

Lesson Six

Imitating Sherlock Holmes

The detective, Sherlock Holmes, exemplifies the use of Peirce's categories with wonderful clarity. Holmes crawling around on the floor with his magnifying glass looking for clues is operating in the second skill set, searching for specific facts. Playing his violin in oblivious rapture, cultivating his intuition in the middle of a case, Holmes is operating in the first skill set,. Explaining to Doctor Watson his reasoning in solving the case shows his third skill set, his 'if...then' reasoning. Success with Threeing means increasing your ability to operate in these skill sets. In this exercise, your team of three will take on a 'case' of their own, using all three skill sets.

Preparation:

Read a Sherlock Holmes story or watch a Sherlock Holmes movie. SUGGEST SPECIFIC ONES. Look for his different uses of the three skill sets.

Select a local 'case' for your group exercise based on the needs and interests of the group. For example, if you are a group devoted to eating in good restaurants, you might send your teams to the same restaurant to investigate using the three skill

sets. The first skill set would be used to pay attention to ambiance, mood of waiters and waitresses, taste of food, quality of sound and so forth. In the second skill set, team members would note things like parking, specific seating arrangements, specials on the menu, broken items, prices, 'clues' about the place that indicate something about it. The third skill set would be used to pay attention to the overall pattern of the experience: travel time, parking, view, type of customers, pacing of the meal, overall service, as well as comparison with other restaurants.

Other possible 'cases' would be:

Investigate a local lot for a community garden.

Investigate a piece of property for sale.

investigate a new shop in town.

N.B. Consider the time available for your 'case'. You might have participants investigate the case on their own 'preparation' time and use the entire lesson time for discussion. All participants should do the same 'case'.

Objective:

- To exercise the three skill sets in imitation of Sherlock Holmes

Materials:

- Notebooks and pencils or pens for fieldwork.

- Tricolor Talking Stick.
- A 'case' that is convenient to investigate.
- Comfortable private room, big enough to divide everybody into small groups of three and four, ideally around a small table.

Procedure:

Recombine the group into teams of three. Avoid repetition of same members in the same teams.

Pass out notepads and pencils or pens to each person. Instruct members that they are to operate in all three skill sets on this case, making notes under the heading of each skill set.

Give instructions to the teams as to how to find the 'case'.

10 minutes

Holmes Exercise # 1

Deploy the teams according to the case selected.

45 minutes

Gather together after your investigation. Use the talking stick to go around and report your findings to your team. All go round in yellow. All go round in red. All go round in blue.

20 minutes

Gather the entire group together. A pre-selected member of the team summarizes the findings of the team for the group.

End Of Lesson

Extras

Identify and investigate other 'cases'.

Read more Sherlock Holmes stories.

Watch more Sherlock Holmes movies.

Study other detectives, such as Jessica Fletcher, Poirot, or Columbo for their use of the three skill sets.

Read "You Know My Method" an essay by Thomas Sebeok comparing Peirce and Holmes.