

FINAL
11/8/07

Moderator's Guide Education/Students

INTRODUCTION

- MRB, who we are, what we do.
- Focus group method -- Peer pressure – everyone’s opinion is important, differences of opinion are encouraged.
- Respondent introductions -- Name, age, where they go to school, size of school, activities involved with in school, etc.

Today we’re going to be talking about your experiences in school.

BACKGROUND/WARM UP

You’re all high school seniors. Tell me a little about what it’s like being a senior.

- What is good about being a senior?
- What is not so good about it?
- Tell me a little about your day-to-day activities. What kinds of things do you do at school?
- What do you like about your classes?
- What don’t you like about them?
- Do you do any other academic things aside from your classes? What kinds of things?
- What kinds of other non-academic things are you involved in? PROBE FOR:
 - Sports
 - Clubs
 - Music
 - Work

DECISION MAKING/INFLUENCERS

- Tell me a little about your future plans. What are you going to do after high school?
- Why have you decided to do this? What influenced you to take this path?
- Did you consider other paths? Which ones?
- Why did you not choose to take those?
- What factors did you take into consideration when you made your decisions? PROBE FOR:
 - Friends' opinions
 - Parents' opinions
 - Money
 - Time
 - Location
- How do you make decisions on what you plan to do? Tell me a little about the process.
- Do you do any research? What kinds of research? PROBE FOR:
 - Online - what kinds of sites?
 - Library - what kinds of books/resources?
 - Media - what kinds?
- Do you talk to people? Who? PROBE FOR:
 - Parents
 - Other family
 - Friends
 - Teachers
 - Guidance counselors
 - Doctors/other professionals
- What are the most important influencers in your life? Who or what do you listen to or pay attention to the most?

MOTIVATION

- What kinds of things do you get excited about? What kinds of things get you motivated to do things?
- Are there any particular people that are more likely to motivate you? Who are they?
- What else motivates you? PROBE FOR:
 - Money
 - Recognition
 - The activity itself (e.g. having a passion for the work itself)
 - Fear/avoiding punishment – from whom or what?
 - Approval/encouragement from parents
 - Approval/encouragement from friends
 - Approval/encouragement from teachers, others
- Would you say that you're self motivated? Or do you get your motivation more from other people or other things?
- How about sports or hobbies or other activities that you're involved with – what motivates to you work hard and do all of those kinds of things?
- How about your school work – what motivates you to do well on your school assignments? Why do you study and try hard to do well?
- How important are grades to you? How do feel when you get your grade on an assignment? How do you feel when you get your final grades for each semester?
- What would get you to work even harder or try harder to do well in school?
- Do you treat your assignments the same as exams? Are you motivated in the same way to do well on exams?

TESTING

- How do you feel about taking tests?
- Do you make any distinction between the tests you take for your classes and other kinds of tests?
- What other kinds of tests have you taken?
- Do you prepare for different types of tests in the same way?
- Do you care about them in the same way?
- Are you motivated to do your best for all the different types of tests that you take?
- Why do you think you need to take them?
- How do you feel when you find out you have to take the test?
- How do you feel right before you begin?
- How do you feel when you finish the test?
- How do you feel when you get the results of any of your tests? If you do well does it make you feel good?
- Is it the same feeling as when you do well in sports or other activities? How is it different?
- Is it the same feeling as when you do well on your other school assignments? How is it different?
- Do you have the same feeling when you do well on standardized tests as when you do well on tests you take for your classes? How is it different?

NAEP CONCEPT EVALUATION

DESCRIBE NAEP IN GENERAL, CONCEPTUAL TERMS

- What is your overall reaction to this description?
- Have you ever heard of this kind of thing?
- Have you ever been a part of this? What was your experience? How did you feel about it when you went through it?
- Do you know anyone who's taken such a test?
- Is this different from some of the other tests that you take? In what way?
- What would you see as the benefit of this test? Who would it help?
PROBE FOR:

- The country as a whole
- The school system
- Your school
- Your teachers
- Your parents
- You

- How would it help you?
- Do you think it's important for the government to know how students are doing across the country and across time? How do you think the information will/can be used?
- Have you ever taken any tests where you did not get your results or scores?
- How did/would you feel about taking a test and not getting the results?

PARTICIPATION/ENGAGEMENT

- If you were asked to take part in such a test, would you? Why?/Why not?
- How do you think it would make you feel to take part in it?
- What concerns, if any, do you think you would have in taking part?
PROBE FOR:

- Missing classes
- Being singled out
- Not getting any feedback on how you did
- Being stressed out over a test

- How seriously would you take it? Would you try your best on it?
Why?/Why not?

INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATION/ENGAGEMENT

- What would make you more likely to take part in this kind of test? PROBE FOR:

- Recognition (within your school, in your local community)
- Credit toward community service requirements
- Receiving scores for your school/district
- Receiving your own scores
- Prizes
- Your parents' support/encouragement
- Your teachers' support/encouragement
- Your principal's support/encouragement
- [OTHER THINGS???

- Would you be more likely to participate if your entire class participated?
- Do you think it matters whether you do well on the test or not?
Why?/Why not?
- What would get you to try harder to do well on it?
- How important is it to have your teacher or a teacher that you know in the room when you're taking the test? Would you try harder?
- Should the principal be there? Would you try harder?

MESSAGES

- What kinds of things would you need to know before you decided to participate in this kind of test? What would be the most important things to tell you about this kind of test?
- What would be important to tell your parents?
- What would be important to tell your teachers about it?
- What kind of things would be important to tell you to get you to take it seriously and do your best on it?
- Who would you expect to get the information from? Who would you listen to about this kind of test?
- How should they get the information to you? PROBE:
 - Letters
 - Email
 - Web site (which one)
 - Advertising
 - Posters
 - Fliers
 - Through your teachers

REACTIONS TO MATERIALS

NOTE: WE CAN TEST ANY MATERIALS – EXISTING OR CONCEPTS.

FOR EACH ITEM:

- What is your overall reaction to this?
- What is this trying to say? What is it telling you?
- What is the main point of this piece?
- Who is this directed to? Is it talking to you or to somebody else?
- What do you particularly like/dislike about this piece? Why?
- Is there anything confusing or hard to understand?
- Is it complete? Is anything missing?
- Is it unique/different from other messages that are directed to you?
- Does this tell you something important about the kind of test we've been talking about?
- Is it relevant to you? Why/why not?
- Is it believable?
- Would this catch your attention? Why/why not?
- What would you do based on this piece/message? Would it get you to take any action?
- Would you be more likely to participate in the test based on this?
- Would you be more likely to take the test seriously and do your best based on this?

AFTER ALL MATERIALS HAVE BEEN SHOWN:

- Which of these approaches do you feel would be most effective? Why?
- Which do you think might not work as well? Why?
- Are there any things that are missing? Is there anything that you would recommend?

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- Where do you get information about what's happening in your school?
- What sources do you trust the most in getting information about your school?
- Where do you get other information about your education?
- Do you pay attention to education stories in the general media – on the television news or articles in the newspaper or magazines?
- Do you check any web sites? Which ones?
- What methods does your school use to communicate with you?

CONCLUSIONS

- Do you have any additional comments about what we've been talking about?
- Thank you.