Educational Attainment Gap - Role of the Third and Private Sectors

Parliamentary Inquiry

Response by Scottish Film

Scottish Film Ltd is a consortium of Scotland’s leading cultural cinemas, film festivals, and cinema development agency. It manages the Scottish Film Education Programme, which is working alongside Into Film in developing and delivering the Scottish component of the BFI’s UK-wide 5 to 19 Film Education Programme. This aims to transform the position of film education within formal and informal settings across Scotland. The Programme has the following aims:

- To put film and moving image education where it belongs on the learning agenda: in the curriculum (in principle and practice) and as an integral element of children and young people’s learning in both formal and informal settings;
- To ensure that every child and young person has access to film and moving image learning experiences: by increasing reach, depth and inclusivity of provision, including currently under-served communities across Scotland;
- To broaden young people’s experience of and appetite for a wide range of film, and contribute to audience development;
- To improve the quality of film and moving image education in every context;
- To ensure that the film and moving image education “offer” is as straightforward as possible for both educators and children and young people to understand, navigate and access.

The Scottish Film Education Programme is funded by Creative Scotland

The contributors to this submission have been involved for many years as part of a wider movement in developing the role of Film and Film/Moving Image Education within Scottish schools, colleges and universities not only to develop a wider concept of what it means to be literate in the 21st century, but also to overcome some of the constraints of what is still a heavily print-focused curriculum that can serve to stifle creativity, engagement, self-confidence, self-expression, achievement and attainment. This is particularly evident with respect to the less able and the least advantaged.

Much of the evidence base that this submission will refer to stems from the long term development work undertaken and/or supported by Scottish Screen, before it Creative Scotland.

In terms of the promoting greater engagement in Film Education and Moving Image Education, the third & private sectors are well represented in Scotland by a variety of bodies and groups, albeit presenting an often-confusing plethora of acronyms. There is a growing body of evidence that Film Education and Moving Image Education supports the ambitions and capacities of Curriculum for Excellence.

The list below gives an indication of the main agencies involved in promoting greater engagement in Film Education and Moving Image Education in Scotland:

The Scottish Film consortium members are:

- Centre for the Moving Image, (Filmhouse, Edinburgh; Belmont Filmhouse, Aberdeen; Edinburgh International Film Festival)
- Dundee Contemporary Arts (including Discovery Film Festival)
- Eden Court Theatre & Cinema
• Glasgow Film (Glasgow Film Theatre and Glasgow Film Festival)
• Regional Screen Scotland

Scottish Film Ltd is also responsible for managing the BFI Film Audience Network Programme in Scotland, which operates as Film Hub Scotland. This is also funded by Creative Scotland.

BFI Film Academies in Scotland are provided by;

• Screen Education Edinburgh (SEE): East of Scotland, Highlands & Islands and the Scotland Residential Academy
• Station House Media Unit (SHMU): Aberdeen, North East Scotland.
• Glasgow Media Access Centre (GMAC): Glasgow and West Scotland
• Dundee Contemporary Arts (DCA): Aberdeen and Tayside.

Scottish 5 – 19 Film Education Programme (Joint Delivery)

• Scottish Film Education: Funded by Creative Scotland
• Into Film: Funded by BFI.

In addition to the core staff of the above agencies, a body of Film & Moving Image Lead practitioners supports the teaching and learning in school, youth and CPD contexts. They are drawn from a mix of educational and film industry backgrounds and bring with them a wealth of relevant experience and insight. The majority of these individuals are self-employed and a number of them are running their own businesses in various branches of the creative industries. As such they inject an element of entrepreneurialism into the learning experiences they support.
Educational Attainment Gap - Role of the Third and Private Sectors

The scale of the third and private sectors’ involvement in schools, in terms of improving attainment and achievement, and the appropriate dividing line between their role and the role of education authorities:

