

Spectrum mapping — Perspective

EXPLANATION:

Spectrum mapping is designed to reveal the diversity of perspectives and about any given topic that may be experienced within simple group dynamics. Organising perspectives into a meaningful spectrum is valuable as it makes visible the range of knowledge, attitudes and beliefs that otherwise may not be visible. Sharing perspectives in this activity will support group cohesion!

YEAR LEVELS: Years 11–12

STUDENT GROUPING: Whole group discussion — research in pairs or small groups to facilitate discussion — plus group presentations

ACTIVITY LENGTH: 45mins approx.

LINK TO CURRICULUM:

Link to General Capabilities in the English curriculum:

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.

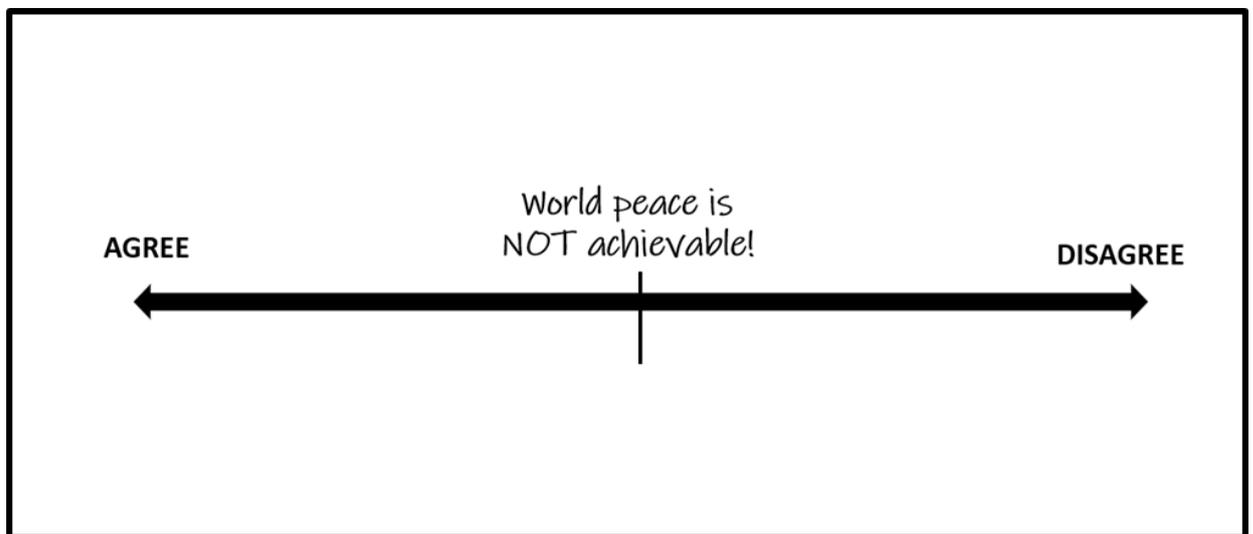
SCOPE OF TASK:

Some notes about perspective and spectrum mapping:

- The ability to listen to others and understand how a situation appears to another person and how that person is reacting cognitively and emotionally to the situation.
- The recognition of other perspectives creates the basis of understanding between people.
- The conscious attempt to understand another's point of view can reshape interactions and support positive group dynamics.
- Perspective taking requires individuals to connect with each other and value diversity.
- When spectrum mapping individuals have opportunities to share their information and understanding of topics contributing to group knowledge.

- Spectrum mapping provides a visual representation of the diversity of perspective informing authentic dialogue.
- During spectrum mapping activities participants improve their understanding and affirm their own thinking or gain new knowledge on a topic.

1. Discuss with the students the activity and its purpose. This spectrum mapping activity will require students to share their own perspectives about a range of statements to explore how people can have different opinions and perspectives on the same topic.
2. Ask the students to consider topics that might divide opinion and share their ideas. The topic that is chosen for the spectrum mapping should be agreed on by the group to ensure that no offence is taken by any participants. Examples could include:
 - Animal testing should be banned.
 - The chicken came first.
 - Climate change is the greatest threat facing humanity.
 - Cookie dough is best eaten raw.
 - Bottled water should be banned.
 - World peace is not achievable.
3. On a whiteboard draw a long line with a whiteboard marker. In the middle of the line write the topic that is to be debated and perspectives shared. At each end of the line the words agree and disagree are written.



4. Ask students to write their name on a *Post it*® note. Students can then stick the notes on either side of the topic along a horizontal line depending on how strongly they agree or disagree with the statement.
5. Once all students have placed their *Post it*® notes along the line a discussion can begin. Individuals can be asked why they placed their *Post it*® note at the particular point along the line. The discussion can unearth innovative ideas and show the diversity of opinions within the group. People's positions and perspectives can be debated in a collaborative and supportive manner.

6. Once students have trialled the first spectrum mapping topic ask them to choose another topic. Encourage students to listen to other opinions and justifications and to move their own *Post it*® note along the spectrum and change their stance on the subject if they choose.

Assure the students that they're free to write up honest perspectives around a topic even if those preferences may be considered unusual or even eccentric by the group. The activity is not about evaluating ideas for validity or popularity but about demonstrating how a group can embrace different perspectives and use them to grow their knowledge and own ideas.

7. In conclusion ask the students why considering other people's perspectives is important for healthy relationships and to engage effectively with others. Some questions could include:
 - Why is authentic communication important?
 - How can we incorporate other opinions with our own?
 - Does perspective-taking support diversity?
 - Where or how do you think you could use this activity again?

Conclusion: When considering the perspectives and points of view of others, we help to grow our own feelings of empathy, awareness, problem-solving skills and relationships.

RESOURCES:

- Whiteboard and markers
- *Post it*® notes