

Using drama to address social justice issues in school and the community

Overview

This lesson will introduce students to the idea of social justice. Students will learn about how dramatic performance can be used as an expression of social change or social awareness, as demonstrated by Ajoka Theatre of Pakistan. The students will view clips of Ajoka Theatre productions and learn about the history of the theatre group's origin as an artistic response to the nation's oppressive military government. The lesson will culminate with students creating a Public Service Announcement to educate others about a social issue that is important to them.

Grade

9-10

Subject

ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) class- focus on literacy skills and written and oral communication in English.

Essential Standards:

- NC.CC. 9-10.W.1.b Develop claims, and counterclaims, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.
- NC. CC. 9-10. SL.4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience and task.
- NC. WIDA standards for English language proficiency standard course of study for English language learners Standard 1: English language learners communicate for Social and Instructional purposes within the school setting.

Essential Questions

- What does social justice mean to you?
- When was a time that you felt strongly about an issue and wanted to share your views with other people?
- Why do you believe the Ajoka theater group chose to use drama as a form of expression about social causes?
- How will you determine which information is most you will include which is most essential to your message?
- How effective was your presentation in expressing your message?

Materials

- Children's book: *The Day the Crayons Quit* by Drew Daywalt
- Teacher access to computer, projector, and speakers
- TED Talk, Middle Eastern and Muslim Stereotypes in Media : Eefa Shehzad:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRZQiwxB8IE>
- Video clips of Ajoka Theatre
 - Ajoka Theatre Excerpt (<https://vimeo.com/131126762>)
 - Ajoka - A story of Activism and Theatre (<https://vimeo.com/62215644>)

- *Dara:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdGCs1ZoSOg>
- Optional interactive Venn diagram: http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/venn_diagrams/
- Selected examples of Public Service Announcements: www.adcouncil.org/Our-Campaigns
- PSA Outline from Read-Write-Think (attached)
- Freytag's Pyramid Worksheet (attached)
- Construction paper and other art supplies as per the discretion of the teacher (crayons, markers, etc.)
- Laptops or computers for each student to do research on their social issue
- Optional Powtoon program: <https://www.powtoon.com/>
- PSA Rubric (attached)

Duration

3-6 lessons at 60 minutes each, depending on the amount of time needed for explanation, direction, writing and creating.

Teacher Preparation

Consider reading this short article by Michael Hernandez, "Social Justice in a digital age" from Literacy Today Nov/Dec 2016: <https://www.slideshare.net/cinehead/digital-storytelling-and-social-justice>. The article addresses teaching, digital storytelling, and social justice.

Procedure

What is "social justice?"

1. Introduce the lesson by asking students what "social justice" means to them. ESOL Students may need help getting started on this topic. Breaking down the words "social" and "justice" can make it more manageable. Write the word "social" on the board as the center of a word web. As a class, discuss what "social" means. Fill in the word web throughout your discussion. Then, write the word "justice" at the center of a new word web, and discuss the concept of justice as class. Fill in this word web with notes from the discussion. Then, ask students about the concept of "social justice."
2. Ask students to reflect on to the following Essential Question prompt into their journals or on a sheet paper: When was a time that you felt strongly about an issue and wanted to share your views with other people? Give students 5 minutes to free write. If students feel comfortable, some may choose to share orally.

The Day the Crayons Quit

3. To provide an example of addressing issues of social justice, read aloud the book *The Day the Crayons Quit*, a picture book about the grievances of over worked and underappreciated crayons.
(Note: Teachers may substitute a different book from their library that addresses the theme of social justice.)
4. Lead a discussion about why the crayons were upset and the "issues" they raised. Remind students to consider why those issues were important to the crayons. Write down student responses as a list on chart paper. This list will be used as a conversation starter for the student's own future investigation into social issues which concern them.
5. As a homework assignment, direct students to observe things in their community, school, or the world that may be an area of concern for them. Their observations will be used as an "icebreaker" to launch the classroom discussion the next day.

