Glesne, Corrine: Chapter 4 “Making Words Fly: Developing Understanding through Interviewing”, pgs. 79 - 108.

This lengthy chapter explains in depth the interviewing process. I have organized this write up in focus type sections and highlighted important things to remember by using bullet points.

**Interviewing: An Interaction:**

The chapter defines the interaction of an interview between two persons or other possibilities (i.e. one or more interviewers or interviewees). It also states the researcher focuses on the context of purpose in obtaining information for their own purposes. The author states when the researcher asks the questions they need to be mindful that the respondent’s answers will reflect their values, motives, concerns and needs. The interview must also be flexible to change, modify or dispose of questions in this interviewing process.

**Developing Questions:**

The author states, “What is the origin of the interview question?” as a way to focus the reader on how to structure their qualitative research. The researcher must look at why they are doing the research and what are they trying to understand better. They need to be able to identify this so they can structure the questions and correctly direct them to different respondents. An inexperience researcher may confuse their research questions with their interview questions.

Research questions need to give you information on what you want to understand. While interview questions are questions you ask people to better understand them.

**Mechanics of Question Development:**

Questions should be developed and asked from many different angles. For example, questions about experience and behavior versus knowledge based. A researcher must ask a variety of questions and shape them differently. Why type questions are typically bad because it would vary from the respondent’s point of view.

With more controversial or sensitive topics the researcher must structure the directness and generality of the question differently depending on the rapport created with the respondent. Generally, a researcher should have some warm up type questions because some interviewees are better when asked questions towards then end of an interview.

**Revising and Piloting:**

There is a previewing process that acts as a three-way “interaction between your topic and questions and collaborators whom you enlist to play several facilitative roles”. The author states to write your questions then check them against your topic and then rewrite them if required.

Then the author suggests to “Think of pre-pilot testing as a four-way interaction when the collaborators enter the picture”. The best collaborators are the people for whom the questions were directed towards.
This process of drafting, re-focusing or re-directing and re-drafting interview questions is time consuming but beneficial.

Setting Up to Interview:
Make sure where you set up your interview is “convenient, available, appropriate” type places that are also comfortable and quiet. When scheduling a time be mindful of the respondent’s schedule and preferences the decision so it works best for the interviewee. Be mindful of how long the interview might last. Keep the lines of communication open and try to schedule several interviews (depending on the type of research) that are consistent with time and location. Identify what you are bringing to the interview (i.e. laptop computer, tape recorder, video taping, etc…). Remember if you are doing several interviews that you have a way to transcribe the recorded data. Make sure you keep an accurate journal of time, date, location and what was discussed in the interview. This is important especially if you talk about topics outside the original scope of your questions.

Nature of Interviewing:
This will change depending on personalities, topic discussed, and location of interview, temperament of the interviewee and time of day. Make sure you keep track of the time and you have enough time to wrap up, review and transition for the next interview. As a researcher you must remember to be a good listener, be observant and remember what was discussed.

Interviewer Attributes:
The book states the following are good interview attributes. Remember to have each attribute complete the following sentence: “The good interviewer is…”
- Anticipatory
- Learner
- Analytic
- Nondirective
- Patiently Probing
- Non-threatening
- Aware of Power and Hierarchy
- Caring and Grateful

Some Typical Problems
Sometimes things the interview goes bad and you manage to salvage it for just the experience of doing the process of interviewing.