Michael Avila - BYU

Theatre of the Oppressed Unit

**Objective**: Students will demonstrate their understanding of oppression, empathy, Boal techniques by creating and participating in Forum Theatre scenes

**Learning level:** Advanced (Secondary Education)

**Student Prior Experience**: Students have a strong understanding of the basics of theatre including body, voice, improvisation, risk-taking, and performance experience.

National Standards

* TH:Cr1.1.III.a. Synthesize knowledge from a variety of dramatic forms, theatrical conventions, and technologies to create the visual composition of a drama/ theatre work.
* TH:Cr2-III.a. Develop and synthesize original ideas in a drama/theatre work utilizing critical analysis, historical and cultural context, research, and western or nonwestern theatre traditions.
* TH: Re7.1.-III.a. Use historical and cultural context to structure and justify personal responses to a drama/theatre work.
* TH:Re9.1.III.c. Compare and debate the connection between a drama/theatre work and contemporary issues that may impact audiences.
* TH:Cn10.1.III.a. Collaborate on a drama/theatre work that examines a critical global issue using multiple personal, community, and cultural perspectives.

Enduring Understandings

* Oppression detrimentally affects us all
* Images are effective tools of theatre
* Play is essential to theatre

Essential Questions

* What is Theatre of the Oppressed?
* Why are games and play important to theatre?
* How are images powerful tools of theatre?
* What is oppression?

Authentic Performance Tasks

* Image and Forum theatre performances
* Forum theatre performance
* Boal reading response

Lesson 1 - Introduction to TO

**Objective**: Students will demonstrate their understanding of play and discovery as essential tools of theatre by reflecting on Boal Games and their connection to acting and oppression.

**Materials**:

* Open space
* “Games for Actors and Non-Actors” by Augusto Boal

**Essential Questions**:

* What skills do I use in theatre?
* Why is awareness important in theatre?
* What does it mean to play?
* Why is play and discovery important to theatre practitioners?

Note: Discussions will be used to check for understanding. Ask the questions and encourage multiple students to answer. Afterwards, support the students’ answers with additional information if needed. (Some answers to questions are written down, indented in farther)

Hook:

Slow motion race - pg. 71 (Boal)

* Time: 5 minutes
* Invite students to line up on one side of the classroom. Explain that this will be a slow motion race that will warm up your bodies and minds
* “The winner is the last person home. Once the race starts, the actors must never stop moving and every movement should be executed as slowly as possible. Take the largest step forward you are capable of. Both feet must ever be fully on the ground at the same time.” (Boal)
* Discussion
	+ What was your experience during this activity?

Transition

Tell students that today we are starting a unit on Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed and we will be focusing on playing games today

Lesson

Instruct

* Augusto Boal was a theatre practitioner in Brazil. He lived under an oppressive government, so he created Theatre of the Oppressed as a way to discuss oppression and practice revolution. His form of theatre encourages participation from the audience.
	+ Ask Students: What is Oppression? (This is a formative pre-assessment. They will do more research about this topic later)
* He used Games as a way to prepare actors and audience members to do more intense theatre work. We will be playing and discussing Games today.
* Boal wrote a book called “Games for Actors and Non-actors.” It is a resource that contains a lot of exercises and explanations of how to do Theatre of the Oppressed work. I will read a short excerpt from this book

Read “Games” by Boal - pg. 49 (The paragraphs about the Two Unities)

* Discussion
	+ What do you think Boal meant by “All ideas, images, and emotions reveal themselves physically?”
	+ How does that influence our performance?
	+ “Bodily activities are activities of the whole body,” we need to practice connecting each part of the body to ourselves

* Discussion
	+ What does it mean to play?
		- Exploration, discovery, questioning, trying
		- For me, play is an essential part of theatre. It should be taken seriously, but that doesn’t mean you need to be serious while you are doing it
	+ Why is it important to theatre? How do we learn through play?
		- Through play, we have experiences that teach us skills. By doing, we practice.

