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# MOVING IMAGE PRODUCTION AND THE PEDAGOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIA LITERACY

Liam French, Stuart Moore and Kayla Parker

## Introduction

This chapter states the case for the pedagogical value of moving image production in the development of media literacy. In the context of this chapter, the concept of media literacy is extended to encompass not just the ability to critically 'read' media texts but also involves the practices of 'making' media products and artefacts. Drawing on the experiences of two of the authors' involvement with the Bristol Natural History Consortium's *Wild Ideas* DVD as a case study, this chapter illustrates the pedagogical value of using media technologies to enable the learning of critical abilities, competencies and skills through the active production of media texts. In concluding, we propose that moving image production work not only contributes to the development of media literacy (a valuable life skill in its own right) but also contributes to personal and social development as well as potentially fostering other transferable skills and competencies for employability and citizenship.

## Media Literacy

The concept of 'literacy' is central to media studies although within the context of media education literacy is extended and developed in the conventional (or familiar) sense of the term when used in relation to print literacy<sup>1</sup>. Media literacy is increasingly being acknowledged as an important (indeed desirable) skill and is gaining currency across the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of the education system in the United Kingdom, Europe and other parts of the world<sup>2,3</sup>. What constitutes media literacy is subject to ongoing debates and there is no absolute consensus as such in terms of how media literacy can be defined. Media literacy can be (and often is) defined in different ways and no singular, agreed upon definition exists in the academic literature at the time of writing this. However, it is not our intention here to enter into a debate in terms of arguing for or against what does and does not constitute an adequate conception of media literacy. Of course, we recognise the importance and validity of these arguments and their historical place in the formation of media studies and media education more generally but such debates are beyond the scope of this chapter. What we do offer here is a working definition of media literacy supported with a grounded example with a view to sharing our own understandings and how this translates through practice into what we term the pedagogical development of media literacy.

Whilst it is still commonplace in many media studies' textbooks (and in some media studies courses) to maintain a distinction between media theory and media practice it is our belief that the pedagogical development of media literacy involves both theory and practice. In this respect, the term media literacy involves using media technologies to enable the transference of critical abilities, competencies and skills through the active production of media texts as well as equipping students with the methodological tools for interrogating dominant, mainstream representations of ethnicity, class or gender in media output. Our position on media literacy then is broadly in-keeping with the notion that media literacy can be defined in the following way: "the ability to access, understand and create communication in a variety of contexts"<sup>4</sup>. Defined in this way, media literacy can be legitimately expanded to encompass not only the critical reading (or deconstruction) of meaning(s) in media products such as Hollywood movies, television programmes, popular songs and so on, but can also involve the skills and competencies to produce media texts and artefacts. Media literacy, ideally then, involves critical thinking skills, the development of strategies with which to discuss and analyse media content, an understanding of the process of communication, the impact of the media on the individual and society, and the ability to produce effective and responsible media messages<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Ben Moore, "Media Education" in *The Media Studies Book: a Guide for Teachers*, ed. David Lusted (London: Routledge, 1991), 171-190.

<sup>2</sup> Marcus Leaning, *Issues in Information and Media Literacy: Education, Practice and Pedagogy* (Santa Rosa: Informing Science Press, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> W. James Potter, *Media Literacy* 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (London: Sage Publications, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> *Review of Ofcom's Media Literacy programme 2004-08*, (Ofcom: Office of Communications, December 19, 2008), 2, accessed April 5, 2011, <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/media-literacy/reviewml0408.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Art Silverblat, *Media Literacy: Keys to Interpreting Media Messages* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001).

In our view, the aforementioned elements of media literacy can be pedagogically achieved through actively involving students in the production of their own media texts. The skills and competencies involved in the active production of media artefacts are valuable (indeed, as valuable) as the tools and techniques for critically decoding (or reading against the grain) media messages. This, we believe, is crucial to the development and formation of (a critical) media literacy. If, as Potter<sup>6</sup> contends, media literacy is fundamentally about ‘taking control’ then media production must be included in the pedagogical development of media literacy. As Grahame<sup>7</sup> suggests, media analysis alone is not enough and hands-on experience of production work is essential if students are to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which the media produce meaning(s) and the ways in which those meanings are understood by audiences. In short, media literacy must be centrally concerned with the production of meaning(s) and the pedagogical development of media literacy must involve both the ability to critically engage with media messages as well as actively and creatively producing meanings in a variety of contexts. Media literacy by definition must include elements of both media theory and practice and an understanding and appreciation of their inter-relationships. In this model, “practice and theory are complementary and interrelated”<sup>8</sup>. Conceptualised in this way, we have suggested that “media literacy empowers people to be both critical thinkers and creative producers of an increasingly wide range of messages using image, language and sound”<sup>9</sup>.

### **The Moving Image: Production Work and the Creative Process**

In terms of developing media literacy then we have suggested that an understanding of media production processes and techniques can play a key role. Production work is an important element in the pedagogical development of media literacy because moving image production in particular can actively involve students in the creative process and the production of meaning(s). The skills involved in the creative process of media production are valuable for developing an understanding of how the communication of meaning takes place and of how media texts are produced. It also underpins the fundamental principle of giving a voice to the student - a core objective in terms of developing media literacy<sup>10</sup>.

Contrary to some accounts, production work involves more than simply mastering the technical aspects of how media technologies actually ‘work’. Learning the technical aspects of media production is, of course, an important set of skills in its own right but the practical activities involved in the creative processes of media production are effective in terms of developing a range of transferable skills and competencies. For example, students can develop their understandings of institutions, audiences, texts and genres through first-hand experience of how narrative, editing, lighting, sound, camera angles and shot types all contribute to the production of meaning(s) for an intended audience. It is also the case that both team work and collaboration is an important element in moving image production work wherein students often have to work in a group with clearly defined roles:

“co-operation must be a central feature of production methodology, not only for its pedagogic value, but also for the very obvious reason that all media products are defined and constructed by groups rather than individuals”<sup>11</sup>.

The pre-production (or planning) stage(s) of any production project fosters an environment for active collaboration from the outset wherein decisions have to be made about idea generation, story boarding, scripting, responsibilities and roles, including camera work, direction, editing, locations and so on. Production work should also ideally provide a space for students to reflect upon and evaluate the creative process, what they have produced, what was achieved and what they have learnt. Although more research is needed in this area, there is some evidence to indicate that moving image production work provides a creative context for literacy development because it establishes a ‘space’ wherein language, images, voices and gestures can be combined<sup>12</sup>. In so doing, moving image production work can be utilised effectively for the development and enhancement of

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<sup>6</sup> Potter, “Media Literacy” 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Jenny Grahame, “The Production Process” in *The Media Studies Book: a Guide for Teachers*, ed. David Lusted (London: Routledge, 1991), 146-170.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 150.

<sup>9</sup> Belinha S. De Abreu, “Middle Schoolers, Media Literacy and Methodology: the Three M's” in *Issues in Information and Media Literacy: Education, Practice and Pedagogy*, ed. Marcus Leaning (Santa Rosa: Informing Science Press, 2009), 218.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 209-226.

<sup>11</sup> Grahame, “The Production Process,” 152.

<sup>12</sup> Jackie Marsh, “Media Literacy in the Early Years” in *Desirable Literacies: Approaches to Language and Literacy in the Early Years* 2nd Edition, ed. Jackie Marsh and Elaine Hallet. (London: Sage Publications, 2008), 205-222.

a range of transferable skills such as the negotiation of meaning, reasoning and problem solving<sup>1314</sup>. In addition to this, some research has indicated that there is also the potential for a positive correlation between moving image production and more traditional conceptions of literacy<sup>1516</sup>. Moving image production undertaken in a structured learning environment can facilitate the promotion of a more positive engagement with print literacy including greater awareness of composition, sentence structure, narrative comprehension and increased motivational levels for reading more generally<sup>17</sup>. Moving image production work then should not be seen as an end in itself but rather a structured process through which students can better understand how meaning is produced in a range of contexts including print based forms.

Moving image production work conceptualised within a theory/practice framework for media literacy can play an important role in personal and social development as well as offering the potential for both creativity and empowerment. Grahame<sup>18</sup> offers an insight into the ways in which schools and colleges in combination with various sector agencies and organisations might come together in order to co-produce media texts:

“production work might function as a link between different schools, sectors and agencies so that institutions within a particular area from further education down to primary or even nursery, might collaborate with parents, youth workers, community workshops or independent production groups in sharing resources, expertise, skills and ideas. Such co-operations could challenge and redefine the conventional hierarchies of learning and, through the genuinely democratic process of constructing meanings from and for the community, establish the development of a life-long commitment to media practice and media education”<sup>19</sup>.

In the following section, we offer a case study of how such a project can be practically realised and how such co-operations can actually work in practice.

### **Case Study: *Perfect World*, a Music Video with an Ecological Message for the *Wild Ideas* Project**

The *Wild Ideas* filmmaking project about wildlife, ecology, conservation and the environment for six groups of young people in the South West of England, took place from late in 2004 to the summer of 2005. *Wild Ideas* was run by Wildscreen on behalf of the Bristol Natural History Consortium, (BNHC)<sup>20</sup>, which was set up in 2003 by organizations in the Bristol area in order to initiate and realize “flagship environmental communication projects”<sup>21</sup>. *Wild Ideas* was one of the first projects initiated by BNHC, whose members include Bristol Zoo Gardens, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), University of Bristol, University of the West of England, and Wildscreen, the charitable trust responsible for the international wildlife and environmental filmmaking Wildscreen Festival. Bristol is a centre of moving image and media production, and has been home to the BBC’s Natural History Unit (NHU) since it was established in 1957.

### **Methodology**

The project was broadly underpinned by the principles of action research, which, as Reason<sup>22</sup> points out, is best understood as an orientation to inquiry rather than a specific methodology. Action research has a long history and can be defined and deployed in various ways depending on the aims and objectives of the researcher(s), the context of the research and the nature of the issue or problem in question. However, key elements that are common to most action research projects involve the bringing together of, where possible, both theory and practice wherein planning, participation, action, reflection and evaluation are built into the research process in the pursuit of practical solutions. Most importantly, action research is characterised by collaboration with all those involved and is participatory where possible, at all levels. In this respect, all

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<sup>13</sup> Grahame, “The Production Process,” 146-170.

<sup>14</sup> Marsh, “Media Literacy.”

<sup>15</sup> Jackie Marsh, Greg Brooks, Jane Hughes, Louise Ritchie, Sam Roberts and Katy Wright, *Digital Beginnings: Young Children’s Use of Popular Culture, Media and New Technologies* (Sheffield: University of Sheffield, 2005), accessed April 5, 2011, <http://www.digitalbeginnings.shef.ac.uk>.

<sup>16</sup> Marsh, “Media Literacy.”

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Grahame, “The Production Process.”

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 168.

<sup>20</sup> BNHC: *Bristol Natural History Consortium*, accessed April 5, 2011, <http://www.bnhc.org.uk/>.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Reason, “The Theory and Practice of Action Research,” in *Understanding Research for Social Policy and Practice: Themes, Methods and Approaches*, ed. Saul Becker and Alan Bryman (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2004), 114–122.

participants in the process take some responsibility in the planning, action and decision making and it is these features of action research that make it potentially both empowering and emancipatory for all involved. Quite simply, action research attempts to be research that is conducted by, with and for people rather than research that is 'done to' or 'on' people<sup>23</sup>. Action research can be used in a variety of contexts but is most commonly used in educational settings<sup>24</sup> wherein the goals of the research might be to implement change, influence policy or, more generally, to actively enable the participants realise a shared goal that might serve the interests of the community through the empowerment of the participants in the research.

The *Wild Ideas* initiative sought to address the failings in the communication of conservation issues, especially to youth audiences, identified by BNHC research<sup>25</sup>. Wildscreen, on behalf of BNHC, commissioned six production companies, with expertise in working with young people and communities, to each make a short film with a group of young people that communicated their perspectives on "their lives and environment"<sup>26</sup> to other young people. The production companies worked with young people in "disadvantaged communities"<sup>27</sup> located in Bristol, Plymouth and Cornwall, Bath and Wiltshire. Sundog Media, the production company run by two of the authors, was responsible for managing the Plymouth strand: the brief was to work with a group of young people using moving image production as a pedagogical tool in order to stimulate an interest amongst young people about the environment, and to educate and inform understanding and appreciation of the natural world<sup>28</sup>.

This case study focuses on the experiential learning model<sup>29</sup> at the heart of the *Wild Ideas* project, and in particular the additional pedagogical methodologies deployed in *Perfect World*, the music video with an ecological message made by the Plymouth filmmakers, which illustrates the dynamic collaborative processes of integrated theory and praxis such as 'problem based learning' (PBL)<sup>30,31</sup> and 'situated learning'<sup>32</sup>, that enabled them to develop their own critical voice through creating a film from 'script to screen', and on the additional legacy of the project: enhancing the young filmmakers' personal and social development, and through the acquisition of transferable skills that increased their employability and sense of citizenship.

### ***Wild Ideas: Pedagogy***

Following the engagement of the six production companies in autumn 2004, representatives from each were invited to attend a briefing day held at BBC Bristol during which Paul Appleby, the NHU representative for the project, explained the pedagogical underpinning of *Wild Ideas* using Kolb's Learning Cycle<sup>33</sup>, a model of experiential learning that directs the student through four successive stages of learning and reflection. Kolb's theory suggests that it is not sufficient to have an experience in order to learn: that the students must reflect on the experience in order to formulate concepts that can then be applied to new scenarios. This learning must then be tested out in new situations: "The learner must make the link between the theory and action by planning, acting out, reflecting and relating it back to the theory"<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Patrick McNeil, *Research Methods* 2nd Edition (London: Routledge, 1990).

<sup>25</sup> BNHC, "Wild Ideas Project Agreement" (contract between Sundog Media and Bristol Natural History Consortium C/O The Wildscreen Trust, Bristol, October 1, 2004).

<sup>26</sup> *Wild Ideas: A Series of 6 Films Produced by Young Filmmakers in the South West*, (Bristol: Bristol Natural History Consortium, 2005), DVD.

<sup>27</sup> SWRDA, "Full Application Form: Innovation – Inspire SW Action 2" (Form Proj2A, Applicant: The Wildscreen Trust, Exeter: South West of England Regional Development Agency, 3 September 2004), 4.

<sup>28</sup> "Wild Ideas," 2005.

<sup>29</sup> David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning Experience as a Source of Learning and Development* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1984).

<sup>30</sup> Reva Berman Brown and Sean McCartney, "Learning About Knowing, Knowing about Learning: Management Education on Part-time MBA," in *Managing Institutions of Higher Education in the 21st Century*, ed. Ronald R. Sims and Ronald S. Sims (Westwood, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), 254-267.

<sup>31</sup> Maggi Savin-Baden, *Problem-based Learning in Higher Education: Untold Stories* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000).

<sup>32</sup> Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>33</sup> Kolb, "Experiential Learning Experience," 1984.

<sup>34</sup> Clara Davies and Tony Lowe, *Kolb Learning Cycle Tutorial: Static Version*, University of Leeds, accessed April 5, 2011, [http://www.ldu.leeds.ac.uk/ldu/sddu\\_multimedia/kolb/static\\_version.php](http://www.ldu.leeds.ac.uk/ldu/sddu_multimedia/kolb/static_version.php).

The work of the moving image professionals and the young participants was therefore informed by experiential learning theory from the outset.

### **Widening Participation, Fostering Imagination and Media Literacy**

Following the key parameters of the *Wild Ideas* project, each of the six production companies recruited young people who were disadvantaged through gender, ethnicity, lifestyle and social class. The commissioners wanted *Wild Ideas* to be driven by the young participants, and this aim was fulfilled in a range of filmmaking methods: in some, the young people had prominent roles in front of and behind the camera; and in others, worked with professionals as apprentices. The six films produced exemplify a varied approach to the project themes, from different styles of documentary to the music video created by the group of young people working with the authors. The following describes each film project, in the order presented on the *Wild Ideas* DVD<sup>35</sup>, to illustrate the variety of forms and methods:

Four young people worked with the Bath-based company Suited and Booted on the creation of *Beast*, a film-within-a-film, using the conceit of video coverage of the making of an investigative television documentary about sightings in Cornwall of a large black cat known as the ‘Beast of Bodmin’. The film was scripted from the young people’s ideas, and included home movie footage of a “big cat”, with adult actors playing the roles of experts and eyewitnesses, and the documentary team on location on Bodmin Moor. The young participants worked alongside a professional film crew to create a humorous look at what goes on ‘behind the scenes’ in natural history documentary filmmaking, with particular emphasis on the editorial process.

*Penzile* examines different ways past and present generations in Cornwall have responded to their natural environment: a contrasting montage of images, past and present, illustrates the decline of the traditional industries of fishing and tin mining, the impact on the income and expectations of the local population, and the resulting loss of heritage and Cornish culture. The film makes the point that closure of the tin mines and reduction in the fishing fleet has benefited the environment. Interviews with miners and archival footage are juxtaposed with the opinions of young skateboarders who explore the deserted urban spaces on the coast. *Penzile* was made by two young people working with three young skaters and the production company Awen.

The filmmaking group based in Knowle West, Bristol was the youngest involved in *Wild Ideas*: the six project participants were of primary school age. Their film *Pets & the City* is a warm and engaging portrait of the children. Told in live action filming, narration and drawn animation, the film shows the ways in which they care for the important animals in their lives - horses, dogs, owls, chinchillas - and a boy who has been growing his own plants since the age of eight.

Bristol-based company First Born Creatives worked with a small group of young people on the production of *A Meerkat’s Tale*, an imaginative film using the format of a television wildlife programme in which a computer-generated meerkat ‘humanologist’ presenter examines the behaviour of ‘the most dangerous animal’ - the human being - in its natural habitat. The film features a “look inside a human build” - a terraced house - and explores the typical daily activities of the “pack leader”, the “adult female”, the “cubs” and the adolescent female, and shows the male “foraging for food” in his local supermarket. Although humorous, *A Meerkat’s Tale* has a serious message and warns about the dangers of an ever-expanding human population.

*Perfect World* is a music video with an ecological message created by five young people working with production company Sundog Media, in Plymouth. The original lyrics and music were written and performed by three of the participants, in collaboration with a local music producer. The young people filmed and recorded all material themselves, including time-lapse sequences of a city centre building site, except for material chosen by them from the NHU at BBC Bristol. The young people framed their music video within the context of a news programme that presented facts about threats to the environment, in order to reinforce the messages they wanted to communicate.

The documentary *Our Lives with Horses* was made by young Roma Gypsies based in Easton, Bristol about their unique relationship with animals. Working with the production company Calling the Shots, the group of nine young travellers focused on the animals with whom they shared their lives: budgerigars, cats, dogs, shire horses, and a pet cow, and gave a valuable insight into the traditions of the travelling community and the prejudice to which they are subjected.

### ***Perfect World: In Focus***

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<sup>35</sup> “Wild Ideas,” 2005.

Sundog Media, the producer of the Plymouth strand, worked with black and minority ethnic (BME) young people, and advertised the project as a 'creative challenge': an opportunity to make a collaborative film with the support of media professionals, about the natural world that would be of interest to young audiences, and one that would 'make a difference', Stuart Moore comments:

"We wanted to make sure that the opportunity was offered to a broad spectrum of young people, not just the ones who would usually participate in a media-based Initiative in our area: from our experience these are typically white, middle class and mostly male; who continue with formal education beyond sixteen"<sup>36</sup>.

The authors recruited participants through youth agencies in Plymouth and by distributing leaflets at a young persons' outdoor music performance and at other events for young people. From an initial shortlist of 15-20 young people the company pulled together a team of five to work on the film. This stage of the project was facilitated by Fata He, a BME cultural development organization based in Plymouth that had worked with Sundog Media on other projects<sup>37</sup>.

Sundog Media has expertise and experience in creating music videos, and in widening participation. The authors were keen that the young people explored the music video 'genre' to communicate their environment theme and messages, as they felt that a music video would appeal to all young people, especially the target groups identified in the *Wild Ideas* project brief. The young people were therefore challenged to produce a piece of music that would inspire an appreciation of the natural world and an awareness of the need to protect our environment. The music track would form the basis of the film, with the lyrics forming a script. Kristian Sharpe, a local music producer who had worked previously with Sundog Media on a young Plymouth MC's hip hop album for a cultural diversity project, was commissioned to collaborate with the young people on development and recording of the music track. The young people were excited by the challenge, although at the start none felt confident of achieving a 'good' result. Initially the *Wild Ideas* themes of science, natural history and conservation did not excite the young people - none of them watched these types of programmes on television but all agreed that preserving our environment and making the world a better place were important - and that it was important to communicate this message to other young people. Sundog Media worked with the filmmaking team on ideas development, at first emphasising the visual elements of the music video. The young people imagined what they wanted the audience to see on-screen; from this they created phrases that then became the lyrics and music for the rap and chorus. The participants surprised themselves by how much they could do through team working. None had been involved in such a project before and only one had any experience of filming before the project. The oldest member of the team (23) proved herself to be an excellent mentor: she encouraged everyone to work together, ensured people knew about meetings and production sessions, and was an enthusiastic and responsible team member.

At the beginning of the project, none of the group had watched wildlife programmes on television, but by the end, everyone was watching them for several reasons, which the young people identified as: firstly, to find information; secondly, to learn how professionals produced wildlife films; and thirdly, because an interest had been sparked:

"By the end of the first week of development all the young people said they had looked out for wildlife programmes on TV and had deliberately watched some. We encouraged them to identify and discuss what did and did not appeal to them in the programmes, and this informed both the visual and audio elements of the music video they created"<sup>38</sup>.

The young people wanted to reinforce the message of their film by including radio and TV news reports as an introduction, and used the internet to research their topic, learning research skills in order to do so. The facts they collected had to be edited and ordered to produce maximum impact on the audience, and this taught them to analyse data and make value judgements. In addition to this, a 'wish list' of archive footage - sequences of wild life that they wanted to illustrate their lyrics - was drawn up by the young people with Sundog Media. From the descriptions and the lyrics, the NHU at the BBC in Bristol was able to provide most shots the young people wanted to include in their music video. It would not have been possible to include these images (such as wolves running through a moonlit forest) otherwise. This was a key part of the production process as the young people felt that an important national organisation - the BBC - respected them. This increased their self-confidence and made them feel that their ideas had value to others.

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<sup>36</sup> Sundog Media, "Wild Ideas: A Perfect World," 2005, accessed April 5, 2011, <http://www.sundog.co.uk/perfectworld/index.html>.

<sup>37</sup> Fata He BME Development Ltd, 2005, accessed April 5, 2011, <http://www.fatahe.com/>.

<sup>38</sup> Sundog Media, "Wild Ideas," 2005.

### **Financial Responsibility**

The young people were also given responsibility to collectively manage a budget of £500 for their film. They wanted to show the audience some of the beautiful places in the Plymouth area, so a portion was allocated for travel costs to enable filming at a variety of locations such as the beach and the moor. All five young people appear in the music video, and each person researched and bought clothes and accessories to create the image on-screen they wanted for themselves. The allocation of such a large amount of money to be spent by project participants is unusual: the authors have twenty years of experience in moving image and media projects in a wide range of formal and informal educational contexts, and have no knowledge of similar generosity from a commissioner or client. From their experience on *Perfect World*, the authors believe that this aspect of the project reinforced the sense of responsibility of the young people, and enabled them to gain confidence and competence in financial management in addition to the co-operative negotiation skills necessary for a group to agree upon how to spend a budget; and, importantly, led to the individuals acquiring media literacy in the area of moving image production financing.

### **Wild Ideas: Project Success**

The *Wild Ideas* project's key aims, stated by the Bristol Natural History Consortium at the outset, were that the filmmaking groups should: "produce a short film aimed at communicating with wide public audiences (specifically other young people) about science, wildlife and natural history"<sup>39</sup>; and the commissioners stressed that:

"The filmmaking process and ownership of the content of the final films will be entirely driven by the young people to ensure that peer to peer dissemination plays a strong role and ensures film content is accessible to target audiences"<sup>40</sup>.

The authors believe that the *Wild Ideas* project overall has been successful within all these parameters. Firstly, a short film was created in all of the six strands that articulated "messages about the natural world and the need for its conservation"<sup>41</sup>; and which achieved the level of technical competence and fluency of media language required to present the work at screening events open to the public, and to distribute the work to wider audiences through the publication and distribution of a DVD to organisations in the "education, youth and media sectors"<sup>42</sup>. Secondly, the six production companies used their expertise in community filmmaking and working with young people to ensure that the filmmaking process 'from script to screen' was led by the young participants: this fostered effective, accessible peer to peer communication between the makers and the young audiences.

### **Perfect World: Project Success**

From their experience of the Plymouth strand of *Wild Ideas*, the authors believe that this project was successful pedagogically for several reasons. From the beginning, an interest in the environment was stimulated because science as a subject was approached in an innovative way through digital filmmaking and creative technologies, and there was adequate time to explore both science and art. The filmmaking process fostered an environment where the creative juices flowed: for example, in the *Perfect World* music video made by the Plymouth young people, writing lyrics is effectively writing poetry, but many young people would not consider themselves poets or creative writers. J Reaper, one of the project participants, wrote these opening lines for the *Perfect World* song:

"cause everything's changing  
a waste of space  
and still fading  
but make way  
or make space to face thing  
or make things  
even though unnatural  
where caught in a cold of old moulds  
a hold of all fake things"<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> BNHC, "Wild Ideas Project Agreement," 2004.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> SWRDA, "Full Application Form", 2004, 14.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>43</sup> J Reaper, "Perfect World" (rap lyrics for song), Plymouth: Sundog Media, 2005.



In previous work known to the authors, J Reaper, a rapper, had demonstrated lyrical ability through writing and performing about his own life. The project presented an opportunity to him to tackle complex messages on the *Wild Ideas* environmental themes. The authors believe that J Reaper demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the effectiveness of poetic expression through his *Perfect World* lyrics and their delivery on the screen, and, further, that the project motivated him to extend his subject matter beyond the personal.

The young people's self esteem was boosted through the high profile support from the BBC, a leading maker of wildlife and natural history programmes for television and radio, Wildscreen and SWRDA, and that these organisations trusted them to make a film which would be shown to other people: the authors believe that because the young people felt that their ideas were valued and treated with respect, this gave them ownership of the project.

The young people were encouraged to use filmmaking equipment and fully engage with the technology, and filmmaking was delivered as an organic, collaborative process rather than a traditional, hierarchical procedure. This approach extended beyond the core team as Sundog Media established a good relationship with the parents and families: there was regular, frequent contact with the young peoples' families throughout the *Wild Ideas* project, providing support and encouragement, and keeping everyone up to date with information.

Team working was at the heart of the *Perfect World* project, and the authors feel that their experience in working with young people helped them to achieve the right balance in knowing when to step in and when to step back when 'conflict occurred' in the group. The young people themselves stated that learning to work in a team was a valuable skill, and that team working generated more creative ideas than working alone. As the youngest team member, Kimberly, observed: "everybody has different ideas and points of view"<sup>44</sup>, whilst her brother Jonathan commented that "everyone has their own views and when put together it works well"<sup>45</sup>, and sister Erica stated that "we don't always agree, but we have different skills and ideas that can create a wonderful thing"<sup>46</sup>.

Sam Burkey, the *Wild Ideas* project manager, provided excellent support throughout the project. All the production companies were able to access advice and support about aspects of the care and protection of young people as issues arose during the course of the project, from Young Bristol, Plymouth City Council, and other organizations. This was particularly helpful for *Perfect World*, as the young people's ages ranged from 15 to 23: Sundog Media processed Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for the three project participants who were over 18 years at the time of the project, because they were in direct contact with the young people under 18, and were at times unsupervised. To avoid further CRB checks being necessary on film shoots with the child performer, her mother and grandmother were included as members of an extended project 'family'.

The young people had to put in a lot of focussed effort and hard work, and consequently felt a great sense of achievement and ownership - much more than mere instant gratification - through making something that would be of benefit to others. Erica, one of the *Perfect World* participants, said that she hoped that the music video would help "people to understand what they are doing to our world and the wildlife. Just one person can make such a difference"<sup>47</sup>.

There were several strands to the presentation strategy for the six short films. Firstly, *Wild Ideas* budgeted for the young people and their families to travel to Bristol to see the premiere screening at the IMAX theatre. This was followed by community screenings of the six films in the local area of the participants: these events were designed and planned by the young people with the assistance of professionals. The young people were therefore able to hold an event in their local area to premiere their film and celebrate their achievement with their families, friends, and the wider community. In Plymouth, the young people chose the city centre as the venue for the projection of *Perfect World* and the other five films within a special 'cinema tent' erected specially for the screening. A *Wild Ideas* project DVD containing all six films with additional footage and information was produced professionally and widely distributed. Entry to all the screenings was free, and there

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<sup>44</sup> Kimberly Iji, "Kimberly," *Wild Ideas: A Perfect World*, Sundog Media, 2005, accessed April 5, 2011, <http://www.sundog.co.uk/perfectworld/kimberly.html>.

<sup>45</sup> Jonathan Iji, "Jonathan," *Wild Ideas: A Perfect World*, Sundog Media, 2005, accessed April 5, 2011, <http://www.sundog.co.uk/perfectworld/jonathan.html>.

<sup>46</sup> Erica Iji, "Erica," *Wild Ideas: A Perfect World*, Sundog Media, 2005, accessed April 5, 2011, <http://www.sundog.co.uk/perfectworld/erica.html>.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

was no charge for the DVD. In addition, the commissioners also presented the *Wild Ideas* films at festivals and young people's events. The commissioners therefore achieved audience numbers of several thousand, and ensured a long-term legacy for the project through the distribution of the DVD.

### **Perfect World: Personal Impact and Widening Opportunities**

A side-effect of the project was the widening of options for future employment: the three older *Perfect World* participants expressed an interest in working as mentors or tutors on other projects with young people, and they made a successful grant application to The Prince's Trust<sup>48</sup> to support the setting up of a community recording studio, working with local musicians and young people with an interest in music. The two younger participants continued with formal education.

In addition, the music producer Kristian Sharpe considers that *Wild Ideas* gave him an insight into how important sound design and music were in moving image production, and his experience with *Perfect World* led him to expand his client base to include media production companies. Since the *Wild Ideas* project ended in 2005, Kristian has created music for advertisements, documentaries and promotional DVDs; but it is important to him that he maintains his 'grass roots' connections, through collaborations with social enterprise media organizations such as Cricklepit Media<sup>49</sup>, a not-for profit company in Exeter that works with communities, young people and disadvantaged groups. Kristian enrolled as an undergraduate at the University of Plymouth in September 2007 and graduated with BA (Hons) Music in 2010<sup>50</sup>.

### **Digital Technologies**

The authors believe that the use of portable digital video and sound recording equipment, and resources for editing moving images, is an important factor in the success of the *Wild Ideas* project. Paul Appleby was the NHU's representative on *Wild Ideas*, and a key voice in the design and management of the project 'on the ground': he provided training in digital filming and post-production techniques at the BBC studios in Bristol and Plymouth for the young people, and also worked directly with the children in Knowle West. As a BAFTA winning producer of television and multi-platform projects in the NHU, he may be considered an expert in his field of specialism. Paul believes that "media is human communication" and continues to promote experiential learning and the open approach and flexibility of the *Wild Ideas* project, which he views as an exemplar of the ways in which the 'hands on' experience of making moving image empowers people and enables them to become 'media literate'. Reflecting on *Wild Ideas*, Paul considers that "making a film is a fabulous learning experience because you have to look someone in the eye and give direct feedback" and that it is vital to understand your audience and "what people need from you"<sup>51</sup>.

