

Video 4 of 6: Respondent (Cognition, Basics)

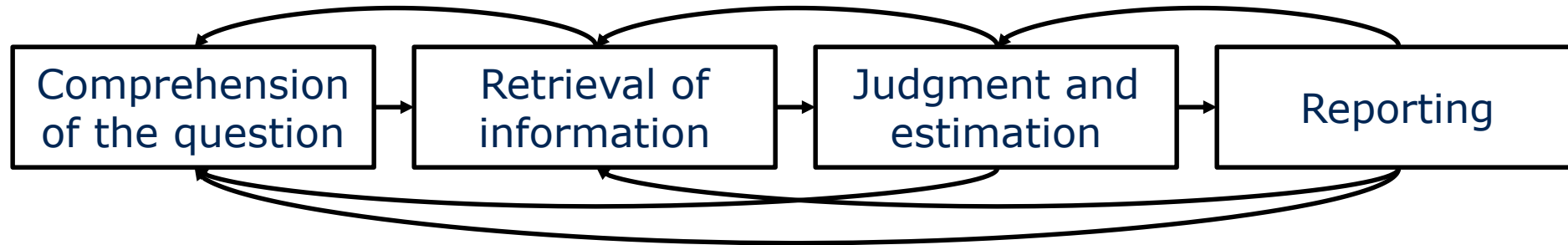
Questionnaire Design



THE WORLD BANK

MANNHEIM
BUSINESS SCHOOL

Simple Model of Survey Response Process



- Sequential although respondent can backtrack
- Models ideal performance, but:
 - Event(s) may not be recorded (“encoded”) in respondents' memory
 - Respondent may misunderstand question
 - Respondent may forget relevant events
 - Respondent may take shortcuts: satisficing, acquiescence
 - Respondent may intentionally misreport: **social desirability**

Failure to Encode

- Some events less likely to be encoded (recorded in memory) than others
- Lee et al. (1999) demonstrated that parents' poor memory for children's vaccinations due to not encoding events
 - Comparing recall to medical records
 - Parents reported that vaccinations were up-to-date for 80% children who were not up to date
- Alternative: diary studies

