


Facilitating Open-Forum Discussions During Comprehensive Evaluation Visits

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Presenters

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Comprehensive Evaluation Visits

- Scope and preparation for on-site work
 - Review all materials provided
 - Review relevant institution Web sites

Comprehensive Evaluation Visits

- Review of documents prior to site visit should inform building the visit schedule

Comprehensive Evaluation Visits

- The night before: making some initial points as a team based on areas of focus (identified ahead of time by team chair)
- Team members will conduct separate group interviews. Work with each other to make sure your questions get ask and answered, even when you are not at the session.

Comprehensive Evaluation Visits

- Day 1: basic meeting management tips; review of evidence collected at the end of the day

Comprehensive Evaluation Visits

- Day 2: Any changes to the schedule? Tying loose ends via open fora/forums

Comprehensive Evaluation Visits

- Focus group interview techniques

What are the main phases in the interviewing process?

- a) Planning and preparation – determining the types of questions to be asked, the degree of structure they are to demonstrate, the sequence in which to ask them, the interview schedule, etc.
- b) “Getting in” (Berg, 2004, p. 76) = using particular techniques and strategies to gain access to a setting of interest, where the subjects of our investigation interact, thus creating the phenomena being observed

What are the main phases in the interviewing process?

c) Diagnostic analysis – in the process of interviewing the subject(s), the interviewer has to mentally assess where he/she is with relation to the interview schedule until there is a point of saturation reached.

*“I have asked three of the seven questions I have in my script ... I got some details on _
... I might need to probe into _.”*

What are the main phases in the interviewing process?

- d) Getting out – upon reaching the point of informational saturation, the interviewing session ends in specific ways – EITHER there is a follow-up session that needs to be announced (or reiterated) OR there is no other future session (and this one completes the interview schedule).

What are the main phases in the interviewing process?

- e) Post-interview “analysis” (Berg, 2004, p. 76)
 - interpreting the data gathered during the interview(s)

Useful pre-requisite to effective interviewing

- “Creative interviewing” (Douglas, 1985, as cited in Berg, 2004, p. 77) – making the interviewee feel comfortable and safe/secure enough to promote relevant/useful mutual informational exchanges

Types of interviews

- a) Structured (standardized) – the language and sequence of the questions to be asked is pre-determined and it does not change (like an “oral form of a survey” [Merriam, 1998, p. 73]). No clarifications or additional questions are to be offered to the interviewee, either (Berg, 2004, p. 79)

Example of how a structured interview “plays out”

Structured Interviews

“Getting in”

