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**USING DRAMATIC STRATEGIES IN THE FIFTH GRADE SOCIAL  
STUDIES CLASSROOM**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ii
RESEARCHER STANCE .....	1
METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH .....	7-14
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	15-27
Introduction.....	15
Drama in Education.....	17
Drama Strategies .....	18
Motivation to Learn.....	21
Constructivist Learning .....	23
Cooperative Learning .....	24
Ownership to Learn.....	25
THE DRAMA BEGINS – MY STORY.....	28-50
QUESTIONING THE STUDENTS.....	28
ACT I “GETTING STARTED” .....	29
Role on Wall.....	30
Writing in Role .....	33
ACT II “STRATEGIES AT WORK” .....	35
Improvisation.....	35
Role-Play.....	38

Try and See It My Way- Debate.....	39
Still Image .....	42
Collective Drawings .....	45
ACT III “ASSESSMENT TIME” .....	47
ACT V “A CLASS PASTICHE” .....	51
METHODS OF ANALYSIS.....	52-56
BINS AND THEMES.....	57
FINDINGS .....	58-72
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?.....	73-75
REFERENCES.....	76-81
APPENDIXES .....	82-87
A September Questionnaire.....	82
B December Questionnaire.....	83
C Journal Entry .....	84
D Principal Letter.....	85
E Parent Letter .....	86
F Student Letter.....	87
Resources .....	88
A. The Starving Time.....	89
B. Trouble At Jamestown (1606-1616).....	90

C. Mayflower Compact (1620).....	97
D. Fish Heads and Snake Skins (1620-1621).....	98
E. Map of the American Colonies (1750) .....	105

## ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study used dramatic strategies to motivate students to learn about colonial history. All students were enrolled in an inner city middle school in a fifth grade proficient level social studies class. The study explored the use of seven different dramatic strategies to motivate students to learn about colonial times. The following strategies are explained in the study: Role on Wall, Writing in Role, Improvisations, Role-Playing, Debates, Still Images, and Collective Drawings.

The class textbook, primary sources, and plays were used to gain the information needed for the dramatic strategies to be successful. Data was collected from the students after each strategy through journal entries. The journals shared the students' thoughts and experiences after performing each of the seven strategies. There were two questionnaires given within the study. One was given at the beginning of the study in September, and the second was given at the end of the study in December. These questionnaires allowed the students to express their opinions about learning with the use of dramatic strategies. The dramatic activities, journal entries, and questionnaires showed that students' motivation to learn colonial American history increased as a result of using dramatic strategies.

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## RESEARCHER STANCE

My dream of becoming a teacher started when I was a sophomore in high school. A British Literature teacher grabbed my attention the very first day of class. He was energetic, motivated, and extremely knowledgeable about the subject and about life in general. He made learning come alive in his classroom. However, not all my teachers were like that; in fact he was the only one who gave me some excitement about learning. The one subject throughout my high school career that was not any fun at all was history. Those teachers did not have the energy or the motivation to make me want to learn about the past. There was a lot of lecturing, note taking, and documentaries shown on films, which made the classes very boring and dreadful.

Year after year I had such a hard time in any history course I had to take, and I believe I did so poorly because I was bored; there was no motivation to want to learn the subject. I was learning in a traditional educational setting, which is a matter of routine in which the plans and programs are handed down from the past (Dewey, 1938). So I knew that if or when I became a teacher I definitely wanted to engage my students with real experiences, not just bore them with note taking and lectures.

In 2000 I was hired at an urban middle school in the Northeast teaching fifth grade language arts and social studies. Part of the opportunity was exciting because I truly had a passion for teaching language arts. The other half of the job I had no interest in teaching because I did not like learning it as a student. However, I thought about it and decided that being right out of college and in need of a job, I could not be choosy. I took the job but had some doubts. In the least I figured I would stick it out for a year or two until another opportunity came around. I had to think about how I was going to teach social studies to a fifth grade class and how I was to get them excited about learning colonial history, when I myself thought it was a bore.

My first year was pretty dreadful. I taught social studies the way I was taught in a more traditional manner where content knowledge was stressed. Students read from the textbook, took notes, watched movies, and took multiple-choice tests. Students were required to do some poster and research projects, along with some group presentations. However, I was bored so I knew my fifth grade students were also.

Then an opportunity arose for me to take an eight-day summer course in Colonial Williamsburg. This course was about going behind the scenes of how the people at Williamsburg created and reenacted history for the visitors. We toured historical buildings, battlefields, plantations, slave quarters, the Jamestown settlement and the Yorktown settlement. We were taught as though we went



back in time and were living the way the first colonists did in the area. I thought bring this information back into the classroom and making what we were learning more real to my students could be the answer to my problem of teaching such a boring subject. It was not only the answer; it was an experience that I as a teacher will never forget. This was truly an authentic experience where history came alive through the dramatic strategy of role-playing. Therefore, I thought drama could be the key to making history come alive in my classroom. The people in Williamsburg devoted their lives to reenacting colonial times to make the visitors, young and old, realize what the New World was really like. The role-players had the visitors step into the past to see a totally different perspective of this time in history.

When I returned eight days later the question that lingered in my head was: Will using drama in the history classroom motivate my students to learn? I took the information from my class in Williamsburg and did a lot of role playing and reenacting within the curriculum. The students seemed to really enjoy the role playing activities and reading different plays, but still I felt something was missing because I still saw some students not enjoying my class. Maybe it was because I did not know enough about being a drama teacher, but at least there was a spark starting to generate interest.

I later started my Master's Degree and saw that a drama in education class was being offered. I wondered if it could be useful to me. This class gave me the

resources, practice, motivation, and confidence to see that teaching history, or any other content area, with dramatic strategies will get my students motivated and excited about learning.

The course included many resourceful textbooks that thoroughly explained many dramatic strategies. During each class session we did three or four strategies explained from the books. This made the class a lot of fun, and it was very interactive. Doing the strategies helped me to remember them more easily, and gave me first hand experience on how the strategies worked.

The drama activities that we were doing had a lot of integration with teaching reading comprehension skills, and many ideas on how students could learn about story elements. Comprehension has been an ongoing problem for my students in past years. My students have had difficulties reading and understanding the fifth grade textbook. Getting students to read independently and to comprehend informational texts has been a difficult part of teaching social studies for me as well as my students. I have found that students struggle with comprehending nonfiction readings. I could see, after taking the drama in education course, that using these different strategies that integrated story elements would motivate students to learn, and become better readers. Many of the drama activities were helpful in retelling stories, examining a problem in a story, looking closely at characters, and solving problems. The use of drama would improve comprehension, as well as make learning about history exciting.

I started using strategies like improvisations, role-playing, reader's theatre, pantomimes, debates, role on the wall, and mantle of the expert that were well explained by Jonothan Neelands and Tony Goode's (2001), Structuring Drama Work. Using their strategies, I saw a different type of learning taking place in my classroom. Students started telling their friends about what we were doing, so they were communicating knowledge they had gained in my class with others. Parents began telling me that their children were really enjoying my class and were having a lot of fun. Wow! I have made learning history exciting, and I felt my students were beginning to feel the same way I felt years ago about my British Literature course.

This thesis reflects my research and the study of the benefits of drama used in the social studies classroom. There are so many different strategies teachers can use to help kids learn and get them motivated about the learning process. Research shows that students' knowledge will increase when referencing their own thoughts, feelings, and ideas while using drama strategies (Bouchard, 2002). Fernsler (2003) argues that students who are taught with dramatic strategies will enhance their comprehension skills and those who receive drama instruction compared to traditional ways of learning do much better on assessments.

I feel as though by fifth grade many students forget how to play and create their own learning experiences. I feel it is important for me to generate these

experiences in the classroom. However, some students may be reluctant to learn about colonial times through dramatic strategies. Some may not feel comfortable doing these activities because of shyness or because they are not use to being taught by the use of play. As a researcher I will have to be aware of those who are not feeling comfortable with this style of learning, and try to adapt or find ways to make them feel comfortable and be a part of the drama activities. I want the environment in the classroom to be a safe learning place for all. I want my students to take risks while using drama to explore colonial times.

## METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

I began the 2005 school year with the goal to complete a qualitative action research study with a proficient level fifth grade social studies class. The study involved a number of different drama strategies to motivate students to learn about Colonial America. The setting was a fifth and sixth grade middle school building. The school was located in the northeastern part of the United States in an urban area. There were approximately 1350 students in the school. The population is very diverse. Approximately 150 students walk to the city school and 30% of the population is on a free lunch program. The other 70% of the student population either ride the bus or are transported by parents.

The students observed in the study were all fifth grade students, placed in heterogeneous teams of 90 students. Of those 90 students my research study focused on 29 students. There were 15 boys and 14 girls in the social studies classroom which I observed using dramatic strategies. They were all on a proficient fifth grade learning level. No one in class had an IEP or a 504 plan.

My goal was to have students use a variety of resources to learn colonial history. They used textbooks, the Internet, primary sources, and historical plays to learn the content information, and to use that information in their drama strategies and group activities. Students were required to read independently and come prepared to class to discuss and share information through cooperative learning groups using dramatic strategies.

I started the study by giving the class a September questionnaire (see Appendix A). I wanted feedback on what the students thought about social studies and some of the past activities they completed in elementary school. After reviewing the questionnaire, I spent time going over student expectations, students' role in the classroom, and stressing the importance for students to take ownership in the learning process. Students were instructed on the importance of coming prepared to class and complete all assignments for the activities to work.

I began the study with a strategy known as Role on the Wall (Neelands & Goode, 2001). Important roles are represented in life size pictures, which allowed the students to add information about that historical character on the picture. The people that were portrayed were Queen Elizabeth, Walter Raleigh, John White, John Smith, a Roanoke colonist, a Jamestown colonist, King James, and John Rolfe. This was done with information from Roanoke Island and Jamestown, and the people who were associated with these two places.

Students worked in small groups to complete their life size picture of these historical characters. They placed information on their life size pictures that were learned and discussed in class, and information they have found on their own about their characters. Students then shared their completed pictures with the class. When they presented they spoke as the person whom they were giving information about. This activity helped students to go into the next drama strategy, writing in role.

Students read a primary source (see Resources) titled “The Starving Time 1609-1610.” After reading and discussing the primary source students were instructed to write a similar account about the Lost Colony from a Roanoke colonist’s point of view. They then shared their first person writings with the class.

The third strategy used was improvisations (Needlands & Goode, 2001). This strategy asked for students to use prior knowledge and in their own words and actions reenact the event discussed. Students read a play “Trouble at Jamestown” (see Resources). They then reenacted the play by putting their own words and ideas to the story, but needed to still get the general idea across. It was still similar to a play except the students did not read from a script.

A debate then was role-played about the dissenters of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Students were placed on the side of the Puritans, the Church of England or a group, which was undecided. The students spoke on behalf of the side they were on and argued that their way was the right way. Their goal was to have others to Try and See it Their Way (Swartz, 1995). The students used information about the dissenters by reading and discussing within their cooperative groups a lesson from the textbook. They were also given a play called “The Trial of the Century” (see Resources), which was about Williams, Hutchinson, and Hooker.

Still Images (Needlands & Goode, 2001) are like pictures taken with a camera. Students worked cooperatively to show a scene from the triangular trade routes. They used props, and they used their bodies and expressions to show what a scene may have looked like with the triangular trade routes. Trading of imported goods and the African slave trade were two that were portrayed.

These five different dramatic strategies were used two or more times in the social studies classroom during this study. The main components of my data sources were participant observation notes and reflections that were recorded throughout the process of my research. I wrote what I observed in class, and then I reflected upon those observations. I also gave two surveys during the study. One was in September (see Appendix A), and the other was at the end of the study in December (see Appendix B). This allowed me to see the affects of using dramatic strategies in the social studies classroom. Students were also asked to complete journal entries about their drama experiences to express their thoughts and opinions of the classroom activities, and whether they liked or disliked the strategy used (see Appendix C). I also did some formal and informal interviews throughout the research period with randomly picked students from the class. Students' works throughout the study were examined and discussed in my log.

In order for me to determine the results of my study, I took my field log and coded my observations, placed those codes in bins, and put the bins into themes so I could easily note patterns taking place (Arhar, Holly, & Kasten,



2005). This allowed me to easily see the changes occurred while using drama in the social studies classroom. I read journal articles and research reports that pertained to my study. The students shared their thoughts and feelings through journal entries, questionnaires, informal and formal interviews, and a drama profile. This gave me an overview of the students' thoughts on the use of drama in the social studies classroom.

In order to gain the students' trust I had to obtain the necessary permissions through my principal (see Appendix D), the students' parents (see Appendix E), and the students themselves (see Appendix F). All the information that I collected was confidential, and no data was used from those who choose not to take part in the study. All participants' names were kept confidential by the use of pseudonyms. Participation in this study was strictly voluntary. Anyone at any time could decide to withdraw from the study without fear of negative consequences. All research materials were secured in a safe location, and at the end of the study all papers and documents were destroyed (Ahrar et al., 2005). A field log with my observations and reflections was kept on a daily basis. This helped me gather all necessary information honestly, so the information to what took place in my classroom could be shared with accuracy in my final paper.

I also referred to articles, research reports, and books, which have not only encouraged me to look closer to the question of using drama in the history classroom, but have also supported why using dramatic strategies in the social

studies classroom was a benefit to students. I feel my study showed many forms of data and resources, which showed triangulation to support what I was doing in the classroom. I was also given permission from the Moravian College Human Subject Internal Review Board to conduct my study.

All of these resources supported students to learn by doing. The youth of today are very social, and the principle that development of experience comes about through interaction means that education is essentially a social process (Dewey, 1997). I feel it was important to learn by creating experiences by doing and discussing.

