

ALL ABOUT YOUTH SURVEYS

Choosing or Creating the Best Tool for your
Evaluation

Youth Development Executives of King County

Working together to advance the youth development field



Who We Are

Youth Development Executives of King County (YDEKC) is a coalition of youth-serving organizations working to advance the youth development field in order to improve outcomes for young people.

Representing the executive leadership of King County based youth serving organizations, YDEKC is uniquely positioned to **advocate for its members** with the systems (school districts, governments, the public) that they intersect with; to **develop field level knowledge** about best practices in youth development; and to **build leadership strength** in the non-profit youth serving sector.

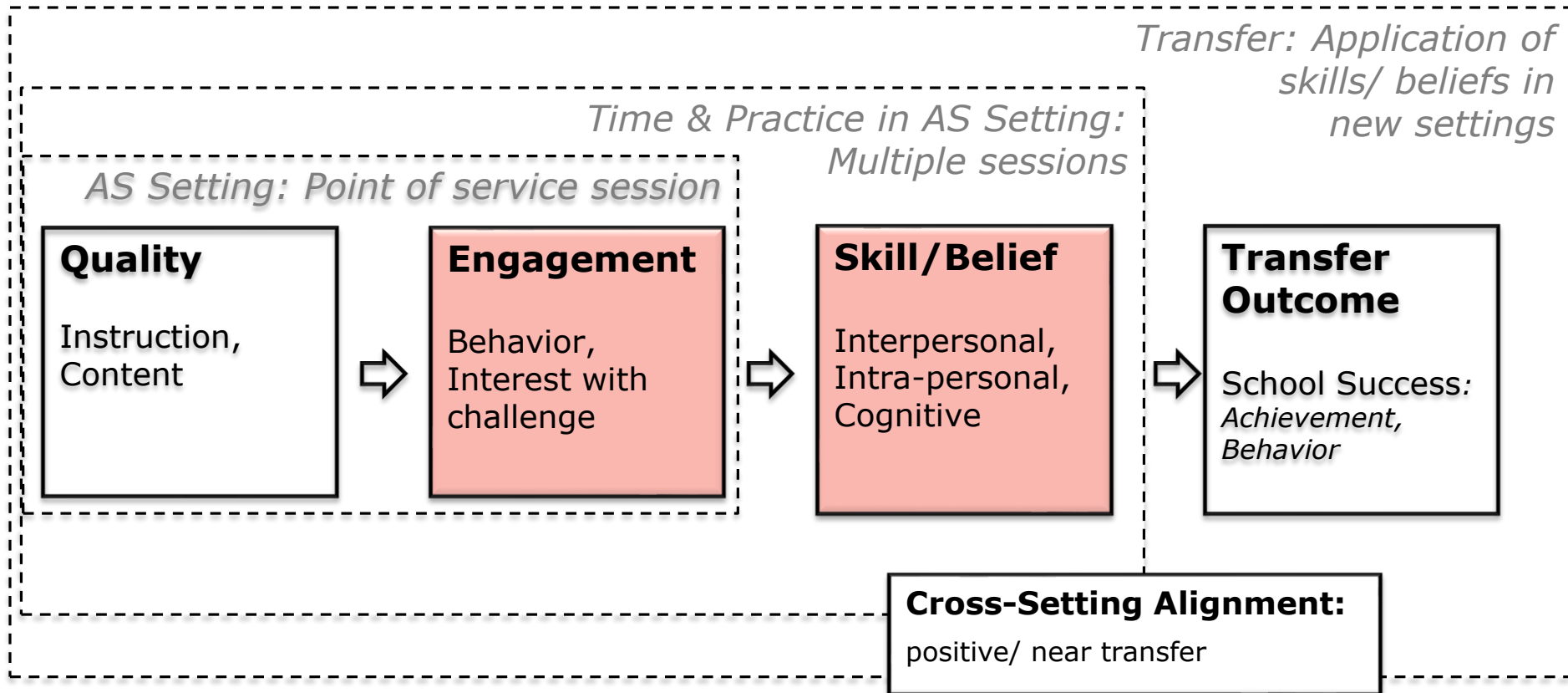


Plan

Collect

Reflect

Quality to Outcomes Theory of Change



Smith C., Hallman, S., Hillaker, B., Sugar, S., McGovern, G., & Devaney, E. (2012). *Development and early validation evidence for an observational measure of high quality instructional practice for science, technology, engineering and mathematics in out-of-school time settings: The STEM supplement to the Youth Program Quality Assessment*. Forum for Youth Investment. Washington D.C.

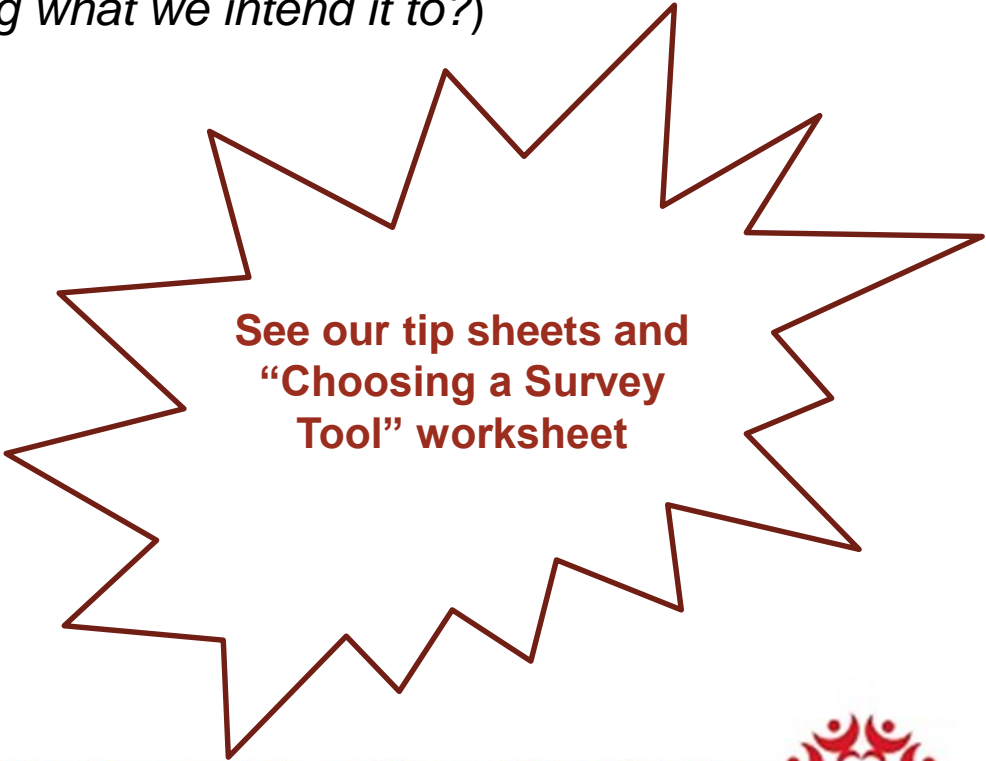
Measurement Options

- Performance tasks
- Adult report on youth skills
- Youth self-report
 - Interviews
 - Focus groups
 - **Surveys**
 - **Post- only**
 - **Pre-/Post-**
 - **Retrospective pre-/post-**



Criteria for Selecting Appropriate Method(s)

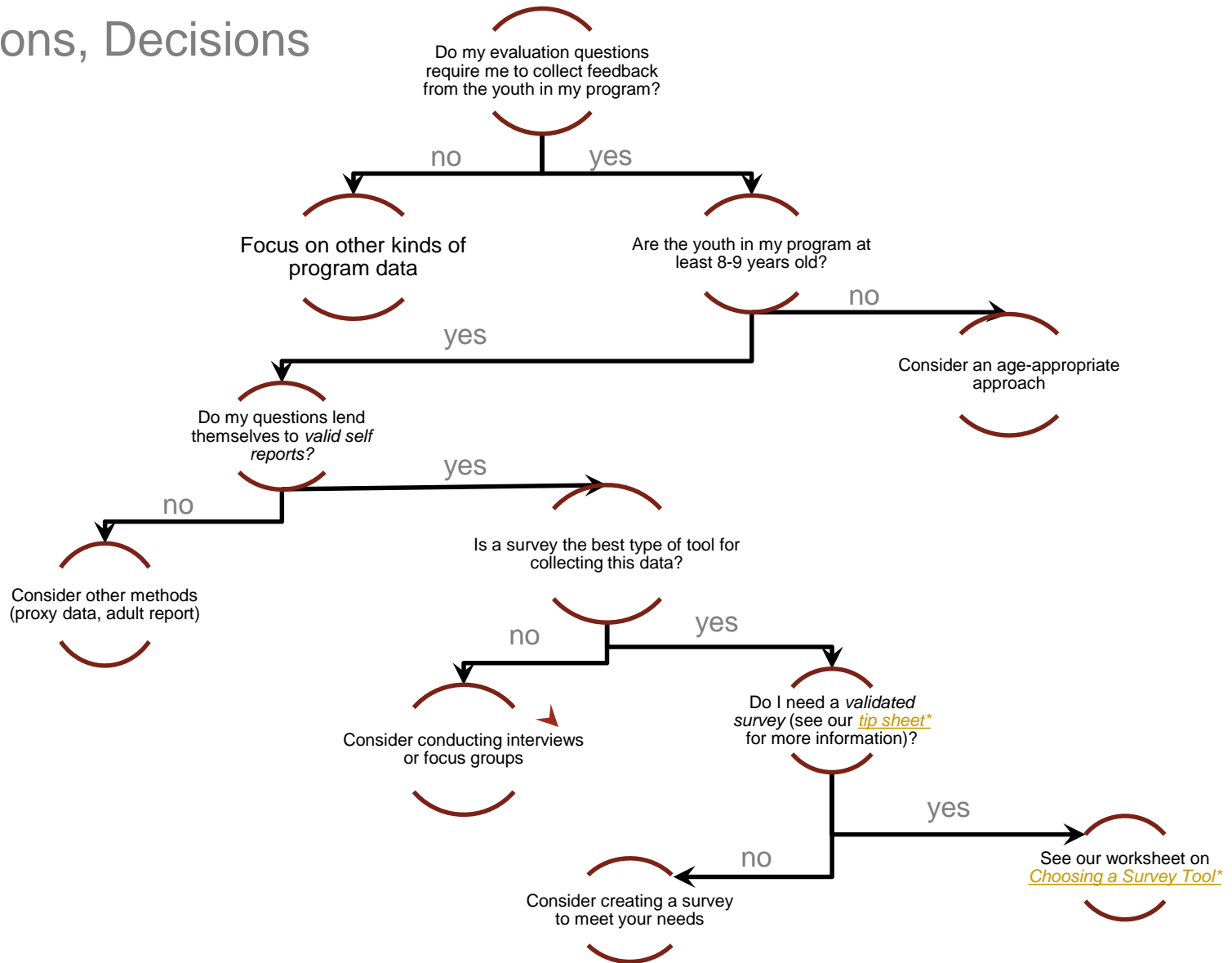
- **Reliability** (*Is the measure consistent?*)
- **Validity** (*Is the measure capturing what we intend it to?*)
- **Feasibility**
 - Cost
 - Burden
- **Appropriateness**
 - To the population
 - To the question being asked



**See our tip sheets and
“Choosing a Survey
Tool” worksheet**



Decisions, Decisions



***Note:** Resources are available on YDEKC's website at <http://ydekc.org/measurement-toolkit/>

Do my evaluation questions
require me to collect feedback
from the youth in my
program?

no

yes

Focus on other kinds of
program data

Are the youth in my program
at least 8-9 years old?

Are the youth in my program at least 9-10 years old?

no

Consider an age-appropriate approach

Examples of Age-Appropriate Techniques for Collecting Information from Younger Children:

- Simplified surveys (read aloud if necessary)
- Interviews (one-on-one or group)
- Program observation
- Adult report on child skills or behavior



Do my questions lend themselves to *valid self reports*?

Conditions for Valid **Self Reports**

- The information requested is known to the respondent
- Questions can be phrased clearly and unambiguously
- Questions refer to recent activities
- *Respondents think the questions merit a serious and thoughtful response*
- *Answering the questions does not threaten, embarrass, or violate the privacy of the respondent or encourage the respondent to respond in socially desirable ways*

Source: Kuh, G. D. (2001). The national survey of student engagement: Conceptual framework and overview of psychometric properties. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research (2001), pp. 3-4.

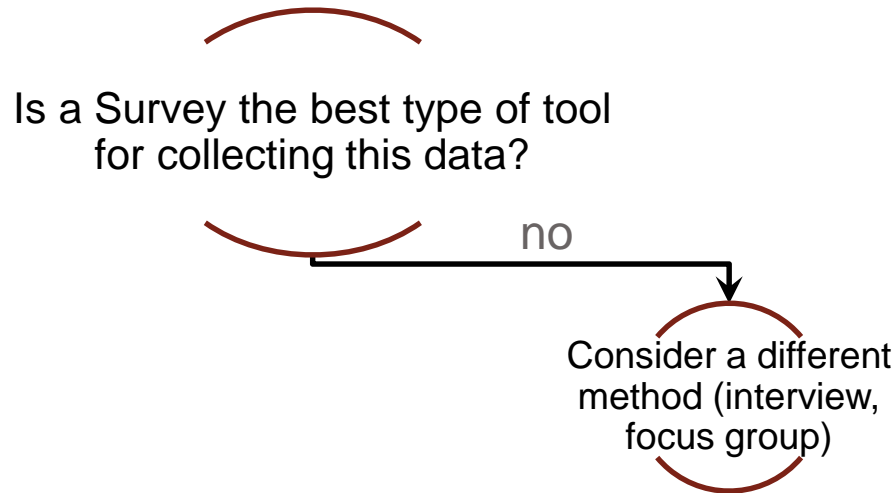
Do my questions lend themselves to *valid self reports*?

no

Consider other methods (proxy data, adult report)

Conditions for Valid **Adult Report** on Child or Youth Skills

- The respondent has adequate knowledge to report
- Questions are clear and unambiguous
- “Perverse incentives” are minimized
- Underlying racial and cultural biases are acknowledged and actively countered
- Questions refer to *observable behaviors* rather than *internal states*



When Surveys are Most Useful

- You need to collect information from a large number of people
- Your questions focus on attitudes and perceptions
- You want to quantify (count) results
- You want to collect sensitive information
- You want respondents to remain anonymous



Do I need a *validated survey* (see our [tip sheets](#)* for more information)?

Some Considerations:

- What is the purpose of my evaluation?
- Who is my audience?
- Do I need comparison data? What kind?
- Will I publish my findings?
- Is there a tool that meets my needs?

Some Criteria for Choosing a Survey

- Reliability and validity evidence
- Relevance
- Cost
- Burden
- Appropriateness to the population of interest

CHOOSING A SURVEY TOOL WORKSHEET

If you are comparing potential survey tools for an evaluation, use the grid below to compare. Some of the criteria listed may be more or less important to you depending on your specific situation. This worksheet is intended to give you a general framework for decision making.

Survey Name and Source Information	Relevance to Program Outcomes	Cost	Burden	Evidence of Validity/Reliability	Other Notes
<i>Could be a full survey (Developmental Assets Profile) or a subscale (The Multiethnic Identity Measure)</i>	<i>Your subjective assessment of the tool's ability to capture those outcomes you care about and work toward</i>	<i>Some tools are free, but will require staff time; others have a per-child or per-program cost</i>	<i>How long is the tool, and how long will it take? It is also reasonable to note burden on staff and/or on resources</i>	<i>Could be a yes/no, or a high/medium/low; or a summary of evidence (e.g. tested on 6,000 12-18 year-olds in OST programs)</i>	<i>Any other impressions you have that are relevant to your decision</i>



A Note About Scaling

- What is a “scale” (not to be confused with a “response scale”)?

A value or score used to represent an abstract concept

- Why use a scale?

To create a score that represents a person’s overall attitude or belief

- What kinds of concepts are represented by scales?

Height, weight, self-efficacy, civic engagement, empathy



Likert Scale Example

Please circle the number that shows what you think about each statement:

	Strongly Disagree or No Way!	Disagree or Not Really	Agree or Sort of	Strongly Agree or Yes!
1. Once I know what needs to be done, I am good at planning how to do it.	1	2	3	4
2. When I see something that needs to be done, I try to get my friends to work on it with me.	1	2	3	4
3. I am pretty good at organizing a team of kids to do a project.	1	2	3	4
4. If I'm the leader of a group, I make sure that everyone in the group feels important.	1	2	3	4
5. I feel like I can stand up for what I think is right, even if my friends disagree.	1	2	3	4
6. When I see something is wrong, I try to change it.	1	2	3	4

Source: Chi, B., Jastrzab, J., & Melchior, A. 2006. Developing Indicators and Measures of Civic Outcomes for Elementary School Students. CIRCLE Working Paper #47. <http://civicyouth.org/PopUps/WorkingPapers/WP47chi.pdf>



Some Sources for Surveys or Survey Scales

- From Soft Skills to Hard Data - <http://forumfyi.org/content/soft-skills-hard-data->
- TASC: Every Hour Counts - <http://afterschoolsystems.org/>
- PerformWell - <http://www.performwell.org/>



Creating a Survey in a Nutshell

1. Identify questions or outcomes you want to address
2. Brainstorm questions that get at these questions or outcomes
3. Review questions to ensure they avoid common pitfalls
4. Decide on the response categories you will use
5. Pilot test the survey with your target audience
6. Revise, finalize, and decide on mode of administration
7. Administer, score, and report results



1. Identify questions or outcomes you want to address

Questions/outcomes should be:

- Based on research
- Aligned to your program theory
- Timely
- Actionable
- Appropriate to a survey



YDEKC'S Skills and Dispositions Framework

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVES
OF KING COUNTY



SKILLS & DISPOSITIONS

THAT SUPPORT YOUTH SUCCESS IN SCHOOL



Youth Development Executives of King County &

The Road Map Project

SKILLS & DISPOSITIONS THAT SUPPORT YOUTH SUCCESS IN SCHOOL

	OUTCOME DOMAINS	SKILLS & DISPOSITIONS
Motivation & Engagement	FUTURE ORIENTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goal management: Setting short- and long-term goals and monitoring progress toward their achievement Hope and optimism: Positive beliefs regarding one's future potential, goals and choices
	SELF MANAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotional regulation: Assessing and regulating one's feelings and emotions Self-discipline: Ability to focus on a task in spite of distractions
	PERSEVERANCE / GRIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perseverance: Tendency to persist in spite of obstacles or setbacks Goal orientation: Commitment to the achievement of goals over time
	SELF EFFICACY & MINDSETS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-Efficacy: Belief in one's own capabilities and capacity to learn and succeed Growth mindset: Belief that intelligence and ability can increase through effort Mastery orientation: Enjoyment of learning and desire to master new skills; willingness to try new things Relevance: Belief that work done in school is related to personal aspirations
	BELONGING & IDENTITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of belonging: Perception of acceptance and support in a learning community Relationship building: Establishing and maintaining positive relationships with adults and peers in school setting Personal identity: Understanding and valuing one's own culture and beliefs Social capital: Recognizing and using family, school, and community resources; asking for help when needed
21st Century Skills	INTERPERSONAL SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration: Negotiating and compromising when working in groups or pairs Communication: Communicating effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences Cultural competence: Ability to work effectively with people from different backgrounds; appreciation of diversity Conflict resolution: Preventing, managing, and resolving interpersonal conflict Compassion: Taking the perspective of and empathizing with others
	CREATIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideation: Using a wide range of idea creation techniques Imagination: Using intellectual inventiveness to generate, discover, and restructure ideas or imagine alternatives Innovation implementation: Acting on creative ideas to make a new contribution
	CRITICAL THINKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metacognition: Ability to reflect on one's assumptions and thinking for the purposes of deeper understanding and self-evaluation. Problem solving: Generating and selecting from alternatives based on desired outcomes Analytical thinking: Separating problems or issues into their component parts

2. Brainstorm questions that get at these questions or outcomes

- Build on other sources or past practice as needed
- Think about the language your audience would use
- Ask several questions that target the same outcome in different ways
- Consider your evaluation design



Evaluation Design and Survey Types

- End of Program Survey or Post Only Survey
- Pre- and Post-Program Survey
- Post then Pre, or Retrospective Pre- Survey
- Reflective Post-Program



See our “Comparing
Survey Types” handout



3. Review questions to ensure they avoid **common pitfalls**

- Ambiguous or unclear questions

The media wrongly attributes gun violence to Second Amendment rights (yes/no/no opinion)

- Confusing wording (e.g. double negatives)

Contrary to what the media says, raising taxes does not create jobs (yes/no/no opinion)

- Double-barreled questions

The mainstream media played a critical role in electing President Obama and is now attempting to do it again for Hillary Clinton (yes/no/no opinion)

- Loaded or leading questions

The mainstream media needs to do more to expose the shady donations to the Clinton Foundation (yes/no/no opinion)

- Sensitive topics

Source: Trump/Pence 2016 Mainstream Media Accountability Survey, <https://action.trump2016.com/trump-mms-survey/>



4. Decide on the response categories you will use

Common Survey Items and Response Options

Yes/No	Have you spoken to your guidance counselor about college admission in the last month?			
Multiple Choice	How many hours did you study for class last week?			
	<i>0 hours</i>	<i>1-3 hours</i>	<i>3-6 hours</i>	<i>More than 6 hours</i>
Likert Scale (agreement)	This program helps me build new skills			
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i> <i>Strongly Agree</i>
Likert Scale (frequency)	I work hard in school			
	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Some of the Time</i>	<i>Always</i>
Likert Scale (“like me”)	I take pride in doing my best in school			
	<i>Not Like Me</i>	<i>A Little Like Me</i>	<i>A Lot Like Me</i>	<i>Completely Like Me</i>
Open-Ended	What are the most important skills you learned or practiced in this program?			
Alternative Responses	<i>Don't Know, Not Applicable, Decline to State, Other</i>			



5. Pilot test the survey with your target audience

- Can do cognitive pre-testing if feasible
- Smaller-scale administration with representative group
- Check for:
 - Understanding of items and concepts
 - Variation in results
 - Internal consistency
 - Burden



6. Revise, finalize, and decide on mode of administration

- Add, delete, and revise questions as necessary
- Determine the “when” and the “how”
 - Time of year
 - Print versus online
 - One-time versus pre-/post- program
- Create clear instructions for survey takers and survey givers



YDEKC's Skills and Beliefs Surveys

Student Enrollment

V2.0 ENGLISH VERSION

This survey is confidential.

Read each of the

I work hard at school

It's important to me that

I concentrate on my school

I feel proud of my school

I am a responsible student

I am treated with as much

I complete my schoolwork

In my school, I feel that

I take responsibility for

Youth Skills and Beliefs Survey Version 2.0

Instructions: The purpose of this survey is to find out more about youth and programs in Washington State. Our goal is to help make out-of-school time programs better for you and other young people. This survey should take about 20 Minutes. Below are questions that ask about you and some of the things you think and feel about yourself and your afterschool program. This is not a test. There are no "wrong" answers. Please choose the answer that is most true or most like you.

This survey is completely voluntary. You do not have to answer any of the questions if you don't want to, and you can stop doing this survey at any time. This survey does not have your name on it, so everything you write is confidential and anonymous to the extent permitted by law, which means that no one (not your parents, teachers, school staff or other students) will be allowed to know how you answer these questions.

1. Young people might describe themselves in many ways. We have listed some things youth might say or think about themselves. For each one, pick the answer that is most true for you.

	<i>Not at all true</i>	<i>A little true</i>	<i>Somewhat True</i>	<i>Mostly true</i>	<i>Completely True</i>
Doing well in school is an important part of who I am	1	2	3	4	5
Getting a college education is important to me	1	2	3	4	5
I finish whatever I begin	1	2	3	4	5
I have goals in my life	1	2	3	4	5
I can discuss a problem with a friend without making it worse	1	2	3	4	5



7. Administer, score, and report results

- Involve stakeholders (staff, youth) in the interpretation of survey results
- May present different information to different audiences
- Be cautious about bias in your results



What is Bias, and Why does it Matter?

“A systematic distortion of a statistical result due to a factor not allowed for in its derivation” (from *Oxford Dictionaries*, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/bias)

Bias can lead us to draw inaccurate conclusions, and make inaccurate claims. Bias is *inevitable*, but we should try to:

- Minimize it
- Acknowledge it
- Distinguish between *research* and *evaluation*



Types of Bias

- Selection Bias
- Maturation Bias
- Attrition Bias
- Instrumentation Bias
- Social Desirability Bias
- Response Shift Bias



Selection Bias

- **What it is:** Participants in a program or intervention differ in a systematic way from non-participants
- **Why it matters:**
Overestimates program impact



Maturation Bias

- **What it is:** Something that would have happened naturally is attributed to a program or intervention
- **Why it matters:** May overestimate (or underestimate!) program impact



Attrition Bias

- **What it is:** Participants drop out of a program before the study period is complete
- **Why it matters:** Fails to account for the effects of a program on participants who have dropped out



Instrumentation Bias

- **What it is:** The tools or techniques we use to measure are not accurate or consistent (i.e. reliable)
- **Why it matters:** The conditions under which kids are assessed can influence the results of the assessment.



Social Desirability

- **What it is:** Survey respondents answer questions in a way they think is “right” or socially desirable rather than a way that is honest.
- **Why it matters:** We may not be measuring what we think we are measuring.



Response Shift Bias

- **What it is:** A program or intervention affects the standard or criteria that participants use to assess themselves (i.e. “you don’t know what you don’t know”).
- **Why it matters:** Can produce counterintuitive results in pre- / post-research designs.



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