“Diagnostic analysis” – *Did I answer all the questions in my script?*

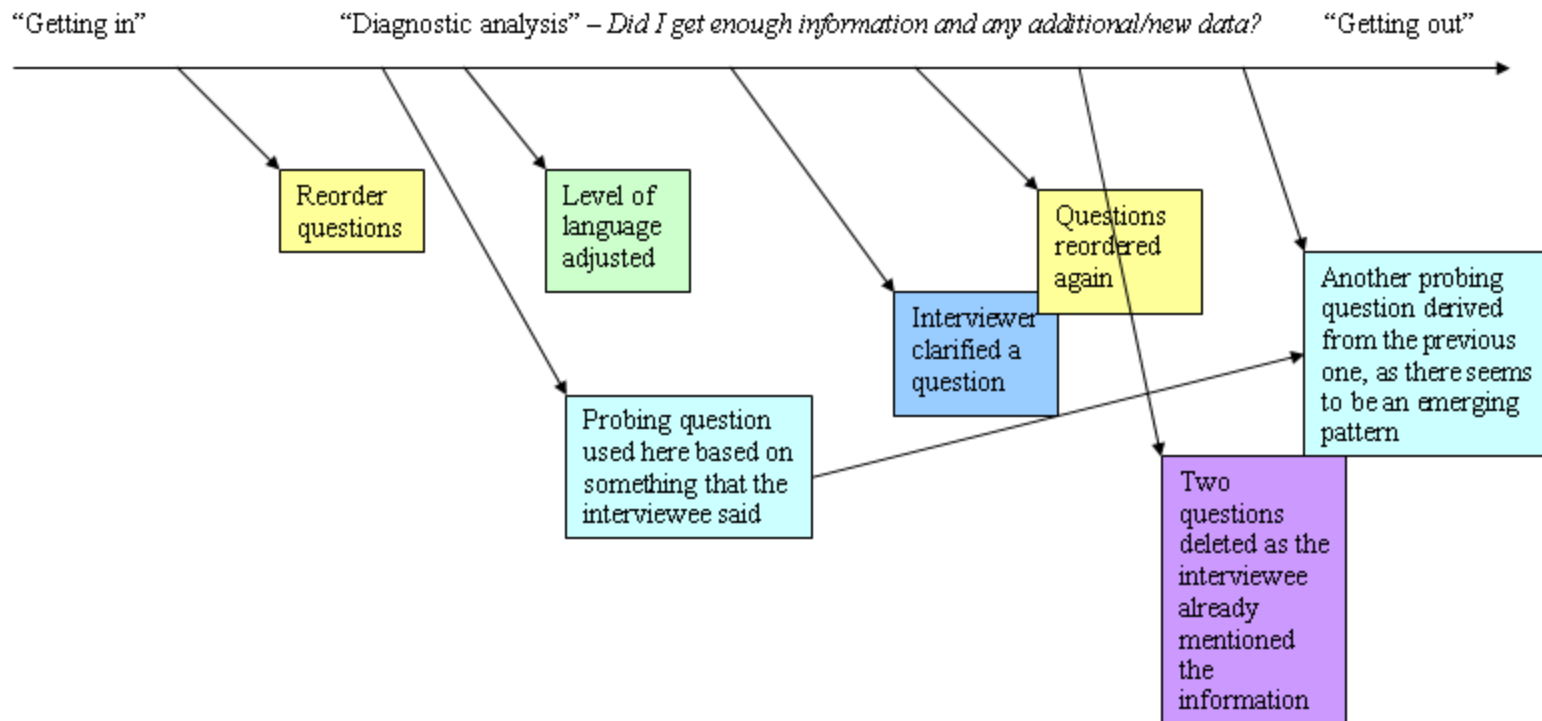
“Getting out”

Types of interviews

- b) Semi-structured – a more flexible version of the previous type; the degree of flexibility varies from context to context and interviewer to interviewer.

Example of how a semi-structured interview “plays out”

Semi-Structured Interviews

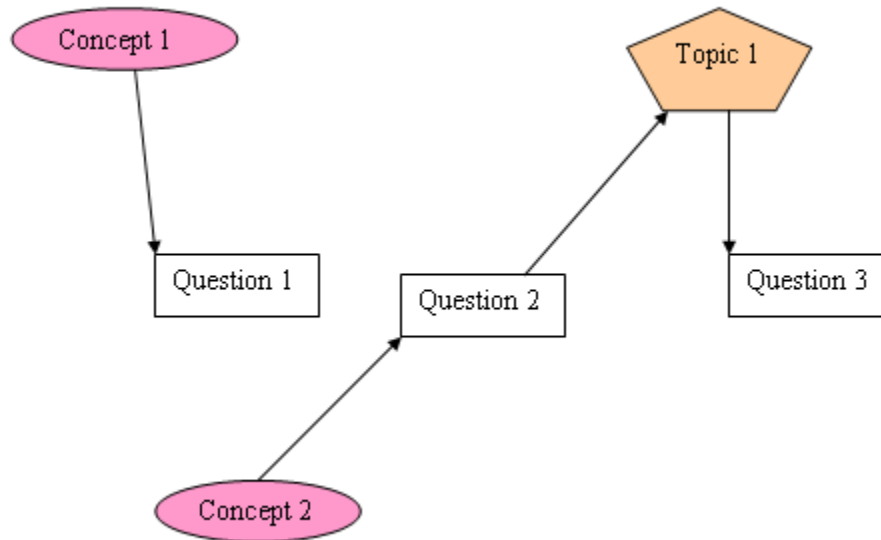


Types of interviews

c) Unstructured (informal) – open-ended questions; flexible & exploratory; more like a conversation (Merriam, 1998, p. 73)

Example of how an unstructured interview “plays out”

Unstructured Interviews



Types of questions

- Essential questions (Berg, 2004, p. 85) – relate to the central focus on a study
- Extra questions (Berg, 2004, p. 86) – like essential questions, but worded differently to check on the reliability of responses
- Throw-away questions (Berg, 2004, p. 86) – not related to the central focus of a study; however, they allow the interviewee to “take a break” from the sequence of “heavy” questions

Types of questions

- Probing questions (Berg, 2004, p. 86)
- Hypothetical questions (Merriam, 1998, p. 77) – “what if”- or “suppose”-type
- Devil’s advocate questions (Merriam, 1998, p. 77) – divergent from the perspective shared by the interviewee
- Ideal position questions (Merriam, 1998, p. 77) – it asks for a description of an ideal situation

Types of questions

- Interpretative questions (Merriam, 1998, p. 77) – the interviewer proposes an initial interpretation of what the interviewee has said, thus asking for a reaction (confirmation or rejection)

Bad, bad questions to ask

- Multiple questions (Merriam, 1998, p. 79) – How would you describe *the teachers*, *their students*, and *the instructional strategies used in class*?
- Leading questions (Merriam, 1998, p. 79) – How *difficult* was it for you to deal with a recalcitrant student?
- Yes-No questions (Merriam, 1998, p. 79)

Bad, bad questions to ask

- Affectively worded questions (Berg, 2004, p. 89) – when inquiring about an emotionally-charged topic, the language of the questions should be neutral
 - *Why* did you do such a *bad* thing?
- Complex, convoluted (long and winding) questions (Berg, 2004, p. 90)
- Question sequencing (Berg, 2004, p. 90)

How to set up effective interactions interviewer – interviewee?

- Be “respectful, nonjudgmental, and nonthreatening” (Merriam, 1998, p. 85)
- Develop a series of strategies designed to help the interviewer “adjust” the verbal interactions with the interviewee = “interviewer’s repertoire” (Berg, 2004, p. 104)
 - Build rapport with the interviewee (by briefly chatting before the interview starts, for instance)
 - Develop the “character” of an interviewer

How to set up effective interactions interviewer – interviewee?

- Use several techniques (Berg, 2004, pp. 108-110), as follows:
 - Uncomfortable silence - up to 45 seconds
 - Echoing – relate to what the interviewee is saying WITHOUT shifting the focus onto yourself as the interviewer
 - Letting people talk – avoid interruptions; become aware of the pace at which different interviewees talk (don't let the interview schedule/script take control of how fast you run the interview)

The ten commandments of interviewing (Berg, 2004, pp. 110-111)

- Never begin an interview cold – do some little chatting beforehand to “warm the interviewee up”
- Remember your purpose – stay focused
- Present a natural front – be yourself, not a reciting head
- Listen actively
- Appropriate appearance (business-like)

The ten commandments of interviewing (Berg, 2004, pp. 110-111)

- Location of the interview should be safe and inviting
- Probe, don't accept yes-no answers
- Be respectful
- Be cordial and appreciative of the fact that the interviewee is actually opening up to you
- Practice as much as you can

CQR differences

- AQIP Action Projects
- Commitment to Continuous Quality Improvement
 - Levels of Organizational Maturity
 - Evidence of Principles of High Performance Organizations

CQR differences con't

- Commitment to AQIP Process
 - Actions that capitalize on Systems Appraisal Feedback
 - Actions that Capitalize on Strategy Forum Participation
 - Actions that Capitalize on Action Projects
 - Commitment to Active Engagement in the AQIP Pathway

Federal Compliance

- Panelist will submit report to Commission
- Commission in turn sends it to the Team Chair
- Chair makes arrangements with institution contact right away
- This session should be on the agenda prior to receiving the report
- Team responsible to investigate, if applicable
- Chair submits with Team Report

Final words of advice ...

- Know who you are as an interviewer and why you are doing this
- Know who your interviewees are so that you can be flexible in your persuasive and confident approach to interviewing
- Remember “creative interviewing”
- What (not) to say ...

Bibliography

- Berg, B.L. (2004). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences (5th ed.)*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Merriam, S.B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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