

# **BFI Response to Rose Review Interim Report**

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The British Film Institute, 75 years old in 2008, has been the lead advocate for film, film culture, and film education in the UK for much of its life. Since 2000, the focus and drive of its education work has been to promote understanding about, and wide experience of, film as an entitlement to all children, choosing the mandatory curriculum for 5-14 year olds as the vehicle most likely to enable that entitlement to be realised.

With our campaign Reframing Literacy, between 2004 and 2007 we enabled 60 local authorities in England to work directly with 2000 teachers and 1200 schools to develop a film-rich literacy curriculum. Our teaching resources compiled 55 short films on 7 DVDs for KS1-3 and to date have sold over 13000 copies. We called the campaign Reframing Literacy because we wanted to do two things: to incorporate film into teachers' literacy practice, and children's literacy experience at school; but also to extend, diversify, and enrich children's cultural experience by including films from around the world, and from film's rich heritage.

The evaluation of the programme, by Professor Jackie Marsh of Sheffield University and Eve Bearne of UKLA, found evidence of direct positive impacts on the print literacy of children, and on the motivation and engagement in literacy of both pupils and teachers (Marsh and Bearne, 2007). Children responded very strongly to films that differed from their usual domestic experience of the medium. Our account of the campaign is called *Reframing Literacy* (BFI, 2008). Our response to the Interim Report of the Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum is framed by these achievements.

## **Focus on Literacy**

We have come a long way from David Blunkett's introductory definition in the National Literacy Strategy, that 'literacy is at the heart of our drive to raise standards.' The success of the National Year of Reading, and of UKLA's work on multi-modal texts, has broadened literacy away from just words and books. In Scotland, the new Curriculum for Excellence defines literacy as:

*the set of skills which allows an individual to engage fully in society and in learning, through the different forms of language, and the range of texts, which society values and finds useful.*

(Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2008)

And at the BFI we have championed a definition that comes originally from UNESCO: 'to be literate is to fully participate in a culture.' Our work in Reframing Literacy, and with UKLA and the Primary National Strategies, has sought to include the moving image in a model of literacy that is extended and enhanced beyond an instrumental focus on decoding the alphabet. We have found particularly at whole text level that children have a sophisticated grasp of 'relational networks' (van den Broek, 2002) and of genre, and a higher level understanding of character and setting when responding to moving image texts that are often belied by their engagement with the same concepts in print texts. Our conception of literacy includes children's reflection on their everyday film and television experiences, but also a broadening of those experiences to film from around the world, and from our rich moving image heritage.

- We would thus welcome in the final report a definition of literacy that was visionary, inclusive, but still rigorous and challenging to children.

## **Learning progression**

We share the concerns expressed in the report over the dissociated practice at key moments of educational transition – between EYFS and KS1, and KS2 and 3 – and especially of the reluctance of teachers in higher phases of learning to acknowledge the practice of teachers at the lower. This is particularly acute in our experience of work with film: some early years’ work with film astounds teachers at KS1 and 2, and some work at KS3 leaves children unchallenged. (See Scott, 2008.)

We are especially conscious that the prior experience, knowledge, understanding, and skills in moving image media that children gain at home are currently not being recognised. Jackie Marsh’s report *Digital Beginnings* (Marsh, 2006) offered a comprehensive picture of the media competences of 0-6 year olds reported on by parents, which she then mapped onto the Early Learning Goals. She simultaneously reported a reluctance by teachers and early years practitioners to take these experiences seriously.

- We would welcome in the final report some explicit attention to progression in film and broader media learning, and to the profiling of children’s moving image experience from outside school.

### **‘Understanding’ at the heart of learning**

We welcome the definition of ‘understanding’ (as opposed to knowledge and skills) as the ‘crowning attribute’ of learning (2.19). This acknowledgement plays directly to the heart of our concern to promote rich film experiences. Typically in the last 10 years curriculum developments with film have centred on technology and technical capabilities. BFI (Reid et al 2002, and others – see Burn et al 2003, 2007) has long championed film as a distinctive expressive language system rather than as a subset of ICT. Understanding this system is more than a ‘crowning attribute’: it is a pre-requisite of any engagement with film, and with film technology.

- We would welcome the final report explicitly referencing the importance of understanding the language system of film as being fundamental to any engagement with film-making technology.

### **Across the curriculum – areas of learning**

We welcome the consolidation of subjects into ‘areas of learning’, and would like to claim a distinctive role for film here. In 2003/4 DfES published two curriculum guides supporting film – *Moving Images in the Classroom*, and *Look Again* (BFI 2002, 2004) – and these continue to be hugely popular. In two areas of learning we believe a priority emphasis on film would be welcomed: in the arts segment, and in foreign language learning. In the latter, we have growing evidence of the value of film in motivating and engaging young learners in learning European languages – from activities at our venue at BFI Southbank, but also at The Showroom, our partner cinema in Sheffield; in partnership with the European Cultural Institutes; with language subject associations CILT and ALL; and with ITT providers. We are finding that film offers a wider range of ‘comprehensible input’<sup>1</sup> for language learning – beyond the mono modes of listening to audio recordings and print textbooks.

- We would welcome in the final report some explicit attention to film as an art form in the ‘Art’ area of learning, and as a cultural form that supports modern foreign language learning.

### **Recommendations**

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<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comprehensible\\_input](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comprehensible_input)

In addition to the above suggestions about coverage in the final report, we have some specific recommendations:

- A full DCSF-funded review of the relationship between film and literacy, that covers: the impact of film on literacy at EYFS – KS3; the CPD available – and further CPD required – to embed this impact; a robust model of learning progression that accounts for children’s growing understanding and levels of knowledge and skill in film-related literacy. *Work on learning progression has begun with the CLPE, Sheffield and Nottingham Universities, and Leeds and Lincolnshire LAs, using a small grant from QCA.*
- The funding of a pilot scoping study for developing resources and CPD using film to support European language learning at KS2.
- Inclusion, in The Early Years/ Foundation Stage Profile, of a reference to the child’s moving image experience, expertise, and emerging understanding, so that their teachers at the next phase of learning have a clear sense of what the child knows and can do, and so this expertise can be built upon.
- Resource allocation from the Assessing Pupil Progress funding to focus specifically on the building up, and building upon, of knowledge, skills, and understanding directly related to moving image texts across the primary phase.
- Explicit coverage of film-related learning in the proposed National Strategies’ review of transition (Recommendation 15; 2.99).
- Understanding the system of film to be explicitly addressed as part of literacy, and as part of ‘aesthetic understanding’; and any reference to film under new technology to explicitly reference the language of film as fundamental to any development of film-making skills.

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