

paper

Supporting Perspective Taking in Honors

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Abstract

Personal development is a defining feature of honors programs, often demanding pedagogical strategies that differ from those in mainstream education. This study explores the role of perspective taking – the ability to emphasize by understanding others’ thoughts, emotions, and motivations – as a key mechanism in fostering personal growth among honors students. Through qualitative analysis of focus group data, the research identifies four distinct modes that facilitate perspective change: 1) confrontation with different cultures or target groups, 2) confrontation with unknown domains or cognitive frameworks, 3) shifts in task or role, 4) self-insight. The findings affirm that perspective change could lead to a shift in students’ interpretive frameworks. Besides, this study gives insight into educational practices that can support personal development within honors settings and offers inspiration for regular curricula.

Keywords: Personal development, perspective taking, honors education

1. Introduction

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes". ~ Marcel Proust

A crucial characteristic of many honors programs is the focus on personal development (Coppoolse et al., 2013; Van Eijl et al., 2007). Personal development can be defined as understanding yourself, your connection to others and the world around you, and the kind of impact or meaning you wish to bring to that world. Supporting students’ personal development might require different teaching approaches. One effective method is through the practice of perspective taking (Ankrah et al., 2023; Gillespie, 2006). Honors programs, in particular, offer a unique opportunity to transcend basic academic requirements and place students in scenarios that expose them to diverse perspectives. That is, in honors programs, students frequently encounter situations where they are introduced to viewpoints different from their own (Weerheijm et al., 2026). This is where perspective taking comes in.

Despite the importance of perspective taking as a skill to master, for years it has garnered relatively little attention in educational research (Southworth, 2022). However, in the past years interest in the topic has grown (e.g., Brügge-Feldhake et al., 2024; Hemer et al., 2019; Van Balen, 2025). The current study adds to this knowledge base by gaining insight into educational practices and conditions in honors settings that could promote perspective taking by answering the following research question: *“How does perspective taking take place in honors education to support personal development?”*

1.1 Why perspective taking matters

In today’s increasingly diverse educational settings, students encounter a wide range of social, cultural, and ideological differences (Neville, 2008). While such diversity fosters learning and personal development, it may also lead to tension, conflicts, and polarization when mutual understanding is lacking (Van Wonderen & van den Berg, 2019). To navigate these complexities constructively, students require a constellation of socio-cognitive and interpersonal skills. One of these socio-cognitive skills is perspective taking.

The Inner Development Goals Framework (Ankrah et al., 2023) conceptualizes perspective taking as part of a broader set of 23 interdependent skills spanning five dimensions (i.e., being, thinking, relating, collaborating, acting). Rather than functioning as a standalone solution to complex challenges, perspective taking is viewed as one competency that works together with others, such as critical thinking, humility, co-creation, and creativity. Within this framework, perspective taking helps individuals cultivate open-mindedness and curiosity and to actively seek out diverse viewpoints (Stålne & Greca, 2022). The Inner Development Goals Framework (Ankrah et al., 2023) also positions perspective taking as one of several interconnected skills that together enable individuals to engage with complex societal challenges.

Empirical work shows that being able to shift perspectives contributes to a wide range of (developmental) outcomes, including civic identity formation (Johnson, 2015), reducing intergroup bias (Todd et al., 2011), promoting responsible citizenship (Nussbaum, 2016), expanding world views (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011), deepening understanding of themselves in broader social and historical contexts (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Nagda & Zúñiga, 2003), wise decision-making and self-understanding (Ankrah et al., 2023; McHugh & Stewart, 2012), open-mindedness and curiosity (Stålne & Greca, 2022), empathy (Gehlbach, 2004; Gehlbach et al., 2015; Hall et al., 2021; Oudshoorn-Fuller, 2025), improved social interactions (Hall et al., 2021) and social connectedness (Ku et al., 2015; Lamblin et al., 2017; Todd & Galinsky, 2014).

