



Transition Year Module in Moving Image Education Pilot Review



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Is it not curious that Ireland, which is right up there with the leaders when international cinema attendance figures are compared, has yet to establish film or moving image as a distinct subject in the school curriculum? Studies show that a majority of adolescents in this country go to the cinema several times a month, nine out of ten watch two or more films a week on television or dvd¹, and over 500,000 teenagers have signed up to bebo.com. But where is the school subject that adequately reflects the interests of this mobile-using, website-surfing, dvd-viewing, camera-wielding and gaming generation?

These were just some of the concerns facing the Arts Council working group on film and young people. From the outset, we agreed that education in moving image should be available both in and outside school in order to develop visual literacy, critical thinking and creativity in today's media. We also sought to identify deficits in the area of film exhibition and filmmaking for this age group.

In order to reach a defined outcome and make best use of our time and expertise, we decided to focus on second level education and on Transition Year (TY) in particular. The ongoing development of transition year units by the NCCA² presented us with a further opportunity for 'a way in', that would work within the existing TY framework and the proposed changes to Senior Cycle.

The Module that emerged from these discussions provided an in-school opportunity for an active, pleasurable and creative engagement with moving image. Its principal aim was to encourage a visual literacy that would enable learners to interpret, respond and create. Devised by the Irish Film Institute (IFI), the national organisation dedicated to the promotion of film culture in Ireland, the initiative was implemented in conjunction with the Second Level Support Services (SLSS) in English and resourced by members of the working group. This collaboration ensured the best quality Moving Image Education (MIE) experience for teachers and students.

This report is a review of the Module and it has unearthed some exciting results: students respond favourably to moving image and teachers enjoy teaching something of interest to their students, that also has relevance for many other areas of study as well as life outside of school. The very positive response to contemporary Irish cinema reinforces the value of promoting Irish film to young audiences.

The report's findings clearly demonstrate the need for continued support and resources in the area of Moving Image Education. Thanks are due to the teachers and students who participated in the pilot; the diligence and enthusiasm from teachers on the review day and from all those who completed questionnaires is greatly appreciated. The report informs us of the potential for MIE in the classroom and its significance for all those involved. In the words of one of the participating teachers, it is 'just the beginning'.

John Kelleher

Irish Film Censor

¹ Source: IFCO Annual Report 2005

² National Council for Curriculum Assessment

Executive Summary

This report presents the results of an internal review of Phase One of the Moving Image Module for Transition Year, undertaken by the IFI.

AIMS OF REVIEW

- To define the Module within the context of Moving Image Education and the Irish post primary school curriculum.
- To evaluate the impact of the Module on participating teachers and students and identify its strengths and weaknesses.
- To make recommendations for Phase Two implementation and consolidation.

METHODOLOGY

Primary research

- qualitative information gathered through questionnaires and group discussions with teachers, students and members of working group.
- quantitative information regarding participation, attendance at screenings and use of related resources.

Secondary research

- relevant information from arts and education research reports and government policy documents.

TIMEFRAME

Implemented as part of IFI Schools Programme and SLSS (English) between October 2005 and January 2006.

PARTICIPANTS

Eleven schools in the Kildare and Dublin area comprising single sex, co-educational, voluntary secondary, community, comprehensive and vocational.

THE MODULE

Content

- Teacher training in MIE with IFI and SLSS in Kildare Education Centre over 2.5 days
- Teachers and students attend three free film screenings (comprising American independent, Irish, non-English language) at IFI and Dara Cinema, Naas
- Teachers and TY groups engage with moving image in the classroom, using resources provided

Context

Designed to operate within the context of Moving Image Education, the Module was devised and delivered by IFI Education and teacher training delivered in conjunction with the SLSS. Emphasis was placed on the process rather than a final measurable product or skills. Learning would be experiential, using a variety of learning

strategies and learning outcomes would relate to students acquiring visual literacy as well as using their existing knowledge.

Operating from outside their specialist subject area, teachers would be in a position of both learning and facilitation.

FINDINGS

Findings are presented as statistics relating to participation obtained quantitatively and qualitative data obtained through questionnaire, interview and group discussion with participants and members of the working group.

Principal quantitative findings:

Of schools participating, 100% of participating teachers found that the Module inspired them to teach more moving image.

All teachers felt that the training days were essential and met their needs.

In general, the films chosen were considered very appropriate, and the accompanying resources relevant and engaging.

83% declared the teaching of Irish film to be worthwhile.

Students

Of students who responded, 61% were very enthusiastic about taking film as a TY subject. 37% were enthusiastic.

84% found watching films together in the cinema the most enjoyable aspect.

100% of students said their interest in learning more about moving image had increased, as a result of the module.

Principal qualitative findings:

Content

It was generally agreed that the Module drew on existing enthusiasm for and knowledge of a very relevant and contemporary medium among students of all abilities. Teachers gained in confidence through the training days and were eager to continue their learning. Fostering critical skills and visual literacy in an active and experiential learning environment was considered apt and stimulating. Students acquired confidence and skills to discuss films as well as to evaluate and compare with others.

Free cinema outings were very popular: they provided an optimum common viewing experience and motivated discussion back at school.



There was considerable enthusiasm for Irish film and the short film form.

Specially designed resources and DVDs were deemed essential material for classroom work. Teachers recognised cross-curricular potential for moving image education.

One of the most common comments from students was that they liked films and thought studying them would offer something different. They enjoyed viewing the films together and having the opportunity to discuss them back at school. They found *Mean Creek* particularly relevant to their own experience as teenagers. Many students expressed an interest in learning about practical filmmaking.

