

Learning to Interview: An Autoethnographic Account of Doctoral Training

PENGFEI ZHAO*

RICHARD WATSON TODD

School of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Thailand

*Corresponding author email: zhaopengfei2014tr@gmail.com

Article information	Abstract
Article history: Received: 9 Sep 2024 Last revised: 26 Apr 2026 Accepted: 26 Apr 2026 Available online: 29 Apr 2026	<i>This autoethnographic study traces the development of a PhD candidate from a novice to a more competent qualitative interviewer, with a specific focus on research interviewing. Drawing on 11 pilot interviews, reflective journals, and supervisory feedback, it uses a critical incident approach to examine how interviewing skills, emotions, and reflexivity co-evolved. The study proposes a two-step, three-stage framework for understanding novice development, centered on grounding and integration across interview style, study design, and micro-techniques. The findings show that interviewer learning is nonlinear and cyclical, with an emotional trajectory that moves from anxiety toward agency. Effective interviewing depends on deep listening and rapport building, and reflexive adaptation improves interactional decisions and data quality. The study contributes to qualitative methodology by reinforcing the researcher-as-instrument perspective, demonstrating how critical incident autoethnography can illuminate interviewer development, and offering training implications for doctoral education. These implications include scaffolded rehearsal, guided reflection, supervised practice, and structured emotional support. Overall, the study provides a learner-centered roadmap for doctoral training and qualitative interviewing pedagogy.</i>
Keywords: Interview techniques Autoethnography Mentorship Doctoral training	

INTRODUCTION

Qualitative interviewing is a core method in social sciences because it can elicit lived experience and situated meaning. It is not a simple question-and-answer exchange, but an interactional process in which interviewer and participant co-construct knowledge (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Shaban & Wilkerson, 2019). The interviewer's skill, judgment, and reflexivity therefore substantially shape the quality of interview data. Methodological literature offers rich guidance on interviewing techniques, including avoiding leading questions, building rapport, and practicing attentive listening (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Roulston, 2010; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). However, this literature tends to focus on the capacities expected of competent interviewers.

This paper was specially selected to be published from the 5th Doing Research in Applied Linguistics (DRAL 5) International Conference that was run from 5 to 7 September 2024 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Less is known about how novice interviewers develop these capacities. Systematic accounts remain limited to the concrete difficulties beginners face, how they navigate anxiety and uncertainty, and which formative moments most effectively support their development as qualitative interviewers (Haughton, 2023; Kalman, 2019). This gap is especially important in doctoral training, where many researchers conduct interviews for the first time while also negotiating researcher identity, reflexivity, and confidence. Addressing this gap matters for strengthening interviewer education and for understanding how interviewing competence develops through practice, feedback, and emotional support.

This study documents and critically examines the development of a novice PhD candidate, the first author, as a qualitative interviewer. Using an autoethnographic design informed by critical incident analysis, it focuses on key moments in my learning process. The study is guided by two research questions:

- (1) How does a novice PhD candidate learn to conduct qualitative interviews effectively?
- (2) Which critical incidents shape and influence this learning process?

The study contributes to methodological discussions of the researcher-as-instrument perspective by showing how interviewing competence develops iteratively through practice, feedback, and reflexive engagement. It also demonstrates how autoethnography and critical incident analysis can be combined to examine researcher development in a rigorous and situated way. Practically, the study offers learner-centered insights for interviewer training. These include mock interviews, reflective journaling, supervised practice, and structured emotional support. Empirically, the analysis draws on pilot interview transcripts, reflective journals, and supervisory meeting notes. Trustworthiness is supported through reflexive accounting, analytic transparency, and ethical safeguards appropriate to autoethnographic inquiry.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

Qualitative interviews in social science research

Interviews occupy a central place in social science research because they allow researchers to explore how people interpret experiences, construct meanings, and make sense of their social worlds (Lune & Berg, 2017; Patton, 2014). They are especially valuable in studies of lived experience, beliefs, professional practice, identity formation, and educational or social contexts where meaning is situated and context-dependent.

In qualitative inquiry, interviews are not merely tools for collecting information, but interactional events in which knowledge is produced through dialogue between interviewer and participant. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) describe the interview as an “inter-view,” while Rubin and Rubin (2005) emphasize responsiveness, trust, and careful listening. From this perspective, data quality depends not only on the interview guide, but also on the interviewer’s ability to build rapport, listen actively, probe sensitively, and adapt to the flow of conversation.

Interviewer competence is therefore particularly important. A well-designed guide alone cannot guarantee rich data if the interviewer asks leading questions, interrupts too quickly, or fails to follow participants' meanings. Conversely, attentive listening, neutral follow-up questions, strategic silence, and flexible sequencing can encourage deeper reflection and fuller responses (Seidman, 2006). Interviewing is thus a learned practice requiring reflexivity and ongoing adjustment (Roulston, 2010).

For novice researchers, especially doctoral students, learning to interview involves technical, relational, and emotional demands. Beginners must learn to design questions, manage silence, respond to unexpected answers, maintain ethical sensitivity, and develop confidence while centering the participant's voice (Haughton, 2023; Kalman, 2019; Roulston et al., 2025). These demands make novice interviewer development an important methodological issue. The present study addresses this issue by examining how one doctoral researcher developed interviewing skills through practice, reflection, and supervisory feedback.

Autoethnography in social science research

Autoethnography is an established qualitative approach in social science research, particularly where the researcher's own experience offers insight into broader cultural, educational, or professional issues. It combines autobiography and ethnography. The "auto" refers to personal experience, while "ethnography" interprets that experience in relation to wider social and cultural contexts (Chang, 2008; Ellis et al., 2011). Autoethnography is therefore not simply personal storytelling, but an analytic and reflexive practice in which the self becomes both a source of data and a site of inquiry.

In practice, autoethnographic research involves the systematic collection and analysis of personal experience. Researchers may draw on reflective journals, field notes, memories, documents, conversations, or other personal and professional materials (Chang, 2008; Ellis et al., 2011). These sources can then be examined through reflexive writing, narrative or thematic analysis, and, where appropriate, critical incident analysis (Watkins et al., 2022). The aim is to connect lived experience with scholarly interpretation by showing how moments of uncertainty, learning, or change relate to broader methodological, institutional, or cultural questions.

A key benefit of autoethnography is that it makes visible dimensions of research and professional practice that are often hidden in conventional accounts, such as emotions, doubts, tacit decisions, identity negotiations, and moments of vulnerability. This makes it useful for studying professional development, doctoral learning, and researcher reflexivity. For example, Koay (2023) used autoethnography to examine teacher professional development and reflective learning, while Chiu (2025) explored how a doctoral student's lived research experiences cultivated reflexivity through communities of practice. These studies demonstrate the value of autoethnography for examining how professional and scholarly identities are formed through lived experience and reflection.

For the present study, autoethnography is appropriate because my learning to conduct qualitative interviews involved technical improvement, emotional adjustment, emerging

researcher identity, and reflexive awareness. By treating my own learning journey as an object of systematic inquiry, this study examines how interviewing competence develops through practice, reflection, and supervisory feedback. In doing so, it links a personal doctoral training experience to broader concerns in qualitative research pedagogy and novice interviewer development.

Researcher positionality

I am a Chinese PhD student in Thailand with over five years of experience teaching Chinese in Thai educational contexts. I hold bachelor's and master's degrees in language education. This background shaped my access to participants, my sensitivity to language-teaching experiences, and my awareness of how familiarity, language choice, and cultural positioning could influence interview interactions. My co-author, who is also my PhD supervisor, is an experienced qualitative researcher and provided methodological mentorship throughout this project.

At the outset of my doctoral work, I needed to collect interview data for my thesis but had little prior experience conducting research interviews. With my supervisor's encouragement, I conducted a series of pilot interviews to build my skills and confidence. These interviews were initially designed as training exercises rather than for a formal study. They gave me opportunities to practice interviewing techniques, reflect on my difficulties, and identify what worked for me as a novice interviewer. This study documents that developmental process by examining the experiences, challenges, and reflexive practices that shaped my learning.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts an autoethnographic and reflective design to examine my learning journey as a novice qualitative interviewer. Rather than treating this journey as anecdotal, I analyze it as the primary site of inquiry through which issues of interviewing competence, reflexivity, and doctoral training can be explored. I serve as both the researcher and the subject of inquiry, drawing on first-person reflection while grounding my interpretations in interview transcripts, reflective journals, and supervisory feedback.

To organize this account analytically, I use a critical-incident approach to foreground the events, turning points, and learning moments that shaped my development as an interviewer. Importantly, "critical" in this context does not necessarily refer to a dramatic or disruptive event, but to any moment that becomes especially relevant or formative through reflection (Watkins et al., 2022). Thus, even a minor mishap, an awkward pause, or a brief moment of insight during an interview can be treated as a critical incident if it prompted a meaningful shift in my understanding or practice.

The design was emergent and became explicit only in retrospect. I initially conducted 11 pilot interviews as informal learning exercises, without intending to analyze them as research data. Their original purpose was to help me practice interviewing techniques, refine my confidence, and prepare for doctoral data collection. After completing the pilots, however, I recognized

their analytic potential for examining interviewer development and subsequently conceptualized the present study. This adaptive, experience-led trajectory aligns with emergent design in qualitative research, where a study's direction may evolve in response to the researcher's experiences, observations, and developing insights (Hammersley, 2022).

Rationale for 11 pilot interviews

Participants were recruited through convenience and network sampling in line with the study's training-oriented aim. Table 1 summarizes the basic characteristics of the 11 pilot interviews. The pilots were distributed as follows: Mandarin/English = 5/6; face-to-face/online = 4/7; and participant roles included Chinese teachers (experienced = 3, novice = 1), English teachers (experienced = 5, novice = 1), and one Thai teacher (novice = 1).

To approximate the dynamics of engaging with unfamiliar research participants, the sample was deliberately structured to encompass a spectrum of relationship types, including familiar contacts, a former colleague, and two first-contact participants via introductions. Participants were classified according to the degree of pre-existing familiarity: close friend (sustained interaction over approximately three or more years), good friend (a stable interpersonal relationship involving multiple interactions within the past year), friend (acquaintance of over six months with intermittent contact), former colleague (previous workplace association), and new acquaintance (first met during the study).

Because my PhD thesis data collection was expected to rely primarily on online interviews in the post-COVID context, most pilots were conducted via Zoom to refine technical and interactional protocols. A smaller number were held in person to ensure preparedness for co-present interviewing, resulting in a mixed-mode design aligned with the needs of my thesis.

My entry pathway moved from familiar to less familiar settings and from Mandarin to English, with step-by-step refinement. I began with Chinese-teacher peers in my native language to stabilize logistics and interviewing routines, then shifted primarily to English-teacher interviews in English to align with the doctoral context.

Because recruiting additional English teachers within the piloting window was impractical, I followed a feasibility principle and recruited a Chinese national who taught Thai and with whom I already had rapport. This 11th session served as a full-scale pretest. In addition to the interview, I collected classroom video and teaching materials to stress-test the entire workflow (guide implementation, consent, de-identification, recording, and data management). This choice kept the work close to the doctoral field while meeting the training aim.

This pilot phase followed an emergent design with no *a priori* sample size. I worked through repeated cycles of interviewing, memoing, supervisory debriefing, and minor redesign. I concluded the piloting when four stopping signals had been met. First, the interview guide had stabilized, with only minor wording or order changes remaining. Second, additional pilots produced diminishing returns, as no substantively new types of critical incidents emerged. Third, core micro skills, including listening, probing, and pacing, were consistently enacted across

contexts. Fourth, the contextual coverage needed for the subsequent study had been achieved. The final sample of 11 interviews therefore reflected iterative sufficiency and contextual coverage, not a pre-set quota.

Table 1
Basic information of the 11 pilot interviews

Interview	Relationship	Role/Subject	Language	Mode	Length
1	Close friend	Chinese teacher (experienced)	Mandarin	Face-to-face, Coffee shop	50 min
2	Former colleague	Chinese teacher (novice)	Mandarin	Zoom	55 min
3	Friend	Chinese teacher (experienced)	Mandarin	Face-to-face, Participant's home	50 min
4	Friend	English teacher (novice)	English	Zoom	30 min
5	Friend	Chinese teacher (experienced)	Mandarin	Face-to-face, Coffee shop	70 min
6	Good friend	English teacher (experienced)	English	Zoom	75 min
7	New acquaintance	English teacher (experienced)	English	Zoom	110 min
8	New acquaintance	English teacher (experienced)	English	Zoom	50 min
9	Friend	English teacher (experienced)	English	Zoom	60 min
10	Friend	English teacher (experienced)	English	Zoom	60 min
11	Good friend	Thai teacher (novice)	Mandarin	Face-to-face, Coffee shop	60 min

Data sources

To build a rich and multifaceted account of my development, I drew on three sources. First, the 11 pilot interview transcripts captured in situ phrasing, probes, silences, and other interactional features. They enabled a more systematic review of interviewing techniques, such as leading questions and missed probes. They also documented improvement across the pilot interviews and served as the primary basis for identifying critical incidents.

Second, I kept a reflexive journal. After each interview or supervision meeting, I recorded participants, context, duration, techniques tried, evaluative notes, emotions, and “aha” moments. These contemporaneous reflections made bias, growth, and sense making visible, and often helped flag critical incidents (Olmos-Vega et al., 2023).

Third, I used audio recordings of six supervision meetings held at key milestones, including before the study launch, after the literature review, before the pilot interviews, and after Interviews 1–4, 5–8, and 9–10. These recordings provided targeted feedback on guide refinement, ethics and consent scripting, pacing and probing, and memoing. They also functioned as an external “critical mirror.” Between meetings, we exchanged frequent emails.

By triangulating these three sources, I gained a comprehensive view of my learning journey. Transcripts showed what happened in the interviews, journals captured my interpretations and emotions, and supervision recordings offered an external perspective on my performance. For example, when a journal entry described an interview as “difficult,” I could revisit the transcript to examine the interaction and check supervision recordings or feedback to see whether that difficulty had been discussed. This cross-verification strengthened credibility by grounding interpretations in multiple forms of evidence.

Critical incident identification

Watkins et al. (2022) emphasize that critical incidents need not be dramatic or catastrophic, but may become formative through reflection. In this study, I conceptualize a critical incident as a moment that, upon reflective analysis, led to a significant transformation in either my approach to interviewing or my understanding of the interview process. Here, “critical” denotes salience for growth rather than drama.

I identified such incidents inductively and iteratively across all data sources. After each pilot interview, I wrote reflective notes that flagged potential learning moments with cues like “I realized...,” “I was surprised...,” or “Next time I should....” During formal analysis, I revisited these entries systematically and highlighted episodes I had already intuited as important, such as the first time I deviated from my guide and saw improved flow, or the moment when I noticed a participant’s discomfort and learned to ask more sensitively. I also reviewed supervision-session recordings to locate feedback that triggered a strong reaction or commitment to change.

For each candidate incident, I returned to the interview transcripts to locate the precise exchange, such as the Q&A sequence preceding a pause or the segment where I tested a new approach. I then examined the exchange closely, transcribing it verbatim when necessary, to understand how the moment unfolded and what it revealed about my practice. Events were classified as critical incidents when they met three criteria. First, there was a discernible shift in mindset, understanding, or behavior. Second, the event involved a significant challenge or breakthrough. Third, it generated a clear and articulable lesson or impact, such as learning to allow silence after asking a question.

Applying these criteria, I distilled a concise set that traces my developmental trajectory, spanning both positive breakthroughs and difficult experiences. Illustrative examples include first-interview jitters (recognizing my initial unpreparedness), protocol overhaul (redesigning an overly rigid guide), and an active listening breakthrough (consciously applying active listening and improving interview flow). Identifying these incidents required stepping back from chronology and viewing the journey as a whole. This process helped clarify why each moment was pivotal and converted personal learning into shareable insights about interviewer development. Each confirmed incident then served as a unit of analysis for subsequent coding and thematic exploration.

Data analysis

A qualitative, inductive approach was adopted using thematic analysis informed by Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework. Each critical incident was treated as the unit of analysis, and this framework guided the coding and interpretation of how my interviewing developed over time.

(1) Familiarization: I immersed myself in the corpus by re-reading the 11 interview transcripts, reflective journals, and supervision recordings, and noted preliminary patterns, such as rushing to the next question and increasing relaxation across interviews.

(2) Generating initial codes: I open-coded segments closely to the data, capturing concrete behaviors, techniques, and emotions (e.g., "nervous laughter," "did not probe," "effective silence," "leading question," "active listening attempt," "gaining confidence"). Brief analytic memos accompanied codes to record interpretive insights about improvements or missteps.

(3) Searching for themes: I grouped related codes into provisional themes linked to specific incidents and broader skill domains, such as questioning technique and adaptability, listening and the use of silence, rapport and relationality, emotional growth, and feedback and mentorship.

(4) Reviewing themes: I checked each candidate theme against transcripts, journals, and memos, merging overlaps, creating subthemes, discarding thin categories, and ensuring every incident fit meaningfully within the structure. Peer debriefing with my supervisor helped challenge and validate boundaries (e.g., separating question design from follow-up probing).

(5) Defining and naming themes: Following review, I finalized five analytic themes, including questioning style, active listening, rapport, emotional growth (from anxiety to confidence), and the role of feedback. For each, I wrote a brief scope note, assigned a concise label (e.g., navigating silence), and identified exemplary incidents.

(6) Producing the report: I then integrated the themes and incident evidence into a coherent narrative of my development as an interviewer. This narrative was organized through the two-step, three-stage developmental model that structures the Findings section. Each stage is illustrated with incident-based evidence.

Throughout, I interpreted the themes in dialogue with literature on qualitative interviewing and researcher development. Triangulating across transcripts, reflections, and supervision feedback strengthened transparency and credibility. This process yielded a concise, evidence-based thematic map of my developmental trajectory.

Ethical considerations

Given that many participants came from my personal and professional networks, I paid particular attention to ensuring voluntariness and avoiding any sense of obligation. Participation

was explicitly optional, and participants were informed of their right to refuse or withdraw at any time. Oral consent was obtained for interviewer-training practice and for the anonymized use of recordings and transcripts. I explained the study purpose, voluntary nature, withdrawal rights, and confidentiality. Only anonymized material is cited (honoring any conditions, e.g., “no direct quotes”); all files are securely stored and de-identified (pseudonyms, removal of identifiers). Because participants were adult educators discussing non-sensitive topics, risk was minimal. I followed institutional low-risk guidance and practiced ethical reflexivity under a do-no-harm ethos.

