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Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Welcome to Research Methods and Field Study Experience (BMTP5022)



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BMTP5022 – Research Methods and Field Study Experience Week 9

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Aims For Today

- **Recap: Surveys**
- **Interviews**
- **Observations**
- **Assignment 2: Video Project**



Research Checklist

Tasks	Completed ✓ / ✗
Ethics Form	
Research Permission Letter	
Research Information Sheet	
Research Consent Form	
Risk Assessment (+Fieldwork Medical Questionnaire)	
Draft Questionnaire	
Draft Interview Guide	

Risk Assessments

- Please ensure you submit your completed **Risk Assessment** to the dedicated submission link no later than:

Wednesday, 10th December by 12pm (noon)



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Interviews

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**What is the
purpose of a
research
interview?**

**What makes an
interview “good”
or “bad”?**

**Where might
interviews be
used in your
field?**

Interviews

- **Interviews** are a common way to collect detailed information in qualitative research. In an interview, the researcher asks questions and the participant answers them.
- The aim is to understand the participant's thoughts, feelings, experiences and behaviours.

Key Features:

- 1. Direct Communication:** Involves conversations between the researcher and participant, whether face-to-face, by phone or online.
- 2. Open-Ended Questions:** Uses questions that let participants share their thoughts in their own words.
- 3. Flexibility:** Interviews can change based on the participant's responses, allowing for deeper exploration of topics.

Type of Interviews

Structured Interviews

Description: Use a set list of questions with no deviation.

Example: A job interview where all candidates are asked the same questions.

Strengths: Consistent data, easy to compare responses.

Weaknesses: Limited depth, little flexibility.



Type of Interviews

Semi-Structured Interviews

Description: Use a set list of questions, but allow for follow-up questions based on responses.

Example: An academic interview exploring a student's experiences.

Strengths: Balance of structure and flexibility, deeper insights.

Weaknesses: More complex to analyse, requires skilled interviewers.

Type of Interviews

Unstructured Interviews

Description: No fixed questions; the conversation adapts to the participant's answers.

Example: A journalist interviewing someone about their life story.

Strengths: Flexible and can reveal unexpected insights.

Weaknesses: Difficult to compare answers and can be time-consuming.



Probing

Probing refers to:

- Asking **follow-up questions**
- Encouraging the participant to:
 - ✓ Explain more
 - ✓ Clarify meaning
 - ✓ Give deeper details



Probing helps the researcher go beyond **surface-level answers**.

**Why is probing
important?**

Why is Probing Important?

Probing helps to:

- ✓ Increase **depth of information**
- ✓ Clarify **unclear responses**
- ✓ Reduce **misunderstanding**
- ✓ Explore **feelings and experiences**
- ✓ Improve **data quality and richness**

Without probing, interviews remain **shallow**.

When Should You Probe?

You should probe when:

- ✓ The answer is **too short**
- ✓ The response is **unclear**
- ✓ The participant says something **interesting**
- ✓ You need **examples or evidence**
- ✓ You want to explore **emotions or opinions**



Probing

Which of the following are **GOOD** probes? (✓ or X)

Probe	✓ / X
a) “Why do you prefer studying alone?”	_____
b) “Don’t you think group study is better?”	_____
c) “Can you describe what your study routine looks like?”	_____
d) “So you hate studying with others?”	_____
e) “How long do you usually study each day?”	_____

