

# TO COLLECT GOOD DATA BUILD GOOD SURVEYS

A Quick & Dirty Guide To Getting Your Survey  
Off The Ground

Denise Williams-Klotz, PhD  
VPSA Assessment Committee

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# WORKSHOP OUTLINE

## **Before you survey**

- Survey Big Picture Items
- Survey structural options

## **Asking Good Questions**

- Language
- Common Errors
- Type of Questions

## **Building Your Survey**

- Qualtrics Basics

## **Launching Your Survey**

- Qualtrics Distribution Options
- Response Rates and Incentives

## **Analyzing the Data**

## **Next Steps**

# SURVEYS ARE USELESS IF...

- People don't take them.
- People don't understand them.
- You can't tell what people meant.

# 1. BIG PICTURE

- What do you want to know? (Research/Assessment Question)
- About whom? (Population)
- From whom? (Sample)
- How will you use the data (Program improvement vs. Presenting)

## 2. HOW WILL YOU GATHER INFORMATION?

- **Paper Survey**
  - Often given in-person/at event or service
  - Generally good response rate if evaluating an event/service immediately
  - Requires time to enter hand-written data
  - Good for short surveys or with captive or highly invested audiences
- **Web/Mobile Survey**
  - Ability to distribute after the event or service
  - Response rate can be lower if participants are not invested or motivated
  - Does not require time to enter data
  - Participants might write more in open-ended questions with the ability to type
- **Mobile on-site Survey** (*i.e. PollEverywhere (free account: 40 or fewer responses at a time)*)
  - Great for short program/event evaluation
  - Requires participants have a smart phone or immediate access to the web.

### 3. WHAT WILL YOU ASK?

- Break down your learning outcome(s)—what do you need to know to answer if the outcome has been reached?
- Example Outcomes:
  1. Program participants will talk with other participants about XYZ.
  2. Program participants will be able to articulate what they gained from the conversation.

Item #1 can be assessed through observation depending on the size of your group. You could devote the survey to outcome #2

# VISIT OR SCAN

<http://bit.ly/2l1gGt1>

This example survey will provide illustrations of Qualtrics functionality as well as provide examples of problematic and effective ways to ask questions.



Indicates to move to the next screen



# LANGUAGE



Qualtrics allows you to offer your survey in multiple languages (you have to provide or pay for the translation)

Use simple and familiar language appropriate for the respondents

***Hint:*** If it's a vocabulary term used on the GRE, it shouldn't be in your survey.

### 3. WHAT WILL YOU ASK?



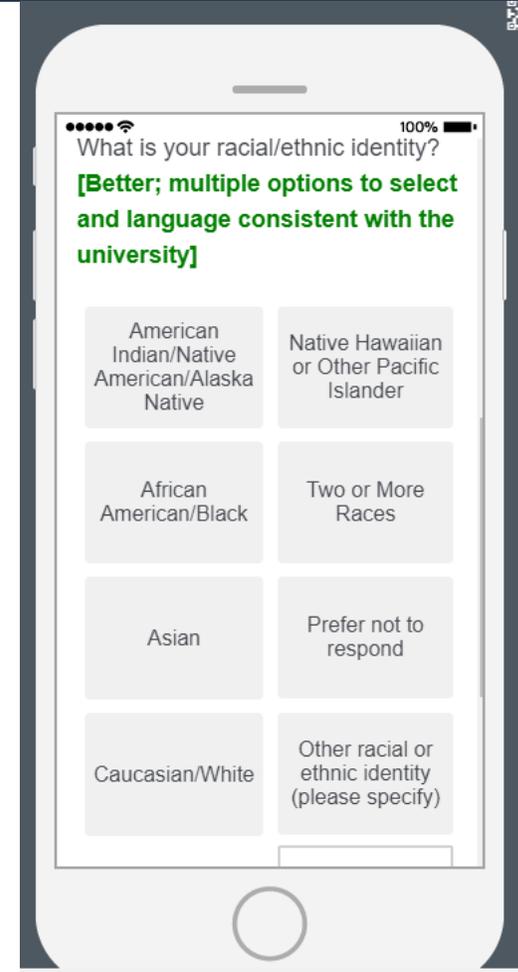
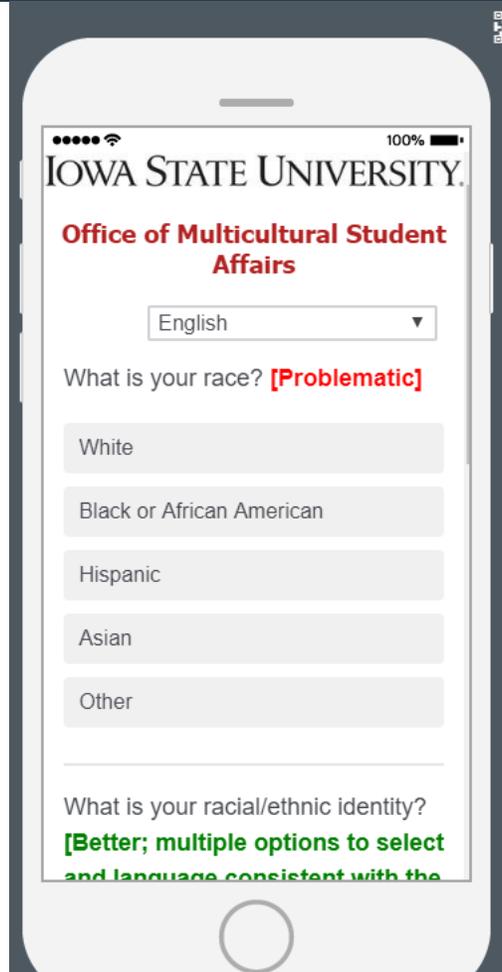
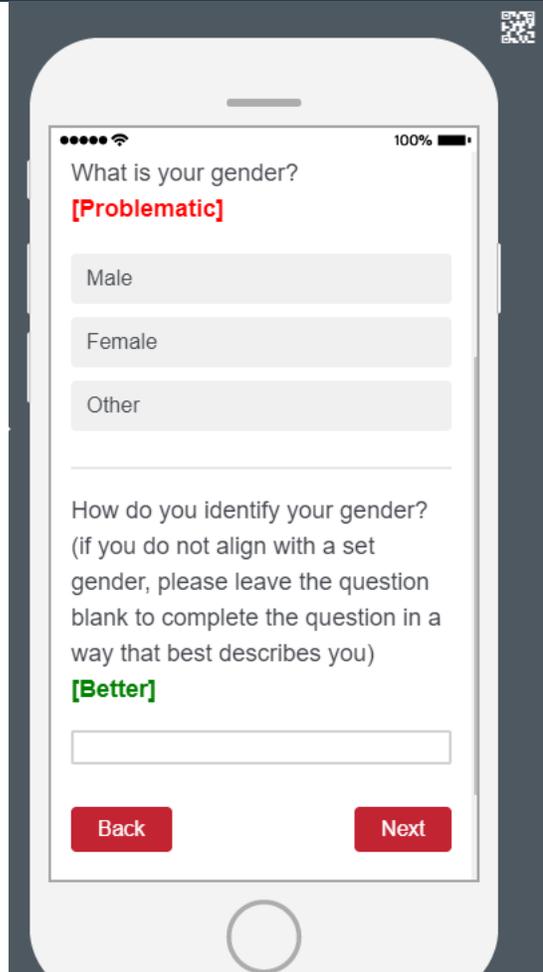
- **Demographics:**

- If you have a set population, you do not need to ask for demographics that already exist in their student record
- If an open population:
  - Ask demographics first if they are going to be imperative for analysis
  - Ask demographics last if they are less important
  - Don't ask them at all if you don't plan to use them (consider if equity issues may impact this)
  - Be inclusive and/or at least aligned with the University when asking for demographics

**Resource:** Asking About Sexuality and Gender from *The Center*:

<https://center.dso.iastate.edu/resources>

# EXAMPLES



## 4. HOW WILL YOU ASK IT?



- **Good survey questions:**

- Do not use jargon or acronyms without spelling them out first
- Ask questions that are technically accurate and do not include bias in the premise of the question
- Use as few words as possible to pose the question
- Include complete sentences with simple sentence structures
- Make sure yes means "yes" and no means "no"

Dillman, Smyth & Christian (2009)

# EXAMPLE

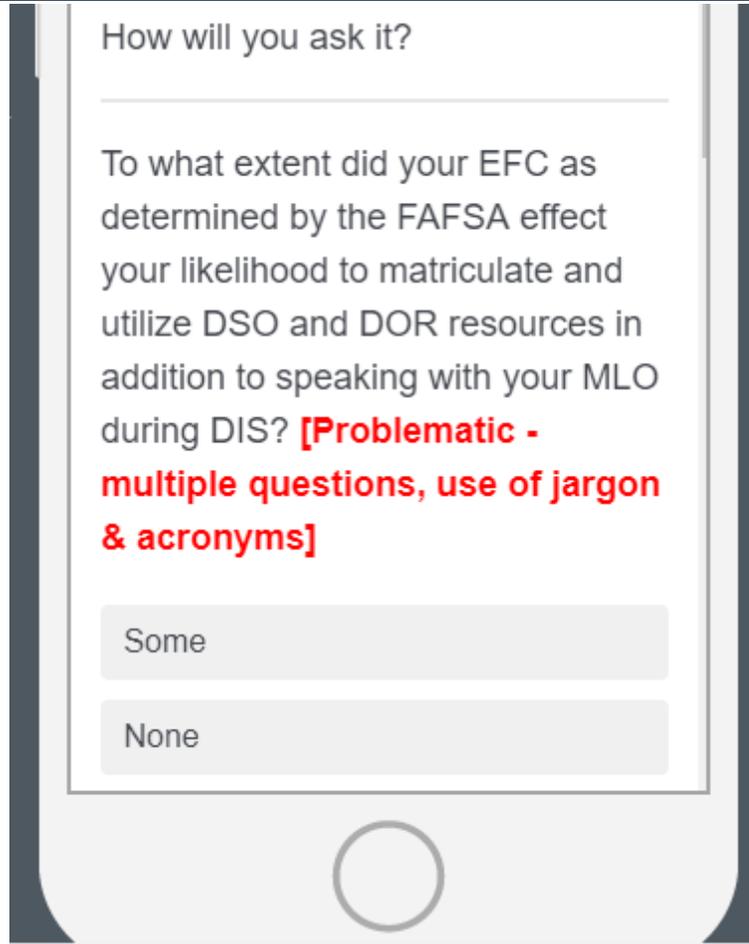
How will you ask it?

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To what extent did your EFC as determined by the FAFSA effect your likelihood to matriculate and utilize DSO and DOR resources in addition to speaking with your MLO during DIS? **[Problematic - multiple questions, use of jargon & acronyms]**

Some

None



## 4. HOW WILL YOU ASK IT?

- **Avoid:**

- Asking multiple questions in one question
- Bias in questions and responses
- Making identity assumptions in the questions or responses
  - *What was your professor's response when you told him....?*
  - *Do you talk to your mom and dad on a regular basis about...?*
- Asking what students know and interpreting it as what they learned
- Asking questions you don't need (i.e. demographics)

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Could you understand and truthfully answer the question above? **[Problematic - multiple questions]**

Yes

No

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Please evaluate this workshop. **[Problematic - bias in response options]**

Excellent

Good

Great

Did not attend

# QUALTRICS BASICS

- Qualtrics is survey software that is free for use by ISU students, faculty and staff
- [lastate.edu](http://lastate.edu) > Q > Qualtrics; login using NetID and password
- Building surveys/Adding Questions

The screenshot displays the Qualtrics interface for a survey titled "Survey Workshop Example Survey". The top navigation bar includes "My Projects" and "Survey Workshop Example Survey". Below this, there are tabs for "Survey", "Distributions", "Data & Analysis", and "Reports". A secondary navigation bar contains "Look & Feel", "Survey Flow", "Survey Options", and "Tools". The main content area shows a list of questions, including a demographic question "What is your gender? [Problematic]" with radio button options for "Male" and "Female". A question type selection menu is open, showing categories: "Static Content" (Descriptive Text, Graphic), "Standard Questions" (Multiple Choice, Matrix Table, Text Entry, Slider, Rank Order, Side by Side), "Specialty Questions" (Constant Sum, Pick, Group, and Rank, Hot Spot, Heat Map, Graphic Slider, Gap Analysis, Drill Down, Net Promoter Score®, Highlight, Signature), "Advanced" (Timing, Meta Info Question, File Upload, Screen Capture, Captcha Verification), and "Replace From Library" (Question Library). The right sidebar shows settings for the selected question type, including "Change Question Type" (Text / Graphic), "Choices" (Automatic Choices), "Type" (Text, Graphic, File), "Validation Type" (None, Custom Validation), and "Actions" (Add Page Break, Add Display Logic, Add Skip Logic, Copy Question, Move Question).

\*\*Qualtrics more advanced features: Piped text, branching, display & skip logic, "Allow text option" for "other" response, and others.

# TYPES OF QUESTIONS: OPEN-ENDED



- **Open-ended questions**
  - Use sparingly
  - Be specific if you need specific responses
- **Short answer/Form Questions**
  - Use to collect demographic or basic information
  - Organize questions logically
  - Provide size-appropriate spaces for information

# EXAMPLES

## Types of Questions - Open-Ended Questions

What was done well or poorly in the workshop? **[Problematic-multiple questions in one question]**

What was done well in the workshop? **[Specific: easy to analyze]**

Open-ended: What do you like about the presenter, Denise? **[Specific but biased]**

[Forms] Please enter your information below **[Problematic - questions feel disjointed and there is no consistent way for people to answer]**

What is your name?

