



Activity: Unraveling Bias in News Reporting

Objective: To help participants understand the concept of bias and recognize its influence on news reporting, fostering critical thinking skills when consuming media. By engaging participants in this activity, they will gain a deeper understanding of bias in news reporting and become more adept at critically evaluating the information they encounter in the media.

Materials:

- Whiteboard and markers or projector
- Print Copies of articles from *The Spokesman-Review* NIE e-Edition with clear instances of bias
- Handouts with discussion questions (see below)

Introduction (10 minutes):

Begin with a brief discussion about what participants understand by the term "bias." Encourage them to share their thoughts and examples, if any.

Explain that bias refers to the inclination or prejudice for or against something, often resulting in unfair judgments or decisions. In the context of news reporting, bias can affect how information is presented, influencing readers' perceptions.

Defining Bias (15 minutes):

Use the whiteboard or projector to display a simple definition of bias: "Bias is the presence of a personal, cultural, or ideological leaning that affects one's ability to make objective judgments."

Provide examples of different types of bias, such as political bias, confirmation bias, and cultural bias. Discuss each example to ensure participants grasp the nuances.

Analyzing Bias in News Reporting (20 minutes):

Distribute printed or digital news articles that clearly demonstrate bias. These articles can be on controversial topics, where different news sources report the same event with varying biases.

In pairs or small groups, ask participants to read the articles and identify the biases present. They should highlight specific language, tone, or framing that indicates bias.

Reconvene as a whole group and discuss the biases discovered. Encourage participants to explain their findings and how bias might affect readers' interpretations of the news.

Facilitate a broader conversation on the potential consequences of biased reporting, including how it can perpetuate stereotypes, create misinformation, and contribute to polarization.

Group Discussion (10 minutes):

Provide participants with handouts containing discussion questions related to bias in news reporting. Some sample questions could include:

- How can bias in news reporting impact public perception and understanding of events?
- What strategies can individuals use to identify bias in news articles?
- In what ways might bias be introduced unintentionally in news reporting?
- How can media literacy skills help mitigate the influence of biased reporting?
- Can you think of any real-world examples where biased reporting had significant societal consequences?

Reflection and Closing (5 minutes):

Ask participants to reflect on what they've learned about bias in news reporting and its implications.

Emphasize the importance of critical thinking and media literacy skills in navigating the complex landscape of news consumption.

Provide resources, such as fact-checking websites and guidelines for evaluating news sources, to help participants continue developing their media literacy skills.

Optional Extension:

Encourage participants to analyze news articles on their own and identify instances of bias. They can then share their findings in the next session or through an online discussion forum.