CONVERSATION WITH A PURPOSE

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WITHOUT KATY VIGURS AND GARETH COWLIN, THIS PROJECT WOULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED. WE ARE BOTH VERY GRATEFUL FOR THEIR ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT.

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I had an interview to come here. It was awful.

Are research interviews like that? Like interrogation under torture?

Are they going to teach us to be torturers?!

I hope not!

It's just a conversation, isn't it?

Essentially, an interview is a conversation.
BUT IT’S A CONVERSATION WITH A PURPOSE. TO GLEAN INFORMATION, FIND STUFF OUT.

YOU KNOW THE BASICS FROM YOUR READING. NOW IT’S TIME TO PRACTICE!

GET INTO PAIRS. DISCUSS A CHILDHOOD TIME WHEN YOU LEARNED SOMETHING USEFUL OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL.

I REMEMBER MY GRANDMA TEACHING ME TO PLANT SEEDS IN LITTLE POTS. I WOULD HAVE BEEN, MAYBE, SIX YEARS OLD? SHE SAID I WAS THE BEST PERSON TO HELP HER BECAUSE I HAD SMALL HANDS.

SHE DIDN’T ONLY TEACH YOU ABOUT GROWING PLANTS, THOUGH, DID SHE, OWEN? SHE TAUGHT ME THAT I WAS IMPORTANT. I MATTERED.
I mattered to her.

Swap over now. Try to build rapport.

You ok?

Yeah. Sorry.

Nada, mate. It's because we know each other.

Yeah... It wouldn't be like that with a stranger.

Well done, class. Next week you have a field assignment.

Interview. Please pick up your interview schedule and contact information from the office.

The local residents' association has agreed that you can interview people about their experience of ageing.
A woman called Ella...

I wonder if she lives alone...

It's weird.

Going to someone's home when you don't know them.
I hope I can do this...

Hi.

I'm Owen.

From the college...

Would you like a cup of tea?

And some cake?

Yes please.

I won't be a minute.
I know you're here to interview me about my experience of ageing.

But can we have a chat first, while we drink our tea?

So I can get to know you a little bit?

I don't get many visitors, these days.

Sure!
I love to bake...
You look like a sportsman...
I left school at sixteen...
I enjoy college...
You must have seen a lot of change...

Right, young man, it's time we got on with this interviewing.

Is it OK to record our conversation?
Fine by me.
I hope this thing works!

There's no need to be nervous.
I'm not!

I am a bit nervous.
I've never done this before.
GOOD LAD.
ALWAYS SENSIBLE TO TELL THE TRUTH.

HOW WILL I KNOW IF ELLA IS TELLING ME THE TRUTH?

SO...

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED HERE?

IN THIS CITY, ALL MY LIFE.

IN THIS FLAT,

ALMOST FIVE YEARS NOW.

I HAD TO MOVE HERE AFTER MY HUSBAND DIED.

I DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE OUR HOUSE,

BUT I COULDN'T MANAGE IT ON MY OWN.

I HAD NO CHOICE.

BUT WELL...

IT'S NOT A HAPPY STORY.

HOW WAS THE MOVE FOR YOU?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME.
I DO.
OR YOU WON'T HAVE AN INTERVIEW, WILL YOU?

MY SON VISITS WHEN HE'S ON LEAVE FROM THE ARMY...
AND HIS WIFE CAN SPARE HIM.
I DON'T HAVE ANY OTHER FAMILY. MY OLD FRIENDS CAN'T VISIT.
IT'S TOO FAR.

I HAVEN'T MANAGED TO MAKE ANY NEW FRIENDS.
IT'S HARD FOR ME TO GET OUT.
THE LAST TIME ANYONE VISITED ME WAS...
SIX MONTHS AGO.
BUT I DO HAVE SOME LITTLE FRIENDS WHO LIKE MY BAKING.

COME. I’LL SHOW YOU.

TWEET. TWEET.

TWEET.

TWEET.

THANK YOU FOR TELLING ME SO MUCH ABOUT YOUR LIFE.

MAYBE YOU’LL COME BACK AND SEE ME SOME TIME?
She's so lonely.

I didn't know anyone could be so lonely.

That cake is way too good for bird food.

I wonder how many people live like Ella?
GREAT PRESENTATIONS, CLASS.
YOU'VE ALL DONE REALLY WELL WITH YOUR INTERVIEWING.

KEY LEARNING POINTS:
IT'S A CONVERSATION WITH A PURPOSE.

BUILD RAPPORT,
BUT DON'T LET ANYONE MISTAKE THAT FOR FRIENDSHIP.

IT'S A PROFESSIONAL ENCOUNTER.
SEE YOU NEXT WEEK.

BUILD RAPPORT,
BUT DON'T LET ANYONE MISTAKE THAT FOR FRIENDSHIP.
1. HOW DO YOU THINK OWEN HANDLED THE INTERVIEW WITH ELLA? WAS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY? IF SO, WHAT, AND WHY?

2. OWEN ADMITTED TO ELLA THAT HE WAS NERVOUS. SHOULD HE HAVE DONE THIS? WHY?

3. DO YOU THINK ELLA WAS TELLING THE TRUTH IN HER INTERVIEW? WHY? WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS?

4. OWEN SHOWED HIS FEELINGS AT SEVERAL POINTS IN THE INTERVIEW. SHOULD HE HAVE DONE THIS? WHY?

5. SHOULD OWEN HAVE VISITED ELLA A SECOND TIME OR NOT? WHY?
This short comic is designed to help bridge the gap between classroom and practice for students of qualitative interviewing. Owen’s first real-life interview is full of surprises. Do you think he acted wisely — or unwisely?

“Helen Kara and Sophie Jackson are in the vanguard of a concerted push for visual methods in research teaching. Comics, once regarded as a lowly art, are steadily being embraced in many serious professional and academic fields because of their immediacy and accessibility. Kara and Jackson clearly revel in bridging the gap between theory and application in real, human contexts; easing that daunting step for research students between classroom and practice.”

Stuart Medley, Associate Professor in Design, Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia.

“This book offers a creative approach to reflecting and teaching research methods using comics. An exciting approach to contemporary research practice.”

Dr Joan Ormrod, Senior Lecturer, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK, and Editor, Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics.