THE IMPACT OF HIGH SCHOOL INTRODUCTORY FILMMAKING ON STUDENTS'

SELF-CONFIDENCE AND FUTURE ASPIRATIONS IN FILMMAKING

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Abstract

This case study of four students and the teacher of an introductory-level film course at a Colorado Springs high school explores how filmmaking can impact the self-confidence and future aspirations of high school students. Observations of the filmmaking class occurred ten times over a three month period followed by interviews of each participant at the end of the observation period. The interview responses and observation summaries were coded in NVivo 12 for themes. The coding results suggest that the students experienced positive self-confidence towards filmmaking connected to the course, and were encouraged to continue learning film in school. The students also demonstrated authentic interest and enjoyment in the class and its content. In terms of patterns that distinguished the participant responses, the two male-identifying students,particularly the one male student of color, did not demonstrate wanting to pursue filmmaking on any professional level after high school; by contrast, the two female-identifying students reported feeling much more determined to pursue filmmaking on a professional level. These distinctions are explained by the combination of societal norms and pressures as to what a career should be, as well as by a lack of information by the students on how filmmaking skill sets can provide professional opportunities in the future. Suggestions are made on how to curate a class environment where *all* students are engaged, encouraged, and are aware of how their voice and their skillset can be impactful at a professional level.

Keywords: filmmaking, self-confidence, future aspirations

The Impact of Teaching High School Introductory Filmmaking on Students

Self-Confidence and Future Aspiration in Filmmaking

As a discipline and an art form, filmmaking can provide young adults with a voice for storytelling and a medium to tell those stories in any way they can imagine. In the context of the classroom, filmmaking has the advantage of being a largely culturally responsive practice: It provides students with the ability to bring their outside experiences and perspectives into the classroom (Herrera, 2010). Depending on the assignments and the way the teacher encourages their students, filmmaking as a class has the potential to be a broadly inclusive space. Students of any background, race, gender, etc., can pick up their phone or use the filmmaking resources provided by their school and use it to tell a story. Filmmaking is one of the most powerful tools today for broadcasting a message. The discipline in itself has already changed the lives of many. Filmmakers have the power to use the voice of the medium to create a platform and amplify messages that need to be heard. A powerful example of this is 'Welcome to Chechenya,' a documentary directed by David France that depicts the horrific true stories of kidnapping, torturing, and killing of LGBT people in the Republic of Chechnya ordered by the Chechen government and its leader Ramzan Kadyrov (France, 2020). While the film is extremely jarring and disturbing to watch, the anger and sadness left sitting in the viewers' minds is crucial to fueling a movement that will put an end to the reign of this horrific leader. Because of the film, there was a rapid response to helping victims evacuate, receive treatment, amplify international outcry, and hold those in power responsible. The discipline, in theory, can provide ALL people with a voice–which is why filmmaking in schools has the potential to be so powerful. Providing students with inspiration, knowledge, experience, and access provides them with the tools and belief that they have the capability to change the world.

Literature Review

Filmmaking promotes fundamental pedagogy

Filmmaking, as both a discipline taught in schools and a tool in the classroom, supports many highly acclaimed pedagogical theories in education. Filmmaking is a critically responsive practice, as students bring their life experience into their classroom (Herrera, in Blum Ross, 2017). In his transformative work on Critical Pedagogy, Paulo Freire centers his pedagogical model around the achievement of the emancipation of the oppressed through the alignment between theory and practice (Freire, 1968). Freire's critical pedagogy is focused on the belief that teachers should challenge their students to examine power structures and patterns of inequality within the world they live in. This model of pedagogy allows students to think critically about their experiences and positionality in society; such a reflective model can be well-supported by filmmaking as an educational discipline. Student filmmakers are empowered to think about and reflect on their experiences or something they witness in their community and use their voice through film to share those stories and inspire action. The creative mind of the maker is central to filmmaking as a practice–in a classroom setting this translates to a learner-centered approach, much as those we see in sociocultural models of teaching (Goodman, 2013). Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development–a key idea in sociocultural pedagogy–consists of two components: the students' potential development and the role of interaction with others. With the use of scaffolding, learners complete small manageable steps in order to reach their goals. As students grow within this zone of proximal development, they become more confident in practicing new tasks, reinforced by the social support around them. Filmmaking as a practice allows students to use what they know and create something new while using important collaboration and leadership skills. As a practice in an academic setting, filmmaking dismantles the common structures that keep students from thinking critically and creatively. As an example of

practice-based learning (Dewey, in de la Garza, 2013), filmmaking allows students to engage in hands-on work, learning as they go and facing problems as they arise. The discipline supports the work of important educational pedagogists, allowing the classroom to create independently thinking minds, prepared and motivated to tackle the problems that surround them outside of the classroom.

Media Literacy

Goodman defines media literacy as practices that allow people to access, critically evaluate, and create or manipulate media (2003). While its roots go back to the 1950s, media literacy is more crucial today than ever before. In their 2014 work, Moore and Hobbes explore the youth media movement and the evolution of film and media practices since their inception. In it, they show how with the accessibility of new equipment and technology, youth media now holds a unique position as "neither professional nor intentionally experimental… (it) exists in a nebulous space between professional and amateur discourse communities" (2014). As Pannoni describes in her article about a high school film festival, media literacy is essential for high school students currently learning how information is shared in multiple different formats (Pannoni, 2017). Throughout the 20th-century, teachers have learned how to make use of media in the classroom in many different ways as new technology has inspired creative pedagogical approaches to both play and learning (for example, as the objects of study, tools of expression, and tools of communication). The increased access to film equipment in the last twenty years has sparked the growth of media literacy, whereby it has expanded beyond simply the watching and critiquing of media in core courses to the development of a more hands-on media literacy. Access to film equipment and to filmmaking courses has allowed students the next level of fluency when it comes to media-literacy. The hands-on aspect of filmmaking allows students to use critical

thinking and analytic skills they have gained through watching digital media and put those skills into creation and action. Today, most students have the access (both in and outside the classroom) to create a digital story using the phone in their pockets. Storytelling is becoming more and more accessible: students just need to learn the basic skills and feel empowered to use them. Goodman (2013) discusses how images and text collectively convey particular messages in a seemingly objective fashion that can empower youth. He believes that this development and the increase in access to the production aspect of media literacy is essential. "The power of technology is unleashed when students can use it in their own hands as authors of their own work and use it for critical inquiry, self-reflection, and creative expression" (as quoted in Hobbs, 1998, p. 20). Creating and producing is ultimately what turns that first level of literacy into practice. Practice is the critical step that allows students to fully comprehend the full picture of media in today's world. By creating a digital story, students can use what they've learned from critiquing and analyzing media and put it into action. Through this process, students can understand both sides of digital media today–the perspectives of both the creator and the viewer.

Educators and filmmakers are generating new opportunities for both teachers and students every day–helping students reach the point of fluency in understanding media use. While media education in the US has a much shorter history than in countries such as the United Kingdom, resources for teachers are nonetheless becoming increasingly abundant. Brunner and Tally (1999) published "The New Media Literacy Handbook: An Educator's Guide to Bringing New Media into the Classroom", designed to help teachers develop their own visual literacy skills and reflect on their experiences with media in order to integrate it into the classroom and develop evaluation criteria for media products. Teacher resources and support are also available through professional development conferences such as the annual National Association for Media

Literacy Education (NAMLE) conference held annually, which works to give video production teachers an opportunity to improve their curriculum as well as provides teachers of any discipline the opportunity to learn how to include film and other forms of media in their courses to elevate their lessons.

In addition to professional development, there are a growing number of media education opportunities (and collaborations) outside the confines of the classroom. Hobbs (2016) studied the success of a PBS extracurricular program targeted at middle and high school students. The PBS News Hour Student Reporting Labs is a program that connects middle and high school students to local PBS stations and news professionals in their local communities. Through this connection, they create publishable news stories on critical issues from a youth perspective, an excellent example of a program that boosts authentic media literacy. Through a problem-based learning model, students learn how to read information and investigate important topics as they build their media literacy. The program works to help students gain an accurate perspective into the reality of news and the creation of news stories. An evaluation study of this program found greater student collaboration and teamwork competencies, including curiosity, the ability to give and receive feedback, and an increase in students' confidence in self-expression and advocacy (Hobbs, 2016). While the discipline of filmmaking as a high school course is the focus of this paper, it is important to understand that film and filmmaking are tools that can benefit any academic subject. For example, Martin, Davis and Sandretto describe how engaging teaching practices, including filmmaking, are the best ways to encourage students to stay in science; "mobile filmmaking improves engagement; the storytelling process while producing films "require(s) students to gather, interpret and reproduce information" (2018). Norton and Hathaway argue that video production should be viewed as an instructional strategy to support

content learning and, as such, is an integral part of K-12 practice (2010). Whether applied as a tool or an object of study, media literacy is essential to any classroom both on the teaching and learning sides. Fostering classrooms of universal media literacy only promotes the positive outcomes film and media are capable of providing.

Media as a Means of Enhancing the Core Curriculum and the challenges that come with it (some teachers love some teachers hate)

While film production classes offer students a unique opportunity to fine-tune skills and tell a story, which can empower and bolster confidence, these skills can be widely beneficial in the core curriculum as well. The British Educational Communication Agency (Becta) commissioned a study of a Digital Video Pilot Scheme, a project conducted in the UK in 2001-02 involving 50 schools across the country to assess the impact on digital video technology on students' engagement and behaviors. This evaluation found that the integration of digital media can promote and develop a range of learning styles and engage a wider range of students that traditional methods don't necessarily reach (Reid, Parker, Burn, 2002). Sweeder corroborates these findings with his research on a graduate course that trained teachers to use digital video in their classrooms, reporting that the teachers found that video projects helped them "more fully differentiate their instruction and assessment. Videos are by their very nature multimodal; thus, such projects help to meet the needs of visual and auditory learners." (2007).

However, because technology is so prominent in everyone's lives, especially today's youth, there are drawbacks that keep teachers from wanting to include digital media in their classes. Many teachers resist the inclusion of media because they fear the potential harm technology can cause–from social media to the impacts of screen time on mental and physical health. Because

media education/literacy in the US is still at a relatively early stage of development, it is often still seen as a protective measure against 'harmful' media messages. Banaji, Buckingham, Carr, and Burn (2004) point out how many teachers fear the inclusion of experiential media education because they do not want to bring unnecessary attention to popular culture in school curricula. Yet, popular culture is where most students live; there is a way to use media and popular culture to advance curricula. Becta, in their report, provides helpful recommendations for teachers, including the need for proper knowledge and training in the language of media for teachers before it can be integrated into the curriculum. Goodman (1996) states, "The power of technology is unleashed when students can use it in their own hands as authors of their own work and use it for critical inquiry, self-reflection, and creative expression" (as quoted in Hobbs, 1998, p. 20). Video production can and should be linked to the core curriculum, therefore, allowing it to become an instructional strategy that reaches more students. While controversial, technology is not going away. In fact every day, it's changing our lives more and more, so teachers should embrace it rather than hide from it, learn it, and utilize it to their advantage for the benefit of their students.

Encouraging leadership, collaboration, communication, creativity and empowerment (an opportunity for the counter narrative)

Media literacy, when achieved thoroughly, has the ability to tremendously empower young people as well as enhance their creativity. Learning how to critically watch and understand the media's message(s) develops a student's mind into the mode of production. And ideally, it provides them with the tools to produce a counter narrative, which is essential to a healthy classroom environment. Stanton, Hall and DeCrane describe a case study focusing on two projects with rural indigenous communities where student-led research and filmmaking were

used as teaching pedagogy. This storytelling required active collaboration between the storytellers and those hearing the stories - and both groups "expressed a belief that filmmaking is a form of living oral history" (2020). Filmmaking holds the potential to provide the platform and the tools for marginalized communities to tell their stories and speak their truth, but Goodman argues that all adolescents (to a degree) would benefit from that opportunity as well. He identifies the teenage years, for many kids, as a time of defiance and rebellion and points out that this journey can be especially grueling for lower income students. He identifies two essential types of authority that come into play: the traditional systems (school, police, courts, etc.), and the new institutions of mass media culture (music, fashion, television, advertising), and claims that both act as mechanisms of social control that work to silence them. Media literacy, he argues, would allow teens to "speak out and represent themselves" (2003). In looking at an international research project on the use of video for intercultural youth communication, Buckingham and Fishkeller extoll the value of the medium in their closing recommendation: "In a globalized, media-saturated, and deeply complex world, helping all youths express themselves and to understand others, using all available technologies and strategies, is a goal that is not only desirable but necessary" (2003).

Bonnet (2017) also describes the huge benefits of using filmmaking in the classroom, arguing that the medium promotes young people's creativity as well as communication and teamwork. The roles in a filmmaking environment demonstrate this well; there is the director - utilizing leadership and decision making skills; and the camera-person, fine-tuning their listening skills. Both roles work together to creatively connect a vision to a reality. Hobbs and Friesem discuss how the popularity of remix culture has led to the phenomenon of people creating videos that

explicitly and intentionally imitate or copy others' original work. While remix culture may not sound organically creative, there is valid educational value to the concept. The production of remake videos enhances media literacy competencies by allowing young filmmakers the means to develop creative skills through strategically imitating another's work. The emphasis on practice inherent in filmmaking is in itself a valuable tool. Arminda de la Garza (2013) argues that practice-oriented education promotes communication skills and exists as a laboratory for experimentation where students can take the codes and conventions of filmmaking and deconstruct them when editing, allowing them to discover and develop a new sense of creativity. "Practice-oriented film education offers a means of enriching children's lives through aesthetic experiences and of promoting more integrated communities at the local level, while also raising them in awareness of what may be called a cosmopolitan experience of childhood." (De la Garza,2013). The confidence that can emerge from a hands-on filmmaking experience is widely beneficial in the way that it allows students the chance to express themselves and their thoughts as a motivation for learning. Furthermore, Hofer and Swan (2005) provide research that points to how student-generated videos promote high levels of motivation and engagement, promote the student's voice and the confidence in self-expression of that voice, promote student creativity, and work to accommodate students of different learning styles and ability levels. The opportunity to create a film offers students a tremendous amount of growth that will not only see benefits in the classroom but in the students' daily life and self-perception as well.

