

Introduction:

In this activity, participants will explore micro-fiction, which differs from longer form narrative pieces in relying wholly on the perspective of the reader to interpret what is happening. Participants will practice active reader engagement to gain an immersive exploration of perspective taking and the creation of their own narrative worlds. This activity centers around developing critical interpretation skills in perspective taking.

Objectives:

As a result of this activity, participants will be able to:

1. Discuss the connection between empathy and communication.
2. Describe the role of perspective taking in communication.

Time:

30 minutes.

Group Size:

Small Group.

Materials:

Perspective Taking and Microfiction Participant Instructions; PowerPoint slides (both in [Downloads](#)).

Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:

- Denial
- Polarization
- Minimization
- Acceptance

AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Goals:

Empathy:

- Interprets intercultural experience from the perspectives of own and more than one worldview and demonstrates ability to act in a supportive manner that recognizes the feelings of another cultural group.

Openness:

- To initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others.
- To suspend judgment in valuing interactions with culturally different others.

Other Skills:

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion.

Activity Instructions:

1. Ask participants the following questions:
 - What do you think perspective taking means?
 - What kinds of interactions require us to take another's perspective?
 - How do differing perspectives affect communication?
2. Narrative perspective discussion. Show participants the slide with the quote and then discuss:

"When he/she/it woke up, the dinosaur was still there" (Monterroso, 1959)

 - What information do we have?
 - What do you think is happening in this narrative?
3. Show participants the PowerPoint slides with Augusto Monterroso's one-sentence piece of fiction. Ask them to describe what they think is happening for each image.
4. Explain that these pieces of micro-fiction do not give any contextual information about when, where, why, or how, but rather only a snapshot of what is happening. Discuss:
 - Whose perspective do we see?
 - How do you understand the dinosaur in this image?
 - What is the relationship between the dinosaur and the main character (positive/negative/ambiguous?) Explain.
4. Show the final slide with all the versions together and ask:
 - What do you feel when you see each image with the dinosaur? Why?
 - How have you taken a perspective on what you have just seen?
 - How did our experiences influence our opinions of the 4 interpretations?
 - How does it feel when others share your perspective on these images? How does it feel when they don't?
 - How can you apply what you've learned about perspective taking and communication?
 - What role does perspective taking have in your daily communication?