

## Five Steps for Conducting Focus Groups at Valencia

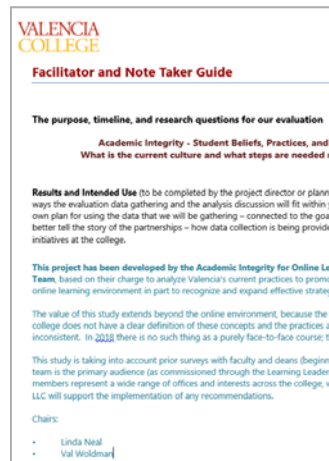
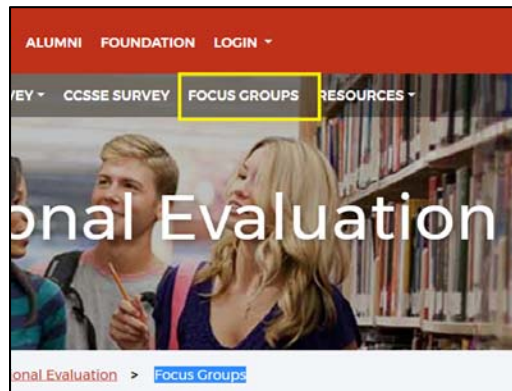
Updated 2-5-2019

1. Determine the purpose, audience, and timeframe
2. Develop the protocol template, tailor it to your topic
3. Identify key support using the list of trained facilitators / note takers for your campus
4. Handle logistics – schedule the rooms, invite the participants (tips below)
5. Use the notes and observations for analysis, discussion, and decision-making.

### Download and Use the Focus Group Guide / Protocol

(fill in the template and then use it to take notes)

[www.valenciacollege.edu/vie](http://www.valenciacollege.edu/vie)



Tips for handling logistics (ideal focus group size, 5-8 participants with maximum of 12).

- **Involve faculty:** Schedule times before or after specific classes where the faculty are interested in referring students to the focus group (even for extra credit).
- **Meet students where they are:** Schedule rooms near areas where students gather so you can invite walk-ins last minute to fill the group (Learning Support, Cafeteria).
- **Overbook:** Register 12 participants, and waitlist 12 more. Send reminders, and the day before let waitlisted students know that they should show up and will likely be admitted (2/3 of students do not arrive even when registered).
- **Incentivize:** Get funding for pizza or other enticing incentives to include in the subject line of the email invite ("snacks" and "t-shirts" do not motivate our students).

## Focus Group Communications - Example Text

1. Students should get a reminder (individualized if possible)
2. Students should get a “thank you” or “we missed you” note
3. Prior to the session facilitators / note takers should also get a reminder

### 1. Students should get a reminder (individualized if possible)

**From:** [your name]

**Sent:** Wednesday, October 31, 2018 11:59 AM

**To:** 'www@mail.valenciacollege.edu' <[www@mail.valenciacollege.edu](mailto:www@mail.valenciacollege.edu)>

**Subject:** This Friday - your focus group participation details - see you there

Good afternoon www,

I am so glad you will be able to join us for the conversation focus group this Friday. The discussion will be moderated by a trained student facilitator and I will be there to take notes. I am looking forward to meeting you in person, Professor \_\_\_\_\_ let me know you are interested. Here are the details:

- Friday November 2
- Osceola Campus Building 4-105
- 9:30 am to 10:30 am

You will want to arrive little earlier to sit down and sign in. You do not need to prepare in advance. Of course plan for parking, anything else that might delay you. I include a link to the campus maps below. Please send any questions my way,

Thank you, [your name]

[your name]

[title]

Valencia College

Campus maps and directions: <http://valenciacollege.edu/map/>

## 2. Students should get a “thank you” or “we missed you” note

### a. Thank you

**From:** [your name]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 7, 2018 10:31 AM  
**To:** 'www@mail.valenciacollege.edu' <www@mail.valenciacollege.edu>  
**Subject:** thank you --- RE: This Friday - your focus group participation details - see you there

Thank you \_\_\_\_\_ -

We learned a lot from you on Friday and I am really glad you joined the group.  
The faculty members will learn a great deal from the overall conversation.  
Best wishes for the rest of your semester - [your name]

[your name]  
[title]  
Valencia College

### b. We missed you [for students who did not show up]

**From:** [your name]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 7, 2018 10:25 AM  
**To:** 'xxx@mail.valenciacollege.edu' <xxx@mail.valenciacollege.edu>  
**Subject:** RE: This Tuesday (tomorrow) - your focus group participation details - see you there

We missed you yesterday – I hope all is well – best wishes, [your name]

[your name]  
[title]  
Valencia College

### 3. Prior to the session facilitators and note takers should get reminders

----- Original message -----

From [your name]

Date: 11/5/18 1:23 PM (GMT-05:00)

To: Jordan Barr <[yyyyy@valenciacollege.edu](mailto:yyyyy@valenciacollege.edu)>

Subject: See you Tuesday on East Campus - RE: Focus Group Facilitation

Hello again yyyyy,

We have a group of students scheduled and \_\_\_\_\_ will be your note taker. Here are the details, if anything has changed for you, let me know.

- o We meet at: 1:00 pm
- o Students arrive: 1:30 - 2:30 pm
- o Location: East Campus Bldg. 6-201

Attached you will find the final script / guide and I will send / bring the handouts and the pens for students. Please skim the script the day before, remember there are checklists included. You will want to bring your copy of this guide / script and a notepad and pen - or whatever else will help you. Here is my cell phone number in case you need to contact us the day of – \_\_\_\_\_. Please plan for parking and anything else that might delay you...

Thank you,

[your name]

[title]

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