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2019 Workshop: Interviewers and Their Effects  
from a Total Survey Error Perspective

Sociology, Department of

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2020

## Chapter 3: General Interviewing Techniques: Developing Evidence-Based Practices for Standardized Interviewing Appendix 3

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Chapter 3: General Interviewing Techniques: Developing Evidence-Based Practices for  
Standardized Interviewing

Appendix 3

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Full book reference:

Olson, K., J. D. Smyth, J. Dykema, A. L. Holbrook, F. Kreuter, B. T. West. 2020. *Interviewer Effects from a Total Survey Error Perspective*. Boca Raton: CRC Press.

**Table A3A.1 Summary of Basic Techniques of Standardized Interviewing (adapted from Fowler and Mangione 1990, pp. 35-53)**

- Read questions as worded
- Probe inadequate answers non-directively
  - Closed questions: explain that choosing an answer from the list is the way to answer, repeat entire list of categories
  - Numerical answers: Repeat question, “zero in” with a series of probes that do not suggest an answer (e.g., “Would that be two or more or fewer than two times?” THEN: “Would that be 0, 1, or 2 times?”)
  - Open questions: Repeat question, “How do you mean that?” “Tell me more about that,” “Anything else?”
  - Don’t know answers: Diagnose source, repeat question if needed, reassure that there are no right or wrong answers if needed
- Record answers without discretion
  - Open factual questions: Write down all information relevant to the question’s objectives
  - Open opinion questions: Write down the answer verbatim, using no summaries or paraphrases
  - Closed factual questions: Check off the answer chosen by the respondent, if respondent is uncertain, proceed as with open questions
  - Closed opinion questions: Check off the answer chosen by the respondent, probe until the respondent chooses an answer, check off a category only if the respondent chooses it
- Be interpersonally nonjudgmental about the substance of answers
  - Do not volunteer personal information or views
  - Use neutral feedback

Table A3A.2 Basic Question Forms (Response Formats)

**Yes-no:**

Do you feel you have ever been treated unfairly because of your race or ethnicity?

<1> YES

<2> NO

**Selection with Ordered Categories:**

In general, would you say that your health is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?

<1> EXCELLENT

<2> VERY GOOD

<3> GOOD

<4> FAIR

<5> POOR

**Discrete Value:**

During the past week, on about how many days did you have at least one drink of any alcoholic beverage such as beer, wine, a malt beverage, or liquor?

\_\_\_ NUMBER OF DAYS (0-7)

**Selection with Choice List:**

Which of these is the most important problem facing this country at present: Food and energy shortages, crime and violence, inflation, unemployment, or decreased trust in government?

<1> FOOD AND ENERGY SHORTAGES

<2> CRIME AND VIOLENCE

<3> INFLATION

<4> UNEMPLOYMENT

<5> DECREASED TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

**Open with Interviewer Coding (Field Coded):**

What is the most important problem facing this country at present?

RECORD ANSWER WITHOUT READING CATEGORIES

<1> FOOD AND ENERGY SHORTAGES

<2> CRIME AND VIOLENCE

<3> INFLATION

<4> UNEMPLOYMENT

<5> DECREASED TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

<6> OTHER (VERBATIM) \_\_\_\_\_

**Open with Verbatim Recording:**

What is the most important problem facing this country at present?

RECORD ANSWER VERBATIM

\_\_\_\_\_