

“Qualitative Interviews and Analysis”

This course aims to introduce doctoral students to the most widely used qualitative research technique – the interview. The course begins by outlining the sorts of research question that are best addressed through qualitative interviews, touching on debates about the nature of qualitative data. We then consider the practical considerations when undertaking a qualitative interview project – from selecting participants through to choosing a location in which to conduct the interview and the sorts of things you ought to take with you into the field. There will be a practical exercise on designing a qualitative interview guide, with a session devoted to how to avoid and recognise poorly worded interview questions. Attention will be focused on the key skills that qualitative interviewers need to collect good quality data (including body language, asking open questions, probing, prompting and active listening) and we will discuss the importance of critical reflexivity throughout the research process. Participants will also be introduced to thematic analysis and shown how to undertake a basic analysis using the CAQDAS package, MAXQDA.

The course is primarily aimed at two groups of doctoral students; those who are at the beginning of their qualitative research projects and want to deepen their knowledge of the qualitative interview; and those who have never used qualitative methods and want an introduction to one of main data collection tools used within this approach.

Course structure

On the first day, we will explore the nature of the qualitative interview, research planning and designing interview questions and guides. The second day will involve a range of practical activities – including mini-interviews, student-led discussion groups and using CAQDAS. The second day devotes some time for exploring participants own experiences of qualitative

interviewing, collectively discussing challenges that you might have faced and how it is possible to overcome them. If anyone would like to present their work on this day, please let the instructor know 3 weeks before the course start date by sending an email with a short summary of your research, and be ready to present for 10 minutes on the second day

What do you need to bring?

It is recommended that you bring your own laptop to the second day of the workshop. You will be sent a free 30-day trial of the software MAXQDA, which you are asked to download.

If you have interview material you would like to work with in the seminar, please bring this with you.

Timetable:

Day 1

- 10.00-11.00: Introduction to qualitative interviewing
- 11.00-11.15: Coffee/Tea Break
- 11.15-12.30: Planning a qualitative interview project
- 12.30-13.30: Lunch
- 13.30-15.30: The qualitative interview: managing the encounter
- 15.30-15.45: Coffee/Tea Break
- 15.45-17.00: Practical: Writing interview guides

Day 2

- 10.00-11.15: Practical: Mini-interviews (conducting and observing an interview, and being an interviewee)
- 11.15-11.30: Coffee/Tea Break
- 11.30-12.30: Student presentations and discussion
- 12.30-13.30: Lunch
- 13.30-14.30: Analysing interviews
- 14.30-14.45: Coffee/Tea Break
- 14.45-16.00: Practical: Working with MAXQDA

Suggested reading prior to the workshop

(copies of which can be circulated 3-4 weeks before the workshop start date)

- Aurini, J., Heath, M. & Howells, S. (2016) *The How to of Qualitative research*, London: Sage. Chapter 4 'How to do interviews: Making what people say matter', pp. 80-116.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology' *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), pp. 77–101
- Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2015) *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. London: Sage. 'Chapter 3: Epistemological issues of Interviewing' pp. 55-82

About the instructor:

Katy Wheeler is a Lecturer in Sociology at The University of Essex. She has extensive experience of conducting qualitative interviews with a range of different participants from industry experts through to household interviews. Her research interests are in the fields of sustainability and ethical consumption. She is also an instructor at the Essex Summer School in Social Science Data Analysis, where she co-runs a course on qualitative interviewing.

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