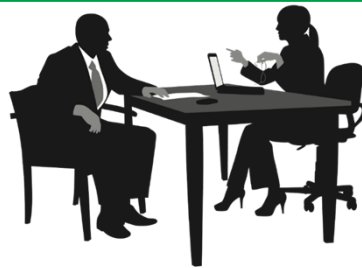


# The Interview Process

(So much more than just a friendly conversation)

NOTE: THIS IS THE FIRST TIME FOR THIS 90 MINUTE SESSION; PLEASE HOLD QUESTIONS UNTIL THE END, SINCE I DON'T YET KNOW APPROPRIATE PACING.. THANKS!



## An Invitation (at no cost to you)

- You have a draft of your interview protocol, and you'd like me to review it.
- You email me (or call)...[kenic@aol.com](mailto:kenic@aol.com), 714-281-7783. We'll briefly discuss it, and assuming all is well, you will email me your purpose statement, your research questions, and your protocol draft.
- Give me 2-3 days, and I will get it back to you

OR

You're confused (lost?)!! You and your chair think Jim may be able to help. You call or email.

## Important to Understand

During our time together, I will be suggesting some procedures that go beyond those required by the university. I will give a rationale for why I am recommending such procedures.

**IMPORTANT:** What you will be required to do will be decided by your chair and the quality review process, based upon your proposal. I hope you choose to go above what is required. (*Go slow to go fast*)

3

## The Steps For Conducting Dissertation Interviews

1. Establishing your guiding questions (*these will be your research questions that are related to the interview*)
2. Operationalizing your guiding questions
3. Designing the protocol
4. **Conducting the alignment check (Critically important)**
5. Validating the protocol
6. Marketing the process

4

**Step 2: Operationalizing your guiding questions**  
*(You've already taken care of Step 1)*

Are there words/phrases in your guiding questions (research questions) that require clarification so that all interviewees will view a question the same way?

e.g. instructional strategies  
 parental involvement

**DO NOT TAKE THIS STEP LIGHTLY**

5

Operationalizing tells your interviewees that when these concepts are used in the interview, **THIS IS WHAT IT IS!!**

**instructional strategies:** *any teacher controlled activity in which student intellectual growth is the goal.*

**parental involvement:** *any parent activity, at home or at school, which is done to support a child's learning.*

Step2

6

## Step 3: Design the protocol in "parts"

Part 1: Introduction

Part 2: Initial "settling in" questions

Part 3: The body of questions

Part 4: Closure



(Yep... this is how good it has to be...error free!! Or as error free as possible)

7

## Step 3...Part 1: Introduction

- Who you are and what you are doing **low key and personal**
- What does your research consist of **Provide context**
- Describe the sample of interviewees **"Why I fit"**
- Explain the need to read the questions **consistency**
- The interview is confidential **to encourage openness;**  
**Participants will NEVER be associated with any responses**
- How long the interview is scheduled to last **so I won't lose my will to live**
- The interviewee can skip any question asked **"I'm in charge"**
- Request recording the interview **and be ready for note taking if the permission is denied.**
- **AND THEN THERE'S THE IRB THING.. BETWEEN YOU/CHAIR**

## Step 3...Part 2: Initial "settling in" questions



*"Getting to know you... getting to know all about you... getting to like you and hoping that you like me" (great words for a song, don't you think? For you youngsters, The King and I)*

Three or four questions, **VERY QUICKLY ANSWERED**, that puts you and the interviewee at ease. Keep them professional

Eg. "How long have you been teaching?"

"How long have you been at your current school?"

"What goals do you have for yourself for the next 5 years?"

Perhaps ask a question about your area of study, not necessarily related to your research questions

**What do you believe your major mistake will be here?**

9

## Step 3...Part 4: Closure

- Before the final question, inform the interviewee that this is the last one, and "thanks for helping out."
- Summarize briefly the interview content up to this point. E.g. "You have highlighted the instructional strategies that you believe have lifted you to being an outstanding teacher. Your work has been exemplary. But while we have focused primarily on instruction, there's one more thing I'd like to know about."
- And finally: "Is there anything else you would like to add that you believe would be important for me to know?"

"Thank you again for your help! An abstract of the findings will be sent to you." (be sure you do this; professionalism!)

10

## Step 3...Part 3: The Body of Questions (we're still on designing the protocol)

Your research questions  
are your guide

RQs (Your guiding questions)	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6	Item 7 Etc.
1							
2							
3							

11

## Writing your questions/items

- Absolutely no edubabble
- Absolutely no bias (You MUST NOT lead your interviewee to answer a particular way)
- Absolutely must be simple, one idea per item
- Absolutely capable of analysis

Step 3/part 3

12

## Absolutely No Edubabble

All interviewees **MUST** interpret the words or phrases the same way. Edubabble has a way of meaning something different to each person using the words.

**Examples:** *differentiated instruction... authentic assessment...dual immersion...multiple intelligences...pull out program...whole language...core standards*

If there is a question, define the words for the interviewees ahead of asking

step3/part 3

13

## Absolutely No bias

**NO-NO-NO...** *"We all know that it is important to teach to the core standards. What are some ways that you teach to the standards?"*

**NO-NO-NO...** *"Parents who become involved in their student's school experience are more likely to have high achieving students. What are some ways that you have become involved in your student's school?"*

Step 3/Part 3

14

## **Absolutely** must be simple, one idea per item

To save time, here is a common question:

*"Do you believe it is important to give students time to begin their homework during class time, and, if so, how much time do you believe you should give?"*

**No! Make it two items with appropriate probes**

Step 3/Part 3

15

## **Absolutely Must be capable of analysis**

You can save unnecessary pain by trying to analyze the information collected during your field test.

