

Appendix B: Freshmen Interview Script

Introduction to the interview

(This script is used after verbal consent is obtained from the participant)

Hi, thanks for making time today to talk further with me. For the next 30 to 45 minutes, I want to ask you about what it is like being a first-time college student on your campus. I am particularly interested in how you navigate your new information environment. How do you find information to help you complete research assignments and get your work done as a student?

[Summarize these points]

- Conducting interviews with other first-time college students at 5-6 other institutions in the US this fall.
- Results will be brought together and used for informing an online survey we will administer in spring 2013.
- Before we begin -- some things to make our discussion more productive:
 - No wrong answers;
 - Don't hold back;
 - Feel free to share your opinion and experiences;
 - Interested in negative as well as positive experiences;
 - Assured confidentiality (name will not appear in results);
 - As to timing – 60 minutes, no longer, could be even be shorter and that's fine.

My role:

- Ask questions;
- Listen, I won't participate in the actual discussion, as far as my own opinions.

KEY FOCUS OF THE INTERVIEW

Let's begin. Today, we're going to be talking about what is it like being an incoming student on your college campus. In particular, we want to hear about how you settle into your new information environment. We'd also like to hear what it's like for you once you started classes and needed to find information for research assignments.

So we're both on the same page, let me define what I mean by the phrase "finding and using information for assignments." We mean the process of defining a topic and searching and collecting information sources for working on course-related research assignments.

We know there are many different places to look for information—the Web, someone you know and ask for information, libraries, professor's offices, books, and newspapers. We want to hear about all the different kinds of strategies that you use. Any questions? Shall we begin?

Question 1.

Let's start with a game. Can you give me one or two adjectives (or words) that describe how it feels to come into a new place, like this campus, and need to find and use information to fulfill assignments for courses?

Question 2.

Let's talk about finding and using information for the courses you are taking now. Have you had to look for information for any course-related research assignments, yet?

YES, I have looked for information for course-related research assignments

NO, I have not looked for information for course-related research assignments

OTHER:

Question 3.

If the participant answered yes to Questions 2 (i.e., has looked for information for a course-related assignment) then ask:

Can you tell me in order where you looked for information for a course-research assignment you've done as a college student? Where did you look FIRST, SECOND, THIRD, and so on? (Researcher: please rank from first to last in your answer.)

Question 4.

How is finding and using information on this campus different than it was at your high school? What have you found is the SINGLE biggest difference between finding information in college vs. high school?

Question 5.

Did you graduate from a PUBLIC or a PRIVATE high school?

(If "other," please explain)

Question 6.

How difficult would you say it is to find and use information for course-related research assignments? (1-7 scale with 1 being easy and 7 being very difficult)

Question 7.

Can you give me a specific example—tell me a story—about what made the process of finding and using information you needed difficult?

Question 8.

What would you say are TWO of the biggest challenges you've encountered with finding and using information on this campus for use in coursework?

Question 9.

Have you developed any new strategies to deal with finding and using information here? What are they? Where did you learn them/from whom?

Question 10.

Who have you found are the THREE most helpful people on this campus when it comes to finding and using information for course-related research assignments? (i.e., have the student rank most helpful, second most helpful, and third most helpful.)

Question 11.

Now, let's talk about access to professors, that is instructors teaching your classes this term. So far, what has it been like trying to obtain information from professors on this campus?

Question 12.

How about to administrators, that is for things like signing up for classes, finding out requirements, or getting scholarship information. So far, what has it been like trying to obtain information from administrators on this campus?

Debrief and thank the participant for their time. Explain what the study is about and when the report will be released and how they may obtain a copy.

Question 13.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW AND DEBRIEFING:

Are there any other comments or quotes from the participant that you'd like to include from the participant?

Question 14.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW FOR THE RESEARCHER TO COMPLETE:

What is the name of the INSTITUTION where this interview occurred?

Belmont University
California Maritime Academy
Harvard
Mesa Community College
Ohio State Newark
Santa Rosa Junior College

- END -