

The non-fixing interview

The purpose of the non-fixing interview is to immerse the interviewer in the practice of deeply understanding someone else's ideas, as they are, without striving to change them in any way.

Roles

Select one person for each of these roles:

- Interviewer
- Interviewee
- Observer/timekeeper

Interviewer: Your task is to learn about the interviewee's ideas about a physics concept. Your only purpose in this interview is to learn about their idea. Your purpose is NOT to teach them anything. See the "Evaluation rubric" below. Consider using questions like these to probe your interviewee's thinking:

- Can you tell me about the reasoning behind your answer?
- Can you tell me a little more about that idea?
- Why do you think that's so?
- Do you have any other ways of thinking about this question?
- What experiences are informing your answer/your thinking about this question?
- Are any new questions coming up as you think about this?

Interviewee: Your task is to adventurously choose one of the questions below *that you have not considered before*, and share your thinking about the science involved. (You may play a student, or just be yourself, as you like.)

- A. Are all the colors in the rainbow?
- B. Is the burn one may get from touching a hot pan the same as, or different from, a sunburn?
- C. A bird is temporarily contained in a large sealed glass container (with plenty of air), which is placed on a scale. When the bird flies in the container, does the reading on the scale change?
- D. A monkey hangs on a rope. The rope goes up over a pulley, and on the other end is a weight, which exactly balances the monkey. Everything is initially stationary. Then, the monkey tries to climb the rope. What happens?
- E. How can you create an electric circuit using three identical light bulbs and one battery where the bulbs are as bright as possible, and as dim as possible. You can use PhET's DC circuits simulation.

Observer: Your task is to keep track of how well the interviewer follows the instructions for this assignment. Keep a tally of when you see them doing the "shoulds" (green) and the "should nots" (red) in the evaluation rubric below, along with a few notes of what you observed.

We are grateful to [Hunter Close](#) for teaching us this interview format, and want to acknowledge [Carl Rogers](#) for inspiring the non-fixing mindset

Non-fixing interview evaluation rubric

The interviewer should: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Openly inquire into the interviewee's thinking, with curiosity● Ask questions for the sake of finding out● Actively listen and show that they are listening● Ask open-ended questions● Paraphrase what they understand them to be saying to see if they are understanding them correctly	The interviewer should not: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Teach● Help● Lead● Coax● Critique, challenge, correct● Give feedback, judge, evaluate● In any way attempt to change, repair, or fix the interviewee's ideas● Suggest new ideas

What did you notice?

Please share a reflection about your experience. Highlight, bold, +1, or comment on others' comments that stand out to you.

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