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**Constructive
Dialogue
Institute**



Turning Down the Heat on Campus:

How an online educational program can reduce polarization and improve dialogue in college classrooms

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About The Constructive Dialogue Institute

This report was conducted by the Constructive Dialogue Institute (CDI). Founded in 2017, CDI is a non-profit organization dedicated to equipping the next generation of Americans with the mindset and skill set to engage in dialogue across differences. At CDI, we seek to help teachers, faculty, and administrators build learning environments that enable students to feel comfortable engaging with challenging topics so that real learning can occur. To accomplish this goal, we translate the latest behavioral science research into educational resources and teaching strategies that are evidence-based, practical, and scalable.


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Executive Summary

Americans are deeply divided. Toxic polarization and political dysfunction have become the norm, resulting in a majority of Americans losing faith in our democracy.¹ Our media environment continues to sow conflict and has resulted in Americans having radically divergent views of reality. If we cannot agree on basic facts and communicate with one another, how can we possibly come together to solve the urgent challenges of our time?

It is the responsibility of our educational institutions to prepare the next generation for democratic citizenship. However, given the divisive climate on campuses across the country, many faculty members and university leaders are unsure of how to navigate this fraught environment.

Perspectives: An Online Learning Program to Promote Constructive Dialogue

To address these challenges, the Constructive Dialogue Institute developed an online learning program, free for faculty members to use with their students, called Perspectives. Perspectives teaches psychological concepts to foster openness to diverse perspectives and equip students with evidence-based practices for engaging in dialogue across differences.

The Study

We conducted a randomized controlled trial (RCT) to evaluate the effectiveness of the Perspectives online learning program. We recruited 775 college students across 10 courses at three U.S. colleges and universities. Each of the 10 courses were either assigned to a treatment group, where they completed Perspectives, or a waitlist control group, where they did not complete Perspectives during the study period. Students in both groups completed the same psychological assessments at two time points to evaluate whether they changed over time.

The Results

Across all key outcomes, students in the Perspectives group showed significant improvements, compared to the control condition. The study found:

- **73%** of students showed a decrease in polarization;
- **51%** of students were better able to recognize the limits of their knowledge;
- **59%** of students showed less negative attacking behaviors during conflict; and
- **55%** of students showed a decrease in negative evading behaviors during conflict.

Implications

These results demonstrate that our deep divisions are not inevitable. There are scalable, evidence-based tools that can be used to break our toxic polarization and prepare students for democratic citizenship.

However, faculty and educational institutions cannot be passive. They must proactively take steps to foster understanding across differences, create classroom environments that support constructive dialogue, and provide students with the skills to practice these essential skills. With our democracy hanging in the balance, the time to act is now.

Introduction

In recent decades, polarization and social division have been on the rise.^{2, 3, 4} American society is increasingly marked by hostility, outrage, and contempt for members of the opposing political party.⁵ Consider this statistic: In the 1960s, 4% of Americans said they would be unhappy if their child married someone of the opposing political party. In recent years, that number has hovered around 40% – a tenfold increase in the last 60 years.⁴

An unfortunate consequence of this deep animosity is the breakdown of constructive dialogue and the demonization of those who hold different views. These trends are felt intensely on college campuses. In a 2021 study, 63% of college students surveyed agreed that the climate on their campus prevents people from saying things that they believe (up from 55% in 2019). This is far from what college students desire. Indeed, the same 2021 study revealed that 88% of students agreed that colleges should encourage students and professors to interact respectfully with people whose beliefs differ from their own.⁶

The appreciation for a diversity of ideas aligns with modern notions of the purpose of higher education: to foster critical thinking, inquiry, and analysis, and to prepare students to be informed and engaged citizens.⁷ Indeed, research supports that the clash of ideas is part of what helps the college experience promote learning and growth.⁸ Research suggests that interacting with people of diverse backgrounds and views and having conversations about differences is linked to enhanced critical thinking, knowledge acquisition, career readiness, and general education quality.^{9, 10, 11, 12, 13}

Such experiences are particularly important for adolescents and young adults, who are undergoing the process of defining their values, worldviews, and identities.^{14, 15} Fostering this exploration allows young people to develop a nuanced and stable sense of self, and has been linked to fewer psychological problems and greater well-being later on.^{16, 17}

