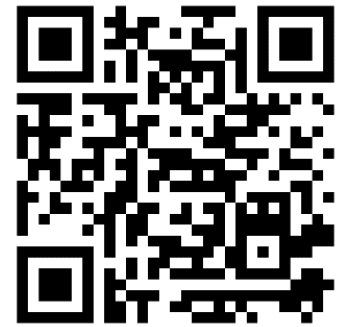


Complex Identities: Writing and Using Identity Demographic Questions

Identity Demographics

1. *What are the complex identities of particular interest to your institution right now?*



Writing Identity Demographic Questions

2. *What challenges or successes have you faced in trying to collect demographic information that involved identity? In other words, what demographic questions have or have not worked for you and why?*

Using Identity Demographic Data

3. *What challenges or successes have you faced in trying to use the data and results collected from identity demographics? In other words, what have you done well or gotten stuck on when using these demographic data?*

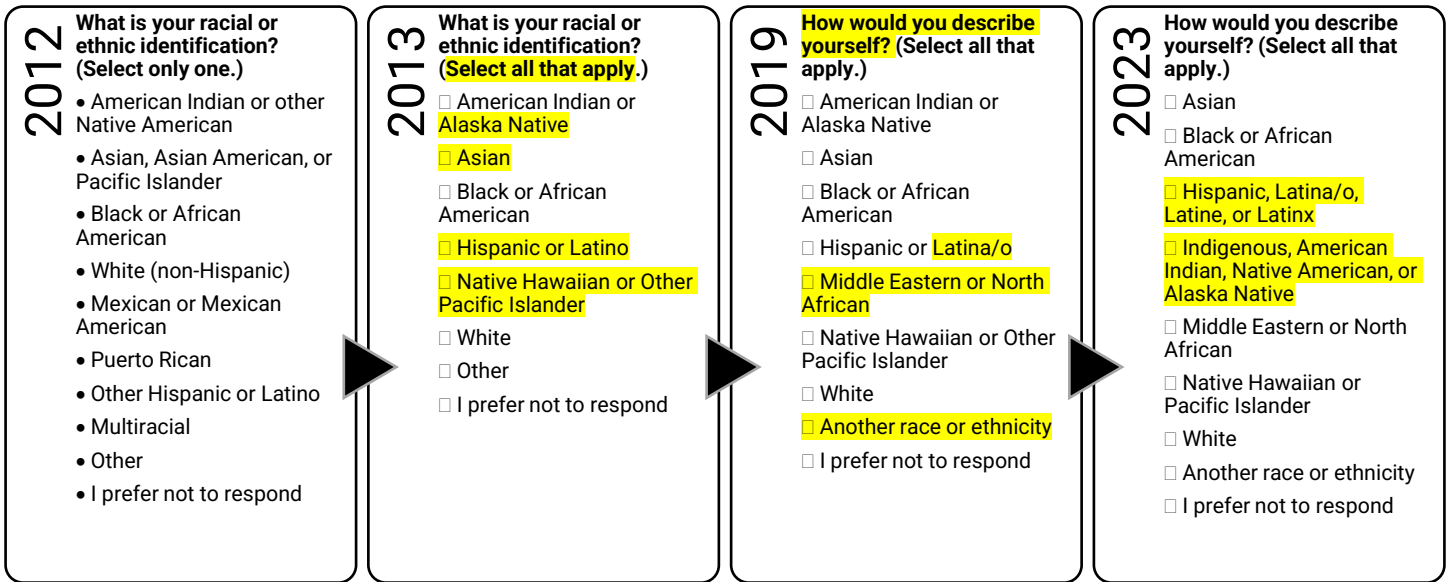
Allison BrckaLorenz, Associate Research Scientist, Center for Postsecondary Research, Indiana University Bloomington, abrckalo@iu.edu

BrckaLorenz, A. (2024). Complex identities: Writing and using identity demographic questions. Program presented at the 2024 AIR Forum, Denver, CO.

