

FILM FESTIVALS AS EFFECTIVE TOOLS IN MEDIA EDUCATION

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Bachelor's thesis
May 2014
Degree Programme in Media
34 pages

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ABSTRACT

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YRJÄNÄ, AINO:
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Bachelor's thesis 34 pages, appendices 3 pages
May 2014

The purpose of this thesis was to study how film festivals can be used as effective tools in media education. The main research problems were how can local education institutes implement film education in their curriculums? What kind of co-operation educational institutes and film festivals have and how this can be developed further?

To answer to these questions, the background of the research was set by first exploring the theory of media and film education and defining some of the keywords of media and film education. The theory included researching Finnish media education and the current state of film education in Finland. The second part of the theory focused on significant film experiences, which served as a bridge to the second part of the thesis. The second, more empirical, part of the thesis studied the research question: how film festivals can be effective tools in media education? This part of the study was implemented through analysing survey data, which included comments and views from the representatives of film festivals and educational institutes.

The results suggest that there is a great possibility to use film festivals as tools in media education by developing the already existing (and hopefully future) co-operations between the festivals and educational institutions. The results indicate that film education should be more accessible in schools in order to make it easier to approach. Educating the educators and offering pre-assembled film education to schools are the first steps closer to broader national film education. The suggestion is to invest on regional film education libraries so that children and youth can access non-popcorn mass media films more easily.

The hope is that the thesis provides the reader, despite scratching the surface of the topic, summarized information and overview of the state of film education in Finland. Another hope is that film festivals are considered as tools in media education nationally and the co-operation between film festivals and educational institutions are seen as development sites in the future. The last grand hope is that someone could pick up the final conclusions of this thesis and invest on the concept idea how regional film educational libraries can be implemented.

Keywords: media education, film education, screening literacy

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	4
2	TERMINOLOGY	6
3	MEDIA EDUCATION IN FINLAND	9
4	FILM EDUCATION IN FINLAND	11
	4.1 Formal education	12
	4.2 Informal education	13
	4.2.1 Film festivals	14
5	PEDAGOGY OF FILM EDUCATION	16
6	SIGNIFICANT FILM EXPERIENCES	18
7	IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESEARCH	20
8	RESULTS	21
	8.1 Film screenings for children and youth	21
	8.1.1 Criteria of the film screening's content	22
	8.2 Co-operation with educational institutions	23
	8.2.1 The importance of the co-operation	24
	8.2.2 The pedagogical point of view within the co-operation	25
9	FUTURE LANDSCAPES OF FINNISH MEDIA EDUCATION	26
10	CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION	28
	LIST OF REFERENCES	29
	APPENDICES	32
	Appendix 1. Survey cover letter	32
	Appendix 2. Survey questions for film festivals	33
	Appendix 3. Survey questions for educational institutions	34

1 INTRODUCTION

In very early age children become a part of media culture. Parents and educators should be aware of the fact that media is an essential environment to grow in and learn (Ninistö, Ritokoski & Ruhala 2008, 20) about. Media education is currently living its state of transition. Finland's Ministry of Education has a clear strategy that screening literacy and media education should be a part of early childhood education to some extent (OPM 29/2007). So far, there has not been widely done research about media education. There might be various reasons for this. Media education covers a wide range of disciplinary fields and faculties in it. Therefore, there are various different theories and approaches in media education researches (Lehtonen, Kupiainen & Kynäslähti 2007, 20–21).

For me film is an art form, it is something you experience and feel, it is something greater. This is my personal perspective on the matter. The thesis studies media education from more technical angle of a film: how moving image is used as a tool in basic education. This thesis will explore if film festivals have means and possibilities in effecting local media education. And if so, what ways?

The starting point for me in this thesis was to find out the current stage of film education in Finland, what the future plans in the field are and what kind of development is needed. This meant first exploring and defining media education before getting familiar with the theory of film education.

In the second part of the thesis, using qualitative research method, it is explored how different educational administrators and organizations, such as film festivals, are feeling about the research question. It was also explored what kind of co-operation these different institutes have together when implementing film education in education or in film festivals. I had wishes to find out what is the stage of film education in schools and in film festivals.

In the end there will be conclusions and discussion about the future landscapes of media and film education in Finland as well as some suggestions summarized based on my research.

I hope this thesis will be helpful for people who are planning or implementing media education in schools or film festival organizers who are considering film education in their festival program and people who in general are interested of film education. I hope this thesis will be useful, not just for Finnish people, but other nationalities as well. I would like to know more about the media and film education in other countries, what kind of activities there are between film festivals and educational institutes?

This thesis is quite narrow research of the field of film education and its challenges, and more importantly the possibilities of film festivals as tools in media education. I sincerely hope someone will continue the study, hopefully inspired by this thesis, to go into more detail or update the research.

2 TERMINOLOGY

To make this thesis easier to read and utilize its content, I am opening up its key terminology underneath.

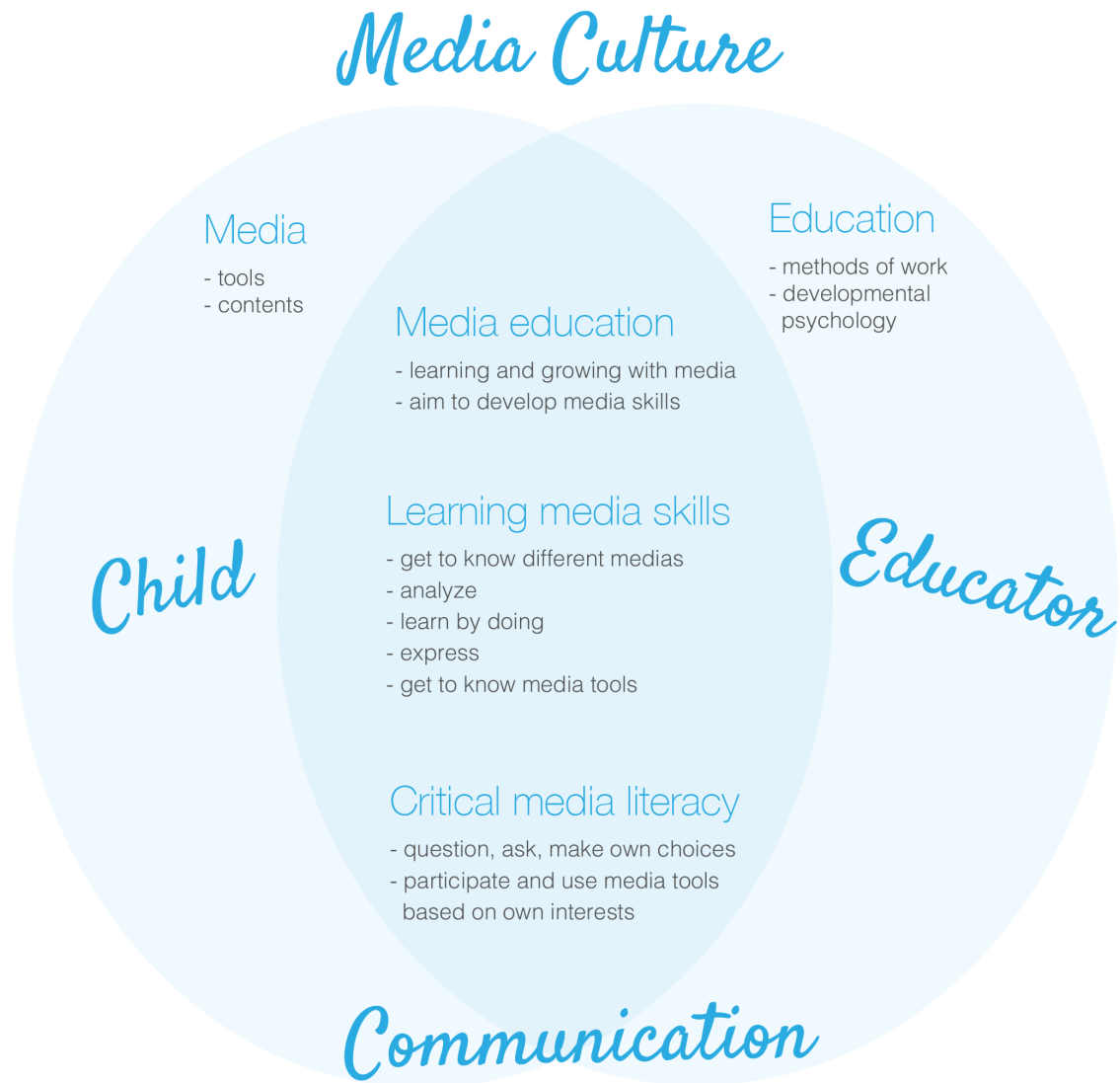


FIGURE 1. The body of media culture, designed by the author (Niinistö, Ritokoski, & Ruhala 2007, 101)

Media culture is the very mediated cultures where media tools and contents of communication are in the center of the culture (Figure 1). *Media culture* is a very essential activity and learning environment for children in the 21st century (Mediakasvatus varhaiskasvatuksessa 2008, 9).

Media education is about learning and growing with media, aiming to develop one's media skills (Niinistö, Ritokoski & Ruhala 2006, 8). The core of media education is to develop *critical screening literacy skills* (Mediakasvatus varhaiskasvatuksessa 2008, 9). When talking about *media education* in this thesis, I am talking about it through a form of moving image, film, and its pedagogical aspects (see 3.0)

When referring to good *media skills*, it means having the ability to gather information from and with media, analyze and interpret different kinds of media contents, control media tools and equipment, communicate and express oneself through different media tools. Media skills also include *critical screening literacy skills*, meaning questioning and asking when making own choices while using different media tools (Mediakasvatus varhaiskasvatuksessa 2008, 9).

When talking about *screening literacy* in my thesis it means to be introduced to the fundamentals of the moving image, and to be able to master some of its language (BFI 2011a, 3).

Media educator is someone who is familiar with different media phenomenon, plans and implements media education and is aware how to use media tools safely (Mediakasvatus varhaiskasvatuksessa 2008, 9).

Simply put, a *film educator* can be any adult who is ready to watch films together with children, have a discussion about films and be present while watching them (Kovanen 2013, 9).

Film education has been divided into several different pedagogical movements: all the way from esthetic film education to media education, into cognitive, philosophical and consumer educational approaches (Kovanen 2013, 14).

The terms *formal and informal education* are used in this thesis to separate government and non-government organized and funded media education. The quality of the education is equally high and comparable in content (BFI 2011a, 3).

Formal learning is learning typically provided by an education or training institution, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and leading to certification. Formal learning is intentional

from the learner's perspective. [...] Informal education is learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and typically does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional but in most cases it is non-intentional (or incidental/ random) (EC 2001, 32).

A non-governmental organization (*NGO*) is a private, nonprofit organization aimed to advancing an objective such as film education. In this thesis NGOs are e.g. film or media education centers and organizations (USIP).

When I am referring to *popcorn films* in my thesis, it is meaning the opposite of film as an art form, films that serve only as enjoyable entertainment without any intellectual depth (Bergala 2013, 41).

3 MEDIA EDUCATION IN FINLAND

In many ways the history of Finnish media education can be perceived to be a part of the birth of Finland – the winning of her independence, the development of the Finnish language and the construction of Finnish identity – the national project and the history of Finnish popular liberal education, in which two stages are discernible. The first great wave of the latter part of the nineteenth century signified the age of civilizing the masses into citizenship. The second great wave gained momentum in the 1960s with the beginning of the drive to educate people into the information society. The last phase of this great history, the further development of information society skills, has continued since the 1980s to the present day (Kupiainen, Sintonen & Suoranta 2008, 3).