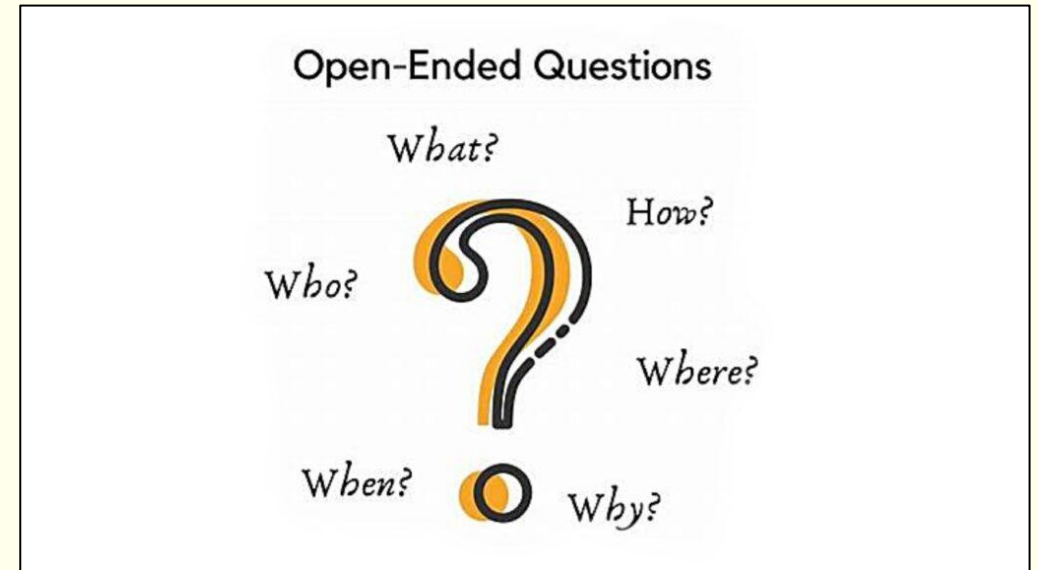
Probing

Which of the following are **GOOD** probes? (✓ or ✗)

Probe	✓ / ✗	Explanation
a) “Why do you prefer studying alone?”	✓	Good probe – open-ended and explores the reason behind the choice.
b) “Don’t you think group study is better?”	✗	Poor probe – leading and opinionated. Pushes the interviewer’s view.
c) “Can you describe what your study routine looks like?”	✓	Good probe – encourages detail and deeper explanation .
d) “So you hate studying with others?”	✗	Poor probe – assumptive and judgemental . Puts words in the participant’s mouth.
e) “How long do you usually study each day?”	✓	Good probe – asks for specific detail and expands the response.

Common Mistakes in Probing

- Asking **too many questions at once**
- Turning probes into **interrogation**
- Asking **yes/no probes**
- Interrupting the participant
- Rushing to the next question



Steps in Conducting an Interview

1. Preparation:

- Define the interview's purpose.
- Create a list of topics to discuss.
- Pick a good location or platform (virtual or in-person)

2. Conducting the Interview:

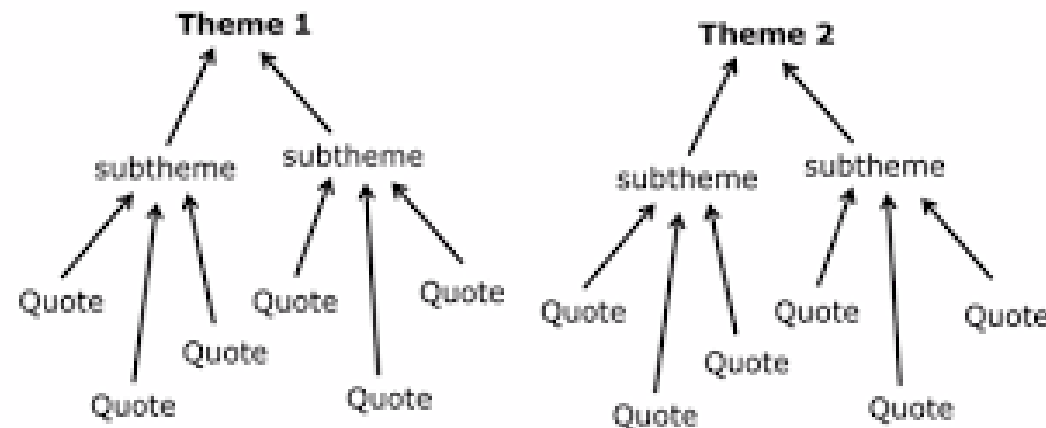
- Build rapport to make the participant comfortable.
- Ask open-ended questions for detailed answers.
- Listen actively and explore interesting points.
- Record the interview (with permission) for accurate analysis.

