

# Interviewing for Qualitative Inquiry: A Relational Approach

Qualitative inquiry is a research approach that seeks to understand the lived experiences of individuals and groups. In qualitative inquiry, researchers use a variety of methods to collect data, including interviews, observations, and document analysis. Interviews are a particularly important method for qualitative researchers, as they allow researchers to gain in-depth insights into the perspectives and experiences of research participants.



## Interviewing for Qualitative Inquiry: A Relational Approach by Ruthellen Josselson

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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The relational approach to interviewing is a specific approach to interviewing that emphasizes the importance of building and maintaining a relationship with research participants. Relational interviewing is based on the belief that the quality of the data collected in an interview is directly related to the quality of the relationship between the researcher and the

participant. When researchers have a strong relationship with participants, they are more likely to be able to gain access to rich and meaningful data.

## **Benefits of the Relational Approach**

There are several benefits to using a relational approach to interviewing for qualitative inquiry. These benefits include:

- **Increased access to data:** When researchers have a strong relationship with participants, participants are more likely to be willing to share sensitive and personal information. This can lead to richer and more meaningful data for the researcher.
- **Improved data quality:** The quality of the data collected in an interview is directly related to the quality of the relationship between the researcher and the participant. When researchers have a good relationship with participants, participants are more likely to be honest and forthcoming with their answers. This can lead to more accurate and reliable data.
- **Enhanced understanding:** The relational approach to interviewing allows researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the perspectives and experiences of research participants. This is because researchers are able to build rapport with participants and establish trust, which allows participants to feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings.
- **Increased participant satisfaction:** Participants in relational interviews are more likely to be satisfied with the research experience. This is because they feel that they have been treated with respect and that their voices have been heard. This can lead to increased participation in future research studies.

## Challenges of the Relational Approach

While the relational approach to interviewing has many benefits, there are also some challenges to consider. These challenges include:

- **Time-consuming:** Building and maintaining a relationship with research participants takes time. This can be a challenge for researchers who are working on a tight deadline.
- **Emotionally draining:** Relational interviewing can be emotionally draining for researchers. This is because researchers need to be sensitive to the needs of participants and be able to manage their own emotions in response to the often personal and sensitive information that is shared.
- **Potential for bias:** The relational approach to interviewing can introduce bias into the research process. This is because researchers may be more likely to favor participants with whom they have a strong relationship. Researchers need to be aware of this potential bias and take steps to minimize its effects.

## Implications for Research Practice

The relational approach to interviewing has several implications for research practice. These implications include:

- **Researchers need to invest time in building relationships with participants.** This can be done through spending time with participants in their natural settings, getting to know their interests and concerns, and being respectful of their time and boundaries.

- **Researchers need to be aware of their own emotions and biases.** This is important for ensuring that the research process is fair and unbiased. Researchers need to be able to manage their own emotions in response to the often personal and sensitive information that is shared by participants.
- **Researchers need to be flexible and adaptable.** The relational approach to interviewing is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Researchers need to be able to adapt their interviewing style to the needs of each individual participant.

The relational approach to interviewing is a powerful method for collecting rich and meaningful data for qualitative inquiry. However, it is important to be aware of the challenges of this approach and to take steps to minimize its potential biases. By investing time in building relationships with participants, being aware of their own emotions and biases, and being flexible and adaptable, researchers can use the relational approach to interviewing to gain a deep understanding of the perspectives and experiences of research participants.



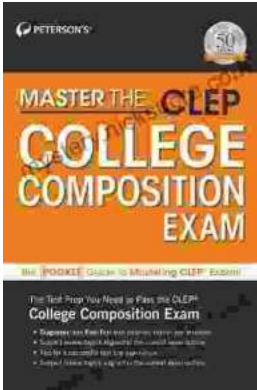
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