

Appreciating Excellent Movies, Forging Beautiful Souls – Use Movie & TV Education as Effective Teaching Resource

Presented by Xue-mei Xu, Shidong Middle School (East Urban High School) of Shanghai

School of a long history, with the combination of east and west architectural style

Shanghai Shidong Middle School, whose old name was Nieh Chih-kuei Public School, was founded in 1916 by Shanghai Concession Municipal Department. The school got the land donation of more than twenty acres from gentry Yun-tai Nieh, who did this to commemorate his father, Chih-Kuei Nieh. Chih-Kuei Nieh was the son-in-law of Guo-fan Zeng and a capable assistant to Hung-chang Li during the Westernization Movement in Shanghai. He used to be Daotai (similar to vice president in a province) at the end of Qing dynasty. The school name was changed to Chih-Kuei Middle School in 1941, and then changed again to Shidong Middle School in 1951. The school has more than ninety years history and is regarded as one of the top one hundred most famous schools in China.

The first three school principals were all foreigners, who were L. H. Turner, L. Kershaw, and G. L. Aitchison. The famous educationists, Li-pei Duan and Xing-wei Lü, all took the position as the principals of Shidong Middle School before, nurturing talented students with both ability and integrity. The main school building, deeply impressed the famous Taiwan writer as well as alumni, Ao Li. It is a teaching building with a gothic touch and the combination of western and eastern architectural style, indicating a strong cultural atmosphere.

The school has accumulated a rich cultural foundation through its long history. We have introduced excellent movies into the education and teaching plan, and advocate the idea of “Appreciating excellent movies, forging beautiful souls.” Using movies & TV as effective teaching material has become one of the most unique features of running our school. We have continuously gained positive comments through our practices, making our school the Municipal Advanced School Of Movie & TV Education selected among elementary and secondary schools in Shanghai, as well as the National Advanced Collectivity of Movie & TV Education.

Visual art of lights and images, effective teaching material

Film, a modern art developed by “the combination of photography and slide shows,” has given people a brand new world of lights and images since it was born at the end of the 19th century. In the 1940s, television was invented, deriving from film technology. With the development and popularization of TV, people have changed their thinking, ideas, values and lifestyle. Since the

invention of movies and television, after over 100 year's development, movies and TV have not only provided people entertainment, but also become the most influential and effective way for human beings to express their ideas.

To some extent, movies and television will shape people's minds, create their behavior habits, and enhance or weaken the common value of the society. Movies & TV are not only an art form, but also a dominating cultural ideology in modern society. They have largely influenced or changed people's lifestyle, and are making an increasing impact on adolescents in the information age. The adolescents, energetic and curious, living in the information age of high technology, have grown up with the company of movies & TV.

Lenin once remarked: "Among all the art forms, film has the most impact on educating people." However, as movies & TV have the feature of complexity, they might bring some negative influence to young students' growth, such as violence, absurdity, decadence or even eroticism. Therefore, it is necessary to guide students and introduce excellent movie & TV works to education and teaching. Movies and TV are a valuable education resource because any excellent movie & TV works contain human civilization achievements of either ideological content or artistic forms. Students can gradually foster their aesthetic outlook, increase their cultural connotation, and understand life, the nation and the world.

Let Movie & TV get into classroom, let students get closer to movies

Integrating excellent films into class teaching is what our school has been constantly exploring and practicing. In recent years, we have successfully introduced good films to the class and formed a new teaching approach. Chinese class, integrated with Movie & TV, has turned the vacuous preaching, tedious lengthy talk and boring remarks into a new form welcomed by students. This form of teaching can broaden students' vision and spiritual world. Students are obviously excited as the movies are brought into class, including *Medicine*, *The True Story of Ah Q*, *Lu Xun*, *Thunderstorm*, *Remote City*, *To Live*, etc. Just as Confucius said, "Knowing something is not as good as loving it; loving something is not as good as enjoying it."

