Phronesis in investigative interviewing: A scoping review

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Abstract

While evidence-based practice aspires to ground professional decision-making in empirical research, it often falls short in addressing the complexity, unpredictability, and moral ambiguity of real-world practice. This thesis argues that "phronesis" - understood as practical wisdom, situational awareness, and ethical discernment - is a supplementary approach to reach the goals of investigative interviewing. A distinction is made for instructions in manuals that are specific and ambiguous. Specific instructions are more useful in practice, but lack enough generalizability to be applicable to the case-by-case nature of investigative interviewing. Ambiguous instruction instead shows less utility, but can be applied to most cases a practitioner may encounter. Phronesis is observed in training manuals by understanding how practitioners act upon its ambiguous instructions. This paper attempts to answer the research question: is phronesis used to apply techniques for investigative interviewing? A scoping analysis on training manuals for investigative interviewers was conducted. Codes were created with a predetermined theoretical framework in the form of The Taxonomy of Interrogation Methods (Kelly, Redlich, & Kleinman, 2013). Results for this research demonstrate how training manuals expect practitioners to be phronetic. This implies for the training of interviewers that phronesis should be encouraged so practitioners are trained to make the best decisions at the best times.

Key terms: Phronesis, Investigative Interviewing, Interrogation, Techniques, Training Manuals, Scoping review

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Introduction

"To know your enemy is the best strategy. It takes time, commitment and grueling effort": this is the recommended modality for interrogators to draw out a confession from homicide suspects, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) Behavioural Analysis Unit (Douglas, Burgess, Burgess, & Ressler, 2006)

For police, the enemies are people who are guilty of crimes, and actively avoid retribution. With the job of police being to capture these people, evasion from punishment can persist up until court, where a final verdict will eventually conclude a case. Between capture and the trial, police have an opportunity to conduct interviews on suspects, which - ideally - can be used as evidence to push the criminal investigation forward.

To avoid negative connotations with malpractice, coercion, and torture, an investigative interview is the modern terminology for what was once known as an interrogation. Though the approach has changed, the premise remains the same: "The overall objective should be to obtain reliable information; information that will push the investigation in the right direction. The objective should not be to get a confession." (Mac Giolla & Granhag, 2017, p. 362) The FBI's advice addresses an interesting notion that in order to have a successful interview, interviewers must study the case, and know the enemy. No case is the same for interviewers, and in recognizing this, the FBI puts forward reliable guidance.

Interrogation in practice has encountered a lot of criticism, and only recently has there been a shift toward using techniques based on empirical research. Preceding the year 2006, interviewing techniques in the United States - and their training - were devoid of any supporting evidence on whether they provide reliable and valid findings (Fein, Lehner, & Vossekuil, 2006) (Meissner, Surmon-Bohr, Oleszkiewicz, & Alison, 2017). Then in that year, a scientific report was published that drew conclusions about the current state of interrogation as a discipline. With an evidence-based approach, the report delved into issues concerning how interrogation is solely taught through personal experience (Gudjonsson, 2002). Not only does this mean that there is no evidence to support arguments made, but measuring effectiveness of interrogation practice becomes almost impossible with no established standard between practitioners. The report concludes that a program of scientific research on interrogation practice is necessary for the discipline to move forward. Reflecting the change of terminology, the approach to investigative interviewing has also changed over the past decades: It has shifted from admission seeking approaches to information gathering approaches. That is, the former seeks for confessions, while the latter simply seeks for reliable information, while encouraging non-coercive techniques (Meissner, Redlich, Michael, Evans, Camilletti, Bhatt, & Brandon, 2014).

In the context of real world application, the reason why the advice "To know your enemy-" is so great is because it will always work. Namely, the strategy can help, and be applied to just about any case. This is the pay-off of having such a vague instruction. The trade-off however - similar to many vague instructions - pertains to the lack of clarification. The advice cannot provide more to an interviewer than a general direction. So, interviewers are left to

interpret this advice on their own accord - managing the specifics by themselves. "It takes time, commitment and grueling effort": An interviewer's job entails studying the suspects case, studying their history, and it could even go as far as getting to know the suspects social circles. All of this can be done prior to the interview as preparation, keeping in mind that the interviewer might not have even met their suspect yet. Once the interview begins though, it becomes evident to the interviewer that the FBI's advice is not so useful in a practical sense. Sure, gaining a suspect's personal information can be deemed useful for an investigative interview, but do interviewers know how to take advantage of this information in the midst of an interview?

To understand how an interviewer acts upon ambiguous instruction, it is important to consider the Arestotelian term "phronesis", also known as practical wisdom. It refers to one's ability to make sound decisions in complex, real-life situations. Aristotle distinguished phronesis as something that requires experience, and to have practical wisdom is to inquire well into what would be a good course of action (Aristotle, 1999) In the context of investigative interviewing, a phronetic interviewer would be able to meet the goals of interviewing with ease. Also, phronetic interviewers should be able to take appropriate action with ambiguous instruction. With the FBI's advice for example, a phronetic interviewer would not only know how to collect information on a suspect, but then also know how to use this information to their advantage. Working with ambiguous instructions seems difficult through this exaggerated example, because all it says is "know your enemy." Instead, instructions that are slightly more specific could make it easier. As phronesis requires experience, the fact that interviewers mostly learn through experience reflects how phronesis is important in practice.

Extensive instructions for investigative interviewing are found in handbooks and manuals. Being the tools to teach investigative interviewers, it would be hopeful that their instructions are applicable to any case one can be faced with. Addressing the margin between specific and ambiguous instruction in manuals is important here. Though specific instructions can be very useful for a particular case, they cannot generalize well for most cases. Likewise, while ambiguous instructions are more generalizable, they can be just as useless if it is too difficult to act upon. Within investigative interviewing manuals, instructions find themselves somewhere on this margin where generalizability and utility is somehow maximized. To counter the lack of application that comes with specific instruction, some ambiguity is required to make instructions generalizable. Phronesis plays a role according to the amount of ambiguity an instruction has, and how interviewers take action with nuanced instructions.

For police officers, a certain level of phronesis is useful in solving exceptional problems (High-Value Detainee Interrogation Group, 2016). This paper will take it one step further by considering what are the most common problems interviewers encounter, and how phronesis is used to overcome them. To help clarify what these problems are, the Taxonomy of Interrogation Methods (Kelly et al, 2013) will be used as a framework. Through six domains, the taxonomy categorizes 71 interrogation techniques. This heuristic device is based on 47 sources which cumulatively discuss 824 interrogation techniques. Introducing this taxonomy to understand interviewing techniques is appropriate because it summarizes results from 47 different studies all into one organized taxonomy. The domains are: Rapport and relationship building, Context manipulation, Emotion provocation, Confrontation and competition, Cooperation, and Presentation of evidence. Refer to appendix A for all constituent interrogation techniques.

Because investigative interviews are shaped by case-specific details, interviewee characteristics, and unique contextual factors, no two interviews are the same (High-Value Detainee Interrogation Group, 2016). Hence, teaching and mastering investigative interviewing is a very challenging task. On top of this, for instructions in training manuals to be generalizable, a degree of ambiguity is needed. Now, with the taxonomy of interrogation methods, a research question arises: Is phronesis used to apply techniques for investigative interviewing? To conduct this research, a scoping review will be done on investigative interviewing manuals. In doing so, it will be understood whether instructional text is flexible enough to encourage phronesis.

Methods

A scoping review is the best design for the research for three reasons: First, as the data will come from investigative interviewing manuals, mapping the existing literature will provide an overview over this broad topic allowing us to identify key concepts, and gaps in the literature. Second, in being able to use the taxonomy of interrogation methods for the scoping review, understanding the content from interviewing manuals will be fairly simple. Last, by identifying trends and gaps in the manuals, a scoping review can help as a guide for future research on the discipline.

Search Strategy

PsychINFO, WorldCat, Google Scholar and Google were used to collect interrogation manuals. The search was conducted in January 2025. The use of these directories, justified by the immense scale of available data, free access, and algorithms, provide relevant results from search

queries. Traditional search methods were used for all directories. That is, a search query (eg "Interrogation manual") is the input for the directory, and an output (A link to published text) is then screened to judge whether it is applicable to this study and is deemed usable. Accumulated interrogation manuals are then saved in a repository .

Queries for WorldCat, Google Scholar, and Google were straightforward: "Interrogation Manual, Police Interview Handbook, Interrogation Technique, Police Manual, Investigative Interview Manual, Investigative Interview Handbook". Whereas for PsychINFO, queries were tailored for specific keywords such as "(Interrogat* OR Investigat* OR Police*) AND (Manual OR Protocol OR Guide OR Handbook)." Once the directory displays the output, the identification and screening can start.

Identification and Screening

Selection criteria for interrogation manuals were constructed prior to the search. A strict criteria was that any manual acquired should be in English as that is the author's native language. A more lenient criteria pertains to manuals not being limited to one publication type. Books, journals, journal articles, and - naturally - manuals for the purpose of practice were chosen. Publication type is not mutually exclusive to whether instructional text can be used in practice. If a text can be used in practice, this study will include that text under the umbrella term 'manual' and will treat it as such. This criteria allows for various publication types to be used, while still ensuring literature comes from a reputable and scientific background.

When becoming aware of what data is available in reality, screening out manuals becomes an important step. Using the search strategy, the amount of information was overwhelming, so quickly being able to screen out redundant results was the goal. By reading the title of each result, an accurate judgment can be made of whether the publication would be considered an interrogation manual. If the title was not enough, the abstract - or table of contents for books - was read in order to help pass judgment. For books, only relevant chapters were chosen as data. For a publication to be considered an interrogation manual, it must have had instructional content that can be used in practice. All data that was deemed appropriate was then organized into a Google Docs as a repository. This preliminary screening is able to exclude the majority of redundant sources, but some sources can still slip through and make it to the repository. If this was the case, data can be screened out at any time during the analysis.

Coding: Finding phronesis through instances of ambiguous instruction

The basis of our codes were deduced from the theoretical framework. Prepared prior to analysis, individual codes were derived through the 71 constituent interrogation techniques. Not every technique will get an individual code. The domain of Context manipulation for example, refers to eleven constituent techniques that are only concerned with altering the physical space of the interrogation. This entails altering seating arrangements, picking a time of the day and even considering the choice of clothing. Since most of these techniques lack an interactional quality with the interviewee, their effects only have passive influence on behaviour, whereas the other domains directly influence the interviewee. Codes will more so reflect techniques that have direct influence on behaviour. Nevertheless, codes will attempt to be representative of all 71 techniques. To fully implement the theoretical framework into the research, every domain will

have at least one code. The author recommends to refer to appendix A for the constituent techniques that codes are based on.

Domain of Rapport and Relationship Building. Building rapport: This code is applied to instances of instructional text that encourage rapport building with interviewees. Building rapport is characterised by a harmonious relationship between interviewer and interviewee. The purpose of these techniques is to limit any resistance from interviewees. This will include all fourteen constituent techniques in the domain.

Domain of Context Manipulation. Setting the stage: This code is applied to instances of instructional text that are concerned with altering the physical space of the interrogation. This includes constituent techniques one through seven and nine through eleven. The eighth technique will have its own code. Prisoner's Dilemma: This code is exclusive to the eighth technique and is applied to instances of instructional text that seek to benefit from cases with multiple perpetrators. The prisoner's dilemma from the perspective of interviewers is the process of increasing mistrust between perpetrators so either is more likely to confess.

Domain of Emotion Provocation. Minimization and maximization: This code is applied to instances of instructional text where an interviewee's perception of consequences of a crime are minimized and feelings of guilt are maximized thus both increasing the desire to confess. This technique was introduced in the most famous admission seeking approach to interrogation: the REID technique (Black & Fennelly, 2021). It has stood the test of time, proven its effectiveness, and thus has found its way into the taxonomy of interrogation methods. This code

reflects constituent techniques two, five, seven, eight, nine, eleven and twelve. Emotional provocation: This code is applied to instances of instructional text that encourage interviewers to provoke, manipulate and benefit from the emotions of interviewees. The constituent techniques this code are related to are one, three, four, six and ten. Examples include capitalizing on an interviewee's shock, and flattering the interviewee.

Domain of Confrontation and Competition. Strength: This code is applied to instances of instructional text that direct interviewers to be authoritative in the interview. This is useful by ensuring interviewers remain in control and can therefore steer the interview toward a desired direction. This code is made out of constituent techniques one, two, three, seven, eight, and nine. Examples include emphasizing expertise, preventing denial from the interviewee and threatening with consequences for non-cooperation. Use of trickery: This code is applied to instances of instructional text that encourage interviewers to deceive interviewees and stimulate a change in behaviour. Whether it is the use of deceptive techniques, or making the interviewee believe the interviewer is truly angry, the purpose of these techniques are to stimulate and confront. The constituent techniques this code relates to are four, five, six, and ten through thirteen.

Domain of Collaboration. Using rapport advantageously: This code is applied to instances of instructional text concerned with situations where rapport can be used advantageously. Typically, rapport is established to prevent reactance and hence resistance from interviewees, but this is just a consequence of establishing rapport. Using rapport advantageously is the process of gaining more from the relationship. This entails being able to bargain with the

interviewee for a deal where information is traded for a lesser sentencing for example. All seven
constituent techniques from the domain are relevant to this code.

        Domain of Presentation of Evidence. Strategic use of evidence: This code is applied to
instances of instructional text that seek for interviewers to present evidence in a strategic manner.
Keeping the interviewee in the dark about information on the case can be beneficial, as a
deceptive interviewee for example may then struggle to provide a verifiable alibi. This code is
representative for all eight constituent techniques related to this domain.

        Any instructional text to which one of these codes can be applied will be analyzed on
how phronesis is being promoted. This will be done based on the margin of specificity versus
ambiguity with said instructional text. If instructional text does not fall into any domain from the
framework, inductive reasoning will be used to develop new codes that explain the text better..

Epistemological stance: The researcher as an observer and interpreter

        As there is only one person studying the manuals in the repository, it is important to note
that this research is subject to personal biases from the author. My theory of knowledge derives
from the perspective of a twenty-four year old caucasian male who studies psychology, and is an
aspiring investigative interviewer. The aspirations could give rise to a conflict of interest due to
subjecting biases onto the codes. For example, I am biased in thinking these manuals are made
by experts in the field of interrogation, whom I - as a researcher - might have to criticize.
Consider these criticisms with caution as this is the first occasion I study investigative
interviewing in such depth. Taking this all into account, it can make me naive in my ability to

think critically. For example, an interrogation technique I might consider to be not so phronetic - might actually be very phronetic in practice. It is encouraged to remember that the research is subjective as the coding process changes depending on who does it.

This research has been approved by the ethics committee at the University of Groningen's behavioural and social science department. There is no sensitive data used in this study as all material is publicly available.

Results

Sixteen manuals were analyzed and coded. With different publication dates and points of interest, a broad understanding of manuals for investigative interviewing was achieved. The analysis ended with a total of thirteen codes. That is, nine preliminary codes, and four codes developed inductively through analysis.

There were many differences between manuals. While some manuals discussed the best strategies for eliciting a confession, others focused on legal and ethical concerns interviewers may encounter. The manual from the San Diego Police Department (Brown, Kalmanoff, Kizziah, & Silbert, 1973) focused on field interrogations - think of a police officer pulling someone over on the highway - while most focused on interviews in a controlled environment - think of an interrogation room. A clear distinction can be made between manuals that follow an admission seeking approach as opposed to an information gathering approach. Each approach emphasized the importance of their techniques in order to achieve their respective goals. As a result, the goals for an interrogation also changed between manuals; where some are only successful if a

confession is elicited, others are labeled a success if you managed to get the suspect to talk. A benefit from having so many manuals is that the most important aspects of investigative interviewing can be understood simply by looking for similarities between manuals.

The four new codes were a result from the taxonomy of interrogation methods not being applicable to instructional text. These codes are *identifying and evaluating baggage, interviewing styles*, *managing cognitive dissonance*, and *professional responsibility*. The first pertains to the idea that interviewers should learn about an interviewee's stereotypes, cultural background, and individual character, calling it their "baggage." Recall the FBI's advice. The second acknowledges that interviewers also have their own individual differences. Only, interviewers have more control over these differences, and can adapt their behaviour to fit the baggage of the interviewee. An interviewer adapting their behaviour to match the baggage of interviewees is called their "style." The third code is for instructions that direct interviewers to manage their own emotions, as in many situations, investigative interviewing can be stressful scenarios where the stakes are high. Cognitive dissonance is an internal conflict anyone can experience when their actions contradict their beliefs. This code is justified with the fact that interviewers frequently must manage their cognitive dissonance. The last code was created to reflect the real task demands of interviewers outside the context of investigative interviewing. That is, interviewers represent many external parties such as the police department they work for, and must maintain a degree of professionalism and responsibility. Any violation of professional responsibility has the potential to render entire interviews as inadmissible evidence in court. For example, if a suspect was not read their rights before the interview.

Domain of Rapport and Relationship Building. The UN Manual of investigative

interviewing adopts the most famous information gathering approach called the PEACE model

which promote non coercive techniques, and recognizes the benefits of rapport (Davison, n.d.).

"An important element in rapport building is to show empathy;" and "-respect, empathy, a

nonjudgmental mindset, non-aggressive posture, attentiveness to details, and patience-" Acting

on these instructions appears easy, but when comparing this manual with others, we can see a

different perspective: "An officer with children may be utterly revolted by a sex criminal or child

murderer. Regardless, he must maintain a neutral manner or risk blowing the interrogation."

(Rapp, 1987). For this particular case, the code of cognitive dissonance can be used here to

understand that rapport is also established by interviewers managing their emotions. With an

additional perspective, the ambiguous instruction "show empathy" becomes more clear. So

together, two codes are applied to understand how techniques interact with one another. This is

the first instance of codes occurring together, and this can be seen under different contexts.

"A suspect who has murdered his wife, for example, may be very responsive to an

interrogator who gets the point across that he understands how stressful marriage can be." (Rapp,

1987). A responsive interviewee is indicative of rapport. By coding this as baggage, tailoring the

interview to understand the context of an individual's life helps build rapport. Marriage plays an

important role in this case, and in considering that, it becomes easier for interviewers to show

empathy and build rapport. Rapport is established through demonstrating abilities like empathy,

respect, and attentiveness to details. Interviewers are instructed to demonstrate these abilities by

first managing one's own cognitive dissonance, and understanding a suspect's baggage. Under

the context of building rapport, there is a relationship between techniques from the taxonomy

and techniques identified inductively. The inductive codes help in considering multiple techniques from different manuals, and understand how exactly rapport is established. Individually, manuals fail at providing detailed explanations on how to build rapport, and what obstacles one might come across in doing so.

Domain of Context Manipulation. The code 'setting the stage' was prominent in a lot of manuals. An issue was encountered however in grasping the effects that context manipulation has. Altering the seating arrangement in an interview is a technique that might influence the interview, but the extent of this influence, and the exact effect it has does not seem to be fully understood by practitioners. For manuals that followed information gathering approaches, context manipulation was the process of ensuring interviewees are comfortable. That is, the conditions of the interview room should be satisfactory with food, drink, and access to the lavatory. Reflecting the goals of information gathering approaches to interviews, ensuring comfort for interviewees serves only as a benefit in establishing rapport. Instructional text is very specific and easy to understand. Phronesis does not seem so relevant under the context of context manipulation.

Very few manuals consider the 'prisoner's dilemma' as cases with co-conspirators are not encountered so frequently. Manuals that did consider cases with co-conspirators did not place much emphasis on its instruction either. Common sense seems to be the deciding factor on how interviewers should navigate these types of cases. "Co-conspirators don't always have their stories straight - and the interrogator can exploit these discrepancies to break the case wide open." (Rapp, 1987). This ambiguous instruction to 'exploit discrepancies' requires the

interviewers to know the details of the case, and act upon it in a way that builds mistrust between conspirators thus increasing the likelihood of a confession.

Domain of Emotional Provocation. Originating from the notable REID technique, 'minimization and maximization' is found in all manuals that encourage the admission seeking approach. "The interrogator's job is to reduce the fear of punishment and enhance the desire to confess." (Gordon & Fleisher, 2011, p. 256). To "minimize the blame" and hence the fear of punishment, interviewers are instructed to "offer a series of possibilities of how and why this [the crime] may have happened." To maximize the desire to confess, interviewers are instructed to enhance feelings of guilt in the suspect. By appealing to a suspect's consciousness through emotional provocation, the interviewer stands present as someone who can relieve guilt through administering punishment or forgiveness to the crime. Reducing someone's fears, and increasing feelings of guilt all point toward the interviewer knowing the interviewee well. If interviewers consider the baggage of interviewees before this technique is used, it could help make administering the technique more comprehensible. Ambiguous instruction is made more clear by applying codes that were created inductively through other manuals.

Acting upon 'emotional provocation' requires interviewers to be very attentive to an interviewee's current state of mind. Moments where interviewers need to press for confessions are explained using an analogy of how seeking a confession is like selling something to someone. Like a salesperson, interviewers are instructed to "watch for the buy signs." (Gordon & Fleisher, 2011, p. 262) These signs are explained through an interviewee's "nonverbal signs of submission" and how they might ask questions pertaining to the crime's punishment. Attention to

an interviewees emotions is key here. Taking action on emotional provocation then closely preceded the domain of techniques concerning confrontation and competition.

Domain of Confrontation and Competition. Strength was mostly found in manuals that follow admission seeking approaches. While manuals label things differently: "Executive power" (Brown et al, 1973) or "Force assertion" (Gordon & Fleisher, 2011), interviewers must be authoritative figures that can steer the interview in a desirable direction. This is considered in the taxonomy through the first constituent technique (Emphasize your authority and expertise over source). Relating to emotional provocation, after an interviewer identifies the "buy signs", acting upon these signs and confronting them requires interviewers to demonstrate strength. The case-by-case nature of interviewing makes it very difficult for manuals to provide specific instruction on the correct timing of confronting suspects. Information gathering approaches do not promote strength as it can induce stress on interviewees. Instead, they provide an interesting alternative. The PEACE model instructs interviewers to listen to a suspect's entire story in narrative form, and only after confront them about details of their story. Confronting these details in an efficient manner is done by interviewers following what the manual calls 'The information funnel.' The process entails interviewers narrowing the scope of relevant information to the point where the discussion is solely about relevant details to the crime. To act on this, interviewers are instructed to start with open-ended questions, and to sparingly use close-ended questions as a method of gaining clarification.

The code 'use of trickery' refers to a controversial technique that is also mainly encouraged in admission seeking manuals. There are many ways to do this, and to do it

effectively is to tailor it to the specific case. "It's necessary to adapt this story to the individual case, to each type of crime." (Rapp, 1987, p. 80-81). For the prisoner's dilemma for example, if interviewers were to say "Your partner confessed", this falsification can motivate either conspirator to actually confess. Some promote tactics like a "fake phone call" to scare interviewees, "have a friend play the role of eyewitness" or even make the suspect believe officers have found their DNA at the crime scene. Trickery can either be simple or complicated. The main goal here is to induce stress. Admission seeking manuals encourage interviewees to be creative with trickery, and to be responsible in making sure the confession is still admissible for court. "-it can lead to many, many variants." Instructions for the timing of trickery, and whether its use is appropriate are very ambiguous and seems to be completely up to the interviewer.

Domain of Cooperation. The code 'using rapport advantageously' was a rare occurrence in manuals. Instead, most manuals focused on how to build rapport, and in doing so, lowering resistance from interviewees. Taking advantage of rapport was discussed in the context of managing aggression. Deescalation seems to be easier when rapport is already established. Interviewers are advised to "stay calm" because "if the person also perceives that you are losing control, the situation will get worse." (Neuman, & Salinas-Serrano, 2005). Under the condition that rapport is already established, manuals place more emphasis on getting to know the interviewee to comprehend their baggage, as it becomes an easier process. Rapport seems to be a quality that provides many opportunities for interviewers to push the investigation in their desired direction. What is actually stated in the San Diego manual is "finding ways of reading the baggage of the interviewees so that the officer can assess his or her impact." (Brown et al,

1973). Acquiring information on an interviewees baggage is then easier to do when rapport is already established, and hence it is also easier to then adapt the style.

Domain of Presentation of Evidence. There are contradictions between manuals on how evidence should be presented to interviewees. The Integrated Interrogation Technique manual (Gordon & Fleisher, 2011) emphasizes that presenting "leverage" early in the interview can be used to gain authority. On the other hand, the book Forensic psychology: Crime, justice, law and interventions (Mac Giolla & Granhag, 2017) presents many reasons why evidence should be presented gradually throughout the interview. By disclosing evidence early within the interview, it damages rapport by stimulating reactance and increasing the likelihood for a false confession from innocent suspects. Disclosing evidence too early with guilty suspects plays into their hands as they can prepare evasive strategies. Guilty suspects can then create statements that are consistent with both the evidence and their claimed innocence. Lastly, if you use evidence, you cannot unuse it. Similar to context manipulation, presenting evidence strategically has influential effects, but these effects are not fully understood.

Professional Responsibility. The last code of professional responsibility was very prominent across all manuals. Whether concerned with how to prevent false confession, manage vulnerable interviewees, or remain lawful, manuals place a lot of emphasis on how interviewers should behave as professionals. One manual almost exclusively focuses on the bounds of the law, and how officers can stay within them without substantial legal knowledge (Salhany, 1994). "In a sense, then, he [the interviewer] must know the rules and be prepared to work within them." and "He may also feel frustrated with a system that appears to have no certain guidelines or rules to

tell him how far he can go in his interrogation." Knowing the rules when they are not made explicit is the justification for Professional responsibility being coded for as phronetic. Interviewers must overcome their lack of understanding of the laws and adapt on their own accord as they navigate the conflict of fulfilling the interview's goals, while still producing admissible evidence for court. This code refers to the right way of doing work for interviewers. Manuals also provide many guidelines on how to prevent false confessions. For example, for suggestible interviewees like children or the mentally challenged, it is told to repeatedly ask the interviewee whether they understand the implications of what they said, and what was told to them.

Discussion

Recall the goal for investigative interviewing: "The overall objective should be to obtain reliable information – " (Mac Giolla & Granhag, 2017). In analyzing the sixteen manuals another goal was identified for investigative interviewing. A commonality amongst manuals is the goal concerning procedural justice for interviewees. Namely, interviewers need to come about their information 'legally' and avoid malpractice. If this goal is not met, regardless of how reliable the information is, the interview cannot be used in the criminal proceedings and will be deemed a failure. This was coded with Professional responsibility, and is justified by its substantial discussion in manuals. So with two goals for interviewing, phronesis is identified under different contexts.

Regarding the first goal, manuals instruct interviewers to obtain reliable information by using techniques from the taxonomy of interrogation methods. Phronesis is encouraged through the ambiguous nature of these instructions. In a general sense "Improvisation will almost always be necessary during an interrogation." (Rapp, 1987). By referring to one's ability to make

decisions in complex, real-life situations, phronesis seems to be a prominent quality for improvisation. Though this instruction does not have a lot of practical utility, it acknowledges the real nature of interviewing in that the best way to learn is to do. This also supports the notion proposed by Gudjonsson (2002) that interviewing is almost exclusively learned through experience.

Building rapport is a perfect example to understand how manuals encourage phronesis. By giving instructions like "show empathy", it is assumed that interviewers have their emotions under control. An interesting way of thinking about this was proposed in the manual from Burt Rapp: "a successful interrogator has to be an actor." By combining certain aspects that were emphasized in each manual, we begin to paint a picture of what it really takes to build rapport. More than just being empathic (Department of Peace Operations, 2024) to build rapport, interviewers should manage their cognitive dissonance and consider a suspect's baggage (Brown, 1973; Rapp, 1987). Individually, no manuals look at rapport from all these different angles, but from a holistic perspective, all manuals together do. The fact that each manual approaches rapport in a different way indicates the need for the interviewer to have phronesis.

Not only do manuals approach techniques like rapport differently, the reader also approaches these instructions in their own way. The impact of instructional text depends on who is reading it. If for example interviewers are instructed to "present evidence late in the interview", where one interviewer might perceive this as presenting evidence one hour into the interview, another interviewer might perceive this as presenting evidence 24 hours into the interview. By leaving instructions up to interpretation, phronesis seems to be an expected quality interviewers should have. A phronetic interviewer is expected to know what is meant by "late" and act upon it appropriately based on the case they are working on. The perception of

ambiguous instructions is also influenced by an interviewer's style. Manuals acknowledge that some styles are better at achieving reliable information: To be an expert at interviewing, "experts - not coincidentally - have unusually low numbers of fights and complaints." and have "a certain undefined investigative skill" (Brown, 1973, p. 35). With no manual ever referring to the term phronesis, from the repository, this is the closest thing to a specific call upon phronesis. In admitting that this skill is undefined, this could be a supplementary way of saying how phronesis is a skill expert interviewers have. So holistically, the manuals encourage phronesis because they propose a lot of different instructions, and individually, adopting these vague instructions and acting on them in your own way also requires phronesis.

Still, investigative interviewing is evidently more than just the application of interrogation techniques. There is a whole other side to it which encourages that information is acquired legally in the context of providing admissible evidence in court. When analyzing the manuals, the recurring question came up: How much legal knowledge are interviewers expected to know? The answer to this question in short: not much. Nonetheless, manuals placed a lot of emphasis on its importance. To achieve the second goal of investigative interviewing, instead of teaching the full extent of criminal law, manuals teach interviewers on how to have a good instinct and common sense for when it is reasonable to detain a suspect. Decisions made by interviewers "will be the subject of judicial scrutiny" (Salhany, 1994, p. 199) and preventing this is the second goal for investigative interviewing.

The idea of having a professional responsibility can be seen in other contexts besides the rules for detaining suspects. The interviewers are culpable for anything that goes wrong in the interview, including a false confession. Since the late 1980's, there have been 250 interrogation-induced false confessions with the mean time served in prison being 14 years (The

Center on Wrongful Convictions, n.d.). The UN Manual of investigative interviewing addresses

this with a whole section on the "acute risk of unreliable statements and false confessions."

Interviewers are told to be responsible with force assertion (coded for as strength) as most

interviewees experience a "heightened stress [that] may hinder the interviewee's ability to take

informed decisions and understand the possible implications of their answers." Following these

guidelines is all up to the interviewer, and would take some level of common sense when

detecting interviewees that are vulnerable. Phronesis is present here in moral judgment.

Interviewers should be able to detect whether something was not fully understood by

interviewees, and ensuring this clarity is part of the job. Professional responsibility is not

necessarily just used as a code for phronesis, but it was used as a code for the diverse nature of

task demands of which interviewers must use phronesis to navigate.

One significant limitation for this study is that in using manuals to search for instances of

phronesis, the research does not consider what is actually occurring in the discipline of

investigative interviewing. Interpreting this using Higgins's (1987) self discrepancy theory, the

manuals provide a perspective of what interviewers ought to be, and not what actually is. To

understand the importance of phronesis in practice, and provide the perspective of what actually

is, further research that interviews practitioners is granted. Manuals are used as a proxy to

understand what is happening in practice.

Conclusion

In bringing together the central arguments of this qualitative research, it becomes clear

that phronesis is a significant concept to achieve the goals of investigative interviewing. Through

analysing training manuals with the taxonomy of interrogation methods, we have seen that varied

instructions represent phronetic practice, and phronesis too is required to act upon the ambiguous

nature of these instructions. These insights bear implications for the education system of investigative interviewing. As manuals acknowledge phronesis in different ways by calling upon improvisation and common sense, the education programs should fully incorporate phronesis into their curriculums. By placing emphasis on phronesis, novice interviewers should know that there is no perfect way to approach instructional text, and instead should be encouraged to interpret and act upon it in their own way.

The evidence presented illustrates not only the complexity of navigating ambiguous instruction but also supports the idea that investigative interviewing is taught through experience. While challenges remain, particularly concerning the application of this research in practice, it is evident that the theoretical framework was an appropriate tool to understand interrogation techniques.

Ultimately, this essay affirms that phronesis is used to apply techniques for investigative interviewing. Future efforts must continue to optimize its teaching, develop better evidence based manuals, and above all, remain attuned to the evolving realities that shape this dynamic field. In doing so, we can move beyond simplistic narratives and towards more sophisticated, actionable understandings. The age-old saying from Thomas Hobbes "Knowledge is power" must be taken with a grain of salt because the real power comes from being able to act upon the knowledge one possesses.

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Appendix A: Taxonomy of Interrogation Methods (Table 1A) (Kelly et al, 2013)

