# Interviewing Basics

# An interface design process

**Goals:**

- Articulate:
  - who users are
  - their key tasks

- Brainstorm designs

- Refined designs

- Completed designs

**Methods:**

Interviewing

Shadowing

Contextual Inquiry

Card Sorts

Affinity Diagrams

*Evaluate*

Psychology of everyday things

Visual Design

*User tests*

*Task scenario walk-through*

Graphical screen design

Interface guidelines

Style guides

*Usability testing*

*Cognitive Walkthru*

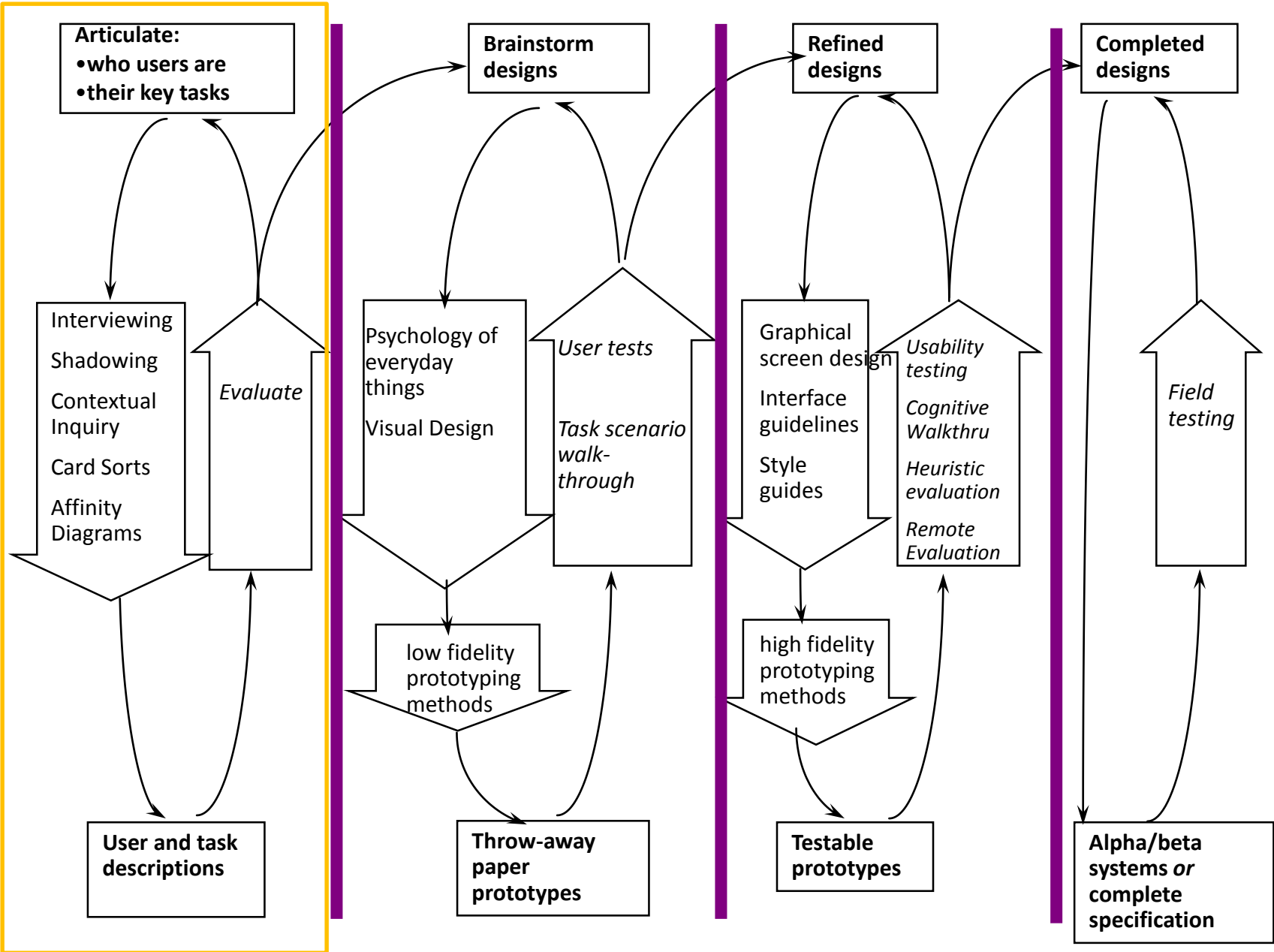*Heuristic evaluation*

*Remote Evaluation*

*Field testing*

low fidelity prototyping methods

high fidelity prototyping methods

**Products:**

**User and task descriptions**

**Throw-away paper prototypes**

**Testable prototypes**

**Alpha/beta systems *or* complete specification**

# Constructing an Interview

- <span style="color:red">Who do we interview?</span>

- What do we ask them?