Resources & Finance

Devised and implemented by IFI Education with teacher training funded by the SLSS, the Module was integrated into the existing IFI education programme but it required a considerable investment of time and resources. Funding for screenings and publications secured from the Arts Council and Irish Film Board were essential for successful implementation.

Although schools allocated time and personnel in advance, the Module was often vying for position with other more established TY activities.

Consultation

The need for adequate advance consultation was apparent in

- securing time for including Module in TY programmes
- range of interests and expectations expressed by teachers
- response to selection of films
- application of resources: opinions varied over the amount of guidance required

Teacher/pupil role

Students were often more knowledgeable about contemporary film than teachers, thus changing the traditional teacher/pupil role and necessitating different learning and teaching styles.

CHALLENGES

- Concerns were expressed regarding the absence of discernable, measurable skills or specific written tasks, which would offer a final product.
- MIE was new to most of the participating teachers, some of whom felt lacking in confidence.
- Considerable time and planning implications for implementing the Module in an already busy TY year.
- Minimal consultation with students or the wider film community in the design and implementation of the module.
- A lack of time and resources to include a practical element.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this review confirm the strengths of this pilot project and the challenges it has offered. They underline the relevance of MIE for the contemporary learning environment as well as the enthusiasm of both teachers and students to participate. The report presents a unique framework for collaboration between relevant organisations. It poses questions with which the key organisations need to engage to determine their ongoing involvement. It reinforces the significance of the Module for the work of IFI and SLSS and justifies the financial commitment of organisations represented in the working group, and the validity of working in partnership. Areas for development are also revealed.

In carrying out the review, a number of issues became apparent. These have implications for future implementation of the Module and highlight the importance of

- adequate resourcing to ensure successful implementation
- consolidating the Module within IFI education programme and SLSS training programmes
- ongoing collaboration and consultation between the working group, education centres, participating schools and other relevant organisations to realise best MIE practice
- consulting with teachers and contributing to their professional development
- capitalising on the enthusiasm for moving image among young people
- reflecting the interests and learning needs of participants in the design and implementation of the module
- locating the Module within TY programme of participating schools, making it widely available to teachers in different subject areas, to ensure optimum application
- defining the Module and learning outcomes along TY guidelines, in keeping with curriculum changes to ensure sustainability
- recognising the importance of Irish film and ensuring its representation
- incorporating the wider film community through delivery of a practical element and programme of screenings
- raising the profile of MIE through this module within education and film sectors and the public

The report concludes with a series of recommendations that incorporate these issues, reflect the findings of the review and the strengths of the Module but also suggest opportunities for creating a sustainable model of Moving Image Education.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

‘ This module has inspired me and has given me a more indepth knowledge of film and how to approach teaching it.’

The Module was delivered in eleven schools as part of the IFI Education Programme, in conjunction with SLSS In-Service for English. Financially supported by members of the working group, it comprised teacher training, cinema screenings, the provision of specially designed resource materials and support DVDs, and ongoing teacher support.

This review aims to:

- Define the Module within the context of MIE generally and the Irish post primary school curriculum specifically.
- Evaluate the impact of the Module on participating teachers and students.
- Outline the way forward: Phase Two of the Module, recommendations and wider implications.

Methodology

In choosing a methodology by which to evaluate, the Working Group agreed to draw on the considerable experience of FÍS, IMMA and Poetry Ireland, who had already carried out extensive external evaluations of particular projects³. Given the size of this pilot, it would be an internal evaluation, combining quantitative and qualitative research.

Our main interest was in investigating the teachers' and students' experience of the Module. Although there are key skills identifiable and measurable in MIE, particularly in visual literacy, we agreed to focus on the process rather than a measurable product. Elements identified as being essential to this process included:

- viewing and discussing a range of feature films including non-mainstream, Irish, non-English language;
- engaging in further exploration and discussion of aspects of film and moving image eg. the short film form, animation.

The review would assess the impact and effectiveness of the Module. It would inform:

- members of the working group in terms of their sustained involvement;

- participating schools with a view to establishing Moving Image into their TY programmes;
- those concerned with curriculum development and the proposed new Transition Units;
- the wider film and education community, and members of the public;

A qualitative picture was drawn of the participants' experience through group discussion and questionnaire survey. Quantitative research reveals the statistics of those attending screenings and using related resources. Members of the Working Group were also invited to comment on their involvement.

Secondary research into the work of other arts and education organisations and government policy documents on education provided relevant background material.

Limitations

Limited by constraints of time and resources, most of the research involved the teachers, with whom we had direct contact. Our contact with students was confined to a summative evaluation. Although school principals were the first point of contact, we were unable to obtain any subsequent feedback from them on further implications for the school eg. of visits to the cinema. Parents were not involved in the project design or evaluation. Initial plans to involve the wider film community with school visits and practical filmmaking were postponed to Phase Two.

³ *Vision in the Curriculum – An Evaluation of the FÍS Project* (www.fis.ie) in Primary Schools in Ireland, June 2003. *Red Lines between the Fingers – A Review of the IMMA* (www.modernart.ie) *Breaking the Cycle Project*, March 2004. A Review of the Poetry Ireland Writers in Schools Scheme, November 2004.

Chapter 2

CONTEXTS

The project operated within the following institutional, policy and research contexts:

(i) Institutional

IFI

The IFI is at the forefront of delivering film education in Ireland. Through a nationwide programme that promotes recognition of and participation in Moving Image Education in school curricula and in life long learning, the IFI exemplifies best film educational practice. The Moving Image Module provided an opportunity to build on our experience in this area and to consolidate relationships with key partners.

SLSS

The English SLSS programme offers school based support, staff development programmes, regional cluster based support and modular courses. Teacher development in MIE is a continuation of the work that began with the introduction of the revised Leaving Cert English programme in 1999, which promoted the development of students' ability to interpret, discriminate and compose in relation to a wide range of texts, including film.

