

Stand & Deliver - Preparation

Overview: This movie is based on the real life events of a math teacher, Mr. Escalante, who teaches in an inner city school in California. Despite high poverty and low academic abilities amongst his mostly Hispanic students, Mr. Escalante believes they can learn. He initiates an advanced placement calculus course at the school and raises the bar of what is expected. He and his kids spend countless hours preparing for the advanced placement test. When almost all of his kids pass the exam, he and his students are accused of cheating. The students retake the test and get similar results. At the end of the movie, the credits reveal that each year the number of students who pass this exam at Garfield increase under Mr. Escalante's leadership.

Moral of the Story: Regardless of what anyone else thinks or says, if you set goals and prepare yourself for success, almost anything is attainable.

Selected Scenes

Scenes 12-16 (35:54 - 55:10)	20 minutes
Scenes 19-21 (1:01:10 - 1:07:22)	6 minutes
Scenes 27-30 (1:26:22 - 1:39:36)	<u>13 minutes</u>
Total	39 minutes

Discussion Questions

- 1) Mr. Escalante obviously cared about his students. Do you think the teachers at your school care enough about the students? If a teacher was willing to put forth that much effort, would you match that commitment?
- 2) These students succeeded when nobody thought they could. Do you believe you could do what they did too, if you put your mind to it? Are you willing to work that hard in school to reach your academic potential? If not, why not?
- 3) In scene 14, Mr. Escalante tries to teach one of his students to see that academics will eventually get him a better job and more money than quitting school to become a mechanic. Are you able to take this long-term approach?
- 4) The high school administrator in this movie does not want Mr. Escalante to teach calculus at Garfield because she is afraid that if the students fail it will hurt their self-esteem. Mr. Escalante believes the best way to improve a child's self-esteem is to challenge kids, not protect them. Do you think we should focus so much on self-esteem in our society and what do you think is the best way to build it?
- 5) Discrimination played a major role in this movie. In general, do you think society has different expectations for different racial or ethnic groups? In other words, do we expect more out of white students than other minorities? Is this fair? Do students have a responsibility to change this perception?
- 6) The author of this curriculum was a college professor and he firmly believes that almost everyone (90%+) is capable of graduating from high school and succeeding in college. It has more to do with desire, hard work and good study skills than it has to do with intelligence. Do you agree or disagree?