Steps in Conducting an Interview (contd.)

3. Data Analysis

- Transcribe the recorded interview.
- Identify key themes and insights from the responses.
- Compare data across interviews if there are multiple participants.

Figure 2.1 Classification Tree



Interview Skills Activity (Part 1)

- You will be placed into a group of **3-4 students**.
- Each group will be given **one research topic**:
 - Student stress and mental health
 - Social media and learning habits
 - Unemployment among graduates
 - Environmental awareness on campus
 - Consumer behaviour in online shopping

Step 1: Define Your Research Focus

- Clearly write **ONE research objective** related to your topic.
- Example: *To explore how social media affects students' study habits.*

Interview Skills Activity (Part 1)

Step 2: Prepare an Interview Guide

- Your group must create **4-5 main interview questions**
- At least **1 probing/follow-up questions** for each main question
- Identify: Target participant, Type of interview (structured, semi, unstructured), Ethical concerns.

Your questions must:

- ✓ Be **open-ended**
- ✓ Be **clear and simple**
- ✓ Be **neutral (not leading or biased)**

Avoid:

- X** Yes/No questions
- X** Double questions (questions that touch on two different topics but allow only one answer)
- X** Judgemental wording

Interview Skills Activity (Part 2)

Step 1: Assign Roles in Each Group

- Interviewer
- Interviewee
- Observer
- (Optional) Timekeeper



Interview Skills Activity (Part 2)

Step 2: Conduct the Interview (6 minutes per round)

- Interviewer conducts a real interview using the guide
- Interviewee improvises realistic answers
- Observer uses an evaluation checklist:
 - Body language
 - Question clarity
 - Probing effectiveness
 - Neutrality
 - Listening skills



Step 3: Rotate Roles

- Repeat so **each student interviews once.**

Interview Skills Activity (Part 3)

Group Reflection

Each group discusses:

- What questions worked well?
- Which questions felt awkward?
- Did probing add depth?
- Did the interviewer interrupt or lead the participant?
- Did personal bias appear?

Observer gives **structured feedback**.



Key Takeaways for a Successful Research Interview

1. Always start with a clear research purpose

Know exactly *why* you are conducting the interview and what information you need.

2. Use the right type of interview

Structured = fixed questions

Semi-structured = flexible, most commonly used

Unstructured = exploratory and open

3. Ask open-ended questions

Good interviews use “*how*”, “*why*”, “*what*”, and “*describe*” questions, not yes/no questions.

Key Takeaways for a Successful Research Interview

4. Good probing creates rich data

Probing helps you go deeper, clarify meaning and uncover real experiences.

5. Listen more than you speak

A successful interviewer is an **active listener**, not a talker.

6. Remain neutral at all times

Never judge, agree, disagree or influence the participant's answers.

7. Avoid leading and biased questions

Your wording must never push the participant toward a specific answer.

Key Takeaways for a Successful Research Interview

8. Build rapport and trust

Participants share more when they feel respected, comfortable and safe.

9. Ethics come before data

Always ensure:

- ✓ Informed consent
- ✓ Confidentiality
- ✓ Voluntary participation
- ✓ Right to withdraw



10. Silence is a powerful tool

Pausing often encourages participants to continue speaking and add depth.

Key Takeaways for a Successful Research Interview

11. Be flexible, not robotic

Follow your interview guide, but allow natural conversation when appropriate.

12. Record and take notes carefully

Accurate recording ensures reliable data for later analysis.

13. Be aware of your own bias

Your background, beliefs and expectations can affect how you ask and interpret questions.

14. Respect emotional boundaries

Never pressure participants to discuss sensitive topics beyond their comfort.

