QUALITATIVE RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

SEER
Workshops
Spring 2017

THANK YOU

- Jenn Thompson
- Jill McCourt
- My research group members
- Images obtained from:
  - http://ed.fullerton.edu/seced/category/news/
  - http://www.hannahwarrenauthor.com/?attachment_id=5523
  - http://www.kaskaskia.edu/Title3/learningcommunities.aspx

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Write a rationale for doing qualitative research. Provide examples of the types of research questions that call for qualitative investigation via (1) fieldwork (broadly) and (2) interviews (more specifically).
- Name several different types of research interviews.
- Explain some important considerations in conducting a research interview, i.e., rules and guidelines, attitudes and demeanor.
- Diagram a process for developing an interview guide.
- *Get to know each other.*

SOCIAL EXPERIENCES AND THE QUESTIONS THEY PRODUCE

- Recall a social experience from your past that moved you emotionally and made you want to know more about the social phenomena behind that experience. What was the experience? What questions did the experience generate?
- Rules: Only pick an experience that you're comfortable sharing with someone else.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

- "The goal of qualitative research is the development of concepts which help us understand social phenomena in natural (rather than experimental) settings, giving due emphasis to the meaning, experiences, and views of all the participants." (Pope & Mays, 1995)

- "Qualitative methods can help bridge the gap between [experimental] evidence and [real world] practice"(Green & Britten, 1998)

HOW ARE QUALITATIVE METHODS DIFFERENT FROM QUANTITATIVE METHODS?*

Quantitative

- Outsider Perspective
- Variable-Centered
- Particularistic
- Decontextualized
- Focus on Breadth of Knowledge
- Deductive
- Researcher experience separate from data and analysis

Qualitative

- Insider Perspective
- Person-Centered
- Holistic
- Contextualized
- Focus on Depth of Knowledge
- Inductive
- Researcher experience can be part of data and analysis

*Adapted from Padgett, D. 2012. *Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research in Public Health*.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH & YOU

- What are the social phenomena you would like to investigate?
- Write a research question about that phenomena you are investigating?

FIELDWORK

Observations

- Used to describe a setting, activities, people, and meanings of what was observed.
- Provide an Insider's view
- Limitations: Observer may affect the situation being observed; focused only on external behaviors; can only observe a limited set of activities in a given setting.

