

Helping Students Document Hurricanes: Interviewing and Fieldwork In the Classroom

Purpose of Lesson

Students are introduced to interviewing and fieldwork through activities that will help them understand the Interviewer's task of examining his or her position in fieldwork through observation and questioning. Students learn about themselves and cultural assumptions through observation and the interview process. The unit is designed to assist you and your students make some steps toward recovery from the hurricane(s) and open lines of communication within your class and the community at large.

Time Required

Seven to twelve days depending on the handouts and products the teacher chooses.

Louisiana Content Standards

ELA-1-E1, ELA-1-M3, ELA-1-M4, ELA-1-M5, ELA-2-M2, ELA-2-M5, ELA-2-M6, ELA-4-E6, ELA-5-E7, ELA-4-M4, ELA-4-M5, ELA-5-M2, ELA-5-M3, ELA-5-M4, ELA-5-M6, ELA-7-M2, ELA-7-M3, H-1A-M3, H-1A-M6, H-1C-E4, H-1D-M6.
(Individual standards delineated in Appendix A.)

Materials

1. Appropriate handouts.
2. Folders or large envelopes for each student or team.
3. Have samples of possible projects.
4. Optional equipment: Tape recorder(s), cameras, and/or videorecorders.

List of Handouts

1. Project Management Overview
2. Letter to Parents and Caregivers
3. Listening Log
4. List of Contents
5. Sample Fieldnotes
6. Taking Notes
7. How NOT to Conduct an Interview
8. The Reluctant Guest
9. Notetaking Worksheets
10. Fact-Based, Open-Ended & Follow-up Questions Worksheet
11. Naming Traditions
12. Written Release Form
13. Interview Checklist
14. Tape and/or Photo Log
15. Conducting an Interview Evaluation

16. Fieldwork Rubric
17. Individual Roles in the Field (group projects only)
18. Oral Release Form
19. Folklife Interview Form
20. Hurricane Responder Form
21. Evacuees
22. Non-evacuees
23. Transcribing an Interview Worksheet (for use with taperecording)
24. Writing About the Interview
25. Preparing a Presentation Worksheet
26. Oral Presentation Rubric

Preparation

1. Choose and run off appropriate handouts.
2. Make interview folders.
3. Develop schedule.
4. Get any necessary approvals.
5. Invite any guests you wish to interview.
6. Make sure any equipment you plan to use works.

Activities

Introduction to Fieldwork

1. Review Handout 1 - **Project Management Overview**.
2. Send out Handout 2 - **Letter to Parents and Caregivers**.

Observation

1. The first principle of fieldwork to stress is looking and listening. Ask students to conduct a 10-minute observation at school. This can be done at school in the hallway, in the cafeteria —wherever. Tell students to take down simple notes on what they observe. They should concentrate on just observing, and not judging or forming an opinion. Encourage them to use all five senses in this observation. Then have students complete a Handout 3 **Listening Log - Community Soundscapes** about the place they observed.
2. After students complete their observations and Listening Logs, ask them to go over their notes and review what they observed and heard. Have them write three to five statements to summarize their findings. Then have them discover which actions helped them "look and listen" more carefully and accurately.
3. On the board have the students list what they think are the Keys to Successful Observations.

