

# 1

## Young People's Video Productions as New Sites of Learning

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### Introduction

Jacob, a twelve-year-old boy, shows me his latest video production: a skateboarding DVD. The title of the DVD, *Get Out*, refers to a sequence in the video when the skateboarders are chased away from a site where they practise their tricks. The DVD is presented with a printed covering, designed by Jacob, complete with his company name, Mimic Films. Playing the DVD reveals a stylized menu accompanied by the sound of skateboard wheels on pavement. As I click through the menu options, I am able to view carefully edited movies of Jacob and his friends doing tricks (or 'bailing'), each accompanied by a different style of music. Jacob tells me that he would like to run a skateboard company selling skateboards and accessories (including DVDs). He has already sold a few of his skateboarding DVDs, thanks in part to a teacher who was so impressed with the videos that he shared the DVD with the entire year group.

Readers of this chapter may find connections between this anecdote and their own experiences, as well as with other chapters in this volume: examples in which young people are producing digital media, connecting with peer cultures, being recognized by their teachers and projecting a future identity for themselves. One of my responses to Jacob was appreciation of his skills (both in skateboarding and digital media), his apparent ease with successfully performing an identity in both his peer life and his school career, and his learning of both skateboarding and media production, which involved hours of practice with no formal training.

It is easy to celebrate Jacob's learning. He is clearly a motivated learner, spending the hours needed to produce his DVD. His learning is embedded in his (skateboarding) culture, connects with his own experiences and helps him

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to make sense of the DVDs that he watches. He is reflecting on his consumption of skateboarding videos by critically analysing other works as well as his own. He evaluates and seeks to improve his own work: for example, he said that on this DVD he was unimaginative and always used slow motion for the jumps. He has a goal for his next project: to experiment with different music rhythms and tempos to match the style of skateboarding. For example, he plans to use slower music for long glides on the skateboard. As a learner in this context he has a positive identity aided in part by an interested teacher. He engages in constructionist learning (Kafai and Resnick, 1996), uses iMovie software to scaffold his learning, engages in non-linear forms of learning that are needed for his project and utilizes the Web to find answers to questions. Finally, his learning is part of his identity as a budding professional.

For educators, an example of learning such as this can be intriguing, and we might ask ourselves how the kinds of learning Jacob is doing in his home environment complement or connect with the kinds of learning he is doing inside schools. This chapter analyses learning specifically around camcorders and moving-image production occurring outside schools, and is based on interviews with young videomakers such as Jacob. Using literature on informal learning in relation to digital and participatory media cultures, the chapter raises questions about how we are to recognize and understand the skills and creative efforts of young people, and highlights challenges schools face as they consider current forms of media literacy that are needed by young people today.

### Digital cultures and new forms of learning

With learning of digital technologies taking place in informal settings such as homes, there has been considerable interest in contextualizing learning and looking at different styles and forms of learning (Coffield, 2000; Gee, 2004; Lave and Wenger, 1991). Toni Downes (1999) analyses approaches to learning taken by game players, identifying trial and error and learning-by-doing as dominant forms of learning. Arguing that game players are developing different approaches to learning, Downes writes, 'computing environments, through their interactivity, readily afford these approaches and therefore reinforce this pre-disposition towards exploratory modes of learning' (1999, p. 77). James Gee also focuses on video games, and discusses games as extraordinarily effective learning tools. In his book, *What Video Games Have to Teach Us about Literacy and Learning*, Gee (2003) outlines thirty-six learning principles which are inherent in peoples' game play: for example, he says that learning through game play is active, meaningful, multimodal, scaffolded, entails participation in social networks, encourages learners to take risks and allows for self-reflection. Gee argues that learning through game play is effective because skills are acquired in the context of an activity rather than through abstract exercises. As is evident when watching a child learning to play a video game, there are few times when children will sit down and be given step-by-step instructions by a tutor or instruction booklet. Similarly, Jacob described himself and his father learning to use iMovie to edit

videos by experimenting with Jacob's skateboarding videos, through trial and error and, as his father said, through intuition.

Gee (2003) makes reference to Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of *situated learning*, which frames learning as a type of social interaction rather than a cognitive activity. In Lave and Wenger's theory, members of a *community of practice* are brought together by a common activity centred on an area of knowledge. Because the community is built on common activity, learning involves relationships, the construction of identity in relation to the community and the development of particular practices (shared ways of doing things). Using the term *legitimate peripheral participation*, Lave and Wenger examine ways learners join a community of practice on the periphery and gradually move towards the centre as they become involved in the practices of that community. This is similar to the way Jacob has approached his skateboarding video: he first watched 'millions' of similar videos; he practised his own skateboarding (to make a skateboarding video the videographer also has to be on a skateboard); he hung out at skateboard parks, gradually moving to the centre areas to demonstrate his skills; and is now engaged in experimenting with recording and editing videos.

In relation to formal education, Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that there needs to be a shift away from the concept of an individual learner and that notions of mastery and pedagogy must be decentred: '[R]ather than learning by replicating the performance of others or by acquiring knowledge transmitted in instruction, we suggest that learning occurs through centripetal participation in the learning curriculum of the ambient community' (1991, p. 100). Gee's work (2004) similarly discusses the role of the social environment in learning, outlining the concept of *affinity spaces* as places where people with similar interests and goals come together to share knowledge. These concepts have been applied to learning related to digital technology in spaces such as forums and social networking sites, where young people immerse themselves in the language, skills and discourses of communities online (see Davies, this volume; Davies, 2006; Leander and Frank, 2006).

With high numbers of young people interacting online, questions are being asked about the skills and competencies that are being developed and the role of schools in providing opportunities to develop those skills. Jenkins et al. (2007) assert that participatory cultures build on traditional skills (literacy, research, critical analysis), but specific new media literacies are also developing. Rather than focusing on technological skills, new media literacy involves 'a set of cultural competencies and social skills' (Jenkins et al., 2007, p. 4). Jenkins et al. identify eleven new skills associated with online social environments, including appropriation, multitasking, collective intelligence, judgment, networking and negotiation. Importantly, although young people are developing new media literacies within participatory cultures, schools have a role in addressing these literacies. Jenkins et al. (2007, p. 18) outline three concerns that point to a need for educational intervention:

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- How do we ensure that every child has access to the skills and experiences needed to become a full participant in the social, cultural, economic and political future of our society?
- How do we ensure that every child has the ability to articulate his or her understanding of how media shapes perceptions of the world?
- How do we ensure that every child has been socialized into the emerging ethical standards that should shape their practices as media-makers and as participants in online communities?

Some of these questions have been fundamental to those who have been involved in media education for many years (see Buckingham, 2003; Buckingham and Sefton-Green, 1993; Buckingham et al., 1995; Burn and Durran, 2007). These researchers see media literacy as involving social, cultural and analytical competencies rather than a set of skills to be learned by engaging with technologies. Media education, therefore, needs to draw on the cultural experiences of young people, recognize the barriers to participation, and provide students with skills to analyse and produce media in ways which extend and build on their existing knowledge. In relation to digital video production, studies have examined how new technologies support the development of understandings of production practices, making particular elements more visual (Buckingham et al., 1995; Sefton-Green, 2003). Furthermore, studies of practices in secondary schools in the UK have raised issues concerning not only how to teach but also what to teach in relation to digital production: for example, considering macro-level languages for different media genres, reflecting on issues of aesthetics, addressing different learning styles through different elements of digital media production, and considering when intervention is needed and when technology can scaffold learning (Burn and Leach, 2004; Reid et al., 2002). The ways these concepts are being understood, as young people experiment with different software packages in the home, is an increasingly important area of study as digital production practices become more commonplace.

### The study

The focus of this chapter is on young people's learning in relation to camcorders and related technologies (for example, editing software) in the home. Data discussed in this chapter come from a three-year project that is investigating the use of camcorders in the UK.<sup>1</sup> The data include individual interviews with contacts, such as Jacob, who belong to specific subcultures that use video, as well as interviews with users who do not see themselves as connected with particular cultures in terms of their video production. As such, the participants' orientation towards their media production practices varies, as does their investment in learning skills related to media production.

