Pop Imagination

Created: September 2017
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Estimated time:	50 minutes ● [10 minutes] Activity #1 ● [40 minutes] Assignment
Group or individual activity:	Group
Ages:	11-18 years old
Grades:	Grades 6-12
Online / offline elements:	This learning experience contains links to online resources to help facilitate a group-based discussion, with an offline writing assignment.
Areas:	Main area: Civic and Political Engagement Additional areas: Content Production, Information Literacy, Positive / Respectful Behavior
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Learning Goal

Participants will explore how popular culture characters and stories can and have been used to foster awareness and advocacy around various causes. Participants will identify one popular culture character and story that can be used to promote awareness around an issue that is important to them.

Materials

- [For educator] Computer with Internet access
- Projector and projection screen
- [Two per group of 3 participants] Paper
- [One per participant] Pens or pencils

Resources

- Article: [Cambodia: 'Avatar' Rally to Protect Country's Forest](#) - by Sopheap Chak (Global Voices)
- Blog post: [Avatar Activism and Beyond](#) - by Henry Jenkins
- Video: [The Hunger Games Are Real](#) - by The Harry Potter Alliance
- Video: [Be the Hero You Read About. Ashoka Fellow Andrew Slack](#) - by Ashoka
- Video: [Harry Potter Fans Win Against Child Slavery](#) - by The Harry Potter Alliance

Activity #1: Pop Culture and Activism

SAY:
- Drawing upon images, lessons, or examples from characters in your favorite books, movies, and TV shows can be an excellent way to raise awareness about a cause. Often, the experiences of fictional characters can influence how people think about real-world issues.
- For example, Harry Potter's attitude towards house-elves might make you more concerned about child slavery or poor working conditions in the manufacturing industry. After James Cameron's Avatar was released, interest in environmental protection causes increased. Admirable characters have the potential to affect wider behavioral changes, making them perfect for use in advocacy campaigns.

[On a projection screen, show a recent video example aligned with your / participants' local / regional context to further solidify the concept of using popular culture to raise awareness around a cause. An example from the United States context (in English) is

[Harry Potter Fans Win Against Child Slavery](#) by The Harry Potter Alliance. After showing the video, explain why you chose this video and why you believe it's a good example of promoting awareness around an issue through pop culture.]

- In the following assignment, you will develop your own advocacy campaign using a popular culture character or story.

Assignment

SAY:
- We are going to go around the room and have each person name a few of their favorite pop culture characters or stories.

[Have participants name two or three of their favorite characters or stories. Afterwards, arrange students into groups of 3 based on similar interests.]

SAY:
- As a group, identify a pop culture character or story that you can use to communicate an issue that is important to you.
- As a group, write down answers to the following questions:
    - What is your pop culture character or story?
    - What issue would you like to address using the character or story?
    - Which movie, musical composition, or fictional world would you use as inspiration for your advocacy efforts?
    - How might you make a piece of media (e.g., song, cartoon, poster, etc.) based on your favorite form of pop culture to raise awareness about your chosen issue?
    - How might you share this work online and reach a large audience?

[Give groups 20 minutes to complete this assignment. Afterwards, ask groups to share their ideas with the larger group.]