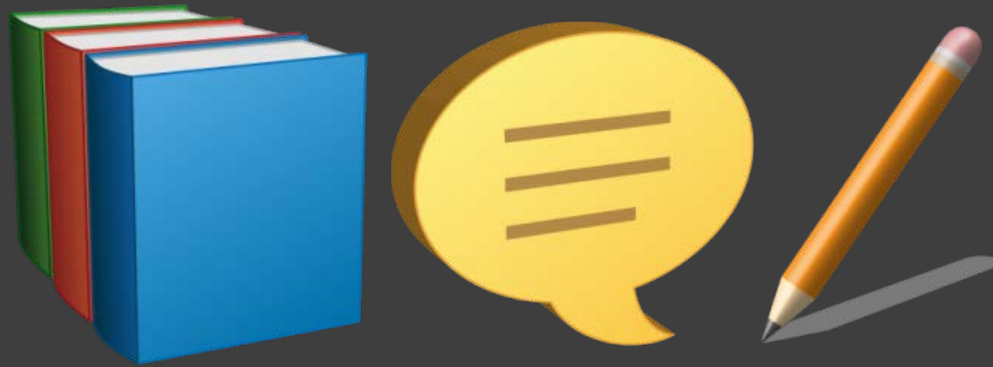


Three New Qualitative Methods For Feedback on the Student Experience

CIRPA CONFERENCE 2014



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REALIZE. OUR FUTURE

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insightrix®

the art of research™

Or....

...the survey is dead!

Or....

...long live the survey!

YOU COULD SAY WE HAVE A VESTED INTEREST

We do a *lot* of surveys...Over 400 per year!

Across the company, we are launching more than one survey...

....EVERY DAY...

...ALL YEAR...

Key strategic initiatives at the U of R

Student Success
Research Impact
Commitment to our Communities

This project focused on the first area

We know from our research that early academic engagement and early social engagement are critical factors in first-year undergraduates' persistence and success.

Big surprises in past research!

- The U of R has conducted prior research regarding engagement.
- A survey was conducted in November 2013 with first-year undergraduates.
- Although six in ten students felt their high school prepared them for university studies, when asked to explain their answer, **73% explained how high school did *not* help them!**

Reasons for difficulty adjusting

Self-directed Learning

- Taking the initiative to ask questions in class
- Making own judgments about what's important to study
- Often no reminders to get the work done.
- Not knowing how to take proper notes or prepare for university exams.

Higher expectations

- Greater work demand compared to high school.
- Differences in grades between high school and university.
 - English writing skills and familiarity with proper citation requirements required for university.

But what about the social aspects of "fitting in"?

Survey: Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages

Respondents know what to do.

Technologically easy.

Device agnostic

(can complete the survey on a smartphone, tablet, desktop or laptop computer)

Easier to compile and report on

Disadvantages

Cannot probe, clarify, or follow up with respondents.

Retrospective rather than in-the-moment.

How to invite respondents to participate?

Barriers to Participation in Research

How much time will it take?

Time commitment

Am I comfortable with the research method?

Comfort Level

Am I interested in the subject or the outcome (incentive)?

Interest

Do I have the technology to participate?

Technology

Who is asking me to participate?

Trust

Do I understand what I have to do?

Process

Our Research Project

We compared the results of four research streams

Online Survey



Day Diary (Autoethnography)



Online Discussion Group



Self-administered Video Survey



Three Major Objectives

Value

What **value** do these new qualitative approaches provide to augment traditional approaches?

Barriers

What are **barriers to participation** in these new research methods? How significant are these barriers?

Fit

How do these research methods **fit in** to the larger institutional research program?

Questionnaire: Consistent across methods with the exception of the Day Diary

Your Day	Your experience at the U of R
1. How did you spend your day today?	4. What has been the biggest adjustment that you have had to make or challenge you faced while starting your course at the U of R?
2. In terms of how you spent time today, do you wish you would have spent more or less time doing certain activities? Please explain.	5. How do you feel that you are adjusting to University life?
3. Overall, how do you feel about your experience today?	6. What can the University do to help you adjust to University life?

