



Students Assessing Teaching and Learning

Assessment support program
for Instructional Faculty, Academic and
Administrative Programs

How does the program work?

Invite SATAL students to collect confidential data on your classroom activities and courses

Give us a try!

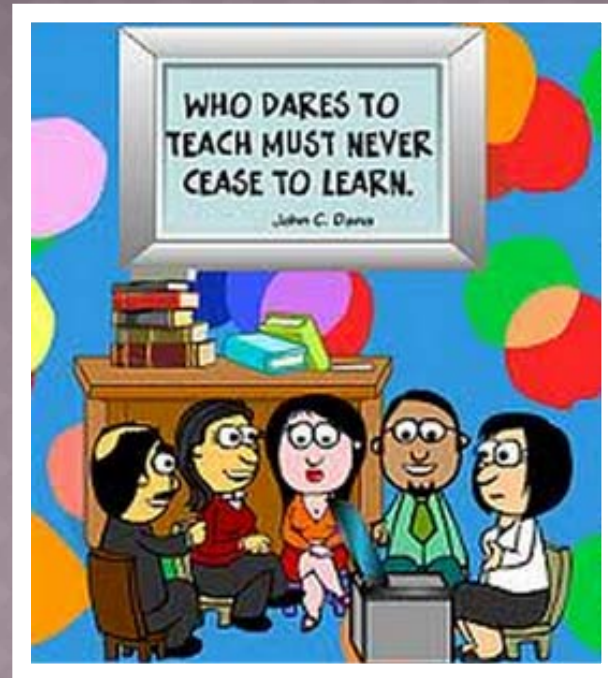
SATAL Options

- Class Interviewing
 - Focus Group
- Class Observation
- Class videotaping
- Mid-course Evaluations
- Entry/Exit Surveys



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FOCUS GROUP TRAINING



SATAL

INTRODUCTIONS



- ◎ What do you expect to get out of this meeting?
- ◎ What is your experience, if any, with focus groups?

TODAY'S OUTCOMES

- ◎ Identify in which situation a focus group session is the most appropriate tool
- ◎ Examine best practices
- ◎ Become familiar with focus group facilitation skills
- ◎ Draft focus group summary results



FOCUS GROUP DEFINITION

- ◎ A **focus group** is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea, or packaging. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members.

Watch this session and decide ...

- What is not working?

OUTLINE

- I. Preparing for Focus Group Sessions
- II. During the Focus Group Sessions
- III. After the Focus Group Sessions
- IV. Open Discussion



BEFORE THE FOCUS GROUP SESSION

◎ Plan ahead ...

■ Questions:

- Find out the purpose of the focus group
- Practice reading the questions aloud
- Discuss potential responses
- Set estimated time of completion by question

■ Resources:

- Get the digital recorders
- Make a room reservation
- Arrive 15 minutes before the session

■ Others:

- Decide on your role: note taker? facilitator?
- Arrange the participants in a circle and the recorders in the middle



DURING THE FOCUS GROUP

◎ Creating a comfortable environment:

- Welcome the participants (maybe learn their names)
- Start on time & smile
- Introduce yourself and the goal of the session
- Emphasize the confidentiality of the conversation.
- Check that the digital recorder is still on
- Invite participants with candy



DURING THE FOCUS GROUP

◎ Facilitating the session ...

- Introduce the questions without reading
- Show interest in the students' answers
- Ask for students' consensus on the responses
- Do not interrupt or ask for explanations about specific subject matter content
- Ask why/ in which way/ how questions & examples

DURING THE FOCUS GROUP

◎ For note takers ...

- Take down notes about the students' answers & keep consensus.
- Take notes of “students' comments” that catch your attention



AFTER THE SESSION

- ◎ Smile & thank the participants for coming
- ◎ Write down the total number of participants
- ◎ Download the recording from recorder to a computer
- ◎ Re- read and complete your notes right after the session.

FOCUS GROUP SCENARIO

- ◎ We are going to facilitate a focus group about how you all felt about this workshop training session. This will help you all get a feel for how a focus group should be carried out.

REPORT WRITING

- ◉ Look for participants' consensus - ideas most of them agree on
- ◉ Arrange the ideas into categories, if possible
- ◉ Arrange comments from highest to lowest level of agreement.
- ◉ Include participants' quotes (listen to participants)
- ◉ Draft report immediately after
- ◉ Avoid prescriptive, judgmental language
- ◉ Could you illustrate the data with graphs or tables?

Focus Group Report: Questionnaire Example

- **Part I: Demographic Information**

1. What's your class standing?
2. What's your major?

- **Part II: Self-assessment of Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Relative to when I started at UC Merced, my Appreciation of Human Differences has become

Much stronger	Stronger	No change	Weaker	Much weaker

Focus Group Report: Demographic Results (Table)

Part I: Demographic Information

1. Class standing	N=16	%
Junior	3	19
Senior	11	69
Graduate	2	13
1. Major	N=16	%
Management	4	25
Human Biology	3	19
Computer Science and Engineering	1	6
Sociology	1	6

Focus Group Report: Self-Assessment Results (Table)

Part II:

1. Appreciating Human Differences

N=16

%

Much stronger

9

56

Stronger

7

44

No change

0

0

Weaker

0

0

Much Weaker

0

0

1. a. If you indicate Much Stronger or Stronger, what project, position or involvement contributed to that increase?

(list of activities the students reported that helped with this outcome)



Focus Group Report: Summary (Questions)

- **III. Group Discussion focused on Self-Assessment.**

3. Now consider your self-assessment of the seven learning outcomes and identify those outcomes for which you rated your abilities as “No change,” “Weaker,” or “Much weaker.”

b. What might UC Merced do to increase student achievement of these seven Learning Outcomes?



Focus Group Report VI: Summary (Results)

“The majority of students agree that events need more variety in subject matter (11 or 69%). Some students stated that fliers may not be the right way to attract students to events (9 or 56%).

Some students also agree that the program offers the right amount of activities, but students would like to be reminded the day of the event (5 or 32%).”

Focus Group Report VII: Summary (Illustrative Comments)

Illustrative Comments

- *“I think when the instructor explains in office hours, she goes in depth and is more patient with me.”*
- **Insert direct quotes of student responses recorded during the focus group.**

Thank You

FOCUS GROUP MINUTE PAPER

- ◎ What were the three most important things you learned today?

- ◎ What questions do you still have about focus groups?

DURING THE FOCUS GROUP

- ◎ In pairs...
- ◎ Look for a video on focus group facilitation and identify three things you find relevant to share.
- ◎ Here are some titles...
 1. What makes a good focus group
 2. Overview of the Process of Conducting a Focus Group
 3. Focus Group Facilitation