Assignment: Interviewing People to Find Latent Needs

Submit by March 6, 11:59 PM PT

Important Information

It is especially important to submit this assignment before the deadline, March 6, 11:59 PM PT, because it must be graded by others. If you submit late, there may not be enough classmates around to review your work. This makes it difficult - and in some cases, impossible - to produce a grade. Submit on time to avoid these risks.

1. [**Instructions**](https://www.coursera.org/learn/human-computer-interaction/peer/xAgAF/interviewing-people-to-find-latent-needs)
2. [My submission](https://www.coursera.org/learn/human-computer-interaction/peer/xAgAF/interviewing-people-to-find-latent-needs/submit)
3. [Discussions](https://www.coursera.org/learn/human-computer-interaction/peer/xAgAF/interviewing-people-to-find-latent-needs/discussions)

Instructions

Design Briefless

You’ve learned about interviewing and needfinding, now it’s your turn to give it a whirl. Good design often benefits from understanding people. What are the goals, problems, and contexts of the people who might use your design? How might their settings and goals inspire you to create new applications, products, and services? In this assignment, you’ll first create an interview guide. Then it’s showtime: Find a participant, and interview them using your guide. Finally, write a short reflection about your experience and what you learned about interviewing participants to find design opportunities. Remember that at this stage in the design process, your goal is to understand the user’s goals and context. We’re not yet at the stage where we’re looking for feedback on a specific design idea.   
  
The setting for this general area is transportation. You want to learn how people get around. What opportunities can you unearth for redesigning the transportation experience? Your interviewee can be anyone you like: it could be a person on the street, or if you’re feeling shy, it could be a friend or family member.   
  
[Here](https://www.coursera.org/learn/human-computer-interaction/supplement/oFCEG/example-interview-guide) is an example field guide that Google Researcher Dan Russell created for his class at UC San Diego. [Here](http://rosenfeldmedia.com/app/uploads/2014/10/Portigal-Consulting_Reading-Ahead_Interview_Guide.pdf?680497) is another example from Steve Portigal’s excellent book, [Interviewing Users](http://rosenfeldmedia.com/books/interviewing-users/).   
  
This assignment should take 3-4 hours. If you have mobility limitations, perform your observations and interviews over email, phone, Skype, and/or video chat.

Instructionsless

To ease the reviewing process, we are asking you to submit your interview script in 4 sections. Additionally, you will upload an audio file of your interview and then write a short reflection on what you learned and what you will do differently in the future.

Script: Setup

What contextual information do you hope to glean and where will you conduct the interview to do so? (Hint: at the participant’s home is probably a good choice.) Make sure to note any additional setup steps your interview will require.

Script: Intro & Participant Background

Write a script introducing yourself and explaining the goals of the interview. At first, many people (and you) may be a little nervous It’s not everyday that most of us get interviewed. Also, as a designer you may have lots of preconceptions about what people do or need that may not be true. And people do all sorts of cool and creative things that you may have never thought of. For all these reasons, you want to start the conversation at a high level before you dive in. With an easygoing demeanor, build rapport and use what you learn to guide your subsequent questions. You might take a few rough notes so that you remember things you want to follow up on.

Script: Main Interview Questions

After you’ve eased into the interview and gotten some context, start in on your main interview questions. Write 8-10 questions that elicit the relevant information about the participant’s behavior. It’s valuable to get an understanding of your participant’s emotional relationship with their endeavors. What do they find intrinsically enjoyable? What’s frustrating? What tools do they currently use to accomplish their task, and what limitations do they see with their current practices?   
  
Remember, as we learned in the videos, people are often inaccurate when they try to generalize about their behavior. Consequently, favor questions that focus on concrete experiences of the person you’re interviewing over generalized experiences or estimates about a class of users. For example,” How many times have you exercised in the past week?” will yield more accurate answers than, “How often do you exercise in general?” or, “How often do people in your neighborhood exercise?” Asking about an unusual story can be helpful, as can asking ‘why?” or other follow-up questions that fill in details and specifics. (One exception to the specificity principle is when discussing private or taboo topics, where people may be reluctant to be truthful about their own behavior, but would implicitly disclose it when asking about people’s behavior in general.)

Script: In Closing

At the end, include a wrap up question that invites your participant to speculate about the future. What pie in the sky ideas do they have? You can also ask participants whether there’s anything additional that they’d like to share, or any questions that they wish you’d asked. Make sure to thank your interviewee.

Audio Record Your Interview

Make an audio recording of your interview and upload it to [Soundcloud](https://soundcloud.com/). To record audio, you can use a smartphone (here are instructions for [iOS](http://www.wikihow.com/Record-a-Voice-Memo-on-an-iPhone) and [Android](https://support.google.com/android-one/answer/6159880?hl=en)), a laptop, or any digital recording device that you have access to.   
  
Note: You may conduct your interview in any language you choose but for interviews not conducted in English, a written transcript of the interview must be provided as part of your submission.

Write a Short Reflection

Write a short paragraph reflecting on your experience of planning and conducting an interview. What did you learn about interviewing participants to find design opportunities? What would you do differently next time?

Review Criterialess

**The following criteria will be worth 1 pt each:**

Setup

* Submission lists a location for interview.
* The location is a good choice for eliciting authentic responses.
* Submission includes a list of equipment, such as notebook and audio recorder.

Intro & Participant Background

* Submission has an intro script.
* Intro script explicitly shares interview goals (why participant is there are what outcomes are sought).

Main Interview Questions

* There are at least 8 ‘main interview’ questions.
* Questions probe specific behavior (e.g., “tell me about a time...”, “in the last week”) rather than ‘in general’ behavior (“How often do you think people...”).
* All interview questions require a ‘substantive’ response--with opportunities for elaboration--rather than simply “Yes/No”.
* Questions are focused on the topic of the participant’s transportation experiences.
* There is a question asking about a specific interesting/unusual example the participant experienced?
* There is a question asking the participant about their motivations/goals.
* There is a question asking about what the participant finds frustrating/joyful.

In Closing

* The wrap-up includes an open-ended prompt for blue-sky thinking or anything missed.
* Wrap-up thanks the participant.

**The following questions will be worth 2 pts each:**

* Audio submission is present and audible.
* Interview includes an introduction based on the written guide.
* Interview includes main questions based on the written guide.

**The assignment is worth a total of 20 points.**