

The North Carolina Student Survey

Introduction

The North Carolina Student Survey (NCSS) is a high-quality, structured, personal interview survey of North Carolina's students conducted by the NC testing program. Since the project began over a decade ago, surveys have been carried out in several subject areas. This document provides information about the NCSS: the general purpose, the types of questions asked, learning dimensions explored, and corresponding teaching strategies. If you would like clarification or additional information, please contact Iris Garner at igarner@dpi.state.nc.us.

General Purpose

The NCSS has a twofold purpose: to generate systematic data on the North Carolina student body and to provide data to educators that could inform discussions about instruction. Each NCSS has a series of questions on a special topic and a set of background, behavioral, and attitudinal items that are asked in successive surveys. The questions in the NCSS pertain to the following learning dimensions:

- Extracurricular Participation
- Instructional Participation
- Educational Practices
- Learning Styles
- Demographic Information
- Technology Usage

Once the data on each of these dimensions has been generated and trends recognized, then it can be linked to certain instructional strategies aligned with the standard course of study in each subject area.

Design

The NCSS has several key design features. First, it is structured: all respondents are asked the same questions in the same order, and all questions have a fixed and limited set of response alternatives. Second, many of the questions have been previously used. Third, a sample is systematically drawn; the entire student body is not given the survey. Fourth, it is a personal representation: the students complete the survey independently. Fifth, the survey generally takes between 15 and 20 minutes to complete.

Each of these features contributes to the goal of yielding reliable data on the attitudes and behaviors of North Carolina students. Using existing questions capitalizes on the efforts of other researchers to develop reliable questions. Drawing a sample provides a basis for calculating the margin of error, that is, the amount by which a sample estimate is likely to differ from the value for the entire population. And using personal representation and keeping the survey relatively short facilitate a high response rate, one of the most important indicators of survey quality.

Examples

Click on one of the **Civics and Economics and U.S. History** student survey questions on the following pages to view the learning dimension explored and linking instructional strategies.

Civics and Economics and U.S. History

Student Survey Questions

Directions: Read each question below. Fill in the circle in the Student Survey Section of your answer sheet that matches the letter of your choice on this survey. Fill in only **one** choice for each question **unless otherwise specified**.

1. **About how much total time *each week* do you spend outside of class doing work assigned by *all* of your teachers? Mark only *one* choice.** (Include school work done at home, in the library, during study hall, in homeroom, and all projects, special assignments, readings, and problems.)
 - A No homework is ever assigned.
 - B less than 1 hour
 - C between 1 and 3 hours
 - D more than 3 but less than 5 hours
 - E between 5 and 10 hours
 - F more than 10 hours
 - G I have homework, but I don't do it.

2. **In this course, what kinds of homework are typically assigned? Mark *all* that apply.**
 - A reading outside of the textbook
 - B worksheets
 - C problems in the textbook
 - D written assignments (for example, essays, lab reports)
 - E research (for example, library, Internet)
 - F other

3. **About how much television do you usually watch each school day? Do not count TV time at school. Mark only *one* choice.**
 - A none
 - B 1 hour or less
 - C 2 hours
 - D 3 hours
 - E 4 to 5 hours
 - F 6 hours or more

4. **What do you plan to do after high school? Mark the *one* circle that best describes your plans.**
 - A Seek employment.
 - B Enlist in military service.
 - C Enroll in a business or trade school.
 - D Enroll in a community, technical, or private junior college.
 - E Enroll in a four-year college.
 - F undecided
 - G other

5. **In which of the following extracurricular activities do you participate? Mark *all* that apply.**
- A athletics and supporting activities (e.g., athletic teams, cheerleading, pep club)
 - B academic subject matter clubs or debate
 - C fine arts (e.g., band, orchestra, chorus, dance, drama)
 - D vocational education clubs (e.g., future homemakers, teachers, farmers, business)
 - E service clubs (e.g., Civitans, Key Club)
 - F other activities
 - G I do not participate in any extracurricular activities.
6. **How often do you use a computer at home for school work? Mark only *one* choice.**
- A almost every day
 - B once or twice a week
 - C once or twice a month
 - D hardly ever
 - E Never, even though I have a computer at home.
 - F I have no computer at home.
7. **Using the following educational levels, what is the highest level completed by *either* of your parents/guardians? Mark only *one* choice.**
- A did not finish high school
 - B high school graduate
 - C some additional education after high school, but did not graduate
 - D trade or business school graduate
 - E community, technical, or junior college graduate
 - F four-year college graduate
 - G graduate school degree
8. **Which of the following *best* describes the course in which you are enrolled? Mark only *one* choice.**
- A two-year/two-block
 - B regular year/block
 - C honors
 - D college placement (CP)
 - E Advanced Placement (AP)
 - F other
9. **Which of the following kinds of texts did you read or study this year in your social studies class? Mark *all* that apply.**
- A primary resources (historical documents, biography, autobiography, memoirs)
 - B news magazines and journals
 - C daily/weekly newspapers
 - D fiction (short stories, novels)
 - E drama
 - F poetry
10. **During this school year, which of the following did you complete or participate in for your social studies class? Mark *all* that apply.**
- A independent research
 - B portfolios
 - C collaborative group projects
 - D educational field trips/travel
 - E community service activities
 - F social studies organizations



Question Dimensions

Question #1

Extracurricular Participation questions provide information to educators on students' personal interests and goals. This dimension will allow teachers to craft instructional strategies that capture and maintain students' attention.

Strategy

- Thematic instruction including variety of textual resources

Question #2

Instructional Participation questions provide educators with a bank of typical instructional strategies customarily implemented. This dimension will allow teachers to develop multi-dimensional instructional activities that cater to diverse learning styles.

Strategies

- Use of primary documents and document-based questions
- Historical artifact analysis
- Use of “doing history” classroom activities (contextual analysis to question historical interpretations; present more than one possible cause for historical events and have students evaluate; use historical fact as evidence for arguments; student presentations of interpretations)
- Use of “doing history” research assignments (where historical interpretations are questioned, students research for facts and counterfactuals to build an argument for why historical events took place as they did)
- Thematic instruction including variety of textual resources
- Use of conceptual questions to organize lecture material
- Use of graphic organizers, interactive note-taking and maps to develop main concepts
- Use of images, media, multimedia, and technology as sources for historical interpretation
- Use of counterfactual approach (What would have happened if ...)
- Use of narrative approaches including guided imagery for response
- Perspective-taking exercises: role-plays, scenarios, inclusive subjects and conditions, present-minded responses put in historical context, impact of individuals on history
- Use of familiar, familial, and community connections to propose historical links

Question #3

Learning Style questions provide educators with blueprints of students' learning behaviors. This dimension will allow teachers to develop lessons that are fashioned to meet the cognitive demands of the students.

Strategies

- Use of conceptual questions to organize lecture material
- Use of graphic organizers, interactive note-taking and maps to develop main concepts
- Use of images, media, multimedia, and technology as sources for historical interpretation

Question #4

Demographical Information questions provide educators with students' demographic trends such as education. This dimension allows educators to better understand the student population and their family units.

Strategies

- Perspective-taking exercises: role-plays, scenarios, inclusive subjects and conditions, present-minded responses put in historical context, impact of individuals on history
- Use of familiar, familial, and community connections to propose historical links

Question #5

Extracurricular Participation questions provide information to educators on students' personal interests and goals. This dimension will allow teachers to craft instructional strategies that capture and maintain students' attention.

Strategy

- Thematic instruction including variety of textual resources

Question #6

Technology Usage questions provide educators with knowledge that certifies the students' degree of technology awareness and availability. This dimension will allow teachers to promote and improve a key component of 21st century skills. Additionally, this dimension will inform the Information Technology staff on technical requirements and technology-based needs.

Strategy

- Use of images, media, multimedia, and technology as sources for historical interpretation

Question #7

Demographical Information questions provide educators with students' demographic trends such as education. This dimension allows educators to better understand the student population and their family units.

Strategies

- Perspective-taking exercises: role-plays, scenarios, inclusive subjects and conditions, present-minded responses put in historical context, impact of individuals on history
- Use of familiar, familial, and community connections to propose historical links

Question #8

Instructional Participation questions provide educators with a bank of typical instructional strategies customarily implemented. This dimension will allow teachers to develop multi-dimensional instructional activities that cater to diverse learning styles.

Strategies

- Use of primary documents and document-based questions
- Historical artifact analysis
- Use of “doing history” classroom activities (contextual analysis to question historical interpretations; present more than one possible cause for historical events and have students evaluate; use historical fact as evidence for arguments; student presentations of interpretations)
- Use of “doing history” research assignments (where historical interpretations are questioned, students research for facts and counterfactuals to build an argument for why historical events took place as they did)
- Thematic instruction including variety of textual resources
- Use of conceptual questions to organize lecture material
- Use of graphic organizers, interactive note-taking and maps to develop main concepts
- Use of images, media, multimedia, and technology as sources for historical interpretation
- Use of counterfactual approach (What would have happened if ...)
- Use of narrative approaches including guided imagery for response
- Perspective-taking exercises: role-plays, scenarios, inclusive subjects and conditions, present-minded responses put in historical context, impact of individuals on history
- Use of familiar, familial, and community connections to propose historical links

Question #9

Learning Styles questions provide educators with blueprints of students' learning behaviors. This dimension will allow teachers to develop lessons that are fashioned to meet the cognitive demands of the students.

Strategies

- Use of conceptual questions to organize lecture material
- Use of graphic organizers, interactive note-taking and maps to develop main concepts
- Use of images, media, multimedia, and technology as sources for historical interpretation

Question #10

Instructional Participation questions provide educators with a bank of typical instructional strategies customarily implemented. This dimension will allow teachers to develop multi-dimensional instructional activities that cater to diverse learning styles.

Strategies

- Use of primary documents and document-based questions
- Historical artifact analysis
- Use of “doing history” classroom activities (contextual analysis to question historical interpretations; present more than one possible cause for historical events and have students evaluate; use historical fact as evidence for arguments; student presentations of interpretations)
- Use of “doing history” research assignments (where historical interpretations are questioned, students research for facts and counterfactuals to build an argument for why historical events took place as they did)
- Thematic instruction including variety of textual resources
- Use of conceptual questions to organize lecture material
- Use of graphic organizers, interactive note-taking and maps to develop main concepts
- Use of images, media, multimedia, and technology as sources for historical interpretation
- Use of counterfactual approach (What would have happened if ...)
- Use of narrative approaches including guided imagery for response
- Perspective-taking exercises: role-plays, scenarios, inclusive subjects and conditions, present-minded responses put in historical context, impact of individuals on history
- Use of familiar, familial, and community connections to propose historical links