Using Surveys for Understanding and Improving Foreign Language Programs

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Foreign Language Program Evaluation Project

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1. INTRODUCTION

The goal of this guide is to help language educators develop surveys that produce useful information for evaluation in language programs. To that end, survey methods are situated within a method of evaluation that emphasizes use and usefulness (Norris & Watanabe, 2011; Patton, 2008). This approach is explicitly geared to ensure that evaluations impact programs in the ways stakeholders[1] desire. By undertaking survey methods in this way, people who do evaluation in their programs will be more likely to *use* survey findings for understanding and improvement.

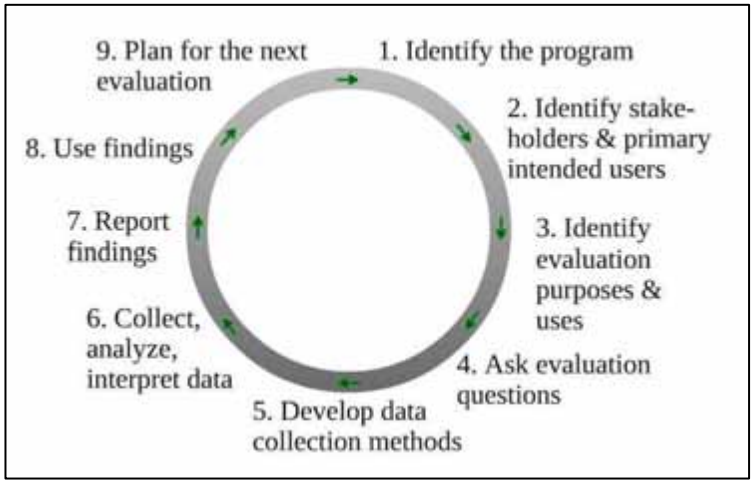
2. USING SURVEYS IN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS: A USEFUL EVALUATION APPROACH

Surveys are often the first method we think of for collecting data in program evaluations. This tendency demonstrates a common approach to evaluation work: thinking primarily in terms of how to collect information before fully considering what will be investigated and why. Doing so holds certain risks. As is well known, research tools provide particular perspectives and if they are mismatched with research aims, they can fail to provide the needed information or tell the needed story.

Thus, evaluation data collection methods need to be considered *after* establishing a clear understanding of what people want to know about their program. Prior to choosing data collection tools, then, decision-makers and evaluators should engage in a process of identifying, clarifying, and prioritizing what needs to be investigated and why.

A systematic way of doing so is by following a use-oriented process. In the framework depicted on the right, a decision to use surveys—or any data collection method—comes after careful thinking about

(a) why decision-makers (primary-intended users[2]) are investigating programs;
(b) what they want to do with evaluation information; and
(c) what specific aspects of the program decision-makers want to know about.



Ideally, this process should systematically lead to clarity on all these points and a *subsequent* determination that a survey methodology will be the best way to collect the needed information.

Before starting a survey evaluation project, then, a number of preparatory steps are needed.

[1] Stakeholders: Individuals and groups who have an interest in the program.
[2] Primary intended users: A group or individuals who make decisions about the program and are in a position to use the evaluation findings to inform future actions.

3. PLANNING AN EVALUATION PROJECT

3.1. Identifying evaluation needs/purposes and intended uses

An initial step in useful evaluation is getting decision-makers to concretely identify their needs and purposes for evaluation, as well as their specific uses of evaluation findings. Examples are below:

NEED	PURPOSE	EXAMPLE USE
A chair wants to know how best to provide professional development for language instructors	Formative • improve • develop • advocate	Identify content and format for a FLT training course that different stakeholders would find appropriate (Zannirato & Sánchez-Serrano, 2009)
A department must demonstrate student learning outcomes assessment for accreditation review	Summative • hold accountable • demonstrate value • judge	Demonstrate the ways in which the university is maintaining standards of accountability in its educational practices (Walther, 2009)
Faculty want to know how a program in their department is perceived by key stakeholders	Illuminative • understand programs • test theory	Understand the distinctiveness and value of the … program from the perspective of multiple stakeholders (Pfeiffer & Byrnes, 2009)
Faculty want to help graduate students become more involved in program development efforts	Process-Oriented • motivate • empower • educate	Involve graduate students in work on the … program in order to facilitate their understanding of and investment in the program (Pfeiffer & Byrnes, 2009)

Who wants evaluation to happen in your program? Why do those people need evaluation to happen (needs/purposes)? Specifically how will decision-makers use the information you anticipate collecting (intended use)?

NOTE: Prioritize. Address a few feasible, urgent evaluation purposes and intended uses.

In useful evaluation, establishing intended uses is crucially important to the evaluation process. Stakeholders, primary intended users, and evaluation facilitators should refer back to their uses at each decision-making step during the evaluation project and consider how a particular course of action might enhance or undermine intended use.

3.2. Asking evaluation questions

When people are clear about why evaluation is being done (i.e., needs/purposes) and what it is meant to accomplish (i.e., uses), the next step is to focus on what people specifically want to investigate in their program(s). That focus is expressed as an *evaluation question*, that is, an over-arching question in need of an answer.

EXAMPLES OF EVALUATION QUESTIONS*	
Student satisfaction	What types of classroom activities and assessments were most helpful to students? (Milleret & Silveira, 2009)
Student learning outcomes assessment	To what extent do majors graduate with the basic knowledge and skills that faculty expect? (Grau Sempere, Mohn, & Pieroni, 2009)
Instructor training	What are the training needs of Graduate Teaching Assistants in terms of foreign language teaching? (Zannirato & Sánchez-Serrano, 2009)
Study-abroad programs	Are all aspects of the study abroad experience in Spain working effectively to facilitate language and cultural development? (Ramsay, 2009)

*See Appendix A for additional examples from published FL/ESL program evaluations.

Given the evaluation needs/purposes in your program, what do decision-makers want to know about? Identify a few key issues to be investigated, and list them as questions.

NOTE: Prioritize. Formulate *a few* high-priority evaluation questions.

Also, keep in mind that good evaluation questions…

- address program elements that stakeholders care about,
- address issues for which there is no immediate or obvious answer,
- are clear, specific, straightforward, comprehensible,
- 'researchable' (i.e., information exists to answer the question),
- feasibly answerable (i.e., given time available, resources, and scope of work required),
- politically non-threatening (i.e., will not alienate individuals or groups of program stakeholders)

3.3. Identifying appropriate data collection methods

The next step is to select or create methods/tools for data collection. Typically, this involves:

(a) listing the sources and types of information or phenomena needed to answer a given evaluation question (referred to as *indicators*);
(b) selecting or creating data collection tools that will get at the sources and types of information.

To illustrate, consider the following example evaluation question:

What types of classroom activities and assessments were most helpful for student learning?

What information is needed to answer this question? What kinds of phenomena will *indicate* "class activities and assessments… helpful for student learning"? For the question above, indicators might include the following:

Student opinions = attitudes toward/satisfaction with class assessments/ activities
Instructor opinions = perceptions of student learning gains, enjoyment, participation
Student actions = observed levels of student participation, motivation, enthusiasm
Student performances = demonstrated learning on assessments and assignments

Bear in mind that indicators are not the same as data collection tools, typically. Indicators are the information source or phenomena itself, not the tool used to capture that information.

Indicators should be negotiated and approved by decision makers and other key stakeholders (Watanabe & Davis, 2011). Indicators need to be perceived as appropriate and sufficiently accurate, otherwise methods decisions may be questioned and findings seen as untrustworthy.

Identifying indicators

For each your evaluation questions, where will the information come from—what are the likely indicators?

Matching methods to indicators

After identifying indicators, the next step is to find a data collection tool or procedure that will best operationalize a given phenomenon (e.g., how can we get at student opinions?). Note that a single indicator may be revealed using several different tools. Student opinions, for example, can be captured by surveys, course evaluations, interviews, focus groups, observations, etc.[3]

Below is an example of the links between evaluation question, indicators, and methods (taken from Zannirato & Sánchez-Serrano, 2009).

EVALUATION QUESTION	INDICATOR	METHOD
What are the training needs of Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) in terms of foreign language teaching?	• Review of classroom observations	Document review
	• GTAs' training in FL teaching before admission to the program • GTAs' perceptions or misconceptions about the usefulness of FLT training • Language coordinator's perceptions of FL teacher training • Language coordinators reflections on teaching performance of GTAs • DGSs* and section heads' reflections on the training needs of the GTAs • DGSs and section heads' perceptions of the importance of FLT training	Surveys

*DSGs = Directors of graduate studies

3.4. What surveys can do

At this point in evaluation planning, a decision to use a survey becomes possible. In the example above, the indicators/information captured by a survey methodology included the *reflections*, *perceptions*, and *misconceptions* from various program *informants*. When thinking about possible ways to gather data, consider the general sorts of information that surveys typically yield:[4]

- demographics/respondent background
- behaviors (actions, habits, personal history)
- attitudes (beliefs, opinions, interests, values, aspirations, expectations)
- feelings
- knowledge (facts/information)
- abilities
- priorities
- identification of problems
- identification of solutions

[3] A shortlist of evaluation methods includes: surveys, interviews, focus group techniques, observation, expert panel, case study, assessments, tests, photos, videos, document review, testimonials, simulated problems or situations, journals/logs/diaries.
[4] Adapted from Brown (2001), Dörnyei & Taguchi (2010), and Patten (2001).

Strengths and drawbacks with survey research

Strengths
- Non-threatening
- Economical
- Fast, more people can participate
- Easy to compile and analyze data
- Eliminates interviewer bias
- Anonymity for respondents

Drawbacks
- Not suitable for collecting in-depth info
- Simplified responses, does not get whole story
- Might not generate careful feedback
- Requires careful sampling
- Impersonal
- Low response rate
- Lack of opportunity to follow-up
- Poorly written questions may introduce bias

Survey, interview, or focus group?

Of course informants can be targeted in a number of ways. Beliefs, opinions, abilities, etc. can also be garnered from interviews or focus groups. Given evaluation questions and intended uses, evaluation facilitators will need to think about whether a survey is the most appropriate choice. Often, that decision will depend on depth versus scope of information needed, the importance of anonymity, and the time/resources available.

METHODS NEEDS	Survey	Interview	Focus group
1. Quick and efficient data collection/analysis	✓	x	x
2. Numerous respondents	✓	x	x
3. Respondent anonymity	✓	x	x
4. Information free from interviewer bias/influence	✓	x	x
5. Response rate (for validity of findings)	✓	x	x
6. Numerical/Quantitative data	✓	x	x
7. Generalization to populations	✓	x	x
8. Patterns across individuals; trends	✓	x	x
9. Information from remote respondents (e.g., alumni; employers)	✓	✓	x
10. Interaction (active participation; co-constructed knowledge)	x	✓	✓
11. In-depth, detailed, rich information	x	✓	✓
12. Probing, clarifying questioning	x	✓	✓
13. Flexible questioning	x	✓	✓
14. Post-hoc response follow-up	x	✓	✓
15. Group dynamics (co-constructed knowledge; group thinking)	x	x	✓
16. 'Public' opinions	x	x	✓

Additional factors to consider in choosing survey methods

- Will targeted respondents be sufficiently motivated to complete a survey?
- Will respondents be sufficiently informed to answer the survey (e.g., are program experiences recent enough to be recalled accurately)?
- Do respondents have sufficient language skills to complete the survey (are resources available for translation)?
- Are respondents culturally disposed to completing surveys?
- Are respondents accessible for survey administration (e.g., is contact information available/ current)?
- What are intended users' attitudes towards survey research generally? Will they be accepting of survey data?

Following on from the last point above, primary intended users and other key stakeholders need to agree on methods choices (Watanabe & Davis, 2011). As with indicators, methods need to be perceived as appropriate and sufficiently accurate, or findings may be seen as untrustworthy, decreasing the likelihood that information will be used.

