

INTERVIEW DESIGN PROCESS: STEP BY STEP EXAMPLE

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Introduction

The Interview Design Process is an active and efficient method for engaging participants in eliciting and sharing group knowledge. This step by step guide for the Interview Design Process uses as an example our experience conducting it with participants in a teacher professional development project.¹ In this case, we were investigating the role of high school science teachers in fostering STEM career awareness. It will be helpful to review the accompanying brief slide presentation first for a visual representation of the process ("The Interview Design Process: Active Group Knowledge Sharing").

1. Preparing the Question Set

The question sets, which are to be handed out on paper to participants, are color coded to match the corresponding interviewers and interviewees on the PowerPoint slides that accompany these instructions.

Interview Questions

Question 1 (Orange)

Educators play a wide variety of roles in student learning and development.

What do you see as the role(s) of science teachers in helping students become aware of, and prepared for, STEM-related careers?

Question 2 (Yellow)

Keeping up to date on rapidly evolving STEM-related careers can be a challenge even for professionals working in those fields.

A. How do you stay abreast of emerging STEM-related career opportunities, pathways, and requirements?

B. What support would be useful to you as a teacher to maintain or increase your own career awareness?

Question 3 (Green)

We know that science teachers often face challenges in not having up-to-date technology resources, or enough time to infuse new content (e.g., careers) into lessons.

Besides addressing these technology and time constraints, what policy changes, support, or resources do science teachers need to engage in career-related activities with their students?

¹ *Bio-ITEST: New Frontiers in Bioinformatics and Computational Biology*, Northwest Association of Biomedical Research (NWABR) funded by the National Science Foundation. We were introduced to this technique by the project PI, Jeanne Chowning.

2. Seating the Participants

- Participants must be seated in groups so that they can take turns interviewing each other in pairs, one pair of participants per question.
- This example shows pairings of 6 persons seated at a table (total of 24 participants = 4 tables), with two persons assigned Question 1, two assigned Question 2, two assigned Question 3. In 3 rounds, participants take turns interviewing in pairs (3 pairs of 2), cycling through the 3 questions:

[Example for one table (there will be 4 tables total), showing pairs in each round seated according to assigned question numbers, 6 persons at one table]

Round 1

1 2 3
1 2 3

Round 2

1 2 3 ← This row stays seated.
3 1 2 ← People in this row rotate.

Round 3

1 2 3 ← This row stays seated.
2 3 1 ← People in this row rotate.

3. Facilitating the Process

- Introduce process
- Assist/monitor at individual tables as necessary and during question debrief
- Lead full group reporting and discussion
- Take notes

4. Example of Timing and Facilitator Talking Points

Time	Activity	Materials/notes
3:15	Seat participants Hand out interview sheets Explain process Review interview questions	Interview sheets Writing utensils at tables Slides (pre-load) Copies of schedule/plan to facilitators
3:25	First round – 4:00 each person + 2 minutes for transition	Interview sheets Writing utensils Timer (“Switch roles [or partners]”)
3:35	Second round – 4:00 each person + 2 minutes for transition	“
3:45	Third round – 4:00 each person + 2 minutes for transition	“
3:55	Regroup for debrief by question to synthesize: Each group designate a recorder and spokesperson Each person share responses Use tick marks for repeats	Three post-it sheets: question written at top of each beforehand Markers
4:10	Full group discussion, about 10 minutes per question	Use one of the sheets for displaying comments during discussion One facilitator records notes on laptops
4:40	Wrap-up if time: sharing specific experiences	Collect all paper

Introduce process and questions (10 minutes)

As teachers enter the room, ask them to sit at 4 designated tables in groups of 6, 3 on each side (half will face the front of the room, half face the back).

Give each teacher sheet (handouts at the end of this document) with the appropriate color-coded and numbered question according to the seating chart below on p. 4 and on the Round 1 slide—make sure all have pen or pencil to write with or put on tables beforehand.

Talking points:

- We are going to engage in a structured interview process that will provide a lot of information for group discussion later on.
- We will go through several rounds with instructions along the way.
- Each of you has a question that you will be asking, on the colored sheet. You will ask each of the 3 persons sitting across from you at your table, one per round.
- As you can see on your question sheet, there are spaces to record the responses from each of the 3 teachers you will interview.
- **REFER TO SLIDES:**
 - Right now, for the first round, you are paired up with the person sitting across the table from you. Persons A, B, and C start out paired with Persons D, E, and F [point to one table as an example]
 - Persons A, B, and C will interview their partners by asking the question on the sheet.
 - Persons D, E, and F will respond. Interviewers will record the response.
 - After 4 minutes, we will call time and say “Switch roles.”
 - You and your partner will reverse roles. The person who was speaking will now be the interviewer—asking the question that’s on her or his own sheet and recording your partner’s response.
 - After 4 more minutes, we will call time and say “Switch partners.”
 - You’ll switch partners according to this diagram. People seated facing the back of the room will remain seated throughout the process. People facing the front will move [explain movements on slide].
 - [Show process through last slide]. After 3 complete rounds, you will regroup by question for a debrief and we’ll talk more about what to do then.
- [Review the questions and clarify as needed]:
 - Note that Question 2 (yellow) has 2 parts. You will have 4 minutes during your turn—same as for other rounds—to address both parts of Question 2.
 - For Question 3, we are well aware of lack of time and technology issues and will be addressing those in our report. We would like to know what other types of policy changes, support, or resources would be helpful.
- It’s important to do your best to capture each person’s perspectives and experiences faithfully. You may ask clarifying questions without offering your own opinions—this is a time for active listening. You will need to be able to accurately represent the information you gathered from the persons you interviewed in the discussion later, so it might be helpful to record points in bullets as you do your interviews.

Interviews (30 minutes, 10 minutes per round)

Facilitator keeps time and calls out “Switch roles” for partners to switch interviewer and speaker roles (4:00 each person and 2:00 for transitions); “Switch partners” for rotating partners.

Group monitors assist as necessary.

Debrief in question groups (15 minutes)

Prepare 3 large post-it sheets beforehand with questions written at the top. A facilitator should be on hand at each group to take notes and assist with these instructions or to let them know when they have just a few minutes left to prioritize themes to report to the large group if time is getting short. Davis will track time.

- Select a group recorder and a spokesperson.
- Go around the circle with each person sharing one or two common responses they recorded during their 3 interviews. As each person offers a response, the group recorder asks for a show of hands of how many others heard the same idea. Point out that the interview sheets have space on the back for teachers to take their own notes on group themes, if desired.
- The recorder indicates repeat responses with the number of votes to facilitate prioritizing the responses.
- Prioritize responses to identify the major themes for reporting to the large group.
- If there isn't enough time to share all themes in the question debrief, there may be time to comment in the large group.

Full group discussion (35 minutes)

Ask each group to report top themes, following order of the questions (1, 2, 3).

Elicit additional themes that didn't get captured in the small group question debrief.

Finish one question before moving on to the next.

Wrap up

Collect all paper—teachers' notes and debrief post-it sheets.

Sample Interview Recording Sheet**Question 1 (Orange)**

Educators play a wide variety of roles in student learning and development.

What do you see as the role(s) of science teachers in helping students become aware of, and prepared for, STEM-related careers?

Responses of Teachers Interviewed:

Teacher 1:

Teacher 2:

Teacher 3:

Sample Interview Group Themes Recording Sheet

Debrief: Question 1 (Orange)

What do you see as the role(s) of science teachers in helping students become aware of, and prepared for, STEM-related careers?

Big Ideas and Common Themes: Group Responses

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.