

A PROPOSAL FOR THE INITIATION
OF A STUDENT FILM MAKING COURSE

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The student film making movement became apparent in February, 1967, when the first Young Filmmakers Conference ever held was organized by the National Film Study Project in New York City. Over 1,200 people jammed into a room designed for 600, and 740 of them were student film makers or students interested in making films. With only 90 days notice, the students submitted 120 films for consideration for showing. Famous directors, actors, and educators came to look, listen, and act as consultants. Most were amazed.¹

There is little need for amazement when one realizes that the upper middle class high school student watches some 15,000 hours of television before he graduates and sees about 500 movies in theaters.² In an age when sight and sound have become the basic modes of mass communication, young people have no desire to remain passive receivers. Film making has offered an avenue for entering into a working relationship with the environment. It is a liberating form of dialogue.

It is becoming increasingly evident that film and the motion picture industry have a great deal to offer humanistic education. Yet, film's vast potentiality is surpassed only by formal education's seeming

¹ Henry E. Putsch, "Student Filmmaking," Films Deliver, eds. Anthony Schillaci and John M. Culkin (New York: Citation Press, 1970), p. 189.

² Rodney E. Sheratsky, "Film: the Reality of Being," (Newark: New Jersey Association of Teachers of English, 1969), p. 10.

incapacity to deal with it in any original fashion or to benefit from its immense power. Unfortunately, many teachers regard film as a competitor.

Socrates objected very much to the emergence of the written word because he felt it would weaken man's power of memory. Now, certain educators are afraid that films will lure youth away from reading and writing and weaken their powers of verbal expression.

We live in a total-information culture, which is being increasingly dominated by the image, both moving and static. Intelligent living within such an environment calls for the development of habits of perception, analysis, judgment, and selectivity that are capable of processing the relentless input of visual data. What better way to teach such habits than through an active participation with the film medium? Our schools must agree that to be liberally educated is to be "cinemate" as well as literate.³

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to create a detailed description of a course in student film making, including a rationale, behavioral objectives, a course syllabus, recommendations for the purchase of basic equipment, and a list of teaching resources.

An Overview of the Report

Chapter 2: With the aid of various indices (e.g., Education Index, Research in Education) a survey was made of recent trends in film curricula. Professional education journals, professional media publications, research

³John M. Culkin, "Films Deliver," Films Deliver--Teaching Creatively With Film, eds. Anthony Schillaci and John M. Culkin, (New York: Citation Press, 1970), p. 19.