

QUAL 8520: Interviewing Research
College of Education
University of Georgia
Fall 2006

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Course Description

This course examines interviewing in educational research: the conceptual frameworks that inform it, the approaches associated with various disciplines and schools of inquiry, the forms and structures that it takes, the criteria developed to assess it, and its practice across a variety of situations. Topics include interviews and research designs, relationships between interviewers and respondents, kinds of respondents and their selection, interview contexts, content, and structures, recording, analyzing, and reporting interview data, ethical issues in interviewing, evaluating interview studies, and theories of and research on interviewing methods.

Course Objectives

As a learner in this course you will investigate methodological possibilities and various ways of dealing with procedural, philosophical, analytical and ethical issues related to undertaking qualitative interview projects.

Specifically, you will:

1. Reflect on your own presuppositions and subjectivities in regard to the educational research processes.
2. Participate in an interview project that includes both individual in-depth interviews and moderation of a focus group.
3. Discuss different theoretical frameworks informing the use of interviews and articulate the theoretical framework informing your own research.
4. Analyze ethical dilemmas in qualitative interview research.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of issues related to differing participant populations (race, social class, gender, disabilities, sexual orientation, etc.)
6. Recognize, develop and demonstrate high quality interview skills in different interview formats.
7. Understand the transcription process as theory and be able to construct transcriptions of interview data.
8. Understand data analysis/interpretation procedures for making meaning of interview data.

Required Texts and Materials

Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. (Eds.). (2003). *Inside interviewing: New lenses, new concerns*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Morgan, D. L. (1997). *Focus groups as qualitative research*. (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Puchta, C., & Potter, J. (2004). *Focus group practice*. London: Sage.

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research* (3rd ed.). New York & London: Teachers College Press.

Additional readings are available in course reserves in GIL.

Additional readings listed in the syllabus are available from the UGA Central Library in electronic format for you to download. To access the documents, go to the Course Reserve module in GIL (<http://gil.uga.edu>). The password access is: **interview**

If you need access to hard copies of these readings, please let me know, and I will make these available for copying in the OIT room on the 2nd floor of Aderhold.

See full listing of readings in course outline.

Equipment:

You may use either

- A tape recorder that uses standard or micro-sized audiocassettes OR
- A digital recorder (submit audio-recordings on CD) (these are available for loan to students enrolled in College of Education courses from OIT, 232 Aderhold. *An external microphone will ensure higher quality recordings*)
- One (1) audiocassette
- One (1) videocassette (digital or VHS)

Transcribing machines may be borrowed from OIT, 232 Aderhold. (I also have a number available for loan).

Recommended text

Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (2001). (5th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Course Activities

The course will involve lectures, demonstrations, discussions, small group activities, use of audio and videotape, and various participatory experiences.

Policies and Procedures

Attendance and Participation

Please be prompt to class.

I expect regular attendance and points will be deducted from the final grade if there are excessive absences (missing more than 6 hours of a 3-credit course). Your participation in class discussions and course activities is essential. If you have a conflict with a session due to prior commitments, please see me privately (so as not to use our limited class time with individual scheduling concerns).

I expect people to come to class prepared, to contribute to class discussions, and participate in activities. Frequent lack of preparation or failure to contribute will also be taken into account in the final course grade.

You will be expected to share your experiences in the interviewing class with others in the class for discussion and feedback.

Email

All students are required to have and to use an electronic mail account. For urgent messages, the class discussion list should be used. Other email may be facilitated via WebCT, so be sure to check WebCT regularly for messages or postings.

Posting to the discussion list:

To send mail to the list (ie, to all list subscribers), send the message to the *list* address,
QUAL8520-06@listserv.uga.edu

Assignments

Please complete reading and written assignments by the due date. Points will be deducted for papers submitted after the due date (0.5 points per day). Remember that **both** content and quality of your writing products are very important. If there are extenuating circumstances for which you require an extension, please arrange an appointment to discuss this with me. Extensions will not be granted on the due date of assignments.

All assignments should be submitted electronically via the "Assignment" module in WebCT. I will grade these electronically, and upload your work to the assignment module so you can read comments inserted into the document at your convenience.

Accommodations for Qualified Individuals with Disabilities

It is the policy of The University of Georgia to make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. If you have a disability and desire accommodations to complete your course requirements, please notify me as soon as possible to discuss your request.

Tutorial assistance

Assistance with writing and editing is available from The Division of Academic Enhancement at Milledge Hall Learning Center. Ph. 542 7575.

Walk in assistance is also available at the Student Learning Center. See:

<http://www.slc.uga.edu/students.html#writing>

Free and Open Exchange of Ideas: Classroom Climate

As a graduate student at The University of Georgia, the free discourse of ideas should be expected. I believe the open exchange of ideas is necessary for learning. You may find that some of the class readings and discussions challenge your views and theoretical frameworks. I expect openness to difference and a willingness to interpret issues from frameworks that may not be quite so comfortable for you.

I have opinions, and will express those. You are free to express either agreement or disagreement without fear of consequences. This does not mean of course, that I may not challenge your views or disagree with them. But it does mean that you will experience no consequences for disagreeing with me. If you feel that I am violating this commitment, please arrange an appointment to discuss the issue.

Please be sensitive in your class participation by not unfairly dominating discussions. My goal is to create a psychologically safe space in which everyone feels that they can participate in the discussion. This does not mean people cannot disagree. This does not mean people cannot have emotions connected to their words. What it does mean is that we all need to be sensitive, appreciative, and respectful, no matter how strongly we might disagree.

Academic Honesty

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.

The University of Georgia seeks to promote and ensure academic honesty and personal integrity among students and other members of the University community. Academic honesty is defined broadly and simply -- the performance of all academic work without cheating, lying, stealing, or receiving assistance from any other person or using any source of information not appropriately authorized or attributed. All students must comply with an appropriate and sound academic honesty policy and code of honest behavior. All members of the University community are responsible for and involved in bringing about an honest university, and all must work together to ensure the success of the policy and code of behavior. Where suspected violations of the academic honesty policy occur, appropriate procedures are designed to protect the academic process and integrity while ensuring due process. All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance is not an acceptable defense.

I take academic honesty seriously, and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Quality academic writing includes accurate reference to others' ideas with appropriate acknowledgement.

Further Information

<http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>

Note:

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

A Note on the Human Subjects & IRB

Data from research involving human subjects that is collected during qualitative research courses, or used in project-based work in qualitative courses in the College of Education (whether taken by students inside or outside the COE), must either be approved for research under an existing UGA Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved application or under the IRB-approved class project application submitted by the instructor of the class (see outline of project possibilities outlined in the syllabus).

Students who plan to use data generated in QUAL 8520 in their dissertations MUST have IRB approval for their project prior to the commencement of the course.



Your instructor

I am an associate professor in the Qualitative Research program, which is one of three programs in the Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy. In 2001 I took a tenure-track position at UGA after spending one year as a post-doctoral fellow in the Qualitative Research program. Prior to moving to the US, I taught music education in elementary schools (P-8) in Queensland, Australia, and was adjunct instructor in pre-service teacher education programs at the University of Southern Queensland, Queensland University of Technology, and the University of Queensland. I have a Bachelor of Music Education from the Queensland Conservatorium of Music (1985), a Masters of Music Education (Kodály emphasis) (1992) from the University of Calgary, Canada, and a PhD in Education (2000) from the University of Queensland. I completed my doctoral program in the Graduate School of Education because I wanted to learn more about qualitative research methodology. I'm still learning! My research interests include the study of qualitative research methodology, including ethnomethodological and conversation analytic approaches to research, and the study of topics in music education.

Selected publications are listed at:

<http://www.coe.uga.edu/leap/faculty/roulston/index.html>

Class activities and projects

You will be reading about, conducting, and analyzing interviews. By the end of the course, I expect to see a substantial growth in both your knowledge and skill in the theory, methodology, and method of qualitative interviewing.

Research project

You have the option of engaging in interviews for

- (1) an authentic project for which IRB approval has been received;
- (2) your own research project, for which you have already obtained IRB approval; or
- (3) a research study you propose for the purpose of fulfilling the course requirements.

1. An authentic project

This is a qualitative study for a client group at UGA. Class members involved in this project will meet with the clients from UGA to provide a preliminary report of what they have found in interviews. Class projects that will contribute to this study will include conducting two (2) individual interviews; and participation in the facilitation of one (1) focus group. All interviews are expected to be of one hour's duration.

The interviews for the authentic project will be conducted outside class time and you will each transcribe two individual interviews. Depending on the number of volunteers recruited for this project, the focus groups for the authentic project may be conducted as a group project, with group members participating in different roles (moderator; observer; recorder). The group will be responsible for a partial transcription of the focus group. As a class group, we will conduct preliminary analysis, and meet with clients from UGA to provide feedback.