Transition

We are going to play some games. Through these games, we will be practicing skills of expressivity and dialogue. Pay attention to the thoughts and feelings you experience during these activities. Be prepared to reflect on them at the end of class.

Activities

(With each of activities, explain the instructions of the activity, have the students perform the activity, then discuss)

Cross and Circle pg. 50

* Time: 3 minutes
* Location: Students stay seated
* Instructions: Make a circle with one hand. Stop. Make a cross with the other hand. Stop. Do both at once.
* Discussion
	+ What was challenging about this? How does it apply to our discussion about all things being connected?

Minimum Surface Contact pg. 56

* Time: 5-7 minutes
* Location: Invite students to find their own space in the room away from walls and other students
* Instructions: Purpose is to bring your body and its surface into minimum contact with the floor, varying the options and exploring all the possibilities: feet and hands, one foot and one hand, backside only, chest, knees… at one time or another during the exercise the surface of every part of the body must have touched the floor. Passage from one position to another should be one very slowly, to stimulate all the muscles.
* Discussion
	+ We deal with gravity everyday, but there are thousands of ways of counteracting this force. We must practice de-structuring our habitual movements.
	+ Why is it important to de-structure our habitual movements?
		- In acting, we have to perform a lot of characters that may be completely different to ourselves.

Racing on chairs pg. 68

* Time: 3 minutes
* Set-up: Divide class into groups of five. Create vertical lines of six chairs (or have one extra chair for each group if less than five students per group) one for each group
* Instruction: A group of five actors in a line, one behind the other, stand on their own chair. There is a sixth unoccupied chair at the front of the line. Each actor moves forward so there is an empty chair at the end. Then the last actor passes that chair to the next actor, until this last chair is at the front of the line. The groups race each other across the room.
* Side-coaching: Be safe! Move carefully but efficiently.

A round of rhythm and movement pg. 92

* Time: 5-7 minutes
* Instruction: One person goes into the middle. All others try to imitate them perfectly with sound and movement. Sounds and movement should be different from how you act/sound in normal life. There must be no fear of ridiculousness, we will all look weird. Try to reproduce everything as precisely as you can. Do not try to try and change it to make it more like you. Do not do a caricature. When the leader is ready, they stand opposite of someone else and they switch places. This should be done non-verbally
* Side-coaching: Make big choices! Try to move exactly like the person in the middle.
* Discussion
	+ What did you discover?
	+ How did it feel to move like someone else?
		- When we try to move like someone else, we begin to undo our own mechanisations. We are working to restructure our own way of being.

Colombian Hypnosis pg. 51

* Instructions:One person is the leader, the other the follower. The follower has to follow the leader’s hand perfectly by keeping the same distance from the hand the entire time. If the hand rotates to the side, the head will rotate as well.
* For the teacher: Look for engaging images and call ‘Freeze’ when most groups are in an interesting configuration. Have one group unfreeze and observe the images they see. Afterwards, that group freezes in their image and another group unfreezes.
	+ Side-coaching: Keep focused on the hand. Leader, keep the follower safe. Challenge the follower.
* Discussion
	+ What stories were being told?
	+ What relationships do you see?
	+ How did you see oppression in these images?
* Repeat this activity and discussion 3-4 times

* Now, there will be one leader with two followers (one for each hand of the leader). Try to split up the class into groups of 3, but they may still be some groups of 2. Give each student a turn to be the leader.
* Discussion
	+ What was your experience being the leader?
	+ What was your experience being the follower?
	+ How was this different from only one follower?

* The final iteration of this game starts with one leader and two followers. The other students sit and watch for a moment. After some time, tell the participants to stop. Ask the followers to put out their hands and have one student go to the four open hands. Resume the activity. Pause again after some time and have the followers on the end put up their hands. Continue adding followers until every student is participating
	+ Remind the students to be safe
* Discussion
	+ What was it like being the ultimate leader?
	+ What was it like being a follower at the end?
	+ How does this activity relate to power and control?
	+ How do you think this connects to oppression?

Final Discussion

* What did you discover about oppression?
* How can theatre be a tool to discuss social topics?
* How can this help you as an actor and person?

TO Lesson 2 - (Online) What is Oppression?

Objective: Students will demonstrate their understanding of Theatre of the Oppressed by participating in an online discussion of Chapter 1 of “Games for Actors and Non-actors” by Augusto Boal.

This lesson was originally online using Canvas.

Assignment - Self Reflection

This is a self-reflection focused on the activities you participated in during the previous class. Respond to these questions in a text box or upload a written document.

1. What was a moment of discovery for you during the activities? Why did it stand out to you?
2. What was a challenging moment during the activities? How did you overcome that challenge?
3. What was your favorite part of the activities? Why was it your favorite?
4. Why is play important to theatre?
5. What additional questions do you have about what you learned?

Assignment - Oppression Research

Theatre of the Oppressed deals with the topic of oppression. For this assignment, you will be asked to research different topics and share your findings. Do your own research, then post your thoughts to the online discussion board. The intention of this assignment is to improve your understanding of oppression so you can fully participate in future discussions and activities. Use google, wikipedia, and any other form of information to create a well written paragraph. 200-300 words.

Questions to research: What is oppression? What kinds of oppression do we have in our society? What is the difference between discrimination and oppression? What does oppression look like, sound like, feel like? Why does oppression exist?

Afterwards, respond to at least two peers’ research. Responses can include additional thoughts, emotions, stories, and/or questions.

Assessment (Have students read Ch. 1 of Boal’s book)

After reading chapter 1 of Games for Actors and Non-Actors by Augusto Boal (https://demos.be/sites/default/files/games-for-actors-and-non-actors.augusto-boal.pdf), respond to the reading in 200 -300 words. Then, reply to 3 of your peers' comments.

Questions to consider: What surprised you about the reading? Whose story was being told? What type of reactions did you have while reading? What questions do you have? What did you learn about Theatre of the Oppressed? How is this style of theatre different from what you know about theatre? Why is it important to learn about this style of theatre?

Requirements:

1. Respond to the reading in 200-300 words
2. Comment on at least 3 peers' responses: reflect on their response, bring an additional perspective to their thoughts, or ask them a question.

Lesson 3 - Oppressions and Images

**Objective**: Students will demonstrate their understanding of using and analyzing images to tell stories by creating and responding to Story Gifts

**Materials**:

* Large, open space
* “Games for Actors and Non-actors” by Augusto Boal
	+ https://demos.be/sites/default/files/games-for-actors-and-non-actors.augusto-boal.pdf
* Whiteboard and multiple dry erase markers
* Phone/Camera

**Essential Questions**

* What is oppression?
* How does oppression affect me?
* How are images related to oppression?

Hook

Colombian Hypnosis

* Review the rules of Colombian Hypnosis. One person is the leader, the other the follower. The follower has to follow the leader’s hand perfectly.
* Start with two followers with each leader. Encourage leaders to challenge their followers while maintaining safety. After a couple minutes, call ‘Freeze’ when most groups are in an interesting configuration. Have one group unfreeze and observe the images they see. Afterwards, that group freezes in their image and another group unfreezes.
* Discussion
	+ What stories were being told?
	+ What relationships do you see?
	+ How did you see oppression in these images?
* Repeat this activity and discussion 3-4 times

Transition

We will continue to explore images and how they relate to Theatre of the Oppressed. But first we will discuss more about oppression.

Lesson

Ask students: “What is oppression?” (They’ve already researched this topic)

* Definition: the exercise of authority or power in a burdensome, cruel, or unjust manner (dictionary.com)

During the online class, students read Ch. 1 of “Games for Actors and Non-Actors”, Ask these questions to check for understanding and enhance the learning from the reading

* “For the online class, you read a chapter from Boal’s book. Let’s discuss the reading!”
	+ How did you connect this activity to the reading?
	+ What other moments stood out to you from the reading?
	+ Why is it important to have conversations about oppression?
	+ Why are images important to theatre?

