If at first you don’t succeed

**Language level:** Intermediate (A2) – Upper intermediate (B2)

**Learner type:** Teens and adults

**Time:** 90 minutes

**Activity:** Describing a photo, watching a short film and speaking

**Topic:** Physical appearance, intelligence and persistence

**Language:** Adjectives to describe a person’s appearance and character, and expressions related to intelligence

**Materials:** Short film and 2 photos
Overview

This lesson plan is designed around a beautiful short film by Nuno Rocha called 3 X 3 and the themes of intelligence and persistence. Students describe a photo, watch a short film and speak about physical appearance, intelligence and persistence.

Step 1

Tell your students that they are going to describe people’s physical appearance. Write the following words on the board:

Face
Hair
Body

Put students into pairs and give them 10 minutes to come up with as many words as they can to describe face, hair and body. Then get feedback from the whole class.

Step 2

Now give each student either photo A or photo B. Tell them that student A has to describe the person in their photo using some of the words they came up with in the previous stage. Student B has to listen and visualise the person being described. When student A has finished their description they show the photo to student B who says if the person looks like how they had visualised. Now student B describes their photo and follows the same process.
Step 3

Ask students the following question:

What do you think the man in your photo is like as a person?

Get students to compare the characters of the 2 men.

Step 4

Tell students that they are going to watch a short film in which the 2 men appear. Put them into small groups and ask them the following questions:

What do you think the relationship between the 2 men is?

What story do you think the film will tell?

What do you think you will see in the film?

Step 5

Tell students they are going to watch the start of the film and that they should answer the following question:

What is the character of each man like?

What is the relationship between the 2 men?

Show the film and pause at 02:20. Get feedback from the students.

Link:  https://vimeo.com/6761817
Step 6
Ask students the following questions:

What is going to happen in the rest of the film?
What’s the thin man going to do?

Step 7
Now show the rest of the film and ask students to compare their answers in the previous stage with what they see in the film.

Step 8
Ask students the following questions:

How do the 2 men feel at the end of the film?
Does the film have a message?
How did the film make you feel?

Step 9
Write the following expressions on the board:

“brains over brawn”
“all brawn and no brains”

Tell them to use a dictionary to find the meaning of the expressions and then ask them to say how these expressions might apply to the story they have seen in the film.

Step 10
Write the following proverb on the board:

*Tis a lesson you should heed:

Try, try, try again.

*If at first you don’t succeed,*

Try, try, try again.

Ask students what the meaning of the proverb is. Then put students into pairs and ask how the message of the proverb can be applied in their everyday life.

**Homework**

Ask students to write a short composition in which they have to describe how the proverb in the last stage can be applied in learning English.

*I hope you enjoy the film.*