'Films have the power to raise your gaze
and raise your game and give you a
ticket to pleasure and enlightenment
forever more ...'

Lindsay Mackie, journalist and film critic

'People do learn best
when tasks are meaningful,
they matter when they
are... push back
the bo... what they
already k... and step on to
new ground.'

Cary Bazalgette [1]

# A

## Film in action

Film was considered the great art form of the twentieth century and was undoubtedly one of the most popular. Film, in the twenty-first century, remains one of the most enjoyed and accessible forms of entertainment and artistic expression throughout the world.

Part of its popularity lies in the way it has interacted with other, long-established art forms, including storytelling, music and the arts.

However, film is much more than just a popular art form.

Let us consider the following observations:

- 'Film works as a motivator. Film is fun. And film is the rising language of the twenty-first century, whether we want to be or not. We might as well start embracing it now.' Stephen Apkon

- 'Moving images can educate and inform as well as entertain. In the 21st century, the ability to read critically and evaluate moving images has become an integral part of literacy.' Story of the Movies

- 'Film can enhance the language learning process by designing a series of activities that can ... linguistic, cultural and intercultural skills, as well as developing the practices of New ... that learners need for the 21st century.' ... and Carmen Herrero [2]

In this book I will be referring to major film and media researchers' findings, and I will try ... answers to these important questions:

- What is the role of film in society?
- What is the role of film in education?
- What is the relationship between film and literacy in the twenty-first century?
- Why is it becoming increasingly important to help young people analyse films and to educate them in making their own films?
- What are the educational benefits of not just watching film, but also of creating moving images?
- What are the key strategies to use film 'in action' in language teaching, both inside the classroom and outside?

A key goal of *Film in Action* is to challenge teachers to reflect on the role of film in society, in our educational systems and in language learning, and to think more systematically and deliberately about the different ways we might use film critically and creatively – both in the classroom and beyond.

## Film in society

*'To be a functioning adult in a mediated society, one needs to be able to distinguish between different media forms and know how to ask basic questions about everything we watch or hear.'*
Elizabeth Thoman and Tessa Jolls [1]

In today's society, we acquire the majority of our information through moving image media: the cinema, the television, the internet, and the screens that surround us as we work, shop, travel, socialise, and learn. Film is very much at the heart of these moving image media, which are an important and valuable part of our culture.

Technological developments, such as the advent of the internet, the digital revolution, the proliferation of mobile devices which allow us to capture moving images easily, the introduction of cheap and accessible video-editing tools and the emergence of video-sharing sites such as YouTube and Vimeo, have changed forever the way moving images relate to society.

The moving image has extended its reach from the conventional cinema and television screens to a myriad of different platforms, yet, whatever the technology, the end product remains the same – stories told, using sound and light that move across a screen.

As Stephen Apkon has said: 'What we are now seeing is the gradual ascendance of the moving image as the primary mode of communication around the world: one that transcends languages, cultures and borders. And what makes this new era different from the dawn of television is that the means of production – once in the hands of only the broadcasting companies with their large budgets – is now available to anyone with a camera, a computer and the will.' [?]

### Developments

So the significance of the moving image is changing profoundly – 'it has developed from being a vehicle for art and entertainment to become a key part of how we communicate, socialise, learn, and do business.'

As Apkon notes, every computer – or even a mobile phone owner – is, potentially at least, in a *producing role*, no longer solely a consumer, but with the capability to edit or create moving images. The fact that children and young people have access to technology which allows them to become media producers in their own right has important consequences for our social and educational system.

It would seem, therefore, to make sense for schools to focus on the moving image and capitalise on learners' knowledge and enthusiasm. However, many teachers believe that a focus on moving images in the curriculum does not allow time for films and television. Furthermore, there is a tendency in society to assume that moving image media are bad for children and somehow detract from 'real' education.

### Dangers

Many people, including some teachers, believe that there exists a direct relationship between a perceived fall in literacy standards and a rise in children's consumption of the moving image, in particular film, television and online video.