The participants for discussion in this chapter are seven boys aged 11 to 18, all located in the UK, who were contacted specifically because of their use of video (skateboarders and young videomakers), or who were part of a year-long study

in which their households were given a camcorder. The household study participants had not had access to a camcorder before the project, but they all had access to a computer with editing software and most had internet access in their homes. The lack of female perspectives in this particular data relates partly to long-standing gendered constructions of, and orientations towards, technology: it was difficult to find girls who used camcorders, and many of the cultures which include video production are almost entirely male dominated (for example, skateboarding). We also found that when including a more female-centred culture, very often girls were unavailable for interviews via online contacts (possibly for safety reasons). In terms of the household study, in which twelve households participated, a majority of the girls were under age 8, and although some had tried videoing, they were not engaged with the camcorder in the way the older boys were. The participants in this research represent a mix of socio-economic groups, although there is a dominance of middle-class households. This might be expected considering the topic involves technology which is expensive to update (computers), and access to high speed internet access is required for full participation in many media production centred cultures.

The focus on learning was one part of the wider camcorder project, which also looked at the domestic context of the use of camcorders, and how wider cultural networks support, value and reward amateur videomaking. In terms of learning, we were asking about the processes that amateurs go through when producing videos. In relation to theories of learning and previous studies that analysed learning and digital cultures, as discussed in the previous section, we asked the following questions:

- What styles of learning can be identified?
- What are the participants' motivations for learning?
- How do they critique and seek to improve their own work?

These open-ended questions were posed in semi-structured interviews. The boys who were interviewed because of their specific uses of video were contacted through the video-sharing site, YouTube, or through personal contacts. Individuals in this group were interviewed face to face or over the phone, with follow-up questions via email. The boys whose families had been given camcorders were interviewed three times over the course of a year. These individuals were interviewed along with other family members who used the camcorder. The data were analysed in terms of emerging themes concerning learning, and are discussed in the following two sections: the first explores styles of learning, and the second examines motivation and audience feedback in relation to learning.

### What styles of learning can be identified?

Online communities that revolve around participatory media practices are often discussed as spaces in which people are striving to improve their work,

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where assessment is common and welcome, and where information is being shared (Gee, 2004; Ito, 2008; Jenkins, 2006). In spite of the extensive online discussions which took place around three out of the seven participants' productions, the data for the current study do not include examples of online learning communities that are operating with the same types of learning goals. This might be because the young people in this study are not concerned with techniques as much as they are with the ideas behind the videos. One participant specifically said that he was not aiming to produce a film of 'brilliant quality' and that he watches television and goes to the cinema if he wants to see professional filmmaking. In this participant's words, his interest in both producing videos and viewing videos on YouTube is 'not necessarily for how it's done but more for the content'. He goes on to comment about one specific video on YouTube, which he describes as 'interesting because of simplicity, how you make something simple and then put it on here and it gets like one million views, it's really effective'. This participant is highlighting the amateur aesthetic that contrasts with the aesthetic of high-budget films, and he is recognizing qualities of amateur film which specifically do not engage with professional filmmaking skills. This presents a challenge to researchers who discuss a 'pro-am (professional-amateur) revolution' and suggest that amateurs are challenging a pro-am divide by operating at professional levels, thus leading to a society in which 'there will be more innovation, deeper social capital and healthier democracy' (Leadbeater and Miller, 2004, p. 49). The young people in this study do not see themselves as professional amateurs, nor do they aspire to become professionals (only one of the interviewees was considering studying media production at university level).

Although perhaps not interested in acquiring professional skills, the participants clearly were learning skills that enabled them to produce videos. One of the significant changes in relation to learning with digital technologies is the scaffolding that current technology provides for learners. As one might expect, many of the young people to whom we gave camcorders were happy to experiment with the menus and buttons and to learn the about functions of the equipment through trial and error. The camcorder we provided has a joystick, which allows the user to navigate through menu options in a similar manner to interactions with computer games. This familiar environment encourages these young users to experiment with different menu options (including adding transitions to video segments, wind reduction, and adding effects such as sepia). Similarly, the ease of rewinding and watching a video on camera allows users to evaluate their video techniques. All of the young people in this study mentioned learning that arose from watching their videos and noticing problematic issues (for example, too much zoom, poor lighting, shaky camera). However, these are very limited uses of the camcorder, and one might ask how more advanced uses of the camcorder are learned.

Video-editing software is also scaffolding learning. With simple programs such as iMovie and MovieMaker bundled as standard software on computers, and free websites for video-sharing proliferating, producing and distributing an edited

video has become an option that is easily available to many videomakers. When connecting the camcorder to a Macintosh computer, a dialogue box appears that asks users if they would like to make a Magic Movie. The program then proceeds to offer a selection of title formats and transitions, iTunes opens for users to select background music and, finally, users are asked how they want to share their movie (via email, DVD or on a website). After making these selections, the movie is downloaded from the camcorder, edited (that is, titles, transitions and music are added) and compressed to correct format. The software finishes by opening the appropriate application for sharing the movie (email, DVD burner or web browser). One might argue that this example is not about enabling production at all but, rather, disables users by hiding the process. However, I would suggest that for some users the interaction described here makes limited options visible, demonstrates the ease of using a particular program such as iMovie, and encourages users to explore the program further. Software companies have an economic imperative to scaffold learning in order to encourage users to continue using their product. Thus video games have different levels that get progressively harder as the player proceeds. Similarly, iMovie users can start with very basic editing and proceed to more advanced levels. Importantly, as our participants described, learning to use the software is intuitive. However, it is not just technical skills that new software scaffolds. Through visual layouts, digital technology also enables conceptual understandings of processes (for example, editing packages showing sound and image on two different strips) (see also Buckingham et al., 1995; Burn and Durran, 2007).

Although digital technologies may be enabling modes of learning such as trial and error, it is important to look at other modes of learning in relation to these technologies. A closer study also may provide information about the kinds of things that are learnt effectively through trial and error or technology enhanced scaffolding, and those that require more direct kinds of instruction. Although only one of the seven students in this study was enrolled in a media studies course at school, many of the young people had social networks that included older and more experienced technology users. For two of the boys in the study, interviews with their fathers revealed important scaffolding that was happening in the home as the young videomakers worked on their projects. Jacob's father worked with him to produce the skateboarding DVD using iMovie and, as Jacob describes, 'we kind of both learnt together'. Jacob's father is a graphic designer and artist, and is therefore familiar with digital technologies and design principles. Although he had not used iMovie before, as with any learner, his experience and knowledge contributed to his competent interaction with the program. Therefore, Jacob's experience learning iMovie was partly scaffolded by his father, who learnt side by side with him but also had other resources upon which to draw.

The youngest boy in the study discussed here (Ted, age 11) had more particular kinds of knowledge that were scaffolded by his father. Before being given a camcorder, Ted made videos using the video function on a stills camera. The videos he made are narratives, which often follow established movies or TV dramas. His

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father described how he directly taught Ted about particular concepts involved in filmmaking. For example, Ted was under the impression that his video needed to be shot in sequence, rather than shooting sections and then editing them together into the desired sequence. His father also taught him techniques of framing and storytelling within filmmaking, such as using perspective to make objects look bigger. Here we see conceptual work being taught more directly. As suggested by Burn and Durran (2007), 'children cannot be assumed to be "digital natives" (Prensky, 2001), who spontaneously know how to use digital technologies' (p. 168). Burn and Durran analyse exemplary practices in secondary school media studies classrooms, demonstrating the conceptual frameworks with which children engage when developing media literacy. However, although we have a growing number of examples such as Burn and Durran's, studies are still demonstrating a need to develop a more evidence-based curriculum in relation to media literacy, which charts the development of conceptual frameworks starting with primary and moving through to secondary school-aged children.

The role of the amateur and the scaffolding of learning both pose interesting questions for educators. If an amateur aesthetic is developing around video-making, which is not about film grammar, production techniques or even legibility, then what is useful for young people to learn in schools about video-making? Furthermore, if young people are learning editing skills on their own, what should teachers be doing?

More importantly, perhaps, are questions about digital divides. As can be seen with Jacob and Ted, social and economic resources are needed to participate in media production practices. We need to consider Jenkins et al.'s (2007) concern about ensuring that every child has access to the kinds of skills, knowledge, and learning increasingly valued within 21st century participatory media cultures. Who has responsibility for ensuring that the 'participation gap' does not widen? Schools are often looked to as one solution to the participation gap, by providing all pupils with access to technology. However, access to technology is never simple – schools have qualitatively different kinds of access, with physical, digital, human and social resources all impacting on the skills, knowledge and learning that can be expected (Buckingham, 2007; Seiter, 2005). Furthermore, the challenge of meeting individual needs arises when students such as those included in this study are in classrooms alongside students who have never touched a camcorder or editing equipment. Gender divides are also increasingly likely, if this study is anything to go by, with boys' cultures more likely to involve using technology to create finished products for display. If there are things to be learned from studying informal learning and digital cultures, perhaps it is the challenges these cultures pose for schools.

### Motivation and audience in digital videomaking

Similar to the learning involved in game play, as discussed by Gee (2004), motivation plays a key role in sustaining engagement with digital technology. For



Jacob, motivation to produce a movie about skateboarding comes partly from the fact that it is a subject with high status in his peer culture and that it is familiar to him as a consumer (he said he had watched 'millions' of skateboarding videos). The other interviewees also had specific motivations for producing a video, often connected with their media consumption and peer cultures. Some of the videos that were produced by the boys in the study include *Mislaid* (after the series, *Lost*), a new episode of *Doctor Who*, *The Brea Witch Project* (after *The Blair Witch Project*), *Wish You Weren't Here* (after the travel show, *Wish You Were Here*) and *Resident Evil 4* (after the movie and video game of the same name). Almost all of these productions were spoofs: a common style or genre of video found on the video-sharing site YouTube, as well as in comedy sketch shows on mainstream television. In addition to spoofs, the interviewees videoed football matches, music subcultures (particularly grime), school projects, and friends and family 'larking about'. In many of these cases, the interviewees were connecting with peer cultures and their own media consumption. This is not to say that learners always need to be motivated through connections to popular media cultures. Rather, as educators, we need to see what young people are already doing, so that we can build on their existing practices and knowledge, and identify barriers and enablers to new media literacies, in line with Jenkins et al.'s (2007) research discussed in the previous section.

One of the important developments for young people producing media is the ease of sharing their work with a potentially global audience. Work by Jenkins (2006) and Ito (2008) analyses how globalized fan networks are creating cultures in which consumers and producers are interacting in different ways, and where knowledge is being developed, shared and acknowledged. Ito's work, in particular, discusses the role of global networks in creating communities in which assessment of media productions is part of the ecology of the fan network. Similar to Gee's affinity spaces, these members of online communities have a shared interest in developing networks around a particular fan culture. In schools, teachers have long recognized the importance of audience, and have connected the motivation to produce, assess and improve work with an awareness of audience. However, not all work needs an audience. Some of the projects in the current study certainly were private and motivated by desires other than having an audience. For example, one participant said he keeps a video diary on his mobile phone and watches it back privately. Another participant made several narrative videos, based on *Jaws*, *Lost* and *Doctor Who*, but did not share these videos with anyone. These videos involved numerous takes, careful selection and creation of props, and detailed planning to create a correct sense of scale (for example, using toys in a fish tank as well as videos taken at the London Aquarium). Although he had the motivation to work through the production process, he had no desire to share his products. The motivation came from the process rather than the product.

