

Use of the episodic interview method in everyday life information behaviour research.

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The use of the episodic interview method (a form of narrative interviewing) is outlined, and its utility in relation to everyday life information seeking research is discussed. The author draws on her use of the episodic interview method in her doctoral study, *Everyday information needs and information behaviour: a study of the information environment of individuals in a low-income neighbourhood in Dublin, Ireland*, and presents examples of narrative units from this study. This study sets out to examine the everyday information needs of adults in relation to public information (such as information relating to health, housing, education, and employment) and the ways individuals approach their information needs, their strategies and tactics, their information-seeking behaviour and use of various (formal and informal) sources.

Use of a narrative interview approach enables the researcher to gain access and develop an understanding of the study participants' experiences of the world; for example their social and informational environments and experiences. Episodic interviewing is a particular narrative interview technique or genre that elicits descriptions of particular episodes or features in the interviewee's daily life and the technique used by the author in her current research has been adapted from the techniques outlined by Flick (1998, 2000), and by Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000). This method of data collection encourages storytelling, which can be particularly useful where the researcher needs to gain an insight into the everyday experiences of the study participants and how they make sense of their experiences and their wider environment. This research approach can provide the researcher with a window into the information worlds of the study participants.

References

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