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Training Program on

"Research Methods and Documentation for Extension Personnel"

Reading Material

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Contents

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1. Interview Method

Introduction

An important tool for data collection specially in the field of research is the 'interview'. It implies personal interview in which the interviewer and the interviewee carry on conversation face to face and discuss problems thereto. It may be noted that an interview is more than a conversation. It is not only the words spoken but also the gestures, glances, facial expressions, pauses, intimation, rate of speech etc. Which also matter. In the words of Brown and Ghiselli, "the term interview stands for a generic concept which includes a wide variety of procedures adopted in collecting data through person to person contact between an interviewer and a respondent".

Interviews can be used to collect facts, eg information about people's place of work, age, etc., but such questions are usually no more than opening items which precede the main substance. The bulk of interview questions seek to elicit information about attitudes and opinions, perspectives and meanings. Interviews are widely used because they are a powerful means of both obtaining information and gaining insight. They give us an idea of 'what makes people tick', of the personality and the motivation of the interviewee.

Most field research or empirical social survey is adopting the procedure of interviewing for the purpose of collecting relevant data. This method is to be used as a scientific tool. The interview method is not to be called scientific, if its results would not be useful and reliable. It is unplanned if it is carried on with variable purposes and questioning procedures and the bias of the interviewer enters into the selection, recording and analysis of the data etc. In other words, the interview, as a tool of collecting data, should be used with caution as well as in a scientific manner and with scientific instruments as well. Interview may be said to be one of the most commonly used techniques of data collection in studies of human behaviour (Stouffer and Associates in their study entitled, the American Soldier). Thus, the interview method is quite an effective technique in collecting data in social science research.

Interview is adopted as a method to offset the drawbacks in a questionnaire. The subjects (people) are usually more willing to talk than to write. The interview is often superior to other data collection devices. The interviewer must possess the skill and talent of carrying out the interview. It is an important method because of the following factors:

1. The causal factors are being probed by the interviewer and determine the attitude and also the origin of the problem.
2. It is more appropriate to deal with illiterates and others who face difficulty in understanding the language
3. It is essential in diagnosis.
4. It helps in stimulating the interviewee for eliciting vital, valid and reliable response.
5. It permits, if necessary, small clues in complex material where the development is likely to proceed in any direction.
6. It provides an opportunity for the interviewer to explain information and to develop certain attitudes on the part of the interviewee. Such an opportunity is indispensable in the interview.
7. On the spot improvements, explanations, adjustments or variations are possible in collecting data because of its flexibility in character.

8. The subjects are more willing and less hesitant to talk than to write particularly on delicate, confidential matters, etc. In such context the interview method is more appropriate.

Type of Interview

Interview may be classified as structured interview and non-structured interview. In the former a detailed pre-planned schedule is used. The responses may simply be 'yes' or 'no'. This type of interview may involve use of open-ended questions with predetermined order. The interviewer is free to repeat the questions if the reply is not to the point. In the latter, interview is conducted with no pre-determined questions but which proceed on the basis of an interview guide. The interviewer has the freedom to ask supplementary questions, if he/she feels and has the freedom to record the response according to convenience. In other words, structured interview and non-structured interview respectively are called as controlled, guided or direct interview; and uncontrolled, unguided or indirect interview. Non-structured interview is again divided into (a) focused (b) non-directive interview, (c) depth interview and (d) repetitive interview.

To study the focus of attention on a given experience and its effects is termed as focused interview. For example, the impact of a film-show or TV programme on social behaviour. The behaviour is analyzed prior to the interview. The interviewer tries to focus attention to the aspect or a film seen or TV programme heard and tries to gauge the expressions and attitude, regarding the behaviour under study.
In non-directive interview, the interviewer's function is to encourage the respondent to talk freely about a given topic under a direct questioning or guidance. He/She should create an atmosphere in which the subject feels free to express without fear of dispute and without advice from the interviewer. The non-

directive interviewer's function is primarily to serve as a catalyst to a comprehensive expression of the subject's feelings and beliefs.

The depth of interview is intensive. Often there is a need for repetitive interview especially when the researcher wants respondents under varying conditions. This type of interview is particularly useful to trace the specific developments of a social action to know their influence upon the people.

Interview Guide

It is a common practice to prepare and make use of an interview guide for the purpose of interview. The interview guide is to be prepared after thorough study of the subject concerned and the respondent's behaviour. It would require detailed thinking and planning about the interview and preparing in a proper sequence the way the questions have to be asked by the interviewer. In this context, it is always advisable to prepare an interview guide. An Interview guide is a brief written document giving an outline of the different aspects to be studied. It forces the interviewer to think and plan the interview properly. Thus, the interview guide facilitates in gathering the information fully.

Preparing

The first step before the interview is actually to think over the problem properly. In this process all the relevant matters have to be chalked out duly and given the shape of questions. The arrangement of questions in a proper way is highly appreciable. After the preparatory plan is ready, the interviewer has to resume and locate the various respondents who may have to be interviewed. Selecting a sample of population in a scientific manner is very essential in social science research. Random sampling should be adopted for the purpose. Practicability is one of the characteristics of research which has to be kept in mind by the interviewer while covering the area under study. The cost factor should not be forgotten.

Developing Rapport with the Interviewee

Developing rapport with the interviewee is the second important step in the interview technique. Once the plan and the interview guide are ready, the interviewer will have to find out the address of the informants with their residential address. After locating the residence, the persons concerned would have to be contacted. For smooth conduct of the interview and thereupon getting more useful information may be well appreciated if the interviewer has rapport with the interviewee. This would also facilitate in choosing the time and place of the interview suitably.

The first approach to the interviewee should be made carefully so as to get his/ her confidence and cooperation. Generally, he/she may be greeted with a smile. If the interviewees are not convinced about the authenticity, they may refuse to oblige the interviewer. The correct answers and facts have to be obtained. Thus, the basic key to successful interviewing is to establish rapport with the interviewee to create a friendly atmosphere for the best response.