The early roots of Finnish media education come from 1950s and 1960s when the first research of mass communication were published and the more liberal education was spreading to the classrooms, bringing new media tools in education. As Kupiainen, Sintonen and Suoranta summaries (Kupiainen, Sintonen & Suoranta 2008, 7), media is just not consciously utilized in teaching situations, it serves itself to teach and educate.

1960s Popular liberal education	Audiovisual education Mass media education	Film, television, newspaper, mass communication
1970s Critical stance	Mass communication education Communication education	Television, mass media
1980s Aesthetics, ethics	Communication education	Video, audiovisual culture, film, music videos
1990s Networking, interaction	Communication education Media education	Information technology, net technology, digital technology
2000s Multi-modal media culture	Media education	Digital technology, multi-modality
2010s ?		

FIGURE 2. Decades of Finnish media education, design by author (Kupiainen, Sintonen & Suoranta 2008, 23)

At this time school children were not involved or the media was not interactive even though children were as active media users and participants as in today's media world. The new approach in media education nowadays is more interactive and hands-on learning by doing, experience-based methods, such as film education workshops and customized film screenings for children (Lapset ja nuoret mediaosallistujina 2011, 28). I will talk more about these in oncoming chapters.

What should be distinguished is that Finnish government has taken steps forward for media education (Lehtonen, Kupiainen & Kynäslahti 2007, 15). The Federation of Finnish Media Industry made historically important paper in 2008 in which media education and critical media literacy are in the central position. The National Board of Education has been involved with several media education projects over the recent years. In 2005, The Ministry of Finnish Education and Culture funded a nationwide operating association Finnish Society on Media Education.

For several years, the Finnish government has paid attention to media literacy and the question of safe media environment. The various administrative sections of the different ministries promote media education from different points of view, yet supportive of each other. Media education issues are especially dealt with by both departments of the Ministry of Education: the Department for Education and Science Policy and the Department for Cultural, Sport and Youth Policy. The Finnish National Board of Education, the national agency in charge of education, plays an especially important role in the education sector. (Mediakasvatusseura 2014)

The hopes and demands for the future decisions for the government are growing. Media education is today's world. It is a challenge to be able to surf on the waves of the development of education, but it cannot be achieved without any tools or help. In the next chapters I am going to talk about the possibilities of film education.

4 FILM EDUCATION IN FINLAND

Film is one of the most significant art forms of the 20th century, yet it has almost disappeared from the Finnish educational program. This is difficult to understand since film education has been part of the educational programs since 1950s, long before there were any talks about media literacy or media education (Nevala 2013). Many educators state that this change has happened because of the development of the film culture itself into more entertaining and popularized. The film as an art form invokes strong emotions, and it provides the tool to discuss about feelings and learning emotional skills (Kovanen 2013, 11; 49). The conclusions are that film has great possibilities to be used as a tool in field of education, both in *formal* and *informal* education. These two types of education are opened up further in this chapter.

Tommi Nevala (2013) explains well in his article on Valve Film School blog why film is often thought to be entertainment and therefore its place is not in schools. The place for film in schools is often only when the class is going to be rewarded or calmed down or it is used as a tool to pack up the content or time of teaching. In these cases, the films are watched from the same starting points at schools as the children and youth watch films on their free time – for entertainment. This is so-called *non-optimal use of videos* where children are educated to the mass culture where they already trudge. The educational, real potential of film is almost always forgotten.

A few years ago, British Film Industry published a research about film education in Europe where was compared the level of screening literacy of EU member countries and the quality of film education in them. I chose this secondary source to my thesis to have the insight of outsider on this subject.

Even though in Finland we do not have any overall film education strategy by government, there are plenty of non-government organizations, which are highly active in the promotion of film education and provide film education training and materials to public (BFI 2011a, 13).



PICTURE 1. Children waiting for the film screening to start (Photo: Reikäreuna 2013)

4.1 Formal education

Throughout the school years, film education is part of cross-curricular themed media skills and communication and is included in other subjects. In formal context, there are no resources, guidelines or official systems of assessment for film education although it's estimated that one third of all Finnish school age children regularly take part in film education in school (BFI 2011b, 14).

The formal film education plays an important role in the development of youths' skills in film literacy. It also has the responsibility to guard cultural film heritage and pass the knowledge forward to future generations (Elokuvakasvatus Sodankylässä n.d.).

Instead of reinforcing the commercialism of film and the value of mass culture in formal education, the starting point should rather be in encouraging young people towards critical film literacy and introduce them to the film as an art form (Bergala 2013, 71). Bergala sees that it is the responsibility of schools is to offer this possibility to children in the name of mandatory education. Some children do not have the chance to get involved with cultural education outside of educational institutions.

The question worth thinking about is what is the role of school as institutes to educate children towards film education? Are schools the right place to film educate and encounter films as art forms instead of tools of educating? (Bergala 2013, 31) I will cover more about the pedagogy of film education and Bergala in the oncoming chapters.

4.2 Informal education

In Finland there is a great deal of informal education by non-governmental institutions and associations. The content these actors offer does not mean that the quality or content of the informal education would be less or worse than formal education.

There is a national infrastructure for informal education in which film education is offered regionally. In this context it is part of media education as well as being offered as a separate object of study and is delivered in a variety of settings including adult colleges, film societies, the National Audiovisual Archive, libraries and regional film centers. NGOs play a significant role in Finnish society as well as being major stakeholders in the field of film education, for example, Koulukino (School Cinema) and Mediakasvatuskeskus Metka (BFI 2011b, 14).



PICTURE 2. *Kaikki kuvaa* video tutorials guide youngsters to the world of filmmaking (Photo: Kaikki kuvaa 2014)

Finnish Broadcasting Company (Yle) started a project Mediabussi back in 2006 to provide formal media education to schoolchildren. Mediabussi educated children through workshops: how to use media tools by making one's own short films from scratch. Me-

diabussi is providing resources to schools, which they would not otherwise necessarily have. The concept has become success among youngsters (Mediabussi 2013).