The literature directly identifies the many ways incorporating film and filmmaking into high school classrooms can have wide-spanning benefits. However, film programs are not offered in all public high schools; many public high schools in the United States have few options outside of the core curriculum. This study explores the benefits filmmaking can provide

(as discussed above) for high school students. Through a qualitative study on a high school introductory level film class, this study explores whether filmmaking is as subjectively valuable to high school learners as experts in the field contend. Through this study, the following research questions will be explored:

1. How does filmmaking promote self-confidence and future creative aspiration in high school students?
2. How does student positionality impact interest in the discipline of filmmaking?
3. Why do students choose to take Palmer High School's filmmaking class, and who are those students?
4. What motivates students in the course and what presents challenges, impacting their experience with the class and with filmmaking as a broader concept?

Methods

I conducted a study on a high school introductory level film course to see how the course impacts students. I collected data in two steps - first, through observations and then through four student interviews and one teacher interview occurring at the end of the observation period. Over a three-month period from the end of September 2021 to early December 2021, I observed participants on a weekly basis (totaling ten observations throughout the time period).

Author positionality. As a white 22-year-old woman from a small town in southern Maine, my experience in a predominantly white, middle-class town often left me feeling isolated from the rest of the world. Watching films created by people from all over the world inspired me to leave my small town after graduating high school and pick up a camera to document what I was experiencing in my own life. My high school did not offer any film courses, so my passion

for film was always a focus confined to outside of school. Because I never had the experience of taking a film class in high school, I was especially interested in studying the effects of a high school film course on the students who take one.

Participants

Palmer High School, part of Colorado Springs' District 11, is located in downtown Colorado Springs. Because of the school's central and urban location, its demographics include just over 50% enrollment of students from racial minority groups with a total of 1,622 students enrolled (US News, 2019). The school's urban location, student diversity, strong digital media department, and compelling film program all made it a very interesting choice when considering the focal group of this study. Due to these student demographics as well as the school's urban setting- in a location where students of a variety of financial backgrounds live in the school district, Palmer sits as an example of many urban American high schools.

The Introduction to Filmmaking course is offered as an arts elective for any students interested in film and filmmaking. All students in District 11 are required to take 11 elective courses-those courses could be in film, physical arts, theater, among others. Students in Palmer's introductory filmmaking course at the time of my observations were all between the ages 15 and 17, freshman through juniors. These students had chosen to take this course out of the elective options they were provided. The course has 15 students in it, taught by one teacher. After a few observations and with insight from the teacher of the course, I chose four students to interview at the end of the observation period. These four students were chosen based on the criteria that they had different at home/background experiences from one another. In this group, there were two

female-identifying students and two-male identifying students. Both female-identifying students were 15 years old and white–one identified as middle class while the other identified as lower middle class. One male-identifying student was 14 and identified as African-American. The other male-identifying student was 16 and identified as white. The teacher of the class was 37 years old and identified as female, white, and middle class. After three observations and multiple conversations with the teacher, I selected the four students. For the rest of the observation period, I gave more explicit and intentional focus to these four students by labeling them as student one, two, three, and four in my notes and throughout observations, noting how they reacted to different things happening in class (ex. how they seemed engaged in their own work, how they reacted to an example being shown, etc.). During the observation period, the students were unaware of who was ultimately going to be interviewed.

Procedure

In this study, I conducted both observations and interviews to collect data. Observations occurred 10 times over a three month period- each observation lasting approximately 40 minutes (the length of one class period). I collected observations using time-stamped field notes which described the actions, body languages, and words of the teacher and students in the class as well as noted questions, comments, and takeaways based on those observed behaviors (see Appendix A). After each observation session, I wrote up a summary of the session. After I completed 10 observation days, I conducted interviews to explore how observed actions and behaviors could be interpreted by the students as well as to gain insight into how students feel about the course, the teacher, and filmmaking in general at this half way point in the year. The goal of the interviews was to gain self-reported data on how the class is impacting its students. I formulated interview questions after analyzing the observation summaries and field notes taken throughout

the observation period. These questions focused on noticeable themes that came up in observations as well as touched on the crucial elements of the research question. The questions focused on future interest/aspiration in film and the promotion of self confidence through filmmaking, as well as experiences in class (positive experiences and challenges), and how positionality/lack of representation in the field affects how the students perceive their role as a filmmaker (see Appendix B for questions). I asked the teacher a different set of questions than the students; her questions focused on matching the students' questions in order to gain insight from the teacher's perspective. For example, I asked students about their future aspirations in film (if they had any) and asked the teacher if she thought students in her class had future aspirations (see Appendix B for questions). All interviews were audio-recorded. I then transcribed those audio recordings and placed them into Nvivo along with the observation summaries and field notes. Once all the data was placed into Nvivo, I began the process of coding common themes.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the data by organizing each of the five interviews, transcribing those interviews, and then importing them into an NVivo 12 project along with the daily summaries of my observation notes. In order to code, I grouped the interview responses and observation summaries into essential themes (ex. Feelings about class/projects, feelings about filmmaking, self-confidence in filmmaking).These themes were generated as I looked over the data.They were concepts that related to my core research question as well as concepts that emerged as I began to sift through the data. By grouping data into different themes it became clear which responses/actions were common among the students and how those matched with the interview responses/actions of the teacher.

After I completed this initial coding, I conducted matrix query tests and cross-tabulation tests using the nodes and cases generated to further reveal commonalities across responses and observed actions. That is, I used the qualitative analysis software to compare instances where students and teachers mentioned feelings about class and filmmaking more generally.

Findings

Throughout the coding process, I created 36 different codes, grouped into five categories. These 36 codes were created after studying the interview questions along with the responses and determining themes across the interview data. Through this process I began to pull out themes that existed in responses as well as related back to my core research questions. Within these five categories, there were 1-5 secondary codes. I then divided those up into 15 tertiary codes, and in some cases quaternary and quinary to ultimately generate a total of 36 codes (see Appendix C for full coding method used). For example one of the five categories I created was feelings. The category of feelings was then split into 5 sub-categories- feelings about class and projects, feelings about filmmaking, feelings about the teacher, feelings about teaching this class, and feelings about students' future aspirations in film. Each of these 5 sub categories was then divided into two more sub categories- positive and negative. Positive and negative were the codes I used to explore students' feelings within each category. Once the coding was completed the data was organized by responses fitting into each of these categories. In Appendix C below, next to each of the final codes is a number displaying how often that code appeared in the data. For basic questions, the number of references is not relevant to the results as each interviewee had an answer to each of those questions.

I applied the results of these codes into matrix query tests and cross-tabulation tests to help draw

connections between interview responses. I ran matrix query tests to look at the following relationships and these were the results:

Student feelings about teacher, filmmaking, and class.

All students besides student 3 only had positive things to say about the teacher. Student 4 had three negative comments about the teacher. All students only had positive things to say about their feelings towards filmmaking in general. All students had both positive and negative things to say about class and class projects–more positive things than negative things. The negative things were all about how class can only work in person; there is no take home aspect to class which makes it challenging to get work done efficiently. Also projects demand a lot of time and energy, which can sometimes feel overwhelming especially when it can only happen during class time.

Student and teacher feelings about class distractions.

Phone use, absences and tardiness were the only distractions mentioned by students and teachers. All interviewees mentioned absences and tardiness as the greatest distraction, one student talked a little about phones. Both students and teacher mentioned absences and tardiness as bothersome to the flow of class- one student said it wasn't a problem that directly affected her but mentioned it as a problem.

Student self-confidence around film, future interest, and representation.

All students expressed some positivity about their self-confidence in filmmaking but students 1 and 4 both expressed some doubt in their self-confidence. Student 1 did not seem super eager about a future involving filmmaking. He said he wanted to continue filmmaking at

Palmer next year but not much beyond that. Students 2,3,4 all are interested in further pursuing film in school; Students 3 and 4 both see themselves wanting to pursue film after high school. All students acknowledged lack of representation in the medium of film but were motivated by it rather than negatively affected by it.

I ran one cross-tabulation test on students' thoughts around filmmaking and representation, separating by race and gender. It showed that the African American student was less positive about filmmaking in general than other students, the female students were more interested in film careers than male students, and all students across race and gender were motivated, rather than hindered, by the lack of representation in filmmaking.

This section will focus on the explained answers to each of the four research questions in this study. I will do this by looking at the results of Nvivo 12 coding and at the tests conducted following coding, further elaborated through direct quotes from interviews and observation.

RQ 1: **How does filmmaking promote self-confidence and future creative aspirations in high school students?**

RQ 1 Results:

Students in this introductory-level film class felt strongly about the positive impacts the discipline has on their lives both academically and outside the classroom. In their interviews, students pointed out that filmmaking has strong effects on their self-confidence because of the creative nature of the discipline. Rather than operating off of benchmarks of achievement the way many classes are structured, they find that creating something and using their voice in a creative medium is massively empowering. Student 2, for instance, shared: "I think… going into

this class, you don't directly see how filmmaking can lead you to different branches of your life. But now, one semester in, and I can see that, this class can open up new pathways just as much as any other class". Finding voice through the medium of film has the ability to impact students to a high degree. Throughout class observations, the teacher provided the class with numerous example videos based on the project assignment they were working on. These example films were created by mostly students; students of different races, genders, and from all different parts of the nation and in some cases the world. Watching these films created by diverse student filmmakers helped students in this class learn about topics that they would otherwise never have known about. Student 3 said in her interview: "I think that's always the goal of a film, to spread a message. So I mean, it can really be about anything, it can make you feel something. And that's all up to the filmmaker."(Student 3). As this student points out, the filmmaker is in the driver's seat–they have the power to express a voice to elicit emotions that could inspire a new perspective.

Seen through observations and in interviews, the experience of storytelling, and then sharing their story with the class is a thrilling and motivating experience for students. Student 4 explained in her interview that it can be nerve-wracking to want to share your opinions in class out of fear of being judged or shut down but filmmaking makes that experience a positive one. "I think the way filmmaking has impacted me is, it's giving me confidence because it's like I'm showing my work. My films–they're kind of like my children in a way. And I'm showing them to a whole class of people that are doing the same as me. But I feel like before I would not have done that, and I'd get very self conscious and think, 'Oh, what if theirs is better than mine?' But I feel like everyone's learning in this class. So I think it's really cool (Student 4)." High school years are a time of self-discovery and often self-doubt. This student pointed out how filmmaking,

and this class specifically, provided an experience of self-confidence growth. Rather than fearing and shying away from sharing and using their voice, this student discovered that in this environment they are comfortable sharing and as a result, they feel strongly about themself and their work.

Coding results showed that self-confidence towards filmmaking was overall positive for students in the class. Two students had expressed some self-doubt in their confidence towards filmmaking, both indicating that they had not been provided with teaching experiences that prompted a growth mindset. One student expressed that she has been frustrated in the past by her inability to think creatively; she expressed in an interview "I am not a creative thinker". However that student went on to explain that even though she thinks she lacks creativity, filmmaking has become an outlet for her, helping her to nurture creativity she never thought she had. Another student expressed doubt, not with his current experiences in class but rather about a future in filmmaking. He said that he wanted to pursue a career in the medical field because it would provide more financial security and he thought it would be too difficult to "make it big" in filmmaking. As seen through this student's response to working with film in his future- many students aren't educated to understand the practical use of filmmaking within a career. Filmmaking skills are not only applicable in a Hollywood setting where "making it big" is the only way to success. Filmmaking today is used in so many different fields around us. It can be used as a tool in advertising and marketing, a tool for educators, a tool in medicine, etc. Students in high school are being prepared for their future and it is the responsibility of teachers to provide as many opportunities and exposures as possible to help students make informed, and ideally impassioned, decisions about their future.

RQ 1 Discussion:

When talking to students about a future involving filmmaking, all students demonstrated some interest in continuing filmmaking during their time at Palmer. All 4 interviewees said that they were interested in doing Terra Television, which is both a class and an extra-curricular program where students produce weekly videos that are shown to the entire school every few weeks. Introduction to Video Production (this class) is a prerequisite for TTV. The teacher reported that usually between 8 and 10 students choose to do TTV. Student 1 talked about potentially wanting to do TTV but expressed some hesitations due to the intensity of the workload since he will likely be also taking other challenging classes. In a casual conversation with student 1 during a class observation he said that his hesitation with TTV, in addition to the workload, is also having to show your work to the entire school. He said that he didn't know if he would want the whole school to see his work. Given the social tendencies of high schoolers it is not uncommon to fear the exposure of your work being put on display in front of your peers, but positive reinforcement and affirmation can bolster those feelings of doubt and vulnerability. By the end of the observation period, when interviews were conducted, student 1 seemed more confident about wanting to do TTV, demonstrating that the class positively affected his confidence in filmmaking and his interest in film in general. Students 2,3, and 4 all expressed positive interest in wanting to do TTV next year and in continuing to work on filmmaking throughout high school. Students 3 and 4 both expressed wanting to pursue filmmaking past just high school; they both described their interest in film as being self-defining and worth exploring beyond high school. Student 3 said in her interview "Oh yeah, I would love to pursue film as a career. It's a huge hobby, and I really enjoy doing it. The only thing I worry about is how realistic it would be. So, I'd have to think more long term" (Student 3). Student 2 and 4 also talked about how their love for filmmaking is a driving factor in how they envision their future. Student 4

reported in her interview that after high school she thinks "it would be a cool kind of career to do some kind of filming or directing" (Student 4). Student 2 felt that while a film career would be really fun, he doesn't necessarily see that as attainable as a career so he sees filmmaking in his future as more of a hobby for fun. While it is clear that all of the students are thoroughly enjoying their time in class and making films, most expressed some doubt about the stability and reality of pursuing a career in filmmaking. It would be unlikely that 100% of students in this introductory level course would leave the course with complete determination in pursuing a filmmaking career, but these results do point out that there is potential for improvement in exploring what a film career actually means. In the teacher's interview, she discussed how in the past she has provided interested students with different money-making opportunities outside the classroom. She has encouraged students who are really into filmmaking to use their skills to film weddings, or other events. She describes:

> So that's really inspiring - to know that there's multiple kids that I've taught, that this class just opened the door to. And so now they can go and keep pursuing what they want to pursue. Like one of them, I coached and I was like, 'Hey, can you film my wedding? You know, because I've seen your skills. I trust you enough. So, come and I'll pay you.' This, you know, was back in 2014. But I think just like, hey, showing that yes, this can make you money. And also just having that skill to be able to talk to people and getting that, I mean, that's not always easy when you're first starting in high school, just talking to people can be hard. So, working some of those career things; we work on some soft skills here. You know, whether you become a videographer, you can take these skills into college, into the workforce, wherever and say, ``I know how to talk to people, I know how to communicate'(Teacher).

