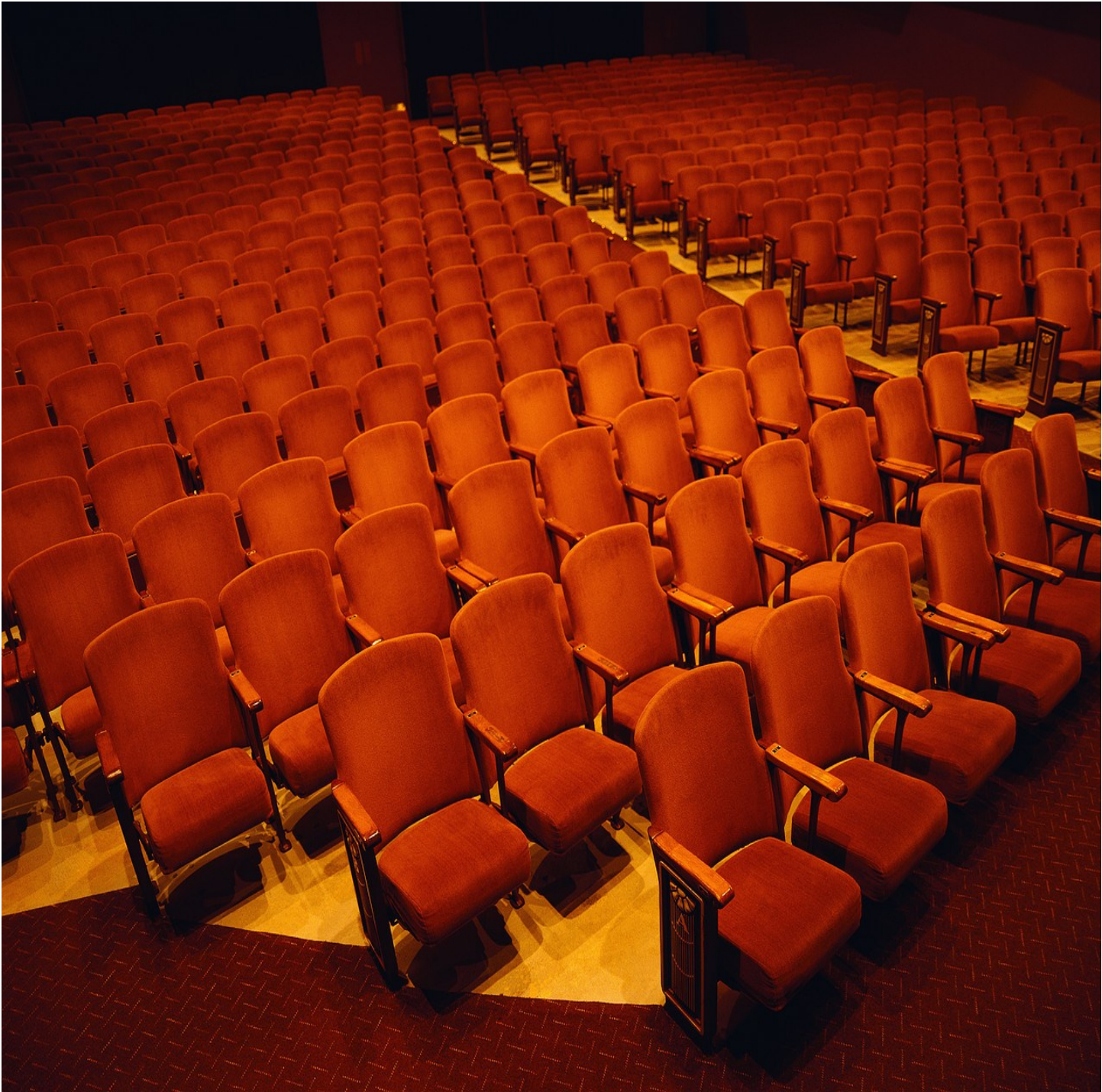


Notes/Reflections:



Idea Contributed by Susie Spear Purcell

Social Studies • Culture • Expository Writing •
Monologue • Improvisation • Theatre



Explore perspective and dialogue through
playwriting and improvisation!

Exploring Social Studies Through Playwriting

Students use photos of people in real life events from the Zapatistas Movement as a springboard to write dialogue between the people in photograph. Students are paired up and create a scene that addresses the issues surrounding the Zapatistas Movement. By allowing your students to explore their knowledge of the Zapatistas Movement through the eyes of someone who was there, they learn empathy and better embody the subject matter. This exercise is a wonderful tool to increase presentation skills, empathy and ensemble in your classroom.

Essential Question

What impact does a photograph have on our perception of a society and/or historical event?

Process

Pair students up and have them sit with their partner. Take them through these brainstorming exercises:

Brainstorm exercise #1 (Similarities & Differences)

You have 1 minute to write down as many similarities and differences between the two of you. Do not list physical or obvious ones.

Brainstorm exercise #2 (Desert Island)

Imagine that you are on a desert island and only have one object (a coffee can with plastic lid or a jump rope with silver metal handles, etc). Be very descriptive when you tell them about the object (i.e., what is made of - "a 6 foot, white cotton jump rope with shiny silver handles on either end.") You have 1 minute to think of as many uses for this object as possible. After the minute is up, have each pair read off their favorite idea.

