

LEARNING CARD

Short movie, long story

Description This activity is focused on motion pictures and global warming. Students watch a short film (subtitled in English) by the studio Bagabaga about a community in Guiné-Bissau seriously affected by climate change and discuss the theme while thinking about film production as a technique and a particular form of communication.

Tag

- Media
- Movies

Skills

MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

- Recognise and describe
- Compare
- Evaluate and reflect

IDEOLOGY AND VALUES

- Recognise and describe
- Evaluate and reflect

Learning areas

- Foreign Languages
- Language
- Social Sciences

Card language

- Spanish
- English

Structure

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| Sessions | 1 |
| Duration | 60' (Variable) |
| Number of participants | 10-30 |
| Age | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10-13• 14-16• 17-18 |
| Materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pen, paper, pencils• Television or computer (to exhibit the short film) |

Process

Key questions

- What elements contribute to the storytelling when you watch a film? (image, sound, text)
- Does a written story have the same impact as a story told with motion pictures? Why?
- Does the motion picture provide a guarantee of truth and/or reliability?
- What is the short film about?
- Who's telling us the story? How do you know that?
- What part of the short film has a strong impact on you? Why?
- Do you remember a particular quote?
- Are there any film techniques that grab your attention?

Development

Introduction - 15

The teacher should start by explaining what a short film is (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Short_film). Like a film, there are a lot of short film genres (let students refer to some - animation, comedy, drama, romance, sci-fi, horror, documentary...).

Then, students should watch the short movie mindfully in order to discuss it in the classroom after watching it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VtqAUFVw318> (Portuguese subtitles), <https://vimeo.com/147454300> (English subtitles) and as a starting point to talk about climate change and global warming (or also social inequalities).

Discussion - 35'

The teacher can use the 'key questions' above to start and conduct the debate about the short film.

- Students should find out the theme of the short film: climate change/global warming and its consequences. How do they know this? The theme is never named in the film directly. The protagonists do not even know why the changes are happening. That's what they want to know. It's like they know better than us a part of the story (the consequences) and we know better than them the other part (what's causing it).
- The person telling us the story is Zé, we deduce. He never speaks directly to the camera. There were so many ways of telling us the story. It could be a journalist speaking. The choice of hearing just Zé's voice is important: it makes us feel like he is speaking to us directly, gives more dramatism to the story, it's like a testimonial; the same sensation is given when he looks directly at the camera. It's like he is asking us for help.
- There are significant moments in the film. The one in which Zé looks directly at the camera, for example. Also the image from top to bottom, when we see all the rice production is dry (there's no green); or, still, the moment when the skinny cat looks at the camera. Also what isn't in the film can stand out: the film is about climate change, global warming and has a powerful message although it never makes us see the causes: pollution, industries, transport, the way of life of people from developed countries.
- What Zé and the woman - we suppose to be his wife - say can also produce a strong impact on the spectator. When Zé's wife says "this is the punishment we're living in our house" it makes us think. "Punishment" is a word that implies guilt and from what we can see about how they live, they are not guilty, they are suffering the consequences for industrialised countries' way of life. Another meaningful statement is at the end of the film (that actually makes the title), when Zé says: "people ask themselves: why did it once rain so much and now it doesn't?". It may touch spectators exactly because they know the reason and may feel guilty for what the people in the film are living.
- The film uses simple means to tell the story and that's also something powerful: the sound of nature, the natural frames give us the sensation of being there. Although, the producers seem to use some techniques. At 00:48" if we pay attention to the clouds they are accelerated to illustrate the passing of time, the change the character is talking about; the already mentioned plan from top to bottom gives the sensation of weight in the character's shoulders; it's also curious to note the colour. It seems the image is always put in a grey scale, and the colours are blurred (the green of the trees, the colour of the African fabrics).

The teacher should let the students watch the film again, after the discussion, so they can improve their watching process and see things they missed the first time.

If there is more time available, it could also be interesting to compare how different types of formats address the global warming theme, showing, for example, parts of a documentary such as 'An Inconvenient Truth' (Al Gore) and a movie like 'The day after tomorrow' (Roland Emmerich).

Evaluation

The evaluation should be done simultaneously with the discussion.

References for professors

- Media Education Guidance (http://www.dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/ECidania/Referenciais/media_education_guidance_dge_pt.pdf)
- Teachers Guide Series (Oscars.org): <http://www.oscars.org/education-grants/teachers-guide-series>
- The Story of Movies (the Film Foundation): <http://storyofmovies.org/common/11041/default.cfm?clientID=11041>
- Media Literacy Questions for Analyzing POV Films (NAMLE): <http://www.pbs.org/pov/blog/povdocs/2015/11/media-literacy/>
- Edutopia (George Lucas Educational Foundation): <https://www.edutopia.org/cinema-schoolchildren>

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