Survey Question Types

Question Type	Description	Strengths	Weaknesses
Yes/No	Questions with two possible answers	Wide variety of data analyses	Provide limited information
Multiple Choice	Stem followed by set of answers, pick the option that best describes opinion	Easy to answer, collect factual information	Possibility of not including key response options
Likert Rating Scale	Determine where an answer fits on a scale of carefully ordered categories	Efficient means to information, comparisons among answers	Difficult to write unambiguous items, potential for biased results
Open-Ended	No formatted response options, compose own answer to a stem	Informative – learn about unanticipated topics or issues	Require more work/effort, time-consuming analysis

Teaching & Learning Laboratory

15



- Does the question require an answer?
 To what extent do respondents have a ready-made answer?
- Can respondents accurately recall and report past behaviors?
- Are respondents willing to reveal the information that you're asking for?
- Will respondents feel motivated to answer?



Dillman, D.A. (2000). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method (2nd ed.)*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Prepared by: Lisa O'Leary Shuler Associate Director for Assessment and Evaluation lols@mit.edu



9. Choose as few words as possible to pose the question

<u>Problem:</u> Do you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree that service learning should be required for all MIT graduates?

~		
\cup	Strongly	agree

Agree

🔿 Neither agree nor disagree

) Disagree

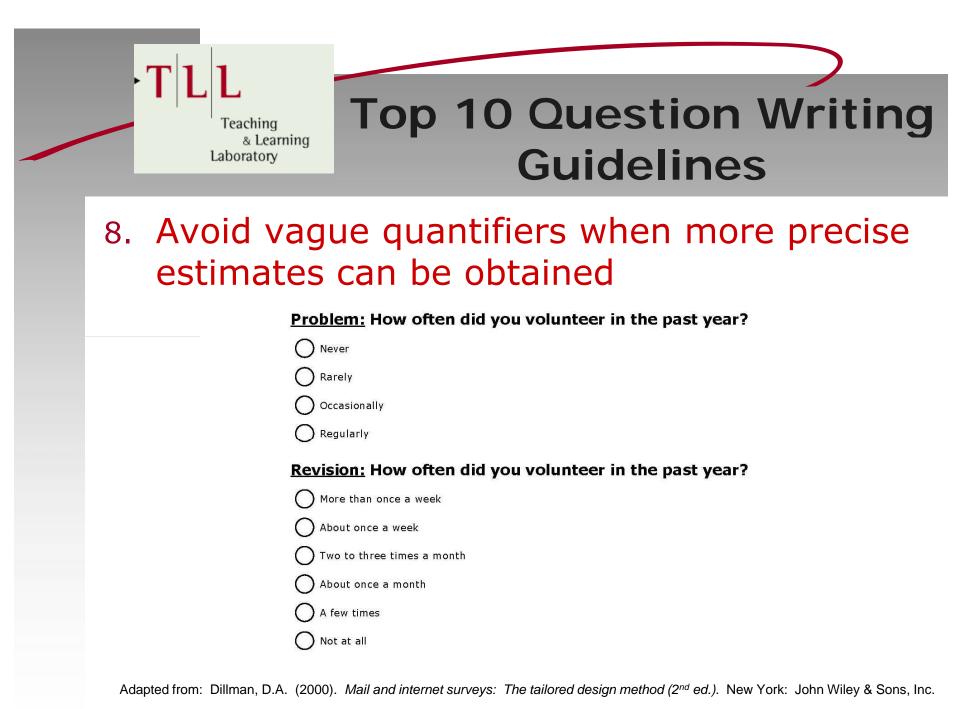
O Strongly disagree

<u>Revision:</u> Which of the following best describes the extent to which you agree or disagree that service learning should be required for all MIT graduates?

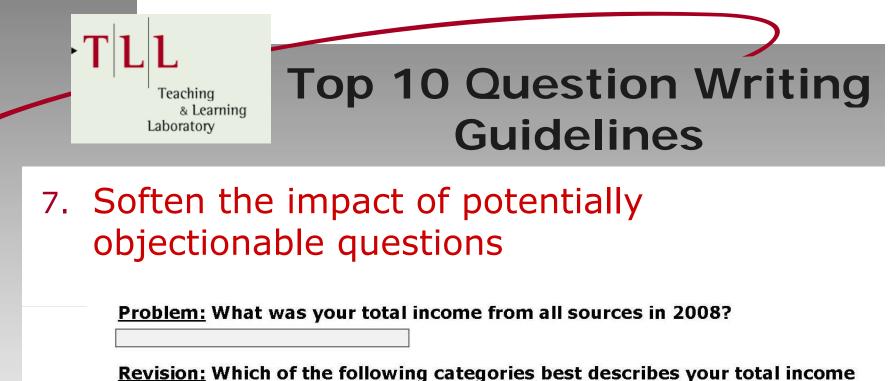
- Strongly agree
-) Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- 🔵 Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Adapted from: Dillman, D.A. (2000). Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method (2nd ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Prepared by: Lisa O'Leary Shuler Associate Director for Assessment and Evaluation lols@mit.edu



Prepared by: Lisa O'Leary Shuler Associate Director for Assessment and Evaluation lols@mit.edu



<u>Revision:</u> Which of the following categories best describes your total income from all sources in 2008?



Adapted from: Dillman, D.A. (2000). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method (2nd ed.)*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Prepared by: Lisa O'Leary Shuler Associate Director for Assessment and Evaluation Iols@mit.edu



6. Avoid asking respondents to say yes in order to mean no

Problem: Do you favor or oppose not allowing students to graduate without enrollment in two service learning classes?



Oppose

Revision: Do you favor or oppose requiring enrollment in two service learning classes in order to graduate?



Favor requiring two service learning classes

Oppose requiring two service learning classes

Adapted from: Dillman, D.A. (2000). Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method (2nd ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Associate Director for Assessment and Evaluation Prepared by: Lisa O'Leary Shuler lols@mit.edu



5. Develop response categories that are mutually exclusive

<u>Problem:</u> From which one of these sources did you first learn about the Public Service Center (PSC)?

O At orientation

O In a class

O Through an extra-curricular activity

Another student

A faculty member

○ A PSC staff member

<u>Revision:</u> In what setting did you first learn about the Public Service Center (PSC)?

At orientation

O In a class

An extra-curricular activity

<u>Revision:</u> From which one of these sources did you first learn about the Public Service Center (PSC)?

O Another student

O A faculty member

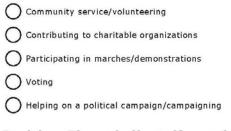
○ A PSC staff member

Adapted from: Dillman, D.A. (2000). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method (2nd ed.)*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Prepared by: Lisa O'Leary Shuler Associate Director for Assessment and Evaluation Iols@mit.edu



4. Eliminate check-all-that-apply question formats to reduce primacy effects

<u>Problem:</u> In the future, which of the following do you plan on participating (after you graduate from MIT)?



<u>Revision:</u> Please indicate if you plan on participating in each of the following activities in the future (after you graduate from MIT)?

	Yes	No
Community service/volunteering	0	0
Contributing to charitable organizations	0	0
Participating in marches/demonstrations	0	0
Voting	0	0
Helping on a political campaign/campaigning	0	0

Adapted from: Dillman, D.A. (2000). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method (2nd ed.)*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Prepared by: Lisa O'Leary Shuler Associate Director for Assessment and Evaluation lols@mit.edu

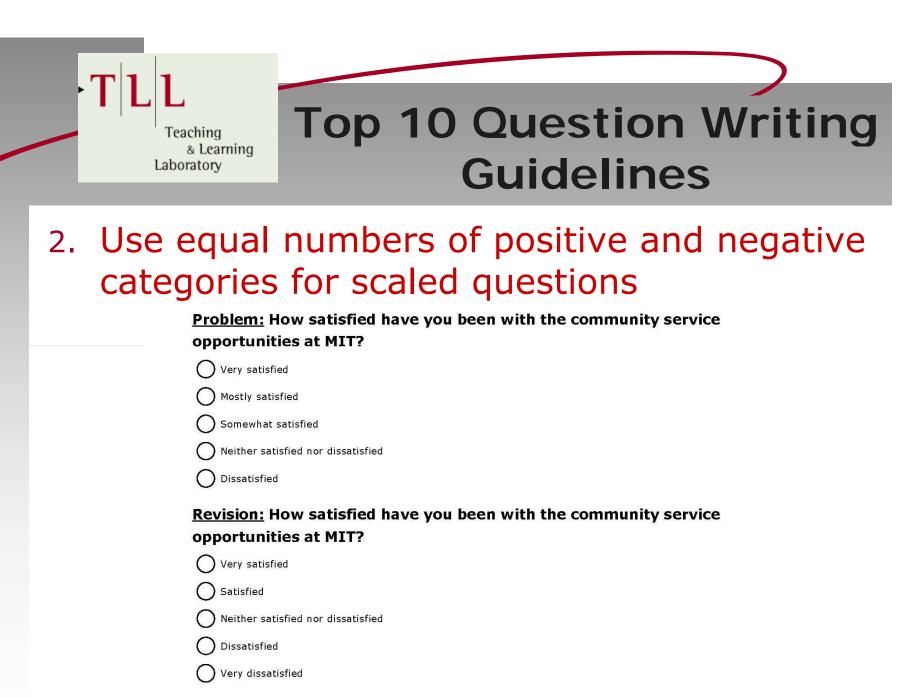


3. Provide appropriate time references

<u>Problem:</u> During your four years at MIT, how many times did you participate in community service?

<u>Revision:</u> On average, how many times per month did you participate in community service during your four years at MIT?

Adapted from:Dillman, D.A. (2000).Mail and internet surveys:The tailored design method (2nd ed.).New York:John Wiley & Sons, Inc.Prepared by:Lisa O'Leary ShulerAssociate Director for Assessment and EvaluationIols@mit.edu24



Adapted from: Dillman, D.A. (2000). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method (2nd ed.)*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Prepared by: Lisa O'Leary Shuler Associate Director for Assessment and Evaluation Iols@mit.edu

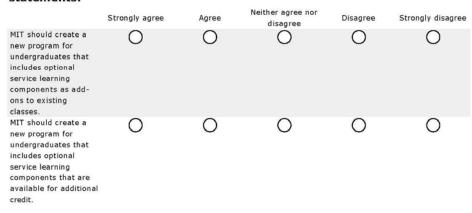


1. Avoid double-barreled questions

<u>Problem:</u> Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: MIT should create a new program for undergraduates that includes optional service learning components that are available for additional credit as add-ons to existing classes.



<u>Revision:</u> Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:



Adapted from: Dillman, D.A. (2000). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method (2nd ed.)*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Prepared by: Lisa O'Leary Shuler Associate Director for Assessment and Evaluation lols@mit.edu