Savita Custead, the Director of BNHC, agrees with Paul's view that *Wild Ideas* was a catalyst for other moving image projects with young people, both in the community and in schools, because "we showed that we could work with young people and film, and tie in with the BBC." She believes that the accessibility of digital media has enabled BNHC to manage moving image production projects that enable young people to develop an understanding of environmental issues "in a new way, using media to interpret things - and pick up media literacy on the way"<sup>52</sup>. In addition, despite the six *Wild Ideas* strands being spread across southwest England, online technologies enabled fast communication between the production companies, the young people, Wildscreen and other organisations such as the NHU. Sundog Media also created a *Perfect World* website<sup>53</sup> with the young people involved in the Plymouth strand, which further reinforced the exchange of ideas and dissemination of project outcomes.

### **Reflecting on the Project**

The resulting *Wild Ideas* DVD, a collection of the six short films with additional footage, including a 'making-of' documentary, was premiered at the IMAX cinema in Bristol, and has been presented at many youth festivals and community events in the South West, with distribution of the DVD across Britain. The film *Perfect World* was the Jury's Special Selection at the Wildscreen Festival in Bristol and was nominated for the *Panda in*

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<sup>48</sup> *The Prince's Trust*, 2011, accessed April 5, 2011, <http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/>.

<sup>49</sup> *Cricklepit Media: Media Production with Positive Aims*, 2011, accessed April 5, 2011. <http://www.cricklepit.co.uk/>.

<sup>50</sup> Kristian Sharpe (musician and music producer) in discussion with Kayla Parker, November 15, 2010. Interview MIL2.

<sup>51</sup> Paul Appleby (natural history programme maker) in telephone conversation with Kayla Parker, November 12, 2010. Interview MIL1.

<sup>52</sup> Savita Custead (Chief Executive, Bristol Natural History Consortium) in telephone conversation with Kayla Parker, November 22, 2010. Interview MIL3.

<sup>53</sup> Sundog Media, "Wild Ideas: Perfect World," 2005.

*the Pocket Award* for its “outstanding creativity”<sup>54</sup>. Looking back on the project six years after its completion, the authors consider that the success and impact of *Wild Ideas* is due to several factors. Firstly, the project attracted considerable financial support from the Inspire SW programme that was jointly funded by the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) and the European Union, and in-kind contributions from high profile established organisations such as the BBC. The level of support was substantial: this ensured that there was sufficient budgetary allowance for the six production companies to work with their young collaborators according to the needs of the individuals<sup>55</sup>, and enabled the efficient management of multiple levels of project activities with generous allowance for contingencies, and enabled comprehensive training workshops in digital video production techniques and a programme of publication and dissemination of the collection of six films with additional documentary material. In addition, all the BNHC members were fully committed to ensuring that the project was a success and that the highest possible standard of moving image production would be achieved.

### Active Learning

The *Wild Ideas* project as a whole embodies ‘active learning’, a term used for learning that involves students in an active engagement with the learning process. The Home Office’s National Framework for Active Learning for Active Citizenship programme<sup>56</sup> worked with a range of groups and individuals across England in order to test ideas about the most effective ways to develop confident and articulate citizens. The programme evaluation identified the core elements of active learning to be: student activity, engagement and reflection, and the use of academic skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Active learning uses a flexible approach that involves ‘experiential learning’ in group settings characterised by “the values of participation, co-operation, social justice and equality with diversity. These values require the work to be: (i) community based, (ii) learner centred, and (iii) developed through active and reflective learning”<sup>57</sup>.

### Problem Based Learning

Sundog Media framed its Plymouth-based project as Problem Based Learning (PBL): ‘a creative challenge’. PBL is a flexible methodology that allows students to direct their own learning with the support of professionals as facilitators. PBL originated in medical education during the 1950s<sup>58</sup> and is now used widely in science, business, legal and health education and training, using an ‘open-ended’ issue or question as a prompt for active learning: “The principal idea behind PBL is that the starting point for learning should be a problem, a query or a puzzle that the learner wishes to solve”<sup>59</sup>. PBL is effective because it creates an active student-centred environment in which autonomous learners take responsibility and make their own choices, usually working collaboratively to devise ‘solutions’; in addition, students are encouraged to reflect on their experiences. This fosters the holistic, deep learning<sup>60,61,62</sup> which Ramsden<sup>63</sup> describes as “deep-holistic” learning. PBL is included within the umbrella term ‘enquiry-based learning’ used by The Higher Education Academy (HEA) for student-

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<sup>54</sup> Sarah Mitchell (Festival Manager, Wildscreen), email message, and attachments “Wildscreen 2006 Panda Awards Nominations” and “Wildscreen 2006 Nomination Panel Report,” to Kayla Parker, June 13, 2006.

<sup>55</sup> Donald Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*, 1991 Paperback Edition (Aldershot: Arena, 1983).

<sup>56</sup> CLG, “Take Part: The National Framework for Active Learning for Active Citizenship/Communities and Local Government” (Civil Renewal Unit, Active Communities Directorate, the Home Office, 2006), accessed April 5, 2011, <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/152396.pdf>.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Graham Clayton and Peter Pierpoint, “Problem Based Learning: A Would-be Practitioner’s Guide” (presentation, University of Plymouth Business School, Plymouth, October 1996), “A brief Introduction to Problem-Based Learning” in *Introductory Accounting: Achieving Relevance, Interest and Understanding*, May 2003, introductory accounting network, University of the West of England, Bristol, accessed 5 April 2011, [www2.uwe.ac.uk/faculties/BBS/BUS/Research/NTFS/problem.pdf](http://www2.uwe.ac.uk/faculties/BBS/BUS/Research/NTFS/problem.pdf).

<sup>59</sup> David Boud and Grahame I. Feletti (ed.), *The Challenge of Problem-Based Learning* New 2nd Revised Edition (London: Kogan Page, 1998).

<sup>60</sup> Ralph W. Tyler, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949).

<sup>61</sup> Graham Gibbs, *Improving the Quality of Student Learning* (Bristol: Technical and Educational Services, 1992).

