

Focus Group Session Protocol

1. INITIAL STEPS BEFORE STUDENTS ARRIVE

- a. Enter classroom, arrange desks in a circle
- b. Place nametag at each desk (folding kind)
- c. Place three different colored folders (red, blue, and green) at each desk. If possible, place them under each desk. Each folder should have the sorting envelopes and the photos inside.
- d. When students enter classroom, have them find the desk with their name on it. Ask them to please not touch folders.

2. STUDENTS ARRIVE

- a. Introduce students to each other and to staff.
- b. Explain the purpose of the meeting.
- c. Have students to read and sign assent form.

3. CARD SORT PROCEDURE

- a. After introductions, have students pull the red folder for middle school activities. Ask them to leave the others under the desk.
- b. Have students take out each of the three envelopes in the folder and place them face up on the desk.
 - i. "Happens" envelope
 - ii. "Does not Happen" envelope
 - iii. "Like" envelope
- c. Have students to pull out the stack of pictures and allow them to browse through the set.
- d. Ask students to make two piles of pictures. One pile is what "Happens" in your math class and the other what "Does not Happen" in your math class. Then, have students place the pictures on top of the appropriate envelope.
- e. Next, have students to place pictures that reflect "Does not Happen" in the envelope and place the envelope aside.
- f. Ask students to make a separate pile from the pictures that "Happens" in middle school and have students to choose pictures they "Like" to do.
- g. Then, have students to place pictures on top of the appropriate envelope.
- h. When finished, have students put each stack of pictures inside the appropriate envelope. Put all the envelopes back in the red middle school folder, close the folder and put it under their desk.
- i. Repeat steps for the blue (professional/jobs) folder and the green (elementary) folder.

4. DISCUSSION

a. Use the sort procedure as a way to facilitate discussion.

b. Middle School Discussion

- i. Students make two piles of what “Happens” and “Does not Happen” in middle school, the facilitator directs students to discuss which activities happens in the middle school math class.
 1. Possible prompts are:
 - a. What are your experiences?
 - b. Does anyone have similar or different experiences?
 - c. Can you be more specific about that?
 2. If possible, allow students to express experiences that will trigger other students to remember to promote discussion among students.
- ii. Students make another pile of what they “Like” from activities that “Happen” in middle school, the facilitator directs students to discuss what you like about those activities.
- iii. The facilitator ask additional questions for discussion.
 1. Are there things you wish could happen in your math class that you didn’t see in any of the pictures?
 2. In your math class, is there just one way to solve a problem? Or does your teacher let you use different ways?
 3. Think about solving problems in math class. Who usually decides whether you have a right answer?
- iv. The note taker is recording students’ responses in real time.

c. Career Professions/Jobs

- i. Students make two piles of professions/jobs they think “Uses Math” and “Does not Use Math,” the facilitator directs students to discuss which professions/jobs they think “Uses Math.”
 1. Possible prompts are:
 - a. Let’s share the jobs you think use math. Why did you choose that profession/job?
 - b. How do you think that profession “Uses Math?”
- ii. Students make another pile of which professions/jobs they would like to do that “Uses Math,” the facilitator directs students to discuss why they would like to do those professions/jobs.
- iii. Students make another pile of which professions/jobs they would like to do that “Does Not Use Math,” the facilitator directs students to discuss why they would like to do those professions/jobs.

d. Elementary School

- i. Students make two piles of what “Happened” and “Did not Happen” in middle school, the facilitator directs students to discuss which activities happens in the middle school math class.
 1. Possible prompts are:
 - a. What were your experiences?
 - b. Did anyone have similar or different experiences?

- c. Can you be more specific about that?
- 2. If possible, allow students to express experiences that will trigger other students to remember to promote discussion among students.
- ii. Students make another pile of what they “Liked” from activities that “Happened” in middle school, the facilitator directs students to discuss what you like about those activities.
- iii. The facilitator ask students additional questions for discussion.
 - 1. Do you any other general memories of what your kindergarten, 1st, or 2nd grade teachers did to help you learn math?
 - 2. Do you like learning math more in early elementary grades or middle school grades? And Why?
- iv. The note taker is recording students’ responses in real time.

To promote discussion there are general prompts the facilitator use throughout any given point of the focus group.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me more about that. • Please explain your response. • Go on. • What else do you have to say about... • Give me an example. • Does anyone else see it differently? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now let’s hear some from some others. • What do you think? • Say more. • Describe that for me. • What do others think about this? • Who can add more to this idea?
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5. CLOSING PROCEDURES AFTER STUDENTS LEAVE

- a. After the focus group session is concluded, all three folders should be underneath each student’s desk. Make sure the students’ nametags remains on their desks.
- b. After students leave classroom, go around to each stack of folders and pass out a data check sheet with each student’s name on it. Each desk should now have 3 colored folders, a nametag, and the data check sheet per folder.
- c. On the data check sheets, the facilitator tallies the pictures contained in each envelope. Place pictures back in envelopes and folders.
- d. The facilitator gives the data check sheets and folders to the note taker. The note taker recounts, and make sure they match up to the data check sheets. Then, they enter the data into FileMaker on their iPad.

After the data have been entered into FileMaker, the facilitator and note taker pull out the stacks of pictures and set the materials back up for the next focus group session to use.

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. CARD SORT

Folder 1: Middle School

13 images

1 envelope labeled HAPPENS

1 envelope labeled DOES NOT HAPPEN

1 envelope labeled LIKE

Folder 2: Professional

14 images

1 envelope labeled USES MATH

1 envelope labeled DOES NOT MATH

1 envelope labeled USES MATH/ I LIKE TO DO

1 envelope labeled DOES NOT USE MATH/ I LIKE TO DO

Folder 3: Elementary School

8 images

1 envelope labeled HAPPENED

1 envelope labeled DID NOT HAPPEN

1 envelope labeled LIKED

2. OTHER MATERIALS

- a. Student rosters
- b. Name tags
- c. iPad with FileMaker program
- d. Pens
- e. Marker
- f. Rubber bands