

Report on Evidence Submitted to the Film Education Working Group

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1. Breakdown of Evidence Submitted

Total = 120 Submissions

1.1 Sector

Sector	Number of Submissions
Practitioners	19
Local Authorities /Govt. Agencies	8
Community/Arts Organisations	5
Primary Education	2
Secondary Education	22
Further Education	14
Higher Education (inc. teacher training)	18
Exhibitors (RFT/Film Society)	10
Miscellaneous Organisations	6
Trade Unions	5
Library	1
Other	10
TOTAL	120

1.2. Region

Region	Number of Submissions
Scotland	16
Wales	10
London	25
South/SE	18
North 1 NE	14
North West	8
South West	9
Midlands	5
East Anglia	2
Northern Ireland	2
Unknown	9
Channel Islands	1
USA	1
TOTAL	120
Urban Centres	56
Rural/Provincial	55

2. Current Provision

This question was interpreted quite widely - largely depending on from where people were speaking. Location was a key factor, clearly provision of film education whether through access to training, RFT educational programmes and multiplex cinemas is determined on a local level. Three broad areas of the provision of film education are outlined below with supporting quotes and some examples of provision that are outlined in some of the evidence.

Given the importance of location it is interesting to note areas from which generally positive and generally negative submissions came. Evidence from Bristol, was, in the main pretty upbeat - referring to the number of cinemas in the city - both commercial and art house as well as the popularity of the evening courses and study days run by Watershed. In contrast, evidence from the Highlands of Scotland was more pessimistic about the prospects for film education - particularly in terms of access to films.

2.1 Compulsory Education

Sense in which things are better than they were - more chance to study film through both recognised media studies exam courses and within the English curriculum. However there was some tension between media studies and film studies with a number of submissions expressing concern about the degree to which film has been subsumed by media studies where the focus tended to be more on soap operas or advertising rather than cinema. As two teachers of English explain - "film has suffered in relation to media studies" (No.41). Similarly there was concern about film only being used to "illustrate" classic literary texts - particularly Shakespeare - within the English curriculum.

One of the key features of provision mentioned again and again was the enthusiasm of individual teachers. There was a sense that training for teaching film was inadequate and one submission talked about the need for a media education component to teacher training.

There were only two submissions relating directly to primary education so there is little sense of the degree to which film education - in all its forms - has any place within KS1 and KS2. One primary teacher in Wales talked fulsomely about the positive benefits of Film Education workshops:

Those with special educational needs are able to voice opinions about the film - there is no big issue about recording the work on paper, they see that films are stories - they have a beginning on paper and developing through into real live characters in films; they understand the heroes and heroines, main characters, plots with beginnings and a middle and an end ... all these are essential to the National Curriculum but with film education workshops they are a pleasure add the skills that are learnt are as if 'by accident ... (No. 74).

In this way, from the evidence it would seem that unless there is a clear syllabus or curricula justification for providing film study in formal education, it is unlikely to take place. One interesting exception to this was the evidence from a Physics teacher who shows films to groups of sixth formers as part of his "form discussions" as a way of discussing broader issues and ideas (no. 55).

2.2 Further and Higher Education (inc. vocational and relationship between the industry and education)

The expansion of media studies courses within further and higher education was noted within the evidence. Evidence illustrated that a wide range of media courses including BTECH, A Level and GNVQ are available in FE colleges around the country. Again there was a tension between the isolated study of film and the broader subject area of media studies. Where exactly the study of film should be located was clearly the source of some tension - some submissions suggested that it should be part of the visual arts, while others - through their emphasis on film institutions and industry in their definitions of cineliteracy - clearly saw the study of film as a kind of social science while other submissions clearly saw film as analogous

to literature. This variety reflects the different intellectual traditions that have informed the development of film and media studies (see 4). Another source of tension was the relationship between the practical and the theoretical study of film. A number of submissions were pessimistic about the adequacy of film and media courses to equip graduates with the technical skills to work in the industry. A BBC producer was critical of Media Studies A Level as a basis for working in and understanding the industry and referred to the "narrow base" of film texts that are studied within academic film studies (no. 52). Unsurprisingly, these submissions were more likely to come from practitioners than lecturers in HE.

There was some evidence of links between educational institutions and the film industry. These tended to be on an individual and personal level. A number of submissions came from people who worked in both sectors, providing examples of how collaborations and partnerships ran work. Evidence from an animation production company/community education organisation referred to the work they do with schools and colleges working on animation production projects but lamented the fact that there are too few opportunities for young people to make films with professional production companies (no. 70). The clear division between 'professional'/ industry sphere and community/education work could be seen, then as a barrier to the provision of production focused film education. Indeed one submission referred to the possibilities of taking amateur film culture much more seriously within academic film study (no. 73).

In both pre- and post-16 education there were positive references to the popularity of the subject and the enthusiasm of the students. As one teacher in a secondary school put it (no. 71) "Media is a popular subject at both GCSE and A Level."

2.3 Informal Education

Provision of film education outside of formal schooling came from two categories. Firstly, through the work of film societies and RFTs and secondly from community and arts organisation with some kind of focus on moving image.

Arts organisations - such as WAC and Swindon Media Arts (no. 10) provide film education within a more practical and general framework of audio-visual production - link to performing arts, offering short courses in things such as video games design. Another example of informal education - this time with adults - came from the New York Film Academy where they run "Total Immersion" film-making summer schools as an alternative to more traditional and costly film schools (no.23)

Another source of informal film education is provided by film societies and film theatres. For example a film society in Lyme Regis has links with a local sixth form and has contributed to courses run in the school. Similarly, another film society in Wales gave evidence of work they had done with a primary school helping to organise a Christmas matinee project. Clearly, these kind of cross-sector links increase the range and diversity of the provision of film education. An educational officer at an RFT (no. 114) referred to the links they have with schools and colleges through film seasons, programme notes, regular mailings and the possibility of creating a young people's film group for 12-18 year olds.

2.4 Film Distribution

Clearly a key issue in terms of the provision of (just under a third) made reference to problems around access to a range of films. Although this ranged from general moans (London), to almost total lack of access e.g. a submission from Aberdeenshire pointing out that even commercial cinemas are at least a 1½ hour drive from many parts of the county. Associated with this was a sense of the dominance of US cinema and the difficulties of viewing international films.

The majority of submissions made reference to the opportunity to view films themselves in their locality. As well as references made to multiplexes (nearly all negative), art cinemas, RFTs, and film societies, a number of submissions also considered videos, libraries and both terrestrial and non-terrestrial television. While four submissions referred to the increased opportunity to view films on television through the expansion of outlets, others were more

negative about the programming policies of film on television - particularly television about film, and the costliness of access to dedicated film channels. Submissions from two film societies wrote about the difficulty of programming adventurously - both in terms of audience conservatism and access to prints. However, a number of submissions were more positive about the opportunities to view and to study film. A head of media studies in a girls' school in Kent wrote "Study schools, TV screenings, cable TV and film channels, radio documentaries ... mean that it is easier to teach film than Shakespeare to a 1990s audience."

2.5 Resources

In formal education there was a strong sense of inadequate resources to deliver even basic film courses - for example not having blackout facilities or through not being able to get hold of copies of films even on video (see 3.4). Although two submissions were much more upbeat about the possibilities of access to resources offered by cable television channels and video. There was also some evidence of an expansion of the kinds of resources that might be available. A librarian from a college of higher education referred to the building of a new learning resources centre that would be equipped with digital and DVD technology and that might develop into a focal point for the study of film. More of an issue was what *kind* of resources are on offer. Non-mainstream, international or art house films and the teaching materials to support them are clearly harder to get hold of them.

Specific references to the provision of resources such as those produced by Film Education were positive - "Film Education do an excellent job" (No 64). However, a number of submissions talked about the need for more materials on non-mainstream films or about film history or international cinema. As submission no. 72 put it there is a lack of access to anything except mainstream cinema". One teacher also felt that some of the BFI study materials were too inaccessible for low ability pupils.

3. Difficulties and Constraints

3.1 Cultural

Many submissions referred to more general national/cultural issues that inhibited the development of film education.

30 submissions referred to the attitude towards film and film studies within education and society. These ranged from observations about the literary bias of society to comments about an elitist culture and the dominance within culture of a realist tradition at the expense of a more formal and aesthetic approach. Some of these were contradictory, so that while on the one hand film was seen as the poor relation in comparison to other art forms, on the other it was seen as being marginalised within media studies in comparison to more populist texts such as soap opera or advertising. In this way, there is clearly a tension between film being both too "high cultural" and not "high cultural" enough.

Another key cultural concern was the perceived dominance of a commercial, market forces agenda on taste and policy. 13 submissions referred, in one way or another, to commercial pressures on more general attitudes to film - the idea that films are a commodity and the privileging of industry over art.

