

ReelEducation

LESSON: The Interviewer

Film Length: 13 minutes

Lesson Length: 30-40 minutes

Grades 9-12

ReelAbilities
FILM FESTIVAL

TORONTO



Ontario

An EnAbling Change Project
with the Government of Ontario

Rick Hansen
Foundation



School Program



Winston
Preparatory
School

ReelAbilities
FILM FESTIVAL

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Lesson Title: The Interviewer

Synopsis:

Thomas Howell gets more than he's bargained for in a job interview at a prestigious law firm; an insult about his tie, a rendition of Harry Potter and the chance to change the lives of a father and son.

Film Length: 13 minutes

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the capabilities of people with a developmental disability
- Understand employment inequities that exist for people with disabilities
- Identify factors that inform first impressions
- Explain how first impression can be misleading
- Empathize with those who feel excluded

Resources:

Film Link: <https://vimeo.com/261207717>

- Chart paper and markers
- Materials for lesson assignment

Time: 30-40 Minutes

Before Viewing

Ask students if they have viewed the following television shows or movies, by raising their hands or standing up.

- *Glee*
- *The Secret Life of the American Teenager*
- *American Horror Story: Coven*

Ask students what they know about these characters in these shows.

- Lauren Potter in *Glee* (played by Becky Jackson)
- Tom Bowman in *The Secret Life of the American Teenager* (played by Luke Zimmerman)
- Nan on *American Horror Story: Coven* (played by Jamie Brewer)

Discuss their roles in the movie or television show.

Others you might not know

- Tommy Jessop is a British actor with Down Syndrome who has played in *Hamlet* since 2007.
- Chris Burke played in a popular TV show, *Life Goes On*, with appearances in other shows such as *ER* and *Touched by an Angel*.
- Edward Barbanell is a comedian and appeared in productions of *The Ringer*, *Workaholic* and *New Normal*.

Explain: All these characters have Down Syndrome. Down Syndrome is a developmental disability caused by the development of an extra chromosome that leads to a range of mental and physical challenges.

Tell Students: They are going to watch a movie about a man named Thomas Howell. Thomas has a job interview at a prestigious law firm.

After Viewing

Discussion Questions:

1. Why did Mr. Howell look confused? What contributed to his impression at the start of the film?
The interviewer seemed to have some type of disability and he had a preconceived notion about the interviewer's abilities based on how he looked and sounded.
2. Part way through the interview, Mr. Howell changes his mind about James Dexter. What changed and why?
Mr. Dexter asks some good questions about why Mr. Howell wanted to change his firm.
3. What expectations did the boss (probably James' dad) have for James? What changed his mind?
When Mr. Howell asks James about his interview question, Mr. Dexter sees that James has insight into the firm, and wrote good interview questions. He demonstrated insight into the motivation of Mr. Howell.
4. How did James feel when he was told to limit his work to the food cart?
5. How does James stand up for himself?
He asks Mr. Dexter why delivering food is all he is good for.
6. Can anyone explain the end of the movie?
The twist at the end. We see James inviting someone to an interview so we think that he is doing fake interviews again, but it is a real interview. James says he has been working there 15 years, so we know that four years has passed.

7. What qualities did James have that could have been beneficial to the firm?
8. What should have James done to stand up for himself, if Tom wouldn't have spoken up for him?

Learning Activity

Explain to students that employment for people with developmental disabilities is quite low despite the capabilities and talents that these individuals can bring to a workplace. In the US, only 18.7% of persons with disabilities were employed in 2017.

1. Divide students into pairs or small groups.
2. Ask students to think about their favorite store, restaurant, or recreational activity that is a business. Students will select one as a focus for the activity.
3. Ask students to think about how you can encourage your business to employ a person like James. (See websites listed above for places they can do research on this topic).
4. Brainstorm ideas for approaching your business. What can you do to convince them that James would be a good employee? If time permits, students can research businesses that employ people with Down Syndrome.
5. Create a convincing speech, a brochure, a blog, letter to business to persuade a business to hire a person with a developmental disability.
6. Each student shares their final product.

Enrichment:

1. Students research and write a biography report on the life of a famous person with Down Syndrome.
2. Students research businesses that hire people with a developmental disability and create a report or presentation.
3. Students create a video public service announcement to encourage businesses to consider employing people with a developmental disability.