

Valencia College

Title of Your Research Here:

A print version of this document will be provided at the facilitator training and it contains:

1. This overview
2. The Discussion Guide
3. The Participant Details Handout to be handed out at the end (copies will be provided)
4. A Notes Template for the write up of the report and for note-taking

\*\*Note: This guide is only for facilitators and notetakers (not for participants)

**Facilitator – Primary Role:** Introduce the purpose (i.e. program improvement – document aspects of the student/faculty/staff experience), set the ground rules (i.e. comments will not be linked to names), guide the conversation to cover the topic areas – delve deeper as appropriate (using questions like: “Tell me more about ...” “What might be an example of that...” “If another community member were to ask you about x, what would you tell them...?”) Take notes as possible, but maintain eye contact as clearly as possible. See related notes and reminders later in The Discussion Guide.

**Notetaker – Primary Role:** Listen. Take notes to include non-verbals and changes in tone – like sarcasm or humor – facilitators may not be able to capture that level of detail. At the very end ask any unanswered questions or questions regarding unexplored ideas at the invitation of the facilitator (we will not have time to break, confer, and reconvene the participants.) If the activity results in a product (like a map, writing on the board, or participant activities) take a cell phone photo. Document anything that assists in evaluation the participants’ thinking process, this include exchanges between participants like “I agree” or “I don’t see that.”

**Results and Intended Use** (to be completed by the project director or planning team): Briefly describe the ways the focus group data and the analysis discussion will fit within your timeline and your teams’ own plan for using the data that we will be gathering – connected to the goals for this initiative. We want to better tell the story of the partnerships – how data collection is being provided and then used within the initiatives at the college.

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**Background of Participants and Purpose of the Conversations:**

The participants are (i.e. students, employees, faculty, partners...) \_\_\_\_\_ of Valencia College who may or may not have (i.e. have knowledge/awareness of ...)

Participants are selected from (i.e. survey responses, enrollment...)

The (i.e. departments, divisions, committee...)

are conducting research to learn (type your purpose statement here)

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## Discussion Guide

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### Goals and Research Questions:

The goal of these focus groups is to get a better understanding of:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

### Research Questions:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

### Introduction:

- Begin on time and thank participants in advance for their time.
  - Introduce yourself and the role of any other notetakers in the room.
  - Discuss your role as the facilitator explaining the need for frank and honest feedback and that the information is confidential (ask participants to complete the waiver to audio record for accuracy of the data).
  - Explain aspects of the process telling why are we leading these conversations and what will happen with the information (i.e. to determine what will be used to start the conversations at Valencia College).
  - Stress that this is not an evaluation of individuals or processes at the college.
  - Include here any statement that must be read verbatim that defines an aspect of the research.
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### Establishing Context:

- **Their Perspective**  
Respondent Introduction (first name) and write on both sides of name card.
  1. Tell us about...? What do you believe...?
  2. How much...? What would you...?

### Objective #1

- **Document how participants ...** (see notes template for follow-up)
  3. What? When?
  4. How did ...?
  5. Do you know...?

### Objective #2

- **Reflect on the effectiveness of ...** (see notes template for follow-up)
  6. What is most important...?
  7. How helpful...? How did you feel...?
  8. What was your opinion before...? What did you experience...?
  9. When thinking about others at Valencia, how do you think they would...?
  10. What one word comes to mind when you think about...?

### Wrap Up

- **Any follow-up questions raised by notetakers...**
  - Ask if there is anything else they would like to add?
  - Give them "Participant Details Handout" (with pens)
  - Let them know they can leave after completing it and thank them for their time.

## Participant Details Handout

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### Title of Your Research Here Focus Groups

Please take a few minutes to share additional information about yourself that will be helpful in informing this work at Valencia College.

- What is your first name?
  
- List the roles you have had at Valencia. Include previous and current roles. (Include student or employee designations)
  
- How long have you been at Valencia? Designate length in each role . (i.e. 3 years student with 1 year workstudy, 2 years career staff)
  
- Did you take SLSI 122 The New Student Experience?  
If yes, which semester?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Fall 2014	<input type="checkbox"/> Spring 2015	<input type="checkbox"/> Summer 2015
<input type="checkbox"/> Fall 2015	<input type="checkbox"/> Spring 2016	<input type="checkbox"/> Summer 2016
<input type="checkbox"/> Fall 2016	<input type="checkbox"/> Spring 2017	<input type="checkbox"/> Summer 2017
<input type="checkbox"/> Fall 2017	<input type="checkbox"/> Spring 2018	<input type="checkbox"/> Summer 2018
  
- What is your program of study and desired major?
  
- What are your career/academic goals?
  
- Please check here if you are willing to have us contact you in the future: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- If so, please include the best e-mail account to reach you.

Please include any other comments that you wish to share, here...

Thank you for your time today.

## Notes Template (in Word)

**Document Their Responses**

1. Tell us about...? What do you believe...?
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2. How much...? What would you...?
  - How confident are they...? Any uncertainties?
3. What ? When ?
  - Did this remind them of...?
  - Do they tell how...?
4. How did ...?
  - What terms do they use?
  - Do they refer to ...?
5. Do you know...?
  - Any concrete? (We can...)
  - Any abstract? (Help with...)
6. What is most important...?
  - Was ... a factor? Was ... a factor?
  - What kind of expectations did they have? (I wanted to...)
7. How helpful...? How did you feel...?
  - What impact do they report that this had?
  -
8. What was your opinion before...? What did you experience...?
  - What did you take away from it?
  -
9. When thinking about others at Valencia, how do you think they would...?
  - Any differences reported?
  - Any barriers to...?
  - Any changes needed?
10. What one word comes to mind when you think about...?
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**Any overall themes and conclusions? Suggestions if we use these questions again?**

*Research questions to keep in mind:*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Afterwards:** If time permits discuss / debrief after the session. Capture any additional notes from the session and send all notes to the Assistant Director, Learning Assessment by email.