDE



THE QUANTITATIVE VS. QUALITATIVE DIVIDE



WHAT IS QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?

- Not a “methodological deviation” (Kidder & Fine, 1997)
- Its methods are empirical because they involve the collection, analysis and interpretation of data
- Its data are primarily “language data” (Polkinghorne, 2005)
- It has a long intellectual history in psychology, although the range of specific methods is relatively recent

HISTORY AND INTELLECTUAL ORIGINS

- Has been a part of psychology since the inception of the discipline
- For Wundt, psychology was “a hybrid discipline, representing a combination of a natural science and a human science.” (Kendler, 1987, p. 27)
- Wundt and James: a concern with both subjectivist and objectivist knowledge and approaches
- Titchener: *both* description and measurement

A MUTUALLY ENRICHING RELATIONSHIP

The experiments are complementary, each sacrificing something, and each gaining something. The qualitative experiment shows us all the detail and variety of the mental life, and in so doing forbids us to pack its results into formulae; the quantitative experiment furnishes us with certain uniformities of the mental life, neatly and summarily expressed, but for that very reason must pass unnoticed many things that a qualitatively directed introspection would bring to light. (Titchener, 1905, p. vi)

KEY FEATURES OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH:

- Naturalistic settings
- An emphasis on real-worldness: gains in richness/relevance but loses in control and certainty
- Less interested in the quantity and measurement and more interested in the qualities and features which make a phenomenon what it is
- Ways of thinking about the data rather than things for doing to the data

KEY FEATURES OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

- Qualitative research asks different questions, and therefore needs different methods to quantitative research
- Qualitative research collects words (and sometimes images or movement) as data
- Within qual research there are many different approaches to data-collection and analysis

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF USING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?

Depending on method used may PERMIT:

- inductive exploration of new topic, development of new theory or discourse
- holistic analysis of complex, dynamic and exceptional phenomena

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF USING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?

- analysis of subjective and symbolic meaning, language and socio-linguistic interaction
- analysis of investigator's role in knowledge construction
- study of contexts and processes not amenable to experimental manipulation - e.g. policy and management changes, natural/cultural contexts.

WHAT ARE THE DRAWBACKS OF USING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?

- not objective or reliable (but alternative criteria for quality will be considered in the next part of this session)
- findings less precisely specified than when quantified, less suitable for prediction and control
- because of the above, and small intensive samples, cannot test hypotheses (e.g. between group differences, relationships between variables)

Qualitative
Methods

Grounded
theory

Discourse
analysis

Narrative
analysis

IPA

Thematic
analysis



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Open ended research questions rather than hypotheses
- Exploratory
- Focus on meaning
- Answerable, and worth answering
- Grounded in an epistemological (i.e. theory of knowledge) position

<i>Example research question</i>	<i>Key features</i>	<i>Suitable approach</i>
What are the main experiential features of being angry?	<i>Note the focus on the common structure of ‘anger’ as an experience.</i>	Descriptive phenomenology
How do people who have complained about their medical treatment make sense of being angry?	<i>Note the focus on personal meaning and sense-making in a particular context, for people who share a particular experience.</i>	Interpretative phenomenological analysis
What sorts of story structures do people use to describe events which made them angry?	<i>Note the focus on how narrative relates to sense-making (e.g. via genre, structure, tone or imagery).</i>	Narrative analysis
What factors influence how people manage being angry?	<i>Note the willingness to develop an explanatory level account (factors, impacts, influences, etc.).</i>	Grounded theory
How do people talk about ‘being angry’ in close relationships?	<i>Note the focus on interaction over and above content, and the caution about inferring anything about anger itself.</i>	Discursive analysis
How is ‘anger’ constructed in incident reports from a residential home for Older People?	<i>Note the willingness to use a range of data sources, and the focus on how things ‘must be understood’ according to the conventions of a particular setting.</i>	Foucauldian discourse analysis



DATA COLLECTION

- Interviews
- Observation
- Focus groups
- Diaries and other written accounts
- Visual and pictorial material
- Newspapers, television, film, social media

REFLEXIVITY

- Exploring “the ways in which a researcher’s involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs such research.” (Nightingale, & Cromby, 1999, p. 228)
- Personal reflexivity
- Epistemological reflexivity: “encourages us to reflect upon the assumptions (about the world, about knowledge) that we have made in the course of the research, and it helps us to think about the implications of such assumptions for the research and its findings.” (Willig, 2001, p. 10)

REFLEXIVITY (CONT.)

Being reflexive involves the “process of continually reflecting upon our interpretations of both our experience and the phenomena being studied so as to move beyond the partiality of our previous understandings and our investment in particular research outcomes” (Finlay, 2003, p.108).

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO ESTABLISH CRITERIA FOR VALIDITY?

