

# CS 377U Understanding Users

## P2: Research: Generative Research

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### Assignment Description

You will conduct a 1-week field study in your domain of interest. The goal is to obtain key insights that are grounded in real-world behaviors for identifying possible applications and services to create in your primary class project this quarter. You will collect a variety of data using multiple research methods over this week, and will come to class with your raw data on individual notecards/pieces of paper next Thursday for analysis.

**Research Questions:** You should begin with the research questions that you developed last week. What do you need to know beyond your existing research to understand how people approach your topic area today? Which aspects of the domain are the most interesting to you (e.g. learning about new music or how people select music to play for a given situation, etc.) How might a person's context (e.g. location, who is around them, weather, etc.) affect their interactions? How do your questions complement existing solutions and research insights? Cover the appropriate breadth and depth to gain the understanding needed to design your app. You can definitely add new questions to the set from last week or modify the ones that you had initially.

**Participant Selection:** Participant recruitment is extremely important in generative research. You must choose the kind of people will most likely give you most insight into your research questions and could be potential users of your ultimate system. This likely means that your participants will not be Stanford students and you might have to recruit online (e.g. Craigslist) or through other networks. Enumerate criteria that will help you identify a range of behaviors and attitudes with respect to your domain.

**Research Methods:** Use interviews and at least one more research method with each of your participants to answer your research questions.

- Interviews: Asking people about specific recent times they did something in your domain area and understanding details of those interactions. This method is required for your assignment. Optional participant activities: Drawn artifacts, A day in the life, "Describe x in 5 words"
- Observation: Watching people perform tasks in your domain of interest.
- Home/site tours: Having people guide you through their places of interaction in your topic area.
- Diary logging: Having people keep a log of times/places/situations where they do something you are interested in.
- Participatory Design: Having your participants help you sketch out solutions of how the system might work, or providing input on specific features or interactions.

**Research study:** Perform a study with 5 people using the methods you have selected. Take pictures of your participants and their environment as it pertains to your domain (with permission). Audio record your session so that you can pull out quotes later.

**Direct quotes & observations:** After interviewing your participants, take notes on index cards or post-it notes, noting the exact quotes of what your participants say or direct observations of what they are doing. You do not need to write down everything, just the statements that pertain to the research questions. Do not (yet) try to analyze what they are saying or doing, just write exactly what is said or done. Also create note cards for any diary entries that the participants gave you or direct observations from home/site tours. Bring 75+ note cards with quotes or observation to class on Thursday. We'll teach you methods for analyzing these notes and arriving at new concept ideas based in the data next week. The easiest way to create these note cards is to make a Word Doc with each quote or observation on a new line. We will give you a macro to convert it to printable note cards that can easily be cut with scissors or on a paper cutter before you come to class.

**Participant profiles:** Create a **1 page interview summary** per participant with pictures. If the participant prefers to be anonymous, change the name and use a blurred photo for the profile picture. Include the most salient quotes. Describe the answers to your research questions as a story about this person. [Here is an example.](#)

**Please do not yet think about potential application ideas or what you think the data might be telling you. This will be the focus of the next class.**

**A note on informed consent:** While you do not need to go through an IRB (institutional review board) for a class project, you should inform your users about the study prior to starting the interview or diary study. Make it clear that all names will be anonymized, that this study is for a class project, and that there are no anticipated risks for participating. If you are audio/video recording, make sure they know that. Also make it clear that they can stop or skip a question at any time if they are uncomfortable. Some templates for forms can be found [here](#).

## Deliverables & Due Dates

Assignment is due on Thursday, April 20th @ 4:30 pm.

Please submit materials in a folder entitled with your team name to [this gDrive folder](#). One submission per group, please.

1 PDF containing:

- List of your **research questions** and how they **complement existing work**.
- List of **recruitment criteria** and the **recruitment screener** you used to find participants.
- List of the **research methods** you used. **Interview guides**. A description of **participant activities**. For **diary logging**, a description of the **frequency and content** of the **prompts**.
- A **people profile** for each **study participant**.
- A **PDF** of all of direct quotes and observations.
- A **PDF** with **activity artifacts**.

Bring to class:

- Bring at least **75 notes** from this study on separate cards or post-its to class (1 observation or quote per card.)
- Bring an 8.5"/11" printout of the **people profile** for **each** of the 5 **study participants**.

# Grading Rubric

This assignment is graded on a rubric out of 100 points. It is worth 15 percent of the overall grade at the end of the quarter.

Category	Unsatisfactory	Adequate	Good	Very good	Excellent
<b>Research Questions</b> 15 Points	No research question enumerated.	1-2 research questions enumerated, but with little justification, or with great overlap with existing publications.	3-5 research questions, perhaps narrowly defined, with some explanation of how they were arrived at based on lit review.	5+ research questions that are a bit too narrow or are covered by parts of the existing literature.	5+ research questions complement previously published work RQs have appropriate amount of depth and breadth
<b>Participant Selection</b> 15 Points	Participants are friends or classmates.	Participants are not appropriate for the domain being studied (e.g. all students)	<3 participants but still appropriate for domain.	<5 participants but still appropriate for domain and research questions	5+ participants Participant selection appropriate to domain Survey appropriate for identifying qualified participants
<b>Research Methods + Protocol/ Prompts</b> 30 Points	Interviews were not chosen as a method.	Only interviews conducted. Or protocol/prompts are extremely biased.	Interview + other method chosen. Method chosen in addition to interviews is not appropriate for the research questions or method is not executed appropriately to collect valid data	Interview +other method chosen Method appropriately addresses research questions Protocol and or prompts contain partially biased questions.	Interview +other method chosen Method appropriately addresses research questions Protocol and or prompts contains unbiased questions Method is executed appropriately to collect valid data
<b>Profiles</b> 15 Points	No participant profiles	Only basic demographic detail on profiles	Profiles give some information about the user and their current behavior, but do	Profiles give some information about the user and their needs, but do not	1 for each user Images tell a story Head shot has emotional impact

			not capture needs/pain points.	emotionally capture experience.	Quotes powerfully illustrate experience Story summarized experience with emotional impact
<b>Quotes</b> 25 Points	<30 items for analysis	< 50 items for analysis	50+ items for analysis. Cards are not direct quotes/observations (more like summaries).	50+ items for analysis. Quotes are not about specific experiences	75 or more first-person in depth of specific experiences Direct insightful observations