

Using Focus Groups for Student Evaluation of Teaching

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Abstract

Traditional means of evaluating instruction, though reliable, are limited in scope. In this paper, I provide an argument and a template for the use of focus groups as a supplemental tool for gathering student feedback. I begin with a brief discussion of focus groups and an examination of the traditional student evaluation process. Next, I discuss the advantages of using focus group research to supplement that process. After considering some of the shortcomings of focus group research, I provide specific suggestions for using this means of collecting data. I conclude with a case study example of the preliminary results of my own focus group inquiry.

Introduction

One cannot be an academic for any length of time without hearing colleagues complain about student evaluations. Though there is an ongoing debate in the literature about the validity of standard quantitative course evaluations, the majority view is that these evaluations are valid (for example, Marsh & Roche, 1997). Nevertheless, researchers also criticize traditional means of gathering student feedback as failing to capture critical elements of student response to a course (Kolich & Dean, 1999). A predetermined set of closed items does not enable students to provide unexpected, and possibly valuable, feedback. Even the open items present on many course evaluation forms do not allow students, who often hastily scribble nonspecific comments ("Dr. G rocks!") so they can get out of class, to provide appropriately rich feedback. Other methods of soliciting student feedback may assist in providing instructors with more varied kinds of responses.

One way of soliciting additional student feedback which I have found particularly valuable is the focus group. This method of collecting data encourages students to reflect on the instructional process in a much more ruminative fashion, considering the opinions of other group members as they refine their own insights. Through addressing a series of loosely-structured open questions, small groups of students provide more detailed feedback which enables instructors to have a different perspective on how the course has been received.

In the pages that follow, I argue for the value of using focus groups as a tool to supplement traditional student evaluations. These groups can consist of current students or former students, as discussed below. As part of this argument, I utilize the perspective of the scholarship of teaching and learning (for example, Boyer, 1991; Trigwell, Martin, Benjamin & Prosser, 2000), which encourages academics to reflectively transform their teaching practices in light of pedagogical research. First, I briefly describe the focus group methodology for readers who may not be familiar with it. Next, I discuss the traditional evaluation process and consider advantages and disadvantages of incorporating focus groups as a supplemental tool. After providing specific suggestions for using focus groups in this manner, I close by providing an example of my own focus group-based evaluative research, briefly discussing how this research has influenced my own instructional practices.

Focus Group Methodology

Morgan describes focus group methodology as "a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher" (1996, p. 130). The group interaction allows for a different sort of response than that generated by interview questions, and the open-ended questions allow for a very different sort of data than that typically generated by survey instruments. Focus groups allow researchers to explore predetermined topics in depth, and can allow for the emergence of previously unconsidered topics as well.

Focus group research is commonly employed in communication, sociology, and related disciplines. For example, Press and Cole (1995) used focus groups consisting of pro-life women to analyze their rationale for their beliefs, and Grover and Nangle (2003) used focus groups of adolescents to explore problematic opposite-sex situations. In both of these studies, focus group conversations allowed a level of depth of discussion that would not have been possible using survey methods alone. Also, the group interaction process allows for student concerns to be raised and discussed in a collaborative manner which is not possible with one-on-one in-depth interviews. One student might raise a particular issue, but any number of participants might comment on this issue after its introduction.

Focus groups have also been used in a limited way to supplement the traditional evaluation process. Clark and colleagues (Bennett, 1987; Clark & Redmond, 1982; Redmond, 1982) developed and utilized the Small Group Instructional Diagnosis method (SGID) as a way of providing formative evaluations for faculty at about the midpoint of the semester. The standard technique (which has been adapted for use in an online environment; see Sherry, Fulford, & Zhang, 1998) involves having a trained facilitator visit a class for about 25 minutes, dividing students into small groups and soliciting their opinions on three general questions about how the course is proceeding thus far. Then, the facilitator meets with the instructor to provide a summary of student feedback. Researchers have suggested that not only can faculty adjust courses according to feedback, but also that students show higher levels of motivation for the remainder of the semester after participating in the process (Redmond, 1982). The focus group research outlined below differs from the SGID in that it is generally designed to be a formal, detailed summative evaluation, conducted after the end of the semester. Also, the more detailed questions and the formal transcription process suggested below allow for greater insight, though the

process is far more time-consuming than a formative SGID. Both the SGID and the focus group process discussed in this paper can help overcome some of the potential flaws of traditional student evaluations, discussed below.

Traditional Student Evaluations

Academic research into the validity of student evaluations has been extensive, for at least three reasons. First, those evaluations are often used by administrators as a way of evaluating the quality of instruction provided by faculty (McKeachie, 1997). Second, instructors presumably study evaluations carefully and consequently develop alternative instructional strategies when appropriate. Finally, student evaluations are a commonly used tool in academic departments of all sorts, both in the United States and elsewhere (for example, Kember, Leung, & Kwan, 2002; Beran & Violato, 2005).

Generally, research suggests that quantitative student evaluation forms are both reliable and valid (Marsh & Roche, 1997; Berlan & Violato, 2005). Indeed, McKeachie (1997) argues that "student ratings are the single most valid source of data on teaching effectiveness" (p. 1219). Concerns with quantitative evaluation of instruction tend to focus not on the instruments themselves, but on how they are utilized by faculty, students, and administrators.

Some researchers are concerned that faculty and students may not take the evaluation process seriously, thus undermining the validity of the process (e.g. Richardson, 2005). Spencer and Schmelkin (2002) suggest that although students do not fear reprisals as a result of the evaluation process, they "are unsure whether their opinions matter," and so may not devote as much careful attention to the evaluation process (p. 406). D'Apollonia and Abrami (1997) argue that though the evaluations are valid, they are often over-interpreted by administrators, who use them to make judgments about teaching which are too fine-grained. In fact, these scholars suggest that only the most basic judgments about teaching effectiveness (such as "exceptional, adequate and unacceptable") can be inferred from student evaluations of instruction.

Though these concerns about traditional student evaluations are intriguing and worthy of further research, two additional concerns provide the strongest impetus for the search for alternative, additional means of evaluation of instruction. Kolich and Dean (1999) argue that traditional student evaluations

privilege what they call a "transmission" model of instruction, with a focus on a lecturer imparting knowledge to a relatively passive audience. Within this model, "absorbing quantities of knowledge is more important than the construction of knowledge, which takes into account students' lives and experiences" (p. 30). Kolich and Dean (1999) instead advocate an "engaged-critical model," which views instructor and students as co-constructing a learning environment. Though Kolich and Dean suggest that additional survey items can capture this alternative approach to instruction, I believe that focus groups can provide more detailed student feedback to better assess the extent to which the engaged-critical perspective is employed. Through focus group interaction, and the subsequent analysis by the instructor, students participate in the co-construction of future courses.

The second particularly problematic issue related to traditional student evaluations concerns their use by faculty. Kember, Leung and Kwan (2002) found that professors did not generally improve their evaluations over time, and argued that this lack of quantitative improvement suggests that professors are not incorporating their students' suggestions in subsequent semesters. According to these scholars, the evaluations are thus failing to accomplish what is presumably their primary goal: fostering instructional improvement. Perhaps part of the reason why professors do not more carefully utilize student evaluations can be found in the work of Narasimham, who found that half of the qualitative comments on student evaluation forms were two words and "were really of no value" (2001, p. 182). Thus evaluations still can be used by administrators to evaluate instruction, but lose a great deal of utility if they are not accomplishing a critical goal. By allowing for more detailed feedback, focus groups may contribute to improvement of instruction for professors willing to use this supplemental methodology in a manner discussed below.

Value of Focus Groups as a Tool to Supplement Evaluations

It is not my suggestion that focus groups should be used to replace traditional means of student evaluation of instruction, which clearly still have an important role to play. Instead, I argue that faculty members who are committed to improving the quality of their teaching can use focus groups as a way of receiving additional, rich feedback from students. In the following section, I discuss several advantages of using a focus group methodology in this manner.

Supplemental focus group evaluation allows faculty members to ask questions which go beyond the typical student evaluation forms. Though some of these scales (notably one commonly used questionnaire, the Student Evaluation of Educational Quality) have been found to be reliable and valid, not all academic units will use these forms. In fact, it is common for academic units to add their own questions, which may not reflect the goals of a particular instructor or even be empirically sound (Marsh & Roche, 1997). Using focus groups allows an instructor to develop his or her own questions and better reflect those concerns which may be particularly salient for a given instructor, program, or class. For example, I have asked former students in my research methods classes about the practical value of the course, which is of particular concern to me: I want my students to see the class as applicable to the "real world." This question is not included on the standard evaluation questionnaire in my department.

Using focus groups can also enable professors to evaluate student responses beyond a single class. Groups of students who have had a particular class or professor can meet to discuss their common experiences, including providing a sense of how a particular class might relate to other classes. For example, I asked my research methods students how that class helped to prepare them for other classes in the major or internships; students filling out the evaluation form at the end of their class could not be expected to answer this question. Harvey (1997) also has suggested that focus groups could be used for this sort of investigation, though he concentrates on constructing additional survey items following the use of a focus group methodology. In contrast, I suggest that although the focus groups could be used for that purpose, data from the groups have an intrinsic value separate from leading to the construction of new survey items.

Also, focus groups enable students to suggest important issues which may not be listed on the traditional form. The open nature of questions, along with group interaction, allows for discussion to focus on aspects of a course which an instructor might not have considered. For example, when I asked my research methods students which element of the course they found most valuable, they emphasized the library research component--not at all what I would have expected. When individual group members mentioned this component of the class, other members were able to contribute their own ideas.

Perhaps the greatest advantage of the use of focus groups as a supplement to traditional student evaluations is that they help instructors break out of what the novelist Walker Percy (1961) called

"everydayness"--a lack of reflection, in this case on a life of instruction that might involve teaching the same classes for years without change. If a professor has taught the same class for an extended period of time, to generally good reviews via the traditional process, that professor is probably not likely to consider ways of improving the class still further. Initiating any sort of supplemental evaluation process requires a professor to break out of this "everydayness," as she must carefully consider the supplemental questions she wishes to ask.

Considering themes from focus groups can encourage additional introspection on the part of an instructor, potentially leading to what Mezirow (1990; 1991) calls "transformative learning." Through the process of carefully considering basic assumptions related to teaching, an instructor may develop entirely new approaches to the craft. As students learn from instructors, professors as adult learners can consider their own approaches to teaching. This constant, careful, self-critical evaluation is, as Ramsden (2003) suggests, essential to improving as a teacher. Careful construction and interpretation of focus group questions can assist in this process.

Finally, students are more likely to take this process seriously than they apparently do the typical course evaluation process. They can observe that a professor is making an extra effort to solicit their opinions, and are likely to respond more positively to that endeavor. In addition to feeling that their opinions are more valued by a particular professor, students may appreciate the idea that their reactions to a given course might influence how that course is taught in the future, and thus have a greater sense of participating in an important process for an academic department.

Limitations of Using Focus Groups

Though the use of focus groups to supplement the traditional process has certain advantages, as discussed above, the process also has some significant drawbacks. Of these, the most obvious is time. It is much easier simply to hand out the forms at the end of the semester than to take the time to construct a set of questions, recruit students, meet with groups and transcribe their interactions. Part of my goal in writing this paper is to persuade the reader that it is, in fact, worth the effort. One way of minimizing this effort on the part of the instructor involves recruiting other students to help with part of the process, perhaps for course credit. I recruited two students who had previously taken my research methods class

to help with recruiting students, facilitating groups, and working with transcripts; the experience provided tangible rewards for them, in that it gave them course credit and a valuable line on a résumé. More importantly, it gave students valuable research experience and the opportunity to participate in an important group process.

Recruiting students to help also addresses the second key problem of using focus groups: anonymity. Students are perhaps less likely to be brutally honest if they can be connected with their responses. There are a variety of ways to overcome this concern; having student facilitators lead the groups can help. Even though I taped the students' interactions, I believe that communicating with another student who was physically present allowed them to feel more relaxed and be more open with their comments. Also, it enables the instructor to completely remove himself from the process, allowing the student facilitators to tape the interactions and transcribe them with names removed, ultimately protecting the participants' confidentiality.

Implementing Focus Groups: Getting Started

There are a variety of ways to implement a focus group methodology. The simplest use of focus groups is at the individual class level; an instructor might dedicate a class period to dividing students up into small groups with video cameras and previously trained student facilitators. Instructors might also use focus groups to recruit as many students as possible who have taken a particular class, or who have taken a variety of classes from a particular instructor. It might be particularly interesting to try to recruit students who have taken a class from a particular instructor and graduated, to see to what extent they still remember and use information or skills from classes. It is also possible to use focus groups for more programmatic assessment, though that usage is beyond the scope of this paper (see Harvey, 1997, for a more detailed treatment of this use of focus groups).

