The Other Survey Method…. 

INTERVIEWS

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Interviewing is usually defined simply as a conversation with a purpose” (Berg 13).
Dramaturgy & Interviewing

Analogous to theatrical production

• Roles:
  – Performer
    • Develop Style
  – Audience
Key Actors

• Informed individuals about culture & history of a particular group.

• Excellent sources of information

• Provides context
Dramaturgical Benefits

- Types of interview structures
- Survey construction
- Interviewer Role
- Rapport
- Reactivity
- Accessing Difficult or Sensitive Material
Interviews

- Standardized
- Unstandardized
- Semi standardized
- Retrospective
  - Personal
  - Telephone
Standardized Interview

• Formally structured schedule
• Set of “required” questions to:
  – Elicit specific information
  – Equally meaningful wording
    • Objectivity
    • Comparability
Unstandardized Interview

• *Does Not* utilize rigid set of questions.
• Criterion:
  – Interviewers *do not* know in advance the relevant questions to participant.
  – Cannot guarantee all respondents will have equally access to meaning of questions.
Unstandardized Interview

- **Objective:**
  - Develop
  - Adapt
  - Generate
    - Clarify
    - Extend
Semi Standard Interview

• Between Standard & Unstandard techniques:
  • Some predetermined questions
  • Special topic questions
Semi Standard Interview

- Systematic, consistent order of questioning
- Room to digress
- Give/Receive clarification
- Probing questions
Retrospective

- Structured, semi-structured or informal

Response based on:
1. Recollection
2. Reconstruction

*Least likely to provide accurate, reliable data.*

(Fraenkel & Wallen, 510).
Dramaturgical Benefits

- Types of interview structures
- **Survey construction**
- Interviewer Role
- Rapport
- Reactivity
- Accessing Difficult or Sensitive Material
Survey Structure

• Interview Schedule:
  – Interviewer Instructions
  – Questions to be asked
  – Response options if applicable
    • Open ended questions
    • Close ended questions
• Question ordering
• Phrasing
• Level of language
• Limit to subject matter
• General style

– Rely on respondent’s
  • Ethnic
  • Cultural
    • Age
  • Educational level

(Berg, 20).
Essential Questions

• Seek to answer central questions to study
  – Grouped together
  – Scattered throughout
  – Direct
  – Subtle
Extra Questions

- Roughly equivalent to essential questions,
  - Worded differently
  - Aids in reliability check of responses
Dramaturgical Benefits

- Types of interview structures
- Survey construction
- Interviewer Role
- Rapport
- Reactivity
- Accessing Difficult or Sensitive Material
Interviewer as Performer

- Actions
- Lines
- Roles
- Routines
  - Carefully prepared in advance
  - Contingency responses
Getting In

• Getting In:
  – Gaining Access
    • Setting
    • Participants
    • Knowledge
    • Activities being observed

• Request official permission
• Mailing a cover letter
  – Who
  – What
  – When
  – Where
  – How

(Singleton, 253).
Building Rapport

• Put Respondent at ease

"O.K. Now are you ready to answer my questions?"

"When Sally says she means to interview somebody she’s not kidding!"

(Fraenkel & Wallen 515).
Building Rapport

- Put respondent at ease
- Be natural
- Respectful: individual & culture
- Act Professional
- Respondent as “Advisor”
- Vary who controls flow of information

(Fraenkel & Wallen 515).
Dramaturgical Benefits

• Types of interview structures
• Survey construction
• Interviewer Role
• Rapport
• Reactivity
• Accessing Difficult or Sensitive Material
Respondent Reactivity

• Expect nervousness
  – Meet skepticism with:
    • Professionalism
    • Care, Respect for individual
    • Assurance of anonymity

• Do not panic!
• Wait

(Berg, 39).
Throw Away Questions

• Unessential questions
  – Unnecessary demographic questions
  – General questions
    • Used to “tone down” heated or uncomfortable moments

(Berg 21-22).
Dramaturgical Benefits

- Types of interview structures
- Survey construction
- Interviewer Role
- Rapport
- Reactivity
- Accessing Difficult or Sensitive Material
Probes

• Neutral questions
  – Offers no additional information

• Purpose is to obtain more information from a prior response
  – May be “structured”
Retrieving Sensitive Material

• Ask same question different way
• Repeat answers
• Learn how to wait for answers

(Fraenkel & Wallen, 513-515)
Interviews

• Personal
• Telephone

– Advantages
– Disadvantages
Telephone Interview

• Difficult to establish rapport
• Difficult to recognize / overcome respondent discomfort
• Unlisted phone numbers disqualified from survey
• Homes with no phones disqualified
Telephone Interviews

• Compares favorably to face-to-face method
• Low cost
• Faster completion times
• High response rates
• Greater Anonymity
Telephone Interviews

• Greater Anonymity
• Computer assistance
  – Calling
  – Administering
  – Coding Responses
Surveys

• Generally speaking, surveys cover both interviews & questionnaires.
  – Which one is best for your research?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Flexibility</td>
<td>• Expensive:</td>
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<tr>
<td>ordering questions</td>
<td>– Selection &amp; Training of interviewers</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Respondent cannot change</td>
<td>– Traveling Costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>earlier responses</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interviewer Bias</td>
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<td>• Social Desirability Bias</td>
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Response Rates

**Interviews**
- 80 - 90%
- Good sample size
- Little missing data

(Singleton, 244).

**Mailed Questionnaires**
- Less than 30%
- Reduces sample size
  - May bias results
- Missing data

(Ary, 434).
Analysis

- Content Analysis
  - Similar
  - Dissimilar patterns

- Making “sense” of information

- Avoid Bias
References


