

Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID)

Instead of waiting until the end of the term, find out now what students experience in your class....

About the SGID

Are you looking for a way to collect meaningful and honest feedback from your students?

Between weeks four and seven of the semester is a terrific time to seek feedback from your students about how they are experiencing your class. The Small-Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID) is a focus group led by a trained facilitator who speaks directly with your students to provide formative feedback concerning ways learning can be enhanced. A post-SGID consultation between facilitator and instructor is part of the procedure. The SGID session takes about 30 minutes of class time.

The SGID is voluntary. We believe if instructors were required to use SGIDs, it would undermine the spirit of communication and dialogue that makes them useful. SGIDs are intended as formative assessments—purely for the instructor’s information—although SGIDs are recognized throughout the university as one of the “multiple measures of teaching effectiveness” that can be used to document your teaching. Therefore, many instructors do mention their use of and adaptations made in response to SGID feedback in their annual reports as evidence of their learner-centered approach to teaching.

Student and instructor response to the SGID has been positive. Students have expressed greater satisfaction with the SGID method than with the traditional evaluation form at the end of the term. They appreciate the teacher’s awareness of student concerns and the early- to mid-semester timing of the procedure, which provides opportunity for changes to affect them. Instructors appreciate the personal interaction and supportive interpretation by a colleague, as well as the data, which are helpful in considering changes. Student suggestions also provide a diversity of perspectives and may save time for the instructor in generating problem-solving alternatives

A description of the general process.

- The instructor and facilitator meet to review the SGID process and schedule a mutually convenient time to conduct the SGID. The SGID should occur near the beginning of the class time.
- On the day of the SGID, the instructor introduces the facilitator to the class and explains the purpose of the process. The instructor leaves the room.

- The facilitator divides the students into small groups of 3-4, gives them a handout that includes the questions with space for concrete examples. The questions are: *What class activities and teaching techniques have been most helpful to you in meeting your learning objectives in this course? What changes should the instructor make to better support your learning? If you had a friend who was going to take this course, what advice would you give him or her about this class and instructor?*
- Students in each group reach a consensus for each question. Consensus eliminates the extreme outliers in the group.
- The facilitator leads a whole group discussion, inviting students to share their group lists.
- The facilitator develops consensus among groups about the most and least effective elements of the course.
- After the session, the facilitator schedules a time to meet with the instructor to provide the results of the SGID.
- The instructor reports back to the class, explaining how the students' feedback informs the course design, activities, or assignments or future courses. This step is the MOST important part of the process. It demonstrates the instructor's commitment to improving teaching and learning and respect students' voices.

Benefits:

- The feedback can lead to improvements in instruction and build positive relationships between the instructor and students.
- Student participation allows students to compare views; extremely divergent views may be moderated.
- The timeframe allows for instructor adaptation during the semester.
- SGID is one way to reflect on one's teaching through the student lens.

To schedule a SGID contact the Lucas Center: