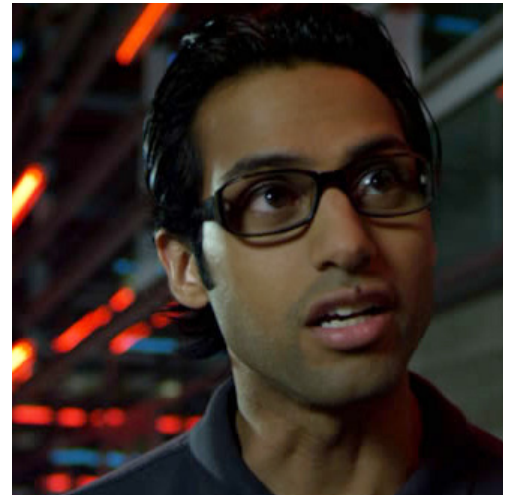


FUTURESTATES[®]



Crossover

Directed by Tina Mabry

[C] COMMUNITY CLASSROOM
ENGAGING STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS THROUGH FILM

PRESENTED BY:
ITVS
Public Media's
Independent Voice



FUTURESTATES.TV

ABOUT

FUTURESTATES

Imagining tomorrow's America today,



SCENES AND BEHIND THE SCENES FROM *FUTURESTATES* FILMS.
TOP LEFT TO BOTTOM RIGHT: *Gunny* by Patrick Stettner, *That Which Once Was* by Kimi Takesue, *Laura Keller-NB* by Mo Perkins, and *Beholder* by Nisha Ganatra



Futurestates is a series of independent mini-features – short narrative films created by experienced filmmakers and emerging talents – transforming today's complex social issues into visions about what life in America will be like in decades to come. Now in its third season, *Futurestates*, which debuted in March 2010, is available online at futurestates.tv.

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Public Media's
Independent Voice

The Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web and the Emmy® Award-winning weekly series *Independent Lens* on Monday nights at 10 PM on PBS. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens, and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue, and serve underserved audiences. Since its inception in 1991, ITVS programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing TV audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. More information about ITVS can be obtained by visiting itvs.org. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people.

OVERVIEW



Do all children in the United States have the same opportunities to succeed in life?

According to some research reports and media accounts, American society is facing a growing separation between rich and poor. Many researchers find that this disparity is increasingly reflected in our education system. Do all children in the United States have the same opportunities to succeed in life? And to what lengths would parents go in order to give their children the same chances to succeed? Over the past couple of years there have been political movements, Occupy Wall Street, for example, that have tried to bring attention to the growing economic divide in this country. This episode of *FutureStates* is called *Crossover*, referring to the desires of the main character, Angela, to help her children “cross over” from their poor public school into the fully resourced private school in a restricted section of the city. She is willing to consider undergoing an illegal organ donation procedure to pay for their chance at a better future.



TARGET AUDIENCE:

Grades 9–12
ENGLISH, SOCIAL STUDIES, OR SCIENCE

DURATION:

The main lesson is designed to be completed within a **55-minute class period**, with additional and extension activities that can expand to three or four class periods.

The film itself has a running time of about **20 minutes**.

STANDARDS:

Common Core State Standards for Reading Literature:

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Common Core State Standards for Writing:

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

BEFORE

(5–10) minutes

Based on the time available, ask students to consider one or more of the following questions and topics:

1. Fictional news broadcasts in the film refer to the recent overturning of the Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*. It might be helpful for students to complete a K/W/L (Knows/Wants to know/Learned) chart about the topic. Students should know that in 1954, the Court determined that “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.” The result was that forced segregation of white and black students in separate schools was illegal. Students ought to also consider whether segregation still exists today, despite the 1954 ruling.
2. Much of the plot of this film is about Angela’s children’s movement from a public school to a private school. Ask students to complete and share a Venn diagram comparing public and private schools, based on their own experiences and background knowledge. Or, ask students to identify the rich and low income schools in their district or area. Why are some schools wealthier than others? What are the obstacles that students from poorer schools have to overcome that students from wealthier schools do not? Or, ask students to make a list of all of the elements that would make a perfect school: course offerings, materials, resources, class size, etc. Then, students should compare their ideal list with their actual school. What keeps students from having everything on their ideal list?
3. The other main plot deals with Angela’s selling of some of her own organs to fund her children’s crossover into the private school system. Students should have an opportunity to learn about and discuss the issue of organ transplants and donations before viewing the film. Ask students to debate whether people should be allowed to sell an organ, such as a kidney, that they can live without, which is currently illegal. Why is it legal to donate an organ but not to sell it?
4. Additional previewing activity: if students have not been asked to view film critically before, you may want to consider taking some time to review [film terminology](#) with students, using the lesson on the *Futurestates* For Educators page.

DURING

(20) minutes

As students watch the film, ask them to take notes about the details they notice about the school Jennifer attends, and the environment in which her family lives. On the other side of the chart, students should take notes on what they infer about the new school and home life that Angela wants for her children. These inferences should be based on information presented in the film, including the news broadcasts that can be heard on the soundtrack.

AFTER

(8–10) minutes

Based on the time available, ask students to consider some of the following questions and topics:

1. Using the free resource, [PollEverywhere](#), develop a quick poll that students can respond to with their cell phones on how they feel about Angela's decision at the end of the film: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree. You can also have students text in the reasons why they feel the way they do about her choice. Conduct the poll again to see if students have changed their opinions. Another low-tech approach to this activity is to have students move to one of four corners of the room, based on their opinion. As they share their reasoning, students can move to one of the other corners.
2. Take some time to help students consider the deep, personal sacrifice that Angela is making for her children. What are the factors that have put her in this position and what are other possible solutions? Ask students to write a letter as if they were Angela to Jennifer or to Quincy that explains the choice she made.
3. The film takes place in 2028. How did the filmmakers make the time period seem both futuristic and recognizable to us today? What were the effects of some of the choices they made?
4. While there is little information provided about it in the film, what do students think brother Quincy's life will be like? How will it be different from Jennifer's?
5. Notice that we only see only a very little bit of the outside of the school and housing of the private, restricted areas. Why do you think the filmmakers chose to keep us from seeing too much of this? What is the effect of this on the viewer? Is Jennifer really going to be better off? Why or why not?
6. Ask students to make a list of ways that Jennifer's school is similar and different from their own school or schools in their community. Is the portrayal exaggerated, and if so, is the exaggeration effective?

ASSESSMENT

(10) minutes

Have students write a diary entry from the point of view of Jennifer a week or two after her arrival in her new school, in which she compares her new life with her old. Be sure that the entry draws on specific evidence that the film presents, as well as appropriate inferences about how you imagine the new school would look like, based on the information included in the film.

If you have additional time for this assessment, you may want to have students create a PowerPoint of Jennifer's first days at the new school with contrasting images of her old school. Students could create their own images or they can access legally acquired photographs at creativecommons.org.

ADDITIONAL MEDIA LITERACY ACTIVITIES

1. Using their cell phones, students can make a film or a slide show of still images that document the conditions of their own school. They should focus on exploring a single topic: overcrowded classrooms, cafeteria food, athletics, cliques or social groups, etc. Be sure that students acquire these images ethically and that they receive permission from anyone who is recognizable in their film. It would also be advisable to alert your school administration about this activity.

Watch the documentary *Crossed Over* (7 minutes), about the making of this film. Why do you think the producers of the documentary decided to start not with the film at all, but with interviews and images of actual classroom teachers and administrators? In the documentary, the director of photography of *Crossover* discusses his and the director's choices for the contrasting areas – restricted and unrestricted – of the film. What were some of the most effective choices that helped you to understand these differences?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Have students use the Predict-O-Meter tool on the *Futurestates* website. First, using the forms at the end of this lesson plan, students will evaluate up to three predictions from this film based on scientific facts and their own knowledge. Then, they'll have an opportunity to make a prediction of their own about an issue raised in the film and have it evaluated by another student. Finally, if they have made an interesting and a likely prediction, they can have it posted onto the *Futurestates* website.
2. Explore the science and ethics of transplants. Read or listen to the PBS story transcript about the **ethics of transplants** or the article and the charts about the issue of **transplant tourism**, which, according to the World Health Organization, is where rich patients can essentially buy organs that have been harvested from poor residents of countries like India, Bangladesh, and others. Students can then create an awareness campaign about the issue that includes press releases, posters, videos, editorials, or podcasts.
3. Explore the issue of school funding further by reading a portion of an article written by Jonathon Kozol called "**The Shame of the Nation**," or an excerpt from his book **Savage Inequalities**. Students could also view portions of the documentaries *Hard Times at Douglass High* or *Waiting for Superman*. Once they have an idea of the problem of inequitable school funding, students should then research possible solutions, such as vouchers, school choice, federal funding, etc. and present their solutions in a persuasive speech, letter to the editor, or their own documentary or fiction film.
4. While it is not explicitly stated, it is clear that Quincy, Jennifer's brother, is going to have a very different education than his sister because of his autism. Unfortunately, until very recently, this also has been the case in real life; it was thought that autistic students could not learn. Ask students to research the history of educating autistic students in this country. A good starting place could be this power point: http://www.dps.missouri.edu/Autism/2011AWNC/Aut_Hist_Handouts.pdf. Then, students could hold a panel discussion about the challenges that autistic students face and the ways that the education system can best meet their needs.

