

# Perspective Taking for Inclusion

## Facilitation Guide



Tool for  
**Civic Character**

 **30 minutes**

 **Educator-prep  
Leader-prep**

### Materials

- Read:  
[Two Types of Diversity Training That Really Work](#)

### Making Connections

Principled Innovation asks us to work with others and recognize the limits of our own knowledge so that we can better understand and tackle the complex issues our communities face.

Connecting Character Assets:

[Perspective taking](#)  
[Humility](#)

### About this Guide

Taking the perspective of others can be challenging, and this can be more challenging the further away we are from the lived experiences of others. Use this activity to begin developing both an awareness of the difficulties others face and also an awareness of our own shortcomings in understanding others' experiences.

The work of perspective taking – of learning about others' beliefs and experiences in an effort to place ourselves in their shoes – is essential to navigating differences between values and to finding solutions to problems. Playing a central role within Principled Innovation, the process of perspective taking supports multiple assets within the Principled Innovation framework.

It provides our minds with the new information needed to make **empathetic** connections with others and both supports and is supported by **altruistic** intentions, **civility**, and **inclusivity**. Motivated by intellectual **humility** that recognizes that our own perspectives are always incomplete, it gives pause for critical **reflection**, motivates **collaboration**, and can spark the **creative** thoughts that give rise to innovative solutions. Through seeking out others' values (**Identify and acknowledge fundamental values**, and **Engage multiple and diverse perspectives**) and seeking to understand our cultural and social and built environments (**Understand culture and context**), we supply our minds with more detailed vision of others' lived experiences, helping us to better understand the problems of our learning communities and catalyze solutions.

Perspective taking is a cognitive activity that depends on an awareness of others. Taking time to intentionally imagine others' experiences can help us to develop this capacity while also exposing our need to learn more about their experience.

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### Instructions

#### 1 Situate

Share the Harvard Business Review article linked above with the participants. In this piece, the researchers write:

*One training exercise that we analyzed, and that shows promise, is perspective-taking, which is essentially the process of mentally walking in someone else's shoes. Results from our experiment involving 118 undergraduate students showed that taking the perspective of LGBT individuals or racial minorities – by writing a few sentences imagining the distinct challenges a marginalized minority might face – can improve pro-diversity attitudes and behavioral intentions toward these groups. These effects persisted even when outcomes were measured eight months after training. Even more exciting is the fact that perspective-taking was shown to be capable of producing crossover effects. In our experiment, taking the perspective of LGBT individuals was shown to be associated with more positive attitudes and behaviors toward racial minorities, and vice versa.*

#### 2 Reflect

Following the experiment in this article, ask students to practice “walking in someone else's shoes” by attempting to write out some of the challenges that others in their community might face. This could be the challenges faced by marginalized communities, as described in the article, but it can include any kind of difference. For instance, participants might focus on another member of a teaching team with whom they disagree, a student or parent with whom they have a tense relationship, or an administrator whose decisions they struggle to understand.

Then, consider asking these questions:

- What biases or false assumptions might you be bringing into your perspective taking?
- What are some ways that you can better understand those biases and false assumptions?

#### 3 Share

Some participants might be willing to share something they wrote down – if so, hearing participants' reflections would be a constructive way to conclude the activity.