

Evaluation

Evaluation of the actos consists of two steps. The first evaluates the mechanics of the group process from the beginning of the assignment to the end of the presentations. This step should keep students on task and keep them responsible for their various assignments. By monitoring each group every day of the project and using an observation form such as the one in figure 1, the teacher should be able to evaluate the effectiveness of each group.

FIGURE 1 – Acto Observation Form

<u>Group Member</u>	<u>Role</u>
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____

Theme(s):

Time:

Situation/Plot:

Group Grade:

Comments:

**El Acto:
Studying the
Mexican-
American
Experience
Through
Farmworkers'
Theater**

Evaluation

In the second step, the teacher debriefs each group individually and, upon completion of the assignment as a class, the class's work as a whole. Debriefing determines command of content information, how well the central concepts of the activity were understood, and students' ability to apply contemporary or historical information to the design of the acto and to present-day situations. Before each presentation, each student receives a handout of questions to answer during and after the presentation (figure 2). From these questions the teacher conducts the debriefing.

FIGURE 2 – Acto Debriefing Form

1. What is the major focus of this acto?
2. Based on what you have seen, what issues do this acto illustrate?
3. What specific facts, concepts, or generalizations in this presentation justify these conclusions?
4. What particular incident brings out the major focus of the acto?
5. How can these conclusions be applied to the contemporary/historical topic we are now studying?
6. Are these conclusions consistent with those of the other actos? Why or why not?
7. How are these conclusions applicable to current society?
8. Do you agree or disagree with or accept or reject these conclusions? Why?
9. What questions do you feel this group should have asked in their presentation?
10. How can this presentation be improved?

An Example of an Acto

The example presented here represents a U.S. history unit on the Delano Grape Strike. The teacher introduced the unit by asking the students if anyone in class has ever heard of or knew about the Delano Grape Strike or boycott. No one did. The teacher then gave three assignments: (1) spend the balance of class time in the library finding information on the strike; (2) after school interview parents on what they knew or remembered about the strike; and, (3) be prepared to discuss the Delano Grape Strike in class the next day.

The balance of the next day's class revolved around what was, who was involved, why, and what events made up the strike based on the findings of the students with additional information from the teacher. A list of events from each class were placed on the blackboard from the class discussions. The third day of the unit a guest speaker, a woman who was actively involved in the grape strike, gave an overall history of the strike and shared emotional personal experiences of her involvement. The fourth day of the unit, the teacher passed out a sheet of paper with a number of events that made up the Delano Grape Strike episode. He then introduced the acto activity in which five groups of six students would choose one event to be designed into an acto skit. The sequence of the five actos would provide the class a glimpse in the events of the Delano Grape Strike.

One of the five groups choose two related events that took place in December, 1965, in the San Francisco Bay area. The DiGiorgio Corporation, a California grape grower who had locked out the National Farm Workers Association and employed "scab" workers, was to ship scab-picked grapes through the Bay area ports. In two related instances, picketers from the Association and friends of the farmworker movement caused the dock longshoremen not to load the grapes, which in turn rotted and cost the DiGiorgio Corporation a tremendous loss of money and gave the National Farm Workers Association a victory.

The reason the group choose this event was because a father of one of the group's members had actually participated in the two events. Based on an interview with the father and information from news articles, the group designed a five scene acto entitled "What's Up at the Docks, Doc?"

Scene 1:

Three characters: a campesino, DiGiorgio, and "scab" worker. No scenery. The campesino begins to narrate the story by providing background and naming the characters included in the play. DiGiorgio tells the audience how he is going to issue a court order to prohibit the National Farm Workers Association from interfering with the shipment of his grapes. The campesino reminds the audience the grapes are no good because—he points to the "scab" worker—the grapes have been picked by "scab" labor. A student walks across the stage with a "boo, hiss" sign.

Scene 2:

Four characters: a judge, DiGiorgio's lawyer, two picketers. No scenery. Props: Two picket signs held by the two picketers, a large piece of paper with large words "INJUNCTION." The judge asks the two picketers to stand up. She then tells them she is giving the DiGiorgio lawyer an "injunction" to stop the farmworkers with interfering with the shipment of DiGiorgio's grapes. The lawyer, with a big grin, flashes the "injunction" in the faces of the two picketers. A person walks across the stage with a "boo, hiss" sign. One of the two picketers turns to the audience and asks them what would they do: interfere or not? A small discussion with the audience takes place.

Scene 3:

Five characters: truck driver/DiGiorgio's lawyer, dock boss, a longshoreman, two picketers. Scenery: A backdrop with a building, a dock, and a ship. Props: Two picket signs,

and a sign saying “Pier 37” taped to the scenery, a cardboard truck with a side panel indicating “DiGiorgio’s Grapes,” and the “Injunction paper.” The truck driver/lawyer “drives” up to Pier 37, gets out of the truck and tells the dock boss the grapes are to be unloaded onto the ship at the dock. The dock boss turns to the longshoreman and tells him to load the grapes in the truck onto the ship. Then two picketers with their picket signs held very high walk up to the lawyer. The lawyer pulls out the “injunction” and tells the picketers they cannot interfere or picket. It is illegal because of the “injunction.” The two picketers ask “what is an ‘injunction’?” The lawyer explains. The two picketers leave. Two more picketers (the same students) return to the lawyer. They are each wearing a new sign around their neck. The picket signs are held high. They tell the lawyer they are two new picketers. The lawyer exclaims they cannot picket because of the “injunction.” The two picketers ask “what is an ‘injunction’?” The lawyer explains. This event is repeated one more time with the picketers each wearing a third sign. The longshoreman tells the dock boss he is not going to cross a picket line in order to load the grapes. The dock boss tells the lawyer to drive the grapes away because he is losing business. He does not need the grapes. The lawyer/truck driver backs the truck off stage. The two picketers cheer. A student walks on the stage with a sign saying “The DiGiorgio Corporation lost \$50,000 in grapes.” Another student follows with a sign “BUENO.”

Scene 4:

Three characters: DiGiorgio, the lawyer, and “50” policeman (representing 50 policemen). No scenery. Props: The “injunction” and a cardboard bullhorn. DiGiorgio tells his lawyer and the “50” policeman they need a new plan. He has got to ship his grapes. The lawyer says the grapes will be shipped after Christmas at the Howard Terminal on the Groove Street Pier. DiGiorgio asks what needs to be done to stop the farmworker pickets. The “50” policeman answers the lawyer that he will read the “injunction” over the bullhorn to avoid the delaying tactics used at Pier 37. The “50” policeman then will draw a line to allow the grapes to be shipped. If the picketers then try to picket, the “50” policeman will arrest the picketers and the grapes will still be shipped. “Great Plan!” exclaims DiGiorgio. A student walks across the stage with a sign “Boo, Hiss.” Another student with the campesino sign around her neck follows and asks the audience what the farmworkers and picketers should do now? A short discussion with the audience follows.

Scene 5:

Six characters: Truck driver/lawyer, “50” policeman, dock boss, a longshoreman, and two picketers. Scenery: A backdrop with a building, a dock, and a ship. Props: Two picket signs, a sign saying “Howard Terminal” taped to the scenery, the cardboard truck, the “injunction,” and a cardboard bullhorn. The truck driver/lawyer “drives” to Howard Terminal, gets out, and tells the dock boss he has some grapes to ship. The dock boss tells the longshoreman to load the grapes on the ship. Two picketers appear as does the “50” policeman. The “50” policeman draws a line on the floor of the stage with a piece of chalk. The lawyer using the bullhorn reads the injunction to the picketers. The picketers take one step back and yell “We can’t hear you!” The “50” policeman yells through the bullhorn if the picketers cross the “police line” to interfere with the longshoreman, the picketers will be arrested. The two picketers go out into the audience and ask for a volunteer picketer who then comes on stage. The two picketers put a sign “picketer” around the neck of the volunteer, gives her a picket sign, and tells her to cross the “police line” with them. As the three cross the “police line,” the “50” policeman grabs the “volunteer,” puts her arm behind her back, pretends to kick her, and yells “You are under arrest!” The longshoreman is furious at the actions of the “50” policeman and refuses to go to work until the “50” policeman leaves the area. He then yells “Those grapes will rot before I touch them!” The picketers cheer. The dock boss tells the “50” policeman and the lawyer to leave and take the grapes away. The lawyer tells the dock boss the picket lines were illegal, he has to ship the grapes. One of the picketers changes her sign to the sign of

“The Judge.” Now as the judge she tells the audience indeed the picket lines are illegal, but the longshoreman has the right to refuse to work due to safety reasons, and the dock boss did not need to ship the grapes. The lawyer/truck driver backs the truck off stage. A student walks across the stage with a sign saying “The DiGiorgio Corporation lost \$20,000 in grapes,” followed by another student with a sign “BUENO!”

The play was presented to the class followed by a lively discussion on the rights of corporations and laborers.

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