2. Individual research project

If you have an active IRB application, you may prefer to work on your own research project. You will need to submit a copy of your current IRB authorization to the instructor. This will entail conducting two (2) individual interviews of one hour's duration with participants in your study. Interviews conducted prior to the class are not permitted for this course. If you are using focus groups in your study, you will need to facilitate a one-hour face-to-face focus group during the course. If you are not using focus groups for your individual research project, you may audio-record a "mock" focus group of one hour's duration and submit this for assessment purposes.

You will submit transcriptions of two individual interviews, and a partial transcription of one focus group.

3. Research project for class

You may design a research proposal for the purposes of this class; that includes two individual interviews and one focus group, all of one hour's duration. Your research study should meet the following requirements:

1. **NO MINORS:** The project cannot include minors or any other vulnerable populations like pregnant women, prisoners, those who lack the capacity to consent, non-English speaking individuals, etc.
2. **NO MORE THAN MINIMAL RISK:** "Minimal risk" is the probability and magnitude of harm that is normally encountered in the daily lives of healthy individuals. This also precludes the study of any illegal activities.
3. **NO DECEPTION:** The project cannot include any deception. Individuals must be fully informed and given the opportunity to voluntarily consent to participation.
4. **NO PUBLICATION:** You may not use data from the study for publication or for thesis/dissertation research.
5. **NO VIDEOTAPING:** Audiotaping is allowed if the recording is erased upon transcription or no later than the end of the semester.

A consent form should be included with your application as specified by the IRB.
<http://www.ovpr.uga.edu/hso/Sample.leic.doc>

In your research proposal, include the following items:

- Title of study
- Problem abstract (rationale; research questions; significance of study)
- Research design and methods (sampling; selection and recruitment; procedures; interview guide)
- Consent form

You will submit transcriptions of two individual interviews and a partial transcription of one focus group.

You may not use data generated from this project for publication purposes.

Reflective activities

In preparation for engaging in this research project, you will undertake a number of class projects that will develop your skills. These projects include an audio-taped bracketing interview to assist you in getting a better understanding of your own subjectivities, a videotaped focus group interview conducted during class time, and a close analysis of your participation in research interviews.

1. Bracketing interview

You will conduct a 15-20 minute bracketing interview with a class member centering on the interviewee's research interests. This will be audio-recorded. After listening to the audio-taped of the interview, present a 5-6 page statement including

1. a summary of the content of the interviewee's reflections;
2. suggestions to the interviewee about issues and/or readings to do with their topic that they might consider further; and
3. a reflection (1 page) on your skills as an interviewer.

Provide one copy of sections 1 and 2 of your report to your interviewee, and one copy of all sections to the instructor.

2. Videotaped practice focus group

You will conduct a 30-minute focus group on a topic of your choice in class time. This will be videotaped. After viewing the video of the focus group interaction, present a 4-5 page (double spaced) statement including

1. a summary of the content of the focus group interaction; and
2. a self critique of your skills as a moderator. Issues to consider include:
 - what kind of interactions were generated? (eg. did participants express their opinions? were exchanges conversational?)
 - what challenges did you face? (eg. did you have individuals who were dominant speakers/non-participants?)
 - what were your responses as a moderator?
 - what did you do well?
 - what would you change in future focus groups?

3. Analysis and reflection on your participation in interview interaction

You will re-transcribe 3-5 minutes of talk from an interview (this may be the bracketing interview, individual interviews, or focus group) that you have conducted for this class using Jeffersonian transcription conventions. Select a segment of talk in which you are talking within the interview (eg. you may be summing up what your participant has said, or asking questions). Prepare a 3 page (double-spaced) statement that focuses on the following issues:

- What does this kind of transcription reveal that is not apparent in your earlier transcription?
- What do you notice about your utterances?
- What happened next? How did the participant respond to your talk?
- What have you learned from this exercise about your interaction in the research interview?

Reading summaries

Each class member will be responsible for posting two readings summaries to the discussion list on WebCT. Sign up lists will be available at the beginning of the course. These should be posted on the day the reading is set for class, be 200-250 words in length, and summarize the key points in the article or chapter you have read. Include the full reference in your posting. Complete the posting by posing a question concerning the reading that might be taken up further by other class members via the discussion list. By the end of the course, these readings summaries will constitute a bibliography that the whole class will have access to. Your participation in on-line discussion of readings will be taken into account in the “participation” grade.

