

Learning progression in secondary students' digital video production

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I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this
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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Assessing learning progression in Media Education is an area of study which has been largely neglected in the history of the subject, with very few longitudinal studies of how children learn to become "media literate" over an extended period of time. This thesis is an analysis of data over three years (constituted by the production of digital video work by a small group of secondary school students) which attempts to offer a more extended account of this learning.

The thesis views the data through three concepts (or "lenses") which have been key to the development of media education in the UK and abroad. These are Culture, Criticality and Creativity, and the theoretical perspectives that the thesis should be viewed in the light of include the work of Bourdieu, Vygotsky, Heidegger and Hegel.

The examination of the student production work carried out in the light of these three lenses suggests that learning progression comes about because of a relationship between all three, the key metaphorical idea put forward by the thesis that describes that relationship is the dialectic of familiarity. This suggests that for media education at least, the learning process is a dialectic one, in which students move from cultural and critical knowledge and experiences that are familiar -or thetic - to ones that are unfamiliar, and hence antithetical. Over time this antithetical knowledge becomes familiar and students synthesise together their popular cultural and critical experiences with the critical experiences that they have in the media classroom. This synthesis is driven by the creative act of production work, which brings together the cultural and the critical, the familiar and unfamiliar.

It is this key metaphor then, that offers an account of learning progression in media production, and the relationship of that process to creativity, criticality and popular culture.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Progression and processes: The puzzle of the media classroom

“You couldn’t write it Sir. You couldn’t make it up!” Adrian, Year 13 student, (O1)

Adrian was telling me this because his group had just made a short slasher movie in which a classmate of his had worn a particularly outrageous pair of socks in order to indicate that she was the victim of a serial killer. Adrian’s amazement had arisen out of the fact that the group had been asked to make the film without using any of the standard props that one would find in such a film (knives, axes, chainsaws) but rather to demonstrate knowledge of that genre through camerawork, mise-en-scene, editing and sound. Adrian’s amazement also arose out of the fact that, at the start of the project, he had no idea about how his group would complete the task. Nevertheless, they did. They did effectively “write it”, demonstrating generic knowledge through the making of a short video. It is reactions and outcomes like this that led me, as a media teacher, to consider not only the question of how students learn to make video in my classroom, but also how they learned to progress; to make increasingly sophisticated video productions and discuss them in increasingly sophisticated cultural and critical terms. At one level, the answer to these questions seemed obvious: they learnt to progress because I taught them to. On further consideration, however, it was clear that the process of learning in my classroom was much more complex. My students came into class with some very in-depth knowledge of popular culture – how could I be said to be teaching them anything about it? I could teach them production skills that they didn’t previously know of course, but what was the relationship between those skills, their popular cultural experiences and the critical knowledge that was prescribed by the exam specification? More importantly, how could they be said to be progressing in their learning when they were already completely immersed in the popular culture of the media?

This thesis is, therefore, an attempt to answer those questions (or rather, a range of questions which encompass them, outlined below). I believe that they are vital questions because, after 15 years of teaching Media, I still don’t know what, exactly is going in my classroom in learning terms. Similarly, I am fairly sure that a lot of other media teachers feel the same way. Indeed, research into this area has not adequately addressed the question of progression in

media literacy: the single major research study conducted in this area (Burn, Buckingham, et al., forthcoming) raises more questions than it answers. The complex relationship between culture, criticality and production work means that teachers (this one included) are not entirely clear about the learning processes that allow students to be successful. This thesis is borne out of that uncertainty.

1.2 The need for an account of learning progression

Currently in the UK, the vast majority of Level 2 and Level 3 Media courses rely upon a mixture of theoretical and production work in order to deliver a curriculum based on a set of key concepts. Such conceptual frameworks have been in existence for some time (as discussed in Chapter 3) but none of them give a satisfactory account of how learning takes place in the media classroom. There have been attempts to show the ways in which creative production work and critical analysis are connected, but these have not looked at learning over any substantial length of time and nor do they give accounts of the mechanisms by which connections are made between the creative and the critical. What this study does is to provide an account of the way that students learn in the media classroom – specifically in terms of making digital video, based on the production and evaluation work done by students across three years. Such an account is needed because, for example, the fact that the absence of media education in many schools below Key Stage 4 means that there has been little opportunity to explore models of progression. Additionally, the advent of digital video in the secondary classroom as a means of production is relatively recent, and there has been no real longitudinal study made in order to assess the impact of this technology on media learning. However, there is a need to explain that learning process because it is clear that learning in media is probably not like learning in many other subjects. This is because of its relationship with popular culture – something that art, music and PE may also lay claim to at times, but not always in terms of it being the sole focus of the subject.

1.3 Who needs such an account?

This research is primarily aimed at two groups of people who may find it useful. Firstly, teachers in secondary schools delivering media and other creative courses will find an account of the nature of progression useful because, I believe, many are unclear about the way that learning happens in a subject where there is a reliance on the students' relationship with popular culture. It is almost as if the teacher cannot quantify the role that popular culture

has to play in learning, and so has to constantly adjust their teaching in order to account for this “unknowable.” This research, in providing an account of progression in learning to make digital video, offers some ideas of how the relationship between the student, their popular cultural experience and the creative and conceptual processes introduced in class might be viewed. This in turn, might help teachers to structure their teaching and respond to student work accordingly.

The second group of people who may find this work useful are academics looking for a more in-depth account of how learning and subsequent progression take place in production-based media education. As explained below, there are almost no satisfactory accounts of the way that such learning takes place over a longer period of time, and to give such an account is one of the purposes of this study.

1.4 Original contribution

The original contribution to research made by this thesis is then, the development of a theoretical metaphor which I have called “the Dialectic of Familiarity,” and its application as a way of explaining learning progression in the media classroom. As will be explored in more detail later, the Dialectic of Familiarity seeks to account for the movement that the student makes in media learning from the familiar field of their popular cultural experience to the unfamiliar world of new cultural experiences and critical frameworks that should arise in the media classroom. It also seeks to explain the role of creativity in this learning process – something that is frequently problematised in accounts of media learning. The study focuses on the way that students learn in critical and cultural terms, through creative production work, and the relationship between those three aspects or “lenses” through which media education may be viewed. There are, as Chapter 2 establishes, no significant longitudinal studies looking at progression in the media classroom which have been published at the time of writing. This, I would argue, constitutes a significant gap in the academic discourses which surround media education, and as such makes this study all the more important.

1.5 Towards a research question

In the initial stages of the study, I had thought that the main research question would simply

be about “learning to make digital video,” with some additional focus on the role that popular culture played in that learning process. However, it became clear that as I had access to an opportunity sample of students who I would teach for three years, that progression would become a more significant focus. This is worth emphasising, because in many respects students *had* learnt to make video after the first year. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 of this thesis all feature completed video projects all submitted after one year of study. What was developing beyond this, was the way that they were making video and the way that it was changing, as the students own relationship to popular culture and the critical and conceptual material being in covered in class changed. As a consequence of this, the main research question also changed, so that it read, “What constitutes learning progression when students learn to make digital video in the secondary class room?” This question gave more opportunity to consider the way that learning changed over the course of the three years and the processes that facilitated that change.

Subsequently, the decision to use the three “lenses” of criticality, culture and creativity necessitated a further set of questions which fed into the main research question. These are explained in detail in Chapter 3, along with the rationale for examining the work in the light of culture, criticality and creativity, but for the purposes of introduction they can be briefly summarised as:

- What counts as cultural capital and how does it change over the three-year-period, especially in terms of identity?
- What kind of framework can we construct in order to explain students critical and conceptual progression in terms of moving image literacy?
- How does a student demonstrate their individual creativity through production work and what does this have to do with cultural capital or critical understanding?

These questions were developed as a way of assessing how students progressed critically and culturally, and the role that creativity had to play in that process. While the thesis was still about learning progression, it became clear over time that the relationship between these elements meant that creativity was something different from cultural and critical learning. As a consequence, the study devotes equal attention to criticality, creativity and culture, though what results is a view of creativity as a driving force for cultural and critical learning.

1.6 Development of research context

At the time when I started the research contained in this thesis (around 2004) I had spent nearly 8 years as a teacher in London secondary schools teaching Media and Film Studies. Throughout those 8 years, I had always taught and supervised production work, but the advent of digital cameras and editing technology, which had been widely available since 2001, meant that as a teacher, one could devote serious amounts of time and effort to having students produce video in the classroom. At this stage in my career, I was conscious of two things: firstly, that I was teaching myself how to do video production and editing shortly before I taught it to the students; and secondly that the students were already in a world in which they had access to the same technology at home. These two observations led to the research questions above, which were about what my students were actually learning and what kind of influence external cultures and creative practices were going to have on that learning.

The research developed out of my interests as a teacher, particularly in looking at what production work could tell teachers about understanding and learning. I had explored this in my MA Dissertation (Connolly, 2004) and was keen to look at learning through production work over a longer period of time. The role of teacher as researcher is considered in Chapter 4, but I believe that it provided me with a unique position from which to observe the creative and critical work done by my students across three years.

1.7 An introduction to the students

The production work (including pre-production work and evaluations) of five students – **Andrew, Jasmin, Lianne, Bruce and Jamie** – constitutes the majority of data for this study. They were, however, five within a cohort of around 25-30 students (the size varied across the three years) and so at some points it becomes necessary to discuss their work in relation to that of their classmates. Similarly, it is also apparent that at various points in the study it is necessary to focus in on one or two of those five because space does not permit an analysis of the production work output – which was substantial – of all of them.

As this thesis unfolds, the individual personalities of these students will become more and

more apparent, but it is worthwhile explaining a little about them. All five students took GCSE, AS and A2 Media Studies across a three-year-period from 2004 to 2007. They were very different individuals, with very different views of why they were doing the course that they were doing. While the following pen portraits may seem a little impressionistic, they are built on observations made during three years as their class teacher.

Andrew came from a middle-class background, the son of third generation Greek immigrants, whose parents were both middle-class professionals. He had a deep interest in film and performing arts; while completing both GCSEs and A-Levels, he took a significant role in three whole-school productions. He was very clear from the outset that he wanted to work in the creative industries in some way.

Jasmin was from a much more working-class background with both parents being first-generation Hispanic immigrants. Jasmin was very hard-working, fairly reserved, and obsessed with film, particularly romantic comedy. Interestingly, her peer group within the school was other working-class ethnic-minority girls, almost none of whom achieved as highly as she did.

Lianne was white and came from a reasonably affluent background, though not, a traditionally middle-class one. Again, she was hard-working, but had a high profile within her year group and was popular with a wide range of students.

Bruce was again, from a white middle-class background with professional parents. He was obsessed with music, and spent a lot of time outside of class playing in a band.

Jamie was, in many ways, typical of the kind of Media Studies student that many teachers will meet in their career. He was academically above average, but at the start of the three years had to be pushed all the time to complete any assignment. However, he totally changed his work ethic in Year 12 when he realised that film-making was what he wanted to do with his life.

This group of students and their work forms the basis of the study. The idea of, and problems with the selection of these students as the sample for analysis will be explored further in Chapter 4, but ostensibly, the data chapters in this thesis are the account of these five students and their production work across three years.

1.8 Limitations – The problem of pedagogy

One of the things that became apparent as the research progressed was that learning

progression was only really part of the story. The question of what the teacher was doing (or rather questions about the way the teacher was doing it) kept arising out of the data. As a consequence, there was the intention, early on in the research at least, to discuss the role of pedagogy in learning progression. As it transpired however, the questions around how students learnt generated a huge amount of data; enough to mean that the difficult problem of how to assess my own pedagogical input when I was occupying dual roles as both teacher and researcher could be put to one side in order to take a more student-centred approach. The limitations of this decision are discussed further in Chapter 4, but I have ambitions that a future study might examine very closely the role of the teacher in learning progression in the secondary media classroom, as this is evidently a key aspect of progress. However, considerations of time and space did not permit such an examination here.

1.9 Use of terms

Finally, a brief explanation of some of the terms I have used in the course of the thesis. Generally, I have been very specific in my use of terms where they are key to understanding the ideas that lie behind the research. A good example of this may be the difference between the words critical and conceptual which is explained in Chapter 4. These words are seemingly used interchangeably by some academics in the field, but I have made what I deem to be a necessary distinction between them. There are, however, some words that *as a media teacher* I would use with a fair degree of flexibility. The words “production” and “practical” for example, are used interchangeably in order to describe work that students do that is of a practical nature or involves a production process (in this case, make digital video). Frequently, these terms not only refer to the finished video product, but also the pre-production and evaluation work that the students do. Similarly, I will often use the words “film,” “video” and “moving image text” to mean the same thing; a finished moving image text made by the student. The word “triangulate,” I use to refer to the student making meaning or choosing to do something by occupying the space created between the meanings of a number of other terms or activities. Finally, when I use the word “experiences” as in cultural or critical experience, I am generally referring to the experience of watching media texts, discussing them or making them either in or outside the classroom. While this may seem a little inaccurate, it reflects the way that I would use these terms and as a consequence, is how students are used to talking about them with me – something that is important for the interview and data from written evaluations obtained in the study.

1.10 The structure of the thesis – Abstracts

This is an empirical thesis. The structure reflects its nature, though a word of explanation is needed about the structure.

Chapter 2 is the **Literature Review** which deals with largely with empirical studies into the use of digital video in the classroom. I have begun here because there is a need to demonstrate that while there are a number of such studies, they tend to be quite short term, and do not comment on learning progression. **Chapter 3** is the **Theory** chapter in which I set out some of the key theoretical debates around culture, criticality and creativity and the way that they are connected by the idea of a Dialectic of Familiarity, which I introduce here. What the theory chapter seeks to do is look at the theoretical ideas that would underpin a study of the relationship between culture criticality and creativity, suggesting that there is in media learning, a process that can be seen in dialectical terms. **Chapter 4** refers to **Methods**, and seeks to do two things; firstly explain the range of methods used in this study, but also highlight some of the problems involved in using a range of methods and in being a teacher-as-researcher. **Chapter 5** is the **first of the data chapters** and views the work produced by students in the light of what it demonstrates about **culture**. What the chapter does is to look at the cultural experiences (and indeed, types of culture) that surround the students' production work. It also seeks to establish what might count as cultural progression, particularly in terms of the differences between cultural and academic capital. It seemed appropriate to begin here, as much of the work that students first produced was very much focused on their own cultural experiences and their encounter with the cultures that surround media studies in school. **Chapter 6** is the second data chapter and this deals with **Criticality**, focusing on how students become critical and begin to become familiar with the metalanguages associated with criticality. The idea of the Dialectic of Familiarity moves on here as students demonstrate what I would term critical orthodoxy. **Chapter 7** is the final data chapter, which seeks to show how cultural learning and critical learning are linked through **creativity**, which manifests itself in the video productions that students make. It is in this chapter that I explore fully the idea that creativity is the engine of the dialectic learning process. **Chapter 8** provides some conclusions and looks forward to further work in this area.

Chapter 2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction: National and International Contexts

The research question for the purposes of this literature review is as follows: “What constitutes learning progression when students learn to make digital video in the secondary classroom?” It is important to emphasise that within the terms of this study, the context of secondary education in the United Kingdom is a significant consideration and while there are a number of studies carried out internationally, the “global” picture regarding research into video production and learning progression is still largely dominated by studies from the UK. Burn and Leach (Burn and Leach, 2004) , in their review of such studies only identified twelve that had been carried out around the world, and in the intervening period only one or two others had been added to this list, such as the Irish and Australian studies (Shuck and Kearney, 2004; McNamara and Griffin, 2003) discussed below. Of the twelve studies that Burn and Leach identify in that review, eight originated in the UK with the other four coming from the USA, Australia and Canada. As such then, this literature review is likely to seem somewhat Anglocentric, but there is merit in pausing to consider the nature of these international studies in order to not only examine how video production might work in classrooms in other countries, but perhaps why they may also be seen as less useful in terms of this study.

Firstly, those empirical studies that originate in Australia, America and other countries tend to have focused on questions of learning progression in media education outside a classroom specifically dedicated to media education . The work of Renee Hobbs is a good example of this (Hobbs, 2011, pp.vii-viii) in that it tends to look at media education across the curriculum because there is not an established tradition of teaching media as a distinct discipline in American schools. Additionally, Hobbs’ work largely focuses on the role of video production – particularly for social media - as a means of addressing learning outcomes in other subjects (Hobbs, 2011, pp.85-87), rather than as a means of learning about the moving image in itself. This cross-curricular, project based approach is common in studies outside the UK, reflecting the fact that the media and film curriculum here is well established in its nature when compared to other countries. This has in many ways, always been the case. In the relatively early days of video production work, Donna Grace and Joseph Tobin’s account of an extended video production project with elementary school students on Hawaii (Grace and Tobin, 1998) was seen as particularly significant, but its limitations for the purposes of this

review would seem to be that it's context is so far removed from that of the students whose work is discussed here. While Grace and Tobin's study was carried out over a similar time frame, three key differences illustrate why its findings must be treated with some caution. Initially, the study deals with 8 and 9 year olds and while it does give some detailed discussion to the cultural influences that pervade the student's work it does not consider their critical development. Also, it was conducted in the age of analogue video and so cannot consider the way that digital technology might influence criticality and creativity. Finally, the curriculum model used was developed specifically by and for the teachers and researchers involved in the project, in an American elementary school, rather than working within the statutory curricular frameworks that the data for this thesis was produced within.

Secondly, whilst there have been reasonably substantial studies of students learning progression when making video conducted in both Ireland and Australia (McNamara and Griffin, 2003; Schuck and Kearney, 2004), these have been conducted in the primary sector, and as such present similar problems, not only in that they are frequently cross-curricular in nature but also that they are not working within some of the institutional cultures that the students are encountering in this study, such as the English secondary examination system, or indeed the confines of the National Curriculum, which also applies to primary schools. While both these studies provide reasonable sample sizes and time-frames, this lack of a "media literacy" framework and indeed the project-based nature of the studies may well raise questions about the authenticity of the learning experience and the way that it could fit in with the student's broader education.

Thirdly, there is a good deal in the literature that originates outside the UK that is simply rhetorical rather than empirical. While the work of Henry Jenkins (Jenkins, 2008) is clearly influential in its exploration of the way new media technologies are used by young people, there is very little in his writing which is based on large scale empirical study, and even less which gives prominence to the voice of the learner – something that I believe is significant in discussing learning progression.

From these international studies then, it is possible to take a view that while there is a small but significant literature that surrounds digital video in classrooms originating from outside the UK, the question of progression is largely not dealt with by it. This is because the structures within which students are learning are very different, and quite frequently the

question of learning *about* the moving image through video production is not the object of the student's learning. The tendency in these studies is to look at learning *through* the moving image, and as such they may prove to be less useful here.

With this in mind then, the literature review presented here tends to focus specifically on empirical studies carried out in the UK in primary and secondary schools rather than making detailed reference to these international studies and critiques. This however, is only actually one of the three broad areas of literature which surrounds the area of video production in the classroom. These three broad areas need to be explained because they are discussed elsewhere in the thesis as and when they are needed.

Firstly, there are rationales for production work in the classroom, of which video production is an increasingly significant part. Though a number of people have looked at these extensively, most notably Buckingham, (Buckingham, 1991, pp.63-68; Buckingham, et al., 1995, pp.4-6) and Tyner, (Tyner, 1998, pp.183-184) it is worthwhile thinking about how production work contributes to a wider understanding of media literacy, and what ideas about learning and progression can be derived from it. **The second area specifically refers to empirical (in its broadest sense) studies that focus on the use of digital video in the classroom.** As digital video is a relatively recently developed medium in terms of school production work, many of these studies have sought to examine the initial impact of the technology. **The third area tends to be about literature suggesting models of progression**, and the way that these incorporate production work into suggestions for a broad media curriculum.

The work in the first and third areas of literature is extremely extensive, and its relation to the research question is actually discussed in detail in other areas of the study. Ideas around progression and rationales for production work are both referred to in Chapter 3. As a consequence, the focus of this literature review is empirical research studies carried out into the use of digital video in British primary and secondary classrooms. This distinction is made because it is within these locations that not only critical and creative concerns are evident, but also because, I believe there may be important cultural factors (as yet insufficiently explored even in the UK-based studies themselves) at work in what they have to say about learning progression.

From the start, it is clear that many of the empirical studies are extremely useful from the point of view of developing ideas about the way that students learn to make video and progress creatively, critically and culturally; particularly as they often incorporate wider theoretical perspectives on media education. However, they do all tend to be small-scale in terms of sample size and are carried out over relatively short periods of time. One of the purposes of this study is to identify what such empirical studies do not tell us about progression and how they might be built upon. **These empirical studies** I will treat chronologically in order to demonstrate how the thinking about the relationship between the technology of digital video and progression has developed over the past ten years or so, and how the use of this medium in the secondary classroom has brought new ideas into the field of media education – for example the blurring of the lines between work and play, producer and consumer and even student and teacher.

2.2 Empirical studies

Empirical research looking at how young people have used video in the classroom falls into three broad categories:

- How young people have used video to represent both themselves and the environment
- How young people's use and creation of video has led to an enhanced engagement with the moving image and associated issues of literacy
- How students and their schools have learnt to use and manage video technology and the resultant editing processes.

These studies, with the possible exception of the BECTA DV pilot evaluation (see below), are small-scale in terms of sample size, and also tend to be short term. This thesis is set against a context of a three-year time-line and so intends to provide a longer term view, but a look at this empirical research is useful in that it provides us with a picture in which several key strands are emerging; namely the move from studies about representation and identity, towards critical analysis; and the way in which digital technology may actually facilitate a critical understanding that analogue technology could not.

Prior to the widespread advent of digital video in classrooms, studies into the use of video *per se* by young people are generally few and far between. Julian

Sefton-Green's account of a video project in which a group of students made their own soap opera (Sefton-Green, 1995a, pp.169-198) does explain some of the difficulties in organizing production work of this kind, but does not really dwell on the relationship between the creation of the text and any kind of development in critical understanding. What marks this study out – and Grace and Tobin's coincidentally (Grace and Tobin, 1998) - in fact, is the way that they tend to reflect on the students' response to the act of creating a video project in process terms, rather than thinking about the way that the project fosters a spirit of critical inquiry. Here the research seems to be more about how the teacher is dealing with and using the medium in the classroom rather than thinking about how best to employ that medium to teach other concepts – though, certainly in the case of Sefton-Green's study, there is a clear sense that the work is linked to the conceptual framework, even if this link is never fully explained.

Interestingly, digital video technology became a more available and easily accessible technology for schools at around this time. The earliest study is one that appears in *Making Media* – contemporaneously to the study described above – where Julian Sefton-Green has written about his experience of having students make trailers for Francis Ford Coppola's *The Outsiders*, and so makes an important bridge between the earliest research done on production work and the subsequent studies of digital video production in the classroom. Here, Sefton-Green does begin to hint at the kind of criticality which might be inherent in digital video production work.

Viewing and re-viewing, noting down shots, shaving frames off clips and simply poring over the desktop with its frame-by-frame representation of the filmclip, the sound track or the kind of edit used forces the students to adopt a high level of concentration and attention to detail.

(Sefton-Green, 1995b, p.63)

These are, of course, the early days of digital video (DV) but what I think is useful for the wider purposes of this study is that it is not only one of the first to research the use of DV in the classroom, but also to put it into a context of classroom practice, with a teacher using the technology for curriculum purposes. This is relevant because, as I will explain, the institutions of the classroom, school and curriculum all play an important role in the production process. I would want to situate the kind of work being described here as not being dissimilar to Sefton-Green's, but looking at the development of what the students do

over a longer period.

It is in the late 1990s that a number of studies begin to appear. Andrew Burn and Kate Reed's article entitled *Digi-teens: Media Literacies and Digital Technologies in the Secondary Classroom* (Burn, 1999) gives an indication of the way that digital technology has changed the rules of video production in the classroom. It is here that we begin to see a connection being made between the act of creating a video and the conceptual and critical frameworks outlined above. The study recounts how four able girls are preparing their own version of a trailer for Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*, and that the digital editing process is allowing them to explore some conceptual ideas that they want to articulate through their work. As Burn and Reed comment:

...the teaching of this group has clearly succeeded to some degree in combining important concepts like genre, narrative and audience with processes of digital production that enable the pupils to work through these abstract ideas in material form, and, at the same time, appropriate them, internalise them, make them subject to their own textual decisions...

(Burn and Reed, 1999, p.53)

What can also be seen in this study is the acknowledgement that, not only does the production process allow students to explore conceptual knowledge; it also allows them to make use of it and even to subvert it when they wish to.

Because strips of digital video can be stored in bins, and trimmed to fit the desired sequence, the early stages of selection, ordering, constructing a sequence or montage (both audio and visual), can be much more ambitious. Because final decisions can be postponed indefinitely, students can hold a wide range of possibilities together provisionally, and can then revise, delete and insert, try out different audio tracks, try out different kinds of transition between shots

(Burn and Reed, 1999, p.45)

In a companion piece to *Digi-teens* (Burn, 2000), Burn expands upon some of these ideas further. Here he explains how two students, this time boys, found a previously undiscovered level of engagement with the critical through a similar exercise in creating a trailer for *Psycho*. What Burn describes here as the “unwriting” of the digital film text (Burn, 2000,

p.12, in order to write it again makes an important connection between the production process and the acquisition of what Vygotsky has termed scientific concepts (Vygotsky, 1996, p.146). These are concepts that the student is already familiar with and has begun to systematize – those previously, unsystematised familiar concepts being what Vygotsky terms the “spontaneous:”

So these students develop, through spectatorial engagement, memory, and the social processes of understanding, checking out, enjoying, rehearsing, building cultural allegiances to films, a range of mental readings, banks of powerful images, ranked in different forms by the ways in which they interact with, remake, structures of genre and narrative. The apparently simple process of digitising clips in this software is, then, a kind of formalising of this process.

(Burn, 2000, pp.11-12)

As the decade goes on empirical research begins to seek to develop its own frameworks for working with digital video in the classroom. *The Rush of Images* (Burn, et al., 2001, p.34) begins to do this with its suggestions for a “framework for digital editing.” *The BECTA DV Evaluation* (Reid, et al., 2002) also begins to suggest ways that teachers might explicitly link the practice of using digital video with conceptual understanding. The evaluation also emphasizes the point that the literacy of the teacher in both the moving image and the technology, is something that is key, though often forgotten, and that the best work in the area of DV use is done where the teacher does not simply accept that a student’s understanding of the conceptual framework is intuitive. The evidence that the evaluation presents is striking here:

One school reported pupils showing far less awareness of media conventions than the teacher had expected. Almost all teachers, however, reported that after having used iMovie 2, pupils had a greater technical understanding of how the moving image is made. One teacher, for example, said: ‘Editing is for them a fantastic critical judgement about what they’ve done; it’s an evaluation’. (Reid, et al., 2002, p.27)

The case studies included within the evaluation bear this out. What can be seen here are examples of pedagogic practice in which teachers are making an explicit link between the conceptual and critical framework and the production itself:

It was evident that pupils were picking up the specific language of film and DVE and the teacher consciously addressed and reinforced this. Pupils referred to, and understood, terminology such as 'cut-aways' and 'word walls' (comprising film-related language, which the pupils can point to, select, and use, in a similar way as some of them compile sentences when communicating via their specialised technology) reminded pupils of terminologies and reinforced their learning.

(Reid, et al., 2002, p.51)

Implicit in these latter empirical studies of digital video – as opposed to those that focus on analogue (Sefton-Green, 1995; Grace and Tobin, 1998) – is an understanding that digital video, because of its malleable nature, facilitates an easier understanding of theoretical concepts, such as narrative. For example, the ability to “see” a narrative embodied in a timeline on a computer screen, allows students to think about concept of narrative much more clearly. Burn and Durran talk about this idea at some length, by giving digital video a set of *affordances*, which describe the advantages of working in the medium. (Burn and Durran, 2007, pp.45-6). These affordances – iteration, feedback, convergence and distribution – allow students to achieve certain kinds of outcome which were not previously possible with analogue video. For example, iteration, which is the ability to constantly change the work, affords students an opportunity to add things and take things away immediately after being taught about them in class.

I would argue that this facilitates a dialectical way of working, where students are allowed to become deeply familiar with their work. Daily editing, adjusting and even re-shooting – as well as incorporating unfamiliar content; attempting to try their hand at new camera techniques; incorporating generic signifiers or experimenting with narrative. Such iteration permits this dialectic approach. Feedback on the other hand, is described as being about the fact that digital editing technology allows the student to see the effect of changes they are making and see almost instantaneously improvements in their work. This affordance reflects the cyclical nature of learning within media education, with students able to instantly “try out” new conceptual ideas in their production work. Convergence, being about the ability of the software to deal with different modes, allows for the synthesis of both concepts from the classroom - such as, for example, Tzvetan Todorov’s term narrative equilibrium (Todorov, 1977) - and concepts from the students own cultural and conceptual experience (such as importing a musical “mash-up” from the internet). Finally, the distributive qualities of the

digital medium means that the student can see and share their own video work in a variety of different formats and media (web, phone, TV etc.) which accentuates the collaborative nature of production process. This last aspect of the affordances of digital video is explored further in Chapter 7. Later in this thesis I want to emphasise the fact that the learning processes that can be described by what I have termed “the Dialectic of Familiarity” have a close relationship with the flexibility of the digital medium.

Extending these ideas in his 2003 work with David Parker, (Burn and Parker, 2003, pp.13-28), Burn completes a detailed analysis of production work done by three GCSE students in a chapter called “The Skater and the Old Man”, which explores the improvised response that students make to an interruption to their video production work. The purpose of this analysis is to present the moving image as *multi-modal*, but also to explore the way in which both the planned and improvised aspects of student’s video production work shape the way they represent both themselves and the world around them. Multimodality is explored in some depth in both Chapter 3 and Chapter 6, but can be briefly described here as an idea developed by Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen which can be used to describe the ways that a text can create meaning across all its different modes of production. For Kress and Van Leeuwen, all texts can be seen as “*making meaning in multiple articulations*” (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, p.4). This means that instead of the meaning of a text just being made once, or indeed in only one mode, it is made across several different strata. These strata are **Discourse**, **Design**, **Production** and **Distribution**. The argument here is that texts communicate with their audiences through these different modes and that they all have a role to play in making meaning. A novel for example, creates meaning through the way it demonstrates knowledge of the world; this could be in terms of the genre, or the language that the writer uses to describe things and people. This is what Kress and Van Leeuwen call **discourse**. The writer of the novel has chosen to reproduce that knowledge of the world in the form of a novel, rather than say, a painting or a symphony. This choice of **mode** (the novel) is what Kress and Van Leeuwen refer to as **design**. The book is published as a paperback and choices are made about the paper it is printed on and the colours used in the front cover. These decisions about the medium that the knowledge is communicated through are referred to as **production**. Kress and Van Leeuwen refer to the final stage of getting the book to the audience as **distribution**, and this may require new modes and media, such as advertising.

In *The Skater and the Old Man* chapter, Burn uses the term *kineikonic* (Burn & Parker, 2003,

p.13) to describe the multimodal nature of film and the way it brings together Metz's two concepts of the *cinematic* and the *filmic* (Metz, 1974, pp.92-107). The term kineiconic refers to the moving image in its entirety, so not simply the mode of film and its design, but also the other multimodal aspects of the moving image, such as acting, lights, sounds, speech, movement, facial expression and indeed all the ways that a moving image text communicates with its audience.

Burn's chapter is very clear from the outset that one of the problems with students production work is that it presents the viewer with a kind of dual-discourse. The production is presented both as a real media text in a particular media genre (here documentary) and as a piece of coursework, to be presented to an examiner or moderator. Thus, the very existence of the film itself has a duality to it which is problematic – something in itself that seems to emphasise its multi-modal nature.

The article describes how the students' video documentary about skateboarding emphasizes both the skill of the skateboarders, by use of editing and camera shot, as well as the way it shifts from being a scripted, somewhat "artificial," drama to a more improvised piece of *realité* when an old man appears and tells them to stop skateboarding. Burn outlines the way in which the film's multimodal structure presents its audience with a number of different representations, by combining elements of design, (e.g. planned shots that appear) drama, (acting out the roles of skateboarder and later, rebellious youth) technology (the camera and edit suite) and other production elements (such as music).

The article goes on to make the salient point, however, that student productions often do not rely entirely on that which is planned, but also that which is improvised, as demonstrated by this piece of work.

Burn emphasizes the fact that the students use numerous techniques at their disposal to create a piece of work which consciously appeals to its audience (both real and imagined). They use a range of shots and editing techniques to articulate a set of meanings and "intensify" the images and subsequently what concerns them. What isn't clear is how they learnt to carry out this articulation. As Burn acknowledges, (Burn and Parker, 2003, p.26) the film itself is not sufficient to tell us the processes that occurred prior to this final, assembled multimodal product. For example, it is pointed out that the students attempt to adjust their camera work (in an improvised way) to deal with the sudden arrival of the old man, by trying to portray

him as a villain. They clearly have a sense of how the villain should be portrayed, but the film itself cannot really explain why they instinctively see the old man as a villain or how they learnt to portray him as such by means of the camera. The students edit the film as effectively as they can to “simultaneously keep the narrative high and the meaning clear.”(ibid, 2003, p.22) But how did they learn to do this? And what was the relationship between this and any documentaries they might have seen previously?

At the end of the article, its authors suggest that the students are bringing together three multimodal “principles” in their film; the pre-filmic, the pro-filmic and the cinematic, used here in the sense that Metz uses it (Metz, 1974, pp.92-107). They don’t give any explanation of how these were brought together – presumably some educational process went on to enable this. However, they do also acknowledge that the film itself is not the only thing that one could examine to see how the multimodal assembly occurred. They point towards evidence such as storyboards and the filming of the production process. These are the kinds of evidence I hope to utilize in this thesis to provide an answer to the question of how this assemblage, this layering of modes occurs.

It is interesting to note that by the time we come to the end of the decade and the work of John Potter (Potter, 2009), empirical studies return to a point at which identity and self-representation become the focus of the work. The difference for Potter seems to be the fact that within the act of self-representation (or more accurately *self-curation*, as he describes it) lies an opportunity to explore the conceptual framework. This raises what I think is an important point about the difference between the primary education arena that Potter is working in and the secondary sector that this thesis relates to. The notion of self-curation is one in which the children that Potter is writing about gather memories and records of things that they have done through what he calls “digital inscription.” (Potter, 2009, p.106) The important point to note here, I think, is that while technology allows for a very holistic collection of digital material by the students he is writing about, it is the primary school environment that he is working in that allows for the creative nature of what the students “curate.” Culturally and institutionally, primary schools are different places from secondary schools, and while the technology used by the children Potter is writing about is not dissimilar to that used by students in this study, there is clearly a difference of emphasis in the *way it is used*. I would want to argue that it is these cultural and institutional differences that mean that self-curation, (which appears to be mainly about identity – Potter draws upon

Foucault's idea of *hypomnemata* (Foucault, 2005, p.500) to describe the digital texts that students make as a sort of "repository of self") while being an important aspect of the learning process, is probably not complete enough for the purposes of demonstrating progress. There is though, a clear sense that there are opportunities to become critical within this self-curation process. As he describes at the end of his thesis:

For primary school children this could be worked in alongside opportunities to make short, simple self-representational texts of the kinds in these projects, alongside frequent review and evaluation, demonstrating not merely the function of the tools but how certain juxtapositions and appropriations produce different meanings. In this way, an understanding of the grammar of the moving image, its construction of shots and edits, transitions and cuts can be layered in with the critical study of moving image material in which learners have a real investment.

(Potter 2009, p.273)

This kind of sophisticated inversion of the idea that the initial empirical studies started out with demonstrates how far teachers and researchers understandings of what students might do with digital video have come. We are now at a point at which this area of study is able to encompass issues of identity, representation, use of technology and critical and conceptual frameworks.

2.3 Literature review: Conclusions

2.3.1 What do the studies tell us?

These research studies highlight a number of things about the nature of young people's work with digital video. Firstly, there is a tendency, particularly in the early years of digital video in school to focus on the students' response to the medium and its associated technologies, rather than the nature of the learning going on in the classroom. The majority of studies are situated in classroom practice, and this provides a useful precedent for the nature of the study being undertaken here (See Chapter 3). They do, as time goes on, provide an account of the relation between digital video making and the conceptual understanding of the moving image (particularly the BECTA evaluation). They also comment on the increasing cultural significance of young people becoming producers (Potter, 2009, p.274), and the opportunities that the medium of digital video provides for learning e.g. in bringing together different

modes on the timeline (Burn and Durran, 2007, p.94). Some of these ideas will be built on in the course of this thesis, such as the relationship between production and conceptual understanding, and the way the students in the study develop as producers, and the cultures that surround this development. There will also be some discussion of the nature of digital medium and what it actually permits students to do. However, because this study looks at work over three years, it allows for the development of the ideas first suggested in these empirical studies in very particular directions. For example, the study attempts to offer a more in-depth account of the relationship between production and conceptual understanding; the notion that there are particular cultures that surround production work and lead to the development of particular kinds of identity; and the idea that digital technology leads to particular kinds of craft skills being developed.

2.3.2 What do the studies not tell us?

There are a number of things missing from these empirical studies, most notably, the absence of any long term studies of students engaged in a range of different kinds of video production work. There is a need for a longer-term study because it seems highly likely that criticality and creativity, only become fully developed in digital video work over a longer period of time. To use Burn's writing/unwriting analogy, there is for most people, a long period of time between them making marks on a slate and writing a short story. With Media Studies now well established in school curricula, it seems that the existing studies would probably only give a basic insight into learning processes and progression in students digital video production work.

The idea of developmentally working on different types of project with a view to progressing in various skills areas is also without extensive coverage. None of these studies examine the way that students progress as planners, as camera operators, as editors and evaluators across time. They tend to give snapshots of how good or bad students are at one particular thing – thus they address criticality but not creativity, or perhaps technology but not culture. This is a significant weakness, because, I would contend that in examining learning progression in production work, what teachers are really assessing is not simply the skill of making a finished video, but a whole range of other skills which could demonstrate criticality or creativity or craft skills. Connected to this point is the fact that none of the studies spend much time describing or investigating the production process in its entirety, from initial ideas

to final evaluation. The student does not see making their final video in isolated terms, so it is probably reductive to conduct a research study in such a way. In the study being described here, there is a full and detailed description of the production process which allows for an explanation of the way that this feeds into progression.

Finally, there is the problem of culture. While many of the studies do take students own experience of popular culture as a starting point for their digital video production work, none of them explore the relationship between the student, their cultural experience and what is going on in the classroom in any great depth. Again, I would argue that the key to understanding the way students learn in the media classroom is to examine the way that students triangulate between their own cultural experience, what they are taught in class and what they make, AND the way that this product changes over the course of time.

Consequently then, this study seeks to address these gaps highlighted by the Literature review, and provide the kind of account outlined in the Introduction. Specifically, these gaps can be identified as being about the culture of production work and the role of popular culture in that work, the connection between criticality and production; the link between creativity and digital technology; the importance of filming as well as editing - something that Burn and Durran emphasise; (Burn and Durran, 2007, p.69) and the way that these three things might aggregate into a complete learning process. This, along with the need for a longitudinal study over time, points toward both the need for this thesis and the direction that it will take.

Chapter 3 Theoretical debates

3.1 The birth of the dialectic

At the start of the study, what I was most concerned with was identifying the way that students learnt to make digital video. As the data collection progressed though, it became clear that the process of learning to make digital video was actually part of a wider process of learning about sorts of media cultures, concepts and skills. Students would talk not only about the video that they made, but also a great deal more about what they had learnt on the way. Thus the question became specifically about learning progression, and the ways that students learn. It was clear to me from an early stage that learning in the media classroom was about critical and conceptual knowledge, but in some way, that was triangulated with the students own cultural experiences and the cultural texts and experiences that the teacher attempted to introduce his or her students to. It was also clear that an analysis of creativity and the role of practical skills (particularly those that involved digital technology) was essential for an understanding of the learning process. To this end, I decided to view the data in the light of these three “lenses” (criticality, culture and creativity). These perspectives have been used by numerous others in this field (Burn and Durran, 2007, p.11) and so are generally accepted as being an appropriate framework for analysis. However, these lenses in and of themselves did not offer any insight into learning progression. They were merely aspects of learning that were evident in what was happening in the classroom. While numerous others have tried to give accounts of, or frameworks for, progress in each of these areas (see Chapters 3, 6 and 7) they have not succeeded in tying together these aspects of media education into a coherent whole.

As a consequence then, what I was seeking here was an idea that would allow for the possibility that learning in cultural, critical and creative terms could happen simultaneously, rather than a ticklist of requirements that needed to be met sequentially. I was convinced early on in the data collection process that learning was really about the nature of the movement between that which the student knew already and that which they did not know – something that appears to be fairly evident in all learning, and emphasised in Vygotsky’s work on the “zone of proximal development” (Vygotsky, 1986, pp.187-189) – but that the movement was accompanied by range of responses that would determine the nature of the student’s next

learning movement. Sometimes that would be forward to something new, implementing newly learnt concepts in a creative production; sometimes it would be backward to an already experienced practice, text or concept that had been learnt about either in or outside the classroom. Occasionally, there would also be an outright rejection of the learning and a move to somewhere else completely unexpected, which could still be characterised as learning progression, but not in the way that I, as the teacher, was expecting. I was also convinced that, towards the end of the learning process (or perhaps more accurately, at the end of the three years of the study) that there was an ability, in many cases, demonstrated by the student, to “critically distance” themselves from their own work, and discuss it in critical terms, as well as an ability to create finished video products that went well beyond both the requirements and the expectations set by the teacher. In thinking about these things, I found myself drawn back to the ideas of Georg Friedrich Hegel (Hegel, 1807), which I had studied as a Philosophy undergraduate, and the work of the Russian formalists, most notably Roman Jakobson (Jakobson, 1998). The work of these individuals, one an enlightenment philosopher and the other a literary theorist, encapsulated the idea of the acquisition of knowledge being about both movement through a series of opposing stages (Hegel) and the notion that to know something really well, it must be defamiliarised (Jakobson). As the unique nature of media education frequently relies upon the students’ experiences of popular culture, there seemed to be much in the learning process that was about both familiarity and unfamiliarity, as well as the critical act of defamiliarising. Making a connection between these two ideas led to the creation of the Dialectic of Familiarity as a metaphor for the learning process. This arose out of the data, and the observations made therein. While methodologically, the research used a range of methods to get at what students were learning and the way that they learnt it, it was the emergence of this metaphor that allowed me to see learning as happening contemporaneously in critical, cultural and creative terms. This is important, because it was also clear that students did not learn in any uniform way; something that was frequently characterised in my practice as a teacher by an inability to assess students who, for example, were culturally well-developed but creatively weak. A range of methods then allowed for dialectic as an organising metaphor, because it described the learning movement without chaining that movement to any one aspect of learning. The rich ethnographic data generated, despite having its own manageability problems, (see Chapter 4) allowed me to see the learning that was occurring in a more reflective and philosophical light. This metaphor is, I believe, a new theoretical perspective on progression; previous accounts of which have tended to be quite polarised.

3.2 Towards a theoretical model

The literature review conducted in Chapter 2 suggests that in order to understand learning progression, there was a balance to be struck between the analysis of the culture and criticality which underpins the students' production work. This relationship is a crucial one to analyse, especially when a view is taken on how it is combined with the creativity afforded by digital technology. The absence of any long-term studies into how this balance develops over time, along with a lack of entirely complete accounts of how students acquire critical knowledge is one of the key motivations behind this thesis.

The history of media education is dominated by theorists discussing the way that that student's own cultural experiences might be built on in the media classroom, and how they might be introduced to new texts, concepts and practices. For some, such as Julian McDougall (McDougall, 2006, pp.vii-xi), there is a primacy to the cultural experiences of students, which positions them as "expert" and the teacher learning as much from them as they do from the teacher. For others still, there is a tension between text that students do know and have experience of, and those they don't, and media education occupies that space in between. Andrew Burn and James Durran's work on using *Psycho* (Burn and Durran, 2007, pp.82-85), for example, clearly has a connection to students' experience of horror, but doesn't employ their experience of popular culture in the same way that McDougall is proposing. For others still, such as David Buckingham and Julian Sefton-Green (Buckingham and Sefton-Green, 1994, p.8), there is a desire to warn against seeing the media classroom as being a place where the cultural inclinations of the student are merely celebrated. There is a need here to negotiate these differing positions and try to describe students' relationship with their popular cultural experiences when they bring these into the classroom and indeed, how they are changed by that movement. It will become clear from the data generated by this study, that students do not always feel the need to put their own cultural preferences to the fore in their own work and neither do they simply follow blindly the cultural preferences of their teacher. The relationship between media production work, teaching and culture is much more complex, difficult and fluid than either of these positions and, while there is a need to introduce students to a wide range of unfamiliar texts, how students respond to these texts is not something that has been extensively explored.

Equally, the literature around video production work more specifically suggests that the unfamiliarity of both the texts and the production methods is something that generates questions about the learning process for students and teachers. When a student does not know about a particular concept or technique there is clearly a negotiation or transformation going on for them between their cultural experience outside and within the classroom. The idea that students have a “common” culture to use Raymond Williams’ term (Williams, 1958, pp.53-59), or indeed share similar cultural experiences, is part of the difficulty here. As Burn, et al. in their survey of students and teacher experiences of popular culture in schools point out:

As contemporary media cultures continue to proliferate and students’ media uses and tastes diversify, attempting to define and secure this shared ‘common culture’ becomes increasingly problematic... At the same time, it (media education) legitimises this popular cultural knowledge as cultural capital recognised by the mechanisms of education, both local and national, through a series of transformations involving the application of abstract concepts and the use of practical production activities.

(Burn, Buckingham et al., 2010, p.194)

The problematic nature of the way in which students might learn to do these “practical production activities” is also characterised by some of the difficulties that media education theorists have with Vygotskian notions of the spontaneous and the scientific concept and how the move from one to the other can be seen as a creative process; something that Vygotsky is also concerned with (Vygotsky, 1998, p.157). How does a young person who is deeply imbued with a sense of their own cultural experience and knowledge go about processing that into abstract conceptual understanding in the classroom? Similarly, the kind of transformation that occurs in the media classroom, does not merely involve a conceptual and critical change, but also often a change in tastes, experiences, practical skills and peer relations, all of which are integral to the question of learning progression in terms of both production work and broader media education.

The key question here is about familiarity. The students whose work constitutes the focus of this study come to the projects they are working on (at least initially) being familiar with certain kinds of text, concepts, cultures and practices, but not others. They often have texts that they enjoy, and indeed certain kinds of production work that they know about, but across

a three-year-period like the one studied here, they are often expected to engage with things that are outside their comfort zone. Similarly, students may well have a kind of critical awareness when they begin to learn about media concepts through production work, but this is clearly not as developed as it will be after a number of years of successful study. This notion of familiar and unfamiliar concepts is explained in more depth in Chapter 6, but it is worthwhile giving some introduction to what I mean by the two terms. There is a connection here to Vygotsky's spontaneous and scientific (Vygotsky, 1986, p.146), as well as to the idea of the familiar and unfamiliar experiences of the student. For example, in terms of concept, the idea of "story" is something that many people will be familiar with from a young age. "Equilibrium" – a term used by Tzvetan Todorov in his 1977 work *The Poetics of Prose* (Todorov, 1977, p.111) - on the other hand is a concept that is probably unfamiliar to students before they step in to a media classroom. Once learnt however, the concept of equilibrium, which Todorov uses to refer to the "way that things are" at the start of a narrative and the state to which they often return at the end, becomes familiar and other, new and unfamiliar concepts can be moved on to. Similarly, a popular film text, such as a Harry Potter film may be familiar to a majority of students in a GCSE class, whereas a French arthouse movie may not be. To a certain extent, these differences between familiar and unfamiliar boil down to cultural preference and critical analysis – topics that have been debated extensively (Buckingham, 2003, pp.107-119; McDougall, 2006, p.116) but I want to suggest that these two areas of familiarity or unfamiliarity are connected and explored through creativity. The creative production process is the engine of this movement between the familiar and the unfamiliar, and being able to describe this will give some insight into how progression is occurring.

The recognition of these movements between the familiar and the unfamiliar led to the development of the Dialectic of Familiarity; a metaphor for the learning process in which students constantly make use of their familiar cultural experiences and then spend time defamiliarising themselves from those experiences in order to become familiar with them in a new way as a producer and student of the moving image. Central to the dialectic is the idea that media learning takes place through a kind of Hegelian synthesis¹. I have explained above how I decided upon this metaphor as a suitable means of describing progression. For Hegel, truth, and by implication, knowledge were revealed by a dialectic system of philosophy, in

¹ It is actually slightly inaccurate to describe the "thesis-antithesis-synthesis" triad as being Hegelian, something that is explained below in section 3.3.2

which one began with a proposition or *thesis* which was in some way inadequate for reaching the truth or knowledge that one sought (Hegel, 1807). Consequently, an *antithesis* (generally something opposite or alien to the original thesis) was generated, but this also proved inadequate and what the philosopher was left with was the pursuit of *synthesis*; the desired truth or knowledge synthesised from the rational and effective knowledge of the two former propositions. In the media education model, the thesis or thetical is often formed by the personal popular cultural experiences of students and the spontaneous concepts identified by Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1986, pp.146- 209). The antithesis often comes in the form of cultural experiences or preferences and new, unfamiliar concepts introduced by the teacher (new and unfamiliar knowledge) to which the student may respond in a number of ways (see below, Chapters 5 & 6). The synthesis is usually to be found in the way that the student brings together both the thetical, personal cultural and conceptual knowledge and the unfamiliar knowledge, in their practical production work. The dialectic, however, does not stop at this point, because this newly synthesised knowledge becomes a thesis in its own right, and thus familiar to the student. Unfamiliar texts become newly familiar and unfamiliar concepts become accustomed ways of thinking and analysing. Indeed, in most media learning we might use the dialectic metaphor to say that there are two distinct stages in which separate syntheses occur at different points. The first point of synthesis is actually at the end of stage 1 (see diagram Fig. 1 below) at which a student begins to make statements of critical and cultural orthodoxy, where through either written or production work, they can demonstrate a clear understanding of broadly orthodox critical views and cultural texts. This synthesis then becomes the thesis for stage 2, which is the first step to a fuller, more *expansive* - to use Engeström's term (Engeström, 1999, p.7) - synthesis. The critical stage between one synthesis and the other is characterised by *defamiliarisation*, where the student can step back and critically analyse what they have made in the light of the conceptual knowledge and cultural experiences that they have acquired. The whole process of familiarisation and defamiliarisation is driven by creativity and realised through the production process, which will be explained in further detail later.

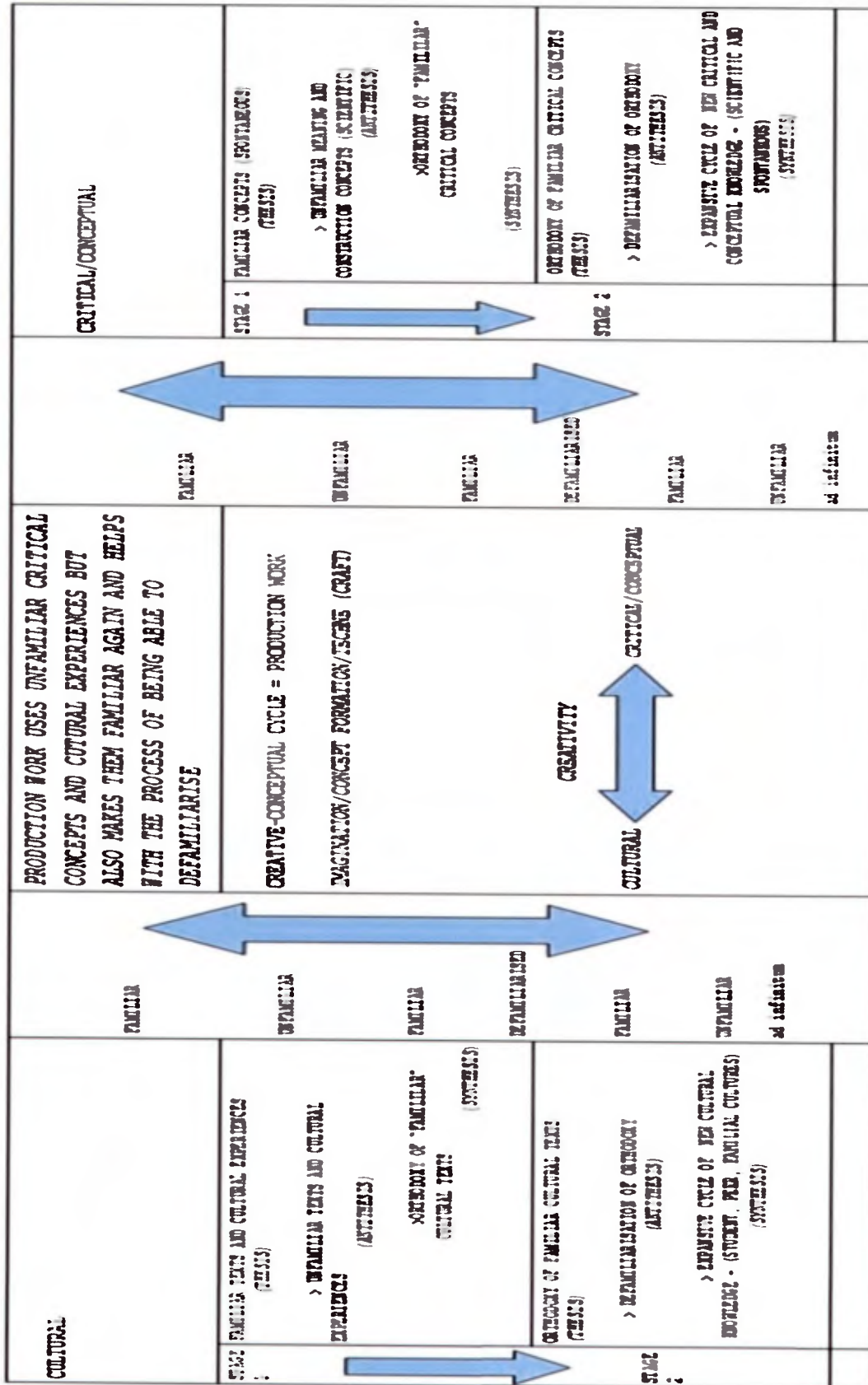


Fig. 1. The Dialectic of Familiarity

3.3 Key theoretical concepts

3.3.1 – Culture, criticality, creativity, familiarity & Hegelian dialectics

The wider theoretical concepts to which the research questions refer in 3.2 need some explanation. The development of criticality, culture and creativity as lenses through which to view the students' work across the three years of the study may seem somewhat arbitrary at first glance, but in actuality these terms have a long and complex association with media education. They are three aspects of learning that have surrounded discourses about media education since its earliest inception, reflecting debates about the purpose and direction of the subject. The decision to view the students video production work through them was built on the view that learning is contemporaneously happening in cultural, critical and creative terms, rather than strand by strand, and that there is a need to see all three forms of learning happening at the same time. There is also a need though, to explain how these terms fit in with the key ideas set out in 3.1 – namely the idea of familiarity, and the dialectic process. The theoretical basis for the terms “culture,” “criticality” and “creativity” are explored in more detail in the data chapters 5, 6 & 7, each of which pertains to one of those terms. As however, was suggested in 3.1.1, the idea of a Dialectic of Familiarity will also be key to analysing the student work, so the terms dialectic and familiarity also need further exploration.

3.3.2 Hegelian Dialectics

As suggested in section 3.1.1, the work of Hegel is drawn on here because of the way it implies movement through particular stages in the acquisition of knowledge. It is actually slightly inaccurate to describe the “thesis-antithesis-synthesis” triad as being Hegelian, as he actually used this terminology only once in his work, even then ascribing it to Immanuel Kant. Hegel's actual form of the triad, outlined in his seminal work *The Phenomenology of Spirit* is better translated as “abstract-negative-concrete.” The “thesis-antithesis-synthesis” triad was popularised by Fichte, (Fichte, 1848 cited in Smith,1999) which gave rise to its adoption by Karl Marx and others. For Hegel, truth, and by implication, knowledge were revealed by a dialectic system of philosophy, in which one began with a proposition or *thesis* which was in some way inadequate for reaching the truth or knowledge that one sought. (Hegel, 1807). Consequently, an *antithesis* (generally something opposite or alien from the

original thesis) was generated, but this also proved inadequate and what the philosopher was left with was the pursuit of *synthesis*; the desired truth or knowledge synthesised from the rational and effective knowledge of the two former propositions. The metaphor of the Dialectic of Familiarity could be used to describe the way that students generate opposites in terms of knowledge and practices, to those originally held by the student (and in some cases by the teacher). In terms of media education, I want to start with the idea that the thesis is that which the student already has experience of, in cultural and critical terms: the films they have watched, the books they have read, the basic spontaneous concepts – such as “story” – that they hold, the experiences of making video in their back yard they have had. In the metaphor of the dialectic that I am setting out, the learning process starts with these things, and comes up against the oppositions set out by their teacher, in terms of texts, concepts and practices. This is not to say of course, that the normal practice of the teacher is to set up oppositions to the student’s popular culture or experience, but rather to build on them. However, students sometimes react to these unfamiliar texts and practices in very oppositional ways – something illustrated in Chapters 5 & 6. These texts, practices and concepts are new and unfamiliar to the student, so they have to negotiate these unfamiliarities. This negotiation, in turn, allows the student to generate new oppositions, or antitheses in their work (some of which appear to be directly oppositional or indeed contradictory to the teacher’s view), before synthesising opposites together. It is in this process that learning progression occurs, and viewing learning in this way permits a perspective that can see it as constantly evolving, a cyclical process. The Hegelian dialectic triad of thesis/antithesis/synthesis describes this move from what the student is familiar with, to what they are unfamiliar with and back again.