Setting the stage for a useful survey project

If a survey methodology has been chosen at this stage in evaluation planning, evaluators can feel reasonably confident it stands a good chance of providing information decision-makers want and need. Crucially, the previous steps help to create the conditions that make this possible. At this point in the evaluation process, decision-makers will…

- know what they want to do with evaluation information (evaluation uses);
- know specifically what they want to investigate (evaluation questions);
- have identified (and agreed upon) the sources and types of information that will tell them what they want to know (i.e., indicators);
- have identified (and agreed upon) sufficiently trustworthy tools to collect that information;
- have identified (and agreed upon) a survey methodology as one of those tools;

…all of which contributes to the future use and usefulness of evaluation findings.

3.4. Preparing a timeline

The next step in planning is to draft a plan/timeline for upcoming project tasks, including instrument development, piloting, survey administration, data-collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting. While drafting a timeline, consider a few guidelines:

- Pick an end date and work backwards in time.
- Consider feasibility—given available time, personnel, and resources, what can get done?
- Allot sufficient time for participating stakeholders to complete their tasks.
- Be generous in allotment of time—most projects take longer than anticipated.

Timeline—key steps and tasks

To help formulate a timeline, glance ahead in the guide to get a sense of the various tasks involved in a full survey project. Knowing what lies ahead will help with project scheduling now.

STAGE	SUBTASKS	ISSUES TO CONSIDER	WHEN?
Development	• Survey drafting	• Who will draft the survey? Is collaboration involved? How much time is needed?—Section 4	TIMELINE
	• Survey review/ editing	• Who will review? How much time will they need?—Section 4	
	• Piloting	• How many procedures? ○ Think aloud protocols? ○ Pre-administration?—Section 4	
Administration	• Administration start date	• When are respondents available?—Section 5	
	• Administration period	• For mailed/online surveys, how long will the administration period be, including extensions? • How many extensions?—Section 5	
Analysis	• Compiling/ Organizing data	• Paper-based administration? Data will need to be organized by hand (time consuming if there are a lot of respondents)—Section 5 • Large amounts of textual data can take time to analyze/interpret—Section 6	
Interpretation		• Who will interpret? When are they available? How much time will they need?—Section 6	
Reporting		• Who will be involved? When are they available? • How will data be presented? How long will preparation take?—Section 7	
Use		• What kinds of decisions and actions will be taken? • By whom?	

4. DEVELOPING A SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Stages in development

At this stage in the survey project, evaluators (and potentially others) will construct the survey instrument itself. Survey construction typically involves the following tasks:

1. Determining information needs
2. Writing items
3. Formatting the survey layout
4. Editing/Reviewing
5. Piloting

Survey "accuracy" versus survey use

The purpose of survey design guidelines/advice is to help researchers elicit maximally "accurate" information from respondents. According to conventional survey methodology, accuracy is threatened when flawed survey design (or administration) leads to incomplete, uninterpretable, or biased responses. Since accurate information is more likely to be useful, evaluators should aim for as much methodological rigor as possible (following the guidelines below).

However, from a usefulness point of view, a strict adherence to survey development guidelines may need to be balanced with decision makers' needs to actually acquire and use data.

Therefore, rather than aim for strict validity and reliability of survey methods (in the research sense of these terms), stakeholders should come to a consensus about aspects of survey design and administration that will lead to *sufficiently accurate* results. When making design and administration decisions, then, some of the methodological recommendations that follow may need to be relaxed (or ignored) to increase the possibility of data usefulness.

Stakeholder involvement

A second use-related consideration is to think about who should/could be involved in the survey development process per se. A general recommendation: the usefulness of survey findings can be greatly enhanced by involving diverse stakeholders at each of the development stages that follow (where feasible and practical to do so). Stakeholder participation increases evaluation ownership and understanding, leading in turn to an increase in the likelihood of use.

4.1. Determining information needs

Before writing items, evaluation facilitators should first elaborate indicators into a detailed list of *information needs* (Brace, 2004; Iarossi, 2006). Information needs are similar to indicators though expressed at a much greater level of specificity. Developing information needs is accomplished by analyzing indicators in greater detail. To illustrate, consider the example indicators below:

QUESTION	USES	RELATED INDICATORS
• Are graduates satisfied with their educational experiences in the program? • To what degree have students attained programmatic learning outcomes? • Do perceptions and realities of learning warrant any programmatic changes?	• better understand the extent to which our programs prepares students to meet the goals and learning outcomes articulated by the curriculum, for the purposes of engendering programmatic and curricular improvement. • demonstrate the merit and value of the program in meeting its goals • enhance the profile of foreign language programs within the university at large, as integral to the humanities and to a liberal arts education	• Student background, study abroad, or other experiences that may factor into student learning. • Students' expressed levels of satisfaction with the program • Assessments of student learning outcomes • Perceptions of program strengths and weaknesses

Given these indicators, what *specific* information will decision makers need? A list of survey information needs itemizes that information. Given that the target informants in this example are graduating students, a list of information needs might include:

INDICATORS	EXAMPLE INFORMATION NEEDS
Student background, study abroad, or other experiences that may factor into student learning.	• Student background information • Participation in internship opportunities/ study abroad • Heritage language profile • Career goals/Future plans
Levels of satisfaction with program	• Satisfaction with general program elements* • Satisfaction with courses* • Satisfaction with learning resources*
Assessments of program student learning outcomes	• Self-assessment of learning outcomes • Performance on proficiency exams
Perceptions of program strengths and weaknesses	• Recommendations for improvements • Opinions about helpfulness of degree for future employment • Opinions on program strengths of key program elements • Degree to which students would recommend program to others

*Information needs could be elaborated in further detail by listing the *specific* program elements, aspects of courses, and learning resources that would give decision makers a sense of program satisfaction

Purposes of information needs

The main purpose of explicitly itemizing and listing information needs is to **guide item-writing** (see section 4.2). A detailed list of information needs provides the issues, concepts, specific foci, etc. that can be used to construct the actual questions and prompts on the survey itself.

In addition, information needs also:

- define and clarify the aims of the survey project
- reveal weaknesses in indicators (e.g., incomplete or inappropriate)

Secondary purposes include:

- focusing further attention on intended uses of survey findings (see below)
- Identifying new evaluation areas/indicators of interest

Generating a list of information needs

When generating a list of survey information needs, adopt the most feasible and efficient method (or combination of methods) below:

- Relevant stakeholders and evaluators collaboratively brainstorm and *prioritize* information needs together
- Evaluators undertake small-scale, qualitative data collection to provide information on the relevant points and issues (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010)
    - Interviews/focus groups
    - Discussions with colleagues in peer programs
    - Consultation with evaluation/assessment/domain experts
- Evaluators review relevant documents in the program related to indicators
- Evaluators review related issues in academic literature

Reviewing information needs

Once a list of needs is compiled, it should be checked by relevant stakeholders and/or decision makers. During the review process, consider the following issues.

- Is the list of needs feasible—is the information available?
- Is the list of needs relevant—do they tie directly to evaluation questions and indicators?
- Do any of the information needs undermine intended use (e.g., is any of this information politically threatening to certain stakeholder groups)?

4.2. Writing items

4.2.1. From information needs to items

The next task in survey development is to write the *survey items*. Survey items are questions or prompts that solicit information from respondents:

> 1. Is anyone in your immediate or extended family a native speaker of Spanish? Choose all that apply.
>
> □ mother
> □ father
> □ sibling
> □ grandmother/father
> □ aunt/uncle
> other:_____

NOTE: The first step in item writing is to *refer to the list of information needs and/or indicators*. Again, the main purpose of listing survey information needs is to provide the ideas and topics from which survey items will be derived.

Further, only write items linked to information needs (and indicators). Resist writing items out of curiosity. Superfluous items undermine cohesiveness and add length to the questionnaire (Patten, 2001), which may lead to incomplete responses.

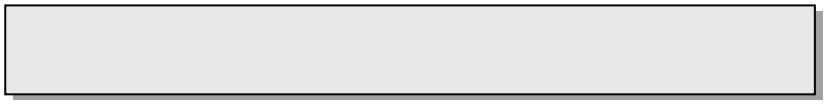
4.2.2. Survey item-types

Different item types get at information in different ways. Before writing, consider some of the response format options, as well as their strengths and weaknesses. There are two main response formats:

- Open-response
- Closed-response

OPEN-RESPONSE

A question or prompt followed by a blank space for the respondent to fill in with text.

> 2. What are your immediate plans after graduation?
>
> 

Types of open-response items

TYPE	DETAILS	EXAMPLE
Short-answer	• Free response	• *What are your immediate plans after graduation?*
Specific	• Asks for concrete info on facts, past activities, personal preferences, etc.	• *What languages have you studied in the past?*
Clarification	• Attached to a closed-item to clarify the prior response(s)	• *If you answered "other," please specify.*
Sentence completion	• Unfinished sentence-prompt	• *One thing I liked about this course is_____.*

Strengths and weaknesses of open-response items

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Exploratory in nature • Wide range of possible answers • Richness; descriptions of dynamic phenomena • Yield graphic examples, illustrative quotes • Enable free expression of opinions • Signals humanistic research values • Relatively easy to write	• Time consuming to complete • Mentally taxing • Labor/Writing-intensive to answer • "Essay test"-like aspect (threatening) • Prone to be left blank/skipped

CLOSED-RESPONSE

The respondent is provided with ready-made response options to choose from.

3. Would you recommend the program to other students who are interested in getting a B.A. in Japanese?

○ Definitely not
○ Maybe not
○ Neutral
○ Maybe yes
○ Definitely yes

Common types of closed-response items

TYPE	DETAILS	EXAMPLE
Alternative/ Dichotomous	• Two response choices (yes/no, true/false)	• *Did you study abroad during your undergraduate studies?* ☐ *Yes* ☐ *No*
Rating scale*	• Evaluative judgment by selecting one of a series of categories organized into a scale.	• *Study abroad was well-integrated into my studies.* ☐ *strongly disagree* ☐ *disagree* ☐ *agree* ☐ *strongly agree* ☐ *n/a*
Multiple choice	• Multiple response options	• *Student status:* ☐ *Freshman* ☐ *Sophomore* ☐ *Junior* ☐ *Senior* ☐ *Graduate student*
Rank order	• Rank ordering response options according to some criterion	• *How much time do your students spend in class on the following? (1 = most time; 4 = least time.)* ○ *listening to lectures* _____ ○ *speaking* _____ ○ *reading* _____ ○ *writing* _____

Strengths and weaknesses of closed-response items

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Relatively easy to answer	• Narrower range of responses
• More uniformity across items	• Lack an exploratory aspect
• Less likely to be skipped	• Tricky to write
• Relatively easy to code/analyze	• Superficial treatment of complex, dynamic phenomena
• Amenable to statistical analysis	

4.2.3. Guidelines for item-writing

Well-written items are important for useful survey research. Consider the following guidelines to avoid a few common pitfalls.

Guidelines for writing open-response items

1. Use sparingly.	Open-ended questions are "easy to ask, [but] difficult to answer…" (Oppenheim, 1992, p. 113).
2. Place at the end of the survey.	Begin with closed-response items, draw in respondents, establish rapport.
3. Place at the beginning of a survey.	To avoid influencing how respondents answer, start with open-ended items, followed by closed-response.
4. Use to probe the respondents' view of salient issues.	Open-response items work well if they are not completely open but contain some guidance (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010).
5. Allow appropriate space for the response.	Too little, respondents may think their opinions are not taken seriously. Too much, respondents may feel intimidated or annoyed at the amount of effort required to write an answer.

Guidelines for writing closed-response items

When writing closed-response items, aim to be brief, objective, simple, and specific (Iarossi, 2006).

1. Be brief.	• Keep questions short • Avoid superfluous words/information
2. Be objective (pay attention to neutrality of words).	• Avoid loaded questions (i.e., creating bias via emotionally charged wording) • Avoid leading questions (i.e., wording that pushes the respondent toward a certain answer) • Avoid questions that ask for socially desirable responses (beware of "options which either flatter the respondent's self image or injure his[/her] pride"; Warwick & Lininger, 1975, p. 144)
3. Be simple.	• Use words and expressions that are simple, direct, and familiar to targeted respondents • Avoid technical jargon or concepts • Avoid negative or double negative expressions
4. Be specific.	• Avoid questions for which the respondent does not have an answer • Avoid expressing ideas that are too general, too complex or undefined • Cover a single point in each item (avoid double-barreled questions) • Make the choices for an item exhaustive (e.g., use "other:_____")
5. Other things to keep in mind.	• Ensure questions are culturally appropriate • Consider providing "n/a" (not applicable) or "neutral" options

Which of the above guidelines are evident in the *revised* items? (Davis & Long, 2008)

(1) On average, how many times do you write during the week?
□ 0-3 times □4-6 times □7-9 times
□10 or more times

Revised: On average, how many times each week do you write short materials such as emails, grocery lists, or to do lists?
□ 0-3 times □4-6 times □7-9 times
□10 or more times

(2) More money is needed to improve facilities and salaries.
□ strongly disagree □ disagree □ agree
□ strongly agree

Revised: More money is needed to improve salaries.
□strongly disagree □ disagree □ agree
□ strongly agree

(3) I believe that the free-writing assignments that we do every week at the start of class are useful for improving my writing.
□ strongly disagree □ disagree □ agree
□ strongly agree

Revised: The free-writing assignments are useful for improving my writing.
□ strongly disagree □ disagree □ agree
□ strongly agree

(4) Would you characterize the motivation of students as being primarily linked to achievement as determined through assessment systems?

Revised: Is getting a high grade the main motivation for students?

(5) Is getting a high grade the main motivation for students? [Asked of a group of teachers.]

Revised: Do more students submit an assignment when a letter grade is given?

(6) How many articles from professional journals do you read each week?
□ 0 □1-5 □6-10 □11 or more

Revised: It is a challenge to find time to read articles from professional journals.
□ strongly disagree □ disagree □ agree
□ strongly agree

(7) What class activities are most helpful for learning?
□ Lectures □ Worksheets □ Pair discussions
□ Games

Revised: What class activities are most helpful for learning?
□ Lectures □ Worksheets □ Pair discussions
□ Games □ Other (please specify):_____

(8) I do not dislike the in-class reading assignments.
□ strongly disagree □ disagree □ agree
□ strongly agree

Revised: I like the in-class reading assignments.
□ strongly disagree □ disagree □ agree
□ strongly agree

(9) The amount of daily homework assigned in Japanese 201 should be increased.
□ disagree □ neither agree nor disagree
□ agree □ strongly agree

Revised: The amount of daily homework assigned in Japanese 201 is____
□ far too little □ too little □ just right
□ too much □ far too much

Answers

1. Be specific. "Write" is too general.
2. Be specific. Double-barreled (the item asks about facilities and salaries). Respondents may want to indicate different levels of agreement for elements within a single item
3. Be brief. Avoid superfluous words.
4. Be simple. Use simple, direct language familiar to all respondents.
5. Be specific. Avoid questions for which the respondent does not have an answer. Ask students about their motivation; ask teachers what they know about.
6. Be objective. Avoid questions that ask for socially desirable responses. The number of journals indicated may be exaggerated.
7. Be specific. Make the choices for an item exhaustive. "Other" enables respondents to supply a choice that survey developers may have overlooked.
8. Be simple. Avoid double negative expressions.
9. Be objective. The prompts and answers are leading. (a) The prompt asserts that homework should be increased; a more neutral statement about amount of homework should be used. (b) Imbalanced answer choices; choices are skewed toward agreement.

Choosing item types—Usefulness issues

When choosing items types, it can be worth thinking about the likely types of data the survey will bring, and whether that data will enable decision makers to realize intended uses. To illustrate, imagine a set of indicators/ information needs for the following use:

- to better understand the extent to which our program prepares students to meet the learning outcomes articulated by the curriculum, for the purposes of engendering programmatic and curricular improvement.

A better understanding of how the program prepares students to meet learning outcomes could come from knowing about students' perceptions of their learning. A rating scale item would be one way of generating this type of information—that is, students rate the degree to which they feel they have attained programmatic learning outcomes (1 = not at all → 4 = easily).

To what extent can you do the following?

	Not at all 1	With great difficulty 2	With some difficulty 3	Easily 4
1. Engage in oral communication in Japanese in various social contexts, in linguistically and culturally appropriate ways.	◯	◯	◯	◯
2. Read and comprehend texts written in Japanese from a variety of genres and contexts (e.g., newspapers, essay collections, novels).	◯	◯	◯	◯
3. Apply critical thinking and rhetorical skills to	◯	◯	◯	◯

Data from this type of item would likely be numerical, typically frequencies/counts (numbers of students who selected a particular rating), percentages (percentages of students who selected a particular rating), and mean (average) ratings and standard deviations:

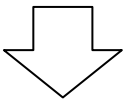
Student learning outcomes	*N*	*M*	*SD*	Not at all 1	With great difficulty 2	With some difficulty 3	Easily 4
1. Engage in oral communication in Japanese in various social contexts, in linguistically and culturally appropriate ways.	9	3.56	0.73	0% (0)	11% (1)	22% (2)	**66% (6)**
2. Read and comprehend texts written in Japanese from a variety of genres and contexts (e.g., newspapers, essay collections, novels)	9	3.00	0.50	0% (0)	11% (1)	**77% (7)**	11% (1)

While such data might plausibly result in a "better understanding" of how much the program is enabling students to attain learning outcomes, it is important to realize that *whoever will be using the data* must share this view.

When considering item-types and response options, then, try to imagine the likely data to come from potential items, and have decision makers negotiate and come to consensus on data-types that will be sufficiently informative for intended uses (see Section 6 "ANALYZING SURVEY DATA" for the types of data that survey items typically provide).

USE → QUESTION → INDICATOR → INFORMATION NEED → ITEM-TYPE → ITEM

On the following page is a depiction of the survey development process described so far, showing how evaluation uses and questions lead to indicators, which lead to survey information needs, which implicate items. A use-focused evaluation process is meant to link all of these components together, from beginning discussions about what decision-makers want to know and do with evaluation findings, down to the individual items on the survey itself.



EXAMPLE: QUESTION → USE → INDICATOR → INFORMATION NEED → ITEM-TYPE → ITEM

Questions	(a) are graduates satisfied with their educational experiences in the program? (b) to what degree have students attained programmatic learning outcomes? (c) do perceptions and realities of learning warrant any programmatic changes?
Uses	(a) better understand the extent to which our programs prepares students to meet learning outcomes articulated by the curriculum, for the purposes of engendering programmatic and curricular improvement (b) demonstrate the merit and value of the program in meeting its stated goals (c) enhance the profile of foreign language programs within the university at large, as integral to the humanities and to a liberal arts education

INDICATOR	INFORMATION NEED	ITEM-TYPE	ITEM
(a) Student background, study abroad, other experiences that factor into student learning.	Background information	Multiple choice	When did you first enroll at [university name]? [Drop down menu: year/semester] When did you declare a B.A. in [X] as your major? [Drop down menu]
		Alternative + Open clarification	Are you a double-major? Yes/ No If "yes," what was the other major?
	Participation in internship opportunities	Alternative + Open clarification	Did you take the [Internship program] during your study? If you answered "Yes" above (4-A), please tell us where you did the internship and for how long.
	Participation in study abroad	Alternative + Open clarification	Did you study in X country during your studies? Yes/ No If "yes," please tell us where you studied and for how long.
	Heritage language profile	Multiple choice	Please tell us if your parents, grandparents, or anyone else in your immediate/ extended family is a native speaker of X. Choose all that apply.
	Career goals/Future plans	Open-short answer	What are your immediate plans after graduation? What are your long-term personal and/or career goals?
(b) Levels of satisfaction with program	Satisfaction with general program elements • Availability of program info • Academic standards/ expectations • Relevance of program to academic/professional goals • Appropriateness of degree requirements • Faculty mentoring & advising • Extra-curricular activities • Research opportunities • Career training opportunities	Rating scale [matrix] + Open clarification	

	Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied	Not applicable
1. Availability of program info	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Academic standards/ expectations (etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Relevance of program to academic/professional goals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please provide comments that will help us understand your response if any.

EXAMPLE (continued)

INDICATOR	INFORMATION NEED.	ITEM-TYPE	ITEM
(b) Levels of satisfaction with the program	Satisfaction with courses • Overall quality of instruction • Variety of courses • Course sequencing • Course availability • Frequency of course offerings • Class size	Rating scale [matrix] + Open clarification	<table><tr><td></td><td>Very dissatisfied</td><td>Somewhat dissatisfied</td><td>Neutral</td><td>Somewhat satisfied</td><td>Very satisfied</td><td>Not applicable</td></tr><tr><td>1. Overall quality of instruction</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td></tr><tr><td>2. Variety of courses (etc.)</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td></tr><tr><td colspan="7">Please provide comments that will help us understand your response if any.</td></tr></table>
	Satisfaction with institutional resources • Classroom facilities • Lab facilities • Library resources • Funding opportunities	Rating scale [matrix] + Open clarification	<table><tr><td></td><td>Very dissatisfied</td><td>Somewhat dissatisfied</td><td>Neutral</td><td>Somewhat satisfied</td><td>Very satisfied</td><td>Not applicable</td></tr><tr><td>1. Classroom facilities</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td></tr><tr><td>2. Lab facilities</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td></tr><tr><td colspan="7">Please provide comments that will help us understand your response if any.</td></tr></table>
(c) Assessments of program student learning outcomes	Self-assessment of attainment of student learning outcomes	Rating scale [matrix] + Open clarification	<table><tr><td></td><td>Not at all</td><td>With great difficulty</td><td>With some difficulty</td><td>Easily</td></tr><tr><td>1. Engage in oral communication in Japanese in various social contexts, in linguistically and culturally appropriate ways. (etc.)</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td><td>☐</td></tr><tr><td colspan="5">Please provide comments that will help us understand your response if any.</td></tr></table>
	Performance on proficiency exams	Open-specific	Did you take any proficiency tests in X? If "yes," please write the test name, year taken, and the result for each test.
(d) Perceptions of program strengths and weaknesses	Opinions on program strengths	Open-short answer	What are the strengths of the program?
	Recommendations for improvements	Open-short answer	What recommendations do you have to improve the program? ◯ Definitely not ◯ Maybe not ◯ Neutral ◯ Maybe yes ◯ Definitely yes Please provide comments that will help us understand your response if any.
	Opinions about helpfulness of degree for employment	Rating scale + Open-clarification	Did this program increase your job prospects? ◯ Definitely not ◯ Maybe not ◯ Neutral ◯ Maybe yes ◯ Definitely yes Please provide comments that will help us understand your response if any.
	Degree to which students would recommend program to others	Rating scale + Open-clarification	Would you recommend the program to other students who are interested in getting a B.A. in Japanese? ◯ Definitely not ◯ Maybe not ◯ Neutral ◯ Maybe yes ◯ Definitely yes Please provide comments that will help us understand your response if any.

