
Designing Survey Tools for Impact

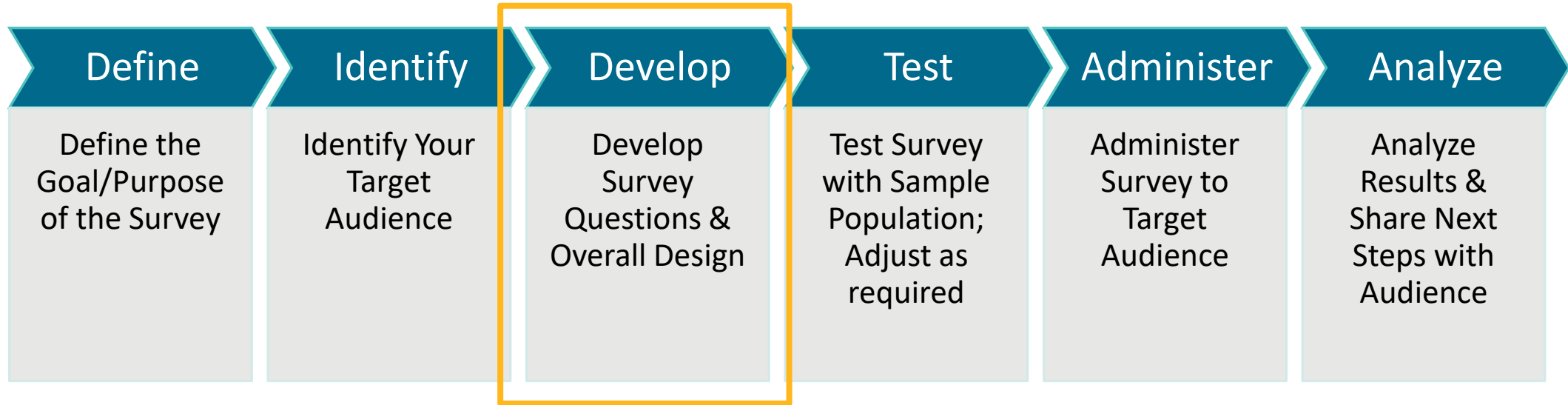
BEST PRACTICES FOR SURVEY DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION IN
EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO



Survey Development Process



Survey Questions

CRAFTING
QUESTIONS FOR
HIGH RESPONSE
RATES AND USEFUL
DATA COLLECTION



Designing Survey Tools for Impact

Presented by The SERVE Center at The
University of North Carolina –
Greensboro



Part 2: Survey Questions

- Define elements of a quality survey question
- Open-Ended & Close-Ended Questions
- Rating Scale Questions







Relevant

The questions asked on the survey are intentionally designed to answer the research questions / survey goal.

Survey questions are designed to gather the most important information in the most succinct and efficient way





Reliability

The consistency of your measurement, or the degree to which an instrument measures the same way each time it is used under the same condition with the same subjects.

No matter how many times a question is asked to the same group of people, the responses among the group are always the same.





Validity

The extent to which the measure is appropriate to its purpose.

Does the instrument and/or items measure what it is supposed to measure?



Types of Survey Questions



Close-Ended vs. Open-Ended Questions



Close-Ended Questions

Respondent is asked to select a response from a provided list



Open-Ended Questions

Respondents are asked to answer to a question in their own words

A respondent is more likely to skip open-ended than a close-ended questions



Close-Ended Questions

Limit Choices

- Answer choices should be limited to 4-5
 - If question is asking about objective fact or demographics, more categories can be used and are encouraged for inclusivity


Provide Directions

- Be clear if respondents should choose one answer or select all that apply.

Set Expectations

- Consider including the phrase “of the following” to set expectations.

Be Intentional

- Only provide answers most aligned with your survey goal 

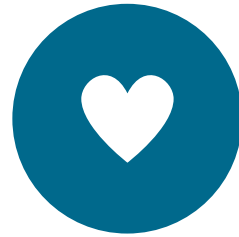
Open-Ended Questions



ALLOW THE
GREATEST VARIETY
OF RESPONSES



COLLECTS
DETAILED AND
DESCRIPTIVE
QUALITATIVE DATA



CAPTURE
STAKEHOLDER
FEELINGS AND
PERSONAL
EXPERIENCES



REQUIRE
ADDITIONAL
RESPONSE TIME



CAN INCREASE
PROJECT COSTS IF
PROFESSIONAL
CODING/ANALYZING
IS REQUIRED



Rating Scale Questions



Measuring frequency



Measuring quantity



Measuring feelings



Answering evaluative questions



Measuring satisfaction



Rating agreement



Measuring priorities



Example

In the last 30 days, how often did you exercise for at least 20 minutes?

Very Often	Fairly Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
1	2	3	4	5

More than 15 Times	15-10 Times	9-4 Times	1-3 Times	None (0)
1	2	3	4	5



5-Point Rating Scale

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

Not a Priority	Low Priority	Medium Priority	High Priority	Essential
1	2	3	4	5

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Dissatisfied or Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
1	2	3	4	5





Consider reading level of audience



Use simple sentences and simple answers



Use language respondents will understand

Avoid: technical jargon and unfamiliar abbreviations



Ask one question at a time

Avoid: How would you rate the food and the childcare provided during family nights?



Avoid double-negatives

Example: Do you favor or oppose not continuing the CHAMPS program next year?



Avoid leading or biased language

Example: The CHAMPS program is considered a board-certified gold-star program for increasing student academic progress. In your opinion, how well does the CHAMPS program increase student academic progress?

Question Wording



Resources

Writing Quality Survey Questions:

- Qualtrics (2023) – [Great survey questions: How to write them & avoid common mistakes](#)
- Qualtrics (2022) - [How to create an effective survey](#)
- PEW Research Center (2023) – [Writing survey questions](#)
- REL West (2021) – [Creating Effective Surveys: Best Practices in Survey Design](#)

Internal Consistency Process for Survey Reliability:

- <https://www.statisticshowto.com/internal-consistency/>

Designing Rating Scale Questions

- Qualtrics (2021) – [How to design rating scale questions](#)
- Iowa State University Extension (2010) – [Likert Scale Examples for Surveys](#)

Up Next: Part 3 – [Survey Instrument Design](#)
Best practices for designing goal-aligned survey instruments



Thank you!



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