- While we have an overview of the Third sector’s contribution to education within our own field, this does not extend to other spheres of activity and therefore we are unable to comment upon what overall impact that this broad and diverse sector may be having on attainment and achievement.
- In addition, we unaware of any systematic tracking and quantification of third sector involvement in schools. Perhaps this suggests that tracking the scale and impact of the third sector involvement is something that should be addressed.
- The suggestion that there may be an “appropriate dividing line between the third and private sectors’ role and the role of education authorities raises questions of its own. Does a shared vision of an appropriate dividing line, held in common across all 32 Local Authorities currently exist? If so, does it arise from a natural or reasoned demarcation or is it simply rooted in an historical context, perhaps harking back to earlier policies or attitudes?
- We would suggest that, in the current climate where public services such as education are under pressure and subject to significant cuts, it would seem logical that local authorities should be seeking to engage more widely with the third and private sectors to bolster provision in areas that they do not have sufficient in-house capability to deliver.
- This suggests that Local Authorities and individual schools, should be seeking alternative local solutions, based on their particular needs, rather than applying some notional norm.
- The recent report by Graham Donaldson “Teaching Scotland’s Future” (2010) pointed quite explicitly to the need to develop new and better models of partnership. The Donaldson report focused primarily on developing enhanced partnership arrangements between local authorities and the teacher education universities. However, while the report also made passing reference of the need for, and benefits of, involving other/national agencies, it did not go on to identify which agencies, and to what specific ends.
- Much of what Scottish Film aims to achieve through the CPD activity that forms the main thrust of the 5–19 Film Education Programme, has been designed to dovetail with the conclusions and subsequent ongoing implementation of the Donaldson report.
- Rather than seeking to provide a pre-planned national menu of set CPD offerings for each individual category of stakeholder e.g. primary teachers, subject specific groups of secondary teachers, classroom assistants, learning support teacher, specific cohorts of ITE students, and University ITE tutors, the programme team will negotiate locally an integrated approach to CPD within individual clusters of schools. Each cluster will comprise of a secondary school, and all its feeder primaries and engage the full range of stakeholders associated with that cluster as detailed above.
- This approach is less about dividing lines and more about the third sector engaging with schools at a local level, within existing local management structures to develop and extend their capability to support themselves a local level on an ongoing basis. The aim is to engage with such clusters over a two-year period to develop self-sustaining expertise and capability within communities of practice that will continue after cessation of programme funding.

Whether their approaches have been particularly successful in improving achievement and attainment for school pupils. If so, whether their methods could be more embedded in the curriculum;

- With reference to Film Education and Moving Image Education, the answer is a resounding yes, and this is not merely the view of those in the third sector who have taken it upon themselves to promote these new and exciting approaches to learning and teaching. Successive evaluations going back more than a decade provided by pupils, teachers, teacher educators, student teachers and Local Authority staff have consistently reported that Film Education and Moving Image Education, while not trying to establish itself in the curriculum as yet another subject, nevertheless offer a new set of pedagogical approaches that support the
learning of pupils from across the ability spectrum and provide routes to learning that chime very clearly with the aspirations of a Curriculum for Excellence.

- In 2009 Carey Bazalgette, formerly head of education at the British Film Institute, was commissioned by the then Scottish Screen to summarise existing research regarding the impacts of Moving Image Education. The executive summary of her subsequent report, now getting on for six years ago, still makes for persuasive reading in the context of this Parliamentary call for evidence. This being the case we are reproducing the executive summary in full as follows:

**Executive Summary**

Evidence about the impact of moving image education (MIE) is still emerging and is relatively limited. There has been no large-scale research on this topic, and although the research field is growing, the limitations of funding and the diversity of practice on the ground mean that making comparisons between different studies is risky.

Nevertheless, the 14 recent studies that form the basis of this summary do offer some useful indications about the distinctiveness of MIE and its potential to make a substantial contribution to learning and teaching. Each of these studies identifies four or more of the following seven ‘generic impacts’:

1. Learners’ enjoyment and sense of achievement.
2. Disaffected or underachieving learners showing engagement and concentration.
3. Increased motivation, confidence, and self-image.
4. Increased attainment in literacy.
5. Increased skills in collaboration and teamwork.
6. Increased knowledge about, and interest in, making moving images.
7. Increased interest in watching and talking about moving images.

However, these impacts closely mirror those found in a wide range of research and evaluation on cultural interventions in education. To make the case for MIE as a distinctive and worthwhile aspect of education, it is important to be able to identify impacts that are specific to MIE. Although most of the research that has the potential to offer these tends to be small-scale and short term, it has the advantage of depth and detail, and can thus offer important insights on the learning processes involved in MIE, which do indicate distinctiveness and a high level of relevance to other aspects of the curriculum, particularly literacy. Five ‘MIE-specific’ impacts are identified in this summary. It seems that MIE can:

A. enable access to a distinctive, culturally important, non-verbal mode of expression and communication (i.e. the moving image);
B. provide previously failing or excluded learners with access to the curriculum;
C. offer different routes into key literacy concepts;
D. give learners a sense of agency and autonomy that supports self-image and confidence;
E. build bridges between ‘home’ and ‘school’ cultures and knowledge.

A brief overview of the parallel but differently prioritised field of research into the impacts of ICT in education suggests that versions of MIE are frequently present in what is designated ‘ICT education’ but are misrecognised by both teachers and researchers in this field, due to their focus on technology rather than on texts and textual practices.

The summary concludes with recommendations on further research that Scottish Screen might wish to be involved in, and on changes to its education practice in order to ensure sustainability and larger-scale implementation.

