


“The important thing is not to stop questioning.”

Albert Einstein



Popping the Question



Agenda

- Assumptions
- Introductions
- Open versus closed questions (pair and share)
- The right words
- Context and Culture (case studies)
- Designing your survey (group activity)
- Discussion and final questions

Assumptions

You have already:


- Identified your evaluation questions
- Matched your method (a survey) to the question/context
- Identified the audience for your survey
- Selected your sample
- Chosen your survey type

“Quality questions create a quality life. Successful people ask better questions, and as a result, they get better answers.”

Anthony Robbins


Introductions

Susan Kistler
Executive Director for the American Evaluation Association
Taught Survey Design at University of Minnesota
Provided Training on Survey Design
Written Over 100 surveys
Conducted Surveys Online, On Paper, and In Person
Taken Surveys
Asked Questions and Gotten Answers
Asked Questions and Not Gotten Answers




“It is not every question which deserves an answer.”

Publilius Syrus




Questions

- Have you been the primary writer of a survey?
- Have you been the primary writer of 10 or more surveys?
- Have you been the primary writer of 100 or more surveys?
- Have you taken other training on survey or instrument development?
- Have you taken a paper-and-pencil survey?
- Have you participated in an orally administered survey?
- Have you taken an online survey?




Questions

- Is your next survey development project likely to be delivered online, via paper, or orally? (please choose one)
 - Online
 - Paper
 - Oral
 - Multi-format
- What is your primary work context? (please choose one)
 - Health
 - Education
 - Nonprofit
 - Other




Questions

- What is your primary reason for being at this session today?
- Which of your following is your primary reason for being at this session today? (please choose one)
 - I want to improve a future survey.
 - I have to improve an existing survey.
 - I want to get teaching/training ideas.
 - Other




Open vs Closed

- **Closed Ended Questions** are those for which respondents choose from a set of pre-defined answers, sometimes with an 'other' option available.
- **Open Ended Questions** are those for which respondents provide narrative/qualitative/worded responses.



Choosing

OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS	CLOSED ENDED QUESTIONS




Choosing

OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

- Exploratory, encourage depth of answer and nuance
- Researcher need not know appropriate response options
- Provide more rich detail and nuance per question answered
- Generate more data
- More time to take (decrease response rate – blanks)
- More time/expense to analyze
- Responses tell more about an individual subject
- Respondent must attend to question (decreases error)
- Cannot validate answers for online surveys

CLOSED ENDED QUESTIONS

- Confirmatory, force selection of answer
- Researcher must know appropriate response options
- Allow for more questions within survey
- Generate less data
- Less time to take (increase response rate)
- Less time/expense to analyze
- Responses more easily compared across subjects
- Respondent may attend only to key words in question
- Can validate answers for online surveys (may force bad selections)




Wording Pitfalls

AVOID

- Words unknown to your respondent
- Jargon (middle school, contusion)
- Acronyms or abbreviations (NCLB, AYP, OTC, FAQ, CD)
- Words open to interpretation (special needs, global)
- Regionally/Nationally specific terms (grinders, athlete)
- Two questions in one (friendly and helpful)
- Leading questions (hot button words, power issues)

Yet, even with unambiguous language, readers will assign values to your words, especially around value-laden issues.




Example Critique

Gallup: “Do you think abortions should be legal under any circumstances, legal only under certain circumstances, or illegal in all circumstances?”

ABC/Washington Post: “Do you think abortion should be legal in all cases, legal in most cases, illegal in most cases, or illegal in all cases?”

Gallup Poll: 2005	Percent	Percent	ABC/WP Poll: 2005
Legal under any circumstances?	23 %	20 %	Legal in all cases?
Legal under most circumstances?	12 %	36 %	Legal in most cases?
Legal only under a few circumstances?	40%	27 %	Illegal in most cases?
Illegal in all circumstances?	22 %	14 %	Illegal in all cases?




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- Two questions in one (friendly & helpful)

ATTEND TO


- Culture
- Context



Critique


The 1962 National Health Interview Survey
 With others from your table, take a moment to critique this section from the survey.

What concerns do you have about wording choice?
 About open versus closed questions?
 About cultural or contextual issues?
 Would this survey be appropriate today?



Example


- 1962 National Health Interview Survey
 Question: Race (check one box for each person)
 Response options: White, Negro, Other
- 1996 National Health Interview Survey
 Question: Do you consider yourself to be Hispanic or Latino?
 Response options: Yes, No, [and multiple clarifiers]
 Question: What race or races do you consider yourself to be?
 Please select 1 or more of these categories.
 Response options: White, Black/African American, Indian (American),
 Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Guamanian, Samoan, Other Pacific
 Islander, Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean,
 Vietnamese, Other Asian, Some other, Refused, Don't know
 [5 pages of follow-up/clarifying explanation]



Quick Cases


- **Case 1:** You have been hired to provide evaluative data to improve a program aimed at improving the English language proficiency of the elementary school aged children of new immigrants. You are planning the parent's survey, to be administered in writing in the parent's workplace.
- **Case 2:** You have been hired to provide evaluative data to improve a program aimed at decreasing high risk activities for spreading HIV/AIDS among men who have sex with men. You are planning the men's survey, to be administered orally in social establishments.
- **Case 3:** You have been hired to provide evaluative data to improve a program aimed at increasing the Gardasil vaccination rate among girls 10-14. Gardasil prevents cervical cancer and other diseases caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV), the most common sexually transmitted disease. You are planning the parent's survey to be administered online.

In each case, what linguistic, contextual and cultural issues likely should be taken into consideration?




“You mustn't always believe what I say. Questions tempt you to tell lies, particularly when there is no answer.”

Pablo Picasso



Closed Types

- **Dichotomous:** Only two answers are feasible
 - Are you enrolled? (Yes/No)
 - CHECK: Are only two answers feasible?
- **Multiple Choice:** Appropriate for categories/categorical data
 - Which doctor did you see today? (Sanford/Kirkland/Chen)
 - CHECK: Have you exhausted all categories?
 - CHECK: Is an 'other' or 'not applicable' category needed?
 - CHECK: Are the response categories listed logically (alpha, sequence)
 - CHECK: Select one or select all that apply?
- **Ordered Multiple Choice:** Deliver ordinal data
 - How often do you eat out? (about daily, weekly, monthly...)
 - CHECK: Can you push your multiple choice to ordered?
 - CHECK: Have you provided all of the ordered options that are needed?
 - CHECK: Select only one
- **Scales:** Deliver interval data



Scales


Scales (and a note or two on Likert)

- Seek equal interval between response items (conceptually and visually)
- May be unidirectional or bidirectional
- May or may not have a neutral center

CHECK: Are they balanced linguistically
 CHECK: Can you push your ordered question to a scaled question?
 CHECK: Do the question stem and instructions flow to the answer?


How important would you say it is to you that the next president supports women's issues?

<input type="radio"/> Very Important	Very Important
<input type="radio"/> Important	Somewhat Important
<input type="radio"/> Moderately Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant
<input type="radio"/> Of Little Importance	Somewhat Unimportant
<input type="radio"/> Unimportant	Very Unimportant




Scales

- 3 response categories inadequate, more than 9 no gain (Cox, 1980)
- Little gain beyond 5 response categories (Clarke, 2000)
- 5 point scales more internally consistent than 4 (Osteras et al 2008)
- Use of a midpoint found fewer positive responses (Dawes, 2001)
- Use of midpoint found fewer negative responses (Garland, 1991)
- As number of scale options increases, mid-point use decreases (Matell and Jacoby, 1972)



Examining Example Scales


- Look at the example scales, which best reflect equal interval?
- Which are unidirectional/bidirectional?
- Which have a neutral center?
- Which are balanced linguistically?
- Could any be improved?
- Choose two and with your partner write full questions for each



Qualitative

Qualitative Questions

- Usually are few in number and require investment of respondent
- May be short answer or longer
 - Text versus memo boxes online
- Amount of space influences the type of answers given
- Always include open ended question at end equivalent to 'anything else we should know'



Critique

Critique the workshop feedback form using all of the things that we have talked about. What would you change? Why?



Debrief

- Questions?
- Next Steps?
- Contacts?

EVALUATION
 Outstanding
 Very Good
 Satisfactory
 Marginal

Resources

- Open ended versus closed ended questions:
<http://www.metagora.org/training/encyclopedia/ceg.html>
- Discussion of Gallup and ABC/Post polls:
<http://philippinecommentary.blogspot.com/2006/01/polling-bleg-ponnurus-puzzle.html>
- Example likert scales:
<http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/Siegle/research/Instrument%20Reliability%20and%20Validity/Likert.html>
- National Health Interview Surveys Online (US)
http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/nhis/quest_doc.htm
- Demographic and Health Surveys (International)
<http://www.measuredhs.com/aboutsurveys/start.cfm>

EVALUATION
 Outstanding
 Very Good
 Satisfactory
 Marginal

References

- Middle School/Junior High School Distinction
http://middleschool.suite101.com/article.cfm/middle_school_versus_junior_high
- Health Jargon Buster:
<http://www.healthknowledge.org.uk/HK%20Public%20Health%20Jargon%20Buster.htm>
