

F. Direct information, models & experience

- Sample release form for taped interviews—adjust if need be.
- A sample interview guide. (Notice the scripted beginning and ending. The rest of the guide is not a script—it is meant to remind the interviewer of lines of questioning. Terry Gross on NPR's "Fresh Air" is my anti-model of an interviewer. She follows a script for her questions, which are often ones that could be answered "yes" or "no" when she actually wants an elaboration.)
- Two examples of an interview guide
- Two examples of reports on interviews
- Notes and assignments from a 1998 sociology course on qualitative research (incl. Interviewing, observing, etc.)



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I hereby certify that a tape-recorded interview with me was conducted on _____ by _____ for the purposes of writing a class report for the Practicum course (CrCrTh698) in the Graduate College of Education at the University of Massachusetts, Boston in the fall semester, ____.

The following conditions (indicated by initials) shall govern the use of the tape(s).

___ a. No restrictions

___ b. If a transcript of the tape is made, I wish to read the transcript and make corrections and emendations.

___ c. My permission is required to quote or reproduce from the tape or corrected transcript (if applicable).

___ d. Only if the class paper is subsequently to be submitted for publication or used in the preparation of any manuscript intended for publication do I need to be consulted, in which case a new release form governing the use of the material must be provided and signed by me.

___ e. Only if other scholars want access to the tape or corrected transcript (if applicable) do I need to be consulted, in which case a new release form governing the use of the material must be provided and signed by me.

This constitutes our entire and complete understanding.

Name

Signature

Date

Interviewing is not just asking questions and receiving informative answers.

Lizzie Linn Casanave and Jenny Robicheau

Research Briefing October 26, 1998

BRIEFING

Synopsis

1. Why interview?
2. Types of interviews
3. Steps in interviewing
4. Interviewing Tips
5. Issues
6. Resources

1. Why interview? Interviewing allows us to learn about people, places, and events through other people's experiences. It gives us access to other people's observations. It expands our understanding of other people's perceptions, learnings, feelings, etc. It also gives us peeks into areas that may typically be private.

2. Types of interviews:

- Quantitative or Survey Interviewing: Statistical surveys. Aim is typically to report how many people are in a particular category. Results can be in table form. This is a more close-ended interviewing research method that tests hypothesis. "In designing my study it was my intention to combine the most rigorous, scientifically sound methodology with a deep knowledge of, and sensitivity to, the issues of rape." Diana Russell was referring to the survey form of interviewing in this quote.
- Qualitative Interviewing: Semistructured or unstructured form of interviewing that allows for clarification and discussion. Encourages open-ended questions which explores individual's views and allows the interviewer to create a theory. This style is typically less controlled. This form is often used when the researcher wants detailed descriptions, multiple perspectives, a described process, a holistic description, interpretations or the identity of variables. This type of interview may sacrifice uniformity for broader development.

3. Steps in interviewing

1. Decide research goal: Choose a specific topic or question to be answered.
2. Decide aims of project.
3. Develop framework for project including the breadth of the study.
4. Develop appropriate questions based on study.*
5. Decide type of interviewees: Experts, witnesses, general population.
6. Question: will you tape the interview, transcribe, take notes?
7. Determine contacts.
8. Initial introduction/connection, establish relationship.
9. Arrange for interview keeping in mind where, when, and how long the interview will be?
10. Conduct interview.
11. Analyze data.

*How do we determine what questions to ask? Develop a basic understandings from previous work, study, writings and experience. Do pilot research. Try to see how others have asked the question. Determine what will give substance to your future report and ask questions based on this goal.

4. Interviewing Tips:

- First, explain the purpose of the interview, going over explanations of your overall goals.
- How to ask the question: Phrase questions in an open way. Don't ask leading questions. Do ask probing and clarifying questions.
- Express interest in the informant's response: be an active listener.
- Provide good feedback: (from The Ohio State University Polimetrics Laboratory for Political and Social Research interviewer training manual via "Essential Interviewing Techniques" by A. Barber.)

