



Evaluating Changes to the Health Insurance Questions in the Current Population Survey: State Implications

State Health Research and Policy Interest Group

Orlando, Florida

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- Co-authors
 - Brett Fried (SHADAC)
 - Joanne Pascale (Census Bureau)
 - Kathleen Call (SHADAC)
 - Michel Boudreaux (SHADAC)

Outline

- Background and implications for state policy research
- Overview of the Census Bureau field test
- Experimental health insurance coverage questions
- Next steps

Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS)

- Over 20 years of health insurance coverage estimates
- Estimates for all 50 states and the District of Columbia
- Survey of record for state and national health insurance policy

Policy Questions

- Gaps in coverage?
- Churning of coverage?
- Crowd-out?

Problematic CPS Questionnaire Features

1. Calendar year reference period
2. Questionnaire structure = “laundry list”
3. Household-level design

Source: Joanne Pascale (AAPOR, 2012)

Re-designed (Experimental) CPS

- Census Bureau test of a new approach to asking questions about health insurance coverage in the CPS
- Goals: Improve estimates of coverage and provide a richer set of measures
 - Calendar year
 - Point-in-time
 - Duration

Field Test of Experimental Questions

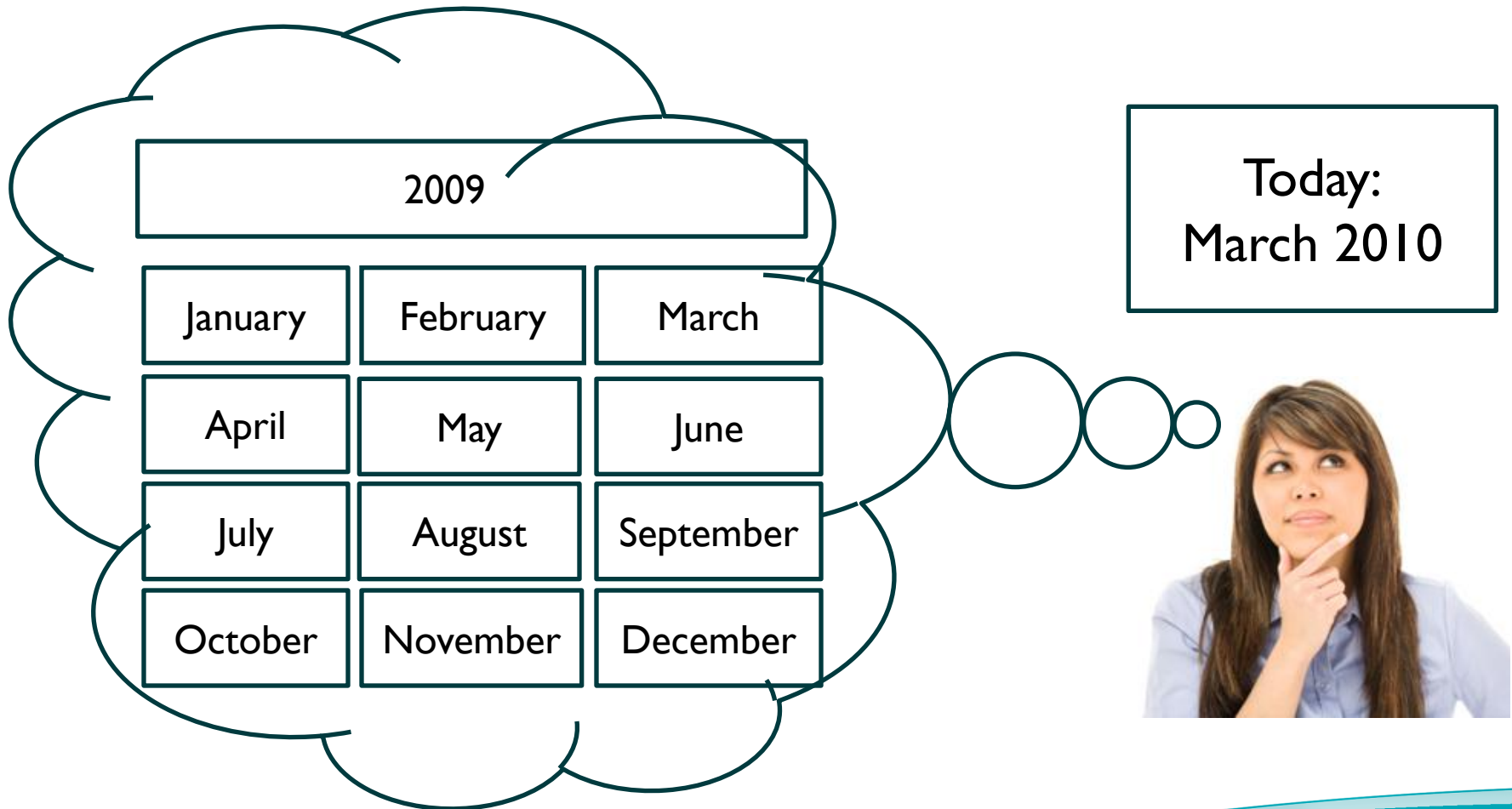
- After multiple rounds of testing, Census Bureau fielded in March 2010
- Field test of 5,000 households
- Administered using Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) instrument

