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Promoting Students' Interaction in Higher Education: A Reciprocal Interview Activity Carried out during the First Class Session in Management Subjects

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Abstract: This study analyzes students' thoughts and reflections on an activity carried out during the first day of class of management subjects which are part of technological programs. The purpose of the activity was to promote student interaction during the first session of class of these subjects, with the aim to positively influence the class climate and the students' wellbeing. A reciprocal interview activity between the students and the team of instructors was conducted in the first session of the subjects, instead of a standard 'one direction' presentation of the syllabus by the instructor. Once the activities were completed, students were asked to answer a survey about the activity through qualitative and quantitative questions with a twofold research aim: (1) to analyze the effects of the activity on the students; (2) to gather feedback from the students to improve future editions of the activity. The results obtained showed a clear preference for this type of interactive technique, as opposed to the more classical approach to the first session of a subject.

Keywords: class climate; COVID-19; first day of class; management subjects; reciprocal interview activity; students' interaction; technological programs; wellbeing

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1. Introduction

Enhancing interaction and communication between instructors and learners, and between learners themselves, has been considered one of the most challenging issues in higher education in recent times. The COVID-19 pandemic, which forced many institutions to shift from face-to-face teaching to online teaching [1–5], further accentuated the need to improve interaction and communication. Student–instructor interactions are associated with several positive outcomes [6,7] including wellbeing [6]. According to research work by Trolian, Archibald, and Jach [8], students' interactions had a positive effect on their wellbeing. In the early stages of school, early relationships between instructors and students can predict students' wellbeing in the long term [9]; in fact, student–instructor interactions also have a positive effect on teachers' wellbeing [10]. Therefore, due to its effect, relationships between students and instructors have been an object of research to shed light on the topic [7,10].

In the academic literature, wellbeing can be defined and studied through different approaches. As discussed in [11], the attributes of wellbeing can be used to generate a taxonomy to be used in both objective and subjective approaches. Different definitions of the term wellbeing have been formalized. In this research work, since we focus on the students' wellbeing, we will adopt the following definition: "positive feelings about oneself and reflecting an inner capacity—a resourcefulness—to deal with the pressures and challenges of student life and learning" [12].

1.1. First Day of Class Activities of a Subject Matter

Several textbooks present and suggest didactic activities highlighting the importance of the first day of class [13–15]. According to diverse research studies, the activities carried out on the first day of class during a session of a course—or a subject—can have an impact, among others, on student engagement [16–18], course expectations [19–21], or the students' motivation [22–26]. Empirical research studies on students' preferred activities [17,27–29], may help design the first session of a subject. Hence, once the preferred and the undesired activities according to the students' feedback are collected, instructors may focus on designing the first session to achieve specific goals, which should be consistent with the course objectives and the methodologies to be used [30]. Furthermore, besides designing the first session of class with a specific purpose, all first encounters create a specific impression on the students [31], being a key element of the instructor's discourse that is performed during this first session [25]. Therefore, when teaching during the first session the instructor's discourse and attitude matters [25,32–34], and its impact is not restricted to just the first session [35].

Different first day of class activities have been proposed and experienced in different research works, such as the ones listed in Iannarelli, Bardsley, and Foote [19]: (1) presenting the subject in a 'one-way direction' by the instruction which may include spontaneous students' questions; (2) creating positive or negative experiences; (3) introducing topics to create students' interest in the subject; (4) reciprocal interview activity. Among the available options, our choice was to perform a reciprocal interview activity, as explained in detail in Section 2.1. This activity has been carried out successfully in different sessions during the first day of class of a subject [17,20,36], in line with other research studies that have found that asking the students the proper questions may be very effective [25,37]. It should be noted that it is out of the scope of this study to compare the reciprocal interview activity with a 'one-way' speech-based approach for a first day of class session.

1.2. Aim of This Research Study

This work aims to answer the following research question: How does carrying out an activity that promotes interaction in the class on the very first day of class of a subject affect the comfort levels of the students and the degree of the relevant information obtained on the subject? Our hypothesis is that carrying out a reciprocal interview Activity aimed at promoting student interaction will increase students' comfort levels, without affecting either the quality or the quantity of the information received from the instructor. Hence, the aim of this research is to collect feedback from students to evaluate a reciprocal interview Activity, with the double objective of (1) analyzing the effects of the activity on the students and the degree to which it enhances interaction and establishes a climate of comfort in the classroom; (2) checking that students have acquired the relevant information about the subject (content, methodology, assessment, instructors' profile, important dates, . . .); and (3) collecting feedback about the experience itself, to implement future improvements in these types of tools.

