

Title of Resource	Activity: That's So Meta: Student Generated Course Evaluations
Author(s)	Jacquelyn Omelian
Institution	Please provide the affiliation for each author. University of Nebraska at Omaha
Brief Description:	In this activity students practice designing survey questions by creating course evaluations. Students alternately serve as both researchers and participants, and the results from the activity allow instructors to assess the pedagogical classroom environment while illustrating survey methodology.
Keywords:	Research Methods > Descriptive Methods > Survey Research > Question Construction
Author Contact Information:	jacqueldavis@unomaha.edu
Additional Information:	

TeachPsychScience.org is made possible with grant support from the *Association for Psychological Science (APS) Fund for Teaching and Public Understanding of Psychological Science* to the site creators Gary Lewandowski, Natalie Ciarocco, and David Strohmets. All materials on this site have been subjected to a peer review process. We welcome additional resources (www.teachpsychscience.org/submissions).

© 2016 Jacquelyn Omelian. All Rights Reserved. This material may be used for noncommercial educational purposes. All other uses require the written consent of the authors.

Instructors:

The following activity provides practical experience creating survey questions as part of training in research methodology. **Prior to beginning this activity, students should be introduced to the general guidelines of survey question construction** (e.g., appropriate language and word choice, open vs. closed questions, anchored scales, etc.). When completed, the responses generated by this activity will allow you to assess the classroom environment, student satisfaction, and concerns related to the course. Additionally, evaluating the quality of the student-created survey questions serves a formative assessment of student learning on the principles of survey construction.

Instructions for Activity:

Students should already have been introduced to the basics of creating survey questions (via lecture or reading). It may be helpful for students to have access to their lecture/reading notes for review while completing this activity. This survey-writing exercise takes approximately 1 hour. Alternately, the activity may be spread out over 2 class periods (students make surveys on day 1, complete and review surveys on day 2).

- Pass out student worksheet and have students work independently to generate research questions **(10 minutes)**
- Students form groups of 3-4 and discuss differences or similarities in question content, the challenges of question formation and the advantages/disadvantages of each question type **(10-15 minutes)**
- Working as a group, students share individual questions and debate, develop, modify, and select the strongest questions to develop a survey consisting of between 3 and 5 closed-ended (Likert scale) and 2 open-ended questions. A copy of the final survey is written on a separate sheet of paper, and submitted to the instructor **(15 minutes)**
- Finished surveys are photocopied, randomly distributed to another student group, completed anonymously, and then returned to the instructor **(10 minutes)**
- Once all the surveys are submitted, each group gets their original, now completed questionnaires back and are able to briefly look over the responses **(5-10 minutes)**
- As a class, hold a discussion on the challenges in question writing, the advantages/disadvantages of closed versus open-ended questions, variation or similarities in question content between groups, the quality of student responses, etc. **(5-10 minutes)**
- Completed surveys are collected and reviewed by the instructor for pedagogical assessment

Student Learning Outcomes

Goal 1: Students will apply the basic principles of survey construction to create questions.

Goal 2: Working in groups, students will generate a completed course evaluation survey.

Goal 3: As a class, students will evaluate the relative advantages and disadvantages of survey data collection.

Required Resources

Student worksheet (the examples on the worksheet may be tailored to fit your class content)

Access to a photocopier

A teaching assistant or student volunteer (to make copies during class) is suggested, but not required

That's So Meta: Student Generated Course Evaluations

Pedagogical research examines best practices in teaching and evaluation. For this activity, you will be engaging in pedagogical research assessing this class. To do so, you will create a course evaluation to be completed by your fellow students.

Working independently, write at least 5 close-ended and at least 2 open-ended questions measuring the quality of the current course. Your goal is to determine what aspects of the course are most useful to students, what areas could be improved, and how such changes could be enacted.

To this end, you should design questions aimed at gaining information on:

- A) Assessment of current course content
- B) Assessment of student learning
- C) Suggestions for improving the course

Successful evaluations should focus on specific aspects of student *learning*, not just student opinion (e.g., “do you like the class?”). Keep in mind the rules for writing good survey questions and aim to create informative, useful questions. For example:

As a result of this course, my ability to locate peer-reviewed research articles has improved.

1
Strongly
Disagree

2
Somewhat
Disagree

3
Neutral

4
Somewhat
Agree

5
Strongly Agree