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Cognitive Interviewing

A Tool for Improving Questionnaire Design

"As both an academic instructor in questionnaire design and a research design methodologist for the federal government, I feel this book is very timely, useful for students and practitioners, and unique in its use of real world practical examples that most everyone can relate." —Terry Richardson, General Accounting Office "The combination of theory and practical application will make this a useful book for students as well as professionals who want to learn how to incorporate cognitive interviewing into the questionnaire design process." —Rachel Caspar, RTI International The design and evaluation of questionnaires—and of other written and oral materials—is a challenging endeavor, fraught with potential pitfalls. Cognitive Interviewing: A Tool for Improving Questionnaire Design describes a means of systematically developing survey questions through investigations that intensively probe the thought processes of individuals who are presented with those inquiries. The work provides general guidance about questionnaire design, development, and pre-testing sequence, with an emphasis on the cognitive interview. In particular, the book gives detailed instructions about the use of verbal probing techniques, and how one can elicit additional information from subjects about their thinking and about the manner in which they react to tested questions. These tools help researchers discover how well their questions are working, where they are failing, and determine what they can do to rectify the wide variety of problems that may surface while working with questionnaires. Cognitive Interviewing is ideally suited as a course text for advanced undergraduate and graduate research courses across the social sciences. Professional researchers and faculty in the social sciences, as well as practice fields such as medicine, business, and education, will also find this an invaluable reference for survey research. There is no other book on the market that covers cognitive interviewing as applied to questionnaire design.
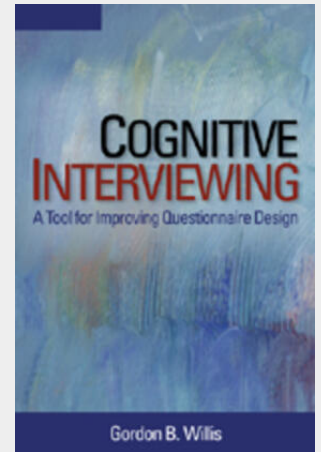
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