Good Feedback:

I see...

That's important to know

OK... now the next question reads

It's important to find out what people think about this

That is useful/helpful information

Thanks, it's important to get your opinion on that

Bad Feedback:

Yes, a lot of people say that
Oh, really?
Gee, that's the first time I've heard that
I don't know anything about that

- Avoid bias: even voice tone can be interpreted as a bias. Be careful not to imply criticism, surprise, approval, etc. A non-judgmental manner will promote a more honest, response.
- You can help the respondent develop their response using the following suggestions which are excerpts from Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies by Robert Weiss.
 1. Extending. You might want to know what led to an incident. Questions that ask for this include, "How did that start?" "What led to that?" Or you might want to know the consequences of an incident: "Could you go on with that? What happened next?"
 2. Filling in detail. You might want more detail that the respondent has provided. A useful question often is, "Could you walk me through it?" An interviewer who worked with me used to add, "We need you to be as detailed as possible," and that seemed to work for her.
 3. Others the respondent consulted. Especially in a study whose concerns include how respondents talked dealt with problems, you may want to ask whom the respondent talked with about an incident and what the respondent said: "Did you talk to anyone about what was going on?" This may produce information about the respondent's view of the incident at the time.
 4. Inner Events: You will generally want to obtain information regarding some of the inner events that accompanied the outer events the respondent reports. Inner events include perceptions, what the respondent heard or saw; cognitions, what the respondent thought, believed, or decided; and emotions, how the respondent felt and what strivings and impulses the respondent experienced.

- tips from visit by Joy Charlton, Swarthmore College, March 1998

1. Conceptualization: multiple respondents vs. particular informant (you want to generalize vs. someone who has some particular experiences you want to know about)

2. Start with easy Qs then ask broad Qs that get a person talking, then add probing Qs

3. Preliminaries at the time of the interview

- avoid offices full of distractions -- look for, say, a conference room instead

- JC always tapes interviews so she has an accurate account

- use fresh batteries

- if phone interviewing, watch out for problems with analog vs. digital equipment

- (re)state who you are & what it is you want to know -- be honest, but not very revealing

- (re)state what's promised, e.g., anonymous & confidential

4. During interview

- concentrate every moment

- it's a gift for most people to be listened to

- be flexible, esp. when they say something you didn't expect

- peg things to what they previously said

- don't be afraid of pauses

- use your guide to lessen your anxiety

5. Afterwards

- write up notes straight away before you talk about it -- talking first distorts one's memory

5. Issues:

Confidentiality

Validity

Responsibility

Intrusions

Unresponsiveness

6. Resources:

"Essential Interviewing Techniques" <http://www.unc.edu/depts/nnspp/viewtech.htm> by Alleen Barber.

The Ethnographic Interview by James P. Spradley

Feminist Methods in Social Research by Shulamit Reinharz.

Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies by Robert Weiss.

Profiles of Social Research: The Scientific Study of Human Interactions by Morton Hunt.

The Research Experience by Patricia Golden.

} in comp
refs.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

*Questions prepared
on outline
processor*

The following list of questions was used, largely by myself and Tom Gieryn, as we conducted interviews for the archive. The interviews were largely unstructured; we used the list of questions mainly as a guide.

The main set of interview questions was developed for dealing with active researchers. Following those questions are two sets of briefer, modified questions used as guides for interviewing journalists and administrators.

1. Introductory comments:

I'd like to use this interview to collect your recollections about the cold fusion episode. Toward the end, I'll ask about the material that you have that might be appropriate for our archive. I'll also ask you at the end to look back at the cold fusion episode and reflect on it. But for now, what I'm most interested in is your memories of how your own involvement in cold fusion developed.