Board Talk

* Set-up: Have a blank whiteboard and multiple dry erase markers
* Instruction: Tell students that we will be doing a Board Talk: using the whiteboard as a way to have a conversation. Invite students to write different oppressions they’ve experienced or know about on the whiteboard. Students can put stars next to ones they share. Give students 5-7 minutes to add to the board. At the end, have one student read through all of the words.
* TAKE A PICTURE OF THE BOARD
* Discussion
	+ How does oppression affect everyone, even the oppressor?
	+ How can we have empathy for those that are oppressed?
	+ How can you be oppressed and privileged at the same time?
		- You can be oppressed in one group but privileged in another. Ex. You can be a white woman. A wealthy black man. Etc.
* Inform students that we will return to these words later in the lesson

Images

* We’re going to return to the idea of images
* Read pg. 175 of Games for Actors and Non-Actors by Boal as a class
	+ What did Boal mean by “the meaning of an image is the image itself?”
	+ What did he mean by “Image is a language?”
	+ Why is ambiguity important to image work?

Activities

Images while walking

* The actors walk around the room in strange and unusual ways playing with tempo, levels, and styles.  Every so often call “Stop”. Pick a few interesting images. Have other actors unfreeze and observe the images nonverbally. Repeat this a few times
	+ Side-coaching: Move as creatively as you can, but don’t think too hard about it.  Just move. Explore different planes, high, medium, and low.  Explore different movement patterns, diagonal, curvilinear, staccato.
* Add on a new layer to this activity. Give actors specific prompts to inform their movement. Invite them to incorporate each prompt fully and allow it to affect how and why they move
	+ Prompts: Joy, sadness, anger, fear, loneliness, frustration, confusion, shame, disgust, hunger, oppression
* Discussion Questions
	+ How did the prompt inform your movement?
	+ What prompt impacted you the most?
	+ What are different sides of each prompt? How did people interpret images differently?

Complete the Image

* Model this activity first
* Divide class into partnerships. The two actors go in for a high five and freeze. Partner A leaves the images and immediately returns to create a new frozen image with their partner. Then Partner B leaves and returns to create a new image. Begin by telling each partner when to move and freeze. After a time, allow partnerships to move at their own pace.
	+ Side-coaching: Don’t think, just move. Play with different levels and connections. React immediately. Don’t overthink it.
* After students show understanding of this activity, add prompts to inform their images.
	+ Prompts (Draw from words written on board during the Board talk)
		- Example - Oppression due to: gender, sexuality, religion, race, ethnicity, appearance, age, parents, teachers, etc.
	+ After each prompt is given, find a time to have some partnerships freeze so others can observe and discuss the images.
		- Discussion: What story is being told? Why do you think that?
		- What prompt was the most engaging?

Lesson 4 - (Online) Oppression in ‘A Raisin in the Sun’

Objective: Students will demonstrate their understanding of oppression by analyzing Act 1 Scene 1 of ‘A Raisin in the Sun’ by Lorraine Hansberry

Materials

* A digital copy of ‘A Raisin in the Sun’ or a physical copy for each student

Assignment - Self Reflection

This is a self-reflection focused on the activities you participated in during the previous class (Discussion on oppression and images). Respond to these questions in a text box or upload a written document.

During the last class, we discussed the power of images in theatre and how oppression can be portrayed through image theatre.

1. What was a moment of discovery for you during the activities? Why did it stand out to you?
2. What was a challenging moment during the activities? How did you overcome that challenge?
3. What did you discover about oppression?
4. Why are images important to theatre?
5. What additional questions do you have about what you learned?

Assessment

After reading Raisin in the Sun Act 1,  Scene 1, respond to these discussion questions in 100-200 words:

* What are your initial reactions to the play?
* What character are you most interested in?
* What questions formulated as you read?
* How does this play relate to our discussions on oppression?

Requirements

1. Respond to Discussion Questions
2. Continue discussions by responding to peers: reflect on their response, bring an additional perspective to their thoughts, or ask them a question.

Lesson 5 - Image Theatre

Objective: Students will demonstrate their understanding of using and analyzing images to tell stories by creating and responding to Story Gifts

Essential Questions:

* What is Image Theatre?
* Why is ambiguity important?
* How do images encourage ambiguity?
* How do images tell complete stories?

Materials:

* Large space
* A chair for each student
* Picture of Board Talk from last class

Hook

Creative Walking

* Purpose is to warm-up bodies, minds, and creativity
* Invite students to begin walking around the room. Then invite them to start playing with levels (high, middle, low). Speed (Slow, medium, fast). Lines (Straight, curved, zig zag, spiral). Lead with different parts of the body (arm, elbow, knee, toe, nose)
	+ Side-coaching: Take risks, challenge yourself, do movement that you are not used to doing, play!
* Discussion
	+ How can this activity help us in Image Theatre?

Transition

* We will continue exploring Image Theatre and how we can use images to tell stories and gain empathy for others

Activities

Complete the Image

* Review instructions with students
* Divide class into partnerships. The two actors go in for a high five and freeze. Partner A leaves the images and immediately returns to create a new frozen image with their partner. Then Partner B leaves and returns to create a new image. Begin by telling each partner when to move and freeze. After a time, allow partnerships to move at their own pace.
	+ Side-coaching: Don’t think, just move. Play with different levels and connections. React immediately. Don’t overthink it.
* After students show understanding of this activity, add prompts to inform their images.
	+ Prompts (Draw from words written on board during the Board talk from last class)
	+ After each prompt is given, find a time to have some partnerships freeze so others can observe and discuss the images.
		- Discussion: What story is being told? Why do you think that?
		- What prompt was the most engaging?
* Discussion
	+ How can images be tools to discuss oppression?
	+ If images are reflections of ourselves, what did you learn about yourself looking at images?
	+ What is ambiguity?
		- There can be multiple correct interpretations of an image.
	+ Why is ambiguity important in theatre or discussion about oppression?

Partner Image Stories

* We will continue using the techniques of Complete the Image to create short stories with partners
* With your partner, start Complete the Image. After a few switches, decide which images you created are the most engaging. Work together to create 3 distinct images that tell a story. This can be a literal story about two people or a more abstract story that centers around a concept or theme.
	+ Give students time to practice
* Now, create transitions for the images. Transitions are helpful to further or clarify the story. Each transition should be rehearsed and intentional. How do you get from one image to the next? When you get to an image, freeze there for at least 7 seconds. Practice these images and transitions and memorize them. Be prepared to share them with the class.
	+ Give students time to practice
	+ Students perform their stories with the class
* Discussion
	+ What kinds of stories did you see?
	+ What stories stood out to you? Why?

Transition

* This final activity. We will be applying the skills of complete the image and image stories to create Story Gifts

**Assessment - Story Gifts**

* As a class, choose one word from the Board Talk as a prompt. (Ex. Parents, gender,etc)
* Begin by sitting across from your partner and tell a story relating to the prompt (A time that you felt oppressed or hurt by your parents). Each partner takes 2-3 minutes to tell their story.
* Afterwards, each actor moves to their own space in the room with a chair. Their objective is to create 3 images that help tell their partner’s story. Encourage actors to use the chairs and their bodies in engaging ways to create these images.
* After actors have practiced and memorized their images, invite them to create short transitions between each image that is artistic and enhances the story.
* Finally, have partnerships perform their story gifts for each other

Discussion

* What did you experience while watching your story told by someone else?
* What role did empathy play in this activity?
* How effective were images in telling a story?
* How did ambiguity come into play during this activity?

Remind students to complete a self-reflection online and continue A Raisin in the Sun.

Lesson 6 - (Online) Analyzing Images

Objective: Students will demonstrate their understanding of Image Theatre by analyzing Act 1 Scene 2 of ‘A Raisin in the Sun’

Assignment - Self-Reflection

Reflect on the Story Gifts activity from class, then type your responses. Respond to each questions with 2-3 complete sentences.

1. What did you discover about your partner from this activity?
2. How did it feel to interpret someone else's story?
3. What were your reactions/thoughts while you watched someone else tell your story?
4. What did you discover about oppression?

Assignment - Analyzing Images Online

Find an image online (Google, social media, etc.) that tells an engaging and meaningful story. It can be a painting or photography. Copy and paste the image or link into your response, then answer these questions

1. Why does this image speak to you?
2. What story do you see?
3. Ask a friend or family member what story they see, share their response
4. Compare/contrast the two stories (yours and your friend's/family's)

Assessment

After reading A Raisin in the Sun Act 1,  Scene 2, respond to these discussion questions:

* What moment stood out to you the most? Why?
* What questions formulated as you read?
* How does this scene relate to our discussions on oppression and images?

Requirements

1. Respond to Discussion Questions
2. Continue discussions by responding to peers: reflect on their response, bring an additional perspective to their thoughts, or ask them a question.

Lesson 7 - Sculpting Images

Objective**:** Students will demonstrate their understanding of Image Theatre by creating multiple images of oppression and reflecting on the activity.

Essential Questions:

* What is Image Theatre?
* How can images tell stories?
* How can images be used to discuss oppression?

Materials:

* Large space
* Oppression Images (posted on a projector or printed out)
	+ Examples of images can be found under the lesson

Hook

**Manipulate image (Sculptor)**

* Students get into pairs. Decide who is partner A and who is partner B. Partner A starts by sculpting partner B with their hands into a desired shape. They continue manipulating the image.
* Switch who is the sculptor.
* Switch back. Now, the sculptor steps away from their partner and manipulates the image without touching their partner, but making similar movements. The person being moved has to watch the sculptor and try to understand their movements of how they should be shaped. After a time, switch.
* Discussion
	+ What was it like being the sculptor?
	+ What was it like being moved?
	+ How does this experience connect to Image Theatre?
	+ What is different about creating an image with your body and someone else’s body?

Transition

Remind students: In theater, images can be a language on their own and tell their own stories. Sometimes, words are not even used to discuss one image. Everyone can look at the image, interpret it their own way, and then move on. Image theatre is nonverbal which makes it more easily accessible to people without theater training.

* Pull up images on a projector or print them out and discuss these questions
	+ What are you seeing? Where do you see it?
	+ How does this image connect to oppression?
	+ How could we use these images as inspiration for theatre?

Let’s review our discussion on oppression:

* What is oppression?
* What emotions do you feel when you are oppressed or see oppression?
* Why is oppression a challenging topic to talk about?

**Group Images**

* Similar to the sculptor activity, students are put into groups. One student is the sculptor and can move the other people in their group into any image. The sculptor must move quickly and not use words, but this time they can model how something is supposed to look.
* Invite sculptors to think about an instance where they experienced or saw oppression. Have them create that image with their group. Share the images with the entire class.
* Switch who is the sculptor a few times.

Discussion Questions

* Did you see any stories emerging?
* What reactions did you have to the images?
* What was it like being a part of someone else’s image?
* How is a group image different from an individual’s images

Multiple Images of Oppression from “Games for Actors and Non-actors” by Boal

Goal: Utilize Image Theatre to allow participants to explore the relationship between reality and the ideal and explore possible solutions to combat oppression.

Instructions Pt. 1

* Come together as a class, one person is the sculptor.
* Invite students to think of specific situations that they have felt oppressed.
* Ask participants if any of them have a specific image of oppression they can create using multiple participants. Whoever says they have one will now be referred to as the sculptor. Explain the instructions for part 1 so the sculptor fully understands what he needs to do.
* The sculptor decides on how many bodies he needs and who is representing himself. He uses the bodies of the participants to create their image of oppression. The sculptor cannot speak, but can physically move the bodies around or pantomime what they want the participants to do. The sculptor needs to move quickly to avoid thinking in words rather than images.
* When the image is completed, the sculptor replaces the participant representing himself. \*Have the image members memorize their position\* Everyone is able to observe the image. If someone inside the image wants to observe, one of the audience members can replace her for a minute while she observes.
	+ “Think about what each character is thinking or what they want.”

Side-coaching Pt. 1

* Sculpt quickly, try not to think. Don’t speak. How can you communicate without words?
* What is this image saying? How does it make you feel? Are there any characters you feel connected or disconnected to?

Instructions Pt. 2

* Then, the sculptor moves the bodies around to create the image as an ideal. How he wishes the image looked. \*memorize the ideal\* Afterwards, the image returns to the first image.
* “When I say go, the people in the image are going to move in slow motion. You get to decide how you move, but you need to ultimately end in the ideal image. Think about how your character needs to change or what they need to do to get to the ideal.”
* Go. After the ideal is reached, return to the original image.
* “This time when I say go, move in slow motion, but not necessarily towards the ideal. Think about what your character would do next realistically. Don’t feel constrained by the ideal image. Anything can happen as long as it is motivated by a real impulse.”
	+ “Life rarely works out exactly how you want. If your character would leave, leave. If they would change their expression or body position due to what others do, then do it.”
* Go. Instructor calls stop when the image seems to end.

Side-coaching Pt. 2

* Listen to your impulses. Don’t speak. Why is this an ideal? What does your ideal look like?
* How does your character respond?

Discussion Questions

* How did you respond to the original image?
* How realistic was the transition from the first image to the ideal?
* Why do you think the third image ended how it did?
* What does this say about oppression?

Final Assessment - Discussion

* How can images be tools to discuss oppression?
* Why is Theatre of the Oppressed meaningful?
* How can it be a tool for social change?



<https://www.elle.com/culture/a26236281/black-history-month-photos/>



http://thelistlove.com/10-powerful-photographs-from-womens-history/

Lesson 8 - Perspective Taking

**Objective**: Students will demonstrate their understanding of the importance of others’ perspectives by analyzing another’s thoughts and feelings about oppression.

**Essential Questions**

* Why is it important to listen and understand others’ perspectives?
* How do our experiences affect our perception of the world?

**Materials**

* Interview Questions

Interview Assignment

Post the instructions below to the online learning platform that you are using (this can be adapted into a homework assignment if you are not doing online classes)

* There are two parts to this assignment: For this assignment, you will be interviewing a family member or friend about their thoughts and feelings around oppression. Choose someone that would have an understanding of what oppression is. Get their permission to write down and share their responses. Write down a summary of their responses and submit them. (Or turn them in a physical copy of the responses)
	+ What is oppression?
	+ What feelings do you have about oppression? Why do you feel/think that way?
	+ Do you have experience with oppression?
	+ What should be done about oppression?
* Part 2: Analysis of the responses. Answer the following questions and submit them. These responses should be thoughtful and use complete sentences. (Total of 200-300 words)
	+ What surprised you about their responses?
	+ Why do you think they felt/thought oppression the way they did?
	+ What are similarities and differences between your thoughts about oppression?
	+ How has your understanding of oppression grown after hearing about someone else’s perspective?
	+ Is there anything else you discovered or would like to share?