- Criteria necessary to justify claims for value of research
- Criteria necessary to win acceptance within discipline, funders, policy makers, etc.
- Criteria necessary to maintain/improve standards
- Criteria helpful for guiding/assessing individual pieces of research

WHY IS ESTABLISHING THE QUALITY OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PROBLEMATIC?

- Traditional criteria used for quantitative research inappropriate for most qualitative research
- Qualitative methods relatively new in psychology - criteria and validation 'hierarchy' not yet fully established (e.g. training, experts, journals, etc.)
- There are many different varieties of qualitative research, which require/employ different criteria for validation.



WHY ARE TRADITIONAL CRITERIA FOR QUALITY INAPPROPRIATE FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?

Objectivity

Reliability

Generalizability

WHAT QUALITY CRITERIA CAN BE APPLIED TO (QUALITATIVE) RESEARCH?

OR how to demonstrate to an examiner or editor that your research merits a pass or publication!

Inter-rater reliability

Triangulation

- of sources (people, places, times)
- of investigators
- of methods
- of theoretical approaches

WHAT QUALITY CRITERIA CAN BE APPLIED TO (QUALITATIVE) RESEARCH?

Deviant/disconfirming case analysis

Participant feedback/respondent validation

‘Paper trail’ + making raw data available

WHAT IS IPA?

Concern with:

Personal lived experience

Meaning of experience to participant

How participant makes sense of experience

Theoretical underpinnings:

Phenomenological

Interpretative

Idiographic

IPA - PHENOMENOLOGY

- IPA is phenomenological in that it involves detailed examination of the participant's lived experience.
- When we talk about experience in IPA research, we are talking about 'something that matters to the participant' and something of which they have some understanding -
 - we seek to understand their perspective on it.

IPA - HERMENEUTICS

Hermeneutics - the study and theory of *interpretation*.

Understanding = core of human existence; cyclical process.

Language = means through which we get to understanding.

Negotiated understanding (through conversation) reveals the “things themselves.”

IPA - HERMENEUTICS

Explanation & understanding – two modes of knowing:

“Human beings therefore have two different tasks. One is to construct and *explain* nature as an ordered whole governed by causal laws from the impressions we receive. The other is to return from nature to life itself where there is *meaning*, value and purpose.” (Schmidt, 2006, p.36)



IPA - IDIOGRAPHY

Nomothetic approach:

- Analysis at group level

- Actuarial claims

Idiographic approach:

- Value of the case in its own terms

- Illuminate/problematize the group

- Theoretical generalization

- Case law

- Warnock on particular and universal

DOING IPA

Design

Suitable research questions:

Hot vs. cool cognition

Existential moments (e.g. crisis)

Experience at varied levels

Life transitions

How to sample:

Why homogeneous?

How homogeneous?

How many?

Formulating research questions

- The aims and research questions in IPA tend to focus upon persons' *experiences* and/or *understandings* of particular phenomena in particular contexts.
- Other common focal points for IPA researchers are the *perceptions* and *views* of participants (i.e. as alternatives to 'understandings').

Formulating research questions

E.g.

- What is it like to be a recovering addict within a self-help 12-step program?
- How do people receiving support from an Early Intervention Service make sense of their experiences of auditory hallucination?
- How is the experience of dialysis understood in the context of impending transplantation?

Top tip: set yourself some clear objectives, so that you know when you are finished!

What is a suitable research question for an IPA project?

- not hypotheses
- exploratory not explanatory (e.g. 'explore', 'investigate', 'examine')
- focus on meaning and sense-making
- grounded in an appropriate epistemological position (usually suggested by focus on experiences, and/or understandings in a particular context)
- answerable, and worth answering

Don't underestimate the importance of this last one!

Top tip: Personal commitment is often a positive advantage ...

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY QUESTIONS

- Your primary focus relates to the experience at hand, and your participants' understanding of it.
- You may, however, have a *secondary* question, informed by prior experience, theoretical interest or applied concerns. You can't guarantee that you'll be able to answer it, but provided that you remain focused on what your participants can tell you (i.e. aren't testing a theory, or making inferences about causality, or 'what happens') it's fine to set these.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY QUESTIONS

E.g.

How can the help-seeking narratives of hard-to-reach parents help us to evaluate the relevance of a 'stages of change' approach to service provision?

How can young people's experiences of making decisions about risk help us to develop existing theories of planned behaviour?

PICKING A TOPIC [AKA 'WHY DO IT?']

IPA research can help us to:

Understand the experiences of particular groups of people (service-users, or their families, or staff, etc.) – 'give voice'

Develop and evaluate services, therapeutic interventions, etc.



PICKING A TOPIC [AKA ‘WHY DO IT?']

Interpret the associative findings from conventional quantitative research

Situate and understand people in their socio-cultural contexts

Evaluate and reflect upon the role played by therapeutic, institutional and legislative cultures

SUMMARY OF IPA

Phenomenological- experience is central

Privilege the experience not the theory

But no direct access to experience

Experience needs interpreting - hermeneutic

Double hermeneutic - others account of experience

Great care with each case

Nuanced account of similarities and differences in cases

Individual and the universal

PLANNING YOUR DATA COLLECTION

Generally language-based, but can also include visual materials.

