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Interviews and Dialogues

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Data from interviews

- Quantitative
- Qualitative

Dialogic Interviews

- Example from Knight and Saunders

Before the Interview

Activity

- Creating dialogues
- Utilising data source
- Statement Bank
- Using a survey

Types of Interview

- Chat and Structured
- Semi-Structured
- Unstructured

<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/events/capacitybuilding/index.php>



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What information do I want to get from this method?

How do I want to analyse the information:

- Do I want to count or measure
 - basic non-ambiguous quantitative data from larger samples or
- Do I want to interpret meanings and understandings
 - qualitative – deeper and richer data from smaller more purposive samples

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Quantitative data from Interviews

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If the data is to be analysed quantitatively then some rules of engagement are likely to apply:

- Interviews may be 'scripted' so the same questions are asked in the same way of each respondent – this is like delivering a face-to-face questionnaire.
- The resultant data may then be coded using a pre-determined interrogation system which may look at vocabulary, inference, construction of ideas, the use of particular words, identification of themes etc.

This is often called 'discourse analysis' in research theory

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Qualitative data from Interviews

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Interviews usually provide the richest data particularly if they are not tightly structured and allow the respondents to discuss their individual ideas and innovations with regard to the subject.

This type of material is more interesting but slightly more time consuming to analyse, partly because it involves the evaluator in interpreting the meaning behind some of their participants statements, but also because you can get very involved in thinking about some of the unexpected, or unpredicted ideas that arise!

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Things to consider before interviewing 1/2

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Who should I interview?

- Who will have important views about this?
- Who has a role or position relative to this subject that must be considered?
- Who is affected by this issue/subject – who are the stakeholders?
- Which people need to be interviewed individually and which could form an effective focus group?
- Is interviewing the most effective way to get information from this person?
- Should the interviews be:
 - Face-to-face, video linked or on the telephone? (this might be different for each interview respondent)

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Things to consider before interviewing 2/2

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Remember at the start to:

- Introduce yourself
- Give a simple explanation of:
 - The purpose of the interview
 - why should they bother filling it in
 - Confidentiality and recording issues
 - If recording who will listen to the tape and what you will do with it when the research is over
 - Time
 - How long it is likely to take
 - If you get to that time, check they are happy to continue
 - Informed consent arrangements
 - It is useful to have an information sheet with these details which can be sent in advance

See 6E Evaluation Practicalities Ethical Consideration

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Types of Interview 1/4

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Chat

- This informal version may be the way that evaluation ideas are tested or confirmed with a line manager or colleague.

Structured Interview

- Scripted questions and each respondent is treated the same in terms of explanation and recording methods.
- The interviewer has predicted what is likely to be discussed.

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Types of Interview 2/4

Semi-structured Interview

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- Often used for qualitative research.
- Respondents are given some themes, often ahead of time so that they can prepare some ideas for a more detailed conversation.
- The themes would be the same for each respondent, but the conversation may be slightly different and unpredicted material may arise.

This is likely to be a useful approach if you are wanting to compare the views of teachers from different schools or if you have different people asking the questions.

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Types of Interview 3/4

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Unstructured Interview

- Usually used in ethnographic studies where the interviewer does not have any pre-conceived ideas about what will be discussed
- Totally unpredictable material which may include a lot of discussion about subjects only of interest to the respondent and not connected to the research issue at all.
- Time consuming to analyse but usually fascinating!

This is unlikely to be an approach you could use in the time pressured evaluations. However, it's possible for a particular project, you might capture views from participants over time, important to plan ahead with respect to ethical issues of consent.

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Dialogic Interviewing 4/4

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- Creating a dialogue between 'interested parties' will provide a good means to discover what there is to know about a subject.
- Dialogues are more like conversations than interviews but if you have prepared the themes with your respondent before hand they are also good sources of rich and focused data.
- The discussion could relate to any or all of your prepared aspects depending on the knowledge, experience or interest of your respondent.
- You are looking for DEPTH not merely range of knowledge.
- It is easy to understand how to create a dialogue – the following exercise will show how to 'get people talking' – stopping them may be more difficult!!

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Dialogue as a RICH data source

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Features of dialogic interviews

- The interviewer and interviewee have perceived parity of occupational or professional status.
- The interviewer shares personal/professional views on the issues discussed with the interviewee.
- Innovative ideas in relation to the issues are encouraged and developed by both parties.
- People test sudden intuition and sparked thoughts on each other.
- Unpredictable data is generated through wide ranging discussion, this material can be tested with other respondents.

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'Understanding Teachers Professional Cultures' Knight & Saunders (1999)

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An example

- Using a dialogic approach to find out what people thought was meant by the term 'profession', Knight and Saunders reported:

Click to hear dialogic interview

'The dialogues which occurred between interviewer and interviewee did not uncover truths or meanings but produced them. Interviewees often reported to us that they had not thought of the term 'profession' much, even though they used, read and heard the word regularly. The interview, then, provided an opportunity for reflexive thinking during which the interviewee undertook a process of construction with the interviewer.' (1999:148)

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Creating Dialogues
 (example - talking about something we can all relate to!)
Task 1: (Paired activity)
 Think about a negative learning experience you have had in your past and tell your neighbour about it (no more than 2 minutes each!).

Feedback to group by partner – less threatening than doing it yourself and also makes both parties LISTEN carefully to each other!

Task 2: (Paired activity)
 From your dialogue with each other compose 3 or 4 generic statements about 'negative learning experiences' – these will relate to the 'factors' of this type of situation:

- A negative learning experience destroys self-esteem.
- Negative learning experiences can never have positive learning outcomes.

Insert adapted statements onto the 'agree/disagree grid' to provide survey materials testing real data – slide 13

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Utilising a data source

The next move!

- After feeding back you could continue the discussion but this time as a whole group This would generate more data about 'Negative Learning Experiences'.
- You would be creating important 'shared understanding' about this topic which would help later with interviews and analysis.
- This further discussion would turn your group into a 'FOCUS GROUP'.
- You could also use the statements to create a survey and test these ideas on a wider population. This is a better way to generate survey material than trying to think up all the statements or questions yourself.

See 7E Evaluation Methods: Focus Groups

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Statements	Agree	Disagree
Negative Learning experiences can never have positive outcomes		
A negative learning experience is often demeaning		

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Using the Survey

- The survey allows you to further test the ideas that came from the partner dialogues, and or the focus group feedback session.
- A survey like this can help you to confirm ideas that you were beginning to get from other sources of data.
- This type of survey can be analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

See Section 8 Evaluation Analysis


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Evaluation Capacity Building in Widening Participation Practice

 **ECB Toolkit Website:**
www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/events/capacitybuilding/index.php

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