Lights, Camera, FILM Literacy!
Lesson Plan #12

Topics:

Journal Writing
Genre
Screenplay Format
Reading a script
Writing a Talkie Scene

Outcomes:
Students will follow organizational procedures.
Students will see and hear applicable vocabulary.
Students will name film genres.
Students will determine genre characteristics.
Students will infer film genre by reading a script.
Students will apply genre characteristics to their productions.
Students will add dialogue to their productions.
Students will write a scene, using screenplay format.

Materials:
Writing journals
Camcorders
Tripods
Computers
Post-it notes
Chart Paper

HANDOUTS: Genre
Opening intertitle and script pages for *King Kong*

New Vocabulary: genre, format, sluglines

Sequence of Events:

I. <u>Journal Activity (15)</u>

Prompt:

**What do you think of using The LCL! 3x3 Story Path
to understand the structure of a story?**

II. <u>Genres (45)</u>

1. Remind students of the scene from **SINGING IN THE RAIN,**
where Don Lockwood walks along on a sound stage at Monumental
pictures with his friend Cosmo and behind them, many silent films
are being shot right next to each other. There was a jungle
scene (perhaps action-adventure), a bleachers/cheerleaders scene
(perhaps romantic comedy), and a cowboy fighting on top of an old
train (perhaps a western).

2. Ask students if they've heard of film **GENRES**.

3. Have students brainstorm a list of film genres… first alone, then
with their group, then as a class. (horror, western, thriller, fantasy, sci-
fi, musical, romantic comedy, creature feature, historical epic, drama, romance,
detective, action-adventure)

4. Ask students if they have ever decided which film to see with
their friends based on its genre. Most people do. Audiences
enter the theater with an expectation about that genre.

5. Students explore this concept by completing the "Genre" handout
individually or with others.

HANDOUT: Genre

6. Review answers as a class.

III. <u>Recognizing Genre Elements in a Script (45)</u>

1. Tell students that they are going to look for characteristics of
a genre in a script of a famous movie.

2. Hand out the beginning pages of the screenplay *KING KONG.* Ask if anyone knows the genre of this film? (Creature Feature)

LCL! students should know script format. It should be pointed out to the other students that movie scripts are written in present tense with few adjectives (Set and costume designers make these decisions.) and few adverbs (Actors make these decisions.). Dialogue is written in the center with the character's name above. "INT." for "interior" and "EXT." for "exterior" in the scene headings, also called **SLUGLINES.**

Explain that usually movies use much less dialogue than a play and the challenge for screenwriters is how to use as few words as possible. Dialogue should only be used to either reveal character traits or to move the story forward. (Sentence fragments are acceptable in movie scripts.)

Because of the genre of *KING KONG*, however, more dialogue is used at the beginning in order to set up the situation and the characters' motivations. This allows more time for the creature scenes. Use *"more dialogue in the beginning"* as the start of a list of characteristics of a "Creature Feature." (*more dialogue at the beginning, a helpless female, lots of impending danger, lame jokes to ease the audience tension, lots of creature scenes that increase in intensity with a larger than life monster of extraordinary strength*)

3. Tell students that as a class, they are going to read through the intertitle and first pages of the script. **The teacher (!) should be narrator and students should take the speaking parts. It's VERY important to keep the momentum of the story going! Use lots of expression to keep student interest and to model how pacing and intonation can involve an audience.**

Tell students to visualize the movie on a screen in their mind as the script is read aloud. They should look for characteristics of the "creature feature" genre and raise their hand when they see words or situations that support the genre.

4. Stop when a hand goes up and ask the student to list the mentioned support for the Creature Feature genre.

IV. The Production Process: Adding Dialogue and Genre Characteristics (80)
1. Tell students that their group's next tasks will be to:
   a) determine the genre of their film. ***Explain that violence is not to be shown nor implied in the LCFL! course and this limits their genre choices.*** In choosing genre, they can either come to consensus as a group or, if they can't agree, place the disputed genres in "a hat" and pick randomly.
   b) redo their scenes as a talkie film and write their new talkie version in script format. First each student writes their own version. Then they meet to blend their first drafts into a group draft of the script.

2. When the script is approved, the group goes into production.

3. Students then continue the production process by editing their production. They include sound effects and music.
   (This activity will be completed in the next session.)

V. Reflection (15)
1. Direct students to the hanging chart paper labeled:

   What did you learn about genre in films?

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.