4.3. Guidelines for survey layout/formatting

After writing items, they will need to be arranged somehow in the survey itself (either in paper-based or online formats). Common components of survey structure include:

1. Title
2. Introduction/Cover page
3. Survey items (potentially grouped and with instructions for subsections)
4. Parting information and "thank you"

Before elaborating on each of the above, consider a few general suggestions for survey formatting and layout relating to appearance, length, item ordering, and item grouping. A poorly designed survey can cause respondents to skip items or opt out of completing the survey entirely.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SURVEY LAYOUT/FORMATTING	
Appearance	• Make the survey visually attractive and user-friendly • Avoid small or *difficult to read* fonts • Use different typeface/font and highlighting options to emphasize key information (without creating garish or cluttered text) • Paper-based—use space economically, but avoid cluttered, crowed layouts. • Paper-based—use high-quality printing/copying and copy paper • Online—make sure color schemes do not impede clarity of text
Length	• Paper-based— "Anything that is more than four to six pages long and requires over half an hour to complete [is] too much of an imposition" (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, p. 12). • Online—provide a sense of progress (e.g., survey completion bar). Indicate how much of the survey has been completed and how much remains.
Ordering	• "No single question is more crucial than the first one" (Dillman, 2000, p. 92). Make the first question interesting, easy to answer, and applicable to all respondents. • Ask interesting questions in the beginning of the survey. • Place sensitive questions at the end of the survey. • Online—Ask only one question per line (avoid multiple columns layouts) • Number sections, subsections, and items • Avoid extensive 'branching' (e.g., If yes, go to section 3; If no, …)
Grouping	• Group items together by content (i.e., place related items together) • Within each group of items, place items with the same response format together (place multiple rating responses in a matrix) • Provide a subtitle for each group/section • Provide instructions (when needed) at the beginning of each subsection/group of items

Title

Write a descriptive title for the survey that (a) uses simple direct language, (b) generates interest (to the extent possible), (c) avoids acronyms and jargon, and (d) describes the overall survey topic.

Survey introduction

Write the survey introduction after items have been written. For online formats, the introduction should be the first page of the survey; in a paper-based format, the introduction can be on a separate cover page. In both formats, survey questions/items should be separate, on subsequent pages, The introduction should do the following:

- Explain the survey's purpose (stressing its importance)
- Identify the entity/individual(s) administering the survey
- Explain how the information collected will be used
- Assure confidentiality and anonymity
- Estimate how much time is needed to complete the survey
- Stress the value of respondents' participation
- Provide contact information for respondent queries
- Provide a brief outline of survey sections[5]

EXAMPLE SURVEY INTRODUCTION[6]

The Georgetown University German department is seeking information on the effectiveness of its undergraduate program. The information you provide on this questionnaire will help us better understand the effectiveness of the curriculum and identify possible areas that might be enhanced for the benefit of current and future students in the program.

The questionnaire has five components:

It begins with a brief set of questions that elicit information about your course of study and your background in German.

The next three sections ask you to indicate the degree to which you agree with statements in three areas of the program:

- your experience with how the German program was delivered;
- your learning outcomes within the program;
- your experience as a learner and user of German.

At the end of each of the four sections, you will have a chance to clarify any of your answers or to add other comments on that particular subtopic. To help you with that, you will be able to glance back at the questions in each section.

The final section consists of three open-ended questions about the program. We invite you to provide us with as much information as you find useful so that we might be able to get a full picture of your experience in the program.

Note that your responses will not be associated with any individually identifiable information, and they will be kept anonymous by the data collection team.

We thank you for participating in this survey about the German department's undergraduate curriculum.

[5] Depending on the use of survey data, the introduction may need to provide consent information as required by IRB entities for research involving human participants.

[6] Adapted from Pfeiffer & Byrnes (2009).

Parting information and "thank you"

At the end of the survey, respondents will read the final, parting information. In online formats, respondents should navigate to a final page, separate from the rest of the survey. Parting information should include the following:

- Expressions of thanks/gratitude
- Additional instructions, if needed
- Contact information for additional/further queries

EXAMPLE SURVEY FINAL PAGE/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

EXAMPLE 1—Online[7]

Thank you for completing the survey. We appreciate your participation.

NOTE: Please click "DONE" to save your answers. After you click "Done," your responses will be submitted to the College of Languages, Linguistics, and Literatures Evaluation Resource Team.

QUESTIONS?
Please contact the Associate Dean of the College of Languages, Linguistics, and Literatures, Jane Doe, with any questions about the survey ((555) 555-1234; janedoe@ fictionalu.edu).

EXAMPLE 2—Mail[8]

Thank you for taking the time to compete this questionnaire. Your assistance in providing this information is very much appreciated.

Please return your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided to:

Social & Economic Sciences Research Center
PO BOX 999999
Honolulu, HI
96822-1101

If you have any further questions, please contact the Social & Economic Sciences Research Center at (555) 555-1234.

[7] Adapted from College of Languages, Linguistics, and Literatures, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (2010).
[8] Adapted from Dillman (2000).

4.4. Survey editing/reviewing

As a general rule, try to get as many people as possible to look at initial drafts. Note that this is an opportunity to involve stakeholders and generate additional project ownership (Brown, 2001). Individuals who can (and should) review survey drafts include:

- Primary intended users* (highest priority reviewers)
- Key local stakeholders
  - Faculty, administrators, lecturers, students, etc.
- Local experts
  - Faculty with survey research experience
  - Colleagues with survey expertise in other departments (e.g., social sciences, public policy, marketing, etc.)
  - Local Assessment Office and institutional staff

*Before intended users or other decision-makers review, consider having them first reflect on evaluation questions and uses. Also, if they have not done so already, have them consider the types of data that will be generated by items and come to consensus that it will be the information they need (see page 19).

4.5. Piloting[9]

Piloting involves trying out surveys to identify potential problems. The goal of piloting is to see what types of answers respondents produce (Brown, 2001) and whether they understand what it is that the survey is asking them to do. Piloting can be done in several ways:

"Think-aloud"

A "think-aloud" involves an evaluation facilitator listening to a pilot respondent complete the survey verbally/out loud, and looking for survey problems on the basis of the respondents' comments.

1. Ask individuals to participate who will *not* be respondents in the live survey, though are similar in profile to individuals in the target respondent group.
2. Explain to the volunteer that you want them to verbalize their thoughts as they complete the questionnaire.
3. Provide any specific guidelines for pilot respondents to focus on*
4. Take notes (or record) to capture details of participants' feedback.

Note: When selecting think-aloud respondents, to the extent possible, try to select participants that are similar to individuals in the target population.

* Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) suggest asking respondents to

- mark any items with wording they dislike (and suggest improvements, if inclined);
- mark any items whose meaning is not 100% clear (again, suggestions are welcome);
- mark any items they consider unnecessary;
- suggest additional questions/ topics worth asking about.

[9] Adapted from Patten (2001).

Written feedback

A paper-based version of the think-aloud procedure, in which pilot respondents write detailed responses in the margins of a draft survey.

1. Provide a version with ample space in the margins and white space between items.
2. Ask a variety of individuals (not only targeted respondents) to respond
3. Ask pilot respondents to complete the questionnaire *and* write comments about anything they find confusing, in need of more explanation, or seems in error.

Pre-administration to target participants

With large populations, it can be helpful to pre-administer the survey to a small representative group of target respondents.[10]

- Administer the survey in exactly the same way as you would for the live administration.
- Once data are collected, check for potentially problematic patterns. For example,
  - items consistently left blank;
  - items consistently answered in the same way (for which variance is expected).
- Analyze any open-response comments for clues about why items are functioning poorly.

All or some of the above of the piloting techniques can be used during a survey project, depending on the needs of evaluators and the program context. While evaluators should be as thorough as possible in their piloting efforts, aim for the most feasible approach.

[10] To make this method worthwhile, Patten (2001) recommends administering to 25 or more respondents.

5. ADMINISTERING THE SURVEY

Once the survey is piloted and ready to go, the next step will be to disseminate it to respondents. Doing so will require decisions about two main aspects of survey administration:

(a) Sampling—whether to administer to a sample or the whole population;
(b) Mode of administration—online, via post, or completed in-person.

5.1. Sampling respondents

Sample or census?
Given the target group, evaluators will need to decide whether to administer the survey to the entire the population (a census) or to a subgroup of that population (a sample).

Generally, population size and available resources will determine whether to take a census or a sample, though intended uses will affect sampling decisions as well.

All things being equal, if the size of the target population is such that every individual can feasibly participate in the survey (with a reasonable expenditure of time and resources), then evaluation may want to take a census. If the population is so large that taking a census is unfeasible, evaluators should consider administering the survey to a sample.

Important note: Typically, for surveys used within foreign language programs, the intended use calls for surveys to provide a clear indication of the levels of satisfaction, opinion, perspective, experiences, and so on, for entire groups (e.g., groups of students, faculty, alums). In these cases, users generally want to know what the full range of opinions actually is, in order to identify program areas in need of attention—clearly here, a census approach is called for in order to tap into the perspectives of the well-defined, specific population in question.

Sampling
Sampling methods are broadly distinguished by whether they involve randomized selection.[11]

Random sampling—selecting members from a population by chance using a random number table or computer application (e.g., Excel, SPSS).

- Random sampling enables generalization of findings to the population on the basis of statistical inference.
- Random sampling requires a population list (i.e., the sampling frame)—that is, a complete list of every member of the population.

Types of random sampling

Stratified—identifying important subgroups (i.e., "strata") within a population and randomly selecting respondents from within each of those groups.

Cluster—identifying pre-existing groups (i.e., "clusters") to which respondents belong (e.g., clubs, classes, universities, departments, etc.) and then taking a sample of clusters. There are two variations to cluster sampling:

[11] In technical parlance, random sampling is commonly referred to as "probability sampling"—non-random referred to as "non-probability sampling."

(a) **One-stage cluster sampling**—randomly sampling clusters and administering surveys to everyone in the cluster units
(b) **Multi-stage cluster sampling**—randomly sampling clusters and then taking a second random sample of respondents within the clusters.

Non-random sampling techniques—respondent selection without randomization. Non-random techniques do not allow generalization the population on the basis of statistical inference, but they may allow key differences from different segments of the population to be uncovered.

Types of non-random (non-probability) sampling[12]

Convenience—Selection of respondents on the basis of convenience, such as availability of respondents at certain times, geographical proximity, ease of accessibility, etc.

Snowball—identifying a few individuals in the population and asking them to identify further population members (useful for studying groups whose membership is not readily identifiable)

Quota—defining distinct subgroups in a population (e.g., males and females) and sampling a specified minimum number of respondents (the "quota") from within each of those subgroups.

Decisions in choosing a sampling method
Random sampling allows generalization from the sample to the population on the basis of statistical inference. However, rigorous generalization may be relevant for certain evaluation uses (and audiences) and not for others.

METHOD	STRENGTHS/DRAWBACKS	ISSUES TO CONSIDER
Random Sampling (RS)	**Strengths** • Rigorous generalization of survey results to a population • Statistical tests of validity (i.e., standard/ sampling error) **Drawbacks** • Technically complex; requires statistical expertise • Creating the sample frame/population list can be time-consuming and/or costly	**Generalizability** • Given intended uses and likely audiences, how important is generalization? Will audiences require claims of rigorous generalizability based on RS? **Feasibility** • Is the sampling frame/population list possible/practical to construct? • Does statistical expertise exist to undertake RS methods?
Non-random Sampling (NRS)	**Strengths** • "Weak" generalizability (using stratification and quota techniques) • Appropriate for exploratory, practical inquiries that do not require generalizability (e.g., needs analysis, awareness raising, knowledge creation) • Efficient (quickly implemented); • Cost-effective • Potentially the only way to access difficult-to-reach respondents **Drawbacks** • Inability to rigorously generalize to populations	**Generalizability** • Given intended uses and likely audiences, is rigorous generalization even necessary? • If so, given intended uses and likely audiences, will "weak" generalization from NRS methods suffice?

[12] Other types of purposive, non-random sampling techniques include modal instance sampling, expert sampling, and diversity/heterogeneity sampling. For more information, refer to http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/sampnon.php

Sample size

How data will be used should affect decisions about sample size. In general, if generalization from the sample to the population is crucial for use of findings, then sample size becomes important. If generalization is not a priority, sample size is potentially less of an issue.

However, determining a needed sample size is not a straightforward matter. "As many respondents as possible" is common and correct advice, but unhelpfully vague.

To offer some very rough guidance on this issue, the chart below shows a statistical method for determining sample sizes. The table indicates needed sample sizes given…

- the population size;
- a 95% confidence or 'certainty' level;
- the variance of a sample statistic;
  - "80/20" split on a proportion statistic ("Yes/No") means that 80% of survey respondents chose one option and 20% chose the other;
- the sampling error;
  - ±10%, 5%, 3%, which means, at ±3% sampling error, if 50% percent of sampled respondents chose "Yes," then the number of people in the population who chose "Yes" is somewhere between 47% and 53%.