Interrogation Domains and Constituent Techniques

Rapport and relationship building	Context manipulation	Emotion provocation	Confrontation and competition	Collaboration	Presentation of evidence
1. Find common ground or shared experiences	1. Conduct the interrogation in a small room	1. Appeal to self-interest	1. Emphasize your authority and expertise over source	1. Offer rewards or reinforcement for desired information	1. Confront source with *actual* evidence of involvement
2. Show kindness and respect	2. Move the interrogation from a formal room to a more neutral setting	2. Appeal to conscience	2. Challenge the values held by source	2. Make bargains with source	2. Confront source with fabricated or knowingly unsubstantiated evidence of involvement
3. Identify and meet basic needs	3. Move the interrogation from a neutral setting to a more formal room	3. Appeal to religion	3. Threaten source with consequences for non-cooperation	3. Appeal to sense of cooperation	3. Bluff or bait source about supposed evidence you have of involvement
4. Be patient	4. Isolate source before interrogation	4. Interrogate source while very stressed.	4. Express impatience, frustration or anger	4. Present scenario so source may regain or assert control	4. Identify contradictions with source's story
5. Allow source to play role of teacher	5. Disorganize source by manipulating the physical space	5. Offer moral rationalizations	5. Use deception	5. Offer special rewards (e.g., cigarettes, candy) for cooperation	5. Reveal evidence to source, demonstrating that s/he can offer no more useful information until s/he eventually does
6. Build a bond	6. Consider the time of day	6. Capitalize on capture shock	6. Obscure source's fate	6. Offer intangible rewards (e.g., encouragement, respect)	6. Use polygraphs or other physiological measures
7. Present self as in a role/persona other than being an interrogator	7. Consider your physical appearance (clothing)	7. Appeal to negative feelings for individuals or organizations	7. Ask the same question over and over	7. Present a scenario where interrogator's "job" is to accurately represent source as innocent or helpful to higher authorities	7. Show source photos or statements from witnesses or others
8. Touch source in a friendly manner	8. Prisoner's Dilemma	8. Identify and exaggerate fears	8. Ask a series of questions quickly and without allowing source to answer		8. Use visual aids
9. Find identities in common	9. Consider where operator and detainees' chairs are in relation to one another	9. Reduce fears	9. Do not allow denials from source		
10. Attempt to become source's lifeline	10. Create setting that is culturally attractive.	10. Flatter source	10. Do not speak to source, only stare at source		
11. You make yourself appear to be similar to the source	11. Consider the effect of certain colors or sounds	11. Instill hopelessness in source	11. Confront source without insulting		
12. Show concern for source and his/her situation		12. Encourage source to take responsibility for the outcome	12. Adopt a non-friendly stance		
13. Use similar language as the source (e.g. slang)			13. Insult source		

Table 1 (*continued*)

Rapport and relationship building	Context manipulation	Emotion provocation	Confrontation and competition	Collaboration	Presentation of evidence
14. Employ active listening skills (e.g., eye contact, nodding, summarize source's statements)			14. Get another interrogator and employ good cop/ bad cop 15. Directly accuse source with being involved 16. Accuse source of being someone s/he is not 17. Disparage or dismiss information source provides 18. Misconstrue the source's own words 19. Ask unexpected/ alternative questions		

Appendix B: List of Manuals Analyzed

1. Gordon, N. J., & Fleisher, W. L. (2011). The integrated interrogation technique. In *Effective interviewing and interrogation techniques* (pp. 255–277). https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-381986-4.00018-3

2. Gordon, N. J., & Fleisher, W. L. (2011). Nonverbal Behavioural Assessment. In *Effective interviewing and interrogation techniques* (pp. 105–140). https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-381986-4.00009-2

3. Gordon, N. J., & Fleisher, W. L. (2011). Interviewing Children and the Mentally Challenged. In *Effective interviewing and interrogation techniques* (pp. 209–218). https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-381986-4.00012-2

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15. Abbe, A., & Brandon, S. E. (2013). Building and maintaining rapport in investigative interviews. *Police Practice and Research*, *15*(3), 207–220. https://doi.org/10.1080/15614263.2013.827835

16. Wells, S., & Brandon, S. (2018). Interviewing in criminal and intelligence-gathering contexts: Applying science. *International Journal of Forensic Mental Health, 18*(6), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/14999013.2018.1536090

Appendix C: ChatGPT Prompts

Generative artificial intelligence was only used in helping to format the reference list. Artificial intelligence was NOT used as a tool to get sources of information. It was only used to help format references in accordance with APA guidelines.

The following template prompt was fed into ChatGPT for every source:

Title: *<Insert chapter or journal article title>*

Author/s: *<Insert authors and/or editors>*

Published in: *<Insert date>*

Publisher: *<Insert Publisher>*

Series title: *<Insert book title>*

DOI: *<Insert digital object identifier>*

Volume, issues, chapters and pages: *<Insert Chapter number, name, and page numbers>*

The output from these prompts would provide a reference that is in accordance with APA guideline. Here is an example:

Title: Interviewing in Criminal and Intelligence-Gathering Contexts: Applying Science

Author/s: Simon Wells & Sussan Brandon

Published in: November 2018

Publisher: n/A

Series title: International Journal of Forensic Mental Health

DOI: 10.1080/14999013.2018.1536090

Volume, issue, chapters, and pages: V18, I6, Pages 1- 16

The output is as follows:

Wells, S., & Brandon, S. (2018). *Interviewing in criminal and intelligence-gathering contexts: Applying science. International Journal of Forensic Mental Health*, 18(6), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/14999013.2018.1536090