

**CRITICAL DOCUMENTARY MAKING: AN ACTION RESEARCH TO DEVELOP  
PEDAGOGY FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

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## **Abstract**

This work is part of a larger action research project aiming to establish critical documentary making as a classroom activity in special needs and mainstream schools.

The first part, the Bachelor's thesis, ascertained the rationale for critical documentary making as a tool for critical pedagogy in schools. The second part, this Master's thesis, proposes a theoretical framework and pedagogical principles to guide critical documentary making activities in schools. Data from two projects in Finland, one in a hospital secondary school and the other in an international primary school, provided information regarding pupils' experiences from critical documentary making projects. The third phase, a longitudinal action research for doctoral studies, will study, in Finnish and International contexts, teacher training requirements to support the implementation of critical documentary making in school classrooms.

The foundations for the theoretical framework were derived from a literature study of four diverse, but not unrelated concepts; critical pedagogy, collaborative learning, peer tutoring, and participatory documentary. Based on key characteristics of these concepts and drawing on my teaching experiences prior to the research, I identified seven pedagogical principles to guide critical documentary making activities in the classroom: pupil-centred; conscientising, action driven, and reflective; collaborative; dialogical; empowering; accessible; and integrated.

The action research projects used equipment and software programmes already available in the schools, and the projects were within the scope of the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education and the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme. The simple documentary making processes developed in the research do not require teachers to have a background in ICT, media education, or film-making. In accordance with the democratic and empowering elements of critical pedagogy and action research, pupils chose generative themes to study and collaboratively make critical documentaries about, for a peer audience.

The data demonstrated that critical documentary making is a pedagogically rich classroom activity, providing holistic experiences for pupils through connecting school life with the outside world; facilitating pupils' explorations of societal issues which may support a sense of belonging to the wider community; empowering pupils to develop skills which can be used for voice and to make a difference; and enabling pupils to learn to critically read the media and become competent with information and communication technology which is transferable to other school activities.

Pupils with special educational needs and mainstream pupils described critical documentary making as a challenging, motivating and empowering classroom activity. The data also indicated that critical documentary making contributes towards pupils' transformative learning, conscientisation, self-reflection, and social and technological skill development, as well as being a potential tool for social change.

**Keywords:** active citizenship, collaborative learning, critical documentary making, critical pedagogy, empowerment, participatory documentary, peer tutoring.

## **Abbreviations**

HS	Hospital School
HSA	Hospital School Audience
HSCA	Hospital School Class Assistant
HSP	Hospital School Pupil
HSR	Hospital School Researcher
HST	Hospital School Teacher
IB	International Baccalaureate
IS	International School
ISA	International School Audience
ISP	International School Pupil
ISR	International School Researcher
IST	International School Teacher
LCD	Liquid crystal display, used for small display areas such as in digital cameras
RR	Researcher Reflections
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
WMM	Windows Movie Maker
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH .....	2
1.2	POSITIONING THE RESEARCHER.....	6
1.3	RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND AIMS.....	8
<b>2</b>	<b>THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS .....</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1	CRITICAL PEDAGOGY .....	11
2.1.1	<i>From the Frankfurt School to contemporary critical theories</i> .....	11
2.1.2	<i>Empowerment</i> .....	17
2.2	COLLABORATIVE LEARNING .....	18
2.3	PEER TUTORING .....	20
2.4	PARTICIPATORY DOCUMENTARY.....	23
2.5	A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR CRITICAL DOCUMENTARY MAKING IN SCHOOLS .....	30
<b>3</b>	<b>RESEARCH DESIGN.....</b>	<b>35</b>
3.1	ACTION RESEARCH.....	35
3.2	RESEARCH SETTINGS .....	38
3.3	KEY PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING CRITICAL DOCUMENTARY MAKING.....	40
3.3.1	<i>Pupil-centred</i> .....	42
3.3.2	<i>Conscientising, action driven, and reflective</i> .....	43
3.3.3	<i>Collaborative</i> .....	44
3.3.4	<i>Dialogical</i> .....	45
3.3.5	<i>Empowering</i> .....	46
3.3.6	<i>Accessible</i> .....	47
3.3.7	<i>Integrated</i> .....	48
3.4	EMPIRICAL DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS .....	49
3.5	ETHICAL ISSUES .....	53
<b>4</b>	<b>ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH DATA .....</b>	<b>57</b>
4.1	PUPILS' EXPERIENCES CORRESPONDING TO THE PEDAGOGICAL AIMS.....	58
4.1.1	<i>Autonomous experiences</i> .....	58
4.1.2	<i>Conscientising, action-based, and reflective experiences</i> .....	61
4.1.3	<i>Collaborative learning experiences</i> .....	66
4.1.4	<i>Dialogical experiences</i> .....	71
4.1.5	<i>Empowering experiences</i> .....	74
4.2	PUPILS' ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCES FROM CRITICAL DOCUMENTARY MAKING .....	80
4.2.1	<i>Motivational experiences</i> .....	80
4.2.2	<i>Technological experiences</i> .....	84
4.2.3	<i>Media literacy experiences</i> .....	88
<b>5</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS .....</b>	<b>92</b>
5.1	MAIN FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH.....	94
5.2	CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATIONAL THEORY AND PRACTICE .....	104
5.3	FUTURE RESEARCH PROPOSALS.....	107



# 1 INTRODUCTION

The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>1</sup> (UNCRC) declares in Article 12, that children have the right to express independent opinions, participate, and have a voice in decisions pertinent to their lives. Children who have mental or physical disabilities are specifically mentioned, in Article 23, regarding the requirement for opportunities to be active members of the community. (United Nations, 1989.) The Salamanca Declaration (United Nations, 1994) and Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006) endorse that the principle of education for all really does mean educational and societal participation for all pupils. In addition, the UNCRC declares that children's voices should be increasingly heard through the mass media and children must be "both participants in and beneficiaries of the information revolution" (Gigli, 2004, p. 2).

Politics are considered boring and irrelevant by many young people (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007, p. 124), perhaps due, at least partially, to the way politics are frequently presented, as remote and for adults. Politicians may associate with pop stars to win votes (Furlong & Cartmel, p. 125), but rarely seek dialogue and action regarding youth issues. However, there is evidence that some young people are interested and active in society, challenging for example, instances of social inequity, practices damaging the environment and those who infringe youth rights (Arches & Fleming, 2006).

Solanas & Getino (2000/1983) proposed that documentary film is instrumental in social analysis, political action, and social transformation, similarly, Jess Search said in 2008 "we are only just beginning to see how powerful films can be as kind of vehicle for change."<sup>2</sup> These observations suggest that documentary making within a critical pedagogical framework could be a classroom activity which facilitates pupil awareness of themselves in relation to society and may encourage active citizenship.

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<sup>1</sup> Ratified by all United Nations members, except Somalia and the United States of America.

<sup>2</sup> CEO, Channel 4 BRITDOC Foundation [http://britdoc.org/real\\_good/pitch](http://britdoc.org/real_good/pitch)

This Master's thesis, the second part of a larger research project, follows on from my Bachelor's thesis which established the rationale for critical documentary making in classrooms. In the Master's research I construct a theoretical framework for critical documentary making and identify key pedagogical principles to underpin action research projects at two schools in Finland to discover pupils' experiences from critical documentary making. The third stage, for my Doctoral studies, will include a longitudinal action research commencing with in-service critical documentary making workshops for teachers, who will go on to develop and evaluate critical documentary making in their classrooms. The proposed research will also explore applications for critical documentary making in schools and peer audience responses.

This thesis consists of five chapters and six appendixes. The introductory chapter provides the background and an overview of the research, defines my position as the researcher, and sets out the research questions and aims of the study. Through a literature study, the second chapter discusses four key concepts, critical pedagogy, collaborative learning, peer tutoring, and participatory documentary, to establish the theoretical framework for the research. The third chapter explains why and how the empirical research was based on an action research approach, describes the research settings, identifies key pedagogical principles for critical documentary making, discusses the tools used for data collection and analysis, and examines ethical issues pertinent to the research.

The fourth chapter presents and interprets data generated by the empirical research. The final chapter discusses the main findings in the context of the theoretical framework, identifies contributions this research makes to educational theory and practice, and highlights areas requiring further research.

## **1.1 Background to the research**

Many young people have access to digital media, as consumers and creators, through communication spaces in the Internet. Young people independently develop content, as the proliferation of zines, blogs and vlogs<sup>3</sup> indicate, and are increasingly encouraged to do so

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<sup>3</sup> zine – self-published work, derived from the word magazine; blog – a personal website commenting on particular issues or functioning as an on-line diary; vlog – a blog focusing on video content

as non-governmental organisations (NGOs)<sup>4</sup> recognise information and communication technologies (ICT) as tools for empowerment and voice. Some schools offer classroom activities which utilise, develop and acknowledge ICT skills learnt outside the school environment, however, these tend to be the exception rather than the norm and may involve external expertise and equipment.

One such example, the *Taikalamppu* (Magic Lantern) Project developed in Finland, is available through cultural centre film schools. *Taikalamppu*, in a nutshell, is a 4 hour workshop for young people resulting in a completed film, maximum 5 minutes length (Laiho, 2005). Typically, a teacher arranges a workshop for pupils with a couple of *Taikalamppu* team members who introduce themselves and the project to the class, then plunge directly into the process of making a film. Ideas are gathered, pupils take part in warm-up activities then the video is sequentially filmed to eliminate editing requirements, and finally the films are viewed and reviewed. At first the class work together and then split into smaller groups to make the films, usually according to subject interest. Observing 8-9 year olds and 13-14 year olds taking part in *Taikalamppu* projects, I noticed that pupils found the medium of video stimulating, were extremely engaged during the entire workshop, and creatively collaborated to seek solutions for filming problems.

The notion of pupils making documentaries for their peers began to formulate, based on the premises that: young people have something important to say and rights to a voice; participatory documentary processes are reported to be empowering; documentary making could be a practical classroom activity within a critical pedagogy framework; and media education is important for all pupils. Critical pedagogy connects the outside world with

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<sup>4</sup> The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have numerous initiatives providing resources, competitions, and urging young people to “make a difference” <http://www.unicef.org/voy/index.php>. The Development Gateway Foundation proclaims that ICT will play an important role in the lives of the 1.3 billion young people living in the developing world <http://topics.developmentgateway.org/special/youth>. The TakingITGlobal website gives an insight to the importance placed on young people having a voice through digital media to communicate with peers and influence decision makers <http://about.takingitglobal.org/index.html>.

that of the educational context (McLaren & Torres, 1999, p. 66) and seeks to transform the world to be more equitable through action and reflection, thereby providing a pedagogical approach which supports pupils to become more aware of society and take action, in other words be active citizens.

The concept of active citizenship is mentioned in this thesis but the wide range of interpretations of the term (cf. Scott, 2002; Isin, 2002), is not explored. When active citizenship is referred to, I have in mind pupils working towards shared goals within the communities they are members of, to equitably benefit all members. These communities could, for example, be within the school such as the classroom community, a regional sports club, the local community where pupils live, or the global community. Whilst participating in community activities pupils would be expected to respect “differences in assumptions, beliefs, choices and behaviour provided that these do not destroy social cohesion” (Taskforce on Active Citizenship, 2007, pp. 2, 14).

Information and media for young people is usually created by adults, although the rapid growth of YouTube<sup>5</sup>, a video sharing website is reversing this tendency. More than 70 million videos are watched on the site daily (Green & Hannon, 2007, p. 14). The depth of understanding content is related “to similarities between viewers and content, viewers’ needs and interests, and the age of the viewer” (Adams, Carlson & Hamm, 1990, p. 38). It should be noted that platforms such as YouTube are used and abused, as they are typically regulated by the user community it is vital that pupils learn how to be their own censors and have confidence to draw the appropriate attention to offensive and suspicious content.

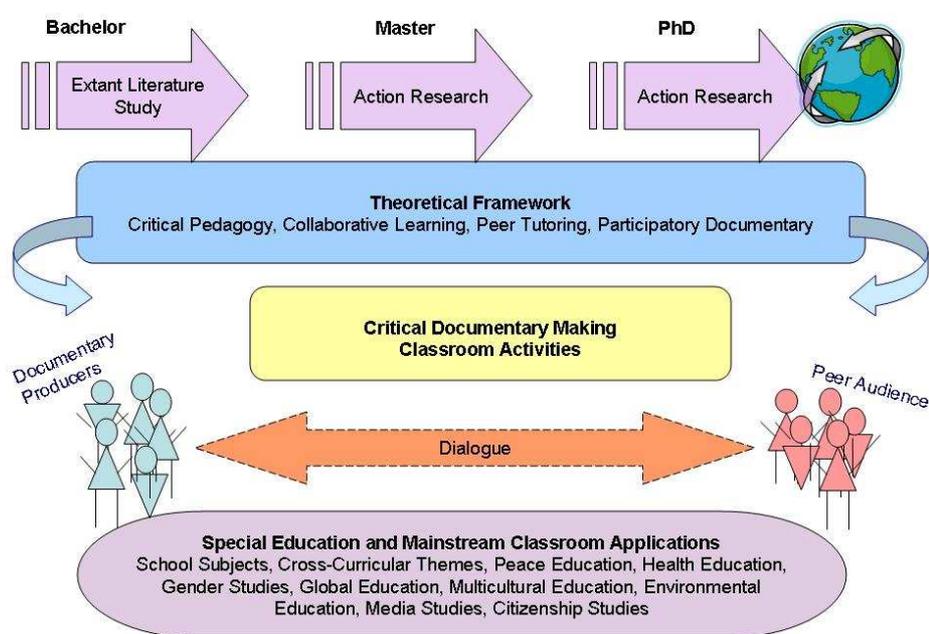
The limited research I found, referring to pupils making films at school, indicated that pupils involved in producing films or documentaries are highly motivated and engaged in their work, the concept appeals to a range of learning styles, and authentic learning and peer work is prominent (cf. Hakkarainen, 2007; Hofer & Owings-Swan, 2005; Kearney & Schuck, 2005; Reid, Burn, & Parker, 2002). A discussion about documentary making as a classroom activity with 12-13 year old pupils at an International School in May 2006 was encouraging. Pupils commented that young people may be more willing to take notice of

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.youtube.com>

what other young people have to say than adults, “adults just tell facts, kids connect with each other.” Some pupils expressed fears about acting in a video but were keen on alternative formats using photographs, drawings, text, cartoon characters, or just audio.

Prior to the empirical research, I studied four key concepts, critical pedagogy, collaborative learning, peer tutoring, and participatory documentary, to provide the theoretical starting point for designing documentary making processes and practices in schools. An overview of the three academic research stages, the Bachelor, Master, and Doctoral studies, is illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1** Research overview

The theoretical framework for the research, grounded in critical pedagogy and supported by additional learning theories and pedagogies, is discussed in chapter 2. The diagram shows that dialogue may take place between the documentary makers and the peer audience, and suggests some of the potential applications for documentary making activities in special education and mainstream school classrooms. The action research projects in this current research took place at two Finnish schools, an international primary school (IS) and a hospital secondary school (HS). The documentary making projects fitted within the

requirements of the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education<sup>6</sup> at both schools, and additionally the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme<sup>7</sup> implemented at the IS.

## 1.2 Positioning the researcher

During the research projects I aimed to develop documentary making activities within the capabilities of all teachers, not only for teachers with strong ICT or media education competences. At the time of the empirical research I did not have a background in film or documentary making. However, I am a keen photographer and conversant with the basic software programmes pupils used to make their documentaries, such as Windows Movie Maker (WMM), PowerPoint, and Audacity. Art and Film Studies, two of my minor degree subjects, gave me some insights for theoretically and practically developing documentary making processes, as did further literary research into documentary and film-making. I had previously produced multi-media learning materials, a short clay animation<sup>8</sup> film, and a number of WMM photograph based films.

In 2007 and 2008 I attended VideoTivoli<sup>9</sup>, the children's section and associated workshops of the Tampere Film Festival. The events were a valuable source for ideas how to make simple yet effective films, and gave me opportunities to interview film producers, including Angelo Loy, John Webster, and Maikki Kantola, to learn about documentary and film-making with children.

Although I did not have experience making documentaries with pupils, before the research projects, I could not claim to be a complete novice, either in making simple films or teaching. I was aware of what hard, frustrating, and rewarding work documentary making can be, and could help pupils avoid some of the pitfalls. I did not attend documentary or film-making courses before the projects so I could experience, as closely as possible, what

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.oph.fi/english/page.asp?path=447,27598,37840,72101,72106>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ibo.org/myp/>

<sup>8</sup> Clay animation is a form of stop motion animation; characters are made from a malleable substance, often plasticine clay, arranged on the set, a photograph is taken and the object or character is then slightly moved before the next photograph. When the photographs are viewed quickly in sequence the characters appear to move.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.videotivoli.fi/english09/index.htm>

teachers might encounter when introducing documentary making activities to their pupils for the first time.

I was the teacher in the workshops at both schools and all pupils were fully aware of my role as teacher-researcher, my aims with the research, and what I hoped would be their contributions towards the research, this is discussed in chapter 3. Some pupils introduced new software techniques to me which could be utilised in developing the documentary making activities, illustrating how teacher and pupils can produce knowledge together.

My present epistemic standpoint comes from a critical perspective, namely that all knowledge is political knowledge and never neutral (cf. Freire, 1970/2000; Kincheloe, 2008) and that “dominant ideologies and culture dictate educational practices” (Degener, 2001). Knowledge is central to effecting social change and something to be sought, challenged, and constantly reviewed in the light of further knowledge. Moreover, knowledge is multi-perspectival (Kellner, 1995), there is not one true knowledge. I also consider knowledge to be socially constructed, meaning that we learn through interacting with people and societies (Vygotsky, 1962). My epistemic standpoint is reflected in critical pedagogy, which provides the foundations for the theoretical framework in the research.

Regarding my personal convictions, I would like the world to be ethical and compassionate. I believe that it is possible, individually and collectively, to make a positive difference by engaging in active citizenship. Although there is no guarantee of transformative action, critical pedagogy can contribute towards “generating the right climate for change” (Mayo, 2004, p 60).

Although I have endeavoured to report my research as accurately and objectively as possible, the data has been interpreted from my point of view. To offset unintended bias, I include many quotations from pupils, teachers, and class assistants. The theoretical framework described in chapter 3 and the findings from the research, in chapter 4, do not provide educators with step-by-step lesson plans for documentary making projects; instead they illustrate how documentary making can be a classroom tool for critical pedagogy and that documentary making offers multiple learning experiences for pupils and teachers.

### 1.3 Research questions and aims

The research questions emanated from two problems; how to apply critical pedagogy theories to classroom activities and how to engage young people in active citizenship, intent on making the world a better place. The Bachelor's thesis indicated that documentary making within a critical pedagogy framework could be one such possibility.

Documentaries address issues of social concern and activate “our social awareness . . . [and] our social consciousness,” and have been used since the 1920s as a means to “promote a sense of participatory citizenship” (Nichols, 2001, pp. 66-67, 98). The process of making a documentary incorporates elements of problem based learning, such as collaboratively solving problems and reflecting on experiences, challenging open ended problems related to the content and the documentary making process, and meaning making rather than collecting facts (Hakkarainen, 2007). Depending on the topic, documentary making has characteristics which reflect the principles of critical pedagogy and could be a classroom activity through which pupils explore their world.

It was necessary to identify how documentary making activities could be underpinned by critical pedagogy and to study the experiences of making documentaries from the pupils' perspective, therefore the two research questions are:

1. What are the key pedagogical principles of documentary making within a critical pedagogy framework?
2. What are pupils' experiences from critical documentary making?

In addition to locating documentary making within a critical pedagogical framework, I identified two further requirements. Critical documentary making as a classroom activity should be accessible for teachers and pupils, and fit within the curriculum. These criteria address educational authorities, school administrators, and teachers' concerns of what additional costs might be incurred in documentary making, as well as questions of teacher or pupil competency, and timetable issues.

Digital media provide flexible tools for producing creative materials, and potentially reaching a global audience through different channels such as email, mobile phones, digital radio, the Internet, CDs, DVDs and podcasts. Conventional classroom projects, posters and presentations are usually intended for an audience within the class, sometimes across a year and less frequently within a school. The audience for peer made documentaries could be known, as in the documentary making projects in this research, or unknown to the makers; a class, a school, the local community or worldwide, depending on the aims of a specific project.

The Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (FNBE, 2004, pp. 36-41) includes seven cross-curricular themes. Some of the cross-curricular themes (growth as a person; media skills and communication; participatory citizenship and entrepreneurship; and technology and the individual), may be addressed through critical documentary making regardless of the documentary's subject. In this research, all of the aforementioned were applicable to the documentaries made, and the remaining cross-curricular themes (responsibility for the environment, well-being, and a sustainable future; cultural identity and internationalism; and safety and traffic) were also relevant in some documentaries.

Research about documentary making in schools indicated that it is an underused and under-researched activity (Hakkarainen, 2007; Reid et al., 2002); accordingly there is a need for this current and future research. Wulf proposed that political, economic, and social conditions are today considered important in understanding education within a specific historical period (2003, p. 20), technological factors are also significant. The change from analogue to digital technology for ICT applications created an opening for documentary making to become a feasible activity in many schools; opportunities were more limited 5, and certainly 10 years ago, making this a timely piece of research. Film-making technologies are now affordable, audio and visual editing software is available in formats which can be used by non-specialists (Reid et al., 2002, p. 79.), and ICT skills and media education are requirements of school curricula.

This research aims to develop educational practices which encourage young people to question information, develop critical thinking skills, facilitate genuine voice, and support

empowerment. Furthermore, the research seeks to develop documentary making processes grounded in a critical pedagogy framework which provide transformative learning<sup>10</sup> experiences for pupils, add a contemporary dimension to classroom activities, and contribute towards engaging pupils in active citizenship. In addition, the research aims to design and develop critical documentary making activities which teachers could and would adopt for their classrooms.

This chapter provided the background to the research, defined my position as the researcher, and introduced the research questions and aims of the study. The next chapter explores the key theoretical concepts in this research, critical pedagogy, collaborative learning, peer tutoring, and participatory documentary, to establish the theoretical framework for the empirical research.

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<sup>10</sup> In this research transformative learning is understood as a learning process which changes perspectives through critical reflection on assumptions and fosters autonomous decision making (Mesirow, 1997).

## **2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS**

This chapter studies literature from four theoretical starting points, critical pedagogy, collaborative learning, peer tutoring, and participatory documentary, to construct the foundations of the theoretical framework for the empirical research. I was unable to find literature specifically regarding documentary making as a classroom activity within a critical pedagogical framework, and therefore investigated related concepts. Collaborative learning and peer tutoring are characteristics of critical pedagogy and participatory documentary, which in turn reflect my ontological and epistemological assumptions described in section 1.2. In addition to literature, I draw on interviews with selected experts from the field of film-making, particularly Angelo Loy in section 2.4. I start by discussing critical pedagogy.

### **2.1 Critical pedagogy**

In this section I outline the history and development of critical pedagogy, starting with the Frankfurt School and Paulo Freire, then progressing to contemporary critical theories including critical media education. In addition, I include a brief exploration of empowerment; this concept, important for critical pedagogy, may be understood in different ways and therefore clarification of what empowerment means in this research is required.

#### **2.1.1 From the Frankfurt School to contemporary critical theories**

The Frankfurt School is attributed with the early development of a theory to transform oppressive conditions through a combination of both theory and practice (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003, pp. 8-9). Members of the Frankfurt School did not produce a universally shared critical theory but shared a common attempt to assess new forms of capitalism and its accompanying domination, in addition to rethinking and reconstructing the meaning of human emancipation (Giroux, 2003, p. 27). By trying to critically find answers for societal questions, the principles for critical pedagogy began to appear (Darder et al., 2003, pp. 9-10).

