Building Rapport: Improve Interviews to Capture Detailed Responses from Parents of Children with Disabilities

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Abstract

Interviews are a commonly utilized research method within most qualitative inquiries. This method can provide a great amount of insight into the thoughts, feelings, and opinions of an individual surrounding her or his experiences. Often parents are used as proxies to their children in cases where the child has a disability and is unable to effectively communicate in ways that researchers can capture. However, simply asking the "good" questions is often not enough to provide useful insight into their world. So, how does a researcher communicate with parents to allow for insightful inquiry and build interpretation? This article discusses the necessity for thoughtful inquiry when conducting interviews, in order to ensure trustworthy, usable evidence. By providing insight on past literature, key interviewing concepts are explored to provide suggestions that will assist in guiding the development of the interview itself, as it is often an overlooked and ill-reported on this facet of interview research. These suggestions are contrasted using prior physical activity research involving parents of children with disabilities to provide further insight into how to effectively conduct and report an interview.

Keywords: *interviews, strategies, trustworthiness, vulnerable populations*

> "At the heart of interviewing research is an interest in other individuals' stories because they are of worth."
> *- Irving Seidman (p. 3, 1998)*

Certain aspects of the world are not easily measured by an assessment—they reside within an individual. Through qualitative inquiry, the emotions, feelings, and opinions of life experiences do not lose the *voice* of those that have experienced it or the context of when/where/how it is experienced. Within an individual's lived experiences lie a wealth of information about topics that are more abstract, such as social injustice, education, psychology, or even health care (Hewitt, 2007; Seidman, 1998). By tapping into this strain of information, researchers can, through "close observation, careful documentation, and thoughtful analysis," discover patterns that exist in the seemingly unseeable (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 21). Within the individual's consciousness, researchers can gain access to the most complicated of issues because the abstractions are based on the concrete experience of people (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002; Patton, 1990; Seidman, 1998) and are seen as reflections of the reality of the individual (Rapley, 2001). The lived experiences of individuals provide access to information that cannot be easily determined through numbers. Furthermore, the researcher is able to build patterns within the data to understand complex issues not easily measured by traditional means.

In order to tap into this pattern of thought within individuals, researchers have long utilized the interview as a method of qualitative inquiry that, on its own, can provide a wealth of information to the researcher (Fossey et al., 2002; Seidman, 1998). Creswell (2013) outlines five approaches (narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study) to qualitative inquiry and among each of these approaches; the interview is an extremely prolific tool to answer some or all of the research questions. Within each approach, the interview, as a tool, can be conducted in a multitude of ways from structured surveys to open-dialogue conversation and everywhere in between. Despite its overall acceptance as an effective tool, there are those who would argue that the interview is over-utilized and gives researchers a false sense of credibility (Atkinson, 1997; Silverman, 2000). However, by understanding the strengths and weaknesses—and, like with any research method, appropriate experience—the interview can be used as a powerful tool to access information not easily captured by other research data collection methods.

As a research tool, the interview is a much deeper line of inquiry than asking a participant a series of questions and waiting for a response (Kvale, 1996). In order to elicit the necessary information, a researcher must act as a "helping voice" (Lillrank, 2012), allowing the participant to respond in his or her own words to express personal perspectives and bring the researcher into their world (Patton, 1990). As the researcher, you are not "giving" voice—individuals already have voice—you are providing a platform and amplifying individual experience. When considering situations involving individuals with disabilities, the researcher should look to include the individual with the disability whenever possible—and to the greatest extent possible—as they offer a firsthand account of what is occurring in their own world (Caldwell, 2014). However, it can be the case that the individual has a limited ability to answer appropriately for research purposes and researchers have limited means of capturing information from none or minimally-verbal individuals (see Yessick, 2018 for scrap-

booking interview technique). Therefore, the next available "expert" for any given situation, often, is the parent or legal guardian of the individual. Parents and guardians offer, due to the sheer amount of time spent with the individual, an insight into the daily life that cannot as accurately be captured by others, though it is important to recognize that this still is imprecise and can often be misrepresented, as the experiences of parents and guardians are portrayed as the experience of their children. Only the children themselves can provide a firsthand account, yet because of their proximity, parents are often used in research looking to gain insight in the opinions of how programs work for children with disabilities (see Blagrave & Colombo-Dougovito, 2019; Buchanan, Miedema, & Frey, 2017; Columna, Pyfer, Velez, Bridenthrall, & Canabal, 2008; Nichols, Block, Bishop, & McIntire, 2018; Na, 2015; or Obrusnikova & Miccinello, 2012) and can provide a great depth of information in this regard. Furthermore, parents can provide context of the lived experiences of their children with disabilities outside the reach of many programs or interventions. However, similar to any other individual, parents can provide answers that may be singular to their own opinions. A parent's "truth" may not be wholly representative of the "truth" of their child. Further, depending the ontology (i.e., "What is reality?") or epistemology (i.e., "How do you know something?") that the researcher is positioned, this "truth" could be interpreted in different ways. Buchanan et al. (2017) make a point to address this in their analysis by asking parents to not "serve as proxies", but "to provide their own perspective as they engaged in the interviews" and were asked not "to say things they thought their child would answer (p. 405)."

