

**From Construct to
Structure:**
IA from Mental Models
Classroom Exercises

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adaptive path

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From Construct to Structure: IA from Mental Models – Classroom Exercises

Transcript ID# 104

[Tell me about the movies you see.] I'll go see anything. That's not totally true. I won't go see anything. I have preferences, but they're all over the map. I like independent movies and the cheesy teen movies, and I always wanted to write a screen play. It would be a teen movie based on Moby Dick. I'm very excited about it. That would be hilarious. I'll go see summer blockbusters. Going to see movies is very much about setting expectations ahead of time before you see it. [How?] Going into a movie, you set the bar for what you think it will be. It puts me in contrast to Peter who decides whether the movie lives up to the high bar he set. As a result he never sees cheesy teen cheerleader movies. I will go see them and not expect anything, and some of them are brilliantly structured or well written. I don't enjoy being constantly disappointed. [What do you mean by structure?] I was a film student in college and studied screen writing. There is a standard way to do roll out a Hollywood movie. It's a baseline for what a movie can be. A summer blockbuster is like paint by numbers. You know what's going to happen in the first 30 minutes and the next 60 minutes. You know how the movie is going to be. To me, it is creative when they turn it on its head and have unexpected moments, good writing, good character development, things that aren't obvious. Summer blockbusters are obvious. There is an old joke by William Goldman (who was a famous screenwriter in early 80's) was, the problem with Hollywood was that they always want to explain everything. He'd be sitting in a meeting after seeing the dailies and it would be a western with all these buffalo going over this big cliff, with big noise and thundering feet and some manager will say, "Hey can we add a voice-over that says, 'Here come the buffalo?'" I prefer when they don't do that, but it's okay. I get ideas out of a bad experience. [What do you get?] Ideas about what not to do. Part of the fun of watching movies is thinking about construction, creative process, how people are engaged. I like to say, "This director is good!" or "This writer sucks" or "Can you believe the editing?" Understanding what works well is part of understanding what doesn't work well. It is all still a part of my education. I just don't go to classes any more. I once spent a summer in college in LA and would go see movies with a friend who lived there. Movies are structured in first, second and third acts. You can see the transition points. "That's the end of the first act." In LA, people will actually shout at the screen, "Where's the third act?" [Really?] I was going with movie people.

[What do you do before going to the theater?] Uh... [hesitates] Well I like to get the previews in the theater. That tells you a lot about what the studio thinks about the movie but doesn't always map to reality. That interests me too –the whole dynamic of how studios release and produce movies. There is a whole level of personal politicking you can find out about through the magic of the internet. Let's see... I don't really like popcorn or candy or drinks. They're overpriced. I do it with Courtney, usually it's a last minute decision. We'll see a hole in our schedule. It's really rare that I will say, "Let's go see a movie next Tuesday." The only time I do that is when Peter calls. I'm all, "Hey, we have a

hole in our schedule. Let's go see a movie!" Or two! Sometimes we have the whole afternoon and we see a couple of movies. I'll see anything. That's not true. I don't like the ridiculous romances. Some of them are so cheesy and over the top. [In what way?] Oh, she finds love in a villa in Tuscany. I'm not going to see bad kids' movies. I have to think about that –the quality. It's what I'm interested in. [How, quality?] It's what's new. I subscribe to different mailing lists where they talk about what's coming out, and I read reviews on Fridays. There are independent reviewers that send out reviews and I pretty much know where I agree and disagree with them. So, I subscribe to mailing lists and on Friday read whole litany of reviews. Metacritic and Rotten Tomatoes. I will sit there and read the reviewers that I respect. That will effect whether or not I go see a movie. If a reviewer I respect doesn't like it, it will disinclyne me from going to see the movie. If they have bad reasoning or bad taste then I won't pay attention to them. The Stepford Wives – I really enjoyed the first one and the actors are ones that I really enjoy, but a bunch of reviewers said the studio trashed it and rewrote the third ending after extensive testing so I was disinclined to see it. [You haven't mentioned tickets.] I'll buy them online sometimes, so I don't have to waste time waiting in line. Especially if it's new and on a weekend. Then we'll buy the tickets online. I try to avoid that because they have ridiculous surcharges. I use one that only charges 50 cents rather than \$2. It's the most ridiculous thing in world for sparing you from standing in line. I rarely stand in line. You can buy online or with credit card when you get there. They have credit card machines. You stick your card in and get tickets. There is usually less line of a line. I'm not one of those who goes on the first day. I love seeing movies with people, so I'm happy when I'm in that situation, but I'm also perfectly happy to go on a Tuesday afternoon. [Do you cut work?] Um, sometimes I'll decide... If work slows down. We have flexible schedules and things slow down. It happens so rarely these days. Courtney is in school so she's flexible as well. [Do you usually go with her?] Most of the time. We have similar taste. I'd say about 85% of what we like to see overlaps. If not, then I'll go with other friends. I always go with someone. I hate going by myself. [Why?] I like to see their reactions during the movie and have someone to talk with afterwards. I've been to a movie alone once in my life in early 80's. It was Baseball with Mel Brooks, and I remember it because I disliked it so much I never did it again. [Was it at night?] I think in the middle of the day. Even with a gigantic crowd I don't like it. [What is important about a crowd?] The reaction of the crowd is an important part of the movie. It can make it better or worse. If there are only three people in theater, I'll be disappointed. It's fun to see how they react, what jokes work and what don't. I love crowds.