Links were also made to the ratings-chasing attitude of television companies and the lack of any serious or "intelligent" film culture on television. A number of submissions also referred to the "off-putting" image of the film buff and art house movies. Similarly there were three submissions that talked about the "abstruse" language of film theory and the inaccessibility of academic "jargon". One submission from an RFT - perhaps confirming the off-putting image of the film buff - also felt that film/media studies courses are aimed at low achievers. In almost total contradiction a Local Authority Director of Education in Scotland felt that arts related courses, such as film, are perceived as only being for a middle-class elite. In all, 5 submissions made reference to problems with students - that they didn't know enough, that they were too conservative or that they had no knowledge of cinema pre-*Star Wars*. Indeed one submission suggested that students need to be educated before they get to see particular films.

3.2 Curriculum

There were 22 explicit references to the curriculum as a difficulty or constraint. This was more of an issue for those working in or with compulsory education than anywhere else. On the one hand the curriculum is seen as overloaded and too prescriptive - as one submission put it there is an "hysteria around the three core subjects" (No. 50). There was also a sense in which there had been too many new initiatives and programmes that put extra pressure on teachers. On the other hand there were references to the marginal place of film study within the curriculum - the feeling that it was not taken seriously, and that consequently teachers interested in the area were often working in isolation and without support. There was also references to the limits of exam syllabi, particularly in relation to English in terms of the ways in which film can be tackled. Even within film and media courses there were perceived difficulties around the emphasis and stress given to different elements. A number of submissions talked about the overly sociological approach of the media studies syllabi, others bemoaned an overtly formal approach to the study of film, another submission referred to the "pop-culture" bias towards Hollywood within film study. Again, the tension between vocational and theoretical study was an issue. For one representative from an industry trade union, FE and HE lecturers had little connection to the real world that their students are hoping to work in" (No 26).

There was also one submission from an Education Officer within a local authority who referred to the lack of cross-curricular and cross-sector planning and co-ordination within subjects (No. 48). Similarly, other submissions - one from a science teacher and another from a media studies teacher - felt that the study of film should not just be sectioned off into its own curricular area.

3.3 Training

17 submissions referred to the inadequacy of training for teachers. Most pointedly the lack of any formal teacher training for teachers of film was highlighted as a constraint (see no. 80). This issue was highlighted predominantly by those working in compulsory education. However, one submission from the community arts sector talked about the need for training media professionals, who might be brilliant and creative in their own work, in how to teach and communicate to groups of students (No. 41). Submissions from teachers within compulsory education also referred to the reliance on the enthusiasm of individual, largely self-taught teachers. There was also a sense that it is the same group of teachers who would be attending film and media INSET - preaching to the converted (No.10, Swindon Media Arts). Therefore the need to move beyond an already committed group of educators was identified as an important aim of the FEWG exercise.

3.4 Resources

There were different kinds of resources identified as important for delivering film education in the broadest sense:

- Technical resources within education. Again, lack of facilities for showing films was identified as a major obstacle. Lack of equipment and facilities for students to produce their own film or video work was also seen as a major problem. In this way, the rhetoric of "cineliteracy" - writing as well as reading may not be realisable given the reality of educational resourcing.
- Supporting materials. Not enough teaching materials on non-mainstream films.
- Access to a range of films. One submission lamented the insistence on cinema quality at the cost of expanding video access (No. 73).
- There were a number of submissions that referred to the narrow range of material shown on television and on video.
- Practical/financial constraints. Again access is a key consideration and one of the main difficulties that emerges is limited opportunities to visit the cinema - time, cost and access. In rural areas, the cost of transport to visit the cinema was referred to as a key issue, particularly for children. One submission from a pensioner in Leeds highlighted the difficulties of visiting the cinema in the evening (No. 120).

3.5 Institutional

Different levels of institutional difficulty were identified. Five submissions were concerned with the lack of policy at local and national levels in terms of co-ordinated strategies and long-term funding of projects (this was of particular concern to arts organisations and RFTs). Those working at policy level - such as Scottish Screen or Media Education Wales - were more acutely aware of these issues, referring to the lack of commitment at policy level and the "inadequate advisory services within local authorities" (No. 80). Similarly, a manager at an art house cinema (No. 54) complained "education is central to the rhetoric of cultural institutions but marginal in practice."

For arts organisations engaged in informal education the lack of any secure, long-term revenue funding for their work was a major difficulty - the problem of institutional insecurity and marginalisation.