Getting Ready for the Interview

1. Give students an Interview Folder. It can just be a large mailing envelope but it will help the students feel more professional and be more organized. Ask them to open it and look at Handout 4 - **List of Contents**. This should be a list of all the handouts you have chosen for their project. They are to check to make sure they have all the handouts listed.
2. Review with students the assessment criteria you plan to use. See Handouts 15, 16, and 26. Tell them that they will be assessed at the end of the unit on their ability to prepare carefully, practice needed skills, conduct fieldwork productively and accurately, process and archive materials properly, and present their findings. They can refer to the rubric as they work.
3. Ask students where they have heard interviews? Perhaps on TV? Why was it "good" or "not good"? What kinds of questions were asked? Ask them if they could interview any famous person in the world today, who would it be? What questions would they like to ask that person? Tell them that interviewing someone is a skillful and artful task that takes practice. This lesson will give them some necessary practice before they invite a guest to their classroom or go outside the classroom to interview someone.
4. Begin this lesson by reading and discussing Handout 5 **Sample - Fieldnotes: Teen Memories of Grade School Traditions**. Show it on a big screen or print it out for students. This sample provides an excellent model for the entire interview process, and especially for notetaking. Generate discussions about it, and make students aware of the key areas that will be covered in this, and other lessons.
5. Notetaking is a sophisticated, multi-task process that usually doesn't come naturally to everyone. Most students, especially young ones, need to be taught how to take good notes. Even if interviews will be recorded, students should also learn the "old-fashioned" way. Use Handout 6 - **Taking Notes** for strategies to use if your students need to learn this skill.
6. Tell students that before they conduct an interview with someone outside of the classroom, they will practice with each other. The purpose of this worksheet is for students to experience the value of listening, courtesy, and preparation in conducting an interview. Select two students to play the roles of "Reporter" and "Guest," on the worksheet Handout 7 - **How Not to Conduct an Interview**. Give each a copy of the script and ask them to read their assigned parts. Tell students that the reporter is interviewing a tourist. After the interview, ask the class to explain what was wrong with the reporter's approach. Write the responses on the board as students offer them.
7. Use Handout 8 - **The Reluctant Guest** to show students the value of asking the kinds of questions that get meaningful responses. In this activity, the teacher should play the part of the reluctant guest. A team of students should act as reporters at a press conference and ask the printed questions. Tell them that they may ask you follow-up questions based on your answers. You should answer the questions offering as little information as possible, using one-word answers, for example. The rest of the class should take notes on your answers, using journals or the Handout 9 - **Notetaking Worksheet**, and they should also critique the reporters' good points and mistakes. After the exercise, reflect with students on the Interviewer's task of drawing out information from the Interviewee. Have them

- write responses on the right-hand side of their journals or **Notetaking Worksheets**. Discuss what an interviewer has to do to ask good follow-up questions?
8. Before students actually interview each other, work with them on asking good questions. Use the Handout 10 - **Fact-based, Open-ended, and Follow-up Questions Worksheet** to explain and review the different kinds of questions. During the interview, they'll need to listen closely to be able to ask follow-up questions. Stress that the best interviews depend heavily on follow-up questions because they are drawing out what the Interviewee wants to say. In this activity, students will learn that certain questions bring out certain depths of knowledge.
 9. If your students are going to be using equipment please review the information in Appendix B. It will assist you in your goal of creating useful products.
 10. To have students practice interviewing with each other, play a "name game." First place students in pairs. Assign one student the role of Interviewer; the other, the role of Interviewee. Have each student playing the role of Interviewee make a name plate by folding a piece of construction paper in half, length-wise, so that it stands up. Have them write their name on one side then hand their name plates to their Interviewers. Tell the Interviewers that they will be interviewing their partners about their first and last names. Use the Handout 11 - **Naming Traditions Worksheet** to get ideas for questions.
 11. Brainstorm with the class about all the possible questions they can ask about a name. List the questions suggested by students on the board and tell the students to use these topics as a guide for formulating their interview questions. Encourage them to use phrases such as "tell me about..." to elicit rich responses. Tell them they are going for the STORIES that can be discovered by asking questions about someone's name.
 12. Review the list of questions that the class derived and put "FB" next to fact-based questions, and "OE" next to open-ended questions. Remind them that, they'll want to ask some "follow-up" questions based on what they hear, and these should be labeled "FQ" on the board.
 13. After the preliminary checks, allow students to start the interview, using questions generated on the board or on the worksheet. Allow 20-30 minutes for the interviews, 10-15 minutes each. Ask the Interviewer to jot down keywords, special language, terms, ideas, and questions that they find interesting, important, or those they need to explore more on the back of the Interviewee's name plate. Remind them to take pictures of the Interviewee, if possible, and have them sign the Handout 12 - **Written Release Form**.
 14. Have the partners work together to evaluate their interviews using the Handout 13 - **Interview Checklist**. If they use a recording device have them fill out the Handout 14 - **Tape Log** and **Photo Log**, and label the tape with the name of the Interviewer and Interviewee, the place, and the date. Have them store all these in their **Interview Folder -- For the Teacher** for now.
 15. Once the interview is complete, ask each Interviewer to introduce the Interviewee to the class and explain the "story" behind his/her name. Then ask the Interviewee to comment: Does he/she believe the Interviewer got it "right?" Is there any additional information to add?
 16. Reflect on this interview activity with your students. What did they find harder than they expected? What did they learn about their partner? What surprised you, intrigued you, stirred or disturbed you? Have students write follow-up notes in their

Journals.

17. Have students read over their Handout 15 - **Conducting an Interview Evaluation** and check off the steps they have learned in this lesson. If desired, check them yourself and administer grades.
18. If you are using the Handout 16 - **Fieldwork Rubric** to grade students at the end of the unit, review it with them now and ask them to self-evaluate their progress.

Interviewing

1. Before an outside visitor comes to the class, you can serve as a model community guest. Students can interview you about your own profession: teaching. Brainstorm with students about the questions that they could ask you in addition to Handout 17 - **Teacher Interview**.
2. If you are using groups, assign each student a role, or ask them to volunteer, then review the roles on the Handout 18 - **Individual Roles in the Field Worksheets** with the students: 1) Lead Interviewer/Note Taker, 2) Tape Operator/Logger, 3) Photographer, 4) Illustrator, and 5) Videographer, if your lesson will include this role.
3. Follow these steps for the interview:
 - a. Students should brainstorm together about possible questions to ask you. These questions should be given to the team's Lead Interviewer.
 - b. Set up the front of the class for the interview by having the Lead Interviewers place their chairs around your desk. Have a table set up near you for the tape recorder. The Tape Operators should sit nearby so they can monitor the recorder. The Photographers can move around to get pictures. And the Illustrators can be at their desks, mapping the layout.
 - c. Pick one team to interview you. Have the Lead Interviewer read the Handout 19 - **Oral Release Form** into the tape recorder and begin the interview with the Handout 20 - **Folklife Interview Form**, or Handouts 21, 22 or 23 - **Hurricane Katrina Worksheets** gathering biographical and contextual information. Have the rest of the team perform their roles: tape operating and logging, photographing, illustrating, and videotaping.
 - d. Have the Lead Interviewers from other teams take turns asking the questions generated in their brainstorming sessions. Or the students can use Handouts 11, 20, 21, 22 or 23. Then open the floor up to the whole class. At the end of the interview, make sure the Interviewer asks you to sign the Handout 12 - **Written Release Form**, and thank you's.
 - e. Have the Tape Operators/Loggers label the tapes, with the name, date, and location of the interview, and complete the Handout 14 - **Tape Log**. Here is an example label:

<p>Community Guest's Name. Nov. 23, 2007. Greenfields Middle School, Greenfields, Louisiana</p>

- f. Have Photographers that take pictures complete Handout 14 - **Photo Logs** and/or contact sheets for digital photos. After the model interview with you, ask the students to return to their teams to complete the checklist for each individual role on the Handout 18 - **Individual Roles in the Field**

- Worksheet.** Encourage them to be honest about the successes of the interview, as well as the things that could have been done better
- g. If desired, award grades for completed **Individual Roles in the Field Worksheets** using the Grade box on the bottom right of the sheets.