In fact, firstly, as Andrew Goodwyn states [?], 'there is currently no actual evidence that the world is becoming a less literate or less sophisticated place'. And secondly, a negative co-relational effect between media consumption and literacy is not substantiated by empirical study.

Indeed, empirical research suggests a more positive relationship between the moving image and print literacy. For example, Margaret Mackey has pointed out [?] the variety and depth of reader engagement with 'moving image texts'. She has shown how they offer children insights into structural aspects of narrative, as it is conveyed through the medium of the moving image.

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### Definitions

At this point, it would seem to be opportune to clarify two concepts that are recurrent throughout *Film in Action*:

- **Text** has traditionally referred to a book or other written or printed work. However, here, we use the term 'moving image text' to refer to feature films, clips, short videos and video-clips, as well as learner-generated content. They are texts, in the same way that books are texts – in the sense that they can be read (analysed and interpreted) and written (created).
- **To read** has been used for centuries to refer to the action of decoding and understanding written or printed texts, and **to write** has conventionally referred to the ability to communicate in writing or print. In this book, we use the term 'read the screen' to mean to analyse and interpret moving image texts, and the term 'write the screen' to mean to make moving image texts.

## Film in education

*'Film and the electronic media have drastically changed how we perceive the world – and ourselves – during the past century, yet we all too rarely consider the vast amounts of information they convey to us in massive doses without questioning what they tell us what they tell.'*
James Monaco [?]

On the whole, our educational systems have been slow to respond to the new visual technologies and the ascendance of the moving image in our society.

In the words of Andrew Goodwyn: 'given the pre-eminence of the moving image in twentieth century culture, and the current evidence that it seems to be even more dominant in the twenty-first, it may seem more peculiar that its study is not at the heart of a postmodern education.' [?]

To better understand the slow reaction of our educational systems to the new visual technology and the dominance of the moving image, we need to explore the concept of literacy and its impact on our educational systems.

### Literacy

The concept of literacy is currently undergoing a radical change. Literacy has been traditionally linked to the alphabet or a language code – that is, through reading and writing – and linked with print media. There has been a strong dependence on linguistic theories and, as a consequence, education has been dominated for centuries by written language and by print in particular.

For a long period, the book was the dominant medium of communication. However, with the challenge of a technologically evolving landscape and the ascendance of the image, in particular the moving image, the screen has taken that place.

According to Gunther Kress, a prominent member of the New London Group, a group of scholars who argue that literacy pedagogy should be linked to the rapidly-changing social, cultural and technological environment: 'The former constellation of medium of book and mode of writing is giving way, and in many domains has already given way, to the new constellation of medium of screen and mode of image.' [?] It is necessary to point out here that this change does not spell the death of the written word. As Kress states: 'Writing is too useful and valuable a mode of representation and communication – never mind the enormous weight of cultural investment in this technology.' [?]

Communication through visual media will never completely displace reading and writing, as Andrew Goodwyn points out: 'it might be far more productive to consider cultural assimilations rather than replacements.' [?] We need to expand our competences, rather than shed the old skills to make way for the new ones.

However, the fact that the book has now been superseded by the screen in the role of dominant medium of communication does mean the definition of literacy as decoding print is now outdated.

In the words of Carey Jewitt: *'As a consequence it is no longer possible to think about learning and literacy solely as 'linguistic' accomplishments: the time for that habitual conjunction of 'language and learning' is over. This has significant implications for communicat[...] [...]tivity, education and the design of social futures for the twenty-first century.'* [...]

## Multiliteracies

The term 'multiliteracies' was coined by the New London Group, who called [...] a broader view of literacy than portrayed by traditional *language-based appro[...].*

According to Andrew Goodwyn, the multiliteracy movement argues 'for [...] [...] intellectual tools, ie ways of interpreting the world that have been deve[...] th[...] [...]rmal and informal learning. Language and its associated literacy is one tool, b[...] visual literacy of images and codes is another and both involve the other'. [...]

The notion of multiliteracies suggests a repertoire of overla[...]g literacies, and that the acquisition of any literacy leads to the capacity to develop ot[...].

