Research Workshop Series
Session 2: Surveys

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Regional Educational Laboratory
at American Institutes for Research

Workshop Series

2017

September 28	**Data, Research, and Evidence**
October 24	**Survey Development and Administration**
November 15	**Interviews and Focus Groups**

2018

January 17	**Observations and Rubric Development**
March 8	**Data Analysis**
April 25	**Communicating Research Findings**

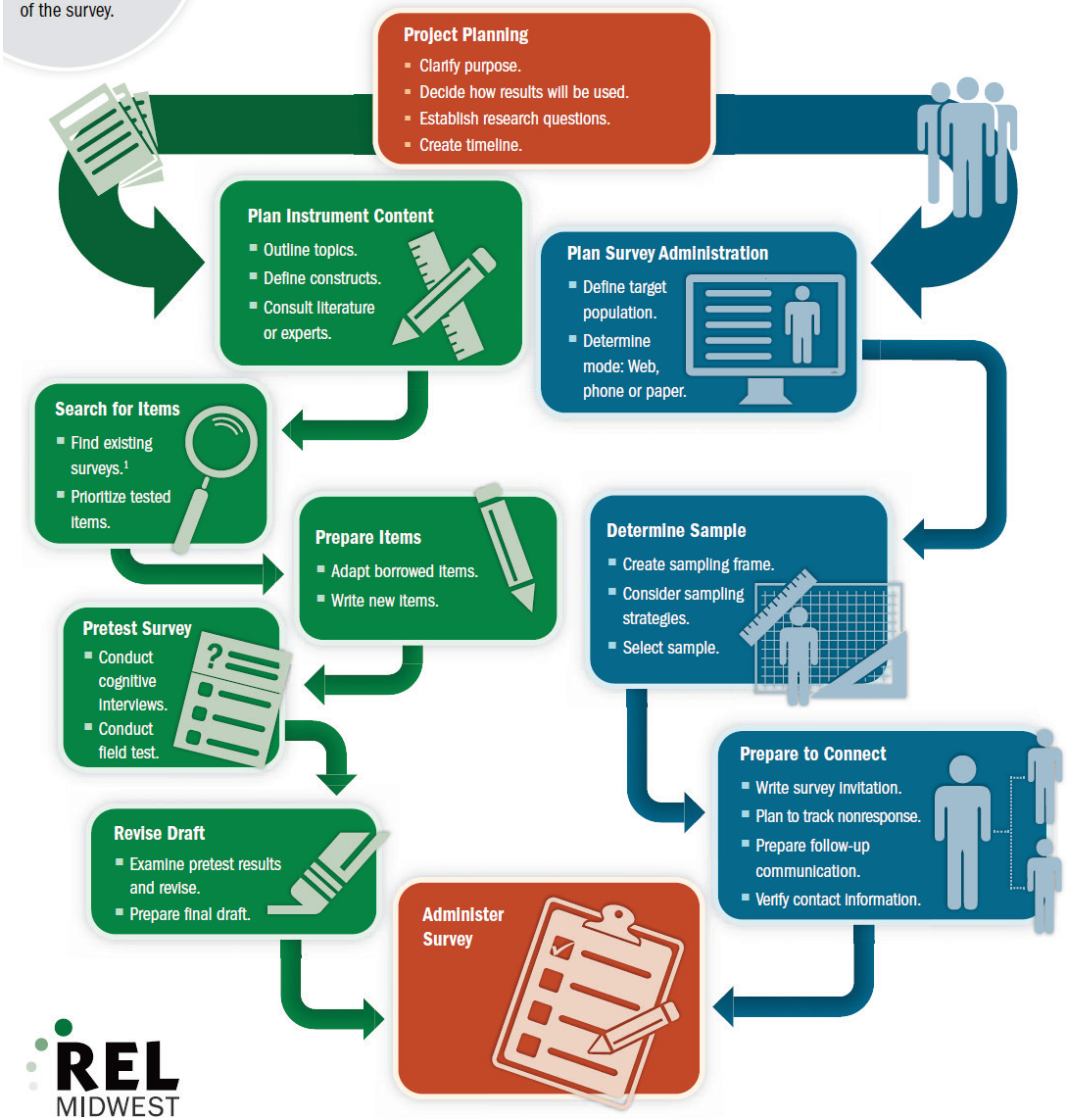
Today's Goals

1. Discuss initial considerations for planning a survey project.
2. Learn how to write and test survey items.
3. Learn about techniques for maximizing response rates.

Survey Development Guidance Checklist

The survey team will embark on two types of preparation activities, leading up to the administration of the survey.

