24 Frames per Second as an Educational Tool in the Classrooms

Student Name

Full Sail University

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“What is your favorite movie?” is one of the most powerful questions we can ask someone we just met. The answer to this question can give us a glimpse of what a person’s soul, personality and interests are. Teachers still haven’t realized how this art form can make children learn more about history, philosophy, languages and especially, about themselves. Schools should provide film education to increase student’s cultural knowledge and film education from an early age. As Beeban Kedron (2012) stated, “Cinema is (…) the 20th. Century most influential art form.” By realizing the impact movies have on kids we can use this device to give them a wider understanding of the world they live in.

Kids of this generation need a different learning process. Teachers can use cinema as an engaging instrument to help stimulate students and increase their interest in subjects such as: World music, languages, history, health and more. “(…) The major sites of education lie outside of the schools and reside in the wider screen culture and the new electronically driven media (…)” (Giroux, 2008, para.3). Technology has made them more interested in absorbing their information in a faster and shorter way. We need to teach students to perceive motion pictures not only as a simple form of entertainment but also as a mean to develop life skills, decrease prejudices and create open minded citizens of the future.

Film clubs have slowly started to appear in schools all over the world and teachers have started to see the results in the classroom. FILMCLUB, a British organization that provides film clubs in schools all over the country, asked the teachers involved in the project to be a part of a survey. 96% of them state that their members have had an increase in the understanding of social and emotional issues. 90% of them point out their members have enlarged their ability to share ideas and debate issues. The project currently includes 286,676 members. Another organization, whose goal is helping the American youth have a multicultural perspective in life, is Journeys in Film. They’ve reached 800,000 members in over 500 schools around the world screening seven. Scholars have been able to share their thoughts and beliefs in a safe environment while increasing their self-esteem.

I recently moved to Aguascalientes, Mexico where most of my family lives. I’d never really had the chance to get to know any of my nephews and was really intrigued when I found out they had never been in touch with foreign films. They didn’t know much from other cultures and religions and movies were just a distraction from school. It occurred to me then to invite them over to my house and played them *“The Mouse That Roared”.* First I made a small introduction to prepare them for what they were about to see and pressed play. They go from ages 8 to 12 so I was really interested on how they may react to it to a film made over 60 years ago. I invited their parents to join us, and to my surprise, everybody in the room loved it. I asked them to express their opinions individually and I’d never seen them more excited to speak. They reminded me of myself when, at the age of 6, my family took me to see *“Metropolis”* at an auditorium with a live orchestra and my senses sharpened in a way I’d never experienced before and changed my life forever.

Middle school children can benefit from these kinds of programs because they are at an age where they start to question the world around them. They have yet to form a solid personality and type of thinking, therefore they can respond with openness to the cultural diversity shown in films. By watching cultures come alive in the big screen, students can get inspired by people from a different country to go out and experience life for themselves. Kids can be impressionable, that is why teachers also need to be educated in this matter. Film professionals have a job in providing educators with the necessary tools to provide age appropriate resources for them to use in the classroom. I’m convinced that film education can help kids from different countries explore concepts and ideas they never would have been in touch with if it were not for watching feature films. I see the results in my nephews; each week they come to my house eager to learn about different languages and lifestyles. Their parents have told me how they’ve become more interested in different subjects in school because they saw something related in a film. They’ve become more confident to express their opinions and even share their new interests with their friends.

Joining a film club allows students to reach all the information they otherwise be getting through the Internet with a positive future impact. By having professional educators guide them through the different topics movies can provide, children are allowed the possibility to provide reasonable, just and intelligent answers to social problems in the world. If you’re a teacher, introduce films as a favorable weapon to get your students interested in a subject. If you’re a parent, enroll your children in a film club; they’ll come home keen to share their experience. It is never too late or too early to start broadening our horizons and learn something new. Let’s give cinema the opportunity to reach students all over the world and join them in thought through this wondrous art form.

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