

Lights, Camera, Literacy!
(Part Two)
Lesson Plan #23

Topics:

Journal Writing
Creating Mood in Film
The Three Act Structure
The LCL! 3x3 Story Path
The First Act

Outcomes:

Students will follow organizational procedures.
Students will revise their box scene to add elements of suspense.
Students will assume a filmmaking role and collaborate with a filmmaking team.
Students will focus on literary aspects of film....the three act structure.
Students will establish their first beginning scene.
Students will become familiar with the LCL! 3x3 Story Path.

Materials:

Writing journals
Video cameras
Tripods
Mini-dv tapes or memory cards
Computers with editing software
LCD projector
Chart paper
Post-its
Individual student pocket folders with previous handouts
Scrabble games
Chess sets

DVD's: *SEARCHING FOR BOBBY FISCHER*

HANDOUTS: LCL! 3x3 Story Path
Beginning Scene Planning Sheet
Storyboard shell

New Vocabulary: three-act structure, Act I, Act II, Act III, theme

Sequence of Events:

I. Journal (10)

Today's prompt:

How does it feel to have a new production team?

II. Adding A Suspenseful Mood (55)

1. Remind students of the timeframe from yesterday. Ask how many groups have completed pre-production? How many have completed filming? Is any group totally finished?
2. Students continue working on their productions. If extra time, they read the books, read the scripts, play Chess, or play Scrabble.
(These directions regarding "extra work time" will be assumed for the rest of the sessions unless otherwise indicated.)

III. View and Critique (30)

1. Watch each group's scene in turn.
2. After viewing each production, ask students to identify what elements of the three film aspects were included to create a mysterious mood. Then ask for suggestions to create even more suspense.

IV. The LCL! 3x3 Story Path (20)

1. Point out to students that the first aspect, **literary**, must be in place to create a good film. If a film doesn't begin with a good story, then no matter how wonderful the dramatic and cinematic elements, the movie just won't be satisfying to an audience. For this reason, they are going to learn about story structure from the LCL! 3x3 Story Path, which will help them create a great short film.
2. Refer to the LCL! 3x3 Story Path handout and explain that in all great stories, the main character leaves their usual life for awhile, has adventures, and then returns to their usual life a changed person. The "3" (that looks like a game board) represents the journey.

HANDOUT: LCL! 3x3 Story Path

3. Ask how many have heard of the **THREE-ACT STRUCTURE**.
This structure is used by most writers of stories, novels, plays, and films and was first written about by Aristotle in his book *Poetics*, which writers study to this day. Point out that the three acts (**ACT I**: the beginning; **ACT II**: the middle; and **ACT III**: the end) are shown on the Story Path. The main character is in his/her usual life in Acts I and III and moves to a "new place" in Act II.
4. Today the focus is on Act I. The beginning establishes the story by letting the audience know who, what, and where:
 - a) **who**... the main character
 - b) **what**... the **THEME**, about which there are clues for the audience to make inferences (Usually audiences have to figure this out for themselves.)
 - c) **where**... the usual world of the main character
5. Tell students that although the LCL! 3x3 Story Path has nine steps altogether, today they are going to learn about the first three: Act I.

HANDOUT: Act I 3x3 Story Path

Direct students to look at **Act I steps a, b, c**.

- I.a.** represents the inciting incident that starts a character on his journey.
- I.b.** represents the character resisting the journey ("Don't make me go.").
- I.c.** represents the transition into new surroundings, usually made easier by a mentor or helper.

Ask students which of these three steps they have already created with "The Box Scene." (*Step I. a... The inciting incident*)

6. Tell students that before a main character jumps into a journey, the usual life of the character is shown. Tell them you will show the beginning scene and inciting incident for **SEARCHING FOR BOBBY FISCHER** and they will try to infer **who, what, where** of the story.

Show students the following:

DVD: **SEARCHING FOR BOBBY FISCHER**

Start at chapter one (*after the black and white scenes with voiceover about Bobby Fischer*) with the movie's title and continue with the scene shown in the last session.
Stop when Vinnie points to the chess piece.

Discuss with students after watching:

WHO: Josh (*Filmmakers let audiences know the main character by the many close ups and being alone in the frame numerous times.*)

Ask students if they have picked up clues that infer Josh's traits. (*quiet, observer, risk-taker*) Not too many are revealed yet.

Ask students if they inferred who might be Josh's parents? How?
How do we know who Josh knows and doesn't know?
How did the filmmaker drop clues about this?

WHAT: Ask students to choose which of the following **THEMES** (**writer's message**) they think the story might be about:

- a) Greed does not pay in the end.
- b) Effective collaboration results in a better process.
- c) Passion to attain a personal goal requires sacrifice.

*(Of course they have already seen the film, so they know the answer is C, but as an audience member when first viewing, they might not have thought this. The audience stays active watching a film, because subconsciously, the audience is looking for clues to determine the **WHAT** of the story.)*

The **WHAT** is usually not known by the audience by step I.a., but **must** be known by the filmmaker who is creating the journey.

WHERE: From having studied the film, they should know that this takes place in New York City's Washington Square Park.

V. Beginning Scene Pre-production (65)

1. Tell students they are going to plan a beginning scene for their movie.

HANDOUT: Beginning Scene Planning Sheet

Review this sheet together. Allow groups time to complete.

2. When finished, groups should review the completed sheet with you and continue by storyboarding the beginning scene (which will precede the box scene in their film).

VI. Reflection (15)

1. Direct students to the hanging chart paper labeled:

What did you learn about the theme of a movie?

2. Hand out Post-its on which students write their response to post on the chart.
3. Review the comments on the Post-Its with the class, so students have a sense of what was learned. Make sure to clear up any misconceptions.