Survey instrument development includes preparing and testing the items that will appear on the survey.
Survey administration design includes determining who will be surveyed and how.



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Planning for a survey

Gain consensus on the goals of the survey.

Create a timeline for survey development, administration, data analysis, and sharing results.

Define survey constructs.

Family engagement
Principal leadership
Academic engagement
School safety
Discipline

Align and limit content to the goals.

Consider who will provide the most accurate data.

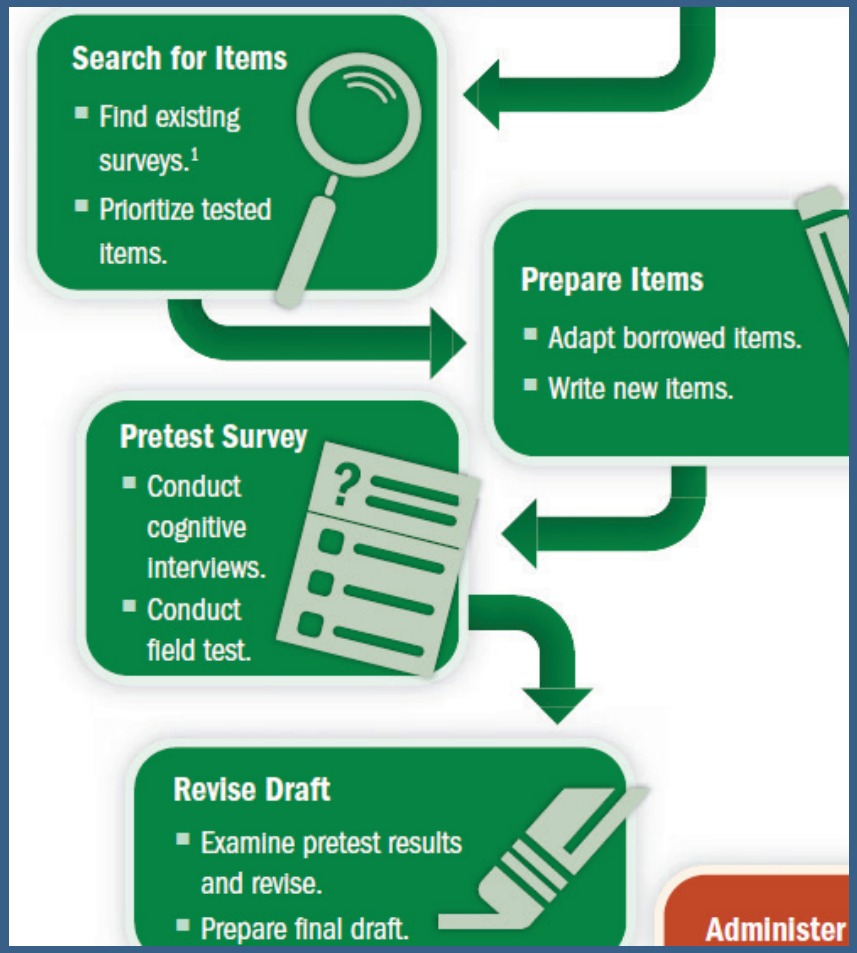
Define the target population.

Choose the most appropriate mode for administering the survey.