Introducing Movie & TV into class turns the teaching method from being abstract and static into lively and dynamic, and provides vivid and pleasant teaching results. At the same time, it extends the time and space of students' cognition as well as infusing vitality into textbooks. Integrating Movie & TV with class teaching can help students diverge and gather their imaginative thinking as well as refining and deepening it. It's also helpful to enhance students' cognition of the objective world. Therefore, we have been gradually introducing Movie & TV not only in Chinese class but also in other subjects, such as watching foreign language film clips in English class, viewing the clips of nature in Geography class, watching related documentaries in Politics class, appreciating the movie music in Music class, and comparing the movie

costumes in Art class, etc.

Our school has insisted on “one movie a month” for many years, resulting in a rich and colorful school Movie & TV culture. Even during winter and summer vacation, and social practice activities such as military training or farming study, we also arrange for students to watch excellent films and write film reviews, so that they can digest what intrigues them from films by their own thinking, and can learn and benefit in the long run.

At the same time, our school Movie & TV associations have closely connected with the research-orientated courses. We also offer Movie & TV lectures with fixed time slots and special instructors, based on the text book *Glamour of Light and Images—Approaching Movies*. In this way, students can learn some movie knowledge, preliminarily grasp methods of film appreciation, and initiate research on the related movie subjects.

Cultivating the national pride and carrying forward the national spirit

One can't live without his or her nation and country. Without an inspiring spirit and lofty character, it is impossible for a nation to stand out proudly in the world. Among all nationalities in the world, the Chinese nation has the most inveterate national pride and spirit. “Every man must share the responsibility for the fate of his country” and “Self-discipline and Social Commitment” are well perceived by the Chinese people. We regard our nation as the offspring of the dragon. As we inherit tremendous spiritual wealth of national pride and spirit, we must cherish, care for and carry forward the legacy. The Movie & TV education, as an effective teaching resource, has become the best carrier of cultivating students' national pride and carrying forward their national spirit.

In *Red Sorghum*, students learned the inspiring and uplifting national spirit of the Chinese people from the great love, strong hate, great life and death depicted through farmers' primitive and wild life, and their bloody battle against invaders. Students could see the blazing life consciousness, as the farmers dare to express their true love and hate.

In *Adventure in Kanto*, students followed Kaishan Zhu to travel around among mountains, waters, gold mines, farms, markets, and oil mines. From Qilu lands (Shandong province) to Northeast China, Kaishan Zhu first went through Shanhai Guan, then went to the gold ditch, thirdly opened a restaurant, and fourthly managed a coal mine. In the end, at the exigent moment when the city was invaded by the Japanese aggressors, he fought against the strong enemy and left with the whole family, resuming his path of Kanto adventure. Kaishan Zhu did not say one brave word, but his actions signified the strong belief in self-reliance, that the national interests must come above anything else, and national dignity should transcend everything.

In the TV show *Soldiers Sortie*, students cannot get out of their heads Shanduo Xu's favorite saying, "To have a good life means to do a lot of meaningful things, and to do a lot of meaningful things means to have a good life." They also remembered the six-character oath of "never abandon and never give up," as well as the spirit of tenacity, persistence and adherence.

While watching *Liberation* (a war-themed movie made by Moscow Film Studio of the former Soviet Union from 1970 to 1972, commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Great Patriotic War), students were deeply impressed that the ceremonial parades of military review were still taking place as usual at Red Square to commemorate the October Revolution, even when Moscow was under German siege and the Soviet Union was on the verge of destruction. At the same time, Stalin was making a speech: "They (the German Fascists) want to destroy a nation which has produced Peter the Great, Kutuzov, Lomonosov, Pushkin, Tolstoy, Lemontov, etc." This was more like a prewar mobilization, after which the troops being reviewed would go to the battlefield directly from Red Square. Students wondered why these names could motivate the soldiers, and why the soldiers were fueled with desire to fight to the death when these names were mentioned. They finally concluded that these names represented the core of the Russian spirit, the soul of the Russians, and they were the symbols of Russian national pride.