Through interviewing the teacher it was evident that she does think about the future of these students. She is focused on building skills in her classroom that will translate well to the workforce. Students may not realize now how those skills could be useful later, but the teacher has intentionally curated her curriculum and teaching style to build confidence and a skill set that will help when it comes to a career later in life.

One thing that appears to be missing, or is a disconnect between the intentions of the teacher and what is being received by the students is that students are lacking a complete understanding of how the skills they are learning in this class could be useful as a career or in making money more generally. Filmmaking isn't about making a movie or being in Hollywood. The skills of storytelling through video and editing are beneficial today in so many areas. Knowing how to use a camera and edit clips can be useful in advertising and brand work, events, marketing, news, etc. There are so many ways a digital media skill set can be applicable in the workforce. In his research and work with youth, Goodman (2003) stresses the importance of this appreciation for 'media literacy'; not only in terms of the tangible skills attained but also for the value of critical thinking and the way this media literacy can connect youth to "more privileged forms of literacy". While this class does a great job of capturing students' interest in film, and building their confidence in the classroom and as filmmakers, it appears the barrier is students' inability to see the full picture of how these skills can be useful in the future. As the teacher points out, she has given unique opportunities to some students but what is likely more beneficial would be to expose students to the possibilities that filmmaking provides; to explicitly explore and go over these opportunities in the classroom. Once students have bought into the fulfillment and fun that filmmaking can provide, exploring money-making opportunities would be a great way to continue to promote their future aspirations in filmmaking.

RQ 2: How does student positionality impact interest in the discipline of filmmaking?

When discussing the effect of positionality on the students' interest in filmmaking it is important to understand the demographics of the four students interviewed. Student 1 is a 14 year old male identifying African-American. He describes his socio-economic status as middle class. Student 2 is a 16 year old male identifying white student. He describes his socio-economic status as upper-middle class. Student 3 is a 15 year old female identifying white student. She describes her socio-economic status as middle class. Student 4 is a 15 year old female identifying white student. She describes her socio-economic status as upper middle class. As mentioned in the discussion of research question 1, there are a few main takeaways about interest in filmmaking based on positionality.

RQ 2: Findings on Race

Student 1, the only African-American student interviewed, was the only student of the 4 to express a lack of interest in filmmaking past highschool. He reported that his focus after highschool was in the medical field because it would provide more financial security. Continuing to look at race as a factor, in the cross tabulation test (showing how feelings of filmmaking were divided by race and gender), it revealed that for negative comments about filmmaking, the African-American student was the only one to report those feelings. While this student showed interest in the class and expressed confidence in his completed films during his interview and even expressed interest in continuing to pursue filmmaking, during observations he was a student that continually was noted as being distracted by his phone. When he was actively working on filming or editing, he was focused on his projects but during down time, or editing time with his

group (when he wasn't the primary editor), he often spent time looking at/using his phone. This does suggest that it's possible that the class material or teaching methods/style wasn't reaching him the same way it was reaching the white students. It is possible that because the teacher hadn't spent a lot of time exploring African-American filmmakers, and possibly because he hadn't been made aware of the many different opportunities filmmaking can provide as a career, that it was difficult for him to fully relate to the content of the course. When teaching to a culturally diverse group of students it is essential that students feel that they can bring their outside experiences into the classroom; this is how they buy in and choose to care about their learning. It is possible that what may be happening here is that this student doesn't feel fully comfortable bringing those experiences into the classroom. He expressed fear in sharing his films with the entire school in his interview. The teacher provided the students with agency in choosing the topics they center their films on but a missing component in her teaching may be the element of creating a comfortable sharing environment for ALL students in the class.

RQ 2: Findings on Gender

Gender is another component where differences were seen in the four students observed and interviewed. The two female-identifying students were much more eager to potentially pursue a career in film than the two male-identifying students were. While the male students pointed out the fun in filmmaking, they both felt it wasn't 'realistic'. The distinction in interest based on gender is not noticeable within the classroom context but is only notable when thinking about future aspiration. It is possible that of the students interviewed, the students who were inspired to keep working with film in a more professional capacity in their future just happened to be women. The data did not provide any clear evidence to why the female-identifying students expressed more of an interest in filmmaking as a career than the male-identifying students did.

Socioeconomic status did not appear to play a role in affecting the interest of students in filmmaking. This is likely due to the fact that the work done in this class always happens in class, during class time. This eliminates the consideration of whether students have access to resources at home. All students in the class use the same set of resources for their films and are given the same time to work on their projects. This means students who have jobs after school aren't affected by the workload in the class. Some students pointed out that not being able to take work home was often frustrating when dealing with occasional absences but overall the format of the class appeared to eliminate the influence of socio-economic status on the work and the interest in filmmaking.

RQ 2 General Findings:

Even when keeping these distinctions by race and gender in mind, when directly asked about the lack of representation of people of color, different genders, etc all students reported that rather than being discouraged by a lack of representation, they were motivated by it. Student 1 said in his interview:

> It's kind of pretty exclusive. But, you know, if I were to get in a position like that, I wouldn't really care. And I would just go on about it. And if people want to say stuff about me, oh well, let it be. But I feel like, yeah, representation really does have to change. And I'm thinking maybe exposure to more different groups, because like right now, video production in the school is for the higher class areas. And I feel like, you know, people should have more exposure and have equal opportunity, because there's a lot of smart people who just don't have the opportunity to take classes like this."(Student 1).

This student points out that he "doesn't care" if people don't look like him - that would not stop him if he was in the position to make films. He brings up the point that the way we can change this lack of representation is by exposing more and more people to the art of filmmaking. Making access to this class or similar classes easier for any student and not just higher achieving students, opens the door for more diversity in the field and more voices being expressed out there in the world. Other students pointed out that the teacher showing example videos created by people of color and women was also a motivating factor in their interest in filmmaking. Hearing from students who have experienced things differently motivates the students to want to share their own stories. "We did that whole week where we watched the documentaries from the women's film festival. And it showed a lot of stories of people of color, and it was all produced by women. So I think there have been some elements where our teacher has incorporated diversity and it's been received really well."(Student 3).

RQ 3: Why do students choose to take Palmer High School's filmmaking class–and who are those students?

Students landed in Introduction to Video Production at Palmer for different reasons. Some were already interested in filmmaking while for others, the class served to fill an arts requirement and by process of elimination this course was selected. There are 15 students in the class but only four students were closely observed in this case study. Student 1 stated that he chose this class by process of elimination. He had taken some video production classes in middle school and needed to fill an elective requirement this year and because he knew he didn't want to do an art or music class, he landed on doing Intro to Video Production. Student 2 chose to take the class because his older brother had taken it with the same teacher and really enjoyed it so he felt encouraged to take the class. Student 3 has always been very passionate about filmmaking. She took another

production class with the same teacher the previous year and knew at the end of last year that she definitely wanted to take this course. Student 4 also took video classes in middle school and enjoyed them, and then got even more into filmmaking in the spring of 2020 during quarantine, so she knew she wanted to keep learning more about filmmaking. Each student came into the class for a different reason, with different previous experiences, yet all students found themselves overall having a positive experience with the course and its projects, even if they don't necessarily see themselves pursuing filmmaking after high school.

RQ 4: What motivates students in the course and what presents challenges, impacting their experience with the class and with filmmaking as a broader concept?

