

Task #5

Write and Edit Items



Write and Edit Items

- **Edit items drafted in step 3 to match response formats drafted in step 4 and vice versa**
- **Tips:**
 - Use precise, clear, simple wording
 - Use sentence stems
 - Check items for ambiguity
 - Make items as specific as possible
 - Check for double-barreled items
 - Check for leading items that imply a desired answer
 - Check for emotionally loaded, vaguely defined, or overly general items
 - Check for abbreviations with which respondents may be unfamiliar

4 -24

Critique Freshman Survey

- We designed the Old Dominion University Freshman Survey using these tips and principles to assess the noncognitive factors that are associated with academic difficulty and attrition
- How did we do?

4 -25

Task #6 Determine Sequence of Items



Determine Sequence of Items

- Organize items to create a smooth flowing survey
- Group items into logically coherent sections with smooth transitions between sections

4 -27

Determine Sequence of Items

- Tips:
 - Begin with interesting items clearly connected to the goals of the survey
 - Use a funnel approach asking broad general items followed by more specific items
 - Make items independent so that answers do not affect each other
 - Ask sensitive items after the beginning and before the end
 - Ask objective items (“Have you participated in ...?”) before subjective items (“How would you rate...?”)
 - Put easy-to-answer items like demographics at the end (sets respondents’ minds at ease when they can see the connection between demographic items and other survey items)

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Task #7 Determine Physical Characteristics of Survey



Determine Physical Characteristics of Survey

- **Make survey look professional**
 - Quality paper and printing
 - Booklets
 - Plenty of “white space” -- uncluttered
- **Web-based surveys -- be careful when choosing colors, background, and graphics**
- **Length**
 - Content is more important than length
 - Long enough to cover the content (answer the research questions) and no longer
 - **KISS -- Keep It Short and Simple**
 - Short in terms of response time
 - Simple in terms of effort required to complete it

4 -30

Determine Physical Characteristics of Survey

- **General format considerations**
 - Use study title on first page
 - Include name, address, and phone number of researcher on survey and cover letter
 - Make survey appealing to the eye
 - Do not squeeze items onto the page
 - Do not use small fonts to get more items on the page
 - Provide brief clear instructions at beginning and each time they change
 - How should respondents mark their answers?
 - How many responses should they choose?
 - Survey should be self-explanatory as respondents will not read instructions
 - Locate response formats or places for answers close to the item (right of the item)

4 -31

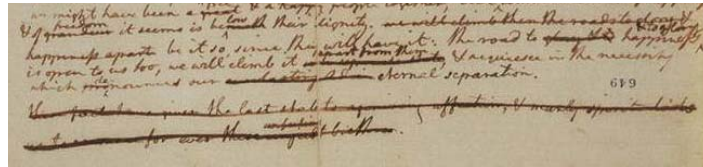
Determine Physical Characteristics of Survey

- **General format considerations**
 - Arrange responses vertically
 - Use skip patterns sparingly
 - May cause frustration
 - May make respondents think that they were not supposed to receive the survey
 - Skip lines after every three items in long checklists to ensure that respondents answer the correct item

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Task #8

Review and Revise Survey



Review and Revise the Survey

- Take the survey yourself as if you were a member of the population
- Seek reviews from colleagues and supervisors
- Ask reading specialist to examine the reading level
- Ask someone who knows nothing about the topic to “idiot proof” it

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Task #9

Pilot Test and Revise Survey



Pilot Test and Revise the Survey

- **Pilot test**
 - Invite group of potential respondents to a meeting
 - Administer the cover letter and survey
 - Time them
 - Collect surveys to test data analysis procedures
 - Distribute a clean copy and lead a discussion critiquing the survey section by section
- **Pilot test BOTH the survey AND methodology by mailing it out to a sample or calling respondents on the phone**
- **Revise, Revise, Revise**
- **Pilot test again if there are significant changes**

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Task #10

Administer Survey



Administer the Survey

- Time – How long will it take to complete the survey?
- Timing – When is the best time of year or semester to administer the survey?
- Need 3-6 weeks
- Create timeline working backwards from when you need the results
- Through the mail, in a group, or over the phone?
- Follow-up at one-week intervals
 - Pre-notification postcard / e-mail
 - Cover letter and survey
 - Follow-up postcard / e-mail
 - Follow-up with second cover letter and survey
 - Follow-up by telephone

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Administer the Survey

- Write an inviting cover letter
 - Personal communication -- ask them to help you
 - Briefly state the goal of the survey
 - Briefly state how they were selected and how many were selected
 - Tell them approximately how long it will take
 - Ask them to return their completed survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope
 - Tell them if their responses will be anonymous or confidential
 - Describe any incentives
 - Describe the benefits of responding to them
 - Offer to send them a copy of the results
 - Identify the name, address, and telephone number of the researcher they may contact with questions

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Task #11 Analyze Data & Report Results



Analyze the Data and Report the Results

- Answer the research questions
- Computer analyses
 - Frequencies and means
 - Crosstabulations
 - Scales -- Factor analyses
- Qualitative analyses (open-ended)
 - Emerging themes and trends
- How will the data be reported?
 - Narrative report+ tables
 - PowerPoint presentation
 - Executive summary
 - Different formats for different groups

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