**What are survey questions?**

It can be easy to sometimes confuse survey questions with evaluation questions because surveys are frequently used to evaluate educational programs, perhaps especially in extension. Just think about the number of times you have been asked to complete a questionnaire at the end of a workshop, conference, or course!

When we think about “survey questions”, we are usually thinking of the specific questions or items of a questionnaire. (The technical term for the set of questions is *questionnaire*, while *survey* technically refers to the process of obtaining responses from a group of respondents.) These are the questions that you ask participants to gain feedback about specific aspects of the program.

There are a variety of ways you may design the survey (i.e., pre-test post-test, post-test only, retrospective post-then-pre) and methods of delivery (e.g., by telephone, handout, electronic), and these variations may influence the questions you include. One particular authority on survey design for research and evaluation is Don Dillman (2009).

Questionnaire items you write for a program evaluation will often:

- Relate to the learning objectives for the program
- Ask about change in knowledge, attitudes, or behavior relative to your intended outcomes
- Ask about ideas to improve the program
- Gather information about participants’ backgrounds
- Seek contact information for a follow-up evaluation

For example, you may ask a closed-ended question like, “After participating in this program, how confident do you feel in your ability to lead an effective meeting?” and provide a scale for participants to select a rating from “Not confident at all” to “Very confident.”

You could ask open-ended questions like, “What is one thing you learned from this program that you did not know before participating?” and ask participants to articulate their response in writing or verbally.

Keep in mind that there are various ways to collect evaluation data besides a survey, and depending on your purposes or the particulars of the program, you may choose another approach. Alternative methods of data collection include observations; accessing existing data, records or documentation; ability tests; and case studies.
What are survey questions?
These are the questions you ask participants to gain feedback about the specific aspects of the program in order to paint a more complete picture.

When you write a survey there are a few questions you should consider.

What else about the program do I want to know?
- Contact information
- How much did participants grow
- Attitudes toward project features
- Participant background

How am I going to administer the survey to participants?
- Over the phone
- Through an email
- Use a survey website
- With a handout

When am I going to give participants the survey?
- At the end of the project
- In the middle and at the end
- At the beginning, the middle, and the end

How do I want the participants to answer the questions?
- Open-ended responses
- Multiple choice
- Scaled responses

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