Appendix C

General Questionnaire Format Conventions and Interviewing Techniques

Introduction

Aspects of the preassessment contact and the school coordinator debriefing interview resemble survey questionnaires and require techniques commonly used by survey interviewers. This section of the manual is a short review of those techniques as they apply to the forms you will use for the 2003 NAEP assessment. These techniques include the following:

- Using a questionnaire format;
- How questions are asked;
- How answers are recorded;
- Techniques you need to know to obtain concise and neutral responses; and
- "Probing" responses.

Using a Questionnaire Format

In its simplest form, a questionnaire contains a series of questions and an area for you to record the answers you receive.

1. **Instructions to You:** An important convention found in the NAEP forms is one that Westat generally observes for questionnaires: Words printed in all capital letters are instructions to you and should not be read aloud. For example:

2. IF NUMBER LESS THAN LOWEST LINE NUMBER ON INSTRUCTIONS FOR SAMPLING NEW ENROLLEES, SAY:

2. **Circling Answer Codes:** Most questions list the possible answers that the school coordinator is expected to give. Simply circle the answer code that corresponds best to what the school coordinator says in reply to the questions. An example of this type of question is Question B2 from the Contact Log requiring a ***Yes*** or ***No*** answer.

2. Have you distributed Teacher Questionnaires to the appropriate staff members?

Yes 1
No ..... 2 → *Please distribute the questionnaires as soon as possible so that everyone has adequate time to complete them either in the hard-copy booklet or on the MySchool web site.*

3. **Skip Instructions:** You will ask all questions sequentially unless you encounter a "skip instruction." A skip instruction tells you to skip past a question because it does not apply to this school coordinator's situation. Skip instructions are printed in bold throughout the Contact Log as shown in the example below.

1. Please locate the New Enrollee Listing Form. Have you kept a list of all students who have enrolled in (*grade*) since the original list of students was prepared?

Yes ..... 1 → How many students have enrolled since (*date master list prepared*)?

TOTAL # OF NEW ENROLLEES: _____.

No ..... 2 → *Please prepare a list of students who enrolled in (grade) after the master list was prepared. We must know in advance whether any students from this list will be selected. When is a good day and time to call you to determine whether any new enrollees fall into the sample?* **SKIP TO STEP F.**

DAY AND TIME TO CALL BACK: _____.

No new enrollees ..... 3 → **SKIP TO STEP F.**

4. **Words in Parentheses:** Questionnaires use other conventions to make the questionnaire more adaptable. If you find a word or words in parentheses within a question or statement, this means you need to substitute the word or phrase that makes the question appropriate to your situation. In the following example you would substitute the grade for the word *(grade).*

> 3. Are there any students on the Administration Schedule(s) who are not currently enrolled in (*grade*)?
>
> Yes ..... 1 ⟶ ENTER AN ADMINISTRATION CODE OF 55 FOR INELIGIBLE STUDENT(S) IN COLUMN P. THEN, DRAW A LINE THROUGH THE STUDENT'S NAME UP TO THE PERFORATION.
>
> No 2

If the words in parentheses are separated by a slash, this means you will need to select the most appropriate word or phrase based on the context in which the question is asked, as in the following example:

> NAEP will be assessing students in your (*fourth grade/eighth grade/twelfth grade*) on (*date*). You will receive a preassessment packet from NAEP at least 2 weeks prior to the assessment date. I would like to schedule a time to (*visit/call*) you to review the packet materials and make final arrangements for the assessment.

5. **Open-ended Questions:** Open-ended questions are used when we do not want to restrict a school coordinator's answer. For a question like the one below, you would write down the school coordinator's answer verbatim on the lines provided.

> 3. What suggestions can you offer for improving the instruction sheet?
>
> .....
>
> .....

C

General Rules for Asking Questions

The following are basic rules for administering the sections of the Contact Log that use questionnaire format.

- Always read the question as it is written.
- Ask the questions in the way they are ordered. If you discover that you have accidentally skipped one or more questions, you may go back to the omitted questions.
- Read questions in a natural conversational tone, following the punctuation in the question. Your reading of the questions should reflect your overall neutrality about the subject matter and encourage the school coordinator to talk freely about the issue. Only emphasize words that are underlined or appear in bold. When answer categories are to be read, put a brief pause between the options so the school coordinator knows what the choices are.
- Read the questions at a slow even pace.
- Do not show the form to the school coordinator.

General Rules for Recording Answers

- Record your answers neatly and legibly. This means that for coded questions you should carefully circle the number that corresponds to the response given by the school coordinator.
- When recording a response to open-ended questions, write legibly.
- If you make an error in recording a response, you may either erase or line through the incorrect answer. In either case, be sure the correct answer is legible.
- Feel free to write notes in the left-hand margin of the questionnaire to explain an answer or unusual circumstance. Do not write in the right-hand margin, however, because this area is used by data processing staff. Distinguish a note from an actual answer given by the school coordinator by placing it in parentheses.
- If the school coordinator does not know an answer and a "Don't know" code has not been provided, record this as "DK" in the margin by the question.
- When recording responses to open-ended questions, keep the following in mind:
    - To the extent possible, record answers verbatim. If the answers are lengthy, you may paraphrase.
    - Use standard abbreviations, such as AA, SC, Admin. Schedule, etc. Be sure to review abbreviations you have recorded afterwards and spell out any that are not in common usage.
    - If necessary, ask the school coordinator to slow down so that you can capture everything that is said.

Techniques for Obtaining Complete and Neutral Responses

When you administer the questionnaire portions of the Contact Log, keep the following interviewing techniques in mind:

- Listen carefully to the school coordinator's responses so that you know when the school coordinator has given a complete answer that is relevant to the question.
- Remain neutral. Do not give the school coordinator any indication of your feelings on the subject being discussed. Studies show that respondents to questionnaires may alter their answers if they think the interviewer expects them to answer in a certain way.
- Encourage the school coordinator to provide clear and concise answers by giving positive reinforcement in a neutral manner. You can do this with phrases like:
  - "I see."
  - "That's helpful."
  - "I understand."

Probing

Probing is a technique used by survey interviewers to refocus and redirect the respondent's attention to the question. It requires the interviewer to find a way to get the respondent to elaborate or reconsider an incomplete or irrelevant answer without influencing the content of the answer.

You will know when to probe by listening to the school coordinator's answer carefully and evaluating whether it is relevant, specific enough, and complete.

There are some examples of situations that require probing on the next page. Note that the probes used are neutral. This means they draw out the school coordinator without influencing the answer in any direction. They generally involve repeating parts of the question or the answer categories in a way that refocuses the school coordinator's attention on them.

Example 1:

1. Overall, how do you think the assessments went in your school? Would you say:

Very Well 1
Satisfactory 2
Unsatisfactory 3

RESPONSE #1: "Our state testing is more difficult."

This answer needs to be probed because it is ***not relevant.*** A good probe would be to repeat the question and answer categories with proper emphasis:

PROBE: "But overall, how would you say *this assessment* went?"

Example 2:

1. Overall, how do you think the assessments went in your school? Would you say:

Very Well 1
Satisfactory 2
Unsatisfactory 3

RESPONSE #2: "It was OK."

This answer needs to be probed because it does not match one of the predesignated answer categories. A good probe would be to repeat the answer categories:

PROBE: "Well, would you say it went very well, satisfactorily, or unsatisfactorily?"

Example 3:

3. What suggestions can you offer for improving the instruction sheet?

.....

.....

RESPONSE #3: "There are so many things."

This answer needs to be probed because it is ***vague***. A good probe to use would be:

PROBE: "Could you be more specific?"

Example 4:

4. What suggestions can you offer for making it easier for schools to participate in NAEP?

.....

.....

RESPONSE #4: "My superintendent said that this takes too much student time."

This answer is off the mark because the school coordinator is repeating what someone else said, which may not be his/her own opinion. Probe by refocusing the school coordinator:

PROBE: "And do *you* have any comments about making it easier for schools to participate?"