Others in the study have large online audiences that would not have been possible before the advent of video-sharing sites. One group, The Bentley Bros, has

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a website devoted to their productions and includes a section of Bentley Bros fan art, links to four fan sites, and a forum with over 500 registered users and over 50,000 posts.<sup>ii</sup> On YouTube, their production *Resident Evil 4* has been viewed 270,000 times, received over 1,500 comments and at one point was number 56 in the all-time top-rated videos (in the games and gadgets category). This group is the most productive of the young people interviewed for this study, producing sixteen short videos, some of which are over sixty minutes long and are carefully scripted and edited. The role of digital technologies was key in the development of The Bentley Bros' productions, as Stuart Bentley explained in an interview for this study:

We started filming around five to six years ago with a cheap old camera... They never went on the internet and were never edited, we just had some fun filming silly little clips around the house. It then became something a little more when we got a digital camera and editing software.

With the advent of video-sharing, the role of the audience has become an important motivator behind their productions, which are mostly parodic comedy sketches. Again, Stuart Bentley stated in his interview: 'We make spoofs purely to make the people watching laugh...and ourselves'. With the large fan base, as demonstrated by the evidence above, this group has a specific purpose for going through the production process and sharing their work online. However, videomaking is not purely done for an audience. As indicated in Stuart's comment above, videomaking is also about having a laugh as a group of friends; this theme emerged in many of the interviews with young videomakers.

With millions of videos available online it is not easy to build a fan base and feedback is not always positive. Martyn Lomax, interviewee from a group called Random Loaf,<sup>iii</sup> specifically commented on the amount of 'flaming' on YouTube, indicating that many people see insults as the norm in terms of feedback: 'There's other people who just like to state their views, I found, they just don't like anything else that's created other than what they did.' As with any social environment, online spaces are embedded with power relations – there are superstars and bullies on social networking sites too. One of the interesting interactions to watch is how young people negotiate these power relations. Martyn said he sometimes views the profiles of the people who leave comments in order to understand why particular individuals who post insults might be offended by Random Loaf's videos. In one instance, in which a Random Loaf production made fun of a Rover Metro, Martyn traced an individual insult to someone who belonged to a Rover Metro enthusiasts club. In another instance, someone who was a fan of a particular football club was offended when the group made fun of the town in which the club was based, as Martyn explains: 'He found that we're slating his personal hobbies...it is down to the personal, the actual person who's writing the comments.' Martyn's comments indicate that making work public involves negotiation and considering an audience beyond one's peers. Random Loaf's work has been broadcast on terrestrial television, and Martyn's comments indicate his awareness of a wider audience beyond just the fans of Random Loaf, who might have the same interests and

understandings as the producers. Martyn mentioned curbing the amount of swearing in the group videos and also commented on being aware of issues that might be sensitive to others. He explains that there are boundaries on what is appropriate to put on video-sharing sites: 'That's one of the things that I find you've got to be really careful of making videos, there's just this line that you can't cross.'

When lines are crossed producers sometimes enter into heated discussions. The Bentley Bros made a video that they described as 'a parody of chavs in Britain'.<sup>iv</sup> This video inspired an extensive online debate about 'chav' stereotypes. Many of the comments on the video (on YouTube and on the forum on the Bentley Bros' website) indicate that chav or similar subculture is seen to exist in different parts of the UK and in other parts of the world. However, one commentator critiqued the Bentley Bros' video by suggesting that the Bros were viewing chavs as a 'real' subculture, implying they should view chav as a stereotype. The commentator said it was sad 'that some thick, thick twats think these people are actually real'. Others criticized the Bentley Bros for reinforcing the chav stereotype. One person defended chavs by saying 'they're only a product of the system', and another said that the chav stereotype has 'been hyped and twisted by the media' and that the producers should 'stop whining and start realizing how bad the white working class have got it in the UK'. This second commentator addressed the Brothers as 'fucking middle class wannabe scum bags', and this class divide also came through in comments about the actors' accents – there were several critiques of middle-class boys putting on working-class accents. In response to this debate, one of the members of the Bentley Bros posted the following:

People stereotype, that's what they do. You aren't going to get past it. You were baggy clothes, talk like a black guy when you're white, and you listen to rap? wigga? Maybe. Stereotyped as wigga? Yes. You have to live with it. People are ignorant enough to not get to know someone's personality and judge them on how they dress.<sup>v</sup>

In this statement, it appears that the Bentley Bros see the video as a chance to hold up the stereotype for critique. However, the ambiguity of their video leaves the Bros open to harsh criticism. This is a risk inherent in parody.

