Interview Learning Activities

Here are some learning activities that can help you to develop your interviewing skills. To Dawson faculty, if you have other interview-related interview learning activities to suggest, we would be happy to share them here! Simply get in touch with Ursula Sommerer at usommerer@dawsoncollege.qc.ca.

For these activities, break into groups of 2, ideally with someone you don’t know well. Then, with your partner, follow the guidelines below for each learning activity.

**Activity 1: Interview about one of your partner’s childhood memories**

Ask your partner to tell you about a childhood memory of their choice. Make sure they are comfortable telling you whatever story they decided to share. With your partner’s permission, record the interview and also take hand-written notes.

* Open with a question that invites them to tell you a story. E.g. “Can you tell me a story about one of your proudest moments?” Or you can ask an even more open-ended question.
* Ask some of the follow-up questions mentioned in the [interviewing section of the toolkit](https://space.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/resources/modules/interview_toolkit/P1) in order to clarify what your partner means, to add detail to their story, to gather further examples, to find out how they felt, etc.
* After your interview, read your notes back to your partner and ask them if they would correct anything you’ve written down or if they would like to add anything they might have left out. Ask your partner what parts of the story they shared with you stand out to them as the most important.
* Can you see an underlying theme to this story? Ask your partner if they see a common thread running through their story. Ask them what makes this story meaningful to them all these years later.
* Optional: write a short text from your notes, including as many of the details as seem appropriate to convey the theme and emotion of the story. Write in the third person––i.e. “By the time she left her piano teacher’s house in the evening…” Revise the story for grammar, sentence structure and word choice. Then print up a copy and give it as a gift to your partner!

**Activity 2: Interview about your partner’s expert knowledge or skill**

Ask your partner to tell you about something they know extremely well. It could be a topic or a skill or both. Make sure they are comfortable telling you about their expert knowledge. With your partner’s permission, record the interview and also take hand-written notes. Below are some possible questions for your interview.

* Ask them to briefly describe their expert topic or skill. What is it exactly that they know about or know how to do?
* Invite them to tell you a story about how they first became interested in this topic or skill. Find out what drove them to become an expert in this area.
* Ask some of the follow-up questions mentioned in the [interviewing section of the toolkit](https://space.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/resources/modules/interview_toolkit/P1) in order to clarify anything that is unclear to you or that you think would be interesting to know more about.
* Ask them about the process of becoming an expert. What did it take? What kept them going? What did they have to overcome?
* Ask them about what their expert knowledge or skill brings them in their live today and how they make use of it.
* Invite them to teach you about a small piece of their expert knowledge or skill. You might structure your questions around the steps of “how-to” do the skill or “how-something-works” or in another way that fits with the topic.
* After your interview, read your notes back to your partner and ask them if they would correct anything you’ve written down or if they would like to add anything they might have left out. Ask your partner what parts of their expert knowledge or skill that they shared with you stand out to them as the most important.
* Optional: write a short text from your notes, focusing on communicating either their personal journey to becoming an expert or explaining their knowledge / skill itself or both. Write in the third person––i.e. “His journey as an actor began the day he …” Revise the text for grammar, sentence structure and word choice. Then print up a copy and give it as a gift to your partner! You could also share your text with someone else who might be interested in this knowledge / skill.

**Activity 3: Interview about needs in a group, organization or community**

Ask your partner to tell you about a group, organization or community that they belong to. Make sure they are comfortable telling you about this aspect of their lives. With your partner’s permission, record the interview and also take hand-written notes. Below are some possible questions for your interview.

* Ask them to briefly describe the group, organization or community.
* Invite them to tell you a story about how they first became involved with them.
* Ask some of the follow-up questions mentioned in the [interviewing section of the toolkit](https://space.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/resources/modules/interview_toolkit/P1) in order to add clarification or detail, to gather further examples, to find out how they felt, etc.
* Ask them to describe a *need* that exists in this group. Why is this need an important one for the people in the group?
* Ask them about any efforts that have already been made to address this need. Invite them to describe / tell a story about those efforts. Were the efforts successful? Why or why not, in your partner’s point of view?
* Invite your partner if they have any ideas about how that need might be addressed differently. You might structure your questions around the steps of “how-to” address the need or in another way that fits with the topic.
* According to your partner, what would it take to implement their suggestions? What might be some of the obstacles? What would be a realistic timeframe in their view?
* Ask them how they would assess or measure whether or not their suggestions, if implemented, were successful?
* After your interview, read your notes back to your partner and ask them if they would correct anything you’ve written down or if they would like to add anything they might have left out. Ask your partner what parts of the need that they shared with you stand out to them as the most important.
* Optional: write a short text from your notes, focusing on communicating both the need and possible solutions, both ones that have been tried and ones your partner might suggest. Write in the third person––i.e. “She belongs to a rowing team where everyone …” Revise the text for grammar, sentence structure and word choice. Then print up a copy and give it as a gift to your partner! You may also share your text with someone else who might be interested in this need.