Carrying the Interview Forward

The interviewer would be required to carry the interview forward with the help of a interview guide and ask the questions after the rapport with the subject has been established. The interviewer should not interfere too much but should intervene to bring the interviewee back to the question if he/she is diverging from the subject. However, the interviewer will have to handle the situation carefully and apply his /her own judgement and expertise to carry out the interview and draw facts from the interviewee.

The interview is not a mere conversation but is more than that – it is an effort to gain the correct and desired information. The interview's manner should be friendly and courteous throughout the interview. Listening patiently with self-restraint is a difficult task but this has to be done to get right information. He/She should be a quiet listener but at the same time should be an analytic listener. The idea should be to put the interviewee at ease so that he/she will talk freely and fully. Prof. Fordynand Zweig found through his experience that **"**the success of his interview … depended primarily on his insight, friendliness, willingness to safeguard the interest and on what he calls flow of energy**".** Thus, the interviewer is not a debater but a reporter.

Recording the interview

Once the facts have been gathered, they must be properly recorded. To this conscious attention is to be paid otherwise the very purpose of interview would be jeopardized. The interviewer may remain more engrossed in understanding the replies and forget to record them; and often may forget to ask questions from the respondent as well.

Under the conditions mentioned above, it will be a problem for the analyst to tabulate and analyze the data if it is incomplete or something is missing. Even the results obtained may not be correct. The only means to avoid this, is to sit down to write them immediately just after completion of the interview when it would be fresh in his mind. If he does not act promptly, he may forget to record the relevant and important information. An alert student without an extraordinary memory can reproduce some 15 to 20 pages of material from the interview lasting one and half hours – if he/she goes immediately to record the same while the experience is still vivid.

Closing the interview

Closing the interview is the last step in the process of interview. It is a fact that often closing the interview is a difficult job than starting it. The interview has to see that he should not antagonize the interviewee and should not abruptly break the rapport developed during the time of interview. To make a good departure one should select the right time for closing the interview. He/she should, thus, make it quite natural to depart.

In the light of the above discussion covering some of the major types of interviews, each one has its own strong points as well as weaknesses and each is suited to a particular kind of situation. The overall merits and demerits of interview method are given below.

Merits

1. The personal interview compared to questionnaire yields good response.
2. The interview method yields a perfect sample because practically everyone can be reached by and can respond to the approach.
3. By the interview method selecting information is likely to be more correct compared to other techniques used for securing information. This is because the interviewer's presence on the spot clears up irrelevant answers by explaining the questions to the informant.
4. Supplementary information can be collected about the environment which is often of great value in interpreting results. Flexibility is a character of interview which means new questions may be posed if needed. Because of flexibility, the interview is a superior technique for exploration of areas for investigation.

5. Since the interviewer is present on the spot he can observe facial expressions, gestures etc. of the informant as also the surrounding pressures of the subject. This helps the interviewer to evaluate the meaning of the verbal replies given by the informant. For example, hesitation may give rise to doubt and the interviewer may then ask indirect questions to verify doubts.
6. Visual stimuli to which the informant may react can be presented.
7. The interview method ensures qualitative as well as quantitative responses compared to other methods.
8. The face to face contact provides enough stimulation to the respondent to probe deeper. Thus, the interviewer acts as a catalyst.
9. Adaptation to the level of education and ability of the person interviewed is possible. Therefore, it avoids misleading questions.
10. The interview is the right technique for collecting information about complex, emotionally laden subjects.
11. On the spot adjustment is possible that ensures rich material.

Demerits

1. In terms of cost, energy and time, the interview approach poses a heavy demand.
2. Collecting information both qualitative and quantitative requires thorough training and skill of interviewers and as also rigorous supervision over them, failing which data may be inaccurate.
3. If the interviewer has bias, the collected information may contain the background understanding of the situation by him. In other words, it is said that human equation may distort the returns.

Source : Research Methodology in Social Sciences – C.R.Reddy (1987), Daya Publishers, New Delhi

2. Observation Method

Observational technique is an important aspect of many action research studies and of case studies whether undertaken by participants or outsiders.

It is an important and extensively used method in social science research. It is a primary research instrument of gathering date in a more natural way. The validity and reliability of data are 'core' to any social science research, for which the exactitude and scientific temper avoiding bias may be possible through means of observation. In fact, it is not always possible to use only quantitative techniques. In all cases quantitative scientific methods may not be of much avail in research and observation may be the best method or at least best alternative. Observation technique is adopted for testing hypothesis where structured methods cannot be employed and pilot enquiries into new problem areas where the purpose is production of hypothesis rather their verification. Thus, observation is a perfect method of investigation and a popular one in gaining knowledge of research.

Observation is a careful and systematic watching of facts as they occur with regard to the cause and effect mutual relations. In every act of observation, there are two components – the object or what is observed and the subject or the observer. If one may observe one's own immediate experience, it would be subjective observation or introspection. If the observer becomes an entity apart from the thing observed, it would be objective observation or extrospection. In recording psychological information and social information, the introspection and extrospection respectively are appropriate methods. An observer may be a visiting stranger, a participant observer, an attentive listener and an eager learner.

In observation:

1. The use of senses – either to see or to hear – is involved.
2. The observer cannot observe anything and everything but only certain things that fall within an act of observation. The scientific observer may see all kind of things but takes notice only of those which are objects of his scientific study. Thus, observation is systematic and relative.
3. Research at certain specified objectives which are to be attained by the researcher. In other words, he/she should notice those facts or activities that relate to the enquiry. For this reason, observation is objective.
4. Observation is a direct outcome of dominant interests which serve in the course of investigation.
5. Watching the course of action is embodied with scientific temper. This means observation is efficient form the point of view of drawing conclusions qualitatively based on properly standardized tools. This quality should be converted into quantity.