Besides Mediabussi there are some other great examples of so-called *informal* education by different kind of organizations and associations. The Ministry of Education and Culture funded the *Kinobox* project, by Finnish Film Contact, which will be available for rent for youth centers, schools, libraries and nurseries. *Kinobox* includes film screenings built around a common theme such as friendship, fear, history, childhood, art, tolerance etc. Finnish Film Contact has also launched a film education project that aims to research how short and documentary films can be used as tools in basic education (BFI 2011b, 14).

Another example is *Kaikki kuvaa* project, also funded by Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture that offers film education equally to youth and educators through their video tutorials. Youngsters can make their own films by following the video tutorials and afterwards submit their work to the website for everyone to see. In addition, the production company Amazement, which produced *Kaikki kuvaa* website, offers film education workshops for both youngsters and educators. Film education workshops are offering a great path to learn by doing (Kaikki kuvaa 2013).

As Alain Bergala manifests, to truly understand films, one is to watch and feel, but also experience the film by doing, in order to see and understand how films are actually made. This way the understanding deepens and the bigger picture of the screening literacy grows (Bergala 2013, 52).

4.2.1 Film festivals

To offer an alternative for the entertainment filled and popularized mass film culture, film festivals often offer diverse content to fill this cap. Film festivals in Finland are organized and kept alive by national or governmental funding (BFI 2011b, 14–15). It is fulfilling to notice that nowadays it is more and more common to have an educational festival program or completely specialized film festivals for children and youth. Often the program has specific pedagogical approaches implemented together with educational institutions or organizations. The common custom is that the festivals will rent for the

children and youth screening packages from associations, such as Finnish Film Contact, or the festival producers compile the film screenings from scratch and get the screening rights for the films. Besides film screenings, the festivals also offer educational workshops to support the film experience (see 8.1).

I believe film festivals can be effective tools in local film and media education. As a venue, film festivals can be the most potential place to face films and experience them, to feel something greater; therefore the experience might be also more educating than ever in a class room (Bergala 2013, 52). This is the secret weapon of film festivals. When combining the atmosphere, content and environment, film festivals and their content have the very effective impact on children and youth (see 6.0).

5 PEDAGOGY OF FILM EDUCATION

The French film education forerunner Alain Bergala is pushing forward a pedagogical revolution in his recent publication *Kokemuksia elokuvakasvatuksesta* (Bergala 2013). He wants to gain the possibility to encounter the film as an art form – as it is. The film as an art form is a tool for people to confront each other and a tool to open new conversations in society. As its best asset, a film can be a gateway to education.

Bergala's ideology has been debated. There are a few pedagogical views in this matter. Kovanen (2013) disagrees with Bergala (2013) who says that children should be left to do the analysis about films by themselves without the guidance of educator. Bergala clarifies that by letting our children make their analysis, films can be discovered and felt in various ways, not just one specific point of view e.g. the educators (Helsingin Sanomat 2013).



PICTURE 3. Children are waiting for a special film screening to start (Photo: Reikäreuna 2013)

I can see a point in Bergala's (2013) ideology but it would mean, in my opinion, that children watching films should have good screening literacy skills even if the educator is not present. Films can be seen different ways and there is no right way to analyze

them. A film educator's job is to support children and their journey in film education (Kovanen 2013, 12–13). It is a long-term commitment; the outcome is not achieved in one moment. If the purpose of the education is to teach critical thinking, film has been considered as a bad tool for this. To be able to manage the use film as a tool in education the first condition is to perceive its positive and constructive effect on children – the same thinking as in art (Bergala 2013, 40). The use of bad or mediocre material, such as mass film culture films, in education is confusing Bergala.

Schools have the vital role to bring awareness: help to build your own point of views and help to develop your own perceive in films. These are the only tools for children to take distance from poor films. The best counteract towards the attraction of popcorn films is to encounter different kind of films and watch them regularly (Bergala 2013, 41).

In school education, grand films are favored which can be a good way to go considering general education and when developing citizenship skills: a film can help to start debates about difficult themes such as war or racism. Nonetheless, understanding the film in this context does not make it any easier to approach as an art form as Bergala manifests (Bergala 2013, 41–44). He never believed to the methods of education that are supposed to educate “active” audience. The pleasures children experience from any audiovisual context are something impossible to understand or change by educators.

Secondly, a few media or film education classes once or twice a week are not enough to bring awareness in film education. Bergala feels strongly that the only tool to fight back and film educate youth is to educate the film taste and film screening literacy skills of our children in a long-term progress (Bergala 2013, 74). No change has ever done overnight. To implement the long-term change, I see that schools should co-operate with the local film or media organizations more closely and actively. Good film screening literacy skills are an excellent base for other media screening literacy skills and critical media thinking skills (Kovanen 2013, 13–14). In the next chapter I am going to explore what a significant film experiences can be used in education.

6 SIGNIFICANT FILM EXPERIENCES



PICTURE 4. A young girl is attending a film screening together with her family (Photo: Reikäreuna 2013)

Another French film expert, a critic Serge Daney (1993), crystalized how meaningful the films we see as children and during our youth can shape our relationship with films. In the end, there are not too many of those significant films during our life but all of us will always carry them with us as inexhaustible resources for our journey (Bergala 2013, 49).

It is very true, as Bergala notes, that after the very first feelings when seeing a film, nothing can replace them. The feelings will leave their marks to all of the future film experiences. Those feelings are almost like knowing about you and your relationship with the world. It is something you do not know yet but it is out there waiting to be found (Bergala 2013, 50–51).