IFB

As Ireland's national screen agency charged with developing the Irish film industry, Bord Scannán na hÉireann/ the Irish Film Board is committed to the development of audiences for Irish films and the development of new Irish filmmakers. The Module's central strand on Irish film engages both of these strategies.

Arts Council

This TY pilot review clearly demonstrates the need for continued support and resources for film in formal education. It also highlights the value of working in partnership with teachers, students and arts organisations, such as the Irish Film Institute and the Department of Education and Science which, through the Second Level Support Services in English, have the expertise to deliver in this area. The process and implementation are in concert with the aims of the Arts Council's policy on film outlined in Partnership for the Arts 2006-2008.

PARTNERSHIP

In bringing together these institutions, this project is a unique partnership: it combines IFI expertise with that of SLSS in supporting teacher development, of the Arts Council in promoting

film culture and of IFB/BSÉ in film production and audience development. Consultation with the Irish Film Censor's Office (IFCO) reflects their interest in promoting awareness and understanding of film classification guidelines among this age-group, one of their key classification categories (15A).

(ii) National Policy

In the White Paper on Education, 1995, governmental policy argues that creative and performing arts are 'intrinsically valuable educational disciplines'⁴. By nurturing creativity, arts education will 'assist the young person to become a tolerant, critically aware and socially committed citizen who can live with confidence in the world'.⁵

MIE promotes creative engagement with moving image. Visual literacy facilitates critical viewing and can promote better understanding of how age, class, gender, sexuality and ethnicity are represented. Observing different worlds through a wider range of films can help overcome the language or cultural barriers that are a concern in the multi-ethnic classrooms of Ireland today. Viewing filmic narratives in the Irish language can stimulate language awareness.

The National Children's Strategy (2000)⁶ states that young people have a valid contribution to make and a voice of their own which needs to be recognised. This can be reflected in the images they themselves create. Watching contemporary Irish films ensures that students get an opportunity to hear familiar voices in recognisable settings and situations on screen and also to experience the Irish language being used as a creative medium.

'Adam & Paul – (this film was) so relevant, kids could have written a whole background on this.'

(iii) Film in the Curriculum

The inclusion of film and media studies in different areas of the secondary school curriculum,⁷ has given some recognition to these subjects. It has also helped reinforce the developmental work of the IFI in partnership with the Dept. of Education, the work of TAME, ATE, Access Cinema, FÍS and some local arts centres and the festivals for young audiences in Galway, Cork and Limerick⁸. However, the preference for visual over written information today,

and the sheer dominance of moving image media, has provoked questions regarding the need for and entitlement to MIE as a school subject. Further evidence of its significance arises from the fact that despite its absence from the Leaving Certificate, applications to film and media courses at third level continue to rise⁹.

(iv) Transition Year

TY Curriculum Guidelines state that TY aims to offer learners a broader range of educational experiences, with a curriculum that relates to the contemporary world outside school. Students will participate in learning strategies that are 'active and experiential.' The Module's active learning environment, in which students can critically connect with contemporary films – working in groups, or pairs, as whole class, or individually – complements these Guidelines. Significantly, as film was not the specialist subject area of teachers involved in the pilot, the TY classroom offered a more open environment where both teacher and student could develop.

(v) Relevant Research

Can this Module be located within a broader European context?¹⁰

Research into MIE reveals a great variety of projects being tested and established throughout Europe, ranging from cinema programmes to digital video production to more established Media Studies and Film Studies programmes. In Northern Ireland, a pilot project in Moving Image Arts, has been developed at senior cycle. The result of a partnership between CCEA, NIFTC, BFI¹¹ and the Nerve Centre, Derry, this very popular programme offers students the possibility of creating their own moving images as well as responding to visual stimuli in an on-line exam.

Despite the growth of activity in MIE, the debates that have characterised media education over the years continue: should it be theory or practice or both? Should it be a subject in its own right? Can any one subject adequately reflect all of today's media forms? As outlined in *A Wider Literacy – The Case for Moving Image Media Education in Northern Ireland*¹², the contemporary media environment requires a wider range of skills, knowledge and critical understanding than previously came under the heading of literacy. The Arts Council study into Cultural and Economic Trends in cinema in Ireland and Wales found that although key organisations such as IFI or Media Education Wales were providing important services, there was much need for development. Among their recommendations was the establishment of working groups to

focus on expansion in the area of cinema and education.

The question was, what form would this take?

The European Charter for Media Literacy website (www.euromedialiteracy.eu.org) provides a welcome forum for media educators to debate and share ideas. Former Head of BFI Education, Cary Bazalgette, in a conference paper, (2004)¹³ defined 'three Cs' – culture, criticism, creativity as a core of media education. Echoing these concepts are key questions, identified by the Center for Media Literacy (www.medialit.org): who created the message? what creative techniques are used? what values are being represented? In both of these contexts, MIE offers a theoretical framework that can be applied to a whole range of contemporary media. This opens up the potential for students to create and manipulate their own media images too. The Moving Image Module also takes this approach, placing it within the context of the Irish school curriculum and our rapidly changing society.

SUMMARY

In this section, we have located the Moving Image Module within the institutional, national and international contexts in which it operates.

