



Berkman

The Berkman Center for Internet & Society
at Harvard University

MODULE: PERSPECTIVE DRAFT



Youth and Media

23 Everett Street
Cambridge, MA 02138, USA
youthandmedia@cyber.law.harvard.edu
<http://youthandmedia.org>

Overview:

This module explores a fundamental aspect of the creation of powerful media that can connect to multiple, and at times challenging, audiences: perspective. Participants will explore what perspective is, and what influences it. In particular, they will consider the roles of empathy and the ability to understand others' perspectives, respectively, to the process of creating and sharing powerful media about social or community issues.

Objectives:

Participants will

- Explore the meaning of perspective.
 - In particular, they will explore how emotionally connecting with others and/or understanding others' perspectives can help them understand perspective more generally.
- Explain how developing their own point of view enables them to create powerful media on important issues.

Age/Grade:

Ages 13-18

Grades 8-12

Audience:

No experience necessary, though the module is more beneficial if participants have experience with media creation, or have thought about associated issues (such as storytelling, audience, etc.).

Duration:

120 minutes

- Likert Scale (20 minutes)
- Gallery Walk (20 minutes)
- Brainstorm Bonanza (20 minutes)
- Design Session (45 minutes)
- Closing Reflection (15 minutes)

Materials:

- Media equipment (flip camera, still camera)
- Flip charts
- Markers
- Art supplies

Key Words:

Likert Scale

(20 minutes)

Goal:

For participants to explore the differences/similarities between one another, their cultures, and their experiences.

Materials:

Cards with statements on them (see below for examples).

Say:

For this activity, we'll be thinking about some of our recent experiences and impressions about dealing with our own, and other people's, perspectives. Keep in mind that perspective is your personal point of view, and that it can be based on a lot of things, such as who you are, where you're from, and what you've experienced.

I'm going to read a pair of statements or words aloud, and I'd like you to move to different sides of the room, depending on how you feel about these statements. For instance, I might say cheeseburgers versus hamburgers, and if I *really like* cheeseburgers, then I'll move all the way to the left, and if I *love* hamburgers just the way they are, I'll move all the way to the right. If I *usually* like cheeseburgers more, then I'll move only part of the way there, and if I can't make up my mind, I'll stand in the middle. If I'm vegetarian, or just don't like burgers, I will also stand in the middle. Any questions?

[During the activity, ask participants to support their decisions, and ask if they notice any trends during any of the statements.]

Possible Statements:

- Chocolate vs. Vanilla
- Facebook vs. Twitter
- It's easy to talk about issues in my school or community with teachers, parents, and community leaders v. It's difficult to talk about issues in my school or community with teachers, parents, or community leaders.
- It's easy to talk about issues in my school or community with peers. v. It's difficult to talk about issues in my school or community with peers.
- Even if I don't agree with someone else's views or decisions, it's still easy for me to understand where they're coming from. V. If I don't agree with someone else's views or decisions, it's not easy for me to understand where they're coming from.
- Even if I don't agree with someone else's views or decisions, I can still feel for them / If I don't agree with someone else's views or decisions, it's hard for me to feel for them.

Say: We saw from your responses that there are different opinions about what makes up your perspectives. Some of our perspectives are influenced more by learning from others; for others, our personal perspectives are less influenced by learning from others. We also saw that some audiences are easier or harder to talk to than others. Now we're going to explore these issues a little further.

Gallery Walk

(20 minutes)

Goal:

For participants to think about all the different perspectives they've come into contact with, and how they've developed their own perspectives.

Materials:

Sticky notes, pens, flipcharts

Say:

Let's think about all the different perspectives we've gotten to know, and how we've developed our own perspectives. We can also think about how online media is important for expressing perspectives in cool and interesting ways.

[Divide students into pairs.]

In pairs, you and your partner will think about the four questions you see posted around the room on the white sheets of paper. I'm also going to pass out a sheet of paper that has a copy of all the questions to each group. Write your group's responses for each question on a sticky note. For each question, you might have more than one answer, so put each of those answers on different sticky notes, and feel free to use as many as you need. Then, stick your answers to the sheets.

You have **12 minutes** to answer these questions. Feel free to move around the room from one question to the next. Have fun!

Possible Questions:

- Whose perspectives have you been exposed to recently? What makes them different from your own?
- How is connecting emotionally to someone else's experiences important for understanding your own perspective?
- How is "putting yourself in someone else's shoes" important for developing **your** own perspectives?
- Is it easier to share your perspective online than offline – yes/no? And why?

[Gather up sheets.]

Say:

- Do you notice any similarities in answers for question X? Differences? Why do you think this is? Do you notice anything else?
- Are there any trends?

Great. Now we've heard each other's views on how we develop and strengthen our own perspectives by connecting to and thinking about others, and how offline and online communication allow us to share our unique perspective with others in different ways.

Brainstorm Bonanza

(20 minutes)

Goal:

To explore how perspective is important for creating media.

Materials:

Handouts (with questions), paper, markers

[Divide participants into groups of 4-5.]

Say:

Now that we've explored the idea of perspective a little, we're going to quickly break out into groups to discuss how perspective is important for creating media. I'm going to hand each group a sheet of paper with questions on it. You have **12 minutes** to discuss these questions in groups; after, one person from each group will report the most interesting parts of the discussion to all of us. I'll hand out paper and markers – you can draw, write down important words, or do anything else that will help you record your conversation!

Possible Questions:

- What opportunities have I had recently to connect emotionally to someone else's experiences, or to "put myself in someone else's shoes"?
- What challenges have I had recently to connect emotionally to someone else's experiences or to "put myself in someone else's shoes"?
- Why is perspective important in media? If you're making a video about two friends who are fighting, how would you document the fight fairly? Do you think that's important?
- Are there ever situations when you're making media where you *don't* want to show all the perspectives on the issue? Give two examples.
- Think about the last movie you watched or book that you read. Did you emotionally connect to a character's story? How do you think the storyteller made that happen? What was that character's perspective, and how did you relate to it?
- How can you incorporate your own perspective into stories that you create and share in new media?

[Ask students to report out.]

Say:

Now that we've totally explored the ins and outs of perspectives, including how we emotionally connect to others, we have a pretty good understanding of that idea. We've also talked about how perspective is part of powerful media. Now, let's think about how to create media for specific audiences.

Design Session

(45 minutes)

Goal:

For participants to think about how different audiences can have different perspectives, and how you can take their perspectives into account when sharing your creations.

Materials:

Handouts (see below), art supplies, and media equipment

Say:

Through our discussions and reflections, we should recognize that, with different ways of developing your personal perspective and sharing it in media, you can succeed in spreading your message to others! The goal of this next activity is for you to explore a way to share your perspective with a particular audience.

[Divide participants into groups of 4-5.]

I am going to read out three project options. After I do so, your group should discuss for **30 seconds** and then choose an option. You'll have **30 minutes** to work on your creation, and then get ready to share out with everyone else!

Possible Projects:

(These can each be printed on individual handout sheets.)

Audience Changer

- Create a skit about someone being bullied at school. Would you tell the story differently if you were presenting it to teachers then if you were presenting it to your peers? What are these differences? Create two different versions of the same story for two different audiences.

Create-an-App

- Think of a way to use digital media to engage other youths in a conversation about important issues in their communities or schools. What if these youths are people who are **not** interested in the same things as you? **How can you show them that what you care about is really cool and interesting?** Use an existing website or social network or create something new! Use art supplies to design the web tool's functions, design, characters, features, etcetera.

Plan an Event

- Plan an event for members of your school or community about an issue you're interested in. Who do you want to come to your event? Parents? Teachers? Friends? How will you promote this event? Create a poster or a commercial for your event!

[Circulate and monitor group work. When time is up, ask students to share out.]

Closing Reflection

(15 minutes)

Goal:

To reflect upon today's activities.

Materials:

None.

Say:

- What does perspective mean to you? How do you define perspective? What makes your perspective different from your neighbor's?
- What I liked most about today was _____. What did you like the most?
- What was something that surprised you?
- What will you take away from today?
- We talked a lot about perspectives in terms of media, right? Why is thinking about perspective important when you are telling a story?
- *[Summarize the day's events; ask for feedback/comments.]*

Thanks for participating and being so engaged!

Background Reading