Problematic CPS Questionnaire Features

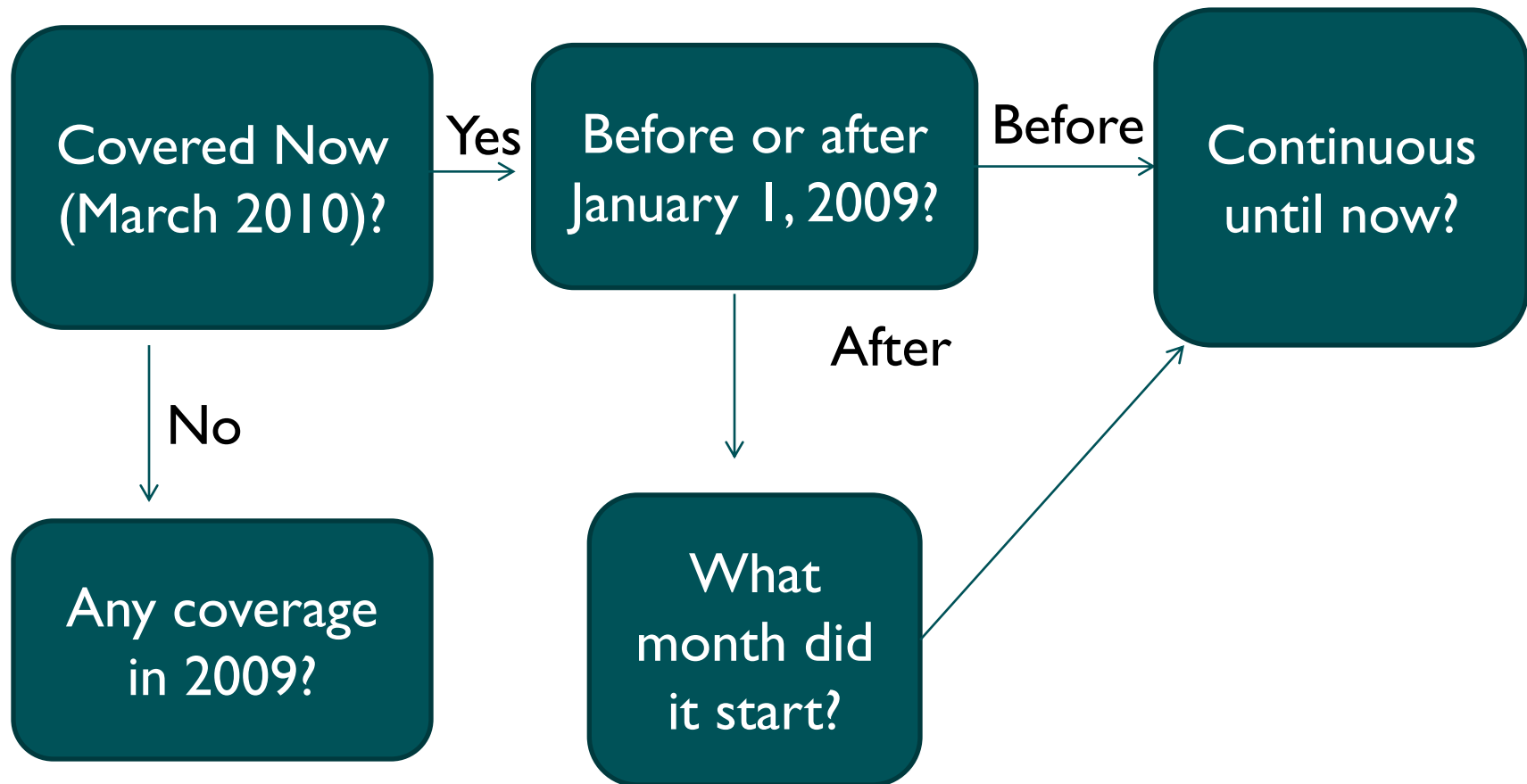
1. **Calendar year reference period**
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Source: Joanne Pascale (AAPOR, 2012)

CPS: Calendar year look-back



Experimental: Retrospective Health Insurance Questions

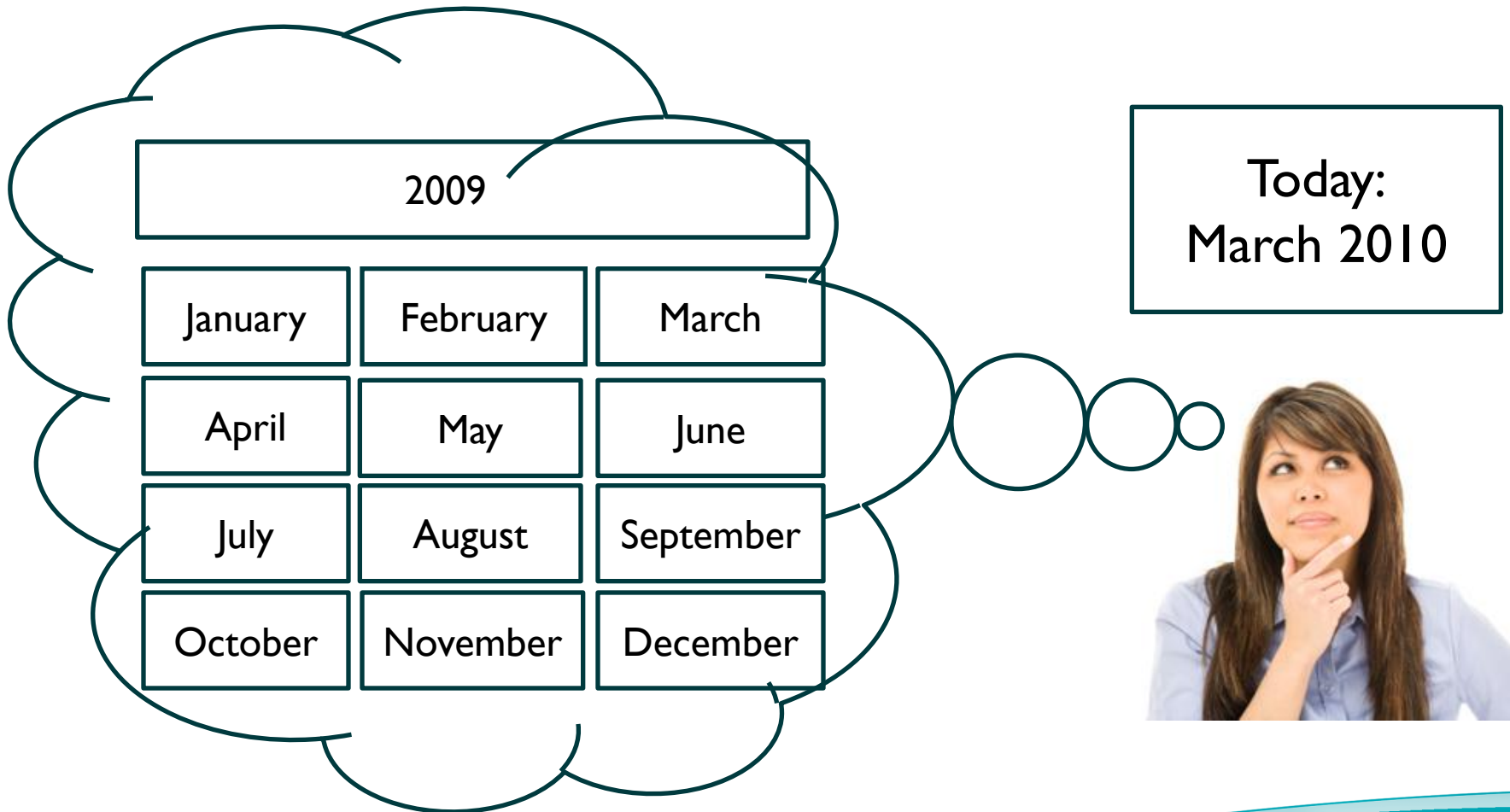


Coverage Scenario



- Had employer-based coverage, but lost job and unable to afford Cobra
- After being uninsured for a few months obtained Medicaid
- Got a new job and is currently covered by job

