Qualitative Assessment
Part I: Conducting Effective Interviews

Qualitative inquiry cultivates the most useful of all human capacities---

---the capacity to learn from the experiences of others.

Presented by: Gary Anderson, Director
Intergroup Relations Program
Workshop Objectives

- Understand difference between Qualitative and Quantitative Assessment
- Explore Uses and Methods
- Learn how to design and conduct Interactive Interviews (a case study).
What is Qualitative Assessment?

- An inquiry process that explores and tries to understand beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviors, and interactions of others by generating non-numerical data in a natural setting.

- Knowledge derived from stories of lived experiences.

- Metaphor: flesh (qualitative) and bones (quantitative)
### methods of data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interactive interviewing</th>
<th>People asked to verbally described their experiences.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written descriptions by participants</td>
<td>People asked to write descriptions of their experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Descriptive observations of verbal and non-verbal behavior.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Quantitative vs. Qualitative

Myths and Misconceptions

- Quantitative:
  - hard
  - rigorous
  - credible
  - scientific
  - Objective

- Qualitative:
  - sensitive
  - nuanced
  - detailed
  - contextual
  - subjective
Why Qualitative Assessment?

- Helps to understand a program / situation as a whole.
- Well suited in areas that are complex, multidimensional, sensitive, and nuanced.
- The open nature of qualitative approach allows the subjects to respond according to their own framework.
Why Qualitative Assessment?

…Continued

- To provide a richer, more descriptive picture of the information being gathered or responses to the questions being asked.

- On college campuses addressing pluralism issues, assessment can in itself serve as a process of inclusion and appreciation for multiple values and views.

- Fills in gaps in quantitative studies.

- Other Reasons?
Interactive Interviews

Purpose:

to understand the experience of others and the meaning they make of that experience.
Conducting Interviews

Case Study:
Experiments in Diverse Democracy
Multi-University Intergroup Dialogue Research (MIGR)
Qualitative Methods: MIGR Case Study

- In-depth Interviews
- Video Tapes of Classroom Sessions
- Journals and Final Papers
- In-Class Reflection Papers
Design Considerations

1. Purpose: reasons for choosing interviews
2. Protocol: themes, topics and questions
3. Subjects: who, how many, incentives, consent, IRB
4. Interviewers: who, relationship, training
5. Timing: when, where, how long, how scheduled
6. Analysis: how, who, resources (Part II)
MIGR Interview Topics

- Course Impact
- Social Identities
- Engagement
- Empathy
- Communication
- Power, Privilege & Oppression
- Disagreements, Differences & Conflicts
- Working Across Differences
Interview Tips and Techniques
Mock Interview

- **Topic**: Employment Background

- **Themes**:
  - Current job description?
  - Prior training and experience?
  - What motivated you to apply?
  - How does it fit into your career path?
Mock Interview

TIPS

DO
Follow up on what participant says (probe/explore)
Ask for concrete details
Ask questions when you don’t understand
Pay attention to non-verbal behavior

DON’T
Don’t interrupt
Avoid reinforcing participant’s responses
Ask leading questions
Thank You!

- Remember Part II (December)

- Resource:

  *Interviewing As Qualitative Research*

  Irving Seidman