Caitlyn Homol received a 2024 APA TOPSS Charles T. Blair-Broeker Excellence in Teaching Award.

Lesson plan

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Research method application: Interviews

This is a two day lesson plan structured for 45 minute class periods. After learning about the four types of interviews that they should know for the IB Psychology exam (structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews, and focus groups), students study Lueck and Wilson (2010) and the use of interviews to better understand acculturation and acculturative stress. We use this study to develop understanding of techniques that improve the quality of interviews and ensure ethical considerations are met.

In order to give students more practical understanding of interviews, this lesson plan allows them to work together to plan one of their own. On day one of this plan, students learn of their opportunity to plan an interview/focus group about culture and acculturation, in which the participants are members of our staff. They begin to discuss which On day two, they solidify their questions, prepare for data collection, and discuss how to improve the credibility of their data and findings. After they complete the interview/focus group, students corroborate their data and complete a rudimentary thematic analysis, which they've practiced in an earlier project. They then summarize their findings and reflect on their research process.

National standards for high school psychology curricula (Feb 2022)
Standard area: Scientific Inquiry & Research Methods
Content standards:
2. Research methods and measurements used to study behavior and mental processes
3. Ethical issues in research with human and non-human animals
Learning targets:
2.1 Describe research methods psychological scientists use
3.1 Identify ethical requirements for research with human participants and non-human animals
3.2 Explain why researchers need to adhere to an ethics review process

Day one
Objectives: Introduce the interview activity, pick the format, and begin developing the question list.
Materials needed: Student handout

Do now: Students enter the classroom and complete a 7 minute Gimkit game that allows them to engage in quick retrieval practice for key terms and concepts related to interviews.

Part 1 - Framing and format discussion: Tell students the big announcement: they're going to be able to try out interviews for themselves! We have 4 staff members from our school from a range of cultural backgrounds who have experienced acculturation at some point in their lives coming to join us to answer questions they come up with about culture and their experiences immigrating to the US. Today and tomorrow, we'll plan what questions we want to ask, make sure we're meeting ethical considerations, and discuss how we'll record data. The day after, our guests/participants will stop by to answer our questions. Provide them with background information about the cultures our participants associate with.

Ask: **What interview format should we use? Why?** Technically, there is one best answer with 4 participants – the focus group. Use probing questions or call on students with multiple opinions to discuss as needed. At the end of this section, stamp that a focus group is the ideal method for our set up: one room, multiple participants, limited time, and similar questions. Have students jot down notes in their handout for the core pieces of info from this framing.

Part 2 - Question brainstorm + entry: Students should complete a brainstorm of questions from any topic within our culture unit they might want to ask our participants for the first 5 minutes of this work block. Let them reference the types of open-ended questions as they work.

Students will then work in groups of 3-4 to share their questions with each other. They should highlight common questions in the document and ultimately narrow down their group's collective list to 5 questions they want to submit for review. Have one person from each group submit their questions to an open ended response question in Google Classroom or a Google form. They can also email them if desired. Aggregate these questions, remove repeats, and prepare a shortlist of questions for the next lesson.

Day two
Objectives: Organize questions, discuss ethical considerations and data collection, and plan for ways to address some of the recurring limitations of focus groups.
Materials needed: Digital document with question shortlist (or, large easel paper with questions written on each, and 3 post-it notes for each student), Student handout (same as day one)

Do now: Have students vote for their favorite three questions. In a digital document, you can have students add their initials after each question. If you prefer students to move around, have them take 3 post it notes and place them on the easel or poster paper displaying their favorite questions.

Part 3 - Creating the interview guide: Summarize the top 6 questions. Ask students to discuss the order the questions should be asked. Once organized, have students complete the discussion primer in their handout, which asks students to consider how ethical considerations should be met, how to reduce interviewer effects, and how to establish rapport between (a rather large) set of interviewers.

Sample answers that may surface during the discussion are provided below. Highlighted responses should be present in their interview plan by the end of class in order to carry out this focus group with ethical considerations met.

Important feature	**Final interview plan**
How will we meet ethical considerations?	*Consent form (signed)* During welcome, ask for verbal consent to participate again Remember to remind participants of right to withdraw Encourage participants (and data recorders/interviewers) to not share responses of other participants after focus group
How will we build rapport and make participants feel comfortable?	Question askers can introduce themselves Look engaged Practice active listening techniques Explain that people will be taking notes on their answers Some classes may choose to have half of the class fully listen and the other half take notes, then swap

How will we reduce interviewer effects?	Make sure question askers do not visibly react to responses that may be sad or uncomfortable Make sure question is read (not improvised) if restated for multiple participants
How can we encourage fair 'air time' for each participant?	Provide wait time Ask if any other speakers would like to add on, before moving to next question
How will we collect data? (What will we record? Who will do it?)	Lots of possible functional answers here! Some classes may choose to have half of the class fully listen and the other half take notes, then swap. Students can take notes verbatim, or summarize answers. Students may want to consider if they want to record data about body language/facial expressions.

Closing - remind students that if they are not a question asker, they should be prepared to take notes during the entire focus group through the next period. They should make sure their laptops are charged!

References

Coolican, H. (2018). *Research methods and statistics in Psychology* (7th ed.).

Crane, J. (2023). *HL: Understanding interviews*. InThinking IBDP Psychology. Retrieved February 4, 2023, from https://www.thinkib.net/psychology/page/23363/hl-understanding-interviews

Lueck, K., & Wilson, M. (2010). Acculturative stress in Asian immigrants: The impact of social and linguistic factors. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 34*(1), 47–57. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2009.10.004

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Day 1

Do now
Directions: Join the Gimkit! Feel free to reference this week's handouts as you play.

Part 1: Background info
Directions: As we discuss the approaching interview, take notes below.

How many participants?	
What are the cultural backgrounds of our participants?	
Which is the most appropriate format for this interview? Why?	

Part 2: Question brainstorm
Directions: For any of the topics below, write one or more questions you may like to ask our participants. As you work, check out the strategies for writing open-ended questions on InThinking!

	Possible questions
Cultural dimensions (individualism vs collectivism, power distance index, long vs short term orientation) and the ecological fallacy	
Enculturation of gender norms or culturally significant skills	
Acculturation and acculturative stress	

During group time, listen to each other's questions and note common themes or phrasings. Work to create a shortlist of questions that represent what your group is interested in learning from our participants. Before the timer ends, have one group member submit FIVE questions maximum to the open-ended question in your Google Classroom page.

Day 2

Do now
Directions: Review the question document posted for you in Classroom. Add your initials to THREE questions you want to ask our guests.

Part 3 - Developing the interview guide
Directions: What should we do to address each important feature within our interview? Add your responses in the "my ideas" column. During our whole class discussion, write our final choices in the "final interview plan" column. Participants have already been sent a consent form, so it has been added to your first row for you.

Important feature	**My ideas**	**Final interview plan**
How will we meet ethical considerations?		*Consent form (signed)*
How will we build rapport and make participants feel comfortable?		
How will we reduce interviewer effects?		
How can we encourage fair 'air time' for each participant?		
How will we collect data? (What will we record? Who will do it?)		