# Literature Review of *Interview/Re-Interview Protocol*

Interview/re-interview applications—commonly known to social scientists as interviewing research methods—hold a rich and fruitful history of providing insight into individuals and their cultures (Fontana & Frey, 2000). As Gubrium & Holstein (2002) note, individuals are largely familiar with interviewing sequences because they are routinely a part of everyday talk – people commonly use interviews to inquire about a possible purchase, converse with friends and family about daily events, or to collect information from a co-worker about a given task. It is when individuals begin to realize that the interview has some sort of formal structure, and therefore some sense of specialized meaning, that interviewing processes become delicate situations requiring careful planning and skilled execution.

These considerations extend both to those conducting interviews (as they wish to collect a given set of information) as well as to those serving as interviewees (who may feel constraints and tensions regarding what information they will provide). Chief considerations include the population from which information will be extracted, the type of information needed, and how this information will be used or applied once it is obtained. To this end, this literature review offers a full understanding of interview research methods, particularly in light of how they may be useful to interviewing processes seeking information from migrant communities.

Specifically, this literature review (in line with considerations outlined by Singleton & Straits, 2002 and in conjunction with the needs of ConQIR) examines the general components of the interview situation and identifies initial concerns those constructing interviews must consider; looks at interviewer recruitment, selection, and

training; discusses pre-testing; examines methods for securing respondents; and offers general advice for conducting interviews. Additionally, considerations for cross-cultural interviews are provided. Ultimately, a thorough understanding of how survey interview methods work in ID&R settings is accomplished.

**General components and initial concerns**

Similar to survey construction, putting together an interview protocol demands careful consideration of what information is being sought from the interviewee(s) and how this information can be extracted (Fontana & Frey, 2000). To this end, those designing interviews must remember the basic rules of survey construction (for more detail, see the literature review on Survey Methods or for an external source see Baxter & Babbie, 2004) in addition to how these rules play out in interview situations. Most importantly, those designing interview schedules should remember that no matter how much a question is designed to extract actual facts, the answers to the question(s) may lead to incomplete results or understandings regardless of how well an individual question is constructed (Foddy, 1993). For example, if a man is asked his height, he may answer (and truly believe the answer to be) 5'10" when in reality he would only turn out to be 5'8" if actually measured. The ability to share false beliefs or to forget is especially true when interviewees are asked about lists of items, as interviewees are human and susceptible to error – particularly when nervous, as they may well be in an interview setting (Friedman, et al, 2003). Similarly, what people say they do may differ from their actual actions (Baxter & Babbie, 2004). Again, this is sometimes due to lack of self-awareness or self-knowledge, but it can also occur due to embarrassment and emotional state – human perceptions of reality are certainly open to interpretation and can be, at

times, unstable (Foddy, 1993). To counter these considerations, it is important to remember that small changes in interview questions can result in different—sometimes dramatically different—responses (Foddy, 1993). It is for this reason that those designing interviews may consider how to ask the same question in different ways in order to extract a more exact and accurate understanding of the information desired. Of course, this must also be done in such a way that the interviewees do not feel as if they are being asked the same questions repeatedly because they are not trusted. Those designing interview protocols must also keep in mind that interviewees may misinterpret what questions are being asked (Baxter & Babbie, 2004); that question order has an effect on participant answers (Foddy, 1993); changing the format of the questions (between closed-ended and open-ended) can change how participants respond (Schuman & Presser, 1981); respondents are likely to try and give an answer to any question whether they truly know the answer or not (Foddy, 1993); and based upon cultural background, different answers may be provided (Briggs, 1986). These considerations will continue to be addressed as this literature review continues.

In addition to considering the questions to be asked of the sample population, the channel through which the interviews are conducted must be considered (Singleton & Straits, 2002). Though they are more costly and can sometimes lead to challenges in locating participants, face-to-face interviews are often considered to be the choice interviewing channel since they allow more flexibility in question content; allow a firmer bond to be made with the target population; generate markedly higher response rates; allow the interviewee (and, to some extent the interviewer) more comfort in terms of interview length and complexity; allow for the presentation of visual aids to help conduct

the interview process; allow for more control of the interview surroundings; and are frequently cited as feeling more reliable by interviewers (Singleton & Straits, 1999; Shuy, 2002). Additionally, and directly relevant to surveys involving migrant communities, face-to-face interviews allow for a better understanding of complex issues (Shuy, 2002) or issues made complex by language barriers (Friedman, et al, 2003; Singleton & Straits, 2002) and are particularly fruitful in situations involving marginalized communities (Aquilino & LoSciuto, 1990), especially in regards to sensitive information (Aquilino, 1994; Sykes & Collins, 1988) and in producing accurate (Lavrakas, 1993) and thoughtful (Sykes & Collins, 1988) responses.

Of course, telephone interviewing methods provide advantages, too. In addition to the economic benefits (Singleton & Straits, 2002) telephone interviews can lead to less distortion of data by the interviewer – but for this to happen, the interviews must be monitored in a call center or recorded (and possibly transcribed) by a supervisor who can ensure interview quality (Lavrakas, 1993; de Leeuw & van der Zouwen, 1988). This increased monitoring of interviewer performance also allows for better uniformity in interviewer delivery. If the goal of the interview is to have every question asked in the exact same way, then phone interviews also stand superior due to their ability to be monitored and provide quality control feedback. Finally, phone interviews can often be completed more quickly (due to less travel time being involved) and provide greater safety to the interviewers since they will not have to enter potentially unsafe environments and will not engage in travel (Singleton & Straits, 2002).

Once the goals of the interview have been established, the questions generated, and the channel for interview communication selected, the initial considerations

surrounding the general components have been made. Next interviewer recruitment and selection must occur.

**Interviewer recruitment, selection, and training**

Fortunately for those seeking to conduct interview research, the qualifications providing for good interview researchers are few. Generally, a good job interview process will immediately allow for a sense of whether or not an individual would make for a strong interviewer as it can be seen how comfortable the individual is in an interview type situation since the job interview itself mirrors how the potential interviewer will behave in interview situations in the field (Singleton & Straits, 2002). In addition to a relative ease with interview situations, it is important for interviewers to have good reading and writing skills – not only do these skills often correlate with people who are reported as being strong interviewers (Fowler, 1991), but they also allow for interviewers to understand any changes in protocol that cannot be explained face-to-face but instead through print or e-mail and will allow for the construction of clear, reliable construction of interview reports (Singleton & Straits, 2002).

Three common concerns about interviewers—age, sex/gender, and race—are shown to have little effect upon interview situations, although research (Finkel, Guterbock, and Borg, 1991; Kane and Macaulay, 1993; Groves and Couper, 1998) suggests certain situations where this may be a factor. First, while age does not typically dictate the outcomes of interview situations, evidence implies interview reporting and description tends to be more accurate when the interviewer is over the age of 25 (Finkel, Guterbock, and Borg, 1991). Second, sex and gender differences typically have no effect upon information collected in survey interviews, but when dealing with issues regarding

sensitive male or female information (sex, reproduction, bodily functions) placing same-sex interviewees together may be favored. Finally, and most important to survey interviewing of migrant communities, some evidence suggests when dealing with issues that could be perceived as race issues interview results were more valid and reliable when the race of the interviewer matched the race of the interviewee (Groves and Couper, 1998). The overwhelming force of what makes a good interviewer, however, is an open nature and the ability to understand people (Warren, 2002). These skills are oftentimes difficult to measure outside of the field.

Of course, these skills can also be developed through careful training practices. Interview training methods commonly include in-class training for groups of interviewers (or one-on-one training for single interviewers) as well as self-directed study outside of the classroom for interviewers (Baxter & Babbie, 2004; Gubrium & Holstein, 2002; Silverman, 1997; Singleton & Straits, 2002). Additionally, testing, role-playing, and shadowing techniques can enhance the training experience making the interviewer well-prepared for the field (Gubriem & Holstein, 2002). Typically interview training takes place over a three day period. The training procedures collected from these resources is presented in the remainder of this section of the literature review:

During the first day/phase of training (usually one day is optimal, but for larger projects more days may be needed), the trainees are taught the purpose behind the interview procedures and the terminologies and situations relevant to the interviewing practices. For instance, if an interview team were to be conducting interviews regarding insurance claims, they would be exposed to the overall missions of the insurance company, any terms with which they would have to be familiar in order to collect claim

information, information about the types of clients the company typically has, and specific information about the company's policies. Members of the class would then have time (ranging from one night to one week) to study and learn this information. Once trainees have had time to learn the relevant information, they return to the classroom where they will be specifically trained regarding interview schedules, questions, and techniques. Sometimes, before the interview process training begins, trainees are tested over purpose, policies, and terminologies in order to ensure they are ready for the next step in the training. It may be necessary to offer additional time to those not grasping purpose, policy, and terminologies in order to make sure they are fully prepared to represent the interviewing organization. If the information regarding the interviewing project is minimal, however, this testing may be skipped.

