

Lesson Five

Reading Peirce

The Three Person Solution depends on three people taking turns playing three roles. These three roles are shaped in keeping with the three comprehensive categories of the philosopher, Charles Peirce. He named these categories firstness, secondness and thirdness. This lesson is designed to deepen your understanding these categories by reading Peirce's own descriptions and discussing these readings in teams of four.

Preparation:

- Read the following passages written by Peirce. Think of examples and explanations of his categories that he does not use.
- Passage about Firstness
- Passage about Secondness
- Passage about Thirdness
- Passage about the Interrelationships among Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness

NB. Peirce expanded his three comprehensive categories to include:

- *the firstness of secondness, i.e., feeling associated with a fact, ex. a slap on the hand is a fact that has feeling associated with it
- *the firstness of thirdness, i.e., an immediate grasp of pattern like a fist in the hand as opposed to thirdness which involves an if...then process of reasoning to a pattern, and
- *secondness of thirdness, i.e., the force of law as when a sheriff grabs you on the shoulder because your are under arrest for breaking the law.

In your discussion of Peirce, these expanded categories might emerge on their own.

Objective:

- Deepen participants understanding of firstness, secondness and thirdness

Materials:

- Comfortable private room, big enough to divide everybody into small groups of three and four, ideally around a small table.
- Notepads and pencils for everyone
- Tricolor Talking Sticks

Procedures:

Recombine participants. Divide into teams of four: the three roles plus a reader. Avoid repeating combinations. Use the Tricolor Talking Stick.

5 minutes

Exercise # 1, Reading Firstness

20 minutes

Reader reads passage on firstness.

Yellow paraphrased the passage in her own words and gives examples Peirce did not use, including examples from the actual physical place in which the team is meeting.

Red responds to Yellow's presentation.

Blue meditates between Yellow and Red.

If there is disagreement, participants use the advocacy protocols among themselves and use the reader as a fourth party to make any necessary decisions.

Rotate roles. Reader becomes Yellow. Yellow becomes Red. Red becomes Blue. Blue becomes Reader.

Exercise # 2, Reading Secondness.

20 minutes

Reader reads passage on secondness.

Yellow paraphrased the passage on secondness in her own words and gives examples Peirce did not use including examples from the actual physical place in which the team is meeting.

Red responds to Yellow's presentation.

Blue meditates between Yellow and Red.

If there is disagreement, participants use the advocacy protocols among themselves and use the reader as a fourth party to make any necessary decisions.

Rotate roles. Reader becomes Yellow. Yellow becomes Red. Red becomes Blue. Blue becomes Reader.

Exercise #3, Read Passage on Thirdness

20 minutes

Reader reads passage on thirdness.

Yellow paraphrased the passage on thirdness in her own words and gives examples Peirce did not use, including examples from the actual physical place in which the team is meeting.

Red responds to Yellow's presentation.

Blue meditates between Yellow and Red.

If there is disagreement, participants use the advocacy protocols among themselves and use the reader as a fourth party to make any necessary decisions.

Rotate roles. Reader becomes Yellow. Yellow becomes Red. Red becomes Blue. Blue becomes Reader.

Exercise # 4, Relating Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness

20 minutes

Reader reads passage on interrelating the categories.

Yellow paraphrased the passage in her own words and gives examples.

Red responds to Yellow's presentation.

Blue meditates between Yellow and Red.

If there is disagreement, participants use the advocacy protocols among themselves and use the reader as a fourth party to make any necessary decisions.

End Of Lesson

Extras

Get a Marx Brothers movie. View the movie in terms of Harpo playing the role of firstness, Chico playing the role of secondness and Groucho playing the role of thirdness.

Read Gilles Deleuze's *Cinema 1*, in which Deleuze classifies all of classic cinema in terms of firstness (the face, the affective image, as in Bergman's *Persona*) secondness (action movies, westerns such as Peckinpah's *Wild Bunch*, and thirdness (interpretive movies such as Hitchcock's *The Trouble with Harry*) View some of the movies he cites through the lens of firstness, secondness and thirdness.

Read Peirce:

The Essential Peirce
Buchler

Read books about Peirce:

Sheriff
Brent, Joe
Apel, Karl Otto
Parker, Kelly