2. Materials and Methods

This research was conducted on students who participated in a reciprocal interview activity during the first session of two management subjects taught at Campus La Salle-URL. Once the activity was finished, the instructors asked the students who attended the first session to complete an electronic survey voluntarily and anonymously.

2.1. The Reciprocal Interview Tool: How the Activity Was Carried Out

Different approaches can be used to design the very first day of class of a subject. In the context of this study, the team of instructors of each of the subjects involved in the research activity listed all the subject information that should be included the first session and carefully planned the 2 h classroom session. In the previous academic course, the instructors involved in this research already had carried out a reciprocal interview

activity in the same subjects. Therefore, they had experienced a 'first version' of the activity that gave them the possibility to refine the activity presented in this research work. The instructors expected two basic outcomes from the activity: (1) to establish a pattern based on promoting interaction between all the class participants from the very first day of class, while increasing their wellbeing; and (2) to offer an introduction to the subject through answering questions that could be of interest to the students.

On the first day of the subject, when the instructors entered the classroom, most of the students were already in the teaching space. The instructors did not introduce themselves as usual; they just said 'Hello' to all the students and one of the members of the teaching staff, in fact the one that was going to be their instructor during the whole academic year, introduced himself just by mentioning his own first name. Next, the first names of the other instructors were given, just adding that they were the teaching team of the subject. The next step was explaining that an activity named reciprocal interview was going to be carried out to present the subject during the first session instead of performing a standard 'one direction' verbal explanation of the subject conducted by the instructor. Students were also told that this activity had been carried out in the previous academic year and had been well-received by students and therefore considered a success, so it was going to be repeated.

The next step was to explain the activity to the students. All the different steps that followed during the activity are summarized in Figure 1.