Coverage Scenario: Production CPS



Coverage Scenario: Production CPS

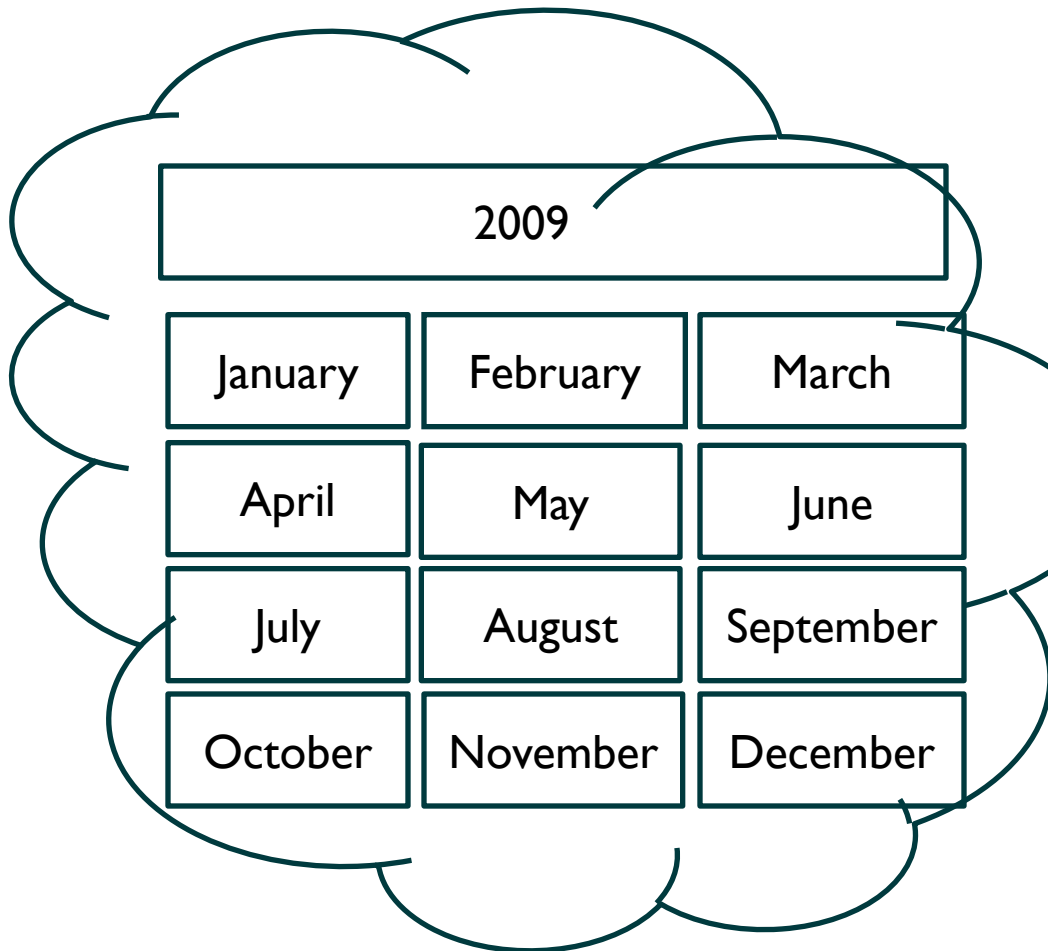
2009

Employer-based
and
Medicaid

Today:
March 2010



Coverage Scenario: Experimental CPS



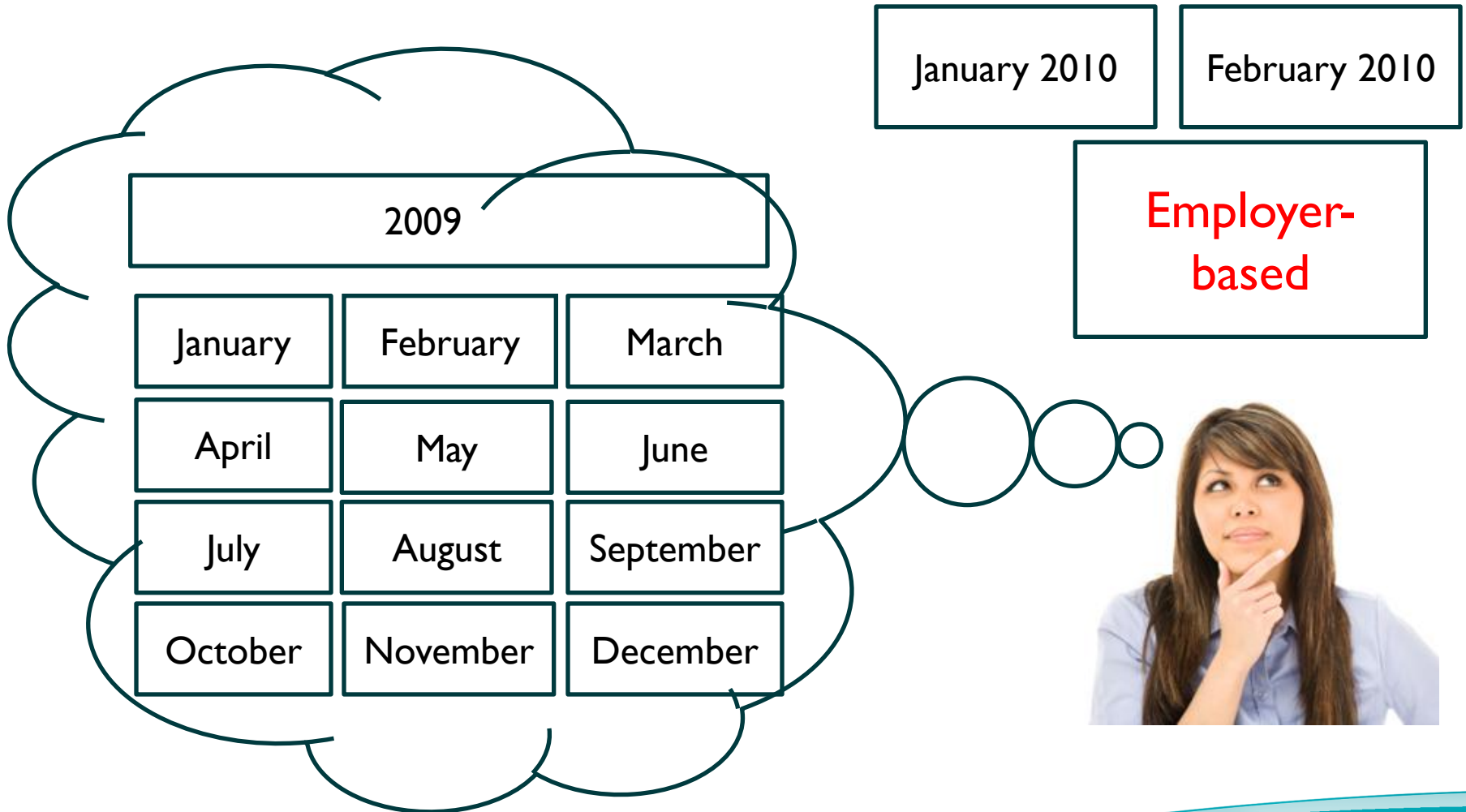
January 2010

February 2010

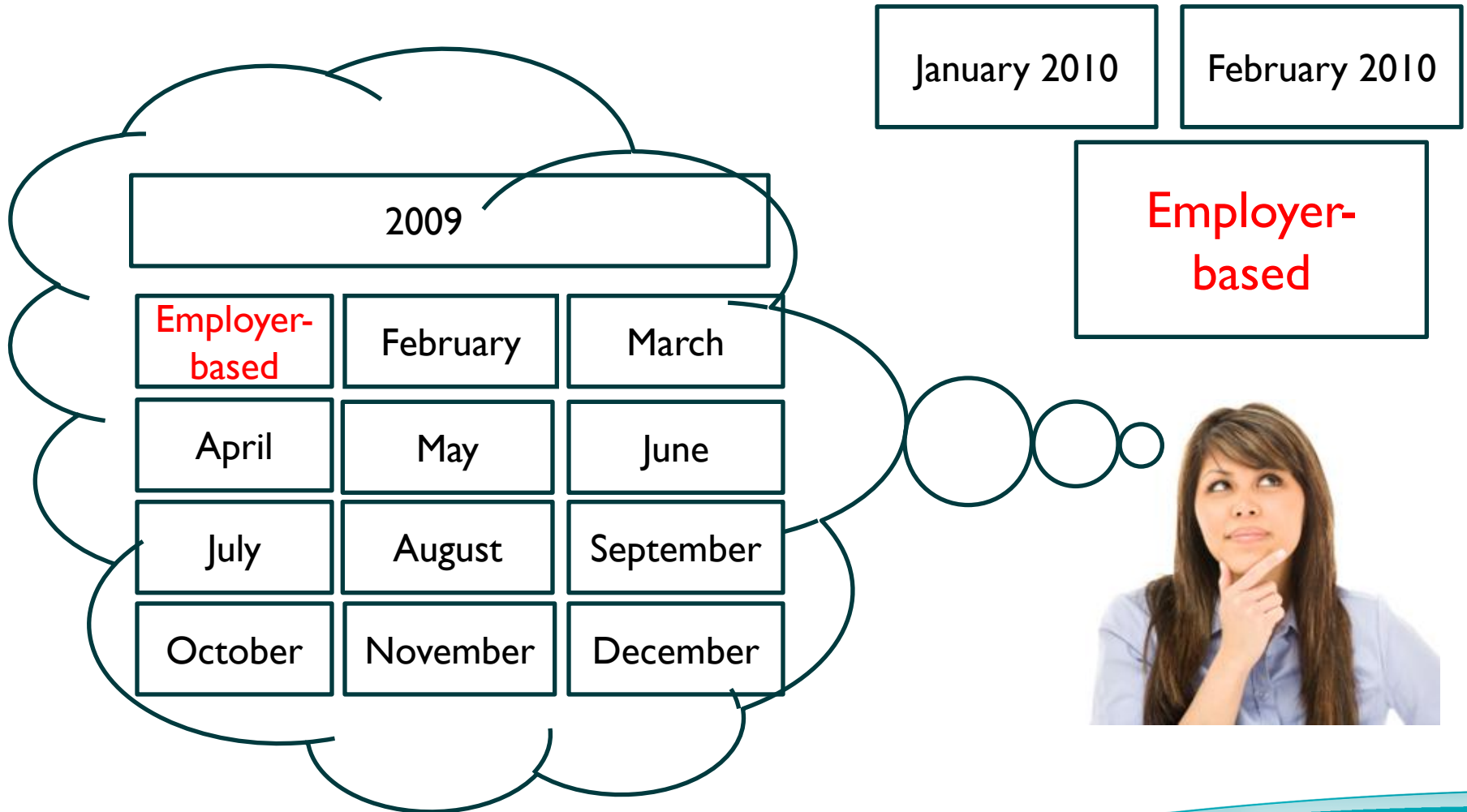
Today:
March 2010



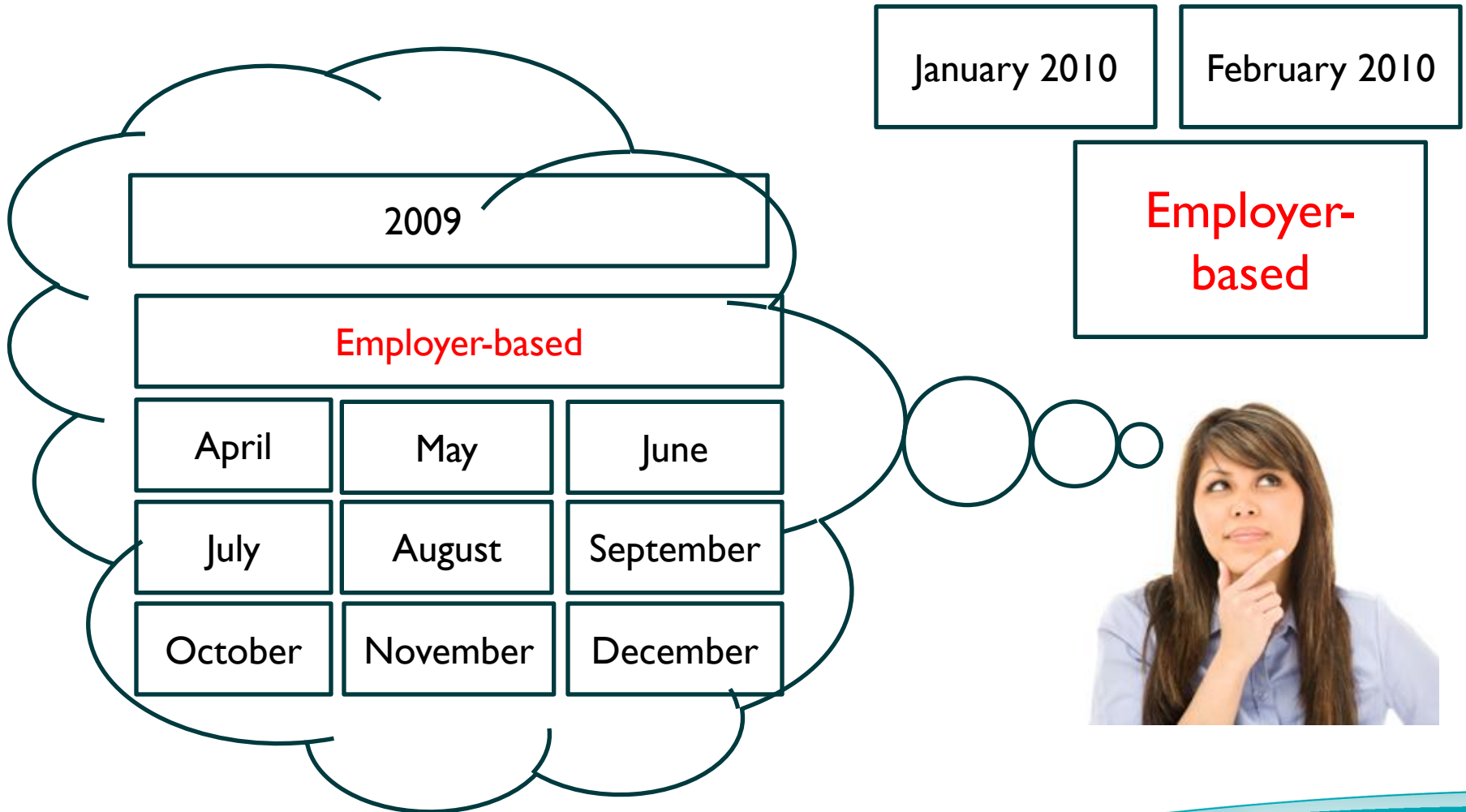
Coverage Scenario: Experimental CPS



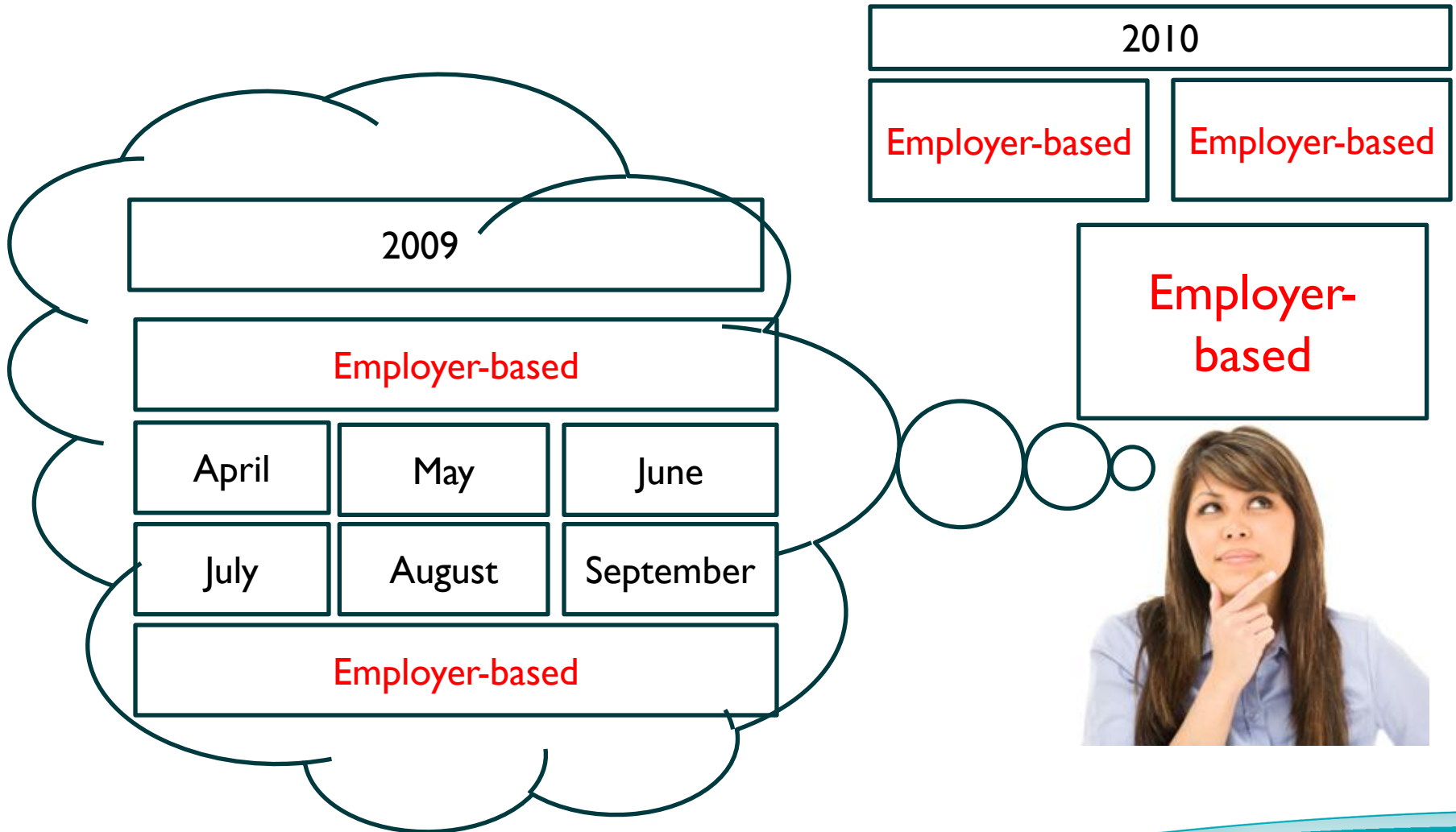
Coverage Scenario: Experimental CPS



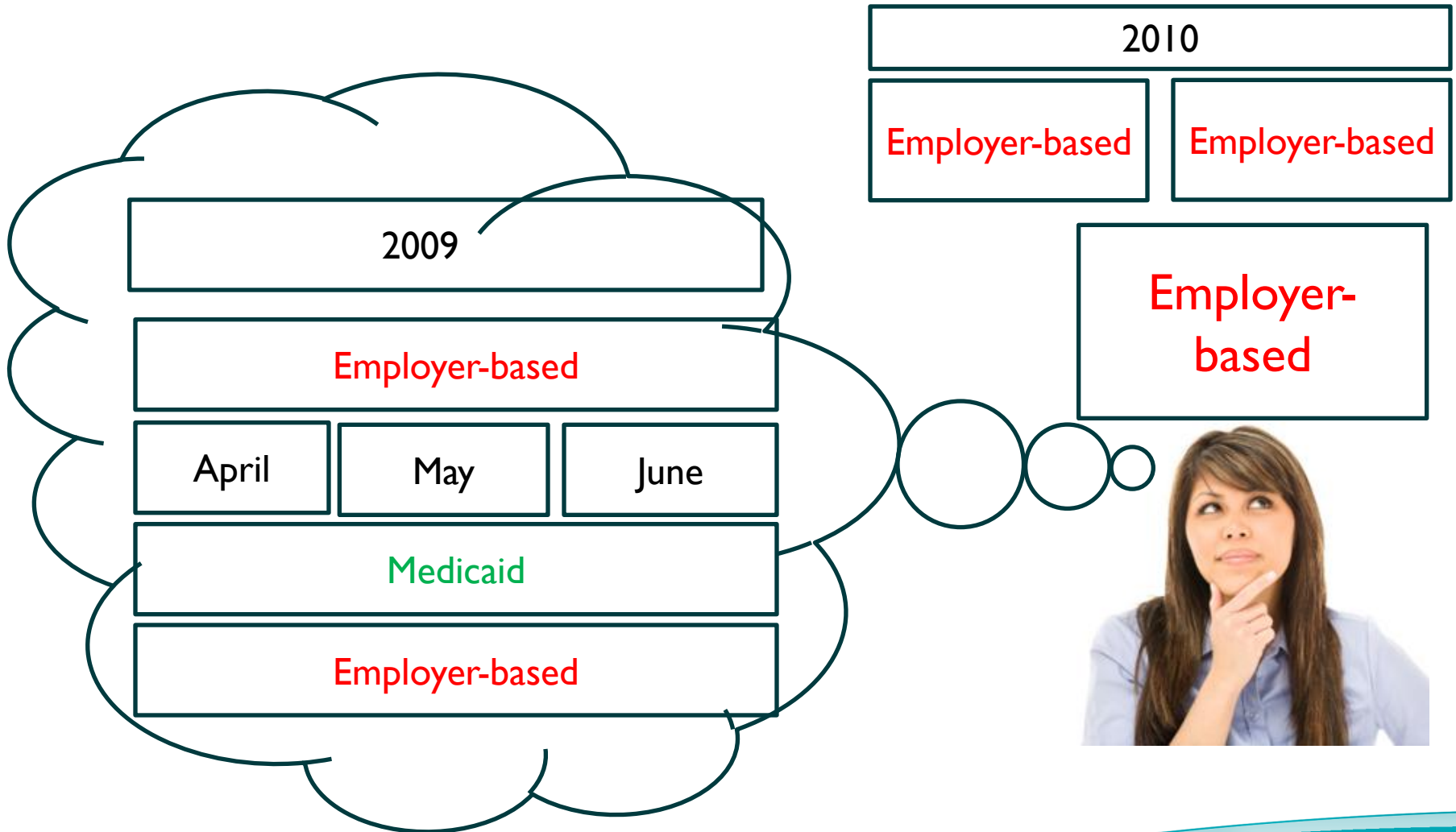
