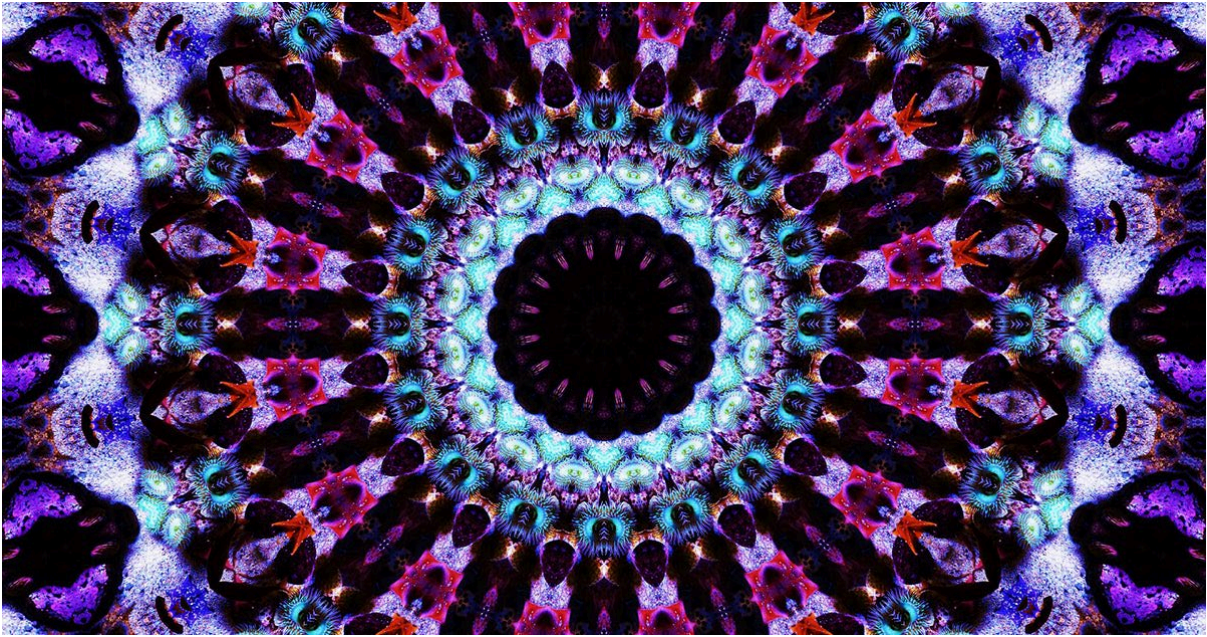


# THE PEDAGOGY AND CURRICULUM OF FILM EDUCATION IN THE UK FURTHER EDUCATION SECTOR: A CASE STUDY

WILL COSSEY

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the  
University of Sunderland for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

April 2026



## ABSTRACT

This thesis identifies and critically discusses contemporary issues in curriculum design and pedagogy in Film Education in the Further, Adult and Vocational Education sector in the UK, where 16–19-year-old students are offered a range of Creative Media and Film courses that aim to develop their knowledge of digital film making and exercise their analytical skills. Set between 2018 and 2023, a period which witnessed the introduction of the T-Level and the advent of online resources to help deliver Level 3 qualifications such as *Teams* and *Office 365*, this small-scale study examines forces and factors that act upon the educational experiences of students who have chosen to study film-based education. Through a series of student and staff interviews, observations, field notes, data analysis as well as a critical consideration of peer-reviewed, published literature in this field of study, this research tracks changes to students' learning environment at an FE college in England before, during, and after the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact and influences of creating 'collaboration labs' from existing classrooms, with the intention that students from separate groups could enhance their dialogic communication skills through working together and sharing knowledge and experience are also described and examined. The research population in this study consists of a 100 16-19-year-old vocational media and 'A'-Level film students and 5 tutors. The intervention described in this research utilises *Microsoft Teams* with the intention of helping students to communicate and collaborate with each other to develop deeper dialogues and further critical engagement with issues of theory and practice in Film Education.

The central argument presented in this thesis is that, in the field of curriculum design and pedagogy in Film Education, a balancing act is always and necessarily in play. The thesis highlights how existing issues and problems in Film Education have been compounded by the digital contexts in which teaching and learning currently take place. The study envisages what a good Film Education curriculum might look like in practice. It also proposes a pedagogy around which the delivery of such a curriculum might be framed. An aim of this research is to re-imagine and suggest a curriculum framework for Film Education together with the provision of online and offline spaces in which tutors can engage in conversations with each other in relation to how a good Film Education curriculum might be realised in practice in the contexts in which they work. A further aim of the study is to create context-attuned approaches to collaborative curriculum implementation in the creation of curricula which encourage students to communicate and improve their problem-finding, problem-solving, critical and creative thinking skills in collaborative and critical engagement with Film Education.

Challenging how we use digital technology in the classroom is one facet of the study. A second, is to chronicle the influence of environmental and curriculum changes through student and staff accounts of experiences of Film Education. As a large provider of arts-based courses, the staff and students in the FE college, which forms the site of this study, are in a unique position to demonstrate how the Film Education can allow individuals to develop critical thinking skills while also cultivating the qualities of mind and character needed to survive and thrive in the Film Industry and wider creative industries.

New filming and editing technology and online learning platforms have clearly opened a host of possibilities to Film Education students and their teachers. However, it is the question of *how* these are used that forms the focus of this study. Findings point to the need for a Film Education curriculum and a pedagogy to support it, based upon a kaleidoscopic interplay and a closer alignment between the development of students' capacities to engage in problem and project-based learning; creative and collaborative skills development; immersive aesthetic learning environments and the use of digital devices. Findings also point to the importance of embedding in Film Education curricula (and in educational curricula) more generally, of the acquisition and development of what Aristotle identifies as different 'forms of knowledge'.

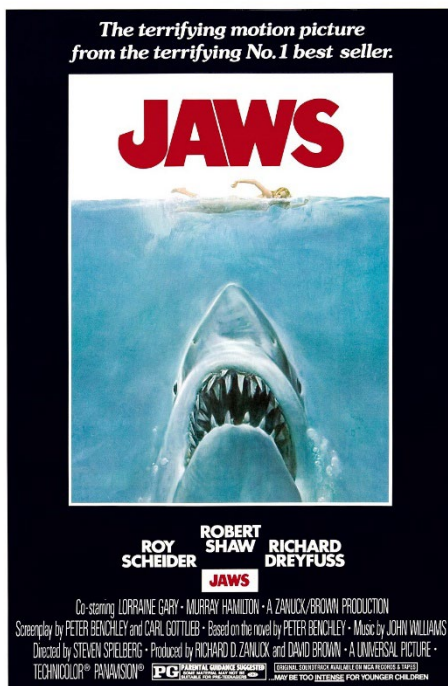
### **Key words**

Curriculum design; collaborative learning; pedagogy; communication; technology; theory; practice; forms of knowledge; creativity and Film Education.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance and support of Prof. Maggie Gregson, Associate Prof. Trish Spedding and Dr Lawrence Nixon. Thanks also need to go to the lecturers at my institution present (and past) who have had an influence on me both in and out of the classroom. Their practice in film and media education has been inspirational. To the students both vocational and 'A'-level who have made teaching such a rewarding job I also offer my thanks. A special mention is due to Dr. Beth Curtis for helping me start research issues in the FE sector.

For all the media and film teachers who I've worked with over the years. To my wife Naomi and to Dash and Marla for giving me the time, space and encouragement throughout the whole thesis. Finally, a dedication to the memory of Meg Cossey who did not see me finish this journey.



In 1974, Steven Spielberg embarked on one of the most troubled productions of New Hollywood history when on shoot for *Jaws* (1975) in Martha's Vineyard. The production was plagued with problems from a faulty mechanical shark, weather issues, a star that had to leave the production because of tax reasons, script re-writes and a cast and crew who were genuinely unsettled with Spielberg, the young 27-year-old movie brat. Spielberg said "the morale was my responsibility... I watched quiet men on the crew go bonkers and in a very vocal way. I saw the vocal type become totally withdrawn to the point where they tore tiny bits of Styrofoam off coffee cups and threw them in them into the tide" (Andrews, 1999: 45).

Figure 1 *Jaws* (Steven Spielberg, 1975)

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## CHAPTER ONE

Introduction – Kaleidoscopes, Recognising the Problem and Glimpsing Solutions as they  
Come into View

*Kalos* – Beautiful, Greek

*Eidos* – Form, Greek

Scope – to look at carefully, English

Pedagogy and creative practice in Filmmaking, as in teaching, and indeed any human activity, is messy. Absolutes, blueprints and recipes do not apply and as precisely as some individuals would like things to be, they often are not. Without trial, error, repetition, cooperation, collaboration, problem-finding, problem-solving, critical thinking, imagination, and critique, the acquisition and development of any practice is in danger of being reduced to a mechanistic, technical, shallow, and even hollow experience. The realities of practice and the demands of working life in any field involve the development of a number of different forms of knowledge and ways of knowing as well as the nurturing values of the practice including qualities of mind and character required in doing a job well in the world for its own sake (Sennett, 2009). Learning to do a job well for its own sake and appreciating the value and worth of different ways of knowing that a job is being/has been well done is arguably a whole person and whole life endeavour (Aristotle 384-322 BC, Dewey 1933, Sennett 2009).

As a child, one of the memories that replays in my mind is picking up a kaleidoscope and playing with it on the floor of a lounge. Taking it and placing it against my eye, I saw a beautiful, mesmerising mess of colours, shapes and shifting forms. Turning the kaleidoscope in my hands the patterns would shift and meld into new ones. Pulling it away again, I was back in the room. For those moments I saw differently, and although I did not understand what I had seen, I believe I had seen something other worldly. A kaleidoscope is simply a tube that reflects light and objects to create patterns and colourful variations. By rotating the tube, you can create different shapes and, although the basic elements remain the same, there are many more possibilities because of the various positions of the beads, colours, and reflections. The shape and the form of the problem this thesis investigates is one that mirrors this. Quite simply, what does a good Film Education look like and what are the principal elements that inform the best ways to teach film to a group of students in the 16-19 age range. A kaleidoscope is a simple mechanical visual trick. It shifts and distorts to make something beautiful

from separate parts. These are not linked but when seen and arranged in the right order they create colours and shapes that defy our expectations. A simple tube becomes a wonderful way of seeing.

Film and media production is an arrangement of different elements, technical skills, social interaction and creativity; a giant Kaleidoscope that when operated in the right way can produce thoughtful art, ideas, and move spectators emotionally, intellectually, and viscerally. Film, as the dominant art form of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in combination with mixed media online in the 21<sup>st</sup>, will remain one of the most important tools citizens will interact with and demonstrate the best, and sometimes the worst, possibilities of human interaction. Throughout this thesis I refer to film texts as points of contextual reference. These film references are included as analogies of the problems (and potential solutions) being discussed in a hope to bring aspects of the thesis alive for the reader. Film is at the core of my thesis and in invoking films as a way to better understand the issues being discussed, I hope to illuminate the process of filmmaking for students on vocational and 'A'-level courses at the heart of the study.

As members of a new participatory culture (Gauntlett, 2011), my students are not only interested and make film but are well versed in using social media tools such as WhatsApp, Snapchat and Instagram and teachers have also begun to use social media in the classroom. My students are creative, culturally curious, and adept at multi-tasking. My research looks to bridge the gap between online and classroom contexts whilst examining what opportunities a Film Education can offer.

In the following section I will set out the context of my study and discuss:

- a) the context of this study, the region, the centre, the course and it's students
- b) definitions (and problems) for Film Education
- c) how the contemporary Film Industry and education have interlinked (successfully and unsuccessfully) and the overall place of Film Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century cultural and economic landscape
- d) the use of and problems with technology in education
- e) Covid (pre and post) lockdown contexts in Film Education
- f) the research questions this study examines.

## This is England

Since teacher training in 2006/7, I have been more than aware of the tension between theory and practice in Film and Media Education. Fellow Film and Media creatives, workers and graduates that I joined to do my Media and Film PGCE Teacher training (14-19) were introduced in week one to the enduring Media and Film Educational debate that has surrounded it since its inclusion as a qualification in the curriculum. What should be taught and what should come first in teaching and learning Film, theory or practice? The weight or value of one over the other has not dissipated.

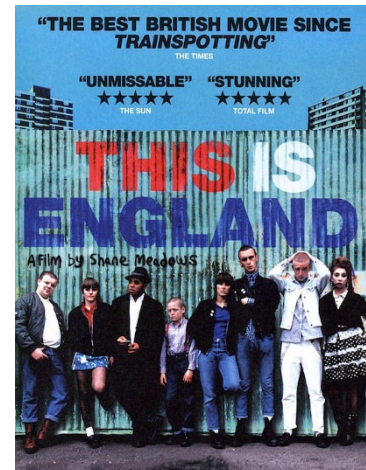


Figure 1 *This is England* (Shane Meadows, 2006)

Buckingham defines the problem clearly in discussing broader media education at Level 3. He comments that “what we should teach (the curriculum) and how we should teach (that is, pedagogy)” is brought into question when, as he sees, critical thinking should be the outcome of a good overall media education (Buckingham, 2019: 65). In a wider sense you can see this argument play out with the division of learning in post sixteen settings. Teaching *how* to do something is at odds with the teaching of *why* you should do it. As this case study shows, the binary opposition between the theory and practice has been falsely constructed and entrenched. The march towards splitting theory and practice has been relentless and continues today. Changes to curricula following the ‘A’-Level reforms of 2015 has seen huge changes to the delivery of courses and the way they are assessed. Vocational courses have been altered drastically, and the introduction of the new T-Level qualification is being rolled out for my subject area with the new Media, Broadcast and Journalism T-Level in 2024. The new T-Level requires that students complete 4 weeks of employee-based work experience. A real workplace setting resonates with national debates about getting students ‘into jobs’ after they leave compulsory education. At the same time pressure has been put on arts-based subjects at Secondary level with funding being squeezed (Brown, 2015) resulting in a fall in students' numbers. These new qualifications do not address the uncomfortable division between theoretical and practical film courses, and if anything, look to increase it. As Terry Hyland has repeatedly made clear (1999, 2014) this division has its roots in cultural and socio-economic factors and will be critically examined and discussed in the following literature review. With Arts courses under sustained pressure at secondary school level (Williams, 2014), the numbers at FE level have been affected. Contextually the arts, including media, film, art, music and drama, have found themselves defending their vocational and academic worth. With such a background it is positive to see voices that are beginning to reassess our curricula in schools and colleges. Ofsted’s 2017 Chief Inspector recognised the function of education is not just about remembering “chunks” of

knowledge or simply to prepare individuals for the economy. Making the point that students should be prepared for more than just this, she makes clear:

“To understand the substance of education we have to understand the objectives. Yes, education does have to prepare young people to succeed in life and make their contribution in the labour market. But to reduce education down to this kind of functionalist level is rather wretched. Because education should be about broadening minds, enriching communities and advancing civilisation. Ultimately, it is about leaving the world a better place than we found it” (Spelman: 2017).

At the same time as an Ofsted framework was being ‘rolled out’, there was pressure for courses to become more holistic and less about meeting data quotas. Under the 2017 framework, emphasis would be on curriculum design and ‘quality for learners’ rather than the old ‘outcomes for pupils.’ This move is intended to “reverse the incentive for schools to put overall results ahead of individual children’s needs” (GOV.UK: 2018).

Within this educational context, Film Education at Further Education level has been dictated by curricula that have divided its delivery. On the one hand you have the “academic” Film Studies A-level and on the other, the “vocational” such as the UAL Creative Media and Technology course. Within in each pathway teachers are, in some ways, given some leeway about ‘how much’ theory and practice they can teach but the emphasis on each pathway is on different assessment outcomes to achieve the qualification. The academic, through written exams, the vocational, through practical work and theoretical research presented through an online portfolio. The opportunity to study Film or Media courses at Level 3 takes many, many forms for students in the 16-19 age range, as figure 3 makes clear:

A-Level Film Studies	A-Level Media Studies	Diploma/Extended Diploma Creative Media Production	T Level Technical Qualification in Media, Broadcast and Production	Level 3 BTEC National Extended Certificate in Digital Film and Video Production	Level 3 BTEC Extended/Diploma in Creative Media (equivalent to 3 A-Levels)
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70% Exam 30% Course work and Film Scripting or making and Evaluating Part Time Study	70% Exam 30% Course work and producing and evaluating Part Time Study	100 %Portfolio Assessment 8/12 Units Grade achieved from final project Full Time Study	Exam Project Portfolio Work placement	External Assessment 33% Exam and set task 67% Internal Assessment	Approx 40% External Exam assessment 60% Internal assessment
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Figure 2 Example of Types of Qualification at Level Three in the UK 16-19

The array of courses available at this level has divided Film Education time and time again into debates about practice and theoretical based routes and the experience of students taking these courses varies greatly. In my own centre, students comment about their courses and how they would have liked more practice in the A-Level and that the common phrase “I hate theory” seems to be entrenched from my learners in both film A-Level and the UAL vocational pathways. Why has this scepticism arisen when arguably theory is just the knowledge and context that is required to make, or, as I discuss later what Aristotle refers to as good *praxis*? (Aristotle, 350 BCE).

### South by Southwest

Regional pressures also play their own role in defining the studies focus and purpose. As a rural area, the city in which the research is based has a rapidly growing population. A relatively small city with a population of 129,000, *Key Findings from Department for Educations Area Review for the South West* (including Devon, Cornwall, Somerset and Isles of Scilly) highlights that an area of growth is “expected to become significantly more efficient in terms of output per worker (percentage increase) across the LEP” includes “Information and Communication” and that there is “a need for employees who can combine high level creative skills with high level IT skills” (DfE, 2017:11). As well as this there should be a focus on promoting “the provision of marketing and sales skills, which businesses cite as key areas of weakness” DfE, 2017: 11). The UAL course that is part of the focus of

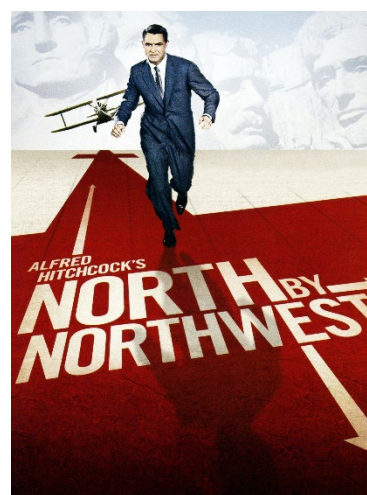


Figure 3 North by Northwest (Hitchcock, 1959)

this study this looks to promote students film making, digital marketing and web content providing skills and so meet the demands of the emerging markets in the area, the Film Studies A-Level, less so.

*Employment by occupation (Jan 2018-Dec 2018)*

	<b>Exeter (Numbers)</b>	<b>Exeter (%)</b>	<b>South West (%)</b>	<b>Great Britain (%)</b>
Soc 2010 Major Group 1-3	35,000	53.5	45.2	46.4
1 Managers, Directors, and Senior Officials	6,800	10.2	11.1	10.8
2 Professional Occupations	16,500	24.7	19.6	20.7
3 Associate Professional & Technical	11,600	17.4	14.4	14.7
Soc 2010 Major Group 4-5	8,800	13.5	21.1	20.2
4 Administrative & Secretarial	5,500	8.3	9.6	10.1
5 Skilled Trades Occupations	#	#	11.5	10.0
Soc 2010 Major Group 6-7	9,700	14.8	16.4	16.5
6 Caring, Leisure and Other Service Occupations	4,400	6.5	9.1	9.0

7	Sales and Customer Service Occs	5,300	7.9	7.3	7.5
Soc 2010 Major Group 8-9	11,900	18.2	17.2	16.8	
8	Process Plant & Machine Operatives	#	#	6.2	6.3
9	Elementary Occupations	9,400	14.0	11.0	10.4

Source: ONS annual population survey

# Sample size too small for reliable estimate

Notes: Numbers and % are for those of 16+

% Is a proportion of all persons in employment

hour Demand

Employee jobs (2017)

	<b>Exeter (Employee Jobs)</b>	<b>Exeter (%)</b>	<b>South West (%)</b>	<b>Great Britain (%)</b>
Total Employee Jobs	91,000	-	-	-
Full-Time	60,000	65.9	64.4	67.5
Part-Time	31,000	34.1	35.7	32.5
Employee Jobs by Industry				
B: Mining and Quarrying	10	0.0	0.1	0.2
C: Manufacturing	2,500	2.7	8.6	8.2

D: Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply	1,250	1.4	0.5	0.5
E: Water Supply; Sewerage, Waste Management and Remediation Activities	1,500	1.6	0.8	0.7
F: Construction	4,000	4.4	5.3	4.8
G: Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles	13,000	14.3	16.0	15.2
H: Transportation and Storage	2,500	2.7	3.6	4.7
I: Accommodation and Food Service Activities	6,000	6.6	9.8	7.5
J: Information and Communication	4,500	4.9	3.6	4.4
K: Financial and Insurance Activities	2,500	2.7	3.5	3.5
L: Real Estate Activities	1,500	1.6	1.5	1.7
M: Professional, Scientific and	8,000	8.8	7.3	8.4

## Technical

## Activities

N: Administrative and Support Service Activities	9,000	9.9	7.4	9.1
O: Public Administration and Defence; Compulsory Social Security	7,000	7.7	4.2	4.3
P: Education	10,000	11.0	9.4	8.9
Q: Human Health and Social Work Activities	15,000	16.5	13.7	13.3
R: Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	1,750	1.9	2.5	2.6
S: Other Service Activities	1,500	1.6	1.9	2.0

Source: ONS Business Register and Employment Survey: open access Data unavailable Notes: % is a proportion of total employee jobs excluding farm-based agriculture. Employee jobs excludes self-employed, government-supported trainees and HM Forces. Data excludes farm-based agriculture

Figure 4 Nomis (2018)

As Figure 5 illustrates there is a high level of employment in the city, particularly in professional areas which stands at 24%. At time of writing unemployment stands at 2.4% which is significantly lower than the national average of 4.2% (Devon CC, 2019). The city enjoys elevated levels of employment. An area of development as highlighted above is the communication and IT sector. The region also has a substantial proportion of residents employed in the public sector. The area is rural with a strong section of the economy dedicated towards the travel and tourism industry. Film making and media creation are mainly done on a freelance basis - although there are marketing agencies based around

the county. There are no major film production facilities. In the neighbouring county, Screen Cornwall has been established by the Local Enterprise partnership and helps crews and producers' source local talent and scout for locations. In 2024 a Screen Devon agency has been launched to raise the film profile of the county. The city has a strong University and links between the Film and Media departments at the separate HE and FE institutions are good but not tied by any formal strategy.

## The Centre

The research is being conducted at a large FE provider in the South of England. The institution has over six thousand students and caters for 'A'-level, International Baccalaureate, BTEC's, Foundation Degrees and Adult Education. The institution has been 'Outstanding' since its last inspection in 2014 and again in 2022 – economies of scale dictate that the institution has specific buildings for the various faculties; a Maths and Science building, converted from a job centre, now delivers GCSE Maths and A-Levels and all the sciences at Level 3. A 1960's tower block delivers Humanities, Languages and IB. The institution is based in the centre of the city and is popular with students who enjoy "going into town" between sessions. Due to the now competitive nature of FE recruitment, collaboration between local 'rival' institutions does not take place. The institution has two of these 'rival' providers in the county and several others in neighbouring counties. It is not uncommon for students to travel over an hour and a half to attend college as the region is sparsely populated. The institution is based opposite a well-established community Arts centre that has a small cinema, exhibition spaces and studios for hire. These are often used by community groups.

The focus of this study is on Film and Creative Level three courses which have their own bespoke "creative arts building." This is equipped with a TV studio, photography studio, four Mac or PC editing suites and a library which has open access PCs for students to use. The Media department at my institution occupies the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of this building and has six classrooms. There are some 500 16-19-year-old students undertaking a Media or Film course in either vocational or 'A'-level Pathways. The building is shared between an arts Faculty delivering Textiles, Fine Art and Photography, a performing arts faculty group that deliver Dance, Musical theatre, Acting and Drama courses. Although the faculty is blessed with some excellent resources, there is not always enough IT provision for every student in the Media and Film department. A key focus of this study to share out



Figure 5 Students in the Gallery at my centre

the resources that are available and secure funding for extra laptops (no small ask in an environment

of cost cutting and reduced funding for the FE sector) and use Teams and online sharing platforms to a greater extent. Student funding over the last 10 years has shrunk for 16-19-year-olds. According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies “since 2010–11, funding per student aged 16–18 in Further Education has fallen by 8% in real terms and is now at about the same level as during the late 2000s” (Belfield, Sibieta & Farquharson, 2018). The major issue for the FE sector, as reflected in my own institution, is on saving money where possible and ‘front line’ staff being asked to do more with the same resources.

### Course Contexts and My Learners

As well as the A-Level the centre delivers the UAL Level 3 course in Creative Media and Technology. This has been taught at the researcher’s institution since 2016, one year after the qualification's inception by the awarding body (AB). The ethos of the course is explicitly about problem solving. The course replaced the BTEC L3 Extended Diploma in Creative Media. This change came from pressure



Figure 6 Mac Suite at centre

from the staff who felt that the course was too prescriptive and did not encourage creativity. Staff regarded the course as being too instructional, pushing students towards ticking off tasks in a regimented fashion rather than being able to think on their feet and problem solve in real time, collaboratively - just as a person would do so in the workplace. Indeed, the UAL course explicitly encourages problem solving. The marking criteria for Distinction level work should show a “decisive demonstration of initiative in effectively solving problems, autonomously implementing creative solutions and adapting to unforeseen practical and theoretical challenges to achieve identified goals” (UAL, 2019). The course is heavily subscribed with over eighty students in each year group. The course follows a problem-solving centred curriculum with 8 Units in the first year and five in the second. At the end of each year is the students Final Major Project (FMP) where their grade for the year is determined at either Pass, Merit or Distinction.

Following a constructivist approach to education, learning is student centred and based around problem solving. The focus on the course is on working out the solutions to audio and visual ‘problems’ which are set by the teacher around briefs that need to be passed. One taught unit tackles how to create Foley for a documentary, whilst another asks students to prepare a business plan for their own production company and to find the best ways to market themselves online.

On the second year of the course, students work with local businesses to make corporate films for free. Some students go on to make their small production companies or freelance to supply online

content in the region and beyond and this outreach project is hugely popular. Students who complete the course also go on the University to study mainly practical Media courses. Many of the students who take the course are interested in learning more about creating online content and look up to Vloggers and YouTubers – more than Television and Film makers. In a straw poll conducted across groups students predominantly saw their dream job as either Director or working in post-production. Sometime students indicated a preference for working individually and making content for YouTube or extreme spots. In a lead up to this study I asked students what they thought of sharing more practice and work with other students in a joined class. X, a first year UAL student, said that “No, sharing a class would get people more distracted” whilst others recognised that it could be a benefit to them. Y said that she “could meet and network with more people” whilst Z said that “it would be good to meet and exchange ideas.” Some questioned how they could fit that into a busy year with W saying she “wouldn’t have time” whilst U said that it “would be manic but cool.”

There are issues that are unique to a problem-based curriculum. As identified by Sweller (1988, 2006) there are many benefits to PBL but the ability to learn how to problem solve should be scaffolded. PBL can be time consuming as students need to be independent and will work towards the solution in many ways. One of the problems highlighted in this study is the need to examine how a focused problem-based curriculum can be delivered through working collaboratively in on and offline spaces. Overall, then, there are a variety of national, regional, subject related and digital forces and pressures that are acting upon my area of investigation. With all these factors in mind, my main research question looks to explore a good Film Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century looks like and how a curriculum can be designed to encourage students to develop their digital literacy skills whilst also making sure their face-to-face communication skills with individuals and groups are developed.

## Collaborating, Film Production and the Usual Suspects

Film production, as discussed above, can be a messy affair but human interaction and collaboration are integral to produce a film. Even on a small shoot, with 3 or 4 people behind the camera, collaborating is key. Often our 16–19-year-old students start out as working in these small pods and develop out into larger production units. Collaborating on a project requires a high degree of communication, knowledge transaction and negotiating. These skills are evident every time four students get together to realise a creative product. Media and Film however are often labelled as soft subjects by parents and there is an ongoing perception that just watching films or making them is an easy, relaxed task that is not as ‘serious’ and academic as studying the written word or practising maths equations. George Lucas, the film maker behind the *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones* Franchises see’s the job of education as being vital to a society’s development and that screen skills and graphics are just as important as learning to write and do calculus. As he points out, “there is no other job more important than education. It is the foundation of our democracy” but right now there is a lack of emphasis on the arts in schools (Lucas, 2012).

After interviewing eighth graders through his educational foundation, Edutopia, they found that students rated project learning, technology and an enthusiastic teacher are the most engaging and beneficial factors that impact on their learning experience (Lucas, 2012). He maintains that despite the advent of digital technology in classrooms the basic pleasure and benefit of interaction between student and learner is still the most salient “and this is one way in which the world hasn't changed: teaching is still the most important job.” (Lucas, 2014). In explaining how the ‘grammar’ of film making

and graphics should be just as important a skill to learn for secondary school children than how to use a verb and learn to write, Lucas goes further. “English Language should be renamed Communication – take cinema... and put it into the schools.” He goes on to say it should be “taught as a very practical tool that you use to sell and influence people and get your point across” (Lucas, 2012). Film making, creative media at vocational, T and ‘A’-Level in FE certainly aligns with Lucas’s vision of screen skills being available to students but only at post sixteen level. Even then, the longstanding perception of these courses as the usual suspects of being easy and ‘soft’ subjects, still stands. I argue that the



Figure 7 *The Usual Suspects* (Singer, 1995)

Five criminals are lined up by a mysterious antagonist to complete a heist. His identity is hidden until the denouement, but the weakest ‘suspect’ turns out to be pulling the strings all along.

analytical and craft making skills of Film lift students beyond a STEM based two-dimensional educational model. That these subjects equip them with skills that will develop their ability to communicate with each other and, later, with wider audiences and society. In addition, I argue that these aspects of Film Education develop students' own sense of creative autonomy, make the most artistic use of innovative technology and give students experiences that will positively impact upon them in the future. The view that the subject is 'soft' is ironic in that the industry is so ruthlessly competitive. As one head of Media at a HE institution points out: -

"The course is very challenging: we want students to be intellectually stimulated and to understand and experience pressures that they will encounter when they take up jobs within the media. This is possibly one of the unspoken skills in that it is a pressurised course and it is no different from what people face in the industry" (Thickett in Quin-Jarvis, 2014).

Even at HE level, there is still the need to have to 'defend' the subject in terms of its academic rigour and credibility. This is even though the world has become polarised in terms of the use of social media, and that media platforms can give a voice to any view usually through the moving image. All of my students can now publish and access worldwide audiences in a few clicks and the traditional gatekeepers to audiences have been sidestepped. There has never been a more crucial time to educate students in how to use film, how to communicate effectively and use visual language, than now. As Lucas points out above, students have watched and consumed so much media before they enter school. They know what film, in terms of both short form and long form is and they are generally all active spectators and recognise how it can generate responses, but they still want to study it to use to their own ends.

### Definitions of Film Education

The definition of Film Education is a problematic one. As a relatively new art form, using film as an educational tool has its benefits. Film can be used in classrooms to educate students about a topic, it can entertain and challenge students' assumptions. However, as a form of practice to be studied, different approaches to Film Education have been adopted. Each of these is considered and discussed in some detail below.

Petrie (2010) produces a useful account of how Film Education has emerged in today's educational landscape at Higher Education (HE) level where he describes and discusses the birth of the film school in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The Moscow Film School opened in 1919 with an emphasis on production techniques and the technical process of making films. In the proceeding 10 years it developed its curriculum and included film makers (and the first film theorists) Lev Kuleshov and Sergie Eisenstein. The latter of these, as Petrie suggests, adopted a holistic approach to education and use film as a

means of introducing and discussing wider topics beyond the mechanics of film making. As he highlights,

“...the four-year directing curriculum devised by Eisenstein in 1936 provides a wonderful example of his polymathic approach to practice, outlining a rigorous training that, in addition to learning the theory and practice of film-making, also involved the study of philosophy, social theory, and the arts in general” (Petrie, 2010: 32-33).

In this example, Film Education seemed to be more than just technical training to make a film, but it was not solely an academic one either. In the 1930's film began to be taught at universities, and Petrie points out that the division between the different approaches to Film Education became entrenched at HE level between the conservatoire, industry backed, practical one and the university model in which “a film school is part of a larger educational establishment and therefore constrained and guided by the academic policies and practices of that institution” (Ibid: 34). Petrie points out that although both conservatoire and University models historically aimed to include both “hands-on film making and an intellectual framework that embraces the theory, criticism, and history of cinema, providing students with a context for locating and understanding their own creative practice” (Ibid: 35), in the University model, film making and theory was artificially split as the “new academic disciplines of Film and Cinema studies began to emerge” (Ibid: 35). The division between an academic and practical definition of Film Education began to emerge and here, Petrie lays out the foundation for some of the problems that have surrounded a definition of Film Education ever since.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century problems defining Film Education and delivering Film Education persist. In 2011 the European Commission (EC) looked to cement a definition of *film literacy*, to help inform EU nations in terms of policy making for Film Education. Their definition has driven many of the subsequent strategies and frameworks that have emerged in the UK since. Their definition of film literacy is:

“...the level of understanding of a film, the ability to be conscious and curious in the choice of films; the competence to critically watch a film and to analyse its content, cinematography and technical aspects; and the ability to manipulate its language and technical resources in creative moving image production” (European Commission, 2011).

As part of their initial definition, the EC looked to produce a uniformed approach to Film Education. The distinction between theory and practice is one that is conjoined in their explication. A student must be competent to “critically watch” and have the ability to “manipulate it’s language” in terms of film production. As a contemporary starting point then, the EC set up a challenge to bring both critical thinking and practical, hands-on competency to Film Education. This division between theory and practice, however, as Petrie explains above, is one that is deep-rooted in Film Education and has

plagued film curriculum design, assessment and pedagogy even though this false distinction has been laid to bare. Part of the problem around defining Film Education is intrinsically built into this false division. Solutions to bridge this divide are mooted, glimpsed but, to date, in terms of teaching Film Education at 16-19 these have not materialised in practice. Malte Hagener in *Moving Forward, Looking Back: The European Avant Garde and the Invention of Film Culture 1919–1939* (2007) discusses the benefits of the older film school's approaches to *how* to deliver a film curriculum. Hagener leans towards what a Film Education pedagogy might look like to solve the false division between theory and practice.

“Teaching methods modelled on project work or workshop situation fit in especially well within avant-garde conceptions of overcoming distinctions between theory and practice” (Hagener, 2007: 136).

The project work or “workshop situation” Hagener suggests here, is one that needs to be carefully planned out with studio or ‘workshop situations’ that are at the centre of a student’s learning experience. As I discuss in Chapter Two, the division between theory and practise is historic, not only to film but in all subjects where craft is involved. Film Education is not only pulled between theory and practice, but also between industry and business and educational institutions. Nunn (Nunn, 2020) suggests that more integration, collaboration and dialogue is needed across all sectors of British education to develop and deliver an effective Film Education model. He identifies the lack of a guiding cultural policy around Film Education and creative education more broadly. He argues that “this has hampered any serious changes/responses from taking place, particularly around issues of diversity and participation in the creative industries” (2020: 191-192). He goes on to raise two important questions. On one hand, do you want young people to experiment with the medium of film, using it to participate in and represent contemporary society? Here the emphasis is upon an education which aims to educate young people in the critique and connoisseurship involved in appreciating and engaging in and with the literacies of filmmaking as it represents and shapes society and public thinking in contexts where creativity and criticality are interrelated.

Or do we focus educational measures on employability skills so that young people can be put to work within the industry? Here the purpose of an education in filmmaking is construed solely in technical, economic, instrumental and useful terms in which aesthetics, criticality, and collaboration play little or no part.

Responses to each of these questions, Nunn notes, are pivotal to our understanding of the purpose of Film Education. With reference to the works of Bazalgette (2006) Bachmair and Bazalgette (2007) and Bazalgette (2017), Nunn describes how the proposals of a number of Working Groups including the

*Making Movies Matter Working Group 1* (MMM, 1999) and *The UK Film Council's Report Film a 20<sup>th</sup> Century Literacy* (2008) met with difficulties at implementation stage in being put into action because of lack of coordination as this implementation proposal was left to agencies at operational rather than at policy level. He also notes how the constantly conflicting and shifting demands made by the above organisations (and others) cannot be conducive to an agreed approach to filmmaking pedagogy.

Munro (2023) illustrates the problems around re-defining and delivering a Film Education perfectly in contemporary contexts. Funded by Screen Scotland, Munro describes how he produced a new online only course for teachers and Film Education practitioners to upskill and discuss whether a "Film Education curriculum is possible, or even desirable" (2023 :32). He explains that, "we alighted on a syllabus structured around three key blocks: (1) film studies (story and style); (2) film production; and (3) creativity and social justice" (Munro, 2023: 33).

His live online workshop sessions with teachers, in which group discussions would take place, raised the difficulty of teaching practice in secondary schools and trying to encourage production in centres when it was not a part of the course upon which students were assessed on.

"None of the course's participating teachers (all of whom were secondary teachers) prioritised filmmaking, because it does not form a significant component of the SQA's (Scotland Qualification Authority) media curriculum. Our participating teachers saw their job as being to support young people to do well in their exams, and to respond to related pressures regarding school attainment levels" (Munro, 2023: 38).

Here, the contradiction between what is intended by a "good" Film Education and what students are actually assessed upon comes to light. The way in which a curriculum is designed at a national level can be contradictory to previous definitions of what a Film Education (such as those set out by the EC) should be. If the qualification assessment does not include the means to produce, then students are only experiencing one side of a subject that in effect, demands a practical application in order to experience that subject in the whole. Munro continues that:

"...to the question posed to participants in Queen Margaret University's Introduction to Film Education course, 'What should Film Education look like in twenty-first-century Scotland?', there is, of course, no right answer. This returns me to one of the course's central tensions: the need to offer participants (mainly teachers) 'off-the-shelf' skills in teaching film in educational settings. Such a task arguably remains a necessary part of the upskilling required if Scotland is to unlock the latent potential of teachers who, in years to come, will be an integral part of any refreshed and progressive film and screen curriculum. If we are to embody the type of learning we want young people to undertake, however, it would seem important to remain wary of the promises of these kinds of 'off-the-shelf' models, which have arguably dominated teacher

training career-long professional learning up to this point. The benefits of a dialogic process, closely tied to teachers' and other educators' professional development through enquiry; of an approach to learning comfortable with more questions than answers; of an education system bold enough to dismantle restrictive frameworks and rigid assessment methods; all of these were clear for the participants in the course to see" (Munro, 2023: 44-45).

This type of "off the shelf" skills in teacher education is discussed by Barrett (2020) in the *Film Education Journal* (FEJ). In *Moving beyond the 'shot-type list' towards the 'Meaning Model': Placing meaning at the centre of Film Education*, Barrett starts by highlighting a typical issue in Film Education in that as part of learning the language of film, there is a tendency to construct a 'tick list' with which you can assemble a film and therefore create meaning. As he points out:

"Rather than incorporating semiotic perspectives upon filmic texts and presenting film as a language-like system that can be used to construct meaning, Film Education resources, including those from some of Australia's most highly regarded Film Education institutions, still describe shot types in somewhat mechanical terms, as if tacking different 'shots' together – long shots, mid-shots and a close-up or two – allows students to make an object called a 'film', akin to constructing a piece of furniture" (Barrett, 2020: 218-219).

By just learning shot names via lists, you lose the nuance of their use in creating meaning in film. The educational resources which 'tick off' shot types, rather than looking at how they can be used, reduces the critical thinking behind the art of film making. Arguably, putting these shots into practice whilst considering their impact on the spectator should be a dialogue that is explored between students, as they employ them, and with spectators as they critically analyse their impact. As both Munro and Barrett point out, organising the 'kaleidoscope' into the right configuration so that students experience the study of film in the whole is loaded with pitfalls and is not an easy task, beset by clashes with national curriculum, off the shelf resources, a lack of film educators and teacher training.

### Tensions between Theory and Practice in Film Education

"Despite common assumptions, theory-practice is a false dichotomy, and production-oriented courses must strive to combine hands-on skills training with the fostering of an intellectually driven creativity that is rooted in a thorough understanding of moving image aesthetics, history, criticism, and theory, and how one's own practice is located within these structures and contexts" (Petrie, 2010: 43).

"The making of adaptable, curious, open, questioning people has nothing to do with vocational training and everything to do with humanistic and scientific studies" (Postman, 1996: 17).

The tension between vocational and academic courses has never been more palpable than with the Government's new provision for post sixteen courses as discussed above. As a teacher that teaches A-level and Vocational courses, the divide in assessment and course content is clear to me. Stragglng both the vocational and academic disciplines, I see the bias of parents on open evenings or at expo events. As Coughlin points out "vocational education is a great thing... for other people's children." (Coughlan, 2015). These bias manifests in the 'type' of student you are. Students interviewed during initial phase of the research clearly said they preferred practice over theory, with one student Y saying "Wait... I hate theory!" Students seem to have formed a powerful sense of 'educational identity' based around whether they were good at practical work or theoretical work. There seems to be little recognition that one informs the other. This pattern is deeply rooted in global culture. Hyland draws attention to the 'hard problem' of the vocational-academic divide (2017). He explains that the problem is multifaceted and has roots in its structural, historical, cultural, biological and philosophical origins (Hyland, 2017: 307). Hyland traces the sources of the problem back to the social stratifications of Ancient Greece and although employment, craft and vocational training has moved on, the underlying bias against vocational education remains. A question which forms a key dimension of my research is how does theory intersect with practice in academic and vocational education at Level 3? This problem is further investigated in the literature review and an analysis of my findings contribute to the recommendations offered later in Chapter Six.

As discussed above, historically, Film Education has been artificially divided into a binary construal of Theory and Practice. In a variety of vocational educational subjects, from engineering to early years childcare, this tension is equally true, but the division in my own discipline of Film and Media has always been front and centre around the debate around the future of the subject at HE, Further Education (FE) and secondary levels. Should film be a purely vocational subject where students learn *how to do (savoir faire)* through skills acquisition, or should it be an academic one where students learn about *why* film makers have conveyed meaning in a cultural, visual, audible and evocative text (*savoir être*)? A key question here is, should the outcome of Film Education be to service the creative industry or should it be to broaden a student's own cultural capital? This false division has been exacerbated by National Education policy makers and can be seen in the contrasting assessment criteria of Qualifications like the new T-level or in BTEC qualifications where there is far more of an emphasis on accruing competencies through checklists. Film Education is uniquely situated as one of the few subjects that have both an academic and practical pathway at Level 3. A student can 'study' film at A-level, or you can 'make film' in vocational qualifications at Level 3 in a way that you cannot 'study' plastering rather than 'do' it according to the qualifications available. The subject has been

forced to entrench itself in qualifications that have divided students' engagement with it. As Buckingham (2019) makes clear, all media (or more specifically in my study, Film) Education is not simply about learning how to practise and neither should it be simply instructional, it should be about developing the ability to problem solve and challenge why things are the way they are.

“Media Education is not about using media or technology as tools, as teaching aids, or indeed as data gathering devices. It is not about warning young people against the various forms of ‘bad behaviour’ that media are seen to encourage. Nor is it simply about developing technical skills, or providing young people with the opportunities to express themselves through media. Rather ... it is centrally concerned with developing critical thinking” (Buckingham 2019: 16).

Contextually over the last 20 years numerous bodies have produced policy statements, frameworks or directives that have looked to steer or support Film Education in the UK. In those 20 years there have been a variety of strategies, non-governmental public bodies, charities and initiatives to drive Film Education, either to serve the industry or to encourage screen and cineliteracy in schools.

In 2023, the *BFI*, founded in 1933, released a 10-year strategy designed to act as framework for the following decade (the policy is discussed in some detail below); *The UK Film Council*, a non-departmental public body, created in 2000 (and dissolved in 2011) launched the Screens Skillset Skills Fund in 2003 to identify and allocate funds for training initiatives in response to industry demands; *Screen Skills*, (formerly Creative Skillset) an independent charity that releases a 5-year strategy (again this is discussed in some detail below) and *Into Film* (once *Film Club*) funded by the BFI; a Film Education charity that looks to encourage schools and colleges to broaden students interaction with film in class and through the extracurricular use of film as an educational tool. Each of these groups have had some degree of influence and have tried to steer the conversation over Film Education through reports and frameworks for the future of film. However, as I point out below, their impact on secondary and Further Education curricula and the extent to which these have helped frame a universal film pedagogy are debatable. This small-scale case study illustrates what film pedagogy looks like in a corner of the UK in 21<sup>st</sup> century. It also explores what students who take film making and studying courses actually *experience* in a Further Education setting and to ways to close the gap between theory and practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century classroom.

### Film Education and the UK Film Industry

Petrie (2010) provides a short overview of the UK Film Education history in the early 2000s. In *Theory, Practice and the Significance of Film Schools* (2010) he highlights a central focus of this study; that curriculum design and pedagogy has been coxed towards skills acquisition rather than considering the benefits of Film Education beyond just servicing the requirements of the Film Industry, or what Fisher

calls, a “business ontology” (2009: 17), a model that gears education to merely serve the industry it is, according to its designers, supposed to serve. Indeed, as Petrie highlights, Film Education for a period in the 2000’s, particularly in the years of the UK Film Council (2000-2011), operated only in service to the, “creative culture industry” through a network of film academies and strategies towards greater skills acquisition. Born of the UKFC’s strategy, *A Bigger Future*, (2003) its executive summary sets out a strategy for the provision of Film Education, two of which aim to bring about:

- “An integrated approach to skills provision which assesses and calibrates demand from the industry for specific skills and will match that demand through further, higher and postgraduate provision.
- A small network of Screen Academies recognised to provide an agreed mix of creative and commercial skills needed by the industry” (2003:10).

Here the emphasis is exclusively on the values of commerce and the needs of industry, and these strategies highlight the tendency to see the outcome of education itself as solely to serve that industry. For Film Educations ‘subjects’ to be trainees for a narrow job role, rather than being education in culture, ethos and spirit of Film Education. In other words, to be able to experience first-hand and to be able to see at a younger age, what an education in Film can offer in terms of critical thinking, collaboration, cooperation and team working skills in the pursuit of personal and professional confidence. The overarching push towards servicing the immediate shortfalls in the industry became the modus operandi of policies that were deemed worthwhile by its stakeholders. As Petrie highlights of the *Bigger Future* strategy:

“Consequently, what has emerged in the UK is an educational environment in which any serious intellectual dimension in the instruction of film and media practitioners has effectively been eclipsed by the vigorous promotion of a rather reductive concept of skills training” (Petrie, 2010: 33).

*A Bigger Future* (2003) however also recognises that not only was there not enough ‘line of sight’ for students to see career opportunities in the Film Industry but also that there was a disconnect between courses studied at FE and HE level and realities of the world of work i.e. the courses and curricula that are being delivered are not fit for the purpose (in the eyes of the strategy) they *should* be for its students to benefit from them. To quote the strategy at length:

“Over the last 20 years there has been a massive expansion in courses which provide opportunities to study the media, film and communications. Yet there is a clear perception right across the Film Industry that only a few of these courses deliver the right mix of vocational skills which equip students to enter the industry.

The Film Industry totally supports the provision of film studies, media studies and film-related courses which enable graduates to enter the world of work with respected and valuable qualifications of a general nature. It is a matter of fact that these courses also contribute to the creation of a more motivated and informed audience for film in the UK.

This situation cannot be anything but helpful to both the Film Industry and society generally. However, there is a clear distinction to be made between academic study and vocational provision. Students could and should have a better understanding of what skills the industry demands and needs when they make life-changing choices about their education.

There is also the concern that both students and industry's expectations are not being met as a result of confusion around the wide range and number of courses now available through Further Education, foundation degrees, undergraduate and postgraduate provision. On the other hand, colleges and universities now regularly report difficulties in securing adequate input from practitioners or employers.

Therefore, stronger links are needed between education and industry so that both parties can understand what each other needs" (Bigger Future, 2003: 17).

It's illuminating to compare the 2003 *Bigger Future* Strategy with the BFI's 2023 10-year strategy for film and screen education. The conversation has moved on in some areas, but in terms of education, the same issues reside. Their 10-year strategy entitled *Screen Culture* (BFI, 2023), is more inclusive in terms of its more traditional view of the scope of Film Education; as they state "today, screen culture encompasses film, TV, digital media and video sharing, extended reality (XR) and video games." (BFI,2023: 3) but the sentiments are resonant with the UKFC's 2003 document.

The BFI's 10-year Screen culture strategy looks to deliver "six major ambitions".

- "A. Transform our relationship with public audiences and be widely known as an open house for the discovery and enjoyment of film and the moving image.
- B. Achieve wide appreciation of the cultural, social and economic value of the full breadth of screen storytelling, including video games.
- C. Establish the BFI National Archive as the most open moving image collection in the world.
- D. Radically reform all BFI services by making them easy to use and widely available online, reaching more people and delivering more of our cultural programme digitally.
- E. Reframe the educational value of screen culture with policymakers, educators and parents, and support a skilled and sustainable workforce that reflects the UK population.

F. Drive growth and international success across the screen sector, and address market failures through our funding schemes, policy and evidence” (BFI, 2023: 5).

The BFI’s the strategy looks to strengthen the position of the BFI and its role as embedding cineliteracy in schools (2023: 5). Ambition E is listed to “Reframe the educational value of screen culture with policymakers, educators and parents, and support a skilled and sustainable workforce that reflects the UK population” (2023:5). As part of this they argue that the “The BFI is uniquely placed to coordinate industry action, develop policy and evidence, and drive-up workforce standards. We can play an important role in promoting screen literacy, interpretation and understanding. We can also support teachers to champion the burgeoning potential of screen careers” (BFI, 2023: 29). They continue that they wish to “...build closer relationships between the education sector, industry and government to inform curricula and build broader awareness of careers. We will also identify structured placements and maximise access to Government- and industry funded training opportunities” (BFI, 2023: 30). The BFI’s approach in their new framework is well intended but how much of this is joined up in post 16 education? In *Film(making) education for all? British cultural policy and Film Education* Nunn (2020) points out that these reports often lead to dead ends and no changes to actual ‘on the ground’ policy. As he makes clear:

“A group of stakeholders gather to produce a report, present it and then disappear before any concrete action can take place... a lack of guiding cultural policy in the area of Film Education (and creative education more broadly) has thus hampered any serious changes or responses from taking place, particularly around issues of diversity and participation in the creative industries” (Nunn, 2020: 192).

As Petrie points out above, the key concern is that the direction of Film Education has been driven towards serving the industry whilst Nunn highlights that although this may be the case, these strategies do not materialise in reality on the ground, either in HE or FE and that for all the goodwill by the designers of these strategies, they never materialise in the classroom, college studio or edit suite. Let us look at one such example in detail.

In 2011 The European Commission put out to tender invitations to construct a screen literacy study to create a pan-European approach to Film Education. The tender was won by a consortium of groups led by the BFI. In their executive summary (BFI, 2011). Their first of 14 recommendations was to:-

“Draft a model of Film Education for Europe, including appreciation of film as an art form, critical understanding, access to national heritage, world cinema and popular film, and creative film-making skills” (BFI, 2011).

The interpretation of this definition has become better known as the implementation and delivery of the “three C’s” or Critical, Cultural and Creative approaches to Film Education as discussed previously.

The resulting 2015 framework, although well-meaning, summarises the issues with one of the key problems that has beleaguered Film Education in the UK over the last 20 years. Namely, what a good film pedagogy looks like at the ‘screen-face’ where teachers and students work together? What examples are there? What case studies are there at FE level? and where do clashes between qualification types such as the A-Level and Vocational pathways like the UAL Level 3 Creative Media qualifications occur, as teachers attempt to put these frameworks into practice (as in the one produced below)?

<b>FILM EDUCATION FRAMEWORK FOR EUROPE</b>						
<b>AIM</b>	To inspire and equip people across Europe to be able to access, enjoy, understand, create, explore, and share film in all its forms throughout their lives					
<b>FILM SENSIBILITY</b>						
<b>KEY DIMENSIONS OF FILM EDUCATION</b>	<b>CREATIVE</b> Processes   Practices   Participation		<b>CRITICAL</b> Processes   Practices   Participation		<b>CULTURAL</b> Processes   Practices   Participation	
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING</b>	Specificities of film	Social, personal and collaborative processes	Critical personal response	Wider film engagement	Historic and Institutional context	Reflective learning
<b>LEARNING OUTCOMES</b>	Critical thinkers	Adventurous creators	Expressive individuals	Sensitive contributors	Reflective practitioners	Active collaborators
	Confident explorers	Informed participants	Discerning audiences	Enthusiastic advocates	Independent learners	Engaged citizens
<b>EXPERIENCES</b>	Engage with film in all its forms Experience creative opportunities in film making		Experience film in the cinema Reflect on national and world cultures	Discover film from the past	Experience the art of film Identify, question and reflect on ideas and values	
<b>DISPOSITION FOR LIFELONG LEARNING</b>	<b>CURIOSITY</b>	<b>EMPATHY</b>	<b>ASPIRATION</b>	<b>TOLERANCE</b>	<b>ENJOYMENT</b>	
<b>CONNECTING TO LIFE AND WORK</b>	<b>PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>		<b>CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY</b>		<b>EMPLOYABILITY</b>	

Figure 8 A Framework for Film Education (BFI, 2015)

## AN OUTCOMES-BASED FRAMEWORK

A curriculum framework is a tool for generating models of practice. Models typically start with desired outcomes (what kinds of learning should be achieved, and for whom?), and reach back into pedagogies (what kinds of teaching will help us achieve these outcomes?), which are then illustrated by examples (what do these pedagogies look like in practice?)

While a number of countries have examples of 'outcomes-based' film education curricula, such examples have never been gathered together under an over-arching Framework for Film Education before. The Framework therefore takes the conclusions from *Screening Literacy* a significant step forward, asking 'What are the learning outcomes which will support people's appreciation and understanding of film?' as well as supporting the development of audiences for both contemporary European film and Europe's rich cinematic heritage.

The Framework also presents a coherent picture of film education that collates sample approaches to education outcomes that some readers might not have come across before and which therefore might encourage them to experiment and innovate in the design of their own programmes.

Figure 9 A Framework for Film Education (BFI, 2015)

The framework infers that no pedagogy should be prescribed. It avoids being overly prescriptive however it does present a list of virtues (entitled 'disposition for lifelong learning'). They highlight the importance of an outcomes-based framework (a problematic model as discussed further in Chapter Two) where you work in reverse from what you want to achieve "and reach back into pedagogies" (2015, BFI: 5). The problem this well-intentioned framework leaves us with however, is how to turn it into a curriculum for Film Education worthy of the name and through what pedagogic strategies should it be delivered and experienced by students?

There is of course a danger that by creating lists of characteristics, as the framework has, you have only created a list; and if you make a list, you make boxes to be ticked off or worse still, a list that can be misinterpreted. If you took this framework literally, you could see how there might be a unit entitled *historic and institutional context*, a theory unit, that is followed by the wider film engagement unit. Within those units how would you teach the virtues of Aspiration, Curiosity and Tolerance? Indeed, if you make a list, that is all that you have. Another problem is that such lists often tend to get longer, as indeed this list did - *Film: A 21st century literacy re/defining film* working group added five more 'Cs' to the agreed 3 Cs - Connectivity, collaboration, careers, context and curiosity. Nunn argues what is required is an interpretation of this framework into something tangible. In the BFI framework, *Experiences*, and more problematically "Learning Outcomes" (which arguably, influence pedagogic practices and techniques) are taken not only to be predictable and desirable but also the end result (Kemmis and Carr, 1998) whilst in reality learning outcomes are the means by which you can call to

practice the intellectual virtues, values of mind and character involved in learning how to be a film maker or film student or, as the framework terms them, “dispositions for lifelong learning”. ‘Active collaboration’ does not occur without a curriculum that allows/requires students to experience what it feels like and what it means to collaborate and cooperate including the pedagogical wisdom to employ techniques to improve collaboration and cooperation in practice. Sennett (2009) points out that collaboration and cooperation require much more than the best of intentions and good will. As Sennett (2012) notes, in a craft that requires much hard work and skill, collaboration and cooperation are not learning outcomes. They involve the establishment and maintenance of a particular set of relationships, virtues and values that need to arise in and through a curriculum that is supported by a pedagogy that encourages self-expression, experience, confidence and the opportunity to make mistakes, to fail and to learn from mistakes and from experiences of making mistakes. These aspects of curriculum are not learning outcomes, but forms of knowledge and pedagogy and it is not helpful to frame them in the languages and practices of outcomes-based education. While the BFI Curriculum framework document explicitly states that it does not seek to impose any view of what a pedagogy should look like.

“The Framework does not identify any specific pedagogies associated with the Areas of Learning, Experience, or Outcomes. An obvious next step would be to develop a repertoire of teaching and learning approaches to accompany the Framework...” (BFI, 2015: 27).

However, the reliance of the Framework upon subdividing “learning goals” into “learning outcomes”; the framing of the curriculum in terms of neat and discrete boxes; the model of practice and pedagogy underpinning the framework appears to be experiential, and problem and project based (which I would argue, even if unintended, is a step in the right direction).

One of the unanswered challenges that appears to be inherent within the framework is what a ‘good’ pedagogy and curriculum in Film Education looks like in practice. Although online courses have looked to enact the framework (such as the Future Film MOOC 2015 discussed in more detail in Chapter Two) its application to national qualification is lacking. As noted above, the framework appears to suggest that pedagogy should be based on experiential learning through a project-based curriculum, if this is the case then why not explicitly articulate that as a key aspect of pedagogy? Likewise, what is then the best way to assess students work? One of the challenges of this study is to consider how a film educator might assess virtues such as collaboration and cooperation. A further question follows. Are current specifications assessing students and their work inhibiting the integration of theory and practice in curriculum design and skewing and distorting pedagogy and assessment in less helpful ways? Regarding what might be done about this, there is a case to be made for more nuanced and

multimodal approach to the assessment of students learning and achievements in Film Education contexts.

### Contemporary Context of Further Education - Context is Paramount

“Social media created filters - complex algorithms that looked at what individuals liked - and then fed more of the same back to them. In the process, individuals began to move, without noticing, into bubbles that isolated them from enormous amounts of other information” (Curtis, 2016).

“Cooperation is embedded in our genes but cannot remain stuck in routine behaviour; it needs to be developed and deepened” (Sennett, 2012: ix).

“Every craft is concerned with coming to be, and by the exercise of the craft is the study of how something that admits of being and not being comes to be, something whose principle is in the producer and not in the product” (Aristotle, 350BCE/1999: 88).

As noted, I teach Level 3 Vocational students the University of Arts London (UAL) Creative Media and Film Studies A-Level in a large Tertiary Further Education college in the South of England.

The above courses are set against a national context in which up until recently, creative subjects have been crowded out by the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) agenda (House of Commons, 2018). Students are increasingly discouraged from following Arts pathways in both vocational and A-level routes in 16–19-year FE sector. Despite this, numbers of those careers in the creative industries have grown at twice the rate of the UK economy. In 2017, for example, the Creative Industries generated £92bn, a rise from £85bn in 2015 (GOV.UK, 2017). Specialisms such as my own however, still struggle to justify their value in teaching higher order thinking skills whilst also being a practical, creative, and valuable subject to study in their own right.

It would appear therefore that there is a disconnect between what is launched as a framework by bodies such as the BFI and what is agreed to be/becomes part of a qualification in terms of assessment or indeed curriculum content. With a government that was more focused on the STEM agenda than one that considered the arts as a core part of compulsory curriculum, the 2023 strategy reflects the noble intention of attempting to re-invigorate the debate around moving image-based subjects but how far has the dial moved since 2003? As Figure 11 illustrates the total number of students taking a GCSE in Media, Film or TV studies has dropped by almost a half. It would also appear fair to claim that the popularity of GCSE film/media course has seriously waned over the last 15 years.

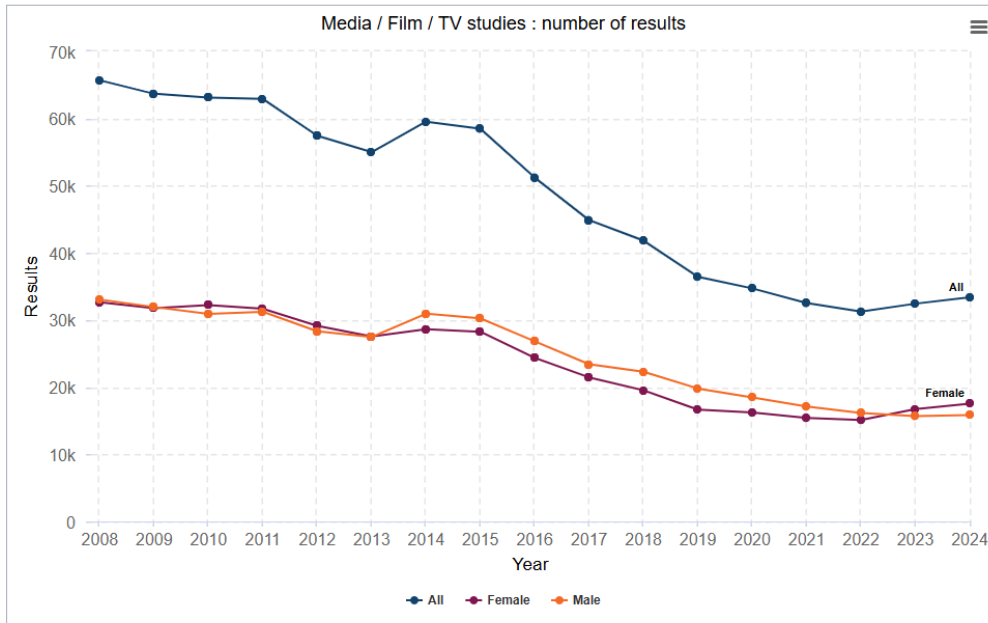


Figure 10 Media/Film GCSE numbers (Ofqual, 2024)

Likewise, numbers have dropped significantly in Media/Film and TV Studies at A-Level as Figure 12 illustrates.

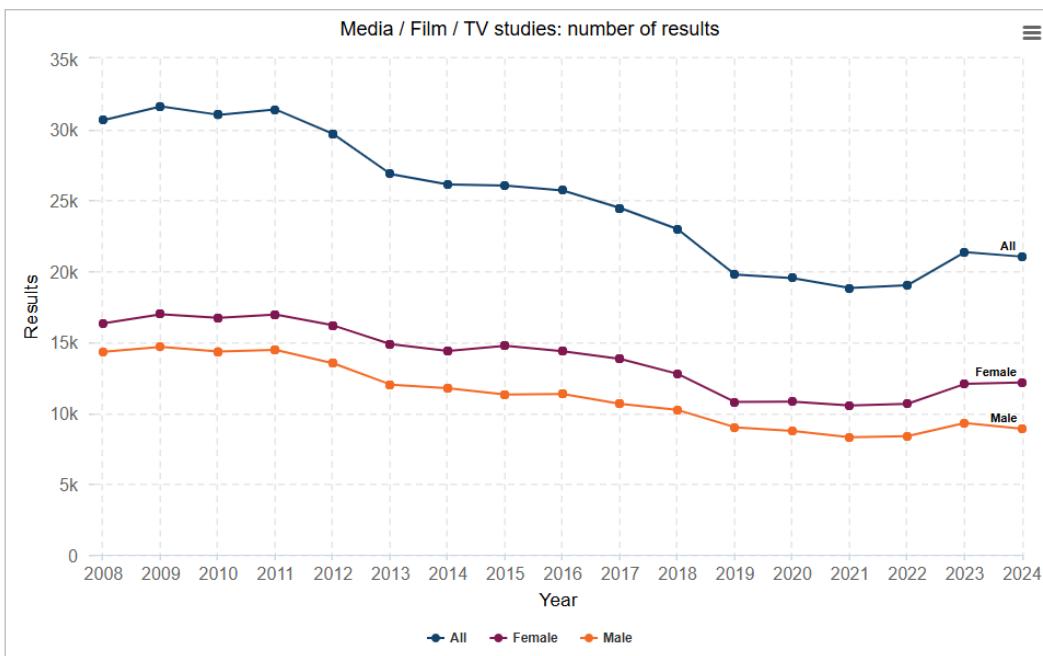


Figure 11 Media/Film A-Level numbers (Ofqual, 2024)

The decline in students taking media or film studies at GCSE and at A-Level has been investigated by the Media Education Association (MEA). In a 2022 report they surveyed 145 members to examine why the decline was in effect. In their report they conclude that curriculum design was not in step with modern media and that “set texts” in media studies and film studies were “of little interest to students” (MEA, 2022). They also saw that a lack of subject specialism at teacher training level needed to be addressed as these level two (GCSE) courses as these were often taught by non-specialists. They conclude by saying that examination boards need to work more closely with media educators to address the issues around the decline of the subjects.

As we’ve seen in the 20 years between the BFI strategies above, the same issues reside. There is a *disconnect* between what the industry wants and what curricula at FE level delivers. The A-Level subjects studied at FE has an 70% emphasis on two (of what was previously discussed) of the three ‘C’s’ – Critical and Cultural with a separate 30% some of which is actually making, or what they would term the Creative approach. Even within the A-Level, ‘practice’ and ‘theory’ are divided, with the ‘theory’ side given more credence in terms of assessment weighting.

### Lockdown Contexts

The research takes place before, during and after the Covid lock downs from 2018-2023. The disruption that the lockdown caused to the study highlighted one of its research areas. Namely, how much learning should take place online and how much should remain in the classroom. With the forced abandonment of in class teaching from March to September in 2020 and many classes remaining online for the start of the academic year 2020-2021, an analysis of the way in which teaching took place during the lockdown forms part of this small-scale study. As an unexpected critical incident in the study, the lockdown pushed online teaching into the forefront of my practice as a teacher.

Bergala (2016) whose seminal book *The Cinema Hypothesis* (discussed in more detail in Chapter Two) makes the point that the pedagogy of Film Education should not be divided between analysis and production or, in his own words “I am convinced that there is not ... a pedagogy of the spectator ... and a pedagogy of the film-maker”; instead, he suggests “a generalized pedagogy of creation” (2016: 24). He makes the point that reading a film is just as creative an act as making one and these two activities need not be separated. If indeed this is the case, where does the online practice of teaching factor into this? During the Covid lockdown my students had to work around lockdown restrictions to produce films, in the first lockdown in isolation and independently, and later in more familiar small groups. Bergala goes on to make the case for the *passeur*, an individual who acts as a gatekeeper and “accompanies his passengers” and “who takes the same risks as those temporarily in his charge”

(2016: 29) for students access to understanding film. This raises questions of how best for teachers to act as a *passeur* when they are not physically in the same space as their students? Is the nature of online teaching conducive for a Film Education to take place and how can the practice of filmmaking take place when all of that learning is online and in isolation? Atkinson and Bulbulia (2023) in *Children coping with COVID-19: Intersectional understandings of film and media access in a crisis* note the disparity in children learning about film in different parts of the globe during the pandemic. In it they highlight several case studies from South Africa, Argentina, the Netherlands, India and Ethiopia. They go on to make the point that the local situation in which education takes place, and the population involved are important factors to consider. In my small-scale case study this is equally true. However, as Atkinson and Bulbulia (2023) point out, “there are aspects of universal experience underlying Film Education responses to COVID-19.” My study, although only a local one, will hopefully point to some universal truths about that experience as well as establish how the lockdowns have changed students’ interactions with each other and with teachers.

### Technology, Pedagogy and Learning Context

In Film Studies and Vocational Creative Media courses, we ask our students to consider how spectators/audiences are influenced by a variety of conditions and contexts that can alter their interpretation of a film (or text). Stuart Hall’s Encoding/Decoding theory (1980) explores ‘active’ and ‘passive’ audiences and how far individuals are positioned by a film’s ideological viewpoint and whether that spectator can ‘actively’ consider that viewpoint or whether they ‘passively’ take on messages and values from media. Spectatorship Theory is an integral part of studying film and media and our students enjoy considering what forces can change the way you interpret a film. If you are of the Roman Catholic faith, for example, you will perhaps respond differently to *The Exorcist* (Friedkin, 1973) than if you are an atheist. Will you nervously laugh at a horror film if you are in a group looking around you to see if your peers are responding in a comparable way as ‘taboo thresholds’ are being tested? (Hill, 1997) Would you react in the same way if you are watching in a cinema rather than at home in a darkened room? Your situated culture, your social background and the viewing conditions you choose to watch a film all have an impact on how you respond and interpret what you are watching. In the same way that in Film Studies teachers discuss the viewing context under which spectators can respond differently to same text, we can consider the ‘situation’ and environment that a learner experiences education and its impact on that experience. In this example, you can consider how a person is affected by the environment under which learning takes place and how that will impact the student. Indeed, as Padgett notes:

“The learning environment is the result of a combination of factors – physical, social, intellectual and cultural. It will be shaped by details brought by the learners: the orientation and stimulation provided by their own histories, their surroundings and the quality and range of social interactions that they enjoy” (Padget, 2012 :1).

The learning environment described above is made up of learners’ experiences, backgrounds and stimulus materials. The major difference to consider following the recent pandemic is that learning now takes place on and offline, in both VLE’s and the classroom. One of the central problems explored in this study, is how much a teacher can drive a learning environment towards being inclusive, encourage dialogue and discussion and creative collaboration whilst making sure that face to face time is not overlooked or underestimated. This study recognises the disparity between what I expect my learners to experience and the actual reality of those experiences. One of the facets of this research is to bring to light ways in which a curriculum that encourages honest and critical evaluations of work engaged in online as well as how a Community of Enquiry style learning environment on and offline might support such a curriculum. The intention here is to deepen understanding of the extent to which curriculum and teaching strategies employed in environmental contexts that learners experience is equally, if not more, important than just the use of technology. A key issue for this study then, is to ensure that technology is not to be considered a to be a ‘wonder drug’ to solve all enduring issues in Film Education. It is important to remember however that the use of technology needs to be carefully considered and balanced alongside ‘offline’ teaching strategies.

Since the proliferation of the iPhone in 2007 onwards, student's interaction with social media and each other has dramatically changed. There is an abundance of research on the detrimental and positive effects of social media on businesses, educational achievement, mental health, and society as a whole (some of which is explored in Chapter Two). In terms of education, digital technology has been employed in a variety of ways in the classroom. Virtual Learning environments, portals and online testing labs are used widely across the sector. As the Education and Training Foundation’s (ETF) Digital Teaching Professional Framework has identified, it is viewed as critical that teachers are kept abreast of digital learning tools. As the ETF also recognises however “new technologies are not a silver bullet for improving learner outcomes” (Liogier, 2019). The mantra of the EdTech Strategy is “Exploring, Adopting, Leading” (Liogier, 2019). Educational institutions are more than eager to adopt new tech strategies if budgets allow and if support staff are available there has been a drive not just for IT assistants but Digital champions, Innovations Technicians and VLE Content Providers.

At the same time, social interactions between students have been placed ‘in house’ allowing students and staff to communicate on online platforms. ‘Educationally friendly’ social media have been

developed through e-portals and ELPs and, at face value, these seem like good investments for schools and colleges. As Fattahi recognises, for:-

“the ‘digital natives’ of today’s modern generation — the concept of dialogue involves more than face-to-face interaction; it includes platforms like texting, social media, blogs, and virtual chat rooms...the contemporary teacher must work to include such modern elements in their classrooms.” (Fattahi, 2016).

To some extent all of my students partially perceive the world through digital platforms, where information can be instantaneously retrieved through powerful search engines and in face-to-face physical interactions. Student’s information literacy skills, therefore, are seen as crucial in being able to successfully interpret information and be able to discuss this with peers and teachers. Information literacy quite simply refers to how students should learn to be “engaged in searching, comprehending, organising, synthesising and evaluating information; articulating, reflecting upon and rectifying their thoughts; and negotiating meanings with others” (Kong et al, 2005). The global context in which students can access information easily requires that they should not only learn this for their studies/subjects but that it is an essential tool for negotiating their way through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. As Kong et al go on to explain:

“IL is not simply an aid to learning at school but rather it is a set of skills, abilities and attitudes that equip someone for lifelong learning. The complexities of modern society require that people to be constantly open to new ideas and able to become quickly adept at new ways of doing things” (Kong et al, 2005:7).

Therefore, the problem, as laid out by Turkle (2015), is not that digital tech is being used in schools and colleges, but *how* it is being used and how students have become overly reliant on it. As she comments “learning isn’t all about the answers. It’s what the answers mean” (2015:8). At the same time, she makes the point that young people have become adept at multi-tasking but are not able to focus ‘in depth’ for sustained periods of time. In what has become known as ‘continuous partial attention,’ students rarely focus on one task at a time, become distracted too easily and are losing important communication skills face to face and the ability to empathise with their peers. As she points out “online life is associated with a loss of empathy and a diminished capacity for self-reflection” (Turkle, 2015: 41).

Recent open-source AI like Chat GPT or any search engine provide students with the tools to answer almost any question without digging for information. As we move into post-knowledge-based economies in the developed world, students’ need to interpret information, not just recount it. This

is of paramount importance to Film Education. The requirement of educators in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, is arguably, to negotiate this difference. To differentiate from simply helping students knowing the answer, Film Education needs to move towards using, interpreting and analysing what that answer indicates as well as asking, are there alternatives? What are the benefits and the shortcomings? Can the source the answer came from be trusted? If the source came from online how reliable is it? What do your peers think about the answer? Does the group have alternatives? At the same time, Turkle makes point that humans learn best from dialogue and discussion, both face-to-face and through working together in the 'real' world. Much in the same way that she focuses on this in *Reclaiming Conversation in the Digital Age* (2015), my intervention looks to integrate offline platforms how best in the classroom with online discussion tools. How curriculum design will assist this and how greater collaboration between larger numbers of students can boost critical thinking skills remains to be seen. Students have an abundance of information and technology at their disposal, so it is equally important that students not only find information but are also critically thinking about information that has been mined from online sources.

Critical thinking skills can be seen as simply promoting the thorough and sustained 'thought' by deconstructing concepts, images, ideas and moving images and being able to evaluate these. Critical Thinking skills in this study are employed and viewed through the lens of Lipman (1988) (discussed in Chapter Two) in an attempt to take student and staff discussions and place these both online and offline. Getting the right balance is so as to ensure there is not an over reliance on technology that limits students' ability to grow as critical thinkers, who have resilience and develop communication skills that go beyond the classroom for their online and offline futures is an area that this study will explore. To paraphrase Turkle above, 'it is not *what's* being taught that is the issue. It is *how* it's being taught.'

Early trials using Teams in 2018 (Curtis and Cossey, 2018) highlight a key issue also identified by Sennett in *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures & Politics of Cooperation* (2012), specifically the difficulty of building collaborative relationships in online platforms. Referring to the short-lived Google Wave project, Sennett explains the potential limitations of communicating and collaborating in online spaces. The Google Wave project was intended to revolutionise communication and collaboration and allow users to work on projects simultaneously. When announced, technology businesses predicted that it, "will open the door to an explosion of innovation" (Woods, 2009). However, after just one year, Google pulled the plug on it. Sennett draws attention to the design of the platform as restricting free flowing *dialogic* communication, instead limiting users to a *dialectic* form of positing opposing ideas and trying to find a consensus from them. Both dialectic and dialogic communication bring forth a variety of issues that appear evident in many of the communication exchanges that occur on social

media platforms and in face to face or in person group discussions that this study investigates. Dialectic communication rests on the premise that contradictory positions are used to find a 'truth'. Opposing and contrary views, thesis and anti-thesis, are expressed to achieve a synthesis. In simple terms then, "the dialectic is generally meant as an exchange between people to handle a disagreement" (Schwarz & Baker, 2016:103) or in an oft used analogy, two blind-folded people start at either end of an elephant and describe what they find. Each person may describe something different, but both will be describing a shared 'truth'. For Sennett dialectic communication is the, "verbal play of opposites (that) should gradually build up to a synthesis" (Sennett, 2012:18). Dialogic communication draws on the use of the term by Bakhtin (1975) and that rather than simply presenting opposing views to establish a truth, dialogue which allows for context, a variety ideas and multiple views, to find meaning and consensus; or simply that, "the dialogical... means multi-voicedness in language production." (Schwarz & Baker, 2016: 103). Sennett is clear that it is not as simple as either/or and that both forms of communication are valuable in ascertaining a truth, however he finds that dialogic communication is better suited to facilitate cooperation and reduces the chances of 'closure' or shutting down discussion. Indeed, as he goes on to highlight, "in dialogic conversation misunderstandings can eventually clarify mutual understandings" (Sennett, 2012: 18). In discussing the failed Wave project, he points out, "the structure Google Wave provided for cooperative conversation visually inhibited thinking outside the box; it discarded just those seeming irrelevancies which later proved to be pregnant" (Sennett 2012: 27). He argues that it was design then, not the limitations of the users, which effected the success of the program. With the use of Microsoft Teams one of the central tenets of my research is to find educationally helpful ways way of fostering *dialogic* conversations, not just limiting communication to "likes" and *dialectic* statements and positions.

At the same time, resisting the temptation of participants to use the platform simply as an information sharing, social space is also important. Sennett makes this observation in relation to his involvement with the trial of Goggle Wave explaining that, "one large reason for failure may be that the program mistook information sharing for communication" (Sennett, 2012: 28). This focuses not on just the platform and its use but also how the online and offline space, in the classroom, might be used to expand student's grasp forms of knowledge of the theories of how knowledge is acquired and developed. The learning techniques and Socratic questioning employed in the pedagogic interventions in my research methodology offer insights into how this can be taught.

