Focus groups, Surveys, and Rubrics, Oh My!
Choosing an Assessment Method

Resources

Rubrics:
- http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/index_p.cfm?CFID=35090442&CFTOKEN=16651847
- http://jonathan.mueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/howstep4.htm
- http://rubrics.kon.org/

Surveys:
- *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method* (Dillman, 2007)
- Qualtrics (UI-sponsored): http://its.uiowa.edu/qualtrics
- SurveyMonkey: http://www.surveymonkey.com/
- Zoomerang: http://www.zoomerang.com/

Focus groups:
- *The Focus Group Kit* (Morgan & Krueger, 1998):
    1) *The Focus Group Guidebook*
    2) *Planning Focus Groups*
    3) *Developing Questions for Focus Groups*
    4) *Moderating Focus Groups*
    5) *Involving Community Members in Focus Groups*
    6) *Analyzing & Reporting Focus Group Results*

Strengths

Rubrics	Surveys	Focus Groups
• Make the criteria explicit for **staff**, which can lead to greater consistency in evaluating students • Make the criteria explicit for **students**, which enables them to know what we are looking for (not a bad thing) • Can be used in self-evaluation • Give students an opportunity to *see* improvement over time	• Can access a large number of potential participants • Relatively easy to analyze, particularly if using an online survey • Students can respond anonymously • Students can respond when it is convenient to them, particularly if using an online survey • National surveys allow for comparison with other institutions	• Provide rich information • Allow for flexibility • Can seek immediate clarification • Give students an opportunity to discuss/reflect on learning with others, which may – in and of itself – promote learning

Nonrandom Sampling Methods for Focus Groups

- **Nonrandom stratified sampling** – choosing participants from various sub-groups
- **Convenience sampling** – choosing participants who are close at hand/easy to access
- **Key informant sampling** – choosing participants who you believe will give you the most information about what you are assessing
- **Snowball sampling** – starting with key informants and asking them to refer you to others who will be able to provide you with more information

Matching Learning Outcomes to an Assessment Method

If You Want To…	Consider Using…
Assess thinking and performance skills	Assignments or prompts planned and evaluated using scoring guides or rubrics
Assess knowledge, conceptual understanding, or skill in application and analysis	Multiple choice tests
Assess attitudes, values, dispositions, or habits of mind	Reflective writing, surveys, focus groups, or interview
Draw an overall picture of student learning	Portfolios
Compare your students against peers elsewhere	Published tests or surveys

Suskie, 2009, as cited by Schuh, n.d.

Application and Questions for Reflection

1) Identify criteria for one of your learning outcomes. What does meeting the learning outcome entail or look like?

2) Who is going to be using the information? What information will be most useful/meaningful to them?

3) **Brainstorm opportunities for embedding assessment into a program or service? How could you better capitalize on information participants may already be providing? How can you "strike while the iron is hot" in getting information from participants?**

4) **According to the table on matching learning outcomes to an assessment method, what method(s) might work best for each of your learning outcomes?**

5) **What steps will you need to take to implement this method/these methods? What questions do you have?**