



Conducting interviews

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By the end of the session you will:

Be familiar with:

- the interview method more specifically with – the techniques of semi-structured interviews
 - planning
 - carrying out an interview (including probing)

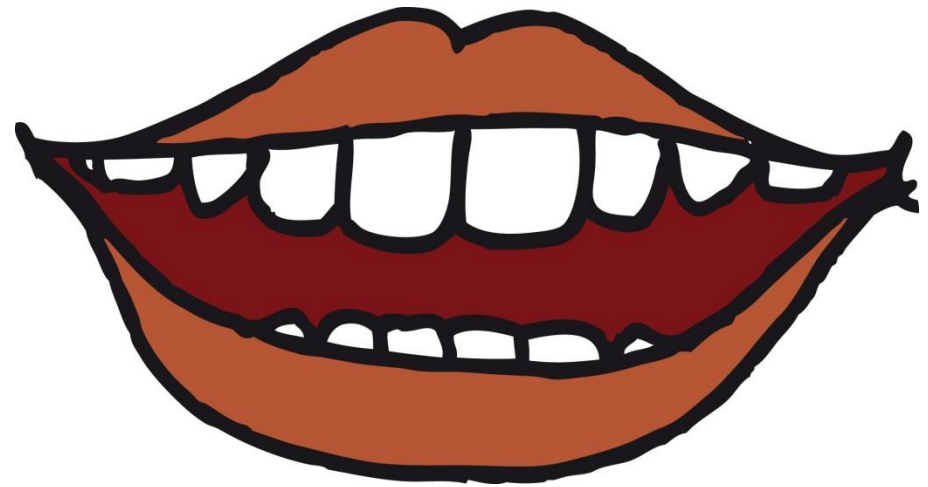
Group exercise

What characterises a good interview?

