VISITING THE WORLD: INTERVIEWS

General Guide

Interview Example: Biophilic Cities

Interview Example: Biophilic Cities: Assignment

GENERAL GUIDE

In this experience, student groups interview people from outside of class about their insight, expertise, or perspective on a sustainability issue. This experience gives students the opportunity to take leadership in designing and conducting a stakeholder engagement, provides one-on-one time with a stakeholder, and develops interpersonal competence in sustainability.

“Truth walks toward us on the paths of our questions...as soon as you think you have the answer, you have closed the path and may miss vital new information. Wait a while in the stillness, and do not rush to conclusions, no matter how uncomfortable the unknowing.” — Jacqueline Winspear (2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Level: 200; can accommodate group size: 2-50</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>Alternative to typical school work: gives students new perspectives, and promotes self-discovery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Exposes students to on-the-ground information and perspectives; builds qualitative research skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjustments</td>
<td>Planning and preparation required to support students to identify interviewees, develop a questionnaire or survey, and coach students in professional stakeholder engagement and rigorous data collection.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Replaces homework, get students excited about material.</td>
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LEARNING OBJECTIVES
• Compare and contrast the value systems of the interviewee with the value system of your own (after the interview). [VALUES THINKING]
• Collaboratively identify a person to interview and a set of research questions that will allow you to collect information that will answer your research questions. [INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCIES]
• Conduct professional stakeholder engagement, arranging interviews in a timely manner, communicating respectfully, being prepared, and follow up with a thank you note. [INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCIES]
• Analyze interview responses, identifying course concepts discussed, comparing and contrasting the interviewee’s perspectives to others encountered in class, and reflecting on what insight the interview provided that you could not have found elsewhere. [BASIC ACADEMIC COMPETENCIES]

ACTIVITIES

Interviews are great ways for students to learn a qualitative research skill and delve into course concepts or topics from multiple perspectives. In in-depth, open ended interviewing, students develop talking points with the intent of creating hypotheses for their research topic. They conduct interviews almost as a conversation, making sure to begin with or touch on all talking questions but also exploring new thoughts, ideas, and concepts that come up. Students then analyze what new information the interview notes or recordings provided them regarding their research question (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999). In semi-structured interviewing, students develop a set of fixed questions relevant to their research question, and conduct interviews by asking each interview question and recording each answer to confirm study domains, and identify factors, variables and attributes of variables for analysis. This approach “combines the flexibility of the unstructured, open-ended interview with the directionality and agenda of a survey instrument to produce focused, qualitative, textual data (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999, 149).

Preparation for both types of interviews is similar. Students develop an instrument with a clear objective, either talking points or questions, and a set of guidelines to ensure professional, empathetic engagement and reliability of data. Students can work in pairs, groups, or alone depending on the larger context and any safety concerns. Instructors provide guidance and assistance in designing and applying interview instrument, but students are ultimately in charge in order to help them develop self-directed research and stakeholder engagement skills. Students interpret results and findings can be discussed and shared in class. They could also be shared within the university or at public events via poster sessions, blog postings or other methods if an IRB exemption has been secured in advance.

A few guidelines to consider:

• Avoid targeting a small population that will be overwhelmed with requests from students.
• If students are new to interviewing, consider targeting a low-risk and high-comfort group like peers, which will give students practice for more sophisticated research in the future.
• Coordinate and rehearse the best interviewing procedure with students in advance, especially if students are interviewing a target group beyond their peers (e.g. staff, faculty, government employees, community leaders, etc.).
• Plan assignments and in-class time for preparing surveys and delineating scope of work.
• Consider whether or not you need to submit an IRB proposal for this activity.

Before
• Explain the assignment to students. Include due dates for rough draft, final draft, interview appointments, data, and final assignments.
• Review and provide feedback on rough draft of interview instrument that includes objective of the interview and talking points or questions.
• Coach students in appropriate interviewing comportment, technique, and data recording to ensure consistency across interviews and maintain positive relationships with interviewees.
• Prompt students to contact potential interviewees well in advance of due dates (2-3 weeks). Review students’ interview request email, including the objective and questions.
• Approve final draft of interview instrument, which includes objective, talking points or questions, and interviewing protocol.

During
• Students conduct interview on their own.

After
• Discuss interview experience and content with students after the fact and coach students in qualitative data analysis.
• Arrange any final assignments like presentations.
• Prompt students to send a thank-you to interviewees.

Assignments and Assessment
The assignments below can maximize learning outcomes of the interview experience and produce outputs that can be assessed to determine achievement of the learning objectives.

• Create a timeline taking into account various tasks and due dates. Output: work plan.
• Develop talking points or interview guide that clearly defines the objective of the interviews, questions, and agreed upon interview protocols. Output: interview instrument.
• Conduct interviews and record conversation or question and answers via comprehensive notes or transcribed recording. Output: notes.
• Analyze interview data and use it to formulate future research questions or hypotheses, and/or conclusions on the initial data analysis. Output: research paper.
• Present findings in class or at a public event (as long as you have secured IRB exemption). Output: participation in discussion or presentation materials and performance.

Use a Likert-scale to determine if students achieved all, most, some, little, or none of the learning objective. Develop a rubric with examples of answers that demonstrate students have achieved all (5), most (4), some (3), little (2), or none (1) of the objective.

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TAKE THIS EXPERIENCE TO THE NEXT LEVEL!
• Simulate with the world - Have students conduct interviews in class with peers who take on the role of experts, community partners, or stakeholders. Do this as a stand-alone assignment or as preparation for interviewing people outside of the classroom.
• Engage with the world - Contact a community or ASU staff partner who is in need of gathering data or information about a certain topic or place (E.g. ASU wants to know about student attitudes towards recycling). Obtain an IRB exemption for your class and have work together or in teams to develop a single interview instrument. Have students work together to collect data through interviews,
analyze and process the information, and finally present the results ASU and broader community.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY & RESOURCES**


- Examples: [Biophilic Cities](#), [Fuel Your Fire](#)
- Experienced instructors: Kelli Larson: (kelli.larson@asu.edu).

- Tools: [Work Plan](#)
- Tutorials: [Student Tutorial: Stakeholder Engagement](#)
INTERVIEW EXAMPLE: BIOPHILIC CITIES

SUMMARY
Groups of 4-5 students from the Sustainable Cities honors section developed interview instrument and interviewed people living in Tempe, Arizona’s historic Maple-Ash neighborhood to find out how they connect with nature in their day-to-day lives, what barriers or sustainability trade offs they have to negotiate, and what elements of sustainability solution options their neighborhoods, parks, and preserves have to offer to urban planners and designers. Students used ipads to film interviews and compiled them with additional footage to create mini-documentaries for in-class final projects.

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Collaboratively identify a person to interview who will give you insight on biophilia in the neighborhood, park, or preserve that your group is studying and develop a set of research questions that will allow you to collect information that will answer your research questions about biophilia and biophilic design in your research site. [INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCIES]
- Conduct professional stakeholder engagement, arranging interviews in a timely manner, communicating respectfully, and being prepared. [INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCIES]
- Analyze interview responses, identifying course concepts discussed, comparing and contrasting the interviewee’s perspectives to others encountered in class, and reflecting on what insight the interview provided that you could not have found elsewhere. [BASIC ACADEMIC COMPETENCIES]

ACTIVITIES
In this experience, students developed semi-structured interview instruments and interviewed people living in Tempe, Arizona’s historic Maple-Ash neighborhood to find out how they connect with nature in their day-to-day lives, what impact these “biophilic” interactions have on them, what barriers or sustainability trade offs they have to negotiate in connecting with nature in a desert city, and what elements of sustainability solution options their neighborhoods, parks, and preserves have to offer to urban planners and designers. Students used ipads to film interviews and compiled them with additional footage to create mini-documentaries for inclass final projects.

The instructor provided guidance and assistance in designing the interview instrument and coaching students in interview protocols, but students were ultimately in charge in order to help them develop self-directed research and stakeholder engagement skills.
The instructor helped students identify interviewees, made initial contact via email before turning communication over to students. Students introduced themselves, the project, and invited interviewees to participate, making sure to explain the goal, share the interview questions, and ask permission to video record the interview. The instructor also secured iPads from the GIS Master’s program, which volunteered students who needed service time to host a mini-workshop on using the iPads and relevant software.

Interviews were 10 - 20 minutes long, consisting of 5-7 questions. One student took on primary speaking roles during the interview, one filmed, and others took notes and provided prompting question. Students were careful to dress nicely, and arrange the seating in a circle so as to facilitate a conversational rather than interrogation environment.

This experience was implemented as part of a semester-long group project that introduced students to concepts of biophilia, biophilic design, and basic skills and methods for sustainability research. Students read Timothy Beatley’s Biophilic Cities book; picked a park, preserve, or neighborhood in the Phoenix metro area to study in teams; and then designed a research project to assess biophelia there, and identify examples of biophilic design that might serve as visions for other places in the valley.

Before

- Explain the assignment to students. Include due dates for rough draft, final draft, interview appointments, data, and final assignments.
- Review and provide feedback on rough draft of interview instrument that includes objective of the interview and talking points or questions.
- Coach students in appropriate interviewing comportment, technique, and data recording to ensure consistency across interviews and maintain positive relationships with interviewees.
- Prompt students to contact potential interviewees well in advance of due dates (2-3 weeks). Draft or review the interview request email, including the objective and questions.
- Approve final draft of interview instrument, which includes objective, talking points or questions, and interviewing protocol.

During

- Students conduct interview on their own.

After

- Discuss interviews with students after the fact and coach students in qualitative data analysis.
- Arrange final assignments like presentations.
- Prompt students to send a thank-you to interviewees.
ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

The assignments below maximized learning outcomes of the interview experience and produced outputs to be assessed to determine student learning outcomes.

