



# Module 1: Method Considerations

## Quantitative, Qualitative, or Mixed Methods

### Quantitative methods

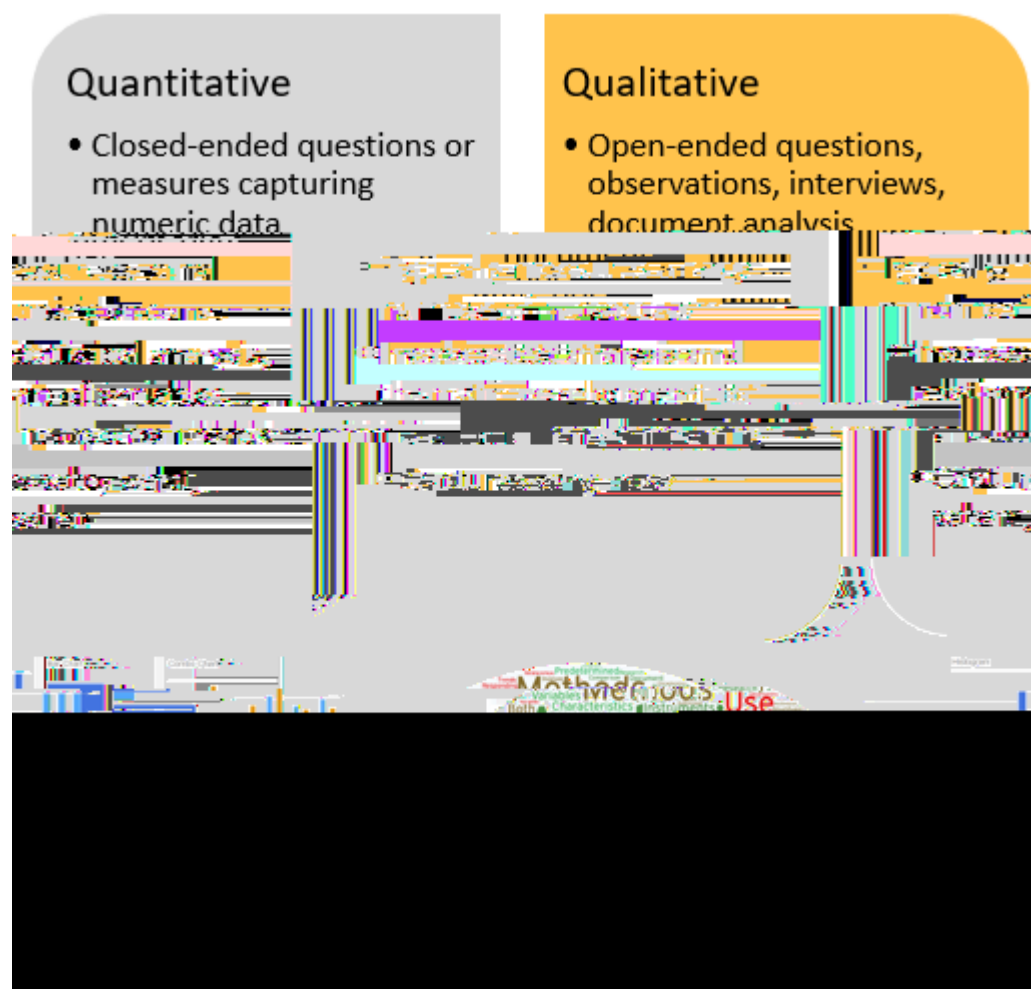
- x involves the use of predetermined instruments where numeric data is collected;
- x typically measures a large number of individuals; and
- x involves statistical analysis, description of trends, and comparison of groups, relationships among variables, a comparison of results with predictions and past studies.

### Qualitative methods

- x involves open-ended questions, observations/field research, interviews, document analysis, audiovisual materials;
- x involves typically a small number of individuals; and
- x involves text analysis, description, analysis, and thematic development, searching for larger meaning

### Mixed methods:

- x A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.
- x Allows for both breadth and depth in participant responding.





## Direct and Indirect Methods

### Direct methods

Direct methods of collecting information require the students to display their knowledge and skills. Direct measures of learning are usually accomplished through assessment methods such

minute assessment, and/or case study

- x Example: Where on campus would you go, or whom would you consult with if you had questions about which courses to register for in the fall?

### Indirect methods

Indirect methods require that students or someone else to reflect student learning, behavior, and attitudes rather than to demonstrate it. Indirect measures of learning are usually accomplished through assessment methods such as surveys or collecting feedback from faculty/staff about students.

- x Example: I know where to go on campus if I have questions about which courses to register for in the fall.

Strongly agree  
Moderately agree  
Neither agree nor disagree  
Moderately disagree  
Strongly disagree

## Formative and Summative Assessment

### Formative

Formative assessment occurs as a program or activity is happening. Students might give student program is meeting their needs and encouraging their growth. If there are areas that can be changed and improved in a relatively efficient manner, this assessment information can serve to make the outcome of the program better catered to the student population it is serving in real time.

- x Example: Say a student affairs professional is giving a seminar for first students, an example of a formative assessment might be that the student affairs professional stops midway through the seminar to solicit feedback from the attendees to gauge whether the seminar is answering their most relevant questions. If the students suggest focusing on other material that is more relevant to their immediate needs, the practitioner can shift the seminar toward those topics in order to make the seminar more effective.
- x Pro: These assessments allow us to understand how the program is meeting the goal outcomes as the program is developing, which allows practitioners to change programming in an effective manner to cater to the needs of the current student population.
- x Con: Many programs cannot be easily changed in a short period of time, so these assessments may not be as relevant to large projects that would take a long time to change.

### Summative

Summative assessment occurs after a program or activity has concluded. Many student affairs assessment projects are summative assessments. In this manner, students experience the entirety