To explain this further here, thesis is the position that the student finds themselves in at the start of the learning process. This position may be constituted by the students own popular cultural or critical experiences, or learning that has already taken place before. This study is about the way that students learn to make video, so thesis may have involved them using a video camera at home or indeed doing some school-based learning, though probably not specifically in a media education context. The term antithesis can describe both material that is unfamiliar to the student (this could be for example, a new critical term, a concept, production skill or a new text such as a film) as well as responses to that material. The Dialectic of Familiarity outlines the idea that once a student begins to become familiar with this antithetical material, they go through two further stages; the first of these is orthodoxy, where the student begins

to replicate the critical and cultural positions put forward by their teacher in both their production and analytical work, while the second stage I have termed synthesis.

I believe that in this second stage of synthesis, is where they begin to re-synthesise this cultural and critical orthodoxy in order to make meanings and texts that go beyond (and in some cases, far beyond) what their teacher intended for them.

3.3.3 Familiarity and defamiliarisation

Familiarity and unfamiliarity are used in this study as umbrella terms that cover some specific learning processes. The notion of what a student finds familiar in cultural and critical terms will, of course, vary immensely from individual to individual, but for the purposes of media education, “familiarity” should be seen as being used to describe those texts, concepts and practices that the student walks into the classroom with at the start of their media education course. This familiarity is often homogenised by media educators as “popular” culture, but, as has been pointed out earlier, (Burn, Buckingham et al., 2010 p.199) is probably more diffuse than this. Familiarity as a term allows for this diffuseness because it is meant to describe what is familiar to the student as an individual rather than any idea of a common culture. That which is “unfamiliar” can be seen as describing those things that are being introduced by the teacher, that the teacher has a reasonable expectation of the student not having experienced. These could be, but are not limited to films or other texts, theories, vocabulary or production practices. I want to argue that the student moves from a situation of drawing upon what is familiar in order to deal with the unfamiliar, but over time, dialectically “deals with” these unfamiliarities – by working through them in creative production work – in order to make a new familiarity (the synthesis stage posited above). I would argue that in this final synthesising stage it is the ability to make this new familiarity unfamiliar again – a phenomenon that I would identify as defamiliarising – that marks the final stage of the learning dialectic.

It may be useful to foreground this idea of defamiliarising by putting it in the context of the work of theorists such as Todorov (Todorov, 1977) and the Russian formalists Jakobson (Jakobson, 1988) and in particular Shklovsky (Shklovsky, 1925) who put forward the view that texts (in this particular case, literary texts) should defamiliarise everyday experience for their audience. The more that a text defamiliarised the reader, the more “literary” it was. Indeed the formalists placed great emphasis on the ability of a text to disrupt the expectations of the reader, as they felt that this would throw into relief the ordinariness, or non-literariness of other texts. The argument then, was that literature did not reflect the world as it was, but

merely “signified” an aspect of reality that the audience was usually unfamiliar with. In the encounter with the text, its audience became familiar with the world in a new way. Thus literature made the world “newly strange” for the reader. This quality, for Jakobson marked the text out as “literature” (Jakobson, 1956, cited in Eagleton, 2008, p.2) and thus, fit as an object for study. I would want to adapt this process of defamiliarisation and apply it to the cultural form of the moving image. Rather than literary criticism here, the apparatus for making the world (as it is presented in film form) “newly strange” is criticality and the cultural activity going on in the media classroom. I want to argue then that for students, the process of making digital video in the classroom involves a similar defamiliarisation or disruption. Students begin at a point of their own cultural experience, but their familiarity with popular culture is disrupted by both their encounter with new concepts and new texts, but also the cultural experiences and tastes of others, both students and teachers. To borrow a term from Shklovsky the concept of “ostranenie” (Shklovsky 1925, p.6), or estrangement came into play, wherein, for example, the act of watching a film becomes an utterly unfamiliar experience when carried out in a media classroom. The students begin to perceive things in a different way; making a film becomes much more than simply “messaging about with a camcorder,” (though interestingly they do sometimes continue to describe it in these terms) but beginning to visualise their finished product as a digital timeline, using certain types of shots and transitions. It is important to note that Russian formalism has, in the recent history of Critical Theory, been seen as somewhat rigid and overtly structuralist. Media teachers tend to take a more poststructuralist view of texts, in which meanings are elastic. I would argue, however, that this notion of defamiliarisation introduced by Shklovsky and Jakobson and others is worth revisiting here. What I believe will be seen in the work of the students considered in this thesis, is that this process, in which some individuals defamiliarise themselves from the texts, cultures and social practices that they are most familiar with and then re-visit and indeed, reinvent them as part of the learning process. In effect, the process of making something that is familiar unfamiliar again has value, and rather than being resisted, is a vital part of learning.

3.4 Research questions

The key theoretical question for the study is “**What constitutes learning progression when students make digital video in the secondary classroom?**” Three specific sub-questions

follow, that will help to put the theoretical debates into the context of the study. It is hoped that these questions will help to form a basis for the theoretical model outlined above as well as providing a direction for the analysis of the data collected.

-What counts as cultural capital in relation to the consumption and production of the moving image by young people and how does it change over the three-year-period? These questions will entail returning to the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1979) in some detail. Cultural capital and its relationship with education (or more specifically educational capital) is extremely complex and throws up some unique questions for media education. For the theoretical model that underpins this study (the Dialectic of Familiarity), cultural capital – and its relationship to academic capital – is a concept that may help to map out what is familiar or unfamiliar to students and what teachers (and other institutions such as schools and examination boards) consider they need to become familiar with. Bourdieu’s ideas about habitus and the idea of a disposition towards particular kinds of text and experience is also integral to understanding how students learn and make progress, because in cultural terms, whether we like it or not, progress is about the acquisition of cultural and academic capital. This realisation has a number of effects on learning. I will argue later, for example, for the idea of a “media studies habitus” that becomes a familiar part of the way that students work when producing digital video in the secondary classroom, and also for the idea that teachers will sometimes seek to legitimise certain types of text in order to turn cultural capital into academic capital.

What kind of framework can we construct in order to explain students’ critical and conceptual progression in terms of moving image literacy? This question involves considering the kind of critical and conceptual statements that students make about their work and how the students progress, but will also problematise them further and set up other questions that will prefigure a close examination of the student work. Familiarity is also integral here, as the process of familiarisation and defamiliarisation with language, the conceptual framework and new texts and techniques, frequently marks varying stages of students’ conceptual understanding and progression. Similarly the distinction that Vygotsky makes between spontaneous and scientific concepts (Vygotsky, 1986, pp.146-209) connects to these ideas of familiarity and unfamiliarity, as the everyday experiences of viewing, and perhaps making moving image texts are made unfamiliar through a conceptual framework. These problems may also be compounded by the nature of the digital technology that the

student uses to do their production work and its own unique affordances.

How does a student demonstrate their individual creativity through production work, and what does this have to do with cultural capital or critical understanding? The issues about creativity that arise out of this study, such as what creativity is and how it manifest itself in a student's production work are integral for understanding progression. It is clear that the transformative qualities of student production work – that is, the way that it helps them to progress in terms of cultural and critical understanding – must involve an examination of the way that creativity interlocks with criticality and cultural understanding. In contemporary media education, this necessitates some exploration of digital technology as well, and the way that it might facilitate creativity. The work of Vygotsky into creativity is important here as it links closely to questions of conceptual understanding, making an explicit link between acts of concept formation and creative imagination (Vygotsky, 1998, pp.157-159).

3.4.1 What counts as cultural capital in relation to the consumption and production of the moving image by young people and how does it change over the three-year-period?

Cultural capital is defined by Bourdieu as the forms of knowledge, skill, material goods and education that people possess which make a difference to their status in society. He actually claims that cultural capital has three states:

Cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the embodied state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.; and in the institutionalized state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because, as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee.

(Bourdieu, 1986, p.241)

When Bourdieu refers to cultural capital existing in an embodied state, he is talking about the basis for what he more frequently refers to as habitus. This is a very important concept for both Bourdieu and the topics being discussed here. Habitus is defined as a set of dispositions that generate practices and perceptions (ibid, 1986,

p.109). The important thing about habitus is that it not only generates those practices and perceptions but also internalizes them back into the individual, so that particular practices, once undertaken, feed back in to the habitus. The notion of a Dialectic of Familiarity could be built upon the idea of the habitus then; if we take Bourdieu's set of dispositions which internalizes not only practices, but also structures that one finds in the world, we can see individuals moving back and forth between the oppositions present in the structures that one finds in the world (school, family, cinema) and their own internalized dispositions, to create finished products – in this case moving image texts. It is important here that we understand this as being embodied; that is to say, it informs our physical, as well as our social and cultural actions. For the students in this study, that dialectic movement is allowing them to feed back all kinds of practices into their habitus, from the way that they hold a camcorder to the way that they perceive digital images on a timeline, to the way that they position and move their bodies when they act in front of camera. All these aspects of the embodied nature of film-making are significant and will be analysed through a multimodal framework in this study. This is important to note for creative as well as cultural development, as the more that these processes of film-making become embodied the more they are part of the student's internal mechanism for processing and reprocessing concepts, For example, a student who repeats the exercise of setting up a particular shot is likely to constantly be processing and reprocessing (and internalizing) the narrative function of that shot. This kind of mental processing and re-processing of a concept is, coincidentally, one of the ways that Vygotsky sees creativity (Vygotsky, 1998, p.159).

For the purpose of this study then, **the question of where the students cultural capital comes from** might be about, on one hand, the kinds of attitudes and predispositions towards popular culture – and more specifically film making – that students carry with them from their home lives and peer groups, but also about how cultural capital might change for a student across a period of time in school. This contrast also raises questions about what kind of value a student places on their own work, and what kind of value is placed on it by the institutions within which they are working.

The question of attitudes and predispositions generated in home and family life sits very obviously under the surface of a lot of what the students make and do. A number

of the students talk about their parents' involvement in the process of making the films, not simply in terms of the practicalities of the task but also in terms of discussion and ideas generation. For Bourdieu, the fact that parents are encouraging students in this way would come as no surprise, if it is the case that the parents see film making as having a specific kind of economic or cultural value. Bourdieu remarks that:

"...one cannot impute the strong correlation observed between competence in music or painting... and academic capital, solely to the operation of the educational system (still less to the specifically artistic education that it is supposed to give, which is clearly almost non-existent) Academic capital is in fact the guaranteed product of the combined effects of cultural transmission by the family and cultural transmission by the school." (Bourdieu, 1979, p.23)

Bourdieu is clear that the role of the family in establishing cultural capital is very significant. It is an important factor in establishing what he terms the "aristocracy of culture" whereby particular attitudes and practices are produced and reproduced in order to assert one's status in society. This "inheritance" of cultural capital also, conversely extends to certain kinds of material inheritance which can be used to reinforce the cultural values that are close to the hearts of the students' parents. Another question for this particular study is how this "inheritance" influences young people's consumption and production of the moving image and the learning progression that goes alongside that.

There are, however, a number of problems with just accepting Bourdieu's view of the way in which cultural capital is transmitted from family to individual alongside schooling. Firstly, Bourdieu's own attitude towards what constitutes popular culture is somewhat disrupted by the notion that popular culture (and in particular the moving image) might be taught in school. Bourdieu's own view, for example, is that the bourgeoisie attempt to dress up film as something other than popular culture, and indeed that knowledge of film is facilitated by other kinds of cultural capital:

"Such competence is not necessarily acquired by means of the scholastic labours in which some cinephiles or 'jazz-freaks' indulge (e.g. transcribing film credits onto catalogue cards). Most often it results from the unintentional learning made

possible by disposition acquired through domestic or scholastic inculcation of legitimate culture.”

(Bourdieu, 1979, p.28)

Note the use of the word legitimate here. Bourdieu holds that certain forms of popular culture such as jazz and cinema (presumably as opposed to “films”) have a kind of cultural status imposed upon them by dominant groups in society, when they become legitimised as if they are “high” by bourgeois culture in a way that say, TV and rock’n’roll are not. This raises an interesting problem, in that by bringing popular cultural texts into the classroom, it could be argued that the teacher is doing the same thing; privileging certain kinds of text over others. This debate, about how popular culture is legitimised as part of the “institutionalised,” – to use Bourdieu’s term – objectification of the moving image, or as a constituent part of the academic capital which is so important in generating subsequent cultural capital, is still a significant area of debate. Questions about the way that the moving image has been legitimised as part of academic capital – in that it is frequently studied in classrooms – do make some media teachers uncomfortable, because there seems to be a need to justify the status of the texts being studied. This idea of legitimation connects to Basil Bernstein’s discussion of the way that certain kinds of knowledge are legitimised by educational institutions according their status (Bernstein, 2003, p.177). For Bernstein, school is frequently about reproducing knowledge (what he calls “the thinkable” as opposed to the “unthinkable” which he sees as newly produced knowledge.” (ibid, 2003, pp.181-182). Knowledge is then legitimised through its reproduction, which might be a problem, for media education, wherein students are frequently doing completely new things and dealing with texts that are apparently not legitimised by the school. These problems with the distinctions between academic and cultural capital lie at the heart of the learning process in media education, and necessitate a close examination of how students begin to acquire knowledge in the classroom.

I would want to argue that what often occurs for students making moving image texts is that they do not (at least initially) see any real distinction between the academic and cultural use that they make of the moving image, but rather that they enjoy incorporating what they know into the process of acquiring academic capital. They learn later that teachers and exam boards, for example, want to make certain kinds of legitimising claims on the moving image, and so they learn to reproduce this legitimation, this orthodoxy. Indeed they also go beyond its reproduction, using it to synthesise genuinely new knowledge, thus reaching Bernstein’s

point of the “unthinkable.” Characteristically of a dialectic process though, while learning to see it in this way, they also seem to retain their (popular) cultural attachment to it – something that should also be the intention of the teacher too, as I do not believe that any media teacher genuinely wants to divest students of their attachment to popular cultural texts, but should seek to introduce students to unfamiliar texts.

This legitimation process points towards the way that students go about acquiring knowledge and cultural values outside the structure of the family. More specifically it highlights the way that the learning process needs to be perceived – namely that there is a unique relationship within media education between cultural capital and academic capital and both the structure of the family and the structure of the classroom have distinct roles to play in that relationship. Of particular interest here is the way that teachers might legitimize certain kinds of cultural experience over others. Moreover, in the 21st century this relationship is made more complex by the innovation of digital technology. Bourdieu is very clear that social networks frequently reproduce cultural attitudes (Bourdieu, 1986, pp.72-81), but one wonders what he would say about the way in which the young people in this study learn and acquire knowledge using new technologies and networks that frequently appear to bypass existing social structures such as the family – an important factor in this, particularly when one considers ideas such as that of the *techne-mentor*, developed by Megan Finn, which describes a model of informal learning that works around social networking sites. (Finn, 2008)

The question of how cultural capital changes across the three-year-period is the one that is perhaps most influenced by the intervention of the school in all this – in particular with regard to the status of the moving image. These changes are influenced by a number of factors; some of which are obvious, such as the increased social mobility that someone in their late teens experiences and some of which are more subtle. In order to assess this more efficiently, it is important to be clear about what Bourdieu does and does not appear to say here. He is not specific about how our cultural capital might change over time, but rather intimates that educational capital cannot ever entirely compete with cultural capital. Perhaps more importantly, it is that genuine popular culture cannot be traded in for cultural capital. His point about jazz, for example, is that while the bourgeois will seek legitimacy for it, it cannot really be used, culturally, in the same way that opera can be.

This raises a number of serious questions for the area of progression in media education:

Firstly, is it the case that the act of film-making in class can only be legitimised through the exchange of one's finished film for a qualification, and hence academic capital – is it the GCSE or A-Level that in and of itself produces the cultural capital? Or is it the case that the act of making film is traded for cultural capital at a more social level, where your film-making receives the plaudits and praise of your peer group? This is significant, because within this study, attitudes expressed by students demonstrate both views. I have reflected upon the notion of peer cultures elsewhere (Connolly, 2009) and their importance in motivating students to do particular types of production work, but it appears to be the case that both positions are important for students at different times – and not necessarily, as one may expect, simply at the beginning and the end of the three years. The Dialectic of Familiarity might describe this dichotomy too. In the cultural capital earned by entertaining one's friends there is a celebration of the texts that the student loves and wants to explore; in this study, Year 11 projects such as the *Lehri Files* (see Chapter 5) demonstrate this. However, in the detailed evaluation and narrative of the work done for one's teacher, there are always higher marks to be had.

Bourdieu's constructs of academic capital, cultural capital and habitus point to the idea that individuals operate culturally by moving between the internalised world of their personal culture and the cultural milieu of the society they inhabit. In the digital world, the dividing line between those two things is much less clear – activities such as blogging for example, seem to externalise the habitus in a way that Bourdieu probably never foresaw. This movement might be reflected by a Dialectic of Familiarity, wherein students' produce moving image texts using their own cultural experiences with confidence to chart a path through the expectations made of them by schools and other institutions. On the way, they adopt a critical and conceptual vocabulary. While this is unfamiliar at first, they end up taking it back to their popular cultural experiences, and making it a familiar part of their everyday watching and making practices. This dialectical activity is truly Hegelian, in that the cultural capital acquired comes from the complete antithesis of the activity that the student starts with (in this case, watching a film perhaps with friends or family). Bringing this activity into the classroom is an almost completely opposite reaction to it, despite the fact that many media teachers probably don't see it in these terms. The general view amongst media educators is probably that the classroom is an extension of this kind of activity. I would argue that there is value in seeing the intervention of the teacher as an opposition, a disruption to the student's

regular cultural experience, albeit a very valuable one. When the student makes their own moving image text they have created a work of synthesis, and, indeed created a new kind of cultural capital.

This discussion of how cultural capital might change over time leads to some consideration of the use of cultural capital to create an identity. While Bourdieu's concept of habitus obviously continues to be important, I think it is most useful here to think about the concept of identity in the way it is described by Antony Giddens, who thinks about it not as being about behaviour, but as "telling a story about oneself." For Giddens, the nature of identity is best defined as the point at which the events of one's life integrate with the events of the world:

A person's identity is not to be found in behaviour, nor – important though this is – in the reactions of others, but in the capacity to keep a particular narrative going.

The individual's biography, if she is to maintain regular interaction with others in the day-to-day world, cannot be wholly fictive. It must continually integrate events which occur in the external world, and sort them into the ongoing 'story' about the self.

(Giddens, 1991, p.54)

This is relevant when considering the way in which popular culture (a series of events in the world) interacts with students own "story about themselves" and may give some insight into the way that not only their identity as a producer is formed but also the way that they progress in terms of learning. The creation of a variety of different selves, resulting from the cultural conditions that surround production work is an important aspect of learning progression. I would want to argue that the synthesis of popular cultures and the individual's story about themselves, employed to create a moving image text, can be described by the Dialectic of Familiarity. As such the students whose work is examined here use their production work as a means of both creating and expressing personal identity. Such an expression is probably best understood in terms of Jerome Bruner's idea of the construction of a "concept of self," (Bruner, 1996, p.15-16) particularly by the time they come to the end of the three-year-period. It seems to be the case that at this point the students' work has been invested with cultural capital gained from a triangulation of school, peer group and family, but has also been in some ways (synthesised into a new product which allows the student to demonstrate something of themselves, as well as undergoing a process of self-realisation. This is best illustrated by a Year 13 student in the study, who reaches the conclusion that:

My GCSE film was me trying to be 'arty farty' and smarter than I actually was and in the two years gap I've learnt that I'm not actually that good at making film.

Bruce, 15

In terms of the culture of the classroom he has gained cultural capital by listening to his teacher. In other ways, however, it could be argued that he has gambled cultural capital and lost some of it somewhere along the way, in attempt to win more academic capital. His identity as a film-maker is constantly being shaped and re-shaped across the three years by his encounters with the films he is making, the films he is watching, his teacher and the examiner. The story (to use Giddens term) of his life as a film-maker is not entirely within his control and though he has made progress, it is not entirely the progress he, or indeed his teacher, envisaged him making. We can describe this progress in dialectic terms as well. In the Year 11 work, his film was inspired by the music he listened to, so he pressed his cultural encounter with it into service. His film project received a reasonably good, but not stellar, mark, and in his desire to get better marks, he sought "purer" forms of achievement by changing both his film-making and his writing in order to achieve this. In his final year project he comes back to music, making a music video but this time, concentrating very much on the technical aspects of the production, something that he has spent a lot of time on (in pedagogical terms) in the intervening period. These observations suggest a debate, not only about identity, but also about the value that different students place on the work they are doing across the three years in terms of both academic and cultural capital.

Certainly then, in terms of student production work, a lot of what is termed cultural capital seems to be about self-representation. The data in chapter 5 suggests that this is a key aspect of learning progression, where students frequently occupy different "selves" at different times in the production process and represent those "selves" in many different ways. While for some theorists (MacDougall, 2006, p.114) this self representation is the key function of media education, I would say that for me, unfamiliarity – both with one's cultural experience and oneself – is an equally important aspect of the way that cultural capital changes over time, and it is this "development of selves out of unfamiliarity" that needs to be explored for learning progression to be understood.

To summarise, there is an extensive analysis to be made of the role of culture and cultural

capital in the production work process. A number of key theoretical considerations need to be explored in order to assess the role of culture in the learning process. Firstly, the study needs to assess the cultural “inheritance” that the students gain from their families and homes both before and during the learning process. Secondly, the study needs to examine the relationship between academic and cultural capital in the media classroom, and how that relationship changes so that new forms of cultural capital are formed. Thirdly, there is a need to discuss what cultural value the students place on what they are doing. Finally, while it is clear that there the development of cultural capital helps to create an identity for the student, it seems legitimate to ask what the nature of that development is, and the ways that it could be related to the concerns of self-representation.

Relative to the other theoretical questions here, culture seems to be the largest concern, but I believe this is necessarily so, because cultures (popular, classroom, school) have a very significant role to play in learning progression. This apparent unevenness is also to do with the fact that culture is a complex thing, and while the other theoretical questions here are of equal significance they are sometimes easier to relate to the process of student production work.

3.4.2 What kind of framework can we construct in order to explain students critical and conceptual progression in terms of moving image literacy?

In discourses about media education, there are many debates about the frameworks that exist for the analysis of media texts. While Vygotsky’s ideas about the difference between spontaneous and scientific concepts (Vygotsky, 1986, pp.146-209) provide a grounding for the way that both teachers and students begin to conceptualise and critique of popular culture, there is still a need to be specific about what such a framework would need to do for media education. There is a good deal of consensus about a set of “key concepts” which organise the kinds of understanding that students might need to acquire when analysing and conceptualising the moving image (BFI, 2000, pp.51-57; Buckingham, 2003, pp.53-69; Burn and Durran, 2007, pp.20-21) and these have been tied to models of progression with varying degrees of success, but none that really exist to explain adequately what is happening in production work, in terms of the relationship between production work and critical understanding. Several theorists (Ferguson, 1981, pp.42-53; Buckingham, 1991, pp.63-69;

Buckingham, 2003, pp.123-138) offer rationales for the student production of media texts, but these do not really explain what is happening in the process and as such, there is an inadequacy in language used to talk about production work. Andrew Burn and James Durran's analysis does begin to connect the ways that production and the conceptual framework could be related. They take the concepts of text, audience and institution (for them, text encompasses both languages and representation) and demonstrate how they might be explored through teaching a unit of work on advertising, which involves making a TV advert. (Burn and Durran, 2007, pp.95-109) What is missing from this account is an explanation of the mechanics of how the production activity promotes and reinforces the conceptual learning. I would want to suggest that the dialectical process of making the advert, being taught the concept and triangulating this with the student's own experiences of watching adverts is what needs unpacking here. In the diagram above (Fig.1), it is important to see the production work as realising a creative-conceptual cycle, which may involve the advert being remade in different ways and in different learning contexts. I would begin then, by contending that one of the first considerations for this study to make is that in order to assess learning progression it needs to acknowledge the relationship between production work and conceptual or critical learning. Additionally, it will become clear across the course of the next few chapters that learning progression in its early stages frequently focuses in on text as a concept, rather than audience and institution. As a consequence, a good deal of the discussion about the student production work examines how students learn about the concept text and then proceed to the concepts of audience and institution, as well as how they talk about them critically. The reasons for this phenomenon are discussed in more depth in Chapter 6, but it should suffice to say that students are initially concerned with the concept of text and its semiotic qualities both in analysis and production.

For many teachers the notion of starting with something concrete, such as making a film, seems to be a good way of making a link to a concept such as audience. However, there are times when both students and teachers' conceptual understanding could be enhanced by moving from abstract to concrete, rather than the other way round. This idea is introduced by Engestrom – following the work of Vasily Davydov (Davydov, 1988) – who posits that “*the dialectical method of ascending from the abstract to the concrete is a central tool for mastering cycles of expansive learning.*” (Engestrom, 1999, p.7). Media classrooms can be prescriptive places at times, so a discussion of the complexities of the student's own identity as a member of an audience, or rather audiences, may be necessary to clarify a student's path

through a production task. By thinking of themselves as one type of audience when they watch a moving image text in class and an entirely different type of audience when they watch the very same text at home or in the cinema, they can begin to problematise and theorize the concept of audience. One of the areas that this thesis should attempt to tackle is to explain the ways that production work might result in students becoming more critical then, and linking their understanding or literacy. It is interesting though, that Engestrom chooses to use the word “dialectical” here; what he is describing is that movement to the concrete world of production, where the student implements concrete concepts such as “long shot” or “close-up,” from the abstract, conceptual world of the classroom where he or she has learnt about the abstract concept of camerawork. This kind of dialectical movement describes, I believe the sort of learning that goes on in media classrooms, particularly in conceptual and critical terms.

Theorizing about students’ production work (and particularly questions about a critical literacy of the moving image) is definitely made more difficult by the role of digital technology, the way that it allows students to explore the concepts of text, audience and institution. The students in my classes learn how to use digital video (dv) cameras in class and then use them, both in and out of school, to make moving image texts. They then connect that dv camera to a computer and edit using Adobe Premiere (or some other software), producing a finished extract in what is a relatively short period of time. The pertinent point here is that digital technology actual enables the moving image to become more like a language, in that now, it is much easier for students to communicate in the medium of film or video. While, of course, theorists such as Metz (Metz, 1974, pp.80-91) would be quick to point out, that they cannot “talk back” to the film, they can make their own version of the film. They can shoot film and arrange and re-arrange it to create particular meanings, while at the same time learning about some of the institutional concerns of planning and executing a film shoot. They can also add sound in order to change the way the audience views the material and indeed think about the way that different audiences may respond to different sound choices.

Such a level of control on the part of the student necessitates us thinking about what the role of the teacher is in a classroom where the students are manipulating digital video. The nature of learning is bound to be scrutinized here and it is at this point that the ideas of Lave and Wenger become important. (Lave and Wenger, 1991) Their idea of “peripheral participation”

(ibid, 1991, p.29) wherein learners do not acquire knowledge simply through what is instructed, but also through what occurs on the periphery of instruction – what John Seeley Brown calls “stealing knowledge.” (Seeley-Brown and Duguid, 2000, p.245) In the media classroom this can very easily occur by watching others and the way they make and talk about moving image texts. In such an environment then, using digital technology could be equally about what the teacher isn’t doing as much as it is about what they are doing. The discussion here needs to be about the way that both the teacher and perhaps more importantly, the technology, facilitate critical and conceptual learning.

The connection between these digital technologies and the development of a critical and conceptual framework necessitates a return to the work of Vygotsky, because, as there is a tension between “watching” and “studying” the moving image, there is also a tension between “making media” and “playing around with technology.” The line between these two things is frequently blurred in media education – a phenomenon that is explored later on – but there is still a need to distinguish between what is familiar and unfamiliar to the student. Vygotsky argues that as we grow up, we acquire two kinds of concept (Vygotsky, 1986, pp.146-150). **Spontaneous** concepts we acquire through our experiences of the world as a child – play, imaginings etc. **Scientific** concepts, on the other hand, are those we acquire through our formal schooling. This is an important distinction; as it is clear that experience does have an important part to play in how learn to watch the moving image. The idea of spontaneous concept doesn’t really deal with the mechanical problem of how we watch and experience the media in the first place (osmosis of some kind?) but it does appear that we can group learning to watch with other kinds of experiences that are formative but not formal, like play. Buckingham (Buckingham, 2003, p.141) rightly claims that the distinction is doubly important for media education, because here, spontaneous concepts (an individual’s experience of the media in this case) have a unique relationship with scientific concepts (media education). It will become clear then, while the idea of scientific and spontaneous concepts are useful for making distinctions about what students learn and when, it does not, and indeed probably did not intend to, explain the teacher’s actions other than to describe them as a process of formalisation. (Vygotsky, 1986, p.178) This is not really detailed enough though, as it does not tackle the issue of how the teacher/student relationship develops over time and the role of the student’s peer group or indeed, other cultural factors. Additionally, the issue of progression over time, as Engestrom points out is clouded by the fact that learning is clearly not simply a linear process. He uses the analogy of a tool kit to explain that

generally, individuals do not go about learning things in a particular order, nor do they need to:

I maintain that levels of learning represent 'general processes of formation of particular functional systems.' As general processes or general mechanisms, they contain no fixed order of progression, nor a fixed end point. They are continuously present as resources for the formation of specific innovations and transformations in particular organizations. It is characteristic to the levels of learning that they appear in various combinations and that there is continuous interplay between the levels. In this sense, consider the levels as a kit of wrenches of successive sizes. The kit itself is pretty general – it may be used in a tremendous variety of specific tasks. But it is always put into use in a particular context and situation. There is definitely a hierarchy in the kit. Yet there is no inherent necessity that the wrenches must be used in a specific order.

(Engestrom, 1987, p.10)

This seems to fit in well with the theoretical idea that this chapter started with. The Dialectic of Familiarity is something that is characterized by the application of students' experience with the media, both in the classroom and at home, to particular learning, watching and making situations. The "continuous interplay" that Engestrom describes could easily be characterized as being about that movement between making the familiar of popular culture unfamiliar, and then re-familiarising (in actuality, defamiliarising) oneself with it in an entirely different way through media learning. The Dialectic of Familiarity fits in with Engestrom's idea of wrenches in that it describes the conceptual learning process as a kind of tool box, in which the learner starts with something that they know, (say a film that they have watched). As they undertake their journey in the language of the moving image they encounter ideas, texts and practices that they have not previously encountered. They may be given tools (such as a critical vocabulary) to help them deal with these things (which they must learn to use of course), or they may look into their own personal toolbox to find other things from their own personal experience. Incorporating unfamiliar texts, ideas and practices into their work allows them to synthesize new products, perhaps adding them to their own existing cultural experiences, or borrowing cultural experience from their teacher, to create a moving image text of their own. The management of this process is also a challenge for the teacher, who needs to allow the work to occupy that space between what has been introduced as "new" and what is at its root the "raw material" brought in from outside the classroom. In

doing so, they will manage the oscillation back and forth between the familiar and unfamiliar. This might be done in any number of well established ways, such as having students do the kind of presentation done by Year 12 students described in the criticality chapter, but it is here that the dialectical processes are constructed. Unfortunately though, the “raw material” is not always legitimised in cultural terms, which means that the process of oscillation is not managed appropriately.

To summarise, the kind of framework that explains students’ conceptual and critical progression is built on four main ideas. Firstly, there is the notion that students progress critically and conceptually through the development of a critical and conceptual vocabulary or language. This language is both a spoken language of technical terms, but is also a language that is applied in the students’ production work. This vocabulary is largely unfamiliar to the student, though I would argue that they learn to use it in a particular way in class in order to imitate the kind of critical and conceptual views that the teacher has put forward. Secondly, this language is grounded in both the kind of conceptual framework that is described by Burn and Durran where students are required to learn about the key concepts of text, audience and representation (Burn and Durran, 2007, pp.95-109). This conceptual framework is also grounded in Engestrom’s thinking so that students begin to engage with concepts such as audience, representation and institution by doing production work, but would also move from discussions of those concepts to create different and perhaps better production work finding more and more concrete instances of those abstract concepts, thus cycling from abstract to concrete and so from unfamiliarity to familiarity. Thirdly, the adoption of this language and the conceptual framework is greatly facilitated by the medium of digital video and editing, as it allows the student to become fluent in that language and allows for greater exploration of those concepts. Finally, there is a need to understand the nature of critical and conceptual learning and the way that this framework could move on from Vygotskian notions of the spontaneous and the scientific, towards a more dialectic account of learning. Such an understanding could involve ideas about play and the way that Engestrom’s tools and wrenches can be applied to show that progression here does not occur in a linear way.

3.4.3) How does a student demonstrate their individual creativity through production work, and what does this have to do with cultural capital or critical understanding?

The question of how creativity influences cultural capital and critical understanding should also be taken into account. I would propose that the movement from familiar to unfamiliar is driven by a creative-conceptual cycle which sees the student constantly implementing their conceptual learning through production work. Here, Creativity is the engine of media learning, as it forces students to triangulate their conceptual learning with acts of imagination – what Vygotsky calls fantasy (Vygotsky, 1998, pp.153-154) – and craft skills (in terms of film-making and editing). Perhaps a more precise definition of craft here might be found in Martin Heidegger’s term *techne* (Heidegger, 1993, p.318). For him this is about physical action or skill which reveals knowledge about the world – what Heidegger refers to as the “essences” of being, a term that implies some kind of ideation or representation of it. *Techne* also involves a sense of the aesthetic; that the craft effort can reveal beauty as well as practicality, though the artist’s own mental effort. These elements of *techne* mean that as a term, it is not simply restricted to “making stuff,” but rather that making stuff reveals particular things about the beauty of the world. A combination of both Vygotsky’s and Heidegger’s ideas leads to a three-part model of creativity, which I propose to develop further in this study. This three part model of creativity (**concept development, imagination and techne**) – in this case manifested in the form of video production – is constantly synthesising both familiar and unfamiliar critical and cultural knowledge, by forcing students to put it into a finished product. It is explained in more depth in Chapter 7, but here, there is a need to give some concept to the theoretical perspectives that inform it.

Vygotsky thought that Creativity was fundamentally connected to the idea of conceptual thinking, an idea which may have some impact on this thesis. He asserts that children move into adolescence when they can move beyond from what he terms “visual thinking” to “non-visual thinking.” (Vygotsky, 1998, pp.161-163) This imaginative transformation is really important for understanding the way that progression in critical understanding is developed, thus suggesting that conceptual and critical development are fundamentally linked to creativity. The transformation then, is about changing the cultural resources that the young person has at their disposal and this is why, as suggested earlier, creativity is closely related to the habitus, or embodied, internalised dispositions to behave in a particular way. This latter

stage of adolescent development is characterised by an ability to deal with concepts:

The concept is a kind of cluster of judgements, a key to the whole complex, their structure. From this it is understandable that the concept has a non-visual character and develops in a way different from simply combining representations

(Vygotsky, 1998, p.160)

It is this that marks out adolescence as being a creative time for Vygotsky, allowing for the generation of what he calls “fantasy” but seems to refer to any act of imagination:

The formation of concepts brings with it, first of all, liberation from the concrete situation and the possibility of creatively re-processing and changing its elements.

(Vygotsky, 1998, p.163)

It is, I believe, significant, that Vygotsky sees creativity as a “re-processing” of concrete situations into abstract concepts. I would want to suggest that this is what is occurring in the production process, when students are moving between conceptual learning in the classroom and the implementation of those concepts in their production work. As will become apparent in Chapter 7, I would argue that the dialectical nature of the learning, means that re-processing is a two-way street, in that students not only seem to move from concrete to abstract, but also, frequently from abstract to concrete – a reversal explored extensively by Engestrom (Engestrom, 1987, pp.156-161). The creative process is marked by a constant re-negotiation of the student’s relationship with both their teacher, the concepts they learn, their cultural capital – which includes the things they watch in and out of class – and the production work itself. This is a synthesising process, suggested here by Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1998, p.160), which provides a useful starting point for thinking about the way that students learn. If the learning process is dialectical then we must make that link between the work of Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1979), and ideas about the habitus, and Vygotsky’s view of creativity, which is about conceptual negotiation (Vygotsky, 1998, pp.163-4). Once a student acquires a new practice or understanding, this becomes incorporated into their habitus and subsequently is used to develop further conceptual understanding, most notably through its creative application in production work where those concepts are demonstrated.

To summarise, the theoretical perspectives that inform this study are as follows: Firstly, the

model of creativity is a three part one that involves imagination and concept formation, and Heidegger's idea of *techne*. Imagination is about transforming the cultural resources of the student into abstract concepts, and theoretically Vygotsky links this to play (Vygotsky, 1998, p.158). I want to argue here that for the student to be creative, such transformations are accompanied by the development of *techne*, a set of craft skills (including those associated with digital editing technology) that are designed to reveal something about the world. I want to use this model of creativity to put forward the idea that for individual students it is the engine that drives learning progression in critical and cultural terms. The absorption, negotiation and re-conceptualisation of new texts, relationships and practices, and their application in production work suggest that creativity is such a force. Additionally, if we see creativity as part of the *habitus*, we can see the way in which it becomes part of the mechanism for transforming cultural capital. An analysis of the students' video production work then, will need to look at the way that imagination, concept formation and *techne* are manifested in that work, and how that might relate to ideas about cultural and critical development.

3.5 Conclusions

I would argue here that the Dialectic of Familiarity draws together these theoretical perspectives on culture and identity, criticality and creativity. The conceptual, critical and practical progress made by students can be characterized by a constant journey from thesis (what I know and have already experienced) to antithesis (what is new, unexperienced and indeed oppositional to my everyday experience) to synthesis (what I have made, with my newly acquired knowledge). At some point in the process this synthesis is about the orthodoxy, the ideas that the teacher and the institutions within which they are working have espoused, but later, it is more about entirely new knowledge, creativity and cultural experience – Bernstein's "unthinkable." (Bernstein, 2003) The idea of the unfamiliar is integral to understanding this; I want to suggest that culturally, creatively and critically, students are constantly looking to turn the unfamiliar into the familiar, while teachers frequently look to reverse that process.

The important thing to emphasise here is that the dialectic describes not only knowledge and concepts though. It is about production practices and skills, cultural tastes or experiences and

about the development of a creative response to certain ideas and tasks. The creative-conceptual cycle requires that students become familiar with many different types of unfamiliar knowledge and experience. What the dialectic does is to pull all these things into a description of the learning process.

What follows then (after the methods chapter) are three data chapters, in which the progress of students across three years is viewed through in cultural, critical and creative terms. That data does, I believe, show that the Dialectic of Familiarity is a powerful (though not unproblematic) model for understanding the way progression in media learning occurs. It does not always deal with the “messy reality” of the media classroom, but it can signpost some ways through it.

Chapter 4 – Methods and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The ideas that lie behind this thesis began to form in the early part of this century, when I was teaching many groups of young people to make digital video in both GCSE and A-Level Media Studies contexts. I became very interested by the way that learning occurred in this process, where several different influences became apparent. The students in my class brought things to the classroom from their peers, their family life and the popular culture that they had experienced as well as some of the concepts and skills that I and my colleagues had taught them. It was clear to me that the unique place occupied by media education, with its reliance upon the relationship between students, teacher and popular culture, meant that learning processes seemed different in many ways from other subjects in the school curriculum, and while others in the field of media education had attempted to analyse these processes, (see Chapter 2) almost none had looked at the progression of students over a significant amount of time. As a consequence, I developed the main research question for the thesis which was: “What constitutes learning progression when students make digital video in the secondary classroom?” This led to a number of other ancillary research questions which were explored in Chapter 3. The question of learning progression developed out of a desire to understand how students learnt and how this learning was manifested, particularly in production work. I considered the role of popular culture to be important as well because it was clear to me that students used their cultural resources all the time in the media classroom in a way that was not always clear cut to me as a teacher.

As a consequence of this, I determined that the way to assess how and why students progressed in learning to make digital video (and by implication how they learned in a media education context more generally) was to look at the kind of work students produced in both written and practical terms across a three-year-period, and to talk to them about that work. This strategy, discussed further below, produced a good deal of data in the form of pre-production work, finished video work, written evaluations and interview data. When I started upon this data collection, I had no theoretical perspective to be tested. Rather, the theoretical ideas that I put forward in Chapter 3, about the Dialectic of Familiarity and the three-part model of creativity arose out of discussion of and writing about the data. Methodologically,

this puts the theoretical perspectives derived from the data in the realm of grounded theory, (Cohen, et al., 2000, pp.150-152) the problems with which are discussed below. Such an observation raises some further issues with the methodological nature of the study generally and its location. While there were significantly ethnographic features to the research (I was after all, the student's teacher, observing the ways that they responded to the tasks I set) there were also longitudinal elements to it as well. These issues of methodological location will be discussed further below, as will the context in which the research was undertaken.

4.2 Context

The context of the school in which the research was conducted needs some explanation, as does the author's relationship with it. The school itself was a 1900-pupil comprehensive school situated in one of the more affluent boroughs of outer London. The school was academically successful on all key governmental measures and had a good record of sending a significant number of students into Higher Education. I had first worked at the school in the late 1990s as the Head of Media Studies, and established the subject to the point at which it had a very high profile within the school with more than 200 students taking the subject at GCSE and A-Level. In 2002 I left the school to take up a more senior post elsewhere, but returned in 2004 as Head of the Arts and Media Faculty. During the three-year-period I was in that post from 2004-2007, the data for this study was obtained. I did not, as outlined in 4.4 below, deliberately create a group of students to track across the three years. Rather, I happened to be teaching a cohort of 25-30 students (this number varied across the period) in classes across those three years. What became clear was that a core of students emerged from this cohort who presented rich data sets for analysis, in that they opted to produce a significant number of video projects (four or more group and individual projects) over the three years, as opposed to other types of media production – such as magazine or newspaper production – that they could have opted for. There is a need to explain though, how these students became the core students that are focused on here. Of the cohort of 25-30 students, 9 opted to do a majority of video projects. I then selected five from this nine as this was a manageable number of “case studies” representing a variety of forms of engagement with digital video production. These five came from both genders and different cultural and academic backgrounds, suggesting that there might be different models of progression and different “learning trajectories” evidenced by their work. These five students produced a huge amount of relevant work across the three year period; so much so, that only part of the total data set is referred to, even for these five. The complete data set for

both these core students and some others from the wider cohort is elaborated on in Appendices 1-3. These core students were: Andrew, Jasmin, Lianne, Bruce and Jamie. A number of other students (four out of the cohort of 25-30) also produced similarly full data sets of four or more video productions over the time period, but that data is largely not referred to here - other than in the Appendices - due to limitations of space. The selection of these five focus students and the rationale behind it is discussed below.

Of these core students a particular focus in the study is given to Andrew and Jasmin, because they completed three individual projects, as well as the two group projects - whereas the others only completed two. Other students, particularly those involved in the group projects are mentioned at various stages because their contributions draw out some of the perspectives that are being drawn from the work of the core students. All the students were undertaking GCSE, then AS and then A2 Level Media Studies courses in accordance with the AQA (for GCSE) and OCR (for AS/A2) specifications. These specifications can be viewed by following the links to them in the references section below.

These students came from a range of backgrounds as explained in Chapter 1. There was also a range of abilities. The school had a tradition of earmarking students who were high academic achievers for application to Oxford and Cambridge Universities, and none of the core students were considered to be in this group. However, all five students achieved in excess of 5 GCSEs at C grade and above including English and Maths, and some (e.g. Bruce) went on to successfully apply to Russell Group Universities. The male dominance of the core group reflects the male dominance of the wider cohort studying Media Studies in the school at the time.

All the students had access to digital video cameras through the school and to editing software. In Year 11, this software was constituted by Windows Moviemaker, while at AS and A2 Level it consisted of Adobe Premiere. However, some students chose to teach themselves how to use Premiere and did use it for GCSE projects.

As Head of the Arts and Media Faculty, I taught GCSE and A-Level Media within the school, as well as Film Studies. I also taught on GCSE and A-Level Performing Arts and English courses, which allowed me to see many of the students in contexts that were not based in the media classroom. This became important particularly when considering the role of creativity

in learning, as analysed in Chapter 5.

4.3 Research design

As Cohen, Manion and Morrison point out, it is important to distinguish between methodology and methods (Cohen, et al., 2000, pp.44-45) and make a distinction between the style of research that one is conducting (methodology) and the instruments that one is using to conduct the research (methods). This study is not exact in its methodological location, but rather uses what Robson identifies as a hybrid strategy (Robson, 2002, p.90) which places it somewhere in between different types of research methodology, but draws from several of them.

As alluded to earlier, in some ways this study bears the hallmarks of an ethnographic study. It is naturalistic, uses qualitative methods and focuses on understanding the meanings behind student work in order to assess how they are making progress in their learning. Indeed, in many ways, the research fits some descriptions of an ethnography, in that the study is about the life of the students in the media classroom and as media students. It is also to some extent about the relationship between the students, their teacher (i.e. me) and each other. The study seeks in some ways to describe that life using descriptions of learning and production activity, acquired through a content and discourse analysis of students' writing and semi-structured interviews with students who made video productions across the three year period. However, it does not display the kind of anthropologically investigative element of a full ethnography. Andrew Tudor has suggested that it is actually impossible to do fully ethnographic studies into the kinds of cultural relationship being explored in this study, because all it ends up doing is replacing real analysis with "rich description." (Tudor, 1999, p.170) As an alternative then, De Block and Buckingham have pointed out that the sort of research being done in this study is best described as "ethnographically styled" (De Block and Buckingham, 2004, p.16) – in that it involves observation of social processes, but is also observant of those processes happening within an institution, of which I personally, as the student's teacher was a part. There are precedents for the kind of research being done here within the field of media education, in which media teachers research their own practice: David Buckingham and Julian Sefton-Green's book *Cultural Studies Goes to School* (Buckingham and Sefton Green, 1994) and *Watching Media Learning* (Buckingham, 1990) – (a collection of articles that come out of teacher-led research in the media education

classroom). Buckingham and Sefton-Green locate their work in the tradition of action research and its concomitant ideas about reflective practice (explored further below), but awareness of both social and institutional processes needed to be retained by the researcher, particularly as I was operating within the culture of the school, but not necessarily within the popular culture of the students.

The action research tradition within education is well established as a means of bridging the gap between research and work-placed based practice. It tends to be designed in order to effect a particular kind of change in the “practitioner-as-researcher’s” professional role (Robson, 2002, p.219). While this thesis did not necessarily start with the intention of effecting such a change, it did arise out of some questions that I asked as a professional practitioner, and as such shares some features of the action research project. McKernan suggests that action research is, amongst other things:

1. *Participatory*
2. *Methodologically eclectic*
3. *Tending to avoid those paradigms of research that isolates and controls variables*
4. *Dialogical and celebrates discourse*

(McKernan, 1991, cited in Cohen, et al., 2000, p.228)

This study certainly does share those features of the action research project, and indeed, as alluded to in the Introduction, one of the motivations behind the study is to give classroom teachers a full account of the nature of learning progression in production-based media work. Consequently, it is the case that one of the approaches that the hybrid method used here draws on, is action research. Additionally, there is a tradition within media education of exploring the role of digital video work in the classroom through this kind of research project, as alluded to in Chapter 2.

Reflecting on this dilemma of “practitioner-as-researcher” more deeply requires an understanding of the limitations of the position that I, as a teacher of the students whose work is analysed in this study, occupied while conducting the research. Such limitations are part of a general problem for practitioner-researchers that Cohen, et al., describe as a “focus on the familiar” in which the researcher tends to ignore the more tacit aspects of the area they are researching (Cohen, et al, 2000, p.157). This is characteristic of ethnographic research in

general, but can be particularly applied to the situation of a teacher researching students that he has known and taught for some time. Interestingly, there is also a contrasting problem for practitioner-researchers, identified by Brown and Dowling using the term “epistemological paradox”. (Brown and Dowling, 2001, p.8) Here, the act of researching an area that you have knowledge of requires that you remove yourself from it, thus changing what you know about it. This broad difficulty filters down into some quite specific difficulties with this type of research. Robson, (Robson, 2002, p.219) has quite rightly suggested that one of the disadvantages of occupying such a position are the preconceptions that one may have about what is being researched or the subjects of that research.

The focus of this study is learning progression though, and this leads to consideration of the role of the teacher in that progression. It may be seen as a limitation of the work that it does not discuss the question of pedagogy, but as already alluded to in 1.8 there was a need to make a choice about which side of the teaching and learning equation to discuss. Having said this, there is some reflection on my own pedagogical input at various points in the three years of the study, and as a consequence there is a need to be aware of some of the difficulties of being a teacher-researcher. The best examples of this occur in Chapter 5 (specifically sections 5.2.2, 5.3.1 and 5.3.2) where I was quite conscious of my own cultural position and preferences influencing what the students were doing. As a consequence, the data used particularly in Chapter 5 that deals with culture, reflects my concerns as both a teacher and a cultural consumer. Similarly, those examples of data that constitute assessment outcomes – particularly those which contribute towards formal qualification – such as the Individual projects described in Chapters 6 and 7, should be viewed in the context of projects that have been taught, by me, with a view to obtaining a particular assessment grade. Such observations do not hinder the richness of the data (if anything they provide contextual detail which renders it even richer) but rather that they probably give insights into my behaviour as a teacher as well as that of the students. These behaviours are not analysed in any great depth in the study, but must be kept in mind when reading it.

As suggested earlier, there is also a sense that the study owes something to the ideas surrounding grounded theory – that is, where new theoretical perspectives arise from the data generated. As Robson points out, (Robson, 2002, p.192) there are several attractive aspects to grounded theory, not least when the researcher is working in an area in which there is a lack of theory and concepts to describe what is going on. The absence of any long term studies, or

indeed, any kind of substantial theoretical model to explain learning progression points towards this being a reasonable, flexible research design to adopt. The problems with a Grounded Theory study are numerous, particularly as Robson states, in the area of “saturation” (ibid, 2002, pp.192-193). Saturation occurs when the categories of an instance or happening cannot be distinguished from one another. There is something of this “messiness” in the application of the metaphor of the dialectic; it is sometimes hard to tell where what is described as antithesis stops and synthesis starts. Additionally, in traditional Grounded theory study, theory development should be interspersed at regular intervals in the research process, while the Dialectic of Familiarity as a theoretical perspective only arose after I had begun to write about the data collected.

In conclusion then, this study is methodologically eclectic in that it draws from a range of research approaches. There is a tradition of this kind of research work in schools, however, making such an approach valid. To echo Buckingham and Sefton-Green (Buckingham and Sefton-Green, 1994, p.9) “this is a very particular situation,” but the need to give an account of how students learn to progress over a longer period of time is great, and as discussed below, it was that opportunity that led to the identification of the students in the study.

4.4 Sample

While the study is generally flexible in its nature and makes use of qualitative methods such as textual analysis and semi-structured interviews, it also possesses elements of a fixed longitudinal study – sometimes referred to as a cohort study (Cohen, et al., 2000, p.174) – where a group of individuals is studied over a longer period of time doing several different activities or tasks. In a cohort study, not all the individuals would necessarily be sampled doing the same things over the same period, but there would be an attempt to identify patterns in responses to activities over that time. There would also be an attempt to select the sample as a means of excluding or including particular variable factors. The sample in this particular study, however, also shares some features of an opportunity sample, (Brown and Dowling, 2001, pp.29-30) as there was no conscious attempt to keep the wider cohort exactly the same over the three-year-period. As discussed in 4.3, the five core students were selected as a manageable number of case studies; their profiles emerging over the course of the three years as they opted to do video projects for coursework.

Across the three years, these students who produced a significant amount of video production work (here defined as four or more group and individual video projects) - either through personal choice or circumstance- became of particular interest to me, because I believed that it was in these students and their different learning trajectories that the most evidence of learning progression was to be found. Such students, of whom there were nine in the cohort, produced substantial data sets, but that is not to say that there was not significant and useful data produced by students who did fewer projects –something that I allude to in the additional data explored in the Appendices. It is worth emphasising here that in terms of the cohort as a whole, no student could avoid doing video production work across the three years. At the very least, every student would have had to do the two group projects in Years 11 and 12. The students who chose to make more video than these two group projects attracted more of my interest precisely because they were choosing to do so. It was clear to me that there were cultural factors behind that decision and, as culture is one of the three lenses through which progression was being viewed, this influenced my decision to select those students who produced the most video.

It might be tempting to see the five students who remain in this study as “the survivors”; those students who were left having done the most video work at the end of the three year period, and as such not representative of the wider cohort. However, there was a mix of gender, social class, ability and ethnicity in both the five focus students and the wider cohort, and while the five focus students produced more video work than the average student in the cohort (who probably produced two or three video projects) their experiences of video production both within and without the class room were not dissimilar, something that is again, supported by the wider data set discussed in the appendices.

This opportunity sample, combined with a longitudinal approach over a three-year-period (though not a true longitudinal cohort study – with its concomitant problem of attrition rates) was chosen because it gave the best opportunity to answer research questions about learning progression.

4.5 Ethical considerations

All students work was completed as part of existing examination and coursework structures and so there was no work in the public domain at any point. Interview discussions were held

as part of the normal processes of assessing work, though students and parents were informed that the content of those discussions would form part of this research study. No objections to this were forthcoming. All research interviews were carried out by myself. The students involved have all now left secondary education and indeed, Higher Education.

4.6 Data Collection

Prior to the main data collection, which was to take place over a three-year-period from April 2004 – April 2007, some pilot data was collected from a group of Year 13 students, (not included in the full thesis, though the quote that opens it does come from that pilot study, and other data from it is included in the Appendices) in order to generate ideas about which kinds of methods and data could be useful in addressing the question of how students learned to progress. Robson identifies this exploratory approach as being a valid one in flexible research designs. (Robson, 2002, p. 185). This pilot study (though not in fact a small scale replica of the full thesis) consisted of a number of approaches that were used later on. Students were asked to make a short (2-minute) slasher movie, and then present a critical evaluation of it to the rest of the class. While the students were engaged in the practical production of the short film, I also undertook filming of them filming. I did this because I had in mind that observing them at work might reveal something about the learning processes, which it did. However, in addition to the finished short films themselves, and the video of them presenting their final critical evaluations to the class followed by some group interviews, it produced an unmanageable amount of data. Exemplars of this data are included in the Appendices . The short films themselves, in conjunction with the evaluations did reveal some interesting observations about the nature of the critical and the cultural development of the students, so it seemed that this data would be sufficient to use in the full study, particularly where interviews were being conducted as well. The filming aspect of the pilot study did influence the full thesis however, in that during the two group projects in Year 11 and Year 12, I did film the students during the filming and editing process editing process, as I was particularly interested in the way that students dealt with the digital dimension to learning. This, in addition to the planning documents, finished videos and evaluations, and interview data gave more than enough material for interrogation.

Much of the data for the study was collected as part of the normal assessment cycle that the students were involved in. In the chapters that follow, the individual examples of data and its

original source are labelled using numbers and letters (e.g. I4, E5 etc). This labelling system is explained in Appendix 1. The key elements of this data are the video productions of which there were potentially five across the three years. These are explained in Fig. 2 below.

Project/Group/Indiv.	School Year	Qualification	Topic Area
YEAR 11 GROUP PROJECT (SUMMER 04)	11	GCSE	Documentary
YEAR 11 INDIVIDUAL PROJECT (AUTUMN 04/SPRING 05)	11	GCSE	Free Choice
YEAR 12 GROUP PROJECT (AUTUMN 05)	12	AS	Thriller/Horror
YEAR 12 INDIVIDUAL PROJECT (SPRING 06)	12	AS	Thriller/Horror
YEAR 13 INDIVIDUAL PROJECT (AUTUMN 06/SPRING07)	13	A2	Free Choice

Fig. 2 – Video Production Projects undertaken by students

Standard modes of assessment for each project would include the submission of planning documents, finished video and evaluation. This work then became the data which was to be analysed in order to reveal what students were learning.

In addition to this, two other forms of data were also collected. The first of these were from semi-structured interview questions asked of various students who had produced video projects at each stage of the study. The second was video data filmed during the editing process carried out by students in the Year 11 and Year 12 group projects.

The semi-structured interviews centred on a number of questions which can be seen in Figure 3.

Fig 3: Semi-structured interview questions

What is the nature of your video coursework?

What are the ideas behind it?

How did you go about constructing it/making it?

What problems did you have with the construction of it?

What kind of texts do you think influenced your own video project?

How do you think you used these other texts?

How different was the experience of making your own project from making the group documentary/slasher you made earlier in the year?

What do you think you learnt from the documentary/slasher project that helped or influenced your own coursework project?

Which of the two projects did you find harder/easier? Why?

While there are some problems with conducting semi-structured interviews, as identified by a number of researchers, such as the generation of an unanticipated amount of data (Deacon et al., 1998, p.352) they did allow for the flexibility to ask follow-up questions.

These interviews were conducted with all students in the cohort as a matter of course at the end of all video production projects with the exception of the Year 11 group project (Documentary). The reason for an absence of interviews after this project was simply one of time; the project finished at the end of the summer term and it was neither appropriate nor efficient to interview them about it at the start of the following Autumn term. Instead, questions were asked about the group project in the interview conducted after the subsequent individual or group project, as indicated by figure 3, above. The questions above remained largely the same, though obviously, the follow up questions varied, and examples of these can be seen in some of the selected interview transcripts which are included in Appendix 3. Also included in Appendix 3 for the purposes of comparison is an example of a transcript from a student who is not in the core group of five,

The interviews were not seen as anything unusual by the students, because the practice of questioning them about their work, both in individual and in group situations was used regularly as part of the departmental assessment process in establishing the student's next steps in learning progression.

However, after some initial attempts to ask these questions in a standard interview set-up – with the teacher and the student, pair of students or group of students simply sat down and the questions being asked and answered - it was clear that the students were not talking as freely or as openly as they might. At this point, it became clear that it would be more productive to watch the student's finished video production with them and ask the questions as we watched. Generally, participation in the interviews was dependent upon the type of project being assessed. If a student had worked individually, they were interviewed individually. If they had worked in a pair or group they were interviewed in a pair or group. There were two exceptions to this. Jamie and Bruce were interviewed together about their Year 11 projects. We watched their films sequentially and then they were asked the interview questions. They answered individually but at the end of Jamie's interview there was an open unstructured

conversation from which some data in Chapter 6 is drawn. Individual interviews were generally advantageous, as students proved to be much more willing and able to discuss their work. Paired and group interviews were harder, as students were less willing to “speak first.” There were however, some examples of students responding to others that produced interesting data, most notably in the case of Andrew’s Year 11 project, who was interviewed alongside Laura, another student who had helped him produce his film. Conducting the interviews whilst watching the finished video produced a much richer vein of data and did not rely upon the student’s memory recall of the production process so much, which was, at times, inconsistent.