[What's important to you at the theater?] I like a good seat which means center forward in the middle. That's where they aim all the speakers. If you're sitting a third of the way back in the middle, you're right in the sweet spot. Well, for THX. A lot of people don't know this, but THX has nothing to do with the electronic equipment. It's a contractual agreement about the level of the equipment. It's a promise that they're going to turn it up real loud. And the equipment will be of certain quality. It happened in 70's when Lucas and Spielberg got together. They found out their films weren't being played loud enough and people were missing things. Also speakers are placed in a certain location. I like to get there early so you can get that. Or go up front so you don't get a neck-craning seat. People get lost in a movie and that doesn't happen if you're in pain. You want to be caught up in

the movie, not thinking about something else, not distracted, not checking your watch. You can get caught up in movies because they're huge and spectacular, or emotionally manipulative and trying to make you cry, because they're intellectually stimulating. You want a movie to engage you at that level. [Anything else?] Not sure anything else. A good parking space, does that count? Especially in San Francisco. I like, I really do appreciate the changes they've made in theaters over last decade. They're going back to old style stuff like stadium seating. You want to see. There's nothing more annoying than getting stuck behind a tall person. Oh, and Courtney makes a good point: theaters that play ads drive me out of my mind. In Seattle they passed a law that they couldn't do that. You're already paying \$10 to see it, not paying to see advertisements. [Is money an issue? You've mentioned it three times.] Money is not an issue but paying for things that are above and beyond... Aspects of it that are annoying. 50 cents so I don't have to get waited on by a person, so they can spend less on employees. If you want to make more money on the movie, then jack up the price of the movie, rather than make me watch 10 minutes of ads. I love trailers though. They are fun. [Why?] You get to find out what's going on. [What if you've seen them before?] That's never happened. If did happen, I don't think I'd mind. [Do you see films multiple times?] Rarely. There have been on occasion... Every time is because I wanted to take someone else to see it. The only time I went alone was when I was in school because I would have to write a paper on it. I would go once to enjoy it and then once more critically/analytically. [Do you write reviews?] Not really. I don't have much interest in writing reviews. I did a couple of times for Epinions, then I decided it was lame. I'm not convinced anyone else is going to share my set of opinions on a movie. I like them to be somewhat personal. [What do you talk about with friends after the movie?] What we like or dislike... Whether it was good or not good.

[If you see a good movie, how do you react?] I enjoy it. I'm happy and tell people after that it was really good movie. I will recommend it to people if the conversation comes up. I don't ever say, "You *have* to go see this movie." I'm a fan of word of mouth, but only when it seems appropriate.