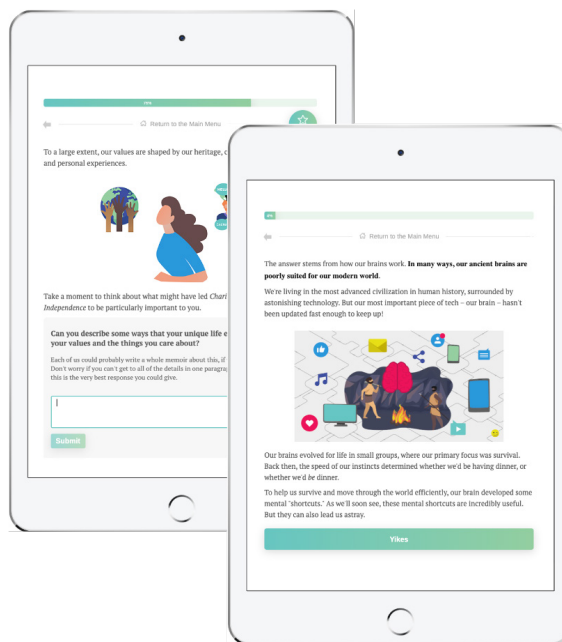
Although research indicates that exposure to competing viewpoints is an important part of the college experience, a climate of increasing polarization puts this important educational mission at risk.



The Perspectives Learning Program: An Evidence-Based Solution?

In 2017, Jonathan Haidt and Caroline Mehl co-founded the Constructive Dialogue Institute (formerly known as OpenMind), a non-partisan, non-profit organization to address rising polarization and the detrimental impact it was having on educational institutions. The Constructive Dialogue Institute (CDI) is dedicated to equipping the next generation of Americans with the mindset and skill set to engage in dialogue across differences. At CDI, we seek to help teachers, faculty, and administrators build learning environments that enable students to feel comfortable engaging with challenging topics so that real learning can occur.

To accomplish this goal, we translate the latest behavioral science research into educational resources and teaching strategies that are evidence-based, practical, and scalable. The main tool we developed to spread the practices of constructive dialogue is an online learning program called Perspectives (also formerly known as OpenMind). Perspectives comprises eight online lessons that weave together psychological concepts with interactive scenarios to equip students with practical skills for navigating difficult conversations. In the program, students explore the inner workings of the mind and gain insights to better understand themselves and others. Students also develop a robust toolkit of evidence-based practices to challenge cognitive biases, engage in nuanced thinking, and communicate more effectively with others about sensitive and divisive topics.

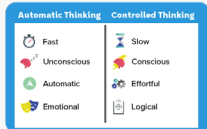


Perspectives is designed to be as easy as possible for college instructors to embed in their courses. The program, which is free for instructors, can be assigned to complete as homework. Instructors can also weave the concepts from the program into their course to best suit their needs. Each lesson in Perspectives takes approximately 30 minutes, and can be completed by students on their own, at their own pace. The program is highly interactive and adaptive. In each lesson, learners read content and, to advance, they must frequently interact with the program by answering questions, engaging in self-reflection, or completing an exercise. The program then adapts based on how learners answer questions. This ensures that the program is highly personalized and relevant to each student. Each lesson also includes five graded quiz questions to test learners' comprehension. Instructors can track their students' progress and quiz scores from their dashboard. Instructors can implement all eight lessons, or they can "build their own experience" by selecting which lessons they would like their students to complete. If instructors opt into this latter option, the program provides a seamless experience to students where the lessons still connect conceptually, even if certain lessons are skipped.

In addition to the online lessons, Perspectives also includes four peer-to-peer conversation guides that instructors can choose to assign to students. The conversations are intended to take place after every two lessons. This provides students with an "accountability buddy" to complete the program, it helps students build social connections, and it also enables students to apply their newfound skills in real-life conversations. Each conversation is designed to last approximately 45 minutes. The conversation guides begin by having students agree on shared norms, engage

in an ice-breaker activity to establish rapport, and then engage in an exercise where they begin applying the skills they learned in the lessons. For example, exercises include students reflecting on the values they prioritize most, what life experiences led them to prioritize these values, and identify areas of common ground with their partner. If instructors decide to include the conversation guides, they break their students into partners, and students can complete the conversations either in or outside of class.