Types of Observation

Observation may take place in the natural or real life setting or in a laboratory. The procedure adopted in observation may vary from one study to another depending upon the nature of data and purpose of study under investigation. However, the investigator must be sure about (a) what should be observed, (b) how the observation should be recorded, (c) how to insure accuracy of observation (d) what relationship should be obtained between the observer and the observed.

The classification of scientific observation broadly is as:

1. Participant/ non-participant observation
2. Controlled/ Uncontrolled observation
3. Structured / Unstructured observation

Participant observation

The credit goes to Prof. Edward Linderman for introducing participant / non participant observation in science research. Participation observation means an activity or a group or activities of a group in which the observer himself participates under investigation. The observer freely mixes with the activities of the group not as an outsider trying to have a critical study of what they do, but as a willing member trying to participate in what they do as a full fledged member of the group. For example an investigator observing rural and urban conditions in India may be able to gain if he merely stood-by and watched what is going on. Linderman is of the opinion that if one wished to know what the subject is really doing one should watch the subject and not ask him/her.

An important point that the observer should keep in mind is that he/she should desist from acquiring any special status but disguised in the group so that the members of the group are unaware of his/her presence. This helps access the information.

Merits

1. The observer by becoming as one of the members in the group gains insight into the behaviour of the group in natural settings.
2. The observer can gather more real and correct information as a member of the group than an outsider. Certain phenomena and behaviour are not open to observation from outside or from a distance; in such cases participant observation is the only method of investigation to collect information.

Demerits

1. The main limitation of participant observation is that the observer may identify himself/herself with the group and may develop emotional attachment. Such emotional identification may loose impartiality as well as objectivity.

2. Certain phenomena cannot be observed in a short time available to the observer.
3. The observer cannot cover a wider area and as such the conclusion reached from the observation of the small group or place may become doubtful.

Non-Participant Observation

Non-participant observation, in contradiction to the above, is characterized by a relative lack of participation by the observer in the life of the group that he is observing. In other words the researcher either observes the phenomena from a distance or while being present in the group but never participates in its activities. Here it should be observed that the observer is present in the group. Therefore, Goods and Hatt called it, quasi-participant observation than non-participant observation.

The difference between participant observation and non-participant observation is that in the former the observer becomes a member of the group and behaves as a member of the group and actively partakes in all activities. In the latter, though the observer associates himself with the group physically, he keeps aloof in its activities and observes the phenomena as it occurs passively.

Merits:

1. In non-participant observation the observer is unattached with the activities of the group so that impartiality and objectivity can be maintained.
2. As he/she maintains cordial relations with the member of the group so will have access to the entire information.
3. The observer being a stranger is less involved emotionally which is likely to result in the ideals of objectivity and real phenomena for analysis.

De-merits:

1. The observer fails to appreciate the significance of actions and activities as he/she cannot view them merely a member. This lack of appreciation may make some of the findings biased in the background of his/her own understanding
2. The observer may not have access to informal organizations and as such cannot understand the whole of the phenomena.
3. The behaviour of the members of the group may get altered during the presence of the observer. Prof. Wirth says that the presence of an observer even merely as one extra person in the interacting situation, will lead to distortion.

Controlled Observation

For a systematic collection of data and for verification of hypothesis, control is imposed on the observer or on the object. Such controls increase precision, reduce bias, ensure reliability, systematize procedure and increase objectivity. Observation is carried according to a plan. Sometimes controls are imposed both on the phenomena and on the observer. The former are laboratory type of experiments. The following are a few control devices used for the purpose:

1. Preparation of a detailed observational plan which helps the observer in systematically making it more standardized.
2. The use of mechanical appliances like photos, films, tape-recorders etc. aids for proper observation and objectivity.
3. The use of socio-economic methods render qualitative observations to mathematically precise and thus produce greater objectivity in the observation as well as analysis.
4. The control over the bias of the observer may be exercised through team observation. The individual observer is likely to commit errors of observation and interpretation. But a team of persons can never be wrong.

Uncontrolled Observation

In this method, observation is made in the natural environment. P.V.Young calls this type of observation as unaided observation. The observer does not plan his/her study in advance. Most of the situations are studied in some uncontrolled setting as they occur rather than in artificial surroundings created through controls.

Uncontrolled observation enables first hand acquisition of knowledge about the social phenomena which implies that this technique is mostly applicable to socio-cultural problems.

Structured observation

In this method of observation, a careful definition of categories under which the information is to be recorded is needed. Structured observation is used greatly in studies designed to provide systematic description or to test casual hypothesis.

Unstructured Observation

Unstructured observation represents the ideal contrast to structured observation characteristics such as a careful definition of the units to be observed, information to be recorded, the selection of pertinent data for observation and standardization of conditions for observation. The observer can ease himself into the field at an appropriate pace.

Validity of Observation:

For ensuring the validity of observation, the following points must be fulfilled. They are:

1. The actual observations should be made of the on-the-job activity.
2. The aims and objectivities of activity must be known to the observer.

3. The point on which the judgement to be made by the observer must be defined clearly.
4. Reporting the observed information should be accurate.

In order to make observation more and more reliable and valuable for the investigation, the observer must qualify himself as an expert. Symonds states the essentials of good observation which are: (a) good eyesight, (b) alertness, (c) the ability to estimate, (d) the ability to discriminate, (e) good physical condition, (f) an immediate record, (g) good perception, (h) freedom from preconceptions, (i) emotional disinterest. To be an expert, the observer should possess efficient sense organs; be able to estimate quickly and accurately; must be alert to observe several things in detail simultaneously; must control the effects of his emotional attitude and must be able to record immediately and accurately the results of his observation.

