Designing and Conducting Focus Groups

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DAY I: THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2014

9:00-9:45 a.m.
DEMONSTRATION FOCUS GROUP
◆ Preamble and Introductions
◆ Quantitative versus Quantitative Methods

9:45-10:10 a.m.
Uses of Focus Groups
◆ A social scientific approach to focus groups
◆ Maximum/minimum size of the groups
◆ Duration and timing
◆ How should focus groups be used in evaluation?
◆ Survey or focus groups? Focus groups, surveys, and other methods
◆ Advantages and disadvantages compared to other methods
◆ Triangulation
◆ Limitations, generalizability, and reliability
(10:10-10:30 a.m. Break)

10:30-12:30
Research Design Issues
◆ Ethical issues, technical issues, defining the purpose of research
◆ Key variables: Breaks and number of groups--The “Group Blueprint”
◆ Secondary variables (sampling and composition)
◆ Homogeneous vs. heterogeneous groups
◆ Recruitment and screening of participants

Teams Develop Research Design for DAY II Mock Focus Groups

Tasks: 1. Define the key research question
       2. Develop a research design
       3. Design a “group blueprint”
       4. Develop a screener
       5. Determine a recruitment strategy

NOTE: USE the “GUIDELINES FOR TEAM PROJECTS,” p. 87 of your manual, Steps 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5
12:30-2:00 p.m. **Lunch: Continue Teamwork on Research Designs and Questions**

2:00-4:00 p.m.

**Development of the Moderator's Guide (Protocol)**
- Refining the research question (outcomes/hypotheses)
  - Idea generation versus debate generation
- Opening procedures
- Principles for structuring the guide: avoid....
- Closure questions

*Teams Develop Research Designs and Moderator’s Guides*

(3:00-3:20 p.m. **Break**)

4:00-4:45 p.m.

**Moderation Theory and Techniques I**
- Communication in the interview
  - Complexities of interaction
  - Enhancing participation
  - Probing, listening
- Time management and staying focused: ensuring even coverage of questions
  - What to do when a question has been answered in a previous question
  - Non-verbal cues
- Moderator as group leader
  - Content vs. Process
  - Task vs. Socio-Emotional
- Effective moderation: Facilitating toward even participation by balancing roles
  - Ineffective moderation
  - Effective moderation

4:45-5:30 p.m.

**FOCUS GROUP: TEAM I**  (3 moderators @ 10 minutes each)

**Processing Focus Group I--Special Issues:**
- Controlling dominants and dealing with difficult participants
- Single vs. co-moderators
- Working with various respondent types, organizations, consumer groups
- Incentives; note taking; recording; digital vs. conventional recorders
- Refreshments, atmosphere

*Note: Teams II and III work on moderator’s guides overnight, if necessary.*
DAY II: FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 2014

(8:30 a.m.-9:00 a.m.—optional)
Further review of team designs and questions (Optional)

9:00 a.m.-9:30 a.m.
Moderation Theory and Techniques II
♦  Coping with complex questions
♦  Deflecting questions about "facts"
♦  Avoiding politicization of the process
♦  Closure procedures
♦  Debriefing sessions

9:30-10:30 a.m.
FOCUS GROUP: TEAM II (4 moderators @ 10 minutes each)

Processing Focus Group II--Special Issue:
Advanced Moderation Strategies

(10:30-10:50 Break)

10:50-12:30
Data Analysis: Working with Qualitative Data
♦  Linking the guide to action/change
♦  Maintaining control of the data
♦  Focusing the data
♦  Using transcripts
♦  The place of quantitative data in focus groups
♦  Structuring, coding, blocking, reorganizing data: “The Structured Transcript”
  ♦    Using the word processor in qualitative data analysis
♦  Uses of computerized text data analyzers

12:30-2:00 p.m.  LUNCH

2:00-3:00 p.m.
FOCUS GROUP: TEAM III (4 moderators @ 10 minutes each)

Processing Focus Group III--Special Issue:
The “Perfect Brainstorm” and Conflict Management
DAY II, CONTINUED

3:00-3:30 p.m.
Report Preparation
  φ Making sense of “mountains of words”
  ♦ Giving feedback to colleagues, communities, clients, and beneficiaries
  φ Structuring the report
  φ Executive summaries vs. in-depth reports
  φ Highlights and recommendations/implications

3:30-3:50 p.m. Break

3:50-5:00 p.m.
Finalization of Individual Research Designs and Moderator Guides
Open Q&A
Wrap Up Focus Group

5:00-5:30 p.m.
IPDET Evaluations