In *Literacy in the New Media Age* [...] Gunther Kress offe[...] theo[...] of literacy where he argues that our previous dependence on linguistic th[...] d[...] e literacy is now obsolete and deficient, and that we must combine language-ba[...] with semiotics (the study of signs and symbols and how they are used) an[...] ther vi[...] theories, to provide an appropriate meaning to the term 'literacy' in t[...] [...]st century.

Carey Jewitt concludes: *'there is a need to [...] uch lite[...] practices as an inter-textual web of contexts and technology, rather than isol[...] s [...] f skills and competences. ... what is needed is an educational framework that recognis[...] es [...] s the new forms of text that children meet every day in order to secure the place [...] mi[...] and visual texts within the curriculum.'* [...]

## Visual literacy

As literacy, in its broadest sense, now ref[...] is a wider cultural competence, the immensely important role of film in [...] culture and society should be sufficient justification for ensuring their integrati[...] in [...] ucational systems.

According to a re[...] [...]y [...] Briti[...] Film Institute [...]:

*'We live in a wor[...] oving i[...] ges. To participate fully in our society and its culture means to be as confident in [...] [...] nderstanding of moving images as of the printed word. Both are essential aspec[...] [...]teracy [...] the twenty-first century. In the same way that we take for granted that [...] [...]li[...] u r[...] bility to help children to read and write – to use and enjoy words – we should tak[...] gra[...] that we help children and young people to use, enjoy and understand moving [...] ages [...] just to be technically capable but to be culturally literate too.'*

The [...] po[...] nce of visual literacy in education is widely acknowledged. It is generally agr[...] e [...]on needs to develop learners' skills and ability to interpret image and to [...]mmu[...] vi[...]lly, and in schools there is a gradual move *away* from a reliance on print [...] [...] ppria[...] dium of dissemination and instruction towards visual media and the scre[...]

[...]hen we look at visual literacy, it is necessary to understand both *media literacy* and *film [...]cy:*

- **Media literacy** is defined by The Media Literacy Centre as follows:
  *'a twenty-first century approach to education. It provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate, create and participate with messages in a variety of forms – from print to video to the Internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy.'* [...]

- **Film literacy,** which can be considered a subset of media literacy, is defined as follows:
  *'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.'* [...]

While media education has a wider scope than film education, the aims of both are virtually identical – to foster a wider literacy, which incorporates cultural experience, aesthetic appreciation, critical understanding and, increasingly, creative production.

An increasing number of educational theorists stress the importance of bo[...] [...]d film literacy as fundamental to literacy in the twenty-first century – if young pe[...] e are [...] able to participate fully in our society.

However, media literacy and, more particularly, film literacy are sti[...] [...]ion, or on the margins of, national and international policy agendas. While the 'tr[...] n[...] [...] such as music, art and literature have long been established as core elem[...] ts [...] [...] curricula in many countries, film education has typically been ignored.

This absence or marginalisation of film literacy in our edu[...] [...] ems is commented on by many influential writers and film directors. Let us con[...] er th[...] [...]ing observations:

- *'You have to make room for film in curriculum. What [...] doing is training the eye and the heart of the learner to look at film in a differe[...] [...] by [...] questions and pointing to different ideas, different concepts.'*
  Martin Scorsese [...]

- *'Cine literacy is long overdue in American [...]cat[...] [...]verage American watches seven hours of TV per day. Yet, for the most pa[...] e w[...] th em uncritically, passively, allowing them to wash over us, rarely analysing [...] [...] on us, how they can shape our values.'*
  Louis Giannetti [...]

- *'So long as the schools neglect this [...] [...] the audience will be at the mercy of those who seek to manipulate them and will [...] n in [...]llectually impoverished in an art form that is closer to them than many oth[...]*
  John Culkin [...]

There is a lack of understanding [...] [...]cy makers about the importance of film in young children's lives and, as [...] consequenc[...] in our educational systems. There is also a lack of a structured, systemat[...] pportunity for learners to watch, analyse, interpret and understand films, and even lee[...] [...] y for learners to make their own films as part of their overall preparation [...] [...]