[What else is unique about your relationship to movies?] Not much really. I like movies a lot. I consider it a big part of my life, but I've been more analytical/critical than anything else. That's how I approach things in the rest of my life. I would be upset if I had to stop watching them or if they stopped making them. It's part of my identity, how I think about myself. If you ask my friends, they'd say I'm between cheesy-teen, Blockbuster, and obscure avant guard intellectual films. My thesis in college was about 50's and 60's minimalist avant guard films in America. I watched lots of 45 minute films where nothing happens, but I wouldn't inflict them on anyone else. I have a few friends who likes this. When I was in New York last week I saw a Stan Brakhage retrospective. He didn't film stuff but painted and put stuff on the film. The film called Mothlight is where he pasted bits of moss and twigs to a film and ran it through a projector. [Huh? How?] He printed it. In film you print to a negative then a positive. So you see impressions of twigs and moss running through projector so you can barely see them. It's really pretty. There's no narrative. You can get caught up in things without narrative. Andy Warhol made films. He has one that's 18 hours long. It's the Empire State building as sun sets for 18 hours. Nothing happens in the film. Birds fly around. One thing is the sun sets halfway through,

then the building lights up. He made them not to be watched but to be projected on walls for parties. Just to be caught up in the moment and be reflective. Designed to make you think about other stuff... Meditative. If there are not other things to watch, the brain focuses on other things and thinks. It's meditative and a lot of them are really pretty. My favorite film of all time is a 45-minute film called *Wavelengths* by Michael Snow. He's a Canadian, but he filmed it in New York. It starts in back of loft apartment in New York slow zooms in on the room. The camera goes further and further in, and the frame is shrinking. It has the best ending that I've ever seen. Ever! It's totally counter intuitive. But it's like an epiphany. You'll say, "This film is unbelievable!" Some day I'll find a copy on DVD and screen it.

[Do you own many DVDs?] I own a couple. I'm not much of a collector. It's tied to don't watch movies repeatedly. We rent movies a lot or we buy them through DirecTV. I tried Netflix but it didn't work for me. I need pressure to watch a movie. If I can keep it forever, I will. I operate on deadlines. That's how I am.

Transcript ID# 105

[Tell me about the movies you see.] The kinds of movies I see? Um, [hesitates] I generally see the big Hollywood releases. I see some independent films, though not as many as I like. Honestly the main reason for that is it's harder to get to the theaters where those movies are playing. They're in neighborhoods where it's hard to find parking... those kinds of things. So, my wife and I will see at least one movie every weekend, whether we go to the movies or rent a movie, depending on whether we feel like going out, more than anything else. So, when it's usually Friday morning or around lunchtime we'll make a choice about if we'll go to the movies. We'll look at what's available and what's playing. We end up going to the big commercial multiplexes because it's less of a hassle to go there. [Less of a hassle getting there?] And being there. They provide parking and the facilities are easy to use and familiar. Buying tickets, the concession area... those kinds of things. We usually don't buy tickets in advance. We will buy in advance (over the internet after lunch on Friday rather than at the theater)... we generally only do that for movies we expect big crowds for, like a new release on the weekend it opens. Generally we prefer not to go because it's too crowded. You can't choose your seat or you have to get there early to choose your seat. [You don't like to go early because?] It's extra hassle standing around waiting for them to let you into the movie theater. Because we go to the movies so frequently, it's not an event for us. Which means we want it to be as easy and simple an experience as possible. That's why we end up picking the big releases at the big multiplexes. We know how to get there. We don't have to think about any part of the experience. We just go and relax.

[What do you do before you go to a movie?] We look up movie times Friday afternoon. [Do you always go with your wife?] Almost always. I would say 99% of the time I'm going with my wife. I'm trying to recall, in last year and a half I have been twice without her and she just didn't want to go to those ones. And I was going with other people. We don't often go with other people. It's our shared hobby. We're not interested in sharing with other people. [Are they date nights?] Absolutely. After the movie we go to dinner and talk

about the movie. That's date night for us. [What do you talk about?] We analyze what we thought worked and what we thought didn't. If the movie, uh, fell short, we talk about things that they could have done differently that we think could have worked better. [Do you have a history in the industry?] We're just avid viewers. When we're trying to make a decision about a movie, we'll go look to see what's playing. We'll go look at a website called Metacritic which compiles movie reviews from newspapers and magazines. It gives you a summary view of what the critics think of the movie. Either they like it or they don't like it. Rather than reading reviews in local papers, we cast a broader net. [How do you use that data?] We don't read the individual reviews. We use that data to help us decide whether something that we haven't heard much about or something we're not sure whether we want to see... it helps us make that decision where we're on the edge. We're aware of the movie from advertising or from seeing a trailer for it last week at the movies... we'll say, "That might be interesting, but we'll see what Metacritic says about it." If it's positive, we'll see it. If negative, then not. Some movies we want to see anyway, and we're just curious what the critics say. But we'll go anyway. Your special effects extravaganzas fall into that category. We're trying now to be a little more selective about... [What has changed?] [hesitates] I think what we've done is made "would look really cool on a big screen" a lower criterion for seeing a movie. If there's a movie not doing well on Metacritic, not actors that we like, but looks like it "would be cool on a big screen," we don't do that any more. We rent it instead. There are so many older movies that we'd like to see that we rent. We're trying to use the video store more. We haven't taken full advantage of that resource, and we're going to see stupid movies that we know will be stupid and paying a lot of money for it, where we could pay a small amount of money to see something good, and not even leave the house. [Is money an issue?] Not significantly. It was really ...cumulatively over the course of a year of looking back and recognizing the amount of money spent on movies that were not really good. We don't shop around for bargain theaters or anything. That is more energy than we want to expend to do this. We want it to be really simple.

[I supplied the words "date night." Tell me what you call it.] That's what we call it. If the scheduling of the show times makes it inconvenient to get dinner, like we'll be starving by the time we got out, we'll eat ahead of time, see the movie, then get dessert on the way home. So we have a place to sit down and have that experience of sitting down and talking about the movie. Getting out of the theater and driving home just doesn't seem as much fun. [How long have you been doing this?] It started before we got married, so at least three years.

[What is important beyond the theater?] Um. [hesitates] Ease of parking is definitely an issue in San Francisco. When I lived in Los Angeles it was never an issue. There are lots of theaters in San Francisco where that's an issue. I like being able to buy tickets from the kiosk. Have you seen these things? They're vaguely ATM-like kiosks with a touch screen. You insert your card, pick the movie time and how many people you have, and it spits out tickets. The theaters where there are kiosks, there is generally not a line but there is a line to buy from a human ticket seller. If we know we have to stand in line, that means we have to get there earlier. That whole thing we don't have to deal with. [Someone in the room sings "Fandango."] We use Fandango only sometimes. The quality of the popcorn

used to be important. Most of the theaters do not have very good popcorn. Unfortunately, small independent theaters have the best popcorn. Partially because of that and because of expense of popcorn, we tend not to buy it at theaters. If I had a theater that I could get to easily that was showing the movies that I wanted to see, that had fresh hot popcorn, then I would be doing it more than I am now. [Is it important that the butter is real?] No not to me.

[What else is important inside the theater?] Inside the theater itself, um, I prefer for it to be clean. This generally is not an issue too much. They are pretty good about keeping them clean. I was in one theater last week where the floor was sticky and I noticed it. Um, but again that doesn't come up too often. Comfortable seats: that's also something that doesn't come up too often, but some there are some theaters where it's hard to sit through a whole movie. My lower back is actually what bothers me. I do a lot of shifting in the seat. The big thing really is being able to have an unobstructed view. Stadium seating is really valuable or at least a floor with a nice slope to it. I would say that is the most important thing inside the theater. Naturally I have certain expectations regarding the quality of the image and the sound, but again problems with those things are fairly rare. When I lived in warmer places I used to always bring a coat to the theater because it tends to be colder in theaters. Living in SF I have to bring a coat with me anyway, so that extra step has been eliminated.

[What about your interaction with film?] I don't talk during the movie. I think that ...no I don't interact with the movie at all. My wife and I will interact a little bit while we are in the movie theater if it's a comedy sometimes. If there's an especially funny joke, we'll reflexively turn to one another and laugh together. We kind of exchange looks from time to time at certain places in movies, especially if it's a really bad movie. [Have you ever left early?] No I don't... believe in that. I think that, not to get dogmatic about it, I think that anybody who walks out of a movie theater is somebody who did not make good choices about what they were going to spend their money on that evening. I think you ought to know what you're spending money on. Even a bad movie we can enjoy afterward, because in a lot of ways failures provide more topics of conversation. [Have you seen Troy?] That's a special effects extravaganza that we'll wait for DVD...

[Do you buy action figures? Watch director interviews?] Yeah, I spent high school and college working in video stores and movie theaters. I have long been an active movie buff. I don't think I have ever gotten any movie-related magazines, but always read coverage off movie-related stuff in the media. I'm not much of a collector, but I do love movie posters. [You love them but don't buy them?] Yeah. It's not exactly related to movies, but I don't believe in having things just to have them... people who just acquire stuff. I think that movie posters are a special kind of art form that I really enjoy. From the video store and the theater I used to bring home posters all the time. [Do you still have them?] Some of them.

[What about "in jokes?"] Yeah, I have long been interested in all the aspects of it. I'm pretty familiar with directors and their styles. Um. When they make references to other movies, stealing things from other movies, references to Hollywood kinds of things, I'm definitely aware of all of those things. I... there are a couple of websites that I read

regularly that are movie related. Yahoo has in their movie section an upcoming movie tracker that watches as projects are developed in Hollywood. They cover from the time a studio buys the script to the actors and casting and filming and release dates. I know a lot about movies that aren't going to be out for another two years, for example. A couple of other things I'll do as the movie gets closer to release, I'll look on the Apple website for movie trailers. I see a lot of trailers in the theaters, but there are movies I'm curious about that I haven't seen trailers for. About once a month I'll go to the Apple site and browse for trailers... see what looks interesting. After the movies come out there's a site that tracks their box office success. [Why do you look at box office data?] I'm not sure. It doesn't help me decide. It's not that. It's more like a spectator sport... what I imagine what other people get out of reading the Sports page. It's tracking the competition between the different movies. On the upcoming movies Yahoo site, this comes up a lot and you see it reflected in box office numbers, is scheduling strategy. It interests me a lot. The studios are trying to figure out the right weekend to release their movie to maximize intake. There are lots of strategies against movies currently playing. Watching what strategy they employ and watching to see how that plays out in the box office is an independent source of entertainment other than the movies themselves. I may be more had core than I thought. [laughs] Movies are my main hobby. I frankly don't go to the movies as much as I like. There are lots of movies that are still coming out that I'd like to see. [Why don't you go more?] More than once a week is difficult to schedule. Back to back Friday and Saturday nights is hard, plus it's expensive. We don't ever do the movie without the dinner. That would be a lot of money to spend. [Do you see DVDs on Saturday night?] Sometimes, but only if we're in the mood. We've been doing that more recently, but I can't speculate as to why that is. Oh, you said about director commentaries... things like that. I [laughs] when we rent DVDs from the video store, I like to watch all the extras. All the stuff. And uh, I would say I'll watch the movie... watch the movie the regular way and then with commentary. I'll watch the commentary version about half the time. [Instead of watching the regular movie?] Always after having watched the movie through first. My wife is not so interested in that. What happens often is that we'll watch the movie through the regular way, then she'll go to bed and I'll watch with the commentary turned on. Some of the things she's interested in like the making of the movie, deleted scenes, she's interested in that. But I think I'm more into it than she is. [So you don't get much sleep?] Yeah, that's true.

[Do you talk to others about movies?] I don't often talk to other people about movies. Um, [hesitates] the things that I like and don't like about movies tend to be different from the things that a lot of other people focus on. [Such as?] I think I tend to be more attuned to the details of the craft of movie making. So one thing that I tend to notice is the cinematography. How the shots are framed, how the camera moves. That's not something you can motivate someone to go see a movie for. [What makes you unique?] It's funny. Some people I know are much more serious about movies in that they want to see important movies [frowns], the big Hollywood blockbusters don't interest them. There are other people I know who just want to be entertained. The craft is not that interesting to them. I fall in between. I'm interested in lots of aspects of lots of different kinds of movies. Um, the main kind of movie that I like that I don't get to see much of any more are horror movies because my wife doesn't like them. Horror movie audiences are the

most fun audiences to be a part of I think. They're much more prone to interacting with the screen. It's a different kind of environment than "we're going to sit and respectfully observe this artist's work." It's a more social movie experience. I still don't interact, but it's fun to be there in that environment while it's going on. People who really like horror movies, that's one of the things they really like about it. That's what I've seen by attending them.