Here are some techniques to keep in mind about probing:

- Sometimes the most effective probe is an expectant pause. This is a cue to the school coordinator that you expect a more detailed or elaborate answer.
- When the school coordinator is giving you comments, probe for additional comments by using the phrase: **"What else?"**
- A common response to survey questions is "I don't know." As a general rule, if you receive a "don't know" response and the answer categories do not allow for it, try to get the school coordinator to elaborate by saying: **"Take a minute to think about it."** or **"Your best estimation would be fine."**
- If you have probed a response once and still do not have a satisfactory answer, you will need to use your judgment about whether you should probe again. For most questions in the Contact Log, it is not necessary to probe more than once.
- If you think the school coordinator just didn't understand the question, the best probe is to simply read it again, perhaps more slowly and clearly.
- Do not make assumptions about what the school coordinator means. If it isn't clear, **PROBE** for clarification.

Special Procedures for Grade 4 Schools Where All Students Are Included

In the fall, schools with 120 or fewer fourth-grade students were given the option of assessing all students in the grade, rather than randomly sampling students to be assessed. In the previous NAEP assessment, 80 percent of the eligible grade 4 schools elected to take this option.

You should check the Contact Log for each fourth-grade school in your area to see if this option was taken. The Contact Log would indicate this by having a *Take-All Option: Yes* for fourth-grade schools on the label as shown below.

School Information

```
ID: 101-101-1    REGION: DC1   AREA: 1
SCHOOL: WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY
TAKE ALL OPTION?: YES
ADDRESS: 50 MAIN STREET
         WASHINGTON, DC  20022

PHONE: (202) 555-2121
PRINCIPAL: BETTY SMITH
SCHL COOR: ANTHONY DAVIS
PHONE:
SESSID: RM0401,RM0402,RM0403
ASSESSMENT DATE: 2/12
```

This situation will require adjustments to some of the tasks and steps listed in Chapters 4 and 6 of this manual. Those tasks and steps that require special procedures are listed on the following pages.

Chapter 4. Contacting Your Assigned Schools

Task 1

Overview of Contact Procedures (Page 4.1)

Whenever possible, you should plan on conducting an in-person visit to any school that elected the "take-all" option and did not provide information in column ***B***, labeled ***Homeroom or Other Locator***.

Task 3

Use the Contact Log to Document the Preassessment Call/Visit (Page 4.3)

Most of the steps of the preassessment contact will not need to be modified. Only the steps of the preassessment contact that require procedural adjustment are discussed in this task. You should follow the normal procedures for any steps not presented below.

Step D

Complete the Administration Schedule (Page 4.20)

Fourth-grade schools that selected the take-all option will need to have the students assessed in sessions according to the homeroom or other locator in column ***B*** of the Administration Schedule as shown on the following page.

Example of Grade 4 Administration Schedules with Students Sorted by Homeroom

This form must be completed in No. 2 pencil.

Race/Ethnicity Codes	National School Lunch Program
1 = White not Hispanic 2 = Black not Hispanic 3 = Hispanic Heritage 4 = Asian/Pacific Islander 5 = American Indian/ Alaskan Native 6 = Other	1 = Student not eligible 2 = Reduced price lunch 3 = Free lunch 4 = Information not available 5 = Refused 6 = School not participating
For Use in Column "J"	For Use in Column "K"
Session Number	**Bundle #s**
RM0401	01001 01002

Column Indicators: "A" Student Name	"B" Grade
01 Mark Atley	10
02 Betty Bates	10
03 Wes Block	10
04 Angela Burns	10
05 Tim Dublin	10
06 Carla Grahams	10
07 Paul Hernandez	10
08 Becky Hoecke	10
09 Paul Lucas	10

This form must be completed in No. 2 pencil.

Race/Ethnicity Codes	National School Lunch Program
1 = White not Hispanic 2 = Black not Hispanic 3 = Hispanic Heritage 4 = Asian/Pacific Islander 5 = American Indian/ Alaskan Native 6 = Other	1 = Student not eligible 2 = Reduced price lunch 3 = Free lunch 4 = Information not available 5 = Refused 6 = School not participating
For Use in Column "J"	For Use in Column "K"
Session Number	**Bundle #s**
RM0402	01003 01004

Column Indicators: "A" Student Name	"B" Grade
01 Nicki Campbell	12
02 Nancy Cordero	12
03 Kimberly Frank	12
04 Daniel Jaemer	12
05 Sarah Kruger	12
06 Penny Lowe	12
07 Eric Malone	12
08 Teresa Meyer	12
09 Belna Ortiz	12

This form must be completed in No. 2 pencil.

Race/Ethnicity Codes	National School Lunch Program
1 = White not Hispanic 2 = Black not Hispanic 3 = Hispanic Heritage 4 = Asian/Pacific Islander 5 = American Indian/ Alaskan Native 6 = Other	1 = Student not eligible 2 = Reduced price lunch 3 = Free lunch 4 = Information not available 5 = Refused 6 = School not participating
For Use in Column "J"	For Use in Column "K"
Session Number	**Bundle #s**
RM0403	01005 01006

NAEP 2003 Administration Schedule

The Nation's Report Card NAEP

Column Indicators: "A" Student Name	"B" Grade	"C" Line # Subject	"D" Birth Date Month		Year	
01 Bernard Boyce	14	01 M	0	4	9	
02 Irving Cohen	14	02 R	0	2	9	
03 David M. Eastman	14	03 M	0	6	9	4
04 Ming Huong	14	04 R	1	0	9	
05 Kimberly Jackson	14	05 M	1	1	9	4
06 Louis Johnson	14	06 R	0	9	9	
07 Elizabeth McDonald	14	07 M	0	1	9	
08 Katherine Parr	14	08 R	0	5	9	
09 Jennifer Schluster	14	09 M	0	7	9	

D

Because students will need to be grouped by homeroom or other locator status, you will need to be sure column ***B*** of the Administration Schedule is accurate and complete for all grade 4 take-all schools by doing the following:

- **If the school provided a homeroom or other locator to NAEP in the fall, then the Administration Schedules will be grouped according to the locator.** There will be one Administration Schedule for each group of homerooms or other locators. During the preassessment contact, you must tell the school coordinator that students will be assessed according to the information in column ***B*** of the Administration Schedule and ask if the indicators in column ***B*** are still correct. If only a few students have changed classrooms, you should leave those students on the Administration Schedules and make the necessary corrections in column ***B***. Next, make a note that the booklet for each student with a new classroom must be pulled from the bundle on the assessment day.
- **If the school did not provide a homeroom or other locator to NAEP in the fall, then you will need to collect this information during the preassessment contact.** Begin by asking the school coordinator how he/she would like students grouped during the assessment (typically, schools will want students grouped in the classrooms they are in during the time the assessment is scheduled to begin). You will then record the homeroom or other locator, as indicated by the school coordinator, in column ***B*** for each student listed on the Administration Schedule. **After the visit or phone call**, you will use blank Administration Schedules (from your NCS Pearson bulk supplies) to group the students according to their homeroom/locator status. Each unique homeroom or locator should have a different Administration Schedule. You must carefully transfer columns ***A, B, C,*** and ***N*** from the original Administration Schedules to the blank Administration Schedules as shown in the example on the previous page. You must also transfer the school name and ID number onto the blank Administration Schedule(s). AAs will use the temporary Administration Schedules to conduct the sessions. After the assessment, you will carefully transfer the attendance and Administration Codes back onto the original (preprinted) Administration Schedules. This procedure is further defined on page D.6-D.7 of this section.

Example of Using a Blank Administration Schedule to Sort Grade 4 Students by Homeroom

This form must be completed in No. 2 pencil.

NAEP 2003 Administration Schedule

The Nation's Report Card NAEP

School # 101-101-1 Grade 4

School Name Washington Elementary School

Administrator's Name Joe Smith

Bundle #s 01001 01002

Session Number RM0401

| Student Name | | |

Step E — Select Sample of Newly Enrolled Students (Page 4.26)

Sampling is not required because all students enrolled in grade 4 on the assessment day will be assessed. You will just add any newly enrolled students to the Administration Schedule for their classroom.

Chapter 6. Assessment Day Activities

Task 1 — Preparing for the School's Assessment (Page 6.1)

Now that the data in columns ***A***, ***B***, ***C***, and ***N*** have been transferred from the original, preprinted Administration Schedules to the temporary Administration Schedules, your next step is to prepare the booklets.

The booklets will need to be prepared in the original Administration Schedule order and then sorted into the new, temporary Administration Schedule order by classroom.

Because this task will take some time, you should plan on completing it at your house the day before the assessment. You may ask your AAs to assist you with this activity.