What is not seen “the right time” will never be seen. (Daney 1992)

To be able to get a lifetime long impact from films, you need to encounter them at the right time and place. When the film experience is taken outside the usual learning environment, such as classrooms or home, the experience will grow stronger. It has the feeling of excitement, something new, maybe even a feeling of experimenting something forbidden (Bergala 2013, 49). Therefore, it is essential that film festivals are opening their doors to children and youth as well.

Experiential feelings are difficult to analyze or research, but there has been positive feedback from children who have attended special film screenings with school education. This strengthens the thought that children are open for new things and curious to learn and experience things in various ways, not just from books or sitting down to a classroom to listen to the professor.



PICTURE 5. A four-member short film jury and their classmates aged 12 to 18 having a discussion session with director Lauri Nurske about the six films seen in the special screening of Helsinki Short Film Festival 2013. The themes of the screening were common topics of a life of a teenager and thoughts about mortality (Photo: Helsingin lyhytelokuvafestivaali 2013)

7 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESEARCH

The research method used in this study is qualitative research. According to Kananen (2011, 75), qualitative research is applicable when a new phenomenon needs to be understood.

The research data for this thesis was collected by an online survey with carefully chosen research questions (Appendix 2; Appendix 3). This data collection method offers inexpensive tools to collect the data, and gives the possibility for more detailed data results with open-ended research questions.

As Goodwin (2009, 217) summaries, choosing quantitative analysis in a research is good when you have to assess the size of a potential market, the probability that people in the audience possess a particular characteristic, or the likelihood that two characteristics occur together. Visualization and comparison are usually the best ways to realised using quantitative methods (Goodwin 2009, 219).

In this study, there were six film festivals that received the survey questions:

- Helsinki Documentary Film Festival
- Helsinki Short Film Festival
- Midnight Sun Film Festival
- Oulu International Children's and Youth Film Festival
- Reikäreuna Film Festival
- Tampere Film Festival

Also, five educational administrators were asked about how film education is implemented in practice in the curriculums. The educational administrative that received the survey questions were in the cities of Helsinki, Tampere, Orivesi, Oulu and Sodankylä.

8 RESULTS

The results reflected the two important aspects of this thesis:

- What kind of co-operation is there between film festivals and schools?
- Are there any pedagogical points of view behind the co-operation?

50 % of the participants of the survey replied during the given time frame, which was 2 weeks. This included one notification email about the survey. In the end 90 % of the chosen participants replied to the survey. Based on the given responses to the questions, the results were analyzed and then grouped into categories.

8.1 Film screenings for children and youth

What is the age of the children and youth who visit the screenings?

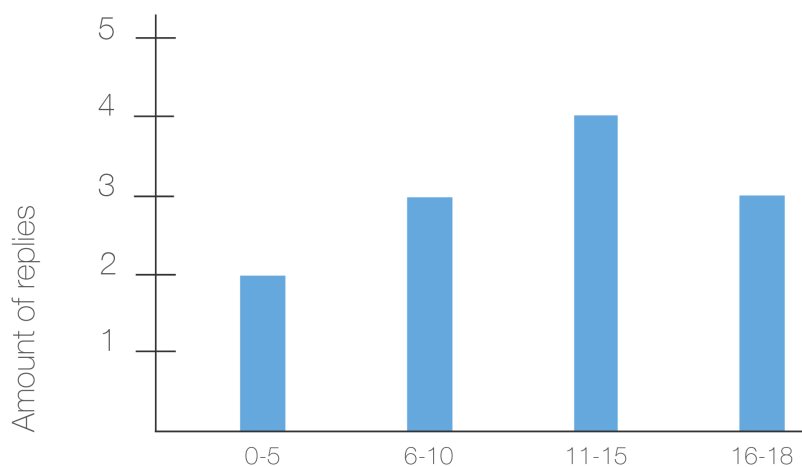


FIGURE 3. The age distribution of visitors in the film screenings

Most of the interviewed festivals have content for children and youth in some extent - mainly either film screenings or workshops, or the festival is completely specialized for children and youth.

The survey revealed that some of the festivals had have screenings for children and youth but those did not function the way they had hoped for. Children and youth were not

common visitors at the festivals outside of the special screenings organized for educational institutes, except if the festival was targeted completely for children and youth.

The children and youth program was a very important foundation to some festivals when thinking about the bigger picture. It is educating the new generation of viewers to film culture, encouraging to go to the film theatre and experiencing the diverse program of the festivals and theatres. The festivals hoped that by film educating the youth, they would be the future visitors of the film festivals, where they first got the spark to the film culture.

8.1.1 Criteria of the film screening's content

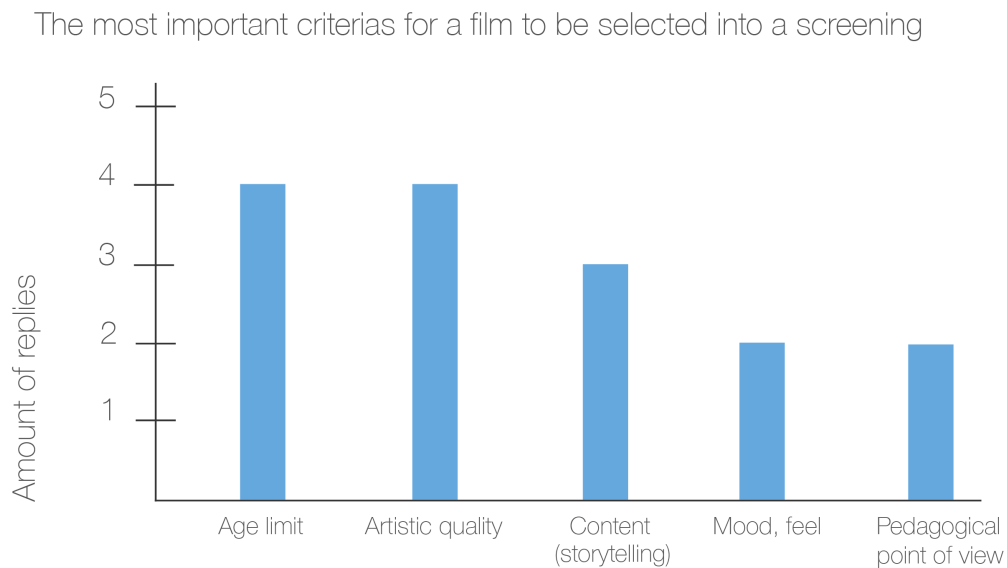


FIGURE 4. A graph visualizing which qualities were important criteria for the festival organizers when planning a children's film screening.