Source : Research Methodology in Social Sciences – C. R. Reddy (1987) Daya Publishers, New Delhi.

3. Focus Group Discussion

Introduction

Focus group are group discussions in which about eight to ten people are gathered together to discuss a topic of interest. The discussion is guided by a group leader (called a moderator) who asks questions and tries to help the group have a natural and free conversation with each other.

Focus groups are aimed at encouraging participants to talk with each other, rather than answer questions directly to the moderator. The group interaction of focus groups is important because it gives us some understanding of how the people are thinking about the topic.

The questions asked of the group area usually “focused”. By this we mean that they focus on one or two main topics, to get a really detailed idea about how the people think about the area of interest. They are also focused because participants of any focus group usually share common characteristics, such as age, sex, educational background, religion, or something directly related to the topic being studied. This encourages the group to speak freely.

Focus groups can find out about people’s feelings, attitudes and opinions about a topic of interest. They examine only one or two topics in great detail, in an effort to really understand why people think or behave the way they do.

Knowledge and skills required for Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

The knowledge and skills required for FGD are mentioned below.

- Roles of the team. General personal characteristics of the moderator.
- Preparation for focus group sessions.
- Activities for reception of participants.
- Communication and co-ordination with the team.
- Beginning the focus group.
- Asking questions.
- Encouraging and controlling the discussion.
- Observing for non-verbal messages.
- Closing the sessions.
- The debrief.

Moderator

The moderator is the discussion leader. It is a very demanding job, but with practice and a little confidence, it can be performed well. The moderator is in control of the session and is responsible for the direction that the focus group takes.

The moderator is provided with a question-line (or question guide) that will provide the direction for asking questions to obtain the information of interest to the project. The moderator must be familiar with all the objectives of the study, as this is essential to explore responses that are given during the focus group and may not be expected by the planning team. To demonstrate this, say a participant gave an answer to a question that was not expected by the team. It may prove to be very important to the main objectives, but if the moderator is not familiar with the purpose of the study he or she may brush over the answer and miss the opportunity to explore something relevant.

Observer

The observer has several functions. The main task is to observe the session and to take notes. If we are relying only on the observer's notes, then we will need to get as close to catching every response as we can. On the other hand if the session is being tape recorded, then less detail of the session is required.

In addition to noting responses, the observer is also looking at any nonverbal sign or body language that the group demonstrates. This can tell a lot about how the group feels about the topic under discussion as well as give some indication of how many people hold the same idea. Sometimes people may nod their head in agreement or shake their head in disagreement without actually saying anything. Observing these signs can add a lot to the written notes of the responses.

The observer also acts as a "back-up" moderator. He or she can quietly pass notes to the moderator to point out any major question not asked, any area that could be followed up, or anything they think may help.

The observer is also responsible for any equipment that is being used such as tape recorders or cameras.

Assistants

If project permits, it can be useful to have focus group assistants. These team members are used to help the moderator and observer run smooth focus group. They are particularly useful in keeping down crowds during sessions, minding the children of participants and generally helping to host the session. They can easily be recruited from the community for a particular session. They need not have any training or understanding or the project.

If the team member or researcher who wants the final control over the discussion does not speak the language of the participants, then translators ate required to assist in the session. It should be noted that direct translation of each response to the moderator by interrupting the discussion is not desirable. For this reason, where translation is required, it is necessary to have a four member team. For this, it is necessary to have two moderators, an observer and a translator.

Moderator translator

This role is one where a translator is trained to be the session moderator, but is directed to some degree by a controlling moderator. The moderator translator will conduct the session with the help of the prepared question guide. They will pose the questions and encourage the discussion, but should only ask question previously discussed by the team, or those that are included on the question guide. If the moderator translator thinks that a response should be explored, they will need to check with the controlling moderator first. They will need to be very familiar with the study objectives, and although they are directed by the controlling moderator, they should have the skills to conduct the session alone. The only difference is the controlling moderator will have the final say about what direction the discussion will take. In more formal research projects, the team member who is responsible for the project mat need to have direct control over the focus group session. In other projects, the team leader or coordinator may want to moderate the sessions themselves, but may be restricted by language.

Controlling Moderator

This member of the team has the final say about what questions are added or dropped from the question guide. They should allow the moderator translator a reasonable amount of freedom in leading the discussion. If the controlling moderator interrupts the discussion too frequently, then it will disrupt the flow of the session. This moderator should simply listen and observe, and interrupt only when a new line of questioning that has not previously been discussed by the team is necessary.

