



ACTION RESEARCH
SESSION 4.3
DATA COLLECTION
THROUGH INTERVIEWS



Objectives

At the end of the session, teachers should be able to:

- 1 Describe interview method as a means of collecting data for Action Research;
- 2 Formulate interview questions for data collection; and
- 3 Identify ethical considerations in conducting interviews.



Key Understandings

- 1 Interview is the process of gathering data where the researcher directly asks for information needed in the study through face-to-face or personal contact with the respondent/s.
- 2 Interviews are classified according to structure (structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews), number of interviewees (individual or group [focus group discussion or FGD]), and mode of conduct (face-to-face or phone/internet [Skype] interviews).
- 3 Ethical considerations that should be kept in mind in conducting interviews are informed consent, confidentiality, and right to privacy.

Materials

- Laptop
- LCD projector
- Manila paper
- Masking tape
- Metacards
- Marking pens
- Scissors
- Copies of the interview transcript for the task under Activity
- Research questions in metacards for the task under Application
- Copies of worksheet for self-check and practice



TIME ALLOTMENT

120 minutes or 2 hours



References

- Allmark, Peter, Jonathan Boote, Eleni Chambers, Amanda Clarke, Ann McDonnell, Andrew Thompson, and Angela Mary Tod. 2009.** “Ethical Issues in the Use of In-Depth Interviews: Literature Review and Discussion.” *Research Ethics Review* 5, no. 2: 48. <https://doi.org/10.1177/174701610900500203>.
- McNamara, Carter. 2006.** “General Guidelines for Conducting Research Interviews” Adapted from *Field Guide to Consulting and Organizational Development: A Collaborative and Systems Approach to Performance, Change and Learning*. Authenticity Consulting, LLC. Accessed May 12, 2018. <https://managementhelp.org/businessresearch/interviews.htm>
- Department of Education. 2017.** Supplemental Research Guides and Tools. DM 144, s. 2017.
- Department of Education. 2017.** Research Management Guidelines. DepEd Order No. 16, s. 2017.
- McKernan, James. (1991) 1996. **Curriculum Action Research: A Handbook of Methods and Resources for the Reflective Practitioner.** London: Kogan Page.
- Mills, Geoffrey E. (1999) 2017.** *Action Research: A Guide for the Teacher Researcher.* United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited.
- Patton, Michael Quinn. (1980) 1990.** *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Introduction

Begin the learning session by saying: “Good _____, everyone. How are you today? I am _____, your LAC facilitator for today’s session. Let’s thank our God Almighty for this opportunity He has given us to learn new things and relearn those that we may have forgotten. Today, we will continue our discussion on Action Research focusing on interview as one of the methods in gathering data. We will be looking at the different types of interview (individual or group, and face-to-face or distant [telephone or Internet-mediated]) as well as its various level of organization (structured, semi-structured, and unstructured). We will also learn how to write sample interview questions.

At the end of this session, you are expected to be able to describe the interview method as a means of collecting data for Action Research, formulate interview questions, and identify ethical considerations in conducting interviews.

Activity (10 minutes)

Lead the participants in doing a choral reading of the following interview transcript. Begin by having the participants divide themselves into two groups. Have the two groups seated facing each other.) Group A will read the lines of the researcher and Group B will read those of the respondent or interviewee.

NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR:

Distribute copies of the transcript or use an LCD projector to display it on the screen. An alternative way of conducting this activity is to assign two people to read the script. One will be playing the role of the researcher and the other one, the Respondent.

Researcher:	Hello, good _____ po, Mrs. Cruz. I am Mr. Abuel. I am the Class Adviser of your daughter, Barbie. As her Adviser, I am curious about why Barbie has been absent from school for the past few days. I hope it is okay for me to ask you a few questions. It should take us only about 30 minutes. Be assured that whatever you say to me will be kept confidential.
Respondent:	Good _____ din po, Mr. Abuel. Yes, come in. Please sit down. Thank you for coming. Yes, Barbie has been absent for the past week.
Researcher:	Thank you po. How many children do you have po?
Respondent:	Barbie is the older one of my two children. The younger one is only one year old and is sleeping inside.
Researcher:	Oh, I see. Is Barbie around?
Respondent:	No, I sent her on an errand at the nearby sari-sari store to get some things we need.
Researcher:	I understand. Barbie is a bright child, but I worry about her grades. I wonder if you have seen her report card for the past grading period?
Respondent:	Yes, I know she is a smart girl and yes, I did see her report card. I actually feel sad about her grades. And now, she has been absent from class because, as you can see, I am unable to walk.
Researcher:	Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. May I know what happened?
Respondent:	I had an accident about three months ago. I fell from a vehicle and injured my right leg so now, I am still unable to walk. My husband works in the field most of the day, so Barbie is forced to help me whenever she can. The previous weeks, my sister-in-law, who lives in the next street, has been helping me during the day. Barbie just takes over as soon as she gets home. Lately though, my sister-in-law has been sick so Barbie has been my only help. Last week, it was particularly difficult, so I asked her to skip school to help me instead. She has been doing most of the household chores and has been taking care of her younger brother.
Researcher:	Now I get the picture. Barbie has been absent from class because she had to take care of you. How much longer do you think Barbie will be absent from class?

