**Usability Testing Principles**

Usability testing principles are golden rules to be always followed in any usability testing planning, session and synthesis.

Sticking to these principles will ensure you

* Unbiased, objectives data
* Rich, quality data set to inform your design

**Principles**

* Freeze the design/implementation until the end of testing and you have synthesized findings.
  + No changes admitted during test period
    - **Did you forget something in the design?** Don’t change, you will after the testing or otherwise the results will be different from person to person and we need to keep the same variables across the sample
    - **Did users mention they would like to see something different?** Don’t change it, even if you think they’re right.
* Find right sample
  + Keep away from biases: involve people who never saw this product before
  + Cover all use cases: differentiate by target type:
    - Experts in the field
      * Seniors
      * Newbies
    - Non experts in the field = people who are not born as devs but would like to develop / prototype
* During the Usability Test
  + Before starting the test
    - Introduce yourself / team
    - Thank the person for participating
    - Explain the purpose of the session
    - Clearly highlight they are not judged, they are not evaluated, they do not need to show performance, it’s product performance is needed to be assessed, and they are huge help in doing so, evaluating the interface
  + Testing tasks
    - How to ask questions
      * Ask them to perform a task – formulate clear tasks
        + Ask them to think aloud, to vocalize what are they doing and trying to achieve step by step
        + Observe them interacting with the portal and note down where do they go, click
        + Max 3 attempts, after that the task is not successful
      * Ask User’s evaluation – how hard or easy (evaluation scale)
      * Ask why after evaluation
      * Always ask WHY after each open question; dig in the reasons why they expressed a concern, an evaluation, etc.
      * Be careful in how you phrase the question: no judgment, no suggestions over a preferred answer
    - **Do not suggest answers**!
      * Don’t say “correct” or “wrong” while they are performing a task
      * Don’t lead them with small hints to the correct path / expected path – could you say you solved a problem if someone else suggested you the solution? No.  
        That’s why we can’t suggest, hint, advise anything during a task completion, even if the user is in trouble.
      * Do not help them completing a task, only observe. If they struggle, that is absolutely the interesting part of the testing, where you can see where and why they are struggling
      * Note: usually we limit the number of attempts and we measure time to assess the effectiveness of a feature tested with a task.