



I Thought You Should Know: Perspective-Taking

Andrea Flores, The GoodPlay Project

Facilitator's Guide

Lesson Overview (Grades 9-12; Recommended 10-12)

Ethical participation starts with the development of specific ethical thinking skills. One of these skills is **perspective-taking—the ability to take on the points of view of a variety of actors in a given situation**. By understanding the perspectives of others, youth can make informed decisions about the best courses of action to take in tricky ethical situations.

In this lesson, students take on the perspectives of characters featured in clips from the television show “Friday Night Lights.” In this episode, Lyla, a popular cheerleader, is the target of a mean-spirited website created by fellow cheerleader, Brittany.

The clips reveal the perspectives of the main individuals affected—Lyla; her father, Buddy; Brittany; Brittany’s father, Ben; and Tami, the school guidance counselor. After watching the clips, students discuss (in small groups) the perspectives of each character, considering **three components of perspective taking**:

- **Intent:** Motivations for an action.

Key questions: What was this person intending to do? What were his/her motivations?

- **Consequences:** Outcomes of an action.

Key Questions: What did this person perceive the outcomes of the situation or of his or her actions to be? To whom and to what communities are the consequences most severe?



- **Emotional Responses/Empathy:** Feelings about an action/state of events and feelings that motivate an action.

Key Questions: What was this person feeling? Is it possible to understand why this person felt this way?

The class will then have a larger group discussion about how a lack of perspective-taking affected this situation, the potential benefits of perspective taking, and the steps towards effective perspective-taking.

The following ethical thinking skill is emphasized in this lesson:

- **Perspective-taking**—striving to understand the motives and goals of multiple stakeholders in a community

New media literacies highlighted in this lesson:

- **Negotiation**—the ability to travel across diverse communities, discerning and respecting multiple perspectives, and grasping and following alternative norms.
- **Simulation**—the ability to interpret and construct dynamic models of real world processes.

Learning Objectives

After this lesson, students should be able to:

- Engage in perspective-taking (includes consideration of others' motivations and feelings, as well as how others may be impacted by a particular course of action).
- Articulate why it's important to consider the perspectives of others when making decisions in online communities (e.g. reduces the risk of potential harm to others).

Materials Used

- **HIGH-TECH NOTE:** This lesson requires use of a TV and DVD player as well as either rental or purchase of “Friday Night Lights,” Season 1. The episode used in this curriculum is episode 10, “It’s Different for Girls.” Below, please find approximate time codes for the relevant clips.

Clip Time Codes:

- 0:52-1:13: Lyla cleans her cheerleading locker/ is taunted (Lyla-centered clip)



- 9:17-9:42: Brittany is mean to Lyla (Brittany-centered clip; shows effects on Lyla)
- 13:12-14:20: Lunch-table gossip about Lyla (Lyla-centered clip; Tami seen observing)
- 15:17-16:16: Buddy finds out about the website from Ben (Buddy- and Ben-centered clip)
- 19:56-20:49: Lyla sees the website (Lyla- and Buddy-centered clip)
- 23:19-24:01: Tami and Lyla discuss the situation (Tami- and Lyla-centered clips)
- 41:13-41:36: Lyla and Brittany at cheerleading competition (Brittany- and Lyla-centered clip)
- “Taking Perspectives” Prompt Sheets (character specific)
- Optional: “Taking Perspectives” Quote Sheet (if used as a supplement or as a supplement to the introduction)

Lesson Introduction

Ask the class to describe the term “perspective-taking,” based on their impressions of the term. (They may be familiar with the alternate term “point of view” from English courses). List the different elements of their definitions. (This may include ideas like: how characters or people think, how they feel, their opinions on a given situation.)

Point out to the class that perspective-taking encompasses how someone thinks, feels, his/her opinions on the situation, and his/her perceptions of consequences. Being able to take someone’s perspective, and empathize with it, can lead to better decision making when working with others both online and offline.

In today’s lesson, we will try to take the perspectives of the characters in clips from a TV show. Each group will take the perspective of one character. Once all the groups have presented the perspectives of their characters, we will discuss how perspective-taking could have helped this situation. Keep in mind how perspective-taking can help decision making.

NOTE: If your class needs more scaffolding for the lesson, please use the following supplementary introductory materials.



