

# Methods to Collect Evaluative Data

<b>Questionnaires Surveys Checklists</b>	<b>PROS:</b> Quick, non-threatening, easy to get information from large number of people <b>CONS:</b> Responses not always careful, impersonal, wording can bias responses
<b>Interviews</b>	<b>PROS:</b> Good for getting full range and depth of info, may be suitable for a subset of participants <b>CONS:</b> Takes time, can be hard to analyze/compare, more costly, interviewer can bias
<b>Case Studies</b>	<b>PROS:</b> Fully depicts participant's experience in program; conveys story well to outsiders <b>CONS:</b> Time consuming to collect info and describe, illustrates depth rather than breadth
<b>Focus Groups</b>	<b>PROS:</b> Good for exploring a topic/question in-depth, quickly get common impressions and range and depth of info <b>CONS:</b> Need to analyze responses; requires good facilitator, need to schedule people together
<b>Observation</b>	<b>PROS:</b> View program/performance as it's occurring <b>CONS:</b> Interpretation can be difficult in some contexts In our context, may be best applied for practical tasks or end goal outcome behaviors

# Commonly Used Question Types

Pre- and Post- Quizzes or Assessments	Retrospective Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Test specific knowledge/skills <i>before</i> learning event or program and again <i>after</i></li><li>• Ask about levels of knowledge/ skill/ ability/ confidence/ intention/ or actions <i>before</i> learning event and again <i>after</i> event or program</li><li>• Not anonymous if individual comparisons to be made</li><li>• People don't always know what they know/don't know</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pre-Post: Ask about knowledge/ skill/ ability/ confidence/ intention/ or actions <i>before</i> event and <i>after</i> learning event asked <i>together</i> at end of event or program</li><li>• Allows anonymous results comparison</li><li>• Post: Ask about knowledge, etc. <i>after</i> event only</li><li>• No baseline for reference if ask about <i>after</i> only</li></ul>

## Response Options

- Closed-ended: Likert scale, Rating, Ranking, Multiple choice, Yes/No
- Open-ended: May invite variable length responses; Used instead of or in addition to closed-ended response.

Source: Janet McAllister, 2019 Professional Development Workshop on Curriculum Instruction and Evaluation, February 6-7, 2019.

# Tips for Survey Questions

- One question per question
- Make sure answers match question
- Answer choices are exclusive of one another
- Avoid double negatives
- Avoid Leading language – may invite bias in responses. People are inclined to agree with suggestions, and to select Yes more than No.
- Response scales are preferred over Yes/No or True/False.
- Include reference points related to your education program or time period.

# A Few More Tips

- Balanced scales – same number of responses on + and - ends
- Avoid asking all questions in same format, e.g. for disagree – agree responses.
- Label responses on scales (not just numbers); use labels that directly relate to question wording.
- Limit choices in Ranking lists to 6-10 (and don't give much credit to a difference in the mid-range)
- It's harder for people to say Negative than Positive things and people often get lazy and pick the first choice (Primacy). Order responses from Negative to Positive to minimize bias or randomize the order between questions.

# Cognitive Steps to Respond to Survey Question about Behaviors



## COMPREHEND

1. Understand the question, any instruction, and the intended meaning (may differ from literal interpretation of words)



## RETRIEVE

2. Correctly identify the behavior of interest
3. Retrieve relevant instances of the behavior from memory.
4. Correctly identify the relevant reference period.
5. Search this reference period to retrieve all relevant instances of the behavior



## JUDGE

6. Correctly date the recalled instances of behavior to arrive at a frequency report
7. Correctly add up and synthesize all the instances to ensure they fall in the reference period



## RESPOND

8. Map this frequency onto the response alternatives
9. Candidly provide the result of their recall effort to the survey administrator (it's not always comfortable to be candid)

# How to improve number and thoughtfulness of responses

- Promote a sense of accountability from the beginning
- Say why you are asking, why their responses are important and how you will use info
- Ask for only what you need
- Don't wait too long to follow-up – retrieval is harder
- Give reference points for information retrieval, e.g. training events attended, practices recommended.
- Write concise, understandable questions with appropriate context-specific response choices.
- Provide a tool for participants to track/record actions