The video data shot while the students were editing was useful as it was a more informal method of gathering information from students about what they were learning. It too was subjected to the analysis methods described below.

4.7 Data analysis

The key methods of data analysis for the study were textual analysis (including multimodal analysis) of the moving image and Critical Discourse Analysis. In Chapters 5 & 6 (Culture and Criticality) the textual analysis and discourse analysis focused on the planning documents, finished video, evaluations and interview data produced by the students in the study. Specifically, the video was initially analysed textually using the kind of framework codified by Bordwell and Thompson, (Bordwell and Thompson, 1993, pp.156-327) while the written and spoken word was interpreted via a kind of critical discourse and content analysis associated with Norman Fairclough and others. (Fairclough, 2005: Van Dijk, 2001; Robson, 2002, pp.351-7) Critical Discourse Analysis involves the analysis of language in order to examine the way that power relationships are enacted. It seemed that there was a good deal in the relationships between teacher, student and cultural experiences that was about the exercise of power, but as it transpired this was problematic, as discussed below. These forms of analysis were at various times attempted on their own with varying degrees of success; for example, I initially began with a straight Bordwell and Thompson type textual analysis of the student films in order to see if what the students said about their production work in the evaluation writing was actually borne out on video. Bordwell and Thompson set up an analysis of the moving image which relies upon a close examination of camerawork, mise-en-

scene, sound and editing. This was perfectly adequate when attempting to assess how critical understanding was being demonstrated in terms of say, filming and editing. However, it soon became clear that this was inadequate for analysing what was actually going on in the production process, and the rationale that lay behind the student's decision-making process, hence the move towards Kress and Van Leeuwen's multimodal framework (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, pp.6-23).

Similarly, I began analysing student statements about their production work (from interviews, evaluations and planning documents) using a strict Faircloughian framework of genre, style and discourse, but this actually proved rather restrictive. There were clear examples of particular genres at work in the learning process – indeed, I refer to these at various points in the study; for example the genre of coursework evaluation. However, style and discourse became difficult to distinguish at points, because students would often represent themselves through their work and Fairclough's view of style as “a way of being” and discourse as “a way of representing” were frequently conflated in productions, especially in the early stages of the study. I only discovered this conflation though, after I had decided that I would, as a consequence of some initial discourse analysis try to code some of the students statements from their planning and evaluation in order to discover more about the way that students were learning. (Demonstrated by the coding framework outlined in Figure 4 below, which was originally developed to identify statements that students made about self-representation and identity – this being an important indicator of cultural progression which is discussed in Chapter 5). It transpired however, that the spoken and written data was very rich in meaning, and such efforts to code were generally inadequate, though they did help to identify some ideas about the way that identity changed across the course of the three years that was described and analysed in other ways. As a consequence, I ended up using a much more “thick description” approach to the textual analysis. “Thick Description” is a term coined by Clifford Geertz, the American anthropologist who famously stated:

...man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning.

(Geertz, 1973, p.5)

This sentence describes the kind of semiotic exploration that eventually went on in the analysis of what students said and wrote. Coding ended up being unable to capture the rich

and complex meanings of what the students said about their work, which is why a range of analyses came to seem more appropriate.

What this meant in practical terms was that I was focusing on the language and content of student's statements about their work, in order to analyse how they used metalanguage, what they placed cultural value on and how they talked about the creative production process. This was fundamentally about looking at particular words and phrases and what meanings were invested in them, but also was about the mechanisms by which the students learnt and adopted the metalanguage of criticality. As a consequence, the quotations from interviews that appear in the body of the thesis are selected because they are specific examples of students talking about the creative production process, adopting the language of conceptual and critical learning or discussing the cultural aspects of both their work and the experience of making it. Given that these three lenses dictate the focus for the study, I would anticipate that any other researcher coding this interview data in order to see how progression occurred in cultural, critical and creative terms would end up selecting similar quotations from the interview transcripts. The exemplar transcripts in Appendix 3 should give some indication of other aspects of the work that students discussed that were not related to these three lenses.

1) Representations of the individual as a member of a group (in which students make statements that are about either the group they worked in for the production work or their membership of the class as a whole.) For example:

"I think our work could be improved if everyone in our group turned up, because that way more effort would have gone into our work." (Anna – Jasmin's group)

2) Representation of the individual as student (in which students make statements about their work in the context of the institutions of school, curricula and coursework)

"I think we could improve the interviews with (sic) interviewing the teachers at the school and ask them what they think about the way that some of the students behave like during lessons." (Tom – Jamie's group)

3) Representation of the individual as aspiring film maker (in which students make statements about the filmic or textual qualities of the work and how it might be viewed by its intended audience)

“It (the documentary) uses a variety of key features used in many documentaries... it uses interviews and effectively uses editing to create a seamless narrative.” (Andrew)

4) Representations of the individual as cultural critic (in which students make statements about the nature and content of the cultural texts that they have encountered either inside or outside of class in relation to the product)

“In the documentary, he (Moore) uses lots of humour such as sarcasm and irony to get his point across.” (Chris – Jamie’s group)

5) Representation of the individual as producer (in which students make statements about the practical application of knowledge, the use of equipment and the logistics of making the video product)

“We knew exactly what we were doing and when we were going to do it, because we planned it out on a storyboard and we stuck by the board.” (Anna – Jasmin’s group)

Fig.4 – Coding framework used to identify statements about representation.

These analytical approaches worked for Chapters 5 and 6 because it was here that the written and spoken data was being analysed in order to ascertain how students’ critical and cultural understanding was being developed (critical discourse analysis) and how that understanding was demonstrated in their production work (textual analysis). In Chapter 7, where it was the creative aspects of the production process that were being analysed, and so it became more appropriate to use multimodal analysis. This method, pioneered by Kress and Van Leeuwen (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001) allowed for a consideration not only of the student’s finished video product, but also the processes that went into making it. However, Kress and Van Leeuwen themselves do not analyse the moving image, so it is necessary to make the kind of

adaptation to their framework suggested by Andrew Burn who describes the multimodal nature of film as being “kineiconic” (Burn, 2003 p.13). This concept has been covered in Chapters 2 & 3, but it does give a good sense of the way that the moving image communicates across a number of modes and can be analysed multimodally. John Potter also uses a multimodal framework in a similar way to get at the layers of meaning in student production work (Potter, 2009, p.125) and so there is a strong precedent for its use in this kind of study.

The use of such a multimodal analysis gives a much richer picture than traditional forms of analysis of the moving image. Bordwell and Thompson’s textual analysis does not, for example give any credit to the way that the formal qualities of a media text bear a relationship to the way that the product is distributed to its audience. When one analyses a textual feature, such as titling, using the Bordwell and Thompson framework, what one ends up with is a series of semiotic statements. This is perfectly adequate for semiotic analysis, but media studies discourses will often want more than this. By using a multimodal approach, such an analysis will reveal more of the relationship between the producer, the audience and the world they both occupy. In terms of this study, focus on the different strata of the finished text (discourse, design, production and distribution) allowed for the discussion of the production process as a whole, which in turn permitted an analysis of the creative processes and the way that they both manifested critical understanding and the way that creativity was manifested within that understanding. This discussion is permitted because consideration of the strata allows for analysis of the students’ finished product and the way that it communicates across several different modes (in the students’ finished video productions those modes might be moving image, the written word and sound, to take just three examples), all of which might be considered to be sites of creativity.

This is not to say however, that other kinds of data are not used and analysed in Chapter 7. Where students wrote about the production process in evaluation, or spoke about it in interview, that data, while being referred to in a chapter that makes extensive use of multimodal analysis, is also analysed using the kind of discourse and content analysis outlined above.

In summary, the data analysis was a combination of these methods; textual analysis of

finished student video work; multimodal analysis of this work; and content analysis of the statements that students made in their written work and interviews. These analysis methods allowed for a full consideration of learning processes across the three years of the study.

4.8 Conclusion

Finally, it is worth re-stating the importance of the metaphor of the Dialectic of Familiarity. This arose out of observations made of the students' work, and, as explained in Chapter 3, the range of methods used was an attempt to facilitate this observation. Methodologically, this "Mixed methods" approach, along with my unique position as both teacher and researcher, while perhaps not being orthodox, did allow for some very rich data to be gathered and analysed. The triangulation of analysis methods in particular, allowed for the development of a theory of learning progression which would not otherwise have been possible. This is significant, as while there are studies which have attempted to gather similar data across a similar time span, (Burn, Buckingham, et al., forthcoming) they are built upon a "researcher in classroom" approach rather than a "teacher-researcher in classroom" one. Across the next three chapters, the data gained from these approaches is analysed in an attempt to ascertain what constitutes learning progression and the way that this might relate to the students' own popular culture.

Chapter 5 - Culture

5.1: Introduction

The theoretical question about culture outlined in Chapter 3 (“**What counts as cultural capital in relation to the consumption and production of the moving image by young people and how does it change over the three-year-period?**”) contains within it questions about culture more generally and in this chapter, I will argue that media education is in a unique position in that it relies upon students having a relationship with culture, or perhaps more accurately, cultures that no other subject has. This argument is also about the way that students exhibit their own ideas about cultural capital and how those connect to, or differ from the cultural values of their families, teachers and schools and the academic capital that those are associated with. Finally, it is also about the way that students build an identity out of their cultural resources and manifest this in their production work.

Answering these questions should provide an insight into how learning progression occurs in cultural terms. As noted in Chapter 2, none of the studies into the teaching of digital video in the classroom deal with culture as an aspect of progression. While there has been some attempt to describe learning progression in cultural terms, these accounts are not complete. As Burn and Durran note, for example, the idea of cultural progression “cannot be contained by ages and stages” (Burn and Durran, 2007, p.152) but it is clear that students do develop their relationship with culture over time. The influences on that changing relationship are clearly varied, ranging from the kind of technology that the student has access to outside school to the sort of things that they watch on TV to the kind of cultural texts that their parents subject them to, either consciously or subconsciously. What Burn and Durran do not propose is a way of assessing cultural progression explicitly and separate from a “critical literacy” model of media education. The question here would be about whether the Dialectic of Familiarity allows a common view of media learning (both cultural and critical) but at the same time, permits some distinctions to be made between the two areas – for example the relationship between culture and identity, or criticality and language.

In a learning process described by the Dialectic of Familiarity then, what role would the familiar cultural experiences of the students have to play? The influence of family and home life, personal viewing habits and other cultural experiences will all have a role to play in how

students learn in the media classroom. There will also, however, be other influences at work which might have an influence; not least, for example the personal cultural preferences of the teacher, the student's peer group or the institutional cultures in which both teacher and student find themselves working. Significantly, the way that the teacher legitimises certain kinds of cultural capital over others by seeking to turn them into academic capital could also be important for understanding learning.

The way that students negotiate these influences, and the familiarisation and de-familiarisation that is involved, I believe, are at the heart of the learning process. This is why learning is probably at its most complex when it is dealing with matters of culture; because the relationship between the student's own culture and the cultures in which they are working are constantly changing as they defamiliarise their own cultural experience and preferences and then familiarise new ones. It is important to realise here though, that familiarity and unfamiliarity are broad terms used to describe what students know and what they don't know. In order to refine a sense of how the student might move from the familiar to unfamiliar and back again, we could use the language of Hegelian dialectics.

In dialectic terms, learning progression could be seen in specific terms of thesis, orthodoxy and synthesis. Here, **thesis** could refer to the kinds of knowledge and experience that students already possess before they start their learning progression in the media classroom; **antithesis** could refer to the new material that is introduced to them in terms of cultural and critical knowledge and experiences – usually by the teacher, though not always so. It might also involve the re-presentation or re-interpretation of cultural texts or experiences that the student has already had. Antithesis might also be used to describe the kind of *oppositional response* that students might have to such new texts, experiences or reinterpretations. **Orthodoxy**, could be used here to refer to a restatement or re-presentation of that antithetical cultural knowledge and experience by the student, and as such, is a new kind of **thesis, (or a “first-stage” synthesis)** in that it would bring together classroom knowledge and personal experience of popular culture, but is not the same as **full synthesis** which is a term that could be used to describe what occurs after orthodoxy. In order to distinguish between these two stages but retain the characteristic of orthodoxy as synthetic, there are occasions when orthodoxy will be described as “first stage synthesis.”

In this section of the study then, I want to explore the idea that learning progression in cultural terms could be viewed in some very specific ways, through this dialectical model. In order to do so, the student production work will be examined in terms of the extent it can be described as moving from thesis, to antithesis, to orthodoxy and then finally to full synthesis. However, it is clear that culture is a complex concept, and a dialectic model would have to allow for some of these complexities. In Chapter 3, I stated that there were a number of perspectives that needed to be explored in order to assess the role of culture and cultural capital in learning. These included assessing the cultural “inheritance” that the students gain from their families and homes both before and during the learning process; examining the relationship between academic and cultural capital in the media classroom, and how that relationship changes so that new forms of cultural capital are formed; discussing what cultural value the students place on what they are doing; the development of cultural capital, identity and self-representation. It is the exploration of these cultural complexities, and the way that they are manifested in the production work of the five focus students that is a constant theme in this chapter. An examination of how they might be described in dialectic terms constitutes the work of this chapter.

5.2– Thesis

If we assume that the Dialectic of Familiarity can describe the learning process, what would “thetic” knowledge look like? What kinds of cultural capital would be apparent when the student first begins the learning cycle? I would contend that student production work generally suggests that their own personal influences, familial background and cultural tastes form the basis for the ideas that they want to apply to their production work. In philosophically-dialectic models, thesis is the point at which the individual starts from in their quest for truth or knowledge. In cultural terms, that can be very wide-ranging, including cultural ideas, experiences, practices and the cultures that occupy the media classroom (e.g. production work, group work) and the wider institutional classes of the school. In the Year 11 stage of the study, where students have a good deal of freedom to choose what they want to make (they have, for example, free choice in terms of the topic of the documentary they are making – see below) and on occasions, the medium that they are choosing to work in. As a consequence, what is frequently seen in these early stages of the learning process is a good deal of talk in both evaluations and interview about the role of both personal cultural interests

and of the student's home and family background in the production process. In Chapter 3, I highlighted the fact that many students may see bringing their own cultural experiences into the classroom as something that is atypical – not what they would expect a teacher to ask them to do. It is for this reason that we might see knowledge at this thesis stage as “illegitimate” or rather, lacking in legitimation, to use Bernstein's terminology. That is to say, that the cultural experiences that the student brings into the classroom have not been subjected to the intervention or repositioning by the teacher. It is these “un-legitimised” cultural experiences that we could see as the basis for thetic knowledge – the student's own cultural capital that the teacher has not yet attempted to turn into academic capital in the media classroom. This raises the additional problem of what happens to the cultural capital of students which is not legitimised because the teacher simply doesn't choose to legitimate it. For example, a teacher who chooses to introduce French Cinema to his or her class but ignore video games is clearly saying something about the cultural capital that they see as valid – and consequently “fit” to be turned into academic capital. If we want to identify what might constitute thetical knowledge and what kinds of cultural capital it might incorporate, there is a need to analyse data – the student productions. In this first phase, the production work of Jasmin, Andrew and Bruce – three of the five focus students – provides some insight into that identification and the way that thesis could be connected to school, family and peer group influences.

5.2.1 Example 1 – Group documentaries

In the first Year 11 video project, students are asked to make a documentary in groups. What the students end up making are both documentaries and “mockumentaries” which show some cultural experience of documentary, but on the whole explore cultural landscapes that are familiar to them. Two of these documentaries exemplify this: Jasmin and her group produce a piece called *Rebellious Teens!* about teenage behaviour in the school; while Bruce and Andrew produce a film entitled *The Silence of the Fizz* which is about the school's decision to ban fizzy drinks from the school's vending machines.

Jasmin's documentary reveals a number of interesting features of these early stages of the learning processes being focused on. It becomes clear that she has learnt some basic production skills using a camcorder and Adobe Premiere. The film has been titled (see Figure. 5) and uses some common generic devices, such as the talking head (Figure. 6)



Fig. 5 Tittling (sic) (Jasmin, V2)

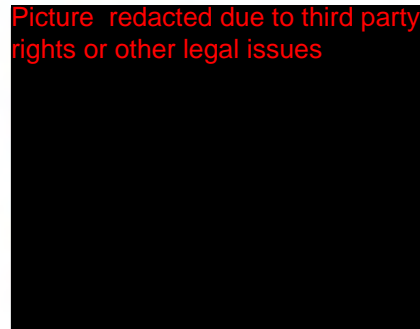


Fig. 6 Talking Head (Jasmin, V2)

These items have been edited together in a drag-and-drop programme in order to create a simple shot/cut/shot structure and demonstrate understanding of the conventions of the documentary genre, but also that they know how it conveys meaning, through titles, stock footage and interview. This basic production work demonstrates a number of signs which suggest it is rooted in Jasmin's own cultural comfort zone. Firstly, it is demonstrating a very basic understanding of a complex genre, in this case, documentary. It suggests that she has seen some documentaries both in and out of school and that they have some idea about the semiotic conventions involved in them. Secondly, she is using the documentary to represent an issue which is of interest to her – in this case, discipline in schools. Thirdly, the genre is being used to represent her own view of the culture she inhabits within school. This suggests that at this stage she is relying on her own cultural views to approach the production work task.

Further analysis of Jasmin's storyboard reveals some significant things going on in terms of the cultures that surround the product as well as the cultural learning. The first frame of the storyboard created for the documentary shows the title of the documentary and then a caption underneath that reads as follows:

This is the first image you will see when our documentary starts. Their (sic) will be a voice over of Steph (one of the other group members) telling you about our documentary. Steph says: Hello and welcome to rebellious teenagers. This documentary is based in a school on Northwood Hills that school is Haydon. This documentary will contain interviews with students and teachers and the general behaviour of the students at the school. This would last for 15 seconds

Jasmin, P1

There are two salient points to make here. Firstly, the need to have the voiceover presenter explain what the content of the documentary will be seems to reinforce the idea that Jasmin and her group know what they are expected to demonstrate. Secondly, the repetition of the word documentary suggests an attempt to “feel” a way into the term by using it redundantly. Both this observation and the fact that it would be unusual for a real documentary to explain itself in terms of its own conventions suggest two supplementary points. These are that a) while Jasmin and her group want to show that they know the documentary genre, it is actually largely outside their everyday cultural experience and b) the culture of the school and the requirements of coursework outlined by the board demands that they provide an explanation for everything. This unwieldy explanation of the content suggests that Jasmin does not have access to a term like “voice of god” narrative which would help her describe what is happening here more succinctly. This is because such a concept is antithetical to her. While a concept like this might have been introduced to her in class, she is not familiar enough with it to use it, or does not know that she should use it. These observations suggests that the thesis and antithesis stages sometimes overlap with each other; that students have some thetical knowledge of the documentary genre, but it is not the kind of fully rounded experience that the teacher (or indeed the exam board) wants them to have. Additionally, the experience of making the documentary is still firmly located in their own experience, something demonstrated by observations of students making the films both in the shooting and editing stages, and the culture of the school sometimes made it difficult to do what the task required. For example, in the middle of filming, Jasmin complains to me that:

Jasmin: We wanted to do a scene in which Miss states to them clearly what they have to do.

SC: So why didn't you do that then?

Jasmin: “Because Miss told us to come back in 15 minutes at the start of the next lesson.”

Jasmin, O2

The finished documentary is then, indicative of their experience of school. Their experiences of documentary are limited, but the familiar cultures of schools, rowdy teenagers and referral rooms (all featured here) suggest that the students are attempting to learn by responding to the task of making a documentary through their own cultural experiences. The antithetical cultural experience here is the documentary genre itself, while the thetical knowledge demonstrated is that of the culture of

school and how they perceive it. Their documentary is a representation of that thetical knowledge, but without a full understanding of the “antithetical” nature of the documentary.

Andrew and Bruce’s documentary is interesting because they see the documentary genre as being a vehicle for an issue that they really want to see addressed. As Andrew says in his treatment for the documentary:

My documentary will be as objective as possible, but it will be mainly subjective towards bringing the fizzy drinks back. The target audience for my documentary will be between teenagers aged 13 and adults/parents aged 40.

Andrew, P1

This apparently oxymoronic statement demonstrates two important things about the understanding of the genre. Firstly, Andrew understands that objectivity is an important notion in documentary. We are seeing that Andrew wants his teacher and the coursework moderator to know that he is clear about the fact that truth and objectivity are fundamental to his project. However, he and his group are also aggrieved that the school took the decision to ban fizzy drinks from the canteen. Instead of moaning about this to their parents, or engaging in a spot of random graffiti, they take the decision to use the documentary genre as a means of airing their grievances. They have learnt either explicitly or implicitly, that the documentary, as a genre, tends to be taken seriously by audiences. This would seem to be a familiar, and hence, thetical concept to them. This makes an interesting contrast with Jamie’s documentary (the *Lehri Files*) – discussed in the section on Antithesis below. In their work it is evident that they have watched other documentaries and the presence of people such as Michael Moore is evident in both their production work (they make a poster to promote the film which compares them to Moore) and their evaluations. We can infer that some of this comes from teacher input, as before watching *Bowling for Columbine* I asked each student to find out someone else’s opinion on Michael Moore, but some of this cultural influence comes from the student’s own perceptions of the genre itself. Andrew comments in his evaluation that:

The Truth Behind the Moon Landings is also a historical documentary because it uses archive footage and people who were related to the event. In it... serious doubt is placed on whether the moon landings were real or in a studio.”

Andrew, E2

This extract seems to demonstrate a fledgling relationship with a type of cultural text that is (as in the case of Jasmin and the group she works with) not entirely familiar to the student. Andrew understands that truth and doubt are important to the genre of documentary, but isn't ready to question what those terms actually mean – hence his blind faith acceptance that a Channel 5 documentary throws the most significant event of the 20th century into doubt. This is part of his learning process, and his understanding of the genre is probably a little more advanced than Jasmin's group, but there is still an unfamiliarity with the genre coupled with a desire to represent and explore his own culture; in this case, manifested by the desire to get fizzy drinks back into school. For Andrew, it is the cultural event of the moon landings, and subsequent views of them (i.e. the belief that they were faked) that it is of most interest, rather than the documentary genre. This reveals something about the antithetical nature of the documentary genre at this stage – he knows that subjectivity and objectivity are important ideas to the genre, but isn't aware that those qualities are necessary ones for a documentary viewer as well as a producer.

Both Andrew and Bruce have learnt something about the genre from the process of actually constructing the documentary. Watching them edit the documentary, it became clear that through production work they were having some discussions which were drawing them towards a better implicit understanding of the genre. For example, at one point Bruce and Andrew are arguing about whether or not to include a comment made by one of the people they have interviewed. Andrew thinks that the segment is too long, but Bruce says:

Leave it in. That will be a talking point. The audience will start talking about that when they see it.

Bruce, O2

This demonstrates an explicit awareness of the idea that documentary should get people talking, but it is only arriving here out of the editing process. Students on the whole, in this group project are choosing to use the documentary to express their own cultural concerns (fizzy drinks, student behaviour). This concern for the cultures of school and peer group suggests that they are using the documentary to say who they are and perhaps more specifically, what they are interested in. These documentary examples reveal that, perhaps unsurprisingly, school is a significant cultural influence on their work. For example,

institutional cultures around the classroom and school are prominent. This is illustrated by Bruce's pre-occupation with what students can and cannot do in school. They also reveal though, that there is a negotiation process going on here between the teacher's cultural preferences and the student's expression of personal identity. They know that they are in a school subject, and are meant to be developing critical skills, so they make concessions to that, showing signs that they will move toward what might be termed a critical and cultural orthodoxy. This is best illustrated by the comments above about what documentary "should" be like.

To summarise, there are a number of key observations to make in relation to these examples. Here, documentary is an unfamiliar, and thus antithetical, form to the students, so they fill it with their own experiences, desires and viewpoints etc. In some ways, we can see the familiarity of the content "alleviating" the unfamiliarity of the genre, and the unfamiliarity of what they are being asked to do by the cultural constraints set by their teacher, school and the examining board. Thetical knowledge at this stage foregrounds the cultural capital of the student in terms of their experiences and desire to communicate personal concerns – it places value on the experiences of school, rather than the genre of documentary. However, even at this stage it is not only school that can be a significant cultural influence. Home life and peer group also have a role to play.

5.2.2 Example 2 – Andrew and the role of family "inheritance"

The role of the family and home life in the development of cultural progression is significant in that it marks one of the points of familiarity from which students begin their learning to make digital video. It is possible to see these familial cultural influences as one of the starting points for the dialectic, with students using the personal resources of their home and family to help them in their production work. For some students this occurs in very simple ways, when parents, brothers and sisters support the student in some way in the production of their video work. Jasmin, for example, is open in her discussions about the way that she used her Mum's house in order to create both her Year 11 and 12 productions. Her Mum and sister appear in two of her trailers and there are numerous comments (see Chapter 6, also) about what she has "done" to the house in order to achieve the effect she wants:

Health and Safety! ...in the sense that I didn't want anyone to get hurt while they were being thrown around the room. And there was the fact that we were really trashing my Mum's house...

Jasmin, 14

Bruce is similarly forthcoming about the way his Dad supported his production work by letting him use both his shed and his work lights for the music video he made in Year 13. This implicit support from parents suggests a home life in which there is a general popular predisposition to the notion of film-making and the idea of practical work. This familiarity with both environment and human resources (e.g. family members as actors) provides a thetical starting point where this one aspect of popular cultural experience can be internalised and made part of the student's habitus – in this case the notion that home will be a place where film-making can take place. For Bourdieu the habitus was constituted by a set of dispositions to do things – in this case to make film at home. The practice of making home movies – a significant strand in popular culture for many people – is the kind of experience that I would argue, is a thetical one. The idea of film-making in the classroom, turning home-movie making into academic capital, on the other hand, may well seem oppositional or alien to both the student and their parents, and yet the existence of an accepting place in which to do that work is clearly significant as a thetical starting point.

This observation highlights a more general point about seeing the “cultural intervention” of the teacher – in this case the practice of bringing film-making into the classroom – as a “positive disruption” to the students' normal experience. Putting film-making into a classroom setting may not always be about building on the student's existing popular culture, but instead maybe something that the student rejects because they don't want “the thing that they do at home” to be “the thing that they do in school.” The dialectic movement here (in this case between school and home, but also in other cases between classroom and peer group) does often appear to have an impact on students' ability to progress, because it is often in the rejection of the teacher's attempt to legitimate the activity – by bringing it into the classroom – that the student ends up resolving the thetical and the antithetical into something new. These ideas are explored further in 5.3.

However, for some students, the status of cultural experience within the home leads to further progression and a move towards new, antithetical knowledge. A closer look at Andrew's Year

11 project, *Never Look Back*, reveals this. Working with his classmate Laura, the two students set out from the beginning to make a classic “stalk-and-slash” type thriller. Andrew is very clear about the genre, and his planning focuses on very generic features:

I have an idea to make an introduction to a thriller/horror movie. It will be about a young girl who gets killed by a crazed murderer after being chased by him down a dark alley.

Andrew P2

Fairly predictable then, at this stage, but his product research shows a tendency to seek to turn cultural capital into academic capital. Only one of the films he researches (John Carpenter’s *Halloween*) fits precisely with this very tight generic structure. He also chooses to write about Alfred Hitchcock’s *Vertigo*, *28 Days Later* and (after a conversation with his teacher) *The Last Broadcast*. From a cultural perspective, these choices are very interesting. Subsequent evaluations and discussions reveal that Andrew spends a lot of time talking with his parents and family about film. *Vertigo* is such a film and it is clear from his writing that he has enjoyed the film, though one does have a sense that he has included it in his planning because he thinks that will get him a better grade. One also gets the sense that he may have chosen *Vertigo* after a discussion of the film with his parents. *The Last Broadcast* was merely a suggestion that I made to him as an example of a different kind of horror film. What this seems to suggest is that Andrew is very keen to take advice from adults, because he has worked out that doing so will guarantee him a good grade. It is important to note though, that this does not on the face of it, appear to be a masochistic instinct. Andrew obviously does love making and watching films – but also loves being the best student and something of an expert. The difficult thing to prise apart here is whether Andrew’s production would have been any different if he had not watched those films. In his planning he spends some time saying how his production will draw from *Vertigo*:

Many of the shots in our piece will be influenced by Vertigo. We want a suspenseful final product, so we will look at how Vertigo achieves this. To build up tension we will use a lot of point of view shots like Vertigo does. These shots make the audience imagine what the victim is feeling.

Andrew, P2

There are POV shots in the finished film, but one could argue that this comes from any of the

films that he has researched, or indeed any other film that he has watched. What we are seeing here is a privileging of a certain kind of cultural text, which Andrew has been either consciously or unconsciously encouraged to do. Whether or not this comes from the classroom or from his own cultural background is hard to tell. Did his teacher explicitly tell him to watch *Vertigo*? No. His teacher has always tried hard not to tell his students directly to watch anything, but rather make up their own minds. Did his teacher discuss any film that students wanted to discuss in the course of doing production work? Yes, of course. There are probably a range of cultural influences here, including familial ones, but what is interesting is the way that they are being manifested, and the way that Andrew is moving between his personal cultural interests, his family home and his academic work, and it is this movement that will take him beyond orthodoxy and towards synthesis. Here though, the familial influences in his consumption and production of film are making him different in a thetical sense; something that requires further explanation.

Andrew is clear from the start about the role of his father in the Year 12 project, for example; when asked about the origins of the name for the production (which is called *Mea Culpa*) he says:

That was my Dad's idea... as it was a thriller, he thought it would be a good idea to have someone writing a love note to someone as if they had done something terribly wrong and were leaving, and I said "Well, what have they done?" and he said, "Well, they are to blame for something going wrong." So we started brainstorming ideas about blame and he came up with the idea of "I am to blame" in Latin, which is Mea Culpa.

Andrew, I4

His work on this idea is particularly interesting because it illustrates the idea that cultural influence, like culture, is not a single, unifying concept. Within it we might detect evidence of cultural capital (the use of Latin, rather than English), a culture of creativity (the word "brainstorming") and the culture of popular texts (referring to the piece as a thriller, rather than just "my coursework"). The role of Andrew's father here, in moving him on from Familiar to Unfamiliar is perhaps, much more like a teacher's role than a parents, with his own cultural knowledge, experiences and preferences being what is antithetical and new. Indeed, this intervention seems to suggest something different to our expected ideas of

popular or, to use Raymond Williams' term "common culture" (Williams, 1958). It is dissimilar to other students' experiences, but what I believe this demonstrates is that the thesis stage is very different for different students. The point at which the student starts may well involve ideas about cultural capital that come from their family. However, it is important that this "new material" – in this case *Vertigo*, and the conversation about the origins of the phrase *Mea Culpa* – is in some senses at least, still antithetical to Andrew, because it is reasonable to assume that he and his father have not had the conversation prior to him undertaking his production work. However, I would want to argue that it is only antithetical in the sense that the conversation is a teacherly one. The input of the teacher (in this case Andrew's father) is to legitimate the cultural experience, to represent it as something new and oppositional; and it is this that makes the experience antithetical. This is problematic, because it not only raises the question of whether what the teacher legitimises is genuinely popular culture, or simply their personal cultural preferences, but also the issue of the fact that learning progression seems to be at times, solely about that legitimation. One of the difficulties with the dialectic model of learning then might be that a student could have a tremendous number of cultural experiences that might be useful from their family life, but would not be seen as making progress unless they were validated by bringing them in to the classroom.

These observations do also raise the question of what role social class has to play in the learning process when considering matters of culture. Andrew is from a middle-class background, where conversations about learning between parents and students are easily conducted. The range of topics that Andrew covers with his father – Latin mottos and Alfred Hitchcock, to name but two – suggest the kind of middle-class, "cultural omnivorousness" observed by Peterson and Simkus (Peterson and Simkus, 1992, p. 169) in which middle-class people are able to move between the popular culture and "high" cultural forms with ease. The important question for this study though is whether or not a lack of this omnivorousness in other students prevents them from progressing. I would suggest not, because learning is not governed solely by cultural experience. The Dialectic of Familiarity could describe why here, in that learning progression is driven by the way that the student implements their cultural knowledge and experience in their creative production work rather than simply by possessing that knowledge.

To summarise in this example, the cultural knowledge provided at home means that in other

senses, Andrew is thetically different when he steps into the classroom. His starting point in any given task or activity is likely to be different from other students as a consequence of these cultural activities. This seems to reinforce the notion that the Dialectic of Familiarity is not a model of learning that occurs for everyone in the same way. The thetical starting point is clearly different for different students, but at the same time, antithetical ideas and cultural experiences do not occur in a regular and even way for all learners.

5.2.3 Example 3 – Bruce, peer group and popular culture

If home life is one potential area of cultural life, then peer groups and the popular culture that they inhabit are clearly another. It is clear that in the early stages of a media course, like these students are, students are very concerned with what their peers think about popular culture and sometimes more simply, just what their peers think. How might a dialectic view of learning explain these peer and popular cultural influences?

Because students' relationships with popular culture are constantly changing, what we consider to be their cultural knowledge and ideas when they enter the classroom – namely that which they hold as their own, something that wasn't introduced by the teacher or in the classroom, or as part of a formal educational endeavour of some sort – is also constantly changing. The early part of this study is characterised by students wanting to bring that thetical knowledge of their own peer culture to the production process, but that knowledge is often not fixed and does not often match the cultural texts that the teacher introduces in class.

Bruce for example, as his Year 11 individual project, produced a short film, which he describes as coming from the mystery/thriller genre. He deliberately chooses not to give it a title and also deliberately gives it no dialogue, instead choosing to have a wordy and rather sinister narrator comment on the story from beginning to end. The premise of the film is that the film's only character wakes up one morning to find that he is apparently the only person alive in the town – something that Bruce freely admits he has borrowed from the film *28 Days Later*. When interviewed about the influences on the film though, he says that music was more of an influence on him:

The idea for the story was 28 Days Later but the camera techniques were stuff I thought up ...I guess at the time I was listening to a lot of dark stuff, depressing stuff like Radiohead and

I was looking through their artwork and it was sort of saying to me “not everything is alright.”

Bruce, 12

These ideas are reflected in the opening scenes of the film, which portray a lone individual sitting in the entrance to a basement with his head down. This high angle shot suggests a sense of surveillance – and constitutes an interesting representation of the culture in which Bruce finds himself.



Fig. 7 – The opening scene from Bruce’s film (Bruce V3)

Both his comments and this shot are particularly interesting because they seem to attest to the model of cultural progression outlined above. Bruce has brought his own influences to bear on what he has been taught (“the camera techniques”) and interestingly has not simply replicated a scene from the film. The cultural texts here have been explored in a thematic way, allowing Bruce to illustrate the ideas rather than the texts, that he is interested in. We are seeing the development of identity and self-representation, but seeing it grow out of the culture of the popular text – the familiar texts that Bruce has explored in his daily life.

So as a piece of moving image text, what is going on in Bruce’s film in terms of cultural influence? When interviewed, Bruce makes some allusions to film noir, seemingly without being clear about what the term actually means:

Bruce: *I dunno... it's just the narrative of the last moments of this person's life.*

I guess it's a bit "film noir" with the voiceover and that.

SC: *I'm interested to know what you understand by the term "film noir" and why you might have thought about doing something in that style.*

Bruce: *What I think of film noir is that it's a very different kind of film making...it doesn't go by the standard rules, like in the first part there has to be an exciting moment ...instead it has different rules, it uses a voiceover, it's just different.*

SC: *Where did that come from though, because we haven't really talked about that in class?*

Bruce: *It wasn't as though it was specifically film noir though. Other people were making films where they had the whole film's storyline thought out and there at the start of the film. I just wanted to keep it simple really, because this is the first film I've made properly by myself and so I wanted to just mess around with it, like trying different angles and different places for shooting and that.*

Bruce, I2

It seems that what Bruce doesn't want to make is a standard genre extract like a lot of the rest of his classmates. What he wants is a vehicle for exploring his ideas – the comment about the fact that he sees film noir as having “different rules” appears to reveal his true intention. Culturally he wants to do something different, to form his own identity and creativity, but he hides this behind a statement about cultural capital, (“film noir” apparently having high cultural value). Again, this illustrates a tension between “popular” film culture and “elite” film culture. This probably has its origins in the relationship between Media Studies and Film Studies, which, in turn probably comes from the tension within the subject of English identified by Marshall (Marshall, 2000, pp.52-3) between teachers who see English as being about “cultural heritage” and those who see it as being about “cultural analysis”. I would also suggest that the reference to film noir, while clearly being about wanting to do something different, is an attempt to acknowledge a cultural orthodoxy – that film noir is worthy of study. This is not about what may be termed “mainstream” cultural experiences, but rather that Bruce knows that media teachers like to give names to types of films, and in terming his film noir, he is playing by the rules of that game, synthesizing an unfamiliar genre or at least its name into his work. While Bruce is attempting to harness a wide range of cultural influences, not all of them will be legitimised in class. The reasons for this are discussed below, but, as a consequence, Bruce will probably learn that demonstrating the orthodoxy that his teacher wants will make him more academic capital than exploiting his own cultural texts.

This, while being the reality of many media classrooms, is still saddening.

Bruce comments that in the middle of filming he was asked by a resident of the block of flats that he was filming outside whether or not he had permission to film. In interview Bruce admits that he was unprepared for this, but doesn't see it as a logistical problem; rather an event that happens in his world in which adults intrude into his popular cultural space:

She asked us if we had permission to film. We said we didn't know we had to have permission, and she replied that she would have to go and check if it was okay. She went off and we waited, but she didn't come back, so we just carried on filming.

Bruce, 12

This suggests a number of interesting things about Bruce's peer culture. Firstly, while this is his project, he has recruited a number of friends to help him, and he sees the project as a collaborative effort. Secondly, his matter-of-factness about it also suggests that this kind of intrusion happens a lot in practical projects like this, and that he doesn't expect the adults here to be interested in what he was doing. I would contend that we can see Bruce's view of film-making here as something that "young people do" and that adults don't understand. He does not of course, tell us if she was interested in filming, but rather that she wanted to stop him in some way. We could see these comments as validation of an "us vs. them" mentality on the part of Bruce and his peers, or perhaps more positively, we can see film-making as something that is owned by them.

His view of the interruption points towards what I would term a personal, rhetorical, "this is me" view of production work, wherein adult interruptions do not make the student think, "What should I be doing differently here?" but rather lead them to carry on doing what they are doing in order to emphasise the individuality of both themselves and their peer group. The "this is me" view of self is common amongst students in the early stages of a media course (see the comments about Jasmin's work, below) and is one of things that suggests a link between culture and identity.

This idea is extended further. When interviewed, Bruce comments on the journey he has made in terms of the culture of production work. Because this is an individual project he perceives the difference in terms of the type of work he did, rather than how much.

When we did the documentary I didn't use any of the equipment really, I was just helping out... I guess I was the director of sorting out stuff. I didn't use Adobe Premiere then, and so all of this was one huge learning curve for my film-making."

Bruce, 12

What this seems to suggest is that for some students, the culture of production work in schools may not always facilitate the kind of experience that the teacher intends. While "director of sorting out stuff" is probably a valuable role in terms of allowing the student to make a contribution in terms of ideas and the production process, it may not necessarily be the kind of training in critical literacy and production work that it is designed to be. Bruce maintains that he actually learnt much more while doing the individual production. This may not be true, as we have seen in the earlier part of the study, he has learnt a good deal about documentary, though this is implicit in the production process. Bruce feels he has learnt more in making his own film probably because he has *taken ownership* of it. It belongs to him and is part of his thetical position at this relatively early stage of the learning process. While it is apparent that there are some elements to his work that we could consider to be challenging, critical and insightful about his work, they are still arising out of his own personal culture and peer group. He has presumably talked to his friends about the films and music that are influencing him. Those challenging and critical aspects to his work, that one might be tempted to describe as antithetical or even synthetic (given the definitions of those terms outlined below), are, I believe, **STILL** thetical knowledge, because they are not the cultural forms that have been (rightly or wrongly) legitimised by the teacher. In this case, his teacher has not discussed or presented Radiohead or *28 Days Later* in class – this is not Bruce's failing, but his teacher's! This is important because we should not see the thesis stage in deficit terms, but rather about the way that popular culture gets used in the classroom. To re-iterate, students bring lots of cultural capital with them into the classroom, but only some of it is legitimised. For a cultural text to be seen as antithetical then, I would suggest that the teacher has to present it as new, or present it in a new way.

5.2.4 Thesis: Some conclusions

To summarise then, if there is a thesis stage in the dialectical learning process, it might be constituted by those familial, popular and peer group influences that make up the student's cultural position when they step into the classroom at the start of the learning process. In the

production work analysed here, we could say that the stage is characterised by a desire to foreground cultural experiences at the expense of media genres, as in the documentary examples. It could also be said that students cultural experiences might mean that they begin the learning process as “thetically different,” particularly if the cultural life of their family is influential, illustrated by Andrew’s Year 11 and 12 work. However, this may not necessarily give them an advantage in learning. Finally, students may bring all sorts of cultural capital from outside of school into the classroom but that this could be said to remain thetical until it is re-presented by the teacher. Bruce talks about film noir, but he has not been taught about it. Does this mean he doesn’t know anything about it? Or that his knowledge is in some way invalid until his teacher deals with the topic in class? Probably not. If anything, it suggests that teachers seek to turn into academic capital those bits of cultural capital that they see as valid, but, because the teacher’s role as assessor is so pivotal at this stage of education, it means that, in official terms at least, the student cannot progress without this re-presentation (or antithetical) process taking place.

In between the thesis and antithesis stages of the dialectic we might see a number of different things happening: students could simply accept the new antithetical material that they are taught and form a new thetical position, or they could reject or misunderstand it (a process that will be explored further below). In this case, their thetical position could remain unmoved. They could, however, develop their thetical position further outside school through engagement with new cultural ideas and texts, and conversations with their family. This could be antithetical too of course, as in the case of Andrew, illustrated above, but it is more likely to contribute to what we see as a bigger “thetical base.” A cautionary note also needs to be added here in that this thesis stage is very probably reached through previous cycles of the dialectic, wherein students have combined their own popular cultural experiences with what they are taught about that popular culture in school. Students could conceivably have a substantial base of thetical knowledge, when they first begin a specific programme of media education. This study does not attempt to assess those previous cycles, but what it does do is assess the role of specific media teaching on learning progression; this makes it distinctly different anyway to any previous cycles because the students have had little or no such teaching prior to this point.

5.3 Antithesis

The term antithesis, as outlined in Chapter 3, was problematic for Hegel (Hegel, 1807, pp.72-73), who tended to use the term negative instead, which perhaps gives a better sense of something being oppositional or alien to the original thesis. Within the Dialectic of Familiarity it is possible to see that negative, or antithesis, as describing two elements of the learning process. The first of these is about the new, the *content, skill or material* that is introduced, re-presented or interpreted in the classroom by the teacher. This is to some extent about the business of teaching and the way that it is carried out, but perhaps more significantly is about the content of the exam specification they are delivering. This content, skill or material is unfamiliar to the student and could in cultural terms, be texts, ideas or practices. It is important to remember here that the text or practice *itself* may be familiar to the student, but that the way it is presented in the classroom is unlikely to be. The unfamiliarity may simply involve taking a text or practice out of the home and putting it in a classroom in order to give it academic legitimacy. This issue of legitimation or validation is important for the way that we might describe learning progression in dialectic terms – I would want suggest the idea that an antithesis stage in learning might partly involve the teacher legitimating certain types of cultural knowledge or experience, and the student's negotiation of that process forms part of the dialectic. In other words, the student may well bring lots of cultural capital into the classroom, but this will remain thetic, unless the teacher treats it or represents it as antithesis, thereby legitimating it.

The second element of what we may see as antithesis is the response that the student makes to that material. In order to explain this element it is most appropriate to look at two differing examples of the kind of response students made at varying points in the study.

5.3.1 Example 1 – Positive reactions to antithesis: Jasmin

Jasmin, who like Andrew chooses to do video production through all three years of the course, is clear about what she wants to do right from the beginning of the three years that this study focuses on. She successfully manages to adapt the needs of her work in media studies across the three years to her taste (not the other way round, noticeably!) Her Year 11 individual project is a trailer for a new romantic comedy film and when interviewed about her

GCSE production she admits that she loves “romantic” films and that there are specific things that she wants to achieve with her trailer that films she has watched do. In interview Jasmine, talks a little about a film that has interested her, *The Princess Diaries*:

When she (the central character in The Princess Diaries) changed her features to become a princess – I brought that idea to it, to my film. Her friends had put make-up on her and it was so excessive that she was like ‘you must be out of your mind!’ I thought that was hilarious, so I brought it in and expanded on that a bit.

Jasmin, 12

This then, is a broad attempt to imitate the key signifiers of an established genre. Jasmin’s familiar experience of romantic comedies is part of her cultural habitus (in the sense that she is teenage girl, for whom romantic comedies might be expected to hold a particular cultural attraction), but what is antithetical here is her role in taking control of both the genre and that habitus in an attempt to meet the cultural demands made by her teacher and the coursework requirements. While what she reworks here may be mostly imitative – re-forming a cultural orthodoxy that sees teenage girls as being represented in a particular way – it becomes less so as she moves on through her academic career (see Chapters 6 & 8). The issues of genre and habitus, and what we are meant to be culturally predisposed to like, link very closely here to the ideas about identity formation put forward in 5.2.3. In making the trailer, Jasmin is saying something about herself. On one level, that self-representation says, “I like romantic comedies;” however, on another level, it says, “I like Media Studies, because it has given me the chance to make a product that I like.” On a third level, it also says “Actually, there is something about romantic comedies that I don’t like, so I am going to do something different with them,” (this is outlined in Example 3, below). This could be seen as a version of the “This is not me” identity type discussed in reference to Bruce’s work, with Jasmin attempting to respond to the task with a combination of thetical understanding (her own cultural interest in the genre) and some antithetical material (the idea of generic signifiers, and the practices surrounding production, work, which she has been alerted to in class, and thus legitimised by her teacher) in order to make her trailer.

This complexity suggests Jasmin’s trailer is a multi-layered response to the antithetical texts and practices introduced as part of the production work project. Initially the trailer is about “doing things in the correct way” in order to meet the requirements of the course and the institutional cultures surrounding it. In another sense it is a positive response to the

antithetical ideas about genre, signifiers and iconography that Jasmin has been taught in class, and so attempts to replicate an orthodoxy (which is probably about a kind of cultural capital). In a third sense, it is about self-representation and pleasure – in that it arises out of Jasmin’s personal cultural interests. She is telling a story about herself, and at this stage the content of the trailer looks back to her identity as a teenage girl, but the cultural complexity of the text looks forward to her identity as a media student. The multi-layered nature of the text she makes, suggests the development of the media studies habitus referred to earlier. Here Jasmin is developing such a habitus as part of her identity and while this formation of identity is not always linear – dialectically, it moves back and forth through an Engestromian spiral of learning – it does clearly occur. Effectively, to echo Giddens again, this disposition has become both a part of her story *and* it affects the way that she tells her story through production work. Her “ongoing narrative” (Giddens, 1991, p.54) has become, at least in part, that of the “media student.”

To summarise, this first, accepting response of the antithetical material seeks to treat it as something that needs to be worked with in order to make valid learning progression. There may be an attempt to incorporate the antithetical material into the production work, such as the acceptance of rules about production work or an acknowledgement of genres and signifiers, but there is still a reliance on the popular cultural experience of the student as the basis for such work. This response is generally characterised by the fact that the student *accepts* that the teacher decides what cultural capital is valid for transformation into academic capital and what is not. The antithetical material is there to be pressed into use, and while this may not actually happen in this stage of learning, the student realises that they will have to do so in order to progress.

5.3.2 Example 2 – Rejecting and re-writing antithesis: Parodies and other things

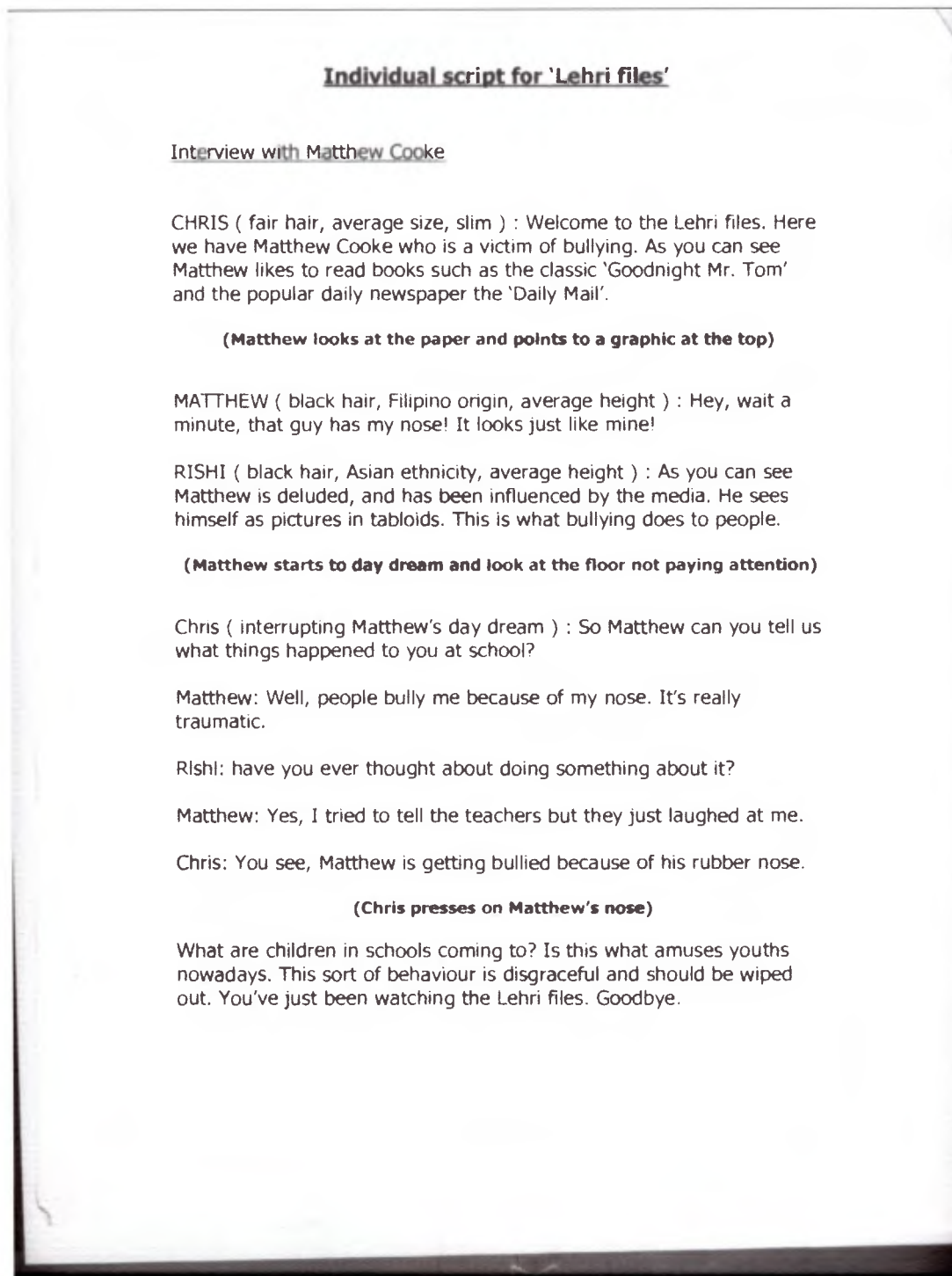
The documentaries described in Section 5. 2 above, are fairly typical of what the whole Year 11 media cohort produced, and they betray varying levels of cultural understanding, but some display a particularly complex relationship between the different cultures outlined at the start of this chapter. In this example, the student seems to reject the new material introduced by the teacher, but in a more complicated way. This second type of reaction is in many ways problematic, because the students who reject the new material that the teacher wants them to learn often seem to be very creative in the way that they make that rejection. Such rejection

of teacher-imposed views of culture and cultural artefacts has been alluded to elsewhere by academics (Hebdige, 1985, pp.99-100; Jancovich 2002, p.153), but these accounts tend to be about critical discussion of texts rather than making them.

In this project, the antithetical material of the conventions of documentary and its associated issues of truth, realism and construction are all “worthy” concepts for the teacher to try to communicate to the class. Also, the choice of example texts (*Touching the Void* and *Bowling for Columbine* have already been mentioned, but *Spellbound* and *When We were Kings* were also shown and discussed in class) indicates a similar set of cultural preferences, all of which could be described as alien to the students. What happened in the case of the example below, appeared to be in some ways, a complete rejection of those cultural aims and the antithetical material that came with them. In other ways, however, it also suggested that students were simply not prepared to accept the orthodoxy that the teacher wanted to move them toward.

Jamie and his group for example (who were all male) chose to create a cross between *Spinal Tap* and the *Cook Report*, in which recognisable roles in the everyday life of a school are portrayed as gross caricatures with students standing in for adults. These caricatures are then pursued by an investigative reporter called “Lehri.” Lianne’s group also did a kind of spoof documentary – a wildlife documentary set in school with different types of student as the featured wildlife – but space does not permit its discussion in cultural terms here. It is analysed instead in Chapter 7 where the focus is on the creativity that lies behind its production. Both these efforts showed a clear understanding not only of the format in its original form, but also of the prevalent trend for subverting the format a la *The Office* – a cultural text that was not discussed in class, and probably would not have been, on the ground that the teacher would have been worried about confusing the students in terms of their understanding of “genuine” documentary. A close look at the script for the *Lehri Files* (Fig. 8) reveals some clever awareness of the kind of oddness that turns up in documentaries both real and fictionalized.

Fig. 8: Script for the Lehri Files Jamie, P1



Here the students' mode of address to the imagined audience and the rather idiosyncratic response of the central "character" show that the students have taken something from their own experience of the investigative documentary either in class or at home; something that is probably antithetical – investigative documentary having been legitimised as "valid" for study by the classroom teacher. Similarly, some of the language of the script suggests an adoption of the cultural landscape introduced by the teacher in this unit of work. For

example, the use of the word “files” in the title, implying something truthful and factual, suggests that they have absorbed the teacher-led suggestion that authenticity is an important element of documentary. Note the use of the word “ethnicity” as well, which suggests an official or perhaps even politically correct treatment of the characters. These are the cultural signifiers that the students are meant to have taken in, responding positively to the antithetical material they were given. These documentaries however, do not end up being like Jasmin’s.

The script – which is in its own way an important piece of production work – is also problematic, in that it seems to challenge Raymond Williams’ definition of “culture as ordinary.” (Williams, 1958, p.53) This is meant to be at, one level a representation of “the ordinary” in that it is about the life of the school. At another level, it isn’t really about the school at all – but more about the students displaying a number of sophisticated desires; for example the desire to show their knowledge of the genre of mockumentary and their desire to abandon the rather restrictive brief given to them by their teacher, who has advised them that it is difficult to demonstrate the conventions of a documentary (the orthodoxy that is the first stage synthesis in the dialectic), and subsequently their knowledge of understanding through parody. They show that they know the format of “serious” documentary – frequently presented by the mass media as bordering on high culture – but that they are also free to subvert it. They also desire to show their teacher that they have been listening in class, (despite what he may have thought!) by introducing the theme of media influence.

This example of Jamie’s work opens up a significant debate about the relationship between realism and parody in popular culture. These students inhabit a cultural landscape in which parodying things occurs so frequently that they sometimes have problems distinguishing what is parody and what isn’t. Brought up on *The Office*, *Curb Your Enthusiasm* and the work of Christopher Guest they seem to revert to parody as a natural state if not given very limiting briefs. These are the familiar rhetorical texts within the students’ culture – fall back positions to which they revert when they either cannot or do not want to critically engage with unfamiliar concepts (or indeed concepts that they do understand as orthodox, but don’t want to bother with because they want to make something new and different). This is not a criticism but an observation of postmodern culture and two distinct strands within it. Firstly, the tendency to subvert, and some times just poke fun at, established “serious” texts and secondly, the tendency for many cultural texts to aspire to what Baudrillard and others call the “hyper-real” – the state in which everything appears to be entirely real but is still actually just a text

pretending to be real (Baudrillard, 1981, p.12). This group's work displays both these tendencies in that it is clearly meant to be subversive, but also is in some ways a perfect representation of school life for these students or what they think it is like. Interestingly, other theorists have noted this kind of rejection of the culture of school. Goodwyn (Goodwyn, 2003, p.145) notes that teenagers will often seek to use Media courses in order to make this specific kind of rejection of the normal school curriculum, for example. I would argue that such a rejection in itself, can be seen as an antithetical response, wherein students know what they are supposed to be doing, (and to some extent do "do" that thing) but instead they subtly reject and subvert it and do something else instead – usually activity that takes them back to their thetical comfort zone. Such an approach marks a rejection of other kinds of cultural discourse that surround the production work, such as the generally accepted culture of media classroom, school and teacher-student relationship. In some ways, this points towards what we could term "the synthetic," as complex understandings of reality and authenticity are worked into the finished text. However, because this finished text is not what the teacher asked for, it is not "legitimised" even though, in some ways it is more sophisticated than the work of other students. Despite this, the dialectic movement from the students' own cultural tastes, to a rejection of the set brief to a complex piece of production clearly involves several different cultural identities which are part of the learning progress. Jamie and the other students who make these parodies are beginning to display different "cultural selves;" consumers of particular kinds of cultural product and subsequently, students of that culture; cultural producers (as film-makers) and cultural agitators (within the culture of school and lessons). The movement between these different selves (and the different locations they inhabit) is dialectic as well; as students clearly struggle with the desire to make the product that they want as well as achieve high marks.

