

# *Using Focus Groups to Assess Your Learning Community*

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# Workshop Overview

- Learning Outcomes
  - Participants will be aware of
    - process to develop a questioning route
    - components of a focus group
    - details associated with conducting a focus group

# Workshop Overview (cont.)

- Activities
  - Participants will
    - experience participating in a focus group
    - develop a component of a questioning route
    - review details related to implementing and moderating focus groups, analyzing data, and reporting findings
    - have opportunities to reflect on workshop content

Please tell us your name,  
position, and learning  
community affiliation.

(Opening Question)

**What is the first thing that  
comes to mind when you hear  
the word assessment?**

(Introductory Question)

**What kinds of resources assist  
you in assessing your learning  
community?**

(Key Question)

What has been the greatest  
challenge to assessing your  
learning community?

(Key Question)

**What assessment advice would  
you give to new learning  
community coordinators?**

(Ending Question)

# Reflection

- What did you notice about the start of the focus group?
- What did the moderator do during the focus group?
- Compare and contrast how the data was collected for the two key questions.

# Questioning Route

- Qualities of good questions
- Qualities of a good questioning route
- Categories of questions

# Questioning Route

- Good Questions
  - Sound conversational
  - Use words the participants would use when talking about the issue
  - Are easy to say
  - Are clear
  - Are usually short
  - Are usually open-ended
  - Are usually one-dimensional
  - Include clear, well-thought-out directions
- Good Questioning Route
  - Has an easy beginning
  - Is sequenced
  - Moves from general to specific
  - Uses time available wisely

# Categories of Questions

- Opening
- Introductory
- Transition
  - e.g., Think back to when you first heard about assessment, what were your first impressions?
- Key
- Ending

# Practice Developing a Portion of a Questioning Route

- You want to know more about your students' learning community experience. Working in groups of two or three, brainstorm one key question for each member of your working group. Assess your questions using the “Questioning Route” slide. Be prepared to share a question with the larger group.

# Focus Group Details Check- List

# Data Analysis

- Two or more individuals independently
  - Read the transcripts
  - Identify categories and themes
- Meet to reach an agreement on the overriding themes that emerged from the data
- Code categories and themes
- Identify illustrative quotes
- Develop draft summary
- Conduct membercheck

# Focus Group Resources

Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Morgan, D. L. (1997). *Focus groups as qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Morgan, D. L., & Krueger, R. A. (1998). *Focus group kit* (Vols. 1-6). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

# Follow-Up

- Workshop feedback
- Transcribe tape and enter comments
- Analyze data
- Conduct membercheck
- Send final summary

# Closing Go-Round

- What information presented today will you use in the assessment of your learning community?
- What aspect of focus groups do you need to learn more about?