Respondent:	Oh, I can ask my husband to try to find a relative who can accompany me next week so that Barbie can go back to attending school. I can already manage to be on my own part of the day. I will make sure that Barbie goes back to class on Monday. Has she missed a lot of her lessons?
Researcher:	Yes, she has missed quite a lot in all her subjects. That was why I was worried and made it a point to visit her today.
Respondent:	Oh, I see. Please, Mr. Abuel, help my daughter recover from her absence and make up for what she has missed.
Researcher:	Yes po. No problem po. Please tell her to see me first thing in the morning on Monday. She knows where our Faculty Room is.
Respondent:	Yes po, sir Abuel. Thank you po.
Researcher:	If you want to talk to me or meet with me about Barbie and other things related to her school performance, please feel free to contact me. My cellphone number is 0900-123-4567.
Respondent:	Thank you po, sir Abuel. I really appreciate your visiting me today to discuss about my daughter Barbie.
Researcher:	You're welcome po. Thank you also for allowing me to ask you a few questions during my visit. I will leave now. Thank you again po.
Respondent:	Sige po, sir Abuel. Thank you din po.
Researcher:	Goodbye po.
Respondent:	Bye din po, sir. I will tell Barbie that you came by and that you want to see her on Monday morning.

Analysis (10 minutes)

After the reading of the transcript, proceed to the processing part of the activity by asking the participants the following guide questions.

- 1 What is the script all about?
- 2 How many respondents were there?
- 3 Who was the respondent?
- 4 How did the researcher conduct the interview?
- 5 What information did the researcher need?
- 6 What went well during the interview?
- 7 What part do you think needs to be improved?
- 8 What information was collected by the researcher? Was there numerical information? What was the numerical information? What qualitative information did the researcher obtain?
- 9 Do you think the researcher would have gotten the information he needed if just he sent a questionnaire to the respondent or if he simply observed the student? Why?
- 10 What made interview a good way of collecting the information needed?

Abstraction (50 minutes)

Proceed to the discussion part of the session by saying: “Let’s now go to the focus of our LAC session today—the purpose of interviews, types of interviews, and guidelines on how to conduct interviews to collect data for Action Research.”

UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSE OF INTERVIEWS

Interviewing is a method of collecting information from the respondent/s by asking questions. It is used if the data required to answer the Action Research question can be obtained only through verbal conversation with the respondent/s. For example, interviews are effective in obtaining the story behind a student’s experiences. The Action Researcher can acquire in-depth information around a topic through interviews. Sometimes, we may want to know more about how or why a student answered a test, a rating scale, or a questionnaire in a particular way. Interviewing enables us to examine their responses in greater detail.

Interviewing is suitable for collecting data to answer Action Research questions such as “What are the effects of the intervention on the students’ attitude toward the subject?”, “How did the students respond to the intervention as implemented?” or “What activities do students enjoy so that I can adapt them in my classes?” It can also be used when a teacher wants to conduct groundwork studies prior to the conduct of Action Research. For example, the interview will provide authentic information for preliminary research questions like “What are the reasons for pupils’ absences from class?” or “What types of activities do at-risk students enjoy so they can be incorporated in the class?”

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Interviews can be classified according to (1) the number of interviewees, (2) structure, and (3) mode of conduct. Each classification has various forms.

- 1 Interviews according to the number of interviewees
 - a Individual Interview—when one person is interviewed at any one time; In the transcript of an interview read for the pre-discussion activity, there was only one respondent. That is an example of individual interview.

- b** Focus Group Discussion (FGD)—when several individuals are interviewed at the same time; also simply referred to as focus group
- 2** Interviews according to structure
- a** Structured Interview—when the Action Researcher has a list of questions already prepared; The questions are presented to all interviewees and are asked consecutively. Probe or follow-up questions are not posed. Interviewees respond to the same series of questions for the purpose of finding similarities and/or differences among respondents.
 - b** Semi-structured Interview—when the Action Researcher is ready with questions or key points that can be raised in different order, depending on the responses of the interviewees. Also referred to as the general interview guide approach, semi-structured interview is intended to ensure that information about the same general topics are acquired from every respondent. Unlike structured interviews, semi-structured interviews may include probe or follow-up questions to obtain more detail about initial responses. There is more freedom on the part of the interviewer, who can adapt the specific questions according to the interviewee.
 - c** Unstructured Interview—when one question is asked and succeeding questions depend on the initial response of the interviewee; Sometimes referred to as the informal conversational interview, this type of interview has no predetermined questions to be asked in sequence. It is also conducted in a very open manner with the questions asked adapted to the interviewee’s nature and priorities. During the interview, the interviewer simply “goes with the flow.” However, this type of interview is advisable for those who have already had some experience in conducting research interviews.
- 3** Interviews according to mode of conduct
- a** Face-to-Face Interview—when the interview is conducted in person; This type of interview requires time for setting up an appointment with the respondents and meeting with them.
 - b** Distant Interview—when meeting face-to-face with respondents is not possible and the interview has to be mediated by technology or conducted using a telephone or the internet (e.g., via Skype); In this type of interview, the major concern of the researcher is the expense for telephone or video calls.

PREPARING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

When drafting questions for an interview, it is advised that you come up with open-ended ones to allow respondents to use their own words when answering. These are those questions that start with “what,” “how,” and “why.” An example of an open-ended interview question is as follows:

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In what way/s do student organizations help individual students develop as a person?

Sometimes though, it is necessary to ask questions with corresponding options for the interviewees to choose their answers from. These are referred to as closed-ended questions. An example of a closed-ended interview question is as follows:

How important do you believe is homework for learning?

_____ *very important*
_____ *not so important*

_____ *important*
_____ *not important*

Researchers should avoid questions answerable by “yes” or “no”, unless these serve as preliminary questions to open-ended ones.

There are six kinds of questions that Action Researchers can ask. All of which can be worded in terms of past, present, or future forms.

- Background/Demographics—information about personal characteristics of respondent such as age, grade level, or place of residence
- Behaviors—what a person has done, is doing, or will do
- Feelings—sentiments or emotional states (Note: Interviewees sometimes respond with “I think...” so be careful to clarify that you are asking about feelings, not opinions.)
- Knowledge—facts about a topic
- Opinions/Values—what a person thinks about a topic
- Sensory—what respondents have seen, touched, heard, tasted, or smelled

It is important for you as Action Researcher to have a clear idea about the research question that will be answered when you complete the interviews. That will be your guide in formulating each interview question.

ARRANGING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Below are some suggestions in conducting interviews:

- Ask about facts first, before asking about controversial matters such as feelings and conclusions. With this approach, the Action Researcher can engage respondents more easily in the interview because there is time for warming up before moving on to more personal or sensitive matters.

- Distribute fact-based questions throughout the interview to avoid becoming monotonous, which may lead the respondents to become less interested in responding.
- Questions should be asked one at a time. Do not ask multiple questions at the same time
- Pose questions about the present before the past or the future. Participants can easily talk about what is going on, which can help them recall the past or think of the future.
- End the interview with one last question that permits respondents to share some other information that they might wish to add. You may also ask about their impressions of the interview.

Wording of Questions

- Questions should be, as much as possible, neutral. Any evocative or judgmental wording that might influence the respondents' answers should be avoided. For example, avoid questions such as "Do you not agree that it is easier for you to..."
- Questions should be worded clearly. Use words that are familiar to the respondents or words used in their culture.
- Be careful when asking "why" questions because these assume a cause-effect relationship, which, in reality, may not be the case. Moreover, these questions may cause respondents to feel defensive because they have to justify their response, which may constrain their responses not only to these questions but also to the succeeding ones.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Below are the ethical considerations in conducting interviews.

1 Permissions

Interviews should be conducted only when the researcher has obtained permission from parents, administrators, and others concerned. Respondents also have to be informed about the purpose of the interview and the Action Research for which the interview will be conducted.

Researchers must also be open to the possibility that respondents may refuse to be interviewed. When this happens, the researcher should find another respondent as a substitute.

2 Confidentiality

The teacher-researcher is responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of the data collected, most especially if the interview brings up sensitive information about a particular person, student, or any other individual.



Application (30 minutes)

Lead the participants in putting into practice what they have learned so far by saying: “Now that you’ve learned how to conduct an interview, let us find out if we can formulate interview questions and identify ethical considerations when gathering data using interviews for the following Action Research topics.” Observe the following activity instructions.

1. Have the participants form small groups with three to five members each. Ask them to choose a moderator and a recorder for their groups.
2. Call on the moderators to come to you to get the metacards that contain the research topics that will be assigned to their groups. The following are the suggested topics but you may opt to add more.

RESEARCH TOPICS
Aspirations for the future
Causes of students’ absenteeism
Difficulty of students in solving word problems
Experiences of working students
Role of religion or faith in one’s education
Students’ perceptions of discipline problems
The importance of going to school
What “being educated” means to students

3. Ask the groups to prepare at least five (5) interview questions for the research topics assigned to them. Remind them to follow the guides in writing good interview questions.
4. Once the groups are done, ask them to roleplay an interview using the questions they have prepared. Give each group five minutes for the demonstration.

Closing (10 minutes)

End the learning session by saying: “Thank you for your participation during our LAC session today. As a way of recalling and applying what we have learned today, please answer the following worksheet before the next LAC session.”

WORKSHEET: SELF-CHECK AND PRACTICE

A SELF-CHECK: On Interview Methods

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Recall the different types of interview and describe each one using the table below. Then, write one or two tips for ethical concern or issue that should be taken into consideration for each type of interview.

TYPES OF INTERVIEW	DESCRIPTION	ETHICAL ISSUE/S AND TIPS

B PRACTICE: Interview Exercise

Practice your interviewing skills by conducting a 10-minute interview with a student, parent, administrator, or fellow teacher on any topic of your choice. Be sure to bring your interview questions and notes in the next LAC session.

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