The *Lehri Files* seems to come out as fully-fledged, grown-up parody. It is extremely creative, certainly, but one is forced to ask why nothing like this occurs in later stages of the study. It is possible that the movement from the thetical to the antithetical results in a product which tends to focus more, though not exclusively on demonstrating the student's critical understanding rather than their cultural influences. There is some debate as to whether this outcome might be less creative, (discussed in Chapter 7) but there is certainly a "tightening up" as the students become familiar with what the course specification requires of them. Whilst they are creative though, they are not then fully "synthesised" in the critical sense of demonstrating an understanding of what it is that they have created. For example, neither

individual students nor groups write about their efforts in a way that suggests that they have any more sophisticated understanding of the genre than Jasmin does. With regard to its “mockumentary” style Jamie says little more about the *Lehri Files* than:

In our documentary we aimed to use humour

and:

I think that our group documentary will be successful because it will be interesting to watch as it deals with the perceptions of today's youths in a comical manor (sic)

Jamie, E2

Here, the popular culture of the peer group is clashing with the unfamiliar, antithetical cultures of the classroom and the school, because at this stage, the student does not fully realise that these institutional cultures not only need to be conformed to, but can occasionally, actually help them to do what they want to do; namely make films that they and their peer group enjoy. Over time the students accept these different selves that are at work in their role as student-producers and synthesise them in the same way that they synthesise thetical popular cultural experiences and antithetical critical concepts and classroom discourses.

5.3.3 Antithesis and antithetical responses: Conclusions

This two-fold nature of this stage in the learning process (antithetical material and student response to it) is important to acknowledge for two reasons. Firstly, in some circumstances it is very hard to distinguish between an antithetical idea or text and the student's reaction to it. The *Lehri Files*, seems in some ways to demonstrate a perfectly good grasp of a cultural text that teachers might see as new or oppositional to students' experience (in this case the observational documentary), but in other ways are a complete rejection of it, in the terms that it has been presented to them by their teacher. Secondly, I would contend that it is only by acknowledging both parts of the antithesis – both the new material and their own response to it – that students can progress further, and synthesise “new” knowledge.

The term “antithesis,” covers two distinct parts of the learning process that are connected. On one side, the teacher introduces texts and experiences that the students are probably unfamiliar with. On the other side, the student responds to those things in a number of ways. The teacher's introduction of these things is usually about representing an orthodox critical or

cultural view of an idea or text which arises out of the cultures of media education outlined in the early part of this chapter. The student's attempt to replicate this orthodoxy is the first example or stage of synthesis (explored in 5.4), as students seek to combine their own thetical experiences of popular culture with the antithetical practices and ideas introduced by the teacher. It should also be noted that, as demonstrated by Andrew's comments in 6.2, there can be new or oppositional material that comes from places other than the classroom, and that could also be described as antithetical if it is presented in a particular way.

The teacher-led element of this process can be seen at a number of stages in the study where briefs are set and particular kinds of unfamiliar cultural texts are set as examples. The documentary project in Year 11 saw students watching Michael Moore's *Bowling for Columbine* and Kevin Simpson's *Touching the Void*, neither of which were particularly well known amongst the students. Similarly, the emphasis on the cultural practices of storyboarding and scripting were not something that students were wholly familiar with. Later on in Year 12 and Year 13, students work in media and film classes led them to a study of older films such as *Psycho*, *Peeping Tom* and *The Wicker Man*, none of which would necessarily have formed part of their everyday milieu. Also, perhaps more importantly was that the way that students were expected to respond to these texts was different. To reiterate, bringing the text into the classroom makes it different. There was also a marked change in the culture of the classroom, with students expected to present their ideas in more discursive and collaborative ways.

The reasoning behind the introduction of these different texts and practices was multi-faceted and complex. I would argue for the idea here of a media education *habitus* (arising out of the discussion of Bourdieu's sense of the word, discussed in Chapter 3), which means that students become disposed to do things in a "media-education-sort-of-way." Such a position might allow for the idea that there are texts introduced in class because media teachers want students to use those texts in a particular way. They carry a cultural capital that the teacher wants the students to acquire because, as a consequence, they will respond to tasks in a particular way. For example, students were expected to deal with a range of unseen film extracts and write about a range of texts from a given genre in exams. Collaborative and discursive group working encouraged students to think deeply enough about a text to write strong, complex, developed answers. However, there was also underneath the above rationale, a desire on the part of the teacher to introduce them to things that they would not

have seen before, and to have the students “discover them anew” in some sense. This underlying desire on the part of the teacher points back to that possibility that this introduction of what are described as antithetical texts might at least partly be about the teacher’s own cultural preferences, and that as well as the cultural expectations placed on students by exams and specifications, they need to negotiate these preferences and legitimations as well.

From the student side of this equation then, it is possible to summarise a number of potential responses that students can make to this antithetical material, which can be loosely characterised in three ways:

- 1) The student attempts to understand and negotiate the antithetical material, and tries to incorporate it into their work, in order to replicate an orthodox position. This is best characterised by Jasmin and Andrew’s responses to the Year 11 project.
- 2) The student fails to understand and negotiate the antithetical material and retreats to their own particular thetical position (a sort of “cultural comfort zone”). For an example of this see Appendix 4, in which a group of students not in the core group of five demonstrate this sort of misunderstanding.
- 3) The student understands the antithetical material but rejects it out of hand or ignores it, choosing to do something with it that the teacher did not intend. Effectively they subvert the learning – or teaching – process. This kind of response could be intentionally subversive, as in the *Lehri Files*, or it could just be to do with the way that the student interprets the task and almost unintentionally creates a new, synthetic understanding of the cultural text that they are working with. This latter reaction is best characterised again, by Jasmin’s responses above (and also in Appendix 3, which gives more detail about the interview conducted with her at this stage) , but also by Jamie’s comments about his Year 11 project which are referred to in 5.5.1.

It should be emphasised that on occasions, these responses overlap. Jasmin’s work in Year 11 is an example of this where it appears that she is, at times, both attempting to replicate an orthodox cultural position (by creating what looks like the perfect imitation of a romantic comedy) while at the same time trying to subvert that cultural position and make the text say something else. This overlap, discussed at greater length in Chapter 7, is connected to the fact that it is possible to see the student work produced as an attempt to consciously or

unconsciously generate forms of cultural capital. In 5.1.2, I suggested that the antithetical stage of the dialectic was most closely connected in theoretical terms with Bourdieu's work in this area. Here Jasmin's desire to produce a "perfect" romantic comedy is about her own cultural capital. However, because it happens to fit in with the requirements of the brief – in this case to produce a trailer – the structure of which is a new (or at least re-presented) cultural text and hence antithetical, her finished production ends up turning cultural capital in academic capital. Here the conscious desire to produce a generic trailer – cultural capital – has coincided or overlapped with the antithesis introduced in the classroom, which in this instance, was the structure of a cinematic trailer. This reiterates the notion that some times cultural capital does get used in the learning process, while at other times it does not.

These three types of student response to antithetical material – acceptance, rejection or misunderstanding arise as a consequence of new or represented cultural texts or experiences. Space permits analysis of only two of these types of response here (acceptance and rejection), with misunderstanding being given some consideration in Appendix 4.

In the particular case of Jamie and Jasmin, these responses could be seen as antithetical not only because in the case of the parodies, they seem oppositional to what the teacher wants for the student, but also because they involve the student adapting their cultural capital (their thetic knowledge) to the legitimizing requirements of the teacher who wants and often needs to turn it into academic capital. Even when the student accepts the antithetic material, they are required *to behave antithetically* towards it, even when the cultural text or experienced being introduced is familiar to them. Yet, at the same time such responses hint at a move towards orthodoxy and synthesis that has not yet fully been achieved. This is true of both the parody – which shows absorption of antithetical production work practices, such as scriptwriting – and Jasmin's response to the Year 11 project. This project sees her attempting to replicate the orthodoxy of the romantic comedy genre, whilst at the same time trying to go beyond it, by suggesting that romance should not be about "which girl is the nicest looking." This re-working is examined in more detail in Chapter 7, but for the purposes of this section it should be sufficient to say that this kind of antithetical response – the re-working of the orthodoxy of genre – is not a retreat back into the thetical, but a move towards something more synthetic and critically defamiliarised. This suggests that the progression here is not anchored to a particular stage in the life of the student, but rather comes out of a dialectic movement.

To summarise, the antithesis stage in a Dialectic of Familiarity might describe the way that students deal with new cultural experiences that are introduced and implicitly legitimised by their teacher. At such a stage the student might see themselves as having to adapt their cultural capital to the requirements of the teacher in order to deal with that antithetical material (acceptance) or they might use it in an entirely different way to reject the new cultural material. In terms of the research question, this is one of the ways that cultural capital changes across the course of the three years, and it suggests one of the ways that students make progress in cultural terms. While one's natural inclination might be to see acceptance of the antithesis as the best response for progress, one might argue that rejection results in new cultural (though not necessarily academic) capital. The parody produced by Jamie doubtless brought him a good deal of kudos amongst his peer group and suggested that he had a good deal of talent as a film-maker, even if what he produced was not necessarily legitimised by his media teacher.

5.4 Orthodoxy

In this Dialectic of Familiarity, orthodoxy is probably best described as a kind of initial synthesis. We could use the term to describe the stage reached when the student has combined their own thetical cultural knowledge and experience with the initial antithetical material of text and ideas that the teacher has introduced to them. What happens at this point is that the student begins to replicate the "text-book" conventions of the antithetical cultural material that the teacher has introduced them. The orthodox response is the mid-point, effectively, in the extended Dialectic of Familiarity model outlined in Chapter 3, and as such is best demonstrated by Andrew's response to the Year 12 individual project.

5.4.1 Andrew: *Mea Culpa*

Earlier in the chapter it was established that Andrew was working from a thetically different position from some other students. Along with Jasmin, he chose to respond acceptantly to the antithetical cultures that he was introduced to in the Year 11 project, such as stricter rules about production work, which he embraced in the production of his film *Never Look Back*,

discussed earlier in the chapter. As a consequence, his later work displays a more secure understanding of the culture of production work, and he seems to want to represent his “filmmaker” self. There are also cultural influences at work in his home life which were discussed in 5.2. His Year 12 film (*Mea Culpa*) demonstrates this desire to achieve what we could describe as orthodoxy, and consequently the academic capital that goes with a “textbook” response. At the start of his film, a protagonist is seen writing a letter on a computer screen. When asked about this, he says:

That idea came from a film called Absence of Malice. Right at the beginning it gives you an introduction where there's a newspaper journalist and she's writing about a murder, and then the film goes into what happened, about what she's typing directly on to the screen.

Andrew, I4

Absence of Malice is an Oscar nominated film from 1981. Whilst having a well-known cast and director (Paul Newman, Sally Field and Sydney Pollack), one would not expect it to be in the immediate cultural environment of a 17-year-old writing in the middle years of the first decade of the 21st century. This is not a particularly orthodox text in and of itself, not considered a classic, and certainly not something that he has studied in class. He goes on to talk about the film in relation to his own work and how it influenced him:

...the journalist writes about, slanders, this man who used to be in the mafia, in organised crime, but he's pulled out of it and led a life of solitude, 'til suddenly this reporter writes in her paper that he's responsible for a murder. So he goes and talks to her, and of course she's really scared of him, and there's this big power struggle between them because she's a strong lady and he's a strong man. And I thought for my film that you could have this character who's a journalist and they've done something wrong, got in too deep when they're just a normal person really.

Andrew, I4

There are a number of significant currents running underneath what Andrew is saying. Firstly, the choice of film is very different from that which we might expect a seventeen-year-old to cite as an influence, but what we are seeing here is almost a reversal of what is going on in Jasmin's work, which takes a popular well-known genre and re-works it to say something different about the identity of the student and the way that she sees herself.

Here a relatively obscure text is being pressed into service as a means of providing a source of ideas for Andrew's work. Andrew is working to a brief that requires him to make a thriller, so he chooses a thriller that he has seen and has sparked off a creative process in him. I would suggest here that notions of cultural and academic capital in those terms identified in the earlier part of this chapter might also play a part in his thinking. This then, is not about Andrew's own cultural preferences, but rather the way that production work can be seen to drive cultural progression. He needed to look at a range of texts in order to gain academic capital through a high mark in his creative production work, and this in turn, led to a further increase in cultural capital. These new texts (not only *Absence of Malice*, but also *Vertigo*, which he watched in Year 11) he has used to reach a cultural orthodoxy. This orthodoxy, in which he instinctively begins to consume texts that he thinks will be useful in class can be describes as his new thesis point. This new thesis involves him attempting to take an unfamiliar cultural text and make it familiar by applying the things he has been taught about to it, and this does not just include the textual analysis techniques. He clearly takes a good deal of ownership of the cultural texts he is working with, but interestingly, wants to use them to demonstrate an orthodox knowledge (in this case, knowledge of the conventions of a thriller).

In many ways, *Mea Culpa* is a completely orthodox piece of production work. Well made, it has all the generic elements of a thriller that allow it to score highly as a piece of AS Level coursework. We can use the Dialectic of Familiarity to describe how learning is working here. The choice of text that Andrew took as a starting point (*Absence of Malice*) and those generic elements could be seen as an unfamiliar, antithetical text (albeit one chosen by Andrew, rather than his teacher) combined with unfamiliar critical knowledge (the conventions of the thriller) and his own personal thetical position of personal interest, family background and enthusiasm, have all allowed him to test out his antithetical experiences in order to create an orthodox media text, showing that the creative act of production has consolidated all that antithetical material into something that works in terms of achieving high grades. This orthodoxy is his new thetical starting point for further learning progression.

Yet, this achievement is problematic. The fact that Andrew has gone home, selected an obscure film and talked about it with his parents, is in many ways, completely unorthodox, and shows a desire to go beyond what the teacher expects of his students. The level of critical understanding that is hinted at in the interviews with Andrew, (though not necessarily

demonstrated by his textbook rendition of a thriller) suggests something more synthesised and defamiliarised than just a standard response. Similarly, Andrew's identity and the selves he is creating suggest that he is moving beyond the idea of himself as someone who is "just a film student." The kind of brainstorming activities he describes imply the sort of creativity displayed by an individual who is as happy talking about films as he is making them. This is the kind of observation that suggests that the dialectic is not always as neat as it first seems.

5.5 Synthesis and defamiliarisation

In terms of the way that the dialectic is a metaphor for cultural progression, synthesis could be used to describe two stages of learning. In first stage synthesis (which I have termed orthodox), the knowledge gained by combining the thetic position of cultural knowledge and experience, with the antithetical knowledge introduced by the teacher, might be seen as the orthodox position described above. Here students attempt to replicate the forms of that antithetical material. Second stage synthesis could describe a more complex achievement, coming after the orthodox production work produced by the student is challenged by others, most notably the students' peers and teachers (through assessment feedback and further teaching). This second stage synthesis could metaphorically describe two things that seem to occur in the student's work; firstly, increased levels of creativity and secondly a tendency to defamiliarise in critical and cultural terms. The nature of creativity in this stage of the dialectic is discussed at length in Chapter 7, where I propose the three-part model of creativity built on concept formation, imagination and craft skill that I outlined in Chapter 3. These three elements of creativity are examined in detail later on, and so the focus in cultural terms here, is on defamiliarisation.

Defamiliarisation as it is used here, means not only the students' own ability to disrupt (or "estrangle") the normal and familiar experience of the product that they make and ask more searching and critical questions of it as if it were unfamiliar to them, but also to go beyond the normal reproduction of the critical and cultural orthodoxy expected by the institutional restrictions the student works within. There might be some modelling done by the teacher here, in terms of "how to defamiliarise"

using various analytical tools and perspectives, but generally this stage of the dialectic is an increasingly independent one for the student. One of the clearest differences that emerges in the work done by students at the end of the three years is the way that many of them have learnt to defamiliarise the new “synthesised” knowledge and understanding that has come out of the antithetical encounter they have had with other cultural knowledge and experience.

5.5.1 Example 1: Jamie and music video

At the start of the study then, we might see the students as starting with a very “me” view of cultural texts and the way that they make them (particularly evident in the documentary project) but by the end of Year 13, they are beginning to ask much more complex questions about the texts that they have made and the cultural experiences that inform their construction. The range of texts that they are watching and researching is much more varied and detailed, and it is here that we see an awareness of not only that variety of text, but also the way they can be distributed and their audience.

As an example of this, Jamie’s cross media production (which includes a performance video and an interview with the band) is an interesting place to start. Jamie had also done a music video for his Year 11 production but it was really quite a different animal. When asked about the sort of text that influenced him to make the Year 11 video, he is really rather vague:

The idea wasn't from any product research or anything. It was just a random idea I had one day. I thought it would be different from anyone else's ...I mean, I'd seen a few movies that had this sort of idea, and I thought it'd be good to work it into a music video.

Jamie, I2

Jamie can’t name the movies that “had this sort of idea” – his music video features a character who wakes up having been on a spree of destruction but has no knowledge of what he has done; there is a non-linear narrative and several devices which imply flashback – but does say that one of them might have been made by Quentin Tarantino. Notice as well his quick rejection of the idea that his idea might have come from product research – part of that

pre-production work that seems unfamiliar to the students in Year 11. This rejection, rather like the parody that he made for the documentary project, is an antithesis in itself, the second type of response to antithesis that was described in 5.3. It may be seen as a rejection of the orthodoxy that the teacher wants the students to reach. While being frustrating for the teacher, I would argue that like all antithetical material it helps the student to eventually reach a synthesis. Jamie has to resolve his own thetical interests (the music video) with the antithesis of the documentary form and all that goes with it. Interestingly, there is an almost perfect resolution of these opposites in his Year 13 project, which draws from both genres.

Contrast Jamie's vagueness in Year 11 with a small selection from his comments about the product research he did for his Year 13 production:

My final live video analysis was of a band called 'Fear Before the March of Flames' performing a song, as of then untitled new song, I found that two of the shots that this video presented to me were very unique in their style and angle. Firstly, a simple close up of the guitarist singing a line of backing vocals portrays a dark background, with a bright light illuminating his face. I found this to be very effective, as in the minimal light present at shows; the cameraman has captured the light in the shot perfectly to deliver an eerie presence about that part of the song. The second unique shot that I spotted, was captured from stage level, as the singer knelt down and sprawled himself across the stage. The camera, in a close up position, manages to portray the energy that the singer was putting into his live performance. As one of the main objectives of a live performance video is to entertain the audience, and see whether they are worth going to see, this type of shot can be very effective in proving so.

Jamie, E6

This is not only more detailed than the Year 11 comments but also more analytical. We are still in Jamie's preferred form, the music video, but he has become much more aware of the way that the text is working on its audience. This focus on the audience rather than himself points toward the kind of defamiliarisation that the final stage of the dialectic might describe, before knowledge becomes completely absorbed and returns to a new kind of thesis, or thetical knowledge. To a certain extent, this is the genre of the evaluation (part of a cultural orthodoxy) talking, but there is also a passion for the cultural signifiers that are being presented by the texts he is researching. I would want to suggest here that other genres have

come into play in his work, perhaps for example the genre of the gig review. The use of words such as “sprawled” and “energy” hint at a fandom that goes beyond just writing the evaluation, and starts to reach into his experiences as a music fan. A useful concept to engage with here, which might describe what is happening to the students in this final phase of the study, is that of the aca-fan, a term coined by Henry Jenkins to describe a perspective on work that is both academic and fan-based (Jenkins, 2011). The work is still about culture and the cultural preference of the student, but is now synthesised through the cultures of media education, production work etc. In producing the work, he is adopting several different “selves.” The “aca-fan” is just one of them; his comments about the “objectives” characterise him as a manager of media productions, while his comments about the types of shot show him as a fully developed “media student” at least in terms of music video. In Giddens’ terms, (Giddens, 1991, p.54) the story that Jamie is telling about himself has expanded into several parallel narratives about the selves that have been created through the production work process. These are an indicator of that second stage synthesis and the associated defamiliarisation that goes with it.

5.5.2 Example 2: Bruce and music video

It is significant that Bruce, the student who was most vocal about his cultural influences when interviewed about his Year 11 work, is almost reticent about them at this stage of the study. When he reflects upon his Year 11 film in relation to his Year 13 work he discusses his view of them with me in interview:

My GCSE film was me trying to be ‘arty farty’ and smarter than I actually was and in the two years gap I’ve learnt that I’m not actually that good at making films.”

Bruce, 15

If we dig deeper though, we can find that Bruce too, despite some of his negative comments, is actually mining some very rich veins of cultural knowledge. He has, for example, done some printed promotional material which used a series of Polaroids to go with the music video and he talks about the inspiration for this:

I don’t own a digital camera, and I thought that Polaroids had that punky, disposable look. Recently, there was this artist called Jack Penate, who on the cover of a thousand of his

singles, personalized each one with a single Polaroid of himself... one of my big influences was The Libertines and that sort of ad-hoc look to everything.”

Bruce, 15

In interview, this leads to a discussion about a number of other texts that both Bruce and his teacher are familiar with, most notably Ian Dury and the Blockheads *DIY* album which centres around a similar aesthetic. What we are seeing here is a more considered and controlled use of the cultural resources at Bruce’s disposal. He has become more detached and more critical, but at the same clearer about what he wants to do. At the beginning of this chapter, I suggested that an important question was to assess what students attached cultural value to and how that changed over the three years. While Bruce is fairly self-deprecatory here, he has significantly adjusted his relationship with his cultural interests; generally those influences are the same – namely the relationship between popular music and the moving image, but he is now more willing to defamiliarise texts that he has enjoyed as a fan. This is a distinct change in identity for Bruce. His work demonstrates a much more agentic approach here than was evident in his Year 11 project as his different identities (media student, music fan, self-deprecating aesthete) begin to bear witness to the development of new “story” about himself. In the Year 11 project, his influences – Radiohead and *28 Days Later* – are firmly things that he does “outside school.” Here, in Year 13, he talks about his influences in a more critical and detached way. His ability to defamiliarise his own work in this way marks out two separate developments in his learning progression. Firstly there is his development as a media student and as a media producer (notwithstanding his own self-deprecation). Secondly, and consequently to this, these multiple selves indicate his ability to distinguish between the cultures that were identified at the start of this chapter, recognising that there is a path to be negotiated between his own cultural preferences and the cultural requirements of the school and examination board. He moves between the roles of student-consumer and fan-consumer fairly effortlessly. This contrasts with his rather introverted “this is me” view of his own work articulated in the Year 11 project. His realisation now is that there is a *need* for him and his work *to be a certain way*, an example of that defamiliarisation in action. In Giddens’ terms, Bruce can be seen to be aware of the need to tell different stories about himself to different people.

Bruce has also taken on board the critical feedback given to him about his production, responding to being told that he should change elements of it. This “new antithesis” is discussed at greater length in Chapter 6, but it is his response to it that is another indicator of

the move towards defamiliarisation. This defamiliarisation process and the self-awareness that goes with it highlight a connection between the Dialectic of Familiarity and creativity, which, as Chapter 7 suggests, is the engine that moves learning on from familiar cultural experiences to unfamiliar ones. His desire to become more critical and more self aware and the feedback of his teacher has led to new cultural experiences and more creative, varied production work.

5.6 Beyond synthesis, beyond defamiliarisation

It is tempting to see this defamiliarisation and the creation of multiple selves as the end of learning progression, with the high-quality Year 13 work focused on above being the endgame for the production work cycle. However, the learning process should be seen as being constantly dialectic, newly synthesised cultural knowledge and experiences becoming a new thesis for students. This begs the question for the students in this study – where do they go after the kinds of synthesis and defamiliarisation that they have demonstrated in the three years analysed here? Particularly in cultural terms, there must be some assessment of the way that cultural capital has changed. At the start of Chapter 3, I suggested that there were three questions that needed to be answered in terms of cultural learning progression, one of which was about how cultural capital might change for a student across a period of time in school. There clearly are changes in cultural capital across the three years of the study; Jamie's comments above about the relative value of what he has produced and the aesthetic behind this, differ so markedly from what he said at the start of the study that one cannot help but think that his progress has been entirely about a transformation of cultures. The change from being the student who was open in his rejection of the value of what he was doing (through both the parody work and his comments about his individual Year 11 project), to placing a great deal of time and effort into his thoughts about the music video he makes in Year 13, suggests that his personal cultural landscape has changed immensely. Similarly, Bruce's ability to make value judgements about his own work suggests a much clearer sense of the relative worth, both to himself and others of what he has produced. These movements beyond the synthesis stage are discussed in some detail in Chapter 8 where the learning progression of some of the students (Andrew, Jasmin and Jamie) beyond school, is explored further.

5.7 Conclusions

In Chapter 3, I suggested that one of the theoretical underpinnings for this study was the idea of cultural capital and the way it changed in relation to consumption and production of the moving image across the three years of the study. Within this suggestion was the idea that changes in cultural capital were fundamental to questions of learning progression. In order to address these changes, I set out a number of theoretical questions which I felt needed to be answered in order to reach the question of how learning progression took place in cultural terms. These were:

- What kinds of attitudes and predispositions towards popular culture and more specifically film making do students carry with them from their home lives?
- How do students acquire knowledge and cultural values outside the structure of the family?
- How might cultural capital change for a student across a period of time in school? That is to say what kind of value does a student place on their own work, and what kind of value is placed on it by the institutions within which they are working or, indeed, the peers that they are working with?

In using the Dialectic of Familiarity to describe cultural progression, I have attempted to address these questions, because it is in the movement from thetical knowledge to antithetical, from the familiar to the unfamiliar and back again towards synthesis and orthodoxy that the changes in cultural progression and cultural capital can be seen. A re-iteration of these changes and how they provide answers to those questions is then necessary here.

5.7.1 – Familial influences and familiarity

The Dialectic of Familiarity could be used to describe how family and home influence the knowledge that students bring with them into the media classroom. It would be wrong to assume that the only place that a student will meet unfamiliar cultural texts and practices is in the classroom – as evidenced by Andrew’s discussions with his father, who takes on the role of teacher at home – but even when they do, this still forms part of their thetical starting

point. It may seem that by introducing antithetical material Andrew's Dad is pre-empting the role of the teacher, and I would suggest that such unfamiliarity, or "antithesis-from-home" generates cultural capital for the student that is easily converted into academic capital, but that is no guarantee that it will be legitimised by the teacher. This situation becomes problematic in that there are clearly many examples of cultural capital held by students that are less easily converted into cultural capital. Jamie's involvement in the *Lehri Files* generates all kinds of cultural capital for himself and his peers, but this is not always legitimised in class. There are, of course, issues of social class involved in such an observation – the suggestion that middle-class students find out which forms of cultural capital are most easily converted to academic capital is an easy one to make – but I would want to argue that the role of production work ameliorates this kind of harsh reality, by allowing students to explore all kinds of cultural capital. For example, Jamie's parody is well made and while it rejects his teacher's intention, it does allow him to demonstrate skills which he receives credit for.

The students in this study, who generally came from supportive (though not necessarily financially comfortable or traditionally nuclear) families, used the resources of those families throughout the study, but on the whole, did this because there appeared to be a favourable disposition to film-making within the household. This support, I would argue, was an aspect of the thetical starting point for the student; it was part of their habitus already, in which they had a disposition towards this kind of creative activity largely *because* there was a disposition towards creativity in their household. I would also argue that this is fundamentally different to the habitus ("the media studies habitus") that many of them seem to have developed at the end of the three-year period. This is why, I would contend, that familial influences are largely thetical rather than antithetical. Andrew's Dad and his intervention in the production process is much more teacherly, and while it can thus be seen in antithetical terms, it has not been through the legitimation process of the classroom. This is important, because there are all sorts of familial activities that might contribute to a "media studies habitus," such as making home movies, but bringing these into the classroom is generally oppositional to what students and their families see as their prime purpose.

For most students though, the thetical starting point is a family background that supports what the student is doing, and does not actively undermine it. Coincidentally, one of the things that is absent from student comment about their work is the role that any shared family

viewing has on their production work. Andrew's comments about the role of his father imply that they have watched things together, but the discussion that they have about it is more important than the act of watching. It would seem then, that viewing and listening carried out or discussed in the company of peers are more significant.

5.7.2 Popular cultures: Cultural value and identity

At all stages of the study, popular culture has a role to play in the way that progression occurs. In the thesis stage, peer and popular culture give students ideas and a starting point for their project work. This is borne out by the comments students make about the documentary project and the kind of statements that Bruce makes about his short film, where music, cinema and visual art all influence his finished product. Also, in some ways these peer and popular cultures are used to alleviate the unfamiliarity of some of the new cultural forms they are experiencing, giving the student something that they can appear to be "expert" in, even if that is not the new cultural form itself. It is really important to emphasise that these cultural influences do not disappear when students are more independent and self-critical, but rather that, seen in dialectical terms they get "filtered" through the lens of the antithetical cultural and critical material that they are exposed to during the learning process. Bruce's comments about his Year 13 project in which he makes critical and cultural judgements about the texts he is working with illustrate this, as do Andrew's in his Year 12 projects. Many of the texts they talk about (from *The Libertines* to *Vertigo*) have become very much part of the student's cultural landscape. Students acquire these cultural resources through all the ways one might expect; consumption of popular culture, the internet, peers; but what their media course allows them to do is to reframe them in terms of both cultural and educational capital, synthesising them with the texts and ideas that they have studied in school.

In some senses students end up placing a new kind of value on these texts and ideas – Bruce's comments about his Year 13 project show him valuing music video both as a producer as well as a consumer, a position he has reached through being able to defamiliarise the text. The development of this ability can be seen in dialectic terms, accepting (and sometimes rejecting) antithetical material, achieving orthodoxy and synthesising new "unthinkable" – in Bernstein's terms – knowledge (Bernstein, 2003, pp.181-182). This development goes alongside the development of a series of multiple selves, which originate in the student's ability to move from the "this is me" identity, to the identity of media student, the identity of fan and the identity of producer and perhaps, eventually back to the "this is me" position, but

in a new and more sophisticated, more defamiliarised way.

5.7.3 Cultural capital and academic capital

The role of cultural capital, but perhaps more importantly, the wider cultures that surround production work mean that the value placed on student work clearly changes across the course of the study, with a number of different themes emerging at different times. Firstly, the institutional cultures that surround production work manifest themselves in the way that students conduct production work and the way that they talk about it. These are best illustrated here by the focus on school, which appears as a common form of content in the early production work, but also in the way that school and its connected institutions affects the way that they conduct production work and write about it. This means that in the thesis stage, cultural capital is all, with the students making texts that reflect their lives and the lives of their peers. However, as time goes on, these institutional cultures are replaced as students learn that not all of their cultural knowledge and experiences will be validated in the classroom, or subsequently turned into the academic capital of grades and qualifications.

Secondly, teachers frequently do two things which move students' learning progression on in terms of cultural experience; namely that they attempt to legitimise certain kinds of cultural experience by bringing them into the classroom. *These could be completely new* and unfamiliar to the student or they could be a new interpretation of the student's familiar cultural experiences. Whatever the case, it is only by treating them in a "teacherly" way that they become antithetical, because in dialectical terms this antithesis is really describing the process of ascribing academic capital to cultural capital. Consequently some students may have extensive cultural capital that never gets validated in the classroom, either because the teacher is unfamiliar with it, or even fearful of it.

These new and unfamiliar texts or re-interpretations can be described as being antithetical to the student's existing cultural knowledge and experience, and can consequently produce different reactions ranging from complete rejection of the cultural experience or process introduced by the teacher to complete misunderstanding of it – wherein they are forced to re-examine their thetical knowledge; to imitation of an orthodoxy, in a simple form of first stage synthesis; to successful synthesis of it alongside their existing thetical cultural knowledge in order to make something new. The student often learns though, that dealing with the

antithetical, by imitating it in orthodoxy, or synthesising it with their own cultural knowledge, is an easier way of converting their own cultural capital to academic capital than to simply reject it. They begin to appreciate the fact that the highest grades are to be won when they take something that they really like (such as Jasmin and romance, or Jamie and music video) and filter it through the antithetical cultural knowledge to which they have been exposed in class.

This appreciation is connected to the creation of the “different selves” described above, as the student becomes increasingly aware of the relationship that they have with popular culture and its differing values as cultural and as academic capital, as they engage in more complex production work. This is one of the ways that creativity, criticality and culture are interlocked, in that learning about one’s own creative ability leads to the formation of selves that will respond both antithetically and eventually synthetically to new cultural knowledge and experiences. The make up of this criticality and creativity is the focus of Chapters 6 & 7.

Chapter 6 - Criticality

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I want to try to make clear the connections between students engaging in the production of digital video and their development of a critical literacy and conceptual understanding. In Chapter 3, I posed three research sub-questions, the second of which was “What kind of framework can we construct in order to explain students’ critical and conceptual progression in terms of moving image literacy?” Such frameworks do exist already of course, and as outlined in Chapter 3, there is a strong consensus about the nature of the conceptual frameworks that students and teachers work with in media classrooms and the job that it does of organising media learning. There is, however, little explanation of the way that production work complements it, and helps students to progress, particularly over a longer period of time.

In Chapter 3 it was posited that such a framework would be constructed on four ideas; firstly, that conceptual and critical progression was about the development and application of a language; secondly, that the focus of the framework would be on the key concepts of text, institution and audience; thirdly, that the framework would need to acknowledge the importance of the digital medium in accessing and developing the critical language of concepts; and finally, that the nature of critical learning would need to expand on the ideas of Vygotsky in order to take account of some of the particularities of media education.

These features of a framework for conceptual and critical understanding may be addressed by a Dialectic of Familiarity that allows for an understanding of the relationship between critical understanding and creativity. The relationship between culture and creativity has already been touched on in Chapter 5, and will be explored further in Chapter 7, but here the focus will be on critical and conceptual understanding. At this stage it is necessary to group critical literacy and conceptual understanding together under the heading of criticality, but later in this chapter I want to argue that there is a clear difference between them.

I would argue that criticality is like culture in that, in terms of learning progression it can be

seen developing in a dialectical way. I would suggest, that learning progression in these terms is about the development of **language** rather than the development of **identity**. The process of defamiliarisation is still important, and this happens in largely the same way for critical and cultural material, with the learner moving dialectically through thetic, antithetic and synthesis stages as they deal with new critical and conceptual material towards a stage where they can defamiliarise their own work.

So how might this actually occur? For criticality, this movement towards the synthetic, is like cultural understanding, fed by the creative process of doing production, and students move towards a more critical synthesis the more they attempt to incorporate the antithetic language of criticality and conceptual understanding. For example, many students, when they first film a conversation between two characters, will often frame the entire thing as a two-shot. However, once their teacher has introduced the idea of the shot/reverse shot sequence, they will often try to incorporate this into their production work.

Such progress is not confined to any particular age group, and as a consequence there are descriptions of production work done by students at each stage from all three years of the study. Reaching the stage of learning that I am describing as synthesis is a messy process, and does not happen in an “ages and stages” way, to use Burn and Durran’s terms (Burn and Durran, 2007, p.152). As a consequence this chapter (like Chapter 5) makes analyses of the work produced by students and the way that their learning could be represented in terms of the Dialectic of Familiarity.

In terms of critical and conceptual learning, what might the Dialectic of Familiarity look like? Here, **thesis** describes the position that the student finds themselves in at the start of the learning process. This position may be constituted by the student’s own critical experiences, or learning that has taken place before, though not necessarily in a media classroom. This thesis is about the way that students learn to make video, so thesis may have involved them using a video camera at home or discussing a film with their family. The role of the peer group in offering an initial critical response to students making or viewing might also be important here. In critical terms **antithesis** can describe both material that is unfamiliar to the student (this could be for example, a new critical term, a concept, or production skill associated with that concept) as well as student responses to that material. These responses can be varied in their nature, as has been suggested in Chapter 5. Once a student begins to

become familiar with this antithetical material, they go through two further stages; the first of these is **orthodoxy**, where the student begins to replicate the critical and cultural positions put forward by their teacher in both their production and analytical work. The second stage of **synthesis**, describes the point where they begin to re-synthesise this cultural and critical orthodoxy in order to make meanings and texts that go beyond (and in some cases, far beyond) what their teacher intended for them. Such re-synthesis, again may involve the input of peers and others giving feedback to students and transforming what they have made.

While a good deal of the data generated by the students in this study directly deals with questions of critical and conceptual understanding, it is necessary to be clear about definitions of criticality from the outset, primarily because there are times in which learning progression in critical and conceptual understanding sometimes seems to overlap with the way that learning happens in cultural understanding. As a consequence of this, the first part of this chapter sets out the ways that terms such as “critical” and “conceptual” are being used in this study. Once these terms have been defined, the student’s production work will be analysed in dialectic terms to give an account of the way that critical learning is happening.

In conclusion then, I want to examine the way that students learn to become critical over the three-year period through their video production work (sections 6.2,6.3 and 6.4) and this necessitates a thorough analysis of how students encounter these key concepts, or “conceptual toolkit,” through that work. In order to do this, there is a first need to define critical and conceptual understanding, particularly in Vygotskian terms, as well as exploring the links between conceptual understanding and production work. In my experience, these two entities are often divorced from each other in the media classroom, but I believe that they are inextricably linked. This link is also the reason why this is an appropriate place to discuss the role of digital technology and the way that it may allow for the development of the metalanguage of the moving image.

6.1.1 Criticality, conceptual knowledge and key concepts

For the purposes of this chapter, I will be taking the key concepts of text, audience and institution proposed by Burn and Durran (Burn and Durran, 2007, p.3). These make use of the “traditional” key concepts of media studies, as established by Buckingham (Buckingham,

2003, pp.53-69) and others, but compress language and representation into the cover-all term of text. Frequently, representation is separated out from text, but one of the key things about the work that students are doing here is that questions of representation and (particularly) identity appear to be firmly embedded in the texts that are being made and being watched. For students then, representation and language are both contained within the broad meaning concept of text, but for me these questions of identity are significant and need to be treated separately, which is why they were dealt with in Chapter 5.

I want to argue that the acquisition of conceptual knowledge is fluid, particularly when viewed through the lens of video production work. Like cultural progression, it is not something that happens in the same way for all students. It is frequently messy and uneven. For example, we might see developing criticality, not only in terms of both Vygotsky's work on spontaneous and scientific concepts, (outlined in Chapter 3) but also Engestrom's ideas about tools and wrenches. (Engestrom, 1987, p.10) Indeed both these theoretical ideas might be used to illustrate the way that the students' production work illustrates their conceptual understanding. For Engestrom, the idea that learning does not occur in linear terms with a fixed beginning and end, is something that will become increasingly important when assessing the critical and conceptual progress of the students in this study (Engestrom, 1987, p.43; p.131). The Dialectic of Familiarity can be seen as such a cycle, meaning that concepts are being learnt, applied and then reinforced through practical activity. Similarly, the "conceptual toolkit" idea fits in here with Engestrom's wrenches and the way a concept might be constantly applied and re-applied to learning, in order to develop critical understanding.

The particular nature of media learning does also, I believe, necessitate a reframing or perhaps an extension of the Vygotskian definition of concepts in order to account for the creative, critical and cultural mix of activities that take place in the media classroom. Vygotsky groups concepts into the spontaneous and scientific (Vygotsky, 1986, pp.146-209). I want to break down his scientific concepts (those we acquire through our formal schooling) further into two groups – "meaning concepts" and "construction concepts." This may seem an unusual move, but I believe it necessary because there is a need to acknowledge that there are different types of criticality that can develop in different ways, and as a consequence, I believe it is useful to make distinctions between the kinds of scientific concepts that get used in the media classroom. These distinctions are explained further in 6.1.3, but at this point they should be seen as an attempt to get at the distinctive nature of media education concepts.

I should emphasise here that I am not using the terms “critical” and “conceptual” interchangeably. They are very closely connected, but there are some subtle and important differences between the two. “Critical” is what we, as teachers, want students to “be”; that is, able to discuss in detail and show through their production work, the way a moving image works and creates meaning, including the way that the concepts of audience and institution influence meaning. It is closely connected to, though not to be substituted for, defamiliarisation, which is discussed at length later in this chapter. When I use the term “conceptual,” I am thinking about a set of ideas that the student uses to become critical. The best way of viewing these conceptual understandings is as a set of tools for organising the student’s ability to understand and become critical in the moving image. This distinction, as will be discussed below, is an important one for understanding how students develop a critical and conceptual literacy – essentially, the way that they speak about, write about and apply those concepts. It also points towards the dialectical nature of the learning, with students often encountering, misusing and then confidently reinforcing their knowledge of the concepts over time as they switch between the “micro” world of the critical and the “macro” world of the conceptual, becoming more and more familiar with unfamiliar ideas.²

Burn and Durran’s triad of text, audience and institution covers the critical and conceptual knowledge that I believe is essential to students, and it is these concepts that inform the analysis of the student work. That analysis has as its purpose the establishment of a clear connection between the practice of creating a digital video production and developing a clear critical understanding of ideas about form, film language and representation. Looking at student work across three years from the five focus students (with a particular focus on Jasmin and Andrew) will allow for a good view of how students progress in becoming critical. As outlined in Chapter 2, the notion of how a student progresses across the course of a number of years is absent from studies in this areas.

6.1.2 Criticality is about language

I want to propose that a key marker for critical learning progression is language, and in

² This distinction between “micro” elements of texts as being part of critical analysis and “macro” as conceptual is not made only by me. Julian McDougall outlines something similar when discussing the way students might analyse news broadcasts (McDougall, 2006, p.111)

particular, the development of a critical and conceptual vocabulary that is used and has its application in student's production work. Because of this, the work most closely scrutinised in this chapter is actually taken, in the main, from student evaluations, and the way that what students say and write about their production work pertains to the way the finished product looks. A good deal of this data comes from evaluations that the students have written about the production and the interviews carried out with them after the completion of each video project. This may seem odd, given that I have just spent some time arguing that there is a relationship between conceptual understanding and its application in video production, but it is in these evaluations that many of the students' critical and conceptual understandings are reflected on. As I suggested earlier, one of the key building blocks of learning is the creative-conceptual cycle, so it seems more appropriate to deal with the actual moving image productions themselves in Chapter 7, which focuses on creativity. For the purposes of the study, the aspects of these evaluations which reveal the most about learning progression include, but are not limited to; the use of metalanguage, genre (in the Faircloughian sense of being "different ways of inter(acting) discursively" (Fairclough, 2005, p.2) and the use of subjective/personal language. It is my contention that the changes in these aspects not only reveal things about learning progression, but also say something about familiarity too. In the earlier stages of the study, students working with unfamiliar concepts do certain linguistic things with them, (such as re-inventing terms and putting speech marks round new technical vocabulary) which mediate that unfamiliarity.

I would acknowledge though, that there is a problem here, in that some of the evaluations are clearly intended for different audiences, for example, some of the evaluations that students write as part of the evaluation of the group project in Year 12 are of a more informal nature when compared to those in later phases of the project when they are submitted for external moderation. One might put forward the argument that different kinds of linguistic behaviour are engendered by these changes in formality. However, it should be emphasized that students were reminded regularly of the need to be reflective and evaluative about their production work regardless of the context of the evaluation. This reflects some difficulties with both the concept of audience in the media classroom, but also the idea of the "genre" of the coursework evaluation, which students see as either an inconvenient add-on, or simply a way of getting more marks. Such observations have already been made and identified as the development of a "media studies habitus," part of which might involve students developing dispositions towards certain kinds of evaluative writing; along with the fact that the cultures

surrounding media education have led to students and teachers behaving in particular ways when it comes to evaluating production work.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the development of a metalanguage – a language that describes a form of communication – plays a significant role in learning progression here. Jerome Bruner describes metalanguage as being the “capacity to turn around on our language to examine and transcend its limits” (Bruner, 1996, p.19). For me, this occurs when students speak or write about their work in what media teachers call “technical terms,” namely using vocabulary from one of the theoretical frameworks that are called upon in class, such as those proposed by Bordwell and Thompson (Bordwell, 1993, pp.156-327). This aspect is closely connected to genre, not least because the genre of “coursework evaluation” requires that the student uses technical terminology. The use of personal and subjective language (use of “I,” “me,” “we”) also changes markedly across the three years as students become more engaged with the production tasks. Indeed, in the middle phase of the project (perhaps the place where the most antithetical reactions are) such language does seem to disappear, but in the final stage of the project, it makes a reappearance as the students synthesise what I would term the critical orthodoxies they have learnt with new ideas and approaches to the production work. Initially though, a consideration of how students understand the ways meaning is created in moving image texts – along with how they learn the language of describing and demonstrating that meaning – is necessary.

Additionally, metalanguage could also reflect the students’ direct engagement with the key concepts of text, audience and institution laid out above. Metalanguage can be seen as a distinct way of talking about these concepts and as a means of becoming critical. For example, students spend a good deal of time talking about audiences in their evaluations. These are both real audiences (their friends, their teachers and perhaps most significantly – coursework moderators) and imagined audiences (those presented to them as being targeted by the coursework brief). The question that needs to be answered in relation to this is to what extent an engagement with these concepts constitutes critical understanding. Clearly, there is articulation of them as words and indeed, some explanation of them as concepts, but this does not always imply a critical understanding. To conclude, the analysis of data should entail looking at the way this use of language changes across the period of the study, and in what ways a Dialectic of Familiarity might describe the nature of these changes.

6.1.3 Reframing Vygotsky

It was suggested earlier that because of the nature of the concepts at work in media education, it might be necessary to build on Vygotskian principles of the spontaneous and the scientific. Vygotsky argues that as we grow up, we acquire two kinds of concept (Vygotsky, 1986, pp.146-209). **Spontaneous** concepts we acquire through our experiences of the world as a child – play, imaginings etc. **Scientific** concepts on the other hand, are those we acquire through our formal schooling. In terms of media education, Buckingham characterises this difference as being about how the teacher provides:

...a body of scientific concepts which will enable them to think – and use language (including “media language”) in a much more conscious and deliberate way... It must also enable them to reflect systematically on the processes of reading and writing themselves and to understand and analyse their own experience.

(Buckingham and Sefton-Green, 1994, p.148)

To some extent, one can see a critical vocabulary of the moving image in this way, as it is this critical vocabulary that is one of the things that teachers expect students to acquire through the production work process. It is clear that some media concepts clearly formalise and categorise our experience. Narrative, for example, is something experienced from a very early age, and the spontaneous concept is with us from the moment we are read a bedtime story. In the media classroom, this concept becomes transformed into a scientific one, subject to academic exploration and exposition. A more particular concept, however, such as “film sound” maybe something that a student has not even thought about. Here the teacher’s first task might not be to transform the concept of film sound from being a spontaneous one to being a scientific one, but might actually be to draw students’ attention to it at all. The categorisation of film sound into further types such as “diegetic” and “non-diegetic” or “synchronous” or “asynchronous” will inevitably come much later on. When we consider “metalanguage” then it is probably a good idea to think about “metalanguages,” some of which describe big, broad concepts, such as narrative and genre and some that describe small details such as “ambient lighting.” I would propose here that such concepts might be grouped into families of scientific concepts which would accommodate all the key terms that we could consider to be “scientific concepts” within media education. Consequently, we might, for within the specific field of media education, classify some concepts as “meaning” concepts.

Meaning concepts might refer to those metalinguistic terms that describe the way that texts generate meaning such as “narrative” or “genre.” Other concepts might be classified as “construction concepts.” This term could be used to describe those details of a text which, on their own, have very little meaning, but when put together with others generate a meaning concept, such as narrative or genre. For example, a close-up shot on its own might have some meaning on its own, but generally it needs to be put in the concept of a wider text – in other words, viewed in conjunction with other construction concepts, such as say, lighting or sound, or mise-en-scene – to make complete sense. Both construction and meaning concepts then, might be broken down further into groups of broad and detailed concepts, some of which describe big ideas that are used in the construction of texts, while others describe relatively small things. Consequently the broad construction concept of “camerawork” might be broken down into “close-up, mid-shot, long shot” and so on, while the broad construction concept of narrative might be broken down into “duration, order, character” and so on. By putting together many detailed construction and detailed meaning concepts, the student is able to make sense of a text. This kind of activity is the expansive learning that Engestrom is talking about when he describes the cycle of learning as moving from abstract to concrete.

In this extended model of conceptual knowledge the spontaneous concepts are fundamentally the same (perhaps story, movie, viewer, character), but I offer this reframing of scientific concepts because I believe that it is necessary in order to explain the nature of learning progression in critical and conceptual terms. In media education, we are dealing with a very broad range of concepts that both teachers and students need to perform different functions at different times. Sometimes we want students to formalize an understanding of an entire text – hence meaning concepts; while at other times, we want them to understand just one small part or aspect of a text, hence construction concepts. Of course, small bits of text do have and create meaning in and of themselves, but what I intend by using the terms broad and detailed concept is to indicate terms or concepts that are used to build bigger meanings. In this model, knowledge becomes more detailed and specific as the student becomes closer and closer to understanding the building blocks (detailed concepts) of the way the text works, but at the same time, knowledge of the bigger picture (broad concepts) of meaning increases. These types of concepts (broad and detailed, construction and meaning) allow the student to “home in” on the things that create critical comprehension. Burn and Durran, drawing on Vygotsky, describe such scientific concepts as “semiotic tools” (Burn and Durran, 2007, p.17) which students need in order to both understand the meanings created by a text and to give meaning

to the texts that they make, and here the “tools” might be used in any number of ways to create meaning. For example, the student in some circumstances may work from the broad concepts towards the more detailed ones, or, in others, move from the more detailed concepts to broader ones. A student may begin with a single signifier, such as a white cowboy hat, towards an entire understanding of mise-en-scene, or start with the concept of mise-en-scene in slasher movies and work back to a single signifier, such as a chainsaw. In either case, I would contend that students grasp these different concepts at different points and begin to inter-relate them at different stages of their dialectic journey towards becoming conceptually literate. This distinction is necessary for understanding that dialectic journey within media education, while at the same time reinforcing the idea that the move from the spontaneous to the scientific is an important part of learning progression.

A word of caution is necessary here though. Vygotsky presents the acquisition of scientific concepts as such an asocial idea; something done in isolation from others, a solitary cogitative experience:

What happens in the mind of a child to the scientific concepts he is taught in school?... As we know from investigations of the process of concept formation, a concept is more than the sum of certain associative bonds formed by memory, more than a mere mental habit: it is a complex and genuine thought that cannot be taught by drilling, but can be accomplished only when the child's mental development itself has reached the requisite level.

(Vygotsky, 1986, p.149)

Vygotsky does not talk about the social aspects of concept formation and it is perhaps because of this that his account cannot deal with the fact that the formation of scientific concepts does not happen in a vacuum. Buckingham, in his analysis of Vygotsky, acknowledges this saying:

Ultimately, his theory may lead to a limited rationalistic account of the learning process which neglects the fundamental significance of students' emotional investments in the media.

(Buckingham and Sefton-Green, 1994, p.151)

What I suggest later on in this chapter, is that, while the movement from spontaneous to

scientific concepts is an important marker for progression towards criticality, it is probably not the only one, or indeed, may be too blunt a tool to explain the nature of progression in this sort of activity fully. I would contend that the Dialectic of Familiarity can take account of the social and cultural nature of that learning process. Some of these social aspects, such as peer and family and relationships, have been dealt with already in Chapter 5, and the role of collaboration will be given more attention both in this chapter and in Chapter 7. Overall though, the analysis of the data in this chapter should explore how the move from spontaneous to (these extended) scientific concepts occurs in the learning process and what other kinds of phenomenon accompany this move.

6.1.4 Criticality and the digital medium

Critical and conceptual learning is, as has already been suggested, closely linked to production work because it is in this environment that the student gets to apply those metalanguages discussed in section 6.1.2. Students may learn about these metalanguages either by doing textual analysis in class or making moving image texts, but at its most obvious, this learning is about the adoption of a vocabulary that surrounds the moving image – the metalanguage used to describe what is often termed the “language of film” with its close-ups, dissolves and ambient sound. However, this observation about the relationship between conceptual understanding and language is more complex, as is learning to apply it to the production work process when students make moving image texts. Additionally, there is the way that digital video apparently makes it easier to learn that language and become fluent in it. Lev Manovich provides an interesting view on the nature of this fluency, by positing that what is important to understand is that digital video changes the function of the moving image:

The logic of replacement, characteristic of cinema, gives way to the logic of addition and co-existence. Time becomes spatialized, distributed over the surface of the screen. In spatial montage, nothing need be forgotten, nothing is erased. Just as we use computers to accumulate endless texts, messages, note and data... spatial montage can accumulate events and images as it proceeds through its narrative. In contrast to the cinema's screen, which primarily functions as a record of perception, here the computer screen functions as a record

This ability to constantly add to and return to an idea – what Burn and Durran describe as the “affordance of iteration” (Burn and Durran, 2007, p.45) is essential for understanding how the students are working when they tackle the production tasks. On a micro-level, it allows them to edit and re-edit an individual project, but on a macro-level, it allows them to revisit a favoured idea or subject matter over the course of a longer period of time. This is best evidenced in this study by Jasmin, Andrew and Jamie, who all return to similar topics at various points in the process of the three-year-period. Here, as they apply layers of newly-learned and recently-unfamiliar critical perspective to the moving image work they produce, we can see their progression in dialectic terms, using the digital medium to resolve their thetic and antithetical concerns into something new.

There is also an important understanding to be gained here in terms of the concept of “institution,” where digital technology facilitates a certain kind of understanding of that concept. Discussing the language of the digital medium with students gives them a perspective on the differences between analogue and digital film and why that matters in terms of understanding institutional issues and the corollary power struggles that surround issues of production, distribution, user-generated content and Web 2.0. Such a discussion illustrates why the role of the teacher is so important. While the student may have the upper hand on the teacher in terms of using the digital technology, the student needs to make sense of the way that the technology might be used to order and re-order their experience of the world. In the Dialectic of Familiarity, I would want to argue that the teacher “re-points” the student’s skills with digital technology towards those texts and practices that they are not familiar with, in order to make sense of them. This, I believe, is one of the things that is implicitly happening in Andrew Burn’s study of secondary school children making their own versions of the trailer for Alfred Hitchcock’s *Psycho* (Burn, 2000). It also illustrates the way that wider conceptual learning is facilitated through production work, and in terms of this study, such a facilitation will need to be analysed in terms of the student production work.

6.1.5 Initial conclusions

Before analyzing the student work, a summary of these definitional issues that surround

criticality is necessary. Firstly, in the analysis of the student work that follows, critical and conceptual mean two different things. The former refers to a way of being that we as media teachers, would like students to adopt; the second refers to the key ideas that will help the student to become critical. Secondly, the key concepts that students are expected to make progress in knowing here are text, audience and institution. Thirdly, a key focus for the analysis of student production work will be the nature of language, metalanguage and the genres associated with media education and the way that these things change across the three years of the study. Fourthly, in order to describe conceptual learning progression in dialectic terms, I believe it is necessary to extend Vygotsky's principles of spontaneous and scientific concepts. Finally, there is a need to acknowledge that there is a relationship between conceptual learning and digital technology.

These issues are all key to understanding how criticality might be seen to develop in terms of a Dialectic of Familiarity. Engestrom's ideas about expansive learning cycles go some way to describing learning as a movement between abstract and concrete – here this is best exemplified by the way the student works from a broad construction concept such as camerawork to a detailed one such as close-up. I want to suggest though, that for media education, this movement happens in a very specific way, in that it is a dialectic one driven by creativity and the creative/conceptual cycle engendered by production work. In order to describe the way that this movement occurs, a number of specific questions need to be posed. For example, what would thesis, antithesis and synthesis – and thus, progression – look like, in critical terms? What does it mean for a student to become critical – and is this the same thing as defamiliarisation? How does the use of digital technology contribute to criticality? Why is it that in much of the data students begin by spending a lot of time on the concept of text and only later become concerned with audience and institution? Finally, why is it that Vygotskian ideas of the scientific and spontaneous do not adequately explain the nature of media learning? Answering such complex questions involves a closer analysis of the student production work, and particularly the evaluative writing that students produced in reference to it.

6.2 Thesis

The question of what the thesis stage in a Dialectic of Familiarity might look in critical terms is about the spontaneous concepts that students come into the classroom with right at the start

of the learning process, and what kind of conceptual knowledge they hold. The way that students talk and write about text, audience and institutions at this time shows them grappling with the problem of how to be critical. They often *want to be* critical and know that they *should be*, but frequently struggle to find the appropriate metalanguage, precisely because it is antithetical to them. In a similar way to culture, students have their own critical experiences which they seek to describe at these early stages of learning, but the ways they do this do not necessarily coincide with those of their teacher.

6.2.1 Metalanguage

Looking at the student writing in the earliest phases of the study, there is unsurprisingly, a lot of what might be termed “mechanical” criticality in which the language of the scientific concepts outlined in 6.1.3 is articulated without really being understood. For the student at this stage, a lot of the work is about using a vocabulary with which they are still unfamiliar and a lot of the reflective and evaluative quality of the writing is mediated through the student’s personal experience without the framework of this metalanguage being present. In Chapter 5, I suggested that in terms of cultural learning, this stage of the learning process is “all about me” for the student. Similarly, in terms of critical learning there is sometimes an absence of technical vocabulary, which makes it harder, in some senses for the student to articulate what they did in the production process. This is well illustrated by a student in the cohort (not one of the five focus students) who says that:

First of all I decided where I would shoot different shots. I found the best places to get football action as obviously I needed that because it's a football programme.

Taras, Year 11 student, I2

“Shooting different shots” is the kind of limited description that there is much of in evaluation and interviews at this stage. The student knows that the shots are important but not why, or indeed which, individual shots might be important. The general spontaneous concept that a moving image text is a “series of shots” is the kind of statement that shows students are aware that there is construction at work in those texts but not quite how that construction works.

There are also frequently inappropriate attempts to harness scientific concepts to the

production task. For example, Andrew comments in the middle of his Year 11 production evaluation:

Before we started to create the film we had to decide whether or not to aim our product at an active audience or a passive audience.

Andrew, E2

Here what I would term a detailed meaning concept (active or passive audience, as a concept that helps understand how a text might be read or used) is being mistakenly used as if it were a construction concept, as if the notion of audience activity or passivity needs to be “built in” to the finished text.

This kind of conceptual malapropism is, I believe, a sign of two things happening. Firstly, the student understands that there is a conceptual vocabulary needed to describe their work and while they don't fully understand it, they are attempting to show this awareness. Secondly, the student thinks that the conceptual framework established by the teacher (moderator, exam board, etc.) demands a theoretical explanation for everything and so makes theoretical explanations for all sorts of things that aren't really there. The “genre” of the coursework evaluation, with its word limits, tightly defined structure and need to use “technical terminology” is an unfamiliar structure that the student must fit their feelings about and experiences of the production into. It is as if the actions of the media teacher often seek to homogenize the learning outcomes for the student, so that everyone understands the same thing by a particular concept. What actually seems to happen is that different students often seem to acquire different versions of the same concept and use them to suit themselves and their interests. In the case of Jamie's spoof documentary the *Lehri Files*,” discussed in Chapter 5, the concept of documentary has been appropriated to mean a “spoof” whereas his teacher intended it to be “investigative” or at least “truthful.” I would suggest in this instance, that the spoof is what is thetical to Jamie. This is interesting, because it may indicate that he has been badly taught, and so does not know what the term documentary means, or it may indicate that he is choosing to ignore its correct meaning, but whichever is the case, he is using the word to suit his own personal purpose. He is moving from the antithetical concept of documentary, introduced by his teacher, back to his own thetical concept of it in order to produce something that is both original and creative, though not necessarily what he was asked to do.

It should be emphasised though, that the thesis stage is not simply about a lack of critical language. Students do many things that we could see as attempts at being critical, though we might not see this criticality in orthodox terms – this idea is explored further below, in 6.2.3

6.2.2 Subjective language

In these early stages there is also a good deal of subjective language, much of which describes the production process in simplistic terms of recalling the events that took place. In this though, there are the beginnings of a criticality. Andrew's evaluation of his GCSE production comments on the production process by saying:

Now that we had a single completed storyboard, we started to film. We used a Canon digital camcorder. We used a tripod for the static shots and I held the camera for the shots that needed movement. Unfortunately, that is why some of the scenes are a bit unsteady.

Andrew, E3

This is a tacit acknowledgement that steadiness and framing of shot are a significant part of creating a "good" film text. There is an implicit criticality here which arises partly from the input of the teacher, who has constantly reminded the students about the need for these things in the construction of the text, but also from the student's own viewing of texts, and it is this that forms the basis of what I have termed *thetic* criticality (discussed below in 6.2.3). The use of the subjective language indicates a personal feeling about the quality of the finished text, but also a sort of spontaneous (as in spontaneous concepts) criticality about the nature of complete moving image texts.

It is also interesting to note that *some* of the use of subjective language seems to mark an inability to generalize about the conceptual framework. In attempting to use the bigger concepts, students end up appropriating them, and applying them solely to their work. For example, this extract from Andrew's GCSE evaluation again:

...we only used transitions from the start of the film as from my codes and conventions I have discovered that to increase the suspense and show that the protagonist is in danger, you use quick cuts and not transitions.

Andrew, E3

This sort of statement suggests that students may see the relationship between their own production work and the conceptual framework in a sort of splendid isolation, where an idea such as codes and conventions is simply there to be pressed into service by the student to explain what they have done. They have clearly learnt about this conceptual idea in class, while watching other texts, but at this stage only link it to their own work mechanically, as part of the requirement of the evaluation. Presumably, the next stage of progression in becoming critically literate is to return dialectically full circle, back to the original watched text and begin to independently generalize about ideas such as genre gained from one's own experience of making a video; something explored further in the next section of this chapter.

The use of subjective language at this (GCSE) stage of the work shows us that any incipient criticality is filtered through a production process that is quite personal to the individual students. This focus on the personal, the subjective, emphasises the lack of a critical vocabulary when students talk about what they view as the shortcomings of their production work. Andrew for example, when discussing his group documentary states that:

The one thing that could have been improved was the continuous interviews. There could have been a bit more variety in terms of content and if we had more time we would have put in more breaks between interviews.

Andrew E2

What he means by “continuous” here, is unclear, though looking at the film it would seem that he is referring to the fact that there are some fairly long, uninterrupted interview segments which are just talking heads speaking to camera. The statement raises a question though, which is this: Is there a fundamental connection between the fact that Andrew does not have a technical term for what is going on here and the fact that he sees what is going on here as a shortcoming in his video? If there is, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that a development in his critical abilities would facilitate an improvement (or rather perceived improvement) in his finished production. I would want to say then, that this use of subjective language points to the fundamental inter-relatedness of the production and the critical framework. Andrew cannot name what he knows is wrong with the video and so has not been through that Vygotskian process of moving from the spontaneous to the scientific. We might describe Andrew's position here as between the thetical and the antithetical; in the middle of the dialectic process that will move him from not having a term to having one (talking head, long take, whatever it might be) and later fully synthesizing that into his critical vocabulary. I

would suggest that it is further engagement with the production process that will allow him to move on in this way. Similarly, we can identify Engeström's notion of moving from abstract to concrete (Engeström, 1987, p.10) in this process here. Andrew is looking to move from the abstract concept of "the documentary" towards the concrete concept of how it works. Being able to take ownership of that concept suggests that he will not have to be so subjective about the shortcomings of his work. We might describe this movement in dialectic terms as he moves from the familiar (documentary) to the unfamiliar – in this case the detailed construction concepts that create a documentary text. The engine for learning here is the practical process of making a documentary, as feedback from his teacher, further consumption and discussion with his peers and possibly parents will move him towards a position where those unfamiliar concepts become more familiar.

6.2.3 Becoming critical – Thetic criticality

When I posed the question above of how students learn to become critical, I suggested that the learning process could be seen dialectically. However, this should not be interpreted as meaning that I only see criticality as something being achieved at the end of the cycle of the Dialectic of Familiarity. I would want to argue that students can display a sort of "spontaneous" criticality, in that it involves being critical with spontaneous concepts, rather than scientific ones and the metalanguage that goes with them.

To illustrate this, consider the response Andrew makes when he is asked about his final GSCE production. In an interview discussion, he is asked about how his product research into similar films influenced their production work. He replies by saying:

Andrew: We watched Vertigo and got this idea for a forward tracking zoom out shot thing....

SC: Forward tracking zoom out?

Andrew: Reverse tracking zoom out....

SC: Huh?

Andrew: It's the Jaws shot, kind of thing... where he looks down but the scenery appears to move forward.

SC: Yes... that's sometimes called a contra-zoom.

Andrew: Yes, all that really is, is pushing the camera forward and zooming out.

Andrew, I2

This is interesting, especially when we look at the language that is used here. Andrew does not have a secure grasp of the concept here, but instead describes the action that lies behind the concept. He uses the verbs “pushing” and “zooming.” In his description, it is almost as if Andrew needs to perform the action before understanding it. He describes what they did, then looks for a name for it, only becoming secure (see below) in his understanding of the scientific detailed concept – and using the noun for it – once this has happened.

There are three different things going on here, but all of them demonstrate how problematic the relationship is between the student, the production and the conceptual and critical frameworks. Initially, Andrew does not know the name for the technique that he has seen in *Vertigo* and used in his own production, so he makes one up, based on what he knows already and what seems to be correct. Then, when it is clear that his teacher (in this case another kind of audience) does not understand what he is saying, he moves to a filmic example to explain what he means, giving an example from that film (though, it is interesting to note that the film is not the one he originally used as his product research example). Finally, he explains how he would carry out that technique himself, satisfied in the knowledge that he knows how to do something that looks difficult – as if it was a trade secret that only a film-maker would know how to do. This observation then, marks a dialectic movement from language to experience to new knowledge. The antithetical material here is not then, the shot itself, which Andrew knows is important to understand in a critical sense, but rather the naming of the shot by his teacher. This is the difference then between the thetic and the antithetical, the spontaneous and the scientific; Andrew has a critical sense of the way he wants the shot to look already – which we might describe as thetic, but is searching for a metalanguage (something we can see as antithetical to him) with which to describe that act of communication. I would use the term “thetic criticality” to describe this phenomenon.

One of the ways this problematises the student’s progress in terms of becoming critical is that it is reasonable to argue that Andrew is becoming critical, without being aware of the correct technical name for the shot at all. This is what was being alluded to earlier in the idea that students can be critical without necessarily reaching the stages of synthesis and defamiliarisation. Indeed, Andrew seems reluctant to part with his original definition of the shot even in his evaluation, where he writes:

I would add in an extra shot, that was used in the film Vertigo... The forward zoom and reverse tracking shot (now sometimes called “contra-zoom” or “trombone” shot) would

show the audience how much fear was being experienced by the character. We did plan to re-film the footage that was unclear but unfortunately we lost the use of the camera.

Andrew E3

The fact that this shot did not even make it into the finished trailer compounds the issue further. Andrew felt the need to talk about *Vertigo* (see Chapter 5), but also to talk about a shot that he didn't actually use. Is Andrew's critical and conceptual literacy hindered at all by the fact that he did not produce the trailer as he intended to, when he clearly understands the concepts of texts and how they work on their audiences in this case? This student can explain the production process required, as demonstrated by his interview response, but one could argue that if the finished product does not assess what is not included, it does not assess everything he knows. One might argue that this demonstrates that a student does not necessarily need a set of scientific concepts to make a production.

This example also addresses two other points which are central to this argument that students develop their critical and conceptual understanding in a dialectical way. Firstly, it illustrates the way that students begin with spontaneous concepts; in this case, I would say that it is Andrew's desire to tell the story in a particular way – that of increasing “suspense and danger” to use his words. He moves from this desire, through both discussions with his teacher and his writing to what I have termed a detailed scientific construction concept, in this case, contra-zoom. The thetical point here is the realisation that the audience's enjoyment of the story and the need to make something that is interesting and well made both for the purposes of the GCSE course and the appreciation of Andrew and his peers. The antithetical point is the teacher's need to impose a conceptual order, and thus *legitimizing*, in Bernstein's sense of the word, the kind of learning that is going on. The appearance of this legitimizing intervention by the teacher at this stage shows the overlapping nature of thesis and antithesis. Secondly, it highlights Engestrom's idea that the learning is “not occurring in a particular order” (Engestrom, 1987, p.10) Andrew's actions show that he has moved to the point at which he has learnt that what the audience sees and the way that they see it as being important. If learning was taking place in a linear fashion, one might expect this to be the final stage, with meaning and construction concepts being acquired first, then combined with production skills which are practised and then thought given to the way they might be used to affect the audience. Instead, the “general mechanisms of learning,” to use Engestrom's phrase, operate almost in reverse, with the need to tell the story in a way that is interesting

(the spontaneous concept here, and one that originates in both the student's own cultural capital as well as the culture of media education within the school setting) being the starting point, and the acquisition of detailed scientific construction concepts coming at the end. This observation also highlights the dialectic nature of the learning, with students moving from the thetical to the antithetical in a number of different possible ways – a phenomenon that is explored in 6.3 below.

6.2.4 Other concepts

Earlier in this study, in 3.4.3, I suggested that one question to answer would be about students' tendency to focus on text rather than the concepts of audience and institution in the earlier phases of their learning. This focus on text does not entirely preclude the other concepts, but it does mean that student production work manifests learning about them in some particular ways. Jasmin's reflections on her own work highlight a common concern (at this early stage of the study) with the practicalities of the production. These concerns are fundamentally linked to the concept of institution, though at this stage that connection is not at all explicitly made. Later on for several students, we see them make a link between these concerns and the identification (either implicitly or explicitly) of a range of institutional issues. A good example of this is discussed in Chapter 7 through the analysis of Lianne's Year 13 work.

The concept of institution is probably the most difficult for students to grasp at this stage but even here their work shows a thetical criticality when discussing it. Jasmin describes in some detail how and why she transforms her Mum's front room into a bedroom for the purpose of her shoot:

I converted the living room into my sister's bedroom... my Mum has a couch which goes into a bed... I changed the mirrors and put posters up, with girl's stuff all over the room and just made it a girly-featured thing. It was big enough to shoot in... I thought it would give me enough space to film in. I share a bedroom with my sister, but I wanted my sister to be that spoilt kind of girl where she had a double bed and a big massive bedroom...

Jasmin, 12

In describing what are essentially a set of institutional processes, (set-dressing, location scouting) and linking them to the semiotic ideas behind her trailer, Jasmin is beginning to get

at something important about the link between text and institution that media teachers want their students to learn – namely that the semiotic features of a moving image text are often governed by institutional concerns. I have talked about this elsewhere, (EMC, 2004) but it is worthwhile re-iterating the idea that production does really help students to grasp the concept of institution and why it is significant. The example of this that I have always used in class is that of Warner Bros. and why they made so many gangster films in which rain-coated individuals shuffled in a sinister manner along poorly lit streets late at night.

Warner Bros.' perpetually perilous financial system was what necessitated the making of low cost movies, shot at night in run-down neighbourhoods, with minimal budgets. In converting her Mum's lounge, Jasmin is implicitly answering the question raised by Andrew's comments about the contra-zoom. While a student may know how to frame a shot without framing a shot, so to speak, there is much more to becoming critical than just doing so. Andrew's conceptual understanding, while moving towards the secure, is not entirely so, because he did not get to the stage where he put the construction concept of the "contra-zoom" into practice. Engagement with film as both an art form and a commercial industry requires conceptual understanding of a whole range of processes, which could be textually, institutionally and audience related. In Jasmin's work, for example, the textually-related, broad construction concept of mise-en-scene and the institutionally-related, detailed construction concept of the production designer are being explored. However, at this stage, Jasmin is not aware of the role of the production designer, (it is antithetical to her at this stage) despite the fact that she is thinking like one in reorganising the bedroom. I would argue that this demonstrates that at this point, that particular detailed construction concept has not been fully introduced to her and so cannot be synthesized into her work. Though the production work itself suggests it, Jasmin cannot fully talk about it. This is almost the reverse of Andrew, who has the concept but not implemented it, and reinforces both Engestrom's idea that learning occurs in no set order, and the notion that students can move from the thetical to the antithetical in different ways.

6.2.5 Conclusions about the thesis stage

In these earliest stages of the study, the students are coming to terms with the metalanguage of the moving image and the different genres (in the Faircloughian sense) of communication

which surround their production work. The “evaluation” genre is sometimes a particularly stilted one, in which GCSE students struggle to communicate, precisely because it relies upon students hitching their personal experience to a critical vocabulary that they are inexperienced in using. Such unfamiliarities result in a number of different phenomena, which can be broadly grouped as follows:

- Uncertainty about the critical vocabulary and a limited grasp of the “construction concepts” which might include developing their own, substitute language for concepts.
- Demonstration in a variety of ways of a clear “thetic criticality” showing that students are aware that criticality is important.
- A tendency for students to appropriate metalanguage for their own personal meanings, and consequently make productions that suit the personal taste and interest of the student producer, even when a tight brief is set by the teacher. This appropriation is often accompanied by a particular use of subjective language.

Generally, these characteristics suggest that learning is not particularly dynamic within this first phase of the project, but while it would be easy to see this as a negative thing, it is clear that the dialectical process is happening slowly. Perhaps the way to see things here is as a series of *negotiations* between the spontaneous and the scientific. The cycling through ideas from abstract to concrete –in this case, from “camerawork” to “contrazoom” – is happening in a slightly haphazard way, but it is happening. Students are beginning to apply their critical and conceptual knowledge through the production work process, and so starting to make sense of some detailed and some bigger concepts. There is also still a lot here in terms of the student’s own cultural capital, hence the use of subjective language, but this is important in the dialectical process. The big, spontaneous concepts such as “suspense” (in the case of Andrew) or “romance” (in the case of Jasmin) anchor the student’s learning, while at the same time keeping them aware of the fact that they need to take a critical perspective on both their view and their production. These big spontaneous concepts also allow them to keep a personal interest as they move towards more detailed concepts. This is their “thesis”, their starting point: where they often return to, making a clear link between the critical and the cultural.

Perhaps one of the most important things to gain from the discussion of “thetic” criticality is the notion that it goes some way towards demonstrating that criticality is not fixed, which is

something that frequently seems to occupy teachers, who are concerned that students have not “learnt the concepts that they are supposed to.” Teachers make such assumptions all the time. I once worked with a trainee teacher whose college subject tutor had told him that at all costs he must know, understand and transmit Laura Mulvey’s ideas as expressed in “*Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*.” (Mulvey, 1975). Aside from the obvious questions this dogmatic sort of statement raises (such as “Transmit to whom?” and “Why?”) and the fact that Mulvey herself probably disagrees with what she wrote in the original essay, behind this contention is the notion that criticality is a fixed and defined body of knowledge. It is clearly not, as demonstrated by Andrew’s comments about the contra-zoom. Indeed a student who made observations similar to Mulvey’s about the masculine gaze, without knowing anything about the original essay would still be being critical. The movement from this spontaneous concept to a scientific concept (in this case “the masculine gaze” or “visual pleasure”) does clearly not run in a straight line from teacher to student. Instead it is negotiated, re-formed, re-imagined and then pressed into service by both the student and the teacher in any number of different ways, illustrating the synthesizing nature of the Dialectic of Familiarity at work. Andrew’s deliberations about the contra-zoom, in both the interview and evaluation demonstrate that his becoming critical is an organic process that can operate both within and without the existing critical and conceptual framework structures. This again, highlights the fact that the movement from spontaneous to scientific concepts is an entirely social one, contradicting the fact that scientific concepts are presented to us by Vygotsky and others as something curiously isolated and asocial (Vygotsky, 1986, p.148). The production process allows students to produce an interesting finished product that they can discuss and enjoy with their peer group, while at the same time developing a critical understanding, that they can demonstrate to both teachers and peers.

To conclude, in what I would term this thetical stage, learning is characterised by a search for a critical vocabulary or metalanguage in order to complement a developing sense of criticality. However, this development does not happen in a necessarily linear way. The move from the thetic to the antithetic; the spontaneous to the scientific are all things that we might expect to happen in the learning process, but I would argue that *they are happening in ways that we might not expect*. For example, Andrew’s struggle with the construction concept of the contrazoom suggests that movement from the abstract to the concrete, prevalent in Engestrom’s cycle of learning (Engestrom, 1987, p.11) . Here he knows about the abstract concept of camerawork, but is struggling with the specificity of the detailed concrete concept.

Such a struggle is about the move from the familiar to the unfamiliar, but is *not necessarily* about being critical – which Andrew already is – but rather using the language of the critical. This thesis stage might also describe the problems that students have with conceptualising institution and audience, and their tendency to focus on text. Students are very concerned with the way the text looks and what it says about them, (as evidenced by both Jamie and Jasmin’s work) and as a consequence, lack an awareness of those concepts that lie outside the text, such as audience and institution.

6.3 Antithesis

As discussed in Chapter 5, antithesis is a term that covers both new and re-interpreted material introduced by the teacher in the classroom. It is also used to describe the responses that students make to that material. So what would be the nature of antithesis in critical terms? I asserted earlier that criticality is connected to language development in a similar way that culture is connected to the development of identity, and it is this realisation – that the student must deal with a conceptual language – that characterises antithesis in critical terms. This realisation, I would contend, occurs when students are forced to confront a critical vocabulary in a much more obvious way, because the requirements of both the Textual Analysis exam that they sit in Year 12, and the Production coursework that they do, demand a much greater use of critical and conceptual terminology. We can describe this critical and conceptual terminology as the antithesis here, and the students cannot really escape engagement with it if they want to proceed further in their studies. The focus on the critical and conceptual is really detailed and involves the teacher introducing the class to many of the detailed construction and meaning concepts outlined in 6.1.3. The somewhat general nature of GCSE Media Studies means that to some extent, the detailed construction concepts can be avoided in favour of a focus on broader concepts, but the Year 12 exam specification that the students whose work is examined in this thesis is such that they cannot avoid such detail. A closer look at the specification (OCR, 2005) demonstrates this by showing the wide range of technical terms that students are expected to familiarise themselves with.

A number of questions might be raised here about the nature of student responses to this material. For example, how do students begin to respond to and learn about the conceptual vocabulary that they are introduced to? Also, how might the use of digital technology affect

the way that they view and learn about this conceptual vocabulary, particularly in terms of the way that it allows students to visit and revisit concepts? To what extent might students' response to this new material constitute a rejection of it, as was observed in cultural terms (Chapter 5)? In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to look at the data from the middle phase of the study (Year 12) where such critical and conceptual concerns were foregrounded and see how it connects to other areas of the study where new concepts are introduced.

6.3.1 Year 12: Antithetical distance, play and collaboration

I have reflected on this phase of the study and its relationship to the development of a grammar of the moving image elsewhere (Connolly, 2008, pp.29-47) but was not really able to pay a great deal of attention to the evaluation process in that work. For the purposes of this study, however, the evaluation work done by the students is of great significance because it is the main place (outside the production work itself) where students demonstrate their development of a critical vocabulary. The requirements of the evaluation "genre" mean that students, to a certain extent, are required to become critical by its demands. However, there is also the first obvious conceptual connection between the critical vocabulary and what is going on in the students' video work.

This second third of the study (Year 12) involves students completing two video projects. In the first, the whole class is split into three groups and each group is tasked with making the opening sequence to an action/horror/thriller film. They then have to evaluate their project and present that evaluation to the whole class. Some of these students then take these ideas forward into their major coursework project for Year 12 which is to create a similar opening sequence on an individual basis. (Examples of these projects by Andrew and Jasmin are discussed in 6.4 below). In the second project though, the evaluation is written, rather than presented. The data below is drawn from the individual work on the project done by Lianne, but also makes connections to the work of Bruce and Andrew in Year 11. These connections should go some way to illustrating the fact that describing learning in dialectic terms does not mean anchoring a stage in the process to a particular school year or course.

It is clear from the beginning of the project that Lianne and her group are very in control of

the task they have been asked to complete and engage with it fully. The film extract they make features a girl being stalked by a hooded stranger who is hiding in the bushes outside the school. In their evaluation presentations, students had been asked to comment on the areas of camera, mise-en-scene, the editing process and genre. Lianne's presentation not only does this very successfully but also uses a range of metalanguage (specifically referring to broad and detailed construction and meaning concepts) into the process. A glance at the comments that Lianne makes about genre show this:

Our film successfully meets the codes and conventions of a typical thriller film. Thriller films are made to create excitement, suspense, anticipation, expectation, uncertainty, anxiety, and tension for the audience. The main character is nearly always placed in a menacing situation, a mystery, or dangerous mission from which they seemingly cannot escape. The narrative of thrillers usually involves the characters coming into conflict with each other or outside forces. The many characters in thrillers are convicts, stalkers, "losers," criminals, assassins, innocent victims on the run, prison inmates, menaced women, psychopaths, characters with dark backgrounds, terrorists, cops, private eyes, fugitives, drifters and many, many more.

Lianne, E4

To a certain extent, some of these antithetical metalinguistic terms have been introduced by the teacher. We can describe this as a part of the dialectic process then, with students taking on board what the teacher chooses to introduce to the class, and becoming familiar with it in that context. However, in other ways it seems to be a confident response that has synthesised the antithetical material with out of class viewing into a competent production. So what is it about this response that suggests it isn't just a complete acceptance of the critical vocabulary and language?

An answer might be found in the observation that, at one juncture in the editing process for this group task, Lianne commented on the editing by saying:

"It's all coming back to me now! I've missed this programme (referring to Adobe Premiere) so much!"

Lianne, O3

This kind of exclamation seems to indicate that there is a pleasure for the student in being a) able to use the software and b) able to get it to do the things that the student wants it to do.

Here that is about being able to construct a text that demonstrates some particular conceptual knowledge. Such comments seem to imply that antithetical material (or in this case, skill) can still be antithetical even if the teacher has taught the skill before. This connects with the idea emphasised in Chapter 5, that the teacher can re-present a text or experience in a new and unfamiliar way. Lianne's reaction suggests unfamiliarity, even though she has, in the past been familiar with the software.

This sense of unfamiliarity with the material is important, because it reinforces the notion that Lianne is not entirely comfortable with the critical vocabulary that the software is meant to be helping her to apply. In her evaluation presentation, she presents her feelings about some of the construction concepts. These appear to be tentative, which she indicates by doing something quite odd. In the presentation slide in which she comments on the editing process, this unfamiliarity is hinted at when all the technical and conceptual vocabulary appears written in inverted commas:

We then dragged the footage on to the 'timeline' and began looking through the footage and using the 'razor' tool, we cut up the footage and re-arranged the shots. Then we deleted the ones which had laughing, smiling, bad camera work etc.

Lianne, E2

Lianne is here attempting to produce the orthodoxy of the critical vocabulary that the teacher wants them to be familiar with, but because this is still antithetical material, there is a specific response. In this case, the slightly distant use of what I consider to be detailed construction concepts such as timeline and razor, by presenting them in inverted commas. It is as if Lianne does not at this stage, own the language she is using. She has not reached the point at which these concepts are fully synthesized. The broad concept of editing is here though, with a clear understanding that it is about "cutting up and rearranging." This example is particularly interesting, as it directly contrasts with Andrew's comments about "my codes and conventions" in his GCSE evaluation (outlined in 6.2.2). It would seem that the students are working out where they stand in relation to the metalanguage, picking it up and putting it down again, as they get used to it. The use of subjective language here (using the word "we" makes it feel as if they don't want one individual to be blamed for getting it wrong) makes that connection again with "not knowing" about the technical vocabulary, or at least only feeling able to use it at arm's length. The inverted commas are a marker of discursive proximity, showing that they are not ready to take ownership of either the word or the

concept that lies behind it.

Jasmin's Year 12 evaluation does something similar when she presents a detailed explanation of the way that the Adobe Premiere timeline worked, and what it allowed her to do:

After filming, this led me to the post production stage; I began inserting my film onto the computer, using Adobe Premier 6.5. Adobe Premier is a distinct piece of software which allowed me to edit my work professionally and to do a number of things to make my opening sequence as realistic as possible. I started by inserting my film onto the editing software and placing it into the software's 'bin.' ... Once I had finished completing the editing transitions, to make sure they worked, I had to render my work by going to 'project' then 'render work area,' this allowed me to see that the fades actually worked in the places I had put them in.

Jasmin, E4

Jasmin is working entirely independently of Lianne at all stages of Year 12, but she instinctively distances herself from these technical terms in the same way. There is a connection here also with something that occurs frequently in both production process and post-production processes, namely the way that students frequently describe themselves "messaging around" or "playing around" with the film. For example, when considering what Bruce says about his Year 11 project:

I just wanted to keep it simple really, because this is the first film I've made properly by myself and so I wanted to just mess around with it, like trying different angles and different places for shooting and that.

Bruce, I2

Later on in the study he uses a similar term:

I had never used Premiere before and this project was a chance to muck about with it and learn what everything does.

Bruce, I5

This distance – using inverted commas, describing the production process as "messaging around," – point towards the notion that there is something playful about the work that students are doing, not only in the sense of having fun, but also in the sense of playing around with the concepts and what they mean. In the antithesis stage, such play is important – it is connected here to the notion of parody, which is one of the key antithetical responses

explored in Chapter 5. It is also interesting to note for example, that Bruce sees messing around as being an important part of making a film “properly.” This blurring of the lines between work and play (like the blurring of the lines between antithetical and orthodox) is an important part of learning progression and a move towards criticality, but not one that can necessarily be described purely in terms of concepts. This suggests that playing with a concept (in this case, editing or perhaps narrative) is vital for the formation of the concept in its scientific sense. There is a wider point here about the way that within media education, the lines between work and play are frequently blurred, but most significantly, such statements relating to play are part of the reaction that students have to antithetical material such as new concepts, texts or production practices. This tendency towards play is part of that dialectic process and is most noticeable in production work. It is also important to emphasise though, that it is facilitated by the medium of digital video, which as Manovich suggests, allows for the visiting and re-visiting of the concepts, which can be picked up and put down – rather in the same manner as the digital clips themselves – in an instant in order to create and recreate meaning.

Finally, there is also a sense that collaboration is important in responding to the new concepts that are being introduced in this phase of the study. In the formation of a scientific concept, it is clear that the students here are developing their ideas and becoming critically and conceptually literate by reaching a consensus on those important critical and conceptual meanings with their classmates. Lianne describes this process of reaching her consensus with her group with regard to editing the group project:

Editing – In most of the sequence we used just the ordinary cut as it was most effective, but we also used the fade to white when the “attacker” flashed up onto the screen. We contemplated using black instead of a white flash but the white made it more dramatic.

Lianne, E4

Such group collaboration is part of the creative engine that drives learning, and as such, will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 7 but it is important to see this collaboration here as a mechanism for dealing with unfamiliar concepts. This can occur either in the formal group work setting or through more informal collaborations with others, and it is important to acknowledge its role, because there were other groups who did not collaborate so well, and who as a consequence, failed to deal with the new concepts introduced. Space does not

permit a full analysis of those groups or individuals work here, but it should suffice to say that making meaning is often a collaborative act, and I would contend that for some of those groups, rejection of the collaborative process resulted in a rejection or misunderstanding of the conceptual learning that was meant to take place.

These ideas about “distance” “play” and “collaboration,” then go some way to explaining the way in which students deal with antithetical material and respond to it as if it was not theirs to own, or something that was necessarily something serious. While this is not the same kind of outright “acceptance/rejection” response that we saw with cultural learning, it does suggest that conceptual learning does confront students with the unfamiliar, and students do not simply always accept that unfamiliarity and internalise it. Rather, they distance themselves from it, play with it and send it back and forth between themselves and their peers. The ideas about play also suggest that digital technology is important for learning about these concepts and turning them from something that is unfamiliar – or antithetical – into something familiar so that they can be synthesised with their own critical ideas and experiences.

6.3.2 Conclusions about the antithetical

What occurs in this antithetical stage of the dialectic is a move towards without achieving, the full orthodox critical knowledge that the teacher is trying to introduce to the students. The distance that they put between themselves and the critical vocabulary, characterised by discussions about “playing around” with both text and concepts is an antithetical response to antithetical material. Here the rejection of, or reaction to, this unfamiliar material is not as sharp as it appears in cultural terms (see Chapter 5), but it is a reaction nevertheless. Indeed, I would add to this by saying that “play,” finds a number of different homes in the critical development process, primarily through the experimental nature of video editing, but also in simulation work. The simulation is not something specifically dealt with in this study, but it has informed the work done between the practical projects done here. The idea of playing out a role has clearly been important in developing a critical understanding, both in the cultural sense of being seen as a film maker, but also in the more rigid sense of being given a simulated industrial role in the media classroom on a regular basis prior to the production work. This idea connects with the discussion of identity and the development of “cultural selves” outlined in Chapter 5.

The role of digital technology is also important here in that it allows students to test out some of the new concepts they have learnt, without fear of committing themselves. The affordances of digital video suggested by Burn and Durran in Chapter 5 mean that students can try out a detailed construction or meaning concept in their work without the fear that it is permanent. In other words, it allows them to make mistakes, and distance themselves from those mistakes (by clicking delete) if they need to. The craft of digital video editing is discussed further in Chapter 7, but here, at this stage of the learning process, the ability to edit is closely linked to experimenting with new concepts.

There is a problem here though, in that even with the distancing mechanisms described above, Lianne, for example, is to a greater or lesser extent describing her work in what many people would see as orthodox terms. There is a sense that, as well as learning to play with the critical concepts, students are learning to play “the game” of being critical, wherein students develop a strategy of saying what they think the teacher wants them to hear. This necessitates a discussion of how this antithetical distance is different from orthodox criticality.

6.4 Orthodoxy

When a teacher sets a class a production task, what does he or she want them to demonstrate about their conceptual learning? I would describe the tendency of students (and teachers) to seek a typical “text book” response that demonstrates a good working knowledge of the concepts that the teacher introduced as about both the teacher and the students desire for an orthodoxy – conceptually and critically a “right answer.” This position in the learning process need not necessarily support the idea that there must be a right answer, but rather that media teachers often seem to be looking for one. How would such orthodoxy be demonstrated by students in critical terms? How would students move away from the distancing techniques demonstrated in 6.3 and show a greater knowledge of the critical vocabulary required by the exam board? How would students move towards a greater awareness of the way that production skills and conceptual knowledge are inter-related? How do students begin to expand their learning to the key concepts beyond text, namely audience and institution? Some of the answers to these questions lie again in the Year 12 individual productions.

6.4.1 Orthodoxy: Metalanguage and production skills

The developing relationship between the conceptual vocabulary and production work is demonstrated by both Andrew's and Jasmin's Year 12 work. A discussion with Jasmin for example, shows that having to do a project in a different genre (in this case horror or thriller) and the practical considerations therein, have allowed her to develop in terms of critical understanding, something evidenced by an increased use of critical vocabulary. When asked how she completed the Year 12 project she replies by saying:

Jasmin: I think that the whole genre thing was much harder. To get what the audience expects from a thriller was much more difficult in terms of getting the actors to do that kind of stuff....

SC: Because your GCSE coursework was a trailer for a romantic comedy?

Jasmin: Yeah, but that was much simpler because the story was so simple, you know man meets woman, they fall in love... you didn't need to think about anything else except for the story. No special effects, no fighting, they don't need to jump over things, nothing except the story ...really straightforward, just the emotions.

Jasmin I4

While later, she adds that one of the differences between the Year 11 and Year 12 projects was that she:

...knew a lot more about editing, and there was definitely more about the different shots and camera angles... like using low angles and high angles for the point of view of the killer and the victim... so the audience feel much more part of the action."

Jasmin, I4

It is significant here that Jasmin is associating implementing detailed construction concepts such as "point of view" with her text becoming more complex. In the Year 11 project, her talk was all about her and her interest. Here it is much more about audience. She is beginning to associate construction with meaning here, and also with the audience's perceptions of meaning. Her comments suggest that she is feeling comfortable with the idea of weaving both into an increasingly seamless discourse about the production process. It is interesting to note

that she sees the “story” – a spontaneous concept – as being “straightforward”, and distinct from her later learning which involves a wider range of scientific concepts such as “low angles and high angles” or “special effects.” There are no inverted commas here, no searching for words. Jasmin talks in a confident way about these detailed concepts. What is also clear here though is that Jasmin’s engagement with the project, and her progression from Year 11 to Year 12 is steeped in her own personal enjoyment and pleasures, not only taken from the genre but also the production process itself. This, I believe, highlights some of the problems with thinking about learning purely in terms of progression from spontaneous to scientific concepts; indeed I would contend that an integral part of progression here is the relationship between creativity and criticality, which will be explored further in Chapter 7.

Similar development can be identified in the interview carried out with Andrew at the same stage of the study. He commented on the fact that in his GCSE project he had

“...really basic, simple ideas that I hadn’t expanded upon.”

Andrew, 15

The students feel that in taking on the brief for the exam board they are having to think deeply about both construction and meaning concepts (e.g. Jasmin’s comments about genre). A cynic might say that this is because the exam board is expecting them to, but a student who is able to make a statement such as,

“I wanted my film to be fun to watch as well as make...”

Jasmin, 14

is demonstrating the undeniably vital point that criticality often goes hand-in-hand with enjoyment. Not every student will be able to revel in this increasing complexity of course, but Andrew and Jasmin’s comments suggest two students whose increasing critical literacy is significantly concerned with self-discovery and is personalized, in that it centres on personal pleasures (Jasmin) and academic status and knowledge (Andrew). We could describe this orthodoxy, the replication of the concepts as the teacher has taught them, almost as a by-product of wanting to do other things, both of which are equally valid. While they are reaching the stage where they can express their criticality in the terms that the teacher wants them to, they are also expressing their individual creativity. This is an important point because it reinforces the notion that learning progression is built on a creative/conceptual production cycle, where orthodoxy can go hand-in-hand with creativity and the development of the student’s identity.

Andrew also commented on the fact that the group project allowed him to connect critical ideas with some important practical knowledge, such as the use of the software:

I learnt a lot from the group project that we did in class about things like the editing software and what its capabilities were... also using different shot types and, working in a group how to incorporate different people's ideas into your own work... with this project (referring to his Year 12 project) I brought in a lot of topics that we did for AS Media.

Andrew, I4

Mea Culpa, Andrew's Year 12 project, finds him reflecting much more deeply on how he has become more critical. At an early stage of the interview conducted with him, he describes the shot he wanted to do but couldn't (note how similar this comment is to his comments about the contra- zoom in Year 11.)

...if I'd had copious amounts of room, I would have done a 360° pan as she was writing and try to get all the focus on the screen, and maybe get in an over the shoulder shot.

Andrew, I4

This realisation that the production work experience is connected to the critical is borne out by his comments about analysis which point towards the idea that his production work will be surveyed by a critical eye, relating the experience of production to the experience of being critical in the classroom. As he says:

You do those topics in AS Media and after analyzing it, you learn that people will be watching it, and picking up on those things.

Andrew, I4

Like Jasmin, Andrew is connecting conceptual learning and the conceptual vocabulary with the wider concept of audience, which means that their responses are moving much more towards the orthodoxy that their teacher is looking for, discussing and identifying audience as an integral part of production and learning more generally.

6.4.2 Orthodoxy and audience

Andrew, like Lianne (in 6.3) is really learning to “play the game” of being critical – by making that explicit connection between audience, text and production. But one wonders if he really believes that people will be “watching it and picking up on those things,” or if he and his teachers have simply convinced him of it. It is interesting to consider what Andrew is getting at here. I would suggest he is probably referring to the imagined, “super-audience” that teachers often ask their students to bear in mind when creating production work; one which sees all possible meanings and understands all known conventions. I would want to make a distinction here then, by saying that this sort of “audience” is a broad meaning concept that might be different from the spontaneous way that students might use the word “audience” outside of the media classroom. This idea of the super-audience is speculative and leads to a discussion of whether or not it is simply a receptacle for the conventions students have learnt, or if it is a projection of themselves. I would again hazard that it is both. The institutional and cultural demands of the environment in which they are working mean that they need to work through their conceptual understandings of audience, while at the same time realizing that, as they progress, their peer group will become more like the “super-audience” that they project their work at. These observations that the concept of audience, at this stage of the study, is becoming increasingly complex, and is a key indicator that students’ learning is reaching the stage where we can describe it as orthodox.

What I have always encouraged students to think about when they engage in a production task is the idea of taking up the position of an audience other than themselves. This way they can think about how that audience consumes, uses and enjoys a particular media form. Many students find this a problem (because they have not needed to do it in their life outside school) and one that is compounded by the fact that there is also another audience for their work, namely the teacher and moderator who will be marking it. In the second phase of the Year 12 work there is an increased awareness of both types of audience that is largely absent from the Year 11 work. Where there is reference to audience in the Year 11 evaluations it tends to be mechanistic, making broad assumptions about the audience.

For example in her Year 11 group documentary, Jasmin makes the statement:

This documentary is aimed at parents of teenagers because we want them to see what goes on

Contrast that with the comments she makes (see above) about working to meet the audience's expectations of the film in her Year 12 production. At some point in the intervening year, her understanding (like several others in the group) has made a paradigm shift from being about what the students expect the audience to want to see, to what the audience actually *wants* to expect to see. Again, this assumes the idea of the "super-audience", which the students are now becoming increasingly attuned to, as they become more aware of the kind of conceptual understandings that they need to meet the requirements of making this kind of text. They are becoming more familiar with this antithetical idea of a "perfect audience" that sees and understands the idealized potential meanings and readings of the moving image texts they have made, because *they* are becoming that audience themselves. This shift is clearly in some way connected to criticality and both Jasmin's and Andrew's comments (about audiences "picking up on those things") suggest that as they become more critical, they are finding out that the audience – in this case the general audience for the film *as well as* themselves and their teachers – is becoming more critical too. This increased awareness of the concept of audience has come about, I would suggest, through textual analysis and the orthodox view of text that has been introduced to them by the teacher. However, perhaps more importantly, it is the process of implementing this orthodox view through their video production work that means it is no longer antithetical to them. It is interesting to note that both textual analysis and production in the Year 12 course that these students are following does not really require them to harness their work to a mechanical framework for categorizing audiences in the way that they are encouraged to at GCSE, by, for example, using socioeconomic classifications or psychographic groupings. In abandoning that, they become much freer to understand and work with the concept of audience.

As an adjunct to this discussion of audience, it is worthwhile saying that institution is still not a major conceptual concern for these students. To some extent this is happening because students are not required at this stage in the course to take an institutional perspective on their own work, they are not seeing it as such. In the dialectical process, the teacher is not spending time discussing their production work in institutional terms, though they are talking about institutions extensively in other areas of the course. At this point, the institutional concepts that students consider to be vital to a synthesized understanding of the moving image are not

here, and seem to come in at later stages of the process.

6.4.3 Some conclusions about orthodoxy

How would we describe the subtle differences in the critical development of the students in the focus study? How do we know that students have become secure in the conceptual framework that the teacher is laying out in class? The term orthodoxy might be used here to describe Jasmin and Andrew's clear identification of the need to adopt a critical vocabulary and consider the audience. This suggests that while those antithetical reactions of students in "playing" with concepts, "distancing" themselves from concepts and learning that collaboration is key to implementing a concept, are all important marker points on the journey of learning progression, orthodoxy is something more. We might see its two key characteristics as an easy familiarity with the critical vocabulary and the realisation that audience is an increasingly important part of the text, but these characteristics also point to a third, emerging characteristic, namely the realisation that there is a connection between the "construction concepts" – shots, sound, details etc. and the "meaning concepts," such as narrative, genre, representation, and audience. This is important, because it marks an ability to oscillate back and forth between critical concepts – frequently from the abstract to the concrete – and demonstrates the student thinking in a more expansive way. This connection could be seen as a dialectic one, with the student initially having some broad abstract concept of an audience for their video product, which is then "disrupted" by the concrete construction concept of a particular shot, for example.

We might go on to say that there is a resolution of this dialectic into the idea that the particular shot can help appeal to a particular audience. It is in this resolution that the student begins to form an idea of the way that his or her teacher sees orthodox texts as working. Some students, such as Lianne and Andrew are very conscious of that connection, and have achieved an orthodox position – because their teacher is very conscious of that connection and believes it is the way to achieve highly in their subject. This is significant because in the next stage of the dialectic – synthesis – students should go beyond their teacher's position in order to progress even further.

6.5 Synthesis

The final stage of the dialectic, synthesis, describes what happens when the students move to a position of critical understanding based on their movement from thesis, to antithesis, to orthodoxy and then beyond orthodoxy into a position where they are synthesising all the critical and cultural influences to which they have been subjected. The question here of what might constitute synthesis is closely linked to the idea of defamiliarisation and the way that we might use such a term to describe an advanced stage of the learning process. We might expect Year 13 work to show signs of being fully synthesised when it begins to explore all aspects of the conceptual framework (institutional as well as textual and audience) but there is also a need to consider further changes in the way students use language and theoretical perspectives. Additionally, I would contend that the term synthesis can be used to describe the point at which the student demonstrates the ability to, in Vygostkyan terms, generalise concepts, while at the same time showing a specific application of them in their production work. This again, could be seen as an Engestromian dialectic movement from the abstract to the concrete. It is important to remember, that throughout the whole dialectic process, this critical and conceptual development and the ability to generalise, is dependent upon the opportunity to apply concepts through production work that involves making the moving image. The importance of this creative-conceptual cycle will be explained further in Chapter 7, but it needs emphasis here also.

6.5.1 Synthesis: (Finally) understanding institutions

As was observed towards the end of the middle phases of the study, the concepts of text and audience pre-occupy the students' learning progression and critical and conceptual development. In the Year 13 evaluations, one would expect students to have developed a greater sense of critical engagement with moving image texts. One of the interesting questions here though, might be to ask to what extent the student has acquired the full "conceptual package" we might require for a critical literacy. In the Year 11 and 12 phases of the study, we begin to see students moving on, consolidating their understanding of the concept of text and those that surround it, but also beginning to think about the way that an audience would see their work. As with much media teaching, the concept that seems to be the most neglected or certainly misunderstood – as evidenced by Bruce's comments from his

GCSE evaluation above – is that of institution. Several researchers have commented on this difficulty (Grahame, 1990, p.101; Burn, 2008, p.123) suggesting that students often have difficulty connecting media activity at home or in class with any kind of institutional decision-making carried out by programme or policy makers. Julian McDougall makes the point that the best way to effect this understanding is by connecting study of institutions to production work and the analyses of texts:

I would advocate maintaining a close link between the study of institutions, the creative process and the analysis of texts. Students are most often disengaged from institutions- work when it is divorced from text-work, and clearly neither deconstruction of meaning or understanding of how ownership impacts on meaning can exist independently of the other.

(McDougall, 2006, p.75)

These debates suggest that what we should be looking for in an examination of student work is to see how students connect their production work with the texts they have studied and a subsequent illumination of the wider role of institutions, both in the data from the student evaluations and interviews with them. It does not seem to be the case that students cannot grasp institutional concerns here; indeed the comments Jasmin makes about her Year 11 production and the practicalities involved, demonstrate that she is thinking institutionally. Rather, it seems to be a question of metalanguage. It is only in this last phase that we can really see students adopting the metalanguage of institution, and the broad and detailed concepts that lie behind it. This connection between metalanguage and the concept of institution could be described as synthesis. In the orthodoxy stage, it was possible to see students making the connection in general terms between the production work, the critical vocabulary and the broader concepts that lie behind it. Because of the focus on text in the earlier phases of the study it would seem that making this connection with the concept of institution is the last piece of the conceptual puzzle.

As a consequence of this in analyzing the Year 13 evaluations, it is possible to see how the metalanguage of institution has moved on for the students; a glance at Jamie's evaluation reveals some extensive and sophisticated knowledge of institutions despite the fact that he does not necessarily identify it as such. For his Year 13 production he is creating a cross media package for a band which includes a video of a live performance and some interviews with the band, and in his evaluation he comments on some product research he did into

existing interviews with bands. Talking about a video he found via the internet search engine *Yahoo!*, he says:

The first major difference in this interview is that it is held with the band as a unit, unlike the typical one or two members. Another significant unorthodox difference was that the surroundings were not music-related. Conventionally, an interview that takes place with band members happens at the venue pre-show or post-show. This is because the band are in a familiar setting and therefore the audience can directly relate to it.

Jamie, E6

Jamie's comments here undoubtedly arise as a combination of two things. Firstly, in order to be able to contrast what he has found with the norm for this sort of text, he must have seen a lot of this kind of interview, but probably in his own time. Secondly, the use of a metalinguistic word such as "conventionally" is now much more easily integrated into the fabric of the evaluation. Jamie does not talk about institution at all in his GCSE work, but if we draw a parallel with Andrew's comments about "my codes and conventions," we can see a real change in the use of the metalanguage here. Jamie is working in a format that he is really familiar with (music video), but what is really evident is that he is now familiar with the language of institutions as well. His response contains both broad construction concepts (conventional, unorthodox) as well as detailed ones (venue, post-show) which illustrate a high-level of conceptual understanding of the institution of the music industry and its relation to the moving image. Perhaps more importantly, the ability to distinguish the "conventional" from the "unorthodox" suggests an ability to generalize, something that Vygotsky identifies as a criterion for holding a scientific concept. This ability indicates the final, synthetic stage in the dialectical process, wherein Jamie is completely critically literate in this kind of moving image text. However, while this is, from a research point of view, the culmination of the process, it is clearly not necessarily why Jamie (or indeed any other students in the study) chose to make the text that they did. Moving from spontaneous to scientific concepts is clearly an indicator of progress but it also highlights what Buckingham has identified (Buckingham, 2003, p.142) as the somewhat asocial nature of Vygotsky's scientific concepts. There are evidently other reasons why Jamie's learning has progressed; not least because he is gaining pleasure from it.

Other students, such as Lianne have become more conscious of what institutions mean and why they are important when considering the development of a production. Her Year 13

evaluation shows that she is triangulating between the three concepts of text, audience and institution in order to position her own production work (in this case a video animation – screenshots from which can be seen in Appendix 2D) in a particular place, as evidenced by this comment:

I knew of stop-motion films that are not aimed at the institutional favourite family or child audience; for example Angry Kid is primarily aimed at teenagers and above. Such variation in audience gave me the flexibility to choose a specific audience to suit a specific narrative.

Lianne, E6

This is a continuation of the realization, identified earlier that the audience, institutions and the production process are linked in a complex relationship. This realization is not entirely fully formed, but it does show that Lianne has reached an understanding of some of the subtleties of institutional control. When discussing her product research for example, and saying that her finished product would be influenced by the output of Nick Park's Aardman animations, she delivers what in some cases, might be seen as a throwaway line designed to do no more than fill up space in her evaluation:

It was interesting to see how much influence Pixar had on audiences, as their distribution of Aardman's creations is what made them so successful.

Lianne, E6

This, on closer examination, reveals how sophisticated Lianne's understanding has become, even moving on from her detailed Year 12 work. Within this statement, she is pointing towards a complete conceptual understanding and relating that to her own production. Within this one sentence she appears to be moving between ideas about audience ("influence") institution ("distribution") and text ("creation").

There is still a problem here though. Lianne is realizing that the reason why Aardman animations have had such success is because they are now distributed by Pixar. Yet, Lianne's finished animation does not really look or feel like a Pixar (or really even an Aardman) animation. On first inspection, the animation really looks like an animated music video, made in the tradition of *Sledgehammer* by Peter Gabriel or perhaps *No Good* by Plan B. The animation is slick and does look professional, but one could argue that its content is not the

kind of thing that Pixar would distribute even for Aardman. So why does she write statements such as the following?

“In terms of character, my animation would be more similar to Monsters Inc.” Lianne, E6

This seems a virtually impossible thing to judge given that her animation, while being of a high standard, is not really like *Monsters Inc.* at all. (Though this would be perhaps the sort of text she is more familiar with). Perhaps more pertinently, why are her teachers and moderators inclined to reward this sort of statement? There are, I believe, two things going on here. Lianne, as a student is working out that there is an important relationship between the text, the audience and the institution making the text. In order to demonstrate that she knows that this relationship exists she makes connections between her work and existing texts. Also, her teacher is concerned about the mark scheme, which explicitly expects her to make those connections and expects her evaluation to explain how:

The production is placed in the wider context of media institutions and audiences by thorough analysis of the ways in which the text compares with real media output (including reference to media institutions) and an evaluation of the relationship of product to audience (including audience feedback). (OCR, 2005)

The question for me here is whether or not there is a fully-fledged understanding of how institutional issues might affect the meaning of a text. Lianne’s comments about the relationship between Pixar and Aardman would suggest that there is, but perhaps a complete understanding is really hampered rather than helped by the requirement to make a somewhat artificial connection between institutions and the text she has produced.

Despite these difficulties, it seems possible to say that a clear awareness of the connection between the student’s production and the institutional world of the media is identifiable in this Year 13 work. The triangulation of the key concepts and the ability to generalise concepts and terms that relate to those key concepts (in particular institutions) using them interchangeably indicate synthesised criticality.

At this point then, it seems a good idea to return to the concepts of audience and text, because the need to talk about institution has turned back into the subsequent need to talk about texts again. While this section of the study is ostensibly about the way that institution indicates a

fully synthesised production, it also has been about the connection between metalanguage and concept, and so a closer look at the way students use language to defamiliarise their work in this final phase is necessary.

6.5.2 Synthesis, theorizing and defamiliarisation

Lianne's apparent confidence with the metalanguage and the ability to incorporate both "meaning concepts" as well as "construction concepts" into the evaluation process is typical of this phase and perhaps even more evident when the students discuss text on its own and separate from institution. Take for example Jamie's comments about the music video he has made for his Year 13 production:

My psychographic profile of my target audience stated that the respondents lived an active gig-going life, and therefore would be more receptive to live videos. By editing the video with fast cut shots and lots of movement, I feel the target audience would want to watch it again... In regard to my video interview I stuck to my primary codes and conventions of other video interviews such as titled questions, accompanied by music and the band member not speaking to the camera.

Jamie, E6

This would seem to do exactly the kind of thing that the "genre" of evaluation requires students to do; analytical distance, technical terms, consideration of audience. Similarly Lianne's comments about narrative:

The overall narrative of the film I came up with follows Propp's narrative formula. The film begins with an exposition consisting of an alien family secretly living in a human residence.

Lianne, E6

These statements, on first viewing, appear to be completely different, but they both demonstrate a high level of confidence with metalanguage, demonstrating a critical use of both broad and detailed scientific concepts (codes and conventions, fast cut shots). However, as Julian McDougall posits, they are also, to some extent, an illustration of how media teaching frequently asks students to resort to a clumsy theoretical position. They do show the student's desire to theorise about their own work and explore what lies behind the "meaning concepts" and in this phase of the study students don't just make reference to other

theoretical perspectives, which they have been trained to do, but they begin to theorise what they have done in terms of production. I am using the term “theorise” here to describe that practice of demystification, which McDougall alludes to (McDougall, 2006, p.13) but also that of defamiliarisation in the sense that Jakobson uses the term, which I also believe is part of that process. For me, this theorizing is not simply about the text, but about audiences and institutions as well. Students theorise best when they take any text, audience or institution that they know and defamiliarise themselves from it. Here defamiliarisation is about re-presenting aspects of the world that people may be familiar with in an unfamiliar way. Witness, for example, the way Andrew’s Year 13 production (a film trailer for a movie called *Distortion*) starts with an image of an ECG monitor. When asked about this he says:

I had a lot of ideas about what that would represent but I loved the idea of it. It’s obviously a way of measuring someone’s heartbeat, so when the beat of the music kicks in the character wakes up... but also it represents the idea of a distortion. The monitor is a straight line and then the heartbeat distorts it, like it shouldn’t be there.

Andrew, 15

For me, Andrew’s statements here suggest an ability to see meaning in a way that is all about theorizing through defamiliarisation. He is exploring the binary opposition of life and death by suggesting that the flat-line indicating death on the monitor is what is normal, and the heartbeat indicating life is what is abnormal – an interruption into an otherwise peaceful narrative world. This ability to defamiliarise, or estrange, that which he has had to familiarise - probably the notion that death is a disruption to narratives, rather than an equilibrium (Todorov, 1977) is indicative of him approaching a fully synthetic understanding. What is perhaps more interesting though, is the fact that in many ways, subjective language has made something of a return. This is not, I believe, simply because he is being interviewed about his own personal work, but rather because he is taking ownership of the work in a *synthesised* way. The passage from the interview above abounds in personal subjective language (“I loved the idea of it”) but at the same time the conceptual language (“represents the idea”) is also completely absorbed into his talk about the work. It is doing the production work and taking ownership of it that has allowed him to reach this fully synthesised position, bringing together both the subjective and the critical.

Jasmin is also undergoing a similar process when she discusses her beloved romantic comedy genre in the light of what she did to make her trailer for her Year 13 production:

I wanted to create this romantic suburban atmosphere... lots of the romantic drama films that I analysed had that suburban thing with a closed community.

Jasmin, 15

This kind of critical statement indicates a defamiliarisation. It is clear that Jasmin is still in love with the genre, but now in an entirely different way from that which she described at the start of the study. She is theorizing about the genre because she has both familiar knowledge of it but also because she has made it unfamiliar, put critical distance between her and it and then synthesized that critical understanding with the personal pleasure she takes in it to make this new understanding. This is typical of the kind of progression towards criticality we see at this stage.

6.5.3 Some conclusions about synthesis

These abilities to theorize and subsequently defamiliarise, using a critical metalanguage in order to scaffold those skills, are a key feature of synthesis. The use of the metalanguage to move from the critical orthodoxy presented by the teacher to a more mature, critical view of the students' own production work is something that can be seen as the culmination of learning progression. The inclusion of the concept of institution as a marker of synthesis is an important one, because I would argue, fully developed criticality requires an understanding of how the product that a student has made fits into the wider world. The ability to use metalanguage to view the text they have made in this institutional context, and then to subsequently defamiliarise in institutional (and other conceptual) terms, means that a significant amount of critical learning has gone on in the preceding period, involving a synthesis of thetic criticality, antithetical concepts, play, "distancing" and language change. Perhaps most interestingly here, the re-emergence of a different kind of subjective language, engendered by the production work process is a – perhaps unexpected – mark of a more fully developed critical understanding. This "recipe" for learning includes many different ingredients, and as a consequence the reality of the progression may be messier than that described here; but there is a clear line to be drawn from the student's thetic position their synthetic position at the end of the dialectic cycle.

6.6 Conclusions – Becoming critical

How then, have these students become critical in the process of learning to make digital video and in what ways has that criticality contributed to the process? In 6.1, I suggested that the key questions to answer here were not only about the process of becoming critical, but also about the relationship between digital technology and criticality, the students' initial preoccupation with the concept of text and the apparent inadequacy of Vygotskian ideas about the scientific and spontaneous.

Before considering these in concluding terms, it is important to note that in the move from Year 11 to Year 13, the student themselves move from a position of lesser to greater personal, intellectual and emotional involvement in the text that they are making. If we return to Bruce's comments from the end of the Year 13 production:

My GCSE film was me trying to be 'arty farty' and smarter than I actually was and in the two years gap I've learnt that I'm not actually that good at making film... planning and preparation wise this is much better though, as for my GCSE I did just get two mates and say, "Right, let's go and film something." With this though, I did a lot more thinking and planning about how I wanted it to look.

Bruce, 15

Despite this somewhat negative view of his own work, Bruce has demonstrated a developed sense of criticality in making the comment. Paradoxically, as students become more involved, the kind of language they use becomes more de-personalised and detached from the subject – as demonstrated by Andrew's comments about the ECG monitor and what it represents – acquiring as they do, the language of the genre of the evaluation. Yet at the same time, they return to subjective language as the student takes ownership of the work. Obviously there are greater and more confident uses of metalanguage and persistent attempts to link them to a wider conceptual framework, though there are points within this process where metalanguage, particularly in terms of what we have come to call "construction concepts". These concepts though, can become problematic, as evidenced by the use of speech marks to bracket technical terms in Lianne's evaluation of the Year 12 group project. Alongside this, productions become seemingly more sophisticated, but also attempt to connect more with the bigger "meaning concepts." This last point is what Andrew is trying to do in his GCSE evaluation when he says things such as, "Using these codes and conventions (referring to a

horror movie) *we decided to use these in the creation of our product*” – giving conceptual names to things that are known to be important but not necessarily why they are important. In the later parts of the study, he and other students are able to give much more articulate accounts of why a concept such as text might be important to their production.

When asked about what they think they have learnt, the student responses are unequivocal. At the end of the study, it is the process of constructing a narrative through editing that has been the biggest change that they have seen in themselves. But it is in these comments about editing that we see how conceptually and critically advanced they have become. Jasmin says for example:

With the Year 13 project I brought in new things... things that I could incorporate from the software... like the editing transitions, I played with them more, used slow motion for example and ...really thinking about the narrative more.... In the GCSE one I was thinking more about this is what I would want to see, whereas here I was trying to tailor it more to them, the audience.

Jasmin, 15

She continues on this theme when asked about how she thought the Year 12 production influenced the Year 13 work:

I just learnt about staying within the limits. Staying within the conventions of the thing, you know, not giving away too much about the killer, and the same with this one, you know, not giving too much away about the romance and whether it's going to happen or not.

Jasmin, 15

It is important to note here the critical and conceptual language and the way that Jasmin shifts freely from construction concepts to meaning concepts, synthesising them together in these final stages of the learning process, to show a deeper level of understanding.

These general characteristics of how students progress across the three years might more helpfully be grouped in the following way; progression here is a cycle of movement from familiar to unfamiliar and then making that familiar again. At the end, what remains is a different kind of familiar, where paradoxically the student is able to defamiliarise themselves

from what they are watching or making in order to be critical about it. This final stage is probably an end point in the dialectic (not necessarily *the* end point, as defamiliarised material becomes a new thesis), and though not all of the students in the study have reached it, there is the sense that this is characteristic of Vygotsky's movement from spontaneous to scientific. The diagram used in Chapter 3 to describe the dialectic process has its limitations, in that it cannot represent the way that progression lurches through the production process as students shift from the familiar to the unfamiliar, nor indeed some of the more social aspects of play and collaboration, but regardless, the data examined here does support the idea that the conceptual learning progression occurs through the production work itself.

However, it is probably not enough to say that progression is just about this move, owing to the fact that it is not as clear-cut as we might expect it to be, perhaps because there are so many different social and cultural aspects involved in studying and making media texts. If we return to David Buckingham's point, made earlier, that the problem with the Vygotskian model of concepts is that it ignores the emotional investment made by students in production work in particular, we can see that this criticism can be extended to a number of areas in which students are clearly making a learning progression that Vygotsky cannot account for. The Dialectic of Familiarity can offer a metaphor for learning that addresses this, not only because it allows for the development of criticality through play and progression but also because it can accommodate other dialectic movements that allow us to see criticality as connected not only to creativity but also to culture.

As was observed in Chapter 6, a significant role is played by students not only reflecting on the spontaneous concepts gained by watching moving image texts outside class, but also the movement from that experience to the classroom situation and then the subsequent return of the student to an experience within popular culture that is in some way different – perhaps even enhanced. The scientific concept of something such as narrative is not really just about the student reflecting on and formalising what they know about “stories” by thinking about them in class. They take back what they have learnt and then make it spontaneous again, throwing the concept back into the cultural pool that they occupy. Andrew demonstrates this when he talks about the texts that influenced his Year 13 production. This constitutes a significant element of the thesis, antithesis and orthodox stages of the learning process, but it is only in the synthesis stage that it can be put into context.

As Andrew comments;

I started off with White Noise, that's where I got the idea of the waves meaning something. Then War Games, where I had the idea that the wave (on the ECG monitor) would have a voice, then I moved on from there and the idea that it would be a government facility... and then I watched a film later on – my Dad showed me it – called Coma, and I used that too, for the idea of why the character was asleep and waking up.

Andrew, 15

What we are seeing here is not just the formalization of concepts experienced outside the classroom, but a dialectic movement between the student's own experience, class, home life and various social relationships (in this particular case, family), as well as that re-emergence of subjective language as a mark of ownership identified earlier. These social relationships are vital for not only the creative energy required by the student to complete the project but also for the development of the critical and conceptual framework which is necessary for the student to make progress – in the case of Andrew's comments above these are both construction concepts (references to sound) and meaning concepts (narrative and why particular things are happening). The movement from the social space to the classroom has been essential here for his conceptual and critical synthesis of the familiar and the unfamiliar. The lines between progression in critical and cultural terms are blurred here, but there is little doubt that the criticality has a social aspect which goes beyond the account of learning given by Vygotsky. (Vygotsky, 1986, pp.146-209)

Finally, there is also an important comment here to be made about subjectivity and objectivity. Paradoxically, while students are clearly becoming more objective about their work and the way that an audience might view it, there is a subjectivity to it too, as they talk about the amount of time and emotion that they have invested in their production work, and where they want the work to take them in the long run. The more production work they do, the more the subjective language re-emerges, suggesting that the relationship between objective critical knowledge and subjective personal ownership of the production work is a complex one. It seems as if the "habitus" of each student, to use Bourdieu's term (Bourdieu, 1986, p.109) has changed. They have internalized the experiences of making the moving image, and to a certain extent, the critical and conceptual languages that they have discovered. What one is left with is a sense that becoming critical, while involving a defamiliarising and distancing process, is for many of these students, on one level at least, a

deeply personal one.

What emerges then, at the end of the project are four key observations that arise from the data, and show the elements that make up the dialectic process. Firstly, that the learning is marked by a gradual exploration of the key concepts that starts with texts, and then adds in audience and institution to complete that package. Secondly, it becomes clear that as students complete the Engestromian cycle through the dialectic process of familiar to unfamiliar concepts and back again, and from abstract to concrete, the conscious acts of theorizing and defamiliarisation come into play, marking a move toward the scientific. Thirdly, while this move towards the scientific is an important marker for progression, it is only part of the story, with other social phenomena such as “distancing,” play, and group collaboration becoming significant in students making progress too. Fourthly, the whole learning process is marked by a gradual familiarity with unfamiliar language (and changing of the use of subjective language, initially losing it but having it re-emerge later) which allows the student to move initially towards a critical orthodoxy, but subsequently to take ownership of their work and synthesise a range of concepts and skills. Finally, the whole development of criticality for the students in this study, at least, is deeply entwined with the use of digital technology and the way it affords them an opportunity to apply and experiment with concepts.

Chapter 7 – Creativity

It's a very different kind of film making... it doesn't go by the standard rules, like the in the first part there has to be an exciting moment ...instead it has different rules, it uses a voiceover, it's just different

Bruce, 12

In Chapter 3, I posed the following theoretical question about creativity; “How does a student demonstrate their individual creativity through production work, and what does this have to do with cultural capital or critical understanding?” I want to argue in this chapter that creativity, (or perhaps more specifically, the creative production process) is the means by which students become familiar with the unfamiliar, while at the same time allowing them to defamiliarise and “estrangle” themselves from that which is familiar to them. This argument is about what creativity is, what it looks like and how it manifests itself in production work, but it is also about the connection between creativity, criticality and culture. It will therefore, refer back to the preceding two chapters, and connect to these aspects of progression in moving image literacy.

It was observed in the previous chapter that students moved dialectically from the stage of being unfamiliar with the broad and detailed meaning and construction concepts to becoming familiar with them. This allowed them to begin thinking about those concepts, in Vygotskian terms, in a scientific way, thus in turn, defamiliarising the popular cultural experience of watching film. Bruce’s comment above about his desire to shoot his Year 11 film in a different way, and to become familiar with a style that he has heard about but not tried (in this case film noir) illustrates what I would call the creative impulse; the inclination to move from something familiar (“like in the first part there has to be an exciting moment”) to something unfamiliar, in this case characterised by his use of the word different, which he uses three times – something antithetical. Notice too, his use of, what I would consider, to be a detailed construction concept, *voiceover* and we can begin to see that Bruce’s creativity is driving him to make new kinds of meaning and engage with new concepts as part of his learning.

I want to propose that this drive is powered by a three-part model of creativity, involving **imagination, concept development** and what Martin Heidegger has described as *techne* –

the idea of craft skill that reveals knowledge of the world. For Heidegger, *techne* involves some sense of revealing (he uses the term “bringing forth”) knowledge of the world – some kind of ideation of it and its aesthetics – through a particular craft skill (Heidegger, 1993, p.184). This is why it is more appropriate than simple “craft” because it contains within it some sense of the relationship between doing something practical in order to obtain, or present, knowledge. Heidegger is clear that it refers to the “arts of the mind as well as fine arts” in addition to practical skills and is something different from just “manufacturing something” using craft skills but rather that these skills are being used to reveal knowledge about the world.

Techne, then has a particular relevance to the use of the digital editing, which is one of the places in this study where, as suggested by the BECTA evaluation report discussed in Chapter 2, and the work of Avril Loveless (Loveless, 2000) amongst others, one might expect creativity to be evident. Lankshear and Knobel ascribe particular qualities to the craft of remix - the practice of taking existing cultural artefacts and manipulating them into new “creative blends” (Lankshear & Knobel, 2008, p.1). This gives some idea of the way we may see the craft of digital editing in contemporary terms. But what of editing as a craft, in the more traditional sense of “learning a craft?” Heidegger points out that the Greek word “*techne*” is often translated as “craft” and that this is where the modern word technology comes from (Heidegger, 1993, p.184). However, he is clear that *techne* should be seen as lying somewhere between art (for which talent is required) and science, which is about knowledge. Digital editing would seem to fit this particular description as its purpose is to produce a text (that could be artistic in nature) but requires a systematic use in order to do so. Additionally, for both Heidegger and Kress and Van Leeuwen, (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, p.66) the act of craft, or *techne* or production is always about physical action, and yet, for Heidegger as well, there is an element of *techne* that is about revealing knowledge about the world. This would seem to imply an additional mental effort. For this study, that mental effort is about what Vygotsky terms, the “transformation” of semiotic tools (Vygotsky, 1998, p.163); the movement from the language of the spontaneous or the *thetic*, to the conceptual language of the scientific. It is through this mental effort that conceptual and cultural knowledge can be seen as being revealed through the *techne* of editing. The finished moving image text produced by the student then, is not only a demonstration of this cultural and conceptual knowledge, but also is an aesthetic product, crafted in an artisanal sense, to represent something about the world.

This contrast between the mental acts of concept development and imagination and the physical aspects of craft, suggest that creativity requires all three aspects if it is to synthesise the familiar (the student's own cultural, semiotic and other resources) with the unfamiliar. It is then, about knowledge AND practice, and this tension is a prevalent one not only for media education but also education more widely – particularly when teachers are not only asked to demonstrate what students can do, but also what they know.

This is why I would suggest that *techne* is a better term to use than craft when describing creativity because it gets at the student's desire to reveal something about their own culture and conceptual knowledge. This relationship between skill and artistic revelation could then cover any number of creative activities from writing a poem to running a science experiment, because we can observe both a skill and a beauty to this process of revealing knowledge. In terms of video production, such a craft skill might involve filming and editing, as well as dramatic, language or even musical skills in order to say something about the world.

7.1 What is creativity?

The question of what creativity is has proved difficult to answer for many teachers and researchers, and not just those within the field of media education. The impulse to create and produce something new, both for oneself and others, is present in all children, from the moment they pick up two toys and begin to use them to act out a story but trying to capture that impulse and to identify the role it might have to play in learning is extremely problematic. Banaji, et al. give a clear account of this landscape of differing views in by identifying nine different “Rhetorics of Creativity”, which are ways of classifying the meanings that people have ascribed to creativity in the past (Banaji, et al., 2012, pp.3-6). These nine rhetorics (creative genius; democratic and political creativity; ubiquitous creativity; creativity as a social good; creativity as economic imperative; play and creativity; creativity and cognition; the creative affordances of technology and the creative classroom) demonstrate that creativity is a complex term that means different things to different people. For the purpose of this study, I want to focus on just one of the kinds of creativity described in these nine rhetorics – namely the kind of “cognitive creativity” described by the cultural psychology of Vygotsky. I propose to take this view of creativity and connect it to

Heidegger's notion of *techne* in order to think about the way that learning might occur through production work.

For Vygotsky, creativity involved processing and re-processing ideas, moving from concrete to abstract concepts.

The formation of concepts brings with it, first of all, liberation from the concrete situation and the possibility of creatively re-processing and changing its elements.

(Vygotsky, 1998, p.163)

As well as making this very clear link between creativity and conceptual learning, (the latter having been explored extensively in Chapter 6) he also connects creativity with the idea of "fantasy." This does not refer to "fantasy" in the modern sense of something that is unrealistic and unobtainable, but rather any genuinely imaginative act. For Vygotsky, imagination, creativity and play are all closely connected. As he remarks:

In order to understand correctly the significance of concrete factors in the adolescent's fantasy, we must take into account the connection that exists between the imagination of the adolescent and the play of the child.

(Vygotsky, 1998, p.157)

Vygotsky goes on to assert that creative acts involving imagination are what he calls "the successors" to a child's play and that in acting imaginatively, the adolescent is replacing the concrete objects that they played with as a child. In the transitional stage between childhood and adulthood Vygotsky claims that an individual creates visual representations in their mind which mark a halfway point between the concrete act of playing and abstract thinking. For Vygotsky then, creativity is about the semiotic transformation of cultural resources – turning those basic visual representations into concepts through language and other sign systems – moving them from one set of concrete concepts into abstract ones. However, it is also built upon the notion that young people will always start at a point with which they are familiar when learning something new (Vygotsky, 1986, p.157-158). I would want to argue here that progression from the familiar to the unfamiliar is all about learning to use a range of creative tools, only some of which are cultural. Others may be semiotic (Jasmin's comments about the role of the suburban setting for example, outlined below) while others may be technical, such

as the use of a digital timeline to organise their work; or dramatic, in terms of organising actors. The use of these creative tools is about developing unfamiliar skills that are based on familiar experience.

For the purposes of this study, creativity cannot be seen as being purely about imagination and conceptual learning, because in media education, learning does not take place in a purely conceptual or imaginative way. There is a need for a modified view of creativity; one that encompasses Vygotskian ideas of physical play and imagination (Vygotsky, 1998, p.157), but also the notion of a set of skills that can manifest that imaginative and conceptual knowledge in practical terms. Such a set of skills would demonstrate the practical ability to process and reprocess conceptual knowledge through imagination which would allow for a more specific application of Vygotsky's view of creativity to media education.

How the student demonstrates their creativity, needs to be broken down into a number of sub-questions though, in order to get at the role of creativity in the learning. There is a need to think about what it means to be creative with digital video and how that creativity manifests itself. There is also the need to think about the role that technology has to play in learning to be creative and (in connection with the ideas in Chapter 6) how that relates to ideas about criticality and cultural knowledge, and of course, there is the question of progression and how creativity facilitates progression, or indeed, may actually be seen *as* progression over time.

In order to answer these questions, a close examination of students' production work – the video that they have made – must be carried out. I explained in Chapter 4 that this analysis would be done using a multimodal framework, as this allows for a consideration of the way that the students' video productions work beyond the level of the purely semiotic, analysing not only what is apparent on the screen, but also the processes and meanings behind what put it there. This analysis will be supported by data from the interviews with students.

Alongside this multimodal analysis, the structure of this chapter itself is designed to treat the data generated by the students differently from previous chapters. This is because there are some important differences between creativity, culture and conceptual knowledge. I want to argue here, that in the dialectic model, creativity is a means to learning, rather than an end in itself. While one can undoubtedly “learn to be creative,” the point of doing so is usually to achieve some other goal.

Culture and conceptual knowledge appear to be different in that it is possible to see them as ends in themselves. I would propose that creativity is not like culture or criticality because it cannot be characterised in the same way. Consequently it needs to be viewed outside those structures (as identified in the diagram in Chapter 3) as a force for moving conceptual and critical knowledge along from point to point in the dialectic model of learning. This difference in creativity means that it cannot be “extracted” from the student work in the same way that critical knowledge and cultural experiences can be. Rather it feeds into the dialectic process at every stage. This is why this chapter does not follow the thesis/antithesis/orthodoxy/synthesis structure used in Chapters 5 & 6, and why the student work is analysed student by student from the beginning to the end of the study, using the multimodal strata.

7.2 Multimodality – A framework for analysing creativity

For Kress and Van Leeuwen, all texts can be seen as “*making meaning in multiple articulations*” (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, pp.6-23). This means that instead of the meaning of a text just being made once, or indeed in only one mode, it is made across several different strata. These strata are **discourse**, **design**, **production** and **distribution**. The argument here is that texts communicate with their audiences through these different modes and that they all have a role to play in making meaning. A novel for example, creates meaning through the way it demonstrates knowledge of the world; this might be in terms of the genre, or the language that the writer uses to describe things and people. This is what Kress and Van Leeuwen call **discourse**. The writer of the novel has chosen to reproduce that knowledge of the world in the form of a novel, rather than say, a painting or a symphony. This choice of mode is what Kress and Van Leeuwen refer to as **design**. The book is published as a paperback and choices are made about the paper it is printed on and the colours used in the front cover. These decisions about the medium that the knowledge is communicated through are referred to as **production**. Kress and Van Leeuwen refer to the final stage of getting the book to the audience as **distribution**, and this may require new modes and media, such as advertising.

There is however, a slight difficulty in using this framework, in that in terms of digital media,

the lines that exist between design (choice of mode) and production, (which is about choice of medium) are often blurred. For example, we might be tempted to see a student's choice of shot, as being about design – in that there is a clear choice to represent the world they see through this shot. However, we might also see that choice as being about medium in that there is a clear decision to use one shot over another. Because of some of these difficulties, I will be taking a customised approach to multimodal analysis, by doing three things. Firstly, I will focus on the design and production modes specifically, and analysing the students' video productions largely in these terms. However, because there are some influential factors in that production that are to do with discourse, I will also be making references to that stratum in the course of that analysis. I am ignoring the stratum of distribution because, at the time that the data was collected, this was largely not something that they could do. Now, six years later, such distribution networks, such as Youtube, are widespread, but none of the students chose to use this network to exhibit their work at the time.

Additionally, I will be focusing on the work of two students through the stratum of design (Jasmin and Lianne) and on the work of two students through the stratum of production (Bruce and Jamie). It is important to note here the video work includes not only filming and editing – dealt with in the stratum of production, but other contributory modes such as acting and movement, which are dealt with in the section on design. While camerawork could be seen as being purely about production, I treat it as part of design in this analysis because it is part of a wider “multimodal ensemble” (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, pp.111-112) that sees the choice of camera as simply one mode of communication amongst many. The actual analysis grid reflects this, with analysis being carried out by presenting a still image from the students' video alongside observations about type of shot used, dialogue, movement, location and music used. Such an analysis allows for a consideration of the kineiconic (to use Burn's term) nature of the work as well as its cinematic nature. Within the stratum of production though, particular consideration is given to editing, as I want to consider the particular craft nature of these skills and how they are developed.

Finally, I will be explaining and analysing the production work in terms of the three-part model of creativity, how it might relate to Vygotsky and Heidegger's ideas and the way that creativity within learning progression might be described by the Dialectic of Familiarity.

7.3 Design

In discussing the stratum of design and what it tells us about creativity, I want to focus on the work of Jasmin and Lianne, and look at how their production work develops over the three-year-period. Jasmin, as we have already discussed in the previous chapters is obsessed with romantic comedies and dramas, and the cultural origins and conceptual knowledge developed through these has been extensively analysed. She begins in Year 11 by making a trailer for a romantic comedy and ends in Year 13 by making a trailer for a romantic drama, with these two productions separated by a thriller opening in Year 12 which she was almost forced to choose by the terms of the specification. Lianne, on the other hand, works in a broader range of documentaries (analysis here focuses on her Year 11 documentary and her Year 12 slasher group project) but other themes are evident in her work which means that progress manifests itself in different ways to Jasmin. In Lianne's work, we frequently see her personal creativity taking on more traditional forms, to do with the generation of academic capital, rather than Jasmin's need to tell a particular kind of story. Lianne is perhaps more conscious of the need to show her teacher and the exam board moderator what she can do.

There is also a different perspective to be taken on Lianne's work in that she chooses to work in a particular way within groups, as a decision maker and "ideas" person." For this reason it is important to look at her work in terms of the role that collaboration might play in the creative process and any subsequent learning progression. There are different choices in design and certainly, discourse for each of these two students, but what do these choices tell us about creativity, and what does the way both students have gone about making them tell us about learning progression?

7.4 Design: Jasmin


In terms of the design of the films, there are a number of design features which are present in both Jasmin's productions at the beginning and the end of the study. For Kress and Van Leeuwen, design is about *choice of mode* and the design features here suggest a desire to communicate particular aspects of that choice, in this case, the modes associated with digital video. A good example of this is the use of the camera and the choices that are made about the way the discourse is delivered. Jasmin's Year 11 individual project, a trailer for a new romantic comedy, includes some scenes that might well be seen as typical of the romantic comedy genre and deliver a familiar "rom-com" discourse. The fundamental premise of the

story is that a teenage girl who wants to go out with the most desirable boy in the school sets out to do a number of things which will grab his attention, all of which backfire disastrously, but in the course of this happening, she does get his attention and finds out that he is a chivalrous sort of individual who actually liked her anyway, despite originally having a girlfriend. Because of this, there a number of shots and sequences that are typically associated with the genre; the single girl in her bedroom contemplating how to ensnare her man, getting a makeover from her friends, several scenes in which she makes a fool of herself the tragic realisation that the boy already has a girlfriend (Fig. 9) feeling sorry for herself about this; and an intimate moment together. Such a discourse is familiar to Jasmin because, as she admits in interview,

“I love watching movies and I love watching romantic comedies.”

Jasmin, 12

For her, the Year production gives her a chance to engage with this discourse and she has clearly taken on board the kind of things that the audience sees in that genre. While this familiarity is exactly what we might expect from a 15-year-old girl there are some problematic things here. The work she produces highlights the fact that the discourse of the rom-com genre is much more complex than it at first seems. The innocent, non-sexualised nature of the narrative, with its comedy makeover scene (influenced in this case, by a similar scene in *The Princess Diaries* which Jasmin describes in interview) seems to suggest an idealized version of romance that is probably not like Jasmin and her peer group’s actual experience of fledgling relationships, where young people do judge on appearances and are often very concerned with sex. This discourse then, provides some revealing insights into the way that the politics of beauty and

	Fig.9 <i>Jasmin, V2</i>	Shot	Three shot/Over the Shoulder
		Dialogue	None
		Acting/Movement	Antagonist girlfriend sees protagonist and boy together
		Location	Street
		Music	<i>Beautiful Soul</i> by Jesse McCartney

teen girl relationships with both their friends and boys are being played out. Jasmin is telling the story of the way she thinks boys and girls *should* get together and, in fact, that while beauty is an important part of that story, it is less important than “true feelings.” The design

choices made to deliver such a discourse then, reveal how Jasmin is exploring those complex ideas through her choices about the different modes of communication available to her in the medium of digital video.


7.4.1 Jasmin: Camerawork

Fig. 9, above, demonstrates these kind of choices. It features an over the shoulder three-shot of the protagonist and the boy she is interested in (both of whom have their backs to the camera) and the antagonist, namely the girl that the boy is already going out with. While, the notion of an obstacle to romance, in human or other form, is common in romantic comedies, this shot reflects a particular construction, which for me, demonstrates the way in which creativity is the driving force behind learning. The “triangle” of characters here positions the protagonist and the boy together rather than the boy and the antagonist together, with the acting and movement suggesting that they are being watched by the protagonist. I would suggest too here that the choice of music is telling; for this shot, and indeed, most of the trailer, a song called *Beautiful Soul* by Jesse McCartney is playing over the action. Its lyrics – “*I don’t want another pretty face/I don’t want just anyone to hold/ I don’t want my love to go to waste/I want you and your beautiful/soul.*” The connection between the “faces” in the shot and the “face” referred to in the song seems to be a deliberate choice to communicate ideas about looking and appearance (referred to above) through the mode of music.

This shot tells a particular story, and indicates a desire to tell that story in a specific way. Here, the meaning concepts of narrative and genre are being put together with, or manifested through the construction concept of the three-shot. I would argue that such a choice of shot highlights the connection between imagination and concept formation. The cultural resources that Jasmin is familiar with, is the motif of the “love triangle” and she imagines what that situation might be like if it were to be visualised on screen. She is beginning to transform those resources into a particular kind of concept when she films this as the kind of three-shot in 7.1. Such a Vygotskian account of the creative act involved here, (Vygotsky, 1998, pp.157-166) ignores, though, the craft skills that are involved in creating meaning. In this case, Jasmin has had to make particular decisions about camerawork, acting and facial expression in order to “craft” the shot in a particular way, and reveal the truth or essence of the situation that she wants to get across.

These decisions give some idea as to why we can describe creativity as the engine of learning, driving the dialectic process. Jasmin wants to tell a familiar story, but needs to find a way of making it interesting to the audience – and, at this stage, it is not entirely clear who they are – and has moved to use a detailed construction concept in order to do so. Presumably this concept is, or has been at some point, antithetical to her, but as creative production is the place where students can try out this antithetical material, she presses this unfamiliar concept into the service of her familiar cultural experience (in this case the romantic comedy). This kind of technical proficiency is not evident the whole way through, as one would expect in a Year 11 production, but this particular example does demonstrate that sense of *beginning* to make connections between the production process and the learning concepts which might be characteristic of creative action. In interview, Jasmin does not comment on this three-shot as one that she took from any other particular film, which is in interesting contrast to those she made about the makeover scene and the way it was influenced by the *Princess Diaries*.

In Year 13, the way the camerawork has been used to deliver this discourse has changed. In this trailer – for what Jasmin is careful to describe as a “romantic drama” – there is a much clearer sense of each shot being important and a desire to promote the film, rather than trying to tell a whole story. The camera work frequently makes a greater use of close-ups (see Figs. 10-12) and these are held for much longer than the rather fleeting medium long and medium shots that are used in the Year 11 production.

	Fig. 10 <i>Jasmin, V6</i>	Shot- CU/MCU
		Dialogue – None
		Movement – couple hold hands
		Location – suburban street
		Music – <i>Halo</i> by Haley James Scott

Picture redacted due to third party rights or other legal issues

Fig.11 <i>Jasmin, V6</i>	Shot- CU/MCU
	Dialogue – “I’m mean and angry all the time and no-one likes me, so why should you”
	Movement – boy and girl face each other in argument
	Location – Suburban park
	Music – <i>Halo</i> by Haley James Scott

Picture redacted due to third party rights or other legal issues

Fig. 12 <i>Jasmin, V6</i>	Shot- CU/MCU
	Dialogue - None
	Movement – Boy looks back at girl
	Location – Suburban Park
	Music - <i>Halo</i> by Haley James Scott

This use of the close-up here, along with the shot/reverse shot structure that allows the dialogue to give a sense of a realistic discussion, seems to tie in with Jasmin’s realization that, at this final stage of the study, the audience has become much more important, and that they really need to see and get to know the characters. This desire to involve the audience more is a creative result of the increased awareness of the concept of audience discussed in Chapter 6, and as such, demonstrates that the design decisions being made by Jasmin are now much less about “story” and much more about the practical application of concepts through

technique. Kress and Van Leeuwen propose in *Reading Images*, that visual signs fulfil a number of different roles or metafunctions. Jasmin's use of the close-up suggests that she has set the trailer up to communicate directly with an audience – this direct communication; what Kress – following Halliday (Halliday, 2004, p.36) calls the “interpersonal metafunction” (Kress, 2006, p.15) - shows a conscious decision to communicate a particular idea and indeed, a particular conceptual understanding, to the different audiences that may be watching. For Kress and Van Leeuwen, the use of a close-up shot in a film or image serves two purposes. Firstly, it “demands” that the audience look at the person being framed by the close-up in a specific way; that they scrutinize their face for a particular meaning. Secondly, it implies a proximity or intimacy between the audience and the subject, and Jasmin is conscious of both these purposes. In interview she reveals:

I really wanted to capture the meaning... the meaning of the character's body language and the meaning in their faces. I used the transitions as well to give this sense of something really building up between them.

Jasmin, 15

She goes on to say that this “capture of meaning” is about being conscious of an audience, implying that she is aware of the social relationship between herself, as the communicator, and her audience – as the people being communicated with. It would seem that in this pursuit of the audience (either the concept or the actual people) Jasmin has been driven to some extent, to re-tell the boy-meets-girl story she told in Year 11, but now she wants to do it in such a way that it would appeal to other people. The original imaginative, transformative effort, in Vygotskian terms, has been increased, changing the semiotic tools being used so that the production moves beyond the imaginative idea of what Jasmin would like to see, towards the imaginative idea of what others would like to see. Looking at the actual trailers themselves, this difference seems to involve a more clearly indicated set of meanings for the audience, constructed through even more deliberate and conscious choices about shot, mise-en-scene and editing. This construction in, and of itself, indicates a move towards the critical orthodoxy described in Chapter 6 but in addition to this, the detailed and deliberate choices made about the way her actors move and speak are clearly foregrounded so that these modes take on specific meanings. This may offer a challenge to the traditional (indeed, “orthodox” in the context of this study) view of production work which often puts technical decision-making in terms of say, camerawork and editing, at the front and centre of a “good production,” but I would argue, shows how students can move beyond orthodoxy towards

synthesis by adapting their acquired conceptual knowledge and combining it with camera work other imaginative and craft processes (explained below).

7.4.2 Jasmin: Acting and movement

One of the most notable things about Jasmin's work in Year 13 is her ability to get her actors to do some complex things. In the case of Figs. 10-12 above, Jasmin has clearly focused on the management of actors, and *their* subsequent creative efforts to tell the story. Here, the creativity involves transforming those physical and dramatic resources to tell the story, demonstrating that students might be more aware of the multimodal nature of the text than the teacher realises. For example, the hand-holding featured in the shot above would have to not only have been framed in the correct way, but there would also have had to be a discussion with the actors (however brief) about the way that they should hold hands and why the characters were doing it. These gestures and intonations are evidence of the creative transformation at work, part of the *techne*, and the way it is used to represent the world that Jasmin is trying to describe. The creative effort here then involves the ideation or representation of two people in a relationship, connected to the craft skill of getting the actors to represent that successfully, combined with the concept of the (probably close-up) shot that will show that relationship on screen. In terms of the dialectic nature of this transformation, one might say that the hand-holding and intonation examples, could have been seen earlier in the study as being antithetical to Jasmin; though she has clearly told her actors to "do things" in the Year 11 trailer, there is an absence of connection between the thing they have done and the best way to frame that action.

Picture redacted due to third party rights or other legal issues

Fig. 13: <i>Jasmin V2</i>	Shot	HA
	Dialogue	None
	Acting/Movement	Protagonist falls down after trying to show off on the basketball court
	Location	Basketball court
	Music	<i>Beautiful Soul</i> by Jesse McCartney

Fig. 13 for example, taken from her Year 11 individual project shows the central character having fallen over on the basketball court. This simply appears as one single shot in the trailer presented in a high angle shot. It appears on screen for 2-3 seconds, and one senses that it is there simply to tell that part of the story, rather than give the audience a particular impression of the character.

In the Year 13 trailer though, the modes of gesture, movement and facial expression are fully synthesised – familiar, important signs that have been incorporated into the finished text. This then, is where the progression lies, with a similarly significant number of creative decisions being made in order to make the text, but those decisions being made with a clear audience (in this case, almost certainly the teacher or moderator) in mind. This is in subtle contrast to some of the apparent uncertainty about the audience in the Year 11 project where Jasmin’s messages about the unimportance of beauty seem to have been replaced by a very clear set of ideas about the “correct” way that a trailer should be made.

When asked about her actors in interview, Jasmin is very positive about them, especially her male lead, and her comments suggest the fact that what the actors do on screen needs to be credible because of the genre she is working in:

He says, “I love you” and that’s a difficult line to pull off, but he does it very well. He’s such a good actor...

Jasmine, 15

Interestingly, it is the same actor who plays the male lead in both her Year 11 and

Year 13 trailer, and as such marks a conscious decision to work with someone who has brought Jasmin a degree of success previously. This actor is not in any way traditional leading-man material (he is not, for example, particularly tall for his age) but the importance of his ability to carry off a line such as “I love you” is obviously useful to the director. This suggests something about learning progression. Jasmin, working in a genre that is familiar to her in a personal enjoyment sense, moves through the unfamiliar processes of directing a film (utilising particular kinds of familiar experience to do so, such as teamwork and editing skills) until she understands what the audience might want from it, to the extent that she is able to defamiliarise the text and understand what it is about it that needs to be credible. This is a conscious choice, showing that the way to be creative is to oscillate between the familiar and unfamiliar constantly.

7.4.3. Jasmin: Locations

There are other aspects of design that play a role here. Location for example, is carefully chosen in both trailers, when Jasmin wants to say something about the kind of characters and narrative that she has created. Her comments about the fictionalised “bedroom” created for the Year 11 production – which are discussed in detail below – seem to be invested with several different meanings about the status, class and character of her protagonist, while of course, also imparting a good deal of secondary information about Jasmin’s own environment (residential area, cultural tastes, domestic situation) as a young woman from a lower middle-class background with a big family and all the circumstances that brings with it. One might speculate from these signifiers that the character inhabits Jasmin’s social milieu and that these are socially-motivated modal choices, wanting to say something about the character’s origins through scale, objects and even décor.

I converted the living room into my sister’s bedroom... my Mum has a couch which goes into a bed... I changed the mirrors and put posters up, with girl’s stuff all over the room and just made it a girly-featured thing. It was big enough to shoot in... I thought it would give me enough space to film in. I share a bedroom with my sister, but I wanted my sister to be that spoilt kind of girl where she had a double bed and a big massive bedroom...

Jasmin, I2

The management of the location here, and its direct connection with wanting to tell a particular kind of story, about a “spoilt girl with a big massive bedroom,” suggests a

Vygotskyan imaginative effort. By this I mean the transformation of Jasmin's cultural experiences of films and probably her experience of some of her peer groups environments, coupled with a series of rational decisions about how the product will look at the end of the process. Additionally the move from the physical, concrete act of rearranging the bedroom (which looks like one big act of play) to the conceptualisation of the mise-en-scene as a necessary element of the narrative in this genre seems to be a manifestation of Vygotsky's transition from play to creativity (Vygotsky, 1998, pp.164-5). This is because of the connection between the role-play of the converted bedroom to its application as mise-en-scene – a scientific concept. Also, the verbs she uses to describe the act of setting up the bedroom scene – “changed,” “converted,” all imply a Vygotskyan transformation. The creativity then, lies in her motivation to engage in a new and fairly unfamiliar practice (making her own moving image text) in order to tell the story that she wants to tell. In reality, the fictionalised bedroom doesn't look especially affluent, but the imaginative effort here, the creativity required to create an environment that would probably be unfamiliar to Jasmin is more evidence of the dialectical nature of the learning here. The familiar surroundings of “spoilt rich girls” from the films she has watched, and her own home are synthesised with unfamiliar, antithetical (institutional) practices such as set dressing. Such practices also constitute a set of craft skills as well, and the expression of techne here is the use of those skills to represent the world of the spoilt rich girl.

In the Year 13 trailer, it is interesting to note that one kind of creativity has been replaced by another. In this instance, the location is “selected” because it fits the genre, rather than making a location fit the genre through the act of physical transformation. This is illustrated by her comments about the mise-en-scene:

...problems were the lighting, the time of day... it took a lot of time and they (the actors) were laughing all the time, and the sun was going down and I was doing the lighting and I didn't want to go into the next day, because I wanted to get these very romantic shots in this suburban background with the sun going down.

Jasmin, 15

The unfamiliarity of one concept – the institutional activity of set design – has been absorbed into, or even replaced, by the awareness of another unfamiliar concept, in this case the signifiers of genre; in this case the location of romantic melodramas in suburban contexts. This is interesting, because it suggests that the nature of the creative activity has changed,

becoming more subtle. Rather like the focus on gesture and intonation which is also observed in the Year 13 trailer, the movement from *transformation* of location to *selection* of location, adds another, different layer of meaning, necessary for Jasmin's demonstration of the understanding of the genre concept. Here, it is possible to see that successful transformation (transforming an initial thetical idea about a romantic comedy into something that looks like a romantic comedy using an antithetical knowledge of set dressing) as achieving an orthodoxy. Later, however, the selection of location would indicate that Jasmin is already aware of that orthodoxy – that it is somehow incorporated into her creative process – she no longer now needs to transform, but rather simply selects. This awareness is, I believe, connected to the idea of a media studies habitus suggested in previous chapters, and that creativity or creative dispositions form part of that habitus.

7.4.4 Jasmin: Titling

The creation of titling in trailers would normally be seen as part of the editing process, – which for the reasons outlined above will be treated separately – but in Jasmin's work, it is clear that titling is used creatively to tell the story. I would argue that this is a design decision, because it is about a choice made to communicate in a particular mode. It actually appears to stand in instead of a voiceover, so it conforms semiotically, but not conventionally, to the trailer genre. This is in and of itself a creative solution. Presumably, Jasmin did not want to use or could not find a man with a deep-throated voice to replicate the sound of “voiceover guy” so what she does is do the job herself in a way that is possible, given the resources available to her. This is probably what Kress and Van Leeuwen (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, p.11) would describe as a socially-motivated modal choice – that is to say that spoken language couldn't be found, so written language was chosen instead.



Fig. 14 Title screens from Jasmin's work. The two on the top are from the Year 11 production (V2), the two on the bottom from the Year 13 production (V6) This represents the kind of imaginative act that students perform all the time in production, but on a theoretical level it tells us that students will be creative in order to deal with a concept that may be antithetical to them. Jasmin knows that there needs to be some kind of device for contracting the story of the film within the trailer, as this is a convention of trailers, and she cannot do a voiceover so she imagines an alternative to the concept of the voiceover. Her craft skills of editing help her to develop the concept of an elided narrative demonstrated through the titles. There is something here too about the semiotics of the titles. In both productions, they are simple phrases in white italic text on a black background. One could speculate as to the reason for this, and indeed, about the choice of font, which seems quite "script like" in the sense that it is like handwriting. This might indicate that this in some way personalises the creation of meaning; Jasmin sees the story as a simple one, but one that can be re-told in any number of ways, as her trailers indicate. For her, it seems, the "skeleton" of the story is the same in both, but the creative, imaginative act is fleshing that skeleton out, adding layers of meaning through *techne*, which demonstrates a conceptual understanding, and it is through this creative process that her learning is progressing.

7.4.5 Jasmin: Design – some conclusions

This analysis of the design decisions in Jasmin's work suggests that learning progression is more complex than it may seem. Accounts of learning that ignore the relationship between creativity and cultural and conceptual knowledge will undoubtedly result in an inability to explain the way that creative production work is essential for learning. Moreover, accounts of creativity that simply rely upon a Vygostkyan transformation of cultural resources ignore the role that craft skills have to play in creativity, and I would say, the revelatory nature of those craft skills that are encompassed by a concept such as *techne*.

Taking a term such as "mise-en-scene" illustrates this. In the standard "conceptual toolkit" model outlined in Chapter 5, mise-en-scene is about texts, and usually refers to lighting, costume, props, location and sometimes set and occasionally acting. Most media teachers tacitly ignore acting finding it too difficult to analyse. For example, an examination of the section on mise-en-scene in any A-Level or GCSE Media Studies textbook will find scant mention of it. This is indicative of the sometimes reductive approach taken to textual analysis in the secondary classroom, and it will not do as an analysis of the way that creativity is working inside student productions. While it could be used to analyse Jasmin's choice of objects say, in the room she creates for her Year 11 trailer (mirrors, posters) I would argue that within this definition there is no way to analyse "planning" or "forward thinking" as it appears on the screen. A multimodal analysis does allow us, to some extent, to reach behind what is obviously there and consider the creative processes that have allowed Jasmin to fill the critical gaps in her knowledge.

With this in mind, there are four main observations to make about creativity, based on these observations about design in Jasmin's work. Firstly, the model of creativity envisaged in this study involves students communicating in a range of modes. The design decisions made here are about working across those modes and it is this plurality of communication that Burn and Parker are talking about when they talk about the kineiconic. (Burn, 2003, p.13) In Jasmin's Year 13 trailer, there is a significant "layering" of these modes, to create a text with a fully-formed sense that the way that the story is told is as important as the story itself. The creative act lies in this "layering", which involves imagination, a set of wide-ranging craft skills, and conceptual understanding. I want to argue that this layering occurs as the creative-conceptual cycle progresses, with students constantly returning to thetical, antithetical and orthodox

material, skills and ideas in order synthesise their finish products.

Secondly, learning progression is facilitated through the creative production process, as students begin to apply more detailed construction concepts and then work towards production which shows an increasing awareness of larger, meaning concepts such as audience. When Jasmin talks about the role of the sunset, she is thinking semiotically, considering its signification in her genre. However, she also knows that for the film to look good and achieve an appropriate production mark, the lighting must be adequate and achieve the effect she wants to. This can be seen as Jasmin thinking creatively about both text *and* audience – a creative manifestation of her critical understanding. This progression is about the dialectic and the way that students synthesise theoretical knowledge and experiences with antithetical knowledge and experiences through the creative production work.

Thirdly, the imaginative act of transforming cultural resources – be they a bedroom or the discourse of the romantic comedy genre – involves a defamiliarisation, making the student ask the question of that resource “What is this thing? How does it work?” It is the creative process, with its emphasis on *techne*, which permits this defamiliarisation to happen.

Finally, within the creative process some of the imaginative effort of transformation is replaced by an imaginative effort of selection. This is an observation about progression, because it does not mean that the creative effort of the student has been diminished at all but rather is refocused in other areas. So, for Jasmin, the creativity of the bedroom transformation is replaced by the selection of location; the transformation of her sister into a character in her trailer is replaced by the selection of a better or more appropriate actor. This shift allows Jasmin to concentrate her creative efforts on other things, such as the design modes of camerawork or direction.

7.5 Design: Lianne

Lianne’s work demonstrates creativity in some very different ways from Jasmin, perhaps most notably in the way that the discourses being delivered by it seem to be much more about a discussion of concepts and ideas, rather than a particular story. It becomes clear that the discourses at work (either of documentary or the thriller/horror genre), especially in Lianne’s group collaborations, benefit everyone in those groups, including her. Lianne may be the


prime mover, but even with that privileged status she is learning from forming and re-forming ideas and communicating them to others. In Jasmin's work, the "story" that she started out with was what was important, and the creative work transformed that imaginative resource into concepts. In Lianne's case, the concepts are at the forefront of the work, and the creative production allows for some more complex exploration of them. This may seem like a small difference, but it goes some way to demonstrating that the three-part model of creativity proposed in this chapter sometimes sees individuals placing different emphases on the three elements in their creative work. With this in mind, the analyses of Lianne's work in the design stratum focuses on the way she creates meaning as a director, in both the Year 11 and Year 12 group projects, which while covering many of the modes that were discussed in Jasmin's work, (location, camerawork, acting) is presented here as a coherent whole in order to show how the texts she produces are constantly pulling at the thread of concept formation that runs through her work.

7.5.1 Design: Lianne – "Directorial mode" – Year 11

Lianne's status as a group member is significant in that the groups that she operates within do things which other groups don't do. While the discourses they create may be familiar to any teacher of media, they are not necessarily familiar to the group creating them, and certainly the manner in which they choose to do them is quite original. A good deal of this originality is down to Lianne, who in both the Year 11 and Year 12 group projects is seen as the leader, and appears to be able to direct her actors very creatively. For example, her Year 11 group documentary, *Wildlife at Haydon*, is at the same time a very competent piece of documentary film-making and a hilarious spoof of the documentary genre, executed with some panache. This is a complex achievement for a group of 15-year-olds who have clearly had several different ideas about what they should do and what they want to do in order to fulfil the aims of the project. Lianne, as director has brought together those differing ideas and turned them into something that works both as original discourse (the spoof documentary) and as secondary discourse (an excellent piece of technical work that shows knowledge of a range of concepts. Loveless draws attention to Feldman, Csikszentmihalyi and Gardner's observation that "creativity arises from the interaction between the intelligence of individuals" (Feldman, et al., 1994, cited in Loveless, 2002, p10). However, Loveless also highlights Csikszentmihalyi's later point that, within those interactions certain individuals act as

“gatekeepers” in order to organise and preserve those creative acts (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, cited in Loveless, 2002, p10). This is the role that Lianne is taking within the group, ensuring that in amongst the interactions a coherent, meaningful, text is produced.

Take for example the image in Fig. 15, in which the presenter holds a student’s pencil


	Fig. 15 <i>Lianne, V2</i>	Shot	Mid Shot
		Dialogue	“This is exactly what I would have expected. The <i>pupillus irritatus</i> is obsessed with its own appearance, ...and consequently, in every nook and cranny we find grooming accessories”
		Movement	Presenter holds the pencil case reverently.
		Location	outside school lockers
		Music	None

case as if it were a prehistoric artefact. This is part of a number of discourses within not only the documentary genre (a genre which often looks to make the everyday surprising to us) but also about school and the territorial nature of student’s possessions. This is a funny scene, because it comments on both the genre of documentary and schools themselves, while at the same time being technically very proficient. The discourse here, as with Jasmin’s video, is more complex than it looks. There is a connection made between documentary and the professorial nature of the people who tend to present them, as well as the implicit comment that schools are wild places which seem like metaphorical jungles to outsiders. The decisions taken to make the documentary in this very multi-layered and polysemic way, such as the choice of a “bookish” student to present and the mixture of close-up and medium close-up shots, to frame him, David Attenborough-style against the background of his subject indicate, again a great deal of thought. These design decisions both explore and foreground a range of abstract concepts, such as documentary, parody and authority, but they do it in such a way that they are very firmly rooted in the imagination of the student. The techne here – revealing knowledge of both the concept of the documentary and the culture of school through the craft skills of camerawork and scriptwriting – goes beyond the mechanistic exercise of just making

something – is being used to make something genuinely creative. However, as discussed in Chapter 5, this is only half the story. If the creation of this kind of parody is not legitimised in the classroom by the teacher, such conceptual and cultural development is effectively ignored. This is because while the learning of those concepts can be applied in production work, if the form in which the student chooses to apply them does not generate the appropriate educational capital, they will expend their future efforts creating work in which that conceptual knowledge is demonstrated in a more orthodox way. This is demonstrated, by Lianne’s work in Year 12 and 13, which whilst being technically very proficient, is more typical of what students produce in these years

7.5.2 Design: Lianne “Directorial mode” – Year 12

This creative ability to foreground concepts through the techne of production work is illustrated further in a different way in the Year 12 group project, when Lianne, again as director, explores the structure of the stalk-and-slash horror movie. Here, her knowledge of the horror/thriller discourse is not in dispute. The sequence is a textbook interpretation of what might happen in the opening of such a film. As such it might be seen as not being especially creative at all, particularly when compared with the originality of *Wildlife at Haydon*, but here that creativity lies in the ability of the director (Lianne) to manage

	Fig. 16 <i>Lianne, V4</i>	Shot	HA
		Dialogue	None
		Movement	Becky has tripped after being chased by her stalker
		Location	Outside school gates
		Music	Untitled “creepy electronic” music

resources, in this case, the dramatic action of the sequence and the people

who are creating it. In the same way that Jasmin had to marshal locations in both her Year 13 and Year 11 productions, Lianne’s creative skill lies in knowing how to marshal people – and not simply actors, but rather anybody involved in the collaboration of the productions. For example, in the two shots selected above and below, it is worth considering what she has done with Becky, the main character in the sequence. In the first, (Fig. 16) Becky has tripped while trying to escape an assailant. This fall has an air of authenticity about it, which, in itself, is a not inconsiderable effect to achieve with an amateur actor who needs to put themselves in harm’s way to complete the shot but Lianne (and presumably other people in the group) have made her feel comfortable enough to do it. It is fairly reasonable to assume that this is unfamiliar territory for both actor and director but they know that to demonstrate their knowledge of the (familiar) genre and their technical proficiency, they need to engage in this sort of activity. Analysing the modes of gesture and movement here suggest that the *action* (of falling over or being tripped) is also linked to critical understanding here though, in that either the action is included to demonstrate the high angle shot, or the high angle shot has been included to highlight the action of the fall and communicate a specific meaning by combining the mode of movement with mode of camerawork. Contrast this scene, with the fall depicted in Fig. 13 in Jasmin’s Year 11 trailer. While the camera angle is similar, the acting is different, with a different kind of movement creating a different kind of fall and a more serious kind of meaning. This is, I believe, significant in that it points towards the triangulation of imaginative transformation (in this case collaborating and using actors to create a particular scene) conceptual understanding (knowledge of how and when to use a high angle shot) and the “*techne*” of production work. (Here the *techne* comprises an idea that the management of the fall as a movement will, in some way, reveal a knowledge of authenticity or realism.) I would posit that in the middle of this triangle is learning progression; the design choices made here show that Lianne has both learnt about how to use familiar resources (peers, location) and to negotiate unfamiliar concepts, (genre, narrative, shot) and that it is her creative use of the former that allows her to demonstrate excellent grasp of the latter.

Picture redacted due to third party rights or other legal issues

Fig. 17 <i>Lianne, V4</i>	Shot	MCU
	Dialogue	“ Thanks, I’m safe”
	Movement	Becky has just got into the car
	Location	Car, parked outside school gates
	Music	Untitled “creepy electronic” music

Fig. 17 here

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also points towards Lianne's increasing pre-occupation with making her work look more professional, something that recurs in her Year 13 project. Figure 17 is the kind of medium close-up shot that would be delivered by a lipstick camera, and indicates a conscious decision to create a particular kind of close-up, almost claustrophobic effect. Becky's facial expressions emphasise this, and the mode of music is used to deliver a constant sense of impending threat. This appears to be the parallel sort of effect that Jasmin wants to create with her lighting in the Year 13 effect; namely, one where creativity is increasingly focused on demonstrating knowledge of genre, rather than telling a more personalised story. Indeed what comes through from Lianne's work is that she does not have a particular story to tell; rather that her pleasure and efforts are about doing the best job possible and creating a good end product.

This one could argue, is about achieving critical orthodoxy; this horror/thriller discourse is delivered through design decisions which make the creative production much more of a "text book" response in many ways. The range of camerawork, the choices of mise-en-scene and the construction of a suitably creepy soundtrack all demonstrate that Lianne is seeking to create a legitimate response to the brief set by the teacher. The semiotic tools have changed here then – the creative response is now less about imaginative play, (which is evident in the spoof, which "plays around" with genre) and more about the demonstration of concept formation. This creative transformation is accompanied by the development of techne skills which seek to reveal conceptual knowledge through a range of design modes, most notably camerawork and the mode of movement and gesture here.

This foregrounding of concepts is also evident in the way that Lianne works to assemble the finished text with her collaborators. For example, in the process of editing the Year 12 group project she can clearly be seen taking control of artistic decisions. Consider the following comments she makes first when talking to her group mates Becky and Kayleigh about the acting and filming of the sequence and then to Kayleigh about the editing on Adobe Premiere:

Becky: *How do you want me to look, happy or sad?*

Lianne: *Not overly happy or sad, just normal.* (Turns to Kayleigh) *Right, signal to Becky when I say action, because obviously she can't see me or hear me* (Lianne is hidden in a bush at this point)

Lianne, O3

And;

*Cut that bit, because it's got that bit wrong with it... cut to there (motioning to the timeline)
but leave the bit with the high angle in it because its good how it moves up... cut there again,
just after it moves to her legs, so you can see the bottom of her top
a bit...*

Lianne, O3

In the first conversation, Lianne is talking about a scene in which the stalker is watching a victim. In the second, the editing sequence that Lianne is referring to is a scene shot from the point of view of the stalker. In both comments, she is sharing her knowledge, as well as managing the production process. Here the “directorial mode” that she is communicating through is being realised in the way she uses imperatives, such as “Signal to Becky,” “Cut that” and “Leave that.” Also the conceptualisation of the semiotic tools of the moving image is being evidenced in the metalanguage she uses; “the bit with the high angle.” This is a creative transformation in Vygotskian terms, moving from a semiotic tool to a concept and it is accompanied here by techne skills that are revealing not only that conceptual knowledge in the finished text but also knowledge about its aesthetic. (“Because it’s good how it moves up.”) This is significant because, for Heidegger, the revelatory aspect of techne is what allies it with art, rather than plain craft skill. In making aesthetic judgements about the finished text, Lianne is exploring the appearance of the text and the way it reveals knowledge of the world *through* the craft skill (in this case, directing the actor’s facial expressions and the editing) rather than in spite of it. This suggests that Lianne’s creativity is about exploring the act of making and creating the moving image text, rather than the text itself. This is, I believe, in direct contrast to Jasmin, and shows us that design choices are one clear way in which differences in individual’s creativity can show itself.

7.5.3 Design: Lianne – Some conclusions

Lianne’s work illustrates some distinctly different aspects of creativity when compared to the four observations made about Jasmin’s work in 7.4.5. Firstly, there is the way that we can see the “directorial mode” as a distinct design feature of her work. She wants to communicate particular things about concepts in an imaginative way and this involves directing resources in order to do so. While this is not present explicitly in the finished text, there are clues to its

importance given in the way she gets her actors and fellow film-makers to speak and move. The additional data of having observed her work allows us to see that she communicates as a director in order to get the text to communicate. This directorial ability is another example of *techne* at work but here it reveals both conceptual knowledge and the personal pleasure that Lianne gets from the act of making a moving image text – something evidenced by her comments noted in 6.3.1 about using the editing software.

Secondly, the progress that Lianne has made in creative terms is her understanding of the way that conceptual knowledge needs to be foregrounded in the text that she makes. While *Wildlife at Haydon* is an extremely creative piece of production work, it “plays around” with some concepts and tends to revert to the comfort of the *thetic*, in this case, spoofing rather than foregrounding the abstract concept of documentary. We can see this progression in dialectic terms. The thriller/horror piece allows Lianne to show that she is familiar with the antithetical material (the metalanguage) that is so much the focus of the Year 12 work. *Wildlife at Haydon* demonstrated that she was a competent film-maker, but conceptually and culturally, it relied upon the *thetic* and like Jamie’s work explored in Chapter 5, avoided the “difficulty” of the antithetic concepts associated with documentary. The Year 12 project on the other hand, shows her implementing the antithetical through her production work and moving towards the production of a more orthodox text.

Finally, the importance of collaboration in the creative production process is demonstrated in some very explicit ways. While collaboration with others was also evident in Jasmin’s work, there was always the sense that the finished product was still owned by her. For Lianne, the collaborations involved in these two projects, lead not only to an increase in her creativity, but also the creativity of others, as they learn about the imaginative transformation of semiotic tools to concepts by being involved in what Lianne does. This kind of direction then, is a creativity that facilitates the creativity of others, who act, speak and move in ways that they probably would not do were Lianne not there, pushing them dialectically towards orthodoxy and synthesis through the discussions and collaborations that they have with her.

7.6 Production: The role of digital technology and the craft of editing.

In terms of Kress and Van Leeuwen's multimodal analysis, I have deliberately left any discussion of the stratum of production until this point, because, as suggested earlier, it is actually sometimes difficult to separate out production and design. However, it is clear that editing digital video is a different area of the students' production work, because design is about choice of mode, whereas I want to argue that editing is to do with choice of medium. While editing is part of the production process, it is distinctly different from the practice of shooting a film. When a student shoots digital video, to a greater or lesser degree they are still making choices about mode, because they are relying upon the camera to synthesize all the other modes they are communicating in. Editing on the other hand is purely cinematic, to use Metz's term, (Metz, 1974, p.19) rather than kineiconic; it is about exploiting the uniqueness of the medium of the moving image. Similarly, when students edit video, there is evidently a different kind of craft (*techne*) involved from that described in 7.5. Editing is not mastery of gesture, movement, sound or camera. It is something different. For Kress and Van Leeuwen, production as a stratum is "*always physical work, whether by humans or machines, a physical job of articulating text.*" (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, p.66). In the video work produced by the students in this study, that articulation can only be fully realised in the relationship between the student and the editing software. While the student may have an idea of how the shots they have used can be used to tell a story or create a text, they must do the physical work of editing, sitting down at a computer, in order to complete that production.

It is for this reason that this production section is largely about digital editing and the transformation of filmed material into finished text, which, I would argue, is something distinctive that gives full force to that articulation process that Kress and Van Leeuwen are describing. The physicality that Kress and Van Leeuwen ascribe to production also connects with the craft element of *techne*. The cutting, moving and pasting of the digital editing process, while being done on a computer, is a 21st century form of artisan labour, crafting and shaping the video text until it adequately expresses the meaning that the student wants to communicate.

The point about artisanship is worth making at here, because none of the five students at the core of this study were seen as particularly artistic. Andrew was involved in several school productions, and Bruce played in a band but even these two were not seen in the school as

outstandingly creative individuals. However, all five students produced substantial amounts of video work ranging in quality from good to outstanding. I draw attention to this, because it seems that the use of editing technology has a fundamental role to play as a creative and artistic tool for students in school. Across the three years of the study, it became clear that these students were using the computer and editing software to make a collection of creative decisions, in the same way that a writer would use a pen, or a painter a brush. This is not simply about craft. It is not clear at all that the group, however motivated, would have produced similar results if they had used the analogue equipment that I taught with at the end of the 1990s. A particular manifestation of creativity arises from editing digitally and I would argue that it is both part of and an aid to, the dialectic move from the familiar to the unfamiliar. This quality arises from the affordances that Burn and Durran ascribe to digital editing (first discussed in Chapter 2); iteration, feedback convergence and distribution. It is the affordances of iteration and feedback, for example, which allow students to explore and become secure in using the antithetical conceptual knowledge that they encounter in class. Similarly, the affordance of convergence allows them to synthesise thetic cultural material, such as their own music tracks or imported images, into their work alongside these antithetical concepts into a new product.

These affordances and the physical aspects of digital editing suggest then that what is required here is an analysis of the creativity afforded by the digital technology and its role in creative production and the way that creativity changes over time. There are really two questions that need to be asked here. Firstly, what kind of knowledge do students acquire in learning about editing – in effect, what is the *techne* of editing? Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, how do they apply their conceptual and cultural knowledge once they have learnt how to edit and how does this application change over the three-year-period of the study? To use Kress and Van Leeuwen's term, how do they articulate the text? I want to explore here the idea that editing as part of the creative production process acts as a sort of fulcrum, pushing the student from the familiar to the unfamiliar by confronting them with the need to apply antithetical concepts in a practical situation. In order to explore this idea, I focus here initially on the production work of Bruce and Jamie and how the stratum of production manifests itself in their creative production work. Later in the chapter I want to explore how this creative production is affected by cultural concerns.

