**Enter data from a questionnaire, Example 5: Open response**

In example five, our last example, we’re going to look at open ended questions response, mainly open response which are numerical data, not qualitative type data from interviews. Now, open response questions are generally used for factual type questions. So for example, what’s your age in months, how many years have you worked at your job, what age do you plan to retire, and these are left open for participants to write in a particular number. Now sometimes these kinds of questions are also used with categorical responses so you might say for example what is your age in years and you have 18-24, 25-30 etc. Or what age to you plan to retire? 60-62, 63-64, and if you choose to do it that way it’s perfectly fine, it just means your data is categorical rather than numerical. Now when you use open responses for opinions or preferences, so you may have an opened ended question where it may say can you please explain or can your opinion about this or your preference about that, and you’re trying to get more information from a participant, it can be more difficult to tabulate and analyse and to be honest, SPSS may not be the right software for you to use. In addition, the question may not be answered correctly, so if someone doesn’t understand what you’re trying to ask, the response they give will be invalid and will not be useful to you. It also may not be answered at all. I don’t know about you but I don’t particularly like open ended questions, I find them difficult to answer on the spot so I usually don’t answer them at all, and that may happen to you if you have open ended questions. If possible, if you have an opened ended question that has a fairly simple response, it may be possible for you to reorganise them into groups. So for example, if I had a question about what is your favourite brand, that would be fairly straight forward, I could write Apple or Ford or Evian Water or something to that effect. I’ve got lots of different brands that’s someone could name, and when I get the responses, I could easily categorise them and then code them and analyse them as categorical data. You may be able to do that with other type of opinions and preference questions, but if there’s just too much information there you may not be able to categorise it and you’ll have to use something besides SPSS.

So let’s look at how we might lay out our data for the first three question examples I gave you. So what’s your age in years, how many years have you been at your job, what age do you plan to retire? Now scaled data does not have to be coded which is great, so we can just enter the raw data as it is. Alright let’s look at how we define this variable into the data into SPSS. I’m going to use the third variable which is What age do you plan to retire. I’m just going to call it ‘retire.’ Its numeric, I don’t have any decimal places for this variable, and I’m going to type in the question. I don’t need value labels because my data is not categorical or grouped, I’m not going to code missing data, and all I need to do then is my measure. So scale, ordinal, nominal, my data is not grouped, it’s just open response numerical data which means that its scale, rather than ordinal or nominal. I’m going to leave the role as input.

Let’s have a look at our data view. Let’s enter some of these ages. Okay, so obviously there’s no value labels attached so I’m going to see numerical data regardless of my value labels button being pressed or not. So these are five examples of different types of questions you could have on a questionnaire and how you enter them into SPSS, define the variables and then enter the data.

END.