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Issue Date: November 28, 2023

## Focus Group: Vision Document Sort

### Purpose

This protocol is designed for teams developing a Portrait of a Graduate that is aligned to the Vermont Portrait of a Graduate.

Use this protocol during focus group discussions. This strategy is ideal for gathering feedback from large groups of people (community members, students, and/or staff) to generate ideas and prioritize themes for developing a Portrait of a Graduate (PoG). This protocol is similar to the Focus Group: Attribute Sort protocol, but is designed for teams that want to include district visionary documents as well as the [Vermont Portrait of a Graduate](#) language.

### Goal

To facilitate focus group conversations and collect feedback from a community partner group.

### Materials and Setup

- Sticky notes. Use light-colored sticky notes and dark writing utensils for the best contrast in the pictures.
- One set of sorting cards for each focus group. Cards need to be created, printed, cut up, and sorted into sets prior to the session.
  - Sorting cards with the 6 Vermont Portrait of a Graduate Attributes (See Appendix A)
  - Sorting cards with phrases specific to the district's visionary documents (i.e., vision, mission, equity statement, strategic plan, etc.)
- Labels for groups (e.g., Faculty A, B, C; Students A, B, etc.) and criteria sorting round (sort round 1, 2, 3, etc.) to include in the documenting photo (See Appendix B).
- A device to take pictures after each sort.



# Agenda

Time	Description
5 minutes	<b>Directions and Introduction:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Divide participants into groups with approximately 4 people.</li><li>• In each round, groups will have discussions about each criteria and sort their cards based on the criteria prompt.</li></ul>
8-10 minutes	<b>Brainstorm and Sort Round One:</b> <p><b><i>Criteria to consider: Which of these cards would you classify as most important, moderately important and least important?</i></b> Focus groups discuss the cards and sort them into the three categories: most important, moderately important, least important.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Label groupings as most, moderate, and least important with sticky notes.</li><li>• Place sticky note with the group identifier (G1, G2, etc.) and sticky note with criteria sorting round at the top of the groupings.</li><li>• When the group is satisfied with their sort, take a picture for data analysis later.</li></ul> <p><b><i>Note: It is important that people put the cards into three separate categories rather than along a continuum.</i></b></p>
8-10 minutes	<b>Brainstorm and Sort Round Two:</b> <p><b><i>Criteria to consider: What is your district doing really well, OK, and not so well?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus groups discuss the cards and sort them into the three categories.</li><li>• Label groupings as really well, OK, not so well with sticky notes.</li><li>• Place a sticky note with the group identifier (G1, G2, etc.) and sticky note with the criteria sorting round at the top of the groupings.</li><li>• When the group is satisfied with their sort, take a picture for data analysis later.</li></ul>

Time	Description
8-10 minutes	<p><b>Brainstorm and Sort Round Three:</b></p> <p><i>Criteria to consider: Thinking about the attributes on the cards, sort them into themes.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus groups discuss the cards and sort them by themes.</li> <li>• Use the sticky notes to create titles for their themed groupings.</li> <li>• When the group is satisfied with their sort, take a picture for data analysis later.</li> </ul>
5 minutes	<p><b>Wrap Up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank participants for participating</li> <li>• Provide an overview of next steps</li> </ul>

## Data Analysis (post-meeting)

Time	Description
60 minutes	<p><b>Directions:</b> Transcribe the data from the pictures into a spreadsheet / matrix (example):</p> <p>Tab one:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Items from each group labeled ‘most important’ are scored as a ‘1’</li><li>• Items from each group labeled ‘middle importance’ are scored as a ‘0’</li><li>• Items from each group labeled ‘least important’ are scored as a ‘-1’</li><li>• Sum columns for each attribute to identify those that rise to the surface as the most important and those that may be able to be cut or wrapped into other attributes.</li></ul> <p>Tab two:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Items from each group labeled ‘most important’ are scored as a ‘1’</li><li>• Items from each group labeled ‘middle importance’ are scored as a ‘0’</li><li>• Items from each group labeled ‘least important’ are scored as a ‘-1’</li><li>• Sum columns for each attribute to identify those that rise to the surface as the most important and those that may be able to be cut or wrapped into other attributes.</li></ul>

## APPENDIX A: Sorting Cards

Directions: Each focus group needs to have their own set of sorting cards. Below is a template with cards specifically for the 6 Vermont PoG attributes. Additional cards will need to be created to include any district specific visionary language. Cards can be created by adding appropriate text into a table. An option is to print the different text sources (i.e., VT PoG, distinct vision, and district equity statement) on different colored paper in order to distinguish the different documents.

### Sorting Cards with the Six Vermont Portrait of a Graduate Attributes

<p><b>Learner Agency</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students take ownership of their own learning.</li><li>2. Students develop their own voice and the ability to use it in a variety of settings.</li><li>3. Students have high expectations for themselves and see themselves as lifelong learners.</li></ol>	<p><b>Well-Being</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students develop strategies and interpersonal skills to manage stress, promote mental health and cultivate positive relationships.</li><li>2. Students recognize the value of healthy behaviors and physical activity in promoting health, enjoyment, self-expression and social interaction.</li><li>3. Students have the knowledge necessary to make financially responsible decisions that are integral to their everyday lives.</li></ol>
<p><b>Global Citizenship</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students recognize that our world is increasingly complex and interdependent.</li><li>2. Students understand and exercise their rights and responsibilities within a democratic society.</li><li>3. Students study a non-native language and understand the importance of learning about other cultures.</li></ol>	<p><b>Critical Thinking and Problem Solving</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students use inquiry to solve real-world problems with innovation, creativity and curiosity.</li><li>2. Students participate in a collaborative problem-solving and decision-making process.</li><li>3. Students evaluate information critically.</li></ol>
<p><b>Academic Proficiency</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students understand essential concepts in academic domains and apply this knowledge in authentic situations.</li><li>2. Students ask questions effectively to acquire knowledge.</li><li>3. Students acknowledge their growth and identify possibilities for continued learning.</li></ol>	<p><b>Communication</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students communicate effectively using oral, written and nonverbal (body language) strategies.</li><li>2. Students communicate through a variety of media and create a positive digital footprint.</li><li>3. Students take into consideration multiple points of view.</li></ol>

## APPENDIX B: Example of Completed Sort for Criteria Two

Sitting on the white envelope at the top of this group's sort, there is a sticky note with the criteria sorting round (Sort 2) and there is a second sticky note with the label for the group (Fac A PM). These identifiers help in the analysis process and need to be included in each documenting photo. Below the white envelope there are 3 additional sticky notes that groups used to sort the cards into the three categories (not well, moderately well, really well).