Questionnaire – Day Diary

Hourly Questions	Your Day	Your experience at the U of R
What are you doing at the moment?	1. How did you spend your day today?	4. What has been the biggest adjustment that you have had to make or challenge you faced while starting your course at the U of R?
Where are you?	2. In terms of how you spent time today, do you wish you would have spent more or less time doing certain activities? Please explain.	5. How do you feel that you are adjusting to University life?
Write down the initials of the people that you are with right now.	3. Overall, how do you feel about your experience today?	6. What can the University do to help you adjust to University life?
[For each of them] Relationship with you:		
How are you feeling at the moment?		



Timing of the research is important!

- Early intervention has an impact on retention
- But we want students to participate in the research!
- However, non-participation by students in an early-in-the-term survey can be an indicator of being at-risk.
- Was our timing right?

Our field dates:

- **September 15th to 30th**
- **Approximately 2 weeks after the start of the term**



Results

Participation rates

Our consent rate was very low overall.

Due to ethics, we had to gain explicit consent. Students had to go to a webpage which had a full disclosure of the research study and click “I consent” before being invited to participate.

All fall 2013 first-time, first year undergraduate students were invited to participate, n=1983 (although perhaps some withdrawals and bad email addresses).

	Consented	Participated	Participation Rate
Discussion Forums	25	6**	24%
Day Diary*	14	9	64%
Video Survey	13	1	8%
Plain Survey	29	15	52%

*we did not send reminders for the day diary because the data collected needed to take place on a specific day.

**One respondent posted an off-topic post and did not answer any questions. This response was excluded.

Video Surveys

My Stories



U of R Experience
Anonymous



U of R Experience
Anonymous



U of R Experience
Anonymous

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STORIES WORTH SHARING

Fun Methodologies – Video Surveys

Motivation: We've all come across an ambiguous comment in an open end...

Advantages

- The story-telling format allows researchers to hear the experiences of participants directly
- Capture the tone, inflection and nuances of the open ended comment.
- The actual response is more impactful when sharing the results with other stakeholders.

Disadvantages

- Technology issues (webcam and microphone on a desktop is required)
- Willingness to participate
- No anonymity

Video Surveys

The remaining 12 who consented went to the site and did not begin the process of recording their video.

1. How did you spend your day today?

Authorize your webcam for recording by clicking "**Allow**" when prompted.

Continue

Skip this question

Video Surveys – In other research...

- Across the industry it is difficult to get participation in videos
- In one project, even with a \$100 incentive we had 5/30 (<20%) complete a video
- With no incentive we had 2/800 (<1%) complete a video through our online provincial omnibus.

Conclusion: Video Surveys

Value

Provides insight with the tone of the comment.



Barriers

Technology and willingness to participate.

Fit

Augmenting the key findings of other research.

Discussion Groups



Online Customer Panel

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Member login

Your Username is your email address.
(For example abc@defghi.com)

Check your email for the password from INSIGHTRIX

[Forgot password?](#)

U of R Panel

Thank you for your participation in this research project about your experience at the University of Regina. All of the discussion questions are optional; however, we encourage you to answer all of the questions.

If you have any questions, please email Briana Brownell at briana.brownell@insightrix.com.

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Fun Methodologies – Discussion Groups

Motivation: Discussion can give the research more depth

Advantages

- The research is flexible and follow-up questions can be added if desired or be probed for additional explanation.
- Respondents can build on each others' responses (Is this an advantage or disadvantage?)
- Augmentations – trigger other comments.