[Is there anything else?] I guess that's pretty much it. For the 4th of July we're going to visit Rebecca's parents in Ohio. They're not movie goers. For me, some of my best childhood memories involve going to the movies with my family. I want to take my nieces and nephews and share that with them, but they don't want to go. When we're visiting my family we do often go to the movies. [Who picks the movie?] Often the visits are during holidays, and there's a high profile movie enough people haven't seen that we can get some momentum behind. The last couple of years it's been easy with Lord of the Rings. [Do you own the DVDs?] I own the extended editions. Those DVDs we have a lot of fun watching. We parcel them out over time. Every week we see a little each night. As a child I used to have books of conceptual art from science fiction movies. For each of the Star Wars movies they put out a book of all the art that they did and the models they built. The books go through all the iterations of what Yoda would look like, from sketches to sculptures and finally to the puppet. You'll see one idea that started as a storm trooper and turned into Boba Fett. "The Art of Star Wars." [Have you seen the Dune miniseries?] A friend of mine read the books at the same time that I did, and he raved about them. I got half way through the fourth book before it got to be too much.

Content for Slotting in Mental Model Diagram

The following features are under consideration for the JMS Entertainment “movie-goer website.” Please choose one person in your group to sacrifice their pages. Cut up this table into little bits of paper. We will use the paper bits for Gap Analysis in the Mental Model Diagram.

Theaters Near Me	What’s Playing Today (by zip code)	What’s Playing Today (by title)	What’s Playing Today (by director/actor)
What’s Playing Today (at favorite theaters)	What’s Playing (by zip code)	What’s Playing (by title)	What’s Playing (by director/actor)
What’s Playing (at favorite theaters)	My Favorite Theaters List	Pick Favorite Theater (by location)	Pick Favorite Theater (by concessions)
Pick Favorite Theater (by screen size)	Pick Favorite Theater (by sound system)	Pick Favorite Theater (by seating)	Pick Favorite Theater (by architecture)
Pick Favorite Theater (by parking)	Pick Favorite Theater (by nearby restaurants)	Map to Theater	Driving Directions to Theater
Parking Directions for Theater	What’s Playing in the Next Two Hours (by zip code)	What’s Playing in the Next Two Hours (at favorite theaters)	What’s Playing in the Next Two Hours (by title)
What’s Playing in the Next Two Hours (by director/actor)	Showtimes	Pick a Film (by genre)	Pick a Film (by compiled reviews)
Pick a Film (by favorite reviewer)	Pick a Film (by peer rating)	My Favorite Reviewers List	Pick Favorite Reviewer
Running Time	Is It Sold Out?	Buy Tickets	Link to Theater Website
Rate a Theater	Pick Favorite Theater (by peer rating)	Rate a Film	Is There a Line?
Pick Favorite Theater (independents)	List of Movies Coming Soon	List of Movies Playing Now	Theater Release Dates

Trailer	Top Requested Trailers	DVD Release Dates	Trailer Release Dates
Links to Other Review Websites	Link to IMDB	Link to Film Website	Top Box Office Performers
Link to Box Office Websites	Links to Gross Income Tracking on Films	Pick a Film (by director/actor)	Pick a Film (by related films)
Relate One Film to Another	Pick a Film (by mood)	Local Film Festivals	National Film Festivals
Links to Film Festival Websites	Links to Film Festival Schedules	List of Movies Coming This Weekend	Links to Film Archive Schedules
Links to Local Outdoor Screenings	Links to Film Institute Websites	Links to Film Archive Websites	Links to Film Institute Schedules
Links to Entertainment Websites	Top DVD Sales Performers	List of Extras on DVD	Pick a DVD (by director/actor)
Pick a DVD (by related films)	Pick a DVD (by genre)	Pick a DVD (by compiled reviews)	Pick a DVD (by favorite reviewer)
Pick a DVD (by peer rating)	Rate a DVD	Link to Netflix	Reserve DVD on Netflix

Mental Model Diagram