

Episode 6 Transcript

00:00:17,359 --> 00:00:38,599 [Speaker 0]

Welcome, listeners, to Education Isn't a To-Do List. I'm your host, Hannah Jimenez, and today's episode will focus on refining my research methods. But I'm not doing it alone. I'm inviting my inner voice to join me, a voice that questions, challenges, and sometimes even makes me second-guess things. But in the end, it's the voice that helps me refine my ideas. So let's dive in.

00:00:38,599 --> 00:00:44,219 [Speaker 1]

Hey, there. Glad to be part of this. You know, I'm always lurking around. Where do we start?

00:00:44,219 --> 00:01:02,599 [Speaker 0]

Well, let's start with the setting, the educational landscape in North Carolina. North Carolina's been really progressive with technology in K-12 education. Many school districts have adopted one-to-one initiatives. They're giving kids laptops and tablets to enhance their learning experience, and there's even a statewide digital learning plan.

00:01:02,599 --> 00:01:14,599 [Speaker 1]

Okay, that's great. Technology is changing everything. But are all the kids actually benefiting from it? I mean, what about the rural areas? Isn't access to broadband still a huge issue there?

00:01:14,599 --> 00:01:34,119 [Speaker 0]

Exactly. That's one of the biggest challenges. Rural communities often struggle with internet access, and that creates a digital divide. You've got some students who are fully equipped to thrive in this digital age and others who are just trying to keep up. The state is working on initiatives to improve connectivity, but we're not there yet.

00:01:34,119 --> 00:01:44,899 [Speaker 1]

So you're saying the setting you're working in is both progressive and problematic. Technology is being integrated in a big way, but there are gaps. How do you reconcile that in your study?

00:01:44,899 --> 00:02:09,779 [Speaker 0]

That's part of what I want to explore. North Carolina is at an interesting crossroads. On one hand, you have these forward-thinking digital learning plans, and on the other, there are some stark inequities. The pandemic really pushed schools into adopting virtual learning models, but it also exposed how fragile the system is when technology isn't accessible to everyone or when teachers don't know how to use it.

00:02:09,779 --> 00:02:17,759 [Speaker 1]

Okay, but you're not just looking at technology integration, right? You're also diving into culturally responsive pedagogy. Where does that fit into all this?

00:02:17,759 --> 00:02:40,899 [Speaker 0]

Yes, I'm looking at that too. In recent years, North Carolina has placed more emphasis on culturally responsive teaching. The idea is that teachers should be attuned to the diverse cultural backgrounds of their students and leverage technology to support that. For example, digital tools can provide multilingual resources or allow teachers to incorporate different cultural perspectives into their lessons.

00:02:40,899 --> 00:02:45,319 [Speaker 1]

Hmm. That sounds good on paper, but do you think it's actually happening in practice?

00:02:45,319 --> 00:03:02,859 [Speaker 0]

That's why I'm conducting this study. There's a lot of talk about culturally responsive pedagogy, culturally relevant teaching and learning, culturally sustaining pedagogy, but I wanna hear directly from teachers, principals, and district leaders who are trying to implement it.

00:03:02,859 --> 00:03:12,559 [Speaker 0]

Are they using technology in a way that truly supports diverse students, or is it just another checkbox that they can say they did?

00:03:12,559 --> 00:03:29,479 [Speaker 1]

Fair point. But if there's so much diversity in North Carolina, wouldn't the approach need to vary widely between different communities? Like, what works in an urban school might not work in a rural one. What works in Eastern North Carolina won't work in the mountains. How are you going to account for that?

00:03:29,479 --> 00:03:53,999 [Speaker 0]

That's one of the reasons I want to include participants from across the state. The western part of North Carolina is very different from the eastern part. The Piedmont area is its own thing too. By including district leaders, principals, and teachers from various regions, I hope to get a fuller picture of what's happening. I'll also focus on elementary, middle, and high school educators to capture a broad range of experiences.

00:03:53,999 --> 00:04:02,819 [Speaker 1]

Interesting. So, you're not going for a one-size-fits-all answer. You wanna see how these issues play out across different types of schools and communities.

00:04:02,819 --> 00:04:23,119 [Speaker 0]

Exactly. I'm curious about the variations, and I wanna see how different schools are dealing with the intersection of technology and culturally sustaining pedagogy. Are there similarities that work across context, or is each one truly different at creating success or creating failure in their own way?