Through its implementation, the Module

- extends and consolidates the education work of IFI and teacher training work of SLSS
- reinforces the audience and filmmaker development strategy of Bord Scannán na hÉireann/the Irish Film Board
- reinforces the cultural significance and audience development of film in line with Arts Council policy and activities
- connects IFCO with one of their principal classification groups (15A)
- builds on the recognition afforded to film and media studies in the curriculum by directing the subjects towards this clearly defined Module
- recognises and capitalises on the different learning environment offered by Transition Year Studies
- acknowledges the growing demand for and entitlement to education in visual literacy
- reflects current research, locating the Module within a broader European context

⁴ Charting our Education Future, Dept. of Education and Science, 1995, p.49

⁵ Charting our Education Future, Dept. of Education and Science, 1995, p.22

⁶ The National Children's Strategy. Our Children – Their Lives, 2000.

⁷ See Appendix I for more detail

⁸ Teachers Association of Media Education, Association of Teachers of English, Zoom Access Cinema Programme for Young Audiences, FÍS Film in Primary Schools Programme, Galway Junior Film Fleadh, Garter Lane Arts Centre, Cork Film Festival, Limerick Fresh Film Festival; Model Arts: Niland Gallery, Sligo; Roscommon Arts Centre; St Michael's Theatre, New Ross.

⁹ 12% increase in applications to film and media courses in DLIADT in 2004-05 period.

¹⁰ See Appendix I

¹¹ The Council for the Curriculum and Examination. Northern Ireland Film and Television Council, British Film Institute

¹² See www.niftc.co.uk

¹³ See www.eavi.org/session3



Chapter 3

AIMS

To pilot a Moving Image Module in eleven schools in Dublin and Kildare from October 2005 – January 2006 and in so doing to assess the potential of MIE among Transition Year students and their teachers.

Objectives:

- to deliver the Module to a broad and representative cohort of students.
- to explore how MIE would be received in different environments.
- to assess how MIE would complement TY study.
- to assess how the Module would complement the main activities of partner organisations.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS¹⁴

Single sex
co-educational
voluntary secondary
community/comprehensive
vocational

Considerations:

- All schools had an existing TY programme.
- One participating school is designated disadvantaged.
- Each school identified a teacher who would take part in training and pilot the Module with his/her TY group.
- Participation would involve three outings to the cinema during school time.

OUTLINE OF PROGRAMME¹⁵

Recommended Time Allocation:

2.5 teacher training days

45 hours classtime

Implementation period:

8 weeks Oct – Dec (teacher training days: Oct, Dec, Jan)

Double class x 2 per week

3 cinema visits

CONTENT

- Teacher Training
- Shared Viewing Experience
- Response and development with related resources
- Learning Outcomes

(i) Teacher Training

Kildare Education Centre

Teacher Trainers: Alicia McGivern IFI
Kevin McDermott SLSS

Guest speakers: Jane Doolan Arts Council
Victoria Pope IFB

Strand I: The Single Film *Mean Creek*

Focus: teen genre

Aims:

- to establish film interest and experience among teachers and share relevant teaching experience
- to introduce MIE and visual literacy and place in TY context
- to focus on *Mean Creek* as example of teen genre, to expand study to other genre
- to explore and suggest ways in which contemporary films could be brought into the classroom using various clips
- to consolidate and develop teachers' existing knowledge of moving image

+ evaluation

Strand II: Irish Film

Focus: What is Irish Film?

Bloody Sunday: 'Useful background – crosscurricular – history.'

Aims:

- to share experience of teaching MIE since Day 1 Training
- to engage teachers' knowledge and curiosity about Irish film and explore its classroom potential
- to relate Irish film to key concepts of MIE eg. representation,



Mean Creek

¹⁴ See inside back cover for details of schools

¹⁵ See Appendix II for detailed outline

point of view using a range of clips including. *About Adam*, *Intermission*, *Boy eats Girl*, *Adam & Paul*, *Bloody Sunday*.

- to examine the short film form and develop ideas for classroom application
 - to investigate cross-curricular links eg. history and art
- + evaluation



Adam & Paul

Strand III: Wider Visions

Focus: Representation of different worlds on film.

Aims:

- to engage teachers' interest in arthouse/non-English language cinema and explore its potential
 - to continue study of representation with focus on *Maria Full of Grace*
 - to suggest different genre eg. action film, documentary
 - to begin discussion of style/auteur/arthouse
- + evaluation

(ii) Shared Viewing Experience

Criteria for selection of films:

- Accessibility
- Central male role
- Central female role
- Non-mainstream 'teen' story
- Contemporary Irish
- Non-English language 'arthouse'

The shared viewing experiences took place in two venues:

- IFI, Dublin
- Dara Cinema, Naas

Prints were sourced from the distributor by IFI. Screenings were advertised through the IFI Education programme. Teachers reserved places and made own arrangements for cover and transport if required. Screenings were free to all students and teachers.

(iii) Response and development with related resources

The following DVDs were sourced and provided free of charge to teachers:

Mean Creek
Bloody Sunday
Inside I'm Dancing
Adam & Paul
The Mighty Celt
Irish Shorts
Irish Talent on Film

Print resources:

- IFB reports
- Copies of Film Ireland and articles from other film journals
- Interviews and newspaper clippings from IFI Archive

Studyguides: 'Great. Access to good background info. Gives the confidence to attempt teaching it.'

Three writers were commissioned to write studyguides for the Module. Draft copies were issued to teachers on training days. Teachers evaluated the guides and their comments were reflected in redrafts.

Strand I: *Mean Creek*

Studyguide focus: Film Genre, Film Style, Theme

Content:

Previewing activity
Director & background to story
Theme: bullying, journey
Genre: the teen movie
Style & Scene analysis
Student Exploration

Strand II: *Irish Film*

Studyguide focus: What is Irish film?

