

## Common practice

*f* Once surveyor provide transitional statements to give a conversational help the respondents to follow the shift from one topic to the next. This the questionnaire as a “coherent whole.”

naire should be asked using a standardized format for both question and answers that can be readily compared and that the child can produce reliably.

single

At the same time, a “multi-question approach” lengthens the questionnaire, which can lead to non-response, so consider the right amount of these.

- f* In order to ensure good measurement, unless measuring the knowledge is the goal of the question, all respondents should have access to the information needed to answer the question from their experience. What constitutes an adequate answer should be consistently communicated.
- f* Try to avoid strong negative words (forbid, ban, restrain, oppose).
- f* Try to avoid a long list of response choices in order not to confuse respondents.
- f* Overall, lengthy questionnaires should also be avoided when children are participants. It can be tiring and lower the response rates or even affect the accuracy of the answers.

### Questions to consider

After a pilot test, why are some questions not answered? Are all response options used appropriately? Do some answers suggest response biases that could be corrected? How long does the questionnaire take to complete? Did all respondents understand what they were meant to do? Are all the questions really needed? What exactly is being measured with each question and how will the data be analysed?

When constructing a survey questionnaire, ask yourself three questions: (1) Can the respondent understand the questions? (2) Is the respondent able to answer the questions? (3) Is the respondent willing to answer the questions? Be cautious of using common words/expressions. To the question: “What proportion of your evening viewing time do you spend watching news programmes?”, Belson (1981) found in his research that only one-quarter of respondents interpreted “proportion” as a “part”, “fraction”, or “percentage”. About one-third saw it as quantitative such as “how long”, “how many hours”, or “how often”. A larger group tapped other dimensions entirely such as “when they watch”, “which programmes”, or “which channels”. Therefore, it is important to avoid such common words or to try to be as specific with what you mean to ask.

### An example of the importance of pilot testing

Mainly because of budget and time constraints our questionnaire was designed and piloted in the country of residence of the researcher (Belgium) instead of in the country where the data collection had to take place (Chile). Moreover, the questionnaire was piloted with 1st year bachelor students instead of with school children (the actual sample population). As a consequence, the English pilot questionnaire was not really useful in revealing essential problems such as language issues present in the Spanish version. Moreover, and probably due to the