

Circle of Viewpoints

Method	Circle of Viewpoints
Introduction	
<p>In this method, students have to move between different viewpoints. Understanding how different actors may think and feel differently about things is a key aspect. It stimulates students to abandon their own point of view and to look for arguments for an given one. It promotes understanding for other ways of thinking and skills to form compelling arguments.</p> <p>Divergent thinking is stimulated to make them list different points of view. Next, students elaborate and question one point of view to develop a deeper understanding. Different points of view are discussed in the classroom.</p> <p>This method can be used at the beginning of a subject, after reading a book or seeing a movie. It is especially interesting for controversial or complex topics. It is also helpful in the students' process of problem orientation and formulating research questions in their research.</p>	
Overall aim	To develop understanding of a subject area: considering different viewpoints and perspectives in order to dig deeper into ideas.
Target group	Can be used in a wide variety of different disciplines and topics
Intended learning outcome	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced ability to take different perspectives • Greater awareness as to how others are thinking and feeling • Better understanding of a topic / subject 	
Description	
<p>Choose source material, e.g. an image, story, issue or topic that is neither not simplistic nor obvious and one that invites students to consider different viewpoints.</p> <p>As an introduction present a painting or image or multiple pictures of the same object (or Youtube movies from different points of view in a sport game) which can serve as a starting exercise to trigger the skill of perspective thinking. Or an object with students around it describing it from different physical points of view.</p> <p>Then follow these steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up: introduce the source material and ensure there is enough time for adequate examination/consideration; at the end of this step, make sure that you identify and name the topic(s) that students are asked to better understand. Write it on the blackboard, or chart or... make sure it is visible to all participants • Identify viewpoints: generate a list of viewpoints; start with people but make sure you go beyond (a bird, parts of the setting, ...). Actors and groups not immediately present in the source but affected by the topic can be taken into consideration. Or actors affected at different points in time 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students could be supported by asking the following questions in case of difficulties: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How does it look from different points in space and different points in time? ○ Who (and what) is affected by it? ○ Who is involved? ○ Who might care? • Select a viewpoint to explore: ask students (even when working in small groups) to each take a different viewpoint in order to create a richer and more complete exploration of the topic. • Respond to the “I think...” prompt: ask students to take the place of the person or thing chosen and describe the topic from this perspective: what does the person/think about the event/situation? What are their interests? What does he/she holding to be true/believing? What might be problematic/advantageous? How does he/she/it feel and/or care about? What could he/she/it be considering? Make sure notes are being made. • Respond to the “A question I have from this viewpoint...” prompt: students imagine what this person could ask him/her/itself or be curious about.. students formulate a question from this point of view. Make sure notes are being made. • Share the thinking: when initially applying this method, it can be really interesting to share this in the whole group in order to coach better the process and to assess students’ thinking; ask students to introduce the viewpoint he/she has taken, state his/her thinking and her/his question. As a facilitator, document the main threads that infuse the discussion and note the differences and similarities in viewpoints. 	
Preparation	The facilitator needs to run through the process of circle of viewpoints before the class in order to identify different viewpoints.
Required resources and equipment	The room should be set up in a way so that students sit in circles which supports the idea of different perspectives.
Success factors	To contribute roles in case of group work helps students to pass through the process in a more disciplined manner which increases the chance of success. Give sufficient time for thinking in each step.
Advantages	When things seem black and white to students, this method can help them see different perspectives.
Disadvantages	Student might experience difficulties to go to a deeper level in perspective taking. This needs to be coached and practiced regularly in order for it to become a successful thinking activity.
Additional information	Initially, the viewpoints will be very predictable: model other possible viewpoints. Asking questions is also a thinking activity that students need to learn : as a facilitator you might model asking questions in order to go below the surface (not only actual, concrete level, yes/no-questions, ...). On this link you’ll find some helpful questions to support taking a different perspective.

This method is a way of making thinking visible. On this websites you will find a lot of information about the importance of that and how to organize:

<http://www.pz.harvard.edu/projects/visible-thinking>

<http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org>

This method is a way of making thinking visible. On this [website](#) you will find a lot of information about the importance of that and how to organise your class. Here is another useful [link](#) which covers the same topic.