Content:

Inside I'm Dancing
The world of the film
Theme: love, relationships
Representation of disability
Scene analysis
Student Worksheet



Chapter 4

Bloody Sunday

- History on film - docudrama
- Background to events
- Character study
- Scene analysis
- Useful links

Adam & Paul

- Interview with director, Lenny Abrahamson

The short film (*The Breakfast Student Worksheet*)

Strand III: Wider Visions

Studyguide focus: Arthouse, non-English language film, documentary.

Content

Maria Full of Grace

- Coming of age story
- Representation of Columbia/US on film
- Theme: 'drugs', coming of age
- Scene analysis

Touching the Void

- The docudrama
- The mountain film genre
- Student worksheet

House of Flying Daggers

- Action genre
- Style & visuals
- Student worksheet
- Scene analysis

Arthouse Cinema/auteur cinema

- Introduction to both concepts
- Focus on: Tarantino & Scorsese

(iv) Learning Outcomes

Although there was no specific project to be completed, several learning outcomes could be identified from this Module. The experiential learning style encourages students to contribute their own experience. The shared viewing experience gives all the opportunity to offer opinion and interpretation, the outing also relies on their cooperation. Each film leads onto broader study such as genre, Irish film, arthouse, and studyguides provide the stimulus for further analysis and classification of films. Promoting visual literacy from the outset, students can apply this to their moving image experience both in and outside school and across a range of subjects.

PRIMARY RESEARCH

Rationale

Given the size of this pilot project, but also the fact that the Moving Image Module comprised extra work for teachers, it was felt that the best judges in order to evaluate its potential and applicability would be the teachers themselves. Students were also invited to offer a summative evaluation.

(i) Teachers were asked to evaluate:

- training
- choice of film being screened
- draft materials provided
- student responses
- their own learning

As is SLSS practice, each training day was evaluated through completion of evaluation questionnaires. Resources were also evaluated in this way. During the final training session, teachers were invited to work in groups to share their experiences and comment on the Module.

Criteria

Evaluation was based on criteria concerning the potential of the module for:

- Interest and relevance to TY students
- Interest and relevance to teacher
- Usefulness of training days
- Usefulness of resource materials & cinema visit
- Potential of TY Module for further application

Results

Evaluation was structured according to the three strands of the Module with a Summative Evaluation addressing the Module as a whole.

Strand I: Mean Creek & Film Genre

'this section was the easiest for students to relate to and they had plenty of background info'.

Number of schools attending screening:	91%
Number of teachers attending training:	100%

Usefulness of studyguide

Of those who responded:	
very useful	100%

Choice of Mean Creek as introduction

Of those who responded	
very suitable	75%

'Unsuitable for my students – drowning of student in summer – otherwise great film!'

Teacher Training

'Felt confident to approach teen/chick film and use them in a meaningful way.'

For ideas on how to approach teaching film Excellent

Specific observations regarding Studyguide

Director profile and background to story	very relevant
The world of the film	most useful to teacher
Scene analysis	excellent
Student explorations	'good' 'some language too patronising'

Strand II: Irish Film

Number of schools attending screening, <i>The Mighty Celt</i> :	100%
Number of teachers attending training:	100%

Usefulness of studyguide

Of those who responded	very useful 80%
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Comment on choice of *The Mighty Celt* as introduction to Irish film:

'great appeal'
'excellent appeal'
'reasonably appealing'

Choice of subjects included in guide:

History of Irish Film	Very appropriate 100%
Inside I'm Dancing	Very appropriate 100%
Bloody Sunday	Very appropriate 83%
Adam & Paul	Very appropriate 83%
Short films	Very appropriate 100%

Observations on Studyguide

'essential'

'thought it was interesting for them to read what the director (Lenny Abrahamson) said'.

very good reaction;

'(short film) Most suitable for 40 min class setting'

... more scene questions needed! Only two questioned in detail

'Bloody Sunday: Absolutely brilliant – great response from students.'

History of Irish film: 'excellent detail'



The Mighty Celt

Teacher Training

How worthwhile do you consider the teaching of Irish film to be?

Of those who responded

Very worthwhile	83%
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How familiar were you with Irish film before the training day?

Very familiar	–
Familiar	50%
Not familiar	50%

How familiar were you with the work of the Irish Film Board/Arts Council?

Very familiar	
Familiar	67%
Not familiar	33%

Observations on teaching Irish film after training:

'had very little awareness/knowledge before I realised the broad range of material available.'

Strand III: Wider Visions

Number of schools attending screening:	81%
Number of teachers attending training:	100%

Teacher Training

Usefulness of half day training

Of those who responded:

Very useful	50%
Useful	50%

How worthwhile do you consider the teaching of non-English language/non mainstream film to be?

Very worthwhile	50%
Worthwhile	50%



Do you think your teaching of this section has inspired an interest among your students to a wider range of cinema?

'Difficult to say – certainly has broken down barriers'

Specific benefits

Director profile and background to story	very relevant
The world of the film	most useful to teacher

Summative

Of those who responded:

Reasons for taking part in Module

Interest in film	100%
Desire to offer something different to students	60%
Developing skillsbase	60%

Main area of interest before taking part

Irish film	20%
Arthouse cinema	–
Using mainstream film in the classroom	20%
Promoting visual literacy	80%
Practical filmmaking	40%
Getting practical ideas for classroom work	40%
Linking in with the curriculum	–
Other	–

How well do you think your training needs were met during the training days?

A lot	100%
Not much	–
A little	–

Has the Module inspired you to more/less/the same amount of teaching of moving image?

More	100%
Less	–
Same	–

Observations:

'I would make it a much bigger part of TY study and would have a more focussed approach'.

'Enjoyable and informative, great resources. Irish film very successful with kids'.

'(I would teach) more – in a more structured way'.

(ii) Student Evaluation:

'I really like movies and felt that studying them would be interesting'.

