

Lesson 3: Collaborative Listening and Questioning

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Grade Level(s)

Grades 8-12

Lesson Overview and Learning Objectives

Using their collaborative and individual research, and keeping in mind the class definition of “zombie,” students will collaboratively develop, hone, and refine questions to pose to different community leaders as they endeavor to empathize the needs of these leaders in the face of a zombie pandemic. The objective of this exercise is to glean information pertinent to the students’ design process.

Preparation

- Contact and invite community leaders to come to class to be interviewed as “users.”
- Provide users with your class’s definition of “zombie” and brief them on the zombie pandemic scenario ahead of time so they are able to prepare appropriately.
- Try to invite a variety of community leaders to expand the horizon of information, i.e.: police, fire, medical, and county or town leadership.
- Keep students in their heterogeneous groups of four. For example, one highly skilled, one low skilled, two medium skilled.
- Depending on the needs and scheduling, interviews may be done in one day, or over the span of a few days.
- Assign a student to play the role of “vocabularian” (who will write up new and interesting vocabulary gleaned from the interviews).

Materials and Resources

- Chart paper for interview protocols, class interview questions, and new vocabulary identification.
- Student notebooks, journals, or field notebooks

Activity 1: Classroom Collaboration for Interview Questions (20 Minutes)

- Post one piece of chart paper in front of the class for each user to be interviewed. Write the name of one user at the top of each paper. The questions generated should be specific to the expertise of the user. For instance, appropriate questions for the Mayor or other elected representative from the city could be:
 - What is the current population in our town?
 - How many citizens are ambulatory? (Great example of a possible vocabulary word)
- Guide students as they craft these questions to be cogent, specific, focused, and relevant. Generate at least five questions for each user to be interviewed.

Activity 2: Introduce and Interview Community Leaders (15 Minutes Per User)

Before interviews:

- Explain that these interviews are a research tool that involves active observation. Discuss the use of note taking, sketching, question-asking, and picture-taking as effective field tools for research. Make a list on the board of good examples of effective uses of these tools. Discuss any inappropriate uses of these tools and behaviors to avoid, and remind students to comply with school and facility policies.
- Design a protocol for the interviewing process. Guidelines could include: don't interrupt, make eye contact and nod to show you're listening, etc.

During interviews:

- Have a student timer hold up signals for interviewers and interviewees to keep to the schedule. Keep conversations moving. You may want to assign specific students questions and prescribe a designated order for the questions.

After interviews:

- Give students time to update their notes after each interview. Based on the testimony of the interviewees, see if any of the questions need to be updated or modified for the next interview.

Troubleshooting

To avoid one of the user interviews taking up more time than the others, use a student as a “timer” who signals a countdown to time expired.

Assessment

Quick journal activities for learning indicators focusing on the information gleaned from the interviews and how students plan to incorporate insights into their designs would be a great assessment of conceptual understanding.

Extensions

Send students into the community for further field research. Assign students to go out into their neighborhoods and use interviewing, sketching, recording, and photography to develop an authentic understanding of the problems the community might face in the event of a zombie pandemic.