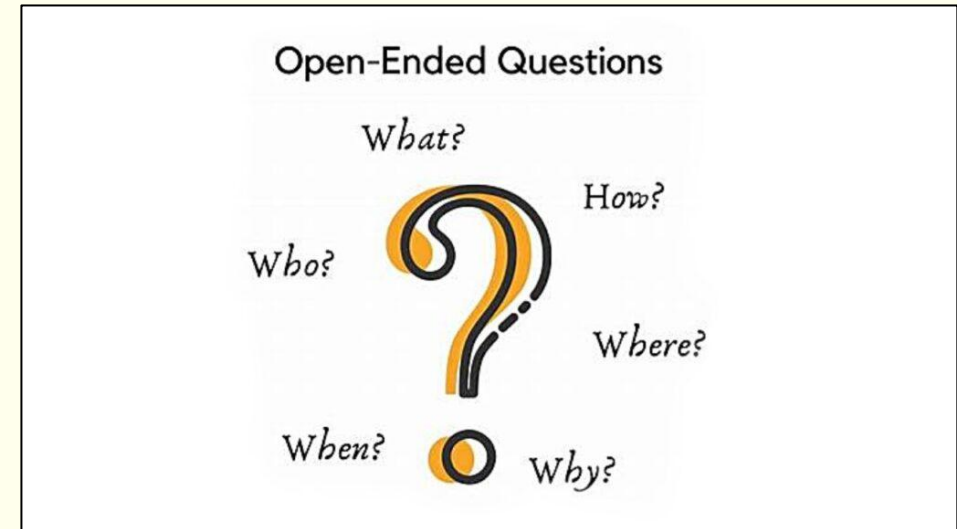
15. Reflection improves future interviews

Every interview should be followed by reflection on:

- What worked well; What could be improved.

Key Takeaways (contd.)

- Probing is the **heart of a good interview**
- It improves **data depth and quality**
- Probing must always be:
 - ✓ Ethical
 - ✓ Neutral
 - ✓ Respectful
 - ✓ Purposeful





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Observations

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Learning Objectives

By the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

- Define observation in research
- Identify types of observation
- State advantages and disadvantages
- Understand ethical issues
- Apply observation in field research



What is Observation in Research?

Observation is a **research method** where the researcher:

- Watches behaviour
- Records actions and interactions
- Studies people in **real situations**

Focuses on **what people do**, not what they say.

When is Observation Used?



Observation is used when researchers want to study:

- Natural behaviour
- Social interactions
- Daily activities
- Classroom behaviour
- Workplace practices

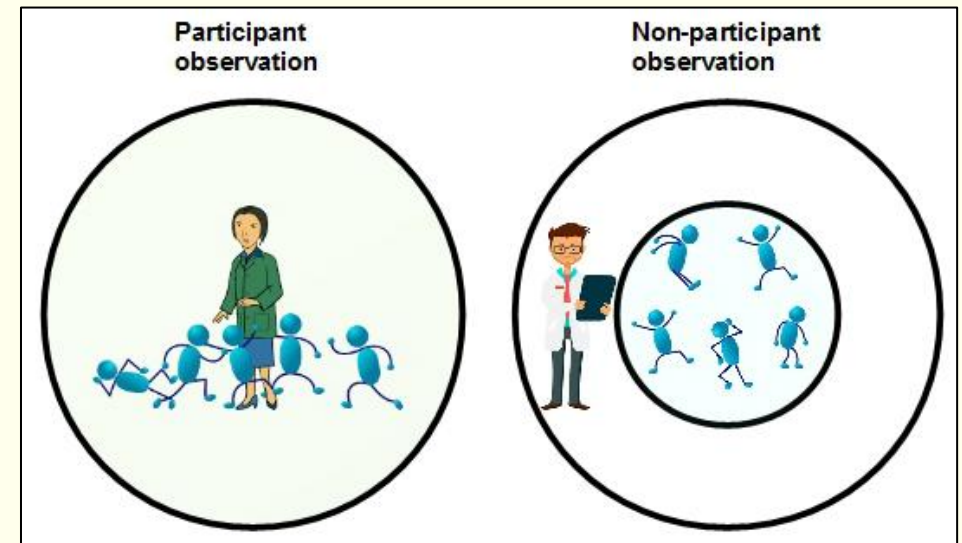
Participant vs Non-Participant Observation

