

# Interpreting and Writing up Qualitative Research (Online Course)

Karen O'Reilly

What can qualitative research tell us? This one-day advanced course covers the transition from interpretive (thematic) analysis to writing up qualitative findings. It shows how key themes can be extrapolated to form the structure of a written piece and presented with confidence and style. It reviews different formats of presentation, for different audiences, and includes examples from both academic and applied/policy research. Emphasis is on higher-level abstractions, achieving coherence, and writing in a confident qualitative style, expressing range and diversity as opposed to incidence and statistics.

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 9.30 – 11.10  | <b>Session 1</b>  |
|               | <b>Welcome</b> and Introductions<br><br><b>The challenges</b> of qualitative reporting and knowing the audience<br><br><b>From notes and codes</b> to coherence and insights Developing typologies, personas, and interpretive explanations <b>Discussion</b> |
| 11.10 – 11.30 | Break   |
| 11.30 – 13.00 | <b>Session 2</b>  |
|               | <b>Workshop 1:</b> Organizing key themes and drawing out conclusions/ implications<br><br>What should the <b>overall structure</b> be? The usual structural shape, from title to conclusions<br><br><b>Writer's Block</b>                                     |
| 13.00 – 13.45 | Lunch   |
| 13.45 – 15.10 | <b>Session 3</b>  |
|               | How to write in <b>richness and diversity</b> without resorting to numbers<br><br><b>Workshop 2:</b> Writing qualitatively without resorting to quantities<br><br>The challenges of <b>qualitative writing</b> and a sense of style                           |
| 15.10 – 15.30 | Break   |
| 15.30 – 17.00 | <b>Session 4</b>  |
|               | <b>Workshop 3:</b> The qualities of a good 'output'<br><br>A matter of style: how to write in <b>interpretivism and reflexivity</b><br><br><b>The finished product.</b> Discussion, Feedback and close  |

**Interpreting and Writing up Your Qualitative Research**  
**Karen O'Reilly**  
**References and Further Reading**

- An Jacobs, Katrien Dreessen, Jo Pierson (2008) 'Thick' personas – Using ethnographic Methods for Persona Development as a Tool for Conveying the Social Science View in Technological Design, *Observatorio (OBS\*) Journal*, 079-097
- Billig, M. (2013) *Learn to Write Badly: How to Succeed in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge; Cambridge University Press.
- Bryman, A. (2012) *Social Research Methods*. 4<sup>th</sup> edn. London: Sage
- Charmaz, K., 2014. *Constructing grounded theory : a practical guide through qualitative analysis*. 2E. London: Sage.
- Fetterman, D. (2010). *Ethnography: Step by Step*, London: Sage.
- Hayes, M. Gringolandia. *Lifestyle Migration under Late Capitalism*. Minnesota Press.
- Kvale, S. and Brinkmann, S. (2009) *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (or Brinkmann and Kvale , 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 2014)
- Ladner, S. (2014). *Practical Ethnography*. London: Routledge
- May, T. and Perry, B. 2017. *Reflexivity: The Essential Guide*, London: Sage
- O'Reilly, K. (2000) *The British on the Costa del Sol*. London, Routledge
- O'Reilly, K. (2012) *International Migration and Social Theory*, Palgrave Macmillan
- Pinker, S. (2015) *The sense of style*. Penguin.
- Rivas, C. (2018) Writing a Research Report, in C. Seale (ed). *Researching Society and Culture*. 4<sup>th</sup> edn. London: Sage.
- Rubin, H.J., and Rubin, I. S., (2012) *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. Sage.
- Stanley, L. Ed. (2013) *Documents of Life Revisited. Narrative and Biographical Methodology*, Ashgate
- Staham, Paul. 2019. **Living the long-term consequences of Thai-Western marriage migration: the radical life-course transformations of women who partner older Westerners**, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2019.1565403>
- Van Maanen J (1988) *Tales of the Field* Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Wertz, F.J., Charmaz, K., McMullen, L.M., Josselson, R., Anderson, A. and McSpadden, E. (2011). *Five Ways of Doing Qualitative Analysis*, New York: The Guildford Press
- White, C., Woodfield, K., Ritchie, J. and Ormston, R. (2014) 'Writing Up Qualitative Research' in Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., McNaughton Nicholls, C., and Ormston, R., (eds) *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. London: Sage
- Wolcott, H.F. (2009) *Writing up qualitative research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Newbury Park: Sage
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/content-design/writing-for-gov-uk>  
<https://www.researchtoaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/PBWeekLauraFCfinal.pdf>  
<https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/offices/bicameral/post/about-post/writing-a-policy-brief/>  
<http://www.scidev.net/global/communication/practical-guide/how-do-i-brief-policymakers-on-science-related-iss.html>  
<http://www.fasttrackimpact.com/single-post/2015/12/19/How-to-make-a-policy-brief-that-has-real-impact>