Summary of Perspectives Lessons



LESSON 1: Explore the inner workings of the mind:

The program begins by exploring the inner workings of mind and teaches foundational psychological concepts such as dual-process theory and an introduction to cognitive biases.

LESSON 2: Uncover the roots of our differences:

Students explore the moral psychology underpinning how our worldviews emerge and why we have differences in our moral beliefs. Students learn Moral Foundations Theory, complete a Moral Foundations Theory quiz to identify their key foundations and values, and reflect on what personal experiences influenced their worldview and values.



LESSON 3: Cultivate intellectual humility:

Through interactive exercises, students discover common misconceptions they hold and learn about the benefits of intellectual humility and growth mindset. They are encouraged to shift from approaching disagreements like a warrior (a desire to win and defeat an opponent) to an explorer (displaying curiosity and a desire to learn, listen, and discover).



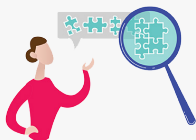
LESSON 4: Welcome diverse perspectives:

Students work to solve an interactive mystery, where along the way, they discover the benefits of engaging with diverse perspectives. Students also have the opportunity to explore the question of “where to draw the line” when engaging with diverse perspectives. Through this exploration, they gain the cognitive tools to make thoughtful decisions for themselves.



LESSON 5: Explore other worldviews:

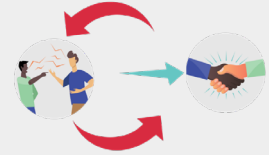
Students take a deeper dive into diverse worldviews. They break down assumptions about those who differ from themselves, gain an understanding of our shared humanity, and complete interactive scenarios to learn skills for finding common ground.



Summary of Perspectives Lessons (Cont'd)

LESSON 6: Challenge the culture of contempt:

Students explore the dangers of a “culture of contempt” and learn about the underlying psychology of why shaming others is often counterproductive. Students gain skills to break the cycle of contempt and learn about the benefits of treating others with dignity and respect.



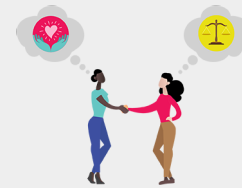
LESSON 7: Manage emotions during difficult conversations:



Students learn skills from cognitive behavioral therapy to manage their emotions in difficult conversations and practice cognitive reframing to challenge dichotomous thinking and other forms of cognitive distortions.

LESSON 8: Master difficult conversations:

Students end by learning a framework for engaging in constructive dialogue that integrates concepts from previous lessons. Students also gain skills including active listening skills, asking questions for understanding, speaking to other people's values, communicating with humility, and troubleshooting conversations when they begin to become fraught.



In the past five years, Perspectives has been used by more than 43,000 college students across more than 400 higher education institutions. Faculty across more than 100 academic disciplines have found value in implementing the program, given that it provides students with foundational skills to engage in dialogue about any subject matter. As one professor noted, “In an increasingly polarized world, OpenMind brings students together to explore their own values and better understand the values of others. This platform provides students with the tools to constructively engage with one another on a variety of challenging issues. I hear regularly from my students that OpenMind has helped them to have more productive conversations with others about a variety of important topics, even when they may disagree.”

As an organization committed to research, we develop our educational resources based on the latest scientific research, and we also conduct academic research on an ongoing basis to evaluate the effectiveness of our tools. We then use the results of our research to continuously refine our tools. The primary method that we use for research evaluation is embedding surveys into Perspectives, which students complete before and after completing the program. This enables us to evaluate how students change over time. Since 2017, we have collected data from more than 35,000 students, and we have found strong effects about the benefits students experienced from the program, including decreased hostility towards others and increased perspective-taking and intellectual humility. In 2021, we conducted a more rigorous study in order to further determine whether these positive changes were a result of completing Perspectives.

