# Writing Your Questionnaire by Paul Rice, Kate Littlemore and Sue Marchant [Video Transcript]

Many student projects involve questionnaires or surveys; different types of questions are useful for quantitative or qualitative research. This video will be concerning where precise numbers are required. The design process must take into account the way you ask the questions, as this determines the type of data you will have which impacts on your analysis.

There are some things you need to think about for your questionnaire. You need to allow enough time to produce, distribute, collect, analyse, interpret and report your data. You need to make the respondent aware of why you are collecting the data and what you are going to do with their responses. You need to ensure consistency amongst your responses, this will depend on what analysis you will be doing (see the most appropriate test video). It is important that your sample is representative of your population.

You will also need to think about your questions – too much information may not be useful so to include questions just because they seem interesting, may be a waste of space and time. A very long questionnaire may be ignored and so the response rate will be low. The respondents may interpret the question very differently to the researcher’s intention. If a question asked you if you were happy with the bus and tube service in London is asking two questions in one – how would you answer if you were happy with one, and not the other if you only had a yes/no response? A question like ‘How many times have you exercised this month?’ may be quite difficult for people to answer, or may well be answered untruthfully if they wish to give a more favourable response.

In reality, it’s going to be very difficult to eliminate all bias in your research, however, if you do introduce any bias into your study it is important that you are aware of it, and report it. One way you could bias your responses is by asking leading questions.

Please see the following example:

Q: ‘Are you willing to answer some questions for me?

A: ‘Yes, of course.’

Q: ‘Do you agree that the first five years are the most important in a child’s life?’

A: ‘Oh, absolutely.’

Q: ‘Is it important for the mother and child to bond?’

A: ‘Oh, yes.’

A: ‘Do you agree that the mother and the child are more likely to bond if the mother and child are together a lot?’

A: ‘Yes.’

Q: ‘Are childcare costs reduced if the mother cares for the child?’

A: ‘Oh Yes, absolutely.’

Q: ‘So, should mothers stay at home?’

A: ‘Yes!’

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Q: ‘Does a mother make a positive impact in the workplace?’

A: ‘Oh, yes, absolutely’

Q: ‘Does a mother have a right to work if she chooses to?’

A: ‘Yes, she does, yes.’

Q: ‘Do you agree that families are financially better off if a mother goes to work?

A: ‘Yes.’

Q: ‘Generally, does going to work enhance the mother’s life?’

A: ‘Absolutely, yes.’

Q: ‘So, should a mother go to work?’

A: ‘Yes!’

So, can you see that the way you ask a question can influence the response?

Thank you for listening.