Students in this course are motivated and challenged by different aspects, which influences their relationship with the discipline of filmmaking in general. In their interviews, most students discussed how the agency their teacher provided them in choosing the topics of their films as well as the flexibility in using class time in the ways that they wanted when working on their films, made the class very engaging. Student 1 said "I really like the freedom in this class. Freedom is something that's kind of unwritten in education. Most of the time you know, you have a solid concrete assignment and with this class she just allows us a lot of freedom which helps us a lot and allows us to work with whoever we want and then she also gives us the time to brainstorm and stuff- that's really helpful."(Student 1). The format of the class provides the students with many opportunities to be creative and interpret prompts as they want.

RQ 4: Findings on Classroom Successes

When asked about their favorite project so far, the students were split on their responses. Two of the students said that the PSA project was their favorite, both mentioning how the project

allowed them to tackle a problem in their community and explore and expose that problem, using the voice of the film to inspire change in the minds of the viewers (their peers). The other two students said their favorite project was the music video project because of the independent aspect of it. The music video was a film project each student did on their own- and both students expressed that they loved creating something completely on their own where they had all the control and were in charge of all the decisions made. They both also mentioned how they enjoyed watching how their peers interpreted the project as well. Each student produced a very different music video. Based on observations, students also seemed to react well to the example films shown in class. A quote from an observation notes that "the students all seemed very engaged in the example videos- all students participated in the discussions after each video. The quieter students were called on by the teacher but all the students in the class had something to say. Students all seemed very focused on their films once given the time to work on them." (observation note). Students appeared to be motivated by seeing the work of other students bringing the same energy to their projects. Student 3 talked about being so inspired and motivated by her work in this class that "I'd come in here at lunch sometimes and just work on my editing. It gives me something to focus on and makes me proud of something I create." (Student 3). The tools that the students learn in the classroom - editing skills, cinematography skills, interview skills - all provide students with a skill set enabling them to creatively tell any story they want.

RQ 4: Findings on Classroom Challenges

Challenges presented in the class mostly circulate around absences and tardiness. Since the class is first period, there is never a full roster. At the start of class usually less than half of the students are in attendance. By half way through class usually ¾ of the class is there but there

was not one day observed that all the students in the class were in attendance. Absences and tardiness can set students back from getting their work done and can affect the students who are in class if they are working with a student who often isn't in class, but it was the teacher who seemed to express the most frustration with tardiness and absences. She said " I think absences are definitely the struggle when it's such an in person, hands on class. You don't have a lot of homework. So that is a struggle. And then the tardies. I teach a lot at the beginning of class and it's just really frustrating having to, "well hold on. I'm gonna hold off for a few minutes because there's four of you" and yeah, I'd like to have more people. So that's definitely been the tricky one in this particular class." (Teacher). The teacher has had to alter the way she conducts class because of the number of tardies and absences. In many cases, though, she doesn't blame the students. Many students don't have a ride to school until later into the morning, some students have siblings at other schools with the same starting time, so there is no way all the kids in those families will get to school on time. And she also suggested that some kids have things going on at home that keep them from coming in.

The bigger challenge for her is figuring out the reason why students aren't showing up. She has no way of finding out unless she talks to them directly and they feel comfortable sharing. During one observation session a student who hadn't shown up to numerous classes finally came to class on the day that one of the film projects was due. Obviously he hadn't completed much of the project, but rather than punishing him by making him submit what he had done and giving him a poor grade, she gave him an alternative project to work on, independently, that focused on the same skills that his peers were learning. It was clear that this student was not uninterested in filmmaking - he was very engaged in the project the teacher assigned to him, he just hadn't been in class.

The structure of class and how work is assigned and completed puts a heavy emphasis on in-person attendance. Student 3 talked about how absences affect work in the class, saying, "you have to really be in class to work on it. It gets difficult to catch up. And I don't really know how to work around that."(Student 3). While there are advantages to the way class time is utilized, it is also very challenging for students who miss even a day of class to catch up. When working with groups it's an easier solution because usually at least one member of a group will be in class. But when there are multiple absences, in some cases full groups were absent quite often and for those groups there's really no way to catch up. Student 4 talked a bit about tardiness in her interview as she mentioned that it was one of her greatest challenges with the class. She says "I have my brothers and it's hard to get to school on time, because we all have to be in three different places at the same time. Yeah, it's impossible. Really. Yeah. And so she does count me absent a lot because I get there after the 10 minute mark. And I mean, she's following the rules, but I just asked her to be a little bit lenient because I think that it is affecting my learning. When I come to school, I get so mad, and it's hard to control it. And they say 'we'll just call your parents'. And it doesn't work like that. I can't just interrupt them while they're working and be like, hey, I need you to excuse my absence. And it's just very difficult for me." (Student 4).

This student also speaks to the challenges that come with the rules of school and how they impact her performance in this class. While the teacher makes a very intentional effort to give students the greatest opportunities to learn even when they are showing up late or missing class, this student points out that it is still a challenge. Even the teacher mentioned in her interview how the rules of the school and the system used for tardiness and absence is very challenging; she never knows the reasons for those absences (what is being told to the office). She talked about how some students need/can benefit from the harsh rules while for others their

tardiness is out of their control. It appears in some cases she doesn't always read the situation accurately - which isn't necessarily her fault, but it certainly affects students' experience in the classroom.

Some of the students mentioned in their interviews how group assignments were another aspect of the class that they didn't enjoy. Student 4 said she wishes that "sometimes she would assign us groups outside of our work zone" (Student 4). The teacher allows students to choose their groups and what often happens is students just work with the people they are sitting with - usually friends. Certain pairings of students will both be absent frequently which makes it challenging for those groups of students to ever complete work on time. Additionally, students often are working with the same group again and again preventing them from the growth that can occur when collaborating with other perspectives. While the four students in this case study didn't have major problems with absences, many students in the class do and it is likely that for those students, they are not getting the same positive experiences and feelings towards filmmaking as their peers. Filmmaking, as seen in the positive experiences described by the four students in the case study, can promote self-confidence through the use and amplification of voice that can influence a future interest in the discipline. It is unfortunate that the students who are unable to show up to class regularly, may not receive the same experience.

Future Recommendations

As seen through the experience of the four students in this study, teaching film to high school students has wide spanning benefits. The class has positive effects on self confidence, mental health, and provides students with a specific skill set they can take with them after the class, whether it be for fun hobby projects or in a more professional setting. For teachers who are

looking to teach introductory level filmmaking, it is essential to give students the agency to choose topics that interest them and allow them the space to be creative and think outside the box. As seen in the findings of this study, the reason students in the class were able to feel such positive feelings towards the class and filmmaking in general was because of the way they were able to choose the topics they focused on in their films. The freedoms that the students had in choosing the story they wanted to tell and choosing how they wanted to tell it is what ultimately allowed these students to form such a positive relationship with the medium of film. Bonnet (2003) discusses the impact of filmmaking on creativity and leadership and those concepts are emphasized in the findings of this study. Through the process of developing a film concept and working together to actually bring that concept to life, students were inspired by their own ability to take their own ideas and bring them to fruition. Additionally, providing students with film examples that come from many different perspectives and people of different backgrounds is necessary to foster a culturally responsive classroom setting where all students are able to benefit and engage in their learning. Herrera (2010) points to culturally responsive teaching practices as essential in fostering a healthy classroom environment that allows all students to thrive. By providing students with examples of work that range across filmmakers from a variety of backgrounds, each telling a different story, students in the class could really seek inspiration and connect to the open-ended assignments of the class. Finally, as seen through the gaps of students' interest in future aspiration of filmmaking in this study, in order for students to receive a complete understanding of filmmaking as a discipline, teachers must promote the ways in which the skills learned as a filmmaker can be useful in a professional setting. Learning how to operate a camera, learning the fluency of editing softwares, and learning how to effectively use those tools to tell a story are skills that can make money. Especially in today's digital world, where

