

Supplemental Digital Appendix 1

Focus Group Scripts from a Qualitative Study of Trainees and Their Mentors Regarding the Development of Scientific Communication Skills, 2010

Trainee Focus Group Script

You have been selected to participate in a focus group on scientific communication sponsored by Dr. Shine Chang, Professor, Epidemiology, at The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. The purpose of the focus group is to receive input from research trainees concerning development of scientific communication skills and how your mentors at M.D. Anderson can help improve these skills.

Discussions will be kept confidential and comments will not be identified by name.

I'm Dr. Marilyn Greer, Director of Institutional Research, from M.D. Anderson and will moderate the discussion. I'll be making notes on my flip chart to help us report on what we are saying. If you see that the information I am writing is not correct, please let me know so that our comments can be recorded correctly. We appreciate your participation.

1. How long have you been at M.D. Anderson as a postdoc/GRA? How much longer will you be here?
2. Where did you go to college? Did you graduate from a US or non-US college?
3. Were your family, significant partner, or friends an influence in making your college selection? If so, how did they influence you?
4. Where you grew up, were most of the significant influences in your life non-college or college educated?
5. How comfortable are you with the way you speak in professional or academic settings? How confident are you that your speech is similar to other successful researchers?
6. How comfortable are you that the language you use in your presentations is similar to other successful researchers?
7. How comfortable are you that your writing ability is similar to successful researchers?
8. How much scientific writing do you do in your work? How would you rate your scientific writing ability?
9. What information (from other people, feedback on your work products, comparing yourself with others, etc.) do you use to assess your own ability in:
 - Speaking in professional or academic settings, such as meetings?
 - Presentations?
 - Writing ability?
10. How often does your mentor at M.D. Anderson talk or meet with you (weekly, monthly, other)?
11. Does your mentor ever talk to you about your speaking skills? Does your mentor ever talk to you about your writing skills?

12. If your mentor has approached you about your communication skills, what was it like for you to discover that communication is an important issue for you? What was it like to get that feedback?
13. How much do you think your mentor understands about your concerns in communicating to a targeted scientific audience? How much do you think your mentor understands your issues about oral or written communication?
14. What has your mentor offered to help you with your speaking skills? What has your mentor offered to help with your writing skills?
15. If there was one thing you could imagine to improve oral or written communication, what would it be?

Mentor Focus Group Script

You have been selected to participate in a focus group on scientific communication sponsored by Dr. Shine Chang, Professor, Epidemiology, at The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. The purpose of the focus group is to receive input from mentors of research trainees concerning development of trainee scientific communication skills and how develop their skills.

Discussions will be kept confidential and comments will not be identified by name.

I'm Dr. Marilyn Greer, Director of Institutional Research, from M.D. Anderson and will moderate the discussion. I'll be making notes on my flip chart to help us report on what we are saying. If you see that the information I am writing is not correct, please let me know so that our comments can be recorded correctly. We appreciate your participation

1. How long have you been a faculty mentor at M.D. Anderson? How long have you mentored trainees and/or post-docs?
2. How many trainees do you mentor per year?
3. How comfortable are you with your speaking skills (i.e., speaking spontaneously in a professional setting such as a lab meeting or conference, and giving a rehearsed speech such as a presentation)? How comfortable are you with your writing skills?
4. How comfortable are you with advising trainees on writing skills? How comfortable are you with advising or correcting the speaking skills of your trainees, both spontaneous speech and formal presentation?
5. What usual problems do trainees have with speaking skills? What problems do trainees have with scientific writing skills?
6. If your mentee struggles with scientific writing, how would you approach that issue? What sort of reactions might you anticipate?
7. If your mentee has issues with oral communication skills, either spontaneous speech or formal presentation or both, how would you approach that issue? What sort of reactions might you anticipate?

8. What are some obstacles you have mentoring your trainees in scientific writing skills?
What are your obstacles you have mentoring your trainees in oral communication skills?
9. Would you want training to help you address your trainees' scientific writing skills?
Would you want training to help you address your trainees' scientific speaking skills?
10. What resources do you want available to help your trainees who have issues with speaking skills? What resources do you want available for your trainees who have issues with scientific writing skills?
11. What would be your motivation or incentive, if any, for mentoring your post docs/trainees in communication skills?
12. If anything or any resource was possible, what would you want available to your trainees who have issues with writing skills?