

I214 Interviewing

February 4, 2013

- The nondirected interview
- Writing an interview guide
- The craft of interviewing



THE NON-DIRECTED INTERVIEWING STYLE

What we want to do

Collect information

Estimate preference

Probe for what's unspoken or unrealized

Draw out frameworks or models of the world

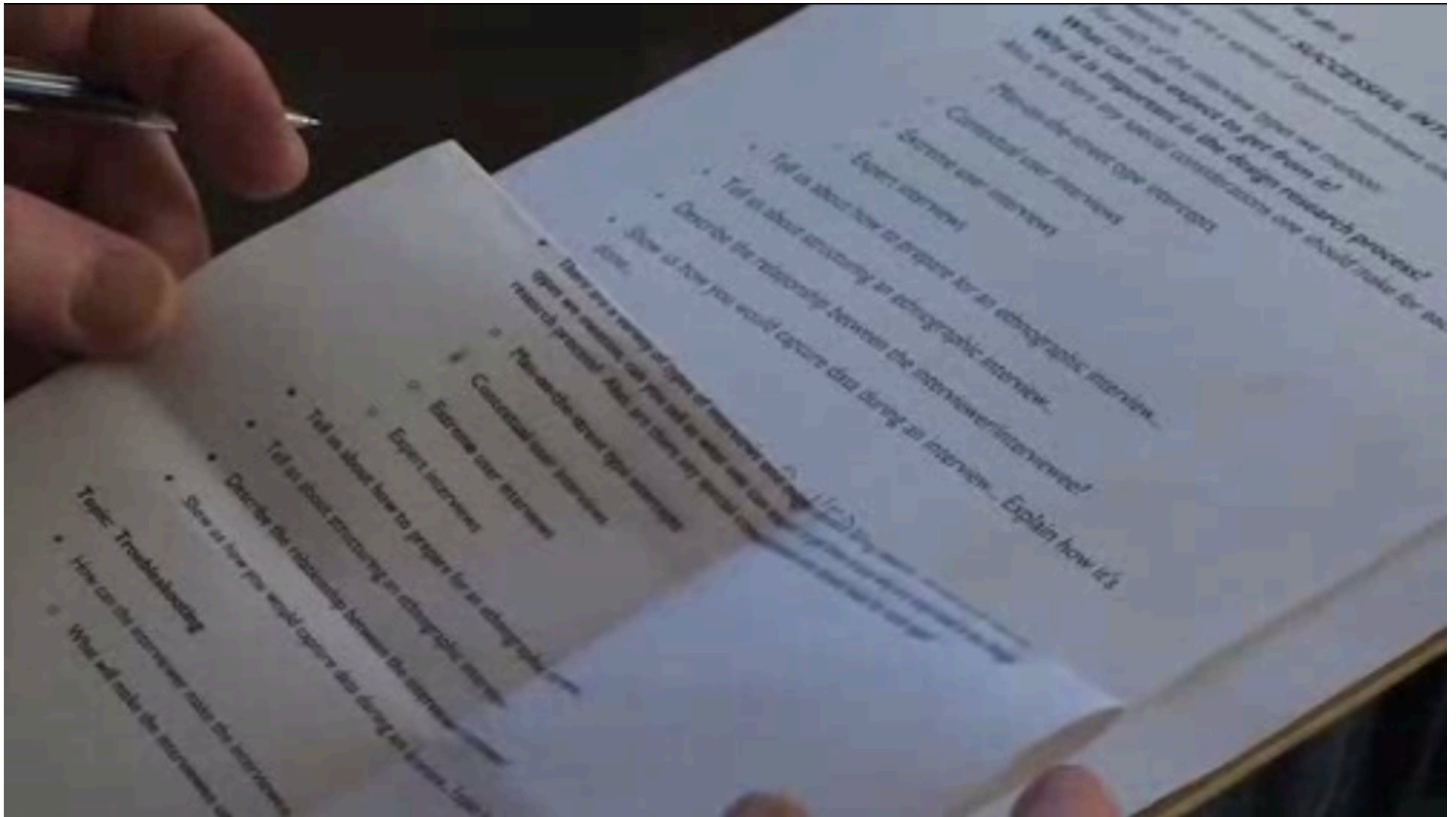
**...most of us are more skilled
at doing the first two!**



Non-directed interviewing

- Minimizes the effects of your preconceptions
- Avoids biasing or leading questions
- Does not mean unstructured or vague!

“The interviewer will **respect the respondent's integrity**. This means that the interviewer will not question the respondent's appraisals, choices, motives, right to observations, or personal worth.”



WRITING INTERVIEW GUIDES

Ways to ask questions

Open-ended

What is your opinion of the 49ers?

Closed-ended

Are you a 49ers fan?

Indirect

Prompt storytelling

I'd like to hear about when you...

Ask to roleplay

Could you act out what happened when you tried to cash that check?

Ask to imagine or project

Imagine your mother were here. What would she say?

Ask to demonstrate or teach

How would you teach me to milk a cow?

Typical question subjects

Behavior

Sequence *In what order?*

Quantity *How many? How often?*

Examples *The last time you...*

Complete list *Tell me all the...*

Emotion *How do you feel when...?*

Knowledge *What do you know about...?*

Sensory *What does it look like when...?*

Background *You are a...?*

Opinion and value

Direct *What's your opinion of...?*

Preference *Rate these five options...*



Helpful interview questions...