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The eight studies referred to above were as follows:

An evaluation of a pilot project to place digital video editing equipment in selected schools in England.
An evaluation of a pilot project to establish filmmaking in schools in Ireland.
An evaluation of Scottish Screen’s Teacher Education Programme.
An investigation of learning outcomes related to MIE in nine Creative Partnership projects in England.
An evaluation of Scottish Screen’s MIE Projects.
An evaluation of the British Film Institute’s initiative to train MIE leaders in 60 local authorities in England.
A study of learning outcomes from a BBC project to enable news production by 13/14 year olds in UK schools.
An evaluation of a Scottish Screen MIE project for young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs).
In the intervening period since 2009 further research has been undertaken and further projects and initiatives have been evaluated, again with similar conclusions:

- (2010) “Investigating practitioner perceptions of moving image education in relation to a curriculum for excellence”, University of Glasgow. This piece of research led directly to a collaboration between Creative Scotland and Education Scotland to produce the on-line classroom literacy resource “Screening Shorts”, available via GLOW to all Scottish Schools, as is the growing on-line provision of digital Film and Moving Image resources that is accessible in classrooms and other places of learning across Scotland.

Whether the full potential of the third and private sectors in helping to improve children's attainment and achievement is being realised:

- If no one is specifically tracking, quantifying and evaluating the level and impact of involvement then there is no ready answer to this question. However, given that Scottish schools are not currently awash with partners from the third sector, it is probably safe to answer, “probably not”.
- Something that should be kept in mind when considering the success of Film Education and Moving Image Education is that amongst those involved from Creative Scotland, the Cultural Cinema Venues and the Lead Practitioners, there is a core of individuals who have an education background and who have had years of experience working in partnership with schools, local authorities, and colleges. This represents a major difference in comparison to other third sector or private sector bodies, who would not have had this experience.

How successful schools have been in reporting on pupils' wider achievements (i.e. not just examination results) such as those the third sector helps to deliver. Whether such achievements are valued by parents, employers and learning providers as much as formal qualifications:

- The moving image, now firmly welded to digital technologies that facilitate copying, transmission and screening is a natural for wider public engagement. Researchers report regularly that “Outcomes are improved when filmmaking and analysis are closely integrated, and when filmmaking is for ‘real’ audiences.
- Pupil's wider achievements in film and moving image are celebrated regularly in public with audiences of parents, employers and learning providers either in schools or else in actual cinema venues. This was the case in the Future Learning and Teaching Project centred around Brechin, Angus some years ago. That event was attended by the actor Brian Cox whose presence provided a real boost to the self-esteem of the young film-makers and also emphasized that household names were prepared to come out and give their time to recognise the achievements of young people. That approach is maintained by the BFI Film Academies at their annual celebration of pupils' work on film. The Film Festivals and other events hosted in the cultural film venues also do this, for example, in relation to the Understanding Cinema initiative at CMI, Edinburgh.
- A more elaborate variant of this occurred, again at CMI, in 2014 in relation to “McLaren 2014”: a project celebrating the life and work of Norman McLaren through a range of public exhibitions, screenings, academic exploration, and public engagement. It explored his international impact and highlighted his legacy to Scotland through providing a series of animation workshops. It had been agreed that the best way to reach a wide audience for these workshops was to split between school workshops specifically designed for primary school children and public workshops opened to wider audiences, i.e. families, adults, teenagers, etc, working alongside each other.
Given the strong policy focus on the early years, whether the third and private sectors have been able to work equally effectively with pupils of all ages.

- While reference has been made to the 5 – 19 Film Education Programme, the decision to focus on that particular age range was made at a UK-wide level and not here in Scotland. It has already generated a degree of discussion as to why it was not cast as 0 – 26, but it stands, at least for the time being.
- In terms of the broad span of potential third and private sector partners, it may well be that many would not instinctively gravitate to the early years end of the spectrum. This tendency might arise from the viewpoint that potential employers are more interested in the senior phase as they are the young people who will be entering the employment market soonest.
- However, so far as the Film Education and Moving Image Education is concerned, the early years represent a fascinating stage of development when young children of pre-reading age can follow, enjoy and make perfect sense of moving image texts, with or without dialogue.
- Not only that, but there is also interest in investigating and researching the possibility that early level moving image education can have an enduring impact on very young learners.
- This was the hypothesis behind a piece of research carried out by Aberdeen University, which in 2011 followed up a previous intervention that had taken place in 2006 with a group of who had been in nursery/P1, and who were then in P5/6.
- This was a sizable undertaking and too rich to try to condense in this context however, one of the conclusions arrived at represents a neat way to end this submission:

  “The positive emotional responses displayed by the children [P5/6] and their ability to draw on and enthusiastically share a vast array of memories to successfully complete the project strongly suggests that their early years MIE experiences were key learning experiences for them, that they had retained skills and knowledge from them and they valued and treasured them.”

(2011) Mairi Flood – Lead Practitioner in Moving Image Education in conjunction with Angus Council’s Maisondieu Primary School and Creative Scotland. Evaluated by the University of Glasgow.

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