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# Multilingual Survey Design

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## OVERVIEW

Metropolitan Community College (MCC) in Omaha, Nebraska is a two year institution with programs for non-traditional students such as those seeking their GED and English as a Second Language (ESL) students. On Metropolitan Community College's website, it says that the program is sanctioned by the Workplace Innovation and Opportunity Act and offers adult learners the skills to:

- Help adults become literate and acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency.
- Support parents in obtaining the education and skills needed to become active partners in their children's educational development and improve their family's economic opportunities.
- Assist adults in earning a secondary school diploma or its equivalent and transitioning to postsecondary education and training through career pathways.
- Aid immigrants and English language learners in enhancing their reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in English and mathematics, as well as understanding the American system of government, individual freedoms, and citizenship responsibilities.

Kaylen is currently a Transitional Learning Community (TLC) instructor. The TLC course is the mandatory orientation course before students in the GED and ESL programs can start their classes. Its purpose is to give students a structured way to complete required documentation and tasks and to give them the tools they need in class. Activities include but are not limited to: government paperwork, career pathway surveys and activities, class placement testing, computer skills practice, and curriculum tools orientation.

## PROBLEM

As part of the funding requirements for these adult education programs, MCC must collect follow-up data about program participants' compensation, employment status, and housing. The current survey format only allows for phone interviews to gather this data. This presents issues with survey participation due to two main concerns:

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1. **Language Barriers:** Some program participants ~~graduates~~ are not fluent in English, making it difficult to communicate effectively and collect accurate data.
  2. **Personal Nature of Information:** Asking for sensitive details, like salary, over the phone can make participants uncomfortable or hesitant to share, which might lead to incomplete or inaccurate responses.

Another key issue we will face when developing this survey is that it needs to be an editable “living” document because the program coordinators at MCC must be able to work on the survey questions and access the data often.

## STRATEGIC PLAN

To address these issues, we are developing a multilingual survey that will allow participants to respond in their preferred language. Initially the survey will be translated into Spanish because Spanish speakers make up the largest population of ESL students at Metropolitan Community College. This approach will reduce language barriers and offer program participants a more private and secure way to share personal information, like salary details and living conditions, without the pressure of a phone conversation that may not be in their native language.

By providing an easier, more accessible way to collect this data, we hope to improve both response rates and the accuracy of our program evaluations.

## Survey Software

The survey software and formatting we choose will be very important to the longevity of our design. If we choose a software that requires subscriptions, MCC may not be able to maintain it based on fund availability. If we pick a format that does not translate to their required record maintenance structure, the work we do will not become widely adopted. We will need to work with our client on understanding their capabilities when it comes to software. Some of the options include:

### JotForm

Key characteristics: Accessibility and Conditional Logic Functionality

Number of Survey/Form Questions: 100 with free plan

Number of Responses Allowed: 100/month with free plan

Important: offers a 50% discount on paid plan to educational institutions

### SurveyPlanet

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Key characteristics: Large surveys

Number of Survey/Form Questions: Unlimited

Number of Responses Allowed: Unlimited

Number of Surveys Allowed: Unlimited

Important: Support for 30 different languages, Enterprise plan: \$350/year and may be required for exporting large amounts of data

## **Translation Quality and Consistency**

When creating a multilingual survey, the most critical aspect is that the translations are accurate and consistent across languages. Miscommunication due to incorrect translation could lead to inaccuracy in survey responses. Consistency is important for translations because it adds to the credibility of the survey responses.

Depending on the chosen software for our survey, we may be able to translate the questions directly in the software. However, even if we are able to use the survey software to automatically create translations, we will need to find individuals fluent in Spanish to edit and correct our translation. Thankfully, there are resources at Auburn and MCC that could provide this assistance. Additionally, one of our project team members, Kaylen Michaelis, has a rudimentary knowledge of Spanish and will be able to identify areas where a further translation check is necessary.

## **Data Privacy and Security**

When collecting sensitive information such as salary and housing data, it is vital that respondents can be confident their data will not be shared with anyone other than required parties. Data privacy means that we will only gather information that is required for funding organizations.

Practicing secure data exportation will mean finding a secure survey software and limiting individual access to the survey responses to required persons. It may also be important to refer to legal policies such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

## **Accessibility**

Accessibility should always be a consideration when creating surveys because the audience for such information is not always known at the document's creation. There are some main accessibility checks that need to be made throughout the design and user testing process. These include

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- The use of plain language for ease of understanding, especially for ESL learners
  - Ensuring compatibility with a screen reader
  - Color and typography with high contrast values
  - Mobile device accessibility
  - Step by step instructions

Once the survey is created, we will use accessibility checkers to examine the document's compliance with legal and ethical guidelines.

## **DELIVERABLES**

### **Timeline**

This timeline is based on course requirements for ENGL 7080 as well as the client's needs. Adjustments may be made as needed.

#### **October 31**

Confirm survey questions and the conditional logic (if/then) required for questions

Determine software for use

#### **November 5- 10**

Draft survey

#### **November 11-13**

User testing where possible

#### **November 14-16**

Client discussion of draft

#### **November 17-20**

Final adjustments, write rationale memo

### **Assessment Criteria**

Based on our initial meeting with the client, they have said the document needs to be:

- Individualized
  - Each student will have specific dates, answers

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- Translated
    - Initial language: Spanish
      - Assessed by fluent Spanish speaker for understanding, consistency
    - Future languages to be translated: Arabic, Burmese/Koren, French, Vietnamese, Pashto, Russian, Ukrainian
  - Live Document to track results (living doc)
  - Editable
  - Comprehensive for all students
    - See Figures below for current survey questions that must be included
  - Date of Survey Completion

## Add New Diplomas/Credentials Record



Diploma/Credential Type\*

No Value Entered

Expected Award Date

Date HSE or Certification Exam Last  
Taken But Not Passed

Date Earned\*

Actual Award Date

Diploma/Credential Name

Description/Number

Person's Name Displayed on  
Diploma/Credential

Description/Number

Completed Requirements

By Exam Only

Save

Save and New

Cancel

Greeting/Intro

Employment

Secondary and ...

Conclusion

Verification

### Secondary and Postsecondary Credentials

Did you receive a secondary school diploma or high school equivalency either while you were enrolled in Adult Ed or within a year of exit from 7/11/2023 to 4/11/2025?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know / Refused

Did you enroll in Postsecondary Education or Training while enrolled or within a year of exit from 7/11/2023 to 4/11/2025?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know / Refused

Did you attain a Postsecondary Education or Training credential while enrolled or within a year of exit from 7/11/2023 to 4/11/2025?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know / Refused

Add New Work History Record

Start Date\*

10/1/2024

Employment Status\*

Employed-Full

Occupation

No Value Entered

Description

Employer Name

Type Of Employer

No Value Entered

Employer Address

Employer Contact

Salary

Earnings Not Provided

☐

Earnings

0.00

Earnings Period

No Value Entered

Earnings Number Hours

0

Quarterly Earnings

Save

Save and New

Cancel