

Films for the Feminist Classroom

Volume 4, number 1 (Spring-Summer 2012)

Edited by Agatha Beins, Jillian Hernandez, and Deanna Utroske

Editorial Assistant: A.J. Barks

Editorial Intern: Vera Hinsey

A Lesson Plan by Anna Zailik

Overview:

Today the students will be watching *Presumed Guilty*. First, they will start with the icebreaker called telephone charades.* I will show the entire film with pauses (indicated by the times listed below) so we can talk about the important issues and I can ask them questions about the film.

Resources:

Presumed Guilty. 2010. Directed by Roberto Hernández, Layda Negrete, and Geoffrey Smith. Brooklyn: Icarus Films.

Time Needed: 90 minutes

Activity	Procedure	Objective
Icebreaker	Game	To warm up for our group discussion
Film	Show the film and intersperse the screening with questions and discussion	To get the teens to understand the issues behind the film
Dialogue	Question/Answer	To have the teens speak about what they felt while watching the film
Voting	Majority rules	To decide which film will be shown at the community screening
Discussion of community screening	Getting the teens to volunteer for positions/assigning positions	To decide on what role each teen will have at the community screening

* Telephone charades is a game that requires people to stand in a single-file line. One person is given an action to act out for the next person in line until it reaches the other end of line and the last person must guess the action.

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Main Content

00:04:44

Discuss the benefits of filming the courtroom.

- Allows the public to see the injustices that take place, which creates awareness
- Awareness leads to discussion of how to reform the legal system
- Holds officials accountable

Question:

- How would you feel if you were picked up off the street and put into jail for reasons you didn't know?

Discuss:

- Even though this isn't their story, they described similar injustices in their own community.
- Film allows people to relate to each other through stories. Their own story could be made into a film.

00:10:40

Question:

- How would you feel getting married to somebody knowing they were going to be in jail for 20 years?

(Clarify: The accused, Toño, gets a retrial because his original lawyer had an invalid license to practice. This was confusing for some and needed clarification)

00:20:30

Discuss:

- The lawyers were going through reports to find that witness really didn't see him at the scene of the crime
- Bringing the camera to court ensures fairness

Question:

- How does the power of film relate to the community screening?

00:25:00 (approximation)

- How do you think Toño's opinion about prison has changed now that he's in it? What did he say about it?

00:31:00 (when lawyer hold his hands over his face)

Questions:

- The lawyer urges the witness to tell the truth. How do you think this will help Toño? Is it obvious that Toño is right? Why?

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- How do you think Toño feels right now?

00:41:00 (after Toño cries)

Questions/Discussion

- How does the verdict make him feel right now?
- How might you use this film to better understand the injustices that happen in your own community?
- Even though something like this has never happened to me, I can still feel very sorry for Toño. Do you think this would sadden your friends and family that attend the community screening?
- We all have those moments when we know there is nothing we can do to change something.

00:47:00

Discuss:

- Report showed stenographer didn't record what Tonõ said. The filmmakers used the video to show the court what happened.

Question:

- What benefits have using film in the courtroom had so far for Toño?

Reflection after credits:

- How did you like it?
- What parts of the film could you relate to and why?
- What do you think got him out of jail?
- What power did film have by the end?