# Who? - Participant Sampling Strategies

- Purposive – recruit based on meeting a set of criteria
  - Computer science majors @ wash u
- Quota – criteria based, but with quotas for subgroups
  - Computer science majors @ wash u, x% female, y% male (or racial group, club participation, religion, etc)
- Snowball – chain referral sampling
  - "Can you refer me to some other computer science majors you know?"

# More on Who?

- Representative samples are key
  - Comparing against known demographics
  - Recruiting from organizations with known and diverse properties
- How many?
  - Rule of thumb: keep recruiting until you aren't learning new things from each participant
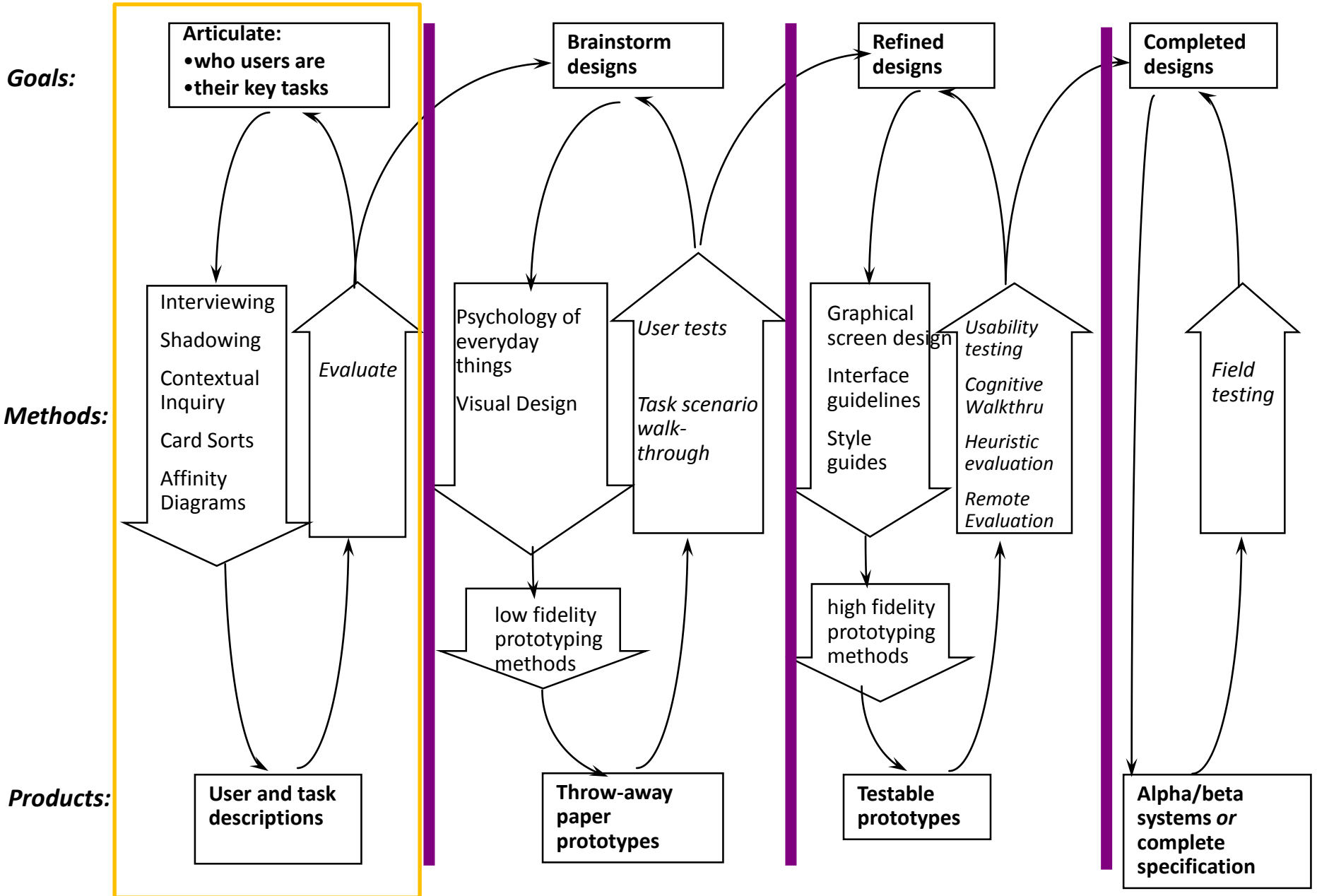
The book says that after 12 people some interviews say they have a very good idea of the population and feel as though they can stop interviewing. Is 12 people an exaggeration? It seems to me that there is a much too high chance of simply interviewing 12 very similar people. I understand that it may depend on the study, but shouldn't statistics and power also factor into it always? Rather than just a 'feeling' that you should be done?

# In Class Design Challenge

You are in the advanced development office at a software and consumer electronics company. Your boss comes to you saying he/she wants you to explore the potential for some kind of device that helps keeps geographically separated families feeling more connected using photographs.

If you don't understand your problem enough to know what population you should sample from; do you do a random sampling with more open questions to try and better understand the problem?

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# Constructing an Interview

- Who do we interview?
- What do we ask them?

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# What info do we need to build a new system?

- Who are the users?

- What are their tasks?

- How do they complete those tasks?

- Why? What are the goals behind the tasks?

- Where? In what context do these tasks occur?

# Interviews

- Unstructured - are not directed by a script. Rich but not replicable.

- Structured - are tightly scripted, often like a questionnaire. Replicable but may lack richness.

- Semi-structured - guided by a script but interesting issues can be explored in more depth. Can provide a good balance between richness and replicability.

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# Closed vs. Open Questions

- Closed questions are useful when you really are looking for a fact
  - Do you own or rent your current house? [and now I'll ask you to go into depth on how you manage finances or something]
  - Vs. Describe your current living situation.
- If you are looking to gain an understanding, start open…but it's ok to ask some closed questions based on their answers.
  - Describe what you do at work on a typical morning.
  - Do you have the same routine every day? Or does it vary sometimes?
  - Open questions are in general better at getting people to actually talk.

# Things to avoid

- Long questions

- Compound sentences - split into two

- Jargon & language that the interviewee may not understand

- Leading questions that make assumptions e.g., why do you like …?

- Unconscious biases e.g., gender stereotypes

# Some Dos

- Build Rapport
  - Interviewees should feel comfortable with you.
- Where possible, ask for specific examples
  - What were you working on at work this week? Did you need to gather any info as part of that? What was your process?
  - What kinds of information do you search for in your job?
- If you hear something interesting or surprising, ask follow on questions.
- If there's a system already in place, ask them for the best and worst 3 things about that system.
- Have a conversation?

# Some Don'ts

- Don't assume that you already know the answer, present it, and ask for support.

- Don't ask your user to design for you.

- Don't limit the kinds of answers your user can give you.

# In Class Design Challenge

You are in the advanced development office at a software and consumer electronics company. Your boss comes to you saying he/she wants you to explore the potential for some kind of device that helps keeps geographically separated families feeling more connected using photographs.

# Who

- **army military**
- international students
- domestic students
- **recent immigrants**
- retirement communities
- traveling business people
- pilots
- truck drivers
- **children**
- **spouses**
- **grandparent-age**
- people who recently moved
- aunts/uncles/grandparents not in town
- **divorced parents**
- cultural diversity
- **limited mobility**
- people in prison
- rehab
- hospital

# Who

- We particularly want:
  - A diversity of ages and age pairings because
    - they may have very different notions of what it means to feel connected
    - Because they may have very different preferences and capabilities that impact the design
  - Some examples where isolation is more extreme because these people may have developed interesting techniques for keeping a sense of connectedness
    - Examples: military, recent immigrants, etc.
  - Some examples where there may be difficult relationships
    - Examples: divorced parents

# What to ask about?

- time investment
- post communication feelings
- how do you communicate + gaps
- when
- current uses of photographs
- content in photos
- how take photos
- what happens to a specific photo
- outside of family sharing
- devices - improvements
- willingess to get something new
- responses
- visit frequency
- how often do you want to hear?
- geographical separation effect on relationship
- how connected do you feel?
- how frequently do you share photos?
- technical proficiency
- how do photos make you feel/role in connectedness
- preferred method of communication
- more interested in sending or receiving
- photos vs videos?

