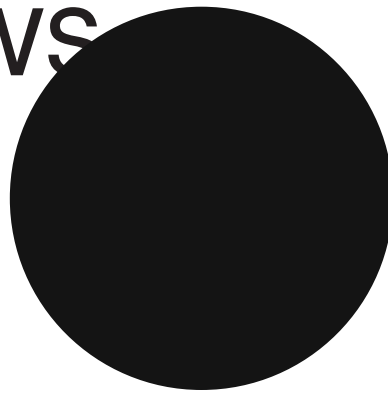


Semi-Structured Interviews



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Semi-structured interviews are conversations. You will have a pre-determined set of open questions (questions that prompt discussion and don't have 'yes/no' answers) and you will explore particular themes or responses as the conversation flows. This is unlike a structured interview which has a rigorous set of questions requiring answers.

Choose your participants carefully

If you are asked to choose a participant to interview for an assessment, think carefully. Choose someone who will provide you with rich information and who will offer different perspectives. Interviews are time consuming; don't waste them on finding out what you already know. Find out as much as you can about your participant before you meet them.

Plan and prepare

Think about how you will introduce yourself. Prepare your information and consent form. Plan your questions. Write them down. Prepare any props or images you might need for your questioning.

If you are recording your interview, make sure you have the technology ready and you have chosen a quiet place to conduct the interview. Make sure the location is comfortable for both you and your participant. Pause and check you are recording. Your participant won't mind and it is best to be sure.

Relax and listen

Let your participant know that you value their opinion (and explain why) and then listen attentively. Allow them to think about their answers. Don't rush. Allow the interview to move into

unexpected directions, these may be helpful later. Be as engaged as you can be by making eye contact and being responsive.

Use procedural questions like 'Can you tell me more about that?' 'Can you give an example?' when you feel you need more information about something.

Do your best to turn off your own assumptions as you are listening.

Say thank you

Your participant has given you their time, information, and insight into themselves. Participants are always grateful for this.

Analyse

Your interview is your raw data. Remember that you will need time to analyse what has been said. You may to return to your participant with follow up questions. Listening back to your interview can help you improve your technique for next time.

Other resources

- www.designresearchtechniques.com/casestudies/semi-structured-interviews/
- www.tools4dev.org/resources/how-to-do-great-semi-structured-interviews/