

Retrospective Process Interviews



What is it?

A 1-2-1 conversation where you ask the participant to sequentially talk you through the various stages they go through to complete an activity whilst drawing/writing down key words for each stage. This is a great technique to use when focusing on activities that involve step-by-step processes, such as working on an assignment. It also allows the students and their practices to direct the conversation as the pictures drawn by the student become the subject of the interview. The only drawback could be that it requires accurate recall from the interviewee.



Things you need

- A large piece of paper with the instructions written at the top of the paper
- A dictaphone or recording device
- A quiet, private space
- A consent form



How to do it

1. Decide what you want to find out and the process you want them to map.
2. Prepare an A3 sheet of paper with the instructions of what you want them to do at the top of the page.
3. Have a crib sheet with suggestions of non-leading prompts.
4. When interviewing the student, explain what you are going to ask them to do. Stress there is no right answer but you are looking to find out more about their experience.
5. Ask for permission to record the interview. If you are intending to write up the research for a journal article/conference presentation you may want to ask them to sign a consent form. Stress that they can withdraw from the research at any time.
6. Spent ten to fifteen minutes allowing them to draw as well as talk you through the process.
7. Sit at right angles and employ open body language with lots of eye contact and nodding throughout.
8. Use neutral language and don't ask any leading questions.
9. When they have finished the interviewer should summarise what they have drawn and said.
10. The interviewer then has a chance to ask further questions if required.