Participant Observation:

- Researcher takes part in the activity

Non-Participant Observation:

- Researcher only watches, does not participate



Overt vs Covert Observation

Overt Observation:

- People **know** they are being observed

Covert Observation:

- People **do not know** they are being observed



Structured vs Unstructured Observation

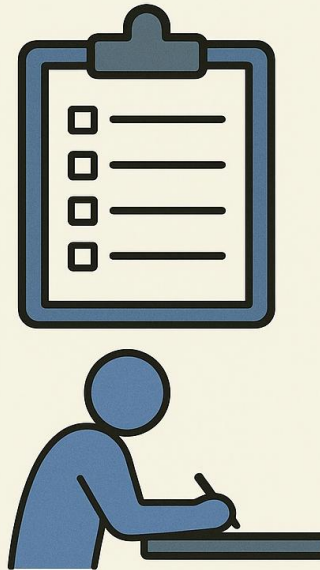
Structured Observation:

- Uses a checklist
- Looks for specific behaviours

Unstructured Observation:

- No fixed checklist
- Records everything seen

STRUCTURED OBSERVATION



UNSTRUCTURED OBSERVATION



**What can be
observed?**

What Can Be Observed?

Researchers may observe:

- Actions and movements
- Social interaction
- Facial expressions
- Communication patterns
- Participation and engagement

Tools used in observation:

- ✓ Observation checklists
- ✓ Field notes
- ✓ Video or audio recordings
- ✓ Rating scales

**What are the
advantages and
disadvantages of
observations?**

Key Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages

- ✓ Studies real behaviour
- ✓ Not based on self-report
- ✓ Useful for children and non-verbal groups
- ✓ High level of detail
- ✓ Helps verify interview data

Disadvantages

- ✗ Time-consuming
- ✗ Observer bias
- ✗ Ethical problems
- ✗ People may change behaviour
- ✗ Not all behaviour is visible

Activity: Student Observations

Some of you were being observed as part of a research activity.



**Who suspects they
were observed?**

Activity: Student Observations

Group A (Observers) Discuss:

- What behaviours did you observe?
- Was it easy or difficult to observe?
- Did your personal opinions affect what you noticed?

Group B (Observed) Discuss:

- How do you feel knowing you were observed?
- Would you have behaved differently if you knew?
- Do you feel your privacy was affected?

Activity: Student Observations

- Was this **overt or covert observation**?
- Was this **participant or non-participant observation**?
- Did the observation change natural behaviour? Why or why not?
- What type of **bias** might exist here?

What is Observer Bias?

Observer bias occurs when:

- A researcher's **personal beliefs, expectations, culture or prior knowledge**
- **Influence what they notice, record or ignore** during observation

Instead of recording **what actually happens**, the observer may record:

- ✓ What they **expect to happen**
- ✓ What they **want to see**
- ✓ What they **believe is important**

 This reduces the **accuracy and objectivity** of the data.

Example

Two observers watch the same classroom.

- Observer A believes: “Students are generally lazy”
- Observer B believes: “Students are highly motivated”

They may:

- Record **different behaviours**
 - Interpret the **same behaviour differently**
 - Produce **different results** from the same situation
- ➡ This shows how bias can affect **research validity**.

Key Takeaways for Successful Observations

1. Observation studies **real behaviour**, not self-reported data.
2. Types of observation include:
Participant vs Non-participant
Overt vs Covert
Structured vs Unstructured
3. **Observer bias** can distort data; training and multiple observers help reduce it.
4. **Reactivity (Hawthorne Effect)** occurs when participants change behaviour because they know they are observed.

