

# 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

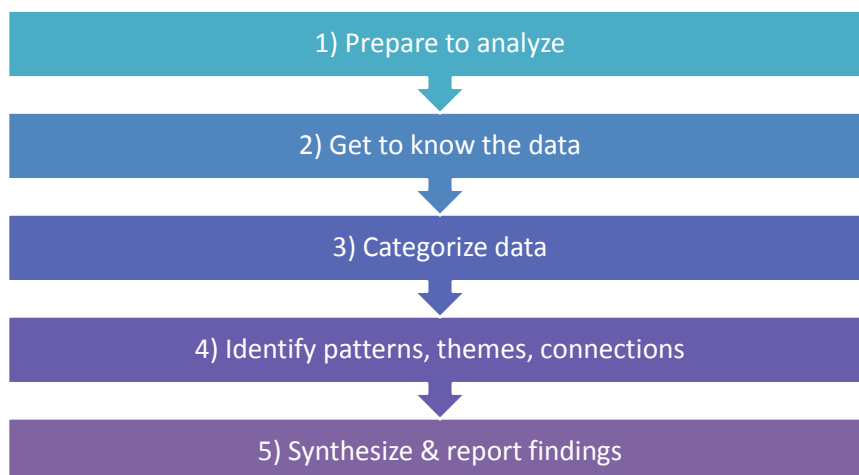
### In small groups

- 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

## Be Systematic: The Analysis Process



## 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 & 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)
  - B. **Labs.** Seeing things in microscope instead of just book. Botany tour across campus. Nice to see "real" (4 votes)
  - C. **Apply theory** to real life. (2 votes)
  - D. **Field work** to help writing of research paper (1 votes)
  - E. **Field trip** to zoo (3 votes)
  - F. **Field trip** to taro field and see it in action

# Example: Organizing Data

	4/01/20XX	4/01/20XX	4/05/20XX
1	Faciliator: XXX	Faciliator: XXX	Faciliator: XXX
2	Co-Faciliator: XXX	Co-Faciliator: XXX	Co-Faciliator: XXX
3	2) What kinds of hands-on activities do you like in your	2) What kinds of hands-on activities do you like in your	2) What kinds of hands-on activities do you like in your
4	Field trip (zoo) 3 votes	Field trip (Zoo). Complete worksheet to find the primates. Fun to go.	Outside class activities like to church or art museum. 4 votes.
5	Field trip to taro field and see it in action		Go to cadaver lab
6	Labs. Seeing things in microscope instead of just book. Botany tour across campus. Nice to see "real" (4 votes)	PHYS Lab: dissections of animals	
7	Labs can be interesting.	Dissections. 3 votes.	
8		Hands-on experiments. 4 votes.	

Session details

Focus group question

Responses

1 Question per sheet

## 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

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

*TIP: Match color coding*

4/01/20XX	4/01/20XX	4/05/20XX
Faciliator: XXX Co-Faciliator: XXX 2) What kinds of hands-on activities do you like in your	Faciliator: XXX Co-Faciliator: XXX 2) What kinds of hands-on activities do you like in your	Faciliator: XXX Co-Faciliator: XXX 2) What kinds of hands-on activities do you like in your
Field trip (zoo) 3 votes	Field trip (Zoo). Complete worksheet to find the primates. Fun to go.	Outside class activities like to church or art museum. 4 votes.
Field trip to taro field and see it in action		Go to cadaver lab
Labs. Seeing things in microscope instead of just book. Botany tour across campus. Nice to see "real" (4 votes)	PHYS Lab: dissections of animals	
Labs can be interesting.	Dissections. 3 votes.	
	Hands-on experiments. 4 votes.	

**Example:  
Categorizing Data**

*TIP: Group responses by category*

## Identify patterns, themes, connections

- Combine categories, if necessary
- Identify major themes
- Identify relationships

## Example: Patterns, themes, connections

	Facilitator: XXX	Co-Facilitator: XXX	
	4/01/20XX	4/01/20XX	4/05/20XX
<b>CODE</b>	Facilitator: XXX	Facilitator: XXX	Facilitator: XXX
<b>CATEGORIES</b>	Co-Facilitator: XXX	Co-Facilitator: XXX	Co-Facilitator: XXX
<b>NOTE: BOLD INDICATES CONSENSUS</b>	2) What kinds of hands-on activities do you like in your	2) What kinds of hands-on activities do you like in your	2) What kinds of hands-on activities do you like in your
<b>Field Trips</b>	<b>Field trip (zoo) 3 votes</b>	Field trip (Zoo). Complete worksheet to find the primates. Fun to go.	Outside class activities like to church or art museum. 4 votes.
	Field trip to taro field and see it in action		Go to cadaver lab
<b>Labs</b>	<b>Labs. Seeing things in microscope instead of just book. Botany tour across campus. Nice to see "real" (4 votes)</b>	<b>PHYS Lab: dissections of animals</b>	
	Labs can be interesting.	Dissections. 3 votes.	
		Hands-on experiments. 4 votes.	
	Experiments		

*TIP: Include notes*

Responses grouped and color coded by category and theme

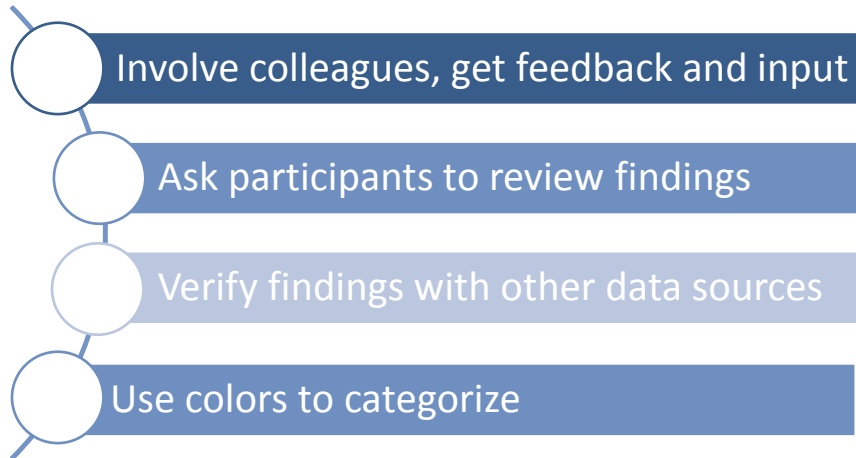
## Synthesize & Report Findings

- Synthesize
  - Identify the “big ideas”
  - Verify findings with other sources
- Reporting
  - Audience & purpose
  - Avoid over-generalization
  - Choose quotes carefully

July 18, 2014



## 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?

Contact Marlene Lowe at  
[mplowe@ucsd.edu](mailto:mplowe@ucsd.edu)