

TRUMAN SHOW – unitplan

Lesson One

Notes/Discussion:

Reality TV

- Big Brother
- Survivor
- NZ Idol
- Blah blah blah...

Shows with 'ordinary people', willing participants.
Critically rubbished as "exploitation for the masses" but universally popular – a ratings winner.

WHY? (look for ideas on board)

Human Nature – we like to watch/observe other people's lives in action – neighbours, workmates, sporting figures, celebs – doesn't matter who. The way a person **ACTS/REACTS** makes for great viewing on a **SUPERFICIAL** level. Perhaps not a huge deal of thinking involved, but then television is often called 'chewing gum for the brain'

DISCUSSION TASK:

Read the following **excerpt** and in groups discuss the following points, come up with a reasonable response to:

- Does television have a responsibility to be responsible in what it shows audiences?
- Why are reality TV shows so popular?
- Do you agree with the idea that reality TV shows us a lot about ourselves?

(Feedback on issues, after discussion-time.)

Notes:

The film that we are going to study is 'The Truman Show'. A film with a very strong NZ/AUST connection. It was written by a New Zealander, ANDREW NICHOL and directed by an Australian, PETER WEIR (also director of films such as 'Gallipoli', 'Dead Poet's Society', 'Master and Commander').

In this film, Jim Carrey is Truman, a man whose life is a fake one... The place he lives is in fact a big studio with hidden cameras everywhere, and all his friends and people around him, are actors who play their roles in the most popular tv-series in the world: The Truman Show. Truman thinks that he is an ordinary man with an ordinary life and has no idea about how he is exploited. Until one day... he finds out everything.

During the course of this unit we will be examining 'The Truman Show' as a **literary text AND as a production text**. We will examine aspects such as characterisation, setting, themes but we will also **DECONSTRUCT** certain scenes – examine how they have been made.

Ask boys individually to write up a personal response to their discussion task
(complete for homework)