Exploring Research Perspectives

As you learned in Task 1-6 and 1-7, the team will be presented with various perspectives of the problem throughout your research: social, ethical, environmental, and economic.

**Objective**

In this task, the team will explore these perspectives to understand them better.

This task only requires space for a continuous line (real or imagined) from one side of the room to the other.

1. Post one sign stating STRONGLY AGREE and one sign stating STRONGLY DISAGREE on opposite walls or corners of the room. The space between these two signs is the continuum. Put a sign in the middle of these two signs that states NOT SURE.

2. The team will hear a variety of statements.

3. After each statement, each team member should place themselves along the continuum based on how much they agree or disagree.

4. Go to the Task 1-8 folder to get the statements, further instructions, discussion questions and Meet the Team Reading. Choose the Mosquito A or Mosquito B version of this task.

5. Go over the team norms together in the task folder.

6. Follow the instructions to play the warm-up round.

7. As a team, discuss the Warm-Up Discussion Questions.

8. Follow the instructions to play four Perspectives rounds and questions.

9. As a team, discuss the Task 1-8 Discussion Questions.

10. Read the Meet the Team Reading on what to do when the team does not agree. Learn about and discuss the ways their teams work through disagreements. Think about how your team can best work together to respect everyone's ideas.

Hooray! You completed Task 1-8. Check it off the task list. *Go to Task 1-9!*
Task 1-8 Exploring Research Perspectives—Mosquito A

Team Norms

- Recognize the benefits of listening to a range of different perspectives and viewpoints.
- Be open to new ideas and perspectives that challenge your own.
- Be willing to cooperate with others to change things for the better.
- Use active listening skills.
  - Face the person talking.
  - Look them in the eye.
  - Be attentive.
  - Keep an open mind.
  - Don’t interrupt.
  - Ask questions if you are confused.

Warm-Up Round Instructions

1. Here is the warm-up round statement.

   Bananas are the best-tasting fruit.

2. There are not necessarily any right or wrong answers, and everyone’s view will fall somewhere along the continuum, from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

3. Take a minute and let each team member think about their position on that statement. Explain the next step, so team members can choose where to stand along the continuum.

   - Explain that relative location is also important; that is, standing closer to the strongly agree or disagree side of the room means you feel very strongly about this statement.

4. Once each team member is located along the continuum, direct the team members to begin explaining to those standing near them why they placed themselves as they did. Students should explain their reasoning for their location.

5. Based on these discussions with the people near them, they should be “recalibrating” with each other. This is the process of listening to other team members near them and determining whether they really are more or less extreme in their thoughts and feelings on the topic. Encourage team members to move as necessary to accurately represent the continuum of opinion on the team.

Warm-Up Round Discussion Questions

- Can individual team members explain to the team the reasons for their position on the continuum?
- How many team members changed their positions after talking to other team members around them on the continuum?
- How many team members changed their positions after hearing people talk during the whole team discussion?
- What led you to change your mind?
• Conclude the discussion by asking team members on both sides of the issue to identify what they believe to be the strongest arguments and reasons they heard from the opposing side.

Four Perspectives Rounds Instructions and Questions

1. The line continuum setup for the next four rounds stays the same. The main difference is the team is now divided into groups of three to four team members.
2. Each group will negotiate their position along the continuum, based on the following statement.

   Ethical perspective: It is okay to kill all of the mosquitoes on the planet.

3. Each group must determine where they are located on the continuum as a group.
4. Each group will send one representative to identify the place on the continuum line that best represents the group’s view.
5. Now the representatives from each group will explain to the whole team the reasons for their group’s position on the continuum. Members of the group speaking can support the representative at any time.
6. After each group has had a chance to share, each group should have a brief discussion about whether they would like to move their location on the continuum, based on the team discussion.
   • How many groups changed their positions after hearing people talk during the whole team discussion?
   • What led you to change your mind or not change your mind?
   • Conclude the discussion by asking team members on both sides of the issue to identify what they believe to be the strongest arguments and reasons they heard from the opposing side.

7. Repeat steps two through six for one statement from each of the following three perspectives categories.

Social Perspective

1. People who live in places with mosquito-borne diseases should not be able to travel to other places to visit family.
2. People who get mosquito-borne diseases engage in some type of risky behavior.

Environmental Perspective

1. All mosquitoes are dangerous to humans.
2. Spraying potentially harmful chemicals to control mosquitoes around children and pregnant women is okay.

Economic Perspective

1. Mosquito bed nets protect you from mosquito bites when you are sleeping. It is okay that people who cannot afford to buy a bed net get sick more often from mosquito-borne diseases.
2. Every person should be required by the government to pay some tax money to help people who cannot afford to protect themselves from mosquito-borne diseases.
Task 1-8 Discussion Questions

As an entire team, discuss the following questions.

Remind the team that you will now engage in a discussion. When engaging in any type of meaningful discussion as a team, you must respect your team. Use the meaningful conversation starters in your discussion to respect your other team members.

Meaningful conversation starters used in the language of argumentation:

- I agree with ____________ because ...
- I disagree with ____________ because ...
- I’d like to go back to what ______________ said about ...
- I’d like to add ________________
- I noticed that ...
- Another example is ...
- So, what you are saying is ...
- Do you think that ...?
- Couldn’t it also be that ...?
- Why do you think that?
- Can you explain what you mean?
- Can you tell me more?
- Can you give me an example of that?

1. How did your group arrive at your decisions?
2. What decision-making methods did your group use (consensus, voting, etc.)?
3. How were your decisions influenced by the values? Attitudes? Prejudices? Aspects of identity of people in your group?
4. How were disagreements and conflicts handled?
5. What are some benefits to listening to a range of different perspectives and viewpoints on the team?
6. Is it helpful to be open to new ideas and perspectives that challenge your own? Why or why not?
7. Is there anything you learned in this task that would be useful when thinking about the problem question: How can we ensure health for all from mosquito-borne diseases?

Go back to Research Guide now
Task 1-8 Exploring Research Perspectives—Mosquito B

Team Norms

- Recognize the benefits of listening to a range of different perspectives and viewpoints.
- Be open to new ideas and perspectives that challenge your own.
- Be willing to cooperate with others to change things for the better.
- Use active listening skills.
  - Face the person talking.
  - Look them in the eye.
  - Be attentive.
  - Keep an open mind.
  - Don’t interrupt.
  - Ask questions if you are confused.

Warm-Up Round Instructions

1. Here is the warm-up round statement.

   **Bananas are the best-tasting fruit.**

2. There are not necessarily any right or wrong answers, and everyone’s view will fall somewhere along the continuum, from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

3. Take a minute and let each team member think about their position on that statement. Explain the next step so team members can choose where to stand along the continuum.

   - Explain that relative location is also important; that is, standing closer to the strongly agree or disagree side of the room means you feel very strongly about this statement.

4. Once each team member is located along the continuum, direct the team members to begin explaining to those standing near them why they placed themselves as they did. Students should explain their reasoning for their location.

5. Based on these discussions with the people near them, they should be “recalibrating” with each other. This is the process of listening to other team members near them and determining whether they really are more or less extreme in their thoughts and feelings on the topic. Encourage team members to move as necessary to accurately represent the continuum of opinion on the team.

Warm-Up Round Discussion Questions

- Can individual team members explain to the team the reasons for their position on the continuum.
- How many team members changed their positions after talking to other team members around them on the continuum?
- How many team members changed their positions after hearing people talk during the whole team discussion?
- What led you to change your mind?
• Conclude the discussion by asking team members on both sides of the issue to identify what they believe to be the strongest arguments and reasons they heard from the opposing side.

Four Perspectives Rounds Instructions and Questions

1. The line continuum setup of the next four rounds stays basically the same—but with some differences that are described in the step three.
2. Present the following statement to the entire team.

Ethical perspective: It is okay to kill all of the mosquitoes on the planet.

3. Have each person individually place themselves along the continuum.
4. Next, create groups of three to four team members with the team members that are nearest you on the continuum.
5. Have each group work together to develop an explanation of the reasons for their group’s position on the continuum. Share these explanations with the entire team.
6. After each group has had a chance to share, each group should have a brief discussion about whether they would like to move their location on the continuum, based on the team discussion.
   • How many groups changed their positions after hearing people talk during the whole team discussion?
   • What led you to change your mind or not change your mind?
   • Conclude the discussion by asking team members on both sides of the issue to identify what they believe to be the strongest arguments and reasons they heard from the opposing side.

7. Repeat steps two through six for one statement from each of the following three perspectives categories.

Social perspective

1. People who live in places with mosquito-borne diseases should not be able to travel to other places to visit family.
2. People who get mosquito-borne diseases engage in some type of risky behavior.

Environmental Perspective

1. All mosquitoes are dangerous to humans.
2. Spraying potentially harmful chemicals to control mosquitoes around children and pregnant women is okay.

Economic Perspective

1. Mosquito bed nets protect you from mosquitoes when you are sleeping. It is okay that people who cannot afford to buy a bed net get sick more often from mosquito-borne diseases.
2. Every person should be required by the government to pay some tax money to help people who cannot afford to protect themselves from mosquito-borne diseases.
Task 1-8 Discussion Questions

As an entire team, discuss the following questions.

Remind the team that you will now engage in a discussion. When engaging in any type of meaningful discussion as a team, you must respect your team. Use the meaningful conversation starters in your discussion to respect your other team members.

Meaningful conversation starters used in the language of argumentation:

- a. I agree with ___________ because ...
- b. I disagree with ___________ because ...
- c. I’d like to go back to what ___________ said about ...
- d. I’d like to add _______________
- e. I noticed that ...
- f. Another example is ...
- g. So, what you are saying is ...
- h. Do you think that ...?
- i. Couldn’t it also be that ...?
- j. Why do you think that?
- k. Can you explain what you mean?
- l. Can you tell me more?
- m. Can you give me an example of that?

1. How did your group arrive at your decisions?
2. What decision-making methods did your group use (consensus, voting, etc.)?
3. How were your decisions influenced by the values? Attitudes? Prejudices? Aspects of identity of people in your group?
4. How were disagreements and conflicts handled?
5. What are some benefits to listening to a range of different perspectives and viewpoints on the team?
6. Is it helpful to be open to new ideas and perspectives that challenge your own? Why or why not?

Is there anything you learned in this task that would be useful when thinking about the problem question: How can we ensure health for all from mosquito-borne diseases?

Go back to Research Guide now
Meet the Team

**Mosquito!: Task 1-8 Exploring Research Perspectives**

What do you do when the team does not agree?

---

**David Pecor - Walter Reed Biosystematics Unit (WRBU)**

Sometimes people on our team do not agree. When the team does not agree, we make sure to treat each other with respect. It is important to not bring your personal feelings or opinions into the argument. Just as in science, the best evidence will determine which path to take. Sometimes there is not enough evidence to decide the argument. This means the solution is to gather more information. The team will gather information until enough exists to support one side or the other. Sometimes the solution is to discuss issues or generate new ideas. Brainstorming sessions are needed for our team. We start by focusing the group around a single issue. Then we freely explore all possible (and even some impossible) solutions together via discussion. We begin to build ideas that will eventually become real solutions. Think about how your team can work together to respect everyone’s ideas.

---

**Meera Venkatesan - President’s Malaria Initiative - United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**

Sometimes people on our team do not agree. When this happens I try to understand where the other side is coming from. I try to put myself in their shoes. Even if we do not agree, I can at least see the discussion from their perspective. This helps me approach the discussion with humility and openness. It also helps the team come to a decision we all can support. Think about how your team can work together to respect everyone’s ideas.

---

**Russane Low - Institute for Global Environmental Strategies**

Sometimes people on our team do not agree. However, it is important to see the value of listening to each member of the team. Listening deeply is not easy. It is actually very hard work. I try and see an issue from each person’s point of view. Sometimes I do not completely know where they are coming from. In these cases I try and imagine what their story might be. It is a useful way to help me talk with people I do not agree with. Being a good leader means being a good listener. Think about how your team can work together to respect everyone’s ideas.
Kelly Bennett - Biologist - Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI)
Sometimes people on our team do not agree. This is an important part of science. Conferences, meetings, and networking events are invaluable to present our work to the scientific community. Public outreach events are also important to raise awareness of our findings to the nonscientific community. These events provide opportunities to engage the thoughts and concerns of all people involved.

Lee Cohnstaedt - Research Entomologist - United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Sometimes people on our team do not agree. Respect and empathy for others, perspectives are essential to effectively defending and presenting one’s arguments. This is especially helpful when people do not agree. Bruce Lee, the famed martial artist, had a philosophy for his martial art (Jeet Kune Do), which was understanding other martial arts and incorporating their key pieces to make your own style. Another way to say this is: Understand what others are trying to do so you can defend yourself, and learn from them so you can use their moves, if it fits your style. When this philosophy is applied to life, it becomes: Learn about others, their motivations, drive, and perspective. Then, when you debate or communicate with them, be able to use the best tools - theirs, yours, or others, - to maximum effectiveness. Be true to oneself, but keep learning about others, so as to continue growth and development while maintaining an understanding of others and oneself.

Bridget Giles - Research Assistant Professor - Virginia Modeling Analysis & Simulation Center at Old Dominion University
Sometimes people on our team do not agree. Here at the Virginia Modeling Analysis and Simulation Center we build models, simulations, and visualizations to understand problems and make decisions. We investigate complex problems, design experiments, analyze data, and interpret results to help people begin to agree when at first they might not.