The Frankfurt School based its position on understanding situations within the historical context; incorporating self-criticism as an essential component of critical theory; dialectical thought; acknowledging the link between knowledge, power and, domination; critical theory struggling for a better world; and empirical work neither producing universal truths nor being confined to replicable experiments, as argued by positivists (Giroux, 2003, pp. 35-39).

Habermas identified three kinds of knowledge, technical, practical, and emancipatory. Technical knowledge separates knowledge from the issue of power and can be measured, quantified, and used to sort, regulate and control pupils, for example, through examinations and streaming. Practical knowledge aims to help pupils describe and analyse ongoing and situational social events. Emancipatory knowledge, which is of particular interest in this research:

helps us understand how social relationships are distorted and manipulated by relations of power and privilege . . . [and] aims at creating the conditions under which irrationality, domination and oppression can be overcome and transformed through deliberative collective action. (McLaren, 2003a, p. 73.)

Whereas the Frankfurt School advanced their theories in Europe and the United States, Paulo Freire developed his pedagogy of the oppressed in a different historical and geographical context. Born in Brazil, in 1921, Freire grew up in the north-eastern state of Pernambuco. He graduated in law but did not practice it; instead he studied further and pursued a career in developing progressive adult literacy education, which he saw as an essential tool in overcoming oppression. His politicised teaching methods were considered a threat by the military which overthrew the reform-minded Goulart regime and subsequently, in 1964, Freire was exiled for 15 years. (Collins, n.d., Lownd, n.d.)

Freire had worthy intentions at heart when he wrote about liberation of the oppressed, who were encouraged to liberate themselves and their oppressors. He warned that the oppressed should not become oppressors of their former oppressors, but “restorers of the humanity of both.” Freire called for the transformation of society, to replace exclamations of how terri-

ble things are, by asking ‘what can I do to change the situation?’ (Freire, 1970/2000, pp. 44, 51.)

The two distinct stages in Freire’s pedagogy of the oppressed indicate optimism that the world can be transformed and hope for permanent liberty. Firstly, conscientisation enables the oppressed to unveil the world of oppression and through processes of reflection and action, known as praxis, commit to transforming it. Secondly, after the oppression has been transformed, the pedagogy of the oppressed becomes pedagogy for all people, to maintain liberation. (Freire, 1970/2000, p. 54.) Monchinski described praxis as “thinking about what and why you’re going to do before you do it and then reflecting on what you did, how you did it, and how it turned out” ( 2008, p. 1).

Freire despaired of a form of teaching prevalent in many classrooms, where the teacher is the possessor of knowledge and deposits that knowledge in the empty heads of the pupils. This banking approach to education operates to maintain the status quo and is based on a one-way flow of information. The alternative Freire proposed, liberating or problem-posing education, involves the pupils as critical co-investigators with the teacher. Teachers choose themes they feel are important and relevant for the pupils, based on what pupils want to know more about. Through dialogue, pupils start to see the world as it is and not as it is presented by others. On the one hand, banking education provides “myth-creating irrationality” and on the other, problem-posing education offers a “critical and dynamic view of the world.” Critical pedagogy requires pupils to take an active, reflective and critical participation in their education to develop the capacity to transform the world. (Freire, 1970/2000, pp. 72-74, 79-83, 98, 102-106, 123.)

Whilst there are common themes and critical theorists may start from the same premise, *“that men and women are essentially unfree and inhabit a world rife with contradictions and asymmetries of power and privilege,”* critical pedagogy is diverse (McLaren, 2003a, p. 69, author’s italics). Critical pedagogy emerged from a desire to transform, through education, the structures and conditions within society that prevent democratic participation of all people. The term critical pedagogy first appeared in Henry Giroux’s *Theory and Resistance in Education* published in 1983. (Darder et al., 2003, pp. 2-3.)

In contrast to the orthodox Marxist view of schools reproducing class relations and passively indoctrinating pupils into becoming capitalists, or the mainstream educational theory view in which schools mainly provide pupils “with the skills and attitudes necessary for becoming patriotic, industrious, and responsible citizens. . . . a dialectical understanding of schooling enables us to see schools as sites of both domination and liberation.” Critical pedagogy asks how and why some knowledge is constructed the way it is, how and why some knowledge has more power and legitimacy than others, and how and why knowledge is used to reinforce dominant ideologies which hide unjust power relations. (McLaren, 2003a, pp. 69-73.)

From starting to address inequalities on the basis of social class, critical pedagogy has developed to curricular and policy initiatives based around anti-sexist, anti-racist and anti-homophobic classrooms, recognizing that “racism, sexism, and homophobia are exacerbated by capitalist exploitation” (McLaren, 2003b, pp.160-161, Darder & Torres, 2003, pp. 247-257). Critical feminist education theory assumes that schooling is deeply connected to the class structure and economic system of capitalism, and that capitalism and patriarchy mutually reinforce one another. This builds on liberal feminist work which focuses on sex-stereotyping at school, the bias in curricular materials and school practices, but largely ignores the depth of sexism in power-relationship and gender-class issues. (Weiler, 2003, pp. 270-272.)

Investigations into gender and school, from a critical feminist perspective, come from a feminist reproduction theory, that is, how schools function to reproduce gender divisions and oppression, connected to a traditional Marxist class-based analysis. However, a growing body of work uses concepts of resistance and culture production to look at the experiences of girls and women in schools. For example, working class girls opposing the dominant-class culture and ideology of school emphasize their femininity and “end up exploited both in their unpaid labour in the home as well as in the marginal and low-paying jobs they can get as waged workers,” reproducing working class through resistance. (Weiler, 2003, pp. 272-275.)

Understanding the relationship between power and knowledge, and capitalism and political tactics is fundamental to being a critical pedagogue. Political, economic, and power theories are rarely part of student teacher curricula which suggests an intention to perpetuate domesticating educational practices; educators, however, may not be aware of advocating domesticating rather than liberating educational policies. Quoting Marx, Freire affirmed that “the educator should also be educated,” to acquire a political literacy which sheds a naïve outlook on social reality in order to see it as something in the making not something already made and requires educators to ask themselves for whom and on whose behalf are they working. (1985, pp. 2, 100-105, 180.)

Unlike McPeck (1990, p. 43), I consider primary school the place for pupils to start developing critical thinking skills, and believe it is vital rather than educationally premature. Young children are bombarded with information and it is important that they learn to question and reflect on the content. It could be argued that teachers who favour a critical approach to teaching would themselves critically select lesson content, however, this is not in line with the concept of teachers and pupils learning together, nor does it account for learning which takes place outside the classroom. McPeck (1990) commences his critical thinking activities with 15-16 year olds; by this time a pupil may, for example, have already experienced physical or mental abuse, have low self-esteem, or be well on the way to materialistic consumerism.

Observing 9-11 year old pupils discussing a wide range of issues with each other and their class teachers convinced me that primary school children have plenty of content to critically discuss and are extremely capable of considering information from alternative points of view. Primary school aged children often have a curiosity, perhaps an intrinsic development of critical thinking processes, which is often discouraged by teaching practices focusing on facts rather than problem posing and dialogue. Children quickly get the message that there is a right answer and the one truth equates with high grades.

Despite the considerable amount of information transmitted about crucial societal matters, there is not enough action to right the wrongs, feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, or protect the abused; people are “deliberately entertained, amused, and soothed into avoid-

ance denial and neglect” (Greene, 2003, p.110). Freire indirectly called for critical media pedagogy when he wrote that mass society, characterized by standardized thinking, dressing, and eating, and daily prescriptions from the media, hinders critical thinking and risk taking (1985, p. 88).

In pursuit of profits, companies and the media create the needs and desires to proliferate the notion among young people that it is essential to own the latest fashion, games, and technology. Critical awareness of how marketing and the media can manipulate is a valuable tool for young people. The powerful images which persuade young people to crave the latest trainers can be deconstructed and better understood for what they are really selling; a desire to possess, use up the planet’s natural resources, and have at the expense of those who have not.

As information becomes more accessible, through the Internet for example, we should encourage young people to think more critically about where they find information, and how they interpret and present it for assessment (Green & Hannon, 2007, p. 38). Incorporating critical media studies into everyday classroom practices aids this process. Critical viewing skills enable viewers to understand who controls the content, who is communicating and why, what is behind the content, and whose story is being told (Bery, 2003, p. 118).

An extensive report on the media habits of 8-18 year olds in America indicated users watch an average of 4 hours television, per day and spend 90 minutes on recreational internet use (Roberts, Foehr & Rideout, 2005, pp. 118, 128). For 15-19 year olds, television is still the dominant media globally, surpassing radio listening in nearly every region, as well as newspaper and internet use (Gigli, 2004, p. 4).

A medium like television shapes thinking habits, social behaviour, and political ideas, and reinforces stereotypes, all of which provide a good source for developing critical thinking and cooperative learning skills with pupils (Adams et al., 1990, pp. 36-37). Critical media studies usually revolve around discussions, reflection, observing and reporting, although “given the right resources, children can even produce good programming [for television],” an activity schools are reluctant to consider (Adams et al., 1990, p. 47). This Master’s research intends to take critical media studies beyond commenting on productions to engag-

ing pupils in making their own documentary film productions, thereby experientially demystifying media.

### 2.1.2 Empowerment

Exploring empowerment in educational discourse, Gore identified three distinct categories of empowerment. Firstly, conservative empowerment which is rhetorical and involves a minimal shift in power; secondly, liberal humanist empowerment which is concerned with the empowerment of individual teachers, student teachers, and pupils, as well as changing power within the classroom; and thirdly, critical and feminist discourses which contemplate societal relations of power, and collective and political notions of empowerment. (Gore, 2003, pp. 331-333.)

The agent of empowerment in critical pedagogy is often acknowledged to be the teacher, however, Gore warned that not only are extraordinary abilities attributed to the teacher, but it infers that the teacher has something, empowerment, to give to the pupils. In a zero-sum situation, where it is understood that there is only so much power to have, this would mean that any power given, by the teacher to pupils, results in a loss of power for the teacher. (2003, pp. 334-335.) Teachers fearing empowered pupils lead to reduced teacher authority can be reassured, critical pedagogy strives to empower both teachers and pupils. Teachers need to constantly question their intentions and actions, and acknowledge their limits accepting that it is possible to “get it wrong” (Gore, 2003, pp. 336-346).

Peterson provided an example of good intentions but ‘getting it wrong’ when he described how he dismissed text books in favour of providing interesting stories and role-plays of “true history” with pupils (2003, p. 378). The role-plays may have provided a truer version of history than found in textbooks, but still a version. Peterson gave practical suggestions and examples for a critical approach to teaching, but compared his knowledge, the right knowledge, to encyclopaedias and text books, the wrong knowledge. His writing is a reminder to create time and spaces to reflect on one’s own practices and check if we are living our well-intentioned aims.

Four dimensions of empowerment are identified by Stromquist in the development project context of women's empowerment through education:

The cognitive, which refers to a critical understanding of one's reality; the psychological, referring to feelings of self-esteem; the political, which refers to an understanding of power inequalities and the ability to organize and mobilize; and the economic, which involves the power to generate independent income (cited in Monzó, 2002).

Stromquist (1995) stressed that self-esteem and confidence cannot be taught, but the conditions under which they may develop can be provided, and empowerment can only be developed by the project participants, echoing Gore's (2003) sentiments mentioned above. McLaren takes a Freirean stance in describing empowerment:

the process through which students learn to critically appropriate knowledge existing outside their immediate experience in order to broaden their understanding of themselves, the world, and the possibilities for transforming the taken-for-granted assumptions about the way we live (2003a, p. 89).

Although Paulo Freire (1970/2000) did not use the term empowerment in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, it is an important work for understanding a critical concept of empowerment. Some of the characteristics of empowerment identified in this section are within Freire's problem-posing, dialogue, conscientisation and praxis paradigms, which I draw on in section 2.5 to construct the critical pedagogy theoretical framework in which to ground documentary making classroom activities.

## **2.2 Collaborative learning**

Literature is divided between the terms collaborative learning and cooperative learning. Sometimes the terms are used interchangeably, sometimes as separate entities, and definitions may or may not be provided (Panitz, 1996). I refer to collaborative learning when pupils work together using dialogue or more than one pair of hands to achieve a goal. Cooperative learning in this thesis implies pupils working independently and then pooling their resources to achieve a common goal. Rockwood observed that authority in a cooperative learning environment remains with the instructor and is not empowering, whereas

authority and responsibility for collaborative learning is transferred to the group and is empowering (cited in Panitz, 1996).

Documentary making activities could be collaborative or cooperative, depending how pupils choose to tackle tasks. For example, a group may choose to research their themes collaboratively by all working at the same computer, or cooperatively by individually finding information at separate computers and then pooling their resources to make collaborative decisions on what to include or exclude. Similarly, the script may be written by the group as a collaborative process, or one member may write the whole script, or it could be divided into sections for different members to write. As discussed in chapter 4, pupils in the research projects chose to work in a variety of ways. One group at the IS spent most of their time working collaboratively, discussing all issues and reaching a consensus at each stage of the documentary making process. Another IS group divided tasks between group members and then got together at times during the workshops to share their findings. Sometimes it was difficult to identify when pupils were collaborating and when they were cooperating.

Pupils who are used to being given facts by their teachers need time to adapt to becoming responsible for their learning, rather than relying on the teacher to validate their thinking and direct learning. Teachers benefit from collaborative learning environments too; less individual papers to mark or work to grade frees more time to “work with small groups and interact in a more personal manner with students” (Adams et al., 1990, pp. 23-25).

Peterson made a number of suggestions how to make the transition with pupils who have previously not been trusted with responsibility. He advocated enhancing pupils’ self-esteem and reducing anxiety level through a positive classroom atmosphere and activities which stress self-awareness, respect, and cooperation. Pupils should take each other seriously and listen to each other, and the teacher should discuss the content and process of activities as well as time management and how to keep organized. Peterson also recommended, “restrict[ing] student decision making at the first signs that students are using the increased power as a license to goof off,” and placing those pupils unable to work in a cluster, in rows. (2003, pp. 372-373.)

Despite Peterson's explanations (2003 pp. 373-375) this immediate withdrawal of trust in pupils is manipulative, authoritarian, and oppressive. Collaboration requires desks in clusters or tables to work around, plenty of resources, and teachers trusting their pupils to be responsible for their learning and behaviour, not authoritarian approaches to discipline. Needing to raise hands to ask questions and not being allowed to move from desks inhibit pupil collaboration. (Adams et al., 1990, p. 25.) Disruptive pupils should not stop others from working and measures need to be taken to prevent this, but responsibility and trust cannot be something to be given and then taken away so seemingly easily.

### **2.3 Peer tutoring**

Characteristics of, and skills used for ICT activities, commonly identified by teachers, parents, academics, and children are; collaboration, peer-to-peer learning, self-esteem, problem-solving, self-motivation, ownership, and purposeful creativity and communication (Green & Hannon, 2007, pp. 16, 36, 48). When teachers act as facilitators or guides in ICT learning, rather than directing it, young people's expertise and exploratory approaches to informal learning are utilised in classrooms as pupils share their knowledge with peers. Siblings and friends are cited as the greatest source of learning new skills, not ICT classes. (Green & Hannon, 2007, pp. 66-67.) Unfortunately, teaching and learning which takes place outside of school is rarely given formal recognition.

Classroom-based documentary making presents an opportunity for pupils to share their ICT skills and knowledge with peers at the same time as increasing their own repertoire and gaining academic credit. Groups or individuals, for example, can teach classmates how to use software programmes such as WMM, Audacity, or PowerPoint, or perhaps show particular features of programmes that others have not yet discovered. Documentary making provides plenty of genuine needs for pupils to collaborate. In this regard, I am reminded of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffolding concepts.

ZPD is the difference between what a child can do alone compared to what could be achieved with an adult or other competent helper, for example a classmate. Scaffolding is a term used in connection with ZPD, but not one introduced by Vygotsky, to describe the

actions of the competent helper, who increases or decreases assistance depending how much is required. (Berk & Winsler, 1995, p. 34.)

Reid et al. reported on a study (citing an unpublished paper by Sweetlove, J. 2001) comparing different methods to introduce a digital video editing and handling software tool, iMovie 2, to pupils in a specialist Media Arts school. Peer tutoring at a shared screen had the most success “using accessible language without unnecessary explanation or elaboration,” and a printed guide was the least effective, except as a supplementary resource. However, the results were dependent on the level of ICT competency of the pupils. Computer literate pupils learnt as well through experimentation as they did with teacher instruction, but those with little experience of computers were unable to learn by experimenting. (Reid et al., 2002, p. 88.)

Peer tutoring in classrooms frequently involves finding information from textbooks or the Internet and presenting it to peers in a variety of formats with little critical analysis, discussion or questioning. Different names are given to these activities, such as jigsaw, buzz group and expert panel. NGOs take a more dynamic approach to peer tutoring, for example, in teenage health education projects.

Young people often have a strong peer communication network through which accurate and inaccurate information is exchanged. Children are frequently influenced more by their peers than anyone else and are more likely to change behaviour on account of peers than adults. Peer tutoring programmes are said to work best when they use discussion groups, experiential learning, interactive games, role plays and plenty of opportunities to practice new behavioural skills. Peer educators are encouraged to use innovative and creative methods to involve participants in learning, such as video making, creating theatre productions, producing an art exhibition and arranging meetings with people directly connected to the topic. (Felch, Hincks Reynolds, & Shiroyama, 1993, pp.9-11, 16-18.)

Peer tutoring enables young people “to define and establish standards of acceptable behaviour within their own community,” serve as positive role models, and be perceived as credible sources of information with peer groups. Typically in NGO youth projects, peer educators are selected to attend workshops to learn about the topics they will discuss with

their peers and develop communication, counselling and educator skills. (UNESCO Regional Clearing House, 2003, pp. 11, 13-15.) The use of role models is widely documented, especially in the area of sports and celebrities, and provides a rationale for peer education. According to Bandura, most learning comes from observing role models, imagining emulating the role model, and imitating the role model. The more similar the role model is in characteristics to the learner, the more motivated the learner is likely to be. (Payne, Reynolds, Brown, & Fleming, 2002.)

Peer tutor groups often demonstrate more behavioural change than the peer groups they are educating (UNESCO Regional Clearing House, 2003, p. 32), which suggests that documentary making projects will be more transformative for the makers than the audience. However, research indicates that peer education projects are more transformative for participants than projects led by adults, and that girls are more influenced by peers than boys. Peer education is recommended to be one component in programmes and not relied on as the sole method. (UNESCO Regional Clearing House, 2003, pp. 33-34, 43, 47.)

When documentaries are made by peers, the audience has an opportunity to identify with content made by those with an insider's knowledge of the viewer's reality, rather than by someone of an unequal standing. The latter may be more inclined to promote their personal values or inadvertently miss the core of the issue. Audience identification with the content perhaps explains the popularity of contemporary reality television programmes, although this reality is largely created by the programmes' producers.

To establish if members of a peer audience experience their own reality in new ways and consider their ability to influence their own lives (Bery, 2003, p. 110) research focusing on the audience is required. The type of documentary projects initiated and control of distributing documentary materials will affect the ease or difficulty of assessing audience responses. Unrestricted distribution via the Internet relies on voluntary audience feedback submitted independently, whereas projects to exchange documentaries within a school or with a partner school could have support from teachers collecting feedback. This current research concentrates on critical documentary making rather than reception, however, the international school audience (ISA) were requested to complete the questionnaire in Ap-

pendix A, and verbal responses were collected from both the IS and HS audiences. Audience feedback is briefly discussed in chapters 4 and 5.

## **2.4 Participatory documentary**

Participatory documentaries share some commonalities with critical pedagogy; they focus on issues that are important in the maker's lived world, are often dialogical, and frequently aim to effect social transformation. Although the pupils in this research are not necessarily the subjects of the documentaries, as is the case in many participatory documentary projects, the characteristics of participatory documentaries make them particularly suitable to contribute towards constructing the theoretical framework for this research.

The origin of the term documentary, is attributed to John Grierson when, in the 1930s, he described Robert Flaherty's 1926 film about the daily life of a Polynesian youth, *Moana*. It has since come to describe a wide range of non-fiction productions, which serve at least four functions; to record, reveal or preserve; to persuade or promote; to analyze or interrogate; and to express. Grierson saw documentary as a tool for creating a more democratic world and was responsible for starting the National Film Board of Canada which pioneered participatory documentaries. (Crocker, 2003, p. 124; Shabazz, 2001.)

In this thesis, documentary refers to non-fictional films produced from single or combined software platforms, to create still or moving images, audio or text. Within the documentary film genre there are various sub-genres. Nichols, for example, identifies six modes; poetic, expository, participatory, observational, reflexive, and performative. Poetic documentaries present the historical world more aesthetically than it would be presented in an expository documentary, which leans towards a rhetorical or argumentative style, and through participatory documentaries film-makers portray their personal contact with the world. Observational documentaries favour fly-on-the-wall techniques where the film-makers are not visible, unlike in reflexive documentaries where the film-maker reveals to the audience how documentary reality is constructed and questions how the historical world is represented and what is chosen to be represented. Similarly the performative mode questions what is knowledge and focuses on personal experiences and subjective world views. A

documentary may draw on conventions from more than one of the modes, or be dominated by a particular style. (2001 pp. 99-138.)

The concept of participatory video, was created on Fogo Island, Newfoundland (now Newfoundland and Labrador), by the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) in the late 1960s. It grew, almost accidentally, from the idea that the subjects of films should participate in making them. Initially, the idea was to make a documentary about poverty caused by the declining fishing industry, and in the process teach young Newfoundlanders about filming so they could make their own films. The resulting films were used as a tool for social change and empowerment; locally produced images of problems in isolated communities were presented to distant decision-makers. (Crocker, 2003, pp. 122-123.)

The people of Fogo resisted resettlement attempts by the government and formed their own fishing cooperative. Whilst it is not known how much the film-making process influenced these outcomes there is no doubt that it played a role and “was employed as a powerful tool of social change.” The process was more important than the product, the cooperation and sense of community required to make the documentaries was empowering. Perhaps the most empowering element was the effect of seeing one’s life on screen, which, even if undertheorized, is said to promote feelings of confidence, self-worth, and a better self-image as a result of seeing oneself as others do. (Crocker, 2003, pp. 125-128.) The films also provided the rare opportunity for fishermen to dialogue with cabinet ministers.

White noted that “the participatory model has transformed people from “objects” of communication, learning and research, into active “subjects” who are shaping their life space, through knowledge and action” (2003, pp. 29, 34). Participatory communication is process oriented, emphasizing critical thinking and critical reflection. It is that reflection, about the participants’ own conditions that enable them to think about and articulate the social action they believe would improve their lives (White, 2003, pp. 38-39, 86), hence demonstrating potentially transformative elements. However, I disagree with White’s opinion that video is a medium for anyone to voice ideas, viewpoints, and opinions, without barriers of status or consequence (2003, p. 64). Pupils may be reluctant to appear in a

video, as mentioned in chapter 1, or cannot be identified if maintaining anonymity, discussed in chapter 3, is important. Educators, pupils, and in some cases the pupils' parents, need to carefully consider the possible consequences of distributing documentaries and identification of participants.

A two-day seminar, "LISTEN TO ME – the young people got something to say," held in Tampere, Finland, 2007, focused on participatory video projects from different contexts and countries. All presenters affirmed that documentary making is empowering and in some cases accompanied by transformative action. Documentaries screened at the event showed how the young film-makers portrayed their life situations differently to the stereotypical and often negative, adult mainstream media representations.

One project presented at the seminar, the African Spelling Book,<sup>11</sup> was made by children living in slums or on the street in Nairobi who tell their stories in three minute videos. These young people tell their stories with hope, joy and a positive attitude towards life, focusing on their stories not their harsh circumstances of poverty, hunger, abuse, and squalid living conditions which are also present. The producer, Angelo Loy, suggested that the opportunity for the young people to have their own voice, rather than having their story told by another, is empowering. He believes that the trust shown from being given cameras to use, an interest shown in their lives, their own reflections on their lives, having a voice for their issues and control over something, all contributed towards empowerment. (Angelo Loy, personal communication, March 2007.)