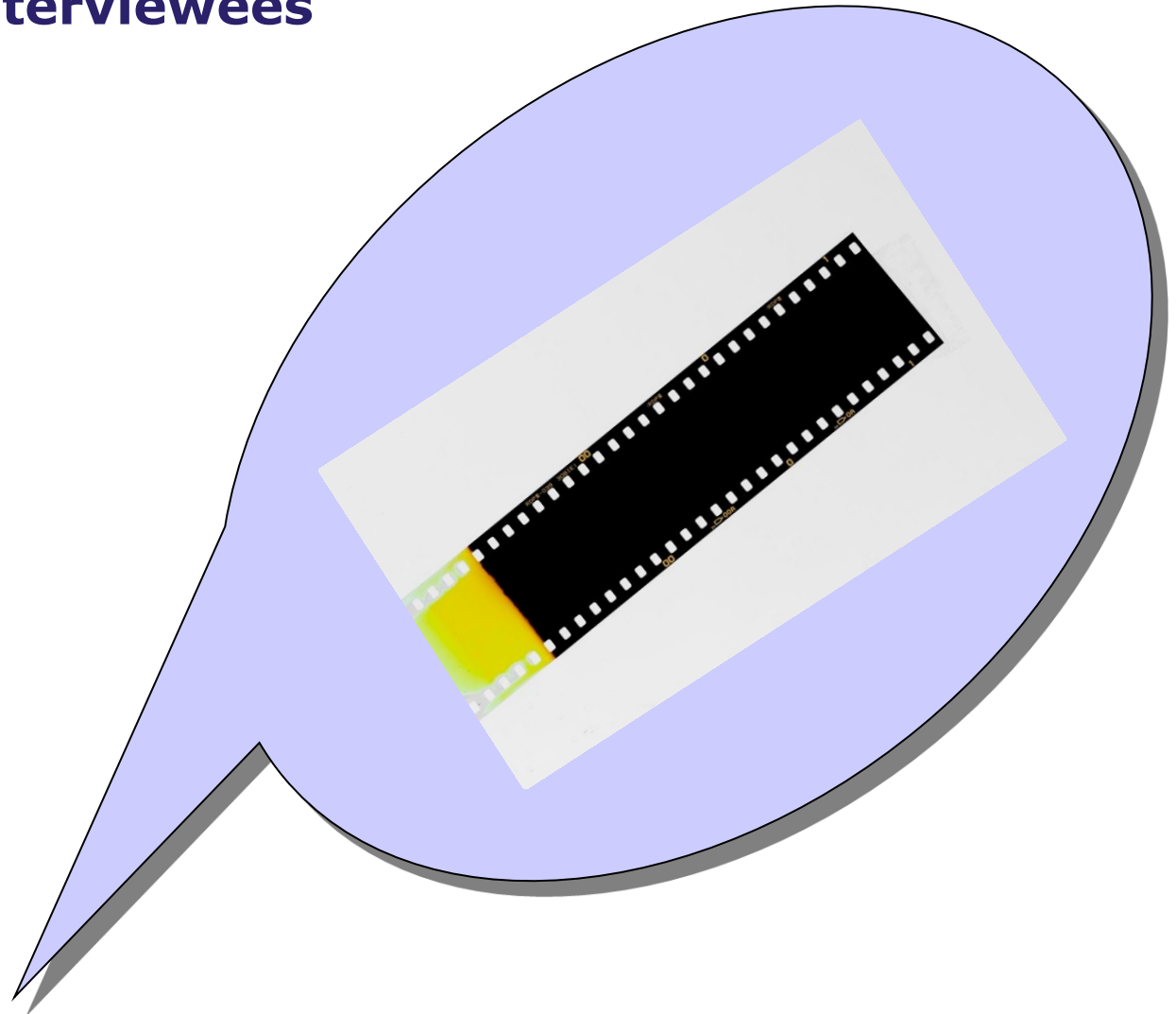
5 minutes alone

5 minutes in the group

TWO ears – just ONE mouth



Jump into the interviewees "filmstrip"



Characteristics of a good interview

- **Spontaneous, rich, specific & relevant answers**
- **Short questions long answers**
- **The interviewer's ability to understand & pursue the underlying meanings in the interview-person's answers**
- **Good interaction & understanding between interview-person & interviewer**



Qualifications needed for a good interview:

- **Structuring (frames the interview well)**
- **Clear, gentle, sensitive, open**
- **Give the interviewee space**
- **Able to interpret during the interview; follow-up on answers**

- **Curiosity 😊**

Interviewer role (inspired by <http://ec.hku.hk/epc/>)

- Know the **interview guide** (almost 😊) by heart
- Try to put interviewee **at ease** (talk about bla bla weather, news)
- Give interviewee **time** to answer
- Explain the **purpose** of the interview (perhaps even a theme guide?)
- Let the interviewee do **most of the talking**
- Keep **the goal** of the interview in mind
- Pursue questions that have not been adequately answered (**probing**)
- Keep a **record** of key points and your impressions
- **Avoid** premature decisions or those based on minor details
- Consider whether **open or closed questions** are appropriate – use a fair number of open questions
- Prepare key questions but **remain flexible**



Advantages

- Respondents can answer questions in as **much detail** as they want
- Possibility of probing
- More valid information about respondents attitudes, values & opinions can be obtained, particularly **how people explain**
- An **informal atmosphere** can encourage the respondent to be open & honest
- **Flexibility** – the interviewer can adjust questions

Limitations

- Only a **small number** can take place
- Difficult to directly compare the results because **each interview is unique**
- Because of small sample results are unlikely to be representative of a particular population
- **Time consuming** – in terms of data collection and data analysis

Challenges:

The interviewer/the interviewee relationship:

- The ability to communicate and listen
- The "Hawthorne Effect": Wanting to "please" the interviewer
- Interruptions, repeating questions
- Personal dislikes, provocation
- Power relations, silent/introvert interview persons
- Repeating questions
- (Using students as interviewers?)

ALL AFFECTS DATA QUALITY if you don't pay attention...

And remember: research interviews are NOT critical journalist interviews.....