Hopefully you will have 4-6 participants to field test. Use that information as if it were your complete set. How would you analyze it? What recommendations does your chair/committee have? *(university requires 2-3. hear me out; GO SLOW NOW TO GO FAST LATER)*

Step3/Part 3

16



# This is big, really **BIG!**

Once you are certain that there is a perfect match between your protocol questions and your research questions, I believe this is the most important part of your process:

## USING PROBES!!



Step 3/Part 3

17

You will keep this list of probes with you during the interview until you've become a "pro" (which is never; I'm sure not! )

- "What did you mean by .....?"
- "Do you have more to add?"
- "Would you expand upon that a bit?"
- "Why do think that was the case?"
- "Could you please tell me more about.... "
- "Can you give me an example of ...."
- "How did you feel about that?"
- "What would that look like?"
- "How did others respond to that?"
- "How has your approach changed overtime?"



Step 3/Part 3

18

## Categorizing Respondents

- Typically less important than with quantitative studies
- Used to describe the characteristics of interviewees
- May suggest trends and/or differences (*must be very cautious because of small sample size*)
- Used to assess representativeness of the sample (*may not be an issue*)

Step 3/Part 3

19

## Step 4: Conducting Your Alignment Check

*Where is the major Oh-Oh in the figure below?  
Where is the possible time waster?*

Research Questions	Interview Protocol Items								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	X	X	X						
2				X	X				
3						X	X		
4									X
5									

20

## Step 5: Protocol Validation...The Pilot

- **Obtaining the interviewees; as close as you can to the demographics of your "real" subjects** (Jim's suggestion vs. Brandman requirement)
- **Securing an observer** (seek advice from chair)
- **Conducting the interviews** (observer has copy)
- **Obtaining necessary feedback from**
  - You
  - Interviewee
  - Observer
- **REVISE...REVISE...REVISE**

21

## Just For You... The Pilot is more important than you might think

Conducting interviews is a learned skill set. Gaining valuable insight about your interviewing skills and affect with the pilot interviewees will support your data gathering when interviewing the actual participants. As the researcher, PAY VERY CLOSE ATTENTION TO SLIDES 23, 24, AND 25. THEIR CONTENT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR YOU AS YOU BUILD YOUR INTERVIEWING SKILLS.

22

Step 5

## For You To Ask Yourself

1. How long did the interview take? Did the time seem to be appropriate?
2. How did you feel during the interview? Comfortable? Nervous?
3. Going into it, did you feel prepared to conduct the interview? Is there something you could have done to be better prepared?
4. What parts of the interview went the most smoothly and why do you think that was the case?
5. What parts of the interview seemed to struggle and why do you think that was the case?
6. If you were to change any part of the interview, what would that part be and how would you change it?
7. What suggestions do you have for improving the overall process?

Step 5

23

## For the Field Test Interviewees

1. How did you feel about the interview? Do you think you had ample opportunities to describe what you do as a leader when working with your team or staff?
2. Did you feel the amount of time for the interview was ok?
3. Were the questions by and large clear or were there places where you were uncertain what was being asked? *If the interviewee indicates some uncertainty, be sure to find out where in the interview it occurred.*
4. Can you recall any words or terms being asked about during the interview that were confusing?
5. If you were to change any part of the interview, what would that part be, and how?
6. And finally, did I appear comfortable during the interview... (I'm pretty new at this)?

Step 5.....*Remember, the key is to use common, conversational language and very user friendly approach. Put that Emotional Intelligence to work.*

24

## For the Field Test Observer

1. How long did the interview take? Did the time seem to be appropriate? Did the interviewee have time to respond?
2. Were the questions clear? Were interviewees ever confused?
3. Were any words/terms used unclear or confusing to the interviewees?
4. Did the interviewer appear comfortable during the interview?
5. Did the interviewer appear prepared to conduct the interview? Are there areas that you believe need improved?
6. What parts went the most smoothly? Why do you think that was the case?
7. Did the interviewer seem to struggle during any part? Why do you think that was the case?
8. If you were to change any part of the interview, what would that part be?
9. What suggestions do you have to improve the overall process?

Step 5

25

## Review: Some essentials of a good interview protocol

- Use language of the interviewee, not the interviewer... No Edubabble!
- User friendly Introduction; be sure to cover the bases...
- The effective use of probes is ESSENTIAL
- NEVER.. EVER... EVER...EVER...ask leading questions.  
(these are questions that lead the interviewee to answer a certain way)...
- Order your questions carefully. (How the interviewee answers one question can affect how they answer the next one)
- Five or six drafts
- One of the most important success issues: LOGISTICS
- PRACTICE...PRACTICE...PRACTICE (NEED A PARTNER)

26

## Step 6: Marketing the Process

You have designed the best protocol in the world. But because you failed to follow through in a carefully planned process, you have not been able to acquire a suitable interview sample that fits the purpose of your study.

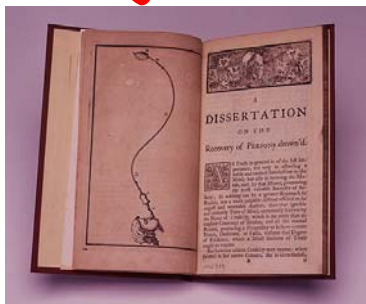
*Now Where? Enlarge your tear ducts when you meet with your chair*

**Be aware that this can happen. It is ESSENTIAL that you work closely with your committee to guarantee a willing and enthusiastic set of interviewees.**

27

## Your Turn...

# Questions?



**KYEOTH**



28