

**DOCS**<sub>FOR</sub>**Schools**

**hotDOCS**

**OUTSPOKEN. OUTSTANDING.**

# DOCS FOR schools

In this session, we will...

- explore documentary film programming for schools
- examine festival models I have tried
- discuss details and logistics of organizing an in-school film festival
- share reactions from staff and students

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What is Docs for Schools?

- Hot Docs festival for schools
- In-school & Bloor Hot Docs Cinema Screenings
- Education packages for all selections
- Free!

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How does it work?

- Selections are announced in early Feb
- Schools choose up to 8 documentaries
- DVDs are sent early for preview
- Schools screen during the dates of Hot Docs
- DVDs and participation reports are returned

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## School-wide festival: Why?

- D.I. - creative, cutting-edge, thought-provoking, relevant
- Cross-curricular application
- Media literacy

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PLUS...

- Raise end-of-year energy level
- Unique opportunity for students in a city where film is so important
- Exciting school-wide event

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Why the library learning commons?

- LLC cross-curricular vision
- familiarity with curriculum across disciplines
- ability to collaborate and coordinate with and between departments
- ability to effectively manage the resources (creating records, check-in/out)

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## 2 Models

A.

Class screenings  
Lunch screenings\*  
After school  
screenings\*  
(\* school clubs only)

B.

Auditorium screenings  
Every period, every day  
Class sign-out available



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## Model A

- DVD sign-out in library
- Screenings take place in classrooms
- Tickets for lunch & after school screenings for clubs (film, eco, etc.)
- Tickets were ballots for prizes *(note caveat)*

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## PROs

- Teacher choice  
(all films available to all classes)
- No central coordinating

## CONs

- Viewer overlap (!)
- Documentary length may not fit class/lunch time

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## Model B

- Venue - auditorium
- Large scale intro and Q&A
- Multiple school-wide screenings per day
- Class sign up via Google Form
- DVDs *still* available for sign-out from library

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## PROs

- Cinema experience
- Better viewing quality
- Multi-level, multi-discipline Q&A
- Limited viewer overlap
- Minimal class disruption
- More staff involvement

## CONs

- Need “buy-in” from the whole school (*admin, leadership team*)
- Not possible to please everyone regarding scheduling

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## Key People

- Teachers - (selection of films, scheduling input, facilitators, event promotion, logistics)
- Students - volunteers (event promotion, AV, seating, crowd control)
- Caretaking
- Main office (bells, announcements)

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## Checklist:

- ❑ Put in the school calendar EARLY
- ❑ Survey teachers as soon as titles are released (*Feb*)
- ❑ Consult dept. heads to match films w/ courses
- ❑ Cross-reference with Hot Docs' subject grid
- ❑ Consult master timetable to schedule films appropriately
- ❑ Share schedule, film synopses & curriculum material
- ❑ Make preview DVDs available w/ generic library record

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- ❑ Send [Google Form](#) for class sign-up (include course codes and # of students)
- ❑ Share [master sign-up spreadsheet](#) with staff for collaboration opportunities and capacity control
- ❑ Invite volunteers to introduce and facilitate Q&A for each film
- ❑ Consult with caretaking re set-up & tear-down
- ❑ Arrange AV team (lights, curtains, mics, projection, sound)

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- ❑ Prepare announcements (daily & before each film)
- ❑ Send curriculum material for EACH film to all attending class teachers (2x)
- ❑ Send reminders to attending class teachers the day before each film
- ❑ If offering club screenings at lunch and after school, prepare [tickets](#).
- ❑ Track attendee #s & course codes - reports & advocacy
- ❑ Offer forum for student responses (AW or Google Site)



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## Some Considerations

### Scheduling Challenges?

- Consider proposing a special festival schedule

### Sensitive Content?

- Consider smaller screenings with more intimate Q&A
- Offer a “safe zone” so students can step out

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## Successes?

- Approximately 1,500 students viewed 11 films in one week
- Staff and students on spare bring actual number much higher
- Now part of the annual schedule at *CALC*

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*Three cheers for  
Gina! ...so lucky  
to have been able  
to participate.*

*J.M.*

*You Rock!  
Thanks for  
all your  
hard work.*

*JSR*

*It was a great  
program this year.  
Great work! CK*

*A HUGE thank-you!  
We are all greatly  
appreciative. LM*

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Thank you for all  
your hard work!  
Congrats on  
another  
successful event.  
- RB (principal)

*Thank you for all your  
initiative and hard  
work. MK (VP)*

**I echo the sentiment. It  
was a great opportunity  
for our students (and us).  
SM**

Thank you  
for making  
Hot Docs  
happen at  
CALC. I'm  
going to miss  
you. SJ

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It gave me the opportunity to explore places and concepts that my personal knowledge fell short.

***A real gift!***

**It showed me that there are so many issues that take place in our backyard and we are either ignorant or simply turn a blind eye.**

...opening my eyes to an array of issues...

... inspiring and eye opening realities that can be of use in students' courses.

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**[Docs for Schools] offered a way for teachers to incorporate film into the curriculum and allowing students to achieve and interact in a stimulating environment.**

...it got us sharing insightful and constructive banter on topics that ignited intelligent conversation based on current events...

[The festival] really did give me a sense of being part of the CALC student body.

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For more information from Hot Docs:

Docs for Schools

[www.hotdocs.ca/youth](http://www.hotdocs.ca/youth)

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Alternative Film Screening Resources:

REEL Canada

<http://www.reelcanada.ca/>



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**THAT'S A WRAP!**



<http://goo.gl/z7N0aW>