

Introduction

This eBook will help develop people who are new to qualitative research into competent depth interviewers, at a foundation level. If you are studying for a qualification, you will need most of it. If you urgently want some interviewing skills, click straight through to the relevant sections.

The focus is on interviewing, but you need to understand the context within which it is used. There are optional sections on the research process, qualitative research and its methods, sampling and recruitment, and Codes and ethics.

“Interviewing is rather like a marriage: everybody knows what it is, an awful lot of people do it, and yet, behind each closed front door, there is a world of secrets.”
(Oakley, 1981)

Interviewing skills include: writing or adapting topic guides, presenting yourself as a professional, managing the research relationship, eliciting and listening skills including probing, challenging and summarising. You will need to understand the basics of using stimulus material and simple projective techniques.

Finally, an interviewer needs an awareness of how research findings will be analysed, in order to elicit the most useful information and insights.

Reading the book will equip you with the knowledge, but you will still need to practice the skills. There are a number of suggested exercises but the most important is to get some feedback on your practice depth interviews. You will find feedback forms at the end of the book. Aim to get a more experienced colleague to help you with this.

Notice that the skills of listening and eliciting information will serve you well in many parts of your life, both personal and professional.

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The Syllabus

What you need to learn and why

What you need to learn and why	Learning Outcomes	How you will learn
<p>1. Overview of market research</p> <p><i>Understand and use terminology appropriate to the interview process and the researcher's role.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good quality in market research • Main uses of market and social research. Client needs • The main processes, roles involved • Key differences between qualitative and quantitative 	<p><i>Reading</i></p> <p><i>Lingo Bingo quiz (Appendix)</i></p>
<p>2. Defining and understanding 21st C qualitative research</p> <p><i>Understanding the potential and limits of qual so you can use it effectively</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition, scope, key benefits and drawbacks of the qualitative approach • What it is. what domains it covers • Sample sizes • Benefits and drawbacks • How qualitative research is valid 	<p><i>Reading</i></p> <p><i>Quick Quiz</i></p>
<p>3. The importance of ethical and legal frameworks</p> <p><i>Having an ethical attitude towards participants results in better research.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principles of the Code of Conduct • Obligations to participants • Vulnerable respondents and sensitive subjects • Data Protection 	<p><i>Reading</i></p> <p><i>Code of Conduct</i></p> <p><i>Quiz on key points</i></p>
<p>4. The main qualitative methods</p> <p><i>Understanding suitability of a range of qualitative data collection methods, focusing on interviewing</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What qualitative methods can you use? • When to use groups or depths? • Advantages and drawbacks of interviewing methods 	<p><i>Reading</i></p>
<p>5. Qualitative thinking and research design</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red thread of thinking • Business and research objectives • Key principles of research design 	<p><i>Reading</i></p>
<p>6. The research process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steps in a project, briefs & proposals 	<p><i>Reading</i></p> <p><i>Checklists</i></p>
<p>7. Qualitative sample design</p> <p><i>Understanding how and why the participants are selected</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quotas and sample design • Recruitment • Writing a screener, quality control 	<p><i>Reading</i></p> <p><i>Links to example screeners</i></p>
<p>8 Preparing for interviewing</p> <p><i>Understanding that the researcher is the research instrument and can unknowingly introduce bias</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills and qualities of a researcher/ interviewer • Potential biases and how to limit their effects • Power in the research relationship 	<p><i>Reading</i></p> <p><i>Sample bracketing exercise</i></p> <p><i>Link to IAT</i></p>

<p><i>9. Interpersonal relationship skills</i></p> <p><i>Professional conduct and maximising participation, by developing and managing the research relationship.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building research relationships • The power of a good introduction • Working with 'difficult' people and situations • Building rapport 	<p><i>Rapport building exercise</i></p>
<p><i>10. Best practice in interviewing</i></p> <p><i>A deep understanding of the basis of interviewing practice.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The psychological principles underlying interviewing • Using the principles in practice • Focusing attention outward 	<p><i>Link to Emotional Intelligence test</i></p>
<p><i>11. Interviewing Skills Eliciting and listening</i></p> <p><i>How to put the skills together in practice</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General guidelines • Types of eliciting skills • Listening skills • Emergent interviewing 	<p><i>Listening skills questionnaire</i></p> <p><i>Video on poor interviewing skills</i></p> <p><i>Face to face interview exercises with feedback</i></p>
<p><i>13 Writing a topic guide</i></p> <p><i>Understand the principles of how to write / use/ adapt /evaluate a guide</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different types and roles of guides • Structure of a guide • How to adapt a guide • Topic guide template 	<p><i>Topic guide template</i></p> <p><i>Checklist</i></p>
<p><i>14. Stimulus material and concepts</i></p> <p><i>How best to explore new ideas, motivations, reactions in as concrete a way as possible</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the roles and types of stimulus • Differences between strategy and execution • Working with concepts 	<p><i>Reading</i></p>
<p><i>15. Simple projective techniques</i></p> <p><i>These help you go below the surface and help respondents to express themselves</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do they come from? • Why do we need them? What different types are there? • Practicalities of using some basic ones 	<p><i>Reading</i></p> <p><i>Links to further info</i></p>
<p><i>16. Analysing qualitative data</i></p> <p><i>The best interviewing is useless if it has no impact on the client and their issues.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How A & I adds value. • What are the processes of analysis? • What data can be analysed? • Interpretive questions 	<p><i>Reading</i></p>