ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
END OF AWARD REPORT

Grant Reference: RES-189-25-0122
Grant Title: Addressing 'Problem Behaviour' in the Early Years: An Innovative Film Resource
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Grant holding Institution: Manchester Metropolitan University
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1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Please provide below a project summary written in non-technical language. The summary may be used by ESRC to publicise your work and should explain the aims and findings of the project. *[Max 250 words]*

This 3-month project developed an innovative film and accompanying educational package aimed at user groups with an interest in understanding and tackling problem behaviour in the early years. Based on the findings of an earlier ESRC project, and incorporating excerpts of classroom video data, the film aims to help viewers examine and challenge their preconceptions about young children and behaviour. It presents an interesting and challenging collection of visual, sound and text images drawn from a range of sources including art, education, psychology, special education, policy documents and philosophy.

The final version of the film was shaped by input from a range of expert users drawn from constituencies including parents, early years practitioners, teacher educators, student teachers, Local Authority personnel, behaviour support workers, and policy makers. These users also contributed to the construction of the accompanying multi-user support materials and advised on dissemination strategy.

By inviting a more open and critical engagement from audiences, the film has the potential to help viewers examine and challenge their existing preconceptions concerning young children and behaviour. In the words of one respondent, 'You have to engage hearts as well as minds'.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

a) Objectives

Please state the aims and objectives of your project as outlined in your proposal to the ESRC. *[Max 200 words]*

To develop an innovative film arising from a recent ESRC project, for those seeking to address 'problem' behaviour in the early years;
To build a user support package around the film, for use by practitioners, teacher educators, early years professionals, parent groups and policy makers;
To demonstrate ways in which educational questions may be stimulated through contact with art and film practice;
To develop innovative strategies, in co-construction with users, for increasing impact and knowledge transfer in data-rich qualitative studies.

b) Project Changes

Please describe any changes made to the original aims and objectives, and confirm that these were agreed with the ESRC. Please also detail any changes to the grant holder's institutional affiliation, project staffing or funding. *[Max 200 words]*

There were no changes to aims or objectives.

c) Methodology

Please describe the methodology that you employed in the project. Please also note any ethical issues that arose during the course of the work, the effects of this and any action taken. *[Max. 500 words]*

User input to the design of the film and accompanying user materials was generated though semi-structured interviews with individuals and groups. Interviews centered on a showing of the prototype film and were facilitated by the investigators using a series of prompts to ensure coverage of topics, while leaving space for open-ended contributions. Individual interviewees included: a local authority Director of Children's Services; a former head of Policy Development at the General Teaching Council; the head teacher of a school for children with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD); an educational psychologist/consultant on behaviour and emotional issues; the former Research Director of Futurelab, and a media journalist. Group interviews were conducted with: 10 members of CAMHS services (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) in the North of England (a clinical psychologist; social work manager; nurse manager; operational CAMHS nurse; autism specialist manager; child mental health practitioner; social worker; social work student; psychoanalytic psychotherapist; intercultural psychotherapist); a group of 4 parents attending a mother and toddlers group; 4 teachers who took part in the original research on which this follow-on project was based; 12 early childhood teacher educators; 3 early years teachers; 1 teacher and 10 Year 11 students from a comprehensive school; 1 teacher and 14 students aged between 8 and 16 from a progressive independent school; and approximately 45 trainee teachers, who registered their responses to the film using the BackNoise social networking tool.

The interviews were not transcribed in full, but were audited and logged to identify themes and issues. User responses were coded and analysed using grounded theory (a) to guide development of the final version; (b) to inform the production of a multi-user support package; (c) to explore ways of deploying the resource in the users' professional/practical contexts.

Design of the user support package
A set of accompanying materials was produced, incorporating advice from the users on the needs of their constituencies; the types of situation in which their users might be likely to use the resource; the forms of activities that are familiar in these settings; and possibilities for follow-up work. Since the rationale is to help viewers to overcome their own preconceptions and assumptions, these textual accompaniments have been kept as open-ended as possible, to avoid 'domesticating' the film in advance of its viewing, and are available as optional downloadable files, to allow viewers to engage with the film as a stand-alone resource if they wish.

Ethical issues
Ethical issues relating to representation of children were discussed with users. The film was shown to parents of children who featured prominently. Special care was taken in the final edit to ensure that children who could not be traced, or from whom permission had not been obtained (eg in the background of scenes from classroom data) were not identifiable. This involved blurring, cropping or editing out of shots.

d) Project Findings
Please summarise the findings of the project, referring where appropriate to outputs recorded on *ESRC Society Today*. Any future research plans should also be identified. *[Max 500 words]*

User responses
The film was successful in stimulating questions about children and behaviour, and helping viewers to examine their existing preconceptions. Many respondents described an *affective* engagement, in words such as 'haunting', 'sad', 'sombre', 'sinister', 'disturbing'. This did not necessarily mean that the film was felt to be unsuccessful – some respondents found it, for those very reasons, 'powerful', 'emotional', 'unsettling in a good way'. The film also had *cognitive* impact, in helping interviewees think about particular issues, or relate the film to their own experiences: eg 'It made me think about how children's creativity can be interpreted as naughty'; 'it makes you think differently – outside the box'.

There was diversity of views on certain issues such as: the need for greater 'structure' or explication; whether the film was too directive, or by contrast unclear in its message; whether the artistic qualities of the video were a strength, or might diminish the seriousness of its message. Rather than attempting to arbitrate, diverse views were incorporated where possible into the accompanying multi-user resource, as a way of further opening up questions.

The film was generally felt by respondents to hold strong potential for use in pre-and in-

service training for professionals and policy makers involved with young children and behaviour, and also as a stimulus to cross-professional engagement.

Production of final version of the film
The prototype film was re-edited and developed using Final Cut Pro editing software. User group responses informed all aspects of its development. Amendments were made in order to address: accessibility/comprehensibility; style, balance and range of views and voices represented; ethical practices in representations of children; copyright, where permission could not be obtained or was too costly. Amendments included: changes to duration, placement and style of text and images; minor changes to soundtrack; removal/substitution of images and clips; blurring or cropping of images.

Multi-user support materials
The accompanying materials are intended to be scalable, for use in small groups through to larger, multi-professional training sessions. It was important to build in flexibility, as respondents varied in the extent to which they felt the need for framing or structure. Users may therefore access the materials according to their interests and individual contexts, in the form of downloadable files when the film is accessed via the Internet, and as additional 'chapters' in the DVD version. The materials are organized thematically around five key themes: 'What counts as problem behavior? 'What is a normal child?', 'Difficult bodies', 'Parents' and 'Observing and Monitoring'. Each theme comprises of relevant clips and images from the main film, accompanied by orienting questions, and additional visual and textual content.

Additional downloadable materials include: worksheets for each theme; a short outline of the project and the aims of the film; a summary of user responses to the film; a summary of this report; a summary of the original 'Becoming a Problem' project; a list of publications.

The film and downloadable materials are accessible via the MMU project webpages (http://www.esri.mmu.ac.uk/resprojects/project_outline.php?project_id=127) in preparation for further dissemination.

e) Contributions to wider ESRC initiatives (eg Research Programmes or Networks)

If your project was part of a wider ESRC initiative, please describe your contributions to the initiative's objectives and activities and note any effect on your project resulting from participation. *[Max. 200 words]*

n/a

3. EARLY AND ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

a) Summary of Impacts to date
Please summarise any impacts of the project to date, referring where appropriate to associated outputs recorded on *ESRC Society Today*. This should include both scientific impacts (relevant to the

academic community) and economic and societal impacts (relevant to broader society). The impact can be relevant to any organisation, community or individual. *[Max. 400 words]*

Societal impacts
The film and materials have been commended by a Local Authority Director of Children's Services as a cross-professional resource, and discussions are in progress for the provision of training sessions. A CAMHS team member has approached the researchers with a request to use the film in a multi-professional training initiative with teachers, on children's social and emotional development. The film and resources are being incorporated into initial training and in-service programmes at MMU, and will be included in a new CPD Partnership offer. The film is also being used to raise awareness of issues concerning behavior and views of children amongst older school students. For instance it was used as discussion material for a poetry teaching session at one of the schools involved in the project, and will feature as the basis of a debate between secondary school students and teachers, as one of the featured events at the first in an ESRC Seminar Series co-ordinated by the present investigators (see below).

Scientific impacts
The project was a significant factor in the establishment of a new International Centre for Arts and Cultures of Childhood, led by the present investigators with colleagues from the faculties of education, art and design and the humanities at MMU. This emerging Centre builds on the potential for interdisciplinary dialogue and activity revealed in the present research, with members including artists, school teachers and academics from a range of disciplines, in the UK and overseas.

The film will feature in the first seminar in the ESRC Seminar Series 'Un-easy childhoods: innovating theory, practices and ethics through interdisciplinary research' (RES-451-26-0948), as a way of generating discussion about childhood by a multi-user audience whose members include policy makers, school students, teachers, artists, museum curators and academics from disciplines including sociology, psychology and education. It will also be shown, with an accompanying art exhibition, at the 2nd international Summer School in Qualitative Research at MMU.

b) Anticipated/Potential Future Impacts
Please outline any anticipated or potential impacts (scientific or economic and societal) that you believe your project might have in future. *[Max. 200 words]*

We anticipate that the film and resources will be adopted for use by an expanding range of professionals and groups who work with young children and/or behavior and emotional development, and to be of particular value in cross- and multi-professional development. We expect to see it in use in training sessions by individual schools and consortia, Children's Services, CAMHS, and initial and in-service training modules on behavior and classroom management, and will build on the relationships with such groups established on this project.

We expect the project and film to contribute to public information and education about

children and childhood, and to be of documented interest to parent groups, policy makers and the wider public. We will contact journalists and bloggers responsible for the extensive media and online coverage of the original 'Becoming a Problem' project, and will make the film available to parenting communities such as Mumsnet and NCPTA. We anticipate interest from policy bodies such as DfE and the Children's Commissioner and will actively seek to promote this.

There will be further scientific impact through ICACC, the ESRC 'Un-easy childhoods' seminar series, academic journals, networking and presence at international conferences and symposia.