

## CS110: Effective Interviewing

**Goal: To gather empirical data in an organizational or social setting**

Fact-Finding Methods

- Questionnaire
- Record Sampling
- Observation
- Face-to-Face Interview (to get their view of the world!)

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### Effective Interview Sessions:

Interview sessions should be planned

- Interviewer should have specific objectives in mind

Interview Challenges

- Getting access to interviewees (e.g. identifying the right source(s), scheduling)
- Getting interviewees to talk specifically about target areas
- Ensuring that extracted information is useful, relevant to achieving objectives
- Listening and learning as you go to shape the interview in real-time

Goal

- Keep the interviewee engaged in the interview
- An enjoyable process yields greater involvement

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### Interview Process

Prepare for the interview

- Confirm time and place for meeting
- Bring all necessary documents, materials, recording equipment etc.

State the purpose of the interview

- All parties should be clear on objectives

Record information

- Avoid the annoyance that may result from having to repeat oneself
- Choose the *most effective*, *least obtrusive* method for recording
  - Examples: manual note taking, audio-tape, video-tape
- Establish specific roles when there is more than one interviewer
  - Example: Person A is primary interviewer, Person B is primary recorder

Be specific, not too general

- Vagueness tends to lead to digression, repetition and information which is difficult to analyze
- Specific instances, problems and situations may be easier to describe
- Don't lead the interviewee to your conclusion!
- Avoid interrupting (even when interviewee digresses a little)
- Always exhibit respect and avoid evaluating the interviewee's comments
- Avoid introducing or imposing unfamiliar ways of describing something such as graphs, tables, diagrams
- Accept the interviewees way of communicating; convert to yours later

### Interview Techniques:

*Critical Incident Technique*

- The interviewee is asked to describe interesting or difficult cases
- Challenges are often most memorable, stimulating and valuable

*Symptomatic Questioning*

The interviewee is asked to provide a list or description of symptoms or characteristics of a situation

*Goal Oriented Questioning*

Intermediate or final goals are identified by the interviewee  
Interviewee is asked to specify requirements to achieve the goal

*Reverse Goal Oriented Questioning*

Interviewee works backward from the goal  
Alternatives that were considered are key to the discussion

*Narrative Observation*

The interviewee demonstrates something while supplying "thinking aloud" narrative of what is going on

**Our goal is not to embarrass anyone or make them look stupid, but to understand the use of technology in their work environment from their point of view! Similarly, try not to put them on the defensive about what they do or make them hostile.**

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**Example:** Interview someone from another country to try to determine how their culture is different from American culture.

**Example 1:** Where are you from?  
So what's it like there?  
Are you very religious?  
How is your culture different from American culture?  
Do you like Americans? American music? American shows?

**Example 2:** What is your country of origin?  
Do you come from a city or the countryside?  
Describe what your home location is like - climate, your house, family.  
What are the major religions in your country and how important is religion there?  
Do the people in your country have much exposure to American culture?  
If so, what is their reaction to it?  
If not, what do they hear about it?