EXAMPLES OF BAD QUESTIONS
&
SUGGESTIONS OF HOW TO FIX THEM!

Double Barreled question:
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the childcare program.

Incorrect:
I feel welcomed by staff and other youth at the center

Correction:
I feel welcomed by staff at the center
I feel welcomed by other youth at the center

Biased/leading question
Incorrect:
Community organizing is hard. Do leadership trainings help you feel prepared for community organizing?

Much more prepared Somewhat more prepared
Slightly more prepared Not more prepared

Correct:
The leadership trainings prepare me for community organizing.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Double Negative
Incorrect

Does it seem possible or does it seem impossible to you that the Nazi extermination of the Jews never happened? (22%)

Very possible Possible
Impossible Very impossible

Correct

Do you doubt that the Holocaust actually happened or not? (9%)

Very possible Possible
Impossible Very impossible
EVALUATING SURVEYS

The following are additional examples of bad survey questions. As a group, apply our class discussion, evaluating each question and its response choices to identify one error in each question (i.e. double barreled). Explain the problem that your group identifies in each question and propose an alternative that solves the problem.

1. More people have attended the movie, *Gone with the Wind*, than any other motion picture produced this century. Have you seen this movie?

   Yes  No

2. In your opinion, how would you rate the speed and accuracy of your work?

   Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor

3. Did you first hear about the bombing:

   _____ from a friend or relative  _____ from your spouse
   _____ from a newspaper  _____ at work
   _____ from the television or radio or other electronic media

4. How do you feel about the following statement? We should not reduce military spending.

   Strongly agree Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

5. People grow up in all different types of families. What type of family did you grow up in?

   _____Mom as single parent  _____Dad as a single parent
   _____Both Mom and Dad

6. Where do you get most or all of your information about current events in the nation and the world?

   __radio  __Newspapers  __Magazines  __internet

7. Higher than single-family density is acceptable in order to make housing affordable.

   Strongly Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Agree  Disagree
   1 2 3 4 5
The following are some suggestions of how to fix the problems of the survey questions found on the prior page.

1. **Problem**: Biased/Leading  
   **Solution**: Have you seen the movie *Gone with the Wind*?
   Yes  No

2. **Problem**: Double Barreled  
   **Solution**: In your opinion, how would you rate the speed of your work?
   Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor
   In your opinion, how would you rate the accuracy of your work?
   Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor

3. **Problem**: Categories are not Mutually exclusive  
   **Solution**: Did you first hear about the bombing:
   ___ from a friend
   ___ from a relative
   ___ from a media source

4. **Problem**: Double Negative  
   **Solution**: How do you feel about the following statement? We should reduce military spending.
   Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

5. **Problem**: Categories are not Exhaustive  
   **Solution**: People grow up in all types of families. What type of family did you grow up in?
   ___ two biological parents
   ___ one biological parent & a step parent
   ___ mom as a single parent
   ___ dad as a single parent
   ___ with a relative other than my biological parents
   ___ in foster care
   ___ with adoptive parent(s)
6. **Problem:** Double Barreled  
**Solution:**  
Which media source do you rely on most to get information about current events involving the nation?  
___radio     ___ Newspapers     ___Magazines     ___ Internet  

Which media source do you rely on most to get information about current events involving the world?  
___radio     ___ Newspapers     ___Magazines     ___ Internet  

7. **Problem:** Ambiguous  
**Solution:**  
In order to make housing affordable, is it acceptable to build housing whose buildings hold more than one family?  
Strongly agree     Agree     Undecided     Disagree     Strongly Disagree