

Cognitive Interview Guide - Educational Certificates

April 5, 2010

Introduction and Warm-Up

- Who I am
- What I do
- Length
- Purpose of interview
- Read confidentiality statement:

“Shugoll Research and the American Institutes for Research are conducting this study for the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education. This study is authorized by law under the Education Sciences Reform Act (Public Law 107-279). Your participation is voluntary. Your responses are protected from disclosure by federal statute (P.L. 107-279, Title 1, Part E, Sec. 183). All responses that relate to or describe identifiable characteristics of individuals may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose, unless otherwise compelled by law.”

- Be candid; no right or wrong answers
- Gratitude for your time and opinions
- Colleagues listening in on the interview (if any)
- As you are answering questions, “think out loud” when responding. That is, if a question is unclear, tell me and tell me why it is unclear. Tell me what is going through your mind as you answer a question

Before we begin, could you tell me what kind of work you do? [It is not necessary to probe on this item. We just want to know what the respondent does so there is context for the interview]

Okay. Let’s get started.

1. Have you taken education or training to earn a certificate?

PROBE: A certificate is a credential awarded by an education provider for completion of a course of study. [USE ONLY if the respondent asks for a definition]

- If NO CERTIFICATE ask the following then go to Q13. Tell me in your own words what you think we are asking about here.
- Do you use another word/s to describe this training?
- Do you have any other certificates?
- Let's talk first about the most recent certificate.

2. What is the name of this certificate? _____

3. Did you complete the certificate training?

If yes,

- When was that? _____

If No,

- Do you intend to complete the training?
- Are you currently enrolled in a certificate training program?

4. What is the major subject or field of study for your certificate?

5. Why did you decided to get this certificate?

4a. If more than one reason given ask: What was the primary reason you decided to get this certificate?

- If not clear ask: Did you take the certificate training mainly for work-related reasons or mainly for personal interest?
- Are you using the certificate in your current job?

IF CERTIFICATE IS FOR PERSONAL REASONS AND THE RESPONDENT HAS OTHER CERTIFICATES, GO BACK AND ASK Q1-5 ABOUT THE OTHER CERTIFICATES [UP TO 4 additional certificates]. Continue with Q6 about the MOST RECENT work-related certificate.

IF RESPONDENT HAS ONLY ONE CERTIFICATE, PERSONAL OR WORK-RELATED, CONTINUE.

6. What type of organization or business provided your certificate training?

If needed, examples are: A university or college, a commercial organization, a non-profit organization such as a professional association, voluntary organization, or trade union, an employer, a state or local government

- What is the name of that [PROVIDER]? (e.g. What is the name of that commercial organization?)
- Was the training primarily self-study or did you take classes or courses with an instructor?

7. Did you have to pass a test or exam to obtain this certificate?

8. Did you have to demonstrate you could perform certain job tasks to obtain this certificate?

- Tell me what “perform certain job tasks” means to you.
- Tell me more about what you had to do.

9. How long did it take you to obtain this certificate?

- Walk me through how you came up with your answer. [Note or probe the unit of time R uses, e.g. per day, week, or month over what period of time?]
- Can you tell me how many course hours or credit hours the instruction took?
- How many weeks did it take you to earn the certificate? How many hours per week was that?
- What other activities did you have to do to get the certificate? How many hours did you spend on that?

Additional probes if needed:

- Did you study on your own? If yes, about how many hours?
- Did you need on-the-job experience to qualify for this certificate? If yes, how much experience?

10. Do you have to take periodic tests or continuing education classes or both in order to maintain this certificate?

- Tell me more about that.

11. Would you be able to use this certificate if you took your same job with another employer?

- If self-employed, ask, Would you be able to use this certificate if took your same job as an employee of another company?
- Can you give me an example of a company you could go work for?
- Could you work for that company without this certificate?
- How much more (per whatever unit) do you make because you have this certificate compared to a similarly qualified person without one?
- Can anyone with this certificate do that?

12. Did you take the education or training for the certificate in order to obtain a professional certification or license?

- Do you currently have that professional certification?

13. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

[For in-person interview – Hand response show card]

- a. No schooling*
- b. Nursery school*
- c. Kindergarten*
- d. Grade 1-11*

- e. 12th grade NO DIPLOMA
- f. Regular high school diploma
- g. GED or alternative credential
- h. Some college credit, but less than 1 year of college credit
- i. 1 or more years of college credit, no degree
- j. Associate's degree (for example: AA, AS)
- k. Bachelor's degree (for example: BA, BS)
- l. Master's degree (for example: MA, MS, MEng, Med, MSW, MBA)
- m. Professional degree beyond a bachelor's degree (for example: MD, DVS, DDM, LLB, JD)
- n. Doctorate degree (for example: PhD, EdD)

IF R HAS A CERTIFICATE ASK:

- Did you think about your certificate when you answered?
- Do you think this question applies to your certificate? If no, how do you think about your certificate compared to a diploma or college degree?
- In Person: Where do you think your certificate fits on this list?

