

ReelEducation

LESSON: CODA

Film length: 22 minutes

Lesson Length: 40-50 minutes

Grades 9 to 12

Lesson Title: CODA

Learning Objectives:

- Develop an understanding of Deaf Culture.
- Understand the factors that contribute to a sense of personal identity.
- Use self-awareness and self-monitoring skills to help students understand their strengths and needs.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between culture and language.
- Develop an awareness of cultural differences.
- Use a creative process to express thoughts through various forms of art.
- Use art and media to convey meaning.

Curriculum Connections:

Grades 9-12

Oral Communication

Social Science

Arts

Health

Media

Synopsis:

A young dancer struggles with her bicultural identity and conflicted feelings about growing up hearing in a Deaf family, when she meets a confident young Deaf man.

Film Length: 22 mins - Narrative - English, American Sign Language - USA

Screener Link: <https://vimeo.com/289986313>

Screener Password: **coda2018**

Websites:

CODA International **LINK:** www.coda-international.org/

Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf **LINK:** <https://deafculturecentre.ca/>

Materials:

Chart paper, Sticky notes, Poster paper 22x28 inches or smaller
Art supplies (dependent on student choice of project)

Time: 50-100 minutes (1-2 class periods)

Before Viewing (Discussion)

Discuss “personal identity”. What is it and how does it develop?

Personal identity is the concept you develop about yourself that evolves over the course of your life. This may include aspects of your life that you have no control over, such as where you grew up or the colour of your skin, as well as the choices you make in life, such as how you spend your time and what you believe. You demonstrate portions of your personal identity outwardly through what you wear and how you interact with other people. You may also keep some elements of your personal identity to yourself, even when these parts of yourself are very important.

Ask students: Have you ever felt stuck “between two worlds” where you have two very different interests or social groups but don’t feel like you really belong to either?

Examples might include:

- A student who is perceived to be an athlete by their friends but really just wants to join a comic book club.
- A student whose parents want them to become a doctor but the student feels they want to sing and be in a rock band.
- A student who has immigrated to a new country and wears different clothing or speaks a different language.

Tell students: When people have similar interests, language and culture they identify with one another and often group together. Language is an important part of one’s cultural identity. You are going to view a movie where a young woman perceives herself to have two languages and cultural identities. Think about how these two facets of her life affect her self-discovery and identity. As you view the movie identify the two cultures and languages. Think about how language defines their experiences and culture.

NOTE TO TEACHER: Deaf (with a capital “D”) refers to embracing the cultural norms, beliefs, and values of the Deaf Community. The term “Deaf” should be capitalized when it is used as a shortened reference to being a member of the Deaf Community. Example: He is Deaf (meaning that he is a member of the Deaf Community). Use a lower-case “d” when referring solely to the hearing loss.

After Viewing

Discussion Questions:

1. **The parents in the movie faced a unique situation. What was it?**

The parents use American Sign Language to communicate. Their child is hearing and therefore knows both ASL and spoken English.

2. **What challenges does the main character have as a child?**

The girl is reluctant to use her voice. She is more comfortable and familiar with sign language, since this is how her parents communicate. She must learn to communicate and advocate for herself with spoken English.

Tell students: *In sign language, there are ways you can express or say things that seem better or are easier to express than in spoken word. In addition, there are nuances in learning spoken English as a second language.*

3. **Why does the writer include a scene with visitors at the door?**

It points out that the parents live in a world that is different than the hearing world. It also shows the child using her voice as a way to literally use her voice to be assertive but also to demonstrate how she exists in and between both worlds. It was a moment of strength and intelligence.

4. **What does dance mean to the main character of the story?**

It is her way of expressing her feelings and identity. For the main character, dance is a way to demonstrate how it is possible to communicate effectively using one's body. It is similar to communicating in sign language.

Through dance, she can share her feelings with people in her life who are hearing and who are Deaf and she doesn't have to translate or interpret for different communities.

5. **The dance instructor tells the main character that she is "playing it safe." What does she mean by this? What childhood experiences have shaped this?**

The main character is not expressing herself fully in her dance. The main character has learned to live in two different worlds, hearing and Deaf, and she is not expressing herself in either one.

6. **What event changes her view on her own identity?**

She is interested in a young man who is Deaf and she pretends she is too. He finds out she is hearing and tells her to "be herself".

