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ECDE 7021

Exploring Contemporary Issues in Education **2: Applying critical skills, contributing to knowledge: leading improvement**

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Transforming Education, Transforming Lives

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Designing and evaluating research tools – things to consider...

An illustration at the top of the slide shows a row of eight teal-colored human head silhouettes in profile, facing right. Above each silhouette is a colorful speech bubble. The speech bubbles are in various colors: light blue, purple, green, orange, yellow, blue, brown, and pink. Some bubbles are overlapping, creating a sense of active conversation or discussion.

Discussion:

-
- Why is designing a good questionnaire or interview schedule important?
 - What challenges have you faced in collecting data before?



Designing effective questionnaires



Signature

Date

A good questionnaire is...

Concise

Clear

Manageable (not too long)

Avoids jargon

Fair and reasonable

Does not upset/offend

Sequenced (consider sections)

Tackles one issue/topic at a time

Types of questions

Multiple choice

- Walk/Bike/Bus/Car/Taxi
- Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor

Rank order

- 1-5 (where 1 is lowest and 5 is highest)
- 1-10 (where 1 is most important and 10 is least important)

Rating scales

- Agree/disagree
- Satisfied/dissatisfied
- Happy/unhappy

Presenting your questionnaire

- Order your questions in a way that is meaningful and easy to follow.
- The questions should flow in some sort of order that sounds natural and does not skip around too much.
- Group like topics together rather than jumping back and forth.
- Start with questions that are easy to understand and easy to answer.
- If there are any questions that are of more importance and that you want your respondents to focus on, place them towards the beginning of your questionnaire.

Researcher bias – avoiding leading or loaded questions

- ‘Did you have a good day at school?’
- points the child towards thinking about good things that happened at school.
- ‘How was school today?’
- is more generalised and does not ask for judgment about how good or bad the day has been.

Target audience – tailor to the need of respondents

- How old are they?
- What language should I use?
- How many options do I need to give them?
- What is their attention span?
- Will they fully understand what I'm asking them?
- Might images/emojis help?
- Triangulating data – pupil/staff

Introduction/overview

This should explain a little about your questionnaire:

- Keep it brief, but engaging.
- Outline why are you doing it and what your goal is.
- Think about Ethics – reassure them of confidentiality/anonymity.
- Remind them of their right to withdraw.
- Articulate number of questions and roughly how long will it take to complete.
- Ask them to contact you with any further questions.



INTERVIEWS

Designing effective interview
schedules

Being mindful of power
dynamics and researcher bias.

Top tips:

1

Avoid dichotomous questions that invite a yes/no answer

2

Use 'Think back...' questions

3

Vary the question types

4

Avoid leading questions

5

Avoid loaded questions

6

Stay away from double-barrelled questions

7

Avoid absolutes

Be clear



1

Be clear by speaking your participants' language.



2

Use clear, concise, and uncomplicated language while trying to avoid acronyms, technical terms or jargon that may confuse your participants.



3

Consider the age of the pupils that you will be working with.

Ten Heuristics for Interview Schedules That Elicit Rich Data

1. Know your phenomenon of interest.
 2. Aim for experiences more than opinions.
 3. Start with a good warm-up question.
 4. Brainstorm around the experiences you want to know about.
 5. Use open-ended questions.
 6. Consider the valence of your questions.
 7. Leave space for interviewers to improvise; probes can help.
 8. Start concrete and easy, finish with abstract and hard.
 9. Final reflections offer opportunities for interviewee open comment.
 10. Pilot, adjust the schedule and pilot again.
-

Table 1
Example Interview Schedule

Schedule	Rationale
Thank you so much for agreeing to this interview. We've got a few questions for you around social media and your studies. <Check consent and start recording.>	Useful to have some text up front to act as an aide-de-memoir to check consent or any other logistics. If many people are conducting the interviews then this text becomes more significant.
1. How are you finding your studies? Check year level and profession mentioned.	This is a warm-up question but also allows the interviewer to confirm the course and level. Provides a sense of the student's relationship with their course and even with their chosen profession. Can record this in demographic checklist.
2. I'm guessing you use social media in some form. Tell me about which platforms you use. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Tiktok, etc.	Still in warm-up mode but also giving the interviewer a sense of how the participant uses social media.
3. What main platforms do you use with respect to your study?	
4. Thinking back over the last month, tell me about a time where <main social media platform(s)> helped you with your studies? Probes: What happened? Where were you? Who did you connect with? How did it help?	First substantive experience question. Because social media is quite abstract, might need a bit of probing to fill in detail. The "how did it help?" is the most significant probe if the participant is finding it tricky to answer the question.
5. If relevant: What reasons did you have for using <main social media platform(s)> to help you with your studies?	This probes deliberate use of social media versus incidental.
6. How typical is this scenario? What other ways does social media help your studies?	This gives a sense of whether this experience is normal and plants the opportunity to provide a range of other experiences.
7. In the last month, can you think of a time when <favourite social media platform> interfered with your studies? Probes: What happened? Where were you? Who did you connect with? How did it interfere?	These questions are about balancing the valence—both positive and negative influences.
8. How typical is this scenario? What other ways do social media impede your studies?	
9. Thinking back over the last year of your studies. Tell me about a meaningful connection that you have made through social media (with respect to study)? Probes: (if stuck): How about influencers? Any friends that you already connect with? Probe: (if a particular connection is raised): Tell me about how that developed? What happened next?	This question is a more challenging one because it is asking the interviewee to disclose something that may be more personal (i.e., "meaningful"), therefore, it is closer to the end of the schedule.