everything we do is through a screen, this kind of work is becoming more and more valuable and students should know that. Media literacy is one of the most powerful tools that education can provide today. There are many opportunities for high school students to take the passion that is birthed through an introductory class and continue to foster it. Teachers should make themselves aware of the opportunities that lie outside their classroom for their students. From NPR film contests and after school programs to, as the teacher in this study did, providing students the opportunity to film her wedding, etc , there are many opportunities for high school students to take their passion and utilize their skill set and continue to grow within the medium. If more research was to be done on this topic, it would be interesting to focus on the opportunities that exist outside of offered classes. This study points out that it is important for filmmaking teachers to really make their students aware of the opportunities that can arise from the skills learned in a film class. If students are able to see how their skills within the discipline could translate into a source of income and develop into a career- it could impact the way students see themselves and their future. It would be interesting to explore what kinds of programs exist for high school students passionate about film. How do students find out about those programs? Are they accessible for any high school student? This study makes clear, the benefits that filmmaking as a high school course can provide. Now, more work needs to be done to promote those benefits so that more high schools choose to incorporate a film curriculum, and more teachers learn how to effectively teach the subject in a way that encourages all students to share their voice.

Limitations

The nature of this case study research approach has clear limitations. With the focus of this study being on four specific students in the class, the results may not accurately represent the demographics of US public schools. The students in this study all fall within the same SES broad

grouping; there were no cases of high income or low income students represented in this study and no representation of any non-binary students.The four students studied in the class were also students who attended school on a relatively regular basis. The students who did not attend regularly were too difficult to track down in order to adequately study them in this research, and as a result, one meaningful limitation to this study is the absence of those voices and perspectives. It would be interesting to do a similar study focusing on one of the groups that wasn't represented in this study. Additionally, it's possible that the time period of the research may have also been a limitation as this research was conducted over the first semester of this class; it would be interesting to see if results were different at the end of the class in June. One final limitation of this study is the difficulty in measuring self-confidence. This study uses the combination of interview responses and observed behaviors to justify students' positive or negative self confidence and attitudes towards filmmaking, but it is hard to confirm with certainty if those results are 100% accurate. It is very possible that students could say and show one thing while internally feeling something very different. Self-confidence is not easy to measure. Finally, since this research is qualitative research, there are natural limitations to individual assumptions and biases through the data collection process. These limitations were mitigated as much as possible by choosing to do observations as well as interviews- a way to check observed behaviors (that could be affected by assumption and bias) with self-reported interpretations of those observed actions.

Conclusion

This study made clear how impactful filmmaking as a high school course can be on the students who take it. The technical skills gained allow students to share experiences, stories, their voices and imaginations in ways that other courses could not as easily allow. The open format of this

class at Palmer High School enabled students to take ownership of their films and choose topics they were passionate about. While not all students showed definite determination in pursuing a career in film, all four students demonstrated authentic interest in the skills they had learned and the films they had created. In order for students to maximize their experience in a film classroom, teachers must foster a comfortable environment where ALL students feel comfortable sharing their opinions, experiences, and perspectives. An essential part of fostering this culturally responsive environment is by providing students with film examples from filmmakers of all different backgrounds. In one classroom observation session I observed the teacher show the students a film about a fifth grade class who were led by their teacher to change their community park name to the name of a black abolitionist instead of the name of a slave owner. The students were all very impacted by the video they watched- paying close attention while it was playing and making thoughtful positive comments after it ended. Seeing an example like this is what allowed students in the class to really dive into stories they were passionate about from their own invested personal interest. Filmmakers have the power to change the world - and allowing students to realize that is deeply empowering. Inspiring a student to highlight a societal problem or share the experience of someone who doesn't have the platform to speak out is how action can be ignited. The teacher at Palmer said in her interview, "And why I teach film is because we want to see everybody's voice. I mean, I don't want to just hear mine, you know. And so young, old, white, black, girl, boy, transgender students, whoever falls in there. We need to hear their voice because we don't know what it's like, we only know what it's like to be us. And I think that's our job, just really to help people understand that. I know it's hard at the high school level, but it's not all about you - it's telling somebody else's story. And getting in that perspective. Yeah, that's probably for me the most important." (Teacher). She says it well; outside of the skills, the

creativity, and the boosted self-confidence, filmmaking truly allows students to step into and discover another person's perspective. A class like this not only prepares students to use their filming and editing skills on a professional or fun level, but possibly more importantly, helps students learn the beauty in empathy and understanding life - the struggles, the pain, and even the successes of others. More people with an understanding like this can profoundly impact our world.

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Appendix A.

Observation Notes Example

Day 4 Observations:

Time:	Action observed:	Questions and intuitions:
7:40 7:55 8:00 8:10 8:15	-teacher explains that she's going to use 10 minutes at the start of every class for the next two weeks and then they will have their time to work on the project -student 2,3, and 4 are here at start of class -student 4 comes in a little bit late -teacher shows video from women's film festival -video was very powerful- about a fifth grade class led by their teacher to change their community park name to the name of a black abolitionist instead of the name of a slave owner -example film end -students share what they think -teacher highlights the interview techniques and quality -all students start gathering equipment and talk to each other about their plan -one student comes in really late -teacher asks student 4 about her plan for today since her partner isn't here -teacher helps both student 4 and partner and students 1 and 2 and their third partner to get equipment set up -teacher gives student 4 and partner lots of advice about interviewing both how to talk to the interviewee and film/audio tactics -teacher talks to kid who came very late and helps direct him what to do today since he's late and his partner didn't come -one group returns from filming first teacher -student explains how she didn't think she miced the teacher she was interviewing correctly- teacher tells her she should think about and ask questions about equipment if she has questions before they leave to go interview someone	-Teacher chose to show example content that could be an inspiring story that her students esp students of color in her class could be inspired by. -student videos: -2 girls- skateboard movie -girl and boy- foreign exchange students -the other groups are all focusing on stories about teachers -How long is the project?

8:20	-one student in classroom working on sending emails to teachers about interviewing them -I talked to teacher	-What are the biggest challenges for students when they are out filming/interviewing that you are concerned about?
8:30	-most students have returned to classroom and are putting their things away -student 4 and partner say their interview went great	

Day 4 Observation summary/analysis: This class was structured to give the students some direction and inspiration prior to actually going out and spending the rest of the class filming and working on their projects. One video that was shown especially struck me and seemed to definitely affect the students as well. The film was one featured in the women's film festival about a teacher and her 5th grade class who set out to change the name of a park in their community (a primarily black community) from being named after a slave owner to the name of a black abolitionist. All the technical aspects of the film- the interview set ups, lighting, sound, etc were done very well and both the teacher and students in the class gave credit to that. The teacher gave a lot of specialized attention to each group before they left the classroom trying to make sure they had a solid plan for how to spend their time filming. The students all appeared very motivated and focused to get going on their projects. After they left the classroom all but one student stayed back since he was late to class and his partner wasn't in class that day either- but the teacher talked to him and made sure he was using the time productively to plan, email teachers to interview, and prepare for filming in the following class. During this time I had a chance to talk with the teacher one on one and hear a bit more from her about the project. She handed me a rubric (see below) with the layout for expectations/ a way for the students to have an organized plan for these journalistic films and told me what the groups were doing. One group (student 3's group) was making their film about skateboarding culture at their school, another group was making a film about exchange students at Palmer, and the other four groups were making films focusing on the teachers at Palmer. She also explained to me that her largest concern for her students when it comes to this independent work time is that the students leave the classroom without being properly prepared for their interviews and will misuse the equipment- effecting how the quality of the sound bites and video they get will come out. This explains why she gave so much intentional instruction and attention to each group before they left the classroom to film. She also talked about how important it is for them to use class time- because students only have access to the equipment during their class so they need to use the time she's given them well in order to complete their projects on time and create something of good quality.