<sup>62</sup> John Biggs, *Teaching for Quality Learning at University* 2nd Edition (Buckingham: SRHE and Open University Press, 2003).

<sup>63</sup> Paul Ramsden, *Learning to Teach in Higher Education* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2003), 43.

directed learning that involves a process of enquiry: for further information, readers may refer to Kahne and O'Rourke's useful *Guide to Curriculum Design: Enquiry-based Learning*<sup>64</sup>.

### **Situated Learning**

Sundog Media also adapted Lave and Wenger's theory of 'situated learning'<sup>65</sup> in order to create an environment for the project in which the participants worked alongside professionals - themselves and the music producer. Lave and Wenger's work *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* uses case studies to describe the ways in which students learn informally in vocational groups: it is described as 'legitimate' because newcomers are accepted within a 'community of practice', 'peripheral' because the new students are entrusted with less skilled activities while the more expert practitioners undertake the specialist tasks, and 'participation' because the students learn by doing and knowledge is shared between the members of the community of practice rather than being something that is accessed through reference books. The authors believe that situated learning provided a dynamic model for the creation of *Perfect World* at every stage of production, and facilitated the sharing of skills and knowledge between themselves and the music producer - the professionals - and the young people. For example, the participants wanted to include sequences in which the audience could see their song being sung by 'live' performers against a backdrop of a variety of locations, and wildlife and natural history images. The young people worked with Stuart Moore of Sundog Media, an experienced camera operator and filmmaker, in setting up a 'blue screen', lights, camera and monitor in a large room at the community centre hired as a studio for the production. (The use of a 'blue screen' behind the performers enabled the background to be 'keyed out' in the edit suite, and the chosen visual sequences to be inserted). Then the participants were encouraged to 'take over': all five were involved in the decision-making about direction and filming, with three young people performing in front of the camera, and the two youngest participants responsible for filming and playing back the music track to ensure 'lip synching' and continuity.

### **Project Evaluation Strategies**

*Wild Ideas* incorporated two evaluation strategies aimed at gathering feedback from the young filmmakers:

An independent science policy consultancy conducted an evaluation of the *Wild Ideas* project. Participants were interrogated via an internet-based questionnaire, with a paper option for those without online access. The replies were confidential and individuals' comments were not passed back to BNHC. This evaluation method encountered resistance from the young people, resulting in emailed pleas from the project organiser to boost participation.

Two filmmakers from Bristol were commissioned to produce a 'behind the scenes' record of all the young people's productions, from the planning stages through to postproduction. They returned to gather feedback via filmed interviews in the later stages of the project and during the local public screenings. This method of evaluation - by interviewing participants - was much more positively received, and forms part of a 'making of' video, which is included in the *Wild Ideas* project DVD as a 'bonus extra'.

The authors believe the latter method of data collection was more successful, for a number of reasons. The film crew were known and trusted by the participants, having visited each group several times during production, and, by filming the questions and answers, were identified as being engaged in the same media-based creative processes as the young people themselves. This face-to-face approach allowed the research to be tailored to the participants who varied greatly in age and background across the six filmmaking teams.

In contrast, the impersonal online questionnaire was regarded as burdensome and disconnected from the lively and intense filmmaking process the young people were engaged in. The questionnaire sought frank and unmediated commentary about the professionals and processes involved in the delivery of *Wild Ideas*. The need to gather data is entirely understandable, given the scale of public funding involved, but clearly highlighted the cultural gulf between the commissioning organisations and funders and the participating young people. The Plymouth group expressed concerns about a procedure in which they were asked to confide in a stranger, as part of a secretive process, from which they would not be able to see the results. They felt that this approach did not sit well with the openness of the ethos of the project.

### **Making a Difference**

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<sup>64</sup> Peter Kahn and Karen O'Rourke, *Guide to Curriculum Design: Enquiry-Based Learning* (York: The Higher Education Academy, August 2, 2004), accessed April 5, 2011, [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/resource\\_database/id359\\_guide\\_to\\_curriculum\\_design\\_ebl](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/resource_database/id359_guide_to_curriculum_design_ebl).

<sup>65</sup> Lave and Wenger, "Situated Learning," 1991.

The recorded interviews on the *Wild Ideas* DVD demonstrate that the young filmmakers engaged with the key project themes: “I’ve gone through most stages when I think about the environment, and sometimes I’m not really bothered, but this has really made me think about the environment and the animals.” Participants also benefited by developing key transferable skills and became more confident: one of the Knowle West team said “It was a bit scary at first, but when we got used to it - going to see Paul [Appleby at BBC Bristol] and talking about it - it wasn’t as scary.” Other comments indicate the gains in media literacy: “How to edit, how to direct, how long it takes, how to use cameras”, and “When watching TV programmes, like wildlife programs, I’m a lot more interested now. Whereas before, I just changed the channel.” Several expressed a desire to pursue a career in media, with one enthusiastic young man stating: “I would like to direct for a career, and suffer more people telling me that my film must be shorter, for the rest of my life!”<sup>66</sup>.

In addition to the *Wild Ideas* evaluation, the *Perfect World* team collaborated to write a series of questions about their project, a self-generated questionnaire, which each member answered individually. Each young person also chose three photographs from the hundreds of production stills taken by all the project team to represent their perspective on the project. This material was presented on a website created for the Plymouth strand of *Wild Ideas* because the young people wanted to disseminate their evaluation of the experience of making the music video – another example of the sense of ownership they felt as media literate, reflective practitioners<sup>67</sup>. All the *Perfect World* participants said that their understanding of wildlife and ecology, media production and the way in which meaning is created through moving images, had increased greatly because of their experience on the *Wild Ideas* project. The comments of the oldest participant of the *Perfect World* team, MC Storm, are representative of the views of the whole *Perfect World* team: “Uh, definitely! I look at the world in a whole new light, and have begun to appreciate nature, and try to offer it the respect it deserves [and] I notice and understand what effort and skill and creativity goes into producing even a short film”<sup>68</sup>.

Finally, after the premiere screening at the IMAX cinema in Bristol, organisers used an innovative mobile phone text messaging method of audience feedback in the auditorium. Given that the screening was in 2005, this was a forward looking new media initiative which today could effectively be replicated using mobile technologies and social networking.

The formal evaluation by questionnaire has subsequently proved impossible for the authors to access, due to personnel changes in the commissioning organisations and the dissolution of SWRDA; whereas the young people’s feedback can still be heard on the DVD. Integrating a media-based feedback process within the *Wild Ideas* project framework has, in the authors’ opinion, proved to be a valuable legacy and entirely in keeping with the ethos of the whole project.

### **Project Transferability**

From the outset, *Wild Ideas* was intended to offer its filmmaking opportunity to young people disadvantaged by factors such as ethnicity, geographical isolation, and poverty. The project was ambitious in its objectives, and was generously funded and supported by organisations based in Bristol, the regional capital and centre for both economic and media activity, extending across the whole of South West England. A reader could reasonably ask whether the good practice outlined here could realistically be transferable to projects with less funding, lower levels of coordinated support and without the close involvement of high profile organisations. *Wild Ideas* was exploring unfamiliar territory for the commissioners, both in working with young filmmakers and collaborating with community video producers, but was intended to be a high profile, flagship project, with expensive screenings across the region and further dissemination through the country-wide distribution of a professionally authored DVD.

The six production companies involved in *Wild Ideas* demonstrated that high levels of skills and expertise in production, mentoring and training could be found outside of centres of broadcast media production. Small companies such as these can deliver media-based community projects that are meaningful, despite being of smaller scale than *Wild Ideas*. The authors believe that the young filmmaking groups had a valuable experience working in collaboration with professionals and creating a short film: being part of a larger project was a bonus, but not an essential part of the experience nor of the acquisition of media literacy.

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<sup>66</sup> “Wild Ideas,” 2005.

<sup>67</sup> Schön, “The Reflective Practitioner,” 1983.

<sup>68</sup> MC Storm, “MC Storm,” *Wild Ideas: A Perfect World*, Sundog Media, 2005, accessed April 5, 2011, <http://www.sundog.co.uk/perfectworld/mcstorm.html>.

Furthermore, a key difference between the time of the project and the time of writing is the development of digital media technologies not only for filming and editing, but also for online collaboration. The reduction in price and consequent uptake and deployment of the means of production and dissemination of media texts has considerably lowered the financial threshold for a viable meaningful filmmaking project. For example, during production in late 2004 the *Perfect World* team was provided with disposable 35mm cameras to record the project, with the resulting documentary photographs scanned for use on a website. This process would likely be made redundant today by contemporary participants' camera-phones, with pictures instantly uploaded to Flickr or a Facebook page, opening up opportunities for development of media literacy in new media forms and practices. A later young people's media project by Sundog Media, *The Other CO2 Problem*, produced in 2009<sup>69</sup>, augmented DVD distribution with online availability via video websites YouTube and Vimeo.

### **Transferring the Methodologies to Other Educational Contexts**

Since the completion of the *Wild Ideas*, the authors have adapted the range of methodological strategies used in *Perfect World* to moving image and media projects in formal education at both primary and secondary level, and within further and higher education (FE and HE); and for community-based initiatives that aim to empower the participants via the acquisition of digital media skills and critical competencies of media literacy. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to give details about these projects, but these examples convey the variety of educational contexts: *C-Sound*, a project made in 2005 with children from four primary schools to create a collection of one minute films about the waterfront in the Mount Wise area of Plymouth; *Street Rat*<sup>70</sup> a film drama with animation that tells the story of a young homeless girl's struggle to survive on the street, made in the autumn of 2005 with students at rural primary and secondary schools; the Rocknose project, in which older members of a seaside village created a photographic and video archive for their community; and *There 2 Care*<sup>71</sup>, a collaborative animation DVD made in 2008 with young carers, in order to train educational and healthcare professionals, and raise awareness in schools about the experiences of children who are the principal carers for their family.

The authors believe that the approaches exemplified by the *Wild Ideas* project, and the further strategies deployed for *Perfect World* can usefully inform the curriculum design and delivery of moving image production in HE in order to foster the development of media literacy:

“In furthering students' academic and personal development, programmes within communication, media, film and cultural studies are committed to forms of pedagogy that place emphasis on developing critical and creative independence, flexibility, sensitivity to audience, and self-reflexiveness, across individual and group work, and critical and production work”<sup>72</sup>.

### **Some Limitations**

Action research, like all research strategies, does have its limitations and whilst we do not intend to provide an in-depth discussion of the methodological short-comings of action research here it is worth noting that, typically, action research projects are very often situated and context specific thus making replication across different contexts extremely difficult. Additionally, action research projects, because of their singular, context specific nature, rarely offer the promise of either representativeness or generalisability. However, whilst recognising that the *Wild Ideas* project was, in many respects, a one-off, unique multi-agency, collaborative effort, which, in all probability is unlikely to be directly replicated, we believe that it does offer a template (that can be modified or adapted) for future projects of a similar nature. So, whilst not wishing to make any grand claims on behalf of the efforts of all those involved in the *Wild Ideas* project, the authors hope that others will be both inspired and motivated to construct similar projects of their own in the future.

### **Conclusion**

Drawing on the Bristol Natural History Consortium's *Wild Ideas* DVD as a case study, this chapter has outlined and illustrated the pedagogical value of using media technologies to enable the learning of critical

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<sup>69</sup> *The Other CO2 Problem*, directed and animated by Stuart Moore, Kayla Parker, and children at Ridgeway School (2009; Plymouth: Sundog Media/Plymouth Marine Laboratory), DVD/online, accessed April 5, 2011, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvUsSMa0nQU> and <http://vimeo.com/3800275>.

<sup>70</sup> *Street Rat: Online Film Production Office*, Sundog Media, 2005, accessed April 5, 2011, <http://www.sundog.co.uk/streerat/index.html> 2005.

<sup>71</sup> *There 2 Care*, directed and animated by Stuart Moore, Kayla Parker, children and young carer workers at The Zone (Plymouth: Sundog Media, 2008), DVD/online, accessed April 5, 2011, <http://vimeo.com/1232258>.

<sup>72</sup> QAA, “Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies,” benchmark statement, 2008, 2.4, accessed April 5, 2011, <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/statements/CMF08.pdf>.

abilities, competencies and skills through the active production of media texts. Moving image production work not only contributes to the development of media literacy but can also contribute to both personal and social development as well as potentially fostering other transferable skills and competencies for employability and citizenship. In conclusion, moving image production can play a crucial role in the pedagogical development of media literacy especially when the concept of media literacy is extended to encompass not just the ability to critically 'read' media texts but also involves the practices of 'making' media products and artefacts.

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