What is your address?

What was your favorite class in middle school?

How old are you?

[Forms] Please enter your information below **[Better]**

Last Name

First Name

Age in years

What is your current (local) zip code? (XXXXX-XXXX)

# TYPES OF QUESTIONS: MULTIPLE CHOICE

- **Multiple choice**
  - Make response options clear and related to question
  - Use the number of options you need
    - (i.e. do you need a 7 point scale of options or could you answer your question with 3 or 4?)
  - Drop-down boxes when many options are needed.
  - “Neutral” response option

# EXAMPLE

Matrix: Please respond below **[Problematic - Questions are very similar (1 and 2), and disjointed (3). A lot of response options; not mobile friendly]**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion	Not applicable
I use my time effectively.	<input type="radio"/>						
I sometimes use my time effectively.	<input type="radio"/>						
I like to go jogging in the mornings	<input type="radio"/>						

Matrix: Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements below. **[Better]**

	Agree	Disagree	No Opinion/Not Applicable
I use my time effectively most of the time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have time for leisure activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy jogging.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# A NOTE ON NEUTRAL & NOT APPLICABLE

- The utility of a neutral or no opinion option in multiple choice questions is based on multiple conditions:
  - Does it make sense? Does neutral have a meaning in the context of your survey vs. No Opinion?
  - Does it provide the information you need?
  - How are you coding it? (i.e. likert scale of 5 items with neutral in the middle—is neutral coded as three points while strongly disagree is coded as 1?)
- Not Applicable should be offered as an option when the question may not apply to parts of your audience.
  - i.e.: Do you believe Denise is an effective supervisor? What is your level of agreement with the statement that Denise has a long history of cheating in Monopoly?

# TYPES OF QUESTIONS: MULTIPLE CHOICE



## Matrices

- Introduce one question and provide multiple options for offering it.
- Make sure statements are definitive
- Determine the needed number of options
- Avoid long and wide matrix questions: confusing and not mobile-friendly

Option 1 moved from a matrix to multiple drop-down options on mobile device

Option 2 allows the matrix to remain intact on a mobile device

A screenshot of a mobile survey interface. The top part shows a question titled "Matrix: Please respond below" with a red label "[Problematic]". Below it are three statements, each followed by a downward-pointing chevron: "I use my time effectively.", "I sometimes use my time effectively.", and "I like to go jogging in the mornings". The bottom part shows another question titled "Matrix: Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements below." with a green label "[Better]". Below it are three radio buttons labeled "Agree", "Disagree", and "No Opinion/Not Applicable". The "No Opinion/Not Applicable" radio button is selected. The statement "I use my time effectively most of" is partially visible at the bottom.

# OTHER TYPES OF QUESTIONS



**Less common question types (Potential mobile-compatibility and accessibility concerns):**

- Scale/Slider
- Side by Side
  - Clarity of question
- Ranking
- Heat Map
  - Size
- **Drill Down**
- **Constant Sum**

Other types of questions

(Sliders) In the last year, what percentage of each class type below did you skip?

Drag the slider to the correct position from 0-100

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Core/Major Courses



Elective Courses



Side by Side Questions

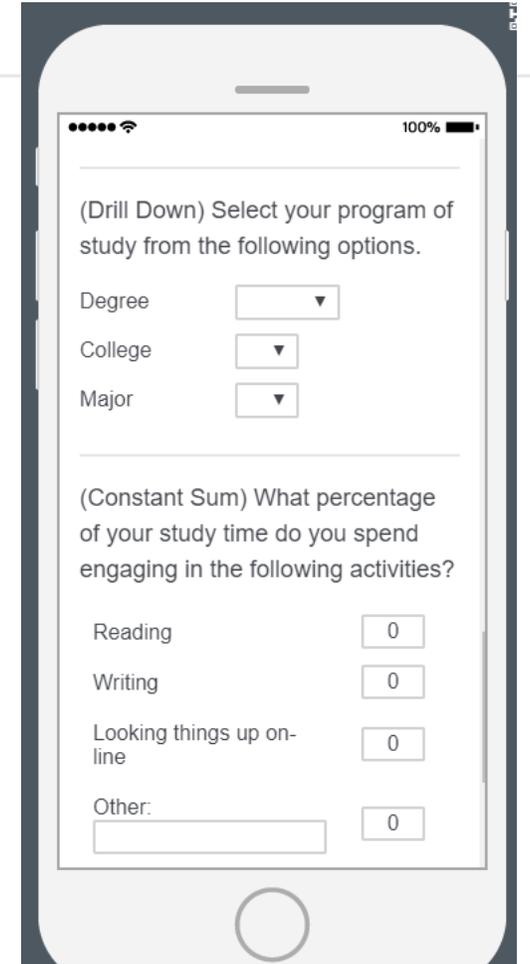
	How often do you purchase food from these restaraunts			When you order, how do you order?		
	Never or Rarely	Monthly	Weekly or More Often	In-Person	Phone	On-line
Pizza Hut	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Domino's	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Papa John's	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Ranking) Please rank your level of interest in the following committees from (1) least interested to (4) most interested

