User Research
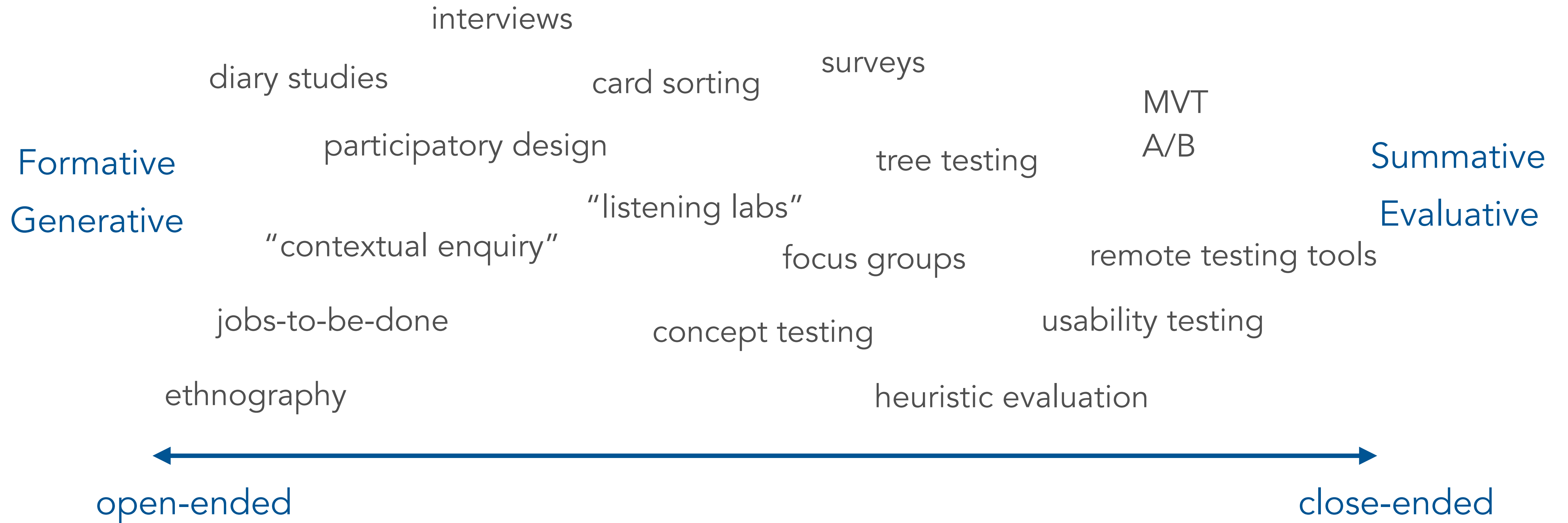
#5: Research Methods

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Which research method?

interviews

diary studies

card sorting

surveys

MVT
A/B

Formative

participatory design

tree testing

Summative

Generative

"listening labs"

Evaluative

"contextual enquiry"

focus groups

remote testing tools

jobs-to-be-done

concept testing

usability testing

ethnography

heuristic evaluation

open-ended ←——————————————→ close-ended

Usability — a definition

Usability is defined by 5 quality components:

- **Learnability:** How easy is it for users to accomplish basic tasks the first time they encounter the design?
- **Efficiency:** Once users have learned the design, how quickly can they perform tasks?
- **Memorability:** When users return to the design after a period of not using it, how easily can they reestablish proficiency?
- **Errors**: How many errors do users make, how severe are these errors, and how easily can they recover from the errors?
- **Satisfaction**: How pleasant is it to use the design?

https://www.nngroup.com/articles/usability-101-introduction-to-usability/

Usability testing

Core components of a usability test involve testing for:

- **Comprehension & learnability**: does the user understand? How quickly do they "get it"?

- **Findability**: can they find their way around?

- **Efficiency**: how quickly or effectively can do they what they want to do?

- **Memorability**: if they go away and come back, do they remember what to do?

- **Errors**: How many mistakes do they make, and how easily do users recover?

Usability testing

The main goal is to get the participants to simulate going through the scenarios in as real a situation as possible.

So, sometimes, you might have to get creative, e.g. the <u>Bollywood technique</u>.

Writing good tasks for usability testing

Make the Task Realistic

User goal: Browse product offerings and purchase an item.

Poor task: Purchase a pair of orange Nike running shoes.

Better task: Buy a pair of shoes for under $40.

Make the Task Actionable

User goal: Find movie and show times.

Poor task: You want to see a movie Sunday afternoon. Go to www.fandango.com and tell me where you'd click next.

Better task: Use www.fandago.com to find a movie you'd be interested in seeing on Sunday afternoon.

https://www.nngroup.com/articles/task-scenarios-usability-testing/

Writing good tasks for usability testing

Avoid Clues and Describing the Steps

User goal: Look up grades.

Poor task: You want to see the results of your midterm exams. Go to the website, sign in, and tell me where you would click to get your transcript.

Better task: Look up the results of your midterm exams.

https://www.nngroup.com/articles/task-scenarios-usability-testing/

Writing good tasks for usability testing

- **Avoid giving clues in the scenario.** Don't use uncommon or unique words used in your website or app. Testers will scan the screen to find these words and you won't get many insights about the usability of your website.

