# Focus group – checklist

This checklist is designed to assist schools with a process to consistently plan and implement a focus group to evaluate curriculum implementation initiatives.

Planning checklist

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Check? | Criteria | Comment |
|  | Overarching question – specific and narrow. |  |
|  | Purpose – what do you want to find out? |  |
|  | Roles – who is who on the evaluation team: facilitator, recorder, collator. |  |
|  | Audience – who do you want to hear from? |  |
|  | Sampling – is the group diverse and representative? |  |
|  | Method – content or thematic analysis? |  |
|  | Dynamics – power dynamics, trust amongst participants. |  |
|  | Recording – tools and sufficient copies (record sheet, checklist, blank note page). |  |
|  | Question design:   * brevity * salience to the evaluation * relevance to the respondent * clarity * style * order * consider the most appropriate questions to ask in this format (For example, could it be asked in a survey instead?). |  |
|  | Environment – quiet and free of distractions. |  |
|  | Coding – recording codes or shorthand determined and understood by evaluation team. |  |
|  | Pre-meeting – for consistency and discussion of evaluative practices (bias and so on). |  |
|  | Participant understanding – purpose of focus group, who, what, when, how the data will be used, timing. |  |
|  | Are permissions required?   * child protection * principal or school executive. |  |

Collecting checklist

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Check? | Criteria | Comment |
|  | Ensure sufficient copies of the recording template are available for evaluation team members. |  |
|  | Introduce evaluation team, clarify questions about the focus group. |  |
|  | Outline confidentiality requirements, obtain recording consent. |  |
|  | Explain participant rights (stop at any time, skip questions, withdraw consent post-interview). |  |
|  | Note and code only what is heard (not inferred, stick to the facts). |  |
|  | Ask follow-up questions, probe for further information by asking for examples. |  |
|  | Clarify jargon or slang or unfamiliar terms. |  |
|  | Avoid leading participants, remain neutral, open body language. |  |
|  | Keep discussion on track. |  |
|  | Ensure shared participation by all participants. |  |
|  | Write notes soon after the focus group and read notes to check accuracy. |  |
|  | Total tally marks for each criteria. |  |
|  | Save or copy record documents, photographs or audio or visual records in a secure, central place. |  |

Analysis checklist

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Check? | Criteria | Comment |
|  | Collate data from evaluation team (all team members should undertake the analysis of data). |  |
|  | Tally frequencies or means for each criteria **or** highlight main issues or themes or patterns. |  |
|  | Record additional information for each criteria. |  |
|  | Record quantitative results into a table or spreadsheet. |  |
|  | Record qualitative results into a format to allow annotation – what are the key facts, compare/contrast variables. |  |
|  | Check your analysis, ask a colleague to look at the same raw data and see if they draw similar conclusions. |  |
|  | Create charts or visual representation of data. |  |
|  | Summarise key findings. |  |

Implications checklist

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Check? | Criteria | Comment |
|  | Reflect on focus group data (strengths, areas for improvement). |  |
|  | What implications or conclusions have been identified? |  |
|  | Has the evaluation question or inquiry focus been answered? If unanswered, determine data gaps. |  |
|  | Make recommendations based on your analysis. |  |
|  | Discuss with evaluation team, agree and share evaluation with colleagues. |  |

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