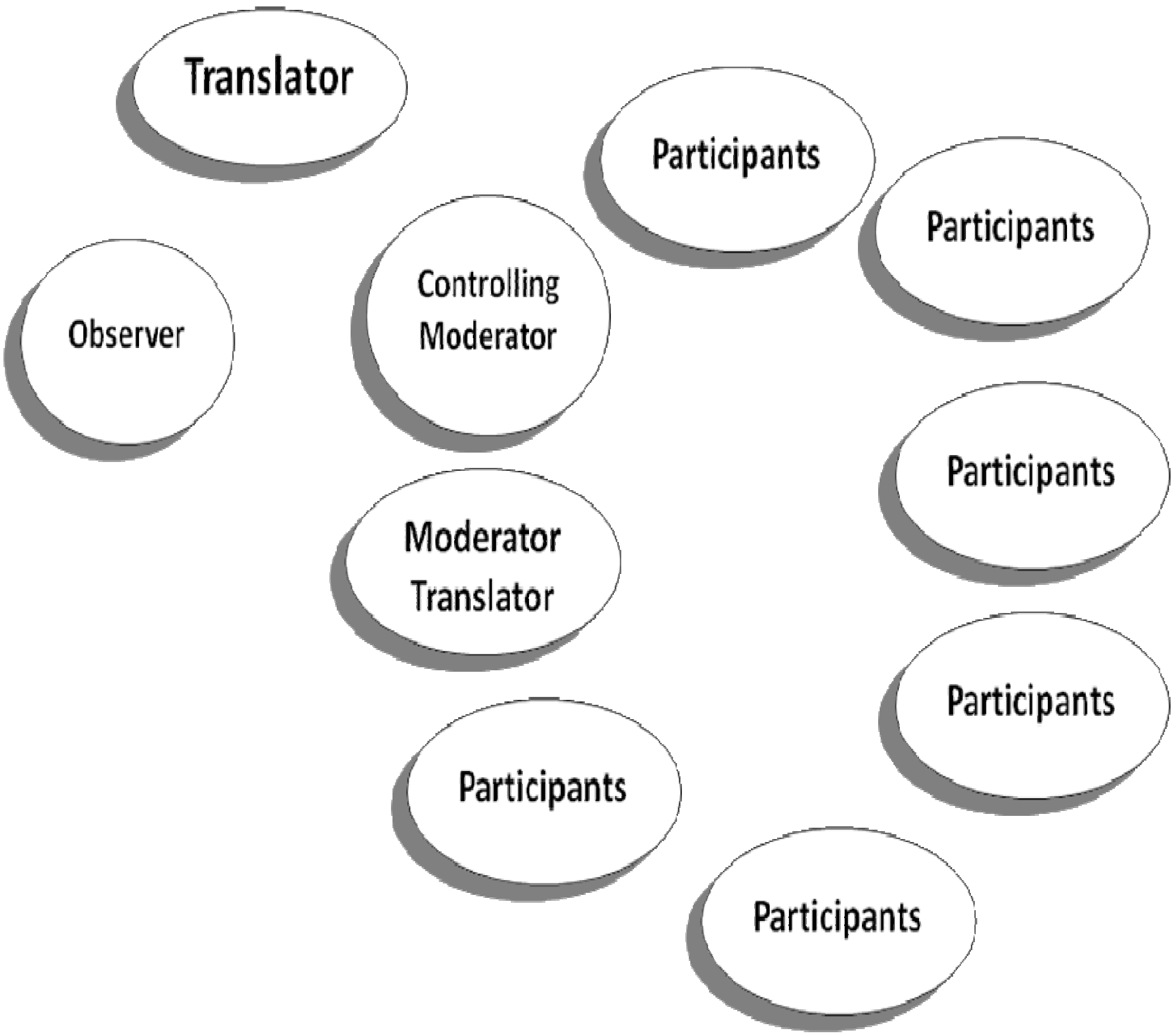
Translator

The translator is expected to keep both the controlling moderator and the observer informed of the entire sessions. The translator should aim to provide the other team members with a summary translation of each response by each participant. It is not possible to provide a full and direct translation for such a long period. It is also necessary to translate what the assistant moderator is saying in order to aid the overall understanding of the session.

Observer

The role of the observer for translator- assisted sessions is essentially the same as that in the single language sessions. They are there to look, listen and take notes. In this case, the observer will be noting responses as they are translated by the translator. These notes will be used in the debrief after the focus group discussion is over. The debrief checks on the direction of the focus group and quality of the information gained. The notes are also important to the development of future question guides for further focus groups. For these reasons it is extremely important that the translation is as accurate as possible.

Seating arrangements for translator assisted focus groups (Dawson et al.1991)



Communication and co-ordination with team members

There are clear responsibilities for all members of the team. It should also be apparent that a high level of communication and co-ordination is required to achieve results. There will always be times when some team members will feel that the session is sliding out of control. The main point here is to understand the roles and needs of your team members and to be understanding when problems arise.

The other aspect of communication is translation where you are working in a second language. It is really important that the team knows what is going on at all times. If you are losing track of what is going on, it is better to stop the session than for the translator to try to keep pace and to provide the moderator or observer with an inaccurate translation.

Good communication also involves honest and helpful feedback of the session during the debrief. You will be expected to discuss any difficulties you face as soon as they arise.

Personal characteristics of the moderator

There are many personal characteristics of the moderator that can aid in producing excellent results from focus groups.

-**Listening skills.** Being a good listener is a good skill to develop. For focus groups, it is particularly important. You need to be able to listen to what the participants are telling you, so you can summarise comments and repeat them back to the participants to check understanding; in addition it is only possible to gain information from the group if the moderator is not talking too much!

It is the role of the moderator to encourage the group to speak, rather than talk throughout the discussion. However, it is very easy to do this, especially if you are anxious about the success of the discussion. In addition, the moderator will not be taking many notes and therefore close attention to the discussion is necessary. You will need to be able to remember the comments and then relate them somehow to the nest question, and to ask follow-up questions on the basis of what people say.

Asking good quality follow-up questions is only possible if you are listening carefully to the participants' comments and really trying to think about what they mean. The skill of good listening requires practice! One can practice this by listening to a group conversation and trying to remember the main points.

- **Leadership skills.** The role of the moderator is also that of a leader. Leadership does not mean taking over the group, but directing the discussion. On the other hand, you do not want the group to lead you. If this occurs you will not have time to get the information you need to meet the needs of the research project.

- **Relationship with the participants.** In order to encourage discussion, participants in focus groups need to be able to communicate with you comfortably. It is important to try to understand what the participants are saying and what it really means to them, being sincere; learning about the community should be felt by the group. Good moderators are very sensitive to the needs of the community in which they work, and should be as familiar as possible with important aspects of the local culture. Your tone of voice could tell the participants many things without you actually saying anything wrong! Where it is necessary to ask further questions so as to gain more information, this must be done in the most gentle and friendly way possible.

It is also extremely important not to be judgemental about any response you hear. People will not talk freely if they think they are being judged, if they feel that you disagree with them, or if they feel that they are giving the "wrong answers". There are no right or wrong answers in focus groups.

- Patience and flexibility. Sometimes focus groups do not go as planned. This can occur by interruptions of many kinds. It helps to try to think of what these interruptions might be, but sometimes the unexpected happens. More people turn up, the group doesn't work well together. Some groups may not talk much or, at first not even arrive! If things happen that you cannot control, then you need to accept whatever happens. Always keep your sense of humour.

- Observation skills. As well as listening to the participant's responses it will also be necessary to watch for anything that could indicate boredom, anxiety, tiredness, or impatience. If this occurs, be prepared to fix any problems swiftly.

As well - Clothing It is always a good idea to find out how the local people would expect you to dress. If you are working in very poor communities you will not be well accepted in very expensive clothes. This could well distance you from the local people. On the other hand, some communities would expect a certain standard of dress, particularly if you represent a district or provincial health office. Find out from local staff the best thing to wear in the field.

-Mental preparation. As the focus group is an activity that requires intense concentration for a one to two hour period, it is important that the moderator is mentally alert and free from anxieties or worries. For the period of the study that includes focus groups, being well rested will assist in your ability to concentrate.
Another factor influencing the success of the focus group is your ability to conduct a smooth and natural conversation, and it will be necessary for you to memorise the questions that will be asked. You will always have a copy of them in front of you but they should only be glanced at to remind you what the next question should be or what small prompting questions to use to encourage conversation.

Focus group discussion checklist

Any activity that requires many activities, equipment and field visits needs to be well planned. Although the majority of plans have been made, it will always be necessary to make sure that you are leaving for the field with everything necessary to conduct the focus group as successfully as possible. You should prepare a checklist to go through before you leave for the field for every focus group. Any member of the team can be responsible to check that everything is prepared and available. In your list include all the paper work, necessary equipment and lists of participants.

4. Case Study

Case study is termed as a method, a technique, an approach to social reality and a mode of organizing data in terms of some chosen units. The case study method is a popular form of qualitative analysis and involves complete observation of a social unit, whether it is a person, a family, an institution, a cultural group or even the entire community. It is a method of study in depth. The case study places more emphasis on the full analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their interrelation. It deals with the processes that take place and their interrelationship. Thus, case study is essentially an intensive investigation of the particular unit under consideration. The objective of the case study method is to locate the factors that account for the behavior -patterns of the given unit as an integrated totality.

According to Pauline V. Young, case study is "a comprehensive study of a social unit, be that unit a person, a group, a social institution, a district or a community." Thus, case study method is a form of qualitative analysis wherein careful and complete observation of an individual or a situation or an institution is done ; efforts are made to study each and every aspect of the unit in detail and then generalization and inferences are drawn. Thus each situation, whether it is an entire life cycle or a particular process of the cycle, forms part of the case study.

Case study is a method of organizing social data so as to preserve the unitary character of the social object being studied. It is an approach which views any social unit as a whole – *Goode and Hatt.*

Case study method may be defined as a small inclusive and intensive study of an individual in which the investigator brings to bear all the skills and methods or as a systematic gathering of enough information about a person to permit one to understand how he/she functions as a unit of society - *Yang Hsin Pao*

The case study is a form of qualitative analysis involving the very careful and complete observation of a person, a situation or an institution- Biesanz and Biesanz.

A case is a factual description of events that actually happened at some point in the past.

Why case study

- to improve practice
- to forge close links between the academic and the practical
- to offer practitioners suggestions about appropriate ways to act
- to inform practitioners about a single case as a way of understanding others (that is, generalization)

The attraction of case study

- it resembles detective work
- or investigative journalism
- the methods used to investigate the case will relate closely to the nature of the case

Objectives of Case Method

- Helps one to acquire the skills of putting textbook knowledge about management into practice. Managers succeed not so much because of what they know but because of what they do.
- Gets one out of the habit of being a receiver of facts, concepts and techniques and get into the habit of diagnosing problems, analyzing and evaluating alternatives, and formulating workable plans of action.
- Trains to work our answers and solutions for ourselves, as opposed to relying upon the teacher/counselor or a textbook.
- Provides exposure to a range of organizations and managerial situations (which might take a lifetime to experience personally), thus offering a basis for comparison.

Characteristics of a Case Study

1. It should create interest while reading and thus attract attention of the participants.
2. Case study is a deep, detailed and intensive study of a social unit.
3. It is a method of qualitative analysis.
4. It is a comprehensive study
5. Real life sample
6. All the variables and traits are linked with one another
7. It aims at studying everything about something, rather than something about everything.
8. Unit of study may be an individual, a family, an institution, a cultural group or an entire community.
9. Case study covers sufficiently wide cycle of time. According to P.V.Young, case data may be gathered exhaustively on the entire cycle of a social unit or a definite section of it.
10. As the study is more detailed and extends over a wider expanse of time, the number of units has to be small. The number may vary from a single unit to a few dozen or even a few hundred.

There are different kinds of case studies. Four types of case studies are: Illustrative (description of events); exploratory (investigative); cumulative (collective information comparisons) and critical (examine a particular subject with cause and effect outcomes).

Merits of a Case:

- Close to field realities
- Digs out specific facts
- Helps take decisions on specific situations

- Provides data in depth
- Develops skills in appraising situations

Case studies provide an excellent opportunity for triangulation; that is, using a number of research methods to complement and confirm findings. For instance, using observation, interviews and questionnaire.

Organizing/writing the case

Structuring in a narrative style: Narrative style lays out a sequence of events that develop the story. It covers:

- What happened
- Who were involved
- When it happened
- Why it happened
- How it happened (processes involved)

A narrative writing should be organized chronologically, in the order in which the events occur.