Activity: Handout 1

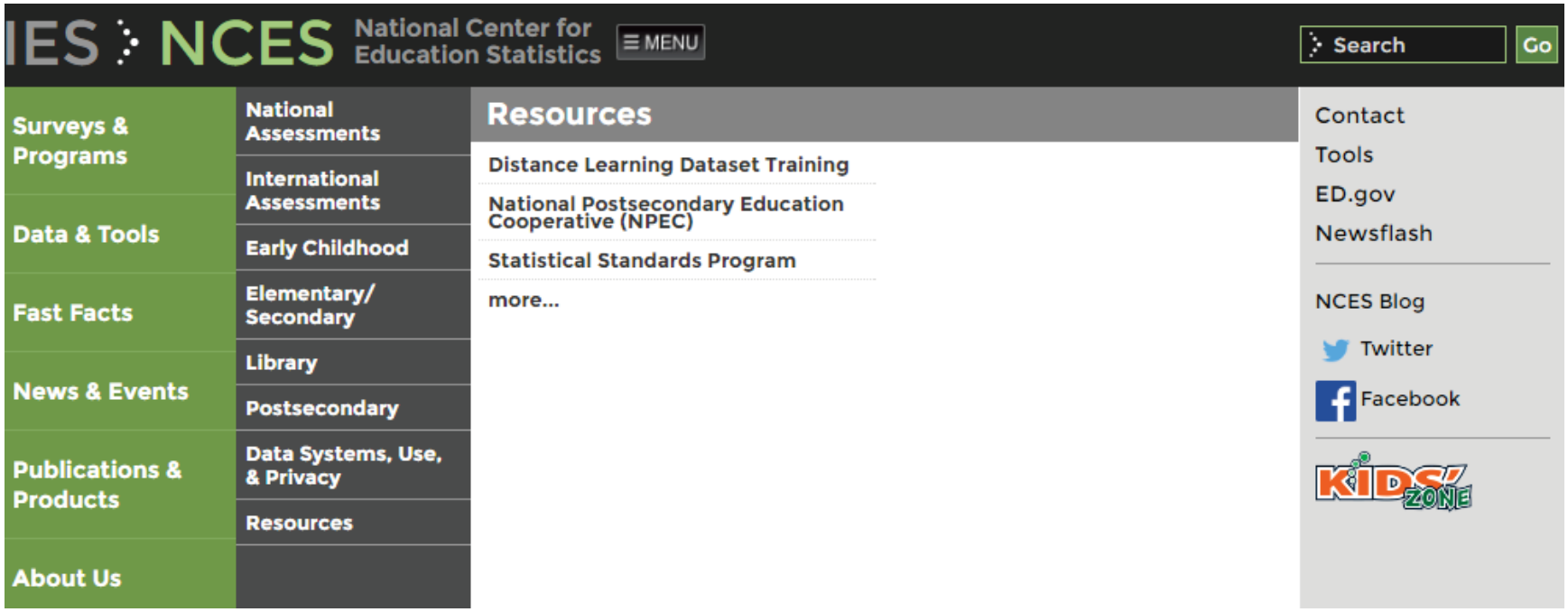
Work in your group to complete the survey planning form for your survey.

