My Focus Groups Are Complete, Now What?

June 17, 2014
UCSD Student Affairs Assessment

DISCLAIMER:

• There are many ways to analyze focus group data, this is one approach.
  – The approach described is for assessment-related focus groups ONLY.
Outcomes

At the end of the workshop, you will be able to
• List the 5-step focus group analysis process
• List 2 key principles of analyzing focus group data

Activity

By yourself
• Jot down your beliefs about candy and group activities

In small groups
• Step 1: Examine your candy. Jot down your initial thoughts questions, or observations.
• Step 2: Group the candy and label them.
• Step 3: Write brief descriptions of the labels.
• Step 4: Make note of patterns or relationships.
• Step 5: Hang your Post-it Paper.
Key Principles

• **Systematic**: Have a process and be able to describe it to others
• **Verifiable**: Leave a trail of evidence

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Be Systematic: The Analysis Process

1) Prepare to analyze
2) Get to know the data
3) Categorize data
4) Identify patterns, themes, connections
5) Synthesize & report findings
Prepare to analyze

- Collect materials: script, notes, sign-in sheets
- Develop a plan
- Review the original purpose of the focus group.
- Reflect on your role(s) and point(s) of view

Get to know the data

- Organize data by question and group
- Read, read, and reread
- Write down initial impressions
Example: Organizing Notes

STUDENT SUCCESS PROJECT DISCUSSION GROUP
4/1/2011 2:00pm-3:30pm

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

1. What has been your favorite class so far and why?
   A. New subject, passionate about it, interested in the subject.
   B. Study not just the language but also the culture.
   C. Prof teaches in an easy to understand way. He is always there to help and is humorous.
   D. Teacher was nice, encouraged using office hours, is humorous. Learned science & ethics, it was fun, showed Daily Show clips.
   E. TA is nice, explains things to help us understand. Didn't get to use microscopes in HS = = now we do!
   F. Learning something new. Teacher doesn't teach in western way - it's group discussion.

2. What kinds of hands-on activities do you like in your courses? (1 vote per person)
   A. We follow along lecture using lecture print out so we don't have to write everything down. Labs can be interesting. (0 votes)
   C. Apply theory to real life. (2 votes)
   D. Field work to help writing of research paper (1 vote)
   E. Field trip to zoo (3 votes)
   F. Field trip to taro field and see it in action

Example: Organizing Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4/01/20XX</th>
<th>4/01/20XX</th>
<th>4/01/20XX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator: XXX</td>
<td>Facilitator: XXX</td>
<td>Facilitator: XXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Facilitator: XXX</td>
<td>Co-Facilitator: XXX</td>
<td>Co-Facilitator: XXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) What kinds of hands-on activities do you like in your</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trip (300) 3 votes</td>
<td>Field trip (300). Complete worksheet to find the primates. Fun to go.</td>
<td>Outside class activities like to church or art museum. 4 votes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trip to taro field and see it in action</td>
<td>Go to cadaver lab</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Labs can be interesting.

Dissections. 3 votes.

Hands on experiments. 4 votes.

1 Question per sheet

UCSD Student Research and Information
Categorize data

- Identify patterns, recurring ideas, concepts, words, phrases, behaviors
- Organize data into categories that summarize them
- Go back to the assessment question
- Review and revise categories
- Re-categorize data

Example: Categorizing Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you have any suggestions for event improvements?</th>
<th>More Organization</th>
<th>More Advertising</th>
<th>Better Signage</th>
<th>More Booths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A little more organization for people who have booths.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Better advertising, I thought attendance was too low.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Better signage and more food booths</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Bigger signs that tell what each booth and where things are.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. More booths and live music!</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Make more booths so it's less crowded.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Maybe more booths so there's less lines.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. More advertisement!</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TIP: Match color coding
### Example: Categorizing Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4/01/20XX</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Facilitator: XXX Co-Facilitator: XXX 2) What kinds of hands-on activities do you like in your Field trip (zoo) 3 votes</td>
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<td>Facilitator: XXX Co-Facilitator: XXX 2) What kinds of hands-on activities do you like in your Outside class activities like to church or art museum. 4 votes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trip to taro field and see it in action</td>
<td></td>
<td>Go to cadaver lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Labs.</strong> Seeing things in microscope instead of just book. Botany tour across campus. Nice to see &quot;real&quot; (4 votes)</td>
<td>PHYS Lab: dissections of animals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labs can be interesting.</td>
<td>Dissections. 3 votes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hands-on experiments. 4 votes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TIP: Group responses by category**

### Identify patterns, themes, connections

- Combine categories, if necessary
- Identify major themes
- Identify relationships
Example: Patterns, themes, connections

Responses grouped and color coded by category and theme

TIP: Include notes

Synthesize & Report Findings

- Synthesize
  - Identify the “big ideas”
  - Verify findings with other sources

- Reporting
  - Audience & purpose
  - Avoid over-generalization
  - Choose quotes carefully
Tips to analyzing focus group data

- Involve colleagues, get feedback and input
- Ask participants to review findings
- Verify findings with other data sources
- Use colors to categorize

Final Thoughts

- Be **systematic** - The 5 Step Analysis Process
  1. Prepare for analysis
  2. Get to know the data
  3. Categorize data
  4. Identify patterns, themes, and connections
  5. Synthesize and report findings

- Be **verifiable**
Questions?
Comments?
Concerns?

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