



How can forest pedagogy profit from using stories? Recommendations for use in public relations and environmental education

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Research project founded by the Bavarian Forest Administration:

Analysis of discourses about forests and development of recommendations for communication

Tools: Models from narrative semiotics

Stories

Grandmother reads a story for her grandchildren representing that we know stories from childhood on

Smileys representing emotions

Drawing of little red riding hood, representing fairy tales



Mandala representing that a story is a whole, gaps can be filled by the recipient

Stories are more attractive than a list of arguments

reason 1
reason 2
reason 3
....

Tom lives in a miserable hut. School is too far away and his help is needed on the family farm. One day everything changed...

What is it good for?

This models about the structure of stories are useful for:

- Public relations
- Forest pedagogy

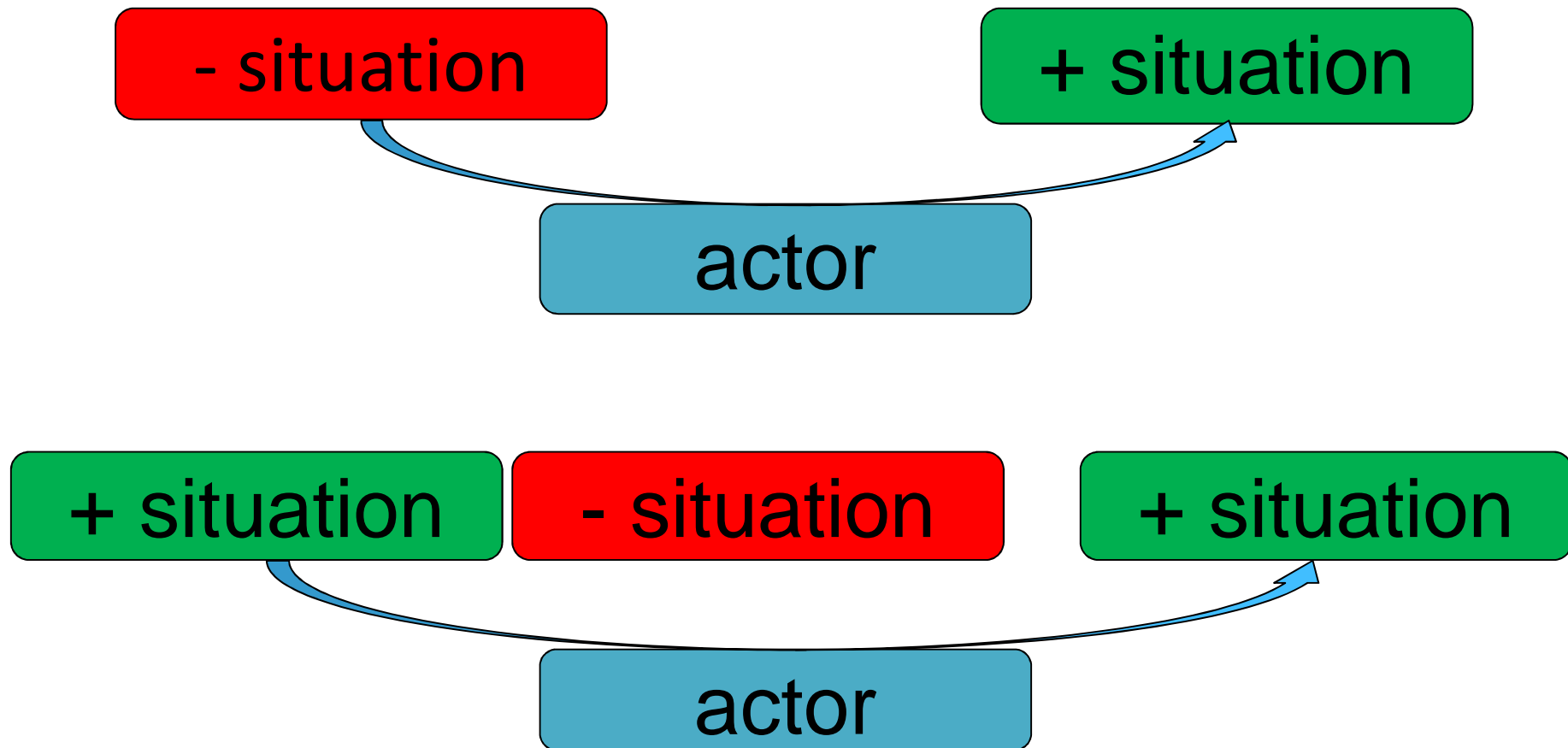
Instruments of sense making, of creation of meaning, of analysis of understanding.

They help you to:

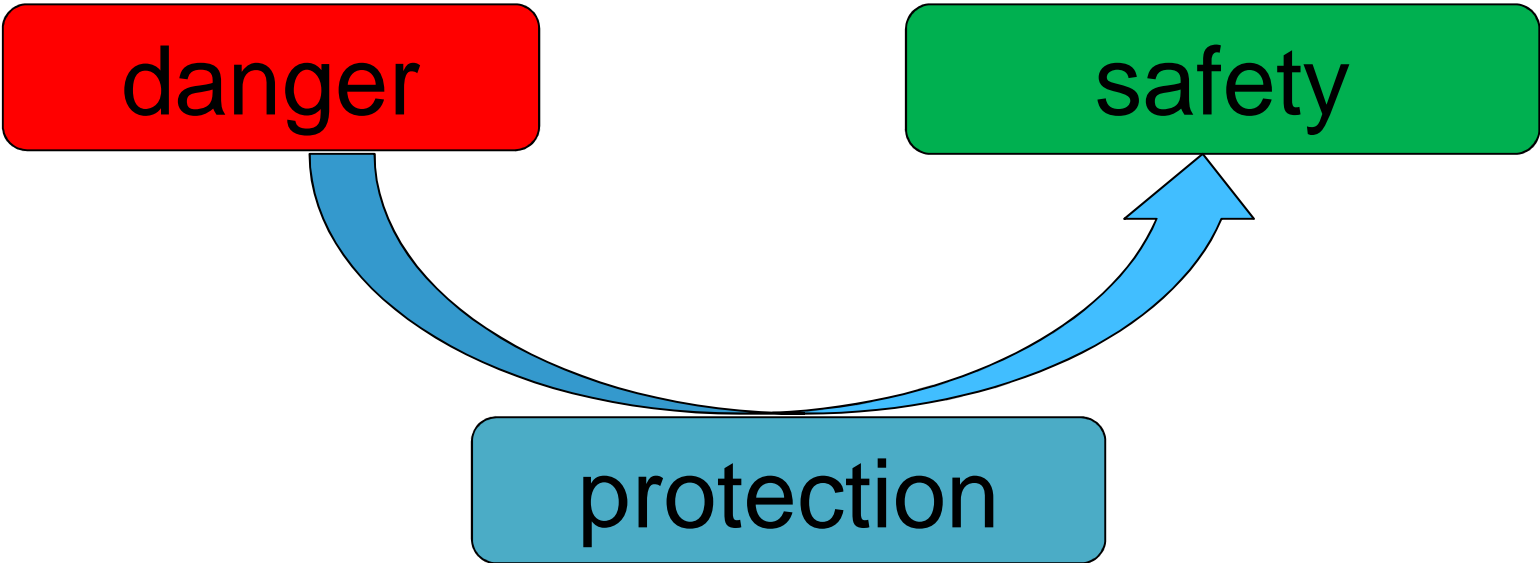
- convince others (communicate more effectively)
- analyse how people “see” a situation
(clearing conflicts, finding possibilities of cooperation)
- give orientation and structure to your Forest Pedagogy Event
- define your role as forest pedagogue
- find motivation

When is it a story? Minimum-criteria

Actor changes a situation or prevents it from changing.



One-Word-Stories



- solution
- healing
- repair
- rescue
- just distribution
- defense
- ...

