

Interviewing Project Part I: Investigating a Campus Space

Goal: Your goal is to understand how students use and experience a shared campus space. This assignment emphasizes curiosity as a way of uncovering needs, patterns, and unspoken norms. You'll observe how people interact with the environment, conduct interviews with users, and reflect on your assumptions and findings.

Tasks

1. Select a Shared Campus Space

Choose one physical space on campus that is regularly used by students. Some examples include:

- A commons or lounge area
- A hallway seating zone
- A tutoring or learning support center
- A quiet study room
- A library stairwell or open-use corner

Your goal is not to critique the space but to learn how it functions for different students.

2. Observe the Space

Spend at least 30 minutes observing the space. Take field notes. Focus on:

- How people enter, exit, and move through the space
 - How individuals or groups position themselves
 - What objects or resources get used (tables, outlets, chairs, posters, dividers, etc.)
 - Who appears comfortable or out of place?
 - Look for patterns, pauses, or informal "rules" of behavior. **Take notes!**
 - **Transfer your notes into a shared team document.**
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3. Create an Interview Guide

First, review and organize your shared observations notes.

Think about your overall questions about this space. What do you want to understand from the user's point of view? Your guide should help you learn **how different people experience, interpret, and use the space**—not just what they like or dislike.

Next, draft **5-6 open-ended questions** that invite reflection, storytelling, and interpretation. Your questions should encourage the user to explore what the space means to them, how they feel in it, and how it supports or complicates their goals.

Consider starting with questions like:

- “What brought you to this space today?”
- “How do you usually use this space—or avoid it?”
- “Can you describe a typical experience here?”
- “What helps you focus or feel comfortable in this environment?”
- “What kinds of people do you think this space is designed for?”

As you develop your guide:

- Avoid leading or yes/no questions.
- Use neutral phrasing that doesn’t assume a problem exists.
- Sequence your questions from general to specific or from safe to more reflective.

Your guide will be submitted with your reflection. You may adapt or improvise during the interview, but your preparation should reflect thoughtful planning and a clear curiosity about the user’s experience.

4. Interview Three Users

Conduct interviews with three students who currently use or have used the space. This can be a convenience sample: classmates, friends, or people in the area. Your questions should be curiosity-based and invite users to reflect on their experience.

Use your interview guide!

During the interview, use follow-up questions generously. Focus on how they experience the space rather than what they think should be changed. Appropriate follow-up questions could be:

- “Can you tell me more about that?”
- “What makes you say that?”
- “How do you think others might experience this space differently from you?”

5. Submit the Following:

1. Your completed Population & Research question worksheet
2. Your interview guide (list of your **interview questions**)
3. Your interview notes (all notes from all interviews)
4. A picture of your affinity diagram
5. A 400–500-word **team reflection** addressing:
 - What surprised you in the observations and interviews?
 - What assumptions were challenged?
 - What behaviors or patterns stood out to you?
 - What do you want to understand more deeply in Part II?