COMPLETED SAMPLE SIZES NEEDED FOR VARIOUS POPULATION SIZES AND CHARACTERISTICS AT THREE LEVELS OF PRECISION*

	Sample size for the 95% confidence level					
	±10% Sampling Error		±5% Sampling Error		±3% Sampling Error	
Population Size	50/50 split	80/20 split	50/50 split	80/20 split	50/50 split	80/20 split
100	49	38	80	71	92	87
200	65	47	132	111	169	155
400	78	53	196	153	291	253
600	83	56	234	175	384	320
800	86	57	260	188	458	369
1,000	88	58	278	198	517	406

*Adapted from Dillman (2000)

Putting the above technical concepts to one side, the table is meant to provide a rough sense of the sample sizes professional researchers would aim for given certain population sizes (and other factors). For example, if evaluators wanted to sample from a target population of 400 students, a complete and random sample of 53 students would suffice in the eyes of some to make fairly rough claims about the larger student population.[13]

[13] For this example, bear in mind that the sampling error for this many respondents is 10%, which is the greatest (and least precise) amount of error tolerated in survey research. Further, the table assumes a *random/probability* sample (the values do not apply to non-probability samples). Also the values refer to "complete sample sizes," meaning a sample in which every respondent who was invited to participate in the survey did so (see the discussion below on the importance of response rates).

Additional advice from Brown (2001) and Dörnyei & Taguchi (2010):

- The greater proportion the sample size compromises of the population, the better (Brown, 2001). A normal distribution can be achieved with 30 or more people, so that might be considered a useful minimum (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, p. 62)
- 50 participants are needed for statistically significant correlation coefficients (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, pp. 62-63)
- 100 respondents are needed for using multivariate statistical procedures (e.g., factor analysis; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, pp. 62-63)

Important note: Ultimately, in foreign language programs, it is most often the case that getting at least some responses is better than having no information at all for evaluation purposes. However, in order to increase the representativeness of findings from surveys, it will pay to put some effort into thinking about how best to get at a sufficient number of responses. Where surveys are used beyond individual programs (e.g., across language programs of a particular type in the U.S.), sampling issues become increasingly important for informing accurate interpretations and the responsible use of surveys.

5.2. Mode of administration (mail, online, in-person)

Evaluators/survey developers will need to decide how respondents will complete the survey. The main options are:

- **Mail**—A paper-based questionnaire mailed to respondents, usually including a self-addressed stamped envelope
- **Online**—Respondents take the survey online by linking to an online survey tool (e.g., LimeSurvey, SurveyGizmo, SurveyMonkey)
- **In-person**—Respondents complete a survey while physically present at a specific location—for example, a group survey administration during a regularly scheduled class or staff meeting.

MODE	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Mail	• Higher response rates (on average)[14] • Readability (black ink on paper more readable than a computer monitor) • Marking outside of option choices (can provide useful information) • Access to respondents (most people receive mail; not everyone has access to the internet) • Anonymity	• Cost (paper, printing, mailing, return postage) • Paper consumption • Data collection, organization (slow, labor-intensive) • Data collection/organization prone to human error • Space restrictions in survey layout and open-ended responses • Marking outside of option choices (e.g., marking in between rating scales choices; creating new response options)
Online	• Cost-effectiveness • Item design flexibility for (e.g., drop-down	• Lower response rates (on average) • Requires computer access &

[14] Though university/college constituencies—particularly students—may be more inclined to fill out an online questionnaire.

	menus)	competency/literacy
	• Instantaneous dissemination • Fast/automatic data collection, tabulation, organization • Branch logic (different response paths depending on respondents' choices) • "Piping"(previous response text appears in later questions) • Question randomization (reduces order bias) • Eco-friendliness	• Dependent on reliable internet service • No opportunity for marking outside of option choices • The same respondent can complete the survey multiple times, if not secured • Anonymity not necessarily fully guaranteed
In-person	• High response rates (with a "captive audience")	• Inconvenience (requires physical attendance on the administration day).

5.3. Increasing response rates for surveys

Response rate refers to the number of respondents who completed and submitted their surveys. As a general rule, aim to get as high a survey response rate as possible, especially if decision makers want to make claims about an entire population (e.g., undergraduates enrolled in language requirement FL courses).

Non-response error: If evaluation facilitators have taken a census or a random sample to make claims about a population, low response rates will undermine these claims. When response rates are excessively low, rather than capturing a representative distribution of views, survey results may be biased by a self-selecting group (e.g., strongly opinionated individuals who are for some reason eager to respond).

Guidelines for increasing response rates

In-person, group administration

Group administrations yield very high response rates. Where possible, take advantage of situations where respondents are a "captive audience"—that is, physically present and grouped together during a weekly class or regular meeting.

Self-administered surveys (via mail or online)[15]

If the targeted respondents are local stakeholders, an effective way to increase response rates is by creating as much stakeholder ownership of/buy-in/ involvement in the survey project as possible. Stakeholder respondents are more likely to respond if they…

- had some input in the creation of the evaluation project (and the survey);
- feel that the evaluation project (and survey) responds to their needs and interests; and
- feel that program decision-makers are genuinely interested in and value their feedback.

[15] Adapted from Brown (2001), Dillman (2000), Norris and Conn (2005).

Guidelines for increasing response rates (continued)

Beyond ownership concerns, consider the following guidelines to increase response rates:

1. Create a respondent friendly questionnaire	• Clear questions, appropriate question order, observe visual/layout recommendations (see section 4.3)
2. Personalize correspondence	
3. Provide assurances that responses are confidential (though be brief to avoid arousing suspicion)	
4. Determine an optimal (e)mail-out date and administration period	• Administer when people will be more likely to respond (avoid busy periods, holidays, etc.) • Allow enough time to complete the survey (e.g., two weeks for the initial administration period) • Allow sufficient scheduling time for multiple follow-up/reminders (2 reminders minimum) • Be clear about how long the survey takes to complete and cutoff dates when collection will stop.
5. Explain to recipients the importance of the survey and the value of their opinions	
6. Provide survey instructions	• Explain how to navigate through and submit the survey • Include instructions for each section if applicable
7. Multiple contacts/notifications	• Pre-notification (request participation in advance)—brief, personalized, positively worded, aimed at building anticipation; arrives a few days to a week before administration • Follow-up, reminder contacts or phone calls (without follow-up contacts, response rates are 20-40 percentage points lower. Dillman, 2000) • Tracking non-responders and contacting them in follow-up notifications (though see below for ethical considerations regarding anonymity) • *Mail*-send a replacement questionnaire
8. Mail	• Use a cover letter (less than a page; explain why the survey is important) • Supply a stamped, self-addressed envelope • Put the address somewhere on the questionnaire (see "parting information" above)
9. Email	• Avoid spam language in email correspondence[16] • Follow-up with a mailed (paper-based) survey

[16] For information on spam language see http://help.surveymonkey.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/426/session/L2F2LzEvc2lkL1VSbzNRSnlr

An example of how to maximize response rates during a survey administration

Below is an example of a survey administration procedure—aiming to maximize response rates—involving a survey emailed to students graduating from a language program.

EXAMPLE OF SURVEY ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURE	
Timing/Scheduling	• The administration period start date is scheduled immediately after final exams/final assignment due dates, and before graduation ceremonies (to catch students before summer vacation)
Pre-administration	• The survey is repeatedly promoted via email, during student advisor meetings, and in classes with high enrollments of graduating students. • During each of these contacts, emphasis is on… ○ anonymity ○ importance of findings for program improvement ○ value of students' opinions
First contact/ administration	• Respondents have a two-week period to complete the survey, with a clear due date on the first page • The initial email invitation comes from someone fairly high-up/with some authority; to lend the invitation weight and "officialness" (in this case the department Chair) • A follow-up message is sent, simultaneously, from a faculty member who students know well/personally, encouraging them in a friendly informal way to participate • The respondent group is small, so each graduate receives an individual personalized email
Reminders	• Two emailed reminder notifications are sent ○ one half way through the administration period ○ one just before the due date (both drawing attention to the due date) • In the second reminder email, attention is drawn to response rates ○ The specific numbers of people who have and have not responded are listed. ○ Those who have completed the survey are thanked; those who have not are gently exhorted, in a friendly, polite way, to do so
Extension	• Two extension periods are added to the original due date (each a week long) • Reminder emails are sent toward the end of each extension period • The reminder procedure above is followed during the extension period as well (at this stage, extension and reminder efforts only get a few stragglers, but every respondent counts)

Anonymity and survey method ethics

Particular care needs to be taken where evaluation facilitators have assured anonymity and confidentiality. Aspects of administration can reveal in the following ways:

-Language skills can give away certain L2 speakers' identities
-Small numbers of respondents (1 or 2) cannot be guaranteed anonymity. In such cases, accumulate a minimum of 5 or more respondents before data is analyzed.

Ensuring anonymity is one of a number of ethical responsibilities evaluation facilitators should consider carefully. See appendix B for additional ethical guidelines for survey research.

6. ANALYZING SURVEY DATA

Once collection is completed, survey data will need to be organized into a format that enables interpretation by decision makers and other stakeholders. The key aspect of this process is to organize data in such a way that will enable *relevant* and *sufficiently trustworthy* interpretations, given the stipulated evaluation questions and uses.

To these ends, consider a few use-related concerns:[17]

1. How will data need to be organized to answer evaluation questions and enable desired uses?
2. Who should be involved in data organization? Be mindful of the possibility of inappropriate data manipulation.
3. Can intended users be involved in the data organization process (or approve how data will be organized/analyzed)? Doing so helps ensure PIUs will see relevant and needed information.
4. What data analysis expertise is available (either within or beyond the program)? Though remember strict technocratic criteria in organizing data are unnecessary; think of the best way to organize data to facilitate relevant interpretations (i.e., to answer evaluation questions).
5. What are decision makers'/stakeholders' attitudes toward (and knowledge of) data analysis and interpretation generally? Do people have preferences for certain approaches? Given these inclinations, which types of analysis will be regarded as credible and trustworthy in decision-makers' eyes?

6.1. Coding, entering, cleaning data from paper-based surveys[18]

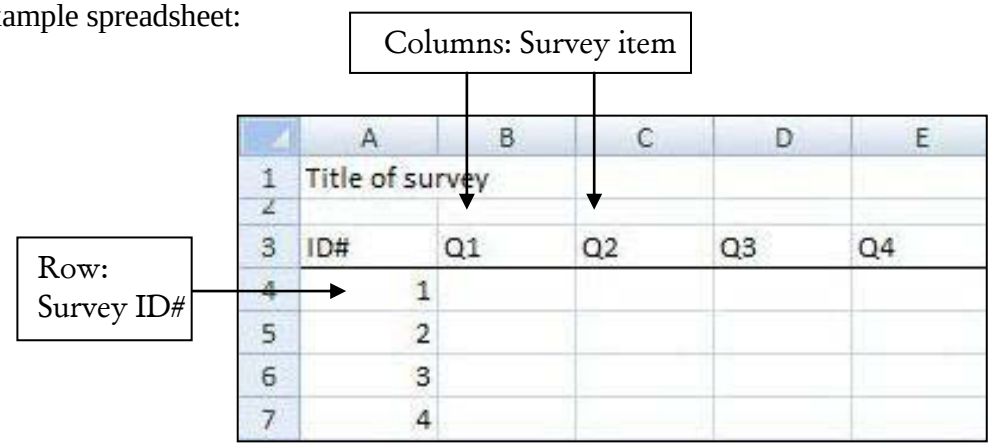
Online survey tools will allow for data from electronic questionnaires to be directly imported into analysis software. Data from paper surveys will need to be entered into software packages (like Excel, Access, SPSS, SAS, etc.) by hand.