Key Takeaways for Successful Observations

5. Structured observation improves **consistency and reliability**.
6. Ethics is crucial: **consent, privacy and no harm**.
7. Observation is **time-consuming** but provides **rich, contextual data**.
8. Combining observation with other methods (e.g. interviews) improves **validity**.
9. Always **reflect and review** your observations to improve accuracy.



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Assignment 2: Video

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Assignment 2: Video

LEVEL 5 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

Student name:		Student ID number:	
Programme:			
Module:	Research Methods and Field Study Experience		
Module code:	BMTP5022	Contribution to Overall Module Assessment (%):	50%
Lecturer:	Lisa Bassler	Internal Verifier:	Scott James
Assignment Title:	Video Project	Word count (or equivalent):	10 Minutes (+/-10%)
Submission deadline:	Friday, 13th February 2026 by 23:59pm	Return date of provisional marks & written feedback:	Friday, 13th March 2026 by 23:59pm

Assignment 2: Video

TASK DESCRIPTION

Video Presentation – 10 minutes (+/- 10%)

Your video presentation is the follow-up to **Assignment 1 (Research Project Proposal)**. In this assignment, you will present the outcomes of your research, showing that you can clearly describe your study, analyse your findings, and critically evaluate the results.

The presentation should be organised into the following sections:

1. Introduction (~2 min)

- Provide a visual snapshot (pictures or video clips) of sustainable transportation and its role in supporting tourism and events.
- Use **annotations, short texts, or images** to highlight why sustainable transportation is significant in your chosen region or (events) context.

Assignment 2: Video

2. Findings & Analysis (~4 min)

- Present the **key findings** from your research.
- Use a variety of presentation techniques to make your analysis clear and engaging, such as:
 - Pictures or video clips
 - Diagrams, graphs, or tables
 - Interview quotations or key insights
- Your goal is to **demonstrate the evidence you collected** and explain what it shows about sustainable transportation in relation to tourism and events.

3. Reflections & Limitations (~4 minutes)

- Critically evaluate the **strengths and weaknesses** of your research approach and findings.
- Reflect on:
 - Which research methods worked best and why
 - What challenges or limitations you encountered

Assignment 2: Video

- How these might have affected your results
- Include both:
 - **Personal reflections** (what you learned, what you would change in the future)
 - **Academic reflections** (evaluating the effectiveness of your research methods).

4. References (final slides – not timed)

- Provide a list of credible sources used in your research, including:
 - Academic journal articles
 - Industry reports or online sources
 - Textbooks
- Display your references on the final slides of the presentation. Leave enough time at the end of the video for viewers to read your references (this time will not be counted towards your total).

Assignment 2: Video

Presentation Requirements

- The video should be 10 minutes (+/- 10%, excluding references).
- You must appear **on screen at least at the beginning and end** of the video.
- To achieve higher marks:
 - Stay visible throughout, using **professional presentation skills** (good eye contact, clear voice, confident delivery).
 - Ensure your slides and visuals are **well-designed, clear, and engaging**.

Assignment 2: Video

Important Reminder: You may use graphic design tools like Canva and generative AI tools to assist with the visual creation of your video presentation. However, all written content must be based on your own research and original work. Submitting AI-generated content as your own is considered **academic misconduct**.

As per the University's AI Guidance, "all AI intervention must be clearly recorded in any part of the creative process where AI is used. This must include the programme(s) or app(s) wherein it was produced, the prompts used (be they pictorial, text or data), and the date when this was undertaken" (UWTSD, 2025, p.1).

UWTSD (2025) *Creative Work with AI*. Available at: https://hwb.uwtsd.ac.uk/pages/academic-support/deallusrwyddartiffisial_artificialintelligence (Accessed: 10th September 2025).

Any Questions?

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I look forward to seeing you next week.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via email.

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