

## Texas Pathways Institute #6: *Teaching and Learning in a Texas Pathways Framework* Faculty Focus Group(s) Discussion Guide

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### Outcomes for the Faculty Focus Group Advance Work

1. To learn what practices, systems, and classroom strategies promote effective teaching and learning.
2. To understand the innovative practices that faculty are utilizing in their classes to promote learning.

Each college will conduct one or two faculty focus groups with 7-12 participants in each. Leadership teams will share the insights from Faculty Focus Groups with their Pathways coach and use the information to inform the college's Action Plan at the Texas Pathways Institute on November 14-16 in Dallas, Texas.

### Selecting Participants for the Faculty Focus Group(s)

**Required:** All Colleges - Cadres 1+, 1, 2, and 3

- Recruit a purposeful sample composed of: (a) faculty representing workforce programs, and (b) faculty representing academic transfer programs.
- Recruit a diverse group of faculty for this focus group (race, age, gender, etc.).

**Recommended:** Cadres 1+ and 1 and **Optional:** Cadre 2 and Cadre 3 Colleges

- Each college may conduct a second faculty focus group focused on corequisite supports for math and English at their institution.
- Recruit a purposeful sample composed of: (a) math corequisite faculty and (b) English corequisite faculty.
- Recruit a diverse group of faculty for this focus group (race, age, gender, etc.).

### Conducting the Faculty Focus Groups

- Conduct one or two focus groups either in person or virtually based on available resources.
  - **Required:** All colleges will conduct a Workforce and Academic Faculty Focus Group. Utilize the focus group questions from all four topics provided on pages 5-6 (highlighted in blue).
  - **Recommended/Optional:** Colleges may choose to conduct a second Corequisite Faculty Focus Group with corequisite math and English faculty. Utilize the focus group questions from all four topics on pages 7-8 (highlighted in green).
- Utilize the focus group facilitation guide (pages 3-4).

- Synthesize what you learned and identify key themes to share with your college’s Leadership Team in the Faculty Focus Group Report(s). There is a unique template for each faculty group.
  - If you conducted only one focus group, please complete the Workforce and Academic Faculty Report Template.
  - If you conducted two focus groups, please complete the Workforce and Academic Faculty Report Template AND the Corequisite Faculty Report Template.

### Timeline for Advance Work

**September 2:** Pathways Leads Orientation Webinar (Recording will be posted on the [Texas Pathways Institute #6 event page.](#))

**September 7:** Pathways Leads receive advance work package by email, including: (a) Faculty Focus Group Guides with Faculty Focus Group Questions, (b) Consent Form for Faculty, and (c) Faculty Focus Group Report Templates. This advance work package will be posted on the [Texas Pathways Institute #6 event page.](#)

**September 7 – October 31:** Recruit targeted faculty, conduct focus group(s), and synthesize what you learned on the Faculty Focus Group Report template(s). One report will be created and submitted for each faculty focus group conducted.

**November 7:** LAST DAY TO SUBMIT FOCUS GROUP REPORTS. Upload Focus Group Report(s) to TSC’s Document Center on the [Texas Pathways Institute #6 event page.](#)

Determine project management timeline with input from the Pathways Leadership Team (see table below).

	9/2	9/5-9/9	9/12-9/16	9/19-9/23	9/26-9/30	10/3-10/7	10/10-10/14	10/17-10/21	10/24-10/28	10/31-11/4	11/7
Orientation Webinar											
Receive Advance Packet & Logistical Planning w/IR											
Recruit Students											
Recruit Faculty											
Conduct Focus Groups											
Synthesis of Student Responses => Complete Report Template											
Synthesis of Faculty Responses => Complete Report Template(s)											
Upload Focus Group Reports to Document Center											

## Conducting The Faculty Focus Group Session(s)

### A. Preparation

As participants enter, the coordinator should:

1. Ask participants to sign in
2. Ask participants to sign Consent Form for Faculty

### B. Overview of Focus Group Discussion

As focus discussion begins, the facilitator should:

1. Introduce themselves
2. Explain the purpose of the focus group
3. Confirm that participants have signed the consent forms and reiterate that participants may stop participating at any point. Be sure to provide each participant with a copy of the consent form and you keep the signed form.
4. Describe his/her role:
  - To ask questions and keep the group on track and on topic
  - Keep the discussion moving so that all topics are explored
  - Allow everyone to participate even though some people might have more to say about a particular topic; all voices matter
5. Describe participants' role:
  - To share experiences and opinions, both positive and negative
  - Explain that there are no right or wrong answers
  - Explain that everyone should equally participate in the discussion, however faculty are not required to answer every question
6. Explain logistics of discussion:
  1. 90-minutes maximum
  2. Arrangements for refreshments
  3. Cell phones turned off
7. Explain ground rules:
  1. One person speaks at a time; no side conversations
  2. No one person dominates; everyone will have a chance to be heard
  3. There are no right or wrong answers; the discussion is about participants' experiences
8. Introduce notetaker and if applicable, audio/video operators. Explain purpose of recording/notetaking:
  - For the purposes of highlighting "faculty voices" at the college
  - Explain that no names will be used in reporting
  - As the college representative, show appreciation for time, honesty, and authentic conversation
  - Invite questions from participants

## C. Faculty Focus Group Discussion

### Facilitator Tips:

The goal of these conversations is to hear from as many different faculty as possible to obtain a rich description of what practices, systems, and classroom strategies promote effective teaching and learning at your institution.

Remind participants of the value of differing points of view:

- Does anyone see it differently?
- Are there any other points of view?