In education perspective taking is particularly relevant when students engage with people from different backgrounds and disciplines. Students should be able to articulate the central viewpoint on a complex issue from the standpoint of another academic discipline and need to communicate across academic boundaries. Furthermore, students must develop an understanding of how knowledge and ideas from their own discipline diverge from those of other fields. This process requires a respectful engagement with differing disciplinary perspectives, accompanied by disciplinary humility. As such it is conceptualized as a core learning objective in transdisciplinary education (Blom et al., 2021).

Taken together, perspective taking makes a meaningful contribution to student's personal development. Perspective taking helps students understand oneself in relation to others and the world. Besides, it helps in becoming a person capable of acting autonomously and responsibly in society (Biesta, 2020), as well as working interdisciplinary. Perspective taking enables students to confront cognitive biases and broaden their self-concept, recognizing others as equally legitimate subjects (Gehlbach, 2004; Hall et al., 2021; Southworth, 2022; Stålné & Greca, 2022). Promoting perspective taking within education allows students to "see things in a different light," underscoring its transformative potential.

1.2 What is perspective taking?

Perspective taking refers to the capacity to understand and reflect on both one's own viewpoint and those of others, particularly in complex and systemic contexts (Brügge-Feldhake et al., 2024; Stålné & Greca, 2022). It is closely related to Theory of Mind (ToM) and broadly entails placing oneself in another's position to discern their thoughts, emotions, and motivations (Mouw, 2018; Southworth, 2022). This process can occur in interpersonal interactions or within broader cultural, historical, and political frameworks (Gehlbach et al., 2012, 2015), and requires deliberate cognitive engagement and contextual awareness (Cole & Millett, 2019; Ottenheim-Vliegen et al., 2023).

The literature distinguishes between cognitive and social perspective taking (see Oudshoorn-Fuller, 2025 for a similar distinction regarding empathy). Cognitive perspective taking involves *understanding* the feelings of others (Brügge-Feldhake et al., 2024; Sandahl, 2020; Southworth, 2022). The student is able to infer, understand, and reason about someone's intentions, motivations and thoughts (Brügge-Feldhake et al., 2024; Mouw, 2018). In social perspective taking, a student can empathize with the other perspective (Brügge-Feldhake et al., 2024). This also involves *caring* about the emotional state of others and/or personally experiencing the emotions of the other individual (Mouw, 2018). Social perspective taking can be developed through cultivating and understanding of other people and societies, recognizing different perspectives, consideration of alternative ideological and cultural contexts, and heightened self-awareness of own values, motives and beliefs (Sandahl, 2020).

1.3 Promoting perspective taking

Research indicates that perspective taking can be trained within an educational setting. Classroom interventions such as book clubs and film-based discussions have proven effective in fostering this skill, as they encourage students to build on one another's reasoning and engage in exploratory and argumentative dialogue (Fehim Kennedy et al., 2011; Khokhlova & Bhatia, 2023). Group discussions, in particular, provide students with the opportunity to see how their perspectives affect others and to encounter different viewpoints (Van Balen, 2025). Facilitating peer-to-peer interaction during whole-class conversations further supports the development of perspective taking by promoting authentic dialogue and exposure to diverse perspectives.

However, many pedagogical approaches presuppose that students possess a foundational capacity for perspective taking. Brügge-Feldhake et al. (2024) emphasize that this basic ability must first be established before more advanced skills can be developed. To support this progression, they propose a didactical framework comprising six interrelated steps

(Table 1, with illustrative example of a classroom discussion). While presented sequentially, the model is intended to be flexible rather than prescriptive.

