Interviewing is an important skill that students can use to generate and evaluate new ideas. I describe a methodology for teaching interviewing skills in which students are provided with a framework and then conduct several interviews. The students transcribe the interviews and bring the transcripts to class, where they engage in peer critiquing. I describe my experience in an entrepreneurship class and discuss the results of an experiment that tested the effectiveness of this approach.

Outcomes:
The goal of the session is to share a methodology for teaching students to learn interviewing skills. However, the general principles involve making tacit knowledge explicit – in other words, helping students see things that they could not see previously. This session should help participants think about how to make knowledge more visible and explicit as students develop and practice new skills.

Category: Research
Indicate your teaching and learning project: the problem, question, or opportunity addressed in your paper and why it was a problem or opportunity; Describe what you saw in your students’, colleagues’, or institution’s behavior that you wanted to change. Describe the learning objectives you wanted students or colleagues to better achieve as a result of your project.

One important tool for generating and evaluating new ideas is through conducting interviews. However, my students have struggled while conducting interviews in a number of ways, including: formulating appropriate questions, getting interviewees to share concrete and specific information, leading/biasing the interviewee, not asking important follow-up questions, etc. The purpose of this project was to help improve the interview skills of students in the course.
I begin with the assumption that the ability to interview well is a tacit skill because it involves "know-how" and because it is difficult to simply "tell" students how to interview well. In describing the tacit dimension of knowledge, Polanyi (1966) famously said, "We know more than we can tell." Tacit knowledge is difficult to articulate and has been described as "know-how." Explicit knowledge, on the other hand, has been described as "know-what" (Kogut & Zander, 1992) and can be easily codified and shared (Kogut & Zander, 1992). The transfer of tacit knowledge is more difficult and generally involves developing a shared context, language, and experience (Beckky, 2003). Some tacit knowledge can also be made explicit, and this process is a central activity of knowledge creation (Nonaka, 1994).

Given the nature of tacit knowledge, experiential learning may be an especially appropriate vehicle for helping students learn how to conduct effective interviews. Experiential learning is action based and involves deep engagement and interaction between content and experience, as well as deep reflection on the experience (Madsen, 2007). Experiential learning may also involve four stages, including abstract conceptualization, concrete experiences, reflection, and active experimentation (Kolb, 2014). This project will seek to help students learn to interview by experiencing the interview process (Madsen, 2007), making the tacit experience more explicit (Nonaka, 1994), and then reflecting on the experience in a meaningful way (Kolb, 2014).

If your project involved a particular course or curriculum, briefly describe it, its students, and its place in the curriculum or program.
Entrepreneurship 201 is designed to lay the foundation of knowledge and skills that students need to become successful entrepreneurs. During the course students reverse-engineer existing business models and also develop their own. When working on their own business model, students develop hypotheses regarding what would make their business idea work. Students then begin a process of iterative learning in which they interview potential customers, analyze the information they gather, adjust their business model, and then interview more potential customers, repeating the process throughout the business model development process.

How did you solve the problem, answer the question, or address the opportunity? How is your approach different from ones that others have tried?
In order to help students become better interviewers, I asked them to conduct a series of interviews with potential customers for their business (the experience). Prior to conducting interviews, students received guidance on interviewing skills. Students were assigned to record and transcribe one of the interviews word for word. This activity was designed to make the tacit dimension of the knowledge more explicit and lay the groundwork for meaningful reflection. Students then brought their transcriptions to class, where we engaged in peer-to-peer critiques of the interview techniques as well as discussed their own evaluation of how the interview
went. These activities were designed to improve the quality of the reflection that occurs. During the reflection period, students looked for stories as well as instances in which the interviewer led a respondent, cut-off a respondent, or failed to ask an important follow-up question.

**Assessment and baseline: Illustrate how you determined the success and effectiveness of your project. You may use quantitative or qualitative data or both.**

I used an experimental design for my study while teaching two sections of an introduction to entrepreneurship course. In one section (the control group), the students received instruction regarding interviews the way it has traditionally been taught—students engage in interviews and then come to class and discuss their experience. In the treatment group, students transcribed the interviews and engaged in reflection as described above. Prior to the intervention, all students took a short survey that measured extraversion and satisfaction with the course. Their GPA was also used as controls in the statistical analysis.

Students in both sections received a second interviewing project two weeks after the first. In the second project all students were required to transcribe an interview. I collected the transcribed interviews from all students and these interviews were coded and compared for the quality of the interview.

I conducted an analysis using linear regression and found that those students in the treatment group had a statistically significant and practically relevant advantage in terms of the number of stories they collected through interviewing.

**References:**


Organization:

I will use PowerPoint to present the problem and then the solution that I tried. I will then ask participants to think of analogous problems in their own classes—tacit skills that students struggle to develop. We will brainstorm ways that they can make these skills more explicit and, hopefully, more accessible to students. I will then present the results of the experiment that I ran in my own class and discuss how it has influenced my teaching.

Keywords:

Action Research
Interviewing
Narratives
Reflection
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Example
Tacit Knowledge