THE OASIS – Owen’s account of life on the street

EDUCATIONAL NOT-FOR-PROFIT COOL AUSTRALIA RETURNS WITH A LESSON PLAN EXPLORING THE CONFRONTING NATURE OF HOMELESSNESS.

This lesson plan will show students a different side to the world they thought they knew and inspire them to take action on issues that really matter. THE OASIS is a powerful documentary exploring real-life stories of young people facing homelessness and the people who support them. Cool Australia, in partnership with Shortland Island Productions, provides free-to-access Year 9-12 units of work that use selected clips from the documentary to teach English, health and Physical Education. Each lesson plan includes curriculum links, teaching tips, fact sheets, assessment ideas and access to free educational videos.

ABOUT THIS LESSON
Students consider Owen’s experience of living on the street and the reasons why he is experiencing homelessness. They explore his own response to Owen’s experience and their interests in the manner in which Owen’s story is told through a deeper investigation into film techniques and how they affect the audience’s interpretation of the story being told.

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM
General capability: Critical and creative thinking, ethical understanding, literacy
English Years 9-12
Time Required: 120 minutes (or 2 x 60 minutes)

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

TEACHING SEQUENCE
10 minutes: Part A: My home
25 minutes: Part B: THE OASIS clip viewing and understanding
15 minutes: Part C: My reaction to Owen’s story
25 minutes: Part D: Film technique exploration
10 minutes: Reflection

PART A: MY HOME
Step 1: Invite students to explore the idea of home and the way they would like to feel at home. Ask students to name some of the things they love to do at home. Ask students to consider the personal reflection activity and then share their thoughts using the think-pair-share method – which encourages students to justify their reasoning.

You could use these questions to guide the discussion:
- What is the activity you love to do at home?
- Who does it with you? If no one is required, are you left to do it on your own?
- What do you feel when you’re doing this activity?
- What about being at home more generally – how do you feel?

Step 2: Summarise the part of the lesson by reiterating that we all feel a certain way when we are at home and are entitled to a feeling of safety and security.

PART B: THE OASIS CLIP VIEWING AND UNDERSTANDING
Step 1: As a class, watch the film to learn more about Owen’s story.

Step 2: After watching Owen’s story, ask students to note down one phrase spoken by Owen that stood out to them or sticky notes, and stick them up on a space on the wall in landscape format.

PART C: MY REACTION TO OWEN’S STORY
Ask students to choose one word that explores their reaction to Owen’s story. Encourage students to then write a short paragraph that explains why they chose that word.

PART D: FILM TECHNIQUE EXPLORATION
Individual, in pairs or in groups, students explore how the film influences the audience to think about Owen’s reasons for being homeless. Ask students to explore the way film techniques are used to portray Owen and this story and how the audience is ultimately influenced to feel a certain way about Owen and his situation.

Step 1: Consider the following: when he’s talking in his story. Owen takes some pretty serious moments that he’s committed. And yet, it could be suspected that we as the audience aren’t afraid of him. Why is that? We could start by considering what the film director chooses us. For example, how do Owen’s experiences shape the audience by the director and how does that influence our view of him?

Directors always use film techniques to influence the audience to see the subject of the film in a certain light, and everything we see on the screen is intentionally included.

Considering that, let’s explore some film techniques and their purpose and effect to find out a little more about the film shapes the understanding of Owen’s reasoning for being homeless.

Step 1: Students choose a film technique to investigate and respond to the following:
- Define the film technique and its intended effect.
- How is the technique used during Owen’s story?
- What is the effect of the audience?
- What is your interpretation of Owen’s reasons for homelessness and how does the film technique influence your opinion of him?

Students could present their research using Cool Australia’s film techniques fact sheet.

REFLECTION/WORKSHOP
Students’ write research and exploration of the film techniques as they apply to how Owen’s story is told in THE OASIS could be expanded and presented in a way that they choose, for example, on analytical essay – 200+ words and exploratory presentation. Use screenshots from the film to create an annotated storyboard.

Write a quiz with questions for comprehension. Discuss the whole English unit on https://www.coolaustralia.org/theclassroom/year-9-10/

Consult an earlier version of the story published in Education Matters Secondary May 2017 - October 2017 contained the incorrect images. The version contains the images originally intended for publication.