

A STRANGE HAT

A FILM BY MÉLANIE LÉGER

LESSON PLAN

A NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA PRODUCTION



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A STRANGE HAT

Directed and written by: **Mélanie Léger**

Producer: **Murielle Rioux-Poirier**

**Produced and distributed by
the National Film Board of Canada**

2007 – 13 min 43 s

INFORMATION: 1-800-267-7710

Internet site: <www.nfb.ca>

A STRANGE HAT

LESSON PLAN

OBJECTIVE

To help students to increase their self-esteem and to find ways of communicating effectively with others.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Students age 10 to 16

CONNECTIONS

Languages and literature - Social sciences - Arts and culture

SUMMARY OF LESSON PLAN

This lesson uses simulation exercises and a forum theatre. These help students examine how they get on with others and find ways of making these relationships harmonious.

PREPARATORY ACTIVITY

Approximate duration: 45 minutes

Have the students bring in magazine illustrations or photos showing young people communicating. Ask each person to describe in a few sentences what s/he thinks the situation is, then show the picture to a classmate to discuss their perceptions. Ask volunteers to answer these questions:

- What situation is shown in your picture?
- What are these young people doing? What emotions are they showing? (joy, sorrow, anger, etc.)
- Did your classmate view the picture differently? Explain.

ACTIVITY:

Lend me your hat!

Approximate duration: 2 periods of 1 hour

FIRST PERIOD

Before playing the film, explain that you'll stop it a few times so they can guess what happens next. We shall suggest **when** to stop the screening and provide some questions. Ask the students how they would have reacted in the same situation. Make a list of these reactions and discuss them.

FIRST STOP:

The girl says to the young man, "You're a writer? Me too..."

- How do you think the girl feels about talking to the young writer? Why does she address him like this?
- How does he react?
- How does this reaction affect her?

SECOND STOP:

The young man types, "It's a nice, sunny day..."

- Why do you think he writes this?
- The girl thinks she should have approached him with "Want a lollipop?" She thinks, "That's what I should've said. Easy!" Why does she think this?
- Do you think that question could have changed the situation?

THIRD STOP:

The girl sits down on the bench next to the artist whose frisbee has just been stamped on by the policeman.

- How do these people seem to be feeling?
- How does the girl seem to feel when the artist leaves?
- Again she says: "Want a lollipop?" Why?

FOURTH STOP:

The homeless woman with magical powers swaps a hat for a lollipop.

- What changes, positive or negative, do you think the hat might bring to the girl's life?
- How do passersby, the policeman and the artist react when they see her wearing the hat?
- How does the artist act towards her? Why?

SECOND PERIOD

Your students will now do a *forum theatre*. This activity was invented by the theatre director Augusto Boal and is often used to help students solve moral dilemmas. It gets them to distance themselves from a personal judgment by identifying temporarily with the characters in the film. They explore the feelings behind the characters' attitudes or actions and understand them better. They see what it's possible to do in similar situations.

ACTIVITY

STEP 1

- Put a hat on a table. This will be a way for the *spectators* to interrupt the play at any moment. (See step 2.)
- Get volunteers to play the characters: girl, writer, street artist, policeman, homeless woman, mother and child and passersby.
- Suggest they begin at the moment when the girl in the hat reads the notice saying *Wanted. Reward for return*, and continue until the final scene.

STEP 2

- Get them to act it a **second time**.
- Say that anyone who wants to suggest a different way for the girl to act must take the hat off her head, put it on, take her place and play the part.

When the students have suggested enough alternatives, close the activity with these questions:

- What has the film taught you about solving communication problems?
- Which aspects of the film, whether sound or image, got your attention most? Why?
- What dramatic touches do the magic hat and the homeless woman bring to the narrative? How about the music?

RECAP

Approximate duration: 1 hour

Suggest that the students make a reference list of ways of solving communication problems.

REFLECTIVE SHARING

Ask your students to name difficult interpersonal situations and say how they would resolve them.

RELATED NFB FILMS

A Sunday at 105

A film by Daniel Léger 2007 – 13 min 20 s

Audience: Ages 12 to 16

Connections: Languages – Social sciences – Arts and culture

Sleeping Betty

A film by Claude Cloutier 2007 – 9 min 14 s

Audience: Ages 10 and over

Connections: Languages and literature – Arts and culture – Social sciences

To order, call 1-800-267-7710

Lesson plans are available at <www.nfb.ca/guides>