



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1995 Volume II: Film and Literature

Friday Funtastic and Friends: The Art of Story-telling through Film

Guide for Curriculum Unit 95.02.08
by Geraldine M. Martin

In my paper I have explored ways in which puppetry and art can be integrated into a unit for helping young children approach film and literature in a more critical manner. As a key component to my unit, I have emphasized the active participation of children in using puppetry and art to retell and analyze literature through film.

Friday Funtastic is a duck who resides in a bag. One might ask: "What can a duck who merely pops out of a bag and begins to bemoan the fact that her voice is a bit raspy from being cooped up in a bag collecting dust do?" Wait one moment, or perhaps 15 minutes, as you discover that the dust in the duck's bag is not the ordinary dust found in your classroom closet. Have no fears; vacuums and dust pans are obsolete. For you see, that dust in Friday Funtastic's bag is magical dust. As it settles in the classroom, one discovers that the children have been introduced to a wealth of information about a film they are about to view.

Friday Funtastic will introduce her film friends to the class each Friday for a total of three or four weeks. Three films, "The Secret Garden," "Heidi" and "Dumbo" have been chosen as Friday Funtastic's friends. Besides the country and culture of the people in the film, she will give suggestions for critical analysis of the story. Follow-up activities will include cooperative learning activities where children are paired and discuss themes from the film, then report back to class. Journal writing will be included where the children report their critical feelings about the story.

The children will also retell the story in the film through their own puppet creations and illustrated works. For example, in the story film about Heidi, the children will make Heidi puppets. Each child will write his/her own version of the story, then retell the story using the Heidi puppet.

As a culminating activity, Friday Funtastic will suggest a theme for the children to write their own stories. With the aid of the puppet and classroom teacher, one story will be chosen and developed into a play suitable for filming on stage in the school's all-purpose room.

(Recommended for Reading/Language Arts, grade 1)

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