




# Focus Groups: A Quick Guide

A tool for gathering diverse perspectives in educational research

## ? What is a focus group?

“A focus group is a gathering of a limited number of individuals, who through conversation with each other, provide information about a specific topic, issue or subject”  
(Savin-Baden & Major, 2023: 374-375)

-  Small group
-  Open discussion
-  Insights from potentially shared & differing perspectives

## Facilitator Dos & Don'ts

### DO


- ✓ Let participants speak freely but ensure the discussion stays on track
- ✓ Use gentle prompts, not persuasion
- ✓ Listen actively & remain neutral
- ✓ Value & respect all contributions


### DON'T


- ✗ Skip consent or ethical procedures
- ✗ Share your personal views & opinions
- ✗ Ask leading questions, e.g. 'Many students say online lectures are boring. Would you agree?'
- ✗ Allow one participant to dominate
- ✗ Rush through the discussion


## Focus Group Flow

### 1 START


Welcome & state the purpose of the session  



Explain timing  



Gain verbal consent for audio/video recording  



Check consent for participation, offer a withdrawal option & assure data confidentiality 

### 2 DURING


Facilitate neutrally (avoid leading questions or showing bias) 


Encourage all participants to share ideas  


Ask one question at a time  


Keep the discussion on topic  


### 3 CLOSE

Invite final reflections & give participants a chance to share any last thoughts  


Thank participants for their time  


Outline next steps  