2. First, I'd like some quick background information about your training and current position.

- a) Do you have a C.V. that lists that?
- b) If not, let me ask some quick questions:
 - 1) name
 - 2) age
 - 3) position
 - 4) educational
 - a> degree
 - b> year
 - c> discipline
 - 5) area of research
(get down to subdisciplines, actual work; if possible, get a c.v. and list of publications)
 - a> Any earlier fusion research?
 - 1> hot fusion
 - 2> cold fusion
 - 6) Patents?

3. Now, let's go back to the third week of March of this year. Try to remember what you were thinking then.

- a) When and how did you first hear about the Pons & Fleischmann announcement?
- b) What do you think about this way of releasing scientific information?
(prompt: by press conference)
 - 1) good
 - 2) bad
 - 3) indifferent
- c) Had you known anything about earlier research on cold fusion?
- d) How did you initially respond?
(Goal: did they immediately try to do something, or did the desire to take part arise later)

6. Did you do any formal literature searching?
 - a) What kinds of literature searching did you do?
 - 1) mass media
 - 2) technical literature
 - 3) SDI (selective dissemination of information/current awareness)

7. Did you try to "replicate" or do any other experiments or calculations?
(Did they think the idea was worth pursuing, or just a silly idea?)
 - a) what did you do?
 - b) with whom?
 - c) with what equipment?
 - d) with what funds?
 - e) Who made decisions about these things: you, a lab chief, a supervisor?
 - f) What happened to your efforts?
 - 1) If you failed to replicate, to what did you attribute failure?
 - 2) If you succeeded, how did you proceed?

8. What is your continuing activity/interest in the area?

9. Did your work/opinions make it into the press?
 - a) were you interviewed?
 - b) did you reach out or did press come to you?
 - c) what was your reaction to being interviewed/quoted?
 - d) In general, what was your sense of the utility of information in the mass media? How accurate was that information? How complete?

10. Looking back on the whole episode?:
 - a) What has been the scientific result of all of this?
 - b) What's your opinion of Pons & Fleischmann now?
 - 1) their science
 - 2) science by press conference
 - c) Is this typical science?
 - d) Does it remind you of any other episodes in the history of science?
 - e) Is it good science?
 - f) What does all this say about science these days?
 - g) What happens next? Do you have funds to keep pursuing this field? Do you have time?

11. Are there key people you think I should talk with here or elsewhere?

12. Is there anything I didn't ask you about that I should have asked about?

John Quirk
Revised Interview Guide – Assignment F1
(edited in response to comments)

Intended Subject: Dr. Robert Evans

Intended Length: 30 Minutes

Introduction: I am the dean of students at a small boarding school, and I am looking at the ways in which students, parents, faculty members and others interpret the community's view of values or standards of behavior by looking at the disciplinary structure of the school. I am concerned that the structure of our disciplinary system may be undermining some educational goals related to the teaching of values.

1. Describe one or two key moments or times of engagement in your early thinking about the importance and messaging of structure for adolescents.
2. At those times, were you aware that perhaps you were beginning to think differently about the topic of structure for students. If so, could you explain what was novel about your perspective?
3. As you began to evolve your thinking on the topic, what other work under-pinned your own engagement with the topic?
4. With what specific challenges presented by others or by previously existing work did you have to struggle as your ideas emerged? Were any of these internal struggles? Are there any that still have you wondering?
5. On the flip side, whose work bolstered your own, or whom did you consider to be allies?
6. What was the most surprising twist/turn in your emergent thinking on the topic of structure and adolescents? Were any of these helpful or enlightening? Any dead ends?
7. In what places or environments has your theoretical work found practical, successful application? Has it failed anywhere? If so, what were the challenges.
8. What did I miss? As an expert in this area of interest for me, what should I have asked that I missed? Anything you would like to add?

Introduction:

- a. thank the interviewee for their time and confirm the allotted time to which we had agreed for this interview
- b. provide a brief description of my purposes and research:
 - 1) exploring the question of how use of theater arts can be used in adult education environments to support learning that prepares adults to create social change
 - 2) brief explanation of Critical and Creative Thinking program
 - 3) ask interviewee to explain their role in their organization/work situation

Questions:**Theater in Education**

1. When you were first starting to involve yourself in the use of theater in education, what had you done to prepare yourself (informal and formal education)? In what ways do you wish you had been more prepared?
2. Can you tell me about successful work experience that gave you a new excitement or encouragement about the potential of this work?
3. What are the objections that have been expressed by your potential clients/constituents when you have suggested how your work and methods might be useful in their environment?
4. What have you done to form collaboration with others toward using applied theater in education? How have the skills of others complemented your own?

Theater in Social Change Issues

5. Do you think that there are any key misconceptions that are broadly held about theater for social change?
6. ** If you believe that that use of theater techniques in social change should be more prevalent in educational environments, what have been the barriers to making that happen?

Work Organization and Administration of the Program/Project

7. How do you organize the information that you need to manage your work?

8. What are the things that you need the most right now that would make your work most successful or fulfilling?
9. What are the most difficult parts of this work, especially the things that others may not tell me?
10. What do you do to keep up with the trends in the use of theater for social change and its educational applications?
11. ** Are there any philosophical differences between you and your partners/staff in the way that you approach your goals? If so, how do you handle those?
12. ** In terms of your daily work tasks, what are the parts that tend to be particularly boring or frustrating?

Additional Leads and Suggestions

13. Who are the other key people in the Boston area that might be able to provide insight or support?
14. Is there anything else that I should know?

Wrap-up

- a. thank the interviewee for their time
- b. mention how I will follow up with them, if appropriate
- c. confirm again my support of the interviewee's work and efforts

Other Reminders:

1. monitor the time throughout the interview
2. when possible, think about how to phrase my next question in a way that also acknowledges the previous statement or comment - change the question order as needed

** I consider some of the questions to be "secondary" if pressed for time and needing to sacrifice some; these may also be answered or addressed in the course of discussing the other questions.

Overview

During the course of my research, I have been able to engage directly through participation in the following ways:

Two Phone Interviews: Jonathan Mirin (Co-Artistic Director, *Piti Theater Company*, Shelbourne, MA), Linda Naiman (Director, *Linda Naiman & Associates*, Vancouver, BC)

Group Meeting: Theater for Change practice group (Florence, MA)

In-person Program Visit: Urban Improv program (Vine St. Community Center, Roxbury, MA), including a follow-up meeting with Kippy Dewey, director of Urban Improv.

Phone Interview, Jonathan Mirin

General summary and relevance: Jonathan's Piti Theater Company is a group of theater professionals who have developed a theater-based model for addressing change management in organizational development. Jonathan was able to offer several leads for further exploration and suggested that in addition to my current directions, I might want to explore some of the university programs that directly address "applied theater". He also suggested the importance of remaining active in theater education by continuing to take classes so that I start to more naturally think about use of theater in education during my daily work.

Lessons learned: 1) using theater in learning environments necessarily means that everyone takes an active part in the process, particularly through physical movement and body awareness; 2) getting people to become engaged in theater-based activities and methodologies requires that a "warm-up" period is allowed, and although this seems like a way to activate the mind toward theater, it is mainly a way to let people find ways to let go of their inhibitions

Follow-up needs: 1) review the applied theater program at Stanford; 2) review the following local organizations: Dramaworks Theater Company (Northampton), the Ariel Group, The School for International Training, and the Sandglass Puppets Theater; 3) review the backgrounds and key works of the following people involved in developing theater-based education in social issues: Keith Johnstone and Michael Rohd

Phone Interview, Linda Naiman

General summary and relevance: Linda is the Director of an arts-based consulting group that helps organizations experience change particularly through visual images and "print conversations".

Although her specific domain represents a different angle on the arts compared to my research, she was able to address the issue of what it means to engage people in use of the arts who decidedly do not

consider themselves to be artists. She was able to provide insight on presenting such material in a way to make it more accessible to those feeling some hesitation.