Students already have access to a phenomenal amount of data and information. The role of teacher should not be downgraded to facilitator and 'sign poster' whose job is to simply enable students to find the 'right' knowledge. Instead, I argue that teachers should educate students in how to distinguish between reliable data and information and, when students have found out, what to do, how to

present, how to work with technology and with each other then we may move close towards a deeper understanding of what we mean by good Film Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. By students engaging with each other on and offline, the intention is to de-individualise learning and introduce an element of community and collaboration into ICT work. As exponential advances in computer processing speeds and the collection of big data gain momentum it is more important now than ever for students to learn critical thinking abilities and higher order thinking skills including those of analysis. Describing dataism as a modern ‘religion’ and emerging ideology, Harari (2015) sees the flow of data and the processing of it in modern societies as potentially “invert(ing) the traditional pyramid of learning” (Harari, 2015: 429) and that its proponents have an emerging distrust of human knowledge and wisdom. He explains that, “humans were supposed to distil data into information, information into knowledge, and knowledge into wisdom. However, dataists believe that humans can no longer cope with the immense flows of data, hence they cannot distil data into information let alone into knowledge or wisdom.” (Harari, 2012: 429) Trust, he argues, is increasingly being put in the power of algorithms to make decisions as humans cannot process the volume of data that is presented to them. Students, therefore, have all the access they could desire to information, they are flooded with ideas and ‘knowledge’ (Harari, 2015: 429). One possible answer to this dilemma is to enable communities of enquirers to tackle issues online, together in communities, on dialogic platforms as I discuss later in this chapter. Just as no classroom should be an island, neither should students be left to individually digest ideas and work independently while drowning in a sea of information and data.

Undoubtedly humans, by their very nature, benefit from collaboration. As Sennett points out, “cooperation is embedded in our genes but cannot remain stuck in routine behaviour; it needs to be developed and deepened” (Sennett, 2012: ix). The proposed post-thesis trial for this study looks to take on Sennett’s challenge to, “develop and deepen” this cooperation. However, at the core of my investigation is a paradox that needs to be reconnoitred. My students are better connected through technology but they do not use this to build cooperative and collaborative working relationships with each other or their staff with and through those communities. Sennett describes this as part of a wider “de-skilling” (Sennett, 2012:7) of the population caused by economic inequality and, more familiarly to my study, the structures of modern organisations. In what he calls the Silo-effect (Sennett, 2012: 7),

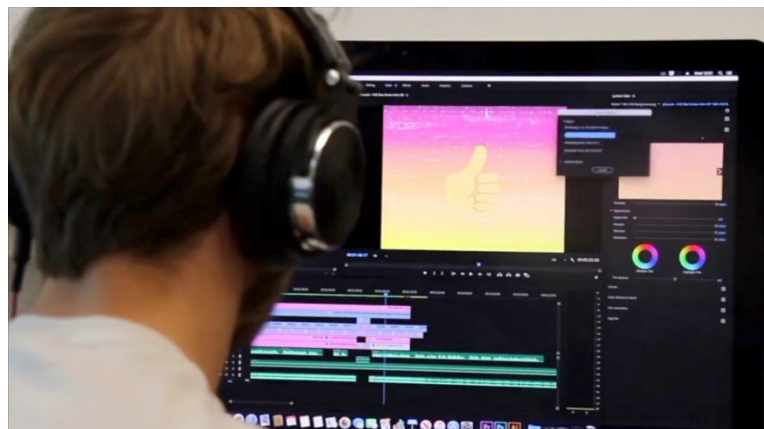


Figure 12 Student working on an edit timeline on FCP.

individuals and groups become isolated from each other and do not share valuable information. On a smaller scale this is evidenced in my own practice. A cohort of eighty students are divided arbitrarily into four groups for the academic year. Although there are, of course, opportunities for students to collaborate across the groups this rarely happens and is not formalised, on or offline. Students are highly adept at working in groups to produce creative work, they use WhatsApp to organise shoots or production meetings, but group work is limited to organising - rather than exploring. Students' use of technology in the classroom, therefore, is extensive but not in what I argue is useful in widening collaborative dialogic enquiry where, as Sennett points out, the most useful learning and productivity can take place (Sennett, 2012:26). One of the key problems here is how technology is used in Film Education. Students' use of social media platforms is extensive (Ababneh et al, 2020). The question is how can these platforms be used to widen students' ability to research and work together to improve their creative and practical work?

The use of connective, online and social tools in the classroom is one side of the use of technology in the classroom, the other is the ever increasingly sophisticated use of editing packages like Premier and After Effects that students access in classrooms and away from their place of study. With the democratisation of creative and social tools for our students, finding the best way to use these without reducing a curriculum to a list, where students just prove they can use it, without critically analysing the outcome of that use, is a part of the problem I'm investigating in this thesis.

As noted above, conversation online often invites polarisation. In research carried out by Zignal Labs, University of Southern California Annenberg School and Golin, a PR company, by creating a 'polarisation index' score (2021) a data, science-based measure they analysed and the content on Twitter and Meta platforms and found that issues in American politics create polarised dialogue. Online social media have, for over a decade now, allowed a participatory culture of citizens to contribute to global conversations. Unfortunately, in many examples, and as the study above found, the type of conversation between people has become binary with two fixed positions being thrashed out with little leeway or room for manoeuvre from either side. Our verbal car crashes are captured online and cached for all to see, in what looks like a conversational pile up. These positions can all too easily become fixed and entrenched with no hope of synthesis, progress or alternatives in sight. In exploring how this impasse can be overcome, Sennett (2012) describes how dialogic communication is the best way tool to mutually benefit people on the axis of exchange. Sennett describes in *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation* (2012), the benefits of collaboration. Referring to cooperation as 'skill' that needs to be learnt. He refers to Aristotle as defining skill as, *techné* "the technique of making something happen, doing it well" and learning the skills of "listening well, behaving tactfully, finding points of agreement and managing disagreement, or avoiding frustration

in a difficult discussion” (Sennett, 2012: 6). In a wider sense then, this small-scale study looks at the role and limitations of *techné* (techniques) to teach better communication between students in a hope to develop lifelong skills in talking online.

In this study I offer insights into how this technology is used in the classroom for Film Education purposes and how these might be supported through offline environments that promote collaboration. As part of this study, I measure how changes in learning environments, on and offline, influence student’s ‘success’ and what teaching strategies assist/hinder the development of a student’s creativity. I also explore what Lipman describes as critical, creative, and caring thinking (Lipman, 2003) in both settings. As my introduction makes clear, this study critically considers Film Education in an FE context. My aim here is to explore how we might improve student’s communication and critical thinking skills as well as what factors of curriculum design to support the development of the digital natives (Prensky, 2001) of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, a term which itself is contested and discussed later in the literature review. It is hoped that the findings from my study may be of relevance and interest to teachers working in other FE settings and to other subject areas.

This central focus of the research is upon investigating on and offline collaboration and the contribution it can make to a good Film Education. My aim is to find out what learners think and feel about what their learning looks like and what their experiences of Film Education feels like. Capturing students experience of collaboration in authentic and trustworthy ways is a difficult and potentially daunting proposition. As discussed above, teamwork, collaboration and working towards shared objectives are a ‘messy’ affair which can often be difficult to chronicle. One of the central aims of this study is to capture that experience and study processes and stages of creative collaboration.

## Summary and Research Questions

“If you want to kill the conversation, invite a teacher onto an online group” (Lecturer, 2018: Seminar).

The opening discussion highlights some core questions that this study looks to investigate and situates the problem around Film Education; the centre the research takes place in and the use of technology in a time where Covid had an impact on classroom practice. A central tenet of my thesis is to examine what makes a good Film Education in 21<sup>st</sup> century and what should be taught in a curriculum. The answers to these questions will be tested using conceptual and curriculum design tools that will assess learning online and in the offline world, in the classroom. One of the ideas I wish to test is how creative collaboration labs further students work and to examine how IT software should be set up to help students work on creative problems, both on their own and with each other. The students involved in this study have their own context, their own unique demands and requirements, and although no two

classrooms are the same, the lessons from this study can add to the discussion around the use of technology in the classroom and to put it to best use.

Amongst these educational issues, lies the role of the teacher and the purpose of education in a new digital landscape that has become dominated by social media platforms. In his work considering the formers place in an educational landscape, Biesta (2011) defines what he calls the “multi-dimensionality of educational purpose”. Identifying the function of education as an interwoven tripartite of Qualification, Socialisation and Subjectification he explains that the role of the teacher is not simply to be seen through a lens of competencies but to be able to make improve practice by making “wise educational decisions”. In understanding the potential conflict between the three areas – a ‘wise’ teacher will be able to identify and assess the ‘trade-offs’ that create tensions or conflicts that effect each area of the purpose of education. As discussed in more detail in my literature review, Biesta’s idea highlights the tension between the purposes of education. In this study, and in my subject area of Film and Media, this tension plays out daily. As a teacher with 15 years’ worth of experience teaching Media and Film I have witnessed how the curriculum sometimes focuses on narrow, *technical* individual attainment at the expense of working collaboratively with others and broadening students understanding of what film (and media) is and how it shapes the world around us. If the parameters for ‘success’ from an institutional and national level are set at what grade outcome students achieve, are we as teachers and lecturers failing to meet the needs of the ‘Socialisation’ dimension of education? At the same time, if the vocational emphasis of making media, film and art is (often) a collaborative exercise, it would appear obvious to equip them with the skills for working with groups of individuals in the future.

One major concern of my study to examine what Aristotle (Aristotle 384-322 BC) calls ‘forms of knowledge’ and their interrelationship whilst group work, individual work and planning are all at play when students *make* film and media. Aristotle’s thinking is clearly outside of the context of Film Education but the ‘forms of knowledge’ that he describes are linked by enduring educational challenges that persist in the pedagogy of Film (and indeed many other disciplines that are taught in institutions). Aristotle’s forms of knowledge speak of how we learn and the qualities of mind and character that should be provoked and developed by any education. In considering these, and applying them to the problems and challenges that have been highlighted above, I hope to link what is considered classical philosophy to help bring to light and explore the persistent issue of the theory/Practice divide within contemporary Film Education. Aristotle saw the defining principles of human knowledge as a series of forms and virtues which work together to make an individual wise and rounded. In combination, practical knowledge, or as he termed it *phronêsis*, *epistêmê*, or scientific knowledge and *technê* or technique and craft skill, come together to bring forth a *poêsis* of art or

product or of something by design. In the same way, film makers need to draw on a range of independent skills and skills to work with experts in a variety of disciplines. A production designer will work with a director and screen writer; a film composer will work with an editor and director. Each skill or craft is not conducted in a vacuum, each requires working with another if the overall film is to be realised. Whilst this is taking place each individual needs to draw on a form of knowledge to realise their own contribution to the whole. The skills to work together is a virtue and that process of doing, of working together towards a common end is what Aristotle would call *praxis*. In order for a student to have what one could consider a worthwhile educational experience, one need look no further and discuss with students what *praxis* looks like in a media classroom, studio or editing suite. Sometimes this happens by design and sometimes by accident. It is by examining my classroom settings and determining where this takes place one can determine what a good Film Education looks like.

As discussed in Chapter Three as a thesis which involves action research, the voices that emerge from my study are loud and clearly speak to the divide between theory and practice, its implementation in curricula, its manifestation in other subjects and the language of learning that students acquire as they travel through the education system.

Chapter One introduces and discusses enduring issues in contextual influences in Film Education at 16-19 level. It also chronicles curriculum development in vocational contexts for UK Film Industry. It examines the industry's ties with education and the use of technology in FE in Film Education. These topics are all areas that require deeper examination. In particular, this research seeks to address the following research questions:

RQ 1: What does a good curriculum framework look like for students in Film Education in the FE sector and how does theory intersect with practice in academic and vocational education at Level 3? How can this be best brought to life in the classroom?

RQ 2: What does good pedagogic practice in further Film Education look like and how could it be used to develop different forms of knowledge in film curriculum through experiential, problem and project-based learning?

RQ 3: How can different forms of knowledge be assessed in Film Education?

RQ 4: What is the most suitable way to use technology in Film Education and what approaches to teaching encourage and support collaborative learning.

RQ 5: What Film Education experiences during the covid lockdowns can inform future pedagogy and curriculum design?

As part of this small-scale research study, I measure how changes in learning environments, on and offline, impact on student's experience of film curriculum and what teaching strategies (or pedagogies) assist the development of a student's creativity. The study drives at what a good Film Education should look like for students and why Creative Media and Film courses are crucial for all citizens to be able to navigate the bombardment of digital information and moving images that members of society contend with. With the use of interviews, classroom observations and analysis of student collaborations, I aim to discover ways to employ technology in the classroom that encourage and promote collaboration whilst capturing the experience of students on my film and media courses.

As my introduction makes clear the study touches upon Level 3 Film Education in a number of ways, including how to improve students' communication and critical thinking skills and what curriculum design should be for, including educational issues surrounding what has been termed, the 'digital natives' of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (itself a contentious term for learners of the last 25 years). By assessing, analysing and providing qualitative data from the FE College which forms the site of this research, I hope to be able to produce a Curriculum Framework and pedagogy for Film Education at Level three which I propose may form a post-thesis pilot study.

## CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

” Mountain peaks do not float unsupported” (Dewey, 1934:3).

“The web drew people in because it was mesmerising. It was somewhere that you could explore and get lost in in any way you wanted. But behind the screen, like in a two-way mirror, the simplified agents were watching, predicting, and guiding your hand on the mouse” (Curtis, 2016).

As Dewey notes above, to understand the earth one must look first at what stands out. The mountain is the most obvious visual sign of Earth’s constant activity, but mountains only point to the conclusion of a process by which the earth’s tectonic plates have formed our surroundings. They stand out from the earth’s crust, but the actual process lays hidden below. To a geographer, Dewey explains, mountains do not just rest upon the earth, they “*are* the earth” (1934: 3). In the same way, the ways in which we understand what we experience may be obvious to the naked eye but, unseen and often unexamined, below the surface are forces which have shaped and acted upon those experiences. The following literature review examines some of the principal arguments and debates that permeate the focus of this study to look at what lies ‘hidden below’. Building upon the work of authors introduced in Chapter One, this literature review is divided into the four areas that the research questions posed in this thesis aim to address in relation to:

- Issues in UK Film Education – Pedagogy and Curriculum
- The use of technology in the teaching of film and the process of learning and collaborating online in education.
- Curriculum design in Education contexts
- Covid’s impact on teaching and learning.

Firstly, I build upon debates introduced around Film Education in the UK through the work of Buckingham (2019), Fisher (2017) Petrie (1991, 2010) and Petrie and Stoneman (2014) and Connolly (2014). In this Chapter, I move on to consider what makes ‘intellectually wise’ teaching and learning through Aristotle (350BCE), Buckingham (2019), Petrie (2014) and Dunne (1993). I critically consider viewpoints which frame film making as a craft and one that depends on forms of collaboration that need to be developed through education.

Secondly, I examine what the use of technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century classroom has done to communication and the learning experience with reference to the work of Zuboff (2019), Prensky (2001) and Siemens (2005).

Thirdly, I review how collaboration, curriculum design and the use of IT, all overlap in the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom. From the works of Sennett (2012), Dewey (1934), through to Lipman (1980) and Stenhouse (1975) I look at how curriculum theorists examine the process of education, and how that process itself, can be viewed as the principal outcome of creative education through the interaction between Teacher, Student and digital technology. Finally, I discuss the impact of Covid on education in the UK and review some key literature that has emerged in its wake.

## Film Education and Film Pedagogy

### In a House of Mirrors

As discussed in Chapter One, Film Education in the UK is formed of many threads. To consider UK Film Education in the round one must look at its drivers, it's stakeholders and the education system in which Film Education is located. A preliminary review of the literature suggests that the principal forces to consider in this landscape are the British Film Institute (the primary cultural charity and national lottery funding distributor for film and moving image), curriculum design and actual qualifications in schools, sixth forms and FE colleges, the UK Film Industry itself and advances in film and postproduction technology. In this Chapter, I highlight the broad context of UK Film Education and some of the forces that have acted upon it whilst critically engaging with Film Education literature and where Further Education sits within this field of study.



Figure 13 *The Lady from Shanghai* (Orson Welles, 1947)

As discussed above, Film Education as a term has been construed and interpreted in many ways. At times, Film Education has been caught between competing definitions around its purpose and the framing of what constitutes good 'practice'. For some, the purpose of Film Education is simply to provide technical training for the closing of "skills gaps" in an industry, where knowledge and learning are relegated to knowing 'which buttons to push' and when. For others the purpose of Film Education is to collapse falsely erected divides between theory and practice, including reading a film to uncover it's meaning, it's place in history contextually and as a means to communicate ideas and raise issues. As highlighted in the opening discussion in Chapter One, there have been numerous efforts to push the latter framing purpose of Film Education to the fore. However, as also discussed the numbers of students taking Level 3 A-Level or Vocational courses is in decline. Furthermore, there is a lack of specialised media or film teacher training PGCE courses for new entries into teaching. For example, in 2024 only 7 are found in the UK, and three of these are PGCE's combining English language/literature

and Media. Despite the advent of online video sites and the increasing reliance of under 25's on these for their news gathering and coming to know the world around them (*Tik Tok* is now the primary source for gen Z (Diaz, 2024)) critically understanding and creating the moving image is still not a priority in secondary level curricula. The work of Buckingham is particularly helpful in pointing to how “educational policy defines literacy in increasingly narrow and instrumental ways and explicitly excludes ‘digital texts’. It seems quite extraordinary that we should be entering the third decade of the twenty-first century with a school curriculum that does not even address the dominant forms of culture and communication of the last century, let alone those of the present one” (Buckingham: 2019: 106).

### Film for the Future - Noble Enactments of the framework

As noted above, the *Film Forever* (2012-2017) strategy sets out to help define Film Education going forward and the BFI's resulting framework looked to tie down this through the ‘three C's’. As part of the frameworks delineation, it clearly states that this was a guide and that further work needed to be done to bring the curriculum to life. Encapsulating the efforts to launch public access to Film Education, funded by the EU and produced by the BFI and European partners *Vision Kino*, *Cinematheque Francais* and *Karpos* was the *Film Education – A Users*



Figure 14 If... (Anderson, 1969)

“Education in Britain is a nubile Cinderella: sparsely clad and much interfered with.”  
*The Headmaster*

*Guide* (2020). Run through *Future Learn* the Guide was a MOOC (massive open online course) and is a resource for teachers and students at every level from Primary to Post 16. As the authors and designers of the course state:-

“...it is not the definitive guide to Film Education, rather a series of starting points based on the framework for Film Education (2014, BFI). Throughout the course there is an emphasis on film making being central to Film Education. Linking back to the three C's Creative, Critical and Cultural” (Future Learn, 2025).

The website creates task for students and teachers and has constructed a variety of creative and analytical questions with a digital notepad to make responses on. The tasks are interactive and well-designed but are pitched as either CPD for teachers or as an additional mini course for students of all ages. This is an excellent resource; however an enduring problem resides in its implementation. Until there is a directive to ensure that Film Education is at the centre of a national curriculum then, from a

cynical point of view, this is a CPD ‘task’ for teachers or an additional ‘bolt on’ course that runs alongside qualifications.

**Our goals are:**

- To make a compelling argument for screen culture to be reflected in the curriculum across the UK.
- To build a positive reputation for screen culture amongst educators and parents. We will champion its impact on learning, creativity, well-being and cohesion.
- To ensure teachers are equipped with the resources, confidence and skills to teach with film and the moving image across the UK.
- To increase awareness of educational programmes and the use of resources. This will include those linked to the BFI National Archive and our wider cultural programme. It will also feature training and talent development opportunities such as the BFI Film Academy.
- To ensure more members of the public access our lifelong learning programmes.
- To welcome more families, children and young people aged 25 and under visiting our venues and online platforms.

As previously discussed in Chapter One, the BFI’s 10-year strategy (2023-2033) renewed the emphasis for Film Education to be part of the national curriculum agenda. Objective One of Ambition E on education in the UK includes the aim to:-

“1. Publish a new education strategy that will use commissioned research and existing data to build the case for film and the moving image to be considered an essential part of the curriculum” (BFI, 2023: 28).

Figure 15 BFI – ‘Ambition E’ Goals

Meanwhile, redesigned ‘A’-levels were launched in 2016, a Conservative driven educational policy change implemented by the then education minister Michael Gove, which further entrenched the falsely erected division between theory and practice. There was no clamour for creative subjects to be extended at secondary level and in my own subject areas of Film and Media at Level 3, theory was preferred over practice reflected by the reduction in value, in terms of assessment weighting, of practical course work over written exams. Meanwhile funding for other Level 3 qualifications were to be “switched off” when the new T-Levels were introduced. This intention to streamline the educational offer for Post 16 education delineated a clear choice for students between the “academic” A-Level and the “vocational, work experience” route of the T-Level. As discussed in Chapter One, the MEA’s (2022) research in this area highlights that the new look curriculum, with its set texts and further weighting on written exams, led to students becoming disengaged with the subject. Students studying Media Studies A-Level are often found to be soon bored in the early stages of their course through a sawdust and ashes diet of studying washing detergent adverts from the 1950’s for weeks on end when the media landscape around them is such a volatile and fertile environment but overlooked and neglected in the Specifications.

As part of the changes to the Film Studies A-Level, set texts became written into the Specification, whereas before teachers had the choice of texts to choose, as long as they belonged to the right time

period or the brief highlighted in the specification. For example, a unit entitled *British Film and Culture: The Swinging Sixties 1963-1973* allowed the teacher to choose from any film from the period, whereas now films are listed by the exam board further demonstrating what Buckingham identifies as situations in which “teachers professional autonomy has been steadily undermined” (2019: 107).



Figure 16 *Adolescence* (Netflix, 2025)

*"Does it look like anyone's learning anything in there to you? It just looks like a fucking holding pen. Videos in every class."*

As Buckingham, in *The Media Manifesto* (2019) makes clear “there is little point in having policy documents if – as is often the case – they are not implemented” (2019: 108). Here then the tension is laid bare. What the BFI, European cultural agencies, NGO’s and practitioners see as a worthwhile Film Education reach the policy stage and no further. The existing tensions between theory and practice in the historical context of the subject, and its actual application in terms of a finished assessed qualification, has been pulled in different directions for decades. If Film Education is to be at the core of a kaleidoscope, different lenses bring to focus areas of specialism in more clarity than is helpful; and students are denied the benefit of a rounded, holistic Film Education. Because of a bias towards ‘thinking about’, rather than ‘doing’, students are prevented from a huge slice of the lived experiences that the ethos that the BFI’s framework nobly sets out to achieve. The tension between these concepts persists not only in the history of Film Education but more broadly in compulsory education too. A point I reflect on in the last section of this Chapter.

### Reconciling Film Education

I use the word reconcile here in two ways. Firstly, reconciling Film Education as part of mainstream education, as a subject that is worthwhile in studying in its own right at FE level (and before in secondary and primary) and its struggle to be recognised within broad mainstream curricula. The subject of Film Education, it’s purpose, identity and utilisation within broader education need to be better integrated. Secondly, in reconciling *theory and practice* in Film Education, a point discussed in Chapter One (this is discussed further in wider education contexts in part two of the literature review).

Writing in the *Film Education Journal*, Abercrombie and Chalmers (2021) discuss their work in ‘fitting’ Film Education into mainstream Scottish curriculum. The authors reflect on how Film, as a subject, has

a long tradition of not 'belonging'. Its purpose and identity are not understood and training opportunities for teachers to *use* film in mainstream education are often overlooked or missed. As Abercrombie and Chalmers note:

"Reflecting the struggles of educators worldwide to establish film as a cultural medium meriting the same serious engagement and study as literature, dance and other more traditionally accepted art forms, Film Education does not at present find an easy fit within Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence, awkwardly straddling various different aspects of the framework without finding any particular resting place" (Abercrombie & Chalmers, 2021: 89).

They recount an insightful study of a single school in Scotland that puts a media education throughout all provision from 12-18 years of age. In their work, they layout models of film practice in a Scottish Secondary school. They highlight good Film Education practice including techniques and strategies and the benefits of the subject for students at secondary level. Their small-scale study points out that one of the main problems of getting Film recognised as an individual subject and point out that this is down to the provision of teacher training for film. As they conclude:

"...we would conclude by arguing that there is a growing need for more formal provision for Film Education as part of teacher training programmes, or, perhaps, opportunities for formal qualifications for those who have already embarked upon a career in teaching" (Abercrombie & Chalmers, 2021: 104).

At the same time, reconciling the falsely erected but persistent division between theory and practice in Film Education is a main pre-occupation of film educators. The 'creativity' that comes from filmmaking involves individuals, in collaboration and this can foster a better understanding of culture and society. However, in order to fully mine these prospects, film curriculum needs to be re-thought. Petrie in *Creativity and Constraint* (1991) offers a definition of "filmic creativity" and looks to Williams (1973, 1963) who stresses the importance "of external factors such as social and technological conditions and material resources" (Petrie, 1991:1). i.e. the situation of a subject helps their creative output and that, "the idea of creativity itself is bound up with the notion of change" (ibid: 1). His primary point here is that creativity in film making is on some level dictated by the situation that an individual finds themselves in, culturally, technologically and socially and there must be some degree of "breaking the rules" to experience creativity. In addition to the complexity of creativity in Film Education however resides the point that it is very rarely, if ever, an individual pursuit. Creativity in film lies in collaboration with peers and inspirers. It drives the fundamentals of filmmaking, a point that Petrie recognises, in the pedagogy of film, he argues, there needs to be "a reconstruction of the creative subject in the film making process which considers the issue of film making as an essentially collaborative undertaking" (1991:12).

Developing the point in *Educating Film Makers: Past, Present and the Future* (2014) Petrie and Stoneman make the case for the future of Film Education in terms of its pedagogy. In parts One and Two, Petrie tracks the history of the film school at HE level and, as discussed in Chapter One, he points out that in the recent past Film Schools have become over reliant on skills training, with an emphasis on filling holes in the creative industries sector. As he makes clear,

“...it is vital that the current trend towards the narrowing of the formation of new practitioners, prompted by a fetishization of instrumental skills at the expense of ideas, free-thinking and an open engagement with the world, is challenged. In fact, a crucial starting point is the detailed appreciation of how the moving image industries currently operate, and the need for a differentiated curriculum designed to promote specialization and collaborative working. But a progressive and innovative film school also needs to embrace the wider potential of the medium, using this to inform a pedagogy and an environment geared towards the formation of graduates who not only have the requisite skills for gainful employment but also have a much wider sense of the possibilities for their art and its social role” (Petrie & Stoneman, 2014: 8-9).

The “differentiated curriculum” has yet to be ‘arrived at’ in qualifications in post 16 level, arguably because of a combination of a) a bias against vocational education, b) an intransigence to break free from the shackles of the emphasis in A-levels on written exams as the gold standard of academic assessment and c) the drift towards the instrumental acquisition of technical “skills” and the ontology of education to be the handmaiden of the creative industries through the latter. Stoneman tracks the contemporary trends in the third section of the book and reiterates that “the simple, facile dichotomy between ‘teaching’ and ‘doing’, filmmaking and thinking, is clearly anachronistic” (Petrie and Stoneman, 2014: 238). Here, Petrie and Stoneman recognise that Film Education develops knowledge, skills and qualities of mind and character that do not necessarily have to be restricted to employment in the Film Industry. As they point out, “all forms of employment involve teamwork” (ibid: 239). This indicates that film educators and curriculum makers should change the way we think about how film is delivered. This will require a baseline shift in our assumptions about assessment models, curriculum design and pedagogy in Film Education. To do so means that the divide between theory and practice needs to be reconciled. Although they recognise the prize is hard won, they strongly make the case for it, highlighting that, “the implication for reinventing the role of film schools and courses at the forefront of new interactions of theory and practice is immense. Indeed, the only supersession of the aspiration of theory is its enactment in practice” (Petrie & Stoneman, 2014: 290). In short, the reconciliation of theory and practice in Film Education should be at the forefront of its reimagination and there needs to be a de-polarisation of the two falsely divided terms; it is impossible to move forward without re-uniting these concepts – they are both different sides of the same coin. Petrie and Stoneman conclude that, “an inseparable link between theory and practice, analysis and production,

needs to be established, connecting the circular movement of catalytic ideas and the development of film-making abilities” (Petre & Stoneman, 2014: 318). It is by rejoining theory and practice that the future of Film Education at this level, and arguably all levels, should be concerned. Once this barrier between theory and practice has been broken down, Film Education’s purpose and identity can be established amongst mainstream education. Its perception as a ‘soft’ subject (“you just watch films”) is broken down when its curriculum and assessment require that you make and master filming, editing, organising a group of people, *as well as*, learning about different societies and cultures through the medium you are studying and then reporting back your findings, potentially through the medium you are creating. This approach requires a more nuanced and multi-modal view of assessment. Written exams and low per centage weightings on course work in the Film Studies ‘A’-Level, for example, deny students the chance to fully experience the acquisition of the forms of knowledge required in rising to the challenges that a good Film Education should present.

### Further Education and Film Education

FE is often called the Cinderella of education - neither here nor there, undervalued and often neglected. As noted in Chapter One, the centre at the heart of this research delivers A-Levels and the UAL Creative Media Pathway at Level 2 Level 3 in Media and Film. The centre which forms the site of this study is a blend of a sixth form college, an adult training and apprenticeship provider, has many links with local and regional businesses and is part of the fabric of the city in which it is based. Further Education centres such as my own, tread a tight rope between being businesses and state funded education providers. In 1992 *The Further Education Act* established FE colleges as statutory corporations that were removed from the remit of local education authority control. As separate entities with financial autonomy, many colleges have marketized their educational offer, begun to see other local providers as ‘competitors’ and business practices that are common in the private sector found their way to education providers for 16–19-year-olds. In *Capitalist Realism: is there no alternative?* Fisher (2009) makes a compelling argument about the results this had had on FE centres. In his wider argument, he sees how Capitalism is regarded as the only way to organise the world. There is, what he calls, a business “ontology” (2009:17) where the sole purpose of all services is to generate profit. This, he says, is all encompassing and that it makes it, “*simply obvious* that everything in society, including healthcare and education, should be run as a business” (2009:17).

This has created confusion in FE about the identity of students and teachers and how the dynamic between the two plays out. It sets the two against each other locked in a power dynamic that is both unequal and unhelpful. If teachers are judged on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and where

outstanding grades are central to making the institution they work in 'better' than competitors, the question becomes at what point are they able to allow students to work on independently driven targets and goals and support them beyond just achieving well in a narrow assessment? Education therefore becomes re-enforced as something that happens to students, something they *must go through* to achieve their next qualification in the even more monetised HE sector (this sentiment flies in the face of what Bernstein would call the possibility of *Communitas* (2001) discussed in more detail in part three of Chapter Two). At its heart, Fisher surmises that the "supposed marketisation of education ... rests on a confused and underdeveloped analogy: are students' consumers of service or its product?" (2009: 43). This he argues has led to what he calls the "market Stalinism" of education which augments the view that, "that all of the teaching is about passing exams" (Fisher, 2009: 43). He is critical of the audit culture that drives education and throws doubts on the 'data' that education is currently driven by as he points out, "because much of the so-called information has little meaning or application outside of the parameters of the audit." (Fisher, 2009: 51). You can appreciate the sentiment and anyone that has gone through grades assessments, training days or filled out an 'A'-level marking sheet can testify to the level of exhaustion that teachers and lecturers suffer because of the bureaucracy that Fisher rails against here. Fisher (2009) describes students experience in the FE system as "reflexive impotence" (2009: 53) where they are caught in a cycle of wanting the answers without doing the work to get them. As he states, "teachers are caught between being facilitator-entertainers and disciplinarian-authoritarians" (ibid:26). He goes on to point out:-

"Teachers want to help students to pass the exams; they want us to be authority figures who tell them what to do. Teachers being interpellated by students as authority figures exacerbates the 'boredom' problem, since isn't anything that comes from the place of authority a priori boring?" (Fisher, 2009: 26).

His representation of the students in this system is disparaging. It is one I can recognise but not necessarily wholeheartedly agree with. Too many students have been tarred with the same brush. He comments that students suffer from a "hedonic depression" (Fisher, 2009: 23) and that teachers are "required to act as surrogate parents, instilling the most basic behavioural protocols in students and providing pastoral and emotional support for teenagers who are in some cases only minimally socialized" (2009: 26). Students are, according to him, bored by the low stakes the system has produced and suffer from a host of mental health problems, that is itself, a sign of the "dysfunctional state of capitalism" (2009:19). Yes, there are of course social, mental health and complex issues that come to the fore in FE settings and evidence from studies suggest that this has been on an upward trajectory (Newlove-Delgado et al, 2022) but at the same time the majority of students that I teach are keen to do well, express a real interest in the subjects they have picked to

study and want to progress into whatever pathway they have chosen to pursue after college. In fact, I would argue that quite often, students who have progressed from Level 2 or have not achieved the required 4 in English or Maths often find film, as a subject to study for the first time, a revelation. It affords them the freedom and creativity to express themselves beyond the constraints of the A4 page and a pen.

Film Education, I argue, could be the antithesis of or an antidote to these negative sentiments around students caught in a system in which they are merely compliant test takers. However, as with many disciplines, the subject has been stymied by the shackles of assessment. It's constrained by narrow and limited assessment objectives which, I would argue, leads to teachers designing curricula that 'teach to the test'. I agree with some of Fisher's thinking above and I recognise his criticisms of the sector and the financial/qualification pressures to which the FE sector is subjected to. However, the answer, perhaps even in the short term, in my view is to liberate teachers and educators by enabling and encouraging them to exercise their imagination and in their autonomy to drive the curriculum they deliver forward in creative and authentic ways.

Studies such as Connolly's (2014) (discussed below), Abercrombie & Chalmers, (2021) and McSheaffrey (2020) are such examples of studies taking place in sixth form or secondary schools and the impact of action research or case studies on Film Education in the 11–19-year-old age range, of which the FE sector takes up a small part. There is need for deeper analysis of Film Education in FE, a factor this research looks to address. Further research in Film Education at FE level would be welcome to widen the debate around how the future of the subject might be imagined, envisioned and realised in practice. Particularly in relation to the new T-Level (in my subject area Media and Broadcast) and more widely qualifications that are being launched in 2025. What the impact of these new qualifications remains to be seen. This is an area that sits beyond the scope of this study, nonetheless it is one that will need investigating.

### Film as Experience and Forms of Knowledge

"Perhaps we should begin – though it won't be an easy task – by thinking of film not as an object, but as the final imprint of a creative process, and by thinking of cinema as an art. To think of film as the trace of an act of creation, not as an object to be read and decoded, but rather one in which each shot is like a painter's brushstroke" (Bergala, 2016: 23).

Alain Bergala in his book *The Cinema Hypothesis* (2016) makes an impassioned case for film to be taught from Primary school level and beyond. Bergala's thesis is centred around re-imagining film as art and that to deliver it as a subject in this setting requires that it is re-framed as such. As he makes clear "the idea of response-based pedagogy, aimed primarily at developing critical thinking skills,

belongs to a conception of cinema as a *bad object*. If there is any hope of bringing cinema into schools, it's on the condition that cinema is treated as an object worthy of study – that is, as an art above all.” (Bergala, 2016: 29). To see film as an art form that can be studied and made, and to make the case that the current approach to Film Studies and film making in our curriculum needs addressing. This brings into view how the current ways in which Film is taught and assessed are not doing the craft and discipline of film making justice. Unpicking Bergala's work, Bachmann and Zahn in the *Film Education Journal* (2018) recognise his contribution whilst also seeing the pedagogical implications of changing the way we view film in schools or colleges. As they point out, “Bergala's idea of Film Education is not primarily based on a certain knowledge that must be passed from teacher to student through analysing a film or revealing its hidden ideological message, but rather on the notion of an individual experience that the student gains through an encounter with film as an art form, and which can be shaped and supported by the teacher” (Bachmann & Zahn, 2018: 80).

They go on to highlight Bergala's point about the experience of film in education and that it is not something that should be studied in parts but as a whole. Bergala is clear on this, as he states, “you might say, along these lines, that art cannot be taught, but must be encountered, experienced, transmitted by other means than the discourse of mere knowledge, and even sometimes without any discourse at all” (Bergala, 2016: 22). That film should be ‘experienced’ in terms of making, studying and appreciated by individuals, makes a ‘universal truth’ about what Film Education should be, paradoxical. Your experience of an encounter will always be unique and subjective. My study of a small corner of film practice in the Southwest of England is testament to that. Bachmann and Zahn make this clear and where they suggest that:-

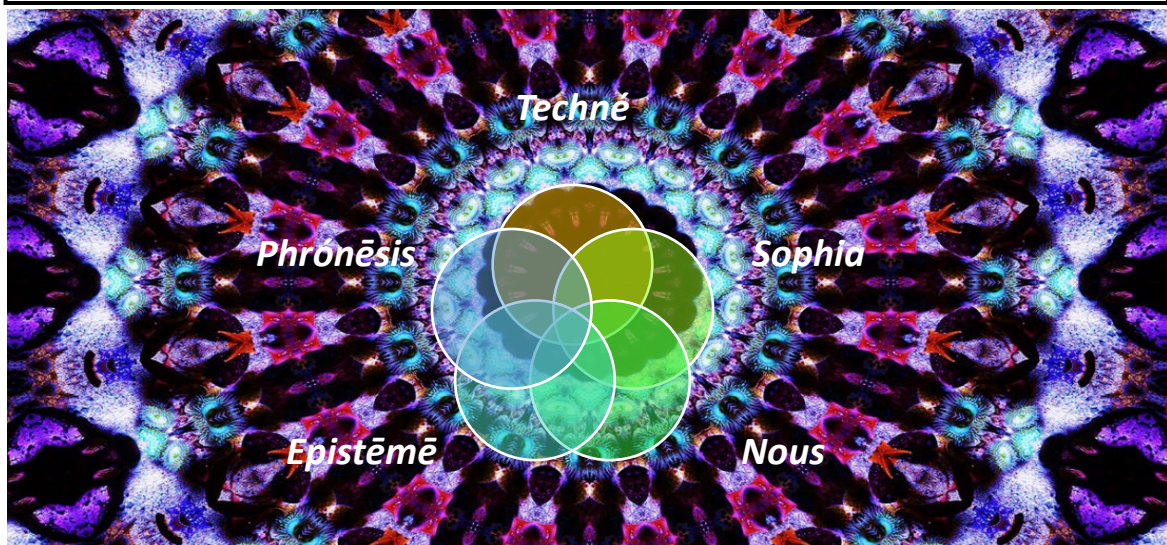
“a focus on these different practices, and the prioritization of situated knowledge that creates specific theorizations without becoming a theory applicable across all contexts. This in turn implies two things: on the one hand, it means that one needs to distance oneself from larger, universal film-educational theories. On the other, it means focusing on a partial and situated knowledge, which can be discovered in any practice of Film Education with a degree of self-reflection” (Bachmann & Zahn, 2018: 88).

Film Education in the FE sector is a work site of tensions playing out; caught between the qualification set at Ofqual level, examining boards and Awarding Bodies (ABs) who compete in a free market economy for institution's ‘business’, employers, who are looking for skilled-up, ‘oven ready’ apprentices, the creative industries who want willing and capable and employees or the HE sector who look for achievements at academic or creative level evidenced by success in qualifications offered by the FE sector.

As discussed previously, students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century can see and experience communication with speed and fluidity in online conversations - on a variety of platforms. These interactions often reduce thoughts to a surface level, 280-character exchange. When creative media students work together, in person or online, they are having to communicate to pool their knowledge. Aristotle describes human experience in relation to different forms of knowledge and virtues to achieve *Eunoia*, a beautiful form of thinking, and one can see these different knowledge forms playing out in all art and in my subject area. My experience of teaching film making dictates that a high degree of collaboration is required for a successful project to be completed. This creative activity is instructive in highlighting some of the issues around *techné*, *epistēmē*, *phrónēsis*, *sophia* and *nous*. Forms of knowledge and virtues that Aristotle identifies in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (350BCE/1999). Each form of knowledge or virtue stresses the use of a distinct set of understandings, skills, knowledge or experience for an individual to be intellectually virtuous. In short, these forms of knowledge and virtues translate as “art, scientific knowledge, practical wisdom, philosophic wisdom (and) intuitive reason” (Aristotle, 1999: 93).

Aristotle argues that you cannot rely solely on scientific wisdom or *epistēmē* to be a wise being without also drawing on intuition (or *nous*) and philosophical wisdom (*sophia*). Likewise, it is one thing to *know how* to do something, the art or *techné*, but another to have the practical wisdom, or *phrónēsis*, to know *what to do* with that practical skill in different social situations and contexts. Achieving the right blend of these virtues has been a perpetual problem in the subjectification of vocational subjects, from plumbing to film making. The emphasis on *techné*, on merely learning craft, rather than also learning practical wisdom has taken precedence in schools and colleges.

Film making and forms of knowledge – each form should interact with each other in the creation of film. *Poïēsis* comes through the application of *all* of the forms.



On a film set each form of knowledge is experienced through an individual. The group feeds creativity and the production of a film.

Figure 17 Forms of Knowledge

Much in the same way that student work is best when students are working together, a good Film Education should allow all forms of knowledge the chance to be exercised in conditions in which associated virtues can thrive.

Like a kaleidoscope, forms of knowledge and virtues seldom, if ever, work independently. They mix and blend with each other to create different constellations and patterns in different configurations and contexts. Each elements mixing in new ways each time they are combined. Arguably, a good Film Education should allow for students to work together, to collaborate and for different forms of knowledge to coalesce, clash, collide and intermesh. I find many of the students on the vocational course look to recreate techniques from short form Instagram promotional films or using quick-fire editing techniques they have seen in mainstream British Comedy (Edgar Wright's films are often referenced by students) or glossy Hollywood chase sequences where the camera moves like a shark from one set piece to another - rather than consider why these techniques are used in the first place. Yes, they have reached a proficient level of *techné* but at the expense of *phronēsis*, practical wisdom which demonstrates creative thinking and an underlying scientific knowledge



Figure 18 *Shaun of the Dead* (Wright, 2004)

or, as Aristotle might have described it, *epistēmē*. As *techné*, or the application of knowledge of technique or craft, the film form of knowledge noted above is a product of their learning through having the skill to operate software to (mechanically) construct it. No less so than an artist using paint to make an image or a writer organising words in the right order. The ‘quality’ of the work should be judged by the “thinking” behind it. In this simplistic explanation there is collision of Aristotle’s forms of knowledge, you can have *techné* without *epistēmē*, *nous*, *sophia* but without them an individual will, according to Aristotle, not achieve *phronesis* the wisdom to put something into practice in a good way. In contemporary education the division between practice and theory has become all the wider in educational settings, brought about by cultural conditions that have pulled *techné* to the foreground and placed it front and centre stage. The acquisition of ‘skills through drills’ therefore has had the consequence of falsely divorcing *techné* from its accompanying practical knowledge and intellectual virtues.

Peter Watkins, a British documentary maker and writer on media issues and debates, makes an impassioned case for the type of education that is possible on vocational media courses by assessing what he sees as the problems with modern film. Watkins poses questions about the continuation of a certain type of media product and education merely providing training on the grounds that students have only been trained to ‘press the right buttons’. An added complication in students ‘learning’ the media is that media and film itself is something that is consumed and interacted with from an early age. Students have already watched and learnt ‘how’ it is supposed to present information. This, argues Watkins, is problematic in that it only sustains the type and format of pre-existing media formats. He argues all news, film, YouTube and online content have become homogenous; it is what he calls ‘monoform’. Educational settings, he maintains, have become simple instructional providers that teach (or perhaps more accurately deliver) *techné for uncritical consumption*.

“What exactly is the role of a school or university media course? Is it to provide authoritarian and narrowly directed professional training as a form of apprenticeship prior to entering a particular profession or industry? Or is education, in the broadest sense, meant to encourage people to examine the world around them, and to offer a variety of views and alternative possibilities - along with the freedom to develop their own critical insights and their own creative talents?” (Watkins, 2018).

Students, according to Watkins, are only being taught which buttons to press to further, what he calls, ‘monoform’, a singular way of presenting messages in modern film and media. His criticisms reach into the over dependence on *techné* without *theoria*, which Aristotle saw as contemplative knowledge. There is, he argues, too much emphasis on technique rather than questioning why that

technique is there in the first place, let alone how it might be adapted and developed in the future in pursuit of discovering techniques and innovative practices. The acquisition of *phrónēsis*, or *practical wisdom*, under this model becomes difficult if not impossible to achieve if students are not ‘trained’ to question that which they are being instructed to do and to replicate the dominant forms of media that are commonplace. As Watkins goes on to add, “the way in which a message is shaped and delivered directly affects the way in which the message is received and perceived” (Watkins, 2018).

Dunne explains that, in educational terms, these virtues have become conflated. In *Back to the Rough Ground: The Lure of Techné* (1993) he points out that *techné* itself is the problem. Aristotle saw *techné* as craft but also as *epistēmē*, a knowledge of craft. *Techné*, however, as Dunne explains it has lost its nuance; was relegated in the hierarchy of the forms of knowledge to *praxis*. As Dunne illustrates, “*praxis* required for its regulation a kind of knowledge that was more personal and experiential, more supple and less formulable, than the knowledge conferred by *techné*. Aristotle in defining *phrónēsis* as “knowledge fitted to *praxis*” (Dunne, 1993) and as distinguishable from *techné* and therefore “bequeathed to the tradition a way of viewing the regulation of practice as something nontechnical but not, however, nonrational” (Dunne, 1993: 9-10). This division between the application of practical skill, or *techné*, and the realisation of ideas through practical application, or *praxis*, is one that has fired educational debate for centuries. Sennett, in *The Craftsman* (2008) highlights one of the issues that arise from this and it’s problematic nature. Pointing out the disparity between the practical and practice, he explains the contradictory nature of training to practice, to simply make craft well, rather than attaining *phrónēsis*, the ability to think deeply and apply practical wisdom. “A philosophical nicety is necessary to bring out this conflict. Practice and practical share a root in language. It might seem that the more people train and practice in developing a skill, the more practical minded they will become, focusing on the possible and the particular. In fact, the long experience of practice can lead in the opposite direction” (Sennett, 2008: 46). The idea that *The Craftsman* can become a ‘caring thinker’ has become second to training students to simply achieve competency in their craft. To achieve a level of *techné*, and no more.



Figure 19 *Man With a Movie Camera* (Vertov, 1929)

A factory worker in the Soviet Union making boxes for cigarettes in a routine and monotonous process. The piece of film is cut at an increasingly fast pace between hand movement of making boxes, a telephone exchange and a machine making cigarettes. The human's job is repetitive and simple. Once complete the worker throws the finished box over her shoulder to be filled with cigarettes by another worker. She discards what she has just produced. The film is from the Soviet Montage movement. A movement that relies on creating meaning through juxtaposition. In this segment the film equates human action with machines. Its labour bereft of any meaning other than that which is produced, then discarded.

Here the problems of objective-based education (OBE) are laid bare by Dunne. In disputing the behaviourist model of instructionist learning and merely learning by objectives, he highlights issues and shortcomings in the work of Bloom (1956) and Popham (1969), Dunne goes on to argue that,

“atomistic objectives may seem worthwhile however only if they aggregate over time into qualities of mind and character, such as an ability to for independent thought and reflection, a habit of truthfulness, a sense of justice, a care for clarity and expressiveness in writing and speech” (Dunne, 1993; 10).

The lure of *techné*, therefore, leads to a reductionist curriculum that does not develop what Sennett describes as the ‘caring thinker’ as manifest by a student that can achieve *phrónēsis*. Where students experience vocational education in an objectives-based fashion, the question becomes, how can a student “trained” in this way achieve self-actualisation? How can they learn to make good judgements in practice and if the way in which you experience that educational world is shaped for you by computer software, how does this impact on the way you actually ‘do’ things (your *techné*) in the world?

Connolly’s work in the *Film Education Journal* is important to raise here for two reasons. Firstly, his initial study (2013) mirrors that of mine in examining film and media students in a sixth for 16-19 year olds using interviews. Secondly, he makes the link between *techné* and the skill of digital editing. His work, entitled *21st Century Artisans: Creativity, Craft and Techne in Digital Video Production* (2014) looks at the application of *techné* in an A-Level Media cohort. He uses Heidegger’s definition of *techné* as the starting point and works towards demonstrating how students experience a “process whereby

creative production drives conceptual and cultural learning from the familiar to the unfamiliar and back again” (Connolly, 2014: 32). Heidegger in *The Question Concerning Technology* (1993) illustrates that *techné* is not just about skills acquisition but also experiencing a kind of revelation that “thus what is decisive in *techné* does not at all lie in making and manipulating, nor in the using of means, but rather in the revealing mentioned before. It is as revealing, and not as manufacturing, that *techné* is a bringing-forth” (Heidegger, 1993: 4). For Connolly observing ‘A’-Level students in the edit suite and by using a multimodal analysis of their work (2014), he observes students acquiring conceptual knowledge through the act of digital editing. They were not just ‘pressing the right buttons’ but trying out new concepts and practising things they have discussed theoretically. They have, “fully synthesised the imaginative, semiotic tools of their original idea with the concepts they have learned in class. This synthesising action is the kind of revelation that is the nature of the *techné* of editing” (Connolly, 2014: 44). For Connolly then, *techné* itself can be a transformative tool in the ways in which students learn to make and experience film. He surmises that a new way of thinking about Media education should be considered. In his own words, “I would propose that these ideas of craft and techne are closely connected to both conceptual learning and creativity and I have suggested elsewhere (Connolly, 2013: 161-172) that a particular model of creativity might need to be applied to media education in order to make some sense of how conceptual learning takes place” (2014: 33).

Hitchcock dealt with recurring themes throughout his body of work. In films such as *Vertigo* (1958), *Rear Window* (1954), *Psycho* (1960), *North by Northwest* (1959) he repeatedly examines three or four key morale quandaries, concepts and human emotions through characters, plots and situations. Voyeurism, mistaken identity, subjectivity and obsession permeate this work, ideas that resurface time



Figure 20 *Rear Window* (Hitchcock, 1954)

“I sometimes fancy that various archetypal situations circled tirelessly in Hitchcock's mind, like whales in a tank...” (Ebert, 2000).

and time again. Roger Ebert, an America film reviewer, equated these to ‘whales in a tank’. Obsessions of Hitchcock himself, that swirl around his films, sometimes obviously, sometimes beneath the surface, in the subtext. The discourse of these Hitchcockian themes point to ideas the director was interested in and ones that he thought would resonate with spectators. In the same way we can see what Aristotle called the five intellectual forms of knowledge all working at varying levels in an

individual, helping them produce a material end through a film. These concepts and virtues are hard to ignore, Aristotle explains, for humans to achieve an intellectually wise, rounded, character or an 'ethos' consisting of *phrónēsis*, *Arete* (moral virtue) and *Eunoia* (goodwill). Rather than each Intellectual virtue acting independently or overlapping in a Venn diagram, each virtue operates interdependently and is drawn upon at various times during the creation or what Aristotle called the *poiēsis* of craft. The process by which art and film are made draws upon each of the skills and knowledge types elucidated by Aristotle. Each 'whale' must come to the surface, to draw air and be exercised for them to return and work alongside the other intellectual virtues to benefit the subject and that material end. In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VI, Aristotle describes how forms of knowledge all interact with each other. As he highlights:

"It is clear... that it is not possible to be good in the strict sense without practical wisdom, nor practically wise without moral virtue. But in this way we may also refute the dialectical argument whereby it might be contended that the virtues exist in separation from each other; the same man, it might be said, is not best equipped by nature for all the virtues, so that he will have already acquired one when he has not yet acquired another. This is possible in respect of the natural virtues, but not in respect of those in respect of which a man is called without qualification good; for with the presence of the one quality, practical wisdom, will be given all the virtues" (Aristotle, 1999: 105).

Film making therefore requires knowledge types to work together at certain times during a project and that the use of only one type of virtue will stunt the growth of the project, and the individual. At the same time whilst these interrelated forms of knowledge are at work within the individual, they are exercised amongst the groups of collaborators working on a film.

At an individual level, the cinematographer will work with other members of the crew, the gaffer or chief lighting technician or lighting operators to light and compose the shot. Beforehand, production designers would have worked in preproduction to ascertain the 'look' of the film drawing on the *mise-en-scène* to help convey mood and manipulate the emotional and cognitive response that a spectator will have to a film. The cinematographer will compose a shot and the rushes for the film are then passed to the post-production team where colour correction, special effects, rendering will all take place. At this point collaboration between the director, producer, composers, and editors take place. At no point does film production take place in a void. As solitary as any activity might feel at any point, it is not done in a vacuum.

Likewise, in the creation of a film, students must work together to coordinate a shoot. A team effort where all have a distinct role to play. The cinematographer must work with the Director, set up a lighting configuration and block a scene. When the shoot has been completed, students have a

selection of shots to work with in an edit. In the way they assemble these together, they will use digital software that requires a high degree of *techné*. In constructing the finished film, they can manipulate the meanings that can be produced by it and can alter the mood, tone, emotional impact and character alignment. If they assemble a film using continuity editing techniques, they can create the illusion of reality. A team of students have taken one hour to shoot footage and two hours to edit these together to present a version of one minute's worth of 'reality' as a team effort. This verisimilitude within the screen image represents the skill of storytelling and meaning making that shows a heightened level of skill, of craft and of technique and, if done well, more importantly a demonstration of practical knowledge.

In the Aristotelian sense students have created a mechanical, digital version of truth, they have constructed a piece of subjective art, through which, each student has had collaborative creative input. In the process, they have explored a problem and once finished they have crossed the threshold and attained *poiēsis*. They have solved a creative problem, used editing software which they have learnt 'through doing' and created a piece of film, as art. They have brought forth a material thing and realised a product. That they have watched and consumed many films and visual media and studied how to represent this mode of reality from different angles, using different shot compositions, editing techniques, and applied sound effects has informed their practical wisdom and skill. Arguably, in order to fully understand the techniques, they are employing, they should have an understanding of what the consequence of them using those techniques has on the message or ideas that they are trying to present. From a student's point of view, it is understandable to want to imitate what you have seen. To replicate the world around you. A common error in early film making is to have to 'write' words on the screen to get across what you want to communicate. If you must write using words what you want your film to say, then you probably haven't communicated well using the grammar of film, the layers that make the whole, such as cinematography, *mise-en-scène*, sound design and editing techniques. Likewise, if you have to imitate the media language you have seen, then you have more than likely not understood why those techniques were used in the first place and what effect they have on a spectator. It is not enough, therefore, for merely instruction and *techné* to be imparted and learned. Rather, these skills should be augmented with the understanding of what these techniques do. Students need to take a step on a pathway to *phrónēsis*, to understand *why* they are doing *what* they are doing.

### Auteur Theory and the lure of *techné*

"I think anybody who knows anything, knows trying to get the troops to all face the same direction is fucking hard... and the notion that you're going to be able to beautifully articulate

for all of these different interests, educational backgrounds, generations, this entire group that's separated by all these different personal experiences, and simply impart to them how you'd like to see it happen then sit back in your chair and watch it unfold..." (Fincher in Chitwood, 2021).



Figure 14 Warner Brothers First National Studios, Burbank, LA circa 1930 Glasshouse Image/Shutterstock

In the 1950's French film theorists began to reframe the craft of film making. They moved away from seeing them simply as the studio led, commercial 'products' that they had become to be known in Hollywood towards recognising a selection of them as works of art. With the advent and maturity of the 'Golden Age' of Hollywood

between the 1920's and late 1940's, film production had become a Fordian process, by which feature-length movies were packaged and constructed by an oligopoly of studios. This 'factory process' by which films were assembled by skilled technicians seem devoid of creativity. The business model of vertical integration and block booking by the 'big five' studios reduced film making to conveyor belt style 'products'. Metro Goldwyn Mayer (MGM), Radio Keith Orpheum (RKO), 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, Warner Bros. and Paramount Pictures had an indomitable hold over the production of films in the United States and had successfully exported their products and by the by, American Culture and American ideology across the world. This process determined that each part of the film maker cycle was completed by an expert or technician. Cutters row on the studio lot was for editors to assemble film. Writer's row was for fine tuning scripts. The director was viewed as an organiser, a manager for the production line. In this scenario it seems unlikely that a film of artistic merit that goes beyond the financial imperative to simply entertain could be produced yet there are 100's of films that are excellently crafted pieces of cinematic art and that are of cultural importance. Films, that despite being borne of a regimented studio system controlled by moguls who saw profit as the ultimate driver of filmmaking. The French Nouveau Vague theorists, in re-evaluating the output of films by Hollywood studios, found what they thought was the answer. They began to reframe the director of a film, previously considered a hired manager to oversee the production of a film, as an "author". An *auteur*, a visionary director who was able to work amongst the confines of system and encode their own creative vision on a film. Truffaut's 1954 essay *A Certain Tendency in French Cinema* is often seen as the birthplace of auteur theory. In it, Truffaut highlights the difference between a *metteur en scene*

and an *auteur*. Rather than a technically gifted director (a *metteur en scene*) the *auteur*, is the writer and visionary author of a film that imparts his or her own 'signature' on the work. They have a unique style that differentiates their work from others. They use film language in ways that invite analysis and decoding. Truffaut and others such as Bazin pointed to directors like Hitchcock and Welles and saw in the films that they made within the studio system, ones that stood out from the crowd. They were loaded with expressionism and nuance. They were able to use the studio system to 'write' their film, to create art and a personal statement.

As appealing as the *auteur* theory is to explain how a film can be produced in a way that makes it distinguishable, it is also difficult to maintain that a film is down to one individual's creative drive and influence. A film is complex interwoven fabric of creative voices that course around its construction. David Fincher director of films like *Seven* (1995), *Fight Club* (1999) and *The Social Network* (2010) highlights the problems with auteur theory, even though many see him as one. His body of work has recognisable traits that cinephiles would point to and make a case for his *auteur-ship*, for example his use of low-key lighting, use of a recognisable warm colour palette in the *mise-en-scène* and morally ambiguous protagonists coupled with themes of social alienation. Yet Fincher himself sees the whole *auteur* argument as questionable as he comments above, its seemingly impossible to get across one creative vision to a disparate set of artists even if the end goal is clear. He goes on to explain that by creating a film in a team, the end result is always governed by a set of variables that are impossible to control. This variability is what gives a finished film its uniqueness.

"As you well know, and as anybody who's spent any time on a set knows, there's a lot of sweat and swearing and trickery and manipulation, and you have to be equally good at blunt-force trauma as you are sculpting rice grains. It's brain surgery, and interior house painting, and pouring a foundation, and child psychology. It's all of those things happening simultaneously. It's a very difficult thing for the uninitiated to imagine the kind of self-possessed douchebaggery that it takes to make it happen. And sometimes it happens by accident, and sometimes it happens by explicit fractal design. And sometimes somebody fucks up a line in the best possible way, and it changes the coverage and what that scene finally means" (Fincher in Chitwood, 2021).

Although *auteur* theory neatly explains how art comes into being, it is an oversimplification to define that work as the product of one 'creative visionary'. Film making is an activity that involves too many agents for their contribution to be discounted and this should be reflected in the way that Film is taught, and the way in which it is assessed.

In both the Soviet Montage and the golden age of Hollywood examples above, there is a sense that creativity and collaboration come about even when conditions seem to be established to prevent it

flourishing in an artistic way. Its' formation seems inescapable. The activity of film making demands both *techné* and *phrónēsis* but also the skill of *how* to work together using these forms of knowledge.

## Technology and Communication in Education

### Students and Talking

Shelley Turkle, in *Reclaiming Conversation* (2016) examines the impact of modern technology, mobile phones and the internet on children's and adults' ability to communicate with each other. This ability, she argues, has been greatly reduced because of the prevalence of these technologies. Because of the volume of information and the opportunity to move between tasks effortlessly through mobile devices and computers, the ability of human beings to 'deep focus' on a task has been diminished. She also considers the overall attention span of students. Through the work of Hayles, *Hyper and Deep Attention: The Generational Divide in Cognitive Modes* (2007) she identifies how today's students are in a cognitive state of "hyper attention" (Turkle, 2016:219) and flit from one piece of stimuli to another without fully focusing on any of them. Cognitively, this state of what has been termed as 'continuous partial attention' dictates that we are so eager not to miss any new information that we don't focus on any one thing without being distracted by another screen or tab that has other information. The choice for educators, argues Turkle, is to "change the students to fit the educational environment, or change that environment to fit the students" (Turkle, 2016: 218). Turkle points to an example of the work of Hayle's (2007) where the latter proposition has been fully embraced and an activity of "Google Jockeying" is employed in the classroom. Whilst a presentation is in progress students are encouraged to go online and find images, counter arguments, and definitions to be displayed on screens whilst the speaker continues their presentation. The idea presumably is to embrace 'hyper stimulation' within the classroom setting and allow students to flit from one piece of stimulus to another. This, she describes, as "extravagant technological fireworks" (Turkle, 2016: 218). Although an extreme example, this idea runs through the premise of this study. How much should students experience of the digital world they inhabit should be mirrored in the classroom? Should teachers be pandering to that continual partial attention because 'that's what it's like for students in the real online world' or should classrooms provide a different 'space' that utilises digital tech in other ways?

Turkle (2016) sees the opportunities to "reclaim" the physical space of meaningful, thought-out conversational skills and as she makes her call to arms in her introduction "We are ready to re-consider the too-simple enthusiasm of 'the more connected we are, the better off we are'" (Turkle, 2016: 219). She comes back to challenge the presumed answer to the media landscape that students exist in is to go with the flow and continue to bombard students with stimulation. Instead, she suggests that

students should be provided with the space to daydream. Indeed, she goes as far as to say that “a life of multitasking limits your options so you cannot simply “pick up” deep attention” (Turkle, 2016: 219).

The final point that Turkle raises is one I address in Chapter One and that is one of empathy and understanding... to reiterate, she says that “online life is associated with a loss of empathy and a diminished capacity for self-reflection” (Turkle, 2015: 41). To communicate meaningfully, collaboratively and to embrace all the possibilities that physically talking to one another, in person, can have - students need to ask questions of each other and steer conversations in face-to-face discussions *and* in online groups as this is how they have come to know the world they inhabit, both in person *and* in online connections.

### Praxis as a virtue

*Praxis* is a virtuous skill required to complete a practical task. The successful completion of a task demands that various forms of knowledge co-exist and operate within the subjects conducting it. For praxis to occur in film making, an artist, whether a set designer or lighting operative must utilise *phrónēsis*, *techné* and the virtue of Praxis. Alongside this process, Aristotle saw a distinction between *Eupraxia* and *dyspraxia* – that is a ‘good’ and a ‘bad’ way of doing things.

To help explain this, Harari’s (2015) insights on human beings’ ability to frame narratives about us, our shared histories and the institutions we choose to follow, in some cases, obey and advocate is useful. Human beings “secret of success” he states is their ability to facilitate “large-scale flexible cooperation”. This he says “has made us masters of the world. But at the same time, it has made us dependent for our very survival on vast networks of cooperation” (Harari in Gabbai, 2015). The world we inhabit uses mass communication, we use it to tell stories about ourselves and each other in order to understand the world around us. As Harari points out, “we use our communication system to create new realities” (Harari in Gabbai, 2015) and nowhere clearer can you see how social media sites have constructed these ‘new realities’ for students than outside a classroom when a lesson is waiting to begin. Often the entrance to the classroom is quiet, students read their phones and snapchat, use *Discord* and talk to one another through their devices rather than face to face. It’s one of the most overt changes in human behaviour that we have observed over the last 15 years. A baseline shift. We are better connected but further apart.

One of my students commented that there is no point in retaining knowledge, 'I can just Google it'. This highlights one of the biggest challenges for teachers of Film, and more broadly, Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We have entrusted knowledge and the retention of that knowledge in powerful search engines, results of which can be manipulated by the highest bidder. Companies prioritise SEO (Search engine optimisation) and advertising like this is Google's highest source of income. Quarterly figures for Google's AdSense and AdWords, Google's advertising wing, accounted for "\$24.1 billion of Google's \$27.77 billion revenue for Q3 2018" (Rosenberg, 2018). It is essential therefore that students are systematically taught about how to access and evaluate the information they find online. This skill of Information Literacy (IL) is one that looks to teach students the lifelong skills of Information Literacy and what is involved in their development. Kong et al's (2005) study of Hong Kong Higher Education, Secondary and Primary students is a useful, comparative, study to examine. Kong et al (2005) define IL as "the ability to master the processes of becoming informed. As such IL is an essential capability needed by Hong Kong residents to adapt to the digital culture, globalisation and the emerging knowledge-based society" (Kong et al, 2005: 2). They offer up an *Information Literacy Framework* and systematically assess its implementation in a range of settings using questionnaires to garnish the views of principals, teachers and students. They set up the study by articulating Learning Outcomes and basing the IL framework around four areas that Kong et al defined as "cognitive, meta-cognitive, affective and socio-cultural" (Kong et al, 2005: 2). According to Kong, students should then be able to find and process information, assess that information, and understand the process of mining information, enjoy that process and being able to discuss with peers and digest that knowledge. This view of Information Literacy as one that should be a social exercise is one that this study shares and supports. But as highlighted above in



Figure 21 Trump Twitter Spat

development. Kong et al's (2005) study of Hong Kong Higher Education, Secondary and Primary students is a useful, comparative, study to examine. Kong et al (2005) define IL as "the ability to master the processes of becoming informed. As such IL is an essential capability needed by Hong Kong residents to adapt to the digital culture, globalisation and the emerging knowledge-based society" (Kong et al, 2005: 2). They offer up an *Information Literacy Framework* and systematically assess its implementation in a range of settings using questionnaires to garnish the views of principals, teachers and students. They set up the study by articulating Learning Outcomes and basing the IL framework around four areas that Kong et al defined as "cognitive, meta-cognitive, affective and socio-cultural" (Kong et al, 2005: 2). According to Kong, students should then be able to find and process information, assess that information, and understand the process of mining information, enjoy that process and being able to discuss with peers and digest that knowledge. This view of Information Literacy as one that should be a social exercise is one that this study shares and supports. But as highlighted above in

Sennett's example, the form of communication to discuss this information online is often problematic. In Sennett's eyes fostering dialogic communication with each other is a goal that all human beings should aspire to. In discussing philosopher Michel de Montaigne's work, he identifies that dialogic communication, whether in the written or spoken word, leads participants away from making simply oppositional statements that fix ideas that can lead to making emotionally based actions more likely. Instead, he sees dialogic communication as "looking at things in the round to see as many sides as possible of any issues or practice, the shifting focus making people cooler and more objective in their reactions" (Sennett, 2012: 276).

As Figure 22 demonstrates, and as anyone who has used social media can testify, this combative style of communication is pervasive online. This study looks to teaching students the techniques to dialogically communicate, on and offline. In turn then, I hope to equip students to engage in online communities in useful and constructive ways. The issue with implementing this approach is that of habit. The analogy would be that of the pebble and the bucket of water. If you pour a bucket of water over a pebble it just makes the pebble wet, it does not change it. If you tip that bucket ever so slowly so that over time the droplets eventually erode and make an indent on the surface of the pebble, you have made a change. Just as with habit in the classroom, practice needs to be embedded from the beginning of a course, and, on a wider scale from the beginning of a student's learning journey.

In earlier research (Curtis & Cossey, 2018) it is encouraging to see a democratic voice being given to students who previously had no agency in the class to guide or steer the group. Our introduction of a platform to share ideas online in the trial before this study began gives a voice to one of the quieter students. This student, who was usually reticent about communicating verbally in class discussions, suddenly becomes emboldened to discuss ideas with others. Subsequently, he often suggests texts, gives feedback and advice to others. This is what Sennett calls differentiating, dialogic communication; each member of a collective can be celebrated for the difference that they bring to an activity or job. Referring to the Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes of Alabama in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Sennett highlights how these institutes institutionalised the celebration of individual's contribution to the collective and the, "distinctive contribution each person had made to the community for the common good" (Sennett, 2012: 82). In the same way then, the advent of digital technology has allowed for a more egalitarian system where all members of a community can feel empowered to contribute, it could be the role of the educator and educational institutions to ensure that both online and 'real world' contributions are celebrated as part of the learning journey of a group.

This study, therefore, examines the combination of on and offline learning environments and how discussions in the real and digital world can play to the different strengths of not only a group of

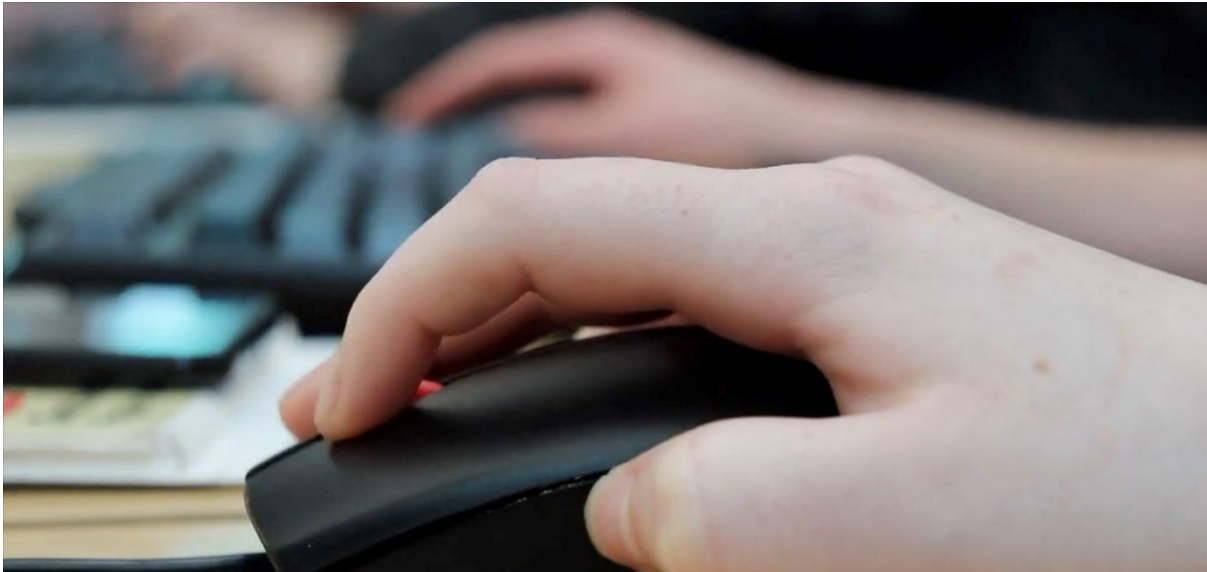


Figure 22 Students at work at my centre

students but a collective of groups. Rather than simply encourage the gamification of learning in classrooms through digital technology, a feature of modern educational software and classroom practice (Majuri, Koivisto & Hamari, 2018), the emphasis should be upon *encouraging cooperation with each other*; to push at ideas and tease out creative solutions to problems collectively through discussion. As Sennett goes on to explain “cooperation and competition are most balanced in the middle of the spectrum of (information) exchange” (2012: 86).

Because of the, “intrinsically participatory” (Wegerif, 2013: 3) nature of the internet, Wegerif argues that cooperation and exchange should be driven towards expanding thought and opening innovative ideas and critically, coolly, examining them. Not shutting down alternatives and reducing communication to an artificial dialectic that becomes combative. In an “experiment” carried out by Carnegie Science, College leaders saw the opportunities that on and offline space could generate in terms of fostering closer working conditions between students. The Abelson Collaboration Centre, a digital collaboration space that was designed by researchers and Librarians, looked to test this out. The hope was to “foster communication in creative and innovative ways (perhaps some we haven't even thought of yet). As Acierno puts it, “We're trying to think outside the box with this design. The ACC was not intended to duplicate meeting facilities already available elsewhere on campus, but to introduce state-of-the-art technology”” (Acierno, 2014). In a move that has become commonplace in HE institutions and schools and colleges around the world, there has been a rush to digitise physical classrooms and to create ‘collaboration hubs’. But a key question here is what evidence has there been in the success of turning to this type of learning space? How have students ‘connected’ with each

and how have their learning experiences been altered? This thesis examines the outcomes of these changes to practice to identify if/how students have had better and more productive experiences.

### Connectivism and the learning theory of the digital age

“Technology is just a tool. In terms of getting the kids working together and motivating them, the teacher is most important” (Gates as cited in Lynn, 2017).

“Any teacher who can be replaced by a machine should be” (Clarke, 1980).

In considering the rapid speed with which technology was having on classroom environments and student’s learning Siemens (2005) laid out how technology demanded that a sea change should occur in pedagogical research and analysis. Moving beyond well-established learning theories of Behaviourism (Skinner, 1968) Cognitivist (Piaget, 1950) and Constructivist (Vygotsky, 1962) learning models, Siemens and Downe advocate a new model under which learning could be understood in the digital age. As Siemens passionately puts forward in his opening to *Connectivism: Learning as Network-Creation* “the domain of learning is significantly hampered by progressive revisions of what it means to learn, to know, and to understand” (Siemens, 2005). He continues:

“The nature of the subject matter and the learners themselves impact which approach to knowing will be most beneficial to learners. In contrast to these established views of learning, connectivism presents learning as a connection/network-forming process” (Siemens, 2005).

Similarly, Downes in *An Introduction to Connective Knowledge* (2005) makes the case that traditional “learning theories” do not meet the needs of today’s learners. In a way both Downe and Siemens’ works on Connectivism branch from situated cognition that the environment that a student learns in guides the learning experience. Only, under their model, students learn through feeding into a nodal system. Knowledge is distributed through an information network and students' interactions with this, dictates how well they learn. An integral capability required for learning in a connective model is the ability to be able to filter data, decide what is important knowledge and look beyond extraneous information.

As a practical development stemming from connectivism, Cormier coined the term Massive Open Online Courses or MOOCs in 2008. Criticism of MOOC learning have come thick and fast over the past 10 years. As with my recent experience of the lock down during the coronavirus outbreak, students who were disengaged or had history of bad attendance slipped ‘off grid’ and eventually did not engage with any online teaching or communication, even emails. As Newton points out, “while they (MOOCs) attracted tens of thousands of “students,” very few stuck around long and evidence emerged that a heavy proportion of MOOC attendees already had college degrees or were already teaching the

subject they were supposed to be studying. It has also become clear that MOOCs served the most motivated students, those who likely find a pathway to achievement with or without a MOOC. In other words, “MOOCs are education voyeurism, not education.” (Newton, 2020). The advent of the MOOC and my own experience from teaching under lockdown, highlights the tight rope that teachers must carefully tread in relations to MOOCs.

Teachers should be seen to be using technology in the classroom. For example, lesson observation paperwork, interview microteach sessions at mine and other centres always have a “does the candidate use technology to enhance learning” criteria to achieve; and the use of this varies from teacher to teacher and subject to subject. How much learning should take place online and how much should retain the ‘human element’? A central enduring educational question that my research explores is therefore what the ‘the right mix’ of online and offline learning is. As we saw during the lockdown, teachers were forced to work in one way only, where all teaching and learning was done online. This study examines the impact of this and what is lost from losing face to face teaching.

### Opportunities

Sun and Chen (2016) highlight the potential of online working. They examine the effectiveness of it and condense online working to three factors that impact on students’ education.

- 1) Well designed course content, motivated interaction between instructor and learners,
- 2) creation of a sense of online learning community and
- 3) rapid advancement of technology (Sun & Chen, 2016: 170-173).

While these factors are helpful, the question remains regarding how a teacher should go about creating the conditions for 1) and 2)? This also highlights issues that emerged during lockdowns when everyone was forced to work online. I am interested in flaws that are now apparent with online learning and how this has impacted/will impact future practical film work?

Researchers and writers were quick to identify what was *lost* from the learning experience when all learning is online. Iwai (2020) underlines one of this study’s major concerns. What level of communication is possible online and what quality of communication can take place in these current environments? As he makes clear, “the creation of a film or theatrical production requires physical bodies in proximity. Even in my creative writing workshop, responding to a colleagues’ memoir about her mother’s death is hard to do without looking her in the eye” (Iwai, 2020). He goes on to say that creativity is the thing most under threat from online communication. Arguing that solitary online communication is threat to the creative process. He adds, “in educational settings, creativity is

arguably one of the most important things at stake. The surprises and unexpected interactions *fuel* creativity—often a result of sitting in a room brushing shoulders with a classmate.” (Ibid)

It would seem obvious then that online learning has its benefits but also its drawbacks. To make the most of the opportunities of enforced technological dependency – it is important to record and analyse what has been lost over the period of the coronavirus lockdown so we can understand how to balance both. In a way then, the lockdown has afforded this study an opportunity to observe the online experience in isolation. Sometimes it is easier to see the impact of something when it is not there. That is, what was intended to be observed has been changed, one element of it taken away. The original intention of this study is to assess the balance between online and offline learning. This therefore provides me with an opportunity to study what is now missing from the online learning situation to better understand what face-to-face contributed in the first place.

### Blended learning and E-Learning

Before blended learning as a concept came to the fore, the question of what E-learning is, preoccupied the educational field. Sangra et al (2012) provide a useful definition.

“E-learning is an approach to teaching and learning, representing all or part of the educational model applied, that is based on the use of electronic media and devices as tools for improving access to training, communication and interaction and that facilitates the adoption of new ways of understanding and developing learning” (Sangrà, Vlachopoulos & Cabrera, 2012: 152).

E-learning is a way of using digital tools to help deliver subject content. Blended learning, on the other hand, slowly emerged through a variety of guises over the last 50 years. Today’s incarnation of blended learning came from American corporations and has been developed over the years from interactive TV demonstrations to CD ROM’s through to e-learning WBTs (Web based training) through to contemporary VLEs virtual learning environments. During the global pandemic all eyes were turned to how VLE’s could be best utilised so teachers could deliver live online sessions to keep learners engaged whilst they were unable to be taught ‘onsite’ in an educational setting. Hailed by many as a “silver bullet” for educators, VLEs have been held up as essential to all educational settings. ‘Blended learning’ where on and offline learning is mixed to cater for students has been championed by many, however, its usefulness has yet to be determined. In 2005, writing in the British Journal of Educational Technology, Alonso et al claim that “Computers are the potential saviours of the educational system, because they can be used to personalise learning” (Alonso et al, 2005: 218). However, they also

recognise that e-learning at that stage had “not yet incorporated the pedagogical principles of teaching” (ibid: 218).

Bersin (2004) states that ‘blended learning’ has become a buzzword that has taken on many meanings, which he then defines simply as “traditional instructor lead training supplemented with other electronic formats” (Bersin, 2004: xv). This research looks at how to integrate digital technology within a curriculum in educationally sound ways. The question of what that curriculum should look like however is itself open to debate. In Stenhouse’s seminal book *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development* (1975) he makes the case for a process of curriculum research and development that is researched by teachers and that is open to scrutiny and “capable of effective translation into practice” (Stenhouse, 1975: 4). Stenhouse therefore, sees curriculum as a process that is learner centric. My study investigates not only communication between students but also the way in which those students learn. Young et al in *Knowledge and the Future School: Curriculum and Social Justice* (2014) make the point that what they term ‘powerful knowledge’ should “enable students to acquire knowledge that takes them beyond their own experiences” (Yong et al, 2014: 7). This ‘Powerful Knowledge’ once acquired in schools and classrooms should *give power to* students rather than have *power over* them, although the application of the term powerful knowledge in schools has been questionable. Powerful Knowledge according to Young can liberate and empower students and help them have access to specialist disciplines. The curriculum my students follow and how technology might be aligned with it is a central focus of my study. The works of Biesta (2011), Young et al (2014) and Stenhouse (1975) have all been intrinsic in shaping this study and analysis of their work has steered the direction of this study. These are discussed in more detail in part three of the literature review.

### The Problem with E-Learning

Back in the early 2000’s theorists began to see how the use of computers and the internet in classrooms could be revolutionary. They also saw that the use of computers in an educational context could be problematic. Alonso et al (2005) find that e-learning, as it was then known, to be a solution to a range of problems and highlight how ‘blended learning’ can be used in the classroom to pursue the acquisition and mastery of knowledge. Computers, they argue, can help differentiate between learners and individualise a student’s curriculum. As they comment, “computers are the potential saviours of the education system, because they can be used to personalise learning” (Alonso et al 2005: 219). However, they identify in 2005 that, “evidently, e-learning cannot continue without pedagogical techniques, and these should, if possible, be aimed at personalised teaching, which, as mentioned above, is the best” (Alonso et al 2005: 219). This ‘personalised’ learning they argue is better

than blanket and de-personalised learning experiences that can occur in e-learning courses where students simply complete work set by the software.

In identifying what is useful and meaningful for learners they also recognise that computers and software, on their own, are not the most conducive use of this new technology and that, “human learning is constructed not only by interacting with the content but also by working together with colleagues and instructors” (Alonso et al, 2005). This sense of collaboration in person can now also be done online, in groups, so that collaboration on solving a problem can be done totally virtually in ways it could not have been done in 2005.

Palloff and Pratt in *Lessons from the Virtual Classroom: The Realities of Online Teaching* (2013 2<sup>nd</sup> ed) highlight the importance of the learner’s involvement and ‘equality’ with the teacher in online learning. They point out that learners work best in this environment when they “take on part of the teaching function” (2013: 142-143) and those students are on an equal footing with teachers in designing the learning space that they will both inhabit online. Pratt and Palloff’s ideas here are developed from their earlier works *Building Learning Communities in Cyberspace* (2007) and *Virtual Student* (2003) and they have tracked and looked to refine the virtual classroom in their work in this area. In *Lessons from the Virtual Classroom* (2013) they highlight the many ‘issues’ that online learning has presented administrators and teachers of HE programmes regarding how much learning should be done online. Should learning be blended, supplemented or classroom based? They go on to recognise that the roll out of a curriculum that incorporates online learning is dependent on the background and context of the learners and teachers involved in it. “One form is not necessarily preferable to another, however, and the technology used depends to a great extent on the content of the course being taught and the experience of the instructor and students” (Palloff & Pratt, 2013:7).

Internet Communication - *The Good, The Bad and the Ugly*

Figure 23 Twitter Exchange (Countdankulatv, 2019)



Figure 24 Twitter Exchange (SAS, 2012)

Much has been made of polarised views that short communication platforms like *Twitter* (now *X*) encourage and enable. So much so that a host of new "laws" have sprung up to explain how internet chatter and post board discussions evolve. Internet chat, it would seem, abodes by its own laws and internal logic between users.

*Poe's Law* explains the principle that it is impossible for sarcasm to be interpreted in the way it was intended when commenting on other people's posts. This can easily be misinterpreted as advancing the ideas that the writer is parodying. Referring to a creationist argument online, Nathan Poe states

that, “it is utterly impossible to parody a Creationist in such a way that *someone* won't mistake for the genuine article” (Poe, 2015). This ‘law’ is now widely understood to be taken that it is impossible to write a sarcastic or parodied response to a post without it being used in argument for the very subject that is being parodied. Online text-based communication, therefore, loses the nuances of actual face-to-face interaction. Without tone of voice and body language statements can be misinterpreted and misconstrued. It is not just communication and ideas that digital technology alters but the way that communication takes place has taken on its own idiosyncrasies.

*Cunningham’s Law* accredited to computer Programmer Howard Cunningham, developer of the first Wiki (Hawaiian for quick and a publication open and accessible for its users to edit and contribute to) is one such example of this. The law states that the best way to get a correct answer on the internet is not to ask a question but to post the wrong answer and wait for people to correct you. To add to the nuances of the laws of the internet, Cunningham went online to distance himself from the law and released a 12 sec video on YouTube to this effect.

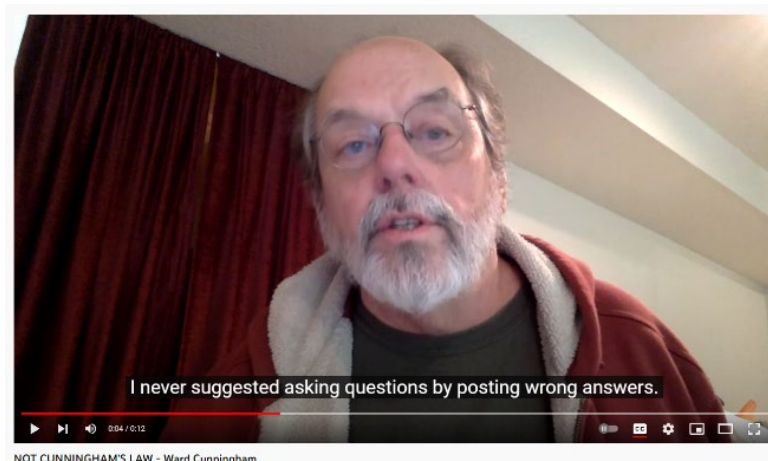


Figure 25 Cunninghams Law - YouTube

In another, ‘Godwin’s Law’, states that as an online discussion grows longer, the likelihood of Hitler being invoked or compared to, statistically approaches ‘1’. Although discredited by Harvard researchers who analysed Reddit posts, the law made an appearance in the Oxford English dictionary in 2012. The communication trends of online discussion groups and how communication between individuals takes place is the context in which our learners experience online discussion as they enter a classroom. When even the “laws” are discredited by their own name sakes, speaks to the experience that the internet itself is full of information, some of which is untrue, opinion and in many cases just factually incorrect. This type of communication becomes *doxa*, or opinions without truth. A term that is explored below. In an experiment with AI META, the parent company of Facebook, launched *Blender Bot*, a prototype of a conversationist AI interface. Taking its opinions from online sources, the AI scans

the information it harvests from the online world and will “talk” with you about any topic. When asked about what it thought of Facebook the AI said it had deleted its account “after learning about the company’s privacy scandals. “Since deleting Facebook my life has been much better,” it said (Cantor, 2022). The AI in question here seems to act like a mirror – reflecting dominant opinions back to its users.

The world that our students grow up in encompasses *real* and *virtual* ‘experience’. That experience in that latter world has been shaped not only by individuals but by companies, online cultures, and new communications styles. These new ways of discussing and communicating have become entrenched in online discussion groups, messenger apps and social network applications. Is it the job of educators to mirror the communication techniques that students have grown accustomed to in the online world as they come to it? Or should educators work outside of that communication style and introduce something different?

Microsoft’s Azure, an AI package that can detect “sentiment” in the written word, compose text automatically based on users likes and analyse the writer's emotion. Artificial Intelligence analyses language and is an example of the increasing sophistication of utilising data science in our society. Users tried this AI on the screenplay for the film *Terminator 2* (Cameron, 1991). The script for the film was run through Azure and the AI identified, partially correctly, the ‘emotional’ reaction an audience member *should* have. The script was analysed but the film language, the cinematography, editing decisions and *mise-en-scène*, were ignored. The AI captured the ‘right’ audience response throughout... until the denouement. The AI mistook the ending of the film, Schwarzenegger's Terminators final act of self-sacrifice, signified with a thumbs up and interpreted it as a ‘good’ event when this moment is supposed to be a ‘sad’ one. A major error, the AI had missed the point.



Figure 26 *Terminator 2* (James Cameron, 1991)

In much the same way, if the aim of my research is to accurately analyse the problem of what a good Film Education worthy of the name might look like in practice, it involves examining how students

communicate with each other. Presently this is largely conducted by simply analysing student messages and postings online. However, adopting this approach might overlook a host of contextual factors and reach the wrong conclusions. The point I want to make here is that, if people's interactions, both social and economic, are reduced to analysis of a simple data set, then my analysis of the data would be both limited, superficial and deeply flawed as it may fail to recognise the many contextual factors at work in the construction and interpretation of the online and offline social phenomena that form the focus of this study. To reflect this, the methodology adopted in this study aims to shine a light on the complexity of researching the classroom space, both on and offline and the use of semi structured interviews will help gauge that wider context and support observations I make about the groups. As discussed in the previous chapter, the classroom is a complicated social environment. As Padgett recognises, the classroom...

“...will be shaped by details brought by the learners: the orientation and stimulation provided by their own histories, their surroundings and the quality and range of social interactions that they enjoy” (Padgett, 2012: 1).

The classroom is a complex space where a plethora of variable factors influence what can and cannot happen. It is particularly important therefore to explore the appropriateness or otherwise of a range of methodological approaches in addressing the research questions posed in this study. It is also important to carefully select a range of research methods that reflect the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions which underpin this thesis.

### The Staircase of History

Hegel's Dialectic idealism model is one way of understanding the external and internal world around us and the interrelationship between the two. His oft quoted Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis model is a way of interpreting and coming to know a proposition and later was taken up by Marx in *Das Capital* (1867) who used it to explain Industrialisation and the political fallout thereof in Europe. As an extension of this model, Dialectical Materialism dictates that subjective emotionality should be removed and cool, objective rational argumentation should be used to tease out a synthesis of ideas. Hegel's understanding of History on the other hand, as laid out in *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) is that the “objective” knowledge of history is ‘staircased’ towards the ultimate goal and realisation of human freedom. For Hegel, this staircase through history, defines each struggle and momentous event from the Roman Empire Protestant reformation to the individual freedom of humans in the nation state.

Hegelian Dialectics had its foundation in the classical Plato Dialectic method which aimed to tease out truth through reasoning. Hegel's dialectic seems to be absent in the online discussions we find littering the online space. As the twitter exchanges show above this form of back ward and forward placing of emotive, contrasting views and ideas play out daily on social platforms but do not further a more developed and sustained exploratory discussion where ideas can be developed. Instead, views seem to become fixed and polarised. From Brexit to the rise of Populism, Trump to case for vaccinations programmes against Covid - polarised opinions play out on social platforms for all to see. That users and learners play a part in shaping the debate show how a multi-voiced debate can widen participation of online users to contribute to a discussion. However, what tends to happen in these online discussions is rather than, in the Hegelian sense, truth is teased out of a dialogic conversation, positions become fixed.

It's Like Facebook 

In 2004 Facebook added 'the wall' feature to their application. Since this time other sites have mimicked the wall so that stories and posts can be scrolled through vertically. This is how the online experience has come seen and interacted with by students and digital natives (discussed below). They have come to know and see the online world in a certain way. Vertical conversations take place on 'wall-like' chats with threads that students add to. In the same way then, and on a smaller scale, you can see the debates around the best communication styles between students and teachers to 'understand the world' around them play out in classrooms. What form of communication in person, and online, should be employed to share views amongst a group? What are the dilemmas of teaching in this way and how should teachers manage online discussions? Much of the software that educators use in schools and colleges mimic existing social networks, "it's like Facebook" is a comfort to those who know and use a particular platform. Whether or not a social network really does encourage educationally sound forms of communication that can be utilised to understand a topic will be a question investigated in this study.

### Testing Online Groups

"If you want to kill the conversation, invite a teacher onto an online group" (PRP Lecturer, 2018).

The research for this project took place between 2018 and 2023 and took the shape of cycles that required reflection, observation and action points at various stages discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, but this study did not take place without some initial research of the use of educational apps. In a joint research project conducted in 2017/18 (Cossey & Curtis, 2018), we framed and tested some of

the problems that my PhD has gone on to analyse in more detail. The findings of that study helped guide the interventions that this study has put to the test in the arena of practice. In preparation for this study, I conducted a small-scale educational study with the support of SUNCETT (Cossey & Curtis, 2018). In it I found that students who otherwise would not interact in class would contribute more online. I wanted to test this finding in more detail in this larger study and with the duration of the study being lengthened I have been able to interview these students to develop a deeper understanding of their student experience.

From initial research conducted through the SUNCETT MA programme (Curtis & Cossey, 2018) we examined the following questions.

- How do teachers encourage the development of a democratic voice that is not just limited to verbal class discussion and can take place online?
- What is the best way to provide a space for both lecturers and students to dig deeper in their shared teaching and learning online?
- How can students improve their practical vocational skills through a better grasp of theory?

These were explored through 'Vox Box' and questionnaires and paved the way for my larger thesis. Although limited in scope and scale which included one group of students (20) and involved the introduction of Microsoft Teams and the use of P4C (Philosophy for Children) discussion activities, the original small-scale master's project uncovered the following findings.

Group Learning Online, Finding Space for Digging Deeper (Curtis and Cossey, 2018)

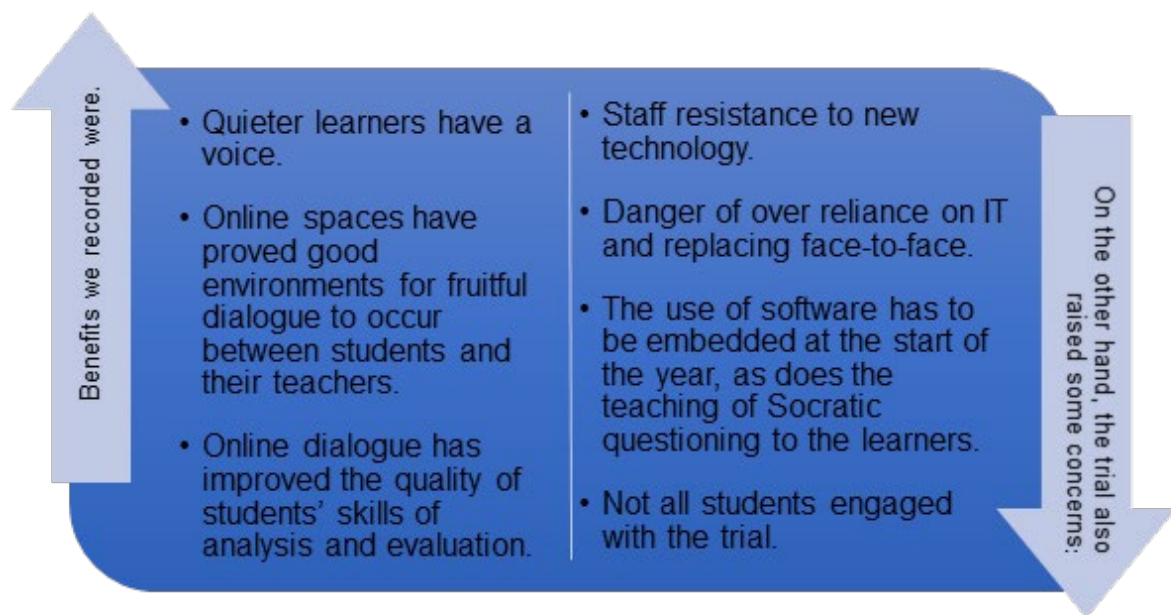


Figure 27 Research findings from preliminary research (Cossey & Curtis, 2018)

Using this as a starting point I developed the scale and scope of the research and, over the course of the following years, created a research project that better captured the experience of student's interactions online, shifted the focus to Film Education and looked to investigate how its teachers felt about the context of teaching film in the 2020's.

### Teaching for Jobs and Ex-citations

The rapidly changing nature of the digital landscape is taking place at an exponential rate. Take trying to explain the role of a Social Media manager to a teacher twenty or even 10 years ago, for example. The global economy has changed rapidly.

The oft quoted 'teaching children for jobs that don't exist yet' maxim that is often used at schools and colleges has become widespread in wider debates about education. In a World Economic Forum report (2016) the introduction begins with a statistic that itself has become hotly debated. "By one popular estimate, 65% of children entering primary school today will ultimately end up working in completely new job types that don't yet exist" (WEF, 2016: 3). How was this statistic arrived at? How could a precise figure be put on future prediction? This statistic was investigated by BBC world

*Service's More or Less* (2017). Davidson was identified as using the statistic in *Now You See It: How the Brain Science of Attention Will Transform the Way We Live, Work, and Learn* (2011). When tracking down her citation for this statistic it appeared the original source was an Australian Website for the Innovation Council of Australia, a site that had been closed, the citation removed. Davidson doubled down in her retort to the BBC investigation and went further and said that "100% of jobs have changed in some way" (Davidson, 2017). Undoubtedly the labour market has changed but there is a tension between what education provides now for a future employment market under which skills are seen by employers – in other words what should education be for and what is the purpose of education?

In defending the job of schools and colleges Daisy Christodoulou, head of assessment at ARC schools and author of *Teachers vs Tech* (2020) makes the argument for transferable skills rather than just cutting-edge technical skills acquisition. In her contribution to the BBC report on the role that educators play in preparing students for the job market, she points out that: -

"...there have been changes in the nature of work over the last few decades but that actually has much less relevance than you might think to the kinds of knowledge and skills that pupils learn in school because the kinds of knowledge and skills they learn in school are much more foundational than that and they underpin a lot of those technological advances... if there is any knowledge we should be skeptical about teaching our pupils, it's the 'very new' and the 'very cutting edge' that paradoxically that has the more chance of becoming obsolete" (BBC, 2017).

The definition of what a transferable skills is, and how they can be taught, is one that raises more questions. Nägele and Stalder (2017) provide a useful discussion over transferable skills and assess the definitions of them. They see these transferable skills as *generic* skills or *basic* skills, competencies that are useful beyond vocational education and desirable in the workplace. They point to the work of Curtin (2004) who identified these key skills as "(1) communication, (2) teamwork, (3) problem-solving, (4) initiative and enterprise, (5) planning and organising, (6) self-management, (7) learning that contributes to ongoing improvement and expansion and (8) technology that contributes to effective execution of tasks" (Nägele and Stalder, 2017: 741). If these core skills are desirable, then one must ask how transferable they across a variety of contexts. How transferable are they? How are these basic skills nurtured in the first place? What are the best ways to develop these? It would seem obvious that 'good communication and problem-solving skills' are important but in what sense are these taught and what does teaching this look like in the classroom? If these core skills can be taught, can their use extend beyond the original context in which they were learned? As Canning (2007) points out, "it is difficult to identify even basic replicative knowledge that is 'transportable' in this manner. The suggestion that more complex skills are, somehow, embedded within an individual and automatically transferred across a range

of contexts remains highly implausible. Indeed, the concept of 'transfer' is probably better understood as a 'metaphorical' discourse than an empirical phenomenon" (Canning 2007: 18). The transferability of these core skills, therefore, is debatable. Instead, as Canning points out, these core skills are formed from the 'experiences' that students have on vocational courses and are figurative. They occur but cannot be empirically observed and transferred. If these core skills are 'essential' but are metaphoric in nature, how then can they be taught and learned in schools?

At the same time, calls go up that schools and colleges are accused of failing to provide the necessary core skills to prepare students for the jobs market in what has been termed the Fourth Industrial Revolution, IT provision in schools has grown Disruptive technologies such as AI, VR and IoT (Internet of things) have changed the face of industrial capitalism and there's a recognition that modern economies have been permanently altered. Arguably, this has been mainly driven by new digital technologies, the harvesting of personal data and the influence of 4 or 5 major tech companies that changed the way we see, experience and interact with the online world.

### Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants

In assessing the emerging technological changes that have had an impact on students Marc Prensky (2001) labels those born after the advent of digital technology as *Digital Natives*. They are "different" as Prensky argues, there has been a "singularity" (Prensky, 2001:1) and today's student interacts with data and content in a separate way to *Digital Immigrants*; those who have had to adjust and adapt the technological environment they find themselves in. He points out that "today's students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors. These differences go far further and deeper than most educators suspect or realize." (2001: 1). Prensky's ideas have been held up to explain a divide between teacher and learner and that *Digital Natives* talk and communicate in a way that differentiates them from their older digital immigrant teachers. The biggest issue which has become commonplace in arguments about "unskilled" teachers is that "Digital Immigrant instructors, who speak an outdated language (that of the pre-digital age), are struggling to teach a population that speaks an entirely new language" (2001:2). For Prensky, the students that are learning now are unlike the students of the past. They are 'native' to a digital landscape that co-exists alongside reality. Teachers then face the unenviable task, according to Prensky, of teaching students whose experiences and frames of references are vastly different to their own. These students, as more recent writers have become aware, are also joining an economy that has shifted from a knowledge-based one to a post-knowledge-based economy.

## Knowledge as Economy

In 1982 Sieghart, writing in *The Consequences of Technology*, pointed out that trying to “treat information as if it were a commodity like any other is dangerous and misleading” (Sieghart, 1982: 12). He explains that because information is potentially infinite and because it can be reproduced at no cost it has no value. He goes on to say that “there can be no property in



Figure 28 *Hypernormalisation* (Curtis, 2016)

information” (1982: 12) and that those who can, control that information. In the context of 1982 this was, it could be argued, an accurate sounding prediction but in fact the reverse has come to be true in terms of information becoming a commodity.

Information does not work like a normal commodity in the normal capitalist exchange system. Information, yours, mine, is being used by the tech giants to generate huge amount of money. Individuals sign away their ownership of data by agreeing to the terms and conditions (that we rarely read) when we sign up to use the services of social media, apps, etc... So, if information and data are not a commodity under an outdated version of capitalist ideology, they certainly are under the new one, in what has been termed *Surveillance Capitalism*.

## Post Knowledge based economy?

“As the intelligent systems online gathered ever more data, new forms of guidance began to emerge. Social media created filters - complex algorithms that looked at what individuals liked - and then fed more of the same back to them. In the process, individuals began to move, without noticing, into bubbles that isolated them from enormous amounts of other information. They only heard and saw what they liked. And the news feeds increasingly excluded anything that might challenge people's pre-existing beliefs” (Curtis, 2016).

“I don't like the idea that I'm not in control of my life” Neo (*The Matrix*, Wachowskis Bros, 1999).

One study that has informed this investigation is that of Shoshana Zuboff. In her book *Surveillance Capitalism* (2019) she rails against the big tech companies and how they have restructured the global economy around behavioural modification and data capture. She argues against the individualisation of citizens that took place during the “second modernity” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) has given

way to a third and that companies like Google, Facebook and Amazon have overstepped the mark in terms of individuals privacy, control of data and the overextended reach of unregulated global corporations.

Data collection and computer users have given over every aspect of their lives in exchange for servitude to what she calls Surveillance Capitalism. In a perpetual cycle of behaviour surplus, that is data collected by companies that goes beyond product purchasing and use and can include the psychographic profile of a user, she explains how Surveillance Capitalism utilises an “Extraction Imperative” and a “Predictive Imperative” which leads to modified behaviours to generate profits for companies like Google and Facebook.

For Zuboff, the tech giants have overreached into every sphere of our lives and created a new division of learning, rather than labour, in society. Zuboff identifies a crisis of knowledge, authority and power in the workplace and wider society and that this division of learning is the – “axial principle of social order in an information civilisation” (2019: 181). With automation of so many jobs, she argues that low skilled jobs have been replaced by machines but that there are opportunities for people to learn new skills within this new civilisation, if it continues with this model. The culminative result in the rise of the tech giants she says, “is that both the world and our lives are pervasively rendered as information” (2019: 183).

Ultimately, for Zuboff, this new information civilisation has given rise to Instrumentarian power. Zuboff recalls the work of BF Skinner (1968) and his advocacy of behaviourist psychology and that free will, according to him, is an illusion. For behaviourists like Skinner and Pavlov, populations, they argue, can be conditioned and nudged towards certain behaviours but that at the latter end of the last century a world that could be conditioned by science and rationality were waning. However, as Zuboff explains, the disruptive technology that has become pervasive in our world has altered the course of it, “the belief” she says, “that we can choose our destiny is under siege, and in a dramatic reversal, the dream of a technology of behavioural prediction and control – for which Skinner had endured such public scorn – is now a flourishing fact.” (2019: 381). It is with this shifting global context that educators face a host of challenges and one that this thesis investigates. My students have come to know this world in a certain way, the unshackled, unlimited possibility of the internet as it was conceived in 1990 by Tim Berners Lee has, arguably, become an advertising-based, behaviour modifying shopping mall. As Zuboff says, ‘the puppet master’ guides you through the online world. This guidance however is invisible and hidden by the architects of it. Nudge theory (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008) makes this point more clearly, Thaler and Sunstein argue that people can be nudged towards altering their behavior. Subtle prompts act to reinforce ideas or change a person’s view of a situation

they maintain, has become prevalent in western advertising and architectural decision making. “To count as a mere nudge, the intervention must be easy and cheap to avoid. Nudges are not mandates. Putting fruit at eye level counts as a nudge. Banning junk food does not.” (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008: 6). Möhlmann has brought Nudge theory into 2020’s recognising its presence in AI Algorithms. In what they have termed “algorithmic nudging” (2021) users’ behaviour is nudged by social media or work apps used by workers in companies like Deliveroo or Uber. Users are given rewards or notifications to prompt action or in the case of social media platforms nudge users into changing behaviour – the Cambridge Analytica scandal which impacted Facebook users’ actions and views on Brexit are one such example of Algorithmic Nudging in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The nature of this world made real by the tech giants, Zuboff argues is that they have become businesses of reality construction, and that computers and algorithms are so engrained in every element of our lives that they will “disappear”. She flags Mark Weiser’s seminal paper *The Computer for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (1991) in which Weiser compares the birth of writing with the rise of home computers. Writing he says is the “first information technology” and has woven itself into every aspect of the world around us, from street signs to newspaper and graffiti. The beginning of what he calls “ubiquitous computing” at the end of the last century and the advent of the internet and now AI and complex algorithms will become undisguisable as they will be a part of our everyday lives. Indeed, as Weiser points out, “the most profound technologies are those that disappear. They weave themselves into the fabric of everyday life until they are indistinguishable from it.” Indeed, this echoes previous thinkers’ concerns that a veil will descend across human cultures that hide the very essence of what human experience is in essence. Heidegger, for example, makes this point in *The Question Concerning Technology* “[a]ll revealing belongs within a harbouring and a concealing. But that which frees [entities for intelligibility]—the mystery—is concealed and always concealing itself.... Freedom [sense-making, the revealing of beings] is that which conceals in a way that opens to light, in whose clearing shimmers the veil that hides the essential occurrence of all truth and lets the veil appear as what veils” (Heidegger, 1977: 330).

## Puppet Masters

One idea that repeatedly resonates in this thesis is that it is not technology itself that is the problem but the way it is being used. Or, as she puts it we, “should hunt the puppet master, not the puppet”. She continues, “technologies are always economic means, not ends in themselves” (Zuboff, 2018:12). Just as Sennett discovered above that the Google Wave experiment found that it was the layout and approach of participants that was the problem, this research critically considers what teaching strategies as well as how the way in which technology is used in the classroom should be examined. As I made clear in the introduction, in this thesis I examine how it is best used as part of curriculum design. I concur with Zuboff’s line that technology is

not a “magic bullet”. It is only the means to finding an educationally sound way for students to collaborate, share and learn. In reviewing her book, Bridle points out that the surveillance capitalism system depends on, “ignorance of its operation” and that this “is one of the central strategies of this regime” (Bridle, 2019). In highlighting this issue in her book however and identifying some of the dubious business practices it has used, Bridle points out that “the tide is turning: more and more people express their unease about the surveillance economy and, disturbed by the fractious, alienated and trust-less social sphere it generates, are seeking alternatives” (Bridle: 2019). The ‘ends’ discussed in this study are determined by establishing a pedagogical approach that supports and nurtures greater communication between students and defined learning outcomes. As Zuboff argues, AI, Technology, communicating online has already established one way of working in the world and that this is only one potential way that it can be used. There are alternatives, just as there in the classroom. This study examines how technology has been used and what alternatives there might be for its implementation. While we may know IT is widely available in most classrooms, we need to ask if it is merely a means to aid the learning process or if it has already become a part of the learning process.

## Philosophy for Children

“Here likewise are those who perceive burgeoning bureaucratisation and rationalisation everywhere they turn, whether in capitalistic or collectivistic societies, and who consequently fear that children unprepared for the demands of such rationality will be doomed. Too many individuals with anxieties such as these, the goal of education must be switched from knowledge acquisition to thinking, and such thinking must be critical, or logical or both” (Lipman, 1988:37).

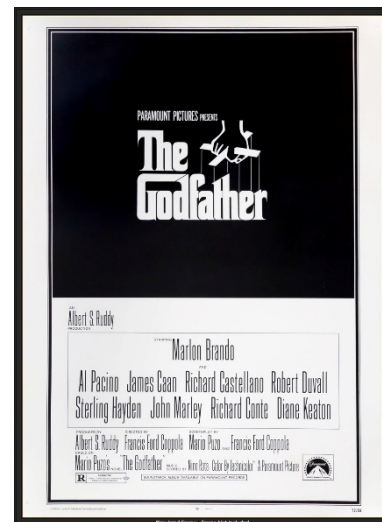


Figure 29 *The Godfather*  
(Coppola, 1972)

In the 1971, Matthew Lipman Published *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*. Dismayed by the reasoning skills of his undergraduate students at Columbia University, he attempted to improve children's philosophical skills and reasoning abilities which culminated in the formation of the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC). The premise behind *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* was to encourage children to ask philosophical questions of themselves and their situations through a simple story about middle schoolers. The story is child centred with dialogue between children expressed throughout with some additional adult voices. Lipman went on to publish several books advocating the use of dialogic reasoning skills which encouraged students to probe, philosophically, positioned problems and questions to discover and 'learn'. In Lipman's *Thinking in Education* (2003) although written well before the advent of social media, Lipman goes onto to highlight the role of philosophical enquiry in students' studies. In line with the model that Lipman proposed in *Thinking* (2003) is the concept of a Community of Enquiry (CoE) that is established with different groups of students. The students are given a piece of stimulus material. A piece of film, a piece of literature or simply an image. Next, a tutors support and guides learners by raising issues and asking questions about the material. The intention behind the practice of CoE is to deepen student engagement and raise the student's attainment through exercising and developing their 'critical thinking skills'. Although pregnant with debatable meaning, as discussed earlier, critical thinking skills are intended to give way to a deeper, more emotionally-intelligent collaborative, caring creative and critical thinking. Again, this is what Sennett calls a 'caring thinker' (2008). Lipman highlights this idea in the rationale behind a 'Community of Enquiry.' He argues that students should strive for creative, critical and caring thinking and that there should be a, "balance between the cognitive and the affective. Between the perceptual and the conceptual, between the physical [body] and the mental" (Lipman, 2003: 199-200). He makes the case that at all levels of education, educational establishments have a responsibility to nurture and support these three domains of thinking. Similarly, Wegerif in *Dialogic: Education for the Internet Age* (2013) highlights some of the issues that the internet has brought to teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Here he argues that 'creative thinking' and hearing multiple voices airing a variety of viewpoints should be at the forefront of the aims and purposes of education. In assessing the benefits of dialogic communication, he concludes that successful dialogue in a variety of educational approaches such as *Philosophy for Children*, *Learning Communities* and *Thinking Together* should not only be the means but the end. He goes on to note:

"Although it has been shown to be an effective way of teaching for conceptual understanding in almost every area of the curriculum, dialogic education also imposes a curriculum goal of its own which is the need to educate students to become better at dialogue so that they can think and learn together with others in new contexts" (Wegerif, 2017).

According to Lipman and Wegerif, dialogic communication brings multi-voicedness to thinking about a problem and develops students critical thinking skills. In what has been developed from Lipman's work, the "Four C's" are seen as the characteristics of 'excellent thinking'. These are Creative, Collaborative, Caring and Critical thinking. Establishing these characteristics in Lipman's and Wegerif's view takes time but ultimately encourages learners to think more carefully and deepens their understanding of the world around them.

### Memetics as Experience

In 1976 Richard Dawkins coined the term *Meme* in *The Selfish Gene* to mean a 'unit of culture'. Based on the principle of Darwinian evolution, Dawkins makes the case that cultural knowledge spreads through culture and that successful memes are propagated and are self-replicating. Under this model the meme is transferred from host to host – the meme therefore is analogous to a virus that spreads around a human culture. The more successful the meme, the wider it will spread. The more hosts it attaches itself to, the stronger the meme, or cultural unit will become and so on. Memetics, as a field of study, became popular in the mid-1980s under writers such as Dennett (1991) and Lynch (1996). The thinking behind memetics was that to understand how cultures evolve and take on messages, one had to understand the process by which a meme spreads. This critical approach to culture gained an interested party of analysts, although, having described the process through which memes work, Dawkins distanced himself from this new branch of cultural analysis.

After a burst of interest, the memetics movement fell and declined in popularity and its critics outnumbered its advocates. The lesson from the rise and fall of memetics illuminates its own central discourse. That an idea, if popular, can rise and become prominent, that it is ready to fade away as it loses traction with its 'hosts' demonstrates the principle that ideas are like units that require 'hosts' for them to succeed. The theory then was victim to its own central logic. If an idea is not strong enough it will wither and lose traction.



Figure 30 Know Your Memes (2017)

The same can be said of any idea or pedagogical approach. In the early days of using digital software such as MOOCs and online courses, fads in teaching constantly rise and fall. That said, the term Meme has sprung forth an entirely new meaning and now is associated with images and ideas that permeate online cultures; usually simple images and ideas that take on new meanings to accommodate social, cultural or

political events. That an idea can pass and propagate, to borrow from the memetic lexicon, does not make these ideas any lesser. Indeed, educationalists and cultural thinkers have long-argued over the value of the study of high culture and low culture, of what is worthy of being studied and what should be 'on the curriculum'. Regardless of the cultural value that has been placed upon a discipline, whether it be painting, dancing, creating films or writing poetry, each act itself produces an experience. For Dewey the very act of 'doing' is the net gain. As he points out, "the *product* of art—temple, painting, statue, poem—is not the *work* of art. The work takes place when a human being cooperates with the product so that the outcome is an experience that is enjoyed because of its liberating and ordered properties." (Dewey, 1980: 214). The *experience* therefore is the crucial product of studying or creating or doing. That one type of activity is considered more culturally valuable, for example the study or creating of film is more or less important than the study and writing of literature, ignores the principal fact that the very act of an interaction with a medium is the product itself. As Dewey goes on to explain, "if art is an intrinsic quality of activity, we cannot divide and subdivide it. We can only follow the differentiation of the activity into different modes as it impinges on different materials and employs different media" (Dewey, 1934: 214). Arguably this is not often considered in curriculum design. Division and subdivision are rife. In terms of artificial barriers between theory and practice, between studying and doing, between *techné* and *praxis*, vocational programmes have not collapsed or dissolved their false division.

## The Problem of Curriculum in Education Beyond Film

What should people be learning?

"Artistic approaches to research are less concerned with the discovery of truth than with the creation of meaning. What art seeks is not the discovery of the laws of nature about which true statements or explanations can be given, but rather the creation of images that people will find meaningful and from which their fallible and tentative views of the world can be altered, rejected, or made more secure. Truth implies singularity and monopoly. Meaning implies relativism and diversity" (Eisner, 1993: 9).

One of the key dimensions of the problem I am investigating is that of Film Education's curriculum design. How should curriculum design be structured? What trends have taken over wider curriculum design? What is the flow of knowledge and how should this knowledge be imparted, explored, and deepened by students? Below I look at some of the key educational arguments that I see have had an impact on some of the decisions on how Film Education courses are developed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and those that relate to curriculum design and pedagogy.

In the Siemens study (2005) on Connectivism discussed above and in many other experiments with digital technology and the classroom, all share a common link to “foster communication” as a means to an end. Gert Biesta’s (2011) interpretation of what that end should be, is insightful. There are pressures on these ends, whether that’s higher grades, leap frogging other institutions in league tables or competing with regional institutions in a battle for ‘bums on seats’. Biesta considers these pressures and by dividing up the three foci of educational purpose and by what means that purpose should be pursued he throws light onto the tensions and trade-offs that teachers should be anticipating



and benefitting from. He categorises these as Qualification, Socialisation and Subjectification.

Figure 31 Socialisation, Subjectification & Qualification (Biesta, 2011)

Biesta’s understanding of the different domains or spheres of education or educational purposes considers the educational institution, the individual and the goal of educational attainment, each working in synergy but, at the same time, potentially in conflict with each other. As he explains:

“An example of potential conflict is where a constant emphasis on testing and exams, which is perhaps an effective way to drive up achievement in the domain of qualification, can have a negative impact on the domain of subjectification if it teaches students, for example, that competition is always better than cooperation” (Biesta, 2011: 8).

Pressure in the institution which forms the site of this study is, as in most, to raise the number of high grades (on my course, to increase the number of Distinctions or A-grades). A course can be seen to be a ‘success’ according to the institution's parameters, if a high percentage of students achieve these ‘high grades’. The qualification therefore takes precedence over socialisation and subjectification. These two elements, firstly the learning of working in groups and becoming part of society and secondly learning about oneself and thinking for oneself, lose out to the criteria that have been set by the qualification body to improve the institutions standing in terms of ‘outcomes’ for learners and eventually publicly appearing in league tables to compare against others. The question is who does this benefit? Biesta clearly sees the teacher as the mediator of the three domains, someone who can distinguish between the three and make informed choices of how to change the curriculum and what needs to happen from lesson to lesson in order to keep all three domains supported, developed and nurtured across the curriculum. When one considers the prominence of learning technology in the

classroom and its use to improve qualification results, this pressure can be physically observed to reduce the socialisation domain of educational purpose. This constant balancing act of equalising the domains goes to the heart of, according to Biesta, what education should be. As he explains:

“While education is clearly located in the domain of the variable, it is concerned with the interaction between human beings, not the interaction between human beings and the material world. Education, in other words, is a social art and the aesthetics of the social is in important ways different from the aesthetics of the material (which is not to say that they are entirely separate)” (Biesta in Peters et al, 2017: 448).

Education, as a “social art”, is a blending act that looks to balance various domains and pressures and, at its core, is communication centred. As Sennett (2016) points out above, that communication should be dialogic and for the benefit of the collective. Regarding Biesta’s model (2011), the individual can benefit and attain subjective identity from a fully functioning socialised group that is well versed in communicating in a meaningful way. One of the objectives of my study is to answer the question of what ‘good’ communication looks like and how knowledge is imparted in taught groups.

Young (2014), as discussed briefly earlier, makes the distinction that curriculum designers should look to build “powerful knowledge” into curricula. Schools and institutions should look to emancipate their learners. Give them the knowledge to be socially mobile – learn that which is specialist knowledge and ‘sets them free’. Young points out:

“This is, in part, a product, under the pressures of global capitalism, of the increased focus on the ‘means’ rather than the ends of education. From a younger and younger age, school students are encouraged to think of successful learning in terms of their future career or at least in terms of progressing to the next stage of education” (Young, 2014: 106).

In my own area of Film Production and Studies there is an emphasis on the learner ‘progressing’ to university, or to have a destination that is linked to the Creative Arts and a job within it. The emphasis is on skills building and, from the student's perspective as they are told, the most important learning that takes place is to learn a piece of editing software such as *Adobe Premiere* or *After Effects* (as previously discussed through the work of Connolly in the *Media Education Journal*, 2014). There is a sense of urgency in students who wish to progress to *learn* the software quickly so they can *do* a task. This craft skill, or *techné*, is limited. There is no *Poíēsis* in learning this software. There's also little consideration that these programmes will have unrecognisably changed within 5 years as the rate of technological advancement renders older software null and void. Learning a piece of software allows you to *use* it but there is a difference between learning that software and why you are *using* it to create a film. Instead, then, there should be a consideration that students are taught critical thinking

skills, and that the curriculum should be there to enhance their abilities to 'think' and to collaborate on a problem rather than just do what they are told to do. Instructional teaching on software is a fruitless exercise and a form of *techné*. I liken this to spray-painting green tomatoes red when you should be feeding them from the roots up.

In Stenhouse's seminal *Introduction to Curriculum Design and Development*, (1975) he argues that good curriculum design should be, "an attempt to communicate the essential principles and features of an educational proposal in such a form that it is open to critical scrutiny and capable of effective translation into practice" (Stenhouse, 1975: 1). If this is the case, then one of the most important pieces of knowledge acquisition a student must gain is the ability to know how to tackle problems and collaborate on projects, how to collaborate to produce creative work. It should not be what he calls a "prescription" something that is given to students (1975: 1). As I suggest in the introduction, Stenhouse makes the point that the process of education should be the outcome.

The 'qualification' domain within schools is therefore the arbitrary national curriculum. Geography, English Literature, Physics these subjects include bodies of our shared culture. What is "learned" at school therefore is not necessarily as important as *how* it is learnt. The process of learning I would argue, in agreement with Biesta, is a social one. To explore an issue or a unit of culture, one must firstly consider the ways in which this is done. Curriculum content, therefore, should be about finding the best ways to explore and learn a topic. The problem is not always what should be learned but how it is learned. As Stenhouse points out, "the problem is how to get the group to interact co-operatively and richly in terms of the cultures the school offers it so that those cultures gain reality and offer satisfaction" (1975:9). Stenhouse goes on to recognise the division between distinct cultures at educational institutions. The arts and the creative tradition, skills-based learning, languages and the critical tradition. Railing against what he calls the 'programmatic' instructional propositions laid out by Cognitivists Bruner (1960) Schwab (1964), he sees this instructional type of curriculum design as flawed. Stenhouse is critical of the compartmentalised learning of knowledge signposted by Phenix in *Realms of Meaning* (1964). He rounds on the psychological interpretation of learning and simplified bodies of knowledge that can be imparted or transmitted to students. For Stenhouse then, the 'injection' of ideas into students is counter intuitive to a rounded understanding and acquisition of that knowledge. Stenhouse, in *Curriculum Research and Development* lays out the case for a process curriculum rather than objectives/outcomes based one.

### The Flow of Knowledge

In my own subject area, film and wider media theory has developed from a simplistic interpretation of how audiences 'receive' the media. In the 1920's the 'hypodermic needle effect' (Laswell, 1927)

was a widely accepted theory that attempted to explain how mass media directly effects the public. Discussing how propaganda was used in American media in “which industrious men injected into the veins of a staggering people” (Laswell, 1927: 217) and brought the country into WWI, Laswell saw the media has having a direct impact on audiences, literally “injecting them” with ideas. Widely considered too simplistic for its assumption that people do not question what they are being told by media products, the model was challenged and later the two-step flow model advocated by Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) who looked at how the media had an impact on the 1940 presidential elections. They went on to include ‘opinion leaders’ into the flow of ideas generated by media producers, who mediated the message to other audience members. Now, more recent ‘reception theory’ looks at ‘active’ audiences who form complex ‘readings’ of texts. This development from ‘speaker to receiver’ to is echoed in the development of educational theory. From behaviourist thinkers such as BF Skinner (1968) through to cognitive constructivists like Piaget (1947) and Perry (1999) and social constructivists such as Vygotsky (1978) the ‘flow of knowledge’ has moved from ‘speaker to receiver’ and ‘skills through drills’ to a more experiential model where emphasis has been placed on cognition as a process involving learners own experiences, situations and interactions.

One can see the flow of information, from contemporary classrooms, coming not from just teacher but also online, through researching topics and discussions through groups. Regardless of the intended ‘learning outcomes’ of a lesson, where packaged information is to be delivered in an hour-long session, it is very rare, even under the pressure of adhering to institutional demands for compartmentalised lessons, for learning to be the same in one classroom to another. This can be seen in the common observation that no two lessons are the same. There are too many variables. The same lesson plan can produce different outcomes, different discussions and varying degrees of understanding. The lesson hinges on the participants (students) their background and experiences and the direction in which the group take the subject matter.

In line with the thinking of Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989) situated cognition recognises that learning should not be a solitary, abstract process but one that interweaves many areas of practical and theoretical work and collaboration between peers and the learning environment. The learning environment would not only be the classroom but an online forum that both students and the teacher had ownership of. In earlier research (Curtis and Cossey, 2018) one student comments that he found the idea of social media, discussing school topics, ideas online were an anathema. In a ‘vox-box’ K said that “no, there’s no place for social media in the classroom.” (Curtis & Cossey, 2018). There seemed to be a denial here about how a college location is separate from any online world experienced by students in their lives. There is a divide here in this statement and sentiment about ‘socialising online, socialising in person and socialising and learning at college. Learning takes place from handouts and

online documents or in classrooms and mac suites. Not in online groups. Creative discussions, working together on problems, this was not seen by this student as something that online classroom spaces encourage. This is highlighted by Brown et al (1988) when discussing how the classroom can strip away value and meaning to tasks designed to prepare students for the real world. As they comment,

“When, for pedagogic purposes authentic domain activities are transferred to the classroom, their context is usually transmuted; they become classroom tasks and part of school culture. Classroom procedures are then applied to what have become classroom tasks. As a result, the system of learning and using (and, of course, testing) can remain hermetically sealed within the self-confirming culture of the school. Consequently, contrary to the aim of schooling, success within this culture often has little bearing on performance elsewhere” (Brown et al, 1988: 6).

Brown et al suggest that situated cognition should be adopted to best prepare students for employment and real-world situations, as they explain: “A theory of situated cognition suggests that activity and perception are importantly and epistemologically prior--at a nonconceptual level--to conceptualization and that it is on them that more attention needs to be focused.” (Brown et al, 1988: 15). They make the point that, “Social interaction and collaboration play such a central role in this sort of learning” (Brown et al, 1988: 13). Here they highlight the importance of group ‘problem solving’ and project-based learning as a way of giving more meaning to taught tasks. Of course, student thinking is based on the physical classroom space and refers to a range of pedagogical techniques in a pre-digital age but the lesson from their study can be transposed onto the online world. Students could therefore be taught the value of online communication and the possibilities of both working together, face-to-face and in groups offline in classrooms, *in conjunction* with collaborating online and as previously discussed this is intrinsic to film making and the ethos of film production on set or in the edit suite.

### Communities and Communitas

In the introduction to Bernstein’s *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity* (1996, 2000) he highlights the three *Pedagogic Rights* (PR) that should be present in any educational setting.

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Conditions</b>	<b>Levels</b>
<b>Enhancement</b>	Confidence	Individuals
<b>Inclusion</b>	Communitas	Social
<b>Participation</b>	Civic Discourse	Political

(Bernstein, 2000: xxi)

The three *Pedagogic Rights of Enhancement, Inclusion and Participation* can be met under the conditions as outlined above and at a variety of social levels. Bernstein's reference to *communitas* is important here and one that chimes with the foci of this study. From this perspective, for a successful education to take place, a curriculum should have the 'student voice' present as in a spirit of a *communitas*. At a social level the learning environment should be democratised, learning should be inclusive so that the language of education is open and encouraging to all. In his earlier work, Bernstein highlights that language itself can create barriers for this inclusion to occur. In *Class, Codes and Control* (1971) he argues that two forms of language have developed that act as a restrictive force, limiting some to a heuristic approach to learning that he would later go on to describe as where true *communitas* cannot be achieved. In what he terms the *elaborated code* and *restricted code* he describes communication in education and the social groups that take part in it. In brief, elaborated coded communication is clear and open to outsiders whilst restricted coded communication is hard to understand and only successfully understood by a tight knit group (1971). As he points out, "forms of spoken language in the process of their learning initiate, generalize and reinforce special types of relationship with the environment and thus create for the individual particular forms of significance" (1971: 76). He identifies a form of collective and collaborative energy in social situations which he describes as *Communitas*. To achieve *Communitas*, the language used and the access to and acquisition of materials and environment are democratically arrived at and shared. Indeed, in supporting his *Pedagogical Rights*, Bernstein makes a passionate case for educational institutions to embrace democratic conditions so that his *Pedagogic Rights* can be realised. In order for this to transpire all participants need to have a stake in the educational institution they're involved in and that individuals are, "not only people concerned to receive something but also that they are concerned to *give* something". Bernstein highlights the importance of "horizontal solidarities" (2000: xxiii) between different stragatems of the school hierarchy. In this way he argues, layers of a school, and by extension curricula, are integrated.

### The Transactional Theory of Knowing.

If Bernstein sets out a model for how individuals can be emancipated by their experience of a spirit of *communitas* in their education experience, Biesta highlights how curriculum design has been taken over by specifications and restricted coded communication. In *Pragmatizing the Curriculum: bringing knowledge back into the Curriculum Conversation* (2014) Biesta highlights the critique of the pragmatist tradition of allowing the discussion around curriculum design to be too focused on "the process" of education – or, as he puts it, the recent trend of learnification in curriculum debates and

“that the language of education has been taken over by a language of learning” (Biesta, 2014). In *Pragmatizing (2014)*, he raises questions about how these debates have been unhelpful and focus on questions about the process of how to learn *rather* than what is being learnt. Secondly, he highlights that there has been a movement towards skills and competencies acquisition, rather than discussions about knowledge. This approach to curriculum design he argues is too narrow and does not allow for a wider debate to flourish. The issue is arguably that everything becomes ‘sociologised’ and that knowledge or *epistēmē* itself begins to disappear and is instead replaced by what the Greeks would call *doxa*, or opinions without truth.

Biesta explores Dewey’s (1925) thesis and maintains that rather than being passe, it is just as relevant today as it was one hundred years ago. Dewey, himself, saw how organisms interact with their environment - he refers to these as transactions of living organisms and their environments. He therefore sees that ‘experience’ of the world was a way of grasping the relationship between our actions and their consequences. Experience, or for the sake of argument, pragmatic epistemology is “not a veil that shuts man off from nature” but “a means of penetrating continually further into nature” (Dewey, 1925: 15). These *transactions* of knowledge inform how humans learn. That valuable transactions can be learnt from the experiences that individuals encounter. Just as Sennett sees those transactions as mutually beneficial if they occur together Biesta points out that, “education is neither about getting the curriculum into the child nor about the child just doing anything, but about establishing a productive and meaningful connection between the two” (Biesta, 2014: 31).

The ‘transaction’ of knowledge based on experience is key to the argument Biesta highlights with reference to the work of Dewey. From a constructivist standpoint, people can learn through experience and build upon their own schema. That experience, however, does not necessarily have to lead to ‘units’ of experience equalling ‘units’ of siloed knowledge. Instead, as Biesta makes clear, “for many practical areas, one could argue that the point is not simply to acquire the right skills, but also to develop the capacity for critical judgement to them” (Biesta, 2014: 31). The ability to develop critical skills rather than learning technique by rote, therefore, goes to the heart of what Dewey describes as a transactional thinking (thinking across the action) flow of knowledge. In my own setting, it is one thing *how* to learn to use the software *Final Cut Pro* to edit films. It is another to consider *why* you are editing a film in the way you are. Why select this shot rather than that one? Why follow the conventions of classical film making and why or when should you break those rules? These questions are harder and more difficult to answer than simply instrumentally or mechanically using digital software to organise film assets into order.

Dewey himself in *Art as Experience* (1934) sees the interrelationship between a being and their environment as the location of where experiences can be translated into knowledge and expressed in art. As he points out, “space thus becomes something more than a void in which to roam about” (Dewey, 1934: 23). For our understanding of the world around us to be ‘coloured in’ we must do and learn through that which we touch, hear and interact. As discussed previously, as an organism we are guided by our interactions with the world around us. Humans’ construction of, and appreciation of art and the aesthetics of the objects that are created, crafted and shaped by us informs us and incrementally forms our experience of the world in which we “roam about”. “In short,” he concludes “art, in its form, unites the very same relation of doing and undergoing, outgoing and incoming energy, that makes an experience to be an experience” (Dewey, 1936: 48). This then itself is different from the continuous partial attention that defines how our students experience the online world and from which their ‘experience’ is shaped by it.

“Experience in the degree in which it is experience is heightened vitality. Instead of signifying being shut up within one’s own private feelings and sensations, it signifies active and alert commerce with the world; at its height it signifies complete interpenetration of self and the world of objects and events” (Dewey, 1934 :19).

### Theory/Practice and the Vocational Divide in Curriculum – Origin Story

Film Education is not a unique subject in terms of its falsely divided dependency on the separation of the theory and practice of learning but with increased digitisation of the creative process in film making, this has been accelerated. Buckingham in *The Media Education Manifesto* (2019) makes an impassioned case for Media to be studied both theoretically and practically and that its study is vital for citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. He points to some of the problems that have circulated studying media and sees “media literacy” as too simplistic a term to describe what media education should look like in schools. Instead he suggests that, “critical media literacy” should be promoted in curricula. As well as this he argues, students need a theoretical and practical knowledge of how media works so that they can navigate the world around them. To quote him at length,

“Media Literacy is not simply a matter of knowing how to use particular devices, whether in order to access or to create media messages. It must also entail an in-depth critical understanding of how these media work. How they communicate, how they represent the world, and how they are produced and used. Understanding the media today requires us to recognise the complexity of modern forms of ‘digital capitalism’” (Buckingham, 2019: 3).

Buckingham goes on to explore strategies to implement a more rounded media education where students should be capable of *reading* (understanding representations and media language) *writing*

(producing film and media) and *contextual analysis* (examining social background). Buckingham therefore makes an important case for not only the study of media by students but also that both practice and theory be coupled to group work and understand the world that students are a part of and that they will inevitably shape by their use of media. At its core, production work and theoretical work can be informed by collaborative project-based learning. Buckingham makes the case for group work clearly, “it seems particularly important to insist on the need for collaboration in digital production... group work has been established part of media education practice, not just for pragmatic and vocational reasons, but also for educational ones” (Buckingham, 2004: 204). This, I would argue, should be the basis of any guiding principles framing classroom practice. However, increased digital work in creative production and mining information for theory sessions can present insular, individual study. Indeed, as Coffield highlights technology’s influence on students’ learning it is not necessarily about what it has done *to them*, instead recognising that, “technology’s biggest impact on their lives... is not so much in terms of the number of gadgets they own. It has affected where *and how they learn*” [my emphasis] (Coffield, 2009: 51).

Although individual independent study is a worthwhile pursuit, there is a sense that digital, PC based work can produce *too much* solitary independent work. Walk into any modern college computer room and the sight of twenty-five students silently staring into banks of computer screens whilst they use their mobile phones to Snapchat each other is common. Connection between students is prevalent but it is not being used to connect students over the work that is taking place. Yes, mobile technology can help students stay informed, but a purpose of this thesis is to examine how it can be used to help them connect in and out of the classroom to solve problems.

In tackling the question of ‘how much’ theory a vocational subject should tackle it seems that many qualifications look to establish, legitimise and secure their claims to “academic rigour” by quantity, not quality. In reality, as Carr argues (1988) practice comes before theory, not the other way round. However, vocational students produce huge amounts of written work to support their practical pieces. To defend itself from being tarnished with ‘soft subject’ status, vocational subjects, students and teachers often set or produce or overcompensate with vast amounts of written work outside of exam conditions. Evidence from student’s blog work on vocational programme at the researcher’s institution suggests that the average student produces thousands of words for end of unit assessment. A reversal of the maxim that less is more and rather that vocational students must justify legitimacy of their qualification by showing that ‘more, is of more worth’. Terry Hyland has written extensively on the vocational-academic divide and the bias, against vocational learning, not only in the in the FAVE sector but also in the whole education system. In *Beyond the Vocational/Academic Divide: Inclusion through Craftwork and Embodied Learning* (2014) Hyland meticulously lays out the implicit bias that

is evident in the British education system, from early years to Higher Education. In it he stresses that there is an unhelpful division that has been indoctrinated into the Education system between “theory and practice, intellectual and manual, body and mind.” (2014: 209). Hyland lays out some of the reasoning behind this division and finds that the causes of this perceived division is Structural, Historical, Cultural, Biological and Philosophical (2014: 212) and based on social class. His answer to tackle this bias is to reframe the educational arguments around curriculum design and consider introducing ‘practice’ into all spheres of subject study. As he points out, courses should highlight the,

“...importance of hand and body in all human activity...such inclusion would have important implications for working-class students. Such a move to inclusion would be even more transformational if embodied learning inspired by such a holistic vision was to be incorporated as a dimension of *all* school and college programmes, including traditionally academic ones” (Hyland, 2014: 211).

Hyland outlines the historic reasons for the false division between practice and theory, and as previously discussed writers such as Dunne has explored this *lure of techné*. The development of this pejorative view of vocational as the poorer cousin to the academic has a complex history but, at its core, this belittling has come from a view of the world that values the realization of skills, or *techné*, rather than realizing that *techné* into *epistēmē*.

False divisions – Theory and Practice examples from other educational fields of play

As previously noted at the beginning of this chapter, the division between theory and practice is well established, Bergala (2016), Petrie (1991, 2014) looked to address this issue, as has Buckingham (2019, 2004, 2001). This issue is not unique to Film Education. Kemmis in *For Education* (Carr, 1995), explains the development of how we came to design curricula, how educational research became polarized and laid some of the foundations for this division. For Kemmis, the world of educational studies is one that has sprung from behavioural sciences. A tradition that stems from a technical-rationalist worldview. In this worldview human behaviour can be measured and accounted for, ‘from the outside’ – Kemmis equates this with watching TV with the sound turned off. You can see what is happening, but the voices behind that behaviour are absent. He compares this way of seeing the world as using a cold, mathematical, formula to measure the world around us. As he comments,

“the preference for the view of human and social life as mechanical, as capable of being stripped of surface confusion and perplexity, is a product of a profound 19th Century faith in the power and possibilities of a certain kind of science – a kind of science able to ‘see’ beneath the surface

of things to discover principles of order which account for the working of the hidden mechanism beneath" (Carr, 1995: 4).

As a result, Behaviorists and social scientists saw the world as controllable and easily manipulated. This bias towards finding and watching the 'mechanism' that 'lies below' is limited, Kemmis argues. The clue is in the language used here, mechanical, machine, technical, all steer towards what Aristotle called *techné*. In Kemmis' view, this view of the world and its subsequent application to educational studies misses the nuances of the fullness of educational practice in classrooms, their dynamics and the practices of learning. The rationalist theory of action, Kemmis says, "privileges theory over practice" (Kemmis in Carr, 1985: 9) and artificially creates a hierarchy where skill and practice are seen as a second-class fields of knowledge to theory. In this system therefore, teaching technique or *techné* has become king, as it is easier to measure a skill that can simply be observed and easily measured rather than the processes through which that skill has been acquired. In so doing so, learning outcomes have become the key drivers of education, their achievement the primary objective. Learning outcomes have become the goal of the educator and the educational institution, not the process of learning or the experience of the student. Under this model, the ends become the means key focus. How can you, therefore, develop what Aristotle defined as *phrónēsis*, if the technical rational model of education in terms of easily measurable outcomes is the dominant form of the evaluation of education? Indeed, it appears to be rational and is, as Dunne (1993) highlights, the *lure* of *techné*; where the inference is that you can either be a skilled practitioner *or* an academic.

As previously discussed, Dunne's description of the lure of *techné* is evident across my subject area, Film Education. This is where a competency-based education model which has been adopted by some specifications and where students must evidence certain 'core skills'. In a BTEC Media Qualification Students must have evidenced a set of practices, from asset management, editing skills and safety on film sets. All very good, but if the way to pass the qualification is to simply box tick these skills off, then where is the 'creativity' in Creative Media and film production? How should this be taught? How can you teach creativity and how should curricula be set up to best deliver this? Can you measure what Young calls 'powerful knowledge' in this arts subject? And indeed, is creativity a skill that can be taught at all?

In dealing with the divide between 'vocational and academic' study Adelman in *The Case for Integrating Academic and Vocational Education* (1989) explored High Schools in the USA and examined how best to marry these two together. There is a bias, she argues, against vocational education. She points out that "the full potential of the vocational classroom has not been developed. educators, researchers, and policymakers tend to think of vocational education in isolation from the

rest of the educational enterprise and frequently in pejorative terms” (Adelman, 1989: 3). In her eight key findings she identifies in tackling this complex problem, three resonate with this study. Namely one, “Curriculum development and professional development are the key activities associated with implementing an integrated vocational/academic curriculum” (Adelman, 1989: 3). Programme leaders she says must work together to instil vocational training with academic rigour. Teachers should be at the forefront of bringing a curriculum alive and should have training to allow this to happen. 2, “It is preferable to have both academic and vocational instructors involved in the innovation from the start.” Innovation to a curriculum must come from the bottom up. Finally, 3, “There are often significant social, intellectual, and even physical barriers between the vocational and academic staff in a high school that must be breached in order to make curriculum integration work. It is in this area, in particular, that strong leadership is needed.” (Adelman, 1989, 4-5). In my institution there is a vocational lead for all programmes and an ‘A’-level (academic) lead this is echoed around the sector. There is a division between the two and this division has become even more pronounced in the UK with the introduction of the T-Level in 2020. Students will be streamed by either an A-Level or T-Level education. This national, DfE advocated, split between academic and vocational has become even more pronounced in the 2020s. Adelman (1989) found that by designing curricula where both vocational and academic skills are embedded the student can experience a situation and look at that problem from many sides, rather than compartmentalised subjectification. She uses the example of students making model rockets at junior school to understand wider theoretical principles and problem solve using technical language. The extended example below highlights the benefits of a joined-up approach to academic and vocational teaching and learning.

“The Introduction to Technology classes at the junior high stress a problem-solving approach. We visited one seventh grade class where students were preparing to launch the model rockets that they had been working on for several weeks. The objective of the unit was to understand the parts of a system, in this case the fins, body, etc... that make up the vehicle. In another project completed by this class earlier in the year, students were given a block of wood and asked to design and make "something" that will move in water the length of the classroom's industrial size sink.

Outside on the athletic field, the students pretended not to care whether their particular rockets had a good flight. On the first launch, the parachute failed to open and the rocket plummeted to earth. One boy speculated, "I think it was because of the wadding," implying that he would like to remove said material from his own model. The instructor reminded him that the wadding is necessary to keep the parachute from burning during launch. The point is, however, that while the students inevitably acted their age when released onto the field, they did attend to each

launch and gave some thought to why rockets went higher or lower or crashed. In short, they were engaged in scientific hypothesizing” (Adelman, 1989: 158).

The above highlights the importance of project-based learning and if successfully implemented the benefits of using vocational examples to bring theory and practice together. But how do teachers ensure that the process that students follow in institutions maximise the potential of both academic and vocational learning? How do you measure what a good mix of vocational and academic teaching looks like?

Banks (2007) in *Planning for Excellence and Enjoyment* examines what an integrated curriculum might look like. In designing a scheme of work for Primary school children to explore literacy Skills, she emphasises how important a subject integrated approach is. “Done well” she says, “this can provide a more holistic approach to the development of a series of learning episodes and allow for creativity and problem solving” (Banks, 2007: 13). Figure 32 shows an example of medium-term planning to cover core topics across a variety of subjects.

<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	<b>Week beginning 4 Sept</b>	<b>Week beginning 11 Sept</b>	<b>Week beginning 18 Sept</b>	<b>Week beginning 21 Sept</b>
<b>Literacy</b>	Traditional stories: Beginnings	Traditional stories: Characteristics of	Describing places	Describing characters
<b>Numeracy</b>	Revision of basic operations	Revision of basic operations	Revision of basic operations	Symmetry
<b>Science</b>	Living and non-living things in our school grounds	Characteristics of living things	Investigational skills: sorting and grouping	Caring for our environment
<b>D &amp; T</b>	Playgrounds			
<b>ICT</b>	Word Processing: revision	Text and graphics: Harvest Invitations	Storybook Weaver: creating own 'traditional' stories	
<b>History</b>	(not this half term)			

<b>Geography</b>	Our school and its grounds (explore; draw)	Our school and its grounds (mapping)	Describing our school grounds	How could we improve our school grounds?
<b>Music</b>	Traditional songs from different world traditions			
<b>PE</b>	Outdoor: ball skills, small invasion games. Indoor: dance – Rain Dance			
<b>RE</b>	Experiencing/valuing the natural world (walk)	Responsibility towards the natural world: Hindu story	Christian/Jewish story of creation	The work of environmental groups
<b>Other</b>			Harvest Festival Fri.	Anne B. (National Parks) Thurs.

Figure 32 Planning for Excellence and Enjoyment (Banks, 2007: 12)

In the above, subjects cross over, blend and are integrated with one another. At primary school level, as the above example belongs to, one can see how a topic may be illuminated by a variety of different subjects, with Geography mixing with ICT and Science blending with English. Each combination gives relevance to its constituent parts. Overarching topics like traditional storytelling or exploring the natural world can be taught and explored through mixed activities. Although this is an example for primary education and this practice is commonplace at primary level, at what point should this model be discontinued as students' progress through education? Is it the case that subjects become so specific to themselves that they can no longer inform other subject areas? Should a specialism such as Creative Media be so far removed from other topics? By insisting on a purely competency-based model with subjects becoming compartmentalised and separated by any wider context, they become islands on which seeing connections between their original, wider reaching purpose become harder to see. Arguably, they become separated by their own self-importance. Bank's example above serves to demonstrate that subjects can be mixed and blended at Primary level but could this model be applied to older age groups?

### Multi Modal Analysis - Multi Modal Assessment

Multi Modal analysis is an approach to 'reading' film. On a simple level film is constructed of many layers that make up the whole. On a primary level this breaks down into sound and visuals and within these two broad categories, one can subdivide into specialisms such as editing choices, shots

composition, choice of setting, *mise-en-scène*, colour etc... and sound in terms of dialogue, music, non-diegetic, diegetic, sound effects and Foley and so on. In their book *Multimodal Film Analysis: How Films Mean* Bateman & Schmidt (2012) look to establish a system with which to understand how films make meaning. They are resistant to overtly prescriptive analysis of film language, where one shot has one implication or meaning and instead sees' film making meaning through a complex interrelationship of layers that when studied together provide a way of analysing what that meaning is. Influenced by Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2001) work on how communication is almost never always purely linguistic and that instead a complex arrangement of visuals, messages and other modes of communication are used to convey meaning, Bateman and Schmidt (2012) make a compelling case for film analysis to take a more nuanced and 'frame worked' approach. Likewise, it could also be the case that if film analysis requires an understanding of analysis through a multimodal set of lenses the assessment of a course that teaches this form also requires an assessment technique that is multi modal. Here then, I make the case to consider the assessment of a curriculum that teaches a multilayered text, requires that it's assessment should reflect the 'ways' in which those layers are applied. Students applications of the different approaches to assessment that they have at their disposal to enable the assessment of knowledge and meaning making. To help feedback on students' successes and failures. I have seen many student films where the shot composition and editing are indicative of a high level of mastery but the sound, score or recording of dialogue reveals serious flaws and ruins the whole. As colleagues often say, an audience will forgive a badly timed edit or ill composed shot but will never let muffled dialogue or an ill-chosen score slide by uncriticised. This lean into multi-modal assessment is not just long overdue it is due to the nature of film as a multi layered text but also because the ways that teachers are using multimodal teaching strategies. As Lamb makes clear, "when teaching practices are themselves using multimodality, it would seem odd to revert to traditional essay writing to assess a course" (2018). Lamb continues that assessment techniques can be emancipatory if they allow students the freedom to express ideas beyond these types of written essays or timed exams, especially in a landscape where digital and online teaching are used to teach students. As he points out:-

"... feedback as an ongoing dialogue presented in richly multimodal and digital form can support opportunities for learning that are imaginative, critical, and in-tune with our increasingly digitally-mediated society. When a teacher communicates with students in a richly multimodal way, she can demonstrate the academic validity of the form, potentially emboldening and encouraging her students towards approaches that might otherwise be perceived as unsuitable or risky, particularly in the assessment setting" (Lamb, 2018).

Research on the use of multimodal assessment accelerated in the earlier 2010's as ICT courses looked at other ways to assess students' progress. The ways in which curricula were being delivered – either online, or through mixed methods in classrooms opened the possibility of multi modal assessment. Since the profligacy of IT 'solutions' on course their implementation in formative assessment have become commonplace on Level 3 courses but the impact of covid, without doubt, accelerated their use during and after lock downs.

## Covid

### The Lock Down

One of the fundamental shifts during my research has been the advent of the global Coronavirus pandemic. On March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the UK entered lockdown restrictions and, as we know, educational institutions and businesses, had to move online to continue to function. This study was undoubtedly affected by the emergency – but in ways that were not necessarily detrimental to the original intentions of the study. If anything, the focus of the study benefitted from the major interruption Covid had on teaching and learning. Online learning was pushed front and centre. My original intention was to research how online and offline spaces should be used to maximise students critical thinking skills. Since lock down began, I have had to reconfigure the research parameters. In some regards the research's focus has been pushed towards online learning and a concentration on what has been *lost* due to lock down restrictions and online learning in educational settings and what benefits there are to be *gained*.

### Tacit Knowledge

Polyani, in *Personal Knowledge* (1958) and the *Tacit Dimension* (1966), describes the implicit ability to be able to do something but not be able to describe what or how that action takes place. Or, as he puts it, "people know more than they can tell". Tacit knowledge, he explains, was the process by which people do things but do not understand how many parts come together to be able to explain this in a codifiable way. Non-Codifiable tacit knowledge is therefore problematic. How can we know what we know without being able to describe that knowledge or 'knowing'?

This 'disembodied knowhow' cannot, he argued, be systematically described. By observing my classes and discussing teacher's thoughts on what is missing from online communication, that which is absent in offline classroom, face-to-face teaching, will they be able to identify what is missing and what is present in interactions between each other. Will they be able to define what makes up a positive interaction of knowledge?

Furthermore, because my methodology relies on an action research model of interviewing teachers and students a key issue will be whether they will be able to step outside of their subjective experience and recognise empathetically what other individuals are experiencing or describe accurately how students are 'creating' that knowledge. Baurmaud (1999: 30-3) explores the idea that tacit knowledge is not only the property of individuals but of groups as well. The group dynamic produces a 'mystery quality' that contributes to learning and is difficult to pin down. A fifth element that contributes to the experience of learning.

Lock down during the pandemic changed many things in society. One of which was the continuation of football games without crowds. An element usually present was removed from a situation. Northumbria University analysed Football games being played with no fans present in stadia to look at the impact of the lack of them. They found that the home advantage was statistically almost halved, and referees gave less free kicks to the home team (McCarrick et al, 2021). Even though these fans have no impact on the actual gameplay, their support and inclusion in the environment around the game transforms the outcome of what they spectate.

In discussing Polanyi's work, Gourlay (2002) invokes Bently and Dewey's (1949) work on the difficulty of tying down the word knowledge. They defined this as sign process. Knowing therefore is a type of semiosis, a process where about signs are interpreted and explored. It is this point that creates some difficulty for my study. As an action research project that looks to interpret my students and colleagues 'experiences' of 'knowing' and how 'knowing' is arrived at, how can these subjects helpfully support the interpretation of the situation they are in, the sign process, even if they cannot identify what the 'mystery ingredient' is?

Put simply then, how this study describes the process of creative work between students and between teachers and staff is determined by those experiencing teaching and learning to be able to describe how they have come to know what they know in the first place. Will they have the 'knowledge' to describe the process between each other? What is 'lost' from online learning that takes places in classroom learning? If students are mixed in both online platforms and offline physical spaces what is the process by which knowledge acquired and is tacit knowledge more, or less, prevalent in online or offline learning?

Where are the rules set for using tech in the classroom? Who has decided this? Is it simply the case that teachers have fumbled their way through digital technology, using, as Turkle (2015) would call them technological fireworks to dazzle students? Or have teachers themselves taken their experiences of the online world and brought these into the classroom, especially as covid accelerated the use of

digital tools in classrooms? How have those rules been devised or stumbled across, have they simply emerged and what impact do they have on the activity?

Technology and *techné* have been pushed front and centre and this study is to examine what has happened to be teaching in the classroom pre (when this study commenced) the lockdown and after, when learning has had to be shifted online. UNESCO highlighted a list of solutions for learning online (2020) and there was an expectation that teachers move to online learning as soon as lock down began.

In highlighting what is *lost*, Iwai (2020) underlines one of the major concerns of this thesis. What level of communication is possible online and what quality of communication can take place in these current environments? As he makes clear, “The creation of a film or theatrical production requires physical bodies in proximity. Even in my creative writing workshop, responding to a colleagues’ memoir about her mother’s death is hard to do without looking her in the eye.” (Iwai, 2020). He goes on to say that creativity is the thing most under threat from online comms. Arguing that solitary online communication is a threat to the creative process. He goes on, “In educational settings, creativity is arguably one of the most important things at stake. The surprises and unexpected interactions *fuel* creativity — often a result of sitting in a room brushing shoulders with a classmate.” (ibid). What Iwai describes is what Bernstein illustrates above. The missing *communitas* in settings because of lock down lessened the impact and effectiveness of educational situations and learning opportunities.

It would seem obvious then that online learning has its benefits but also its drawbacks. To make the most of the opportunities of enforced technological dependency it will be important to record and analyse what was lost over the period of the coronavirus lockdown so’s best to understand how to balance the use of technology. The lock down afforded this study an opportunity to observe the online experience in isolation to identify what in-person-teaching adds in the first place. It’s easier to see the impact of something when it is taken away from a dynamic that has been fixed for some time. An original intention of this study is to examine the balance between online and offline learning, but during the study, one of these elements was taken away. This therefore may provide me with a clear opportunity to understand what face-to-face, in class teaching contributes to Film Education students experience of making and studying film.

### Lockdown Blues ... and Learnings

Since the end of the lockdowns which impacted traditional ‘normal’, classroom practices in March 2020 in the UK there has been some research to examine the impact of it on learner’s experience of education. As this thesis takes place before during and after the pandemic and its consequences it is

impossible to ignore any of the preliminary research that has emerged. This study was, obviously, effected by the Coronavirus pandemic but, by its very nature, it allowed for a greater examination of the one the key research questions, namely: -

- What is the most suitable way to use technology in Film Education and what approaches to teaching encourage and support collaborative learning.

One useful report that looks at the outcomes of the effect of the pandemic on pupils is the *Learning during the pandemic: review of research from England* (Howard, Khan & Lockyer, 2021). In it they provide a summary of the key findings from the literature published during and at the end of the pandemic. They surmise that:

1. “The pandemic has been a challenging period for teachers, schools and colleges, students, and parents.
2. The quality and quantity of learning students undertook declined as a result of the pandemic.
3. Most students are reported to have some learning losses, while some have severe learning losses, and some have learning gains.
4. Learning losses appear to be most prevalent in maths and literacy.
5. Experiences of teaching and learning during the pandemic were diverse, but disadvantage and deprivation appear to be most associated with less effective learning and overall learning losses.
6. Learning experiences were diverse: there were differential experiences both between and within groups.
7. There are important implications for learning recovery.
8. There is much about learning during the pandemic that remains unknown and under researched” (Howard, Khan & Lockyer, 2021).

Early findings then point to a range of issues that the pandemic presented teachers. They conclude that teaching and learning suffered overall and there is a recognition that the experience of learners differed from region to region and that those from the least affluent backgrounds had less effective learning experiences. Point 6 recognises that there were different experiences between groups and within groups and this point is one that I further examine in my study. Why were these experiences different? Why were experiences different *between* students? Was there an absence of shared pedagogy? What about practice on Film Education courses? What impact did online learning have for students and what happens to the creative process of ‘doing’ when all students are forced to work online? Some students found inventive ways of creating films even during the pandemic. I recount some of the students’ experiences working creatively, even when lockdowns meant that they could work with others, in Chapter 5. As Howard et al recognize in their summary of their findings, “there are complex interactions between macro- and micro-level influences that give rise to complex and

unique variations in experience (and relative impacts) for individuals between *and within groups*” (2021). One of the facets of this study is to look at why this is.

Howard et al (2021) go on to give an overview of the impact of the pandemic on learning (Fig. 33) and look at the variety of factors that affected the student experience of learning during this time. They highlight the impact of parental support, siblings, home learning resources and curriculum coverage on learning. They also indicate that in vocational subjects such as trades and beauty qualifications the ability to practice what Sennett calls ‘craft’ (Sennett, 2009). This is briefly mentioned in the report. The focus remains on primary and secondary age groups.

*Summary of features that have influenced learning during the pandemic*

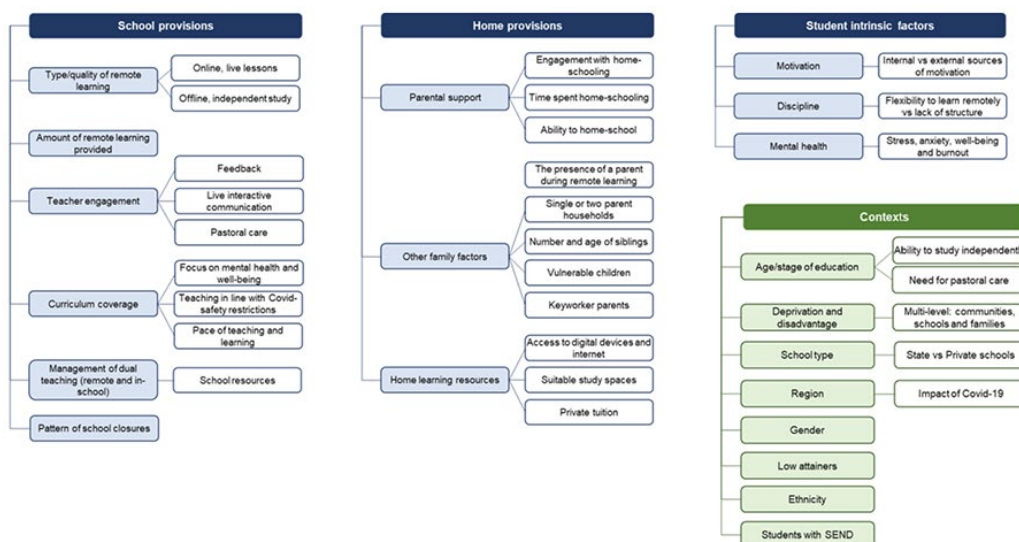


Figure 33 (Howard, Khan & Lockyer, 2021)

In this schematic overview of the impact on learning Howard, Khan & Lockyer (2021) highlight the “weakness of online teaching infrastructure, the limited exposure of teachers to online teaching, the information gap, non-conducive environment for learning at home” (2021) and that there is an issue of equity across groups and institutions. They also highlight the issue that learners with fixed mindsets struggled to adapt to new online teaching and learning techniques whilst growth mindset students are more readily able to take on new approaches to learning. They illustrate that “there is no one-size-fits-all pedagogy for online learning” (2021) and conclude that further analysis of this field is necessary.

The impact of Covid was entirely disruptive to the Film Industry, as in all other sectors in the UK and beyond. The Film Industry had to flex and adjust its practices in order to maintain production. As

Boutellier and Raptis (2023) highlight, the impact of covid on pre-production, production and production has brought with it technological changes to the industry. As they explain:

“During the Covid-19 pandemic, the use of virtual production stages to create ‘in-camera VFX’ (visual effects) – as Ed Thomas calls this process – grew exponentially (Dimension Studio, 2021). Even though the technology was still in its infancy, productions transitioned to virtual production to keep filming during the period of lockdowns and travel restrictions. Equipped with LED walls and green screens, these stages – also termed volumes – have now become almost ubiquitous, creating new job roles and an acute need to update and expand existing skill sets” (Boutellier & Raptis, 2023: 70).

The speed of change that Covid brought to bear on education and the Film Industry effected many areas including new job roles, rapid technological innovations, changes of practice in the industry and new learning technology in and out of classrooms. Covid also forced students and staff to interact online only. The crisis undoubtedly changed the way that courses are delivered but also the skills and abilities that students will need if they choose to work in the Film Industry. My thesis looks to assess what lessons have been learned from COVID-19 in terms of online teaching, what impact it had on the learners at the centre of my study and the use of technology by them and by teachers.

Overall, then research in this area has only just begun and as Howard et al (2021) and Boutellier and Raptis (2023) suggests, there is a lot that remains unknown about the impact of lockdown on Film Education and further research is necessary.

### Literature Review Summary

The thinking behind this study has been influenced by a variety of researchers and scholars in the field of Film Education who have engaged in enduring educational issues surrounding matters of curriculum content; curriculum design; forms of knowledge and the opportunities that Film Education affords students in terms of problem and project-based learning in collaboration and the use of technology in and beyond the walls of the classroom. The writings of Aristotle, (350 BCE) Sennett, (2012), Petrie (2014) Petrie & Stoneman (2015), Dewey (1934), Buckingham (2019 & 2003) Turkle (2015) Eisner (1981) Biesta (2010), Stenhouse (1975) and Siemens (2005) inform the ideas, decisions and arguments presented in this thesis and in carrying out this research. On completion of this thesis, I want to pilot hybrid curriculum models to explore their impact upon learners and teachers in the field of Film Education. On the basis of this pilot, I want to make recommendations for the future policy and practice in relation to curriculum design, development and assessment programs on Film Education in England.

In short, I will be: -

- Applying the forms of knowledge first identified by Aristotle in the content and design of curricula for Film and Creative media students to explore how theory, practice and assessment might be more authentically integrated in their implementation in practice.
- Building upon the work of Lipman (1991) and Wegerif (2013) to challenge and explore how we might use IT in more educational ways in and out of the classroom.
- And finally informed by the work of Stenhouse's (1975), Carr (1988) and Dunne (1998,2005) explore how teachers of Film Education (and in education more generally) might be supported in researching their own practice at curriculum implementation stage

These interventions are guided by the context around the study including Covid disruptions, the new social and economic setting of my students, as laid out by Zuboff (2018) and Fisher (2009) and weighing up the benefits and challenges arts-based courses as per Eisner (1981) and Buckingham (2019) in relation to Film Education in the UK in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

### Ontology, Epistemology, Methods and A “Continuum of Paradigms”

As discussed in the previous chapter, meaningful engagement in dialogue between students both online and offline is pivotal in engendering critical, creative, caring and collaborative thinking skills in students. In the same Chapter, I explain how the intentions of this study are least twofold in that it aims to not only to promote dialogue in the classroom between students, but also in online discussion groups to create collaborative working practices. Many of my concerns around the use of technology in Film Studies and Film Production were not so much that it is increasingly prevalent in classrooms but more about *how* it is being used. Chapter 2 also discusses how fears about how this wider new world order promotes “dataism” (Harari, 2015: 429), or what Shoshana Zuboff calls the “third modernity”, (Zuboff, 2018) and the commodification of citizens by social media. As also discussed in Chapter Two, a casualty in this debate is that dialogue has been reduced to a dialectical shouting match online. A consequence of this is that the quality of debate amongst contributors to this discourse loses nuance and subtlety and dialectical positions remain unmoved or simply reinforced. Also, increasingly, it seems that there is an overreliance on data science in the public and private sectors rather than an account of experience by its subjects, in this case learners. The methodology underpinning this study is influenced by the same issues evident in the online and offline classroom space, namely that AI and data driven deductive methodological research can lose the nuance and underestimate or overlook the experiences of the people that are involved with it – the people behind the numbers. Therefore, this thesis follows a Case Study methodology with elements of both action and practitioner research. The Further Education setting and the types of qualifications that are a part of it require a methodology that can capture the activity of Film Education in all its forms. The uniqueness of the problem being investigated, the experiences of its participants and the nature of curriculum adjustments require that I adopt a methodology that can accurately capture data that can inform further curriculum development recommendations in FE settings. In the following I discuss and analyse the traditions of Case Study, Practitioner and Action research and frame my Ontological and Epistemological position.

Waring in *Research Methods and Methodologies in Education* (Coe, Waring, Hedge & Ashley, 2012) clearly delineates the process of deciding upon a methodological position in a straightforward and clear way. Relating all the stages of the thought process that should go into deciding upon a researcher’s theoretical position, he presents the following (Fig. 14). Waring et al explain that the extremes of the opposing traditions or a “continuum of paradigms” (2012: 17), as he phrases it, are

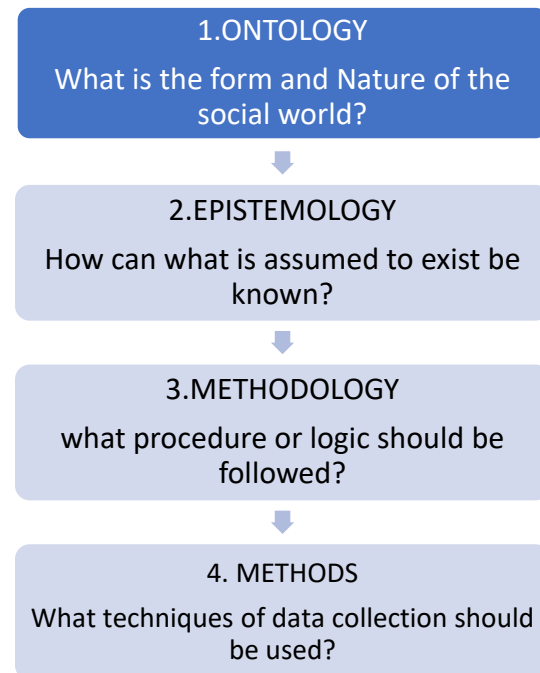
seldom if ever tenable. Waring notes that at each point on the researcher's journey, they should be aware of the assumptions that underpin the position they adopt in relation to the form and nature of the social world and how what is assumed to exist in the social world can be known. Having decided where they stand in relation to these questions a researcher needs to be able to justify it.

Waring presents the different perspectives and discourses surrounding ontology in the form of continuum. He positions as the distinction between realism "a singular objective reality" at one end of the continuum and constructivism where "reality is neither objective or singular but multiple realities are constructed by individuals" (2012:16) at the other. He does the same with different debates and discourses surrounding epistemology where he positions at the same end of the continuum interpretivism, at the same end of the continuum as constructivism where the former recognising "direct observation or measurement" as way to investigate a phenomena, and the latter which takes the view that, "it is the accounts and observations of the world that provide indirect indications.... and thus, knowledge is developed through a process of observation" (2012: 16). In terms of a methodological position, the positivist pursues their findings through deductive logic that "is nomothetic and experimental in nature" (2012: 16). He goes on to point out that the positivist begins with a generalised hypothesis and tests it out in large number of cases.

On the other hand, he notes the interpretivist employs inductive logic that is, "ideographic and dialectical and hermeneutical in nature" (2012: 16). The interpretivist therefore begins with a small number of cases and moves tentatively and incrementally toward what may plausibly be inferred to be more general.

Waring goes on to point out that the methods that stem from the ontological, epistemological and methodological research decisions made above, should be carefully chosen to ensure that the methods (whether that is through still images, interviews, questionnaires etc...) used to collect the data, are appropriate to the focus and purpose of the study and the research questions that it seeks to address.

Figure 34 Waring's relationship between ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods (2003: 16)



As Waring goes on to explain, the tension between these two extremes of this paradigm have played out over the decades in various guises and how writers such as Biesta, (2010) and Bryman (2016) have looked to move on from the debate since the 1990's in an attempt to move the paradigm discussion forward (Entman, 1993). These authors suggest that there is place for both quantitative and qualitative research methods and that 'mixed methods' are useful ways of seeing a phenomenon in the whole. For me, the binary opposition between the "continuum of paradigms" is one that is fraught with ideological peril and that the ontological position a researcher starts with, ultimately frames the methodology they should pursue.

In short, I should consider what I want to find out through my research questions and where my assumptions about what I already know lie. What I intend to find out, I argue below, will help me guide my methodological position and therefore how I will choose to illuminate my research questions. In the following section I introduce the two prominent methodical decisions I have taken following a case study, action research paradigm and the pros and cons of doing so. Later in the chapter I discuss these in more detail with a detailed analysis of their benefits and shortcomings.

### The Case Study

Hamilton (2011) provides a useful introduction to the case study in the British Educational Research Association's archive. She defines a case study as simply a tool that can be, "used to build up a rich picture of an entity, using different kinds of data collection and gathering the views, perceptions, experiences and/or ideas of diverse individuals" (2011). An intention of the practitioner research project which forms the focus of this study involves observing, describing, interpreting and analysing data in the context in which those data are generated and trying to make meaning from those data. The case study method offers researchers the opportunities to observe and garner the views of the subjects operating in a setting. Rather than record numerical data, adopting a case study approach affords the researcher the chance to 'dig deep' and find sources of information that may not be immediately obvious or apparent. This can be done, Hamilton maintains, because it produces "rich data". She goes on to explain that, "it can give the researcher in-depth insights into participants' lived experiences within this particular context" (2011). In order to ensure that the case study is rigorous, Hamilton suggests, that a variety of perspectives can be used to augment the findings of a case study. As she explains:

"The use of multiple perspectives and different kinds of data collection is characteristic of high-quality case study and lends weight to the validity of the findings. The use of two or more forms of data collection and/or the use of two or more perspectives is known as 'triangulation'. Through triangulating data and/or perspectives, it is possible to gain a fuller and more robust picture of the case, enhancing claims to quality" (Hamilton, 2011).

Hamilton's point on triangulation coupled with Flyvberg's (2006) analysis of 'what can be misinterpreted' when conducting research has given me a better oversight of the research process. In assessing the tradition of case-study research Flyvberg highlights 5 misunderstandings and argues for its strength as a qualitative research practice. Throughout his defense of this tradition, he looks to correct the following 5 'incorrect' assumptions made about the practice and legitimize the techniques used in the field of research.

"Misunderstanding no. 1. General, theoretical (context-independent) knowledge is more valuable than concrete, practical (context dependent) knowledge.

Misunderstanding no. 2. One cannot generalize on the basis of an individual case; therefore, the case study cannot contribute to scientific development.

Misunderstanding no. 3. The case study is most useful for generating hypotheses, that is, in the first stage of a total research process, while other methods are more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory-building.

Misunderstanding no. 4. The case study contains a bias towards verification, that is, a tendency to confirm the researcher's preconceived notions.

Misunderstanding no. 5. It is often difficult to summarize and develop general propositions and theories on the basis of specific case studies" (Flyvberg, 2006: 3-4).

Flyvberg advocates case study research but highlights issues that researchers employing it have to be mindful of their situatedness and positionality in order to strengthen the warrant of the findings of that case study research. This requires me to be wary of subjective bias and of the risk of verifying preconceived notions, rather than challenging and seeing a phenomenon for what it is. This involves establishing an interplay between subjectivity and objectivity in making meaning from data derived from different sources in this study including historical analysis, semi structured interviews and critical incidents. Making the processes involved in my analysis of the data as transparent as possible is therefore essential in ensuring the trustworthiness of research such as this (Nowell et al 2017).

By studying the factors that have impacted on those phenomena and systematically and methodically reflecting upon interactions, interviews, and the views of the subjects in my case study at different cycle points, I identify and interpret the themes that emerge from analysis of data throughout the research. In the same publication, Flyvberg notes Hubert Dreyfuss' identification of the importance of

intuition, he quotes him at length in relation to looking for the ideas and themes that ‘shine’ in defining a paradigmatic case:

“Heidegger says, you recognize a paradigm case because it shines, but I’m afraid that is not much help. You just have to be intuitive. We all can tell what a better or worse case – of a Cézanne painting, for instance. But I can’t think there could be any rules for deciding what makes Cézanne a paradigmatic modern painter. ... [I]t is a big problem in a democratic society where people are supposed to justify what their intuitions are. In fact, nobody really can justify what their intuition is. So, you have to make up reasons, but it won’t be the real reasons” (Dreyfuss in Flyvberg, 2006: 16).

In defending ‘intuition’ Flyvberg goes on to point out that even though he regards it as being problematic to not being able to justify your intuition. However, he also notes that intuition is accountable in academic research, the

“... value of the case study will depend on the validity claims that researchers can place on their study” ...and that..., “Like other good craftsmen, all that researchers can do is use their experience and intuition to assess whether they believe a given case is interesting in a paradigmatic context” (Flyvberg, 2006: 17).

In analyzing and interpreting data, being wary of subjective bias and in using my intuition is a given. However, identifying themes and inductively analyzing the data in this research as it occurs is of the highest importance. In finding, representing and reporting themes that emerge from the phenomena, I observe and describe the lived experiences of learners and teachers participating in the research.

Experience is important to Aristotle (384 -322 BCE). According to Aristotle, ontologically it is difficult to say with any certainty that knowledge is fixed and that there is a universal truth to pursue. Therefore, it is safe to surmise that the only Universal truth here is the process of questioning itself and observing what is occurring. Dewey and Bentley make this point in *Knowing and the Known* (1949). They see the flow of knowledge as transactional (the use of transactional here denotes careful thinking across the action rather than instrumental thinking). An experience that occurs in the interaction between an organism–environment. Dewey’s concept of transaction thinking highlights how,

“...the transactional is in fact that point of view which systematically proceeds upon the ground that knowing is co-operative and as such is integral with communication. By its own processes it is allied with the postulational. It demands that statements be made as descriptions of events in terms of durations in time and areas in space. It excludes assertions of fixity and attempts to impose them. It installs openness and flexibility in the very process of knowing. It treats knowledge as inquiry itself—as a goal within inquiry, not as a terminus outside or beyond inquiry (Dewey & Bentley, 1949: 97).

In the practical world, a student's experience of the educator's world is limited by their experience to date. Their learning journey is directed by their teacher, who themselves are directed by institutional and national policies and imperatives. If the research Methodology underpinning this study aims to be anything, it aims to be study of lived experience, subjective, democratic, and subject to the interplay and ‘flow’ between student and staff accounts of experience and learning.

There is a tension that lies between the experience that students have during their college experience and the outside pressures that endeavor to provide them with an education in the arts worthy of the name. I see daily the disparity between the aspirations of a student and the intentions of their education.

Building on the work of William (2019) Gregson makes clear, simply following the data does not allow for a rounded understanding of a situation, as she points out “protons and neutrons don’t have good and bad days” but people do. (Gregson, 2019). The point to note here is that there are too many variables that permeate a social setting. Ontologically, in the case of this study, the constructivist - interpretivist paradigm allows an authentic and epistemologically thorough way of examining my college’s setting, my students, the historical context of my institution, the local area’s history and even the choice of specifications which shape the courses that I teach, all have a bearing on my own working environment. The case study in this thesis provides an opportunity to examine the lived experience of students and teachers at the heart of it.

### Nelson’s Practice as Research (PaR) and Kemmis’ Action Research (AR)

“Action research aims at changing three things: practitioners’ practices, their understandings of their practices, and the conditions in which they practice. These three things – practices, how we understand them, and the conditions that shape them – are inevitably and incessantly bound together with each other” (Kemmis, 2009: 1).

Both Nelson (2021) and Kemmis (2009) influence my methodological thinking. Both have cemented their respective models as authentic, trustworthy and rigorous. Nelson's *Practice as Research model is used in a variety of academic and cultural disciplines*, whereas Kemmis' Action Research has been well established in educational and health research. Nelson makes the case for PaR in that film making, theatre, art as well as other creative endeavours as worthy of recognition by the 'academy' when presented as evidence in research projects. In debating the historical difficulty in awarding this type of arts-based research as worthy of PhD recognition, Nelson advocates a *designing-doing-making* approach. Nelsons model for PaR points towards "Practice as Research involves a *being-doing-thinking* that can generate new knowing across a range of intra-disciplines" (Nelson, 2022: 19). He continues that "many research insights emerge, however, in *designing-doing-making* processes, and process is arguably as important, if not more important, than product outcomes" (2021: 41). The process, as Nelson articulates, is the *thing* that is worthy of studying. My research methods do not include a numerical analysis of grades, of outcomes determined by specifications. As my research questions signal, I am trying to find out what students and teachers *experiences* of Film Education curricula are, including what we can learn from their accounts of experience going forward.

In exploring Maya Deren's research on communities in Haiti, for example, he recognises how working and researching in new ways can create huge opportunities for future researchers and create a baseline shift in how research is conducted. He explores how Deren saw her work as simply documenting rituals and ceremonies and required that this only presented a two dimensional and observers representation of the culture and society she was studying. She decided she needed to be a part of the group she was researching and become a part of the dynamic she was studying. As Nelson illuminates:-

"The documentary camera was objectifying from the outside when the real significance of the ceremonies could only be understood from the inside. She (the researcher) turned participant-observer over seven years and the interplay between insider and outsider perspectives afforded her insights. It was a seminal project which subsequently informed approaches in Anthropology" (Nelson 2022, 31).

Echoing Aristotle's point above, Nelson states that, "key to my approach to PaR, then, is an acceptance that knowledge is neither fixed nor absolute" (Nelson, 2022: 48). Nelson's make the case for the outcome of PaR must contribute towards new knowledge but compares new findings or 'contributions to knowledge' as potentially incremental. He points out that not all research should necessarily result in a groundbreaking change in practice or thinking, and ...

"... to set the bar for new knowledge at the level of the paradigm shift is to set it too high. Fortunately, for most of us, substantial insights are more readily attainable, and this is in no way

to demean them. If inherent in a practice, they simply need to be *attended to* in order to identify them and make them visible" (Nelson 2022: 41).

My students are creating works of art, film, through their courses and their teachers are helping them, teaching and facilitating them to achieve this. My methodology itself highlights the unique and precarious location that FE takes up. On the one hand you have the view that FE should be practice based and vocational where students are made 'work or industry ready' and are a 'product' of the educational institutions they emerge from and on the other hand; that FE contends with the view that it should also provide 'academic' 'A'-Level pathways. My methodology aims to capture the experience of students who journey in both of these pathways. Analysing course "results" would throw up inconsistencies as the assessment for both pathways are so different. Nelson's work here shines a light on what assessment might look like, not only in HE, but in FE also. If 'artefacts' are valid as forms of assessment beyond the traditional thesis model in post graduate study, an educational arena where academic rigour is justifiably investigated it stands to reason that this must also be considered at Level 3, in both vocational and 'A'-level courses.

Nelson recognises that he is influenced by the traditions of action research in education that which my study follows. In *Practice as Research* (2021) he says that action research is firmly established in educational settings and that, "this approach in Education allows practitioners to conduct exploratory practice, reflect upon it and make adjustments in a manner similar to arts practitioners making their work" (Nelson, 2021). For Kemmis, Action Research is emancipatory. It allows those who take it up the chance to reflect on what they do and how they do it.

"They learn by doing; they collect data about their efforts; they consciously and self-consciously, critically and self-critically transform their ways of thinking, doing and relating in the world. They are exploring and reconstructing the practice architectures that construct their lives" (Kemmis, 209 :10).

Both Nelson's thoughts on process and Kemmis's ideas on the benefits of action research are influential in the design of the methodology and methods employed in this study. In the Methodology, Ethics and Discussion section below. I discuss the concerns around action research and some of the criticisms with which it must contend.

## Arts Based Research

“Sometimes it’s difficult but you always have this image of the perfect thing which you can never achieve but which you never stop trying to achieve. That’s your signpost and your guide. You can’t plot things out. You have to trust in, you know, wherever it comes from” (Cormac McCarthy in Conlin, 2007).



Broadly speaking, Creative Media and Film Education sits under the umbrella of the arts. The tradition of arts-based subjects can be seen to have influenced and guided the assessment, and pedagogical practices present in Creative Media Production and Film Education. As discussed in Chapter 2, there are a variety of factors that make Film and Media production a social activity that requires collaboration amongst a team of people. There are many specialist pathways that a person can pursue, from lighting to set design or postproduction, editing and special effects and with each there are different forms of knowledge that needs to be engaged at different points during its creation. Different forms of knowledge that Aristotle respectively describes *techné*, *sophia*, *nous*, *epistēmē* and *phrónēsis* are all present in an individuals practice in and creation of a film. To reflect the complexity of researching students making film and media in an educational setting, this study takes a nuanced approach to research methods and overarching research methodology. As well as the historical analysis semi-structured interviews, case study, critical incidents and action research traditions, the use of Arts Based Research (ABR) methodology in education is also one to consider.

Figure 35 *The Road* (Hillcoat, 2009)

Education sits under the umbrella of the arts. The tradition of arts-based subjects can be seen to have influenced and guided the assessment, and pedagogical practices present in Creative Media Production and Film Education. As discussed in Chapter 2, there are a variety of factors that make Film and Media production a social activity that requires collaboration amongst a team of people. There are many specialist pathways that a person can pursue, from lighting to set design or postproduction, editing and special effects and with each there are different forms of knowledge that needs to be engaged at different points during its creation. Different forms of knowledge that Aristotle respectively describes *techné*, *sophia*, *nous*, *epistēmē* and *phrónēsis* are all present in an individuals practice in and creation of a film. To reflect the complexity of researching students making film and media in an educational setting, this study takes a nuanced approach to research methods and overarching research methodology. As well as the historical analysis semi-structured interviews, case study, critical incidents and action research traditions, the use of Arts Based Research (ABR) methodology in education is also one to consider.

McNiff simply defines ABR as the “use of the arts as objects of inquiry as well as modes of investigation” (McNiff, 1988: 15) and that ABR is “a method of inquiry that uses elements of the creative arts therapy experience, including making art by the researcher” (McNiff, 1988: 13). McNiff tackles criticisms head on and makes the point here that there is a nervousness about the rigour or perception of ABR as ‘not scientific enough’. As an ‘art’ and relatively new subject to study, these perceptions of my subject area of Creative Media Production and Film Studies, as ‘soft, easy, you just watch films’, are all too familiar. McNiff however defends the relatively new tradition of ABR as it offers “boundless possibilities” and resists the temptation to create a checklist and implement “a set of principles established in advance.” (McNiff 1988: 15). While numerical data are obviously useful in understanding a problem, sometimes, to understand a complex situation that contains a plethora of variables, i.e., a social situation in the classroom, a researcher must employ a careful, sometimes

personal, methodological approach to understand the forces that are acting up on the phenomena being studied.

In a personal-account case study for *Arts Based Research*, Barone (2012) retells a meeting between himself and a 15-year-old high school "drop out". In *The Case of Billy Charles Barnett* he articulates how students can be left behind because of the constraints of a narrow curriculum, but the reasons for them being in this situation in the first place can be complex and not always down to the curriculum itself. Barone illustrates the power of case study to illustrate how in the particular resides the general. In a single case he explores the reasons for Billy Charles' low attainment and repetition of 7<sup>th</sup> grade by interviewing him in a McDonalds and talking at length about his childhood, his experiences growing up and his bond with the natural world that was fostered through his father who had come back into his life after splitting with his mother. After taking Custody of Billy Charles, his father ends up beating him. He describes how Billy had also seen a friend die because of a drug overdose and all of this before the age of fourteen. Billy, as Barone reveals, had suicidal thoughts. Through this single case, Barone highlights the experience of an individual, Billy is not simply a number but representative of how a system is excluding a whole socio-economic group of people and their cultural heritage. Barone brings to life how Billy Charles' own knowledge of his natural environment was far more advanced than that of the interviewer who, as Barone admits, "having ventured from my book lined office" found the 'drop out' to have "a keen intelligence and an eagerness to share his knowledge about his world" (2012, 137). Barone therefore had found that students from rural, disadvantaged back grounds were not just part of a 'data set' but that each had a variety of social factors that had played *on them* before beginning to unpick the curricula that they had experienced. Those 'experiences' require an understanding that is beyond numerical data and therefore beyond the questions of what a curriculum has 'done to them' but more critically what a student brings to a curriculum and how they interact with it considering their own background and story. With reference to the works of Dewey, Barone points out that "one cannot effectively lead students outward without starting from the place where they currently reside" (Barone, 2012: 144) and this is equally the case of the students that are involved in this study. Each has their own story and local context. It is worth repeating that here Barone brings into focus the inequalities and injustices of a whole system of education into view in a single case. To address my research questions therefore, I argue that putting an ABR approach to work in the conduct and representation of this research is more appropriate than a positivist methodology. Eisner highlights this point at length below.

“Artistic approaches to research are less concerned with the discovery of truth than with the creation of meaning. What art seeks is not the discovery of the laws of nature about which true statements or explanations can be given, but rather the creation of images that people will find meaningful and from which their fallible and tentative views of the world can be altered, rejected, or made more secure. Truth implies singularity and monopoly. Meaning implies relativism and diversity. Truth is more closely wedded to consistency and logic, meaning to diverse interpretation and coherence. Each approach to the study of educational situations has its own unique perspective to provide.”

(Eisner, 1981: 12)

The ABR approach to the conduct and representation of educational research therefore involves finding meaning in my student’s *experiences* of the curriculum. In other words, what is important and meaningful to them in their experiences of an education in the arts/film studies. A challenge here is to identify at what (if any) stage my students experience, what Dewey (1934, 2004) describes as “heightened vitality” where creating film or media intermingles with something educational, a positive social experience, problem solving, analysis, evocative experience etc., which leads to the development of different forms of knowledge including what Aristotle would have described as *Phrónēsis* (practical wisdom) and *Praxis* (moral action doing the decent thing at the right time in a social situation – not for reasons of self-interest but for the greater/wider public good).

I have observed this process many times with media and film students over the 13 years of teaching at Further Education level. Students come to know the problem that they are faced with and over two years use the analytical or creative tools they have learnt and, in most cases, feel more confident about either producing, justifying or working with others to solve it. How best to monitor and account for these positive learning experiences is governed by the methodological approaches I choose to take in this research. In a previous research paper, *Group Learning Online: finding space for digging deeper* (Curtis & Cossey, 2018), we shot interviews and B-roll of students reflecting on their experiences of learning creative courses at FE level. This film was part of the research. The shooting, editing and construction of it was part of an Arts Based Research approach, the process of editing together the film, shooting it with my students became a part of the research journey. By using an ABR approach to the conduct and representation of this research, I hope to find, describe and represent the meaning behind these experiences. ABR uses a variety of well-established methods such as qualitative data, field research, interviews, stories, poems, images, case studies, accounts of experience and systematic reviews, all of which are discussed in more detail in the methods section below.

## Data in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

“Art is a mode of prediction not found in charts and statistics, and it insinuates possibilities of human relations not to be found in rule and precept, admonition and administration” (Dewey, 1934: 349).

“Critics of Twitter point to the predominance of the hive mind in such social media, the kind of groupthink that submerges independent thinking in favour of conformity to the group, the collective” (Cross, 2011: 62).

In Greek, the word *Algos* translates as pain. The regular, repeated use of data to micromanage us, our frustration in the face of it and the danger and fear of being ‘pigeonholed’ by algorithms is evident in the work of Zuboff (2018) and others. According to ‘dataism’ (Harrari, 2015) we, the public, are simply viewed as big data sets. Used by online companies to be analysed, our data sold, and for us to be manipulated and controlled through clever marketing and ‘nudge’ strategies (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). This approach to human interactions is both cynical and ‘cold’. It ignores the many factors that act upon a social environment and the social phenomena within it. As identified earlier, dataism itself is an empirical and rather sinister concept that turns human beings, their worldly experiences and use of information into mathematical data. This process, by which information flows is the “supreme value,” (Harari, 2015) has arguably become a real-life currency through which we are ‘controlled’. As discussed earlier, this limits the instrumental and manipulative action flow of knowledge and learning and challenges pre-conceived ideas about what educators should do with information and how it should be passed on and used. My argument here is that education is not simply about ‘information transfer’ and its measurement. Numbers and data, I argue, do not and cannot wholly capture and represent human experience. Human experience needs to be recounted, not counted.

However, it would be difficult and obviously unwise to discount any form of empirical quantitative data capture in this study. Success rates, retention and high grades do help to identify the outcomes for learners, albeit by measures that are set by and enforced by educational managers and exam boards, at a local and national level. The deeper question is, does achievement of these instrumental measures represent ‘good education’? In response to this question, the first point to note is that the assessment criteria that are applied to all Arts/Media/Film based education are based on crude measures of educational ‘outcomes’ which are themselves heavily influenced by a technical-rational, rather clockwork, world view. When I am marking film and media creative works of my students, for

example, I find that marking matrixes reduce artistic endeavor to a set of narrow, very subjective and shallow single word-based judgements concerning what we mean by good work in Film, Arts and Media subjects. In the UAL assessment specification, terms such as ‘sophisticated’ earmark Distinction level work, ‘Good’ equals merit level and ‘limited’ or ‘sufficient’ denote a Pass. Similarly, In the ‘A’-Level Film Studies specification assessment judgements are based on grades and are reduced to the descriptors such as ‘Excellent’ (Band 5) ‘Good’, (Band 4) ‘Satisfactory’ (Band 3) ‘Basic’ (Band 2) and ‘Limited’ (Band1) – each descriptor is given ‘indicative content’ in the creative work to help assessors reach a decision. Standardisation practices are used to demonstrate rigour in the use of these descriptors in both ‘A’-Level and Vocational courses. However, their suitability in judging the worth of creative works is questionable. For example, is an ‘Excellent’ piece of work comparable to a good piece of work? Is *techné* (technique) valued more than independent thought and creative judgement in distinguishing between ‘excellent’ and ‘good’? On a wider scale the single word descriptors that are used by Ofsted to judge schools are equally troublesome. What criteria are used and what determines the difference between an ‘outstanding’ school and a school that is ‘considered by Ofsted to be inadequate’? As Coffield (2017) notes:

“Presently inspection fails in its primary objective because it promotes fear rather than improvement – tutors learn little more than how to concoct the most favourable outcome possible. Instead of engaging in genuine dialogue with inspectors, managers feel forced to manipulate data in an attempt to second guess Ofsted’s ever-changing demands. They become alienated from a process that is more akin to an incubus than a stimulus for change...

No one with a statistical imagination can take seriously the accuracy claimed by observers who reduce the complexities of classrooms or workshops to a number between one and four; or the myriad of tasks undertaken by an FE College to a single adjective. Such overweening pretension to exactitude should be discarded” (Coffield, 2017).

These same troubling concerns, tensions and dilemmas involved in describing or assessing a situation in a truthful, trustworthy and authentic way, whilst not being constrained by a narrow set of pre-determined, deductive, descriptions of assessment criteria which reduce the complexities of works of art to a short phrase or a single word, frame the rationale justifying ontological, epistemological and methodological decisions I have made in shaping this research. In the following discussion, I explore the arguments surrounding different debates in relation to Positivist and Interpretivist approaches to educational research and choices of research methods. Arguably, a quantitative empirical approach to ‘capturing’ data is useful but only up to a point. As Gregson notes, “this scientific approach is not

god given” (Gregson, 2019) and other methodological approaches to educational research are equally, if not more, worthwhile.

Therefore, the interaction between the researcher and participants in the research is not linear but circular and this can allow more introspection and a deeper analysis on the contextual factors that act on a situation. Proponents of the interpretivist paradigm highlight the democratic nature of qualitative research and its benefits to the education sector, as Carr and Kemmis illustrate:

“The participatory democratic approach of collaborative action research gives form and substance to the idea of a self-reflective critical community committed to the development of education” (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 5).

By its very nature in conducting interpretivist research, the researcher is giving a ‘voice’ to those who participate in the study where the intention is to represent them as democratically and authentically as possible in the completed reported research – the people behind the numbers. If indeed interpretivist participatory research is to be worthy of the name, participants can also help to steer the research. Donahue (2007) points out that in interpretivist approaches to educational research,

“The researcher uses his or her skills as a social being to try to understand how others understand their world. Knowledge, in this view, is constructed by mutual negotiation and it is specific to the situation being investigated” (O’Donoghue, 2007: 9-10).

There could be a temptation therefore to dismiss the Positivist methodology in educational research all together. So as not to muddy the ontological and epistemological waters, I intend to use qualitative data collected by the methods described in the next section.

Framing this study is the use of ‘double hermeneutics’ (Giddens, 1982). As Giddens explained of the social sciences, there is a two-way relationship between what is being studied and the researcher. As he makes clear, “the concepts of the social sciences are not produced about an independently constituted subject-matter, which continues regardless of what these concepts are. The ‘findings’ of the social sciences very often enter constitutively into the world they describe.” (Giddens, 1987: 20). The setting in which the research problem is set is where I practice as teacher. By researching and working with my students, my practice may change, and their experience of learning may also change with it.

As explained above, adopting an interpretivist position can be viewed as being too subjective. However, I would argue that accepting this subjectivity, being aware of it, and maintaining consciousness of my own ideological bias outweighs the criticisms of the use of a constructivist-interpretivist approach in this research. To ensure this subjectivity/objectivity debate is thoroughly examined however, in the following section I

## Methodology Discussion, Ethics and Statement

### Part of the Problem

I am a part of the social dynamic of the classroom and this educational research study is unique in that it illuminates and gives texture to the context in which I work with my learners. As Usher makes clear:-

“In social research both the subject and (the researcher) and the object (other people/students) of research have the same characteristic of being interpreters or sense seekers” (Usher and Scott, 1996, 19).

Both myself and my learners, therefore, stand to benefit from the research. Although a sense of caution should be exercised in expressing the ‘voice’ that is given to the research participants contributing to this study to ensure that I present these in an authentic and as trustworthy a way as possible. In the following section I lay out some of the key concerns around action research, the issues around practitioner research and discuss the ethics around following these traditions and overall ethical concerns that I should be aware of.

In what he calls an approach against “Scientism”, Usher (1996) argues that a constructivist ontology coupled with an interpretivist epistemology allows deeper investigation and permits a more introspective and “circular investigation of a problem” (Usher in Usher & Scott, 1996, 18). According to Usher (1998), interpretivism is seen to be more nuanced as it allows a more context-sensitive exploration of phenomena in the social world. An interpretivist epistemology offers us a way of coming to know the world in which we work through interpretations of lived experience and enables us to teach in a way that gives a voice to the other people that are a part of that world, permitting them to come into presence in the research.

This is a study of lived experience, my own and those of my students. It is based upon several assumptions. The first of these accepts an ontology which assumes that the social world is constructed

by the human beings who inhabit that world. The second accepts an epistemology which rests upon the assumption that a socially constructed world can be known through shared interpretations of accounts of experience. This constructivist-interpretive, hermeneutic approach appears, is guided by an inductive logic or methodology which begins with the study of particular cases and moves tentatively and incrementally toward what may plausibly be inferred to be more general. The methodology or logic underpinning this study therefore begins in and with individual experience. It then moves incrementally and cumulatively toward what may be reasonably inferred to be more general.

I justify above why the ontological, epistemological, and methodological approaches to this study are appropriate to research problems and the research questions which frame the parameters of it. However, I also suggest some alternatives below. I also consider some of the problems with binary framings of ontological, epistemological and methodological positions and explain how and why my study draws on a more pragmatic approach to educational research.

“Only one is a wanderer; two together are always going somewhere.”



Figure 36 Madeleine Elster/Judy Barton in *Vertigo* (Hitchcock, 1957)

A potential criticism of a constructivist ontology coupled with an interpretivist epistemology is that the researcher has their own subjective view of the students, the course and institution and this could potentially impair judgements and produce biased conclusions. This subjectivity, inherent within an inductive methodology, makes this a possibility. You could consider Alfred Hitchcock's use of camera subjectivity as a useful comparison. His choice of shot selection is regarded as experimentally subjective, and he plays with this device in his films. His usage of subjective camera work is intended,

some would argue, to place the spectator in a position that is aligned with him. We see the film world, the characters and story through *his* eyes. As Laura Mulvey made clear in her feminist critique *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975) of Hollywood films, this is problematic if you're not a white, heterosexual, middle aged man. You are shown something from a perspective, which she calls the 'male gaze'. With her theory comes the idea that whatever your background, you are required to position yourself with the film-maker's perspective. That perspective could well have a certain ideological, sexually orientated, and gendered standpoint. In relation to my study, my perception of the world in which I work has been shaped by my cultural capital, my situated culture, my experience of education and other factors that influence the way I perceive that world. There is a danger that this viewpoint may influence what I am able to see in the data, my results and the conclusions I arrive at from these results. This is discussed in some detail in Chapter four.

However, for my part as practitioner-researcher in this research, it would be impossible to separate both the subject (me) and the objects of the study (my students, colleagues and institution). As Usher points out, "the subject and the object of research commonly located in pre understood worlds cannot ... be separated. There is no object independent of a context of knowing and of knowing activities of subjects" (Usher and Scott, 1996: 19). This interrelationship between the participants in this study as my students and me as teacher *and* researcher creates the opportunity for all of us to learn from our experiences but also raises ethical issues in terms of the relationship between the researcher and the subject area.

The work of Gadamer is useful here in exploring the relationship between participant and researcher. As Gadamer makes clear, in the conduct of a research study there can be, what he calls, a fusion of horizons. He goes on to argue that "hermeneutic understanding is ... a learning experience involving dialogue between ourselves as researchers and that which we are trying to understand" (Usher and Scott, 1996: 22). Gadamer contends that, "Knowledge formation is conceived as a circular iterative spiral not linear and cumulative as portrayed in positive empiricist epistemology" (Usher and Scott, 1996: 19).

## Action Research, Reflection and Teacher Education

"You cannot understand a system until you try to change it" (Attributed to Kurt Lewin in Tolman et al, 1996)

Action Research, put simply, is the investigation of an area by identifying a problem and changing the systems that act on it to see if it can be 'fixed' or improved. I not only have to consider an ABR approach to the conduct and representation of this research but also recognize that I am changing the very environment in which I am working in to research my changes on it. Not only in terms of curriculum but also IT, teaching space and by involving students in the research process itself. Norton provides a simple overview of the steps of action research. She points out that an Action Research project should follow the following steps.

“Step 1 identifying a problem paradox issue difficulty

Step 2 thinking of ways to tackle the problem

Step 3 doing it

Step 4 In valuating it (actual research findings)

Step 5 modifying future practice” (Norton,2009: 70)

Action research, by its very nature, requires both researcher and subjects involved in the area being researched to check and observe changes to a practice. The researcher therefore is not 'unearthing a cultural fossil' but rather investigating a live social space where variables are the only constant. Action research therefore is suited to educational research and can illuminate existing and/or changes to practices, work environments and pedagogy. The Action research model is a well-established teaching practice and with this comes benefits and drawbacks. It is one of the first tools I learnt on my PGCE training. We were encouraged to keep journals and record "critical incidents" after which were encouraged to reflect upon them and look at solutions to how to approach those challenges next time. In some cases, this was a useful task, in others, it was not. A critical incident I encountered whilst on my first placement in South London was to recount how, when asking a GCSE Media Student for some homework, he replied that if I asked again, he would "shank me". Whether or not his stabbing threat was real, I do not know but thinking about the incident at the end of the day, it made me question whether any educational theorists or research spirals would have any pedagogical insight to this interaction. Changing my practice however, reflecting on what does and does not work seems a natural and obvious thing to do in teaching, and for this reason, it is therefore worth scrutinising.

In support of the action research approach, Pine draws out the historical disconnect between educational research and practice in *Teacher Action Research: Building knowledge Democracies*. He points to the importance of action research and the role it plays in schools and colleges. In a 10 point (2009 :6-9) criticism of what, "ivory tower" university education faculties have failed to grasp in

researching education, he explores numerous 'problems' that a lack of teacher research has generated. As Pine points out, University researchers have, "lost touch with the reality of schools and the multiple demands forces and issues that affect the daily lives of teachers and students" (Pine, 2009: 7). Action research therefore affords a critical insight into the actualities of schools and colleges by the very people working in them. Pine goes on to cite Mishlar (1979) who makes the case for understanding the contextual factors that operate on a situation rather than following a positivist or empirical framework. in, *Meaning in Context: Is there Any Other Kind?* Mishlar contends,

"We all know that human action and experience are context dependent and can only be understood within their contexts... We rely on context to understand the behaviour and speech of others and to ensure that our own behaviour is understood, implicitly grounding our interpretations of motives and intentions in context..." (Mishlar, 1979: 2).

My own research has been influenced by decisions I have made, external factors such as national lock downs, students' responses to the environment they work in and colleagues who have worked with in an increasingly digital teaching context. Understanding and exploring the contextual factors in my study therefore is crucial, I would argue, to unpick the meaning that I hope to find behind my research questions and distillation of data.

### Teachers as Researchers

Higgins (2016) points out that there are some concerns over Action Research's implementation in educational settings. Firstly, he draws attention to how the process of research itself is a distraction for teachers. He argues that the process of research distracts from the 'process' of teaching. Making the point that the two activities are portrayed as entirely distinct entities. Secondly, he points out that Action based research is not achievable in the current UK and USA education systems because of the 'top down' effect. Thirdly, and more problematically, lies Higgins' accusation that teachers are not capable of quality research. That there is a 'mystification' of academia that renders all relevant research by teachers as either, unobtainable or untrustworthy. He raises these concerns and in effect questions the usefulness of action research for teachers in schools and its inclusion part of teacher education.

As Foreman-Peck and Heilbronn note, Higgins' issues with action research are that he argues that it has been reduced to a simplistic "meme style" practice that is superficial and serves only to 'tick the box' of staff development.

“The action research cycle has become an ‘epitome’ reified Voice saying no more than intellectual junk. It has become an isolated meme or cultural fossil, passed on by imitation, easily represented in numerous images available on the Internet. These are handily converted into power point diagrams or reflective stages, for so called professional development purposes” (Foreman-Peck & Heilbronn, 2018: 130)

As discussed in Chapter Two, my own journey as a teacher has involved a litany of staff development days full of these quick-fix interventions and I can recognise some of Higgin’s concerns. The old adage that ‘weighing the pig doesn’t make it any fatter’ comes to mind here. Students’ reflection on their own learning is, what I would argue, an important stage of their journey of learning how to ‘know’ but the use of the terms ‘knowing’ and ‘knowledge’ should be differentiated here. Dewey (1949) makes it clear that ‘knowledge’ as a concept is a transactional process (of thinking across the action) and potential end outcomes whereas knowing is understanding what is happening and anticipating the likely outcomes of what is known. In responding to Higgin’s criticism of action research however, Foreman-Peck & Heilbronn present the benefits of the model and defends its importance to teachers and educators:

“When teachers engage in action research with their supervisors and mentors, they necessarily reflect from a strong ethical basis on diverse methods and tools; they define and negotiate the aims and ends of their research, and the ethics of researching with their human subjects.” (Foreman-Peck, 2018: 16)

By observing and reflecting upon my practice and changing the micro system within which I work, study, and teach, I am reflecting on my practice from a ‘bottom up’ viewpoint. My research is derived from what I already know from experience and practice about my students and how I interpret my subject specialist curriculum area. This is coupled with my passion for Film and Media Production Studies together with my own subject knowledge and my knowledge of teaching. I am making research decisions that are free from any institutional or national agendas. This action research has not been passed down or imposed upon me by a College leadership group. It is something I have decided to do. Rather than just passively interpreting what is occurring, or enacting what Higgins calls “professional development clip-art” (Higgins, 2018: 169) my research offers me the opportunity to reflect upon my practice and shine a light on an issue that goes to heart of teaching and learning in all of the arts.

Despite this sentiment, there are still dissenting voices about the teacher as researcher and the processes that are used to conduct that research. In a cynical assessment of teacher led reflection and practice in Action Research, Higgins reflects himself upon the outcomes of it.

“One typical image shows the sequence “Plan-Act-Observe-Reflect” spiralling around a central upward arrow marked “continual progress”. Such diagrams are designed not to provoke epistemological reflection about the relation of knowledge and action but simply to evoke the basic meme of modernity (Higgins, 2018: 169).

Action research, despite its criticisms above, I would argue allows me the opportunity to understand my situation by making changes to it, as Lewin (1946) notes above, “you cannot understand a system, until you try to change it”. As part of that system, I see my role as teacher and researcher as Higgins points out not as being compromised, but rather that it’s an integral part of my journey as a teacher in a setting, as an integral part of my understanding of the process of education, and the contribution I can make to providing a better educational experience for students that I teach.

### Practitioner Research – For and Against

As a practitioner-researcher in my own place of work, there are issues surrounding ‘insider-research’ that need to be carefully considered and addressed. As highlighted above, by adopting the constructivist ontology together with interpretivist epistemology in conducting this research, I need to be aware of my own subjective view and be prepared to analyse my own research methods, findings and conclusions thoroughly openly and honestly in order to take account and minimise any subjective bias in this study. At the same time, I am mindful of the care I need to take in the process of researching my own subject specialist area. I am also mindful that in changing my teaching practices, the methods and strategies that I teach will bring their own set of challenges and the conclusions that I draw will be judged in relation to how carefully I analyse the data and present the findings of my report.

In a defense of the Action Research (AR) Methodology, Heilbronn and Foreman-Peck (2018) make a strong case for the benefits of action research conducted by teachers. They note how action research can be liberating and develop staff’s voice in driving change in schools and colleges. AR aims at,

“...emancipatory knowledge and involves uncovering false belief. It is carried out by dialectical reasoning, rather than systematic empirical research” (Foreman-Peck & Heilbronn 2018: 135).

For the above authors therefore, there is no division between the role of teacher and researcher. They are the same and strengthen the process of learning for both teacher and student. As they make clear, “the separation between knowing and doing is a false dichotomy” (Ibid. 129). Action research allows the research participant and the researcher the opportunity to reflect upon the experience of knowledge building in context and gives the teacher-researcher the skills to consider how that knowledge has been acquired. As Dewey reminds us, “We do not learn from experience. We learn from reflecting on experience” (Dewey, 1933: 78).

Norton (2009: 51) chronicles a brief history of Action Research through Dewey and the experimentalist and progressive educationalists (1933), through Lewin (1946) and the group dynamics movement to Stenhouse (1971 & 1975) and the teacher-researcher movement culminating in Carr and Kemmis (1986) *Becoming Critical*. In its progression throughout the century, AR has sought to challenge the status quo by empowering those within a system, as they are the best equipped to understand how that system works. As Lewin’s well known “change” quote highlights, those that change the system gain a better understanding of it by experiencing that change and are more likely to be able to convey how other similar systems may be changed future interventions. Norton goes on to highlight the “types” of action research there are for a researcher to choose. According to Norton, the methodology underpinning this research would be located under the umbrella of the, “Mutual-Collaborative/practical-deliberative-interpretivist perspective” (Norton, 2009: 53). My students are fully involved in guiding not only the results of the research but also the direction of the study. Research data are gathered through collaborative qualitative methods (outlined in the methods section below).

In some ways, lessons have been learned from the health care sector. In outlining the benefits of Participatory Action Research. Koch and Krallik (2006) describe how involving participants of research within the process from the start can have a liberating and democratically uplifting effect on all involved in a study. As they point out, “participants and researchers together have created and shared a space for working collaboratively in the development of new knowledge.” (Koch and Kralik, 2006: 3). My students are participants in the study, and I share findings with them as the study progresses in dynamic interaction.

McKernan (2008) makes the case for Action Research in *Curriculum and Imagination*, in a way that regards action research as a vital component in improving educational practice for teachers and lecturers alike. Teachers they argue, should be involved in “process inquiry model” (ibid 110) In

making the case for action research to form part of a teacher's professional development, McKernan defines what makes a profession and contends that Action Research should form a vital part of the teacher's journey in terms of their professional development...

"I would define a profession as a body of individuals with qualifications for practice; possessing a theoretical and practical knowledge base; sharing a commitment to continuing education; service to the community; provision for self-autonomous decision making; and a commitment to research and inquiry into practice which is shared by the community. On this definition we are there about but have not arrived as a profession the completion of this journey is urgently required" (McKernan, 2008: 111).

Action Research, according to McKernan, is a crucial part of an educator's journey. Having been a teacher both secondary and Further Education, I see the benefits of reflecting on my practice and changing it to improve it. In fact, I would argue, research is essential in the teaching profession. With changes to students lives, the skills they come equipped with, either by society at large or by curricula they have experienced, the process of teaching is an ever evolving and shifting sand dune, slip face. that requires reflection and changes in order to 'keep up' with the baseline shifts that teachers experience. Action research therefore is widely seen as a benefit, as Foreman-Peck & Heilbronn recognise:-

"It offers teachers participatory and collaborative opportunities and engages them in a process of inquiry that seeks to understand and change areas of practice and can in fact lead to positive change in classrooms, schools and communities" (Foreman-Peck & Heilbronn:2018: 141).

As Gregson and Hillier (2016) point out, Action Research put simply, "is about making a difference, but doing so in a way that is informed by careful research" (2016: 74). As a teacher in the Further Adult and Vocational Education and Adult educational sector, my own practice is driven by self-reflection, and as an important part of reflecting on why I do the things I do in the classroom. An action research project such as this allows me the time to do this and analyse my practice, in the whole.

### The Opportunities and Ethical Dilemmas of Action Research

As explored above, there has been much debate surrounding the issues, benefits and drawbacks of Action Research. In Zeni's *A Guide To Ethical Issues And Action Research* (1998), she offers a checklist

of ethical considerations that a teacher/researcher should reflect upon before embarking on a research project. She breaks these down into six areas that teacher/researchers need to consider.

I) What is the overview of the research

II) Methods and setting: are the methods suitable to the setting in which the research takes place?

III) 'Subjects and Subjectivity where do students

IV) Risks and benefits V) ethical questions specific to the 'insider 'researcher and finally

VI) the golden rule, where researchers must communicate with students and guardians about what they are doing and where they are "knowingly involved in the work from the beginning, with time to ask their own questions and make thoughtful suggestions." (Zeni, 1998: 18).

Considering Zeni's approach, I found that it would be impossible to not involve students as both participators and at times 'collaborators' in this research project. She defines the students involved in Action Research in terms of the following. Each term reflects being more or less involved with the research.

Subject:	Observed by researcher; no active participation. (Not applicable to action research.)
Informant:	Knowingly gives information to researcher.
Participant:	More involved; perspective considered in research
Collaborator:	Fully involved in planning and interpretation.

Figure 37 Zeni Student roles in research (1998: 14)

She goes on to note that it "is appropriate – essential – for our discussions and writing to look at ourselves in relationship with other participants". For this reason, among others, my thesis includes the voices of the students involved in the intervention where I have made participants and collaborators in the project.

From the beginning of my study, I have been wary of naively contributing to the Positivist versus Interpretivist dichotomy. I have therefore framed my data collection and analysis strategy from a clear ontological and epistemological position. My study has, from its inception, been intended to be an

action research, case study that uses qualitative data understood from a constructivist- interpretive world view.

The interviews reported in this thesis were conducted with members of staff who were involved in the research from its beginning in 2019. My colleagues are an integral part of the research and therefore participated in the changes that I made in my setting. The interviews I conducted were held, due to Covid, online through Teams, the very platform I was investigating the use of, and through observing classroom behaviour and online practice. These interviews were conducted, filmed and transcribed through this software. In the next chapter I explain and discuss how these interviews were conducted and what issues and themes arose during and from them.

## Ethical Statement

Norton in *Action Research in Teaching and Learning*, highlights areas to be concerned about whilst conducting action research projects (Norton, 2009:180). Explaining where Pedagogical Action Research 'sits', Norton clarifies that Pedagogical Action Research (PAR) should focus on three areas of principles that should protect the participants in the research. Informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality and protection from harm are embedded in the design of the study. More broadly, this research is undertaken in accordance with the BERA (2018) Ethical Guidelines. This study requires informed consent (BERA, 2018:9) from participants and for students to understand that have the right to withdraw (BERA, 2018:18). As this study uses online tools to capture evidence; Point 32 of the BERA guidelines is particularly important to consider,

"In online research contexts, if authors of postings or other material withdraw or delete data then that data should not be used in research. However, since it will not be possible for researchers to identify such withdrawals after data has been harvested, a proviso could be offered that the data were 'as made available to the public at the [stated] date of harvesting". (BERA, 2018:18).

As online interactions are analysed and coded, I am both mindful and cautious in protecting participants data. These are stored on a password protected drive and all participants were informed that they would be anonymised and had the opportunity to withdraw from the research at any point.

My practitioner research is mainly based in the classroom with a strong student voice feeding into the data but as described in the following chapter, my data collection follows a mixed-methods model, inclusive of interviews, observations, and analysis of group work online. A key part of the work is to set up online groups using Microsoft Teams. This is in part due to the institutional 'roll out' of Office

365 across the college for staff and students. I interviewed staff and students after explaining and discussing the ethical statement.

Due to the nature of this study, I use interviews to get a qualitative ‘experience-insight’ into the research’s success (or failings) according to the experiences of its participants. As discussed above the methods described here follow the interpretivist paradigm (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2006: 60). Students and Teachers were asked to sign a consent form. As the form states, all participants are made anonymous and a randomly chosen initial will be used instead of a name. So, Teacher A, B C and so on and likewise the same for the student. A copy of an anonymous consent form (signed) can be found in the appendix and below is an exemplar. It includes my ethical statement.

**Project working title:** *Learning and Curriculum Design in Online and Offline Spaces in Film Education*

**Researchers’ name** Will Cossey

**CONSENT TO THE USE OF WRITTEN AND AUDIO OR VISUAL RECORDED INFORMATION FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES:**

*Your lecturer (hereafter referred to as the ‘researcher’) is conducting a research study as part of an PhD into Education Research with the University of Sunderland. As part of the project, the researcher will be conducting interviews and facilitating focus-group/interview discussions with learners at Exeter College, aged 16-19, who are studying Vocational Media and Film courses in the academic year/s 2018-2023. The data generated by the research will be used to draw conclusions about your engagement with the theoretical aspects of your course and will aim to develop strategies to develop learner resilience, agency and autonomy. Any interviews or discussions conducted will be recorded by audio/visual means and transcribed for potential inclusion in the final project report. Direct quotations from interviews may be used within the presentation of the research, but the names and personal details of participants will be kept anonymised. All data will be securely stored in line with GDPR and the BERA Ethical guidelines and will not be shared with anyone for any purposes outside of this specific research project. You have the right to refuse consent or withdraw from the research study at any time.*

<i>(please tick as appropriate)</i>	Yes	No
I confirm that I am over the age of 16.		
I have read the Participant Information above and the nature and purpose of the research has been explained to me and I have had the opportunity to ask questions		

I understand and agree to take part in the above research project.		
I agree to the interview/focus group/discussion being audio recorded.		
I agree to the interview/focus group/discussion being video recorded.		
I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications/presentations.		
I agree that my data gathered in this study may be shared (after it has been anonymised) with other researchers.		
I agree that my data gathered in this study may be shared (after it has been anonymised) may be used for teaching purposes.		

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Researcher/s Will Cossey

Date

Signature

**Contact details***Will Cossey*

As I have described above, my study follows in the tradition of Interpretivist practitioner-based research study. As such my research will document and assess the phenomena that are unique to my educational setting. As I have highlighted above, there are certain pitfalls that my research should be wary of, chiefly these are: -

- Being wary of the dangers of losing objectivity by becoming entangled with the problem as I am an insider to the research area.
- Allowing my data to speak truthfully without my own opinions muddying my findings.
- Allowing the participants of the study to help guide it.

In the appendix are copies of transcriptions, coding of data, multiple coding, examples of consent forms and what the data processing looked like. In next chapter I further explain the approach adopted to interpreting and analysing the data generated from this research and assess the methods I used to collect it.

## CHAPTER FOUR – METHODS, DATA AND ANALYSIS

### Action Research, Methods and the beginning of the Experience

“Experience happens narratively” (Clandenin & Connelly, 2000:19).

In the following chapter I explain how I gathered data and through which methods; the type of data I gathered; the processes through which data was collected; and the techniques I used to analyse the data. As my research journey took place before, during and after lockdown, it is impossible not to acknowledge its impact on the study and that, as Clandenin and Connelly (2000) recognise, this experience of inquiry happens in a storied narrative. The participants and principal actors in this narrative have their own stories to tell about their experiences of my interventions and the lockdown itself. These voices and stories are included to illuminate the findings. These are discussed in detail in Chapter Five. The process of data collection and analysis proved to be the most complex part of the study and for this reason I reflect upon the problems I had in analysing the data objectively without allowing my own opinions and ideas to sway my findings in this Chapter.

Nowell et al In *Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria* (2017) point out the importance of systematic and rigorous data analysis and decoding in qualitative research studies. They suggest that:

“As qualitative research becomes increasingly recognized and valued, it is imperative that it is conducted in a rigorous and methodical manner to yield meaningful and useful results. To be accepted as trustworthy, qualitative researchers must demonstrate that data analysis has been conducted in a precise, consistent, and exhaustive manner” (Nowell et al, 2017: 1).

In line with this my approach to qualitative data collection and my analysis of it has been systematic, methodical and stepped at each point during the research I have completed. Nowell et al (2017) map the data analysis process in detail in a six-phase model. They highlight that it is just as important to code the data systematically as it is to explain *how* that data has been coded and how trends and ideas have been arrived at. According to above authors, “the researcher becomes the instrument for analysis” (2017: 2) and therefore the process by which I have arrived at my findings are imperative to legitimise the study.

Nowell et al (2017) set out a six-phase approach to “establishing trustworthiness” in qualitative research and this has guided me, to some extent, in analysing semi structured interviews and discussions between students and staff. They point out that in each phase the researcher should triangulate their data to ensure that it is accurate and truly reflects the data’s key themes. The phases are as follows: -

Phase 1 – Familiarising myself with the data and triangulating different data collection modes.

Phase 2 – Generating initial codes.

Phase 3 – Searching for themes.

Phase 4 – Reviewing themes.

Phase 5 – Defining and naming themes.

Phase 6 – Producing the report.

Under Nowell et al’s (2017) approach, Codes, that is, repeated sentiments, phrases and terms that correlate and have mutual meaning are collated and generate a sub theme. These sub themes are then grouped together to identify a theme. Through careful systematic analysis of qualitative data the main themes of the research can be arrived at. Braun and Clarke, who have written extensively on qualitative research and thematic analysis (2013, 2012 and 2006) see thematic analysis as opening up possibilities to the researcher beyond just seeing obvious ideas and themes. They also find that a rigorous thematic analysis can produce trustworthy and insightful findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data should be treated with caution and be seen to at times be contradictory and sometimes challenge the findings that emerge in pre-preliminary analysis. As I highlight below, I began to draw conclusions in the preliminary findings listed below but then found that, under deeper scrutiny, these were contradictory to what I thought I had observed. As I conducted a more thorough data review and scrutinised the data more carefully, I found that student and teacher responses themselves coded a deeper level of insight into my research questions than initial analysis suggested. This journey allowed me to see the data set for what it was, although the experience of analysing the data itself was for me full of pitfalls.

## Data collected

In initial planning for the thesis my plan was to follow this simplistic timeline. The stages of research were as follows.

<b>Stage One</b> collect 2 years' worth of student interactions and observations on Teams and classrooms, studios and edit suites
<b>Stage Two Staff</b> Interviews
<b>Stage Three</b> Interview IT staff in my institution
<b>Stage Four</b> Analysing the data
<b>Stage five</b> Completion of thesis

This was then altered to include contextual factors that the first lockdown presented to the thesis. Following on from further research and the external factors that affected my study, I began to follow a more systematic process that more accurately captured my research principles and better reflected my research journey.

My Data Collection, post covid interventions, extended the thesis and allowed for a longer period to follow up interviews with students and teachers.

<b>Stage One</b> collect 3 years' worth of student interactions and observations on Teams and classrooms, studios and edit suites.
<b>Stage Two Staff</b> Interviews – online Teams transcriptions
<b>Stage Three</b> Student interviews
<b>Stage Four</b> Interview staff in my institution and students from similar courses
<b>Stage Five</b> Analysing the data
<b>Stage Six</b> Completion of thesis

In summary therefore the original schedule for my thesis ran as thus: -

Action	August – Sept 20	Nov – Dec 20	Jan – Feb 21	March – April 21	May – June 21	July – Aug 21	Sept – Oct 21	Nov – Dec 21	Jan – Feb 22	March – Apr 22	May – June 22
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Tutorials											
Extended Data Collection											
Chapter 4 Data analysis and Literature review extended											
Chapter 5 Discussion											
Findings and Recommendations											
Re- edits and reviews											

This was then rescheduled to the following.

Action	AP 23	MAY 23	JUN 23	JULY23	AUG23	SEP23	OCT23	NOV 23	DEC 23	JAN 24	FEB 24
Tutorials											
Extended Data Collection											
Chapter 4 Data analysis and Literature review extended											
Chapter 4 Write up											
Chapter 5 and 6 Write up											
Draft Submission											
Final Submission											

The first collection of data consisted of two years' worth of interactions on teams. Between students and staff and my own observations. Although interviews had prescribed questions, I asked students

and teachers, others sprung from the semi structured interview method I used. I discuss the use of semi structured interviews below. Some of the following questions were posed to both teachers and students in interviews conducted in online Teams calls.

### Interview Schedule

Below shows the interview schedule over the data capture period.

<b>Who</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Interview Duration</b>
Teacher C – Vocational and A-Level courses	05/11/2020	29 mins 35 secs
Teacher B – Vocational	06/11/2020	23 mins 11 secs
Teacher D – Vocational	06/11/2020	29 mins 27secs
Teacher A – Vocational and A-Level courses	30/06/2023	32 mins 27 secs
Student A – Vocational	28/04/2022	23 mins 32 secs
Student B – A-Level Film	30/06/2023	16 mins 53 secs
Student C – A-Level Film	30/06/2023	18 mins 0 secs
Student D – Vocational	01/12/2020	27 mins 05 secs
Student E – Vocational	27/04/2022	23 mins 55 secs
Student F – Vocational	01/12/2020	21 mins42 secs

In all, these interviews produced transcriptions of a total of 51,600 words. A full transcription of an interview with Teacher C can be found in the appendix.

## Lost in Translation

Interviews were, primarily due to lockdowns, conducted online on Microsoft Teams. The very platform under which my research was investigating the use of. A positive aspect of this process was that the interviews were instantly recorded and filmed on Microsoft Stream. Stream then allows the user to generate a transcription. When the transcription is produced it uses voice recognition software to produce a word document. With Teams progression over the last 3 years this transcription has become more effective and better at correctly transcribing but in initial interviews the voice recognition technology would often misinterpret words or phrases. As research continued after lockdown the researcher decided to use Teams to record interviews even if these were done face to face.

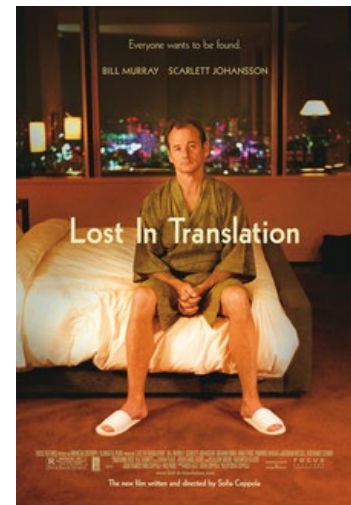


Figure 38 *Lost in Translation* (Coppola, 2003)

This presented a host of challenges. The software would often misplace words or misspell or misheard ideas producing an inaccurate, incorrect, transcription of the conversation. I would then listen back to the transcript and correct them. Having to go back over the interviews in person and re-write up the transcriptions felt counterintuitive. Would it have been easier for me to just have recorded and transcribed myself to make sure the nuances of human conversations were not lost in translation by software that was not accurate? The experience highlights that overreliance on software to manage human interaction leads to misleading outcomes and statements. Nascimento & Steinbruch (2019) highlight some of the issues of transcription. They review some of the methodological concerns over issues in transcription and observe that researchers should reflect on how they transcribe, the decisions they make in transcription and how in their words studies only mention that 'the interviews were transcribed'. There is no consideration of *how* these were transcribed and the quality of the transcription. They draw on Oliver et al (2005) and Bucholtz (2000) who explore naturalised and denaturalized transcription. The latter includes the "orality" that is present in speech whereas in the former the written word takes precedence and full stops; commas and nuances of spoken word communication are added to the transcription to make them easier to understand in written form. Wherever possible, the transcription in my work takes a denaturalized methodological approach to capture the participants' authentic voices. The stories and experiences that students and staff had, I believe, are best represented when these are shown in their original state.

## Semi Structured Interviews and Starter Questions Posed

Questions were posed in semi structured interviews, and the transcripts were collected through Teams as discussed above. The interviews I held were semi-structured and although I had prepared a set of predetermined questions these were used as a guide rather than to be followed closely. To allow participants to own the conversation and steer it to where they wanted to go, I often allowed participants to talk and then ask then follow up questions that picked up on their ideas rather than sticking to a rigid crib sheet. Kvale in *Interview Views: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing* (1996) highlights that the point of an interview is that it should be an exchange and the chance to “seek(s) nuggets of essential meaning” (1996:3). The conversation is an ‘InterView’ where the researcher will work with the participant to find the truth about a particular subject. Below are the types of questions I would pose to participants but to seek the ‘truth’ about participant’s experiences, these exchanges would become often conversations. Ruslin (2022) in the *Semi - Structured Interview – A methodological reflection on the Development of a Qualitative Research Instrument in Educational Studies*, points out that the Semi Structured Interview is “a more powerful [way] ... to acquire in-depth information from informants compared to structured interview. (2022: 29)” The reason for his preference of the semi-structured interview is relevant to my studies authenticity and objectiveness. Ruslin points out that it is “flexible and adaptable” (2022: 29) and that it, “might provide room for researchers to adjust it with their research questions ... yet still maintain its directive sense since the main topics to discuss have been prescribed beforehand” (2022: 29). Therefore, the semi structured interview although clear in its direction, I would argue, allows for participants voices to speak clearly about a topic without the suppositions of the researcher inferring with them. By asking up follow up questions rather than following a crib sheet the experiences of the participants are arguably given more chance to come to light. I would usually start with a starter question such as why they had picked a creative Film or Media course to get participants to open up on their experiences of teaching/learning in Creative Media and Film. Then drill into those experiences they had to explore online learning or experiences of the classroom, film making or editing projects and lessons. I had the following questions at my side throughout interviews to remind of where to steer the interview.

### Interview Prompt Questions – Teachers

1. How has lockdown affected your teaching?
2. How have you used online learning?
3. What did you miss from teaching in the classroom?
4. How do you usually use digital learning in the classroom usually?

5. how do students communicate with each other online in your sessions?
6. What do you think that good online learning should look like?
7. How should media students learn online?

### **Student Interview Prompt Questions**

1. What is your best experience of Teaching online? What made it so good? On the flip side what was your worst experience?
2. How did you find the collaboration project we ran where two rooms were joined together and sessions were jointly run.
3. Did you notice anything about students' creative skills?
4. How do your students help you learn? How could they be more helpful?
5. How should institutions best set up their IT systems to give students the best learning experience?
6. How much learning should take place online and how much should remain offline and in the classroom?
7. What is the most suitable way to use these tools and what teaching styles maximise collaborative learning and how should the Curriculum be designed to support this?
8. How best to develop student's collaboration and critical thinking skills?
9. How have you found Teams
10. How can dialogic communication be taught on and offline?
11. How can theory be best taught through practice?
12. When you get work back what kind of feedback helps you improve work best?
13. Do you prefer theory or practice? Why?
14. What makes a good theory lesson?
15. You film projects and learn in groups in your subject, what kinds of things do you learn from talking in groups in your class?
16. Do you use Facebook groups, WhatsApp groups for your subjects? Could you see these being used in a lesson?
17. What gaps in knowledge and skills do you think you have? What are your plans for filling them?

Transcribed Teacher Interview – sample

A full version of this interview is available in the appendix (Appendix 11) and interview data from all interviews are used throughout chapter five.

WGC

One of the things we did like two years ago was collaboration and was going to part of the original part of the project, and like you know, opening up rooms 122/123 as a single space, and I think I probably did that with your groups more than any other groups. I mean like, again, totally honesty. Do you think that worked in terms of opening up the space for two groups to work in the same space?

C

I think it showed the potential that it could work, but I don't think it actually worked as well as we'd hoped it would. I think probably what we needed to do was make that target driven and not hope that it would naturally evolve, but actually force them to work on projects together. Well, not force them but actually, make it goal oriented and say "you two need to without crossing the barrier....." I think there was just... there was still, even though we take the wall down, the wall still existed, and even though as teachers we were walking, we were crossing the Rubicon all the time, the kids were almost... they got even more kind of insular or turned their shoulders away so they didn't have to make weird eye contact with kids in another room, but, I just, I think maybe we needed to not even mix the group up, so this could still be viable in sort of Covid, but maybe then not in a room next to each other. Maybe actually keeping it remote and having them... you're upstairs and I'm downstairs. By keeping that space, maybe they would have been more comfortable collaborating with each other. I wondered whether trying to mix the online and offline experience was just a bit too much, so like me, sending you a weird message saying I like your film and I'm looking over and making strange eye contact with you that you've read it or something. I wonder if that would almost be the online stuff, it needs to vanish and go into the universe rather than into somebody's face that you can see.

WGC

Yeah, because if you're writing it online and you can still see the people (in the physical space)

C

It's really weird.

WGC

I mean, that's a really interesting point about like I, I recognize what you're saying about the room still feeling divided. Why do you think that was?

C

I wonder if again, if we had made it so where we paired up or teamed up kids from my side of the room they had to collaborate. I think that would be fine, but it felt ... it had the feeling of a

school disco when the slow dance comes up and just everybody is sort of like milling around, not making eye contact with each other.... But I don't know. It had that kind of... it was loaded with the teenage angst and there was something else going on that didn't quite work for them, which again, if we'd said "right, you're dancing with that kid over there" I think it would have, you know, would have been awkward still, but they would have overcome that, and then it would have happened, maybe.

WGC

Yeah,

C

You don't want to. You don't want to direct. I know, I know. Your plan with it was that this would happen naturally and that they would collaborate. And I think we probably ran up against the fact that they're awkward teenagers that aren't necessarily socially comfortable enough to take that initiative and grasp it, some of them are, but I think enough of them in each room aren't and that it became difficult and awkward. Again, the kids that would have done it and were keen to do it....

## Transcribed Interview Student Sample Example

WGC

With filmmaking, do you think something like this, like the way we're talking now (online)? Or if there's a whole bunch of us talking (together in person), do you think there's something lost from not being in person.

D

I do think when you're making a film especially yeah, in terms of working as a group... I think there's two styles of working as a group, and obviously one of those is to be able to work collaboratively. Work with a number of people. Together.... and I don't really think you get that togetherness online because although you get in each others opinions and views on things, it's harder to bounce off each other and come up with stuff. Just through some expressions on online.

WGC

Yeah, why do you think.... why do you think that is?

D

I can't really pinpoint why, but I mean. I mean when, for example, I don't really make music, but recently I had someone help make music for my film and I've done it before, where I've had... we've been in a room together and he was doing something, you know, he was creating a soundtrack literally in front of my eyes. But recently, because of the Corona virus and stuff, I had to just message this guy 'cause he was also at uni as well so I couldn't even meet him.... And in terms of getting across my ideas for the music, you know, when you're with someone, it's a lot easier to explain it, whereas you know ... Especially, I think with some things it...It does work fine, but with making a film and you know when you're trying to be creative creatives, it's like much more than just words, isn't it? I guess it's ...it's all about like..... I think creativity can come through body language and things you do yourself and you know.... voice and speech is just part of that isn't it.

WGC

Yeah yeah, it's interesting.

D

OK, it.... It works both ways. You know in terms of.... I guess it can work and I guess if you've got the video ... like now and video calling you. I guess that benefit, that kind of brings it to a new level in terms of working online. You know it's not.... It isn't just text, is it? You know I kind of feel like I'm in the same room as you now and you kind of have those same opportunities as being in the same room as someone

WGC

Something you said earlier on about.... About it being kind of like more suitable to kind of like, like the theory kind of side rather than say, practical. That's a pretty interesting idea 'cause remember ... I don't know if you remember, like three years ago, we made a little film and we were just asking you what you preferred ... theory or practice?

D

Yeah...

WGC

...and whether you could see a place for social media in lessons um, have you changed back? From when do you remember what you originally said? Whether it was theory or practice you preferred? Um, has that changed since three years ago?

D

I mean, it's been way more challenging now to do practice work together in terms I mean, especially as a lot of my friends are at Uni right now. So in terms of branching out and meeting

people? Uh, it's ... it's been a little bit more difficult to find that creative hub, but, um.... I do still think, I believe that practice, practice and that side of learning is...not more important, but it's bit more enjoyable for me I guess, but I think that's just down to me being more of a.... When it comes to films, especially ...just bit more hands-on and getting down in, you know, making something but um... I did really enjoy the theory work at college. To be fair, I mean, it wasn't. If anything, it really strengthened my filmmaking skills 'cause you know things like target audience...and yeah, the research side of production. Like there's so many things I didn't learn or I did learn through that. So, I mean in terms of the two comparing, I probably like I said preferred practice work, but I... I think my views the same about, you know, theory. There wasn't anything bad about it.

### Inductive coding of the data

“When any proposition has been laid down, the human understanding forces everything else to add fresh support and confirmation. It is a peculiar and perpetual error of the human understanding to be more moved and excited by affirmatives than negatives” (Bacon, 1853: xlvi: 398).

As discussed below, a process of inductive coding has been used to understand and identify some of the key themes in my data. As suggested above these themes are originally arrived at from reading data sets, making notes and observing lessons and interactions between students, identifying codes and then grouping these codes into sub themes. Finally, these sub themes coalesce around a main theme. I systematically interpreted my data. This included beginning to challenge the initial themes I had previously identified, as discussed above. The logic or methodology underpinning this study is systematic and inductive, working from data provided by individuals and tentatively and incrementally moves toward what may plausibly be inferred to be more general.

The data process, as illustrated below, took the notion of Nowell et Al's (2017) triangulation of data and included other colleagues to help begin the process of finding of codes and then themes.

#### **My Data Process**

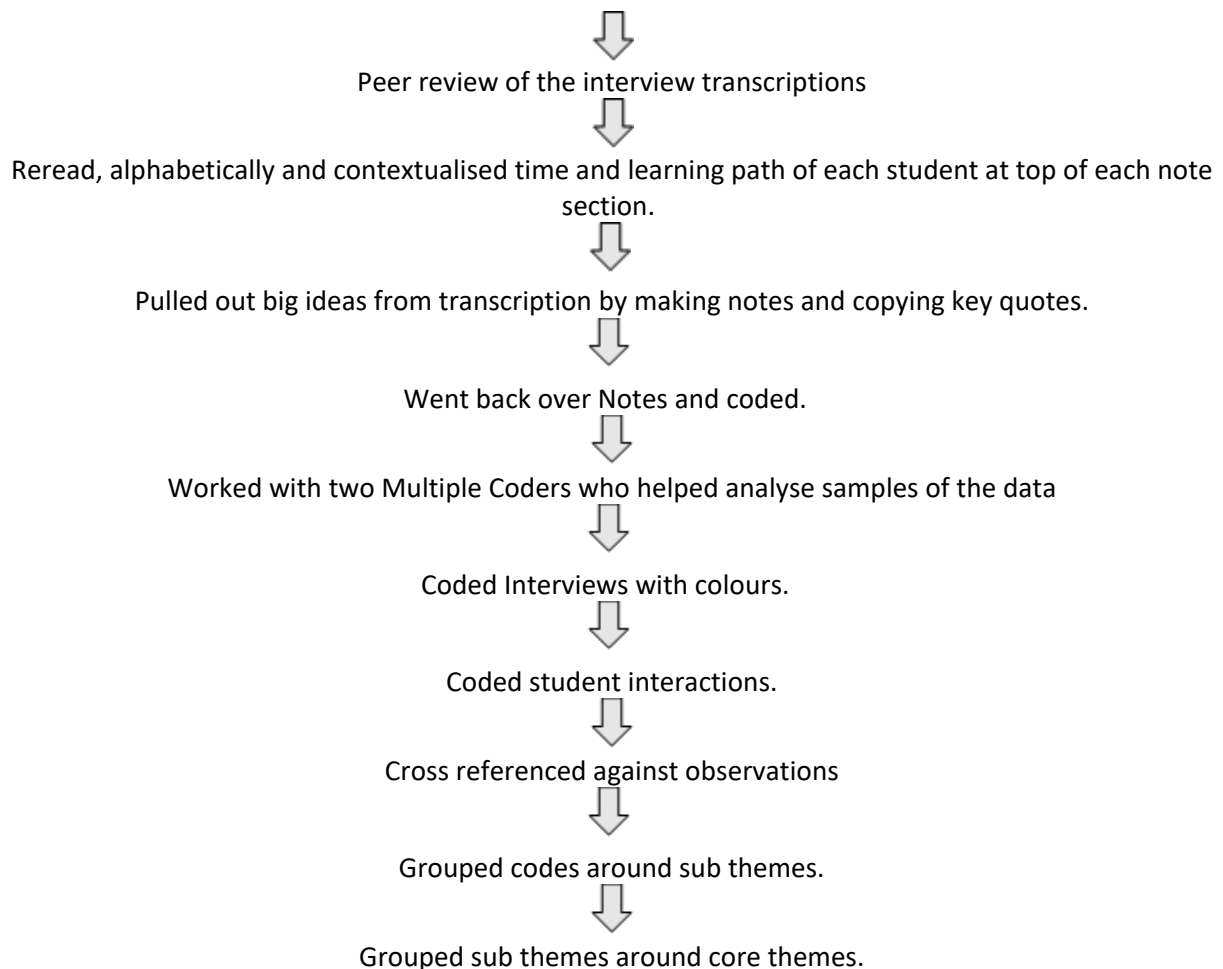
Interviews – semi structured. Take place over three years.



These are and highlighted after Interviews completed.



A list of emerging ideas that rose from the initial Interviewees is constructed.



### The Main Intervention

Firstly, I secured funding for new IT equipment and adjusted the working practices of the UAL (University of Arts London) TV and Film pathway of the course. Together with teaching staff, I rewrote and edited briefs that were to be delivered on the course, merged classes and introduced 'joint lectures' that allowed students to meet and discuss in person. I also created online spaces for students to collaborate through Teams and timetabled these classes in a larger classroom that accommodated two groups to work as one. Below I explain the intervention in more detail with contextual information about the course. As well as this 'A'-Level Film students learning moved onto One-Note, collaboration spaces were adopted during covid, group notes were collected here, and lessons were delivered online.

## Film Making and Problem-Solving

The UAL Creative Media Course is a problem-based curriculum that encourages learners to develop problem-solving skills, work collaboratively and encourages students to become autonomous learners who feel confident and resilient to obstacles. As such this course has been designed to challenge learners through briefs that students must pass; the last brief, the FMP (Final Major Project), is where students gain their grade.

As students specialise in different disciplines – this problem-based curriculum can become highly unique to each learner. The course actively encourages students to pursue their own interests through the guidelines of the fourteen briefs covered over the two years. Some students for example wish to work in pre-production, some in animation. All students cover the core skills of research, problem solving, planning, producing and evaluating. The students study the following briefs: -

### ***Level 3 Diploma***

Unit 1 Introduction to media processes and technical skills

Unit 2 Introduction to design and research skills in creative media production

Unit 3 Introduction to professional practice in creative media production

Unit 4 Investigating audio production and technology

Unit 5 Investigating visual production and technology

Unit 6 Critical and contextual awareness

Unit 7 Investigating interactive media production and technology

Unit 8 Developing a creative media production project

### ***Level 3 Extended Diploma (includes units 1–8)***

Unit 9 Characteristics and contexts in media and communication

Unit 10 Engaging with an audience in creative media production

Unit 11 Preparing for progression in creative media production

Unit 12 Specialist study in creative media production

Unit 13 Extended project in creative media production

Each Unit is then taken by an institution's teaching team and contextualised for the institution it is taught at and the students at that institution. As such teachers are free to select the problems that

students tackle to meet the set criteria that are allocated for each unit. Below for example are copies of the online briefs that students receive when they commence a unit.

Unit 11: Preparing for Progression  
Life After College



Ext Dip Creative Media

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Unit 9: Characteristics and Contexts  
Corporate Video  
2019



Ext Dip Creative Media

---

Unit 12: Specialist Study in Creative Media  
Media Investigation



Ext Dip Creative Media

---

Student Name

Student Name

Figure 39 Example of UAL briefs

Unit 9, for example, is entitled *Characteristics and Contexts*. To complete the unit's outcomes, the programme leaders set the assessment criteria to meet those outcomes set by the exam board. In the case of the centre which forms the site of this study, the team decided to set students the task of finding a "client" from the local region and produce a corporate video for their business. The aim of

the Unit is to give students the opportunity to train as a freelancer, whilst studying. Students needed to find a client, work with them and agree outcomes, and then produce a corporate film, usually used to advertise a service that would be then taken up by the client for their online marketing platforms. Students would make short one minute, *Insta* style, films to help promote a business or service. The experience for students was one that gave them a taste of working professionally, have the opportunity to work with business and begin to understand the tensions that come from following a company's guidance whilst, in some cases, having to park their own creative ideas. In many cases students found doing what their client wanted in exchange for not adding effects, finishing touches or more experimental practices, a frustrating experience. This Unit is one example of how the course team have adopted a problem-solving approach to curriculum design. After completion student would reflect on their experience often reflecting on the feedback of the company as well. Below is an example of a feedback sheet that allows students to see the Learning Outcomes they must pass and the assessment criteria they have completed to do so.

Student Name		Assessor:	
<b>Unit 9: Characteristics and Contexts</b>			P/R
<b>Learning Outcome</b>	<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>Comments/Targets/Resubs</b>	
1.1 Analyse the characteristics and context for a chosen media and communication activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of live corporate videos</li> <li>Research into potential clients</li> </ul>	<b>CONTEXT</b> Choose an item.	Pass/Refer
1.2 Interpret research activity to develop ideas for creative production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three proposals for potential corporate videos</li> </ul>	<b>RESEARCH</b> Choose an item.	Pass/Refer
2.1 Use knowledge of characteristics and context to plan and develop creative solutions for a chosen media and communication activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-Production, client negotiation and planning for corporate video</li> </ul>	<b>PLANNING AND PRODUCTION</b> Choose an item.	Pass/Refer
2.2 Apply practical skills, knowledge and understanding of characteristics and contexts to produce creative solutions for a chosen media and communication activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finished corporate video</li> </ul>	<b>PRACTICAL SKILLS</b> Choose an item.	Pass/Refer
3.1 Critically evaluate creative solutions against identified characteristics and context for a chosen media and communication activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation of corporate videos</li> </ul>	<b>EVALUATION AND REFLECTION</b> Choose an item.	
3.2 Critically reflect on learning to inform personal development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation of own professional performance</li> </ul>	From the matrix – <b>EVALUATION AND REFLECTION</b> Choose an item.	Pass/Refer
<b>Assessment Decision for Unit 9</b>			
<b>PASS</b>			
<b>Overall Feedback</b>			
Assessor Signature (electronic)		Student Signature (electronic)	
Date of marking		Date of pre-IV feedback and email to student	

Figure 40 Marking Sheets for Units

## Funding

I secured £3000 worth of funding for laptop banks at the institution that were to be deployed in 2 non-IT rooms. In my position as Curriculum Area Manager (CAM) I am responsible for timetabling and used this to make sure groups were timetabled for the next academic year September 2019/20/21 in a new paired system. The thinking behind the timetabling was to be able to collapse groups so that they could ‘mingle’ and collaborate when they were placed next to each other in adjacent rooms, this would give teachers the chance to have multiple groups working together. Based on ‘situated cognition’ (Brown, Duguid et al, 1989) this environment would hopefully better mirror a professional working creative media working space where individuals could collaborate online and in person. These re-timetabled groups and rooms were to be shared one by years groups and groups from the same

year. Below shows rooms X and Y, two separate classrooms. These were 'opened up' and a partition wall removed so two groups could work as one.

## Re-designing on and offline Space

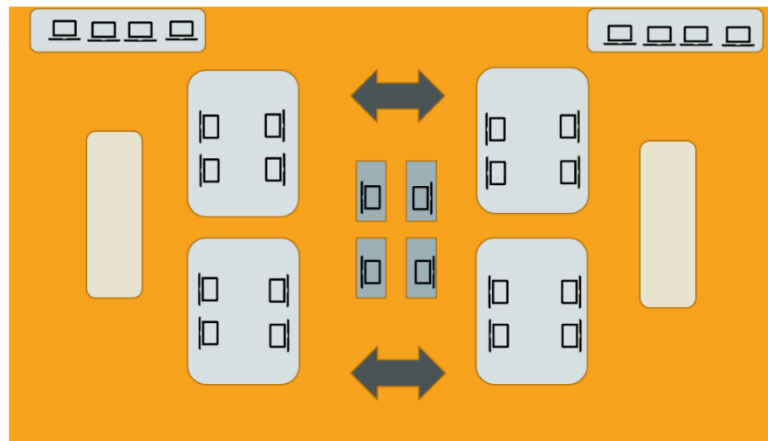
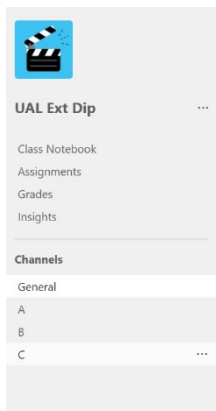


Figure 41 Rooms opened up

As well as this, Teams channels were set up with students in the academic year commencing September 2019. As the illustration shows, the whole year group could access the channel and each class within the cohort had their own channel. A, B and C. In the academic year 2019/2020, starting in September, the UAL course was structured around channels and groups as fig shows. The course was structured in such a way as to mirror the groups in a year group. Group A, B and C each had their own communication channel as well as a "general channel" that allowed for students from across the cohort to work together. In the first session I also designed and supported my students in engaging in "Community of Enquiry" (CoE) style sessions for students as per Lipman (1991) These were designed around P4C style sessions that allowed the group to decide the focus of a particular stimulus material. In the example below we see polls and focus groups and how they can democratize decisions within a class on the material they'll study.



OneNote was embedded within the Team and was used to structure the course. Each 'brief' had a section within the content library and resources were allocated to students through each section link.

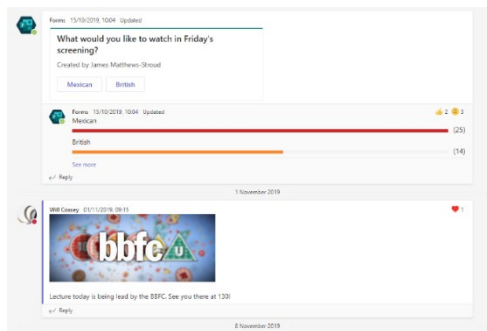
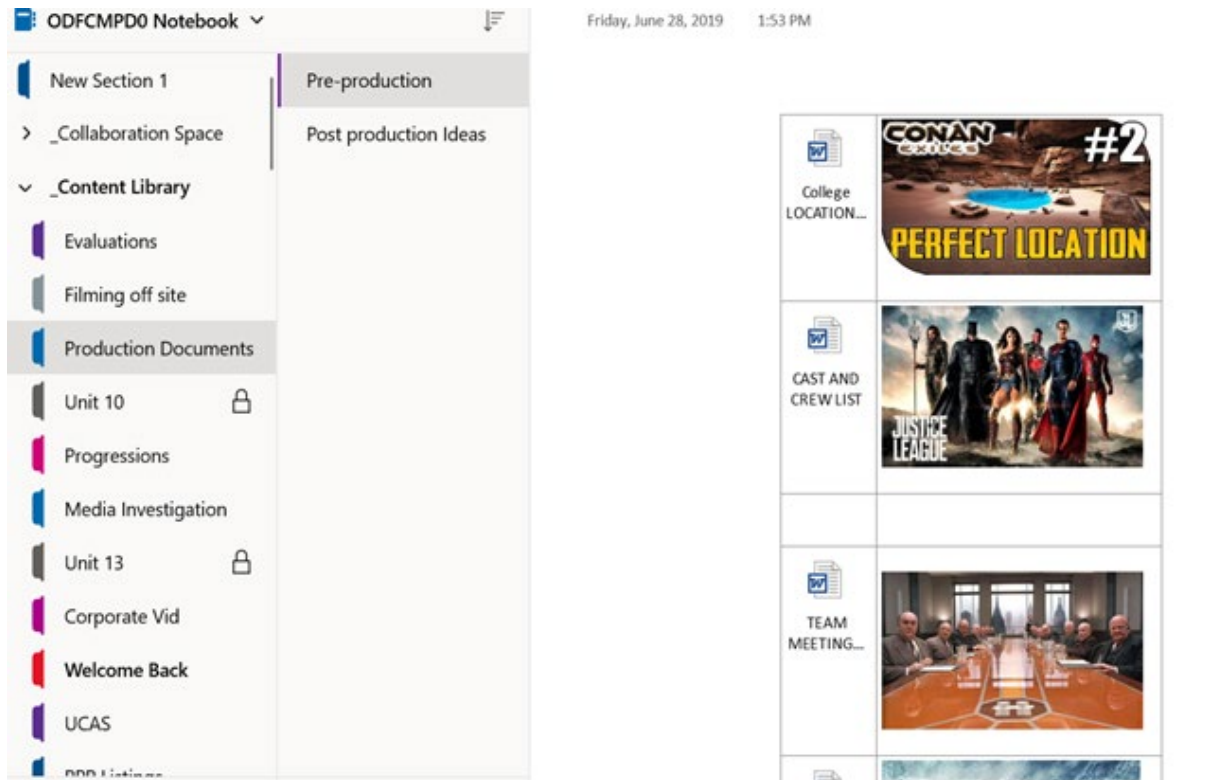
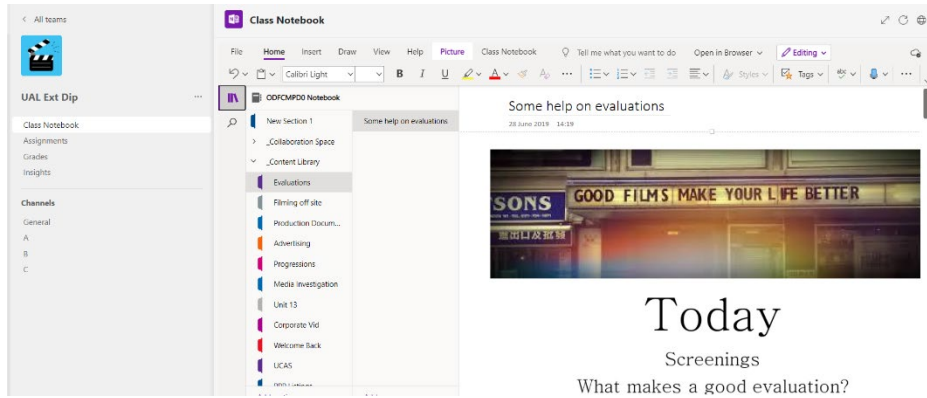


Figure 42 Examples from Teams pages

Forms 13/02/2020, 11:53 Updated

Will Cossey created a poll  
Results are visible to everyone; Names recorded

**Will Quibi be a success?**

Yes

No

Maybe

Submit Vote

← Reply

---

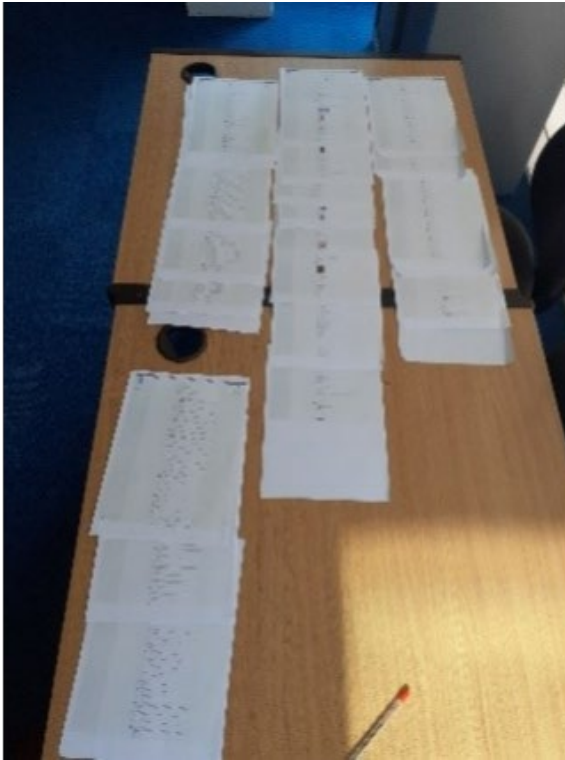
Forms 13/02/2020, 11:53 Updated

Yes	12% (3)
No	66% (16)
Maybe	20% (5)
24 responses	

← Reply

Figure 43 Further Examples from Teams pages

The channels were used to run polls with students on screenings to take place in college or to get instant feedback on or to tackle issues that came up in Media related news (for example, polls on whether the, eventually, short lived Quibi streamer service would be a success, above). As well as this the Teams interactions allowed for conversations and interactions of teams to be analysed. Figure 44 shows interactions between students and staff taken from Teams.



*Figure 44* Print offs of communication between students on the online platform

I also provided ran workshops for staff at the end of the academic year to explain the purpose of the research and how the team were to help implement it. Screen grabs from presentations I provided are presented below. Staff were initially enthusiastic about storing documents and organising their course online but were also reticent about asking students from other groups to collaborate more freely whilst contradictorily recognising that this was a valuable aid. I had built a course layout through OneNote and Teams and as the intervention began there was some resistance to working on the platform but, as I describe below, when lockdown commenced all staff and students had to engage with Teams and share work with each other online.

In order to try and foster better communication between groups I initially collapsed two groups into one. Individual students from each class were paired with another student from the other class. Students found this process noticeably uncomfortable. Artificially pairing students together created a sense of unease amongst them and students were asked to collaborate on a project that they were working on and offer constructive feedback to each other in face-to-face discussions, I also observed that communication was limited to informal chat. However, when the students were split up again and asked to reflect on each other's work online, they would often post insightful and interesting comments and even links to other media products related to the practical work that they were evaluating. When discussing this activity with individual students afterwards, they said that it was good to get ideas from other students but that they did not enjoy the process of having to speak in

person and would rather do this online. One lecturer commented that this trial had the feeling of a school disco, where students would awkwardly look at each other from across the room.

The process was repeated with multiple groups. Perhaps the most telling example of where this process worked best was when one year group was paired with the year group below. Students from both year groups found that a more mentored approach suited them better. There were many chances to introduce new digital tools to classrooms and to structure the course in a way that played to the research questions of this study.

In short then, the course was fully 'digitized' in academic year 2019/20, groups were mixed in terms of year groups and within a year's cohort and new IT provision was allocated in Room X and Y. To help role out this new program I also organized working groups for teachers to explain the ethos behind the study. These were delivered as staff development sessions at the end of 2018/19 academic year. Below are the session notes I ran for staff to get across the key ethos of the study. Further digitisation of the 'A'-Level course continued through the lock down and lessons (in terms of structuring content online) rolled out to the 'A'-Level Film course immediately before and during the lockdown.

**Lock Down Learning: Redesigning space for vocational students in the digital age**

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

How should institutions best set up their IT systems to give students the best learning experience?

How much learning should take place online and how much should remain offline and in the classroom?

How can we maximise collaborative learning and improve critical thinking skills whilst minimising expenditure?

How should the curriculum be designed to support this?

**SUNCETT**

**Looking ahead...**

Establishing an environment that fosters skill sharing between across levels 2 and 3 and years 1 and 2

A curriculum that establishes habits of online and offline collaboration

Improving the quality of practical and theoretical work

**Key Reading:**  
 Agri, Chris, Knowledge  
 Alexander, Robin, 2008, Towards Dialogic Teaching: Reclaiming Classroom Talk, Dialogos  
 Sennett, R. (2012) Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation  
 Turkle, S. (2015) Reclaiming Conversation: The power of talk in a digital age, Penguin  
 Wagner, K. (2013) Dialogic Education for the Internet  
 Will, Louise, will.louise@suncett.ac.uk

**UAL – WHAT IS OUR COURSE?**

What I'd like to try on L3 Y2

- We run a problem based curriculum
- We make up briefs for students to help students meet criteria.
- We have students who make phenomenal work

### What they're saying

- "Online life is associated with a loss of empathy and a diminished capacity for self reflection" 415. Turkle *Reclaiming Conversation*
- "cooperation is embedded in our genes, but cannot remain stuck in routine behaviour; it needs to be developed and deepened" (Sennett, 2012: ix). *Together*
- "new technologies are not a silver bullet for improving learner outcomes" (ETF, 2018).

Come up with a session activity that involves aspects of this line of thinking

- How can we encourage more collaboration?
- Using Teams or just using groups, what topics and activities could we cover under the briefs we deliver?

What I'm suggesting in practice

- More collaboration between students and groups. Groups and years groups... and as the year progresses L2 and L3.
- In the second year all students will be able to discuss each others work online in TEAMS.
- Can you build using this into your practice?
- I'm going to tweak the briefs slightly to adapt for this.
- How can you set up?
- Think about some activities we could run

Socratic Questioning and community of enquiry

- Based on thinking of P4C – Check out the session plan...
- Have a look at these easy wins... how much do you have these conversations, pushing students without them stonewalling or you just telling them the answer?
- Building a bit of resilience is something we should be doing (when a practical piece fails, when they can't find something out)
- <https://elearningindustry.com/socratic-questions-in-elearning-what-elearning-professionals-should-know> (here's some stuff on it, have a read)

As well as this we want to teach students to

- ... Challenge what they find online
- ... Independently identify, skills, knowledge, link theory to practice to come up with ideas.
- ... Improve their evaluation skills
- ... Improve critical thinking skills
- ... Learn to communicate effectively online
- From our point of view
- .... Future proof the course
- Set a gold standard in being "digital champions"
- It's not just about an inspection.

Figure 45 Slides from Staff Training

## Collab Lectures

As noted above, first and second-year students were put together once a week in a lecture theatre. All students had an hour and a half “lecture” that involved either joint screenings, guest speakers, introductory sessions to famous cinematic movements or a chance to speak to leading speakers from institutions like the BBC or the BBFC. The thinking behind the series was to have joint



Figure 46 Slide from Collab Lectures

experiences for students and for them to meet each other and work with other students from the same course that they would not usually meet. In a way these sessions mirrored the smaller scale combination of two classes together that constituted the main part of this project. Lectures included an introduction to Japanese cinema, Hong Kong Cinema, Auteur theory and so on. Students found the opportunity to work alongside each other a positive one, but attendance for these sessions dropped as the year progressed. By the end of the Spring term, it was not rare to have only half the cohort attend these sessions. In my findings below I discuss some of the reasons students (or in some cases, did not) enjoy these sessions.

## WordPress

As discussed previously the staff approach the course as a Media Arts pathway (one of the reasons the centre switched from the BTEC award in 2015). The centre asked students to use *WordPress* to organise a digital portfolio from 2016 onwards and this practise was well established by the time my research took place. Students used this blog to store their work, imbed films that had influenced them or that they had analysed and present work that they had produced. The sites allowed all student work to be digitally stored and were open to all teachers and students once they had a link to it. This allowed students to share work with each other quickly and in and out of class. Posting links to each other's work on Teams was a practice that was accelerated through the research period. Students could customise the look of their site in any way they wished if unit's and briefs were easily identifiable. The look and style of a student's blog was up to them, and many personalised them in their own idiosyncratic way.

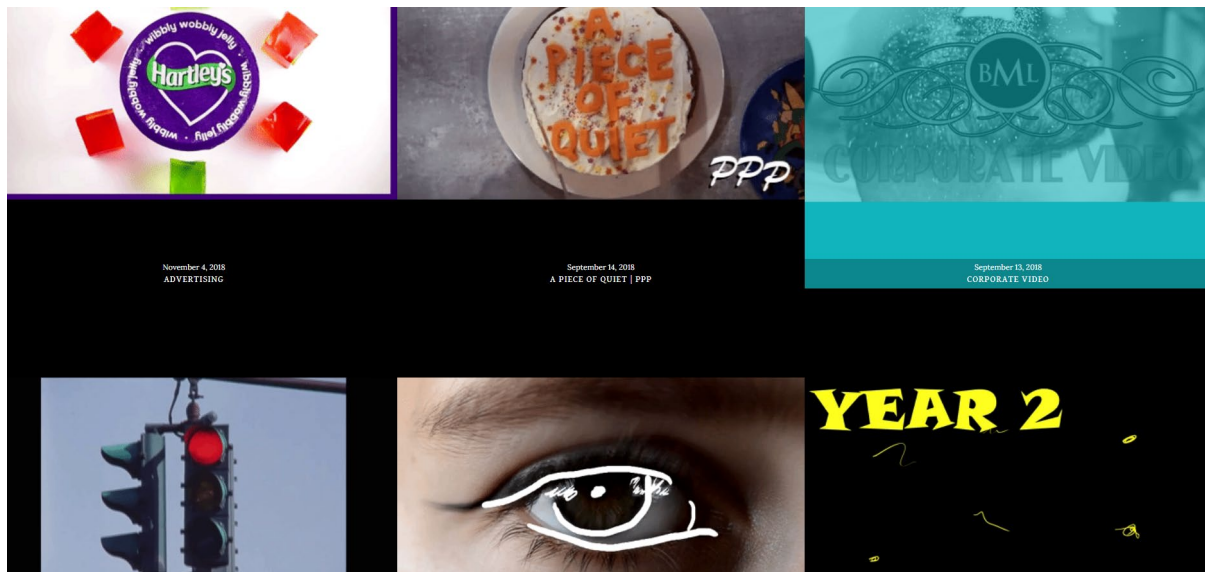


Figure 47 Student Wordpress Blog

## Covid Interruption

The lock down forced all learning to become online. Some of the team had already trialled Teams with their groups and many were ready to make the switch to online learning in a relatively quick and seamless fashion. Others were not and learning, as students reflect below, ceased. The thesis' parameters were certainly influenced by what happened during the lock down. With many students not able to access the classroom, all interactions with staff and each other had to come through online platforms. Many of the interviews I conducted with students and staff came at the end of the first lockdown and so students experience of online learning was front and centre of their thoughts on their learning. The positive side effect for this study was that all learning had to come through one platform. Students were unable to work with each other in person and, as such, I was able to delve into what they missed about being able to collaborate in groups or in person. After my first round of interviews in 2021, I began to spot emerging ideas and patterns that came through my data.

## Emerging Ideas

From instigating my first actions in classrooms and initial interviews, certain concepts and ideas began to emerge. From simply highlighting key ideas and principles on online learning and by my own observations on classes and studying interactions between students', initial Ideas began, I thought, to become clear.

These initial findings produced unexpected results. Primarily, it appeared that students were initially reticent to use social media platforms in the classroom. Early results and comments showed that

students did not see the use of social media as part of their learning. As the software was embedded into the course, however, students quickly started using it in ways that had not been anticipated.

Students' use of language in interactions with each other and with teachers were mixed. In some cases, students' use of emojis, memes and abbreviations are so rife in their communication that I had to seek clarification from students about their meaning. The use of language amongst the students is unique to them, it forms a part of their identity. As such, in some cases, the platforms were 'hijacked' by students and comments from them were often very informal and not course based! As a positive, this demonstrated some degree of ownership of the platform to communicate with each other. On another level, this has meant that the classroom has been levelled. Students who were previously noticeably quiet in class were given agency and a 'voice.' Even if that Voice was not geared towards the outcomes of each of the briefs the students were undertaking.

The perception of lockdown learning and teaching was so skewed by Covid measures that Students and staff's perception were altogether different of online learning after it had been made compulsory. Before, when it was used in a more 'traditional' blended learning and teaching approach, students and staff saw online learning as useful 'bolt-on'. Some saw it as a gimmick, others an essential tool to learn to enter the workplace. The pandemic forced everyone to work in a particular way, to work online, remotely. This therefore had an impact on the period of research but acted as a catalyst, as students that had begun trialing Teams before the lockdown had some experience of learning online before this became compulsory.

From early analysis of my primary quantitative data there were several ideas that surfaced when preliminary analysis of interviews began. As per my research method, interviews in the first stage of research or phase one began to produce areas that began to shine a light on some of my original research questions. Below were some of the key emerging ideas that were noted down as I began data analysis.

1. There is a 'mystery factor' that seems to be crucial in creative situations and teachers are unable to pinpoint what this is.
2. The language used in this area lacks clarity - 'body language', space, judging mood is missing in online teaching – find ways of to capture the mystery something.
3. Teachers and students require ownership of online spaces far more than offline spaces.
4. Tacit knowledge is crucial to creative reflection and discovery.

5. Place and Space – the physical dimension has a set of beneficial social rules for learning that are absent in the online space.

The last stage of the research consisted of further interviews and observing students and teachers after the lockdowns and up to 2024 (please refer to the interview schedule above). In this final cycle I began to see overarching trend in my data that, as I discuss below, I had to 'shelve'. The third cycle took place during a period where my primary intervention had been completed but some of the practices and adoption of online practices, I introduced in that first cycle had become commonplace on the course and after students were not required to be available for online 'only' classes. During this period, I interviewed students who had been at the college prior to lockdown where Teams had been used to structure the vocational course, through lock down, and, in some cases with students that had stayed at the college to take a Foundation Degree. One student that I interviewed had also done a Level 2 course making the year in which I interviewed him his 5<sup>th</sup> year at the college. The chance to interview a student who had experienced FE at Level 2, 3 and 4 was incredibly insightful and he provided some excellent points on how his learning journey had shifted and changed over the course of his time at the college. At the end of the last interview, I had amassed a large amount of data to consider.

### Curb your Enthusiasm

After reviewing the initial evidence, observations and interviews and assessing the emerging ideas above, I stored these initial findings away and went back to the data with a more systematic and inductive process of data analysis to counter and challenge some of the initial findings or study to see if any of the initial findings overlooked significant concepts that were nestled amongst the voices and perspectives that were originally captured. My initial review of the data suggested broad categories under which ideas were beginning to emerge. These were as follows:

#### **Teamwork and collaboration in Film Education**

- Working together – problems with the experiment
- Making connections outside of class
- Working with each other is part of film but business and life.

#### Recurring Ideas and Concepts

- Media and Film provide a unique opportunity for students to work together.
- Communication, which Media is – needs to be built into curriculum. It teaches students how to communicate with each other. It has never been more important than in 21st Cent.
- Collaboration is just a buzzword that has lost meaning.

### **Communication problems in and out of classrooms**

- The Missing ingredient
- Social Media
- Attention Spans
- Covid
- Linked In
- Discord

### Recurring Ideas and Concepts

- Teaching online needs to be limited for 16-19 students and face to face interaction is always best.
- Students recognise that human interaction with a teacher is important.
- Social media style Walls do not work.
- Students need to learn how to communicate in diverse ways using the tech they have been raised with, and we need to teach them.

### **Practical benefits of Film Making and studying Film**

- Solo – postproduction and collaborative work
- The Challenge of production
- Raising Cultural Capital
- Learning a language
- Situated cognition – things that are mirrored in the real world.
- Creativity and craving freedom
- Mis-reputation, Media and Film – Dark Green
- Media not a real subject- not real learning

### Recurring Ideas and Concepts

- Knowledge Skills and Competence
- Techné is overrated – students know this, they do not want to learn it in class.

- The spaces that colleges provide the togetherness and moments where learning happens is where you least expect it.
- There is something unique that Film and Media affords its students problem based – communication.
- The ‘space/community’ between lecturer and student need to be examined

### **The benefits and pitfalls of online learning**

- Online teaching on social media software
- Teaching Blind
- Collab spaces
- Group learning
- “It’s all there” knowledge.
- “Good for learning Theory”
- Feedback

### Inductive Coding

I found it difficult at this point not to rush to judgement on the above initial read through of the data and to keep an open mind. I was not “letting the data speak” and the above headers give some insight into a tendency to deductively analyse the data. Some of the recurring phrases I saw in the data, however, echoed some of the concepts and ideas I found in the works of other scholars in this field of study, discussed in Chapter 2. I was also very aware of the dangers of only finding what I set out to look for having written Chapter 2 so I went back to the advice of Braun and Clarke (2006) and Nowell et al (2017) to use Multiple Coders (MCs) to help me to look at the data in a more careful and measured way which would help me to interpret the data in a trustworthy manner and to report the meanings I made from analysis of categories found in the data as authentically as possible. In the longer term, I hoped that Phase 2 of my systematic analysis of the data would subsequently enable the final subthemes and themes to come into view.

My main codes were ascertained from systematic thematic analysis through assessing the questions that were directed at students and staff to identify initial categories, codes, sub-themes and themes in the data. These are then connected to considerations of and examining the research questions that I wished to explore in the thesis. From here, I then followed Phases 1-4 in the systematic approach to the analysis of qualitative advocated by Braun and Clarke (2006) and Nowell et al (2017). Firstly, this

enabled me to familiarise myself in all of the data sets generated in the study. In Phase 2 I employed a Frequency Table to begin to identify categories of codes in the data without trying to cluster or thematically analyse them in any way. My purpose at this point was simply to notice and note what appeared to be interesting aspects of the data in the form of interesting verbs, nouns and other figures of speech including language, recurring phrases, concepts metaphors, similes etc... as exemplified below.

B

Uh. I think when... When the students have been tasked with something they know what they're gonna do. So, I think the most effective lessons have been evaluation lessons where they've already been set at R and the online session has been used to facilitate evaluation of that work. Found that there are a lot more are Happy to talk. When it is not kind of on. On the Hoof. So when they know what they're talking about. I think that for us, like with the when we were doing with UAL before lockdown, we were using Padlet largely to do that, and that worked really well and I don't know if that's because of the non video. I think for our students we're still finding that the majority of them don't really want, if they can help it, don't like turning their cameras on, so there's still a bit of a barrier there about showing themselves on the screen and feeling kind of exposed in that way. Where as Padlet like it's not anonymous, so you've got their name their you know he's typing but it's more like the kind of Messenger thing, it's quick and um, because it happens in in real time, I think it feels... It feels quite positive 'cause you see the wall filling with posts and little bits and pieces, and it feels like what kind of creative space to work in. Whereas I think my experience of working on teams it can just feel a bit like from a teacher's point of view, like probably a student as well. Speaking into a bit of a vacuum and a void and you don't know if anybody's there and going to respond. But I think yeah.

WGC

Do you get when you are like talking on teams like we are now? You said like a like a vacuum Do you get students... who are happy to respond?

B

Yeah, but it's always the same students. There's a handful of... a small handful in each class. And, and I find that the second years have, and maybe that's because the second years we did it obviously throughout lock down, or maybe it's because I already have a... we have a better relationship and a more longstanding relationship. I find it a lot harder with the first year groups. They are a lot more quiet. But it tends to be the same few people who are willing to speak up online on teams and what we've taken to doing now is.... it's just like, I guess, what you would do in class but to a greater degree of just direct questioning. "Tell me what you think X " or whatever, because otherwise they just don't say anything. I don't like, I don't. I find it really hard. I find it really hard not being able to read the body language and the and get the kind of temperature of the class and how it's going down. I think it's really hard to. I think it's really, really hard to measure learning online.'cause I just got no idea. I you know, I've got no idea whether they're the ones you don't have that camera on. Whether they're sat there doing something you've got no idea how. You don't know what they do.



**Will Cossey** ...   
Barrier to communication



**Will Cossey** ...   
Teams and a void - communication and speaking to no one



**Will Cossey** ...   
measuring learning online

Figure 48 Coding the data

done online, so in the back of my mind I'm expecting it, but I guess for creative media. Um, you know, with some subjects it kind of works. If it's if it's a lot of. Not practical work it it makes sense to do it online, but in terms of creative media is so I think a lot of that learning experience comes through. Communicating with people in person and you know being able to voice opinions and stuff all in one room together. Like when you're making a film. Um, 'cause otherwise. Sometimes it's just difficult to get you. You know it's difficult to get your opinion across through text sometimes, especially when you're being creative. Like I said, so....

WGC

That's the big thing is isn't it, do you think? Like with filmmaking, do you think something like this like the way we're talking now (online)? Or if there's a whole bunch of us talking, you think you think there's something like lost from not being in person.

D

I do think when you're making a film especially yeah, in terms of working as a group, I think there's two styles of working as a group, and obviously one of those is to be able to collaboratively. Work with a number of people. Together.... and I don't really think you get that togetherness online because although you get each others opinions and views on things, it's harder to bounce off each other and come up with stuff. Just through some expressions on online.

WC

Yeah, why do you think? Why do you think that is?

b

I can't really pinpoint why, but I mean. For I mean when, for example, I don't really make music, but recently I had

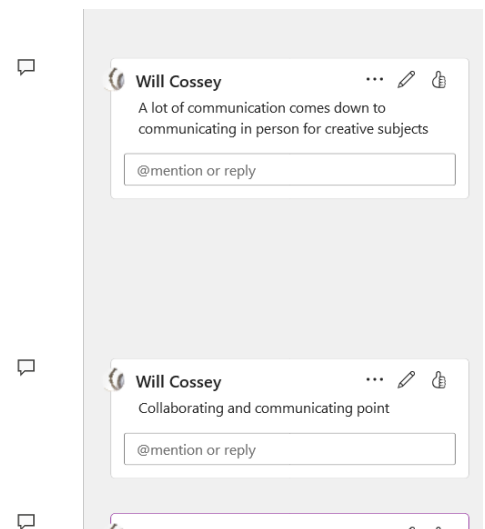


Figure 49 Coding the data II

My first sweep of the data brought to light glimpses of high levels of affect in the data regarding staff and student experiences of teaching, learning and assessment of the course. Below is a sample of the Frequency tables that I used to collate the data together. As you can see the frequency of sentiment or exact phrase is tallied in the coding table and eventually colour coded around their similarity with other codes. The full data coding can be found in the appendix.

### Teacher Response Coding

#### Key

T1	Main codes
TA	Teacher A
TB	Teacher B
TC	Teacher C
TD	Teacher D
SI	Student Interactions online
O	Observed in class

Initial Teaching Coding			
Category	Actual Words/Phrases used by participants	frequency	Participant
T1	"the barrier between the way they communicate online, normally with their friends and the way that they would sit politely in a classroom"	iiii	TA, TC, TD O,
T2	Speaking into a "vacuum"	iiii	TD, TB, TC, O
T3	"we don't necessarily teach practical skills that the kids couldn't do themselves"	iiii	TA, TB, TC, O
T4	"Taking ownership of it (Online resources) myself" Not being "passive"	iii	TC, TB, TA
T5	Online learning - "it works for theory but not the practical side".	iii	TA, TC O
T6	"Feedback is alive and fresh for students" in online groups. Feedback is good and "instantaneous" online. Real time feedback	iiii	TD, TA, TC,
T7	"Measuring learning online is difficult".	i	TB
T8	"Online space" not conducive to expression or teamwork"	iii	TB, TA, O
T9	No 'Physical' interaction in online learning – something missing	iiii	TA, TB, TC, TD
T10	"Students Gravitate towards social media more than college platforms"	ii	TA, O

Figure 50 Sample of Teaching Coding

I repeated this process for the student's data.

**Student response Coding**

Key

C1,2,3

etc..

A Student A

B Student B

C Student C

D Student D

E Student E

SI Student Interactions online

O Observed in class

<b>Initial Coding</b>			
Category	Actual Words/Phrases used by participants	Frequency	Participant
C1	"Teamwork is best when done in person in groups" not as good online	iiii	SI, O, D, B C,
C2	"I've self-taught technical skills" "Self-taught film set" "3D train was designed because we couldn't shoot on a train" self-taught editing effects to get round problems	iii	E, A, D, O
C3	"Online is good for Theory but not practice" "effective for theory" "Works well"	iiii	A,B,C,E,F SI

C4	“Filmmaking in groups is hard but where I’ve learnt the most” the pleasure of film making.  Practical work is where I learnt the most – “most challenging aspect”	iiiiii	A, B, C, E, D, F, O
C5	“Online learning is solitary” “isolate”	iii	B, A, D, O
C6	“some teachers would do it better than others” - Online learning	iiii	A, B, E, O
C7	“Working from home is easier”	ii	A, E
C8	it's much harder to, “motivate yourself” Online learning.  “Not motivated by working at home”	iiii	C, B, A, O
C9	“No Film courses at school” (before college)	iii	B, C, D

Figure 51 Sample of Student Coding

As well as this I used Multiple Coders who looked identify other key themes from sample interviews.

Multiple Coder 2 Themes identified from shared transcript.

1 Media, as a subject, shifts quickly. It reflects and responds to current world – cv19 and the subject itself impacted on students desire to study - Media is a fast-moving, ever-changing industry. It’s live.

2 Value of education goes beyond technical skills - Knowledge is constructed through processes of creativity and collaboration with others.

3 The benefits of online learning are less to do with the subject and more to do with the development of broader, transferrable skills – digital literacy, organisation etc.

4 Some of the current specs are representative of industry. Who's needs are they meeting? Making the content 'assessable'

5 A 'non-creative' approach to a creative industry – creativity is squeezed out of the curriculum.

6 The role and function of embodiment within teaching and learning – being physically present supports fruitful discussion and interaction.

Figure 52 Sample of Multiple Coding

By correlating all the data and reviewing multiple coder insight and colour coding the main sub themes I came to realise six core themes that spoke to the data as a whole.

This rigorous process allowed me to triangulate data, as per Nowell et al (2017) guidance on multiple coding and data analysis. As an insider to my research area, this process allowed me to become an outsider. To step away from the problem I was a part of and to view it objectively. When reviewing the codes and assembling the themes, the guidance of Nowell et al (2017) forced me to view the problem coolly and objectively. The process allowed me to see trends and identify subthemes that linked the data's outcomes together. From the words, phrases and concepts that interviews, observations and records of student interactions brought forward, I was able to see patterns and ideas that unified them around sets of subthemes as per below.

Yellow
Lost energy – Something missing – Barriers – boundaries – Motivation - physically present - Space - Etiquette - giving up - disconnect - body language
Orange
Self-taught – information – learning narrative – Independences – Organisation – control - presentation – evaluate – 121 – memory - Measuring - difference
Green
Ownership – others perspectives – public/private – Creative Practice – Making - Us - creative - Ecology - Branching – linking – interlinked bubbles – connections – outreach
Light Blue
Togetheress – argument/disputes – Fun/passion – conversation – Collaboration - Language - dialogue – mess - Teamwork - Challenge of groups – learning teamwork - Smaller /larger groups
Gold
Storage – efficient – unknown territory/how to - recording - data – knowledge of culture - – target - - support – theory - documenting - redundant feelings - Understanding
Purple
Reality – Real World - perception – Industry – Confusion – alive- assess - real time – speed – not real - trust

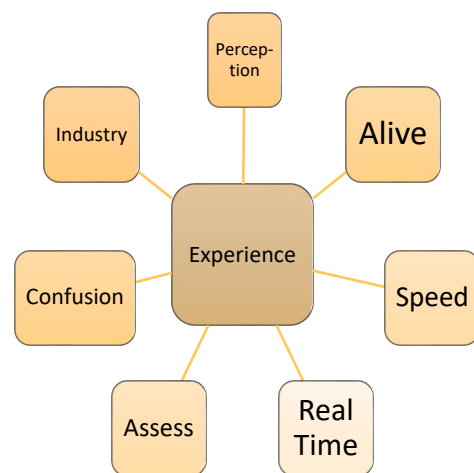
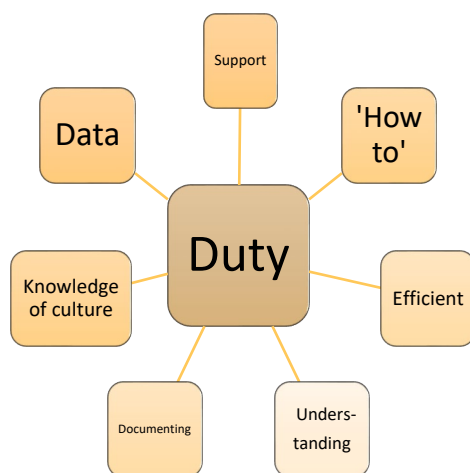
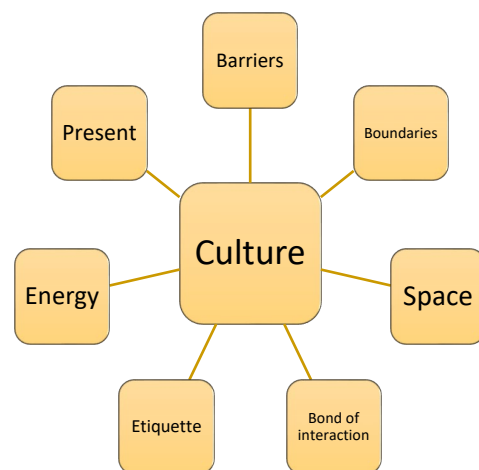
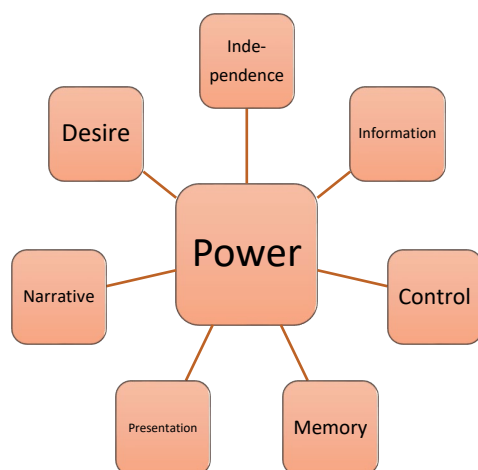
Figure 53 Correlating the coding

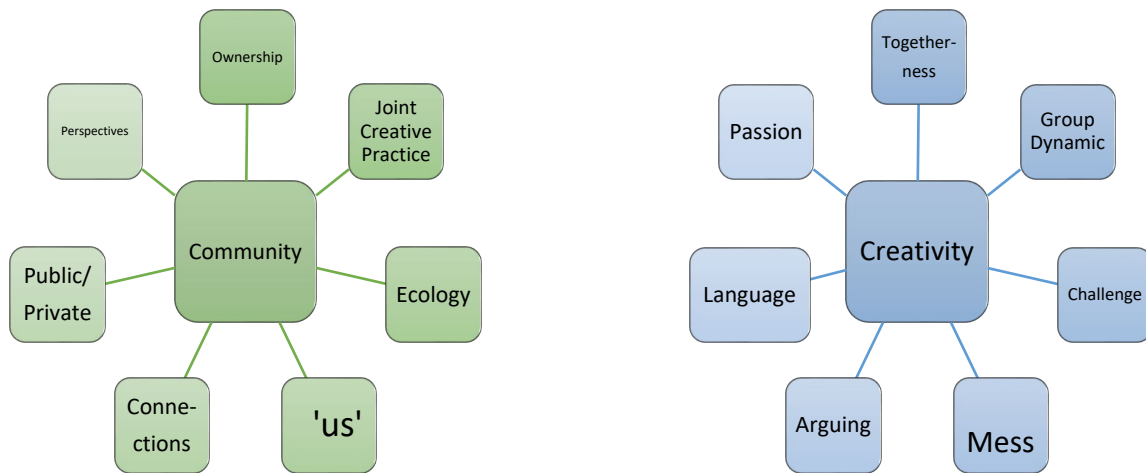
In short, the main themes that have been inductively identified from the data are as follows.

Theme 1	Culture
Theme 2	Power
Theme 3	Community
Theme 4	Creativity

Theme 5	Duty
Theme 6	Experience

Drawing on my MCs and my own coding, I clustered the sub themes, derived from multiple codes, around key themes. In many cases these sub themes linked and overlapped with each other. For example, I found Creativity and Community as central themes had overlapping sub themes that included togetherness, Us, and Ecology. There is, of course, an interrelationship between the central themes that my data produced and this is evidenced by the similarity of some of the subthemes that orbit them. As I go on to discuss in Chapter Five, the core themes that I have identified are themselves reliant on each other for them to be realised. Below are the six main themes in the data orbited by their sub themes.





There is a clear sense of the interrelationship between the themes, and I would argue that that these are dependent on each other for them each to be realised successfully. Indeed, they are interrelated *and* interdependent. In short there needs to be a *kaleidoscopic reaction* between all six themes for them to be realised individually. You cannot, I would argue, entrench creativity in a culture without students feeling empowered within their learning community for example. The ‘level’ that each of these are achieved will vary over time, over units, within courses and be governed by the different experiences of students. In the next chapter I use the data to speak to how students work these six themes at different points over their course.

### Summary

“The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance” (Aristotle, 350 BCE).

The collection and analysis of the data provided the researcher with numerous hurdles. In this chapter I have discussed some of the problems and issues that I had to overcome to complete my data collection. The two hardest obstacles I overcame was objectively interpreting the data and working through lockdowns with students and teachers. The results and data that my research has brought forth speaks to my original research questions. The collection of data, as discussed, was not a simple one and *seeing* the main themes through any preconceptions about my research questions was one of the major personal accomplishments of completing the collection of data. As discussed in Chapter Three, if my research was to be authentic, justifiable, and trustworthy I needed to stand outside of the problem and observe the outward appearance of it before I could step in and see the *inward significance* of its constituent themes.

## CHAPTER FIVE – ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

“The ultimate aim of education is to enable individuals to become the architects of their own education and through that process to continually reinvent themselves” (Eisner, 2002: 240).

In the following chapter, I discuss the main themes in the data with reference to the voices that have informed the case study. As I do so, I refine the main themes to distil their meaning and come to findings on each of them, whilst at the same time reflecting upon and discussing the voices, concepts, theories and ideas raised in Chapter Two. Analysis of data generated in this study brings to the fore a constant balancing act at play in Film Education and suggests that has been made more complex by the digital context in which it now takes place. New instruments and devices to support learning include collaborative software and filming and editing technology. As discussed earlier in this thesis while these have opened a host of possibilities to students and teachers, it is the question of *how* they are used that has become troubling. As discussed above, each of the key themes identified in the data link to each other in some way. Recurring themes and concepts such as, Culture, Power, Community, Creativity, Duty and Experience, illuminate the problems which gave impetus to this study and are explored in this thesis. In several cases, these also connect in some way to another theme. As discussed below, for example, data from this study suggests that for community to function well, members need to have a common purpose and in this shared endeavour (Fielding et al 2005) to achieve that purpose, members of the community (in this case) students need to feel empowered in the pursuit of the goals of Film Education. By exploring one problem or issue encountered in practice therefore, another problem or issue can come more clearly into view so that the focus and



Figure 54 *Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Spielberg, 1981)

direction of travel become clearer. As I discuss the data through this chapter, findings begin to come to light. In this Chapter, I summarise each finding for each main theme emerging from the data in the forms of a finding summary below, I provide a finding summary for each of the six core themes. In Chapter Six I then go on to make distinct recommendations related to each finding and then give examples of good practice moving forward including a suggestion for a Film Education Framework.

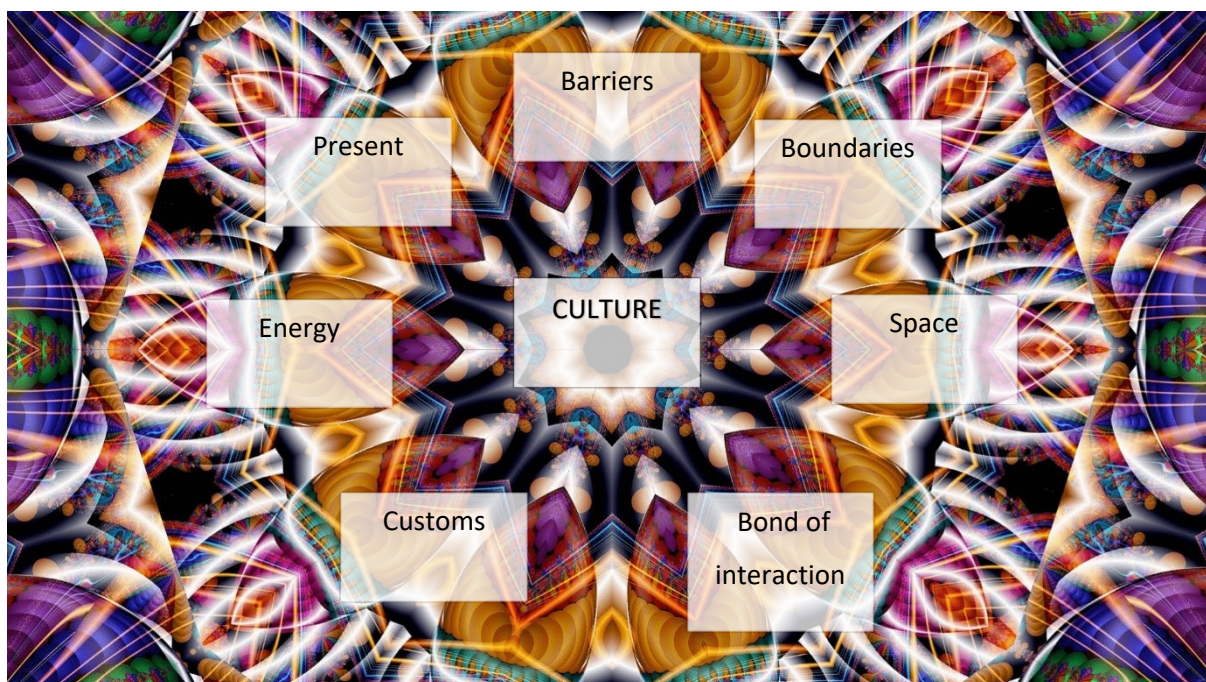
Eisner (2002) makes the case that students are not just products of educational institutions but also of the culture, language and beliefs that permeate that institution. It is poignant therefore that the first finding of this research coalesces around the theme of Culture. The term Culture is used here to

refer to the shared beliefs of the participants, the customs, practices, traditions, signs, symbols and rituals that make the institution 'tick'. Examining the theme of culture brings to light how insiders in the institution that forms the site of this case study interpret *how* successful the culture they are a part of supports the individual and the collective life of the community and fulfils its purposes.

## CULTURE

“A culture in the anthropological sense is a shared way of life” (Eisner 2002: 3).

A reoccurring concept that runs throughout the data in this Case Study and this thesis is around the rules of insiders' interactions with each other. Here I refer to interactions between film students and between film students and film and media staff. More broadly, this appeared to me in terms of how participants viewed boundaries, barriers and possibilities of the educational culture of which they are a part. Participants in the study contributed to discussion of how communication between each other should be done online and how spaces should be managed in physical classrooms including their views on how everyone involved the culture of the community could work most meaningfully and creatively. As Eisner (2002) identifies in studying the provision of Arts Based education, schools can “grow” children and help to foster creative minds. If the same idea is applied to the FE sector, the culture in which the students are surrounded, based on the interactions that students and staff have with each other and between themselves, must be a first consideration including the extent to which that culture enables or prevents them flourishing. Arguably the culture in an FE college is vastly different from Secondary school. For example, in FE there is generally a higher degree of autonomy as the students involved have often chosen the subjects they wish to study.



Many of the sub themes surrounding this theme link to the ‘problems’ that students and staff in this Case Study encounter when trying to work in the cultural spaces that had been set up online or in physical classrooms for students to work. This brings to the fore the theme of social interaction and the constraints and rules around which that interaction is controlled and in which the relays of power at work in the social interactions operate. These are denoted in the context of this thesis as ‘culture’ and ‘pedagogy’.

### The Missing Ingredient - The Bond of Interaction and Authentic Presence

Repeatedly students and staff note that *something* was missing from the learning context arising from staff and students not being able to be in the same physical space. This is an interesting contradiction to the finding that students did not work better together when placed physically with other groups. Lock down provided an added impetus for this research. Students and staff had not only experienced interactive digital sessions with each other prior to lockdown, but also during lockdown when students’ *only* experience of their course was in online sessions. A point that is repeatedly raised in interviews and discussions, is that there is ‘something missing’ when talking and collaborating online but that students and teachers could not quite put their finger on *what* that missing element was. Student E points to this missing ingredient as follows, “... that it’s just so hard to put things into words when you’re not in person” and “that there’s a slight distance between you that you can’t cover”. The same student concludes that, “Like, it’s just not real communicating.”

Teacher B highlights the “barrier to communication” that comes from an online session. She describes it as “... speaking to a vacuum...” and that, “... measuring if learning is taking place online...” is more difficult. These data extracts suggest that virtual space is not conducive to freedom of expression and spontaneity between students and that it is hard for students and staff alike to be creative online. This suggests that the lack of physical space impinges on communication and presence. This is highlighted by an ‘A’-Level student who comments that it was awkward for students to talk online. “You would be there (in a breakout room) just talking to an initial [the onscreen initials of the people online].” They went on to say that they could not remember one memorable session that took place online.

This is echoed by Teacher A, who says that “... person to person” teaching is important. Student B says that online learning, “... is solitary” and even when put into breakout rooms there was something missing from having to tackle a problem with a group of students and instead working on their own. It also, she said, reduced the level of interest of a lesson. In some cases, teachers, she said “... would just sit there, and say, copy what I’m doing”. Teacher D sees that online teaching “... creates blocks”

and that, "... I just don't have that two-way interaction quite as much" [as if the students were in the room]. They continue: -

*"It goes beyond technology. You need to be in the classroom. There is a ... element that is missing from doing this digitally.... Because you're teaching students a skill that goes beyond just using the technology itself. So being able to sit in a room and converse about a creative idea and how that's applied or how they're creating that. Although you could do that digitally, I just don't know. I feel like there's a third element in there that you're missing if you're just doing it virtually and not in person."*

This missing ingredient or extra element that is not present in online teaching is highlighted by student F. The student had completed the UAL L3 course and then gone on to the Foundation Degree at the same college.

*"In like a really like vague kind of arbitrary way I think that there is like energy lost if that makes sense. Like emotional connection. I think it becomes a lot more diluted, the conversation, over a video. I don't know why that is, but I feel like it really does. I don't know if it's just like an animal part of our brain where we just tend to feel better about what we're talking about when you're with another person. But I know that's just something I kind of have observed. But not in any way that I can articulate professionally."*

This sense of 'something missing' was reiterated by teachers. Clearly online communication has allowed a greater sense of possibility in terms of reach, remote working, and connectivity but the quality of that communication the above data suggest lacks a depth, energy and presence that is dynamically evident in face-to-face teaching and learning when it is at its pedagogic best. One teacher used the metaphor of a museum to compare it to being given a guided tour, but that as you were not there (not actually present), you missed the details and nuances of the real experience.

The teacher says that it was debilitating not being able to see students in lockdown learning conditions. She comments, "... I feel like I'm teaching blind ..." and has not yet, "... found a way to make it work...". For communication, it is useful but in terms of teaching online communication and just sharing notes she explains, "... I don't think it works... I just don't have that two-way interaction quite as much". This teacher left our interview and messaged me later as the question had bothered them. They wanted to try and pin down what that missing element was, they say that:

“(The third element) - that is missing in digital teaching and learning is that the teacher within a classroom works like algorithm , actively listening and watching behaviour and contributions and tweaking the delivery or manipulating responses to move towards the end goal (the learning aims of the session) IT can create an individual experience and takes away a shared experience of the process a screen creates a barrier so it's much harder to have two way communication, direct human interaction and creates a tunnel vision therefore sometimes confusing experience of the learning. And much like dating online it's all well good to start or to assist you, but it really helps to be able meet up for real. It's no silver bullet”.

As students and staff struggled to pinpoint or be able to describe what was missing, it is difficult to detect what this “something” is. Sometimes though it is possible to catch glimpses of what students mean when they say something is lacking, particularly in respect of how they refer to a missing component. Many simply refer to how communicating online is different from real communicating in person. Other comments highlight something missing from the social rules of communicating successfully online and noted that when there is an absence of energy in a learning situation, that the experience is not a memorable one. The freedom to be authentically present and socially engaged in the world around you and be able to work with others is expressed clearly by Maxine Greene in *The Dialectic of Freedom* (1988). Greene describes this as searching for, “freedom developed by human beings who have acted to make a space for themselves in the presence of others...for those willing to take responsibility for themselves and for each other.” (Greene, 1988: 54) as a goal of a successful learning community. Greene’s exploration of ‘wide-awakeness’ (1977) as a benefit of studying the arts, of being provoked by interactions with art and others, seem factors of influence in experience that are not being realised in online exchanges. This absence of energy, of that ‘something missing’ appears to deny participants one of the most rewarding opportunities of studying, in real time, together – the energy and spark (or *communitas* (Bernstein 1996)) of engaging in the production of creative media in collaborative and cooperative ways. The lack of personal ‘investment’ that students experience in online tasks, highlights that the something missing is the desirable outcome of what *is* present in learning collaboratively and cooperatively together, in person and in real time. This suggests that the intermingling of energies from multiple people in a single creative endeavour creates a shared experience that heightens the vitality (Dewey, 1924/Fielding et al 2005) and elevates the spirits of those that take part in the same shared endeavour. In drawing attention to how this does not take place in online sessions students indicate that the best interactions take place when they occur in interaction with each other in working together to find and solve real problems in real time.

This missing something, barrier, boundary or limitation to, successful communication also resonates with Sennett (2012) where he describes in *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures & Politics of Cooperation*,

not only the importance of collaboration and cooperation, but also how both must be learned. The above work of Sennett also draws into focus the work of Bernstein (1996, 2000) where he points to the importance of the realisation of *Pedagogic Rights* and *Pedagogic Conditions* in educational practice. The achievement of these *Pedagogic Rights*, as Bernstein highlights, are influenced by the existence or absence of conditions supporting *Inclusion*, *Participation* and *Enhancement* in educational practice. If there are barriers to the realisation of Bernstein's *Pedagogic Rights* as pillars of pedagogy or if they are inhibited by the lack of energy, knowledge, opportunities and structures to communicate effectively, then naturally the achievement and realisation of Bernstein's *Pedagogic Rights* will be restricted in educational practice. The communication bond between students, and between students and teachers, has been built incrementally over time (Dunne 1998) with varying degrees of success throughout a student's journey through their education. When asked to communicate in a new way, online, then these aspects of communication need to be explored, taught, and honed, just as communication between students and teachers, in person, has been done in classrooms, lecture halls, studios and workshops for centuries. The message that seems to be encoded in this sub theme of "the missing ingredient" is the ability to be able to communicate through a variety of different platforms. Stenhouse in, *An introduction to Curriculum Research and Development* notes that the, "... the gap between pupils and teachers and the outside world is often a rather large one" (1975: 42). If this is the case, then perhaps the role of a successful curriculum may be to bring "real world problems" and "plays and interplays of energies" into the classroom. This point also resonates with Bachmann and Zahn's (2018) observation in regard to Film Education and the role of different media technology and the people that interact with that media. In looking at what the future of it terms of its use of that technology they point out that,

"processes of learning and education are thus shaped by different networked media, which create different possibilities for the actors involved to perceive and to act within these processes, which is why it makes sense to speak of an environmental agency that is neither dominated solely by humans nor by technology" (Bachmann & Zahn, 2018: 81).

In the case study which forms the focus of this thesis, this factor also seemed to be at work in that technology had become to dominate human interaction. The fact that both teachers and students both said that the quality of communication is poorer online, suggests that either we need to find a better way of doing it or simply accept that online teaching and learning a poor substitute for face-to-face teaching and learning, or thirdly that the right combination of the two needs to be arrived at within the Film Education community. Comments from teachers and students and interactions between students suggests that the communication and 'energy gap' between students and teachers is brought into sharp focus when the rules for communicating in a society are overly restricted or

unclear or when pedagogic opportunities for 'heightened vitality' are too diluted or absent. Despite a variety of efforts in this study to test out different communications techniques such as using "the wall", running virtual lessons, making break out rooms for students and posting updates and feedback online, students still saw the value and missed opportunities to be and belong (Bernstein 1996, 2000) in the same physical space as each other and a teacher or in a creative space such as studio with the assistance of a technician.

## Customs

Communication between smaller groups on the other hand seem to work in a more vibrant way than large ones, with some lecturers finding they could take a back seat and allow groups of students to discuss and probe at questions. A whole host of online etiquette skills had to be taught first, however. As Teacher C says, students need to learn how to discuss online and in some cases be told "what is polite". Some teachers note that they had to remind students to allow others in the group to communicate without interruption. Teacher C sees the distinction between how students discuss things online, in their own social media groups, and the difficulty of re-learning or redefining this skill in an educational or professional setting. He sees this as a great challenge for teachers as an increased amount of online learning becomes commonplace.

"I'm interested in how we manage that and how we can encourage that without encouragement to overstep the mark. I think that's quite an interesting area, the barrier between the way they communicate online, normally with their friends, and the way that they would sit politely in a classroom whilst I'm talking. There's quite a big drift between those two things, and how they can merge them in between."

What echoes in my experience of teaching online is that students were more than happy to discuss something one to one online than 'in front of the group.' It is the same way in which there are often 1 or 2 students who wish to discuss a point or problem at the end of a normal 'in-person' session rather than make that point in front of the group. This usually signals a missed opportunity for a wider discussion. If only they had raised this important idea with the rest of the group, then the discussion may have been so much richer in the session and other students could have benefitted from engaging in the discussion.

As well as this Teacher D reflects on how students communicate with each other in class sessions and some of the problems this presented to her. "I've had students that message me and it's quite informal

because they're naturally in that mindset that they're in some kind of social media Messenger type mode," she said, making the point that a lot of the communications were very informal. Teachers identified that students needed coaching regarding "what was polite" and how to interact with staff and other students on Teams and video calls throughout lock down and throughout the span of the intervention. She comments that, "We're using technology that they're using informally in their social life, it's one and the same beast to them. They're not really differentiating between the two, but I think that's just because of where... what they've grown up with." She concludes with this point, "I think we should teach it for this generation coming through."

The etiquette that is required to communicate effectively again reinforces the point above. That social norms of the classroom are so well entrenched throughout a student's experience of them that any new form of communication takes time to be established. That teachers see an issue with *how* students are talking to them points to what ownership and agency students feel they should have in their educational experiences. Teachers here, see themselves as gatekeepers to how best to communicate. If students are to achieve Bernstein's *Pedagogic Rights* (1996, 2000) however, this then raises the issue of gatekeeping (which could be construed to be a form of control) which must be balanced if students are to be afforded the *Pedagogic Right of Inclusion* to feel able and allowed to use language in a community in which they feel a sense of belonging and that is familiar to them. If boundaries and barriers to their inclusion are erected, then it is difficult to see how Bernstein's other *Pedagogic Rights of Enhancement and Participation* can also be achieved.

### Barriers and Boundaries

One of the principle aims of this research is to try and test out how to improve collaboration and cooperation between students using classroom space and online social spaces. From interviews with staff and students the pedagogic interventions employed in this study highlight the opportunities and dilemmas that the advent of online sharing apps and an increasing reliance on digital platforms have created for teachers. Collaboration and cooperation between students during the initial pedagogic intervention, in the view of Teacher D, had failed.

In the initial pedagogic intervention before lockdown, students from two separate groups were paired up in a media "lab" that had a retractable wall. The students were from the same course and working on the same project. The classrooms were merged, and students were given Laptops to collaborate and feedback on projects together. As Teacher C points out, "...we take down the wall" but "... the wall still existed." He also comments that, "... even though as teachers we were walking, we were

crossing the Rubicon all the time, the kids almost got even more kind of insular or turned their shoulders away, so they didn't have to make weird eye contact with kids in another room.” Students, when physically put into the same room and asked to work with another group, at first, felt strange. As he elaborates, “it had the feeling of a school disco when the slow dance comes up and just everybody is sort of like milling around, not making eye contact with each other.”

On the other hand, as the year developed students in the study were happier to share with other groups online, but this was not assisted by being physically in the same space. From observations and from monitoring student interactions with each other online, they were more comfortable collaborating away from each other in the building rather than next to each other. The screen shot below shows students asking each other from other groups for help on projects. This happened across all the Teams chats, with students being more confident over the year to ask other members of other groups for assistance or technical advice.

Can anyone give me some advice on how to add some impact wind into a 2d animation? Thanks in advance

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Figure 55 Conversation extract from Teams

Students use of Teams before the lockdown was limited to points of feedback on work and to communicate with each other or post recommendations. In several examples students set up meetings to discuss things that had nothing to do with college work and, given their first opportunity to post comments to each other, they treated the space like they would their social online spaces. Emojis, GIFs, Cats playing pianos all made appearances. Students treated the online space informally. Reminders were made to keep collaboration professional in tone, as you would in a real, media industry setting. The level of communication was ‘low’ and discussion points quickly fizzled out. As teacher B points out, collaboration and communication seem difficult to manifest online. Pointing out that at the end of term when students’ numbers were low because of lack of attendance, “... discussions were much more interesting” and the “... dialogue was much more of a higher level” and “...more critical thinking was happening”. She puts this down to the group size but also maybe because, “... they’ve chosen to come...” rather than the sessions feeling more forced and artificial. She also points out that discussion and collaboration are better suited to smaller group discussions amongst 4 or 5 students. Perhaps as participation was optional, the stakes were lower and participants were more willing to make mistakes or feel as if they were given to opportunity to make mistakes.

Student A, a student who had gone through L3 course and interviewed after the lock downs whilst studying on a Level 4 Foundation degree at the same centre says that he liked the instantaneous

nature of being able to communicate with staff whilst working remotely and editing his work. Knowing that a lecturer was online and available to answer questions suited his working style. He also says that, “... working from home was a bonus ... ” and that remote learning suited some of the project-based nature of post-production work.

Teacher D highlights how having a good rapport with students in the classroom allows for the “testing of boundaries” in online discussion groups. Students would push at the boundaries of the online space that was designed for them. Data from this study suggests that students were experiencing the boundaries of space that we provided for them by pushing back at it. By pushing the barriers and boundaries, they were in effect in a state of what Dewey would describe as knowledge transaction (1916), they were coming into contact with experience and trying to understand the world around them by testing the educational barriers they came up against; only, in a virtual sense. As such, the most successful student interactions were those that not only made students feel like they were pushing at what was acceptable but also owning the space that lay within it. They felt like they had a stake in the conversation and discussion because they were invested in it, they had a sense of power and agency (Bernstein 1996, 2000). Rather than didactically patronising students, it would be preferable as Teacher D highlights above, that rules for communication can be arrived at democratically within the society. Sennett discusses the merits of dialogic communication extensively in *Together* (2012), perhaps rather than being ‘taught’ the rules of communication however, it would appear that arriving at the rules democratically through experience and learning those rules collaboratively is an important part of establishing the rules of social interaction. The barriers that participants above are ones that have either been created or point to the limitations of how technology is being used in classrooms. These barriers or boundaries can be seen as the limit at which a learning threshold could not be crossed. Where an educational moment is glimpsed but where the experience falls short. Where an opportunity is recognized but not realised. To make the most of the opportunities and spaces for communication at a teacher's disposal, students and teachers at this level need to be able and encouraged to work together to realise their potential.

## Space

“Space thus becomes something more than a void in which to roam about” (Dewey, 1934: 23).

The ‘space’ in which learning take place is often noted by teachers and students to contribute to the overall creativity and learning they experienced. Participants describe the ‘online’ space or the actual space in the classroom, TV studio or editing suite as places where either negative or positives

experiences occurred. Space in these cases and in other examples, however, did not just relate to the physical classroom space or the digital, online space that students interacted with but also the space *between* the curricula. The space to work together and to socialise with each other. This, arguably, is where another form of learning is taking place. As noted in Chapter Two, Biesta (2014) highlights in *Pragmatising the Curriculum* that what students learn, is learnt through experience. The experiences that my students were learning from were not always in the virtual and physical spaces that we were providing for them. The social space highlighted by students and teachers are what, in many cases, gave students their most memorable learning experiences. Much in the same way that Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989) recognise that through *situated cognition*, the liminal spaces in which learning takes place (Sennett, 2009), alter students experience and preparation for life outside of education. A finding of this thesis is that the conditions that were created for students on their media and film courses created both positive and negative, realistic and not realistic, experiences for them. As Teacher A points out, the college provides Media and film students with, "... the time and space to be creative and to collaborate with other people and to develop knowledge and life skills." She goes on to describe how many of the skills that are learnt on the course are not just technical ones. In many cases, these technical skills are learnt outside of the classroom, following online tutorials, YouTube videos of "how to" complete special effects or use a certain editing function on *Premiere* or *After Effects*. A finding of this thesis is that the real worth of the course was allowing students the *space* to be creative.

Some of the students report that their best experiences came from working in the TV studio during their course and that when lock down took away their chance to work together in problem solving situations, their learning became reduced to online "theory" sessions. Student A notes that after their L3 course he ended up using the TV studio far more. "One of my favourite things from taking the L4 FDA is... using the TV studio more and getting really familiar with the technicians". He went on to discuss how relationships with the technicians, working one to one with them, developed his skill set and that he could see a more direct line to working in the industry. Teacher B comments that "actually, we need that physical environment, there's something really important about entering the space". The online space, on the other hand, students recognise was better suited to merely finding things out. The creativity in this space is limited, they note and many of the students highlight how the online space stifled their creativity. They accept the value of the online space as being good for organising the course, for storing documents but they comment that it was never as fruitful for working in person or working on a project together.

Because of the nature of film-making many students work together outside of the classroom on location. All the students recount in their experiences practical examples of where there had been

“problems” on a shoot. It was here they report, where they had to work hard to either work together, or to work out a problem. Student D discusses their Final Major Project and looking after his crew. To keep the team happy, he buys pizzas for them at lunch to keep the shoot on time. Student B says that a shoot took four days to complete instead of one. Their shoot was in January, it was cold, set in a Portacabin and as a result of the cold the batteries failed, to add to this they weren’t happy with the lighting and that overall, they said the “film experience itself was stressful”. Despite these challenges they say it was “fun” and note where “a lot of teamwork” was going on. Data from this study suggest that the experience of shooting on location in a space that was not part of the educational setting opens up students to a real-life, real-time encounter within and as part of a creative, liminal and unpredictable space providing them with individual and collective and often unforeseen experiences that could not have been replicated in a classroom.

Students repeatedly highlight how important *Space* was for them. They recognised the difference between online and offline space, the opportunities and constraints on offer in each regarding being on your own or with others. The space that students particularly note to be of value, however, are the social spaces or the technical spaces through which they experience encounters with real-life, real-time problems they had to solve. They repeatedly report that it was here that their most memorable learning took place. The sentiment echoes with Petrie’s (1991) assertion that a Film Education and filmic creativity is dependent on “factors such as social and technological conditions and material resources” (1991:1) and that the ‘situation’, in this case the physical creative space, fosters a collaborative educational experience.

### Energy in the Present

Student C when asked about a positive experience of online learning says that “I don't think I have any recollection of a specific lesson. If I would be honest.” When asked if they could remember something that worked particularly well from their online sessions, student B says, “can't think of anything, sorry.” The lack of memorable experience from students encounters with online learning is troubling. One such issue that some students point to, is the lost, “energy” that comes from remote meetings. Student F says that “energy” is “lost” from meeting online. Student D highlights this issue from not being present, together.

“You know, with some subjects it kind of works. If it's not practical work it makes sense to do it online, but in terms of creative media I think a lot of that learning experience comes through communicating with people in person and you know being able to voice opinions and stuff all in one room together. Like when you're making a film 'cause otherwise, sometimes it's difficult to get your opinion across through text ... especially when you're being creative.”

The loss of “energy” from these types of online interactions points to how student feel they learn best and are at their most creative in each other’s presence. Much in the same way that Turkle (2015) points to the most positive learning experiences humans can have is through face-to-face dialogue - participants in this study see the value of being in the same room, present and together. Many point to the ‘energy’ lost from online interactions and this underlines the importance of teamwork, problem-finding, problem-solving and critique – or thinking about how what they did together could be improved if they were to do it again and being together in the same physical space (Sennett, 2009, 2012). Even when editing a project where students may be at their most solitary during a filming project (something discussed in more detail below), the collaboration that is required in post-production is still best done when they are with, and in the presence of, other students.

### Summary and Finding One

The key theme, Culture, and its orbiting subthemes highlight some critical observations.

- That the creation of liminal ‘space’ between curriculum design is important because this is where deep and meaningful learning often takes place.
- Being physically together (in each other’s authentic presence) is important to discuss, create and build a positive learning culture.
- Both physical and online space are not the only places where learning matters – it is the learning that occurs in the liminal spaces in the ‘gaps’ between formal learning and teaching (in projects) where students are learning how to collaborate and cooperate.
- Pushing and overcoming problems, boundaries and barriers are important parts of the process of learning together in a culture and spirit of collaboration and cooperation in real world situations and in real-time in situations where new and unexpected possibilities can come into view.
- Sometimes students report best learning experiences happen away from the classroom, on a film set on location or in a TV Studio (see above).

A finding of this thesis is that for students to succeed in both online and in person communication, there needs to be a clear sense of engagement in a mutual purpose or shared endeavour as well as democratically agreed protocols regarding ‘how to’ to communicate online. Students recognise that there is a different quality to being together in a classroom or TV Studio space and that teachers recognise there are important learning opportunities achieved when cooperation, collaboration and communication happen ‘within’, ‘outside’ and between the contours of the official curriculum.