Students were still very enthusiastic even after the film ended. They were wondering what the Chinese general would say if the same circumstance happened in our country. With a massive selection of brilliant names, he could definitely say: "They want to destroy a nation which has produced Emperor Wu in Han Dynasty, Laocius, Chuangcius, Confucius, Zu Chongzhi, Li Po, Du Fu, Su Tungpo, Luo Guanzhong, Cao Xueqin, etc." Hearing these brilliant names mentioned and watching the proud and excited faces, I knew the national pride was aroused within them, and that was the power of films.

Understanding multi-cultures, forging beautiful souls

Film is the universal language of the world. Movie stories open a window, through which we see different lives. We can learn about China and understand the world through movies. It is the movies that have formed students' multi-cultural outlook of different nations, different cultural backgrounds and different values. It is movies that have forged students' beautiful souls by the same faith, same pursuit of dreams and same aspiration for goodliness.

As a Chinese teacher and the instructor of Movie & TV education, I always watch movies with my students:

From the aggressive bloody red in *Red Sorghum*, the severely depressing dark red in *Raise the Red Lantern*, and the imposing earthy yellow in *Yellow Earth*, to the splendid colors in *Hero*, it is Yimou Zhang who has acquainted us with the nationalized colors.

From the hopelessness of longing for love in *Days of Being Wild*, the loneliness of boundless desert in *Ashes of Time*, and the floweriness of gorgeous cheongsams in *In the Mood For Love*, to psychedelic shadows mixed with interlacing time and space in *2046*, it is Karwai Wong who has acquainted us with the stream of consciousness.

We can find the gate of fate and soul in *In the Woods* (1950), learn to cherish today and seize goodness from *Yomigaeri: Resurrection* (2002), understand persistence of hope and belief in miracles through *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994), and appreciate forgiveness and the infinite affection among family members in *Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles* (2005).

I share the same feeling, appreciate joy, and taste bitterness with my students while we are watching movies together. I can tell that they love movies, and movies are their indispensable close friends during their growth. Moreover, I can feel their heart quavering and the growing joy and pain from their writings. No wonder one student said that youth is of bright and beautiful sadness. Some students sent me text messages after going to college, expressing their thanks that I had cultivated their love for movies, and habit of longing for brightness and sensing details.

In the end, I want to say that movies have connected the hearts of students and teachers closer. It is the movies that are changing and influencing us, because movies are the products of dreams, and movies are produced for people with dreams. I sincerely hope whoever has a dream can grow happily.

Movie & TV Culture Nourishing Children's Soul

Presented by Wuhua Xia, Xie-Tang Primary School of Shangyu

Xietang Shangyu, located in Hangzhou Bay and beneath the Xiagai Mountain, is an ancient town full of rich culture, pear flowers' fragrance and voices of book reading. This land gestated the city's two-century old school, Xie-tang Center Primary School, which was built in 1818 (Jiaqing 23th year of Qing Dynasty). The famous Chinese director, Jin Xie, had graduated from Cheng Liu School, the predecessor of this school. As a great master of art, Jin Xie has earned a worldwide reputation by his great accomplishments. What is most important about Jin Xie is his sense of national pride and strong patriotism expressed through his fifty-year film career. His persistent and meticulous working style has inspired people and made his hometown proud. Mr. Xie left glorious footprints along his career path, and his life is the most vivid, imposing, and characteristic teaching example of how we should love our country and hometown. His idea of "philanthropy and erudition" is the essence of our school teaching philosophy.

In the new century, following Director Jin Xie's "philanthropy and erudition" education philosophy, Xie-tang Primary School has fully explored the local cultural features, adopted "Movie & TV culture" into Xie-tang's land and education, which has led to a unique way of "Jin Xie Movie & TV culture." "Small screen but big world, small pear flower but big stage." We have established the unique concept and practice of "Movie & TV culture" to distinguish our school, i.e. cultivating students' personality under the guidance of Jin Xie's national patriotism, nourishing students' literature taste under the guidance of Jin Xie's literature achievement, and developing students' talents under the guidance of Jin Xie's art accomplishment.

