I am teaching a class at a high school and have set expectations. While I let them sit wherever they want, it is clear that they must pay attention, not disrupt the class, and do their work. Peter is a student I always expect to meet these expectations so that others around him will follow. Peter and I have had our disagreements, but he is still a reliable and hardworking student. Peter likes to challenge me on topics where there is only one right answer when I clearly explain how I am stating facts and trying to teach concepts not for interpretation. One time, Peter brought up arguments on the test that weren’t discussed in class and didn’t use the proper evidence. He came to me after class and was visibly angry and questioned every little thing on the test as if I could give him an A simply for just writing. It would be better for him to pay more attention during class. He has an A in the class, but I don’t want him to look at this as a reason to give less effort and stop learning. I graded his test fairly, just like I graded everyone else’s test fairly. I appreciate him wanting to learn what he did wrong, but this time he didn’t put in the effort to get a good grade on this test. He did come after class and showed that he was eager to learn so I ended up giving him a couple points back.

I thought maybe he would understand that he needs to pay attention to learn and succeed in my class and beyond. A few weeks later, I showed examples of students not completing their work on time, but he seemed to find this funny. I called him out and asked him what was so funny. He was too busy joking around to understand me so I told him to talk to me after class. Peter is one of the more reliable students and his behavior influences those around him so I needed to send a message to him and everyone else to pay attention and not fool around. He has been acting up lately so I needed to tell him.
I talked to him after class. It was not important to me as to what he thought was funny. I just told him that his behavior influences those around him and he sets the tone for the class and the other students. Clearly my messages had not been getting through to him so I had to bring up how his poor grade on the writing test a few weeks prior just to remind him.

A concept to describe this conflict would be taking the role of the other. Taking the role of the other is putting yourself in someone else’s shoes and looking at yourself through their point of view. The point of doing this is to see how others view you and what they expect of you. You can look at yourself to see how your behavior has formed a thought of who you are. This applies to my situation for both my teacher and I. My teacher viewed me as a student who influences the behavior of those around me, but he also viewed me as someone who was not putting in the effort to keep learning because I had a good grade. My teacher is unable to put himself in my shoes and notice that I shouldn’t be responsible for the behavior around me. He may think that I wasn’t paying attention or not learning, but the reality is that I had worked ahead of what was due and put in more effort than most in the class. My teacher also knows what is generally expected of me and my peers. I can see that he noticed we all weren’t doing well in the class and paying attention whereas I thought that my classmates and I were all doing well.

The same goes for me. I was not able to see how my teacher saw me. I know that I understand what’s going on in class and that I put in a lot of work to do well, but I didn’t realize that my teacher only sees what I’m doing during class. I also didn’t see how my teacher viewed me as someone to influence those around me; I never really thought of it that way.

This changes my view of the situation because I can now see the misunderstanding between what was expected. My teacher expects all of us to be on task so if he sees someone
disturbing the class, he has the right to speak up about it. While my view of the situation has changed, I still think my teacher made the misunderstanding. We both failed to look ourselves from each other’s perspective, but my teacher held me accountable for the actions of my classmates which I don’t agree with. My teacher’s expectations for me were different than for other students which was confusing when he defines expectations for the whole class.

I could use the concept of taking the role of the other in the future. It’s hard to know exactly what someone is doing without being them. I will take the role of others to see if how they see me is how I see myself. If these views vary, I can change the perception so that these people are not mislead.