

Data collection methods can be either qualitative or quantitative.

- Quantitative data is numeric data that can be counted to show how much change has occurred as a result of the program.
- Qualitative data is descriptive data used to capture the context around the outcomes of the program. Qualitative data is important in evaluations of programs that have contextual and external factors that may impact success—such as geography and population characteristics.

The table below provides an overview of these two types of data, highlighting their key differences.

<p>Quantitative data is numerical and can be counted, quantified, and mathematically analyzed.</p> <p><i>For example: The average number of adults served by an ESL program each month.</i></p>	<p>Qualitative data is used to describe the qualities or characteristics of a program or initiative. It is generally non-numerical.</p> <p><i>For example: Participant narratives about why they participate in a monthly support group.</i></p>
<p>Quantitative data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answers the questions “what,” “how many,” or “who” • Draws correlations between factors • capture less in-depth data on a larger number of study participants • Is best used in statistical methods to generalize to population (but requires random sample) • Generally, the only way to provide statistical evidence of program impact. • Is easy to present in tables and charts • Requires carefully designed metrics 	<p>Qualitative data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answers the questions “how” and “why” • Generate in-depth data on fewer study participants. Gains insight into experience, behavior, or beliefs • Represents the “voice” of the client • Does not generalize to the population • Is time-consuming to collect and analyze • May lead to answers for questions you didn’t think to ask • Results are typically not generalizable to a larger population and cannot provide statistical evidence of program impact
<p>Quantitative data collection methods include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program records • Pre-and post-tests • Surveys 	<p>Qualitative data collection methods include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis • Observations • Journals • Interviews • Focus groups

Source: <http://toolkit.pellinstitute.org/evaluation-101/quantitative-and-qualitative-data/>