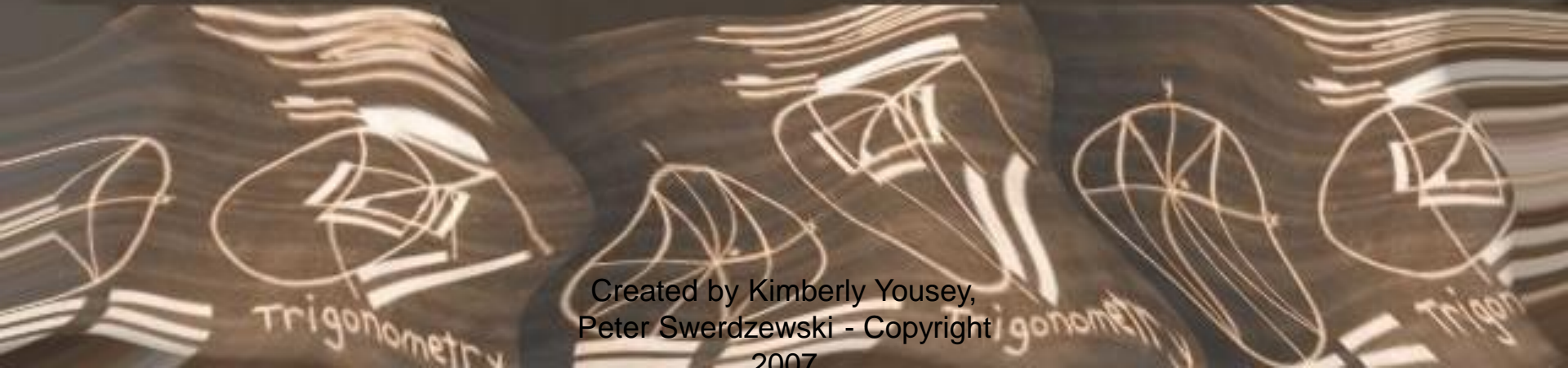


Writing up your Results

NYU Assessment Bootcamp



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The Steps in Writing Reports

1. Determine the Audience
2. Determine the appropriate format(s)
3. Write important components
4. Check facts and proof-read
5. Present draft for final review
6. **Submit the report and use the data!**

(Upcraft & Schuh, 1996)

1. Determine the Audience

- Supervisors
- NYU Leadership (Dean's, VPs, Provosts, President's Office)
- Policymakers
- Students
- Legislators
- Parents
- Alumni

Reading Habits of Policymakers

In an influential study in the health domain on the gap between research and policy (Sorian & Baugh, 2002) *policymakers reported...*

- They **read** 27% of what they received in detail
- **Skimmed** 53% for general content
- **“Never get to”** 35% of the material
- 49% of the material they receive is **not “relevant”** to their purposes.

What’s “relevant”?

- 67% focus on information related to current debates
- 25% cite impact on “real” people
- 11% indicated an “easy-to-read” format

Reading Habits of Policymakers

*What makes information **least** useful?*

- 36%: “not relevant or focused on real problems”
- 22%: Too long, dense, or detailed
- 20%: Too theoretical, technical, or “jargony”
- 19%: Not objective/biased

Reading Habits of Policymakers

Policymakers are more likely to read information if:

- Information is in short bulleted paragraphs, not large blocks of type
- Charts or graphs are used to illustrate key points
- It's provided in print rather than electronically (67%), but 27% indicate reading electronic materials more often.
- A recommendation and implications are presented (89%)

(2) Determine the appropriate format(s)

- Executive summary
- “Just-in-time” report
- Progress report
- Targeted reports
- Full report
- Public report
- Press release
- Web-based [interactive] report

(3) Write important components

- Qualitative Assessment
 - Emergent themes
 - Knowledge gained due to the assessment
 - Raw responses
 - Acknowledged biases
- Quantitative Assessment
 - Aggregated (objective-level) data
 - Item-level data
 - Demographics
 - Validity threats
- **BOTH:** Implications and Recommendations

The Executive Summary

Section 6. Results

*This is the section that the Center for Assessment and Research Studies can provide if needed (you select their involvement in this section).
This section will contain all tables, figures, and interpretation of statistical analyses and therefore can be quite lengthy.*

6.1. Executive Summary of Results

This assessment was conducted to provide empirical evidence about the knowledge and confidence that students have with regard to academic advising at JMU.

During the Fall Semester of 2006, CARS worked with Anna Lynn Bell of University Studies and Kristen Schiavone of the Student Government Association to craft a series of questions to serve as indicators for five advising outcomes established at the outset of the assessment. In total, 34 items were administered to a random sample of 401 JMU students at the Spring 2007 Assessment Day (February 13th, 2007), 42 students during a scheduled make-up day, and 23 students during unscheduled make-up drop-in sessions.

This analysis includes results from students who attended the regular Assessment Day as well as results from students who were unexcused for Assessment Day but who had to attend make-up sessions to have an administrative hold removed from their records. We believed the make-up students would score lower on the knowledge items than the Assessment Day students. This is because we thought that the students who avoided JMU's required Assessment Day (make-ups) may be less engaged with JMU's advising practices. The hypothesis was not supported as students in the make-up sample tended to perform similarly, although less well, than students who attended the regular Assessment Day (although there are specific areas in which the two groups performed differently).

Overall, students who took the Advising Assessment appear to have a moderate-to-high understanding of the dynamics related to advising at JMU and moderately high confidence in their abilities to fulfill the graduation requirements and utilize advising resources without the help of an adviser. Considering each outcome individually:

- Outcome 1: Increased student knowledge of academic resources
 - Assessment Day students answered 66.07% of the items correctly. Make-up students answered 64% of the items correctly.
 - Assessment Day students were most proficient at knowing that e-campus includes college course credits transferred from another institution (Item 10e; 91.8% correct). Make-up students were most proficient at knowing that registration dates and deadlines are available on the JMU Website (Item 6c; 89.2% correct) and not available on the General Education Checklist (Item 6d; 89.2% correct).
 - Assessment Day and make-up students were least proficient at knowing that e-campus does *not* include financial aid and tuition information (Item 10c; 9.5% correct for Assessment Day students, 13.8%

Objective-Level Reporting

6.3. Assessment of Outcome 1: Increased student knowledge of academic resources

This subscale consists of four items, of which two items are multi-part check-all-that-apply items, for a total of 15 items.

6.3.1. Subscale score for this outcome

On average, regular Assessment Day students are answering 66.07% of the Outcome 1 items correctly.

		REGULAR A-DAY		MAKE-UP SAMPLE	
		Knowledge Scale Raw Score (15 = max possible)	Knowledge Scale Average Score	Knowledge Scale Raw Score (15 = max possible)	Knowledge Scale Average Score
N	Valid	401	401	65	65
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		9.9102	66.07% correct on average	9.4923	63.28% correct on average
Median		10	66.67%	9	60.00%
Mode		10	67.00%	9	60.00%
Std. Deviation		1.67539	11.17%	2.1587	14.392%
Minimum		5	33.00%	3	20.00%
Maximum		14	93.00%	14	93.00%

Each item will be considered individually next.

6.3.2. Item 6

Original text [correct response(s) marked with asterisk]:

In what specific place can you find information about registration dates and deadlines (i.e. drop-add,

For Outcome 1, on average...

- Students from Assessment Day correctly answer 66.07% of the items correctly, indicating a good understanding of JMU's academic resources
- Students were most proficient at knowing that e-campus includes college course credits transferred from another institution
- Students were least proficient at knowing that e-campus *does not* include financial aid and tuition information

A note on "check box" items:

- Each "box" counts as a

Quantitative Data: Item-by-Item Results

no response option after the information was finalized because the presence of financial aid and tuition information was being implemented on the e-campus self-service Web site; therefore, inferences made from the results of item 10c should be made with caution as some students may have known about the new feature while other may have not known about the new feature.

6.3.4. Item 14

Original text [correct response(s) marked with asterisk]:

- Where is the University Registrar's Office located?
- Taylor Hall
 - The Festival
 - Wilson Hall
 - * Warren Hall

Regular vs. Make-up Students:

The results to items 14 and 22 indicate that make-up students seem to have less knowledge about the locations of university advising resources, possibly indicating that they are less likely to use university resources for the purposes of advising.

Option		REGULAR A-DAY		MAKE-UP SAMPLE	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
a.	Students who <i>incorrectly chose</i> "Taylor Hall"	13	3.2%	4	6.2%
b.	Students who <i>incorrectly chose</i> "The Festival"	2	0.5%	2	3.1%
c.	Students who <i>incorrectly chose</i> "Wilson Hall"	46	11.5%	14	21.5%
*d.	Students who <i>correctly chose</i> "Warren Hall"	340	84.8%	45	69.2%
<i>Total N =</i>		401	100%	65	100.0%

6.3.5. Item 22

Original text [correct response(s) marked with asterisk]:

- The office that assists students with career planning can be found in which building?
- Warren Hall
 - Taylor Hall
 - * Wilson Hall
 - Huffinan Hall
 - Showker Hall

Quantitative Data: Likert Items

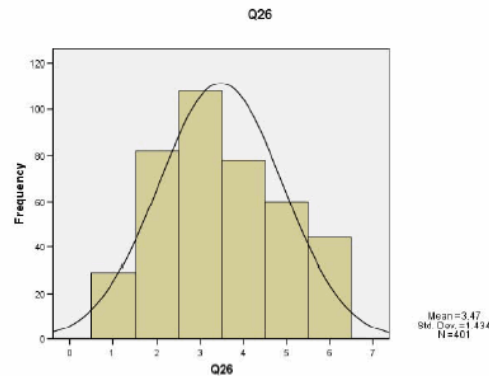
6.7.4. Item 26

Original text [this item does not have a correct response]:

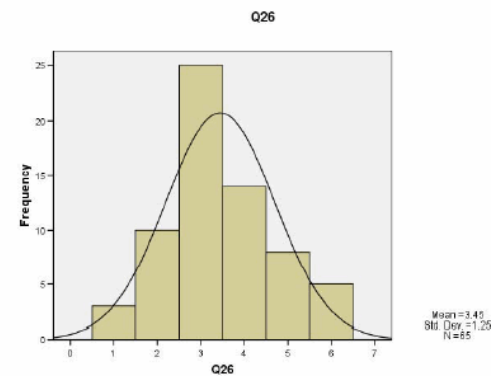
How confident are you in your knowledge of the process for requesting an override into a class at JMU?

- No confidence at all
- A little confidence
- A fair amount of confidence
- Much confidence
- Very much confidence
- Complete confidence

Option		REGULAR A-DAY		MAKE-UP SAMPLE	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Students who feel "No confidence at all"	29	7.2%	3	4.6%
2	Students who feel "A little confidence"	82	20.4%	10	15.4%
3	Students who feel "A fair amount of confidence"	108	26.9%	25	38.5%
4	Students who feel "Much confidence"	78	19.5%	14	21.5%
5	Students who feel "Very much confidence"	60	15.0%	8	12.3%
6	Students who feel "Complete confidence"	44	11.0%	5	7.7%
Total N =		401	100.0%	65	100.0%



REGULAR A-DAY



MAKE-UP SAMPLE

Qualitative Data: Summary Coding

6.8.6. Item 33

Original text [this item does not have a correct response]:

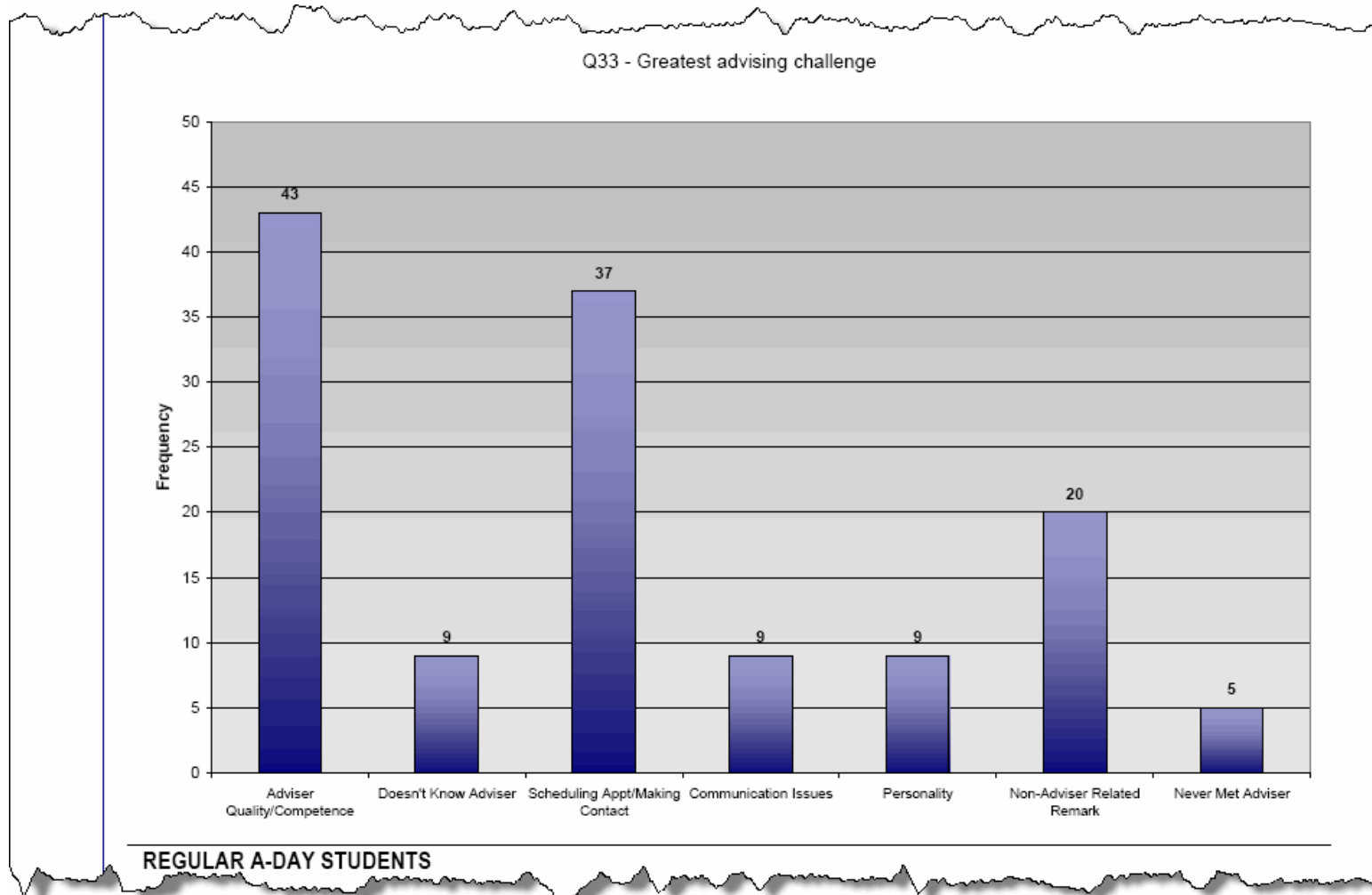
What was your greatest advising challenge?

Item 32 asks if students are satisfied with the advising they have received at JMU. The 120 students who responded “No” to item 32 were then asked to respond to items 33 and 34, which are constructed-response items asking why they are not satisfied with advising at JMU. The 281 students who responded to item 32 that “Yes”, they were satisfied with the quality of advising at JMU, were not asked to respond to items 33 and 34.

To facilitate interpretation of the 120 responses to this item, seven themes were identified that emerged from an initial reading of the responses, and each response was subsequently coded into one or more of the seven themes (thus the sum of the frequencies below exceeds the 120 responses received to the item).

Theme	Description
Adviser Quality / Competence	The most frequent theme that emerged from the responses was that of the quality of advising. Many students indicated that their advisers lacked the technical knowledge to be effective advisers, and some students' responses suggested that their advisers are simply not competent.
Doesn't Know Adviser	This theme includes responses from students who indicated they do not know who their adviser is.
Scheduling Appointment / Making Contact	A significant advising-related challenge that students indicate they face relates to meeting with advisers. Students appear to have trouble finding advisors during the advisers' stated office hours, and suggest that advisers are inflexible to meet during the busy scheduling season.
Communication Issues	This theme deals with responses that include unanswered e-mails sent to advisers, difficulty in discussing issues with advisers, and general difficulty in communicating with adviser. In-person communication with adviser is reserved for the “Scheduling Appointment / Making Contact” theme above.
Personality	Some students indicated they did not like their adviser for reasons that are more closely associated with personality than with knowledge of advising.
Non-Adviser Related Remark	This theme includes those challenges that do not specifically relate to major advisors.
Never Met Adviser	Some students indicated that they know who their adviser is, but have never taken the initiative to

Qualitative Data: Summary Coding



Qualitative Data: Raw Responses

of freshman year with first year student.
Meeting with my advisor
Meeting with them. They are always booked up for weeks, so it seems.

