

Lights, Camera, MEDIA Literacy!

Lesson Plan # 17

Topics:

Journal Writing
The Earliest Film
Lumiere Brothers
Melies
Creating In-Camera Special Effects

Outcomes:

Students will follow organizational procedures.
Students will see, hear, and use applicable vocabulary.
Students will state contributors to early film.
Students will react to examining a piece of movie film.
Students will discuss the contributions of Muybridge, Dickson, and the Lumiere Brothers.
Students will examine and discuss the framing and composition of the earliest films.
Students will compare Edison's kinetoscopes to films of the Lumiere Brothers and Melies.
Students will create a 50-second Melies-type film showing in-camera special effects.

Materials:

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

HANDOUTS: How Movies Got Their Start (Photography + Moving Image Machines = Movies)
Working Effectively as a Team (2 sheets: back-to-back suggested)

BOOK: *EYEWITNESS FILM*

DVD: *THE MAGIC OF MELIES*

New Vocabulary: zoopraxiscope, mutoscope, kinoscope, special effects, collaboration

Sequence of Events:

I. Journal Writing (15)

1. Prompt:

How has your thinking about moving images changed?

II. Photography + Moving Image Machines = Movies (20)

1. Direct students to work alone or with others to fill in blanks on the handout, which will then be used as a guide.

(Note: For LCFLI students this will be a review.)

HANDOUT: How Movies Got Their Start

(Photography + Moving Image Machines = Movies)

2. Review the first three answers on the worksheet. Ask students to note the machines' names:

ZOOPRAXISCOPE, MUTOSCOPE, KINETOSCOPE

Ask what these words have in common. *(the last syllable "scope")*

Have students guess what the syllable "**scope**" means and then check in a dictionary.

III. The Kinetoscope (20)

1. Give each student a 4-inch piece of 8 or 16 mm movie film. Note and discuss individual frames and sprocket holes. Provide magnifying glasses, if possible.

2. Show these four Edison's kinetoscope films *(no sound or music)*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQk5RftSdF8>

Tell students these were made in 1894-1896:

1) "**The Kiss**" was considered scandalous at the time. It is the very first moving image kiss ever.

2) "**Serpentine Dances**" shows color due to individuals painting each individual film frame by hand.

3) "**Sandow**" (the strongman)

4) "**Glenroy Brothers**" (comical boxing)

3. Discuss the **FRAMING** and **COMPOSITION** of each.

(centered full body shots, camera on tripod, camera doesn't move at all, no edits)

Point out to students that these kinetoscopes were the only way the public could view celebrities "in action" without seeing them in person. Remind students of the 50-second length to avoid the heat of the projector causing combustion of the film.

IV. The Lumiere Brothers (20)

1. Review answer #4 on "How Movies Got Their Start."

2. Show the Lumiere Brothers' earliest films (*no sound or music*) and discuss.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nj0vEO4Q6s>

(Explain that the earliest films sometimes look speeded up due to the experimentation with the number of frames per second, both with shooting and projecting the footage. 24 frames per second was established as the most natural illusion of movement and remains the film standard today.)

3. Discuss the framing and composition of the first Lumiere films (without hearing the added music).

V. Melies (30)

1. Direct students to #5 on "How Movies Got Their Start."
Review the final answer.

2. Show "George Melies: Cinema Magician"

DVD: THE MAGIC OF MELIES

(At 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.

(The movie HUGO would provide a wonderful experience for students after learning about Melies.)

VI. Creating Special Effects In-Camera (50)

1. Direct groups to produce a "Melies-style" film by creating **SPECIAL EFFECTS** in the camera. *(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.)*

2. View the completed productions as a class and discuss the process, especially any difficulties.

VII. Collaboration (30)

1. Discuss as a class the effectiveness of group work (or lack of) on the productions. Tell students that in the film industry **COLLABORATION** is HUGE. You must show that you are an excellent collaborator in order to be hired for future film work. Tell students that this same standard is expected of them as you move forward with class filmmaking and that being an effective collaborator is a skill that will be practiced in this 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.
2. Review collaboration skills on the handout.

HANDOUT: "Working Effectively on a Production Team"

VIII. Reflection (15)

1. Direct students to the hanging chart paper labeled:
What did you learn 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. Make sure to clear up any misconceptions.