

ACTIVITY TWO: LOCAL INTERVIEWS, INDIGENOUS STORIES AND CATCHMENT HISTORY

In this **ARTS AND CULTURE** activity, learners conduct interviews in their local community and then share their findings to the rest of the class in small group role-plays.

A watershed and its catchment is the land from which rainwater flows into wetlands, streams or rivers.

Many of the river catchments of southern Africa have been changed by historical land use practices, settlements and industrial growth to cater for a rapidly expanding population. In many cases, wetlands have been destroyed and riverine vegetation removed, decreasing natural flood control so that the amount and quality of water released by our river catchments is decreasing.



Interviewing local people and collecting stories can develop a sense of how things have changed. Local information and stories are essential for our understanding of local water quality issues.

ACTIVITY

- In small groups of 4 or 5, the learners must work out a set of questions to ask local people, particularly older folk, who have lived in the area for many years.

Some ideas for questions for older people could be:



1. How long have you lived here?
2. Have you noticed any changes, since you were young?
3. What are these changes?
4. How did you collect water long ago?
5. Have you noticed any change in the water? Quality? Amount of water?
6. Have you noticed any changes in the amount of rain that falls?
7. Do you know any local stories about water? (Or animals linked to water?)

Learners also need to work out another set of questions about the present conditions of their catchment and possible problems. These questions can be asked to their friends, parents and other members of the community.

1. How long have you lived here?
2. Where do you get your water?
3. Have you noticed any problems with the quality of water here, in this community? What are these problems?
4. Are the streams and rivers clean in this area? Can one drink from them?
5. Is the community involved in any river clean-up / alien plant eradication projects that you know of?

NB: Only use the questions above if learners are struggling to work out their own sets of questions

Time needs to be set aside, either during or after school, to conduct these interviews, using the questions prepared during the lesson. These local interviews will give the learners information on water and the water quality situation both in the past and today.

And now ... it's time for some drama in our lives!!

What is role-play?

We use role-play to explore different situations and ideas. This is done by acting out a usually authentic situation, without a script.

Now that the water quality and catchment interviews have been completed, each group will role-play their experiences of:

- Deciding what questions the group was going to ask the interviewees;
- Deciding who they were going to interview;
- The interviews themselves;
- Some of the funny/sad/interesting/unusual things that may have happened during the interviews;
- Their interactions with one another during this activity – any conflicts that arose, any differing of opinions (how they were sorted out, or not!), any laughs and good times.



One of the first tasks of the role-play is for each group to decide who are the different characters involved. It is a good idea to use simple props for each character (such as a hat, wig, jacket or jewellery to help characters get into their 'role').



Role-play is a fun way of exploring environmental issues and concerns. At the end of the role-plays, a list of all the main points that emerged from the interviews can be drawn up and shared with the whole class, thus giving a broader and fuller overview of the water and water quality situation in your local catchment.

Criteria to assess learners during this arts and culture lesson

Criteria	Exceeded requirements of the Learning Outcome	Satisfied requirements of the Learning Outcome	Partially satisfied requirements of the Learning Outcome	Not satisfied requirements of the Learning Outcome
The learner was able to research the issue of water quality by conducting interviews within their local community				
The learner was able to work in a group and play a part in the role-play of water and water quality				