



Midsemester Class Interviews

As instructors think about their teaching and student learning, they may have questions about the effectiveness of the teaching/learning process, effects of instructor decisions on student learning, and student-instructor relationships. For instance, does the course organization foster student learning? What material do students see as relevant or irrelevant? Are the writing assignments achieving desired goals? Are students comfortable asking for help?

The Midsemester Class Interview (also called Small Group Analysis) is designed to help instructors gain insight on what students see as helping them learn, as well as suggestions to strengthen the course, encourage student-instructor communication, and generally improve teaching and learning.

We recommend using this procedure in the middle of the term, after students have received at least one grade. We suggest avoiding days immediately before an exam and days when you plan to return graded work.

The Interview Process

The process involves an experienced consultant working with the instructor and students in a course. First, the consultant and instructor meet to discuss the course and determine whether a class interview is the most appropriate method for the course and instructor. The consultant then meets with students during a single class session to gather the data, but without the instructor and TAs. Using about 30 minutes of class time, the consultant directs students to form small groups, select a recorder, and come to consensus on answers to two questions. Although the questions may vary in form, they always focus on strengths and areas for change, including suggestions for making changes. The most common questions asked during the process are:

1. What helps you learn in this course?
2. What changes would improve your learning?

After ten minutes of discussion, the consultant asks the groups to report out to the entire class. If an instructor wants feedback on specific aspects of the course, the consultant can make sure that is addressed during the whole-class discussion. The consultant collects and summarizes the groups' ideas, clarifying until the students are satisfied that the consultant understands the information being reported. The instructor and consultant then meet to discuss the data and develop teaching improvement goals that are responsive and specific to the course.

Benefits to Students and Instructors

Student and instructor response to the Midsemester Interview process has been outstanding. Students appreciate the timing, which provides an opportunity for changes to affect them, and the heightened teacher awareness of student concerns. Instructors appreciate the personal interaction and supportive interpretation of the consultant and actionable student feedback.



Student Feedback Form

Number of participants in group: _____

****Try to come to consensus, but if you cannot, please indicate areas of disagreement.****

I. What helps you learn in this course? Please explain or give an example for each.

Things that work well in this course

Explanation/Example (i.e., why?)

1.

2.

3.

4.

II. What changes would improve your learning? Please suggest specific ways the changes could be made.

Things that could be changed

How could this be done differently?

1.

2.

3.

4.

III. Individual Comments: