December 2013

National Center for Education Statistics

School Survey on Crime and Safety

Cognitive Interviews 2014

Protocol

Volume II – Cognitive Laboratory Protocol

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Cognitive Laboratory: Protocol for SSOCS Survey

**MATERIALS NEEDED FOR INTERVIEW**

□ INTERVIEWER PROTOCOL BOOKLET (THIS BOOKLET)

□ RESPONDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

□ DO YOU HAVE THE CORRECT VERSION OF THE BOOKLET AND QUESTIONNAIRE?

□ THINK ALOUD PRACTICE PAGE

□ CONSENT FORM (TWO COPIES)

□ INCENTIVE

□ PAYMENT RECEIPT

□ DIGITAL RECORDER AND EXTRA BATTERIES

□ PENS AND PENCILS

**STEP 1: WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION SCRIPT**

**Interviewer Instructions:** The following scripts should NOT be read verbatim. Text in italics is suggested content with which the interviewer should be thoroughly familiar in advance. Text in brackets [ ] presents instructions for the interviewer.

Hello, my name is **<your name >** and I work for American Institutes for Research. It’s nice to meet you, thanks for coming to help us out today.

[Create small talk to build rapport with the principal]:

You are here today to help us out with a new survey that we are working on with the U.S. Department of Education. This survey asks about your opinions of the school where you work: [school name]. A survey is a set of questions about your experiences. I will ask you to take the survey as if you were taking a real survey. There are no right or wrong answers, and it’s ok if you do not know some of the answers. As you are answering the questions I will ask you about how you are answering the questions. I will also stop you once in a while to ask you questions. This will help us make the survey better and clearer for other principals and school staff just like you.

Because the information you provide is so important, I am going to be taking notes while you are working and while we are talking [INSERT IF THERE IS AN OBSERVER: and my colleague will also be observing our session today].

Also, this interview will be recorded so researchers can review the tapes later. Any information that refers to you or the name of your school will not be included in our report. Your answers may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (20 U.S.C. §9573)).

As a thank you for your time and effort, you will receive a [INSERT GIFT CARD AMOUNT ($40 IN-PERSON INTERVIEW/$25 REMOTE INTERVIEW)] gift card at the end of today’s interview.

Remember, you are not being tested; we want you to tell us what you think about the survey. Would you like to be a part of this study? [If respondent agrees, continue. If not, end the interview.]

If at any time you want to stop, just let me know.

[If, for any reason, the participant is no longer interested in participating, thank the participant for his/her time and end the interview.]

Before we continue, do you have any questions about what I just said? [Answer any questions the participant may ask.]

PROVIDE RESPONDENT WITH A COPY OF THE INFORMED CONSENT FORM. ASK THE RESPONDENT TO READ THE FORM (OR READ IT TO HIM/HER, DEPENDING ON RESPONDENT PREFERENCE), ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS, AND HAVE THE RESPONDENT SIGN THE FORM. LEAVE A SEPARATE COPY OF THE FORM WITH THE RESPONDENT.

□ SIGNED CONSENT FORM COLLECTED

□ COPY OF CONSENT FORM GIVEN TO RESPONDENT

□ IF THE RESPONDENT HAS CONSENTED TO RECORDING, START THE RECORDER.

**STEP 2: THINK-ALOUD PRACTICE**

While you fill out the survey I want you to think out loud about how you are answering the questions. Hearing you talk about how you figure out your answers to the questions will help me understand how to make the questions better. I am more interested in how you arrive at your answers than in the answers you give me. To help you get started on thinking aloud, we are going to do a practice activity.

I’m going to give you a piece of paper with a question in it. I’m going to ask you to read out loud the question and think aloud as you decide on your answer.

Give respondent handout with think aloud practice.

***How many windows are there in the house or apartment where you live?***

Please tell me what you are thinking while you are figuring out your answer.

**HAND RESPONDENT A COPY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND A PEN.**

**STEP 3: COMPLETION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Now I would like you to complete the questionnaire. While you are answering the questions, please think about the school you currently work at: [school name]. I’d like you to think aloud while you decide on your answer. Please read aloud anything you would have read to yourself if I were not here.

Remember that I am very interested in hearing you talk about what you are thinking about as you figure out your answers to the questions.

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| General Probes – These should only be used when the R shows signs of confusion to a question that does not have a specific probe |
| Problem Items | What is this question asking, in your own words? |
| What were you thinking when you answered this question? |
| Problem Instructions | Tell me what this introduction/instruction is telling you. |
| Problems with Clarity | Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking? |
| What does this word [term] mean to you? [in reference to a particular word of technical term] |
| Tell me what you were thinking when I asked you about this [topic, time period, degree, certification, etc…] |
| Skip and Marking Issues | I noticed you skipped this/checked this. How did you choose this answer and not this other option? |
| Can you tell me how you chose this category? How easy or hard was it to find your answer on that list |

**Start the questionnaire**

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| **SECTION: School Practices and Programs** |
| **STOP Respondent after Question 3 – I’d like you to stop here** |
| ALL: Were there any questions in this section that were confusing or a bit difficult for you to answer? Which ones? PROBE. |
| 1. During the 2014–15 school year, was it a practice of your school to do the following? * If your school changed its practices during the school year, please answer regarding your most recent practice.

