## Evaluation methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Surveys  | • Can survey many respondents with relatively low added cost or time for each respondent  
          • Relatively inexpensive per person if the sample is large  
          • Everyone gets the same instrument  
          • Interpretation of data is fairly objective                                                                 |
|          | • Difficult to get much detail  
          • If using a long instrument should control the circumstances in which respondents use it  
          • Response rate can be effected by (1) setting; (2) commitment to organization; (3) how well respondent understands questions  
          • Can’t control how respondents will interpret questions                                                                                 |
|          | **Additional considerations: group-administered**  
          Can observe how well respondents are answering questions                                                                              |
|          | **Additional considerations: telephone**  
          • Able to ask for more detail when needed                                                                                             |
|          | **Additional considerations: electronic**  
          • Can control how respondents answer questions and avoid invalid responses  
          • Costs for each additional survey are very minimal  
          • Researcher can know how respondents are interpreting questions  
          • Able to ask for more detail when needed  
          • Respondents can provide detailed data about areas of interest  
          • Can get interesting stories or anecdotes that illustrate points  
          • Respondents may feel comfortable sharing detailed stories with interviewer                                                                 |
|          | **Additional considerations: electronic**  
          • Not a great method for all populations  
          • Set-up costs may be higher (including staff time learning software)  
          • Time-consuming – can only get one respondent’s data at a time  
          • Because of time, can limit sample size  
          • Interpretation of data is fairly subjective  
          • Can be expensive  
          • Can be difficult to identify common themes or findings among respondents                                                                 |
| Interviews| • Relatively low burden for both respondent and researcher  
          • Can send same questions out to multiple respondents and then follow-up as needed                                                            |
|          | • Response rate may be low without an existing relationship between researcher and respondent  
          • Respondents will likely have concerns about anonymity and privacy  
          • Not a great method for all populations                                                                                           |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus Groups</td>
<td>• Researcher can know how respondents are interpreting questions&lt;br&gt;• Able to interview multiple respondents at one time, thus, more cost-effective&lt;br&gt;• Can get interesting stories or anecdotes that illustrate points&lt;br&gt;• Comments from one respondent stimulate discussion among other respondents—creating a deep understanding of an issue</td>
<td>• Group setting may inhibit some respondents from providing information&lt;br&gt;• Strong facilitation skills are sometimes necessary if there are dominant or reluctant respondents&lt;br&gt;• Sometimes hard to coordinate multiple schedules&lt;br&gt;• Comments from one respondent stimulate discussion among other respondents—biasing results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Additional considerations: electronic</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Can keep questions “open” for multiple days so respondents can continue to add thoughts&lt;br&gt;• Electronic format is more comfortable for some respondents that may be shy in person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory</td>
<td>• Respondent not only share information, but generate ideas&lt;br&gt;• Researcher can know how respondents are interpreting questions&lt;br&gt;• Can break into smaller groups about specific issues&lt;br&gt;• Able to interview multiple respondents at one time, thus, more cost-effective&lt;br&gt;• Comments from one respondent stimulates discussion among other respondents</td>
<td>• Respondents will likely have concerns about anonymity and privacy&lt;br&gt;• Not a great method for all populations&lt;br&gt;• Set-up costs may be higher (including staff time learning software)&lt;br&gt;• Risk of selection bias because most interested respondents are most likely to attend&lt;br&gt;• Complex roles for everyone -- researcher and participants are both giving and gathering information&lt;br&gt;• Ideas that are generated need to be validated by non-participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>• Objective interpretation&lt;br&gt;• Low burden for respondents providing data</td>
<td>• Time-consuming&lt;br&gt;• Some items are not observable&lt;br&gt;• Can be expensive&lt;br&gt;• Participant behavior may be affected by observer presence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Records</td>
<td>• Objective interpretation&lt;br&gt;• Low burden for respondents providing data&lt;br&gt;• Relatively inexpensive</td>
<td>• May not correspond to exactly what researcher wants&lt;br&gt;• May be incomplete or require additional interpretation&lt;br&gt;• May have restrictions about how data can be used if respondents were guaranteed privacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>