Film: 21st Century Literacy

RE/DEFINING FILM EDUCATION

Notes towards a definition of film education

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SUMMARY

Aims

Following comments made by delegates at the Film 21st Century Literacy Advocacy Feedback meetings in Cardiff and Bradford, there seemed to be some confusion as to what "film education" might mean in 2012.

The aim of this seminar was to promote discussion around this topic. It was felt that whilst it was unlikely that one final definition would be achieved, some key points might be developed and it was felt that it was important to both start the debate and also to offer some initial "notes" which could be taken forward in the future. The comments made here do not imply the view of the Strategy or any of its consortium partners; this paper is a close to verbatim record of the day.

Overview of the day

During the day there was the lack of distinction between finding a definition of film education and advocating film education (without there being a definition available).

One key point made was that any definition of film education should have the following as components - collaboration, advocacy, focus, and clarification. However, these are more about action than definition. A caveat to this was that it was felt that film education should not be just "one thing" but rather should be a collection of possibilities.

Whilst this is a useful pointer towards creating a diverse content of film education, it is not helpful in trying to pull together a disparate number of approaches, many of which might be seen to be contradictory.

A reoccurring theme was that the term 'Film' wasn't sufficient, and that perhaps 'Moving Image' was more all encompassing.

The acronym REAL (Relevance, Engagement, Attainment, Literacy) was a popular choice in conveying a meaning of film education in a succinct and memorable way.

It was felt that the inclusive nature of film was a vital ingredient of film education.

INTRODUCTION

The *Film: 21st Century Literacy* Strategy ran its three year course and ended in December 2011; however, funding was received by the BFI for a transitional period to prepare findings in order inform the BFI of responses to the overall work of the Strategy and how this work might inform any future developments within the realm of film education across the UK.

Following comments made at the Advocacy feedback sessions held in Bradford and Cardiff about the confusion surrounding what the term "film education" actually meant in 2012, the Film: 21st Century Literacy Strategy office decided to hold a seminar at the BFI on 13th April entitled *Re/Defining Film Education*.

Delegates represented a diverse spectrum of stakeholders involved with formal and informal film education, giving a wide-range of perspectives from school representatives, to filmmakers to cinema organisations.

Until now, the most recent attempt to define film education was in 1999, in the document *Making Movies Matter*, which called for a fresh approach to the moving image, by education policy-makers (Jim Barratt from Bigger Picture Research who wrote the Strategy's advocacy document '*Integrating Film into Education*', recently defined it as "Learner-focused activity that is intended as educational").

Making Movies Matter identified four competencies, which formed the bedrock of film education:

1. Analytical competence
2. Contextual competence
3. Canonical competence
4. Production competence

Learning objectives could be summarized as giving children and young people the ability to develop:

- their enjoyment of film
- their knowledge about its variety of forms
- their understanding of how the moving image language works
- their ability to articulate what it is they value and enjoy in films
- their skills in making their own moving images

These might be seen as helpful pointers for a new definition but in many ways the landscape has changed significantly in the last 13 years. Whilst the above definitions seem aimed at formal education, new organisations such as First Light and FILMCLUB have been formed with an emphasis on informal learning. What would their objectives be and how could these be linked to formal expectations? More individual organisations have appeared delivering practical workshops for schools and colleges as well as being involved with informal education. More students are taking GCSE, AS/A2 and Higher qualifications, which involve Film and Media. There has also been a growth of the use of film in primary schools.

The seminar's aim was to look again at what is meant by those terms, so there is an understanding of what film education is, or could be, within both formal and informal education; and to examine the links not only between these two educational models but also the relevance of the competencies outlined above; and to consider if new competencies might now need to be included in such a list.

What follows in this document reflects the comments, arguments and conclusions made by delegates and should be seen as a summary of the day's debate. Some of the content could be seen as contradictory, but we feel that such contradiction can only help further the debate.

SETTING THE SCENE

In order to give both context and areas of discussion for the day seven speakers from various backgrounds involving film education were asked to present five-minute thought-pieces on film education.

TERRY BOLAS, author of *Screen Education: From Film Appreciation to Media Studies*, and former BFI employee, shared his insights about the historical origins and definitions of film education. Beginning with ideas of film appreciation from the 1930s through to the advent of film studies as a discreet subject, Terry examined the various stages of development from marginalisation through moral panic to a slow but steady growth in numbers taking the different film and media related examinations. Whilst Terry identified progress within the film education realm, he also reminded us that some of the debates we are still engaged with as education practitioners are on-going, such as convincing policy makers of the worth and value of film education and working from a systematic strategy for learning with and through film education.

TOM BARRANCE of Media Education Wales talked about the main focus of working in both the formal and informal sectors, highlighting key features, issues and concluding that what is lacking in both sectors are technical skills, knowledge of film theory and language, access to equipment and an interest in film in its own right, rather than as a tool. Tom highlighted the different demands and outcomes of both sectors, which are set out below.

The main focus of the formal training is delivering the curriculum and improving attainment, with particular focus on literacy, speaking and listening. Formal education also focuses on gaining specific qualifications in film and media.

Key features of formal education are that most practitioners in the formal sector are educated to degree level or above, activities can be structured and long-term, and can include overt critical and cultural elements. The main issue encountered in this sector is the lack of time and resources available, especially in terms of practical filmmaking.

A typical formal project would start with analysis activities, for example, sound only, freeze frame, spot the shots, where's the camera. 'Cultural' films, like classics and world cinema, would be used. There would be a practical editing activity with footage provided by them. It includes practical film work, within a structured filmmaking process including scripting and story boarding.

In the informal sector, it's difficult to do structured in-term work because theory has to be integrated into practical lessons. Analysis activities are also done, and cover cultural film, classics, and world cinema.

The focus for informal education is to encourage aspiration, provide a voice, offer opportunities for engagement and offer accreditation.

Key features of this type of education is that the practitioners are enthusiastic and adaptable, although some do lack formal qualification and can only work part time, thus making it difficult to do structured long-term work. Activities have to be immediately appealing and theory needs to be integrated into making – "Challenge-based learning".

For a typical informal project, the best way is learning by doing, working out how to make a short film within a specific time and structure. They do mimetic activities – imitating something – then talk about what went right and wrong, and how to improve their filming. Practical editing skills are also taught, using provided footage. Overt discussions of theory should be avoided and more focus should be on stuff that makes sense on its own, instead of part of a project – i.e. short, discrete chunks of activity.

What is lacking in both formal and informal sectors that need to be addressed, are: technical skills, knowledge of film theory and language, access to equipment and an interest in film in its own right, rather than as a tool.

DAN SIMMONS, Head of Film at Creative Skillset, talked about how creative skills are hard-core key skills, and believes that education agendas are crucial. Aggregate, integrate and respond were his key words that go towards the definition of film education. This raised an interesting point regarding using the word skills and added another dimension to the debate.

LEIGH THOMAS is the Chief Executive of First Light. Leigh talked about the benefits of filmmaking in informal education. A definition of film education should recognise excellence, quality and defined learning outcomes. It should be a forward-looking, flexible vision rather than a distraction.

MARK HIGHAM, Chief Executive of FILMCLUB posed three questions:
1) Historically, have we been trying to get film education to fit in with existing model of education?
2) Should we be capitalizing on film education's difference above what becomes monotonous in schools?
3) So much is not memorable in education, but film is. Are there other ways we can capitalize?

MICHELLE CANNON Researcher and 'media mentor' gave us a presentation around the concepts of Purpose, Positioning and Processes (the 3 Ps) in relation to film education. Paradoxically, film education's very plasticity and translatability, so often perceived as problematic in the current structures, are its most 'marketable' core strengths. An interesting approach was offered by Michelle – to look at the unique selling points of film education. These are set out below.

What if … in the spirit of TV's The Apprentice, film education was a product…

- with abundant USPs, massive growth potential and clear evidence of longevity

- but whose brand, despite its relevance, suffers in some quarters from perception deficit and issues of differentiation

- whose backers lack sustained R & D commitment, even taking into account excellent in-house product design skills

- whose target markets are highly receptive, but whose market penetration continues to disappoint – despite the potential for cross-selling, franchising and international expansion

- whose excellent market research isn't always acted on and is, in some cases, disregarded

- whose PR strategy, Quality Control & Sales Rep training need larger investment

- whose stakeholders are debating the pros and cons of a being absorbed by another associated brand with bigger European clout: 'Does this represent a good opportunity to raise our profile? Might our product's distinct qualities be subsumed in the process?'

- whose creative use of new media technologies both in its delivery and consumption, make it current and adaptable

- whose competition is virtually nil but whose profit margins are really tricky to measure, in fact so elusive and diffuse that to some, the product doesn't even look viable; however, such is the manufacturers' and consumers' belief in the benefits, it keeps current and successful on the margins.

PATRICK PHILLIPS
Director of Programmes: Media Arts at Middlesex University, made some predictions on how film in higher education will differentiate itself between academic and vocational, putting it at risk, and that the perception of film as a 'soft subject' feeds back down to parents' choices of media studies at A Level. He left us with a powerful warning that practitioners are being increasingly hindered by government in being allowed to develop a film education that they might want: what is film education allowed to be?

WHAT IS FILM EDUCATION?

Some key questions were posed to delegates:

- Is there a coherent understanding of what film education is supposed to achieve?
- Does film education address specific knowledge and understanding or is it exclusively about creativity? Or a combination of these? If so, how can an integrated film education be achieved?
- Are the aims of film education the same for children (and people) of all ages, in all settings, or should it be inflected by different contexts?
- How can we get closer to agreeing on what is actually meant by film education?

Semantics

It was felt that there is a fundamental semantic problem surrounding the definition of film education: the whole glossary needs to be about how film differentiates itself from media literacy, film literacy, moving image literacy etc. Delegates felt that it might be worth exploring the idea of "moving image education" which would broaden the offer made to children and young people.

Delegates attempted to define what the key aspects of film education were, that made it distinctive:

Five Phrases about what film education is...

1) **Film education is a vital learning tool and it's about pleasure.**
2) **Film education needs to be curatorial – what and how to teach – and navigated through international and national levels.**
3) **Film education needs to be positioned within a political agenda – arguing about kinds of experiences students can have.**
4) **Film education is for empowering students.**
5) **Not leaving behind the collective experience of cinema – cultural experience of going to cinema.**

Film education with a historical context:

1) **Creative engagement in learning.**
2) **Discrimination / evaluation / differentiation by value.**
3) **Balance of making and appreciation of a cultural form and it's history.**
4) **Engages every single child of all abilities.**
5) **Sustainable.**
6) **Prior-learning.**

An understanding

Definitions of film education have been made and unmade for many years. In the search for what makes film education distinctive and important it was felt that in trying to develop a definition, many of the 'values' it is said to offer can be

applied to many other spheres and curriculum subjects and do not help define the specifics of what film education itself can offer.

One suggestion was that film education is about teaching people a language that allows them to articulate descriptively and theoretically, as well as teaching them practical skills – learning through doing and making, and this should be considered in the definition.

In identifying a film education unique selling point (USP), the acronym **REAL** was created as an all encompassing and succinct way of defining film education, with the intention of using it as a constructive framework:

1. **R is for relevance, a key argument: film is a contemporary medium, it gives us access to our cultural history, provides learning outside the classroom.**
2. **E is engagement – a holistic inclusive discipline from which we can establish film is for everyone.**
3. **A is attainment – the political aspect is important and what is essential to the government is bridging the attainment gap. The critical dimension of film education could serve that function.**
4. **L for literacy – location of film within new literacies, there is a danger of thinking of it in terms of platforms and getting back to what film literacy actually is: Making films is essential as watching them, just as you have to read to be able to write, so making it just as important.**

A number of issues arose regarding the link between creative and analytical approaches to film education. It was felt that from an analytical point of view, film history (and cultural history in general) was in jeopardy - there is no real take on the history of the medium unless one enters an advanced course on the subject. Is it enough just engaging people in the here and now, in their visceral sense of their own viewing?

It was felt that film education needs to be about making as well as "review writing," an interesting statement from someone from the informal sector which, as was pointed out by other delegates, belied what is actually involved in the formal study of film within the curriculum.

It was argued that creating moving image in schools could have more prominence, alongside watching, and in a continuous and progressive way. So much learning is done through making, and that there are fundamental things that can only be learnt about film through making. The question of how children and young people develop an aesthetic awareness of the film making process was raised. Is this through watching and then making or is it something that we hope will just develop through practice?

Young people often don't know how things are made, so further discussion about art and apprenticeship – academic and industry - is welcome, for, in order to

understand film as art, it is very important to understand how film is made. This needs to be communicated to young people, and a way of how education practitioners can collectively do that, needs to be found.

To go alongside this, a valuable part of the film education process is sharing, watching and commenting on each other's film productions. But just how much of this activity actually happens and how can it be facilitated? You Tube?

Evidence, such as the 'Teaching Using Film – Statistical Evidence' report produced by *Film: 21st Century Literacy*, shows that where film education is implemented in a school, it engages every single child, irrespective of ability. Film allows students to bring prior learning from outside the classroom in, which in turn gives them confidence, as they are bringing knowledge to the table. A number of examples were given where the use of film was seen as an aid to the delivery of specific curriculum subject – MFL and History, for example.

Film education should be a collaborative effort. The 3Cs (Cultural, Creative, Critical) are important but the 'uniqueness' of film doesn't mean its *better* than other art forms or educative tools, it just means it's *different*. How can these differences be drawn out?

The issue of skills versus critical and creative was raised – does film education need to lead to employability? All education does not need to be vocational, but there do need to be clear pathways to follow; in education people should understand the opportunities that there may be available and have clear information. Thus a fourth C could be Context.

> **8 cs – Cultural Critical Creative but also Context and Connectivity, Collaboration, Careers and Curiosity.**

One key question was –"Should film education be extra curricular, or should it be an entitlement and thus embedded in the curriculum?" It is interesting to note this polarity and that few voices were raised suggesting that both formal and informal education could work together in delivery of film education or how this might be achieved.

Literacy
What is meant by literacy/film literacy? One suggestion is that it's reading, writing and speaking skills - participating in discourse and discussions about culture/meaning/ values not just literature and art, but also film and television. It's about encouraging young people to be confident and articulate in a contemporary discourse of culture.

But does, for example, the idea that you cannot understand contemporary literacy if you don't understand film still hold?

Culture

> **Moving image/film is a massive part of all of our lives and unless we have the capacity to understand it, then we are culturally diminished.**

With film education, there needs to be a balance in making and appreciation – it needs to be part of a cultural form and history, it must be sustainable, and there should be discrimination as in differentiation by value or evaluation.

Digital Issues and definition terms of reference

As touched upon earlier, there is an obvious digital divide between schools and home. Many young people encounter film on the internet, so should politicians be encouraged to consider film from the perspective of film as a language, the internet as an interface? 12 and 13 year olds can multi task – they use their phones whilst doing something else at the same time, so are able to interpret information in a different way. Filmmaking is also a completely different process now, as technological advances have completely changed creation and distribution methods. Thus, the question must be asked again – is 'Film' still a relevant term?

There has been a huge response to the term 'digital'. There continues to be a problem of mixing meaning, making, form, and the platform... this needs to be clarified. Where does film sit: if it is allowed to be considered a multimodal text, separate from other texts, it remains marginalised. Early understanding and recognition of the meaning of film means it is a complex and rich means of communication. This however returns us to our original question of how to define film education. In what ways does digital help with the access to creative pursuits (making films) but at the same time in what ways might it lead to simply producing images that no one has any desire to see?

A context was offered regarding the current state of the use of digital technology. Young people today are cutting film together on their BlackBerrys with it's own language – is this film? Is it the new film, and so should it be called "moving image studies" because they are mobile phone films? And do the creators perceive what they have created as a "film"? It was felt that young people don't know the difference between adverts, programmes, or drama features when they look at content on Internet. If they can't get the difference between adverts and films on Internet, how do they understand their world?

Beginnings - Primary Film Education

We don't consider literacy the entitlement of the few, why should film be so? There are difficulties with using film, which starts in primary schools: children are working with film at home, but they are not able to do this at school due to issues of security/safeguarding. YouTube and similar online platforms have been blocked by most LEAs, limiting access to film. The debate of film as an art form is part of this, but the discussion needs to be broader: home film production and school needs to be linked.

