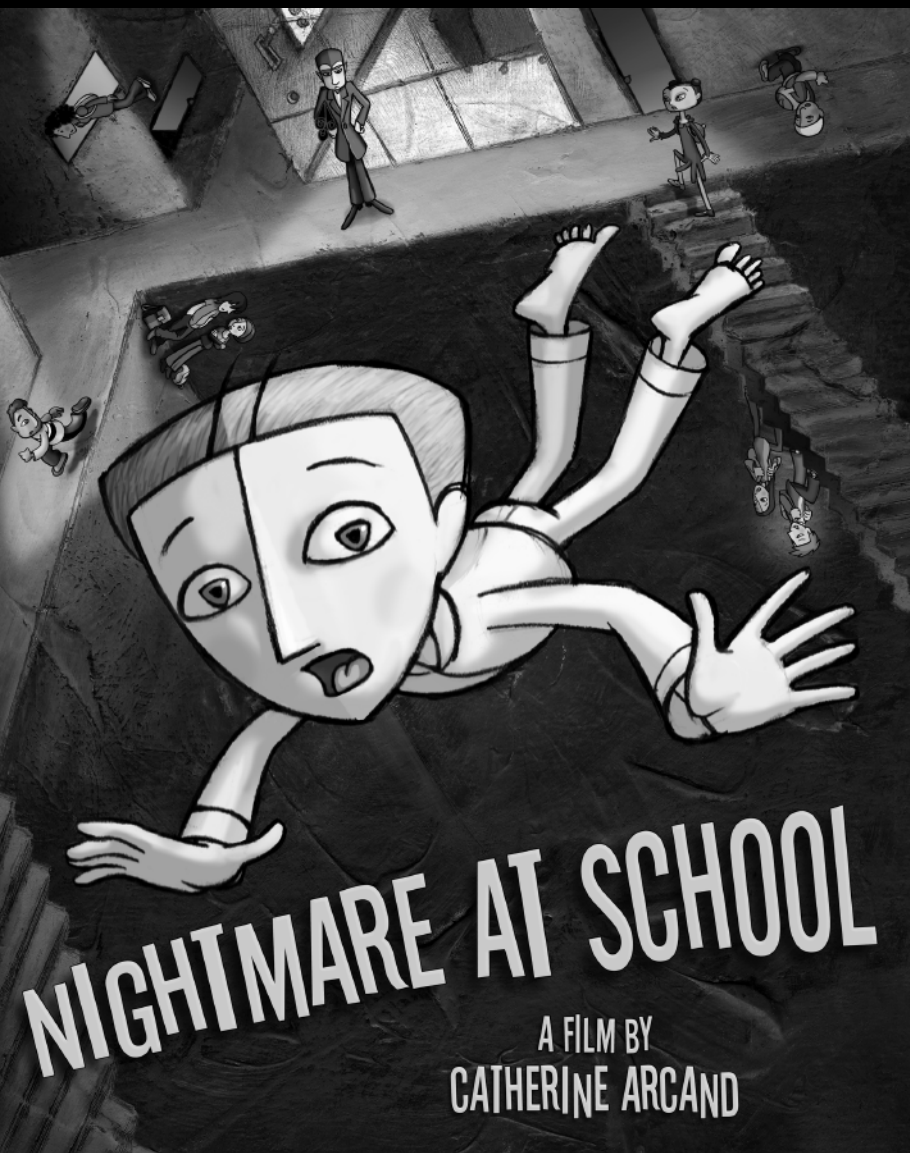


LESSON PLAN



NIGHTMARE AT SCHOOL

A FILM BY
CATHERINE ARCAND

A NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA PRODUCTION



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NIGHTMARE AT SCHOOL

**Produced and distributed by the
National Film Board of Canada**

2006 – 8 min 43 s

Technique: Paper drawings

Information: 1-800-267-7710

Web site: www.nfb.ca

NIGHTMARE AT SCHOOL

LESSON PLAN

OBJECTIVE

To allow students to express their fears and recognize the signs of fear in order to overcome it.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Students aged 10 to 13

CONNECTIONS

Languages - Social Sciences - Arts and culture

GOALS OF LESSON PLAN

Students will become aware of the mechanism and signs of fear. They'll see that nightmares express many of our fears but are an exaggeration of them. In particular, they'll describe the fears they have about school and find ways of overcoming them.

