

Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID) Instructional Improvement & Course Evaluation Tool

OVERVIEW

Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID) is a method that uses small group discussion among students to provide feedback to an instructor in order to improve teaching, provide suggestions for strengthening the course, and generally increase communication between the students and the instructor.

The SGID method is directed at helping instructors answer student questions and concerns regarding instructional effectiveness: Does the course organization provide for optimal student learning? Is the presentation enhancing or detracting from the content? What material is seen as relevant or irrelevant? Are there more effective ways to present the material? How is the pacing of the course, too fast or too slow? The method not only identifies problem areas, but also records suggested revisions for the instructor to consider. Secondary benefits can include increased student interest and acceptance of the course material and methods.

A SGID takes about 20 to 30 minutes of regularly scheduled class time. Class members are asked to form small groups and discuss the following two questions:

1. What is helping you learn and succeed in this class?
2. What suggestions do you have to improve the effectiveness of this course?

After about ten minutes of small group discussion, the facilitator brings the whole class together to discuss the groups' findings. The facilitator collects, summarizes and organizes the feedback and shares it with the instructor.

PROCESS

- Instructors who need a SGID facilitator can reach out to any tenured, fulltime faculty member with the request. Include the course title, section, meeting time, and location.
 - The facilitator may wish to schedule a pre-meeting to identify any specific concerns the instructor may want addressed.
- The instructor and facilitator identify a date and time for the SGID to take place.
- On the day of the SGID, the instructor introduces the facilitator and explains the SGID process.
Sample Language: One of the best ways to improve our courses is to collect feedback from the people taking them. FVCC uses a very useful method where a feedback session is facilitated by someone other than the instructor. I have invited a facilitator to collect your feedback on this course. This is . . .
- The instructor leaves the room and the facilitator organizes students into groups and provides instructions.
- Once groups are finished discussing, the facilitator leads a whole-class discussion and records the feedback.
- Within 10 days of the SGID, the facilitator will prepare a formal write-up of the SGID (see suggested template) and meet with the instructor to review the results. The facilitator and instructor will both sign the SGID write-up and submit it to Academic Affairs for distribution to the appropriate entities, depending on the instructor's needs (VP, TRC, DC).
- After receiving the SGID results, the instructor will de-brief with the class, acknowledging their participation and addressing the feedback as necessary.

HOW TO PREPARE TO FACILITATE A SGID

Consider the following:

- How will you introduce yourself to the class?
***Sample Language:** I am here to collect feedback about this course. We will use a technique called Small Group Instructional Diagnosis. You will discuss two questions in small groups, and then we will come back together to have a whole class discussion. I will record your responses and share them with the instructor. I will keep the responses as anonymous as possible, so please feel free to share your thoughts openly.*
- How will you direct students to break up into groups based on class size? (e.g. students count off 1. 2. 3 and form groups by number)
- It is important that each group identify a note taker to record comments. They should NOT include group member names on the notes. Let students know that you will collect the notes at the end of the session in order make sure that your summary is complete. The notes will not be seen by the instructor, who only receives the typed summary.
- Provide students with your contact information and offer them the opportunity to contact you if they think of something they would like to add later, or didn't feel comfortable sharing something to the whole group.
- Consider writing the two discussion questions on the board for students to reference during small group discussions.
- If you've never facilitated a SGID before, consider accompanying someone else who is facilitating one OR consider bringing an experienced facilitator with you.
- Consider bringing a laptop to record notes during the session so you can easily go back and edit when you finalize the document.
- Make sure to ask small groups if their spokesperson accurately represented their comments or if they have any clarifications to make.
- Read your notes back to students to ensure you've recorded them accurately ("What I'm hearing you say is....").

If you'd like to discuss the SGID process or have further questions, please contact the Director of Academic Affairs or the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs.