

Lights, Camera, Film Literacy!

Introduction

Lights, Camera, Film Literacy! (LCFL!) is a film studies course that delves into the physics and history of film while teaching students to “read” and “write” the moving image at the literary, dramatic, and cinematic levels. LCFL! focuses on increasing literacy in both written and visual texts, improving collaboration skills, building confidence and motivation, and providing opportunities for higher level thinking skills.

LCFL! is the second course in a three year strand of full-year elective courses for middle school students.* No prerequisite is required. The carefully planned lessons differentiate for a wide range of ability levels and learning styles. LCFL! is organized into forty lessons that total approximately 140 hours of instruction and allows for flexibility within a school's organizational structure. There are eight units:

- 1) How Movies Got Their Start
- 2) Silent Narrative Films
- 3) Early Talkies; Early Color
- 4) Genre Classics: The Golden Age of Hollywood
- 5) Classic Adaptations: The Golden Age of Hollywood and Beyond
- 6) Modern Documentaries
- 7) Animation
- 8) The Business of Film and Film Festivals

The LCFL! course is project-based with each lesson building upon the knowledge and skills acquired in preceding lessons. The discovery process is the main approach to the courses' filmmaking instruction. Screenplays and storyboards are emphasized as planning tools, but not evaluated for perfection. Class momentum and teacher preparation are key for successful implementation. Staff training to learn the pedagogy and instructional techniques prior to the teaching of the LCL! courses is encouraged. To maximize success in this sophisticated literacy course, it is advised that enrolled students be in the program from the start. The pacing of the curriculum and the logistics of implementation are optimized at a class size of twenty-four students with four students to each camera and computer editing system.

*The preceding course is “Lights, Camera, Literacy! (LCL!) and the following course is “Lights, Camera, Media Literacy!” (LCML!)