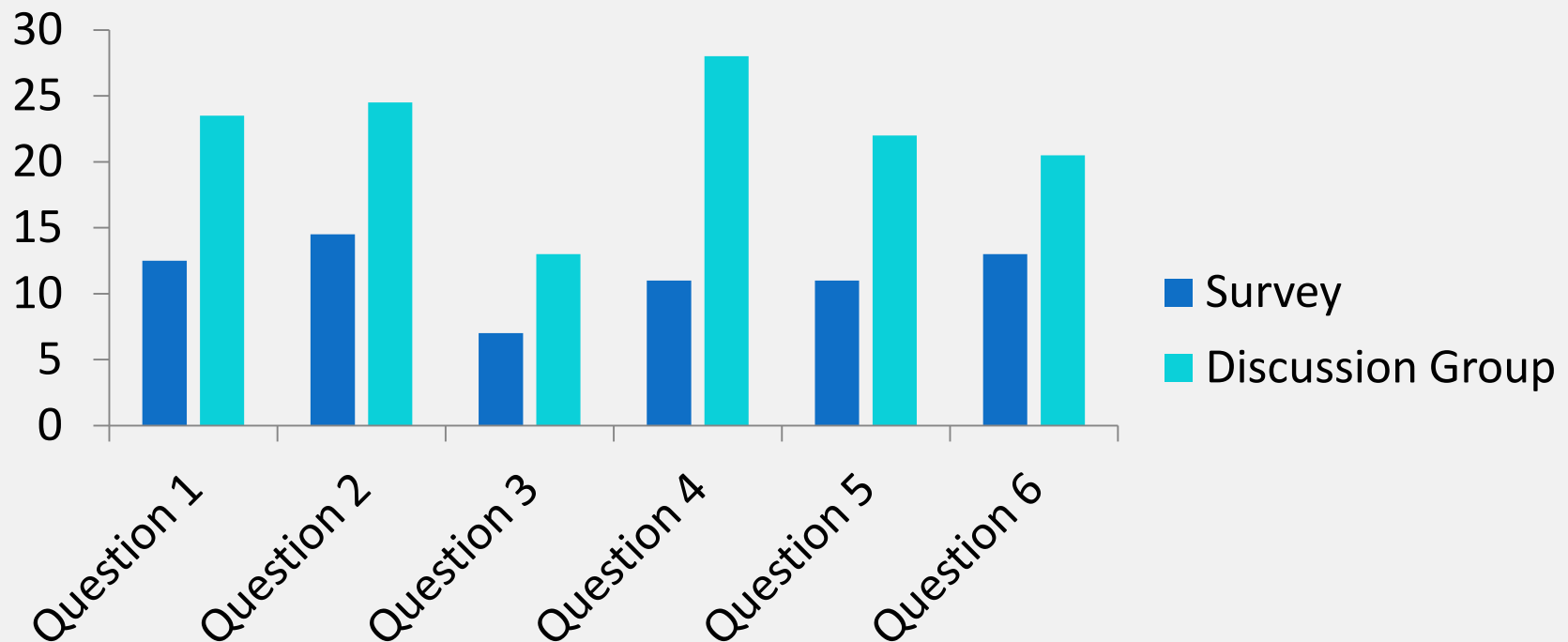
Disadvantages

- Willingness to participate might be lower when others can read and respond to their answers: “I have nothing to add”
- No affirmations online
- Possible technology barriers (though not as pronounced)

