

Mid-Quarter Class Interview (Mid-Q)

As instructors think about examining their teaching, they frequently seek insights into a variety of pertinent questions. For instance, does the course organization provide for optimal student learning? Is the presentation enhancing or detracting from the content? What material is seen as relevant or irrelevant? Is the pace of the course too fast or too slow? In an effort to answer such questions, instructors frequently seek systematic ways to obtain input.

Mid-Quarter Class Interviews are a process designed to help instructors answer such questions. The method, commonly conducted at midterm, uses class interviews with students to provide suggestions to strengthen the course, increase communication between the students and the teacher, and generally improve instruction. The process identifies not only problem areas but also ways to address those areas.

Mid-Q Procedure

The Mid-Q process requires an experienced consultant to work directly with the instructor and the students in the class. The process is initiated when the consultant and the instructor meet to discuss the course and determine how the class interview process can best be used to provide feedback for instructional improvement. Then, on the given day, the consultant meets with students in the class, in the absence of the instructor, to obtain the data. The consultant directs students in the class to form small groups, select a chair and come to consensus on answers to three questions. Although the questions may take a variety of forms, they always focus on strengths in the class, areas for change/improvement, and ways of making suggested changes or improvements. The following are typical of the questions asked during the process:

1. What helps you to learn in this class?
2. What changes could be made in the course to assist you in learning?
3. How would you recommend that suggested changes be made?

Following ten minutes of discussion, the consultant asks students to report to the entire class. The consultant collects and summarizes the groups' ideas on the chalkboard, clarifying until group members are satisfied that the consultant understands clearly the information being reported. The instructor and consultant then meet to discuss the data and develop a teaching improvement process responsive to the data and the specific needs of the instructor.

Benefits to Students and Instructors

Student and instructor response to the method has been outstanding. Students appreciate the midterm timing, which provides opportunity for changes to affect them, and the heightened teacher awareness of student concerns. Instructors appreciate the personal interaction and supportive interpretation by a consultant, as well as the content of the data in a form which facilitates its use by the instructor in making changes.

Scheduling a Mid-Q

If you are interested, the TLC staff is available to discuss the ways in which the Mid-Q process can be used to meet your specific instructional needs. If you would like TLC staff to facilitate an Mid-Q in one of your classes, it is best to contact TLC well before midterm of the quarter during which you would like assistance. Early planning will allow you to make the best use of the student feedback for instructional improvement.

For further information or to schedule an Mid-Q, please contact:

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