Program
Evaluation
Toolkit

Program Evaluation Toolkit

Module 6 Data Collection

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REL Central at Marzano Research

COLORADO KANSAS MISSOURI NEBRASKA NORTH DAKOTA SOUTH DAKOTA WYOMING

Module 6
Data Collection
Chapter Progression

1 — Interviews and Focus Groups

2 — Observations

3 — Surveys

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Chapter 1

1 ———— 2 ———— 3

Interviews and Focus Groups

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Interviews and Focus Groups[1]

- Definition: Directly asking an individual (in an interview) or multiple participants (in a focus group) questions to collect data to answer an evaluation question.

- Uses:

  - To obtain information about thoughts and behaviors.

  - To explore new issues or generate ideas.

  - To identify and define problems.

  - To identify new or assess existing solutions.

  - To pretest or refine questions for surveys.

  - To provide context for quantitative data.

Guidelines for Interviews and Focus Groups[3]

When to Use Interviews and Focus Groups

Use interviews and focus groups when you want to do the following:

- Obtain detailed information about someone's thoughts and behaviors.
- Explore new issues or generate ideas.
- Identify and define problems.
- Identify new or assess existing solutions.
- Pretest or refine questions for surveys.
- Provide context to quantitative data.

Steps in Conducting Interviews and Focus Groups

Step 1: Identifying evaluation questions to be answered through interviews or focus groups

Step 2: Developing questions

Interview or focus group questions should align closely with your evaluation questions.

- Limit the number of questions to three in-depth questions , 15 questions that require shorter responses, or a manageable combination of the two.
- Avoid closed-ended questions.
- Ask "how" and "why" questions to establish the processes and reasoning behind perceptions and behaviors.
- Ensure that questions are developmentally and culturally appropriate.
- Develop probing questions to elicit more detailed responses to your primary questions.
- Include a final question that captures topics you may not have considered. For example, "What else do you think I should know about XX that I have not asked about?"

Step 3: Developing a protocol

A protocol outlines procedures for conducting interviews or focus groups, provides a script of what to say during the interviews or focus groups, and includes a complete set of questions. In addition, the protocol might include the following:

- An explanation of why the interview or focus group data are being collected provide context to participants.
- Options for participants to terminate their participation if they
- Guidelines for protecting confidentiality.
- Specific terminology and definitions to use through ensure consistency.

Additional Resources

- *Guidelines for Interviews and Focus Groups*

Step 1: Identifying Evaluation Questions to Be Answered Through Interviews or Focus Groups

Step 2: Developing Questions[1,3]

- Ask no more than 3 in-depth questions or 15 short-answer questions.

- Ask "how" and "what" questions to gather detailed information.

- Ensure that questions are developmentally and culturally appropriate.

- Include probing questions.

- Ask a final question for participants to share anything missed.

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Additional Resources
- *Guide to Conducting a Needs Assessment for American Indian Students*

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Step 3: Developing a Protocol[1,3]

- A protocol outlines procedures for conducting interviews or focus groups.

  - Keep interviews or focus groups within a 30- to 90-minute time range.

- The protocol includes a script of what to say during the interviews or focus groups.

- The protocol includes a complete set of questions.

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Additional Resources

- *AMMP! Interview Protocol*
- *AMMP! Focus Group Protocol*

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Step 4: Developing a Template or Data Form

- Take notes.

- Audio-record interviews and focus groups.

- Have both an interviewer or facilitator and a notetaker.

Setting and background information:			
Question:	Answer(s):	Key quote:	Notes (including nonverbal cues):
1.			
2.			

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Step 5: Identifying Participants[1,3]

- Identify a representative and diverse set of participants.

- Consider group dynamics for focus groups.

- Include no more than 6–10 participants in a focus group.

Step 6: Identifying and Training Interviewers and Facilitators[1,3]

- Knowledgeable about conducting interviews or focus groups.

- Well informed and familiar with the protocol before conducting interviews or focus groups.

- Able to speak the language of participants.

  - If not, provide a translator, even if a group is bilingual.

Step 7: Conducting Interviews and Focus Groups[1,2,3]

- Provide compensation or a resource.

