

Research with Educators? Consider Bulletin Board Focus Groups

How is a Bulletin Board Focus Group (BBFG) Conducted?

- ✓ Roughly 20 multi-part questions posted per day
- ✓ Participants check the bulletin board, read comments, and respond at their convenience
- ✓ Educators are asked to log-in at least twice per day (once to respond to posted questions, and again to respond to moderator probes)
- ✓ Moderators can post traditional, open-ended questions, polls, and share (or receive) content (e.g., videos, pictures, documents, etc.)
- ✓ While the discussion does not occur “live,” moderators are actively engaged throughout the research to ensure thorough feedback is obtained

What Are the Advantages of a BBFG?

- Flexible:** Easily include new questions that arise, gather preliminary qualitative feedback about products in development, and can accommodate a variety of creative exercises/output
- Time-efficient:** No travel is involved, and it is not necessary to repeat standard introductory questions if multi-phase research is conducted
- Representative sample:** The convenience of an online forum increases participation and ensures breadth of respondent-types (e.g., national sample, no bias based on those who can attend, etc.)
- Cost-efficient:** Lack of travel and an online methodology means that this approach is a less expensive (with capacity for larger sample sizes in a small amount of time) than traditional focus groups conducted across multiple cities.

Why is this Approach a Good Fit for Educators?

- Convenience:** As many educators are in class most of the day, the BBFG allows them to participate in the research at a time most convenient for them
- Passionate about the Subject Matter:** Educators are passionate about teaching and give well thought out, detailed feedback, with little probing; they interact with each other for a lively discussion
- Time to Review Materials:** BBFGs are an excellent way to obtain teacher feedback on digital or print content and give educators all the time they need to adequately review and evaluate the materials
- Develop Communities:** BBFGs are perfect for longitudinal research with educators. Educator communities are excellent for iterative evaluations of materials over several months. And with educators, we have seen very few dropouts over time.