

May 2004

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There are a number of reasons for screening and discussing Australian documentaries as part of the secondary school curriculum, apart from simply teaching students about the form itself. Teachers can use documentaries to introduce a new unit of work, enhance student understanding of material by reinforcing particular points, provide food for thought for those needing new challenges within an enhancement program or channel ideas for a major work requirement. Selection and the need to provide contextual and interpretative frameworks can therefore be the most demanding tasks for those educators who choose to use documentaries.

Secondary school teachers are continually reassured that a surprisingly large number of their students are avid consumers of documentary programs on Australian television. Yet, viewing this material in the classroom, brings about a set of problems pertinent to the purpose and function of a documentary film in an educational environment. A student can be intrigued and often confused by the overwhelming array of styles and interpretive avenues afforded by documentary filmmakers. Presenting students with a variety of documentary forms; educational, impressionist, observational documentaries, personal journeys, TV series and short documentary films, might assist them in understanding different styles and using diverse strategies to extract necessary information from the documentary material. Support material that can assist teachers includes research notes, a copy of the script, storyboard, interview transcripts and stills, cast and crew lists and production timelines. The working history of crew members, lists of archival material, music, the format of acquisition and finished material and the screening history of the program can also be useful.

This article focuses on three aspects of using documentary programs in secondary classrooms; the discussions of Australian identity from diverse perspectives, focusing on specific subject areas and links across the curriculum, and use of personal journey to assist students in providing a broader context to their own narratives.

Australian Identity from Different Perspectives



My Mother India

Probably the most popular and accessible documentary films in Australian secondary classrooms are those focusing on subject matter pertinent to Australia and Australian identity. These programs often focus on the themes of community, love, acceptance, belonging, and in some cases, complex and controversial issues of justice, social equality, economic hardship and racism. They could be appropriated to a particular curriculum area and tend to provoke interesting, passionate and often heated classroom discussions.

Some examples from recent years include Michael Cordell's *The Year of the Dogs* and Tom Zubrycki's *Molly and Mobarak*. Documenting a season in the life of an AFL club, Cordell explores a sense of belonging surrounding the most popular Australian sport and addresses the related social, economic, cultural and psychological factors. Zubrycki, on the other hand, travels to a small Australian country town and investigates the case of a Hazara refugee on a Temporary Protection Visa, awaiting the resolution of his case. Mobarak Tahiri becomes particularly close to a local teacher and falls in love with her. Mobarak's desires, frustrations, dilemmas and disappointments are examined in the broader context of Australian debate about human rights, justice, fear and racism in rural communities and ultimately, the fate of refugee applicants on temporary visas



My Mother India

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Focus on Specific Subject Areas and Links Across the Curriculum

Secondary students may benefit from documentary films that are closely connected to a particular curriculum area, enhancing their knowledge and understanding of specific units of work, while also broadening the scope of their investigation into areas of the curriculum that are not seen as commonly related. A documentary about the descendants of Indian aristocratic families struggling to raise revenue for the maintenance of their palaces, *Beyond the Royal Veil*, is often used in History and Studies of Society and Environment, but provides plenty of scope for work in Marketing, Tourism and Hospitality. *Einstein's Wife* closely examines the contributions of Albert Einstein and Mileva Maric to the world of Science. However, it also could be used for exploration of gender relationships, focusing on the life and work of a woman struggling to resist the imposed patriarchal limitations at the turn of the twentieth century. A portrait of Jose Ramos Horta, *The Diplomat*, is often used as a supplementary material in SOSE and History, exploring the recent events in the region. It is also a revealing example of a relationship between a documentary filmmaker and his/her subject that could be used in senior Media curriculum. A six part documentary series, *A Case for the Coroner*, focuses on issues related to the curriculum areas of Science and Legal studies, as it relates to the Legal process, privacy matters, DNA and forensic science. Yet, it also provides an opportunity to examine and present issues such as grieving and loss, drug use and problems of homeless and elderly people as a part of exploration of issues in the senior English curriculum.



The Diplomat

Personal Journey: Providing a Context

The emergence of a personal journey has, in recent years, afforded a plethora of visual and narrative stimuli for students planning to complete projects focusing on an important personal narrative. Showing films or excerpts from films that use personal journey and simultaneously engage the viewer in understanding broader social issues, might facilitate student understanding of this form. It might also assist them in their relation to the subject and the selection of material used in their English essays focusing on a personal experience or footage compiled for a short film portrait in Media Studies.



Molly and Mobarak

My Mother India examines family relationships in the background of broad historical, political and cultural contexts, providing a wide scope of interpretative possibilities and ideas for a secondary school viewer. *The Man Who Stole My Mother's Face* places the tale of crime, suffering, search for justice and reconciliation against the backdrop of South Africa's transition from an oppressive apartheid regime to a democratic state. The filmmaker's quest for justice is closely connected to the problems of present day South Africa; the economic crisis, the explosion of urban violence, the patriarchal order and gender repression and the outbreak of AIDS, issues that are as troubling and oppressive as the tragic, violent past.

These three facets of using documentary programs in the secondary classroom are merely an indication of an array of possibilities for teachers who endeavour to provide their students with the

learning tools for better understanding of the curriculum. One would hope that documentary programs will continue to be a vital presence in our classrooms, strengthening teachers' and students' understanding of a form that is becoming increasingly popular within the secondary school system. Filmmakers' awareness of the importance of documentary programs as educational tools can assist them in directing their material towards large and yet undiscovered sections of the secondary school audience. By providing support material relevant to the curriculum, teachers and students are greatly helped in effectively using these documentaries in their everyday classroom activities.

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Screenrights distributes over \$A3million in two months

Screenrights Member Services department has distributed more than \$A3million in royalties for the period between 1 March and 30 April 2004, continuing to exceed its distribution targets.

These royalties are collected from educational institutions for television and radio copying and from overseas collecting societies for retransmission and private copying.

The team's target was to distribute 70% of 2003 educational royalties by October 2004. This has already been achieved with more than 72% of these royalties distributed by 30 April.

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New enhancements link filmmakers with educators

With hits now reaching 40,000 over four days, www.enhancetv.com.au is an exciting opportunity for filmmakers to access the education market free of charge.

The site, which was developed by Screenrights to link its filmmaker members with the educators who use their work, has grown rapidly, bringing benefits to both the film industry and the education sector.

It now has home pages highlighting audio visual content for each learning area, regularly changing features as well as the very popular free email television guide listing upcoming programs for each curriculum area.

If you haven't yet visited the new look site go to www.enhancetv.com.au now and find out more about how you can make the most of this valuable free service.

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Don't miss out on 1998 royalties

With the deadline for distributing 1998 royalties fast approaching, Screenrights is urging members whose programs were broadcast between 1 July 1997 and 30 June 1998 to contact Member Services if they may have a claim.

Under its Articles of Association, Screenrights holds royalties in trust for six years. If the money is not distributed by the end of this time it is rolled over into the next distribution pool.

This means that 1998 royalties must be distributed by 30 June 2004. Over 95% of this money has already been paid out to copyright owners and letters have been sent to potential claimants for the remaining amount.

If you believe you may have a claim email memberservices@screen.org

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Register now for international royalties

Want fast, cost effective access to royalties being held on your behalf in the United States and Switzerland?

Screenrights International can ensure that you don't miss out on the next round of registrations necessary to collect money for the retransmission and copying of your titles in these territories.

If your program was broadcast in Europe during 2003, you may be entitled to retransmission or private copying money from the Swiss society. To ensure you don't miss out, you will need to supply all title details to Screenrights International by June 7.

Screenrights is also registering for retransmission royalties in the United States. The deadline for this registration is June 14.

If you would like us to access this money on your behalf, simply email international@screen.org now and we will help you complete the necessary registration forms.

May 2004

Good news for filmmakers in review of Copyright Act

A report into the Digital Agenda Amendments to the Copyright Act has recommended extending the educational copying licence to include payment for filmmakers when free to air broadcasts of their work are copied from the Internet.

The amendments were enacted in 2001 and included the extension to the educational copying provisions allowing educational institutions to communicate copied programs, by email or on an internal network for example. They did not, however, provide for the fact that free to air broadcasts may be picked up on the Internet and copied from the Internet. Under current law, educational institutions that choose to copy from television in this way cannot rely on the educational copying licence in the Copyright Act.

At the time of enacting the Digital Agenda Amendments to the Act, the Government promised to review them in three years time. The report, prepared by Phillips Fox following consultation with interested parties including Screenrights, was part of this review.

Screenrights has always argued that the educational copying licence should allow schools, TAFEs and universities to copy free to air broadcasts from the Internet and that copyright owners should be paid for this.

The report also made it clear that parliament did intend copyright owners to receive a separate payment for the communication of copies of their programs by educational institutions. Screenrights currently collects and distributes this payment for rights owners in film, television and radio.

Finally, the report recommended an awareness campaign for schools, TAFEs and universities on the scope of the educational copying provisions

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Collecting societies Code of Conduct: call for submissions

Screenrights' and other collecting societies' compliance with a voluntary Code of Conduct is currently the subject of an independent annual review being conducted by former Federal Court judge Mr James Burchett QC.

As part of this review, Screenrights members and licensees can make submissions directly to the Code Reviewer at the following address:

The Code Reviewer
Suite 704
4 Young Street
Neutral Bay NSW 2089

Email: codereviewer@screen.org

Submissions should be made by no later than 31 July.

The Code of Conduct has been in effect since July 2002 and is subscribed to by the following collecting societies: Australasian Performing Right Association (APRA), Australasian Mechanical Copyright Owners' Society Limited (AMCOS), Phonographic Performance Company of Australia Limited (PPCA), Copyright Agency Limited (CAL), Screenrights, Australian Writers Guild Authorship Collecting Society Limited (AWGACS), and Australian Screen Directors Authorship Collecting Society Limited (ASDACCS).

A full copy of the Code can be viewed on the website of each society, including Screenrights': www.screen.org