

AI and Multiple Perspectives - *Vox Populi* “interview” with ChatGPT

Why?	
In a world increasingly polarized by black-and-white perspectives, especially in areas such as politics, social issues, and cultural debates, it's crucial to foster an understanding that the spectrum of human opinion is far more colorful and varied. Artificial Intelligence (AI) can fill in gaps in students' knowledge by providing a spectrum of opinions on a specific issue. By exploring these multiple viewpoints on a single topic, students learn that issues are rarely as binary as they seem. This understanding is critical for developing empathy and a more nuanced worldview. This lesson offers a dynamic way to engage students with current topics, encourage critical thinking, and introduce innovative educational technology.	
Materials Needed	Time needed
• Computers with internet access • Projector or screen to display example content	Approximately 60 - 75 minutes (could be split over multiple class periods)
Objectives	
• Students will be able to identify and describe the variety and complexity of viewpoints on various topics. • Students will be able to analyze and critically evaluate different opinions to gain a comprehensive understanding of complex issues. • Students will be able to operate generative AI tools to create a spectrum of responses, gaining insights into contemporary technological advancements in media and communication. • Students will be able to effectively communicate diverse viewpoints in a clear and respectful manner. • Students will be able to investigate and understand the crucial role of journalists in educating and informing the public.	
Key Concepts & Vocabulary	
• <i>Vox Populi</i> or “vox pop” - Literally, “voice of the people,” a form of journalism in which various people’s perspectives on a single question are shared together. (See examples below)	
Lesson	
1. Introduce the Lesson a. Begin the lesson by introducing students to the concept of <i>Vox Populi</i>	

(Voice of the People) interviews. Explain that these interviews are a way to gather a variety of opinions from different people on a single topic. Start by showing examples of written Vox Pop interviews available online (see links below), highlighting how these interviews capture diverse perspectives from "people on the street."

- b. Discuss the range of opinions presented and the importance of diverse perspectives in understanding complex issues.

2. Topic Selection

- a. Choose a topic relevant to the current class study (e.g., a historical event or modern parallel in a history class, a scientific debate in a science class, etc.).
- b. Give students the task of coming up with a question that an interviewer might ask people on the street, or in a public place, to get a variety of opinions about the topic.
- c. Topics may be controversial, but encourage students to approach the controversy with a goal of understanding differences. Students should attempt to present positions with equal treatment, and not side with one response.

3. Introduce the AI Tool(s)

- a. Explain the use of generative AI (such as ChatGPT) to simulate different viewpoints.
- b. Discuss how AI can help us explore a range of perspectives on any given topic. Users can prompt ChatGPT to provide five distinct viewpoints on any specific issue.
 - i. (For example, "Provide me with five different perspectives a person might express about the topic of _____. Each perspective should be distinct from all others. Each perspective should be explained in no more than two sentences.")
- c. Model the process of using ChatGPT to provide these viewpoints. A full example is at the end of this document.

4. Generating Diverse Views

- a. Have students (individually or in pairs or small groups) use ChatGPT or another generative AI to ask for five (or more) distinct viewpoints on the selected topic.
- b. The benefit of asking for more than five perspectives is that students can evaluate the quality and choose the best from among the provided perspectives.
 - i. Optionally, students could use multiple different chatbots to see if they provide different perspectives. (For example, [Claude](#) or [Google Bard](#))
- c. Have students ensure that the responses reflect clearly different perspectives.

5. Creating Character Profiles

- a. Assign students to create identities for people who might give each of the five AI-generated responses.

- b. Encourage them to think about who these people might be, including details like name, age, and descriptor, such as occupation or equivalent (e.g., "architect," "college student").
 - c. This section of the lesson carries the risk of reinforcing stereotypes, as students may rely on biased or simplistic assumptions to assign identities based on their notions of certain groups. Guide students to focus on appropriate character creation of authentic people, incorporating discussions on empathy and the dangers of prejudgment.
6. Writing the Interviews
 - a. Students will type out the question they are asking the five characters to answer. (The best questions for this type of interview are open-ended, not yes or no questions.)
 - b. Students will then type out five responses using the material in the perspectives generated by AI, ensuring they align with the character profiles they've created.
 - c. Each response should demonstrate a unique perspective on the issue.
7. Visual Representation
 - a. (This section is optional. It could take an extended amount of time. It may be cut from the lesson if desired.)
 - b. Use an AI tool such as Dall-E or thispersondoesnotexist.com to generate images representing each character.
 - c. Students should make sure the images are diverse, representing a range of backgrounds and ages, and align with the character profiles.
8. Assembling the *Vox Populi* Interview
 - a. Students will compile the interviews into a formatted document.
 - b. Each interview should include the question at the top of the page.
 - c. Each of the five answers should include the character's name, age, descriptor (and optional picture), and their unique perspective on the topic.
9. Reflection and Discussion
 - a. Have students present their *Vox Populi* interviews to the class.
 - b. Facilitate a discussion on the different perspectives presented and what students learned about the complexity of viewpoints.
10. Connecting Back to the Lesson:
 - a. Conclude by relating the diverse perspectives gathered to the broader context of the current class study.
 - b. Emphasize the lesson that issues are seldom black-and-white and often have multiple viewpoints.

Discussion Questions

- How did the process of creating different character profiles change your understanding of the topic? Which viewpoint surprised you the most, and why?

- What did you learn about the importance of diverse perspectives in media reporting?
- How do you think media representation of issues affects public perception?
- In what ways did AI-generated responses differ from what you might have come up with on your own?
- Did any of the AI-generated perspectives resonate with your personal views? Why or why not?
- What did this exercise teach you about the dangers of stereotyping in understanding complex issues?
- How did you ensure that your character profiles and responses were realistic and well-informed?

Supplemental Activity Ideas

- **Debate Club Style Discussion:** Organize a structured debate where students are assigned different viewpoints (possibly the ones they developed during the *Vox Populi* activity). This would help deepen their understanding and ability to articulate different perspectives.
- **Community Interviews Project:** Encourage students to conduct actual *Vox Populi* interviews within their community or school on a relevant topic. They can use audio or video recording equipment to capture these interviews, learning about journalism techniques in the process. This real-world application reinforces the importance of listening to and understanding diverse perspectives. This could also be tied in with a student publication, such as a school newspaper.
- **Ethical Implications of Scientific Discoveries:** In a science class, students can explore the ethical implications of various scientific discoveries or technologies. For example, the class could examine different perspectives on gene editing, artificial intelligence, or climate change solutions. Students can research, debate, and present on how different groups (scientists, ethicists, general public) perceive these topics.

Sources to Learn More

- Links showing printed Vox Pop interviews
 - [Link 1](#) [Link 2](#) [Link 3](#) [Link 4](#) [Link 5](#)
- AI-generated faces - <https://www.thispersondoesnotexist.com/>
- Information on (video-based) Vox Pops - <https://www.voxpops.com/>
- Why Vox Pops are sometimes considered “lazy” journalism, but are still vitally important - <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-46946442>

Sample AI-aided *Vox Populi*

User asked ChatGPT for appropriate ideas for a science class, and the suggestion was “The Use of CRISPR Gene Editing Technology.” (“clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats”)

User: Give me a two-sentence description about this topic, without including any viewpoints.

ChatGPT: CRISPR gene editing technology represents a groundbreaking advancement in genetics, enabling precise alterations to DNA sequences within organisms. Its potential applications range from treating hereditary diseases to enhancing agricultural crops, but it also raises significant ethical, safety, and social concerns regarding its use and implications.

User: Provide me with six different perspectives a person might express about this topic. Each perspective should be distinct from all others. Each perspective should be explained in no more than two sentences.

ChatGPT:

Medical Researcher's Perspective: "CRISPR technology is a revolutionary tool that could lead to cures for genetic diseases like cystic fibrosis and sickle cell anemia. It's imperative we advance this research to unlock its full potential for medical science."

Ethical Concerns from a Bioethicist: "While CRISPR offers significant medical advancements, it poses ethical dilemmas, especially regarding human genome editing. We must be cautious to not cross moral boundaries, such as creating 'designer babies' or exacerbating social inequalities."

Environmental Activist's Viewpoint: "The use of CRISPR in modifying plants and animals could have unforeseen ecological impacts, like disrupting local ecosystems or causing unintended harm to wildlife. We need strict regulations to prevent ecological damage."

Patient Advocacy Group Opinion: "For individuals suffering from genetic disorders, CRISPR represents a beacon of hope. It's crucial that we make this technology accessible and affordable to all, not just the wealthy."

Skeptical Public Perspective: "The long-term effects of gene editing are still unknown, and the idea of altering human DNA seems unnatural and risky. We should proceed with extreme caution and more thorough testing before widespread use."

Industry Professional's Stance: "CRISPR is not only a medical breakthrough but also a huge opportunity for agricultural advancements, like creating disease-resistant crops. This can lead to more sustainable farming practices and help address food security issues."

Each of these perspectives highlights different aspects of the CRISPR debate, from its potential benefits in health and agriculture to the ethical, social, and environmental challenges it presents.

[Note that these perspectives are too complex for the purposes of a Vox Pop interview. The goal is to get students to refine each statement to a brief, understandable answer.]

Final Product

Question: What are your thoughts on the use of CRISPR gene editing technology? Is it safe? Should we be using it?



Claudia Nurtwangel, 41, Medical Researcher: It's important to pursue this technology in an effort to better understand the origins of debilitating conditions such as cystic fibrosis.



Cathy Stone, 53, Bioethicist: The promise of solving diseases is inspiring, but at what cost? Going down this road could make things worse if people use the technology unethically.



Mikaela Orellana, 37, Environmental Activist: We don't really know what might happen if we alter plant genes too much – It could cause the collapse of ecosystems all over the world.



Claude Nelson, 44, Patient Advocate: People are suffering from potentially curable diseases. It's worth it to help people.



Chikao Miura, 22, Student: Nobody really knows the long-term effects of CRISPR technology. In fixing one health issue, we might be causing 10 more. It's just too risky.