

LESSON 15

Clarifying: Choosing and Defining a Real-Life Community Issue

60 minutes

Strand 2.1: Appreciating my Community

Participating

Outcome LCW.M2.S1.CPS.3

Outcome LCW.M2.S1.COM.5

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

Groups select a community issue from earlier investigations, create empathy maps to explore its impacts on people, and write a precise problem-definition statement to guide their design-thinking collaborative task.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Outcome	What the specification asks for
LCW.M2.S1.CPS.3	collaborate to respond to a real-life community issue, using a design thinking problem-solving approach.
LCW.M2.S1.COM.5	investigate how different groups in a community have been impacted by a real-life issue.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Select one community issue from your group's Community Issue Investigation documents (earlier in this strand)
- Use empathy mapping to understand who is impacted and how
- Write a design-thinking problem-definition statement your group can take forward

KEY TERMS

Term	What it means here	For example
Problem definition	A short, precise statement of the real problem you are solving, written from the point of view of the people affected, not as a slogan or a solution in disguise.	Teenagers in our town need a free, supervised place to go after school because the only options cost money or leave them on the street in the cold.
Empathy map	A simple four-part picture of a person affected by the issue: what they say, think, do and feel. It stops the group inventing the problem from their own heads alone.	For an older neighbour without a car: says 'I miss the Thursday market'; thinks transport is only for people with money; does not go out after dark; feels cut off.
Collaborative task	The multi-lesson group project in this strand where your team of three or four uses design thinking to respond to one real community issue, then reflects on the transferable skills you showed.	Our group of four will clarify, ideate and plan a response to one local issue, then reflect on the skills we used for ALT 3.

BEFORE THE BELL

- Confirm groups of three to four remain intact from the group-norms lesson (Lesson 74).
- Ensure each group has their Community Issue Investigation documents ready (investigating lesson, Lesson 65).
- Have groups reopen their Community Issue Investigation documents from the investigating lesson (Lesson 65) and the group norms from the norms lesson (Lesson 74). Seat groups so they can talk without drowning the room.
- On screen this lesson: worked example.

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS

5 min	introduction	Getting Started
5 min	content	Key Terms
35 min	activity	Define Your Group's Issue
10 min	content	Think About It
5 min	summary	What you covered

STEP BY STEP

5 min Getting Started

Confirm groups of 3-4 are still intact from the group-norms lesson (Lesson 74). Each member needs their **Community Issue Investigation** document open (from the investigating lesson, Lesson 65). If a group has no usable issue, pair them briefly with a neighbouring group to borrow one investigation before they choose.

5 min Key Terms

Spend no more than five minutes here. The worked example carries the real teaching of what a strong definition looks like.

35 min Define Your Group's Issue On screen: worked example

SUGGESTED TIMING

- **0-5 min:** Walk the worked example beats on the IWB. Pause before each reveal and ask the class what they notice.
- **5-12 min:** Issue share-out inside groups. Interrupt any group that jumps to solutions.
- **12-17 min:** Forced choice of one issue. Visit groups still hedging. At 17 minutes, pick from their top two if they have not decided.
- **17-25 min:** Two empathy maps. Look for maps that only list adjectives with no behaviour.
- **25-35 min:** Write and bank the definition, both empathy maps, and the discard paragraph. Protect this block; do not let share or choose overrun into it.

LOOK-FORS

- Definition names a person or group, not 'society' or 'the community' in the abstract.
- The 'because' clause is an insight, not 'because it would be nice'.
- No solution hiding inside the definition (watch for words like 'app', 'club', 'campaign').
- Both empathy maps are saved in the document (typed or photographed), not left on scrap paper.
- Every member has the same wording and the same maps saved.

TEACHING TIPS

If a group writes a solution as a problem, ask: *If that idea failed, would the underlying need still be there?* Send them back to the empathy map. Keep ALT 3 in view only as context: today banks the problem statement and clarifying evidence the later reflection will sit on, not the reflection itself.

10 min Think About It

Suggested pacing (10 minutes): 5 minutes group talk on the two prompts; 3 minutes for any group whose 'need' clause still smuggles a solution to rewrite that clause only; 2 minutes whole-class sample of one strong discard reason and one clean definition. Send solution-smugglers back to the empathy map, not to a longer debate.

5 min What you covered

Spot-check that every student has the same statement and both empathy maps saved. Note any group still without a chosen issue so you can unblock them before the ideation lesson.

ANSWERS AND LOOK-FORS

- "Thirteen- to seventeen-year-olds in our town need" - Named users, not 'people' - The definition opens on who has the need. 'The community' or 'society' would let the group hide. A named age group in a named place can be checked against real lives.
- "a free, supervised place to go between four and six on weekdays" - The need, not the solution - This states what is missing. It does not prescribe a youth club, an app or a campaign. Ideation later can invent many responses to the same need.
- "the library closes early, sports places cost fees many families..." - Insight from evidence - The 'because' clause is built from things the group can point to. It is not 'because teenagers deserve better'. Concrete constraints make the problem real.
- "Says she would go somewhere if it did not cost money" - Empathy before the sentence - The map gives the definition its weight. Without Maya's voice, the group would be guessing what 'free' and 'supervised' actually mean to the people affected.
- "Feels stuck between being fair to the teens and protecting his trade" - Second person, second angle - A second map stops the group treating the issue as only the teens' story. Mr Doyle is impacted too, and a credible response has to face that tension.
- "named a solution before they had evidence of the need" - Why discard matters - Writing what you left behind proves clarifying happened. A group that cannot say why an idea died usually never really chose.

TEACHING MOVES

- Walk the class through the example definition annotations together.
- Circulate during the main group activity to prompt specific evidence use.
- Hard-gate the choose step at five minutes so the banked definition is never the block that gets cut.
- Facilitate a brief whole-class share of one strong definition.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Writing a solution into the problem definition; redirect to needs and insights only.
- Generic empathy maps without specific details from investigations; prompt for real quotes or actions.
- Leaving empathy maps on scrap paper; require both maps in Collaborative Task Problem Definition.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: Provide sentence starters for the problem-definition statement.
- Extension: Challenge groups to note how their statement might change in later design stages.
- Support: Offer quick voting prompts if a group struggles to select one issue; if still tied, teacher picks from their top two.

WHAT STUDENTS ARE LEFT WITH

- Collaborative Task Problem Definition plus paragraph on what was discarded