

Interview Purpose: During 60 minute interviews, elicit student stories regarding students' approaches to learning at [CLIENT] in order to develop in-depth personas that contain actionable insights for supporting learners to complete their degree aligned to their unique circumstances, strengths, challenges, and behavioral patterns.

Relevant Background Information:

- [Kickoff Meeting Summary](#)
- [Research Plan](#)

For Interviewers: Each section is tied to a specific set of research questions (alignment can be found in the research plan linked above). Some questions have probes, and the italicized information is to help you understand what we are hoping to learn from the participant. We are most interested in the stories students have constructed for themselves, so probes are designed to get them to elaborate in ways that are aligned with the intention of the question.

Note: You will have access to the pre-interview form responses students complete, which will let you know whether you're interviewing a current, former, prospective or alumni student along with some information about their career, roles/responsibilities, etc. You can reference this information in your interview, especially during the Warm Up.

Current Students

Warm Up

Get a sense of who they are and what demands they have on their time outside of school.

Script: We're excited to hear stories about your experience learning at [CLIENT]. This is a safe space to share. Your identity will be kept confidential because we want to know what you truly think and feel. What you share here will not be shared with your instructors, program mentor, or anyone else at [CLIENT]. We use the information students share with us to create personas, which are a compilation of many student stories that help us improve the [CLIENT] experience.

- Tell me about yourself. What's a typical day like for you? Who do you interact with most? How do you spend a weekday vs. a weekend?
 - *Try to understand what their life outside school is like.*
- What roles and responsibilities do you have at home? How often do you get to spend time doing personal hobbies or activities?

- Probe: How do you ensure you have the time for these interests? (*this might tell us something about their priorities*)
- (*If they don't get to do things often*) What stops you from being able to do these things?
- Why did you choose [CLIENT]? What are you studying? What does getting your degree mean to you?
 - Probe: What are some of your goals, and how do you see your degree helping you get there?

[CLIENT] Expectations

- Have you taken online classes at a school before [CLIENT]?
 - Probe: If so - which school(s)?
 - *We want to know if previous online learning experiences influenced their expectations.*
- When you enrolled, what did you think being a [CLIENT] student would be like?
 - Probe: What did you expect classes to be like? How have your expectations changed?
- Tell me about a course you had that was difficult.
 - Probe: What made it difficult? How common is this?
 - *Interviewer note: re the Discern if the topics are difficult, are the tools difficult to use, pacing is challenging, etc.*
- How does [CLIENT] fit into your day to day life?
 - Probe: [*If employed*] how well does what you're learning in your courses align to what you do for work?
- How do you spend your non-studying time? Are you working?
 - Probe: If working, is their job one that aligns to the degree they are seeking?
- What else is important in your life aside from school?
 - Probe: What other responsibilities or obligations in your life with family, friends, or work?
- When you have a lot of different things to do, how do you prioritize them?
- Tell me about a recent experience where you had a lot of tasks to do and had to prioritize.
 - Probe: How did you prioritize those items?
 - Where does school fall in the list?

Scenario Question

We hope to understand what internal motivations students have for finishing their degree and how they might persist if their circumstances change abruptly. Based on your conversations with each interviewee, select a scenario that makes the most sense for the person you're talking to. This can be an open ended conversation; the interviewee might choose to explain that they would or would not take a break instead and that's okay. We just want to get a better sense of how they would respond to potential interruptions in their studies.

- Option 1: Imagine you are just a few classes away from finishing your degree, and you are offered a promotion at work. Your new increased compensation will be the same, regardless of whether you finished your degree.
- Option 2: Imagine you are a few classes away from finishing your degree and a personal event in your life causes you to need to take a break from [CLIENT] for a few months.
- Would you still finish your degree in this scenario? Why?
 - If Yes Probe: How would you motivate yourself to keep going? Why is it important for you to finish?
 - If No Probe: Tell me about why you would stop. What would you do instead?

User Experience

- Talk me through how you generally work on your courses.
 - Probes: What time of day? Where do you go? What tools do you use?
 - *Try to get a "picture" of them in their unique learning environment(s)*
- What do you do first when starting a new course?
- What do you do when you run into difficult material in a course?
- What do you do when it's time to take an assessment?
 - Probe: How do you know when you're ready to take an assessment?
- What do you feel are your best success strategies for finishing a course?
- Has there ever been a time when you skipped something in a course, like a reading or an assignment?
 - Probe: Why? How did you decide to skip it?
- What's missing from your courses?
 - Probe: Are there activities or assignments that you wish there were more of?
- What other tools or resources do you use to help you complete courses or study?
 - Probe: How do you decide when to use these other sites or tools?
 - *Understand why they leave the [CLIENT] course site - is it because the material isn't explaining a concept well, is the content too long, are they looking for video instead of reading, etc.*
- Tell me about a time when you reached out to an instructor.

- Probe: What did you need from them? What was that like? Was it helpful? How common is this kind of conversation?
- Tell me about a time you talked with your Program Mentor.
 - Probe: What did you discuss? Who initiated the conversation? Is that pretty typical for your interactions with your program mentor?

Wrap Up

Try to understand what suggestions or changes they would like to see.

- What's the most challenging thing about being a student at [CLIENT]?
- What would you change about [CLIENT] to make it fit better into your day to day life?
 - Probe: How would this change help you?
- What could [CLIENT] change to make classwork more integrated into your day to day life?

Final Thoughts Activity - Important

- Please take a minute to complete the last activity "Final Thoughts". Even if you have no further thoughts, please add a brief comment and complete the task. This will trigger our process to send the gift cards.