- **Prepare** talking points or an interview guide that clearly defines the objective of the interviews, questions, as well as agreed upon interview protocols. Output: interview instrument.
- **Conduct** interviews and record conversation or question and answers via comprehensive notes or transcribed recording. Output: notes.
- **Analyze** interview data and use it to formulate research questions, hypotheses, and / or conclusions. Output: research paper and 3-4 minute documentary.
- **Present** findings in class or at a public event (as long as you have secured IRB exemption). Output: participation in discussion or presentation materials and performance.

A rubric was used to determine if students achieved all (5), most (4), some (3), little (2), or none (1) of each learning objective.

TAKE THIS EXPERIENCE TO THE NEXT LEVEL!

- **Simulate the world** - Have students conduct interviews in class with peers who take on the role of experts, community partners, or stakeholders. Do this as a stand-alone assignment or as preparation for interviewing people outside of the classroom.
- **Engage with the world** - Contact a community or ASU staff partner who is in need of gathering data or information about a certain topic or place (E.g. ASU wants to know about student attitudes towards recycling). Obtain an IRB exemption for your class and have work together or in teams to develop a single interview instrument. Have students work together to collect data through interviews, analyze and process the information, and finally present the results ASU and broader community.

BIBLIOGRAPHY & RESOURCES


Resources:

- Interview Guide
- Experienced Instructors: Dorothy Trippel (dtrippel@asu.edu).
- Guidelines for designing and conducting interviews:


- Tools: [Work Plan](#)
- Tutorials: [Student Tutorial: Stakeholder Engagement](#)
INTERVIEW ASSIGNMENT: BIOPHILIC CITIES

SUMMARY:
Your group of 4-5 students from the Sustainable Cities honors section will develop an interview instrument and interview people living in Tempe, Arizona’s historic Maple-Ash neighborhood to find out how these residents connect with nature in their day-to-day lives and what barriers or sustainability trade offs they have to negotiate. Your team will be given an iPad for one week to film interviews and compile them with additional footage to create mini-documentaries for in-class final projects. The purpose of this assignment is to introduce interviews as a qualitative research method, help your team collect data for your research projects, help you develop interpersonal skills, and introduce you to video as a means for communicating research findings.

INSTRUCTIONS:
- **Meet** with instructor to identify potential interviewees for instructor to contact. Think about who might have unique information, perspectives, or expertise that would help answer your research questions. Do not interview people previously interviewed by students in this class.
- **Draft** a set of 5-7 interview questions for a 10-20 minute interview. Send to instructor for approval by Feb 1.
- **Assume** responsibility for communicating with interviewees once instructor has made initial contact. Email interviewees 2-3 weeks in advance of when you need to complete the interviews to introduce yourselves and schedule a date and time. Identify the group contact person who will be in charge of communication. Briefly explain the project and goal of interview, acknowledging that the instructor has been in touch. Ask permission to video record the interview and let interviewees know that you can record it via notes if they prefer. Copy instructor in all email communications.
- **Revise** interview questions and create protocol. Send to instructor for approval by Feb 15.
- **Practice** interviews in class on Feb 23.
- **Pick up** iPADS in class on Feb 23. Bring student ID. The student who picks it up will need to drop it off in class on March 2.
- **Conduct** interviews the week between Feb 23 and March 2. Have one student take on primary speaking roles during the interview, one film, and others take notes and listen actively. Dress nicely, and arrange the seating in a circle so as to facilitate a conversational rather than interrogational environment.
- **Compile** and type notes.
• **Edit** video footage and add to documentary on your research site.

• **Analyze** notes and footage. What does the interviewee’s knowledge and perspectives add to the narrative about biophilia and biophilic design in the Maple-Ash neighborhood? What insight does it give you into barriers and trade-offs? What insight does it give you into examples of biophilic design and change-making that could help other neighborhoods?

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

• Collaboratively identify a person who will give you insight on biophilia in the neighborhood, park, or preserve that your group is studying and develop research questions by reflecting on what you know and don’t know about biophilia and biophilic design in your research site.

• Develop a questionnaire instruments that will allow you to collect information that will answer your research questions.

• Conduct professional stakeholder engagement, arranging interviews in a timely manner, communicating respectfully, and being prepared.

• Analyze interview responses, identifying course concepts discussed, comparing and contrasting the interviewee’s perspectives to others encountered in class, and reflecting on what insight the interview provided that you could not have found elsewhere.

You will be evaluated on how far your written newspaper article and reflection demonstrate your achievement of these learning objectives.

**REMEMBER:**

• You are in charge of making sure that your team completes each step of the interview assignment and meets all deadlines and requirements. Work Plans and Codes of Collaboration are great tools to make this happen.

• It is imperative that you secure approval from your instructor before contacting your interviewee and again before you interview them. This will ensure that your instructor is aware of you public engagement and can coach you as necessary. To do this, send draft emails and interview protocols to instructor for review. Complete any necessary revisions. And then proceed once you have secured approval.