Can a text be informative, educational AND entertaining?

Teacher Support Resource: Year 10 English

Curriculum connections

Year 10 Australian Curriculum English Strand of Literacy and the substrand:

Identify and explore the purposes and effects of different text structures and language features of spoken texts, and use this knowledge to create purposeful texts that inform, persuade and engage (ACELY1750)

Year 10 Australian Curriculum English Strand of Literature and the substrand:

Analyse and evaluate text structures and language features of literary texts and make relevant thematic and intertextual connections with other texts (ACELT1774)

Years 9—10 Health and Physical Education

Propose, practise and evaluate responses in situations where external influences may impact on their ability to make healthy and safe choices (ACPPS092)

Year 10 Ethical Understanding

Reflect on ethical action: evaluate diverse perceptions and ethical bases of action in complex contexts

Learning intentions

Students watch and discuss some short films that revolve around the theme of bystander/ upstander behaviour. The films vary in terms of raising issues, being open-ended, being didactic, or providing information. The learning intentions are:

- to identify specific features of the texts which engage, texts which inform, and texts which persuade
- To consider the effectiveness of each purposeful text in delivering a social message
- To consider the impact of bystander/upstander choices on relationships.

Note that your jurisdiction may have a Respectful Relationships Education program or Social and Emotional Learning program with additional information/lessons addressing bystander behaviour.

Teaching sequence

Introduce the sequence of activities with a conversation about the purposes/aims of some of the visual texts that we watch – eg The News, The Project, Reality TV, series like Game of Thrones, various ads etc. Some of the aims that may be suggested include:

- Informative
- Educational
- Entertaining

- Persuasive/motivational
- Commercial

Ask students to identify some of the key features that pertain to each aim. Discuss instances where TV shows fulfil more than one aim.

Explain that the focus for this learning sequence will be on visual texts that have a message about our behaviour/values. The focus will be on the theme of being a bystander/upstander. This has been selected as it is one of the behaviours that is addressed in Respectful Relationships Education and therefore supports curriculum areas across the school.

Ask students for examples of films/texts that they are aware of that have a social message eg advertising about drink-driving, cautionary tales such as Aesop's fables or Roald Dahl stories, and films such as To Kill a Mockingbird, Erin Brockovich, Super Size Me, Boy Erased, Black Panther.

The sequence starts with a focus on a short fictional film – with a level of detailed analysis that is appropriate to the length of the film. Some elements can be applied where appropriate to the other films suggested for viewing.

Film #1

Locker Room is a 13-minute film made by Australian film-maker Greta Nash in 2017. It has won several awards.

Nash made the film after a scandal about Australian secondary students who'd uploaded intimate images of their female school mates to an online site. Of this, Nash says: "I was pretty much directly inspired by this relentless series of scandals that occurred in the middle of last year ... I wanted to show the bravery of girls who stick up for each other, and how events like these affect people in ways less straightforward than you'd expect." Note that there is some coarse language in this film.

1. Show students the film until the 4.11 mark. Pause it here. Ask students to discuss in pairs:
   - Predictions of what the film is about from the title and opening scenes
   - Ways in which the film establishes both characters and the relationships between characters (some of the elements might include the power relationships between the boys and where Carla sits in the power relationships, how Carla feels about herself, Carla's emotional development).
2. Continue to show film until the 7-minute mark. Pause it here. Carla has identified that her friends are sharing online film of a girl who has passed out and making sexually explicit comments online. Ask students to discuss in pairs:
   - What options does Carla have in terms of what she has seen? Encourage students to discuss this from a range of angles: legal, personal, social – and to identify the consequences of each action.
   - What options does Finn have in terms of what Carla has seen? Encourage students to discuss this from a range of angles: legal, personal, social – and to identify the consequences of each action.

3. View film until the end. Ask students to discuss in pairs:

- How did they interpret the ending? Was it hopeful/positive or depressing? This film review '*Locker room*' provides some alternative ways of interpreting the ending: <https://www.shortoftheweek.com/2018/11/30/locker-room/>
- How did the film-maker continue to develop the characters and the relationships between characters (some of the elements might include the power relationships between the boys and where Carla sits in the power relationships, how Carla feels about herself, Carla's emotional development).
- Explain that the film maker made the film with the aim of showing the bravery of girls who stick up for each other, and how events like these affect people in ways less straightforward than you'd expect. Ask students to assess the extent to which she has met this aim.

4. Film techniques – Carla is the protagonist of the film. Ask students to identify the ways in which the construction of the film throws light on her context, her relationships or her point of view. It may be easier for students to think about this by considering what is NOT in the film ie. Scenes with the boys only.

5. Ask students to consider why the film is titled *Locker room*. (It is likely that the title derives from the defence made by Donald Trump in 2016 of his behaviour towards women and the way he described it to other men. "This was locker room banter, a private conversation that took place many years ago.")

Move on to viewing some or all of the remaining short film texts below. Ask students to consider the questions below.

Film / Running time	Short description	URL
Film #1 *Locker room* 13 minutes	This is a fictional narrative sequence exploring the themes of image-based abuse, being a bystander/upstander, gender and relationships, and friendship.	http://www.gretanash.com/locker-room
Film #2 Unnamed short film 2 minutes	This short untitled film produced by eSafety Commission aims to educate young people about image-based abuse and bystander/upstander behaviour.	Go to Image-based abuse and select 'Watch people's stories'. https://www.esafety.gov.au/image-based-abuse
Film #3 *The Upstander* 1 minute	This is a short film made for young people to encourage behaviour that shifts from bystander to upstander.	https://antibullying.nsw.gov.au/educators/resources/catalogue-green/bystander-to-upstander-video
#4 Animated short film *The bystander* 2 minutes	This is an animated fictional short film that was made as part of a project against violence.	https://vimeo.com/60113127
#5 Advertisement *Respect women: call it out–active bystander* 45 seconds	This ad is part of a government campaign designed to bring all Victorians into the conversation around sexual harassment on public transport by providing the tools to call out inappropriate behaviours.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHxAxRYIlfE

1. Who is the audience for this film? How do you know that?
2. What is the main "message" of each film?
3. What is the main aim/purpose of each film? Informative? Educational? Entertaining? Persuasive/motivational? Commercial? A mix of these? Identify the elements that contribute to this aim.
4. How does the construction of each of these films throw light on the themes of being a bystander/upstander.
5. What contributes to/detracts from the effectiveness of the message in each case?
6. Compare the impact of each of the films.

Texts that inform, persuade and engage

Can one text fulfil all these purposes? Facilitate a discussion about this topic.

It may be interesting to show some examples from Gruen's *Inside the pitch* – where advertisers are working to engage viewers about a social issue using all three of these purposes at times.
Gruen Pitch https://iview.abc.net.au/show/gruen-pitch
Gruen's ten favourite episodes of The Pitch https://mumbrella.com.au/jon-casimirs-top-10-gruen-pitch-ads-171650)

Taking it further

Ask students to design a campaign to promote understandings of positive bystander behaviour for their own context (the audience might vary: from year level to subschool to entire school which will potentially alter the nature of the campaign)

Further resources

- *More than a bystander*

  https://studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/educators/resources/resources/more-than-a-bystander

- *Being a good bystander*

  https://esafety.gov.au/-/media/cesc/documents/virtual-classroom-resources/teacher-summary-sheet-being-a-good-bystander.pdf?la=en

- *How to analyse film in Year 10*

  https://www.matrix.edu.au/beginners-guide-year-10-english/part-5-how-analyse-film-year-10-analysing-film-tv-show/

- *Analysis of images and advertisements for year 10 English*

  https://www.studentbox.com.au/discussion/682/analysis-of-images-and-advertisements-for-year-10-english

- *English: Reading film TLF-IDS4302 Scootle*

  https://www.scootle.edu.au/ec/p/home

- Bystander approaches Responding to and preventing men's sexual violence against women

  https://aifs.gov.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/acssa-issues17.pdf