Of those who responded

How do you feel about taking film as a TY subject?

Very enthusiastic	61%
Enthusiastic	37%
Not enthusiastic	2%

Which aspect of this module did you most enjoy?

Watching film in cinema together	84%
Talking about films back at school	5%
Learning about a popular and contemporary art form	2%
Learning more about how films tell their story	9%

Do you think this Module has increased your interest in learning about moving image?

A lot	59%
A little	41%
Not at all	–

What did you think of the films chosen?

	Excellent	Good	Not Good
Mean Creek	73%	27%	–
The Mighty Celt	30%	47%	23%
Maria Full of Grace	41%	46%	13%

Would you like the opportunity to study film for Leaving Certificate?

Yes	91%
No	9%

Observations:

'I would like to study film because it is a part of everyday life'.

Mean Creek: 'very relevant to teenage life, easy to discuss'.

The Mighty Celt: 'It teaches you a lesson such as revenge is not acceptable'.

Maria full of Grace: 'raised good awareness of trafficking'.

Chapter 5

ANALYSIS

This section examines the main issues arising from the primary research findings.

The issues are organised as follows:

- (i) The Module and MIE
- (ii) Teacher as learner/facilitator
- (iii) Student learning and outcomes: process vs product
- (iv) Resources & visits

(i) The Module and Moving Image Education

‘(Mean Creek) is about a young boy being bullied and it is something that people can understand in school’ – student, on Mean Creek

Rather than pursue an historic approach to film, the decision to focus on contemporary films was accurate. Key to this was the experiential learning style of TY – that students would learn from the kind of stories with which they were familiar, such as teen films. While they may not have been fluent in the terminology of film, an accessible film meant that students of all abilities were comfortable and reasonably confident to start discussion.

‘I thought it would be good for TYs to get away from written texts and to engage with film as a medium in itself, rather than simply as a way of illustrating a written text.’

As a way into MIE, the module was perceived as a good start, with access to feature films, short films, films of different genre. Teachers welcomed the opportunity to teach film in its own right, not merely as text as in the English curriculum. Some commented on the usefulness of the three categories – single film/teen genre, Irish film and wider visions – focusing their lessons. Teachers were motivated by their students’ enthusiasm, but also by how much students were willing to connect with this medium.

Strand I: Mean Creek

‘Very pertinent, nicely crafted and stimulating.’

This first strand facilitated the introduction of film language and visual literacy. The studyguide prompted exploration of point of view or representation of the bully. Students had already plenty to draw on from the teen films they knew so discussion was easy. This led to more detailed study of generic elements of teen and romantic comedies.

Strand II: Irish Film

As a complete strand, Irish film was very well received. Beginning with discussion of what ‘Irish film’ means opened up ideas – students and teachers found that they knew more than they had previously thought.

Focussing on recent Irish film, *The Mighty Celt* was very appropriate. While some felt that there would be little interest in ‘northern’ issues, the personal story of the teenage boy made this film appealing. As welcome follow-up, the range of film titles in the studyguide offered different approaches, broadening out ideas of genre to include docudrama and outlining analyses of different scenes.

The short film – ‘*Most suitable for 40 min class setting!*’ – was an unexpected success with teachers and students. As a form, it could be examined visually, generically and narratively. Animations and Irish language titles on DVDs offered diverse resources.

Strand III: Wider Visions

‘Although they weren’t happy with the subtitles, they soon got interested and had excellent views about Maria.’

The aim of Strand III was to offer students the opportunity to engage with films they would not normally either have access to or choose to see. This strand included documentary, non-English language, arthouse titles. *Maria Full of Grace* tells the story of a young, Columbian female drugs mule.

This film was chosen for its accessible story line but also its engaging and strong female central character. In this, the aim was to draw on issues that had been investigated in Strand I, regarding

the teen movie and romantic comedies. They would then view a film about a very different and most likely unfamiliar culture. Given the dominance of leading male roles, discussion of this character could lead onto further exploration of roles for women, such as the action heroine in *House of Flying Daggers*.

The film's handling of drug trafficking and decisions made by Maria also offered possibility for cross-curricular links with CSPE.

'I think they may be more open now....'

As an approach to a wider range of films, the film was a good choice. In general teachers found that their students were more open to subtitled films following this Module although language and perception remain a deterrent.

(ii) Teacher as Learner/Facilitator

'The more information I have, the more I will feel competent to use the ideas with pupils'...

Teacher training days were dedicated to offering suggestions for classroom work, but also to facilitating teachers' learning in the area. Training was regarded as essential and welcome. It gave some confidence in approaching the subject, it offered possibilities and generally, motivated teachers to teach more moving image. The partnership with SLSS ensured that cover was provided for two full days, which took place at the start and during the pilot phase. Day three took place after school, in teachers' own time.

Teachers approached the Module with a range of expectations. Some wanted training in practical filmmaking, others sought to build on existing TY Film Studies programmes and recognised MIE and visual literacy as important skills for today's students.

'Initially, I had no interest but Maria Full of Grace gave me the encouragement to see more foreign language films'...

Teachers found the background material provided in the study guides essential, helping them stay ahead of students. Some teachers commented on their experience of lessons in which they were no longer sole information provider but facilitator in an environment in which all were participating and learning.

'Training was a good intro for teachers/ was fairly wide-ranging, lots of ideas'.

(iii) Student learning as outcome: process V product

'The students really enjoyed the films and even the 'weaker' student was as literate in film analysis as the more able'...

