

VISTA LEADER WEBINAR

Designing Effective Surveys

January 14, 2021

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Webinar ID: 161 645 5653



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Today's Presenters

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Outcomes

- Clarify the purpose of your survey and information you want to gather
- Identify different question and response types for surveys
- Describe considerations for survey structure and data collection



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Steps to Take Before You Design Your Survey

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Before You Begin

1. Clarify your purpose
2. Develop research questions
3. Understand your respondents



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Clarify Your Purpose

What do you want to do with your survey results?

Examples

- Collect information to guide planning
- Evaluate an outcome
- Identify audience segments
- Test a hypothesis
- Describe a phenomenon



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Develop Research Questions

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Example purpose
To gather information to guide planning of future online webinars

Example research question
What topics are VISTA leaders most interested in learning about?



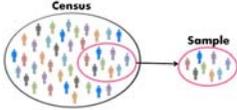
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Census vs. Sample

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Closed groups vs. populations



Closed group example
All VISTA leaders

Example of a census
The U.S. Census ©

Population example
U.S. college students

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Describe Your Respondents

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Respondent characteristics that may be relevant:

- Access to technology
- Education
- Language
- Industry
- Cultural differences



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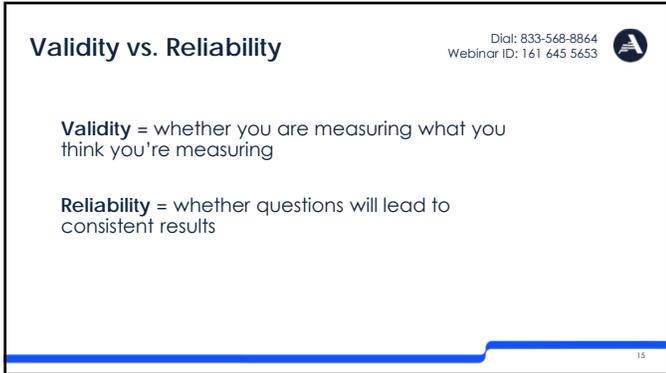
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Survey Questions and Responses

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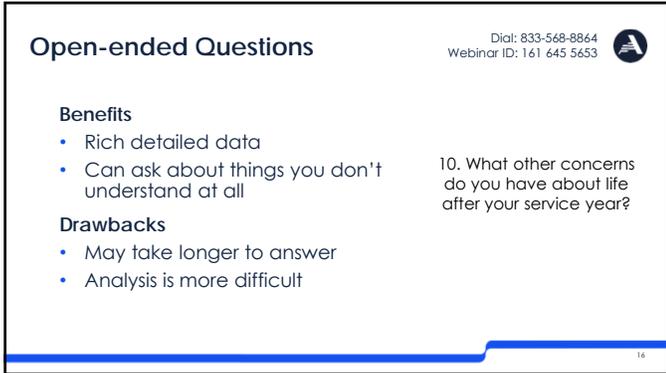
Validity vs. Reliability

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Validity = whether you are measuring what you think you're measuring

Reliability = whether questions will lead to consistent results

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Open-ended Questions

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Benefits

- Rich detailed data
- Can ask about things you don't understand at all

Drawbacks

- May take longer to answer
- Analysis is more difficult

10. What other concerns do you have about life after your service year?

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Qualitative Data Collection Methods

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- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Diaries
- Observation
- Document review



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Crafting Closed-ended Answers

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Two parts

Question stem Of the following ice cream flavors, which do you like best?

Response options

- a. Rocky Road
- b. Chunky Monkey
- c. Wavy Gravy
- d. Tutti Frutti
- e. These are all terrible

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Priorities when Drafting Questions

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- Clarity
- Consistency/lack of ambiguity
- MECE (mutually exclusive, comprehensively exhaustive)

NOT MECE:
How many children are living in your house?
a. 1-2
b. 2-5

NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE
What do you select if you have 2 children?

NOT COMPREHENSIVE
What about if you have 6 children? Or none?

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Response Option Types

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Binary/dichotomous
Two options (e.g., true/false, yes/no)

Multiple choice
Three+ options, pick one

Multiple response
Pick more than one (e.g., select all)

Rating and Likert scales
Responses along a spectrum



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True or False/Binary

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Example
Do you intend to be a VISTA leader next year?
a. Yes
b. No

Benefits

- Easy to understand
- Easy to analyze

Limitations

- Can frustrate respondents
- Might not be exhaustive

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Multiple Choice

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Example
Where in the U.S. were you born? [select one]

- o Northeast
- o Midwest
- o South
- o Southwest
- o West
- o I wasn't born in the U.S.

Comprehensiveness
Why and when to include "Other" and/or "None of the above"

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Multiple Choice: Ranges Dial: 833-568-8864
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Example
What is your age?

- 18 or younger
- 19 to 35
- 36 to 64
- 65 or older

Knowing your audience:
 What if you are only surveying senior citizens?

- 65 to 74
- 75 to 84
- 85 and above

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What may be problematic about this question?

What do you plan to do when you finish VISTA? [select one]
 Apply to be a VISTA leader
 Get a job
 Go to graduate school
 Move back home



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Example
Which of the following do you use to access the Internet? (select all that apply)
 Smartphone
 iPad or Tablet
 Laptop
 Desktop
 Other (specify):



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Pros and Cons of Multiple Response Options

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Pros

- Better reflection of reality
- Able to ask many things at once

Cons

- More difficult to analyze
- Potentially less reliable (select all vs. true or false)

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Ranking and Limited Selection

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Ranking example
Rank your favorite ice cream flavors from least favorite to most favorite.

Limited selection example
What are your favorite ice cream flavors? (select up to 3)

Limited Selection > Ranking (usually)

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Ratings and Likert Scales

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Unlabeled vs. labeled
Unipolar vs. bipolar (symmetry, neutral options)
Matrix questions

Rate your experience about using our products

Product packaging







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Response Option Tips

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- Limit the number of options
- Make sure responses are mutually exclusive and comprehensively exhaustive (MECE)
- Consider different response option types
- Use the least complex response option types that will give you the information you need (e.g., true/false vs. multiple choice vs. ranking)

Helpful Tips

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Common Problems and How to Fix Them

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Common Problems

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- Double-barreled questions
- Leading questions
- Making assumptions
- Confusing or ambiguous questions
- Wrong question/response type
- Non-MECE responses



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#1 Double-barreled Questions

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What it is
Having two or more questions in one, with a forced choice response

How to fix it
Split into separate questions



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Double-barreled Example

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<p>Example</p> <p>How satisfied are you with your work and life?</p> <p><Very dissatisfied -> Very satisfied></p>	<p>Fixed</p> <p>How satisfied are you with your work?</p> <p><Very dissatisfied -> Very satisfied></p> <p>How satisfied are you with your life?</p> <p><Very dissatisfied -> Very satisfied></p>
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#2 Leading Questions

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What it is
When you bias people toward a certain response with question wording or response options

How to fix it
Remove loaded language and/or make sure that response options allow for a range of responses



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Leading Question Examples

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<p>Example</p> <p>Stem: How amazing is our product?</p> <p>Responses: How would you describe this webinar? [Select one]</p> <p><Fantastic, Great, Pretty good, Okay></p>	<p>Fixed</p> <p>Stem: How would you rate our product?</p> <p>Responses: How would you describe this webinar? [Select one]</p> <p><Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor> or <Very bad, Somewhat bad, Somewhat good, Very good></p>
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#3 Making Assumptions

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What it is
When the question text assumes that you have an experience or identity that isn't universal.

How to fix it
Use skip logic; make questions more broadly applicable; add N/A option; pre-test with target population.

This can be tricky to detect! Pre-testing can help.

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Example: Making Assumptions

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<p>Example</p> <p>What is your spouse's annual salary?</p>	<p>Fixed</p> <p>Q1: What is your relationship status?</p> <p>Q2 [if married]: What is your spouse's employment status?</p> <p>Q3 [if spouse is employed]: What is your spouse's estimated annual salary?</p>
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#4 Confusing or Ambiguous Questions Dial: 833-568-8864
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What it is
Questions that are too long, poorly worded, or too open to interpretation

How to fix it
Many options: Simplify; split up questions into smaller questions; use more narrowly defined words or give context clues; remove double negatives; pre-test



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Example: Confusing Question Dial: 833-568-8864
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<p>Example</p> <p>How unusual is it for you not to go to the doctor for more than a year?</p>	<p>Fixed</p> <p>Have you visited a doctor in the last year? --OR-- On average, how often do you go to the doctor?</p>
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What's wrong with this question?

Would you describe the new iPhone as cheap?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure



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#5 Wrong Question/Response Type Dial: 833-568-8864
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What it is
A question that would be easier to answer and/or lead to better responses if presented in a different format

How to fix it
Consider simpler formats (e.g., select 3 vs. ranking) or units of measurement; use forced choice when possible



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Example: Wrong Question/Response Type Dial: 833-568-8864
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Examples	Fixed
<p>Rank your interest in these topics in order from 1-12.</p> <p>When was the last time you bought a car? ___ months ago</p>	<p>Select up to 3 topics on the list that interest you most.</p> <p>When was the last time you bought a car? <Less than a year ago, 1-3 years ago, more than 3 years, never></p>

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#6 Non-MECE Responses Dial: 833-568-8864
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What it is
Non-MECE: Mutually exclusive, collectively exhaustive (e.g., overlapping response options or clear gaps in possible responses)

How to fix it
Review; empathize with respondent and imagine possibilities; pre-test



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Example: Non-MECE Responses Dial: 833-568-8864
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Example	Fixed
When do you expect to graduate college? 1-2 years 2-3 years 3-4 years	When do you expect to graduate college, approximately? Less than 1 year 1 to 2 years 2 ½ to 4 years More than 4 years

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Considerations for Survey Design and Data Collection

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“If it’s nice to know, it’s got to go”

- Survey length
- Question order
- Advanced research designs
- Instructions
- Pre-testing

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Pre-testing

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- Why pre-test your survey
- How to pre-test and incorporate feedback
- Difference between pre-testing content and testing technical experience



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Data Collection and Analysis

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- Data collection modes:
 - Online
 - Phone
 - In person
- Increasing response rate
- Connecting analysis to research questions



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Survey Makeover

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Sample Survey Q3 Dial: 833-568-8864
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Overall, how helpful was the content presented at *Life After VISTA* to supporting your plans after VISTA service?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

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Overall, how helpful was the content presented at *Life After VISTA* to supporting your plans after VISTA service?

- Extremely helpful
- Moderately helpful
- Slightly helpful
- Not at all helpful

- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Neither helpful nor unhelpful
- Somewhat unhelpful
- Very unhelpful

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Which sessions were most useful to you? Please include the names of the session(s):

Resume Workshop (Preethi and Dee)

Lunch Round Table Discussions

VISTA Tools: Tool 1: VISTA & The Star Technique/Mock Interviews (Aly)

Alumni Panel (Riyana, Dr. Dixon, Ravi and Shannon)

Impromptu networking with fellow VISTAs

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Improving Q8 Dial: 833-568-8864
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Which sessions were most useful to you? *(select up to 3)*

- Resume Workshop
- Lunch Round Table Discussions
- VISTA Tools—Tool 1: VISTA and the Star Technique
- Alumni Panel
- Impromptu networking with fellow VISTAs

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Practice



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<p>How often do you visit the VISTA Campus website?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Very often <input type="radio"/> Often <input type="radio"/> Somewhat often <input type="radio"/> Not very often 	<p>In the last month, about how often did you visit the VISTA Campus?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> More than once a day <input type="radio"/> About once a day <input type="radio"/> About once or twice a week <input type="radio"/> Less than once a week <input type="radio"/> Not at all
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Would you serve another year with our project?

- Yes
- No

How likely are you to apply for another term of VISTA service?

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Very unlikely

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Free/low-cost online data collection tools:

- SurveyMonkey
- Google Forms
- Recommendations from TechSoup

Survey design guidance:

- Types of survey questions (SurveyMonkey)
- Response option scale examples (Clemson University)
- Question database (Pew Research Center)



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Recap Dial: 833-568-8864
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1. Steps before designing your survey
2. Survey questions and responses
3. Common problems in designing questions
4. Survey structure and data collection



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Take our survey!

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- Please take 3 minutes to complete our webinar evaluation.
- The link is in the Chat.

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Q & A

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What questions do you have?

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Upcoming Webinar

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Responding to Conflict with Emotional Intelligence
Thursday, March 11, 2021
2-3:00 p.m. ET

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Thank you!

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Designing Effective Surveys

RESOURCES MENTIONED DURING THE WEBINAR

Free/low-cost online data collection tools

- [SurveyMonkey](#)
- [Google Forms](#)
- [A Few Good Online Survey Tools for Your Nonprofit](#) by *TechSoup*

Survey design guidance

- [Types of Survey Questions](#) by *SurveyMonkey*
- [Likert-Type Scale Response Options](#) by *Clemson University*
- [Pew Research Center question database](#)