I) Create Movie and TV School Environment

1. Schoolyard: Xie's advice and philosophy can be seen everywhere around the school so that people can feel the edification of Movie & TV culture. At the entrance of the school, four gold-plated Chinese characters written by Mr. Xie jump in your eyes immediately: Philanthropy and Erudition. The school's characteristics are summarized in a few key words written on the central teaching building: Small Screen but Big World, Small Pear Flower but Big Stage. There are some quotes from Mr Xie on the walls of school teaching buildings: "Thanks for the cultivation of my home school; Successors excel the predecessors, etc." There are other Mr. Xie's quotes on the walls of school multi-purpose buildings as well.

2. Halls and rooms: The school has a showroom of "Jin Xie Movie & TV culture" with various books and presents given by Director Xie lying in the cabinets. Xie's reviews about his art life and his classic movies are posted on the showroom wall. Children have various activities here, under the influence of Director Xie. At the same time, the school also constructed a Movie & TV museum in order to broaden students' horizons and enable them to get a better understanding of Movies & TV.

3. Corridor: We realized that corridors can be used not only to beautify the school environment, but also to exhibit some film and television works. Therefore, we turned teaching buildings' corridors into some long standing exhibitions such as “cartoon character” and “celebrity Jin Xie”, etc. At the same time, we creatively maximized the limited space in school to set up a changeable Movie & TV corridor to regularly showcase students' excellent Movie & TV compositions and paintings. The artistic layout and the wonderful content always attracts parents' and students' attention.

4. Classroom: The classroom is not only a building space, but also an important location where teachers and students can interact with each other and reach the educational objectives. At the beginning of every semester, each class will properly arrange and carefully decorate its Movie & TV Corner in the classroom with unique formats and rich contents to reflect the school's Movie & TV feature. The themes, such as “Cartoon Kingdom”, “My Favorite Celebrities” and “Great Program, Great Audience” all reflect the strong Movie & TV culture in school.

II) Develop Movie & TV Education and Research

Our school has established a lot of research subjects related to our feature, including the municipal-level subjects of “Establishing Jin Xie culture, cultivating school spirit, and building the national spirit,” “Learning from Director Xie's spirit, and raising sails of quality,” and the key provincial project of “Exploration and research of children's Movie & TV composition,” as well as the national-level subject “the integration of young pioneers' Movie & TV practices with ‘eight honors and eight disgraces.’” Chinese teachers have embraced the provincial key subject and taken on seven sub-projects including research on the teaching methods of Movie & TV composition, the writing form of Movie & TV composition, and the writing content system of Movie & TV composition, etc. At the same time, we have established some municipal-level projects combining other subjects with the Movie & TV theme, and formed a network of third-grade subjects. What's more, we have constructed the Movie & TV composition website in order to discuss and display our research results. Relying on those research subjects, we can make faster and steadier progress in promoting this distinguished teaching methodology. In fact, driven by research projects, we have kept inheriting, developing and improving our unique Movie & TV education method for the last four years.

III) Integrating Movie & TV into subject teaching

With Movie & TV as the carrier, we have sufficiently excavated various functions of Movie & TV including cognition, entertainment, aesthetics, inspiration, intelligence development, etc. We have also integrated Movie & TV with subject teaching while utilizing Movie & TV, which dominate children's spiritual world, as vivid teaching materials. In this way, we can not only brighten the class but also enhance interest in subject teaching. Our goal is to improve thinking and studying through interest so that we can enhance the effect of subject teaching. Based on

this understanding, the school not only guides children to develop their interest in watching movies, but also integrates Movie & TV into classes of various subjects.

1. Comprehensive Movie & TV practice. In April, 2005, our school creatively exploited the unique resource of Jin Xie and published the school text book *Approaching Jin Xie*. All school students have this book. Students in fourth and fifth grades also have a class called “Movie & TV and Humanity” once a week. The purpose of this class is to let students study Jin Xie’s patriotism for his nation and hometown, his outstanding achievements, and his persistent pursuit of film through the contents of “Jin Xie’s Youth”, “Movie Career”, “Jin Xie and His Family”, “Hometown”, etc. In the comprehensive practice curriculum of *Approaching Jin Xie*, children can take a closer look at Jin Xie’s professional life and understand his broad vision as well as his national sentiment through various practice activities such as visiting and conducting research. In May 2005, the meeting of “Introducing Hometown’s Spiritual Role Model into Schools” was held at our school, where the class of “Jin Xie and Opium War” provided a great example for the nationalism education in schools throughout the whole city. Our school has also opened the appreciation course of Jin Xie’s movies, so that students can receive edification of the national spirit through Director Xie’s movies.

2. Chinese Movie & TV Education. Our school has gradually combined Movie & TV with Chinese literature since September 2005. We initiated the course of Movie & TV and Expression, focusing on the integration of teaching Chinese composition with Movie & TV culture, so as to enhance children’s composition level with the aid of the Movie & TV media. Children tell Movie & TV stories, write Movie & TV episodes, discuss their thoughts after watching movies, dub movies, and make children’s DV work, etc. These practices resulted in some creative classes, such as “Approaching Li-hua Shao,” “Creative Animation,” “Touching Fatherly Love,” and “Walking Into the West” etc. The approach can guide children to deal with media information properly, inspire their minds, improve children’s verbal skill and cultivate students’ sense of civilization.

At the same time, we have concentrated on studying the model of thematic Movie & TV composition teaching, and gradually summarized the basic operating model in class, which is: appreciating works—expression and communication—reading expansion—expression and interpreting—recommending works—evaluation and elevation. The basic mode follows the needs of children’s cognition and emotional development.

3. Movie & TV Art. Besides integrating Movie & TV into Chinese literature, we have also tried to integrate Movie & TV with other curricula. For example, we introduced the animation film of “Pulling the Carrots” into English class, which greatly raised students’ learning interests. In music class, students can learn to sing Movie & TV songs, play and appreciate Movie & TV music. The “Sound Of Music” program was introduced to the class and students learned the

song “Edelweiss” very well. In art class, students can learn how to design Movie & TV posters, draw cartoon characters and shape clay into Movie & TV figures. The 3D movie “The Animal World” was brought to the class and students learned how to draw the running animals more vividly. In science class, students can solve riddles and explore the mystery of nature in “The Animal World” and “The World Mystery.” They can also explore some basic knowledge such as how to frame a view, how to take a photo, and so on. With Movie & TV media, art comes to life, and science gets closer to life. In such fascinating classes, children can exploit their potential and constantly improve their overall quality.

IV) Integrating Movie & TV in Extracurricular Activities

Without the class restraints of time and place, activity time is no doubt the most pleasant time for children. Our school emphasizes bringing fun to education for a long time. We have built all kinds of platforms to integrate Movie & TV into students’ extracurricular activities.

1. Student club activities. There are all kinds of student clubs, such as “Little-Pear-Flower Art Group,” “Little-Pear-Flower TV Station,” “Xie-Jin literary Club,” “Little-Pear-Flower Interest Group of DV,” etc. They have carried out a variety of colorful activities under the guidance of Jin Xie’s personal character, literature character and art character.

2. Branch activities. Our school was authorized to establish a Hometown Celebrity Research Association, namely Xie-Jin Children Branch. The Branch has held a series of activities, such as “Passing national spirit from generation to generation,” and “Know the celebrity, Learn from the celebrity, Be the celebrity” following the track of Director Xie. The branch has carried out a lot of other characteristic activities, including: visiting Director Xie’s former residence, little journalists’ DV competition of “Grandpa Xie in my eyes” interview, little film critics contest, competition of Movie & TV poster design, singing contest of Movie & TV songs, acting competition etc. A lot of school stars have been identified through these activities. Children can experience success, taste pleasure, and grow up confidently.

