



THE CLASS

Directed by Laurent Cantet; written (in French, with English subtitles) by Mr. Cantet, François Bégaudeau and Robin Campillo, based on the novel “Entre les Murs” (“Between the Walls”) by Mr. Bégaudeau. Released by Sony Pictures Classics. Running time: 2 hours 8 minutes. WITH: François Bégaudeau (François), Wei Huang (Wei), Esméralda Ouertani (Sandra) and Franck Keïta (Souleymane). “The Class,” has won the Palme d’Or at the Cannes Film Festival in May 2008.

What happens in the film? Why should he be used for discussions about parental work in multicultural classes?

Over the course of the year, François – the white french teacher - pushes and prods at his students, encouraging a bashful Chinese boy, Wei (Wei Huang), and trying to navigate around two pint-size terrors — a lippy Arab girl, Sandra (Esméralda Ouertani), and a belligerent African heartbreaker, Souleymane (Franck Keïta) — who test his patience with unsettling effectiveness. Souleymane, son of Malian immigrants, flashes some Arabic tattooed on his arm, challenging everyone with the barely suppressed rage that radiates off him at times like a fever. The teacher reacts with disrespect to Souleymane, but respect of the teacher was something, the boy wanted above all. His code was not the talk - talk of the french dialectic but silence if you had nothing of value to say. From the very first day, the teacher makes egregious errors. He never gets control over his class, and he never creates a safe atmosphere in the class so his students trust him and can learn from him. He conducts inappropriate discussions in front of the entire class, instead of in private. He misses numerous opportunities to get to know these kids and the students suffer. This is an example of very poor teaching, an honest, realistic example. It is the teacher who has failed, failed to connect, failed to discipline, failed to reap the enormous potential of his bright and misguided students. The job of a teacher is to build bridges and bring students across. This portrait showed the consequences of failed teachers, consequences that

have an enormous influence on parental work in schools: „ His parents had come to the wrong country!“ This is one of the messages, which his mother receives, when she is called to a conference of the school council, who has to decide after an incident in the classroom whether Souleymane has to leave the class or not. He is his own interpreter towards his mother, who does not speak french and no one in the school ever cared about that fact. The problem with the mother of Suleyman, the Malian student who is expelled, is not that she is "coddled" - for her, and millions of migrants like her in France and not only there - the school system is simply one more institution that is indifferent at best and hostile at worst, regardless of the good intentions and efforts of the teachers. It's not that she can't understand that her son's behavior has consequences; it's that she and her son are on one side, and the school system and the society it represents are on the other side. This scene can be a good start for the discussion of involvement of ethnical diverse parents, who are often simply neglected and disrespected by not using the host language.