Film is appearing in different disciplines, but the question is, how would this happen in primary school, as it's not overtly in the curriculum? In primary

schools, inspections say the studies of film and visual literacy should be embedded into the existing curriculum, but it isn't. Film education perhaps has an even more powerful effect at primary level, as pupils engage creatively. Primary school film projects involve numeracy and literacy; they are often done on laptops and involve editing work.

In primary schools, it's about engagement and starting early, particularly for young people and children who aren't necessarily easy to engage, where film is a good medium to stimulate their imagination.

A recent paper published at the beginning of 2012 from Ofsted noted that outstanding teaching in primary used film and recommended teachers use it.

Attainment
Can film education narrow the gap and raise standards? The fact that this discussion is taking place may be why film is often called a soft subject. What are it's own attainment targets? How do these relate to attainment objectives in both other subjects and in education as a whole? The question remains, can film close the attainment gap?

Some evidence was put forward that film education is central to closing the attainment gap from Lincolnshire, BFI, and other examples shown in the *Film: 21st Century Literacy* advocacy report. It was stated that there is a lot of anecdotal evidence available but nothing robust to prove the impact of film education on learning, and this was evidenced in the *Film: 21st Century Literacy* evaluation where little research had been carried out on impact – this is not strictly true: MIE in Scotland produced much evidence on impact, and research undertaken by Cary Bazalgette for Scottish Screen also provides strong evidence.

We need to find out what's unique about film, why use it, with the objective of showing how attainment levels can be raised by using film as a tool. To get the best results, there is a need to maximise resources, join up and share knowledge. There needs to be some solid research carried out in this area (Bradford will be launching a 3 year study starting September 2012 into film in the primary school).

Film education needs to be positioned within a political agenda – it needs power behind it in order for it to become embedded within the curriculum. One of the [government's] key priorities should be about getting all the different agencies to work together, an idea being, for example, that national organisations hold regional events that other regions can benefit from. However, in order to rationalise delivery there still needs to be a solid definition of what film education is, so that WHAT is delivered is relevant.

A joined up approach should be worked on, so that a strong, unified message can be sent to the government – the message is "give teachers the incentive, encourage them and embed it into curriculum."

Perception

Why are people afraid of film studies? In contrast to the USP talked about earlier, there is a great fear of film because film is experienced intuitively all at once in the viewing, it's audio visual, it's received viscerally before its turned into discourse, and this is what makes it dangerous. The pre-verbal moment and what happens in this moment is everything – then there is a need to step back in order to verbalise and talk about what has just been seen, and felt, and thought – so its about learning a language that will allow us to articulate this experience – but this language is never sufficient and always leaves a lot of things unsaid, including the pleasurable hall of that moment. It's about allowing children to respond verbally and creatively.

There is an argument that says to forget Hollywood and mainstream form and focus on film and independent art; however, the counterargument is that one can't ignore what kids are learning from Hollywood. If this is taken away, there will be a lack of understanding about how they're being manipulated.

There is a general perception by non-practitioners, of moving image as entertainment, not education. This will stop it from moving on, so needs to be addressed.

People who make raw film without the background knowledge don't have the knowledge to take them forward in their career – they make one film and then can't go forward, because they don't know anything. So a fundamental issue is how to ensure that making and theory are kept together, and how to do this throughout education, not just at the beginning (primary) and end (higher education) – make it lifelong learning.

There is a pattern on how students perceive cinema, they don't realize that they are watching a whole film, whereas from other platforms they rarely watch a film to completion. So film education should be about creating a culture of curiosity.

There isn't a wide perception that film is valued as an art form, so there's more that we can do as a sector to increase this perception of it, it's the great USPs of film that need to be made the most of. It's the tension between the Arts and the film industry, which makes it interesting; how do we capitalise on that so that the end result is having extremely skilled people that can operate in the 21st century?

SUMMARY OF PHRASES DEFINING KEY FINDINGS

Some paraphrases of the most important findings in terms of film or moving image education that go towards a definition are as follows:

   Valuable learning goes on outside the classroom as well as in it.