The relationship between educational institutions and film industry bodies and individuals was also referred to in 6 submissions. A head of media in a comprehensive school referred to the lack of access to the film and television industry for her and her pupils (No. 71). Related to this was a problem of different institutional cultures (No. 98), educational institutions being relatively stable and commercial organisations moving fast as witnessed by commercial cinemamanagers moving on after a short period giving no chance to build relationships.

The difficulty of establishing film education *within* institutions was also identified. Issues such as not being taken seriously by other colleagues, or being marginalised within the curriculum. One teacher (no.45) complained how it was hard to justify cinema trips in contrast to theatre

visits. One submission (no.58) referred to "specialist territorialism" whereby teachers and researchers within film were un-supportive of each other's work. A key issue in establishing film education at the insitutional level, then might be support from the head teacher or heads of department.

3.6 Copyright

There were only 4 submissions that explicitly referred to copyright as a problem. One from the Voice of the Listener and Viewer addressing the issue of off-air recording copyright and two from teachers in FE concerned with copyright on an institutional level and one in reference to a particular suggestion for the BBC to show more "classic" and international films.

4. "Cineliteracy"

There were a wide range of outcomes of film education and definitions of cineliteracy outlined in the evidence. The most common broad definitions are outlined below, however it is important to point out that many submissions saw the outcomes of film education as being more than one thing and therefore fitted into some or all of the categories.

4.1 Moving image not cinema

There were a number of submissions that took issue with the framing of the question and the term "Cineliteracy" because of its emphasis on cinema. For example, the Voice of the Listener and Viewer pointed out the close relationship between film and broadcast television and argued that education about cinema could not be isolated from other forms of audio-visual culture. For one submission from an arts centre in London, cineliteracy was taken to be "an elitist term that privileges a restricted notion of literacy". Moving image was felt by some to be a more appropriate term as it encompasses video, television and new technologies. As one submission, from a cinema manager in Lancaster, put it "Cineliterate is too narrow a definition given the crossover between television and film". Another submission from the Guild of Television Cameramen felt that cineliteracy could not be divorced from a wider understanding of the visual arts.

There were also two submissions that questioned the degree to which British audiences are any less cineliterate than anywhere else.

4.2 Writing as well as reading

Many submissions argued that the outcomes of film education (or cineliteracy) should be focused on being able to produce moving image material (writing) as well as knowing how to be make sense of and enjoy it. Indeed links were made between these two aims - i.e. that through the process of making moving image media understanding and enjoyment of viewing moving image media would be enhanced.

This kind of "writing" was clearly seen as separate from vocational training. As one submission argued:

If the industry wants trainees it should run training courses, in the interim, every citizen, if they are to understand and participate in the culture should get the chance to shoot and edit a basic video.

4.3 Formal - "Film as art"

A great number of submissions talked about the importance of audiences understanding the formal qualities of film. This ability to decode or deconstruct films both as single texts and within the context of a range of genres - was seen as an essential component of cineliteracy by a majority of submissions. Phrases such as "recognise how films are constructed"; "knowledge of film codes"; "understanding of the techniques and grammar of film production" occurred again and again.

Associated with this formal appreciation of films, a number of submissions made the case for film as an art form that should have equivalent status of drama, novels, poetry and art.

4.4 Social/cultural/economic

A number of submissions referred to an understanding of the broader social, economic and historical contexts in which films are both produced and consumed. As one submission (No. 35) defined it, cineliteracy involves "knowledge of production, industry traditions, audiences and the social influence of film".

4.5 Film History and the canon

Access to and an understanding of important films was seen as another desirable outcome of film education. As one submission defined cineliteracy consists of the "ability to list 10 major films and film-makers from around the world" (No. 94).

4.6 Broadening of taste.

A number of submissions referred to the need to introduce audiences to a greater range of film material to encourage "more adventurous tastes ... an engagement with and appreciation of film in all its forms and possibilities" (No 67). In particular, this aspect was often mentioned in relation to international and world cinema.

There was little evidence that considered what cineliteracy might mean to film audiences, that is what being literate about film might actually mean on a day to day level. An exception to this was a submission from an HE lecturer in Sussex referred to "networks of talk" the idea that understanding and appreciation of film develops through conversations with peers, friends and colleagues so that meaning and value develops as a social process, e.g. children's discussions about classification.

5. The future

5.1 General

In broad terms, what people wanted to see in the future - across all sectors and locations, is more money, more resources, better collaboration and co-ordination between sectors, both educational and industry and a wider recognition of the value of moving image media as art, as communication as industry and as an educational resource across the curriculum.

5.2 Specific

The following sections detail specific suggestions offered in the evidence.