Yet, the question that resides, then, is how does a researcher find meaning within the words of parents without having an undue effect on what is being said? Furthermore, how does the researcher know the parent is providing candid information and not simply what is expected. By understanding how interviews are situated within qualitative inquiry, as well as how to conduct the flow of an interview, researchers can best incorporate interviews into their own research design—whether it is in a purely qualitative study or as a part of a larger mixed methods project or as quantified data (e.g., in-person surveys). The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to provide suggestions as to how to build effective questions that will access the most useful information. Further, suggestions will be provided to assist in situating questions for difficult or sensitive topic, in order to ensure the credibility of the findings.

Interviews as Evidence

Interviews in Qualitative Research

Interviews have, traditionally, been viewed as a straight forward process in which an interviewer solicits information from interviewees, and, in response, interviewees give information to the interviewer about their inquiry (Gubrium, Holstein, Marvasit, & McKinney, 2012). Seemingly, if the interviewer asks the "right" question, the interviewee will provide information about their thoughts or feelings on any given topic. However, this is not always the case. Just having "great" or the "right" questions alone will not lead to accurate, meaningful, or insightful responses from the interviewee, as interpretations of questions can differ from interviewer to interviewee. Questions—depending on how they are asked, the context they are asked in, or even when they are asked during the interview—can inadvertently prompt a response from the interviewee. For topics regarding sensitive or controversial topics, the interviewer can potentially lead the interviewee to respond in a way that might be more socially acceptable or in line with norms, as opposed to what is "truly" happening. Furthermore, there is often a disconnect to what is considered the practice of interviewing and the methodology of interviewing. In much of the literature, the theorization of interviewing has been described in detail (e.g., Arksey & Knight, 1998; Kvale, 1996; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2005; 2012; Seidman, 1998); however, it often comes with an uneven description of the actual practice of interviewing (Gubrium, Holstein, Marvasit, & McKinney, 2012). Blagrave and Colombo-Dougovito (2019) provide a fair example of the procedural steps of their interview process. In a very limited space, it is very clear from what position the authors are addressing the research questions (i.e., phenomenological and heuristic), how long each interview was and where it took place, as well as a list of each of the primary research questions. In Na's (2015) article, the author provides the frame (i.e., phenomenological) and the duration; yet, do not provide information on where the interviews took place or the questions that were asked. By providing the set of interview questions, Blagrave and Colombo-Dougovito (2019) make it easier for the reader to understand how the themes might have emerged from the data.

Furthermore, the researcher's philosophical approach and positioning of the interviews can drastically alter how the interview will be conducted and the lens in which the researcher is analyzing the interview can affect the outcome of the results. Typically, the interview and subsequent analysis is anchored into the framework from which the researcher is situating the study (Collier, Moffatt, & Perry, 2015; Creswell, 2013). For example, asking a question such as, "What benefit do you find in your child participating in physical education?" from different paradigms will ultimately impact what "truths" are constructed. From a constructivist or interpretative paradigm, the researcher recognizes that there is no singular reality or truth; the response to the previous question, could be interpreted based on the reality of a parent of a child with a disability, that inherently their benefits will be different than a parent whose child does not have a disability. Further, from a pragmatic (i.e., reality is renegotiated based on its usefulness in any given situation) paradigm, the research

may interpret responses to understand the most direct or practical benefit in the moment, as opposed to finding the most optimal benefit. For further discussion on paradigms and qualitative approach see the works of Creswell (2013), Denzin and Lincoln (2011), Guba & Lincoln (1994), and/or Maxwell (2008). However, what is constant among each of the approaches to qualitative inquiry is that a research interview is an "interpersonal situation" or conversation between two partners (typically, a researcher and participant or small group) about a theme of mutual interest (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Kvale, 1996). It is often co-constructed by the researcher and participant acting as "active agents" in the research (Charmaz, 2006; Watson, 2006). Contrary to commonly held understandings of the effects of paradigm, Wolgemuth et al. (2015), in an analysis of the influence of paradigms on the research experience, found no pattern of participants' benefits or risks based on research orientation, suggesting that the paradigm behind the interview may have less importance on the impact of the interview than other features, such as researcher reflexivity and rapport. Arguably, the development of rapport may be one of the most important pieces of the interview process; doubly so when working with families of a child with a disability.