- **Problem statement / key issues :** Start with a statement of the problem / key management issues you have identified through your analysis. We have to concentrate on the critical issues facing the case

- **Supporting argument:** Sufficient explanation should be given why this is the key issue (s). This conclusion should be carried out with the help of the data / information gathered and comparing it.

- **Alternative strategies:** Lay out the alternative strategies available to the organization. Three or four alternative strategies are enough. With the help of theoretical models or information show why these strategies are viable by explaining the cost and benefit of each strategy proposed.

- **Recommendations:** Explain the recommendation suggested. This recommendation should emanate from our earlier discussion of the case.

- **Implementation plan:** Present an implementation plan for the recommended strategy.

A Case Study should have Objectivity, Clarity in purpose, Use real names, events and written in sequence of time.

References:

- *Hayes, Denis (2006). Case study. University of Plymouth*

- *Inside story- process documentation: experiences from EMOWERS Project co funded by European MEDA water programme.*

- *Mustafa A (2008). Case study method and practice, research and management approaches. Atlantic publishers and distributors.*

5. Success Story

What is a success story?

A success story shows Extension making a difference in people's lives. More than a list of events or activities, it describes a positive change and shows how that change benefits the people of Wisconsin. A good success story uses evidence from evaluation to show the value of Extension.

You can write a success story about an entire program or part of a program that is particularly noteworthy and significant. It may be about an innovation, emergency response or outstanding effort. The program may be complete or in an earlier stage of development but with important accomplishments to describe. You could even write a success story several years after a program's completion when you have collected evidence of long-term impact. For a multi-year initiative, you may write a series of success stories that describe significant but different changes that occur over the years.

Whatever you choose to write about, your story should show Extension making Wisconsin a better place to live – for individuals, families, organizations, businesses, local governments and communities.

What goes into a success story: SRRE

Situation: **What prompted the program?**

Response: **How did Extension respond?** (inputs and outputs)

Results: **Who benefited? What resulted?** (outcomes)

Evidence: **What's the evidence**? (evaluation)

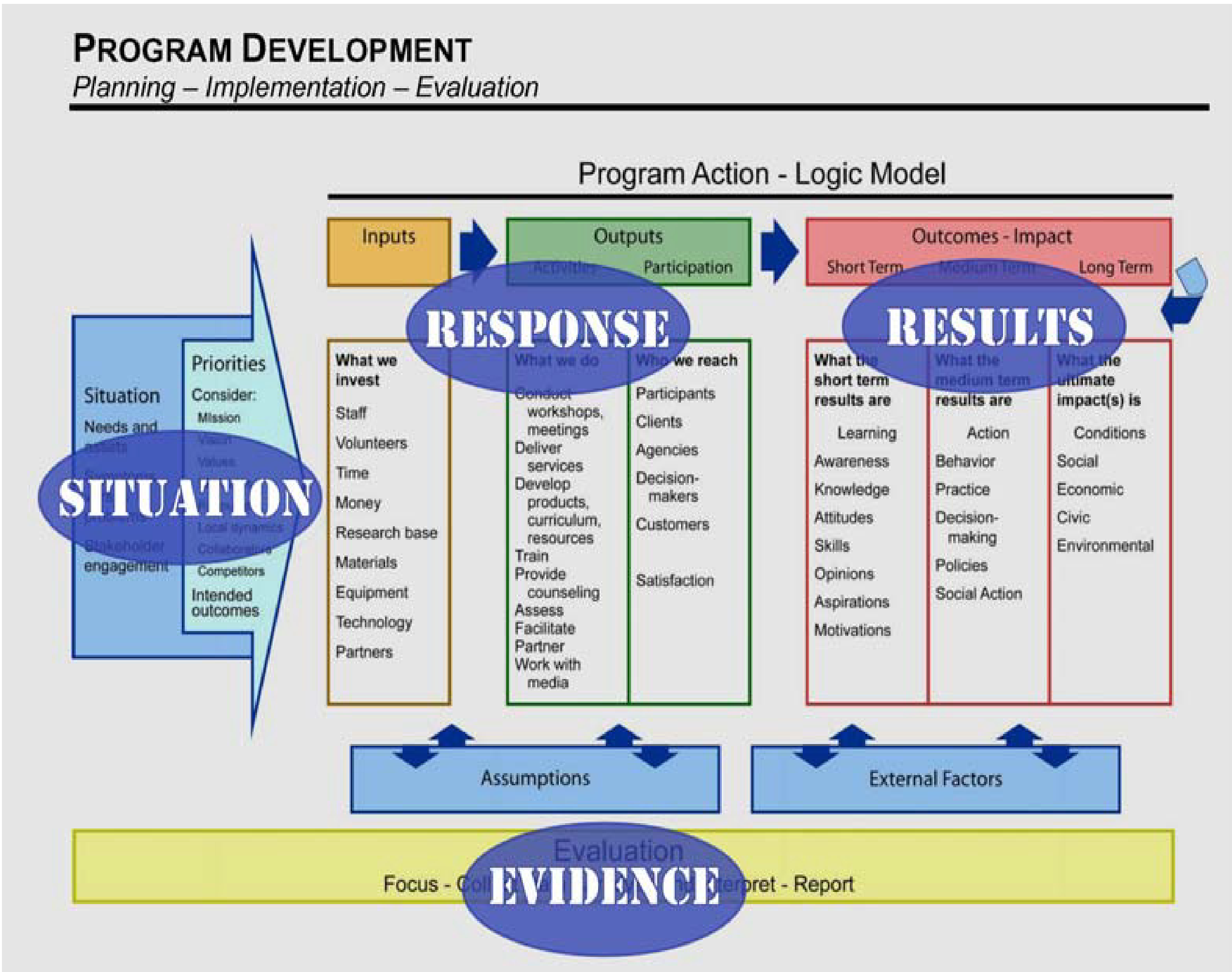
Situation: Tell why Extension started the program. What problem, issue or concern needed addressing? Who cares? Who are the key stakeholders? The opening should make the case for why Extension stepped in.