As you watch, note the conditions presented in the kids' current school and home life, by referring to details the filmmakers use (such as costumes, set designs, props, music, lighting, and other choices).

Current School and Home Conditions

Inferences About New School

Futurestates

Predict-O-Meter

Log on to www.futurestates.tv. Go to the Predict-O-Meter. There are three rows of predictions. The row on the far left contains the predictions based on the *Futurestates* films, including *Crossover*. The center row consists of predictions submitted by viewers. The far right row contains dates of know events. For this activity, click on the green *Futurestates* predictions. The number that appears in each green square is the number of predictions related to the specified year. Be certain to scroll down to see all predictions for a given year. At the end of each prediction is the tag for the film associated with each prediction. Find as many predictions as you can for the *Crossover* film. Choose three predictions to evaluate using the rubric below. When the assigned evaluations are finished, create at least one prediction of your own. Your prediction will be evaluated by another student. If the evaluation is at least a “3”, you may post it on the *Futurestates* website.

FILM: _____ YEAR: _____

PREDICTION: _____

KEY- No:1 Somewhat:2 Yes:3 Don't Know:4	VALUE
Is the prediction based on scientific possibilities?	
Do the consequences of the prediction support the film?	
Does the prediction directly lead to the next prediction?	
Do known events in the past support the prediction?	
Is this prediction plausible? (This is your opinion.)	
Overall Total: (add up the values)	
Score: (Overall Total ÷ 5)	

FILM: _____ YEAR: _____

PREDICTION: _____

KEY- No:1 Somewhat:2 Yes:3 Don't Know:4	VALUE
Is the prediction based on scientific possibilities?	
Do the consequences of the prediction support the film?	
Does the prediction directly lead to the next prediction?	
Do known events in the past support the prediction?	
Is this prediction plausible? (This is your opinion.)	
Overall Total: (add up the values)	
Score: (Overall Total ÷ 5)	

FILM: _____ **YEAR:** _____

PREDICTION: _____

KEY- No:1 Somewhat:2 Yes:3 Don't Know:4	VALUE
Is the prediction based on scientific possibilities?	
Do the consequences of the prediction support the film?	
Does the prediction directly lead to the next prediction?	
Do known events in the past support the prediction?	
Is this prediction plausible? (This is your opinion.)	
Overall Total: (add up the values)	
Score: (Overall Total ÷ 5)	

PERSONAL PREDICTION FOR _____ **(film name)**

NAME: _____ **EVALUATOR:** _____

FILM: _____ **YEAR:** _____

PREDICTION: _____

KEY- No:1 Somewhat:2 Yes:3 Don't Know:4	VALUE
Is the prediction based on scientific possibilities?	
Do the consequences of the prediction support the film?	
Does the prediction directly lead to the next prediction?	
Do known events in the past support the prediction?	
Is this prediction plausible? (This is your opinion.)	
Overall Total: (add up the values)	
Score: (Overall Total ÷ 5)	

Should this prediction be posted to the website? _____

Teacher's approval _____

Date posted _____

If not posted, explain the reason for declining.

CREDITS

CURRICULA WRITER

John Golden

John Golden is currently a curriculum specialist for high school Language Arts in Portland, Oregon. He is the author of *Reading in the Dark: Using Film as a Tool in the English Classroom* (NCTE, 2001) and *Reading in the Reel World: Teaching Documentaries and Other Nonfiction Texts* (NCTE, 2006). John has delivered presentations and led workshops around the country in order to help teachers use film actively in the classroom as a way for students to improve their reading, analytical and critical thinking skills.

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SCENES FROM FUTURE STATES FILMS.

TOP LEFT TO BOTTOM RIGHT: *Gunny* by Patrick Stettner, *Advantageous* by Jennifer Phang, *Asparagus* by Robby Henson, *Laura Keller-NB* by Mo Perkins, and *Worker Drone* by Sharat Raju