Certifications

14. A. If Q1=No (no certificate), ask: Do you have a professional certification?

B. If Q12=Yes (certificate led to a certification), go to first probe.

C. If Q12=No (certificate did not lead to a certification) ask: Do you have any professional certification?

PROBE: A professional certification shows you are qualified to perform a specific job and include PMP Certification, Certified Medical Assistant, Certified Construction Manager, Linux+ certification. If NO, have you ever had one?

- Is the term “professional certification” clear to you? If no certification ask, in your own words, what do you think we are asking about here? (IF NO Certification, GO TO STATE LICENSURE SECTION, Q24)
- Do you use another word/s to describe this training?
- Tell me what certifications you have. Let’s discuss the most recent certification you have.

15. What is the name of this certification? _____

[Note if R has difficulty with the name, if they use and acronym, and how difficult it is to capture the verbatim response]

16. Were you certified by your state, industry, a company, a professional association, or some other organization?

1=State

2=Industry

3=Company

4=Professional association

5=Other_____

- What is the name of the organization that certified you?

IF THE RESPONDENT HAD CERTIFICATE TRAINING THAT LED TO THEIR CERTIFICATION (Q12=Yes), SKIP TO “Licensure” SECTION, Q24. ELSE CONTINUE. [The reason for this skip is these questions would have already been asked about the certificate course that led to the certification, thus making repetition of the questions redundant].

17. Did you have to pass a test or exam to obtain this certification?

- Tell me more about the test.

18. Did you have to demonstrate you could perform certain job tasks to obtain this certification?

- Tell me more about what you had to do.

19. How long did it take you to obtain this certification?

- Walk me through how you came up with your answer. [Note or probe the unit of time R uses, e.g. per day, week, or month over what period of time?]
- Was the training primarily self-study or did you take classes or courses with an instructor?
- Can you tell me how many course hours or credit hours the instruction took?
- How many hours did you spend in a classroom or receiving other instruction to earn this certification?
- What other activities did you have to do to get the certification? How many hours did you spend on that?

Additional probes if needed:

- Did you study on your own? If yes, about how many hours?
- Did you need on-the-job experience to qualify for certification? If yes, how much experience?

20. What is the main reason you decided to get this certification?

- Are you using this certification in your current job?

21. Do you have to take periodic tests or continuing education classes or both in order to maintain this certification?

- Tell me more about that.

Additional probes if needed:

- When was the last time you took a periodic test? Do you have to renew it regularly? How often?
- When was the last time you took continuing education classes?
- Tell me more about those classes.(how many, how long, where); How many credit hours did you take? How did you earn them?

Is there anything else you needed to do to get this certification that we didn't talk about?

22. Would you be able to use this certification if you took the same job with another employer?

- Can you give me an example of a company you could go work for?
- Could you work for that company without this certification?
- Can anyone with this certification do that?

23. Can this certification be revoked or suspended for any reason?

- For what reason could it be revoked or suspended?
- If you changed your occupation, would the certification expire?

Let's talk about those other certifications you have? Tell me more about what they are and when you got them.

- How did you decide which certification to answer about?

License

24. Do you have a state or industry license? [If no, GO TO other training Q25]

- What is the name of the license?

If R does not have a certification:

- How is that different from a professional certification?
- Go back through certification questions asking about license and using the term license instead of certification.

If R has a certification:

- Is this the same as your certification or something different?

Other training

25. Have you taken other education or training for work-related reasons? [If NO, go to PROXY questions]

- What training was that? Any others? Let's talk first about the most recent training.

26. Did you complete the training?

If yes, When was that? _____

If No, Do you intend to complete the training? Are you currently enrolled in the training program?

27. What is the topic of this training? _____

28. What is the main reason you decided to take this training?

- If not clear ask: Did you take the training mainly for work-related reasons or mainly for personal interest?
- Are you using the training in your current job?

29. Was this training provided by...

- a. A university or college?
 - b. A commercial organization?
 - c. A non-profit organization such as a professional association, voluntary organization, or trade union?
 - d. An employer?
 - e. A state or local government?
 - f. Someplace else?
- What is the name of that [PROVIDER]? (e.g. What is the name of that commercial organization?)

30. How long did it/will it take you to complete the training?

- Tell me how you came up with your answer.
- Is that based on what you actually completed or what is required required for completion?
- Did you have to take a certain number of classroom or credit hours?

31. Tell me about what you had to do during the training. Did you have to take classes? Did you need to study on your own? Did you have to purchase books or materials?

- Did you have to take an exam?

32. Would you be able to use this training if you took the same job with another employer?

- Can you give me an example of a company you could go work for?
- Could you work for that company without this training?
- Can anyone with this training do that?

33. Did you take the training to obtain a professional certification or license?

- Do you currently have that professional certification?
- What is the name of the certification/license? _____

34. I'd like you to think again about the question I asked you earlier, "What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?"

- Did you think about this training when you answered?
- Do you think this question applies to this training? If no, how do you think about this training compared to a diploma or college degree?
- In Person: Where do you think your training fits on this list?

Proxy for other adults in household

- Has any adult in your household completed education or training for a certificate? Who? If no other adults in household, terminate.
- Do you feel you could answer a similar battery of questions about their certificate?
- What is the name of their certificate? Where did they get it?
- Return to question battery if respondent is knowledgeable and time remains.