## Social lite[...] a[...]

If learner[...] [...] to suc[...] ally meet the social, cultural, political and economic demands of t[...] [...] ies, [...] need to be able to read and write in all forms of communication. George Luca[...] the p[...] ment question: *'If learners aren't taught this new language of sound and im[...] es a[...] t they be considered as illiterate as if they left college without being able to read [...] te?'* [...]

[...] [...]pkon states that, with the ascendance of the moving image and visual te[...] [...] [...]ge [...]ur work lives will be changed forever, and soon it will be as unfathomable not to [...]ow [...] make a video as it is not to know how to send an email.' [...]

[...] cation has always been focused on preparing young people for their future roles as citizens and workers. We teach children to read and write, not so that they become the next J. K. Rowling or Ian McEwan, although some of them do become professional authors, but so that they can become fully active and participating citizens in society.

The same applies to film.

We should teach children to 'read the screen' – to analyse and interpret moving image texts – and to 'write the screen' – make their own moving image texts – not so that they become the next Kathryn Bigelow or Quentin Tarantino, although some of them will become professional film-makers, but to prepare them for their future roles as citizens and workers in society.

Educating children and young people to be film literate is about democratic entitlement and civic participation. The skills needed for the modern day 'workplace' are quite different from

what they were even twenty years ago, yet our educational systems seem to be caught in a time trap.

In our schools, we urgently need the introduction of structured, systematic opp_____ties for learners to watch, analyse, interpret and understand films, and opportunities for l_____ to make their own films as part of their overall preparation for life.

## A new literacy

The concept of literacy is also changing because of the advent of remix a_ pa__cipatory culture.

- **Remix** is a collage or a recombination of existing images, video cl___ o_____om popular digital culture, 'mashed up' into something new. In other w___ a remix is made when a person joins separate media elements to form a new _____ of media with a different meaning from the original. For example, a youn_ __d in fac__ o sees a clip from a Hollywood film she loves and sets it to music whi__ _h think suits it; she mixes the original clip with the song and creates a new piece of me___
  A remix culture is one which encourages these der_____ rks, which combine or edit existing artistic materials to create new products. C_____ olar Larry Lessig has argued that remix is literacy in the twenty-first _____ orm of self-expression that should be allowed to flow without restrictio__ _ro___oday's digital world. [ ]
- **Participatory culture** is a global phenome___ ___ young people all over the world are embracing the expressive and distribu___ ____ s of digital technologies and the internet, to create and share their ow_ ___ materials with each other. For example, a young man sees a viral video on You____ ___ __ic__ e hates; he creates his own parody of the video and uploads it to YouTube ___ __ __ the original video.
  Scholar Henry Jenkins explain___ 'participatory culture describes a world where everyone participates, where we take media___ ___ own hands, and where we have the capacity often to produce media and share media'. ___ _____rding to Jenkins, 'young people have a richer intellectual and creative life outside of school than inside'. [ ]
  In participatory cultur_ __h_ _____ of literacy shifts from one of individual expression to community involvem___ ____ ng body of research suggests the potential benefits of participatory ___ __ includ___ __ development of skills valued in the twenty-first century workp__

Scholarship i_ ____ begin___ to show how elements of remix and participatory culture are part of ___ __ ___ which children develop literacy in the new century. Jenkins concludes: 'Access to __ ____cip___ y culture functions as a new form of the hidden curriculum, shaping which y__h __ ___cored and which will be left behind as they enter school and the workplace.' [ ]

The ___ on _ _ important that young people learn how to create their own media, especially mo___ __ ___ to be able to take part in this remix and participatory culture which will become _ __ cre___ _ply important part of literacy.

__ _book__ __ to help learners to acquire the skills they need to become full participants in ou_ ___iety.

## Education in film

'Film education can encompass both watching and making films, and the best kind of film education engages learners in active learning. It goes beyond just passively consuming or watching films.'
Kenneth Brannagh [ ]

Film literacy, as we have suggested, involves being able to analyse and interpret moving image texts (reading the screen) and being able to edit and make moving image texts (writing the screen). Meaning is communicated through moving images more readily than print because of its immediacy, making film literacy an incredibly powerful teaching tool.

