
Classroom Interviews in Action

Why should we do interviews of community members in the classroom?

The act of interviewing helps children:

- speak to people and think about what to say to them
- learn effective socializing skills including listening
- form *who, what, when, where, why and how* questions
- think analytically in order to form new questions after what they have heard
- take notes--*what to write? What are the main ideas? In which things am I interested?*
- understand fundamental principles of community--*who is in it? How is my family connected to it? Peers' families?*
- learn through direct contact that *all* people (women and men) do *all* different things--*I can grow up to do any of these things.*

Other benefits of doing classroom interviews:

- Interviewing is perfect for any curriculum, age or grade because it is a multi-level activity--meaning that it reaches people differently depending on where they are at developmentally. Therefore, *everyone* can benefit from classroom interviews regardless of age or level of development (unlike worksheets, which typically are designed to have a specific outcome for persons with specific abilities.)
- Aligns perfectly with New York State ELA (1, 3 and 4) and Social Studies (5) Standards

For more ideas, look for educational video *Classroom Interviews in Action* and Nan Hoffmann song "*What does your momma do?*"

Toothpaste Feelings

objective: promote use of kind words and actions between peers through the understanding that "words can not be taken back"

materials: paper plate, tube of toothpaste

procedure:

- Plate is passed around to students and they are asked to squirt out some toothpaste onto the plate
- After each student has had a turn, teacher asks, "Who would like to try to put the toothpaste back into the tube?"
- They might all laugh at that, or a few students may wish to give it a try, either of which leads to the discussion

discussion:

- Words are like this tube of toothpaste, once they come out, they can not be put back in
- We need to think about the words we use and what we say to people
- If we say something to someone that makes them feel sad or hurts their feelings, the words are out there and can not be taken away.
- Even if we say "sorry", the person still feels bad or has hurt feelings because the words were already said. "Sorry" can not take them away.