

Open Minds: learning how to take perspective and engage in dialogues

Exchanging different perspectives leads to new ideas, insights and ways of thinking. It is therefore one of the foundations of science and innovation. But how do you learn to be open to other perspectives? To really listen and understand someone else, even if you have a different opinion yourself? In this project, creative learning activities (games, game design, creative dialogue formats) have been developed to practice exchanging perspectives and engaging in respectful, equal dialogues.

Background information

In a time of increasing polarization, conversations at the university are sometimes becoming overheated or in some cases topics are even avoided. While the university should actually be a place where the exchange of diverse perspectives leads to new ideas, insights and ways of thinking. In the new UU Education Model, the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes for engaging in dialogues and exchanging perspectives is therefore mentioned several times. However, education in this area is currently still limited.

In this educational innovation project, creative learning activities are therefore being developed to teach and practice the required knowledge, skills and attitudes. With the developed games and art, you become aware of your own perspective and assumptions, you learn to investigate other perspectives, to listen actively, to have respectful dialogues and to deal with discomfort.

Project description:

In co-creation with students and lecturers from various faculties, and external creative partners, the learning activities and associated manuals and training are developed. Pilots are taking place in various courses as part of the development process.

The starting points for these learning activities are:

- Low- key practicing of dialogue skills with ‘colder’ subjects
- Creative methods that allow for subtle and more emotional aspects to emerge more easily than with more conventional working methods
- Transformative learning experiences, in which not only knowledge and skills are taught, but also personal reference frameworks are examined and (where necessary) adjusted.

In addition, dialogue sessions and art are developed in collaboration with existing dialogue initiatives and artists. Parallel to the development of all (learning) activities, a study is conducted to investigate the outcome and effectiveness of the various activities.

Aims

- Development of creative learning activities (a digital game, game design activity, creative dialogue format) to practice perspective taking and having dialogues
- Development of teacher manuals and a training for the developed learning activities
- Activities (dialogue sessions, art) and media expressions to increase the understanding of the concept of dialogue and raise awareness of its importance within the UU
- Research into the yield and effectiveness of the developed (learning) activities

Results and conclusions:

Three teaching tools have been developed to stimulate dialogue and perspective taking in education:

- Open Mind: a digital game to stimulate perspective taking
- Playing Perspectives: a game design assignment about perspective taking
- The Square: a creative dialogue format to experience and practice dialogue and to allow for complex topics to be discussed respectfully.

The activities have been presented at the Education Festival on March 6, 2025. Before the summer of 2025, the learning activities, teacher manuals and first training sessions will be offered via the Teaching & Learning Collection.

After finalizing and testing the tools, the (learning) outcomes of the tools will be investigated in the final phase of the project. As soon as the results have been published, they will be shared via this page.