TABLE 12.1 | Assessment Methods Compared

Method	Advantage	Disadvantages
Questionnaire	Data can be obtained from everyone in the organization in a cost-effective way. Data are collected anonymously so employees feel free to be more honest. Provides data in comparative form from all respondents that can be quantified and statistically analyzed. Takes relatively little time from employees and can be done simultaneously in many locations. Simple to administer, either electronically or paper and pencil.	Requires literacy and possibly translation into other languages. Oneway communication offers no way to get clarification or explanation about responses. Responses tend to be limited by information requested in questionnaire. May get lip service and perfunctory answers rather than thoughtful responses. Impersonality and lack of human touch may put off employees, especially those from highly relational, high-context cultures that prefer face-to-face communication and storytelling.
Interviews	Interviewees may feel freer to speak openly without others present. Problems and issues surfaced can be explored in depth. Permits collection of examples, anecdotes, and stories that illustrate the issues and put them in human terms. More personal touch allows for person-to-person communication.	Least time efficient and most labor intensive and costly method. Requires skilled interviewer to guide sessions. Data collected from a limited number of people may provide a narrow slice of information if only staff at certain levels are interviewed. Affects the least number of staff so may generate only limited commitment.
Focus Groups	Serve as a teaching tool, building respondee awareness about diversity. Produce richer data through in-depth discussions about topics and issues. Two-way communication permits clarification and explanation of information given. More personal and human. Subtle information from nonverbal clues and body language can be picked up. More time efficient to get information from groups rather than individuals one at a time. Interaction generates more data. Comments spark other ideas so new information may emerge. Participants' hearing of each others' views may expand their understanding of the issues.	Require skilled facilitation in sessions. Generally only provide a sample of views, not everyone's. Peer pressure may influence participants' comments. Takes time to coordinate sessions and schedule the pulling of employees from jobs. People may be uncomfortable in a new setting and an unfamiliar experience. Participants may be reluctant to open up and speak freely for fear of repercussions or because of cultural norms that discourage negative or critical comments.