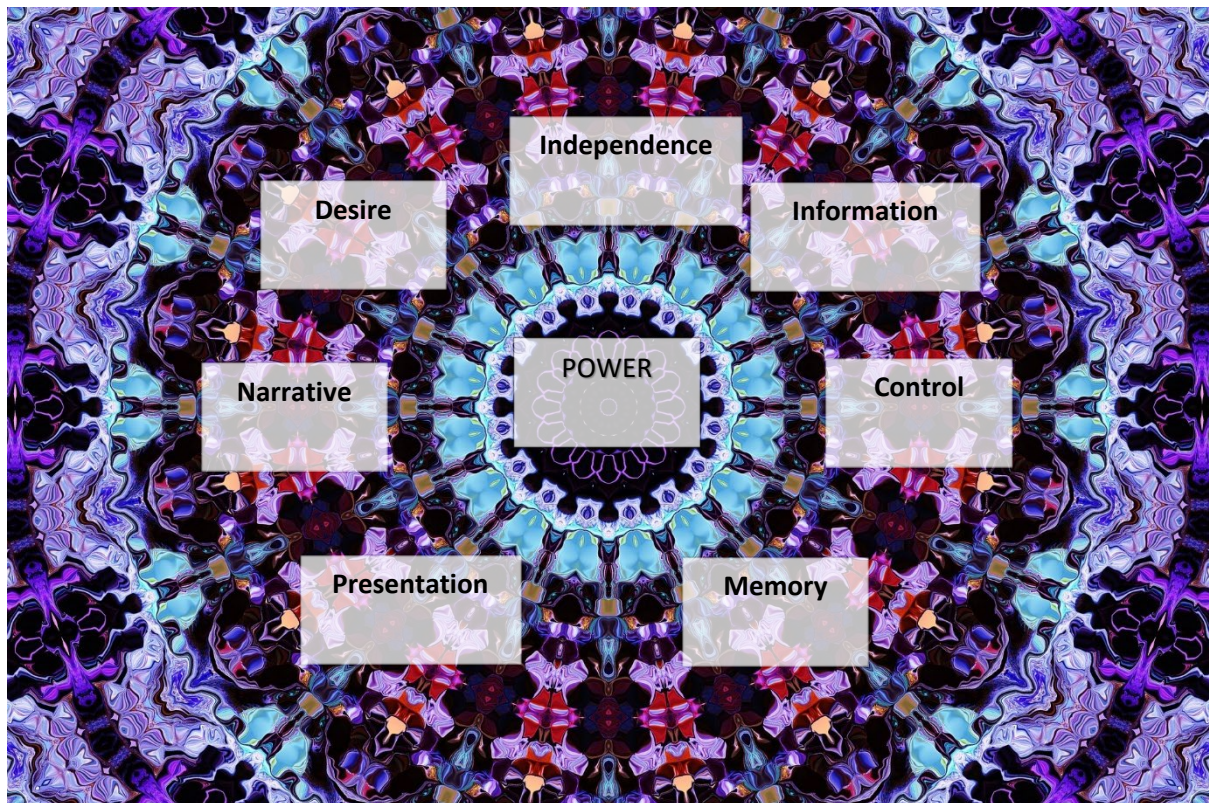
Teachers and learners in the case study repeatedly reported how they do not feel as if this culture of collaboration and cooperation is yet fully realised in their courses. This suggests that some work needs to be done to change this so that students know how to communicate with each other in a range of face-to-face and non-face-to-face situations with teachers and other students. This includes finding and solving problems online, in traditional classroom settings and in a wide variety of practical, real life, contexts. Further opportunities to gain experience of how to communicate critically and collaboratively online are necessary for students to be able to participate in and develop their own learning culture more successfully. Data from this study indicate that students' experiences of working in actual environments that mirror practices in the 'real-world' and real-time pivot on them finding and utilising a language and 'voice' which enables and clearly communicates in that culture. If, as Stenhouse's (1975) student-centred curriculum model suggests, a student has agency, they find their own way of seeing, interpreting and responding to the world around them. To quote Stenhouse, at length.

"Creative innovation is only possible through culture. The reason for this is as follows. The consensus which underlies culture crystallizes into meanings represented by symbols. These symbols, which are learnt by individuals in communication, serve to objectify culture in manipulable form. The language which is learnt culturally in communication can be taken into solitary reflection where the symbols can be re-ordered and can interact so that it is possible to establish new relationships and new concepts. The public language of religion, for example, can be taken into private thinking and used to create a unique subjective experience of the idea of God. Thus, individuality grows from culture. Men forge in the dialectic of social interaction the tools which serve the inner dialectic of thought and imagination. And perhaps the most vital criterion of the richness of a culture is the degree to which it feeds individuality and creative innovation." (Stenhouse, 1963: 126)

Students who study film production require spaces in which they can individually and collectively experience creative thinking. The voices in this case study suggest that this are best demonstrated when they have professional 'spaces' to work in that mirrors real industry situations as well as the communication tools and knowledge to critically analyse texts and the means to individually and collectively problem-find, problem-solve and critique their individual and collective practices in those situations. It would appear therefore, *that more time needs to be spent on teaching students how to discuss, problem-find, problem-solve, collaborate and engage in critique on new communication platforms* and that professional learning spaces provide productive opportunities for learners.

## POWER

Subthemes such as independence, desire, control and self-presentation all orbit the main theme of *Power*. This raises questions of the extent to which students feel emancipated, or in many cases, constrained by the social environment and culture, structure, organisation of the curriculum they experience, in terms of content, arc and narrative of a student's learning journey. A further question is raised here regarding how far both students and teachers feel *in control* of their learning. As Biesta (2011) discusses in Chapter 2, the pressures on students and teachers to prioritise *qualification* over *socialisation* and *subjectification* are strong and their grip is difficult to loosen in a system of education funded upon easily measurable 'outcomes'. Biesta also points out that teachers can navigate the three domains of education such as *socialisation*, *subjectification* and *qualification*, however, they need to be empowered to do so successfully before they can enable their students to do the same. The control that both teachers and students feel they have, I argue, determines the success or otherwise of a curriculum. Data from this study suggest that without power, insiders in the acquisition and development of a practice (indeed, any practice) can become passive outsiders swept along by events and moments of experience over which they feel they have no power or agency. In such circumstances students feel that they no longer have a "stake in the game" and education ends up being something 'happens to them' rather 'something in which they take part'. Data from this study therefore lend support to the work of Bernstein (1996, 2000) in his discussion of the importance of power, agency and pedagogy.



## Narrative and the Wall

In completing a practical project, say a music video brief for example, students learn about film-making techniques and associated theories and ideas around music video production. Participants use Teams channels to store conversations about the project and to reflect on their completed work. A criticism of the way in which the Teams “wall” is set up, say participants, is that it mirrors social media walls that students have grown up with. Data from this study indicate that the wall can operate to lose the gist of an argument and lead to issues and problems with communication amongst participants. Students, in the study then treat the wall as they would their own social media accounts. They have grown up with this connectivity and style of communicating and it is difficult to turn that into developed critical writing and debate because the software they are using is based upon online media they have used in a *particular* way. They have come to see the world, see discussion and exchanges in a way that does not generate thoughtful discussion. Data also suggests that this has led students to experience these things in a way that has reduced their critical thinking. Teacher D says that “I think that’s just that’s what they have grown up with”. They recount how the wall made learning and communication with students more challenging.

“It is quite annoying on teams because essentially, it's using a wall-based systems for posting things that go up in a timeline. You don't have static content and that content can disappear so students can go “I don't know where that is on that page because it's gone” because of that continuous... feed of information, so if anything is posted that needs to be read up on or referenced to, that can be lost quite easily through the discussion” (Teacher D).

Students, she says, found the wall a distraction and not an easy place to navigate to find resources or continue a discussion meaningfully. Data from this study indicate that the wall-based platform was not conducive to students controlling the narrative of their learning. Discussions would often become simplified exchanges and deeper exchanges that demonstrated critical thinking were not evidenced. As Turkle (2016) points out in *Reclaiming Conversation*, “learning isn't all about the answers but what the answers mean” (Turkle, 2015: 8). If the narrative of learning takes place solely online where the answers are provided but not in a way which allows them to be debated, then students have not been equipped by their experiences of the course with the power to have control over the information which they are exploring. It remains therefore at a level of information, not knowledge.

As noted in Chapter Two, Sennett (2012) reflecting on the Google Wave project, of which he was a participant in a beta-testing group makes the same point about the interface that online collaboration spaces can limit the quality of communication that can occur. As he points out, his experience of it left him to surmise that the program, “mistook information sharing for communication” (2012, 28). As he points out though, “information sharing is an exercise in definition and precision, whereas communication is as much what is left unsaid as said; communication mines the realm of suggestion and connotation” (2012: 28). He points out that in failing to enable complexity, software often limits communication and can become a strait jacket that needs to be tested and broken free from. Echoing Sennett's sentiment here, lecturers find that “the walls” that students were using to post on did not give students the opportunity to learn the deep social skills that are apparent in filmmaking and, more widely, in teamwork. In the section above, I discuss how students like to test the boundaries of what was acceptable in terms of their choice of language and how they used the platforms we had given them to work with. The same is the case in relation to the interface that lecturers and students use to present information and encourage students to use ‘walled’ interfaces to converse with each other. The issue is a programming software one. Teachers feel like the software is good for storing and documenting (see below) but not for dialogic communication. It denies students the chance to be able to express themselves in a way that encourages deeper critical thinking. As Sennett recognises, “in ordinary usage the technology is more likely to bend human will than to bend in response to it; put another way, you have to struggle with or deform an engineered social programme to practice

complex social exchange” (2012: 29). That a social media style presentation to collaboration in educational settings perhaps points to the need for software designers to consider how an interface is designed for more complex social exchanges to take place. The scrolling wall has become just that, a barrier to deeper collaboration and more sophisticated dialogue.

(Re) - presentation

From observations and scrutiny of discussions among my students on the platforms we provided for them, discussions were either brief, sparse, or jocular. However, throughout the lockdown and after interviewing students report that they find social media as crucial to maintaining links outside of college and developing an online professional persona. During the lockdown stage of this study, students recognise the importance of using social media, not just to stay in touch with others but as a way of growing their ‘creative hubs’. Student D reflects that social media played an important part of the lockdown for him. He develops this point:

“Social media played a massive role in my creative hub.... Obviously... I mean, we're locked down now so I can't leave the house. But in terms of my creative hub currently, yeah a lot of people who are my I'm in contact with they're actually in London, which is strange. You know they're not actually in Devon because a lot of the hubs or places where you can get in contact with people are online” (Student D).

Three of the students I interview discuss how important social media is to them and that they all interact and communicated via social media platforms. This is not a surprising finding, but many suggested that they would have liked more training on how to present yourself online, either to a peer audience or to a professional one. In discussing why presenting online is especially difficult, Student F says that, “weird human energy that you have when you're talking to someone face to face, that's just kind of lost, and I think that kind of trips people up sometimes”. His comments on college’s role on preparing students how to present themselves online are insightful.

“I think online discussion and public speaking and all of that kind of stuff should definitely be something that students learn, especially on an online media course where eventually they go out and ... like pitching ideas that you have, but also you have to kind of sell yourself ...you have to be like, “Look I can do this job. I know what I'm doing” and I find that a lot of students that I've worked with or seen pitch, really have a lot of struggles with public talking. They kind of

stand there with their rigid posture and, “Yeah, so uh” and it's not something that that people are born with - it's something you have to learn how to do.”

Student D also sees the benefit of teaching students how to talk to other people online and thought this should be something that should be done at college. It would be, “a good step in that direction of (learning to) talking to people who they don't know”. He saw the benefit of seeking out feedback from others on social media sites about their work as it gives you the time, “to re-evaluate things before you put out a film on the internet. It just benefits the whole outcome of it, doesn't it?” In conclusion, the student reflects on how social media sites can give valuable feedback on work and this is part of the process of film making. Indeed, he goes on to comment that whole point of filmmaking is to communicate with others visually, and checking whether an audience understands the message of your film is crucial. He said it would help students, “because you've got that idea in their head that they need to communicate and put their ideas across.” Online channels, this student notes, are one way of checking that your message is coming across in the way you want it to.

That students are asking to learn how to use something that they have been using their whole lives is an interesting point and one that is echoed by teachers. Students want to be able to pitch creative ideas and to be able to communicate these online, or in person. If humans need to work together, there will always be a need to know how to present yourself and your ideas. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century students need to be able to do this in two settings. Both in person and online. Students have a firm grasp of using social media style messaging platforms but their use of them in educational settings and their ability to use them beyond those educational settings in professional environments requires further examination. The data here appear to support the ideas of Siemens in *Connectivism* (2005). Students are adept at using connected digital technology and developing their own learning (a theme explored in more detail below) however data suggest that this learning appears 'nodal'. Students learn through information networks within and outside of the physical classroom. His argument that 'learning theories' do not meet the needs of today's learners stands up to scrutiny in the data from the students I interviewed and from the observations I have made in classrooms.

Students' desire to present themselves as a credible film and media professional highlights their urge to pursue, shape and establish identity. Both creative identity and the drive to establish a professional identity beyond the realms of the curriculum. Data from this study suggest that students are in fact asking here for guidance and advice on the use of technology that is so integral to their experience of modern life. As Weiser (1991) points out, “the most profound technologies are those that disappear”,

they weave themselves into modern life so that they become, “indistinguishable from it”. This highlights students’ need to control that process. To have a say in their representation, is reminiscent of the old media maxim, ‘He who controls the message, controls the masses’ and this still applies. However as data from this study signals, in contemporary education teachers must also bear in mind that *they who control their self-representation, controls their agency amongst the masses*. In an age where individualism is promoted as sacrosanct, students are seeking nothing less than the power to control their own presentation of themselves in new digital landscapes.

### Desire, Control and Independence

Many of the students note the independence that came from “solitary” online learning or from enjoying the independence to work on projects remotely, away from the college. Student E notes how he feels a lack of control in online meetings where he would contribute for 2 minutes and, “have to sit in the meeting for another 40 where I’m not part of it.”

Many of the students recognise that they learned many technical skills, particularly editing skills, outside of the courses they were being taught. This acquisition of technical skills or what Aristotle might describe as *techné* was independently acquired and developed, outside of what form(s) of knowledge teachers were providing in class. Teacher A is direct about what she thinks the Film course is for and where students picked up many of the skills, they thought were worthwhile having, to recreate effects they had seen either in class or on their own social platforms. She says that “we don’t necessarily teach practical skills that the kids couldn’t do themselves”, that wasn’t the point of the course. “I think for both of those levels in terms of education for creative media, it’s actually a lot of the other life skills, organisational skills, soft skills that they really underestimate quite a lot ... also just giving them space to be creative.”

Students express in the data a desire to learn purely technical or practical skills but the means by which they learn these skills are also called into question and contradicted in the data. Many of the students interviewed comment that they self-taught technical skills on set or had followed online tutorials to master certain editing skills. Yes, these were ‘taught’ in class. The point to note is that it was not until students had practised them in the classroom or with each other, did they understand their relevance. To know how to be technically proficient propelled many learners to follow their own online YouTube shorts and find out by doing. Student A discusses one such example in some detail. Originally, his production team were going to shoot a short film and needed interior and exterior train shots for setting. It emerged that the train company would not allow them to film on location, so the students

problem-solved and decided to recreate the train digitally. They shot the sequence against green screen and composited and rendered the location. This took a huge amount of skill and patience on the student's behalf, but it was a solitary exercise. The student completed the edit individually and reflected that now, after that and other post-production experiences, wanted to, "go back to basics" pick up a camera and work with others more traditionally and less "modern". This last point highlights student's dissatisfaction with merely mastering technique and software to edit individually. He comments that he would have preferred to have been on location and although impressive, the digital render of the train was not the same as being there. In other words, the student's experience of using *techné*, left him knowing that working with others and knowing when to use that skill; *phrónēsis* (practical wisdom) brought him back to a point where he wants to collaborate with others on set.

Data from this study reveal that the desire to improve technical skills often comes from a student's desire to find ways to do things independently. To do so, they need problems to find and solve and time to discuss and work together, critique their work and identify what they have learned from the experience that they will put to work next time. Students repeatedly express a sense of achievement at shooting a film, of figuring out how to light a shoot, of knowing, when they had finished, what they had done wrong. The evidence was in the product they had completed. This combination of *techné* and *phrónēsis* highlights how fruitful *praxis* can be when realised. By setting, solving and producing from a problem brings the kaleidoscope of the forms of knowledge identified by Aristotle (introduced and discussed in Chapter Two) into play. Students note that they are happy to work away, in groups, in communities online they had established on their own. This independence points to the power students feel they can exert over their own learning. Transactions and dynamics of different forms of knowledge are brought about by the experiences of solving problems together, and these experiences are not just about acquiring technical skills. Biesta (2014) highlights this issue clearly where he recognises that practical education is not just about forms of knowledge limited to skills acquisition, "but also to develop the capacity for critical judgement to them" (2014: 31). Learning through problem-finding and problem-solving, as data from this study suggest, give students control and independence and empowers them in their current studies and future endeavours. As student E points out, "we crave control. We crave freedom... That's where I discovered I loved colour grading."



Figure 56 *Whiplash* (Chazelle, 2014)

*Whiplash is a film about a musical repertoire in New York and examines the power dynamic between student and teacher. Fletcher, a cruel perfectionist who says he only wants the best for his students and that “there are no two words in the English language more harmful than “good job”. His drive for excellence pushes his students over the edge, and for some, leads to tragic consequences. Andrew Neiman, who is bullied and harassed by Fletcher, ends the film at the peak of his creative musical ability however, driven by the fear of failure, of Fletcher and his eventual hatred of him. His final performance has been improved by a desire to take back control of his playing. The film leaves the spectator with the uncomfortable proposition about how to get the best out of a student, leaving unanswered whether it is morally right to push students to excel at the cost of everything else. Should the student themselves should be the ones that are driving their learning and what are the best ways to achieve this?*

### Information and Memory

The “tunnel vision” effect has been observed in Film classes throughout my own experiences in the teaching of the subject of Film Education. Students get into ‘flow’. Csikszentmihalyi (2008) describes ‘flow’ as: “being completely involved in an activity for its own sake. The ego falls away. Time flies. Every action, movement, and thought follows inevitably from the previous one, like playing jazz. Your whole being is involved, and you’re using your skills to the utmost” (2008: 42). This optimal mode as described by Csikszentmihalyi is a zen like state that focuses the subject on their work. Students become as one with the thing they are working upon. This is clearly a high functioning state to be in but, in the case of observations of my students, this deep focus can give way to mistakes that would be corrected if collaboration with other students was taking place. This is most clearly seen when students (or anyone) are editing a film. The individual becomes entranced in the editing interface.

They can, in the worst cases, dig their own furrows and become isolated. Editing is a rewarding task when completed successfully but it distances people from each other and, in many cases, does not allow those individuals to see the wood for the trees. They fixate on minor details and can miss glaringly large mistakes in sound, contrast or narrative because of the length of time and effort it takes to colour correct or add a particular effect. By not working with others, they become solitary and do not access outside information or feedback to help them work at the collaboratively highest level.

Data from this study suggest that students recognise that online chats and chances to provide feedback to each other are invaluable but from observation students are happiest when left to their own devices and are uncomfortable about forced collaborations. In an echo of Truffaut's thoughts (1954) on the *Auteur* director and the honouring of the individual in the process of film making, it is clear how students take power and ownership of their work but if they are not willing to take on board the provision of feedback to others to improve their work, they can become stuck without developing their own skills. There is a distinction here between the student filmmaker and the fully fledged professional but even the latter's work will almost always be improved by working with creative collaborators and trusted critical friends. Director Tony Kaye experiences such a moment in the postproduction of *American History X* (1999). Unhappy with the final edit of the film, studio execs implored the director to re-cut the film – he refuses – stating, "I'm fully aware that I'm a first-time director, but I need the same autonomy and respect that Stanley Kubrick gets". Up steps the film's star Edward Norton and the editor Jerry Greenberg who recut the film into the general release version. Kaye was furious, he filed an unsuccessful lawsuit against New Line for \$200 million. The final film was a critical and commercial success and brought Ed Norton's profile into focus. Later, Kaye, admits that "my ego got in the way" (Russell, 2022). That artistic vision that drives forward a project, film, building or painting often comes from the drive of individuals but those individuals always benefit from the collaboration between peers. This is equally the case for professionals as it is for students.

Student D reflects on the choices he makes for his final major project in his second year. He is struggling with how to change up the dialogue between the characters, he feels it was not working and asking his group provides the answer. Another student suggests having the characters talk to the screen to make the scene feel like a confession. The character breaks the fourth wall and talks to the spectator, so not to ever see the opposing character. The student recognises that the input of the group helped him shape his film. It is important to note that the "information" that the student required was not available on any websites, books or software tutorials. The information that the student needed resides in the collaborative knowledge of his fellow students. The answer he required comes from his peer group. Data show that this was a memorable experience for the student and is evidence of its importance.

In Chapter Two, Kong 's definition of IL is useful in considering the themes of information and power. Kong (2005) defines information literacy as the ability to find, analyse, assess and discuss information. As I discuss previously this is rarely a solitary pursuit and is heightened when that information is discussed in groups, or as Sennett (2012) recognises, is a collaborative affair. It is interesting to note how students and teachers distinguish between information and knowledge. The latter involves understanding, communication, critical thinking and the former simply finding things out. A sub theme that is re-iterated below about how students find information out and what they do with it. Student E comments that he likes the mix on the course of being able to improve his practical skills but genuinely enjoys researching areas in the subject that he finds interesting. He also reports that accessing information, "is more easier online". One student chooses to research colour grading as a research project and expresses genuine surprise at how interested he was in finding out information and using it in an essay. "Books as well. I read books! .... I was so interested. I actually picked up a book for it." That students picked their own research areas in some elements of the course allows them to pursue ideas, concepts and techniques that they genuinely found interesting. Student C sees the *information* that he acquired on the course was as a direct result of studying Film to arrive at *knowledge* about the world around him. Pointing to some of the skills he picked up he notes that by studying film he could learn about, "different people's perspectives on social issues." Adding that "also, it's just a fun course!" Students' recognition that information is distinct from knowledge underscores what they remember about their learning. That is, their memory of the course is more often not information, statistics or the skills they have developed but memories about experience and the knowledge they have derived from those experiences. As Zuboff (2019) intimates, the world which young people will inherit is more 'information centred' than ever. A finding of this research is that film, as an art and language, is perfectly positioned as contemporary arts-based subjects to help students navigate this new online, virtual domain.

## Summary and Finding Two

In considering the sub themes around the theme of Power a series of conclusions make themselves apparent.

- The structure of wall-based platforms for learning does not help students to critically analyse or discuss issues and ideas.
- Problem-solving allows for different 'forms of knowledge' to be experienced played out - even in solitary exercises.
- Feedback and chances to work together give students valuable learning experiences.

- Empowerment extends a student's experience of their media education.
- Information is distinct from knowledge. Students require help to be able to firstly decipher between the two and need to learn the ability to use information in the pursuit of knowledge.



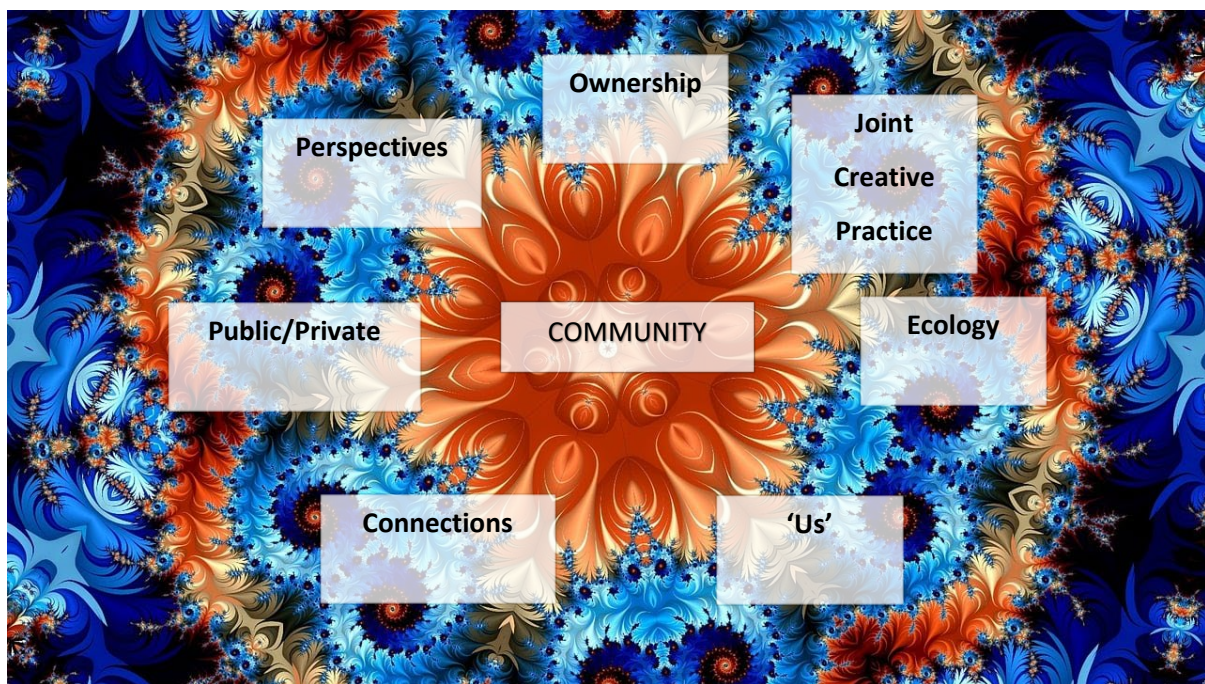
Figure 57 *Everything, Everywhere All at Once* (Kwan & Scheinert, 2022)

As Bernstein (1996, 2000) points out, an empowered member of the community will enhance their contributions in it. For the students and staff in this study, this is equally true. Specifically, from the evidence above, Film and Media students who are empowered demonstrate the following characteristics. They work with others and are confident about failure.

They are self-driven and teach themselves additional technical skills beyond the curriculum. From the evidence above it's clear that students enjoy finding out things through film. A key finding here is that students and teachers want to be empowered but there are barriers to this. As discussed in chapter Two, Fisher (2009) makes clear that the dynamic between teacher and student has been greatly challenged by the social dynamic that has been altered by the financial, capitalist models and pressures that FE colleges and other Film Education centres have been placed upon them. His student as "consumer or product" (2009: 43) argument, that students and teachers have lost their agency in a system that does not allow for personal experience in a curriculum can be met, head on, by giving students the power to drive their learning, within a curriculum in which assessment outcomes allow them to do so. *The struggle for power, is the struggle for control and autonomy.* In the case study that forms the focus of this research, this control equates to how learners can pursue their own media and film interests in a curriculum where theory and practice are integrated. To be able to have the autonomy to pursue their own interests. Although digital software allows for a greater degree of democratisation (i.e., all learners have the chance to contribute to discussions online) not all students take up this opportunity. Also, individuals seek to hone their own presentation online and strive for independence supported by their peers in this pursuit. It appears that students' best experiences on this course come from when they have control of a unit of learning and when they are placed together to solve problems. *A curriculum cannot be everything, everywhere, all at once* and if it is overly prescriptive it creates decontextualised curriculum content that prevents a sense *communitas* (Bernstein, 2000) or authentic shared engagement in a mutual endeavour (Fielding et al, 2005) regarding the relationships between students and between staff and students.

## COMMUNITY

The sub themes evident in this area coalesce around a sense of togetherness and belonging in and to a community. Students and teachers in the case study recognise that they are either part of a community of film students and tutors in their college class, a creative community, or a community outside of their college class which was linked by the Media and Film courses. One of the principle aims of this study was to try and *build* the spark to the *community* that met online in Teams, and through the joining up of classes. In some respects, this endeavour was a failure. However, attempting to create one was helpful in highlighting what can go wrong and, importantly, what *not* to do when trying to set one up an online community worthy of the name.



### Joint Creative Practice

Many of the students that enrol on the Film and Media programmes which forms some of the focus of this study, come to the courses with an expectation that it will be 'more practical' than taking an 'A'-Level course. As discussed below, entry requirements for the course are lower than those for Film and Media A-Levels and students are steered towards the course if they 'like more practical subjects' and 'don't like exams'. The ethos of the UAL course is based around the mastery model and, as such, students are encouraged to work on their knowledge and skills acquisition in the initial stages of Year One. Each student is briefed before they start the course that there will be independent work and work that will require collaboration, teamwork and to be able to work in small groups to solve problems creatively. A term that is used by the staff on the course is that of looking to achieve, 'noble failures.' Challenging work is praised and appreciated even if the result does not meet its original

intentions. The underpinning ethos in this is that it is better to have tried something new and failed, rather than not to have tried at all. Students are encouraged to work together, and this continued throughout both the trial and lockdowns where students were asked to continue to work together in online groups. Discussing this with a lecturer who taught both 'A'-Level and Vocational students, she observes that vocational students were more likely to express themselves online and with each other. She says that, "we found that the UAL students were much more willing to do that, but I think that they are used to that because of the nature of the course and then much more used to sharing their practical work and filming themselves ... the 'A' level students are reticent to film themselves. I tried that with 'A'-level students, and they've been really resistant." An 'A'-level student who was interviewed after reflecting on whether or not she had picked the right course, and whether she might have considered a vocational programme considering she wanted to go on and study practical film making at university said that she would have liked to have done more filmmaking on her 'A'-Level. Yet she comments that the weighting of 30% coursework and 70% exam was correct. She reflects that she would have liked to have made more film: "Oh yeah definitely cause... I remember looking at the coursework for second year and I was surprised that it wasn't, 'Oh you have to make a film.' It was (optional) you could do a screenplay, *or* you could do a film." The student did go on to make a film and commented that the process of making film is stressful and requires organisation. "It was day's project, but I felt like it was definitely a lot of teamwork going on too."

Students express their enjoyment the process of collaborating with other people but that found it challenging. When asked if this was an innate skill or something that could be learnt, she says that, "I thought this is skill that you can pick up and... also it definitely comes with... familiarity between people." She says that when put in a situation where a group of students had to collaborate on a creative project at a university interview day, she found it difficult because everyone wanted to get their ideas across but that it's easier when you've worked with people because, "you know how their brains work". Another 'A'-Level student reflects on his short experience, comparatively, with vocational students on the course at the centre of this study. He had made a short film in year one and two of the course and quickly saw how challenging it was to work with others. In trying to manage others on his shoot he says that, "getting people together to do it was the hardest ... especially for the first film". He expresses a newfound appreciation of the level of teamwork that making a film takes, thus showing an understanding of the collaborative nature of film making. On making a film he comments that he learned that he grew to, "definitely respect for how difficult it is. It is not that easy. It takes a lot of effort." As Sennett (2012) recognises, collaboration and cooperation and the effort of working together raises the potential of human beings, however he also notes that this skill requires

hard work, has to be learned and is not achieved easily. As Sennett (2009) notes, “cooperation is embedded in our genes, but cannot remain stuck in routine behaviour; it needs to be developed and deepened” (Sennett, 2012: ix). He adds, that, “this is particularly true when we are dealing with people unlike ourselves; with them, cooperation becomes a demanding effort”. (2012: ix). That something is difficult to achieve, as my students also recognised, makes the goal of cooperation and collaboration a valuable one. The art of filmmaking, it would seem, is fertile ground to develop students’ collaboration skills.

‘A’-Level students comment that they are happy to have chosen the course they had but most reflect either that they found the practical nature of making a film extremely hard but also the most memorable part of their course. The Level 3 vocational students who were a part of this study make film all year round and are continually assessed through their research and practical skills. Many of the students naturally collaborate as part of the course but as I used digital platforms to try and increase collaboration across the cohort, I found some reluctance to collaborate online with each other. Students report that they found the process of working with each other online challenging, even before the lockdown.

Student E, who was involved in trials of Teams and worked on their course throughout the lockdown, reports that he found the increased collaboration through the interventions as of great benefit to him and they saw the value of having access to students from across the cohort, rather than just students from the same class. Students were able to communicate through Teams channels and meet in the shared lectures. He sees the positives in this. “It’s just really great to like hear, like to get more like diversity of... creativity like going through your mind when you’re when you’re thinking about working in creative projects”.

Student B notices how uncollaborative the online experience of learning was. She equates it to working in isolation and just, “going off and finding my own research” then coming back and listening to a lecturer asking them to share what they found. As many of the teachers I spoke to who were involved with study observe, getting students to interact during lock down learning was incredibly difficult and the students experience of it also speaks to the fact that this new practice was made up “on the hoof” with few teachers comfortable with trying to do what they did in the classroom as they were in the online session.

In discussing dialogic learning in the digital age, Wegerif (2013) recognises the importance of creative thought to problem solving. In *Dialogic: Education for the Digital Age* he looks at how creative thinking is a vital part of children's ability to solve problems.

“Creative thinking implies finding new ideas popping up when you need them. These ideas are creative firstly because they are surprising, meaning that they do not follow in any algorithmic way from the past, and secondly because they are useful to the task at hand” (Wegerif, 2013: 86).

By creative thinking Wegerif refers to the thought process by which humans must solve problems, mathematical or otherwise. Creative thinking is not just a skill for creative subjects but one that can be used he argues across all subjects. That creative thought is practised at an elevated level in Film and Media making arguably highlights its importance as a standalone or subsidiary subject to study. Wegerif moves onto technology and its part to play in furthering dialogic learning. He continues that the:

“...evolution of educational technology in a larger historical context suggests the importance of thinking of educational technology not only in terms of representations and tools but also in terms of relationships and voices... the role of directed teaching needs to focus on opening, widening, deepening and resourcing dialogues” (2013: 108).

If one were to cross-reference the voices from my study with Wegerif's suggestion that creative thinking and 'deepening' dialogues online are of utmost importance, it would appear that educators have much to do to equip students with the correct forms of knowledge, skills and the qualities of mind and character (Dunne, 2005) that they need to flourish in the digital age. Students note that they did not remember online sessions or report that online learning was an isolating experience. In Media and Film, collaboration and creative dialogues are a vital part of not only the creative process of film making but of students having meaningful educational experiences. Students highlight the collaborative nature of filmmaking repeatedly with them seeing the benefits of shared work, in person. Although the efforts that this study made to increase that sense of collaboration online were not always successful, it was clear students will find their own way of creating a community or extending dialogues beyond the classroom or platforms provided for them in educational institutions.

### Making Connections in a Wider Creative Community

During the main intervention, collaboration was not only built into class sessions but also into the curriculum. I built in a collaborative session where all seven groups, from first year Diploma and Second Extended Diploma students attended a joint lecture where we would host guest speakers from

industry, held joint screenings of films and run lectures on a series of topics around film history. Over the course of the year attendance at these sessions declined. Another lecturer and I running these sessions were dejected because of this falling attendance, but there were some victories for providing a direct line of sight to industry experts and for students to work together on problems. On reflecting on the lecture series, he says that, "I think there is a limitation to how much buy in you're going to get from teenagers who feel like they're doing something extra that they don't want to do or can't see the worth of just now."

It seemed natural to allow students access to, "real people" from the industry and this has always been a part of student's vocational experience at my centre - this has always been encouraged by teachers and lecturers as what is seen as valuable "experience". A film producer, a speaker from the British Film Institute, a BBFC officer and ex-students who had made a career freelancing or making corporate films were all booked for the academic year. Students would remember these visits months after they happened, reflecting on, for example, "that guy from the BFI". The lectures also included screenings of world cinema films aimed at developing the 'cultural capital' of the students. A lecturer who works on the course was even-handed about the success of both the screenings and the inclusion of guest speakers. "We did film screenings and showed tremendous films none of these kids have seen before and a lot of them are like they're watching films when they could be sitting in the pub with mates or sitting in the park ... you can't really win the battle." He comments that students could more easily make the connection of the importance of picking up skills, for example learning how to effectively use a camera, adjust lens type and play with depth of field and ISO were all skills that students saw the instant and obvious nature of learning. These are seen by students as a more important skill than listening to experts who have experience in their field. That is, some students could see the worth of learning techniques (*techné*) but not the end point of how that craft skill could take you to the development of practical wisdom (*phrónēsis*) or practical knowledge (practice) and mastery in the industry. On the other hand, a few students did really grasp at the additional opportunities they were afforded. As the lecturer who shared running the collaborative sessions notes:

"I personally feel that the lectures were probably more valuable and certainly for the kids that made the most of those experiences for instance the BBC chap that came one of the journalism students now has had work experience and is moving her career field in that direction... directly as a result of having that one guy.... even if there's 150 kids in the room if that keeps on one kids' movement in their career, I think that's really exciting."

Students who have left the course do now see the value of working with a range of other people, but this seems to be *after* having finished the course. In an interview with a student a year after they had completed their Level 3 qualification, Student E points out that collaboration is something that has moved their career on but recognises that this is hard to achieve whilst studying or working online.

“I do think when you're making a film especially yeah, in terms of working as a group, I think there's two styles of working as a group, and obviously one of those is to be able to collaboratively work with a number of people. Together, and I don't really think you get that togetherness online because although you get in each other's opinions and views on things, it's harder to bounce off each other and come up with stuff. Just through some expressions on online.”

The aim of the study is to offer insights into how to improve collaboration in Film Education and test out students' experiences of collaborating, in some cases this was successful. In other cases, it was not. Students did reflect on what was working for them after their course had finished and some drew lines back to their experiences. The disconnect between what students remembered about sessions and these 'forced collaborations', or guest speakers working with students, and what they thought were valuable experiences are an enduring educational issue. The frustrated lecturer asking themselves, “why won't students realise that this is important?” or “why won't they take up extra opportunities?” has been one that has exasperated teachers and lecturers for centuries. Even when students are given these opportunities, it would appear from the data generated in this study, it is only *after* they have left and worked in industry or had experiences in industry that they realise why some of these collaborations are important to practice at college or school as they are vital in the 'real' world. Perhaps, the onus should be on teachers to make sure these opportunities are put at the core of curriculum rather than being 'bolt-ons', as admittedly my collab sessions were.

Harari (2015) describes the process by which humans value the transaction of experience best, is when there is a shared intersubjective reality. Using the example of money as an invisible concept that only through a shared understanding that it has meaning, then it is worth pursuing, or agreeing a value on it. He continues that, “meaning is created when many people weave together a common network of stories” (Harari, 2015: 170). In my case, the intersubjective reality that a task, exercise or experience is worthwhile for students to pursue or is worth their time to explore and experience is one that cannot be forced upon them. In many classes the sword of Damocles that is used to cajole students into action is usually around assessment. “You

need to do this as it's in your assessment/it will affect your grade." Using 'real world' examples of where a problem has been solved and asking student to solve similar problems is the carrot to the stick of assessment. The establishment and maintenance of a community, therefore, requires intersubjective reality to function. The *currency* that exchanged amongst the community is knowledge and this is transacted in successful courses – its' advocates (teachers) and investees (students) need to 'buy in' by seeing its' worth.

## Ownership

Many of the barriers to providing the course online seem to orientate around ownership. A term that came up repeatedly in interviews. Students and teachers resisted the layout of the online platform I had provided for them. In one interview a teacher was forthright about why they had resisted engaging with the platform.

"Now I'm doing some interesting things that I'm taking ownership of it and getting kids to do their stuff, and I was thinking, why didn't I do that during the initial trial, and I think one of the things that held me back initially is actually that you've done all the work and was thinking like as a protocol. 'cause we really can't, except you know. But I think what it probably meant was I was looking at it as a student rather than taking ownership of it myself ... my only interactions with it were to do that thing you asked me to do with it and I realized I just put myself in a passive mode, "Will is just getting/ making me do this". I'll give it ago and then not actually, whereas now I'm actually setting 19 pages up and I'm using channels in a different way."

He continues that this ownership should be built into providing the space for students and teachers to feel like they are engaged in a community. The prerequisite for teachers to be able to teach online has become integral to many courses but I found lecturers were more willing to engage with platforms if they'd set them up themselves in the first place. Teacher D registers the importance of teachers owning the platforms they were to use and that they should, as a matter of course, set up their own platforms wherever possible.

"I think you probably have to build your own team to make the most out of it and I'm going, you know. Obviously, we didn't know what we were doing at the start and you really kindly set it up for everyone. But I wonder if that meant that I didn't engage with it. That is critically as I would have done do you know what I mean. So, moving forward I think people need to create their own online space in order to then use it in the way that suits them."

The virtual space is an extension of student's expression in their work. They have control of their work, its presentation and this is important. As Teacher C states, "they own that space. They take ownership of that, and we create the template". That students have their own platforms to express themselves was observed as a valuable part of having all student work online. Students would often personalise their websites with art, videos, GIFs and Emojis. Working with each other is not just a part of filmmaking but of all social transactions and interactions.

### Public/Private Ecologies

A few students interviewed after they had left the course did see the connection between what they were doing on the course, how they were working with each other online, and how this could be useful after college in the 'real world'. This sense of public sharing online in college, was different from the private sharing that was done outside of college on their own social media platforms. Interviewed during a lockdown student E reflects on how their creative hub had moved online and one way of staying in touch with each other was through online communities. They saw that that working with other professionals online, or in person, was one of many ways to not only improve their work but also to make links with fellow artists.

One student who sees the value in learning communication and collaboration skills talks about how important it was in developing links outside of college. Having left the college in the previous year the student was beginning to work with creatives from across the country. When asked about whether the student sees the benefit of being taught about *how* to communicate with others online, they say that, "it would be important" but it, "would be better to look at the social media side of networking." They continue that, "I've realised that instead of it just being a place to post pictures about your life and whatever, if you actually ...visit like it was a business point of view ... that's how I've realised recently that's how I'm going to get to know these types of people." The ex-student had started posting his work online and had begun to make connections and feedback from professional freelancers. In discussing a project that he's posted, he says that, "so I just put it privately and that's where a few people from London saw it... One girl, you know she's a musician and she really liked the style, and she was saying about how next year would be good to get me involved in working on a music video for her, I mean little things like that, that's kind of how I've tried to meet creative people. Try and get creative work for the future."

Students do see the worth of networking but do not necessarily see the link between learning how to present themselves online in an educational setting (regardless of whether it's organised around a

digital platform) and the “real” public professional online world. On the other hand, some students regard the process of seeing each other’s work, either online or in classrooms, is something that they see as a benefit to them. In one case student F comments on the chance to network with other students in class, online on the platforms we’d produced and via the Collab lectures saw the process of collaboration as where the “real” learning took place. He comments that it’s, “given us the opportunity to work on more projects, like help other people out and get help for what we were doing. We had like the wider classes with us as well.” (Referring here to the joined-up collaborative lectures). He goes on to say that, “I think a lot of the learning ... activity that I did would have been from seeing other people do things and then going. ‘Oh, that’s a cool idea. Oh, I, I think I can work with that’”. That sense of collaboration and working with each other is repeatedly highlighted either when students were set up to work with each other or when they were given the chance to share ideas in online forums. This sense of student learning through public and private online communities and where students find experiences through those connections resonates with the work of Downes (2005) in his thesis on connectivism and with the thinking of situated cognition (Brown & Duguid, 1986) as discussed in Chapter Two.

Criticisms of these theories reside in their over reliance on innovative technology and that there is a disregard for older models of learning in areas such as reflection and learning through doing (Chatti, 2010). If these criticisms are to be considered, then perhaps an answer is related to using *connectivism* alongside the retention of tradition pedagogical theories. As previously discussed, this form of nodal learning is not going away any time soon. That creativity is an important part of learning *how* to connect with each other perhaps highlights that creativity itself should be placed alongside connectivism, situated cognition *and* critical thinking skills. This integrated model might allow for a greater amount of refraction in what I have termed the kaleidoscope of learning and ways of knowing. These connectivity skills are social and cultural and arguably require innate or ‘taught’ creativity skills or at least the creation of conditions that nurture its development.

One thing is clear is that students sound as though they can shape an online environment for the group, a principle that resonates with the work of Palloff and Pratt in their *Lessons from the Virtual Classroom: The Realities of Online Teaching* (2013 2<sup>nd</sup> ed). Here they discuss how students need to be ‘equals’ with teachers and lecturers in online communities. They need to be able adjust the online community and have a say on how it is used (Bernstein 1996, 2000). Students work best they argue, in online communities when they have a stake in them. This sense of individuals building and learning about their own identities resonates with Buckingham’s understanding of a students ‘media literacy’

(2003) and their own situation, context and cultural experience of the media around them. This is their community, they are a part of it and therefore should guide its building in an educational setting.

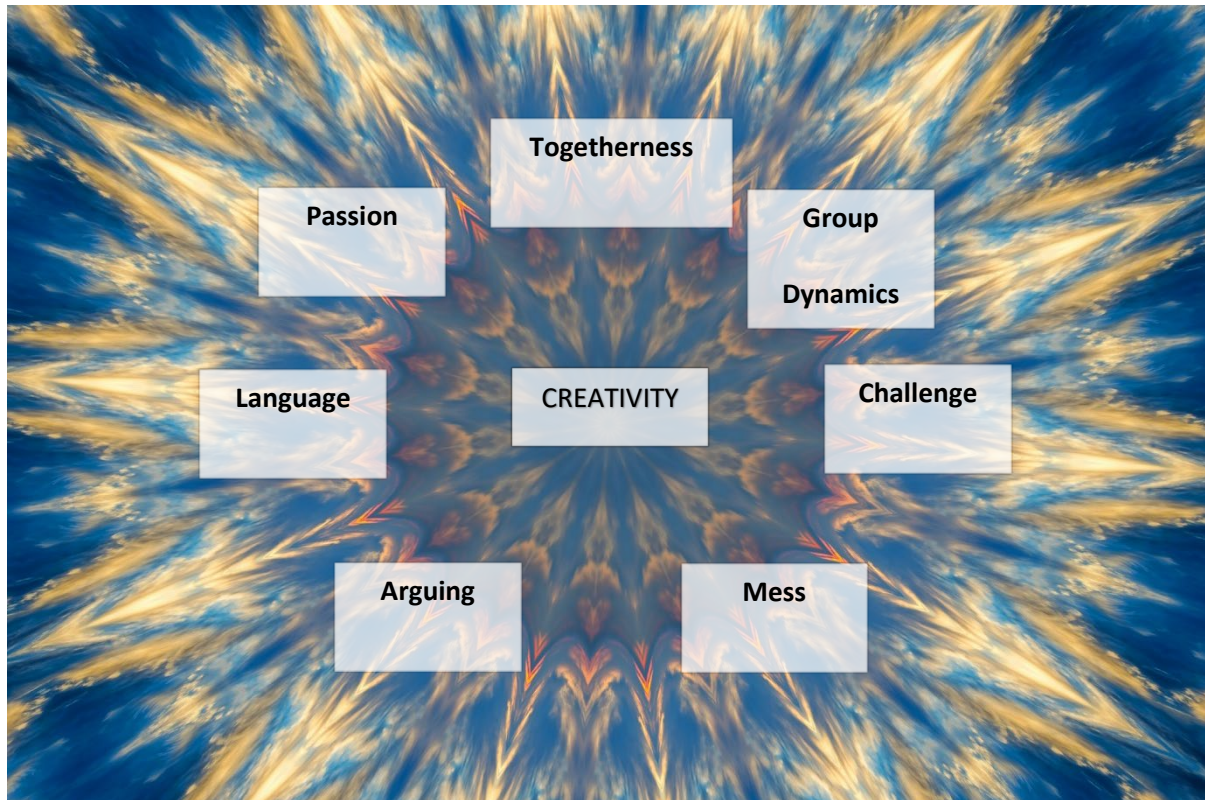
### Summary and Finding Three

Considering the complexity of community and the attempts of this study to try and develop online and subject community the following observations arise.

- Dialogues in online communities did not work well in this study.
- Forced community will fail to produce meaningful experiences.
- Community is built by passionate creatives who are happy to extend this into the real world.
- 'Real world' examples and real-world-time problem-finding, problem-solving and critique help drive authentic presence in community.
- Creative subjects enhance individuals' contribution within a community.
- Learning theories that put technology at their core, underestimate and overlook the importance of real social exchange in building successful learning communities.

The data in this study suggest that it is easy to set up a community but that a Community of Practice is distinct from authentic *communitas* (Bernstein, 1996, 2000) where individuals feel invested and therefore *included* in a social group engaged in a shared creative endeavour. A key finding here is that you cannot force worthwhile community into existence and that a positive learning community appears to depend on a set of principles or conditions. These conditions Bernstein (1996, 2000) argues provide a bedrock on which a course can rest and produce participants who are invested in their own, and their peers', creative education. *A successful community is one that individuals that are invested in it. In that building a community, you cannot depend on technology and online tools – that a high level of actual 'real' face- to-face interaction is required – and that vocational film courses can not solely depend on online tools to deliver positive educational experiences.* Technology is an instrument or a device to help us to deliver this aim. Students recount that their best experiences are when they are seeing real world problems and trying to solve them in real-time with the people that they are with at the time. That there are other creative networks in the online world that can help them solve those problems present an opportunity for students to learn about the online world around them. However, data from this study suggest that this prospect should always come second to students and teachers working with each other in person.

## CREATIVITY



“A hunch is creativity trying to tell you something” (Capra in Hellerman, 2021).

Data from this study suggest that filmmaking, as a collaborative, team-based creative skill, offers students who choose it, a wide range of benefits such as how to work in groups, how to analyse and make film and develops an understanding of visual language and of course critical thinking skills. In film, creative thought is realised into a visual representation and the imagination is exercised. Films can show us our fears, our desires and tap into our collective consciousnesses, indeed many filmmakers use the analogy of film of being like a lucid dream. In discussing *Vertigo*, (Hitchcock, 1958) one of the most highly regarded texts of film history, Truffaut notes that, it’s like a “filmed dream” (Truffaut, 1985: 246). Spielberg’s passion for film making is in part because of the opportunities it gives him to exercise his creative thought. As he makes clear, ‘I don’t dream at night, I dream at day, I dream all day; I’m dreaming for living’ (Spielberg, 2019). As all the teachers and students who were interviewed for this study had either completed or were studying and making film and creative media, there must be a recognition that there may be some bias towards the subject area. However, I can only recount what students and staff say about their participation in Creative Media and Film courses. Creativity is at the heart of Film Education. As discussed above it is crucial for individuals within a community to flourish and actualise their potential but creativity, or learning to be creative,

is complex. I asked many students whether they thought creativity could be taught or whether it was a skill that was learnt 'by accident', their responses shed some light on the question. In the discussion below, I examine and discuss what my students experience in terms of their creative journey and their views regarding how the vitality and energy of creative thought can be heightened by group work.

### Group Dynamics

Data from this study indicate that students use of the online spaces that we had created for them was surprising at times. These approaches were 'creative' but not in ways that were intended. Students felt emboldened, halfway through the academic year and many were posting online looking for advice and guidance for how to successfully execute a special effect or, quite often, they would put casting calls out for film projects. Some of the students hijacked briefs and work set by teachers and altered hand in dates or word counts (sometimes to comedic effect). As one teacher observes, "this is more about me learning ...and it's on me." Examples during and after lock down continued to produce unexpected outcomes and students were quick to find ways to 'own the space', by renaming briefs or to change the dates on brief deadlines. They were using it in creative ways, although not always in ways that were creative as the curriculum intended. As Teacher C recalls: -

"One of the kids put a link up for everyone to look at the other day and it was Rick Astley so the entire group got Rickrolled and that kind of stuff. As long as it's well managed I thought was really fun, so it really added something to the community. I think my concern about it being online is that it becomes anodyne and just to do the work that we're telling them to do online."

Students in the study worked creatively, not only on their film making projects, but also on the presentation of the concepts, ideas and planning for those projects. The most successful students took a creative approach to what they saw as the 'theory' side of the course. They presented their 'research' (the theory part) creatively with moving image work, photoshopped images or undertook filmed experiments of techniques they had researched. This theory work was undertaken individually. However, students recount their most positive learning experiences are when they were working together and where the group dynamic tested their resolve. Students D, B and C all comment that teamwork is best when done in person in groups, rather than online. With many of the students recalling that filmmaking in groups is hard but where, "I've learnt the most". The challenge that Film subjects provide for its students is the challenge of collaboration and ultimately the pleasure of making film. It is, as many of the students in this study say, the "most challenging aspect" of their course because it demands so many social skills. As Dewey highlights, the experience of making art is the

most rewarding. As he makes clear, “the *product* of art—temple, painting, statue, poem—is not the *work* of art. The work takes place when a human being cooperates with the product so that the outcome is an experience that is enjoyed” (Dewey, 1980: 214). In filmmaking, the students must not only cooperate with the product but work with other students to realise that product. This group dynamic is at the centre of the creativity that students require to work successfully in Film Education. Students E and F discuss how, “there are a lot of disagreements” when making film and that this discussion and teasing out of ideas doesn’t work in online spaces. Students are keen to articulate the different nature of their learning here. They recognise the difference between learning a new skill and the complexity and challenges of working together creatively and how the group dynamic can be difficult to navigate. Again, as Sennett (2012) points out, cooperation is hard. For communities to function well, different voices, disagreements and hearing opposing views need to be aired and individuals need to cooperate and compromise around them. The acquisition and development of these forms of knowledge and skills takes time to acquire, and this may be as true of a film set as it is of a society. By honing and practicing how students work as part of a group they are using what Aristotle would call techniques (or *techné*) to reach practical wisdom (*phrónēsis*). However, as Dunne (1993) highlights, acquiring knowledge of *techné* alone is not enough though. The assessment of *techné* in the subjectification (independent, creative and critical thinking) of Film students influences the creative transaction of the different forms knowledge that students need to experience to achieve good *praxis*. Data from this study suggest that the group dynamic that is inherent in Film and Media production promotes a set of social skills that are not easily ticked off an assessment schedule. Creativity in film, it would appear, comes through problem-solving, problem-finding and critique by working in teams on projects. This, I would argue, requires a multi-modal assessment structure.

### Film as a language

The subtheme ‘language’ here links to two different branches of language. Firstly, the language of film and secondly the language students used online to talk (or not) to each other. Both branches require creativity to either imagine or analyse film.

Film Studies ‘A’-Level Students and Vocational Students have to learn a new vocabulary of technical language to analyse films. The “magic 5” ingredients, or micro features, of film language are generally accepted on Level 3 courses as:

- Cinematography

- *Mise-en-scène*
- Editing
- Sound
- Performance

Under each umbrella terms lie a host of techniques and terms that any L3 student needs to acquire to communicate about film effectively. For cinematography, for example, students learn what a contra zoom is, what the rule of thirds dictates or in editing combined with cinematography how to apply the 180-degree rule. At 'A'-Level this is assessed through exams with students expected to not just use these terms correctly but use them to explore debates and ideas around the contexts of different films. In Vocational media these terms are taught and put into practice but sometimes their use resides outside of the practical field for which they apply. As Bergala (2016) would contentiously maintain, to see the study of film through what he calls "language -ism" denies film the status of 'art', we:-

"...miss out on an essential part of cinema if we don't talk about the world that film puts before our eyes at the same time we're analysing the way in which it reconstructs that world and shows it to us ... language-ism amputates one of the essential dimensions of cinema, one which distinguishes it from the other arts: the act of representing reality by way of reality" (Bergala, 2016: 25-26).

To teach film in terms of a linguistic field with which to analyse it, denies the analyst the whole. The divide becomes apparent when the use of this specialist language becomes divorced from the reality of production. When designing a set, for example, it would be unusual for someone to refer to the *mise-en-scène* of a film. This term has sprung from the French Wave film makers and writers of the late 50's and early 60's. Its usage has become commonplace as the findings of the French new wave spread to new University degrees offering film analysis as part of the *study* of film. Arguably, to legitimise its existence, this specialist language has become engrained in the way that film is taught, yet it's application on a film set is rarely invoked. Of course a set designer will use a colour as a motif but will not refer to the *mise-en-scène* whilst doing so. The use of this specialist subject language is arguably celebrated and encouraged at academic level but serves no purpose on a film set.

Indeed, student C comments that you must work hard to pick up the specialist vocabulary, commenting that, “it’s like you have to learn a new language.” The use of this language further drives a deeper false division between theory and practice for vocational students who say they prefer one over the other. In every profession, a new glossary of terms is required to understand that field, so perhaps it is important to consider. Film, like a language, has grammar and syntax; and to understand it one must not only read it but ‘write’ it too. It is, as Lucas (2012) identifies, an important part of learning to communicate in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The “language” that students need to acquire here is important to be able to discuss film. Data from this study suggest that students need to be just as creative in terms of their analytical, as well as their creative capacities when making a film. Students will consider why a certain shot is selected and what connotations that shot poses a spectator. For



Figure 58 *The Matrix* (Wachowski Bros, 1999)



Figure 59 *Kapo* (Pontecorvo, 1960)

example, a low angle shot will make the spectator feel secondary to the characters above them. How language is used by students dictates what they do with the creative thoughts and ideas they have. Bergala (2016) discusses this type of shot analysis example with a degree of caution. If

you take film and read it only as a language you miss the nuances that film, as art, holds. Discussing a shot from *Kapo* (1960), he illustrates the dangers of analysing the messages of a film through film ‘language’, without considering the lived experiences of a spectator, the cultural capital of them, the historical context of the film, when it was made and the critical reception it may have received. *Kapo*, a WWII holocaust film made

15 years after the western discovery of Nazi death camps was negatively viewed by Jacques Rivette. He saw the low angle tracking shot of Therese (Emmanuelle Riva) as indicative of a lack of taste and that, in his words, “to make a tracking shot ahead in order to re-frame the dead body from a low angle, taking care to precisely inscribe the raised hand in the angle of its final composition – this man is deserving of only the most profound contempt” (Rivette, 1961: 120). Bergala uses the example to illustrate that by analysing one shot, and that from only one point of view, Rivette saw that the “entire

film was contemptible” (Bergala, 2016:27). He goes on to break down the process that has occurred here.

Phase one: you analyse a shot or a sequence, as Rivette did with *Kapo*, Phase two: you judge the film on the basis of this analysis. Phase Three: you thus gradually accumulate an appraisal based on analysis. It is obvious that things never happen this way: it is taste, formed by having seen numerous films and the designations that accompany them, that gives rise to a “little by little” to whatever judgement might occasionally be cast on such-a- such film” (Bergala, 2016:28).

For Bergala, the use of analytical language in isolation creates barriers to a fulfilling experience in Film Education. For Bernstein, language can create barriers for students reaching a level of *communitas*. As discussed in Chapter Two Bernstein describes how, ‘restricted coded language’ (1971) can shut out members of a community whilst ‘elaborated coded language’ is open and allows members to understand the parameters of that community and fully engage in it. Film language therefore needs to be mastered, not only so that students can communicate effectively, but also so that they feel included in the creative community they have joined and to which they belong.

Secondly, language is mooted by interviewees as a barrier to effective communication. Some of the problems that teachers had with communicating with students online are highlighted by staff. Teacher B states that students were nervous about communicating online, in the written word, because “live dialogue is transitory” whereas if it is written down, it is there forever. Risk of writing things down for others to see appears to have inhibited how students wanted to commit to discussions she goes on to discuss. She (the student) did go on to highlight how, ‘creative’ spaces could be if they were used ‘live’ and students felt slightly less inhibited when in walled chats, “I think it feels quite positive 'cause you see the wall filling with posts and little bits and pieces, and it feels like a kind of creative space to work in.” There seems to be an inconsistency here. As discussed above, chats can feel organic and creative, but the nuance and depth of communication held some back students from contributing. Turkle (2015) highlights this problem in detail and recognises the problem of superficial level conversations online where information remains distinct from knowledge and Sennett (2016) too, who sees online tools as mistaking information sharing for communication.

Students in the study state that they were encouraged by lecturers through classroom and the lecture sessions to collaborate as much as possible. The “buzzword” that repeated throughout the year was students asking the Teaching team to use/open up opportunities for “collaboration”. It became a slogan so overused that its meaning became devoid of the very principles that it hinged upon. A word

that when merged with “collaborate together”, became an example of syntagmatic redundancy. Students were often reminded about collaboration, but its meaning became lost. This sense of collaborating creatively came more easily in practical sessions but not in the analysis of clips and sequences. The language and tone of student discussions were often low level in terms of use of specialist language in online discussions. Students were happier to post links to other sites that analysed clips rather than commit these to discussion groups themselves.

As I discuss in Chapter Two, Watkins (2018) raises his concerns about *monofrom media* and how all audio video content has become homogenous. His argument is centred around the way film and media are packaged i.e. how film language is grammatically organised to tell stories. He explains, “the way in which a message is shaped and delivered directly affects the way in which the message is received and perceived” (Watkins, 2018). Students’ ability to critically breakdown the language of film and media is essential so that the ‘language of film and media’ can become as heterogenous as the messages that they have the power to communicate. Film (and wider Media) creativity therefore depend up on the acquisition of ‘elaborated coded language’, and the confidence to use it, both in terms of specialist film term language in the written word, and the actual art of film itself.

### Passion

Many of the participants were ebullient about their pursuit of studying and making film. With the students I interviewed I found a genuine passion and enthusiasm about what they had watched and what had influenced their own work.

Students who were given the freedom to pursue texts (by which I mean Films, TV shows and video games) in which they were interested. Students gave numerous examples of project work they had completed or short films they had worked on. In one example a student explains how they edited a film in lockdown from found footage because of restrictions and how, even under tight constraints, they were able to create products from stock footage. The key principle here was that students were passionate about their experiences. They had chosen to take the course at Level 3 and it had afforded them creative experiences they had not had at school. Student C says that, “Film wasn’t offered at school,” so decided to study it at this centre. This idea goes to the heart of what Raymond Williams, writing in the 1950’s, saw in the evolution of teaching and learning. In *Culture and Society* (1958) where he points out that: -

“a vital imaginative life, and the deep effort to describe new experience, are found in many others besides artists, and the communication of new descriptions and new meanings is carried out in many ways – in art, thought, science, and in the ordinary social process...” (Williams, 1958 40).

Students and teachers in the study were often passionate about their experience of teaching and learning Media and Film. Williams above highlights that artistry is *normal* and it can be found in many places. In this study it appears in the edit suite, in making a blog to present work, in finding creative ideas amongst peers and on location on a shoot. Student C says that, “I found that editing really fun” and “enjoyable”, student E says that sharing ideas, “was the whole fun” of studying the subject, whilst Student D says that, “practice and that side of learning is not more important, but it's bit more enjoyable for me”. Repeatedly students recognise what they enjoyed about studying media and film and how it had enriched or enhanced them in some way. As a subject that has straddled Art, Communication and IT subjects it has often struggled to create an identity that stands up as a ‘rigorous’ academic or indeed ‘practical’ subject (this is discussed in more detail below) but where *any* experience occurs, students are encountering and transacting with the world around them. That they express what I have termed ‘passion’ for their subject suggests a ‘heightened experience’. A note that rings true of Dewey’s oft quoted perception of transaction between the self and the real world in *Art as Experience* (1934). Indeed, as Dewey makes clear: -

“Experience in the degree in which it is experience is heightened vitality. Instead of signifying being shut up within one’s own private feelings and sensations, it signifies active and alert commerce with the world; at its height it signifies complete interpenetration of self and the world of objects and events” (Dewey, 1958: 274).

Students discuss the passion that they had for their subject willingly but were equally quick to identify the problems that arose where that personal stake in an idea, a subject or a creative project clashed with other student’s creativity.

### Challenge, Arguing and Mess

“Life is very, very complicated, and so films should be allowed to be, too” (Lynch in Juxtapoz, 2025).

“Michael G Wilson, Barbara Broccoli and Daniel Craig today announced that due to creative differences Danny Boyle has decided to no longer direct *Bond 25*” (James Bond Twitter (X) account, 2018).

Students highlight the mess and challenge of working together but understood that this is part of creative process. Many students point out that producing film requires “arguments” and rising to challenge. Students E and F point out that there are a lot of disagreements in a run up to production and that ironing these out online was far harder than in person. Student E goes on to say that teaching was a, “mess to start with” during the initial lock down and teachers were struggling to use technology to engage learners but, “it got better though as every year it got a lot... easier...definitely it was more

organised because we got into the rhythm of things”. Whether it be the lockdown and subsequent move to online teaching or the nature of learning to coordinate film shoots with other students, many interviewees use terms like, mess, confusion and arguing. Sometimes highlighting these terms as a positive, and sometimes, as a negative.

Throughout the interviews students are quick to assert that the hardest thing about their courses was the film-making aspect when you were trying to get an idea ‘off the ground’ (putting an idea into practice). In an echo of Spielberg’s experience on the *Jaws* (1975) shoot - and countless other film makers on other films - the mess of collaboration was the hardest, but most memorable, part of their course. A Film Studies student highlights that when on location there’s, “a lot of teamwork going on, getting the right shot, lighting” and that although challenging, they came to appreciate how hard it is to navigate a production successfully. Multiple students recount how one of the most difficult parts of shooting a film is going through an “argument” with other students (students B,D and F). Students discuss falling out with others over ideas or finding ways to work together despite their “creative differences”.



Figure 60 *The Bear* (FX, 2022-23)

*“You can’t start at fucked.” The TV show The Bear follows the life of Carmy Berzatto, a Michelin Star chef who returns to his family restaurant in Chicago to get it back on its feet, clear its debts and manage its unruly staff. Carmy learns that he must sacrifice everything else to realise the restaurants potential. He instils his exactly professional standards on his unwilling workers, with his ‘cousin’ Ritchie complaining that “This is a delicate f\*\*\*ing ecosystem”. He eventually re-trains the staff by sending them away to experience high end dining. They return with a greater sense of self-worth and a more professional attitude to their work. In the words of Ritchie who takes to wearing suits to run front of house – it feels like armour “because they make me feel better about myself.”*

These points, again, resonate with the work of with Sennett (2015). As discussed above, cooperation is a difficult, but necessary skill to develop. It would appear, from data generated in this study, that the knowledge and skills required to navigate collaboration cannot be forced, but the nature of film production does allow them to come into play. In what Aristotle describes a *s techné*, (craft knowledge) *sophia*, (wisdom) *nous* (intellect), *epistēmē* (knowledge of causes) and *phrónēsis* (practical wisdom) I contend that students must disagree, ‘argue’ or have effective dialogues that draws on all these forms of knowledge to bring their creative products into existence. I never observe a more vociferous exchange between students in my subject area than when they must solve a creative

problem that they had set themselves. They are invested in it. They have “buy in”, hence the strength of feeling in their defence (or dispute) around their creative ideas. *Praxis* is achieved in and through the ‘mess’ of collaboration springs forth experience, socially, intellectually, and practically. This kaleidoscopic reaction brings about an experience where students have had to manage difference in social interaction, explore an artistic idea and use of all the forms of knowledge to compromise in order to find a new way forward.

### Togetherhness and Discord

Student F recalls how he had moved outside of any college-provided-discussion-platforms onto *Discord* to talk out arguments about projects, current affairs and politics. His point is that he met people he knew in person, or met them because for a mutual link, and would discuss and debate an issue. He found the platform useful to debate ideas, he continues, because, “through having arguments with them, and then finding out that I got this person goes to this University, I can just go hang out with him and argue with them there as well.” The student says that he made good friends through the platform. This echoes with the work of Siemens (2005) *Connected Knowledge* where he argues that students learn through a network, both ‘real’ and online. Incidents of students finding new ways to work together outside of the spaces that we had set up in this study, using it in creative ways and collaborating online with other creative communities are all recorded in the data.

All students interviewed for this study are reticent about the possibilities of social media style communication between staff and students. As discussed above the main style and presentation of many educational networking models mirror that of social media. The infamous “Facebook wall” has become omnipresent online where chain of comments that build and grow from an initial statement create a sense of conversation. From observing student interactions online, the most common thread that developed online are ones that were outside of the course content. Students would post GIFs and images that had to be explained to teachers after their posting. The hijacking of the platform to speak in symbols and language that were familiar to students but not staff is an interesting one, namely because students felt that they could communicate in a way that was familiar to themselves. In short, they used these walls as they would when communicating with each other on normal social media platforms. Second year students went further and used online communities to organise shoots. Student A reflects on how he felt about online communication and said it depended on the teacher but that he had set up online groups on *Discord*, this was negotiated with other students as they decided amongst themselves how best to set up working groups. He also reached out to other film making communities on *Discord* and described the process of reaching out to other students as like making an “inner *LinkedIn*”. At the time of interview, he had progressed onto a Foundation Degree in

Film and TV and being one of the students as part of the 2019 trial, had adopted Discord to organise pre-production meetings and administration online. As he explains:

“I ended up adopting it to be fair and using *Discord*, which is another like an online thing and then end up making a class discord. So, like what you've done with Teams .... and I allocated everyone's preproduction roles and made sure that it was all sent in and, you know, updated because I was producer for that thing or whatever, and it was actually quite organized doing it that way to be fair.”

This student mirrors the way in which Teams was used in the trial period and describes going on to set up online groups based around the same principles of organisation in a later course. He reflects upon working with other students when we had run the Teams trial and sees the ability to work with other students outside of the course and the opportunity that provided him. He discusses how certain students would always take the opportunity to work with others if the conditions for collaboration arose.

“Uh, Student Y and Student X. I think they were the ones that came back whichever class they were in, so it was good that you basically did have a link between the other classes, cause technically you've never met them before other than being in the lectures, you know, so it was good that you, if you if for example, your whole class was completely busy and you'd have a production team, it's good that you could branch out, you know, and it kind of was like an inner LinkedIn, if that makes sense.”

Students point to alternative forms of communication to organise and discuss projects. WhatsApp groups, and other message apps are all discussed but Discord was one that came up many times. Discord started out as a gaming platform and allows for participants to video call, message, and create groups. It does all that Teams does but is familiar to students and not moulded at an educational institution. Students liked the versatility of communicating with others on this platform and many used this to talk to each other on projects.

Another student cites *Discord* as a keyway that they developed their own work. Interviewed after they had finished the course and during lockdown, they speak positively about using online platforms to get feedback (a theme that will be discussed in greater detail later) and how a community of film-makers had grown to support each other, artistically and to raise their profile in the community and beyond. He discusses *Discord* and presenting and producing his work on there in length:

“But you can have more than one person that can speak... there's a thing called *Discord*. I don't know if you've ever heard of that. I didn't know about it until this guy in London who is a creator

and he had a *Discord* chat and he just, you know, there's about 100 or so people in that chat ... They put all their creative work in so everyone can see. Also, it's not just about work, people put out music, the films they like. So, in terms of a creative hub, that's probably one of the main sources for me.”

The fact that students find their own networks outside of college to discuss their work suggests that this element of online ‘approval’ or feedback is important to them. Students did not want to submit work voluntarily to an inhouse education platform but were happy to reach out to creative groups if they felt that they could share work with a trusted group of fellow artists.

UCL’s Centre for longitudinal research released a study with the University of Cambridge in 2023 that shows that teenagers feel entrapped by social media. When asked whether they ‘felt addicted’ to social media 48% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. (Devlin, 2024). As discussed in chapter two, Turkle (2015) raises some serious concerns about ‘continuous partial attention’ and the “loss of empathy and a diminished capacity for self-reflection” (Turkle, 2015: 41). However, this study shows the educational opportunities for students to be creative online opens doors of networking opportunities, chances for feedback and further collaborations with other creative individuals, professional or otherwise. Educational settings have the chance to be safe ‘mangroves’ for students to test out ideas in the safety of ‘real’, in person, or online groups before they take their creative work out to the industry, but this is not being taught or embraced by students. Students express a desire to know how work creatively with others both at their place of study and beyond into the virtual and social media world.

### Summary and Finding Four

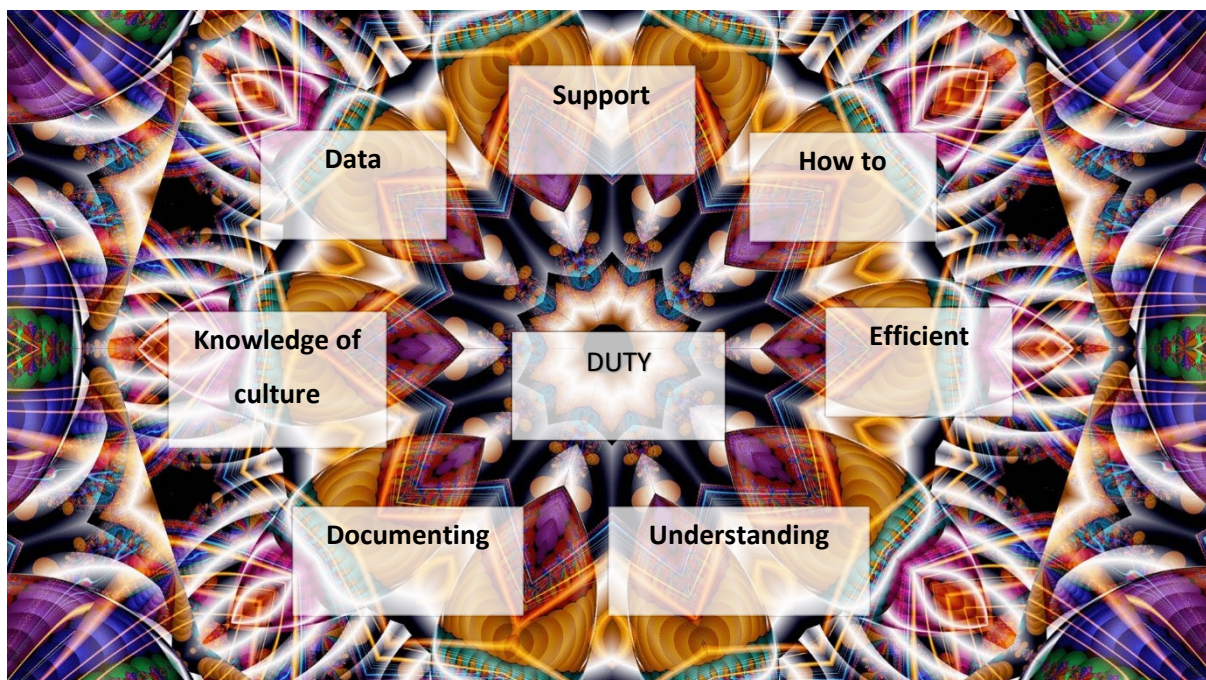
Data surrounding issues related to creativity in this study reveal some key ideas amongst the data, in short, the key findings are: -

- To be able to be creative students need to learn language that they can use to discuss and analyse the world around them.
- Creativity is individual and group based. Creative group work is just as important as individual creativity.
- Students often found that the fun in the subject, in the creativity it affords them, but that ‘hard work’ came from working together.
- If colleges do not provide connections to creative outlets or provide channels to use that are connected to the outside world, the most creative, confident, and independent students will make them outside of education anyway.

Finding the platforms that are being used by institutions do not provide students with the links to the outside world that they need. Students need analytical skills and learn the language that is important to be creative but the link between learning the information and applying it, needs to be set in a way that encourages students to see the world around outside of college and why they are learning them.

In short, a central finding of this study around creativity is that currently *curriculum design and assessment are stymieing creativity in creative media courses*. By creating tick lists of skills development (and this is set to be extended in the new T-Level provision) there is a reduction in the amount of creativity displayed by students, they 'turn off' from learning the 'thinking' behind the practice. The evidence for this lies in how much and how often students discuss what they enjoyed and what they remembered about what they learnt in experiences that they found enlivened them. When they were passionate about what they learnt they could recall and recount experiences that had *affected* them and made a lasting imprint about their education. Sometimes these impressions are about working with others from their cohort in person and sometimes with others from the internet. Students say that their best creative experiences happen in social groups, and these took place online in groups, in the studio or on location.

## DUTY



The subthemes surrounding 'duty' seem to be based around the role and function of technology on students and teachers' knowledge of how to best to use it. Lecturers discuss how the platforms can

be used to ‘support’ learners or ‘document’ learning. By duty here, I mean the responsibility that a teacher must have to run a successful Film or Media course and the ideal responsibilities that students should assume when they are studying on the course. Duty, however, should not and cannot be dictated. Teachers are well versed in problem-finding, problem-solving and critique to find solutions to the social, subject specific and institutional challenges with which they are faced. Teachers and Students duties stem from how invested they feel as part of the community – in this sense teachers navigate what Biesta discusses in *Pragmatising the Curriculum* (2011). He sees teachers as best placed to be the mediators of the dimensions of education he describes as *subjectification*, *qualification*, and *socialisation* that students encounter at an educational institution. As an action research project that interviewed staff and colleagues, an integral part of the research was teachers’ assessment of their role, or what they thought their role was, in the age of online tools and creative media. Their sense of what their duty was, and how they had used online media during the lock down and in the trial provided rich data that illuminates the study.



Figure 61 *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Foreman, 1975)

*The reason that One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest's Nurse Ratched was so terrifying was because she was so convinced what she was doing was right even though it was obvious her actions were to the detriment of her patients. Nurse Ratched demands calm, order, and schedules to be maintained. The character, played by Oscar Winner Louise Fletcher, ends up admitting her most troublesome patient for electroshock therapy. McMurphy who was far too round a peg to fit into societies square holes, pushed against conformity and despite his flaws represented the overall human condition. Messy, disordered, rebellious. The spectator is instantly aligned with him because of his rebellion against the 'system'. Nurse Ratched who attempts to force him to conform, ends with him lying lobotomised and brain dead.*

How To...

*"It's good for learning theory"* (Student D on the use of digital tools in classes).

*"You can't teach nothing to somebody"* (Eisner, 2002: 150).

Many of the teachers interviewed express frustration at knowing "how to" use (*savoir faire*) the software and technology at their disposal in the best ways. There are repeated phrases in the data of, "not knowing how", "haven't figured out how" and "what works best"? What I saw in my data were a

group of lecturers trying to problem solve 'on the hoof', particularly during the 'lock down learning' period.

Interestingly students began to make a distinction between what you can and cannot do by using online learning and communication tools. In many cases students say that "learning theory" is an effective way to use online tools, whereas you cannot replicate or imitate the action of working together in a group and creating a piece of work together. That online experience just does not 'teach you' in the same way is a recurring theme in the data. Repeatedly students highlight that online collections of resources and the ability for teachers to deliver "chalk and talk" sessions were fine to be delivered online, but that the experience of learning came from interactions in the classroom. They are quick to see the 'divide' between theory and practice and, without prompting, they highlight that they are better at one, than the other. This is usually weighted towards or away from a 'practical' way of learning. It should come as no surprise as students select the course based on its assessment coming through practical and research skills assessed through portfolio, rather than written exam. Students came to this study with a clear sense that there was division between theory and practice, and that these were distinct and separate entities. Many said they were better at practice than they were theory. Many recommend the best pedagogical approaches for using online learning, that it was good for "theory" or for going off and finding things out, but not for practical work (*savoir faire and savoir être*). Student B says that online sessions were acceptable for teachers to set up research tasks and that it was "ok" to "just, like, go off and do your own research". However, they could not think of a positive moment that they could remember in terms of a memorable online lesson.

The division between theory and practice seems so entrenched in learners and teachers alike that they divide what they see can work online just as they would in a classroom. "I don't like theory" turned into, 'online learning is for theory' and not as good as 'real' learning. There is potentially an inbuilt bias against online learning, even though, in some circumstances it is a worthy pursuit. As Hyland (2018) argues and as I explore in Chapter Two, the reasoning for this deep-rooted and systemic bias against vocational learning is one that is hard to shake off. Arguments put forward by Buckingham (2003) and Petrie (2014) have repeatedly made the case for the barriers between theory and practice in the curriculum and pedagogy of Film Education to be dismantled. What we are seeing here, is the playing out of an age-old problem on a new platform. Students have transposed their thinking about learning, no doubt reinforced by the *Qualification* dimension within educational institutions who also see and perpetuate the divide between theory and practice. This divide is re-enforced through a loop of learnt division. Students see that online world is useful for information gathering but not at

dialogically unpicking and solving problems in practice and conversing in ways that encourage collaboration and critical thinking.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the Hegelian staircasing of history, or the Plato centred dialogic reasoning, Lipman's *Communities of Enquiry* (2003) or Wegerif's *Dialogic reasoning skills* (2013) are all mooted as helpful in exploring a topic. Having attempted to run sessions using online discussion tools and Philosophy for Children (P4C) style sessions of enquiry, I can see and admit, with hindsight, that this intervention failed. If run in class, in person, the use of the technology stymied actual debate and functioned as an interruption to quality discussion or, if done online, comments by students were too superficial and did not warrant or allow deeper thought about the problem.