Response: Describe Extension's response including inputs (staff, funding, volunteers, research, expertise) and outputs. Outputs include activities (teaching, facilitation, product development) and people reached (number of people and demographics). Describe partnerships and external funding sources. Be sure to spell out Extension's role in programming. Although we often work with other agencies and teams, it's important to emphasize Extension's contribution. See below for "" How do you write a success story for a collaborative program?

Results: Use quantitative and qualitative data to describe important outcomes (changes and benefits) achieved as a result of Extension's response. Who benefited and how? Outcomes include changes in knowledge, skills, motivation, behavior, decision making, practices, policies, social action, social, economic and environmental conditions. Describe outcomes in terms of value or meaning. For example, "Thirty participants increased their knowledge of safe food-handling practices (outcome). This should lead to better food-handling practices and fewer food-borne illnesses" (expected value). In other words, help the reader understand the meaning behind the change. Link to existing research, if possible, and include future plans or lessons learned based on results.

Evidence: Briefly describe how you evaluated the program to attain the reported evidence. Include the data collection method (pre- or post-test surveys, interviews, testimonials), sample (number and how selected), response rate and the date of data collection. Remember – a good success story depends on credible information.

SRRE reflects UW-Extension’s program development model as seen in the following graphic:



How do you write a success story for a collaborative program?
Often we work with others as we conduct programs. Partnering and collaboration are part of how we do Extension work. You may wonder how you can take credit or write a success story when a project involves teamwork. In any project it’s important to document your achievements, contributions and role in a collaborative effort. When you write a success story, describe your role in the “response” section. Tell what you did as part of the total effort. It’s important for readers to understand Extension’s role and how that role contributes to the results.

Why write success stories ?

◇ To show accountability for public funds

◇ To verify that we are using resources to make a positive difference in people's lives

◇ To share successes so individuals in and out of Extension can learn from our results

◇ To spread the word about Extension as a valuable resource

◇ To show that numbers alone don't tell the whole story of Extension

◇ To reflect and learn from our work

◇ To practice good scholarship

How are success stories used?

Administrators, program leaders, communications specialists, Extension legislative liaisons and Extension staff around the state periodically review success stories on the Planning and Reporting System. The following sections list a few of the ways these individuals use success stories in their everyday work.

What makes a good success story?

A good success story:

- Describes results that are valued by clients
- Contains compelling, significant facts
- Catches your attention
- Tells who benefits
- Answers: "So what?"
- Spells out Extension's role in achieving results
- Is easy to read and understand
- Identifies key partners and funders

When do you submit success stories?

- When you have something significant to report and evaluation data to back it up
- When you are proud of a program or initiative
- On an ongoing basis – don't wait until the end of the year

Writing tips

It's one thing to have a good story to tell. It's another to write it so that people will want to read it. Use the following tips and many resources on the Internet for help in writing your success stories.

- Use active voice.
  Example: Passive: Wells were tested by 80 percent of the participants.
  Active: Eighty percent of the participants tested their wells.
- Use short, complete sentences.
- Be concise.
- Choose simple words.
- Avoid jargon.
- Avoid acronyms.
- Use your name, program name or county name rather than "this agent," "Extension" or "I."
- Write in paragraph style in complete sentences.

Ask your communications specialist for help.

Success story checklist

Use the success story checklist at the end of this document to check your success story.

Ask a colleague or communications specialist to review your success story before copying it to the Planning and Results System.

Questions and answers

1. How do I write success stories on the same program over consecutive years?

   Answer: When you have significant results in a multi-year program, report the new results. You may want to identify stories by date, for example, "Lakeshore Management 2003," "Lakeshore Management 2004."

2. Much of my programming is multi-year in nature; there isn't a neat relationship between what I do in a given year and what results. In fact, results may not appear for several years. How do I report this?

Answer: Even though you may engage in multiple activities that interact and evolve over time, keep track of the resources and series of events or activities that make up an initiative or program. These resources and events are inputs and outputs that lead to outcomes. Document outcomes when they occur and link them to the inputs and outputs that occurred previously.

3. Can I include photos, graphics or illustrations?

   Answer: Yes

4. Can I write a success story that spans more than one year?

   Answer: Yes

5. How should I write about events or activities that don't constitute a success story?

   Answer: Consider writing an impact statement, developing a news story with your communications specialist, or sharing the event in a newsletter, committee report or on your office bulletin board.

6. My success story is too long for the Planning and Reporting System. What should I do?

   Answer: Edit. Edit. Edit. Keep the vital information. Use short sentences and simple words.

7. Can I Write a success story about one person ?

   Answer: Extension programs usually target more than one person. However, showing how an Extension program benefits one individual gives a story human interest and often makes compelling reading. A single testimonial doesn't constitute a success story; however, describing the personal impact of an Extension program adds powerful evidence of a program's potential value.

Success Story Template

The following formatting features may also be considered while writing a success story'

- Time New Roman, 12 point
- Singh space, double space between paragraphs
- Left justify all headers and text
- Bold headers
- 1.5-inch margins
- Short paragraphs, active tense, complete sentences

Title:
(State direct title covering meaning and scope of the issue without ambiguity)

Situation :

(Clearly describe an important issue or concern or problem; state why extension's involvement is appropriate)

Response :

(Spell out extension's response/ contribution in the programme; describe role and contribution of stakeholder and partnerships; identify participants; numbers and demographics of individuals or communities that were reached; state the plan of action; include who and how many were reached).

Results :

(State who benefited; give numbers or narrative data to described important outcomes; report how many farmers benefited and how they benefited; link story to research and state future plans based on results).

Evidence / Evaluation :

(Describe data collection methods; response rate and when data were collected).

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