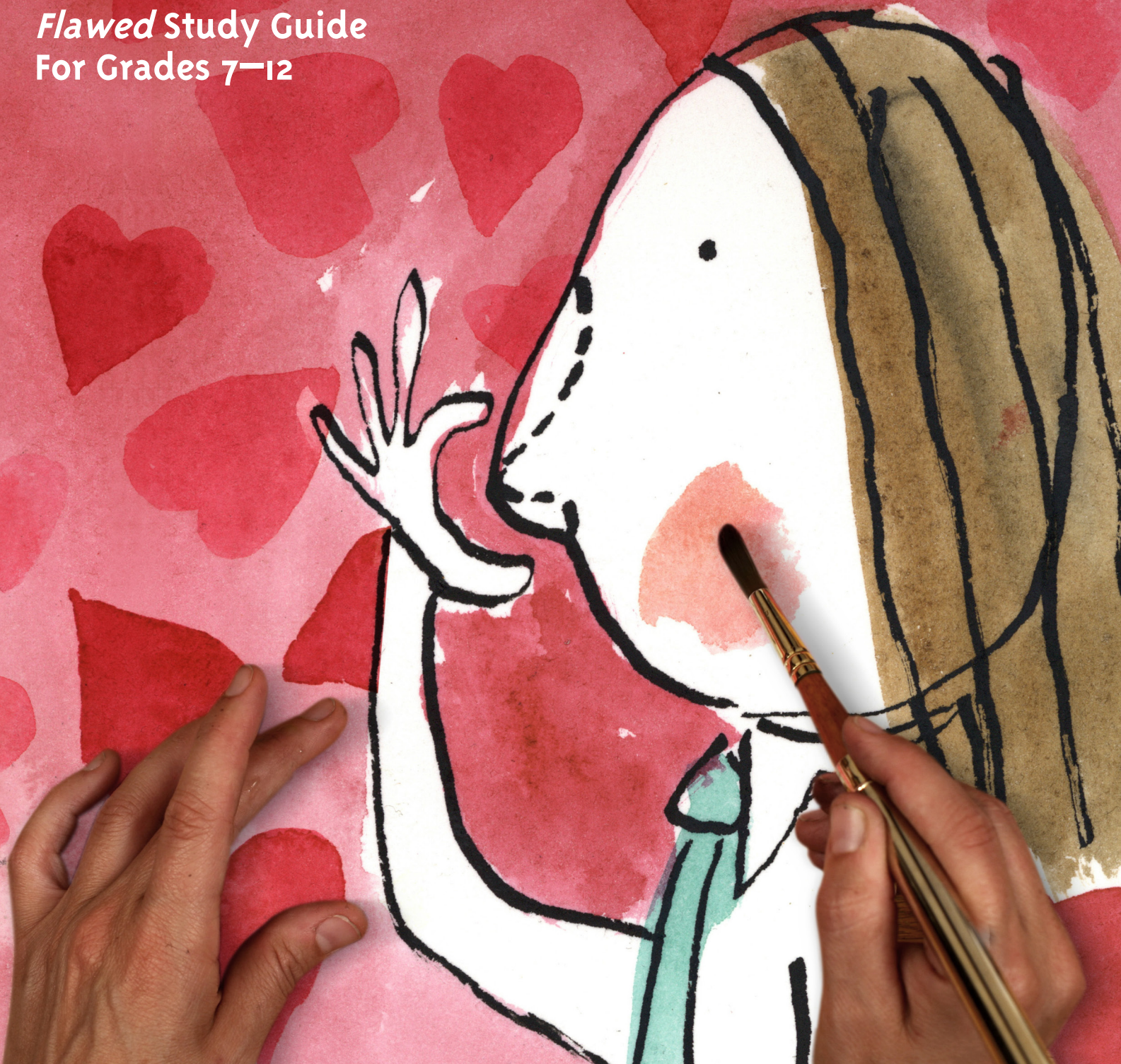


FLAWED

Flawed Study Guide
For Grades 7–12



A NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA PRODUCTION





Flawed presents learning opportunities in the following subject areas:

- Healthy Living and Relationships
- Health and Personal Planning
- English and Language Arts
- Media Literacy
- Fine Arts/Visual Arts
- Family Planning

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes will include understandings of healthy decision-making, building trust and establishing boundaries, exploring conflict resolution and using positive communication skills. Students will gain knowledge of fine arts and technology uses, how to articulate messages in media, how to build and maintain positive relationships and how to integrate broader concepts of perspective, storytelling and artistic expression.