However, I came into this study with some biases. As a teacher we tend to rely on those students who go above and beyond and really delve into what we, as teachers, are trying to accomplish. They work hard and are the ones who always participate. My goal as a researcher was to have the drama strategies be a learning tool for all the students, not just those who accept it with ease. To guard against my own biases of what was taking place in the classroom, I accumulated field notes, which included my reflections about thoughts on what was taking place in my study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). The field notes included notes about direct observations with what was taking place in the classroom and with my students. Reflections were shared in the field log about how I felt about the things I was inquiring about at the time (Hubbard & Powers, 2003). I also wanted this study to have positive outcomes for students to enjoy learning about our

country's history. I tried not to ignore those days things do not go well, and students were not motivated in taking part in the drama activity. Instead I observed what took place that did not work, and reflected what could have made it a better experience. Ely et al. (1997) suggested that in order to understand the findings of my study, it is necessary to look at multiple viewpoints. They suggested breaking down the data into manageable themes, which made it easy to arrange the information in an outline form (Ely, et al., 1997). While this was being done, it was easier for me to see what I was trying to find out by doing the qualitative research. By breaking data down, this encouraged me to see the entire picture of what was taking place in my classroom. The purpose of qualitative research is to become more reflective and conscious about what is taking place and shaping the study (Ely, et al., 1997). "What's important about the process is to be able to explain one's reasoning for whatever one created" (Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul, 1997 p. 207).

I believe it is important to incorporate drama into my history classroom. The use of drama encouraged my students to be motivated in understanding colonial history. This is vital because it is how our nation developed to be the land of the free. I needed my students as citizen of this country to respect what this time period was all about and how it made their life what it is today. Teaching them through the use of drama, I believe, allowed them to retain this information

and enjoy learning history again. I was excited to find: What were the observed and reported experiences if drama was incorporated in the history classroom?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

“Education is experience. Students need to learn how to learn. Subject matter needs to be made meaningful and relevant to the learner. Education is life-long learning. Learning is building upon students’ prior knowledge. Learning is constructing meaning from experience” (Jadallah, 2000, p. 221). There are many goals in the American school system. Educators need to mold students into life-long learners. Educating students how to think and apply what they know to what they have learned will encourage problem solving and create life long learners (Aldrich & Thomas, 2002).

Using dramatic strategies in the social studies classroom will motivate students to learn. Teaching students through acting upon their experiences will help them to remember the content and will motivate them to want to learn (Predmore, 2005). Teaching students with dramatic strategies does not necessarily mean the use of theatre or a performed show. One need not have costumes, props, and skits for the learning to be real. The use of dramatic strategies asks students to learn by using imagination and play to make the curriculum come alive (Wilhelm, 1998). These strategies also encourage historical empathy which allows students a deeper understanding of why people acted they way they did. Appreciation for historical people, culture and their

personalities is brought about in these drama strategies (Foster, 1998). Drama can be used to engage students in an in-depth discussion about the context. This allows the students to create a mental image, which will help them to retain what is being learned, and they can easily recall that image to use when discussing the topic with their peers (Wilhelm, 1998).

The use of dramatic strategies in the social studies classroom will cause students to think critically using problem solving techniques. Drama engages students in historical investigation to think critically and better understand the past (VanSledright, 2002). Developing these dramatic skills will give students support with self-esteem and their ability to imagine through experiencing (Garcia, 1993). The use of dramatic skills will promote an appreciation and understanding of different cultures and values discussed in the study of history (Garcia, 1993). Problem solving, thinking critically, and the ability to imagine are important strategies in becoming an active learner for life, and these skills encourage the grounds for using drama to learn the social studies curriculum. Recently, the state standards require students to learn to think historically (VanSledright, 2002). This is another reason to endorse drama in the social studies curriculum.

Learning through drama also involves working cooperatively in a constructive way with others. Students can begin taking ownership for their education because they begin to make decisions based on the dramatic activity

being used in the classroom. Making decisions and working constructively gives students the ability to work independently and use their critical thinking and problem solving to create meaning (Chen, Chung, Crane, Hilvach, Pierce, & Vaill, 1999). Students who work independently and are occupied by working with their peers in a cooperative manner will become self-directed learners who are not dependent on the teacher (Chen, et al., 1999).

### **Drama in Education**

Self-directed learners use play to build awareness of their surroundings in their world (Pinciotti, 1993). Drama in education is about unprompted play to create an image of what is being learned. The goal of using drama in education is to encourage students to assume the role of a character, or have them create a situation for what is being learned (Tatar, 2002). Tatar (2002) also suggests some important steps when incorporating drama into any curriculum. First, the teacher needs to entice the students into experiences with different points of view and guide the students through understanding human relations. Secondly, it is important to focus on the importance of learning by using drama and not worrying about a finished production.

Booth, as cited in Wilhelm (1998), believes drama is extremely undervalued in the United States' school system. Countries, like Canada, England, Ireland, New Zealand, and Australia have been using drama in education for years. There are three reasons why teachers are not incorporating drama into

the United States' schools. Those reasons are time, space, and curriculum constraints (Kaaland-Wells, 1994). There are limited resources available for teachers to help them incorporate dramatic strategies into their lessons (Garcia, 1993). The recent drive toward state testing and the time needed to teach the state standards are also concerns. These are just a few reasons why teachers are pushing this powerful strategy to the side. However, it is important to draw attention to the use of drama as a teaching technique because of the many benefits acquired by learners.

### **Drama Strategies**

Drama in education gives learners an array of different experiences in the classroom. Drama takes an idea and can easily represent it through all the human senses. One can see it, feel it, and hear it. What is being learned can be physically learned by doing. Using these multi-sensory techniques permits students to retain the information in a more concrete way (Kruegar & Ranalli, 2003).

Historical dram promotes historical inquiry. When students become historical detectives they gain knowledge and understanding of the content presented. They learn to interrelate messages received from many sources making the information relative to one another (VanSledright, 2002).

There are four specific dramatic strategies children really seem to enjoy in order to achieve the goal of being a historical detective. They are: Role-playing,



Reader's Theatre, improvisations, and pantomime. These are four strategies that can be easily integrated into any subject area as a learning activity (Farris & Parke, 1993). These activities will convey a different understanding of learning for students, and the students tend to enjoy the learning experiences provided by the dramatic activities.

Role-playing is just one strategy often used to teach students the history curriculum. This strategy encourages students to make the historical information real by acting and imagining to be someone else in the past. Exercises like this have been a valuable learning strategy to help students retain historical information (Ali, 1996). Role-playing gives the students a different view on past events. Learners have a sense of satisfaction while doing a role-play. Taking part in the activity shows they understand the information and what has taken place in that historical event (Ali, 1996). Castle and Rogers (1993), feel that when students have something to become engaged in, and a variety of ways of reasoning with others learning becomes an experience for them. Students performing role-plays linked to real-world tasks help them to demonstrate mastery of the content being learned (Morris, 2001). When students perform by role-playing, they are showing content understanding of the curriculum. They perform what they know by using experiences in their own lives and relating the experience to what they are learning in the classroom (Hertzberg, 2001).

Reader's Theatre is another popular drama strategy integrated into the social studies classroom. Reader's Theatre is a script developed from materials not written for a performed play (Swartz, 1995). For example, a primary source, such as a letter from a colonist living in the Middle Colonial Region, could be used. The technique will allow the students to dramatize narrations using information from the primary source. This strategy does not require students to memorize lines. It is about making decisions on how to present narration from what was learned using a primary source. This creates a real experience for the learners.

In addition, another easy to use strategy is improvisation. This strategy is a spontaneous skit that can happen at any time during a lesson or classroom activity. It is about the absence of prepared lines. Students incorporate their own words to express thoughts and meaning in context, which makes it an improvisation (Swartz, 1995). Learners enjoy improvisations because they need to think quickly to respond, which makes learning fun (Farris & Parke, 1993). Improvisations also give students the opportunity to use play in the classroom and add some excitement to what they are learning (Farris & Parke, 1993). Teachers are encouraged to have students reflect through writing or speaking about what they viewed, felt, and learned through the improvisation experience. This allows students a chance to see the many different perspectives taken from improvisation

and engrosses the students more deeply in conversations about the content (Philbin & Myers, 1991).

The use of pantomimes involves critical thinking and problem solving on the pupils' behalf because it is communicating without words. Learners express what they know by using gestures and body movements to tell a story or reenact an event. This is a powerful strategy because students have to think critically about how to communicate through movements and actions without words and sounds. These are just a few of the many dramatic strategies that can be incorporated into the social studies classroom to make learning come alive for students.

### **Motivation to Learn**

Using dramatic strategies needs to be part of the learning experience in order for students to be motivated to learn (as cited in Carroll & Leander, 2001). Involving students in activities taking place in the classroom encourages more motivation for learning (Carroll & Leander, 2001). Motivation tends to depend on the importance of what is being learned because students make sense of the curriculum by reflecting on what is important to them. Inserting state standards into dramatic activities will produce a motivational experience for students because learning becomes real and important to them (Caine, Caine, & McClintic, 2002). Making learning as real as possible holds students' curiosity about the content area and motivates them to learn (Kostelecky & Hoskinson, 2005).

Students need to see the connection of what they are learning to their world. They then become more interested, and motivation begins to drive their curiosity to learn (Predmore, 2005).

Motivating students to learn has been a difficult challenge for many educators for years (Carroll & Leander, 2001). According to Raffini, (as cited in Carroll and Leander's study, 2001), the motivational problem is the declining need to explore through play as students age and go through the K-12 school system.

When boredom is created with the traditional ways of teaching history through lectures, notes, tests, and worksheets, drama may bring motivation and excitement back into the classroom (VanSledright, 2002). By using fewer lectures and encouraging students to react to the past, dramatic activities allow students more motivation to learn and understand by reenacting and making learning real (Fogg, 2001). Using dramatic techniques will permit students not to feel bored and will guide them toward being interested in what is being learned (Predmore, 2005). Creating influential classroom activities and lessons, which encourage students' curiosity, is a positive way to teach students any content area (Caine, Caine, & McClintic, 2002). Using imagination while thinking and learning is a major objective of drama in education. Teachers need to provide their students the opportunities to use imagination and their own ideas to keep students motivated and interested in what they are learning (Conlan, 1995).

Using drama can create imagination, curiosity, and the desire to use play. Some students can learn by participating in dramatic activities, which spark imagination. They become more curious about the content being learned by becoming part of the experience through play. Other students can choose to be spectators within the classroom (Gay & Hanley, 1999). These two roles, participant and spectator, that a students may participate in, helps them to become motivated to learn.

### **Constructivist Learning**

Constructivism leads to motivation in psychological theory of learning. Knowledge is learned by interacting with others and exploring the content being learned through real experiences using what is already known (Hoagland, 2000). All humans try to make sense of their experiences from birth on, and are looking to find personal meaning from what they are learning (Hoagland, 2000). The constructivist learning style is what humans use everyday to learn, and it is useful for those in school because it is a life long process (Hoagland, 2000).

Constructivist classrooms have many roles for both teachers and students. The teacher in a constructivist classroom is a guide or a facilitator to her students, and the students are asked to build upon what they already know and explore those concepts by interacting with others in the class (Jadallah, 2000). Students become more knowledgeable about what is being learned because they are learning by doing (Aldrich & Thomas, 2002). Teachers are guiding their

students through the curriculum by asking them to create meaning from the content through experiences (Jadallah, 2000).

Constructivist learning not only builds on students' prior knowledge and group interactions. It also encourages more use of primary sources, student lead discussions, and less focus on a right or wrong answer. This can make learning more inspiring for some (Hoagland, 2000). Learning about history in a fifth grade classroom should not be dull or boring for students. It is important a teacher of social studies encourages students to become engaged in the thoughts and beliefs of people from the past (Foster, 1998).

### **Cooperative Learning**

Student involvement and working interactively within groups is essential for using dramatic activities in the classroom (Farris & Parke, 1999). Learning cooperatively through communicating and interacting allows students to learn through others' experiences (Sierra, 1997). "Only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education." (Freire, 2004, p. 92)

Sternberg states in Freeman, Sullivan, and Fulton (2003), that dramatic activities in the classroom engage students in working collaborately, which teaches them how to become real learners. This skill is essential in the world we live in because working with others is part of human existence (Wilhelm, 1998).

This permits students to have control of what they are doing and learning. It creates choice through imagination and play.

In order for cooperative learning to be a positive experience for both students and teacher, the teacher, who is the facilitator and planner, needs to have set objectives for what is expected in the class by the students. Careful planning is key for all students to have a successful learning experience (Jadallah, 2000).

Time to set up a cooperative learning environment is important so students can use exploration skills and interactions with others to learn (Jadallah, 2000). Carroll and Leander (2001) found that learning cooperatively in a social studies classroom increases motivation to learn the content being studied.

### **Ownership to Learn**

Working cooperatively lends itself to students taking ownership of learning. Ownership involves students judging situations and acting upon them by problem solving and reasoning independently and within their groups (Freeman, Sullivan, & Fulton, 2003). Teaching social studies by using dramatic strategies encourages learning to become a more holistic experience for the students. This approach will aid in learning by extending students' abilities to think more critically. They are using imagination, creativity, and performances to share their feelings of what is important to learn and know (Freeman, et al., 2003). Taking ownership of experiences encourages students to retain information more readily and become motivated to share knowledge with others (Predmore, 2005).

Students gain ownership of learning when drama is incorporated into the history classroom. Through dramatic play students develop an authorship, and can refer to their own thoughts, feelings, and experiences (Bouchard, 2002). Drama encourages students to find a language of their own, and through many different dramatic strategies students make meaning of the content through personal experience. Research shows that supplemental drama enhances students' comprehension in many academic areas (Fernsler, 2003). Those who receive drama in education score much higher on tests than those who only receive traditional study of history or any other subject area (Fernsler, 2003).

Research has been done analyzing social studies textbooks and their uses with the arts to motivate students to learn the curriculum (McKean, 2002). It has been found that when the arts, one being drama, are referred to in textbooks, it asks students to call on their critical thinking skills (McKean, 2002). It goes beyond just reading and restating what has been read and discussed in class. The students see a whole new way of learning the past and really begin inquiring about certain historical events.

Understanding colonial history for some is difficult, and many students wonder why they need to learn about historical events. Integrating drama will remove this feeling and motivate students to become more serious about their work. Drama will help students to understand the content provided as a substantial learning experience, which will help them to better understand what is



being learned when it is taught through drama (Schubert & Melnick, 1997). Teaching history in a constructivist way will encourage students to become responsible for what they are learning (Chen, et al., 1999). The goal of education is to get students to learn more and care more through a meaningful learning experience. Using cooperative learning with dramatic strategies will challenge students to make learning meaningful. This will motivate them to become life long learners (Predmore, 2005).

Drama has so many benefits. Drama has been found to enhance communication skills and vocabulary through cooperative learning (Evans, 2004). Cooperative learning engages students to take ownership in what is being learned, along with motivating them to want to learn. The use of dramatic strategies makes learning come alive and relates what is being learned to experience the children know about. Weaver (1999), states it best, “By drawing on art, drama, storytelling, music, and gastronomy, there’s no telling what our kids might learn!” (p. 49).

## MY STORY

### Questioning the Students

Before introducing and beginning my study about using drama in the social studies classroom, I thought it was important to first find out what my students thought about the content of social studies. I also wanted some input on what their past experiences were like in their previous elementary classrooms on the topic of social studies. To gather this information I asked students to complete a September questionnaire (see Appendix A).

What students had to share was that they liked social studies and liked learning about the past. They felt it is an important subject to learn, and they thought it fairly easy to learn and understand. Reading about their previous experiences from elementary school with learning social studies all of the students shared that their learning was consistent with reading the textbook out loud and sharing their thoughts. They also took notes, did worksheet pages, and then took multiple-choice tests. Any activities done were review games, group projects, and posters.

I was not surprised to see the outcome of this information. This is what my classroom was all about until this year, and I believe this is what happens in most elementary social studies classrooms. I wanted to get away from this routine, and using drama seemed to be an exciting way to do it.

I wanted my students to know all about my study, and what their role was going to be. I shared the student letter (see Appendix B) with them, and answered any questions they had about the study. I also reviewed the parent letter (see

Appendix C) and explained why their parents needed to sign the letter if they were going to be part of the study. I then explained that they were responsible for what activities and assignments were done in class, but if they chose not to participate in the study, it would mean that I would not be writing about them in my final paper.

## **Act I**

### **Getting Started**

I was very cautious about how I introduced the use of drama in my social studies classroom. I knew that some students would be uncomfortable with acting out parts right away in front of classmates they did not really know yet. I started with the topic of Roanoke Island and Jamestown. Students read independently from their textbooks about these first two attempts to start a colony in the New World. Students then lead a whole class discussion about what happened in each of these colonies. It was like story time in class where students got to explain their view of the two colonies.

I started the discussion by making a Venn Diagram on the board labeling one side Roanoke Island and the other side Jamestown. Students then gave input to complete the diagram. We discussed how each of the colonies was different and how they were the same.

Max: Roanoke Island was different because it was a disaster from the beginning. The men were going to look for gold and forgot about survival.

Bill: On the other hand Jamestown was more successful because they had a plan and John Smith saved the colony by making the men work to eat.

Casey: But they both had problems with supplies. So in that sense they are similar.

This discussion went on until we have completed all we knew about the two colonies first established in the New World. I was excited to see that students had a lot of good things to share and brought up important aspects of each colony.

### **Role on Wall**

I then introduced my first drama strategy, Role on Wall (Neelands & Goode, 2001). What this strategy consisted of was small groups of students working together to make a life-size drawing of a person from one of these two places. I assigned people like Queen Elizabeth I, Walter Raleigh, John White, John Smith, a Roanoke colonist, a Jamestown colonist, John Rolfe, and King James II.

Each group was assigned a different person. They needed to trace one of the member's body on a large piece of paper, and then fill the inside of the body with what that particular person would have been thinking in their head, feeling in their heart, seeing with their eyes, hearing with their ears, and saying with their mouths. Students were also instructed to try and make their person look as close to what they would have actually looked and dressed like.

As I walked around from group to group, I was impressed with the conversations I heard. Students were discussing the plans on how to portray the person they were assigned. They spoke about how the body would be posed, what clothes they would wear, what was going to be held in the person hands, and what was going to be written down on the person to show what their person was

thinking, feeling, seeing and hearing at that particular time. A lot of problem solving was taking place about how to portray their assigned person. I also observed students using their textbooks as resources to find out more information about their people, and what their person actually looked like. The students were taking learning into their own hands and working cooperatively to complete the assignment.

One particular group really impressed me with the use of their imagination. They were assigned John White from the Lost Colony of Roanoke Island. As I started to converse with the group and look at their drawing, I noticed that they had a broken heart in his chest with the word “unsure” written through the heart. I asked Craig to explain the reasoning behind this idea. He stated,

Craig: “Because Croatian is a mystery to White, and he didn’t know where everyone went or what had happened.”

Many historians believe that Croatian was a Native American group, which came into the Roanoke and had a war with the colonists.

Casey chimed in with, “We took the word Croatian and thought about how we would feel if that was our only clue for this colony and our family and friends.”

I was thrilled to see this group taking the sense of feeling as a real life experience of their own and relating that experience to the past and what they were learning. This created a connection for the students and a learning experience that they could relate to.

After giving the groups two class periods to complete their Role on the Wall we hung all the historical images around the room. Each group then had to share their role with the class. Excitement filled the classroom, and there was a lot of giggling while sharing their presentation ideas.

I over heard Tyler say to his group: “Hey guys, doesn’t it feel like all of these historical people are really standing all around us?”

I was glad to see such an imagination and a connection to what was taking place in the classroom.

Yogi asked: “Mrs. Orwan, can we introduce and discuss our person in first person, like we are them?”

Hurray! This was exactly what I wanted to happen as a building block to later dramatic strategies like improvisations and role-playing.

Amazing thoughts were shared during that forty-minute class period. Students really got into retelling the story of their assigned people of Roanoke Island and Jamestown. Many students used accents and spoke freely as though they were actually the role on the wall.

At the very end of class I asked students to fill out a journal entry (see Appendix D) about their thoughts about the dramatic activity Role on Wall. I gained a lot of positive feedback about this dramatic strategy in the students' journal entries. Some of the things students had to say were exciting and a good start to my study.

Karen shared: “In past grades we rarely worked on something in groups, and, well, I guess that is why I enjoyed myself.”

Bill said: “We had a lot of fun thinking about the things we were going to put inside King James.”

Roy thought: “This activity is going to help me remember things about these people I need to know for the test.”

Ned finished with: “Social Studies will be very exciting this year if we continue to do activities like this.”

### **Writing in Role**

Writing in Role using the primary source “The Starving Time 1609-1610” (see Resources) was the next strategy used to teach what Jamestown was suffering through during this period in the colony. I asked students to read the primary source independently, and this is where problems arose. I had many students call out sharing their frustrations that they could not understand the document. After one student started, they all chimed in and told me they could not do this assignment independently. I then changed gears and had to do a mini lesson on how to read difficult material and share strategies with them to accomplish a task such as this.

What I did to help student understand this difficult primary source, which was above their reading level, was I went sentence by sentence and we wrote our own sentence in our own words for what each sentence in the primary source was saying. I wrote on an overhead projector after I read the sentence allowed and I asked for volunteers to explain the sentence. When we agreed on one sentence that gave the main idea of each sentence in the document I wrote on the transparency and we created our own paragraph about the primary source. After

pulling apart the document the students understood that it was someone's view of the Starving Time in Jamestown and the obstacles and problems one faced during this hardship of the new Jamestown settlement.

As a class we read and discussed the primary source about Jamestown's starving time after students had struggled through trying to understand it first on their own. As a group we spent some time breaking down each sentence and comprehending what the sentences were telling us. This was not just a social studies lesson, but also a reading lesson on how to read nonfiction articles and comprehend what the source is telling us.

After understanding the primary source, students were instructed to write in role as a Jamestown colonist living during this historical period. I used examples from some of the groups from the previous dramatic strategy of Role on the Wall, and how certain groups spoke and told a story in first person. Students were asked to focus on the senses of: hearing, thinking, feeling, seeing, and smelling, of a colonist living in Jamestown during this period and write about what they were experiencing using the senses.

Volunteers were asked to share their writings. Many of them did a wonderful job pretending to feel what a Jamestown colonist would be feeling. After sharing, students took the time to complete a journal entry (see Appendix C). I received many positive statements from these journals about the writing in role strategy. The number one response was students felt the strategy helped them to understand the Starving Time in Jamestown because they put themselves in the role of a colonist living during this historical event.



These two strategies, Role on Wall and Writing in Role, were stepping-stones to really getting dramatic strategies started in my class. I think these two activities got students thinking about actually pretending and playing the role of someone other than themselves; rather than acting and doing improvisations right away. These two strategies encouraged students to think first like a historian, and second as the people they would be role-playing. This was a necessary step to get students to do a good job with role-playing and improvisations.

## **Act II**

### **Strategies at Work**

After students understood and practiced viewing someone else's perspective of a situation, I felt students could actually put the use of dramatic strategies to work with the use of improvisations, role-playing, debates, and still images.

### **Improvisation**

I thought it was important to model what I expected of the students during our first improvisation. In order for my students to understand what I wanted them to accomplish, I did an improvisation as an indentured servant pondering the idea of going to the New World. I chose this because we spent a lot of time talking about indentured servants and their role in the New World. I also wanted to do an example they could refer to in their first improvisation of Jamestown. I pretended to be talking to a friend of mine about the idea of having a rich land owner pay for my way to the New World and working for that person for seven years until I could get a piece of my own land and start my own farm. For

example I stated, “ Joseph, I am thinking about having Sir Francis pay for my way to the Mew World and working for him for seven years until I can have my own land.”

I then played Joseph, and changed the way I was facing to talk to John the one who wanted to become an indentured servant. I continued as Joseph, “I think being an indentured servant will be difficult, I think many people who left England are sorry they did.”

He continues, “I heard Harold has been worked to death and never did see the land he was promised.”

As a class we spent a few days reading about and discussing the troubles in Jamestown. It was now time to improvise in our own words and actions what this historical period was about. I reminded students to think about what someone in Jamestown would be thinking, doing, and saying. I remind them about my short improvisation about the curious indentured servant and how I used what I knew to create a conversation and scene of my own. Here is a short dialogue about an indentured servant wanting to come to Jamestown.

Ned: “I must get to the New World.”

Mick: “ Become an indentured servant, someone would gladly pay your way to the New World. You’re strong and healthy. They would be a fool not to want you!”

Ned: “Wonderful idea, that’s what I will do to get there and start a new life.”

The next scene Ned is with his wealthy owner and having a terrible time working for this gentleman. Through his body language and facial expressions the class could see he was worn and tired.

Ned states at the end of the scene, “ This will be a hard and dreadful seven years working for a miserable man like you.”

It was exciting to see that this student brought into the scene what he had learned about indentured servants. He played the role by dressing in rags for clothes. He used a tired and dreaded tone of voice; he dragged his feet as he walked to show how tired he was. He also used statements to share how sorry he was that he had decided to become an indentured servant. He created what an actual account of this event may have really been like.

I feel that those acting out their parts today brought Jamestown alive in the classroom. Those who chose to be a part of the audience also learned something by watching and listening to their peers expressing their own ideas and actions about Jamestown. The audience shared that they felt like they were actually in the past.

Bill shared, “Ned did an excellent job. I actually was feeling very bad for him, and I was thinking in the back of my head that if he keeps working so hard he won’t make it and get the land he was promised.”

Dina added, “His look was so real, I thought at one point he was going to fall over and just die from being over worked.”

Kathy chimed, “I loved watching Ned act this scene out. I got so much more out of what an indentured servant was feeling by watching him role-play the part.

Students were then assigned to do a journal entry about the improvisation strategy used in class. Here are a few accounts from the journal entries on the improvisation activity.

- Rob: “Fun and very funny! I was learning and laughing at the same time.”
- Dina: “Fun activity because we put in our own words and it was like playing, not learning.”
- Yogi: “Students were tremendous and full of expression.”
- Karen: “I really enjoyed this and would like to do it again.”
- Ned: “I liked this drama activity because it was a better way to learn because it made us make the learning happen.”
- Tyler: “Hilarious!”
- Mary: “Very life-like.”

### **Role-Play**

The students did a role-play about the Pilgrims and Indians. They reenacted the Pilgrims leaving England to go to the New World. The goal of the Pilgrims was to land in Virginia; however they were disappointed to find they landed in Plymouth instead. As the role-play proceeded the students really used a lot of expression in their voices and showed a lot of action through their body language. They told the story of the Pilgrims and why they needed and wanted to make the voyage to the New World.

Casey started the role-play with a strong argument against England and the King: “ This is the best decision we made to leave England for religious reasons.”

Quade responds to her statement with: “Yes, I did not want the King telling me I had to be part of the Church of England.”

Mick added: “And to think we were persecuted for religious reasons.”

I was thrilled to see them taking the information we discussed in class and began putting thoughts and feelings into the information and showing these Pilgrims felt.

I had many surprises during this particular role-play with two students, Jill and Drew, who have not said a whole lot so far since the study had started. Both of them volunteered on their own to play a part today. Drew and Jill are both very shy, but I did not notice their shyness today; they were like two different people. This was an exciting observation for me because I was beginning to see good things coming out of using dramatic strategies to teach and learn social studies. I was noticing my students are having fun learning the information through play.

### **Try and See It My Way- Debate**

Our class debate was a huge hit. We had a debate called Try and See it My Way. Students were put in three groups. One group represented the people in England who were part of the Church, the second group acted as Puritans, and the third group was a group who could not decide to go to the New World for freedom of religion or stay in England and be a part of the church.

I started the strategy by acting in role as the King who thought his church was the best, and he did not understand why these English people did not want to be part of it.

Teacher: “The Church of England is a wonderful place because it sets order in my country and I am able to see what people are doing and who is attending the church on a regular basis.”

Yogi: “I do not want someone telling me what religion I must be!”

Teacher: “We must all be one. This is my country and this is how it will be.”

Casey: “I agree with the King. It is disloyal not to follow his wishes.”

Max: “Loyalty? How can you be loyal to someone who is so bossy and powerful?”

Casey: “It’s not being bossy, it’s the King’s job to dictate what needs to be done to make the country run smoothly.”

Craig: “Well, I am going to the New World. I want no part in this Church of England.”

Max: “I will join you I also want no part in this anymore.”

Students really enjoy arguing their points trying to prove they were right. Many times too many students were trying to speak at once which made understand what was being said confusing. I took many time outs to remind students that they needed to let who ever was talking to finish before they spoke. I believe that the students were so excited to share their point of view and beliefs that they did not let others finish before they began to speak.

Mary played a huge part in this activity. She kept the debate going by the things she said and the questions she asked of others. I could see students really thinking about ways to argue their point to persuade others to see it their way.

Mary: "The King is telling you what church you must belong to. Doesn't that make you feel that your religion doesn't matter?"

Joe: "She's right! We are individuals who should have the right to choose."

Drew: "But then we are going against the King, and not being loyal."

Nathan: "Is it loyalty or is it about power?"

Mary: "It's about power and telling others what to do."

Drew: "I don't agree. He is doing what's best for his people."

Mary: "No, he's doing what's best for him. He doesn't care about you."

Joe: "Maybe we should consider going to the New World for religious reasons."

Mary: "You can't consider it. It needs to be a choice that you can't turn back on. You are either in or out. You know the King won't let you back if you decide to go to the New World."

Joe: "Then I am in."

Drew: "Not I. I will remain loyal to the King."

Nathan: "I can't take a chance. What if we never make the New World?"

Mary: "It's now or never, if you aren't in, then you will stay and pay the consequences. Don't write to say how unhappy you are with the Church of England."

I thought this conversational debate was excellent. They used the information they read about, and they used the issues we discussed and role-played about the dissenters of the Massachusetts Bay Colony to show an understanding of all perspectives that could have been voiced during this historical time period. They showed the view of those who chose to be loyal to the church. They played the role of those who were undecided, and those who were willing to take the risk and journey to the New World for religious reasons. I was pleased to observe that students took what was learned and created an experience through role-playing a debate about an important historical issue concerning the Puritans and the Church of England.

### **Still Image**

The still image activity that students were assigned to do involved images of the slave trade, the triangular trade route, and a colonial job. Students were given the expectation of showing these three scenes as a photograph without action and without speaking. I gave them two class periods to work on their plan for the three images. I then asked if anyone had any questions.

Bill asked: "Can we bring in string cheese to show how to make a candle?"

Mary added: "How about thread and a basket to show a dressmaker?"

These were all good questions. The students came up with the idea that adding props to the scenes would make it easier to portray what the students were trying to show in their three assigned still images.



Students quickly got to work sharing their ideas. As I walked around from group to group I saw a lot of enthusiasm in what students had to share and show their groups.

Becky: You need to look confused!

Mindy: Yeah, confused looks like this.

*Mindy then put this puzzling look on her face.*

Rob: These are some great ideas.

Tyler: This is going to be banging! No Kidding.

Rob: Um, Mrs. Orwan is going to love our still images; she will totally know what the pictures are about.

The discussions that students had to share between one another were helpful, insightful, and factual with how the group should go about creating these three different images. I was very pleased with the efforts I observed from all the groups. They all came up with creative ideas on how to show the triangular trade route, the slave trade, and a colonial job.

Students did a lot of laughing, chattering, and moving about showing one another what the group should do to create the best still image. There was a lot of creative thinking about how to display their images. They discussed body language, facial expressions, and the use of props to really make their scene come alive. The groups worked extremely well with one another, and the students did an excellent job staying on task practicing what they were going to show the class.

Students had enough time to come up with ideas, gather their props, and practice how they were going to show their three images. It was then time to share their images with the class, and my time to take pictures with my digital camera. I thought it was important to show the pictures over the projector to use as a follow-up and to aid in a class discussion about what each group had done. As the groups shared their still images, everyone in the class was focused and paying attention to what each group had to show. I was very happy with their images. Students seemed to really enjoy this activity and getting their picture taken.

The following class I showed all the pictures using the projector. All the students pulled their chairs really close to the front of the room and huddled around the computer and the projector. They were excited to see the pictures on the big screen. As the pictures came up, students shared their comments aloud.

“How cool, they created their own patient by stuffing clothing to look like a person,” said Rob.

The next picture was a group of girls who were showing a still image of dressmakers.

“They look great!” replied Bill.

“Yeah, where do you find dresses that look like that now a days?” Max asked.

I was very happy to see positive comments about the pictures and inquiry about what was taking place in the images. The photos of each still image aided in generating a class discussion about the three historical events that each group

portrayed. We spoke about how their body language helped to show what was happening, and their facial expressions helped us to capture how they were feeling at this time in history. The discussion continued through the entire class, and the students really liked sharing their thoughts and questions about each image.

### **Collective Drawing**

Collective drawings (Neelands & Goode, 2001) was the final dramatic strategy used before repeating all of the dramatic strategies again. This was a group drawing project, which involved two pictures drawn on large poster board. The poster board was split in half so there were equal sides for each of the drawings. The first was the view of how colonists see England and why people wanted to move out of England and go to the New World. The second drawing had to show how the colonists imagined the New World would appear and what it had to offer them. All groups were drawing a different second scene. The students were either assigned a colonial city, town, small farm, large family farm or a southern plantation. Each group did a drawing of England, and then the second drawing was a view of what colonists dreamed about the New World depending on the area they were assigned.

I showed an example of what a collective drawing looked like on the board so students would know what they were to do and what the drawing should look like. I explained that the picture of England goes on the left and the New World picture goes on the right. The reason for this was that I wanted the pictures

to be set up as book pages going from left to right. The left side tells the story of what life was like in England, and the right side was a dream of the New World.

The class then split up in their groups, and they automatically used their textbooks as references to view pictures of the places they were assigned. They were quietly discussing a plan on how they were going to show these scenes and assigning jobs to each member of the group.

As I walked around to each group I got involved in some interesting conversations within the groups. Craig was inquiring about a cotton plant because he needed to draw a plantation.

Craig: "Guys, do any of you know what the heck a cotton plant looks like?"

Ali: "We don't have any cotton plants around here." She continued with, "The only cotton I know about is the cotton I use to take my fingernail polish off with."

Teacher: "What could you do to find out what you need to know?"

Craig: "Maybe it would be in our book."

Teacher: "What if it is not there?"

Ali: "It could definitely be found on the internet because you can find everything there."

Student conversation showed critical thinking skills and problem solving on how to find information the group needed in order to complete their assignment of drawing a cotton plantation. The two students had two different

resources they could use to find information to learn more details about a cotton plant, how it grows, and what it looked like.

Another group discussed ideas about how they were going to show these two places.

Mick shared: “Because it’s an image of a European going to the New World, we are going to put a picture of a person on a boat and have a conversation bubble over his head showing what the person is thinking about.”

I thought this was a different idea. I asked other students in the group what kinds of thoughts they were going to share.

Ned quickly answered: “I think things like opportunities, land, no ruler, self-government, and freedom of religion should be shared some way because they are some of the main reasons people decided to leave England and go to the New World.”

This response was excellent. Ned really grasped the concept of why people chose to come to the New World and has taken past topics we have already discussed to share within this drawing. I was happy to see this information had stayed with Ned and see that he is building upon what is being learned with the group.

### **Act III**

#### **Assessment Time**

An assessment was given to the class to see what information they have understood and retained. The assessment consisted of short answer and essay questions. I felt that it was important to allow the students to explain themselves

through words because our class lessons have been about communication through discussion and acting out colonial history.

I was a little nervous to see how this assessment was going to play out because I have always had a lot of material and notes for each of the lessons in the chapters from the textbooks. Now I was only using the textbook as a resource and depending more on primary sources, and plays, that were used in all of the dramatic strategies. I was really unsure how much learning was actually taking place. I did not want the class to turn into an atmosphere of just play. Learning colonial history was most important, but I also wanted it to be fun. I was not sure if the two things could go hand in hand.

As the students spent the class time writing their answers, I walked around the room to observe what they were writing and if anyone was having a difficult time. I was pleased to see the entire class working hard and concentrating on what they were writing. That night, as I went through the papers, I was satisfied with what everyone had to write. I was pleased to see some of the students write about their group experiences to explain their answers. This was interesting because they used their real classroom experience and related it to what they were writing to answer the question.

Craig explained the slave trade and how his group showed this horrible time in history:

The slave trade was an unpleasant time for the African people.

They were jammed in boats and treated badly. Many of them

were very sick with disease. My group showed this scene using

a still image. I was lying on the floor of a boat, and another slave, Max, was getting sick all over me. We huddled really close together to show that we were very crowded on the bottom of the boat. This is what I imagine the route to the New World for a slave to be.

Another question on the assessment asked students to explain a colonial job and the role of an apprentice and their master.

Casey explained it in these words:

Being a dressmaker was a lot of fun, but there were hard and long hours involved. As an apprentice you learn from a master who is skilled in their work. Most of the time you have to live with this person for many years and you don't get paid for your work because you are learning the trade. It is kind of like going to college to become a teacher. You have to teach for a while with a person who is a teacher already. You don't get paid for doing the job.

Many students related their answers to experiences they knew about or experiences they had in class with the topics they were writing about. I was happy to see that the students did an excellent job answering the questions. I know that they understand how the New World started because what they had to share in their answers was correct and was related to classroom activities. Learning has become fun for my students.

As the semester continued and more essay tests were given I found that students really got into their explanations on the assessments. The first assessment took the whole forty-minute class, but the second and third assessments that were given took the time of two classes for students to complete their answers. This was encouraging because they enjoyed writing and sharing with me all they knew on the topics being questions. I also feel that these written assessments helped my students to become better writers and explaining themselves through writing.

All students shared some kind of past information that had been discussed and played out in prior dramatic activities in their assessments. This showed me that my students were really learning and retaining the information by using dramatic strategies as a learning tool.

I then continued the qualitative study by using all of the seven dramatic strategies again for a second and third time to teach the series of events leading to the Revolutionary War. Students were much better with using the dramatic strategies the second time around. They were more comfortable and took more risks to make the learning of these events come alive.

Students have come a long way since the beginning of my study. They have evolved into independent learners that took ownership in their education. They have learned how to work within groups and inquire more deeply about issues discussed in class. They have retained information from the dramatic strategies and are building upon their new knowledge to make connections within the historical time period.



Figure 1

**Students' Thoughts on Using Drama in the Social Studies Classroom**

"Social studies will be more interesting if we keep on doing this once in a while."

**"The projects helped us learn more about what colonists went through."**

*"We listen to each other and work together."*

**"We used our textbooks to find out what the colonists looked like. This helped us to remember certain things."**

*"Drama is especially fun because we work in groups."*

**"DRAMA HELPS ME TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PEOPLE IN COLONIAL TIMES."**

**"DRAMA MAKES ME FEEL LIKE I AM IN THE TIME PERIOD."**

*"It's a time to express our own thoughts."*

**"I like having more resources to use and read other than our boring textbook."**

*"You are making me very interested in social studies."*

**"We can learn when we are having fun."**

*"I like using drama because it's a better way to learn because it's fun."*

*"Learning with drama is life like."*

*"I love to act."*

**"I look forward to social studies class."**

**"THESE ACTIVITIES ARE THE BEST!"**

*"Social studies at the EAMS is so much better than social studies in my other school."*

**"I love that we can speak freely as someone else." "I LIKE TO PRETEND."**

**"IT WAS FUN AND I LEARNED."**

**"Props make our play so real it's like we are there."**

*"We work together to create a scene from colonial times."*

**"FUN!"**

## METHODS OF ANALYSIS

In order to get accurate data during my study I kept an on-going daily field log, which detailed my observation of what students were doing in class. Also in the field log, I wrote some reflections of my own thoughts and feelings about what was happening in the classroom. The log was very detailed with dates, times, page numbers and line numbers (Ahrar, et al., 2001). This made it easy to locate certain pieces of data after my log was coded.

Coding is used to provide the data in the field log with labels written in the margins of the pages to simply sum up an idea (Ely, et al., 1997). I coded my field log with one or two word phrases after rereading the entries I had made. The codes gave me an idea of what was happening in the classroom with my students. I then took the codes and organized them on a table that listed the codes, the page number where the code was located in the field log, and the line numbers where they would be found (Ely, et al., 1997). I also mentioned in a separate column if the code was related to any other codes throughout the field log.

My next step in organizing my data was to organize all of these codes into bins (Ahrar, et al., 2001). Bins are labeled categories made from grouping the codes and seeing a relationship (Ely, et al., 1997). After the codes were placed into bins this helped me to create a graphic organizer of a web to view all of my data at once. As I studied the codes and bins I then came up with theme statements, which allowed me to look at the information I had compiled. I then

searched through the data to unravel the mystery of what all the information was showing me (MacLean & Mohr, 1999). Theme statements were then developed which allowed me to analyze important issues my study was showing using drama in the history classroom.

Students were asked to do journal entries numerous times throughout the study after each dramatic strategy. The objective of the journals was to get feedback from all the students participating in the study. I wanted to hear the thoughts and feelings about the dramatic strategies being used to reinforce the learning of colonial history. I read through all of the journals and found some insightful quotes, which helped me to make any necessary changes during the study. I also took key words that were repeated throughout the journals and tallied them to give me a better idea of what the entire class felt about each strategy.

Two questionnaires were given. One was given in September, which gave me feedback on past experiences in the elementary social studies classrooms. The second was given at the end of the study to compare their thoughts and feelings about social studies class and how the curriculum was being learned. I again tallied comments and wrote memos to myself about the students' feedback, which they shared with me. Along with the questionnaires I also did some informal and formal interviewing to gain any feedback the students could share with me about

their thoughts and feelings about using dramatic strategies in the social studies classroom.

In order to make sure students were learning the curriculum they were assessed with a few essay tests. These tests were given throughout the study. The essay tests allowed the students to express their answers through written communication and use their dramatic strategies as examples while explaining their answers.

In order to better analyze what the data was showing I had to use many resources to support my findings. Writing daily observations in my field log, collecting students' journals, and reading literature supporting my data, accomplished a triangulation of data to support what my study was showing. Triangulating my data gave me multiple sources in which I could turn to and check my work (Wolcott, 2001)

Along with this I also had analytical memos connecting my data and research to educational theorists like John Dewey, Paulo Freire, and Lev Vygotsky. These memos allowed me to make sure previous researchers could support what I was doing in my classroom and helped me to reflect about what was taking place in my study and where to go next (Ahrar, et al., 2001). My data was reported factually because of the many different sources I was pulling information from.

Ely, et al. (1997), also suggests using a narrative forms to capture what our studies are truly about. I chose to do a pastiche of quotes taken from the students' journal, questionnaires, and interviews that summed up how students felt about using drama in the social studies classroom. Looking at the pastiche after it was finished gave me a feeling of accomplishment because of the positive feedback the students shared with me about the use of dramatic strategies as a learning tool (see Figure 1).

My field log, students' journal entries, questionnaires, interviews, essay tests, and my pastiche allowed me to find patterns that developed throughout the study. These resources helped to show that using dramatic strategies in the social studies classroom was a positive learning technique in my fifth grade classroom.

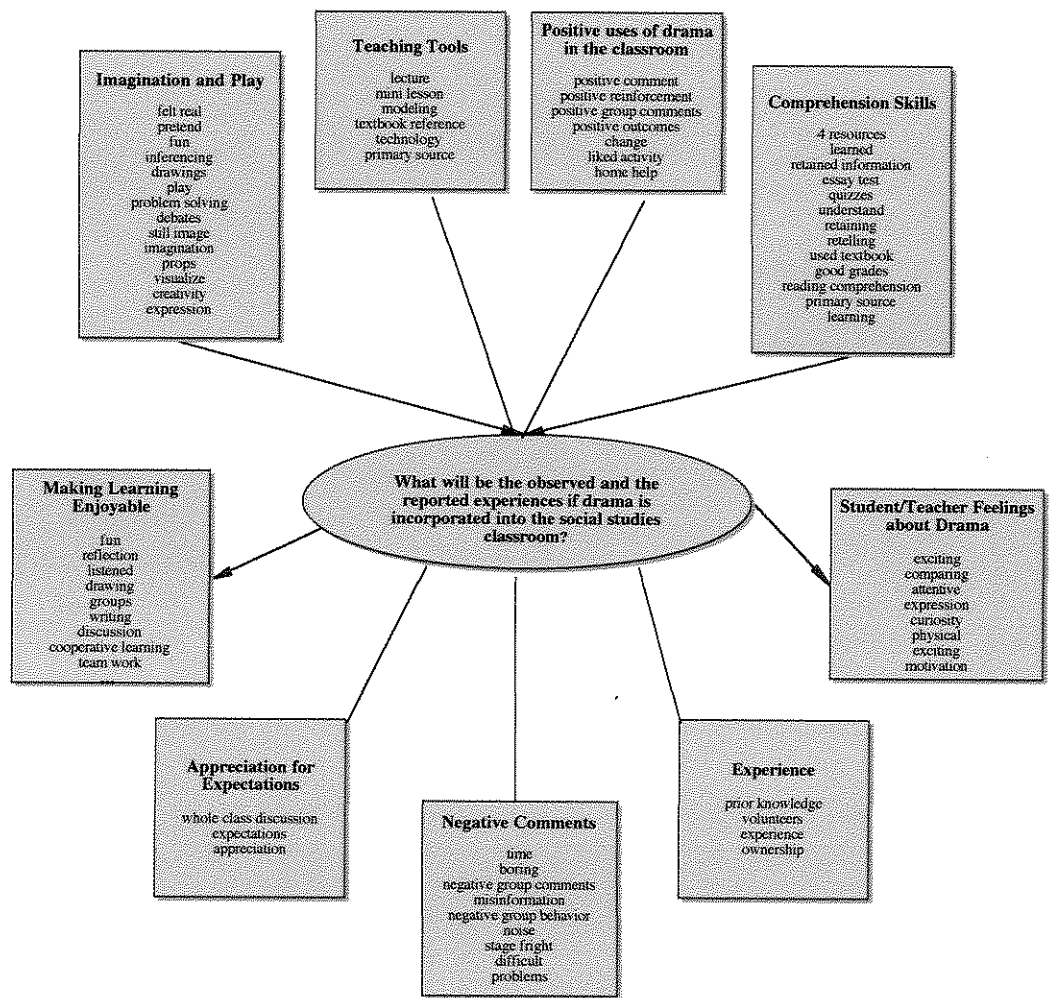
The themes that were discovered throughout the findings were a positive experience for my students as well as myself. I have discovered that play is an important strategy to use in order to make learning a more real occurrence for students. Multiple dramatic strategies were important to use when incorporating drama in the history classroom. The use of communication and interaction with the use of dramatic strategies had positive learning outcomes. This communication and interaction also motivated students to work in cooperative groups. Cooperation of classroom expectations with each other was helpful while using dramatic strategies to learn colonial history.

Comprehension skills also improved while using dramatic strategies in the history classroom. It encouraged students to use their prior knowledge to connect to what was being learning about colonial America.

These findings were developed through the use of my bins and themes diagram (See Figure 2). I was pleased to see that using dramatic strategies in the history classroom had many positive learning outcomes for my fifth grade students. I feel that play and imagination can give students the motivation they need to learn about colonial America.

Figure 2

### Bins and Theme Statements



## FINDINGS

My goal in this study was to use dramatic strategies to teach proficient-level fifth grade students about colonial history. I wanted to get students motivated about the colonial time period and not make learning about this content tedious. Using dramatic strategies allowed me to make learning enjoyable through play, imagination, and making the students' learning experiences meaningful.

The themes that arose from my field notes, students' works, and students' assessments showed that learning with dramatic strategies made learning come alive in my fifth grade classroom. My objectives with using dramatic strategies were to get students excited about learning colonial history, make learning fun, encourage learning to be a real experience that could be related to the students' lives, and encourage teamwork within the classroom. Important themes emerged throughout the study because of the use of dramatic strategies. These outcomes supported the use of play and imagination in the classroom, which made learning motivational.

**Students that use play and imagination as a learning technique find learning history to be a more real experience, which makes learning more enjoyable for them and me.**

My field log supports my belief that, as students used play and their imagination to learn history, they also increased their self-confidence, and had



positive feelings within the class about what was being learned. Students enjoyed giving positive feedback to one another, which made many of the students feel good about what they were sharing in class. One dramatic strategy particularly stands out that would support play, imagination, and self-confidence. That was the still image strategy the class did to show three different colonial scenes.

In my field log I shared that students did a wonderful job using props and actions to create a scene of a colonial job. One group wore old doll-like dresses and bonnets to look like they were truly in the time period. They had baskets and balls of yarn to show they were dressmakers. The girls created meaning from using these objects to portray the colonial job of a dressmaker. Seeing this live picture of what a dressmaker looked like allowed the students to understand the process by using objects to play the role. This made the play more real for them, and for those who were watching. The students learned the curriculum of colonial history through doing and interacting with one another and relating those actions to their prior knowledge.

The literature I read before my study also supported the fact that students enjoy learning when they can relate to what is being learned. Wilhelm (1998) believed the use of dramatic strategies asks students to learn by using imagination and play to make the curriculum come alive. Drama was used to engage my students in in-depth discussions about the subjects being addressed. The drama allowed the students to create a mental image, which helped them to retain what

was being learned, and they could recall that image to use while discussing the topic with their peers (Wilhelm, 1998).

I found throughout the study that students continued to relate back to their prior knowledge and outside experiences to express actions while role-playing historical events and people. For example, students used what they knew about emotions and body language in order to develop a more realistic role-play of the character they were portraying. If the character was angry they used an angry face and a harsh tone of voice. This created a more realistic scene of what was being learned. The use of prior knowledge for imaginative role-play is consistent with Vygotsky's belief that action is important in the creation of meaning for children who are learning new information. He states, "Action in an imaginary situation teaches the child to guide her behavior not only by immediate perception of objects or by situation immediately affecting her but also by the meaning of the situation" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 97).

According to Vygotsky, action in an imaginary situation can teach a child the meaning of what has taken place. This is exactly what my study did through the use of many different teaching strategies, which incorporated drama into the social studies classroom. Depending on the situation, children can guide their behaviors to create meaning by using objects and acts of play to create an understanding of a situation. My students brought in props like clothing,

household tools, and everyday items like newspapers to create a situation that looked real.

**The use of many different teaching strategies is important to use when incorporating drama into the social studies classroom.**

The use of different dramatic teaching strategies engaged my students, and motivated them to want to learn. Students became engaged and motivated by what was taking place in class; they took ownership of what they were learning and doing in the classroom. Students began to care about what they were learning, and tried harder to understand the information. They came to class prepared and excited about their next dramatic activity.

My students spent their free time at the end of the day rehearsing their lines for their presentations the next day. They also took the time to search the Internet for more information about topics like slavery, indentured servants, and the triangular trade route, which our textbook did not give us a lot of information about. There were not many days that passed that I was not asked to give permission for use of the classroom computer, or permission to get students from other classrooms to work on a skit that would be presented the next day.

Craig and Max were two boys who really got into investigating the Internet for more information about colonial history. The boys shared with me that they spent time after school at each other's homes to search the Internet so they could share the information with their groups and other classmates. I was

excited to see that their interest did not stop when they left school. Their motivation continued at home as well, finding out all they could about this time period.

Carroll & Leander's (2001) article, "Improving Students' Motivation Through the Use of Active Learning" supported my findings. They also found that children needed to be part of their own learning experience in order to be motivated to learn. Involvement in the activities taking place in the classroom encouraged more motivation to learn. Motivation tends to depend on the importance of what is being learned because students make sense of the curriculum by reflecting on what is important to them. Inserting our standards into dramatic activities will produce a motivational experience for students because learning becomes real and important to them (Caine, et al., 2002).

Students prepared for the dramatic strategies through reading their textbook information, primary sources, plays, or even researching the Internet to further expand their knowledge about a colonial person or event. They took learning into their own hands because they felt involved in what was happening in the classroom. Each student wanted to have a part in the dramatic strategies, and they wanted to bring something important to their group to make their presentation the best it could be.

Assessments were given after using two or three dramatic strategies. I found that using two or more strategies as learning tools allowed all the students

to make a connection to what was being learned. Students shared the strategy that had helped them when responding to their open ended questions on the assessments. For example, Casey stated in one of her essay tests, “Doing the still image strategy helped me to picture the colonial jobs I needed to write about on this test.” So she shared the fact that this particular strategy helped her to recall necessary information about colonial jobs.

She continued with, “I pictured in my mind what others did in their groups to create a picture of other jobs, and that also helped me to recall all the different colonial jobs we discussed in class.”

Students’ learning styles depended on what benefited them to make a connection to what was being learning in the classroom. Some of them learned better through acting and movements, and some learned by observing others and listening to what their peers were saying. No matter what the learning style, there were different strategies that helped the students depending on their needs.

**Students that communicate and interact with one another while using dramatic strategies in cooperative groups had many positive learning outcomes.**

Dewey (1997) states,

students learn through experiences and being  
social with one another. That the fact  
that all human experience is ultimately social:

that it involves contact and communication.

The mature person to put in moral terms, has no right to withhold from the young on given occasions whatever capacity for sympathetic understanding his own experience has given him. (p. 38)

One reason I decided to carry out a study on motivating students to learn history through drama was because I felt I was denying my students the opportunity to approach learning as a social experience. Farris & Parke, (1999), found that student involvement and working interactively within groups is essential for using dramatic activities in the classroom. Learning cooperatively through communicating and interacting allows students to learn through others' experiences. As my study progressed I found students developing socially, and learning through communicating with their peers.

Dewey expressed how students felt about the lack of social time they are given in the learning environment. He states, "The primary source of social control resides in the very nature of the work done as a social enterprise in which all individuals have an opportunity to contribute and to which all feel a responsibility. Most children are naturally sociable. Isolation is even more irksome to them than to adults." (Dewey, 1938, p. 56). Dewey's words really inspired me study and helped me to see how important it really was to have students socialize with one another to make their learning experience real.

Throughout my field log I had many notes written about what my students were sharing in their cooperative groups. They were problem solving about how they would present their dramatic strategies to the class, and they were learning how to work cooperatively to create an educational experience about colonial America.

With my students socializing and working together as a team, I saw huge strides in many students' self-esteem and their abilities to express their thinking through communication and action. For example, I was a little nervous in the beginning of my study about two students that did not like to speak and interact with their classmates. They were very shy and kept to themselves. As the study went on they became more confident and involved in the group activities and dramatic presentations. During a play that needed to be improvised in the students' own action and words, Drew and Jenny both were first to volunteer for parts in the improvisations. This, to me, was a huge step forward in class participation and their own self-esteem.

Drew asked, "Mrs. Orwan, how did I do?"

I quickly answered with a huge smile on my face, "Awesome! I am so proud of you!"

This was an extremely positive outcome with what the use of drama can do in a classroom and how it can make learning come alive for all.

**Comprehension skills improved when students used dramatic strategies.**

My field log supported that, as students used play and their imagination to learn history, they also increased their comprehension of the content being learned. The students were discussing factual information through reading plays, primary sources, and their textbooks. Students working within groups created a dramatic scene, which helped them to retain the information they needed. Hearing the information in a way that peers could understand and explain to one another was a way that many comprehended and retained the information they needed in order for them to do well on their assessments.

I also feel that sharing their experiences about using drama with journal writing encouraged my students to reflect back on what took place in the classroom. These reflections about the dramatic strategies and group happenings also helped them to retain the necessary information because they were writing and reciting it.

Kruegar & Ranalli (2003) also found that drama takes an idea and could easily represent it through all the human senses. One could see it, feel it, and hear it. Using all the senses allows the students to comprehend the social studies curriculum by doing. Using these multi-sensory techniques permits students to retain the information in a more concrete way. When students perform by role-playing, they are showing they understand the content of the curriculum. They



perform what they know about by using experiences in their own lives and relate these experiences to what they are learning in the classroom (Hertzberg, 2001).

