

SHORT FILMS

INTRODUCTION

A short film is any film not long enough to be considered a feature film.

No consensus exists as to where that boundary is drawn: the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences defines a short film as "an original motion picture that has a running time of 40 minutes or less, including all credits".

The term feature originally applied to a film longer than a short subject, but shorter than a standard feature film.

The increasingly rare term short subject means approximately the same thing.

An industry term, it carries more of an assumption that the film is shown as part of a presentation along with a feature film. Short is an abbreviation for either term.

Short films can be professional or amateur productions. Short films are often screened at local, national, or international film festivals.

Short films are often made by independent filmmakers for non profit, either with a low budget, no budget at all, and in rare cases big budgets. Short films are usually funded by film grants, non profit organizations, sponsor, or out of pocket funds.

These films are used by filmmakers to prove their talent in order to gain funding for future films from private investors, entertainment companies, or film studios. Longer and shorter films coexisted with similar popularity throughout the early days of film. Short comedies were especially popular, and typically came in a serial or series. Even though there was often no set release schedule, these series could be considered somewhat like a modern TV sitcom – lower in status than feature films but nevertheless very popular.

Animated cartoons came principally as short subjects, as did newsreels.

Virtually all major film production companies had units assigned to develop and produce shorts, and many companies, especially in the silent and very early sound era, produced mostly or only short subjects.

Short films had become a medium for student, independent and specialty work.

Cartoon shorts had a longer life, due in part to the implementation of lower-cost limited animation techniques, but also declined in this period.

SHORT FILMS IN EDUCATION

We are now living in the age of the moving image. The advent of the digital revolution and the Internet, the proliferation of mobile devices, which allow us to easily and proficiently capture moving images; the introduction of inexpensive, accessible and user-friendly editing tools; and the emergence of distribution sites such as YouTube and Vimeo, have changed the way moving images relate to society, education and language learning forever. One very interesting development from all these technological advances has been the renaissance of the short film. Shorts films have traditionally been treated as the poor cousins to feature films at film festivals, but the ability to create and screen shorts easily and cheaply has spawned hundreds of dedicated film festivals throughout the world.

The rise of the short film can be exploited in teaching.

Showing an entire feature film may lead to cognitive overload and is often not possible given timetable constraints.

In contrast, a short film can be shown in its entirety easily within one class and they can have a great dramatic impact than feature films which often lose their impact by being viewed over a number of sessions.

As most short films are under 10 minutes long (many are less than 5 minutes long) they can be shown several times in a single class and students are able to acquire detailed

familiarity with the film which is important in enabling students to critically engage with the material on a meaningful level.

As most short films can be watched several times a different focus or activity can be used for each viewing which may help to develop integrated skills

Another reason why short films are particularly useful to exploit in a single lesson is that they offer a complete narrative in a short space of time, which captures and holds learners' attention quickly.

Students love stories and short films tell innovative and creative stories.

Short films are not necessarily governed by the same conventions as feature length films.

Short filmmakers, because they are normally independent and not tied to big film studios, often have greater scope for innovation and creativity which leads to more imaginative forms and narrative structures.

These departures from more familiar forms and narrative structures very often provoke stronger responses from students, than the more traditional narratives of feature length films.

Another characteristic of many modern short films which can be exploited in teaching is that they are silent or quasi silent. These short films with little or no dialogue can be used for different language levels as the stories they tell are accessible and easy to. They also give students the opportunities to supply the language by creating their own written or spoken dialogues.

Most short films focus on a single idea or make a single statement which make them excellent prompts for oral communication.

Many short films deal with contemporary subjects and issues such as bullying, racism, sexism, consumerism, and human rights which are very relevant to the lives of students who are perfectly capable of dealing with these subjects.

Short films which deal with these contemporary issues are excellent beginning points for engaging student in a wide range of conversational activity such as pairwork, group work, discussions, debates and roleplays stimulating an active engagement with language.

Short films are excellent prompts for writing activities such as writing an alternative ending, writing a prequel or a sequel, or writing from the perspective of one of the characters, which students find engaging and motivating.

Because of their accessibility, brevity, innovation, and creativity short films are the perfect vehicle for using moving images in learning classroom and for promoting both written and oral communication.

HOW TO USE SHORT FILMS IN THE CLASSROOM

Effective teachers understand that film demands disruption.

Think of film (and video, its contemporary counterpart) as another form of text.

No mathematics teacher would hand a student an algebra textbook and say, “Figure it out.”

English classes are not booklists, with the teacher merely handing out a stack of books to be read for the year. But when we simply hit “play” and settle back for the next 90 minutes, meaning is left to the student to extract, and the teacher’s role is reduced to that of projectionist.

Ironically, the rise of short videos is changing all that.

YouTube, CitizenTube(YouTube’s news and politics blog), and Google Videos, to name a few, have made video sharing easily available to teachers around the world.

Almost daily, educators in any middle or high school can be found using news reports, documentary segments, and hard-to-find film clips from previous decades to infuse into their teaching.

These short videos are used to transport students to locations across the world and to demonstrate concepts that cannot otherwise be practically illustrated in the classroom.

Film can be a powerful tool for meaningful learning. The key to using film effectively is preparation. Maximize learning opportunities by encouraging students to become active viewers.

Before Viewing

- Preview the film. Determine whether you will use the entire film or only relevant segments to illustrate objectives in your curriculum. Remember: There is no rule that requires you to use an entire program—even a few seconds of film can spark discussion.
- Prepare the classroom environment and film equipment. Choose lighting to enhance the learning experience. Low light increases the dramatic effect while brighter light may be helpful in eliminating distractions. Position yourself to maximize your “facilitator” role.
- Stimulate students’ pre-existing knowledge. Have students write down what they are sure they know about the subject and what they think they know. After viewing the film, have students revise their lists based on what they have learned. Divide students into small groups. Have each group summarize what they know about the subject and identify questions they may have. After viewing the film have the groups answer questions, discuss new information, and formulate new questions.

During Viewing

- Give students a focused viewing assignment. Focused viewing questions can make viewing more meaningful by encouraging active viewing and evaluation of content. Give students a task, something they are responsible for remembering or writing down, such as interesting facts or personal responses.
- Show one short segment or story at a time and direct the learning experience. Focus clearly on a defined theme or topic. A short segment can be shown at the beginning, middle, or end of an activity. Analyze and discuss each segment thoroughly.

- Encourage student awareness of production values and techniques. Have students watch for elements of the production, such as camera angles, shot choices, and music. What effects do these techniques have on the viewing experience?
- Press “Pause” often. Take time to identify and clarify what the students are watching. Stop to consider answers whenever a question is asked. Clarify new vocabulary as it is used.

After Viewing

Draw on the following activities to extend and deepen the viewing experience.

Brainstorm

Present a key concept or vocabulary word from the film, such as “local food.” Ask students to form small groups to generate related concepts, such as foodshed, seasonality, and farmers markets. Select one student in each group to record the ideas and present a summary of the responses to the entire class.

Categorize/Clarify

Divide students into groups to develop a conceptual word map. Begin by having students write a key word or concept from the film in the center of a blank “map” on chart paper. Have each group build the map by adding words related to the key word and arranging them in categories. Discuss each diagram and supply additional information to extend students’ understanding of the concept.

Compare and Contrast

To encourage students to compare and contrast ideas, divide them into groups to make Similarities/Differences Charts. After presenting two ideas, have each group discuss similarities and record them on chart paper. Then have students discuss and record differences. Have students present their charts. Discuss each diagram and supply additional information to extend their understanding of the topic.

Four Corners

Choose four main concepts or topics in the film and label each corner of the room with one of the concepts. Ask the students to choose a corner of the room that matches the concept they wish to explore. Plan an activity for the students in each corner and have them share their findings with the class.

Jigsaw

Divide students into groups of four, assigning each student a number (from 1 to 4). While watching the film, assign each group member a different concept to understand or a question to answer. After viewing the program, have each group member teach what he or she has learned to the other members of the group. Have each student quiz the group members until everyone understands how the pieces of the “puzzle” fit together to make one “picture.”

Think-Pair-Share

After asking a follow-up question to the film, have students pair with a neighbor to discuss their responses. Invite students to share their responses with the whole group.

Quick Write

In a personal journal or on paper, have students write quickly for two minutes to record any thought that comes to mind after viewing a segment or program.

BENEFITS OF USING SHORT FILMS IN THE CLASSROOM

Any company, organization, or individual hoping to take advantage of digital video to educate or entertain the populace or promote a product should have a video strategy in place before springing for the time and equipment involved. Educators, of course, are not exempt from the core tenets of solidifying a viable video strategy — especially when it comes to how exactly they plan to take advantage of everything the medium offers.

1. Online and open source

Because both the online and the open source movements within education have been enjoying steady growth, it behooves any adherents to fire up their cameras and film a few lectures or other helpful videos. Educators who upload for public consumption on a personal site, iTunes U, YouTube Education, or other hosting resource reach a range of students beyond their rosters. For plugged-in teachers hoping to extend their influence and bring knowledge to the world, or an exclusively digital classroom at the very least, videos add a more human element.

