

Teaching kids about



Perspectives and Empathy

This activity focuses on teaching students how our experiences shape our perspectives, and empathy is the key to understanding.

INSTRUCTIONS

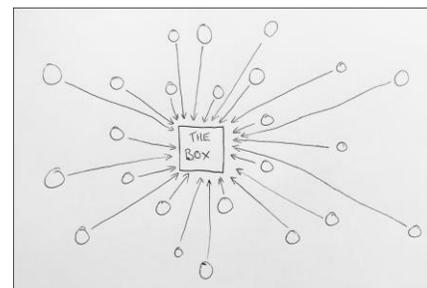
1. Get a larger box.
2. Print off some very different pictures and stick them to five sides of the box (you do not see the bottom). You can download an image template [here](#) or use your own.

*Make sure to use images that can have two meanings and evoke different emotions.



3. While your students are out of the room, place the box in the middle of the room and cover it.

4. Ask the students to enter the room and spread out. Encourage them to be at different angles and distances from the covered box. Ask them to stay in their spot.



5. Tell your students you are going to remove the cover, and silently they have to think about how the pictures on the box make them feel. If you students are easily influenced by their peers, you may get them to write down what they feel in one or two words so they do not alter it.
6. After they have had time to think/write down their thoughts, go around the room and ask them to share their feelings.
7. Each student will likely have very different feelings depending on their distance, angle from the box.

This is a great way to introduce your students how their point of view on anything is shaped by our relation to it. Our relation to anything is determined by our experiences. Some are effected by things on a personal level (close to the box) and thus may have a “deeper” understanding, while others have only heard about things second hand (far away from the box) and as a result have a more “shallow” view.

You can also get students to move around the box and so they can better understand why others described their feelings the way they did. This is great if you use the “Heart/I hate you” image.

DISCUSSION

- How does our distance/experience with something shape our perspective?
- When we move to a different angle/distance, are we better able to understand things from someone else’s point of view?
- Can we also be at a same distance and have different feelings about things?
- Is someone’s opinion more valid/true if they experience something from a closer perspective?
- Is there a right and wrong opinion?
- How can you convince or tolerate a person who has a completely different opinion to you?
- How can your view of something be influenced by others?
- How do stereotypes relate to perspectives?

Remind the students that sometimes it is good to put themselves in other people’s shoes and see things from different perspectives to learn and understand the importance of respecting others.