Brainstorm exercise #3 (Things that you know about the Zapatistas Movement)

You have 2 minutes to write down things that you know about the Zapatistas Movement between the two of you. After two minutes are up, have each pair read off their favorite fact.

Review:

Give a brief review of the Zapatistas Movement by reviewing some photos that you will pass out shortly. Make sure to get the students to give as much information as they know.

Creating Characters:

Pass out photo pages. Explain that these photos were taken during the time of the Zapatistas Movement. Ask the students to each pick a person in the photo and circle it. Now, have them list the following on the paper, based on the circled person in the top photo's point of view:

- Character's name
- Character's Age
- Where do they live?
- How did the historical person or event in the bottom picture affect their life?
- What is the character's greatest fear?
- What is the character's greatest dream?

Play music from the era while students are writing. Give them time to finish, about 5 minutes.

Character Grounding:

Using a voice different than your own, the voice of the character circled in the picture, on a count of three, softly but aloud, tell me what you had for dinner last night.

Now sit like your character sits, different than yourself.

Imagine your character is wearing an article of clothing that you don't have on. On a count of three adjust that article of clothing.

Dialogue Demo:

So, you have brought your character to life by using your voice, mind and body. Very cool!

What if two of the characters in the top picture started to talk to each other? What would we call this? A monologue? (Dialogue) What do we put around the words or sentences that a person says? (Quotation marks) Let's explore and see what a dialogue might sound like between the two people in a picture.

Look at a picture in Power point. Have the class create dialogue with these elements as a group:

- Where are they?
- Which two people are going to talk?
- What do they think about the bottom picture?
- What is their greatest dream for their country?
- Who is going to talk first?

Have two volunteers come to the front to play the parts. Demo and create about 4 lines of dialogue between the two characters pictured. Writing dialogue is that simple! Just writing down what two people are saying to each other. Let's try it with the pictures of the people that you have in front of you.

Materials

- handout visuals
- paper and pencil
- sound source (e.g., CD player)
- audio recordings

Vocabulary

Theater

Dramatic literature or its performance; drama

Expository Writing

Serving to set forth, demonstrate, or explain

Ensemble

All the parts of a thing taken together, so that each part is considered only in relation to the whole

Improvisation

A creation that is spoken or written without prior preparation

Zapatistas Movement

A communistic guerilla movement in Mexico that opposed NAFTA

Indigenous People

The people who lived in an area before any explorers came from anywhere else

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

An arrangement signed in 1993 that allows free trade between the United States, Canada, and Mexico

Commercial Farming

Large-scale production of crops for sale, intended for widespread distribution to wholesalers or retail outlets

Sabotage

To ruin something on purpose or make it break

Classroom Tips

This activity works best in an open space with room for students to move.

Scene Writing:

Introduce yourself as your character to your partner's character. Share the details that you wrote down on your paper:

- Character's name
- Character's Age
- Where do they live?
- How does he/she feel about the historical person/event in the bottom picture?
- What is the character's greatest fear?
- What is the character's greatest dream for their country?

Excellent work! Now just start talking to each other as if the picture came to life. Allow students some time to talk through this. Now let's write down what you said or the dialogue between the two of you. Turn on music and let groups write dialogue. When they are finished, talk about how they have actually written a scene. They have told part of a story in playwriting format.

Presenting Scenes:

Today we are going to learn about how the Zapatistas Movement changed so many lives around the world by hearing from real people. Ask each group to walk up to the front of the room, in character, and assume the positions they have in the photo. When you call "action" they need to bring the photo to life. Clap when they are finished and give them one specific piece of positive feedback.

Assessment

- Students use descriptive language in the generated monologues and expository essays.
- Monologues and expository essays are free of grammatical errors, contain thoughtful insights, and express feelings/emotions while relating to focus images.
- Improvisational skits accurately portray rational scenes from focus images.
- Articulated resolutions to conflicts are practical solutions for proposed conflicts.

Georgia Performance Standards

SOCIAL STUDIES

GRADE 6

SS6H3: The student will analyze important 20th century issues in Latin America and the Caribbean.

b. Explain the impact and political outcomes of the Zapatista guerilla movement in Mexico.

THEATER ARTS

GRADE 6

TAMS6.1: Analyzing and constructing meaning from theatrical experiences, dramatic literature, and electronic media

TAMS6.2: Developing scripts through improvisation and other theatrical methods

TAMS6.3: Acting by developing, communicating, and sustaining roles within a variety of situations and environments

TAMS6.6: Researching cultural and historical information to support artistic choices

TAMS6.7: Integrating various art forms, other content areas, and life experiences to create theatre

TAMS6.11: Engaging actively and appropriately as an audience member in theatre or other media experiences

Common Core Georgia Performance Standards

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

GRADE 6

ELACC6W3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

ELACC6W9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

ELACC6SL1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 6 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

ELACC6SL2: Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

ELACC6SL4: Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

National Standards

SOCIAL STUDIES

NSS-WH.5-12.9: Understands how post-World War II reconstruction occurred, new international power relations took shape, and colonial empires broke up; the search for community, stability, and peace in an interdependent world; major global trends since World War II

THEATER ARTS

NA-T.5-8.1: Script writing by the creation of improvisations and scripted scenes based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history

NA-T.5-8.2: Acting by developing basic acting skills to portray characters who interact in improvised and scripted scenes

NA-T.5-8.5: Researching by using cultural and historical information to support improvised and scripted scenes