Some film festival organizers felt that the pedagogical planning was trusted fully on them, because they did not think the educational institutions cared or questioned the content of the film screenings offered to them. On another hand, some organizers were working closely with local schools and planned the content of the screenings together with them, the pedagogical point of view closely in mind.

The pedagogical point of view was taken seriously in some festivals. The film as an art form was important matter in most of the cases. It was an important factor that the chil-

dren and youth would experience something new, different and informative, something that they would not otherwise experience or watch in a different environment.

Both festival organizers and educational institutions felt that the films selected in the film festivals should support the educational line of the schools - therefore some festivals think they have some “safely” chosen films in their program so everyone can enjoy them. It was not specified if the “safely” chosen films in the program were good or bad decision.

8.2 Co-operation with educational institutions

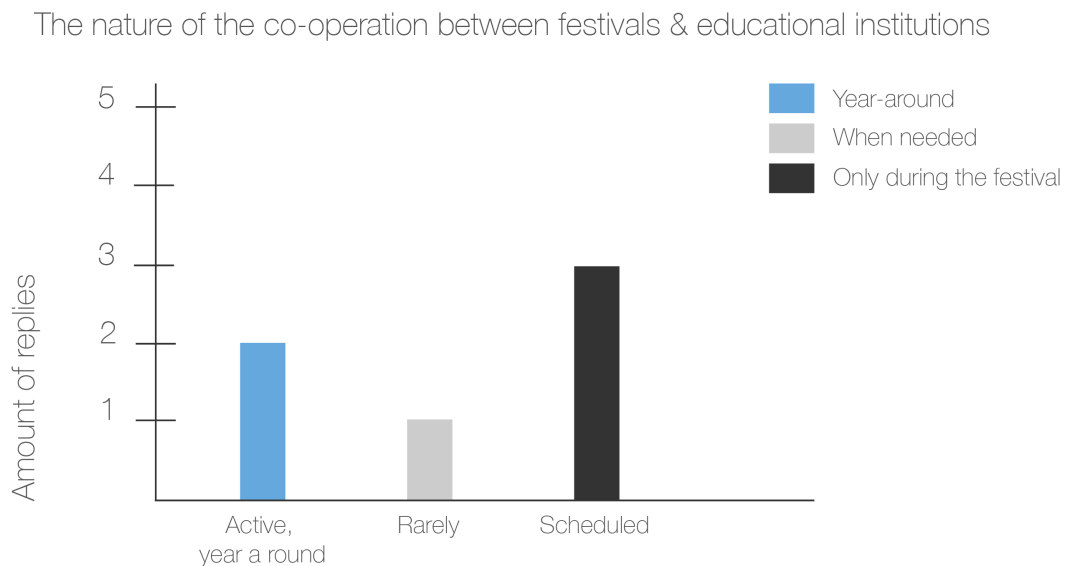


FIGURE 5. The figure above shows how often film festivals and educational institutions have co-operation with each other.

Some of the festivals offer pre-assembled film packages to them or a list of different film packages - the educational institutes can choose the package they think suit their class the best.

Two educational administrators described that the local festival organizers contact them annually and offer them film screening sessions before or during the actual festival. Half of the festivals replied that they offer film education workshops and other educational activities to the schools, including film education briefs, workshops, and sometimes inviting special guests, e.g. filmmakers, to tell about their work. Last but not least,

not to forget the teachers, some festivals film educates the teachers equally. The festivals offer educational workshops and seminars for the teachers, not just about film education, but also about media education in general. The educational packages are tools to be used in classroom, before and after the film screenings, to open up themes and topics of the films.

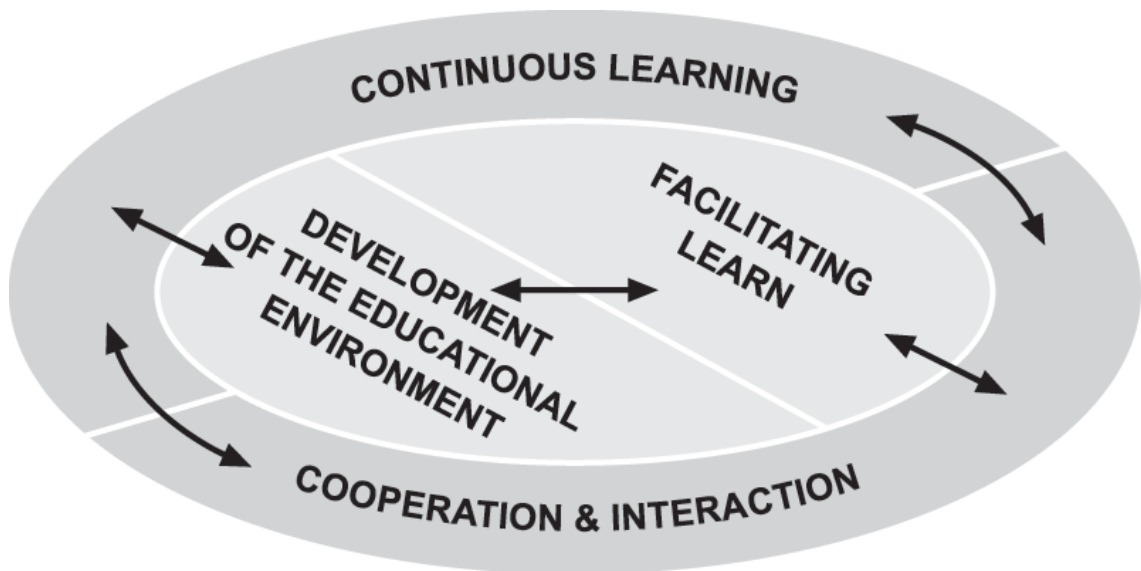


FIGURE 6. Teachers' competence area is very important to understand and develop when implementing film education in schools (Avoimet oppimateriaalit, 2011)

As introduced earlier, the festivals also saw that it is important to educate the educators before there can really be any conversation about educating the youth in film festivals. It is not just the moment you see the film but how you go through your experience after the screening (see 6.0). In most of the cases, the co-operation between the festivals and educational institutions had started when the festivals started functioning. None of the participants explained *how* the co-operation had started in more detail. There were no comments about how and which members of the institutions or festivals are normally contacted when implementing the co-operation.

8.2.1 The importance of the co-operation

The co-operation had a major importance from both festivals and educational institutions point of view. Most of the festivals replied that if they did have co-operation with educational institutions, they would not have special screenings for the children and

youth. The school-aged visitors bring depth to the film festivals, compared to the fact there would not be any children and youth screenings at all. The educational institutes were happy that there were pre-assembled activities for them, and that it was a nice change for the everyday school life.

The feedback from the schools is very important to the future of the special screenings in film festivals. Unfortunately, some of the festivals and educational administrators stated that one of the biggest challenges they are facing at the moment is that there are not enough resources (time, money, motivation) to really include any activities outside of school. This is something both the festival organizers and educational administrators wished to develop in the future.

8.2.2 The pedagogical point of view within the co-operation

When planning children or youth screenings the pedagogical approaches of film festivals were various. Many organizers think about the content of their screenings from a pedagogical point of view, some even plan the content together with teachers or other professionals of the educational field.

The festival organizers, who did not co-create the content of the screenings with basic education teachers, felt that the pedagogical point of view, which they had in mind, was not important or noticed by the educational institutions. The festivals questioned it if it was even important for the educational institutions.

One festival estimated that it might also be a sign that the educational institutes trust the festival organizers to already have the pedagogical knowledge; therefore it is not necessary for the institutes or individual teacher to question the content of the screenings.

9 FUTURE LANDSCAPES OF FINNISH MEDIA EDUCATION

The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture published in 2013 an issue of Cultural Policy Guidelines to promote media literacy for 2013–2016. The Guidelines draw on the objectives set out in the Government Programme, on the growing range of media education actors, media environment and media education. Film education is mentioned in the issue as an important area under media literacy and is being promoted by NGOs and informal education organizations (see 4.0). How can we develop watching a film into a learning experience without making it feel like an effort or as a workload to either students or educators? In Finland there are some forums where the media education discussion has risen over time. The most popular forums for media education discussions are online in media and film education related blogs and in seminars.

Lately there has been a great deal of good examples of acts towards film education promotion. In April 2014, IhmeFilmi was granted a three-year funding by Finnish Culture Foundation. IhmeFilmi is a national project that aims to provide film education to primary school teachers and aims to awake student club activities through film workshops and screenings (IhmeFilmi 2014). Also in autumn 2013, Finnish National Audiovisual Institute (KAVI) released a website Elokuvapolku, where can be found information and clips about traditional fictional storytelling. The website is targeted for primary school teachers and other educators. Elokuvapolku is a great portal but it is a little behind its time regarding content. An online film portal is a great concept, and therefore I hope Elokuvapolku site could be more diverse regarding its content. Perhaps there could be another portal that offers films directly to children and youth. To make the concept national, it could have some of its content not just online but rentable DVDs, which could be borrowed from schools just like from a vending machine. Also the idea that there could be film education spots in schools where children could come and check just a short film or a scene from a film during breaks or lunch time sounds worth of developing (Kiesiläinen 2013; Nevala, 2013). As the library system works admirably well in Finland, why not to broaden it to the school environment? I will crystalize this idea in my final conclusions and discussion.

Ismo Kiesiläinen (2014) has great thoughts about the future of Finnish film education in his blog, which has already revitalized the national film education sector. I deeply agree

that film education could take the example of other arts education. E.g. the early childhood music education aims to provide the following:

[..] to provide children musical experiences, abilities and skills. In addition the aim is to provide stimulants to create continues music hobby for the future. The early childhood music education supports child's creativity and the development of self-expression. The aim is also to support the child in all developing regions; emotional, social, cognitive and motoric abilities. (Musiikin opetus Suomessa, 2013)

As Kiesiläinen (2012) summarizes, the similar approach continues through all primary school years. The aim is to support and encourage children to find their own strengths, abilities and actions in music. The same approach could be added to educational program of film education. His thought supports Bergala's conclusion that none of the schools' film policies will get implemented well enough unless there is similar access to get familiar with film as there is already to music and books (Bergala 2013, 74).

10 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

As my research findings showed, there is already co-operation between film festivals and educational institutions. Based on the replies, the quality of the co-operation depends purely on the individuals who are implementing it. There is a lack of resources in both cases. My conclusions would be to make the existing co-operations more interactive. This way it would be possible to offer more diverse film culture in schools. It would require more financial support for both film festivals and educational institutions from the government to make this kind of activity spread nationally.

I find it highly important that the Ministry of Education and Culture considers new kind of approach in media education in Government Programme. There is already a suggestion to include more media education, on a weekly level, in primary school curriculums (OPM 13/2013). When considering the new media education suggestion, based on everything I have observed and researched for this thesis, it does not sound like enough media education in the long run. The media environment develops faster than the Government Programme. It is essential that the NGOs co-operate with the local educational institutions more actively. Sometimes the institutions are not aware of the available resources and what could be improved. This might be because of not being familiar with the possibilities and again lack of resources.

