



Chapter 2

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The needs assessment is a useful tool for community development. This chapter demonstrates the steps for an assessment that will determine community opinion of needs and documents the extent of the need. Once such information is gathered, programs to meet the needs can be developed. Needs assessments can be used to document present conditions, information which is often useful in measuring progress in future evaluations of program success. The gaining of community participation for a project is another benefit of the needs assessment process. You will find a sample needs assessment questionnaire and examples of how the data can be collected, analyzed, and presented to communicate community needs.

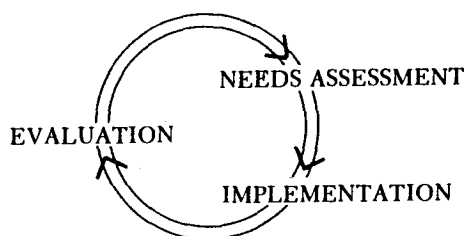
A need is a difference between an existing condition and a desired condition. Income may be so low (the existing condition) that families cannot provide adequate shelter (a desired condition) or nutrition (another desired condition). Children may drop out of school after eighth grade (the existing condition) but be unable to get jobs (the desired condition) unless they complete twelfth grade. On the community level, needs are often felt. In environments where there are widespread low income levels, low levels of educational attainment, and health problems, the members of a community usually have a feeling for what needs to be done. To secure resources to improve conditions, needs must often be documented. It can be a frustrating experience for a community member aware of community needs, to be told that documentation must exist before a program can be developed. The needs assessment is not only a means for documenting the existing condition, but also a very constructive way of finding out community opinion and gaining participation.

These are a few of the ways in which a needs assessment can improve the decision-making process during community development:

- * Determining community opinion on needs
- * Determining priorities for meeting the different needs
- * Determining the size or extent of the need
- * Gathering community opinion on methods for meeting the needs
- * Gaining community participation for meeting the needs

One of the challenges in conducting a needs assessment concerns the end product. If the needs are determined only on the basis of desire or wish, then the results do not give much of a basis for action. If the needs are measurable or quantifiable, such as a gap in services, performance, or attitude, then the result gives a basis for implementation. Needs assessment then becomes part of a planning, implementation, and evaluation process. Careful planning of the needs assessment design includes selection of the methods to be used, the data gathering techniques, and the analysis of the data. With a careful plan developed, the needs assessment becomes a direction-finding tool which can be applied to meet the determined needs.

TABLE 2.1



STEPS IN CONDUCTING THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

There are two basic methods of conducting a needs assessment, the deductive and the inductive approaches.

The Deductive Approach

The most common method of assessing needs, the deductive approach, asks the following questions: "What goals do we want?" and then, "Where are we in relation to those goals?". There are four major steps¹ to this type of needs assessment:

Step 1. Goals are listed and then ranked for importance.

To accomplish the setting of goals, a questionnaire or an interview schedule is usually developed with an extensive list of possible goals. Those participating in the needs assessment would be asked either to rank the goals as to their relative importance or to rate the importance of each goal on a scale. Another method of rating is the card sort, where each goal is written on a card. Then, participants are asked to put the cards into piles according to the importance of the goals. The card sort would be used with an interview approach. For educational assessments, there are previously published sets of goals available for use. For a realistic goal-ranking process, the expected cost of each alternative is often given.

Step 2: The present status of each goal or the existing conditions are determined

Techniques for determining the existing conditions can vary, depending on the type of service, program, or attitude being assessed. For example, educational assessments often obtain student performance data from scores on achievement tests, supplemented by student health data, attendance records, drop-out data, supportive service data, and ratings obtained from parent advisory groups. In a different setting, the health care needs assessment might look at data on existing health levels, requests for additional services, distances traveled to obtain health care, and the extent to which combinations of traditional and modern health care are utilized. An employment assessment could include statistics on resent educational levels, employment training available, actual jobs available, training levels of community members, transportation and child-care services and previously-documented needs in this area.

Sometimes a broader survey is useful for assessing the existing conditions. The next chapter, on conducting surveys, may provide some techniques if resources permit a thorough assessment of existing conditions and the extent of the need. Such a supplement to the assessment can be

very valuable later when securing resources to meet the needs.