FINDINGS

This section presents the key findings of my autoethnographic study, tracing how I grew from a novice to a more confident interviewer. The findings are organized within a two-step, three-stage model. Step 1 outlines the theoretical foundation I built through literature and supervision. Step 2 describes my practical learning across three stages, with Interviews 1–4 focusing on learning an interviewing style, Interviews 5–8 on designing an interview protocol, and Interviews 9–11 on refining interview techniques.

Step 1: Building a theoretical foundation

At the outset of Step 1, I focused on establishing a theoretical foundation for qualitative interviewing and quickly encountered a series of challenges that reshaped my approach. The initial problem was selecting an interview format that was both effective and capable of generating rich data. I consulted methodological literature showing that qualitative interviews can generate rich accounts and that semi-structured formats balance focus with flexibility (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021; Kallio et al., 2016; Lune & Berg, 2017). Accordingly, I chose a semi-structured design to balance structure with openness.

Guided by Holstein and Gubrium’s (1995) active interview, which emphasizes interaction, co-construction, and adaptability, and by Lyndon and Edwards’s (2022) discussion of co-constructed, participant-led narratives, I adopted a more conversational style in practice, preparing broad guiding topics while allowing participants to shape the flow of the dialogue. At the same time, I confronted the issue of my own influence (reflexivity), acknowledging that my background and biases shape the interview process. In response, I drew on Roulston (2010) and Roulston et al. (2008), who advocate maintaining reflexivity across all stages of interviewing, and I committed to ongoing self-reflection to identify and mitigate my impact on data generation.

I also faced challenges in building trust and rapport. Without a solid sense of partnership, conversations tended to remain at the surface level. Rubin and Rubin (2005) describe responsive interviewing as a partnership grounded in trust. This led me to prioritize active listening and empathy, which are often more important than clever questioning in fostering a safe, open conversational space. Another critical incident concerned keeping participants’ voices at the center. I wanted to ensure that the conversation was guided by their perspectives rather than

my agenda. Charmaz's (2014) constructivist grounded theory emphasizes open, in-depth interviewing that allows participants' meanings to emerge. This encouraged me to use broad, open prompts and allow participants' narratives to guide the dialogue, which helped preserve the primacy of their voices.

Mann (2016) helped me connect theoretical understandings of interviewing with practical concerns of interview interaction, reflective practice, and reflexivity. Drawing on this guidance, I translated theory into practice by preparing carefully for both face-to-face and online interviews, attending to participant comfort, and refining active-listening routines so that theoretical principles could be enacted during the interview.

By the end of Step 1, I no longer viewed an interview as a checklist of questions, but as a conversation in which interviewer and participant co-construct meaning. I had developed a more grounded stance toward semi-structured interviewing, centered on flexibility, reflexivity, ethical awareness, empathy, and collaboration. These experiences prepared me for the next phase of pilot interviews.

Step 2: Practical learning

My practical learning unfolded in three stages, supported by 11 pilot interviews (see Table 2). The sections that follow synthesize how my interviewing stance and techniques evolved, why these shifts enhanced analytic depth, and how they align with the study's aims and relevant literature.

Table 2
Critical incidents in interviewing development across three stages

Stage	Interview	Critical Incident	Key Insight	What I Learned
One	1	Over-familiarity with a close friend	Relationships affect depth, and too much rapport risks losing focus	Balance warmth with authority, keep it conversational, and softly steer when required
	2	Rushing and adding own opinions	More patience, more listening, and less talking	Pace slowly, avoid researcher interjections, and probe to encourage depth
	3	Nervousness and leading questions	Avoid leading questions, and use reflexivity to check influence	Plan prompts, slow down, and adopt neutrality to center the participant's voice
	4	Anxiety over silence with a quiet participant	Silence invites elaboration	Pause, allow silence, and observe subtle signals
Two	5	Interrogative tone	Keep interviews conversational, not interrogative	Use gentle protocol delivery, and prioritize rapport and openness over rigid scripts
	6	Unclear focus	Align questions with research aims	Frame questions for protocol clarity and purpose
	7	Talkative participant	A flexible interview guide supports responsive probing	Use the protocol as a guide, not a script, and allow participant-led flow within the protocol
	8	Quiet participant	Silence and probes deepen responses	Design prompts to be adaptable, and probe gently and patiently

Stage	Interview	Critical Incident	Key Insight	What I Learned
Three	9	Over-reliance on a fixed script	A rigid script suppresses depth and flow	Loosen the sequence by listening, mirroring, probing, and following participant cues
	10	Quiet, hesitant participant	Adaptive questioning improves engagement	Use why and why-not prompts, strategic silence, and paraphrase checks to invite longer, reflective responses
	11	Rapport-building as the gateway to depth	Trust is a prerequisite, not a preface	Use friendly, low-pressure opening prompts

Stage 1: Learning interview style

As Table 2 shows, the first 4 pilots progressively calibrated relationship, pacing, question design, and silence. This section synthesizes the key shifts in my interviewing practice and explains why they mattered for analytic depth, while clarifying my emerging stance as an interviewer.

I first learned that rapport should serve inquiry, not steer it. Interviewing close acquaintances eased entry but diluted focus through tangents and insider talk. I established practical boundaries by previewing the agenda, signaling topical limits, and using gentle redirects, so that warmth would support the research purpose without overriding it (Mann, 2016).

Next, I came to see pacing and the creation of conversational space as meta-skills. Trying to cover every planned question reduced participants' opportunities to elaborate and conflicted with the ethic of "listening more, talking less." I therefore slowed the tempo, allowed more wait time, bracketed my own views, and used neutral probes and minimal encouragers to elicit fuller narratives (Seidman, 2006).

A third shift was toward neutral question design as the basis of credibility. Under nerves I heard myself drift into leading phrasing that participants then mirrored. I addressed this by drafting neutral, open prompts in advance, delivering them more slowly, and writing immediate memos after each interview to monitor my influence. These practices helped recenter participants and strengthen interpretive rigor (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). This also taught me that, at times, doing less yields more.

Finally, I learned to treat silence as reflective space, not failure. With quieter participants, I paused before intervening and attended to subtle verbal and nonverbal cues. These practices helped honor participants' agency and invited more considered responses (Patton, 2014).

