

General Class Outline

Get The Whole Picture: Asking Probing Questions In a Behavior-Based Interview¹

Introduction. This outline is designed as a starting point for developing a class plan according to your specific needs. It will be necessary for you to adapt the outline to your own needs, including:

- The option of having the assessment tool completed before class
- Determining which of the simulations you will use
- Setting your own time estimates for the duration of activities
- Linking this class to others offered by your organization

In addition, you must prepare yourself by thoroughly reviewing the Participant Learning Tool and *Get The Whole Picture*.

This outline provides elapsed time estimates for some of the activities and sections of the class. You can expect to spend about 2:45 minutes in class time (1) if participants complete the learning tool in the class, (2) if all of the 11 simulations are done, and (3) if you keep breaks spontaneous and brief. As an alternative, you could have the assessment tool completed before the class and select from the simulations to reduce time in the class.

I. Start up

A. Prior to class

1. Ensure that you understand behavior-based interviewing and can explain it to others.

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2. Prepare yourself for this class by watching the video, completing the probing styles assessment, learning the five probing strategies and eleven skills, learning how to interpret the probing styles model, and getting familiar with the layout of the Participant Learning Tool.

3. Plan for 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ to 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ hours of class time based on what you expect to cover. For example, you could have participants complete the assessment tool prior to class. And, you could pre-select which of the 11 simulations you will use.

4. Complete your presentation checklist, including a Participant Learning Tool (booklet) for each participant, name tents, "Get The Whole Picture," a video player, a projector for PowerPoint slides, a structured interview for demonstration, and evaluation forms. "U" shaped seating is preferred.

B. In the class (10 minutes elapsed time)

1. Project Slide 1 and have participants complete name tents, write their names on their booklets, and introduce themselves.

2. Introduce the class.

a. Define behavior-based probing (Slide 2)

b. Review instructional objectives (Slide 3)

c. List class segments and estimated times (Slide 4)

3. Assign participants to small groups of 3-4.

II. Assessment tool and discussion (50 minutes elapsed class time)

A. Introduce the probing style assessment tool (Slide 5)

1. Review the points on the transparency.

2. Explain the layout of the booklet by pointing to pages in your participant learning tool as participants look in their booklets. Indicate that there are instructions on what to do next at the bottom of each page.

3. Show the “shingling” of the item pages and how answers are written on the “Answer Strip.”

4. Emphasize that options under each item are to be rank ordered.

5. Ask participants to read the instructions and begin responding. This should take 12 - 14 minutes on average. Encourage slow responders to speed up.

6. Add comments on the parts of the assessment tool instructions that you feel to be important to your class.

B. Explain the process of scoring, converting, and profiling.

1. Show the first person to complete the assessment in each group how to get total scores, conversion scores, and plot the style profile. Continue helping participants get their totals, conversion scores, and style scores.

2. Refer to the pages that offer style interpretations and emphasize that no style is absolutely wrong; however, the informational style is preferred because of its structured, job related approach. This is particularly important when participants write their personal learning objectives. There are suggestions on what may need to be learned for each style in the “Explanations Of The Probing Styles Model.”

C. As groups complete the assessment, refer them to the discussion questions behind the profile. Allow about 10 minutes for discussion.

D. Ask participants to write out their learning objectives, based on their assessment and group discussion. Respond to questions about each person’s profile and learning objectives by using your knowledge of the section titled “Explanation Of The Probing Styles Model.” For example, a person with intuitive scores may need to learn how to avoid drawing quick conclusions about candidates; a person high on interaction may need to learn how to use a structured interview more effectively. A person with an inquisitive style may stray from the structured interview and ask inappropriate questions.

Although the informational style is the preferred style, a person who is high on this factor may choose to improve his/her rapport building skills.

III. Review of behavior-based interviewing and probing (5 minutes elapsed class time)

A. Review the behavior-based interviewing technique

1. Prior to the interview (Slide 6)
2. During the interview (Slide 7)
3. After the interview (Slide 8)

B. Ask for questions and discuss

IV. Probing practice with video simulations (90 minutes estimated class time when using all 11 simulations)

A. Transition into the probing practice by saying that the class will next see Dr. Green give a brief summary of ways to probe in a behavior-based interview. Start “Get The Whole Picture” at the point where Dr. Green begins to talk. This introduction will take about 1 ¾ minutes.

B. Stop the video and direct the class into section two of the Participant Learning Tool.

1. Ask participants to read the “Instructions For Practice Simulations.” Allow about 8 minutes on average for them to read the information and familiarize themselves with the page layout for the simulations.
2. Ask the class to look at the “Candidate Response Page” for Simulation #1. Emphasize that the class is to practice returning to the target of the question by repeating or paraphrasing the question. To reinforce understanding of the skill to use in the exercise, use the following combination of instructions:

- (a) Ask each person to circle the probing skill they are to use in the simulation.
- (b) Indicate that the skill to use is on the reminder page.
- (c) Refer to Slide 9, which shows the strategy and skills to be used in the first two simulations.

C. Transition to the first simulation

1. Indicate that Dr. Green will introduce the idea of how to “Return To The Target Of The Question” (35– 40 seconds). Then tell the class that they will see Simulation #1 immediately after Dr. Green’s comments.
2. Explain that immediately after the simulation each person is to independently write out a probe. Then each group will share their probes with each other and refer to the Tips Page.
3. Show Dr. Green’s comments and Simulation #1.
4. Circulate through the class answering questions during small group discussion. Then ask for insights / learning points in the overall group.
5. Don’t forget to point out that the simulations were intentionally created with “distracters” that may lead the participant to probe based on their personal reaction to the candidate, rather than the job requirements. These distracters include such things as being manipulative, arrogant, cold, and disagreeable.
6. Expect to spend 8 - 12 minutes on average for each simulation, responses, and discussion. The more complex skills in Simulations #4, #5, #10, and #11 may require more time.

D. As you gain experience with the class you will naturally develop your own ways to introduce the simulations in order to give participants a preview on what to look for. The note at the bottom of each Tips Page reflect some of the ways to give the class a clue on what to look for before watching the simulation.

E. Some of the simulations require basic skills while others involve high-level skills. For example, returning to the target of the question is very basic.

On the other hand, the scenario involving probing based on a verbal lead, takes the class to ask probing questions about a job skill involving professional communications, when the original question dealt with a systematic approach in dealing with a solution. Similarly, probing based on non-verbal clues requires watching the screen closely during the simulation, link it to words in the answer, and form a probe based on those words. This is clearly a higher order interviewing skill and may require special coaching in order for participants to master the skill.

Seeking contrary evidence also provides its own challenges. Here the interviewer has to put aside a quick conclusion about an answer and actually seek information that is the opposite of what was said. This is a challenge for many people who are accustomed to drawing quick conclusions about people.

F. Continue with the remaining simulations you have selected to use. You can fast forward to selected simulations while the small groups are in discussion. Depending on your choices you would expect to use Slides 10 – 13 as an introduction to each of the five video explanations of each strategy and the specific skills associated with it.

V. Wrap-up (10 minutes)

- A. Ask participants to state one major thing that was learned and if they reached their learning objectives (Slide 14).
- B. Take out the reminder page for future interviews.
- C. Start the summary / wrap up by Dr. Green.
- D. Class evaluation