

Researching Understandings of the Child in Intercultural Marriages: Trying out a Hermeneutic Interview Protocol¹

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In interpretive inquiry, researchers need interviewing approaches that will create possibilities for insight and holistic understanding. A hermeneutic interview protocol was developed and refined over a number of years in the context of an interpretive inquiry course. In this study, one of the authors examines her experience with using this interview framework in a practice inquiry for her research on “understandings of the child” in intercultural marriages. The study identifies the misgivings and doubts she experienced before and during the interview. It also illustrates how the structure of the interview supported the interview participant in reflecting upon and reconstructing his experience and supported the researcher in accomplishing a fusion of horizons. The interview framework invited stories from different important contexts and having stories from across time, place, and activity enabled the researcher to identify themes. Clarity about themes meant that important stories could be interpreted with more confidence.

Dans le cadre d'une enquête interprétative, les chercheurs ont besoin d'approches aux entrevues qui créent des possibilités de compréhension holistique et de vision. Un protocole d'entrevue herméneutique a été développé et affiné pendant plusieurs années dans le contexte d'un cours sur l'enquête interprétative. Dans cette étude, l'une des auteures examine son expérience de l'utilisation de ce cadre d'entrevue dans une enquête pratique pour sa recherche sur les "conceptions de l'enfant" dans les mariages interculturels. L'étude identifie les réticences et les doutes qu'elle a éprouvés avant et pendant l'entrevue. L'étude illustre également dans quelle mesure la structure de l'entrevue a aidé le participant à réfléchir et à reconstruire son expérience et a aidé la chercheuse à réaliser une fusion des horizons. Le cadre de l'entrevue invitait à raconter des histoires provenant de différents contextes importants et le fait d'avoir des histoires à travers le temps, le lieu et l'activité a permis à la chercheuse d'identifier des thèmes. La précision des thèmes a permis d'interpréter les histoires importantes avec plus de confiance.

Janine Tine

As a PhD student in the Department of Elementary Education at the University of Alberta, my research interests centered around parental understandings of childhood in intercultural marriages, and how these understandings can be acknowledged in the context of the early childhood classroom. The understandings (e.g., competent, interdependent, vulnerable) that parents have of their child(ren) directly impact the ways in which they relate to and raise their

child(ren). I am interested in intercultural marriage and childrearing because of my experience as a spouse and mother in my own intercultural marriage.

As a field test for my dissertation interviews, I interviewed my husband, who selected the pseudonym, Andre. He grew up in Senegal, West Africa, and immigrated to Canada as an adult. I was born in coastal British Columbia, Canada, and lived on Saltspring Island before moving to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, with my family at the young age of three. My initial intention for the interview was to focus on “how Andre experiences parenting our 16-month-old daughter.” I developed the interview protocol, and completed the initial analysis and reporting, following the format requested in a qualitative research course with Julia Ellis at the University of Alberta. As the process of developing the interview protocol proceeded, I found the scope of the interview was broader than Andre’s current day-to-day experience of parenting our child. In this paper I examine my experience using this interview approach to inquire into Andre’s “understandings of the child.”² With this purpose, the work constitutes a methodologically self-reflexive paper and, as a case study, it makes a contribution to understanding of the phenomenon (Bagchi et al., 2017) of being a graduate student trying to use this interview protocol approach with a topic of high interest to oneself. Even though the topic of interest to me was Andre’s “understandings of the child,” and although I begin by providing a few definitions of related terms, the purpose of this paper is not to review the literature on interethnic and bicultural childhood or delve deeply into Andre’s understandings of the child. Rather, I intend to shed light on the importance of the structure of the interview protocol and the dynamics of my experience as a graduate student learning to use this interview approach for the first time.

Culture and Understandings of the Child

My early childhood research is informed by the Super and Harkness’ (2002) developmental niche framework, which acknowledges the role of parents’ cultural belief systems regarding the nature of the child and its influence on childcare practices. Of particular importance to parents’ cultural belief systems are parental ethnotheories, which include “taken-for-granted ideas about the ‘natural’ or ‘right’ way to think or act” (Super & Harkness, 2002, p. 270) when caring for children. Parental ethnotheories comprise implicit and culturally constructed “understandings of the child” such as the child’s roles, abilities, and needs—all in the context of the daily customs of care and physical and social settings provided for them. In my interview with Andre, I expected to learn something about any parental ethnotheories that were implicit in his day-to-day experiences of caring for our child.

The meaning of culture and cultural belief systems is important in this inquiry. Drawing on the work of Kağıtçıbaşı (2007), I begin by understanding culture as the learned shared behaviour and values, and their attached meanings, which are passed through generations and “socially transferred in life-activity settings” (p. 5). Although these behaviours and values are shared by a community of people in the same socio-cultural circumstances, the term *culture* in my research also acknowledges the “the uniqueness of each individual case” (p. 5). With this recognition of uniqueness, I do not use the term culture as a blanket “explanation” (p. 7) for an entire group’s behaviour and values, but rather acknowledge culture as a set of experiences in which some behaviour and values of an individual are held in common with the group, while others may not be. In the study, *intercultural marriage* is understood as “a marriage between individuals with different cultural or ethnic backgrounds” (Bell, 2014).

Julia Ellis

An Interview Protocol for Interpretive Inquiry

For the better part of my career, I have worked with graduate students in qualitative research and interpretive inquiry courses to explore ways of researching topics of interest. Most students in the courses anticipate doing interviews in their research. Key ideas and metaphors from hermeneutics have informed our work with developing interview protocols and engaging in analysis/interpretation. Over time a particular format for crafting an interview protocol has evolved and been employed by class members.

Brenner (2006) has argued that one can reasonably ask whether interviewing is a method or a theory. She reviewed the purposes and processes of interviews in the five methodologies of Ethnographic research, Cognitive Ethnography, Think Aloud Method, Clinical Interview, and Grounded Theory, showing how the interview steps or key practices of each were consistent with assumptions about the nature of knowledge in its grounding discipline. In our work with interviews for the methodology of Interpretive Inquiry grounded in a hermeneutics paradigm, we tried out interview activities that could be congruent with key ideas from hermeneutics and which could accommodate a broad range of research topics and research participants. Some of the helpful concepts and metaphors from hermeneutics are shown in Table 1.

