Image Perceptions & Listening to Different Perspectives

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Overview:

This short activity can serve as a warmup or a stand-alone exercise for students to practice honoring different perspectives along with active listening, dialogue, and compassion. The exercise asks students to spend 5-10 minutes looking at an image or watching a short video and write down everything that they see, think, and feel. Then they will share and compare their observations with those of their partners.

The aim of this exercise is for students to remember that perception is influenced by personal experiences and to practice listening to others with an open mind.

Learning Outcomes:

- Are prepared to discuss issues and ideas with people of different views, learning to listen and ask questions with compassion, open mindedness, and respectfulness.
- Build interpersonal communications skills to listen and respond to various types of conversations and materials to participate in respectful discourse.

Information for Instructor:

Teachers will select images or videos to show to their class. The attached "Possible Ideas for Instructor: Images and Videos," provides options and examples of images and videos for instructors to use. Pulitzer-Prize winning photographs are a great option, as well as emotionally appealing videos and advertisements.

Instructions:

- Show the image to students. Instruct them to spend 5 minutes looking at the image and writing down their reactions. You might prompt them to write down any thoughts or feelings provoked by the image, everything they see, what they think the true story behind it is, or maybe to write their own story based on the image.
- After students have written down their reactions, they can share and compare with classmates. Encourage students to ask each other questions about what they wrote down and why. If showing an image, you might disclose the story behind the image.
- Lead the class in a follow-up discussion. Some possible questions include:
    - What were some major similarities or differences between what you and your classmates saw? What influenced these similarities or differences (e.g.. background knowledge, culture, personal experience)?
    - Why might people see things differently? How do individual experiences influence how we perceive things? Can we expect everyone to see things the way we do?

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- What happens when we ask people more about why they see things a certain way?

Applications:

This activity can be used to introduce or practice dialogue; more resources about dialogue can be found on the Teach Conflict Resolution website. Other applications include: Social emotional learning; leadership, diversity; decision making; creative writing; history, perspective-taking, and communication.

Possible Ideas for Instructor: Images and Videos

- "Faith And Confidence," 1958 Pulitzer Prize Winning Photo
- "The Terror of War," 1973 Pulitzer Prize Winning Photo
- Murphy, Sean. "Pulitzer Prize Photography and the African-American Experience: For Black History Month, look back at the work of Pulitzer-winning African-American photojournalists, and prize-winning images documenting pivotal moments in race relations." Pulitzer Prizes. https://www.pulitzer.org/article/pulitzer-prize-photography-and-african-american-experience
- Photo by John White of children playing in front of the Cabrini Greene Projects in Chicago, found (along with other great photo options) here: https://www.pulitzer.org/article/pulitzer-prize-photography-and-african-american-experience also found here, "a man stares out of a broken window"
- Emilio Morenattie's 2021 Pulitzer Prize-winning photo series documenting the lives of the elderly during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Barcenlona, Spain https://www.pulitzer.org/winners/emilio-morenatti-associated-press
- Photos from Jacob Riis's "How the Other Half Lives."
- "Flowers in Gun" photo from Vitenam War protests
- Political cartoons

Videos:

- Google "Search On" from any year
- One Republic Jeep Commercial
- https://www.facebook.com/jeep/videos/794211550941314/
- Nike Commercials like "no excuses"
- Dove advertisement on self esteem

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