7. **What changes after that?**

She starts to explore her own identity as someone who is hearing raised in a Deaf culture.

Tell students: This identity is known as CODA. Children of Deaf Adults.

8. **Before the movie I asked you to think about what the two cultures and languages being presented in the movie were. What are they?**

Hearing culture, Deaf culture. English language, sign language.

9. **Think of other examples where a person could feel stuck "between two worlds."**

Optional: Discussion Activity

MAKE THE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS INTERACTIVE.

Rather than ask questions and elicit answers from students, write the questions on numbered pieces of folded paper. Students sit in a circle and toss a ball to one another with music playing. When the teacher stops the music, the student with the ball pulls the first question and reads it. This student gives one idea, then tosses the ball to another student who tries to give another. When two or three ideas have been presented, discuss the ideas presented before moving to the next student until all the questions have been discussed.

Learning Activity

1. Brainstorm

Tell Students: In the movie, the main character was struggling to find her own identity. She demonstrated behaviours that helped the viewer understand that she felt like she was being torn between two cultures. She found a way to express her identity through her dance. In this activity we are going to explore what makes self-identity and find a way to creatively express your ideas.

We have talked about personal identity. I want you to now think about the many things that make you unique. Some characteristics may be similar to your friends or family. Think about what has influences your personal identity.

Record answers on chart paper or have students brainstorm individually or in small groups. Encourage students to use pictures and words to demonstrate their thinking.

Possible Influences may include: Family, disability, friends, interests, gender, ethnic background, culture, personality, values, beliefs, religion, preferences, attitudes, dreams, what we want to be, the influence of parents.

Optional: Brainstorming Activity

As an alternative to chart paper, have students write their ideas on sticky notes. They place their sticky notes on the chart paper or board. This provides an opportunity for each student to contribute one idea and allows for physical movement between discussions.

2. Art Project:

Students will create an art collage that uses images without words to represent the factors that influence their self-identity. They will create an image of themselves in the centre of the project with images flowing from it to communicate messages about themselves. Students can draw themselves, create an avatar or print a photograph.

Images are used to represent their self-identity that are drawn from the top of their head and to fill the upper half of the page.

EXAMPLES:



Images above came from LINK: tinyartroom.wordpress.com
Posted on February 6, 2013 by tinyartroom LINK: gravatar.com

3. Research Deaf Culture (optional)

What does Deaf Culture mean? Why is it important? What is the experience of people who are Deaf and how do they identify with their culture next to the world of hearing individuals? Research the topic of Deaf Culture to address these questions and create media to report your findings. Include a reflection. What did you learn? What surprised you? How has this changed your perceptions and understanding of Deaf Culture?

Have student research Deaf Culture and create media to report their findings.

Wrap Up

Option: Ask students to share their art, the images and their meaning.

1. **Teaching Tip:** Sharing personal descriptions of self might be intimidating for some students. As a class write or discuss some guidelines for interacting and responding. This is an important time to remind students to be respectful of each other.
2. **Tell Students:** The movie is about a person finding her identify and a way to express it. The movie also exposes us to the concept of Deaf Culture, hearing culture and how language is related to culture.

ASK STUDENTS:

What did you learn about Deaf Culture?

What is **CODA**? Why do you think it has been identified by this acronym?

What questions do you have?

Enrichment

1. Have students brainstorm ways to demonstrate their knowledge in a creative way. In the movie, the main character used dance to express herself creatively. What other ways can be used as creative expression?

Answers may vary. Suggestions include:

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|---------------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Acting/Drama | Singing | Writing songs or poems |
| Playing music or a musical instrument | Using fabric art to create a mural or depiction | Using digital media |
| Ice dancing | Sculptures | Murals |

2. Use chart paper and ask students to brainstorm **other ways that teens struggle with a similar dilemma**. What topics are important to teens and young adults?

Answers may vary. Some of the subjects that could be covered include:

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Diverse economic backgrounds | Diverse cultures | Second generation Immigrants |
| Sexuality & gender | Personal goals that vary from those of your parents | Physical disabilities |

Have students use one creative method of expression to address one of the dilemmas identified. What are the challenges and possible ways these can be addressed? Students can plan and implement their project individually or in groups.

RESOURCES:

Deaf Culture Centre

Canadian Association of the Deaf

Deaf Poets Society

Deaf Crows Collective