Part 2: The Guest Interview

1. Once you've conducted the model interview and identified and scheduled the guest, talk to your students about their roles and behavior with the community guest. It is a good idea to have students assume the same roles as they did in the model interview with you. Follow the same procedure as above for the Teacher Interview.
2. Conduct the guest interview. It can be with someone who was a hurricane responder to the crisis; fireman, policeman, rescue worker, Red Cross, etc. or it could be someone from the community who was affected by the storm. Use the appropriate interview forms, Handouts 21, 22 or 23. **Caution:** It must be remembered that each student probably has their own memories of the event and some of them may be traumatic. Tens of thousands of students have lost their homes and some have relatives or friends that died or are missing. Consider prior to the interview what areas you as the teacher feel may be 'off base' under the situation. It is advisable to discuss this with the guest before the interview also.
3. Reflect on the interview with the class using the Handout 13 - **Interview Checklist** and discussing new information and skills the students gained.
4. If using a recording device, use Handout 24 - **Transcribing an Interview Worksheet** to introduce students to the transcription process. Give each student a copy of the worksheet. The aim of this exercise is to demonstrate to them the difficulty of recording faithfully a person's speech. They should follow the directions on the sheet.
5. After transcribing, logging, and further reflection, provide each student with a copy of the Handout 25 - **Writing About an Interview Worksheet**. After all students have written their thoughts, discuss the three questions: What surprised you? What intrigued you? What stirred or disturbed you?
6. Have students complete the Handout 15 - **Conducting an Interview Evaluation** to document what they have learned in this lesson. If desired, grade the students' work and record at bottom of the form.
7. After the practice interviews and the classroom visit with a community guest, students should be ready to proceed to the next lesson, which puts them in the field.
8. Assign students or teams a product that will summarize their field interview. Each may develop the same product, such as a poster or brochure, or each may choose how to display their findings. Here are some ideas.

Presentation of fieldwork to school or community	Drawings, paintings, collages	PowerPoint presentation
Photo Album	Graphs, charts, timelines	School or town story day or photo day
Brochure	Magazine or other publication	Panel discussion of results
Classroom or school exhibit	Multimedia presentations	Songs or poems written from fieldwork interviews
Bulletin Board	Mural	Story quilt or mural
Computer Quicktime video clips	Newscast	Taped collage of "community sounds"
Computer or conventional slide show	Oral and written reports	Town model (before and after)
Exhibit	Portfolios (of lessons, units, or a longer study)	Video
Classroom or school exhibit		Poem
Scrapbook Page		Webpage

Part 3 In the Field

1. If a specific product will be created with the findings, consider whether this will affect the interview. Do certain things need to be asked? Are photos or other visuals needed for the exhibit or PowerPoint?
2. Students should proceed as in the interviews:
 - A. Set up for the interview by reviewing their questions and checking their equipment.
 - B. Read Handout 19 - **Oral Release Form**, then ask questions from the appropriate Interview Question sheet, Handout 22, 23 or 24 making sure they ask at least 2 or 3 questions of their own.
 - C. Take notes during the interview.
 - D. Have Interviewee sign the Handout 12 - **Written Release Form**.
 - E. Make sure all fieldwork forms are signed and completed.
 - F. File all forms in their folders.
 - G. Send a thank you note to the Interviewee.
 - H. Complete the Handout 13 - **Interview Checklist**.
 - I. Soon after the interview, have students write fieldnotes. A good place to start is with the three questions on the Handout 22 - **Writing About a Interview Worksheet**: 1) What surprised you? 2) What intrigued you? 3) What stirred or disturbed you? Encourage students to write in detail, recounting the words of the participants, describing the setting and the experience, and being as accurate as

possible. Have them file these fieldnotes in their **Interview Folder -- For the Teacher**.

After the Interview

1. Determine the most important point in the interview. What do these stories tell us about the person, place, or event? What did you learn in the interview that you didn't learn from background research? Then, if the interviews were on related topics, as a class, the teams should compare their interviews and determine how they are related.
2. Write these points on the board and add any that the class feels are important, then ask each team to work together to come up with a list of important points that should be conveyed in a presentation.
3. Have each student or team work on the final project.
4. Using the Handout 26 - **Preparing a Presentation Worksheet** have students work to analyze and interpret the findings and materials they have gathered. Ask them to write Thesis Statements and three Main Points that support it, which will be shared in the presentation.

Preparing a Product

1. Review the product that the students are to produce. Give very specific guidelines to ensure a consistency of product.
2. Sometimes fieldwork results give a clue how best to present findings. Obviously, student products will vary from project to project, community to community. If you've undertaken very simple fieldwork and asked students to interview one another, the product can also be simple: essays, drawings, timelines, graphs, oral presentations, multimedia presentations, team reports, radio programs.
3. More elaborate fieldwork can provide content for more complex products. Collaborations among classroom teachers, media specialists, and art and music teachers strengthen design and content of products. Here are products that students around the country have produced from their folklife and oral history research. Check out some truly exciting national projects online at Louisiana Voices, www.louisianavoices.org. Select Units and Lessons Outline, then Unit II. Then you'll find Thumbnail Sketches. The direct link is http://www.louisianavoices.org/Unit2/edu_unit2_fieldworkbasics.html#thumbnail.
4. Have each student or team present their final product to the class. If possible, invite the Interviewees to the presentations
5. Use Handout 27 - **Oral Presentation Rubric** to evaluate the presentations.
6. Students should place any materials they collected or copies of those materials into their interview folder to be given to the teacher. The teacher with the class can decide on the distribution and/or archiving of the material. Often working with the school librarian is helpful with this issue.

Explorations and Enhancements

1. Select two students to "model" the Name Game interview in front of the class. Have the rest of the class fill out the **Interview Checklist** as the two students model the

- interview. After the interview is finished, go over the list with the class to discuss what was done well and what could be improved.
2. Interview a family member about his or her name, using similar questions that were used in the classroom activity.
 3. Interview someone that was in a previous large hurricane using the same questions. Consider the differences.
 4. Have the Interviewer/Interviewee partners work together to produce a summary paragraph of the Interviewee's name. Also, have them take photographs of each other and submit the paragraph/photos as a partner project.
 5. It's your turn! On your own or as a team, identify an Interviewee and conduct a second interview on the topic.
 6. Brainstorm words or phrases that come to mind when you reflect on your fieldwork experience. Choose some to arrange as a poem. A diamante formula can be found at http://www.louisianavoices.org/unit6/edu_unit6w_diamante.html.
 7. Pretend you are a radio reporter and tape record a story about your fieldwork. Share it with classmates or the Interviewees.
 8. After the interview is finished, use the **Student Post-Interview Review Questions** at http://www.louisianavoices.org/unit2/edu_unit2_stud_post_interview.html to review the session, including the notes taken during the interview, to see if there are additional questions that need to be asked of the Interviewee, to discuss the mechanics and content of the interview, and to plan subsequent interviews. This is part of the ongoing self-evaluation process. Written answers can go into your portfolio.
 9. Write a paragraph or essay producing a biography of your Interviewee. Use the **Rubric For Firsthand Biography** at http://www.louisianavoices.org/Unit3/edu_unit3_first_biog.html to evaluate them.
 10. Use the teams' transcriptions to prepare a drama in which all the different Interviewees communicate with each other in their own words. Use the **Production Rubric** at http://www.louisianavoices.org/Unit6/edu_unit6w_prod_rubric.html to evaluate the work.

Internet Resources

Louisiana Voices Unit II Classroom Applications of Fieldwork Basics

http://www.louisianavoices.org/Unit2/edu_unit2_lesson2.html This unit has many more resources for classroom fieldwork projects including question suggestions on many topics about traditional culture and communities.

Conducting an Interview Essay

http://www.louisianavoices.org/Unit2/conduct_interview.html

INTECH Lesson on How to Conduct an Interview

<http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/intech/k6/day3/interview.htm>

Discovering Our Delta: A Learning Guide to Community Research

http://www.folklife.si.edu/explore/Resources/Tools/tools_delta.html

Writing Interview Questions, Nieman Enhanced Learning Center: Oral History Projects
<http://connections.smsd.org/nieman/el/>

Language Arts Lesson: Posing Good Interview Questions
<http://www2.edc.org/FSC/MIH/ph3-interview.html>

Kodak, Guide to Better Pictures
http://www.kodak.com/eknec/PageQuerier.jhtml?pq-path=38&pq-locale=en_US

Learning From Your Community
http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Virtual_Books/Learning_From/Learning_From_Your_Community.pdf This project was in response to Hurricane Hugo in South Carolina.

Sample Fieldnotes: Teen Memories of Grade School Traditions
http://www.louisianafolklife.org/Resources/main_prog_models.html

Adaptation Strategies
http://www.louisianovoices.org/edu_adapt_strategies.html

Additional Resources

Cogan, Stanley et al. *The Community As Classroom: A Teacher's Manual*. A compendium of 16 K-12 lessons and projects compiled by New York City teachers who use the history of architecture and communities as teaching resources. Maps, landmarks, architectural styles, building materials and much more are tackled in these projects, which also are designed to strengthen students' skills and integrate into core curricula. Useful research and resource listings are NYC-focused, but may be used to guide other readers to similar listings in their own locales. \$10.*

Howard, Diane W. and Laurie Sommers. **Folkwriting: Lessons about Place, Heritage, and Tradition**. Curriculum workbook is geared toward Georgia standards and its core curriculum for language arts and social studies. The workbook has lessons for all grade levels, each with an interview component. Softcover copy with three-hole punch and CD also available from Laurie Sommers, South Georgia Folklife Project, 1500 N. Patterson, Valdosta, GA 31698, 229-293-3610, or lsommers@valdosta.edu. Also available online.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. *An Accessible Aesthetic*. The folk artist is very much like a curator and the community is a living museum. In unpacking this metaphor, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett explores how the folk artist learns various traditions and then teaches adults and children to develop strong ties to their communities and cultural history.*

Library of Congress. **Folklife and Fieldwork: A Layman's Introduction to Field Techniques**. American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, 1990, 2002. A basic, accessible guide to developing collection projects with sample forms. Available in Spanish. Order from the Center, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20540, 202/707-5510, folklife@loc.gov, single copies free, postage on bulk orders, or free on the Internet.

Matthews-DeNatale, Gail and Don Patterson. **Learning from Your Community: Folklore and Video in the Schools.** South Carolina Arts Commission, Folk Arts Program, 1991. This guide for grades 4-8 provides a sequence of classroom lessons that help students make videos about local culture and connect their life experiences and "history." It is based upon a folklorist's and a videographer's work with South Carolina students on the effects of Hurricane Hugo. Offers good tips about student collection and video projects.

Portraits of Oregon: Youth Exploring Culture and Community Kit. An award-winning project of the Oregon State Extension Service 4-H Program and the Oregon Historical Society Folklife Program that involved 4-H youth and club leaders in community documentation and provided awareness and interaction with traditional cultures and those who carry traditions.

Rogovin, Paula. *Classroom Interviews: A World of Learning.* Heinemann Press, 1998. Expert help on finding people, inquiry-based curriculum, and making choices about how to use interviewing, \$20.*

Simons, Elizabeth. *Student Worlds, Student Words: Teaching Writing Through Folklore.* Heinemann, 1990. A teacher and folklorist, Simons offers background and detailed lesson plans for writing and folklore studies, including games and play, family folklore. Invaluable resource for all disciplines and grade levels. **If you can afford only one book, this is it.***

Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. 2000. **Discovering Our Delta: A Learning Guide to Community Research.** Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution. An educational kit with a student guide, a teacher guide, and a 26-minute video that follows five students from the Mississippi Delta as they conduct research on their communities, \$30. Both guides are available free online.

Steinberg, Adria, and David Stephen. *City Works.* Award-winning curriculum focusing on understanding a community. Challenges young people to use their heads and hands to investigate the neighborhoods where they live. Through interviews, research in local archives, and the creation of "artifacts" — maps, photographs, audiotaped oral histories, and three-dimensional models — students document their cities as they find them, and develop new visions of what their cities could be. \$19.95.*

Sunstein, Bonnie and Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater. *FieldWorking: Reading and Writing Research.* 2nd ed., Bedford/St. Martins, 2002. This teacher resource provides excellent exercises to aid students' fieldwork, observation, and writing skills. Good extension of Elizabeth Simons' *Student Worlds, Student Words*.*

Taylor, David. **Documenting Maritime Folklife: An Introductory Guide.** American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, 1993. Detailed fieldwork guide for maritime regions available from the Center, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20540, 202/707-5510 (email folklife@loc.gov), \$10, or **free online.**

For additional resources, check the **Louisiana Folklife Bibliography.** If you would like a list of resources that only relate to this unit, select "Public Folklore & Documentation Tools."