1 Academic Standards

3 2 Recruitment  
Service

4 Social



# A NOTE ON QUESTION VALIDATION

- In Qualtrics, you have the ability to require, recommend or validate a response:
  - **Force Response:** the question will be identified as a required field-participants will not be able to move forward until they provide an answer
    - Use sparingly and judiciously
    - Examples:
      - Require a question that directs the next question (i.e. Have you been to a Speaker's Bureau program? If yes, the next question is ABC, In no, the next question is XYZ.) [Good use of forced response]
      - Making every question required [Poor choice – people will get annoyed or be forced to answer a question with which they are uncomfortable/unsafe]
  - **Validation:** allows you to set parameters on the content for open ended questions (i.e. requiring an email address be formatted correctly, that a number must be within certain parameters, etc.)
    - This can be useful for collecting accurate data when you believe people may not enter it correctly
    - **Note:** you would be surprised how many people misspell their own email addresses, names and ID numbers when entering them quickly.

# QUALTRICS BASICS

- **Look & Feel**
  - Choose theme, fonts and colors
  - Add/Remove progress bars and buttons
  - Preview survey
- **Survey Flow**
  - Shows branching (advanced feature)
- **Survey Options**
  - Survey access
  - End of Survey messaging
- **Tools**
  - Email triggers (advanced feature)
  - Spell check
  - Export options

# REVIEWING YOUR SURVEY

- **Accessibility**
  - My projects > Survey > Tools > Review > Check Survey Accessibility
  - Option to input questions in multiple languages (not automatic)
- **Testing**
- **Preview the survey and the results**

# RESPONSE RATES

- **Incentives**

- Financial: sometimes a few \$5 awards will be more effective than 1 \$500 award
- Personal: personal investment in survey purpose (student Veteran survey example)

- **Keep the survey easy to complete**

- Concise
- Easy to read/view
- Mobile-friendly (if digital)
- Clear language (no jargon)

- **Reminders and timing**

- Consider when students are likely to complete survey
- With a large distribution, use different launch times
- *Hint:* Avoid 8:00am

# QUALTRICS DISTRIBUTION OPTIONS

- **Email**

- Generate a reusable link (open)
- Generate a specific link for each contact (allows for reminders)
- Send the email through Qualtrics with a specific link

- **Web**

- Embed the survey link on a website

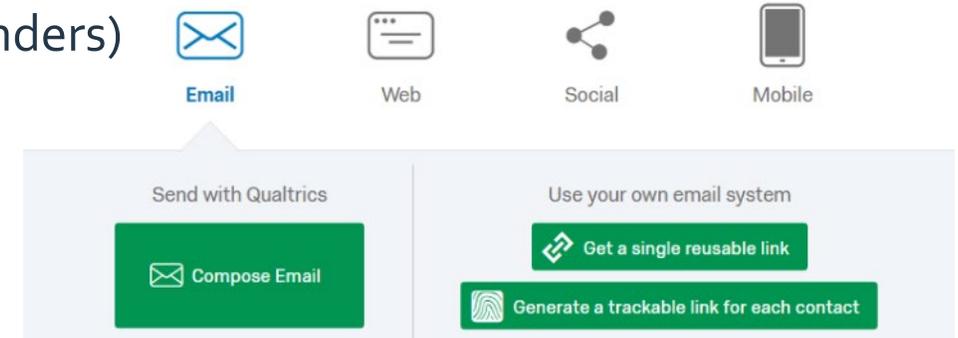
- **Social Media**

- Post survey to Twitter, Facebook, Reddit, LinkedIn, Google+ or Pinterest

- **Mobile**

- Offline App
- Download a QR Code (open)

How do you want to distribute your survey?



# QUALTRICS DATA & ANALYSIS

## QUALTRICS REPORTING

- **Data**

- View individual responses completed and in-progress
- Filter responses by contact information or survey response
- Export responses to Excel

- **Text**

- Code or tag responses by topics

- **Cross Tabs**

- Create the equivalent of a pivot table

- **Reporting**

- Create reports within Qualtrics

# QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS