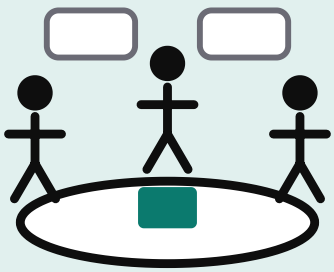
Method

Focus group

A conversation led by a moderator with a small group on a specific topic, to learn their opinions and how they build them by talking to each other.



In Spanish
Grupo de discusión

Origin
The focused interview of Merton and Kendall (1946)

Output
A group's opinions and how they build them through conversation

What it's for

Useful for exploring attitudes, words and reactions to an idea, and seeing where people agree or argue.

Key elements

A shared stimulus
The whole group reacts to the same thing: a concept, an ad or a prototype.

Moderate without steering
Make sure everyone speaks, not just the most confident.

Choose the group well
People with something in common, so they speak with confidence.

How it's done

1 

Prepare. A topic guide and the stimulus to be shown.

2 

Moderate. Open the conversation and share out the turns.

3 

Analyze. Look for themes, agreements and disagreements.

Applications in design

When to use it

Early on, to learn the language and reactions to a concept.

Avoid

Using it to measure how many people prefer something: it is small and the group sways opinions.

Don't fall for it

What people say in a group isn't what each does alone: don't use it to check how something is used.

Connections

Builds on

- Say vs. do

Used by

- Game design
- Brand design
- Packaging design
- Graphic design
- Design for health
- UX design

Related to

- In-depth interview

Authors and works

1946	**Robert K. Merton and Patricia L. Kendall**	Described the focused interview about a specific situation everyone has lived through, for individuals and groups.
2014	**Richard A. Krueger and Mary Anne Casey**	Wrote one of the most widely used practical guides to running focus groups.

Sources

Original sources

- Merton, R. K., & Kendall, P. L. (1946). The focused interview. American Journal of Sociology, 51(6), 541–557. View source (https://doi.org/10.1086/219886)

Secondary sources

- Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2014). Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research (5th ed.). SAGE.

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