



Effectively Starting Your Courses: Insights from Industrial/ Organizational Psychology, Empirical Research, and Your Best Practices

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First day of class

- Starting off right
- Something you do that you like
 - goals?



Overview

- Share ideas
 - Insights industrial/organizational psychology
 - My first week activity
 - Research
-
- Feel free to interrupt to ask, clarify, share, etc.



Your Best Practices

- One thing you do & why you do it



Typical Activity Goals

- Course content
- Course expectations
- Classroom environment
- *Student-student* interaction/rapport
- *Student-teacher* interaction/rapport

The Psychological Contract

- “An individual’s implicit belief in mutual obligations between that person and another party” (Rousseau, 1989)
- Most research has been done in the context of employment relationships
 - **fulfilling psychological contracts** is associated with increased trust and cooperation (e.g., Conway & Briner, 2002).
 - **violating psychological contracts** is associated with increased anger, frustration, and intentions to quit (e.g., Robinson & Morrison, 2000).
- To maximize satisfaction, explicit discussion of both parties’ expectations is recommended

Application to Classroom

- College instructors & employers desire similar outcomes.
 - e.g., good “citizenship”, hard work, motivated participation, punctuality, satisfaction
- Communication is usually one-sided.
- Adapted an activity designed to illustrate good management practices.
 - multiple goals
 - after syllabus has been covered



Reciprocal Interview Activity

adapted from Harvey & Brown (2000); Osland, Kolb, & Rubin's (2001)

- Students form small groups and discuss interview topics
 - elect representative
- Instructor interviews representatives from each group about
 - their goals
 - helping students achieve their goals
 - their fears/reservations
 - preconceived notions about the course
 - the resources they bring to the class
 - desired norms for classroom behavior
 - professor pet peeves

Activity (cont'd)

- Students regroup to discuss topics for instructor interview
 - new representative
- Group representatives take turns interviewing instructor about the instructor's
 - course objectives
 - expectations of the students
 - theory of learning
 - approach to evaluation
 - role in the class
 - and any other concerns/areas of interest
- Summary, resolution



Key Implementation Issues

- Representative's charge
- Talking points
- Authenticity
- Deferring questions
- Tailor to class



Things I like

- Receptive audience
- Promotes dialogue
- Fosters reflection and ownership
- Awareness and interaction
- Energizes me

Findings

○ Students like it

- Hermann and Foster (2008)
- Case, Bartsch, McEnery, Hall, Hermann, and Foster (2008)

○ Short term changes

- Hermann and Foster (2008)

○ Satisfaction at the end of the term

- Hermann and Foster (*under review*)
- Foster and Hermann (*under review*)

○ Better performance

- Hermann and Foster (*under review*)



Larger Issues

- Instructor-Student Dynamics
- Sharing Pedagogy
- Student Motivation

Thank you

- Interested in trying it?
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