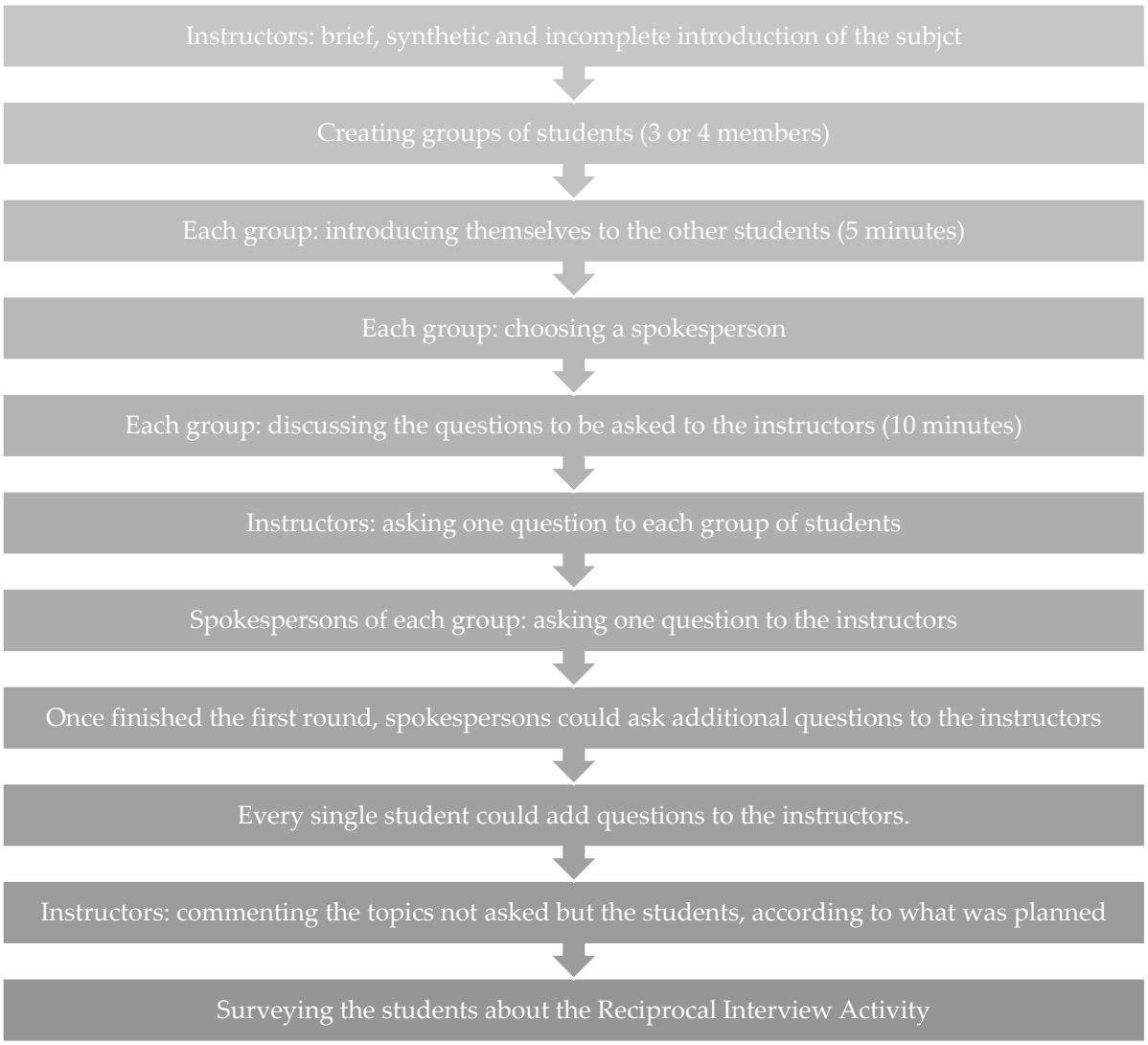


Figure 1. Steps carried out during the reciprocal interview activity.

2.2. Participants and Procedure

The participants in the survey were students who were enrolled in two management subjects in the 2022–2023 academic course. One subject was taught in the context of an informatics degree, while the other one was taught to students of 7 ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) engineering degrees.

The survey was properly answered by 125 students (80.65% of the total enrolled students), 105 engineering students and 20 students pursuing a degree in Software Application Techniques. All the instructors had carried out this activity in the previous year and were familiar with the format. Table 1 shows the sociodemographic characteristics of the students who completed the survey.

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of the surveyed students.

Characteristics	Category	Frequency (Percentage)	Frequency (Percentage)
		Engineering	**Soft. App. Techniques**
Gender	Woman	26 (20.8%)	5 (4.0%)
	Man	76 (60.8%)	14 (11.2%)
	Non-binary	1 (0.8%)	-
	No answer	2 (1.6%)	1 (0.8%)
Age (years old)	18	22 (17.6%)	-
	19	56 (44.8%)	2 (1.6%)
	20	11 (8.8%)	2 (1.6%)
	21	7 (5.6%)	1 (0.8%)
	22	3 (2.4%)	7 (5.6%)
	23	3 (2.4%)	4 (3.2%)
	24	2 (1.6%)	1 (0.8%)
	25 or older	1 (0.8%)	3 (2.4%)
Starting year at La Salle	2019	3 (2.4%)	4 (3.2%)
	2020	11 (12.8%)	14 (11.20%)
	2021	88 (70.4%)	2 (1.6%)
	2022	3 (2.4%)	-

In this table, 'Soft. App. Tech.' stands for 'Software Application Techniques'.

To collect the students' opinions about the reciprocal interview activity, a questionnaire with diverse items was distributed in September 2022. Before starting the survey, the students were informed that their participation was voluntary, that their response would be treated anonymously, and that the data were going to the analyzed in an aggregated way. The students were asked to give their written consent before completing the questionnaire.

The first part of the survey included sociodemographic characteristics, previously shown in this text in Table 1. In the second part, specific items about the reciprocal interview activity were surveyed, as shown in the template included in Figure A1 (see Appendix A). The selected items were adapted from other research works [17,20]. The students were asked for their opinion about the activity based on a 5-point Likert scale [38], ranging from 1 to 5, values that were associated to the following descriptions: 1 ('Strongly disagree'), 2 ('Disagree'), 3 ('Undecided'), 4 ('Agree'), and 5 ('Strongly agree'). The questions were grouped in four blocks, as shown in Table 2.

The final part of the survey included three additional questions related to possible changes to improve the activity (see Table 3).

OQ1 and OQ3 were designed as open-ended questions, while OQ2 was a 'yes' or 'no' question. The items surveyed through a Likert scale were treated in a quantitative basis, while the answers to the questions OQ1 and OQ3, were analyzed through a qualitative approach. Three researchers analyzed the contents individually, but since the answers were short, they agreed not to codify each answer and to literally write the answers of the students.

Table 2. Questions related to the reciprocal interview activity.

