

Educational Ventures

Project Code: 2023-1-IT02-KA220-SCH-000151181

FOCUS GROUP

By 30/10/2024 Assisi, Nara, CRAS and CAIO will involve target groups and experts in the field and will organize focus groups to evaluate and validate the content and structure of the technologies. The following tables and paragraphs contain useful tips for focus groups:

Focus group for specific stakeholders			
	Teachers	Students	Partners
Objective	To assess the effectiveness and practicality of the proposed technologies from the point of view of educators.	To collect feedback on the user experience and perceived effectiveness of technologies in learning.	To understand the perceptions and concerns of parents regarding the use of new technologies in education.
Issues to be addressed	Ease of use of technologies, integration into existing curriculum, challenges in implementation, need for additional training.	Engagement, motivation, ease of use, preferences between different technologies (AR, VR, online platforms).	Online security, balance between technology and traditional methods, support for home learning.

1

Focus group thematic			
	Immersive Technologies	Outdoor Learning	Cross-Cutting Competencies
Objective	To assess the effectiveness and applicability of AR and VR in specific educational settings.	To explore the integration of technologies into open-air learning activities.	To assess how the proposed technologies support the development of skills such as critical thinking, collaboration and creativity.

Practical guide for the organization of Focus Groups

Tips for organizing focus groups.....	2
Preparation	2
Focus Group Phases	2
Conclusion	4
Moderation tips	4
Sample questions.....	5
Focus groups by theme	5
Focus groups for specific stakeholders	6
Conclusion	7
Tips on gathering feedback and rating.....	8

Tips for organizing focus groups

Preparation

- **Participants:** Involve a diverse group of at least 10 people, including teachers, students, and relevant stakeholders. If possible, invite one or more researchers from your organization or school to support moderation and observation.
- **Objectives and questions:** rely on internal guidelines (e.g., “green table” and “orange table”) to define focus group questions. Structure the questions as follows:
 - **General questions by topic (“green table”):** Introduce and stimulate discussion on key topics (immersive technologies, outdoor education, soft skills).
 - **Role-specific questions (“orange table”):** To gather targeted feedback, ask questions differentiated for each role (e.g., teachers on integrating technology into the school curriculum; students on technology motivation and preferences, stakeholders on online safety).
- **Environment and tools:** select a comfortable and quiet space. Prepare tools for notes and some infographic support.

Focus Group Phases

1. Introduction

- **Project presentation:** provide a brief overview of the project, detailing the objectives, progress, and value of the focus group in improving modules and technologies. Help participants understand the context and their input.

Educational Ventures

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- Objectives of the focus group: explain that the meeting aims to evaluate and refine the modules and technologies of the Educational Venture model. Invite participants to share free and authentic opinions.

2. General discussion by topic

- Introductory questions: start with open-ended questions, addressed to the whole group, to encourage a spontaneous discussion on the central topics (indicated in the “green table”).

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- Discussion guide: leave room for conversation, intervening only to keep the focus on the main topics.

Educational Ventures

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3. Role-specific discussion

- Targeted questions: conduct a differentiated discussion by role.

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Issues to be addressed	Ease of use of technologies, integration into existing curriculum, challenges in implementation, need for additional training.	Engagement, motivation, ease of use, preferences between different technologies (AR, VR, online platforms).	Online security, balance between technology and traditional methods, support for home learning.

4

For example:

- Teachers: ask for feedback on teaching effectiveness and difficulties in implementation.
- Students: investigate interest, ease of use, and preferences across technologies (e.g., AR, VR, online platforms).
- Stakeholders: gather insights into the project's potential impact on a larger scale.

Alternate questions between participants of different roles to keep attention high and stimulate dynamic interactions.

Conclusion

Comments and suggestions: open the discussion to collect free comments and proposals. This is the time to listen to final impressions and spontaneous ideas.

Moderation tips

Each group is unique; adapt your approach depending on your reactions and involvement. Changes in pitch and rhythm can stimulate participants to participate more actively.

Encourage participants to engage in dialogue with each other, avoiding a one-way interview structure. This contributes to richer feedback and a collaborative environment.

Educational Ventures

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Sample questions

Below is an example of how questions might be broken down and phrased:

Focus groups by theme

Technologie Immersive (AR, VR)

Objective: To evaluate the effectiveness and applicability of AR and VR in specific educational settings.

Suggested questions:

- How do you perceive the effectiveness of AR and VR in learning compared to traditional methods?
- What benefits do you see in the use of immersive technologies to delve into complex or abstract topics?
- How do you rate the quality of interaction between students and technology? Are they easily involved or are there obstacles?
- How do AR and VR support the development of soft skills (e.g. critical thinking)?

Outdoor learning

Objective: to explore the integration of technologies in outdoor learning activities.

5

Suggested questions:

- How can immersive technologies be integrated into outdoor learning activities? What benefits do they bring?
- What challenges or limitations do you see in using technology in non-traditional environments, such as outdoors?
- Do you think technologies help to better connect students to nature or their surroundings? How so?

Soft skills

Objective: to evaluate how the proposed technologies support the development of skills such as critical thinking, collaboration and creativity.

Suggested questions:

- How do immersive technologies (AR, VR) facilitate the development of critical thinking and creativity among students?
- If you use them, have you noticed an improvement in collaboration between students thanks to the use of these technologies? In what activities or contexts?
- Do the technologies used offer opportunities for the development of soft skills? What suggestions do you have to improve these aspects?

Educational Ventures

Project Code: 2023-1-IT02-KA220-SCH-000151181

Focus groups for specific stakeholders

Teachers

Objective: to evaluate the effectiveness and practicality of the proposed technologies from the point of view of educators.

Suggested questions:

- What are the main difficulties in integrating technologies (AR, VR, online platforms) into the existing curriculum?
- Do you think immersive technologies are easy to use in the educational context? What could improve its use?
- What challenges did you encounter in implementing these technologies in the classroom?
- Do you feel you need additional training to use these technologies effectively? In which areas?

Students

Objective: to collect feedback on the user experience and perceived effectiveness of technologies in learning.

Suggested questions:

- How motivated do you feel when using immersive technologies like AR and VR? How do these technologies affect your engagement?
- Which technologies do you find easiest to use (between AR, VR and online platforms)? What difficulties did you encounter?
- Do you prefer to use these technologies over traditional learning methods? Because?
- Do you feel that these technologies are safe? What would improve your perception of online security?

6

Stakeholders

Objective: to understand parents' perceptions and concerns regarding the use of new technologies in education.

Suggested questions:

- What are your main concerns about online safety when using immersive technologies such as AR and VR?
- How do you perceive the balance between the use of technology and traditional methods in education? Which do you think is more effective?
- How can technologies support learning at home? What improvements would you suggest?

Educational Ventures

Project Code: 2023-1-IT02-KA220-SCH-000151181

Conclusion

After the specific questions, it is important to leave a space to gather freer opinions and suggestions from all participants. It may be helpful to ask:

- Are there any other aspects or suggestions you would like to share regarding the use of technologies in the educational context?
- Do you have any further thoughts or questions about how technology and more traditional learning methods can be integrated?

Educational Ventures

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Tips on gathering feedback and rating

Collecting feedback is essential to obtain a complete and structured view of the opinions and reactions of the participants. The following techniques allow you to analyse in depth the data collected during a focus group, helping to improve the effectiveness and accuracy of the final analysis:

- **Immediate analysis:** during the conduct of the focus group, the moderator can take notes on the dynamics of the group, the reactions of the participants and the most relevant topics that emerged.
- **Audio/video recording:** the recording (authorized by the participants) allows you to listen to and review the discussion later, allowing for a more in-depth and detailed analysis. This could become a testimony to be shown at the training level to other targets as well.
- **Transcription:** the complete transcription of the discussion allows you to analyse the verbal content in a systematic way.
- **Evaluation questionnaire:** the moderator can prepare a short questionnaire to be administered at the end of the focus group to know the participants' impressions.
- **Observation:** an external observer can participate in the focus group without intervening in the discussion, noting the dynamics of the group and the interactions between the participants.

8

These are different modes, which can be used individually or in combination.