

March 8, 2006

Writing Good Survey Questions: Examples

Summary: Writing Good Survey Questions - Examples

Creating a good survey is an art and a science. The process for constructing any survey is an instructional design project in and of itself and requires analysis & testing, design & testing, development & testing, implementation & testing, and evaluation, which is basically more testing.

There are many ways in which to ask questions. The type of question used depends on several factors:

- The data that is required
- The amount of time one has to analyze the data
- The degree to which respondents understand the construct in each question

Heading List

1. [Open-ended Questions](#)
2. [Partially Close-ended Questions](#)
3. [Close-ended Questions](#)
4. [Close-ended Questions with Ordered Responses](#)
5. [Close-ended Questions with Rating Scale](#)
6. [Resources](#)

1. Open-ended Questions

Open-ended questions are often used to find out what people think about issues. The danger with open-ended questions comes when people's understanding of the concepts included in the questions differ. For example: the open-ended question number five asks about features. If people do not have the same construct of "features" or if someone doesn't understand the construct at all, the question will not get us the data we need.

1. Who should be included in our target audience?

2. How many articles do you plan to submit?

3. What instructional strategies do you plan to use in your chapter?

4. In what formats do you plan to use to present your instructional strategies?

5. What features would you like to see included in our project?

[\[Back to heading list\]](#)

2. Partially Close-ended Questions

Many times, respondents may not be familiar with the constructs in the survey. For example: if we ask an open-ended question about instructional strategies, we assume that everyone knows what instructional strategies are; they can recall or find a list of them; they understand what each instructional strategy entails; and, therefore, can identify which instructional strategies they will be using. Not everyone has had "Introduction to Instructional Design" or they may currently be taking the class and haven't gotten to instructional strategies yet.

Partially closed-ended questions are open-ended questions with a comprehensive list of possibilities included. Respondents are saved the step of having to recall or look up a list of instructional strategies. Sometimes the creators inadvertently omit an item that a respondent is planning to use. To cover such cases, respondents are allowed to add extra choices in the form of a choice designated as "other".

Partially closed-ended questions can be in the form of "choose one" or "choose all that apply" depending upon what data is required.

1. Which of the following should be included in our target audience?
Check all that apply.

- Potential employers
- Students interested in eLearning
- The fictional people for which we have create learner profiles
- Other: please specify

2. Which of the following instructional strategies do you plan to use
in **your chapter**?
Check all that apply.

- Apprenticeship
- Case study
- Collaboration
- Debate
- Demonstration
- Discussion

- Drill and practice
- Field trip
- Game
- Generative development
- Facilitation
- Interaction
- Modeling
- Role-playing
- Scenario
- Simulation
- Story-telling
- Tutorial
- Other: please specify

3. Which of the following instructional strategies do you plan to use in *your articles*?

Check all that apply.

- Apprenticeship
- Case study
- Collaboration
- Debate
- Demonstration
- Discussion
- Drill and practice
- Field trip
- Game
- Generative development
- Facilitation
- Interaction
- Modeling
- Role-playing
- Scenario
- Simulation
- Story-telling

- Tutorial
- Other: please specify

4. Which of the following types of things should be included in a "chapter"?
Check all that apply.

- Title page or screen
- Chapter summary as a lead in to chapter
- Main chapter information
- Chapter conclusion or wrap-up
- Citations
- Resources
- For more information list
- Assignment or practice section
- List of creative ideas to extend the use of the information in the chapter
- List of questions to inspire further interest and learning
- Other: please specify

[\[Back to heading list\]](#)

3. Close-ended Questions

Carefully constructed close-ended questions:

- Dramatically reduce the amount of cognitive overhead that would be required to answer the equivalent open-ended question
- Dramatically reduce the amount of time needed to sift through the data

Constructing a close-ended question requires the creators to do a very in-depth analysis of the respondents because all those cognitive steps inherent in answering an open-ended question must be identified and addressed for each and every close-ended question.

Close-ended questions may contain two-option responses such as "true/false" or "yes/no", one-best-answer responses, or a number of other types of forced-choice responses.

