

DAYS OF LISTENING AND DISCOVERY GUIDE

(May, 2003)

OBJECTIVES

- Share a best work or learning/classroom experience.
- Develop collective knowledge and wisdom about what we value and what we would change about UW.
- Participate in designing and creating our future campus community.
- **Be yourself and have fun.** The details don't matter today, just the broad themes.

FACILITATORS

Each table has a volunteer facilitator, who will also be a participant in an interview, to support activities, assist in keeping the group on track, help with recording themes, and ensure that **all the hand-held keypads are left on the table at the end!** Roving Facilitators are available to support the process at your table. Just raise a hand!

TIME GUIDELINE FOR TWO HOUR SESSION

10 minutes	Assemble, Welcome, Introduction
10 minutes	Gizmo demo (instructions on keypads), demographics survey
35 minutes	Instructions on interviews (5), one-on-one interviews (15 per person)
10 minutes	Record interview highlights on colored cards
35 minutes	Table discussion of experience themes (10), values (10), wishes (10); turn in
10 minutes	Feedback: Show themes and values from room, prioritize wishes from room
10 minutes	Evaluations, close

INTERVIEW INSTRUCTIONS, INTERVIEWS (35 MINUTES)

- Write the session number and your gizmo number on a YELLOW, a PINK and a GREEN card. Write your name and contact information (not gizmo #!) on a BLUE card.
- Select an interview partner from your table with whom you do not regularly interact.
- Interview your partner using the questions that on the separate sheet.
- You will have 15 minutes to interview your partner and then you will switch roles.
- Listen carefully, be patient, and take notes. Prompt the other person's story with questions, but only if needed. We'll let you know when the time is nearly up.
- Be prepared to record and share themes from your interview with your table group.

AFTER THE INTERVIEWS: RECORDING THEMES, ETC. (10 MINUTES)

Consult briefly with your interview partner and review your notes to determine what to prepare for discussion at your table. You will record and present your partner's information, not yours.

- Write 1-3 themes from the experience you heard from the Experience question on a YELLOW "experience theme" card with the session and partner's numbers. The two of you choose one from each interview to share with the table.
- Write one (labeled) self value, one environment value, and one campus value from the Values question on a PINK "values" card with the session and partner's numbers. The two of you choose one from each interview to share with the table.
- The two of you choose one wish from the Wishes question from each interview to share with your table (already on a GREEN card with the session and partner's numbers).

TABLE DISCUSSIONS (35 MINUTES)

- Discuss for 10 minutes among all participants at the table the themes that emerged from the Experience question during the interviews. Facilitator, please take notes on the white sheet provided and check whether the experience was from a classroom/learning or a workplace experience. Select 1-3 “experience themes” to share with the room. Circle the selected themes and hold up the sheet to be collected.
- Discuss for 10 minutes among all participants at the table the values that emerged from the Values questions during the interviews. Facilitator, please take notes on the white sheet provided and check whether the values are “self” or “environment” or “campus.” Select a total of 3 “values themes” to share with the room. They need not be from all three categories. Circle the selected values and hold up the sheet to be collected.
- Discuss for 10 minutes among all participants at the table the “wishes” that emerged from the Wishes question during the interviews. Facilitator, please take notes on the white sheet provided. Select 1-3 “wishes” to represent the table’s participants. Circle the selected wishes and hold up the sheet to be collected.
- If time, discuss how the wishes meshed with the experience and values themes.

FEEDBACK (10 MINUTES, some use of keypads)

Experience themes – View a synthesis of the Experience themes from the tables.

Values – View a synthesis of the Values from the tables.

Wishes – Choose **3** (we have to show the list 3 times to do this) for your top priorities for a positive impact our future campus community.

EVALUATION (3 MINUTES, using keypads)

We have just three questions in our evaluation, but one introduces the opportunity to help us, which we hope you will take.

At the end, please leave your keypad and ALL colored cards on the table. On your way out

- recycle this sheet,
- keep the Appreciative Interview/Dealing with Negatives sheet if you wish,
- pick up a “Campus Climate Resources” sheet if you wish,
- drop your name and contact information card in a box if you will help us develop and implement the plans which grow out of our listening sessions.

OUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Results posted at <http://www.wisc.edu/climate/> Click on Days of Listening and Discovery.
Suggestions and volunteering Bernice Durand <bdurand@wisc.edu>.

Please leave the room promptly, to allow time for the next group to enter and us to set up.

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF AN APPRECIATIVE INTERVIEW

1. The interview is based on an assumption of health and vitality. What you are seeking are incidents and examples of things at their best.
2. The connection between the interviewer and the person being interviewed is through listening and being listened to.
3. **Intense focus and patience** by the person listening to the stories leads to the experience of being fully heard and understood, a desirable effect from the close sharing that takes place.
4. **Personal excitement, commitment and receptivity** are qualities that are present when the interviewer and the person being interviewed are sharing stories of their personal peak experiences.
5. **Generative questioning, prompting, guiding** make up the role of the interviewer. The skill is to encourage and question without interrupting the storyteller.
6. **Belief vs. doubt is the proper stance.** This is not a time for skepticism or for questions that imply a need for “proof.” The trust that develops from simply listening with interest and acceptance is a major positive effect of this process.
7. **Allow for ambiguity, generalization and dreams.** These are stories being shared, not reporting of facts. Enjoy.

TIPS FOR OPTIMIZING THE CONVERSATION...

Sometimes people feel compelled to talk about what isn't working. You can usually get them to identify times when they are at their best. People should not feel like they do not have permission to talk about things that need fixing. Depending on where the interviewee is, you can handle this in several ways.

§ **Postponing:** Tell them you will make a note of what they have said and come back to it later. Position yourself to return to this data when you approach the last question which asks:... “if you could change this organization in any way you wish, what three things would you recommend...” Return to your notes paraphrasing what they originally said and ask them to translate this feedback into organizational wishes for improvement. Be sure to come back to this data; it will sustain your credibility in the interview process.

§ **Listening:** If they are intense about what they want to say about problems, let them say it. You are not going to get any appreciative data until they have an opportunity to express themselves. You must be empathetic, but remember that you cannot take on that person's problems. Keep a caring and affirmative spirit.

§ **Redirecting:** After a reasonable period of time, find a way to guide them back. “I think I understand a bit about some of the problems you see (paraphrase a few of the ones you've heard), but I would like to guide us back to looking at what is happening when things are working at their best. Can you think of a time, even the smallest moment, when something was at its best?” If they say it never happened where they work, find out if they have EVER had a worthwhile experience in any organization or work environment ANYWHERE before you give up.

§ **Remember:** All the stuff people find wrong with an organization represents an absence of something they hold in their minds as an IDEAL image. What organizational processes, if present, might create the ideal organization that the negatives imply? DATA is DATA - use it. But use it affirmatively. In fact, one could argue that there is no such thing as negative data. Bad data is good data in that we can learn from it.

It's a conversation - be yourself and have fun. If you approach the interview like a piece of drudgery, you've lost before you've begun. You want to approach interviewees as if they are very special, valuing the best of who they are. Be yourself - don't try to put on an expert role or act as though you've got to get every word in the interview exactly right. Be a learner - realize that people like to share their knowledge and wisdom with others who genuinely like to learn. If you've got an affirmative spirit going in, mistakes in wording will not stop you from getting great data. Finally, have FUN. You are getting to know someone new, and you are hearing some fascinating and important stories.