Probes (questions to elicit more detailed responses):

- Would you please explain further? Tell me more about that.
- Can you give me an example of what you mean?
- Would you say more?
- Is there anything else?
- Please describe what you mean.
- Does someone have a similar/different experience?

*[Starting on the next page is a bank of objectives and questions which can be used to form your discussion guide.]*

## Faculty Focus Group Questions: Workforce and Academic Faculty

Topics	Workforce and Academic Faculty Questions
General Information About Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Please introduce yourself, how long have you taught in your career and at our college, and your teaching field.</li> <li>▪ What inspired you to become a community college faculty member?</li> <li>▪ What is your favorite course to teach and why?</li> </ul>
Teaching Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What are the qualities of an effective faculty member (e.g., knowledge/experience, good teaching skills, caring about students, etc.)?</li> <li>▪ How would you describe the culture at your college as it pertains to teaching and learning?</li> <li>▪ Think about the courses you teach. To what extent have you integrated active learning practices into your courses?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How are your activities structured so that all students are engaged?</li> <li>○ What strategies do you use if you notice a student is not engaged?</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Paint a picture of what collaborative learning looks like in your courses. How do your students respond to it?</li> <li>▪ How do you incorporate cultural awareness and inclusivity into your classes?</li> <li>▪ What is the biggest challenge to implementing engaging teaching strategies? How have you overcome this challenge?</li> <li>▪ How do you build relationships with students during the semester?</li> <li>▪ How do you encourage students to build peer relationships during the semester?</li> <li>▪ What professional development opportunities have the college provided to faculty to develop strategies such as active teaching, culturally relevant and inclusive teaching, faculty-student communication, and assessment?</li> <li>▪ What kinds of PD would you like to engage in to develop your teaching craft?</li> </ul>
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As you are designing and teaching a course, describe how you know that learning is going on and what you want to be able to observe when learning is happening.</li> <li>▪ How do you assess if your teaching practices result in student learning in your classroom?</li> <li>▪ How does the college provide you with the data you need to ensure that students from different backgrounds (i.e., ages, race/ethnicity, and income levels) are learning in your classroom?</li> <li>▪ While content mastery is important, what other learning skills do you think are important for students to master?</li> <li>▪ How does the college engage you in the development of student learning outcomes at the course level? At the program level?</li> <li>▪ How do you incorporate course-level student learning outcomes into your learning assessment process?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How aware are you of the program learning outcomes associated with what students need to know and be able to do upon completion of a program? How do you incorporate program learning outcomes into your learning assessment process for your courses?</li> <li>▪ How has your department or college integrated feedback from employers or transfer institutions to improve program learning outcomes for graduates/transfer students?</li> </ul>
Faculty Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What would you recommend as the most important things faculty can do to help students succeed inside the classroom? To help student achieve their educational goals?</li> <li>▪ What would you recommend the college do to support the teaching and learning efforts of faculty?</li> <li>▪ Is there anything else you would like to share with us?</li> </ul>

## Faculty Focus Group Questions: Corequisite Math and English Faculty

Topics	Corequisite Faculty Questions
General Information About Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Please introduce yourself, including how long have you taught in your career and at our college, and what your teaching field is.</li> <li>▪ What inspired you to become a community college faculty member?</li> <li>▪ What is your favorite course to teach and why?</li> </ul>
Corequisite Teaching Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What are the qualities of an effective faculty member (e.g., knowledge/ experience, good teaching skills, caring about students, etc.)?</li> <li>▪ How would you describe the culture at your college as it pertains to teaching and learning?</li> <li>▪ How would you describe the design of the corequisite course you teach?</li> <li>▪ Which features of your corequisite course matter most for students' learning? How do you know?</li> <li>▪ Math faculty, how does the corequisite course design vary for different courses such as college algebra, statistics, math for business, and contemporary mathematics?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Why do you think this matters for student success?</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Think about your corequisite/gateway course. To what extent have you integrated active learning practices into your courses?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How are your activities structured so that all students are engaged?</li> <li>○ What strategies do you use if you notice a student is not engaged?</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Paint a picture of what collaborative learning looks like in your courses. How do your students respond to it?</li> <li>▪ How do you incorporate cultural awareness and inclusivity into your classes?</li> <li>▪ What is the biggest challenge to implementing engaging teaching strategies? How have you overcome this challenge?</li> <li>▪ How do you build relationships with students during the semester?</li> <li>▪ How do you encourage students to build peer relationships during the semester?</li> <li>▪ What professional development opportunities have the college provided to faculty to develop strategies such as active teaching, inclusive teaching, faculty-student communication, and assessment?</li> <li>▪ What kinds of PD would you like to engage in to develop your teaching craft?</li> </ul>
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As you are designing and teaching a course, describe how you know that learning is going on and what you want to be able to observe when learning is happening.</li> <li>▪ How do you assess if your teaching practices result in student learning in your classroom?</li> <li>▪ Will you share a favorite moment when you knew students were learning?</li> <li>▪ How does the college engage you in the development of student learning outcomes for corequisite courses?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How do you incorporate course-level student learning outcomes into your learning assessment process?</li> <li>▪ How does the college provide you with the data you need to ensure that students from different backgrounds (i.e., ages, race/ethnicity, and income levels) are learning in your classroom?</li> <li>▪ While content mastery is important, what other learning skills do you think are important for students to master in a corequisite course?</li> </ul>
Faculty Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What would you recommend as the most important things faculty can do to help students succeed inside the classroom? To help student achieve their educational goals?</li> <li>▪ What would you recommend the college do to support the teaching and learning efforts of faculty?</li> <li>▪ Is there anything else you would like to share with us?</li> </ul>