

Course Syllabus

SurvMeth 652: Introduction to Focus Group Interviewing Research Methods

1 credit -- Summer 2020 -- June 15 – June 29, 2020

Summer Institute in Survey Research Techniques

University of Michigan

An on-line class taught by

Richard Krueger, Ph.D. and Mary Anne Casey, Ph.D.

Course description

This is a course on planning, conducting, and analyzing focus group interviews. It is designed to help students, researchers, and community members develop the skills needed to conduct defensible research.

Feedback on your focus group study

In this course you will have opportunity to develop a plan for a focus group study, an oral introduction, and set of questions to use in the study. Richard Krueger will review these assignments (your plan, your introduction, and your questions) and offer feedback including suggestions for improvement. Many class participants find this feedback useful, particularly if they are designing an upcoming study.

Instructors

Name: Richard A. Krueger, Professor Emeritus, University of Minnesota, and
Mary Anne Casey, Adjunct Professor, University of Minnesota

Email: rkrueger@umn.edu and casey016@umn.edu

Goal

The goal of the course is to help students learn how to use focus group interviewing as a research method.

Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the core ingredients of a successful focus group.
2. Identify situations where focus groups could be useful.
3. Develop a plan for a focus group study
4. Develop questions for a focus group study.
5. Identify characteristics of information-rich participants and recruit participants.
6. Begin a focus group in a way that creates a thoughtful and open environment.
7. Moderate a focus group.
8. Capture data during a focus group.
9. Analyze and report focus group results.

Class instruction will consists of:

- One-hour group zoom meetings -- 10am and 2pm EDT on June 15 and June 16
- Question & Answer Bulletin Board
- 20 short video segments
- 2 video demonstrations
- 4 video lectures
- PowerPoint slides
- Student notes
- Textbook

Zoom video meetings - June 15 and 16

Students will participate in two small group Zoom meetings. Each group will consist of a limited number of participants and last one hour. The first small group will occur at the beginning of the class on **June 15th**, and will allow participants to get acquainted, briefly describe their background and potential uses of focus group research. The second small group will occur on **June 16th** when students are asked to present a 3-4 minute introduction to a potential focus group interview.

Q and A Bulletin Board

The instructors will publish a Q & A Bulletin Board twice a week which will be sent via email to all students. Student can submit questions via email to (rkrueger@umn.edu) and the questions with answers will be published in the next newsletter.

20 short video segments

A series of 20 short (4 – 10 minute) video presentations by Richard Krueger on the basics of focus group interviewing. Internet locations of these videos are included in this syllabus.

PowerPoint slides*

PowerPoint slides for 20 YouTube video presentations. These are the slides that accompany the 20 short video segments.

2 video demonstrations

Short focus groups are demonstrated in two video presentations. One presentation is specifically on moderating skills and the second presentation is an actual focus group on healthy living. Internet locations are included in this syllabus.

4 video lectures

Lectures by R. Krueger and Mary Anne Casey on Developing Questions, Recruiting Participants, Moderating the Focus Group and Analyzing Focus Group Results (34 – 46 minutes) Internet locations are included in this syllabus.

Notes*

“Notes: Focus Group Interviewing” (June 2020) by Richard A. Krueger and Mary Anne Casey, University of Minnesota. 31 pages.

Textbook

Krueger, R. A. & Casey, M. A. (2015). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. 5th Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

*These materials will be sent to students by email.

Course Requirements

Watch the videos and read textbook. Then, select a topic for a focus group study, develop a plan, an introduction, and a set of questions to use in the focus group. You are not required to conduct the study.

Assignments and Expectations

1. A plan for a focus group study

Submit a plan using the instructions in Video 03: Planning the focus group study. Use the template on p. 17 of “Notes” as the basis of your plan. If additional background information is needed to explain your study, include it on a page or two after the completed template. Due on June 30th.

2. Focus group questions

A typical two-hour focus group usually consists of 10 to 14 open-ended questions. These questions should be conversational (written using words the participants use—no jargon) and sequenced carefully. Questions should be numbered with estimated time needed for each question. At the top of the page indicate the purpose of the study and the anticipated focus group participants. Before submitting, review the videos: 04 Types of questions in a focus group, 05 Developing questions for a focus group, and 06 Examples of focus group questions. Note examples of format on p.14-15 of Notes. Due on June 30th.

3. An introduction for your focus groups

The introduction is the first thing the moderator says at the beginning of the focus group interview. It is short and snappy. Again, use words the participants would use if they were talking about the study. Include why you are conducting the study, what you will do with the results, and how it will benefit people. Students will practice this introduction on the June 16th Zoom conference call and receive feedback from other students. The written introduction is due on June 30th. Note the examples in Videos 09 – 13 and on p. 4-5 of “Notes”.

Course Sessions and Readings*

Note: The course is planned to be completed within two weeks. Contact the instructor if you need additional time.

How to Proceed -- We recommend the following sequence:

INTRODUCTION

- 01 - What is a focus group? (4:34 minutes)
- 02 - What makes it research? (3:56 minutes)
- Reading: Chapter 1 "Overview of focus groups"

PLANNING

- 03 - Planning the focus group study (2:59 minutes)
- Reading: Chapter 2 "Planning the focus group study"

DEVELOPING QUESTIONS

- 04 - Types of questions in a focus group (6:59 minutes)
- 05 - Developing questions for a focus group (7:52 minutes)
- 06 - Examples of focus group questions (7:18 minutes)
- Video Lecture: Developing Questions (46:10 minutes)
- Reading: Chapter 3 "Developing a questioning route"

RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

- 07 - Locating focus group participants (9:15 minutes)
- 08 - Recruiting focus group participants (8:57 minutes)
- Video Lecture: Recruiting Participants (34:55 minutes)
- Reading: Chapter 4: "Participants in a focus group"

MODERATING

- 09 - Moderating skills – Before the group (7:34 minutes)
- 10 - Moderating skills – During the group (9:38 minutes)
- 11 - The role of the assistant moderator (5:26 minutes)
- 12 - Tips for moderating – Part 1 (7:23 minutes)
- 13 - Tips for moderating – Part 2 (7:04 minutes)
- Video Lecture: Moderating the Focus Group (34:27 minutes)
- Video Demonstration: Moderating a Focus Group (30:13 minutes)
- Video Demonstration Focus Group (32:04 minutes)
- Reading: Chapter 5: "Moderating skills"

ANALYSIS

- 14 - Capturing data during the focus group (4:37 minutes)
- 15 - Taking field notes in focus groups (7:50 minutes)
- 16 - Transcribing focus groups (7:09)
- 17 - Analysis basics ((6:38 minutes)
- 18 - Classic analysis (6:10 minutes)
- 19 - Deciding what is important in the focus group analysis (5:31 minutes)
- 20 - Preparing a focus group report (6:37 minutes)
- Video Lecture: Analysis (41:04 minutes)
- Reading: Chapter 6: "Analyzing focus group results"
- Chapter 7: "Reporting"

Additional References

Byseth, Jean, et al. (2003) *Moderating to the max*. Ithaca, NY: Paramount Market Publishing.

Grob, G.F. (2015). Writing for impact. In K. Newcomer et al. (Eds.). *Handbook of practical program evaluation*. 4th Ed. (pp 739-764). Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley

Guest, G., A. Bunce and L. Johnson. (2006). "How many interviews are enough?: An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability." *Field Methods* 2006; 18; 59.

Hennink, M.M. (2007). *International focus group Research: A handbook for the health and social sciences*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Krueger, R.A., & Casey, M.A. (2015). Focus group interviewing. In K Newcomer & H. Hatry (Eds.), *Handbook of practical program evaluation*. 4th Ed. (pp. 500 - 528). Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley.

Krueger, Richard A. (September / October 2006), "Analyzing focus group interviews." *Journal of Wound Ostomy and Continence Nursing Society* pp 478 - 481.

Krueger, Richard A. (1998). *Analyzing and reporting focus group results*. (Volume 6). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Krueger, Richard A. (1998). *Developing questions for focus groups*. (Volume 3) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Krueger, Richard A. (1998). *Moderating focus groups*. (Volume 4) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Krueger, Richard A. and Jean A. King (1998). *Involving community members in focus groups*. (Volume 5). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Morgan, D. (1998). *The focus group guidebook*. (Volume 1) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Morgan, D. (1998). *Planning focus groups*. (Volume 2) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

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