Context and Outcomes

Students will explore personal and universal questions about relationships, careers, self-concept, safety, gender and body politics. Participants will understand the positive impacts that storytelling, the arts, storyboarding and filmmaking can have in the classroom. Facilitator will acquire tools to inspire personal and meaningful reflections.

Why Animated Stories?

Just like plays, films, books and comics, animation invites an audience to observe and interact with the world in new and magical ways. Animation techniques develop character and emotion through visuals, tempo, repetition and timing; they challenge conventional notions of representation, imagination and human interaction.

Questions for Discussion or Research – Before Screening

- Who is the filmmaker? Where does she live? How did she learn to make animation?
- What is self-concept? Who do you turn to for accurate information? What is a support system? How do you build and maintain positive relationships with family and friends? Demonstrate an understanding of how to stay safe in a variety of interpersonal relationships.
- What factors influence your attitudes and decisions regarding healthy lifestyles (e.g. family, peers, media)? Analyze how media and role models can influence opinions about adolescents.

Questions for Discussion or Research – During Screening

Note to teachers: This film contains drawings of bodies and body parts. The film is made with storyboards and is lyrically narrated by the filmmaker. Stop periodically and ask questions to ensure comprehension and establish links to curriculums.

- [4:00] “It wasn’t him, it was me.”
This midway point is also the “turning point” of the story, when the character realizes that she has been “editing” and “selective-listening.” Discuss.
- [6:10] “Big Nose!”
The narrator shares the fact that she is being singled out by bullies and called names. She seeks a friend with a big nose (a similarity) and makes reference to having “character.” Discuss.
- [6:34] “Different Point of View”
How does looking at something from a different point of view (POV) change an idea, a concept or a rationale?



Questions for Discussion or Research — After Screening

The filmmaker demonstrates a willingness to explore how she can mend her past hurts and self-concepts when she comes to realize that there are parts of herself that she has never fully embraced. For example: “Grade 7. Doing aerobics to lose weight on my thighs . . . my body started to feel warped and awful. Hair, skin, braces . . . others going through the same thing. A hellish time for everyone, but there was one exception . . .”

- Is there someone who, in your view, has avoided these external changes? Do you think they are the exception to the rule?
- Have you ever felt judged about your looks, clothes, the way you speak or the food you eat? What is the impact of this (dieting, exercising, cosmetic surgery, rejecting family cultures, etc.)?
- Have you ever judged others, only to find out that your assumptions were unfounded? Discuss.
- How does the media play a part in how we judge ourselves?
- Have students describe ways in which they can contribute to a safe and caring school environment.

The filmmaker experienced bullying and self-loathing as an adolescent. What she could accept about herself only changed when she met someone who challenged her ideas (that is, she had “stakes”) and she was forced to come to a deeper understanding about her relationship with her body, specifically her (big) nose, in order to become closer to someone who cared for her.

- Discuss puberty, adolescent issues and challenges and include the physical, emotional and social changes associated with stages of growth and maturity.
- Have students propose strategies and effective ways for coping with such changes.
- What are strategies for responding to discrimination, stereotyping and bullying? For responding to images in the media about what is “cool,” acceptable and popular?

- Refer to the *Embracing My Flaws* website to inspire sketching of mini models of self. Have the class add their own—whether real or imagined—places of shame or shyness for a “master” group map. Deconstruct these unique features and make them beautiful.

Additional Sample Activities and Actions

English and Language Arts

When does the filmmaker start to really get to know her boyfriend? Review the film, looking for the point of change in her—and in him. Transformation is key to classic dramatic storytelling. Do a storytelling unit using examples of “transformation” in books, poetry, drama and films. Have the students write personal accounts of a time when they changed or were transformed. Extend the project to use media and record their stories using GarageBand, or give them digital texture with images and text in PowerPoint, iMovie or Movie Maker. Play the results in class and invite students to evaluate their impact, as well as self-evaluate.

Debate and make a case for topics such as Arts vs. Science, Math vs. English, Stop-motion Animation vs. Digital Animation, Natural vs. Manufactured, Sexual Activity vs. Abstinence, Social Media vs. Postcards, etc. Reference “The Debaters” <cbc.ca/thedebaters> on CBC radio for inspiration.

Extend by using a PROS or CONS list to demonstrate the process of decision-making, the value of informed decision-making, and the support that positive decision-making will bring throughout life stages.

Do an Interview Project utilizing active listening, questioning and editing skills. Have students develop interview questions together and practice mock interviews with each other. Invite them to select an elder, friend or family member to interview on topics of relationships, careers, belonging, home and safety.



Fine Arts and Visual Arts

Storyboarding is one of the key tools that an animator uses. Through a series of paintings or storyboards, the filmmaker of **Flawed** paints in sequence, photographs in series and then plays back her story to us, creating the optical illusion of movement, or animation.

Examine the visuals of the animation. What does the phrase *mise en scène* mean? Analyze how storytelling elements and animation techniques are used to convey mood and meaning in images. Note how style, tone and pacing contribute to the impact of the film.

To describe different ways people communicate, including verbal and non-verbal communication, create a series of scenes or tableaux that capture scenes from the film; take photos and create a digital storyboard of scenes.

Use a variety of tools to draw, paint or collage a postcard with a journal entry or a secret on it, and send it to a friend. Draw a flip series, being sure to express ideas in a sequence, and play back.

Create images that express personal identity and that reflect aspects of art from a variety of historical and cultural contexts.

Review the “one hundred noses” series that plays during the credits of the film. Invite students to make drawings of the many ways that body parts can be drawn, beyond cartoon or airbrushed media images.

Assign poetry projects that explore “my deepest, darkest secrets” as per the *Embracing My Flaws* site. Add a Media Literacy element, making collages from popular magazines. Use humour and critical thinking to explore the messages behind the practice of airbrushing and Photoshopping to create the illusion of perfection.

Media Studies

The filmmaker becomes critical of ads that portray women in compromised ways, and is judgmental of those who choose surgery to change themselves.

Have students use digital cameras to create a “digital journal photo essay” on media that they encounter on their daily travel to and from school. Include print, TV and Internet images or radio clips. Also have them gather images that help them to feel positive about themselves. Put together a gallery show and choose the top three images, analyzing their messages and comparing and contrasting images that evoke a positive self-concept with those that do not.

Compare modern social networking with old-style postcards and “snail mail” by collecting media from these different “eras.” Study the way that people communicate, and how technology and globalization are transforming the way we live, change and relate to each other and the environment.

Healthy Living and Relationships, Health and Personal Planning

The filmmaker recalls the first day of Grade 8, when she decided that her nose was part of her, and also that she was flawed.

Invite a counsellor into class to discuss strategies for responding to discrimination, stereotyping and bullying. Have students write a dialogue about how they would counsel a friend who is feeling self-critical. Demonstrate these good communication and leadership skills through short dramatic plays or presentations.

In small groups, have students define “personal potential.” Interview a local hero, leader, elder or family member about their journey to self-acceptance and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. How did this person draw on creativity, patience, diligence and discipline to complete their goals? Create a slide show and/or audio diary and share with others, including the student’s personal reflections.



Family Planning

At the end of **Flawed**, the filmmaker asks: “Why be ordinary when you can be extraordinary?” Drawing on the terms compassion, envy, perfection, ordinary and extraordinary, analyze how media and role models can influence opinions, and develop a multi-media slide show that compares and contrasts the attributes of true heroines and heroes who have inspired change throughout history.

In small groups, write a short script about how to stay safe in a variety of interpersonal and intercultural relationships. Use interview skills to draw out the extraordinary in others. Storyboard the script, take photos in sequence and play it back as an animated film.

Taking the lead from *Embracing My Flaws*, have students work with younger kids to help develop their self-concept. Have students sketch out each other’s profile or body shape onto large pieces of paper and identify areas that they love about their bodies.