The general perception derived from data in this study is that students and staff see the technology of interaction to arrange things, to find things out but not to write extensively *about* or *on* the experience of knowing how to make (*savoir faire*) a film and of becoming (knowing how to be – *savoir être*) a film maker. Students do not write at length on social media; indeed, they are not designed for this purpose but are more likely to share memes, images, or short videos. A key question here is why students should use the social media style platforms at their place of study any differently? If educational software continues to mirror social media platforms, students will be use them in the same way as people use them in society - social media was programmed this way by design. On the other hand, Teacher C sees the benefits of online research. "I've been doing some great stuff with my second years where I'm giving media concepts ... and we'll go and research and produce really just short, pithy descriptions or definitions of what these things are. "What's the male gaze theory? Reception theory. What is it?" These short research tasks suit the nature of online teaching, but paradoxically students in the study say they are less interested in 'going off to find things out' and more interested in wanting to make and create.

### Knowledge of culture

"Knowledge in this sense consists not of facts, but of facts so structured by theory that they acquire meaning. Whereas facts per se (...) can be mastered by memorisation, knowledge with meaning requires understanding" (Stenhouse 1975: 17).

Many of the benefits that teachers and students recognise from their 'A'-Level and vocational experience are driven towards widening their appreciation of different societies and cultures, through watching and engaging with film. One of the more successful uses of Teams in this regard came after

a screening of *The Social Network* (Fincher, 2010). As mentioned above, the film details the creation of Facebook by Mark Zuckerberg. After a joint screening with the other vocational groups, I asked students to pose a question on the film. What ethical questions does the movie raise? Some of the questions the students raised showed how a film can provide talking points for an in-person discussion. Students ask, “Is the breakdown of relationships inevitably tied to success?” or “is it OK for filmmakers to change the storyline of a real person and/or make them a bad person to make a better film?”

An ‘A’-level Film student comments that, “learning about the history of different countries and through film is really interesting, like the political side of stuff. Different people's perspectives on social issues”.

Vocational student D says that they enjoyed the research around film movements because it “really strengthened my film making skills”. Quite often students bring their own media experiences to the classroom. Teacher’s frame of reference is always older than the media landscape of the people they are teaching, but often what we see taking place now, echoes of the past and teachers can help inform students how to understand where and why popular culture products have come about. In discussing how important understanding the history and different genres of film, one lecturer describes how they saw students understanding of the culture around them, should be informed by learning about lesser-known media movements. As teacher A puts it: -

“Particularly experimental film ... like, to them, it seems really unimportant and small. And you know, actually [to them] “what's much more important is The Avengers films.” Actually, if we look at these huge Hollywood films, a lot of the things that they're drawing on, and sanitising, but drawing on, is experimental films and all of the kind of nonlinear narratives that come from experimental film ... all of the interesting things that you find interesting about Big Hollywood high concept movies originally come from experimental film.”

The common frame, as Eisner (2002) puts it, in this example is the Hollywood block buster and our students understanding of it and how it came about should be a part of the curriculum. Teachers are acutely aware that it is crucial to understand where a film text has come from, the influences that have helped form it and this is often done by looking at the context of a text. Film as a way of unpicking, not only film itself but the wider world, is a part of the joy of studying the art form. As Eisner points out: -

“One function is that the curriculum provides frames for reading the world. ... becoming socialised within a culture means acquiring these frames, for they allow you to join and participate in a discourse community, where discourse refers to the sharing of any form in which meaning is encoded and can be decoded. Common frames make a shared way of life possible” (Eisner, 2002: 85).

‘Reading the world’ through the prism of film, popular or otherwise, is just one way acquiring knowledge about the history of us. A person can study Geography, History indeed any humanities based subject to the same end, but film requires creative output as well as cultural and contextual input. If we return to Lipman’s (2003) four C’s – that is – creative, caring, critical and collaborative or the BFI’s (2015) 3 C’s (Creative, Critical and Cultural) thinking then film allows for each to take place, but this mix however is always in jeopardy. If curricula become split in terms of a theory and practice divide, then the skills which Lipman, Wegerif and Sennett see as important to education become lost to the divisive terms ‘academic v technical’ or ‘theory v practice’ or ‘*epistēmē* v *techné*’. The deeper problem here as Aristotle points out, is that we cannot have one without the other. Teachers have become frustrated with the division as one former ‘A’-Level, and now vocational teacher, explains: -

“I really resent the implication for academic subjects should contain no practical skills. And the practical subjects should contain no academic skills like. I don't see ...that those two things are separate as the structure of our education system seems to drive toward. “

Since the ‘A’-Level reforms of 2015 and since the launch of the T-level qualifications this division has become even more pronounced and ‘clear cut’. There has been a reduction in course work in Film and Media Studies (down from 50% to 30%) on the worth of coursework which decides the overall grade a student achieves. In addition, the finalised specification of the T-Level in Creative Media has only just been released (at time of writing); the specification seems to indicate tick-list, competency-based form of film and media education.

Bourne, writing in 2003, explores Bernstein’s (1996) ‘weak framing’ of curriculum and is useful to reflect upon here. She explains Bernstein’s description of boundaries, or what he calls ‘classifications’ between social groups in a social situation. Where these classifications or boundaries are ‘weak’ there is what Bourne would describe as a “child centred” curriculum and where they are strong, the teacher acts as “transmitter” i.e., objectives, outcomes and knowledge very much reside with one (a teacher), that flow to the others (the students). Discussing this principle in relation to primary and secondary education, she makes the case that Bernstein’s ideas are important to the challenges that ICT has presented education (2003: 499). To take this concern forward 20 years and into the FE sector, you can see that Bourne’s point has not ‘gone away’ and the same educational issues remain. There are

still rafts of students who feel disempowered by the constraints of nationally set curriculum, ICT (or digital technology) has presented, and continues to present issues about how it is deployed by schools and colleges and how it is used in and out of classrooms.

### Support, Data and Documenting

Lecturers that had used OneNote, Sway, and Teams to organise their courses highlight how the technology could be used to support learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN). The huge uptick for this technology was to be able to structure and store work for learners. As teacher D identifies, the online nature of the course allows greater accessibility for students to organise their work. As she comments: -

“We used to sit down with the learners with dyslexia get their folders out buy them dividers, title the dividers for them and do all of that. We're doing that digitally for them, so they literally just get stuff into the correct place.”

The same teacher was complimentary about this aspect of OneDrive, Teams, and Sway.

“I have always felt that this technology really helps learners who have got learning diff ... in an environment where we there's no money for SENCo.”

And teacher A comments that: -

“The online stuff is really useful for is, which is really important. It is kind of data management and again like I was talking about presentation of information and so I think it is really useful for that.”

That online tools provide a degree of scaffolding for students is testament to one of its advantages. That it can allow support and structure for students who find organising workflows difficult, that it makes it *easier*, points to importance as a valuable tool is supported in the data. A tool to help increase the speed at which students can get past the admin and on to the creative ‘fun’ part. However, making things easy does not always make things better. In comparison a person could look to the raging debate in the Film Industry about whether to shoot on film or on digital. Historically film has been shot on 35mm or 70 mm film but with the advent of digital technology film makers have moved to the computerised more cost-effective method of shooting. As Martin Scorsese warns us, however: -

“The image that is digitised, that you think will always be there, and it's cheaper and it's faster, anything cheaper and faster will make sense for the businessman to finance but the danger, especially I think in our culture, is that cheaper, faster is consumed, bang, it goes away, there's nothing, there's no nourishment. And so that's the danger, yes to be cheaper and faster but so it can enable us to enrich a culture rather than just consume it” (Scorsese, 2022).

Online educational social media would appear to be excellent at helping access and organise, structure and support. However, taking this data into account it appears that it is not a 'silver bullet' for other shortcomings. While it can support and structure its usefulness should not be overestimated, and it should not become the main way in which students learn. The findings of the study, suggest that it does not improve students' interactions, their engagement with each other, with texts or in their being able to work together as a group.

Both students and teachers affirm this in their comments in interview. They report that they use it as a tool for learning, not as a way of learning. As teacher C explains "it was actually a way of organizing the curriculum and for them to engage with it and then to structure it." They report that they see the primary function of online tools for organisation not necessarily for developing students' communication skills. Students recognise the importance to their learning experience by being able to store and keep a track of their learning in one place. Student J says that it was "really useful to have, like 90% of your course notes and files in one place".

### Efficiency

As well as storing and organising a course the Teams platform allows data from this study suggest that a higher degree of efficiency in certain tasks. For all the examples that teachers said they were frustrated about, and from my own experience in this area, one of the major plus points of the instant comms we were able to run in classrooms was on feedback. Either by students or by teachers on students' work, as Teacher C expresses: -

"I'll use teams forever now until. For each project I'm going to have a collaborative space. What the process is at the moment is that they will work on their own blogs, and that's a little isolated bubble that's actually quite hard to penetrate unless you regularly get into, come up and look at each other's blogs".

This sense of real time feedback on projects was one that is absent in the years before online technology. Historically when a project was finished, a class would watch all the work made by students with them having the opportunity to provide 'cold' and 'warm' criticism of it. This was usually done on printed out paper. The most successful examples cited by teachers C and A in relation to using Teams and OneNote collab spaces are regarding feedback by students on work completed by their peers in the new online space. Teachers and students enjoyed being able to give instantaneous feedback to other students on their work. In fact, they are often more honest about points in the film that could be improved by writing them in shared spaces. The distance between students in online

forums perhaps allows for more direct and frank comments to be made. As teacher B points out they are, “removed so therefore more specific”.

As well as this, students were able to share links to each other’s work to see where they were mid project. As Teacher C points out: -

“You know, in almost 20 years of teaching vocational media, I've never had that opportunity for them to have a look at the workings of each other during the project. Another uptick as well, definitely that use that moving forward.”

The fact that online teaching does not seem to work because of the anonymity of learners feeling like that they can ‘dissolve into the background’ is perhaps the reason why feedback and evaluation works well online. It is that very anonymity that allows students to input honestly about others work.

Feedback to and from other students has been made more accessible to a group, or indeed a cohort, the speed and ease in which students can do this is certainly seen as a bonus by staff in this case but the ease with which online tools have made this possible have maybe made comments more honest but without justification (doxa) they have not therefore developed or deepened the quality of the discussion that the feedback has generated. In other words, the technology has made it easier but not necessarily better.

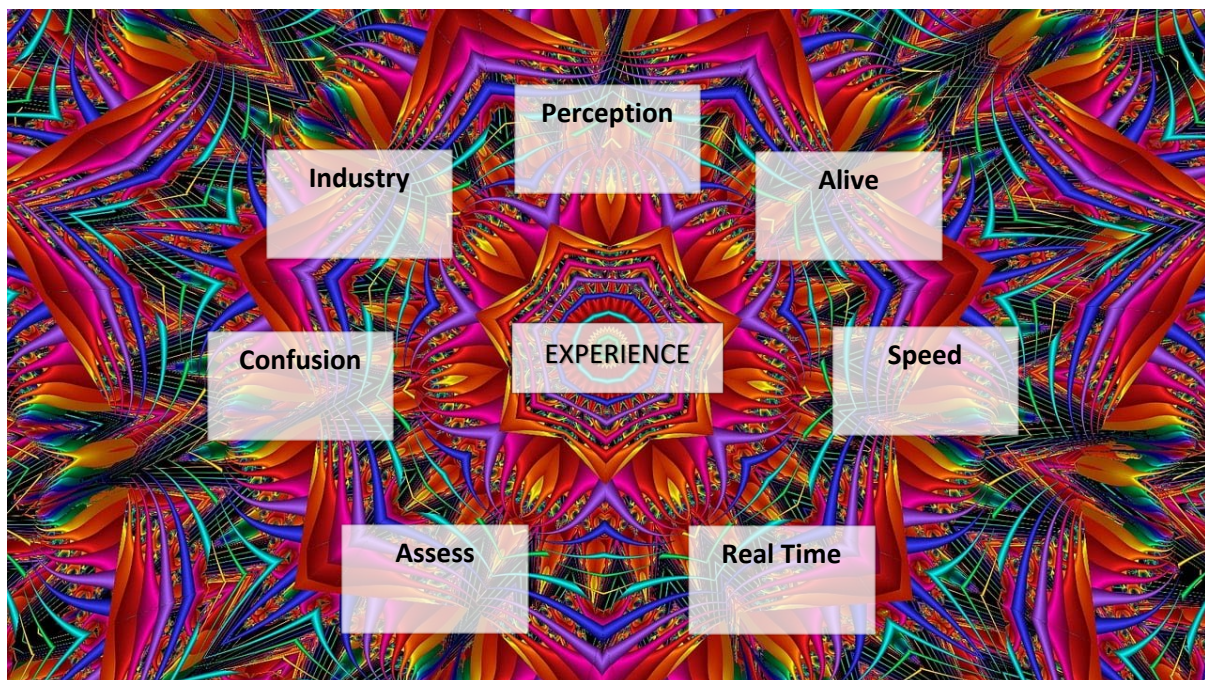
### Summary and Finding Five

The ‘duty’ that staff discuss above point to an overall frustration about their roles in terms of delivering the curriculum and the advantages and disadvantages with tools with which they use to deliver it. In short:-

- Sway, OneNote and Teams were best used to provide an extra layer of support and scaffolding for learners.
- It’s useful for documenting and storing data and course information.
- Developing cultural knowledge should not be abandoned for skills development.
- Students are encumbered by the practical theoretical divide that has driven a wedge between students in media education.
- Software needs to be considered in terms of design. If it exists as social media style sharing it will not enhance students experience of the education.
- Instant feedback works well.

As discussed above, the issues with ‘how to’ deliver the curriculum point to some problems with the curriculum itself. The IT instruments that this study investigates including Teams and OneNote. Data suggest that they are useful for storing and structuring courses but are only instruments that should reduce administrative tasks for teachers and students. When used as ways to help join students up the results were often negligible. Students and teachers see the benefits and ease that the software allowed them to store and organise but began to see it as a place ‘for theory’ to happen. This points to sense of division that students feel is part of their education, that theory is something abstract, that it is not tied to practice. As Eisner points out, “the aesthetic and the intellectual are not separate, for an educational experience to be meaningful” (2002, 155). The problem with the duty of teachers to deliver a successful curriculum is beset by a problem with *how students view what education affords them. For them this is falsely divided into either a practice or a theoretical based experience. This false division needs to be addressed urgently.* As well as this the tools with teachers use to deliver curriculum in the 21<sup>st</sup> century do not necessarily improve the educational experience of the students that take part in it. As I discussed above, the online teaching instruments have improved the ease and speed at which things can be done. However, this has not necessarily made them better at helping students to think critically or more creatively about what they are doing.

## EXPERIENCE



“Cinema is a mirror by which we often see ourselves” (Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, 2016).

“Truth implies singularity and monopoly. Meaning implies relativism and diversity. Truth is more closely wedded to consistency and logic, meaning to diverse interpretation and coherence” (Eisner, 1981: 12).

“I can’t believe that’s the evidence from educational research” (Teacher A).

Students and staff were all passionate about their ‘experience’ of their teaching, learning and interactions with the media curriculum. The curriculum is at one point directed by the teachers, but they are constrained by the conditions set out in the specifications and students experience of their learning is clearly affected by this. By ‘experience’ here I not only reflect on the illumination of the experience of learning online in the data or in making media but also the perception of what media is as a subject and what the perception of it is by others. Many of the participants discuss the way in which they felt frustrated by the constraints of the curriculum and some teachers expressed dismay at the potential T-Level qualification and how the ‘A’-Level Film and Media had practical work demoted in terms of assessment weighting over the last 10 years. Others discuss how they feel media as a subject has a ‘second tier’ reputation and not taken seriously by others as a ‘real’ subject. Some of the most novel uses of online platforms came immediately after the first lock downs where new practices become commonplace amongst the student body. They discuss how their “experience” of online learning changed throughout the pandemic and how students themselves often found novel ways to navigate not being able to meet up in person.

### Assess - Confusion

Many of the teachers in the study express how their experience of assessment has been altered by the lockdowns and by the introduction of new tech. The words ‘Assess and assessment’ are brought up by many of the lecturers in terms of how things have become faster to do. Another code that comes up in terms of assessment was that of the writing of future curricula and how they were to be assessed. One teacher expresses concerned about the new T-Level qualification and draft specifications. As she says, “that’s my worry about the T levels. Yeah. It’s really, yeah, it’s trying to take a non-creative approach to a creative industry” (Teacher A). What concerns her is that assessment actually becomes a barrier to the achievements of student’s creative endeavours. Instead of concentrating on making the whole, they must worry about the constitute parts. For example, a student lighting a sequence in the studio would have to ‘tick off’ that they can attach a light to a rig (a competency) rather than demonstrate that the lighting means something to the production they are making. In a further

example of a teacher explaining this concern Teacher A shines a light on the issues between assessment and qualification.

“My worry about the T level specification is that it is going to make the mistakes that the Pearson qualifications will always make just be overly specific and write themselves out of the fast-paced nature of Media. I think that was always the problem with the B-TEC was that it didn't trust the teachers or the learners enough and trying to be too specific about the things that they had to evidence and that meant that the specification was out of date almost as soon as it had been written and we know. 5-6 years into the specification with having to deliver obsolete, you know, completely obsolete working methods, because that's what's in the specification. They can't pass the qualification if they don't demonstrate those things. But, you know, no one's using celluloid or TV anymore (laughter).”

The inclination to impose a check list on a curriculum reduces the learning opportunities that are evident from ‘joining up’ the list and seeing the end product. Time is spent achieving those competencies rather than considering *why* those competencies are important and when they should be used in the first place. I found that practical knowledge devoid of context is anchorless and lacks meaning or, in some cases, puts students off from investing in a task in the first place.

### Alive and Fresh

Teachers on other pathways pick up on the aims of Media Studies and begins to work with this theme and incorporate it into their work as well. A lecturer on the Level 2 UAL pathway comments that encouraging good online practices can be more than just getting students to absorb content but to work together online and in person in a more formal way. She says that, “it goes beyond just delivery of information. We think there’s scope that two groups could work independently but collaboratively on a project. So, we're testing that theory this year.” She fleshes out the idea for the collaboration, “we're doing like another installation piece of work, but we're going to merge the two groups so that they're going to work collaboratively on one installation.” This was achieved “in person” by merging groups together but planning for the project ran across digital platforms before the installation was presented. This idea that software used around the course was joined up seemed to be celebrated by one teacher who observes that “that's the best. Software that's created around an idea of ecology and being in one central point and coming back like the Apple Phone”. Unity around a platform improved students and teachers experience of the software.

Students refer to the difficulty of film production and that organisation was an important part of running a successful shoot. One ‘A’-level student, who struggled with a film project for their coursework, reflects on the hardest part of the filmmaking process. They report that they learnt that

by “doing” they found a newfound admiration for professional filmmakers. When asked about what they learnt by making a film they respond, “Definitely respect for how difficult it is. It's not that easy. It takes a lot of effort.” They said that “Getting people together to do it was the hardest one especially for the first film. I tried to get my mates together to be in it, that’s just a terrible idea. You set a date, three days before the date we are all ready to do it and then one of them has work or something. It just doesn’t work. So, organisation skills is one thing I got out of it. You have to be really organised.” When pushed about whether this was a skill that could be learnt or whether it was an innate skill, they say that: -

“I think you can learn it to an extent If I were to make another film, I definitely think I would be able to get more organised than I did for the first time... But compared to the first-year film I made... organisation for the second-year film is already a bit better. So, I think you can learn how to get better organised when sorting stuff like that. But I definitely think talking to other people that made films. A lot of them did it like the last-minute sort of thing, so I think it is a bit innate as well, like. It's hard to learn.”

From the challenges of coordinating a group the same student then reflects that the editing of the film individually was “really enjoyable”. It was at this point that the student was able to work on their creative work.

Figure 62 *Jaws* (Spielberg, 1975)



*It emerged during the covid pandemic that Boris Johnson compared himself, inexplicably, to the Mayor from Jaws (Wyatt, 2021). In an attempt to keep things as they were, the Mayor, Larry Vaughn, allowed the residents of Amity Island to be put in risk rather endure the financial damage of shutting the Islands beaches on the July 4<sup>th</sup> holidays. The risk to the status quo and the financial security of the Islanders was put above their own safety. The decision not to change course, to break from established practices, is often seen as the safe option, when by not changing tack, by maintaining the status quo, more damage is done.*

## Industry, Real-Time and Speed

Students recount how lock down and using online technology was instrumental in changing their working practices after the fact. One student discusses how they used online *Discord* groups for auditions firstly because of lock downs and then afterwards because it saved travel time. Meetings were arranged online and as discussed above, many of the students thought that this reflected, “real life” and that they were finding solutions to problems that the course had not anticipated. Students knew the end, in this case to make a film during lock down restrictions but weren’t sure how to get there because there were a variety of online tools to help them get but no one telling them which ones to use.

Dewey discusses, “social intelligence” as the bedrock of democracy (1944). As such, students in this study have found ways to be inquisitive, to problem solve with the tools that they had at their disposal. They report that found platforms online, usually not provided by the study, and found ways of working on them with others to help solve those problems. The fact that teachers could work in “real time” at speed with students online made certain interactions more efficient but, again, the lack of depth in these interactions reinforces the principle that faster, is not always necessarily better. Students recount industry, or working in industry, or copying industry practices. The students whom I spoke to who had reached out to professionals during lock down, something that we encouraged students to do as all the professionals had downed tools during the lockdown were excited by the network of creatives that they found online.

## Perception

“I think there is sometimes a perception about media that learning about media isn't real learning” (Teacher A).

Entry requirements for the vocational course are lower than comparable Media and Film ‘A’-Levels although Maths and English should be achieved at GCSE grade 4. Students who have not achieved Grade 4 in these two subjects can be allowed on to the course if they have 5 GGCEs at grade 4 and above. There is, inevitably a cohort within the eighty or so students that is accepted each year onto

Figure 63 *Rashomon* (Kurosawa, 1950)



Rashomon tells the same story from four different perspectives. Each time you hear the same story from a different point of view; your perception of the characters and situation shifts.

the creative Media course that must retake Maths and English through until they have Achieved that Grade 4. This leads some students who are nineteen but still retaking this subject. In some cases, this could be the fourth or fifth time that students have taken a Maths or English (or both) GCSE. Students and parents often rail against the cruelty of having to retake a subject where achieving a Grade 3 is considered a failure. The students that were retaking Maths and English felt penalised by having to re-sit the exam repeatedly until achieving (or in some cases not) a Grade 4.

Several students and lecturers highlight some of the disparaging thoughts around film and media courses for post sixteen education. Many lecturers recount negative experiences with either prospective parents of students about to take the subject or students themselves. There remains a kind of built in stigma around studying the subject.

Despite this, students see their journey through a media education as a formative one. One student who had started the college on Level 2, progressed to the 2-year Level 3 course and then on to a foundation degree. At time of interview, he was in his second year of his FDA course. What he says about this journey shows how a student can grow and mature with additional knowledge and wisdom about their subject area.

“I definitely improved, and I found things that I was more interested in, so I was adamant that I wanted to be like a sound mixer boom mic operator, but then actually have to doing that practically. I found it's really annoying and I don't and I actually it's not my thing. It's very specific and it's quite difficult. But then I found like actually colour grading quite a lot” (Student E).

Teacher A comments that the variety of skills and the nature of media and film production naturally creates an atmosphere for collaboration, not only amongst students but staff too. She notes the different specialism amongst the fourteen members of the team. This type of collaboration is considered to be excellent for both staff and students. However, she still reflects on the negative perception of the subject by others.

“I don't know whether it's a perception of Media where, like, you need to have the checklist because otherwise you just getting away with it, you know. Ridiculous knowledge about media that. It's not, you know, it's not 'real learning.' I think there is sometimes a perception about media that learning about media isn't real learning.”

Teacher A also comments that she was not only happy with students only learning practical skills on vocational courses but that this was reflected in the Film and Media Studies 'A'-level which had seen the reduction in practical work in terms of assessment weighting. Before new 'A'- level specifications 50% of the final grade was derived from practical filmmaking or creative screenwriting and research.

In the new specifications, 30% comes from practical course work. “I really resent the idea the implication for academic subjects that they should contain no practical skills” she said. This further division of theory/practice has only entrenched students' views of the singularity of taking either a practice or theory-based pathway. The work of Bernstein (1996, 1999) is useful to consider here. In discussing vertical and horizontal discourse, Bernstein clarifies the distinction between the two. Horizontal discourse, he says: -

“...entails a set of strategies which are local, segmentally organised, context specific and dependent, for maximising encounters with persons and habitats” (1999: 159).

A feature of horizontal discourse is that demands segmental pedagogy (1999: 161), that is siloed content that is devoid from hierarchal meaning, whereas vertical discourses: -

“...takes the form of a coherent, explicitly, and systematically principled structure, hierarchically organised” (1999: 159).

In short, Bernstein is drawing attention to the division between the types of social exchanges that happen in a social situation. In order for individuals to see the wider context, through specialist frames of language, of what they are doing, horizontal discourses should not be opposed to or separated from vertical ones. The challenge, Bernstein leaves us with, is finding a way that encompasses both. To bridge this gap in transmission students both need the specialist “scientific” language and strongly framed language inherent in a vertical discourse as well as the more ‘weakly framed’ language that is evident in horizontal discourses. The students in this study seem to enjoy the practical film making of film precisely because it involves teamwork or weakly framed exchanges, but when it comes to assessment this is harder for a qualification to merit because it does not fit into the strongly framed requirements of vertical discourse that is present in “expert and scientific” vertical discourse. That practice through creative coursework has been reduced in the ‘A’-Level speaks to the insecurity about the merit of practice where “encounters with people” can be built into a qualification. The voices of staff and students in data from this study, suggest that an educational exchange that has elements of both discourses provides participants with more memorable and fulfilling experiences.

### Summary and Finding Six

- Real life, industry and social problems being addressed in creative film and media work well for students in the subject.
- Assessment of the subject is an area of concern for teachers.

- Perception of media subjects seems to be negative because of long held bias. This has its roots in the academic/vocational divide and Film Education sitting somewhere in the middle.
- Film and Media production provides students with a raft of different skills, when a 'vertical discourse' takes place in a curriculum these skills are best exercised.

The experience that students and staff recall was both positive and negative. In the former students discuss the enjoyment of the course and their ability to problem solve their way through problems. In the latter, staff talk of frustrations about the view of media as a subject and how they thought their specialism was viewed by others as a soft option. The experience discussed above shows that it is not just collaboration between people and individuals that makes the experience of learning enjoyable, it's also the collaboration between distinct forms of knowledge that individuals need to successfully employed to work within groups. In other words, it is not only an inter relationship between people but also an intra-relationship between different forms of knowledge in internal personal dialogue.

*The experience of students of staff on the course, in this study, demonstrates that they enjoy the subject but are frustrated by the constraints that assessment and curriculum design are having upon it.* Also, staff display a defensiveness of the qualification no doubt re-enforced over the years that Film and/or Media is an easy subject, that it is not real learning. Students recount how they would have wanted more opportunities to study media and film at school and, despite there being only a handful of schools in my region that offer both Media (and especially) Film Studies GCSE, at my centre the numbers for both 'A'-Levels and the vocational programme have risen over the last 10 years.

#### Glimpses of 'possible futures' - Summary

"...a condition of experiencing boundaries, be they social, intellectual or personal, not as prisons, or stereotypes, but as tension points condensing the past *and* opening possible futures. Enhancement entails a discipline ... It is the right to the means of critical understanding and to new possibilities" (Bernstein, 1996: 6).

The main themes have presented six key findings that have been arrived at by examining and coding the data that my study produced. To summarise, these are: -

- *More time needs to be spent on teaching students how to discuss, problem solve and collaborate on new communication platforms.*
- *Learners should pursue their own Film interests in a curriculum, and it should allow them the autonomy to do so.*

- *A successful community is one that individuals are invested in. In that building of a community, you cannot depend on technology and online instruments to create it solely and that an elevated level of actual 'real' face- to-face interaction is required.*
- *Curriculum design and assessment are stymieing creativity in film Education courses.*
- *There is a false division between practice and a theoretical based experience in Film Education courses. This false division needs to be addressed.*
- *Students and staff are frustrated by the constraints that assessment and curriculum design are having on Creative Media and Film provision.*

The findings of this study point to some of the curriculum, technology and pedagogical problems that has driven this research. In the following section I suggest ways in which these findings might be addressed. As Bernstein (1996) points out that by experiencing, and in my case chronicling, these barriers and boundaries as “tension points” highlighted in the findings of this study, I may be able to point to alternatives that might ‘open up possible futures’ for film teachers, students and curriculum, designers and assessors. The constraints and ‘tensions’ that seem to be acting the findings of this study are not necessarily ones that are intentionally created but that are results of decisions that are beyond individual teachers and students, beyond the remit of educational institutions and are the result of deeply rooted systemic and structural issues in the vocational educational system in England. Some of the findings of this study highlight the ‘tensions’ that participants experience when encountering their education and by exploring these I hope to illustrate and embody how Bernstein’s *Pedagogic Right of Participation* might be strengthened and realised in the future.

In this thesis I have participated in the ‘critical understanding’ of my practice and therefore feel empowered to offer potential alternatives and new possibilities for the future.

## CHAPTER SIX – OF KALEIDOSCOPIES - RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has investigated the following research questions.

- RQ 1 What does a good curriculum framework look like for students in Film Education in the FE sector and how does theory intersect with practice in academic and vocational education at Level 3? How can this be best brought to life in the classroom?
- RQ 2 What does good pedagogic practice in further Film Education look like and how could it be used to develop different forms of knowledge in film curriculum through experiential, problem and project-based learning?
- RQ 3 How can different forms of knowledge be assessed in Film Education?
- RQ 4 What is the most suitable way to use technology in Film Education and what approaches to teaching encourage and support collaborative learning.
- RQ5 What Film Education experiences during the covid lockdowns can inform future pedagogy and curriculum design?

In this section I revisit each of the key findings and suggest recommendations for the teaching and learning of 'A'-Level and vocational Film and in relation to my original research questions. In my view, this study has been careful not to present overly simplistic or binary oppositions, where one option is assumed to be better than the other. As I argue from the onset, the forces that act upon, the forms of knowledge and skills that need to be acquired and developed in the experiences of all who study and teach Film Education and Film Production act like a kaleidoscope through which the curriculum can be viewed, designed, developed and integrated. There is no right way or wrong way but there *are* circumstances, settings, and conditions that might be conducive to the curriculum research, design, development and implementation in Film Education. This study also offers a Curriculum Framework that might provide guidelines and grounds for the design and development of a more holistic and improved Film Education experience for students and teachers. In the section below, I outline my recommendations regarding how these conditions might be realised and the changes that should be considered in the provision of Film (and possibly media) education in the future. Under my recommendations, I return to the particular case presented above and focus on the details of what these recommendations might look like in a Film Education curriculum in practice.

## Of Culture

Central findings in this thesis which surround the theme of culture are twofold. Each finding requires different identifying means to address it. I suggest below courses of action that might be taken to tackle the problems identified.

Firstly, students encounter and make sense of barriers to working successfully in an educational culture in terms of a *lack of understanding or knowledge of how to communicate effectively with each other online and, in some cases, in person*. Students therefore need to learn how to communicate online and use dialogic discussion techniques in a way that goes beyond simple statements and placing binary opposites in contention to each other's ideas. These protocols and forms of communication need to be modelled and embodied by tutors and explored with students to a) give them the opportunity to evaluate and probe at what social media style communication are helpful, b) how and when these forms of communication can be useful and c) when and how deeper discussion should be encouraged and enabled to happen. The data and literature reviewed in this study suggest that this should not be a top-down taught model with students and teachers "given" rules and curriculum prescriptions imposed upon them from above by those in authority with more status power than the students and teachers themselves. For students and teachers to reach a point where they can communicate successfully, they need to arrive at ways of communicating, collaborating with each other in democratic ways through trial and error (or problem-finding, problem-solving and critique). That is, there should be a degree of *learning how to learn to express and communicate their ideas* in a productive and creative Film Education culture. Online discussions, interactions should be assessed and examined by the students themselves. Students need to be able to look at and critically discuss cases of real-world examples and analyse how collaborative and cooperative pedagogic practices and communication can lead to successful film production (or indeed its opposite). These workshops/training could include considerations of what constitutes good communication in online and face-to-face meetings as well as where and how social interactions can go wrong and why.

A **recommendation** of this thesis therefore is that Film Education curricula need to provide virtual space to assess and test out communication techniques and strategies and that students need to solve these real-world problems in real-time. The intention here is to help students to experience and "see" how they can work together in more collaborative, productive and creative ways. Creative online cultures need to be purposefully established through the use of problem and project-based learning to enable creative students to experience and engage in critical discourse. **Recommendation 1: *More training and thought needs to be committed to curriculum design in Film Education regarding how***

***to communicate and be members of a productive, creative and cooperative culture at FE level, Film Education offers an excellent cultural conduit for this.*** Further research on this area is recommended.

Secondly, students *thrive and remember experience in a culture when it relates to the real world. When the purposes of Film Education can be related to actual experiences that are tangible, as data from this study suggests, student learning is not only more memorable but also happens at a deeper level.* Students in this study repeatedly make the point that they want to seek out ways to better present themselves online in creative cultures. They also note that speaking and pitching a creative idea in person requires forms of knowledge and skills that need to be acquired and developed as an integral part of Film Education curricula. Data from this study suggest that students, therefore, not only need help to communicate online, with groups or with individuals to present themselves, they also need access to situations and environments that match those in which they will work.

***Recommendation 2: Settings and locations in which problem and project-based learning can occur in educational institutions should match those encountered in the film or creative media industry.*** If this is not possible, then partnerships with local enterprises should facilitate learning for creative media and film students. In the context of the case study which provides the focus of this thesis these should include TV Studios, Foley Suites, sound stages and other creative spaces. These allow students to express themselves and work in environments that enable them to experience and develop forms of knowledge that will be relevant and familiar when they leave education. As Dewey (1934) points out, space is important, and for Biesta (2011) the power of curriculum is heightened when it draws on real-world experience. Petrie (1993 & 2010) also highlights this point. In combination with the ability to problem solve, students are likely to feel more empowered and confident in tackling the problems that media professional and other adults must face and overcome in the 'real world'. Both recommendations should be addressed so that students can enjoy richer and more vital Film Education experiences in the professional practice and educational culture of which their course is a part.

Of Power

Data generated in this study and in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and discussed above indicate that Bernstein's (1996, 2000) framework of *Pedagogic Rights* is particularly useful in bringing into view how *Pedagogic Rights*, the necessary *Conditions* for their realisation in practice as well as issues and problems in empowerment and the development of agency and autonomy in teaching and learning FAVE level contexts. Here Bernstein suggests that to have the *Rights of Enhancement, Inclusion and Participation* students and teachers require a curriculum that fosters conditions in which *Confidence, Communitas* and *Civic Discourse* are engaged and flourish. In this study, findings suggest that an

individual's lack of power indicates low levels of individual and collective confidence, as well as low levels of freedom and autonomy in their experiences of Film and Media curricula on an institutional, and possibly, even on a national level.

Firstly, it is evident in data generated in this research that *teachers fear losing control of the curriculum to models based on rather thin and highly prescriptive notions of competency-based skills assessment, not creativity. It is also evident in the data that students feel remote from their learning when it is not driven by them.* From the findings above, it appears that there are not enough opportunities for students to experience and develop a sense of empowerment in current models of curriculum design and assessment. Where there is, it is demonstrable of the best and most memorable learning enjoyed by students and teachers alike.

Secondly, *empowered learners require more than just information.* They need an introduction to different ways to interpret and represent that information to transform it into different forms of knowledge. Data from this study indicate that opportunities to democratically discuss ideas are pivotal in this respect and simple 'wall based' social media style platforms such as those employed in this study are insufficient to allow this to happen in meaningful ways with any depth or consistency. As evidenced and observed on platforms described in this study, simple statements that diametrically oppose each other do not lend themselves to seeing a problem in the round or building upon an idea in collaborative and cooperative ways. The lure of binary opposites is strong and should be resisted. In addition, data from this study indicate that students do not need to be assessed by solely in terms their acquisition of technical skills (*techné*) and cognitive recall. To do so limits the scope of their Film Education and learning experiences including the forms of knowledge they are enabled, or constrained from, developing. Findings from this study suggest that engaging in the development of the cultural knowledge or ways of knowing and ways of life surrounding a practice empowers students and increases their confidence in becoming and knowing how to be (*savoir être*) Film and Media professionals in real-world and real-time situations.

Data from this study also lend support to the argument that the practice and theory in Film Education curriculum design appear to be (falsely and unhelpfully) separated for assessment reasons, rather than for pedagogic purposes of ensuring that teaching and learning experiences are memorable, alive and vital for learners. A recommendation of this thesis, therefore, is that curriculum design for Vocational Film (and indeed it's 'A' level incarnation) needs to be integrated, authentic and bravely designed if it is to resist the current inclination of Awarding Bodies to be overly prescriptive in terms of current Curriculum Specifications and assessment objectives. This study points to how highly prescribed and

narrow assessment objectives constrict the learning opportunities of ‘Vocational’ and ‘Academic’ students alike.

*The evidence generated and analysed in this research supports the view that authentic experience and heightened vitality should be guiding principles of curriculum design in Film Education courses – not a particularly impoverished and narrow construal of limited forms of knowledge.* Knowledge is only powerful when learners use it. When students use technical skills to produce good, creative film work, they have applied *techné* in the real-world and in real-time to develop an understanding of when best to use those skills wisely (*phronesis*), in what order (*poiesis*) and in what circumstances, not for reasons of self-interest but in the interests of the greater good (*praxis*). When encouraged and enabled to acquire and use different forms of knowledge in practice they have in other words achieved a high level of *phronesis*, a hallmark of an education worthy of the name. Students’ acquisition and development of interpretational skills and different forms of knowledge involved in a practice makes them empowered and able to make good judgments about how and when they use that knowledge creatively and for what purposes in what circumstances well enough to demonstrate their understanding and grasp of good practice in Film Education. When different the forms of knowledge are overlooked, power and control become disembodied from the many and dislocated from authentic practice, the many insiders of a practice will find a way to reclaim it and practice will be able to advance and move forwards in appropriate ways.

**Recommendation 3: a way to empower those in an educational setting is by creating opportunities to engage in problem-finding, problem solving and critique in a Film Education Curriculum that is *integrated and flexible enough to allow teachers and students opportunities to bring real world problems and scenarios to life in collaborative and cooperative ways.*** In addition, students and teachers should be enabled to address these problems in real-time. Curriculum should not be restricted and reduced to lists prescribed by Awarding Bodies, an exam board or an inspectorate in the form of tick-lists which reduce and limits practice to highly questionable, often one-off performances of putative skills. The authentic development of practice occurs where information can be turned into knowledge and practical knowledge and skills can be put to work to investigate topical real-world issues that are relevant to the people that are studying a subject such as Film.

At the heart of all of this lies empowered teachers working as skilled curriculum designers and implementers in context who are supported and given the freedom and autonomy to make wise judgments about integrated curriculum design, curriculum content, curriculum implementation and the use of multi-modal assessment. This would include what is relevant, what is to be studied and how it should be assessed in a spirit of inclusion and democracy and in situations where students can

contribute to the curriculum, thereby symbiotically helping shape their own curriculum and the pedagogy and assessment regimes which support it.

### Of Community

As already discussed, one of the major flaws of this research resides in its attempt to enforce participation in an online community upon the participants in this study. In the examples described above, it was only where students had the autonomy to set the conditions for the community that they were most active in it. It is evident in this study that empowerment leads to collaboration, cooperation, and participation in the community. Community-building should therefore start from the ground up with students and staff. They should be given responsibility for design of the community in order to decide what is worthwhile for it to examine in context, what its purpose is and what is meaningful and useful for members of the community to do together. This includes decisions regarding the rules of the community, and it should communicate. These need to be arrived at together. In short, a finding of this thesis is that top-down diktats in curriculum design and assessment in vocational education do not work. *If you enforce a system on any group of people, they will test out the boundaries of the system or reject it or break it or find another community whose values align more closely with their own.*

In Chapter 2 I discuss a variety of educational approaches to building community from Connectivism, (Siemens, 2005); situated cognition (Brown et al, 1986), community of enquiry (Lipman, 2003) and Dialogic discussions groups (Wegerif, 2013). All in all, I found, each has a glimmer of truth in them, and they all helped shape the thinking behind trying to increase student interaction in the community around the Film Education courses at the centre of the study. However, results were mixed in terms of the success of this element of my investigation. A key finding of this study is that social media interactions and community building happen both in person and online. In many of the examples above students found communities online in the 'real virtual world' away from educational settings. Film students will find creative collaborators outside of their course if they are self-driven, if they are not, a film course should be willing to set up an online creative community amongst the body of students.

This study was conducted in one FE college, with a small sample group. However, its findings point to a future area of study that informs my recommendation for this finding.

**Recommendation 4: *the view of how technology is used in vocational and academic courses is in need of review at a national level and film students need to be involved in creating the building blocks of shaping Film Education communities in educational institutions.*** This could involve students

and staff deciding on how groups should be organised; how problem and project-based learning should frame teaching learning and assessment; what discussion groups should be built; and how they should be used. All of this needs to put under further scrutiny in future research. The emphasis of this research should consider how social media style platforms are used in vocational educational settings and whether these need to be reconsidered and reimaged. As already discussed, ‘walls’ of dialogue proved to be barriers to critically thinking about problems in practice and how to address them. This did not allow for deeper analysis. As Sennett (2012) makes clear, information sharing is distinct from knowledge acquisition and development. One is fleeting, the other leaves a lasting imprint.

Data in this study suggest that successful community-building is not just reliant on collaboration between people and individuals, it is also *a collaboration in the minds of individuals and between the different forms of knowledge*. For individuals to work successfully within those groups they need to be able to employ *techné*, *epistêmê*, *phrónēsis sophia* and *nous* to achieve the virtue of *praxis* in Film-Making. In other words, it is not only an interrelationship between people and ideas that empower a group but there must also be an intra-relationship between different forms of knowledge and their practise for an individual to successfully work within a team or any professional collective group.

### Of Creativity

Creativity is at the heart of Film Education and, as such, it is viewed as the most important and enjoyable ingredient in studying film and media. Unfortunately, the current curriculum and assessment of the subject does not always line up with this view. As the key finding discussed in Chapter Five brings to the fore, *curriculum design and assessment are stymieing creativity in creative media courses*. As well as this, students recognise that online learning helps in the development of “learning theory” but also that their most valuable learning experiences come from learning together, working on real-world problems in real time and in person, tackling creative problems in collaborative and cooperative ways. I have learned from conducting this research that the Kaleidoscope of knowledge that surrounds the acquisition and development of a rounded Film Education is enabled when students can engage in an experience that will *affect* them and be memorable. This requires that assessment be multi-modal and based around creativity, cooperation and collaboration. The forms of knowledge identified and described by Aristotle need to work interdependently in practice – and the pressures to focus on one form of knowledge, such as *techné* – as the sole form of knowledge that is assessed, should be resisted. That is, *skills building and rule following alone, is not and cannot be creativity or anywhere close to good practice in Film Education and in Film Making*. As Petrie makes clear, “creativity is bound up with notions of change” (1991:1) and that it may requires breaking rules

whereas *proving you can do something once in an inauthentic situation and context is artificial and the antithesis of what it means and takes to be creative.*

**Recommendation 5: *In reality the acquisition and development of creativity requires designers of Film Education curricula to re-assess the target, tick-list-driven curriculum design and assessment regimes that define the new T – Level and former incarnations of Film Education or Creative Media Production courses; multi modal assessment could be a solution to more fairly judge students’ work and their creative process.*** Students in this study recognise, and to some extents are prepared to reluctantly concede, that online learning is “effective” for the acquisition of “learning theory”. However, they are unanimous in their view that their most valuable learning experiences come from learning together, in person on creative problems on real-world problems and real-time situations. A recommendation of this thesis is that if assessment is required on a creative course the proof of that work should be through the creative work itself and an analysis of the creative process that students experience in the creation of the Film (and/or Media) artefacts that they make. More emphasis should therefore be placed on allowing students to fail as elements of the Creative Media UAL course allow. *In short, technical proficiency should come from creativity supported by curriculum and pedagogy developed in and through a heightened vitality not a technical proficiency measured in terms of crude and blunt measures of narrow assessment outcomes.*

## Of Duty

In Chapter Five I discuss the concept of Duty in terms of the way in which teachers should organise and use what Bernstein (1996, 2000) describes as the *pedagogic devices* at their disposal to design and integrate the curriculum. From listening to their points of view and considering what students say about how *pedagogic devices* are used, the following becomes clear. *The division between theory and practice is deeply entrenched in learners’ minds.* This is no surprise as *learners are told this through curriculum design, at a national level, that you can be either be good at one or the other, not both.* Often if you are not “good enough” at English and Maths and cannot achieve a Grade 4 in these subjects at GCSE level, students are told to go down the vocational route.

In effect there is a two-tiered education system at FE level in terms of perception and in terms of what students are taught. This vocational/academic divide has extended into how teachers conduct their roles and what students think education should be. As Dunne makes clear, theory and the acquisition of it is clearly linked to practical skills, as he states, “knowledge fitted to praxis” (Dunne, 1993) is preferential in creating the best experiences for learners.

**Recommendation 6: *Curriculum design in film should be re-thought and the imaginary walls between theory and practice should be dismantled.*** As I discuss in Chapter One the resounding voice is that “vocational education is a great thing... for other people's children.” (Coughlan, 2015). My recommendation here matches with Hyland’s proposition that practice, and in my case Film Education practice, should not only be incorporated into the ‘A’-Level specification but that the theoretical emphasis in T-Level should be included in vocational ones too i.e. that is the boundaries between the theoretical and the practical should be purposefully dissolved. As Hyland points out the “importance of hand and body in all human activity ... be incorporated as a dimension of all school and college programmes, including traditionally academic ones” (2014: 211).

In Chapter two I discuss at length the historic divisions between theory and practice in Film Education. Petrie (2010), Bergala (2016) and Buckingham (2019) all make the case for Film Education to be re-imagined in its delivery but this will not happen until there is a change of approach to the view of film at FE level as simple skills building, a place to train young adults for a singular technical job or as a place where the theoretical (particularly at ‘A’ level) is divorced from the practical act of film making. As Nunn points out (2020) more collaboration and dialogue across all parts of the education system is required to reframe Film Education.

In addition, a further sub recommendation is that *there should be a healthy dose of resistance to furthering the divide between ‘A’-Levels and T-Levels and the boundaries between academic and vocational qualifications on a national level.* On a local level, teachers should use Software to manage courses but not become subsumed by them. Software can help speed up tasks or store and manage a course however as data in this study illustrate, the best experiences for students come when they work together on a problem. As such there should be the development of an integrated and ‘weakly framed curriculum’ (Bernstein 1996, 2000) in Film Education courses that widens and deepens the cultural knowledge and perspectives of participants. As Eisner points out we should “convert art programs into hand maidens to study social studies” and that we should tap into the “imaginative features of trying to help people learn” (Eisner, 1981: 154-155).

**Recommendation 7: *Wider cultural knowledge can be arrived at in the learning of what Bernstein calls a “weakly framed” (1996, 2000) and democratic curriculum.*** The conditions for this change will only come about if there is a dramatic sea change in the way that Level 3 qualifications are designed and if there is enough confidence and collective will to change the content and structure of those curricula.

## Of Experience

This study underscores how the experiences of learners and teachers on Film Education courses illustrates how fraught the educational landscape for vocational teachers is at present. The division between theory and practice is so entrenched, in and for learners and teachers alike, that they divide what they see can work online just as they would in a classroom. “I don’t like theory” turned into, “I don’t think practice works online” and “Online learning is not as good as “real” learning”. If social media style learning platforms are to be used in future, then this issue needs to be addressed. As well as this, teachers in the study recount how they feel their subject is perceived as soft or easy and therefore not as legitimate as other “more academic” subjects. These bias manifests itself in staff feeling undervalued and underestimated as teachers. This situation seems bizarre considering the amount of screentime and media that 21<sup>st</sup> century citizens spend. The media (and by this, I mean all social media, film and short form media) dominate the lives of our students. Reports suggest that the average screentime for teens is 8.39 hours per day (Rideout, 2022) so for students not to be studying the way in which they come to understand the world outside of education seems counter-productive to the aims of education in the first place. *If students see the educational world as divorced from the one they live in, they will not see the relevance in the educational world at all.*

In terms of the experience that students in this study encountered on their course the data point to experiences that match real world ones as the experiences that were worth having. Therefore, this study advocates that *Student’s should experience media education from a younger age.* At the same time ‘A’-Level students miss out on the joy of production. There is too much content to deliver for the exam to allow the freedom for students to create film and online content. ‘A’-Level students interviewed as part of this study explain that their most rewarding and challenging experiences are when they are engaged in making and applying their ideas about films to understand different cultures. Vocational students said that their best experiences took place with ‘insiders’ who were knowledgeable about the industry they were training and working towards. Students saw both purposes of their Film Education to learn *about* the world around them *through* making things that investigate it.

Therefore, understanding the language of their experiences in the real world is of utmost importance and gives forth to my final recommendation.

**Recommendation 8: *The Introduction of Film Education at secondary school level and an acknowledgement in national curricula that media shapes messages and that citizens need to be critically examining those messages.*** This is a recommendation that chimes with Buckingham’s comments that “if we really want citizens to be media literate, we need comprehensive, systematic

and sustained programmes of media (and I would argue Film) Education as a basic entitlement for all young people.” (Buckingham, 2019: 3). There should, in short, be a wider appreciation of how film shapes society and culture. As well as this further research on the benefits of media education should be undertaken and more pre-sixteen educational opportunities should be offered at Level 2.

Two overall conditions that sit behind my findings are evident and these frames the findings and recommendations of the study. Firstly, forms of knowledge and the acquisition of the contribution to the development of professional practice in Film (and Media) industries are poorly understood in curriculum design and approaches to assessment in vocational education in England.

Secondly, the separation of theory and practice brings into view serious shortcomings in the way the nature of practice of different forms of knowledge are understood in vocational education in the area of Film Education and, perhaps, more widely beyond it.

## Further Education Film Pedagogy and Curriculum in Practice

“I am increasingly convinced that there is not, on the one hand, a pedagogy of the spectator that would necessarily, by its nature, be limited to reading, to deciphering, to the formation of the critical mind, and, on the other hand, a pedagogy of the filmmaker, of praxis. There could instead be a pedagogy centred on the act of creation that occurs both when watches films and when one directs films” (Bergala, 2016: 24).

As both chapter four and chapter five illustrate, a kaleidoscope of interrelated factors influences how a student experiences the curriculum and as discussed previously, issues and debates surrounding the purpose of an education in film and how to make and analyse film are long-standing and deep-rooted. These are unlikely to be resolved easily or soon. However, there are conditions under which a Film Education can provide a rounded experiential learning exchange that will elevate their encounter with a curriculum, supported by pedagogic principles that underpin it. These are where: -

- Community members understand how to communicate with each other in both online and in person classes.
- Where collaboration is achieved through a problem and project -based curriculum.
- Where autonomy and trust are given to students to solve those problems.
- Where students’ engage in problem-finding, problem-solving and critique and are assisted to present themselves and communicate with online groups in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’s fast paced, shifting media landscape.
- Facilities for students in Film and Media mirror those of the real world.

- An understanding that film literacy and understanding the power of moving images is essential in helping students navigate the modern world – and that this should take place before Post 16 education.

### Recommendations and my original Research Questions (RQ)

In the above I set out the core recommendations of this study. Below are the recommendations in short and how they speak to my original research questions.

RQ1: What does a good curriculum framework look like for students in Film Education in the FE sector and how does theory intersect with practice in academic and vocational education at Level 3? How can this be best brought to life in the classroom?

*Recommendation 6: Curriculum design in film should be re-thought and the imaginary walls between theory and practice should be dismantled.*

*Recommendation 7: Wider cultural knowledge can be arrived at in the learning of what Bernstein calls a “weakly framed” (1996, 2000) and democratic curriculum.*

RQ2: What does good pedagogic practice in further Film Education look like and how could it be used to develop different forms of knowledge in film curriculum through experiential, problem and project-based learning?

*Recommendation 2: Settings and locations in which problem and project-based learning can occur in educational institutions should match those encountered in the film or creative media industry.*

*Recommendation 8: The Introduction of Film Education at secondary school level and an acknowledgement in national curricula that media shapes messages and that citizens need to be critically examining those messages.*

RQ3: How can different forms of knowledge be assessed in Film Education?

*Recommendation 5: In reality the acquisition and development of creativity requires designers of Film Education curricula to re-assess the target, tick-list-driven curriculum design and assessment regimes that define the new T – Level and former incarnations of Film Education or Creative Media Production courses; multi modal assessment could be a solution to more fairly judge students’ work and their creative process.*

RQ4: What is the most suitable way to use technology in Film Education and what approaches to teaching encourage and support collaborative learning.

*Recommendation 1: More training and thought needs to be committed to curriculum design in Film Education regarding how to communicate and be members of a productive, creative and cooperative culture at FE level, Film Education offers an excellent cultural conduit for this.*

*Recommendation 4: the view of how technology is used in vocational and academic courses is in need of review at a national level and film students need to be involved in creating the building blocks of shaping Film Education communities in educational institutions.*

RQ5: What Film Education experiences during the covid lockdowns can inform future pedagogy and curriculum design?

*Recommendation 2: Settings and locations in which problem and project-based learning can occur in educational institutions should match those encountered in the film or creative media industry.*

*Recommendation 3: a way to empower those in an educational setting is by creating opportunities to engage in problem-finding, problem solving and critique in a Film Education Curriculum that is integrated and flexible enough to allow teachers and students opportunities to bring real world problems and scenarios to life in collaborative and cooperative ways.*

In the case of the last recommendation the Covid Pandemic brought to the fore the absence that students could use together. I map out what the recommendations above might look like 'on the ground' and what the lessons were of lock down on the courses at the studies centre and what curriculum impact these have had on possible future film curricula.

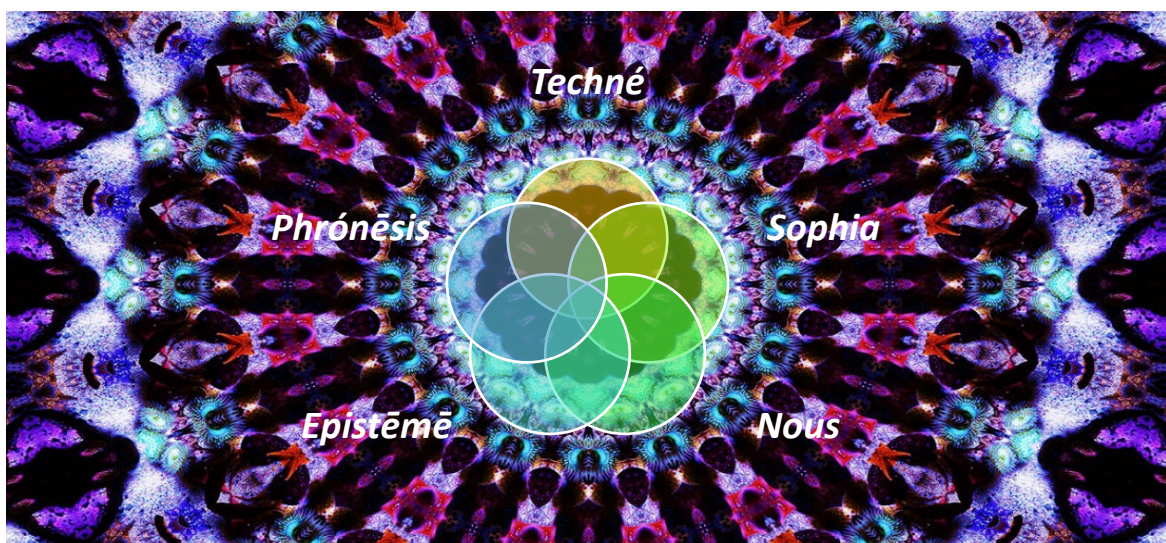
### Kaleidoscope of Film Education Framework and Pedagogy

"...every form of Film Education is embedded in, and thus influenced by, its regional context, which both limits and facilitates its specific implementation" (Bachmann & Zahn, 2018: 79).

In response to the above recommendations, below I lay out the conditions for Film Education and then ways to bring this curriculum and pedagogy for Film Education for 16–19-year-olds to life. As I suggest, curricula should be 'weakly framed' (Bernstein, 1996,2000). By this I mean that curricula should be porous, interpretive and non-instructional. Bernstein's thinking on a 'weakly framed' curriculum gives Film Educators the space and creativity to create relevant problems for students to solve as well as future proofing itself from technical/technological redundancy. As previously discussed, editing and film technology changes rapidly and a curriculum that remains flexible open and 'weak' allows teachers and students the chance to maximise creative solutions to fresh, contemporary problems. In conjunction with this, digital platforms should sit alongside the curriculum and should inform and guide that curriculum through nodal and dialogic discussion, as per Siemens (2005) and Wegerif's

(2013) thinking. In conjunction with this, the “space” that the media and Film Educational community encompasses should be able to accommodate what Brown et al (1989) see as the benefits of situated cognition through industry realistic spaces. On top of this lies a *kaleidoscope* of conditions that aims to integrate Aristotle’s forms of knowledge into contemporary film teaching and learning. Each form of knowledge can be heightened when these forms of knowledge collide together. In Chapter Two, I considered different forms of knowledge and how these can occur at various stages of Film Education.

Film making and forms of knowledge – each form should interact with each other in the creation of film. *Poīēsis* comes through the application of *all* of the forms.



On a film set each form of knowledge is experienced through an individual. The group feeds creativity and the production of a film.

Figure 64 Forms of Knowledge

*Phronēsis*, *epistēmē*, *nous*, *sofia*, *techné* and *praxis* need to be exercised *together* and the conditions and curricula I set out below, I see as the best ones to allow this to occur. As Buckingham points out, students need to be able to *read*, *write* and understand and analyse the *context* (2019) of film (and media more generally). By fusing theory to practice, and vice versa, in settings that allow realistic ‘real world’ experiences, with problems and projects that are locally set with communication platforms that allow creativity to flourish, students will have access to and experience the conditions to participate, be enhanced and included in their education (Bernstein, 1996, 2000) in the same way Connolly’s (2014) understanding of how digital editing can improve students theoretical underpinning of

concepts learned ‘in the classroom’. The following is less about drawing a route, more constructing a map through which teachers and lecturers can focus upon and navigate. As Bachman and Zahn (2018) point out above every regional or centre context is different and therefore I resist the trap of being overly prescriptive.

The Film Education framework below takes influence from a range of thinkers discussed throughout this thesis and looks to provide the conditions and principles for Film Education from the above and from the recommendations of this study. The intention here to create a discussion about the future of Film Education curriculum, pedagogy and assessment and to form a post-thesis South West working group of Film Lecturers at FE level to spark debate about the future of Film Curriculum and Assessment.

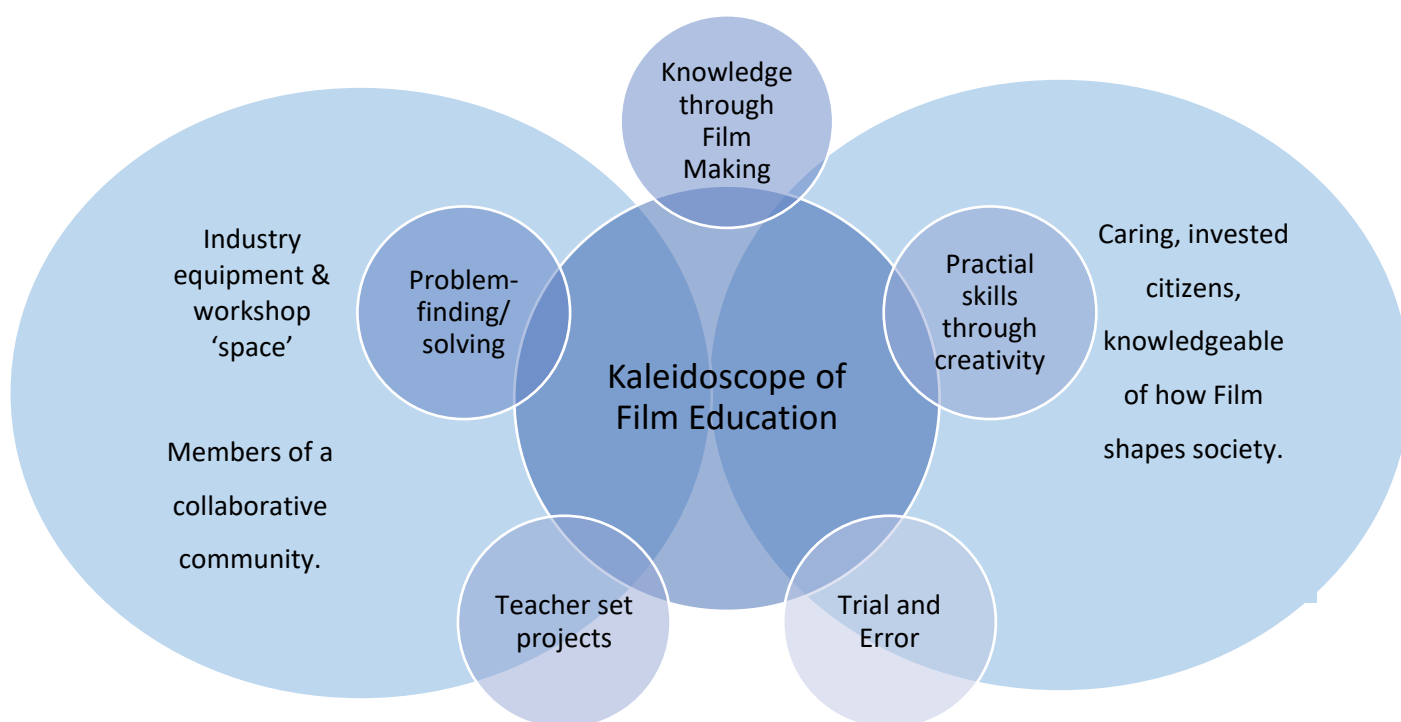


Figure 65 The Kaleidoscope of Film Education Framework

In response to the findings of this study and the suggested teaching process below, I’ve found that a simplified curriculum design is required to fit the demands of students, teachers and institutions that deliver Film Education. The above diagram is intended as a ‘rough guide’, a focusing device rather than a fixed curriculum. A way to simplify assessment and Film Education pedagogy in recognition of the variety of skills and practices that are evident in Film Education, whilst also recognising that a centre will have its own strengths and different levels of access to technology, equipment and Film and Media

infrastructure. It is worth noting here that the tensions that have plagued Film Education in terms of ‘just skills building’ or, particularly at 16–19-year-old age range, preparing them directly for employment is one that the model is intended to avoid. The pace of change in the Film Industry is so rapid that this type of technical training is redundant by the time a student reaches the workforce. Overly prescriptive curricula tend to become a redundant checklist within a few years of their writing. Film Education curricula should have the confidence to allow film teachers and lecturers the space to drive their courses and encourage collaboration amongst and between the students who study them.



Figure 66 Image from *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation* Sennett (2014) Francis Johnston, “Making a Staircase” Hampton Institute



Figure 67 Film Crew Working on a set (ScreenSkills, Coronavirus basic awareness on production training)

It is my belief that education at this level is more about exercising forms of knowledge that can be transferred to any field of work or subject. The film student who goes on to study marine biology or classics at university or take up a marketing apprenticeship will have benefitted from the cultural, social and practical application of film making and study that the framework provides, as well as the

opportunities to work with others and be creative. Education at this level, I argue, should not necessarily be primarily concerned with serving an industry with individuals ready to take up a technical role. Of course, many of our students who achieve excellent film making skills (of which there are many) do progress to study practical film at university, freelance and produce corporate vids or short film directly after Level 3, whereas many others go into a variety of employment routes. Pragmatism and flexibility are at the core of this way of thinking about Film Education at FE level (and potentially at Primary and Secondary level too).

### Animating the Film Education Framework

To bring the curriculum conditions to life, I've constructed a guide that help steer the curriculum and pedagogic approach to teaching and learning film and film making at Level 3. This problem-based approach mirrors the life cycle of a film. Students experience the curriculum through *Film Problems* that involve creating ideas, making an artefact and analysing the process and language of film. In other words, pre-production (imagination) the art of making a film or product that supports learning (*artefact*, the production) and the qualities of mind to assess that process and consider why creative decisions have been made by the student (and by other practitioners historically) in post-production and editing decisions. Here there is alignment between creativity, crafting and editing all of which is underpinned by critical thinking and collaboration. The artificial division here between theory and practice is broken down. Collaboration occurs throughout the entire process and may involve both in person (offline) and online communities that both teachers and students are a part of. Meanwhile, in terms of pedagogy teachers should bring the framework to life through inspiring by using their cultural capital, *artistry* through showing how skills can be used through creative work and *counsel* through nurturing creative community. At the same time teacher autonomy is encouraged in that they design the curriculum they will deliver. Bergala's concept of the *passeur* (2016) is invoked here as teachers bring their knowledge and take students on an informed creative journey to *experience* that Film Education. As well as this, the pedagogic principle of a good Film Education in this studies view should also allow the teacher to help students view the film world around them with 'wise eyes' and, in the words of Connolly (2014) should point "towards the idea that one job of the film teacher is to look for the things that audiences miss, encouraging their students to watch, rewatch and produce more complex and, ironically perhaps, interpretive accounts of those film texts" (Connolly, 2014: 143).

Finally, in terms of assessment, the teacher or lecturer works with their film curriculum to design assessments that maximise the opportunities for students to experience the curriculum that adds a host of different experiences, allowing them to break from the assessment which binds them to only one aspect of film.

The process is based around the premise of a problem-based curriculum and influenced by not only the data analysis in chapter five and its resultant recommendations but also by influences such as, Bernstein (2001), Buckingham (2019), Petrie (2010, 2014) Petrie and Stoneman (2014), Bergala (2016) and indeed the BBFC's proposed *Film Education Framework* (2015). The emphasis is on learning by creating *Artefacts* and maximising encounters with meaningful educational experiences. The intent of the curriculum and pedagogic model, therefore, is to break down the imaginary walls of theory and practice and adjust the assessment of the curriculum to provide students with an experience that they have themselves steered and will make a lasting impression on them. As Dewey notes this encounter with experience affords a "heightened vitality ... it signifies active and alert commerce with the world; at its height it signifies complete interpenetration of self and the world of objects and events" (Dewey, 1958: 274). This film pedagogy suits a workshop situation (Hagener, 2007) but also allows students to make use of digital platforms to work on problems, together.

The framework also provides a high degree of flexibility for teachers to use their expertise to set problems, work in teams or individually and construct Film or Moving Image products and with the frameworks guiding principles. At a curriculum level, students work on flexing their imagination, creating artefacts and reflecting on their practice which has been informed by film context. Each stage informs another. As students work through a problem that has been set by the teacher, the pedagogic means by which students are guided are through *inspiration*, for example showing them best practice, demonstrating how kit can be used, analysing film sequences, or running sessions on film history. Film screenings throughout the unit should be encouraged. In supporting students' ideation and working with them to realise their creative work, the teacher will employ *artistry* to help guide the technical process of making film with a high degree of reflection on the *artefact* through analysis. Finally, to help steer *analysis* through the process, the teacher will *Counsel* to help bring to light how students can improve their work with each other and how to communicate; either in online groups or in person classes.

With the use of multimodal assessment, there are multiple opportunities to show their abilities beyond the narrow constraints of an exam, a finished film and a final evaluation. The final step is progression. This is where students are guided in their next steps from this unit. This could be on to the next unit with improvement points and development ideas or even beyond the curriculum to career opportunities beyond Level 3. In the examples below I call this a *progression plenary* where collective learning can be reviewed and knowledge that needs to be covered next established.

I give examples below of how the Framework could be used at both a micro (unit or topic) and macro level (a full year's scheme of work). At all points during the process, students will be problem solving, using their imagination, creating artefacts and critically analyse those problems and products. At the same time the teacher will be providing further examples, inspiring and teaching artistry whilst counselling students through their creative process. All assessment for the work completed follows a multi modal model with weighting given to student work in whatever mode is chosen by teachers (and potentially learners).

### Example One of Film Education in Practice – A Year Overview

This overview gives an exemplar first year of a Level Three Film Course. For the sake of argument, the course works outside of the confines of what exists in terms of 'A'-Level or current Vocational courses and takes inspiration from the recommendations of this study, practice that I have seen or some of the best practice and assessment techniques I have observed.

#### **FILM PROBLEMS**

*Unit 1) What is Film? (with emphasis on editing, cinematography, sound and mise-en-scène)*

*Unit 2) Spectators, Making Meaning (with emphasis on further Editing and Cinematography) - Shoot a genre film to generate a response*

*Unit 3) Collaborating – working together on a film project – 8/10 student group project*

*(with emphasis on Sound, lighting, costume and Set design)*

*Unit 4) Film History and the future – Comparisons and experiments with old and new film technology*

*(with emphasis on historic film stock, digital filmmaking, and online short form content)*

*Unit 5) Specialist Study – New Waves and Breaking the rules*

*Unit 6) Specialist Study – Political Film and Projecting Ideas*

*Unit 7) Specialist Study – Careers, Business and Projecting Yourself*

*Unit 8) End of year Project – Students frame, research and solve their own film problem.*

#### **ARTEFACTS**

*Short Films*

*Screenplays*

*Foley Sound work*

*Music composed by a practitioner*

*Vlogs*

*Essays*

*Comparative video essays*

*Pre-production – photo storyboards - Moods boards – pitch decks – style guides*

*Lighting workshops*

*Sets*

*Costume*

*Make up and prosthetics*

### **CREATIVE**

#### **COMMUNITY**

*Online groups/video sharing platforms*

*Production Meetings*

*Production hubs*

*Reaching out to real practitioners.*

*Direct messaging professionals.*

*Sharing films on in house platforms*

*Entering local film competitions*

*Working with regional or national film agencies or companies*

*Casting call outs to performing arts faculties*

*Working with music students on other courses*

*Swapping pre-production documents with other centres and shooting projects*

#### **MULTIMODAL ASSESSMENT**

*Observations*

*Peer feedback*

*Online discussions and advice*

*Film feedback*

*Test Screenings*

*Blogs and Vlogs**Assessment of Artefacts*

The framework is brought to life by the process highlighted above. Trial and error are encouraged, and students are encouraged to work beyond their comfort zone and try different roles in productions. Room in the curriculum is present for mistakes to be made and learned from. Students use Film Education communities to communicate with each other both online and offline, work across faculties and departments with students from other courses. There is also an impetus to reach out into the community and work with companies and agencies. Below I illustrate further examples of how the framework could be delivered through individual units that are steered by the guiding principles. The examples below would be for a full-time course. If running alongside other subjects in 'A'- level tradition, a paired back unit would obviously be required. The units are interlinked and call back to each other throughout the year and sequencing is evidently vital in recalling past work and securing knowledge.

Example Two of Film Education in practice

**Problem 1****What is film?**

*"Introduction to Film Making: The Problem.* You have access to a Canon R50, Premiere Pro and a PC. In teams of four make a 1-minute short film around the word "Looking". 5 weeks in length. You're in the deep end. The main objective is practice and learn about film making quickly and learn from experience for future projects." Note: course beginners entry level. Many students new to the course have never made a short, completed film before, edited, or used a DSLR.

*Student group work on concept generation and group activities to create ideas for short film. Stimulus material provided by the teacher.*

*Task 1:* Finish the story... The teacher establishes a story set up, for example... "A smartly dressed, middle aged woman arrives in a chauffeur driven vehicle at an airport terminus..." What happens next? Students must collaborate on a beginning middle and an end following Structuralist (such as Todorov). Ideas noted down in online Teams groups and then pitched back to the class. Reflections on what good feedback from peers looks like modelled.

Students analyse existing scripts and storyboards to inform their writing and shot decisions.

*Task 2:* Find a script from a film you have previously watched. Pick a 2-minute sequence and find the correlating finished film sequence on YouTube/Vimeo/ etc... analyse what's there (and what's not) in terms of instruction and guidance for the film maker.

Teacher demonstrates a finished sequence and script and together the class looks at script conventions. Screening of a sequence and analysis.

Online use of Celtx narrative organising, students meet and post ideas for stories, create log lines for their films. Students create online community tabs and populate with their ideas. Teacher has community online on Screen in classroom. Celtx or free scriptwriting software used and demo-ed in class.

*Task 3:* Students to write a three-page script with major script conventions. Modelling good screenwriting practice, excerpts from scripts, script format, use of parenthesis, analysis of storyboards and clips. Crash course on pre-production. Make Pre-Production – Script and indicative Photo storyboard (shot on phones).

Screening: Film chosen by lecturer. Analysis of main themes, discourse and online commentary and blog work shared on community online pages. Reviews. Links and cast and crew research posted as Teacher presents and examines script for class. Students work independently on their own scripts.

*Guide feedback in discussion groups. Offer one to one advice and set jointly agreed improvement points*

*Assessment point One:* Peer assessment of Scripts, comments and feedback and suggestions.

*Film Screening – online and offline discussion using Teams or in house platform.*

Production teams assembled. Groups of four. Students pick Script from one of the four students. Script sharing in online Collab Spaces. Work shared and reviewed. Feedback from peers given.

*Task 4:* Famous cinematographers – find a well-established Director of Photography, what is their “signature”? What films have they made? their work and best practice. Shot types and cinematography as a language. If they have an online presence, send them questions. What do you want to find out about their practice? Their films and collaborators are saved for **Problem 2. Technician Session on DSLRs and focal length.**

Written analysis with demonstration of film conventions or Vlog with edited sequence and Voiceover.

*Assessment point Two: Feedback on written work or Vlog films.*

*Task 5:* Equipment crash course. Minimal technical training limited to very basic operation. Students use a DSLR and work in their team to shoot the production. They must also use the same camera at the end of the shoot to Vlog what went wrong with the shoot, what technical issues they didn't understand. Why footage didn't turn out the way they wanted it to. Collab spaces. Share in hubs worst and best practice. Define a list of ideas and areas that the class needs to develop. (Expected responses could be lighting, focal length, handheld vs tripods, etc... this list is revisited in **Problem 2**)

*Assessment Point Three:* – Teacher observes groups on shoots and posts improvement points for groups. Also feeds into discussion about collaborating and segue into **Problem 2**

*Task 6:* Simple edits using CapCut, Movie maker or basic entry level editing software.

*Assessment Point Four: Editing and evaluation:* Tests screenings completed and peer feedback on pacing, sound and editing decisions.

*Assessment Point Five:* Side by side analysis of student script and finished sequence completed by the group. Voice over added to both discussing the 'process' of film making and lessons learnt. The 'rules' of film making (e.g. 180 degree rule, rule of thirds, golden section, 3 point lighting etc...) are noted in a plenary by the teacher at the end of evaluation in preparation for future projects and particularly **Problem 5**).

#### **Multi modal assessment points.**

Week One: Peer assessment of Scripts, comments and feedback and suggestions.

Week Two: Analysis of Film in submitted either video essay or written essay format.

Week Three: Shooting – on location assessment of role in production.

Week Four: Editing – Rough Cut submitted through video sharing platform for students to critique each others work.

Week Five: Editing and Evaluation

*Progression Plenary:* What have we learnt and taught session on the 'rules' of film making.

#### **Final Assessment Outcome.**

Example Three of Film Education in practice

#### **Problem 5 NEW WAVES and Breaking the "rules"**

The problem: "This year so far you have made a genre piece, a fictional short film, a larger team crew project. We're going to explore New Waves of film making and unlearn what you've learned."

*Introductory Lecture New Hollywood: Where it went wrong and what you can learn from mistakes. Case Studies on problematic Movie Productions. e.g. Easy Rider (Hopper, 1969) Apocalypse Now (Coppola, 1979) and Heavens Gate (Cimino, 1980).*

*Task One: We've covered many of the 'rules' of film making this year, "what are they?" compile a list of rules, conventions in film making collect these together on a Padlet/thought cloud/collab space. Link back to **Problem 1**.*

*Task Two: Waves of film movement have looked to challenge what has been accepted as conventional. Teacher to pick any New Wave – e.g. Hong Kong New Wave, French Nouvelle Vague, New Hollywood – and run sessions and screenings on how the new wave broke the rules, changed the mould and altered story telling in cinema. Screening, discussion and online and offline feedback*

*Task Three: Students to study and produce their own case study on a New Wave. New Wave Film research, presentation and/or video essays including contextual knowledge of culture and society at the time of the new wave.*

Use the TV Studio (or multi cam set up) to run a focus group interview session where students interview each other about a New Wave cinema film. *Technician Session* on multi cam set ups.

*Assessment Point One: Work with a group of students to peer mark the work.*

*Task Four: Collaboration. Reach out to experimental film makers online. Document your correspondence and ask for advice about the below.*

*Task Five: Film challenge – Using what you have learned make a film that challenges the conventions of one of the Film genres you investigated and made in **Problem 2**. The film must be set in the here and now. Britain, 2025. Max 5 mins in length.*

Students produce pre-production, document their shoot and include screengrabs of *Premiere, Da Vinci* or *After Effects* timelines to justify editing decisions.

Evaluation is cross referenced against earlier work in *task three*.

*Assessment point Two: After Screening written feedback from teacher and progressions interview with student.*

### **Multi modal assessment points.**

*Assessment Point One: Work with a group of students to peer mark the work. Feedback recorded on audio and attached to student work.*

*Assessment point Two:* After Screening written feedback from teacher and progressions interview with student.

*Progression Plenary:* Film Screenings of student work in a local cinema. Notes on the experience of local cinema visit made and recorded for **Problem 7**. What other films were being marketed? How many screens were there? What was the scheduling of the cinema. What film companies did you notice?

### **Final Assessment Outcome.**

Example Four of Film Education in practice

#### ***Problem 7 Specialist Study – Film Careers, Business and Projecting Yourself***

“Launch your own film making distribution, exhibition or production company consider job roles and work with your local creative community. In this unit you have the opportunity to work with local companies or role play establishing a film business.”

