

Extra Practice With Sampling Types

Directions: Choose a sampling type for each of the scenarios below.

Choices for Scenarios

- A. Simple random sampling
- B. Stratified random sampling
- C. Clustered random sampling
- D. Consecutive sampling
- E. Convenience sampling
- F. Snowball sampling
- G. Purposive sampling

Scenario 1

A small rural district has implemented a new program. The district wants to answer the evaluation question “How are teachers using the new program in their classrooms?” The evaluation team only has one week to conduct interviews with teachers. What is the best sampling type?

Scenario 2

A new program has been implemented districtwide. The evaluation team wants to know whether teachers at different levels (elementary, middle, and high school) are using the new program and make inferences about the usefulness of the program for teachers at schools with different grade levels across the district. What is the best sampling type?

Scenario 3

An evaluation team wants to interview teachers from three racial/ethnic minority groups and with three levels of teaching experience (high, medium, and low) about recent professional development to identify any demographic characteristics that are associated with the helpfulness of the professional development. The team has exactly six interview slots to fill. What type of sampling should the team use?

Scenario 4

A small rural district has implemented a districtwide improvement program. For reporting purposes, the funder would like preliminary evidence that teachers are using the program as well as information about what teachers think of the program. The evaluation team has enough resources to interview only 15 teachers. What is the best sampling type?

Scenario 5

Following a professional development session, a teacher approaches the evaluation team to say that many teachers felt some information from the training was incorrect and that perhaps the team should not use the trainer in the future. To better assess whether to continue with the current trainer, the team interviews the teacher who came forward and asks whom else they should interview. What type of sampling is this?

Scenario 6

A large suburban district has rolled out a new writing program in several pilot schools. The district now wants the evaluation team to determine whether the program should be implemented districtwide. What type of sampling should the team use?

Scenario 7

A superintendent of a large school district would like feedback from teachers about a new professional development initiative. She wants the teacher feedback to be representative of the entire district. Due to a busy schedule, she can visit only 10 of the 400 schools in the district but can meet with all teachers at each school she visits. What type of sampling should she use?

Answer Key and Explanations

1. **E** (convenience sampling)
Explanation: Given the time constraint, the evaluation team should interview any teachers who are available while understanding that the results may not be representative or generalizable.
2. **B** (stratified random sampling)
Explanation: To make inferences for the entire district, the evaluation team can use random sampling, but it should be stratified by school level to ensure that the sample includes an adequate number of teachers from each school level. The team should use random sampling separately for elementary school teachers, middle school teachers, and high school teachers.
3. **G** (purposive sampling)
Explanation: The evaluation team should use purposive sampling to be sure that the team interviews at least one teacher with each characteristic, regardless of the proportions in the entire teacher population. However, because purposive sampling is not random, it is best suited to identifying areas for follow-up evaluation and will not support inferences for the entire district.
4. **D** (consecutive sampling)
Explanation: Because the sample size must be very small (only 15 teachers), random sampling is probably not worth the time and expense. It would be difficult to draw conclusions about the whole district with such a small sample size, even with random sampling. Therefore, consecutive sampling, in which the evaluation team interviews the first 15 eligible teachers identified, is the best type. The results can provide a preliminary, but not conclusive, view of what teachers may be thinking.
5. **F** (snowball sampling)
Explanation: To sample the teachers who know about the issue, the evaluation team asks each teacher they interview for a referral, until they have spoken to everyone who knows. Although this sample is not necessarily representative, the team can efficiently identify individuals with strong opinions on the issue.
6. **A** (simple random sampling)
Explanation: To make claims about the district, the evaluation team needs to use random sampling. Because particular characteristics do not need to be represented in the sample, simple random sampling is the best type.
7. **C** (clustered random sampling)
Explanation: Because the superintendent wants the results to be representative of the entire district, she needs to use random sampling. And because she can visit only a limited number of schools, clustered random sampling is the best type.

This handout was prepared under Contract ED-IES-17-C-0005 by Regional Educational Laboratory Central, administered by Marzano Research. The content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.