Introduction: The purpose of this presentation is to describe the psychometrics and lessons learned in using a modified Delphi method with Internet based survey tools to gain consensus in a Quality & Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) study partially funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The Delphi method is a reputable survey process that uses a structured series of questionnaires to achieve consensus among a geographically dispersed panel of experts. The traditional process of posted mail has become increasingly expensive, labor-intensive, and time-consuming. With some ingenuity, Web-based survey tools like SurveyMonkey can transcend these issues to allow survey submission online, facilitating immediate collection and organization of responses.

Method(s): In three rounds, QSEN subject matter experts leveled 162 questions (51 knowledge, 65 skill, and 46 attitude elements) in the nursing competencies of patient-centered care,
teamwork & collaboration, evidence-based practice, quality improvement, safety, and informatics. The specific descriptions of each competency required drop-down menu responses (Beginning phase, Intermediate phase, Advanced phase) to the two-part questions "Where should this competency first be introduced in the curriculum?" and "Where should this competency be emphasized in the curriculum?". In rounds 2 and 3, the menus included results from the previous rounds so that participants could consider the collective responses (by percentage) before making subsequent selections.

Results: Eighteen respondents of 29 eligible QSEN experts from 16 states achieved a two-thirds majority or higher consensus within 3 planned rounds for 152 of 162 questions (94%). The remaining 10 questions (6%) achieved at least a simple majority. All 3 rounds were completed in 3 to 6 week segments between mid October 2008 and late February 2009.

Discussion & Conclusions: The flexible online survey development tool required adaptations to manage the unique paired responses and reporting needs of this 3-round Delphi method survey. Using the complex QSEN study, the presenter will demonstrate that online surveys can be adapted to support a successful Delphi method survey across a geographically diverse group of subject matter experts.

Abstract History: This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

Financial Disclosure: No, I (or a member of my immediate family) have not received something of value* from or own stock (or stock options) in a commercial company or institution related directly or indirectly to the subject of my presentation.

FDA Disclosure: I will not be describing any pharmaceutical and/or medical device.

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