



Cinema/Chicago and the Chicago International Film Festival  
Education Outreach Program Screening: *Flex Is Kings*  
Directors: Michael Beach Nichols, Deidre Schoo  
80 minutes

Please use the below synopsis/study questions to lead your students in preparation and post-screening discussion. Following the film, students are required to respond to the screening with a one-page essay. **Schools that do not send in essay requirement will not be allowed to attend future Education Outreach Screenings.**

### **Synopsis**

"Flexing" is a dance style forged in east Brooklyn, at the dead-end of a handful of subway lines. Through battles dancers gain respect, craft an artistic identity, and sometimes find a sanctuary from the poverty and violence that saturates their neighborhood. No other style of street-dance is this violent, scary, or beautifully theatrical. In this purely do-it-yourself scene, creativity and ambition bring a community together around frequent dance-battle showcases that have begun to attract an international audience and may catapult the best dancers into careers in theater or film. Following a group of dancers for over two years, *Flex is Kings* explores the hopes and realities of this under-acknowledged and totally unfunded group of urban artists.

### **Study Ideas/Questions**

1. Jay Donn, Reem and Flizzo all talk about how dance changes them. Are they all changed in the same way? Discuss the different changes and impact dance has had on all of them.
2. Think about the changes we see in Jay Donn, Reem and Flizzo during the course of the film. How do they change, grow and develop as people and dancers from the first scene to the last?
3. One of the dancers says Flex is about "being the best at how you do." What does this mean?
4. Flexing is described as a "do-it-yourself" scene. What does this mean, and how is do-it-yourself different from other dance forms and dance study?
5. Do you think Flex could have come from a different area? Is it specific to Brooklyn, New York, the east coast? How does where a style of art come from influence how it is performed and perceived?
6. Why do you think the filmmakers chose to follow three male dancers?
7. Flexing appears to be performed more by men than women. Why do you think this is? What role do the women play in this art form?
8. Talk about the cultures that clash when Jay Donn partners with the modern dance company. What does he learn from them and what do they learn from him?
9. Discuss how the families, lives and challenges of each dancer are reflected in their performances.

10. How do you express yourself? Do you dance, sing, draw, write? Does the commitment to flexing that the three dancers exhibit inspire you in any way? Think about how your life influences your work and how having an audience to your creativity changes it further.

### **Interested in Film?**

The Chicago International Film Festival's Student Film Council is a program for students who have a passion and appreciation for film, cinema and the moving image. During the school year, Council members will experience and attend the numerous film festivals and film centers in Chicago and engage in conversations with directors, producers and festival programmers. Visit **[chicagofilmfestival.com](http://chicagofilmfestival.com) for more details.**

Adobe Youth Voices helps students/teachers get a film club started at their school to encourage students to foster their creativity, practice their storytelling techniques, and even influence change through experimenting with society's most powerful medium. Find out more at **[youthvoices.adobe.com](http://youthvoices.adobe.com)**