6.4.8.6 Communication Issues with Adviser

annitiating contact through email
I e-mail my advisor with a simple question or ask her when the best time to meet would be and she never gets back to me.
I had to email advisor 2 times before I got a response. I wanted to meet to talk about spring classes and also about transfer credits but by the time I received an email it was too late.
my advisor hasn't responded to my past 2 emails.
my minor advisor is great but my major advisor is never available and does not reply to emails very quickly
no communication with advisor and little help when actually met with him

6.5.8.6 Personality Conflicts with Adviser

Conflict in personality/values of freshman advisor
Getting to know my advisor
I had an advisor who did not seem interested in really answering my questions and talking about the right courses for me.
I would like it if my advisor was more interested in getting to know me and more interested in wanting to meet with me.
Lack of help or interest from advisor
Lack of interest in helping.
My advisor basically said that I should already know what I asked her. She was of little help to me.

6.6.8.6 Non-Adviser-Related Remarks

As an incoming transfer student, I really had no idea what was going on. I felt that maybe JMU should have done more to help out regarding that matter. Or at least push me in the right direction to know what options I had.
choosing classes
declaring a major
even knowing what to ask. It's all up in the air with bureaucratic red tape, and it's sad.
Figuring out what classes classes to take.
Getting into both of my closed majors
getting my transfer credit accepted for full credit and not elective.
holds
How much time you got, I could go all day.
I changed majors early in my Freshman year and it was a little hectic.
Knowing graduation and major requirements.
Make sure I complete my courses on time

didn't show up. He also didn't send me an email AT ALL, I had to
HIIIIII again. Real Professional

Not being able to get in contact with my advisor. She rarely responded to my emails when I would email her with simple questions or in far advance.
Not being able to walk in. Advisors take too long to get back to me.
Trying to get her to email me back.

MAKE-UP SAMPLE:

getting her to return my inquiries
getting the advisor to talk to me. and when she would, she would tell me that I needed to figure it out on my own.

my advisor made me feel uncomfortable and insignificant
My freshman advisor seemed as though she didn't care, and had more important things to do other than talk to me.

MAKE-UP SAMPLE:

Overcoming his "you're an idiot" attitude
I tried repeatedly to get an appointment, and when I finally succeeded my advisor didn't show up. He also didn't send me an email AT ALL, I had to contact HIIIIII again. Real Professional
i feel rushed when I am there

Displaying Information

- Some of Tufte's (2001) Grand Principles:
 - Enforce wise comparisons (i.e., answer the question, “compared with *what?*”)
 - Information for comparison should be placed side-by-side
 - Completely integrate words, numbers, and images
 - Don't “dequantify” results to yes/no, on/off, liked/didn't like
 - Most of what happens in design depends upon the quality, relevance, and integrity of the content

Organizing Your Report

- Put important items first
- Use headings/tables of contents to making skimming easier
- Make clear connections between outcomes and results
- Include a so-what section

(4) Check facts and proof-read

- **Proof-Read!** Do NOT submit a report that has not been proof-read by someone (who is not the original writer).
- **Quality Control!** For important results, have two people conduct the analyses and then compare results against one another.
- **Anticipate Issues!** During the QC phase, try to anticipate issues or problems that stakeholders may have.

(5) Present draft for final review

- ***Always*** present the report in person to the stakeholder(s)
 - PowerPoint is okay, but recognize its limitations
 - Provide a one-page “elevator piece”
 - Before going into the briefing, try to find out what types of questions will be asked

(6) Submit the Report and Use the Data

- Distribute information widely but selectively
- Include the “so-what” factor
- Integrate information into conversations and decision making
- Create a follow-up meeting with key stakeholders

* Final Thoughts *

- Q: How simple should you make your report?
A: Think about what the stakeholder usually reads. The New York Times is at a high reading level; if they read that, you can write a high-level report.
- Q: What about negative findings?
A: In an institution, someone will find out...be transparent and *explain* the finding.
- Q: What if no one wants my results?
A: Don't conduct the assessment (see Lee Upcraft for details...)

References

- Sorian, R., & Baugh, T. (2002). Power of information: Closing the gap between research and policy. *Health Affairs*, 21(2), 264-273.
- Tufte, E. R. (2001). *The visual display of quantitative information* (2nd ed.). Cheshire, Conn: Graphics Press.
- Upcraft, M. L., & Schuh, J. H. (1996). *Assessment in student affairs : A guide for practitioners* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.