BRINGING CINEMA TO THE CLASSROOM: USING FILM TO TEACH STORY STRUCTURE

by:
Jenny G. Barata
Teacher I, Justice Emilio Angeles Gancayco Memorial High School

Film is a powerful medium that has the ability to captivate and engage audiences of all ages. For high school students, studying film can provide a unique and dynamic learning experience that can help them develop critical thinking skills, enhance their understanding of storytelling, and improve their writing abilities. By incorporating film into the classroom, teachers can provide students with a new and exciting way to learn about storytelling structure, character development, and narrative arcs.

The study of film as a storytelling medium can be a valuable addition to any high school curriculum, especially in English and language arts classes. This is because film provides students with a visual representation of the elements of storytelling, such as setting, characters, conflict, and resolution. This visual aspect can help students better understand these elements and how they work together to create a compelling story. By examining films, students can see firsthand how different filmmakers approach these elements, giving them a deeper appreciation of storytelling and helping them understand the different styles and techniques that can be used.

One of the benefits of using film to teach storytelling is that it can help students understand the importance of character development. In film, the characters are the driving force of the story, and their actions, motivations, and relationships with other characters play a crucial role in shaping the narrative. By analyzing characters in films, students can learn about the different ways that filmmakers can create dynamic and compelling characters, and they can begin to understand the role that character development plays in storytelling.

Another important aspect of film that can be taught in the classroom is narrative arcs. A narrative arc is the structure of a story, including its beginning, middle, and end. By studying films, students can see how different filmmakers approach the narrative arc and how they use it to build tension and create a compelling story. Teachers can also use films to help students understand how to construct their own narratives, providing them with a visual representation of the storytelling process.

Incorporating film into the classroom can also help students improve their writing skills. By analyzing the way that filmmakers use words and visuals to tell a story, students can develop a deeper appreciation for the power of language and how it can be used to create meaning. Teachers can also use film as a tool for teaching writing skills, such as plot development, dialogue, and character creation. By studying films, students can learn about the different ways that filmmakers use words and visuals to tell a story, and they can apply these lessons to their own writing.

Moreover, using film to teach storytelling can be a fun and engaging way for students to learn. The visual nature of film can help students stay engaged and focused, and the interactive nature of analyzing films can help them feel more connected to the material. Teachers can also use film to create a more dynamic and engaging classroom environment, making it easier for students to stay motivated and focused.

References:

Lynch, M. (2019 May 23). Using movies for effective instruction. The Edvocate. https://www.theedadvocate.org/using-movies-for-effective-instruction/

Mateer,, G.D. & Ghent, L. (2023 January 23). Using media to enhance teaching and learning. Pedagogy in Action. https://serc.carleton.edu/sp/library/media/index.html