

Teaching with Movies

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First things first...

- Popcorn? (check)
- Movie candy? (check)
- Beverages? (byob...)
- Let's watch some film!

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Video is:
Power of Movies
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pro3z4SPVhQ>



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Why Watch Movies?

{ Ahhh...escape. }

Why Teach with Movies?

Activity | **Word List**

What adjectives can you use to describe what you experience when watching a movie?

Why Teach with Movies?

- Use what engages your learners.
- Use what is accessible for your learners.
- Use what challenges and surprises your learners.
- Use whatever generates the optimum conditions for receptivity and eagerness in your learners.

Why Teach with Movies?

- Instruction via entertainment.
(it's an intellectual sneak attack)
- Content is accessible to a variety of learners - and can be played, rewound, replayed, even slowed down.
- Teaching students to become critical consumers of media is a good thing.
- Last, but not least, the power of a good story is undeniable.

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Storytelling Has Instructional Value

Information - disseminated thru story - predates text. Film is just our generations' version of oral tradition.

- Explicit Instruction - *“eat these berries, not those”*
- Inspiration and Connection - *cultural mythologies teach values and hold communities together by creating and sharing knowledge*
- Repetition - *knowledge is repeated and gradually shaped over time*

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Walter Ong – The word existed as sound first, and secondly as visual and experiential. Film can stimulate so many sensory inputs that it has the power to elicit physiological changes in us! Think about Jaws – right or wrong, you still remember whatever it was you learned and internalized as a result of that film.

Storytelling Has Instructional Value

Film weaves information into a story.

- Historical, cultural, social, economic issues
- Concepts and themes
- Applied knowledge and skills
- Facts (and fiction)

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As educators, it is our opportunity to pull this information OUT and shine a light on it for our students. So that they can become smart customers of media, rather than rote, blank, consumers.

Historical – Jakob the Liar / Holocaust; Freedom Writers / Holocaust, Gang Life, Poverty; Food, Inc. / economies of scale

Concepts – tests of character; moral codes and values; Swing Vote – civic responsibility

Applied Knowledge – Contagion – calculating percentages; Contact – Prime Numbers

Facts (and fiction) – Cinderella Man, based on the true story of Jim Braddock; The World's Fastest Indian, Sugar, etc.

Storytelling Has Instructional Value

Film can demonstrate powerful narrative structures:

- Beginning, middle, and an end
- Consequences
- Details
- Repetition and Patterns
- Language - in all its forms

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World's Fastest Indian – all the preparation (and lack thereof) that his journey requires
Language – vernacular speech, academic speech, vocabulary shared by specific communities

Storytelling Has Instructional Value

Studying film can be a good way to integrate Levels 1, 2 and 3 from Webb's Depth of Knowledge

- Level 1 - simple recall, vocabulary, context clues (body language is context!), sequencing
- Level 2 & 3 - compare/contrast, predict, summarize, critique, make observations and cite evidence

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Level 2 and 3 DOK activities that can be woven into a movie lesson
compare/contrast

ex. In the movie, Jakob the Liar, Jakob tried to be a man of good character in all situations. However, he did modify his behavior at times. Compare how he acted when he was around the Gestapo (police) versus how he acted when he was around his friends.

predict

As you watched the final fight scene in Cinderella Man, could you have predicted the outcome? If yes, please explain the clues and information you had that helped you predict the outcome.

a better way to do this might be to stop the film at a specific point and ask student to summarize what they have seen thus far and then predict what is going to happen next

summarize

critique

This can be done by reading film reviews and simply discussing them, pointing out the words the author uses that appeal to the reader's emotions, and then letting students write their own review. Critique can also come in the form of discussing a main character's response to a situation and how it might have been handled better, worse, or simply differently.

