THE ONE-QUESTION INTERVIEW

Materials: Newsprint, markers, tape, one-question interview form

■ Tape newsprint to the blackboard or wall.

■ Tell students that they are each to think of a question related to the idea of your theme (e.g., community). Or you can ask them to think of a question they have about a topic in today's New York Times.

■ Each student must offer one question. It helps if you offer a question first as a model (e.g., How many different ethnic groups live in your community? Or, if you are using The Times: What is the most important news today about a foreign country?).

■ Once you have generated a list of questions, tell students to choose a question they are most interested in asking.

■ If you don't have the time to do this, you can generate a list in advance.

■ Write student's initials next to the question they chose.

■ Distribute the one-question interview form.

■ Tell students to write their question at the top of the page. Then tell them that they will have to get up and ask everyone in the room their question. They must take notes on the person's name and response to the question.

■ When everyone is finished, tell students to sit down.

■ Students must then analyze the information they collected by noting how many people they interviewed, what responses they recorded and what conclusions they can draw.

■ Have a discussion with students about the idea of being a researcher and the value of interviews as a way to gather information firsthand.

■ You may ask students to find a partner and share the results of their interviews with that partner. Or see if any students would like to share with the whole class.

This activity may take a long time. Allow for it. It is a wonderful opportunity for students to practice speaking, listening, note-taking and getting to know each other. Further, if you are teaching your students about research, it is a way to hook them in before you start. They have so much fun doing the activity, they don't realize that they have actually just completed research.