Purpose: To discover student 1) awareness of General Education program in general, 2) knowledge of expected learning outcomes in particular, and 3) familiarity with current assessment preparations being conducted by FAMU

Participants: Three (3) different groups of students, with 7-10 students per group. Groups to be comprised of students from diverse disciplines and, when possible, diversity of race, age, gender, etc., within each group; Preferably no more than two students from the same major in a group of 7 and no more than 3 with the same major in a group of 10.

Rationale: Reflect the FAMU population

Moderators: No more than two (2) faculty/staff members, one of who will be a member of the GEAC Committee

Rationale: One to ask questions; the other to record responses and observation of group behavior

Selection of Participants:
Perhaps students from a humanities class or history class or one of these English classes: Improved Writing, Introduction to Literature, English Literature, or possibly an ENC 1102 class

Rationale: Diverse classifications and majors enrolled

Schedule for Meetings:
Once a semester, preferably mid semester; 45-60 minutes per group

Rationale: Avoid beginning and end of semester challenges and rituals. Provide adequate time for Committee assessment of findings and time for implementation of changes, if needed, before next semester commences
FOCUS GROUP LOGISTICS

Conducting the Focus Group Assessment

1) Extend greetings  
2) Thank group for willingness to meet with you  
3) Mention time limit for session  
4) If taping, ask permission to tape, acknowledging that you will not share recordings w/ others. Say, “All information gathered during inquiry will remain confidential as far as participants’ names. Source(s) of direct quotations, when given, will not be identified.”  
5) Tell why you are conducting the inquiry. See Purpose above or modification of it.  
6) Inform students that information that you are gathering will be “descriptive rather than numeric” You want their “words” and “impressions”  
7) Begin with questions and recording. See Suggestions below.  
8) At the close of the session, thank participants again.

QUESTIONS

[Moderator will use discretion in choosing questions. Some questions serve as prompts if students are slow in responding.]

1. What does the phrase General Education mean to you?

2. Have you completed General Education requirements?  
   If not, what other courses must you take?

3. Have you heard of the phrase Academic Learning Compacts?

4. Tell us about your experience with communication here at the University.  
   A) How much practice have you had in writing?  
   B) Which classes required you to write? Types of writing assignments?  
   C) Do you feel there should be more writing assignments or fewer?  
   D) Has any emphasis been placed on reading—strengthening reading skills, that is?  
   E) If so, which class(es) placed emphasis on reading?  
   F) Discuss opportunities to express yourself orally in class.

5. How much emphasis has been placed on critical thinking in your classes?  
   A) Are you encouraged to think, or are you expected to give the correct answer?  
   B) When given research assignments, are you expected simply to report data collected or analyze and make projections about it?  
   C) Can you cite a specific case in point of a critical thinking assignment given to you?
FOCUS GROUP LOGISTICS

6. Which of these two, would you say, has provided you with a better understanding and appreciation of **cultural diversity**: the FAMU (environmental) experience or studies at FAMU?
   A) Has there seemingly been a special effort to provide social activities that showcase diversity?
   B) What about exposure to different cultures in content courses, such as history, humanities, literature (for instance, discussion of other authors besides African American and American Caucasian writers)?
   C) During class discussions are efforts made to encourage other ethnic groups represented in classes to share relevant facts/tidbits about their heritage?
   D) Do teachers share knowledge about their heritage as well?

7. Consider the following dilemma. You’re home for the summer. You need to earn money to return to school in the fall. A job offer presents itself, but the prospective employer clearly states that he is looking for someone who will be able to continue working during the fall. Do you reject the job offer, or do you take it, knowing very well that you have no plans of remaining home during the fall?

   **Allow students to respond.** Then ask them what the phrase **ethical values** means to them. Proceed with the following questions:

   A) Who plays the greater role in teaching ethical values, the family or school?
   B) How are ethical values taught or reinforced in school? Which classes?
   C) Are you familiar with the FANG?

8. Tell us about your experience with **quantitative reasoning** here at FAMU.
   A) In which classes are you required to use quantitative reasoning?
   B) On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest rating, how well do you feel you were prepared for college math?
   C) Having taken Gen Ed math, how would you rate your preparedness to master math/math related problems in upper level courses or after graduation?
   D) If responses to B and C are negative, what changes would you suggest be taken to strengthen the Gen Ed math component(s)?

9. Not counting out of class study groups for final exams, to what extent, if any, have your Gen Ed courses afforded you opportunities to **collaborate** with fellow students in the learning process?
   A) Have you given group oral presentations? Group papers?
   B) If so, in which classes? Elaborate on this.
   C) If not, would you like to have an opportunity to complete collaborative projects?
   D) How might collaborative projects prepare you for the professional setting?
FOCUS GROUP LOGISTICS

10. In recent years technology literacy has become one of the basic skills along with reading, writing, and arithmetic that students must master to prove that they are proficient in their respective fields.
   A) How technologically literate are you?
   B) Do you have access to a computer at home?
   C) How accessible are computers at school?
   D) What impact has computer literacy or the lack thereof had on your academic work?
   E) What changes would you like to see made at FAMU regarding acquisition, allocation, training, and use of technological resources?

11. How frequently have parallels been made between instruction in the General Education courses and life-long learning?
   A) Have you been encouraged to participate in activities outside of the classroom that impact course content?
   B) Have you been encouraged to join or attend meetings of professional organizations related to courses/discipline?
   C) How often have connections been made between what you were studying in the classroom and application or relevance of that content to the real world in the future?

12. Is there anything else you would like to share with us regarding academic concerns of the General Education courses?

Reference

UW Bothell Campus Master Planning Focus Group Questions. Student Affairs. June 2005