SURVEY HELL TO SURVEY HEAVEN

... in just three steps!

Bridge Conference
October 2018
Welcome!

Thanks for joining us.
What You’ll Learn Today

- Basic survey terminology
- Three common challenges with surveys & how to address them
- Examples of smart survey design from out-of-school time and summer programs
Basic survey terminology

- **Item** – a question on a survey
- **Close-ended** – multiple choice or yes/no; respondents select from a set of options
- **Open-ended** – respondents write in an answer, can be shorter or longer
- **Domain** – underlying concept for the survey, linked to the content of the items
common challenges with surveys (and how to fix them!)
Challenge 1:
Collecting too much, or too little, data

Identify the 3-4 domains you want to address

Organize survey questions by domain/theme

Add or subtract questions among domains
Hit the Bullseye!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program quality</th>
<th>Academic skills and behaviors</th>
<th>Social emotional skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 questions</td>
<td>3 questions</td>
<td>3 questions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New skills and experience</th>
<th>Sense of mastery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 question</td>
<td>3 questions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Your turn! Map the item to the domain

Survey Items

■ I feel proud of things I've done in this program.
■ In this program, I learned how to do something new.
■ This program helps me listen to others.
■ I feel safe in this program.
■ The adults in this program listen to what I have to say.

Domains

■ Program quality (safety)
■ Program quality (engagement)
■ Social emotional skills
■ Sense of mastery
■ New skills and experiences
Your turn! Map the item to the domain

Survey Items

- I feel proud of things I've done in this program.
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Domains

- Program quality (safety)
- Program quality (engagement)
- Social emotional skills
- Sense of mastery
- New skills and experiences
Hot tip #1

Make your future self happy by annotating your survey by domain
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographic</td>
<td>What grade are you in?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Including this one, how many semesters have you participated in TASC Force?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What others STEM programs have you participated in through the California Academy of Sciences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do you identify? Are you male, female, transgender, gender non-specific?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What race/ethnicity best describes you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is your home zip code?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is the name of your school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What city is your school in?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM identification &amp; knowledge</td>
<td>I have a strong interest in science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am good at understanding science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel I could be a scientist if I want to be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I expect to use science once I am out of school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>I know ways to effectively work in a team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I know ways to effectively keep a group’s attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I plan on continuing to seek out science leadership opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science communication</td>
<td>I feel comfortable presenting science concepts to an audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I know how to communicate science concepts in engaging ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel confident in my public speaking skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel confident in my ability to explain science concepts accurately.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Challenge 2: Asking confusing questions

Find and fix compound survey questions

Watch the level of inference in your items
Your turn! Re-write these items

“Is the program space easy to find, clean, and conducive to learning?”

“Does this program provide high quality homework help?”

“Do you have questions about the program’s activities or suggestions for others?”

“Did today’s workshop improve participants’ ability to implement youth development activities according to best practices?”
Hot tip #2

Find and replace for the word “and” & “or” in your surveys
Challenge 3:
Using overly complex language

Check the reading level in your survey questions
(Avoid compound sentences, long words)

Use simple words or concepts when appropriate
(e.g. “sounding out big words” instead of “syllabication”)
Change question wording depending on reading level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary school level</th>
<th>High school level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In this program, I tell other kids when they do a good job.</td>
<td>In this program, I tell other youth when they do a good job or contribute to the group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Or, you can change the response options:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary school level</th>
<th>High school level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hot tip #3

Use the reading level estimator in Word or online.

Check survey questions and instructions.
Search “Free Readability Calculators”

Look for a tool that has “Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level indexes”
In this program, I tell other kids when they do a good job.
In this program, I tell other youth when they do a good job or contribute to the group.

### TEST RESULTS:

Your text has an average grade level of about 7. It should be easily understood by 12 to 13 year olds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEXT STATISTICS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of sentences</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of words</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of complex words</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of complex words</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average words per sentence</td>
<td>18.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average syllables per word</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rockin’ Survey Example
Mid-Columbia Mastersingers
First page of the survey is a copy of the event flyer

Efficient reminder to respondents about what the survey is about.

More accessible to broader respondent audiences.
Smart use of close ended items

Clear how these responses will be used in analysis
4. Please rank the following in order of importance to you:

(1 = Most Important)

- Program/Music
- Location
- Date
- Time
- What else is happening
- Price

Comment:

500 characters left.

Great use of ranking

Combination of close-ended and open-ended responses
6. What would you like to see/hear more of in future concerts?

- [ ] Collaborations with other performing arts organizations
- [ ] Modern/Pop music
- [ ] Living Composers
- [ ] Music from other cultures
- [ ] Other

Comment: 

[500 characters left]

Combination of close-ended and open-ended responses

Focus on options that are feasible/likely for the organization
Go-To Resources for OST Surveys

- From Soft Skills to Hard Data – Forum for Youth Investment
- Toolkit for Evaluating Positive Youth Development – Colorado Trust
- Designing Survey Questions – Robinson & Firth Leonard
Questions? Answers!

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