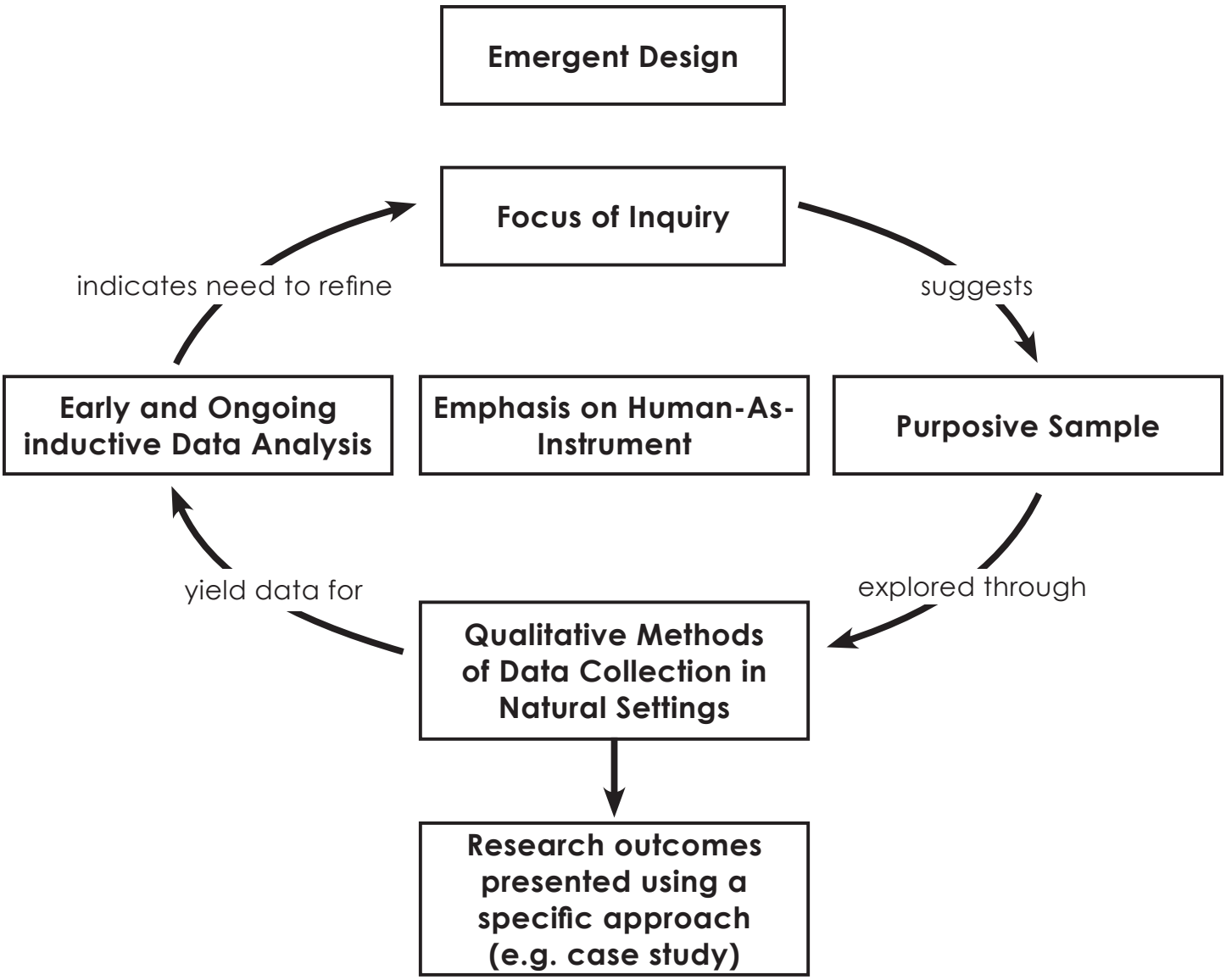
Kvale's early work on the interview process provides seven stages for designing an interview investigation in order to build an effective interview process. The stages are: (1) thematizing, (2) designing, (3) interviewing, (4) transcribing, (5) analyzing, (6) verifying, and (7) reporting (1996). While the design of any given qualitative study must allow for mistakes and facilitate corrections of false steps (Rubin & Rubin, 2005), Kvale's seven stages provide a guide to ensure that a minimal number of missteps occur, while also providing opportunities for reflection. The first two stages Kvale presents are focused on the preparation of the investigation, while steps three through seven consider the interview itself, as well as the analysis. In Kvale's first step, *thematizing*, the purposes of the investigation are formulated and the concepts of what will be investigated are developed (1996). For example, the researcher may outline a certain topic or concept they want to explore. By building the main themes, the researcher ensures the purpose of the investigation is clearly defined before the method of obtaining that information is considered. Once the purpose is finalized, the design of the investigation can be considered. In the second stage, researchers plan the essentials of the investigation, such as the type of interview, number of participants, the resources for the study, feasibility, as well as when interviews may not be appropriate (Kvale, 1996; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). For example, if a parent cannot provide a detailed account of the situation or phenomenon (Kirkevold & Bergland, 2007), the research may need to resort to other forms of data collection other than an interview to capture the child's experience.