Draw out concrete experience

Not: How do people usually get to work?

Ask *carefully* for prediction and recollection

Not: Please tell me about your tenth birthday party

Avoid judgmental language (even body language)

Not: So why did you make that obvious mistake <pointing to haircut>?

Are simple and to the point

Not: Is keeping track of money and paying bills more the responsibility of you and your partner or do you also ask other people for help?

Do not force people to have an opinion

Not: So you hike a lot. What kind of GPS unit do you prefer for hiking?

Avoid binary or universal terms

Not: Is this interface a good one?

Do not suggest a “correct” answer

Not: So you hike a lot. What kind of GPS unit do you prefer for hiking?



A typical interview sequence

Setting expectations	Introductions Who you are and what you'll be doing.
Questions build on each other	Warm-up So tell me a little bit about your dog.
	General issues What do you feed your dog?
	Deep focus How do you store all that food?
Making closure	Retrospective/Projective So you told me you're a vegetarian, but your dog eats a lot of raw meat. Can you tell me what runs through your head when you prepare his breakfast?
	Wrap-up and thanks Is there anything you'd like to talk more about before we finish up?

A sample interview guide (in progress)

General attitudes to advertising

What is an ad?

Exercise: Show participants an ad-heavy site we have pre-selected and ask them to indicate where the ads are. How do they talk about the ads as they review them? Are there any ads that people do not see at first, then become obvious later? Are there any ads that people do not see at all?

Elizabeth Goo..., 6/30/10 5:29 PM

Comment: Possibly Yahoo.com

Can you give us some examples of ads?

Probe: Can you give us some examples of things that look like ads but aren't ads?

Probe: What about an ad that doesn't look like an ad but is actually an ad?

Probe: Can you give us an example of a good ad? What makes it good?

Probe: What about a bad ad?

Elizabeth Go..., 6/30/10 10:10 AM

Comment: I'm leaving this intentionally vague for the moment. Not sure if I want to ask about "good" as "skillfully entertaining," "good" as "ethical" – or "good" as "effectively persuasive." We can implicitly leave that up to the participant, or we can make this question more unambiguous.

What is your opinion of advertising in general?

How did you come to think that way?

Exercise: Advertising time maps. Ask people to map out where they encounter advertising during the day (say, the previous weekday). They should start when they wake up, and walk through to when they sleep. Ask people to mark *where* they remember encountering ads, what format of ad it was, what was advertised, if


Elizabeth Go..., 6/30/10 10:10 AM

Comment: Again, still leaving it open here as to whether "bad" means "irritating," "unethical," or "ineffective."



THE CRAFT OF INTERVIEWING

Exercise: Interview post-mortem



The video player shows a recording session in a radio studio. Four men are seated around a table with microphones and headphones. An NPR logo is visible on the wall behind them. The video player interface includes a progress bar at 0:15 / 5:50, a volume icon, and standard YouTube controls like play, pause, and full screen.

Sigur Ros on NPR's Bryant Park Project

BPPNPR · 14 videos

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Managing the setting (a non-exhaustive list of concerns)

- Going where people are comfortable vs going where the action is
- How many researchers are coming along?
- Planning ahead of time for audio/video needs
- Considering your own health and safety

Practice verbal tactics

Transitions from one question to another

I'd like to move on to your experience with the website...

Different kinds of neutral confirmations

That's interesting...

Distanced sympathy

Sounds like that was a rough time in your life.

Tenaciously seeking out concreteness

Can you walk me through the last time you rented a car?

Most important: staying silent



Following up for more detail

Extensions

Sequence

And then you...?

Clarification

What did you mean when you said, "that's it"?

Definition of code words

What does API mean?

Paraphrases

It sounds like you are unhappy with the response to 911 calls. Why is that?

Comparison

Processes or activities

How does note-taking on computer differ from doing it by hand?

Among people

How does your approach to gardening differ from your neighbor's?

Retrospective/projective

What were your biggest budget items five years ago? What do you think they will be five years from now?



Develop your ear

For generalizations

- i.e., “they”; always/never; generalized present and past

For “markers” or other cues to probe further

- i.e., *“Of course, that was back when I was still married”*

For signals to rethink your approach

- i.e., “holding one’s ground” (Weiss)

For times when you need to break “the rules”

Building rapport

- Setting expectations at the beginning
- Using colloquial language, fluid question ordering, and obvious transitions
- Paying attention to your body language
- Signalling that you're paying attention
 - Follow-ups
 - Responding dynamically
- A little bit of personal disclosure goes a long way

Be ready to ask
(politely!) questions
you believe might be
embarrassing,
obvious, or ignorant

What's punk rock? Where do you buy underwear? What's a wireframe?
Why did he accuse you of lying on your online dating profile?

Recording and note-taking

- Managing video and audio
- Who takes notes?
- What kind of data will you need to share?
- With whom? And for what purpose?
- Doing so *ethically*



An open question

The value of asking for projection and imagination (Portigal) versus sticking to concrete behavior (Weiss, *OUE*)