



PUTTING MYSELF IN THE PICTURE

This strategy turns what is usually a teacher-centered lesson into a dynamic, participative experience. In this strategy, students view, interpret, and physically put themselves into a picture from history or modern geography.

Historical images serve as strong visual mnemonic devices that help many students remember historical content and concepts. Using powerful images will both engage students and relieve the stress of the teacher finding himself the center of every lesson.

Procedure:

1. Select one or two photographs that tie directly into the content for the lesson. Slides should capture student interest, promote thoughtful questions, even empathy.
2. Make sure the photographs are of clear quality. Project them as large as possible onto a screen or the wall of the classroom. Use opaque projectors, overhead projectors, or slide projectors. (Colored or black and white photographs are equally effective.)
3. Student volunteers will be asked to come to the screen and point out details they can identify in the photograph.
4. After discussing the observed details, student volunteers will assume the role of one of the individuals in the photograph.
5. Ask them to place their bodies in the same positions as the individual in the picture, as well as make the same facial expressions as seen in the picture.
6. While posed within the picture, students may be asked to verbally describe what might be on the mind of that individual at this given time in history.
7. Students remaining in the audience will now assume the role of television or newspaper reporters. They will be called upon to create questions for the individuals in the photograph. The students “in the picture” will answer these questions based upon their understanding of the viewpoints of those historical figures they represent.

Enrichment:

Ask students to write a brief response to the experience.

Reporters can write a brief news story for publication, covering their “eyewitness” encounter with this historic event.

Those individuals “in the picture” may be asked to write a brief journal or diary entry through the eyes of the individual they portrayed.