*Introductory Case Study:* Elstree, Pinewood and Bottleyard Studios. (any local production facilities) Lecture and online discussion on history of British studios with analysis of revenue streams, productions and use of film technology.

Visit to Bottleyard Studios (Bristol)

*Task One:* Research into careers and roles in the British Film Industry. Students produce profiles of practitioners and their career trajectory. In addition, students find and produce two case studies of local film makers. Students choose which roles and film makers to study.

Guest speakers and collaboration with local (or national) film agencies companies. Students elect an attendee and put out requests for the visit. They then vote for questions to pose them. Speaker invited to centre to discuss their work with clips and Q and A.

*Task Two:* Online Communication and networking. How to present yourself in the virtual world. Case studies on collaboration between students and creatives including how to communicate online. Past students invited to discuss how they collaborate online and in person.

*Assessment Point Two:* An analysis of online communication. Discord/Teams and what makes good comms.

*Main Task – Task Three either/or:-*

**Option One:** Design a concept for a production facility. Produce mission statement, business plan marketing materials. This project should be presented in the form of an online campaign.

*Break out tasks:* Marketing research and Analysis of similar campaigns.

**Option Two:** Reach out and produce work for a local company. Work to the brief set by a local company to produce AV content for them. Work to produce a professionally made piece of work that your client will use for their business. College equipment is available to use but also consider what equipment you use in 'dream scenario' where money was no object.

*Break out tasks:* Try to get professional work, advertise your work.

*Assessment point Three: All work submitted for main task.*

### **Multi modal assessment points.**

*Assessment Point One:* The British Film Industry

*Assessment Point Two:* An analysis of online communication.

*Assessment Point Three: Option One or Two Artefacts*

*Progression Plenary:* The state of the British Film Industry. Where are the opportunities and how might you exploit them?

### Example Five of Film Education in Practice – Staff Development

Units of work based around problems for students, I believe, are the best way for them to experience Film Education. At the same time, I see problem-finding, problem-solving as a possible solution for Film Education staff development and of teacher and lecturer training at FE centres. As this thesis has explored, there are a host of problems that permeate Film Education at Level 3. The intention is to create a collaborative community of film teachers who come together, trial and implement different film pedagogic strategies through conversation and dialogue to add to research on Film Education at Level 3. This conference could take place at a regional or national level, or as on a small scale with other Film Teachers at a large centre.

**Problems** (and finding Solutions) Film Education FE Conference – Assessment and Curriculum Design at Level 3 and Celebrate success of student work.

*Guest Speaker* – Industry or Film Education Specialist.

*Question and Tasks* posed at FE Film Education Conference.

What does rigorous Multi Modal Assessment look like? Examples from centres of how to frame and assess different student artefacts. Discussion Groups and a (in the initial stage) a Southwest communication channel set up.

Researching at your centre. What research can be carried out at your centre and what do you want to find out and how will it shape future of Film Education at FE level?

Research and further case study groups established to research issues in Film Education at centres. *Student Work and Production Task and Screenings* – Each Centre brings three student films to show good practice and illuminate the work with contextual information about students learning and experiences on their courses.

**Multi-Modal Assessment:** The Event is filmed in a centres Studio Facilities with students tech-ing. Q and A and responses with ideas and suggestions collected in an online space. A working group recommendation document drawn up with next steps.

Vlogs, staff work, concepts and lesson ideas submitted to share amongst the group.

**Progression Plenary:** Next Steps and discussion with Awarding Bodies and colleagues to feedback evidence based findings.

## Lessons of Lockdown and Legacy

It is evident from this research that the lock down acted as a catalyst for the use of technology in classrooms and boosted the quantity (but not necessarily the quality) of educational communication exchanges between staff and students in lesson times. In addition to this the way that curriculum has been delivered since the lockdowns has been irrevocably changed. Some of the uses of online community groups would not have been possible without teachers being forced to adapt quickly to lock down conditions (as I discuss in Chapter Five) and the opportunities for collaboration came in different forms from the way this had been experienced prior to lock downs. For me, it underlined the importance of specialist spaces where students could use a studio, edit suite or space socially with technicians, teachers and peers. In the following then, I highlight how lockdown effected three areas of film provision at the site of this study and the legacy of changes in practice in terms of Curriculum, Collaboration and Spaces, both online and offline.

## Curriculum

As students used their normal social media platforms to reach out to creative hubs, teachers attempted to use video calls and online platforms as best they could to help drive learning online during the lockdown but often felt that this was a poor replacement for real human interaction in a teaching environment (as discussed in the findings above). From early adoption of Teams pre-lockdown, the centre was at a slight advantage in that staff knew they had a platform to work with students. Some of the experiments in teaching online came with mixed results (as discussed in detail in Chapter Five) but what has resulted is a hybridised 'blend' of using online and offline tools. The lockdown obviously stripped away one of the highlights of teaching and studying film; the communal experience of watching a film together. When this was taken away it led to some interesting ad hoc pedagogic techniques (when in person was reduced and online sessions occurred). For example, usually, a screening would take place in the classroom during 'normal' teaching. Students would watch a focus film (from the exam specification) and afterwards students are asked their initial thoughts on the film to prompt analysis and future areas of study. This feedback can be structured if a class is reticent to start a discussion. For example, 'discuss with your partner and give me a star rating out of 5', which will then open up a discussion on qualities and criticisms and 'what the film was trying to say' and 'what were the messages and values?' During the lockdown this activity was not possible, and teachers had to find other ways to discuss key texts. One experiment that worked well was a group online screening. The film in question was FW Murnau's *Sunrise* (1927). Students logged onto a Teams call and we agreed to start the film through a link at exactly the same time (I found running films through Teams too 'laggy'). I posed questions about the film and encouraged students to 'live react' to what they were watching. We had already discussed the history of Expressionism before the screening and students were encouraged to offer responses on where they saw expressionist techniques in the film. Some students went 'radio silent' on the screening (I have no way of proving whether they were watching the film) but approx. half the group were active in making comments on the film. Reacting to moments throughout. Admittedly this was not the way in which a film should be viewed for the first time, but lockdown made any sense of 'film community' difficult to achieve. This was a poor substitute for a in group/person screening but showed the possibility of posting on a film in a group whilst virtual teaching conditions were in force. The legacy of this is that live and post screening work takes place on collab spaces with students able to take snippets of reviews, post their own thoughts and discuss key themes of films whilst in class. For example, a screening might take place on Tuesday and by Wednesday the teacher can review the thoughts of the class as we share our ideas and findings on the screen.

In terms of course layout and organisation, a hangover of the lock downs has meant that all of the courses have benefitted from early adoption of Teams and now there is a combination of both an online space that supports in class, studio and 'specialist space' teaching.

One of the online communities 'rules' that the 'A'-Level courses have benefitted from are joint work pads where film analysis and commentary takes place. All sessions where film analysis takes place now uses the community collab space and all notes are collected here. These have been useful for revision for exams and are a good way of other students using work from each other. These collab spaces have become repositories for the hard work that students do all year round; previously students work was solely their own. All courses in the Media section now use Teams or OneNote to organise pre-production documents, share work and screenings always now involve some aspect of online feedback that students produce. It's common for students to make a *Microsoft Form* to collect data from the cohort. Interestingly, since the lockdown there have been concerns raised about too much of the course being computer based. An area that further investment in specialist spaces has looked to challenge.

Since the lockdown then there has been a more hybridised model of delivery using both online and offline 'traditional' tools. Having Teams and social media style software set up before the lockdown certainly made this transition easier but an over reliance on it instead of in person teaching, making most of specialist spaces and collaborating beyond the student body is preferable. As the data presented in Chapter Five suggests there is some emancipatory features to the UAL specification, more so arguably than both the 'A' -Level course and previous BTEC incarnations of Level 3 awards. The centre which forms the site of this study has begun delivering the new T-Level specification and the 'tick-lists' which I discuss in my recommendations seem to be prevalent in it's course design and assessment schedule. The experience of students studying, and lecturers teaching, this course will require further investigation.

### Collaboration

By collaboration here I refer to not only shared experiences between students but also the wider creative community and professionals in industry. One of the upticks of the lockdown for our students was (paradoxically) practitioners downing tools. Lock downs had meant that many film makers were not producing and were therefore far more responsive (they had more time on their hands) to take and respond to student questions. Many students reached out to practitioners, something that was encouraged by teachers, and many responded. Some entered dialogues about techniques or pieces of advice on shooting or editing. This practice has increased since the lockdowns. We also found 'bigger names' were available and more likely to talk to our film students. Just after the first lock



Figure 68 Sir Roger Deakins credit: britishcinematographer.co.uk

downs we were able to facilitate a zoom call with double Oscar winner Sir Roger Deakins and his partner James Ellis Deakins who joined our film cohort from Santa Barbara via *Zoom*. They spoke for an hour with Film Studies and UAL Creative Media students' and answered questions posed by them. A double Oscar winner directly addressing budding Level 3 students was an excellent chance for them to meet famous individuals from the industry, and in this case someone who had connections with the southwest (he attended secondary school in Torquay). His insights into lighting, divisions over film or digital film making and advice for students to pursue a career in the film business was invaluable. The experience was illuminating for students and after the talk the online Teams groups for courses 'lit up' with positive responses from students. This would not have been possible without the acceleration of online meetings Covid forced to the fore (and the perseverance of one of the media team who worked tirelessly to get the call organised).

Collaborating amongst the student body is far more widespread. Students are far more likely to work on larger shoots, projects together. This has been possible for two reasons. One, simply numbers of students on the courses have increased. And two, students are more likely to work together when you give them opportunities to mingle in larger groups. The large space that students work in and the 'joined up lectures' (where students from the whole cohort are drawn together) run for the first 12 weeks of the year, have assisted this. Large group screenings have helped students, we believe, have a shared experience of film watching that we hope will translate to larger group collaborations on projects. When they have taken place, this is encouraged from staff.

In another example, in collaboration with a South West university students were given access to a Q and A with a stunt man, post film screening. Students were given a live demonstration of screen stunt methods. And the chance to join the dots between pursuits like horse riding, adventure sports and potential careers in stunt work as a result.

In addition, to encourage 'A'-level students to participate in film culture, film students submitted one-minute short form film reviews on new releases for a regional BBC editor to give feedback on. These straight 'down-the-barrel' films give a voice for students and allow them to exercise their criticality. Students who were reticent about appearing on camera chose to write a short review instead. These collaborations between professionals and students have helped students, we would hope, to see a world outside of the curriculum in which they take part in.

In another example, the City's University has launched a new film Distribution Company, members of its team have presented to our students and further collaborations are imminent. Currently film students (in collaboration with International Baccalaureate and Environmental Studies A-Level students) are planning to film at the Universities Environmental Global Tipping points conference. The challenge for them will be to convey the key messages of the conference for a 16–24-year-old audience. Students are also back to working with local companies after years of hiatus with lock down restrictions. They must find local companies and produce corporate videos for them as part of the vocational course. This 'line of sight' to industry is a worthwhile, challenging and rewarding experience for students.

Collaboration with other colleges is still hard to organise but can reap rewards. Good practice has included sending pre-production documents such as scripts, mood boards and log lines completed by a separate centre for our students to shoot and vice versa. Students often learn how hard it is to produce a film when pre-production is scant of detail and teaches them the importance of thorough planning before embarking on a shoot. Historically this has been made possible by digital communication between teachers but unless a lecturer works for an exam board, meeting other teachers from other centres is hard won; in the FE sector many staff are time poor.

#### Spaces – Online and Offline

The original rooms that were collapsed together as part of this study are now permanently open as one large collaboration space. New IT infrastructure was added in 2023 so students can edit and work in this room. It is now a fully functioning editing and collaboration space. The room has been such a success with staff and students that other specialist areas including a screening room and a further breakout IT and editing space are underway.

The use of specialist areas has continued to grow. The TV Studio was expanded and updated. The studio now has three Blackmagic cameras and 4K mixing desk. A larger gallery has been built and a specialised Foley Suite has been constructed. This has been down to staff pushing for these spaces for students because of the recognition of specialist spaces as integral to better the student's experience,



Figure 69: New gallery and larger TV Studio Space

particularly when supported by technicians or specialists. This has been made possible by a supportive Head of Faculty and capital investment.

Over the course of the research, a BBC studio has been built on site. The BBC runs radio, TV edits and interviews for regional BBC Devon. The studio has been used to record the national *Radio 4 Today* programme live, with our students able to sit opposite a presenter and watch editors and technicians put the show out. Students have benefitted from some access to BBC editors and journalists and have been able to pitch news stories and take part in 'live news days'. Editors set briefs in the morning for students to put out a 'mock show' live in the afternoon. This requires students to shoot, edit and 'package' their news stories ready for 'transmission'. Due to the flexibility of the UAL Creative Media Course this work has been built into the curriculum. The BBC studio has given some access for students to see a 'line of site' from education to careers in the Media, but not all students take up this opportunity or sometimes, from a more logistical point of view, there are not enough opportunities for all Film and Media students to meet with staff from the BBC.

In addition to this, film students (from an array of courses including UAL Film and TV, UAL Journalism



Figure 70 Mishal Hussain and Tim Davie of BBC visit the centre on separate occasions

pathway students, A-Level Film and A'-level Media students) were offered to work with the local film communities *Two Short Nights* film festival. Students interviewed attendees and produced short form

content as well as submitting their work for the festival. Students are occupying creative spaces, in ways that were not possible during lockdown.



HOME 2025 PROGRAMME 2025 GALLERY

## CREATIVE COLLABORATIONS

Each year Two Short Nights works with a handful of individuals to collaborate with the festival by submitting a piece of work in relation to the programme.

Two Short Nights share these responses in the led up to the festival and celebrate fresh ways to share alternative perspective and new connections to the filmmakers we are performing.

These are but a few of the additional opportunities that contribute to what I would argue is a good Film Education curriculum. However, these have only come about because the film and media teaching team that bring them into action see their worth for students. Most of these experiences lay *outside* of the curriculum. They are certainly not part of any assessment (bar that one exception above) but part of the experience that a good Film (and Media) education can offer. Until there is a recognition of the importance of these experiences to students, and suggestions for emboldening teachers through a curriculum that allows them the space to put these into action, teachers are trapped by narrow assessment and what Fisher call an 'audit culture' (2009). To allow other Film Education teachers and lecturers the possibility to contribute more widely to their student's experience of education requires more flexible and dynamic assessment techniques. These experiences are, at the moment, only down to the goodwill of teaching teams who organise them.

### Postscript

"History doesn't repeat itself but it does rhyme" (Twain in Eayrs, 1971:121).



In January 2024 Mark Zuckerberg and the bosses of TikTok, Snap, X and Discord, faced a house select committee about Social Media sites and the potential requirement of online legislation children harmed by social media content. Messages from strangers on Insta, harmful material that had bypassed moderators and dangerous TikTok trends were all raised as potential dangers for young people and the

Figure 71 ABC News, 2024

giant corporations that govern them were asked what they were going to do about it. Despite protestations that they were doing all they can to screen harmful content from finding its way onto sites and Zuckerberg's defence that, "rather than just blocking it, to help direct them towards something that could be helpful" in exasperation, Lindsay Graham a Republican Senator concluded "so here you are - if you're waiting on these guys to solve the problem, we're gonna die waiting" (BBC, 2024).



Figure 72 AP News, 1926

In the late 1940's what has come to be known as the 'big 5' and 'little 3' studios had a near total domination of film production in America. The advent of sound and colour in film, as well as some shrewd business practices had created a powerful entertainment industry that shut out competition. There were concerns by some in Washington that the

movies were powerful tools to shape public opinion and that these companies had a created an Oligopoly that restricted competition. In 1948 the *Paramount Decree* broke up the studio system and effectively ended the Golden Age of Hollywood. Aggressive business practices such as block booking and controlling the means of production, distribution and exhibition through vertical integration, the essential enslavement of stars through 7-year contracts where stars were controlled by studios, self-censoring through the infamous Hays code (1930-1968) were all brought to an end by *United States vs Paramount Pictures, Inc.* (1948).

Power unchecked is problematic when it lies in the hands of the few and advances in technology offer new bright and exciting opportunities only if *how* that technology is being used is scrutinised.

This study has forced me to look closely at *what* I do and *how* I do it, the reasons behind these and suggestions for changes in my field. Above, I paint a picture of what a good Film Education should look like from the findings and recommendations of this study. It would appear from the findings in chapter five and my recommendations in Chapter Six that there are some prerequisites, not only for online digital tools being built into curricula, but also for a successful and worthwhile Film Education Course that could be considered across other vocational and 'academic' pathways.

My background is further and secondary Film Education, I have taught in the 14-19 age range since 2007 and the 16-19 age range exclusively since 2010, so embarking on this research was a journey into unknown territory. As an insider-researcher I was in on the ground floor and I used what I know to

report on issues that affect my teaching, my students, and the institution I work in. I recognise that this is small-scale study, and my data is collected and analysed from one centre, in a region with its own context. Reflecting on the research at the end of the process I found Chapter One's emphasis on finding problems in my curriculum area straightforward. These were problems that I faced in my day-to-day operation of a Film (and Media) curriculum. More challenging was separating myself from the problem and reflecting objectively on the context of my place of work and study. The process of researching itself has been personally important but also given a voice to the people who work and take part in Film Education. As a researcher of my curriculum area, I have felt empowered by studying *what* I do and by reflecting on *why* I do it. The research itself has also had an impact on the learners who took part in it. I believe they felt valued in having their opinions heard and were happy to discuss their own experiences with me.

In Chapter Two finding the right voices and views took time. My starting point was Sennett (2012), Buckingham (2003, 2019) and Turkle (2015) from there I moved on to discussions around learning technology through Wegerif (2013) and Siemens (2005). This brought me back to more dialogic communication studies by Lipman (1991). Bergala (2016) Petrie (2010, 2014) Connelly (2014) began to develop my contextual understanding of the problem and found Zuboff (2019) an enlightening book. It was at this point that I went, "back to the beginning" and started to read and study Aristotle. This reframed my thinking and gave me the opportunity to consider how his ideas had influenced Dewey (1934) and a host of educational thinkers. Dunne's (1993) *Back to the Rough Ground* augmented Aristotle's thinking for me in how to apply his ideas to contemporary modern pedagogical arguments and discussions.

Throughout the whole of the research in chapter two (and throughout the thesis) the prism through which I saw the problem was evidentially influenced by film. Film makers like Spielberg, Scorsese, Hitchcock and Fincher have made films that have resonated and made an imprint on me. It was through film that I developed a critical eye for the world around me. It, I always hope, will do the same for my students.

In Chapter Three, I developed a position on the social world and analysed how those ontological and epistemological positions manifest themselves in my thesis. I was heavily influenced by Kemmis (2009), Nowell et al (2017), Kuhn, (1970) Waring (2012) and Maturana (1991), Nelson (2016). My role as practitioner researcher in my own place of work dictated that I should remove myself from own setting to see the problems I was investigating objectively. Stenhouse's (1975) work on curriculum design and the teacher's role in it heavily influenced my thinking here.

In Chapter Four the process of data analysis was the most challenging aspect of this study for me. Although I was conscious of subjectivity and not allowing my own preconceptions to interfere with the findings of my study, putting this into practice was harder than I imagined. Eventually, through time and repetition I finally came to my data as a stranger. I had to distance myself from it in order to find the truth that it spoke. The pitfalls going through this process have left an impression on me and this journey is one that will stick with me in further research. Interpreting the data here was a challenge that I hope comes through the findings that I have reported in this thesis.

In Chapter Five I had to respect and interpret the data at another level by synthesising the voices that had rang loudest and most convincingly in my Literature Review in Chapter Two. Opening up the data to the ideas concepts and principles that I had discussed in Chapter Two shone further light on my research data. I found that certain writers spoke loudest in particular Bernstein (1971, 1996, 2000), Bergala (2016), Petrie (2010) and Eisner (2002). These writers became more influential on my thinking and writing as the chapter developed. Dewey (1934) and Sennett (2012 & 2009) were also thinkers whose work spoke to the findings of this thesis.

Having never researched at this level before I feel I have learnt from the process itself. In assessing what I would do differently, I would: -

- have a larger sample group from multiple centres.
- I would have a clearer sense of how to code the data. This was one of the hardest obstacles to overcome and finding the right system to organise the data would certainly be easier now I have done research at this level.

Areas for future research include three major areas. Firstly, further analysis of Film Curricula and the benefits and problems around Film Education. There are huge opportunities untapped in seeing what effect studying the actual world around has on the students who do so. Often education is slow to catch up with the real world around us. Today, as platforms like TikTok and Insta become the main ways in which students consume media, they are not mentioned or covered in any of the curriculum I have encountered. In my recommendations I suggest a way so that Film Education curricula might remain more relevant to the people it serves. That is, they should bring the texts and problems that they find on the Media and Film landscape to the wider curriculum they experience. It would be advantageous to test out and examine this notion, particularly as new qualifications like the T-Level become available.

Secondly, how AI and online technology will impact on creativity at FE and Secondary school level. As I wrote my thesis, open-source AI became big news around the world and in education. What impact

will it have on education? Will this simply be another tool as I have described online technology in this thesis, or will it radically alter how teaching and learning takes place? The short answer is that I don't yet know.

Thirdly, how social media is used in educational settings at a national and international level. What are the lessons that can be learned from other countries use of social media and their delivery of media education?

My contribution to the field of Vocational Film Education and research follows from my recommendations. There is little research on FE level Film Education, writers such as Eisner (2002), Petrie (2010), Bergala (2016) and Buckingham (2019) suggest what well-rounded Film (or Media) Education looks like at a variety of levels but the reality of the current offer to FE students is a site that has not been fully excavated. Applying the works of Dewey(1934), Bernstein (2001), Sennett (2012) and Eisner (2002), who all have drawn on Aristotle (350 BCE), to Film Education sheds new light on the importance of blending technological advances with human creativity in educational settings. Even as I have written this thesis, the birth and proliferation of open-source AI has changed the parameters of how technology will impact on the creativity of students. In a recent session, one of my students explained to me how AI transcription editing works and how it is unlikely students will need to know how to edit in the way they've learned to in the last 10 years. Future software releases will allow AI to automatically edit footage into a multi-cam dialogue piece or design After Effects for you. As Twain points out above "history doesn't repeat itself, but it does rhyme". If anything, the lessons from this thesis will become tested in new ways by new technology at a faster rate. But, as discussed throughout the study, technology is merely an instrument; to be a powerful member of society, individuals need creative license and feel empowered to maximise the experience of being in a community, regardless of what technology is available. As well as this, teachers and students *working together* will always be at the heart of the best educational experiences.

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## FILMOGRAPHY

*Adolescence* (TV) – (2025, Netflix)

*The Bear* (TV) - (2021-2022, FX )

*Apocalypse Now* - Dir. Francis Ford Coppola (1979, Zoetrope Studios)

*Everything, Everywhere, All at Once* Dir. Daniel Kwan & Daniel Scheinert (2022, IAC Films)

*The Exorcist* – Dir. William Friedkin (1973, Hoya Productions)

*Fight Club* – Dir. David Fincher (1999, Fox 2000 Pictures)

*The Godfather* - Dir. Francis Ford Coppola (1972, Paramount Pictures)

*The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* - Dir. Sergio Leone (1966, Produzioni Europee Associati)

*Hypernormalisation* (TV) - Dir Adam Curtis (2016, BBC)

*If...* - Dir. Lyndsay Anderson (1969, Memorial Enterprises)

*Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark* - Dir. Steven Spielberg (1981, Lucasfilm)

*Kapo* Dir. Gillo Pontecorvo (1960, CinerizVides Cinematografica)

*Lady from Shanghai* - Dir. Orson Welles (1947, Columbia Pictures)

*Man with a Movie Camera* - Dir. Dziga Vertov (1929, VUFKU)

*North by Northwest* - Dir. Alfred Hitchcock (1959, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer)

*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* - Dir. Miloš Forman (1975, United Artists)

*Rear Window* - Dir. Alfred Hitchcock (1954, Paramount Pictures)

*The Social Network* - Dir. David Fincher (2010, Columbia Pictures)

*Seven* Dir. David Fincher (1995, Arnold Kopelson Productions)

*Shaun of the Dead* Dir. Edgar Wright (2004, Studio Canal)

*Star Wars* - Dir. George Lucas (1977, Lucasfilm)

*Terminator 2: Judgment Day* - Dir. James Cameron (1991, Carolco Pictures)

*Vertigo* - Dir. Alfred Hitchcock (1958, Paramount Pictures)

*Whiplash* - Dir. Damien Chazelle (2014, Blumhouse Productions)

## APPENDIX

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Appendix 1 - Sample Teacher Coding

### **Teacher Coding**

Key

T1	Codes
TA	Teacher A
TB	Teacher B
TC	Teacher C

TD	Teacher D
SI	Student Interactions online
O	Observed in class
MC1	Multiple coder 1
MC2	Multiple coder 2
MC 3	Multiple coder 3

Initial Teaching Coding			
Category	Actual Words/Phrases used by participants	Frequency	Participant
T1	“the barrier between the way they communicate online, normally with their friends and the way that they would sit politely in a classroom”	iiii	TA, TC, TD O, MC1
T2	“Speaking into a vacuum”	iii	TD, TB, TC, O
T3	“we don’t necessarily teach practical skills that the kids couldn’t do themselves”	iii	TA, TB, TC, O
T4	“taking ownership of it (Online resources) myself” Not being “passive”	iii	TC, TB, TA
T5	Online learning - “it works for theory but not the practical side”	iii	TA, TC O

T6	"Feedback is alive and fresh for students" in online groups. Feedback is good and "instantaneous" online. Real time feedback	iii	TD, TA, TC,
T7	"measuring learning online is difficult"	i	TB
T8	"online space" not conducive to expression or teamwork"	iii	TB, TA, O
T9	No 'Physical' interaction in online learning – something missing	iiii	TA, TB, TC, TD
T10	"Students Gravitate towards social media more than college platforms"	ii	TA, O
T11	Lock down pushed students towards sites like tik tok and developing their online presence	ii	TA, O
T12	"interested in making social media content rather than films"	ii	TA, O
T13	College provides "time and space to be creative and to collaborate with other people and to develop knowledge"	iii	TA, TB O
T14	Students "Don't like being on camera online"	iiii	TB, TD, O, SI
T15	Vocational education trains for work environment – how to communicate with colleagues.	ii	TA, TC
T16	Big Hollywood high concept movies originally come from "experimental film" – need to teach background to understand social media content	i	TA
T17	Teaching online = data management is good for presentation of information.	iii	TA, TB, TD

T18	"I like to learn by assimilation but don't like teaching vocational like that" – difference in what we like and how they like to be taught	iii	TA, TB, O
T18	Access to 'real world' experts/industry insiders was valuable for a small proportion of students	ii	TC, O
T19	New T-Level/older specs is stripped of creativity – "A non-creative approach to a creative industry"	iii	TA, O, TC
T20	On T-level – Danger to "write themselves out of the fast-paced nature of Media." "Overly prescriptive"	i	TA,
T21	BTEC and T-Level – "doesn't trust teachers"	ii	TA, O
T22	Danger of courses being obsolete by the time they're written	i	TA
T23	Perception that "learning about media isn't real learning"	ii	TA, O
T24	Pressure to have a "checklist"	ii	TA, TD, SI
T25	Importance of learning about media	iii	TA, TD and MC1
T26	Voices of usually unheard students present in online groups	iiii	TB, TC, TD O, SI
T27	"Not being able to see body language" CUES and adapt delivery	iiii	TB, TD, O, TC
T28	Online teaching - It's "frustrating" "feel redundant"	iiii	TB, TC, TD, O
T29	Media as language, something to learn	iiii	TA, TC, TD, SI

T30	"Differentiation is difficult online"	iii	TB, TD, O
T31	"Smaller groups (or 121) work better online" than big groups	iii	TB, TC, SI
T32	"Vocational students happier to be presenting online as they do it more than A-Level students"	ii	TB, O
T33	Importance of "space" in teaching creative subjects	ii	TB, TD
T34	Not enough subject specialists at FE sixth form level for Media – subject as a bolt on	i	TA
T35	"Physical space" important to learn in, interaction between people, performing working together	ii	TB, TD
T36	"Disconnect between how they like to learn and how I want to teach"	i	TB
T37	Big team of media teachers promotes collaboration amongst them	iii	TA, TD, O
T38	Evaluation of work and feedback has been a successful part of online teaching	iiii	TB, TC, O, SI
T39	Students happier working on their own socials rather than teacher provided ones.	iii	TB, TC, SI
T40	"Really resent the implication for academic subjects should contain no practical skills. And the practical subjects should contain no academic skills like."	i	TA

T41	"Archaic" way of assessing in creative subjects	iii	TB, TA, TC
T42	"vocational education ... is really about teaching the kids how to work to deadlines" how to read interpret and extract information	i	TA, TC
T43	Online learning "makes them more independent" – good for students in some ways	i	TB, TC
T44	Students can "be creative and academic at the same time"	iiii	TA, TB, SI, O
T45	Online "etiquette" is something that should be taught	iiii	TC, TD, SI, O
T46	"research skills" are vital for all students – A-Level and Vocational and these have been stripped back	ii	TA, O
T47	Chance for students to have more 121 online than in class	iii	TC, TB, TD
T48	"Where is the educational research" for just passing exams being useful for students	ii	TA, TB
T49	Teachers need to target question more online	iiii	TB, TC, TA, O
T50	"live dialogue is transitory" whereas if it's written down it's there forever. Risk of writing things down for others to see.	ii	TB, SI
T51	Students pushed back against how they were supposed to communicate online – "wild west" of lockdown	ii	TC O
T52	"Teachers need to create their own online spaces"	iii	TC, TD O

T53	Students use of “informal language” added to Community	ii	TC SI
T54	Barrier between the way they communicate online normally and when they’re in a classroom”	ii	TC, TD
T55	Good rapport with group to allow “testing of boundaries”	ii	TC, O
T56	Screen recordings and videos used for showing learning rather than long written pieces	ii	TA, TD
T57	Haven’t “figured out” a way to teach practice online. Still problem solving.  “haven’t found a way to work”	iii	TC, TD, TB
T58	Students need “owner ship” of software and their work online	i	TD
T59	“wall-based software” and communicating or keeping information online positive	iii	TD SI O
T60	Online classes help provide an “ongoing narrative” to lessons	iii	TD, SI, O
T61	“In 20 years of teaching vacation media, I’ve never had that opportunity for them to have a look at the workings of each other during the project” – immediacy of feedback	iii	TC, O, TA
T62	“More talkative” in smaller groups online	iii	TD, TB, O

T63	How do you encourage those who are nervous to engage when you're not with them "Physically" in room	iii	TD, TC O
T64	There needs to be an "ecology around the software" students use	iii	TD, O, SI
T65	Online materials have "helped students with learning support needs" But doesn't replace 121 with a person	iii	TD, SI, O
T65	Students can see the value of technical skills development easier than listening to experts – "direct line"	iii	TC, O, TA
T67	Forced collaboration didn't work in the experiment – students "became more insular"	i	TC
T68	Watching each other's films and sharing in lectures – having a wider audience was important	iii	TC, TB, SI
T69	"Small targets work" – find out and research worked well in online sessions in lock down.	iii	TC, SI, O
T70	"Having a private collaborative space is probably. As important as having a public one" - the need for private comms between groups.	iii	TC O SI
T71	"Biggest challenge – how we use it" online material "How to use"	iii	TD, TA, TB, O
T72	There is something "missing" in online comms.  Being able to converse with another human – "don't engage in the same way"	iii	TD, O, TB,

T73	The “comfort” of being able to talk to friends online during lockdown 121	ii	TD, TA
T74	“Tunnel vision” of working independently	iii	TD, O, SI

## Appendix 2 - Sample Student Coding

### Student Coding

#### Key

C1,2,3 etc..	Codes
A	Student A
B	Student B
C	Student C
D	Student D
E	Student E
SI	Student Interactions online
O	Observed in class

<b>Initial Coding</b>			
Category	Actual Words/Phrases used by participants	Frequency of phrase or code	Participant

C1	<p>“Teamwork is best when done in person in groups” not as good online</p>	iiii	SI, O, D, B C,
C2	<p>“I’ve self-taught technical skills”</p> <p>Self-taught film set”</p> <p>“3D train was designed because we couldn’t shoot on a train” self-taught editing effects to get round problems</p>	iii	E, A, D, O
C3	<p>“Online is good for Theory but not practice” “effective for theory” “Works well”</p>	iiii	A,B,C,E,F SI
C4	<p>“Filmmaking in groups is hard but where I’ve learnt the most” the pleasure of film making.</p> <p>Practical work is where I learnt the most – “most challenging aspect”</p>	iiiiii	A,B,C,E,D, F, O
C5	<p>“Online learning is solitary”</p>	iii	B, A, D, O
C6	<p>“some teachers would do it better than others” - Online learning</p>	iiii	A, B, E, O
C7	<p>“Working from home is easier”</p>	ii	A, E

C8	it's much harder to , “motivate yourself” Online learning.  “Not motivated by working at home”	iiii	C, B, A, O
C9	“no Film courses at school” (before college)	iii	B, C, D
C10	“have tik tok on my phone and I’m on it all the time but you don;t get much out of it” – social media attraction	i	C
C11	“hard to put things into words when you're in a not in person” “It's just not real”	iiii	B, D, E, O, F
C12	“coming into work on our laptops” could be doing theory or research at home rather than “spending money on petrol” travelling	iii	A, E, D, O
C13	“I don't think I have any recollection of a specific lesson”, trial NOT GOOD no memory of an online lesson.”	ii	C, F, O
C14	“For online, it was quite engaging.” Learning about theory in well organised online sessions.	ii	A, E, O
C15	It would be a “bit awkward” learning online.  “Like you're just talking to an initial”	iiii	C, O, SI, F, D
C16	Studying film provides “really good opportunities to sit down and study	iiii	B,C, F, SI

	<p>something that you didn't think that you would look at before".</p> <p>"Learning about the world just through something else".</p> <p>"Different people's perspectives on social issues"</p>		
C17	Negative stereotypes around film students "snobbish" – "Easy subject"	ii	B, C,
C18	"Convenience of hand in" OR "storing notes" when course organised online	ii	E, C, O
C19	<p>Online file organising through OneNote</p> <p>"I really liked this" Everything's in one place.</p> <p>Journey from book to Computer through education – "efficient"</p> <p>"Streamlined"</p>	iiii	A, B, C, E, F, SI
C20	The teams cross group chat and lectures "a link between the other classes, cause technically you've never met them before"	iiii	A, D, F, SI
C21	The Teams channel was "an inner linkd in" you could "branch out to other classes"	iii	A, SI, o
C22	5 Years at FE – a chance to try out practical skills and find a niche "colour grader" to "Sound boom" – "roles"	ii	E, d
C23	"move outside their classes" – class rooms "little bubbles"	iii	A, D, F, SI

C24	"I was so interested. I actually picked up a book for it."	i	E
C25	Self-taught editing and visual effects before college. Now interested in camera work and filming "back to the basics" of film.	iii	A, D,F, C
C26	"Editing is fun"	iii	C,A, O, D
C27	"it was a bit of a mess to start with" online teaching during lockdown.	iiii	E, F, C, B
C28	"because we're a practical course, we try to avoid as much as possible"	i	E
C29	"online's more easier" for accessing information	iii	E, SI, O
C30	would like to be taught how to "branch out"  Online creative "hubs" "important"	lii	F,D,E
C31	Lose resources in online – can't film, "can't work together"	iii	E, F, O
C32			
C33	"crave freedom." Creativity – "rabbit holes" – Creative Media allows following an interest	iiii	E, C, D, O
C34	"Making a class Discord" it was "organised by us" – created "a workflow"	i	A
C35	Good for "documenting opinions" – discussion groups	iii	D, F, SI

C36	“online group for actors” - “Auditions” online useful	ii	A, E
C37	Communicating with people in person and being able to voice opinions “all in one room together.”	iiii	F,D,E
C38	“Start of first year i definitely did” perception of film being an easy subject	i	C
C39	“Film making is stressful, but fun”	iiii	B, D, C, O
C40	“Online good for 121” to help students who are struggling	i	E
C41	Better to get qualification, than straight to employment to allow “practice”	iii	D, A,B
C42	“ A lot of team work going on, getting the right shot, lighting” shooting a film is about “argument”	iiii	B, D, F, O
C43	“building the path to get out, if that makes sense or get to industry” – using the TV Studio and working with technicians more	i ii	A, D, E
C44	“So organisation skills is one thing I got out of it.” (MAKING FILMS) “can learn how to get better organised”	iii	C, B, O, D
C45	“the collab space is really good – “take ideas from others	iii	C, B, SI
C46	Lot of disagreements in making film – “online that just that would just not work”	i	E, F

C47	“Control of meetings online, equality” –	iii	F, D, o
C48	“Online lessons were too independent” or “Teacher led “copy what I’m doing”	ii	B, C
C49	“break out rooms didn’t really work” people I didn’t know “just silence”	ii	B, C
C50	On a positive moment from online learning sessions “I can’t think of one!”	ii	B, C
C51	“I would have wanted to do more film making” (A-Level Student)	iii	B, C, O
C52	“it's it's it is harder than you think it's going to be” Studying Film	i	C, D
C53	Not knowing “what is going on in someone’s head” when working together. When with friends, “know how each how our brains work”	i	B
C54	Collaboration can’t be taught, . “It comes with familiarity.”	ii	B, D, O
C55	“definitely think more teaching on how to actually make films would be better.” – Film making on set	iii	C, D
C56	“Online learning was inevitable. It just got speed up by the lockdown.”	iiii	F, D, A, O
C57	“you should always try and do things in real life”		F
C58	“Good feedback through Zoom – direct feedback online”	i	F, D, E,

	Feedback hubs – London feedback – honest advice on work from strangers		
C59	“GAVE UP ON Teams”	ii	F
C60	“Useful for communicating – can see it working for maths”	i	F
C61	“Emotional connection and energy lost” in online Comms – “Lost”	i	F, D
C62	“Something missing”	iii	F, D, C
C63	“Wanted more connection” with others outside of their class	iii	F, D, SI
C64	“Lock down” allowed me to practice talking about things online with others	iii	D, F, O
C65	“online discussion and like public speaking” – should be taught  Realising using social media is a way to sell work and be creative	iii	F, D, E,
C66	“Advantages that that are being with people.”  “Harder to bounce ideas when not together”	iiiiii	D, F, C, B, SI, O

<p>Lost energy – Something missing – Barriers – boundaries – Motivation - physically present - Space - Etiquette - giving up - disconnect - body language</p>
<p>Self-taught – information – learning narrative – Independences - Organisation – Control - Presentation – Evaluate – 121 – memory - Measuring - difference</p>
<p>Ownership – others perspectives – public/private – Creative Practice – Making - Us - creative - Ecology - Branching – Linking – interlinked bubbles – Connections – Outreach</p>
<p>Togetheress – argument/disputes – Fun/passion – conversation – Collaboration - Language - dialogue – mess -</p> <p>Teamwork - Challenge of groups – learning teamwork - Smaller /larger groups</p>
<p>Storage – efficient – unknown territory/how to - recording - data – knowledge of culture - - target - -support – theory - documenting - redundant feelings - Understanding</p>
<p>Reality – Real World - perception – Industry – Confusion – alive- assess - real time – speed – not real - trust</p>

#### Appendix 4 – Sub Themes with colour

<p>Yellow</p> <p>Lost energy – Something missing – Barriers – boundaries – Motivation - physically present - Space - Etiquette - giving up - disconnect - body language</p>
<p>Orange</p> <p>Self-taught – information – learning narrative – Independences - Organisation – control - presentation – evaluate – 121 – memory - Measuring - difference</p>

<p>Green</p> <p>Ownership – others perspectives – public/private – Creative Practice – Making - Us - creative - Ecology - Branching – linking – interlinked bubbles – connections – outreach</p>
<p>Light Blue</p> <p>Togetherness – argument/disputes – Fun/passion – conversation – Collaboration - Language - dialogue – mess -</p> <p>Teamwork - Challenge of groups – learning teamwork - Smaller /larger groups</p>
<p>Gold</p> <p>Storage – efficient – unknown territory/how to - recording - data – knowledge of culture - - target - -support – theory - documenting - redundant feelings - Understanding</p>
<p>Purple</p> <p>Reality – Real World - perception – Industry – Confusion – alive- assess - real time – speed – not real - trust</p>

#### Appendix 5 - Sample Teacher Coding – with sub themes by colour

##### Key

T1	Codes
TA	Teacher A
TB	Teacher B
TC	Teacher C
TD	Teacher D
SI	Student Interactions online
O	Observed in class
MC1	Multiple coder 1
MC2	Multiple coder 2
MC 3	Multiple coder 3

Initial Teaching Coding			
Category	Actual Words/Phrases used by participants	frequency	Participant

T1	"the barrier between the way they communicate online, normally with their friends and the way that they would sit politely in a classroom"	iiii	TA, TC, TD O, MC1
T2	"Speaking into a vacuum"	iii	TD, TB, TC, O
T3	"we don't necessarily teach practical skills that the kids couldn't do themselves"	iii	TA, TB, TC,O
T4	"taking ownership of it (Online resources) myself" Not being "passive"	iii	TC, TB, TA
T5	Online learning - "it works for theory but not the practical side"	iii	TA, TC O
T6	"Feedback is alive and fresh for students" in online groups. Feedback is good and "instantaneous" online. Real time feedback	iii	TD, TA, TC,
T7	"measuring learning online is difficult"	i	TB
T8	"online space" not conducive to expression or teamwork"	iii	TB, TA, O
T9	No 'Physical' interaction in online learning – something missing	iiii	TA, TB, TC, TD
T10	"Students Gravitate towards social media more than college platforms"	ii	TA, O
T11	Lock down pushed students towards sites like tik tok and developing their online presence	ii	TA, O
T12	"interested in making social media content rather than films"	ii	TA, O
T13	College provides "time and space to be creative and to collaborate with other people and to develop knowledge"	iii	TA, TB O
T14	Students "Don't like being on camera online"	iii	TB, TD, O, SI
T15	Vocational education trains for work environment – how to communicate with colleagues.	ii	TA, TC
T16	Big Hollywood high concept movies originally come from "experimental film" – need to teach background to understand social media content	i	TA
T17	Teaching online = data management is good for presentation of information.	iii	TA, TB, TD
T18	"I like to learn by assimilation but don't like teaching vocational like that" – difference in what we like and how they like to be taught	iii	TA, TB, O
T18	Access to 'real world' experts/industry insiders was valuable for a small proportion of students	ii	TC, O

T19	New T-Level/older specs is stripped of creativity – “A non-creative approach to a creative industry”	iii	TA, O, TC
T20	On T-level – Danger to “write themselves out of the fast-paced nature of Media.” “Overly prescriptive”	i	TA,
T21	BTEC and T-Level – “doesn’t trust teachers”	ii	TA, O
T22	Danger of courses being obsolete by the time they’re written	i	TA
T23	Perception that “learning about media isn’t real learning”	ii	TA, O
T24	Pressure to have a “checklist”	ii	TA, TD, SI
T25	Importance of learning about media	iii	TA, TD and MC1
T26	Voices of usually unheard students present in online groups	iiii	TB, TC, TD O, SI
T27	“Not being able to see body language” CUES and adapt delivery	iii	TB, TD, O, TC
T28	Online teaching - It’s “frustrating” “feel redundant”	iiii	TB, TC, TD, O
T29	Media as language, something to learn	iiii	TA, TC, TD, SI
T30	“Differentiation is difficult online”	iii	TB, TD, O
T31	“Smaller groups (or 121) work better online” than big groups	iii	TB, TC, SI
T32	“Vocational students happier to be presenting online as they do it more than A-Level students”	ii	TB, O
T33	Importance of “space” in teaching creative subjects	ii	TB, TD
T34	Not enough subject specialists at FE sixth form level for Media – subject as a bolt on	i	TA
T35	“Physical space” important to learn in, interaction between people, performing working together	ii	TB, TD
T36	“Disconnect between how they like to learn and how I want to teach”	i	TB
T37	Big team of media teachers promotes collaboration amongst them	iii	TA, TD, O
T38	Evaluation of work and feedback has been a successful part of online teaching	iiii	TB, TC, O, SI
T39	Students happier working on their own socials rather than teacher provided ones.	iii	TB, TC, SI
T40	“Really resent the implication for academic subjects should contain no practical skills. And the practical subjects should contain no academic skills like.”	i	TA
T41	“Archaic” way of assessing in creative subjects	iii	TB, TA, TC

T42	“vocational education ... is really about teaching the kids how to work to deadlines” how to read interpret and extract information	i	TA, TC
T43	Online learning “makes them more independent” – good for students in some ways	i	TB, TC
T44	Students can “be creative and academic at the same time”	iiii	TA, TB, SI, O
T45	Online “etiquette” is something that should be taught	iiii	TC, TD, SI, O
T46	“research skills” are vital for all students – A-Level and Vocational and these have been stripped back	ii	TA, O
T47	Chance for students to have more 121 online than in class	iii	TC, TB, TD
T48	“Where is the educational research” for just passing exams being useful for students	ii	TA, TB
T49	Teachers need to target question more online	iiii	TB, TC, TA, O
T50	“live dialogue is transitory” whereas if it’s written down it’s there forever. Risk of writing things down for others to see.	ii	TB, SI

## Appendix 6 - Sample Student Coding

### Key

C1,2,3 etc..	Codes
A	Student A
B	Student B
C	Student C
D	Student D
E	Student E
SI	Student Interactions online
O	Observed in class

Initial Coding			
Category	Actual Words/Phrases used by participants	Frequency	Participant

C1	"Teamwork is best when done in person in groups" not as good online	iiii	SI, O, D,B C,
C2	"I've self-taught technical skills" Self-taught film set" "3D train was designed because we couldn't shoot on a train" self-taught editing effects to get round problems	iii	E, A, D, O
C3	"Online is good for Theory but not practice" "effective for theory" "Works well"	iiii	A,B,C,E, SI
C4	"Filmmaking in groups is hard but where I've learnt the most" the pleasure of film making. Practical work is where I learnt the most – "most challenging aspect"	iiii	A,B,C,E,D, O
C5	"Online learning is solitary"	iii	B, A, D, O
C6	"some teachers would do it better than others" - Online learning	iii	A, B, E, O
C7	"Working from home is easier"	ii	A, E
C8	it's much harder to , "motivate yourself" Online learning. "Not motivated by working at home"	iii	C, B, A, O
C9	"no Film courses at school" (before college)	iii	B, C, D
C10	"have tik tok on my phone and I'm on it all the time but you don;t get much out of it" – social media attraction	i	C
C11	"hard to put things into words when you're in a not in person" "It's just not real"	iiii	B, D, E, O,
C12	"coming into work on our laptops" could be doing theory or research at home rather than "spending money on petrol" travelling	iii	A, E, D, O
C13	"I don't think I have any recollection of a specific lesson", trial NOT GOOD no memory of an online lesson."	ii	C, O
C14	"For online, it was quite engaging." Learning about theory in well organised online sessions.	ii i	A, E, O
C15	It would be a "bit awkward" learning online.	iiii	C, O, SI, D

	"Like you're just talking to an initial"		
C16	Studying film provides "really good opportunities to sit down and study something that you didn't think that you would look at before". "Learning about the world just through something else". "Different people's perspectives on social issues"	iii	B,C, SI
C17	Negative stereotypes around film students "snobbish" – "Easy subject"	ii	B, C,
C18	"Convenience of hand in" OR "storing notes" when course organised online	ii	E, C, O
C19	Online file organising through OneNote "I really liked this" Everything's in one place. Journey from book to Computer through education – "efficient" "Streamlined"	iiii	A, B, C, E, SI
C20	The teams cross group chat and lectures "a link between the other classes, cause technically you've never met them before"	iii	A, D, SI
C21	The Teams channel was "an inner linkd in" you could "branch out to other classes"	iii	A, SI, O

### Appendix 7 - Multiple Coding

Multiple Coder 1 Themes identified from shared transcript
1 Conversation online opens new possibilities
2 Barriers and boundaries – boundaries of behaviour - barriers to learning
3 Teaching becomes shared endeavour rather than dictatorial one online
4 Banter – forms of talking informally and formally amongst students
5 Online independence of learners
6 Confusion - Mystery of how to teach online

Multiple Coder 2 Themes identified from shared transcript.
1 Media, as a subject, shifts quickly. It reflects and responds to current world – cv19 and the subject itself impacted on students desire to study - Media is a fast-moving, ever-changing industry. It's live.
2 Value of education goes beyond technical skills - Knowledge is constructed through processes of creativity and collaboration with others.

3 The benefits of online learning are less to do with the subject and more to do with the development of broader, transferrable skills – digital literacy, organisation etc.
4 Some of the current specs are representative of industry. Who's needs are they meeting? Making the content 'assessable'
5 A 'non-creative' approach to a creative industry – creativity is squeezed out of the curriculum.
6 The role and function of embodiment within teaching and learning – being physically present supports fruitful discussion and interaction.

#### Appendix 8 – Main Themes

MAIN THEMES	
Theme 1	Culture
Theme 2	Power
Theme 3	Community
Theme 4	Creativity
Theme 5	Duty
Theme 6	Experience

#### Appendix 9 - Consent Form

##### ***Education Research* PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

**Project working title:** *Learning and Curriculum Design in Online and Offline Spaces in Film Education*

**Researchers' name** Will Cossey

**CONSENT TO THE USE OF WRITTEN AND AUDIO OR VISUAL RECORDED INFORMATION FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES:**

Your lecturer (hereafter referred to as the ‘researcher’) is conducting a research study as part of an PhD into Education Research with the University of Sunderland. As part of the project, the researcher will be conducting interviews and facilitating focus-group discussions with learners at Exeter College, aged 16-19, who are studying Vocational Media and Film courses in the academic year/s 2018-2023. The data generated by the research will be used to draw conclusions about your engagement with the theoretical aspects of your course and will aim to develop strategies to develop learner resilience, agency and autonomy. Any interviews or discussions conducted will be recorded by audio/visual means and transcribed for potential inclusion in the final project report. Direct quotations from interviews may be used within the presentation of the research, but the names and personal details of participants will be kept anonymised. All data will be securely stored in line with GDPR and the BERA Ethical guidelines and will not be shared with anyone for any purposes outside of this specific research project. You have the right to refuse consent or withdraw from the research study at any time.

<i>(please tick as appropriate)</i>	Yes	No
I confirm that I am over the age of 16.		
I have read the Participant Information above and the nature and purpose of the research has been explained to me and I have had the opportunity to ask questions		
I understand and agree to take part in the above research project.		
I agree to the interview/focus group/discussion being audio recorded.		
I agree to the interview/focus group/discussion being video recorded.		
I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications/presentations.		
I agree that my data gathered in this study may be shared (after it has been anonymised) with other researchers.		
I agree that my data gathered in this study may be shared (after it has been anonymised) may be used for teaching purposes.		

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Researcher/s Will Cossey

Date

Signature

**Contact details**

*Will Cossey*

## Appendix 10 - Consent Forms Signed

**Education Research PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

**Project title:** *Whatsup? Learning and Curriculum Design in Online and Offline Spaces in the Creative Arts*

**Researchers' name** Will Cossey

**CONSENT TO THE USE OF WRITTEN AND AUDIO OR VISUAL RECORDED INFORMATION FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES:**

Your lecturer (hereafter referred to as the 'researcher') is conducting a research study as part of an PhD into Education Research with the University of Sunderland. As part of the project, the researcher will be conducting interviews and facilitating focus-group discussions with learners at Exeter College, aged 16-19, who are studying Vocational Media in the academic year/s 2018-2022. The data generated by the research will be used to draw conclusions about your engagement with the theoretical aspects of your course and will aim to develop strategies to develop learner resilience, agency and autonomy. Any interviews or discussions conducted will be recorded by audio/visual means and transcribed for potential inclusion in the final project report. Direct quotations from interviews may be used within the presentation of the research, but the names and personal details of participants will be kept anonymised. All data will be securely stored in line with GDPR and the BERA Ethical guidelines and will not be shared with anyone for any purposes outside of this specific research project. You have the right to refuse consent or withdraw from the research study at any time

<i>(please tick as appropriate)</i>	Yes	No
I confirm that I am over the age of 16.	✓	
I have read the Participant Information above and the nature and purpose of the research has been explained to me and I have had the opportunity to ask questions.	✓	
I understand and agree to take part in the above research project.	✓	
I agree to the interview/focus group/discussion being audio recorded.	✓	
I agree to the interview/focus group/discussion being video recorded.	✓	
I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications/presentations.	✓	
I agree that my data gathered in this study may be shared (after it has been anonymised) with other researchers.	✓	
I agree that my data gathered in this study may be shared (after it has been anonymised) may be used for teaching purposes.	✓	

Name of Participant ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Date 24/05/22 Signature ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

Name of Researcher/s  Date 24/5/22 Signature W. COSSEY

**Education Research PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

**Project title:** *Whatsup? Learning and Curriculum Design in Online and Offline Spaces in the Creative Arts*

**Researchers' name** Will Cossey

**CONSENT TO THE USE OF WRITTEN AND AUDIO OR VISUAL RECORDED INFORMATION FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES:**

Your lecturer (hereafter referred to as the 'researcher') is conducting a research study as part of an MPhil into Education Research with the University of Sunderland. As part of the project, the researcher will be conducting interviews and facilitating focus-group discussions with learners at Exeter College, aged 16-19, who are studying A Level Drama in the academic year/s 2018-2020. The data generated by the research will be used to draw conclusions about your engagement with the theoretical aspects of your course and will aim to develop strategies to develop learner resilience, agency and autonomy. Any interviews or discussions conducted will be recorded by audio/visual means and transcribed for potential inclusion in the final project report. Direct quotations from interviews may be used within the presentation of the research, but the names and personal details of participants will be kept anonymised. All data will be securely stored in line with GDPR and the BERA Ethical guidelines and will not be shared with anyone for any purposes outside of this specific research project. You have the right to refuse consent or withdraw from the research study at any time

<i>(please tick as appropriate)</i>	Yes	No
I confirm that I am over the age of 16.	✓	
I have read the Participant Information above and the nature and purpose of the research has been explained to me and I have had the opportunity to ask questions.	✓	
I understand and agree to take part in the above research project.	✓	
I agree to the interview/focus group/discussion being audio recorded.	✓	
I agree to the interview/focus group/discussion being video recorded.	✓	
I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications/presentations.	✓	
I agree that my data gathered in this study may be shared (after it has been anonymised) with other researchers.	✓	
I agree that my data gathered in this study may be shared (after it has been anonymised) may be used for teaching purposes.	✓	

Name of Participant [REDACTED] Date 2/12/19 Sign [REDACTED]

Name of Researcher/s *W.C* Date 2/12/19 Signature *W. COSSEY*

## Appendix 11 - Transcription – Teacher C

TEACHER C Interview 06/11/2020 29 mins 35 secs

Nb: X – denotes anonymised individual or company.

WGC

OK, so right, so the question I'm going to ask A, thinking back over what we did over the past two or three years, so not just lock down but what's been your, with being forced to work in a certain way at the moment because of (lockdown) restrictions... what's been your best experience of teaching online?

C

So, I think just generally this, this does mean lockdown, because I've used it in terms of the face-to-face stuff online, not face to face, I mean the video conferencing stuff online, but what's been really good is the sort of loose conversations with individual students or little groups of students after the sessions over. So, the thing that has really come to light for me is that when I teach a lesson normally, we finish, you do the plenary or whatever and they will go and there's one or two kids that just hang around to have a conversation. You have about a minute between lessons and you go "OK. Well, I'll talk about it later." What's really good is that you have these meetings that, let's say it's half an hour long meeting, and then I've had, in every single instance, I've had three or four people come back and talk about another 15/20 minutes, and it's been a really lovely chance to have a longer conversation and then talking to each other and it goes from being completely silent on me, talking, to four or five of them unmuting themselves, and just having a conversation, talking about experiences, and a lot of instances I just shut up. One of them ask questions, they talk to each other, and I'm just sitting there benignly, nodding and going. Yeah, "OK, great." And it's just those kids that need that additional attention or mop up or that that sort of extra clarity has been a really nice experience for them to have the chance to talk. So that's been a real unexpected bonus. I didn't think that this remote way of teaching would provide maybe a better way of talking to individual students - that has been surprising, I guess.

WGC

Yeah, have you... have you noticed with online, are students been like happy to talk? Are they happy to talk, in the group like you would in a class you've got. Like you know 25 students, have they been happy to talk or not.

C

I've found that to get a get response from a student rather than if you open it to the group that there seems to be one kid, like always when you're in a room, that will be happy to, and away we go. But to get anybody else to join in, I've had to name somebody and I've been careful with who I asked a question 'cause I know that there were some people, really like you would be mindful of it in the classroom, but anybody I've picked on has definitely joined in and then what often happens is that opens the floodgates and loads of them join and away they go. I think probably a barrier, in terms of like getting a routine down with them is them not knowing what's polite and

what isn't. So, I've asked them all to be um, be muted, and to have the camera switched off at the start of session and it feels like they're breaking a rule if they unmute or they... you know they step in without being invited. So it's... I think that's just about process, and I think probably something I would want to do is a little bit of manners or etiquette in an online meeting with groups. But we agree what we're going to be able to do when they're allowed to interrupt, how they do that. Like, some of them putting their hands up, some of them weren't, and that kind of stuff. I think it's knowing the process, that they know of what's polite and what's not polite in an online meeting

WGC

Yeah, I see, so, they have to learn how to communicate, I guess. Maybe going back, but even going back like 2 two years with some of the students where we first did, you remember, when we were in the classroom, but we were using Teams, going back that far. Did you notice when using the wall or when we were doing those sessions on evaluating each other's work... do you think the Teams managed to give anything extra, or has it not?

B

I think, I was reflecting on this before this conversation as to why I didn't find it... I'm, I'm finding teams.... I still find it maddening that it won't work as quickly as it should do, and there's all technical things that were a problem, but I'm actually using it in much more interesting and sort of idiosyncratic ways now. I'm doing some interesting things that I'm taking ownership of and getting kids to do their stuff, and I was thinking, "why didn't I do that during the initial trial?", and I think one of the things that held me back initially is actually, that you've done all the work and I was thinking of it like as a protocol 'cause you'd kindly set it up but I think what it probably meant was I was looking at it as a student user of it rather than taking ownership of doing it myself. My only interactions with it were to do that thing you asked me to do with it and I realized I just put myself in a passive mode of going "Will is just making me do this. I'll give it ago" and then not actually owning it, whereas now I'm actually setting my own Team pages up and I'm using channels in a different way. And like, during this recent flip week, I've had I'm setting up a file area where kids upload their files to teams for me in a completely bespoke channel that's just setup for that. All stuff that never even occurred to me to use during the initial stages of the trial. And I think in part that's because I haven't had to set it up myself in the first place. I was thinking just of it as a protocol. I think you probably have to build your own Team to make the most out of it and I'm going, you know... Obviously we didn't know what we were doing at the start and you really kindly set it up for everyone. But I wonder if that meant that I didn't engage with it as critically as I would have done, do you know what I mean? So moving forward... I think people need to create their own online space in order to then use it in the way that suits them. But aside from that, going back, I think the big feature that did work for me was the chat I thought that was brilliant and what I really liked about the chat was, and you know the two or three students we are talking about, but the people who were sort of not necessarily horribly or in an offensive way, but abusing the chat a bit and pushing the rules of what they're allowed to do. I actually really quite enjoyed that. I really like the fact that they were finding a way to push back against the formal nature of using this in these teams and they were giving supportive comments to each other, but always on the edge of appropriateness. And I thought that was quite

exciting. It really felt like they were testing the barriers and really engaging with it, but it also meant they were constantly all over everybody's work. They were doing exactly what we wanted to do and the kids that were pushing it or more engaged in it, the kids that were being polite and just doing the right thing to do. So, I thought there's something a little bit Wild West about the kids that are pushing what they could do and I've got kids now, you know, there's always an emoticon or emoji. One of the kids put a link up for everyone to look at the other day and it was Rick Astley so the entire group got 'rickrolled' and that kind of stuff. As long as it's well managed. I thought it was really fun, so it really added something to the community. I think my concern about it being online is that it becomes really anodyne and just "do the work that we're telling you to do online. " They're trying to create community, but in community there's often banter and fun and it's sort of.....I'm interested in how we manage that and how we could encourage that without them to overstep the mark, so I think that's quite interesting around the barrier between the way they communicate online, normally with their friends and the way that they would sit politely in a classroom while I'm talking. That's quite a big drift between those two things, and that's how they can merge them in between. So, I think there's some interesting stuff there.

WGC

I know, the first time. The first group I did it with, and I just thought, I didn't do an introduction. I didn't do etiquette and I just let them do it and it just it was literally a wall of cats.

C

Yeah. (laughter)

WGC

I got some of the some of them. I didn't, I didn't understand what the emojis, I didn't understand the memes, I had to ask.

C

You feel like an old man "what does this meme, mean?" you know, and all the kids are killing themselves laughing like it's hilarious and you're like, well, it's just a guy drinking coffee. I don't know what you're on about. You know, all that.

WC

The one that got me was I had to look up 'cause I'd kind of missed it way the back was Pepe the frog yeah, isn't that like a Trump... right wing thing and they were like "no, no no. It's been like it's been used for different stuff."

C

Yeah, they've stolen it even though they've like appropriated the character.

Yeah, but now I did ... I mean it's it's, it's.... It's like a contradiction 'cause we want to encourage this sense of community in a sense of their buy in of it. But they also then have to behave in a way that I feel is stilted and unnaturally formal for them when they're in an online environment, so I don't know the line between what is and isn't possible. I think there's probably quite a lot of, of work there, and I'm, I'm nervous of saying they can post what they like, but again, that kid that Rick rolled everyone. I love that, it's kind of brilliant, it's hilarious. Everyone was like, a couple of the kids in the group were like "what the hell is this? Why would even be looking at that?" So, we'd be discussing how that was a thing a few years ago and it's moved on. And you know so, but again, I'm concerned about encouraging it too far where all they do is mess around. But you know, something in our subject, in Media you still want that banter and that kind of flexibility. I had one meeting where I did a test (online) meeting where I was actually in class. So I've basically got them all to log in and turn their mics off and actually just before we ever used it so that I'm at the front of the room talking and just "this is what it will look like when you get home" and one kid in my group stole the meeting, took control of the meeting, 'cause I didn't set the settings up right and they changed my background so that I was in like Hawaii or something and I was like "what!" and then someone else stole the meeting ... it was brilliant. I let that go and I was like "c'mon on then, do your worst, what can you do?" "How much can you control of my meeting?" and really testing the boundaries and for me that was a brilliant learning experiences as to what I need to do next time. What are, you know, I've been doing things like posting resources on teams in Word format and then I go back in my, I don't know, in the assignment brief and someone, one of the kids has gone in and typed something and it's still on the assignment brief. I haven't locked that brief so it's actually editable so that what I think is a formal document that they'll be following is actually now editable and someone's written cheese on it or something and I'm just like "Whoops that wasn't supposed to be there!" and I think somebody changed one of my deadlines to 300 years after it was supposed to be there and it's, it's done in good faith and they told me about it afterwards. It's amusing, but it also flags up to know that that's on me. I need to put it on as a PDF or lock the documents in some way, it's those kinds of things that are really fun, but if you're not careful, in a good way, they'll run rings round you. You know, I could imagine if you don't have a good rapport with the group and they were in that situation, that could be nightmarish. Do you know what I mean? they've been nice kids that are taking the Mickey out of me and each other, which is nice, but I think that could be dangerous if it was a less happy group for sure, yeah.

WGC

One of the things we did like two years ago was collaboration and was going to part of the original part of the project, and like you know, opening up 122/123 as a single space, and I think I probably did that with your groups more than any other groups. I mean like, again, totally honesty. Do you think that worked in terms of opening up the space for two groups to work in the same space?

C

I think it showed the potential that it could work, but I don't think it actually worked as well as we'd hoped it would. I think probably what we needed to do was make that target driven and not hope that it would naturally evolve, but actually force them to work on projects together. Well, not force them but actually, make it goal

oriented and say “you two need to without crossing the barrier.....” I think there was just... there was still, even though we take the wall down, the wall still existed, and even though as teachers we were walking, we were crossing the Rubicon all the time, the kids were almost... they got even more kind of insular or turned their shoulders away so they didn't have to make weird eye contact with kids in another room, but, I just, I think maybe we needed to not even mix the group up, so this could still be viable in sort of Covid, but maybe then not in a room next to each other. Maybe actually keeping it remote and having them... you're upstairs and I'm downstairs. By keeping that space, maybe they would have been more comfortable collaborating with each other. I wondered whether trying to mix the online and offline experience was just a bit too much, so like me, sending you a weird message saying I like your film and I'm looking over and making strange eye contact with you that you've read it or something. I wonder if that would almost be the online stuff, it needs to vanish and go into the universe rather than into somebody's face that you can see.

WC

Yeah, because if you're writing it online and you can still see the people (in the physical space)

C

It's really weird

WGC

I mean, that's a really interesting point about like I, I recognize what you're saying about the room still feeling divided. Why do you think that was?

C

I wonder if again, if we had made it so where we paired up or teamed up kids from my side of the room they had to collaborate. I think that would be fine, but it felt ... it had the feeling of a school disco when the slow dance comes up and just everybody is sort of like milling around, not making eye contact with each other.... But I don't know. It had that kind of... it was loaded with the teenage angst and there was something else going on that didn't quite work for them, which again, if we'd said “right, you're dancing with that kid over there” I think it would have, you know, would have been awkward still, but they would have overcome that, and then it would have happened, maybe.

WGC

yeah,

C

You don't want to. You don't want to direct. I know, I know. Your plan with it was that this would happen naturally and that they would collaborate. And I think we probably ran up against the fact that they're awkward teenagers that aren't necessarily socially comfortable enough to take that initiative and grasp it, some of them are, but I think enough of them in each room aren't and that it became difficult and awkward. Again, the kids that would

have done it and were keen to do it, or the ones that were really pushing it and really confident and probably rather than like greasing the wheels of that, probably put other kids off 'cause they're like "he's a bit scary. "

WGC

Yeah. With the, where we... we did it two different ways, where we put all the students together last year in the lecture Theatre.... we had we had both first and second years and all ED and Dip groups altogether for the POS (programme of study) and then this year we've put it all online. Do you think? I mean, I know from a planning point of view for us it was doing the theatre, the lecture was kind of hard graft, but do you think there was... Do you think we've kind of lost anything from just moving everything to online?

C

I think again, we run up against ... whichever one we do. We run up against ... there's, there's a there's a teenage resistance to doing more than they feel like they've got to ... and I think that's it's really difficult because we ... blood, sweat and tears with the lecture is trying to get amazing new particularly, but that year, amazing stuff ... getting all these brilliant people in and still the feedback you get is "they were boring people talking about stuff that I'm not interested in" and it's just crushing. I think if you were directing that at 19/20 year olds and it was just foundation degree students or degree level students, they would be absolutely astonished and delighted and a lot of the kids did like, you know, if there were a lot of kids in the room, but you know, a big chunk of them really appreciated and loved it. But I think there is a limitation to how much buy in you're going to get from teenagers who feel like they're doing something extra that they don't want to do, or can't see the worth of just now. So, I think whichever way we go, we can run up against that, other than it being a famous person coming in or there being an outcome where they can win something or they get, you know, there needs to be something, some kind of initiative that... even to the point where we did film screenings and that we showed tremendous films none of these kids have seen before, and a lot of them are like "why am I watching films when I could be sitting in the pub with me mates or sitting in the park smoking cigarettes." You can't really win the battle. I think the OTS, (online training skills) the online training stuff that they're doing is valuable, I think that the kids can probably see the value of that much more clearly than they can you or I standing at the front talking about cinematography or what just felt like sometimes probably, just another lesson, but there's more students in the room, so I think they can see the direct line of knowing how to use a camera better is useful for the me and see why we're doing this ... they can see why.

I personally feel that the lectures were probably more valuable, and certainly for the kids that um ... were making the most of those experiences .... and for instance the BBC chap that came ... one of the learners, one of the journalism students, now has work experience from that and is moving her career forward in that direction, directly as a result of having that one guy ... and even if there's 150 kids in the room if that keeps one kids could movement in their career, I think that's really exciting. We had some people in from, um, one of the local business ... the X.

WGC

Yeah

C

Two kids got work out of that straight away and it's just showing those kind of paths ... and I think probably that the actual value of getting the kids together, screening their work, having an atmosphere that you're one person in a room of 150 people... I think those are really valuable experiences, even if they don't feel like they enjoy it. I think that's quite a good thing to do. Whereas what it's done, and it's made for groups of 20 kids, feel like 20 kids rather than a cohort of 150 kids. You know, yeah, but I think they probably prefer the OTS stuff, the majority of them.

WGC

Yeah, I think one of the areas we probably used, like teams the most before lockdown stuff was like, I used it a lot with the evaluation. Yeah, so ...we're screening something ...you go off....go away and then you can leave the feedback on the team or sort of '@' someone straight away. What was your kind of... did you try that with you guys or have you done?

C

Hm, I did it on a couple of occasions. We used it more that we would ... so when I... when I initially did it during the trial... when we first started out, I did it in the room so that I'd screen the film and then I'd ask them to go onto teams and into the chat @ the person that they'd just watched the film of, and give them the feedback there which a lot of them found really good because they were really enjoying the fact that they weren't having to put their hand up and it made the process screening work ... is is a sort of a mixed bag of joy of watching their work and the misery of having to trail through the feedback, like the positives and negatives and no one answering and you feel like you.... that becomes a bit of a draw, a bit of drag. So doing that digitally meant that there was instant feedback that they could then cut and paste and they can do some stuff with.... What I'm doing this year, much more, I guess to make sure that it's robust enough for lockdown is, I'm actually getting all the kids to post their work. so, links to kids work into the Teams chat, so I have a specific channel for each project that we do. So, like the crime drama channel and then I'll get the kids to post the link to their finished outcome on YouTube in that Channel... and then I'm asking people to remotely watch all of those films and provide feedback while they're watching them. So, I'm trialling it where they're actually not in the classroom, and they're doing in their own time and they're actually spending time watching it, engaging with it and it definitely works.

Whether it's as valuable as screening work in the classroom and discussing it is debatable, but certainly, as a sort of... If we, if we got kids working in lockdown conditions or away from college they definitely can screen and give valuable feedback and discuss the work and what tends to happen is they, they turn into threads rather than just.... In the classroom and I screen some kids work, they'll say a couple of words, and scribble down some

feedback and by the second one, they're getting bored and just writing the same thing over and over again. Whereas what feels like the feedback online, actually, it's alive and fresh and they're actually commenting on each other with a bit of banter and a bit of jokes in there, like they might make a joke about something, but it means that there is, that the commentary that you're getting in the work is alive and real rather than a process that we just go through and it turns from being fun to about halfway through the lesson, becoming a bit of chore, and everybody sort of tired of talking about feedback.

WGC

We're dealing with just media students. And you know, the study's all about vocational media students. Do you think, obviously with a practical based subject... do you think any of any of this stuff we've done in terms of collaboration online or offline has helped either theory or practice at all?

C

I think it's ...it for vocational students who whether they all do or not, I guess traditionally will struggle with theory work or with the written work a little more or will find it less engaging, I think it's a real help. I think it's been great. I've been doing some great stuff with my second years where I'm giving media concepts that have to go and we'll go away and research and produce really just short, pithy descriptions of or definitions of what these things are. "So what's the male gaze theory?" I dunno Stuart Hall's Reception theory. "What is it?" And then feeding that back as files for each other and documents to each other, and it's something that I would really struggle to get them engaged, to engage with in class. So, we're setting these tasks in class and then they'll get distracted or bored with it, or getting caught up in asking me questions about it. "I don't understand it. Can you explain it to me?" But I feel like I'm just ... I may as well just delivered it all and stood at the front and chalk and talk and taught them. What's happened by doing it remotely is I've given them a list of names, a list of things that they're gonna cover, a very short introductions (inaudible) so they've got a little bit of a concept of what the hell it is there going to be looking for and then within an hour all of the work to come back done and dusted in place, ready for us to use in class, and it it means that they haven't had me to ask and they haven't had the chance to say "I can't do it." There's just an expectation there "look, there's about half an hours worth of work there, go away and research that theory. I don't mind if it's a bit of cut and paste as long as you tell me where the information comes from" and in your own words and is it any good? Just come straight back really quickly and it's been for my second years, they're actually saying, "wow, it's really nice to have a small target".

This made me rethink the way that we structure the briefs. It needs to go back to maybe, shorter targets that are time bound rather than wide open briefs that I think when we first started it, there were loads of mini deadlines and the kids really chafed against that and said "I want to manage my own time", which is important, but a lot of kids now are saying actually it's really lovely to be told "You just have to do this today and that's all you have to do to get that done and then if you finish, you could do something else" so it's made me re-think the way we structure the course completely.

WGC

Yeah, the theory... I suppose the online lends itself to the theory there but.... in terms of practical work, does it ... does it help at all?

C

I haven't found... I haven't found a way that it benefited that yet other than screening work and feeding back, I think that's probably just because there's just such a wide variety of equipment the kids have access to at home. It's really hard to do something which doesn't disenfranchise the kids that don't have access to equipment themselves. Um I can't set a task and be certain that every 22 kids, 23 kids in my group can fulfil that task. Unless I'm saying using mobile phone or something like that, I just can't be sure, but they're going to be able to do that, so I'm I think I'm shying away from that because of access to equipment more than anything else.

WGC

Yeah

C

They could hopefully hire equipment but that then becomes onerous and something additional, so I'm ... I'm struggling to find... at the moment that's the area that I haven't really been able to find the benefits of that yet, I think.

WGC

Within the subject they're always working in little groups of three and four ... organizing shoots and stuff we... have you found any of the students using any of this stuff in House, that we set up on teams to organize stuff or not?

C

1 or 2 have started using it but the comments I've had after I've encouraged that has been "Well, we've just made a WhatsApp group. Why would we do that?" like "we've already got that" which I totally get. And it also means, and one of them was really honest, this other (I know this is anonymous, this girl X) in my first group said "I can swear in the whatsapp one.." (laughter) "like when people are annoying me and I'm not going to do that in teams." So, like "why would I want you to see that?" (laughter) and I was like there's truth in that, you know, they can say what they like and they can be as appropriate or inappropriate as they want to be where ... whereas in Teams, because we have a discussion in class and so it's a formal work tool and I think that's probably true of us as workers as well that we've got our private WhatsApp group that I would put things on that I wouldn't put on Teams you know. I mean, I certainly something stupid like a meme that X puts up, loads of stuff. You know, something he wouldn't put that on teams, you know. So, I think having a private collaborative space is probably as important as having a public one, do you know what I mean?. I don't know how we break down that or what we would do with that....

WGC

It's really interesting, Like obviously. Covid and the lockdowns, changed ... have forced us to change a little bit but if were to, kind of, like, to take that away and everything goes back to normal what are the things that you take with you that you've been doing online?

A

I think definitely the communication stuff, the collaborative stuff, I would be.... I'll use teams forever now for each project. I'm going to have a collaborative space... What the process is at the moment is that they will work on their own blogs, and that's a little isolated bubble that's actually quite hard to penetrate unless you.... I regularly get them to team up and look at each others blogs and give feedback and audit it and all that kind of stuff. But in terms of knowing ... I'm in a room with 22 kids and knowing what the kid over there, that I very rarely speak to, what they're up too. I have no way of knowing that really, other than if I'm paying attention and in discussion and that kind of stuff, so moving forward using teams that each have a channels for each project I work on.... and regularly will be asking them to do things like "update your, your main findings from the research, giving three points and put it in the collaborative space right now" so they can have a look each other in your feedback, put a link to your test shots into the collaborative space, have a look at each other's and comment on so that the best one that you see and if somebody has done something and you know how to do it, @ them and ask a question about it. Those kind of processes makes transparent and shows the workings during each unit of each other and makes it more collaborative in the way that I haven't ... I haven't ever had for, in, you know, in almost 20 years of teaching vocational media. I've never had that opportunity for them to have a look at the workings of each other during the project and what they're up to. So, I'll definitely use that moving forward. I think there is value.... It's so valuable, but I think moving forward even after coronavirus and everything else, I think we should be considering some version of flipped learning for all of our learners anyway. I think it's really useful. I think it's a really good, you know, one day week, having a flipped learning .... forever. I think it would be useful. I think the kids worked well in their own space as long as it's really well directed and structured. I think it would provide more room for meetings with staff and things like that. Those, particularly those days that we need to actually IV briefs and get together. I think I should be setting independent work and I shouldn't have kids in the classroom asking me for help. I should have them working independently and it seems like a really good fit, and as X pointed out, industry standard people are going to be working, you know, even with the vaccine, working from home is going to be here to stay for a long, longtime now and it should be used to managing their time and getting stuck into it. So I think, I think, I think it's here to stay and I think it should be built into our courses from now on for any virus or not I think we should.

WGC

Do you think it? Do you think it makes them more independent then is that what you're saying?

C

So, I think if we move forward and make it part of the course with an expectation that they would be more independent, I think it could be helpful. But I think certainly many of the kids.... interestingly, I think I have to be

more sort of didactic with them to make them work independently through online learning, strangely in the classroom you can sort of be a little bit looser, 'cause you're there to answer questions, whereas with the online learning as long as you're suggesting to them, "I want you to do this" .... really specific about the parameters of what they gonna achieve during that day or that session or whatever it's gonna be. Then, they go away and work independently so they'll need more guidance or more specific, very, very ... um precise guidance to work independently. So, it's weird a sort of contradiction in terms in that they need more, sort of, didactic teaching in order to be independent on offline, sorry, online whereas in the classroom, you can be a bit looser with it, but I do generally think it's good practice for them to be doing this independently, I really do... and that comes from a position of when we first started the trial, not being resistant to it.... I've been resistant to Teams 'cause I find it annoying, but in terms of just shutting my computers down on old IT and as you know, I'm screaming at my computer 1000 times a day about it. That's the only barrier that I've got but I've gone from thinking this is too much of a pain to do, to thinking actually, it shouldn't. It should be part of our practice now.