5.2.1 Role of ICT

- Use of the NGfL for distributing and accessing materials.
- Using ICT to promote young people's production work.
- A simple low-cost package that will enable students to digitise and edit their own material.
- Encourage an interest in film at school level through teaching critical skills using IT.
- A dedicated film education website.
- National on-line catalogue of available films and film materials.
- A "virtual studio" linking schools via the NGfL.

5.2.2 Training

- Developing networks of teachers and media user groups in association with RFTs and other educational institutions.
- More links between HE, LEAs and local and national film organisations.
- More specialist training for film and media teachers
- Cinemas offering short courses and live introductions of films.
- "Training teachers not only to improve expertise but to build confidence".
- Film liaison officer in every LEA.
- Teaching qualification in film education/initial teacher education to focus on training about moving image education (many mentions).
- LEAs to appoint visiting film specialist teachers to work across all sectors (cf. writers in residence programmes).
- Industry work placements for teachers.
- More collaboration between the BFI, Film Education, Education Officers and INSET providers.
- Dedicated technical institute to train the technicians of the future.

5.2.3 Resources

- University film students working with schools providing workshops.
- Directors/film industry workers going into schools to introduce films and talk about their work.
- Utilise retired/unemployed technicians for film work in schools/database of professionals nationally who are able to work with groups of students.
- Use BECTU's new entrants branch members to introduce students to the realities of working in film.
- School film festivals linked to the National Curriculum.
- School visits to film sets/film studio open days.
- Cinema concessions for schools and colleges (several mentions).
- Bigger and fewer media departments in HE - specialising in particular areas.
- Outreach work - schools? Colleges? Cinemas? - with rural and non-urban communities.
- Resources - such as Film Education's - on more non-mainstream films.
- Videos of how films are put together distributed to schools and careers offices.
- International Film roadshows (mentioned twice).

- Easier access to broadcast material (mentioned several times).
- Cinema dubs for children (mentioned a number of times).
- Private finance initiative projects to focus on cinema infrastructure - particularly in rural areas.
- Multiplexes devoting one screen one day a week to independent, classic and international films (several mentions).
- Developing a community cinema distribution and exhibition network (CINECOM) which would work as a private/public partnership linking together FE colleges - for screening venues, lottery projects involved with lifelong learning. Programming for CINECOM would be done via the internet.
- Richer libraries of films on video and 16mm (mentioned by a number of submissions).

5.2.4 Curriculum

- Exam boards treating vocational film study and theoretical film study as separate subjects.
- Promotion of film as a serious subject by exam boards and DfEE.
- Classic films to be part of the curriculum.
- The discovery and development of film to be taught as part of science.
- Including film into formal language and literacy provision from Key Stage One.

5.2.5 Role of the BBC and Channel 4

- Incorporating all films on BBC2 under an umbrella of film education through scheduling documentaries and introductions/conclusions around them (cf. *Moviedrome*).
- Broadcasting films and supporting material in the middle of the night co-ordinated by the OU (cf. *The Learning Zone*).
- More time given to intelligent film comment on BBC2 and Channel 4.
- Collaborations between RFTs and the BBC to mount complementary film seasons.

5.2.6 Other

- Public subsidy for exhibition as well as production.
- A BFI/MOMI-sponsored national careers tour with interactive workshops in theatre, TV and film for under 16s. (see paper on screen acting training, no 84, Trevor Etienne).
- Twinning schools in London with rural schools so that children could stay with families in London and watch a greater range of films (cinema exchanges rather than language exchanges).

Examples of good practice

Bob Sewell at Keele University. Two Towns project whereby local schools send children on a university residential course. Media education is part of the programme which in a more general way is concerned with broadening the young people's horizons and making them aware of the opportunities of formal education.

Linlithgow Film Society in Scotland worked with a primary school to put on two Christmas film matinées where the children got involved in all aspects - from marketing to getting prints - as part of a "business project".

No 55. John Anslow - Physics teacher who shows extracts of films to his sixth form tutor group.

Anirha productions, Middlesbrough (No. 70). An example of practical animation workshops with children in school and non-school settings, plus international links including association with a film education group in Belgium.

Submission from Equity (No. 84) which includes a paper on training for Screen Actors, cf. vocational training.

Detailed proposal for CINECOM - a community cinema initiative linking educational institutions, cinemas and cultural institutions - from three HE lecturers, London (No. 104).

Scheme of work for A Level Film studies from FE lecturer in Bexhill (No. 27).