7.6.1 Production: Bruce

A discussion of digital editing and its relationship to creativity is best started by looking at what craft skills the students think they have acquired during that time.

Bruce, for example, by his own admission acknowledges that the difference between what he knows at the start of Year 11 and what he knows at the end is huge:

When we did the documentary I didn't use any of the equipment really, I was just helping out... I guess I was the director of sorting out stuff. I didn't use Adobe Premiere then, and so all of this was one huge learning curve for my film-making.

Bruce, 12

It is when he begins to speak in depth about the differences between Adobe Premiere (an advanced, prosumer video-editing package) and Moviemaker, which is more basic, that the difference in the application of knowledge can be seen:

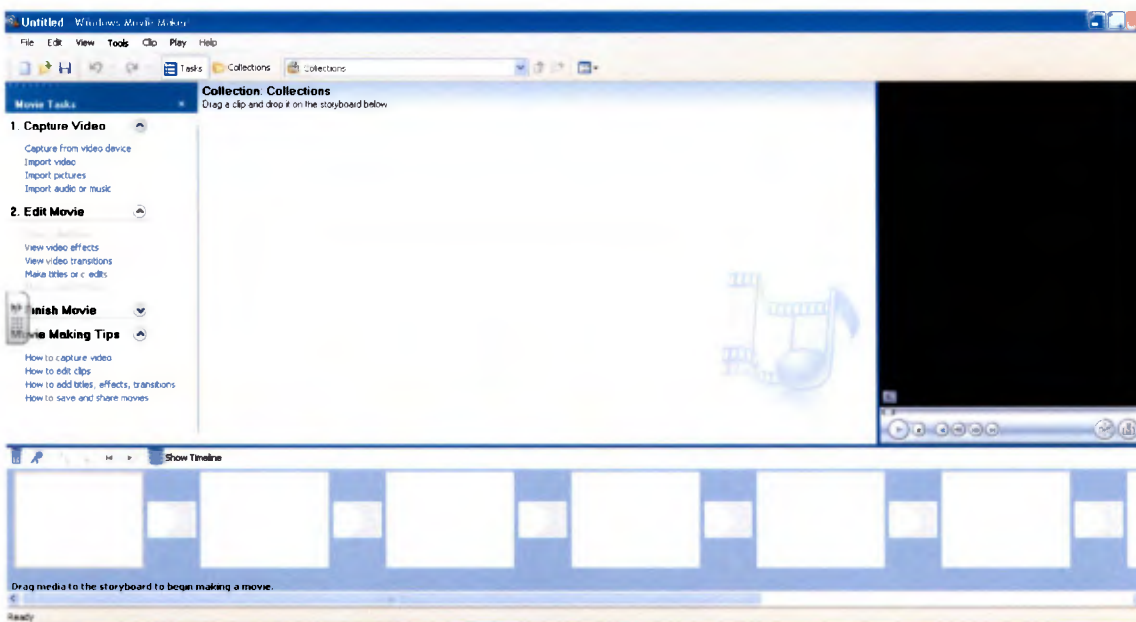


Fig. 18 The Windows Moviemaker editing interface

(Moviemaker) had the instruction bar at the side of the screen, so I just used that to help sort out where everything goes...but when I got it into Premiere it was a totally different world. There was just so much to do on the screen – so I thought I'd keep it simple, just do simple cuts and stuff.

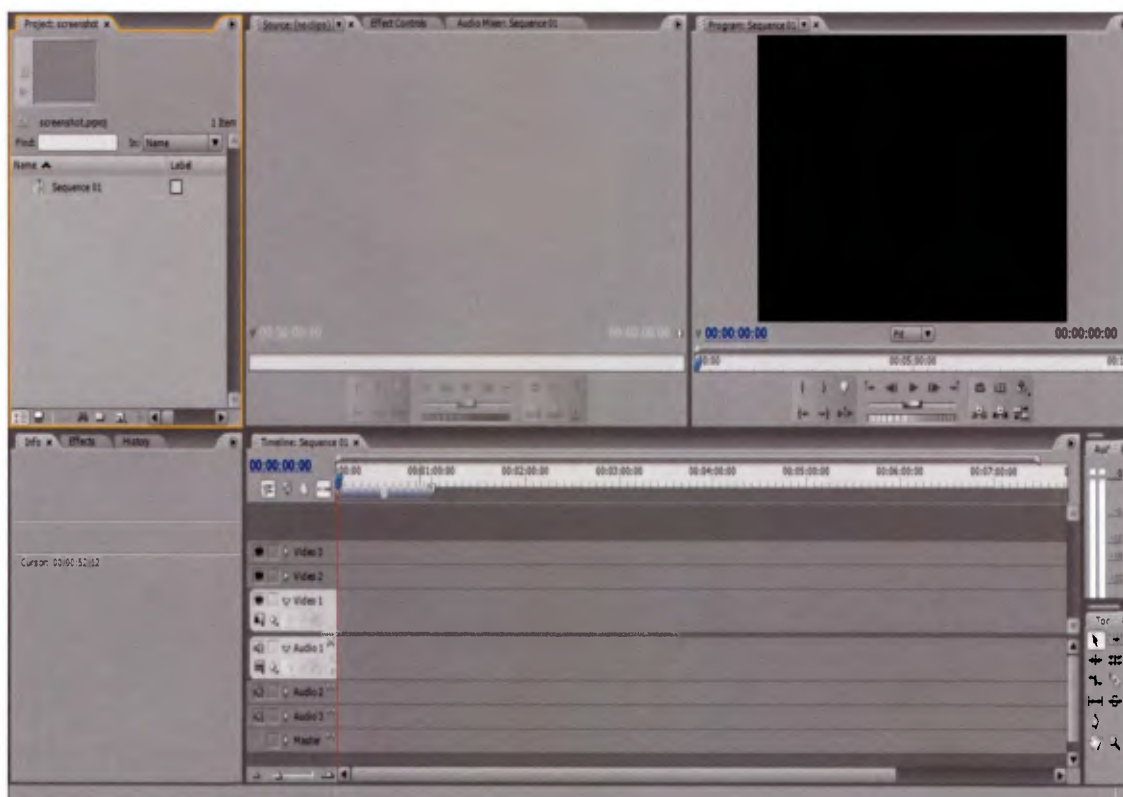
Bruce, 12

He is talking here about using Moviemaker to assemble a rough cut of the film and then

produce a more polished version in Premiere. This conscious decision to use different tools for different jobs is apparently evidence of *techne* at work. In Bruce's Year 11 work, discussed in Chapter 5, we saw him imagine a character in a situation, develop some conceptual knowledge around the use of sound – made explicit by his choice of a voiceover, rather than dialogue – and then apply craft skills to create an end product. These craft skills are essentially about mastery of the software, but they also imply a knowledge of the different modes that the text is working in. In Moviemaker, those modes are made very clear for the user by presenting them in a tool bar at the side of the screen, as Bruce describes (see Fig. 18).

The menu is presented as a series of imperative commands which allow the user to manipulate a number of different design modes including video, sound and titling. Bruce's comments about this software suggest that some of the difficulty in finding out which modes the student needs to manipulate is taken out of the process by the simplicity of the software. Here the *techne* is about assembling the shots in the “right” order and realising the imaginative effort of the story. The conceptual knowledge in and of itself is probably limited to demonstrating an understanding of simple editing terms, such as cut, fade and dissolve. In contrast, the Adobe Premiere interface is more complex (Fig. 19). While some elements, such as the footage bin and the timeline are still evident, they look more

Fig. 19: The Adobe Premiere editing interface



complicated and present the student with many other options .

Here, there are multiple bins and multiple timelines. There are no helpful imperatives telling the student what to do. Manipulation of some modes is governed by icons, such as the toolbox on the right, with its magnifying glass, hand and razorblade. Now, the techne is about not only assembling the shots in the required order, but also making changes to volume levels, shot opacity, visual effects and motion. In other words, the craft skills are not only more numerous, but require judgements to be made continuously. This is one aspect of progression, in terms of creativity. The increasing complexity of the software is meant to complement the developing familiarity with previously unfamiliar, antithetical concepts. For example, the lowest audio track in the screen shot above is labelled “Master.” The construction concept of a master audio track can be experimented with and implemented through this software, but only once that concept has been made familiar through the learning process.

Despite the apparent simplicity of the Moviemaker software, Bruce’s Year 11 film is well executed and allows the audience to get a grasp of the story he wants to get across, something that cannot always be said about the work of others in the class. His comments about the complexity of editing with Adobe Premiere are an almost subconscious acknowledgement that the techne of digital editing, and its use in revealing the story of the film and what it says about the world are integral for learning progression. One element of creativity and the way it drives conceptual learning and cultural learning then, could be seen in this increasing complexity in craft skills, and its subsequent relationship with making more complex texts. As students want to develop these more complex texts, they are required to master the techne skills of editing and find more creative ways of transforming imaginative ideas into evidence of concepts and finished aesthetic products.

Additionally, for Bruce, the affordances of the digital editing software, particularly those of iteration and feedback, are what allow him to apply his increased conceptual and cultural knowledge. Contrast for example, Bruce’s comments in Year 11 about the way he made his film, with the way he went about making his Year 13 project, which was a music video:

Other people were making films where they had the whole film’s storyline thought out right

there at the start of the film. I just wanted to keep it simple really, because this is the first film I've made properly by myself and so I wanted to just mess around with it, like trying different angles and different places for shooting and that.

Bruce, 15

Picture redacted due to third party rights or other legal issues

Fig. 20	Shot	LA
	Dialogue	"None"
	Movement	Singer at microphone
	Location	Shed
	Music	"Another number" by The Zoos

And:

Originally it was just them (the band) performing in the hut, but after feedback I was told to either put in a change of location, or to "sharpen it up" and then I thought a change of location would sharpen it up... I changed the bit with the middle eight in it to black and white because I was told that this would give it a better effect.

Bruce, 15

It becomes clear, in hindsight, that these opportunities to "mess around" and sharpen up, are only afforded by the digital technology he is using. The interesting thing here is the difference in language. In Year 11 the software allows him to experiment with the text and to play with it – something already discussed in some depth in Chapter 6. In the Year 13 project, however, the software allows him to improve his work, to make it better. This difference can be described dialectically, in that "messaging around" or playing about is part of the domain of the thetic – as evidenced by the parodies produced in the Year 11 documentary project – and the antithetic, as illustrated by some of the Year 12 group work. In Year 13, however, improvement can be equated with synthesis. Here, Bruce's thetical cultural interests are being synthesised with the antithetical cultural experiences of his teacher and peers, who have given him feedback. Fig. 20, which is one of the "improved shots" from his Year 13 project demonstrates this, having been re-shot in a new location and changed to black and white in

order to give a sort of DIY aesthetic to this segment of the video. Interestingly though, even in this new “improved” version of the video, “mess” is still important, but it is the way it is synthesised with conceptual and cultural knowledge that has changed. For example, when asked about cultural influences, he states:

One of my big influences was the Libertines and their ad-hoc, random approach... I really like the way they mess around.

Bruce, 15

In Bruce’s video what we see are a mixture of random, hand-held video footage of the members of the band generally messing about, alongside a range of shots of the band playing instruments. These shots are deliberately posed (and in some ways conventional, in that they show his awareness of the concept of the convention of a music video), and present the audience with an obvious contrast with the hand-held material. The menu screen for the DVD shows Polaroids of the band arranged seemingly randomly on a noticeboard. This is clearly a conscious choice on Bruce’s part and suggests that along with the impression of messing around, he wants to create the impression that there is a good deal of thought and order in his work.

The digital editing software is what has facilitated this synthesis of cultural mess and conceptual order, and it has driven him to explore alternative ways of demonstrating his cultural knowledge of music video and his conceptual knowledge of audience – in that he altered the video in order to appeal to that audience. This observation is about the way that the students use digital editing software to apply conceptual knowledge and how that changes from being about play and mess, to being about improvement or development.

7.6.2 Production: Jamie

This realisation, that digital editing both facilitates conceptual knowledge and allows for increasing complexity in the production of texts, reaches an interesting conclusion with the Year 13 evaluations. Jamie, who has used both Moviemaker and Adobe Premiere in Year 11 and 12, decides to use a different package for his Yr 13 music promo video package, namely Sony Vegas. What is interesting about this is that he is using a vocabulary which is common to all editing to describe the way it works:

Whilst editing my footage in Sony Vegas. I did not come across major problems, which affected my progress. I found the program relatively simple to break down in terms of functions. The trimmer and timeline tools were good to use, as the keyboard could be used for most functions. Therefore, no faults were made with the syncing.

Jamie, E6

Here, a term like **syncing** has a revealing story to it. This word, which refers to synchronisation of sound and image, has been introduced to Jamie at the start of Year 12, when he began to do the kind of tight textual analysis required at that level. As he has moved through Year 12 and 13 he probably began to use it to describe his own work as well as the work of those professional producers that he watched. At this point – the end of the three-year-course – he is using the term transferably. This is not the uncertainty demonstrated by Lianne in 6.3.1 about the peculiarity of terms such as “bin” or “timeline,” but an assured, familiar, command of a term which he knows is important in all editing regardless of which software is being used, or who is doing the editing. This kind of command of the conceptual language indicates an ability to generalize, showing how far this term has become synthesised in his work. This marks the concept formation element of creativity out as something that has been drawn out by the techne of the digital editing process. It is also clear that an important aspect of the techne here is the way it is aimed not only at craft but also at aesthetic judgments. For example, if we contrast the comments he makes at this point with Jasmin’s lack of comment about sound in the Year 11 project, we can understand the kind of progress in that Jamie is making:

Sound issues also occurred, but considering the room we had to interview in, there was not much I could do to reduce echo or ambience. In general, I feel the sound quality came out very well. Plus, any ambience or other feedback is drowned out by the mp3 track layered underneath the speech audio track. The final problem I encountered with performing this interview, were people on the tour walking around, packing equipment away and slamming doors. This was all picked up on the camera microphones, however, with the audio mastering tools on Sony Vegas, I was able to reduce levels and raise others to effectively remove these aggravations.

Jamie, E6

This demonstrates a dialectical approach to the problem of sound. Jamie has encountered

problems with sound in both his own work and the work of his peers and by learning about layering and the craft and vocabulary associated with that, he has been able to execute a professional, finished product. Again though, the affordance of iteration has allowed him to deal with these problems, and the software's ability to let him visit and re-visit the concepts of sound that are important to his work here, such as ambience, echo and feedback.

By demonstrating that the skills of editing are transferable, he seems to have reached a point at which the combination of imagination, concept development and craft have allowed him to become familiar with the knowledge and practices necessary to create a text. Here again the "engine" of creativity, with its three constituent elements is driving the dialectic process of learning. I would want to argue that here the role of digital technology lends this creativity a peculiar quality; it is not the everyday creativity of communication and neither is it the kind of creativity displayed by a gifted musician or artist, but nevertheless, there is a combination of learning concepts and craft which creates something accomplished. This has some connection to the iterative and convergent affordances of digital editing tools, but also to the student's imaginative ability to see the possibilities of the medium and dialectically become more adept at demonstrating their knowledge and practices.

7.7 Conclusions about creativity

Creativity then, is, in the first instance, about the control of the different modes of design that are involved in the creation of a video text. It is clear that this goes a long way beyond simple operation of a camera and that across the three years of the study, students learn to master these modes of camera, sound, gesture, movement and location either individually and at different times, or through the "directorial" mode, which sees them shifting between modes very rapidly in the production process. In the second instance, it is the engine that drives conceptual and cultural learning, allowing students to apply this learning in a production context. In the early stages of the study, what we might term thetical creativity is characterised by a sense of play – not unlike that present in the antithetical responses to new conceptual knowledge – and as such does not seek to foreground concepts in the same way as later work does. This ability to apply critical concepts through the techne of digital editing improves over time, as students become aware of the increasing- complexity of controlling the design modes, and the complexity of the software needed to exercise that control. What

the student learns to do over time then, is to take advantage of the affordances of the digital medium – particularly its iterative and convergent natures – in order to practice the application of those concepts; moving cuts, transitions and sounds around on the timeline until they have fully synthesised the imaginative, semiotic tools of their original idea with the concepts they have learnt in class. Dialectically, this is one place in the learning process where the movement from thetic to antithetic to synthesis occurs in a most obvious way, with the technology and the design modes meeting the raw imaginative ideas behind the student work. In the synthesis stage, there are increased levels of creativity displayed as students use digital technology to display advanced cultural and critical knowledge. Again, it is worth repeating that this work, despite being digital, is physical, artisanal labour, using craft skills to reveal the dialectic synthesis of personal experience and antithetical, in-class learning.

Chapter 8 - Conclusions

This thesis started with a quote from a Year 13 student, who claimed that, “You couldn’t write it.” I chose this statement because it was clear to me that, although the learning progression presented here is in one sense about being able to read and write, in the language of the moving image, it is also about modes of communication and learning that go way beyond traditional senses of literacy. As a consequence, this study has attempted to both understand how the young people whose work is examined here have learned to make video and communicate in the language of the moving image. In other words, how they became familiar with the unfamiliar. It has also attempted to articulate how that learning goes on in terms of cultural and conceptual knowledge and the relationship of that learning to creativity. Paradoxically though, it has also explored the idea that in “writing” these texts, students have also had to learn to “unwrite them” (to use Andrew Burn’s term) by defamiliarising themselves from what they have made. This concluding chapter is set out in four sections which draw together the observations made about the relationships between culture, criticality and creativity in the learning process, alongside the metaphor of the dialectic of creativity and the way it describes learning progression.

8.1 Answering the research questions

I have attempted to answer the three research questions which I began with by framing the student production work in terms of theoretical perspectives that help explain how progress is made. For culture, and the question of “What counts as cultural capital in relation to the consumption and production of the moving image by young people and how does it change over the three-year-period?”, I explored the way that the production work of the students changed in terms of its academic and cultural capital value as students went through the learning process dialectically. I would argue that there are three key observations that can be made about the way that cultural capital changes. Firstly, the role of familial influences in the learning processes is largely about the formation of what I have termed the thetical starting point. The support that the student’s family offers and the kind of texts that they have made and watched at home, form these familiar, thetical, cultural experiences that the student comes into the media classroom with. Such support forms part of the habitus they have at the

start of the learning process but I would emphasise that the habitus alters dramatically over the course of the three-year study as students develop a specific “media studies habitus,” wherein they become disposed to do things in a “media-studies-sort-of-way.” Occasionally, familial influences play a more antithetical role, where the parent acts more like a teacher, talking about the kind of texts and ideas that might come in to play in the classroom. It is important to note though, that while I believe that any kind of thetical experience – whether it comes from the family or not – can constitute cultural capital, only some of these cultural experiences are legitimised by the teacher and turned into educational or academic capital. In dialectic terms, these familial influences are something that the student moves away from, as they become more pre-occupied with replicating a more orthodox cultural position, and seeking legitimation from their teachers and peers. While they still use the resources of a supportive family background, these become synthesized with texts and experiences that they know will generate academic capital.

Secondly, the popular cultural texts and experiences that the students place value on do not necessarily change across the three years of the study (popular music, films and TV are all influential in the students’ work) but rather the way that they are used changes. In what I have termed the thetical stage, these peer and popular cultures are used to “alleviate” the unfamiliarity of the new, antithetical cultural forms that they are experiencing in class. Later on, they get filtered through these new antithetical forms, and discussed in terms of a conceptual language, so that they can be reframed for the purposes of acquiring educational capital. This reframing leads to the popular cultural texts that are important to the student having new kinds of value placed on them, and subsequently new identities develop around production, consumption and fandom.

Thirdly, the differences between cultural and academic capital mean that students come to focus more on forms that can be easily converted from one to the other. In the early stages of the study, there is a focus on the institutional cultures of school, which influences both what gets made and the way it gets made. This is evidenced in the Year 11 group documentaries, where the cultural capital of the student and what they think is important, is foregrounded in both the content and the production process.

As time goes on, students encounter the antithetical cultural experiences that are legitimised by the classroom teacher and this process is really about ascribing academic capital to certain

kinds of cultural capital, which the student may or may not be familiar with. Even if the student is familiar with the texts that make up this legitimised culture, the re-presentation or re-interpretation of it by the teacher makes it unfamiliar and antithetical to them. Again, this means that some cultural experience, no matter how extensively acquired by the student, never gets the chance to be transformed into academic capital. Learning progression occurs when the student begins to realise that, by synthesizing their own cultural influences with the antithetical material legitimised by the teacher, they can maximise their academic capital.

In critical terms, the research question of **“What kind of framework can we construct in order to explain students critical and conceptual progression in terms of moving image literacy?”** has been addressed by the explanation that students develop a critical metalanguage over time, which is connected to the way that they have learnt about concepts. These concepts are described in terms of being broad or detailed and referring to construction or meaning. This distinction is made in order to explain the way that conceptual learning takes place in the specific field of media education and is closely connected to the ideas of Vygotsky about the spontaneous and the scientific. It is also connected to Engestrom’s ideas regarding the movement from the abstract to the concrete and the notion that concepts are like tools and wrenches, facilitating learning in a non-linear way, as students go back and forth to the toolkit from concept to application. This reflects the idea that the Dialectic of Familiarity is not a finite cycle of learning, but rather infinite, with synthesised knowledge becoming the basis for new thetical starting points.

However, the study acknowledges the fact that learning is a social process and that in order for progression to occur, the student must play, collaborate and interact with others, throwing newly acquired critical concepts into social space of the classroom and peer group and by doing so making them familiar again. Additionally, the application of these newly acquired concepts, often through collaborative production work allows students to work out a relationship with them. This relationship is not fully formed overnight, but rather goes through a number of characteristic phases as students deliberately distance themselves from critical knowledge and “play” with concepts and become more aware of the connection between what I have termed construction and meaning concepts.

Finally, in critical terms, two of the key markers for becoming critical are, firstly, the ability

to defamiliarise which occurs when students can step back from their work, and “estrangle” themselves from it, and secondly, an increasing awareness of the concepts of audience and in particular the idea of a “super-audience” for their work. They become more objective as they develop these abilities, but at the same time take greater ownership of their work and begin to talk about it in personal terms again – something that was evident at the beginning of the learning process, but disappears as students move towards the orthodox critical view espoused by the teacher.

The questions about creativity posed by the study have been explored by the multimodal analysis of student work and it is clear that progression in creativity is closely linked to critical and cultural development. The question of **“How a student demonstrates their individual creativity through production work, and what this has to do with cultural capital or critical understanding”** can be answered by suggesting that creativity is the engine of learning progression, because it is in creative production work that students get to apply the critical and conceptual learning that they have done and work through the relationship they have to their own popular culture and the popular culture they are introduced to in class. This creativity involves students developing a range of techne skills that work across design modes ranging from camera work to directing actors, transforming imaginative ideas into conceptual learning.

The role of digital technology in this transformation is particularly important, as its iterative and convergent affordances allow students to practice both the techne skills that reveal the knowledge of the world that they have acquired in the learning process, as well as demonstrating a knowledge of the construction concepts that have been introduced to them as antithesis. The increasing complexity of the tasks that the student wants to complete and the increasing detail of the concepts that they want to apply are matched by an ability to use increasingly complex software applications, allowing them to synthesise more and more of their own cultural knowledge and experiences, such as music and digital images with the concepts they have learnt.

For the Dialectic of Familiarity, creativity is distinctly different from cultural and conceptual learning. Rather than constituting thetical, antithetical and synthetical knowledge in itself, creativity is the force that moves the learner from one of these stages to the next.

Collaboration with others is a significant element in this force, as students explore ideas and

concepts while working on creative production. This collaboration is one of the things that encourages the student to work through and subsequently synthesise antithetical concepts and experiences. It is this dialectic process that needs revisiting here in order to conclude how learning progression might be described.

8.2 Patterns of Progression: How the Dialectic of Familiarity emerged

In creating these moving image texts across the three years of the study, the students featured here have encountered new kinds of knowledge and experience that they may have seen as opposite or alien from their popular cultural and critical experiences. Creative production work has, however, allowed them to work through these opposite or antithetical experiences and synthesise them with their own popular culture and critical knowledge to form new imaginative representations of the world they inhabit, while at the same time completing courses and qualifications in media education. I have suggested in both the theory and the data chapters that this process can be metaphorically described as a Dialectic of Familiarity, wherein students are forced from a position of working with familiar texts and cultural experiences, to one where they have to deal with new and unfamiliar texts and cultures, until they synthesise them and make a new kind of familiarity.

The idea of the Dialectic of Familiarity arose out the observation (made about the data collected for this study) that students often begin by reacting in an oppositional way to new concepts and ideas that they are introduced to in class. The cohort of students who form the basis for this study often surprised me with the strength of their response to new material, particularly in the first two years of the study.

I have suggested here that the nature of this response – in what I have termed the antithesis stage – could be characterised in a number of ways; parody, “distancing” from new concepts and playing with texts were not just things that these students “did,” but rather responses that they enjoyed and indeed took pleasure in. I was also equally surprised later on, when they would bring together both the new concepts and practices that they had originally reacted to with their own popular cultural forms in order to make genuinely original, challenging and sophisticated media products. There is no better example of this than the work of Jamie, who after virtually denying that product research was of any useful purpose in Year 11, created a Year 13 project which was meticulously planned and researched. I have also characterised

this synthesis as going beyond the pedagogical intentions of the teacher, and I would affirm the idea that this is something unique to media education. The Dialectic of Familiarity describes the way that students take their personal cultural experience (say, as in Jasmin's case, that of romantic comedy) and combine it with the new and antithetical experiences and concepts that have been introduced in class and create something genuinely innovative. On the way to this point, I observed that students would often attempt to replicate the cultural and critical positions held by their teacher. I have termed this phase of the learning process orthodoxy, but I would emphasise that it does not last long. Lianne for example, moves from creating orthodox slasher movies in Year 12 to a colourful and diverse animation in Year 13 that defies generic description. Indeed, the students who display the most synthetic and diverse responses in terms of production work return to familiar themes at the latter stages of the learning process in order to invest them with new, antithetical knowledge, turning them into something new and different, like Jasmin's romantic drama, Andrew's ECG-inspired thriller and Bruce and Jamie's music promo videos. What was most obvious about this work done in the final stages of Year 13 was the way that I could see things in it which I and my colleagues had taught, but how *much more* was clearly coming from the students and perhaps most importantly, how the two things were being resolved together to make something original.

It would be wrong to suggest that these movements happened in any neat kind of way. For each student, the reaction that they made to new concepts and practices that they were taught in class was in many ways, unique to them. Jamie reacted to documentary by producing a spoof that looked like "*The Cook Report*." Lianne, on the other hand, produced a spoof that looked like a David Attenborough documentary. Bruce and Andrew's documentary "*The Silence of the Fizz*" had parodic elements to its title if nothing else. These pieces of production work were, in comparative terms, wildly different. However, they were both parodies, and the fact that both students had done this suggested that there were commonalities in the way that students were learning. Lianne used inverted commas when writing technical terms that she was unfamiliar with. Jasmin, at an entirely different stage in the learning process, did this too. Such similarities, whilst occurring in a messy and uneven way, were too striking to ignore. This is then, a key point about the Dialectic of Familiarity. It is a metaphorical description of what appears to be happening as student's progress in the production of the moving image and attempts to give some kind of account of the way that students learn. However, it should not be seen as a "neat" solution to the problem of the way

that cultural capital and academic capital can be married together with critical understanding in the media studies classroom. Learning is undoubtedly not something that happens in a particularly even way, and it is important to see that learning described in dialectic terms is definitely not anchored to particular “ages and stages” in a student’s life.

8.3 Original contribution

I would contend that the original contribution of this thesis is threefold. Firstly, that there have been almost no longitudinal studies of young people making digital video over a sustained period of time, and those that there are (Burn, Buckingham, et al., forthcoming) have focused on more broad media literacy outcomes, than those that are more specific to the creative production of the moving image. Many of the studies conducted over the past ten years into the way that students learn to make digital video are short term and tend to look at the experience of constructing the text itself rather than learning progression. Secondly, the metaphor of the Dialectic of Familiarity seeks to describe the different elements of the learning process at work in media education where previously there has been no such description. While the imperfections of the dialectic model are clear – (seemingly, certain types of useful popular cultural experience are not legitimised by the teacher in the process of moving from the thetical to the antithetical stages, for example) it does seek to combine the key elements of media education; the cultural, critical and creative production in metaphorical description of the way that students learn. Thirdly, there are some theoretical perspectives taken here which, I believe, refine existing theory and make them more applicable to media education. These included the extension of Vygotsky’s scientific concepts into broad and detailed, construction and meaning concepts, as well as the three-part model of creativity that encompasses imagination, concept formation and techne.

8.4 Beyond the dialectic (Or what happened afterwards...)

I have identified the four stages of the Dialectic of Familiarity as being thesis, antithesis, orthodoxy and synthesis, but it is important to reiterate that moving through these stages does not constitute the end of the learning process. Rather, it is the start of a new cycle, with the synthesis becoming a new point of thesis. This, as has been emphasised, does not necessarily happen at the end of Year 13 for these students. Different students reach synthesis at different points, and indeed, one might speculate that the whole learning process experienced by the

students in this study is actually full of many small dialectic cycles. But what lies beyond the synthesis achieved by these students? I would suggest that there are two areas where the move beyond synthesis can be explored further. These are the students who choose to enter Media Production HE courses, and those who choose to make media production their career after school.

The “narrative” of Andrew and Jasmin – the two students who chose video projects all the way through Years 11, 12 and 13 – tells us that the thread that runs through the study is, perhaps unsurprisingly, an increased critical awareness, both of their own work and the work of others. What is more interesting though, is that both of these students chose to pursue their studies in Media Production into Higher Education. As this is only a three-year study, one can only speculate at their further progression, but one thing is certain. Their desire to progress further in this area indicates, I believe, a number of things about progression in media education itself.

It may be clichéd, but for these two students, (along with Lianne who also proposes to continue on Media Production courses into Higher Education) the learning process is probably just beginning. The act of becoming critical about their own work and the work of others has led to them not only getting a good deal of pleasure from the production process, but has also led them in a direction which will probably influence the rest of their life, indicating that progression is at least partly reliant upon a good deal of investment (emotional and otherwise) in the production process by the students. It is not for this study to speculate what a developing critical and conceptual literacy might mean for these two students in the long run but one might suggest that the students are beginning to take pride in the body of knowledge and skills and the ability to use them that constitute that literacy.

Andrew and Jasmin’s experiences, in some ways, might be seen as typical of engaged Year 13 students. Jamie’s route beyond the dialectic offers an alternative story. After some deliberation about going on to higher education, he decides not to pursue further study, but instead carries on with a project started in his Year 13 production. He aims to video concert-footage of up-and-coming heavy metal bands in the London area. This aim leads to him being seen at numerous concerts by many people involved in the music industry and after being asked to film a number of bands, he forms his own company, called *Chasing Safety*, doing jobs for a number of corporate clients in the music business. The company makes videos and

promos for bands and companies, and as a consequence, Jamie spent a month as official videographer-cum-driver-cum-all-round-handyman for the US metal band Suchgold, amongst other engagements. For Jamie then, the synthesis achieved in his learning progression has led to a successful career. What does this tell us about the dialectic and how is his future learning likely to be different? While it is unlikely to be the case that Jamie is using his conceptual knowledge from school on a daily basis, it has fed into his production work and subsequently the craft skills that he has developed as a professional videographer and editor. Similarly, his cultural experiences and the way that they have been challenged by the antithetical material introduced to him in the form of films, documentaries and other texts will undoubtedly be something he draws on in his work. It seems reasonable to say, however, that for Jamie the “new thesis” of his synthesised learning at school involves dealing with the antithetical challenges of making his video products for the commercial market, rather than just teachers and moderators. The craft skills have been adapted here though, so that in Jamie’s working life, he is seeking the popular aesthetic that will sell the band’s music through the video he is making rather than the aesthetic required by the formula of coursework. This requires a new originality in his work, another imaginative transformation, with which to deal with the antithetical concept of a popular aesthetic.

8.5 Practical applications

The practical applications of the research findings made in this thesis focus on two areas. Firstly, one proposal might be for teachers to consider how they treat the popular cultural and critical experiences of their students, by assessing how they involve and subsequently validate those experiences in the classroom situation. The metaphor of the dialectic suggests that on occasions, students make use of many different kinds of cultural text and experience that are not legitimised by the teacher or turned into academic capital. One proposed course of action here might be for media teachers (and perhaps examination boards) to give greater freedom of choice in terms of production choices, as well as encouraging students to use texts that they have a close interest in, in class. Secondly, the Dialectic of Familiarity could prove useful in explaining how the key elements of media education work with each other, with creative production work as the engine of critical and cultural learning. It is envisaged that this could make for a clearer and easier construction of courses at all levels of media education, so that there is a clear development of learning from critical and cultural thesis to critical and cultural synthesis via the means of creative production work. Thirdly, I would

propose that the study is of use to teachers, not only in terms of the course construction outlined above, but also in the way that it might help them understand why their students respond in the way that they do in class. Julian Sefton-Green has stated that one of the most important things that media education needs to establish for itself is a “*sophisticated, empirically-justified, broadly understood model of how learning works in practice, how it makes a difference*” (Sefton-Green, 2011). While I am not suggesting that the Dialectic of Familiarity is this in its entirety, I do believe that it can go some way to explaining the nature of student responses to teacher input. As I suggested in Chapter 1, however, the limits of this study mean that there has not been enough opportunity to explore the specific role of the teacher in this process and what exactly it is that they are doing. This limitation should be seen as an opportunity for further research then; to explore the way that the Dialectic of Familiarity might work from the perspective of the teacher, rather than the student.

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NB: The following weblinks refer to the work that Jamie, one of the focus students in the thesis, has done recently in his professional life as a film maker.

<http://suchgold.wordpress.com/page/11/> (Accessed 14/1/13)

http://www.peopleperhour.com/freelancers/jamie_horton/camera_operator_editor_video_content_pro/194893 (Accessed 12/1/13)

APPENDIX 1 - Data Labelling and Sampling

All the data in this study was collected over a three year period (2004-2007), with all students having the opportunity to make five video productions. These five different productions are detailed in Figure 2, on page 61 of the study. For the purposes of identification, each of these productions provided a number of different types of data; these were;

- 1) The finished video production itself,
- 2) The preproduction work for the video production, which included such documents as treatments and storyboards,
- 3) A video observation of students completing the production
- 4) The written evaluation the student completed at the end of the production
- 5) A semi-structured interview conducted by the teacher (i.e. myself) at the end of each project.

Every time one of these types of data is identified in the thesis, it is labelled with a letter and a number (e.g. E5), which refers to both the type of data it is and when it occurs in the three year period. Letter labels are assigned as follows

V- Video Production

P-Pre-Production

O- Video Observation

E- Evaluation

I-Interview

The following table shows where each type of data occurs in the study:

	VIDEO PRODUCTION	PRE-PRODUCTION	VIDEO OBSERVATION	EVALUATION	INTERVIEW
“PILOT” STUDY (SPRING 04)	V1	X	O1	E1	I1
YEAR 11 GROUP PROJECT (SUMMER 04)	V2	P1	O2	E2	X
YEAR 11 INDIVIDUAL PROJECT (AUTUMN 04/SPRING 05)	V3	P2	X	E3	I2
YEAR 12 GROUP PROJECT (AUTUMN 05)	V4	P3	O3	E4	I3
YEAR 12 INDIVIDUAL PROJECT (SPRING 06)	V5	P4	X	E5	I4
YEAR 13 INDIVIDUAL PROJECT (AUTUMN 06/SPRING07)	V6	P5	X	E6	I5

An X in a cell here means that there no data of that type was collected. In some instances the reasons behind this are self-evident. For example, it would be impossible to make video observations of every individual project done by students as they frequently did these away from the classroom. In other instances, such as the absence of interviews with regard to the Year 11 group project, there were methodological and operational reasons why this data was not collected which are discussed in Chapter 4.

The student sample of each type of data can be represented as follows then, because not every student did every project – something that is also discussed in chapter 4. While it would be impractical to fit all the data presented by each student into this thesis, a typical example of a full data set for a student is given in Appendix 2.


	ANDREW	BRUCE	JAMIE	JASMIN	LIANNE
“PILOT” STUDY	X	X	X	X	X
YEAR 11 GROUP PROJECT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
YEAR 11 INDIVIDUAL PROJECT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
YEAR 12 GROUP PROJECT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
YEAR 12 INDIVIDUAL PROJECT	✓	X	X	✓	X
YEAR 13 INDIVIDUAL PROJECT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓


An X in the cell here means that the particular student did not take part in that project. None of the focus students in the study took part in the “Pilot” Study (the use of inverted commas here is deliberate, as this work does not conform to normal definitions of a pilot study; something that is discussed in chapter 4), which was carried out with students in the school year above the cohort that I chose to focus on. Despite this, the pilot study did provide some interesting insights that are developed further in this work. The students who did not do the Year 12 individual project did so because they chose to work in another media for the coursework option in that year. However, they did produce some video work in all three years of the study.


APPENDIX 2 – Sample Data Set- Video Productions : Lianne V2, V3, V4 and V6

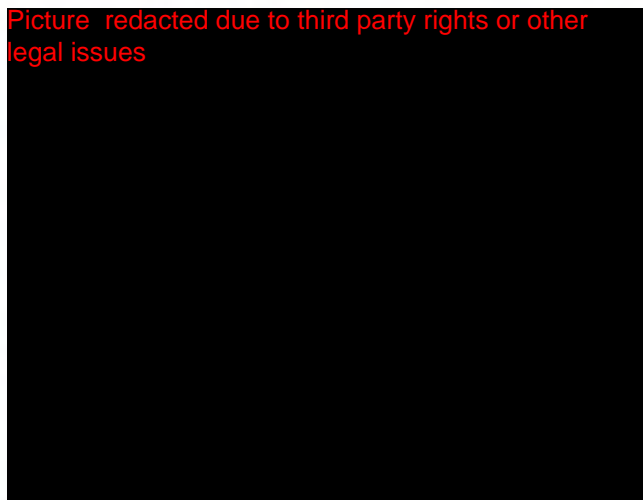
The screen shots below are taken from the full data set of video productions from one of the five focus students, in this case Lianne. All of the five core students had a data set of four or more video productions. Screen shots can only give an impression of the range and progression in the students video work, but I have presented them here in the same multimodal analysis framework used throughout Chapter 7.

2A) Year 11 Group Project – V2 “Wildlife at Haydon”


	Shot	Long shot
	Dialogue	“Hello and welcome to Wildlife at Haydon”. I’m Jack Giddings- Attenborough. During this programme we’ll be examining the natural habitat of the “pupillus irritatus”
	Movement	Hands clasped together here.
	Location	Outside school
	Music	British Airways advert music


	Shot	Long shot
	Dialogue	“Here in the school yard we find this fabulous metal contraption which is used for transporting the “pupillus irritates” from location to location
	Movement	Presenter walks across car park to minibus
	Location	School Car Park
	Music	


	Shot	Mid Shot
	Dialogue	“The Pupillus Irritatus” is very competitive, as you can see behind me”
	Movement	Fingers pressed together in professorial manner
	Location	School Field
	Music	None




Shot	Long Shot
Dialogue	“The Pupillus Irritatus” is a very boisterous species, something that can be particularly observed at the lesson changeover
Movement	Students walking toward camera
Location	Corridor
Music	None

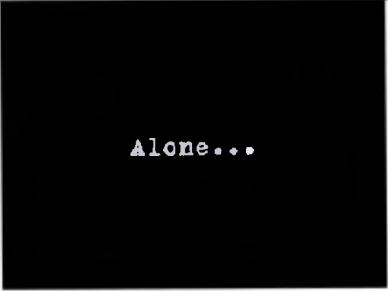
	Shot	Medium Long Shot
	Dialogue	“This example of “teacherus tweedus” is controlling her class of “pupillus irritatus” excellently.
	Movement	Teacher in front of class
	Location	Classroom
	Music	None - voiceover

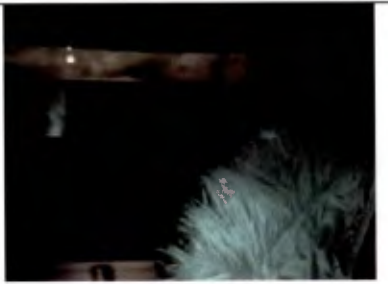
	Shot	Mid Shot
	Dialogue	“this is exactly what I would have expected. The <i>pupillus irritatus</i> is obsessed with its own appearance, ...and consequently, in every nook and cranny we find grooming accessories”
	Movement	Presenter holds the pencil case reverently.
	Location	outside school lockers
	Music	None


	Shot	Medium Close-Up
	Dialogue	“Unfortunately in our attempts to film a particularly naughty class of <i>pupillus irritatus</i> ” we have been locked in this cupboard”
	Movement	Presenter illuminates his surroundings.
	Location	Cupboards
	Music	None


2B) Year 11 Individual Project V3 – “Missing Winter” (Film Trailer)


	Shot	Low Angle shot of trees
	Dialogue	None
	Movement	Camera only, moving from low to high angle
	Location	Trees in Forest
	Music	Evanescence “Wake me up”

		Shot	Long shot
		Dialogue	None
		Movement	Title moves towards audience
		Location	None – title screen
		Music	Evanescence – “Wake me up”


		Shot	OS of driver looking in mirror
		Dialogue	None
		Movement	Driver puts fur hood up while looking in mirror
		Location	Interior of car
		Music	Evanescence – “Wake me up”

		Shot	High Angle shot of driving licence on floor
		Dialogue	None
		Movement	None
		Location	Unspecified Exterior
		Music	Evanescence – “Wake me up”

		Shot	Low angle shot of car pulling up
		Dialogue	None
		Movement	Car pulling up
		Location	Suburban street
		Music	Evanescence – “Wake me up”

	Shot	Medium Long shot of man who is searching for the missing girl whose picture is on the driving licence
	Dialogue	None
	Movement	Walking away from car towards forest
	Location	Forest car park
	Music	Evanescence – “Wake me up”

	Shot	Close up of girls arm against tree
	Dialogue	None
	Movement	Arm flaps in wind (implying she is alive)
	Location	Forest
	Music	Evanescence – “Wake me up”

	Shot	OS of man looking at computer screen
	Dialogue	None
	Movement	None
	Location	Unspecified Interior
	Music	Evanescence – “Wake me up”

2C) Year 12 Group Project V4 – “The Unnamed Film” Short Thriller opening

	Shot	OS of girl in bushes
	Dialogue	None
	Movement	None
	Location	Bushes outside school
	Music	Generic threatening music

	Shot	ELS of Becky being followed by girl
	Dialogue	None
	Movement	Becky walking and girl following her
	Location	Road outside school
	Music	Generic threatening music

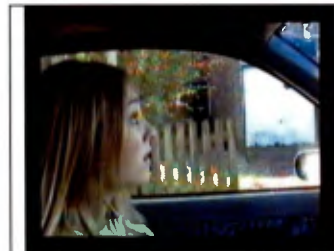
	Shot	LS of Becky running down alleyway
	Dialogue	None
	Movement	Becky Running
	Location	Alleyway outside school
	Music	Generic threatening music



Shot	HA of Becky falling over as girl catches up with her
Dialogue	None
Movement	Becky falling
Location	Alleyway outside school
Music	Generic threatening music



Shot	MLS of Becky managing to escape to car
Dialogue	None
Movement	Becky running to car
Location	Road outside school
Music	Generic threatening music





Shot	CU of Becky inside car
Dialogue	"Thanks, I'm safe"
Movement	Becky turning to camera as if there is someone else in the car
Location	Road outside school
Music	Generic threatening music




Shot	MCU of Becky inside car with girl appearing at window
Dialogue	"Gasp"
Movement	Girl appears at window and Becky, turns, shocked
Location	Road outside school
Music	Generic threatening music


2D) Year 13 Individual Project – “Taxman” (Animation)

	Shot	HA of kitchen (made from modelling clay)
	Dialogue	None
	Movement	None
	Location	Kitchen made from modelling clay
	Music	None, but there is the sound of a clock ticking in the background.

	Shot	Mid Shot of Clock on Wall
	Dialogue	None
	Movement	Clock moves from the hour to five past
	Location	Kitchen made from modelling clay
	Music	As the clock moves the first chords of “Taxman” by the Beatles are heard

	Shot	HA of Snake crawling across kitchen floor
	Dialogue	None
	Movement	Snake slithers around
	Location	Kitchen made from modelling clay
	Music	“Taxman” by The Beatles

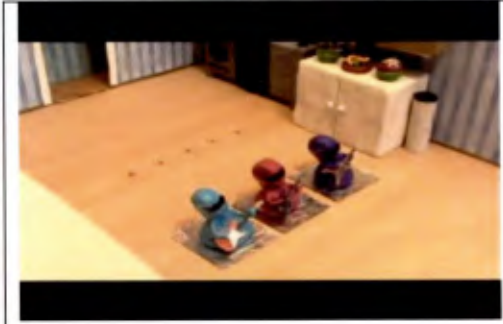
	Shot	LS of Snake crawling up wall and around door
	Dialogue	None
	Movement	Snake slithers around door and out again
	Location	Kitchen made from modelling clay
	Music	“Taxman” by The Beatles

	Shot	LS of coloured balls arriving through door
	Dialogue	None
	Movement	Balls of modelling clay roll through door
	Location	Kitchen made from modelling clay
	Music	“Taxman” by The Beatles

	Shot	LS of coloured balls turning into indistinct figures
	Dialogue	None
	Movement	Balls transform into vaguely humanoid shapes with arms, heads etc
	Location	Kitchen made from modelling clay
	Music	“Taxman” by The Beatles



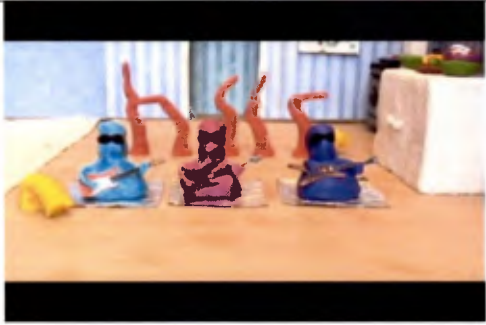
Shot	LS of pieces of silver foil arriving in front of figures
Dialogue	None
Movement	Foil pieces slide across floor in front of figures
Location	Kitchen made from modelling clay
Music	“Taxman” by The Beatles



Shot	HA of figures playing guitars, which have been “delivered” by the pieces of foil
Dialogue	None
Movement	Figures rotate and dance as they play guitar
Location	Kitchen made from modelling clay
Music	“Taxman” by The Beatles



Shot	CU of figures playing guitars, which have been “delivered” by the pieces of foil
Dialogue	None
Movement	Figures rotate and dance as they play guitar. Mouths move when the line “Taxman” is sung in harmony.
Location	Kitchen made from modelling clay
Music	“Taxman” by The Beatles



Shot	LS of modelling clay plants and animals growing around the band.
Dialogue	None
Movement	Modelling clay “plants” grow up at back of band very quickly and yellow “animals” move around in front.
Location	Kitchen made from modelling clay
Music	“Taxman” by The Beatles

APPENDIX 3 – Exemplar Interview Transcripts

These are examples of transcripts from interviews I conducted with the students that are referred to in the body of the thesis. For the purposes of comparison, I have also included transcripts from students who are not in the core group focused on in the study, and a transcript of an interview conducted as part of the “pilot” study. There is also some commentary about these transcripts in order to contextualise them and suggests ways that they may relate to the wider study. This is indicated by the italicised text.

3A) Exemplar Transcript of Interview I2 – Jasmin, Year 11 Individual Project Autumn 2004

Here questions from the list included in figure 3 (Chapter 4) are indicated in bold type. Follow-up questions, which were facilitated by the semi-structured nature of the interview are not. Certain sections of this interview are key to the analysis in chapters 5, 6 and 7 and are extracted in those sections. However, of additional interest here are Jasmin’s comments about her use (or non-use) of a tripod. The students as a cohort have been told about the importance of using this piece of equipment at all times when they are filming, but Jasmin is quite assertive about the fact that she didn’t need it at times. This can be characterised as an antithetical response to a teacher instruction. It seems that despite Jasmin’s generally positive response to the task, there are still elements characteristic of an antithetical rejection of a new and unfamiliar cultural practice introduced by the teacher – in this case, the use of a tripod. Also, in her comments about editing Jasmin hints at a thetic criticality by knowing that “fading” is an important aspect of editing, but isn’t entirely secure in its use. Similarly, the use of the term “chopping up” indicates an absence of critical vocabulary (but not necessarily an absence of criticality itself, but rather the presence of a thetic criticality).

SC: What is the nature of your video coursework and what sort of ideas are behind it?

Jasmin: My coursework is a movie trailer for a romantic comedy. I’ve got my sister and her friend in it. The idea behind it is that I love watching movies and I love watching romantic comedies.

SC: So can you tell me what sort of things we see in the trailer?

Jasmin: You see the characters getting together. She really likes him, so she wants to make her appearance better looking, to attract him, so she goes to the full extent of getting a

makeover done and changing her features and everything. And then he kind of likes her, so she goes back to the basketball court. She shows him what she can do, but she sort of embarrasses herself by falling over. All her friends and him are shocked she fell, so he goes over and helps her and everything and he likes what he sees.

SC: So if this was a whole film, how would the story end up?

Jasmin: Well, they eventually end up together, but there is an obstacle. He's got a girlfriend, but the girlfriend's gone on holiday, then she comes back early to see him especially. Selena, the main character, is really shocked that he lied to her so she dumps him...well, not dumps him, but she's really gutted and upset that she's been lied to, so she hangs around with her friends for support and she watches romantic films and cries in front of them. Then he feels really guilty and he doesn't like his girlfriend so he dumps her and goes for Selena. Then he apologises, and she can't help but fall back into his arms.

SC: What kind of texts do you think influenced your own video project?

Jasmin: Just a bunch of ideas from a bunch of films... "The Princess Diaries" when she changes her features to become a proper princess. That brought an idea to it.

SC: So was there something where you'd seen a specific scene or technique in something you'd watched and you thought 'Oh, I'll use that'?

Jasmin: Probably in one scene where she changed her features to become a princess – I brought that idea to it, to my film. Her friends had put make-up on her and it was so excessive that she was like 'you must be out of your mind!' I thought that was hilarious, so I brought it in and expanded on that a bit and made it a bit more humorous.

SC: So that was from the Princess Diaries?

Jasmin: Yes

SC: How did you go about constructing it/making it?

Jasmin: Well, we woke up in the mornings and I started filming as early as possible because I knew the areas I wanted to film got very busy. I went to the basketball court for instance and by 12pm I had to get it all done, otherwise it would be full of people. Too many extras, and I didn't want that many! I also had to film over two days, because I had to go back and re-film some because I was too late on the first day. Oh, and I filmed some at home. I converted the living room into my sister's bedroom.

SC: How did you do that then?

Jasmin: My Mum has a couch which goes into a bed, so I got some blankets, my mum has this cat blanket, and I changed that into my sister's bed with a few pillows and stuffed toys. I

changed the mirrors and put posters up, with girl's stuff all over the room and just made it a girly-featured thing. It was big enough to shoot in...

SC: Why did you choose to make that change? Why not shoot it in a bedroom.

Jasmin: Because I thought it was big enough. I thought it would give me enough space to film in. I share a bedroom with my sister, but I wanted my sister to be that spoilt kind of girl where she had a double bed and a big massive bedroom.

SC: So almost like a rich girl kind of thing?

Jasmin: Kind of...but she was a scruffy rich girl who had to change to impress the guy

SC: What problems did you have with the construction of it?

Jasmin: Well I had no real problems with the camera or anything. I thought it was really good. There were times when I needed a tripod, but at times my hand was still enough to not need a tripod. In some scenes, you can't really see that I haven't used a tripod. In some scenes it really looks like I have used a tripod when I really haven't....even though I was shaking a lot sometimes.

SC: Other problems?

Jasmin: I had to change the direction of it. In the kitchen, it was too small and I wanted my sister to do a little dance thing. But it was too small and I couldn't do a low angle shot of my sister dancing, so I ended up doing a regular medium close-up and I had to do it from outside the kitchen and it didn't really come out properly. I ended up having to do lots of different shots, but it was okay.

SC: And what about editing? Was there any difficulty with that?

Jasmin: Well, I needed a lot of help from my teachers! I'd never really done editing before, and the documentary we did; I didn't actually do all of it, Laura (a fellow student) did more.

SC: So you needed help. Can you tell me how the editing helped you realise your idea, how did it help you make the finished product?

Jasmin: Well actually, the editing brought out a lot of things that I didn't have in mind. I got shown a lot of things and I tried to use them and develop them. I looked at more trailers at home..."First Daughter" "Wimbledon", I analysed them and looked at how they faded out and those sort of things.

SC: How different was the experience of making your own project from making the group documentary you made earlier in the year?

Jasmin: Very different. I had other people to rely on other than me for the bits that I thought were too hard or I didn't understand.

SC: Which bits were those?

Jasmin: The whole process! I just remember spending ages chopping up the work, in the editing, and everything else was a bit of a blur. Even then, I was just watching Laura do that, and it still didn't come to me, but I slowly caught on.

SC: But how different was the actual filming of the documentary to the filming of your own trailer?

Jasmin: Well, I had more responsibility. I had no one to rely on but me. I asked thousands of people to come and help me in the editing room, but they were like "No, you have to do it"

SC: But do you think you learnt anything useful at all from doing the documentary? **Jasmin:** Only really the chopping up, the editing. And some of the stuff about filming around the school, because it was about school. The problems of filming in corridors!

SC: **What did you think was the harder of the two projects?** What was most difficult?

Jasmin: The individual project. From the very beginning to the end I would say putting it on the computer and capturing it, because I was kind of confused about when to stop capturing and everything. Then moving the audio and the tape thingy.....

SC: The audio and the video?

Jasmin: Yeah. Because I moved the video by itself and then the audio got mixed up, so I had to re-do it again. I learnt from my mistakes...moving it at the same time. That was about it. Overall I found it easy though. I got the hang of it.

SC: But that learning wasn't helped by the documentary though. To you, it was like learning it all over again new?

Jasmin: Yes. just like starting again

SC: Okay. Good. Thankyou.

END OF INTERVIEW

3B; Exemplar of Interview I4 – Jasmin, Year 12 Individual project

This interview was conducted some time after Jasmin completed her Year 12 Individual Project, which was the opening to a thriller film, and just as she had begun work on the Year 13 individual project. Not all of the original questions from the interview schedule are asked here, because Jasmin is generally being more forthcoming about her work, and the follow-up questions tend to cover the same material. Extracts of this interview are used in Chapter 6, but the discussion has relevance to issues of both culture and creativity as well.

SC: What is the nature of your video coursework and what sort of ideas are behind it?

Jasmin: Basically there's this girl and her boyfriend...and the boyfriend is waiting at her house for her to come back and the audience see her walking down the alley on her way home. Meanwhile the audience also see the boyfriend being killed by the killer.

SC: So he's in the house waiting for her....and he gets killed but she doesn't know the boyfriend has been killed.

Jasmin: Yeah, so the boyfriend's dead on the sofa and the girlfriend comes walking right in straight to the bedroom and takes her coat off then she goes to the living room sees him dead and drops her bags.

SC: And the audience sees all that....how do they know she has dropped her bags.

Jasmin: They hear them being dropped but don't see it....then she looks around the room, but from behind her comes the killer.

SC: How do we see him when we see the killer?

Jasmin: Turning round we see him from her point of view.

SC: Is this the first time we've seen the killer....when we see him like this?

Jasmin: Actually no... the audience has seen him before fighting the boyfriend when the boyfriend gets killed, but she hears something behind her and she turns round and sees him coming straight into the room, and she manages to avoid him, because there's this whole scene where he's chasing her round the room, and she manages to knock him down and get past him into the bedroom, but then he gets her and hits her and she's unconscious...well she is conscious but she isn't and he stabs her too.

SC: Do you actually see him kill her?

Jasmin: No you don't see him kill her but you do see the stabbing motion.

SC: What did you do in this film to get across that it was a thriller?

Jasmin: Mainly the killer...I wanted to show that he was big and strong. He was very dark of course as well....then there's just the shot at the very beginning of him (the killer) getting ready...

SC: What kind of shot is that?

Jasmin: I think it's a Mid Shot, and you see him cover his head up.

SC: **SC: What problems did you have with the construction of it?**

Jasmin: Health and Safety!....in the sense that I didn't want anyone to get hurt while they were being thrown around the room. And there was the fact that we were really trashing my mum's house....

SC: So it was the practical things really... **What kind of texts do you think influenced your own video project?**

Jasmin: I think *Scream* was really important this time because of the idea of the central girl character being on her own with the killer. I've seen *Scream* so many times that it just really had a major impact. Its so much fun as a film and I wanted my film to be fun to watch as well as make.

SC: SC: Ok, so how was the whole thing different to your Year 11 project?

Jasmin: I think that the whole genre thing was much harder. To get what the audience expects from a thriller was much more difficult in terms of getting the actors to do that kind of stuff....

SC: Because your GCSE coursework was a trailer for a romantic comedy

Jasmin: Yeah, but that was much simpler because the story was so simple, you know man meets woman, they fall in love...you didn't need to think about anything else except for the story. No special effects no fighting, they don't need to jump over things, nothing except the story...really straightforward, just the emotions.

SC: So it was easier to manage ,the romantic comedy.

SC: **How did you go about constructing it/making it?** What did you do this time that you didn't do before?

Jasmin: Well I knew a lot more about editing, and there was definitely more about the different shots and camera angles...like using low angles and high angles for the point of view of the killer and the victim...so the audience feel much more part of the action.

SC: And what about the way this will influence your Yr 13 project?