Blocks	Items	Questions
Comfort with approaching the instructor	Q1	'Talking to the instructor about the topics to be learned through the subject'
	Q2	'Talking with the instructor about assignments'
	Q3	'Asking questions to the instructor during class sessions'
	Q4	'Talking to the instructor during office hours'
	Q5	'E-mailing the instructor with questions'
	Q6	'Knowing the curricula and the background of the instructors'
Student comfort with class participation	Q7	'Meeting my new classmates'
	Q8	'Working in group activities in the class session'
	Q9	'Sharing ideas and opinions during the class session'
Evaluation of the reciprocal interview activity	Q10	'Would you recommend other instructors to do this activity at the beginning of the term'
	Q11	'Have you found useful this Reciprocal Class Activity?'
	Q12	'Did this activity seem to be a waste of time?'
... the activity helped to	Q13	'To understand what was expected of the subject in the class session'
	Q14	'To understand what was expected of them in the class session'
	Q15	'To work hard to do well in the class session'
	Q16	'To become more comfortable participating in class session'
	Q17	'To share concerns with the instructor'
	Q18	'To establish a climate of interactive classes between students and instructors'
	Q19	'To understand what the subject was about'

The answers to all the questions are based on a 5-point Likert scale.

Table 3. Questions related to how to improve the reciprocal interview activity.

Items	Questions
OQ1	'What would you change about this activity? Anything to include or to eliminate when performing the activity?'
OQ2	'Would you have preferred an oral presentation by the teacher explaining the content of the subject?'
OQ3	'Is there any other alternative activity that you would prefer to do the first day of a subject?'

2.3. Data Analysis

2.3.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

Questionnaire responses were initially summarized using (1) mean and standard deviation (SD); and (2) frequencies. Comparisons between engineering and technical students were performed using the nonparametric Kruskal–Wallis test. The internal consistency reliability of the collected data was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. All data analyses were performed using MATLAB R2018b Update 7 (9.5.0.1298439). The results were finally analyzed to extract conclusions through the frequencies given by the surveyed students to the four different blocks of questions displayed in Table 2.

2.3.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data were initially thought to be analyzed through thematic analysis following [39,40]. Three different researchers were to perform this task individually, to triangulate findings, since this increases the validity of the qualitative research findings. Since all the collected answers given by the students were really brief and synthetic, there was no need to find themes. All the responses collected through the survey were entered literally without the need of further processing.

3. Results and Findings

The results related to the questions based on the Likert scale, once treated according to their quantitative nature, are presented next. Table 4 shows all the mean values and the standard deviations, grouping all the items in different blocks, and clustered by the profile of students: (1) aggregated results, including all the surveyed students; (2) Engineering students; and (3) Degree in Software Application Techniques (Soft. App. Tech.) students.

Table 4. Answers (Q1 to Q19): Means and variances grouped by blocks. Mode (all students).

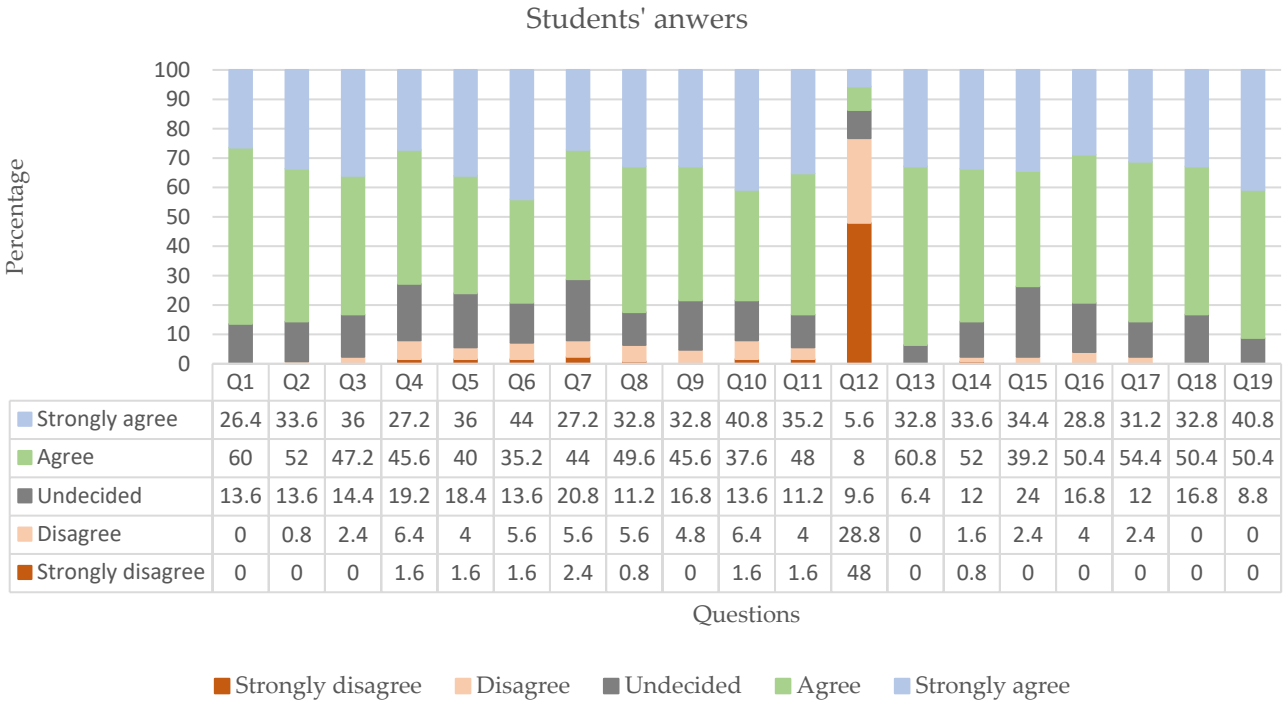
Blocks	Items	Mode	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	*p*-Value
		All surveyed students			*Engineering*		*Soft. App. Techniques*		
Comfort with approaching the instructor	Q1	4	4.13	0.62	4.15	0.63	4.0	0.56	0.294
	Q2	4	4.18	0.69	4.24	0.67	3.9	0.72	0.060
	Q3	4	4.17	0.76	4.18	0.88	4.1	0.72	0.548
	Q4	4	3.9	0.93	4.04	0.89	3.2	0.83	0.000
	Q5	4	4.05	0.92	4.2	0.83	3.25	1.02	0.000
	Q6	5	4.14	0.96	4.14	0.99	4.15	0.81	0.737
Student comfort with class participation	Q7	4	3.88	0.96	3.92	0.94	3.65	1.04	0.278
	Q8	4	4.08	0.86	4.07	0.88	4.15	0.75	0.811
	Q9	4	4.06	0.83	4.08	0.86	4.0	0.65	0.469
Evaluation of the reciprocal interview activity	Q10	5	4.1	0.97	4.09	0.99	4.15	0.88	0.934
	Q11	4	4.11	0.87	4.12	0.88	4.05	0.83	0.580
	Q12	1	1.94	1.19	1.98	1.21	1.75	1.07	0.413
... the activity helped to	Q13	4	4.26	0.57	4.31	0.54	4.0	0.65	0.039
	Q14	4	4.16	0.76	4.19	0.79	4.0	0.56	0.138
	Q15	4	4.06	0.83	4.11	0.84	3.75	0.72	0.047
	Q16	4	4.04	0.79	4.09	0.8	3.8	0.7	0.101
	Q17	4	4.14	0.72	4.18	0.73	3.95	0.6	0.106
	Q18	4	4.16	0.69	4.19	0.69	4.0	0.65	0.238
	Q19	4	4.32	0.63	4.36	0.64	4.1	0.55	0.065

In this table, M stands for 'Mean value'; SD stands for 'Standard Deviation'; 'Soft. App. Tech.' stands for 'Software Application Techniques'. Mode: 5, 'Strongly Agree'; 4, 'Agree'; 3, 'Undecided'; 2, 'Disagree'; 1, 'Strongly Disagree. Information about the differences between both groups is captured by the *p*-values.

As seen from the results presented in Table 4, the responses of the engineering and technical students performed through the nonparametric Kruskal–Wallis test are similar, although the *p*-values linked to Q4, Q5, Q13, and Q15 point to minor discrepancies, which supports the decision of combining both groups of participants. Hence, the next set of results presented in this section is not split into two groups; all the answers of the students are aggregated as a single pack in terms of statistical treatment. As shown in Table 4, most of the mean values were around 4.

Figure 2 displays the collected data, showing the percentage of answers associated to each of the options selected by the surveyed students for each question. In addition, a bar graph helps to compare the chosen options selected by the students for each answer.

The data set presented the following magnitudes of Cronbach's alpha: 'Comfort with approaching the instructor' (0.82); 'Student comfort with class participation' (0.75); and 'Evaluation of the Reciprocal Interview Activity' (0.73). Therefore, since all the values are equal or greater than 0.60, the data set has internal consistency reliability [41,42]. Figure 2 shows the number of answers given by students to each one of the five options (from 1 to 5) of each single question. It should be noted that Q12 ('Did this activity seem like a waste of time') is the only question that was scored negatively, as expected.



	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19
Strongly agree	26.4	33.6	36	27.2	36	44	27.2	32.8	32.8	40.8	35.2	5.6	32.8	33.6	34.4	28.8	31.2	32.8	40.8
Agree	60	52	47.2	45.6	40	35.2	44	49.6	45.6	37.6	48	8	60.8	52	39.2	50.4	54.4	50.4	50.4
Undecided	13.6	13.6	14.4	19.2	18.4	13.6	20.8	11.2	16.8	13.6	11.2	9.6	6.4	12	24	16.8	12	16.8	8.8
Disagree	0	0.8	2.4	6.4	4	5.6	5.6	5.6	4.8	6.4	4	28.8	0	1.6	2.4	4	2.4	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	1.6	1.6	1.6	2.4	0.8	0	1.6	1.6	48	0	0.8	0	0	0	0	0

Figure 2. Answers to each surveyed item (Q1 to Q19) associated to each one of the 5 options.

Findings about the three final questions are presented in the following. Collected results from the participants were open-ended questions about the reciprocal interview activity that students had experienced during the first session of the subjects. Many answers to the question OQ1 were: 'No', 'Nothing', 'I would not change anything', or 'I wouldn't add or change anything'; on the other hand, all the answers given by the participants in a different line are displayed in a literal way in Table 5.

Table 5. Answers to OQ1 excluding the statements 'No', 'Nothing', or 'I would no change anything'.

Respondent	Answer
#1	I think we could go more deeper in everyone, but its fine.
#5/#100	Make groups randomly.
#6	Asking a quick question to each one of the students.
#13	A more dynamic question time.
#38/#48/#49	Make the activity shorter.
#45	I wouldn't do such a long round of questions.
#50	Increase the explanations of how the subject works.
#54/#86/#104	-No answer-
#60	I wouldn't ask all the groups. I would alternate questions.
#64	It could be taught in a more practical way through a game or similar.
#67	To set some more guidelines, make it more closed and set goals.
#78	Look for more ways to integrate all classmates in the activity.
#79	Groups of 4 to 5 people seem a lot to just come up with questions.
#83	More interaction with the classmates.
#94	I would eliminate the 5 min of knowing each other.
#109	Make the round of questions by groups faster or more dynamic.
#113	Let only those who want to participate, participate.
#118	Letting students ask questions only if they have any question.
#58	Start explaining topics on the first day.

The answers to question OQ2, about the students' preference for a more traditional first day of class over the reciprocal interview activity, yielded the following results: 116 answers

(92.8% of the total) expressed their preference for the reciprocal interview activity answering 'Yes', while 9 (7.2% of the total) answered 'No'.

The findings derived from the answers to the question OQ3 should shed light on the alternatives to the reciprocal interview activity in terms of the preferences that the nine students that answered 'No' to OQ2. Their answers given by the students are displayed literally in Table 6.

Table 6. Answers to OP3 from students that answered 'No' to OP2.

Respondent	Answer
#54/#86/#104	-No answer-
#39	Kahoot, instead of a reciprocal interview activity.
#57	Kahoot and all students introducing themselves to their classmates.
#58	An icebreaker where all the students take part.
#97	Doing less activities during the first session.
#100	A presentation, conducted by the instructor.
#125	Kahoot and to ask all students what they know about economics.

4. Discussion

As previously mentioned, this research work was focused on analyzing the reciprocal interview activity from a twofold perspective: (1) to analyze the specific outcomes of this the activity and the students' impression of the tool; and (2) to identify possible improvements on the use of the tool to be applied in future experiences.

An initial evaluation of the collected data shown in Figure 2 can be performed through aggregating the five options given to the students in the questionnaire, in just three options: (1a) 'Agree' plus 'Strongly agree'; (2a) 'Undecided'; (3a) 'Disagree' plus 'Strongly disagree'. In doing that, it can be seen clearly that the number of answers that reflect a negative evaluation (3a) is low, except in the case of the item Q12 (which, in fact, is a question that was asked in a negative format).

As shown in Table 2, the research was oriented to capture and analyze students' thoughts about four main ideas or blocks. The analysis of the collected data per blocks is presented next. The first one was about checking how comfortable students felt about approaching the instructor once the activity was over, which was evaluated asking them about six specific items, as follows: from Q1 to Q6. Item Q6 ('Knowing the curricula and the background of the instructors') was the one in which a greater number of students selected the option 'strongly agree' (44%), followed by Q3 ('Asking questions to the instructor during class sessions') and Q5 ('E-mailing the instructor with questions') with 36%. The options 'agree' and 'strongly agree' ranged between 72.8% and 86.4%. Therefore, it can be assumed that comfort with the instructor once the activity had concluded, considering the diverse surveyed items included in this block, was achieved through the reciprocal interview activity.

The response percentages to the options of the second block of questions was related to 'Student comfort with class participation'. Group work (Q8) and the exchange of ideas among the students (Q9), were highly appreciated by the students (82.4% and 78.4% respectively, when aggregating the 'agree' and 'strongly agree' options), followed by 'Meeting with new classmates' (Q7). It should be noted that group work and the exchange of ideas are common class dynamics during regular sessions, and the students were informed of this at the end of the activity. According to the students' evaluations, it can be concluded that the students perceived the interaction between them very satisfactorily thanks to the activity.

