**Focus groups, Surveys, and Rubrics, Oh My!**

**Choosing an Assessment Method**

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**Resources**

**Rubrics:**

* [http://www.aacu.org/ value/index.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/%20value/index.cfm)
* <http://openedpractices.org/resources?page=2>
* <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php>
* <http://jonathan.mueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/howstep4.htm>
* <http://rubrics.kon.org/>

**Surveys:**

* *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*(Dillman, 2007)
* Websurveyor (UI-sponsored): [http://its.uiowa.edu/apps2/support/category/keywords/ websurveyor-24](http://its.uiowa.edu/apps2/support/category/keywords/websurveyor-24)
* SurveyMonkey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/>
* C:\Users\Suzanne\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\Q4JICRST\MC900366354[1].wmfZoomerang: <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?**