www.ecfaweb.org
ECFA
Journal
Information on Films for Children in Europe
European Children's Film Association

'CHILDREN'S FILM FIRST SEMINAR' IN CHEMNITZ

At the basis of the Children's Film First project, currently commissioned by ECFA with the support of the Creative Europe funding program, are local initiatives: three seminars (in Chemnitz, Bari and St. Quentin) to provide inspiration for a final conference in Brussels in September 2015. The first seminar was held in October in Chemnitz. How a session with local teachers grew into a project with European relevance…

Eisenstein won't help you much

Film publicist Klaus-Dieter Fellsman spoke with the teachers about the impact of film and the changing visions on education. Whoever spoke about film education 15 years ago, easily fell back upon the 'film canon', a list of must-see-movies for students. *"A well-meaning people's initiative, wanting to bring cultural heritage in the interest of young people, but without any participation. Eisenstein won't help you much in winning young people for your cause."*

Nowadays, for students with their technical mastery, making a film is no longer a challenge. But the question 'what more could you accomplish with film?' is still relevant. Therefore you need to thoroughly study the basics of cinema: how is a film constructed? How can you use a camera? What is the importance of music and editing?

Moreover, film can serve as an orientation model in social consciousness. Like for the teacher who was so impressed by WE SHALL OVERCOME that he made the film the basis of his cross-curricular learning program for an entire school year. The main question introduced by this film was: how do I make my dreams come true? What am I willing to sacrifice for it? Films can launch
debates about any current social problem, even in a rapidly changing reality. The problems of the Kurds outlined in BEFORE SNOWFALL can't be
compared with the current post-Syria-situation, but still film can open new worlds and offer chances to compare your experiences with those of other
spectators.

Before snowfall

When Inge is dancing

Successful blockbusters shouldn't be ignored. Such films can equally launch serious questions in the minds of young people. Like WHEN INGE DANCES, in Germany a very successful film in which young people tend to recognise themselves. But this film also speaks about the generation gap, love, forgiveness, ecology, lust for life etc. With such reference points you can easily redirect your audience towards more film technical aspects.

© Int' Shlingel Festival

According to Klaus-Dieter Fellsman the traditional aims of media-education have gathered even more importance over the years:

1. Learning to distinguish what is important and what is not.
2. Creating an awareness that not all info is trustworthy.
3. Learning how to distinguish and measure quality.
4. Finding coherence between different forms of cross-curricular knowledge.
5. Knowing that in life some important values exceed social success, fun or consumption.
6. Developing a passion for (the complexity of) art in itself.
7. Developing skills that allow you to judge critically, taking distance from the here and now.
8. Developing language skills by learning to express yourself about images in your own langu age.

© Int' Shlingel Festival

The Hunger Games

Realistic THE HUNGER GAMES

Stefan Linze of the FSK (Freiwilliges Selbst Kontrol, a German film censorship committee) presented 'Body, Gender & Social Identity', the final chapter in a study on the impact of feature films on young people aged 12-14. A change of course for an institution that usually starts from a negative vision (how to protect young people from harmful content), while media pedagogy strives for a positive approach: how can movies contribute to a young person's development?

In this research 600 students (12-17) were interviewed on four recent films: CHRONICLE, THE HUNGER GAMES (quite violent, but in a critical social context), DIRTY GIRL (about homosexuality) and COMBAT GIRLS (about a young Nazi girl befriending an Afghan refugee). The same survey was executed twice: once

before and once after a discussion about the film. All findings were compiled in a brochure and DVD (with film clips, excerpts from individual interviews with young people, statements from experts etc.).

You could say for every film that the message indeed reached out to the target audience, causing an intensified sense of 'global citizenship', a broadened view on life and reduced feelings of nationalism, as proved in plain statistical figures. In the case of COMBAT GIRLS those figures made proof of reduced xenophobia.
THE HUNGER GAMES led to reduced figures for sexism, because of the way the movie breaks with traditional gender roles. THE HUNGER GAMES oddly enough also got the highest score for "realism" - the recognition of the film in everyday reality. That this film also received the highest appreciation assessment, even from the boys, is quite exceptional for a story with a girl as main character. (GH)

Combat girl

Conclusions:
- Films have an identity-forming effect.
- Film perception is differentiated (identity models are not taken for granted but reflected on).
- Films provide models for solving recognisable problems and identity conflicts.

The brochure can be downloaded on http://www.fsk.de/?seitid=2742&tid=23.

Schlingel International Film Festival

CREATIVE EUROPE