The third block of questions evaluated the reciprocal interview activity itself. The answers of the students to Q10, Q11, and Q12 were included to assess the usefulness of the reciprocal interview activity according to their perception. The recommendation of the reproduction of this activity in other subjects (Q10), as well as the usefulness of the activity

(Q11), were reaffirmed by the answers of the students. Item Q12, which was worded negatively, supports the idea that the activity was valued positively by the respondents.

From the joint evaluation of the first three blocks of questions in the questionnaire it can be seen that 'comfort with approaching the instructor' is the one that obtained the highest positive evaluation. From the results obtained, it can be highlighted that the activity was very useful in order to create a positive relationship between students and instructors. However, both the second and the third block of questions obtained very satisfactory values. These findings are consistent with previous research works, e.g., [17,20]. In fact, all the means obtained for all the items consulted are very similar to those obtained in [17], with obtaining slightly higher values in this research, except for Q8 (a difference of −0.12) and Q12 (the item formulated in negative format, with a difference of +0.47). Thus, the activity was very useful for generating interaction between the students themselves as well as with the instructors, one of the objectives pursued in the design of the activity.

The results from the fourth set of questions, which deals with how useful the activity was for the students, show that all the items were highly appreciated. When analyzing the answers from Q13 to Q19, Q19 ('To understand what the subject was about') was the choice that collected the highest number of 'strongly agree' answers (40.8%). This result was interesting for the instructors who, besides fomenting interaction to enhance wellbeing, carefully designed the first session to ensure that all the basic contents included in the syllabus of the subject were going to be explained. And this was achieved according to the analysis of the answers of the students. When analyzing the aggregated results ('Agree' plus 'Strongly agree'), positive answers to questions related to the subject, such as 'To understand what was expected of the subject in the class session'—Q13 (93.6%)—and the aforementioned Q19 (92.2%) were chosen by more than 92% of the surveyed students. The activity helped student to understand what was expected of them—Q14 (85.6%)—and also to interact and get to know the instructors—Q17 (85.6%) and Q18 (83.2%). Topics about the class climate during the class session, despite mostly positive answers were ranked in the lower levels: 'To work hard to do well in the class session'—Q15 (73.6%)—and 'To become more comfortable participating in class session'—Q16 (79.2%).

As a first conclusion, it can be stated that except for Q12 (which was stated in a negative form), most of the options selected on the Likert scale for the questions were 'agree' or 'strongly agree'. Therefore, it can be said the majority of the participants gave a positive response to the activity and the intended objective of fomenting interaction and establishing a positive class climate.

The final part of this research work was focused on collecting information about alternatives to be carried out in the first session of class instead of a reciprocal interview activity, and how this activity could be improved according to the students' thoughts. First, students were asked about what could be done to improve the activity through an open-ended question. This question was answered through short responses, as shown in Table 5. A wide range of comments was suggested, e.g., including gamification in the activity (#64), asking questions to all the class participants (#6), making the asking activity more dynamic (#13), shortening the activity (#38, #48, #49), etc. Secondly, students were questioned about their preference for the reciprocal interview activity compared to a more traditional approach, as was directly asked to the students through a question that should be answered with a 'yes' or a 'no'. It should be noted that 92.8% of the surveyed students expressed their preference for the reciprocal interview activity. Therefore, both set of answers reinforced the idea that the majority of the students were satisfied with the activity. The last open-ended question was about which activities could be done during the first session of a subject as an alternative to the classical approach or the reciprocal interview activity that is proposed. Most of the answers were aligned with keeping the activity as it was. From the nine students that manifested their preference for another option, three of them gave no answer, while four of them proposed performing an icebreaking activity, with the suggestion of a Kahoot activity by three of these four students. One of the students

chose a classical presentation by the instructor, and the remaining opinion was in favor of 'doing less activities during the first session'.

The surveyed students lived through tough times due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When they started their university studies, they experienced diverse restrictions that affected their interaction with instructors and with their peers. Additionally, they had to study management topics that are quite far from their first interest, which makes some of them are reluctant to dedicate efforts to these subjects. Despite their importance in the future professions of students, management subjects are not initially the preferred ones by the majority students that are learning technological degrees, although the topics and competences taught in these subjects are likely to very important in their professional practice [43]. Therefore, fomenting interaction during the first session according to the theoretical basis previously explained in this paper, may be a choice to enhance the wellbeing of the students when taking these subjects to cope with both issues—COVID-19 restrictions and a lack of interest in management subjects. Another element to consider, is the long lasting effect of the activity on the students [35], which in some cases lasts the whole course. Therefore, exploring the different existing options [19], or even designing and planning a new one, seems to be good choice when an instructor begins teaching a new subject the very first day. The instructors were really satisfied with the experience and the outcomes, an idea that was reinforced once they analyzed the answers given by the students about the activity.