While there was no specific measurement of learning outcomes, teachers commented on their students' engagement with the Module. There was almost complete consensus that the films chosen were apt in terms of stimulating discussion and follow on work. From empathy with characters to recognising the teen subject matter, students found much to respond to in the selected titles. Students could contribute what they already knew, share their enthusiasm and direct this towards developing critical skills. Acquiring visual literacy, they learnt to recognise genre, classify the films they liked to watch and investigate a filmmaker's representation of a subject. Viewing Irish film, they could also evaluate how familiar stories were being told.

It was agreed that the short film form was ideal for student classroom work. One teacher expressed how, 'to his surprise' they had engaged with the activity of creating a 'life' for a character. Another teacher had combined this work with some practical filmmaking and found the two approaches worked really well together.

Some teachers felt under pressure to produce written assessment and asked students to write detailed reviews, which made them more focussed.

(iv) Cinema Visits & Resources 'A very good incentive!'

In student evaluations, the strongest approval rating was given for the cinema outings. From the outset it was agreed that free cinema visits were an essential element. As audience development, they were in keeping with the activities of IFI, IFB, IFCO and the Arts Council. The shared viewing experiences in the cinema, with one's whole class group, created a positive and effective starting point. It facilitated interaction with other students involved in the project from the range of schools (particularly of interest to single sex schools!). It provided an opportunity for the local cinema to engage with the various school communities. One teacher commented on the 'anticipation' and 'excitement of the day'.

'the only problem now is their film outings are over!'

RESOURCES

'Great – access to good background info gives the confidence to attempt teaching it'

Resources, comprising studyguides and dvds, were deemed very useful indeed. Teachers enjoyed the detail provided in the guides, though some commented on sections being 'too highbrow'. One teacher welcomed the categorisation of material into three strands, which made it easier to focus. Several had not worked through all the material, because of time constraints. Preference was expressed for separate student/teacher guides, in particular with an eye to the 40 minute class. Photocopying issues in one school meant guides could not be issued to everyone.

DVDs provided were universally welcomed: one teacher noted how she had previously had to 'scour' shops for prescribed material.

'(the) best support I ever had!'

CONCERNS RAISED

'this looks excellent – I just did not have time to get to it.'

Time: The principal concern raised about delivering this Module was time. In many schools, TY has already an overloaded schedule so, while teachers may search for new and motivating topics for study, they vie for place with other more established activities. One teacher commented that the Module went 'belly-up' early on, because of lack of time, with the cinema visits clashing with work experience.

Training: Needed to be ongoing so that teachers were well equipped to deliver MIE. Interest was expressed in extending MIE from an English focus to include other subject areas such as Art and Technology.

Resources: Although this Module was very well resourced, teachers consistently requested user-friendly classroom materials, particularly student worksheets.

Choice of films: despite the popularity of selected titles, teachers felt the need for advance notice of film's subject matter and access to a wide range of material so as to avoid potentially insensitive material.

Learning Outcomes – Product: The project nature of many TY programmes meant that some teachers were under pressure to produce written work. Suggestions for MIE projects that students could produce were requested;

Whole school implications: In order to gain status within the school curriculum, MIE needs to be implemented in a more structured and resourced way, so that teachers can explore its cross-curricular potential as well as use it to complement their own specialist areas.

SUMMARY

'Just the beginning...'

This analysis has examined the impact of the Module in terms of MIE, the teacher, the student, resources and the working group. Rather than measure specific skills as an outcome, strengths and weaknesses have been deduced from teacher and learner experience. Enthusiasm and skills development has been matched by concern for lack of time, pressure to produce written work, insufficient ready classroom materials. Taking the issues raised into account, we proceed from this analysis to make recommendations for further implementation of the Module into Phase Two.



The Faery Wind (Frameworks short)

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

‘(I) felt very positive about working this module in the classroom...’

The Moving Image Module was piloted to assess the potential for and implications of MIE in TY. This pilot was perceived as a great success from both a teaching and learning perspective. The three elements of screenings, resources and teacher training complemented each other. Teachers spoke of being inspired by the Module but also eager to continue the work, with MIE becoming a more structured and embedded element of TY. Students enjoyed engaging with accessible contemporary films with their classmates, while being invited to draw on their own film experience. The chosen titles broadened both teacher and student awareness of Irish, arthouse and other genres. In many cases, lack of time was the main constraint on further MIE activities, while the prioritising of process over product often added to pressure.

From the point of view of the Working Group, the Module was a success, given that it met its aims, raised the profile of film at TY, stimulated audience development among this age group, expanded the existing IFI education programme and provided a new element to teacher training.

Phase Two is the logical next step. This phase will comprise:

- expanding the reach into a further 50 schools in centres including Athlone, Dublin, Kilkenny, Ennis, Sligo;
- introducing practical filmmaking to the participating teachers and students from Phase One

From the issues raised in the review, a series of recommendations can be made for the Moving Image Module. These build on its strengths but also acknowledge the challenges faced in further implementation.

Recommendations:

- To fulfil the promise of the project, resources must be secured that adequately meet funding requirements of both the theoretical and practical elements

- To continue the collaboration and consultation between the working group, education centres, participating schools and other relevant organisations to realise best MIE practice
- To consolidate the position of MIE within the TY programme of participating schools, making it available to teachers in different subject areas, with priority for English and Art
- To make Module available to all schools through on-line resources and to submit the Module to NCCA for ratification as TY Unit in conjunction with schools to ensure sustainability
- To incorporate the wider film community through delivery of practical element and programme of screenings working with Arts Council guidelines, Towards Best Practice
- To contribute to the professional development of teachers from different subject areas and support curriculum change
- To position MIE within educational debate and curricula review by working together to raise its profile within the education and film sectors and the public



Appendix I

MOVING IMAGE EDUCATION IN THE IRISH SCHOOL CURRICULA

1. Leaving Certificate
 - The revised English curriculum (1999) positions film clearly in relation to other written texts.
 - Irish: From 2006, students can answer a question on a short Irish language film.
 - Modern Languages: Students can discuss a film they have seen in their oral exam.
 - Art: The current art history paper has a question on film.
2. Leaving Certificate Applied
 - Media studies in Communications
3. Junior Cert

English: media studies
4. Other
 - Teachers use film to support other subject areas eg. the adaptation of the English novel, period films for history or classical studies, natural world documentaries for Science or Geography, documentary or issue-based feature film for CSPE or religion.
5. Primary
 - The revised primary curriculum (1999) includes film and media studies in SESE and Visual Arts.
 - ICT: The FÍS project – now in its second phase – uses practical digital filmmaking to support the ICT curriculum.

