CS10: Effective Interviewing

Goal: To gather empirical data in an organizational or social setting

Fact-Finding Methods
Questionnaire
Record Sampling
Observation
Face-to-Face Interview (to get their view of the world!)

Effective Interview Sessions:

Interview sessions should be planned
Interviewer should have specific objectives in mind

Interview Challenges
Getting access to interviewees (e.g. identifying the right source(s), scheduling)
Getting interviewees to talk specifically about target areas
Ensuring that extracted information is useful, relevant to achieving objectives
Listening and learning as you go to shape the interview in real-time

Goal
Keep the interviewee engaged in the interview
An enjoyable process yields greater involvement

Interview Process

Prepare for the interview
Confirm time and place for meeting
Bring all necessary documents, materials, recording equipment etc.

State the purpose of the interview
All parties should be clear on objectives

Record information
Avoid the annoyance that may result from having to repeat oneself
Choose the most effective, least obtrusive method for recording
Examples: manual note taking, audio-tape, video-tape
Establish specific roles when there is more than one interviewer
Example: Person A is primary interviewer, Person B is primary recorder

Be specific, not too general
Vagueness tends to lead to digression, repetition and information which is
difficult to analyze
Specific instances, problems and situations may be easier to describe
Don't lead the interviewee to your conclusion!
Avoid interrupting (even when interviewee digresses a little)
Always exhibit respect and avoid evaluating the interviewee's comments
Avoid introducing or imposing unfamiliar ways of describing something such
as graphs, tables, diagrams
Accept the interviewees way of communicating; convert to yours later

Interview Techniques:

Critical Incident Technique
The interviewee is asked to describe interesting or difficult cases
Challenges are often most memorable, stimulating and valuable

Symptomatic Questioning
The interviewee is asked to provide a list or description of symptoms or characteristics of a situation

*Goal Oriented Questioning*
- Intermediate or final goals are identified by the interviewee
- Interviewee is asked to specify requirements to achieve the goal

*Reverse Goal Oriented Questioning*
- Interviewee works backward from the goal
- Alternatives that were considered are key to the discussion

*Narrative Observation*
- The interviewee demonstrates something while supplying "thinking aloud" narrative of what is going on

Our goal is not to embarrass anyone or make them look stupid, but to understand the use of technology in their work environment from their point of view! Similarly, try not to put them on the defensive about what they do or make them hostile.

Example: Interview someone from another country to try to determine how their culture is different from American culture.

**Example 1:**
- Where are you from?
- So what’s it like there?
- Are you very religious?
- How is your culture different from American culture?
- Do you like Americans? American music? American shows?

**Example 2:**
- What is your country of origin?
- Do you come from a city or the countryside?
- Describe what your home location is like - climate, your house, family.
- What are the major religions in your country and how important is religion there?
- Do the people in your country have much exposure to American culture?
  - If so, what is their reaction to it?
  - If not, what do they hear about it?