

Handout: Moderator Practice

Questions for Moderator Practice

For this practice session, we have selected few questions from our draft focus group questions and

Remember:

- Stay neutral.
- Do not lead or interject viewpoints.
- Use scripted, question-specific prompts if needed (they are asked if respondents' answers didn't already cover them).
- Avoid "why" questions. Use unscripted prompts to request additional information or to clarify.
- Encourage conversation by using a five-second pause and prompts.
- Encourage conversation between members.
- Listen for opportunity to explore views further.
- Make hesitant members feel comfortable.
- Use body language and eye contact to control excessive talkers and encourage reluctant talkers.
- Be careful that your own body language doesn't communicate approval or disapproval.
- Be ready to answer the question "Can we get a copy of the focus group results?"

Neutral, unscripted prompts:

- Tell me more about that.
- Would you explain further?
- Can you give us an example?
- Tell us more / Say more.
- Please describe what you mean.

reworded them to apply to the state Seal in general, rather than district- or school-level issues.

MODERATOR SCRIPT

Welcome everyone and thank you for participating in this discussion today. We appreciate your taking the time from your busy schedule.

My name is [name]. I am a [profession] at [work place] and I am moderating this focus group on behalf of the New Mexico department of Education. We also have [name] taking notes today.

The purpose of today's meeting is to discuss different aspects of the Seal of Biliteracy-Bilingualism that the state of New Mexico adopted in 2015.

The New Mexico state department of education is conducting these focus groups with different stake holders in order to understand better how the implementation of the Seal is going across the state, what concerns stakeholders might have, and what additional support might be needed.

Before we go further, I would like to go over few ground rules for our session today:

- ✓ First, would you please turn off and put away your electronics, including your cellphones. [pause to give participants time to turn off their cell phones and put them away]
- ✓ I will make sure that we end the session by [ending time].
- ✓ There are no wrong answers. I expect that you will have differing opinions and experiences, and I hope you will share them even if they differ from what others have said.
- ✓ Don't feel like you can only respond to my questions. If you want to follow up on something that another person said, feel free to do that. This should feel more like a discussion than a question-and-answer session.
- ✓ We really want to hear from everyone because you have different experiences and opinions, so let's make sure that everyone has a chance to participate and finish their thoughts before others jump in.
- ✓ Finally, we ask that you respect each other's privacy by not sharing with anyone what was discussed in this meeting. What is said in this meeting stays in this meeting.

Let's go around the table and introduce ourselves one at a time. Would you please tell us your name, your school/district and your role related to the Seal?

If it's ok with everyone, we would like to record our discussion today, so that if we have questions later on, we can go back and check the audio recording. The recording will be saved in a password protected folder and only those working on this project have access to the folder. Does anyone object to the recording? [If no one objects, turn on the recorder now]

Okay, let's start our discussion. We are not going around the table anymore, so just jump into the conversation whenever you want.

Seal understanding and priorities

1. What are some reasons why New Mexico decided to adopt a Biliteracy-Bilingualism Seal?
 - Prompt: Have any of the reasons changed over time?
2. What priorities do you think the state department of Education has for the Seal?
 - Prompt: Is increasing the number of students who graduate with the Seal a priority?
 - Prompt: How about number of languages? Is increasingly the number of languages that students can obtain the Seal for a priority?
 - Prompt: Which one of the priorities is the most important?
3. What do you think about the requirements that student must pass to earn the Seal?
 - Prompt: Are the requirements too low or high, or just about right?
 - Prompt: Do you think that the Seal requirement give students strong bilingual proficiency given how the Seal is typically awarded across the state?

Communication and recruitment

4. Please describe how and when you think schools should inform students about the Seal opportunity?
 - Prompt: What is the lowest grade when students should be first told about the Seal?
 - Prompt: How often should schools inform students about the Seal?
 - Prompt: Should students sign up for the Seal or be nominated?
5. How about parents? How and when should schools inform parents that their child(dren) could sign up for the Seal?

- Prompt: In what grades should parent be informed that their child(ren) could sign up for the Seal?
 - Prompt: What communication strategies would you like to see districts use to inform parents?
6. What requirements do you think should be in place for students who want to sign up for the Seal or should anyone be able to sign up?
 - Prompt: How about students with IEP?
 7. How do some schools recognize students as they work towards obtaining the Seal?

Resources

8. Thinking about the different requirements that students need to pass to obtain the Seal, what kind of resources would help districts and schools better support students to earn the Seal?
 - Prompt: How about students who try to obtain the Seal in a less common language? What kind of resources would help support students who want to obtain the Seal in an uncommon language?
9. From your point of view, what do you consider the most important successes with the Seal in New Mexico?
 - Prompt: What aspects of the state Seal are you most proud of?
10. From your point of view, what makes it difficult to implement the Seal in New Mexico?

Closing

11. If you were asked to make a recommendation for how to improve the State Seal of Bilingualism-Biliteracy, what would be your number 1 recommendation?
12. Is there anything else that you would like to mention related to the Seal that we haven't discussed already?

This concludes our discussion. Thank you so much for coming and sharing your thoughts and opinions with us.