Step 3: The gaps or discrepancies between the goals and the present status of the condition are identified

To accomplish this step, the goals measured in Step 1 and the conditions measured in Step 2 are expressed in the same kind of scale. An effective way of conducting the discrepancy analysis (analyzing the gaps or differences between the desired goal and the existing condition) is through the rating process. For example, for each statement of conditions, the respondent may be asked to rate on a scale of one-to-five: a) their view of the extent to which the condition exists at present and b) their view of the extent to which the condition needs to exist or the way the condition should be. Examples of questions structured for this purpose are given below in an excerpt from the sample needs assessment questionnaire that follows at the end of this chapter. (Please note that this questionnaire is presented as a sample only and that it might be revised or adapted for one community, but might be considered appropriate information for documenting a program need in another community.)

Table 2.2 EXAMPLE OF QUESTIONS WITH RANKED RESPONSES

Part II. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAM NEEDS

Please circle, in each section, how you would rate the quality of the present condition and how important the need is. On this scale:

- 1 = not very strong
- 2 = fairly strong
- 3 = quite strong
- 4 = very strong

Try to indicate an answer for every statement where you have an opinion. If you do not have an opinion, indicate a "NO" response for "No Opinion."

| AREA | PRESENT CONDITION | | | | | NEED | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|---|---|---|---|------|---|---|---|---|
| | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| <u>Instruction:</u> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Class Size | | | | | | | | | | |
| Teaching materials | | | | | | | | | | |
| Equipment | | | | | | | | | | |
| Special Education | | | | | | | | | | |

For example, if "Class-Size" is ranked as "not very strong" at present and the need for improvement is "very strong," then the response would look like this:

| AREA | PRESENT CONDITION | | | | | NEED | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|---|---|---|---|------|---|---|---|---|
| | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| <u>Instruction:</u> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Class-size | | 1 | | | | | | | | 4 |

Gathering information in this way enables the researcher to determine the gaps or discrepancies. The perceived extent of the need can be quantified, or given a number, by subtracting the average value (found by adding up all of the values and dividing this total by the number of responses) given to the existing condition from the average value given to the need. The resulting difference is called the need index. For example, if the present condition is rated an average of "1" and the need is rated an average of "4", then "3" would be the need index. The need index is then used in the next step, to document priorities.

Step 4. Priorities are documented for the desired conditions.

Priority, or order of importance, is usually based on such factors as the extent of the need and the resources available. To complete this type of analysis and display the results, the need indexes can be arranged in a table from larger to smaller. Generally, those statements with the larger needs index will represent the most strongly felt needs. Such information does give the community a starting place for making the decisions on priorities. Under the section below on "Presenting the Data," steps for calculating the need index and displaying such an arrangement are demonstrated. Other methods for conducting a discrepancy analysis are discussed by Belle Ruth Witkin in "Needs Assessment Kits, Models, and Tools" (see ADDITIONAL SOURCES at end of chapter). When resources are limited, the cost of implementing each need can be included as a factor in setting priorities.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to the approach just outlined. With the goals set down specifically in the first step, the ranking and the setting of priorities takes a direct path to an answer that can be applied. A disadvantage of setting down goals as the first step of the needs assessment is that some goal possibilities might be left out, or the list of goals might contain cultural bias. These disadvantages are more likely to occur when a standardized list of goals is used for the assessment. If a culturally balanced committee constructs the set of goals, then bias may be greatly reduced. The following alternative approach assesses conditions first, and arrives at goals later.

The Inductive Approach

The inductive approach to needs assessment asks the questions: "Where are we?" and then, "What goals do we want?." In other words, the present conditions are assessed, then goals are determined, and ranked throughout the needs assessment process. Although the ordering of steps is different, many of the same techniques mentioned above can be useful. The basic steps² for this type of assessment are:

- Step 1: Describing conditions and constructing instruments to assess the status of conditions.
- Step 2: Determining the present status of previous goals and conditions
- Step 3: Identifying and analyzing discrepancies between the previous goals and present status.
- Step 4: Assigning priorities to the discrepancies, thus determining new goals.

An advantage of the inductive approach is that when actual conditions are determined first, the resulting goals may be more realistic and comprehensive. Two methods that are appropriate for discovering new goals are the survey approach and the committee method. The survey approach has been discussed above, with a difference for this example in that the information on existing conditions can be communicated to those participants indicating the preference for new goals. On a smaller scale, a representative committee of experienced persons can also be useful for determining new goals and priorities. One disadvantage of the committee approach is the likelihood that committee members will influence one another while making decisions. Some of the disadvantages of the committee can be overcome by a process whereby the individuals who must reach agreement never meet one another³. Information is distributed and results are totaled by a neutral facilitator, and redistributed until an agreement on priorities is reached.