Hermeneutics—initially a branch of theology that focused on the interpretation of holy scriptures—is now a collection of philosophical writings that can help us think about what takes place in the process of interpretation more generally. Gadamer (1989) has explained that one’s perception or description of anything is an interpretation and that meaning is always constructed rather than found or discovered. In a formally conducted research study, the researcher takes self-conscious responsibility for the interpretations articulated. Patterson and Williams (2002) explained that “productive or projective hermeneutics”—the most recent hermeneutic research tradition and the one most closely associated with the philosophies of Hans-George Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, and Martin Heidegger—is based on the recognition that “researchers cannot ‘bracket’ their preconceptions, nor, can they truly empathize with another’s experience. Instead they acknowledge that an ‘utterly innocent’ reading of the text is impossible and that the

Table 1

Key Ideas and Metaphors in Hermeneutics

Sources	Key Ideas or Metaphors in Hermeneutics
Schleiermacher’s work in 1819 (cited in Smith 1991, 2002).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interpretation as a creative and holistic activity • importance of part-whole, micro-macro relationships • key role of language and history
Packer and Addison (1989) Ellis (1998a, 1998b, 2006, 2009) Jardine (1998, 2000) Smith (1991, 2002, 2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concept of “entering the circle in the right way” • forestructure, pre-understandings, and prejudice • approaching the entity in a way in which it can show itself • hermeneutic circle ... and its forward arc of projection and its backward arc of evaluation • fusion of horizons through dialectical engagement • inquiry as a spiral or set of loops • <i>Alethia</i> or “uncovering” • criteria for evaluating an interpretive account

researcher plays an active role in the interpretation” (p. 12). Key ideas from hermeneutics can help researchers to critically evaluate their processes in the construction of interpretations that are “more informed and sophisticated” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 114) than those with which they began with.

In a recent invited address, Smith (2020) explained that in hermeneutics, interpretation is not simply reporting; it has a poetic function and is provocative in the form of an invitation. He clarified that hermeneutics is not a method of interpretation but is instead a form of interpretation that can bring things to life by lifting them from the burden of their specificity and—like great art—by showing the interiority of what it speaks about. He also explained that interpretation arises from experience that has been reflected on and involves discerning what is important. He reminded us that waiting to be able to see what is important is like waiting for the prophecy from an oracle. In spite of worries that some may have about the subjectivity involved in interpretation, Smith assured us that interpretation does not belong solely to an author but more fully to a community of inquiry. Further, he argued for the necessity of a community of interpretation but insisted that that is not the same as “group think,” since the community of inquiry always lies open to what reaches it from beyond itself, and hence is always open to rejuvenation. (Hermes was a god of eternal youthfulness.) Part of the researcher’s interpretive task, therefore, entails a re-reading of tradition both to bring to liveliness (Gk. *energeia*) what may be already there but occluded through lack of rejuvenation, as well as to open the leading edges of tradition so that it can be available to rejuvenation through what comes to meet it as new. This is the interpretive dynamic Gadamer named as *effective historical consciousness*.

The Search for Part-Whole Relationships

Clarifying the meaning of a participant’s experience, words, or actions often entails learning about enough of the parts until they converge into a comprehension of a coherent whole (Smith, 1991). For example, a mathematics teacher’s experience in assessing students in mathematics classes might best be understood in the context of her experiences and views about mathematics in general; being a teacher in general; perhaps assessment in general; being a mathematics teacher specifically; as well as the more encompassing values, preoccupations, motivations, hope, fears, habits of mind, key metaphors, and interests that guide her life in general. To support the search for meaning through identifying such part-whole relationships, the interview protocol developed in our courses uses separate groups of questions moving from the larger overarching topics to the more specific sub-topics of the research.

Attention to the micro and the macro are also important in the process of interpretation. Any entity—a person, a school lobby with its display cases, a local summer festival—can be understood as a microcosm; the part reflects the whole. Accordingly, Addison (1989) and Patterson and Williams (2002) have explained that meaning and action are located in situational influences, shared cultural practices, and social ideologies that may be taken for granted rather than in the awareness of the participant. Consequently, it is possible that the researcher might understand the meaning of actions more fully or at least in a different light than the participant.

Challenges for Interviews

In our research courses, some of the interview questions drafted by class members implied an expectation that interview participants could readily tell them the answers to their research

questions. Within Heidegger's concept of modes of engagement, the "ready-to-hand" mode of engagement reveals why this is unlikely. Packer (1985, as cited in Patterson & Williams, 2002, p. 17) explained that the ready-to-hand mode of engagement is most closely associated with everyday personal projects and that human awareness during this form of activity is holistic. Patterson and Williams summarized these ideas in hermeneutics about how

much of our everyday experience occurs in the ready-to-hand mode of engagement, as practical activity in which actions and emotions are structured by (1) the situation, (2) cultural practices, and (3) current projects and concerns that include habitual responses that are so familiar they are taken for granted.

They concluded that as a consequence, "ready-to-hand" modes of experience are most appropriately viewed as an emergent narrative rather than as predictable outcomes resulting from the causal interaction of antecedent elements" (pp. 17–18). Helpful interviews about everyday experience, then, will invite stories that can be reflected upon and interpreted in the light of all the other stories told (Mishler, 1986). Direct requests for analysis or for "the answers to the research questions" may fail to advance understanding if participants quickly (and perhaps unreflectively) reply with explanations or analyses that will simply sound sensible and competent within the current discourses of the time and context.

Interviewing professionals about their everyday experience in their work can have special challenges for the inquiry process. In such interviews, participants may—as a habitual mode of professional discourse—refrain from telling personal stories and are likely to be practiced at using analytic frameworks or procedural knowledge to tell about their everyday work. However, asking participants to make drawings or other visual representations of experience can support recall of stories and emotions and reflection on stories and their contexts with their full complexity. (See Cristancho et al., 2014 for an example of interview results with surgeons with and without drawings as part of the interview protocol.) The interview protocol that evolved in our courses includes requests for drawings or other visual representations as Pre-Interview Activities (PIAs).³ (See the similar use of "rich pictures" in research with surgeons' experience of surgery in Cristancho et al., 2014.)

Components of the Interpretive Inquiry Interview Protocol

Appendix A shows the format of the interpretive inquiry interview protocol that evolved in the qualitative research and interpretive inquiry courses with graduate students. The template presented uses the example of preparing to interview a Kindergarten teacher about "how she experiences supporting diversity in her classroom." It begins with a request for the participant to complete two Pre-Interview Activities (PIAs): one about the person in general and one about the participant's experience with the research topic. These visual representations are brought to the interview or else completed upon arrival at the interview. After the presentation and discussion of the PIAs, the researcher can use the groups of prepared questions. Following the "Getting to know you" group of questions, the remaining groups are organized according to three or four topics that either (a) move from the general to the specific, and/or (b) move from the past to the present.

In a research study it may be necessary to request brief demographic details in a Life/Education/Employment Table to provide ideas about useful focusses for each of the groups of questions. (e.g., In the case of interviewing an administrator about a particular issue: teaching

experience, early administrative experience, later administrative experience; administrative experience with the issue of research interest.) Our classes started asking interview participants to complete such an overview table. Columns in the table included (a) Age or Year Span, (b) Geographical location, (c) Education activity or employment activity, and (d) Any explanatory details. The rows in the table offered sample age or year spans and participants were invited to modify those to make them more relevant for changes in location or focus of activity.

Open-Ended Questions

The interview protocol also depends upon the use of open-ended questions that invite or provide space for stories and recollections of experiences that are most salient to the participant. Mishler (1986) recommended that interviewers treat respondents' answers to questions as stories or narratives by applying methods of narrative analysis. He explained that the narrative is a concrete example through which the point is made in detail. He also argued that sometimes stories that do not appear to answer the question are the most important stories of all. Chase (2003) also recommended posing questions that invite participant-selected stories rather than asking for reports on specific experiences or discussion of abstract ideas.

