

Case study: Wise Up

Building home schooling links and parental involvement

Wise Up is an education charity based in Neath Port Talbot, offering support and information to home educating families and families considering home education as an option for their children. With the Support of Swansea based production company Undercurrents, Wise Up has been using film-based activity, including an animation project. Some parents of beneficiaries helped to coordinate the Wise Up group and were instrumental in setting up the project.



The project included the making of a documentary. Sixteen young people were involved in script writing, interviewing, camera and sound operation and editing, supported by professional filmmakers. The documentary they made was about their experiences in order to challenge misconceptions around home education.

The Wise Up project was part of the Film Agency for Wales' wider Reach the Heights project, as managed by the Arts Council of Wales and funded by the Welsh Government and European Social Fund. 200 young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) or considered 'at risk' were involved in an ambitious programme of film education activity across Wales.

Attainment

The project helped the young people with language and literacy.

"A lot of children struggle with English skills. I think filming is such a better way of teaching English. My daughter wrote the interview questions, and an outline for the film [to use in Bulgaria, where the group took the project]. She had no idea that what she was doing was Comprehension and English."

Parent and project coordinator

"I've seen a radical change in my daughter. I would never have put filmmaking in her way because she hates English. She's a manic interviewer now. It's lovely to watch. There were a couple of boys who were also brilliant with the cameras and interviewing."

Parent and project coordinator

Pedagogic practices

Both the parents and young people said that the key to the project's success was the learner-led approach that mirrored the self-directed learning favoured within home education contexts.

"We wanted the children to have the experience and knowledge of how to put a film together, interview, edit, use a camcorder...the way the filmmaker teaches was non-prescriptive and flexible. It wasn't a lesson as such but it was about learning fluidly."

Parent and project coordinator

Young people's behaviour

The young people's responses to the experience show that Wise Up helped with their confidence.

"The project definitely made me more confident. If other stuff in my life doesn't go so well, I've got this."

Young person who took part in Wise Up

Parents' view

"Some of our children have special educational needs that have not been recognised. [The project] gives them the confidence to use a camera and do interviews, especially when they feel less capable having come out of the school system."

Parent and project manager

Long-term legacy

The film has been used by Wise Up to change perceptions about home education for families considering the option and the Local Education Authority.

Since the Neath Port Talbot project, Wise Up has also been working with other home education support groups in South Wales, taking the lessons learned from the film project to a wider audience in the region.

Summary of the benefits of film education

- Involves parents and young people – encourages a learner-led approach
- Improves writing, language and communications skills
- Increases confidence in learners

Facts and Figures

- 16 young people participated
- 2 people trained
- Investment from First Light
- 1 completed film