



AN CHOMHAIRLE MHÚINTEOIREACHTA
The Teaching Council

Film Production as a Methodology to Support the Teaching and Learning of History in the Senior Classes of Primary School

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Rationale and Aims

The research aimed to explore the use of ICT (film production) to teach History in the senior classes of a primary school, to investigate film production as a teaching tool and assess its effectiveness, and to examine the pedagogical theories behind such a use of this technology in the classroom.

The research begins with a quote from the primary school History curriculum; “History is not the story of the past but rather our attempt to reconstruct and interpret elements of the past which are of interest to us”. The researcher goes on to identify the central research question as “How does the use of film production support children’s interpretations and reconstructions of the past in senior class History?”. It is argued that film is a powerful medium, with the majority of children immersed in a media rich world from an early age. The emphasis though, it is suggested, has been on learning from film and not with film. As it is put, the researcher explores the transition of learning *from* multimedia to learning *with* it. The researcher also states that taking a constructivist approach to exploring a film production informed pedagogy, may facilitate the exploration of potential links between film production and History curriculum processes. Finally, the embedded question of how film production impacts on the teaching of History in fifth class was a stated aim.

Design and Methodology

The researcher argues for a qualitative case study research methodology due to the complexity of environment. The research, conducted in a primary school, included two groups of nine pupils chosen using a statistical sampling method based around achievements in Drumcondra tests. Data was collected using triangulated methods such as focus groups, observations, journals and questionnaires.

Pupils were asked to get involved in the planning, storyboarding and production of a film, with two stipulations: the film had to contain some historical aspect and it had to have some relevance to the International Year of Astronomy 2009.

Ethical considerations were taken into account and a significant section is included on the area of research ethics.

Findings and Recommendations

Initial findings relate to the links between film production and History curriculum processes. These include participants acting as historians, development of historical empathy, establishing issues around authenticity and film production, and positive social values. Having employed a constructivist setting for the research, the researcher argues that there were benefits in that participants felt

comfortable suggesting ideas and interacting with one another. The theme of collaborative learning, an important aspect to constructivist pedagogy, emerges throughout, particularly in the brainstorming and storyboarding aspects to film production. This, it is suggested, has led to greater motivation in both groups. Finally, the researcher observes that it is possible to make this transition of learning *from* multimedia to learning *with* multimedia, and in particular *with* film production.

The researcher recommends extending the research into other curricula and other educational environments (such as post-primary). Schools, it is suggested, could explore the use of constructivist learning environments. Greater investment in ICT resources is encouraged as is greater use of existing ICTs.