Length of Response: Discussion Group vs. Survey

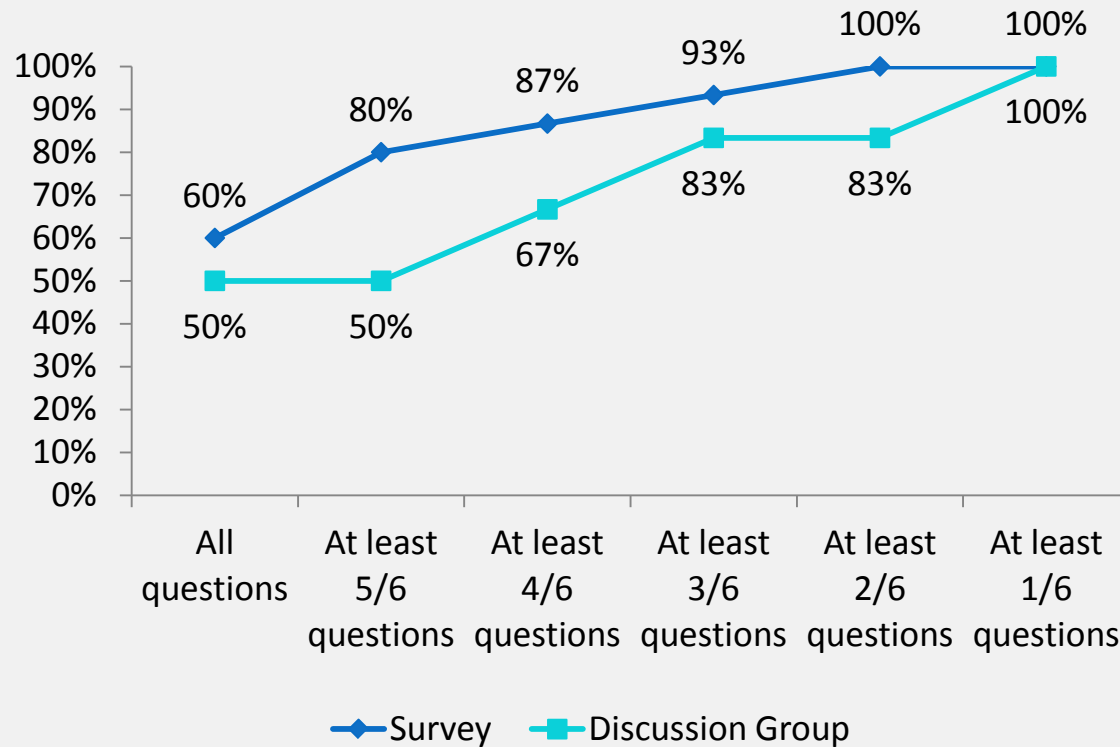
The responses in the forum tended to be much longer as compared to the responses in the survey – when respondents participated, they gave a much more substantial response.

Median Response Length (Words)



Level of Participation

Discussion group participants tended to omit more questions than those participating in the survey.



Were the discussion group comments self-censored?

5. How do you feel that you are adjusting to University life?

Discussion Group:

4/6 (67%) Responded
Comments were all positive

Perfect, I am proud of myself.

Really good! Happy I'm being able to learn fast.

I am definitely enjoying the transition from high school to university. I enjoy not having the feeling of being babied, and working at a quicker pace is much more fulfilling - I am not getting bored!

I am still a bit terrified but I think it is coming on to me.. change is fun when you embrace it- am in the process of stepping out of my comfort zone so I can enjoy the transition from high school to college life.

Survey:

13/15 (87%) Responded
Comments were more neutral and diverse

It's pretty good! I have lots of connections to people to help me!

So far so good. Classes are great, I have made good friends, all and all it has been excellent. I have hardly had to adjust to anything.

I feel like I'm adjusting fairly well, I've learnt more about where buildings are and such.

Pretty good. It will get better once I get into routine.

I feel that I should join in school's activities more often.

Discussion Groups – In other research...

- The comment depth and breadth is different from open ends in a survey:
 - We have found that the main reason that participants don't post in a discussion group is that they feel they "have nothing to add".
- In long-term discussion groups (online communities) participation continues to increase as the community matures.

Conclusion: Discussion Groups

Value

Longer, richer, thoughtful responses.
Ability to augment from other responses.

Barriers

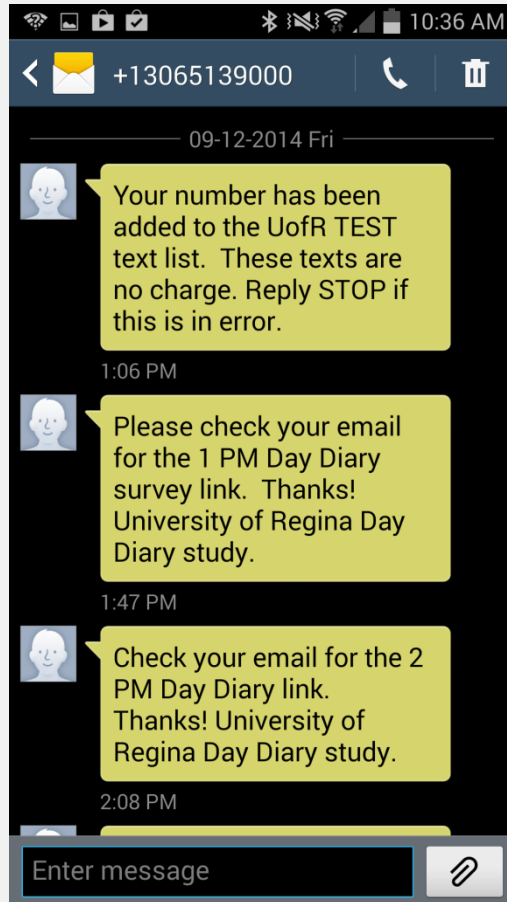
Social dynamics: “I am not having a problem” and “I have nothing to add”

Fit

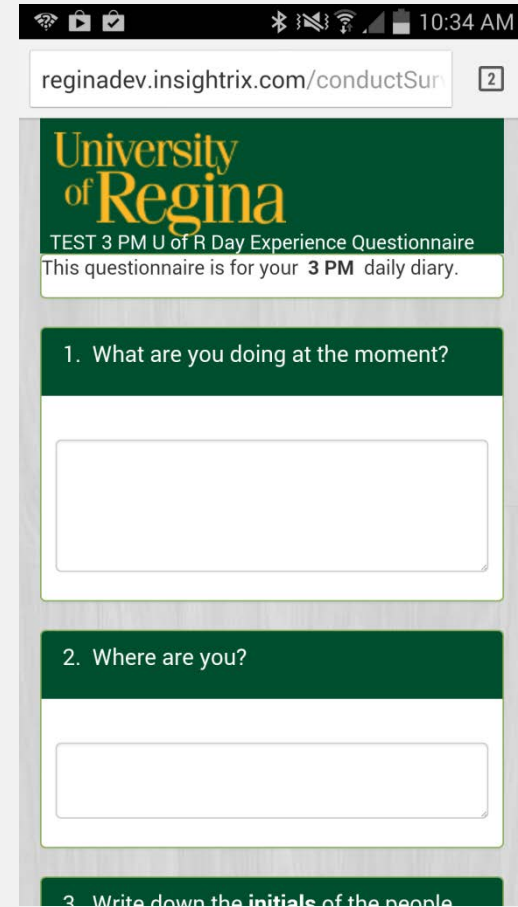
Deep dive into complex topics, augment comments with discussion.

Day Diary

Optional SMS Reminder



Online Mobile-friendly survey



Fun Methodologies – Day Diaries

Advantages

- Precision from using present-time data rather than retrospective
- Understanding the contextual lifestyle factors facing students that researchers, such as difficulties in students' life situation that cannot be fully captured by a survey.

Disadvantages

- Time consuming for respondents – they have to do a survey every hour (10 mini surveys)
- Possible technology barrier (less so with this group).

- Causes respondents to be mindful of their activities (is this an advantage or disadvantage?)

Day Diary - Example

Time	What are you doing?	Where?	With whom?	Feeling
10 AM	Waiting for my lecture to start	Classroom building	I don't know anyone	Tired
11 AM	Taking notes	Classroom building		Intrigued
12 PM	Watching my friend make a calendar	In a res apartment	RJ best friend	Happy
1 PM	Waiting for my prof	Classroom building	RJ friend DL friend	Bored
2 PM	Walking from class	In the hallway	RJ friend DL friend	Relieved
3 PM	Watching Divergent	In my room		Relaxed
4 PM	Watching Divergent	In my room		Happy
5 PM	Watching Divergent	In my room		Hungry
6 PM	Reading a short story for English	In my room		Tired
7 PM	Eating dinner	My friend's room	RJ friend	Excited

I wish I had spent more time working on assignments, because I need to get them done.

I had a great day, I had pizza, and ice cream which made my day ten times better.

I fit right in! I love it here.

Were participants more aware of their activities when they catalogued them every hour? Were they changing their behaviour?

2. In terms of how you spent time today, do you wish you would have spent more or less time doing certain activities?

Survey: 7/14 (50%) said No

I wish I spent more time on my studies and focusing on homework!

Yes. Wish I could do less time doing school work and more time doing things that I enjoy like spending time with family and friends.

No. I think I managed my time well today.

No, I spent enough time doing each activity including studying and work.

I wish i had woken up earlier so i could have had more time in the day.

Day Diary: 1/6 (17%) said No

No, I spent an average day in class and had the morning off which is good for me.

More time scheduling the rest of the month, less time stressing out about it!

I wish I had spent more time working on assignments, because I need to get them done.

More activities because I don't want to spend my time doing nothing(coz its boring) and I like doing activities.

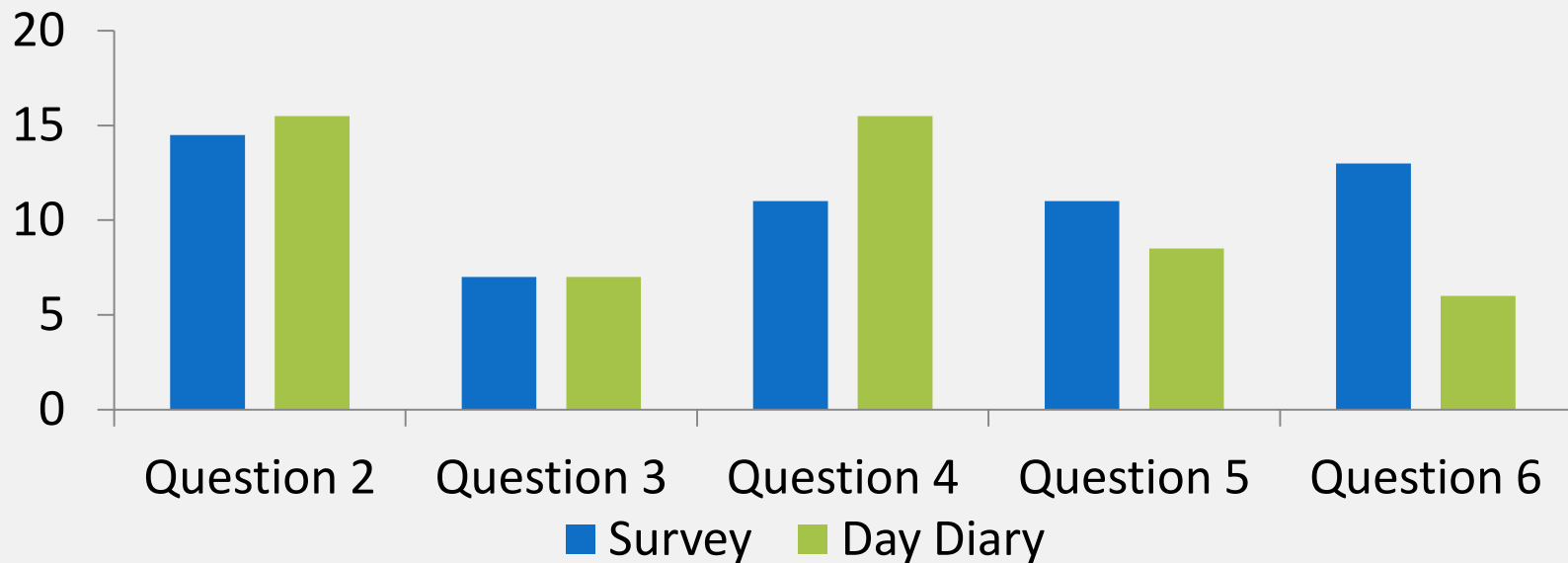
Day Diary: In other research

- We have done research where students catalogued their communications...
students expressed surprise at their own communication habits!

Length of Response: Day Diary vs. Survey

We found no advantage/disadvantage in the Day Diary vs. Survey with regards to length.

Median Response Length (Words)



Conclusion: Day Diary

Value

Context around activities and social circle.

Barriers

More onerous on a respondent to participate.

Fit

Diary complemented well by a follow-up survey or focus group.

Conclusions

Conclusions

	Video Survey	Discussion Groups	Day diary
Value	Provides insight with the tone of the comment.	Longer, richer, thoughtful responses. Ability to augment from other responses.	Context around activities and social circle.
Barriers	Technology and willingness to participate.	Social dynamics: “I am not having a problem” and “I have nothing to add”	More onerous on a respondent to participate.
Fit	Augmenting the key findings of other research.	Deep dive into complex topics, augment comments with discussion	Diary complemented well by a follow-up survey or focus group.

Thank you!
Questions?



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