In the Interpretive Inquiry courses, we tried to write open-ended questions that provided opportunities for participants to tell stories about what was salient to them while not requiring that they discuss uncomfortable experiences. For example, "When you moved to working at your second teaching position, what were some of the things you liked about the way it was different? ... [after response] What were some of the differences that you did not like so much?" With questions such as these we expected that participants could choose from experiences that were meaningful and yet also comfortable to talk about. There is no expectation of comprehensive responses to such open-ended questions. Each question uses a key word or phrase that might trigger memories or ideas: For example, like, not like, different, same, favorite, changed, stayed the same, surprised, important, interesting, hoped for. At the beginning of an interview, we explain that the purpose of the questions is to try to help them recall experiences they would enjoy telling about. We state that we realize that some of the questions might not help them to think of anything and that that is okay and that, in that case, we can just move on to the next questions.

When class members were eager to ask any pointed or prying questions—questions that usually revealed their own assumptions or that framed the research interest as a direct question—we practiced composing open-ended questions that would provide space for the experiences of interest to be mentioned by the participant if they were salient. (For example, a prying question could be "Did you experience racist behaviour from other students at your new school?" while an open-ended question might be "What are some of the things you didn't like so much at your new school?") A couple of pointed or prying questions of high interest were only included at the end of the interview if the experiences of interest were not mentioned spontaneously in earlier parts of the interview.

It can take a long time to think of answers to open-ended questions such as "What are some of the ways your teaching approaches changed a lot or stayed the same a lot over time?" In our interpretive inquiry courses, we eventually started asking interview participants to complete four PIAs—two about themselves in general and two about the research topic—rather than only one of each. Completing this work with the PIAs—and usually a week before the interview—gave interview participants more opportunity to recall and reflect on the experiences of interest. As a result, they could easily answer the open-ended questions. In some instances, class members did

not need to use their groups of prepared questions at all because the talk and the story-telling that accompanied the sharing or presenting of the PIAs addressed the research interest comprehensively.

The “Getting to Know You” Group of Questions

The first group of questions is about the person in general. The course interview protocol offers a list of 12 of these shown in Table 2 and class members were asked to always include six of these as their Group 1 “Getting to know you” questions. The purpose of these questions was to provide opportunities for learning something about the person’s values, interests, motivations, or pre-occupations.

In our courses students were encouraged to complete their first practice interviews with a friend or relative. We were often surprised that class members learned something new and important from responses to these Group 1 questions when they already knew the participants so well. Although the “getting to know you” questions were helpful when used, this group of questions was sometimes omitted if class members were interviewing professionals about their practice if it was anticipated that these participants would consider the questions to be “too personal.”

In our classes I worked collaboratively with each student till a final draft of an interview protocol was completed. I provided some of the interview protocols from previous years’ classes as models. There were typically five or six drafts with each class member before a final draft was ready. In what follows, Janine Tine examines what it was like for her to use this interview protocol format and explains how it worked for her inquiry.

Table 2

“Getting to Know You” Questions

1. Are there any special people or even fictional characters you admire, or wish you could be like?
 2. What would you like to be really good at doing?
 3. In the world of nature, the world of things or people, what surprises you the most?
 4. If you could pick something that you wouldn't have to worry about anymore, what is one of the things you might choose?
 5. Have you ever done anything that surprised other people?
 6. What’s the best part of being your age? ... What’s the hardest part?
 7. If you could spend two weeks with someone who does a special kind of work, what kind of person would that be?
 8. In the year ahead, what are some of the things you'd like to accomplish or try for the first time?
 9. If you had one week of free time a month, what are some of the things you would like to do with that extra time?
 10. In all of your interests or ideas you have thought about, what has puzzled you the most?
 11. What is the most difficult thing you’ve ever had to do or, is there something you’ve done that was really hard to do but you really wanted to do it?
 12. Have you done anything different from what most people your age have done, made something, read up on something, planned something, tried something?
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Janine Tine

First Wondering:

- Would the four-part questioning process draw out Andre’s understandings of the child?

Preparing the Interview Protocol for Learning Andre’s Understandings of the Child

Preparing the Pre-Interview Activities was more difficult than I expected and required several email drafts between Julia Ellis and I before they were completely finalized. Table 3 shows two examples of revisions to initial drafts of prompts for the PIAs. The edits we completed were intended to invite memories of meaningful experiences and provide space for related stories to come forward. Relating the topics to lived experiences could also make questions feel less “test-like.”

When I initially drafted my interview protocol, I had 15 interview questions in total. Some questions asked Andre, the participant, to do too much at all at once. For example: “In what ways do you think your own childhood experiences compare to your child’s experiences?” Such a question would have required him to engage in a complex process of comparing his own childhood in Senegal to his daughter's childhood in Canada in one sweep, without first offering him adequate opportunity to recall and reflect on his own childhood only. In working through drafts of the protocol, we created four groups of questions in order to provide opportunities for the participant to first recall his own childhood and then his own parenting experiences and so forth. The four groups were (a) Getting to know what is important to the participant as a person (Also referred to the “Getting to know you” group of questions), (b) The participant’s own childhood experiences in his home country, (c) The way the participant experiences parenting his own child, and (d) The way the participant experiences parenting in Canada. I hoped that this four-part questioning process would draw out Andre’s understandings of childhood. There were now 47 questions instead of 15 and it was clear that I would need to expand the interview into two sessions.

Next Wonderings:

- Would Andre do something meaningful with the PIA component?
- Would Andre’s responses to interview questions be “brief and emotionless?”

Table 3

Sample Revisions to Prompts for Pre-Interview Activities (PIAs)

First Draft	Revised Draft
Make a list of 20 <i>important words regarding childhood</i> , and then divide the words into two groups.	Make a list of 20 <i>important words that come to mind for you when you think about childhood</i> , and then divide the list of words into two groups.
Draw a picture of <i>an important place</i> and use key words to indicate the parts or what happens in each of the parts.	Draw a picture of <i>a place that is important to you</i> and use key words or labels to indicate the parts or what happens in each of the parts.

First Good News: The Usefulness of the PIAs

Despite my considerable effort and care in preparing the PIA prompts and interview questions, I felt very apprehensive about my ability to successfully interview Andre. Even though I planned to interview Andre over two sessions, I was concerned that my interview questions were too numerous, and further, that they would not help me to arrive at an understanding of Andre’s understandings of the child. I was also concerned that Andre would not complete any of the PIAs, or, if he did, that he would put minimal effort into this activity. This concern was based on Andre’s response that he had little time for “homework” when I first told him of the PIA component. Based on his initial hesitation to participate, I expected that Andre would provide brief and emotionless responses to the PIA and the interview questions.

A PIA that Andre chose to complete out of a list of about 10 PIAs was, “Make a list of 20 important words that come to mind for you when you think about childhood, and then divide the list of words into two groups.” His completed PIA is shown in Table 4.

To start the interview, I asked Andre to share with me about his experience completing the PIA. He replied,

It was not that hard to fill out. I pretty much put down what first came to mind without thinking too much about it. The challenges surprised me. I never really thought about challenges in my childhood that much, but when I put them down on paper I thought about them more. I pretty much always thought that I had a pretty good childhood—a decent one. And now when I see some words like sadness or hurt, or poverty, it makes me feel like oh, there were some hard times. And the separation from grandparents was pretty hard, so, I did encounter some hardships. I am not sure how I dealt with it, but it surprises me that I had quite a bit on that list of challenges.

It felt promising to me that Andre started the interview from a space of such honesty and deep personal reflection. Looking at the list of words from his PIA prompted Andre to revisit his childhood, and allowed him to see that, despite the abundance of good times, there were

Table 4
Childhood: 20 Important Words Divided into Two Groups

Good Times	Challenges
Family	Separation from grandparents
Fun	Hurt
Living with grandparents	Sadness
Village	Troublemaker
Community	Skipping school
Farms	Poverty
Church	Living in different places
Cousins	
Soccer	
Holidays	
Friends	
Herds of cows	
Joy	

challenges presented by the mobility in his childhood. Andre had not so vividly identified with these challenges as an adult until he engaged in the PIA. Hearing Andre talk about these helped me to learn the very basics of his home-life as a child, and the sadness that he felt having to move from caregiver to caregiver. In his early years Andre was raised primarily by his grandparents in a village although his mom helped raise him during infancy before she relocated to the city to work. He lived with his Auntie in another village during much of his elementary school years, then with his grandparents again after that, and then with his dad in the city once he turned 12-years old. Andre voluntarily revealed the details of this personal topic during the PIA discussion without me prying. One might think that because I was his wife, I would already know these details of his childhood. I, however, did not. I knew that he lived with his grandparents, and later with his father, but I did not know of his other living situations in between, nor the extent of the anguish that he felt with these moves. In the past when I had asked Andre about such details and he had given a vague response, I had just reconciled to not knowing. With Andre sharing so openly about his childhood right at the beginning of the interview, I was confident that we “were off and running.”

Further Wonderings:

- As we were going through the interview questions was Andre giving answers directly related to his “understandings of the child?”
- Were there times during the interview when we were caught in an aimless wander?
- Were the first set of questions, “Getting to know what is important to the participant as a person,” of any value given that they appeared to contribute little to my research topic/question?
- Would the “four groups of questions” interview structure eventually reveal part-whole relationships?

But is the Interview Working? A Rich and Unravelling Process

During the interview process, I was often concerned that I was not getting quick answers to my research interest question, “How are bicultural children understood and raised by their parents in intercultural marriages?” The confidence that I had at the onset of the interview, where Andre shared his PIA, waned quickly as we went through the interview. Although Andre and I were conversing well, I worried that he was not giving answers directly related to his understandings of the child. At times during the interview, I felt as though we were caught in an aimless wander. The first set of questions, “Getting to know what is important to the participant as a person,” seemed, at the time, to be of little value as they appeared to contribute little to my research topic/question. Further, I did not yet trust the “four groups of questions” structure and was uncertain that it would reveal part-whole relationships.

As time went on, however, I noticed that each question in the interview led nicely into the next, allowing Andre to build upon different stories as he proceeded through the interview. I began to see a rich and unravelling process take place as I came closer and closer to a better understanding of Andre’s life experiences. As the interview progressed, I, at the time, thought that the major turning point in the interview, where I finally felt that I was particularly learning about

Andre's understandings of the child, occurred during the second last question (Number 46 of 47, which was Question Number 8 of Group 4). The question read: "When thinking about what life is like for children growing up in Canada, as compared to what life is like for children growing up in the village/city in Senegal, what differences and similarities come to mind?" I realize that this question would not have worked outside of the context of the "four groups of questions" process as the participant would not have had ample time and prompts to reflect separately on each of the components of the question (life in Canada, life in Senegal, his past, and his present experiences). Answers to these groups of questions revealed many part-whole relationships, and pieces of information from answers to the earlier questions started to contribute to a holistic representation of Andre's understandings of childhood. My feelings during the interview progressed from a feeling of getting somewhere fast as we were "off and running," to an aimless wander, to a realization of a rich and unravelling process, and finally, to a distinct turning point, a point of arrival—arrival at the place where enough of the parts were converging in my mind's eye for an increasing comprehension of the whole (Smith, 1991). A fusion of horizons (Gadamer, 1989) was being accomplished and I could start to see how Andre saw things from where he stood.

Contribution of the "Getting to Know You" Questions

The first group of questions, the "Getting to know you" questions, proved to be useful in at least a couple of ways. First, it is often easiest for a participant to begin an interview by talking about her or himself (Ellis, 2006) especially if they are given choices about what to talk about. I could see that the "Getting to know you" questions put Andre at ease as he talked about his experiences. Second, in an overall way, Andre used the questions to, in a sense, reconstruct himself (Carr, 1986 as cited in Ellis, 1998c), to revisit his past and reflect on the present. Even with only one PIA and the one group of questions—"Getting to know you" questions—so far, I could already start to recognize part-whole relationships among stories. What Andre had already shared in the PIA about his own childhood, including its moving and sadness, helped me to better understand the significance of his answer to the question about "what is the best part of being your age?" Andre gave a poignant statement about his fulfillment in being settled after persevering for so many years.

The best part of being my age is family, being married to a beautiful wife, having a beautiful baby, taking care of my family. Having a good job, going to work, coming back, and hearing my daughter say "dadadadada" when I come home. That's what I enjoy most about being this age. I feel like now I'm settled. Life is beautiful. It makes me feel at peace. I feel like I have reached my goal, being married and having a family as opposed to living in different places and no specific goal. Being all over the place, nothing really concrete. This makes me feel like, oh, I have something going on and I think that's fulfilling so, I'm settled. (Group 1, Question 9)

Andre's reflections and apparent reconstructions of himself remind us of Jardine's (1998) words about the importance of dialogue for filling out our stories about ourselves:

None of us necessarily knows all by ourselves the full contours of the story each of us is living out. This is why dialogue and conversation figure so predominantly in interpretive work, as contrasted with the 'monologue' of scientific discourse (Habermas 1972) (p. 47)

Unravelling the Threads and Seeing How They Intertwine

As I traced through the PIA transcript and the answers to all the groups of questions, I came to see themes or threads of ideas that connected answers from different groups of questions. Six of the themes are shown in Appendices B and C. Appendix B is about Andre's beliefs and values that can be seen as components of his "understandings of the child" and shows sample excerpts for the themes of

- Importance of Freedom and Unstructured Play,
- Importance of Learning through Modeling and Observation, and
- Importance of Understanding the Child as a Community Member.

Appendix C is about central themes in Andre's life and shows sample excerpts for the themes of

- Importance of Education,
- Importance of "Persevering Through Challenges," and
- Importance of Community.

Another theme (for which a table of excerpts is not shown due to space considerations) was about a "positive outlook for the future."

