

Lights, Camera, FILM Literacy!

Lesson Plan #5

Topics:

Journal Writing
Collaboration
Melies
Create in-camera special effects
The Edison Company

Outcomes:

Students will follow organizational procedures.
Students will see and hear applicable vocabulary.
Students will discuss the in-camera special effects of Melies.
Students will identify behaviors that contribute to effective collaboration.
Students will create a 50-second film showing in-camera special effects.
Students will discuss the contributions of The Edison Company to early narrative filmmaking.

Materials:

Writing journals
Camcorders
Tripods
LCD projector
Chart paper
Post-its
Individual student pocket folders

HANDOUTS: Working Effectively on a Production Team

How Movies Got Their Start I (Optics + Chemistry = Photography) ...in student folders

How Movies Got Their Start II (Moving Image Machines)...in student folders

How Movies Got Their Start III (Photography + Moving Image Machines = Movies)

... in student folders

DVDs: *THE MAGIC OF MELIES*

EDISON: THE WIZARD OF LIGHT

New Vocabulary: special effects, narrative filmmaking, collaboration

Sequence of Events:

I. Journal Writing (15)

Prompt:

What are your feelings about the earliest filmmakers?

II. Collaboration (30)

1. Discuss as a class the effectiveness of group work (or lack of) from the last session's productions. Tell students that in the film industry **COLLABORATION** is HUGE. Folks hired to work on a film must be excellent collaborators to be hired for future film work. Tell students that the same standard is expected with class filmmaking; being an effective collaborator is a skill that will be practiced in class. Students will not be choosing friends to work with on their projects, but rather, will be assigned randomly to simulate the real world of filmmaking. *(A suggestion: Before announcing groups, tell students that since the LCFL! course teaches collaboration, if anyone tells you someone they feel they cannot work with, you will make sure they are in the same group.)*
2. Review collaboration skills on the handout *(This information is already familiar to students who have taken the Lights, Camera, Literacy! course).*

HANDOUT: "Working Effectively on a Production Team"

3. Tell students they will be creating another short production in the style of another of the earliest filmmakers:
George Melies, "the father of special effects."

III. Melies (30)

1. Direct students to #5 on the paper "How Movies Got Their Start, Section III (Photography + Moving Image Machines = Movies). Review the final answer.
2. Show "George Melies: Cinema Magician"
DVD: *The Magic of Melies*
(At the main menu, choose "Select a Film." Then choose "Next" three times. The last choice is the 21 minute film "George Melies: Cinema Magician.")
3. Allow time for students' reactions.

IV. Creating Special Effects In-Camera (50)

1. Direct groups to produce a "Melies-style" film by creating **SPECIAL EFFECTS** in the camera. *(Since they are not using celluloid film, students will not be able to do fading techniques. Let them discover this themselves without prior discussion. They will be able to use the technique of stop/edit...changing an object/person or location of an object/person within the same scene.)* Since there is no time to create the elaborate sets and costumes, they should just focus on the special effect itself.
2. View the completed productions as a class and discuss the process, especially any difficulties.

V. The Edison Company (60)

1. Direct students to place all three "How Movies Got Their Start" handouts in front of them. Tell them that they will be watching a movie made in 2002 about a fictional character who experiences Thomas Edison's involvement in early motion pictures. As they watch the movie, they should circle on their papers the names of people or moving image machines that are shown or mentioned. *(There will only be time for part of the movie in this session and the rest of the movie will be shown in session # 6.)*

DVD: *Edison: The Wizard of Light*

2. Review the people and machines that students' circled.

VI. Reflection (15)

1. Direct students to the hanging chart paper labeled:
**What did you learn about collaboration
as you created a Melies-type production.**
2. Hand out Post-its on which students write and post.
3. Review the comments on the Post-Its with the class, so students have a sense of what was learned that day. Make sure to clear up any misconceptions.