Jasmin: I'm doing a cross media promotion for a Romantic Drama film.... Well I think you just have to think about the genre much more...you know, how you are going to fit the conventions of it, so that the audience know what to expect, rather than just the story....so in the trailer I'm doing now, I'll include more two shots and stuff to focus on their emotions, and to represent the barriers to the central characters being together and that sort of thing.

END OF INTERVIEW

3C) Exemplar transcript of Interview I5- Jasmin, Year 13 Individual Project, Spring 2007

In the later interviews (I3-5) I had taken to re-watching the video production with the student who made it while asking the interview questions. This was intended to produce a richer vein of data and facilitate the asking of follow-up questions more easily. As a consequence, the questioning deviate from the original schedule proposed in Figure 3 (Chapter 4) quite significantly at points. Again, extracts from this interview are used as labelled in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, but of additional interest might be the way that Jasmin uses particular conceptual terms (such as convention, montage and narrative) in a fully synthesised way.

SC: What is the nature of your video coursework and what sort of ideas are behind it?

This looks like a trailer for a romantic comedy. Hadn't you done that already in Year 11 for GCSE?

Jasmin: No, this is a romantic drama

SC: So slightly different. Less of the funnies?

SC: So there's this girl in it who's clearly a bad girl.

Jasmin: Yeah, she's bunking classes, hanging out with a bad crowd, smoking, getting into trouble.

SC: (pointing to screen) And there's your strict teacher...she passes quite well for a teacher given that she's a student...Then the mood changes where we get to that title screen that says "Until Fate Stepped In"

Jasmin: Yeah, she's been caught by the teacher and she meets this guy in the study room. That's supposed to be a punishment but it's also the fate thing...

SC: So they're in detention and she meets him. Then there's this sequence...there are lots of nice transitions here. Why are they being used?

Jasmin: Just to give that effect that there's something building here, to savour that moment.

SC: So we're seeing them get closer, and we get a bit of dialogue here and he says some interesting things.

Jasmin: Yeah...this is the drama part

SC: And it is quite dramatic, I think.

Jasmin: Yes. He says, "I love you" and that's a difficult line to pull off, but he does it very well. He's such a good actor...

SC: So the title is “A Leap of Faith”. How did you come up with that title?

Jasmin: I don’t know. I guess, from her point of view, it is a leap of faith. She’s taking a chance with fate on this guy

(Video on screen ends)

SC: How did you go about constructing it/making it?

Jasmin: Well shooting took a good two or three days, because a lot of those things that you see weren’t just shot in one setting. They were in different parts of each different place I was at, and the other parts were in the school and the park and such.

SC: I think some of the stuff that’s interesting, such as the transitions, are building up a sense of the relationship, but I’m also interested in the camerawork that does that. Can you tell me more about that?

Jasmin: I really wanted to capture the meaning... the meaning of the character’s body language and the meaning in their faces so that’s why I used the close-ups on “Why do you care about me?” and stuff like that. I used the transitions as well to give this sense of something really building up between them.

SC: And what about the music? There are clearly two deliberately different choices here.

Jasmin: Well the first was “Divine” (?) My brother got that for me. I used it to show her rebellion and this crazy lifestyle that she lives, and then you get this song that’s really up-beaty, so it’s very similar to other trailers that you’ll see. The music changes when you get that caption “When fate stepped in” to show a new part of her life, a new set of circumstances.

SC: What problems did you have with the construction of it?

Jasmin: Problems would probably be the lighting, the time of day.

SC: Why?

Jasmin: Because they laughing all the time, and the sun was going down and I was doing the lighting and I didn’t want to go into the next day, because I wanted to get these very romantic shots in this suburban background with the sun going down.

SC: Why was it important that it was suburban?

Jasmin: I wanted to create this romantic suburban atmosphere... lots of the romantic drama films that I analysed had that suburban thing with a closed community

SC: Such as? **(What kind of texts do you think influenced your own video project?)**

Jasmin: “A Walk to Remember”...that’s a kind of suburban, middle class closed community.

SC: Yes. I hadn’t seen that, but there was another one in your product research that I had seen...

Jasmin: The Notebook?

SC: Yes, which is interesting because it is a romantic drama, but it's also about two old people in a nursing home....

Jasmin: Set in different times, yes.

SC: So what was it about The Notebook that influenced you here?

Jasmin: Well actually, for the Notebook, it was probably more about the poster work. I thought that was really amazing, so I wanted to do something like that with the poster.

SC: So as well as "The Notebook" and "A Walk to Remember", were there any other particular texts that influenced you in terms of genre or narrative?

Jasmin: Well I love my romantic comedies, but I didn't want it to hit the romantic comedy side of things, because I wanted to do something more serious. That was pretty hard, so I had to look at these films and study the trailers more and see how they captured the drama and incorporate that into my work.

SC: And how do they capture the drama?

Jasmin: Well, I think, the camerawork and the music. They were really important...like two-shots were important, and the music to capture the romance part but also the drama part of whether these two people were going to get together or not. I thought the music that I chose in the second part really did that, because the music like "rose" when the drama part showed up during the montage of shots.

SC: Montage is an interesting word.

Jasmin: Yeah, it captures that sense of different activities happening as their relationship builds.

SC: So you learnt about montage in class...

Jasmin: Yes, with Mr Daley (other Media teacher) in Film Studies

SC: **How different was the experience of making your own project from making your Year 11 project, the group film you made in Year 12 or your individual project in Year 12?**

Jasmin: Well, I think I've incorporated new things that I learnt from the software. Like new editing transitions...I've played with them more, used more slow motion, whereas in my GCSE project, I didn't really use those things....Really thinking about the narrative more. Whereas in the GCSE one I was thinking more like "This is what I would want to see", whereas with this one, the trailer is more conventional, it has what they have in them, so I'm thinking more about it from an audience point of view, rather than what I would want to see.

SC: And what about the Year 12 projects? How did they influence you?

Jasmin: I guess I just learnt about staying within the limits. Staying within the conventions of the thing, you know, not giving away too much about the killer, and the same with this one, you know, not giving too much away about the romance and whether it's going to happen or not.

SC: What did you think was the harder of the two projects?

Jasmin: I really enjoyed doing this one (Year 13 Individual) because there was more pressure. There's more expected from you as an A2 student, to follow those conventions and incorporate them into what you're doing. I enjoyed all of it, everything about it.

SC: Thank you

END OF INTERVIEW

3D) &3E) Exemplar Transcripts of Interviews I2 and I5 – Taras, Year 11 Individual Project Autumn 2004 and Year 13 Individual Project Spring 2007

The following two interviews were conducted with Taras, one of the boys on the cohort who had a full data set of four video projects or more, but for reasons of space is not included in the final core five students whose work is the focus of the study. Again, interview questions from the schedule in Figure 3 are in bold type, while follow-up questions are not. These transcripts are provided here for the purposes of comparison and to illustrate the wider cohort from which the sample of five focus students is taken. This is a relatively short interview, which illustrates why in the later stages of the study are decided to watch the video production with the student in order to prompt deeper and more thoughtful responses. In the first interview, there is that sense of a lack of critical vocabulary (Taras's statement that he would "shoot different shots" is an example that is briefly referred to in Section 6.2.1 of the study) that is accompanied by examples of thetic criticality – the term "overlapping shots" suggests some kind of critical statement about editing, though it is unclear what it might refer to. Also, the discussion of mise-en-scene in the last part of the interview, which is reduced to the term "props" also supports this. The second interview, again, was conducted while watching Taras' finished video production, and is more extensive as a result. It provides some interesting supporting evidence for the theoretical position put forward in the thesis about the way that students who synthesize their own cultural interests (in this case the TV

programme “24”) with critical and conceptual learning through the antithetical process of play. A closer look at Taras’ comments about practising his editing reveals he has gone through that antithetical process, while his ability to make critical distinctions about his own Year 13 work in relation to earlier work, suggests an ability to critically distance or defamiliarise himself from it.

3C) Interview I2 – Taras Year 11

SC: What is the nature of your video coursework and what sort of ideas are behind it?

Taras: Well, it’s a football show, and if you’ve ever seen Soccer AM, it’s like a shorter version of that. People can see the latest news of football action in a short time so that they don’t have sit there for ages, they can just get it all in five minutes.

SC: How did you go about constructing it/making it?

Taras: First of all I decided where I would shoot different shots. I found the best places to get football action as obviously I needed that because it’s a football programme. I also decided where I’d get the best studio scene

SC: Where did you end up shooting the football bits?

Taras: Well I wanted to shoot at Northwood Football club, but that didn’t come off, so luckily I’d also filmed at lunchtime on the school field, of everyone playing football.

SC: What problems did you have with the construction of it?

Taras: Well the first time I filmed, the camera I was given, there was like a sound problem with it, so I filmed everything and then there was no sound on loads of footage, so I had to film it again. The second time, when we were uploading it the tape just played up, and then third time I filmed it, it was okay.

There was nothing specifically difficult about filming though. Sometimes it was hard to keep up with a moving football, but I thought I did alright with that.

SC: So what sort of things did you do to keep up?

Taras: Well, I just got into a good position, where I would easily be able to pan across the whole football field.

SC: What texts (other than Soccer AM) influenced your own video project?

Taras: Probably Match of the Day as well...it’s like a cross; not as silly as soccer AM, but not as formal as Match of the Day. It’s somewhere in the middle.

SC: How do you think you used these other texts?

Taras: Well there's obviously the goals...the goals of the week. Every football show shows that. Its like a convention, every show features that.

SC: How different was the experience of making your own project from making the group documentary you made earlier in the year?

Taras: It was a lot harder, because it was just me by myself. Also there was a lot more people involved...the presenters, everyone playing football. So I had to try and get everyone to be there on a specific date, whereas with the documentary, it was just me Martin and Tom and I only had one small role in that as cameraman. Martin was presenter and Tom did editing so it was all easily manageable.

SC: What do you think you learnt from the documentary project that helped you?

Taras: The general process. How to go about filming and what you have to think before you film. Normally, I'd have just taken a camera out and shot straight away, but I learnt a lot about about the planning and the process and editing.... How to get the final cut and not have any overlapping shots or any jump cuts because that looks unprofessional. Titles as well.

SC: What did you think was the harder of the two projects?

Taras: Mine was harder, but I think that is what it's like working on your own. It would be even harder to do a 10 to 15 minute film with even more cast and props and stuff. I didn't have many props or things because I just used normal football shirts and scarves and stuff, like everyday items.

SC: Thankyou

END OF INTERVIEW

3D) Interview I5 – Taras Year 13

SC: What is the nature of your video coursework and what sort of ideas are behind it?

Taras: It's a TV drama called "Breaking Point". It's about...well, obviously I could only get teenage actors in it, otherwise it would have been with adults...but because its teenagers they have their own kind of agency that stops crime. In this one (points at screen) it starts off with a mystery, which is what normally features in them, of a chase sequence, and a bad guy kills one of the good guys and takes a disk from him, which makes the audience suspicious about what's on it. They're meant to think it's a terrorist threat or something.

SC: How did you go about constructing it/making it?

Taras: It took a very long time to make. I first started filming things in July last year even before we got the brief or anything. I already knew what I wanted to do – I didn't want to do

anything else like a magazine or anything. I'd finished filming and editing by November probably, and I carried on editing drafts of it until the end of January.

SC: What texts influenced this video project?

Taras: "24", "Prison Break", a bit of "CSI" I should imagine.

SC: What problems did you have with the construction of it?

Taras: Just getting everyone together and stuff. Having to plan the shoots and locations. For example, some scenes...there's a kidnap scene, and you've got to make sure there's no people about, because a couple of times people came out and asked questions...beeped their horns and stuff because they thought it was real. So for things like that you've got to make sure no-one's around on the locations.

SC: And what about technically? Any problems there?

Taras: Probably because there was so much and I didn't always shoot it in one go, I had to shoot one scene at a time and put it on the computer. I found it quite hard to keep up to date with it.

SC: How much footage did you have altogether?

Taras: Probably about 40 minutes or something like that. In the end I got it down to just under 5 minutes.

(Video starts on screen)

SC: So what do we see at the start here?

Taras: From the beginning, there's the previously section, where we see what's happened in the episode before. One of the characters has been kidnapped and one of the other characters is bloodied and beaten, but he's escaped, and then it goes to the titles, where you see every character, and then you see a nerve gas canister, which is meant to let the audience know that the threat is like a terrorist threat. Then it's the first proper scene which is a chase sequence in the woods, between a villain and a good guy and eventually the villain kills the hero and takes the disk, which is for dramatic effect because no-one really expects that. In the final scene, which would be before the break, is like a mini-cliffhanger, and all it is, is one of the terrorists about to go on the train with the nerve gas, so the audience thinks that he's about to attack the train.

SC: There's some really quick cuts in there. Why did you do that?

Taras: To change it from scenes. Because it was only a "previously" bit I didn't really have a proper way to change between scenes. So I thought I'd just do that...in "24" and things, in the intro, they cut really quickly between scenes with loads of different cuts

SC: So in that sequence of really quick cuts there's the CCTV, the fire

Taras: Yeah, and the fence...things that would go well with it....

SC: But it goes really quickly...like a punctuation mark. How did you do that very fast thing there (points at screen)

Taras: I just walked all the way round the actor, and then with the editing I just sped it up.

SC: That's quite interesting, the use of the slow-mo there.

Taras: These are all just shots that are already in the opening sequence

SC: Right, but they're from the episode presumably...

Taras: Yes and there's some bits that aren't, like the nerve canister and the bits with Daniel, who's not in the rest of it.

SC: How did you get smoke coming out of the canister?

Taras: With a lot of trying. Most of the smoke's really dark and I wanted it to be light, like something was burning. I think in the end I burnt some tissues, which was a bit dangerous, but it was fine in the end.

SC: Now what we're seeing here is the ...

Taras: That's the chase sequence. This is the hero.

SC: And where's it filmed.

Taras: In Ruislip Woods.

SC: So he's the hero. How are you letting the audience know that he's a hero then?

Taras: Because he's the one whose killed the villains in the other one (episode?). Because you see more of him, the audience side with him. Whereas the villain, you don't see much of his face, and when you see the way he coldly executes this guy at the end you'll know he's the bad guy. Also, the things he's wearing, like the leather jacket.

SC: So the audience knows this, and you're killing him off at the beginning of an episode. That's pretty brave!

Taras: He's not the main, main hero.

SC: There's lots of interesting camerawork here, and the split-screen.

Taras: Well the last bit was more sort of intense action. This bit is more suspense, and you're wondering what's going to happen.

SC: And how do you think you're building up suspense here?

Taras: Just the whole routine, getting out of the car, seeing what he's going to do when he gets to the boot and you see what's in the boot. There's lots of close-up work here. I made sure there's no zooming in here. For the bad guys, I'd zoom out, so we didn't see them and we're distanced from them. We see them, but we don't sort of thing.

SC: How did you do that shot? (ECU of eye)

Taras: That was just me in the end, my own eye, and holding the camera by hand.

SC: The music seems quite important as well. Where does it come from?

Taras: Mostly from the “24” soundtrack, other than the opening bit which is by the Chemical Brothers. This next bit is supposed to be the train pulling in, which is why I split-screened it.

SC: And that’s the end of it.

(Video ends)

Taras: Yes. I wanted it to end naturally, so the screen only goes black when he closes the boot. And this is just a little scene I did for the DVD as a sort of trailer.

SC: Yes that’s interesting. Like in 24 when they have him walking into the sunset....okay. So this is obviously high concept stuff but just thinking back a bit to other stuff we’ve done and what you did at GCSE what have you learnt in the gap in between?

Taras: Just to be more creative and try and break the stereotypes. Like with the football thing it was very routine...and not very interesting. The shots were all just Medium Close-ups. Also not to be afraid of the camera and try different things.

SC: I think the camerawork is really adventurous here. Why did you want to do that?

Taras: I wanted to challenge myself and make it more interesting for the audience. Most people, like teachers, are probably sick to death of the same old medium close up stuff.

SC: That’s not untrue, but this is quite ambitious. Tell me more about the things you’ve learnt to do better, technically.

Taras: Editing, definitely. The editing before, I was terrible at, y’know, at GCSE. This one I practised a lot.

SC: What do you mean “practised”?

Taras: Well, when I first shot the film, I’d save it as two files and with one I’d just play with it, and practise fades and stuff, the stuff I’d learnt in class, and compare it to the other saved one. Then I’d take the other file and do it properly. If I wasn’t sure of something, I’d try it out first. If I wasn’t sure how to position the shots, keep stuff in there.

SC: What do you mean?

Taras: Well, what to have in the shot...

SC: You mean like framing?

Taras: Yeah. At GCSE you don’t think about that sort of thing, the background and so on. It’s just one thing.

SC: So what do you think your main motivation was here? To get a good grade?

Taras: Just to make something I was proud of really. Hopefully, I'll be able to burn a copy and just keep it as something I've done.

SC: Okay. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

3E) Exemplar Transcript of Interview I1 – Pilot Study. Students Elaine, Ade, Anisha, Katie, Chris. Summer Term 2004

This is an extract from an interview conducted as part of the original “pilot study” for the thesis. None of the students interviewed below feature in the main study, as they were in the year above, but this is me experimenting with both methods – in this case, group interview – and the kind of questions I was asking. The questions are not identical but are similar to those asked in Fig 3 (Chapter 4) and demonstrate the areas of the student work that I was interested in (cultural value and influence, critical language and creative process). I also observed this group doing their production work, which led to observations of the group projects in Year 11 and 12 for the main study.

Ade: We were trying to stick to the conventions of the genre, so that Pretty much assigned me the role of the killer...then Elaine, we thought we'd dress Elaine up as the tart...(laughter)

SMC: And what about the technical work? Who was doing most of the filming?

Elaine: Well we all played a part but initially Anisha was the camera operator, because Katie was going to play the role that Anisha end up doing...the victims friend. But then we had some problems with that (...) and decided to turn it around. We all played a part really – I did a lot of the POV shots in the canteen.

SMC: Those shots are interesting. Presumably you had the camera in your hand?

Elaine: Yeah the camera was in my hand and Ade was bearing down on me.

SMC: I think that shot is quite unusual because in most slashers you tend to see it from the other point of view, the killer's perspective. Can anyone think of a film where we see it from the point of view of the victim?

Chris: In Halloween when Laurie falls down the stairs, when she falls backwards off the banister... and then the camera acts as if it's her looking back at Michael

SMC: Okay... so what was the bit of this that caused you the most problems to do?

Ade: The sound... if you look at the conversation where Elaine and Anisha are talking you just can't hear it. We tried our best to enhance it but it just didn't work because of the distance from the camera to the subject...but that was the shot we wanted to take because we wanted to get the camera to pan across while Elaine was walking out the door, but we just couldn't have both. If we had more time we might have dubbed over it

SMC: How did you try to put into practice some of the things we had learnt about in class?

Anisha: All that stuff at the beginning showing Elaine locking the door...that was supposed to be about the male gaze, and when she ran away it was sort of looking at her legs...it was also trying to show her character, the way she dresses and the conversation we (*the characters Anisha and Elaine were playing*) had was about parties

Ade: She (Elaine) was wearing these what were they?....socks or stockings?

Elaine: They were over-the-knee socks

Ade: ..yeah and they had the Playboy symbol on the back

Katie: yeah and she hadn't been here the lesson before and didn't know what we had decided to film and she just turned up in high boots and high socks!

Ade: I thought it was a strange coincidence, that's all...

SMC: How then, is this work influenced by what you have watched in class and outside of class?

Ade: Well, I think in a lot of ways its different to what we've seen, because Elaine's running away, she's taking all the precautions, whereas for example, in Psycho Marion doesn't take any precautions. Laurie (in Halloween) takes a few, but then she survives. Elaine's different from a lot of other girls because she's tried to lock up.

Katie: And also the way she gets trapped after running all round the school and then getting trapped in the canteen.

Anisha: And the camera focuses on her so you know she's trapped.

SMC: But the old man (the slasher) isn't that light on his feet so why does she go into that small space to get away from him?

Ade: Well, if you look at other slashers, someone like Freddie Kruger, he's no Olympic sprinter, I mean there's a shot... where he's got his claws out and he's just waddling along.

Elaine: If he was to run fast it wouldn't give as much tension, and the effect we wanted. The stuff with her running before she gets to the canteen is the idea of her getting more and more into a trap, and because of the fact that the canteen's so big, yo obviously have to make her go into a small space, otherwise there'd be no point...if she was just running around the canteen and he managed to grab her and kill her, it wouldn't have the same effect. It was light

as well – we had to put her in a small space otherwise she wouldn't have been intimidated, which would have been easier if it was dark and dingy. **END OF INTERVIEW**

APPENDIX 4 – Exemplar Evaluations

The following are examples of evaluations that students did at each stage of the study. There are some obvious things about the differences between them, such as their increasing length, but also their greater reliance upon embedded images as they become more sophisticated but also their ability to switch more easily between the subjective and the objective later on in the study. 4C (the evaluation from the Year 12 Group Project) is a particularly interesting exemplar as it demonstrates the kind of retreat to a cultural, thetic comfort zone discussed in 5.3. This is an example of antithetical reaction that there was not sufficient space to discuss in the main body of the thesis, so it is presented here and should be contrasted with Lianne's work on the same production.

4A) Exemplar Evaluation E2 – Andrew, Year 11 Individual Project

This is a brief but very competent GCSE Evaluation, and illustrates where Andrew is going in terms of his work and demonstrates some features of what I have termed thetic criticality, particularly in his use of non-specific technical terms, such as "background music"

Evaluation

I was given the task to create a documentary about a subject of my choice. The documentary would be filmed using video cameras and edited using computers. This task included individual and group pieces of work. I worked with Bruce Thain and James Barker. We created a documentary called "Silence of the fizz". It was about why Haydon removed fizzy drinks from the vending machines at school.

The documentary is an investigative documentary as it is investigating the reasons why the fizzy drinks were removed. It uses a variety of key features used in many documentaries. It uses a voice behind the camera to be a guarantor of authority. It uses real places, people and events, also it uses interviews and effectively uses editing to create a seamless narrative. I believe that by using these features, the audience's interest and attention is maintained throughout. *Excellent*

The target audience is both genders aged between 12 and 40. I have put the age range so high because parents could be interested in why fizzy drinks were removed from the school. I think that we reached the target audience by using factual and informative information and putting opinions across in a way that would capture the audience and keep them interested.

The subject matter of the documentary is fizzy drinks and why they were removed from schools. On one side the drinks are being represented as full of sugar, additives and colouring that can cause hyperactivity. On the other hand the drinks are being represented as a part of everyday life and they can be bought outside school regardless of the ban. Both sides of the argument are being shown.

I feel that the thing that works the best in the documentary is the interviews with the teachers and the pupils. I believe this because they were done in a very professional way and they get the main points expressed by the interviewee and then reflect them to the audience. The one thing that could have been improved was the continuous interviews. There could have been a bit more variety in terms of content and if we had more time we would have put in more breaks between interviews.

I will compare "Silence of the fizz" to "Stranger than Fiction. The Truth Behind the Moon Landings". Both documentaries are investigative as they both investigate a point, however, "Stranger than Fiction" is also a historical documentary because it uses archive footage and people who were related to the event. Both documentaries use interviews, real people, places and events. But "Stranger than Fiction" also uses background music, archive footage and reconstructions to capture their audience. The target audiences for both documentaries are very different because "Silence of the Fizz" targets 12 to 40 year olds which is a younger target audience compared to "Stranger than Fiction" which has a target audience of 25 to 60 year olds. In "Silence of the Fizz", the subject matter is shown on both sides of the argument, however, in "Stranger than Fiction" serious doubt is placed on whether the moon landings were real or staged in a studio.

A good evaluation

A $\frac{18}{20}$

This is an excellent assignment, which is only slightly let down by some of the untidiness in your final video documentary

4B Exemplar Evaluation E3 – Bruce, Year 11 Individual Project

This is a detailed evaluation, but is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, whilst being quite reflective, it does not use very many technical terms. Secondly, Bruce only talks about using Adobe Premiere to edit his work, whilst in the interview regarding the same piece, he admits that he used Moviemaker first and then used Premiere to finish things off (this use is discussed in Chapter 7). One can only speculate as to why omitted this detail from the evaluation, but it is probably to do with the status of the different editing packages and the (largely mistaken) view that using Premiere will get him more marks.

Supporting account of my Film

The process that I went through to create my product was to start with the idea of making a short art house thriller kind of film. In order to do this I had to research into the thriller genre, to do this I decided to look at other thriller films such as the Alfred Hitchcock film *Vertigo*, *Signs* by M. Night Shyamalan and the zombie film *28 Days later* which a lot of my film is based around. In doing the research I looked at both the films themselves and the posters that go with them. From looking at the films I found that in *Signs* and *28 Days later* there has to be some sense of mystery or the story has a twist in it that is partly unexpected that makes the film a thriller. In my film the sense of mystery is that there is no-one around and you are not sure whether there is something around following the main character which the main character wants to find that something that's following him.

The target audience for my film would be people between the ages of 16-35. This is because people in this age group are most likely to watch a thriller film. Also people in this group are more likely to have the disposable income and free time to watch the film whether they watch it at the cinema or on DVD or video. To find my target audience I asked a number of people questions about my sample film (*Vertigo*, *28 Days later* and *Signs*), these questions included *Have seen either of these films, the M Night Shyamalan film SIGNS, or the zombie film 28 days later? If yes which one?* And another question *what is your opinion of them?* This influenced the way I made the product because I need something that keep the audience wanting to watch the film, e.g. in the other films the sense of mystery and anticipation of what will happen next is what keeps the audience watching the film.

My film would be shown in a cinema but as the film is so short it is likely that it would be shown on TV on such channels as BBC four or Channel Four or on BBC 2 late night. My film would be shown on these channels because these channels are the type of channels that would show short films. Also the reason my film would be shown on these channels is because they are public service channels and they don't rely on viewing figures on need to make money. BBC 2 and 4 can afford to but on shows that may be watched by few people. This is why my film would not appear on channels such as ITV and Sky 1 because these channels rely on viewing figures because they need to show shows that will attract people to watch there shows so that they will make money from adverts, the channels are commercial channels.

If this film was to be made in the film industry there would be a number of things that would have to happen in pre-production before the film would be made. Firstly I would give an outline or a basic summary to a film

*(Goal
Included
Kendley)*

production company; this would be where I would give a pitch to the production company about my idea. After this a treatment would be written up, in this there would be a distribution of each scene in a paragraph. Then after this a script would be written and following that the storyboarding would be done. The final part of the pre production would be the camera script, were instructions to the camera crew are made very specific and almost final.

In the case of my film the pre production involved was doing my research in to my audience and into other films and trying to work out what makes those films thrillers and how can I do this in my film to make it a thriller. From doing my preproduction I learned how much work was needed to be put in into my film such as the editing and the amount of shots I would need in each part of the film. If I was to change anything from my pre production it would be to have more time to carry out audience research.

The production of my piece I did several things I needed to make the film. These things were getting my crew together and seeing weather my location was free for use. Both these things were aright, my crew (of two people including my main actor) arrived and the location were filming was to take place was free with not many people around. With my filming though I had ideas about the shots and the way I wanted to do it I was not going to follow my planning to the mark. This is because I felt I would get a better result in my film by being more spontaneous. My filming took about 2 hours to do and I got about 40 minutes raw footage filmed. With this footage I edited it down to the length of 4 minutes which is how long I wanted the film to be. I wanted the film this length because this is length of other short films and because it was not possible to make the film any longer with the raw footage I had and I was unable to film anymore footage due to weather. From the production process I learned the best ways to use the camera effectively and I also was able to use the camera to get the shots I wanted for my film, and these shots are ones that I had no thought about using before. In the editing of the film, also part of the production, I cut down the raw footage down from around 40 minutes to about 4 minutes. In the editing process a lot of the footage was cut. They way I did the editing was on the computer using editing software called Adobe Premier. In the editing process I cut down the scenes that I thought that were not needed for my film most of the film I used was shot with a clear idea of what I wanted but everything else I got rid of. From the editing process I learned that the editing process its self took a lot of time and you need to be prepared to cut things even through you may like them. Also in the editing process I learned how to us the computer software effectively to get a good result on my film. The final part of the

production was the narrative voice over. For this I reordered a monologue like speech about what the character is feeling through out the time of the film. The idea of the speech was to get the main character's feeling and thoughts across to the audience in the most direct way. However this part of my film I was not happy with, this is because I did not put enough work into the voice over. What I wanted to do was to have a mono tone Steven Hawkins kind of voice narrating, but I was not able to get the software needed to do this. This part I was disappointed with. If I could change any thing it would to change the narrative voice over and made it better.

In order to evaluate my film properly I showed my film to people and listened to their opinion and took feedback. I showed the film to five people and this is what they thought of my film. After the film all of them were agreed that they thought that the film was good with its idea and camera work and the editing but the voice over let it down if that was improved it would make it better as a whole. They also said that the ending was a bit abrupt and could have done with being built on more and made clearer what's going on with the main character at the end. They also said that the film was more of a mystery film instead of a thriller.

This part is the main evaluation of my film and where I tell you what I thought of my film. What I did was make a thriller/mystery film that is about 4 minutes long. The main reason I made this film was because I wanted to make a film and wanted to try making it in the thriller/mystery genre because there are films that are in this genre that I admire such as Vertigo by Alfred Hitchcock. There are many things that I have learnt from doing this project, such as the way to I could use the camera to get effective shots, and how to edit properly with the right computer program. There are other things I have learnt such as the importance of location in a film. The effectiveness of my film as a thriller was not that good; I feel that the film could have had more in it to make it a thriller. However I feel that my film would be better but under the genre of mystery because you never see what is following the main character. If I the opportunity to change parts of my project I would change the voice over narrative which I'm not happy with. I would have the voice over changed to a Steven Hawkins monotone voice and partly change what is being said in the film. I also would change the ending of the film because it ended too abruptly for the audience to understand and make sense of it.

Little or no technical knowledge

4C Exemplar Evaluation E3 – Year 12 Group Project (Ryan, Amber, Sarah and Gary)

This evaluation is added here as a contrast to Lianne’s E3 (Year 12 group evaluation) which is quoted from extensively in 6.3. The group who delivered this presented evaluation are part of the wider cohort, but do not form any of either the five core focus students for the study, or the wider 9 students who opted to do four or more video projects. However, they did all complete at least two video projects across the three years, with two of the group of four students having done GCSE Media in Year 11. This evaluation could be taken as a more detailed example of an antithetical reaction which I term “misunderstanding” in 6.3., because while there is a good deal of critical knowledge in the evaluation, such as the meanings that lie behind particular types of shot, the discrepancy between what the students wanted to do and what they ended up with was quite big. As a consequence, what they end up doing is retreating to a place where it is easier to blame the problems with the production on things such as gender. This is an antithetical response because while it hints towards the orthodoxy of say, adopting a technical vocabulary, it resorts to going back to what the student finds culturally and critically comfortable, such as blaming the perceived and stereotypical differences between boys and girls for an inability to implement this vocabulary properly in practical terms.

The Disaster! (un-named movie!)

By Ryan Duffy.

(And assisted by Sarah, Gary and Amber)

Mise en Scene

- We used scissors in the film to show danger when they are dropped as they can cause harm so it adds to the effect that Sarah is in jeopardy. They are also red in colour so this also shows danger and hell.
- Phone

Camera Shots

- We included:
 - Mid Shot: to show Sarah. Showing she was just an average (but extremely beautiful) girl with an ordinary life.
 - Long Shot in the point of view of the person stalking Sarah. We did this in hand held to add to the effect that it was not professional filming.
 - High angle to show Sarah looking small and innocent.
 - Pan, to show that Sarah is alone in the room. It was also *supposed* to look as though it was actually her looking round the room.
 - Two shot/Over the shoulder. To show the two people who were planning their attack, it also gives a sense of mystery as to who they were.
 - Tilt showing the photos to show that they had been following Sarah for a long time and she wasn't the only one. Still not showing their faces to add suspense! Even though it didn't quite work because this film was a terrible failure.
 - Zoookooooom was used to get a closer look into some of the shots used.

Our Films Genre

- Our film falls into the Thriller genre. It is a thriller because it supposed to have a lot of tension and suspense. Its dark and mysterious.

How we edited it?

- For the answer to this question you should ask Ryan
- Editing for our group did not go as planned as many disagreements occurred. We found that we often had differences of opinion and Amber and Sarah were forced to leave the group... Returning after about half an hour.
- We learnt that Gender has a huge effect on editing and females are much better than males... This also explain why our film is actually appalling as the females did not do hardly any of the editing.
- Gary is a dude

4D Exemplar Evaluation E4 – Jasmin

This evaluation is quoted from in 6.3. Note here the embedding of screen shots, which has been suggested, though not enforced by teaching staff, and the way it is used to reinforce the technical vocabulary. Also note that there is no discussion of the creation of the mise-en-scene, which is revealed in interview I4 and creates a connection between Bruce's omissions about editing software discussed above.

Brief and Research

I've created an opening sequence to a thriller, lasting more than three minutes. In the course of the time we were given to complete our coursework, I have provided planning and research; I deconstructed three existing movies with opening sequences with the genre of a thriller which featured the same codes and conventions as mine. I also looked at the target audiences, representations and institutions in these films therefore I could get an idea of what attracted audiences from the beginning of an opening sequence. I also looked at practice research; how constructing a film is created in the real world. Lastly, I looked at audience research, which consisted of a questionnaire of ten participants, with an analysis of the answers to why they had said what they'd said. This gave me an outlook of what my target audience was looking for and what mostly appealed to their wants and needs. After completing my research, I started to plan my idea of how the story was going to be laid out. I did a character profile therefore it is clear which person was portraying this particular character and why, a basic outline of the story, a storyboard because it's a graphical representation of the camera shots used in a film sequenced together to create a narrative flow and last of all I took pictures of where I had planned to shoot my film to show why I chose those particular places.

Planning the production

Planning my pre-production stage, I took into consideration what my audience was looking for and the research I found while deconstructing my chosen films. I wanted my film to have a very dramatic opening sequence as seen in many thriller opening sequences to determine whether or not the film would be worth watching. I wanted to create an atmosphere as though nothing is or will happen, but it slowly builds up to present to the audience that something bad is going to happen any minute. So I wanted to use the equilibrium, disruption, and resolution method in the sense that I could tell this small narrative in the opening sequence. I did this by wanting to explore each of the characters personalities by shooting a couple of scenes where once the audience have grasped onto what their being shown then they're delivered to the next scene. This was to be done by showing one character, what they were doing at that moment in time and also explore what environment they are in, and then move to the next scene of another character to see what they were doing, before delivering the dramatic end of the opening sequence. Then bring in a sense of obsession between the character that wants revenge for things his been put through, this would be the disruption, because the killer is obsessed with revenge on his victims. This particular idea was influenced by a film called 'Urban Legend' because of the way one of the main characters seeks revenge for the death of a beloved one this idea appealed to me because of the way the killer had power to portray two characters at once; a killer and a friend. However, I altered the idea by the killer being a killer and that's it. Lastly, the resolution would be the evil character getting his revenge by killing his opponents. When deconstructing the film 'Scream', I was impressed by the way the audience was going to see the main actress in that sequence (Drew Barrymore) once more in which the audience are brought to the status of the young teenage girl after she is viciously killed hanging from a tree. This idea influenced my planning, because I wanted to use a similar technique, in which the audiences are shown parts of the main characters body in my film, therefore this made the atmosphere seem like a deadly and dangerous environment.

While planning my production; I had decided that my filming would take place where I live, because at night it creates a very closed and dark atmosphere which I wanted. In this sense, I was creating an environment where the character had no where else to run. I took pictures of the areas in which I was going to shoot my scenes to show why I chose those particular surroundings. I chose

most of those places because they gave a generic feature which related to the genre of the film; something deadly happening at any moment. I also took pictures of the main characters featured in the opening sequence to also justify why I chose them and what they brought to my motion picture creating a character profile.

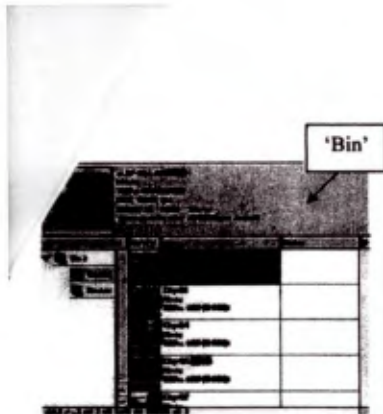
Another feature I did to make sure readers understood my planning was to create a storyboard and basic outline page, which informs people about what's happening in each shot and why I chose that particular shot.

Construction

In constructing my film in the production process, I started filming using a JVC digital video camera. This video camera had a number of additional accessories such as zooming in and out, sound, lighting, and full auto recording which allows you to record without using any special effects. I had used a tripod for several shots. When constructing my film, I had altered some of the ideas that I had in mind at the time of planning, which is shown in my storyboard because I thought it was irrelevant and not needed, or it was just too hard to construct with the equipment I had. However, most of the planning that I did, did follow the idea and did go with my storyboarding. Nevertheless, I did realise that I didn't do many of the shots that I had planned such as close ups, big close ups on the characters eyes because it was very hard with the lack of lighting that was in the scene as well as keeping in mind the idea of the atmosphere of a dark and deadly environment. I wasn't able to see characters facial expressions if I had done shots at close up position. It was also hard to make the camera tilt from a high angle to a low angle shot to create the tension between the character and the audience to build uneasiness. This was because at times the tripod was stiff, and it would stop when I was shooting scenes like that.



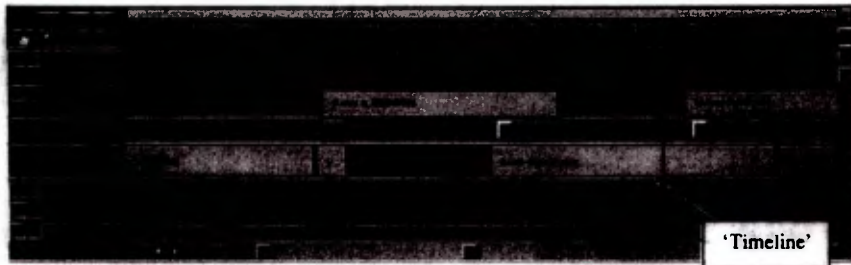
After filming, this led me to the post- production stage; I began inserting my film onto the computer, using Adobe Premier 6.5. Adobe Premier is a distinct piece of software which allowed me to edit my work professionally and to do a number of things to make my opening sequence as realistic as possible. I started by inserting my film onto the editing software and placing it into the software's 'bin'. This then led me to inserting it onto the video and audio timeline. This is where I had the opportunity to alter my film and cut out pieces that weren't needed. After I had finished cutting my film (the rough cut), it was time to insert my editing transitions which only included fades and cuts. This was done because this would build up the tension and create suspense in what was going to happen in the next shot. Once I had finished completing the editing transitions, to make sure they worked, I had to render my work by going to 'project' then 'render workarea', this allowed me to see that the fades actually worked in the places I had put them in.

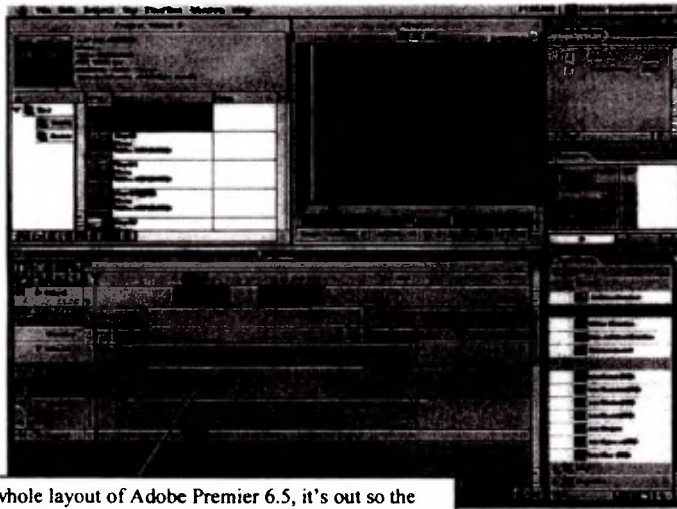


I needed to create titles for the film to generate a sense of realism. I used several titles throughout the opening sequence to identify the institutions-produced and distributed by, actors featured in the film and the actual name of the movie. I decided to use these titles in particular areas of the film therefore I was creating a sense of nervousness and to make the audience wonder what's going to happen next in the sequence. I did this because I thought it was a good way to keep the audience appealed and attracted to the film. Again I had to render my workarea; therefore you could see the actual titles and fades work. The last thing I had to do was insert

music, however, this was a long process because I had to really think about how this music work relate to my piece of film. I decided to work with the soundtrack from '28 days later' because when I played the tunes, I new specifically where to place that particular tune. This was done therefore it would slowly build up to the final closing stages of the sequence. I chose particular tunes from this soundtrack because it related with the sequence when it was being played through. I chose three particular tunes that are featured in my film, to create emphasis and power between the audience and the characters and the situations they are in.

As you will see below, this is an extract from Adobe Premier, and it's a picture of the timeline. This is where I did my constructing of the film; my film, the music and the transitions are inserted and altered to make the film look as professional and as realistic as possible. Above, is where I had inserted my film which is called the 'bin', this is where I broke the film into a suitable amount 'groups' so I could take each piece of film and work on it on the timeline.





This is the whole layout of Adobe Premier 6.5, it's out so the user is able to see and use everything they are altering.

Evaluation

Throughout this whole project I found that I met my original brief very closely. I wanted to keep the idea in mind, otherwise I would confuse myself and the idea I had planned. My film did come out very good and personally I'm very proud of it. My film would relate to other existing films because it slowly builds up the atmosphere between the actors involved and the audiences, using the fades in certain places and inserting titles; therefore it could install time and also make the audience think something terrible is going to happen any moment in particular scenes. However, I should have used more close ups in particular places, then audiences would have an idea of what characters were feeling and what's going to happen after a situation, but I did use several MCU and MS to show to the audience how the character was presented by the way they were standing and the expressions they gave off on their face. I also used various shots like LS and Medium Shot to show the environment they were in.

My product is very realistic because I have used the codes and conventions with the generic features to determine what genre it is immediately. I have also used titles to also show that it has been distributed and produced by real institutions. Looking at lighting, I have kept in mind the limit of lighting used therefore it created a certain atmosphere. For example, the shot of the main character hiding in the closet, I used certain light jus to capture her terrified facial expression before moving further into the closet. The lighting that I used was artificial and low key, because I used it in certain places which really needed lighting to capture exactly what was happening in each scene. However the night time darkness was natural and I only filmed at night to make it less difficult. The MES was set in today's society with characters dressed in what was represented in every day life. The way characters acted in the film was also another important feature because I wanted the audience to relate to the characters presented. In the sense that they were popular groups and then there was the less popular.

The set design was also very important because it had to present a house warming effect, to show that it was a regular house, and that middle class people lived there. I wanted to capture the environment to show to audiences that it's a safe secure environment which is clearly destroyed by a psycho maniac. After the house symbolises that is a dangerous and deadly a surrounding. Looking at sound, I used natural sounds of what was happening in each of the scenes (digetic) to create a sense of realism of how everything is slowly being destroyed as the killer goes around hunting for her. For example, the digetic sounds of the door being opened and creating a squeaky sound to create a build up of a uncomfortable environment. Yet, I did use non-digetic sounds by inserting music of my own, to make the atmosphere seem powerful and dominant and by making the volume of the tune grow louder and louder and the atmosphere seeming more dangerous and generating a sense of something about to happen at any time.

Overall, throughout this whole project I have learnt a number of things such as terminology on specific topics that relate to what I have done. I have learnt a number of things, and it's all been shown in my whole project to show what I am capable of doing.

4E Exemplar Evaluation E6 – Jamie, Year 13 Individual Project

Jamie's evaluation is extremely detailed and technically proficient. He embeds a good deal of images from his work in the evaluation and uses a wide range of technical vocabulary. He also shifts quite easily between the subjective language of ownership and the objective language of criticality.

Evaluation

For my Advanced Practical Production, I decided to carry out the cross-media package. Included in this package was a live performance video of a band, a video interview of a band member and a promotional tour poster. I felt this was the best package to choose, as last year for my AS practical production I chose the magazine brief, where I was able to create print based products. Seeing as I have a keen interest in music and live performance videos prior to this project, I think it was a good option to choose as I was enthusiastic and motivated to make my project work.

My first step in the pre-production process was to research similar products in the fields in which I was planning to produce myself. My first product in the brief was a live performance video. Therefore, with prior knowledge to the institutions involved in these mediums, I visited the website www.punkrockvids.com and watched a few videos which I felt could offer some inspiration to my own product. I chose this website to analyse videos, as they are the progenitor of the live performance videos in the alternative music scene. The first video, which I believed to hold good ideas, was a video of 'Comeback Kid' performing 'Wake the Dead'. When deconstructing this product, I found that there were certain elements, which I wanted to emulate in my video. For example, in my annotations I have commented on the way the camera focuses on the backup singer in a close-up shot when they are singing; it's a simple method, but it clearly shows that this person is singing. I wanted to include these close ups to break up the main focus on the lead singer. This video also made me realise that a good product would include crowd participation, to make the passive audience who are watching it, feel as if they are in the crowd themselves. My qualitative data that was returned, informed me that some people tend to watch live performance videos to see whether they deem the band worthy enough to actually go one of their shows. The next video I analysed prompted the same factors, which I wanted to include in my video. This video of 'Silverstein' performing 'Smile in Your Sleep', had the same basic video structure as my previous product did. This video used a lot of footage taken from the rear of the venue, which gave the audience a sense of crowd participation as you could clearly see the crowd jumping around and crowd surfing. Additional medium close ups and close ups of the band that I have included in my analysis simply show the band performing. However, this makes the audience feel as if they are closer to the band at the show than they actually are. My final live video analysis was of a band called 'Fear Before the March of Flames', performing a song as of then untitled new song. I found that two of the shots that this video presented to me were very unique in their style and angle. Firstly, a simple close up of the guitarist singing a line of backing vocals portrays a dark background, with a bright light illuminating his face. I found this to be very effective, as in the minimal light present at shows, the cameraman has captured the light in the shot perfectly to deliver an eerie presence about that part of the song. The second unique shot that I spotted, was captured from stage level, as the lead singer knelt down and sprawled himself across the stage. The camera, in a close up position, manages to portray the energy that the lead singer was putting into his live performance. As one of the main objectives of a live performance video is to entertain the audience, and see whether they are worth going to see, this type of shot can be very effective in proving so.

The second product I intended to create was a video interview with a member of a band. When researching other video interviews, I came across a Yahoo! interview with a band called 'Saosin'. Instantly, I recognised that this did not follow the conventional methods of a video interview, and so, I decided to analyse it. The first major difference in this interview, is that it is held with the band as a unit, unlike the typical one or two members. Another significant unorthodox difference was that the surroundings were not music related. Conventionally, an interview that takes place with band members happens at the venue pre-show or post-show. This is because it sets the band in a familiar setting and therefore, the audience can directly relate to it. I then analysed two interviews that 'Punkrockvids' had carried out in the last two years. The first one I chose to deconstruct was a band called 'Silverstein'. The formula is simple, however, it presents itself as a very informative and professional piece of promotional material. The interview starts off with the two band member introducing themselves to the

audience followed by a set of title screens displaying the questions, which were being asked. After analysing this interview, I wanted to take away tips on how to inform and entertain the audience at the same time. I feel I could do this by having serious questions about that band, yet asking them in an informal manner, which might draw a humorous response from the band members. At the end of this interview, there is a small bumper with the institutional information on it which tells the audience where to find this interview and who created it. It is therefore vital that institutional information is included, so that others cannot plagiarise the work and pass it off as their own. The last interview I deconstructed is with a band called Alexisonfire. This holds similar conceptual similarities with the Silverstein interview. However, this interview also includes live footage at the start of the video and also uses parts as filler footage between questions. I felt I could use this method, however, it would involve filming another band, which could potentially cause many more problems than necessary.

To complete my package, I decided to create a tour poster, which promotes a headline band and support acts, when they tour across a country. This is the type of poster that PR companies send to venues to put outside, to promote the show coming to the audience's local area. Therefore, I instantly knew that the poster had to be eye catching and could alert the target audience immediately. My similar products resemble that of which I wanted to emulate. The first poster I chose to analyse had the official band logos on it. I felt this was a key element to a tour poster, as the audience could immediately identify the bands through a simple visual indexical signifier. The next poster I deconstructed had connotative imagery as its main graphic, which I felt was important to include. This is because, again, the audience can immediately identify that the poster is about music. The other element which I wanted to draw from this poster, was the fact that it has all the tour dates listed out underneath the main graphic, complete with city, state, venue and date of each show. The final poster had a large amount of institutional information, such as sponsors, record label logo, websites and other logos on the poster, which were important. However, on my poster, I only intended to use the most relevant logos otherwise it would be clustered and could potentially lose the interest of the audience.

There were organisational problems when it came to liaising with the venue about any restrictions on filming. Seeing as we planned to film in Brixton Academy, a very large Carling venue, the general manager told us that there would be a charge of what is known as a facility fee. This came to be £250. Between a 5-man crew, it was just £50 each.

For my shooting of the band, I knew HDV cameras would be needed to capture the essence of a large venue, and to maintain a good quality video. For this, we simply hired 2 Sony A1's which I intended to place with cameraman on opposite ends of the stage to grasp shots I had planned in shots 3, 7, 15, 16 and 18. I also knew I would be able to utilise the press area at the front of the stage to my advantage, to gain low angle, close up and tracking shots that I had planned in shots 5, 8, 10, 14 and 17. For this, I hired a Sony Z1. A main deciding factor in hiring these cameras was the fact that they perform extraordinarily well in low light conditions. However, I also wanted to have shots that just focused on the drummer and shots from behind the stage, concentrating on the crowd and the band's participation with the crowd. Although I knew that the venue is large, and therefore audience interaction is hard, I wanted to test whether this could still come about. I already owned 2 handheld JVC camcorders, which I used for the shoot. One camera was handheld which captured the shots I planned in shot 6 and another I set up on a tripod illustrated in shot 4. I had never used this type of shot before, as the camera peered through the drums from stage side, to capture a low angle & medium close up view of the drummer. I felt this was quite unique, and I think the way I have incorporated it into my final product works very well. During my planning, I also knew that sound quality could have been an issue. Seeing as Brixton Academy is a large auditorium-esque type building, as displayed in my location shots, extracting the sound from what a camera took may not be sufficient. This is because a large auditorium could produce a lot of echo, which would make it extremely hard to sync when editing. Therefore, I endeavoured to find either a minidisk player or some other form of recording device to take a live feed directly from the sound desk. A friend of mine was able to come to the shooting with us to record the sound with a Roland portable sound desk. With a simple input into the sound desk, a recording was easy to take.

Whilst editing my footage in Sony Vegas, I did not come across major problems, which affected my progress. I found the program relatively simple to breakdown in terms of functions. The trimmer and timeline tools were good to use, as the keyboard could be used for most functions. Therefore, no faults were made with the syncing could be made

I chose to perform my video interview with a man named Chris Dudley from the band Underoath. I did not find it hard to organise this interview, as the band were playing the same show at Saosin were, so all I had to do was ask him. During my planning for the shoot, I drew up a rough set of questions, which I would ask each band, providing I interviewed one of them. I felt that for my questions to be deemed professionally, they would need to hold verisimilitude and represent questions that are used in the industry nowadays. My product research for the Alexisonfire and Silverstein interviews displays the methods and conventions, which that company uses frequently. Initially, the band or band members introduce themselves to the audience. I have done this to make the audience feel as if they are being spoken to and therefore, in close proximity to the band. This is also a bonus for the institution that performed the interview, as the video is being endorsed and in turn will make audiences more receptive to it. I have also executed this method. This can be seen at time codes 0:00 to 0:06 in my video interview.



Next, the questions being asked are on title screens with the bands answers following. As soon as the first title screen in my video interview appears, an Underoath song plays at full blast to catch the audience's ear, and to make sure they are paying attention. The intertextual reference between the song and the band member being interviewed engages the audience to a further extent. However, again, I did not want to execute all the typical codes and conventions of a video interview. Therefore, I set up 3 cameras to shoot the interview. But, they were not static in their motion. I asked the cameramen to use slow zooms to get a range of shots varying between extreme close up and medium close ups. The only substantial problems I had when setting up and performing this interview were lighting, sound and pedestrians. Lighting issues were relatively quickly resolved as I found optimum positions to place the cameras where light wasn't going to cast shadows. However, in a couple of shots in my final product, the audience can still see the shadows of the microphone on the wall. Sound issues also occurred, but considering the room we had to interview in, there was not much I could do to reduce echo or ambience. In general, I feel the sound quality came out very well. Plus, any ambience or other feedback is drowned out by the mp3 track layered underneath the speech audio track. The final problem I encountered with performing this interview, were people on the tour walking around, packing equipment away and slamming doors. This was all picked up on the camera microphones, however, with audio mastering tools on Sony Vegas, I was able to reduce levels and raise others to effectively remove these aggravations.

When constructing my poster, I wanted to keep to my initial plan of simplicity as much as I could. In my product research, I explained the elements that I wanted to emulate in my won product, and I feel that I have accomplished this to a large extent. For example, I stated that I intended to have the official band logos at the top of the poster, to immediately catch the attention of the audience. As illustrated on my final product, I have done this. In large white letters, 'Saosin' stands out against the simple black background. I then stated that I needed to have iconic imagery relating to the headline band to be on the poster. This is an intertextual reference between the audience and band. This is another attempt for the audience to instantly recognise the image and be grasped towards the poster. The Fall Out Boy poster in my product research holds key institutional information, which I explained is important for any promotional material. All relevant sponsors and logos were applied, and therefore, on my poster in the bottom right hand corner there is the Capitol Records logo. This is to signify that any members of the press should contact this record label for any enquires.

As I had a prior familiarity with Photoshop and its functions, I found using the program very helpful when creating this poster with multiple layers.

When analysing my final product, I feel it has been constructed in the way that I planned. For example, the first 10 seconds of my live video, the audience witnesses the lead singer addressing the gig crowd. Even though the passive onlooker from home is not in the venue, he or she can feel involved as if they were. Shot 1 of my live video storyboards expresses my desire to have a long shot of the guitarist, with a zoom into a medium close up. After examining my final product again, I feel I have accomplished this to some extent. Seeing as bands are very unpredictable whilst performing, the shot I have captured is close enough to what I planned.

Whilst trying to somewhat conform to the typical codes and conventions of live music videos that I had explained in my planning stage, I also wanted to use other shots, which the audience may or may not have seen in a live music video before. An example of doing so is illustrated in shot 17 of my storyboards, where the lead singer walks towards the front of the stage with the camera situated in the press pit tracks with him. This can be seen at time-code 1:30 > 1:40 in my final product.



This shot acts as the crowd's eyes, as their gaze is following the lead singer across the stage. Therefore, it feels as if the audience are in the crowd watching the band. Another example of a unique shot I was trying to aim for was the medium close up drum shot, where the camera is peering through the drums. This can be seen at time code 1:15 > 1:18. I have also used a tilt in the shot seen at time code 1:01 > 1:04. This is used where the guitarist is in an action pose. The purpose of the shot is to create dramatic effect.



All of the low angle shots I have used in the video are shot from the press pit, where filmers and photographers go to get the best shots. Therefore, where I have taken shots like this and put them into my final product, it makes the audience feel like they are watching the band from the crowd, and not on their iPod or computer. Shots such as in time codes 1:18 > 1:20 and 1:49 > 1:53 evidently prove this.



As I have explained in my product research across all mediums, institutional information is vital to include as a bumper or in title screens. I have done this, so that another person cannot pass it off as his or her own piece of work. At time code 0:06 > 0:12 and 2:49 > 2:55 I have attached title screens with band name, song name, venue it was shot at, date, record label and the company name who produced it.



I feel that my final products have accomplished its goal in reaching the target audience I specified, as I have crafted it in a way that the consumer will want to watch over and over again. My psychographic profile of my target audience stated that the respondents led an active gig-going life, and therefore, would be more receptive to live videos. By editing the video with fast cut shots and lots of movement, I feel the target audience would want to watch it again. If this happens, then the band is successfully being promoted. Seeing as my live video has followed some codes and conventions of typical live videos, I think it has grasped viewers from websites such as Punkrockvids, who as I explained, are the progenitor of Internet distributed live music videos. However, I tried to make my live video original by using other types of shots such as tracking, panning, zoom and tilt, which do not usually occur in live music videos. With this originality I hope I encapsulated my intended target audience.

In regards to my video interview, I stuck to the primary codes and conventions of other video interviews such as titled questions, accompanied by music and the band member not speaking to the camera. However, I have also shot the interview from 3 different angles which I hope the audience can appreciate and enjoy. The songs I have layered underneath the other audio and video tracks are popular Underoath songs and therefore, I hope the audience is also receptive to this.

With my promotional tour poster, I chose simplicity yet efficiency. All the conventions of a typical tour poster are included, in the vein of the target audience being drawn to the poster and then actually buying tickets for one of the shows. I have used large official band logos and iconic imagery, which I feel would attract the immediate attention of my target audience. Key institutional information is also included for press purposes.

After I had completed my final products, I held a focus group where I displayed all three pieces of promotional material. I encouraged qualitative feedback, which in turn I hoped would accompany my planning. In fact, I found that the unconventional characteristics that I used in my live video were greatly appreciated by the audience. For example, numerous respondents commented on the different type shots such as the tilts, pans and tracking shots that I executed. Other comments included were about the way I shot the band from across the stage, the focus on the lead signer and one of the most important elements, the superb sound quality. Therefore, I feel it was the correct decision to make to use a Roland sound desk to take a live feed from the soundboard at Brixton; otherwise there may have been distortion and echo on the audio track.

Comments on my video interview including the use of more than one angle to shoot the interview. As this is not a typical convention of a video interview, I feel it engaged the audience more so than other video interviews have done in the past.

When feeding back on my tour poster, a few of the respondents commented on the use of the iconic imagery of the graphic I used. I am happy with the response to this, as it is one of the main features alongside the headlining band's logo to attract attention.