

Who is this man? - Perspective

EXPLANATION:

The Lab: Decoy showcases an experiment to convey the power of perspective in portrait photography. This short video explores the perspectives of photographers, and how their experiences create biases. This thought-provoking activity questions how experience, beliefs and perspective influence and contribute to perceptions.

YEAR LEVELS: Years 11–12

STUDENT GROUPING: Whole group discussion and individual reflection

ACTIVITY LENGTH: 40-60 mins

Senior Secondary Curriculum: English

In Unit 1, students explore how meaning is communicated through the relationships between language, text, purpose, context and audience. This includes how language and texts are shaped by their purpose, the audiences for whom they are intended and the contexts in which they are created and received. Through responding to and creating texts, students consider how language, structure and conventions operate in a variety of imaginative, interpretive and persuasive texts.

- Investigate how text structures and language features are used to convey ideas and represent people and events in a range of texts.

Link to General Capabilities in the English curriculum:

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability: There is a particular focus in *English* on ICT through the use of digital texts and on understanding and creating multimodal texts. For example, students explore the effects of sound and image as they consider how ideas are communicated in digital texts. They use digital technologies when they access, manage and use information and when creating their own texts. They develop skills in reading, viewing and responding to digital and multimodal texts and analysing the effects of the use of different mediums on meaning and interpretation.

Personal and social capability: Students develop personal and social capability in *English* by enhancing their communication skills, teamwork and capacity to empathise with and appreciate the perspectives of others. Close study of texts assists students to understand different personal and social experiences, perspectives and challenges. Students identify and express their own opinions, beliefs and responses by interacting with a range of texts. *English* actively assists students in the development of communication skills needed for analysis, research and the expression of viewpoints and arguments. Students work collaboratively in teams and also independently as part of their learning and research endeavours.

SCOPE OF TASK

Demonstrating that a photograph is shaped more by the person behind the camera than by what is in front of it, Canon invited six photographers to a portrait session with a twist. In *The Lab: Decoy* an actor provided a different backstory to each photographer, from a 'self-made millionaire' to a 'recovering alcoholic'. In this social experiment the photographer's vision, experiences, perception and personal biases shape the final photos.

Perspective-taking is an important social skill. Relationships hinge on one's ability to see things from another's vantage point. Having the capacity to see other points of view requires empathy, the ability to navigate the emotions of others, connect with others and value diversity.

1. Gather the students together in a group. Share with them the introductory video from Bianca Chatfield. Bianca played netball for Australia completing in Commonwealth Games and World Cups. Recently she was also a contestant on *The Block*. She provides an overview of perspective and introduces the activity:



2. In a whole class group, begin a conversation with the students about what perspective is? Ask a student to scribe/record points made on the board.
 - What is perspective/point of view?
 - Why is it important in daily life?
 - What are the benefits?

2. Play the video *The Lab: Decoy*:



3. The Director had a purpose and used persuasive and interpretive techniques to portray a story. Ask the students to recount the film and discuss the purpose. Ask a student to scribe students' ideas and opinions. Questions to prompt discussion:

- How did the photographers create the images?
- What did they use to create the portraits?
- What is the 'moral' of the video?
- Were the images developed true images?
- Did the photographer's preconceive bias influence the photograph?
- Why did one photographer put an empty chair in the photo?
- What were the stereotypes portrayed?
- Did the film Director mislead the photographers?

4. After exploring the concepts of perspective and how it can influence interactions and relationships positively and negatively, ask students how they would like to be perceived and viewed. Ask them to take some quiet time to reflect on the questions

- How would you wish to be photographed?
- What story would you tell to help someone get to know you better?

5. Provide students with *Post it*® notes and ask them to write a sentence in response to the following question. Ask them to anonymously post the notes on the wall: *What is the most powerful thing I learned personally from this discussion?*

To conclude the session, summarise some of the comments and responses made. Depending on the recorded comments you can offer some overarching statements about what appears important to the class about perspective, bias and preconceived stereotypes.

RESOURCES

Online video: Lab Decoy, 6 Photographers, 1 Man, 6 Different Perspectives, Cannon Australia sourced from:

<https://www.goodnet.org/articles/6-photographers-1-man-different-perspectives-video>

Online video: Perspective with Bianca Chatfield sourced from

<https://youtu.be/i1EtIHVO8ZE>