Often interviews are incorporated into qualitative research based on an inductive design; meaning that the researcher is open to data manifesting throughout the investigation (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994), as opposed to a deductive design, which seeks to develop a theory or pattern of meaning (often a more quantitative method of inquiry; Creswell, 2013). Presented earlier, Kvale's seven stages are described in an interdependent, linear fashion; however, an inductive design dictates a more flexible or emergent pattern of inquiry and relationship among the stages of research. Researchers may interview participants, transcribe, and analyze the data, only to find further questions that need to be asked and answered. Also, an interview has the potential to impact subsequent interviews. A researcher may recognize the need for certain follow-up questions or additional question in the interview script based on earlier interviews. By allowing for flexibility in the design and for data to emerge, the researcher can then follow up with information that surfaces during the interview, transcription, or analysis. Further, this approach helps to generate new knowledge on a topic that is meaningful beyond the interview transcripts, which can represent isolated data points.

Adapting from Lincoln and Guba (1985), Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p. 48) outline what this process would look like (see Figure 1). In this design, the focus of the inquiry (purpose) suggests who should be sampled, which is then explored through qualitative methods (e.g., interviews), yielding data for analysis, which informs any necessary further inquiry. In order to collect a "wealth" of data from individuals, a flexible design must be retained to allow for further in-depth inquiry where needed (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Within an emergent design, the flexibility of methods allows for this to occur. Moreover, it allows the researcher to explore and become more refined throughout the research process to reflect an increased understanding of the issue (Creswell, 2013). Within the research process, if the researcher's goal is to understand the meaning people make of any given experience, then "interviews provide a necessary, if not always completely sufficient, avenue of inquiry" (Seidman, 1998, pp. 4-5). The following sections focus on the art of interviewing, recognizing that the interview itself is only a part of a larger process and relies on a focused purpose to guide the inquiry.

Types of Interviews

Once the purpose of the study is outlined, the method for collecting that data can be selected that will best capture the necessary data to answer the research questions. There are three broad, differing interview types a researcher can select from; *structured, unstructured, and semi-structured* (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Flick, 2006; Myers & Newman, 2007). At the root of the decision to choose one type over another is what the researcher wants to obtain from the interview, as each type will elicit different data and varying depths of information. *Structured interviews* produce simple information, often very quickly (Arksey & Knight, 1999), which can resemble surveys or questionnaires. As the name im-



(Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; liberally adapted from Lincoln & Guba, 1985)

Figure 1. Characteristics of Emergent Qualitative Research

plies, structured interviews are driven by the researcher and pre-determined structure of the interview. Structured interviews can be in the form of a yes/no or scaled question (e.g., 1-5) which could produce quantitative data (DiCicco et al., 2006) or in the form of open-ended questions that are inflexible to change or additional follow-up.

On the opposite side of the spectrum from structured interviews are unstructured interviews. In *unstructured interviews*, the researcher decides only on general themes or topic areas for discussion; parents would then be encouraged to speak openly about the topics in their own language, rather than that of the researcher (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Fossey et al., 2002). Many can follow a fairly unstructured format and appear to be, more or less, a guided conversation (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Fossey et al., 2002). This type of interview can produce a wealth of data and may result in topics or ideas emerging that were not previously considered by the researcher; however, the necessary time to analyze the data is considerable (Arksey & Knight, 1999) as data from one interview to the next may be structurally different, follow different thought streams, and cover vastly different areas within the same topic.

Semi-structured interviews are perhaps the most common type of interview and produce the most diverse data (Kvale, 1996). Within semi-structured interviews, researchers are free to follow up on ideas, probe responses, as well as ask for clarification and further elaboration (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). This type of interview is

situated somewhere between structured and unstructured interviews; however, it allows for a greater amount of depth within each of the topic areas and retains the ability to guide the discussion. In order to build a great deal of depth within an area of interest, researchers need to create the space for parents to "tell a story" or create a narrative on the topic. To do so, researchers need to ask questions that requires more than a yes/no or short response. Furthermore, to reach a level of depth necessary to make conclusions, responses need to consist of rich descriptions and vivid details (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Columna et al. (2008) asked parents, "What outcomes tied to physical activity do you hope your child will demonstrate?"; clearly, this question would require parents to give an answer that is more than a simple yes/no. Rubin and Rubin (2005) recommend to probe further and ask follow-up questions to create the necessary detail and depth. In the previous example, Columna et al. (2008) may receive a response that is in list form of all the outcomes the parent hoped for their child. By using probes and follow-up questions, Columna et al. can encourage parents to provide depth on the items list (e.g., "Why did you hope for that outcome?") and ask about specific areas of interest, such as the social or affective domain, as parents may not typically consider every aspect of development. In another example, if an individual says they rock climb because it is exciting, it would be important to follow up and find out what *exciting* means to that person. This could be done by asking "Exciting, how?" or "In what ways is it exciting?" Moreover, by eliciting detailed, in-depth responses, the parent is providing more of a rich description of the event or topic.