Lesson 9 - Forum Theatre

Hook

Colombian hypnosis

* Begin class with reviewing the rules for Colombian hypnosis. One person is the leader, the other the follower. The follower has to follow the leader’s hand perfectly.
* Start with two followers with each leader. Look for engaging images and call ‘Freeze’ when most groups are in an interesting configuration. Have one group unfreeze and observe the images they see. Afterwards, that group freezes in their image and another group unfreezes.
* Repeat the activity with two followers for each leader (from lesson 1)
* Repeat the activity with one leader in the middle, two followers, and those followers have followers as well.
* Discussion
	+ After more lessons about images and oppression, how has your understanding or observations of this game changed?
	+ What is oppression?
	+ How does it affect all of us?
	+ What is the importance of images?
	+ How has this unit helped you as an actor?

Transition

Inform students that they will be combining all of the skills they have learned into one final activity.

Activity

Forum Theatre - Groups of 5-6 students (total of 3-4 groups)

* Instructions: Create a 30 second scene where there is clear oppression, characters, and conflict. Ask students to determine a realistic scene where oppression can easily be observed. Tell them to choose a situation where there can be multiple oppressors and the oppression cannot easily be solved.
* For teachers: Give students a good amount of time to work on these scenes. Walk around to groups and check in them. If you have time, have them perform the scenes for you so you can give them feedback.

Assessment

* Instructions: Groups will perform their scenes. Inform students that Forum Theatre encourages audience members to become actors to try and solve the problems in the scene. Tell students that the goal of Forum Theatre isn’t to find one correct answer, but to discuss multiple ways to solve the oppression.
	+ Groups perform scenes once. Invite the audience to look for moments of oppression.
	+ Groups start to perform the scene again. When a moment of oppression occurs, audience members have the opportunity to call “Freeze” and take the place of the oppressed individual. The scene resumes and the spec-actor (spectator/actor) tries to solve the oppression.
	+ Other audience members can replace the spec-actor and try to solve the oppression in a new way.
	+ If the conflict is getting solved too easily, Actors can add conflict or an audience member can call “Freeze”, take the place of an oppressor, and intensify the oppression.
* Repeat this for each group

Discussion (Last 5 minutes)

* What kinds of oppression did we discuss in these scenes?
* What did you discover about oppression?
* How do these scenes connect to your own life?
* How do you feel more prepared to discuss and combat oppression?

FINAL ASSESSMENT

*This assessment was originally designed for an online format but can be adapted for a written assessment.*

Reflect on the discussions, activities, and assignments you have completed for this unit then fill out the rubric below and answer the questions. You will be self-assessing yourself, so write down you finale score under the rubric. Under each criteria, write a short explanation of why you feel you deserve that score. (For example - Do you have a better understanding of what oppression is? - Yes, oppression is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I understand it better now because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.) These responses should be **thoughtful and comprehensive.**

**Theatre of the Oppressed Final Rubric (10 points)**

(Copy and paste the rubric and questions, then fill it out and answer the questions below)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Yes (2 points) | Partially Yes (1 point) | No (0 points) |
| Do you have a better understanding of what oppression is? |  |  |  |
| Do you have a good understanding of techniques of Theatre of the Oppressed including Games, Image Theatre, and Forum Theatre and why they are used? |  |  |  |
| Do you understand the importance and power of images? |  |  |  |
| Do you have a better understanding of how oppression affects you and those around you? |  |  |  |
| Do you feel prepared to join conversations about oppression and do you have tools to try and solve oppression? |  |  |  |

Total points (add up your own score):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Theatre of the Oppressed Final Reflection (10 points)**

Finally, reflect on participating in the Forum Theatre scenes and answer these questions. Respond to each question with 3-5 complete sentences For some of the questions, you can draw upon what you wrote on the rubric, but expound on it:

* What did you discover about oppression during this activity?
* How has your perception of theatre changed after today's activity?
* What was a moment that stood out to you in this activity?
* What were some challenges you experienced?
* How will you apply the skills you learned in this unit as an actor?
* How will you apply the skills you learned in this unit as a person (how has this impacted your real life)?
* Any additional thoughts or questions?