Coding, entering, cleaning

1. Write an identification number on each survey (e.g., in the upper right hand corner).
2. Code data. Assign a numerical value to all textual data (except open-ended data). For example:
   - "Yes" = 1
   - "No" = 2
   - Keep track of all codes either in a codebook or using a coding key
3. Create a database spreadsheet (example below from Excel)
   - Use survey question/item numbers as labels for columns;
   - Use survey identification codes as labels for rows:

[17] Adapted from Watanabe & Davis (2011).
[18] Adapted from Leahy (2004).

Example spreadsheet:



4. Enter data

- Type in the ID number and coded survey data from each questionnaire (one row of data for each questionnaire)
- Transcribe/type open-ended data into single cell
- Be careful to type in data accurately

Related issues:

- If a question is unanswered, leave the cell blank.
- If two answers are selected for a question when only one was requested, the data are invalid; treat as unanswered.
- If there are irregular markings of rating scale items (e.g., choosing two scale points; marking between scale points), (a) leave the cell blank, or (b) treat all such instances the same—enter an "average" rating or round up/round down.
- If an open-ended response is incomplete, transcribe/enter as is.

5. Clean data (check data for accuracy)

- If practical, go through each survey again and compare survey responses with spreadsheet data entries
- Scan the data for impossible entries (e.g., an entry of 6 when responses should range from 1-5). Calculate frequencies for expected values to reveal anomalous entries. If there are errors, check the particular survey and re-enter correct value.
- For large databases, initially check five percent of entered data. If errors are found, check the remainder of the data.

6. Save and back-up data (tip: store data in multiple formats and in different locations)

6.2. Analyzing data from closed-response items

Organizing closed-item data for interpretation typically involves some kind of statistical procedure. A number of options are listed below. As noted above, when choosing from possible procedures, think about (and/or discuss with decision makers) what information is needed and organize data so that relevant interpretations can be made.

A brief list of possible analysis procedures for closed-response survey items

1. Response rate
2. Descriptive statistics
3. Cross tabulation
4. Inferential statistics
5. Item reliability (internal consistency)

1. Response rate

Response rate shows the proportion of respondents in the sample or census that submitted surveys. As noted above, response rate is calculated by dividing the number of surveys completed by the number of surveys administered:

- Surveys sent to respondents = 200 (either a sample or a census)
- Completed surveys returned = 60
- 60 / 200 = .3
- Response rate = 30%

As noted above, if evaluation uses of survey data require generalization, excessively low response rates create the possibility of a biased sample or census. Recommendations for minimum response rates are conventionally between 60% to 80%. Any lower, and reporting should include cautions that results may be biased toward a self-selecting group or groups. Nevertheless, some data are better than none!

2. Descriptive statistics

At the minimum, data analysis for closed-response items (no matter what the use) will likely involve showing descriptive statistics of some kind, which aim to summarize a data set

Distribution—summary of frequency of individual or ranges of values
- Frequencies (counts, tallies)
- Percentages

Central tendency—"center" of a distribution of values
- Mean—an average; sum the values and divide by the count
- Median—score at the middle of a set of values
- Mode—most frequently occurring value

Dispersion—spread of values around the central tendency
- Standard deviation—square root of the variance; indicates how tightly values are clustered around the mean
- Range—highest value minus the lowest value

(See the table on the next page for examples of descriptive statistics by item type)

EXAMPLES OF DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS BY ITEM TYPE

Alternative/ Dichotomous

Q1. *Did you study abroad during your studies?*

- *Yes* (1)
- *No* (2)

- Frequencies (counts)
- Percentages
- Sum of responses

YES/NO	COUNT	%
Yes	4	40%
No	6	60%
Total (sum)	10	100%

Multiple choice

Q2. *Student status:*

- *Freshman* (1)
- *Sophomore* (2)
- *Junior* (3)
- *Senior* (4)

- Frequencies (counts)
- Percentages
- Sum of responses

Status	COUNT	%
Freshman	3	30%
Sophomore	2	20%
Junior	2	20%
Senior	3	30%
Total (sum)	10	100%

Rating scale

Q3. *Study abroad was well-integrated into my studies.*

- *strongly disagree* (1)
- *disagree* (2)
- *agree* (3)
- *strongly agree* (4)
- *n/a* (5)

- Frequencies (counts)
- Percentages
- Sum of responses
- Central tendency: mean, median, mode
- Dispersion: range, lowest-highest value, standard deviation (SD)

	COUNT	%
Strongly disagree	0	%
Disagree	2	20%
Agree	4	40%
Strongly agree	3	30%
n/a	1	10%
Total (sum)	10	100%

Mean*	3.11
SD	.74

*Be sure to omit n/a values when calculating means and standard deviations

Rank order

Q4. *How much time do you spend in class on the following? (1 = most time; 4 = least time.)*

listening to lectures ____
speaking ____
reading ____
writing ____

- Frequencies (counts)
- Percentages
- Sum of responses
- Central tendency (median, mode)

	LISTENING		SPEAKING		READING		WRITING	
RANK	COUNT	%	COUNT	%	COUNT	%	COUNT	%
1	3	30%	3	30%	1	10%	3	30%
2	1	10%	2	20%	4	40%	3	30%
3	1	10%	3	30%	4	40%	2	20%
4	5	50%	2	20%	1	10%	2	20%
Median	3.5		2.5		2.5		2	
Mode	4		1,3		2,3		1,2	

3. Cross-tabulation

Cross tabulation allows comparison of response patterns among subgroups. Data is typically represented in a contingency table:

	STUDY ABROAD?					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Freshman	0	0%	3	30%	3	30%
Sophomore	0	0%	2	20%	2	20%
Junior	2	20%	0	0%	2	20%
Senior	2	20%	1	10%	3	30%
Total	4	40%	6	60%	10	100%

4. Inferential statistics

Inferential statistics are used to draw conclusions that extend beyond the immediate data set. Inferential procedures can be used by to see whether observed patterns are occurring by chance or whether they occur systematically in the population (Watanabe & Davis, 2011). Possible inferential procedures used in survey evaluation research include:[19]

- **Chi-square statistics** (χ^2)
  If data fall into mutually exclusive categories, such as gender, chi-square statistics indicate whether one categorical variable is unexpectedly dependent on another.
  - Example: A chi-square test would indicate if choosing to study abroad is related to—or independent of—gender.
- **Correlations** (Pearson *r*, Spearman ρ)
  Correlation indicates the degree of relationship between two interval variables of interest (e.g., test scores).
  - Example: Correlations could indicate the strength of a relationship between ratings of course satisfaction and final exam scores. (See Peacock, 2009, for an example of the use correlation in language program evaluation.)
- **Comparison of means/medians** (ANOVA, *t*-test, Mann-Whitney *U*, Kruskal-Wallis, etc.)
  If groups of respondents have different mean or median scores on a variable of interest (e.g., different average satisfaction ratings), statistical tests can indicate whether the differences are occurring by chance or if the groups are uniformly different from one another.
  - Example: Statistical tests of mean difference could indicate whether learners with a heritage language profile differ significantly from other groups on their ratings of satisfaction with teaching practices and classroom learning (e.g., amount of spontaneous class-room speaking, amount of explicit grammatical instruction, etc.).
- **Confidence interval** (standard error)
  A confidence interval provides a range of values likely to include an unknown population value. A key confidence interval statistic for surveys is sampling error (i.e., standard error, or standard error of the means), which indicates the variance from collecting data on only a subset of the population, rather than all of the members in the population.

[19] Adapted from University of Texas at Austin (2007).

- Example: When pollsters say that the standard error for a survey of voters is ±3%, and 45% of respondents indicated they would vote for candidate A, the real proportion of people in the population who would vote for candidate A is somewhere between 42% and 48%. For more information on survey standard error see Rea and Parker (2005).

5. Item reliability (Internal consistency—Cronbach alpha, factor analysis, Rasch analysis)
Surveys can be used to measure psychological "constructs" such as motivation, anxiety, personality, or willingness to communicate, etc. Typically this is achieved by using a multi-item rating scale, or a group of rating items that together operationalize a psychological trait (e.g., ten agreement rating questions that each ask about/tap into some aspect of a respondent's willingness to communicate). Inferential statistics (Cronbach alpha and factor analysis, commonly) can be used to establish the reliability of those scales by gauging consistency of responses—for example, whether willing (or unwilling) communicators consistently rate items indicating their willingness (or lack thereof) to communicate. For a more detailed discussion on how to use statistical procedures for consistency see Brown (2001) and Dörnyei and Taguchi (also see Green (1996) for an example using Rasch analysis).

More detailed information on how to analyze survey data using inferential statistical procedures can be found in Brown (2001) and Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010).

6.3. Analyzing data from open-response items

Analyzing open-ended responses involves organizing textual data (e.g., single words, brief phrases, sentences, etc.) so that the ideas in the information can be used toward answering evaluation questions.

Is analysis necessary?
The first decision, however, will be to decide whether analysis is even necessary. How much data is there? For small groups of respondents, decision-makers may benefit most from seeing a simple listing of the raw information.

Categorization (i.e., coding)[20]
For large amounts of data, an analytic process is commonly required to search through, reduce, and organize the information for interpretation. The process typically involves identifying recurrent ideas and patterns, etc., and grouping these into analytical categories to aid interpretation (often referred to as "coding").

The key task in this type of analysis is creating the analytical categories. It can be done in two ways: either by (a) establishing preset categories, or (b) by looking for emerging categories in the data itself.

Applying preset categories (deductive analysis)
Prior to analysis, evaluators can start with a set of preset categories and then search through the data looking for those topics. The categories can come from theoretical research or anticipated issues decision makers want to know about.

[20] Adapted from Taylor-Powell & Renner (2003).

Letting categories emerge (inductive analysis)
Another method is to find analytical categories in the data. The process involves reading and re-reading the data and looking for the recurrent issues and ideas that emerge. These recurrent ideas become the analytical categories. (Note that the methods can be used productively together.)

Steps in categorization/coding
To illustrate, below is a simplified inductive analytical procedure.[21]

1. Arrange textual data in a spreadsheet
Many methods (and tools) for organizing text exist. One option is to use a spreadsheet.
List all the data from an open-response question in a single column, with one comment per cell.
Next, number each row; then, create another adjacent column for coding/labeling.

Example spreadsheet

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1			What suggestions do you have to improve the program					
2	Code		Q.15					
3		1	NONE.					
4		2	More classes					
5		3	None.					
6		4	Offer more courses. It was difficult to plan my schedule aroun					
7		5	Not so much of the "outside" class activities because we do sp					
8		6	N/a.					
9		7	More inclusive group activities that will encourage students to					

2. Initial read-through of all responses
Read through each response to get an overall sense of the data. Look for patterns, groupings, common issues, recurring ideas, etc.

3. Create categories
Create categories for patterns of concepts and recurrent ideas (e.g., "more speaking in class," "more extra-curricular activities"). Assign an abbreviation or identifying numeral to each category for sorting later (e.g. "more speaking in class" = "MSC"). List these in a coding key.

Example code key

28	CODE	CATEGORY
29	EA(M)=	Extracurricular activities (more)
30	EA(L)=	Extracurricular activities (less)
31	GA(M)=	Group activities (more)
32	N=	None
33	MC=	More courses
34	NA=	N/A, not applicable

[21] Adapted from Taylor-Powell & Renner (2003) and Planning Council for Health and Human Services, Inc. (2011).

NOTE: An initial decision should be made about how many people to involve in the category creation/coding process. Having another person review the responses independently and check their sense of the data against your own helps reduce subjective (and potentially biased) coding from a single individual (see step 4).

4. Label individual responses with a category (or code)
Read through the data again and label *each comment* with one or more of the identified categories/codes from step 3. Assign at least one category to each response (see next page).