Evaluation

All students are required to complete the following written assignments with the final grade based on the distribution indicated below:

Project	Due Date	Points Possible
Research proposal (individual projects)	31 August	Not graded
Reflective activities		
1. Bracketing Interview Summary	14 September	10 (interview not transcribed)
2. Practice Focus Group Summary	2 November	10 (interview not transcribed)
3. Reflection on your interview style	9 November	10 (CA transcription of 2 minutes of talk)
Research project		
Individual Interview Project • two full transcriptions	5 October	20
Focus Group Project	16 November	20 (partial transcription of focus group talk)
Report of preliminary findings and interpretations • Oral presentation + 2-page summary	5 December	10
Other activities		
Reading summaries	TBA	10
Attendance/Participation	N/A	10
Total Points		100

Evaluation criteria:

Written assignments should show:

- Understanding and reference to the relevant readings
- A critical engagement with the ideas presented
- Clear organization and structure, fluent and accurate writing.
- APA formatting

Letter grades will be determined as follows:

The course will be graded on A-E basis. You will receive comments for your consideration for each item of assessment.

A	100-93
A-	92-90
B+	89-87
B	86-83
B-	82-80
C+	79-77
C	76-73
C-	72-70

Course Schedule

1. Introduction to course and research interviewing (17 August)

- Theoretical frameworks and research design for interview studies
- Overview of approaches to interview
- Methods

2. Research projects (24 August)

Orientation to authentic project

Readings:

Holstein & Gubrium, Chapter 1, *Inside interviewing: New lenses, new concerns*

Seidman, Chapters 1-3

3. The researcher and participants (31 August)

- The interview “subject”
- Research subjectivity
- Class exercise: Bracketing interviews

Holstein & Gubrium, select any two chapters from Part 1:

- Chapter 2, *Interviewing children and adolescents*
- Chapter 3, *Interviewing men*
- Chapter 4, *Interviewing women*
- Chapter 5, *Queering the interview*
- Chapter 6, *Interviewing older people*
- Chapter 7, *Race, subjectivity, and the interview process*

Seidman, Chapters 4-5

Holstein & Gubrium, Chapter 23, *Their story/my story/our story: Including the researcher’s experience in interview research*

Individual research proposals due (where applicable)

4. Technical concerns (7 September)

Guest Speaker: Ron Braxley, OIT

- Selection of recording equipment
- Choosing between face-to-face, telephone and internet interviewing

Readings:

Holstein & Gubrium, Chapter 8, *The reluctant respondent*

Select any two chapters from the following in Holstein & Gubrium, Part II

- *In-person versus telephone interviewing*
- *Computer-assisted interviewing*
- *Standardization and interaction in the survey interview*
- *Internet interviewing*

5. In-depth Phenomenological Interviews

Individual Interview Practice (14 September)

DeMarrais, K. (2004). Qualitative interview studies: Learning through experience. In K. DeMarrais & S. D. Lapan (Eds.), *Foundations for research: Methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences* (pp. 51-68). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Seidman, Chapters 6-7

Bracketing interview summary due

6. Feminist Interviewing (21 September)

Reinharz, S. (1992). Feminist Interview Research, pp. 18 - 45

Oakley, A. (1981). Interviewing women: A contradiction in terms. In H. Roberts (Ed.), *Doing feminist research* (pp. 30-61). London: Routledge.

Wilkinson, S. (1999). Ch. 5. How useful are focus groups in feminist research? In Barbour, R., S., & Kitzinger, J. (Eds.). (1999). *Developing focus group research: Politics, theory, and practice*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

7. Ethnographic interviewing/Considering transcription (28 September)

Heyl, B. S. (2001). Ethnographic interviewing. In P. Atkinson & A. Coffey & S.

Delamont & J. Lofland & L. Lofland (Eds.), *Handbook of ethnography* (pp. 369-383). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Holstein & Gubrium, Chapter 13, *Transcription Quality*

8. Focus Group Design (5 October - Midterm)

Demonstration focus group

Morgan, Chapters 1-7, pp. 1-74

Individual interview project due

9. Focus Group Practice (12 October)

Practice focus groups

Puchta, C., & Potter, J. (2004). *Focus group practice*. London: Sage.

Chapters 1-4

10. Focus Group Practice (19 October)

Practice focus groups

Puchta & Potter, Chapters 5-7

Fall Break 26-27 October No class

11. Approaches to analysis of interview data (2 November)

- Analyzing interview data:
 - emic and etic coding
 - taxonomies
 - domains and structures

- meanings
- narrative analysis
- componential analysis
- themes and patterns

Readings:

Seidman, Chapter 8 & Appendix

Holstein & Gubrium:

- Chapter 14, *Computer-assisted analysis of qualitative interview data*
- Chapter 15, *Qualitative interviewing & grounded theory analysis*
- Chapter 16, *Analysis of personal narratives*

Practice focus group summary due

12. More on analysis of interview data (9 November)

Holstein & Gubrium:

- Chapter 17, *Analytic strategies for oral history interviews*
- Chapter 18, *Using interviews to investigate ruling relations*
- Chapter 19, *Ethnomethodological analyses of interviews*

Reflection on your interview style due

13. Writing it up and representing the “other” (16 November)

Samples from “interview studies”

Richardson, L. (1995). Narrative and sociology. In J. Van Maanen (Ed.). *Representation in ethnography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 198-221.

Holstein & Gubrium

Chapter 21, *Cross-cultural interviewing*

Chapter 22, *Personal and folk narrative as cultural representation*

Chapter 24, *Interviewing, power/knowledge, and social inequality*

Focus group project due

Thanksgiving 22-24 November

14. Considering interview studies & learning to interview (30 November)

Atkinson, P., & Silverman, D. (1997). Kundera's *Immortality*: The interview society and the invention of the self. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3(3), 304-325.

Roulston, K., deMarrais, K. & Lewis, J. (2003). Learning to interview in the social sciences. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(4), 643-668.

15. TUESDAY CLASS Presentation of preliminary findings (5 December)

Report of preliminary findings and interpretations due

Additional References on Interviewing

- Barbour, R., S., & Kitzinger, J. (Eds.). (1999). *Developing focus group research: Politics, theory, and practice*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Brenner, M., Brown, J. & Anters, D. C. (Eds.). (1985). *The research interview: Uses and approaches*. New York: Academic Press.
- Briggs, C. (1986). *Learning how to ask: A sociolinguistic appraisal of the role of the interview in social science research*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Carin, A. & Sund, R. B. (1978). *Creative questioning and sensitive listening techniques: A self-concept approach*. Second edition. Columbus, Ohio: Merrill.
- Dilley, P. (2000). Conducting successful interviews: Tips for intrepid research. *Theory into Practice*, 39(3), 131-137.
- Douglas, J. D. (1985). *Creative interviewing*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Gubrium, J., & Holstein, J. A. (Eds.). (2002). *Handbook of interview research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J., F. (1995). *The active interview* (Vol. 37). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Litoselliti, L. (2003). *Using focus groups in research*. London: Continuum.
- McCracken, G. (1988). *The long interview*. Beverley Hill, CA: Sage.
- Mishler, E. G. (1986). *Research interviewing: Context and narrative*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Morgan, D. L. (Ed.). (1993). *Successful focus groups: Advancing the state of the art*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Morgan, D. L., & Krueger, R. A. (1998) *The focus group kit*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2005). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Scheurich, J. J. (1995). A postmodernist critique of research interviewing. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8(3), 239-252.
- Smithson, J. (2000). Using and analysing focus groups: Limitations and possibilities. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 3(2), 103-119.
- Spradley, J. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.
- Stewart, D. W., Shamdasani, P. N., & Rook, D. W. (2006). *Focus groups: Theory and practice*. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Sudman, S. & Bradburn, N. M. (1989). *Asking questions: A practical guide to questions of design*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.
- Thompson, C. J., W. B. Locander, H. R. Pollio. (September, 1989). Putting consumer experience back into consumer research: The philosophy and method of existential-phenomenology. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16, 133-146.

- Vaughn, S., Schumm, J.S., & Singagub, J. (1996). *Focus group interviews in education and psychology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Whyte, W. (1984). Interviewing strategy and tactics/recording, indexing and evaluating interview data. *Learning from the Field*, 97-127.
- Wilkinson, S. (2004). Focus group research. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative research: Theory, method and practice* (2nd ed., pp. 177-199). London: Sage.
- Wilkinson, S. (1998). Focus group methodology: A review. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 1(3), 181-203.