Morgan (1996) suggests that focus groups can vary in size, depending on the degree of emotional involvement of participants and the extent to which facilitators desire in-depth comments from individual participants. Grover and Nangle (2003) found that small groups of three to eight participants worked well; Tiggeman, Gardiner & Slater (2000) achieved good results with groups of 10 to 16. I have found that a recruited group of eight is ideal. I assume that a few students might not show up for any

given session, and I prefer to have groups of about five to eight students. For me, this number allows for a variety of opinions, while still small enough to enable a facilitator to hear detailed comments from every participant. Providing an incentive for students increases the probability of them showing up. Such an incentive might include extra credit (if your university's IRB allows it), or perhaps a pizza break in the middle of the group session. The groups can be run by trained student facilitators or by the faculty member herself. Though as noted above, it is probable that students will be more likely to speak freely in front of a fellow student. Focus groups should be recorded.

Questions for focus groups should be developed in advance, using a semi structured protocol. It is possible to conduct focus groups with only a list of themes, not questions--but I believe this unstructured approach is best reserved for the most experienced of facilitators. Instead, a list of open questions should be developed which allows for plenty of latitude in student responses. The questions should be developed through a careful consideration of the critical issues of interest to the instructor, but instructors should also consult relevant literature. The questions that I used for my focus group investigation of responses to my research methods class are attached as an example (see appendix A). Facilitators should be advised to ask all of the questions on the list; they should also be willing to ask probing questions and to discuss the unexpected issues which almost inevitably surface when using this method. Facilitators are asked to maintain flexibility and guide conversations rather than control them.

Facilitators also should remember that focus groups are not decision-making groups, but instead are designed to collect opinions without necessarily reaching a consensus. The opinion of every member of the group is important, so facilitators should encourage reluctant members to speak, and make sure one individual does not dominate the sessions. Some focus group researchers suggest utilizing an anonymous, quantitative manipulation check to ensure the process went well (Morgan, 1996). I have also attached an example the manipulation check survey form I have used in my research (see appendix B).

Facilitators should be familiar with all aspects of focus group research before leading a group. Facilitators should start by reading articles on interviewing and focus group methods (i.e., Fontana & Frey, 1993; Morgan, 1996), along with several published focus group studies (i.e., Press & Cole, 1995; Grover & Nangle, 2003; Tiggeman, Gardiner & Slater, 2000). They should have an appreciation of the goals of the instructor, and might also participate in the process of brainstorming questions. Finally,

facilitators should conduct at least one taped practice group session with feedback from the instructor or another party; if the practice group session is sufficiently similar to the later groups, focus group researchers suggest that it can be included in the overall data analysis (e.g., Grover & Nangle, 2003).

Implementing Focus Groups: Analyzing Results

The critical first step for any kind of focus group analysis is transcription. Typically, verbatim transcription is sufficient, and more detailed methods of transcribing language such as the conversation analytic system need not be employed. As instructors or assistants are transcribing, they should start to note themes which may be emerging.

Once transcribing is finished, researchers should go back through transcripts and begin developing themes, the recurring perspectives suggested by group members (e.g., Grover & Nangle, 2003). There are a variety of methods for finding themes including grounded theory, content analysis, and schema analysis (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). One formal way to develop themes is called the constant comparison method. This procedure involves comparing each remark to the previous remarks as a series of categories begins to emerge and is altered over time (Baxter & DeGooyer, 2001). Instructors can use any qualitative means of textual analysis with which they are familiar to arrive at interpretations which can then be incorporated into their teaching.

Implementing Focus Groups: Incorporating Results

Carefully constructed questions and painstaking analysis should lead to the construction of themes that an instructor will find valuable. Ideally, any incorporation of results into future classes should, from a "scholarship of teaching and learning" perspective, begin with a consideration of what the education and/or discipline-specific literature suggests about the particular issues raised. For example, my students suggested that the research methods class was not well-connected to the "real world," so I searched for ways in which other instructors might have overcome this concern. I found research by Keyton (2000), a scholar in my discipline, who suggested that service learning might be incorporated into the course. Another scholar in psychology (Anisfeld, 1987) suggested that having students focus on reading methods and results sections of published articles can help them understand the applicability of

knowledge and skills from a research methods class. Students also expressed concerns about anxiety related to the class, and so I consulted work in educational psychology (e.g. Onwegbuzie, 1997; Onwegbuzie et al., 2000) to examine the effects of anxiety on student performance in that class.

Instructors also should measure the extent to which the changes they implement make a difference in the course. Some of these changes might be reflected in the traditional course evaluation forms, but instructors are probably better served by constructing their own survey items designed specifically to address the changes made. Alternately, instructors could employ the focus group methodology again to assess changes. Regardless of the method, some means of assessing significant changes made to a course, or series of courses, should be utilized.

Case Study: Focus Group Study of Reactions to Research Methods Class

Though I have alluded to my own focus group investigation throughout this manuscript, it is helpful to provide a brief overview of my own use of focus groups as a supplemental evaluation tool. A more detailed discussion of this effort is available elsewhere (Fife, 2005). I will briefly describe the rationale, method, results and conclusions reached through this focus group research, including a discussion of how it has influenced my instructional practices.

Case Study: Rationale

Though I have spent much of my career teaching research methods classes in the communication discipline, I have never really considered HOW I taught them. Since my first “introduction to research methods” class in 2001, I have taught at least one section of a basic or advanced research methods class nearly every semester. As many teachers of such classes have done over the years, I simply uncritically adopted the format used in both of my introductory graduate research methods classes for the first iteration of the course. In subsequent semesters, my teaching has largely (though not wholly) been constrained by the requirements established by a committee at my current institution. Over the years, I introduced a variety of applied and discussion-oriented activities into a class which is historically lecture-based, but other than these minor alterations, I never really considered how I might change the class. In short, I always taught the class in approximately the same way—without ever really considering,

apart from contemplating the limited feedback available via student evaluations, how the students were responding to that class.

Case Study: Methodology

Participants. Thirty-five undergraduate students were recruited through the advanced courses for majors in the department. Thirty-four of the participants had finished taking the research methods class, most within one year of the study; the other was currently enrolled in the class. One of the students was a communication minor and the rest were communication majors. Participants were “traditional” college-age students, with ages ranging from 19 to 22.

Participants signed up for one of six focus groups held in an on-campus classroom in the evening. The number and size of groups is consistent with advice provided by Morgan (1996). Because others did not show up for the groups, the eventual size of the focus groups ranged from four to eight students. One trained student served as the moderator, while another trained student took notes and monitored the process.

Focus groups were conducted in accordance with a protocol (see appendix A), though student moderators were told to deviate from that protocol if they felt it necessary. Focus group time ranged from 30 to 75 minutes, depending on the size and energy of a particular group. All groups were provided with a pizza break during their participation. Finally, after the groups were finished, participants completed a manipulation check questionnaire (see appendix B). Analysis of this questionnaire suggested that students felt free to speak their minds, and that they felt the groups were not dominated by single individuals.

Example: Data Analysis

All six focus groups were transcribed by the student facilitators for course credit. Initially, I had planned to use the first group as a pilot; however, since the pilot group did not differ substantially from the other five groups in process or themes, it was included with the remainder for analysis (similar to procedures employed by Grover & Nangle, 2003).

I began a thematic analysis by reading through each transcript several times, noting initial impressions. Next, I classified themes for individual question responses, counting how often each theme emerged for that question. Also, I began at this point to identify individual representative quotes. Finally, I read through my thematic analysis of the individual items, looking for overarching themes across the six groups. As I developed those themes, I further noted individual quotations which best exemplified those themes. This thematic analysis procedure is consistent with other published research utilizing focus groups, as discussed above (e.g., Press & Cole, 1995). It is also consistent with a constant comparison process, used by qualitative researchers to examine interview transcriptions and other texts (e.g., Baxter & DeGooyer, 2001).

Example: Interpretation

Perhaps the most commonly described theme referred to the "value" of the class; students described the course as rigorous, but appreciated what they gained from it. Students also particularly enjoyed those parts of the course which discussed the physical process of doing research in a library and assessing the quality of a source. Students appreciated writing the semester-long paper, though they did not enjoy it at the time. They felt the paper gave them a good understanding of how to write a literature review and how to organize their time for writing future papers of a similar length.

