

**Ellen CK Johnson  
College of DuPage**

**LIFE CYCLES AND CULTURE SEMINAR, SPRING 2008  
Interview Project**

This is more information about your interview project for the Seminar.

Each student will interview someone who lived for a considerable time in or grew up in another culture (not American culture) and write a paper and give a presentation on the paper. Make sure you have permission from the person you interview to do this and let him/her decide what name (real one or a made-up one) will be used in the paper. If you choose a minor child, you will need permission from parent(s) or guardian. In anthropology, this is known as a life history narrative or life story and such narratives have been collected since the early 1900's; it is a very old method in anthropology. If you wonder what this is, you might want to look up methods books in anthropology; there are many of them.

For all the ethnographies or stories about people you are reading in anthropology, you are also learning contextual information about the area of the world and country or culture in which the people live. You should also do this, but in a minimal way, when you write up your interview and present the information from it. What country or culture within the country is the person from? What is it like there (physical geography)? A rural or urban place? Are there aspects of history that would help fellow students understand this person's life? Aspects of local culture? You should do some research on this even before conducting the interview(s), as you will be able to ask better and more informed questions. The first paragraph or two of your report should contain this information and you should list the sources of your information at the end of the paper using a regular documentation form, as MLA. But, the bulk of your paper should be the person's story, not this contextual information.

While you are conducting the interview(s), have in mind the terms from Developmental (Life Span) Psychology, especially those terms which might relate to parts of the story you are being told, such as terms relating to earlier stages of the person's life or this present stage or to life stages of people this person has been closely associated with. You might want to ask more questions about aspects of the person's life that could relate to these aspects of development at different stages. You would not want, however, to use these terms in the interview unless it is appropriate (if the person uses the term or is a psychologist). That might "lead" the story too much and distress the interviewee.

When you write up the interview, limit the paper to about four to six pages typed double-space using an 11 or 12-point font. You are expected to use only 3-5 of these terms in discussing aspects of the interviewee's life story.

You will then present your paper to classmates and your teachers. Do not just read it; tell it. You might want to use cards for notes and look up at us. Bring whatever you want (within reason) to show us to make your presentation "come alive." You can pass

around a book about the country, bring ethnic food, bring pictures, artifacts, etc. Once, a student even dressed in clothes from that country. Presentations should be designed to be about 10 minutes long.