



The Media Studies Conference 2005

How to Teach...

These sessions are aimed at those new to Film and Media Studies but could also provide a useful refresher for more experienced teachers.

1. [How to Teach Narrative](#) *Charlie Davies*
2. [An Introduction to Film Genre](#) *Bill Malyszko*
3. [How to Teach Institutions \(and make them interesting!\)](#) *Sarah Smyth*
4. [How to Teach Audience](#) *Laureen Todd*
5. [How to Teach Representation](#) *Jean Welsh*

1. How to Teach Narrative

Charlie Davies

Lecturer in Film and Media Studies, Exeter College, Devon

Storytelling is a fundamental human activity across all cultures. Just as we are constantly telling stories about our world in the form of anecdotes, gossip and jokes, so all forms of media are structured into narratives that explain the world to us. Narrative is, therefore, a central concept in Film and Media Studies, which our students need to handle confidently when analysing media texts such as Hollywood blockbusters, television news or contemporary sitcoms. They need to be aware of how narratives are structured, how they construct meanings and how to relate the term to other key concepts such as Genre, Representation and Ideology.

The main emphasis of the session will be on practical delivery in the classroom, based on a complete SoW, organised around a number of case studies and key activities. Although the main focus will be on 'how', there will also be attention given to 'what', covering areas such as narrative theories (but only insofar as these are useful in helping students to examine texts more critically), useful terminology and concepts (avoiding jargon wherever possible) and the different ways in which different media tell stories.

Case studies will be drawn from a range of genres in mainstream film and television, such as Action movies and soap opera. More specifically the session will focus on the fairy story in Classical Hollywood Narrative, the pleasures of High Concept movies and how soap opera represents time.

In the context of the 'unit' organisation of AS/A2 syllabuses, the session will also look at ways of implementing an integrated approach to Film and Media specs which restores an underlying conceptual framework to the study of media texts. Here narrative becomes a useful way into other areas such as Genre, Institutions and New Technology.

This session will offer some fresh approaches to organising a SoW and some enjoyable ways of implementing it with your students.

2. An Introduction to Film Genre

Bill Malyszko

Assistant Headteacher and Head of Media & Film Studies at Langley Park School for Boys in Beckenham, Kent. He is a bfi Associate Tutor and has examined both Media and Film Studies at A Level.

The concept of genre can at first seem quite simple and teachers and students may initially feel at a loss about what we can actually study here. This session will explore some of the complexities of this area of study and will offer some ideas and approaches. The following list gives an idea of the likely points of discussion in the session.

- Why teach genre?
- The problem of defining genres.
- Genre for whom? Looking at: producers; audiences; academics.
- The nature of generic conventions.
- Relating genre to other aspects of film study: micro - *mise en scène*; cinematography; soundtrack; editing; and macro – narrative.
- Genre and fandom.
- Genre and post-modernism: the death of genre?

Examples will be taken from Horror, Film Noir and Gangster genres.

3. How to Teach Institutions (and make them interesting!)

Sarah Smyth

Head of Media, Woking College, Surrey; an examiner for the OCR audiences and institutions paper

I will mainly concentrate on how to teach students about media organisations which offer students the opportunity to develop their understanding and knowledge of how the big media organisations affect the media they receive.

Using examples from the film, television and music industries the session will examine how this area can engage the students by helping them to recognise direct effects in their own lives. We will discuss the impact the development in technologies has had in different areas of the media and how this has directly affected the industries themselves. There are opportunities in this area for students to undertake research, to put together presentations and to work together in groups in order for them to build up portfolios of work.

I will provide a variety of materials and resources and include suggestions on how to approach particular exam questions. I will also trace some of the key historical changes that have occurred in media industries to provide students with an overview of the significance that media organisations have in their lives.

4. How to Teach Audience

Laureen Todd

Media Teacher, Strathearn School, Belfast

Audience is an elusive term and one, which is vital to any media student who is to make sense of the media and why it exists. This session will focus on how to teach audience and will provide useful classroom resources from a basic level through to theoretical thinking on audience. It will address why audiences are important; how audiences change in terms of consumption and how to make the

subject of audience interesting and relevant to teenagers. The workshop will focus on the practical side of teaching audience and will be graded in examples useful for exam purposes. It will explore broadcasting and narrowcasting; audience ratings and their importance; influences on the audience and the audience theories attached to it all! There are many different types of audiences, passive and active, who receive and utilise media texts in very different ways. We will investigate why and how this takes place.

6. How to Teach Representation

Jean Welsh

Head of Media and Film Studies, Hills Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge

Representation underpins a number of topics from the Media and Film Studies specifications. The key aim of the session is to give new teachers ideas and approaches which can be applied to a wide variety of topics they may teach using a variety of sources: magazines, television, film, although we will not confine ourselves to any one topic from a particular specification.

The session will:

- Consider why the concept of representation is so central in Media and Film Studies and how it relates to the other key concepts. Looking at a range of media we will examine the techniques by which the media construct representations and the factors which determine the kinds of meanings and values they convey;
- look at how these ideas can be introduced to students in both practical and written work;
- consider how representation is seen from a range of theoretical perspectives, from feminist theories to postmodernism and how these ideas can be made useful and relevant to students and integrated with their work on specific topics;
- examine representations from recent and historical sources, from print media and the moving image, covering a range of different groups: gender, class, race, nationality and specific social groups;
- consider a variety of different teaching approaches.