In presenting Appendices B and C, I show my process for this initial stage of analysis: grouping stories or excerpts according to commonly expressed themes (i.e., values, motivations, beliefs, preoccupations.) Some excerpts appear more than once in the tables because they illustrate multiple themes. In the next two sections my discussions of themes and selected excerpts reflect my search for part-whole relationships. In these discussions I identify connections among themes in Andre's life as a whole, his recollections of his own childhood, and his stories and statements about his own child.

Themes in Andre's Understandings of the Child

Each of the three themes (Appendix B) presented for Andre's understandings of the child can be identified as distinct threads running through a number of his responses to questions, while also being interconnected with one another. For example, with the theme of child as community member it makes sense that there will be possibilities for learning from modelling and observing. The overarching or foundational theme is the "importance of the child as community member." Andre stated that, "In Senegal we just see kids as members of society. They are just as important as anyone else, as trustworthy as anyone else. ... You are everybody's child. You are a child of the community "(Group 4, Question 8)

Being members of the community gave children access to learning through modelling and observation. In the drumming example, Andre illustrated "the importance of modelling and observation":

Children sit in the circle and clap but, eventually, they go in and start dancing. That's how you learn. There are no official classes on teaching kids how to dance. They just watch people and do the same thing. As a kid, you are part of the community and part of the whole process. There is no particular role but you participate. You are part of it. (Group 2, Question 1)

Being everybody's child—that is, a child of the community and a member of the community—

meant that Andre had freedom to play on the streets or walk to other communities. This theme of the “importance of freedom and unstructured play” is evident in his playing soccer:

Soccer in the village ... It was not all organized in teams. We just did it ourselves ... go to the streets and start playing ... If you don't have a ball at all, you go to other communities. You walk about a one kilometer or two kilometers. If they have a soccer ball you say: “Hey, you guys wanna play a soccer match?” Then you walk back ... It was fun. I loved it. (Group 2, Question 1)

Thus, in the absence of organized sports, Andre and his peers had the freedom to take the initiative to find or make a soccer ball, gather teammates, organize their own teams, choose a location to play, and negotiate disputes. In their play, Andre and his playmates were independent of adults, but highly interdependent with each other as community. When Andre talked about what he wanted for all children he described a community where all adults are looking out for children:

... the freedom to go out and play without having the fear of getting hurt by some weak-minded people. We don't worry about their safety because they know they are safe and every adult is there looking out for them instead of harming them. (Group 4, Question 9)

It is the adults “looking out” for children that provides children with the freedom to play, knowing that they can turn to a nearby adult for help.

It is interesting to note that although Andre recognized that everyone in the village was there to “look out” for him, he also felt that he was “unsupervised” as a child. He felt that the absence of supervision resulted in freedom:

Back home [in Senegal] kids are kids and they just go play most of the time unsupervised. There is no such thing as taking kids to the playground. Here in Canada, you take kids to the playground and you sit there and watch. Back home, kids just go out and play together with no adult around supervising or cheering them on. There is lot of freedom back home as compared to being very protected here. (Group 4, Question 8)

I wondered whether it was through reflecting on his childhood as an adult that Andre came to see that perhaps the adults in his village, despite a lack of obvious and direct supervision had been “looking out” for him more than he had been aware.

Andre's stories about learning to dance in the community and about learning to make a stool through observation helped me to recognize the theme of “learning from modelling and observation.” He talked about how his daughter learns and also talked about his anticipated role in her learning. First, he commented on how

She is fast to learn. I find that she learns things pretty fast. When I show her something, she will do it. Like drinking from her hand. I showed her once and she did it. The way she observes and picks up things is pretty amazing. (Group 3, Question 2)

Second, he observed that

When she is working with blocks, sometimes she quits but I bring it back and do it with her. Even if she is not the one necessarily building it, the fact that she is participating by passing me the blocks and

observing encourages her to try more next time—to keep trying. (Group 3, Question 2)

Third, he commented on how he valued, “Helping her and guiding her with her homework. Being there to guide her. Education, social skills. Speak to her in French and in my two native tongues. Help her with language acquisition.” (Group 3, Question 17). All the stories about the importance of learning from the modelling available in community and the participation of children in community, helped me to appreciate the significance of Andre’s responses about ways to support children’s learning:

Kids should have access to learning opportunities, but those opportunities include mingling with adults, learning from them by doing things, listening. Having access to school, a school as an extension of the community. The learning is not just at school, you also learn in your community. The community reinforces what you learn at school or adds to what you learn at school. (Group 4, Question 9)

The modelling and community participation stories also helped me to better understand Andre’s response to the question “What advice would you offer to an ‘expectant’ father?” (Group 3, Question 18)

Love your child. Love your child. Love your child with all of your heart. It’s a miracle. There’s nothing more beautiful. You have to make sacrifices. You will never regret making them though. Spend time. Be around her—talking to her, taking her places. Give her kisses. I always tell her that I love her. I love her very much and very deeply.

Andre’s words, “Spend time. Be around her—talking to her, taking her places,” have many layers of meaning in the context of his convictions about children as community members who learn from modelling, observation, participation, and being part of the community.

Three Central Themes in Andre’s Life

The interview’s structure with its PIA component and groups of questions on four topics helped me to learn about three central themes in Andre’s life: the importance of education, of community, and of persevering through challenges. Being aware of these gave me a broader context for appreciating the themes I had identified for Andre’s understandings of the child and helped me to understand the meaning of Andre’s statements about the right way to care for and support his daughter.

The theme of “the importance of education” was emphasized throughout Andre’s stories about his childhood and youth and coincided with the theme of “the importance of community.” The guiding words he said he heard most often from parents or other people in the community who cared for him were

Keep going to school. Keep working. Did you do your homework today? People look out for you in the village. Lots of encouragement. Stay in school, stay in school, work hard and you’ll succeed. The only way you are going to make it out of poverty is through knowledge and education. (Group 2, Question 9)

When Andre ran away from school, community members were quick to observe and act.

When I was in Grade 4, I started not liking school at all and I started rebelling, so by Grade 6 I decided

that I'm not going to go to this school anymore. I started running away and hiding in the bush. So eventually, I ran away from that place and I got chased a couple of times [by community members who saw that he wasn't in school] ... (Group 2, Question 4)

Andre stated that he hoped his most important contribution to his child's life would be "Helping her with her education, schooling..." (Group 3, Question 17). In the following excerpt Andre explained the role of the community in supporting children's growth. Modelling is emphasized—"teaching them by doing and modeling, saying things for them to hear."

Children are just like little plants that need watering and they just grow and flourish. It is a comparison, that's how we [the community] look at them. They are little plants that you help grow and shape so they don't go every direction. You give them water and the elements like education they need, teaching them by doing and modeling, saying things for them to hear. That's how you help them grow. It is like you have a piece of pottery you are molding to have a nice art project at the end. Children are the same thing. (Group Four, Additional Question: "When thinking about describing children, what are some words that come to mind?")

