

Lesson 1: Empathizing with the User **(Explorers)**

by Jonathan Coldoff

Grade Level(s)

Grade 5

Lesson Overview

In groups of 3-4 students will read a biographical summary of a hypothetical explorer, building empathy, create an empathy map, and define their user's problem.

Learning Objectives

Students will empathize with a historically based explorer, describe their identity, articulate their needs and infer a problem that they have.

Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.1

Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.3

Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.

Next Generation Science Standards.3-5.Engineering Design

3-5-ETS1-1. Define a simple design problem reflecting a need or a want that includes specified criteria for success and constraints on materials, time, or cost.

3-5-ETS1-2. Generate and compare multiple possible solutions to a problem based on how well each is likely to meet the criteria and constraints of the problem.

Preparation

- Understanding of Design Thinking, empathy maps and POV's (needs statement)
- Group students
- Find whiteboard space
- Copies of biographies (I have completed 4 – other possible motivations: traveling from the East, spreading religion, freedom of religion, Vikings discovery of North America in 1100, etc.)
- Refresher on Design Thinking process with respect to building empathy

Materials and Resources

- Biographies of explorers each with a different motivation for their journey to the New World.
- Sticky notes in multiple colors
- Whiteboard space for 5-6 small groups
- Dry erase makers (different colors for # of group members) and erasers
- Examples of Empathy Map, 3-Column Chart, POV statements template

Activity 1: Meet Your Explorer! (15 Minutes)

- Students are placed into heterogeneous groups determined by the teacher.
- They then find a place in the room to work.
- Each group reads quietly through the biography jotting down notes that they feel are important. This may help them to understanding who their users is, what makes them unique, the challenges they face, and the goal they wish to accomplish. Notes can be taken in notebooks, loose-leaf or stickies.
- Students take turns discussion what they understand about the explorer, ask each other questions, etc.

Activity 2: Empa-Cartography (20 Minutes)

- Students will create an empathy map for their user using large erasable white boards.
- Each student will use a different color pen.
- In the empathy map students will divide their notes into the thing that their explorer is saying, doing, thinking and feeling. Each quadrant should contain at least one statement from each student.
- Students can begin to discuss the needs of their explorer.

Activity 3: Needful Things (15 Minutes)

- Students will identify the needs of their user by developing a 3-column chart.
- Individually students will write 3-5 POV statements utilizing the template: [USER] needs to [USER'S NEED] because [SURPRISING INSIGHT]
- As a group they will choose a single POV to guide them through the rest of this project.

Troubleshooting

It can be difficult to ensure everyone is providing input when student work collaboratively in small groups. Assign different color markers and sticky notes to each child and check to see that all colors are represented at every step of the project. This is the child's "signature color."

Assessment

Evaluate the alignment of the POV statement with the definition of the explorer, their needs and their unique characteristics.