Empathy Interview

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Empathy is the act of feeling what someone else feels. It is central to both principled innovation and human-centered design processes. Deeply understanding someone and their life experiences is the foundational first step towards imagining new concepts and forming new solutions. The interview process is an integral step toward understanding people's thoughts, feelings, motivations, and actions. It is also an opportunity to engage our **moral, civic, intellectual,** and **performance** assets. The empathy interview can be framed as a 1:1 conversation with active listening and responding in an open, inquisitive manner.

Move 1: Develop Trust and Affinity

- Authentically introduce yourself and the project/ challenge/idea
- Frame the interview as a conversation that is a real, humanistic experience for all
- Kickoff off the conversation and transfer the focus to the interviewee
- Continue to build trust and affinity throughout the conversation

Possible questions and prompts

- *How are you doing today? (and actively listen)*
- *How are you looking to grow?*
- *What do you love about teaching?*
- *Tell me a little bit about (yourself…, your experience with..., what you think about...)*

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Move 2: Encourage Storytelling

- Seek specific stories to learn more about your interviewee (focus on thoughts and feelings)
- Concentrate on past and present experiences rather than the future

Possible questions and prompts

- *Why did you become an educator? Why are you still an educator?*
- *Tell me about a time you experienced joy in the classroom.*
- *Can you tell me about the first time you____? What do you remember about that (day)?*
- *What was your best/worst/craziest/most memorable experience with (area of focus).*
- *Could you tell me a story about a time...*
- *What would I find surprising about...*

Move 3: Evoke Emotions

- Draw out feelings and emotions to understand deeply and see the bigger picture

Possible questions and prompts

- *What brings you joy in your work?*
- *What success can you celebrate in your work?*
- *Why do you say that?.....Tell me more.*
- *How did you feel at that moment, when that happened?*
- *Could you share why that is important to you? What emotions do you have (about that)?*

Next Steps

Following the conversation, express your gratitude and appreciation for your interviewee's time as well as their openness and vulnerability throughout the conversation.

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