Lessons learned: 1) for non-artists, take a very direct approach in providing encouragement for people to welcome ambiguity and that artistic experiences can be shared independent of artistic skill; 2) it is critically important to establish arts-based change education in a “safe” environment - this means making it clear that a person will only engage in activities or discussion of personal information with their complete agreement, no discussion of such information will go beyond the immediate situation, and, it is actually the goal of the experience to allow someone to learn from “mistakes”, which are often just situations that we did not expect to encounter; and 3) creative learning experiences must involve a commitment to action, so establishing follow-up activities can be an important strategy for allowing people to take their experience beyond the arts-based learning situation

Follow-up needs: 1) review the following organizations: Interlog, Necessary Theater, and the art program at the Frick Art Museum; and 2) review the writings of artist Marchall McCluen

Group Meeting, Theater for Change practice group

General summary and relevance: This is a group of independent practitioners involved in theater for social change who are looking to form a periodic meeting in which they can discuss models and activities for situations in which they work. I attended the very first meeting of the group, which provided important insight into the logistical needs and barriers that influence the success of such a group.

Lessons learned: 1) a key challenge in such a learning group is to connect theater-based activities to practical use and expected outcomes; it can be demonstrated through a physical exercise, for example, how body postures of two people can influence communication styles in their conversation. It is vitally important though to go beyond the exercise and define next steps or ways that a person can reflect upon and use this principle later, while actually in a related real-life situation.

Follow-up needs: 1) consider the practicality of my future participation in the group since it is far away from my home, 2) explore the activities of the True Story Theater group in the Boston area as another lead in social-change theater education

In-person Visit, Urban Improv

General summary and relevance: Urban Improv is a program that seeks to reduce youth violence through a highly structured improv. education program. I attended one “class”, which was presented to the Tobin School’s 5th grade class as part of an 8-class series. This experience was highly important for

me because it presented a realistic view of a very well-established way to use theater as an engaging method of teaching about social change. Although this program focuses on children, I found numerous points of relevance to adult learning as well.

Lessons learned: 1) it may not be necessary to promote the concept of “theater” in a education for social change situation - it can be sufficient describe activities more generically to make sure that the “audience” feels that it can participate without prior knowledge; 2) all activities in the program were preceded by a description of the activity and followed by a whole-group dialogue and “conclusion”; activities included a role-play of a new student’s first day of school and a student-developed skit that addressed bullying and allowed students to take on the role of both the bully and the “oppressed” student; 3) the improv. group started the program by taking on roles as young students and interacting with the audience, which allowed the students to become engaged as “themselves” first, before the students were asked to take on other roles; and 4) the class’s teacher very naturally felt comfortable as a performer and found it refreshing to be able to related to the students in a way other than their teacher; 5) emphasis was placed on “trying something”, but never “right and wrong”; 6) the class’s teacher reviewed the importance of discussing the program with the students in their own school and also suggested that the students attending the program would be encouraged to discuss the experience with those who did not attend; and 7) even though I am focusing on areas of adult learning, it may be worthwhile to consider involvement or development of a theater-for-change group that serves a school-aged afterschool/summer vacation need - this kind of activity is well-received, much needed, and usually finds funding relatively easily when many other non-profit ventures struggle financially

Follow-up needs: 1) consider how to facilitate theater-based activities in teacher groups; 2) review the activities of “partner” programs “Creative Arts in the Park” and “The Freelance Players”.

