

Taking Part Child Boost: 2014/2015 Technical Note

Appendix H – Cognitive Testing Report

Taking Part Child Boost – Cognitive Testing

1. Background and Overview

Taking Part is the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's flagship survey, commissioned in partnership with three arms-length bodies (Arts Council England, English Heritage and Sport England). The survey covers both adults and children in England and collects a wide range of data about engagement in culture, leisure and sport.

The Department for Education is sponsoring a boost of the child 11-15 year old sample on Taking Part for 12 months from January 2014. The boost will focus on measuring sports participation among this age group. In light of this, the research team at TNS BMRB conducted cognitive testing on a series of potential new questions, which it has been proposed will appear on the survey.

The questions tested focussed on sports provision and the provision of specialist sports coaching at secondary schools.

Question testing was conducted either at the respondent's home or at the TNS BMRB offices. Interviews were carried out by the TNS BMRB research team who tested respondent's comprehension and probed for the thought processes adopted by respondents when constructing their answers. Respondents were friends or relatives of TNS staff, recruited following a request for volunteers aged 11-15 years who currently attend secondary school.

Six interviews were achieved in the following demographic proportions:

Gender	Male	4
	Female	2
Age	11-12 years	3
	13-15 years	3

Interviews lasted between 15 and 20 minutes, with respondents given £10 cash as an incentive for participation.

This document summarises the key findings from the cognitive testing, in addition to recommendations which have been made in light of the key learning's gathered over the course of the interviews.

A copy of the questionnaire used is included at the end of the document.

2. Key Findings and Recommendations

Sports Offered by School

Questions Tested

All respondents were asked what sports their secondary school had offered in the last 12 months *during school lessons*. A follow-up question then asked what sports their secondary school had offered over the same time period *out of school hours*. Respondents were told that it didn't matter whether they played the sports or not or if they were only offered to girls or boys or certain age groups – they were to mention ALL sports offered. Respondents were handed a showcard as used on the main Taking Part survey with a list of sports in order to help them answer. Key areas of testing on these questions were to identify respondents' understanding of the terms 'last 12 months', 'secondary school', 'offered', 'during school lessons' and 'out of school hours'.

Findings

There were no problems with understanding of the terms 'secondary school' and 'offered' and when probed, respondents said that they were thinking of all sports offered to all age groups and genders when formulating their answers. They claimed to be confident that they would be aware of all sports offered by their school, even if they were not offered to their particular age group or gender, as sports offered are displayed on noticeboards, communicated in newsletters, timetables etc. However, on comparison of the responses given by three children attending the same school, there were some inconsistencies in the sports listed.

Given that the list of sports used was taken from the main Taking Part questionnaire, it was unsurprising that the list appeared to be fairly exhaustive in terms of the sports included. That said, a couple of sports were mentioned by respondents which were not included (i.e. cheerleading, water polo and handball).

When probed on their understanding of the term 'last 12 months', respondents seemed clear that this referred to the 12 months prior to the interview. Whilst they appeared to be correctly thinking about the last 12 months when formulating their answers, some said they found it easier to think about what their school offered across the school year generally/now.

Understanding of the term 'during school lessons' was generally good, although one respondent wasn't sure whether to mention go-karting or not as it was offered as a trip off-site during a school PE lesson.

It was clear that without a definition of what we meant by 'out of school hours', respondents were prone to misunderstanding this term. They tended, in particular, to exclude periods such as school breaks and lunch times, which should have been included.

Some respondents were read the 'IF NECESSARY' description of what we meant by 'out of school hours' up front as part of the question, but this made the question wording long (as it was preceded by an explanation that all sports offered to all ages and genders, not just those sports they had done personally, should be included.) Researchers found that at the end of the description it was necessary to repeat the initial question before the respondent could answer, as they had forgotten what they were being asked i.e. 'So thinking about the last 12 months, which of these sports has your school offered out of school hours?'

Even after respondents were given a definition of what we meant by 'out of school hours' some mentioned sports done during lunchtime which weren't organised by the school – i.e. a casual kick-about with their friends.

Recommendations

Is this the best way to collect this type of information given the inconsistencies in the sports listed by pupils attending the same school? If it is decided to continue with this approach, there will need to be recognition that the data collected will not be as accurate as if the data were collected directly from the schools themselves.

Given that the existing list of sports is fairly exhaustive and for the sake of consistency with the main Taking Part questionnaire, we do not suggest adding any pre-codes. Any sports which are mentioned which are not included as pre-codes may be captured in the 'other specify option' (up to three other sports can be recorded in this way).

We do not recommend changing the term 'last 12 months' as this was generally well understood and whilst respondents found it easier to think in terms of sports offered in general, the reference to the last 12 months is important as sports offered can vary by season.

We suggest adding a briefing note to interviewers, either in their interviewer instructions or on screen during the interview, to explain that sports offered off-site during school lessons (such as the go-karting trip) should be included at Q1a.

As a consequence of the confusion surrounding the term 'out of school hours' we feel that it is necessary to start off at Q1 by showing *all* respondents the life events calendar (rather than just showing it 'if necessary') and explaining that out of school hours includes lunch and break times and any time outside of their usual school hours (including before or after school on weekdays, weekends and school holidays)¹. We also suggest removing the 'if necessary' instruction before the out of school hours description at Q1b so that the description is read out to all. At the end of the description interviewers will then need to remind respondents of the original question wording 'So, in the last 12 months which of these sports has your secondary school offered'.

We will also brief interviewers that sports not organised by the school, but played at school (such as a casual kick-about with friends at lunchtime) should be excluded.

Sports Not Offered by School

Questions Tested

All respondents were asked if there were any sports not offered by their school that they would like to do at school? Researchers probed to assess understanding of the term 'not offered'. If respondents mentioned sports which they previously said their school had offered in the past 12 months, researchers explored the reasons for this.

Findings

The question wording was generally well understood, although the words 'at school' at the end implied that we were only interested in sports they could undertake on the school site.

¹ This will need to be handled slightly differently if the new questions are also included in the main Taking Part 11-15 Year Old Child Survey, as the 'in school/during your spare time' distinction will have already been introduced earlier in the interview.

Some respondents mentioned sports that they had already said their school had offered in the past 12 months at Q1. When researchers probed to find out the causes of these apparent inconsistencies, there appeared to be possible valid reasons for mentioning the same sport at both Q1 and Q2. For example, one child said he had mentioned dodgeball at Q1 as he had done it as a 'one-off' during a lesson in the past 12 months. He mentioned it at Q2 as it is something he would like to do again. Another child mentioned football at both Q1 and Q2 and on further examination explained that this was because football is played in PE lessons by those who are not included in sports teams for rugby and hockey, but there is no school team for this (it isn't played competitively) and he would like a school team. Finally, one girl said she mentioned athletics at both Q1 and Q2, as they only do athletics occasionally and tend to focus on one type of event. She wanted to try other events and do athletics more often.

Recommendations

We suggest dropping the words 'at school' at the end of the question so that respondents do not just think about sports they could do on their school site.

A decision needs to be made whether to allow respondents to mention the same sports at both Q1 and Q2 and if so, under what circumstances. For example, checks could be built into the script to highlight if the same sport was mentioned at both questions to allow the interviewer to probe whether there was a valid reason for this (according to the rules we supply them with), and if not, they could amend the answers coded accordingly. Alternatively, rather than leaving the decision to the interviewer, a follow-up question with pre-coded answers and an 'other – specify' could be included if respondents mentioned the same sports at both Q1 and Q2 to capture the reasons for this.

Specialist Sports Coaching

Questions Tested

Finally, all respondents were asked whether they had received specialist sports coaching from external coaches or specialist sports teachers arranged by their school during the last 12 months. If they said 'yes' they were asked whether this was from an external coach, a specialist sports teacher or both. All respondents were told that 'external coach or specialist sports teacher' meant someone other than a teacher at their school. Respondents were quizzed on their understanding of the terms 'specialist sports coaching from external coaches' and 'specialist sports coaching from specialist sports teachers'.

Researchers probed to try to assess whether children were able to distinguish between specialist coaches, specialist sports teachers and supply teachers, and also to see whether children were thinking of coaching both on and off the school site and both part of a regular lesson or a separate session.

Findings

Respondents appeared to be aware of whether or not they had received specialist sports coaching from an external coach or specialist sports teacher (who was not a teacher at their school). On probing, it seemed clear that there would be no confusion with supply teachers as they are told when they are given a supplier teacher (for example when their regular teacher is ill or away in training) and supply teachers 'turn up in normal clothes', 'have a piece of paper telling them what to do' and 'just tell the children to get on and play an easy game such as football and don't teach/coach them'.

However, respondents did not appear to be able to correctly distinguish between external coaches and specialist sports teachers. This was not apparent initially when they were asked who they received the specialist sports coaching from, as most responded with either code 1 'external coach' or code 2 'specialist sports teacher'. Yet on further probing of their understanding of these terms it became apparent that there was possible confusion. Their descriptions of an external coach and those of a specialist sports teacher indicated very little, or no distinction between the two. Descriptions of an external coach included: 'a professional or semi-professional team coach', 'someone who only does that sport', 'someone who doesn't work in a school' and 'someone that is better than a PE teacher'. Their descriptions of a specialist sports teacher included: 'someone who just teaches certain skills like a goalkeeper coach or a bowling coach', 'they would be stricter than a coach and more teacher-like', 'coaching from someone not enrolled by the school but who has a talent or qualification to come in and coach a particular sport' and 'a trained specialist in the subject'.

One respondent said that some non-PE teachers at his school taught specialist sports such as water polo or golf and these were not qualified coaches but were 'better at the sport than the PE teachers' as, for example, they had played the sport at university. The respondent did not include these teachers as 'specialist sports teachers', given the instruction in the question wording: 'By an external coach or specialist teacher I mean someone other than one of the teachers at your school.'

Some respondents appeared to think about coaching both on and off the school site and both during school lessons and separate sessions, others possibly did not.

Recommendations

Given the confusion surrounding the distinction between external coaches and specialist sports teachers we suggest amending the question so that we simply record whether or not specialist sports coaching has been received and don't ask who gave the coaching.

We could also change the two 'if necessary' explanations of including coaching both on and off site and both during and outside of regular lessons to 'read out to all', to ensure comparability of responses.

3. Questionnaire

Good morning/afternoon. My name is [_____] and I am working on behalf of TNS BMRB.

We are currently testing some questions we have developed for an important survey for the Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) and the Department for Education (DfE) and we are offering £10 cash for everyone who takes part.

I'd be grateful if you could help me. Are you happy to help?

Please be assured that in accordance with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct, all your answers would be treated in the strictest of confidence.

PLEASE CHECK THE AGE OF THE RESPONDENT (THEY MUST BE 11-15 YEARS OLD) AND CHECK THAT THEY ATTEND SECONDARY SCHOOL (YEARS 7 TO 11).

If asked: the type of questions we will be asking are about sports that are offered at school.

INTERVIEWER: PLEASE GAIN INFORMED CONSENT FROM PARENT AND ASK THEM TO SIGN PARENTAL CONSENT FORM, BEFORE CHECKING WITH THE CHILD THAT THEY ARE HAPPY TO TAKE PART IN THE SURVEY.

Question 1

I would like you to think about the last 12 months at your secondary school...

IF NECESSARY: If you have been at secondary school for less than 12 months just think about your time at secondary school.

IF NECESSARY, SHOW THE LIFE EVENTS CALENDAR TO HELP WITH THE TIMEFRAME.

Which of these sports has your school offered?

- a) During school lessons
- b) Out of school hours

It does not matter if you played the sports or not or if they were only offered to girls or boys or certain age groups, I would like to know ALL of the sports which were offered.

IF NECESSARY: Out of school hours includes school breaks and lunchtimes, before or after school on weekdays, at weekends or during the holidays.

INTERVIEWER: HAND RESPONDENT THE YELLOW SPORTS PROMPT PACK AND ASK THEM TO READ OUT THE NUMBER NEXT TO EACH SPORT OFFERED. YOU MAY CODE UP TO 3 'OTHER' SPORTS

CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

INTERVIEWER: 'PROMPT ANYTHING ELSE' AFTER EACH ACTIVITY.

INTERVIEWER NOTE: DO NOT INCLUDE HOBBIES SUCH AS CAMPING, DANCING, GARDENING, BIRDWATCHING, PHOTOGRAPHY ETC AT THIS QUESTION.

1. Football (include five-a-side)
2. Netball
3. Hockey (include unihoc but not ice, roller and street hockey)
4. Cricket (include kwik cricket, soft-ball cricket)
5. Rugby (include League, Union, touch rugby or new image rugby)
6. Rounders
7. Basketball (include mini-basketball)
8. Volleyball (include mini-volleyball)
9. Baseball or softball
10. Dodgeball
11. Tennis (include racquet ball, short tennis, swingball)

12. Badminton and other shuttlecock games
13. Table tennis
14. Golf, putting, pitch and putt
15. Tenpin bowling
16. Snooker, pool or billiards
17. Darts
18. Swimming, diving or lifesaving
19. Cross country, jogging or road running
20. Athletics – track and field events, running races or jumping
21. Gym, gymnastics, trampolining or climbing frame
22. Other game skills (e.g. hoops, hopscotch, throwing and catching, bean bags, frisbee)
23. Aerobics, keep fit (include skipping, dance exercise, exercise bike)
24. Weight-training
25. Martial arts – Judo, Karate, Taekwando and other Martial Arts
26. Boxing or wrestling
27. Ice skating
28. Roller skating/blading or skate boarding
29. Orienteering
30. Walking (only include walking non-stop for more than 30 minutes for leisure purposes) or hiking
31. Climbing (include indoor climbing), abseiling or potholing
32. Cycling or riding a bike (include BMX and mountain biking)
33. Horse riding or pony trekking
34. Rowing or canoeing
35. Angling or fishing
36. Any other sports such as American Football, Squash (include mini-squash), Lacrosse, bowls (carpet, lawn etc), street, ice or roller hockey, yoga or pilates skiing (on snow or on artificial surface; on slopes or grass), fencing, motor-sports or karting, waterskiing, sailing, windsurfing or boardsailing (OTHER SPECIFY 1)
37. Any other sport 2 (SPECIFY)
38. Any other sport 3(SPECIFY)
40. None of these
- 1. Don't know
- 2. Refused

Suggested Q1 probes:

- **What do you think we mean by “during school lessons”? – check: do they exclude after-school clubs, school sports teams, extra-curricular activities arranged by the school, etc.?**
- **What do you think we mean by “out of school hours”? – check: do they include activities organised by the school, but done outside of normal school lessons in this?**
- **What time period is the respondent thinking of? Calendar year? School year?**
- **Is the respondent just answering in terms of sports offered by their *secondary school* if they have been at secondary school for less than 12 months?**
- **Check for understanding of the term “secondary school”? Do they understand this to mean Years 7 to 11?**
- **Check for understanding of the term “offered” – what do you think we mean by the term “offered”?**
- **Is child thinking of just sports they have been offered personally? Have they included sports offered to other children in their year and sports that might have been offered to children of other ages in their school?**
- **Is the child only including sports which they or others have *done* as opposed to all sports *offered*?**
- **How easy or difficult is it to think of all of the sports that the school offers? Do children know which sports other classes or age groups do?**
- **Are there different sports taught outside of school lessons compared to those taught in PE and Games lessons? i.e. are there specialist sports clubs available that are not taught in proper lessons?**
- **Are there any sports that your school offers/teaches, which are not included in this list?**

Question 2

Are there sports not offered by your school that you would like to do at school?

IF NECESSARY: This could be either during school lessons or out of school hours including school breaks and lunchtimes, before or after school on weekdays, at weekends or during the holidays.

INTERVIEWER: HAND RESPONDENT THE YELLOW SPORTS PROMPT PACK AND ASK THEM TO READ OUT THE NUMBER NEXT TO EACH SPORT THEY WOULD LIKE TO DO AT SCHOOL. YOU MAY CODE UP TO 3 'OTHER' SPORTS CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

INTERVIEWER: 'PROMPT ANYTHING ELSE' AFTER EACH ACTIVITY.

INTERVIEWER NOTE: DO NOT INCLUDE HOBBIES SUCH AS CAMPING, DANCING, GARDENING, BIRDWATCHING, PHOTOGRAPHY ETC AT THIS QUESTION.

1. Football (include five-a-side)
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11. Tennis (include racquet ball, short tennis, swingball)
12. Badminton and other shuttlecock games
13. Table tennis
14. Golf, putting, pitch and putt
15. Tenpin bowling
16. Snooker, pool or billiards
17. Darts
18. Swimming, diving or lifesaving
19. Cross country, jogging or road running
20. Athletics – track and field events, running races or jumping
21. Gym, gymnastics, trampolining or climbing frame

22. Other game skills (e.g. hoops, hopscotch, throwing and catching, bean bags, frisbee)
23. Aerobics, keep fit (include skipping, dance exercise, exercise bike)
24. Weight-training
25. Martial arts – Judo, Karate, Taekwando and other Martial Arts
26. Boxing or wrestling
27. Ice skating
28. Roller skating/blading or skate boarding
29. Orienteering
30. Walking (only include walking non-stop for more than 30 minutes for leisure purposes) or hiking
31. Climbing (include indoor climbing), abseiling or potholing
32. Cycling or riding a bike (include BMX and mountain biking)
33. Horse riding or pony trekking
34. Rowing or canoeing
35. Angling or fishing
36. Any other sports such as American Football, Squash (include mini-squash), Lacrosse, bowls (carpet, lawn etc), street, ice or roller hockey, yoga or pilates skiing (on snow or on artificial surface; on slopes or grass), fencing, motor-sports or karting, waterskiing, sailing, windsurfing or boardsailing (OTHER SPECIFY 1)
37. Any other sport 2 (SPECIFY)
38. Any other sport 3(SPECIFY)
40. None of these
- 1. Don't know
- 2. Refused

Suggested Q2 probes:

- **What do they think we mean by the term “not offered by your school”?**
- **Were they thinking about just school lessons or sports that they would like to do out of school hours including school breaks and lunchtimes, before or after school on weekdays, at weekends or during the holidays, or were they thinking of both during and out of school lessons?**

Question 3

Again, I would like you to think about the last 12 months at secondary school...

IF NECESSARY: If you have been at secondary school for less than 12 months just think about your time at secondary school.

IF NECESSARY SHOW THE LIFE EVENTS CALENDAR TO HELP WITH THE TIMEFRAME.

Have you received specialist sports coaching from external coaches or specialist sports teachers arranged by your school? By an external coach or specialist teacher I mean someone other than one of the teachers at your school.

IF NECESSARY: The coaching may have been on or off the school site but it must have been arranged by your school.

IF NECESSARY: It might have been part of a regular lesson or a separate session.

WE WILL PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION TO INTERVIEWERS ON SCREEN: External specialist sport coaches are recognised, qualified coaches with expertise in particular sports. Specialist sports teachers are teachers with expertise in a particular sport and are not a teacher at the school. Coaching may happen on or off school sites, but for the purposes of the question we're looking for coaching *arranged* through school. The coaching may have been part of a regular lesson or a separate session.

IF 'YES' ASK: Who did you receive the specialist sports coaching from?

1. An external coach
 2. A specialist sports teacher
 3. Both an external coach and a specialist sports teacher
 4. Not sure if external coach or specialist sports teacher
 5. No – have not received specialist sports coaching
- 1. Don't know
- 2. Refused

Suggested Q3 probes:

- **What do they think we mean by the term “specialist sports coaching from external coaches”?**
- **What do they think we mean by the term “specialist sports coaching from specialist sports teachers”?**
- **Are they able to make the distinction between external coaches and teachers?**
- **Are they able to make the distinction between specialist sports teachers, supply teachers and teachers at their school?**
- **Do they distinguish between sports/PE teachers and other teachers in their school who may coach/teach some sports or PE lessons?**
- **Did they include coaching both on and off the school site?**
- **Were they thinking about coaching in school lessons or coaching out of school hours (including school breaks and lunchtimes, before or after school on weekdays, at weekends or during the holidays) or were they thinking of both during and out of school lessons?**

INTERVIEWER: PLEASE GIVE PARENT £10 TO PASS ONTO CHILD FOR TAKING PART IN SURVEY AND ASK THEM TO SIGN RECEIPT