

# NHES:2009 Cognitive Research Round 1: Screener

## **PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND**

The first round of cognitive interviewing for the Screener questionnaire plans to address two high-level research objectives:

- Gather information about characteristics of the Screener mailing package and questionnaire that may affect the respondent's motivation to cooperate with the survey request, and;
- Gather information about how the design of the questionnaire itself, and in combination with the individual questions can potentially affect the accuracy of responses.
- Ensure respondents can read and understand Screener items.

These high-level objectives are further broken-down into more detailed research objectives that guide the design of the protocol for conducting these cognitive interviews. The detailed research objectives are listed below, followed by the protocol we developed to address these objectives.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

### **A. MAILING PACKAGE MATERIALS**

1. What characteristics of the design of the mailing package and the components of the package motivate response?

### **B. DESIGN OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE:**

1. How does the content of the letter and survey instructions affect the choice of household respondent?
2. How do the navigational cues, such as skip instructions, arrows, etc affect the extent to which respondents fully and accurately fill-out the questionnaire?
3. What aspects of the design of the children's enumeration section help or hinder respondent's ability to complete it accurately?
4. Does the saliency of the questionnaire change depending on the types of questions or topics included on the questionnaire?
5. To what extent does increasing the saliency of the questionnaire to the respondent motivate response?
6. How does information about eligibility affect the respondent's response behavior?

7. Do respondent comments indicate that the questionnaire is at an inappropriate reading level or uses jargon not familiar to respondents?

C. QUESTIONNAIRE CONTENT:

1. What are the characteristics of the questions that affect item non-response?
  - Question sensitivity
  - Vague or ambiguous questions, phrases or terms

SPECIFIC ITEMS TO BE TESTED:

- Alternate survey cover
- Alternate grid for enumerating children
- Education policy and civic involvement questions
- Confidentiality pledge?
- FAQs?

**TOPICAL SURVEY**

**GIVE THE RESPONDENT THE TOPICAL SURVEY PACKET.**

Could you please look at these questions.

Is this related to the survey you just completed or something different?

Just from looking at the questions, what do you think it is about?

Who would be the best person in your household to fill out something like this?

If these questions were mailed to your household, what would happen?

**END INTERVIEW – THANK RESPONDENT – GIVE HONORARIUM – SIGN RECEIPT.**

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When completing this survey, was there additional information you would have liked to have about the survey?

Do you notice the frequently asked questions, or FAQ on the back of the questionnaire?

IF YES: Did you find the FAQ useful?

Would you be more or less likely to fill out the survey if the FAQ were included?

## Confidentiality Statement

HAND R THREE CONFIDENTIALITY PLEDGES ONE AT A TIME (VARY ORDER)

In your own words, can you tell us what these are saying?

What do you think they say about how the data will be protected?

Would you be more likely to respond to a survey that had one of these statements **versus the others?**

**IF RESPONDENT DOES NOT HAVE ANY CHILDREN GO TO THE END/THANK YOU.**

## **ALTERNATE GRID**

**GIVE ALTERNATE GRID VERSION TO RESPONDENT.**

I'd like to show you another version of these same questions.

**Would you please fill this one out?**

What is your reaction to this version? What differences do you notice?

Was this [alternative version] easy or difficult to fill out?

Which one would you say is better?

Can you say why it is better?

## **EDUCATION POLICY & CIVIC INVOLVEMENT QUESTIONS**

I'd like to show you another set of questions that could be used.

**GIVE RESPONDENT THE POLICY AND CIVIC QUESTIONS; ASK THE RESPONDENT TO ANSWER THEM, THINKING ALOUD.**

What would you say these questions are about?

Are these questions easy or difficult?

What makes you say that?

Do you find these things interesting or not so interesting

Which questions are most interesting to you?

Are there any questions you don't like?

IN THE GRID VERSION:

It looks like you started here – can you tell us about that?

[FIND OUT WHY THEY STARTED WHERE THEY DID]

IF MORE THAN ONE CHILD IS LISTED:

How did you pick which child to list first?

Can you say more about that?

**MAKE SURE THEY HAVE INCLUDED ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS.**

Are there any babies or very young children that you did not include?

How about people living in dorms/school housing?

Are there any nonfamily members living in your home?

Any people who live in your household part time?

Is there anyone 20 or younger that you thought about listing, but did not?

Is there anyone in your household that you were unsure about including?

Were there any questions that you think are sensitive and that people might be uncomfortable answering? Which ones?

[FIND OUT WHAT WAS SENSITIVE -- WHY IT WAS SENSITIVE—WHETHER THEY ARE WILLING TO PROVIDE THE INFORMATION.]

Can you say more about that?

**NAVIGATION/CONTENT – CHILD ENUMERATION**

SKIP IF NO CHILDREN

Let's look at where you list the children/child.

INTERVIEWER CHECKS WHAT R PREVIOUSLY REPORTED AS FAMILY/CHILDREN.  
RECONCILE ANY DISCREPANCIES.

IF NECESSARY:

You said earlier that you had XXX children and here you wrote ZZZ. What happened?

IF NECESSARY:

Can you tell me more about that?

**SURVEY Q19; CORE Q9**

**What is the highest level of education among the adults in this household?**

In your own words, what is this question asking?

How did you determine who this person was in your household?

**SURVEY Q20; CORE Q10**

**What is the best phone number to reach you if your household qualifies for this study?**

In your opinion, what's the purpose of this question? What phone number did you write here?

PROBE FOR HOME/LANDLINE, CELL, WORK, OR OTHER TYPE

Do you usually give your phone number out?

Is this something you feel comfortable or uncomfortable doing?

Can you say more about that?

**SURVEY Q21-22**

**How many male youth or children age 20 or younger live at this address?**

**How many female youth or children age 20 or younger live at this address?**

**CORE Q11**

**How many youth or children age 20 or younger live at this address?**

How did you come up with your answer?



I'm now going to ask you about some of the questions in the survey. Remember there are no right or wrong answers, I just want to know what a question may mean to you.

**SURVEY Q13; CORE Q1**

**Is this house owned or being bought, rented, or occupied by some other arrangement by you or someone in your household?**

Can you tell me what this question is asking?

FOLLOW-UP: What does "not read English well" mean to you?

**SURVEY Q14-15; CORE Q4-5**

**How many female adults age 21 or older live at this address?**

number of females age 21 or older

**How many male adults age 21 or older live at this address?**

number of males age 21 or older

How did you come up with your answer?

Can you say more about who is in your household?

IF NECESSARY

What does 'household' means to you; who were you thinking about?

**SURVEY Q16; CORE Q6**

**Of the adults in this household is there anyone who does not read English well?**

Can you tell me what this question is asking?

FOLLOW-UP: What does "not read English well" mean to you?

Let's take a look at the rest of the survey now. What was the first thing you noticed when you opened it?

**IF CORE – SKIP THIS SECTION AND GO TO NAVIGATION SECTION  
IF SURVEY (PAGE 1) ASK:**

What did you think of the questions on this page?

Was there anything that grabbed your attention?

Were these questions interesting or not so interesting or ... ?

#### **NAVIGATION**

INTERVIEWER REVIEWS EACH POINT IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE WHERE RESPONDENT NEEDED TO COMPLETE A SKIP. INTERVIEWER NOTES WHERE SKIPS WERE MISSED.

IF R MISSED A SKIP OR ERRONEOUSLY SKIPPED, POINT TO THE QUESTION AND ASK:

Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking you to do?

#### **CONTENT – EXCLUDING CHILD ENUMERATION**

If you were to describe this survey, what would you say this survey is about?

You said it was about XXXXX, is this something that is important or not so important to you?

Can you say more about that? [FIND OUT **WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO THEM**]

Let's review the questionnaire.

### **POINT TO THE COVER PAGE**

What do you think about the cover page?

You said XXXX, can you say more about that?

### **IF NEEDED:**

Is there anything on the cover page that grabs your attention?

Is there anything that jumps out at you?

When you look at the cover page, what do you think the main message is?

### **SHOW ALTERNATIVE COVER PAGE**

Here is another cover for this survey. What are your thoughts about this cover?

Is there anything that grabs your attention or jumps out at you?

What do you think the main message is?

### **COMPARISON OF COVER PAGES [ GIVE VERSION DID NOT RECEIVE ON QUESTIONNAIRE: PHOTO VERSION LOGO VERSION]**

Which one do you think is better? Why?

Can you say more about that?

You said XXXXX, can you say more?

IF RESPONDENT DID NOT READ THE LETTER: Can you tell me why you didn't read the letter?

Could you please look at the letter now and tell me what you think?

IF RESPONDENT READ THE LETTER: What do you think about the letter?

Can you tell me in your own words what the letter said?

What was the main message in the letter?