What reading level should we aim for?

- Less than 5th-grade
- 5th-grade to 6th-grade
- 7th-grade to 8th-grade
- 9th-grade to 10th-grade
- 11th-grade to 12th-grade
- Greater than 12th-grade

[\[Back to heading list\]](#)

4. Close-ended Questions with Ordered Responses

Close-ended questions with ordered responses allow creators of the survey to collect two types of data for each item; whether the item is used or not as well as the frequency of use. This kind of data can be important for making certain kinds of complex decisions.

How frequently do you plan to use the following formats for support documents in *your chapter*?

Text-based DOC, PDF, RTF

None Little Some Much

Text-based HTML

None Little Some Much

Text-based JavaScript

None Little Some Much

Text-based CSS

None Little Some Much

Text-based server-side ASP, CFM, JSP, PHP

None Little Some Much

Presentation like PowerPoint PPT

None Little Some Much

Spreadsheet like Excel XLS

None Little Some Much

Database like Access MDB

None Little Some Much

Graphics GIF or JPG

None Little Some Much

Graphics PNG

None Little Some Much

Graphics BMP, TIF, PICT

None Little Some Much

Graphics animated gifs

None Little Some Much

Flash-based SWF

None Little Some Much

Flash-based FLA

None Little Some Much

Director-based DCR

None Little Some Much

Director-based DIR

None Little Some Much

Executable EXE

None Little Some Much

Audio

None Little Some Much

Podcast MP3

None Little Some Much

Vodcast MP4

None Little Some Much

Video AVI

None Little Some Much

Video MOV

None Little Some Much

It would be good to ask the same question regarding the format for various support documents in the context of the individual articles.

So, what will all this information tell us, anyway? Well certain formats would work well using HTML. Some of these formats, however, require special plugins or codecs:

- PDF requires Adobe Acrobat Reader, a browser-based plugin.
- SWF requires the Flash plugin, a browser-based plugin.
- DCR requires the Shockwave plugin, a browser-based plugin.
- MP3 and MP4 are more widely supported on all platforms due to podcasting and vodcasting popularity but there is no absolute guarantee that people will be able to play these formats.
- AVI requires the AVI codec and is a PC-based video file format. Not all computers will be able to play this format.
- MOV requires the QuickTime codec and is an Apple-based video file format. Not all computers will be able to play this format.

Some files require the original software or special circumstances to view the files:

- ASP, CFM, JSP, and PHP are server-side software formats. They must be run through a server with particular server software installed in order for the server code to execute.

- DOC files require some version of Microsoft Word.
- PPT files require some version of Microsoft PowerPoint.
- XLS files require some version of Microsoft Excel.
- MDB files require some version of Microsoft Access.
- FLA files require some versions of Adobe (formerly Macromedia) Flash.
- DIR files require some versions of Adobe (formerly Macromedia) Director.

These kinds of files, most likely, will be some kind of support files that can be downloaded as part of some exercise or tutorial someone plans to include in the final project. Some versions of open-source or non-Microsoft commercial office software may recognize some of the Microsoft Office file formats but I wouldn't count on it.

There are other formats we might want to ask about. This is where the testing process would help us determine if we have included all the formats for which we need to collect data.

[\[Back to heading list\]](#)

5. Close-ended Questions with Rating Scale

Close-ended questions with a rating scale are typically used to collect data about things that generally fall within some range of extreme values. The [Likert scale](#) is one such question and measures a respondent's attitude toward a given item.

The following questions deal with how you feel about issues regarding the chapter information. Chapter information is separate from the individual articles.

1. [All chapters](#) should be of a similar length.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

2. [All chapters](#) should have a consistent look and feel.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

3. [All chapters](#) should contain the same type of basic divisions.
For example: chapter introduction, main content,
for more information, resources, citations, etc.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

[\[Back to heading list\]](#)

6. Resources

- [Questionnaire Design: Asking questions with a purpose \(PDF\)](#) by Ellen Taylor-Powell

[\[Back to heading list\]](#)

Posted At : 10:30 AM. | Posted By : admin