00:04:23,119 --> 00:04:30,679 [Speaker 1]

All right. Let's talk about access. How are you getting into these schools? You're not currently teaching in K-12, right?

00:04:30,679 --> 00:04:52,019 [Speaker 0]

No, but I have a lot of connections. I was a teacher in the past, and my family has deep roots in education. My mother and grandfather were both educators in another district, and they

can help me make introductions if I need them. Also, I continue to work in state education, just not in K-12, in a K-12 setting, so I have contacts that I can reach out to for my interviews.

00:04:52,019 --> 00:05:00,179 [Speaker 1]

You seem pretty well-connected, but are you concerned about how people will perceive you as an outsider given that you're not currently in the trenches?

00:05:00,179 --> 00:05:17,659 [Speaker 0]

It's something I'm mindful of. Even though I'm not currently teaching K-12, I do see myself as a part of the educational community. I've been there before, and I still work in education. I think if I approach the interviews with humility and genuine curiosity, that will go a long way.

00:05:17,659 --> 00:05:31,119 [Speaker 1]

Right. But there's also the issue of power dynamics, isn't there? You're going to be interviewing people who may have more authority in certain settings, and in others, you may have more privilege. How are you planning to navigate those dynamics?

00:05:31,119 --> 00:05:57,679 [Speaker 0]

Good point. I'll be interviewing district leaders, principals, and teachers, so in some cases, I'll be seen as more of a peer, and in others, I may be viewed as an outsider or even an authority. Then there's the racial and gender dynamics to consider. As a White woman, I may be perceived differently when interviewing minority educators. I'm going to be conscious of these dynamics and make it clear that my role is to elevate voices, not speak over them.

00:05:57,679 --> 00:06:00,959 [Speaker 1]

Sounds like a delicate balance. Are you worried about trust?

00:06:02,463 --> 00:06:18,823 [Speaker 0]

A little, but I think the key is transparency. I'll be upfront about my intentions, and I'll spend time building relationships before jumping into the interview. Sharing a bit about myself, my background, and why I'm passionate about this topic will help create a rapport.

00:06:18,823 --> 00:06:23,704 [Speaker 1]

Okay. So who exactly are your participants? Why did you choose them?

00:06:23,704 --> 00:06:43,063 [Speaker 0]

I'm focusing on district leaders, principals, and teachers. Initially, I thought about limiting it to researchers in these topics, but I realized the most important people to hear from are those who are actively working within the system. These are the people dealing with technology integration and culturally sustaining pedagogy initiatives on a daily basis.

00:06:43,063 --> 00:06:49,203 [Speaker 1]

But why this specific group? What makes them the right people for your study?

00:06:49,203 --> 00:07:05,723 [Speaker 0]

Because they're the ones making decisions and implementing policies. Teachers are on the front lines, and principals and district leaders shape how technology and culturally sustaining pedagogy are integrated into schools. I want to know how they're balancing innovation with equity.

00:07:05,723 --> 00:07:12,023 [Speaker 1]

Diversity is a big theme in your research, so how are you ensuring your participant pool reflects that?

00:07:12,023 --> 00:07:41,743 [Speaker 0]

I want my participants to be diverse in terms of gender, race, and geography. Ideally, I'm aiming for a group that includes five men and five women, with a racial breakdown that includes some, that includes White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian educators. I'll also include participants from different regions of the state, ideally three from the western region, four

from the Piedmont, and three from eastern. I'm not beholden to this breakdown, however, as I wanna be flexible in finding willing participants.

00:07:41,743 --> 00:07:46,163 [Speaker 1]

That's a good spread. What about their educational backgrounds?

00:07:46,163 --> 00:07:56,263 [Speaker 0]

All participants will at least have a master's degree in education. In North Carolina, a master's is required to be in a leadership position, so it's important that we have that level of experience.

00:07:56,263 --> 00:07:58,323 [Speaker 1]

That makes sense.

00:07:58,323 --> 00:08:07,223 [Speaker 1]

You mentioned earlier that you'll have to navigate different power dynamics. How will you handle that in your relationship with participants?