Loy told me that except in a few isolated cases the children's lives had not, as yet, significantly changed as a result of making their documentaries. However, audience attitudes towards street children generally became more positive, the children started to be perceived as children rather than abstract statistics. The young people became conscious of their own environment, understood that reality can be transformed through the video camera, and gradually realized how the cameras gave them power. For example, kiosk owners who had previously mistreated the street children showed them respect due to the presence of the camera. (Angelo Loy, personal communication, March 2007.)

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<sup>11</sup> Available from <http://www.amref.org/index.asp?PageID=28&BookTypeID=5>

Participatory documentaries provide examples of how documentary making can be used in a social context, such as for community building, providing documentary evidence of situations leading to interventions, making available a platform for gaining voice and self-expression, and managing conflict. Groups have an opportunity to voice their perceptions of a situation, share these with others involved, and perhaps record their reactions which are then shared with the originators, whose reactions are recorded, and so on. The dialogue, which may or may not result in resolution, ensures the parties involved listen to each other. (White, 2003, pp. 67-74.)

These examples are transferable to a school community. A class could make a documentary about their interests to share with other classes; a documentary about environmental issues around the school could alert all members of the school community to damage, wastage and litter; younger pupils could enter dialogue with older pupils and vice versa; and documentaries could provide a conflict resolution tool for incidents of bullying. Documentaries can present opinions in a non-confrontational way and also create a starting point for classroom discussions.

There are many accounts of the empowering qualities of participatory video projects, however, we should also be aware of the “somewhat idealized role that video is assumed to play in the process of empowerment” (Gadihoke, 2003, p. 281). We should therefore not expect documentary making projects to eliminate bullying, racism, or homophobia without further actions. Gadihoke concluded “video or film can only be a facilitator in a larger process that involved other agents” and we should critically appraise the projects to make sure they are not merely teaching how to use technology (2003, p. 282), or reproducing oppressive practices.

Research by Green and Hannon (2007) indicated that digital activities taking place outside schools tend to be self-motivated and ‘owned’ by individual, or groups of, young people. Even when there is adult supervision the young people take responsibility for the creative output. It is the “sense of joint ownership which distinguishes their activities from school-work.” (p. 47.) This would suggest that pupils should have as much freedom as possible to choose the topics, plan the format, decide on the content and edit their documentaries.

However, it is important to remember that documentary making skills can be used for negative as well as positive purposes; in the classroom the teacher has the final responsibility for the content produced.

I chose to utilise ICT as a tool for critical pedagogy, not least because it is the media of many young people. The digital generation are perhaps learning more outside classrooms than ever before as a result of embracing technology. Research in Britain found that the majority of young people incorporate digital technology in their everyday lives, use it to maintain existing social networks, are involved in creative production, and contrary to popular belief are capable of self-regulation when well-informed of the risks (Green & Hannon, 2007, p.10).

Young people are motivated to use digital technology and their creative results appeal to an audience, however, ICT is just a tool for documentary making and it should not be the primary focus. Green and Hannon noted that whilst many of the young people in their survey had computers at home they enjoyed working together, for example, in community centres, exchanging favourite websites, teaching their peers and collaborating on projects (2007, pp. 18-19).

One *digital pioneer*<sup>12</sup> represented other teenagers when he identified “the idea of a wider public coming into contact with his creations” as his motivation to master new technical skills. He also mentioned “gaining the respect of his peers, satisfying his own high standards and expressing himself politically” as motivating factors. (Green & Hannon, 2007, p. 47.) Producing a digital documentary for a wider audience than class peers could be an important motivating factor for pupils. Pupils may strive to produce higher quality content than they might for a classroom presentation or an essay, read only by themselves and their teacher. Parents are interested in a wider audience for their children’s work too, forty-seven percent of parents polled by Green and Hannon thought schools should showcase children’s creative digital work (2007, p. 60).

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<sup>12</sup> The term used by Green & Hannon (2007) to describe those users who exploit “the transformative potential of digital tools”

White distinguished between participatory video as a process and as a product. On the one hand, the process is a tool to facilitate interaction and enable self-expression, and the product is rarely preserved. On the other hand, participatory video as a product places high importance on the video produced, the message to be communicated, and includes the audience perspective on the topic. (2003, pp. 65-6.) What I propose for the classroom falls somewhere between the two; both the process and the product have important roles. The content of the product may reflect the process; demonstrating the collaboration, creativity, research and utilization of available resources required for making the documentary.

A process centred approach helps young people to de-mystify the media, enables them to develop an informed critical perspective by strengthening audiovisual awareness and learn that soap operas and news programmes are “not necessarily the only valid way to explain the world around them.” Focusing on the product might lead to young people becoming an unquestioning, uncritical cog in media production. (Gómez, 2003, pp. 218-219.)

During the process of making a documentary pupils may learn new skills, and develop existing competences, for example, research techniques, critical thinking, dialogue writing, problem solving, decision making, developing convincing and persuasive argument, determining how to engage an audience, ICT know-how, creativity, team working, and empathy. The type of documentary and how it is made will determine which particular skills are utilised and to what degree. Documentaries made in the classroom are likely to fall within one or more of the following documentary sub-genres, participatory, community, curriculum, and social:

1. Participatory documentary – pupils making the documentary are also the subject, for example, about their daily routine, temptations they face to take illegal drugs, how it feels to be bullied or be a bully, explaining hobbies
2. Community documentary – the subject is within the school or the pupils’ wider community, for example, pupil activities during breaks, the dangers of traffic in their town, dialogue between opposing members of the community

3. Curriculum documentary – the subject is directly connected to the syllabus, for example, global warming, aboriginal art, history of the 1800s, fractions, cross-curricular themes
4. Social documentary – the subject is chosen by the pupils to critique and initiate change, for example, fair trade products, the right of all pupils to education, body images promoted by the media

As mentioned in section 2.1.1, McPeck (1990) disregarded a critical approach for pupils younger than fifteen, a stance I refute. I think it is important for children to critically discover their reality, a claim substantiated by Adams, Carlson and Hamm, who noted that children under seven are “particularly susceptible to the commercial influence of television” (1990, p.50). If “collaboration works best when students are given real problems to solve [and] requires social interaction, creativity, inventiveness, discovery and critical thinking” (Adams et al., 1990, p.27), making a documentary is a particularly appropriate classroom activity within a critical pedagogy framework.

Furlong and Cartmel proposed that an uncertain and rapidly changing social world creates an environment in which it can be difficult to “construct stable social identities” and leaves young people especially vulnerable to manipulation. For example, the mass media “attempt[s] to sell identity scripts which frequently involve stereotyped gender images.” (2007, p. 59.) Documentary making provides one option for meaning making and identity exploring classroom activities.

Telling the story from young people’s perspectives is not the norm, for example, most research on youth and crime concentrates on the perpetration aspect and little is reported about young people’s fear of crime or about young victims of harassment and crime. Considering “a high proportion of criminal acts are committed against young people, this represents a serious bias” and conceals “the extent to which young people are victims.” (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007, pp. 116-117, 119.) Pupils create a space for their voice through documentary making, and distribution to peer audiences may contribute towards validating children’s opinions.

Although frequently used in development and youth empowerment projects, documentary making is rarely utilised in schools. I am researching critical documentary making as a classroom activity, because it may encompass media familiar to many pupils, enable knowledge and skills learnt outside the classroom to be acknowledged at school, develop and practice a wide range of skills, provide a platform for pupils' voice, support critical media studies, and facilitate meaning making and exploration of pupils' identity.

In the final section of chapter 2, I draw on the four key concepts discussed above, critical pedagogy, collaborative learning, peer tutoring, and participatory documentary, to construct the theoretical framework from which key pedagogical principles guiding documentary making activities in the classroom will be derived.

## **2.5 A theoretical framework for critical documentary making in schools**

The theoretical framework is principally grounded in critical pedagogy, inspired by critical pedagogues such as Freire, McLaren, Shor, and Kincheloe, and Kellner from the field of critical media education. There are also elements recognisable from other pedagogical and theoretical approaches and practices, notably, constructivist theory, experiential learning, and participatory documentary.

Constructivist practices include collaborative learning, peer mentoring, groupwork, and peer review (cf. Degener, 2001). Experiential learning encourages pupils to bring their life experiences into the classroom where academic credit can be given for skills developed outside the formal education system, values hands-on learning experiences, and places importance on reflection for learning. These characteristics are present in the critical documentary making projects in this research, as are the empowering features of participatory documentary, such as providing a platform for often unheard voices, enabling communication with an audience, and the documentary makers having control over content decisions and editing.

My research and teaching practices are underpinned by critical pedagogy, but I do not embrace all aspects of all critical pedagogies. Also, I envisage my position will frequently re-

formulate as I gain deeper theoretical and practical understandings of critical pedagogy. However, it is certainly grounded in the Frankfurt School and Freire's principles that emancipatory knowledge is a key to becoming aware of the relationship between domination and power, and that transformation towards a more just society and better world takes place through reflection and action.

Marxist theory and Freire in his earlier books, focused on class struggle and although this remains an important issue, the scope of critical pedagogy has broadened. In addition to marginalization on the grounds of gender, ethnicity and sexuality, often referred to in the literature, I include lesser mentioned discriminations related to age, disability and ideology, as well as regarding social issues such as poverty, hunger and lack of access to health care and education as oppression. Regardless of the nature of social inequality, economics and politics will have an overriding impact and both are inextricably linked to education (Freire, 1970/2000; Kincheloe, 2008).

The major purpose of education today, McLaren critically pointed out, "is to make the world safe for global capitalism," his preferred alternative, influenced by Guevara and Freire, placed "liberation from race, class, and gender oppression as the key goal" (2000, p. 196). Again I would widen the scope for liberation, and then agree with McLaren that schools should be positive places where pupils are educated "to become active agents for social transformation and critical citizenship." However, I cannot concur that armed struggle is a viable option even "when other strategies and tactics have been exhausted, when no other alternatives can be found." (2003b, pp. 113, 178-179.)

Violence turns the oppressed into oppressors, which Freire who "personally abhorred violence" (McLaren, 2000, p. 174), vehemently warned against (Freire, 1970/2000). If the role of revolutionaries is to find the most efficient and viable means of facilitating people towards critical consciousness (Freire, 1985, p. 83), teachers can be revolutionaries; revolutionaries committed to social transformation through nonviolent resistance in the tradition of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., César Chávez and the Dalai Lama.

Pupils require the skills and qualifications currently demanded by employers, such as literacy, numeracy, creativity, initiative, the ability to work individually or as part of a team,

and effective communication skills. Schools usually follow a curriculum and pupils need to be competent to write the kind of answers that will secure exam success, but this does not mean a non-critical approach to knowledge must be adopted. As the world changes at an increasing pace the ability to locate information from diverse sources will make the ability to critically analyse sources and content paramount (Green & Hannon, 2007, pp.22, 57). It is rather difficult to predict what competences employers will value in the future, yet educators must try to.

I do not wish to indoctrinate pupils with my version of how the world could be a better place, but rather raise pupils' awareness of societal inequities through providing spaces and tools for pupils to research and reflect on themes they are interested in, and consequently to form and voice their own opinions. Teaching through generative themes, that is, those issues or topics which relate to the lives of pupils, is paramount in critical pedagogy (Freire 2006; Peterson 2003). However, I again stress, that teachers are responsible for classroom pedagogy, and also for the safety and well-being of their pupils at school: critical pedagogy does not encourage a *laissez-faire* teaching approach.

Whenever possible, I propose that pupils choose their own documentary themes, encouraged by the teacher to take a critical approach to the subject matter. Green & Hannon's research supports pupils choosing their own themes. They observed that "informal learning is driven by the interests, enthusiasms and passions of the individual" and too often the school approach is influenced by teachers assuming they know what children are interested in (2007, pp. 55-56). Investigating a subject from different perspectives, making meaning, and selecting what to include and exclude incorporates reflection and action, that is, praxis (Freire, 1970/2000, p. 51).

Utilising ICT does not necessarily eliminate banking methodology, but can provide an opportunity for pupils to undertake personally interesting research with classmates (Adams et al., 1990, pp. 167-168.) Many teachers have much to learn from the generation that has grown up with ICT as an everyday technology, who sometimes seem able to learn to use new software through some kind of digital osmosis. A shift in school practices could recognise and value learning taking place outside the classroom, concurrent with providing a

space to reflect on it “so students can recognize and transfer those skills in new situations and contexts.” Rather than pumping new investments into education systems it would be more efficient to tap into existing resources, that is, the students themselves who then become “critical participants rather than passive consumers of media.” (Green & Hannon, 2007, pp. 25-27.)

Four broad theoretical concepts formed the starting point for this research; critical pedagogy, collaborative learning, peer tutoring, and participatory documentary. The study of these four concepts revealed five reoccurring characteristics which form the basis for the pedagogy guiding critical documentary making classroom activities. The five characteristics pupil-centred; conscientising, action driven, and reflective; collaborative; dialogical; and empowering, each contain a cluster of components and are briefly described below:

1. **Pupil-centred.** Pupils’ learning is based on generative themes, namely, issues central to their own lives from their social environment, and takes a multiperspectival approach, that is, the themes are considered from different perspectives. Rather than present information as facts, pupils are encouraged to seek to explain causality, why something is like it is, not just how it is. Learning is contextual and relevant for pupils’ needs.
2. **Conscientising, action driven, and reflective.** Guided by the teacher, pupils become aware of societal situations through processes of critical consciousness, question the existing society and plan actions how to change it. Questioning where knowledge comes from facilitates recognising what knowledge is privileged and understanding why it is privileged. Learning includes cycles of reflection and action, that is, praxis; pupils think carefully and critically about specific issues of concern and then purposefully do something to change it, followed by further reflections and actions.
3. **Collaborative.** Pupils contribute towards each other’s learning and utilise interpersonal skills such as communication, trust, decision making, and conflict resolution, to achieve common goals.
4. **Dialogical.** Space is available for all voices to be heard and open communication takes place between pupils and teachers. Pupils and teachers learn together

to find solutions for contextual problems and both are important contributors to the learning process, without diminishing teachers' ultimate responsibility for their pupils' learning and welfare. Teachers learn something about their pupils' everyday experiences, realities, needs and interests; in turn pupils learn something more about their teachers.

5. **Empowering.** Education within a critical pedagogy framework strives to empower pupils to become critical, active citizens, who ask "how can I make the world a better place?" and act in an endeavour to create an equitable world. By discussing generative themes pupils find important they realise that they already possess knowledge and awareness about important matters. Pupils develop tools and skills to transform their lives and their society.

These characteristics constitute five of the seven key pedagogical principles guiding the critical documentary making activities in the action research projects, and are further explained in chapter 3.

In chapter 2, I discussed four theoretical concepts, critical pedagogy, collaborative learning, peer tutoring, and participatory documentary to construct the theoretical framework for the research. The following chapter establishes why the research was based on an action research approach; describes the research settings; explains how theory and practice were combined to identify the key pedagogical principles for critical documentary making; presents the methods and tools used for data collection and analysis; and discusses ethical issues related to the research.

### **3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

As introduced in chapter 1, this research aims to develop educational practices which encourage young people to question information, develop critical thinking skills, facilitate genuine voice, and support empowerment. The educational practices developed, critical documentary making activities, are also intended to provide transformative learning experiences for pupils, add a contemporary dimension to classroom activities, and contribute towards engaging pupils in active citizenship. A further aim includes the proviso that the critical documentary making activities would be widely accessible for pupils and teachers, not a select few.

Consequently, two research questions became apparent:

1. What are the key pedagogical principles of documentary making within a critical pedagogy framework?
2. What are pupils' experiences from critical documentary making?

Based on the literature study in chapter 2 and my teaching experiences prior to this research, I identified key pedagogical principles to guide critical documentary making. These are discussed in section 3.3, thus the first research question is addressed in this chapter. The findings from the empirical action research projects relating to the second research question are discussed in chapter 4.

Chapter 3 explains why and how the empirical research was based on an action research approach; describes the research settings; introduces the pedagogical principles for critical documentary making in classrooms; discusses the research methods and tools used for data collection and analysis; and summarises ethical issues related to the research.

#### **3.1 Action research**

The exploratory nature of the research in natural settings and my personal involvement in collecting, analysing, and drawing conclusions from data suggested that qualitative research methods would be applicable to the inquiry (cf. Creswell, 2003, pp. 181-183).

Levin and Greenwood's (2001) conceptualization of action research identified five core characteristics, which I believe are present in this research.

The research was located in two school classrooms and the classroom activities researched were designed to encourage young people to reflect on their lives, their communities and take part in active citizenship, fulfilling the obligations for Levin and Greenwood's first element that the research is "context bound and addresses real-life problems." Secondly, the research was dependent on input from both researcher and participants, satisfying the need for "participants and researchers [to] co-generate knowledge through collaborative communicative processes in which all participants' contributions are taken seriously." (2001, p. 105.)

Throughout the research the pupils collaborated to share their skills and experiences which enhanced the development of the documentary making activities in this research. Therefore, the third criteria, that "the diversity of experience and capacities within the local group [were treated] as an opportunity for the enrichment of the research/action process" was realised. The fourth element, "meanings constructed in the inquiry process lead to social action of these reflections on action lead to the construction of new meanings" was addressed on two levels. Making the documentaries within the action research may have directly led to social action by the pupils or their audiences, or bring about a change in attitudes or actions, or both. The documentary making activities developed during the action research can be adapted by teachers for their classroom contexts thereby introducing a classroom activity to challenge social injustices and encourage pupils, and their teachers, to ask "what can I do to make a difference?" (Levin & Greenwood, 2001, p. 105.)

Finally, the fifth element states that "the credibility/validity of action research knowledge is measured according to whether actions that arise from it solve problems (workability) and increase participants' control over their own situation" (Levin & Greenwood, 2001, p. 105). Documentary making within a critical pedagogical framework amplifies pupils' skills and knowledge, provides pupils with tools which can be used for independent media creation, and by becoming more aware of issues pertinent to their lives, through conscientisation, pupils may act to initiate social change. In addition, the research inspired me to

continue researching critical documentary making in classrooms and bring the phenomena to the attention of teachers and educational authorities, within Finland and internationally, this is discussed in chapter 5.

Action research is variously labelled, such as critical, participatory, collaborative or emancipatory action research (Kemmis, 1993). It may be rather difficult to distinguish between the branches, for example, participatory action research is said to emphasize the political aspects of knowledge production and draws on Paulo Freire's concepts, aiming "to produce knowledge and action directly useful to a community" and raise consciousness to empower people (Reason, 1994, pp. 47-48). This description could be used to describe critical or emancipatory action research too.

In this research, the action research paradigm is implicitly critical and seeks social action. Critical pedagogy and action research have common purposes such as, conscientisation, producing emancipatory knowledge, utilising democratic participatory processes for social transformation and both link "the development of theory and practice through the efforts of a community of inquirers" (Kemmis, 1988, p. 36).

Reason and Bradbury noted that action research connects action and reflection, theory and practice and is "hugely varied" (2001, p. 1), which could equally be said of critical pedagogy. Similarly, action research aims to produce useful, practical knowledge benefiting humans as part of an equitable, sustainable relationship with the planet earth and is grounded in a participatory world view, indeed "the primary importance of action research is . . . to liberate the human body, mind and spirit in the search for a better, freer world" (Reason & Bradbury, 2001 p. 2). Empowerment, an element of critical pedagogy, is also firmly linked to action research:

the telling of, listening to, affirmation of, reflecting on, and analysis of personal stories and experiences 'from the ground up' are potentially empowering action research strategies (Maguire, 2001, p. 62).

The participants in this action research were primarily the pupils making the documentaries; the teachers, class assistants, and members of the peer audience had secondary roles. I

followed the democratic, collaborative, and empowering spirit of action research, and critical pedagogy, as much as possible, without forgetting that the participants were pupils and I, the researcher, was also their teacher during the documentary making projects.

For the reasons described in this section the research is primarily located within an action research paradigm, however, elements of ethnography are evident in the research design too. I observed pupils making the documentaries in their natural school environments, wrote notes in the field, interviewed pupils, recorded their activities with photographs, and tried to gain an understanding of the pupils and how they make sense of their world. In addition, during the data analysis process, explained in section 3.4 I looked for themes emerging from the data, which is characteristic of grounded theory. (Creswell, 1998.)

### 3.2 Research Settings

The documentary making projects for the empirical research took place at two schools in Finland: one at a primary international school (IS) and the other at a secondary hospital school (HS).

Towards the end of 2007, I arranged for an action research documentary making project to take place at the IS in the first semester of 2008. The school was selected because pupils are taught in English, my first language and the elected language for the research, and also I had some prior experience of teaching there. The principal gave permission for the research to go-ahead and a class teacher agreed her 16, Grade 6 pupils aged 12-13, would take part.

Originally, I planned to have one documentary making project for this research, however, I heard a BBC Podcast<sup>13</sup> about a project to take the local outdoor environment into children's everyday life in the hospital wards at a hospital school in England, and immediately became interested in the idea of documentary making with pupils at a hospital school. I got in touch with a hospital school's head teacher to propose the idea, and subsequently met and discussed the research project with a couple of teachers who greeted the research pro-

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<sup>13</sup> The Sounds of Britain 3 - An Urban Dawn Chorus  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/science/nature\\_20070924.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/science/nature_20070924.shtml)

ject enthusiastically. The teachers suggested I present the idea to secondary school pupils as their English skills are more advanced than those of the primary school pupils, and if any of the pupils wanted to take part permission would be granted.

The hospital school teachers (HSTs) explained that the hospital school pupils in their care were from mental health, rather than physical health wards of the hospital. Before meeting the pupils I was largely unaware why they were not attending mainstream, inclusive education schools, except that some pupils had eating disorders. Some pupils went home for weekends, and those nearing the end of a hospital stay lived outside the hospital for most of the time but still attended the HS until they joined a mainstream school. The HSTs informed me that pupils who started the documentary making project might not be there long enough to complete their documentaries and warned that it might be difficult for me to obtain material for my research.

The two projects are not intended to be a comparative study, although I sometimes mention findings first from one school and then from the other, and point out commonalities found in both projects. Running documentary making projects in two culturally different schools fitted well with action research and critical pedagogy concepts. Firstly, the asynchronicity of the projects provided opportunities for planning, action, observation, and reflection cycles, typical of action research (Brown, Henry, Henry, & McTaggart, 1988; Carr & Kemmis 2004). Secondly, I could practically implement the principles that critical pedagogy is a philosophy rather than prescription and context specific (Darder et al., 2003, p. 20; Monchinski, 2008, pp. 1-2).

At the IS I arranged dates and times for meeting the class to introduce the project, 4 workshops each 3 x 45 minute periods, plus a 45 minute premiere lesson when the documentaries would be shown to a cohort sixth grade class. IS workshops started at 1115, broke for lunch at 1200, resumed at 1230 until 1315, continued after a 15 minute break until 1415. The HSTs had explained that pupils do not always regularly attend the school and sometimes find it difficult to concentrate on their studies so a flexible approach was adopted, we fixed the day of the week when the workshops would take place but not the precise number. HS workshops were scheduled to start at 0830, breaking for lunch from 1115 until

1200 and then continuing until 1415. The actual time spent working on the documentaries varied, depending on what else was happening in the pupils' lives and school day. In the end, there were five workshops plus a time allocated to premiere the documentaries.

I met the IS documentary making project pupils and potentially HS documentary making project pupils, to discuss my research and the concept of critical documentary making, before the first workshops. As well as informing pupils about the research and gaining their agreement to take part in it, I also wanted to start finding out what would be important for them regarding generative themes and initial attitudes towards documentary making activities at school.