Table 1: Didactical Model to Promote Perspective Taking (Brügge-Feldhake et al., 2024)

Step	Description	Example (Classroom discussion on proposed law banning plastic packaging)
<i>Recognizing perspectives</i>	Students become aware of the existence of multiple viewpoints.	Students identify that there are different opinions about the proposed law: from the teacher, a classmate and their own opinion.
<i>Exploring perspectives</i>	Students analyse distinct perspectives and their underlying motivations.	Different people in the classroom represent the different perspectives: the teacher represents the governmental view, one student the corporate stance, and another the consumer perspective.
<i>Comparing perspectives</i>	Students identify points of convergence and divergence between perspectives.	Students map similarities and differences; e.g., both the government and environmentally conscious consumers may support the ban, while companies may oppose it due to financial concerns.
<i>Adopting perspectives</i>	Students put themselves in someone else's shoes and see the issue from their viewpoint.	Students articulate arguments from a viewpoint other than their own, such as defending the corporate position.
<i>Coordinating perspectives</i>	Students synthesize multiple viewpoints to formulate a shared, integrative perspective.	Students propose cost-effective alternatives to plastic packaging that satisfy both environmental and economic interests.
<i>Identifying with perspectives</i>	Students commit to a specific viewpoint and make it their own.	Students consider whether one of the perspectives on the news of banning plastic packaging aligns with their own view.

1.4 Current research focus

As education increasingly moves toward transdisciplinary approaches (Kurriss et al., 2026), the ability to engage with and shift between multiple perspectives becomes not only beneficial but essential within higher education contexts. Although Brügge-Feldhake et al. (2024) offer a didactical framework outlining the steps involved in developing perspective-taking skills, concrete, practice-based examples of how such skills are fostered in higher education remain scarce. Honors education, with its emphasis on inter- and transdisciplinary engagement and focus on personal development en societal engagement, offers a conducive environment for cultivating perspective taking. The current study draws on the framework of Brügge-Feldhake et al. (2024) as an analytical lens to explore how perspective taking is facilitated in honors classrooms. By identifying concrete modes that foster perspective taking, this study contributes empirical grounding to existing conceptual models, insight into how perspective taking is cultivated in honors contexts, and actionable implications for teaching practice.

2. Method

2.1 Secondary analysis of prior data

The present study utilizes a dataset collected in the spring of 2024 as part of an evaluation study of the honors programs at our university (Zijlstra et al., 2024). The goal of this study was to examine how honors education fosters personal development and societal engagement. Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the university's ethics review board (blinded). As we noticed in initial analyses that perspective taking was an often used skill to support personal development, we decided to re-analyse the data to gain a deeper understanding of how perspective taking is used in honors education. The current study presents those analyses.

2.2 Context

The study took place at Hanze University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. At this university of applied sciences around 30,000 bachelor's and master's students are enrolled, with around 500 of them participating in our honors programs. At Hanze University of Applied Sciences, honors programs are extracurricular, interdisciplinary, three year programs (30 ECTS), starting in the second year of the bachelor's program. They encompass disciplinary and interdisciplinary labs aimed at deepening the knowledge, broadening horizons, and fostering personal development for students eager to surpass the standard curriculum. All labs foster societal engagement of students and are linked to one or more of the Sustainable Development Goals.

2.3 Participants

Students and teachers could voluntarily sign up to participate in the study. Students were recruited via the university's honors intranet, via email and via their teachers. All honors coordinators (i.e., honors teachers responsible for their school's honors program) were asked to participate via email. Ultimately, we had four focus groups with ten honors students (1 to 4 students per group) and three focus groups with thirteen teachers (4 to 5 per group). In one instance, only a single student registered for the scheduled time slot. Because we considered their perspective valuable for the purpose of the study, we proceeded with an individual interview rather than cancelling the session.

Students were at different phases in the programme and came from five different faculties within our university. Teachers came from eleven different faculties, and all were involved in honors education for several years.

2.4 Procedure

The focus groups consisted of three phases: 1) drawing honors journey (students only), 2) identifying powerful learning moments and 3) discussing the powerful learning moments.

2.4.1 Drawing honors journey

To help students recall what they had done throughout their honors program and how these experiences contributed to their personal development and societal engagement, we began each focus group with an individual timeline-drawing activity (Beijaard et al., 1999; Haenen et al., 2025; Scager et al., 2013). In chronological order, they indicated the honors activities they had participated in from the start of their honors program up to the time of the focus group session. Subsequently, they were instructed to draw three graph lines to

evaluate on a scale from 1 to 10, their levels of a) personal development, b) societal engagement, c) motivation for each listed activity.