00:08:07,223 --> 00:08:34,143 [Speaker 0]

I want to be seen as a peer, someone they can speak openly with, but I'm aware that power dynamics will shift depending on who I'm talking to. For example, when I'm interviewing men, there may be a sense of male authority. When I'm interviewing minority educators, there's a racial dynamic at play. In each case, I'll try to minimize the power imbalance by positioning myself as a facilitator, someone who's there to let their voices be heard.

00:08:34,143 --> 00:08:39,643 [Speaker 1]

Let's move to data collection. What methods are you using to gather the information you need?

00:08:39,643 --> 00:09:04,823 [Speaker 0]

I'm conducting semi-structured recorded interviews. These interviews will be placed in podcast episodes, which is one of the more innovative aspects of my study. I'll create full-length episodes based on individual interviews, but I'll also cut them up into shorter sound bites for thematic episodes. These shorter episodes, called Connections, will highlight patterns that I notice across the different interviews.

00:09:04,823 --> 00:09:13,263 [Speaker 1]

Interesting approach. You have told us before, but remind us why podcasts? Why not just stick to traditional written formats?

00:09:13,263 --> 00:09:37,263 [Speaker 0]

Podcasts allow for a more engaging format. I want to make sure the participants' voices are heard, literally. It also aligns with arts-based research, ABR, which is about creating evocative experiences and making research more public and accessible. [bell chiming] Audio provides a certain immediacy and intimacy that written formats don't always capture.

00:09:37,263 --> 00:09:41,103 [Speaker 1]

Can you share some of the questions you will be asking your participants?

00:09:41,103 --> 00:10:22,663 [Speaker 0]

The following are just the starting points of the questions I will ask each participant. Number 1, can you describe what success looks like in a K-12 school that does critically sustaining pedagogy and educational technology well, and how would you measure it? Would it be individual or together? Two, do you feel like you have seen the success in your environment? If so, what do you think contributed to it? And if not, what do you think contributed to the failure? Number 3, what would you consider the most important aspect if you were to combine these two initiatives for a class, school, or district?

00:10:22,663 --> 00:10:38,543 [Speaker 0]

Number 4, what strategies would help from making this a checklist for teachers, schools, and districts? In other words, what would fully integrate these initiatives into s- into classrooms, into teacher lesson plans?

00:10:38,543 --> 00:10:54,943 [Speaker 0]

Number 5, can you describe your students and how they might benefit from the merging of these two initiatives? Are there benefits? And number 6, considering the topic, is there anything that I haven't asked that is on your mind and you would like to share?

00:10:54,943 --> 00:11:14,343 [Speaker 0]

While I want to have a guide in these interviews, I also want to be open to explore the topic as they speak. These questions will ensure I'm getting the same information from each participant while also allowing them to expand on their personal experiences. And for a more detailed interview guide, you can see the link in the show notes.

00:11:14,343 --> 00:11:17,803 [Speaker 1]

And how will you analyze these interviews?

00:11:17,803 --> 00:11:40,463 [Speaker 0]

I'll use coding, which involves listening back to the interviews and identifying patterns and making connections. [bell chiming] Since the interviews will be audio recorded, I'll transcribe them and then go through both the audio and the text to find recurring themes. The goal is to look for how participants talk about the intersection of technology and culturally sustaining pedagogy. [bell chiming]

00:11:40,463 --> 00:11:47,143 [Speaker 1]

Let's talk rigor. What is the criteria for rigor in your study since you are using arts-based research?

00:11:47,143 --> 00:12:49,487 [Speaker 0]

There are four main criteria for rigor in my study. The first is incisiveness. Is my research getting to the heart of a social issue, or am I just dancing around it? As Barone and Eisner, 2011 wrote, "Incisiveness means that the work of research is penetrating. It is sharp in the manner in which it cuts to the core of an issue." [bell chiming][upbeat music] Next is coherence. Is the research and all the different parts presented in a coherent manner? Can people that might not be experts in this issue follow along? [bell dings] Then there is generativity. Put simply, this means is the work encouraging others or inviting others into

the work, and to look even further beyond me? [bell dings] Lastly is social significance. Is the research asking us to make a difference in the world? Again, I think Broni & Eisner, 2011 say it best when they write, "We believe that the best arts-based research aims to make a difference in the world." [bell dings]

00:12:49,487 --> 00:12:53,547 [Speaker 1]

How do you plan to ensure your findings are reliable and valid?

