

Listening and Gossip

Summary

Explore gossip by having the students read several examples of stories based on gossip and then analyze the stories. Introduce listening with a conversation heart activity.

Main Core Tie

Teen Living

[Strand 1 Standard 3](#)

Time Frame

1 class periods of 45 minutes each

Materials

1. Gossip signing cards, two having stickers or other marks on the backs.
2. Gossip articles.
3. Half sheets of paper with pyramids on them.
4. Conversation hearts
5. Conversation heart story

Background for Teachers

A. Dr. Skleder says, "despite its power to harm, gossip also has a positive function". In gossiping we share information, keep ourselves in check, grow closer to others and have fun.

B. If you want to know if you are gossiping, ask yourself these questions... could the information that's being passed, that's obviously definitely about a person, be true or untrue?... is that really crucial to the interaction at hand?... If it's not essential in that conversation then it's a signal that it's probably gossip.

C. Psychologists make a powerful case for the purpose, even the necessity, for gossip. But for those who have been burned, the last thing gossip does is build relationships. It destroys them.

D. Lola VanGilst sees gossip as the destruction of relationships. She says no one walks away from either being the gossiper or listening to the gossiper feeling good about themselves.

Instructional Procedures

5 min--as an introduction give every student a quarter sheet of paper that has 4 spaces on it. Two or three of the papers you hand out should have a stamp, sticker, or other identifying mark on the back. Instruct them to go around the room and get four people to sign their sheet.

When they are finished have them sit back down. Instruct the class to turn over their papers. If they have the mark on the back of their paper have them stand up. I have told a marvelous, juicy, gossipy story to these two or three people. These people then have told this story to others. Everyone who has the name of someone standing should now stand up.

So now everyone standing knows the story that I told to two or three people.

But it doesn't stop there, again if anyone has someone's name on their paper that is standing they should stand also. Continue on until everyone is standing.

For my class it only took about four rounds. Explain that this is how gossip is spread. I only told two people, but then they told two people, and then they tell two people. It just continues on and quickly!!!

5 min--Briefly talk about gossip. THE HOOK "Can we talk? I need to talk with someone. Can I trust you to keep this between us? You won't believe what (insert name) has done now." This is how we are hooked into gossip.

If you want to know if you are gossiping, ask yourself these questions... is the information that's being passed, that's obviously definitely about a person could be true or untrue.... is that really crucial to the interaction at hand?... If it's not essential to what they're doing in that conversation then it's a signal that it's probably gossip.

20 min--Give one article of what gossiping has done to each table. Have them read through the examples and then present to the class:

What happened?

What the consequences are.

How could it have been different?

What would have happened if they didn't gossip?

5 min--Hand out half sheets of paper with pyramids on them. Pyramids face down. They cannot turn over the papers until I tell them. Explain that the students will have 20 seconds to memorize what is on the other side of the paper. Let them turn over their papers. Time 20 seconds. After 20 seconds have them flip over the paper. On a separate piece of paper have the students write down what it said on the opposite side. When they are finished have them flip over the paper and compare.

For the most part, a majority of students will leave out the second "the" and "a". Explain that this is a common occurrence that happens with listening and communication. We think we understand what the person is telling us but we missed something. That is why it is so important to listen!! So we don't miss anything.

10 min--conversation hearts!! Hand out conversation hearts (also known as candy hearts) to everyone. They are given one minutes to arrange the hearts any way they want. As I read a story that has the same phrases that are on the hearts, they have to pick out the ones I say. The group that has the most phrases correct wins!!

However, if I say "Cutie Pie" once, you can only have one "Cutie Pie" in your pile. Some phrases will be used more than once, in that case you can have more in your pile. Read the story. Afterwards have them count up how many hearts they had. Who had the most?

Questions to ask the students:

What was it like trying to find the phrases and listen to the story at the same time?

Could you do better now that you've heard the story once?

How many phrases did you miss?

How does this apply to listening to other's in real life?

Discuss how hard it is to listen while you are concentrating on finding the hearts. It is hard to listen and do something else at the same time. Good listening takes 100% effort and concentration. If you want you can read the story again and have the class find the phrases. Is it easier the second time?!

Bibliography

1. "Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens" by Covey 2. Sue Reber

Authors

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