Question-Answering Process

1. Comprehending question
2. Retrieving relevant information
3. Formulating an answer
4. Formatting and editing the answer
Retrieving Relevant Information

- Event must be encoded in memory
- Cues important in aiding recall
- Cues may come from wording of question, lists, context
- Recall takes time. The more time the better the recall
Key Aspects of Recall

- Context
- Frequency of events
- Shape of forgetting curve
- Reference period
- Telescoping
Low Item-incidence Levels

- Two approaches:
  - Vary recall period
  - Vary sample size
Best Practices for Determining Recall Period

- Minimize net relative error from omissions and telescoping
- Negative Exponential function $ae^{-bt}$ fits much expenditure data ($t$ is time, $a$ and $b$ are constants that vary by expenditure type)
Grouping Questions

- Minimize cognitive effort
- Group by event sequences
- Group by expenditure setting
- Group by recall period
Next Steps

- Review findings on context effects on consumer expenditures
- Explore effects of different groupings
- Test hypotheses about groupings in laboratory and field
- Do field test to determine operational feasibility
Proposed Survey Design

- Conceptually separate surveys with different groupings and recall periods
- Sample sizes determined by desired level of precision
- Panel surveys to reduce telescoping
- Questionnaire as a matrix
Additional Issue

- Events cannot be recalled if they were never encoded.
- Price of goods purchased with credit cards may not ever be encoded separately. Only total for mixed basket of goods may be encoded, if that.