Research Methods

Worksheet 3.1: Asking Questions

Complete the following table. The first column identifies a number of situations in which researchers might ask questions. In the second and third columns, you should put the strengths and weaknesses of these ways of asking questions, and in the fourth and fifth columns you should particularly focus on the issues of validity and reliability.

Situation and type of question	**Strengths**	**Weaknesses**	**How valid?**	**How reliable?**
One-to-one, open-ended (unstructured) interview questions				
One-to-one, closed (structured) interview questions				
Postal questionnaire using structured questions				

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Situation and type of question	Strengths	Weaknesses	How valid?	How reliable?
Group interview using open-ended questions				
Structured questions asked over the telephone				
Self-completion, structured questionnaires posted on the internet				
Self-completion, unstructured questionnaires sent via email				