"Asking the Right Questions"

Unfortunately, there is not a perfect formula for creating great or even decent interview questions that will elicit a strong, in-depth narrative response from the parent. Unlike with surveys, questionnaires, and assessments, when interviewing, the researcher is the key instrument (Creswell, 2013; Pezalla, Pettifrew, & Miller-Day, 2012) and "tool of discovery" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The researcher is often the planner, interviewer, transcriptionist, and analyst on a given project—giving that person much of the power over what occurs throughout the research process. As the key instrument in the study, the researcher needs to allow room for the *voice* of the participant to come through during each of the processes. Novice interviewers often make the mistakes of asking long, complicated questions, posturing closed yes-or-no questions, and leading interviewees (Pezalla et al., 2012). To combat these tendencies, Seidman (1998) suggests that *listening* is the most important skill of an interviewer and that it is necessary to simply "listen more and talk less" (p. 63). Seidman also states that in order to conduct a good interview, a researcher needs only to listen actively, ask questions when something is not understood, explore, and avoid leading questions (1998).

This is excellent advice as a foundation; however, to truly allow for the parent's *voice* to come through and reach the core of the experience, each of these suggestions needs to be negotiated with intent and purpose. This is especially important when interviewing parents as proxies to their children as the researcher is already one "step" removed from the actual voice of experience. Further, interviews, and much of the interview process, are not one sided; the researcher and/or the parent will always have some effect on the outcome of any given interview. So much so, that each interview could be viewed as a collaborative construction of the meanings of the topic dependent on both the researcher and parent (Watson, 2006). In order to build a line of questioning that allows for the voice of the participant to come forward, the researcher must be deliberate in their questioning, while allowing for ample freedom for the parent to explain their experiences (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015). Further, discussions of quality within interviews often encompass not just what is asked but how questions are asked, how the study is designed and conducted, as well as how the method of interviewing fits the guiding theoretical and epistemological assumptions (Roulston, 2010). Conducting sufficient interviews is a multifaceted endeavor; each interview must be carefully designed with intention to properly engage parents into the research process through the interview questions. As demonstrated in Figure 1, the researcher must be reflexive throughout the process. In other words, they must constantly and systematically consider the process of each research step and their role in each process. By doing so, increases the likelihood of capturing all the necessary data; processes for this will be discussed later. Buchanan et al. (2017) acknowledge the importance of this step, in order to situate the roles of the participant and the researcher within the study and acknowledge any preconceptions that may exist. Further, by situating oneself, the researcher identifies their expertise and potential biases. As the primary interviewer, Healy identified as a physical education teacher, giving him the "expertise" to analyze the physical education setting (Healy, Mstefi, & Gallagher, 2013). By being reflexive during the process, a clearer connection can be drawn from the intended to the actual research outcomes.

Since, unstructured interviews follow general, broad themes and require little guidance from the researcher and structured interviews are inflexible in formatting, the following suggestions are made with the intention of being utilized in a semi-structured interview. To reach the level of depth and richness within the data necessary to analyze, first and foremost, questions must be open-ended. By asking truly open-ended questions, the researcher is inviting the participant to reconstruct her or his experience (Seidman, 1998). Open-ended questions allow parents the freedom to elaborate and speak in depth on a given topic by answering the "how" and "why" in their own view (see Columna et al., 2008). It is not beneficial to simply recite the purpose of the

study or the studies' research questions and ask for the parent's thoughts because often the purpose is too abstract to evoke any purposeful meaning. Instead the purpose needs to be broken down into several main questions that are more accessible for the parent to grasp and answer with their own experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Asking open-ended questions will not be enough to encourage participants to speak at depth about any given topic. The researcher must also consider that questions may need further probing or a follow-up question, if at first a participant does not respond fully or provides a vague answer. Wolgemoth (2015, p. 367) suggests that any good interview requires "epistemological and practical flexibility." Even though, as researchers, the topics covered need to be as consistent as possible from interview to interview, further inquiry for some parents is necessary to reach the level of richness within the data to gather meaning. Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggest building an interview around a balance of main questions, probes, and follow-up questions. Main questions are typically the broad, open-ended questions that look to educe the overall experience, viewpoints, and understandings of the parent (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Creswell (2013) suggests simplifying the researcher purpose to a very broad, overreaching central question with several sub-questions. These broad, main questions, however, are often not enough to gain access to all the necessary information on a topic; researchers may also probe and ask follow-up questions to gain further insight. Main questions should be derivatives of the research questions, covering each aspect of the question. Once the questions are created, utilizing an independent, expert (e.g., peers) review will increase the likelihood that the interview are coherent with the research questions.

Probes, according to Rubin and Rubin (2005), are ways for the researcher to manage the conversation. These could be verbal or nonverbal and are often very short, such as, "Could you tell me more about that?," or a short pause to provide ample time for a response. Some probes, like the previous, encourage the parent to continue or elaborate further on a topic. Other probes may ask the parent to sequence an event, such as, "And then what happened?," or provide evidence on a topic to allow the researcher to better understand the occurrence of an event, while others steer the conversation back on track. Whatever the probe may be, as mentioned by Seidman (1998), it should be exploratory and non-leading. Meaning probes should only be used to gain further insight to the experiences of an individual, not guide them toward a response the researcher is looking for. Building rapport early with parents will allow for probes to have a greater effect and allow the interview to feel more natural. Both Blagrave and Colombo-Dougovito (2019) and Nichols et al. (2018) identified that interviews took place in an environment identified by the parent (e.g., at home or over the phone); in providing this flexibility, parents had a greater autonomy in the study and were likely more comfortable and confident in the initial moments of the interview.

When a simple probe will not encourage the parent to provide greater detail, a follow-up question may be necessary. Some follow-up questions can be predetermined by the researcher prior to the interview. For example, Columna et al. (2008) included three follow-up questions on specific domains (i.e., physical, social, and affective) to ensure that these were addressed during the interview. However, many follow-ups will happen impromptu during the interview as a means to explore unanticipated responses or build more depth when the response is too general or vague (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). When conducting an interview, researchers need to be cognizant of the response of the parents to be able to ask a follow-up question. Researchers must listen closely for when responses given are oversimplifications, clearly missing information, or introduce new ideas (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Further, researchers must have knowledge of the situation they are investigating to understand when follow-up is necessary, which may include (although not absolutely necessary) working knowledge or experience of the meaning of disability. A researcher will not be able to ask a question about every single topic, there is simply not enough time; however, it is essential to ensure that at the end of the interview there are no major themes left hanging, incomplete ideas, key terms undefined, or a lack of understanding of what explains certain themes (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). One way to ensure that this does not occur is demonstrated by Buchanan et al. (2017), who followed-up by email with parents with questions that arose during data analysis.

Difficult or Sensitive Topics

Inevitably during an interview, a researcher will find it necessary to ask a question about a topic that may be difficult, sensitive, or controversial for the parent, especially when interviewing parents of children with disabilities. At times like this, the researcher must be cognizant of how questions are being asked, as well as when they are asked, to avoid unintentionally guiding the parent toward a response. In asking a question a certain way, parents may feel inclined to respond in a manner that would more closely fit the "norm" or typical behavior. For example, if a researcher is looking to understand how parents feel the school is doing on providing service for their child, a parent may respond in a neutral or positive way for fear that their response may lead to a loss of services. A researcher can *frame the extremes* by beginning the question with something like, "Some parents feel the school really meets their child's needs, while others feel there are more that the school could do, what is your opinion?" By framing the extremes, parents may feel more confident to reveal answers that may fall into the extreme category with the assurance that they are not the only ones (Arksey & Knight, 1999). In adapted physical education or activity research, this framing may be vitally important to assure parents as of-

ten researchers in this area are looking for the experiences of physical education (Columna et al., 2008), youth sport (Na, 2015), or afterschool programs (Obrusnikova & Miccinello, 2012); or have recruited them from a specific program, like Special Olympics (Nichols et al., 2018).

Furthermore, researchers should understand the potential for biases from their own point of views. This can potentially be reflected in the way a question is worded or how the question is framed. Throughout the interview process, the researcher needs to understand the lens in which they are looking when creating the questions and in asking them, as he or she is the key instrument and any biases they may have can be reflected in the questioning (Merriam, 1998). This bias can further be reflected or exaggerated in the response of the parent.

Many authors have suggested methods to help alleviate this issue of potential bias; one of the more commonly used methods is *analytical notes* and *reflexive journaling* (Boeije, 2002; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). This process is done throughout the data collection process by keeping a record of personal feelings, anecdotal thoughts, and professional insight to assist with the analysis of the data. By keeping track, researchers can gain an understanding of how the information was obtained and where they could improve for the next interview. This also provides a frame of reference during the analysis of the interview transcripts. As the researcher is the key instrument, it is imperative they keep track of the research process and make these known to the reader, so that he or she may understand the position of the researcher (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 1998). Another method to lessen the researcher's influence is *bracketing* (Tufford & Newman, 2012); this process occurs prior to conducting an interview. The researcher outlines, or "brackets," their current thoughts, feelings, and mindset. By doing so, the researcher mitigates the potential for bias in the interview (see Healy et al., 2013). The researcher acknowledges the presence of these potential biases and will be more cognitive of them during the interview.

Lastly, in order to limit potential bias, the researcher must be aware of the power dynamic between their self and the person they are interviewing, which can potentially be construed as coercive. Already, in most cases, the researcher is in a position of power, regardless of age, gender, social status, or position, as they are the primary conductor of the interview (Wang & Yan, 2012). Very quickly, in any interview, it becomes evident who is in control based on the researcher asking the question and the parent responding (Creswell, 2013). In most situations, this is unavoidable. However, when considering situations of sensitive topics that may be discussed with parents of children with disabilities, this may place the parent in an awkward position. To reduce the effect of the power dynamic within the interview, the researcher must be conscious of the environment they are creating (Karnieli-Miller, Strier, & Pessach, 2008) and the "respect" one is giving (i.e., building a rapport) to the parent (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). This can be done through being aware of how one is dressing in comparison to the parent, the location of the interview (e.g., parent's home), or the language being used (e.g., formal or slang). As mentioned previously, both Blagrave and Colombo-Dougovito (2019) and Nichols et al. (2018) provided parents with the option to choose where the interview was conducted. When discussing sensitive topics, the parent may find it difficult to begin and welcome encouragement (Adamson & Holloway, 2012). DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) suggest that the first question should be broad and open-ended, should reflect the nature of the research, and be non-threatening. By creating an environment that is comfortable and beginning with a line of questioning that eases the parent into the environment, the researcher will have a far greater ability to effectively elicit opinions, emotions, or experiences that may not be as easily discussed. It is important to also highlight that interviewing is a practice and even the most practiced researchers get it "wrong" sometimes. Only through reflexivity and analysis does the credibility of the interview process improve for young researchers.

As with any research, there is always a risk to the participant, and it is up to the researcher to ensure that those risks are minimized. Within qualitative inquiry—and interviews especially—the risks can be potentially greater due to the smaller sample sizes, in-depth nature of the inquiry, as well as the reporting technique utilized. In any given study, an individual's risk of potentially being identified, having their voice misrepresented, and potential for experiencing emotional pain is heightened through the exploration of sensitive topics (DiCicco-Bloom & Bloom, 2006; Wolgemuth, 2015). When the topics of the interview are sensitive in nature and revolve around children, as many interviews with parents do, researchers must take care to protect the confidentiality of the individual (Kaiser, 2012). For example, choosing pseudonyms for both parents and children, limiting description of very unique cases, and not producing tables of demographic data (e.g., location, education, and type of job), so as to limit identification of participants. In terms of pseudonyms, Blagrave and Colombo-Dougovito (2019) refer to each parent by "F#", while Nichols et al. (2018) used different nondescript names to identify their participants. Obrusnikova and Miccinello (2012) did not identify parent responses, as the interviews were conducted as focus groups. Additionally, participants of interviews should be continually reminded of what their data will be used for and reconfirm consent within the study (Kvale, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Increasing "Trustworthiness"

Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced the term *trustworthiness* to address the credibility of qualitative research and provided alternate terms more in line with naturalistic inquiry (e.g., observations, interviews, etc.). Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 300) utilize the terms credibility, transferability, de-

pendability, and confirmability, in place of the more quantitative terminology, internal validation, external validation, and objectivity. In addition to Lincoln and Guba's initial work, there have been other definitions of how to address credibility, with varying terminology, based on the paradigm or focus within qualitative research (see Creswell, 2013; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Maxwell, 2008; Myles & Huberman, 1994; Patton 2000). However, many have stemmed from and continue the common theme of *trustworthiness* (Creswell, 2013) in order to provide increased rigor within naturalistic inquiry.

Maxwell (2008) provides a list of seven strategies qualitative researchers can take to ensure credibility. Presented in no particular order, the steps include (a) intensive, long-term involvement; (b) "rich" data; (c) interviewee validation (or member checks (e.g., receiving feedback from interviewees on the data and conclusion made about what was said); (d) searching for discrepant evidence or negative cases (e.g., cases that do not necessarily fit with conclusions); (e) triangulation (e.g., multiple or a variety of data from one source or difference sources, or using multiple methods to analyze one topic or theme); (f) quasi-statistics (e.g., using simple numerical results to demonstrate the prevalence or occurrences of a phenomenon); and (g) comparison (e.g., one group to another). Creswell and Miller (2000) suggest eight strategies, which follow similar themes as Maxwell, 2008. In no particular order, the strategies are (a) prolonged engagement and persistent observation; (b) triangulation; (c) peer review or debriefing; (d) negative case analysis; (e) clarifying researcher bias (e.g., commenting on past experiences, biases, prejudices, and orientations); (f) member checking; (g) external audits (e.g., Having an outside source examine the process and product to assess accuracy); and (h) and rich, thick description. Creswell (2013) suggests that researchers use at least two of the eight in any given study to ensure the validity of the findings.

