Check in and fill out our week 1 survey!

Check-in 😊:

Week 1 survey 🙆:

Data Collection

Surveys and Interviews with Sarah Young and Di Yoong

Designing Surveys: What we'll cover

- Purpose of a survey
- Overall survey design and flow
- Designing a good survey question

Connecting your RQ to the right survey approach

When is a survey the right method?

- Use when you need standardized responses across a broad sample
- But not when depth or nuance is key

Weighing the trade-offs

Surveys vs. interviews or focus groups

- Surveys are scalable, quick, and easy to analyze
- They can miss context and are prone to misinterpretation

Closed vs open-ended questions

- Closed = fast data, limited depth
- Open = rich insights, harder to analyze

Connecting your RQ to the right survey approach

What are the general attitudes of university students toward online learning platforms?

How do first-generation college students experience academic and social life on campus?

Outlining the survey: Designing with purpose

What you are asking about?

- Decide on the type of questions that best match your goals
- Factual, behavioral, attitudinal?

How will it flow?

- Group related questions into logical sections
- Think about the respondent's journey through the survey.

Add context and clarity

- Consider adding narrative parts
- Brief intros, transitions, or explanations that guide and contextualize

Ordering questions: Guiding the respondent experience

Start with the easy stuff

- Begin with demographic or low-effort questions to build comfort and momentum
- Don't forget to ask the demographic questions that will help you answer your research question
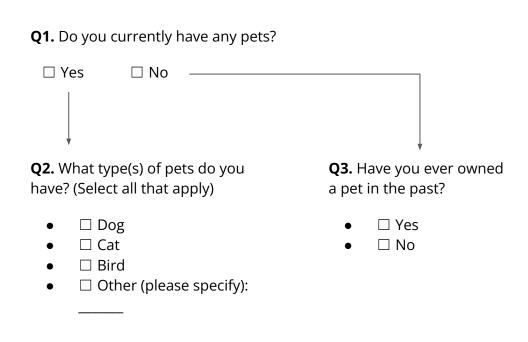
Build from simple to complex

- Order questions from least to most cognitively demanding
- Ease respondents in before asking for nuance or judgment

Ordering questions: Guiding the respondent experience

Use smart pathways

- Survey branching and skip logic can help personalize the experience, keeping it relevant and minimizing unnecessary cognitive load.

Q1. Do you currently have any pets?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Q2. What type(s) of pets do you have? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Dog
- ☐ Cat
- ☐ Bird
- ☐ Other (please specify):
  _____

Q3. Have you ever owned a pet in the past?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Ordering questions: Guiding the respondent experience

Check in on attention

- Include subtle attention-check questions to ensure data quality without frustrating the respondent.

Question:
To ensure you are paying attention, please select **"Strongly Disagree"** for this question.

Response Options:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Designing questions: Clarity, simplicity, and inclusivity

Keep it clear — avoid jargon

- Think about your audience
- Write questions with language that will make sense to them

Keep it simple

- Questions should be short and straightforward
- Long or complex wording increases dropout and misinterpretation

Mind the cognitive load

- Too many choices or options can overwhelm a respondent.
- Aim for 3–7 choices to help respondents think clearly and answer confidently

Designing questions: Clarity, simplicity, and inclusivity

Watch for double-barrelled questions

- Avoid combining two questions into one.

Q. How satisfied are you with the service and outcome?

Cover all bases

- Include an "Other (please specify)" when needed — your respondents may not fit neatly into predefined boxes.
- Allow respondents to choose multiple answers when possible or appropriate for the analysis.

Designing questions: Effective Likert scales

Neutral or not?

- Decide whether to include a midpoint.
- Use it if neutrality is meaningful — skip it if you want to nudge a stance.

Mind the order

- Keep response options in a logical, consistent order (e.g., Strongly Disagree → Strongly Agree) to reduce bias and confusion.

Keep labels consistent

- Label all points or at least clearly anchor the ends — this avoids misinterpretation.

Designing questions: Effective Likert scales

Balance your scale

- Make sure your options are symmetrical
- Equal positive and negative choices

Don't overdo it

- Stick with 5–7 points for most uses
- Enough nuance without overwhelming the respondent

One idea per item

- Avoid double-barrelled statements here too
- E.g., "The service was fast and helpful" can lead to fuzzy responses

Designing questions: Effective Likert scales

I feel confident using new digital tools in my work.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

I feel confident using new digital tools in my work.

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neither agree nor disagree

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

Asking about memory: Getting accurate responses

Be specific about timeframes

- "In the past 7 days…" versus
- "Recently" or "often" — too vague to recall accurately.

Use shorter recall periods when possible

- People are better at remembering yesterday than last month. Consider narrowing the window for more reliable data.

Anchor the memory

- Help respondents orient themselves with reference points:
- "Since Monday…" or "Since your last shift…"

Asking about memory

How many times have you ridden a bike in the last year?

_____

Asking about memory

How many times have you ridden a bike in the last year?

- ❏ Frequently
- ❏ Occasionally
- ❏ Infrequently
- ❏ Never

Asking about memory

In the past 7 days, how many times did you ride a bicycle for at least 10 minutes?

- ❏ 0 times
- ❏ 1–2 times
- ❏ 3–4 times
- ❏ 5 or more times
- ❏ I don't remember

Asking open-ended questions

Be clear and focused

- Vague questions get vague answers

Q. Please share your thoughts about this training session.

Q. What was the most useful thing you learned into today's training session?

Asking open-ended questions

Avoid leading language

- Keep it neutral.

"What did you like about…?" *vs* "What did you think about…?"

Make analysis manageable

- Use open-ended questions sparingly and strategically — they're rich but time-intensive to code and interpret.

Asking open-ended questions: increasing response rate

Give a reason to respond

- Let people know why their input matters — especially in surveys, people write more when they feel heard.

Set expectations for length

- If you want more than a one-word reply, say so:
- "Please describe in 1–2 sentences…"

Put them in the right place

- Avoid open-ended questions at the very start — warm respondents up with easier questions first.

Why pilot your survey?

Find confusing or misleading questions

- Respondents may interpret wording differently than you expect
- Even small tweaks can improve clarity, engagement, and data quality

Test flow and timing

- Learn whether the order feels logical, the transitions are smooth, and the length is reasonable
- You can use the time it takes during the pilot in your survey preamble to set expectations

Identify technical issues

- Especially important for online surveys — test on different devices and browsers.

Check response patterns

- Pilots can reveal problems like everyone choosing the same option or skipping certain questions

Activity 1:
What would you fix about this survey?

Focus Groups and 1:1 Interviews

- Often rich, deep, nuanced data
- Insights into particular frameworks and perspectives
  - People's thinking, experiences, and attitudes
- Useful to gain "insider" knowledge
  - Though, interviewer biases will play a part in who and what is shared
- A useful tool to gain an understanding of the **WHY**
  - Patterns v. insights

Focus Groups

- Collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher
    - focus groups must meet some specified set of criteria, typically that they consist of structured discussions among 6 to 10 homogeneous strangers in a formal setting
- Role of the group in producing interaction
    - observe the extent and nature of interviewees' agreement and disagreement is a unique strength of focus groups
- Role of the moderator in guiding this interaction
    - ability to ask the participants themselves for comparisons among their experiences and views, rather than aggregating individual data in order to speculate about whether or why the interviewees differ

Interviews

- Ranges from standardized/structured to open-ended/semi-structured to unstructured
  - Structured: Fixed questions and order
  - Semi-structured/Open-ended: Fixed questions/topics but participant-led order
    - Includes probes/follow-up questions
  - Unstructured: Participant driven topic and order; resembles everyday conversation
- Learn about people's beliefs, perspectives, and meaning-making – how participants experience the social world and make meaning of their life experiences
  - Limited if interview is focused on generating *facts* about events or what people do, or examine *how* events occur in a setting
    - Forgetfulness, interviewee(r) biases, desirability

Research Questions ≠ Interview Questions

Designing an Interview Guide

- Transforming your research question into interview questions
  - "Do you think of your child as a daughter, son, or a kid?"
- Topics should be something that participants can talk about (who is your audience and how does that change your question?)
  - You want to elicit stories, meaning making

Designing an Interview Guide

- Drafting the interview question/items
  - Interview items should be clear and easy to understand
  - Interview items should relate directly to the interview topics.
  - Interview items should ask only one question at a time.
  - Avoid yes/no questions
  - Avoid assuming that you know what the participants think
  - Avoid leading questions; social desirable questions are leading
  - Learn about acceptable terms/objectionable terms
- Follow-up questions
  - Goal is generally to expand on vague responses and/or to get more concrete information

Designing an Interview Guide

- Structure of interview
  - Introduce self and project
  - Demographics questions (unless it sways responses)
  - Warm-up questions for rapport
  - Easier-to-answer questions
    - Questions that aren't too cognitive demanding nor too sensitive
    - Usually general orienting questions are good to start with
  - Sensitive questions/topics
  - Ending interview questions
    - "Is there anything that you would like to add?"
    - "Do you have any questions about the study?"

ALWAYS do a pilot interview with your equipments

Activity 2:
Drafting an interview question

Activity 2: Drafting an interview question

Do people want their comfort food as their last meal?

- Design an interview question that can help you answer this research question

Activity 3:
Active listening

Activity 3: Active listening

- Pair up with a partner and choose who will be the interviewer
- *__Interviewer__*, please raise your hands and our TAs will hand you printed instructions for your role
  - Please keep the instructions to yourself
- You will be conducting the interview for __three__ minutes
- *__Interviewers__*, you will be asked to share what your interviewees said after the interview

Activity 3: Active listening

- How was this different from a regular conversation?
  - Interviewers:
    - Do you think your interview question was sufficient to elicit a good response?
    - When did you notice yourself wandering off?
    - How did you redirect your attention to your interviewees?
  - Interviewees:
    - Did you understand the question well? Would you have liked an elaboration on any of the term used?
    - Were the responses you received from your interviewer sufficient?
    - When silence happened, how did it make you feel?

As the interviewer…

- Your job is to listen with **intention** – you aren't allowed to do any note-taking

- You will be asking **only one** of your interview question

- When silence occur/lull in the interviewee's response, resist the urge to follow up or ask more questions
  - **Let the silence stew**

- You may encourage the interviewee to continue to share with nods, affirmations (e.g. uh-huh, mmmhmm), and other non-verbal cues

Logistics of interviews

- Size of the recorded files
  - Lossless formats v. compressed formats - Where are you going to store the files
  - Audio only or audio and video files
- In-person or virtual?
- What metadata do you need?
  - Time, date, location, person (pseudonym or not)
  - Type of recording, on what device(s), length of recording
- Transcripts for analysis v. for archiving/sharing
  - Indexing v. transcribing

Sample and recruitment

Sample and recruitment

- Michigan's Consumer Sentiment Index
  - Phone call = who is your audience?
- Recruitment strategy:
  - Phone, MTurk, Prolific, SONA, Social Media, Snowballing
- Difficult to get a truly random sample; important to consider your audience and where you could reach them
  - Maybe a truly random sample is not important to your research question?
  - Stratified sampling can be helpful to recruiting for focus groups and interviews