In mid-January 2008, I met the IS pupils (ISPs), two months before their documentary making project began. We had 2 x 45 minute lessons, one before and one after the lunch break; the break gave pupils time to discuss the project amongst themselves, with their teacher or myself present. In early March 2008, I presented the idea to the HS pupils (HSPs). The five HSPs who wanted to join the research project were enthusiastic to start immediately, so we did in the following week, meaning the HSPs had their first documentary making workshop just before the ISPs had theirs. The research schedule, including the workshops, is summarised in Appendix B.

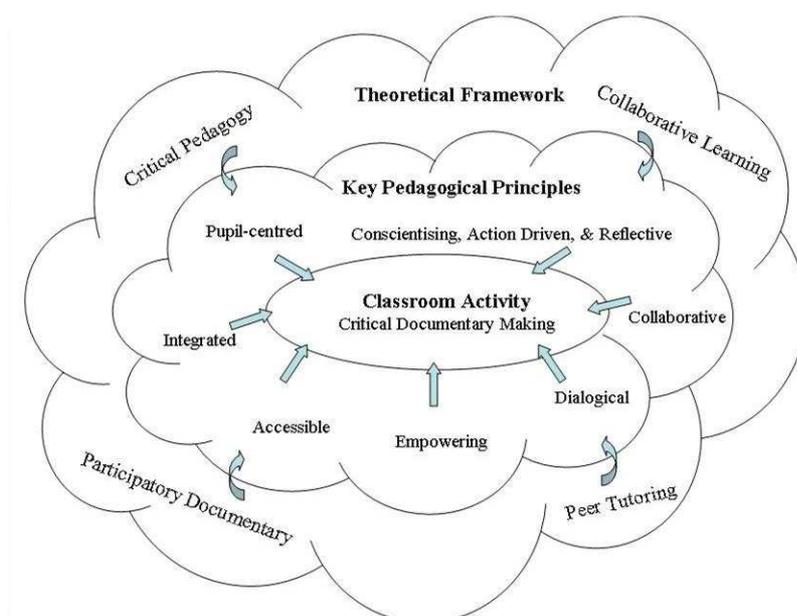
Before commencing the documentary making workshops I sent an email, Appendix C, to the IS teacher (IST) and HS teachers (HSTs) which could be forwarded to parents. The email explained my research, confirmed anonymity of pupils in the documentaries and the research, and defined the extent to which any materials derived from the research would be used without further consent being requested. Parents were invited to ask questions and make comments, or do both.

### **3.3 Key pedagogical principles underpinning critical documentary making**

To find out about pupils' experiences from making documentaries within a critical pedagogy framework, it was first necessary to ascertain key pedagogical principles which would underpin the documentary making projects. In section 2.5, I established the theo-

retical framework for the research comprising of critical pedagogy, collaborative learning, peer tutoring, and participatory documentary. Taking key characteristics from these theoretical concepts, I identified five of the pedagogical principles: pupil-centred; conscientising, action driven, and reflective; collaborative; dialogical; and empowering.

Guided by teaching and teacher training experiences prior to this research, I added two further pedagogical principles. Critical documentary making is more likely to become an established classroom activity if familiar equipment is used and additional financial resources are not required. In addition, to be a classroom activity rather than an extra-curricula activity, critical documentary making should fit within the school curriculum. I conceptualized these aspects with two terms, accessible and integrated. The theoretical framework and the seven pedagogical principles underpinning critical documentary making activities in the classroom are shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2** Theoretical framework and key pedagogical principles guiding critical documentary making

The seven pedagogical principles underpinned all stages of planning, designing, and developing the critical documentary making activities. I now describe how each of the key pedagogical principles became pedagogical practices in the documentary making projects. Some examples could be associated with more than one pedagogical principle but I have avoided duplication.

### 3.3.1 Pupil-centred

The documentary making projects were adapted for pupils in the two different learning environments. ISPs had timetabled lessons during which all pupils worked on their documentaries unless absent from school. HSPs had timetabled lessons but could use the time for either working on their documentaries or doing other school work, whichever they preferred to do at the time, or needed to do, for example, to meet deadlines or study for imminent examinations. The IS computer classroom made a convenient base for the second, third and fourth workshops as computers and the Internet were used for many of the documentary making activities. The HS had a couple of computers, and one laptop which could connect to the Internet; we used a large classroom as our base and pupils worked in other classrooms in the HS building according to what equipment they were using at a particular time.

ISPs and HSPs chose their own documentary themes. At the January 2008 meeting I had with ISPs to present the research project, I adapted Freire's codification process (Mayo, 2004, p. 50)<sup>14</sup> to find out what subjects the pupils would like to make documentaries about. Pupils, called out topics they were interested in, I wrote all the ideas onto the whiteboard so all pupils could see them and then asked how the ideas could be grouped into themes. Five themes emerged; People, Conflict, Animals, Nature, and Arson. The pupils then wrote their individual top three theme preferences on a paper, which they gave to me. Two pupils were absent; their three top themes were emailed to me by their teacher on their return to school.

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<sup>14</sup> Decodification took place when pupils researched their subjects and represented them in their documentaries to the peer audience.

According to first theme preferences I divided the class into four groups of four pupils. The documentary making groups were formed according to subject interest, rather than any other criteria such as mixed abilities, gender balances, or pupils' own choice of group members. The themes were broad enough for the group members to have scope to discuss and choose the specific topic for their documentaries without rigid boundaries. Coincidentally, there was at least one member in each group who had some prior experience using WMM.

I was aware that the choice of topics could be influenced by how I introduced the documentary making projects, so I stressed that the documentaries should be made about subjects important to pupils and interesting to research. I tried to state as clearly as possible that the content was entirely the pupils' own choice, but asked questions to encourage pupils to take a critical approach to their subjects.

### 3.3.2 Conscientising, action driven, and reflective

In critical pedagogy simply becoming aware of knowledge or social injustices is not sufficient; conscientisation should be accompanied by taking action to right wrongs and reflection on that action leads to further actions if necessary (cf. Freire 1970/2000). I therefore chose to combine conscientising, action driven, and reflective, in one pedagogical principle.

During the introductory meetings at the IS and the HS, I asked the pupils "What is a documentary?" Pupils gave their opinions, principally from reflecting on their television documentary experiences, and then we discussed documentary formats, for example, photographic, film, and animation. The next step was to move from the existing, collective knowledge of the group to discuss what a documentary could or could not be, and why pupils considered something plausible or not. Pupils started to suggest creative and original ideas, leaving behind their initial definitions of what a documentary is.

To develop critical awareness of the subjects, I asked pupils to consider their chosen topics from different perspectives, try to identify who benefits, look for any examples of so-

cial inequity, to decide what messages they wanted to broadcast to their audiences, and what actions they would like their audiences to take as a result of watching the documentaries. Pupils were also encouraged to detect social, political, and economic contradictions, reflect how the topics related to their own lives, and identify what they could personally do to make the world a better place. The world in this case could refer to pupils' local communities, or a global context.

Making a documentary develops awareness of how media is constructed, how documentaries represent information, and that it is the documentary makers who decide how information is represented and for what purposes. Exercises and experimentation during the documentary making projects explored how music, colours, images, and editing have the power to subtly or radically change narratives.

During the documentary making projects pupils wrote and drew in learning journals to reflect on their learning processes, documentary making experiences, and their chosen topics. These journals formed part of my research data. LCD displays on the cameras gave pupils opportunities for instant reflection on their photographic and video work, and the chance to experiment with filming, seeing how different angles could affect the story.

### 3.3.3 Collaborative

Documentary making in both projects included collaborative work. ISPs worked in groups of four; all groups agreed on one topic and made one documentary per group. Some IS groups divided tasks between group members and then two or more members worked collaboratively at certain stages of production, other pupils more or less worked collaboratively as an entire group throughout the project. HSPs chose to work individually, each one making their own documentary; however, they collaborated to teach each other how to use equipment and software programmes.

ISPs were requested to take collective responsibility for their group's documentary, so that before the end of each workshop all members of a particular group were aware of what progress had been made and what the next steps were. On the one hand this ensured

documentary making could continue in the case of any group member's absence, and on the other, being aware of what other group members had been doing or were going to do encouraged collaboration.

Just as peer tutoring was a regular feature in the HS workshops, the ISPs tutored within their groups and between groups. Pupils understood that there was no competition to produce a better documentary than their peers, and freely shared knowledge to enable all productions to be as good as possible. Problems were solved either intra-group or inter-group.

At the IS school, the four groups each edited their own group's documentary; all pupils in a particular group took part in editing decisions, for example, about cutting, the order of information, colours, text fonts, and sound.

#### 3.3.4 Dialogical

To facilitate open communication between pupils and myself I explained, at the introductory meetings, why I was researching documentary making in classrooms, and that I would be learning from the pupils, as well as the pupils would be learning about their documentary themes and documentary making. As the teacher however, I had the responsibility for the pupils' learning and classroom management, for example, to make sure that all voices were heard during discussions, exchanging arguments and counter-arguments. (cf. Mayo, 2004; Roberts, 2000.)

I used a data projector at the IS to show the class short documentary examples I had made to illustrate how music and colours can change audience perceptions of images; projecting the data onto a screen for everyone in the class to see at the same time enabled whole group reflection, discussion, and input. I also used the data projector to show two video clips demonstrating stop-motion techniques and to demonstrate the basic concepts of WMM and Audacity. The HS did not have a data projector; however, the five pupils and I were able to gather around a laptop for the same demonstrations, with similar effect.

In addition to the examples and software tools mentioned above, I showed ISPs and HSPs some websites containing documentaries created by young people, we watched a few

short ones and I provided links to the websites so pupils could watch more later, if they wished. I wanted to stimulate pupils' imaginations and encourage different approaches to documentary making, but not show so many examples that little would be left for the ISPs and HSPs to discover.

Producing documentaries for peers provided an opening for dialogue about the themes with other pupils. The ISPs shared and discussed their documentaries with other ISPs in the documentary making project, likewise at the HS. Also, the ISPs presented their documentaries to approximately 16 of their year-group peers, and the HSPs presented their documentaries to approximately nine other HS secondary school pupils, discussion followed all of the showings.

### 3.3.5 Empowering

Making documentaries transformed most ISPs and HSPs from media recipients to media producers, a few already were media producers. The pupils learnt how to create a tool, documentary, which can be used as a medium for expressing points of view and communicating with a larger audience. Throughout the workshops each pupil had a platform for voice, and the individual voices of the HSPs and collective voices of the IS documentary making groups were heard by their peers at the screenings, through the documentaries produced.

Pupils were responsible for their documentary making projects from conception to completion. As already mentioned, the topics for the documentaries, documentary formats and content, were all chosen by the pupils. Learning to use simple yet creative software programmes gave pupils control over editing the documentaries. Pupils selected what content to include or discard, in effect they affirmed their identity, made meaning of their worlds and expressed their future visions how the world could be rewritten.

### 3.3.6 Accessible

The projects did not incur any additional expenses for the schools. ISPs and HSPs used existing equipment, software, and props. Both schools had computers which was the minimum equipment required for the projects, and connection to the Internet. Microsoft Windows packages already on the school computers included basic software programmes which were supplemented by others available from the Internet, free of charge. Pupils from both schools had access to at least one digital camera for taking photographs and short video clips, as well as the accessories required to download materials to the computer. Some pupils brought extra equipment and props to school from their homes.

The documentary making activities needed to be as simple as possible so that all teachers can feel confident they could introduce documentary making into their classrooms. Basic sound and image editing software programmes were used in both projects; although there were no restrictions if pupils had wished to use more complicated programmes they were already familiar with or wished to independently learn how to use them. Keeping the technology simple, at least for first documentary making attempts with pupils, not only makes documentary making accessible for more teachers, but also helps pupils to focus on their themes and the documentary making processes, rather than be overwhelmed by the complexity of equipment and software.

The documentary making activities described in this Master's thesis can be adapted by teachers to use with their own pupils; the IS workshop activities are summarised in Appendix D. Pupils and teachers who are familiar with more sophisticated tools and software, and have access to them, can of course use them for their documentary making projects. Teachers new to documentary making, as I was, will find plenty of tutorials and guidance for the tools and equipment used in this research freely available on the Internet. Pupils often prove to be a valuable resource for teachers learning about ICT.

### 3.3.7 Integrated

The projects at the HS and the IS fitted within the English Language subject area and addressed a number of the seven cross-curricular theme objectives from the Finnish National Board of Education's national core curriculum (FNBE, 2004, pp. 36-41). All documentaries made in the projects could be related to the following four objectives: growth as a person; media skills and communication; participatory citizenship and entrepreneurship; and technology and the individual. In addition, the remaining three theme objectives, responsibility for the environment, well-being, and a sustainable future; cultural identity and internationalism; and safety and traffic, were pertinent in some of documentaries.

The IS follows the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programme<sup>15</sup> as well as the Finnish National Curriculum, and here the documentary making projects could be directly linked to some of the five IB areas of interaction, which can be compared to cross-curricula themes. For example, the approaches to learning area of interaction is concerned with developing independent thought, problem solving and decision-making skills. The community and service area intends pupils to develop an awareness of their community and make an effective contribution towards society. Similarly, the homo faber area of interaction considers how pupils can transform society. The environment area aims to conscientise pupils of their interdependence with the environment, and the health and social education area enables pupils to make informed choices regarding their own well-being and for their physical and social environments.

The HSPs were not given grades for their documentary making work. The ISPs were graded by their class teacher for skills applicable to the Finnish curriculum's cross-curricular theme objectives and the IB areas of interaction.

How documentary making activities are required to fit within the curriculum affects the desired outcomes of activities. For example, the aesthetical qualities of the end product may be more important in art classes requiring attention to visual design, whereas documentaries made in science classes may focus on how content is explained.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.ibo.org/communications/publications/documents/MYPflyerEng.pdf>

### 3.4 Empirical data collection and analysis

During the projects I collected data from pupils making the documentaries (Appendixes E and F), their teachers and class assistants, members of the peer audiences (Appendix A), and made my own field notes and kept a reflective journal. I provided pupils at both schools and the IST with notebooks to be used as learning journals during the documentary making projects. Analysis of all the data collected, my observations, and discussion with theory provides the basis for the findings, interpretations and recommendations in chapters 4 and 5. Collecting data through a variety of means from a number of sources, pupils, teachers, class assistants, and myself, provided the research with a means of verification, known as triangulation (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, pp. 29-30).

The volume of written data collected from the ISPs was considerably more than from the HSPs, even when accounting for the higher number of ISPs taking part compared to HSPs. The variance could, at least partially, be due to the different styles and methods of teaching at the two schools. Written reflection is an integral and sometimes assessed learning activity at the IS but was less evident at the HS. ISPs reflected on their documentary making experiences as par for the course, whereas it was an unfamiliar activity for HSPs to write about their learning experiences. However, due to the flexibility of the HS workshops and the smaller number of pupil I had more time for discussions with HSPs, individually and in groups, as well as with members of staff; the notes I made during these discussions provided most of the data from the HS project.

It should also be reiterated that English is the working language at the IS, so ISPs are used to writing in English. With one exception, HSPs who chose to take part in the documentary making project were sufficiently competent to work in English. The HSP who did not speak English and I communicated in Finnish, neither of our first languages; other pupils, teachers or class assistants interpreted for me when needed and one class assistant translated the pupil's learning journal from Finnish to English.

At the end of the documentary making workshops I collected the pupils' learning journals; in total there were 15 from the IS and 3 from the HS. One ISP and two HSPs' learning journals were not submitted. The missing journals are unlikely to have an overall effect on

the research findings. As already mentioned the HSPs tended to write very little in their journals, particularly the two HSPs who did not return their journals, however, this did not mean that excellent work was not done in the workshops.

Lankshear and Knobel (2004, p. 178) discussed how researcher generated data would not exist if it were not for the researcher collecting the data, and differentiated between contextualised and decontextualised data collection. In this study I gathered contextualised data, for example, by taking written notes and photographs as unobtrusively as possible during the documentary making workshops, and what might be considered decontextualised data, through pupil interviews, questionnaires, and learning journals. Pupils might engage in these activities in the course of everyday school work, therefore although they were specific to my research, the data gathering practices were not entirely alien to the pupils in their school context.

The data includes spoken, written, and observed data. I made notes during discussions, took field notes on my observations during the documentary making workshops, and recorded my reflections within hours of each workshop and later as thoughts occurred. The IST also made field notes and reflected on events in a journal. The documentaries produced provided a source of artefact data (cf. Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, pp. 174-175), which I refer to when reporting the findings in chapter 4.

In addition to freely writing in their learning journals at any time during the documentary making projects, ISPs were given time specifically for this at the end of each workshop. First they reflected unprompted in their journals, and a couple of times I wrote a few questions on the board which could be used as prompts if required. These questions included: what have you learned or taught today, what programmes have you used, how did you cooperate with others, and did you have any problems, if so how did you solve them? I encouraged HSPs to write freely in their learning journals and I also verbally asked pupils the prompt questions taking notes of the oral answers myself.

I planned to interview each IS group in the final workshop, as they completed their documentary, however, due to time limits I gave each pupil a questionnaire about the equipment and software used in the project, and a questionnaire about documentary making to

answer in their learning journals, Appendices D and E. Two groups finished their work with some time to spare, so I could discuss more with those pupils. The last five minutes of all IS workshops were reserved for a whole class discussion, about what had been happening that day and what was going to happen the next time we would meet.

I interviewed each of the HSPs when their documentary was completed, and one HSP before completing a documentary; this pupil's time at the HS ended before the documentary was finished. The interviews were semi-structured, I had the below list of questions ready to ask, but did not restrict discussions to the questions:

1. Why did you choose this subject?
2. How is documentary making the same or different to other school activities?
3. What do you want to tell the audience?
4. What do you want people to think about the subject? Or what action should they take?
5. What did you like or dislike about making a documentary?
6. What have you learnt about the subject and making a documentary?
7. What was difficult? How did you manage the difficulties?
8. What do you think about making documentaries at school?

The questions, except numbers 2 and 5 which were added later, were translated by a hospital school class assistant (HSCA) into Finnish for the HSP who did not speak English; the answers were written in Finnish and then translated into English by the same HSCA.

At the IS screening, members of the IS peer audience and the documentary makers were requested to complete questionnaires, Appendix A. Pupils identified if they were in the peer audience class or the documentary making class but did not need to give their name, rated the importance of each documentary subject from not important to very important on a five-point Likert scale, and commented on what they had learnt from watching the documentaries. The documentary makers were requested to indicate which documentary they had made on their questionnaires. The peer audiences were asked for verbal comments after all the screenings to provide some instant feedback for the documentary makers, and further data for me to note too.

I word processed the data collected from pupils, the IST, my notebooks, questionnaires, and interview notes. In addition to obtaining a flexible format to categorise and analyse the

data, word processing provided an initial overview of the data generated from the projects. I allocated codes to the data so I was able to identify authors. HS data was coded HSP for pupils, HST for the teacher, HSCA for class assistants, HSA for audience members, and HSR for my notes. IS data was similarly coded ISP for pupils, IST for the class teacher ISA for audience members, and ISR for my data. The code RR denoted my researcher reflections not specifically attributable to either the HS or IS project. Pupils were also designated numbers, HSP1 for example, to identify individuals.

Both content analysis and thematic analysis were used in this research, especially thematic analysis. I refer to content analysis as a systematic numerical recording of the number of times words or phrases appear in data, dependent on a mechanical word count without interpretation. Thematic analysis on the other hand, “moves beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focuses on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas.” (Namey, Guest, Thairu, & Johnson, 2007, p. 137.)

I analysed the word processed data through both a theory-driven approach and a data-driven approach, in units ranging from a single word to sentences. A theory-driven approach is said to be more structured and less open for interpretation being dependent on a particular researcher and therefore considered more reliable than a data-driven approach. A data-driven approach offers more flexibility and is open to the discovery of themes or ideas not previously considered, resulting in theory that is ‘grounded’ in the data.” (Namey et al., 2007, p. 139.) There are multiple ways to code and analyse data, I selected those I believed best suited the scope of this research and tried to read all the meanings of the data to answer the second research question: What are pupils’ experiences from critical documentary making?

Using the theory-driven approach, I allocated data to categories corresponding to the key pedagogical principles guiding the critical documentary making activities, discussed in section 3.3, namely: pupil-centred; conscientising, action driven, and reflective; collaborative; dialogical; empowering; accessible; and integrated. The categories were then revised and renamed to reflect the pupils’ learning experiences. The data-driven approach entailed allocating the data to emergent categories. I read and reread the data, ascribing data to the

theory-driven categories or to emergent data-driven categories, until saturation had been achieved (Namey et al., 2007).

Sentences including more than one theme were assigned to all the relevant categories, which Namey et al. refer to as code co-occurrent (2007, p. 145). Data assigned to one or more categories was colour coded with one or more colours depending on how many categories the data could be ascribed to, in addition each unit was accompanied by the applicable author code. I considered a further codification, to identify data generated from questions I had asked pupils to consider at various times whilst writing their learning journals compared to data written freely. I decided not to make this distinction as it was not always discernible.

Data which had not been categorised into theory-driven or data-driven themes was given a final reading and the remaining data from that reading was then set aside from the coded data and not used further in this study.

I performed content analysis word-count and phrase-count operations on the ISPs' data to discover what key words or phrases transpired (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, pp. 334-336). Words with grammatical functions (for example, to, but, and for) were discarded, words with meaning relevant to the study were retained. These do not provide information regarding the verbosity of particular data providers, the number of times an individual used a word or groups of words, or define the number of people who used a particular word or group of words, simply the number of times a word or group of words appeared in the data. I performed the content analysis word counts after the thematic analyses to look for any significant occurrences of a word or group of words emerging that I was not already aware of through the theory-driven analysis. Nothing extraordinary transpired and the content analysis word-counts and phrase-counts were not used for further purposes.

### **3.5 Ethical issues**

MacQueen identified two ethical dimensions in research; professional and human subject protections. Professional research ethics include practices such as crediting original au-

thors, presenting data without falsification, and taking precautions to limit access to data. Protecting humans refers to the ethics of protecting people from harm as a result of the research and ensuring respect for people. (2008, pp. 21-22, 29.) In this section, I discuss ethical issues pertaining to research work and documentary making, which are inextricably entwined in this research.

Quoting Giroux, Pandey and Moorad concurred that ethics are central to critical pedagogy and that “educators need to develop pedagogical practices that not only heightens the possibilities for a critical consciousness but also for transformative action.” By researching and developing documentary making activities in classrooms, I hope to draw attention to what could be a contemporary classroom activity for critical pedagogues and educators who wish to inspire their pupils with “social sense of responsibility to the Other.” (2003, p. 163.)

The research was conducted with the informed consent (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, p. 104) of the research participants. Informed consent was also obtained from ISPs’ parents; an email, Appendix C, was forwarded by the class teacher, to introduce the project, explain how the data gathered would be used and to invite any questions or concerns. A couple of parents replied to thank me and the class teacher for the opportunity their children had to take part in a documentary making project, and one parent asked how identity could be concealed.

I replied explaining that the issue of identity would be discussed with pupils at the start of the project and what measures would be taken to ensure anonymity. For example, pupils would be encouraged to think of alternatives to appearing in the documentaries. However, if an appearance was considered important pupils could film their shadows, disguise their appearances, or use tools in the WMM editing programme to alter appearances beyond recognition. In addition, voices could be disguised using Audacity tools. Instead of pupils’ actual names appearing in the documentary credits, pseudonyms could be used.

The question of identification raises the dialectic of pupils gaining public recognition for school work and maintaining anonymity, which is discussed in chapter 5. In this research there was a stipulation that documentary viewings would be limited to academic purposes

and the pupils were instructed not to put their work on the Internet. All electronic research data has been stored on my password-protected laptop. In this thesis I use abbreviations to refer to and quote pupils, and avoid indicating gender, which sometimes makes reading clumsy, but serves to provide further anonymity.

Anonymity was an important issue at the HS too; unfortunately, stigma still surrounds people who require mental health care (cf. Gale, 2007) and the HS has a responsibility to protect the identity of pupils. I discussed about obtaining consent from the HSPs' parents or guardians, with the HSTs. The decision was taken by HSTs that the project would be in the course of the pupils' school activities for those who wished to take part in the project and therefore only informed pupil consent would be required.

The possibilities of positive and negative consequences of documentary making were discussed with all pupils before and during the documentary workshops. For example, we talked about the possible effects of being in or being connected to a particular documentary and how members of the audience might judge the makers and protagonists, and their views. In addition, pupils concurred that respect should be shown to all those taking part including groups or individuals discussed within a documentary. (cf. Nichols, 2001, pp. 6, 10.)

One documentary portrayed violence and oppression against a named group of people, this raised questions, as with all the documentaries, about the reliability of sources of information and distribution, and also the question of appropriacy to show it to the maker's peers, discussed further in chapter 4. Besides restricting the distribution of documentaries as already mentioned; pupils were instructed to keep their work-in-progress documentaries on USB sticks, rather than on school computers intended for communal use. I gave DVD copies of the completed documentaries to the teachers. The distribution restrictions in this research explain why a DVD of the pupils' documentaries is not included with the thesis; I plan to obtain specific permissions to include pupils' documentaries in the Doctoral articles and dissertation.

As well as the anonymity and safety of the pupils, a further ethical concern was to ensure that classroom intrusion would be minimal (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, p. 109). This was

supported through one of the pedagogical principles, integrated; the projects were within the schools' curricula, as discussed above, in section 3.3.

Finally, the question of copyright required attention throughout the research, copyright laws are unclear and complex, but need to be addressed for texts, images, and audio tracks. One option is to avoid copyright issues by making original materials or using public domain materials. At the time of writing the thesis, I am still unable to find clear guidelines to copyright issues in education; the principle of 'fair use' sounds promising but merely refers to what might be considered 'fair use' in a court of law (cf. Starr, 2004/1999).

I made the documentaries I used for teaching purposes from photographs I had taken, wrote the texts myself, and gained permission to use copyrighted music, as well as using audio tracks which were not subject to copyright restrictions.

Copyright issues were explicitly discussed before pupils started to make their documentaries and frequently during production. Discussions about copyright infringements extended beyond the documentary making projects to everyday situations. I raised the concept of copyright fairness from different perspectives, including the artists, the music industry, and end users. We also considered how copyright laws may serve to protect pupils' work.

In chapter 3, I presented the research design, explained the reasoning for basing the research on an action research approach, described the research settings, introduced key pedagogical principles guiding critical documentary making activities, discussed the research methods and tools used for data collection and analysis, and explored ethical issues related to the research. In the next chapter I present and discuss the data collected during the research.

## **4 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH DATA**

Chapter 3 explained why the research was based on an action research approach, described the research settings, introduced key pedagogical principles guiding critical documentary making activities, discussed the research methods used for data collection and analysis, and identified ethical issues related to the research.

The pedagogical principles presented in section 3.3 guided the documentary making classroom activities and answered the first research question: What are the key pedagogical principles of documentary making within a critical pedagogy framework? This chapter seeks to answer the second question: What are pupils' experiences from critical documentary making? Chapter 4 presents the empirical research data and results based on data from documentary making project pupils, their teachers and class assistants, members of the peer audiences, and my observations.

As described in chapter 3, the data was collected during action research critical documentary making projects at two Finnish schools; two points should be kept in mind by the reader. Firstly, that I, the researcher and teacher for the projects, was previously unknown to the pupils. Secondly, the project language was English, the working language at the IS, but not at the HS where pupils study in Finnish. Pupils and staff at the HS contributed to interpreting and translating as required, but most of the time the pupils and I communicated effectively in English. Language issues are elaborated in sections 3.2, 3.4, and 4.1.4.

Quotations from the research data are coded as explained in Section 3.4. All quotations are reproduced as written by the research participants, except where codes replace names to preserve anonymity and one HSP's comments which were translated from Finnish to English by an HSCA.

I analysed the pupils' critical documentary making experiences using the pedagogical principles described in section 3.3 as starting points, but from the learning perspective. The five categories resulting from the theory-driven analysis are: autonomous learning experi-

ences; conscientising, action-based, and reflective experiences; collaborative learning experiences; dialogical experiences; and empowering experiences. Through the data-driven analysis three additional categories emerged: motivational experiences; technological experiences; and media literacy<sup>16</sup> experiences. The research findings are further analysed and discussed in context with the literature study in chapter 5.

#### **4.1 Pupils' experiences corresponding to the pedagogical aims**

The critical documentary making projects were guided by the key pedagogical principles, described in section 3.3, which are located within the critical pedagogy framework depicted in chapter 2. The seven pedagogical principles are: pupil-centred; conscientising, action driven, and reflective; collaborative; dialogical; empowering; accessible; and integrated. I used these principles as the starting points when analysing the pupils' experiences from critical documentary making, and subsequently formed the following five theory-driven categories on the basis of the data: autonomous learning experiences; conscientising, action-based, and reflective experiences; collaborative learning experiences; dialogical experiences; and empowering experiences.

##### **4.1.1 Autonomous experiences**

Pupils were responsible for their documentaries from beginning to end; this was not a pseudo-responsibility, pupils made decisions that affected their studies. ISPs and HSPs made documentaries about issues central to their own lives and social environment. Being able to choose their own documentary themes was important for the pupils:

We narrowed the topics down to five groups, I voted for animals I really really really want to be in the animal group soo much, hopefully I get in that group (ISP6).

Start was difficult but ok you let everyone choose own and not do something not interesting them (HSP1).

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<sup>16</sup> Media literacy is not a key concept defined through a literature study in this research; the term here is based on what emerged from the data and describes pupils' experiences.

All I can say is wow! The pupils were so focussed on their work AND prepared! Some brought in ready made modelling clay/dough animals and other bits and pieces! I hadn't even reminded them! (IST.)

Although pupils chose their own themes, I asked that they considered the subject from different perspectives and thought about what messages they wanted to communicate and what actions they would like their audiences to take. In addition, I encouraged pupils to avoid simply representing information as facts and instead try to find underlying causes.

Pupils decided on the format for their documentaries, although their choice was somewhat restricted, for example, by their knowledge of how to produce particular formats, time constraints of both the length of documentaries and time available for making the documentaries, and the zero budget imposition. Although pupils were responsible for choosing their documentary subjects, the formats and how they worked during the workshops, they did not completely have a free hand:

I liked it that we could choose what we wanted to do about and how we presented the ideas. I would have wanted to choose the group. (ISP14.)

Today Ros told us about the project I got this great idea of children that are left out, but then ISP14 said it before me. But then the idea failed because Ros told us that it could only be a one minute documentary. . . . In a minute lasting documentary you can't tell everything you want and if the documentary last for one minute I think it is a advertisement. (ISP15.)

Empowering pupils to choose their own content and documentary production methods provided pupils with an opportunity to experiment. Consequently pupils were not restricted by my skills and knowledge as the teacher, nor were they confined within rigid tasks which may not have stretched their collective capabilities.

As discussed in Section 3.3.1, ISPs identified topics of interest, put them into five themes, People, Conflict, Animals, Nature, and Arson, and then voted for their top three preferences, resulting in four groups; Animals, Nature, People, and a combined People/Conflict group. The Animal group made a documentary about poaching, Nature about environmental destruction, People about global inequities of food and money, and People/Conflict about kidnapping. The IST had not expected ISPs to choose themes recently studied at school:

When the pupils raised the topics that they were ‘interested in’ I was surprised as I felt they were similar to themes that had recently come up in art and geography class. e.g. in art we discussed appreciating nature and the life around us and in geography we are studying Asia and have briefly talked about rainforests, extinction of animals and endangered species. (IST.)

The IS ethos encourages pupils to take an interest in social issues and be active citizens, which may have influenced their choices of subject. Although choosing a theme to research and then represent in a documentary was a new activity for pupils at both schools, having the freedom to make one’s own choices does not mean they will not be influenced by prior experiences. The audience questionnaire, Appendix A, asked member of the ISA to indicate how important the subject of each documentary was, on a scale of 1 not important, to 5 very important. The modes of the combined peer members of the audience and documentary making members of the audience for the four films were 4, 5, 5, and 5, indicating a high level of interest and relevance in the subjects chosen.

HSPs made their documentaries about dog training, ice hockey, an oppressed group of people, and guitar music:

[I] could do what I wanted and learned a lot of new things. Some a bit difficult and hard to have an idea from the start. Thinking about my dog a lot and how we trained her and it would be nice to show people. Really don’t have an important message but if someone doesn’t like dogs that much then maybe he or she will be more interested. (HSP1.)

When I asked what advice HSP1 had for pupils taking part in future documentary making projects the answer was to “think about something that is really important to yourself and make a documentary about it.” Making documentaries about subjects of their choice gave pupils an authentic dimension to their work. The IST especially liked the authenticity of the documentary making activities and identified pupils “choosing their own subjects, having real questions, helping each other, and producing work for a real audience” as important elements of the project.

Watching the documentaries I could see glimpses of the pupils’ personalities embedded in their productions, which indicated that the documentary making projects were pupil-centred, and the pupils took ownership of their work. Further examples, illustrating how

critical documentary making is pupil-centred and provides autonomous learning experiences are found in Sections 4.1.2 to 4.1.8, and in Sections 4.2 and 4.3.

#### 4.1.2 Conscientising, action-based, and reflective experiences

During the projects pupils used and developed critical thinking skills. From an initial question “can I make a documentary about my rabbit?” (ISP6), the idea developed into including an animation about a rabbit losing its home in a documentary concerning environmental issues. A “horror movie” suggestion became a documentary about the plight of an oppressed group and “my dog” became a documentary about training pet dogs so people may be less scared of dogs. To select what to include and exclude from the documentaries meant that pupils needed to study their documentary topics in some depth, and from different perspectives:

I have learned how to save our energy and keep our environment clean. I thought of how to find good information about it. (ISP7.)

When I started doing this documentary I had no idea how bad pollution is but now I know it’s serious.<sup>17</sup>

Aids and Hiv are causing lots of human suffering many childs in the developing countries have a disease passed from their mums. About 25,000 people die every day of hunger. There would be plenty of food in the world if it would be shared. become sick can’t work poorer and hungrier. 150 countries 29 thousands people die every year. (ISP14.)

In addition to learning about their chosen subjects, pupils became more aware of how films are made and how effects are used to create different audiences responses. Some pupils initially regarded the documentary film genre for adults and boring but were sufficiently interested in making a documentary and in the technology involved to take on the challenge to make creative documentaries about subjects of interest to themselves and their peers:

A documentary means to me a boring movie. It gives a lot of info about someth: eg nature, people, science. (ISP10.)

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<sup>17</sup> From the audience questionnaire, feedback given by a documentary maker

Well, it would be a big project, but computer skills are needed a lot these days and it also develops group and research skills (ISP3).

One pupil who had been looking at documentary films in the Internet to get format ideas, discovered documentaries to be an alternative source of information for school work, “in youtube I found many videos about wars and war in Iraq. I have noticed that documentary explains and shows me more than text or books” (ISP7). This was just one example which drew attention to the need for critical media education in schools.

Pupils making the documentaries became more aware of the world and their worlds; comments and written feedback from members of the audience indicated they too understood more about the topics after watching the documentaries. The following quotations are from the screenings at the IS, including documentary makers and peer audience members:

We have to think of other people not only ourselves. Good thing we donate money to developing countries

Very good! Movie was great and the ending question made you think...

I learnt that even if we do the smallest thing which don't seem harmful we could still be destroying the world

The documentary was very good and I learned a lot of things to do if you want to stop pollution

It is important that people get food, money and are equal

I learnt that every little thing counts and that I should be happy with what I got

I learnt to be careful when alone in the city and that I shouldn't talk to people I didn't know

To help pupils find subjects for their documentaries, I asked pupils to consider what actions they would like their audiences to take as a result of watching the documentaries; “I want to tell to people how other people live and we could help them together” (HSP3). Anticipating audience responses to the documentaries also made pupils think about ac-

tions they could themselves take, “This project has given me new knowledge about poverty and what I personally can do” (ISP14).

Making documentaries based on generative themes, pupils brought their own interests into the classroom. The ISPs’ subjects, kidnapping, the environment, poaching, and poverty, reflect social issues more than the hobby related documentaries made at the HS, ice hockey, dog training, music, with the exception of one, the plight of an oppressed people. Just as external influences led me to conjecture what pupils would be interested to make documentaries about, external influences such as education, family, friends and the media shaped what pupils actually chose.

Pupils at both schools reflected on their work orally and in their learning journals; seeing their documentaries through the eyes of members of the audience perhaps provided pupils with the most startling reflections. During the workshops I suggested making texts larger and that pupils should read their texts slowly aloud to check timings. Some adjustments were made but watching the documentaries with an audience instantly highlighted how the documentaries could be improved aesthetically:

It was odd to have an audience watching. The doc turned out better than expected. People should have used bigger text. Also music is very important... (ISP3.)

I got confused over some issues like choosing a good and relevant picture that explains and shows something to viewers who are going to watch our video (ISP7).

When we showed the documentaries to the class I thought that is was good, but first the text was really unclear it should have been better, otherwise I think its good. (ISP11.)

It would have been useful for ISPs to view their documentaries on a big screen before the final editing process started because the images were not reproduced exactly as they had appeared on computer screens. Also, a viewing with a pilot audience, for example classmates, would have provided audience feedback to make any final adjustments before screening to the external audience. Improving aesthetic details avoids distracting audience attention away from the content. Pupils reflected on each other’s work and learnt about dif-

ferent formats to use for documentary making “I did not get the text at all. I also think it was too much like a powerpoint not a documentary.”<sup>18</sup>

Pupils gained a critical media awareness during the projects and were subsequently, in the words of Lankshear and McLaren, able to “perceive more clearly the relationship between what is going on in the world and what is happening to and with ourselves” (quoted in Mayo, 2004, p. 37). As pupils planned and researched their topics they related the world to their lives:

We are destroying our earth I learned that if we continue making the earth a ‘better’ place (more technology) we’re actually destroying it. By making global warming the climate changes all the time e.g. this winter was weird. (ISP1.)

Season and climate change, we can’t enjoy nature, pollution is effecting our health. What’s really happening to our earth? When you leave your computer on your take his home! Baby polerbear [picture] It’s your choice to do the right thing so watcha waiting for! (ISP6.)

[People] think only about money not of the nature. Mountain gorilla. Siberian tiger. Pouchers. Almost extinced – if very many animals would be extcided the food circle would go mixed up and in the end even people could be without meat. (ISP4.)

During the documentary making project I learned that it’s not nice to hurt animals. I also learned that people who hurts animals does not realise how bad it is for the animals, some people think that animals has not feeling but they have feelings. (ISP5.)

Our documentary is mainly about how the poor people affect us and how can we help them even in little ways. We also have a comparison of the two people in different living conditions. (ISP8.)

On this first lesson we planned what we were going to do, we planned to show people that there is a huge difference between poor and rich people and so on (ISP11).

Trying to tell people that they are lucky to have money. People in developing countries don’t. People in developing countries are also part of the world that are important. People don’t always think about other people like they think about animals. Often animals are cute so that they are protected. People also have to be protected because they are just like us. Same dreams and heart. We have hobbies and clothes they don’t. (ISP14.)

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<sup>18</sup> From the audience questionnaire, feedback given by a documentary maker

These comments show that although pupils are concerned about social injustices they are also influenced by stereotypes and have simplistic views, for example, about rich people helping poor people. These kinds of issues provide starting points for critical class discussions to challenge stereotypes and myths, and look for new understandings.

The disappearance of Madeleine McCann,<sup>19</sup> a British child, whilst on holiday in Portugal almost 1 year before the documentary making project, was in the minds of one IS group who chose kidnapping as their documentary topic:

Kidnapping! It happens a lot! Especially for little girls. Kidnappers usually trick people to come somewhere. Consequenses might be rape or killing. The documentary: telling about kidnapping (a little video) e.g. about Madeline. places to be kidnapped warnings! Watch out for invitations, people who say “I have candy” etc... - Kidnapping in different places. Jammu setä and Madeline – how they relate. (ISP9.)

The pupils added information about Madeleine McCann and Jammu setä (Uncle Jammu), a Finn convicted of murdering two 8 year old girls in 1989, to a short role-play video they made to alert their peers to the dangers of kidnapping. These pupils related events, which took place at different times in different parts of the world, to their own and their peers’ lives.

HSP4 and HSP5 initially worked together to make a documentary about World of Warcraft<sup>20</sup> (WoW), although ultimately they decided to make individual documentaries about different topics. HSP4 and HSP5 explained to me they played WoW, as well as other online games, because there is nothing to do at weekends and it is possible to play for hours. They described WoW as the best game because there is so much to do and it is “more addictive than Tetras but not nicotine.” They concurred that “living in the fantasy world you can be a hero” and when you think you play too much you have to tell yourself to stop. Reflecting on one of their hobbies gave the two pupils an insight into each others’

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<sup>19</sup> Further information available from <http://www.findmadeleine.com/>

<sup>20</sup> World of Warcraft is a multiplayer online role-playing game which takes place in a fictional universe. 23 December 2008 the subscriber base exceeded 11.5 million (<http://eu.blizzard.com/en/press/081223.html>). Further information available from <http://www.worldofwarcraft.com/index.xml>

lives, as well as sharing with me how they spent their weekends, and considering their personal, computer game addiction potentiality.

When I asked HSP4 and HSP5 if they often wrote about their schoolwork, HSP4 said “Never, but I don’t mind.” The two pupils took care to sharpen their pencils, write neatly so I would be able to read their writing and to write in English; I sat with them whilst they talked about their gaming experiences and wrote in their journals, possibly the only entries made, unfortunately these were the journals, mentioned in chapter 3, that I did not receive.

#### 4.1.3 Collaborative learning experiences

The findings from this research show that making documentaries requires pupils to collaborate, cooperate, and share existing knowledge, for authentic learning purposes. ISPs collaborated within their documentary theme groups referred to here as intra-collaboration and also between members of different documentary theme groups referred to as inter-collaboration. Much of the inter-collaboration related to peer-tutoring, particularly teaching each other ICT skills:

We had some problems on how to put text in the middle of the show, but ISP10 [a pupil from a different group] helped us with it and then we got it (ISP1).

I taught ISP4 [a pupil from a different group] today how to add titles and end titles. I also showed the group how to use the windows movie maker better. (ISP10.)

Today I used windows movie maker for the first time. ISP6 did most of the clicking since [ISP6] had most experience. We had a bit of help from ISP10 [a pupil from a different group] when we had trouble. I helped ISP7 send information to the group e-mail. (ISP3.)

I taught ISP14 [a pupil from a different group] how to get back to the picture mode (ISP15).

I noted occasions when one pupil taught another, for example how to perform a particular function with WMM, then the pupil with newly acquired skills would teach the same to their own group members or pupils from a different group. Pupils not only reinforced their

own learning, through teaching someone else, but also learnt new skills and knowledge whilst finding the answers to questions from the pupils they were tutoring.

Some pupils were competent with particular ICT applications that were new or less well known for other pupils; ICT skill disparities are discussed in section 4.2.2, Intra-collaboration involved ICT peer tutoring and other documentary making activities. Pupils worked together to discuss and justify content inclusions and exclusions, documentary formats, sound selection and production, and editing.

Today we planned our documentary. Planned our characters and how to do them. We decided that who will do what and that we will make the characters from clay. We decided to make some of our own sounds and that ISP10 will bring some boom sounds from home to make the shots. We decided to make our film by taking lots of pictures and making them a film. Then we also created the plot of our film and today's lessons were fun. (ISP4.)

We planned the storyboard and learned quickly to use windows movie maker. It was easier with ideas from others in my group. (ISP8.)

Documentary making activities provide genuine opportunities for collaboration, purposeful communication and for developing critical thinking skills; “in documentary making you have to communicate more than in normal school work to give your own comments” (ISP1).

The groups had different approaches to their work and some group members were more active than other members at certain stages of making the documentaries:

Today we planned what we would have in the movie. Me and ISP6 did most of the talking. We wrote about 2 pages together on what we will have in the documentary. (ISP3.)

Today I got some pictures for it. ISP1 researched music and ISP6 used movie maker (ISP3).

We worked as a whole group to do the final planning in the beginning. Then we sort of split up to do different things like the script, music and pictures so that we would be ready faster. We used windows movie maker or started to see all the things it has and which of them we could use. Were just about ready so we can start filming next week. (ISP8.)

We negotiated and discussed some things together. ISP6 was the leader and could always help us if something was unclear (ISP7).

One group appointed a leader and one pupil mainly, but not entirely, worked alone on tasks. The IST mentioned that the particular pupil had previously expressed a preference to be alone and not work with others, collaborative work was a major feature of the project but not compulsory.

One group collaborated more or less throughout the project, working together during all of the documentary making activities, whilst another group mainly co-operated, allocating tasks for each member to carry out and then came together to put the different pieces of work together and discuss the next steps. Regardless of the working methods I noted that pupils sought and took notice of their peers opinions inter- and intra-group.

There was plenty of scope during the projects for ISPs to communicate inter- and intra-group, and likewise the HSPs to consult each other. Pupils sought solutions for documentary making problems from their peers, for example, what to do when WMM jammed, which of the two options is best for saving work in WMM, how to light a set, how to produce sound effects, and how to rework over-ambitious ideas. Pupils also discussed why some techniques worked better than others and identified improvements for future documentary making projects.

The IST was present during most of the workshops and noted that because the groups were based on pupils' interests there were some new combinations working together:

Something that struck me today was how one specific group was working/cooperating together. The 4 members were not "good" friends or do not hang around in the same 'cliques' in class. However, they all stayed together (even during the break unlike most other groups) and together continued with their project. They even looked as if they were having fun (lots of communication and some laughter) in the process. Sometimes the most unlikely combination of pupils can end up having good "chemistry" when working together. (IST.)

ISPs also commented on working together during the project, mostly pupils were positive about their experiences, although some reflected that groupwork is not always easy:

I felt that after every lesson it's easier and easier to co-operate with my group. I am kind of happy that I was working with new people because I concentrated on my work better. (ISP6.)

I learned to work with my group and focus on my documentary work (ISP7).

I learned to work with a group and to use windows movie maker better. . . . It was fun because we had help from classmates and teachers. (ISP8.)

This lesson I didn't really learn anything else than to work and cooperate with people better (ISP11).

I have co-operated in my group quite well, but sometimes we disagree about things. I also feel that sometimes the members in my group are not listening what I have to say. . . . I also learned that some of my classmates have better nerves with me than I thought. (ISP14.)

I think group work is good and if we have problems we solve them (ISP15).

HSPs made individual documentaries, although as previously mentioned HSP4 and HSP5 worked for some time on a combined project. The HS staff were surprised that both HSP4 and HSP5 immediately said they would be interested in taking part in the documentary making research project, as usually they did not agree on anything. By the second workshop, HSP4 and HSP5 had worked together in their own time to produce ten minutes of film about WoW and had discovered new aspects of their common interests in WoW and music.

HSP4 and HSP5 enjoy using ICT in their free time and could pass on knowledge and skills gained outside the classroom to their peers who were less familiar with the technology. HSP4 and HSP5 demonstrated how to use WMM to HSP1, HSP2, and HSP3 at different times during the project. For example, HSP2 used WMM for the first time in this project; after HSP5 taught HSP2 the key functions of WMM, HSP2 did not need any further assistance in making and editing a documentary.

HSP1 wanted to take photographs for the documentary and to learn about making stop-motion films. HSP4 and HSP5 posed for photographs so HSP1 could experiment with the school's camera and stop-motion techniques. HSP4 then showed HSP1 how to download the photographs to a laptop, import them to WMM, and then add effects to the photo-

graphs in WMM. HSP5 showed HSP1 how to add text and some editing techniques. Using the newly acquired knowledge HSP1 took and edited photographs, and added effects and text, to make a documentary. Using WMM as a simple editing tool provides opportunities for meaning making (cf. Reid et al., 2002, p. 28) and discovering how information can be manipulated for particular purposes.

Staff at the HS said that HSP4 and HSP5 had not done things together before the documentary project; perhaps discovering shared interests had provided the initial reason to communicate. After telling me, during the third workshop, they had abandoned their joint project in favour of making a documentary each, HSP4 and HSP5 continued to have contact with each other at the HS.

In chapter 2, I mentioned the need for pupils to gain the knowledge and skills required by employers, the IST also commented on this issue, referring to the skills pupils were developing which could be beneficial for future needs:

I find the process and social dynamics both interesting and important. Not only is content and skills developing but so are social skills, negotiation skills, sensitivity towards others and teamwork/cooperation skills. Pupils are also learning from each other as some have more advance computer skills. . . . A research I read some time in the past few years said that workplaces in the future will increasingly need people with good social/communication skills to cooperate with the increasingly global world as well as ICT skills . . . I am feeling that the in depth and intense cooperation associated with this project is giving valuable experience in preparation for the pupils' futures. (IST.)

Making documentaries provided plenty of opportunities for pupils at both schools to collaborate, regardless of whether pupils worked in groups or individually. Peer-tutoring is a generous activity, pupils helping their peers to learn how to use software or equipment are effectively taking time out from their own work to assist others. The non-competitive atmosphere, in which all pupils were aiming to produce quality work, supported pupils to share their skills and knowledge by tutoring peers.

#### 4.1.4 Dialogical experiences

As the researcher and teacher in the documentary projects, I was an outsider going into the pupils' schools; therefore I started from a clean slate to create the kind of teacher-pupil rapport advocated by critical pedagogues. As I write this thesis, I am more familiar with criticisms against prescriptive dialogical practices (Burbules 2000), discussed further in chapter 5, than I was at either the time of planning or implementing the documentary making projects. There are moments in the workshops which I now perceive as dialogical but at the time did not acknowledge them as such.

The dialogical element of the critical pedagogical framework did not always involve spoken exchanges; sharing websites and music, sitting quietly with one or more pupils, or retreating to a separate space in the workshop rooms also provided dialogical teacher-pupil experiences. The dialogical pedagogical principle refers to shared learning experiences in the workshops, for the pupils and me, the teacher. Similarly when pupils were teaching peers, verbal dialogue may have accompanied demonstrations but it was not the only dialogical aspect of the exchange.

As mentioned in chapter 3, making the documentaries gave pupils an opening for dialogue about their chosen themes with other pupils, those who were also making documentaries and members of the audience. As the teacher, I took responsibility for encouraging critical approaches towards the themes and critical discourse; and consequently had my own agenda, which I fully acknowledge.

The workshops at the HS did not so strictly adhere to a timescale as those at the IS where the documentaries were completed within a set number of workshops. The flexible schedule at the HS allowed for more conversation with pupils about their lives in and out of school, and to share aspects of mine too.

Real learning took place between pupils, and in both directions between pupils and me, at both schools. Much of the learning related to ICT skills, but not exclusively; pupils also learnt from each other about their topics, as I did too. Pupils gained knowledge from exchanging ideas and skills with each other, and with me their teacher. In addition to pupils

teaching me about WoW and some software programmes, I learnt about some of the hopes, lives, and fears of particular pupils, directly from the pupils, a valuable experience for any educator, or adult.

Whilst not disputing Burbules' claim that language may provide a problem for diversity in dialogue (2000, p. 257), there were times during the projects when the issue of language had extremely positive outcomes. As mentioned in chapter 3, the IS language is English, the HS language is Finnish, and the working language for both projects was English on account of my deficit in Finnish language skills.

HSP3 originally said HSP3 did not belong in the HS documentary making project, because HSP3 did not speak English and could understand very little English. However, when assured working in Finnish would not be a problem and HS staff would help me by translating and interpreting when necessary, HSP3 joined the project. As well as HS staff helping to interpret, HSP5 interpreted for HSP3 and me on a number of occasions; a major achievement for HSP5 who, the HS staff had told me, has challenges with social and communication skills.

HSP2 also competently helped me with interpretations when I needed them, and discussed the documentary making project with me at length. HSP2 chose to make a documentary about a hobby; during our one-to-one discussions this led to HSP2 talking about aspects of HSP2's personal life. The HS staff told me HSP2 was usually shy to talk about personal matters.

Pupils talked about the documentary making activities providing opportunities for reflection on their work. HSP4 and HSP5, for example, explained to me in detail how they had made their WoW ten minute film. As well as informing me about some computer programmes and games which were new for me, the pupils identified their need to find and develop a storyline about WoW and online gaming; coming from the pupils rather than being told it was required maintained ownership of their work.

In the learning journal, HSP3 wrote "at first I couldn't choose the subject but then teacher helped me." The "help" was a discussion we had, partly in Finnish and partly in English

with the help of interpreters, to discover what kind of horror film HSP3 was interested to make; not the Hollywood genre as I had initially thought, but a film about the horrors of an oppressed people. There were conversations with HSP3 which did not take place beyond a perfunctory level, partially because of the language limitations and also because HSP3 returned to mainstream schooling after only a couple of workshops. We arranged an extra time for me to meet HSP3 at the HS, to see the finished documentary and for HSP3 to show it to pupils and members of staff.

Not all dialogue during the projects could be described as positive, illuminating or productive. The following conversation is extracted from notes taken during a discussion with HSP5 in the fourth workshop; that day HSP5 had accidentally erased the third documentary HSP5 worked on, having started and abandoned two previous documentaries:

- HSR: What do you think about documentary making?  
 HSP5: It's boring, I don't know why, maybe it's just boring.  
 HSR: What have you learnt?  
 HSP5: Nothing  
 HSR: What did you teach?  
 HSP5: Nothing  
 HSR: What do you think about making documentaries at school?  
 HSP5: It's unnecessary. It can be fun if you enjoy it.  
 HSR: What advice would you give to pupils about to make a documentary?  
 HSP5: Don't make it about a video game, because it's going to suck.  
 HSR: How?  
 HSP5: Too much to tell but hard to make short documentary trying to tell what you want to say.  
 HSR: What could they do?  
 HSP5: Something about their hobbies?  
 HSR: How would you do it?  
 HSP5: It's hard to speak English  
 HSR: What are your hobbies?  
 HSP5: Guitar, used to swim, judo  
 HSR: What was difficult?  
 HSP5: Making a story line. Getting music  
 HSR: If you made a documentary what would you make it about?  
 HSP5: Guitars, I could make one.  
 HSR: How?  
 HSP5: Photos, music, WMM.

The dialogue is taken from notes I made during our conversation, not reported verbatim, and gives an indication of the frustrations that can occur making documentaries. During

most of the workshops, HSP5 was an enthusiastic documentary maker, did not hesitate to use English which is not to say it was not challenging for HSP5 to speak English, and was actively involved in peer-tutoring. By the end of our conversation HSP5 was keen to start making another documentary, immediately, but had to spend the last hour of school time that day with a visitor who was meeting all the pupils.

I felt it would be a great pity if HSP5 did not produce a completed documentary, having been such an active and interested participant in the project. Shortly after the final workshop at the HS, I was invited to attend a musical event at the school and was delighted to discover HSP5 had made a documentary about guitar music. HSP5 showed me the documentary, then on reflection edited it a little more, and then showcased the production to pupils and staff.

To provide a communication channel for questions or comments between our workshops I gave my email address to the pupils, as well as the staff, at both schools. I did not receive any emails from pupils. Emails from me to the pupils were sent through their respective teachers, not directly to pupils.

#### 4.1.5 Empowering experiences

Pupils learnt how to use tools and developed skills during the documentary making projects which can be used to create a voice:

I learned how to use the Windows Movie Maker and I thought it was fun so I did one video at home telling that you can't by friends with money. I did it because it was fun. I also learned how to put sounds/music to a video. (ISP4.)

The principal of the HS said "the school is invisible but this project makes us visible." The comment was made when we discussed how to use clips from the documentaries, with pupils' permissions, during a public event organised by the HS. HSP3 had observed that making documentaries at school gives pupils a way to show their feelings and thoughts to other pupils, this was evident at the event; the pupils were not present, but their personalities were, in the clips shown from their documentaries.

Making the documentaries within a critical pedagogy framework encouraged pupils to approach their topics from different perspectives and ask themselves “how can I make the world a better place?” This does not mean the views of the documentary makers should be the dominant ones; “everyone has a right to think what they want but if I could I would change people’s thinking and I would like that they accept other people” (HSP3).

Discussing, researching and representing their generative themes, pupils demonstrated that they were aware of societal inequities and creatively suggested actions to make a positive difference. Asking pupils what is important for them, what they think is important to other young people, and what roles individuals or groups of young people can have in tackling social challenges is one step. Combining an interest in the opinions of pupils with developing skills to produce a voice which can reach a wider audience potentially empowers pupils to put their ideas into action.

Two or three pupils had prior experience in creating blogs and making videos; learning to make simple documentaries transformed most of the pupils from being media recipients to media producers. Ownership of the documentaries started and remained with the pupils from conception to completion. Pupils chose and researched their subjects, decided what to include or discard, selected colour schemes, and text fonts, picked and made sound tracks, and edited their work. Filming decisions included; when to cut, how to sequence, whether close-up or long shots were more effective, what camera angles to use, and if panning or zooming was required.

Pupils at both schools overcame obstacles and were proud of their work:

We made our project somehow ready. We have sounds and our movie is ready. All we need is just one sound for the beginning. We done excellent work today. . . . Our sounds were good. We made all sound by ourselves except the last sound. (ISP5.)

It took really long to do it, but the outcome was good (ISP8).

I was thrilled to see the final product it looked really good I couldn’t believe I had worked on it (ISP6).

Solving problems was satisfying for pupils and I needed to determine when to step back or step in to assist. Mostly, I encouraged pupils to find their own solutions or ask peers to help, if a problem persisted I then tried to help.

Pupils were also proud to show the documentaries to peers:

I think our documentary came out really good, except it didn't have really all of our ideas in it. I felt really confident with showing the documentary to the class. (ISP11.)

I think overall it went very well, I was proud to show it to [the ISA]. I hope they liked it too! (ISP13.)

The document is ready! I still don't think I said anything too important, I just told few things about dogs. But I'm happy with the result. I've made a fun little film of my dog and that was my goal. (HSP1.)

Now when we have showed the documentary to [ISA] I think our documentary went well. I like all the documentarys but the text should be big and bold, I hope I will get a chance to do it again it was so fun! (ISP13.)

I had planned that ISPs would present their documentaries to their own class peers at the end of their final workshop. Unfortunately, there was not sufficient time, so the first time pupils saw their work and their classmates' work on a large screen was at the premiere event.

At the HS I asked HSP3 to introduce HSP3's documentary, in Finnish. At first HSP3 was reluctant to say anything, but then told the audience what the documentary was about. The silent documentary had a visible impact on all present, pupils and staff. The audience gave lots of feedback to HSP3, commenting on the power of combining beautiful and horrific photographs, and how silence was more dramatic than any sounds could have been. The audience appeared to be impressed with the work and HSP3 was proud to share the documentary with the audience.

Teachers at both schools commented that pupils who taught peers how to use equipment and software were consequently seen in a different more positive light by their peers, gained peer respect, and some peer-tutors appeared to have increased self-esteem. Some pupils considered less academically oriented by their teachers found they were the ones

who knew what to do and how to do it in the classroom. Skills learnt out of the school environment were given recognition in the school settings.

During the HS project I noted that the HSPs appeared to gain confidence in their abilities as they became aware that they could produce a documentary film. Although mostly working independently, the HSPs helped each other with software programmes and asked each others opinions on issues such as the addition of sound.

As already mentioned, English was the main working language during the workshops at the HS where Finnish is usually spoken. This was for my benefit not according to the pedagogical principles guiding the documentary making activities, although using English had empowering outcomes. The need to use English for genuine communication purposes and recognition that it worked well increased the confidence of staff and pupils in their language skills; pupils told members of staff they liked using English and it was “real” HSP1 wrote “. . . was nice and using English more, I really don’t speak English aloud nowadays, it’s more like reading and doing exercises.” The HS staff mentioned that staff and pupils were speaking more English, not only when I was there but sometimes between the workshops too. Pupils who interpreted or translated for me enjoyed a raised classroom status by performing this task.

Critical documentary making provided alternative creative possibilities. Some pupils, whose previous experiences led them to believe they do not have artistic skills, discovered new ways to be creative and took responsibility to choose colours and fonts for text, music or sound effects, and background images. The HST commented that HSP1 was not traditionally artistic or interested in drawings and paintings, had found a reason, making a documentary, to explore colours, styles and artistic creativity, for a serious purpose.

HSP1 told me artwork was difficult, yet there was plenty of evidence of artistic expression in HSP1’s documentary. HSP1 borrowed a digital camera from the HS to take photos and videos at home, used Paint to edit the photos, and carefully chose colour schemes and fonts. HSP1 put the many photos in order to create a storyline. Photography does not depend on drawing abilities, but does require creative decisions, such as what photos to take, framing the subject, lighting, and how to edit the photos. When the documentary was fin-

ished, HSP1 told me it was “maybe a little arty.” The peer audience enthusiastically responded to the documentary and appreciated it must have been hard to photograph a dog in action.

Some pupils used existing images in their documentaries and others edited existing images to personalize them. A couple of pupils learnt how to make animations by drawing simple shapes in PowerPoint and one group made a Claymation:

Today we started taking pictures and making the animation. First we made a scenery to our work. We made some trees by a technique we invented and they looked quite good. Then we made a greenish background so it would be like nature. Then when 3 or 2 of us were making the scenery 1 or 2 of us tried to find sounds from internet. Then two of us [I and ISP16] started taking pictures by me taking pictures and [ISP10] moving the characters. Then we got the pictures done, but then the time ended. (ISP4)

Filming and photographing was a popular format for the documentaries; some pupils filmed and photographed themselves, and one pupil utilised a member of the family and the family dog. Some pupils who did not actually use the photographs for the final documentaries enjoyed learning about taking photos and experimenting to create different effects with them in WMM.

None of the pupils made an audio only documentary, all productions included visuals and all, except one, were audio-visual. Perhaps this reflected the types of documentaries pupils were familiar with prior to starting the project; none of the pupils mentioned familiarity with documentary podcasts. Music and sound effects presented a number of challenges for the pupils, particularly regarding issues of quality and copyright.

Producing quality sound for films is important as poor sound distracts the audience from the messages, limits enjoyment, and may reduce a film’s credibility. Without specialist sound recording equipment and good acoustics in the recording place, quality sound can be difficult to produce. Pupils overcame a number of problems to create sound effects and record dialogue, and discovered ingenious ways of doing so:

We had a problem of getting the music from the mangatune.com website we solved it by we landed a microfone and we played the song and recorded the song with a microfone and the [sound recorder]. We almost finished the project we just have to save the

video and add beginning music. I learned that magnetune doesn't have downloads it has just so you can listen to it. (ISP10.)

Doing this [using audacity music mixer] I've remembered how much I like music, I'm going to make lots of all types and be famous (HSP4).

Pupils were keen to make their own music but realised it might be too time consuming, although this option might have proved faster than some of the extended internet searches pupils made looking for suitable copyright and royalty free materials:

We tried to get the music downloaded for 3 hours, but it costed to download it, but then we thought of recording it with a microphone. I have to get the music sorted out at home for next time. I learned that finding music for 3 hours isn't good, it is a waste of time. I have to get the music quickly done. (ISP1).

We also learned that we need to check up the copywrite thing that if it's copywrite free we are aloud to use it in the work. It was also quit enoying when there was the copywrite but it was a great music file. We also this time had the difficulty that the copy-right free and copyright files where not known that where the copyright or not. (ISP2.)

After the final workshop I discussed the documentary making project with the HS teachers. The most common observations teachers made were that pupils showed interest in their work, were proud of their documentaries, and liked to share their work with other pupils. The project also inspired some HSPs not directly involved in documentary making; one pupil made a poster and presented it to other pupils and the staff.

HSTs felt that an outsider, me, going into the school to facilitate documentary making workshops was more interesting for the pupils than if the regular teachers had done it. However, HSTs also commented that documentary making was an exciting classroom activity which engaged the pupils and asked how they could make documentaries with pupils in the future.

The analysis of the empirical research data so far, connects the learning experiences to the pedagogical principles. The next section presents the data-driven analysis from which three additional learning experience categories emerged: motivational experiences; technological experiences; and media literacy experiences.

## 4.2 Pupils' additional experiences from critical documentary making

Through the data-driven analysis, data was assigned to three emergent categories; motivational experiences; technological experiences; and media literacy experiences. In this section I present an analysis of the data focusing on the pupils' experiences relating to these emergent categories.

### 4.2.1 Motivational experiences

The data indicated HSPs and ISPs enjoyed making their documentaries and found the work meaningful. Documentary making was a new classroom activity for the pupils and I was not a regular member of either school's teaching staff, so some novelty value could be attributed to the experience; no pupils directly referred to the guest teacher enhancing or detracting from the learning experience. Some pupils perceived the documentary making project as extraordinary to their studies:

I think this was a different from real school work since we haven't done any documentaries really, but it still feels the same since it gets assessed. (ISP11.)

This documentary project was similar to some kind of geography/science lesson. I don't like the fact that it was assessed like normal school stuff. . . . I think it was a nice thing to try out in school that made normal school life a little bit more interesting and brighter. (ISP14.)

Fun, different than other school works (HSP2).

Comparing the documentary making activities to familiar classroom activities, most pupils mentioned using computers, cameras, video recorders, and software programmes:

Well planning is similar, finding info is similar, group work is similar, but making a documentary is completely different from school work. In school work we use less programs and if we have something on computer it is not as frustrating if we lose it. Also in school work we write more while documentaries are more visual. (ISP3.)

It is same by we learn things and we work in groups. It is different that we made videos. (ISP10.)

I don't think we do very many computer works so this is a good change (ISP12)

It used lots of electrical equipment to do it but in school work we use only computer like now we used computer, camera and recorder. I think it was very fun making the whole documentary but maybe the best thing was recording the sounds and adding them in the documentary. It was very fun making the documentary at school and now I would want to make more and more of them at home. Or maybe not documentarys but some kind of videos. (ISP4.)

I don't do IT work here so that was nice (HSP1).

Today we continued with our documentaries we were in the computer lab we were all doing our jobs well. The documentary was coming along well and we were having a lot of fun. It was great because [ISP1] found some music. I had added a lot of pics. I was happy because I understood movie maker better. (ISP6.)

Using ICT was an important part of the documentary making activities, and contributed to enhancing pupils' learning experiences; technological is a separate emergent category, discussed in section 4.2.2.

Many of the pupils' comments attributed to motivational experiences also relate to some of the theory-driven categories presented in section 4.1. In particular, data referred to the autonomous experiences, collaborative learning experiences, and empowering experiences, indicating that it was not simply the type of activities which contributed to pleasure, but also how the activities were realised:

This was a fun project because we got to choose the subject and do it in a group. . . . It would be fun if we could do more. (ISP12.)

Well, the project was fun, but it is frustrating loosing info. It was fun doing group work etc. The team work is fun in a doc. Also the creative side is fun. The project was fun (ISP3)

I was really interested in the pupils reactions. They said it had been "fun" so I probed further "what was fun?" answers = it was fun to choose our own topic and research what we were interested in...(own interest). - it was fun to discuss and communicate with the group (social aspect. - it was fun to choose things eg pictures and music (choice)). These stayed in my mind. Would pupils learn better in other situations if there was more choice, socialising and learning through communication with peers? And also trying to find their own interests within the topics being cover in class and re-searching those further. (IST)

Ownership of work was important for pupils and increased enjoyment of the school work. Through choosing the documentary subjects, the documentary format, and learning how to produce documentaries, pupils created original work and owned it.

During the lunch break at the first HS workshop, staff told me that HSP5 usually attended the school only in the mornings and could concentrate for 20 to possibly 45 minutes. The staff expressed surprise that HSP5 had been writing a script all morning and for the first time would be returning to school after lunch, for the second part of the workshop. I was later told that HSP5, thereafter, started to be at school for the morning and afternoon sessions. There could be a number of reasons why HSP5 decided to start attending school full-time rather than part-time; at least it appears that documentary making did not reduce HSP5's interest in school.

Pupils mostly enjoyed the challenge of documentary making, but also recognised that it is demanding and can be stressful:

I think it was fun but also difficult (ISP13).

Today we managed to do quite a lot! We got to do the text part to our documentary. I learnt that it's quite challenging to make a documentary but yet rewarding! p.s. it was again very fun!!! (ISP9)

I like to make a documentary because it's fun but you get info also from the reaserh. All the lessons have been fun (so far). . . . I liked the project. I think it's good but it's not so good because the pupils could get much stress. (ISP15.)

Today we got a lot done. First I was very stressed out about the fact that we might not get it ready, but today we all worked quite hard. We had some problems when the computer jammed 2 times so we changed computers. . . . I learned how to use the windows movie maker a little bit better and how it works. After all it is a quite a simple program, although sometimes too slow. (ISP14)

Stress was mainly caused by technological problems hindering progress, discussed in section 4.2.2, and not being able to find suitable sound tracks without copyright restrictions, as mentioned in section 4.1.5.

The workshops were productive and often noisy due to frequent discussions between pupils; most of the discussions between pupils were on task, about making the documentaries. Teachers, class assistants, and myself, noted that most of the time pupils at both schools were enthusiastic and motivated about documentary making:

The pupils work SO well on this today and took it SO seriously. . . . I am pleased with the work that my pupils did and the whole process especially. Their enthusiasm was encouraging. (IST.)

One HSCA suggested HSP4 and HSP5 were eager to make documentaries and concentrated on their work well compared to other classes, because it was their own project. The same HSCA also commented that HSP4 and HSP5 had not been such good friends before the documentary making project, but had found something they were both interested in and started working together.

The keen interest shown by HSP4 and HSP5 towards documentary making was not always appropriate. I heard from staff that HSP4 and HSP5 talked about documentary making a lot between the introductory meeting and the first workshop, needing to be told “today is maths.” There were other times when motivation was thwarted. During one workshop HSP5 was tired and hungry, and frustrated because the documentary had not progressed between the workshops and HSP5 could not get on with the work during the workshop because the Internet connection was not available; HSP5 said “I’m bored now.”

Pupils spent their time in the workshops focused on their work, persistent in trying to solve problems, and eager to learn new skills and share knowledge with peers. Some chose to work on the documentaries through break times and out of school hours, all completed the documentaries within agreed deadlines Pupils were keen to make more documentaries and improve their documentary making skills:

I liked everything about the project. It was fun to do. I learned many things and I enjoyed about it. I would like to do another documentary. . . . It helps us to improve our knowledge about documentary better. It can also improve our work on making documentary. (ISP5.)

In the future I would like to do more documentary projects because it makes the whole process more interesting and easier. I would also like to do documentaries about differ-

ent natural thing on biology lesson, because we don't have to do a lot of writing. (ISP7.)

When I asked pupils at the IS why they would like to make more documentaries the different answers included: because they had the opportunity to learn new skills and learn about the topics, they had enjoyed working in groups and discussing the issues together, it was nice to share opinions and the workload, and choosing music was fun.

#### 4.2.2 Technological experiences

To eliminate financial considerations as a constraint for making documentaries in schools, and adhere to the accessible pedagogical principle, the documentaries were made without any additional expense to either school. Apart from a few materials some pupils brought from home and the DVD documentary compilations I gave to the teachers there was no expenditure. Computers were already available at both schools with enough software to produce basic films, and any additional software was downloaded from the Internet free of charge. Both schools owned, or had access to, video cameras, digital cameras, and tripods. ISP9 summed it up, "we don't have all the best equipment but we used what we had."