A debrief with my supervisor crystallized these lessons. Reviewing an excerpt from Interview 4, he noted that my tendency to move on quickly produced brief, unelaborated answers. The remedy was to move from a rigid Q&A mindset to a semi-structured, conversational approach. I kept a topical guide but used it as a compass, not a script, and followed promising leads with flexible probes. This turn also clarified my role as the primary instrument and a facilitator, not a neutral interrogator.

Stage 1 converted friendly conversation into disciplined, participant-centered inquiry aligned with the study's aims. Equally important, it made clear that style alone was insufficient. To obtain richer accounts, attention should move to protocol design, including how questions are framed, sequenced, and followed up to encourage depth and reflection. This sets up the focus of Stage 2.

Stage 2: Designing an interview protocol

Before the pilot interviews, my supervisor asked me to anchor the project in my thesis's core concern of teachers' beliefs, focusing on how they form, how they are articulated and enacted, and, crucially, how to elicit them in interviews. Kallio et al. (2016) recommend grounding semi-structured protocols in comparable prior studies. In line with this recommendation, I reviewed the teacher-beliefs literature, with particular attention to Suwannasom's (2010) doctoral thesis because it parallels aspects of my study. I then translated key constructs into interviewable domains, prompt sequences, and follow-up logics.

I first compiled a broad question pool around four analytic strands concerning sources of belief, articulation of belief, belief–practice relations, and contextual influences. I then mapped this pool onto four domains covering teachers' backgrounds and beliefs, the design and use of teaching materials, teaching practices and pedagogy, and work context and environment. Within each domain, I ordered items from descriptive "what" questions to more analytical "how" questions. I also added generic probes focused on examples, contrasts, decision points, and peer comparisons to deepen inquiry when needed. This process produced a 25-question initial guide used in Interviews 1–4.

After Interview 4, I presented the guide to my supervisor, who observed that it read more like a rigid checklist than an interactive guide. He recommended reframing items as open invitations to foster dialogue and richer narratives, including prompts about professional histories, self-perceptions, peer comparisons, and classroom decision making. He also suggested adding systematic questions that asked "why" or "why not" to elicit explanations.

The first incremental improvement came in Interview 5. Although the content had been consolidated, my delivery still sounded rushed and interrogative. I reworked the document to shape both delivery and content by adding warm openers, using neutral phrasing, applying a strict "one question at a time" principle, and replacing leading question stems with open prompts. These changes helped the exchange feel more conversational and less extractive.

Building on this, Interview 6 exposed another limitation. Several prompts were vague or misaligned with my aims, and my phrasing sometimes blurred meaning. I therefore improved alignment and clarity by keeping purpose lines visible, simplifying syntax, avoiding idioms, and adding systematic "why" and "why not" follow-up questions. These revisions ensured that each prompt carried a clear analytic intention and elicited explanatory accounts (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

With alignment and clarity improved, Interview 7 tested whether the guide could hold coherence with a highly talkative participant. I used the protocol as a navigational map, not a

script. To support this approach, I prioritized the themes, developed branching probe sets, such as examples, contrasts, decision points, and peer comparisons, and introduced gentle time check cues to pause digressions and return to them later. These strategies preserved the conversational flow while keeping the inquiry centered on teachers' beliefs.

The opposite condition emerged in Interview 8, where brief responses and long pauses required a different scaffold. I learned to treat silence as reflective space and support quieter participants by pausing before intervening, offering brief restatements for clarity checks, and using layered probes to invite elaboration without pressure. This "silence-friendly" design helped convert reticence into depth and reduced the risk that rephrasing would disrupt the interaction (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

These stepwise revisions addressed tone, alignment and clarity, branching flexibility, and support for silence. They transformed a question list into a responsive framework for eliciting teachers' beliefs in depth. By the end of Stage 2, the guide had been consolidated into five thematic, open-ended prompts, including personal history as a language teacher, course context, personal teaching objectives, customary ways of teaching the course, and self-positioning as a teacher. Each prompt included alternative probes for both expansive and reticent participants. Kallio et al. (2016) emphasize that semi-structured interview protocols should be developed through iterative design, piloting, and refinement. In this study, the protocol similarly evolved through repeated revision, and its effectiveness depended not primarily on the number of questions, but on their sensitivity, timing, and formulation.

Stage 3: Refining the interview techniques

In light of wording problems that emerged in Interviews 6–8, three participants repeatedly asked me what my questions meant. I realized my phrasing was sometimes unclear or overly complex, so I further examined how question formulation shapes the depth and quality of responses. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) argue that the wording, timing, and sequencing of questions shape what participants are able to say, either opening space for reflection or limiting their responses. Patton (2014) similarly notes that effective interviewing depends not only on what is asked, but also on how questions are framed, including whether they are open or closed, leading or neutral, and whether they invite description, reflection, or evaluation.

Louw et al. (2011) argue that active listening is central to improving data quality because it encourages participants to elaborate and helps them feel heard. This insight led me to adopt active listening techniques, including minimal encouragers, paraphrasing, reflective restatement, and strategic silence. It also helped me understand the interview as a natural conversation in which attentive listening remained closely connected to the research aims. These methodological insights clarified that questioning and listening are not merely technical skills, but active practices through which the interviewer shapes the interaction as a whole.

At the outset of Interview 9, I still clung to a fixed sequence, attending more to the guide than to the participant and advancing too quickly. The exchange therefore felt stilted and superficial. I realized that the underlying problem was my overreliance on the script. As it happened, the

participant was an experienced qualitative researcher whose responses were richly informative, which prompted me to set the guide aside and re-center my attention on the conversation itself.

This experience helped me recognize that I had initially relied too heavily on the guide. This insight echoes Brinkmann and Kvale's (2015) warning against rigid scripting. I subsequently recalibrated my approach, relaxing the sequence and adopting a "listen–paraphrase–probe" cycle, allowing each subsequent question to grow organically from the participant's previous turn. In practice, I shortened question stems, conducted on-the-spot paraphrase checks (e.g., "So what you mean is ..."), and pursued follow-ups keyed to the participant's own wording rather than my prearranged order. In this way, the interview guide shifted from a mandatory "track" to a map for ready reference, and the centrality of listening was further underscored.

In Interview 10, the participant's responses were brief and hesitant, leaving the data relatively thin. Initially, I tried to "help" by rephrasing, but this disrupted the rhythm and increased the participant's cognitive load. I then shifted to low-pressure interviewing moves informed by active listening (Louw et al., 2011), such as silently counting a beat before intervening and using concise paraphrase checks, alongside gentle "why or why not" probes. These moves lengthened the participant's turns and deepened their explanations, marking a shift in my approach from managing the pace to cultivating reflection.

Building on this, Interview 11 served as both the final pilot and a full-process rehearsal for my PhD study. After I had laid the groundwork for rapport in advance, the interview showed a marked improvement in overall tone and depth of inquiry. I opened with low-risk small talk and an inviting first question, maintained a focused, nonjudgmental stance, and as a result, the participant took longer turns while I spoke less. This further suggests that rapport is not a mere warm-up but a precondition for authenticity.

The three final pilots reshaped my interviewing practice. I began to trust the conversational process, reduce reliance on the protocol, and let participants' responses drive the next step. My questioning became more flexible and probing through sustained "why" and "why not" follow-up questions, context-sensitive adjustments, and regular paraphrasing. My listening also became more active and purposeful, supported by strategic silence, reflective restatement, and minimal encouragers. These adjustments markedly increased my sense of control and confidence with both talkative and reticent participants. Moreover, unlike the first 8 interviews, I learned to switch strategies in real time to fit the participant and context.

DISCUSSION

This discussion examines how my interviewing competence developed through a gradual movement from procedural control toward more responsive, relational, and reflexive practice. It highlights how questioning, listening, rapport building, and emotional positioning shaped my emerging stance as a novice interviewer.

Embracing non-linearity: Revisiting the developmental journey

Although my development can be described through a model of two steps and three stages, with each stage having a clear focus, it did not unfold in a neat linear sequence. Instead, I repeatedly returned to earlier concerns through cycles of practice and reflection. Golden-Biddle and Locke (2006) note that qualitative research often develops through return and revision, not through a fixed sequence. My growth followed a similar pattern. I reread foundational texts, revisited interview techniques, and rethought earlier assumptions, with each return adding depth to my understanding.

Crucially, theory and practice evolved together. Insights from the literature directly reshaped how I conducted interviews. Brinkmann and Kvale's (2015) notion of the interview as an "inter-view" helped me see interviewing as a dialogical encounter. Holstein and Gubrium's (1995) active interviewing principles encouraged flexibility, and Lyndon and Edwards (2022) further highlighted the value of co-constructed and participant-led narratives. In turn, field experiences repeatedly led me back to theory. For instance, early interviews with friends helped me recognize that excessive familiarity could weaken analytic depth and that listening more while speaking less was essential.

Gradually, listening, rapport building, and reflexivity emerged not as fixed principles, but as lessons developed through repeated practice. I came to see that trust and responsiveness were more important than strict adherence to the guide. The most significant shift was recognizing my own influence in the interview process. I was not a neutral recorder of participants' views. Instead, I helped construct knowledge with them, as interview data were produced through interaction. This reflexive stance, developed through trial, feedback, and reviewing my own performance, became central to my interviewing practice.

In this sense, what looked like detours or regressions were integral to moving forward. My journey shows that becoming a skilled interviewer is less about following a preset formula than about embracing an evolving cycle of planning, acting, reflecting, and adjusting. Far from a flaw, non-linearity was the very condition of growth.

From anxiety to agency: The emotional journey of the interviewer

At the outset of my interviewing experience, I often felt anxious and uncertain, worrying that I might ask inappropriate questions or fail to be taken seriously. Because I had not yet fully clarified the aims of my thesis, the interview guide remained somewhat underdeveloped. My supervisor encouraged me, noting that sustained reflection on the study rationale, participant selection, and research questions would likely clarify the study's purpose as the project progressed.

I gradually recognized that such anxiety is common among novice interviewers, partly because interviews often involve unanticipated challenges (Scanlan, 2020). Confidence grew through practice. Preparing a flexible conversational guide helped reduce the fear of "blanking out." Supervisory feedback was equally crucial. Reviewing transcripts with my supervisor provided

both reassurance and constructive critique. These cycles of practice, feedback, and reflection led to incremental improvements in both technique and self-assurance.

Yet this trajectory was not linear. Episodes of renewed anxiety, such as working with a reticent participant, reminded me that confidence remained fragile. This fluctuation resonates with Kalman's (2019) account of novice researchers whose self-belief could ebb and flow across contexts. What changed was my response. Instead of panicking, I learned to pause, probe gently, and hold silence, turning setbacks into opportunities for learning.

A turning point was embracing reflexivity. Keeping a reflexive journal allowed me to treat my emotions as data, not as weakness. Ide and Beddoe (2024) similarly encourage novice researchers to adopt an attitude of discovery and shift attention from self-performance to participants' perspectives. This reflexive stance helped me decenter my anxiety and become a more attentive listener.

As my reflexive practice deepened, nervousness gradually gave way to a sense of agency. I became better able to improvise, manage interview flow, and navigate emotionally sensitive moments ethically. What began as an anxiety-provoking task gradually evolved into a more agentic and empowering practice marked by confidence, curiosity, and resilience. This evolution shows that developing as an interviewer involves both technical skill development and emotional transformation.

Listening as the heart of interviewing: Prioritizing rapport over questions

Through iterative practice, I recognized the central role of active listening. Early on, I was preoccupied with crafting the "perfect" interview guide and assumed good questions would yield good data. In reality, the richest insights emerged when I spoke less and listened more, echoing Louw et al.'s (2011) reminder that the core challenge for interviewers is learning to keep quiet and listen actively. Natural pauses, unplanned follow-ups, and attention to participants' own words often revealed more than scripted prompts.

Equally important was building rapport as the foundation of meaningful dialogue (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Trust and empathy allowed conversations to flow more openly. When rapport was prioritized, participants shared more candidly. Over time, I shifted from treating the interview guide as a checklist to using it more flexibly as a compass.

Another key lesson was embracing silence. Initially, pauses felt uncomfortable, and I rushed to fill them. Yet, I discovered that silence often invited participants to reflect and elaborate more deeply. Allowing space, echoing participants' language, and paraphrasing their points signaled attentive listening and fostered a collaborative atmosphere (Louw et al., 2011; Lyndon & Edwards, 2022). These subtle practices shifted the interview dynamic from Q&A toward mutual exploration.

Perhaps the most transformative change was moving away from a "miner" mentality of extracting nuggets of truth and toward a "traveler" stance. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) contrast the miner, who digs for pre-existing information, with the traveler, who journeys

alongside participants to co-construct meaning. This traveler approach encouraged me to treat interviews as collaborative meaning-making encounters. Adopting this stance reduced pressure, enhanced rapport, and generated insights that neither interviewer nor participant could have reached alone.

My development as an interviewer reflects a broader consensus in qualitative methodology. Meaningful interviews depend less on perfectly crafted questions than on attentive listening, empathy, and co-construction of knowledge. By prioritizing rapport over rigid questioning, embracing silence, and journeying with participants, I learned to conduct interviews that were not only richer in data but also more authentic in human connection.

Reflexivity and adaptation: Refining the interviewing craft

My interviewing practice evolved through cycles of reflexivity and adaptation. Systematic reflection on my performance, including journaling, transcript reviews, and supervisory debriefs, helped me develop sharper self-awareness and greater methodological flexibility. This is consistent with Olmos-Vega et al. (2023), who argue that sustained reflexive practice strengthens qualitative rigor by helping researchers examine their assumptions throughout data collection, support deeper probing, and reduce premature closure.

Reflexivity improved not only my awareness but also my ability to adapt. Early transcript reviews revealed habits such as leading questions and unnecessary interruptions. Through journaling and feedback, I became more conscious of these tendencies and learned to bracket my assumptions. This reflective process helped me become more comfortable with silence, more responsive to participants' cues, and more flexible in my questioning. My experience confirmed that responsiveness greatly strengthened interview quality. This responsiveness involved rephrasing questions, exploring emergent themes, and calibrating probes to suit different communication styles.

Several concrete skills improved through this reflexive–adaptive process. I learned to treat silence as a resource rather than a threat. I also developed paraphrasing and mirroring techniques, which not only demonstrated deep listening but also validated participants' own language. As the pilot interviews progressed, I became more adept at sequencing questions flexibly, following each participant's lead while still covering the core themes. These adjustments transformed interviews from rigid Q&A sessions into fluid conversations shaped collaboratively by both parties.

Reflexivity and adaptation were inseparable in refining my interviewing craft. By reflecting on my assumptions and adjusting in real time, I moved from relying heavily on scripts to navigating interviews with greater confidence. Each interview became both a site of data collection and an opportunity for growth.

Implications for training novice interviewers

My 11 pilot interviews suggest that learning to interview requires both methodological grounding and scaffolded practice. Recent work similarly shows that novice researchers benefit

from structured preparation, reflection, rapport building, and flexibility (Roulston et al., 2025). Based on my experience, I propose five recommendations for training novice interviewers.

(1) Emotional preparation is key. Anxiety is a normal part of learning to interview, and training should prepare novices to anticipate and manage it. Research shows that uncertainty in qualitative encounters often triggers nervousness among beginners (Haughton, 2023; Kalman, 2019). Structured role plays and mock interviews in low-stakes environments can normalize these feelings and help novices develop strategies for emotional regulation. By framing nervousness as part of development, not as a flaw, training programs can help build resilience and confidence.

(2) Start with familiar people to build confidence. Initial practice with familiar peers or colleagues offers a supportive entry point. Working with Mandarin-speaking colleagues created a safe context that reduced social anxiety and allowed me to focus on questioning and pacing. Familiar settings provide confidence to tackle more challenging interviews. Still, as Mann (2016) cautions, over-rapport with friends may dilute focus, so professionalism and attentiveness to research aims should remain.

(3) Include feedback-rich practice opportunities. My 9th pilot participant, an experienced interviewer, provided constructive critique that highlighted blind spots in my technique. Emotional scaffolding from supportive peers or mentors can identify technical issues and validate progress, helping to reduce performance anxiety.

(4) Gradually increase the challenge by diversifying contexts. Competence grows when practice progresses from simple to complex. My pilots evolved from close friends to strangers, from my native language to English, and from face-to-face to online. Each stage introduced a new layer of difficulty while drawing on prior skills. Such gradual expansion prevents novices from being overwhelmed, while steadily preparing them for varied and unpredictable contexts.

(5) Embed reflection, feedback, and iteration into training. The most critical component of interviewer development is an iterative cycle of practice, reflection, and revision. Through reflexive journaling and transcript reviews with my supervisor, I identified habits such as interrupting participants and relying too heavily on scripted guides. These insights informed continuous refinements, transforming my rigid question list into a flexible conversational guide. Through this structured reflection, each interview became both a site of data collection and an opportunity for skill development.

The autobiographical insights from my interviewing journey resonate with established methodological guidance. Scanlan (2020) emphasizes the need to prepare interviewers for unanticipated challenges. My experience similarly showed the value of adaptive probing and flexible follow-up questions. The centrality of listening and rapport in my development mirrors Rubin and Rubin's (2005) model of the responsive interviewer, grounded in empathy, attentiveness, and adaptability, as well as Brinkmann and Kvale's (2015) accounts of interviewing as an active, dialogical co-construction of knowledge. Likewise, Roulston et al. (2008) emphasize reflexivity as integral to rigor and training, which aligns with the practices that shaped my

growth. These correspondences suggest that learning to interview involves both art and science, as it requires the cultivation of patience, empathy, reflexive awareness, and methodological technique. On the basis of this journey, I would encourage new interviewers to prioritize listening and self-reflection over the pursuit of the “perfect” question.

CONCLUSION

This autoethnographic study draws on 11 pilot interviews, reflective journals, and supervisory debriefs to trace my development from a novice interviewer to a more agentic qualitative researcher. It proposes a two-step, three-stage framework showing how listening, rapport building, and reflexive adaptation supported deeper interviewing practice. The learning process was iterative, shaped by repeated cycles of anxiety, practice, feedback, and adjustment.

Methodologically, this study shows how autoethnography, critical incident analysis, and thematic analysis can make interviewer learning visible. This approach provides transparent decision rules for identifying critical incidents and an iterative workflow that can be adapted for interviewer training. Practically and pedagogically, the study identifies several principles for novice interviewer training. These include emotional preparation, beginning in familiar and low-stakes contexts before moving to more complex challenges, feedback-rich practice, attention to language and mode, a “listen, paraphrase, and probe” micro-cycle, and the strategic use of silence. These principles suggest that interviewer training should balance structured preparation with flexible, feedback-rich practice within a reflective and emotionally supportive framework.

This design provided first-person, situated access to the micro-decisions, emotional responses, and developing skills that are often less visible in third-person accounts. Treating critical incidents as analytic units helped clarify key moments of change, such as recognizing and correcting leading questions and learning to use silence more effectively.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the single-case and training-focused nature of the study constrain its generalizability. Second, my dual role as both researcher and learner introduced the risk of selective attention. Third, familiarity with participants and language choice may have influenced rapport and interview depth. I addressed these limitations through triangulation across transcripts, journals, and supervision audio, as well as explicit criteria for identifying critical incidents. I also used clear stopping signals, including guide stabilization, diminishing returns, micro-skill consistency, and contextual coverage. For this reason, transferability is a more appropriate standard than statistical generalizability for evaluating the contribution of this study. Future research could examine the proposed model and its associated training interventions, such as mentorship and simulated practice, using multi-participant, longitudinal, or comparative autoethnographic designs.

This study has shown me that becoming a qualitative interviewer involves more than acquiring techniques. It also involves developing greater empathy, patience, and self-awareness. By sharing this learning journey, I hope to encourage other novice interviewers to approach their own development with courage and reflexivity. Mistakes can be treated as valuable learning

data, targeted feedback can support growth, and progress should be understood as an iterative process, not a linear one. Although the path is rarely straightforward, sustained reflection and deliberate practice can lead to deeper professional competence and meaningful personal growth.

THE AUTHORS

Pengfei Zhao, a language lecturer for more than ten years, is pursuing her Ph.D. in applied linguistics at the School of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Thailand. Her research interests include language teaching, curriculum reform, teacher development and multimedia support for teaching.

zhaopengfei2014tr@gmail.com

Richard Watson Todd is a Professor at the School of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Thailand. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Liverpool, UK, and is also the author of numerous articles and several books, including *Discourse Topics* (John Benjamins, 2016). His research interests include text linguistics, corpus linguistics, and educational innovations.

irictodd@kmutt.ac.th

REFERENCES

- Adeoye-Olatunde, O. A., & Olenik, N. L. (2021). Research and scholarly methods: Semi-structured interviews. *Journal of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy*, 4(10), 1358–1367. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jac5.1441>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2015). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Chang, H. (2008). *Autoethnography as method*. Left Coast Press.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Chiu, S. K. (2025). Reflexivity of the lived research experiences of a doctoral student through communities of practice. *Power and Education*, 17(3), 318–333. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17577438241257661>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Historical Social Research*, 36(4), 273–290. <https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.36.2011.4.273-290>
- Golden-Biddle, K., & Locke, K. (2006). *Composing qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Hammersley, M. (2022). Emergent design. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research design* (pp. 55–68). Sage.
- Houghton, N. A. (2023). A pragmatic approach to preparing novice doctoral qualitative researchers. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 23(4), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.14434/josotl.v23i4.33815>
- Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. F. (1995). *The active interview*. Sage.
- Ide, Y., & Beddoe, L. (2024). Challenging perspectives: Reflexivity as a critical approach to qualitative social work research. *Qualitative Social Work*, 23(4), 725–740. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14733250231173522>

- Kallio, H., Pietilä, A. M., Johnson, M., & Kangasniemi, M. (2016). Systematic methodological review: Developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 72(12), 2954–2965. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13031>
- Kalman, M. (2019). “It requires interest, time, patience and struggle”: Novice researchers’ perspectives on and experiences of the qualitative research journey. *Qualitative Research in Education*, 8(3), 341–377. <https://doi.org/10.17583/qre.2019.4483>
- Koay, J. (2023). Self-directed professional development activities: An autoethnography. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 133, Article 104258. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104258>
- Louw, S., Watson Todd, R., & Jimarkon, P. (2011). *Active listening in quantitative research interviews*. Proceedings from DRAL: The International Conference on Doing Research in Applied Linguistics, 71–82.
- Lune, H., & Berg, B. L. (2017). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (9th ed.). Pearson.
- Lyndon, S., & Edwards, B. (2022). Beyond listening: The value of co-research in the co-construction of narratives. *Qualitative Research*, 22(4), 473–489. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794121999600>
- Mann, S. (2016). *The research interview: Reflective practice and reflexivity in research processes*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Olmos-Vega, F. M., Stalmeijer, R. E., Varpio, L., & Kahlke, R. (2023). A practical guide to reflexivity in qualitative research: AMEE Guide No. 149. *Medical Teacher*, 45(3), 241–251. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2022.2057287>
- Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Roulston, K. (2010). *Reflective interviewing: A guide to theory and practice*. Sage.
- Roulston, K., Herron, B. A., & Farrington, C. (2025). Learning how to interview for qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 30(8), 4129–4151. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2025.7737>
- Roulston, K., McClendon, V. J., Thomas, A., Tuff, R., Williams, G., & Healy, M. F. (2008). Developing reflective interviewers and reflexive researchers. *Reflective Practice*, 9(3), 231–243. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623940802206958>
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2005). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Scanlan, C. L. (2020). *Preparing for the unanticipated: Challenges in conducting semi-structured, in-depth interviews*. SAGE Research Methods Cases: Medicine and Health. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529719208>
- Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (3rd ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Shaban, Y., & Wilkerson, M. H. (2019). The co-construction of epistemological framing in clinical interviews and implications for research in science education. *International Journal of Science Education*, 41(10), 1370–1393. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500693.2019.1620972>
- Suwannasom, T. (2010). *Teacher cognition about technology-mediated EFL instruction in the Thai tertiary context* [Doctoral dissertation, Massey University]. Massey Research Online. <http://hdl.handle.net/10179/1853>
- Watkins, K. E., Ellinger, A. D., Suh, B., Brenes-Dawsey, J. C., & Oliver, L. C. (2022). Further evolving the critical incident technique (CIT) by applying different contemporary approaches for analyzing qualitative data in CIT studies. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 46(7/8), 709–726. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-07-2021-0107>