

Educational level: Secondary School | **Age:** >11**Author:** Nickolas P. Wilson, Dr. Edvard Benes Elementary School, the Czech Republic

LEARNING OBJECTIVES/ ASPIRATIONS

Students interview an expert from their community in order to further their understanding of learning objectives. Also, to create a meaningful link between learning and community.



NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

Often teachers and students embark through learning within the bubble of a school. The conditions in which learning occurs are often controlled by the factors of a school or classroom. One exceptional way to step outside of this bubble is to go to an expert in the community, who can provide meaningful insight for a topic, create a personal connection within the community, and help solidify a topic importance.

In the learning scenario, the teachers and students need to find an expert who is willing to be interviewed about a certain topic, perhaps a recent project that the class completed. They will organize an interview, prepare questions, and welcome the expert to the classroom.

Teachers can be creative with how they connect the expert to the curriculum, certainly finding an expert and setting a date requires valuable communication skills, which is an essential skill in almost every curriculum worldwide. A lesson can be aimed at writing proper emails or how to reach out in the community. Preparing the questions to ask, is a great way for teachers and students to learn content because they will have to determine, which information is worthy to ask, what they are interested in, and what they really need to know.

It is easy for students to forget what they are learning has importance outside of the school; the question of what is the point in all this can be answered by the expert. It is an important reminder that the community cares about the school. The process of reaching out to a completely random somebody is an important networking skill; the fact that this person can have some valuable insight for the class is even more valuable.



APPROACH TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

After the completion of a project, or during the drafting phase, seek the insight of an expert to build on what students have learned and make a meaningful connection to the community. Practice writing emails, reaching out to the experts, organize a meeting, and prepare valuable questions for the expert.

ASSESSMENT

For the specific learning objectives, preparing the questions for the expert is an excellent opportunity for the teacher to evaluate what learning goals are concrete and which ones are not. With groups creating a list of questions they need to know the answers to and choosing the most important ones – the class reviews important information.



ROLES

TEACHERS: The teacher evaluates the questions the student thinks of, to determine whether the learning objectives are met and guides the students to making a meaningful connection.

LEARNERS: Students write emails to desired experts, plan a meeting and develop questions

EXPERT: Provides a personal connection to the learning objectives, preferably one that is visible in the student's community and provides additional information and insight to the class.



LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The students and the teacher **interact** throughout the entire process. The teacher is actively guiding the students, gives feedback on their questions, gives further instructions and guides students towards finding most 'appropriate' experts.

The teacher and students, together, **interact** by brainstorming the best approach to write an email. Students **exchange** their ideas about the questions.

They **investigate** and search for the information about experts in groups. The meeting with the expert happens as a **presentation** supported by interaction and students' questions. Finally, the students **reflect** on what was learnt as a result of the process and conversations with the expert.



LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Students should have completed a project or be in the process of creating and researching for a project.

1. The class develops a list (or lists) of questions regarding the specific content, they are learning using a KWL graphic organizer or large sheet of paper. It has three columns: What you KNOW, What you WANT to learn & What you LEARNED. It should be done in medium sized groups (4–6 students). [15–20 minutes] Then the teacher and the class compare lists and evaluate the questions. [15–20 minutes] The teacher tells them that they will interview an expert about the topic, and they must rank the questions in order of 'important to ask'.

2. The class can be divided into groups and will use the internet to search for relevant community members to seek for an interview. On the main whiteboard, the students write names and emails and phone numbers of their wish list. A discussion can be held on which expert would be the best. The teacher should encourage high-ranking individuals, such as the major or directors of a company. Maybe even a president. You never know who will answer the call of an aspiring learner.

3. The class outlines the basic requirements of an email (Greeting, the hook, the request, and signature). Then groups try to formulate the best 'hook' sentence which should interest the expert and they should explain the class's intent with a request. The hook can range from a joke or some intriguing questions, the class should adhere to strict grammatical rules but also display some personality.

4. Different students send their emails, and a meeting needs to be planned with the class via these elected communicators. Results and answers should be monitored as a class.

5. The class must prepare for the meeting. If the expert comes to the physical classroom, they should feel welcomed and respected, this can vary culturally, but some norms are usually true globally. The expert should be given a seat of 'honor' either in front or middle, where they can see all the students, a name tag should be prepared and some water (at a minimum). The class should prepare to express their gratitude to the expert first and foremost. Also, it should be predetermined which students will ask which questions and how the students will record the expert's insight. This is an opportunity to utilize some technology (cameras and microphones). The class can divide responsibilities: Questioners, recording team, preparation and welcoming).

6. Actually have the meeting

7. Follow up and have a lesson which reflects what was learned by asking the children to make highlight reels of the meeting and making changes to their original work.



POSSIBLE CHALLENGES

1. Timing the meeting so that it is still relevant to the learning objectives is difficult because it involves a huge unknown factor, when will the expert be able to come and speak with the kids.

2. Not finding a relevant expert or not receiving any answers.



RESOURCES

- Graphic organizer for questions (KWL): What you KNOW, What you WANT to know, & What you ready LEARNED)
- Email
- School's social media (optional)



LITERATURE TO SUPPORT

- Book: [The Third Teacher](#)
- Book: [Teaching Young Adolescents](#) by Kellough & Kellough
- EduTopia: [5 Steps to Better School/Community Collaboration](#)
- [United Nations: Relationship between schools and their communities](#)

