Best Practices of Film Screening in Libraries

Planning and Marketing
- Read reviews, view films, write reviews and create lists
- Give your film program a catchy, memorable name
- Use themes to group films together into a series
- Select at least one box-office film that audiences will want to attend
- Pair it with thematically-linked less-known independent, alternative or documentary films
- Place announcements in local newspapers and online communities
- Use social media marketing to raise awareness
- Create take-away flyers and post and entrances and exits

Set Up
- Use theater-style seating with a center aisle and place additional chairs against the back wall for latecomers
- Use a late-model data projector and external speakers for the best sound possible
- Darken room appropriately
- Test equipment, lighting and sound before the event
- Use closed captioning to enable full access to film content by all viewers
- Have a sign-up sheet for attendees who wish to provide email for future contact

Introductions and Conclusions
- Stand at the door and greet people as they arrive
- Identify yourself by name and welcome attendees to thank them for participating
- Announce the name of the film, the director, and the year it was created
- Offer a brief synopsis of the film with no spoilers
- If any awards have been given to the film, mention one or two
- Hold up a flyer and promote upcoming film screenings
- Ask people to silence their cell phones
- Announce that people can stay for informal discussion afterward if they like
- End with a question to focus viewer attention or a short phrase that creates anticipation and links to the theme of the film
- Sit in the room and watch while you also observe the behavior of viewers at key moments in the film
- Play the film all the way through the complete credit roll
- Turn the sound down during the credit roll and remind people about the optional post-viewing discussion
- Stand at the door and thank people for attending
- Listen to comments and chat about the film as people leave

Discussion
- Thank people for staying and start them off with a general question to discuss using a pair-share activity to warm people up the process of sharing
- Use open-ended questions about characters, conflict and theme to elicit divergent interpretations
- Invite people to make connections between the film and their own lives, or to another creative work
- Provide emotional support (using head nodding, smiling) to acknowledge those who share and comment
- Look for nonverbal clues (yawning, squirming) to determine when it's time to wrap things up
- Mention the next film event to encourage people to return for another shared viewing experience

Source: Hobbs, R., Deslauriers, E. & Steager, P. (in press). *Library Screen Scene: Film and Media Literacy Education in School, Public and Academic Libraries*. New York: Oxford University Pres.