

Exploring the world of a youth

Case Study Question

What does the world look like through the eyes of a challenging youth?

The Study

This study endeavors to investigate and understand the influences that shape the lives of a youth. You will endeavor to gain an “inter-view” of the world through the eyes of one youth. You will attempt to develop a “trust” as a way to open dialogue with the youth.

The Rational

Interviewing is a way to get past a youth’s strange or bad behaviors in an attempt to learn about their past and present significant relationships, or lack there-of. A critical element for you to be successful in conducting this interview is to develop a climate of “caring.” This critical element is often ignored for stricter rules and firmer management techniques. A “caring” climate is necessary to develop trust, which is critical in seeing a truer picture of what the world looks like from your youth’s perspective.

Questions to ask:

The kinds of questions that will be asked relate to the students past and present experiences and future dreams. Here are some samples of the kind of question that could be asked: Describe some of your accomplishments/successes/interesting experiences. What is the most favorite thing you like to do? Describe your dreams/hopes/concerns and how do you see yourself in five or ten years? Describe some of the obstacles/difficulties to your success that you face. When are you most happy/fulfilled? How do you see school helping you succeed in your dreams of being a successful person? What do you like/dislike most about school? Describe a moment or event in your life that stands out as being very important.

1. Understand what the world looks like through the lives of a youth.
2. Establish a “caring” approach towards the youth.
3. Understand the disconnection that often exists between youth and society.
4. Offer a youth the opportunity to connect to an adult.
5. Discover the importance of developing a “caring” environment in all settings.

The following questions relating to your analysis of this experience should also be addressed: What have I learned through this experience that has helped me understand how a youth sees the

world? How has the youth benefited/not benefited from this experience? How would you characterize the relationship? How would you characterize their relationship with school, i.e., in context with the domain of math, science, English, etc.?

Other comments: _____.

Contemplation Focus

What does the world look like through the eyes of one of the youth?

Imagine yourself as an explorer/anthropologist. What is it like to be a 10 or 16 year old? Do you know what goes through their minds?

What are some of the more important relationships in their lives, i.e. school, friends, family, etc? What do they really think of learning, of teachers, and administrators?

Journal your interviews.

How would you describe your past and present encounters with this youth?

Categories of analysis – PAST/PRESENT relationships, fears, joys, and future dreams.

What would/could you do if you knew _____ about your youth?

What is the relevance of _____ to their being successful/unsuccessful in life?

CASE STUDY/ETHNOGRAPHY – Questions to guide this study

First, describe the purpose and nature of this study to the student and how their responses may be used.

PAST

Describe important relationships growing up.

Describe the nature of these relationships (I & it or I & Thou)

Describe important/significant event/events growing up.

PRESENT

Describe their environment (home, after school activities, weekends)

Describe important relationships ie., person? thing? activity?

Describe successes/difficulties/failures

What do you like to do?

What would you change if you could have one free choice?

FUTURE

Dreams/hopes - How do they see themselves in 5 years? 10 years?

Describe their obstacles

What would make you happy/fulfilled?

Will they reach their goal?

This is a pilot study and you may wish/need to modify the form to allow you more freedom to get the information.

FOR THOUGHT: Your struggle to form connections between anecdotes and educational policies, practices, and assumptions must be filtered through your own history. Your history will help to hear their voices clearly and at the same time your history will keep you from hearing them. So write down what you think they are saying along with your analysis.

Consider the following questions as guide when you are forming your questions:

What would you know if you had all the information?

What would you do with it?

What is your leading question? What question(s) is/are driving this research?

Template for your paper

Introduction: Explain the circumstances in writing this paper including that it is for this course.

Purpose of the study: Describe the need for doing this or similar kinds of studies that examine the lives of children.

Research question: “What does the world look like through the life of this youth?”

Biographical sketch of my student: In your narrative, describe your student’s biographical background both past and present, i.e., age, grade, gender, where he/she lives, family members, and any other pertinent information that will help the reader understand some of the physical circumstances that surround the youth.

Data collection—Interviews: Using narrative as your form, describe the dialogues that ensued. It might be more meaningful if you focused more on the connection/ relationship formed than specific, non-relevant biographical facts about the student (i.e. favorite foods, etc.). You should also include some of your student’s significant life events and relationships, i.e., their relationships with family members, friends, teachers and schooling. The use of illustrations are also a great tool to help you understand the important relationships in their lives.

Analysis and interpretation:

“To the best of my ability, here is what I think the world is like for this youth.”

Reflection: What have you learned from this assignment about students/your student, forming relationships e.g., “I” and “Thou”, and your self-hood from this assignment. Have you seen any changes in your or your student’s attitude to the other, learning, growth, or school-life?

Final thoughts: