

Lesson 1

How others see a person

There is more to a person than one might think

Learning objective	The students experience the complexity of views and make their own choices.
Student tasks	The students are assigned specific roles and form their views. They learn how to switch perspective.
Resources	Role descriptions, handouts 1.1 (groups 1-3), large sheets of paper, markers.
Method	Group work.

The lesson

The students form three groups and receive student handout 1.1 (in three different versions for different groups), a large sheet of paper and a marker. (In big classes more groups can be set up and the teacher then provides more scenes to be acted, or the same task is given to different groups. The latter might be an interesting scenario, as it will show how very different descriptions and understanding can be.) The teacher then tells the story about the boy who has moved house and is exploring his new environment. He tells the class about the boy's diary but does not read it aloud to the class, as each group only has only received part of the text.

Background information for teachers

The complete text runs as follows:

"It is my first day in my new class. My family has moved here from another region and I still feel like a stranger. Dear diary, a lot has happened to me in the last few days. I will tell you about some of it.

We now live in an apartment near the river. One of the boys in my class lives a few doors away. He already came up to me on the third day to ask me to go fishing with him. I said no because my fishing rod is still packed in one of the boxes.

There is a big football pitch in front of our school building. I was happy about this because I like playing football. So I brought along my ball and wanted to start training. I had just started shooting a goal or two when the school warden stopped me. He was angry and asked me if I couldn't read. I hadn't seen the sign saying that the pitch was closed after it had rained. I was so shocked that I went home without saying a word.

An old man lives alone in the apartment above ours. When I came home yesterday, I met him at the front door with his shopping. He was carrying a bag with food and he was breathing heavily. I felt sorry for him. I asked if I could help him, and carried his bag up to his door."

The three versions of the handouts for the groups contain different parts of the diary. The groups' perception will differ depending on the information that they have received. Therefore, each group sees only part of the boy's identity and reflects this view in the role play. As required in the tasks, the groups first present their sets of adjectives. One member of each group collects the results from the group discussion on the large sheet for the presentation in the next lesson.

Now each group decides on a short role play that represents their interpretation. These role plays should first be explained and discussed in class and then rehearsed. This could take place in different corners of the classroom, or perhaps in conference rooms in the school building, in external buildings or, if the weather allows, in the playground. Even if the role play takes some time at the beginning, the effort will be worthwhile. For many students, what is often difficult to express in words may now be stated simply and clearly.

The objective for the students in this lesson is to have written the lists of adjectives on the posters and to have rehearsed the scene.

At the end of the lesson the teacher collects the posters (he will redistribute them at the beginning of the next lesson) and carries out a short debriefing. He gives positive feedback and looks at the topic of the following lesson.