

Interview With an Art Teacher in Narrative Form Hand out.

During the semester I would like you to interview an art teacher in the **public school system**, or a person who has taught art in the public school system for at least two years.

I expect you to write up the results of the interview and include observations that help to round out the entire character of the teacher, the decisions that they made that lead them to teaching, the words of wisdom that they might want to pass on, the challenges they face, and their philosophies on discipline, management, art making, school administration, and their day to day existence in the classroom.

Be sure to ask questions that you need answers too. You are responsible for scheduling this interview. These may be conducted in groups of three, two, or individually. The interview should last long enough to get the answers you are seeking, but not long enough to annoy the teacher. (You might offer to buy the teacher lunch etc. as a thank-you.) Be sure to write them a thank-you note for their time.

DO NOT DO THIS USING E-MAIL or you will have to re-do it or accept a zero. You can do this over the telephone if that is easier. I would prefer that you meet with a teacher face to face.

Questions you might consider:

Do not ask every one of these, just choose a few to get started

What was your first year of teaching like?

What do you like best about teaching?

What do you dislike about teaching?

Why have you continued to teach?

How much is your school budget?

Do you find that the salary is acceptable?

What is your relationship with the administration like?

How do you cope with the stress of teaching?
What is your most successful lesson plan?
What is your strategy for discipline?
What is your strategy for organizing your classroom supplies and students?
What made you want to be a teacher?
Do you ever collaborate with other teachers in the school or do you feel or choose to remain isolated?
What other activities do you do at school besides teach art?
What is the worst discipline problem you have encountered? How did you handle it?
Has being a teacher affected your self image and the way you conduct yourself outside of school?
How do you motivate your students?
What do you do if a lesson is not working out?
How do you keep your life balanced between work and life outside of school?
What do you wish you had known before you became a teacher?

Below are tips for interviewing

taken from the

[Research Methods Resources on the WWW](#)

Found on yahoo

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The following information is taken specifically from http://www.slais.ubc.ca/resources/research_methods/interviews.htm

The course of the interview

It is sensible to concentrate at the beginning of the interview on putting the respondent at ease, to enable him or her to feel comfortable talking to you before any of the substantive areas of the schedule are introduced. Hopefully then, this positive and responsive 'set' will continue through the interview.

The interviewer's role in a semi-structured interview is to facilitate and guide, rather than dictate exactly what will happen during the encounter. If the interviewer has learnt the schedule in advance, then he or she can concentrate during the interview on what the respondent is saying, and occasionally monitor the coverage of the scheduled topics. Thus the interviewer uses the schedule to indicate the general area of interest and to provide cues when the participant has difficulties, but the respondent should be allowed a strong role in determining how the interview proceeds.

The interview does not have to follow the sequence on the schedule, nor does every question have to be asked, or asked in exactly the same way of each respondent. Thus the interviewer may decide that it would be appropriate to ask a question earlier than it appears on the schedule because it follows from what the respondent has just said. Similarly how a question is phrased, and how explicit it is, will now partly depend on how the interviewer feels the participant is responding.

The interview may well move away from the questions on the schedule and the interviewer must decide how much movement is acceptable. It is quite possible that the interview may enter an area that had not been predicted by the investigator but which is

extremely pertinent to, and enlightening of, the project's overall question. Indeed these novel avenues are often the most valuable, precisely because they have come unprompted from the respondent and, therefore, are likely to be of especial importance for him or her. On the other hand, of course, the interviewer needs to make sure that the conversation does not move too far away from the agreed domain.

A few tips:

1. Try not to rush in too quickly. Give the respondent time to finish a question before moving on. Often the most interesting questions need some time to respond to and richer, fuller answers may be missed if the interviewer jumps in too quickly.
2. If the respondent is entering an interesting area, minimal *probes* are often all that is required to help him or her to continue, for example: 'Can you tell me more about that?' Or more specific probes may be appropriate in certain circumstances, for example, to tap affect: 'How did that make you feel?' or to focus on awareness: 'What do you think about that?'
3. Ask one question at a time. Multiple questions can be difficult for the respondent to unpick and even more difficult for you subsequently, when you are trying to work out from a transcript which question the respondent is replying to.
4. Monitor the effect of the interview on the respondent. It may be that the respondent feels uncomfortable with a particular line of questioning and this may be expressed in his or her non-verbal behaviour or in how he or she replies. You need to be ready to respond to this by, for example, backing off and trying again more gently, or deciding it would be inappropriate to pursue this area with this respondent. As an interviewer you have certain ethical responsibilities towards your respondent. (For more on interviewing, see Burgess, 1984 and Taylor and Bogdan, 1984. For

discussion of some of the ethical issues involved in interviewing, see Batchelor and Briggs, 1994.)

Tape-recording

It is necessary to decide whether to tape-record the interview or not. Generally I would recommend taping because of what is lost if you do not have this audio record. Obviously a tape-recording allows a much fuller record than notes taken during the interview. It also means that the interviewer can concentrate on how the interview is proceeding and where to go next rather than laboriously writing down what the respondent is saying.

Tape-recording does have its disadvantages. The respondent may not feel happy being taped and may even not agree to the interview if it is recorded. Transcription of tapes takes a very long time, depending on the clarity of the recording and the level of the transcription.

It is important not to reify the tape-recording. While the record it produces is fuller, it is not a complete, 'objective' record. Non-verbal behaviour is excluded and the recording still requires a process of interpretation from the transcriber or any other listener. However, personally, I think the benefits of tape-recording so outweigh the disadvantages that I would never consider doing this sort of interviewing without taping it.

Assuming you do decide to tape and transcribe the interview, the normal convention is to transcribe the whole interview, including the interviewer's questions. Leave a wide enough margin on both sides to make your analytic comments.