

Session 7: In Depth Interview

Life-story Interview

"We become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining our identity, through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression." Taylor (1994, p. 32)

"[M]y discovering my own identity doesn't mean that I work it out in isolation, but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others." Taylor (1994, p. 34)

Objectives:

1. Through a life story interview, establish a conversation with each student participating in the workshops about their life experiences and perceptions surrounding their school life, family life, and their life in the community.
2. Explore the relationship between the student and their creative work.
3. Explore their perceptions about the study, their participation in it, and their expectations.

Materials:

1. Audio recorder
2. Video camera
3. Life story interview guide
4. Researcher's diary
5. Student's work (i.e. painting, block with stories).
6. Consent form for the interview (per student).

Notes:

- The interviews will be done between Monday, 30th of April, 2018 and Friday, 4th of May, 2018 during school hours. Students have signed in for their interview on a class hour, previously approved by the Academic Coordinator at the school.
- Tuesday is a bank holiday (1st of May, 2018), therefore no interviews will be done on this day.
- Each interview is aimed to last 45 minutes.
- Not all students have attended all workshops. Although the aim is to include the 15 interviews in the analysis, priority will be given to those students with a high record of attendance, therefore, the first interviews will be done with students who have not completed all workshops, and will work as pilot interviews, if adjustments are needed, for the sake of the study.

Before the interview:

- a. Have the classroom set up for the interview by having three desks facing each other.
- b. Have enough space for the participants to not feel crowded with the furniture in the room.
- c. Have the student's block and painting on the third desk.
- d. Have the audio recorder ready and the camera set up and ready to record facing the student.
- e. Have the Researcher's Diary to take notes, the Interview guide, and pens and paper both for the student and myself (just in case).
- f. Ask the student to read the information and consent form of the interview and to please sign if they approve to participate in it.

Interview Guide (Based on McAdams, 1995; 2008):

A. Introduction (10 minutes):

This is an interview, more of a conversation, to get to know you better through the story of your life. Through our weeks together we have written and experienced with different kind of stories, today I am interested in knowing about your own story, including the past, your present and how you imagine your future to be, as well as your ideas about life in general.

As every story, we select what we want to tell and share that is key to understand it, so we won't be focusing in every detail but on some key events, characters, ideas and themes that you consider, have been key in your life, and say something significant about you and how you have come to be who you are.

Please know that the purpose of this interview is not about analyzing you in any way. It is only for research purposes and only intends to get to know you better and understand how you relate to yourself, your work, those around you. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions. Our interview should last around 60 minutes. We have three main topics: talking about your life: past present and future, talking about your work, and talking about this space (workshops). If you see me changing topics, don't worry, it's just so we don't run out of time. Everything you say is voluntary, anonymous, and confidential. Hopefully, you will enjoy this space.

Do you have any questions?

B. Talking about themselves (30 minutes):

I would like to know a little bit more about you. Please imagine your life as a book:

- What would be the key chapters of that book?
- Could you please give me the titles of those sections and briefly describe what happens in each?
- What is the high point of the book (wonderful, happy)? Why?
- What is the low point, or main issue/conflict of your book? Why? Is it still there or was it solved?
- What kind of book would it be? Drama, Action, Love, Suspense, Thriller, Fantasy... Why?
- **Probe by areas:** if the student hasn't talked about any if the following areas, here are some questions to probe the topics:

Self:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What do you think anyone should know about you? b. What do you like to do? c. What don't you like to do? d. What is important to you? e. Do you have any hobbies?
Family:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Tell me about your family b. What would you say are the main values at home? How do you know? c. Tell me about the people in your family and how you relate to them. d. What role do you feel your family plays in who you have become? Can you explain?

School:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Tell me about school, your grade, friends, teachers, or anything/anyone you believe relevant. b. What do you enjoy about school? Why? c. What don't you enjoy? Why? d. What does school mean to you? Why? e. What groups would you say you belong or not belong to? Why? f. Is there anything else you would like to comment about your school environment/education?
Broader community:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Tell me about your wider community (those you relate with outside of school, like in your neighbourhood or town)? b. What activities do you enjoy doing outside of school? c. What do you think about your community? d. How do you see yourself inside this community? e. What are your thoughts about Colombia today? f. What expectations do you have about/for your country? g. Do you think you could have a role in that? How?
The Other:	<p>Sometimes we find people in life who think and act very differently from us. Sometimes it is easy to talk/interact with them, sometimes is it very difficult, and sometimes we just avoid doing it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What usually happens when you find others who think differently from you? b. What usually happens when you think differently from others? c. Could you maybe tell me a moment when you found yourself in this situation? d. Have your views about someone or something ever been challenged? How? Tell me about it.
The Future:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Your book includes important chapters of your past and present. How do you see the next chapter in your life? What is coming next in your life story? b. What are your plans, hopes and dreams for the future? c. DO you have a project in life? Could you please tell me about it?

C. Talking about their work (15 minutes):

I would like you to take me through the pieces you have written and your experience of working in this space with your peers. As we go through your work, could you please walk me through your *thoughts, inspiration, feelings and ideas* when developing it?

1. Writing:

- Which one has been the one you like the most, in terms of results? Why?
- Which one has been the most difficult? Why?
- Which one did you enjoy writing the most? Why?
- *What inspires you to write?*
- *What do you like to write about? Why?*

2. Reading:

- Which one has been your favourite short story? Why?
- Which one your least? Why?
- *What inspires you to read?*

- *What do you enjoy reading? Why?*

3. Workshops:

- Have elements from the short stories impacted *your writing/the way you write* in any way? How so?
- Have elements from the short stories impacted *your reading/the way you read* in any way? How so?
- Have your writings impacted *the way you listen at/read stories?* And if so, how?
- *What do you think about this space in general and what we have done in it?*

Closing questions (5 minutes):

- What made you volunteer for this study?*
- To finish if you could state in a sentence who you are right now, what would you say?*
- To finish, if you could state in a sentence who you want to be in the future, what would you say?*
- How was this interview for you? Has the interview affected you in any way? Do you have any other comments about the interview process?*

References:

McAdams, D. (1995) *The Life Story Interview*. Available at:

<https://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/docs/Interviewrevised95.pdf> (Accessed 27 April 2018).

McAdams, D. (2008) *The Life Story Interview* (revised). Available at:

<https://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/foley/instruments/interview/> (Accessed 27 April 2018).

Taylor, C. (1994) 'The Politics of Recognition', in Gutman, A. (ed.) *Multiculturalism*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, pp. 25-73.