

Exercise B: Questionnaire and Interview

(S.W.Draper, disk courses 6, 20 Jan 1998)

This exercise is for 8% of the marks, handed out 22nd Jan; due in on Tues.3rd Feb.

The exercise consists of (1) designing both a questionnaire and an interview, (2) getting responses from a set of subjects, and (3) producing a small report (about a page).

The questions (and response categories) you use should be the same in both questionnaire and interview, although of course you will also need probes in the interview. Part of the point of the exercise is for you to see how the answers you get from the two methods compare. The topic should be some small issue you are interested in e.g. whether IT students feel the Macs are adequately serviced, how the HCI lecturer compares with others. Pick an issue that interests you: part of the exercise is working out what exactly you would like to discover, and how that can be expressed in questions. Be different from other people if possible, because your subjects will get bored if everyone is asking the same question! You should have basically one issue in mind, but it will probably need 2 or 3 related questions in the instruments (questionnaire and interview) e.g. asking whether respondents feel confident about the appearance, the content, or the effect on the reader of a letter produced by word processor.

You are recommended to work in pairs (it is easier to debug wordings by discussing them, but larger groups probably take longer in discussions), but doing it alone, or in a group of 3 or 4 is OK. You should each write up the final report separately even though it is based on the same questions and data. Put your own name on the report, and also mention the name of any partners.

You will need to debug your instruments on a few people till they seem to be clear. Then you should do *at least* 6 interviews, and 12 questionnaires on different people; but larger numbers especially for the questionnaire usually make for more interesting reports if it doesn't take you too long to get the responses. It will be easiest to use people in the same class as subjects, but more interesting if you go outside. E.g. you could do a study on how often people use the computer index in the library, and after debugging the instruments on friends, you could stand in the library entrance for an hour to get the data. For this exercise, you may well be present when people are filling in your questionnaire, but you must not answer their questions (except during the debugging phase) or it will become more like an interview. I only expect you to spend 4 hours on this exercise: about an hour inventing the questions, an hour debugging them, an hour collecting data from subjects, and an hour writing up; however students have often found it takes longer.

In the report, attach a copy of BOTH the questionnaire and interview (with probes). Summarise the data: state the number of subjects, give the highest and lowest value response for each question, the standard deviation and mean if this makes sense (use a spreadsheet to calculate these); and make a barchart of the results to each question (a graph of the possible answers e.g. 0 to 6 vs. the number of subjects (use the spreadsheet "count2" function) who gave each number as their response). If 2 of your questions are strictly comparable (like mine on comparing a word processor and hand writing) and if you can do the statistics, you may want to do a t-test. State, in a sentence or two, what conclusions you can draw from your results. Are the subjects you got representative or a biased sample?