You said XXXX, can you say more about that?

IF NECESSARY:

Can you say who is sponsoring the survey?

What is the purpose of the survey?

Did the letter make you want to fill out the survey?

Who do you think should complete the survey?

Can you say more about XXXXX?

## **RETROSPECTIVE PROBES**

WHEN THE RESPONDENT HAS FINISHED AND IS COMPLETELY FINISHED – START THE PROBING.

Before we start talking about the questionnaire, could you please tell me who is in your family. Just say all your family members and their ages.

MAKE SURE THEY TELL YOU ABOUT ANY:

BABIES  
PRE-SCHOOL KIDS  
SCHOOL AGE  
OLDER CHILDREN AT COLLEGE

Does this look different or similar to the other mail you receive?

How much time would you spend on something like this at home?

Is that a lot of time or a little time for you?

Do you think that you would do this (COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE) and mail it back?

Now let's look at the letter.

I noticed that you did/did not look/read the letter.

**TO GET THE RESPONDENT GOING SAY SOMETHING LIKE:**

You are at home and this (the envelope) has just arrived. What happens now? Please show us how something like this would be dealt with in your home. Please remember to speak your thoughts.

IF NECESSARY: We would like you to open this and do whatever you would do with it if you were at home.

IF NECESSARY: What is your initial reaction to the package? Tell me what you are thinking about.

IF NECESSARY:

Please fill out the questionnaire.

WHEN RESPONDENT APPEARS TO HAVE FINISHED:

It looks like you have finished filling out the questionnaire. Are you finished?

IF YES

If you were at home, what would you do next?

## **START OF INTERVIEW**

Today we are interested in learning about your reaction to a new study questionnaire. In a few minutes I will hand you the questionnaire package. I would like you to go through the questionnaire as though I were not in the room, except for one difference. I would like you to think aloud for me. So as you are reading items, please read them aloud and as you are thinking about what you have read, please think aloud for me. There are no right or wrong answers.

Let's start by talking about how mail gets handled in your home. I would like you to walk me through the process. Does the mail come to a mailbox, a post office box, or through the door? Who picks it up?

What happens next?

PROBE IF NECESSARY:

Who sorts the mail?

What do you look at when deciding whether or not to open an envelope or throw it away?

What about junk mail?

How about any mail you threw out without opening?

Would an address like "Rockville Resident" or "To the Family At.." make a difference?, etc.)

HAND THE RESPONDENT THE ENVELOPE.

LET THE RESPONDENT COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE BEFORE ASKING ANY QUESTIONS. MAKE SURE RESPONDENT OPENS THE ENVELOPE AND INTERACTS WITH THE MATERIALS.

SIT CLOSE ENOUGH TO THE RESPONDENT TO OBSERVE HOW HE/SHE INTERACTS WITH THE MATERIALS.

TAKE NOTES ON HOW THE RESPONDENT PROCEEDS THROUGH THE MATERIALS.

GET A TIMING ON HOW LONG IT TAKE THE RESPONDENT TO COMPLETE.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Respondent ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Version: \_\_\_\_\_

## **OBSERVING THE RESPONDENT – STARTING INSTRUCTIONS**

PRESENT THE RESPONDENT WITH THE MAIL PACKET AND ASK THEM TO OPEN IT AND REVIEW IT AS IF THEY WERE AT HOME.

IF THE RESPONDENT DOES NOT BEGIN THE QUESTIONNAIRE AFTER REVIEWING THE MATERIALS ASK THEM TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY.

OBSERVE THE RESPONDENT WHILE THEY REVIEW THE MATERIALS AND NOTE WHAT ITEMS THEY REVIEW OR READ (SUCH AS THE LETTER) AND WHAT ITEMS THEY REVIEW FIRST (LETTER OR QUESTIONNAIRE).

ONCE THE RESPONDENT BEGINS THE QUESTIONNAIRE NOTE IF THEY HAVE ANY TROUBLE NAVIGATING THROUGH THE QUESTIONNAIRE, ANY QUESTIONS THEY APPEAR TO PAUSE AT, OR IF THEY FLIP BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN PAGES.

- TAKE NOTES ON:
- 1. NAVIGATION**
  - 2. INSTRUCTIONS**
  - 3. ATTENTION**
  - 4. WHAT IS FILLED IN**
  - 5. ACCURACY OF INFORMATION PROVIDED**
  - 6. GET A TIMING ON TIME TO COMPLETE**