Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will consider research questions that are well-suited for survey development
2. Participants will contrast the purpose and utility of a variety of survey question types (multiple choice, short answer, 'check all that apply', etc.)
3. Participants will discuss the translation of concepts into survey questions

Survey Delivery Methods and Styles

- **In-person or phone interviews**
- **Mail-in surveys**
  - Marketing Research
  - Political Groups
  - Census
- **Online surveys**
  - Invited via email (academic or group-membership generated)
  - Invited via receipt from store (JC Penney, Dunkin Donuts, Lowe’s, etc.)
  - Invited via QR code
Plan to be Successful

- Survey design is an art.
  - Identify topic/area of knowledge
  - List specific attributes/concepts within area of knowledge
  - Define the attributes/concepts, if vague
    - "Retention Rate"
    - "Sophomore"
  - Consider biographic information items that may be of interest
    - "Nice to know" vs. "Need to know"

Is a Survey Appropriate?

- Is there a pre-existing survey or data set available that answers your question?
  - Surveys utilized by your institution
  - Surveys utilized by other institutions
  - System data
  - Survey policies at your institution
  - Online and paper surveys are good for surface-level information
  - When in doubt, talk to your Institutional Research office

An Excessively Short Review: Critical Measurement Concepts

- Validity - Is the question doing what it is supposed to be doing?
  - Does the question accurately reflect the concept it represents?
  - Is the respondent able to interpret what the researcher means by the question, and is the response they would want to select available?
  - Is the answer provided by the respondent a true reflection of what he or she thinks?

- Reliability - Is the question phrased in a way that provides repeatable results?
  - Is the answer to the question the same on Monday as it is on Wednesday for the same respondent?
  - For respondents of the same opinion/status, are the answers the same?
  - For similar questions on the survey, are the responses similar?
Question and Answer Development

Constructing valid and reliable items.

That's a Good Question!

- **Concept clarity for intended population**
  - As a student, how important is date/time when scheduling?
- **Only include questions that can be answered... and need to be answered**
  - Why do you choose to drink water?
  - Do you like sunny days?
- **Avoid leading questions**
  - Do you agree that students in Higher Education Administrator or College Student Personnel programs are the smarter than students in other programs?
  - Do you feel that college mascots are given too much recognition in the press?

That's a Good Question! (2)

- **Wording clarity for intended population**
  - How many times in the last fiscal quarter have you utilized the student portion Cashnet system?
- **Remember, only one construct/topic per question**
  - How would you rate the efforts of the Cleveland Browns and the Pittsburgh Steelers' offensive lines?
  - Please indicate your agreement with the following statement: The presenters for this session on survey development are charming and knowledgeable.
- **Positive language (but not over the top)**
  - On a scale of 1-10, please rate your hatred for the incredibly nefarious and evil Lord Voldemort.
  - How much of an inconvenience is the construction on campus?
  - Do you believe this university’s tuition is too high?
That's a Good Question! (3)

- Results in usable data
  - What is one thing you took from this event/experience?
    - “Infinite knowledge.”
    - “Culture.”
    - “Community is bomb-diggity.”
    - “A bowl of cereal.”
    - “I rock @ 4-square when eating hot dogs.”
    - “A low grade in Soc. I.”
    - “How to play dominoes.”
    - “Chlamydia is bad.”
    - “To get to Nigeria U can go through Egypt.”

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Good Questions Require Good Answers

- Write-In (Open-Ended) Responses (text or number)
- Static Responses
  - Multiple Choice
    - About how many hours a week do you spend studying on average?
      - Less than 1
      - 1-3 Hours
      - 3-7 Hours
      - 7-12 Hours
      - More than 12
  - Likert Scales
    - Please indicate your level of satisfaction with this presentation:
      - Very Satisfied
      - Satisfied
      - Neutral
      - Dissatisfied
      - Very Dissatisfied
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Neutral
    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree
    - The presenters for this session are knowledgeable on survey development:
      - Strongly Agree
      - Agree
      - Neutral
      - Disagree
      - Very Disagree

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Good Questions Require Good Answers (2)

- Static Responses (continued)
  - Semantic Differential
    - This presentation is: Interesting __ __ __ Boring
    - Today’s presentation was: Useful __ __ __ Useless
    - This information is useful for: Administrators __ __ __ Faculty
  - Rankings
    - “Please rank the following brands/types of cookies, in order of your personal preference”
      - Chips Ahoy
      - Oreo
      - Nutter Butters
      - Fudge Stripe
  - Check All That Apply
  - Other types... see resource list
Testing Your Instrument

- **Focus Groups** - Small number of participants; talk through survey contents, questions, response options, etc.; can also be used for post-survey analysis
- **Cognitive Interviews** - One-on-One interviews where the participant talks their way through the survey, analyzing the question and discussing the answer choices; also may be called a read-aloud
  - This can be part of your study too!

Research Questions and Survey Development

- **Could these questions be answered by developing a survey and sending it to students, faculty, or staff?**
  - How do staff feel about the current situation with...
  - What made this year's freshman class enroll here?
  - Did a mentoring program have a positive effect on...
  - Who uses the library most frequently?
  - What are the characteristics of the students who...
  - How satisfied are students with the services offered by...
  - Why don’t students attend more football games?
  - (Hint: It depends.)

Resources for Survey Design

- Survey development, pure and simple:
- More on methods/analysis by itself:
Please indicate if you are an entry-level or mid-level student affairs profession:

A. Entry-Level
B. Mid-Level

Do you think, in general, residents of Ohio care more or less about trees than people in the rest of the country?

A. Yes
B. No
C. Not Sure

Are you concerned about rising inflation undercutting your savings, devaluing your home, and increasing your cost of living?

A. Yes
B. No

My efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by red tape.
Questioning the Questions

What information would you have benefitted from before beginning graduate school?

[Open Ended Response]

Teamwork Time!

1. What does this question really want to find out?
2. What are good ways to collect information to answer this question?
3. What about the question works?
4. How could the question be strengthened?