Interviews

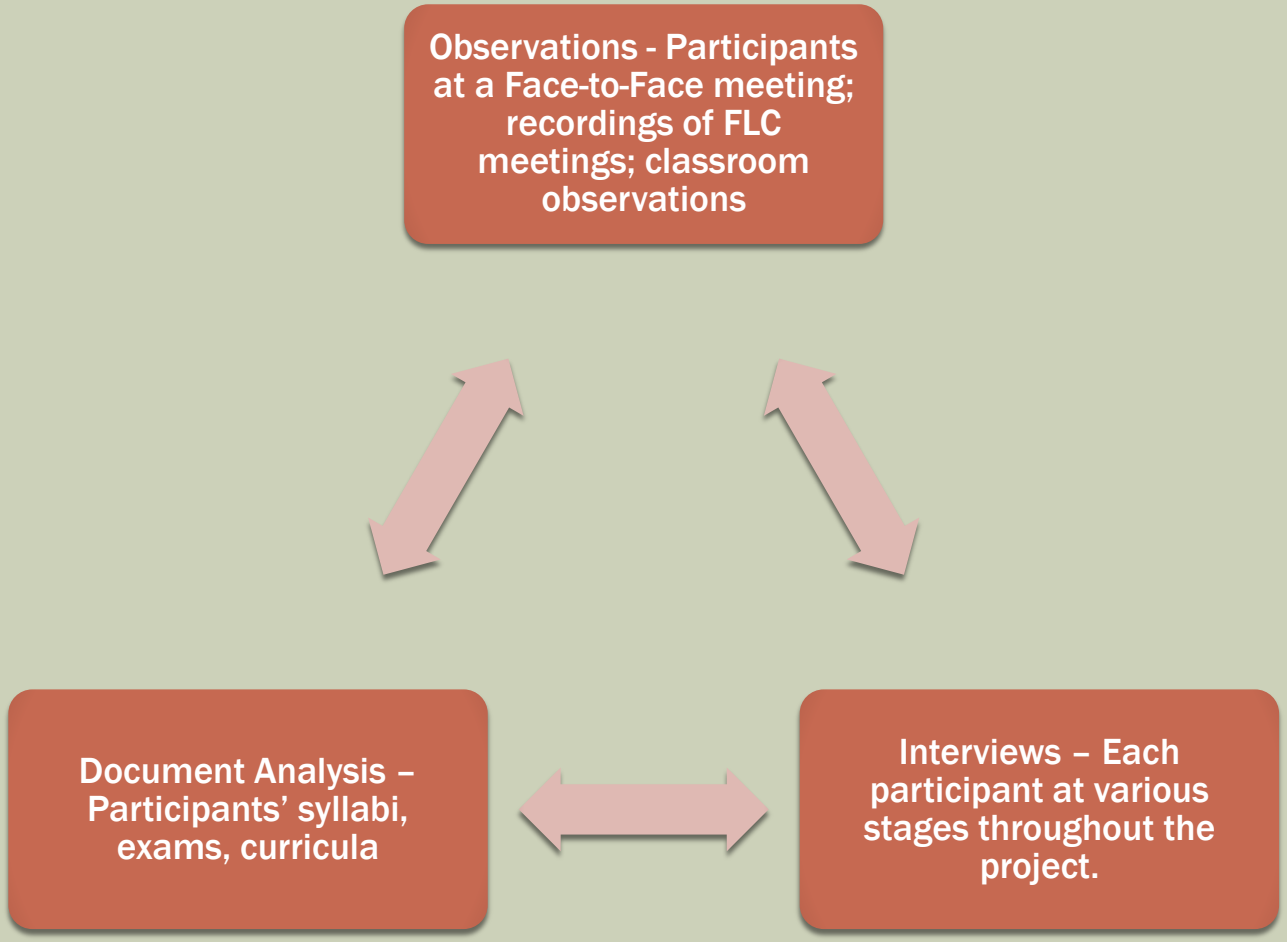
- Used to go beyond external behavior to internal states of participants
- Limitations: Participants can only report their *perceptions*; influenced by emotional state of participant at time of interview; subject to recall error and self-serving responses

Document analysis

- Provides a behind-the-scenes look at a program, course, etc.
- May provide leads for observation or interviews
- Limitations: May be incomplete or inaccurate; may only represent certain aspects of program or course; variable in quality.

Patton, 1990

AN EXAMPLE OF CROSS-CHECKING IN FIELDWORK



INTERVIEW TYPES

- Informal conversational (Often used in participant observation)
- Interview guide/Semi-structured
- Standardized open-ended
- Think-aloud/Cognitive

Kvale, 2007; Patton, 1990

THE CASE OF DR. MCCOURT AND THE FACULTY INTERVIEWS

This case is used with permission:

Dr. Jill McCourt came to UGA in January 2014 as a postdoc. In her new postdoc role, Jill was responsible for investigating the impact of professional development on faculty who participate in the Automated Analysis of Constructed Response (AACR) project.

AACR
Automated Analysis of Constructed Response

THE CASE OF DR. MCCOURT AND THE FACULTY INTERVIEWS

AACR
Automated Analysis of Constructed Response

AACR provides a way to evaluate students' written responses to conceptual questions in biology. Once the computers evaluate students' work, faculty are given a report detailing their students' correct ideas about the concept, as well as their misconceptions. Faculty then use the reports to change their teaching, so students have the opportunity to correct their misconceptions.

THE CASE OF DR. MCCOURT AND THE FACULTY INTERVIEWS

Research Question: How does participation in AACR impact faculty attitudes about teaching and teaching practices?

THE CASE OF DR. MCCOURT AND THE FACULTY INTERVIEWS

Within the first 2 months of her new postdoc, Jill had to work with the AACR research team to prepare to interview 19 faculty participants in the project.

How did she get ready – and fast – for the interviews?!?

