



## **3. Use of Online Focus Groups to Tailor Curriculum**

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# Overview of Focus Groups

- **3 series of focus groups**
  - **Fall 2005, spring and fall 2006**
- **50 online groups**
  - **State- and gender- specific**
  - **n=315; 57% female, 43% males**
- **Goal**
  - **Design curriculum to meet needs and interests of young adult college students**

# Study Design

- **Krueger & Casey method, 2000**
- **WebCT platform, campus version 4.1**
  - Chat-type, synchronous format
- **Standardized protocol across all states**
  - Study manual
  - Centralized moderator
  - State-specific co-moderator online and on phone with moderator
- **Centralized training**

# Discussion Guides

- **Basic structure modified for specific purposes**
- **ARCS Model for Motivation used to structure questions (Keller, 1987)**
  - **Attention**
  - **Relevance**
  - **Confidence**
  - **Satisfaction**

# Analysis

- **Nvivo software**
  - **Coding of printed transcripts**
  - **Themes identified by grouping and categorization**
- **Summary statements developed by question**
- **Summary reports written**

# Series 1

- **Objective**
  - **Identify how college students perceive goals, needs, and interests as they related to the 4 curriculum themes**
    - **healthful eating**
    - **exercise**
    - **size acceptance**
    - **weight management**



# Series 1 Results

- **Healthful eating**

- **Regulating intake important to manage weight**
- **Time, lack of healthful food availability, and social situations were barriers**

- **Exercise**

- **Being physically active was a goal**
- **Social support, access to facilities were motivators**

# Series 1 Results, continued

- **Size Acceptance**
  - **Social acceptance and affirmation that current shape or size was attractive would enable body size acceptance**
  - **Change in mindset needed to be accepting of sizes differing from ideal**



# Series 1 Results, continued

- **Weight Management**
  - **Weight-related goals were common**
  - **To maintain weight, young adults need**
    - **to regulate food intake**
    - **have good choices available**
    - **be physically active**
    - **have an environment that promotes physical activity**
    - **have a metabolism that resists weight gain**

# Series 2

- **Objectives**

- **To confirm themes from Series 1**
- **Explore attitudes about**
  - eating behavior
  - function of physical activity in social life
  - acceptance of body size diversity
- **To pretest viewing lesson within focus group format**

# Series 2 Results



## ● **Healthful Eating**

- **Confirmed barriers and added details**
  - lack of cooking skills
  - limited time to shop and cook
  - cost of healthful foods
- **Skills needed to help overcome barriers**

## ● **Exercise**

- **Confirmed importance of social support and need to increase self-efficacy**

# Series 2 Results, continued

- **Size Acceptance**
  - **Confirmed that college students show size acceptance by accepting diversity in themselves and others, but they don't feel students are accepting**
  - **Success with viewing lesson within focus group context**



# Series 2 Results, continued

- **Weight Management**
  - **Unhealthy weight puts one at risk for ill health later in life, but health is not a concern/priority**
  - **Healthful eating and physical activity with strong social support needed for healthful lifestyles leading to weight management and good health**



# Series 3

- **Objective**

- To pretest online lessons
- To confirm consistency with ARCS model

- **Method**

- One lesson viewed by both genders within one state
- Questions designed to determine ARCS
- Transcripts used by lesson designers to modify lessons

# Series 3 Results

- **Attention—what stood out**
  - “Many different ways to exercise, don’t have to go to the gym”
- **Relevance**
  - “Useful” “practical” information
    - “how to shop for food” “cook for your style”
    - “personalizing lesson made it interesting”
    - “didn’t just tell you no fat no pizza eat only healthy it was very understanding”

# Wave 3 Results, continued

- **Confidence**

- “Easy to navigate”
- “Good review”

- **Satisfaction**

- “Knowing stats/finding out everyone in everyday life goes through what I go through, always concerned about image because of influence of society”
- “Questions were helpful to tell us what we should have gotten out of the readings”



# Using ARCS for Revisions

- **Attention**
  - “Too many graphs”
- **Relevance**
  - “I skimmed over shopping part, I eat on campus and don't go food shopping at college”
- **Confidence**
  - “Easy reading-more like middle school”
- **Satisfaction**
  - “Boring”

# Use of Online Focus Groups

- **General Findings**
  - **Printable transcripts provide quick data**
  - **Comfortable format for college students**
  - **Anonymity maintained, ease of sharing**
  - **Responses are abbreviated and could be misinterpreted**