General Needs for Future Exploration:

- 1) because all of my informants originally started with theater experience and found applications in education, it would be helpful to continue to seek those primarily experienced in adult learning who might be open to theater-based education
- 2) participation is a key; in future exploration, it will become increasingly important to explore possibilities that involve direct participation of adult learners/educators; and also, it will help to expand my understanding to longer-term prospects, so that I am thinking not only of theater activities/applications for teachers and discussions of social change but also of the extended process of transforming the notion of adult education to consider social change as a primary goal

Interview Report

I met twice with J--, a cellist who, as he put it, was in need of relearning how to move his body. He did not like the term "injured." He felt that "injured" did not actually apply as he was really trying to restructure his approach to how his body works. This remark occurred at the onset of the interview and helped to set the tone. I quickly learned to prompt him with terms that (hopefully) would not be labeling or confining to him. He was very engaged in the discussion and had a lot to say about his experiences.

He looked over the questions and pushed them aside saying that he would just let me lead and asked if it mattered if we went in order. I explained that the questions were a guide, rather than a set agenda, with which he seemed contented. As he was very comfortable with sharing his story, I did not need to prompt him very much. He actually went in a similar order as my questions. He was extremely concise and well spoken with his responses, which will help me to apply his information to the project. The difficulty I had was trying to hear and retain his story so I could digest the information quickly enough to then assess whether or not I had the particular information I felt I needed. J-- covered a lot of ground and it was challenging to take it all in. On a personal level, it was challenging to not let myself get pulled into his story too much. I found that it stirred up my own feelings... [section omitted]

Our second conversation had some highlights, but I think the fire was more present in the first. J-- is training to be Feldenkreis practitioner and he invited me to observe one of the sessions, which I did attend. It was fascinating to see the similarities between the Internal Martial Arts and Feldenkreis, as well as the differences.

My talk with J-- gave me the unique information I wanted for the project. It also caused me to take a closer look at my own engagement in my project and my relationship to the topic, which I believe will help to make my project a stronger one.

I have interviewed 2 out of 5 injured musicians. Of the remaining 3, I believe 2 are a lost cause, and 1 may still work out. I have one other person I will try to contact for this interview. I am toying with the idea of contacting my neurologist to try to get similar information from him, since he primarily works with injured musicians.

DEPTH INTERVIEW ASSIGNMENT

Goal: to experience data collection through semi-structured interviewing, including recording and interpretation of data.

Specifics of the procedures:

(1) Choose as a respondent someone appropriate for your project, preferably someone you don't already know. Arrange the interview well in advance, leaving time for rescheduling should that become necessary.

Choose a place for the interview which will be convenient for the respondent, comfortable for both of you, and relatively quiet and free from distractions. Ask for at least an hour for the interview.

(2) Write up an interview guide in your own words. Your questions or topics should be open-ended, not questions that call for a yes or no answer. Be sure you know beforehand the general areas and topics you want to have discussed; worry less about the wording of specific questions. Also be willing to flow with the interview if it should go in an interesting direction, even if it wasn't one you anticipated.

(3) Conduct the interview. Remember to listen during the interview, to concentrate so that you follow everything the respondent is saying and so that you can remember it all as well.

You may tape record the interview if your respondent agrees and you so wish, but you may want to take some notes as well in case the mechanical recording device fails. Certainly take notes during the interview if you do not use a tape recorder. Be prepared to jot down some notes during the interview to remind yourself of questions you want to ask later.

(4) Fully transcribe the interview as soon as possible. If you have not used a tape recorder, follow the interview itself as closely as possible, using verbatim quotes as much as you can. Transcription of either variety will take considerable time, so be sure to include it in your schedule. And as with field notes generally, the longer you wait, the less you remember.

(5) Immediately following the interview and during the interview transcription, note in as much detail as you can manage your ideas about what is particularly interesting, important, or problematic.

(6) Send your respondent a gracious thank you letter. Include a copy in your report.

(7) Code. Read back through your transcription/write up and generate coding categories: what themes and sub-themes do you see that seem important, and that you might look for in other interviews? Demonstrate some means by which you might physically code your data.

(8) Write a report which includes, but is not limited to the following topics:

- (a) Reason for choosing this respondent and location. Relevant information about the respondent if not included in the interview transcript.
- (b) Analytical responses. For example: what data from this interview are most interesting or most important? What are the themes? What are the gaps? Relate this information in whatever ways you can to previous academic work (theories? previous studies you know about?) and to your own observation project. What general questions

- might you generate from what you now know? What specific hypotheses does the interview suggest to you would be interesting to pursue with further research?
- (c) Your coding categories.
 - (d) Methodological discussion. Discuss characteristics of your interview that may have affected your data, how your interview might have been affected by circumstances beyond your control, how you might do things differently now that you've had the experience, and so forth. Being methodologically self-conscious is fundamental.
 - (e) Finally, present a preliminary research design for a project on your topic using solely or primarily this method of data collection.

Turn in: interview guide (typed, double-spaced); raw notes from the interview; a copy of the thank you letter; interview transcription (typed); results of coding process; report (typed).

OBSERVATION ASSIGNMENT

Goal: to experience the initial stage of data collection through observation, including recording and interpretation of data.

Assignment:

(1) Observe a setting that you think will provide information about the topic you have selected. Do a total of at least 3 hours of observation. Make a reasoned choice of the times to observe: think about whether it makes sense to observe 3 hours straight, or to observe in some number of shorter periods; if you decide to do shorter periods, think about bases for deciding when and how long they should be. Be sure to discuss these decisions in your report.

The aim of initial observation is to begin to discover the basic elements of the setting; who is there, what are they doing, what units of space, time, behavior are meaningful?

(2) Take notes. (Review Analyzing Social Settings on "mental notes" and "jotted notes," pp. 53-64.)

(3) Type up notes to submit. (See Lofland and Lofland on "full field notes," p. 64.) Since this is an initial observation, your notes should be inclusive. You don't know yet what is relevant and what is not, so you need to observe and record everything possible.

Your notes should contain two elements: (1) detailed notes that are concrete and descriptive, and (2) analytical notes consisting of tentative evaluations, generalizations, and questions for further exploration.

(4) Prepare a report, including but not limited to:

- (a) typed notes on observations,
- (b) reason for choosing location and time units for observation,
- (c) analytical discussion: what did you find out? what was interesting? what was important? what might be possible coding categories? what would you look for next time?
- (d) methodological discussion: what were the oddities of this particular observation? what worked best? what did you have trouble with? what might you have overlooked? what would you do differently were you to do this assignment again? what can you see are the advantages to this method of data collection? what can you see, on the basis of your experience, are the disadvantages?
- (e) preliminary outline of a research design for a full-blown project using solely or primarily observation.

SURVEY RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT

The goal of this assignment is to work through the major issues in construction of a survey research instrument.

Part I. Initial Development of Instrument

1. Present the goals and general framework of your research: what broad questions do you want to answer and what are the major mechanisms of social behavior you intend to explore?
2. Develop and state two hypotheses about your research setting. Remember that a hypothesis relates at least two variables to each other, and that variables vary.
3. State both conceptual and operational definitions for each variable in your hypotheses.
4. Present and justify a sampling strategy for obtaining responses generalizable to your setting. Assume you have sufficient research funds for the most appropriate sampling strategy you can design. Be sure to discuss all the aspects of sampling about which decisions must be made. (Babbie's list includes: element, universe, population, survey population, sampling unit, sampling frame, observation unit, variable, as well as the types of sampling design, e.g., simple random sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling, etc.).
5. Write a questionnaire including at least 20 close-ended questions.
6. Discuss your decisions about wording, ordering, acceptability, in particular as these were influenced by what you already know about your setting.
7. Discuss why you expect that these questions will provide the data required by the operational definitions of the variables in your hypotheses.

Part II. Pre-testing and Administration of Instrument

8. Ask another member of the class to take your questionnaire; modify the questions as necessary afterwards.
9. Give the questionnaire to a person appropriate to your topic and modify the questions afterwards as indicated by this pre-test.
10. Give the questionnaire to at least 5 more persons appropriate to your topic.
11. Turn in BOTH the original and the 2 modified surveys, with a discussion of why you made the modifications you did.
12. Discuss how you would "reduce" the data from your survey in order to use them to evaluate your hypotheses.
13. Viewing these as very preliminary and limited data, discuss what they seem to tell you about your hypotheses (or about the limitations of your questionnaire). Some simple counts would be helpful.
14. Critique your project. What would you do differently next time now that you have had this experience? What are your thoughts about this method relative to others?
15. Suggest a research design on your topic for a full-blown project using survey techniques.

FINAL ASSIGNMENT: RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The purpose of this assignment is to have you use what you've learned to design a full-scale research project and to present your design in a proposal format as if it were to be reviewed for possible funding.

Your proposal should include the following sections:

1. A brief abstract (no more than 250 words).
2. An introduction which announces the topic, makes a statement of the goals and rationale of the study, and specifies the research questions and hypotheses. The statement of the rationale should pay attention to Lofland and Lofland's concern about one's study being "interesting" and important.
3. A literature review which provides the substantive context for your own research. Normally a proposal includes a detailed literature review (which is similar to what you know as a library term paper). Here you are asked to complete only two aspects of this portion of proposal writing. (a) Go through a minimal searching process, searching for previous research on your topic, but emphasizing the range of resources. You are asked, therefore, to list potential sources, listing with complete bibliographic references, at least 2 items each from at least six different types of sources (e.g., books, professional journal articles, dissertation abstracts, etc.). That means a minimum of 12 items listed. Kate Cleland, the social science librarian, is an excellent resource for help in finding such material. (b) Write a short literature review on your topic, probably around 5 pages, enough to show that you have gotten your feet wet, substantively speaking.
4. An explanation of preliminary studies that you have yourself completed and how they lead up to this particular proposal.
5. A detailed plan of research which states the methods of data collection you plan to use and how they relate to your research questions. The plan should include all major issues of data collection, including sampling strategies, operationalization of key concepts, and so forth. A special requirement here: in your plan of research you MUST include at least one qualitative strategy (e.g., observation, in-depth interviews) and one quantitative strategy (survey, available data).
In this section be sure to justify your methods: what the advantages are of these choices, what we can learn from them that we cannot learn from other methods, why your choices are appropriate, why they are necessary to obtain the data you need. You should also include a discussion of possible problems or challenges and how you intend to address them.
6. A detailed plan for data management and data analysis. Here you need to describe what you plan to do with the data once you have them: how they will be recorded, stored, coded, and analyzed in order to answer your questions and/or evaluate your hypotheses. E.g. how will the data you collect be used to operationalize your variables? how will you combine different types of information to answer your questions? how will you present the information for readers of your final report? If you might use tables or diagrams, explain what material they would include. (It can be very helpful to sketch "empty" tables or diagrams to show what you plan to do with your data).
7. A schedule to show the timing of each of the various research activities within the project (this is often done in units of a month).

8. A budget written in terms of the major categories of expenses which will need funding. Major categories typically include personnel, equipment, travel, supplies, miscellaneous (e.g., phone, postage, photocopying). Each category in your budget needs to be justified (e.g., you must say, if you plan to hire a secretary, what that secretary will be hired to do, such as, for example, transcribe interview tapes; if you will be paid full-time for a year what will be your responsibilities; if you need to travel, why; if you want to buy a computer, what for, etc.). Assume that you are working for an agency or institution which will bill the funding source for overhead or "indirect" costs at 60%. (In fact these charges vary because they are negotiated between each institution and the funding source).
9. A statement regarding your project's protection of human subjects. Issues of confidentiality, possible risks to subjects/respondents, possible benefits, and informed consent belong here.
10. A description of how the results of your research will be distributed.
11. In conclusion, for the purposes of this class, write a critique of your proposal as it stands, pointing out what you see as areas needing improvement and suggesting how you would go about trying to make improvements in future versions.