The theme of "persevering through challenges" was prominent in stories about Andre's life experience and was a key idea in his hopes for his daughter. This theme surfaced in stories about how he encountered hardships as a child such as moving from place to place and experiencing poverty.

In his PIA, after Andre listed "20 important words that came to mind regarding childhood" he grouped the words under the headings "Good Times" and "Challenges" (shown in Table 4). As the interview progressed, and Andre further expanded on the challenges, he did not focus on them as negative things in his life, but instead mentioned them matter-of-factly in stories about his experiences of perseverance. The stories of perseverance concluded in accomplishments such as learning to make a better stool or attaining two master's degrees.

You watch somebody make up a seat with some wood. You watch how they do it and then you grab some leftover wood and you try to do the same. They would do it for money, but when you try and do it as a kid you're just practicing. You just take a leftover piece of wood and try to make your own seat. It doesn't always look as good at first, but eventually you get better because you practice by doing it and then down the road you can start using the real wood and the good stuff to make your own seat and then you can sell it for money. (Group 2 Question 7)

Similarly, Andre recalled persevering after his move to the city as an adolescent to live with his dad—who he was not close to as he rarely saw him throughout his childhood. He said,

It was not my choice. It was not my preference ... it just opened a new chapter of my life. Start over, new school, new environment, make new friends and all that. It was tough. Starting over is always hard. (Group 2, Question 4: "Do you remember anything that was annoying to you when you were a child?")

Andre used his childhood experience of "learning to persevere through the challenge of moving" to his advantage as he moved from country to country to pursue his education. He completed a bachelor's degree in Senegal, a master's degree in France, and then a master's degree in the United States. He then moved to Canada to work as a teacher and become a Canadian citizen. His perseverance through unsettling times is what allowed Andre to create a life where he

finally felt settled and fulfilled.

Andre hopes that his daughter will learn to persevere. When asked: “What has surprised you most about your child?” his first words were that

I like her to persevere when she tries things. When she is working with blocks, sometimes she quits but I bring it back and do it with her. Even if she is not the one necessarily building it, the fact that she is participating by passing me the blocks and observing encourages her to try more next time—to keep trying. (Group 3, Question 2:)

Andre’s words, “passing me the blocks and observing encourages her to try more next time—to keep trying,” help me to understand his ideas about what constitutes “encouragement” and how a child’s learning proceeds. Here in this story, just as in the stool-making example, Andre viewed the adult’s presence (or the child’s participation/observation in the community of adults), as well as the adult’s modelling of a task, as providing encouragement to the child, prompting the child to keep trying.

Andre’s notion of encouragement is different from what he has witnessed in Canada as the parental practice of cheering kids on.

Here in Canada, you take kids to the playground and you sit there and watch. Back home, kids just go out and play together with no adult around supervising or cheering them on. There is lot of freedom back home as compared to being very protected here. (Group 4, Question 8)

In Andre’s hopes for children’s learning, they would have membership in the community, hear guiding words, and experience encouragement through observation and largely self-directed participation. By studying the collections of excerpts for each of the themes I came to see how the especially dominant theme of the importance of perseverance was linked to community and to learning from modelling and observation.

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Closing Reflections

It is difficult to reduce an understanding of Andre’s “understandings of the child” to a few sentences. It is as Jardine (1998) explained that “interpretation is pedagogic at heart” (p. 34) and yet at the same time “interpretive inquiry purposely struggles against the tendency of language towards literalism and univocal declarations regarding what is and is not the case” (p. 43). Similarly, Smith (1991), citing Schleiermacher, reminded readers that “coming to understand something is never a once a once-and-for-all event, but a continual process of emerging understanding, growing out of a spiraling dialectic between the parts and the whole” (p.190).

Andre’s stories will stay with us to help us remember beliefs that are important in his life and in his care for his child. The stories from the PIA and from the four groups of questions illustrated a way for interpretive inquiry interviews to work well. This interview structure supported a more holistic understanding of Andre’s experience and what is important to him—more so than what might have been possible if only the “research-topic-related” fourth group of questions had been used. The discussions of themes and illustrative excerpts revealed the important dialectic between stories and themes in discerning meaning: stories led to the identification of themes and awareness of themes supported clarity in interpretations of important stories.

Conclusion

This methodologically self-reflexive case study can help others to consider related possibilities in research. The study illustrated how this interview protocol can function and what it can be like for an interviewer to try this approach for the first time. For example, I, Janine, as the researcher, wondered how Andre would respond to the PIA component. I had to eventually trust that the four sets of interview questions—about Andre as a person in general, about his own childhood, about his being a parent in general, and about parenting his child in the context of Canada—would lead to clarity about the topics of interest for the research (i.e., his “understandings of the child.”) The interview began with Andre’s own startling remembrance in the PIA component of the sadness that had been a part of his childhood, followed by related stories about the importance of education, of community, and of persevering through challenges in response to later questions. The four sets of questions and the PIA component helped me to discern these central themes in Andre’s recollections, and my awareness of these helped me to appreciate the reasonableness of Andre’s taken-for-granted ideas about the right way to care for and support our daughter. The questions at the end of the interview protocol were most directly related to the research purposes/question. Although Andre’s answers to these questions were relatively brief, in the larger context of the stories or views shared in response to earlier components of the interview, I could more confidently begin to make sense of Andre’s answers and better grasp their significance. The study also included a lovely moment where I shared my surprise about learning of my husband’s personal history: “... In the past when I had asked Andre about such details and he had given a vague response, I had just reconciled to not knowing.” This response indirectly reveals a certain ethical commitment in interpretive work. We witness the releasing of culturally dormant experience into a new shared awareness. This example speaks of the role of interpretive research in the work of deepening understanding between cultures (Smith, 2020).

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Notes

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2 The term “the child” is employed for ease of use while acknowledging that in constructing understandings of the child there are “many children and many childhoods” (Dahlberg et al., 2013, p. 46).

3 For research on using PIAs, see Ellis, 2006; Ellis, Amjad, & Deng, 2011; Ellis, Janjic-Watrich et al., 2011; Ellis et al., 2013; Friesen & Ellis, 2016.

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Appendix A: Example of a Completed Template for the Interview Protocol

Completed Template Showing Pre-Interview Activity (PIA) prompts and Groups of Open-ended Questions

Pre-Interview Activities (PIAs): About the Person in General

Please **complete one or more** of the following visual representation activities and bring them to our interview.

1. Draw a schedule for your week (day or year) and use colors to indicate how time is spent. Make a legend to explain the colors.
 2. Draw a picture or diagram of a place that is important to you and use key words to indicate the parts or what happens in each of the parts.
 3. Think of a component of your life that is very important for you (for example, sports, money, teaching, home, relationship with a particular person, travel). Make a timeline listing key events or ideas that changed the way you experience it.
 4. Draw a diagram or images to show where your support or support systems come from.
 5. Think of an important event that changed things in your life. Make two drawings showing what things were like for you before and after the event. Feel free to use thought bubbles or speech bubbles.
 6. Think of an activity that is very engaging for you. Use three colors to make an abstract diagram that expresses what it is like for you to do this activity.
-

Pre-Interview Activities (PIAs): About the Topic of the Research

Also please **complete one or more** of the following visual representation activities and bring them to our interview.