So my suggestion is that to make film education grow and spread nationally, Ministry of Education should consider creating qualified regional film education representatives, as there are already regional artists, who look after the development of local art scene. The suggestion is that with the help of regional film educators, film education centers could create regional film education libraries to educational institutions. This could only be possible with the help of other NGOs, e.g. film festivals and film schools participation, long-term government funding and with help of public libraries. Whether those film libraries were concrete or online, it is secondary. It is vital that those educational libraries exist in the future to make it possible to face films in a long-term status and to be able to forward the grand film culture to the future generations beyond mass-culture popcorn films. I hope someone could invest on how regional film education library concept could be implemented in practice, what kind of resources it would require and who would maintain it.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Survey cover letter

Hei! Teen opinnäytetyötä Tampereen ammattikorkeakouluun elokuvafestivaalien merkityksestä paikalliseen elokuvakasvatukseen. Aiheesta on tehty melko vähän tutkimusta ajankohtaisuuden huomioiden. Haastattelen niin elokuvafestivaalien kuin opetustahojen edustajia, jotta saan tutkimustuloksia mahdollisimman laajasti.

Toivoisin, että käyttäisit muutaman minuutin kysymyksiin vastaamiseen ja tukisit näin tutkimukseni toteutumista. Mikäli ette ole oikea henkilö vastaamaan kyselyyn, olettehan ystävällinen ja ohjaatte kyselyn oikealle henkilölle. Vastaaminen tapahtuu alla olevan lomakkeen kautta anonymisti. Vastauksia ei pystytä yhdistämään vastaajiin ja vastaukset käsitellään luottamuksellisesti.

Toivon teidän vastaavan mahdollisimman nopeasti, kuitenkin viimeistään ma 7.4.2014 mennessä. Kiitos etukäteen yhteistyöstä!

Hi! I'm making my thesis to Tampere University of Applied Sciences, researching how meaningful film festivals can be in local film education. There's rather little of study made under this topic considering how current it is. I'm going to interview film festivals as well education institutes to get data as widely as possible.

I hope you would support my research by answering to few questions, which you can find from the form attached below. This will take only few minutes and it will be anonymous. If you're not the right person to answer these questions, please forward the survey to the right person.

I hope to hear from you soon, no later than Mon April 4th, 2014. Thank you for advance for the co-operation!

Appendix 2. Survey questions for film festivals

Onko festivaalillanne erikseen lapsille ja nuorille suunnattuja näytöksiä?

Does your festival have own film screenings for children and youth?

Jos on, minkä ikäisiä lapsia ja nuoria käy näytöksissä?

If so, what is the age of the children and youth who visit the screenings?

Kuinka paljon muissa näytöksissä kävijöistä on lapsia tai nuoria?

How many children and youth visit the other screenings of your festival?

Millaisia elokuvia lasten ja nuorten näytöksissä on? Onko elokuvilla valintakriteereitä?

What kind of films there are in the children and youth screenings? Do the films have any kind of criteria to be chosen to the screening?

Tekeekö festivaalinne yhteistyötä opetustahojen kanssa? Päiväkodit, esikoulut, perus ja toiseen asteen koulutus.

Is your festival co-operating with educational institutes? Kindergartens, pre-schools, basic school, secondary schools.

Miten yhteistyö on saanut alkunsa ja million?

How did the co-operation start and when?

Jos yhteistyötä ei ole, onko tätä joskus mietitty aloittaa tai miksi yhteistyö on loppunut?

If there's no co-operation, have you ever thought about starting one or why did the co-operation stop?

Mikä on yhteistyön merkitys festivaalillenne?

What is the value of the co-operation for your festival?

Onko yhteistyötä tehdessä mietitty pedagogisia taustoja?

Are there any pedagogical backgrounds when co-operating?

Miten yhteistyö käytännössä toteutetaan? Onko yhteistyötä tarkoitus kehittää tulevaisuudessa ja millä tavalla?

How the co-operation is implemented in practice? Is there any plans to develop the co-operation in the future and what ways?

Millaisia ajatuksia elokuvakasvatus yleisesti herättää? Keskustellaanko elokuvakasvatuksesta festivaalilnne organisaatiossa?

In general, what kind of thoughts film education brings to you? Do you discuss about film education inside your festival organization?

Appendix 3. Survey questions for educational institutions

Millä tavalla koulussanne toteutetaan mediakasvatusta?

Which ways media education is implemented in your school?

Onko elokuvakasvatus mukana tässä mediakasvatuksessa?

Is film education part of this media education?

Jos on, miten elokuvakasvatusta toteutetaan?

If yes, how film education is implemented?

Jos ei, mitkä ovat suurimmat esteet toteuttamiselle?

If not, what are the main barriers to implementation?

Teettekö yhteistyötä paikkakuntanne elokuvafestivaalin kanssa?

Do you co-operate with your local community film festivals?

Miten yhteistyö on saanut alkanunsa ja milloin?

How did the collaboration start and when?

Jos yhteistyötä ei ole, onko tätä joskus mietitty aloittaa tai miksi yhteistyö on loppunut?

If there's no co-operation, has it been sometimes thought to start or why did the co-operation end?

Mikä on yhteistyön merkitys osana opetusta?

What is the importance of the co-operation as part of the education?

Millaisia pedagogisia taustoja ja tavoitteita yhteistyöllä on?

What kind of educational backgrounds and goals the co-operation is having?

Miten yhteistyö käytännössä toteutetaan? Onko yhteistyötä tarkoitus kehittää tulevaisuudessa ja millä tavalla?

How the co-operation is implemented in practise? Are there any plans to develop the co-operation in the future? If so, how?

Millaisia ajatuksia elokuvakasvatus yleisesti herättää? Keskustellaanko elokuvakasvatuksesta organisaatiossanne?

In general, what kind of thoughts film education brings to you? In your organization, is film education part of the discussions?