2.4.2 Identifying powerful learning moments

Next, we asked students to identify two powerful learning moments on their timeline in which their personal development (moment A) and their societal involvement (moment B) was particularly high. Teachers were also asked (reflecting on their experiences with teaching and mentoring students in the honors program) to recall two powerful learning moments related to personal development (A) and societal involvement (B) that they observed in their students. For each selected moment, participants completed a short form addressing four questions: What happened? Where did the moment take place? Who were you with? What was your role?

2.4.3 Discussing the powerful learning moments

The identified powerful learning moments served as the foundation for the subsequent focus group discussion. Teachers and students were asked to reflect on these moments and to explore factors that enabled personal development or social engagement during those instances.

2.5 Analysis

All focus groups were recorded and transcribed verbatim. During the primary round of analyses, we already identified the powerful learning moments. In the current analysis of the data, we used these excerpts from the transcripts as our units of analysis to conduct a new round of coding on. First, two researchers independently coded in which segments participants described an instance of perspective taking. We did not distinguish between social and cognitive perspective taking. Second, an inductive round of coding was carried out to address the question: "What enables the perspective shift?". To ensure reliability, the two researchers checked each other's codes and reached consensus through discussion. Finally, relevant literature was consulted to further deepen the understanding of perspective shifts. Insights from this literature review informed a revision and refinement of the initial codes. This iterative process ultimately led to the identification of four modes through which perspective change can be supported to foster personal development within the honors classroom.

3. Results

In the subsequent section, we first describe the four identified modes for perspective change: confrontation with diverse cultures or target groups, confrontation with diverse domains or ways of thinking, a task or role change, and self-insight. We will illustrate the modes with examples from our study. After that, we will link the examples to the didactical steps of Brügge-Feldhake et al. (2024). Table 1 provides an overview of the modes, examples and didactical steps.

Table 2: Modes, examples and didactical steps

Mode for perspective change	Example	Didactical step
Confrontation with diverse domains or ways of thinking	Students present their discipline to each other	Recognizing
	Group discussion where different perspectives are explored	Exploring
	Capturing ways where the law is not followed and writing an essay about it	Comparing
	Art students make art based on an essay about law	Adopting
	A shared final product of art and law students	Coordinating
Development of self-insight	Encounter between a student and a homeless person	Identifying
	Sharing failing experiences with other students	Recognizing
	Reflection on one's own failing experience	Exploring
Role change or task change	Relating to 'fail' experiences of other students	Comparing
	Group discussion where different perspectives are explored	Exploring
	Group discussion where different perspectives are compared	Comparing
	Students teach students in another year	Adopting
Confrontation with diverse cultures or target groups	Brainstorm where a student gives advice from a certain role	Identifying
	Watching a movie with the instruction to see the movie from different perspectives	Comparing
	Art students make art based on an essay about law	Adopting
	Collaborating on a construction project abroad alongside professionals with different backgrounds	Coordinating
	Students are co-workers in a construction project	Identifying

3.1 Confrontation with diverse domains or ways of thinking

Encountering diverse domains or ways of thinking means that students face situations where they are exposed to new fields of knowledge or alternative viewpoints. In the focus groups, several examples were given that show this mode of perspective taking challenges existing beliefs and fosters the didactical steps of *recognition of perspectives* and the *exploration of perspectives*.

In order to promote *recognition of perspectives* several concrete activities were described. A teacher described that students presented their own discipline to classmates. In another example described by a teacher, students developed a podcast on socially relevant themes. Furthermore, another teacher mentioned a masterclass in which students engaged with contrasting viewpoints by writing a paper comparing fake news with fiction.

Comparison of perspectives was described by a student through reflecting on how the assignment provided insight into mechanisms by which individuals become attached to particular ideas. Another example came from a law module where a discussion on privacy incorporated multiple viewpoints; beyond privacy, additional substantive themes – such as contemporary news – were explored through both personal and legal lenses, encouraging students to articulate their individual interpretations. Teachers were actively engaged in the activity, thereby contributing to the cultivation of a collaborative learning environment. Students' perspectives were solicited through reflective questioning, focusing on what aspects of the material resonated with them and how these elements influenced their understanding. This activity can also be related to self-insight (see Section 3.2.)

3.2 Development of self-insight

Self-insight refers to the capacity to understand one's own thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Developing self-insight enables students to become aware of their individual perspectives and cognitive frameworks. In the focus groups, several examples were given that align with the didactical steps of *recognizing perspectives*, *exploring perspectives* and *comparing perspectives*

Recognition of perspectives was fostered by teachers through creating awareness of different motivations for course participation. A teacher described that students chose the labs in their honours program based on availability, rather than personal interest. The teacher stimulated perspective taking by asking questions that encouraged students to reflect on their own passions rather than focusing on what is possible according to the program's schedule.

Exploring of perspectives could be fostered by granting students autonomy to design an application tailored to a specific target group. Through this process, a student uncovered their passion. Similarly, the opportunity to experiment in practice, and being encouraged to engage with different viewpoints, before engaging in formal writing served as another avenue for self-reflection.

Another example that accommodated *recognizing perspectives*, *exploration of perspectives* and *comparing perspectives* was a module in which dealing with failure was the central theme. While preparing for the final presentation of that module, a student realized how far she had come through extensive self-reflection. Further, listening to other students' stories and understanding their struggles allowed her to relate to them. *Recognizing perspectives* is highlighted in this activity because all students who attended the module shared their experiences with the fear of failure. The *exploration of perspectives* occurred through the opportunity to reflect. *Comparing perspectives* was central, as students were asked to relate themselves to the perspectives of other students.

3.3 Role change or task change

A change in role or task implies that students undergo a shift in their responsibilities or are positioned in a role distinct from the traditional student. Adapting to new roles or tasks requires understanding and appreciating the viewpoints of others. The examples from our study illustrate that role or task changes can actively promote perspective-taking through specific didactical strategies namely: *adopting perspectives* and *identifying with perspectives*.

An example of *adopting perspectives* was letting students adopt a teacher role by teaching students from another year group. The student teachers developed awareness that fellow learners were interested in the knowledge they teach. In another example we saw that students followed a course as either a junior or a senior, which involved different tasks and responsibilities.

Identifying with perspectives was achieved by letting students give others advice from a particular role. This happened for example during a brainstorm for a company on their new building. Within the brainstorm everyone got assigned a different role, for example a mother or an artist. Everyone could contribute to the discussion from their own role, representing diverse perspectives. Another example of *identifying with perspectives* was an international construction project where students collaborated alongside professionals. Rather than merely adopting the position of students, they actively participated as contributors to the project, thereby identifying with the perspective of co-workers.

3.4 Confrontation with diverse cultures or target groups

Confrontation with diverse cultural backgrounds or specific target groups refers to the intentional exposure of students to diverse cultures and target groups. Through different activities within one course, the following example (described by both a student and a teacher) illustrates how various didactical steps can come into play in the mode confrontation with diverse cultural backgrounds or specific target groups.

In this interdisciplinary module (arts and law students) three assumptions of law were examined. In the first part of the module, students watched films that encouraged them to view the law from different perspectives. In this activity, *comparing perspectives* was central. In the second part, students went into the city centre and were tasked with photographing 'occurrences of law' in action, such as illegally parked bikes. This activity involved *comparing perspectives*, as students captured instances where the law is not being obeyed. During this activity, one student spontaneously engaged in a conversation with a homeless person. Reflecting on this experience, the student remarked that they had never before interacted with homeless individuals: "It gave me a completely new perspective on the homeless, their actions, and their way of life." Through this activity the student *identified with a perspective*, namely a homeless person and came to recognize the homeless individual as a fellow human being.

In the third part of the module, students were required to write an essay on the assumptions of law. This involved *comparing perspectives*, as it addressed whether the law achieves its intended purpose. Subsequently, the students presented their papers to art students. The art students were challenged to create art based on the essay, which

exemplifies *adopting perspectives*. The law students then provided feedback to the art students. Through this exchange, both groups learned from each other's learning processes, backgrounds and thought patterns. This collaborative effort is an example of *coordinating perspectives*, as the students worked together to produce a shared final product.

3.5 Relating didactical steps and modes for perspective change

Within our dataset we were able to identify instances of all didactical steps outlined by Brügge-Feldhake et al. (2024) for promoting perspective taking. Table 1 presents the modes that emerged from each didactical step, along with illustrative examples. These findings highlight the diverse strategies honors teachers use to foster perspective taking among students.

Notably, the mode 'Confrontation with diverse domains or ways of thinking' incorporates all instructional steps of Brügge-Feldhake et al., (2024), underscoring the pivotal role of cognitive flexibility in facilitating perspective shifts. In contrast, the mode 'Development of self-insight' is confined to the initial three steps, indicating that personal reflection predominantly functions as a catalyst in the early stages of the process.

4. Discussion and conclusion

This research has investigated how perspective change is fostered as a mechanism for personal development within honors education at [INSTITUTE]. Drawing on a theoretical framework that positions perspective-taking as central to identity formation (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011), qualitative analysis of focus group data revealed four recurring modes in fostering perspective taking: 1) confrontation with diverse domains or ways of thinking, 2) self-insight, 3) role or task change and 4) confrontation with diverse cultures or target groups. In each of these modes particular didactical steps can be distinguished. Although not every mode was evident within a didactic strategy, they collectively offer a nuanced understanding of the conditions under which perspective change may be facilitated.

4.1 Theoretical and practical implications

The findings of this study carry several implications for theory and educational practice. First, they affirm that shifts in students' interpretive frameworks – how they perceive themselves, others and the world – can serve as a foundation for personal development. This appears from several examples in our study; a student recognizing a homeless person as equal, students teaching other students, and the collective sharing of experiences of failure. These instances support Akkerman and Bakker's (2011) assertion that perspective taking can broaden one's sense of identity. By integrating strategies that promote perspective change into curricula, higher education can reposition personal development as a central pedagogical objective rather than a peripheral outcome.

Second, this study demonstrates that perspective taking can be facilitated through a range of modes, including role transitions and confrontation with different domains. For example, policy analysis assignments enable students to assume the perspective of a policymaker, prompting them to step beyond their habitual cognitive and social frameworks. Such exercises foster the capacity to empathize with alternative viewpoints and critically examine their own assumptions. Additionally, exposure to diverse cultures or engagement with

specific target groups, whether through *out-of-class experiences* or working together with different disciplines, further enhances students' ability to navigate unfamiliar perspectives.

Third, self-insight seems to play a foundational role within perspective taking. Grant et al. (2002) argue that self-insight contributes to personal development by fostering adaptive self-reflection and self-regulation. Reflective practices enable students to recognize parallels between their own experiences and those of others, deepening their understanding of societal contexts (Gerace et al., 2017). This inward-facing dimension of perspective-taking contributes meaningfully to personal development.

Fourth, the data indicate that perspective taking is a dynamic and non-linear process. Therefore, teachers must carefully consider the intended learning outcomes and align them with the diverse needs and backgrounds of students. Moreover, practicing perspective taking in the classroom requires creating a safe and supportive learning environment in which students feel free to explore and relate to different perspectives (Hemer et al., 2019).

Finally, there are two commonalities within the didactical strategies, that according to students and teachers, contributed to moments of personal development through a shift in perspective taking. Across the different modes, *out-of-class experiences* and dialogic learning were frequently mentioned as enabling factors. *Out-of-class experiences* – such as intercultural encounters and confrontation with diverse disciplines – were commonly used to foster perspective change. Examples are the encounter between a student and a homeless person and a brainstorm where a student gives advice from a certain role. *Out-of-class experiences* are especially prominent within the modes 'Another domain or way of thinking', 'Role change or task change' and 'Confrontation with another culture or target group'. The data suggests that such experiences provoke meaningful engagement and critical reflection, enabling students to reconsider their assumptions and broaden their interpretive frameworks. As such they can be a powerful didactical way to work on the step 'Identifying with perspectives'. The findings align with Hemer et al. (2019), who advocate for learning environments where the confrontation with diverse disciplines is central. In the context of *out-of-class experiences*, Engberg et al. (2011) suggest that service-learning could foster perspective taking; something which was central in the example of students collaborating with different disciplines in a construction project.

Another frequently employed didactical approach was *dialogic learning* – sustained, structured, facilitated communication processes (Nagda & Zúñiga, 2003). This form of learning was particularly evident in contexts where students engaged in peer-to-peer interactions, such as sharing personal experiences of failure and participating in guided discussions that exposed them to diverse perspectives. Dialogic learning helps students to 'Explore perspectives' and is prominent in the modes 'Another domain or way of thinking' and 'Role or change', where structured dialogue enables students to arrive at novel insights and alternative viewpoints. Similarly, related to the didactical step 'Identifying with perspectives' and within the modes 'Role change or task change' and 'Confrontation with another culture or target group', students benefit from structured peer interactions to foster perspective change. Structured peer discussion and sharing experiences promote engagement across differences and enhance students' ability to adopt alternative

viewpoints (Nagda & Zúñiga, 2003; Van Balen, 2025). Hence, both out-of-class experiences and dialogic learning seem to be potent didactical approaches to personal development.

4.2 Limitations and future directions

There are several limitations to this research. First, the sample size was relatively small and confined to honors education, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. However, it gave us the opportunity to explore the described educational practices in detail. Further, although honors programmes often design these experiences more explicitly, their underlying pedagogical principles are transferable to regular curricula. The didactical steps from Brügge-Feldhake et al. (2024) offer a design-based approach that can inform the integration of similar strategies into mainstream education. Furthermore, the described educational practices can serve as inspiration across educational practices.

Second, although the data provided rich insight into the participant's experiences and how perspective taking is implemented in honors education, the data were based solely on self-report. As a result, they provide only limited insight into the actual developmental change students experienced or into what occurred in classroom practice. Future research could more directly trace students' development of perspective-taking skills (e.g., Leijenaar et al., 2025) and incorporate classroom observations to build a more comprehensive understanding of both learning processes and teachers' pedagogical competences in facilitating perspective taking.

Third, because this is a secondary analysis of data, we didn't explicitly ask teachers and students how perspective-taking moments are created. It is therefore essential to recognize that additional didactic strategies or pathways to perspective change may exist beyond those identified in this study. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted as a partial representation of the broader pedagogical landscape. Triangulating qualitative findings with longitudinal or mixed-method approaches would strengthen future research in this area. Further, the information available for each described moment of perspective change was not sufficiently detailed to reliably differentiate between cognitive and social forms of perspective taking.

Fourth, this study has illustrated how the didactical steps proposed by Brügge-Feldhake et al. (2024) can be effectively implemented in practice. However, further exploration through design based research is needed to examine the exact underlying conditions and processes that support perspective taking (Van Turnhout et al., 2023). In this way insight can be gained into the initiating factors that trigger perspective change, the learning mechanisms through which change occurs, the contextual variables that influence the process and the outcome of perspective change in relation to personal development.

4.3 Conclusion

This research illustrated how honors education can be a fertile ground for personal development through perspective taking. By identifying key modes for perspective change and their associated didactical strategies, this study offers teachers a conceptual framework to intentionally design learning experiences that promote perspective taking. In doing so,

the study provides both theoretical and practical insights that can inform the design of learning experiences that promote perspective change within higher education.

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