THE CASE OF DR. MCCOURT AND THE FACULTY INTERVIEWS

- Part 1: Conducting the Interviews
- Part 2: Creating the Interview Guide

PART 1: CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

- Handout: Interview guide Jill used with faculty participants.
- Individually or in groups: Take a few moments to get familiar with the interview.
  - What topics are covered in the interview?
  - How many questions per topic?
  - What's the most interesting question to you?
  - Given this interview, what do you think the AACR project is about? What questions do you have about the AACR project?

PART 1: CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

- Interview excerpt - ~ 6 minutes
- Questions #19 - #22 of interview guide

PART 1: CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

- Form groups of 2-3 people
- Set up to your task:
  - "The purpose of qualitative interviewing is to understand how . . . participants view [something], to learn *their* terminology and judgments; to capture the complexities of *their* individual perceptions and experiences." –Patton, p. 290
  - A research interview is not simply an unplanned conversation. Rather, the interviewer has to rigorously prepare and plan.
  - "The task for the interviewer is to make it possible for the person being interviewed to bring the interviewer into his or her world. *The quality of the information obtained during an interview is largely dependent on the interviewer."* –Patton, p. 279
- Your task: Build a list of things Jill had to consider as she prepared for these interviews. What rules and guidelines did she have to follow? What attitude and demeanor did she have to assume?

PART 1: CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

What rules and guidelines did Jill have to follow? What attitude and demeanor did she have to assume?

- Question wording
  - Keep questions open-ended
  - Avoid yes/no questions
  - Make sure questions are clear and singular
- Rapport
  - Convey respect and importance for the interviewee
- Neutrality
  - Convey that the interviewee can tell me anything without judgment
- Probes and follow-up questions
  - Getting interviewees to provide details; deep responses
- Support and recognition
  - Let the interviewee know that the interview is going well and that the information is valuable
- Maintaining control of the interview
- Listening
  - The interviewee should be the person talking most of the time
- Time limits
- Rehearsal
- Ending on a positive note

PART 1: CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW: PROBES AND FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

- "If an interviewer asks . . . 'Are you satisfied in your work?' and the respondent answers 'Yes, I'm pretty happy' – and it is left at that, we have found almost nothing (as it turns out, most Americans report that they are pretty happy with their work, but upon probing, report many of its unexpected downfalls). The response is notable for its lack of detail. The word 'pretty' is a cue, a piece of data one needs to 'hear' in order to probe: 'You say 'pretty' happy? Why 'pretty'? What makes you say 'pretty happy'?'" –Hermanowicz, 2002

PART 1: CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW: PROBES AND FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

Tips for getting details through probing

- Probes are a combination of verbal and non-verbal cues.
- Sometimes remain silent when the interviewee is silent.
- Persist – if the information is important, even if the interviewee tries to redirect the conversation. Be polite.
- Play innocent – "Can you help me understand what you're saying?"
- Avoid use of the word "probe" in the actual interview.
- Keep probes conversational and natural:
  - *When* did that happen?
  - *Who* else was involved
  - *Where* were you during that time?
  - *What* was your involvement in that program?
  - *How* did that come about?
- Use elaboration probes:
  - Gently nod your head
  - *Uh-huh, Okay*
  - Would you elaborate on that?
  - Could you say some more about that?
  - I'm beginning to get the picture.
  - I think I'm beginning to understand.
- Use clarification probes:
  - What you're saying now is very important and I want to be sure I get it in exactly the way you mean it.
  - You said the program is a "success." What do you mean by "success?"
- Probing is a skill that comes from knowing what to look for in an interview, listening carefully to what is being said and what is not being said.

Hermanowicz, 2002; Patton, 1990

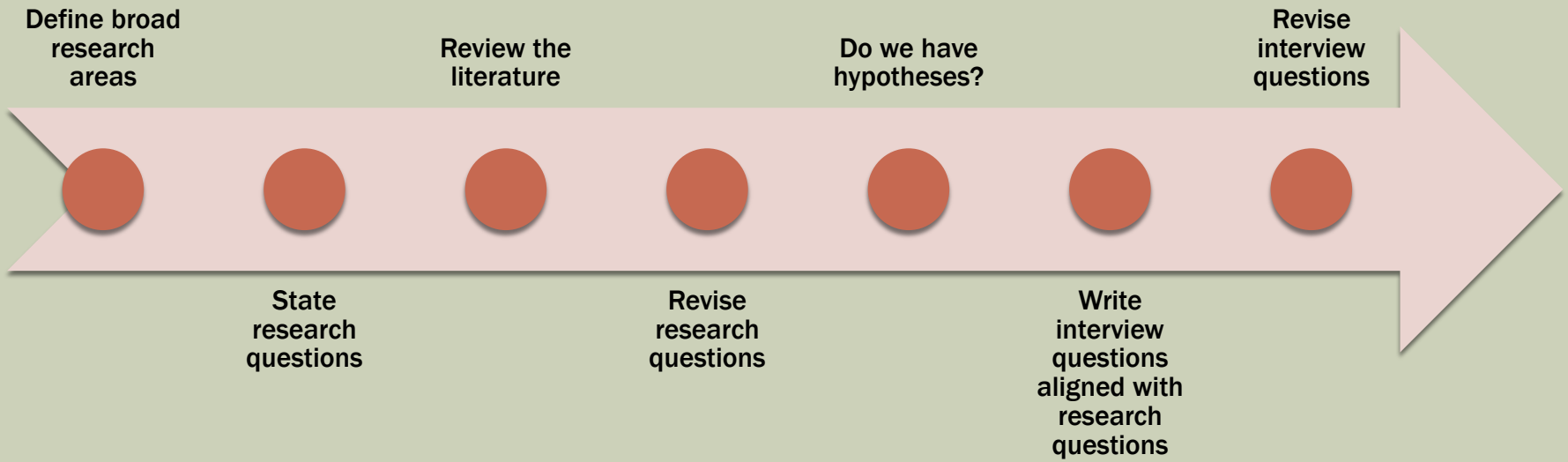
PART 1: CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

- Questions/Discussion?

PART 2: CREATING THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

- In your groups . . . Reverse engineering
- Set up to your task:
  - An interview guide is a list of questions prepared in advance to make sure that the same information is obtained from a number of people.
  - The interviewer uses the guide and also probes based on participants' answers to fully illuminate the participants' perceptions of a particular subject.
- Reverse engineer: How did Jill and the rest of the research team develop the interview guide? How do you think we got from project goals to an interview guide?

PART 2: CREATING THE INTERVIEW GUIDE



PART 2: CREATING THE INTERVIEW GUIDE BROAD RESEARCH AREAS

- Usability and Propagation of AACR Assessment/Reports
- Faculty Teaching Practices
- Faculty Knowledge about teaching and learning
- Climate for Teaching (an Individual Perspective):
- Faculty members' personal characteristics and their teaching practices, etc.

PART 2: CREATING THE INTERVIEW GUIDE INITIAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Usability and Propagation of AACR Assessment/Reports
  - How can AACR reports be designed so they are usable by instructors?
  - How should professional development tools and resources be set up to support faculty use of AACR assessments (not only in biology, but also in Statistics, Chemistry, and Engineering)?
  - What do AACR assessments/reports provide that cannot be provided by other assessments?
  - What is the role of the AACR web portal and how can it be designed to best support instructors?
  - What is the role of AACR FLCs and how can they be designed to best support instructors? Are they a necessary component of professional development for AACR use?
- Teaching Practices
- What are faculty's teaching practices and to what extent do they change while using AACR and participating in FLCs
  - What do faculty report about their teaching practices?
  - What do faculty do in their classes?
  - What do faculty exams look like?
  - What are teacher's doing in the classroom?
  - How are faculty planning their classes?
  - How are faculty desigining assessments?
  - How do students' ideas influence decisions about in-class time and assessments?
- Knowledge about teaching and learning and the change process
  - How do instructors go about gaining knowledge needed to use AACR or pedagogies in general?
  - What are the important principles of teaching and learning that are important to use of AACR assessments/reports?
  - To what extent does the experience with AACR (the accumulation of "how to knowledge") lead to a change in knowledge about principles of teaching and learning? How do instructors gain principles knowledge?
  - How does "how to" and "principles" knowledge relate to actual change in teacher practice?
- Climate for Teaching (an Individual Perspective):
  - To what degree do departmental, institutional, and disciplinary factors influence instructors' use of AACR assessments/reports?
- How do instructors' personal characteristics affect teaching practices, acquisition of knowledge, perception of climate, persistence in use of AACR assessments and reports?

