A scenario for focus group interviews with teachers

Project background

Research carried out as part of the "For Future Professionals" project.

Project Leader: Wroclaw University of Economics and Business

Partners:

- A Hungarian partner: The University of Pannonia, Hungary
- A Finnish partner: EduKo
- A Greek partner: The University of West Attica

The project is co-financed by EU funds under the Erasmus + programme.

Research objectives

Identifying the games/tests and/or assignment types that are preferred and used by teachers and collect past experiences and best practices.

Respondents

Teachers/lecturers of the higher education sector.

N=4 interviews, minimum 24 participants (6-10 teachers per group)

Methods

Focus group interviews – on average 45 minutes each

Time and place

June 2022 – September 2022

At least 1 focus group interview conducted in every countries (Finland, Greece, Poland and Hungary)

Moderator's guide

First of all, here is a set of ground rules that will be effective throughout the session:

- The focus group interview discussion should be directed by a facilitator/moderator who uses the interview guide or script. This helps to keep the conversation on track and ensures the topics under study are addressed.
- Record your session if possible for future listening. This record must not be shared and can be used by the moderator only (to prepare the report of the discussion, for example).
- Ask open-ended questions – ones that can't be answered with 'yes', 'no' or another single word. (Questions that require a "yes/no" response must be avoided, since this limits the amount of discussion that might take place.)
- Ask follow-up questions if you need more information about a participant's answer.
- Repeat participants' answers or periodically reflect back a summary of what you are hearing to ensure that you are understanding participants correctly.
- Use prompts to elicit more detailed responses. (For example, "Is there anything else you'd like to add?" or "Can you elaborate on that point a bit further?")
- Paraphrase a question if it is not clearly understandable (if nobody answers).
- Make sure that all opinions on a question get a chance to be heard.
- Do not expect group consensus. Participants don't have to agree on all items discussed. In fact, disagreement may reflect some interesting themes to explore further.

Focus group interview script
Background information & introduction
Introduce yourself and the topic of the research – say a few words about the project and the purpose of the interview. Obtain consent to record the interview and take notes in order to prepare a collective analyses and the research report. Assure the participants of their anonymity and the importance of maintaining confidentiality outside of the group. Emphasize that the answers of all the participants are equally valid and vital and it is okay if there are divergent views, as focus group interviews are not meant to achieve consensus. Then ask the participants to introduce themselves.

Introduction:
As part of the international project entitled "The Future Professionals" carried out the University of Pannonia together with partners from Finland (EduKo), Greece (The University of West Attica) and Poland (Wroclaw University of Economics and Business), we conduct focus group interviews with the teachers. The project is co-financed by EU funds under the Erasmus + programme. These focus group interviews are conducted with a view to develop a tool for remote assessment of the competencies of students of the following fields: Economic Analytics, Management, Tourism, Automotive.
The discussion will last about 45 minutes and, if you agree, it will be recorded. The recording will be used to develop a research report about the answers (keeping them anonymous). Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers – we are interested in your experiences, knowledge and opinion and it is also useful if we have different opinions, no consensus is expected.

Respondent's introduction
It is important to take time for the introduction of the respondents (even if they know each other) because this can help to "break the ice". The following questions can be used:
Could you please say a few words about yourself?
- Which academic programmes do you teach in? Bachelor, master or other? Which field does it belong to?
- How long have you been teaching in this field? (The field is important not the exact school.)
- Could you mention some of your subjects? Are these more theoretical or practical ones?

Section 1 – Past Experiences

The importance and forms of assessment
- Why do you think assessment is important?
- Why you think assessment is important for the student?
- What do you think about continuous assessment? In what cases is it useful and in what cases would you suggest to avoid using a continuous assessment?

Known and used assessment methods
- How can you measure the knowledge of the students? What factors can be measured? What skills can be measured?
- What kind of assessment methods have you heard about? *Create a list together!*
- How can you effectively measure the knowledge if students? Which methods do you find the best ones? Why?
- What kind of assessments have you tried/experienced so far? *Create a list together!*
- Choose one assessment method you like the best and describe the method how you use (in details) and the reasons why you like it!
- Choose one that you do not like at all and describe why you do not like it!
- In what cases would you suggest to use motivations (like extra points) during the semester (that can be counted in the final mark)? What do you think students think about these motivations?
- In what cases would you suggest a constantly reporting method from the student with a feedback from you? What do you think students think about this?
- In what cases would you suggest a self-testing method?

Competence-based assessment methods and gamification
- How much are you prepared to assess the skills of students? What does competence-based assessment mean to you?
- Have you ever hear about gamification? What does it mean? In which cases/situations/subjects can you imagine to use gamifications as an assessment processes?
- What extra information can be gained with these atypical assessments?
- How much do/would students like games as assessment according to your opinion? What are your experiences about it?
- In what cases would you suggest to exchange a "traditional exam" (answering questions using the memorised material) by a game or a gamified exam?
- How challenging is it to you to create games or gamified exams/assessments? What would help you?
- What kind of games do you prefer in your private life? (Either computer games or others, like table games, card games, sport games, etc.)

Section 2 – Examples

You can find a selected list of assessment methods – it can be completed by further examples from the list created in Section 1. Discuss and evaluate each of the examples with the respondents! Evaluation criteria:

- usefulness
- advantages
- disadvantages
- is it easy to complete an assessment like this or not

Examples to evaluate:

- simple choice test (one of the given answers is valid)
- multiple choice test (one to all of the given answers is valid)
- true/false test without explanation (decide if the given statement is true or false)
- true/false test with explanation (decide if the given statement is true or false and explain why)
- test with open-ended questions (writing less than 20 sentences about a given topic)
- long essay (writing more than 20 sentences about a given topic) writing in a given date and time
- long essay (writing more than 20 sentences about a given topic) writing at home until a deadline
- oral exam with given topics (discussion)
- presentation (of a project, topic, etc.) made together in a group
- presentation (of a project, topic, etc.) made individually
- solve a case study in a group
- solve a case study individually
- video film shooting (according to a given topic)
- situation game (behaving in a life-like situation)
- simulation game (longer, life-like decision-making process)
- earn points for classroom activity
- assessment of classroom activity

3. **Summary & wrap-up**

   Are there any further important issue in terms of assessments that we haven't discussed but you would like to talk about?

   Thank you for your answers!