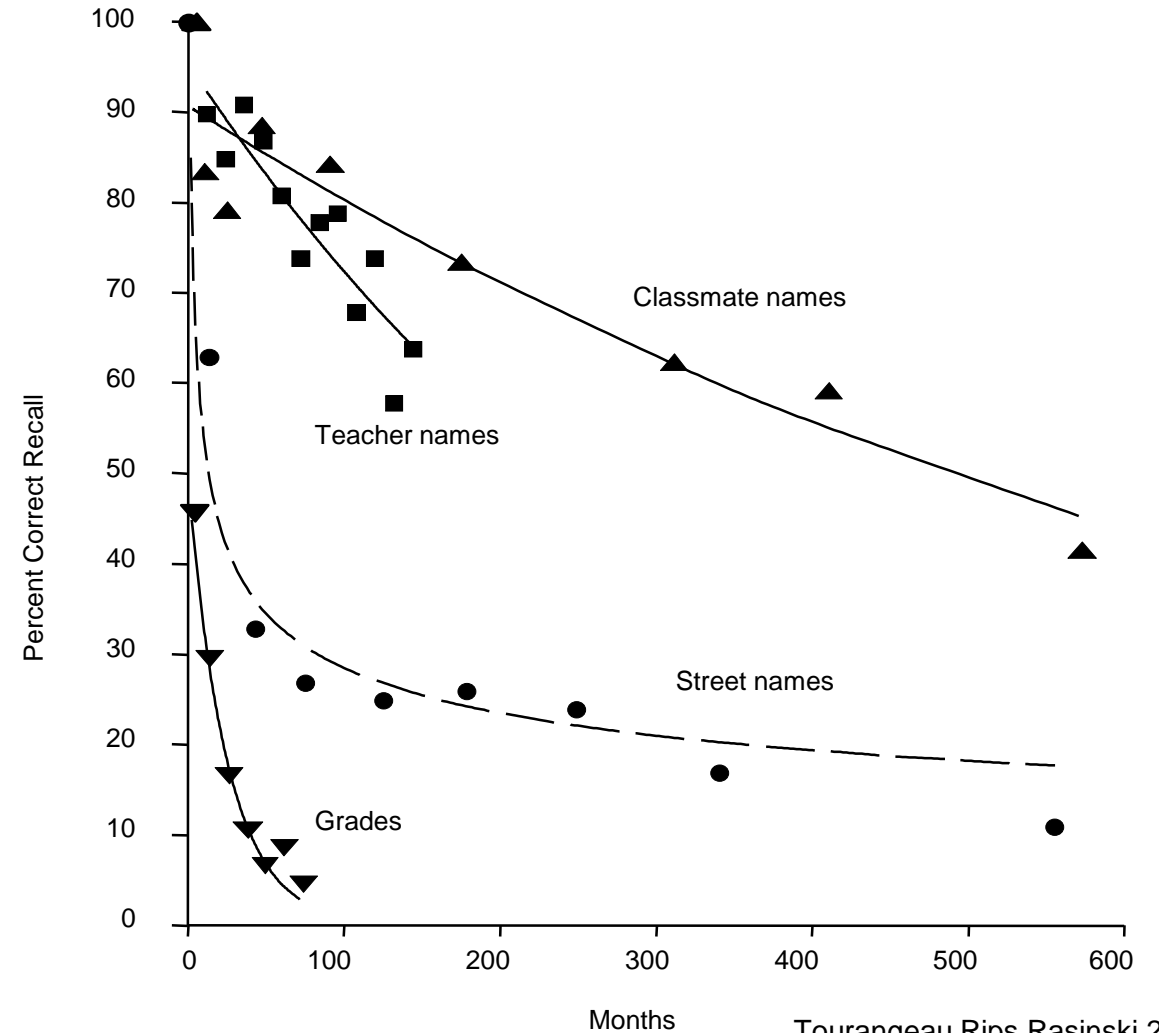
Remembering and Recall Problems

- Time between interview and beginning of period that has to be remembered.
 - Longer the time period, the harder to recall the information.
- Recall period - Length of period that has to be remembered.
- Reference period - Time period that is being used for estimate.



Types of errors

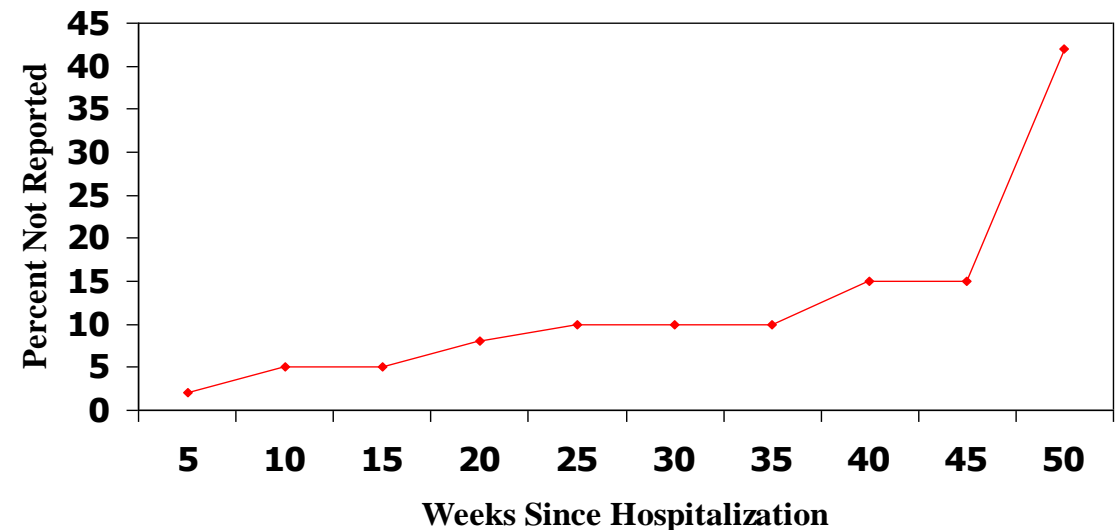
- Early memory models:
 - answers via episodic enumeration
 - two types of errors
 - Telescoping
 - Omissions
- More recent models:
 - Both episodic enumeration and estimation strategies are used, depending upon
 - Number of events
 - Length of the recall period
 - Regularity, similarity of events



Some More Findings

- Charley Cannell and his colleagues did a study looking at reporting of hospital visits; record check study — had hospital records to compare to survey reports
- Impact of forgetting: Increases with elapsed time

Weeks between discharge and interview	% Not Reported (n in records)
1-10 weeks	3 (114)
11-20 weeks	6 (426)
21-30 weeks	9 (459)
31-40 weeks	11 (339)
41-50 weeks	16 (364)
51-53 weeks	42 (131)



Telescoping Error

- “External Telescoping” – Report of an event that occurred outside the reference period.
 - Could happen on either end of the reference period (depends on design)
- Internal telescoping – could place event outside the reference period, if it crosses temporal boundary.



Dating events

- Date tags not stored with other information about event
- Few landmark events, for which we know dates
 - Relative vs. absolute dates
- Autobiographical sequences—memory is not a continuous linear record
- Storage of date information
 - Calendar or calendar-like (season)
 - Socially defined period
 - Elapsed time
 - Idiosyncratic reference points

Guidelines for Dealing with Recall Problems

1. Encourage respondents to use records
 - Bills, checkbooks, insurance forms, calendars, etc.
 - Replace memory with external information or combination of the two
2. Use bounded recall (relative to a memorable and set time point)
 - i.e. in longitudinal study, collect information since prior interview,
 - ask about month x-1, then about month x.
 - This reduces overreports due to “telescoping” (reporting something outside the reference period)

HEALTH

4

Have you or any member of your household needed medical services since [DATE_OUTBREAK]?

YES1
NO.....2 >>FILTER
REFUSED..99 >>FILTER

Guidelines for Dealing with Recall Problems

7. If possible through prior mailings, provide diary to record nonsalient behavior, alternatively
 - Keep reporting period short, ask about multiple items
8. Use words that everyone understands; define special terms
 - *“Do you procrastinate?” vs. “Do you put off until tomorrow things you could have done today – that is, procrastinate?”*

END OF VIDEO 4