- **Write in a clear, understandable, and easy to follow way.** Write the way you talk and don't try to sound scientific or academic. Pre-test your tasks with colleagues or friends to make sure they are easy to understand and people really know what you want them to do.

https://userbrain.net/blog/write-better-tasks-to-improve-usability-testing

Writing good tasks for usability testing

- **Trim any detail that's not absolutely necessary.** Your task scenarios should set a context and provide users with necessary details like a username or a special delivery address. Everything else is unnecessary.

- **Keep your task scenarios as short as possible** and let testers figure out things for themselves.

https://userbrain.net/blog/write-better-tasks-to-improve-usability-testing

Concept testing

Concept testing can take various different forms, and can include prototypes of different fidelities.

You can learn/validate mental models, or comprehension of value proposition from a concept test, but you may also unearth usability issues in early design.

Concept tests are good for validating existing ideas, a series of concept tests can be good for iterating on a prototype.

Participatory design research

Co-design sessions can be conducted in a group or 1-1.

They are structured to help us understand:

- Mental models & use cases
- Pain points
- Triggers & Motivations
- Whether a value proposition resonates with the customer
- "Edge cases"

Outcome of sessions can be powerful in providing design direction.

"Guerilla" Research

Guerrilla testing works best when the problem we are addressing has a degree of universality *and* when our learning objective is specific.

"Guerilla" Research: setting up

1. Identify clear research objectives & target audience.

2. Identify target locations, establish if we need permission.

3. Decide on your incentives.

4. Write a discussion guide. E.g. How do you screen for the right people?

5. Design a corresponding capture sheet.

6. Use a consent form if you are recording.
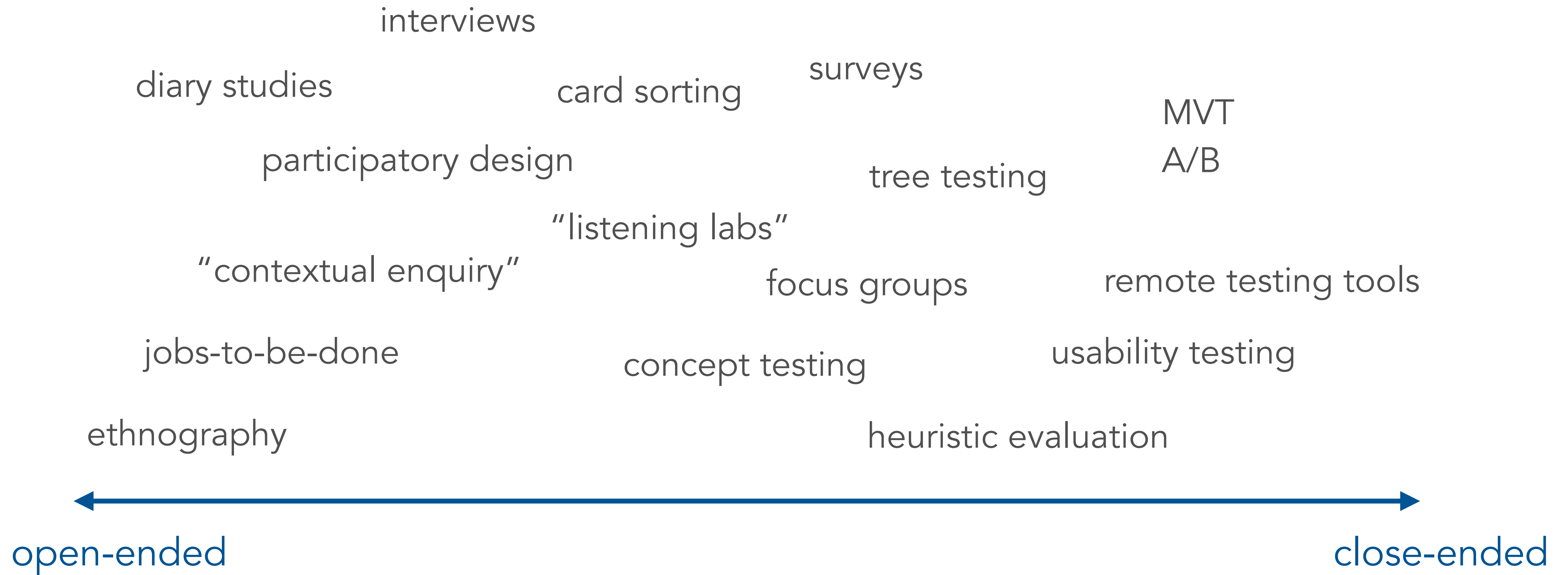
Rapid Iterative Research

The "RITE" (Rapid Iterative Testing & Evaluation) method means you iterate your prototype or stimuli on the fly so you gain insights in the shortest amount of time.

Contextual Research

Conducting interviews with users in their normal day-to-day contexts when they may be using your product or service, combined with observation.

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Exercise:
Which research methods can we use?

You've just been employed by a new startup. The CEO is focused on **minimising single-use plastic bottles,** and they are **open to developing new products**, **or services to support their vision**.

You will also have to think about **how this product/ service generates revenue** for the company.

Exercise:
Which research methods can we use?

Research Context	Research Objectives
Why are we doing this? What impact do we hope to achieve?	What do we want to learn?

Assumptions	Hypotheses	
What do we think we know?	What do we think will happen?	How will we know when it's proven?

Existing Evidence	Target Audience
What current research exists? E.g. analytics, market research, past insights.	Who is our target audience for this research?

Methodology

Which research method do we use?	What does this prove or validate?	Which are relevant participant profiles?

Next:

Sampling