

The Power of Perspective Taking

STEM Teaching Tools: #61, #71, #97

What is Perspective Taking? Why is it important?

Encouraging students to consider multiple points of view, so they can develop a greater sense of empathy and understanding for others. This can be important in promoting critical thinking skills and allow for students to move beyond their own biases and assumptions to consider alternative perspectives when discussing important injustices. Perspective taking is a powerful tool that helps foster a more inclusive classroom environment, where students feel comfortable sharing their perspectives and are open to hearing one's different than their own.

Example 1

Students created a comic strip depicting the journey of a water molecule within the local water cycle. In this task, students were prompted to integrate elements such as nearby lakes, reservoirs, rivers, oceans, parks, and mountains, reflecting on their significance within the water cycle. At its core, this activity facilitated students' comprehension of the water cycle by embodying the perspective of a water molecule. Consider having students narrate the passage of a water droplet through regions where clean water is scarce or access to fresh drinking water is limited.

Example 2

During a unit focused on climate change, students investigated the phenomenon of Arctic sea ice melting. In honor of International Polar Bear Day, they conducted research on the impact that climate change is currently having and will continue to have on the polar bear population if no action is taken. Finally, they crafted a tweet aimed at raising awareness and advocated for action on climate change and its detrimental effects on polar bears.

Taking Perspective of the Natural World

Challenges students to take on the perspective of living and nonliving things to better appreciate the natural world. We want students extend their thinking beyond human perspectives to recognize the impacts of human actions.

Taking Perspective of Other Humans

Science can be a tool for teaching perspective taking and supporting student development into compassionate, well informed members of society. Students are able to connect science to their communities and daily lives.

How Can I Use This In My Classroom?



Example 3

Culturally Relevant, Role, Audience, Format, Topic, Social Justice (CRAFTS) activities are an excellent way to address empathy, perspective taking, and injustices in the science classroom. These activities can be adapted to address a variety of science topics. In this activity, students are asked to create a product given a specific prompt related to the topic they're learning about. Students select a role to embody an audience to address in an appropriate format. They are tasked with discussing an issue from that specific perspective as it relates to the topic in class. Students are challenged to include aspects of their roles' culture and really encapsulate the identity of their selection.