Students also described several ways in which my course could be improved. In particular, they suggested that the course felt like two separate classes--one focused on writing the paper, and the other emphasizing abstract test-related content. Because of this perceived schism, some students felt that there were too few tests representing too great a percentage of their course grade. Students also felt that the course did not provide sufficient "real-world" application, though they regarded it as a valuable course in preparation for future classes in the major.

As discussed above, I searched through the existing literature to find possible ways to address these students concerns, without compromising the integrity of the class. In the future, I will consider incorporating service learning (Keyton, 2000) into the class, or at least having employees of area businesses talk about the importance of understanding research. The problem-based approach of

Anisfeld (1987) might also be useful. I might experiment with altering the number and value of tests, and more carefully connecting the other course content to the writing of the paper.

Had I not used the focus group methodology, I would not have been aware of the value students place on the library instruction. I had always assumed that students came into the class (as sophomores and juniors) with a good understanding of how to do library research, and that my focus should be on emphasizing how to do communication-specific research. Instead, students in these groups openly mocked the library instruction received in their prior general education classes, and emphasized the importance of the library instruction received in the research methods course. I also would not have been aware that students are justifiably proud of their papers, and use the course as "bragging rights" to impress students from other majors who do not have to complete similarly rigorous research projects.

Conclusion

For me, using the focus groups was challenging and time-consuming. However, that process has forever transformed the way I approach the research methods class. It also has the potential to transform how I approach my teaching as a whole. For example, the comments about providing "real-world" applicability are relevant to many of the other classes I teach. I believe I can do so without sacrificing course content or rigor, simply by finding more carefully structured application exercises. This sort of careful, qualitative analysis has the power to transform the way one approaches teaching, as I find myself considering other ways to assess student reactions through both formative and summative evaluation procedures. Also, students become a greater part of the process--beyond just filling out forms, they can participate more actively in the co-construction of future classes. In the near future, I plan on implementing a similar investigation of the other class I have been teaching for years (persuasion). For instructors who are willing to undertake such efforts, focus groups can provide uniquely valuable information to supplement the traditional evaluation process.

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Appendix A: Focus Group Protocol

- 1) First, please tell us in turn your name, year in school, and concentration; also, could you summarize your experience in SCOM 280 in a sentence or two?
- 2) What is the single most important concept or skill you learned in SCOM 280?
- 3) To what extent, if any, do you feel that SCOM 280 has improved your confidence as a student?
- 4) Do you feel that SCOM 280 should be a required course for majors? (probe) Why or why not?
- 5) How would you compare the rigor of SCOM 280 with other classes?
- 6) How has SCOM 280 helped you with the advanced research classes (if you've taken any)?
- 7) How has SCOM 280 helped you with SCOM 341 (Persuasion) or other upper-level SCOM classes?
- 8) Of the required core classes (280, 242, 240, 245, and the second research class), which is the most valuable? Why? (probe) Which is the LEAST valuable? Why?
- 9) Do you think that SCOM 280 will help you get a job?
- 10) How much do you think SCOM 280 will help you after you get a job or an internship? That is, do you think the skills learned from SCOM 280 are valuable to a future employer?
- 11) If you could teach SCOM 280, what would be the focus of the class?
- 12) What advice would you give to a student getting ready to take SCOM 280?
- 13) How would you feel about SCOM 280 being the "gateway" course for majors, with a required grade of B- or better in order to be admitted to the major (instead of the current system)?
- 14) How would you feel about requiring students to collect and analyze data in SCOM 280, instead of stopping with a "methods" section?
- 15) Is there anything else you would like to add about SCOM 280?

Appendix B: Focus Group Manipulation Check Questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our focus group study. Would you mind taking a few minutes to fill out this questionnaire? It asks for your thoughts on the focus group process, and gives you the opportunity to provide additional comments on SCOM 280.

1) Please circle the response which best describes your reaction to various aspects of participating in the focus group.

a) I felt free to speak my mind.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

b) I felt that one person dominated the discussion.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

c) I felt that the moderator did a good job of encouraging discussion.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

d) I felt that the questions asked enabled me to discuss the important aspects of my SCOM 280 experience.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

e) Based on this experience, I would be willing to participate in future focus group research.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

2) I would like to offer the following suggestions to the focus group researchers:

3) I would like to offer some final thoughts on SCOM 280 which I didn't get a chance to discuss in the group:

Once again, thanks for your time. Your input has been very valuable, and is greatly appreciated.