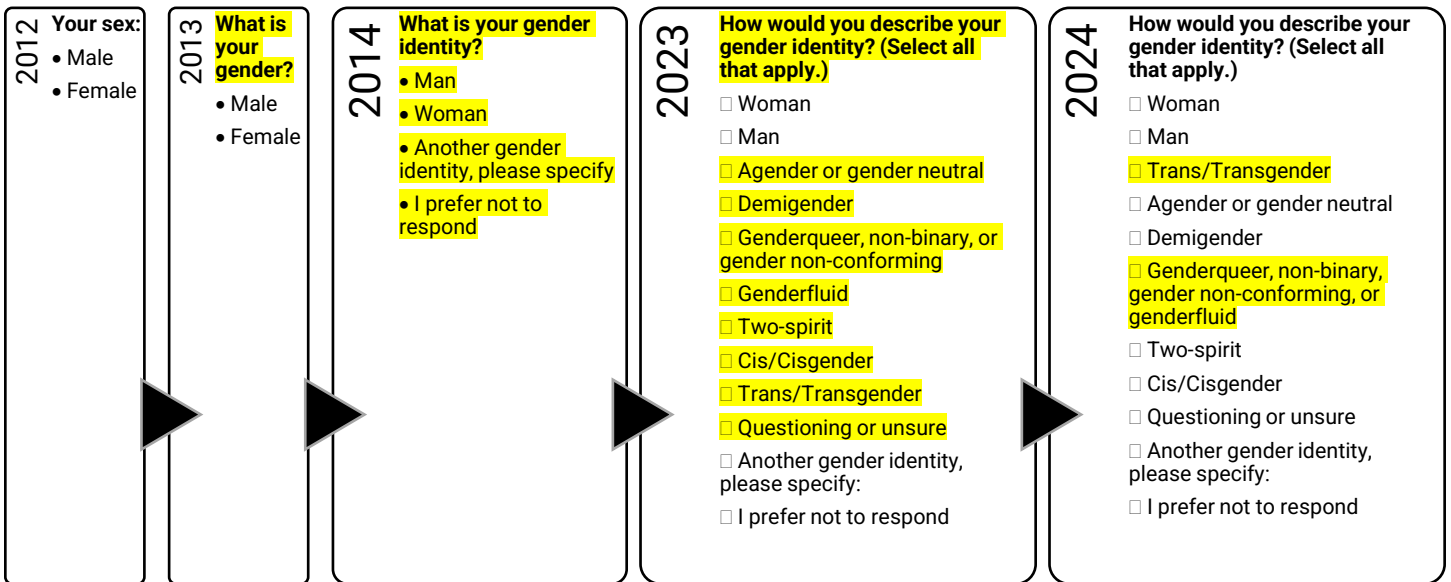
Writing Identity Demographic Questions

The Evolution of National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Identity Demographics

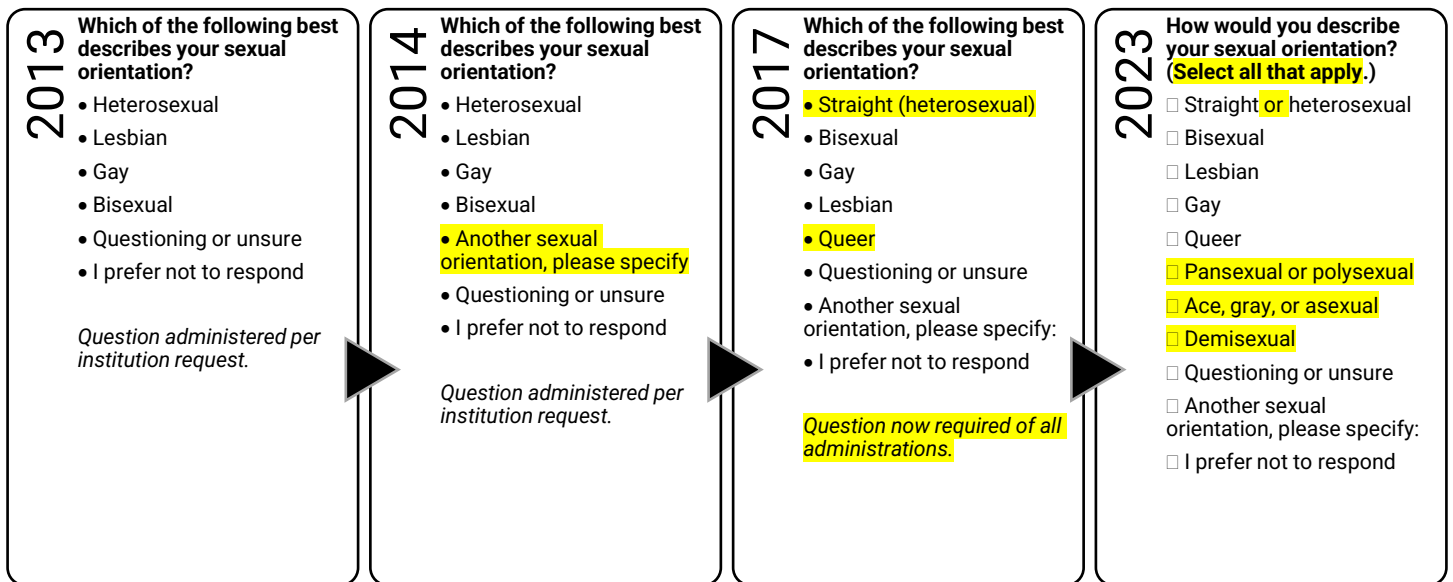
Racial/Ethnic Identity



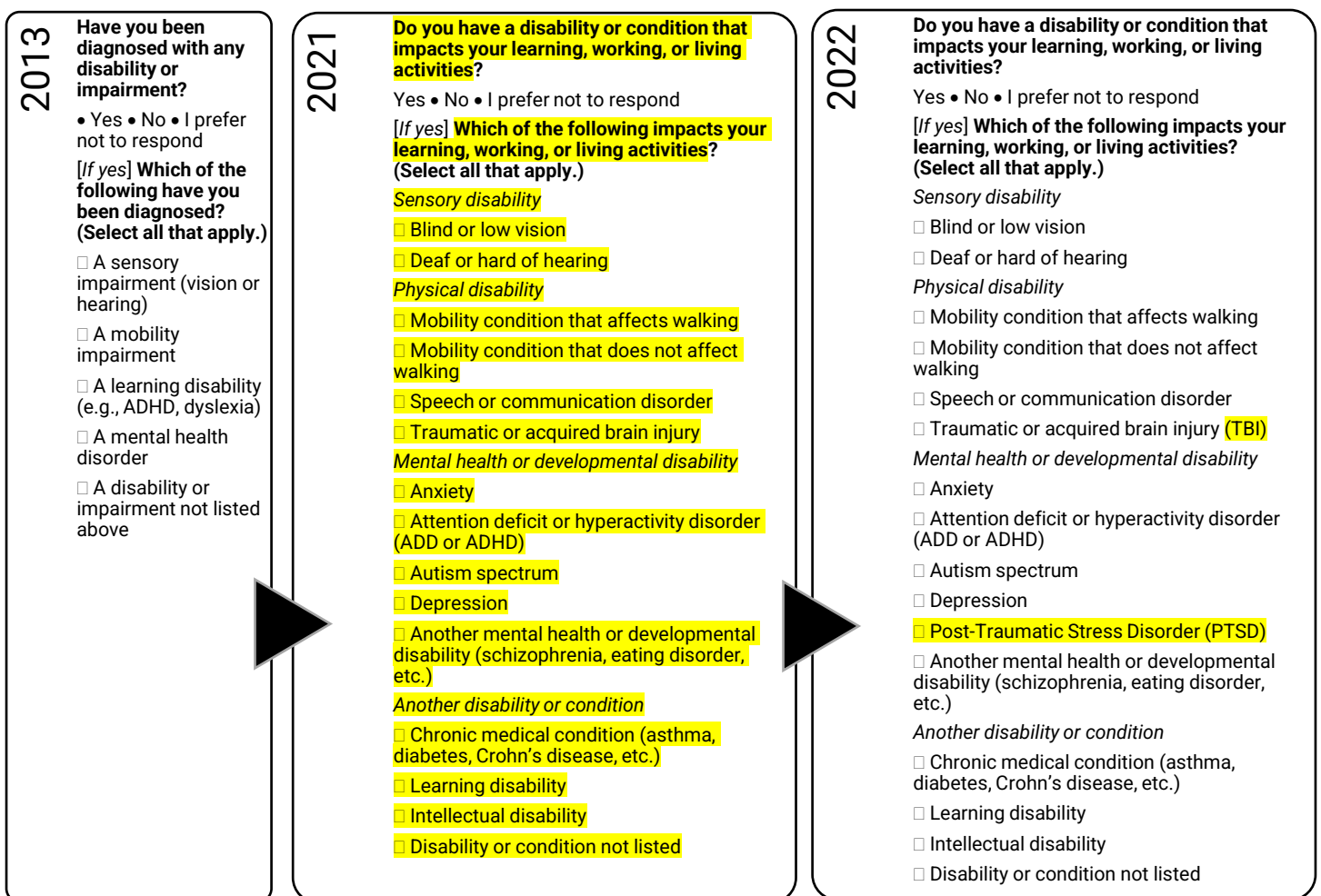
Gender Identity



Sexual Orientation



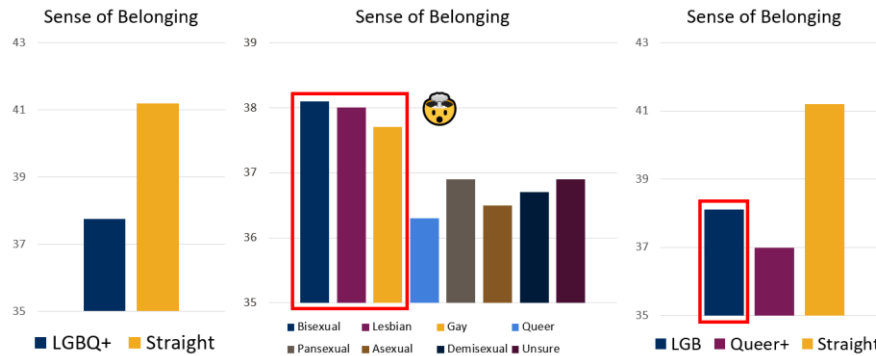
(Dis)ability



Using Identity Demographic Data

Thoughtful Aggregation

→ Disaggregate whenever possible. Aggregate responsibly if you must—collapse groups based on outcomes, not your preconceived ideas of who should be together.



→ An easy-to-use dichotomy can be great (think LGBTQ+, nonbinary+, student of color, etc.), but never skip over acknowledging the identities or variation within. Whether you decide to combine groups, exclude a group, or create an ambiguous “other” group; explain your choices, and do what you can to honor the contributions of all your respondents.

Gender Identity	%
Woman	63
Man	32
Agender or gender neutral	1
Demigender	< 1
Genderqueer, non-binary, gender non-conforming	3
Genderfluid	1
Two spirit	< 1
Cis/Cisgender	7
Trans/Transgender	1
Questioning or unsure	1
Another gender identity	< 1
I prefer not to respond	2

Genderqueer+ (6%) 🙄	Not Genderqueer+ (94%)
Woman	26
Man	16
Agender or gender neutral	16
Demigender	6
Genderqueer, non-binary, gender non-conforming	48
Genderfluid	17
Two spirit	6
Cis/Cisgender	5
Trans/Transgender	22
Questioning or unsure	19
Another gender identity	8

Select-All-That-Apply Data

→ Think hard about whether your reports need percentages to add up to 100%. If you really need 100%, think about presenting both versions or presenting an additional breakout of multiple selections—try not to hide the diversity of people who select more than one option. People with multiple aspects of an identity (multiracial, etc.) in 100% situations are often quite diverse!