# In Class Design Challenge

- Write a first draft of an interview

# Some Example Questions

- Tell me about your family. Who is in your family and where do they live? Who are you close to? Want to be close to?

- Over the last month, which family members have you communicated with and how?

- Which of those communications has helped you most to feel connected to a family member and why?

# Introductions

- I find it useful to tell people where I'm coming from.

  - Set your interviewee up as the expert. Most people like to feel helpful.

- Consent and when you need to be dishonest?

# Probes and prompts

- Probes - devices for getting more information. e.g., 'would you like to add anything?'

- Prompts - devices to help interviewee, e.g., help with remembering a name

- Remember that probing and prompting should not create bias.

- Too much can encourage participants to try to guess the answer.

# Should I use a professional interviewer?

- There is an art to this. Expert interviewers will tend to get good data more quickly. Practice helps.

- There is a huge value in having a design team that understands their user group. If design interviews go exclusively to expert interviewers you don't get that.

- In reality, few companies are going to have full time interviewers.
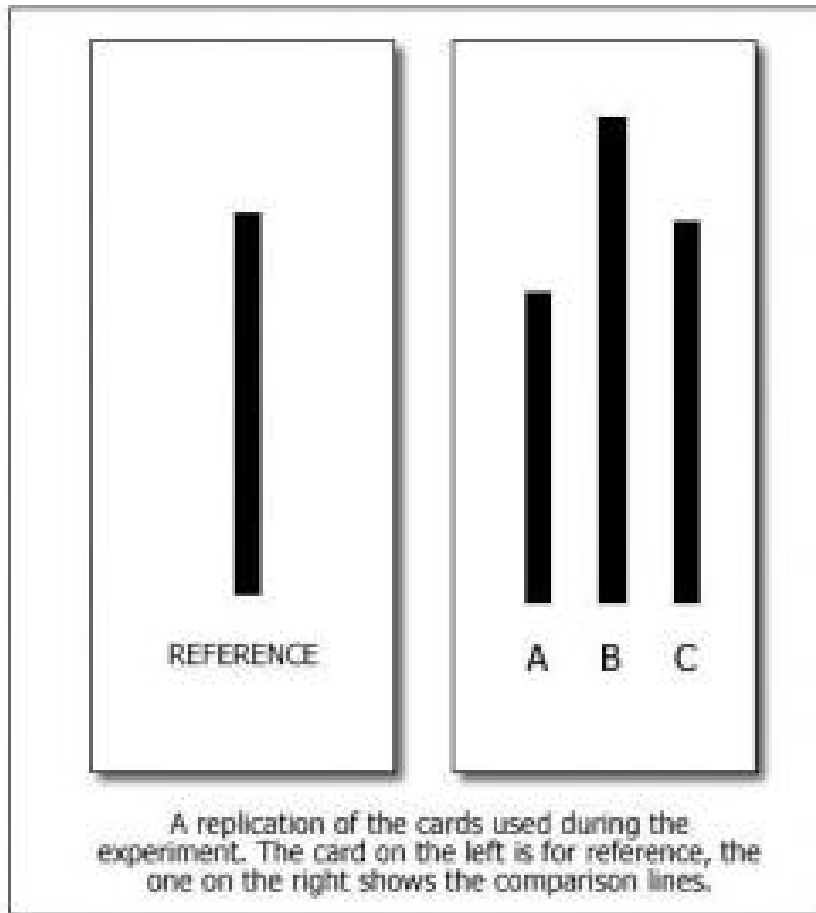
# It's not about you.

- The interview should be all about your interviewee. Your opinion is only a hindrance and a distraction at this stage.

- The questions you choose to ask and the ways you interact with interviewees can color their answers. So, you want the constant "am I biasing this?" in your head.

# Tough Situations

- You're working across cultures or in an emotionally charged situation.
  - Get an expert for that situation.
  - People who've just lost a spouse to cancer, for example.
- Someone you are interviewing doesn't want to talk with *you.*
  - Your goal is to get the data. If another person can get it more effectively, that might be the right answer.

# Asch Experiment



REFERENCE   A  B  C

A replication of the cards used during the experiment. The card on the left is for reference, the one on the right shows the comparison lines.

- 8 people
- 7 paid confederates, one actual participant.
- Variety of answers given, some deliberately incorrect to look at influence of peer pressure.
- At least 75% gave the wrong answer to at least one question.

http://www.experiment-resources.com/asch-experiment.html