

## DDS Focus Groups: Rough Analysis

### 1. Goals of today's analysis

The goal of this analysis is to turn your focus group audio/video records into rough-draft “answers” for the questions your group posed. This means sifting through what people said/did, giving labels to the relevant pieces, and then starting to organise those pieces into bigger categories. We will also be looking for other ideas and themes that may seem to be emerging within and across discussion questions.

As you go through the analysis **DO NOT ignore opinions and feedback because they disagree with what your group thinks, or wants to do.** This is among the most valuable feedback you could get. It is something you want to find out now, while there is a chance to modify your ideas if needed. That is also why we are talking to people outside the course—to get a different view from people who may have no prior knowledge or involvement of food/sustainability issues.

### 2. Recapping the focus group and deciding where to start

DO NOT start watching your videos immediately. Have your whole team confer about how the focus group went, any problems that arose, and whether your participants seem to have been appropriate. Review your discussion questions and goals.

Use the focus group note taker's notes to help identify a particularly interesting discussion question or video section with which to start. It may NOT be your first question, or the one you initially thought would be most important. Also determine if any of the sections are likely to be “low priority” with little interesting material. For example, the discussion might have gone off-topic and lost a lot of time!

### 3. Rough analysis

Once you have identified the chunk of video with which your team/ your pair will start...

#### **FIRST PASS: All the way through**

1. Listen/watch through the chunk of video all the way through, including the part where the moderator transitions into the current question, asks the question. Only stop/rewind if you have trouble hearing what has been said-- this pass is about getting the overall picture.
2. While listening, each person scribble some notes to describe different things that are being said or that are happening in the group interaction.
3. Discuss overall what you think has happened in that segment. Thoughts on any “big ideas” team were hearing, or big events in the group interaction?
4. Consider whether group dynamics (including DDS team members) might have affected the discussion-- a dominant person who limited others' chance to talk? Moderator seemed to be pushing a particular view?

#### **SECOND PASS: Starting and stopping**

The main point of this ‘pass’ is to start labelling what people have said, and grouping smaller pieces together into categories of information.

Remember that we are NOT transcribing the entire focus group, and then attaching label/categories

to each line or sentence of dialogue. There is NO NEED to write down every single thing that is said (not at this time—you can always go back and get extra quotes as needed). If you find yourself trying to write everything, you should STOP and review your goals/questions.

1. Start watching the video again, also including the moderator’s question. STOP to consider what s/he actually said: Might her/his wording or manner have signalled participants to respond in a certain way (e.g. to agree that something was important, or a good idea?).
2. Keep watching the video. STOP when anyone in the group thinks that **a section is interesting/important for your question** (*see below for more on what that means*).
  - a) Sections may be of different lengths—maybe as short as a sentence, or as much as a “paragraph” of speech.
  - b) The segment may include multiple “turns”-- person says something, moderator asks for more information, and person explains.
3. Re-watch that section—do others agree is relevant to questions, important, perhaps a good, illustrative quote? *Team members do not have to agree.*
  - a) Keep some brief notes of what is discussed, why it is thought to be interesting, etc.
  - b) Try to create a **descriptive label** for each relevant/interesting segment (you can always change it later!)
  - c) Note the **video time stamp** of segments/quotes so you can find them later!
4. **Keep 2 sets of notes** as you continue to watch, start, and stop: one as a **memo** of your discussion and reasoning, the other with an incipient list of **descriptive labels and categories**.
  - a) This second list is moving away from literally what people said, to a higher-level description.
  - b) Sometimes, statements will have multiple ideas and might need multiple labels. That is no problem!
  - c) Some labels might end up also being their own category
  - d) It’s OK to end up with an “other” category of interesting stuff that doesn’t have its own group.
5. As you start to have a list of labels, you might want to only note down the labels and time stamps of new segments/quotes, unless the specific wording is particularly useful.

### **What is interesting, or important?**

Guide yourselves with your focus group goals and original questions: what helps you to “answer” those questions, and meet the goal(s)? However, also try to be open to things that are potentially useful for the later project, but don’t fit the exact goals.

#### **For a given segment, you might ask yourself/ a team member...**

Does that provide information for one of our questions?

Is that interesting, but not related to a question?

Is that interesting, not related to a question, but something our group should try to consider? (new idea or source of information, possible problem/challenge...)

Keep in mind that **relevant info might surface anywhere in the focus group**—during question 3, someone says something really insightful for question 1.

## REVIEW YOUR WORK

At the end of the segment, review your notes and labels. Start grouping labels into larger categories if you can. Statements or segments can have multiple labels and “count” in multiple categories. Don’t agonise over where to put something!

For each category, you might want to **pull out a few quotes** that you think are particularly representative of the category, or particularly insightful.

**Check your work:** Do you think things are labelled and grouped together in a way that helps you understand the material and “answer” your question? You can always move things around.

Again consider whether there were other ideas, themes, attitudes, values, patterns of interaction that appeared across this discussion question, and might be useful for your group to consider.

## 4. Reporting back to other groups: What have you found?

Make sure to STOP in time for the whole team to discuss what you think you have found out so far, and share across questions (if your team has split up into pairs)/ **Remember that these findings are not final;** you are free to completely change your minds later about what is important (or not) and what it all means. For today, focus on some interesting pieces to share with your classmates.

**This explanation and discussion stage is also a part of the analysis.** It is an important way of working out ideas and accounts of the data. You may be able to discuss and reach consensus, but it is OK if you do not. There is room for multiple interpretations.

### Make sure you are ready to share the following:

- Reminder of your team sub-theme (e.g. packaging, off-campus cooking...)
- How you tried to use your focus group: get more information by exploring ideas/behaviour/ decision-making vs. get feedback on specific ideas...
- *In one sentence*, who were your participants? (e.g. “4 students who regularly buy lunch on campus”)
- 3-4 key findings from today’s rough analysis. *Make sure to briefly explain the question/idea to which each finding relates, so it will make sense to your audience!*

If there is time, the groups can discuss more about their focus groups and their analysis thus far.