Playing Perspectives – a game design toolkit

Playing Perspectives is based on game-based and transformative learning principles. Students collectively design a game on a socio-scientific topic and are stimulated to explore and gain a deeper understanding of various perspectives and presuppositions (including their own), recognize rhetorical narratives and frames, and devise strategies to overcome these. Students adopt active listening skills when conversing with one another.

Playing Perspectives consists of three phases. These can be conducted consecutively or separate from one another as stand alone activities, depending on the time available, your learning objectives and the desire to have a playable game as end product. The materials that are developed by students in each of these phases can be uploaded onto Edusources and used by other teachers if they only want to conduct one of the later phases as stand alone activity.

Background

Playing Perspectives was developed as part of the Comenius project 'Fostering an Open Mind and Open Attitude in Higher Education' that strives to stimulate perspective taking and dialogue in academic education with creative learning activities.

As part of the Open Minds project, the following learning activities have been developed:

- Open Mind Game: a digital game that stimulates perspective-taking
- Playing perspectives: a game design toolkit to stimulate exploration of perspectives
- The Square (*Het Vlak*): a creative dialogue methodology to experience and practice dialogue skills and discuss sensitive and complex topics.

On campus

Playing Perspectives consists of three phases, each taking roughly 1 hour with an added 30 minutes for plenary reflection. The phases can be conducted consecutively or separate from one another as stand alone activities, depending on the time available, your learning objectives and the desire to have a playable game as end product.

The three phases of Playing Perspectives roughly look as follows:

- Phase 1: Setting the Stage – explore preconceptions and perspectives
- Phase 2: Character Creation – share preconceptions
- Phase 3: Interactive Inquiry – create working game

Manual

The [teacher manual](#) contains detailed information on each phase, the required preparation and teacher role during the activity. In addition on reading the manual, we recommend watching the instruction video available below. This video provides a clear overview of the game design toolkit, complementing the teacher and student manuals.

Supplies needed

Playing Perspectives – Material tool kit, consisting of:

- [Playing Perspectives – Teacher manual](#)
- Playing Perspectives – Student manual – 1 per student per phase
  - [Phase 1 manual](#)
  - [Phase 2 manual](#)
  - [Phase 3 manual](#)
- Playing Perspectives – Additional components per team
  - Photograph ([appendix nr 1 and folder](#))
  - Cards (6 red, 6 green, 6 yellow, 6 arrow) ([appendix nr 2](#))
  - Dilemmas ([appendix nr 3](#))
  - 1 white A3 sheets
  - Pens/pencils
  - 2 markers
  - Dice and meeples

Please note: All materials are available online, so you can print and collect the required materials yourself. There is no physical toolkit available (yet).

Set-up classroom

A room suitable for group work is required. Set up the room in "pods" of desks and chairs for small groups (4-5 students per group).

Step 1 (Preparation)

Choose which phase(s) you would like to go through with your students and book suitable time slots and rooms for the activities. When choosing phases consider the time available, the main learning objectives, and whether you wish to have a playable game at the end.

You can decide to go through all phases consecutively or separate from one another; or solely implement one of the three phases.

Step 2 (Preparation)

Book and collect the toolkit. Or download, print and cut-out the needed components (photograph, cards etc.) yourself, and collect the other materials needed for the phase(s) you want to conduct. Select a photo (phase 1) and/or dilemma (phase 2 & 3).

When conducting phase 2 or 3 without conducting the earlier phase(s) first, download the phase 1 and/or phase 2 materials that have been developed by students in other courses from Edusources.

Step 3 (Preparation)

Set up the room in "pods" of desks and chairs to allow for easy collaboration in small groups (4-5 students per group).

Step 4 (During class)

Introduce the activity and explain how it aligns with, expands on, or otherwise relates to the learning objectives in the course/tutorship (tutoraat). Also, inform them that they will be exploring different perspectives on polarizing topics, and provide the dialogue guidelines that ensure that everyone will feel respected and safe to share their thoughts.

Step 5 (During class)

Divide larger groups up into smaller groups of four (or five) students. Ideally, account for a diversity. See teacher manual for tips on how to create diverse groups. You can decide to create groups in advance to account for diversity within the groups or you can decide to have students create their own groups.

Step 6 (During class)

The groups will run through phase 1, 2 or 3 of the activity independently.

In Phase 1 students explore what happened in an event depicted in an image, identify stakeholders involved, and explore perspectives on the event and the stakeholders.

In Phase 2 students think of backstories and positive and negative traits of characters. They share their preconceptions and collectively go beyond the stereotype.

In Phase 3 students write up scenarios that impact characters in different ways. This way students explore the complex interrelations of different stakeholders.

As a facilitator you want to make sure to sustain a safe environment, and passively or more actively coach the students in their dialogues.

Step 7 (During class)

After all groups have finished a phase, as teacher facilitate a plenary dialogue to share and reflect on students' ideas and experiences. See teacher manual for suggestions.

Step 8 (After class)

Upload the materials that have been developed by your students onto Edusources, for use by teachers in other courses.