1. Make a list of 20 important words that come to mind for you when you think of the idea or concept of "education" and then divide the list of words into two groups in any way that makes sense to you. Please bring both the original list and the two smaller groups of words to the interview.
 2. Think back to your earlier experiences of teaching. Make two drawings: one showing a good day teaching and one showing a "not so good" day. Feel free to use thought bubbles or speech bubbles.
 3. Make a timeline listing key events or ideas that changed the way you have experienced teaching over the years
 4. Think of an important activity that is part of teaching. Use three colors to make a diagram or abstract drawing that expresses the way you experience that activity.
 5. Use colors to make three drawings that symbolize how your experience of teaching has changed over time.
 6. Think of something important that changed things in your teaching life. Make two drawings showing what things were like for you before and after the change. Feel free to use speech bubbles or thought bubbles.
-

Groups of Open-Ended Questions

Group 1: “Getting to Know You” Questions:

-
1. What would you like to be really good at doing?
 2. In the world of nature, the world of things, or the world of people, what surprises you the most?
 3. If you had one week off a month, what are some of the things you would like to do with your extra time?
 4. If you could spend two weeks with someone who does a special kind of work who might you choose?
 5. If you could pick something that you wouldn't have to worry about anymore what is one of the things you might choose?
 6. What are some of the things you like about being your age? And What are some of the things about being your age that you don't like so well?
-

Group 2: Questions about a Larger Whole—e.g., Teaching

-
1. In your early time as a teacher what were some of the parts of teaching work that took up a lot of your attention or effort?
 2. What are some of the parts of teaching that have been most satisfying or enjoyable?
 3. What are some parts of the teaching role that became increasingly important to you or more interesting to you as time went on?
 4. What are some of the ways that your teaching approaches have changed a lot or stayed the same a lot?
-

Group 3: Questions about a Next Smaller Whole—e.g., Teaching Kindergarten

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1. When you meet a new class at the beginning of the year, what are some of the things you pay most attention to? What are some things that are important to learn or to notice?
 2. What are some of the things that make some classes of students easier to work with than other classes?
 3. On a day when things are going well in the classroom what would you say is usually contributing to that good experience?
 4. On a day when things are not going well in the class what are good things to do to help the whole situation?
-

Group 4: Questions about the Specific Research Topic—e.g., Supporting Diversity in the Kindergarten Classroom

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1. What are some of the practices you like to use to accommodate and support diversity in your class?
 2. What would you change about Kindergarten settings or contexts to make them better places for supporting diversity?
 3. If you had a volunteer or teaching assistant in the classroom for part of the day, what would you like to have the person doing to help with supporting diversity?
 4. What advice would you offer to a beginning Kindergarten teacher who is interested in supporting diversity in the classroom?
-

Appendix B: Three Important Themes in Andre’s “Understandings of the Child”

Importance of Freedom and Unstructured Play

Group 2, Question 1: When you were a child what were some of your favourite activities or events?
Soccer in the hood. Basketball later. It was not all organized in teams. We just did it ourselves. You randomly grab a ball and go to the streets and start playing. Everyone else joins in so you divide in teams and start playing. It is like pick-up games. Usually, we don’t have good soccer balls. You take used clothes and wrap them up to make a soccer ball. It was that desperate sometimes. Other times, you have a decent ball but it won’t last long. If you don’t have a ball at all, you go to other communities. You walk about a 1km or 2km. If they have a soccer ball. You say: “hey, you guys wanna play a soccer match?” Then you walk back. So there was nothing like playing video games or sitting in front of the television. You go out, have some fresh air and play outside. It was fun. I loved it.

Group 4, Question 9: In an ideal world, what kinds of community environments, resources, opportunities, and learning experiences would you like all children to have?
If things were perfect, kids should live in a community where there is trust among adults so kids can have the freedom go out and play without having the fear of getting hurt by some weak-minded people. We don’t worry about their safety because they know they are safe and every adult is there looking out for them instead of harming them.

Group 4, Question 8: When thinking about what life is like for children growing up in Canada, as compared to what life is like for children growing up in the village/city in Senegal, what differences and similarities come to mind?
Back home [in Senegal] kids are kids and they just go play most of the time unsupervised. There is no such thing as taking kids to the playground. Here in Canada, you take kids to the playground and you sit there and watch. Back home, kids just go out and play together with no adult around supervising or cheering them on. There is lot of freedom back home as compared to being very protected here.

Importance of Learning Through Modeling and Observation

Group 2, Question 7: When you were a child, how did you learn things best?
By doing it. Watching people do it and then doing it. Hearing something and repeating it. That’s how I learn best. Just using the language you hear and doing things people are doing so you know how to do it. You become proficient. There is a lot of modeling. Something just as simple as dancing. You watch people dance and then you do the same thing.

Or you watch somebody make up a seat with some wood. You watch how they do it and then you grab some leftover wood and you try to do the same. They would do it for money, but when you try and do it as a kid you’re just practicing. You just take a leftover piece of wood and try to make your own seat. It doesn’t always look as good as first, but eventually you get better because you practice by doing it and then down the road you can start using the real wood and the good stuff to make your own seat and then you can sell it for money.

Group 2, Question 1:
When you were a child what were some of your favourite activities or events?

Drumming. People just take drums and sit on a courtyard and start playing. Everybody will come out and make a big circle and start dancing. It will take about 3-5hours. There is a lot of dancing, chatting, laughing, having fun. At the end, people share food.

Children sit in the circle and clap but, eventually they go in and start dancing. That's how you learn. There are no official classes on teaching kids how to dance. They just watch people and do the same thing. As a kid, you are part of the community and part of the whole process. There is no particular role but you participate. You are part of it.

Group 3, Question 2:
What has surprised you most about your child?

She is fast to learn. I find that she learns things pretty fast. When I show her something, she will do it. Like drinking from her hand. I showed her once and she did it. The way she observes and picks up things is pretty amazing.

I like her to persevere when she tries things. When she is working with blocks, sometimes she quits but I bring it back and do it with her. Even if she is not the one necessarily building it, the fact that she is participating by passing me the blocks and observing encourages her to try more next time—to keep trying.

Importance of Understanding the Child as a Community Member

Group 4, Question 8:
When thinking about what life is like for children growing up in Canada, as compared to what life is like for children growing up in the village /city in Senegal, what differences and similarities come to mind?

In Senegal we see kids as members of society. They are just as important as anyone else, as trustworthy as anyone else. Kids don't have adult maturity or skills but they are valuable members of society. So, it is important to trust them and give them that credibility that they are entire members of the community.

You are everybody's child. You are a child of the community.

A child's role is to be obedient and respectful to adults and by adults, I mean it is not just your parents. Every adult is a parent and you respect them as your parent or grandparents.

Group 4, Question 9:
In an ideal world, what kinds of community environments, resources, opportunities, and learning experiences would you like all children to have?