Example coding

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1			What suggestions do you have to improve the program					
2	Code		Q.15					
3	N	1	NONE.					
4	MC	2	More classes					
5	N	3	None.					
6	MC	4	Offer more courses. It was difficult to plan my schedule aroun					
7	EA(L)	5	Not so much of the "outside" class activities because we do sp					
8	NA	6	N/a.					
9	MGA	7	More inclusive group activities that will encourage students to					

NOTE: The trustworthiness of coding procedures can benefit from bringing in a second coder and calculating the consistency of the two coders. One method is to calculate inter-coder reliability (see Brown, 2001, p. 233). Another consistency procedure is Cohen's Kappa, which takes into account coder agreement occurring by chance.[22]

5. Check categories
Check if the categories are appropriate. Some responses may not fit neatly into initial categories, so a number of subcategories—or entirely new categories—may be needed. Often it is the case that an overarching category is accurate, but that there are different values possible in responding to that category. For example "number of courses required" may be a category, with "too few", "just right", and "too many" being the values options. Coding schemes should be able to identify large categories as well as levels of response value for each.

6. Review for prominent themes
Review to see which of the categories have the most responses (count the frequency of categories). These indicate majority views, and represent prominent themes.

7. Identifying patterns within and between categories
(a) Analyze within categories:

- list key ideas within a category, or
- list similarities and differences between respondents' comments within a category.

(b) Find relationships between categories:

[22] For more information on Cohen's Kappa, see http://www.experiment-resources.com/cohens-kappa.html.

- group categories into larger superordinate categories, or
- find links and relationships between categories (e.g., does one category seem to co-occur with, or cause, another?)

Ethical considerations: Given the nature of open-response items and the freedom they provide for respondents to say what they like, bear in mind the following:

- Responses may be harshly critical, even insulting of individuals;
- Respondents may write something that inadvertently reveals their identity;
- If responding in an L2, anonymity can be compromised by language proficiency

If confidentiality has been assured, be mindful of ethical obligations to do evaluation that avoids bringing harm others. One solution is to omit information that will damage individuals or compromise identity.

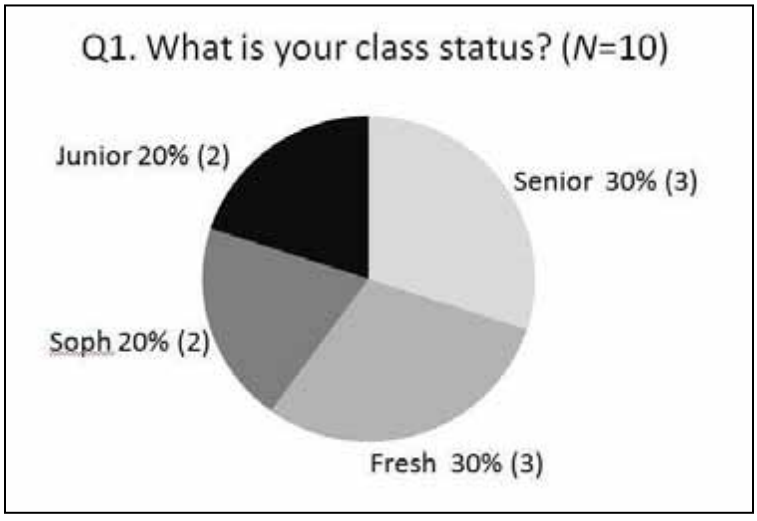
6.4. Presenting survey data

Survey data can be presented in various ways to aid interpretation. In general, a good graph/chart or table should convey information quickly and efficiently. Additional considerations include:

- The audience (primarily intended users, but others also)
  - Given intended uses and evaluation questions, what does the audience need to know?
- What you want to communicate
  - What do the data show? What is the main message?
- The most appropriate format
  - Graph/Chart (e.g., pie, bar, line, scatter plot, box plot)
  - Table
  - Representative quotes, images, etc.

Pie graph

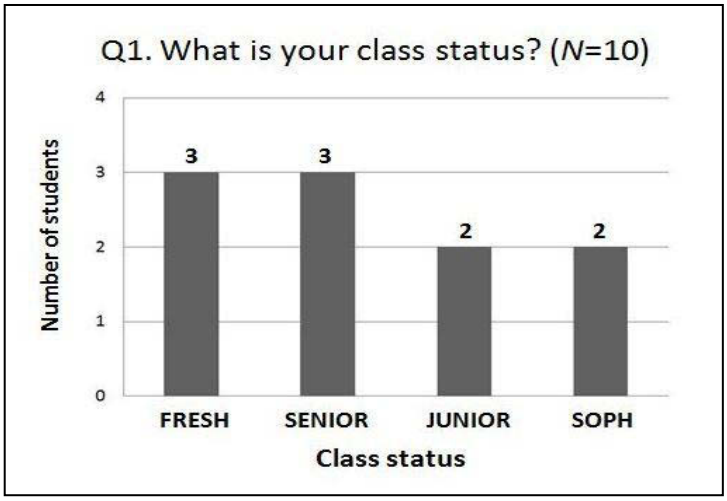
Use pie graphs to show parts of a whole as percentages. Pie charts are useful for comparing pieces to the whole.



- Avoid pie graphs if there are numerous categories (use bar graphs instead)
- Avoid 3-D and elaborate crosshatching
- Use black-and-white formats to show different parts clearly

Bar graph

Use bar graphs to compare values across categories. Bar charts are better for comparing individual pieces to each other.



- Add horizontal lines to help readers compare the values more easily (though make these unobtrusive/a lighter color).
- If longer descriptive labels are needed, use horizontal bars.

Table

Note: When considering pie or bar graphs, experiment with a table (which some regard as a more efficient way to show information). Which format conveys the information most efficiently?

Q1. What is your class status? (*N* = 10)

Status	*N*	%
Freshman	3	30%
Senior	3	30%
Sophomore	2	20%
Junior	2	20%
Total	10	

Other examples…

Bar graph (rating scale)

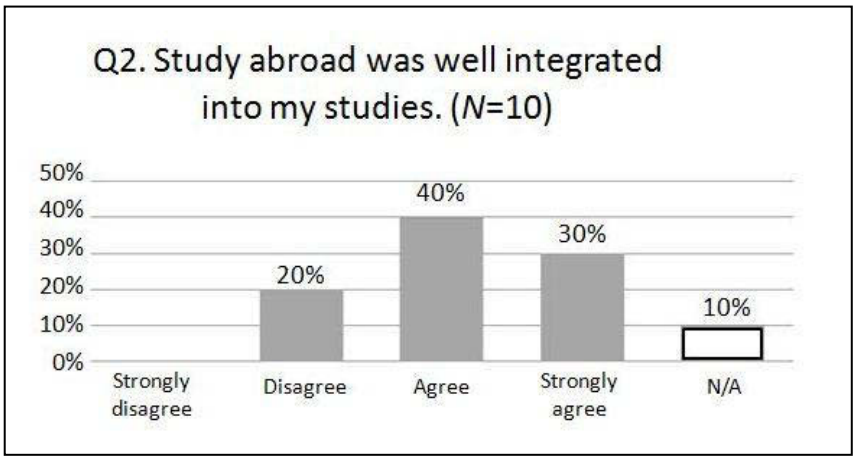
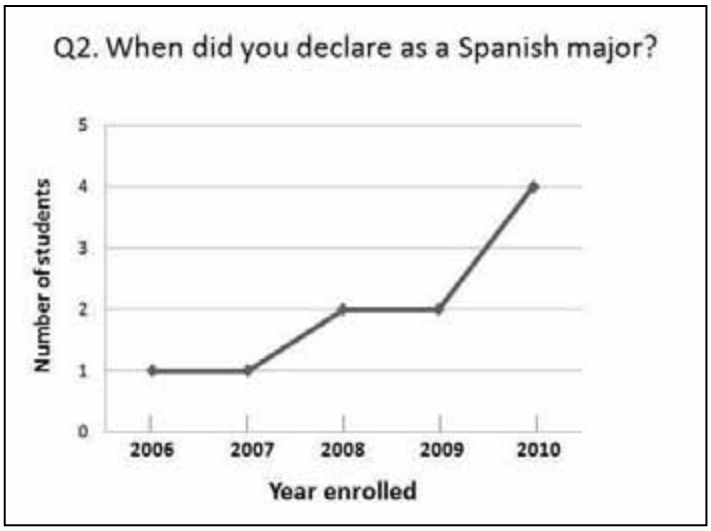


Table (rating scale)

	N	*M*	*SD*	strongly disagree 1	disagree 2	agree 3	strongly agree 4	n/a
Q2. Study abroad was well integrated into my studies.	10	3.11	.78	0%(0)	20%(2)	40%(4)	30%(3)	1(10%)

Line graph

Use line charts for a time series (or some other sequence), or relationships between variables. Use a line graph to show trends and patterns (not exact quantitative values).



Presenting qualitative data

If using tables for coded textual data, group by code/category and frequency (from largest to smallest). Consider including all raw data in a report appendix. For example:

Table 3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program? (*N* = 15)

Strengths (*n* = 9)	Weaknesses (*n* = 6)
"Quality of teaching" (4) • Professors are experts, interesting lectures • Great lectures • Teaching is high-quality • Teaching **"Dedication of faculty" (3)** • Professor [omitted] seems really committed to student success • Really appreciated my advisor's mentoring • Dr. [omitted] really goes out of her way to help students **"Study abroad" (2)** • Study abroad is a great program • Best thing about the program is study abroad opportunities	**"Course availability" (3)** • There are far too few SPAN101 sections • Not enough senior seminars in the spring when students need to graduate • Had to wait two semesters for SPAN324 **"Facilities" (3)** • The language lab needs modernizing • Not all classrooms have audio-visual equipment • The printer in the student common room always seems to need a new print cartridge

6.5. Interpreting survey data[23]

Like analysis, data interpretation is a subjective process. Where possible judgments and conclusions should be achieved via dialogue and consensus (consider involving more than one decision maker/primary intended user in the interpretation process to avoid willful, or politically-driven, misinterpretation). A key concern, then, is who will be involved:

- Will any conclusions be drawn about the data, or will just the data be reported?
- If the data are to be interpreted, who will do the interpreting?
- Whose perspective matters most? Who should be involved in data interpretation? Why?
- How will interpretation be checked? Is it necessary to bring in other perspectives?
- Is triangulation necessary? (Triangulation = looking at additional sources of information to confirm what the survey is telling us.)
- Are patterns found from open-response items and closed-response items complementary or divergent
- Who will draw implications? Who gets to make recommendations?
- Are the interpretations and recommendations cogently evident from the data and clearly articulated in understandable language for intended users (and other stakeholders)?

7. USING SURVEY FINDINGS[24]

7.1. Reporting survey findings

Reporting is a key component of useful evaluation. Good evaluation work can be undone by inappropriate reporting, undermining the ability to use findings (not to mention wasting time and resources). In general, a useful report is informative, timely, accessible, relevant and meaningful for users and other audiences. Other considerations include the following:

Initial decisions

- Who should be brought in to the reporting process, with how much involvement?
- Consider preparation time needed for reporting (schedule accordingly)
- Consider an appropriate venue, date, and time

The audience

Given the audience, how should survey findings be communicated and shared? A few guidelines:

- Be flexible; tailor the reporting format and content to the audience
- Be aware of decision makers' time constraints and availability
- Be aware of knowledge-levels of decision makers, and the affect on how they will receive assessment reports
- Do not assume that audiences understand technical language and concepts

[23] Adapted from Watanabe and Davis (2011).
[24] Adapted from Watanabe and Davis (2011).

