

Open Ended Questions

An exercise for first step of design thinking process in Game Design

Goal: To help students understand how to ask questions that will get to a deeper understanding of their user and the context in which the user operates.

What are Open-Ended Questions?

Open ended questions are questions that lead to a further discussion. They are questions that do not have a simple answer like yes or no or a number.

- Examples of open-ended questions are:
 - “What are your favorite things about this activity?”
 - “How did doing that activity make you feel?”
 - “What would you change about that activity if you could change something?”
- Questions that are NOT open-ended are questions like:
 - “Did you like that activity?”
 - “Did you have fun with that activity?”
 - “Would you make the activity shorter if you had the chance?”

Why do we teach Open-Ended Questions?

Open-ended questions is a good introductory tool to interviewing. Through these exercises students will start thinking about the kinds of questions they ask and what kind of answers different questions will elicit.

How do we teach Open-Ended Questions?

Students often learn this well through trial and error or demonstration. Giving students the opportunity to design their own questions or ask a variety of prepared questions will help them understand which questions lead to which answers.

Sample Lesson Materials:

- Set of questions
- paper and pencil for recording answers

10min

- Interview
 - Give students a set of prepared questions some of them open-ended and some of them not.
 - Example questions:
 - What did you eat for breakfast this morning?
 - How do you get to school?
 - Do you play with friends after school?
 - What is your favorite thing to do after school?
 - Describe your ideal weekend?

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- Tell me a story about a time when you had fun at recess?

The first three questions are not open ended and the second three questions are. Ask students to pair up and ask each other the above questions (or a set of questions that you come up with)

2min

Identify questions

As a class or in pairs identify which questions are open-ended and which are not.

5min

Debrief

Ask the students the following questions:

What kind of answers did you get from asking the open-ended questions?

How did those answers compare to the answers to the other questions?

Why do we focus on open-ended questions when trying to understand our user?

8min

Question Development

Give students time to develop their own open-ended questions