'When people talk about the digital divide, I think of it not being so much about who has access to what technology, as who knows how to create and express themselves in this new language of the screen.'
George Lucas [ ]

'Throughout the history of education, communication has been at the centre of the experience, regardless of subject matter. We can't learn (or teach) what we can't communicate – and, increasingly, that communication is being done through visual media.'
Stephen Apkon [ ]

'Learners often complain after a few months of studying the ____, that they no longer ___ anything ____ without an _____ and critical eye, that __ _____ been ___' How___ who ___ __ ___m further __ _ a_ually very pro__ d excited at acquiring t__ __ye'.'
Andrew Goodwyn [ ]

## Teaching and learning

Educational programmes that make use of visual and digital media, and show learners how to make their own visual texts, will better prepare learners for their fu___ in a rapidly-changing world because, when we are educated in the art of film-mak___ __ see that it develops many of the life skills – such as communication, creativity, __abo____ innovation, conflict management and decision making – that are increasin_ __ __ce __ the modern-day workplace.

In the words of Stephen Apkon [ ]:
'Over the past decade, visual storytelling has become one of the new im____ ____ ____ munication tools for those who want to succeed in business. This is no surprise ___ co___ __ we need almost regardless of profession is communication. It is how we learn, h__ w_ __re information, and how we build professional relationships and communities. A_ _____ ___ly around us and permeate our environments, it is reflected in how we do b_____.'

In this swiftly-changing world, skills in creativity will be p____ ount, and visual technologies give young people unique opportunities to be cre___ __ v____ of media. People who can read a variety of texts critically, and who can ____ _ t___ in a range of media, will be best equipped to succeed as citizens and worker_ __ ir _____asingly complex technological world.

And given that the new visual technolog___ ___le not just to consume media, but to become media producers in their own r___ __ gi___ learners the opportunity to produce their own media texts is an essen_____ __ _____ this ___cess, on whatever scale is possible.

Carey Jewitt states:
'The creation of user-generated ___ __ ____ nd aspect of technologised production practices for pedagogy. Different form_ __ ____duction are required that allow learners to generate and produce their own responses. Le___ ___duction is an important aspect of learner work in the classroom and research has reporte__ _ ___own the value of production as a kind of externalisation in supporting learning ___ the work of production forces learners to express their thinking, thereby making the gaps in _ __ __ ___dge explicit, and clarifying what they need to learn.' [ ]

Practical filr__ _____ __ __ ___ ___ ent way for learners to develop an understanding of how moving ima__ ____ntio_ _ork.

It is clear that pro___ ___ moving image texts is intrinsically motivating and meaningful to lear__ __ _ __ multimedia and multimodal world – in which remix and participatory cul___ pla__ _ increasingly important role, as we have seen.

## Te___hin_ _d learners

___ her_ __ urgent need for schools to develop programmes that teach learners not only __ ___ __ screen, but also how to write the screen. As the actor and film director Ken___ __ tin_ _ugh states: 'Critically, culturally and creatively, film is a key literacy skill for __ ung p___ Every young person should have the opportunity to watch films, to learn from ___ _ and to make them.' [ ]

For any film education programme to work successfully, it needs clear operating principles, such as the 'three Cs' approach adopted in the UK in The Charter for Media Literacy [ ] which was drawn up in 2005 by the UK Film Council and its partners on the Media Literacy Task Force: the BBC, Channel 4 and Skillset.

It suggested three ways in which a fully active and participating citizen would to be able to engage with media. The 'three Cs' of The Charter for Media Literacy are:

- **Cultural access**
  Learners should have the opportunity to choose from a broad range of films and so get a better understanding of their culture and other people's culture, way of life and history.
- **Critical understanding**
  Learners should become confident enough to look behind the surface of the screen, to understand a film's intentions, techniques and qualities.