In presenting the steps for conducting a needs assessment, the term "goal" is used above. It is important to keep in mind that measurable objectives are needed eventually as outcomes, if the results are to be applied in a way that is measurable later. This can be accomplished by either breaking the goal statements down into measurable objectives when conducting the needs assessment or by having a planner develop the measurable objectives to accomplish the goals. The route taken for developing an implementation plan depends on the resources available. In

Chapter 4, on PROGRAM EVALUATION, methods for evaluating the implemented objectives are presented.

GATHERING THE DATA

There are several means of collecting data for the needs assessment. Many community groups prefer to have a combination of quantitative, or numerical data, and qualitative, or descriptive data. The quantitative approach provides "hard data," a useful means of specifically documenting needs. Funding agencies, particularly, like to see this type of data to answer questions such as: "How many people are you serving?," "What are the ages of the target population?," "Is the target group mainly male or female, or mixed," and "Where is the target population located?." Rating needs (according to importance) is another way of gathering quantitative data. For the use in the community, quantitative data can be very valuable for later evaluations of program effectiveness.

The value of qualitative data in expressing felt needs and in offering suggestions for implementing actions to meet needs should never be overlooked. People responding to a questionnaire often have a negative reaction to pages of numbers if there is no place to express an opinion. Questionnaires can provide an opportunity for both types of data, as reflected in the sample questionnaire on needs assessment at the end of the chapter.

A questionnaire consists of a set of questions that are answered directly on paper by the persons responding; whereas, an interview schedule may be a structured set of questions that an interviewer asks of the respondent, noting down the responses (more details on these techniques can be found in the next chapter). Open-ended questions and comments may also be part of the interview or the questionnaire. Some advantages of the interview over the questionnaire are that: 1) the interviewer may collect additional data as comments, 2) the educational level of the respondent does not interfere as much with ability to answer the questions, and literacy is not required, 3) interpretation of the questions for non-English speakers is possible 4) the response rate is usually much better by interview than by mail, 5) the person responding feels more involved with the project and more likely to participate later on, and 6) the interview method is more personal. A major disadvantage of the interview method is the expense of hiring people to conduct the interviews. Interviewers may also carry bias and training is necessary to guard against this. In a smaller community or in a community where either the educational level is low or in a community where either the educational level is low or the mail service is poor, the interview method may be by far more successful.

The needs assessment questionnaire generally contains the following types of questions:

- * Information about the respondent, or person responding (such as age, sex, ethnic representation or tribe, blood quantum, geographic area, native language speaker)
- * Conditions, or statements about conditions, and needs
- * Suggestions for implementing changes or improving conditions

Each of these types of data has a purpose in the need assessment. The information about the respondent shows the characteristics of those participating, the representation in the needs assessment, and allows the actual data on needs to be broken down according to representation. For example, the data on needs could be broken down by age groupings to show the differences or similarities in opinion of needs among the different groups. Suggestions for implementing changes are useful in gaining the information needed to follow up on the needs assessment and in gaining community participation. The sample needs assessment questionnaire at the end of the chapter is structured to include these three types of questions.

Several techniques are available for indicating the importance of needs. Once a condition is listed or stated, a scale is usually presented for indicating opinion. For example, a condition can be stated with a scale from "0" to "5", with "1" representing the lowest extent of need and "5" representing the highest. The scale can be explained with specific terms, as:

- 0 = No Need
- 1 = Low Need
- 2 = Some Need
- 3 = Moderate Need
- 4 = High Need
- 5 = Very High Need

Another scale is listed in the sample questionnaire at the end of the chapter. This is a "1" to "4" scale, with the values:

- 1 = Not Very Strong
- 2 = Fairly Strong
- 3 = Quite Strong
- 4 = Very Strong

This scale is designed to fit both the assessment of the present condition and the assessment of need.

Agreement scales are often used for statements of conditions. An example of a statement of condition could be expressed as "Parental involvement with the school is encouraged." An agreement scale of "1" to "5" might represent the following responses:

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree

Or, instead of numbers the scale could be listed as:

- SD = Strongly disagree
- D = Disagree
- N = Neither agree nor disagree
- A = Agree
- SA = Strongly agree

An expanded seven-point agreement scale can be used to represent "Strongly disagree," "Mostly disagree," "Somewhat disagree," "Neither disagree nor agree," "Somewhat agree," "Mostly agree," and "Strongly agree." One advantage of an odd number of points, over an even number of points, is that the odd numbered scale gives a neutral mid-point. Since the larger scales are more complex to follow, one rule of thumb is to use a three to five point scale for children, five to seven point scale for adults, and a seven to nine point scale for adults responding to items on which they have special expertise.

An advantage of using letters to represent a scale, is that the respondents may more easily remember what the letters stand for than with numbers. Respondents often need to refer to definition of the scale at the beginning of the question section when using numbers to respond. In choosing an appropriate scale to use, it is important to remember the respondents' ease in answering the questions.

The wording of statements on conditions is an important factor in avoiding bias. Subtle differences in wording can tend to influence the way a question is answered, for the respondent may tend to agree with the statement. If, in the case of an educational needs assessment, the questions are all worded favorably toward the existing conditions, the results might tend to agree with the existing conditions. Consider these two statement wordings of the same condition:

Example 1: "The curriculum presents a positive image of Native American history and culture."

Example 2: "The curriculum presents a negative image of Native American history and culture."

Do each of the two statements give you a different feeling about the condition? To avoid swaying the respondent, it is important to provide a balance of negative and positive statements about the existing conditions.

As in all other research efforts involving the development of formats to collect data, an important part of the needs assessment is the testing of the questionnaire or interview schedule. By asking a few people to answer the questions before the actual needs assessment, any difficulties in understanding the instructions or questions, and possibilities of bias can be identified. Changes during this pilot study, or testing of the study, can greatly improve the overall quality of the larger assessment.

In addition to the questionnaire or interview survey, data can be collected by use of public meetings, small group meetings where respondents are invited, or at meetings called for other purposes. To collect data at public meetings, sampling is an important concern, for sometimes people with a common interest are likely to respond to a meeting held at a particular location. Or, when community members attend a meeting, some talk a great deal while others remain silent. In considering sampling procedures, not only is the total number of participants important, but also the degree of representation of the different groups included in the sample. For example, an educational needs assessment might include educational planners, teachers, parents, students, as well as the general community. Sometimes more than one instrument or method of gathering the data is necessary to reach the different groups participating in the needs assessment.

PRESENTING THE DATA

The needs assessment process usually involves a large group of people. Communicating the results to respondents and other persons who may implement the needs is an important final step of the study. Presenting the results not only informs those who participated, but also encourages further participation from the community.

One step in enabling effective communication of results is in a thorough analysis of the data. A basic way of analyzing data is to summarize the number of answers for each possible response. For example, in Table 2.3, the number of answers and the percentage that each of these numbers represents in relation to the total respondents are given (details on how to calculate are given under Frequencies in STATISTICS chapter). For the variable "Class size," 8 (or 8.5%) of the 94 respondents indicated "NO" or "no opinion;" 17 (or 18.1%) of the 94 respondents indicated a "1" or "not very strong" response; etc. (Percentage = "Number Responding" divided by "Total Number in Sample" times 100). The calculations can be taken a step further by finding the average score on the conditions. The average score equals the sum of (the number responding times the value for the

response), divided by the total expressing a response. In our example, this was calculated as: $(17 \times 1) + (42 \times 2) + (25 \times 3) + (2 \times 4)$ divided by 86. The average score on the needs would be calculated the same way. The data in this table tell us about the different responses in addition to how respondents felt "on the average" about the existing condition and the needs. Or specifically, the average score on existing conditions (that is, 2.14) tells us that the respondents felt they were close to "fairly strong" and that the respondents felt strongly (with a score of 3.48) about the importance or need of this variable, rating it about halfway between "quite strong" and "very strong".

Table 2.3 RESPONSES FOR VARIABLE "CLASS SIZE"

| RESPONSE (Number Responding = 94) | CONDITIONS Number (Percentage) | NEEDS Number (Percentage) |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| NO (No Opinion) | 8 (8.5 %) | 8 (8.5 %) |
| 1 (Not Very Strong) | 17 (18.1 %) | 0 (0.0 %) |
| 2 (Fairly Strong) | 42 (44.7 %) | 4 (4.2 %) |
| 3 (Quite Strong) | 25 (26.6 %) | 37 (39.4 %) |
| 4 (Very Strong) | 2 (2.1 %) | 45 (47.9 %) |

To carry the analysis a step further, in Table 2.4 the average need index is calculated for each of the instructional variables in the sample questionnaire. This process involves two steps:

- Step 1:** The need index is calculated for each respondent by subtracting the condition score from the need score (Need Index = Need - Condition). For example, if a respondent circled a "2" for the existing condition and a "4" for the need, then the need index would be a "2."
- Step 2:** The average need index is calculated by adding up all of the need indexes for each respondent and dividing by the number of respondents expressing an opinion (Average Need Index = "Sum of the Need Indexes" divided by "Number of Respondents Expressing Needs"). The persons responding "no opinion" are deleted when dividing, because their response did not contribute to the overall score.

Table 2.4 AVERAGE NEED INDEX FOR INSTRUCTIONAL NEEDS

| <u>AREA</u> | <u>AVERAGE NEED INDEX</u> | <u>NUMBER EXPRESSED OPINION</u> | <u>NUMBER EXPRESSING NO OPINION</u> |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Class Size | 1.26 | 86 | 8 |
| Teaching Materials | 1.49 | 86 | 8 |
| Equipment | 1.44 | 85 | 9 |
| Special Education | 1.47 | 74 | 20 |

Number Responding (N) = 94

The scores in Table 2.4 were listed according to the way that they appeared in the original questionnaire. Another way of presenting them would be to rank them from the largest to the smallest. If this were done, the ranking would be:

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| Teaching Materials | 1.49 |
| Special Education | 1.47 |
| Equipment | 1.44 |
| Class Size | 1.26 |

The ranking procedure is shown again in Table 2.5, but this time the scores have been broken down according to the variable "Blood Quantum." By including demographic and cultural variables in the need assessment questionnaire (see sample), it is possible to break down the responses according to such variables as "age," "sex," "tribe," "blood quantum," "native language speaker," "geographic area," and other variables that may be considered important. By showing similarities or differences between the groups within the community, the needs of those different groups might be better determined and met. The results of a needs assessment may show that one particular group within the community needs a certain type of program that the others do not need. This table shows that different priorities were placed on different areas, for different groups within the community.

There are many more techniques for analyzing and presenting data. In the chapter ahead on "STATISTICS", methods for calculating the average (or mean), percentages, and cross-tabulations are discussed in

Table 2.5 RANKED NEEDS BY INDIAN BLOOD QUANTUM

| <u>Blood Quantum (N = 94)</u> | <u>Ranked Category</u> | <u>Average Need Index</u> |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Full Blood | Teaching Materials | 2.00 |
| | Class Size | 1.70 |
| | Special Education | 1.67 |
| | Equipment | .81 |
| Over ½ to ¾ | Teaching Materials | 1.76 |
| | Special Education | 1.69 |
| | Class Size | 1.35 |
| | Equipment | 1.07 |
| ¼ to ½ | Special Education | 1.62 |
| | Equipment | 1.42 |
| | Teaching Materials | 1.29 |
| | Class Size | 1.17 |
| Less than ¼ | Equipment | 2.06 |
| | Special Education | 1.19 |
| | Teaching Materials | 1.00 |
| | Class Size | .94 |
| Non-Indian | Equipment | 2.57 |
| | Teaching Materials | .67 |
| | Special Education | .67 |
| | Class Size | .57 |

detail. You will find other methods for displaying data and information on sampling included there also.

In addition to presenting the tabulated data, a good analysis will often discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the study. For example, if a rating of a need does not sound accurate to the researcher or another person familiar with the population, it might be wise to ask the following questions:

- "Was a group reluctant to express an opinion?"
- "Was the question worded such that it gave offense?"

If there are doubts about certain results, these are expressed in the final presentation. This needs to be done carefully, through, to avoid bias on the part of the researcher. If there is an advisory committee for the project, the committee members' opinions may provide a balanced opinion. Expressing doubts about accuracy is not viewed as a weakness, but rather as an admission that we are human and that capturing human

opinion through a study is a difficult task. It is viewed as a strength and good perception to admit this of a study.

The following topics may be covered when reporting the needs assessment results:

- * Topic of the needs assessment
- * Person(s) conducting the study
- * Characteristics of the population included in the study
- * Areas of need covered
- * Examples of the instruments used to collect data
- * Methods for collecting data
- * Sampling (those included in the study)
- * Presentation of data
- * Analysis of data
- * Conclusions
- * Recommendations (if any) or implementation plan
- * Costs of the study

If the report is to be distributed widely in the community, then provisions must be made at the beginning of the study to cover this expense. The distribution plan is often stated as a part of the needs assessment design before the study begins. This is an important detail of the project, for communicating the results is a first step in applying the results.