Usually transcripts of (personal narrative):

Audio tapes

Video tapes

Notes

Diaries

Stories

Emails

Most often, in IPA, this is an interview.

STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

like experiment- investigator maximizes control

questions

- clearly worded specific questions
- read question exactly as on schedule
- ask questions in exact order of schedule
- precoded response categories
- each interview to be identical

STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS (CONT.)

responses

- short, specific
- either possible answers provided by interviewer
- or open response then categorized by interviewer
- Resembles questionnaire

• *Pro*

- Control
- reliability
- Speed

Con

can be stilted
prevents empathy
limits what respondent can say

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

use schedule but:

establish rapport with respondent

ordering/ phrasing of questions not so important

follow up/ probe interesting areas that arise

respondent shares more closely in how interview goes

Pro

- more natural
- flexibility
- (e.g. can go into novel areas)
- richer data

Con

loss of control

time

harder to analyze

can be personally demanding

CONSTRUCTING THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- Think of an appropriate topic
- Think of broad areas for interview
- Think of questions
- Criticize/ modify them until you are happy with them
- Think of possible prompts where required

CONSTRUCTING THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Questions

- neutral
- open ended/ expansive
- avoid jargon
- redrafting - questions move from being specific to almost bland
- specific questions can become subsequent prompts/probes
- get it all on 1 side of A4

Semi-structured (in-depth) interviewing (*adapted from Smith, 1995*):

1. There is an attempt to establish rapport with the participant
2. The ordering of questions is less important
3. The interviewer is free to probe/prompt discussion of interesting issues that may arise (e.g. 'How did that make you feel?')
4. The interviewer can follow the respondent's interests or concerns (e.g. 'Can you tell more about that?')



5. Questions to be open-ended, rather than closed (e.g. Not 'Should the PM resign?' but 'What should the PM do now?')

6. Questions should be neutral rather than leading (e.g. Not 'Do you think the PM is doing a bad job?' but 'How do you think the PM is doing?')

7. Questions to be framed in the language and terms of the participant

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWING

setting - quiet and comfortable

know your schedule (to be used as guide, do not be dictated by it)

start with chat to make respondent comfortable

questions don't have to follow sequence of schedule

follow up interesting avenues - even if moves away from schedule

be patient-don't rush in

listen to what is going on: sequence of questions, where to probe-
"can you say more?", is respondent comfortable?

General good advice:

- Don't plan to ask too many questions [e.g. less than 10]
- Learn your interview schedule in advance
- Find a comfortable 'research persona' for yourself
- Be flexible in how you apply your schedule
- Be nice to your respondent!
- Listen to what you are being told by your respondent
- Resist the urge to interpret what you are being told *while the interview is still underway*

GENERAL GOOD ADVICE

- Actively listen to what's is being said (say as little as possible)
- Avoid leading questions – yes/no, single word answer is problematic
- Check participant is comfortable
- tape record (allows you to listen)
- Always ask for feedback about the interview at the end of the interview
- Repeatedly check for informed consent for specific questions

‘WAYS IN’

- What was it like?
- Can you tell me more about that?
- Tell me what you were thinking?
- How did you feel?

Things to avoid

- *Over-empathic* - I can imagine that your job is quite boring - is that right?
- *Manipulative* - You've described your job as quite repetitive. Is it even worse than that?
- *Leading* - So I don't suppose you'd say that your job is rewarding?
- *Closed* - So you've been working here for 5 years then?
- *You know what I mean?* – do not respond with nods, agreement, use as opportunity to probe further



Things to avoid

- *Talking to quickly* – your speed sets the norm and the slower you talk the more time you have to think and encourage reflection
- *Aha's/OK's/Nodding* – can be read as 'you've said enough lets move on'
- *Taking notes* – fractures the moment

I: Okay. Um, you said that, it took time to realize that you could not use any drugs, how have you realized that you cannot use any drugs?

R: Because I tried the alcohol and that didn't work. I came out of rehab. and tried all the drugs, same effect as what had happened with the alcohol. Feeling very ill, all messed up, unable to manage my life, unable to do anything, I wasn't working, I was just getting high all the time. Um..., I was very skinny, ill, I couldn't eat and I felt sick. Again, I felt the same feeling as I did with the buzz.

I: The same feeling?

R: Um, just unhappiness, with my life, emptiness, to be honest, I felt very empty as a person, I had no, I had hopes but I could not achieve anything living my life like that.

I: You felt that you weren't achieving anything?

R: No, no

I: Can you elaborate on that?

R: Um, (hesitates) it wasn't good. (Long pause)...It just, it wasn't a good feeling.

I: Right

R: I went to the meetings and admitted that I was using drugs and that my life was fucked, screwed up. That's when I started making a change.