- Prepare recording equipment.

- Begin by explaining the purpose, use of data, confidentiality, and ground rules.

- Obtain informed consent.

- Ask the questions in a way that makes sense.

- Use active listening.

- Monitor time and stay within time limits.

- Take notes.

- Provide closure and thank participants at the end.

AMMP! Interview and Focus Group Protocols

- ## What barriers exist that prevent students from completing homework?

AMMP! Interview Protocol

Introduction and Purpose

My name is _____, and I am (role) for (organization). We are helping the school district evaluate AMMP! by collecting information from teachers here in the middle school. The district will use the information to help decide next steps for the program. We expect this interview to last no longer than 60 minutes. Your information will be shared with only the district, in combination with information provided by other participants. Although we may include direct quotes from our session here today, we will not share your name or other identifying information with the district. However, we cannot guarantee complete anonymity. We would really appreciate your honest opinions so that the district can make the best decisions for students struggling with math. I am going to take notes and also audio-record your answers so that I don't miss anything. You can discontinue your participation at any time.

Questions

- (In-depth question) Think back to when you first heard about AMMP!. What were your initial thoughts about the program? What questions did you have?
    - Optional probing questions:
        - Can you tell me more about what you thought?
        - Why did you think that about AMMP!?
        - Where did you hear about AMMP!?
        - What did you hear from other teachers/parents/students that led you to think that?
- How well do the students in your class complete homework?
    - Optional probing questions:
        - How much homework do you give?
        - Are there groups of students who perform differently when it comes to homework?
- (In-depth question) What have you heard from students (and from their caregivers) about why they do not complete their homework?
    - Optional probing questions:
        - How have you responded to these comments?

AMMP! Focus Group Protocol

Introduction and Purpose

My name is _____, and I am (role) for (organization). We are helping the school district evaluate AMMP! by collecting information from teachers here in the middle school. The district will use the information to help decide next steps for the program. We expect this focus group to last no longer than 60 minutes. Your information will be shared with only the district, in combination with information provided by other participants. Although we may include direct quotes from our session here today, we will not share your name or other identifying information with the district. However, we cannot guarantee complete anonymity. We would really appreciate your honest opinions so that the district can make the best decisions for students struggling with math. I am going to take notes and also audio-record your answers so that I don't miss anything.

Ground Rules

Before we begin, it is important to set some ground rules. You can discontinue your participation at any time. Obviously, we want to be respectful of one another and hear all opinions, even those in disagreement. It will be helpful if only one person speaks at a time, for listening and note-taking purposes. Also, please speak loudly enough for all to hear and for the audio-recorder. Finally, for the sake of confidentiality, please do not repeat anything said here outside of this room.

Introductions and Warm-Up

Most of you know one another, but let's quickly go around and introduce ourselves and state the grades or math classes you currently teach. Also, let's each give an example of a time when a student didn't complete a homework assignment and gave an interesting or memorable excuse. For example, I had a student tell me once, "I couldn't do my homework because my dad didn't know how." (Go around the room.)

Okay, those were great examples. Now I am going to ask you some questions about AMMP!. Anyone can answer. We are interested in collecting as many different perspectives as possible.
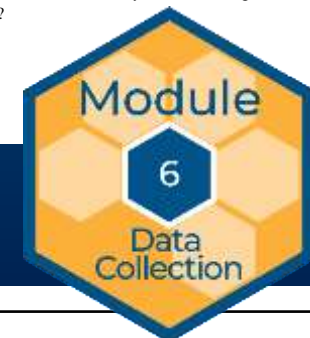
Questions

- Think back to when you first heard about AMMP!. What were your initial thoughts about the program? What questions did you have?
    - Optional probing questions:

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Additional Resources
- *AMMP! Interview Protocol*
- *AMMP! Focus Group Protocol*

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Thank You

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for information about our events, priorities, and research alliances,
and for access to our many free resources.

ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/central/index.asp

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3. Walston, J., Redford, J., & Bhatt, M. P. (2017). *Workshop on survey methods in education research: Facilitator's guide and resources* (REL 2017–214). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/pdf/REL_2017214.pdf