Online Content

Media Awareness Network:

media-awareness.ca

Beauty and Body Image in the Media:

media-awareness.ca/english/issues/stereotyping/women_and_girls/women_beauty.cfm

Vocabulary:

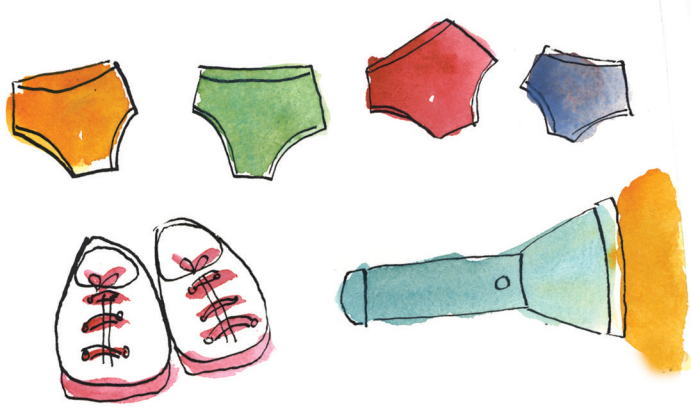
Create a master list of vocabulary from the movie: *puberty, media, surgery, romance, exploration, self-concept, discrimination, ordinary, extraordinary, character, cosmetic, peer pressure, airbrush, differences, exceptions, acceptance . . .*

Storyboards:

Traditionally, animated productions, just like other forms of animation, begin life as a storyboard, which is a script of sorts composed of images as well as words, similar to a giant comic strip.

Animation:

The process of photographing drawings, puppets, silhouettes or inanimate objects frame by frame through stop-motion photography, with each frame recording a minute progressive change in the subject. When the frames are projected onto the screen one after the other at the standard speed of 24 frames per second, the subject seems to move or be animated.



Principles of Animation:

In all animation, there are three main principles. The easiest (and oldest) way to create animation is to make a flip book with a series of hand drawings.

1. **Image** – An image can be two-dimensional, three-dimensional or digital.
2. **Repetition with a small change** – To be brought to life, the same image must be repeated with a small change each time. The image must be repeated 24 times in one second of animation.
3. **Speed** – The addition of speed brings images to life, fooling the eye into believing that a collection of still images is animated.

NFB Animation Workshops

Educational, custom and open-house animation workshops at the National Film Board of Canada introduce young people and adults to various animation techniques using several different media, including 2D and 3D clay animation and draw-/scratch-on-film animation. By learning how to tell a story through animation, participants are challenged to use symbols and movement to effectively convey concise messages and stories. The NFB boasts a rich and innovative legacy in animation production, and the NFB Mediatheque is proud to continue to champion the work of young animators.

Annex

About the Film

Flawed is nothing less than a beautiful gift from Andrea Dorfman's vivid imagination, a charming little film about very big ideas. Dorfman has the uncanny ability to transform the intensely personal into the wisely universal. In **Flawed**, she deftly traces her encounter with a potential romantic partner, questioning her attraction and the uneasy possibility of love. Ultimately, is less about whether girl can get along with boy than whether girl can accept herself, imperfections and all. In many ways, **Flawed** is both an exquisite tribute to the art of animation and a loving homage to storyboarding—a time-honoured way of rendering scenes while visualizing the dramatic arc of the tale. Here Dorfman lets her colourful storyboards shape up into the very content of the film. The resulting effect is pure and fresh, as if we were watching the birth not only of self-love but love of the film medium itself. *Produced by the NFB; 2010, 12 min 29 s*

The website *Embracing My Flaws* <sandbox.nfb.ca/embracingmyflaws>, created in Dorfman's signature animated colouring book style, serves as an adjunct to this DVD set. The site complements and reinforces the fundamentals laid out in **Flawed**.

The Filmmaker

Andrea Dorfman is an artist and filmmaker based in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Dorfman produced and directed *Parsley Days* (2000), three seasons of the award-winning CBC TV series *Street Cents*, *Love That Boy* (2003), *There's a Flower in My Pedal* (2004) and the documentary *Sluts* (2005, IFC and Life Network), which explores the mythology surrounding high school students labelled as "sluts." The film won Best Documentary at the Atlantic Film Festival in 2005. Dorfman is also a part-time instructor in film and video at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. See <andreadorfman.com> for more.