**Econ 2505 – Semester Research Project**

**Guidelines for conducting interviews during your field visits**

**The following is adapted from** “Conducting Interviews in Qualitative Social Science Research[[1]](#endnote-1) (modified from original source)

**Introductions:**

1. Introduce yourself, the title and the purpose of your research and brief description.

2. Record the Time, Date, Place of the interview

3. provide instructions (opening statements) to interviewee

* Release form: ensure you have obtained permission to interview in advance
* Indicate the approximate length of interview

**Types of interviews:**

• Individual face-to-face

• Telephone (not ideal but used when direct access not possible)

• Focus group (if time is limited, if interaction aids response, if solo participants hesitant)

**Benefits to capitalize on:**

• Researcher controls line of questioning

• Historical context can be provided by interviewee

**Drawbacks to be aware of:**

• Researcher’s presence may introduce biased responses (be careful how questions are worded)

• Responses are indirect (out of context from actual performance as in field observation) and may be filtered by interviewee

**Formulating/Asking Questions:**

• Determine what kind information is needed before writing questions

• Keep questions open-ended, unstructured. For example:

* tell me the background/history, about ….
* trace … back to the beginning …
* walk me through the process you experienced …

• Ask clear questions

• Ask single questions at a time

• Establish interviewee background in area of research; “tell me about how you came to be involved in…”

* Details of present experience relevant to topic
* What is the meaning the current experience has for the individual

• Match level of questions and probes to ability of interviewee

**To get information you need:**

1. Allow for exploration but stay on track regarding themes of questions

2. Encourage/acknowledge and pose direct questions that get at the information you are looking for.

3. Be a good listener

* Be sure to ask for details, clarification, examples
* Allow for silence while participant thinks
* Prepare your questionnaire ahead of time

**Questions**

* If recording in writing, allow space to record interviewee responses and space to record interviewer reflections

**Closure**

* Write reminder to thank interviewee
* Ask permission to follow-up if needed

**Recording procedure**

1. If you use an audio recording, you must obtain permission from interviewee prior and then disclose.

2. You may want to take hand-written notes in addition; or this may be your primary means of recording responses if audio recording is not used

3. Recognize difficulty of taking notes/listening/asking questions

4. Recognize that information may be lost/inexact

5. Use two researchers if audiotape not possible (this is recommended if there are two people working together on a project)

6. Be sure to reference all resources (including the name of the person interviewed, his/her title or relationship to the place, date of the interview

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[1-4]

1. Creswell, J.W., Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches. 2nd ed. 2002, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

2. Creswell, J.W., Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions. 1998: Sage Publications.

3. Berry, R.S.Y. Collecting Data by In-depth Interviewing. in British Educational Research Association Annual Conference. 1999. University of Sussex at Brighton.

4. Doyle, J.K., Handbook for IQP Advisors and Students: Chapter 11: Introduction to Interviewing Techniques. 2004, Worcester Polytechnic

1. Source: *Conducting Interviews in Qualitative Social Science Research,* (n.d.) retrieved from <http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/ele/scholars/Results/Workshops/Assessment_Institute/Research/planning%20documents.pdf>

   (this document was somewhat modified from its original) [↑](#endnote-ref-1)