The medium
Different formats will suit different audiences and purposes

- Be aware of reporting demands from particular decision makers/intended users
- Choose a format that will best enable decision makers to achieve evaluation purposes and uses
- Consider how interactive reporting should be (will interpretation happen during reporting? If so, consider interactive formats)

○ written report	○ presentation
○ research monograph	○ workshop
○ executive summary	○ online communication
○ brochure	○ online conference
○ newsletter article	○ meeting
○ poster	
○ website (e.g., ppt, video)	

The message

- Do not surprise decision-makers
- Choose the author of the report strategically (think politically about intended audiences)
- Draw attention to evaluation purposes, uses, and questions
- Draw deliberate links between findings and questions (where they exist); highlight where questions have not been addressed by findings
- Ensure findings provide clear and feasible guidance for future program action.
- Cast negatives in a positive light (i.e., in terms of valued organizational learning and potential for change)

7.2. Drafting an action plan and timeline

Once findings are reported and disseminated, evaluators and primary intended users should formulate a plan to use the information. Given findings, what needs to happen next? When will it happen? To go about using findings systematically, determine a feasible action plan and concrete timeline:

- To the extent possible, involve primary intended users and stakeholders in the development of an action plan and timeline
- List the major actions that need to take place to use survey findings
- Consider feasibility. Can things get done given time and resources? Should some actions take priority over others?
- Is additional information needed to take desired actions? If so, what else do people need to know?
- Create a timeline—select a target date and plan backwards (allow sufficient time)
- Select target dates for each of the steps and phases that will happen along the way
- Who is going to be involved and at what point? Allocate tasks; clarify responsibilities.

8. SURVEY RESOURCES

Recommended!

- A good source of information is the "Using surveys in language program evaluation" webpage at the *Foreign Language Program Evaluation Project* website, which includes:
  - Selected how-to texts on survey methodology
  - Publications on surveys used in L2 program evaluation, curriculum development, and research
  - Websites on survey design for evaluation
  - Comparisons of online survey tools
  - Published research on use of online surveys

The site also has a comprehensive set of resources (both practical and research-oriented) for evaluation in foreign language programs generally.

  - http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/evaluation/R_survey.htm

- For a number of examples of surveys used in language programs (both for students and faculty), as well as information on an ongoing college-wide survey/assessment project, visit the evaluation webpage at the College of Languages, Linguistics, and Literatures (CLLL), University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
  - http://www.lll.hawaii.edu/eval/surveysPage.php

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Appendix A
Selected evaluation questions from FL/ESL studies using survey methods

EXAMPLE EVALUATION QUESTIONS	
Student satisfaction, perceptions	• What did students expect to learn in their classes, and did the classes meet their expectations? (Milleret & Silveira, 2009) • What types of classroom activities and assessments were most helpful to students? (Milleret & Silveira, 2009) • What are student perceptions of the value of their foreign language learning, and what behaviors and dispositions has it engendered? (Walther, 2009)
Student learning outcomes	• What levels of language proficiency are students achieving in oral and written communication by the end of the required sequences? (Walther, 2009) • What cultural knowledge, understandings, and perspectives are students gaining? (Walther, 2009) • To what extent do outside factors such as study abroad, heritage status, and previous language learning experiences play a role in students' learning outcomes? (Walther, 2009) • To what extent do UEDFL majors graduate with the basic knowledge and skills that faculty expect? (Grau Sempere, Mohn, & Pieroni, 2009) • To what extent does the program provide the students with the necessary resources to graduate with expected knowledge and skills? (Grau Sempere, Mohn, & Pieroni, 2009) • To what extent are UEDFL majors able to compete with other students graduating from similar programs? (Grau Sempere, Mohn, & Pieroni, 2009)
Instructor induction	• How well are pre-semester induction practices helping new teachers to get ready for the teaching tasks? (Yang, 2008) • What are the intended outcomes of the pre-semester induction practices for new teachers? (Yang, 2008)
Instructor training	• What kind of training course could best respond to the department's needs? ○ What are the training needs of the GTAs in terms of foreign language teaching? ○ What are the needs of the coordinators in terms of their interaction with the GTAs? ○ What training program format and content could better accommodate the needs of the stakeholders? (Zannirato & Sánchez-Serrano, 2009)
Study-abroad	• Are courses in Spanish study abroad programs at a sufficient level of academic quality to count toward Linfield foreign language degree requirements? (Ramsay, 2009) • Are all aspects of the study abroad experience in Spain working effectively to facilitate language and cultural development? (Ramsay, 2009)
Misc. program development	• What evidence exists to support the need for a stand-alone *BA in Spanish* instead of a *BA in World Languages and Cultures with emphasis in Spanish*? (Lowensen & Gómez, 2009) • Did students get the information they needed from the promotional campaign to help them enroll in the correct class for their language background? (Milleret & Silveira, 2009)

Appendix B
Survey research ethics

The following guidelines for ethical survey research are adapted from the Code of Professional Ethics and Practices from the American Association for Policy Opinion Research (AAPOR, 2010):

- Avoid practices or methods that may harm, endanger, humiliate, or seriously mislead survey respondents or prospective respondents.
- Respect respondents' desires not to answer specific survey questions or provide other information.
- Be responsive to respondents' questions about how their contact information was secured.
- Participation in survey-evaluation must be voluntary.
- Provide participants a description of the research study sufficient to permit them to make an informed and free decision about their participation.
- Make no false or misleading claims survey-evaluation project's purpose.
- Provide truthful answers to direct questions about the survey-evaluation project.
- If disclosure can substantially bias responses (or have some other damaging consequences), indicate that some information cannot or will not be revealed until the survey-evaluation is concluded.
- Unless the respondent waives confidentiality for specified uses, all information that could be used to identify a respondent with his/ her responses is privileged and confidential.
- Do not disclose or use the names of respondents or any other personally-identifying information for non-evaluation purposes unless the respondents grant permission to do so.

Appendix C—Example of a language program evaluation survey [25]
(Delivered via email using SurveyMonkey)

DEPARTMENT OF [NAME] LANGUAGES B.A. STUDENT EXIT SURVEY

Welcome to the [language] BA exit survey

Dear student:
Congratulations! You are completing a B.A. in [language] in the department of [name]. As part of our program improvement effort, the department and the College of Arts & Sciences would appreciate feedback on your experiences in the program and its impact on your accomplishments and future plans. Your candid responses will help us maintain the quality of education that we provide to undergraduate students, and thereby maintain the value of your degree.

Please read the following and click "next" to proceed. Thank you for your cooperation.

Use of the data: the findings from this survey are intended to inform the [name] department and the College of Arts & Sciences for educational improvement.

Confidentiality: your responses will not be associated with individually identifiable information, and they will be kept anonymous by the data collection team in the College of Arts & Sciences. Responses will be reported only when sufficient numbers have accumulated (e.g., on a yearly basis), such that individuals will not be connected with their particular responses.

Procedures: the survey includes four sections for you to complete:
Section 1: background information
Section 2: academic experiences
Section 3: student learning outcomes
Section 4: program value and improvement

Duration: the survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

DUE DATE: X/X/20XX

[Name], Chair
Department of [name]

[Name], Dean
College of Arts & Sciences
University of [name]

Page 1

[25] A student exit survey for graduating seniors. Adapted from College of Languages, Linguistics, and Literatures, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (2011).

DEPARTMENT OF [NAME] B.A. STUDENT EXIT SURVEY

Section I: Background information

To better understand your educational experiences and learning outcomes, please tell us about yourself.

1. When did you first enroll at [university]?

When? Year: _____ Semester:_____

2. When did you declare a BA in [language] as your major.

When? Year: _____ Semester:_____

3. Are you a double-major?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4-A. Did you participate in the internship program during studies?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4-B. If you answered yes above (4-A), please tell us where you did the internship and for how long?

(1) Where/Location: _____
(2) How long/Length of time: _____

5-A. Did you study abroad during your studies?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5-B. If you answered yes above (5-A), please tell us where you studied and for how long.

(1) Where/Location: _____
(2) How long/Length of time: _____

6. Please tell us if your parents, grandparents, or anyone else in your immediate/extended family is a native speaker of [language]. Choose all that apply.

☐ Mother ☐ Maternal grandparent(s) ☐ Other
☐ Father ☐ Paternal grandparent(s)

If you answered "Other," please specify: _____

7. How did you financially support your college education? Choose all that apply.

☐ Fellowship/Scholarship ☐ Personal savings earnings ☐ Loans ☐ Other
☐ Teaching/Research assistantship ☐ Parents ☐ Grant

If you answered "Other," please specify: _____

(Continued on next page.)

(Section I continued)

8. What are your immediate plans after graduation?

9. What are your long-term personal and/or career goals?

DEPARTMENT OF [NAME] B.A. STUDENT EXIT SURVEY

Section II: Academic experiences

Using the rating scale, please indicate the degree to which you are satisfied with the program.

1. Overall satisfaction with the program.

	Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied	Not applicable
1. Availability of program information (website, brochure)	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. Academic standards and expectations	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. Relevance of program to academic/professional goals	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. Appropriateness of degree requirements	○	○	○	○	○	○
5. Faculty mentoring and advising	○	○	○	○	○	○
6. Extra-curricular activities (e.g., cultural activities)	○	○	○	○	○	○
7. Student morale	○	○	○	○	○	○
8. Research opportunities	○	○	○	○	○	○
9. Career training opportunities	○	○	○	○	○	○
10. Faculty's ability to keep pace with the field	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please provide comments that will help us understand your ratings above, if any:

(Continued on next page.)

(Section II continued)

2. Satisfaction with courses in the program.

	Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied	Not applicable
1. Overall quality of instruction	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. Variety of courses	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. Course sequencing	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. Course availability	○	○	○	○	○	○
5. Frequency of course offerings	○	○	○	○	○	○
6. Class size	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please provide comments that will help us understand your ratings above, if any:

3. Satisfaction with institutional resources.

	Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied	Not applicable
1. Classroom facilities	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. Lab facilities	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. Library resources	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. Funding opportunities (e.g., scholarships, grants, study abroad)	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please provide comments that will help us understand your ratings above, if any:

DEPARTMENT OF [NAME] B.A. STUDENT EXIT SURVEY

Section III: Student learning outcomes

1. The following statements are student learning outcomes for your degree program

To what extent can you do the following?

1. Engage in oral communication in [language] in various social contexts, in linguistically and culturally appropriate ways.	Not at all	With great difficulty	With some difficulty	Easily
2. Read and comprehend texts written in [language] from a variety of genres and contexts (e.g., newspapers, essay collections, novels).	○	○	○	○
3. Apply critical thinking and rhetorical skills to produce coherent written works and presentations in both English and [language].	○	○	○	○
4. Use a variety of [language] reference works and sources, including dictionaries and encyclopedias both in book form and on the internet.	○	○	○	○
5. Conduct independent research on topics in [language] literature and/or linguistics, and effectively communicate the results.	○	○	○	○
6. Demonstrate an understanding of phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics through analysis of words, phrases, and clauses from authentic [language] samples.	○	○	○	○
7. Identify and describe major authors, works, features, forms, and styles of [language] literature, both pre-modern and modern.	○	○	○	○
8. Analyze and interpret works of [language] poetry, prose, and drama, read both in translation and in the original [language], using terms appropriate to each genre.	○	○	○	○
9. Situate and evaluate [language] literature in its social, historical, intellectual, and religious contexts.	○	○	○	○

Please provide comments that will help us understand your ratings above, if any:

Page 4

DEPARTMENT OF [NAME] B.A. STUDENT EXIT SURVEY

Section IV: Program value and improvement

Please tell us what you think about our program.

1. What are the strengths of the program?

2. What recommendations do you have to improve the program?

3. Did this program increase your job prospects?

☐ Definitely not ☐ Maybe not ☐ Neutral ☐ Maybe yes ☐ Definitely yes

Please provide comments that will help us understand your response, if any:

4. Would you recommend this program to other students who are interested in getting a B.A. in [language]?

☐ Definitely not ☐ Maybe not ☐ Neutral ☐ Maybe yes ☐ Definitely yes

Please provide comments that will help us understand your response, if any:

DEPARTMENT OF [NAME] B.A. STUDENT EXIT SURVEY

Section I: Background information

We appreciate your responses to the survey, and we wish you all the best in your future endeavors! **Please click "DONE" to save your answers.** Note: After you click "Done," your responses will be submitted to the College of Arts and Sciences Evaluation Resource Team.

QUESTIONS? Please contact College of Arts and Sciences Dean [name] (555-5555, thedean@college.edu)

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