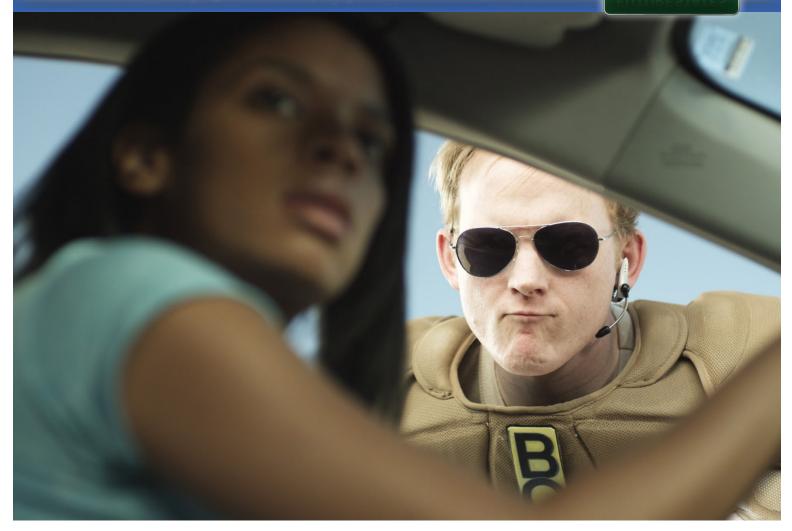# TIA AND MARCO
LESSON PLAN

FUTURESTATES

PRESENTED BY:

cpb [ITVS]

FUTURESTATES.TV

COMMUNITY CLASSROOM
Independent Television Service (ITVS)
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COMMUNITY CLASSROOM is an innovative education resource providing short documentary video content and accompanying curricular materials, lesson plans, and homework assignments to high school and community college instructors and youth-serving community-based organizations. Film modules are drawn from documentaries scheduled for broadcast on the Emmy Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*. Content is grouped into subject specific segments that correspond to lesson plans and educational activities. All COMMUNITY CLASSROOM lesson plans are designed with key education standards in mind, and are available free of charge online, along with the film modules.

COMMUNITY CLASSROOM is a program of the Independent Television Service, created with support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Lesson plans were developed with guidance from the American Association of Community Colleges, KQED Education Network, National Association for Media Literacy Education, National Council for the Social Studies, National State Teachers of the Year, and PBS Teachers.

Developing Empathy for Others
Lesson Plan Overview

A controversial issue, by definition, is one in which both sides have a legitimate argument – the problem is finding common ground. While the film *Tia and Marco* uses the controversy of illegal immigration as part of its setting, the film does not take a side in the argument. The film does, however, point to another issue that deserves exploration: how we deal with people we perceive as different from us. Students are especially sensitive to issues of stereotyping and prejudice, so this contemporary film should be very engaging.

Plot summary: Her year of mandatory service has caused Tia, an African American woman, to lose respect for many of the people she calls "illegals." When her boyfriend encourages her to "have empathy," she snaps back, "You have no idea what it's like here." As a result of her interaction with Marco, a young Latino migrant, and with a prejudiced border patrol agent, however, Tia comes to regret Marco's treatment at the hands of her colleagues and his final capture.

In this lesson, students will analyze *Tia and Marco*, focusing on the development of empathy. They will discuss the impact of empathy (or its absence) in their own lives and produce a story that models empathy. This lesson develops skills in drawing inferences and character analysis.

Target Audience
This lesson is designed for high school students of all ability levels.

Total Duration
This lesson will take about 2 days.

Educational Standards:
This lesson addresses Writing Core Standard 3:

For grades 9-10:
Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

For grades 11-12:
Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Procedures

Teacher Preparation
- The teacher needs to preview *Tia and Marco*, just over 14 minutes long.
- The teacher will also find it helpful to watch "The Making of *Tia and Marco*" (about 8½ minutes).
- Make sure a projector is available so that all students can watch the film together.
- Bring copies of the Viewing Guide and Predict-O-Meter evauation sheet.

Objective for the Lesson
Students will analyze the details that move the narrative forward and that reveal changes in a character.

Lesson Structure

Beginning (5-10 minutes)
Invite students to consider their own stereotypes by having them complete the following sentences, either individually or as a whole class.

1. Teachers fall into two categories: ___ and ___.
2. Joe knows a lot about computers. His social life must be ___.
3. When they drive, old people ___.
4. Women drivers are ___.
5. Rednecks are ___.
6. French people are ___.
7. Televangelists are ___.
8. Teens are considered bad drivers because ___.
9. A few homeless people are mentally ill. The rest of them are ___.
10. Rich people are ___.

Discuss briefly: we all know that stereotypes aren't true. Somehow, though, they continue to exist. Have you ever been on the receiving end of a stereotype? What happened?

Middle (60-75 minutes)
Announce that students will be watching a film in which one person initially clings to her prejudice, but then changes her mind. Ask students to watch for the moment when she starts to change her mind. Then show the film (just over 14 minutes long).

Afterwards, have students gather in groups of about five to share their impressions of when empathy starts to appear in the film. Compile answers, working toward consensus. (Tia is a no-nonsense, effective border patrol officer at the beginning of the film. She has also, however, lost her sense of empathy for Mexicans attempting to cross the border into the United States. By the end, however, she has connected on a human level with Marco and tries to help him escape. She gains her empathy – slowly – while watching over him one night, feeding him, considering herself as a new mother-to-be, and finally witnessing that the racist border patrol officer has harmed him. In this, she feels his humanity even more deeply and begins to understand people as individuals, not as part of an "offending" group.)

Distribute the Viewing Guide and ask students to watch the film again, this time as writers. How has the writer of *Tia and Marco* made this conflict realistic and vivid for the audience? Encourage students to take notes as they watch the second time.

Play the film again. Because it can be difficult to take notes while viewing, allow students to share their observations informally for a few minutes before compiling them into a master list at the front of the room. Discuss the power details have in conveying a message in everyday life.

End
Point out that Tia didn't understand her prejudice against Marco until she witnessed the racist border patrol officer causing him harm and began to respect him as an individual. Ask students if there are any other ways to fight prejudice. Ask them to identify the strategies that they use themselves.
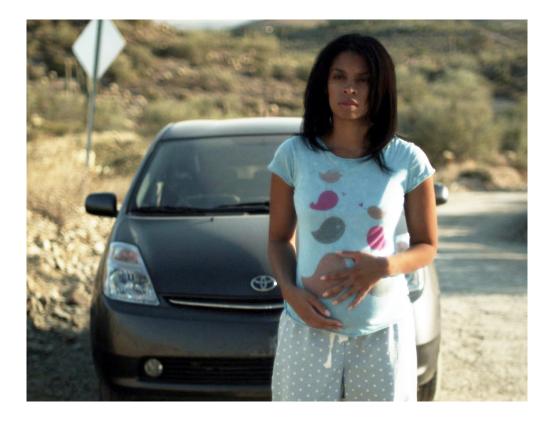
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Suggested Follow-up Activities

Depending on the quality of the closing discussion, students might establish a plan of action leading to a campaign against prejudice in their school. This could include posters, films, and/or guest speakers.

Invite someone who has been a victim of prejudice to speak about how to combat it. This might include a Holocaust survivor, someone who worked for civil rights in the Sixties, a gay rights activist, a member of an ethnic minority, or a Muslim cleric.

Students could produce a digital story on the life of someone who demonstrated empathy for others. (For more information on digital storytelling, visit: http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu.)

Viewing Guide (Teachers Edition)

A good narrative will accomplish each of the following tasks. As you watch the film, your job is to determine how it accomplishes each task.

Task One
Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.

How do we know what the conflict/problem is? How do we meet the characters?

Task Two
Use narrative techniques such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

What is Tia like at the beginning? What is she like at the end? What causes her to change?

Is Marco a likeable character? Why or why not?

Viewing Guide (Teachers Edition) cont.

Task Three
Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.

What examples of cause and effect do we see in this film?

Task Four
Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

What details in the film (dialogue and images) stand out?

Task Five
Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

Does the ending make sense? Why or why not?

Viewing Guide (Teachers Edition)

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Task One
Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.

How do we know what the conflict/problem is? How do we meet the characters?

We know what the conflict/problem is because of Tia's words and actions, by listening to the TV news report, and by noting the cover of Tia's manual. We also hear John refer to torture, which Tia denies weakly. Marco offers an insight when he says, "You're just not used to communicating with us." When Marco escapes, Tia decides to chase him, even though she is no longer a border patrol officer.

We meet Tia at work, capturing an "illegal." We meet Marco when he asks for help. We meet John as he talks to Tia and watch him at work. We meet the border patrol guard when he stops Tia. We learn the reason for the delay from the communication device.

Task Two
Use narrative techniques such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

What is Tia like at the beginning? What is she like at the end? What causes her to change?

Tia is a no-nonsense, effective border patrol officer at the beginning of the film. She has also, however, lost her sense of empathy for Mexicans attempting to cross the border into the United States. By the end, however, she has connected on a human level with Marco and tries to help him escape. She gains her empathy – slowly – while watching over him one night, feeding him, considering herself as a new mother-to-be, and finally witnessing that the racist border patrol officer has harmed him. In this, she feels his humanity even more deeply and begins to understand people as individuals, not as part of an "offending" group.

Is Marco a likeable character? Why or why not?

Marco is likeable. He treats Tia like a person even when, at the beginning, she treats him like an "illegal" (not a person). He asks her about her baby and makes no effort to harm her, even when she is asleep. When they are caught, he even offers her some lines to try on the border guard.

