

WHERE' S THE REMOTE?!?

Purpose: The objective of this activity is to allow the student to explore how dependent we have become on wireless technology by temporarily removing one remote control device and observing the reaction of the people who want to use the affected device.

Overview: Many household appliances have wireless technology integrated into the appliance for convenience and ease of use (TV, VCR, DVD, CD, window blinds, garage door openers, lighting, etc.). Many times, the appliance will not work without the remote control. This has caused us to become very dependent on wireless technology in an insidious, and many times in a humorous, way.

Time: One class period to review student surveys of wireless technology used in their environment. Thirty minutes to explain this activity assignment.

Skills required:

- Observation
- Empathy
- Writing

Materials and Tools:

1. Remote controlled device in the student' s environment that is commonly used by a friend or family member.
2. Unwitting, but amenable, participant in the activity.
3. Journal.

Preparation: Instruct the students to carefully choose the subject of the activity to ensure that the unwitting participant (the target) will react with humor and understanding to the activity. A family member, close friend, or relation would be a good target.

Instruct the students to carefully choose the appliance and the time the appliance use is to be disrupted so that the lack of use of the appliance will be a minor nuisance and not have a major impact on the target. The fact that one appliance is chosen over another would make excellent commentary for a journal entry.

Background:

What to do and how to do it:

1. Discretely hide the remote control for the appliance from the target of your activity.
2. Observe the target' s behavior when they discover the remote control is missing. Some suggestions to guide your observations include:

- How much time did they spend looking for the remote?
 - Where did they look for it? Any unusual places?
 - Did they ask anyone for help in finding the remote? Did they accuse another person of losing the remote?
 - Were they able to operate the appliance without the remote?
 - What was the target's reaction to you when you returned the remote?
3. Describe to the target the details and purpose of the activity. Record the comments and feelings that your target(s) expressed about their dependence on wireless technology in their lives.

Data analysis:

Student reflection and synthesis.

Activity Questions:

Create a journal entry to describe what you observed during the activity. Write a short reflective paper (1 to 2 pages) on how you feel wireless technology has changed our daily lives. Relate your reflective thoughts back to the behavior you observed during this activity.

Adaptations for special needs:

There should be no need to adapt this activity for students with special needs that participate in this activity. Special considerations must, however, be given to targets of the activity that have special needs so that no undue interruptions are caused by the activity. The activity could perhaps provide significant insights into the impact the wireless technology has on the lives of the special needs population.