



International Childbirth Education Association

Choosing and Using Childbirth Films – ICEA Teaching Idea Sheet #15

A picture is worth a thousand words, especially when teaching psychomotor skills in a childbirth education class. Here are some points to remember when choosing a childbirth film:

Film Requirements

- Shows scenes that cannot be reproduced in class
- Shows few scenes that can be reproduced in class
- Demonstrates/reinforces content taught in class
- Should stimulate discussion
- Should provide humor and entertainment
- Pace is fast enough to hold attention, but not so fast as to be confusing
- If flashbacks are used, should be easy to understand
- Cast gives viewers someone they can identify with (include diversity of race and socioeconomic level, and keep it current so fashions don't appear too outdated)
- Familiarizes viewers with medical scenes
- Good color and sound
- Long enough to cover learning objectives, but not too long for a pregnant woman to sit through
- Portrays labor and delivery realistically without scaring
- Must demonstrate good labor support using a variety of comfort techniques

- Must model several positions for labor and delivery
- Must present respectful medical staff that show compassion to the laboring woman and her support people
- Views of laboring woman should be tasteful and respect her dignity

Set Criteria BEFORE Previewing a Film

- Know your audience's educational and age level, and be sensitive to how their culture perceives birth.
- Vocabulary should be appropriate for audience
- Views of birth and medical procedures should not offend viewers
- Identify teaching objectives and goals
- What do you want the viewer to learn from the film?
- What information presented in a film do you feel is *essential*, *desirable*, and *optional*?
- Decide on desired format, maximum cost and length.
- Develop content criteria using the essential, desired and optional method. Be prepared to sacrifice some of your desired and

optional criteria. There is no perfect film.

- Decide what interventions should be included in the film.
- Decide if you want the labor to be perceived as short and easy or long and difficult, natural or with interventions, with or without complications or conflicts.
- Decide where the birth occurs, and who is in attendance.

Now You Are Ready To Watch

- Have criteria listed and check off as you watch.
- Note things you like in one column and things you do not like in another.
- Note how many times you laughed and felt "touched". Humor is absolutely essential.
- Write key points about the birth
- Watch only once before deciding to purchase. You may watch the film a second or third time to check details, but your impression after first viewing is the most important. Remember, your audience will only see it once and you are a more skilled viewer than your average audience member.

Ready to Decide

- Evaluate lists and priorities of each topic – essential, desirable, optional



- Consider price and estimate longevity. How soon will it appear dated?
- Have a colleague help you decide: choose someone with a different learning style, different culture, or different age than you to help.
- Use logic and good judgement to make your choice.

watching. Studies show that viewers may feel more fearful of birth after viewing a film, but later feel that seeing a birth film was beneficial in coping with labor and delivery.

How to Use a Film in Child Birth Class

Show a film after presenting and demonstrating the content in class. Do not show a birth film in the first class of a multi-session course.

SET the Film before Showing

- Explain what the film contains.
- Mention the points that you want the class to notice.
- Tell the class what, if anything, to disregard.
- Watch the film with your students; occasionally glance at their faces to see reactions. *Don't leave the room in case someone gets upset or faints.*
- Consider showing only parts of the film or pause it to make comments, where appropriate.
- Unless you are narrating, don't talk during a film.
- Consider showing the film backwards to loosen up a solemn group.
- Plan for an appropriate follow-up discussion. Have talking points ready.
- Do not be surprised if viewers are a bit stunned or emotional after