The Study

To determine whether Perspectives improves constructive dialogue, we studied 775 college students at three U.S. colleges and universities: Crafton Hills College, the University of North Texas, and the University of Maryland, College Park. Students across 10 courses in psychology, counseling, and speech communications participated in the study. The students were 46% White/European American, 16% Hispanic/Latino, 14% African American/Black, 12% Mixed Race, 7% East or Southeast Asian, 3% South Asian, 1% Middle Eastern/North African, and 1% Other, which is comparable to census data on undergraduate student demographics.¹⁸ The students were mostly women (65%) and mostly liberal (64% liberal, 22% Moderate, 14% Conservative), with an average age of 21.27 years.

This study was a randomized controlled trial (RCT), one of the few designs that enables researchers to draw causal conclusions.¹⁹ Three professors, collectively teaching 10 courses in total, partnered with us to complete this study. Each professor's classes were randomly assigned to a "treatment condition," where students completed the Perspectives program, or a "waitlist control condition," where students did not complete Perspectives during the study period, but were able to complete the program afterward. This study design controls for any effect of the professors themselves, since each professor had students in both the treatment and control groups. Students in all classes were informed of the study and were given the option to voluntarily participate.

In the treatment condition, students completed an initial assessment of our key outcomes to establish their baseline measures. Students then completed Perspectives over approximately four weeks, and then completed a second assessment of our key outcomes to evaluate if they changed over time. In the waitlist control condition, students completed the same pre- and post- assessments, however, rather than completing Perspectives, they simply waited four weeks between the assessments. Students in the waitlist control condition then completed Perspectives after the second assessment once the study had concluded. This design allowed us to compare changes between students that used Perspectives and those who did not, across the same span of time. The design and timeline of this study is displayed in Figure 1.



The study focused on three main outcomes: affective polarization, intellectual humility, and conflict resolutions skills (each defined further below).

Key Outcome 1: Affective Polarization

The first outcome we evaluated was affective polarization, the tendency for people to dislike and distrust those with different political views.²⁰ Evidence gathered over the past decades suggests that affective polarization has been steadily rising in the United States and is currently at its highest level.² Social scientists have documented a broad range of concerning attitudes and behaviors, even beyond the political sphere, that are influenced by this cross-partisan animosity.²⁰ For example, elevated affective polarization has been linked to a tendency to share fake news stories that denigrate the other side and, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, was correlated with individuals' views of the seriousness of the pandemic, their willingness to change their behavior to curb the spread of COVID-19, and their support for COVID-19 policies (e.g., stay-at-home orders).²¹



On college campuses, cross-partisan animosity is impacting students' attitudes inside and outside of the classroom. According to a 2021 Generation Lab/Axios poll of American college students, nearly a quarter of those surveyed said they would not be friends with someone who voted for the opposing presidential candidate. The poll also found that politics had a profound impact on students' dating preferences: 71% of Democratic students said they would not go on a date with a Republican, and 31% of Republican students expressed the same sentiment about Democrats.²²

Beyond these social consequences, in recent years, students have been increasingly hostile towards opposing views. A 2021 study by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education found that 66% of college students supported some level of shouting down speakers, and 23% believed it was acceptable to use violence to prevent certain speech.²³ These findings suggest that high levels of affective polarization are impeding critical components of a college experience, including the engagement with a broad range of ideas and the experience of forging relationships across lines of difference.

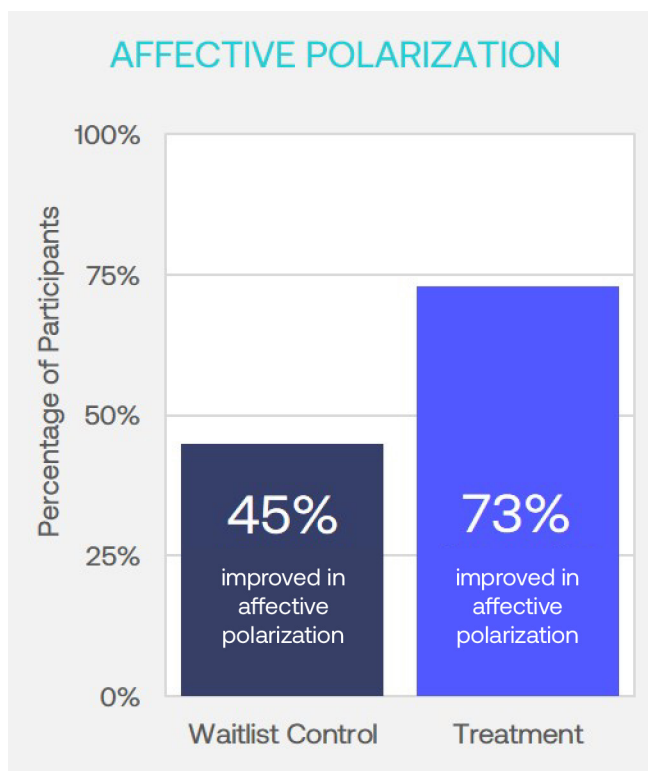
We measured affective polarization by asking students to use a slider to indicate their feelings about individuals who are liberal versus those who are conservative on a scale from 0 (“Very cold”) to 100 (“Very Warm”).²⁴ The degree of affective polarization is then calculated as the difference in the ratings for one’s own party and the ratings for the opposing party. This method of measuring affective polarization is well-validated and has been used extensively to measure feelings toward the opposing party.

We found that **the treatment group, where students completed the Perspectives program, significantly decreased in affective polarization, whereas those in the waitlist control group did not.** While only 45% of students in the waitlist control group improved in affective polarization, 73% of treatment group students improved (See Figure 2). Statistical tests indicated that the difference between the two groups was statistically significant (or unlikely to be due to chance), and is most likely caused by the use of Perspectives in the treatment group.

After completing Perspectives, students shared reflections highlighting how their attitudes towards others had shifted. One student commented, “[I learned] how to better understand and appreciate others despite our differences. I also found that we are more alike than we are different when it comes to social and political issues.”

Another student reflected on his newfound appreciation for our common humanity, noting, “I noticed the interconnectedness of people. We may have different beliefs, but our human emotions make us similar in nature.”

Figure 2. Perspectives improved affective polarization in 73% of students.



Key Outcome 2: Intellectual Humility

The second outcome we evaluated in our study was Intellectual humility, the ability to recognize one's own intellectual limitations and appreciate others' knowledge and intellectual strengths.²⁵ Individuals who are intellectually humble display less authoritarianism, fundamentalism, and political extremism, and are more likely to scrutinize COVID-19 misinformation.^{26,27,28} In the classroom, intellectually humble students are more likely to endorse a growth mindset, seek challenges, and persist, as well as have a greater knowledge of a broad range of topics, greater intrinsic motivation to learn, and enhanced memory.^{27,29,30,31}



In this study, intellectual humility was measured by the widely-used and well-validated General Intellectual Humility scale.³² This scale contains 6 statements that students then rate to indicate the degree to which those statements describe themselves (1 = not at all like me, 5 = very much like me). Example items include “I accept that my beliefs and attitudes may be wrong” and “In the face of conflicting evidence, I am open to changing my opinions.”

We found **that students in the treatment group, who completed Perspectives, significantly increased in intellectual humility over the course of the study, whereas the students in the waitlist control group did not, on average** (See Figure 3). In the control group, only 37% of students improved in intellectual humility, whereas the majority of the treatment group, 51% of students, improved.

Figure 3. Perspectives successfully increased intellectual humility in students



Many students' reflections after completing Perspectives highlighted their increases in intellectual humility. One student, for example, noted that they learned to "listen to the other perspective because you might learn something, and it might influence your own beliefs." Another student shared that their main takeaway from the program was, "To be open minded; to have conversations not arguments and to be willing to be wrong above all else."

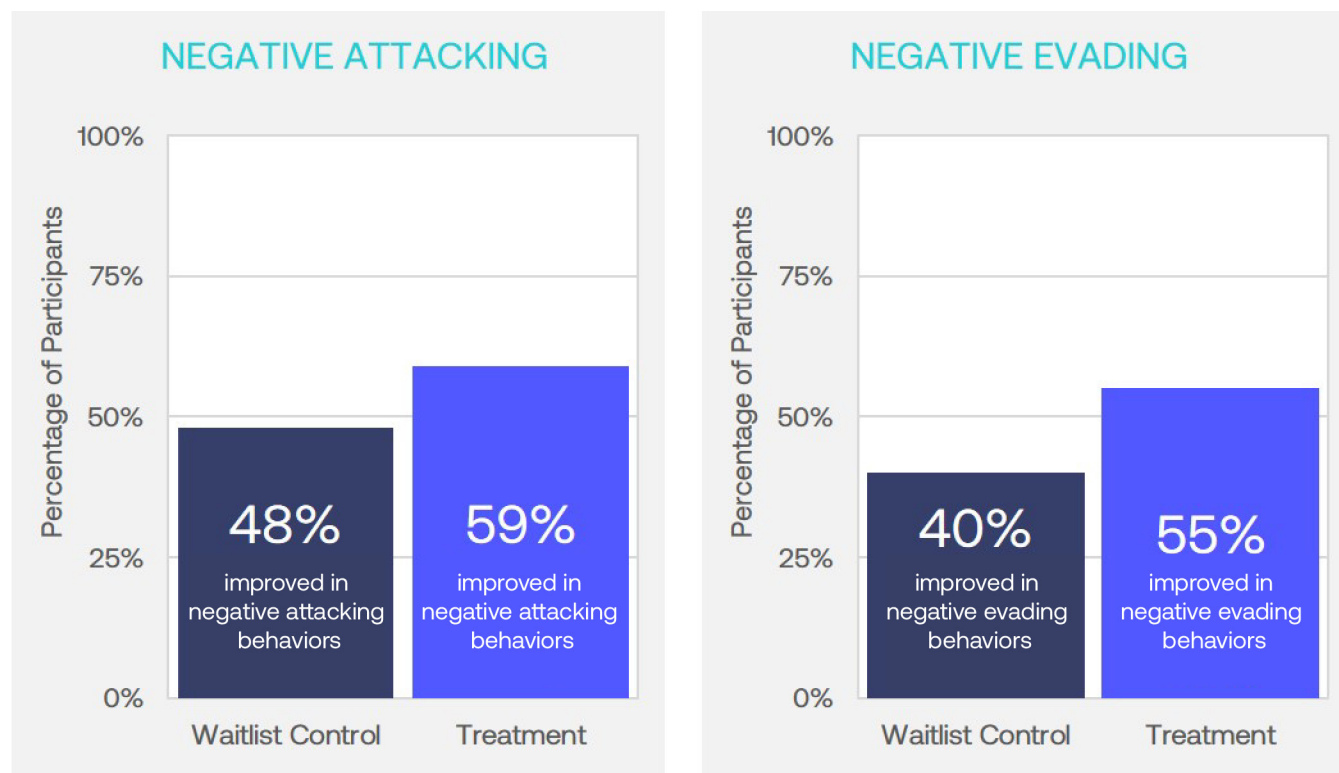


Key Outcome 3: Conflict Resolution Skills

Our first two outcomes, intellectual humility and affective polarization, refer to how students think and feel about others who don't share their views. But how do students actually act toward those with opposing views? To examine how students manage conflict, students completed the Negotiating Evaluation Survey, a validated measure of how individuals handle conflict.³³ We asked students to think of a close friend or family member they had a conflict with. Then, students reported how much they engaged in specific actions when in conflict with this person using a 7 point scale (1 = never, 7 = always).

We were particularly interested in whether those who used Perspectives were less likely to attack or be hostile in conflict situations. At the same, we were also interested in whether Perspectives learners would be more comfortable with conflict. These outcomes are captured in two dimensions of the measure: Negative Attack and Negative Evasion (described below). The effects of Perspectives on these outcomes are displayed in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Perspectives successfully improved negative attacking and evading behaviors.



Negative Attacks: These items measure hostile and inflammatory ways of interacting with others. Sample survey items include asking students to indicate how frequently they “Criticize the other person rather than his/her ideas” and “Speak in a disrespectful manner” when in conflict with another person. Compared to the waitlist control group, we found that **those in the treatment group significantly reduced their use of hostility and attacks during conflict after completing Perspectives.**

One student commented, “This program has helped me discover various techniques to move through social conversations in a more positive and constructive way. It also helped bring into the limelight some issues I personally have when communicating with others.”

Another student in the treatment condition reflected, “I learned more about having good conversations in a way that does not escalate and invites more intelligent discussions that can help connect us.”

Negative Evasion: These behaviors involve shutting down or withdrawing to avoid uncomfortable situations. Sample survey items include asking students to indicate the frequency with which they “Smooth over differences because conflict makes me uncomfortable” and “Remain silent or change the subject because I am uncomfortable with open conflict.” We found that **students who completed Perspectives had a significant reduction in negative evading compared to the waitlist control group**, indicating they were less likely to shy away from conflict. We found that 55% of students in the treatment group had reductions in negative evasion behaviors, but only 39% of waitlist control students decreased in negative evasion behaviors.

These results show that students leave Perspectives with enhanced conflict management skills. Perspectives helped students be comfortable with conflict, face conflicts rather than withdraw from them, and display less hostility during conflicts.

After completing Perspectives, many students highlighted improvements in having conversations across differences and a greater appreciation for views other than their own.

One student who completed Perspectives commented: “I learned a lot about engaging in conversation, and not just how to become a better speaker, but also how to be a better listener as well.”

Another student reflected on their growth, saying: “I’ve always been someone to not speak my mind for fear of upsetting the other person or worry that the person wouldn’t like me because of my opinions. I feel more confident sticking up for myself and having a meaningful conversation now because of the tools I learned throughout the modules.”

A third student shared, “I think I now have a toolbox for communication and disagreements that I did not have before. I learned how to go about disagreeing conversations and how to keep a better open mind.”



Recommendations

At a time when 70% of Americans believe the country “has become so polarized that it can no longer solve the major issues facing the country,” these findings are extremely encouraging.³⁴ The results of our study demonstrate that deep feelings of animosity and division are not inevitable, and such hostility can be reversed. Educational programming can be a powerful tool for combating the toxic trends playing out across the country and preparing the next generation to overcome our current divides.

However, given the forces pulling us apart, it is unlikely that students will shift their attitudes and gain the skills for engaging across differences on their own. It is incumbent upon us as educators to expose students to opposing ideas and provide them with the skills and opportunities to develop the ability to communicate and collaborate across divides.

Below, we offer recommendations for fostering mutual understanding and constructive dialogue in the classroom and on campus more broadly.

What can be done in the classroom?

1. **Implement Perspectives:** Faculty members can use Perspectives in their classrooms to help students foster curiosity, inquiry, and the skills for dialogue about challenging topics. Decades of educational research have shown that such classroom environments engage students and enhance learning. Furthermore, such learning environments are linked to improved critical thinking and communication skills, civic knowledge and engagement, and commitment to democratic values such as tolerance, diversity, and equality.³⁵
 - Perspectives is particularly useful at the beginning of the course because it sets the tone for an inclusive classroom.
 - Faculty can implement the full Perspectives program, or they can assign a subset of the lessons. See Figure 5 below for recommended lesson tracks based on your teaching objectives.
2. **Co-create resilient classroom norms:** Norms are explicit standards that describe both what students can expect to experience in a classroom and how they should expect to participate in that space. Setting norms can be an opportunity to shape an environment that is intellectually rigorous and respectful.
3. **Model and practice asking questions:** Asking the right question can elicit novel information, catalyze new understanding, and encourage reflection. Questions create possibilities. Model asking nonjudgmental questions that complexify issues and cause students to challenge their assumptions.
4. **Make thinking visible in your classroom:** Your classroom should serve as a laboratory where students can try out and test new ideas. Actively highlighting thinking practices signals that the classroom is a place where positions can emerge and change. This encourages students to develop their own thoughtful views on issues, rather than simply regurgitating popular talking points.
5. **Create space in your classroom for students to talk about talking:** Engaging in constructive dialogue is a learning process. It takes time, regular practice, and patience – there will be mistakes along the way. Establishing routine practices that help students process their successes and challenges can help maximize the learning potential such activities offer.
6. **Whenever possible, teach with stories:** Storytelling can be an effective way to build trust within the classroom. It can lead to deeper connections among students, by enabling them to get to know each other beyond simple narratives. These connections can create a sense of community that can fortify classrooms when it is time to discuss challenging issues.

Incorporating perspectives in the classroom



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Figure 5. Recommended Tracks of Select Lessons.

<p>TRACK 01 Total Learning Time: 1.5 Hours</p> <p>Increase students' openness to ideological perspectives</p> <p>Use this track if:</p> <p>Classes include coverage of potentially contentious issues (e.g., race, religion, politics, sustainability). These lessons focus on reducing demonization across political divides by explaining how people can reach different conclusions from the same facts, where our moral worldviews come from, and how these worldviews inform our political views.</p> <p>Assign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson 1: Explore the inner workings of the mind Lesson 2: Uncover the roots of our differences Lesson 5: Explore other worldviews 	<p>TRACK 02 Total Learning Time: 2 Hours</p> <p>Promote intellectual humility</p> <p>Use this track to:</p> <p>Promote students' understanding of their own biases and foster openness to other perspectives. These lessons introduce students to common cognitive biases and teach techniques for challenging them. They also help students identify the roots of their and others' worldviews, cultivate intellectual humility, and explore the benefits of engaging with diverse perspectives.</p> <p>Assign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson 1: Explore the inner workings of the mind Lesson 2: Uncover the roots of our differences Lesson 3: Cultivate intellectual humility Lesson 4: Welcome diverse perspectives 	<p>TRACK 03 Total Learning Time: 2 Hours</p> <p>Strengthen skills for difficult conversations</p> <p>Use this track if:</p> <p>Students have the requisite appreciation for diverse viewpoints but need specific, tailored practice opportunities to build their skills and comfort in engaging in dialogue across differences. These lessons focus on finding common ground with others, treating others respectfully, regulating emotions, and specific techniques to handle challenging conversations.</p> <p>Assign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson 5: Explore other worldviews Lesson 6: Challenge the culture of contempt Lesson 7: Manage emotions in difficult conversations Lesson 8: Mastering difficult conversations
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What can be done on campus?

Changes at the institutional level will require greater stakeholder buy-in, planning, and investment. However, such steps are critical for colleges and universities to fulfill their missions. Below are three recommendations for how university leaders can infuse the principles and practices and dialogue and citizenship on their campuses:

1. **Establish Dialogue and Democratic Citizenship as Priorities:** Institutions of higher education play a critical role in a democratic society. Campus leaders must do more to elevate these principles as part of theirw campuses' culture. In 2021, for example, Johns Hopkins University instituted an annual Democracy Day to explore the threats to democracy and encourage students to consider their civic responsibilities.³⁶ Similarly, the College of William & Mary launched a Democracy Initiative to promote respectful dialogue and foster democratic norms, ideals, and practices.
2. **Incorporate Perspectives into Orientation or First-Year Experience:** The Perspectives program can be incorporated into campus-wide initiatives such as Orientation and First-Year Experience to equip students with a shared language and set of skills for navigating differences as soon as they arrive on campus.
 - **Orientation:** Students can be assigned the Perspectives program over the summer. Student leaders and Student Affairs Professionals can complete a CDI train-the-trainer program to be prepared to lead a Perspectives capstone workshop at orientation. This workshop would provide students with the opportunity to reflect on what they learned and discuss how they can implement these practices in their day-to-day life on campus.
 - **First-Year Experience:** Perspectives can be incorporated into First-Year Experience seminars, especially those focused on life skills, contemporary social issues, or communications. Perspectives can be incorporated into the curriculum in its entirety, or faculty members can select specific lesson tracks (see Figure 5).
3. **Bring Dialogue Skills to Centers for Teaching and Learning:** Faculty members across the country are struggling with teaching in our polarized environment. Some professors worry that a statement, taken out of context, can result in students launching a complaint against them. Other faculty members lament that their students are unwilling to engage in discussion about challenging topics out of fear of saying the wrong thing. College and universities can support faculty members by providing them with training in how to create learning environments that support dialogue and how to facilitate conversations about sensitive topics.

While such initiatives will take considerable time and investment, the stakes are too high not to act. Our hope at CDI is to provide evidence-based tools, resources, and strategies to support faculty and institutional leaders in taking on the great civic challenge of our time.

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