Diverse limitations of this research work can be pointed out. The first one is that all the questions were focused on the reciprocal interview activity, although a key element is to promote wellbeing of the students. After discussing this issue when planning this research, the researchers decided not to include any specific question about wellbeing. However, we plan to carry out a survey aimed at assessing the wellbeing of the students at the end of the teaching of these subjects. A second limitation concerns the participants: all of them are associated to technical studies related to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Further research should be performed on the first session of class of management subjects in other technical programs (such as architecture, chemistry, ...), or non-technical studies in which management subjects are taught (such as physical education, law, ...). In fact, research work in this line with students of physical education has already been planned. A third limitation of this study is that we do not know how long the positive effect of the study is going to last, which is an element that we want to study in future research works. Finally, a fourth limitation that has been identified is that this experience has been developed in a post COVID-19 pandemic scenario, and students are presumably affected someway. Further research should be performed in this line during the next academic years to compare the results and findings that have been found in this work.

5. Conclusions

This research is focused on studying a reciprocal interview activity carried out the first day of class of two management subjects. The activity was performed instead of a classical introduction of the subject led by the instructor. The instructor established a dialogue with the students to achieve the goals of (1) establishing a climate to be replicated during the whole course, oriented to promote interactions between all the class participants, as a tool to enhance students' wellbeing and establishing comfortable atmosphere in the classroom; and (2) promoting students' questions about topics of their interest related to the subject and the instructors.

On completion of the activity that promoted interaction between all the participants—students and instructors—the students were very satisfied with the comfort—i.e., wellbeing—that they experienced during the first session of class. In addition, the students highly valued the reciprocal interview activity and manifested their preference of this format when compared with a more classical approach based 'on a one direction' speech conducted by the instructor. It should be highlighted that the activity was not detrimental to the students' need to be fully informed of the subject, as they ended up receiving the

same or more information about their subjects. The survey also asked about what could be done to improve the activity, obtaining feedback that suggested the inclusion of icebreakers in the context of the activity to further increase the students' interaction.

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Institutional Review Board Statement: Data were collected using a nameless form, to be completed on a voluntary basis and treated anonymously once handed in and collected during a session of class. The research presented, as well as the design, collection, and management of its data, were positively evaluated and approved by the Ethics Committee of Ramon Llull University, with the file number: CER URL_2020_2021_009.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all students involved in the study. Data were collected and treated in a voluntary and anonymous manner.

Data Availability Statement: Data available on request from the authors.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A

Reciprocal Interview Activity

1	Strongly disagree
2	Disagree
3	Undecided
4	Agree
5	Strongly Agree

This activity helped me to ...

Comfort with approaching the instructor	
Q1.- 'Talking to the professor about topics to be learned through the subject	
Q2.- 'Talking with the professor about assignments'	
Q3.- 'Asking questions to the professor during class sessions'	
Q4.- 'Talking to the professor during office hours'	
Q5.- 'Emailing the professor with questions'	
Q6.- 'Knowing the curricula and the background of the teachers'	
Student comfort with class participation	
Q7.- 'Meeting my new classmates'	
Q8.- 'Working in group activities in class'	
Q9.- 'Sharing ideas and opinions during the class session'	
Evaluation of activity (Reciprocal Interview)	
Q10.- 'Would you recommend other professors to do this activity at the beginning of the term?'	
Q11.- 'Have you found useful this Reciprocal Class Activity?'	
Q12.- 'Did this activity seem to be a waste of time?' *-negative statement-*	
...the activity helped me:	
Q13.- 'To understand what was expected of the subject in class'	
Q14.- 'To understand what was expected of them in class'	
Q15.- 'To work hard to do well in the class'	
Q16.- 'To become more comfortable participating in class'	
Q17.- 'To share concerns with the professor'	
Q18.- 'To establish a climate of interactive classes between students and professors'	
Q19.- 'To understand what the subject was about'	

What would you change about this activity? Anything to include? Anything to remove?

Would you have preferred an oral presentation by the teacher explaining the content of the program of the subject? SI / NO

Is there any other alternative activity that you would prefer to do during the first day of class of a subject?

Figure A1. Reciprocal interview activity: template of the survey.

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