

Module 3. Survey Tools

A. Determine Whether a Survey Is the Right Research Tool at This Stage

- 1) What was the research question you identified at the beginning of the design process (i.e., in Module 1)?

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- 2) Reflect on what you learned through focus groups, interviews, or other preliminary research. What were some of the key insights and questions that arose for you out of that research?

Insights:
Questions:

- 3) Compare your responses to Questions 1 and 2. Consider how would you modify, add to, or break down your original research question based on what you learned during the preliminary research phase. You might consider
- ☐ Modifying or breaking down the language of the original question to be more targeted;
Example: What do students like and dislike about relationships with adults at school? →
What are the characteristics of positive student relationships with adults?
 - ☐ Adding specific questions to confirm key insights from preliminary research;
Example: Do our insights about what students value about adult relationships hold with a larger sample?
 - ☐ Adding specific questions based on what you learned during preliminary research;
Example: Does choosing the adult have a positive impact on the student's relationship with the adult?
 - ☐ Adding specific questions based on inquiries that arose during preliminary research;
Example: Do students believe that adult relationships they perceive as positive are beneficial to their learning?

Use the space below to revise your original questions with the guidelines above in mind:

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B. Develop questions

Use this worksheet to brainstorm survey questions and revise them in keeping with the guidelines set forth in this question.

- 1) Refer to the revised set of research questions you developed in Step 1. Brainstorm as many questions as you can that will help you answer those questions.

Assume these questions will be forced-choice (meaning respondents will have to select an answer you provide for them), but do not worry about writing out answer choices for now.

If you developed focus group and interview questions in the previous module, you can modify those questions and incorporate them here.

- 2) Look back at the questions you developed in the previous step. Are any of the questions double-barreled? That is, do they ask about more than one thing in a single question? If so, place a * next to those questions and re-write them below:

- 3) Now, consider the language in your questions.

- a) Read for clarity. Try to put yourself in the mindset of your group of interest. Do any of the questions use vocabulary that would seem confusing or unnatural to your audience? If so, place a # next to those questions and re-write them below:

- b) Read for parsimony. Re-read your questions closely. Do any of them use unnecessary words (e.g., “adults at your school” instead of “teachers,” when you are really asking about teachers)? If so, place a ## next to those questions and re-write them below:

4) Look through your questions. Do any questions ask students to:

- ☐ Incriminate themselves in some way; or
- ☐ "Lose face" by admitting to an embarrassing or unpopular viewpoint or behavior?

Flag those questions with a !

In the space below, re-write the questions so they ask about the behavior or thoughts of others, rather than the behavior or thoughts of the respondents themselves:

5) Re-read your questions closely. Do any of the questions hint that a certain response is the best or correct one? If so, revise them below, keeping in mind that, when asking questions about attitudes, it is considered best practice to present both possibilities in the question (e.g., "favor or oppose," "agree or disagree").

6) If you like, use the space below to write out all of your revised questions:

C. Develop Responses

- 1) Review the questions you developed in the previous section. Transpose them here, select the best response type for the question, and draft a set of response options.

Question	Type of Response Set	Response Set
	<input type="checkbox"/> Likert scale <input type="checkbox"/> Ranking <input type="checkbox"/> Open-ended <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Likert scale <input type="checkbox"/> Ranking <input type="checkbox"/> Open-ended <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Likert scale <input type="checkbox"/> Ranking <input type="checkbox"/> Open-ended <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Likert scale <input type="checkbox"/> Ranking <input type="checkbox"/> Open-ended <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Likert scale <input type="checkbox"/> Ranking <input type="checkbox"/> Open-ended <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Likert scale <input type="checkbox"/> Ranking <input type="checkbox"/> Open-ended <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Likert scale <input type="checkbox"/> Ranking <input type="checkbox"/> Open-ended <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Likert scale <input type="checkbox"/> Ranking <input type="checkbox"/> Open-ended <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Likert scale	

	<input type="checkbox"/> Ranking <input type="checkbox"/> Open-ended <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Likert scale <input type="checkbox"/> Ranking <input type="checkbox"/> Open-ended <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Likert scale <input type="checkbox"/> Ranking <input type="checkbox"/> Open-ended <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	

D. Order Questions

- 1) Review your draft survey questions. Are there any open-ended questions that require reflection? If so, identify any related closed-ended questions and order them so that close-ended questions lead to the reflective open-ended question:

- 2) Review your survey questions. What student characteristics beyond gender, socioeconomic status, and race/ethnicity do you expect to factor into differences in student responses? You might consider:

- ☐ GPA
- ☐ Attendance
- ☐ Disciplinary history
- ☐ Parent's occupation

- ☐ Participation in extracurricular activities
- ☐ And many other things!

a) Make a list of student characteristics that you expect to factor into differences into student responses:

b) Now, write a series of demographic questions that ask students about these characteristics:

E. Revise Using Survey Checklist

Is my survey purpose-driven?

- ☐ Each survey item will give me information I need to answer my research question(s).

Is my survey easy to analyze?

- ☐ Each survey item asks about only one thing (and is therefore not a double-barreled question).
- ☐ Closed-ended survey items use Likert scales or rankings.
- ☐ "Yes/No" and "Choose all that apply" response sets are used only when absolutely necessary.
- ☐ I have identified all the subgroups I expect to be relevant to my analysis and included demographic questions asking about them at the end of my survey.

Is my survey easy to answer honestly?

- ☐ Each survey item is written in clear and parsimonious language.
- ☐ Respondents are “primed” for reflective open-ended questions with related closed-ended questions.
- ☐ There are no leading survey items (framing of each item does not imply that a certain response is correct).
- ☐ All demographic questions (with the exception of name and ID, if applicable) appear at the end of the survey.
- ☐ Any potentially sensitive or controversial survey items have been framed to ask about the thoughts or behaviors of others, not the thoughts or behaviors of the respondent.

F. Field Test

Protocol for Cog-Labbing

For each item, ask the respondent to:

1. Read the item aloud and tell you of any words they do not know or find confusing.
2. Rephrase the question in their own words.
3. Read the answer choices and: if answer choices are on a Likert-scale, choose one option; if answer choices are multiple-choice, rephrase each option in their own words.

For each item, take note of any confusing vocabulary. In addition, during Step 2, if the respondent’s way of phrasing the question sounds more natural, consider re-wording your survey draft.

Cog-Labbing Note-Catcher

Item #	Confusing/Unclear Words	Re-phrased Question	Answer Choice/Re-phrase

G. Prepare for Survey Administration

Cog-Labbing

You should “cog-lab” your survey with at least one person from your group of interest.

- 1) Who will you ask to “cog-lab” your survey?

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- 2) When and where will cog-labbing take place?

Date	Time	Location

- 3) Who will be responsible for revising the survey in light of the “cog-lab,” and by when?

Who	Deadline

Administration

- 4) How many people will, ideally, take your survey? _____

- 5) Where will you recruit respondents from your survey (e.g., local schools, etc.)?

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- 6) When and where will survey administration take place?

Date	Time	Location

- 7) Will surveys be administered online or via paper-and-pencil? Consider access to technology and reliable Internet at the survey administration location. Based on this decision, note who will be responsible for setting up the online survey or preparing the paper documents.

Mode of Administration	Person responsible for preparing survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Online	
<input type="checkbox"/> Paper-and-pencil	

- 8) Who will be responsible for coordinating administration of the survey on the day(s) of administration?

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