Racial/Ethnic Identification	%
Asian	8
Black or African American	9
Hispanic, Latina/o, Latine, Latinx	11
Indigenous, American Indian, Native American, or Alaska Native	1
Middle Eastern or North African	1
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	< 1
White	57
Another race or ethnicity	1
Multiple races/ethnicities selected 🙄	10
I prefer not to respond	3

Racial/Ethnic Identification	%
White	57
Hispanic, Latina/o, Latine, Latinx	11
Black or African American	9
Asian	8
Latine... + White	3
Asian + White	2
Middle Eastern or North African	1
Black or African American + White	1
Indigenous... + White	1
Black or African American + Latine...	1
Keep Going! 😊	

→ Additionally, look for commonly selected pairs. You may find that these are a larger group than some of your single-select options.

→ For more advanced modelling, investigate different kinds of variable coding systems (binary coding, deviation coding, effect coding, etc.)

- Mayhew, M. J., & Simonoff, J. S. (2015). Effect coding as a mechanism for improving the accuracy of measuring students who self-identify with more than one race. *Research in Higher Education*, 56(6), 595–600. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-015-9364-0>.
- Mayhew, M.J., & Simonoff, J.S. (2015). Non-White, no more: Effect coding as an alternative to dummy coding with implications for higher education researchers. *Journal of College Student Development*, 56(2), 170-175. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2015.0019>.