Table 1
Outline of Strategies to Ensuring Trustworthiness

Maxwell (2008) Seven Strategies	Creswell & Miller (2008) Eight Strategies
Intensive, long-term involvement	*Prolonged engagement and persistent observation*
Rich data	*Rich, thick description*
Respondent validation or member checks	*Member checking*
Discrepant or Negative cases	*Negative case analysis*
Triangulation	*Triangulation*
Quasi-statistics	External Audits
Comparison (i.e. one group to another)	Peer review or debriefing
	Clarifying researcher bias

**Italics* denotes similar terms.

As seen in the two examples (Table 1) from Maxwell (2008) and Creswell and Miller (2000), each set of strategies aim to ensure credibility by maintaining a high rigor within the data collection process to limit the bias of communication (e.g., the transferring and transformation of aural knowledge from one person to a more sharable textual communication; Kvale, 1996). In addition to the strategies outlined by Maxell (2008) and Creswell and Miller (2000), a "review from relevant stakeholders" should be added. This strategy would be done during the designing phase described above by Kvale (1996). Columna et al. (2008) demonstrated this step by sending questions to "experts" in the field then conducted one pilot interview. Researcher can, if available, share the questions with parents directly who are not involved in the study to have "insider" knowledge of how questions may be interpreted during the interview.

If interview questions and the interview is conducted to the standards above, the overall result may still provide little new knowledge if the questions asked are not done in a way that is friendly, consumable, or of interest to the parent. By having a review of questions prior to the interview, this can provide for greater trustworthiness of the data. Further, these strategies lend transparency in the data collection and analysis phases of the study. Kvale (1996) described the methods and analysis sections of most research studies as a "black box" (p. 255). Researchers commonly describe how the studies were carried out, at great length, but provide little insight into the analysis or steps taken to ensure trustworthiness (Boejie, 2002). By providing transparency, not only as to how the study was conducted, but everything that happened afterward from the data collection through the analysis, will provide further credibility to the findings that result from the interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Blagrave and Colombo-Dougovito (2019) and Columna et al. (2008) are very forthcoming about the entire research process, as well as how the researchers fit within that process. Conversely, Na (2015) and Nichols et al. (2018) do not provide the depth of details that is reported by Columna et al. or Blagrave and Colombo-Dougovito. Na and Nichols et al., like many others, provides a detailed version of how the data was collected, but little else until the findings. This demonstrates a "black box" that Kvale (1996) discussed; there is a great detail as to how the information was collected, but there is little connection for the reader as to what happened afterward to reach the results. By not having that connection, readers are left with little with which to make their own connections and without that connection there is a meager likelihood of transferring that knowledge. When considering the potential threats to the credibility of interview data, researchers can utilize the above strategies to counter those threats. By using triangulation, for example, data collected through multiple persons, sources, or even researchers can provide multiple angles on a given topic (Arksey & Knight, 1999). Through the inclusion

of multiple angles or perspectives, it further strengthens the possible conclusions from that data.

When is Enough?

A term often used to describe the process of interview research is reaching a "saturation" point within interview data (i.e., when the researcher reaches a point when the topic has been fully covered to the satisfaction of the researcher, whether from collecting a large enough sample or enough depth from the current sample). This idea of saturation, often, is tied to the idea of quality within qualitative interviewing but is often done so with limited transparency (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). Additionally, the idea of saturation has been critiqued in recent years (Hammarberg, Kirkmand, & de Lacey, 2016). In a review of a leading journal, Francis and colleagues (2010) found during a 16-month period, 18 articles mentioned saturation, yet none provide information as to how it was achieved. In order to provide transparency in the findings, researchers need to be clear during the dissemination if they reached saturation, how it was reached, and what issues were faced in getting there (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). Obrusnikova and Miccinello (2012) discuss saturation within their data, regarding when data collection was terminated and used as a rational for ending the interviews but did not provide a rational as to what made it saturated. By providing extensive detail on the processes involved from the inception of data collection to the conclusion of analysis, the audience gains a greater confidence in the results through an understanding of how and what was done to reach those conclusions—though this may be the fault of journal restrictions and not researcher oversight.

Conclusion

Interviews can be a powerful tool to utilize when attempting to gain deep understanding of individuals, because "at the root of interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (Seidman, 1998, p. 3). However, accessing that information is a process that takes practice and intent to ensure credibility. Simply asking the "right" questions will not ensure that the information accessed is entirely uninfluenced. By building questions that are open-ended questions and guiding interviews with purpose, while giving room for the parent to provide detailed and vivid responses, the researcher allows for the best opportunities to capture the what is often difficult to see or measure. Yet, it is not enough to use the included strategies or follow a prescribed method, researchers must continue to pursue an interview style the creates a report with their parents, especially when working with parents of children with disabilities. In doing so, researchers develop the awareness of the responses given by their parents and create an environment that allows for the full picture of their lived experience to emerge (Creswell, 2013; Kvale, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). By being aware of the steps necessary to ensure the data collected is "trustworthy" (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 2008) and building rapport with their participants, researchers can increase their opportunities for capturing the data necessary to recreate a vivid and detail recollection of the experiences of the individual.

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