



Informed Consent Form for Focus Group Participants

The Effectiveness of Cheat-sheets as a Learning Tool for Critical Thinking

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Why are you invited to take part in this study? Why are we doing this study?

You are invited to participate in this focus group discussion because you have previously taken and/or are currently taking Dr. Lee-An's sociology class and have experienced creating a handwritten cheat-sheet to prepare for your sit-in exams. The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of handwritten cheat-sheets as a tool for promoting critical thinking and to develop a variety of cheat-sheet templates. The researcher wants to know about your experiences of using cheat-sheets for exams and your thoughts and perspectives about considering cheat sheets as learning tools to promote critical thinking through the process of creating them.

Your participation is voluntary.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. Your decision to participate or not participate will in no way impact your relationship with the researcher, your coursework, or your grades. Just because you are taking or have taken a course with Dr. Lee-An does not mean that you must join this study — the choice is totally and completely yours.

If you wish to withdraw from this study or to leave, you can do so at any time before and during the focus group discussions and until seven days after the focus group is completed. You do not need to give any reasons or explanations for doing so. You can indicate your willingness to withdraw verbally and/or by writing by communicating to the researcher or research assistant.

In the case of withdrawal, all individual remarks from you will be deleted from the transcript, and they will not be used in any future publication. However, given the nature of the group discussions, your ideas (which may have sparked the thoughts and ideas of other participants and may have shaped the collective discussions), would remain as a part of research data. In addition, your audio files would remain until all audio files are deleted with the completion of this research as it would not be feasible to single out individual voices from the audio files and delete them separately.

What happens if you say, "Yes, I want to be in the study"? What happens to you in the study? How is the study done?

If you indicate your willingness to take part in the study, the research assistant will follow up by both sending you a consent form, as well as scheduling the focus group discussion date. The focus group discussion will last 60-75 minutes and will be audio recorded to ensure an accurate transcript of the focus group discussion. You will have an opportunity to share your own experiences and thoughts with other participants. The focus group facilitator (researcher) will

ensure that all participants have an equal opportunity to contribute to the discussion, though any decision not to make any comments at any time will be equally respected.

Will you be paid for your time/ taking part in this research study?

While there would be no financial compensation for your participation in this study, light refreshments will be provided during the focus group discussion and there is a chance for you to win a raffle for a 20-dollar gift card.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for you?

There are no risks associated with this study. However, if you feel a sense of discomfort or distress when discussing your school work experiences, you will have received a list of campus resources where you can seek support.

Will being in this study help you in any way? What are the benefits of participating?

You will have an opportunity to reflect on your own experiences of creating the cheat-sheet and how that experience shaped your own learning process. Your experiences and thoughts will greatly help the researcher develop her teaching materials including a variety template for cheat-sheets for her future students. The research outcome will also be shared with other educators and students through an open access website.

How will your identity be protected? How will your privacy be maintained?

Given that all participants have taken Dr. Jiyoung Lee-An's sociology courses, it is easy for participants to identify each other, and thus anonymity would not be feasible in this study. However, in focus group discussions, each participant will be given a color-coded name tag and their responses will be recorded based on color-coded pseudonym. To protect the privacy of participants, participants will be informed in their consent form and at the beginning of the focus group discussion that they are required to keep all comments made during the focus group confidential and not discuss what happened during the focus group outside the meeting.

All research data will be kept confidential to the researcher and research assistant by encrypting and using passwords for data security. After all focus group discussions are conducted and transcripts are produced, the audio files will be deleted permanently from any computer used in the research and from the researcher's voice recorder. Other gathered data (transcripts and other research materials such as researcher's notes and memos) will be kept for future research on the same or similar topics for 5 years.

After all focus group discussions are completed, you will receive summaries of the points raised during the discussions, and a link to the final version of the research website that includes research findings and cheat sheet templates.

Contact information for the Dean of the Faculty of Arts

Dr. Richard McCutcheon, Phone: 250-828-5170; Email: rmccutcheon@tru.ca

Contact for concerns about the rights of research participants

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Board at Research and Graduate Studies, Thompson Rivers University, 805 TRU Way, Kamloops, BC.V2C 0C8. Email: TRU-REB@tru.ca; Phone: 250-828-5000.

My signature on this form indicates that I understand the information regarding this research project including all procedures and the personal risks involved. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and am satisfied with the answers. I have received a copy of this consent form for my records. I voluntarily agree to participate in this project.

Name: (Please Print) _____

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator and/or Delegate's signature _____ Date _____