make observations and cite evidence

draw conclusions and differentiate*

*something useful to us in corrections is using the movies to discuss aspects of character. Part of building and speaking to emotional intelligence, is in having students watch critically a film and then discuss the moral implications of the character's behaviors. We will typically have a question on the lesson plan that prompts students to critique what they are seeing in the main character for example, so that they can observe character flaws, strengths, and tests in others. Then, in that same lesson, we will typically have a question that prompts them to reflect on their own character - in the same way they viewed the protagonist in the film - and then draw conclusions about their personal experience as it relates to what they saw.

another aspect of differentiation has to do with teaching students to be media savvy. You could select a movie and as part of the lesson have them count the number of product placements they see/hear in a film. As they cite the evidence, the different brands, etc. they become aware of how brands strive to differentiate themselves from their competitors subtly, but powerfully, by embedding their messages in film, popular music, for starters.

Before You Teach

- What topic, theme, skill, etc. are you wanting to highlight in the film?
- How will you show the film? (small excerpt, entire film, in class/face-to-face instruction, outside class assignment, etc.)
- What technology and copyright supports do you need? (we'll cover this in greater detail toward the end)

Before You Teach

- But, most importantly, what are your goals for student **PARTICIPATION** and **ACCOUNTABILITY**?
 - Pre-watching Activities
 - Prime the Pump
 - Discussion Questions Post-Viewing

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An effective lesson plan for a movie is simply clarify **PARTICIPATION** and **ACCOUNTABILITY** on behalf of you and your students. This sets the stage (if you will) for how you will engage their interest, while they are being entertained, and then what must they accomplish to access knowledge and meaning from this exercise. Our teachers know that the entire event will be much more meaningful if there is time for discussion before and after watching the film.

Getting the Best Result

- Pre-watching Activities Prime the Pump
 - Character Studies Example - Lit 1
 - Then there are simpler methods...
 - “Can you spot the...?” Challenges
 - Fill-in-the-blank Cloze Sentences
 - Vocabulary Word Preparation

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We study a character trait each month, so all month long there are ongoing discussions about what the character trait means. So, when a character movie is shown, the hope is that our students are already prepped to critically view the film watching for ways the movie illustrates the trait and all its nuances. We make that preparation more explicit, however, when there are specific pre-watching activities. Our Lit 1 teacher, for example, will often create an entire week of Daily Edit paragraphs focused on an aspect that will be featured in our upcoming film. When we watched Jakob the Liar, he spent time talking about the holocaust. In our Lit 2 classroom, before we watched the movie War Horse, the instructor had the students reading the text. Our Lit 4 teacher, who loves to teach math an especially economic concepts to his students, often uses movies like Food, Inc., to demonstrate how economies of scale operate, the math behind it, and how all of it impacts something our students can relate to such as paying for food items at the store.

A pre-watching activity can also be as simple as having a list of vocabulary words - derived from the film - that the students define before watching, or reading aloud a synopsis of the film. Then, you can augment that by having them note when they hear the words in the film and write down a few contextual details.

Even a simple prompt you deliver beforehand like, "there are ---- that happen in the first 30 minutes - can you spot them?" OR "the main character is often seen wearing three specific items - can you list those details on your paper and then list five more details about him" then, at the end of the film, students could put all the details together and then write a character sketch based on that information and the inferences they draw.

If you like film trivia that focuses on the mistakes that happened in production, IMDB.com often has this and you can cue your students to watch for those mishaps. (see Star Trek)

Getting the Best Result

- Technology Matters
 - VHS / DVD / Streaming
 - TV Cart / Smartboard / Internet
 - Renting vs. Buying vs. Library vs. ~~Copying~~
- Copyright Matters
 - Fair Use
 - Face-to-Face Instruction
 - Public Performance Licensing
 - Your Organization's Policy

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Resources

- Never underestimate the power of **GOOGLING** for discussion guides, ratings, reviews, worksheets, and more!
- See Handout
- Visit the Freebies & Requests Tables
- Need more inspiration?

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Video is:
Taylor Mali - Miracle Workers
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o53i0kL6-Jw>

THANK YOU!

...and drive home safely :)