EXAMPLES OF MIE ACTIVITIES/ORGANISATIONS THROUGHOUT EUROPE:

Czech Republic: An annual summer school for teachers.

Association of 'cultural cinemas' have compiled a list of classic films which can be purchased and made available to a regional network. (www.lfs.cz)

France: Association Les Enfants de Cinéma coordinate a project (see www.cinegamin.free.fr) the aim of which is to open cinemas up to young people. This is achieved through programming a range of films which students are brought to see during school time.

Germany: Lernort Kino (www.lernort-kino.de). Working with local cinemas in different regions around a thematically programmed school film week. Resources are provided.

Sweden: Since 1988, the Swedish Film Institute has administered a yearly governmental grant to promote screenings at local cinemas within the school system.

UK: Websites of various organisations including the British Film Institute (www.bfi.org.uk), Association for Media Education in Scotland (www.mediaed.org.uk/links/ames) and Media Education Wales (www.mediaedwales.org.uk), outline different media education and digital filmmaking projects for young people. Film Education (www.filmeducation.org), funded by the UK film industry provides online resources and coordinates a National School Film Week.



Pilot Transition Year Module in Moving Image Education

October 2005 – January 2006

Participating Teachers & Schools

Clongowes Wood College, Clongowes, Co Kildare
Collinstown Park, Clondalkin, Dublin 22
Firhouse Community College, Firhouse, Dublin 24
Holy Family School, Newbridge, Co Kildare
Holy Family School, Rathcoole, Co Dublin
Naas CBS, Naas Co Kildare
Newbridge College, Newbridge, Co Kildare
Old Bawn Community School, Old Bawn, Tallaght, Dublin 24
Our Lady's School, Templeogue, Co Dublin
Scoil Mhuire, Clane, Co Kildare
St Marys College, Naas, Co Kildare

Brendan Shalvey
Mary Hartnett
Eileen Murphy
Catherine Rochford
Yvonne Kiely
Rob Halford
Anne-Marie Killen
Darach O Laoire
Linda Morris
Marie O'Rourke
Eileen Keane

Arts Council Working Group on Film and Young People

Arts Council (www.artscouncil.ie)
Irish Film Board (www.filmboard.ie)
Irish Film Censor's Office (www.ifco.ie)
Irish Film Institute (www.irishfilm.ie)

Second Level Support Service (www.slss.ie)

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Victoria Pope
John Kelleher, Chair
Grainne Humphreys
Alicia McGivern
Kevin McDermott

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Appendix II

PILOT MODULE FOR TY IN MOVING IMAGE EDUCATION

Recommended Time Allocation:

45 Hours

8 weeks Oct – Dec (after teacher training Day 1, Oct 17, 2005)

Double class x 2 per week

3 screenings per module (min. 2) out of school

Examples of Curriculum links with films:

English	Film as stimulus for discussion/ exploration of theme Intro to film language – applicable to LC study
Modern Languages	German/French/Spanish/Italian/ Irish shorts
Civics, Social, Personal Education	Exploring issues eg <i>Mean Creek</i> , <i>Adam & Paul</i> , <i>Inside I'm Dancing</i> , <i>Bowling for Columbine</i> . <i>Maria Full of Grace</i> , Irish film.
History	eg. <i>Downfall</i> , <i>Fog of War</i> , <i>Bloody Sunday</i> .
Art	<i>House of Flying Daggers</i> , <i>Spirited Away</i> ; marketing film – advertising; style, auteur; practical filmmaking.
Business	Film marketing & distribution; inside the industry; documentary.
Environmental and Social Studies	Documentaries eg. <i>Supersize Me</i> , <i>Touching the Void</i> .

SECTION 1: WEEK 1–3

Studyguide: *Mean Creek*

- Focus on single film and film genre: *Mean Creek*
- Intro to Film Language – looking at clips from range of films;
- Looking at teen genre with particular focus on *Mean Creek*
- Exploring different genres eg. Romantic comedy or thriller
- Study of characterisation/theme
- Inside the Industry – meet the producer
- Evaluation
- Cinema Visit: *Mean Creek*

SECTION 2: WEEK 4–6

Studyguide: Irish Film

- Irish film – brief history of industry;
- What is Irish film?
- Themes/representation
- Typical storylines/themes
- Clips from DVD resources (*Adam & Paul*, *Inside I'm Dancing*,
Bloody Sunday)
- Irish short films/schemes
- Work of Irish Film Board
- Visiting filmmaker
- Evaluation
- Cinema Visit: *The Mighty Celt* .

SECTION 3: WEEK 7–8

Studyguide: *Wider Visions*

- 'Arthouse' film: *Touching the Void*; *Maria Full of Grace*,
House of Flying Daggers, *Spirited Away*.
- Questions of national cinema
- Representing reality: eg. *Bowling for Columbine*.
- Representation of race/class/gender
- What is an auteur?
- Classification & Citizenship
- Evaluation
- Cinema Visit: *Maria Full of Grace*