The projects focused on the documentary making activities and did not aim to imitate professional productions, although high expectations for the completed documentaries were held by me and the pupils. Using existing equipment encouraged pupils to find practical solutions for representing content and to learn how to be creative with widely available ICT.

Also, the documentary making projects, intentionally avoided using complex or sophisticated editing software programmes. These take longer to learn and may prove to be a barrier for the adoption of critical documentary making as a classroom activity. All software introduced in the workshops would be familiar for basic computer users, or relatively easy to become familiar with.

Teachers and pupils who use Microsoft Windows programmes, such as Microsoft Word or PowerPoint, are already familiar with tool bars, drop down menus, and drag and drop functions, for example, and will not find learning to use Microsoft WMM a daunting prospect. I explained to IS and HS staff that I did not have a background in film or documentary making and although I knew the basic functions of the equipment and software I introduced to pupils, I expected the pupils to have a greater collective knowledge.

Microsoft WMM was the key editing programme for the documentary making project and for many pupils this was their first experience with the programme. PowerPoint, Audacity, and Paint were also used. I had anticipated a slight variation in the ICT competences of pupils, however, there was a wide spread in existing knowledge. The variation in levels of ICT skills provided many of the collaborative learning experiences discussed in section 4.1.3. Pupils learnt how to use equipment and software programmes very quickly from each other or experimented to find solutions for themselves:

Today I learned how to add titles and put pictures to Windows Movie Maker. I also learned how to record a sound from 'sound recorder' and put it on our movie. (ISP5.)

Some of the timings on the slides were too short or long, but we learned to make them the right time (ISP8).

We used paint and movie maker it was hard at first but I got the hang of it after a while (ISP6)

Using technology was a daunting prospect for some pupils, and not without challenges:

I'm also a bit afraid of using the computer programs (HSP1).

We also found out that windows movie maker can be quite frustrating (ISP2).

Sometimes we couldn't find our files that we saved (ISP7).

Sometimes the computer also crashed and finally we had to change the computer (ISP14).

Making documentaries is really hard because I didn't understand and know how to use the programs but I just asked for help (ISP6).

ISP6 later, more confidently, wrote:

Today we continued our documentaries, I couldn't open our documentary so I had to start again. It wasn't hard to start again because I had the pics saved on the computer. . . . We also tried making a clip on powerpoint it was really easy! I think we have progressed a lot! At least since the first workshop I really think this documentary is going to work. I learned a lot about windows movie maker so now making slides is a breeze for me (but I still need lots of help) (ISP6.)

Pupils reflected on their work throughout the project. Digital photo and video cameras provided instant feedback on the quality of filming. Sometimes it was necessary to take shots a few times to achieve the results pupils wanted, as ISP12 noted "our group also had to film our video part over 8 times." Using WMM enabled pupils to review their work and experiment with, for example, timings, colours, special effects, and text, as well as edit the films.

WMM has two options to save work which caused confusion for some pupils. One option saves the work-in-progress project and allows the film-maker to resume making the film at a later date; the other option saves the work as a completed film, which can be harder to edit, depending on the type of film being made and editing required. The problem pupils encountered was caused by not grasping that WMM does not actually import materials into WMM. Even though one function is confusingly named "import photos" it actually makes a link to the materials. So, if pupils had photographs, videos or sound files on a memory stick, they could see the photographs or video, and hear the sound track, as long as the memory stick was attached to the computer. Believing their materials to already be in WMM, pupils did not realise that the memory stick was required to be attached, so WMM could locate the visual or audio files, when they resumed their work, or wished to show it to others.

Usually the missing content was easily rediscovered; the memory sticks were attached and the visuals or audios magically reappeared. HSP3 wanted to show the completed documentary to a class assistant between workshops but it had disappeared. Rather than abandon the project or contact me to ask if I could help, HSP3 made the documentary again, from scratch because, as the assistant told me, HSP3 said the project was so important.

Pupils used the Internet search engines to research their subjects and find sound effects or music for their films. Some pupils quickly located what they required whereas other pupils spent much longer searching for information. If a member of the group was allocated the task of finding audio or specific pictures they might have spent most of their time doing that, rather than learning how to use different computer programmes and participating in content decisions making, or the editing process, for example. Finding soundtracks for the documentaries was perhaps one of the most challenging tasks of the documentary making projects:

... choosing the music! Horrific! I didn't find any music in internet and I really didn't get a chance to shearch it carefully. . . . Then I chose a song from my mp3-player. . . . a song that is light and fun. . . . I think the song is ok for the document but I believe that somewhere out there there would have been a better song for it. But as I said, I'm happy with what I have come up with! (HSP1.)

To find music to suit the content, without copyright restrictions, proved impossible for some pupils, who eventually resorted to using known, copyrighted materials. I took the decision that this was acceptable as the documentaries were made for educational purposes and would not be distributed out of educational settings.

The IST had been thinking a lot during the past year about how pupils could improve their time management on computers:

some pupils have no problems collecting material on the internet and continue on with processing the information, whereas there are always other pupils who will happily spend all of the allocated computer lab lessons seemingly aimlessly googling around with no evidence of having collected the needed material (IST).

The IST had tried different strategies, such as giving pupils strict deadlines for searching for information during class time and requiring evidence such as notes or printouts. Pupils unable to find information during time allocated had to complete their work at home. The IST concluded, "I'm just developing and thinking of ways to assist pupils to manage time and effectiveness when researching for information on the internet."

As film-making was a new classroom activity, I had anticipated a temptation for the young film-makers to focus on the technology and effects, rather than the content. Whilst this was

the case for a few pupils, especially in the beginning, the majority were keen to have quality content too. Deciding how to present the content required pupils to consider the meaning of the information they had researched, and getting the aesthetics right needed a holistic understanding of the information and the explicit and implied messages given.

Documentary making may be perceived as a somewhat exclusive activity, more appropriate for specialist courses than in the primary or secondary school classroom, yet simple documentaries can be made by anyone with an elementary understanding of ICT and willing to learn. During the workshops teachers and other members of staff at both schools, not only those directly involved in the research project, were interested in what the pupils were producing and how they produced it, especially as they saw how engaged pupils were whilst making the documentaries. In chapter 5, I briefly report on developments since the research projects ended, including documentary making workshops I have held for HSTs.

#### 4.2.3 Media literacy experiences

I refer to media literacy as a critical understanding of the media and the techniques used by the media, as well as the ability to produce media. In this third emergent category, I identified data which suggested pupils gained an insight into how films are produced, through making their own documentaries. During the introductory meetings at the IS and the HS, I asked pupils to describe documentaries:

documentaries are things that tell information about people, places, religions, etc. They are non fiction. Some are also based on wars. They can also be fiction. (ISP1.)

They are boring, movies ment for moustly older people. Some documentarys can be interesting if the topic is interesting. The topic might be anything, eg an animal document or a documentary of a building, that how is it built. They are true storys/things. When I think about documentary I usually think about animal documentarys since that is what I know most about... Also I have seen many about historical things like Rome etc. (ISP3.)

Documentaries are like movies but boring. They tell about things in a scientific way they are made for mainly adults. Documentaries normally have narrators or text. 4-D is a good documentary show but sometimes it can be disgusting. Documentaries aren't

funny or sarcastic and that's why I don't really watch anything else than good 4-D (ISP6.)

Many pupils mentioned nature programmes they had seen on television, but generally categorised documentaries as adult viewing, rarely with content of interest or relevance for their age groups. Unless there was something 'weird or disgusting' the pupils said they did not watch documentaries on television.

After the first workshop at the HS, I asked pupils to tell me their thoughts about making documentaries, they said that it was quite exciting, new, a big deal, lots of work, and they were learning new things. They mentioned that young people usually ignored music copyrights; starting to make their own productions led to discussions about the fairness of copyright from different perspectives, the artists, the music industry, and end users.

Pupils tried to choose music to fit the story demonstrating they were aware how sounds could have a strong effect on audience perceptions. Notes from ISP5's learning journal showed how the group, making a documentary about poachers, planned to find music and sounds to fit the visuals and the key messages. For example, pupils identified peaceful sounds for opening scenes of animals in their natural habitat, then sounds to match the mood of fear when poachers were killing animals, and anger as poachers were driving vehicles.

By making documentaries pupils gained an appreciation of the hard work required for making films:

I learned that making clay animations is very hard. It takes that you need to make the clay figures then you need to take pictures and keep moving the figures. (ISP10.)

[Documentary] needs busy working and you need to be concentrated on your work. You need to plan what are you going to do. You need to find sounds and things like that. (ISP5.)

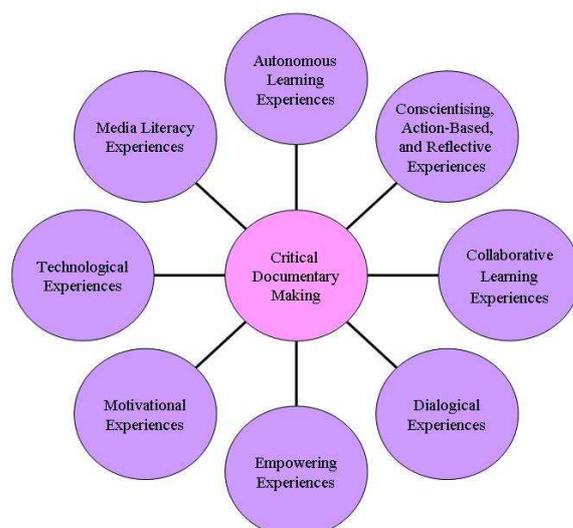
I had no practical experience of making a document so I really understood what proverb "well planned is half ready" ment. (HSP1).

When pupils started to visualise the format for their documentaries they initially based their ideas on the types of documentaries they had seen on television, often involving unrealistic photo shoots for a school-based project. Watching examples of documentaries made by young people and learning how to make some simple animations broadened their horizons. The IST said seeing a few different kinds of formats stopped the pupils from thinking that they would have to act in their documentaries and they began to consider alternative ways to make a documentary. Once pupils wrote storyboards and planned how to create the images and text, the designs became more realistic; on the whole pupils aimed for something simple yet effective, and importantly a format that could be completed within project deadlines.

I encouraged pupils, when watching their usual television programmes, to consider how they were made, what explicit and implicit messages were transmitted to the audience and how. Pupils used the skills and knowledge gained through making their own documentaries to analyse how different kinds of films are produced, for example, animations and advertisements. HSP1 told me “I’ve seen some music [videos] and I thought how they made them.”

Although there was not sufficient time to discuss in detail, and not having a common language created additional difficulties, I talked with HSP3 about problems which may arise from using images from unknown sources. For example, images may be discovered to have been staged which can destroy the credibility of an entire documentary, even if only one of the images is a misrepresentation of events. We also discussed how to represent horrific events without frightening a young audience.

In this chapter I presented, analysed, and discussed the empirical research data to answer the second research question: What are pupils’ experiences from critical documentary making? Figure 3 summarises the pupils’ experiences indicated by the data.



**Figure 3 Pupils' experiences from critical documentary making**

Many of the learning experiences can be attributed to the key pedagogical principles guiding the critical documentary making activities in the classroom. This indicates that the seven pedagogical principles identified in chapter 3 to answer the first research question, what are the key pedagogical principles of documentary making within a critical pedagogy framework, did have an effect on the critical documentary making activities in practice. The pedagogical principles can now be said to be grounded in theoretical and empirical research. In accordance with action research, however, the principles are not necessarily final ones. During the next cycles of action research, discussed in chapter 5, the principles will be reviewed and refined; new elements might emerge, and existing ones may be reconceptualised.

In the final chapter, I summarise the Master's research, discuss the main findings with extant literature, describe the contributions this research makes to educational theory and practice, and identify areas requiring further research.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Following on from my Bachelor's thesis, which established the rationale for critical documentary making as a classroom activity, the Master's thesis sought answers for two research questions:

1. What are the key pedagogical principles of documentary making within a critical pedagogy framework?
2. What are pupils' experiences from critical documentary making?

Literature regarding documentary or film-making as a classroom activity is extremely limited (cf. Hakkarainen, 2007; Reid et al., 2002), therefore I drew on four concepts, critical pedagogy, collaborative learning, peer tutoring, and participatory documentary, to construct the theoretical framework for the research. Much of the literature I consulted was from out-of-school contexts, such as NGO participatory documentary and peer-to-peer educational projects. Based on literature and supplemented by my teaching experiences prior to the research, I identified seven key pedagogical principles to guide critical documentary making activities in the classroom: pupil-centred; conscientising, action driven, and reflective; collaborative; dialogical; empowering; accessible; and integrated.

An action research approach was taken for the study because the democratic, collaborative, and empowering starting points for action research are in accordance with the four concepts comprising the theoretical framework, critical pedagogy, collaborative learning, peer tutoring, and participatory documentary. The critical documentary making projects were developed through planning, action, observation, and reflection cycles (Brown et al., 1988; Carr & Kemmis 2004). The research addressed real-life problems; used democratic participatory processes; emancipatory knowledge useful to a community was generated through collaboration between pupils, teachers, and class assistants; and pupils learnt how to independently create film media (cf. Kemmis, 1988; Levin & Greenwood, 2001; Reason, 1994; Reason & Bradbury, 2001).

Two documentary making projects took place at two schools in Finland. Pupils' experiences from critical documentary making were recorded by the pupils, their teachers and class assistants, and myself. The data indicated that the critical documentary making activities provided pupils with a wealth of social, technological, and cognitive learning opportunities, and pupils were extremely motivated to make documentaries.

As one of a range of classroom activities, critical documentary making has much to offer, however, I should mention a few cautions too. Firstly, it is unrealistic to expect all pupils to be keen to make documentaries, any more than all pupils enjoy writing an essay, painting a picture, or playing a musical instrument. Secondly, overuse of activities can lead to them become dull tasks, mechanically performed without interest or motivation. Thirdly, naming inequities, identifying how 'I' can make the world a better place, and feeling more connected to society are important, but critical documentary making in schools is not a quick-fix answer to deep-rooted societal problems.

Fourthly, pupils who become interested, or more interested, in active citizenship may face resistance at home or amongst peer groups. A sudden interest in societal issues and utilisation of critical thinking skills may not always be greeted with positive reactions, so pupils need to be prepared for adverse reactions too. It could be helpful for parents to see their off-springs' work, for example, documentaries could be shown and discussed during parents' evenings.

Within the short timeframe of this research and the contexts of a primary international school and a secondary hospital school in Finland, the results look extremely promising; critical documentary making is a didactically innovative and pedagogically rich classroom activity. The seven key pedagogical principles, now informed by theoretical and empirical research, provide a good starting point for the next phase of the research, which is discussed in section 5.3.

In this final chapter I discuss the main findings of the research with literature, identify contributions the research makes to educational theory and practice, and propose areas requiring future research.

## 5.1 Main findings of the research

I will start this section by listing the main findings of the research and then discuss them in the context of literature. I will discuss the findings as a whole, rather than distinct items, as they are interrelated. The ten most significant conclusions from this research are:

1. Critical documentary making is a pedagogically rich classroom activity.
2. Critical documentary making activities motivate pupils with special educational needs and mainstream pupils.
3. Collaborative learning and peer tutoring reduces ICT competence gaps, increases pupils' self-esteem, and elevates the status of some pupils' with peers.
4. Critical documentary making raises pupils' awareness of societal inequities and shows potential to empower pupils to be active citizens.
5. Critical documentary making supports alternative learning styles and creativity.
6. Critical documentary making enables knowledge and skills gained outside the classroom to be accredited at school.
7. Critical documentary making creates a platform for pupils to articulate their views.
8. Critical documentary making facilitates meaning making and exploration of pupils' identities.
9. Skills gained through critical documentary making are transferable
10. Critical documentary making is accessible for many teachers and pupils and can be integrated with school curricula

The data demonstrated that pupils' experiences during the critical documentary making projects were similar to those described in the few research papers available on film-making activities in schools. Pupils were highly motivated and engaged in their tasks, the activities suited a range of learning styles, collaborative learning and peer tutoring were prominent in the workshops, and authentic learning took place. (cf. Hakkarainen, 2007; Hofer & Owings-Swan, 2005; Kearney & Schuck, 2005; Reid et al., 2002.) Being responsible for making the documentaries from conception to completion gave pupils a genuine sense of ownership of their work.

At times the workshops were noisy, but by observing the pupils activities and checking their progress it was evident that the pupils were usually working on their documentaries. Making the films involved plenty of discussion so it was to be expected that the classroom volume would rise every now and then. ISPs and HSPs commendably demonstrated their trustworthiness at remaining on task whilst collaborating with peers, searching the Internet for information, and selecting content for their documentaries which would be appropriate for peers.

Most pupils were making documentaries for the first time, and during the projects gained new, or developed existing, knowledge and skills. The HS teacher said “every day HSP1 comes to school and says I want to learn something new, I believe today she has.” Pupils found the work challenging, demanding, and rewarding, and spent time trying to overcome the problems they encountered (cf. Reid et al., 2002).

Pupils were motivated and engaged in their documentary making work, including learners who may feel, or be, excluded from the traditional school curriculum. Pupils not only concentrated during the workshops but many continued their work during break times and after school in their free time. Quieter learners found an alternative way to participate in class and pupils who are less able to produce written work discovered a new visual platform to show their understanding of concepts which might be more difficult to explain in writing. The less artistically inclined designed aesthetic productions demonstrating creative abilities. (cf. Reid et al., 2002, pp. 6, 18, 31.)

According to some surveys, although Finnish pupils achieve highly in all academic areas a high proportion do not enjoy time spent at school (Arnett, 2007, pp. 298-299), and a 2006 STAKES<sup>21</sup> school health survey revealed that “18% of primary school aged learners and 14% of high school learners suffer from symptoms of depression” (Uusitalo, 2007). Learning activities which provide a means of expression and pupils enjoy, could be one intervention towards more positive experiences at school for pupils (cf. Reid et al., 2002).

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<sup>21</sup>Finnish Organisation: National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health

Topping noted that pupils often have a deeper knowledge of ICT skills than the non-specialist teacher (2001, pp. 45-46). Empowering pupils to choose their own content and documentary production methods enables pupils to experiment, rather than be restricted by teacher skills and knowledge, or the confines of rigid tasks which may not stretch their collective capabilities. The dialogical pedagogical principle supports teachers creating new knowledge with pupils and encourages teachers to try classroom activities even when they are not totally familiar with the technology involved.

The software programmes used for producing the documentaries had rarely been used at either school, if at all, prior to the projects. There were noticeable differences in pupils' ICT competences and knowledge; pupils' comments suggested a number of reasons why this might be. There were variations in the amount of ICT instruction and practice pupils had had at school, pupils spent different amounts of time using ICT applications out of school, and they took part in diverse types of ICT activities. Pupils also demonstrated different levels of interest in ICT and confidence in their ICT abilities, frequently underestimating their aptitude for learning new ICT skills. Pupils learnt quickly from their peers and put their new skills into immediate practice to create their own work.

Peer tutoring raised the ICT proficiency of those taking part in the critical documentary making projects, including the peer tutors who gained a deeper understanding of the ICT applications they taught. It was easy to assess the success of peer tutoring, for example, HSP4 and HSP5 competently taught their peers how to use WMM. The pupils they taught were consequently able to use WMM independently to compile images, texts, and sounds for their documentaries, as well as use WMM as an editing tool.

Peer tutoring also enhanced the self-esteem of the peer tutors. During and after teaching new skills to peers pupils displayed and mentioned feelings of worth, pride, and belief in their abilities (cf. Topping, 2001). The relationship between some pupils changed from disinterest to collaborative; teachers and assistants at the HS said that some pupils demonstrated more positive attitudes towards learning and some pupils had become aware of the skills and knowledge other pupils had as a result of peer tutoring. Topping's inference that pupils with special educational needs benefit as tutor and tutee in peer tutoring projects,

both socially and academically (2001, pp. 15-16), was endorsed at the HS and the IS for pupils with special educational needs and mainstream pupils.

Initially, it was a challenge for me to resist stepping in prematurely to assist; doing so would have reduced peer collaboration. I felt the need to be occupied in the classroom, rather than observing pupils so intently that it could be disturbing. By the second workshop I realised the pupils were so focused on making their documentaries that they were not acutely aware of what I was doing, and I could more or less be a fly-on-the-wall observer. In the classroom context where research is not taking place, teachers would have time to work with a few pupils on specific tasks, as well as time to get to know and show an interest in their pupils (cf. Adams et al., 1990).

The high level of competent peer collaboration during the workshops put Vygotsky's ZPD concept into practice (Berk & Winsler, 1995), and demonstrated that children have a lot to teach each other in the school context, as well as out of the classroom. Knowledge was socially constructed and learning took place through interaction with peers and in communities (cf. Vygotsky, 1962). The collaborative atmosphere was conducive to risk taking; pupils experienced that it was frustrating, but alright for things to go wrong, creative solutions, discovered individually or collectively, usually solved the problems.

Describing the Fogo participatory documentary activities, see section 2.3.1, Crocker (2003) observed that the film-making process was more important than the product, the cooperation and sense of community required to make the documentaries was empowering. The same can be said about the documentary making activities in this research; pupils were engaged in their own work, but were also willing to help and tutor their peers, even when they had their own deadlines to meet. Theorists and practitioners stress that transformative learning is an important element of critical pedagogy and participatory documentary (Freire, 1970/2000; Pandey & Moorad, 2003; UNESCO Regional Clearing House, 2003; White, 2003). The data demonstrated that transformative learning took place at both the HS and the IS, especially in pupils' personal, through increased self-esteem, and social spheres.

Although “Freire’s pedagogy does not guarantee that people will engage in action for social transformation once they become conscientised and begin to critically read the world” (Mayo, 2004, p. 60), ISPs and HSPs demonstrated they are interested in the world they live in and willing to take affirmative action. Critical documentary making is a classroom activity which provides a space for pupils to explore social issues, and share their opinions and suggestions for improving society. The documentary making activities transformed some pupils from being media recipients to media producers, a few pupils were already media producers (cf. Hakkarainen, 2007). Due to the short timeframe of this research, data is not available confirming actions, other than making the documentaries, were taken, either by the documentary makers or members of the peer audiences. This aspect requires further research and is discussed in section 5.3.

The data indicated that during the documentary making workshops, totalling 10.5 hours at the IS and approximately 24 hours at the HS, some pupils increased their media literacy skills. Most of the workshop time was dedicated to making documentaries, as a regular classroom activity, media literacy themes can be developed. Pupils transformed photographs with software programmes which, with more time available, would have made a good starting point for exploring the reality of representation. For example, to study how archive materials can be used out of their original context to create new meanings, thus re-interpreting events (Bruzzi, 2000, p. 23).

Learning about film media techniques not only improve pupils’ film-making skills and provide starting points for media literacy activities, but also can be used in different contexts. A special educational needs teacher in the digital video pilot projects reported by Reid et al. gave a practical example of film-making activities which can be used for other purposes:

We did a few exercises where we filmed a sequence of shots, filmed them in the right order, but then put them in a storyboard on the timeline in the wrong order and they [the pupils] can see straight away that it’s wrong (2002, p. 52).

Similar activities could be used in language classes to teach the target language for giving instructions and describing everyday routines, for introducing new vocabulary, practising usage, or reinforcing familiar phrases. Critical documentary making and film-making per

se provides plenty of authentic purposes to use a target language, as was demonstrated by the HSPs who worked in English rather than their native Finnish during the workshops.

In a report about video making within a problem based learning framework, Hakkarainen (2007) acknowledged the presence of collaboration and cooperation, however, she observed that creativity and reflection were not fully realised. A critical pedagogy framework, which encompasses problem based learning, provides latitude for pupils to explore creative solutions, and reflect on the content and documentary production activities.

Documentary making provides alternative creative possibilities for pupils who, for example, do not have strong drawing or musical skills (Reid et al., 2002, p. 17). Digital technology offers opportunities for pupils to produce their own audio, images, and texts, and in doing so avoid copyright obligations. Critical documentary making projects offer numerous possibilities for cross-curricular activities; soundtracks could be produced during music lessons, images created during art classes, and scripts written in language or other subject classes.

I wholeheartedly agree with Reid et al., that film-making “should be accorded a higher status in the curriculum as a ‘language for learning’ alongside the use of print, which would give more pupils opportunities to achieve” (2002, pp. 21-22). In addition, the challenging activities build on existing competences including skills and knowledge pupils gain out of school, thereby connecting schoolwork to the outside world and validating knowledge from alternative sources.

Pupils enjoyed the autonomy to choose what to make their documentaries about and how to make them. Incorporating pupils’ interests in the classroom activities engaged pupils in their learning, provided opportunities for pupils to articulate their world views, and weave their issues and their lived experiences throughout the documentary production. As described in chapter 4, when pupils researched their topics and developed their scripts they became more conscious of how the issues directly related to their own lives. Some teacher interventions, such as asking questions, were sometimes required to obtain a more critical analysis of materials.

Some of the HS staff commented that the documentaries made by HSPs radiated their respective personalities; this might have been less noticeable had I prescribed the content and format for the documentaries. When I first considered documentary making as a classroom activity, I pictured pupils choosing to make their documentaries about social issues relating to young people such as smoking, drugs, or bullying. During the first workshops I realised I had in mind the topics I, an adult, thought would be of interest to pre-teens and teenagers, and not topics pertinent to the lives of the pupils who took part in the research.

An important point raised by the research is the dialectic of pupils owning their work, creating a platform for voice, and yet maintaining anonymity. On the one hand, pupils were proud to show their work to a peer audience beyond their immediate classmates, acknowledge it as their own, and share their ideas for improving society. On the other hand, wider distribution could have unexpected and possibly unwanted effects for the film-makers, so there is also a valid case to preserve anonymity to protect pupils.

This dilemma should involve discussions with the pupils, their parents/carers, and teachers, and be context dependent. It would be irresponsible to make pupils' documentaries available to a wider audience without carefully considering the potential positive and negative consequences. All documentaries made in class should be critically reviewed by the makers and their teacher before being shown to any audience.

Out of the school context, some pupils independently express their views publicly through the Internet. However, teachers should be guided by the school policy covering publication of work, photographs and videos of pupils on web pages. If such a policy does not exist it would be advisable to initiate one. Unless permission has already been granted for publicly showcasing pupils' work, parental or guardian permission should be obtained before any screenings to wider audiences. Green and Hannon (2007) reported that almost fifty percent of parents are keen to have a wider audience for their children's work.

After the premiere screening the IST wrote:

On the whole – the impressions left from viewing the documentaries was: they were creative and original; good ideas; more 'polishing' could have been done e.g. size of font (- small), speed of text appearing on screen (sometimes too fast) Also – could

some text have been eliminated? “Pictures tell a thousand words” and could visual representation of message have been used instead of lots of explanatory text; they were creative and original.

The IST and I later discussed that documentary making, like other classroom activities such as writing essays, requires practice (cf. Reid et al., 2002). The first time pupils write an essay they are not expected to produce an epic; whilst retaining high expectations of our pupils, we should not anticipate the first exploratory steps in documentary making to produce professional films. Like written or oral presentation competences, critical documentary making competences are developed through exercises and practice.

It was important for pupils to see other young people’s films from the Internet and their peers’ documentaries, rather than unrealistically compare their productions technically with professional television programmes. Seeing the documentaries through the eyes of their peers provided feedback for the makers who immediately recognised how their own and other pupils’ documentaries could improve. The IST concluded:

The pupils need to do more documentaries after having learned and had feedback about how to improve their work. Having learned raw skills they need to maintain and develop them – so now I’ll have to get them to make more documentaries in the near future!

I contacted the IST in January 2009 to ask if documentary making had become a regular classroom activity. The IST had not yet experimented, but reported two examples where pupils who made documentaries in the research project applied the skills and techniques to different tasks. Firstly, some pupils made a documentary film for an assembly held for Middle Years Programme pupils (11-16 year olds), and secondly, some pupils designed PowerPoint slides to provide backdrops for their drama activities. The simple documentary making activities developed during this research could also be used for fictional film-making and visual storytelling activities in the classroom. Skills developed and knowledge gained through critical documentary making are also practical for teachers, ICT and creative skills, for example, can be used to produce original teaching materials.

The documentary making projects did not incur any additional expenses for the schools. All equipment used was available at the schools prior to the projects, and the existing software programmes were supplemented by others which could be downloaded, free of

charge, from the Internet. The teachers were not aware of exactly what equipment and software programmes were already available at their schools, or, understandably, how to use all of them. Pupils eagerly discovered for themselves, or with the help of their peers, how for example, a camera functioned or what special effects could be created in WMM, confirming Green & Hannon's (2007) findings that pupils are often the best and most underused resource in schools.

The combination of not requiring any additional finance and the simplicity of the documentary making activities developed in the research projects makes critical documentary making accessible for educators and pupils. In addition, the dialogical pedagogical principle encourages teachers and pupils to learn together, and thereby diminishes instant rejection of classroom activities which may challenge a teacher's current skills or knowledge.

I agree with Reid et al., that digital film-making can provide a simple introduction to ICT for teachers and pupils who do not feel fully conversant with it. However, to some extent, I disagree with Reid et al.'s recommendation that "teachers should not be expected to manage, teach, and support [digital film-making] work without input from specialist technicians." (2002, pp. 13, 33.) Teachers may need user rights enabling computer passwords to download free software, or to seek assistance for compatibility issues, or, for example, find a missing camera USB cable; however, these problems are usually quickly resolved and often have the extra benefit of rendering discarded equipment usable.

Contemporary teacher training programmes usually include ICT courses and some incorporate simple film-making or media education, or both. An 8 hour hands-on workshop, preferably held over 2-3 days, is sufficient to introduce the rudiments of critical documentary making for participants who have basic ICT skills. The HSTs were keen to learn how to make documentaries so that critical documentary making could become a classroom activity for both primary and secondary HSPs, endorsing how beneficial HSTs perceived critical documentary making to be for their pupils. After the research projects I facilitated in-service documentary making workshops for the HS staff. By the end of the first 2 hour workshop all participants were using the basic functions of WMM to produce short films.

After approximately 8 hours HS teachers and assistants, all said they felt confident to try documentary and film-making with their pupils.

To be accessible for a greater number of pupils, critical documentary making needs to be included in regular lessons, rather than reserved for pre-school or after-school clubs. For this to happen, teachers, headteachers, parents, and authorities need to know documentary making activities can be an integral part of the curriculum. As mentioned in chapter 2, the documentary making projects in this research were located within The Finnish National Curriculum, and in the case of the IS the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme too.

Four of the seven cross-curricular theme objectives from the Finnish national curriculum were present in the documentary making activities: growth as a person; media skills and communication; participatory citizenship and entrepreneurship; and technology and the individual. The remaining three cross-curricular theme objectives were evident in specific documentaries. Three documentaries, concerning the environment, poaching, and ice hockey respectively, incorporated the theme, “responsibility for the environment, well-being, and a sustainable future.” Documentaries about an oppressed group of people, social inequities, and guitar music included elements of the “cultural identity and international” theme. Two other documentaries, one about kidnapping, and the other about dog training, related to the “safety and traffic” theme. (cf. FNBE, 2004.)

The IS workshops took place in English and Religious Education classes. The IST taught these subjects to both 6th grade year classes, usually keeping to the same topics for each class. The IST said that the documentary group pupils would cover any content missed with less depth and stressed the importance of the documentary making project:

Moreover, what skills they are learning through the documentary making, I see as being very useful and important for their education in a holistic sense and fit in with the overall/general objectives of the curriculum and IB programme. These are cooperation skills, ICT skills, communication and negotiation skills, time management and meeting an authentic deadline, reflection skills, problem solving and thinking skills. . . . I am feeling that the in depth and intense cooperation associated with this project is giving valuable experience in preparation for the pupils’ futures... and so no I am not worried that they are “behind” on some topics in the syllabus. (IST.)

The IST and I had planned that the documentary making project would be an activity within the English and Religious Education syllabus, the above comments suggest this intention was largely, though not entirely, achieved.

Media education increasingly appears in school curricula, often requiring teachers to incorporate it in their lessons. In Finland, for example, a committee has been set up to tackle the integration of media education in schools and in teacher education, and strengthen media education research (Sinko, 2007). Kellner asserted that “media culture is now the dominant form of culture,” providing our identity, worldview and values. He recommended the development of “critical, multicultural, and multiperspectival” models of media cultural studies, not to inoculate pupils against media, but to teach pupils to analyse and decode texts, and “use media technologies as tools of self-expression and creation” (Kellner, 1995, pp. 1, 336.). Critical documentary making offers teachers a classroom activity which can flexibly be used in different subjects and integrates media education.

## **5.2 Contributions to educational theory and practice**

This research contributes to theoretical knowledge and the application of theory in practice in the classroom, in six areas which are listed and then discussed below:

1. The research establishes critical documentary making as an accessible activity for special education and mainstream classrooms, underpinned by theoretical and empirical research.
2. The data demonstrated that critical documentary making based on critical theory has a great potential for motivating pupils, reflecting on identity, meaning making, consciousness raising, empowerment, and learning social and technological skills.
3. The research adds to the development of critical theory, particularly in the context of critical documentary making theory, and critical pedagogy practices in the classroom.
4. The research augments published research on documentary making and filmmaking in school classrooms.

5. The theoretical framework underpinning the research can be used in other contexts, in and out of schools, which have similar ontological and epistemological assumptions.
6. The key pedagogical principles guiding critical documentary making activities are starting points for the design and development of educational activities, in and out of schools.

A notable difference between this research and some school film-making projects is the element of sustainability. Although there is much to be gained when professional film-makers using their own equipment work with pupils on a film project in a school, both the expertise and the equipment tend to leave the school at the end of the workshop.

The critical documentary making activities developed in this research eliminated the need for external equipment, teachers do not require specialist ICT, media education, or film-making backgrounds, and there were no additional costs. Extra-curricula film-making projects may focus on the technology (cf. Gadiloke, 2003) and techniques, but overlook pedagogical opportunities. Empowering teachers to be able to include critical documentary making in their own classrooms can maximise the pedagogical learnings from the activities. If possible, regular critical documentary making activities with teachers could be enhanced by additional projects with professional film-makers.

The two pedagogical principles, accessible and integrated, are important in addressing potential barriers to critical documentary making activities in the classroom. To establish documentary making or film-making as regular rather than elusive classroom activities, teachers need to feel unconstrained by financial considerations, confident using the technology, and be able to see how the activities connect to cross-curricular themes and curriculum aims.

The pedagogical principle, dialogical, supports teachers and pupils learning together, to create new knowledge and master new skills. In the same way that teaching literature does not require the teacher to be a published literary author, or the art teacher to be an exhibited artist, I hope this research convinces teachers, that making critical documentaries with pupils is not just within the domain of recognised film-makers. The rich learning experi-

ences from critical documentary making reported by the participants in this research makes a strong case for critical documentary making pedagogy and didactics to be incorporated in pre-service and in-service teacher training (cf. Hakkarainen, 2007, p79).

I have started to disseminate the research findings at educational events and to facilitate critical documentary making workshops for pupils and teachers. Through these actions I hope to encourage educators to try critical documentary making activities in their special education and mainstream classrooms, and learn about the experiences of other classroom documentary making pioneers. In addition, by collaborating with teachers the pedagogical principles can be further refined and developed.

Critical pedagogy is sometimes accused of being theoretical (Darder et al., 2009), and not applicable in primary or secondary schools. The data from this research demonstrates that critical documentary making, a practical tool for critical pedagogy, engages pupils in their studies, connects school with the wider society, and potentially encourages active citizenship.

Initially, I planned to research how critical documentary making at school could encourage active citizenship, within pupils' social circles, their school, neighbourhood, village, city, and so forth. Wanting to make the world a better place refers not only to the world in a global context, but also to the smaller scale of pupils' immediate and local communities. However, when I started to study the literature it quickly became apparent that firstly, I would need to develop a theoretical framework for critical documentary making as a classroom activity, and secondly, identify pedagogical principles to underpin the practices. Only then could I discover pupils' experiences from critical documentary making. Accordingly, the focus changed to be manageable within a Master's research thesis.

As I planned the activities for ISPs and HSPs, and held the workshops, I reflected on the theoretical framework and key pedagogical principles to try to ensure that the documentary making took place within a critical pedagogy framework. The research results indicate that this aim was achieved; many of the pupils' learning experiences could be attributed to the pedagogical principles guiding the critical documentary making classroom activities.

Literature and published research about film-making in the classroom is scarce. This does not necessarily reflect the volume of documentary or film-making activities actually taking place in schools, although discussions over the past 4 years with teachers from a number of countries and contexts suggest they are not commonplace. This Master's research contributes towards the published research in the field, bringing attention to an innovative classroom activity, and may encourage educators to conduct and report their own critical documentary making researches and experiences. In addition, this research reports from a classroom context on two concepts, peer tutoring and participatory documentary, which are much more widely discussed outside school contexts.

The theoretical framework and key pedagogical principles were specifically applied to designing and developing critical documentary making activities in schools. However, provided the philosophical starting points are the same, they may guide the design and development of other types of classroom activities. For example, pupils were extremely motivated to choose their own topics to research and make documentaries about. Teachers could consider empowering pupils to have more influence on what they study, and at the same time keep within curriculum requirements.

Research and theories from outside the school context, as mentioned above, were valuable resources for constructing the theoretical framework and pedagogical principles for this school-based research, which in turn can be appropriated and further developed for non-school research and practices.

### **5.3 Future research proposals**

As already mentioned, there is very little published research about documentary or film-making activities in schools. The data from this research demonstrated that critical documentary making is a pedagogically rich classroom activity that pupils with special educational needs and mainstream pupils find motivating, it has impacts on pupils' learning, and potential for consciousness raising, critical reflection, and empowerment. I hope the promising results encourage more research and dissemination of findings in this field. A number

of areas require further investigation, some of which I will study in the Doctoral phase of this ongoing research.

During the documentary making research projects I was a guest teacher, which may have influenced the pupils' reception to documentary making activities; the next research will include a report on the experiences of pupils making documentaries with their own teachers. The Doctoral research will comprise of a longitudinal action research in Finland and a shorter international action research, both focusing on in-service teacher education. A second shorter action research will study critical documentary making applications in special education, in Finland or abroad.

The longitudinal action research project in Finland will have four phases, the first phase commences with in-service critical documentary making workshops for teachers. In the second phase, the teachers will adapt critical documentary making activities for their own pupils and undertake documentary making projects in their classrooms. In the third phase, the teachers will meet, 6-12 months after the in-service workshops to share their and their pupils' experiences. The fourth phase is a long-term study about the critical documentary making experiences of two of the teachers and their pupils.

To obtain a multidimensional view of critical documentary making as a classroom activity, teachers from diverse school settings will be invited to take part in the action research. This may also facilitate research on different applications for critical documentary making, such as, how critical documentary making in schools could support social and pedagogical development with underachievers and pupils with special educational needs.

The shorter action research project focusing on in-service teacher education will take place abroad and correspond to the first two phases of the Finnish longitudinal study. The content of a 2 day in-service workshop for teachers will be similar to the workshops in Finland, however, there will be more emphasis on how culturally appropriate the theoretical framework and pedagogical principles are, and what revisions may be required.

Continuing this study through action research will facilitate further cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection (cf. Brown et al., 1988; Carr & Kemmis 2004), character-

istic of action research. During the in-service workshops for the teachers, I will introduce the theoretical framework and the key pedagogical principles guiding critical documentary making as starting points. Together we will democratically collaborate to further develop the theoretical framework, pedagogical principles, and critical documentary making activities.

Pupils in this Master's research demonstrated an interest in society, and some indicated that they felt they could contribute to making the world more compassionate and equitable. The proposed longitudinal research may establish if and how critical documentary making as a classroom activity empowers pupils for sustainable, transformative learning.

This current research was not specifically looking at gender issues, but I observed that boys were most frequently the initial peer-tutors, tutoring both boys and girls. At the IS, girls tended to tutor other girls in their group or in another group. Boys searched for music, subsequently asking opinions on their choices from all group members. Girls making their own documentaries at the HS had extended decision making power, including selecting music, or in one case silence, for their films. Studies focusing on gender issues in critical documentary making and peer-tutoring would be an important area for research and could provide useful insights for classroom practices.

Clearly defined copyright laws are required to avoid copyright issues, discussed in section 4.1.5. Pupils can create their own audio tracks and images which may sometimes be less time-consuming than searching internet for exactly what is required. However, producing good quality audio is challenging, especially without high-quality recording equipment and poor quality audio is disturbing for the audience, often detracting attention away from the content. Online websites such as JamStudio<sup>22</sup> provide an alternative and creative, electronic means for pupils to make music; some of these tools are available free of charge and others require subscription. Two areas requiring research in this regard are, firstly copyright laws pertaining to educational purposes and secondly, what equipment and software is available for producing quality audio content in the classroom.

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<sup>22</sup> [www.jamstudio.com](http://www.jamstudio.com)

The ownership and distribution of products produced during research is an important ethical issue, but also an aspect to be clarified in future action research. Being able to share the documentaries produced during this research with thesis readers would clarify the results and add to the quality of the research report. However, the documentaries are the pupils' work and they must not be used for research purposes without obtaining permission from the makers and parents or guardians at the beginning of the project. Knowing the documentaries will be part of a research report might change the nature of the documentaries produced, and there still remains the question of pupils' safety, as discussed in section 3.5. In this research the documentaries were shown, with permission, at research group meetings. The issue of anonymity versus wider recognition for pupils' work, discussed in section 5.1, remains open and requires further enquiry.

To conclude, I propose a cross-disciplinary research, for example between educators and mental health care therapists. Pupils have different degrees of control over particular aspects of their lives, perhaps according to age and life situation. Some pupils' need for control manifests itself in eating disorders and "if the underlying issues are not resolved the therapist should help the client find a sense of control and personal power in other ways" (Costin, 2006, p. 157). The critical documentary making activities developed through this research provide a multitude of opportunities for decision making and control over the content and format of productions. Critical documentary making in this research demonstrated its potential for increasing pupils' self-esteem and motivation, empowerment, meaning making and reflection, as well as for developing social skills and becoming conscious of personal and societal issues of interest to pupils.



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APPENDIX A  
IS Audience Questionnaire

**Audience Questionnaire**

**1. Are you in class            6X                    or                    6XX**

**2. How important is the subject of the documentary for you?**

	<b>Not Important</b>				<b>Very Important</b>
<b>Documentary A</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Documentary B</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Documentary C</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Documentary D</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

**3. What did you learn from watching the documentaries?**

**Documentary A**

**Documentary B**

**Documentary C**

**Documentary D**

**Thank you for your answers!**

APPENDIX B  
Research schedule

	International School (IS)	Hospital School (HS)
<b>December 2007</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed documentary making action research project to IS teacher</li> </ul>	
<b>January 2008</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presented documentary making project and research to prospective pupils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>
<b>February 2008</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contacted head by email to propose documentary making action research project</li> <li>Telephone call from a teacher indicated very interested in documentary making project to take place at HS (29/2)</li> </ul>
<b>March 2008</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop 1 (19/3)</li> <li>Workshop 2 (26/3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Met with two HS teachers (10/3)</li> <li>Presented documentary making project and research to prospective pupils (14/3)</li> <li>Workshop 1 (17/3)</li> <li>Workshop 2 (25/3)</li> </ul>
<b>April 2008</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop 3 (2/4)</li> <li>Workshop 4 (16/4)</li> <li>Documentary Premieres (21/4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop 3 (1/4)</li> <li>Workshop 4 (7/4)</li> <li>Workshop 5 (11/4)</li> <li>Documentary Premieres (14/4)</li> </ul>
<b>May – September 2008</b>	Preparation of data for analysis (word processing),	
<b>October 2008 – March 2009</b>	Thesis writing	

APPENDIX C  
Text from an email for parents

Hello,

I would like to introduce myself, Ros Cooper, and my research project to you. I am a fourth year, Master of Education student, at Oulu University, interested in discovering the skills and knowledge pupils may gain through digital documentary making at school. Additionally, I hope to show how documentary making could provide an opportunity for young people to communicate their hopes and concerns, and be active members of society.

I have completed the theoretical part of my research and am now starting a series of pilot projects; the first with your child's class in co-operation with [IST]. A topic from this semester's Religious Education course, exploring issues which are important for pre-teen children, will provide the theme for the documentaries. Also, the English course requires pupils to investigate media language, so the documentary making project will be part of Religious Education and English programmes.

Briefly, pupils will first discuss what issues are important for them, select a topic to focus on and then work together in small groups to make their documentary. The pupils will choose their own documentary format, for example, digital photographs, a video, an animation, an audio recording, etc.

During the documentary making process pupils will keep a learning journal which I will use for writing the results of the research project in my Master's thesis. Your child's identity will not be made known in my thesis.

The documentaries will be presented to other pupils at the International School and during presentations and workshops about my research at Oulu University, and possibly other educational institutions. In the event that I would like to show the documentaries to a wider audience, your permission would be requested in advance.

If you have any questions about the documentary making pilot project please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards  
Ros Cooper

## APPENDIX D

### Documentary making project workshop activities at the International School

<b>Introduction to Documentary Making Project (21/1/08)</b> <b>Classroom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions</li> <li>• Presented documentary making project &amp; timetable</li> <li>• Discussed what a documentary is</li> <li>• Identified five generative themes</li> <li>• Learning journal entries</li> <li>• Groups formed, based on generative themes after all pupils voted (two absent during the introduction)</li> </ul>
<b>Workshop 1 (19/3/08)</b> <b>Classroom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planned documentary outline (key points, audience message/actions)</li> <li>• Introduced Window MovieMaker, Audacity</li> <li>• Brainstormed &amp; discussed documentary formats</li> <li>• Showed short demonstrations of Photograph, Video, PowerPoint, &amp; Animation formats</li> <li>• Introduced storyboard; pupils made own storyboard</li> <li>• Learning journal entries</li> <li>• Homework: finalise stories ready for next workshop</li> </ul>
<b>Workshop 2 (26/3/08)</b> <b>Computer Room</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each group briefly presented documentary making tasks</li> <li>• Started making documentaries</li> <li>• Discussed copyrights &amp; credits</li> <li>• Learning journal entries</li> </ul>
<b>Workshop 3 (2/4/08)</b> <b>Computer Room</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each group briefly presented documentary making progress &amp; next steps</li> <li>• Aimed to have documentaries ready for final editing by end of the workshop</li> <li>• Learning journal entries</li> </ul>
<b>Workshop 4 (16/4/08)</b> <b>Computer Room</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Editing; documentaries completed</li> <li>• ISR copied each documentary to the project USB Memory Stick</li> <li>• Pupils answered research questionnaires (Appendixes E &amp; F)</li> <li>• ISR briefly interviewed each group after completion of the group's documentary</li> <li>• Learning journal entries</li> </ul>
<b>Documentary Premieres (21/4/08)</b> <b>Classroom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showed documentaries to peer class &amp; own peer classmates</li> <li>• Instant verbal feedback</li> <li>• All pupils completed audience questionnaires (Appendix A)</li> <li>• After peer audience left discussed showing work to an audience and the documentary making project with pupils</li> <li>• Learning journal entries</li> </ul>



APPENDIX F  
IS Equipment and Software Questionnaire

**What computer programmes & equipment did you use during the documentary making project?**

**Please add any programmes/equipment not listed**

	1 <sup>st</sup> time ever	Used before	Did not use	What did you use the programme/equipment for and what were your experiences with it?
Windows Movie Maker				
Audacity				
PowerPoint				
Photoshop				
Paint				
Digital Camera				