00:12:53,547 --> 00:14:12,827 [Speaker 0]

One way I'll ensure rigor is through member checking. After the full interviews, I'll give participants access to the transcripts, and ask them if they feel like their words were accurately represented. [bell dings] If they disagree with the framing of their voice, then I will provide two options. They can join me for a new recording to share their thoughts more accurately, or they can be removed from the study. In the end, this will make more work for me, but I want to make sure everyone feels comfortable and adequately represented. I do not believe any aspect of the data collection, meaning the full-length interview episodes or the connections episodes, will be released to the public before approval is received. This also will make editing and releasing the podcast more streamlined. All editing will be complete with approval before the public engages with it, so there will be less need for corrections later on. This exercise will build trust and help keep me accountable for representing everyone involved well. I do plan to use direct quotes from participants in my final analysis to ground my findings. [bell dings] This transcript will also be shared with all participants for full approval. Since this study is using names and places, I believe that the people involved must have control over how their voice is used and represented.

00:14:12,827 --> 00:14:22,107 [Speaker 1]

Sounds good. And are you including contextual descriptions of the participants and the environments in which they serve public education in North Carolina?

00:14:22,107 --> 00:15:04,307 [Speaker 0]

These types of descriptions are essential for context. I want to provide enough detail about the educational setting and the participants so that other researchers can replicate the study or apply my findings to their work. [bell dings] These contexts are also essential for making the research personal and vivid for those listening. Due to the audio-only nature of the podcast, these descriptions will be important for painting the picture for the audience. [bell

dings] While I can add additional information in the show notes, people will first and foremost be listening, and so I have to make sure that what they hear fully conveys who the participants are, where they work, and what public education looks like in their area.

00:15:04,307 --> 00:15:09,367 [Speaker 1]

Okay. Reflexivity. You're not just a neutral observer in this, are you?

00:15:09,367 --> 00:15:31,187 [Speaker 0]

No, not at all. Reflexivity means I'm constantly reflecting on how my own biases, experiences, and emotions influence the research process. [bell dings] I'll be journaling throughout the study to keep track of my thoughts and reactions. This will help me to stay aware of any potential biases and ensure that I'm not projecting my own views into the data. [bell dings]

00:15:31,187 --> 00:15:35,407 [Speaker 1]

What about ethics? What kind of ethical dilemmas do you anticipate?

00:15:35,407 --> 00:16:25,487 [Speaker 0]

Ethics are a huge concern, especially with a topic like this. One big issue is the digital divide. By focusing on technology, I might inadvertently highlight the inequities that already exist between different student populations. [bell dings] The use of technology in education can shift the power in the classroom between teachers and students as well, particularly among students with spific- specific cultural backgrounds. [Bell dings] Educators have to be attentive to how technology can do this in the classroom and work to promote student agency and empowerment. There's also the use of AI in education, which is becoming more prevalent, and that introduces concerns about data privacy, surveillance, and who has control over student data when it is being used for personalized learning. All of these are different ethical concerns that could be highlighted in the interviews. [bell dings]

00:16:25,487 --> 00:16:30,207 [Speaker 1]

Sounds tricky. How do you plan to address those issues?

00:16:30,207 --> 00:16:44,827 [Speaker 0]

First, I'm gonna focus on getting informed consent from all participants, explaining how their data will be used. I'll keep the recordings and transcripts secure, and I'll constantly be asking myself whether my use of technology in this research is ethically sound.

00:16:44,827 --> 00:16:49,327 [Speaker 1]

And how will you handle any ethical dilemmas that arise during the research?

00:16:49,327 --> 00:17:00,987 [Speaker 0]

I'll have to be flexible. If something comes up that I didn't anticipate, I'll consult with colleagues and possibly even the participants. This is an ongoing process, so I'm ready to adjust if necessary.

00:17:00,987 --> 00:17:09,567 [Speaker 1]

You've got a solid plan. Now it's just a matter of doing the work. But don't worry, I'll be here to question you every step of the way.

00:17:09,567 --> 00:17:19,647 [Speaker 0]

Thanks for joining me on another episode of Education Isn't a To-Do List. I look forward to the start of the research and where the first interviews will take us. [upbeat music]