Table 1
Example Interview Schedule (contd.)

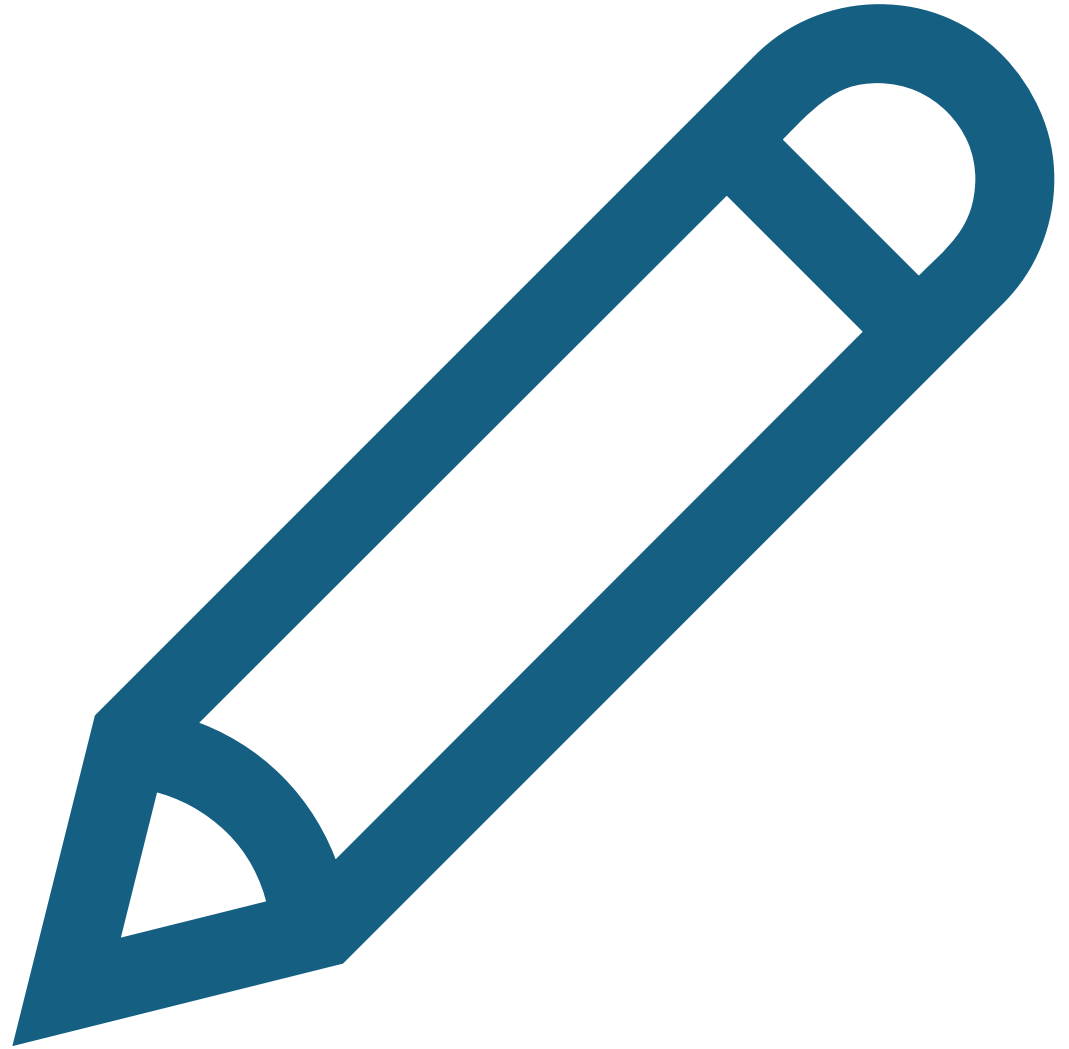
Schedule	Rationale
10. Reflecting on what we've discussed, what role does social media play overall in your learning as a health professional student?	This question is a more abstract one and allows the interviewee to discuss more broadly.
11. Anything else you'd care to add?	Opportunity for the interviewee to give open comment on the topic—can garner very rich data.
12. Record/confirm other demographics for checklist: Age bracket? First degree? Domestic or international? (Record gender).	I like a little pro-forma to accompany the schedule that the interviewer fills out, covering the basics. Questions such as asking about age can interrupt the conversational flow of the interview so are often better at the end.

Have a go!



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Peer assess





Any questions?