2. Accessibility:

Incorporating videos into lessons offers a viable method for students with special needs, such as ADD/ADHD or conditions requiring home-bound stints, to retain and remember information. The medium makes for one more way to ensure all learners enjoy access to educational materials that meet their specific requirements. Just make sure to remember subtitles or transcripts for hearing-impaired students.

3. Archiving:

Teachers who require their students to shoot videos might want to keep a digital archive of their work to show off to future classes. Or, of course, tracking their own creations for online, open source, or hybrid classrooms. For the older crowd needing to convert their educational VHS and DVD presentations to digital media, a video strategy ensures these materials make the transition from generation after generation of learners.

4. Visual learners:

Some students just learn better when viewing animated diagrams, step-by-step how-tos, and other video lessons. A well-balanced classroom spreads things out across different styles, and creating short movies and lectures reaches out to those with a more visual outlook. Cobbling together a video strategy addresses the inherently diverse nature of students' methods for soaking up information.

5. Greater classroom connectivity:

Video conferencing with Skype and other VOIP services entices educators who want their students to tackle collaborative projects with counterparts from around the world. In fact, Skype itself provides its own social media site for teachers wanting to connect and set up everything from foreign language exchanges to group poems. It's an engaging strategy opening up some amazing and unique opportunities that weren't available a decade ago.

6. Low-cost field trips:

Thanks to the recession, schools must watch on helplessly as their funding dissolves, which means their field trip budgets come up scant. But infusing video into the classroom transports students to notable sites around the world, with some museums even offering free virtual tours. All the benefits of exploring and experiencing sans the transportation and admissions fees! The principal will love you.

7. Video games:

Video games are not the scourge society seems to enjoy painting them as — in fact, they actually possess some incredible educational benefits when wielded correctly. Immersive environments particularly engage digital natives, but even the FBI takes advantage of the technology for training its agents. Not every video strategy necessarily needs to think about the whys of Wiis, of course. But instructors might want to research the positives behind serious gaming and strongly think about introducing it into the syllabus.

8. Addressing absences:

No matter who has to stay at home — teacher or student — pre-recording lectures, instructions, or assignments helps close up any gaps in lessons that result from absences. All

video strategies, even the most rudimentary, should keep this not-so-little perk in mind. Learners experiencing prolonged illnesses or other situations requiring homebound education will especially appreciate not being left behind. Alternately, streaming video with Skype, Google Talk, or another VOIP provider works as a stellar alternative.

9. Supplementary materials:

Snag Films, Hulu, and Documentary Heaven all stream free documentaries. And, of course, the Internet overflows with open source lectures from some of the world's most prestigious institutions, like MIT, Stanford, and Yale. Take advantage of this rich bounty of educational delights to drive home points made in classroom lectures, or add to students' overall knowledge of the subject at hand.

10. Nurture creativity:

Long before digital video became a thing that existed, students shot videos as classroom assignments. There's no reason now why this can't continue! Rather than forcing paper after quiz after exam after worksheet, challenge them to share what they've learned creatively, through film they've shot and edited themselves. And with technology being what it is and everything, whipping up something awesome proves easier and faster than ever.

11. Digital literacy:

Both students and educators alike benefit from building their digital literacy skills, regardless of whether or not they hope to share their videos online. With a working knowledge of computers, the Internet, and peripherals — not to mention how to operate and navigate them all safely and responsibly — such a desirable suite of abilities in countless industries today, getting learners familiar with the core tenets as early as possible proves a fruitful endeavor. Even the older set looking to score new jobs or simply keep their mind occupied can pick up a few things through video and other digital resources.”

CONCLUSION

Nowadays, technology plays an important role in every part of our lives as in education. 21st century education requires effective student integration in the classes. To be able to support this, we, educators are searching and trying to apply different techniques to teach in an inductive way and to make teaching and learning process more effective and sustainable.

As we know, short films are very popular in our age and it gets people's attention. So, to use short film in classes helps teachers not teach in classical way, make the teaching-learning process effective and enjoyable, create modern teaching atmosphere in classes and so provide long term learning.

Learners cannot adapt to the lessons, get bored during the lessons so can not motivate because of the classical methods. Because of the facts mentioned above, educators are searching new teaching methods, approach and techniques to be able to keep learners in the classes, to get their interests longer and make teaching process more enjoyable.

Short films which is one of new methods mentioned above will be very useful and effective teaching way to the learners if they are used properly.