Lesson Introduction: Supplementary Materials

When thinking about perspective-taking, there are several key components to consider:

- **Intent:** What was this person intending to do? What were his/her motivations?
- **Empathy/Emotional Responses:** What was this person feeling? Is it possible to understand why this person felt this way?
- **Consequences:** What did this person perceive the outcomes of the situation or his or her actions to be? To whom and to what communities are the consequences most severe?

Students are likely to have generated these three factors or variants of them. Try to match their responses to the three factors.

You could also have the class go through the “Taking Perspective: Views from Youth” Lesson before the clips (or after the lesson is complete) to “practice” perspective-taking using text-based materials rather than media clips.

Lesson Instructions

1. **Introduce** the lesson.
2. Break the class into small groups. Each group will be assigned a character (Lyla, Buddy, Ben, Brittany, Tami). Hand out the “Taking Perspectives” Prompt Sheets.
3. **Watch the series of clips (in chronological order) with these components of perspective-taking in mind:**
 - **Emotional effects** on their assigned characters.
 - **Consequences** to the characters and communities involved e.g., to the individual, to the school community, and to the cheerleading team, as well as outcomes to specific roles like parent, teacher, etc).
 - **The intentions/motivations.** (**NOTE:** it may be harder for students to pick up minor characters’ motivations. For example, Buddy may be motivated to look at the page because he feels responsibility to do so as concerned parent.)
4. **Group presentation** of the worksheet questions. (**NOTE:** Just going over the worksheet questions should generate a discussion. Alternate presentations could include: role-play, writing assignments, etc.)
5. **Group discussion:** The entire class should discuss each character’s perspective as a group and discuss the implications of perspective-taking. Use the guide questions below if necessary.



- 6. Alternate-use note:** Another way to run this lesson is to have each group take on the perspectives of all characters. The clips could be shown multiple times; each time, the groups would focus on a different character within the clips and complete the appropriate sheet for each character. By using the curriculum in this way, students would be able to see the situation through multiple perspective firsthand. This use of the curriculum would likely make the run time of the lesson longer than a 45-minute period.

Lesson Discussion Questions

There are many suggested questions listed below. Please use those you feel would be most appropriate to your class.

- **General Non-Character-Specific Questions**
 - Each group considered consequences to groups larger than their individual character. How did considering these consequences to larger groups affect your feelings about the situation? Should community-level harm have been considered by the stakeholders?
 - Even though it was online, the website had offline consequences for others and for offline communities. Do you think the participants on the site should have considered offline effects on others?
 - Are actions in an online community (like the slurs on the website) different than offline actions in a community (like the notes left on Lyla’s locker at the school)? Why or why not?
 - Do you think people are more or less likely to take others’ perspectives online? Why or why not?
 - Considering harm to others, consequences, a motivation, and emotional effects, was the website justified? Ethical?
 - Whose points of view most closely match one another? Whose don’t match?
 - If everyone was in agreement that the website was justified, would it then be appropriate? Ethical? Why? Why not?
- **General Character-Specific Questions**
 - Ben tells Buddy, “I felt like I owed you an apology.” Why do you think Ben feels this way? Should Brittany have considered her father’s potential embarrassment in this situation?
 - Ben states that “no one deserves this [the website],” but clearly Brittany feels that Lyla deserves to be slammed in the website. What do you think causes Ben to have such a different perspective than his daughter?



- When Lyla is scolded by the cheerleading coach, Brittany asks, “Is it wrong to enjoy this?” Why do you think that Brittany enjoys seeing Lyla yelled at? Do you think it has anything to do with her motivations for starting the website?
- If the website had been about Brittany, how do you think she would have felt? Should Brittany have thought about this before creating the website?
- Tami’s role is that of guidance counselor in the school. What are her responsibilities? What consequences does she need to consider in her role?
- Buddy never tells Lyla he saw the site. Should he have told her?
- **Value of Perspective-Taking Questions**
 - Brittany’s perspective-taking is motivated by self interest (to be at the top of the cradle formation) and a desire to inflict pain on a rival. What changes to her perspective could have made Brittany’s actions more ethical?
 - Imagine you are Tami, and you have called both girls to your office. How would you use taking others’ perspectives to help the girls come to an understanding of each other?
 - Imagine you are the cheerleading coach. What is your perspective? How could taking squad members’ perspectives have helped you to manage the situation better?
 - Imagine you were in this situation. What would your perspective-taking be?
 - How could taking others’ perspectives have helped this situation?
 - How could taking others’ points of view online help you? What are the benefits of taking others’ points of view?
 - Whose actions in this situation were ethical?

Concluding Takeaways

In today’s lesson, we examined multiple perspectives within one scenario. In this scenario, we saw how a lack of perspective-taking negatively impacted many individuals. Think about your own actions online—do you take the perspectives of others when you act? Trying to understand motivations, emotional responses, and consequences can help make better-informed decisions online. It is unlikely that Brittany would want someone to make a website with similar goals about her. It is important to think about the effects of our actions on others.



Assessment

Through participation in class activities and discussions and/or answers to optional assessment questions, students should demonstrate they can:

- Engage in perspective-taking (includes consideration of others' motivations and feelings, as well as how others may be impacted by a particular course of action).
- Articulate why it's important to consider the perspectives of others when making decisions in online communities (e.g., reduces the risk of potential harm to others).

Assessment Questions (Optional)

- You have a funny picture of your friend, Adam, and you want to post it online. How do you decide whether or not to post it?
- Give at least 1 reason why it's important to consider other people's perspectives/points of view when you post or read something online.



I Thought You Should Know: Perspective-Taking Worksheet (Lyla)

Directions

After watching the clips, try taking **Lyla's** perspective. Use the questions below as a guide.

"I just thought, let them talk, you know. Let them say what they are going to say. And I'll just, tough it out."

—Lyla

Lyla is a popular student at Dillon High School. She is the captain, and star, of the cheerleading team. She was the girlfriend of the football team's quarterback. Recently, she cheated on her boyfriend with another player on the football team named Tim Riggins. Her classmates participated in a website that slams Lyla for cheating on her boyfriend.

- What do you think motivates Lyla to visit the website? To not talk with Buddy? To want to leave the cheerleading team?
- What emotions do you think Lyla is feeling when she visits the website? When she is teased in school?
- From Lyla's perspective, what are the potential outcomes of the website? To her? To the team? To Buddy? To her family?



I Thought You Should Know: Perspective-Taking Worksheet (Brittany)

Directions

After watching the clips, try taking **Brittany's** perspective. Use the questions below as a guide.

"Is it wrong that I'm enjoying this?"

—Brittany

Brittany is Lyla's alternate on the cheerleading team. She recently set up a website where she and others make fun of Lyla publically.

- What do you think motivates Brittany to make the website?
- What emotions do you think Brittany was feeling when she made the website and feels as she taunts Lyla? Does Brittany show empathy towards others?
- What outcomes do you think Brittany expected the website would have? For herself? For Lyla? For the team?



I Thought You Should Know: Perspective-Taking Worksheet (Tami)

Directions

After watching the clips, try taking **Tami's** perspective. Use the questions below as a guide.

“It was medieval. It was like ‘The Scarlet Letter’ or something, watching that girl walk across the cafeteria, and everybody just glared at her.”

—Tami

Tami is the school's guidance counselor. She often has to intervene in interpersonal conflicts within the school.

- What do you think motivates Tami to speak with Lyla about the teasing?
- What emotions do you think Tami is feeling when she sees Lyla is upset? When she sees the reactions of others to Lyla in the cafeteria?
- From Tami's perspective, what are the potential outcomes and consequences of the website? For Lyla? For the school? For the cheerleading team?



I Thought You Should Know: Perspective-Taking Worksheet (Ben)

Directions

After watching the clips, try taking **Ben's** perspective. Use the questions below as a guide.

"I want you to know ... it's bad, I'm not going to lie to you.... I felt like I owed you an apology in person. Lyla doesn't deserve this, no matter what she did."

—Ben

Ben is Brittany's father.

- What do you think motivates Ben to speak with Buddy about the website?
- What emotions do you think Ben is feeling when he talks with Buddy? When he realizes Brittany made the website?
- What potential outcomes do you think Ben perceives the website might have? For Lyla? For Brittany? For Buddy? For Buddy and Lyla's family? For Ben's own family?



I Thought You Should Know: Perspective-Taking Worksheet (Buddy)

Directions

After watching the clips, try taking **Buddy's** perspective. Use the questions below as a guide.

“Stuff on the internet? What are you talking about?”

—Buddy

Buddy is Lyla's dad and a successful car dealer in the town of Dillon. In addition to Lyla, he has other, younger children.

- What do you think motivates Buddy to visit the website?
- What emotions do you think Buddy is feeling when he sees the website?
- What potential outcomes do you think Buddy perceives when he looks at the website? For him as a father? For Lyla? For his family?