Coverage Scenario: Experimental CPS



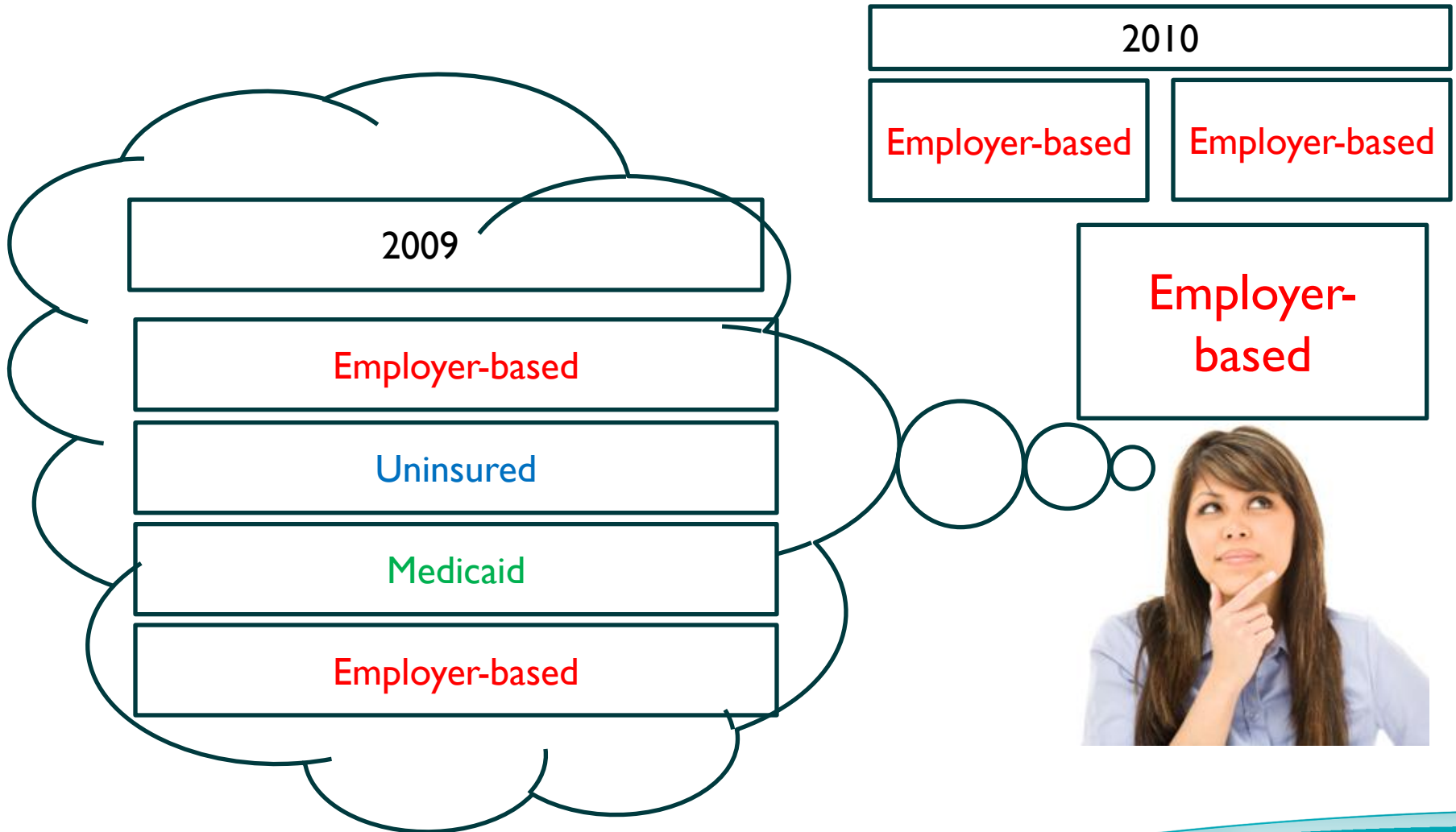
Coverage Scenario: Experimental CPS



Coverage Scenario: Experimental CPS



Coverage Scenario: Experimental CPS



Problematic CPS Questionnaire Features

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Source: Joanne Pascale (AAPOR, 2012)

CPS: Questionnaire Structure

- Each plan type is asked about sequentially
 - Plan through current/former employer or union
 - Plan purchased directly from insurance company
 - Plan of someone outside the HH
 - Medicare
 - Medicaid/state-specific plan name
 - CHIP/state-specific plan name
 - TRICARE, CHAMPVA, VA, military health care
 - Other [such as state-specific plan name]

Experimental: Questionnaire Structure

- Simplified questions
- Starts with yes/no question on coverage
- Drills down as needed to current CPS level of detail

Experimental: Questionnaire Structure

Any coverage now?
If 65+, Medicare now?

No

Yes

Medicaid, Medicaid Assistance,
CHIP?
Medicare?
State specific plan name?
Verification of uninsured

General source: job,
government or other?

Experimental: Questionnaire Structure

General source: job, government or other?

Job:

Military related?
...TRICARE, VA, Etc.

Government:

Job with government?
Government type?
Medicare
Medicaid, Medical
Assistance, CHIP
Military or VA
Other

Other:

Parent/spouse?
Direct
purchase?
Other?

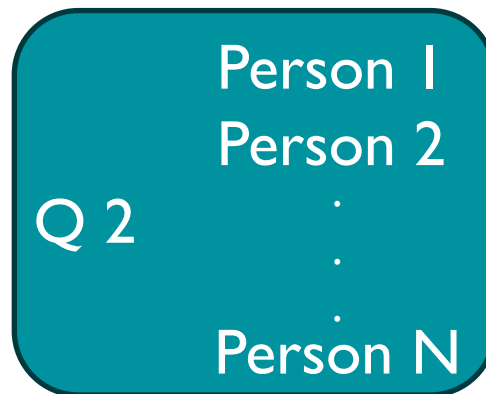
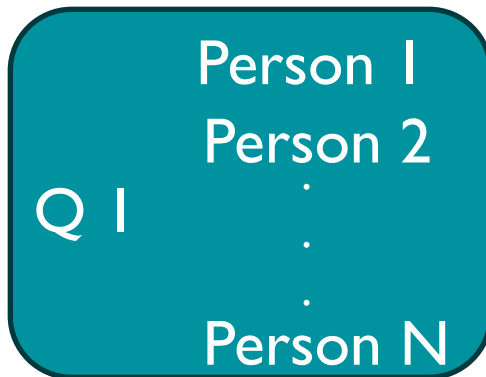
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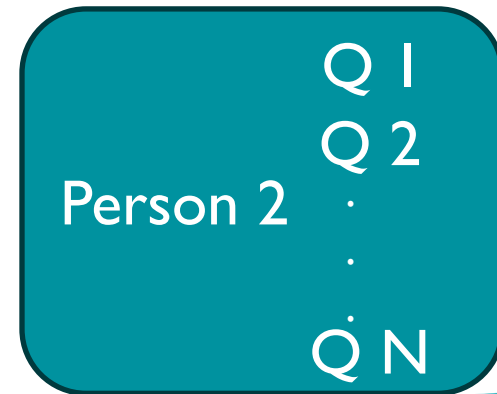
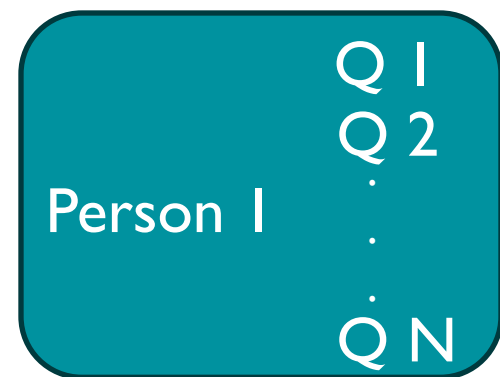
Source: Joanne Pascale (AAPOR, 2012)

Household-level vs. Person-level

- Household-level



Person-level



Conclusions and Next Steps

- 2010 field test shows proof of concept
- Census Bureau making improvements and full test in 2013
 - Larger sample, about 15,000 households
 - Evaluate in production environment
 - Also include health insurance exchange questions

Policy Questions

- Gaps in coverage?
- Churning of coverage?
- Crowd-out?

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