

Cognitive Interviewing for Testing Survey Questions

Summer Institute in Survey Research Techniques, 2018

Instructor: Dr. Pamela Campanelli

Time: 18-19 June, 9.00 to 4.00 pm

Location: To be determined

Office and Phone: Institute for Social Research – Room number to be given on Day 1

E-mail dr.pamela.campanelli@thesurveycoach.com

Course Description

This 2-day course is designed to familiarize participants with the powerful and efficient method of testing survey questions called cognitive interviewing. This course is about understanding and learning to use cognitive interviewing. A full range of cognitive Interviewing techniques will be covered (e.g., think-alouds, probing, observation, paraphrasing, rating tasks, response latency measurement and card sort classification tasks). The course will include practical information on how to implement the various methods as well as “hands-on” sessions where participants will have the chance to practice the major methods. There is also a session where cognitive interviewing is practiced on participants’ questionnaires. In addition, the course also covers recruitment and sampling of participants, analysis, getting from results to improved survey questions and reporting as well as broader uses for cognitive interviewing and cognitive interviewing in comparison and combination with other survey question testing methods.

Evaluation

Grading for the course will be based on a two-part assignment due 2 weeks after the last day of class. The first part will involve using cognitive interviewing on 5 respondents to test a short questionnaire and reporting what was found. The second component will tap your knowledge of the required reading. It is a take home exam with short answer and multiple choice questions. (Please submit your assignments on time, as points will be removed for late assignments.)

Prerequisite

There is no prerequisite, but some knowledge of questionnaire design is of value.

Course Website

The course website will be on CANVAS which can be accessed through (<https://ctools.umich.edu/gateway/>). This website contains pdfs of the course slides and is maintained by Dr. Pamela Campanelli [dr.pamela.campanelli@thesurveycoach.com]. Once the website is “published/open” . . .

- Students using a UMich e-mail can access the site instantly with their UMich e-mail address and password.
- Visiting students will be given a UMich username and password upon arrival. This is an important account as all details about the Summer Institute will come through this email.

- It is also possible for Visiting students and UMich students who wish to use a non-UMich e-mail (in addition to their UMich one) to access the course website by getting a Friend Account. A UMich Friend Account, a special kind of computer account that is used to give non-University of Michigan members access to the general University of Michigan web environment. You can use any e-mail address you want for your Friend Account, but this same e-mail address has to be entered into the CANVAS system by Dr. Campanelli in order for you to access the course materials.
- Steps to accessing the website with a non-UMich e-mail:
 1. Tell Dr. Campanelli your preferred e-mail address so this can be put in CANVAS.
 2. When you receive a reply from her that it is in, go to <https://weblogin.umich.edu/friend/> and do what it says to create a Friend Account. This is just a few simple steps.
 3. You can then go to <https://ctools.umich.edu/gateway/>, choose CANVAS and “login in” using your Friend Account username and password.
 4. This will then show you a tab for the class (and any other classes where that e-mail has been entered in CANVAS)
 5. Be sure to contact Dr. Campanelli if you have any problems.

Course Schedule

Day 1	Topic	Suggested Reading
AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview: Introductions, overview of course topics, recommended reading • Problems with the standard field pilot for interview and self-completion surveys • Cognitive interviewing - What is cognitive interviewing? • 4 cognitive stages in answering survey questions • Peripheral cognitive interviewing techniques • Main cognitive interviewing techniques - Using think aloud techniques and probes • Combining think aloud techniques and probes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willis (2005)
PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main techniques (continued) • Structuring the cognitive interviews • Workshop 1: Practice doing cognitive interviews • Other probes and broadening the cognitive interview • Recruiting and sampling methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willis (2005)
Day 2		
AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis and reporting • Workshop 2 - Practice doing cognitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willis (2005)

	interviews using your own survey questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From cognitive interviewing analysis to question changes with solutions for comprehension, memory and sensitivity issues • Examples of cognitive interviewing results and revised questions 	
PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples (continued) • Workshop 3 – Given cognitive interview and expert review findings, how would you fix this survey question • Other issues in cognitive interviewing • Various uses of cognitive interviewing • Controversy in cognitive interviewing • Cognitive interviewing in comparison to other testing methods • Ideas on combining methods • Final questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willis (2005)

Readings

Assigned Textbook – Available for purchase at the Michigan Union

Willis, G. (2005), *Cognitive Interviewing: A Tool for Improving Questionnaire Design*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (Available at the Michigan Union bookstore.)

Other Suggested Reading

DeMaio, T.J. and Rothgeb, J.M. (1996), Cognitive Interviewing Techniques in the Lab and in the Field, Chapter 8 in: N. Schwarz and S. Sudman, S.(eds), *Answering Questions: Methodology for Determining Cognitive and Communicative Processes in Survey Research*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. GOOD INTRODUCTION – COPY ON CANVAS.

Collins, D. (ed.) (2015), *Cognitive Interviewing Practice*, Sage. EXTREMELY THOROUGH VERSION OF COGNITIVE INTERVIEWING AS A “QUALITATIVE” METHOD

Madans et al (eds), *Question Evaluation Methods*, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. CONTOVERSY IN COGNITIVE INTERVIEWING (AS WELL AS OTHER TESTING METHODS)