APPLYING THE RESULTS

Although the needs assessment is a powerful technique for identifying gaps in services, performance, or attitudes, its usefulness for community development rests with the final applying of results. Rather than being a total approach, locating gaps and determining the most important of the gaps fits into a series of steps for developing services and resources to fill the gaps. A recommended approach⁴ includes going beyond the need assessment to the following steps:

- * Generating program objectives from the statement of needs
- * Analyzing alternative solutions (techniques from achieving objectives, resources needed, cultural appropriateness)
- * Selecting and implementing the solutions that seem to best fit the community
- * Allocating resources according to a solution or plan
- * Evaluating (measuring solution effectiveness)
- * Recycling (periodically establishing new goals)

One practical issue of the needs assessment concerns policy and control. On the community level, there may be a desire to keep opinions of need hidden, as a means of keeping disagreement down. For this reason, there may be a tendency on the part of a program director or a Board of Directors to resist defining goals. When working with such attitudes, the community-based researcher can point out the long-range benefits of a program that represents community needs and work with the resisting parties to develop a needs assessment plan that encourages cooperation rather than disagreement.

Another practical issue affecting the implementation of a needs assessment is the availability of funds. When funds are limited, the expected cost of implementing each need may be included as a part of the questionnaire. This enables the respondent to give a realistic rating of priorities. Also, funding levels are an important consideration in designing the implementation plan.

Needs assessment is often considered a type of evaluation. In the later chapter on evaluation, the total process of planning-implementation-evaluation is expanded, showing how the needs assessment technique fits into a total assessment process.

NOTES

1. Steps are adapted from Belle Ruth Witkins, "Needs Assessment Kits, Models, and Tools," *Educational Technology*, November 1977, p. 5 and David Churchman, "A New Approach to Evaluating the Implementation of Innovative Educational Programs," *Educational Technology*, May 1979, p. 27.
2. Steps are adapted from David Churchman, "An Inductive Approach to Educational Needs Assessment," *Carolina Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 1 No. 1, 1980. The article also presents steps for a case study approach to needs assessment.
3. This committee approach, called the Delphi process, is discussed by David Churchman, same reference as above.
4. Adapted from Joseph A. Sarthory, "Need Assessment and the Practitioner: Problems and Prospects," *Educational Technology*, November 1977, p. 26.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

Brod, Rodney L., *Choctaw Education* (Rocky Boy's Route, Box Elder, Mt. 59521: LPS & Associates, 1979).

This excellent example of an educational needs assessment integrates the findings from four target groups: 1) Choctaw students, grades 7-12, 2) Choctaw tribal

education workers, 3) BIA school educational staff, and 4) Choctaw adults from six local reservation communities. In addition to presenting the assessment results obtained from the four groups, group comparisons are given. Recommendations for educational priorities and education staff priorities are also discussed.

Churchman, David, "An Inductive Approach to Educational Needs Assessment," *Carolina Journal of Educational Research*, Vol 1, No. 1, 1980.

An article presenting a valuable alternative to the classical, deductive approach. A step-by-step methodology for carrying out an inductive needs assessment is given. Advantages and disadvantages of the approach are discussed.

Sarthory, Joseph A., "Needs Assessment and the Practitioner: Problems and Prospects," *Educational Technology*, November 1977, pp. 24-26.

A practical article covering a broad range of problems, including: 1) the problem of awareness, 2) the problems of misunderstandings, 3) the problem of school district size, 4) the problem of state politics, 5) the problem of the Federal role, and 6) the problem of insufficient application. This article is very useful for the applied project.

United Indian Planners Association, *National Indian Planners Assessment* (Washington, D. C.: United Indian Planners Association, 1977).

This assessment focuses on 1) a comprehensive review of available planning literature, 2) development of a background profile of those individuals who are employed as planners by tribal and multiracial organizations, identification and categorization of the basic problems inherent to planning and management for tribes and multiracial organizations, 4) an identification of problems associated with securing funds for planning, and 5) an identification of major training and technical assistance for planners employed by tribes and multiracial organizations. Information gathering techniques are discussed and the report represents a good format for presenting assessment results.

Witkin, Belle Ruth, "Needs Assessment Kits, Models and Tools," *Educational Technology*, November 1977, pp. 5-17.

A complete article on educational needs assessment presenting advantages and disadvantages of different procedures for conducting an assessment. Topics include: 1) goal rating procedures, 2) gathering data on existing conditions, 3) conducting discrepancy surveys, 4) assessment kits for school use, 5) regional and state assessment models, 6) the community occupational needs assessment, and 7) communication-focused methods. A list of publishers of models and instruments for needs assessment is included.

SAMPLE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Respondent # _____

Date _____

The results of this needs assessment will be useful for educational planning in your school. Data collected will only be recorded by respondent number and your name will be kept confidential. Please try to answer each question openly.

Part I PERSONAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Where choices are given for the question, please indicate the number of your selected answer.

_____ Age

_____ Sex

1. Male
2. Female

_____ Tribe

_____ Family Income Level

1. Under \$2,000
2. \$2,001 to \$4,000
3. \$4,001 to \$6,000
4. \$6,001 to \$8,000
5. \$8,001 to \$10,000
6. \$10,001 to \$12,000
7. \$12,001 to \$14,000
8. \$14,001 to \$16,000
9. Over \$16,000
10. Don't know

_____ Representation:

1. Parent
2. Teacher/Teacher Aide
3. Educational Planner/Administration
4. General Community

_____ Type of Home Area

1. Reservation
2. Rural Area
3. Small Town
4. City
5. Rancheria

_____ Blood Quantum

1. Less than ¼
2. ¼ to ½
3. Over ½ to ¾
4. Full Blood
5. (Non-Indian)

_____ Native Language Speaker

1. Yes
2. No

_____ Educational Level

1. Grade School or Less
2. Some High School
3. High School Diploma or GED
4. Some College
5. Completed College
6. Grad or Professional
7. Other (specify) _____
8. None

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Respondent # _____

Part II. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAM NEEDS

Please circle in each section, how you would rate the quality of the present conditions and how important the need is. On this scale:

- 1 = not very strong
- 2 = fairly strong
- 3 = quite strong
- 4 = very strong

Try to indicate an answer for every statement where you have an opinion. If you do not have an opinion, indicate a "NO" response for "No Opinion".

| AREA | PRESENT CONDITION | NEED |
|---------------------|----------------------|------------|
| <u>Instruction:</u> | | |
| Class size | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Teaching materials | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Equipment | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Special Education | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| <u>Counseling:</u> | | |
| Personal | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Career Guidance | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Educational Testing | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Psychological | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| <u>Services:</u> | | |
| Library | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Health | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Food | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Transportation | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Social | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Tutoring | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Referrals | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |

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Respondent # _____

| AREA | PRESENT CONDITION | NEED |
|------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| <u>Textbooks:</u> | | |
| Quality | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Quantity | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Up-to-date | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Cultural Sensitivity | | |
| <u>Facilities:</u> | | |
| Space | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Desks | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Equipment | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| <u>Student:</u> | | |
| Motivation | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Attendance | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Academic Skills | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Enthusiasm | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| <u>Administrators:</u> | | |
| Qualifications | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Ethnic Representation | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Sensitivity to Student Needs | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Resolution Conflicts | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| <u>Teachers:</u> | | |
| Qualifications | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Ethnic Representation | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |
| Sensitivity to Student Needs | NO 1 2 3 4 | NO 1 2 3 4 |

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| AREA | Respondent # | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|---|---|---|------|----|---|---|---|---|
| | PRESENT CONDITION | | | | NEED | | | | | |
| <u>Other Personnel:</u> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Teacher Aides--general | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Bilingual Aides | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Cultural Specialists | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Counselors | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Librarians | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Home-School Liaison | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Secretarial/Clerical | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Transportation | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| <u>Cultural Activities:</u> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Native Language | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Native American Art | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Native American Music/Dance | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Native American History | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Native American Speakers | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| <u>Extra-curricular Activities:</u> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sports | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Music | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Field Trips | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Films | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Indian Club | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Other Recreational | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| <u>Policies:</u> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Leadership | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Communication of Policies | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| School Board Representation | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Parental Involvement with Setting Policies | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

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| AREA | Respondent # _____ | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|---|---|---|------|----|---|---|---|---|
| | PRESENT CONDITION | | | | NEED | | | | | |
| <u>Funding:</u> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Amounts or Levels | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Different Areas Well Represented (staff, supplies,travel, equipment, textbooks, administrative support) | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| New Development Efforts | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Part III. ASSESSMENT OF CONDITIONS AND ATTITUDES

Indicate your opinion or agreement with each of the following statements by circling one of the following:

- SA = Strongly Agree
- A = Agree
- D = Disagree
- SD = Strongly Disagree

If possible, please indicate your feelings about each question.

STATEMENT

1. Parental involvement with the school is encouraged. SA A D SD
2. Student contact with community elders should be part of the curriculum. SA A D SD
3. There is a need for curriculum/textbook revisions that reflect a more accurate picture of Native American culture and history. SA A D SD
4. The educational staff should be more aware of student's educational difficulties. SA A D SD
5. Educational goals are communicated to the educational staff and community. SA A D SD
6. Student needs are assessed every year. SA A D SD

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|---|-----------|
| 7. The curriculum presents a positive image of Native American history and culture. | SA A D SD |
| 8. The curriculum should include more emphasis on Native American arts, crafts, dances, and music. | SA A D SD |
| 9. Teachers do not have a good awareness of Native American culture. | SA A D SD |
| 10. Special programs should be provided to meet the needs of the physically and mentally handicapped. | SA A D SD |
| 11. Students need counseling for career and continued education. | SA A D SD |
| 12. The school provides adequate follow-up for drop-out students and GED programs. | SA A D SD |
| 13. The school does not provide programs and special services for gifted students. | SA A D SD |
| 14. Teachers are not aware of alcohol and drug abuse problems of students. | SA A D SD |
| 15. Alcohol abuse educational programs should be provided for students. | SA A D SD |
| 16. Drug abuse educational programs should be provided for students. | SA A D SD |
| 17. The school should develop evening programs for parents, such as GED. | SA A D SD |
| 18. Parent-teacher communication could be improved. | SA A D SD |
| 19. There should be more school emphasis on the basics---reading, writing, and arithmetic. | SA A D SD |
| 20. Teachers encourage the students' concepts of self-worth and cultural pride. | SA A D SD |
| 21. Extra-curricular activities are available equally to all students. | SA A D SD |
| 22. Psychological and achievement testing in the school are culturally biased. | SA A D SD |
| 23. Parents and students should be told more about their rights. | SA A D SD |

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- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 24. Students are given a chance to assess the curriculum and teachers. | SA A D SD |
| 25. Racial stress is high at our school. | SA A D SD |
| 26. The school needs to emphasize more the bilingual education program. | SA A D SD |
| 27. The school curriculum is adequately preparing students for leadership within the Native American community. | SA A D SD |
| 28. The school curriculum is adequately preparing students for skills needed in the larger/dominant society. | SA A D SD |
| 29. Meals served at the school are meeting the nutritional needs of the students. | SA A D SD |
| 30. Increased parent involvement with school activities would improve the curriculum. | SA A D SD |
| 31. The school board represents evenly the ethnic or tribal groups of the community. | SA A D SD |

Part III COMMENTS

1. Is there a topic in the area of Native American culture/history/arts that should (or should not) be taught?

2. Is there a topic in the area of Native American culture/history/arts that is not being properly taught?

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3. Do you have any suggestions for improvement of the following areas?

Instruction:

Counseling:

Services:

Textbooks:

Facilities:

Students:

Administrators:

Teachers:

Other Personnel:

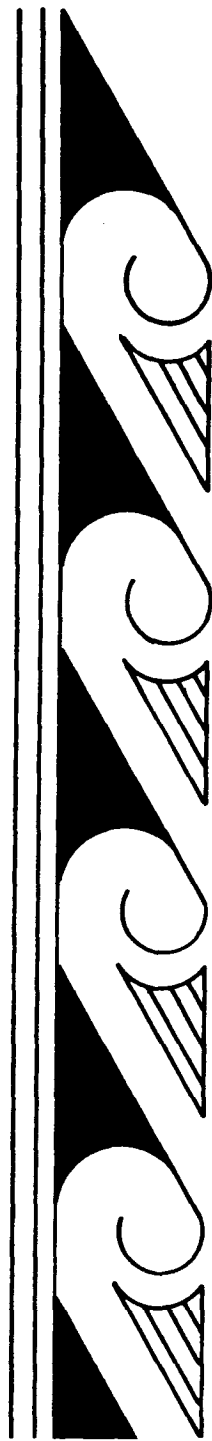
Cultural Activities:

Extra-curricular Activities:

Policies:

Funding:

4. Do you have any other comments?



Chapter 3

SURVEY RESEARCH

A survey is a method of collecting data in a consistent way. Survey research is useful for documenting existing community conditions, characteristics of a population, and community opinion. In this chapter, you will find an outline of the steps needed to conduct surveys using both the questionnaire and interview methods. Details on preparing questionnaires and interview schedules are presented, along with a comparison of both methods for different community-based situations. Survey data is not only useful for immediate community development purposes, but it can also serve the future of a community efforts by providing the baseline data needed later to demonstrate progress.