Seeing & being

An introduction for educators
With tips and extra information

Text in italics are taken form the online learning tool

Every day we look at objects, people and situations. It helps us to discover the world around us. You will explore questions about who you are, which groups you belong to, how other people see you and how you see other people. In real life, the answers aren't always easy, but the activities will help you uncover some of them.

Aims
In this learning path, learners:

- Reflect on how they see themselves and other people.

- Explore different aspects of their own identity.

- Are introduced to diversity as a natural part of the world around them.

- Consider the role prejudices can have on people's lives.

Structure
The Seeing & Being learning path consists of three tracks (lessons) each with a number of steps.

Track 1: Learners explore how they make assumptions.

Track 2: Learners look at the multiple identities everyone has.

Track 3: Homes in on what is visible and what is not, and what people choose to reveal about themselves or not. Learners also explore the role played by prejudices.

Learners should be able to complete this learning path in about 150 minutes, or 50 minutes per track. You can choose how many of the tracks to do. All three are easily adaptable to the ability level of your learners.

Flow of work - Icons

Learners will often work in pairs, small groups or discuss a topic with the whole class. The flow for each step is easily recognised with the help of the following icons:

Answering questions individually allows time to formulate a personal response.

Discussing topics in pairs gives everyone the chance to voice an opinion and discuss in a simple format, with one person.

Discussing in small groups allows for more opinions to be shared and also creates a comfortable space to voice ideas. Not all learners are keen to express themselves in a larger group.

Class discussions give the opportunity to bring the group together to review the work being done and also give you as the educator a moment to summarise some main outcomes.

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Track 1 – What do I see?

Time: about 50 minutes

Whenever we look at a person we make assumptions. What are they actually based on? Let's find out.

Outline
Learners are asked to think about the things they *assume* about what they can see and to consider that the more they see of an image or the more they know about a person, the more they realise that we often make assumptions based on very little information. Learners are not yet introduced to prejudices, but they are encouraged on a very general level to consider how perceptions lead to assumptions.

Step 1 Assumptions
Describe in your own words: what is an assumption?

Learners will return to their answers at the end of this track.

Step 2 Mystery picture
You will be shown five photographs, one by one. As each appears, write down what you see.

Learners are asked to write down what they see in five consecutive images of what turns out to be the same picture, each image zoomed out more to show 'the bigger picture'. They may guess or ask about the people they see in the photograph, but you should only confirm or reveal who these people are after learners have submitted all their answers. Background information on Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King (the people in the photo) is included in the extra information that students can find under step 3.

Step 3 The bigger picture
Click on each picture in turn and discuss the tag clouds.

This reflective step is based on the tag cloud (or word cloud) made up of all the words the students entered during step 2.

The following questions may help guide the discussion:
1. What did you focus on when you were looking at each image?
2. Why did your perception change between images? What made the difference?
3. Can you think of a situation when your view of a person changed after seeing the 'bigger picture'?

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4. What can we do to make our perceptions of different people and things more accurate?

Step 4 At a glance
Look at the photographs. Choose someone you think looks interesting. Work in pairs and agree on one person that you will both choose. Fill in the answers individually.

Working in pairs, learners jointly choose one of ten young people on the basis of a photo and a short quote. The next steps are playful and will involve learners making up a story about someone without knowing the person.

Step 5 Picture yourself
Imagine you are the person you have chosen, living their life. What would you say about yourself? Complete the sentences individually.

There are no right or wrong answers and learners should feel free to use their imagination.
However, it might be necessary to check that the invented stories are respectful.

Step 6 Face to face
Compare answers. Discuss why you chose your person. Compare the answers each of you gave. How different are they? Are there overlaps? Agree which answers might be the 'most likely' and write them down.

Step 7 Reality check
Read what the person you chose says about him or herself. Choose key words or one sentence that you find important about their personality.

The person's real life identity is now revealed. Learners choose three keywords from the text that they consider important in relation to this person.

Step 8 Getting your head round it
What did you learn:
How do we describe a person we do not know? What does the exercise tell us about the assumptions we make about other people?

Navigation
Most learning paths have several tracks. You as the educator will choose which path and track learners work with. Each track consists of several steps. Most steps include several screen pages – usually with a question, some information, and an assignment to work on in pairs or as a group. Learners can only go back a page if it is part of the same step, perhaps to look again at the question or to reread a text. The back arrow will not take learners back to previous steps. If this is necessary, the dropdown menu in the top left hand corner opens navigation through the whole track.

Tag clouds
There are two types of tag clouds that collect the individual answers submitted by learners. The 'word cloud' collects words submitted by the learners. All answers are treated equally. However, the 'cloud' shows a random collection of answers. This means that not everyone sees the same answers. Usually there will be more words than fit on one screen. A useful way to discuss the tag cloud is to ask if anyone is surprised or interested in a particular word. As the moderator you might also group words that belong together.

Sometimes the tag cloud collects the opinions of learners statistically and displays them in a graph or with numbers. This illustrates the differences of opinion in the class. Suggestions for discussion are given.

Learners who are the first to submit answers will find the tag cloud relatively empty. Let all learners refresh their screen if the last learners have submitted their answers.

Glossary
Word highlighted in the text are explained in the glossary. It will depend on the level and interest of the learners, and the time available if they use the glossary extensively or not. In some cases the learners will be required to use the glossary. Consider which words you want to discuss with the whole class to make sure they have been understood.

The following questions may help learners work out what they have learned:

1. How do we set about describing a person we do not know?
2. What things can we easily see about other people? What is harder to see at a first glance?
3. What does this exercise tell us about the assumptions we make about other people?

Step 9 Looking back
Read over how you defined assumptions at the beginning of this activity. Add a comment or thought you have about assumptions now.