Check “Yes” or “No” on each line. |
| a. Require visitors to sign or check in **and** wear badges | What were you thinking when you answered this question? |
| b. Require metal detector checks on students every day | Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking? Can you tell me what “checks” means to you in the context of this question?  |
| c. Equip classrooms with locks so that doors can be locked from the inside | Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking? Can you tell me what it means for you to be able to lock a classroom? |
| d. Have “panic buttons” or silent alarms that directly connect to law enforcement in the event of an incident | Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking? What is a panic button? What does this term mean for you? Can you describe this for me? |
| 2. Does your school have a written plan on actions to be performed in the event of an emergency that describes the following procedures? If yes, has your school drilled students on the use of this procedure during the 2014–15 school year? |
| General | Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?In this question we are referring to several terms and we are interested in understanding what you understand these terms to mean. I’m going to ask you some questions about the terms we use in these questions. |
| a. Evacuation | What does the word “evacuation” mean to you as it’s used in this question?  |
| b. Lockdown | What does the word “lockdown” mean to you as it’s used in this question?  |
| c. Shelter-in-place | What does the phrase “shelter-in-place” mean to you as it’s used in this question?  |
| d. Reunification Plan | What does the phrase “reunification plan” mean to you as it’s used in this question?  |
| 3. Do your school’s emergency plans (as identified in item 2) address the following crisis scenarios? |
| General | What is this question asking, in your own words?The last two questions both ask about emergency drills in your school. Does one question more accurately describe how you designate emergency drills in your school? Are drills typically designated by the type of procedures performed or by the type of crises they intend to address; or both? |
| a. Active shooter | What does “active shooter” mean to you? |

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| **STOP Respondent after Question 5 – I’d like you to stop here** |
| 4. During the 2014–15 school year, did your school have any formal programs intended to prevent or reduce **violence\*** that included the following components for students?* If a program has multiple components, answer "Yes" for each that applies.

Check "Yes" or "No" on each line. |
| General | What is this question asking, in your own words? |
| a. Prevention curriculum, instruction, or training for students (e.g., conflict resolution, anti-**bullying**\*, dating violence prevention) | What were you thinking when you answered this question? |
| b. Behavioral or behavior modification intervention for students (including the use of positive reinforcements) | What does the term “positive reinforcements” mean to you? |
| c. Student involvement in peer mediation  | What does peer mediation refer to in this question? |
| d. Student court to address student conduct problems or minor offenses | What were you thinking when you answered this question? |
| e. Student involvement in restorative circles\* (e.g., “peace circles,” “talking circles,” “conflict circles”) | What comes to mind when you answer this question?What does the term “restorative circles” mean to you as it’s used in this question? |
| f. Social emotional learning (SEL) training for students (e.g., social skills, anger management, mindfulness) | What were you thinking when you answered this question? |
| 5. During the 2014–15 school year, did your school have any recognized student groups with the following purposes?* Check "Yes" or "No" on each line.
 |
| a. Acceptance of LGBTQ students (e.g., Gay-Straight Alliance) | Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking? What does “LGBTQ” refer to in your own words? |
| b. Acceptance of students with disabilities (e.g., Best Buddies) | Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking? |
| c. Acceptance of cultural diversity | Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking? |
| General | Tell me about these questions, what comes to mind after answer these questions?Are there additional examples of clubs or groups at your school which would fall into the above categories? Are there other types of student groups at your school that promote acceptance and inclusion other than those asked about here? |

