

A PLASTIC OCEAN

here is a story for you

A Plastic Ocean is the title of a documentary I just watched on Netflix (*February 13th 2020*). I cannot watch something like that without sharing it with the world. When I learn so much from a well-produced documentary, a report full of accurate information, and filled with beauty and success-stories, it takes me right back to the classroom where I would definitely have shared this information with my students . . . *my kids*, as I used to call them.

Back in 2006 and 2009, there were two extraordinary documentaries which won Oscars at the Academy Award; the first one was [SHARKWATER](#) (a 2006 Canadian documentary written and directed by [Rob Stewart](#)), who died doing what he was most passionate about, saving sharks. The second film was [THE COVE](#) (2009 produced by [Rick O'Barry](#)). I never knew about these two films until I met a young student from a Calgary high school. This chance meeting happened one evening while I was attending a symposium on the protection of the planet's ocean, its eco-systems and its inhabitants. That student introduced me to a brand-new world, to some of his schoolmates and to a few of his teachers. From that point on, I was hooked. I discovered that, from two teachers who took it upon themselves to present these two films in their classrooms, a conversation was born which is still going strong today.

I realized that it started with only two people, two magnificent teachers who decided to use these documentaries as part of their social studies, science and environmental programs, in order to show young people what really goes on in some parts of the world, and how they could help and make a difference. They spread the word, and by doing so, created an awareness. That special student I met that night changed me and because of him, I became a different type of teacher. It was then that I decided to develop educational programs about the ocean. I developed, implemented and delivered presentations to several schools in southern Alberta. I did this for two full years. I was very passionate about it too. This also compelled me to learn more about the world we live in, especially its ocean. That's when I decided to navigate this marvelous blue sphere.

Tonight, I watched a different kind of sailing, on « [A Plastic Ocean](#) ». I truly believe that this documentary has a place in the classroom and therefore, I am calling on you, my teacher-friends and school principals, to take it upon yourselves to watch it and then . . . to show it to your students. It is a two-hour film; it is playing on [Netflix](#) right now (*in English only*) but they offer the French sub-titled version. The first hour is about all the bad things we do to this planet. Some of it is **NOT** for elementary kids; however, middle and high school students can take it. Trust me; if they can watch *Sharkwater* and *The Cove*, they can watch this. The second hour is all about success stories and the wonderful things we can accomplish when we work together in good will. The new sustainable technology discussed in the film (*some of it invented in Montreal*), is also very interesting.

You can look at it from a social studies perspective, as well as from a scientific point of view. What the Calgary students did back then was to write letters to the world governments demanding change and sustainability. They also exercised their rights to lobbying. Furthermore, they had creative and useful fund-raising ideas for the Websites of the two films mentioned above.

I implore you to share this film with other teachers and students. Remember that, from sharing comes knowing; from knowing, comes caring, and from caring, comes change. This planet is covered by the blue part and it is where we live; the blue part is everyone's back yard. Something to be grateful for!

<https://plasticoceans.org/>

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