Developing survey content

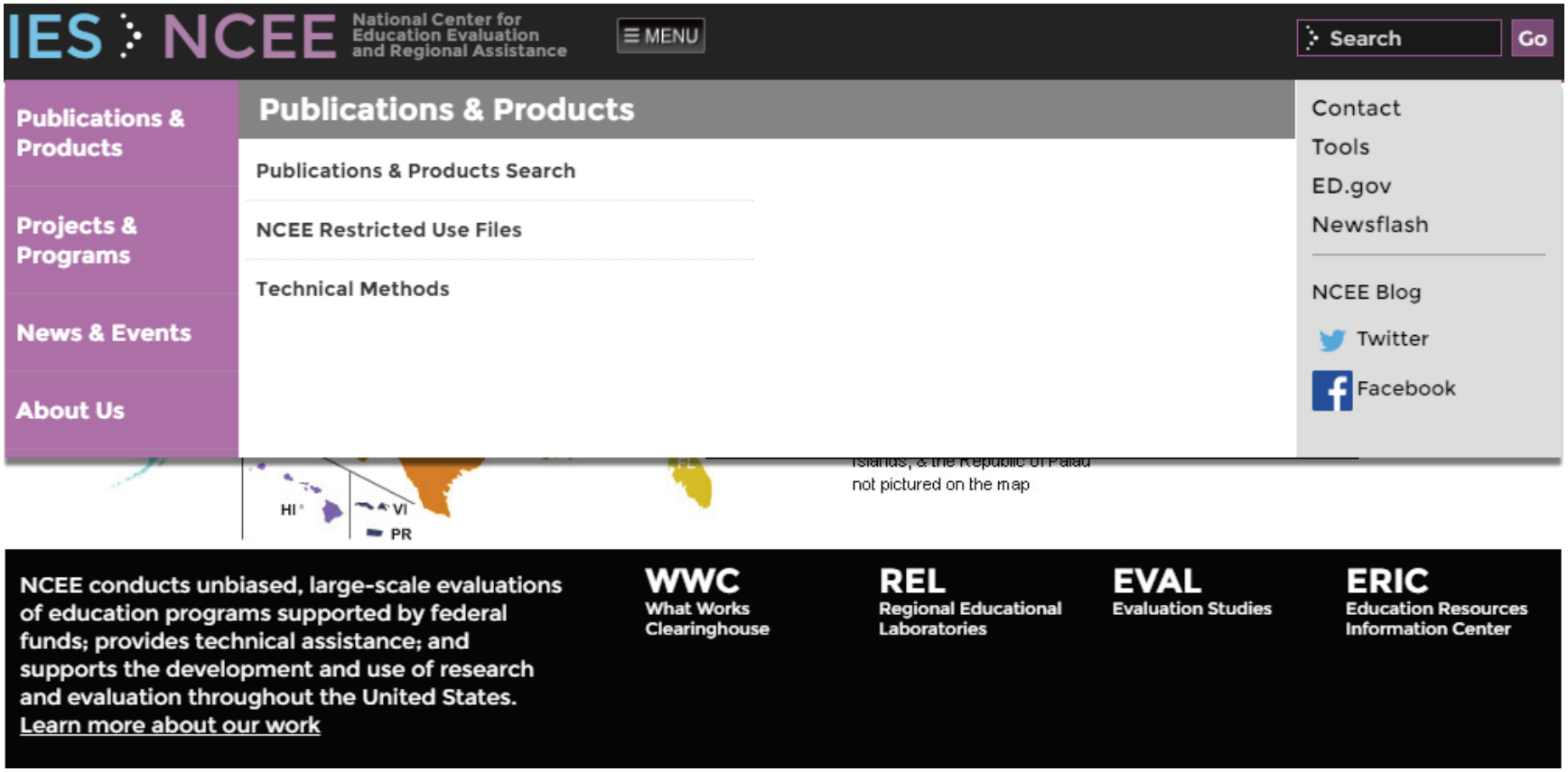


Explore existing surveys.

NCES surveys



NCEE reports



Other resources: School climate

Guidelines for writing items

Be specific.

Do you work full time?

This is more specific.

Currently, about how many total hours per week do you typically work for pay, counting all jobs?

Use clear directions where necessary—for example:

- Select all that apply.
- Select only one response.
- Round to the nearest whole number.
- Do not include long-term substitute teachers in your total count.

Avoid double-barreled items.

To what extent are your measures of progress quantitative and objective?

To what extent are your measures of progress quantitative?

To what extent are your measures of progress objective?

Each item should represent a unidimensional concept.

Use appropriate reading level.

Typically, four to seven response categories are used for rating scales.

My teacher grades fairly.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

Using a neutral category

Types of rating scales

- Agreement
- Interest
- Importance
- Frequency
- Degree or extent
- Similarity (*like me* to *not like me*)

For example:

54. How much actual control do you have IN YOUR CLASSROOM at this school over the following areas of your planning and teaching?

		Mark (X) one box on each line.			
		No control	Minor control	Moderate control	A great deal of control
a. Selecting textbooks and other instructional materials	0280	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
b. Selecting content, topics, and skills to be taught	0281	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
c. Selecting teaching techniques	0282	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
d. Evaluating and grading students	0283	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐

Make responses mutually exclusive.

What is wrong with this item?

How many years have you been teaching?

- 0–5 years
- 5–10 years
- 10+ years

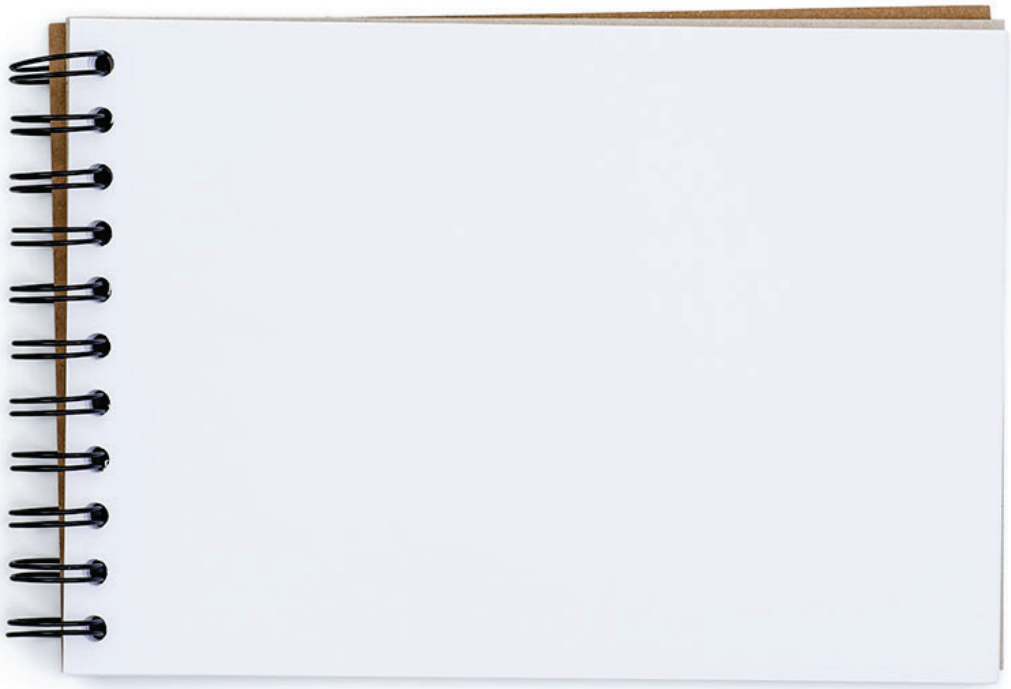
Make responses collectively exhaustive.

What is wrong with this item?

How often do you assign homework?

- Monthly
- Weekly
- Daily

Open-ended items



Methods to pretest survey items

- Expert reviews
- Cognitive interviews
- Focus groups
- Field testing

Cognitive interviews are a common pretesting strategy.

Concurrent “think-aloud”: Ask participants to verbalize what they are thinking.

Retrospective probing: Ask specific questions after responses.

What does the word *participate* here mean to you?

In your own words, what is this question asking you to do?

How do you remember. . .?

Was it easy or hard to answer this question?

Can you tell me how sure you are that you. . .?

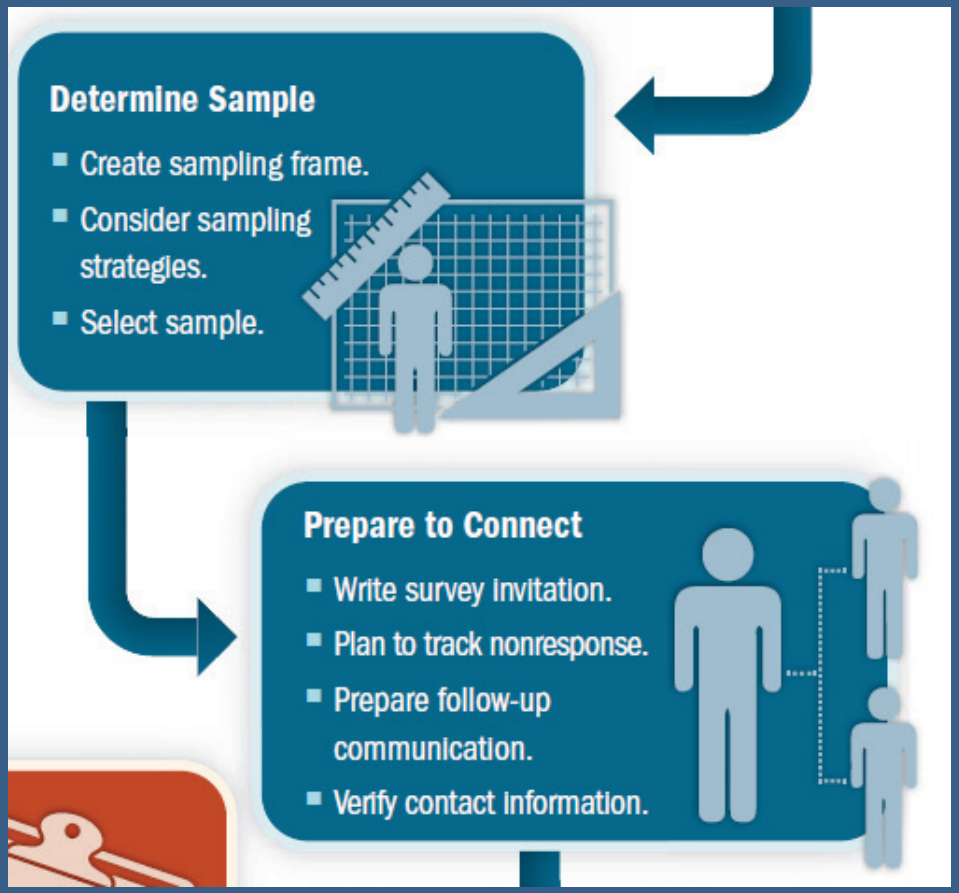
Cognitive interviews: Analysis

Review notes and listen to audio recordings of interviews.

Activity: Handout 3

Work in your group to review survey items.

Survey administration considerations



Avoid convenience samples.

Start with a sampling frame.

Teacher name	Email address	School	Grade level	Year hired	Certification type

It is not necessary to survey every member of the target population.

Large random samples are more representative than smaller random samples.

Consider subgroups of interest.

What is a response rate?

How do you maximize response rates?

Contact participants.

Online survey platforms at DPI

- Qualtrics
- Google Forms
- Verint

Procedures for gaining consent

Final thoughts: Survey projects will need time for:

- Planning
- Survey content development
- Survey administration
- Data analysis
- Sharing findings

See Handout 4 for an example Gantt chart.

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