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When teaching film to my students (in my Introduction to Cinema class) I am aware that one quarter term is not enough to capitalize on the full potential of the analysis of cinema. Films convey meaning in many different ways, and can be approached from many perspectives. Needless to say, we are limited in what can be covered during the quarter, but the limitation is compounded by the fact that students often approach the study of film with deeply rooted misconceptions and expectations. They resent having to work at what should be the logical, effortless outcome of the act of watching, namely, understanding a text. We know that the opposite is true: watching and understanding represent two different modes of engagement and the process of going from one to the other comprises several steps.

Having a background in education, I have started to think about some of the developmental stages through which we pass to become adults and I have considered the possibility of intervening at stages that mark such developmental transitions, to keep children from losing the natural curiosity that would serve them so well...when entering college!

To implement my project have chosen three groups of children (access was an important factor in the selection, my husband works in an elementary school and his colleagues were kind enough to allow me to present my project), two second grade and one first/second split classroom.

There are several reasons for choosing second grades: the first one is that pedagogically, this is the stage at which children are expected to master notions of causality, time, space, primacy, and characterization. In other words, this is the stage when children begin to understand the concepts of narrative and expository logic. The other reasons are more practical. By the time children enter third grade the standardized testing process implemented by the schools requires long stretches of preparation which make it more difficult to carve out the hour necessary for the class presentation.

The hour long class visits unfolded as follows: I brought with me a copy of Charlie Chaplin's short *The Immigrant*, and after some "warm-up" exercises (I had the children create a "collective" story by having every child add a detail to a long string of events-shaping them as we went along around notions of characterization, space, time, etc.) we watched an excerpt from the 1917 silent short, which chronicles the arrival of a ship full of European immigrants to Ellis Island. I chose the particular short because it is consistent with other points of interest in the second grade curriculum (migrations, formation of cultural identity, ocean travel, cultural differences, etc.).

Since the film is silent with musical accompaniment, it allowed for discussions after the screening that ranged from an acknowledgment of the emotional resonance of the musical score to the possibility of having children "fill in" the dialogue with their own words. Other elements of discussion included the recognition of a point of view in the narration,

the understanding of a story's point of inception, the connections between cause and effect. Some of the children raised issues of fairness (the story is about a generous, penniless tramp) and most of them seemed intrigued by the possibility of continuing the story beyond the film's conclusion, or re-writing their own third act.

In a follow up six months after my original approach teachers reported that children did remember the short seen in class and some of the points raised in the discussions. There is, of course, nothing new in the use of filmic texts to draw wide ranging conclusions from their analysis. I do, however, think that in order to foster the understanding of cultures and values the university has a responsibility to reach out and become a bridge towards other elements of the community, while providing a safe ground for the expansion and the consolidation of connections across generations.

In the future, I intend to repeat these experiences either at the beginning or at the end of the school year, to minimize disruptions in the classroom. I intend to open it to some of the students who attend my class and who have expressed an interest in the field of media education.