

## American Education: The Role Of a Teacher in the Movie “Freedom Writers”

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### Abstract

The movie "Freedom Writers" is about a teacher who makes big changes for their students. The true story that Erin Gruwell recounts in his 1999 book, *The Freedom Writers Diary*, serves as the basis for this tale. The purpose of this research is to ascertain how a teacher functions in the American educational drama "Freedom Writers." The subject of this study, the film "Freedom Writers," was the subject of this qualitative descriptive study. Films with a focus on images, actions, sounds, or dialogues that describe the role of a teacher comprise the study's data. According to the findings of this study, the teacher serves as a facilitator, mediator, inspiration, motivator, and corrector. Based on the findings of the research, it is hoped that teachers can use this film as a model or reference because it provides extremely useful information about our students' potential and how we can help them achieve their goals.

**Key words:** *american education, freedom writers, teacher*

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### INTRODUCTION

The study of American literature, history, society, and culture is the focus of the interdisciplinary discipline known as American Studies (Purwaningsih & Gulö, 2021). Literary criticism, history, and critical theory have traditionally been incorporated into it (D. B. Setiawan et al., n.d.). Education is the learning of a group of people's knowledge (Samanik, 2018), skills (EWK, 2018), and habits (Fithratullah, 2021) that are passed down from one generation (Ngestirosa et al., 2020) to the next through teaching (Amelia, 2021), training (Fakhrurozi & Puspita, 2021), or research (Kuswoyo et al., 2021). American studies have long advocated moving beyond traditional academic boundaries (Nuraziza et al., 2021) and encouraging efforts (Al Falaq & Puspita, 2021) to build more open projects (Nababan & Nurmaily, 2021) and collaborations (Heaverly & EWK, 2020) between disciplines (Sari & Pranoto, 2021). These efforts have been conducted in the United States (Sartika & Pranoto, 2021) as well as other countries (Pranoto, 2021). In America, education itself plays a crucial role in politics (Fithratullah, 2019) and society (Kardiansyah, 2019), particularly the teacher's role (Journal & Kiranamita, 2021) in educating or teaching students (Kuswoyo et al., 2020).

In the implementation of education, the role of a teacher is as a teacher has the task of encouraging (Agustina et al., 2021) and guiding (Maskar et al., 2020) as well as providing learning facilities (Oktavia & Suprayogi, 2021) for students to achieve goals (Asia & Samanik, 2018). In improving the quality of learning a teacher is not only tasked (Hamzah et al., n.d.) with teaching (Istiani & Puspita, 2020) but also in charge of educating them (Qomariah & Sucipto, 2021). Because of the big responsibility the teacher's answer to students (Pradana & Suprayogi, 2021), rain and heat are not a reason for teachers (Suprayogi et al., n.d.) to always be present in the midst of their students (Maulana & Suprayogi, 2022). Teachers never angry of their students (Amelia et al., 2022) even though their students act disrespectfully (Suprayogi et al., 2022), even with the teacher's patience (Mandasari et al., 2022) and wisdom (Mandasari & Aminatun, 2022) give advice on how to behave politely to others (Journal et al., 2022). This is illustrated in the film entitled *Freedom Writers*, in this film tells about the struggle of a female teacher (Arini & Wahyudin, 2022) named Mrs. Gruwell a very inspirational who devotes all her attention and life to the 203rd graders of a high school in Long Beach (Hamzah et al., 2022), United States, which is so thick with their respective races and ethnicities (Wahyudin & Wahyuni, 2022). They struggle to defend their respective tribes (Oktaviani et al., 2022), including in the school environment (Wardaningsih et al., 2022). They live in wars between gangs (Kasih et al., 2022), they just want to sit with their gang friends (Wardaningsih & Kasih, 2022), so the atmosphere of division is felt (Aminatun, 2021).

One of the films with the educational role theme, *Freedom Writer*, was released in 2007. Based on this background (Isnaini & Aminatun, 2021), researchers are interested in learning about the roles teachers play because the moral values in this film can be used as examples for teachers to follow an educators (Yudha & Mandasari, 2021). The purpose of this study is to ascertain the roles played by teachers in the movie "*Freedom Writers*." Teacher Duties and Responsibilities According to (Candra & Qodriani, 2019), every teacher must be competent and knowledgeable about the subject matter they are teaching. By carrying out tasks assigned by students' parents (Suprayogi, Pranoto, et al., 2021), a teacher must be able to act (Rido et al., 2021) as second parents (Utami et al., 2021). Therefore, in order to easily comprehend students (A. Setiawan & Pasha, 2020), it is necessary to comprehend their soul and character (Aminatun et al., 2021).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

According to (Oktaviani et al., 2020), teachers are responsible for three types of things: In their respective fields of expertise, teachers are accountable. The teacher's job in this field is to educate (Novanti & Suprayogi, 2021), teach, and provide training (Puspita & Pranoto, 2021) because it requires special skills (N. R. Putri & Sari, 2021). Humanitarian obligations—as teachers (N. Putri & Aminatun, 2021), they must be able to serve as their students' second parents and set an example for them (Suprayogi, Samanik, et al., 2021). responsibilities that are connected to society (Simamora & Oktaviani, 2020). Because a teacher is expected to educate the community (Nurmalasari & Samanik, 2018), society places them in a more dignified position in this field (Gulö & Nainggolan, 2021). In other words, teachers have an obligation to educate Indonesian children (Kardiansyah & Salam, 2021). From ancient times to the present, teachers have served as role models for society (Ayu & Aminatun, 2021). The Ten Roles of Teachers According to (Utami et al., 2020) teachers play the following roles: as a facilitator (Nurmala Sari et al., 2021) who gives students the space they need to do learning activities (Suprayogi & Pranoto, 2020). as a mentor who assists students in overcoming learning obstacles (MULIYAH et al., 2021). as a provider of the environment that aims to create a setting where students are challenged to engage in learning activities (Amelia & Daud, 2020). as someone who communicates with the community and students (Puspita & Amelia, 2020). as someone who sets an excellent example for his students and encourages them to behave appropriately (Wahyudin & Sari, 2018). as an evaluator who evaluates the learning progress of students. as an innovator who contributes to the community's understanding of reform initiatives. as a moral and political figure who helps the community, students, and development efforts develop their morality (Mandasari & Wahyudin, 2021). as a cognitive agent who shares knowledge with students and the general public. as a manager, one who ensures the success of a class of students by leading them.

1. The first previous research used by the author was "Efforts to Improve the Quality of Education in Freedom Writers" by Richard LaGravenese by Refi Perdana<sup>1</sup>, An Fauzia R. Syafei<sup>2</sup>, M. Al-Hafizh<sup>3</sup> English Literature and Language Study Program, Padang State University (2012). In this study, discuss what efforts the protagonist Erin Gruwell makes to improve the quality of education as a teacher, and to what extent the characters, plot (conflict), and setting reveal the protagonist's efforts. Character. The purpose of this

analysis is to determine the extent to which the writer's script Freedom shows efforts to improve the quality of education.

2. The second previous research is "An Analysis of Teacher's Strategy to Solve Racial Discrimination in Freedom Writers Movie" by Hilda Novita Sari English Language Education Department Faculty of Teacher Training and Education University of Muhammadiyah Malang (2019). This study explains how the teacher provides strategies in overcoming the Racial Discrimination in the Film Freedom Writers, and teaches us not to do Racial Discrimination.

3. The third research is "Teaching Strategies in Freedom Writers Movie" by Zulfian<sup>1</sup>, Sahril<sup>2</sup>, Fikriani Aminun Omolu<sup>1</sup> English Education Study Program of Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu (2018). This study explains that one of the things that teachers pay attention to in order to achieve teaching goals in the classroom is teaching strategies. Teachers must be creative and enrich their knowledge of teaching methods or strategies from various sources, including films. The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the teaching methods used in the film Freedom Writers.

4. The fourth research is "The Analysis of Teacher's Role in Educating Racist Students on Freedom Writers Movie by Richard Lagravenese" by Wilda Wahyuningsish University of Muhammadiyah Malang (2022). In the study of this research analyze the teacher's role in the film "Freedom Writers". In this study, analyze the role of the teacher in the film "Freedom Writers". In addition, the purpose of this study is to identify the teacher's role in student education in the film "Freedom Writers" and to find out the most dominant teacher role used by Erin Gruwell in educating racist students in the film "Freedom Writers".

5. The fifth research is "Character Education as Revealed in The Movie Freedom Writers Directed by Richard Lagravensel" by Okclassiya Mega Sarajar, Mister Gidion Maru, Jenie Posumah Manado State University (2021). The purpose of this study is to confirm or find the value of character education revealed in the film 'Freedom Writers' by Richard Lagravens. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method and data analysis using content analysis.

## **METHOD**

This research is descriptive qualitative, because this study aims to describes the role of a teacher in the film "Freedom Writers". Data this research is the film "Freedom Writers"

with a research focus on visual image, action, and sound or dialogue which describes the role of a teacher. The data mining tool in this study was direct observation made by researchers on the film, so that the data collection technique was a documentation technique. After the data was collected, the follow-up of this study was to analyze the data. In this study, the existing data were analyzed using the theory of Miles and Huberman, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the explanation in the previous chapter that there is a role for teachers in the teaching and learning process in schools, namely: teachers as inspiration, mediator, facilitator, motivator, corrector, demonstrator and evaluator. Freedom Writer is a film based on the true story of a teacher in California, Erin Gruwell, played by Hillary Swank. Mrs. Gruwell was an English teacher at that time the issue of racism was very powerful at that time. Based on the results obtained from 7 roles of a teacher, 6 roles of teachers are found in the film Freedom Writer.