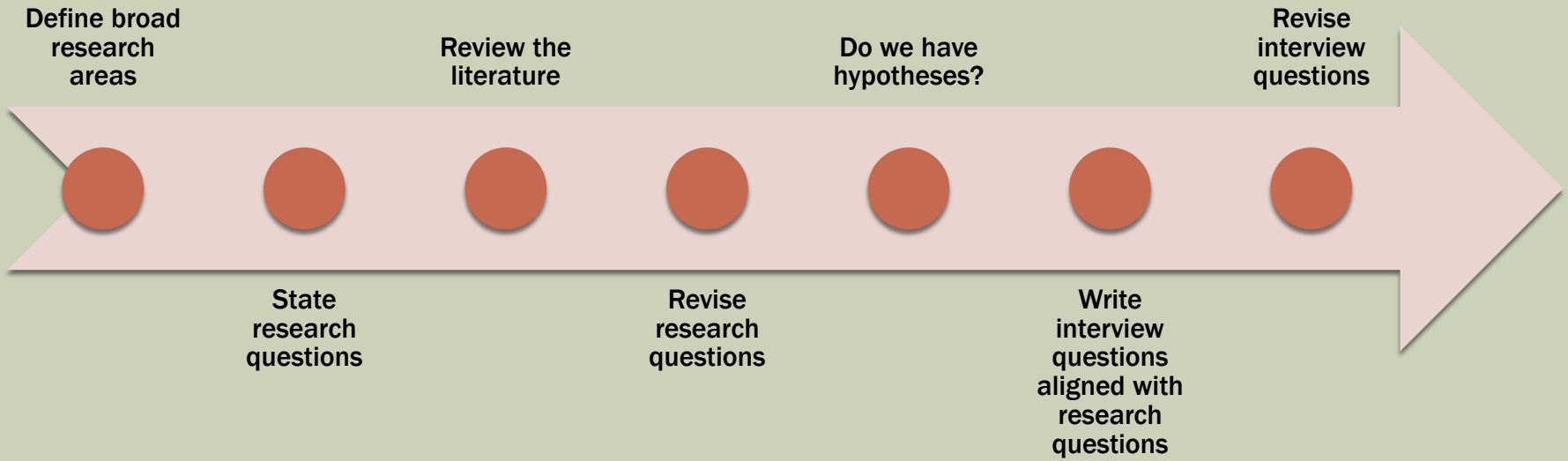
PART 2: CREATING THE INTERVIEW GUIDE LITERATURE REVIEW & REVISED RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Literature review
- “Model for research.2.26.14”
- Revised research questions
- “Research Questions and models.3_4_14”

PART 2: CREATING THE INTERVIEW GUIDE WRITING THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Interview questions aligned with research questions
- “Research Questions and models.3_4_14”
- Revise interview questions based on importance and time considerations

PART 2: CREATING THE INTERVIEW GUIDE



Questions/Discussion?

THE CASE OF DR. MCCOURT AND THE FACULTY INTERVIEWS

Jill got the interviews done and did a great job!

If you need to do interviews or want to learn more, here are some resources . . .

REFERENCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

- Hermanowicz, J.C. 2002. The Great Interview: 25 Strategies for Studying People in Bed. *Qualitative Sociology*, 25(4): 479-499.
- Kvale, S. 2007. The SAGE Qualitative Research Kit: Doing Interviews. Los Angelas: Sage Publications.
- Patton, M.Q. 1990. *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods, 2nd edition.* Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- SEER Center: seercenter.uga.edu
- UGA Biology Education Research Group – We meet weekly. Spring 2017: Mondays, 2-3:30 PM, Life Sciences B121.