Viewing Guide (Teachers Edition) cont.

Task Three
Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.

What examples of cause and effect do we see in this film?

Because it is her year of mandatory service, Tia is patrolling the border.
Because the alarm goes off, Tia catches Marco.
Because she captures Marco, Tia handcuffs him.
Because she feels guilty, Tia shares her meal with Marco.
Because the border patrolman abuses Marco, Tia feels empathy for Marco as an individual.
Because Tia surrenders, Marco is taken away.
(Many more answers are possible.)

Task Four
Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

What details in the film (dialogue and images) stand out?

In the opening scene, the man's face is pushed into the dirt.
A newscaster encourages people to conserve power and water, but Tia's house has all the lights on, and she draws a bath.
Marco asks, "Lady, can you just help me?"
A brilliant moon explains the later report of "high activity" that night.
When the border patrolman refers to Tia's unborn child as an "it," she responds with "Him. It's a 'him,' not an 'it.' His name is Marco." She might also be referring to the character Marco.
(Many more answers are possible.)

Task Five
Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

Does the ending make sense? Why or why not?

It is disappointing but logical that Tia gives up trying to escape the border patrol. She knows what they are capable of, after all. Her anguish at seeing Marco taken away seems genuine and believable.

Extension Activity: Predict-O-Meter

Objectives
- Investigate and analyze predictions for *Tia and Marco* as posted on the FUTURESTATES Predict-O-Meter.
- Formulate and post their prediction on the Predict-O-Meter site.

Beginning (5-7 minutes)
Reactivate prior knowledge by reviewing discussions related to the film.

Middle (30-35 minutes)
Students will investigate predictions as presented on the Predict-O-Meter located on the FUTURESTATES website. After selecting and evaluating three of the predictions using the evaluation rubric, students will develop at least one prediction to post on the website. The proposed prediction will be evaluated by a peer and approved by the instructor before posting. The predictions may alter the course projected in the Predict-O-Meter predictions. Students may require an example of a valid prediction. Using the rubric to instruct the students, prepare a sample prediction and lead the class in an analysis of the statement. The following is an example of a proposed prediction and the evaluation of it using the prepared rubric.

Proposed prediction: "In 2025, Tia, plagued by memories of Marco, writes a best-selling book about her Year of Service and about how she was trained to think about illegal immigrants as not quite human. She starts a non-profit organization to fight prejudice and spread empathy."

- *Is the prediction based on realistic possibilities?*
  Yes. People often write about events in their lives.

- *Do the consequences of the prediction support the film?*
  Yes. Tia seems genuinely sorry when Marco is taken away.

- *Do known events in the past support the prediction?*
  Yes. Many nonprofit organizations exist to improve society.

- *Is this prediction plausible?*
  This is the evaluator's opinion based on the evidence presented in defense of the prediction.

End (Time Varies)
FUTURESTATES Predict-O-Meter Activity
Distribute the FUTURESTATES Predict-O-Meter Evaluation Sheet and go over the instructions with the students before directing them to complete the activity.

Predict-O-Meter Evaluation Form

FUTURESTATES Predict-O-Meter Activity
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 *Tia and Marco*. The center row consists of predictions submitted by viewers. The far right row contains dates of known 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 *Tia and Marco* 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: _____

	No 1	Somewhat 2	Yes 3	Don't know 0
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.)				
Total: (add column)				

Overall Total: (Add totals for each column together) _____   Score: <u>Overall Total</u> = _____
                                                                              5

Film:_____   **Year:** _____

Prediction: _____

	No 1	Somewhat 2	Yes 3	Don't know 0
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.)				
Total: (add column)				

Overall Total: (Add totals for each column together) _____   Score: <u>Overall Total</u> = _____
                                                                              5

FUTURESTATES

Film:_____   **Year:** _____

Prediction: _____

	No 1	Somewhat 2	Yes 3	Don't know 0
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.)				
Total: (add column)				

Overall Total: (Add totals for each column together) _____   Score: Overall Total = _____
                                                                                            5

Personal prediction for _____ **(film name)**

Name: _____   **Evaluator:** _____

Year: _____

Prediction: _____

	No 1	Somewhat 2	Yes 3	Don't know 0
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.)				
Total: (add column)				

Overall Total: (Add totals for each column together) _____   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.

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LESSON PLAN CREDITS

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Carla Beard teaches high school English in Indiana. She often presents at NCTE and has served as Teacher in Residence for the Indiana Department of Education, where she helped teachers integrate technology into their classrooms. She maintains Web English Teacher, a web-based resource for English Language Arts teachers.

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About FUTURESTATES:
Imagining tomorrow's America today, 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. The first season of FUTURESTATES debuted in March 2010, and is available online at futurestates.tv.

About ITVS:
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 Tuesday 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.