The data presented above show motivations for producing digital videos, as well as illustrating critical knowledge and negotiation skills that young people are developing as they engage with their audiences. As Jenkins et al. (2007) discuss, interacting in online spaces involves different kinds of resources, skills and competencies. These young people are developing an understanding of the way texts are read by different audiences, the power relations that are enacted in online discussions, different points of view and deeper understandings of cultural texts (for example, representations of chavs). As they engage in discussions which are immediate and relevant to them, and which relate to their cultural surroundings, these young people are learning how to negotiate their positions as readers and writers of media texts.

## Conclusion

I have suggested that young people in this study are successfully producing media, and in some cases they are engaging in discussions that involve conceptual learning and analyses of key media concepts such as representation. However, I have also suggested that we should not assume that young people are developing the media literacy skills they need, in relation to video production, simply by making movies with friends. The findings from this small-scale study demonstrate challenges for educators. Participatory media cultures sometimes include very productive learning environments. As we can see with Jacob and his skateboarding video, he is motivated and is learning new skills, assessing and improving his own work, making creative and aesthetic choices, and analysing media he consumes. Furthermore, he has a positive identity as a learner and sees his learning as related to his future. But Jacob did not learn everything on his own. He had scaffolding structures from the software that was supporting him, he had access to specialist equipment that supported his video-making (including a fish-eye lens to capture the skateboard video aesthetic), and his father was heavily involved in his learning. We also need to ask if Jacob is entering the participatory media cultures Jenkins discusses, by learning in new ways and developing new social skills and cultural competencies related to new media? Or is Jacob learning in more traditional ways with his father acting as a mentor? Finally, although Jacob found his video-making pleasurable in the same way as Gee (2003) describes the learning of video games, we need to ask if there might be things that videomakers need to learn even if they do not take pleasure in them now or in the future.

## Notes

- i The project Camcorder Cultures: Media Technologies and Everyday Creativity is funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council (reference number RG/112277) and based at the Centre for the Study of Children, Youth and Media, Institute of Education, University of London.
- ii Retrieved 13 November 2007, from [www.bentleybrosproductions.com](http://www.bentleybrosproductions.com)
- iii Retrieved 13 November 2007, from [www.randomloaf.com](http://www.randomloaf.com)
- iv 'Chav' is a derogatory slang term used to describe a stereotype of a particular youth subculture in the UK, associated with particular brands and styles of fashion, music, and attitudes (often considered to derive from American hip-hop culture). The stereotype is often connected with the white working class and is associated with poor education, resistance to authority and racist attitudes.
- v From the Bentley Bros Productions forum. Retrieved 8 May 2008, from [www.setbb.com/bentleybrosprod/viewtopic.php?t=2064&mforum=bentleybrosprod](http://www.setbb.com/bentleybrosprod/viewtopic.php?t=2064&mforum=bentleybrosprod)

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### Key points

1. Although new technologies for media production often scaffold users' learning, a variety of social networks (peers, parents, relatives, online contacts, educators) are also needed to provide specific information and to build on conceptual frameworks.
2. Various digital divides are present (between households and schools as well as communities/nations), and these create challenges for schools, particularly when trying to meet individual needs.
3. Online spaces can provide powerful motivation and appreciative audiences, but they are also spaces embedded with power relations.

### In your classroom

1. As well as examining media studies concepts such as production, language, representation and audience, consider conceptual skills young people are developing when *producing* or responding to videos; the pleasures of, and motivations for, producing media (for both private and public consumption); and the ways young people are engaging as critical consumers on video-sharing sites.
2. Discuss the ways young people have developed audiences for their work, their role as an audience for other people's work and the different dynamics present on video-sharing sites.
3. Consider different digital divides that might be present in classrooms. What are the physical, digital, human and social resources that are impacting on young people's skills, knowledge and learning?

### Further reading

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