

Step 4

What kind of data do you get from a focus group?

This is a focus group transcript from a *TfC* team in New York. This can help your class in at least two possible ways:

- 1) *Design*. When deciding about what method is best for your question it is often helpful to see what data the method generates *before* making a design decision.
- 2) *Tools*. When creating research tools, it is helpful to see the relationship between a focus group prompt and the responses/ data the prompts provide.

Note: This is just one focus group conversation a *TfC* class transcribed. If you have time it would be ideal to run a second focus group. So, consider the time and resources that might be involved. Then you will want to analyze these transcripts looking for common themes or patterns. It is helpful for students to imagine what they will do when they get this data and what kind of analysis will be involved. We will discuss the analysis in more detail in Step 6, but for now it is helpful to realize what data this method provides.

**Focus Group Interview: Date recorded XXXXX
Recorder: XXXXX**

- 10 people-relaxed posture-comfortable

What comes to mind when you hear stories of low voter turnout?

Individual comments in order:

- Apathy-just don't care
- Disgust at the lack of civic duty-don't bother to look into issues
- People die for this right every day
- People don't think 1 vote counts

- People complain but they don't vote
- Bad example set-should find the issues right in front of them
- Depends on vote and if they have an inquisitive mind
- Community elections like school tax votes-there's no campaign

Did you know of lower turnout here-25% yesterday in Port Chester?

- Some people second guess
- Questions about advertising-some say out that it's not an issue-it's all there
- But people don't think it is
- It's the issues –don't know the differences or don't have time (childcare and multiple jobs)
- Involved in own environment
- Many agree

But why is turnout barely different when people have lots of time?

- Voting hours are open a while-it's the people's fault
- New ballot system is no excuse
- too busy to feel educated or just don't care-don't know who to vote for-fear of making wrong choice
- people don't know where to go for info (don't have money to pay for Westmore News)
- lower socioeconomic-no internet and language barriers
- parents don't have time or think their vote makes that big of a difference
- it's easier when you are well off

What do you think government can do to give more info or secure feelings?

- Voter guides like the one in NYC with issues mailed to all residents with public funding
- People learn that one does exist-League of Women Voters and its boring looking and cheap paper
 - Thoughts of looking nicer and more inspiring-should entail why voters should vote
- Why doesn't government fund this?
 - It's political –to benefit self-if you keep vote low than stay in office
 - Improper use of money-controversial
- Educating-why local level is so important-people should see local as more direct-not only national election (part of League of Women Voters)

Who or what influence your voting tendencies?

- Election board meetings on TV-nationally-paper and internet
- Family-dad is up on issues, he thinks similarly to the rest of family
- More gossip and news in Westmore
- Loyalty and trend with family
- Visible people –from same town-familiar
- Some don't watch LMCTV (local community affairs station) tedious
 - Many don't care about cleaning leaves, but they do for taxes
- People are lying! The info is all there!
- Local paper actually is only available when you pay for it.
- It matters how info is presented.
- The issues have to mean something to you, or people won't get that info.

- There should be a system on LMCTV or meetings where there are time frames for different issues, so people only have to watch or see the issues they care about instead of watching everything
- Registration should be automatic-send a voting card-easy to do -people will
- Budget cut-school business problems
- People like posting issues and times of meeting to save time-put info in news stations
- Lose a lot with email –misinterpreting
- Younger people-Facebook for info-apps on phones
 - Opinions and drama interests

Do you believe this is a problem, because of bedroom communities? (e.g. live in one place but work and spend time in another)

- When people don't have kids it's tough to stay involved and care about school issues.
- People don't vote because they are content-"don't find out if it doesn't hurt."
- Boils down to lack of knowledge- "don't know enough don't vote enough."
- No matter how many websites and newspapers there are people have to read them.
- Many are too lazy to look for it
- Look at other countries-compulsory voting, voting as a civic duty.
- Referendum system?
- Vote because you see your parents doing it-vote counted in 1st experience.