At any rate, the second day of training should specifically center upon how the interviews should occur in the field. This includes presenting the interview schedule, or the list of information the interview seeks to obtain; the interview questions, specifically presented as they will be asked; and techniques for proceeding with interviews. In presenting the interview schedule, it helps to both be as candid as possible and to tie the purpose of the schedule in with the interviewing organization's overall mission. This not only allows a connection for the trainees between the organization and the interviewing process, but also allows for heightened confidence and larger intuition when the trainee is in the field. In presenting interview questions, interviewees should be informed as to how, exactly, the results of each question will be used. This will allow for proper inflection to be applied when each question is asked, and it will develop a sense of importance for the individual question. Terms used in various questions should also be

explained, both in terms of how they will be understood by the interviewee and how they tie into the organization's goals. If an interpreter is needed, it is important to explain to interviewees any terms in the questions that may be lost in translation or may provide for a difficult understanding for those in the interview process. Finally, the second day of training should conclude with specific instruction regarding interviewing techniques. Please see the Conducting Interviews section of this literature review for more information on what this training entails.

   After the trainees have had time alone to review interview schedules, questions, and procedures, they are then ready to return to the classroom for the third day/phase of training. This day of training should include practice training. At a minimum, this training should include each member of the class reading interview questions aloud and hearing feedback from both the trainers and the other trainees. This not only allows the trainee to hear an evaluation of their presenting the questions, it allows trainers to hear (and correct, if necessary) insights from other trainees. Mock interviews with trainers are also a valuable way to offer feedback to trainees – and while the trainers are interviewing with trainees, those trainees not involved in a mock interview process can mock interview each other. If possible, bringing in confederates who can serve as interviewees for trainees can be helpful, especially if role-playing is used to problematize the interview process and force the trainees to practice follow-up questions, probing questions, or other unusual situations they may face. Ultimately, the final day of interview training should find the trainees energized and ready to interview in the field. However, shadowing of experienced interviewers, if the resources are available, can be helpful to alleviate any remaining insecurities interviewers may hold. Oftentimes the shadowing process begins

with the trainee watching an experienced interviewer take action in the field and concludes with the trainee conducting an interview why the experienced interviewer watches, takes notes, and offers supportive, thoughtful feedback.

The training process is an important part of the overall mission of information-collecting through interviews. Those considering not offering training or providing short training sessions should keep in mind research from Fowler and Mangione (1990) suggesting interviewer ability and understanding is enhanced through training, with three day training periods being found as optimal; and Billiet and Loosveldt (1988) who found two to four day training periods produced significantly more reliable responses than interviewers with shorter or longer training periods.

**Pre-testing**

Before an individual or organization can confidently code and report interview responses, they must take care to test the interview schedule and questions first in a non-field setting and then in the field (Weinberg, 1983). Pre-testing interview questions allows for question clarity for the interviewee and allows the interviewer (and his/her organization) to retrieve necessary information in an unbiased form (Singleton & Straits, 2002). Interview questions are constructed in ways similar to those in survey methods (see the last section of the Literature Review for Survey Methods). Only with interview scenarios, questions are more likely to be open-ended and, therefore, more likely to elicit unintended responses (Fowler, 1995). For instance, DeMaio and Rothgeb (1996) conducted interviews seeking to discover how people attempted to stop smoking. In order to determine this, their interviewers asked, "How many times during the past twelve moths have you stopped smoking for one day or longer?" Many of the respondents

provided answers and stories where they had to stop smoking because of illness, lack of money to purchase cigarettes, etc. With pre-testing, these answers could have been avoided.

The first stage in testing is the laboratory test (Jobe & Mingay, 1991). While the name implies testing inside of a laboratory, this testing can happen in any setting convenient for those developing the questionnaire. After a list of questions has been devised, practice participants are invited to take place in a focus group session. Focus groups are used to allow a variety of responses to the same question and to see how the questions might be construed differently by different individuals. Each question in the interview schedule is asked in an interview being recorded by a person who is assisting in survey development. If the question results in the appropriate type of response, then the researcher continues to the next question. However, if the question leads to an answer providing inadequate information or information completely different than the interview intended, then researcher should ask a follow up question probing for the information sought. Sometimes many follow-up questions may be asked in order to gain the full range of information needed. Once the interview is complete and answers have been recorded, the transcription of the interview session is used to edit the survey. When questions elicited unwanted responses, the follow-up questions that finally resulted in the desired type of information being shared can be used to build a more effective interview schedule. If a question resulted in a superficial, cursory, or otherwise thin response, the interview schedule can be enhanced with follow-up questions probing deeper into the answers provided.

Once an initial interview schedule has been developed, tested in a non-field setting with participants similar to those who will be interviewed, and revised to better fit the information needed, then the next pre-testing measure is administered in the field. Field pre-testing (Fowler, 1995) consists of administering the interview survey to actual survey participants or, if available, persons who may be similar to the interview population but who are not actually in the interview sample. The current interview schedule (the one revised from the laboratory pre-testing) is administered, and answers are recorded. At this point, the interview schedule should be in such shape so as that fruitful answers are provided, but if respondents do not provide the type of information being sought or enough of that information, further revision may be needed. After the interview schedule is administered, and what would be the full interview when the actual interviews are administered is complete, then extra questions are asked of the interviewee in order to determine the accuracy of the interview. This is not to suggest the interviewee may have intended to deceive the interviewer; instead, it looks to see if the interviewee truly understood what the interviewer was asking. To do this, the interviewer will then go through terms that may be problematic and ask the interviewee what they believed these terms to mean.

Field pre-testing has proven profitable for researchers seeking accurate information. For instance, in a study by Oksenberg, Cannell, and Kalson (1991) interviewees were asked "When was the last time you had a general physical examination or checkup?" The researchers eventually learned they would have had highly inaccurate numbers (87 percent of the answers incorrect in the test) because the participants in the interview did not know what "general physical examination or checkup" meant. They

also learned interviewers were collecting different instances of "when," with some collecting a date, others collecting elapsed time, and still others collecting an age. Through field pre-testing and revision of the survey, they were able to alleviate such inaccuracies. Field pre-tests do take time, but they are worth the effort. In many cases, as few as five field pre-tests can provide the information needed in order to revise an interview protocol; but sometimes as many as 25 are needed in order to shape a reliable and accurate questionnaire (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). Field pre-tests also present a good opportunity for interpersonal interview skills to be examined, as paper questionnaires exploring questions of interviewer demeanor and presentation can be examined in order to understand how the interviewer came across in the situation and whether or not the respondent felt comfortable in answering interview questions (and, if not, why) (Esposito and Rothgeb, 1997).

**Securing respondents**

When selecting interview respondents, it is important to consider both survey mode (that is, whether or not the interviews will be over the phone or face-to-face) and the sampling design (Singleton & Straits, 2002). For some interview projects, an entire population will be interviewed – particularly in agency interviews where participants must be interviewed in order to determine whether or not they apply for housing, financial aid, government benefits, or a particular program (Friedman, et al, 2003). In larger interviewing projects, particularly in national interviews to be conducted over the phone, portions of a population will be randomly sampled (for more information on collecting samples, whether for interviewing or other types of research projects, please see the Sampling portion of this literature review). Typically, the interviewee is given a

list providing all possible interview candidates and is told she or he must reach a certain number of participants from the list (Singleton & Straits, 2002). Sometimes the list is divided into smaller sections divided by demographic features (Friedman, et al, 2003). For instance, for an interview project a certain number of men and a certain number of women may be needed in order to get an accurate estimate of the information being sought. The interviewer would then be given a list of men and a list of women and would be told, based on how many were needed for the sample, must be interviewed from each list. Other possible listing categories could include location, age, race, ethnicity, or other various categories.

For face-to-face interviews, participants can be invited to a facility where they will be interviewed; interviewers may go to the homes of the interviewees; or a mixture of both can occur in order to build a strong collection of interviews (Friedman, et al, 2003). Regardless of the method or mix of methods, the first step is for the sponsoring organization to send a letter notifying the potential interviewees that they are being sought for an interview project (Singleton & Straits, 2002). This letter should appear quite professional and include the interviewing organization, a brief explanation of why the interview is being done, the reason or method behind the interviewee being selected, and when the interview might occur. The letter should be long enough to establish credibility and allow for a sense of comfort for the upcoming interview process, but it should also be short enough so that the reader will complete the reading of the letter. Often these letters are sent two to six weeks before the interviews will occur, with the longer six week period often being extended to those who are being asked to come to an interview facility.

When the interviewer actually goes into the field to conduct the interview, she or he should knock on the door and/or ring the doorbell; present a copy of the letter that was already sent, instantly establishing a connection; provide a friendly introduction (including the introduction of interpreters, mentors, or interviewing partners if they are present); present documents establishing credentials (such as business cards or brochures); and politely ask for the person or persons who are to be interviewed (Singleton & Straits, 2002). While this can be an easy process if the target interviewee is located, oftentimes the challenge for face-to-face interviews is ensuring the potential interviewee is home. Sometimes it can be helpful to call in advance if the phone number is available, but many people choose not to answer the phone when caller identification systems reflect a number they do not recognize (Friedman, et al, 2003); additionally, many people may lie about the target interviewee being around when called in advance because they are unsure about the interview process or feel that it may be an inconvenience (Groves, 1989). For maximum results, interviewers may try calling in advance some of the times when approaching and not calling others (Friedman, et al, 2003).

Fowler (1993) pooled together a variety of research regarding how to most successfully reach face-to-face interview contacts. This research concluded that weekdays after 4:00 p.m. and all day on weekends were the best times to catch people ready to interview; that those who had been contacted six times but who refused or claimed to be unable to interview were likely to never be available to be interviewed (similar research suggests after ten approaches phone participants are likely to never be reached); for maximum success, times should be changed – so if the an interviewee was

attempted to be reached at 4:00 p.m. on one day she or he should be tried at 6:00 p.m. on another; that collecting ideal times to reach the target interviewee can be helpful when speaking to others face-to-face or talking to others on the phone; leaving notes when no one answers the door can be beneficial, especially if the notes contain call back numbers where face-to-face interviews can be scheduled (and if the notes are on professional stationary); and that interviewers who introduced themselves to neighbors and chatted with them would often find a more hospitable environment when reaching the target interviewee.

This hospitable environment can be important, especially since many target interviewees decline interview requests (Friedman, et al, 2003). For interviews conducted completely over the phone, response rates are much lower than face-to-face interviews (Dillman, 2000; Groves, 1989). This is especially true since the advent of cellular phones (Friedman, et al, 2003). When approaching interview situations, interviewers should carefully consider and enact two pieces of advice generated through research surrounding the interview process. First, interviewers should note the surroundings of the neighborhood they are in and the demeanor of the target interviewee and proceed based upon this assessment (Groves, Cialdini, & Couper, 1992). For instance, if in an upscale neighborhood the interviewer should carry a more rigid professional demeanor and should avoid using colloquialisms. If in a neighborhood where everyone seems to be active and carrying a sunny disposition, the interviewer should play into the environment and carry a gregarious attitude with the process. Above all, interviewees want to feel as if they are speaking with someone they trust and someone they like – this can be key to securing extensive and accurate answers (Friedman, et al, 2003). In addition, interviewers

should make sure to note the value of the interview process and not only what they want to gain from the process, but what the process does for the interviewee (Groves & Couper, 1996; Singleton & Straits, 2002). Interview participants want to feel as if they are being taken seriously, and as if the information they are providing can make a difference (Friedman, et al, 2003). More importantly, they want to feel as if they will benefit from taking part in the interview process (Dillman, 2000). Interviewers must stress this, and those designing the interview process must consider strategies for how this can occur (Singleton & Straits, 2002).

A final consideration in securing respondents is the process known as *conversion*. Conversion occurs when a target interviewee who initially refuses an interview can be persuaded into taking part in the interview process (Davis & Smith, 1992; Groves, 1990; Groves & Couper, 1998). Conversion can occur in two ways: immediate conversion, where a target interviewee who declines is instantly persuaded to complete the interview situation; and long-term conversion where the person declining is persuaded to set up a time when she or he will be interviewed in the future. In order to make the appropriate conversion, the interviewer must listen to the refusal by the target interviewee and carefully decide what the appropriate response should be (Groves & Couper, 1998). Possible instances where immediate conversion can occur include reasons such as "I'm not sure I understand what the interview is about and if I should do it;" "I'm not sure I have time to interview," or "I had a hard day at work." Possible instances requiring a long-term conversion include "We are in the middle of dinner," "I'm sorry, a family member just passed away," or "We had some disturbing news today, so I am not sure this is the best time." Specifically, the former set of responses represent inconveniences or

less stressful instances of resistance; whereas the latter situations represent larger problems that may have an effect on the interview data anyhow. In either case, research suggests the conversion should be made using the same style but with a different end request (Friedman, et al, 2003).

In order to make a conversion, the interviewer must first acknowledge the legitimacy of the target interviewee's response (no matter how absurd it may seem) and then present an appropriate argument. In the case of inconveniences, the counterarguments that are most successful usually appeal to getting the interview done and out of the way, stressing that the interview does not take much time and can be valuable, or reasserting that the interview will be a stress free and beneficial process (Friedman, et al, 2003; Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). It is also helpful for a conversion request to end with *okay* (Friedman, et al, 2003). For example, if a target interviewee refuses the interview request because of a bad day at work, the interviewer might respond with, "I'm sorry to hear your day at work didn't go well. I have those days myself, and I know how annoying they may be. But I promise – I won't add to your bad day. I just want to get this interview taken care of so we can help make improvements in the neighborhood for our families and our kids. With that in mind, we can have the interview done in five short minutes – okay?" The addition of the word *okay* often encourages the interviewee to respond in the affirmative, especially when it is accompanied by an encouraging message stressing how important and easy the interview will be (Friedman, et al, 2003). Of course, with the weightier topics that may be introduced by the target interviewee as a reason not to interview, it is not appropriate to ask for an immediate interview – even if the interviewer senses the interviewee is being dishonest (Friedman,

et al, 2003). Instead, the interviewer should request an interview date and time in the future that will allow for the quandary to be less immediate. If a target interviewee replied that a death had occurred in the family, for instance, the interviewer might respond with, "I am sorry to hear that. Please, let me express my condolences. I won't take up any more of your time today – but I do really need to set up a time when we can discuss this important information. Okay?" Usually this will lead to an affirmative response, and a day and time can be set up for a future interview. Unfortunately, rescheduled interviews oftentimes lead to another refusal (Shuy, 2002). At that point, it may be more fruitful to seek other interview possibilities (Singleton & Straits, 2002).

**Conducting interviews**

Fortunately for interviewers, extensive research (Baxter & Babbie, 2004; Fowler, 1991; Fowler & Mangione, 1990; Friedman, et al, 2003; and Singleton & Straits, 2002) indicates that if the considerations previously discussed in this section of the literature review are followed, then following the interview protocol is a relatively simple task. Four prime considerations should be followed in order to ensure the best possible interview situation. First, the questions must be read exactly as written (Fowler, 1991; Fowler & Mangione, 1990). Small changes in the carefully piloted script can lead to completely different answers being provided, as previously explored in this literature review. Second, if an interviewer is not satisfied with an answer provided—that is, if the answer provided does not fully answer the question—then she or he should take special care to ask a follow-up question prompting for more information to be shared, but not coaching, leading, or suggesting what specific information should be provided (Fowler, 1991; Fowler & Mangione, 1990). Good responses for incomplete answers include "Tell

me more," "Anything else?" or "How do you mean that?" If an interviewee seems to misunderstand the question, then the interviewer should vaguely explain ("That isn't really the type of information I need for that question – let me re-read the question and see if that helps…) and re-read the question in hopes of the type of response desired. The piloting process, if carefully enacted, should minimize the need for these types of responses. Third, the interviewer should record answers as presented without editing, editorializing, or re-interpreting (Fowler, 1991; Fowler & Mangione, 1990). For the best possible results, this should include recording answers verbatim when possible (and, if appropriate, using recording devices to ensure accuracy). Fourth, the interviewer must maintain professionalism at all time, especially in the sense that the interviewer remains neutral (Fowler, 1991; Fowler & Mangione, 1990). This means the interviewer should not encroach upon becoming friends with or making relational advances toward any of the interviewees, even after the process has concluded; should avoid sharing opinions about the subject matter of the interviews, even if an interviewee has completely answered the question; and should avoid verbal or nonverbal feedback suggesting approval or displeasure with an answer. If these four considerations are followed, then the interview will likely be executed with much success (Baxter & Babbie, 2004; Fowler, 1991; Fowler & Mangione, 1990; Friedman, et al, 2003; and Singleton & Straits, 2002).

**Considering cross-cultural interviews**

A final consideration for the interview/re-interview process, especially in the context of interviews with migrant communities, is the potential added element of interviewing across cultures. Cross-cultural interviewing, or interviewing across racial, ethnic, class, religious, or even gender lines (Ryen, 2002), can affect the interview

process and the information received during that process. For instance, compelling research (Friedman, et al, 2003) demonstrates African-American communities often feel less compelled to provide information, especially sensitive information, to non-African-American persons. This is often the case with many ethnic communities, including predominantly white communities: for a variety of reasons, the members of these communities may not feel comfortable sharing information with those outside of the ethnic group (Gubriem & Holstein, 2002; Ryen, 2002). This pattern is mirrored across the other demographics mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph.

When encountering cross-cultural interviewing situations, preparations can be made to ensure higher chances of interview success. First, it is often helpful to make connections with key people in a community that are trusted by the members of the community. If interviewing in a predominantly African-American community, it is helpful to make connections with someone in that community who is known and trusted who may be able to introduce the interviewer to target interviewees (Friedman, et al, 2003). If no such connection exists in the community, after one successful interview occurs an interviewer might ask for permission to mention the interview process to others when approaching them for their interviews. This often can be used as a conversion strategy – appealing to others who have completed the interview may make others feel comfortable in completing the interview, too (Friedman, et al, 2003). A second helpful consideration, somewhat related to the first, is the need to establish and maintain rapport (Kvale, 1996). As pointed out earlier in this section of the literature review, interviewees must feel comfortable with the interviewer and must believe the information they provide will be helpful to them. With this in mind, the interviewer should establish that they are

there to help, and that the information collected will be put to good use. An interviewer should not, under any circumstances, presume to know a different culture and should not appeal to their knowledge of the culture (Kvale, 1996). For instance, comments such as "I can understand what it is like to be lower-income" or "I have a cousin who is Islamic" are inappropriate and will likely not be well-received (Manning, 2003).

A final consideration for cross-cultural interviewing is nonverbal communication. Oftentimes it is not so much what a person says in an interview process that is disturbing to the interviewee, it is what the person does (Ryen, 2002). If a person is uncomfortable communicating with someone outside of his or her culture, that will often be read by the interviewee in a cross-cultural interview and could affect the interview results. While this discomfort will likely fade as more exposure to a particular culture occurs (Ryen, 2002), sometimes it is important to consider intercultural communication training or diversity training (Friedman, et al, 2003). Intercultural communication training centers upon specific communicative behaviors one might encounter in a given culture – for instance, some Asian cultures require houseguests to leave their shoes at the door. Violating this cultural expectancy might lead to negative feelings toward the interview process. Training making interviewers aware of such practices, especially specific practices of a particular interview community, could be valuable. Another type of training, cultural sensitivity training, deals less with communicative implications and more with comfort regarding a given culture (although the two types of training do overlap in many aspects). Cultural sensitivity training is ideal for situations where the communication means of two cultures overlap but the sense of understanding may be lacking (Ryen, 2002). For example, some white people may feel uncomfortable around African-Americans. This is

not necessarily because they are bigoted, or because they do not understand communication patterns – it could be because they have been separated from African-American culture and may feel anxiety because of this. Cultural sensitivity training would help to enhance awareness of different cultures, ultimately creating comfort in the interview process. In seeking intercultural communication training or cultural sensitivity training, strong resources can often be found through nearby colleges or universities. For intercultural communication training, contact speech/communication departments; and for cultural sensitivity training, often social welfare departments provide strong outlets.

**Conclusion**

As demonstrated, survey interviews can provide accurate, helpful information when well considered, designed, and executed. This portion of the literature review specifically examined what situations are ideal for using interviews, how interviews are constructed, methods for training interviewers, measures for testing interview protocols, ways to recruit and convert respondents, and offered advice for cross-cultural situations. As can be ascertained from this literature review, good interviewers are well-trained, have an open style, and closely follow the interview protocol with comfort and without judgment. Additionally, it is not so much the order in which the questions are asked in an interview, but how the questions are contextualized and delivered by the interviewer. While face-to-face interviews often cost more than phone interviews, the results are often more reliable and the success rate at ensuring an interview increases. Despite all of the planning involved, interviews are effective and relatively simple ways of collecting data. The next section of this literature review takes another look at interview methods,

specifically exploring the re-interview process. After the initial interview has occurred,

what steps should follow – and when are re-interviews needed?

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