

# Reciprocal Interviews

## Purpose

The Purpose of this activity to get to the heart of the syllabus. Too often, syllabi are dry, contractual documents. That is too bad because I love this course and I want you to see how it will be a valuable part of your learning journey at URI. The purpose of this activity is to bring the syllabus to life so that you can see yourself and your place in this course.

## Instructor-led interview

### Process

Break class up into groups of 3-5 students. Have students discuss the questions below. Each group should designate a note taker and a spokesperson. The notetaker records everyone's responses (and contributes their own) while the spokesperson speaks for the group. Allow 10-15 minutes for discussion. Then the instructor will ask the questions of the groups.

### Questions

1. What are your goals for this course?
  - a. To learn new skills?
  - b. To be introduced to new skills?
  - c. To explore possible majors?
  - d. To get a good grade?
  - e. To learn how to be successful in college?
  - f. Something else?
2. How can the instructor best help you achieve your goals?
  - a. Lectures
  - b. Exams
  - c. Office hours
  - d. Practice problems
3. What have you heard about this course from other people?
4. What reservations do you have about this course?
5. What is the best thing that could happen to you in this course? What is the worst thing?
6. What resources do you bring to this course? (What was your high school experience like and how do you feel about how it prepared you for college?)
7. What norms of behavior or ground rules should we set to ensure that the course is successful?

Adapted from: David A. Foster & Anthony D. Hermann (2011) Linking the First Week of Class to End-of-Term Satisfaction: Using a Reciprocal Interview Activity to Create an Active and Comfortable Classroom, *College Teaching*, 59:3, 111-116

# Student-led interview

## Process

After the first interview, get back into groups of 3-5 students. Have students discuss the questions below. Each group should designate a note taker and a spokesperson. The notetaker records everyone's responses (and contributes their own) while the spokesperson speaks for the group. Allow 5-10 minutes for discussion, where students can add their own questions. Then rotate through the groups so that each group can ask one of the questions below or ask a question they wrote on their own.

## Questions

1. What are the instructor's objectives for the course - what do they hope to accomplish?
2. What is the instructor's learning theory? (How do they think people learn? What is important for students to learn?)
3. What is the instructor's approach to evaluating student's learning in the course? How will they arrive at grades?
4. What are the instructor's expectations of students?
5. What is the instructor's role in the course?
6. Other questions that are important to the group: assignments, attendance, exams, etc.

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