

Think Aloud Protocol
EPSY 5244

1. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview today. I would like to tell you about this project and what we will do.
2. [A very brief description of the project – survey purpose – class assignment...]
3. We are testing this survey to make improvements before it is sent out.
4. I will read the instructions and then ask you to read each question and answer them, just like you would if you were responding to a survey.
5. The reason for doing this is to understand how the questions are working – this is called a “Cognitive Interview”. To help us with this process, I would like to ask you to think aloud when you answer each question—to think aloud as much as possible.
6. Some times I will remind you to think aloud as you answer a question and I might even ask you to explain something that you say so we can learn what you are thinking about for each question.
7. Our purpose here is to learn about your understanding of the question, not about understanding your responses.
8. Please remember that I do want to hear all of your opinions and reactions. Do not hesitate to talk about something that is unclear, difficult to answer, or does not apply to you.
9. Do you have any questions before we start?
10. Let’s start with a couple of practice questions.

Practice Question 1. How many windows are there in the place where you live?

Practice Question 2. How difficult was it for you to get here to do the interview today?
Very difficult, somewhat difficult, a little difficult, not at all difficult

11. That is just what we are looking for. Now let’s take a look at the questions we are testing.
12. I will read the directions and then you can begin by reading the first question, and remember to think aloud as you decide and select a response.

Remember: Focus on questions, not person. Probe the processing system, not the answer.

What are you thinking?

Okay

Keep talking

Nod

If asked what something means:
What do you think it means?