Examples of addressing social justice in Pakistan

6. As a class, discuss concerns that students have brought back to class as their homework. These new items will be added to the list created the previous day. The topics may include topics such as: biases and stereotypes, bullying, underage drinking, gangs, distracted driving, consent, body image, the community, the environment and school.
7. Begin a discussion about ways students can address their concerns in a positive manner. Examples could include: forms of artistic expression, community service, writing a letter to their newspaper, and meeting with local politicians. Tell students that you will now share video clips that demonstrate the way some people have used the arts and media to bring awareness to social concerns.
8. Share that these are examples specifically related to Pakistan. Find Pakistan on a map and share a few basic facts about the country: it is officially called the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; Pakistan is the 6th most populous country in the world; the national language of Pakistan is Urdu, although the official language is English; the state religion in Pakistan is Islam, which is practiced by about 95–98% of the population; etc.
9. Show this TED talk as an example addressing bias given by a 16-year-old Pakistani student about stereotypes of Muslim and Arab people as portrayed in films and the media:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRZQiwxB8IE>.
10. After viewing the TED talk, show clips of the Ajoka Theatre group of Pakistan. Tell students that Ajoka Theater was founded by actress Madeeha Gauhar and writer Shahid Nadeem, and has been part of the struggle for a democratic and egalitarian Pakistan for the last 25 years. Ajoka was organized by a small group of cultural activists in 1983 in Pakistan, during General Zia-ul-Haq's repressive regime. Today Ajoka is an internationally respected name in the world of theatre and is one of Pakistan leading cultural and literary institutions. These video demonstrate the way the theatre troupe addresses social issues in their theatre productions: Ajoka Theatre Excerpt (<https://vimeo.com/131126762>), Ajoka - A story of Activism and Theatre (<https://vimeo.com/62215644>).
11. Have students compare and contrast the ways that social concerns are addressed in the video clips (TED Talk and Ajoka Theater) using a Venn diagram. The Venn diagram can also be used as a tool to prepare students for addressing the various sides of an issue. If students have access to computers, they may use this online Venn diagram creator at:
http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/venn_diagrams/. Otherwise, they may draw one.
12. Lead a class discussion on the following Essential Question: Why do you believe the Ajoka theater group chose to use drama as a form of expression about social causes?

Developing a Public Service Announcement

13. Ask students if they have heard the phrase “Public Service Announcement.” Tell students that a PSA can present a message succinctly in a brief amount of time. PSAs can also be used to address issues of social justice. Show a couple of short Public Service Announcements (typically 30 seconds long) through the Ad Council site (www.adcouncil.org/Our-Campaigns). Direct students to notice the narrative of the short presentations, including the key words and images used. As a class, discuss:
 - How effective was the PSA?
 - Did the message influence your thinking about a topic?
 - Was information provided for further reference (i.e. a link to a website)?

- Was there a slogan or key word used to articulate the message throughout the video?
14. Tell students that they will be creating Public Service Announcements as a way to share an issue that they care about. Revisit the list of things in the community, school, or world that the class has created. Individually or in small groups, ask students select one social issue to create a PSA about. Tell students that their PSA will 1) need to voice a concern and 2) provide an action step for people to address the concern positively. Students may either perform their PSA as a short scene, or you may have them use a digital format like Powtoon.
 15. After each student/group has selected a topic, pass out copies of the PSA outline (attached). This worksheet will guide students to brainstorm the following parts of their PSA: scenario, goal, reason, facts, for more information. Give students time to work silently.
 16. Introduce Freytag's plot structure components: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and solution. Have students fill out the Freytag's pyramid worksheet, attached.
 17. Instruct students to create a four panel-storyboard model to create a concise PSA format using Freytag's pyramid model. Pass out construction paper and other art supplies to students for the storyboard. The storyboard can be made from folded construction paper with four panels. Students should label the panels with: exposition, rising action, problem, solution. As the students are working, the teacher should circulate among each group to help students consider staging, props, and costumes that they may need to perform their PSA.
 18. If students need assistance addressing the persuasive aspect of the PSA, you may have them use this Persuasion Map tool: http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/persuasion_map/

Individual PSA Research

19. During the next class period, give students 45-60 minutes to research the topic of their PSA, as the project includes educating others about the issue. Students should research facts to include in their PSA, as well as a website to refer viewers to for further information on the topic. Students should use two or more sources of information in their PSA. Remind students of the Essential Question: How will you determine which information is most you will include which is most essential to your message?
20. Students should continue working on the dialogue, presentation, props, or scene that they are creating. Students will prepare to share the PSA/scene in class and with the school community at large, if possible.

PSA Presentations

21. Before students perform their PSA presentations for one another, establish classroom rules to create a comfortable environment of mutual respect and trust. Ask students, "What are characteristics of a good audience?" Responses could include: listening, eyes on the presenters, no side conversations, no doodling, etc. Write student responses on the board. After classroom rules have been established, have each student or group present their PSA. Make sure that the class applauds for each group.
22. After each group presents, discuss the issues brought up and how we can adopt the strategies that we have learned into our daily lives. Ask students:
 - What are some other solutions to this problem?
 - Do you think that this issue will continue to be a problem in the future?
 - What stood out to you about their presentation-why?
 - Has your thinking about a topic changed after seeing the presentation?

23. After all students have presented, use a reflective writing journal prompt to consider the success of the project and what you learned about a given issue. Some prompts that could be used to reflect on the activity are:

- What did you find in your research that surprised you?
- Did your research alter your prior thinking on the matter?
- Is there an alternative solution to the one you suggested?
- Is there a different style of presentation that you would adopt next time?



Figure 1- a mask of an old man for a social justice play



Figure 2-scene from a play about harassment

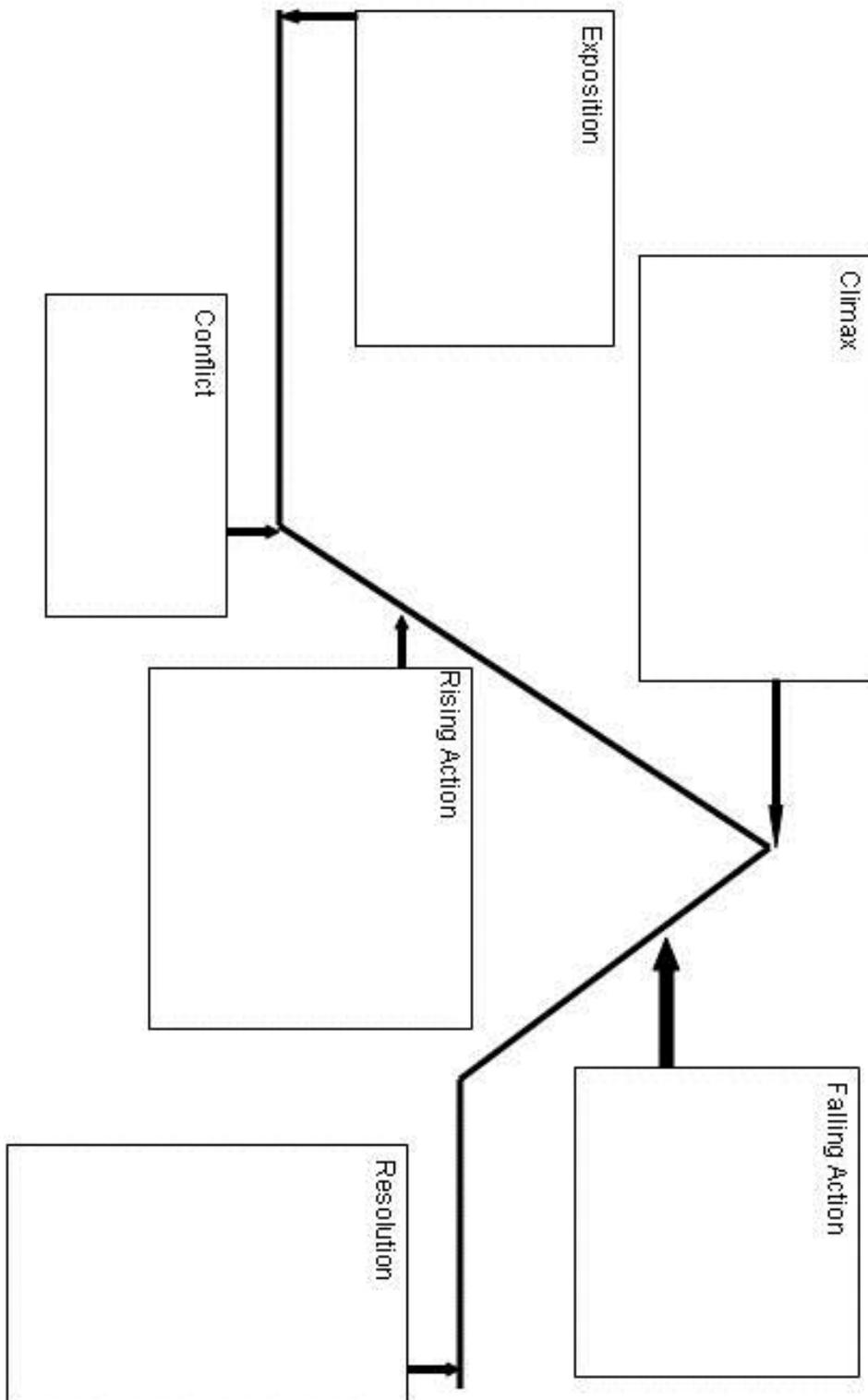
PSA Outline

Instructions: Use this form to outline your PSA. You may need to use a separate sheet of paper to complete Section 1; you should complete that section first and wait until you have had a chance to complete the online Persuasion Map (http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/persuasion_map/) to finish the rest of the outline.

1. Scenario: Characters act out the problem. Write script for actions and dialogue (use back of sheet or another piece of paper as necessary).	
2. Goal: These words flash across the screen.	
3. Reasons: Voiceover explains the problem while image shows problem.	
4. Facts: Voiceover discusses the facts while image shows facts.	
5. For More Information: Show organization phone or website (make one up or use existing).	

Title: _____

Freytag's Pyramid



Public Service Announcement: Social Justice Issue

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	3	2	1
Addresses Social Issue	PSA clearly and creatively addresses a social justice issue.	PSA addresses a social justice issue.	PSA does not address a social justice issue.
Plot structure	PSA makes excellent use of Freytag's plot structure components: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and solution.	PSA makes some use of Freytag's plot structure components: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and solution.	PSA makes inadequate or no use of Freytag's plot structure components: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and solution.
Action Step	PSA includes a reasonable, insightful solution or strategy to address the issue in a positive manner.	PSA includes a solution or strategy to address the issue in a positive manner.	PSA does not include a solution or strategy to address the issue in a positive manner.
Factual information	Students include 3 or more facts to educate others about their issue.	Students include at least 2 facts to educate others about their issue.	Students use 1 or fewer facts to educate others about their issue.
Sources	Students include 2 or more high quality sources of information for their PSA.	Students include 2 sources of information for their PSA, but some of are questionable quality.	Students include fewer than 2 sources of information for their PSA.