

## Semi-Structured Interviews to Investigate Multilingual Learner Experience

<b>What is a semi-structured interview?</b>	<p>A semi-structured interview is an interview that has a set of questions that serve as a starting point for a conversation - but that allow for the interviewer to add, ask follow up questions or deviate from the question sequence based on the answers of the person being interviewed.</p>
<b>Interview Set Up</b>	<p>Invite participants to the interview being clear that this is an interview that you are conducting for your OWN information and learning. Let them know that you are curious about their experiences and that what they tell you will not be part of any school record.</p> <p>Keep the conversation going with as much participant talk as possible. Prompts like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you tell me more.</li> <li>• It sounds like xyz was difficult, exciting, etc</li> <li>• Did you have other experiences that were similar to this?</li> <li>• I wonder...</li> <li>• I notice...</li> <li>• What did you think at the time? What do you think now?</li> <li>• What take aways do you have from the situation?</li> </ul> <p>Be sure to check your understandings with prompts such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So I heard you say Xyz (and paraphrase), did I get that right?</li> <li>• Can you give me an example of ...</li> <li>• You used the word, X, I think that means, YZ, is that what it means to you?</li> </ul> <p>Interviews should last for about 20-30 minutes</p> <p>You do not need to record the interviews, but do take notes or provide yourself with time immediately after to write down salient points.</p>
<b>Interview with a Younger Student:</b> For an older student, use a combination of younger student, parent and teacher questions as appropriate to grade level and experience.	<p>Intro:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm trying to learn more about the experiences of students in our school whose home language is different from English. I'm hoping to learn a bit more about how you learned English, what helped you, what was hard, and any thoughts on how we can help others.</li> </ul> <p>Questions (modifications ok):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Record name and grade (ask if you don't know)</li> <li>2. What language(s) do you speak at home? With whom?</li> <li>3. When did you start to learn English? What helped you? What got in your way?</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. In what ways, if any, do you use your home language at school? Why or why not?</li> <li>5. Do you think we should use languages other than English in school? Why or why not?</li> <li>6. What recommendations do you have for teachers and principals to make sure that students who speak more than one language are included in school.</li> </ol>
<b>Interview with a Parent/Caregiver:</b>	<p>Intro:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm trying to learn more about the experiences of families in our school who come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, from families where students have another home language than English. I'm hoping to learn a bit more about your cultural and linguistic heritage and how we have/can supported this at school</li> </ul> <p>Questions (modifications ok):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Name &amp; age of child</li> <li>2. What makes your child unique? What are your child's strengths?</li> <li>3. Describe your family's cultural and linguistic heritage.</li> <li>4. On a scale of 1- 5, how well do you feel that our school has been able to embrace and honor your cultural and linguistic heritage? Why did you choose this number?</li> <li>5. Who are your child's teachers? Who is primarily responsible for your child's learning? In what ways, if any, do you have contact with the school?</li> <li>6. What do you think is the most important thing that educators should consider to effectively educate students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.</li> </ol>
<b>Interview with a Teacher</b> It is often useful to interview at least two teachers, a general education teacher and an special educator or specialist teacher (literacy, Title 1, ESL/SEI)	<p>Intro:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share your purpose - that you are trying to learn more about the experiences of teachers working with culturally and linguistically diverse students and that this is for your education - and will not be recorded.</li> </ul> <p>Questions (modifications ok):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tell me a little bit about your career as a teacher</li> <li>2. On a scale of 1-5 (1 - limited; 5 - extensive) how would you characterize your experience with culturally and linguistically diverse students for whom English is not their home language. Why did you choose this number?</li> <li>3. In your experience, in this school, is the responsibility for educating students who represent culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds shared by all the educators at the school or does it fall more to the responsibility of specialists?</li> <li>4. In your opinion, what are the factors that are most likely to support students from linguistically diverse backgrounds?</li> <li>5. What challenges do you think teachers and the school face in creating inclusive environments with high learning expectations for students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds in this school?</li> </ol>