Documentary Role Play

Task: Consider the following scenario, and discuss what your team thinks about the moment and what you would do if YOU were documenting the moment.

*In preparation for a community-wide open house, students and teachers at Anyburg Middle School decided that it would help people understand the school experience if each class recorded a video of a typical day. The school had a limited amount of video, sound, and lighting equipment, so staff worked out a schedule for each class to have the cameras for two days.*

*By chance, Ms. Perez's science class ended up with the cameras on days when students were doing test prep. The students didn't think that footage of them mostly reading, taking notes, and occasionally asking questions was representative of their normal, vibrant class with hands-on labs and real-world research problems. But that left them with a dilemma. Should they shoot what was actually happening in their class that day, or should they re-enact what would happen on a more typical day? To make things even more complicated, on the second day of their video shoot, someone accidentally knocked over a tray with test tubes and beakers. This had never happened in class before. Students disagreed about whether to leave in or edit out the footage of the accident and cleanup.*

Discuss:

* What production choices would a documentary filmmaker make and why?
* How about a Hollywood filmmaker?
* How about a reporter from a location television station?
* What would be the best representation of the class and why?

More Discussion:

* Are there things this class could have done to convey their message besides re-enactment of shooting students reading?
* If you were going to document THIS class, what would you shoot and why?
* What would count as a good representation of their class experience?
* Would it be the same for every student?

School Cafeteria Documentary

Task: Plan a documentary about your school’s cafeteria.

1. List the footage you would need
2. Potential interviewees, including roles of those interviewees.
3. Main questions they would ask or address.

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**Directions:** Cut these out and give one to each groups. Tell them to keep the angle of their documentary a secret from others.

**Group 1** – How does the student body feel about the school

cafeteria? What do the students like? What do they think can be

improved?

**Group 2 –** What kind of food is being served? What is the

nutritional value? How does the quality of food compare to that of

neighboring schools’ cafeterias?

**Group 3** - Profile the head chef in the cafeteria.

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