1. Teachers as inspiration
2. Teacher as corrector
3. Teacher as mediator
4. Teacher as facilitator
5. Teachers as motivators
6. Teacher as demonstrator

Picture 1. Act as an inspiration



This scene happened when Erin Gruwell first came in in class 203, she hoped her students would accept it gracefully, from this scene we can see that none of the students in the class paid attention when Mrs. Gruwell introduced herself. When Mrs. Gruwell explained the learning material, none of the students paid attention, instead they treated Mrs. Gruwell badly.

Based on the scene, it can be seen that Mrs. Gruwell is an inspiration, she is an example that when we meet someone we don't know, we must always smile because good things come with a smile. When Mrs. Gruwell smiled she was also humble even though he didn't know the background of her students.

Picture 2. Act as an corrector



In this scene, a student named Eva ignores Mrs. Gruwell when she is asked to study. This was done by Eva because she felt that her presence in the class was not important and she felt that she could not make friends with other students. She came to school because her parents asked her to. Mrs. Gruwell thought it was not true she explained that to get respect you also have to respect others, this advice was given to Eva when she felt unappreciated and neglected the first time she entered class.

Mrs. Gruwell acted as a corrector because she corrected her student's rude behavior. She not only teaches students about good attitude and personality.

Picture 3. Act as an mediator



In this scene, Mrs. Gruwell asked her students to talk about poetry. She also gave the material to her students. From this scene it can be said that the role of Mrs. Gruwell as a teacher is a mediator and facilitator.

Picture 4. Act as mediator and facilitator



Mrs. Gruwell wants to share her knowledge about the Holocaust tragedy that happened to the Jews during the Hitler era. She tried to explain that group life and gang wars were completely useless. Mrs. Gruwell wants to take her students to a museum to see the

Holocaust tragedy. For that she saved the money for several months for the cost of going to the museum.

Picture 5. Mrs. Gruwell acts as a facilitator



There is no reason to get a better education. Because the school does not provide opportunities for them by providing facilities. Then Mrs. Gruwell and her students held a fundraiser to invite speakers to their school. In this case Mrs. Gruwell as a facilitator because she discusses with her students to solve a problem. She asked her students to participate by giving opinions so that they felt confident and free to share their ideas because Mrs. Gruwell not only sits and stands in the classroom, but she also responds so that they feel confident and valued in the classroom. And finally there are no more racial differences in the association in the class.

Picture 6. Mrs. Gruwell acts as a facilitator





Mrs. Gruwell provided a new computer so her students could type in stories about themselves and look for donors because she wanted to make a book based on her students' writings. So that the life experiences of her students can be remembered by others.

Picture 7. Mrs. Gruwell as demonstrator



This scene occurred when Mrs. Gruwell gave game material to her students, before the games started she gave examples of how to play the games. Gruwell subconsciously asks about the life of the gang boy which offends some students. Without feeling ashamed because she is a teacher Mrs. Gruwell immediately apologized to them. From this scene, it can be said that Mrs. Gruwell as a demonstrator because she set a direct example for her students to apologize when they made a mistake.

Picture 8. Mrs. Gruwell acts as a motivator



In this section Mrs. Gruwell gave the books to all the students and asked them to write anything in the book. So they can learn to express anything that happened in the past, present or future. By writing anything in the book, they will become trained in writing.

Picture 9. Mrs. Gruwell motivates students who fail exams



As a teacher who is always with them every day, Mrs. Gruwell knows which students are smart and which students are difficult to accept lessons, one of her students named Andre who gets bad test scores. Mrs. Gruwell advises Andre that she will not let Andre fail even though every day she has to come to his house to teach Andre. Mrs. Gruwell asked Andre to repeat the exam, because she believed that her students could do their best.

This shows that a teacher must care about the grades her students get, as a teacher Mrs. Gruwell motivates her students, she doesn't let her students get discouraged and accepts the grades they get for what they are.

Picture 10. Mrs. Gruwell motivates students who are facing problems



In addition to the main task of the teacher giving lessons, the teacher also has the obligation to guide his students to become good people. So it can be said that the teacher is the second person for her students. This can be seen in the scene when Mrs. Gruwell gives advice to Eva who has a personal problem. She asked Eva to continue studying.

## CONCLUSION

Film as an educational medium because the film displays pictures, stories, conversations, objects that can be seen so that it is easy for viewers to understand and watch. A movie is a product of a very popular mass media. Movies are also entertainment media, namely is a function of communication. Films are not only a medium of entertainment, but also as a medium of information and education. In a film also contains moral content that becomes a lesson for the audience. One of the films that has moral and educational message is Freedom Writer.

Education in America itself has a very important role both in society and politics, especially the role of a teacher in educating or teaching students. From the results of the discussion above, it can be concluded that the role of the existing teacher in the film "Freedom Writers" is the teacher as an inspiration, facilitator, corrector, motivator, demonstrator, and as a mediator. The six roles of the teacher are aimed at making her students changed for the better. The film "Freedom Writers" has a message very deep for the audience, because this film provides an example of how a teacher creates a pleasant classroom atmosphere so that her students motivated to learn.

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