Appendix B.

Interview Questions

<u>Demographic Questions</u>
1. What is your age?

2. What gender do you identify with?

3. What race or ethnicity do you associate yourself with?

4. How would you describe your/your family's socioeconomic status? (low income, middle class, high income)

5. What is the highest level of education your parent(s)/guardian(s) have completed?

6. Which languages are you capable of speaking fluently?/What is the primary language spoken at home?

<u>Teacher Questions:</u>
1. Tell me about your journey toward being a film teacher here at Palmer. How did that develop?
    a. How many years have you been teaching at Palmer? How many years have you been teaching this introductory level film course?

2. What has been your biggest takeaway teaching film at Palmer?

3. There is quite a mixture of personalities in your classroom; How do you balance between teaching to different kinds of learners? Are there any differences in approaching vocal vs quiet students, for example?

4. You give your students the freedom to choose their own video topics- what are the benefits to this? Why don't you just assign them some sort of theme? Why do you like to have them choose what they make their films about?
    a. What challenges come up around this approach?
    b. Can you tell me some of the projects that have stuck out to you from this year? What has made them particularly interesting or successful?

5. What are the biggest challenges you have in teaching this course?
    a. Seems like some of the largest challenges in this class are dealing with phone use, absences, and tardiness- would you agree? (Don't ask)

b. How do you deal with these (phone use, absences, and tardiness)?

6. Thinking about absences in this class since it's definitely a significant problem I am curious, when students miss this class is it because they are absent from school or just skipping this class?

7. Historically filmmaking, like many disciplines, has been excluded (POC, women, etc.) Because of that sometimes it can be hard to imagine yourself in positions/careers where you do not see people similar to yourself being represented. Why do you find filmmaking important and something worth teaching in schools?

8. In what ways would you say this class impacts the students that take it? (If not enough time skip)

9. Do you find that students in this introductory level class leave the class with future aspirations/passion for making films?

10. Which students have you found to be the ones most impacted by your class? is it only students who come into the class with a pre-existing interest in film or do students who maybe randomly find themself in this class also end up leaving this class with a passion for filmmaking?
    a. What, specifically, would you say facilitates these connections for students?

11. After students finish this class, what are the options for them if they want to continue to pursue filmmaking? For example: I know there is TTV and some higher level film classes are offered could you speak about those a little bit and any other filmmaking opportunities at Palmer?
    a. How many students would you estimate leave this introductory level filmmaking course and head onto more film classes or do TTV?

12. Do you have anything else you want to share about your experience as a teacher, or with filmmaking, that I didn't get to ask you?

Student Questions
1. How many years have you been attending Palmer? And what grade are you?

2. What is your favorite class you are taking right now and why?

3. Tell me about how you found yourself in this class; did you know you for sure were going to take it? Were you interested in filmmaking before taking this class? Why did you choose to take this class?
    a. If you were interested in filmmaking before taking this class what got you into filmmaking?

4. What is your favorite film project you've done so far in this class?
   a. What made this project so fun? You mentioned _____ why is that?

5. Do you see filmmaking as something you'll engage with after this class? Maybe in more film classes or TTV? If yes then continue to a
   a. Would you consider it as a career (why/why not)? In what ways do you see doing it as something for fun in the future?

6. What do you think creating a film/storytelling can do for its viewers?
   a. What about for the filmmakers themselves? What are some ways that creating films has impacted you as the filmmaker?
   b. How do you see filmmaking as a tool in the world more generally?

7. Historically filmmaking, like many disciplines, has been excluded (POC, women, etc.) Because of that sometimes it can be hard to imagine yourself in positions/careers where you do not see people similar to yourself being represented. What are some factors that make it challenging to apply this class, or filmmaking, to your life? What could be done to change that?

8. Do you find this class to be a lot of work? Does the amount of work you have affect how you feel about the class? Do you find the work fun or is it time consuming and boring?
   a. If not- what is challenging about the class?

9. What would you say are some factors that negatively affect your learning in class? Absences and tardiness are definitely a problem that I have noticed and I've also noticed Ms. McGilvray is frustrated by phone use. Which of these factors or is there another problem that you think directly affects your learning and how you succeed in the class?

10. The class appears to be structured to give you all a lot of freedom in choosing what you want to do your films on, who you want to work with, how you spend your time, etc. I've noticed Ms. McGilvray will show you helpful tips and put example videos on the projector but outside of that most of class time is spent letting you all use the time as you want to while Ms. McGilvray walks around checking in on you all. What aspects of the class do you think really help you succeed? What aspects of the class are what keep you interested and engaged in what you are doing?

11. Do you feel like you can express yourself/your opinions on film better than you can through writing or another form of expression? If yes, why?

12. Do you have anything else you want to share about your experience in the class, or with filmmaking, that I didn't get to ask you?

Appendix C.

Coding Layout:
- Basic Questions
    - Why choose this class?
    - Time at Palmer
    - Favorite class
- Challenges
    - Class distractions
        - Feelings about distractions
            - Bothersome= 6
            - unnoticeable= 1
        - Kinds of distractions
            - Absences and tardiness= 7
            - Phone use= 3
            - other= 0
    - Effect of lack of representation on interest
        - Motivated by lack of rep= 4
        - Discouraged by lack of rep= 0
    - Effort
        - Drained by challenges- class seems difficult and unenjoyable= 1
        - Motivated by challenges- class is a lot of work but enjoyable= 8
    - Teaching to different kinds of learners (style, positionality, etc)
        - Confidence in teaching to dif kinds of learners
            - Confident=4
            - Unconfident=0
        - Feelings about teaching to different kinds of learners
            - Challenging=0
            - Important=2
            - Indifferent=0
- Feelings
    - Feelings about class and projects
        - Positive=17
        - negative=7
    - Feelings about filmmaking
        - Positive=12
        - Negative=0
    - Feelings about teacher
        - Positive=10
        - Negative=3
    - Feelings about teaching this class
        - Positive and inspiring=3
        - Negative- difficult and challenging=1
    - Teacher's feelings about students' future aspiration in film
        - Thinks students are inspired and motivated by the class=1
        - Doesn't know or think students are inspired by the class=1

- Impact
  - Who is most impacted by the class- teacher
    - All students=2
    - 'Good students' (show up every day, on time, work hard)=0
    - Random - no one trait or characteristic that dictates who is most impacted=1
    - Students already interested in film=0
  - Future creative inspiration- students
    - Future interest of film in career=4
    - Future interest of film in school=4
    - No future interest of film in the future=1
- Self
  - Self confidence towards filmmaking
    - Positive=11
    - Negative=4