

How to use Find the Fun Productions DVDs

(The Philosophy Behind the Productions)

As it says in the beginning of the study guides, “You are tired and overworked,” I understand. As a teacher for over 15 years, the tired feeling starts in September and ends in June. It is logical that anytime during the class day that you, as a teacher, can get a respite—a bit of down time it is much appreciated.

For many years educational media, VHS and now DVD, has been seen as teacher respites. Pop the film in, and let the students watch. As I stated earlier, I have taught for over 15 years. What I did not say is that most of my teaching time has been as a substitute teacher and I have taught thousands of children in hundreds of different classrooms.

In my first year or two, when I was given a lesson to pop in a video, I would pop in the video and let it play. My only obligation I felt was to make sure class management was in the green zone. Too often the class was in the red zone. The film elicited a Pavlovian response in students that it was time to talk with their friends.

To attain my goal of good class management, I started to stand next to the TV as the film proceeded and wrote names of students, on the board, who weren't watching. This helped, but I believe everyone silently agreed the media product was an not an engaging educational tool.

Over time, I shifted from standing next to the inert TV to seeing the TV and media product as something not to simply watch, but interact with. I began stopping the film, asking questions, triggering discussions, checking for understanding, and inventing creative ways to enhance the production.

It was this process that has lead me to the work we do at Find the Fun, the format of our productions, and the philosophy behind our media.

It is essential to think of our productions as a partner, a team-teacher in the class, a media tool you can interact with, play with, and create new ideas.

Our productions work best when:

- 1) a cursory introduction of the subject has been implemented.
- 2) The cursory introduction is followed up with parts of the production that correspond to the topic.
- 3) The portion(s) of the production shown can then be a transition to further details in the textbook or textbook information can be brought in as a production is viewed.

Our media productions are more than tape and DVD. They invite you to stop. You may feel a need to pause and review a point. Do it. Download the lyrics. Make a lyric packet. Have the kids follow along, learn the song, perhaps perform the song as an oral interpretation piece, analyze and interpret the song. Do it. You may want to interject a Study Guide question, extension idea, stop and invite further discussion of an onscreen critical-thinking question, or relate what is on the screen to a section in the textbook. Do it.

The bottom line is: It is time to think of classroom media as a living, breathing, interactive, effective teaching tool that can reach a classroom.

This is the power of media. This is the power of Find the Fun Productions.

