THINK-ALOUD PROTOCOL
Based on Trenor, Miller, and Gipson (2011)[1]

Process

- Tell the respondent to voice any confusion or trouble he/she has when taking the survey.
- Make sure the respondent is aware that the purpose of the study is to evaluate the *survey*, not the respondent's performance. Treat the respondent as more of a 'partner' in the study.
- If the respondent seems to be struggling with a particular question, probe with a question to help fully understand the thought processes going through the respondent's mind.

Potential Probing Questions

1. What do you think this question is asking you?
2. How do you think you should answer this question?
3. Is this question confusing? *(Avoid asking if the respondent is confused.)*
   a. If so, what would make this question less confusing?
4. What are you thinking about?
5. How did you arrive at that answer?
6. What does (a particular word/concept) mean to you?

As researchers, we should consider the following questions if it is unclear whether a respondent is having an issue:
- Does the respondent have an accurate internal representation of each question?
- Does the respondent have to re-read questions?
- Does the respondent seem to be giving a complete answer?

Utilize *respective protocol*, where at the end of the survey (or at logical midpoints), the respondent will be asked to reflect upon the questions encountered and responses provided to determine
- if, after looking back, anything else seems confusing or
- if there is any additional information the respondent thinks we should know but the instrument has not sufficiently drawn out of the respondent.

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[1] Trenor, J. M., Miller, M. K., & Gipson, K. G. (2011, June). Utilization of a think-aloud protocol to cognitively validate a survey instrument identifying social capital resources of engineering undergraduates. Paper presented at the annual meeting of American Society of Engineering Education, Vancouver, BC. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/jhyho9w.