First, open each session box and remove the bundles of booklets, preprinted student ID labels, additional booklet materials, and accommodation booklets (if required). The booklets and student ID labels will be in the same order as the original, preprinted Administration Schedule. Therefore, you should prepare the booklets following the instructions on pages 6.11-6.13. Be sure to write the student's line number from the original, preprinted Administration Schedule in the upper-right corner of each booklet cover. You should also write the session number next to the student's line number. This will make it easier to sort the booklets after the assessment.

Once the student ID labels are affixed to the booklets, accommodation booklets have been assigned, and additional materials have been inserted,[1] your next step is to sort the booklets into the new, temporary Administration Schedules that are organized by classroom.

You will need to review the temporary Administration Schedules one more time to make sure that you have entered the correct information in columns ***A***, ***B***, ***C***, and ***N***. Next, sort the booklets into the new, temporary Administration Schedule order. Once the booklets are stacked in the new, temporary Administration Schedule order, you should place the Administration Schedule on top of the stack and rubber band them together. Place the stack of booklets and Administration Schedule back in the session box. The booklets are now ready to be distributed on the assessment day.

Remember, even though the booklet preparation has been done prior to the assessment day, the booklets must remain in your possession in order to protect the security of the assessment materials. On the assessment day, you must bring both the temporary Administration Schedules that are sorted by classroom and the original preprinted Administration Schedules.

Task 3 — Complete Initial Activities at the School (Page 6.3)

Step B — Review the Administration Schedule (Page 6.3)

Any updates you receive from the school coordinator on the morning of the assessment should be made to the original, preprinted Administration Schedules, because this Administration Schedule will be the only one sent to NCS Pearson after the assessment.

Step D — Complete the Top of the Administration Schedule (Page 6.5)

You will complete the information at the top of the original, preprinted Administration Schedule after the assessment. Therefore, you do not need to enter information on the preprinted or the temporary Administration Schedule before the assessment.

[1] *You may find it easier to insert the additional materials after the booklets are reorganized by classroom.*

Step E

Give the AAs Their Session Materials (Page 6.6)

Remind your AAs that they will be walking into a classroom of students already assembled. In these cases, AAs may not have had an opportunity to prepare the room ahead of time, so the AAs must be organized before entering the classroom.

Task 4

Prepare the Booklets (Page 6.8)

Schools that selected the take-all option and did not provide homeroom status in the fall will require you to prepare the booklets the day before the assessment as described in Task 1.

Schools that selected the take-all option and provided homeroom status in the fall may only have one or two students who have changed classrooms. On assessment day, as the AAs prepare the booklets, you will need to pull the booklet the student was assigned to receive and place it with the booklets for the class in which the student will be assessed. After the session, be very careful that the "swapped" booklet gets placed back with the booklets for the session in which the student was listed on the original, preprinted Administration Schedule.

Task 11

Record Administration Codes on the Administration Schedule (Page 6.36)

At the end of the session, the AAs should record the Administration Codes on the Administration Schedule they used to conduct the assessment.

Once the Administration Codes are recorded, you and the AAs will carefully transfer the attendance and Administration Codes from the temporary Administration Schedules to the original, preprinted Administration Schedules.

Task 12

Complete the Top of the Administration Schedule (Page 6.41)

Once all of the information from the temporary Administration Schedules has been recorded onto the original, preprinted Administration Schedules, you should complete the entire summary box on the top of the original, preprinted Administration Schedules. Follow the instructions on pages 6.5 and 6.41 for this procedure.

Task 13

Code the Booklet Covers (Page 6.42)

The AAs should code the assessment booklet covers according to the procedures on pages 6.42-6.43. After the booklet covers are coded, you and your AAs must put the booklets back in the preprinted Administration Schedule order.

Task 15

Edit the Assessment Materials (Page 6.47)

Once the original, preprinted Administration Schedule is complete and the assessment booklets are in the original Administration Schedule order, you must conduct a careful edit of the materials as described on page 6.47.

Check to make sure that each booklet is in the original Administration Schedule order and that the original Administration Schedule is on top of the stack of booklets.

Task 17

Prepare the NAEP Storage Envelope (Page 6.49)

The original version of the Administration Schedule (with the names removed) is the only one to be sent to NCS Pearson. The temporary Administration Schedules used to organize the sessions should be left at the school in the NAEP Storage Envelope. Follow the procedures on page 6.49 to complete this task.