Common problems/challenges

- **Most common problem - interviewers asking leading questions**
- **Other problems are:**
 - **failure to listen closely;**
 - **repeating questions that have already been asked;**
 - **failure to probe when necessary;**
 - **failure to judge the answers;**



Doing semi-structured interviews



Step by step

- 1. Familiarize yourself with the interview guide**
- 2. Invite respondents**
- 3. Do the interviews**
4. (Analyse & write up your findings – to be done by university employees)



Some of the Major Issues



The semi-structured interview – framing the interview

Creating the best possible circumstances:

- **Choosing a good location/environment**
 - **What's a good location?**
- **What impression you want to give?**
- **Recording the interview?**
 - **Turning on/off recorder...**

Framing the interview

- **The importance of “silence” (pauses)**
- **Be polite**
- **Make time for a short debriefing**
- **Make time for a few notes/reflections**

Beginning the interview

- **Introduce yourself**
- **Brief introduction of the WHO study**
- **Brief description of the interview process**
 - **How long**
 - **The scope**

Beginning the interview

- **Ask for permission to record**
- **Assure that, the person being interviewed understands & trusts that the responses will be confidential**
 - **Informed consent**
- **Give HCP time to recall 3 typical episodes within last week**

Role of probing

- **Getting the participant to expand upon their answer**
 - **give more details**
 - **add additional perspectives**



Probing:

Listen to the answers & ask follow-up questions

One of the most important skills:

- listen to the interviewee's answers closely
- then use the answers to ask follow-up questions in order to get more useful information

Primary question: "What do you think about activity X?"

Answer: "It was good"

Secondary question: "Why was it good?"

Techniques of effective interviewing

- **Matching/mirroring**
- **Open body posture**
- **Appropriate eye contact**
- **Nodding/encouraging noises**
- **Concentrating on what is being said**
- **Leaving pauses (DON'T be afraid of pauses...)**
- **Effective listening**
- **Prompting & asking for more information**
- **Reflecting on what is being missed out**



BEWARE of interviewer bias



Occurs when the interviewer either accidentally or deliberately, communicates his or her opinions to the respondent. (e.g. questions which reveal the interviewer's opinions)

Technique

Record key quotes word-for-word

- Use a voice recorder to record the entire interview
- Often the interviewer takes handwritten notes on the interview guide form
 - it's still very important to try and write the key quotes word-for-word in the language they were said in.



Interview exercise

Group with three persons pr group:

- 1) An interviewer**
- 2) An interviewee**
- 3) An observer**

Theme: The BEST day in your life (so far 😊)

Plan:

- * 5 minutes preparation**
- * 5 minutes interview**
- 5 minutes observer feedback (thick description and evaluation)**
- 5 minutes wrap up in plenum**

*



Interview exercise

Group with three persons pr group:

- 1) An interviewer**
- 2) An interviewee**
- 3) An observer**

Theme: The **WORST day in your life (so far 😊)**

Plan:

- * 5 minutes preparation**
- * 5 minutes interview**
- 5 minutes observer feedback (thick description and evaluation)**
 - 5 minutes wrap up in plenum**

Questions and tasks

Experiences with interviewing? How did it go? What was easy/difficult? How to improve?

If you plan to use others for interviewing in our study – how could you prepare them for the task?

If you were to narrow down each interview guide from the protocol down to 1/2 - 1 page (a THEME guide) to put in from of the interviewee – how would that look?

The interview is finished – what now?



To do immediately after the interview

- Write up the interview as soon as possible afterwards

- Include:

- Who – man/woman; ca. age;
- Where – workplace/private;
- How long was the interview? (minutes)



To do immediately after the interview

- **Transcribe the interview as soon as possible afterwards**
- **Include:**
 - **Impressions of the interviewee**
 - **Where they eager to talk; reluctant to talk etc.**
 - **Where they relaxed?**
 - **Any problems/challenges?**



To do immediately after the interview

- **The entire interview should be transcribed in the original language – sent to Dmitri – who will send us UK-translated transcripts**



Challenges of conducting semi-structured interviews

- **A lot of extra information may surface during interviews**
- **Assure that, in a personal interview, the person being interviewed understands & trusts that the responses will be confidential**
- **It may take some practice for the interviewer**
- **Interviewers need some skills.**

Doing interviews: reminders

Have you:

- **Planned & arranged the interviews thoroughly?**
- **Created a relaxed atmosphere during the interviews, prompting the respondent where necessary?**
- **Written up the interview as soon as possible afterwards**
- **Write about the interviews, including problems you had doing them?**

Data management & data analysis

- Data management: a practical task whereby you **systematize & organize the data**
- Data analysis is a cognitive & intellectual task whereby you **interpret the meaning of the data**

Questions



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