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Interviews

In this very useful paper, Kathryn Roulston shows the various ways in which we can analyse interview data and addresses how we can determine whether that analysis is of sufficient quality.

Qualitative Research, 10 (2): 199–228 (2010):
<http://qrj.sagepub.com/content/10/2/199>

Considering quality in qualitative interviewing
Kathryn Roulston, University of Georgia

http:

LINK

www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/fqs-eng.htm
(click on 'Search' then 'Interview')

In this paper, Catherine Cassell, a management researcher, discusses the dynamics of interviewing. She shows that the interview involves considerable 'identity work'.

Qualitative Research, 5 (2): 167–79 (2005):
<http://qrj.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/5/2/167>

Creating the interviewer: identity work in the management research process
Catherine Cassell, University of Sheffield



TIP

Do not think of the role of the interviewer as just asking questions. Consider the variety of your other actions, for example saying ‘hmm, mm’, reformulating a question, agreeing and remaining silent. Always assess how these influence what an interviewee says.

EXERCISE

Make an audio recording of one interview. Then review how your contribution is presenting a version of your identity. Consider how this might affect your interviewee’s responses.

Hannah Frith and Diana Harcourt asked women undergoing chemotherapy for cancer to keep a photographic record of their experiences. In this paper, they discuss photography as an alternative way of accessing experience.

Qualitative Health Research, 17 (10): 1340-50 (2007):
<http://qhr.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/17/10/1340>

Using Photographs to Capture Women’s Experiences of Chemotherapy: Reflecting on the Method

Hannah Frith, University of Brighton (H.L.Frith@brighton.ac.uk), and Diana Harcourt, University of the West of England, Bristol

Key words: photography • chemotherapy • breast cancer • cancer • psycho-social aspects • interviews • qualitative methods • general



TIP

If you are interested in understanding people’s experiences, do not assume that the interview is the only appropriate research method.

EXERCISE

Studies of ‘experience’ usually fit within an emotionalist model. Is this true of the Frith and Harcourt paper? For example, what other model(s) can you detect in how they describe their research?

Rachel Hurdley's paper is an illustration of how narrative analysis can be used in the analysis of interview data.

Sociology, 40 (4): 717–33 (2006):

<http://soc.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/40/4/717>

Dismantling Mantelpieces: Narrating Identities and Materializing Culture in the Home

Rachel Hurdley, Cardiff University

Key words: consumption • home • identity • interview • material culture • narrative

Life stories are often collected by interviews. Vanessa May's paper shows how you can use written life stories in qualitative research.

Sociology, 42 (3): 470–86 (2008):

<http://soc.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/42/3/470>

On Being a 'Good' Mother: The Moral Presentation of Self in Written Life Stories

Vanessa May, University of Manchester (vanessa.may@manchester.ac.uk)

Key words: accounts • divorce • life stories • lone motherhood • moral presentation of self

How should you handle apparently 'contradictory' data in an interview? In this paper, Cate Watson discusses the solution she adopted to this problem.

Qualitative Research, 6 (3): 367–84 (2006):

<http://qrj.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/6/3/367>

Unreliable narrators? 'Inconsistency' (and some inconstancy) in interviews

Cate Watson, University of Aberdeen

Key words: ambiguity • discourse theory • identity • qualitative interview • narrative • reliability • transcription



TIP

Apparent 'contradictions' in your data depend on the model you are employing. For constructionists, such contradictions may reflect the different discourses that are being used by participants.

J. Potter and A. Hepburn's short piece offers criticism of our over-reliance on interview data.

Discourse Studies, 9: 276 (2007):

<http://dis.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/9/2/276>

Life is out there: a comment on Griffin

Jonathan Potter and Alexa Hepburn, Loughborough University



TIP

Potter and Hepburn introduce the anthropological terms 'emic' and 'etic'. 'Emic' refers to the categories that participants use. 'Etic' refers to an analyst's categories.