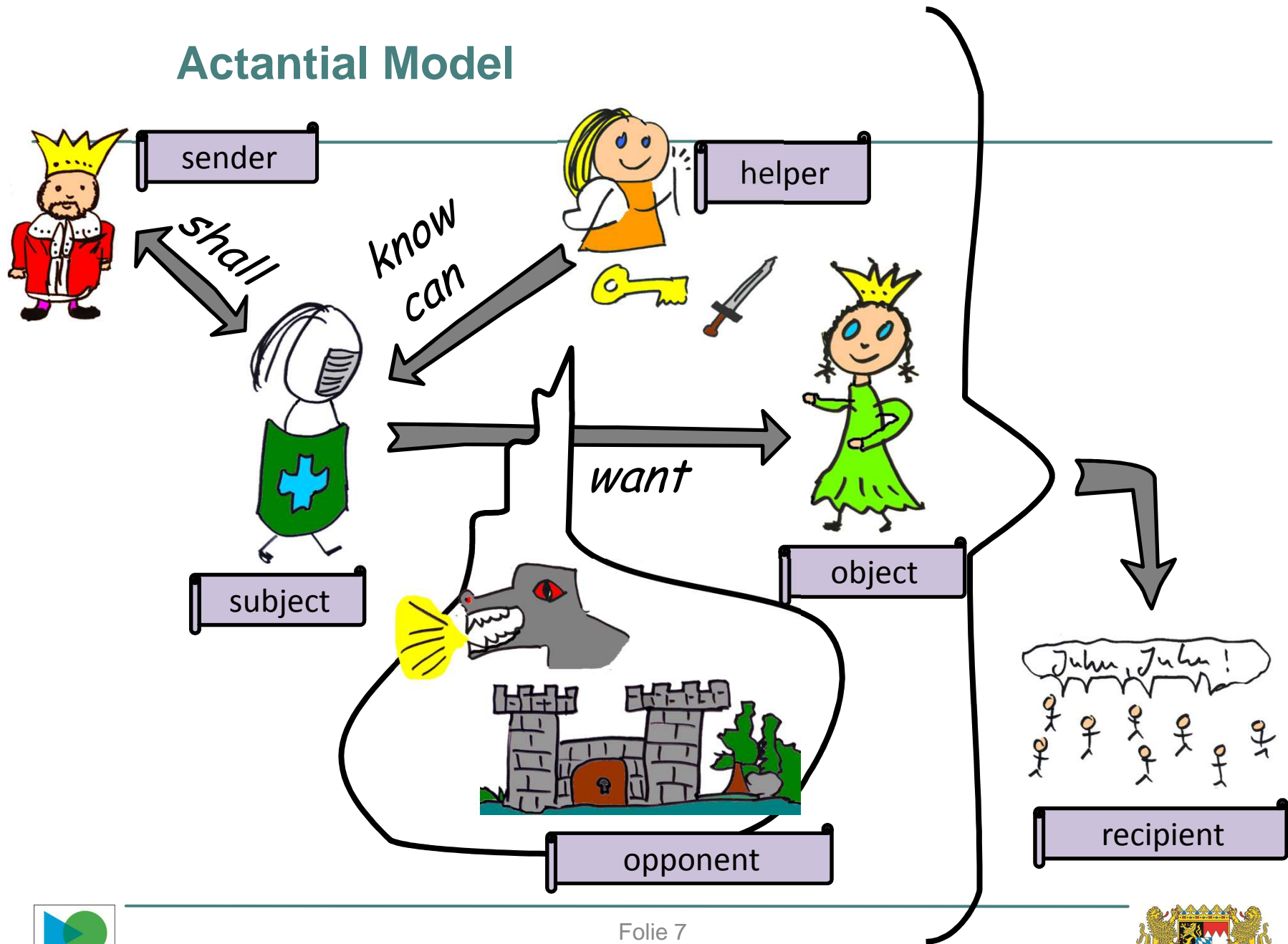


A Fairy Tale

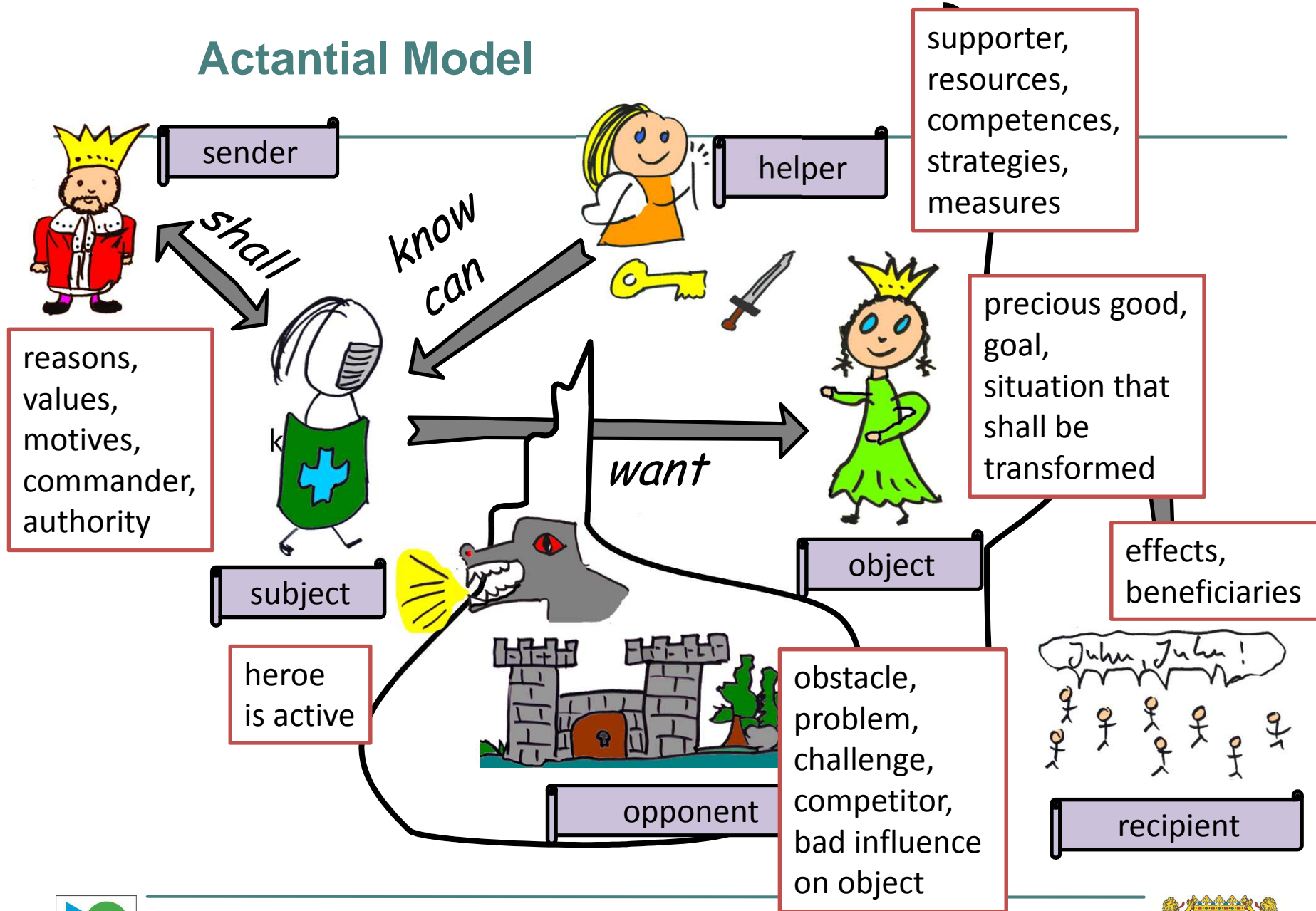
In a happy and wonderful kingdom lived a wise king with his enchanting daughter – the princess. Everyone was happy. One day a misfortune happened. A dragon abducted the princess. The king sent his knight to save her. The knight felt helpless and did not know how to achieve this goal. Luckily, he met a fairy. She told him: The dragon lives on a mountain in a castle. She gave him a key and a sword. The knight and the fairy climbed up the mountain. The knight protected the fairy from falling rocks. For this she drew him up a steep slope. At last they arrived. He opened the gate with the key. With the sword he slew the dragon after a dramatic fight. So he freed the princess. They returned to the castle. The people were happy. There was a festival with dragon-steak.



Actantial Model



Actantial Model



Some questions about your mission in forest pedagogy

Object: What do you want to achieve?
(change, influence etc.)

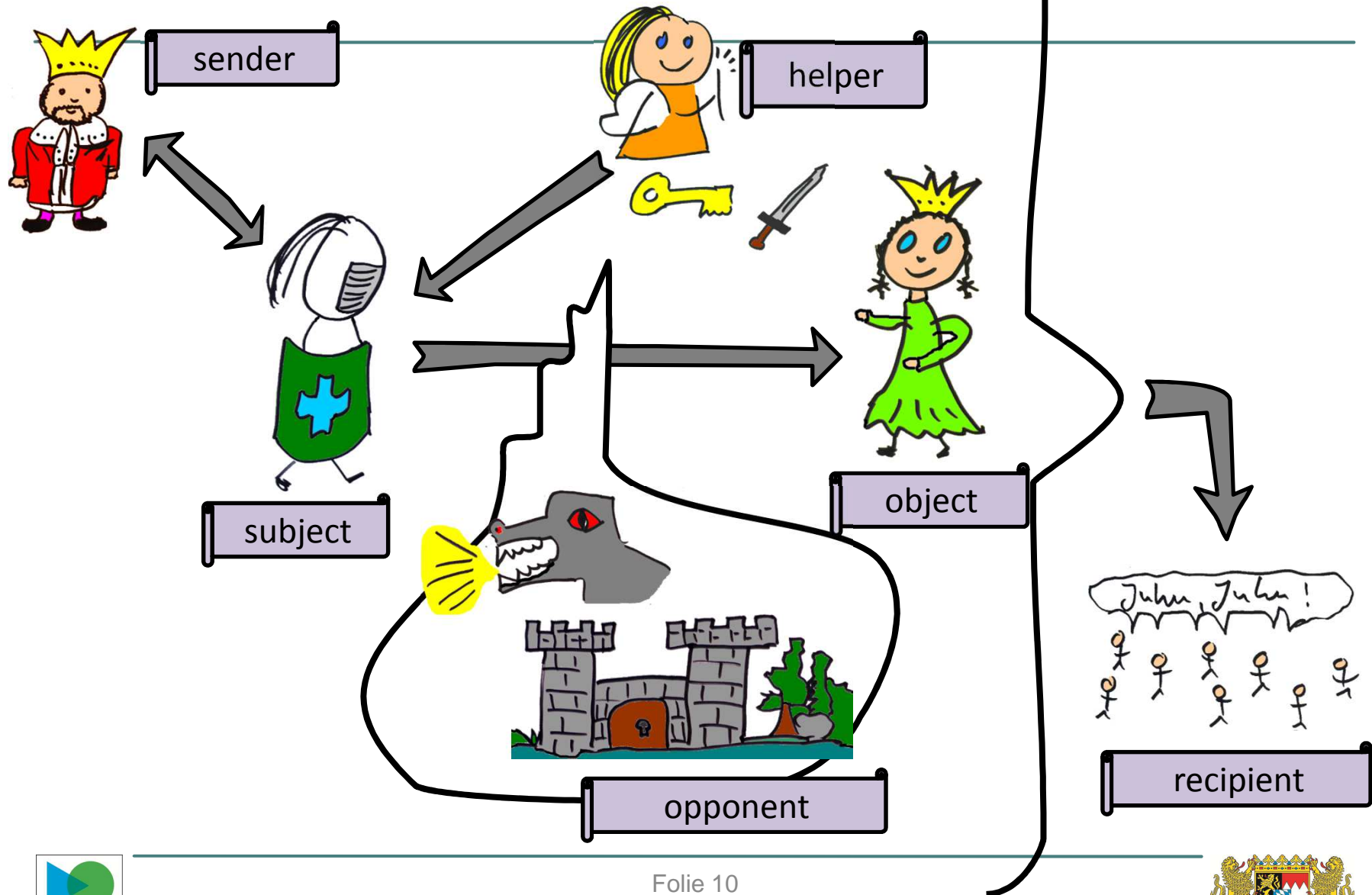
Sender: What is your driving force?
(motives, values, orders (by whom?) etc.)

Opponent: What hinders you? What do you have to overcome?
(problems, obstacles, opponents etc.)

Helper: What helps you?
(competences, resources, helpers)

Receiver: Who or what would benefit from it,
when you achieve that goal?

Your role in the forest pedagogy setting



Heroes Journey

Stage 1

- normal world
- call for adventure

In a happy and wonderful kingdom lived a wise king with his enchanting daughter – the princess. Everyone was happy. One day a misfortune happened. A dragon abducted the princess. The king sent his knight to save her.

Stage 2

- series of tests
- decisive test

The knight felt helpless and did not know how to achieve this goal. Luckily, he met a fairy. She told him: The dragon lives on a mountain in a castle. She gave him a key and a sword. The knight and the fairy climbed up the mountain. The knight protected the fairy from falling rocks. For this she drew him up a steep slope. At last they arrived. He opened the gate with the key. With the sword he slew the dragon after a dramatic fight.

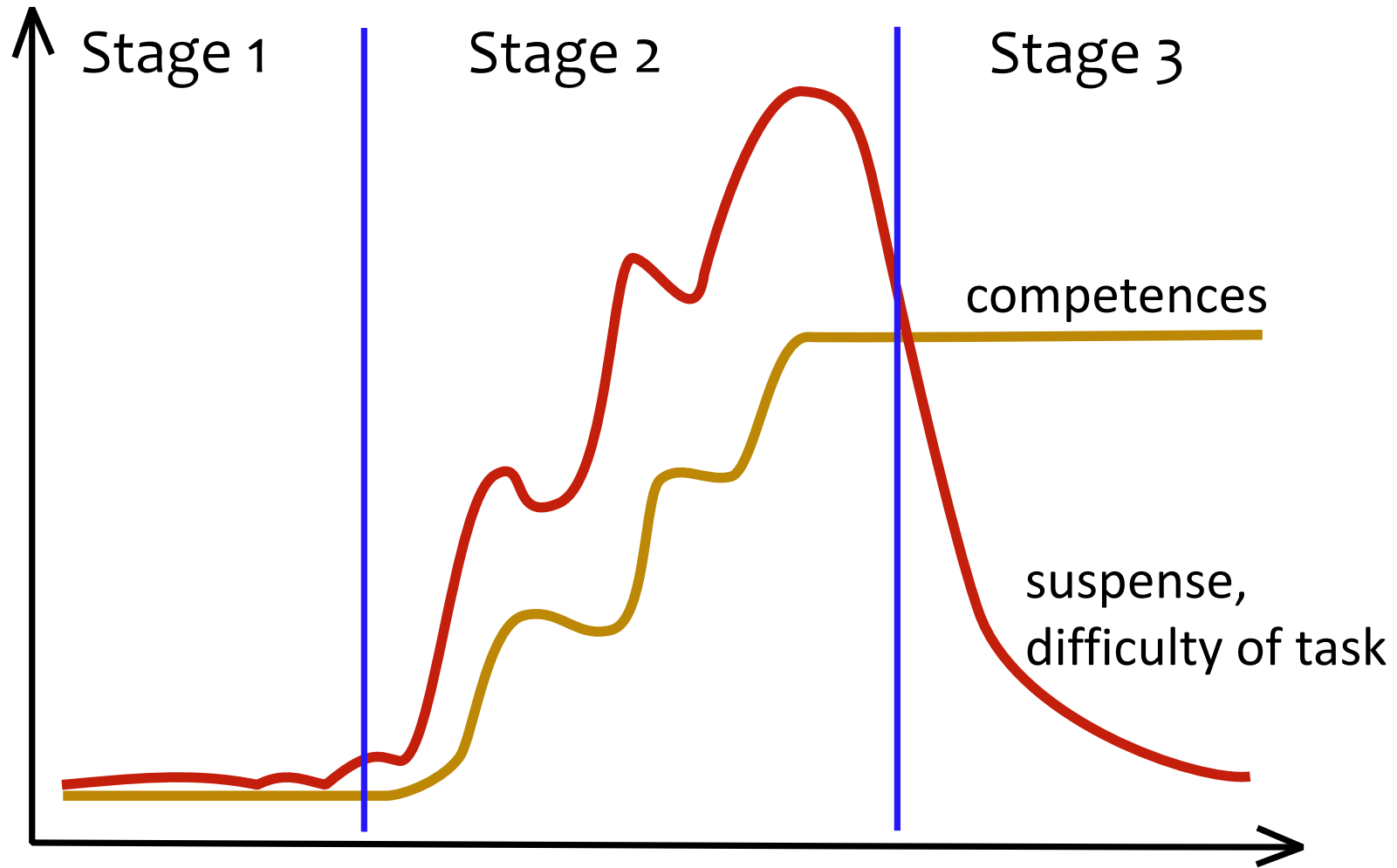
Stage 3

- reward
- return home with „elixir“

So he freed the princess. They returned to the castle. The people were happy. There was a festival with dragon-steak.



Suspense and competence



Using a story as a central and recurring theme throughout the event

- The event is a heroes journey.
- Invent a binding story!
- Be the helper (but you can change in certain situations)!
- Don't be the opponent (except in order to help)!
- The participants are the heroes!
- Make bridges to the daily (normal) world!

Activate your heroes journey in forest pedagogics for motivation

- Be conscious of your mission
- Think of all the actants:
sender, receiver, helper, opponent, object, subject (hero)
- On what missions are others? E. g. public relation or education mission – the alliance is perhaps not as strong as you think
- Setbacks are only temporary, the journey continues.
- Don't forget the opponents, which you defeated (the obstacles that you passed). They make your story interesting and motivating.

Use an effective story structure for public relations

- What is the wrong that you turn into right?
- To legitimate (justify) your work you need the opponent.
- Tell a true story, in which you are the helper or the hero for those, who listen to it
- Examples are often more convincing than numbers and average developments.