3. Weekday Movie & TV Activities. Our group has implemented the objective of subject teaching: To introduce the best movies in the world to the children. We have included Movie & TV appreciation in the curriculum and make sure students can watch one movie every week. In order to make full use of our Movie & TV database, we also schedule extracurricular time for all school students to watch short films during the noontime on weekdays. The genres of these movies are usually easy and lively, such as fantasy and adventure film series, wise children film series, worldwide scientific invention film series, science fiction film series, etc. As most of these films are interesting cartoons, they can easily catch children’s attention. As a result, although there is no teacher on site to supervise, children can all sit in their chairs quietly and watch films with great interest. In order to highlight different educational themes at different times, our school also displays excellent film series through weekly class activity and midday

Little-Pear-Flower Station. Series such as “I Love Life” in September, “I Love China” in October, and “I Love Cartoons” in November were all well perceived by children. We have also organized monthly selections of “My Favorite Movie,” “My Favorite Actor/Actress,” and “My Favorite Cartoon Figure,” which enhanced children’s appreciation of movies &TV.

The post-screening activities after the movie appreciation class is highly emphasized. This can have direct influence or even determine the class result. Therefore, we have carried out various post-screening activities around the screened movies, such as composing film reviews and post-screening thoughts, repeating and giving oral comments on the movie stories, imitating movie episodes, dubbing movies, and organizing class activities with Movie & TV themes.

In order to introduce the best films in the world to children, the school established the “Xie Jin Movie & TV Culture Film Library”, which has collected more than 500 different domestic and foreign movie titles.

4. Festival activities. In order to fully showcase the students’ studying results at different stages, the school has adopted the most popular form of “festival” by holding the “School Movie & TV Cultural Festival” every semester. During the festival, there are these events: “Excellent Cartoon Movie Exhibition,” “Movie & TV Poster Design Contest,” “Singing Competition of Movie & TV Songs,” “Contest of Movie Review Articles,” “Movie & TV Tabloid Design Contest,” “Children’s DV Production Contest,” “Movie & TV Episode Appreciation,” etc. Immersed in the intensive Movie & TV culture, students can feel both joyful and successful. Especially for the DV Production Contest, students at all grades actively participate in making DVs, including planning, composing, producing, and dubbing. After the DVs are aired in the school’s Little-Pear-Flower Station and judged by all of the students in the school, six awards will be announced, including the best movie, the best production, the best director, the best dubbing, etc. The Movie & TV Cultural Festival provides a stage for children to sharpen their abilities and display their talents. The festival also helps children practice teamwork, develop self-esteem and talent, improve their comprehensive ability, and enhance their creativity. Each Movie & TV festival is a grand festival for children.

What’s more, we hold a Cartoon Kite Festival in March of each year, where the students can design and make kites by themselves, fly kites together, compete in writing festival essays, etc. Some students will draw the picture of the cartoon and Fuwa characters from their mind onto the kites, which in turn become a beautiful sight at school. Each November, there is a Movie & TV Composition Festival, in which the school provides movies based on students’ age range and holds competitions in different forms of expression based on students’ unique means of expression at their respective age range. At the same time, in order to provide these excellent compositions a platform for exhibition, we also started students’ own quarterly newspaper, namely Little Pear Flower, which has become the focus of students’ extracurricular life. We

publish articles about various school activities and students' excellent Movie & TV compositions in this newspaper, making it a good stage for students to share their compositions and display their literature talents. This newspaper has published more than six hundred articles by students during the last four years.

The stage extends as far as the heart goes; the exploration extends as far as the beautiful dream goes. In the big stage of Movie & TV culture, Xie-tang Primary School has just started its prelude. With the new curriculum reform and the influence of our hometown's rich cultural tradition and spirit of humanity, children in Xie-tang Primary School will burst into gorgeous blooms of civilization on this rich and honest land of Xie-tang.