Kids should have access to learning opportunities, but those opportunities include mingling with adults, learning from them by doing things, listening. Having access to school, a school as an extension of the community. The learning is not just at school; you also learn in your community. The community reinforces what you learn at school or adds to what you learn at school. Exploring and discovering things without the fear of getting harmed because the community is there to look out for you. You feel safe.

Appendix C: Three Central Themes in Andre's Life

Importance of Education

Group 2, Question 9:
What were the guiding words you heard most often from parents or other people who cared for you? ... Did you like these words? Were there any guiding words you did not like?

Keep going to school. Keep working. Did you do your homework today? People look out for you in the village. Lots of encouragement. Stay in school, stay in school, work hard and you'll succeed. The only way you are going to make it out of poverty is through knowledge and education.

Group 3, Question 17:
What do you hope will be your most important contribution to your child's life?

Helping her with her education, schooling. A Francophone school. Helping her and guiding her with her homework. Being there to guide her. Education, social skills. Speak to her in French and in my two native tongues. Help her with language acquisition.

Group 4, Question 9:
In an ideal world, what kinds of community environments, resources, opportunities, and learning experiences would you like all children to have?

Kids should have access to learning opportunities, but those opportunities include mingling with adults, learning from them by doing things, listening. Having access to school, a school as an extension of the community. The learning is not just at school, you also learn in your community. The community reinforces what you learn at school or adds to what you learn at school. Exploring and discovering things without the fear of getting harmed because the community is there to look out for you. You feel safe.

Group 2, Question 4:
Do you remember anything that was annoying to you when you were a child?

Andre recalls having to leave his grandparents to go live with his Auntie for grades one through six.

Having to leave my grandparents to go and live with my Auntie so I could go to school in that area was really annoying and I had to live with my cousin, that was quite annoying too. I had to go live with my Auntie to go to school because it was considered overall a better school than the one that was closer to my grandparents. They had better results in the exams. It was really hard leaving my mom and, well my mom was in the city, but leaving my grandparents to go live with my Auntie. I had no say in that. It was not optional. It really annoyed me and it was really hard to go to school, I didn't like it. I'd been going to this school by my Aunties from grade one and I'd go back to my grandparents when there were holidays.

But when I was in grade four, I started not liking it at all and I started rebelling, so by grade six I decided that I'm not going to go to this school anymore. I started running away and hiding in the bush. So eventually, I ran away from that place and I got chased a couple of times [by community members who saw that he wasn't in school] and I did spend time in the bush. I did hide in the bush just because I didn't want to go to that school and I didn't want to live away from my grandparents, so I eventually moved back with my grandparents. I eventually transferred to a school that is closer to my grandparents so that I could walk to school from my grandparents. I remained there until I moved to the city when I was twelve with my dad.

Andre goes on to explain why he moved to the city to live with his dad:

When Andre persisted in running away from the school near his grandparents' home we was sent to live with his dad in the city and attend school there.

Because I was being too much of a rebel and they couldn't, didn't know how, to deal with me. I was being too much, I was skipping school and I was running to the bush to hide. You're not gonna get me! I was not doing well at that school, my dad said it was time for me to move with him to a new school in the city. It was not my choice. It was not my preference. They, my uncle and my dad's cousins, came and got me. I was shipped at night. They came and took my stuff. It was not like I was kidnapped, but they wanted to do it at night so everyone was not watching and wondering why I was moved away. We had to walk to the next village, which was my dad's parents, and then after the summer at the village I moved to the city even though I didn't really know my dad. It just opened a new chapter of my life. Start over, new school, new environment, make new friends and all that. It was tough. Starting over is always hard.

Importance of "Persevering Through Challenges"

Group 1, Question 9:

What's the best part of being your age?

The best part of being my age is family, being married to a beautiful wife, having a beautiful baby, taking care of my family. Having a good job, going to work, coming back, and hearing my daughter say "dadadadada" when I come home. That's what I enjoy most about being this age. I feel like now I'm settled. Life is beautiful. It makes me feel at peace. I feel like I have reached my goal, being married and having a family as opposed to living in different places and no specific goal. Being all over the place, nothing really concrete. This makes me feel like, oh, I have something going on and I think that's fulfilling so, I'm settled.

Group 2, Question 7:

When you were a child, how did you learn things best?

...Or you watch somebody make up a seat with some wood. You watch how they do it and then you grab some leftover wood and you try to do the same. They would do it for money, but when you try and do it as a kid you're just practicing. You just take a leftover piece of wood and try to make your own seat. It doesn't always look as good as first, but eventually you get better because you practice by doing it and then down the road you can start using the real wood and the good stuff to make your own seat and then you can sell it for money.

Group 2, Question 4:

Do you remember anything that was annoying to you when you were a child?

... and then after the summer at the village I moved to the city even though I didn't really know my dad. It just opened a new chapter of my life. Start over, new school, new environment, make new friends and all that. It was tough. Starting over is always hard.

Full quote is above in theme of the "importance of education"

Group 3, Question 2:

What has surprised you most about your child?

I like her to persevere when she tries things. When she is working with blocks, sometimes she quits but I bring it back and do it with her. Even if she is not the one necessarily building it, the fact that she is participating by passing me the blocks and observing encourages her to try more next time—to keep trying.

Importance of Community

Group 2, Question 5:

When you were a child what did you dream about doing, or look forward to doing as an older person?

... I did have a lot of positive reinforcement. People, community members, were encouraging towards me.

Group 2, Question 9:

What were the guiding words you heard most often from parents or other people who cared for you?... Did you like these words? Were there any guiding words you did not like?

Keep going to school. Keep working. Did you do your homework today? People look out for you in the village. Lots of encouragement. Stay in school, stay in school, work hard and you'll succeed. The only way you are going to make it out of poverty is through knowledge and education.

Group 2, Question 4:

Do you remember anything that was annoying to you when you were a child?

...But when I was in grade four, I started not liking it at all and I started rebelling, so by grade six I decided that I'm not going to go to this school anymore. I started running away and hiding in the bush. So eventually, I ran away from that place and I got chased a couple of times [by community members who saw that he wasn't in school]

Group 2, Question 1:

When you were a child what were some of your favourite activities or events?

Drumming. People just take drums and sit on a courtyard and start playing. Everybody will come out and make a big circle and start dancing. It will take about 3-5hours. There is a lot of dancing, chatting, laughing, having fun. And at the end, people share food. Children sit in the circle and clap but, eventually they go in and start dancing. That's how you learn. There are no official classes on teaching kids how to dance. They just watch people and do the same thing. As a kid, you are part of the community and part of the whole process. There is no particular role but you participate. You are part of it.

Group 4, Question 9:

In an ideal world, what kinds of community environments, resources, opportunities, and learning experiences would you like all children to have?

Kids should have access to learning opportunities, but those opportunities include mingling with adults, learning from them by doing things, listening. Having access to school, a school as an extension of the community. The learning is not just at school; you also learn in your community. The community reinforces what you learn at school or adds to what you learn at school. Exploring and discovering things without the fear of getting harmed because the community is there to look out for you. You feel safe.