

Social and Emotional Learning

Lesson Title: Good Questions, Part 2 (Thought Bubble Moment)

Grade Level: High School

Project and Purpose

Students either act out a scene or draw a comic strip that applies one of the questions from Dean James Ryan's 2016 Harvard Graduate School of Education commencement speech to a real life challenge.

Essential Question

What is the power of a good question as part of a "thought bubble moment"?

Materials

- Five Questions worksheet/slide
- Five Question Scenarios (cut apart)
- Cardboard or card stock (can use old manila folders) to create "life-sized" thought bubbles
- Paper and drawing materials
- If possible, a copy of and/or youtube video of Dean James Ryan's 2016 commencement speech, found at: www.gse.harvard.edu/news/16/05/good-questions

Teacher

Note: This lesson could possibly extend over two class periods.

1. Explain that today's session will continue the theme from the last session: asking good questions based on Dean James Ryan's 2016 commencement speech to the Harvard Graduate School of Education.
2. Ask students where they have seen "thought bubbles." They are used quite commonly in comics and cartoons to show the thought processes of certain characters. Because there usually is no narrator, it is a way for the authors to give us insight to the characters' thoughts, ideas, and musings.
3. Distribute copies of the Five Questions worksheet. Review each of the five questions encouraging students to provide examples of a good time to ask each question (a teacher support page is provided to help you with ideas). Explain that these are the thought bubble questions of life.
4. Ask students: What would happen if they were in a situation where they could stop time, have a "thought bubble moment" to ask themselves a question, and then proceed. Is this a realistic possibility? Or just fantasy? Explain.
5. Have students return to their five discussion groups from the previous session and give each group one of the Five Question Scenarios. The group must:
 - Determine one or more of the five questions that would stop the motion and help the person/people involved in the scenario.
 - Create a life-sized thought bubble of at least one of the five questions from the list.
 - Write an ending for the scenario that stems from using the question.

The Five Best Questions Plus a Bonus from the 2016 Commencement Speech

by Dean James Ryan
to the Harvard Graduate School of Education

Question	Core	This question helps us...	Application
1. "Wait, what?"	Root of Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a moment, slow down, be sure you understand Seek clarification 	
2. "I wonder...?" (often continued with "why..." or "if...")	Curiosity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay curious about the world Figure out ways to make the world a better place 	
3. "Couldn't we at least...?"	Beginning of Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get past disagreements Come to a consensus Begin SOMETHING 	
4. "How can I help you?"	Base of All Good Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow our instincts to lend a hand, pitch in Be humble ("How" adds humility; we are asking for directions from others who are experts) 	
5. "What truly matters?" (can tack on "to me")	Heart of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get to the heart or the core of any issue 	
Bonus Question: "And did you get what you wanted out of life, even so?" from the poem by Raymond Carver, "Late Fragments"	To be asked at the end of one's life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand what is and was most important in life to each individual 	

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Teacher Support Sheet: Possible Examples

Question	Core	This question helps us...	Possible examples
1. "Wait, what?"	Root of Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a moment, slow down, be sure you understand Seek clarification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A friend asks you to help them cheat on a test Your science teacher wants you to teach the rest of the class
2. "I wonder...?" (often continued with "why..." or "if...")	Curiosity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay curious about the world Figure out ways to make the world a better place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You and a friend broke something precious to your teacher. There's a new student from a foreign country
3. "Couldn't we at least...?"	Beginning of Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get past disagreements Come to a consensus Begin SOMETHING 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your committee cannot agree on a theme for the social action project You and your friend disagree on how to finish the school project
4. "How can I help you?"	Base of All Good Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow our instincts to lend a hand, pitch in Be humble ("How" adds humility; we are asking for directions from others who are experts) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You see a mother with a baby in a stroller trying to get up the stairs The principal drops a box of papers in the hallway
5. "What truly matters?" (can tack on "to me")	Heart of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get to the heart or the core of any issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your best friends argue incessantly about politics You have to choose between seeing a movie or going to a workshop to learn work skills
Bonus Question: "And did you get what you wanted out of life, even so?" from the poem by Raymond Carver, "Late Fragments"	To be asked at the end of one's life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand what is and was most important in life to each individual 	

Five Question Scenarios

Instructions

Cut scenarios apart and give one to each group.

- It's a beautiful day for skateboarding, but you must report to work at 10:00 am.
- Your parents demand you return an outfit you just bought to the store; they say it is ridiculously over-priced.
- Your friends want you to cut class with them, but you need all the help you can get to pass the upcoming test in order to pass.
- Your favorite shirt has a stain on it, and you really need to wear it for a special event.
- Your boy/girlfriend completely takes you by surprise when they say they want to "take a break" for a while.
- You find a wallet with cash, credit cards, and identification on a park bench.
- Your friend's father dies and you have been asked to be a pall bearer. You have never been to a funeral before.
- There was an incidence of gun violence at a nearby high school. You are nervous about returning to school.
- A friend struggles with a subject you find easy.
- A teacher asks you to be a class representative for student government.
- There is a full scholarship available for a week-long summer program at a college you are interested in possibly attending on a subject you think is kind of cool.
- Representatives from a company you might want to work for will be in your school library today.
- A person you are interested in asks you to attend a legalize marijuana rally.
- Homeless people sleep on the stairs to your school. The administration and student council continue to argue over what to do about the situation.
- You have been without a winter coat for a month now. An opportunity to get a free one from a local organization at a school gathering presents itself.