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| **SECTION: School Security Staff** |
| **STOP Respondent after Question 7 – I’d like you to stop here** |
| General | Here we refer to school resource officers and other sworn law enforcement officers. Can you tell me in your own words what a “school resource officer” refers to? What about a “sworn law enforcement officer”? |
| 6. During the 2014–15 school year, did you have any School Resource Officers (career law enforcement officers with arrest authority, who have specialized training and are assigned to work in collaboration with school organizations) or other sworn law enforcement officers present at your school\* at least once a week?* Do not include security guards or other security personnel who are not sworn law enforcement in your response to this item; information on additional security staff is gathered in NEW ITEM 10.
 |
| General | [If No] Have you had any School Resource Officers or other sworn law enforcement officers present in your school (or another school you’ve worked at) in previous years?Can you tell me how you came up with your answers? [Here you are trying to see/determine what types of documentation the respondent is using, if any]. |
| 7. During the 2014–15 school year, did your school have a School Resource Officer or other sworn law enforcement officer present for all school hours every day that school was in session?* Include officers who are used as temporary coverage while regularly assigned officers are performing duties external to the school (such as attending court) or during these officers’ personal leave time.
* Check “No” if your school does not have officer coverage while regularly assigned officers are performing duties external to the school (such as attending court) or during these officers’ personal leave time.
* Do not include security guards or other security personnel who are not sworn law enforcement in your response to this item; information on additional security staff is gathered in item 12.
 |
| General | Can you tell me what you were thinking about when you answered this question?[Regardless of the respondent’s answer to question 6 and it’s follow-up probe, ask respondent what the following phrase means to them in the context of the question]What does the phrase “all school hours” mean to you in the context of this question?[WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW: Try to find out if there is a SRO or other law enforcement officer actually IN the school during all hours that school is in session each day (e.g. from first bell until last bell). We are not interested in coverage before/after school for this question.] |

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| **STOP Respondent after Question 10 – I’d like you to stop here** |
| 8. Did these School Resource Officers or other sworn law enforcement officers participate in the following activities at your school\*?* Do not include security guards or other security personnel who are not sworn law enforcement in your response to this item; information on additional security staff is gathered in NEW ITEM 10.
* Check “Yes” or “No” on each line.
 |
| General | [Ask the following probes of all respondents who responded Yes to question 6, having SROs or other law enforcement officers in 2014–15, or who answered Yes to the follow-up probe for question 6 that they have had these officers in previous years/schools][If respondent answered No to question 6 and it’s follow-up probe, ask respondent what each following phrase means to them in the context of the question] |
| a. Motor vehicle traffic control | Can you tell me what you were thinking about when you answered this question? |
| b. Recording or reporting discipline problems | Can you tell me what you were thinking about when you answered this question? |
| c. Providing information to school authorities about the legal definitions of behavior for recording or reporting purposes | Can you tell me what you were thinking about when you answered this question? |
| General | In this question, was it easy or hard to decide what answers to give? |
| 9. During the 2014–15 school year, did your school or school district have any formalized policies or written documents (e.g., Memorandum of Use, Memorandum of Agreement) that outlined the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of School Resource Officers or other sworn law enforcement officers at school? |
| General | [If No] Has your school (or another school you’ve worked at) had these policies in previous years?Can you tell me about the formalized policy or documents that exist? |

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| 10. Did these written documents or policies include language defining the role of School Resource Officers or other sworn law enforcement officers at school in the following areas?* Check “Yes,” “No,” or “Don’t know” on each line.
 |
| General | [Ask the following probes of all respondents who responded Yes to question 9, having a MOU/MOA in 2014–15, or who answered Yes to the follow-up probe for question 9 that they have had these policies in previous years/schools][If respondent answered No to question 9 and it’s follow-up probe, ask respondent what each following phrase/concept means to them in the context of the question] |
| a. Student discipline | Can you tell me more about what you were thinking about when you answered this question? |
| b. Use of physical restraints (e.g. handcuffs, Tasers, Mace, pepper spray, or other physical or chemical restraints) | Can you tell me what you were thinking about when you answered this question? |
| c. Use of **firearms\*** | Can you tell me a little more about what you were thinking about when you answered this question? |
| d. Making arrests on school grounds | Can you tell me what you were thinking about when you answered this question? |
| e. Reporting of criminal offenses to a law enforcement agency | Can you tell me what comes to mind when you answered this question? |
| General | In this question, was it easy or hard to decide what answers to give? |

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| **STOP Respondent after Question 13 – I’d like you to stop here** |
| 11. During the 2014–15 school year, were there any probation or parole officers present at your school\* at least once a week? |
| General | How did you come up with your answer? Tell me more about your answer?  |
| 12. Aside from School Resource Officers or other sworn law enforcement officers, how many additional security guards or security personnel were present in your school at least once a week during the 2014–15 school year?* If a security guard or other security personnel works full-time across various schools in the district, please count this person as “part-time” for your school.
* If none, please place an “X” in the None box.
 |
| General | How did you come up with your answer? Tell me more about your answer?  |
| 13. Please record the number of arrests that occurred at your school during the 2014–15 school year. Please include all arrests that occurred at school\*, regardless of whether a student or non-student was arrested.* If none, please place an “X” in the None box.
 |
| General | Can you tell me more about how you came up with an answer? What do you consider an arrest? How do you count arrests?  |

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| **SECTION: Staff Training** |
| **STOP Respondent after Question 14 – I’d like you to stop here** |
| 14. During the 2014–15 school year, did your school or school district provide any of the following for classroom teachers or aides?* Check “Yes” or “No” on each line.
 |
| a. Training in recognizing **bullying\*** behaviors | In your own words, what constitutes bullying? |
| b. Training in recognizing **cyberbullying\*** behaviors | Can you tell me a little more about what “cyberbullying” means to you? |
| c. Training in intervention and referral strategies for students displaying signs of mental health issues (e.g. depression, mood disorders, ADHD) | Can you tell me what you were thinking about when you answered this question? |
| General | Was there anything about easy or difficult to answer? |

| **SECTION: Number of Incidents** |
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| **STOP Respondent after Question 15 – I’d like you to stop here** |
| 15. Please record the number of incidents that occurred at school\* during the 2014–15 school year for the offenses listed below. (NOTE: The number in column 1 should be greater than or equal to the number in column 2).* If none, please place an “X” in the None box.

