

ACE Position Paper on Film Education and Film Literacy (28/05/2014)

I. What FHI do

As the promotion of film education and film literacy is part of Film Heritage Institutions' (FHI) public interest mission, almost all ACE members have been active in this field for decades. They have skilled staff and a longstanding expertise in teaching what film is - a language and an art form - and they also provide tools to develop filmmaking skills (in labs and workshops).

1. On institutional level (mainly on premises of FHI)

Target group A: (pre-) school children & families / after school

- Cinema screenings for children and youngsters
- Film and media literacy workshops for children & adults to learn about the making of films and the medium's narrative resources
- Guided tours through exhibitions to learn about the history of film (optical devices, magic lanterns etc.)
- Labs & studios: Most FHI/cinematheques are equipped with studios, green screens, animation tables and digital editing suites to expand children's media competence through playful practical experiments. Kids have the opportunity to direct, act, shoot, edit and design the sound for their films.
- Children's film festivals.

Target group B: (pre-)school children & teachers / school programmes

- Cinema screenings
- Workshops, seminars and conferences for teachers and media instructors
- General consultancy services for teachers on media and film education and films for children
- Development and dissemination of teaching materials about film
- Mail-services, newsletters, web sites or pages on film education for schools
- Labs, studios, (including mobile labs), digital playgrounds: Most FHI are equipped with cinemas, studios, green screens, animation tables and digital editing suites to expand children's media competence through playful practical experiments. Kids have the opportunity to direct, act, shoot, edit and design the sound for their films. These projects are carried out either in schools or on the premises of FHI.
- Children's film festivals
- DVD publications (Films for kids).

2. In the context of larger regional and national activities (Examples)

- School Cinema Weeks / SchulKinoWochen (Germany / Deutsches Filminstitut): Target group: Pupils from 6-18 and teachers. The idea is to strengthen the cooperation between schools and cinemas by turning the cinema into a classroom. The project is carried out nationwide, in cooperation with cinemathèques, media centers and commercial cinemas. In 2012, 700.000 pupils and teachers participated in the project. This project is similar to those in France and the UK (though the French model is state-funded).
- The Norwegian Film Institute has been coordinating a nationwide film education strategy for several years, also the Danish Film and the Swedish Film Institute have developed their own national programmes.¹ EYE Film Institute Netherlands is also funded by the government for coordinating, collecting and disseminating film educational strategies.
- „Schermi e Lavagne” (Italy, Cineteca di Bologna): The project encompasses more than 500 activities (screenings, workshops, summer camps) addressing children and young people from pre-school to university level. It is supported by the municipality of Bologna University and Europa Cinemas.

3. Transnational programmes (Example)

« Le Cinema, 100 ans de jeunesse » This programme, focusing on experimental film, is coordinated by Cinemathèque Française and carried out in cooperation with FHI/Cinemathèques (Deutsche Kinemathek, Scuola Nazionale di Cinema, BFI, Cinemathèque Victor Hugo), media literacy networks and cinemas. It involves over 1000 pupils from 7 different countries, France, (Metropolitan and Overseas Territories), Spain, Italy, Germany, Great Britain, Brazil. Pupils are asked to reflect and develop material on specific film related issues.²

4. Film education online / per video on demand

The Danish Film Institute is one of the few institutions in the MS, which offer online film distribution. The ministry of culture pays a flat fee to Collective Management Organisations for the educational use of films.

In the UK, the BFI supports film education online through www.screenonline.org. Schools, colleges, university libraries and public libraries have free access to video and audio material through the National Education Networks.

¹ Screening Literacy: Executive Summary; BFI Film Forever, 2011
<http://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk//launch.aspx?pbid=25c57922-2908-45b5-b752-e891849e520f>

² Screening Literacy: Case Studies; BFI Film Forever, 2011

II. NEEDS / Problems

1. How to promote the use of film in schools?

Institutionalisation of film education

In most of the ACE members' countries, regional and national bodies have set up guidelines and strategies to promote film education, in cooperation with FHI, cultural agencies and film educational networks. Film education activities are financed by national film agencies, governmental bodies, charity organisations and commercial sponsors, but in general, the funding is poor. FHI offer a variety of educational activities (workshops, screenings, seminars, guided tours) for different user and age groups. Because there is no coherent national strategy in place, it is difficult to receive reliable figures.

With a few exceptions, film education and film literacy is not compulsory and therefore not part of the curriculum. Funding is very often project based and time limited. Particularly smaller institutions are always threatened of budget cuts and of closing down their educational activities. Generally speaking, school budgets for activities (i.e. outside structural funding) are being cut all over Europe. As a result, cinema-related activities are becoming more and more difficult to organize. One key advantage of ACE members is that they have been building networks of teachers interested in providing media literacy activities.

What needs to be done:

- Establishing national programmes and strategies for film education (where feasible, it might be difficult in countries like Belgium or Germany with regional governments and federal states), in close collaboration with FHI
- Film education and film literacy to be implemented in the curriculum
- Film education and film literacy to be part of teachers education
- Create a framework that makes these activities feasible, either by funding schools or institutions properly, or by making educational screenings free-of-charge for education institutions.

2. How to increase the availability of films for educational purposes (online and offline)?

As there is no exception in the copyright act for educational uses of film, the general rule is that films cannot be shown without the consent of the rights holders. To a very high degree teachers just don't know what they are legally allowed to do or not.³

In general, schools and FHI have to obtain licences, but the licensing schemes are complex and do not only differ among the member states, but they also depend on the type of the educational activity.

In some cases the film industry offers reduced licensing fees for educational screenings, which does not solve the problem that the fees are still too high and that most of the schools

³ In Germany as in other countries, a teacher may show his own DVD in the classroom to the pupils, but not in the auditorium and not if parents or pupils from other classes are also in the room).

cannot afford them. Prices for licensing a film for a screening in a classroom are around 300€ per screening (or more, if it is for larger groups). The alternative for schools is to get hold of DVDs and show them in a doubtful legal environment (i.e. in most EU countries it is illegal to show DVDs in a classroom – see notice on the DVDs you have at home!)

In some countries “Mediathek”-kind of institutions provide films for school screenings, as they have acquired licenses for non commercial uses. Service and offer vary among these centres, VOD services are still very limited. The very serious problem with this is that young audiences get used to the fact that films can or should be seen on DVD, or online, and not in a theatre.

Obviously, this has a tragic effect on cinema-going habits of the young generations. No wonder that they will keep searching films on pirate sites, or think that “cinema=DVD”, and that theatrical audiences decrease constantly.

The institutionalization of film education would help to solve some of the main problems:

- No fees for schools and universities! Instead, Government bodies / ministries should pay a flat fee for obtaining a licence for educational uses, or should consider giving educational access as a return on the very heavy support to film production in all countries.
- Each classroom should be able to watch films in the proper way: cinema films in cinemas, based on very clearly defined categories and catalogues of films for which copies should be managed by FHI
- Documentaries and newsreels should be accessible online and offline for free for educational uses
- Each member state should build up a platform for accessing films for educational purposes, in collaboration with FHI
- FHI shall decide on the content and films to be provided through these platforms.

3. What needs to be done on EU level?

- Harmonization of copyright exceptions for teaching, research and non commercial uses in general
- These exceptions should be made mandatory across the member states
- EU to fund the exchange of best practices in media education
- EU to facilitate the cross-border exchange of films for educational purposes
- Member States to be encouraged to properly fund media-literacy activities, based on long standing best practices that are normally to be found in FHI.

Media literacy is key to young generations understanding the world around them, without it, they are unprepared to 90% of the stimuli they are exposed to every day.

Young generations of students or life-long education participants should have free access to historical records pertaining to the culture and history of their country and of Europe.

In the present situation, we are raising young generations who would not understand Nazi or Communist propaganda as such because they are not taught the use of propaganda in media, and they are free to ignore the horrors of the Shoah, or the Stalinist massacres simply because they cannot access these images because they are blocked by copyright.

This is not acceptable – education must be free and available to all.