   How can film be used at all the different models? What is the model of film education that can be sustainable and relevant and can be sold to a politician?

   Is there an argument that film is more important than other art forms?

A strong message is imagination: using film to stimulate imagination.

Film education is contemporary literacy, cross curricula, and imaginative hands-on learning.

Teaching film analysis puts the visceral pleasure of film in limbo.

The pleasure principle and how it's not fashionable in education circles – could use word 'aesthetic' more and place it into the Aesthetic domain, as that sounds high culture enough.

Film to inspire individual aspiration and learning.

Film education needs more advocacy at high levels – where's the celebrity champion? [nb Sir Kenneth Branagh is an advocate in the *Film: 21st Century Literacy* showreel http://youtu.be/OLVfa53PfPA]

Film education involves both filmmaking and film watching – it means working together across all learners, not just some groups, and sustain it.

Without imagination or pleasure there is no educational progress.

Imagination is the source of every form of human achievement.

Convincing Ofsted of the significance of film in outstanding learning is vital.

Moving Image is the most powerful and complex communicative medium we've every invented. And it's the first one we learn. Yet we're still frightened of it.

The importance of introducing filmmaking and watching in primary cannot be underestimated, if only because it offers opportunities for young people to articulate themselves.

THE CASE FOR FILM EDUCATION

A simple way of communicating the key argument of the importance of film, or moving image education, is by the old fashioned medium of writing letters. Key figures need to be identified, with a corresponding relevant argument and case, what is being asked of them? What do they need to do differently to support the cause of film education? This may be regarded as a simplistic and not in the real world, it may be better to think about who your allies are, how you could work with them, who do you persuade to be on your side, so make it more about agencies not individuals. Perhaps it shouldn't be personalised at all, but be about structure. On the other hand, from a historical standpoint, it may not be about individuals OR agencies – it could be deeper than that, there is an ideological base which is impersonal, there is a moment which is more conclusive and more helpful. The definition of film isn't going to be different to other subjects in utilitarian. In this part there is an attempt to narrow down who it is that needs to

be targeted in order for the case for film education to be heard, and a coherent argument for each individual / organisation.

ALLIANCES
It was found that alliances would be a key target – certain agencies could act as natural allies, like those who already have an interest – for example new teaching schools and academy consortia. In terms of semantics, 'film' may be the wrong word to use in this case – *moving image education* may be more appropriate, as it doesn't have the same 'baggage' as film – it is successful in school.

PROFESSIONAL BODIES
Another focus was on extra curricula film education, and enriching existing provision. After all the work that has been done, there still isn't a professional body that represents the kinds of interests that all the representatives of the informal and formal education providers have – that the key stakeholders are not organised as a professional group of people to lobby, thus it could be argued that letters should be written to ourselves. In terms of tone, letters need to be empowered rather than pleading, including what both sides have to gain from it, that it's a huge opportunity, backed up with evidence and statistics.

BROADCASTERS
Broadcasters such as BSkyB Media could have a massive influence in lifelong learning. Broadcasters such as this need to take more risks to make more work, and TV could be a key source of film education. There is a strong commercial argument here - Sky is fragmented, but Sky Movies don't differentiate genres and tastes, yet they could easily have this role. They could contextualize work – e.g. have a British Cinema Season. Also, there was felt to be a need for a broader range of films to be shown on television.

HEADTEACHERS
Headteachers are a key target, because if they buy in to film education then it will filter down through the schools and become embedded across the curriculum.

EUROPE
As well convincing the obvious UK bodies such as DCMS, DfE, BIS, Ofsted, Ofcom, Teacher Training Organisations, Exam Boards, BBC, Scottish Executive, for example; arguments could also be made on a wider scale, to the European Commission. It would aim to find out how we can give better access to world cinema, as cultural access is currently quite poor. There is a need for access to models and finding an international model to replicate, like Creative Europe, the Creative Cities network and UNESCO have good practice.