Please provide information on:* The number of incidents, not the number of victims or offenders.
* Recorded incidents, regardless of whether any disciplinary action was taken.
* Recorded incidents, regardless of whether students or non-students were involved.
* Incidents occurring before, during, or after normal school hours.
 |
| General | Could you tell me about how you fill out this form? How do you gather the information to fill out these numbers of incidents? |
| a. **Stalking\*** | I’d like for us to discuss the concept of stalking.* In your own words, what constitutes stalking?
* Can you tell me how these incidents are documented and reported?
 |
| 16. During the 2014–15 school year, how many **hate-crimes\*** occurred **at your school\***?* If none, please place an “X” in the None box.
 |
| General | [If None] Have any hate-crimes occurred at your school (or another school you’ve worked at) in previous school years?Could you tell me about how you came to your answers?Can you tell me more about what “hate-crimes” means to you? |
| 17. Were any of these **hate-crimes**\* motivated by the offender’s bias against the following characteristics?* Check “Yes” or “No” on each line.
 |
| General | [Ask the following probes of all respondents who reported hate-crimes in question 16 for 2014–15, or who answered Yes to the follow-up probe for question 16 that they have had these crimes in previous years/schools]In this set of items, was it difficult or easy to decide what answers to give?Can you tell me more about what you were thinking about when you answered these questions?[If respondent answered No to question 16 and it’s follow-up probe, ask respondent what each following phrase/concept means to them in the context of the question]In this list what does the term “sexual orientation or gender identity” mean to you? |

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| **Section: School Mental Health Services** |
| **STOP Respondent after Question 18 – I’d like you to stop here** |
| **18**. During the 2014–15 school year, were the following mental health services available to students under the official responsibilities of a licensed **mental health professional\***? If so, please indicate the location and provider for each mental health service that was available to students.* If the service was available to students, mark “yes,” regardless of whether the service was used this school year.
* Check “Yes” or “No” for each type of service.
 |
| General | Can you tell me what “mental health professional” means to you in the context of this set of questions?Was it easy or difficult for you to differentiate if a mental health profession is a school employee or not?Are there other scenarios in which your school helps provide mental health services to students not covered in this list?Can you tell me what “community provider” means to you in the context of this question? |
| a. Pre-diagnostic **counseling\*** | Can you tell me what “counseling” means to you in the context of this question? |
| b. **Diagnostic assessment**\* for **mental health disorders\*** | Can you tell me what “diagnostic assessment” means to you in the context of this question? Can you tell me what “mental health disorders” means to you in the context of this question? |
| c. **Treatment\*** for **mental health disorders\*** | Can you tell me what “treatment” means to you in the context of this question?Can you tell me what “mental health disorders” means to you in the context of this question? |

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| **STOP Respondent after Question 19 – I’d like you to stop here** |
| 19. During the 2014–15 school year, were all students who exhibited **conduct disorder\*** behaviors evaluated by a **mental health professional\*** to identify coexisting **mental health disorders\***? |
| General | Can you tell me what this question is asking you? How easy or difficult was this question to answer?Can you tell me more about what “conduct disorder” means to you in the context of this question?Can you tell me more about what “mental health professional” means to you in the context of this question?Can you tell me more about what “mental health disorders” means to you in the context of this question? |

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| **STOP Respondent after Question 21 – I’d like you to stop here** |
| 20. During the 2014–15 school year, did your school have a **threat assessment team\*** or any other formal group of persons to identify students who might be a potential risk for violent or harmful behavior (towards themselves or others)? |
| General | Can you tell me what this question is asking in your own words? |
| 21. During the 2014–15 school year, how often did your school’s **threat assessment team\*** formally meet? |
| General | Can you tell me more about what “threat assessment team” means to you in the context of these two questions? |
| **STOP Respondent after Question 22 – I’d like you to stop here** |
| 22.During the 2014–15 school year, to what extent did the following factors limit your school’s efforts to provide or refer students for mental health services?* Check one response on each line.
 |
| General | Can you tell me what this question is asking in your own words?In this list of answers, are there any missing options?How easy or hard was it to choose an answer for each of these questions?In this list they use the term “mental health disorders,” what does this term mean to you? |