Their assessment papers also reflected better comprehension than what students in previous years have shown because of the use of dramatic strategies and working within groups. In their papers they were clear to give examples and relate back to the dramatic strategies we used in the classroom. The peer communication and the drive for students to create a historical scene was an important factor that helped to increase comprehension skills and knowledge. Using the different dramatic strategies helped all the students in some way to improve their comprehension about colonial America.

**Drama encouraged students to incorporate their prior knowledge and their own experiences with what was being learned about colonial history.**

While students were in cooperative groups doing dramatic activities there were many positive learning experiences taking place. I observed positive feedback between students and their group members. I also heard many nice comments about what was happening within the dramatic activities. Mary was quoted several times throughout my field notes saying, "Good job, we can use that information here when we present for the class!" I also had Robert say, "Those girls did a great job creating an image of a dressmaker because of all the cool props they brought in."

Students supported one another in class, and were sharing thoughts about what took place during the activities on a regular basis. My students were engaged in communication related to colonial history. Discussions led to further questions asked by group members to further understand the content. One question that particularly stands out was a group discussion on the cotton plant and what it looked like. Students in the group shared their prior knowledge on what they knew about cotton, and that was mostly just a cotton ball, or cotton that made their clothes. They spoke within their groups and looked up a cotton plant on the Internet to gain further information necessary to complete their task at hand.

When students were given an assignment of doing a dramatic strategy they first shared in their groups something they knew or understood about the assignment. Students spoke about emotional feelings they could connect with the historical event. For example, a student did a wonderful job role-playing an indentured servant. He showed he was frustrated and tired through his body language and his voice. This student took what he knew about feelings and used it to create a scene with an indentured servant.

The use of prior knowledge was also pertinent for the students when reflecting in their journals and writing their answers to essay questions. Hoagland (2000) believes that when students build on their prior knowledge and their group interactions it encourages insightful student lead discussions, and less focus on a

right or wrong answer, which can make learning more inspiring for some. I found that when students talked about what they knew and related it to their life in some way they seemed to remember the facts more easily. They also explained the information needed to answer the questions more clearly and readily.

**Students cooperated with the expectations of the class, and with each other as a whole group, when they used dramatic strategies to learn history.**

Students stated on many occasions, as cited in my field log, about how enjoyable this class has been for them. They shared the fact that they were enjoying the different drama activities and working with different peers in cooperative groups. It was also obvious that I was also enjoying the class as I reread my field log and looked back at my reflections about the class and the activities being used.

Students shared openly with me in their journal writing that they appreciated the expectations of this class. The group as a whole respected one another because of all the teamwork necessary to make incorporating drama into the social studies classroom successful. Their need to be a team and respect one another while using drama was risky for many students, depending on their personalities. Dowdy (2002) expressed this same concern when he stated, "Again, having the soul of an actor can force you to put your personal image at risk for no good reason except that it gives you a chance to affect the situation to your advantage" (Kilgour Dowdy, in Delpit & Dowdy, 2002, p. 6). Being at the

middle school age, it can be difficult for students to put their personal image on the line and act different from the norm.

Students' personal images are very fragile, and easily criticized by others. Dowdy thought that those who take the chance of putting their own image on the line are at risk for being criticized by others, and kids do not have trouble criticizing one another. However, in the long run, the people who do take the risks will benefit from the situations they acted upon.

I believe my study put my students in a similar situation. I asked them every day to take the risk by role-playing characters and events in history. They were acting as characters in roles to make history come alive. They were putting their personal images out there for peers to laugh at or make fun of. They were taking the risks, and they benefited from those risks, by learning with new strategies.

As cited in my field log, students used different accents, body language, their own words, and acted in ways other than themselves. They did this to portray a historical character. One of my students played John Smith. He had an uneasy day because of this. He stated, "I seemed to have stage fright today, which I did not have yesterday, and I think it was because Smith has a lot of information that goes with his character." He continued by explaining it was difficult to remember everything he did for Jamestown and the people." He took the risk of taking the role of John Smith, and saw how difficult it was, but he learned that John Smith was an important person who did a lot of valuable things for Jamestown.

### **Conclusion**

Throughout the study students grew to respect one another, and they worked as a supportive team while learning with dramatic strategies. A comfort level developed within the class as the study progressed. Working within cooperative groups and using imagination to learn through play developed this respect and strong team environment. Using play to learn about colonial America encouraged students to make learning come alive. They used their prior knowledge to build upon the historical content, and used their imagination to create scenes that made what was being learned real to them. This allowed the students to make personal connections to their learning.

Students also took the role as motivated learners. They did their part in preparing for the activities in class. They read and discussed the resource materials so they could use play to reenact colonial times. The students enjoyed bringing in and creating props to make their play come alive as though they were truly in the past. They asked questions and inquired about the historical content more deeply by researching resources, other than our fifth grade textbook, to locate information they needed to prepare themselves for the dramatic activities being used in the classroom. Students went home and searched the Internet. They read through encyclopedias and other nonfiction books they had found. This encouraged them to explore all the aspects of the colonial time period that they could incorporate into class to make their reenactments that much more

informative and real. The students were excited about learning and this made teaching a lot more fun because my students had an attitude and drive I have not experienced before.

This study was also encouraging because of the way students perform when it came to assessment time. They enjoyed writing their responses to the essay questions and pulling information from the dramatic strategies used in class to answer and explain their reasoning for their answers. In previous years it was torture to get my students to write a few short sentences on a test, and now they were writing pages to explain all they knew about the content! They were excited to tell me all they had learned and experienced in class while using drama.

I was pleased with the outcomes of using dramatic strategies in the fifth grade social studies classroom. Social Studies had become a new favorite subject for some in the fifth grade classroom. It has also changed my perception on teaching this subject. Getting away from the more traditional way of teaching history created historical empathy in my class and a passion to want to know and understand more about our country's history.

### WHERE DO I GO NEXT?

This study was extremely rewarding to my students and myself as well. I have found a more interesting way to motivate students to learn about colonial America. Using dramatic strategies engaged my students in taking ownership of their learning, it taught them how to work cooperatively, their comprehension improved, and they were having fun using their imagination and their ability to play.

Using the seven dramatic strategies took the boredom out of teaching and learning social studies through the use of a textbook, lectures, and movies. Activities filled this time and made the class exciting. Students also began to look forward to coming to class and participating in the activities planned. Students prepared on their own by learning the information they needed in order to participate in the dramatic activities. This was exciting to me because doing the assigned readings on their own was always a challenge for my students. Holding them responsible to do these assignments showed me they were enjoying the class activities and wanted to be part of the class.

So, where do I go to next? I feel it is important to continue on the same path of using dramatic strategies in my fifth grade social studies classroom. I would like to continue using the seven dramatic activities discussed in the study. I will continue to encourage teamwork and cooperative learning in my classroom. I believe students learned a lot by discussing information with their peers. Play

will remain a huge part of learning my curriculum because using actions to make learning come alive is exciting.

I will continue to listen to what my students have to say about what is happening in the classroom. I want their learning to be enjoyable, and in order for that to happen, they need to share their thoughts about the activities we are partaking in during our class. I will continue doing the journal entries because they gave me a good indication of what my students enjoyed and what was working well.

Interviewing students was very helpful for me to understand how students were feeling about the class activities. Talking with random students also allowed me to bond with my students about the social studies curriculum. That did not occur in my previous years' experiences. The questionnaires that were given in September also gave me an abundance of information about students' past social studies experiences. These questionnaires were an important part of my study. I will continue to use them for future classes because I feel they will give me information about where my students are in the beginning of the year.

I have learned so much from reading journal articles and research reports that this practice will remain an important part of my teaching experiences. I have seen how important it is to read about teaching strategies and best practices that have been studied and useful in the classroom. Reading these articles have given me different ideas to use in the classroom, and have also given me



background information on differentiating instruction to make students' learning experiences more meaningful.

Essay assessments allowed students to communicate their answers through writing and using examples from classroom dramatic strategies that were used to aid in learning the social studies curriculum. I will continue to give these essay assessments and short answer tests. I found that students did better and could better express what they have learned more thoroughly using these types of tests.

Time will always remain a factor in the teaching profession. I will continue to use time to the best of my students' interests. I will try and accomplish the standards needed in the fifth grade social studies classroom, but I will also keep in mind that it takes time for students to develop and understand a classroom project. I will keep time in perspective and go with what is working for my students.

Self-reflection has become part of my routine now. I see the importance of keeping a field log about classroom happenings and what thoughts students, as well as myself, had during our times together. As my study comes to an end I plan on keeping a lot of what has been done throughout the study the same. This has been a rewarding experience for me and as time goes on I am sure another research question will arise that I will investigate.

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**Appendix A**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**September Questionnaire***Direction: Complete each of the questions with your thoughts and feelings about social studies.*

1. How do you feel about social studies?
  
2. How would you rate the importance of social studies compared to other subjects?
  
3. Do you think learning social studies is fun? Why or why not?
  
4. Does this topic motivate you to want to learn? Why or why not?
  
5. Is social studies hard for you to understand? What makes it difficult?
  
6. If you didn't have to take this class how would it make you feel?
  
7. Did teachers in the past spend a lot of time teaching social studies?
  
8. How did teachers in the past teach social studies to your class?
  
9. What types of activities did you do in past social studies classes?
  
10. What do you feel is your role as a student in a social studies class?



**Appendix B**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**December Questionnaire***Direction: Complete each of the questions with your thoughts and feelings about social studies.*

1. How do you feel about social studies after a few weeks of using drama?
2. How would you rate social studies to other subjects now?
3. Is learning social studies using drama fun? Why or why not?
4. Do dramatic strategies motivate you to learn? Give reasons why or why not?
5. Have you ever been taught social studies using drama before?
6. Is social studies still hard for you to learn and understand? Explain why or why not.
7. If you weren't part of this class how would it make you feel?
8. Is the teacher making learning fun?
9. What is your role in this social studies class?
10. Please write a few thoughts about this class. What do you hope to continue? What do you think is the best part about this class? Comment if you are having fun.



## Appendix D

Dear [REDACTED],

I am completing a Master of Education degree at Moravian College. My courses have enabled me to learn about the most effective teaching methods. One of the requirements of the program is that I conduct a systemic study of my own practices. This semester, I am focusing my research on incorporating drama strategies to teach social studies. The title of my research is Using Drama in the History Classroom. My students will benefit from participating in this study because they will be experience colonial history through drama strategies, and making learning come alive in the classroom, which will motivate them to learn.

As part of this study, students will be asked to participate in plays, drama games, improvisations, writing in role, and sharing their thoughts about these techniques through journal writing. I will be asking them to complete two questionnaires, a drama profile, and I will be doing some interviews about some of the strategies we use in class. The study will take place from September 7, 2005 and will end December 15, 2005.

The data will be collected and coded, and held in the strictest confidence. No one except me will have access to the data. My research results will be presented using pseudonyms – no one's identity will be used. I will store the data in a locked desk drawer. At the conclusion of the research, the data will be destroyed.

A student may choose at any time not to participate in this study. However, students must participate in all regular class activities. For example, if a play is read in class, everyone will read and discuss the content, but a child not taking part in the study will not be interviewed about their thoughts and feelings about the activity. In no way will participation, non-participation, or withdrawal during this study have any influence on any aspect of the class. Data from non-participants will not be analyzed.

We welcome questions about this research at any time. Students' participation in this study is voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty or consequence. Any questions you have about the research can be directed to me, Melissa Orwan, (610) 625-7958, [orwanm@eastonsd.org](mailto:orwanm@eastonsd.org), or my advisor, Dr. Charlotte Rappe Zales, Education Department, Moravian College, (610)861-1482, [crzales@moravian.edu](mailto:crzales@moravian.edu).

Sincerely,

I agree to allow Melissa Orwan to conduct this study in her classroom

---

Principal's Signature

Date

## Appendix E

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am completing a Master of Education degree at Moravian College. My courses have enabled me to learn about the most effective teaching methods. One of the requirements of the program is that I conduct a systemic study of my own practices. This semester, I am focusing my research on incorporating drama strategies to teach social studies. The title of my research is Using Drama in the History Classroom. My students will benefit from participating in this study because they will be experience colonial history through drama strategies, and making learning come alive in the classroom, which will motivate them to learn.

As part of this study, students will be asked to participate in plays, drama games, improvisations, writing in role, and sharing their thoughts about these techniques through journal writing. I will be asking them to complete two questionnaires, a drama profile and I will be doing some interviews about some of the strategies we use in class. The study will take place from September 7, 2005 and will end December 15, 2005.

The data will be collected and coded, and held in the strictest confidence. No one except me will have access to the data. My research results will be presented using pseudonyms – no one's identity will be used. I will store the data in a locked desk drawer. At the conclusion of the research, the data will be destroyed.

A student may choose at any time not to participate in this study. However, students must participate in all regular class activities. For example, if a play is read in class, everyone will read and discuss the content, but a child not taking part in the study will not be interviewed about their thoughts and feelings of the class activity. In no way will participation, non-participation, or withdrawal during this study have any influence on any aspect of the class. Data from non-participants will not be analyzed.

We welcome questions about this research at any time. [REDACTED], the principal, has approved this study. Your child's participation in this study is voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty or consequence. Any questions you have about the research can be directed to me, Melissa Orwan, (610) 250-2440, [orwanm@eastonsd.org](mailto:orwanm@eastonsd.org), or my advisor, Dr. Charlotte Rappe Zales, Education Department, Moravian College, (610) 625-7958, [crzales@moravian.edu](mailto:crzales@moravian.edu).

Sincerely,

I agree to allow my son/daughter to take part in this project. I understand that my son/daughter can choose not to participate at any time.

---

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

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Student's name

## Appendix F

Dear Students,

I am completing a Master of Education degree at Moravian College. My courses have enabled me to learn about the most effective teaching methods. One of the requirements of the program is that I conduct a study of my own practices. This semester, I am focusing my research on using drama strategies to teach social studies. The title of my research is Using Drama in the History Classroom. You will benefit from participating in this study because you will be experiencing colonial history through drama strategies, and making learning come alive in the classroom, which will motivate you to learn.

As part of this study, I will be asking you to participate in plays, drama games, improvisations, writing in role, and sharing your thoughts about these techniques through journal writing. I will be asking you to complete two questionnaires, a drama profile, and I will be doing some interviews about some of the strategies we use in class. The study will take place from September 7, 2005 and will end December 15, 2005.

Some assignments will be collected from you and will be held in the strictest confidence. No one except me will have access to the data. My research results will be presented using pseudonyms – no one's identity will be used. I will store the data in a locked desk drawer. At the conclusion of the research, the data will be destroyed.

You have the choice at any time not to participate in this study. However, you must participate in all regular class activities. For example, if a play is read in class, everyone will read and discuss the content, but if you are not taking part in the study you will not be interviewed about your thoughts and feelings about the class activity. Your decision to participate in this study will not have any effect on your grade. Data from non-participants will not be analyzed.

I welcome questions about this research at any time. Any questions you have about the research can be directed to me or [REDACTED]. Your participation in this study is voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty or consequence.

Sincerely,

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Student's Signature

Date

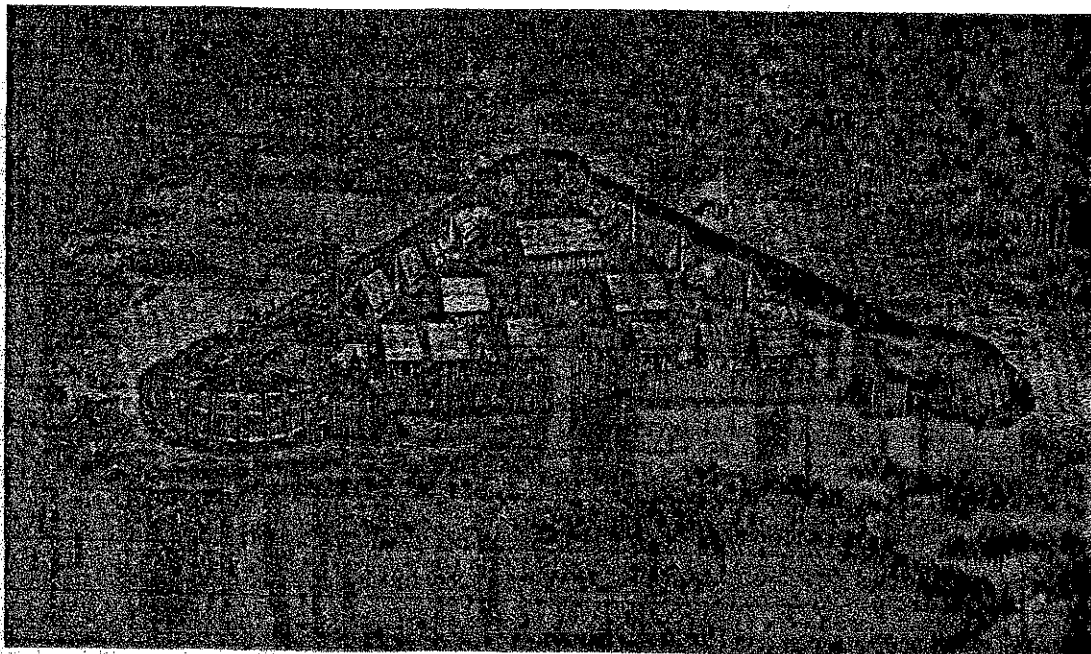
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## The Starving Time

1609–1610



George Beamish

Now we all found the losse of Captaine *Smith*, yea his greatest maligners could now curse his losse: as for corne provision and contribution from the Salvages, we had nothing but mortall wounds, with clubs and arrowes; as for our Hogs, Hens, Goats, Sheepe, Horse, or what lived, our commanders, officers and Salvages daily consumed them, some small proportions sometimes we tasted, till all was devoured; then swords, armes, pieces, or any thing, wee traded with the Salvages, whose cruell fingers were so oft imbrewed in our blouds, that what by their crueltie, our Governours indiscretion, and the losse of our ships, of five hundred within six moneths after Captaine *Smiths* departure [October 1609–March 1610], there remained not past sixtie men, women and children, most miserable and poore creatures; and those were preserved for the most part, by roots, herbes, acornes, walnuts, berries, now and then a little fish: they that had starch in these extremities, made no small use of it; yea even the very skinnes of our horses.

Nay, so great was our famine, that a Salvage we slew and buried, the poorer sort tooke him up againe and eat him; and so did divers one another boyled and stewed with roots and herbes: And one amongst the rest did kill his wife, powdered [i.e., salted] her, and had eaten part of her before it was knowne; for which hee was executed, as hee well deserved: now whether shee was better roasted, boyled or carbonado'd [i.e., grilled], I know not; but of such a dish as powdered wife I never heard of.

This was the time, which still to this day we called the starving time; it were too vile to say, and scarce to be beleaved, what we endured. . .

A Jamestown colonist's account,  
from *Generall Historie of Virginia*, by Captain John Smith, 1624

# TROUBLE AT JAMESTOWN

*Jamestown (1606-1616)*



## Cast of Characters (in order of appearance)

Albert: *Virginia Company man 1*

Thomas: *Virginia Company man 2*

Samuel: *Wealthy Jamestown settler*

Clancy: *Indentured servant*

John Smith: *English adventurer*

Powhatan: *Chief of 28 Native American tribes*

Nataquaus: *Powhatan's son*

Pocahontas: *Powhatan's daughter*

Opechancanough: *Powhatan's brother*

Powhatan's Men 1-4 (non-speaking roles)

Jamestown Settlers 1-4

John Rolfe: *Jamestown planter*

Lady-in-Waiting: *Queen's servant*

Queen Anne: *English queen*



— ACT I —

SCENE 1: THE VIRGINIA COMPANY OFFICE, APRIL 10, 1606

*(Albert works at his desk. Thomas runs in.)*

THOMAS: We got it! We got it!

ALBERT: Really? King James said yes?

THOMAS: Yes! The Virginia Company can send colonists to the New World!

ALBERT: Of course, the king will tell us what the settlers can and can't do.

THOMAS: Of course.

ALBERT: Of course, Virginia is a long way away. It's all the way on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean.

THOMAS: That's very true.

ALBERT: The colonists will have to make sure everyone obeys the rules.

THOMAS: Of course.

ALBERT: They'll also have to work hard. The Virginia Company is spending a lot of money to send people to the New World. We have to make money on the colony. The colonists have to understand that.

THOMAS: Hardworking, honest people—that's who we want.

SCENE 2: ON BOARD THE SUSAN CONSTANT IN THE MIDDLE  
OF THE ATLANTIC OCEAN, DECEMBER 1606

SAMUEL: You know it's really not fair, not fair at all. My oldest brother got all the land, the house, and most of the money. I can't help it if I wasn't born first. Hey! You! Clancy! Where's my tea?

CLANCY: Water's boiling, sir. *(muttering to himself)* I'll tell you what's not fair. I have to work for Sir Samuel for seven years. Then I'll finally be free. I can buy my own land. I won't have to work for anyone anymore.

SAMUEL: Make sure the water's hot, Clancy! Hot!

CLANCY *(muttering to himself)*: It's going to be a long seven years.

*(Clancy leaves. John Smith enters.)*

SAMUEL: Hey! You! Smith! John Smith!

JOHN SMITH: What can I do for you, Samuel?

SAMUEL: I've been thinking. I think I should be on the council. You need someone like me to tell everyone else what to do and how to do it.

JOHN SMITH: The Virginia Company's already decided who's going to be on the council. You know that. All the names are locked in a box. We'll open it when we land in Virginia.

SAMUEL: Well, I'm *sure* my name is in the box.

JOHN SMITH (*muttering to himself*): I'm sure hoping it's not.

SCENE 3: VIRGINIA, MAY 1607

POWHATAN: The English have maybe 100 men. They have three ships.

NATAQUAUS: They have three ships with cannons.

POWHATAN: We have 12,000 people to their 100 men. This is our home. We know where the game is. We know what grows well here. We know where to find water.

NATAQUAUS: The English think this is their home now. They say they want to be friends with us.

POWHATAN: I don't trust the English yet. Keep them busy. Make it hard for them to build their fort. Make it hard for them to plant their crops. Make it hard for them to live here.

NATAQUAUS: Yes, Father.

POCAHONTAS: Why did the English come here? Why did they leave their homes? England must be a very bad place to live.

POWHATAN: We will make them miss England.

— ACT 2 —

SCENE 1: THE BANKS OF THE CHICKAHOMINY RIVER,  
NEAR JAMESTOWN, DECEMBER 1607

CLANCY: Samuel is spitting mad that he's not on the council.

JOHN SMITH: I don't think he's ever worked hard a day in his life. That's the problem with too many of the settlers—and the indentured servants.

CLANCY: It's hard to work for something that's not yours.

JOHN SMITH: Everyone has to work hard now, or Jamestown won't make it. We won't survive.

CLANCY: So many of the men are sick. We left England with 140 colonists—half have died. There's not enough food. Winter's coming. The ships have gone back to England.

JOHN SMITH: Powhatan and his people are helping us now. They're giving us corn. They'll teach us how to live here. Shh! What's that noise? Who's there?

*(Nataquaas and Opechancanough jump in front of Clancy and Smith.)*

OPECHANCANOUGH: John Smith. You're so far from Jamestown. Have you run away from your people?

JOHN SMITH: We're searching for food.

OPECHANCANOUGH: Don't worry, John Smith. We'll feed you. Take that one, Nataquaas. I'll take John Smith.

JOHN SMITH: Wait a minute!

*(Opechancanough and Nataquaas lead John Smith and Clancy away.)*

SCENE 2: POWHATAN'S CAMP, A MONTH LATER

POWHATAN: John Smith, I've enjoyed having you as a guest.

JOHN SMITH: I am not a guest. A guest can leave when he wishes. I'm a prisoner.

POWHATAN: I'm sorry you feel that way.

*(Powhatan claps his hands. Opechancanough and Nataquaas make John Smith kneel down. A group of Powhatan's men surround Smith.)*

JOHN SMITH: Wait a minute! What's going on?

*(Pocahontas pushes through the men.)*

POCAHONTAS: Stop!

SCENE 3: JAMESTOWN, A FEW DAYS LATER

JOHN SMITH: There are only 38 men still alive here at Jamestown! How can that be? I've been gone only a month!

SETTLER 1: Where were you exactly?

SETTLER 2: Smith told you. He was with Powhatan. *(turning to Smith)* What were you doing with Powhatan, Smith? We needed you here.

JOHN SMITH: Wait a minute! They captured me! They killed poor Clancy and—

SAMUEL: It's your fault, John Smith. It's all your fault that I've lost my servant. You should pay me for my loss.

SETTLER 3: And you say that Powhatan was about to kill you, but his daughter—his eleven-year-old daughter—saved your life? Hmm.

JOHN SMITH: We need to work together. Winter isn't over. We don't have time to sit around and talk.

SETTLER 2: He's right. I'm hungry. I'm tired of being hungry. I'm cold. I'm tired of being cold.

SETTLER 1: Then go out and find some food. Go out and find some wood for a fire.

SETTLER 2: I've been sick. You go out.

SETTLER 1: I've been sick, too. Sicker than you.

SETTLER 2: Have not been sicker.

SETTLER 1: Have too been sicker.

JOHN SMITH: Wait a minute! That's enough!

SAMUEL: You owe me three thousand pounds, Smith. I'll give you six years to pay me.

SETTLER 3: You say Powhatan just let you go? Just like that? Hmm.

*(Settler 4 comes running in.)*

SETTLER 4: A ship! An English ship! We're saved!

*(Everyone but Samuel runs out.)*

SAMUEL *(calling after Smith)*: You! Smith! You'd better bring me some food from that ship! You owe me!

### ▲ ACT 3 ▲

#### SCENE 1: JAMESTOWN, 1609

SETTLER 1: "He who does not work, will not eat." If I hear Smith say that one more time, I'm going to eat my boots.

SETTLER 2: You ate your boots last month.

SETTLER 1: I shouldn't have to boil my boots and eat them. That's my point! John Smith isn't helping things. He's making them worse. We never should have elected him as president of the colony.

SETTLER 3: Powhatan attacks us all the time.

SETTLER 4: He gives us food sometimes.

SETTLER 3: Powhatan only sends Pocahontas here with food because he wants to know what's going on here in Jamestown.

SETTLER 1: John Smith's going back to England. I've written to the Virginia Company. They're going to call him back.

SAMUEL: He still owes me money.

## SCENE 2: JAMESTOWN, 1613

SETTLER 1: Hey, Pocahontas. I just got a letter from John Smith. It came all the way across the sea.

POCAHONTAS: How is he?

SETTLER 1: Why don't you come with me? I'll read it to you.

POCAHONTAS: Why don't you just tell me what John Smith said in his letter?

SETTLER 1: No, why don't you come with me?

POCAHONTAS: I don't think so.

SETTLER 1: I think so. *Grab her!*

*(Settlers 2-4 rush out and grab Pocahontas.)*

POCAHONTAS: Let me go!

SETTLER 3: No, you're going to stay here in Jamestown for a while.

SETTLER 2: We'll see what's more important to Powhatan—war with Jamestown or his daughter.

SETTLER 4: He won't attack us as long as Pocahontas is here.

SETTLER 1: Let's see if Powhatan will give us money for her.

POCAHONTAS: John Smith would never have done this!

SETTLER 3: That's why he got sent back to England.

## SCENE 3: JAMESTOWN, 1614

JOHN ROLFE: Before you eat, you put a napkin in your lap.

POCAHONTAS: And I pick up the fork with my right hand?

JOHN ROLFE: Which hand do you use more—your right hand or your left hand?

POCAHONTAS: My right hand.

JOHN ROLFE: That's the hand you use then.

POCAHONTAS: Do you think the English can get along with my people?

JOHN ROLFE: We're at peace with your father now.

POCAHONTAS: Not many people here trust him—or me.

JOHN ROLFE: I do.

POCAHONTAS: Tell me about England.

JOHN ROLFE: It's very far away. It rains a lot. Would you like to go there one day?

POCAHONTAS: I would go if I knew I could come back here.

JOHN ROLFE: You know, I've made some money raising tobacco. The English can't get enough of it. I was wondering . . .

POCAHONTAS: Wondering what?

JOHN ROLFE: Would you like to visit England with me? Would you marry me?

POCAHONTAS: I guess you think the English and my people *can* get along.

#### — ACT 4 —

WINDSOR CASTLE, ENGLAND, 1616

LADY-IN-WAITING: Here's another letter, your Majesty. It's from John Smith.

QUEEN ANNE: John Smith! Whatever does he want? Money for more adventures in the New World? Does he want me to send him back to Jamestown?

LADY-IN-WAITING: No ma'am. He says the Indian girl who saved his life is coming to England. She's married John Rolfe, the tobacco planter. John Smith thinks you should meet her.

QUEEN ANNE: It might be a good idea to meet her. It might make more people want to settle in Virginia. The more people who move there, the more land we can claim. He says this girl saved his life? What's her name?

LADY-IN-WAITING: It was Pocahontas, but now she's called Rebecca. Rebecca Rolfe.

QUEEN ANNE: I've never met an American before. It could be interesting.

# Mayflower Compact

1620

In the name of god Amen. We whose names are underwritten, the loyall subjects of our dread soveraigne Lord King James by the grace of god, of great Britaine, France, & Ireland King, Defender of the Faith, &c.

Having undertaken, for the glory of god, and advancement of the Christian Faith, and honour of our King & Countrey, a Voyage to plant the first Colonie in the Northerne parts of VIRGINIA; doe by these presents solemnly & mutually in the presence of god, and one of another, covenant, & combine our selves together into a civill body politicke; for our better ordering & preservation, & furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by vertue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame such just & equall Lawes, Ordinances, acts, constitutions, & offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meete & convenient for the general good of the Colonie: unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape Cod the 11. of November, in the year of the Raigne of our Soveraigne Lord King James of England, France, & Ireland King, and of Scotland the fiftie fourth, Anno Domini 1620.

State Library of Mas

In the name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwritten, the loyall Subjects of our dread Sovereaigne Lord King James, by the grace of God of Great Britaine, France, and Ireland King Defender of the Faith, &c.

Having under-taken for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian Faith, and honour of our King and Countrey, a Voyage to plant the first Colony in the Northerne parts of VIRGINIA; doe by these presents solemnly & mutually in the presence of God and one of another, covenant, and combine our selves together into a civill body politicke, for our better ordering and preservation, and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by vertue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame such just and equall Lawes, Ordinances, acts, constitutions, & offices from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the generall good of the Colony: unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape Cod the 11. of November, in the yeare of the Raigne of our Sovereaigne Lord King JAMES of England, France, and Ireland, the eighteenth and of Scotland the fifty-fourth. Anno Domino 1620.

# FISH HEADS AND SNAKE SKINS

*The Pilgrims at Plymouth (1620-1621)*



## Cast of Characters (in order of appearance)

Joan Tilly: *Plymouth Pilgrim*

William Brewster: *One of the leaders of the Pilgrims*

John Tilly: *Plymouth Pilgrim*

Wrestling Brewster: *William and Mary Brewster's son*

Elizabeth Tilly: *Joan and John Tilly's daughter*

William Bradford: *Governor of Plymouth Colony*

Miles Standish: *English soldier*

Strangers 1-2 • Separatists 1-2

Rose Standish: *Miles Standish's wife*

Samoset: *Native American from the Abenaki tribe*

Squanto: *Native American man*

Narraganset Man

Massasoit: *Leader of the Wampanoag people*

Wampanoag People 1-4 (non-speaking roles)



## ACT I

## SCENE 1: THE TILLY'S HOUSE IN LEIDEN, HOLLAND, 1618

JOAN TILLY: I don't want to move again. It was hard enough to leave England to come here. We can't go back to England. The king will have us put in jail. Where will we go?

WILLIAM BREWSTER: South America or Virginia.

JOHN TILLY: South America? It's too hot!

JOAN TILLY: And Virginia is so far away.

JOHN TILLY: Will they let us worship as we please?

WILLIAM BREWSTER: We could stay here in Holland. We don't have to leave.

JOHN TILLY: We've been here for twelve years, but none of us are making much money. Maybe it is time to move.

JOAN TILLY: Our daughter Elizabeth speaks Dutch all the time. She's forgotten she's English. At least Virginia is an English colony.

WILLIAM BREWSTER: We wouldn't have to live in Jamestown. We could start our own colony. Virginia covers hundreds of miles.

JOHN TILLY: Joan's right. It's an English colony. Will the king let us worship as we please in Virginia? Would we be safe there?

WILLIAM BREWSTER: We'll have to ask the Virginia Company and see what they say.

JOAN TILLY: It won't do any harm to ask.

SCENE 2: ON BOARD THE *MAYFLOWER* IN SOUTHAMPTON,  
ENGLAND, SEPTEMBER 16, 1620

WRESTLING BREWSTER: We're on our way! I can't believe we had to turn back two times!

ELIZABETH TILLY: I wish everyone had wanted to come to Virginia with us. I miss Anne. I'll never see her again. I'll never see my very best friend again.

WRESTLING BREWSTER: You'll make a new best friend.

ELIZABETH TILLY: We don't even know half the people on the *Mayflower*. Father calls them the Strangers. They call us Separatists.

WRESTLING BREWSTER: Not anymore! Now we are all called pilgrims.

ELIZABETH TILLY: I guess we'll get to know the Strangers soon enough. We're going to be living with them in Virginia.

WRESTLING BREWSTER: Look! There's Miles Standish! He's already having the men drill with their weapons. I'm going to ask if I can drill with the men, too.

ELIZABETH TILLY: You're too young to be a soldier.

WRESTLING BREWSTER: You're just jealous because you're a girl.

ELIZABETH TILLY: I may be a girl, but I have enough work to do. I don't need to go out and be a soldier, too.

WRESTLING BREWSTER: You might. We're going to a whole new world. Who knows what kind of people live there? Or animals?

ELIZABETH TILLY: It's not like we'll be the first people who ever lived there. Lots of people are there already.

WRESTLING BREWSTER: Maybe Miles Standish will let me play the drum while the men march!

*(Wrestling runs off.)*

ELIZABETH TILLY: Maybe I will watch the men drill—just in case.

## — ACT 2 —

ON BOARD THE *MAYFLOWER*, NOVEMBER 11, 1620

WILLIAM BRADFORD: The good news is that we have arrived. The bad news is that we have not arrived in Virginia. Our map says that this is Plymouth.

MILES STANDISH: The captain says it would be too dangerous to try to sail to Virginia. So it looks like we'll stay here. There's fresh water and a good harbor.

WILLIAM BRADFORD: We are not in Virginia. So the rules of the Virginia Company are no good here. We must draw up our own set of rules.

MILES STANDISH: There's been some trouble between the Strangers and the Separatists. It was a long and hard trip, but we're here now. We have to get along and work together.

WILLIAM BRADFORD: We've talked together and made up a set of rules for our Plymouth colony to follow. Each man will read them and then sign his name.

STRANGER 1: I paid my money to go to Virginia, not Plymouth! I'm not signing!

SEPARATIST 1: Unstop your ears! Didn't you hear Miles Standish? It's too dangerous! Do you know what the word *dangerous* means?

WILLIAM BRADFORD: Everybody calm down.

STRANGER 2 (*to Stranger 1*): At least read the rules. You might even agree with them.

STRANGER 1: I don't think so.

SEPARATIST 2: This may be even better than where we were going in Virginia.

STRANGER 1: I don't think so.

STRANGER 2: Just read the rules.

STRANGER 1: Don't tell me what to do.

SEPARATIST 1: Well, somebody's got to tell you what to do. You're nothing but a trouble-maker.

MILES STANDISH: That's enough. This is exactly why we need the Mayflower Compact. Nobody is a Stranger anymore. Nobody is a Separatist. We're one colony, working together, following the same rules.

STRANGER 1: All right, all right. Let me take a look at these rules of yours. Okay, it says that we make laws for the good of the colony. There's nothing wrong with that. Then it says that we make sure everybody follows the laws. There's nothing wrong with that.

WILLIAM BRADFORD: So you'll sign?

STRANGER 1: Of course I will. What makes you think I wouldn't?

SEPARATIST 1: I'll sign next.

STRANGER 2: Then I will.

WILLIAM BRADFORD: Then everyone will read and sign the compact?

*(Everyone shouts: "Yes!")*

### — ACT 3 —

#### SCENE 1: A PLYMOUTH GARDEN, MARCH 16, 1621

ROSE STANDISH: It's been a terrible winter. We've had two fires.

JOAN TILLY: Luckily no one was hurt.

ROSE STANDISH: More than forty people have died since we got here.

JOAN TILLY: I wish the men could bury them during the day, and we could put stones on the graves.

ROSE STANDISH: We can't. We can't let the Indians know how many people we're losing. They might think they can attack us and wipe us out.

JOAN TILLY: I hope these seeds we're planting will grow.

ROSE STANDISH: It would be nice to have vegetables with the fish that the men catch.

*(Samoset enters. Miles Standish and William Bradford go to meet him.)*

JOAN TILLY: Oh my!

SAMOSET: Welcome, Englishmen!

MILES STANDISH: You speak English!

SAMOSET: English fishermen taught me. They come all the way here to fish for cod.

WILLIAM BRADFORD: My name is William Bradford. This is Miles Standish.

SAMOSET: My name is Samoset.

MILES STANDISH: I wish everyone were as friendly as you are.

SAMOSET: You have to understand. This used to be a Patuxet village. The English brought a sickness. Many people died. Then an English captain kidnapped some of our people. They don't trust you.

WILLIAM BRADFORD: Can you help us make friends with them? We don't want to hurt anyone.

SAMOSET: I can try. Good-bye, Englishmen.

SCENE 2: PLYMOUTH, SPRING OF 1621

WRESTLING BREWSTER: Dad! Samoset's coming back! He's got someone with him!  
Another Indian!

WILLIAM BREWSTER: Go tell Miles Standish. Quick!

*(Samoset and Squanto enter. Brewster moves toward them slowly.)*

WILLIAM BREWSTER: Hello! Good to see you again, Samoset! Who's this with you? A friend of yours?

SAMOSET: This is Squanto. His English is even better than mine. *(to Squanto)* Go on, say something.

SQUANTO: My manners are better, too.

WILLIAM BREWSTER *(laughing nervously)*: Oh, no! Samoset's been very polite. Oh, look! Here's Miles Standish! Look, Miles. Samoset's brought a friend.

MILES STANDISH: Just one friend, or are there more hiding in the woods?

SQUANTO: There's no need to hide in the woods. We come in peace.

SAMOSET: Squanto wants to stay and help you.

SQUANTO: England is very different from this country. The plants are different. The weather is different. There are things you need to know.

WILLIAM BREWSTER: Your English is very good, Squanto. Where did you learn to speak it so well?

SAMOSET: He was kidnapped—taken away by an English captain. They sold him as a slave. He escaped. He's been to Spain and to England.

SQUANTO: Samoset loves to tell my story.

WILLIAM BREWSTER: Not all of my people are bad people.

SQUANTO: Not all of my people are bad, either.

MILES STANDISH: We could use some help.

SQUANTO: Good. Let's get started. What have you planted in your gardens?

SCENE 3: A FEW WEEKS LATER IN PLYMOUTH

SQUANTO: You see how the bean plants climb up the corn plants? If you plant beans and corn together, you save space.

ELIZABETH TILLY: And if you bury what's left of a fish in the ground by the plants, they'll grow tall and strong. That's what you said, right?

SQUANTO: Plants need to be fed, just like you and me.

*(The Narraganset man enters. He carries a bunch of arrows with a rattlesnake skin around them.)*

ELIZABETH TILLY: Who's that? Is he a friend of yours? What's he carrying?

SQUANTO: Please tell Governor Bradford to come here.

*(Elizabeth leaves.)*

SQUANTO: What do you want?

NARRAGANSET MAN: None of your business. Who's in charge here?

SQUANTO: Governor Bradford. He's coming.

*(William Bradford comes in.)*

WILLIAM BRADFORD: What's going on?

*(The Narraganset man throws down the arrows at Bradford's feet.)*

WILLIAM BRADFORD: What does that mean?

SQUANTO: It means the Narragansets want war. Shoot the snakeskin. Fill it with bullets.

WILLIAM BRADFORD: Are you sure?

SQUANTO: Would you rather fight them?

*(Bradford shoots the skin. The Narraganset looks at him with surprise.)*

NARRAGANSET MAN (to Squanto): Is he crazy?

SQUANTO: No, he's just stronger than you are. Fight them and you will see.

NARRAGANSET MAN: Are you crazy? No way!

*(He runs out.)*

WILLIAM BRADFORD: What happened? Are we at war?

SQUANTO: No. Everything's fine.

#### — ACT 4 —

PLYMOUTH, A FEW WEEKS LATER

WILLIAM BRADFORD: Oh, no! Now what?

*(Squanto and Massasoit and the Wampanoag people enter.)*

SQUANTO: Governor Bradford, this is Massasoit, the great chief I've been telling you about.

WILLIAM BRADFORD: Pleased to meet you, Massasoit.

MASSASOIT: We have some things to talk about. I wish to have peace between your people and mine.

WILLIAM BRADFORD: We want that, too.

MASSASOIT: I have come to say this: My people will not hurt any of your people. If we take your tools, they will be returned. If you take ours, they will be returned. If anyone makes war on us, you will help us.

WILLIAM BRADFORD: And if anyone makes war on us, you must help us. You must tell your friends and neighbors to leave us in peace.

MASSASOIT: We bring no weapons with us, you see. When you visit us, you must leave your weapons at home.

WILLIAM BRADFORD: We can do that.

*(Bradford and Massasoit shake hands.)*

WILLIAM BRADFORD: Here, my friend, let me show you around Plymouth.