FINAL THOUGHTS

There is a need to acknowledge that if we'd been here five years ago, we'd be having the same discussions as today – this is not a negative comment, but it reflects a situation that exists at the moment, that we haven't cracked key issues

in a wider context. Whilst there have been initiatives that have regressed certain agendas and progress in terms of some aspects of the debate in the wider political world in that they achieved investment, its fair to say many of the issues are the same issues that have been in play for some time. The good news is that we do have the opportunity to create step change in terms of investment in film education. Hopefully we see this reflected in the BFI future plan. It is an opportunity to create a set of addresses and challenges to the issues raised. We need to define film education in the context of wider education; the level of investment is still very low compared to, say, music education. There are sets of challenges that remain to be addressed in wider, political, educational and cultural spheres, but for the first time we have the opportunity to coordinate resources, knowledge, expertise and cultural alignment with cultural funders that hasn't existed in the last ten years. So we can be opportunistic about certain things.

There have been some strong ideas about marketing and advocacy - each argument needs to be embedded in government, showing it's an entitlement. And there's a greater need for advocacy, yet there's some crossover and tension between stakeholders that needs to grow into a strong and unified voice.

POINTS OF VIEW

Finding a definition of film education has been a very fragmented debate. Balancing film theory and filmmaking is crucial and in this regard the comment that "film is a drama enacted medium as well as a narrative medium" was relevant.

Film education appears to be uncertain about its identity and its value, whilst evident to practitioners, needs to be clarified and disseminated. There seems to be an issue between production and analysis, the former is often subject to vocational criticism and can be an issue in schools in terms of accessing equipment / software and training. FE colleges seem to find this less of an issue. The 'soft' subject debate was aired highlighting the high vs. low culture divide. It was suggested that this could be addressed by demonstrating the skills practised in film education to other parties with a view to them being redefined as digital literacy / moving image / transferrable skills - essentially part of a new educational framework enabling teaching and learning to evolve at a more rapid pace. Some excellent acronyms were shared including REAL, which seemed a good way to anchor our campaigns. Recognising the role of moving image and its processing and analysis as part of everyone's pre-verbal experience was a positive way of seeing film education as a core literacy or language. Human experience is becoming increasingly complex and thus difficult to process and interpret with the advent of technology and new platforms. This increases the chances of our experience being edited in ways that we are unable to identify, articulate, challenge and participate in. Film and film education are subjects that audiences (very broad definition) really enjoy. This is partly due to the productive pairing of creativity and criticism as empowering agents of change, getting the balance right in this and other subjects should be on the education agenda.

What is it that makes moving image media uniquely important in our cultural life and therefore of greater significance than other art forms? Here's a suggested argument for making this case:

The moving image is the most complex and rich mode of communication ever invented. It is also the first mode of communication that most children encounter without much if any adult mediation: they independently start to learn its distinctive (but highly accessible) language before they learn to speak, and long before they learn to read print texts. The codes and conventions of moving image media thus underpin everyone's communicative skills and imaginative capacities, but particularly for those born after 1980. Access to a wealth of moving image media within the home, controlled by users, has only been possible since the invention of the VCR, and has become much cheaper and more widespread with the establishment of digital media. It is now essential to acknowledge the importance of moving image media alongside print in a new and wider definition of literacy.

CONCLUSION

The breadth of the issue has become really apparent, with the complexity and demands of different providers coming at it from so many different angles making it harder to pinpoint an exact definition of film education. Key things that are deemed important may have a different effect on different people along the line, and this might not become apparent until everyone is in a room together, listening to each other. Understanding each other is crucial – both the differences and similarities – with the ultimate aim of working together with a unified aim and voice.

It was clear that 'Film' as a term did not always fit everyone's needs, whereas 'Moving Image', a term used successfully in Scotland, also incorporates animation, digital platforms and TV, so may be a more all-encompassing definition. Another of the core dilemmas that arose, was the positioning of film education – as part of literacy, or as a part of culture? Or can it be both?

One of the reasons for focussing on film education in a historical context, as has been done here, was to highlight the fact that education is never an end in itself, but its about the passage. If you focus on a contemporary moment and a look for a converging factor it becomes problematic. One commonality that fits in with most agendas is a need to be creating paths throughout lifelong learning, education is not short term, but the current film education strategy only goes up to 18 and 19, whereas it should be a life-long element.