

STORY COLLECTOR TRAINING:

HOW TO COLLECT STORIES?



GUIDE TO COLLECTING QUALITATIVE DATA

This is a guide to how to collect stories and the qualitative part of the interview including some advice on conducting an interview, and an opportunity to practise.

YOUR ROLE AS A STORY COLLECTOR

There are a few aspects to being a story collector:

- To explain what the project is and what it's about in a simple, easy to understand way
- To direct people to the project coordinator if you are unable to answer any questions.
- To explain the SenseMaker collector and the questions included in it
- To explain the example triangle question. There are supporting materials that will help you do that accurately.
- To collect people's stories and quantitative data accurately.
- To provide information so people can find out more about the project and get more involved.

HOW TO CAPTURE STORIES ACCURATELY?

- Put the respondent at ease by building rapport with them, such as having a little chat before getting started with the interview.
- Most importantly, do not influence anyone's responses, even if you think someone is giving the "wrong" answer or has different views to yourself!
- Respect that the people you interview may have views that are different to your own. Don't try to correct people, or answer on their behalf.
- Allow them to share openly and in their own words. Try to capture what they say the best you can without changing the words. Only change their words if you have confirmed with them that you have understood what they meant.
- Ask the questions as they appear on SenseMaker®. The SenseMaker® collector has been designed with a lot of care and attention, down to the last word, so please do not change the wording when asking people the questions. Otherwise you will bias the results and we may get different results from people, not because they actually think something different, but because the question was asked in a different way.
- Avoid giving examples; they will influence people's responses.
- Take your time and don't rush. Assure people that it's okay to take time to think, especially with the triangle questions.
- Avoid responding to or commenting on their responses, for example saying "Mmm good point". This can also influence people by subtly indicating that their responses are "good/right" or "bad/wrong".

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TIPS AND TRICKS FOR COLLECTING STORIES

Below are a few tips and tricks to keep in mind when collecting your stories. To ensure that the stories are the most authentic portrayal of the respondents, there are certain things to be aware of. We have composed a list of dos and don'ts that you can follow to get the most out of your story collecting.

BEFORE INTERVIEW:

Do:

- Identify a convenient place for an interview (e.g. where the respondents won't be overheard and won't feel anxious, where they can hear you and you can hear them).
- Get familiar with the collection device (e.g. tablet, smartphone or pen and paper) and practice how to use it.
- Prepare for the interview and understand enough about the project to be able to explain it to respondents.
- If you are using a tablet or smartphone make sure your device is charged.
- Practice collecting with someone you know and feel comfortable with.

Dont:

- Do not put yourself in any danger, interview people you know and feel safe with. If you are interviewing someone you don't know, do it in a public/safe place and ensure that someone else knows where you are and what you are doing.

DURING INTERVIEW:

Do:

- Building rapport; get to know the person you are talking to for a few minutes. A script might help, but keep your approach conversational.
- Explain your role to the respondent.
- Reinforcing the intent that as much as possible the story collected and the signification should be done by the participant themselves
- Use prompts e.g.
 - What happened?
 - Why should people know about this?
 - How did it make you feel?
 - Who was involved? (But do not use real names)
 - Tell me more about... (something they have mentioned themselves)

Dont:

- Make sure not to lead or influence the respondent - don't talk about outcomes but instead use the language "this is about what matters to you".
- Avoid making suggestions or giving examples.
- Don't push them, but try to create an open and safe environment.

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AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

Do:

- Thank people for their time and effort.
- Give people the option to find out more about the project or get involved- give them the option to take a project sheet, web address for the project or the email of the project coordinator.
- For any questions please contact the project coordinator at enquiries@learnsheffield.co.uk.

Don't:

- Don't forget to upload your stories once you are in a place with good WiFi connection

TIPS FOR EXPLAINING HOW THE TRIANGLE QUESTIONS WORK....

[USING AN EXAMPLE TRIAD ON THE DEVICE]

- You can have any combination of the three labels at any place in the triangle.
- The closer you are to one or more labels the more strongly you relate to it.
- It's about blending, combination, and relative strength; not choosing one thing or the other.
- If you think all three are equal, place your dot in the middle.
- If you only relate to two of the labels your dot will be along the edge that joins the two.
- If you're asked, "how do we know if people have answered the triangle questions properly?", the best response is usually that there is no "proper", "right" or "wrong" when people share their own stories and answer the questions.

- If the storyteller appears to be confused or requests more clarity, you can try explaining the triangle questions using the example triad again. Do avoid giving your own example answers to the triangle questions. If the storyteller asks you, "what do you think – did I answer it correctly?", answer with "it's correct if you feel that it fits the context of your story most accurately."
- These questions are designed to take a little longer than usual to answer; help the participant feel comfortable about this.



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PROMPTING SOMEONE TO EXPAND

Although you just want to stick to the questions as they are phrased in the SenseMaker collector, sometimes someone might give a very short answer to an open question and you might want to prompt them to expand on what they've said.

TYPES OF QUESTIONS

- An open question is a question that starts with “how”, “what”, “when”, “where”, “who” or “why” and cannot be answered with a simple “yes” or “no”.
- Closed questions can be answered with “yes” or “no”.
- If you want to probe further into what someone has said, you need to ask questions.
- You can ask a closed question (i.e., one that can be answered with yes or no) in order to check whether you have understood them correctly.
- Avoid asking leading questions, that is, questions that suggest a particular answer, even if the story collector is unaware they are doing it. For example, “And did you think that was fair?”
- Avoid asking two questions at once because they will only answer the last one.

EXAMPLE PROMPTS

- What happened?
- Why do you want people to know about this?
- How did you feel when that happened?
- Who was involved? Ask the respondent to change the names of the people involved or to just refer to them as a friend, for example.
- Tell me more about... ? (something they have mentioned themselves)