

Projecting Across Distance

A routine for considering how a topic, event, or issue impacts not only one's own community and country, but also other communities and countries far away.

Pick a topic, event, or issue that might be approached differently in different parts of the world or even your own country, such as food security, population growth, or marriage practices. Then, consider it from the following perspectives.

How is the topic, event, or issue playing out or viewed in...

- your community?
- another city or town in your country?
- a country east or west of your country, where people may think differently about the theme, event, or issue?
- a country north or south of your country, where people may think differently about the theme, event, or issue?

What might account for the similarities and/or differences **between** and **within** the communities and countries?

PURPOSE

What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

This routine encourages learners to take a broader, multi-perspectival view of a topic, event, or issue. While there are other thinking routines that also encourage learners to take diverse perspectives, this routine differentiates itself by inviting learners to specifically compare and contrast perspectives with firstly another community in their country, followed by countries that are geographically different from their own country. In doing so, learners come to understand that:

- Not everyone in the same country or even in the same city, holds the same views, and even if they hold broadly similar views, it's the shades of differences that may be of greatest interest.
- People in countries that seem to be like theirs may not always think the same way, and that in fact it could be the case that people who are most geographically distant that may share similar views as them.
- It is important to gather a diversity of perspectives on a topic, event, or issue if one is to try to understand it as fully as possible, or to try to walk in someone else's shoes for a day.

APPLICATION

When and where can I use it?

An important thing to keep in mind is that learners may not be able to immediately identify communities and countries where the selected topic, event, or issue is approached differently. In that case, you may want to do any of the following:

- Have ready a set of communities and countries that you put forward for learners to explore.
- Invite students to pool what they already happen to know, taking advantage of the diversity among them. Then, assign them to research (e.g. conduct Internet searches; interview adults like parents) some points from the pool of knowledge and bring back their findings.

LAUNCH

What are some tips for starting and using this routine?

As this routine involves discussing different communities and countries, it will be important to keep a lookout for learners who make sweeping assumptions or broad generalizations about other cultures, peoples, and places. This could lead to misunderstandings and stereotyping of other cultures, peoples, and places, which need to be addressed quickly. Some ways to do so are to follow up with “What makes you say that,” introduce a counter example to highlight the discrepancy in their thinking, etc., or ask the question: *Do you think everyone in that country/community is likely to think the same way?* At all times, it’s crucial not to let the misunderstanding or stereotype take root.

This thinking routine was developed as part of the PZ Connect project at Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Explore the full PZ Thinking Routine Toolbox at pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines.