



Community Interviews

Description

Community members share a diverse range of observations on the changes to Clear Lake's watershed. These observations are powerful for students to not only learn the impact of different human impacts over time, but also to participate in cross-generational knowledge sharing. By drawing from the observations and experiences of the Tribal elders or other adults in their lives, students can build community, while learning about local impacts to the shifts in land management and cultural priorities.

This activity is adapted from "Activity 4.9: Snowball Fight for Tool Development" on p. 140 of [Stepping Stone 4](#) in the [Community Futures, Community Lore](#) Stepping Stones Toolkit for youth participatory action research (YPAR) from the UC Davis Center for Regional Change and School of Education.

Objectives

Student Objectives	Reflect on what information they want to know about ways to support a healthy watershed.	Key Youth Practice: Youth engage with complex socio ecological systems
	Consider how their questions can be answered through elder/adult interviews.	Core Activity: Make meaning
Educator Objectives	Facilitate a collaborative process for student-generated questions to be captured in a list for the group.	Key Educator Practice: Attend to the unexpected

Key Vocabulary

Watershed

Instructions

Time

1 hour, 30 minutes

Materials

- 3 to 4 small strips of paper per student
- Whiteboard or other surface viewable by the entire group
- Markers
- Printed copies of the [interview checklist](#) for each student to take with them after the activity

Getting Ready

- Prep the strips of paper

Facilitation

Part One

Show students [this photo](#), and read aloud the photo caption. Ask the students to turn to the person next to them and discuss: what things do they notice? Allow 5 minutes for discussion. Repeat with the question: what do you wonder?

Students may notice that this photo was taken a long time ago. They may also wonder if Kelsey Creek still has that many fish. Ask students if they have seen that many fish in any of the nearby creeks before. If none, why do you think that is? Students will each talk to a Tribal elder or other adult in their lives about the changes to Clear Lake's watershed that the elder/adult has observed over time. After talking with an elder/adult, students can reflect on what they learned from the experience, and decide on what actions they want to take, or further information they need.

Part Two

What do students want to know about how Clear Lake's watershed has changed over time? Use the central question, "How has Clear Lake's watershed changed over time?" for students to think about as they generate questions for the interview. Provide each student with 3 to 4 strips of paper. Ask them to brainstorm questions about what they want to know about on the strips. They should only write one question per strip. Then ask your team to crumple up their papers and have a snowball fight!

Students will collect the “snowballs” thrown in their area so that each person has 3 to 4 questions each that are not theirs. Ask the group to un-ball the strips and read aloud each question one-by-one. Scribe the questions from the slips of paper as they are read on a whiteboard (or other surface) so that they are more easily legible at a distance.

Part Three

Break up the students into small groups. In small groups, students spend 10-15 minutes to review the questions with each other and determine which of the questions can be used in an interview with a Tribal elder/adult. The small groups can also work to generate additional potential questions for the interview. After the discussion period is up, have an ambassador from each of the small groups come up to the whiteboard and put a star next to the questions that their small group selected as interview questions, as well as write in any newly generated questions.

Return to the large group. Together, review the stars. The questions that received the most stars will be used in the interviews. The remaining questions should be saved and used with activities from any of the modules. Work together as a large group to pare down, edit, or generate additional questions to the list.

Once you have completed your list of interview questions, students can practice/role play conducting their interview with one another and/or adult facilitators if time allows. You may supply students with the [interview checklist](#) as added support materials.

Part Four

Copy down the list of interview questions and hand them out to students for their assignment. Students should use these questions outside of the class or program with a Tribal elder or adult in their lives and record the answers to the questions. Consider having students use the age-appropriate writing assignment from the [Lake County Office of Education's Lake County Strong Interview](#).

Reflection

In a follow up class time/group meeting/field trip, students should bring in the writing assignment of question responses. Students can compare and contrast answers from their interviewees with a partner. Ask the group:

- How were the answers from the person your partner interviewed the same as the answers from the person you interviewed?
- How were the answers from the person your partner interviewed different from the answers from the person you interviewed?

Depending on the list of student-generated questions, analysis of the interview responses can ask students to think about ways all the people interviewed have seen the Clear Lake watershed change over time. From there, discuss what actions students can take to improve the health of the watershed.

Additional Uses and Modifications

Instead of each student interviewing the selected Tribal elder or adult of their choice, you may choose to facilitate an interview with a single person with the group. In this approach, students would all decide on the one Tribal elder/adult to interview. Students still generate questions as described above, but then they would all conduct the interview together as a group. See the [Career Pathways and Opportunities](#) activity for ideas.

Youth-Driven Pathway Facilitation

For educators facilitating the youth-driven pathway, this activity helps youth develop a set of questions to ask elders and other community experts and generate useful data and stories about their chosen environmental issue. If your team has chosen to focus on Clear Lake's watershed or a related topic for their environmental issue, you can facilitate this activity with them as written (remembering to adapt it as needed for your youth and their age range).

However, if your team has chosen a different issue to focus on, skip Part One of this activity (examining the photo as a group) and start with Part Two (brainstorming questions). Then follow the remaining instructions, using your team's issue as the focus of this activity and the interviews it supports. You should also insert your team's issue wherever "Clear Lake's watershed" is mentioned in the instructions.