This step might also be given as a homework assignment. The learners reflect on the entire activity and describe what they have learned.

Track 2 - Who am I?

Time: about 50 minutes

Everybody belongs to different groups and has different roles to play. Some groups or roles change over time, some do not. Let's explore!

Outline
Learners will reflect on their own identity, and are asked to consider which parts of their identity are chosen, which parts are given, and which parts may change over time. The questions and exercises offer learners the opportunity to look at themselves in relation to others.

Tip
If learners have also done Track 1, you can start by reflecting on Step 9 – Looking back, and then move on to Track 2.

Important:
In this track learners are asked to share rather personal information. It is essential that all learners can trust that they will be treated respectfully, both in what they share and in what they might not want to share. No-one should ever be told what he or she 'is' and asked to add this to the representation of their identity.

Information and instruction (i)
Extra information and instructions are sometimes provided in the top right hand corner of the screen. Make sure that learners are aware of this. They will sometimes need this information to complete an assignment.

Subtitles
Make sure to turn on the subtitles (click on the icon at the bottom right corner of the video screen to select the language) before learners start watching the film clip.

Step 1 Differences
What makes people different from each other?
Learners are asked to fill in key words in answer to the question.

You might want to take time to brainstorm ideas about the different groups that people belong to. Suggestions may vary considerably.

You can also ask about roles people have (e.g. parent, teacher, neighbour etc.) and either list these as they are mentioned or group them in general categories (e.g. family, profession, home). Such a brainstorm will help students at the next step.

Step 2 My star
Write in each point of the star a group that you belong to or a role in your life that is important to you.

Learners make a personal star, writing on the seven points the groups they belong to or roles they have that are important to them. Make sure that they do not confuse personal traits (such as funny, smart, lazy) with roles. They have to fill in at least five points of the star to be able to move on.

Step 3 Our galaxy
Look at all the stars. Find points in three other stars that surprise you and click on them.

Looking at all the stars made by the group, learners are asked to find points on three other people's stars that surprise them. After clicking on these, they will see the points they found surprising collected together on the next page. Learners then discuss in pairs what they found surprising and why.

Step 4 Written in the stars
Form a group and discuss your stars. Choose one question from the list to discuss.

Divide your learners into groups of at least three members, and give each group one of the five questions below to discuss. If you have fewer than 15 learners, create couples or use fewer questions. They will discuss both the roles they wrote on their own stars and the ones they found surprising on other stars. Learners then individually write up online the main outcome of the group discussion.

Under (i):
1. Are these aspects of personal identity 'given' or chosen?
2. Are these aspects of personal identity fixed or do they change over time?
3. Are these aspects of personal identity seen as important in society or not?
4. Do these aspects of personal identity make life easier or harder?
5. Are these aspects of personal identity common or uncommon?

Step 5 Reflection
What makes people different from each other?
What are your thoughts on this now?

Learners are taken back to the answer given at the start of the track.
Consider asking for examples of any new thoughts that the learners have had.

Track 3 - What do we see in other people?
Time: about 50 minutes

You may not see yourself as others see you. But how others see you influences how you see yourself. Puzzled? Let's take a look!

Outline
This track links questions of identity and prejudice. It homes in on what is visible and what is not, and what we choose to reveal about ourselves or not. We also explore the role played by prejudices.

Step 1 First impressions
Give an example of what some people might think when they see you. When are they right and when are they wrong in what they think about you?

The questions posed here are not easy to answer and need reflection. You might give a personal example to help them along. These answers are not shared with the class.

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Step 2 What's under the surface?
On the iceberg you can show what you think is visible about people, what is not and what may be revealed in some situations but not in others.

Think of 3 characteristics that are easily seen, cannot be seen, may be revealed in some situations but not in others.

You can consider topics such as gender, sexuality, beliefs, religion, personality, nationality, health, age, life experience, ethnicity, being rich or poor, family role, country of origin.

Learners need to add nine examples to be able to move on. There are suggestions under the notes in the top right hand corner.

The examples have to be dragged and dropped around the iceberg. What can easily be seen belongs above the waterline. What cannot be seen goes below the waterline. What might be revealed in some situations but not in

others, belongs on the waterline.
Work in pairs to compare your answers.

You can discuss the following questions with the whole class:
1. Which characteristics were easy to place on the iceberg? Why?
2. Which were difficult to place? Why?
3. Which characteristics 'float' between visible and invisible? When might they be visible and when invisible?
4. Which characteristics did the groups place differently on their icebergs? Let them explain why.

Step 3 Prejudice at work
There are several reasons why people might choose to reveal or hide aspects of their identity.
Being confronted with prejudices can play a role. Let's have a look.
Choose one quote you find interesting.
Give a reason why the speaker is revealing or hiding something about him or herself.
Prejudices can influence whether people reveal part of their identity or hide it. Give an everyday example.

First the learners choose a quote, out of a series of quotes from young people that touches on a prejudice. Then they think of an example of their own. It might be a personal experience or something they witnessed, but might equally be an example from the news.

This is a sensitive topic, as learners may voice prejudices in their answers, unaware that these can be hurtful to others. You should be prepared to point this out and create room to explore why people do or do not consider certain words hurtful.

The last assignment in this track is a statement to which each learner responds individually. All the class responses are collected in tag cloud and shown graphically.

You should always show who you are.
Position the slider to indicate your opinion.
Strongly disagree. Strongly agree.
Discuss the results.

Ask the learners to explain which position they took. You might also repeat the question using an offline barometer. Getting your learners to stand up and physically take a position is a useful way to explore how they feel about hiding or revealing certain parts of identity.

Depending on the time available, you might also discuss the quotes that the learners chose, and look into those that have contrasting messages.

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