

Sample Focus Group Questions

Courses

What were your expectations for this course? Were they met? Why or why not?

What ____ (discipline, such as management) skills are important to you? Has the course helped with them?

Are there things presently covered in the course that should be omitted? Please elaborate.

Are there things not currently in the course that should be included? Please elaborate.

What other activities/topics would you recommend?

Please offer feedback on the course syllabus?

What troubles you most about this course?

How does this course give you a better appreciation of the field of ____ (e.g., management)? Please explain.

Have your experiences [in class] broadened your perspectives? Can you, for example, approach open-ended problems more thoughtfully? Please provide an example.

[Course-specific: content] Please comment on the evening guest lectures and panel discussions.

[Course specific: evaluation] Did you understand the scoreboard and scoring system? Was it fair? Did it motivate you? How would you change it? Please provide some examples.

How do the evaluation methods used in the course allow you to demonstrate your level of mastery of the course material and concepts? Please explain.

What changes in the evaluation methods would you recommend? Please explain.

How do the teaching methods used in the course help you learn?

Please comment on the course materials.

What one new skill is the most valuable to you? Skills could include ____ (e.g., engineering, teamwork, problem-solving, communication, etc.)

In what ways did your instructor contribute to your experience in this course?

What is the most significant thing you've learned from this course?

Please share some things teachers in other courses do that enhance or detract from either your learning or your enjoyment.

What is the estimate of the outside-of-class hours spent on this course?

Is there anything else you would like to say about this course?

The Major

Why did you major in _____ (discipline)?

What skills have you obtained through your _____ (discipline) classes?

What skills do you feel weak in?

Which class in the major did you like best? Why?

Which class was the most difficult? Why?

Which class was the easiest? Why?

Describe your relationship with your advisor. What did you like best? What did you like the least?

What were your expectations of the _____ (discipline) major? Were your expectations met?

What one piece of advice would you offer to students who select the _____ major?

What aspects of the _____ major did you find most valuable?

What aspects of the _____ major did you find least valuable?

What teaching methods used in the _____ courses helped you learn? Please provide examples.

Which evaluation methods (exams, quizzes, journals, homework, papers, oral presentations, etc.) do you feel best assess your mastery of the course material and concepts presented in the _____ major courses? What changes would you make?

What was the most significant or important thing you learned within the _____ major?

Are there any other comments you would like to make concerning the _____ major?

Writing Intensive Courses

Recommendation

On the front of the index card, please write “yes” or “no” as to whether you would recommend this course to others.

Below your “yes” or “no” response, please write short reason why you selected your response.

(Usual index card activity)

On the back of the index card, please write one word or phrase to describe your overall impression of [course].

Below the word, write a number from 1-5 (1 = lowest; 5 = highest) to describe your satisfaction with the course.

How does the entire writing experience of this course compare to:

- Other technical courses
- Other non-technical courses

Do you sense that the emphasis in this course was on writing to learn or learning to write?

Do you feel that writing in this course helped you:

- Grasp
- Understand
- Integrate
- Explore

The course material? Please provide some specific examples.

What bearing has writing in this course had on your interaction with your instructor and peers, both inside and outside the class?

Comment on the feedback you received on your writing. Did you get enough feedback? Did it help you improve?

Please comment on how your writing was graded. Was it fair? Was it accurate?

As a result of this course, do you expect writing in other courses to be less intimidating? Why or why not?

Finally, are there any other comments, observations, or questions about your writing intensive course?