

Lesson 4

Identity: Stereotypes about me!

How do I see myself – how do others see me?

Learning objectives	The students become aware of how they are perceived by others and learn to accept this. They understand better how others view and react to their identity. They explore the effect their identity has on others.
Student tasks	The students describe themselves and each other and compare their results.
Resources	Student handout 1.2.
Method	Work in pairs. Plenary discussion.

The lesson

The teacher begins the lesson by summarising the results of the two previous lessons and explaining the schedule for today’s lesson.

The teacher then reminds the class that they had started by looking at an individual (the personal situation of a boy) and that they had then moved on to study how larger groups, such as professions, ethnic groups and whole countries, are viewed. Now they will again focus on the individual, but this time the students themselves – everyone in the classroom – will be the focus. They will concentrate on the question:

Who am I?	
How would I describe myself?	self-perception
How would a student in class describe me?	perception by others

The teacher supports his introduction to the lesson by drawing this table on the blackboard or on a flip chart. He or she may also ask the students to repeat what they have learnt in the last two lessons about the difference between self-perception and perception by others. In addition, or as an alternative, he may repeat the key concepts of stereotypes and prejudices.

The teacher now takes the handouts showing the students’ descriptions of Max. These should help the students to think of as many qualities and characteristics of people as possible. The students are given the task of listing as many adjectives as possible that may be used to describe a person. The teacher will certainly have to give some ideas and suggestions at this point. For example, the students can be guided by categories which give descriptive adjectives meaning and focus. Such categories could include the following:

How would we describe people:

- if they are in a good mood?
- if they are in a bad mood or even furious?
- if they are good friends?
- if we want to describe what they look like?
- if we want to describe them as students?
- ...

Rather than asking a few students to give some ideas in a frontal teaching situation, the whole class should be involved. This can be achieved by the following exercise,⁵ in which the students work alone to produce a variety of ideas. In the corners of the classroom, or on separate tables, large sheets of paper should have been hung up or laid out. On these sheets, different keywords or categories have been given as headings. The students move about the room in silence and write down their ideas on the posters (ideally with markers provided with each poster). As they can read what other students have written, the students should not repeat one another, but may respond with comments and new ideas.

5. The exercise suggested here is a variant of “The Wall of Silence” (see EDC/HRE Volume VI, *Developing New Ideas in EDC/HRE*).

The result of such an exercise might look like this:

What is a person like when he is in a good mood?

- cheerful
- joking
- relaxed
- communicative
- singing
- charming
- ...
- ...

No follow-up in the plenary discussion is necessary, as the purpose of this exercise is to give the students ideas to work with in the following step. The teacher should have already considered which students could work together in pairs at this stage. This is important, as the topic the students will deal with is a delicate one. The teacher should therefore avoid putting students together who dislike each other, and should make sure nobody's feelings get hurt.

The teams receive the following task:

You will now explore how you perceive yourselves and each other. Do this in the following way:

- First, work by yourselves.
- Look at the many descriptions on the posters in the classroom and choose words that, in your opinion, describe you well. Write them on the handout.
- Add your qualities and the descriptions of yourself in certain situations that you have not found on the posters. Write them on the handout.
- Then describe your partner in the same way.
- When you have both finished, share your results. It will be interesting to see which descriptions and judgments match and which differ or even contradict each other. Express your thoughts and feelings:
 - What surprises me?
 - What makes me happy?
 - What annoys me?
 - What hurts me?
 - Can you back up your judgment with some examples?
 - Which descriptions are (positive or negative) stereotypes?

The teacher should decide whether to arrange a final plenary debriefing at the end of this lesson (which is also the end of this unit, although continuations are possible) or whether to summarise the process of learning over the past four lessons. Whichever method he chooses, the teacher will notice that the working atmosphere in the class has improved during the course of this unit. The

students will have developed closer relationships to one another and will have made interesting discoveries and shared them with each other. They can now distinguish between:

- stereotypes and prejudices;
- self-perception and perception by others.

They have made progress in developing their social competence, which will benefit them in their daily lives, both in class and school as a whole. The students will often come across the themes raised by these four lessons, thus consolidating what they have learnt.