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LETTER

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READING ON THE JOB

That's right, we encourage our office staff to read on the job! But, we encourage them to read materials related to surveys and how to effectively conduct them.

To meet the needs of our professional staff, and to efficiently train the students on our staff, we have set up a library for SRL. Because of budget and space limitations, this is only a mini-library and exists primarily in the dreams and aspirations of the librarian-elect, Mary Kelly Black.

As of now, the library contains about 100 books (from the libraries of our professional staff), and dozens of reprints relating to surveys and survey methods. We are also writing to many research and business institutes throughout the country for free publications on survey and public opinion research. In addition, we have plans to purchase several books each month which the staff feel are especially relevant to their work.

Eventually, when the library becomes impressive enough, we will move it into our conference/work room 419 DKH. Until then, the library materials and card catalog will be kept in MKB's office. Everyone is welcome to use it, and if you are interested in what we have on hand, just see the librarian.

Suggestions, complaints, misspellings, etc., should be directed to Mary Kelly Black, Room 420 David Kinley Hall, who is responsible for the preparation of the Newsletter.

SRL BEGINS TO COMMUNICATE

In November 1967, the SRL Executive Committee approved the establishment of a publications program for the Laboratory. Primarily, this program will serve general educational purposes and provide an outlet for staff publications relating to surveys and survey methods.

The program will initially contain 4 types of publications: (1) technical papers and monographs, (2) nontechnical pamphlets, (3) reprints of relevant articles written by our staff, and (4) informal staff working papers.

Since no publications seem to be available where one can get simple information on the various aspects of a survey and on survey planning, we have decided to begin work on preparing the nontechnical pamphlets. Some of the titles recommended for this series are:

Do I Need A Survey?

Survey Cost and Time Estimates

Questionnaire Design: First Steps

Various Data Collection Methods

How to Process Data

Use of Computers in Survey Work

Data Storage and Retrieval Tips

Ethics in Survey Research

Careers in Survey Research

Presenting Survey Results: Analysis and Reports

Presently, we are working on DO I NEED A SURVEY? This is being written primarily for potential clients and students, but we hope to make it of value and interest to our office and interviewing staffs as well.

The other publications--working papers, reprints, and technical books and articles--will be issued on a more informal basis, depending on research done by our professional staff members.

As the nontechnical pamphlets are issued, they will be distributed to SRL staff for their information.

NEW FACE AT SRL

Sue Sheldon, a part-time editorial assistant, Journal of Marketing Research, joined SRL on a quarter-time basis January 22.

Primarily, Sue will copyedit manuscripts, questionnaires, and instructions prepared by Laboratory staff, as well as write publicity releases, when needed, on our various projects. In addition, she will assist Mary Kelly Black on the quarterly Newsletter.

Sue, originally from Riverside, California, is a senior in English here at the University of Illinois. She has edited theses and dissertations for graduate students, a talent which will make her well qualified for her new position with us.

Note: In our last newsletter we stated that Judy Fielder had held a position in the Department of Psychology; we were wrong, she has never been associated with that department.

ADDITIONAL RECREATION PROJECT

Are the people of Lake Forest, Illinois satisfied with the recreation facilities in their town?

Project 021, Lake Forest Recreation Study, seeks to determine the current use and satisfaction with facilities in the area. Alan Caskey of the University of Illinois

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Department of Recreation and Park Administration, is the project director. With this survey he also hopes to find out what the present and future needs for recreation are in Lake Forest.

The sample of residents includes 1,000 adults, and 500 high school and junior high students from four public schools in Lake Forest. The students completed their questionnaires during regular class periods, and the adult questionnaires were hand-delivered by resident volunteers, and then mailed by the respondents directly to the Laboratory.

In our next newsletter, we hope to report some of the interesting findings of this and two other recreation projects we are currently doing.

STUDENTS TO GET OUT OF CLASSROOM

One of the important functions listed in the Operating Rules for the Laboratory is "to help train graduate and undergraduate students in survey methods." With the establishment next semester of Sociology 490, "A Practicum in Survey Methods," we will be on our way toward fulfilling that function.

Professor Bernard Farber, sociologist, and chairman of our Executive Committee, is in charge of this course, which will enable students to receive training in an ongoing research organization to supplement their classroom work.

Basically, the course has two objectives: 1) to provide training for students in the various phases of survey research methods, and 2) to acquaint students with the functioning of an organization specializing in survey research. These objectives reflect the importance of surveys as a major technique in social science research, and the need for practical training in survey methods outside the classroom.

The students selected for this training will be expected to work in the Field Operations, Sampling, and Data Processing Sections, and to attend senior staff meetings that relate to the project they are involved in. Also, the course instructor will assign two papers each semester: one on the student's evaluation of his experience in the Lab, and the other a research paper based on data in our Repository.

This course should be valuable for both students and SRL--they will receive on-the-job training, and we will get prompt and formal feedback on the operation of our organization.

Two students will take this course initially. If the first semester trial is successful, we will increase the number of students simultaneously training in the Lab.

SURVEY OF THE DEAF BEGINS Matilda Frankel, Project Supervisor

How successful are young deaf adults in making social, marital, and occupational adjustments after they leave Illinois' special schools and classes for the deaf? This is what the Survey of the Deaf (015) hopes to find out.

The first problem is to get the names of those who should be contacted, and for this we are asking the various school systems in Illinois to provide us with lists of all students who have left (or graduated from) their special programs for deaf children. Then, our next task will be to trace these former students and obtain a current address for them.

We are starting this as a mail survey, but there are some unusual circumstances which may change the study design: Since most deaf people have the reading comprehension of a fourth or fifth grader, designing an understandable questionnaire is difficult. We may find from our pretest,

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soon to begin, that it will be necessary to conduct personal interviews or to offer the services of an interpreter. This will be a person who can finger spell or use sign language to explain the questions to the respondent.

Professor Stephen P. Quigley, of the University of Illinois Institute for Research on Exceptional Children, is the project director. With this survey, he hopes to obtain much-needed factual information on the post-school adjustment of deaf students to aid in long-range planning for improved educational programs. Specifically, information will be sought on hearing ability and methods of communication; socioeconomic status of respondents; family; educational, occupational, and marital status; level of job satisfaction; respondents' evaluation and school training, and their interest in further training.

URBAN HOUSING STUDY

The Study of Urban Housing (O20) was undertaken by SRL to determine the kind of housing people in Chicago have.

A sample of about 1,500 representative families in Chicago was interviewed recently about (1) the housing they currently live in, (2) their satisfaction with it and the neighborhood, (3) the rent or cost of their housing, (4) how they pay for it, and (5) the kind of housing and neighborhood they would like to live in.

Another reason for the study was to relate the economic status of different types of families to their housing, their satisfaction with the current situation, and any plans they had for moving. We also expect to get information on preferences for certain kinds of housing, and how many people in Chicago might move within the next year or two.

These results should be extremely helpful for indicating housing needs for Chicago, and for determining what factors seem to influence people's satisfaction with different kinds of housing.

HAVE PROBLEMS MAKING CONTACTS?

Mathew Hauck, Chief
Field Operations Section

The purpose of this article is to review the causes of noncontacts with a view toward increasing contacts (and thus potential interviews). Other types of nonresponse (vacancies, ineligible housing unit, refusals, old age, illness, language barrier, etc.) will be covered in later newsletters.

A noncontact usually cannot be avoided when:

1. Everyone at the address is on vacation or permanently away during the survey.
2. The respondent is not available (out of town, hospitalized, etc.) during the survey.

Contacts and interviews should be possible with all other sample members. However, the number of final noncontacts is directly related to budget and time constraints. The goal on any study is to have as high a contact rate as possible within the budget and time allowed.

There are specific causes for noncontacts:

- The sample is composed of areas where people are generally difficult to reach.
- A study requires that specific person be interviewed and that person cannot be located.
- Interviewer lacks experience.

Let's assume that the first two problems do not exist; that is, contact is possible in the area and the study specifications do not adversely affect contacts.

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Why do experienced interviewers have a higher contact rate than less experienced interviewers? Here are some steps used by an experienced interviewer to reduce his noncontacts:

1. He plans his work so he contacts respondents at a time when he is most likely to find them at home.
 - a. In general, Saturday evenings or Sunday mornings are not good times for making contacts.
 - b. Daytime attempts at high-rise apartments often result in noncontacts because the people who live there usually are at work.
 - c. Attempting to interview farmers on a clear day during their planting or harvest seasons will probably bring a non-contact, unless the interviewer can interview in the field riding on a tractor!
2. He makes sure the respondent hears him at the door. (The bell may be out of order; it is necessary to knock on the door as well as ring the bell.)
3. If there is no answer at the door, he goes to the back door (if there is one) to see if anyone is home.
4. If no one is home, and a neighbor happens to be nearby, he asks when the people might return. Such inquiries may reveal that the house or apartment is vacant.
5. If permitted for a study, he may leave a note advising the respondent of his call and when he plans to be back.
6. If the interview is to be made with a specific household member, and that person is not home, he

makes an appointment or determines when the respondent will be home.

7. He records the details of each non-contact on the Interviewer Report Form so later contacts can be made when it is more likely the respondent will be home.
8. He makes an additional effort to contact the respondent on each follow-up. Passing the house in a car and seeing the blinds are closed or the lights out, does not mean that no one is home.
9. He does not phone to find out if people are home. The first contact must be a personal one, and though it may save time if the respondent does answer the phone, it often causes a telephone refusal.
10. He obtains the doorman or manager's cooperation in high-rise apartments so he can personally talk with the potential respondent.

Any study should only have a small percentage of noncontacts, and these should have an adequate and acceptable explanation. If your noncontacts are reaching three percent of the total housing units you are working on, call your supervisor to discuss the probable causes.

PAY INCREASE POLICY FOR INTERVIEWERS

The interviewer pay increase policy initiated this fall appears to be working well. However, there have been some questions about our procedure for deciding when an interviewer should receive the additional 5 or 10 cents per hour increase for good response rates, few errors, and low cost per interview.

With this pay increase policy, a record is kept for each interviewer of the total hours worked; at each 300-hour level, the

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interviewer receives an automatic 10¢ per hour increase, plus a possible additional increase of 5 or 10 cents for good response rates, few errors, and low cost per interview.

At the completion of each study on which he works, an interviewer is ranked with all other interviewers on the study by response rates, errors per interview, and average cost per interview. Thus, when he reaches a 300-hour level, his rankings are reviewed in relation to those of other interviewers. If an interviewer becomes eligible for a raise during a survey, his work on that study is also evaluated.

Many interviewers do not receive the additional increase over the automatic 10¢ per hour. Only if an interviewer is doing better than the majority of interviewers who have worked on the same studies is he given the bonus increase of 5¢ per hour. For those interviewers that excel on response rates, low cost per interview, and few errors in their work, the additional bonus of 10¢ per hour is given.

The decision whether their bonus increase will be 5 or 10¢ an hour is made by the chief of the Field Section in conjunction with the research assistant(s) who worked with the supervisor and interviewer since the previous 300-hour level.

The pay increase is given as quickly as possible after the interviewer reaches a 300 level. At such time, we send a letter to the interviewer about this increase and, if necessary, his Time and Expense Sheets (completed since the new rate became effective) are changed to the new rate.

If you have any questions about your current rate, total hours worked, or any aspect of this pay increase policy, please let us know.