PREPARATORY ACTIVITY

A nightmare rears its ugly head!

Approximate duration: 45 minutes

Begin the activity by discussing the topic of nightmares with the class:

- How would you describe a nightmare?
- Why do we have them?

Get the students to form small groups and take turns telling each other about a nightmare. Tell them to rank each nightmare on a scale of 1 to 10 depending on how much fear it evokes (10 most fear, 1 least). Next they compare notes to see how subjective fear can be. As a class, discuss these results using these questions:

- From the rankings your team made, what do the nightmares have in common and what are the differences?
- How do you explain the different reactions to a nightmare?
- What themes did these nightmares have in common?
- Which of these nightmares were connected with school?

ACTIVITY

The school of my fears and dreams!

Approximate duration: around 90 minutes

STEP 1 Ask the students to design their dream school with the people who go to it, the building and the things in it. Ask them to do the same for a school of their worst nightmare (e.g. a school with no windows containing sad people, etc.).

STEP 2 Ask the students to get back into their teams and compare designs. Ask them to find what they have or don't have in common.

STEP 3 Watch the film and then ask these questions:

- What's the film about?
- What does the main character experience? What emotion does he seem to feel? How is it shown?
- Who are the other characters? What are they doing?
- What did you feel while watching?
- How did you identify with the character?

STEP 4 To relate this nightmare and illustrate the boy's fears, the director uses various characters, sights and sounds. Ask your students to look out for these when they watch again, as they'll have to identify them. Ask them to make a table like the one below, adding 15 extra lines for more sights and sounds. Watch the film with them up to the moment where the boy dives into liquid in a test tube. (7:16).

TABLE

Sight/sound	In the nightmare	In reality
<i>Main character</i>	<i>Boy becomes smaller when he enters classroom ...</i>	<i>I'm normal height</i>
<i>Stairs</i>	<i>Very long and floating in the air ...</i>	<i>Three storeys, regular steps ...</i>
<i>Footsteps</i>	<i>Strong and menacing</i>	<i>Normal sound of footsteps</i>
<i>Any other sight/sound</i>		

STEP 5 Finish watching, then get the students to complete the three columns of their table. To complete the third column, each of them becomes the main character and their school the place to describe. Afterwards, ask these questions:

- What do you notice when you compare the descriptions of the nightmare with your description of reality? What can you learn?
- What's the boy's emotion at the end of the film? How does he manage to overcome it?
- How does the film end?
- What explains the change in the boy's attitude? The director uses images to show the change. What are these images? Do you think they work?
- Why does the director show photos of graduates at the end of the film? Which people do we see in the frames?
- What did you learn from this film?

STEP 6 To close, ask each student to complete this phrase:
"At school, when I'm afraid of ... I calm down by ...
so I can manage to ..."

Then ask them to add to the list other ways of overcoming one's fears (e.g. coming to terms with them, relaxation, etc.). The lists will be displayed in class for reference.

RECAP

Suggested duration: 60 minutes

Get the students to make a cartoon in which they are the hero/heroine and overcome a fear in a context other than school.

REFLECTIVE SHARING

Students must explain what a fear is, describe its signs and the ways of overcoming it, and explain the differences between nightmare and reality.

OTHER RELEVANT FILMS

Tragic Story with Happy Ending

By Regina Pessoa 2005 – 7 min 40 s

Audience: ages 10 to 12

Here and There

By Obom 2006 – 9 min

Audience: ages 10 to 12

Through my Thick Glasses

By Pjotr Sapegin 2004 – 12 min 41 s

Audience – age 12 and over

To order, call 1-800-267-7710