

Surveys' Emphasis on LSSSE

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In this session we will discuss using surveys for research and assessment, including considering how surveys may fit into a multi-method approach to research and assessment. We will draw on two existing surveys, the Law School Survey of Student Engagement (LSSSE) and the last iteration of the After the JD survey (AJD). LSSSE is aimed at currently-enrolled law students and their experiences and activities in law school, while AJD is focused on the post-graduation career paths of law school graduates. These surveys are available at <http://lssse.indiana.edu/pdf/2015/2015%20LSSSE%20Survey.pdf> (LSSSE survey) and at <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/35480> (follow the link at "Dataset(s): After the JD, Wave 3: A Longitudinal Study of Careers in Transition, 2012-2013, United States: Documentation: Questionnaire.pdf)(AJD Wave 3 survey). If possible, please take some time to read through them before our session so that we can use them substantively in our discussion.

We will use as our focus in the session the task of assessing experiential legal education, using the LSSSE and AJD surveys. We will identify existing LSSSE and AJD survey questions relevant to assessing experiential education, and discuss the kind of information that these will produce. In addition, we will discuss when and why additional methods of research would be helpful, and participants in this session on surveys may also want to attend the session on interviews and focus groups.

In addition, we plan to address the following questions:

- Are there basic conditions for surveys to be an appropriate research method?
- What sort of information can be expected from using a survey? What questions can surveys answer (and not answer)?
- What makes a survey question valid?
- Besides substantively-focused questions, should surveys also include questions about the demographic characteristics of respondents? Relatedly, how important is anonymity, and how does that implicate the use of additional research methods?
- What are some basic approaches to analyzing survey data about law students and law schools?