LENS Project
Picture Monologues

Ages All Ages, some writing required

LENS Skill Empathy

Why? Thinking and writing in the perspective of another person helps me to develop connections to the experiences of others.

Materials Images of humans or animals (included in lesson, or choose your own!) Writing materials (paper/pencil, tablet, computer, etc)

Vocabulary Monologue: a speech presented by a single character, often to express their inner thoughts aloud, though sometimes also to directly address another character or the audience.

Summary

In this writing activity, participants will utilize their Empathy skills to find connections with the experience of others. Using a picture for inspiration, participants will write a monologue from the perspective of one of the characters in the image, exploring their situation, emotions, and perspective (point of view).

Directions

1.) Peruse the Pictures
Share and discuss initial reactions to the pictures. Utilize the pictures provided or find your own online. Focus on the subject in the picture and reflect on what they may be feeling, what they might say or need in that moment. Consider what might have happened right before or after the picture was taken.

2.) Write a Monologue
Choose one picture that resonates with you and write a monologue from the perspective of one person or subject in the chosen image.

When writing,
• Write in first person from the perspective of the subject.
• Clearly identify the emotional state or situation for the subject.
• Explain what the subject wants or needs, or would like us to know.
• Explain the relationship between subjects (if there is more than one person or living being in the picture).
• Create a monologue that is approximately one minute long.

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3.) Practice Monologues and Develop Character
Take some time to practice reading the monologues aloud. Use vocal and physical choices to communicate the perspective of the character. For example, if the character is upset, the person reading the monologue should make choices with their tone of voice and their body language to communicate that the character is upset or sad.
- You could even rehearse in front of a mirror to see your physical choices as you practice.

4.) Share Monologues
Take turns presenting each monologue to the rest of the group. Make sure to also share the picture you've chosen to help your audience understand the context of your monologue. As the performer, be sure to deliver your monologue with a strong, clear voice. As an audience member, listen and show appreciation at the end of each monologue via applause, snaps, or other signs of appreciation.

5.) Reflect
Discuss or write your thoughts about the following reflection questions.
- What aspects of the image drew your attention or influenced your writing?
- How did you connect with the subject in your image?
- How did you connect with the story or emotions you wrote about?
- What personal experiences did you draw from to write the monologue?

Other ways to Play:
1. Consider sharing the writing or performing your monologue virtually with friends and loved ones.

2. For more writing practice, write a letter to the subject of your picture monologue from your perspective as a writer. What questions do you have for that person? What do you want them to know, now that you have spent time relating and connecting to their experience?

3. As a visual art extension, illustrate what is happening around the image, behind the camera, or just out of the frame.
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