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Domesticating Space: Media Production Pedagogy for the Empowerment of Marginalized Youth

Maarit Jaakkola
University of Gothenburg, maarit.jaakkola@gu.se

Linda Sterno
University of Gothenburg

Elias Fryk
University of Gothenburg

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Abstract

This article inquires into the role of space in media and information literacy (MIL), especially when supporting learners' production skills. The MIL framework is to a great extent focused on deconstruction of messages in a private position of reception, while the theoretical, didactic and ethical components of the production pedagogy are less developed. This multiple-case study analyses the situated agency of young people in a vulnerable position with regard to the spaces where agency is sustained. We develop the concept of production context into a more specific concept of production space and apply it to the film club in a suburb in Sweden. We combine qualitative analysis of critical situations in selected spaces with theoretical development of the idea of production space, to arrive at increased understanding of production skills and related media pedagogy.

Keywords: film pedagogy, production skills, spatiality, production space, agency, media and information literacy (MIL)

Introduction

This paper inquires into the relevance of space for theorizing about production skills as part of non- or informal media education. In this paper, we will examine the role of space in creating inclusive place-based production pedagogies, with video production by vulnerable youth in Sweden as a case. Our main ambition is to increase the theoretical understanding of media production skills and, in particular, its connections to the production environment, entailing the physical space but also the symbolic, sociocultural and ethical components of the venue where pedagogy and media production unfold.

By identifying and defining the concept of *production space* we aim at increasing sensitivity to the question of how the choice, conceptualization and use of space may affect the pedagogies of media production. Our object of study constitutes cases with young people who are in a marginalized position, distinguished by a civic-spatial agency that need to be specifically supported, which is why we describe their agency in this context as *developing agency*. With the help of a qualitative analysis of situated agency we want to find out how the selection, utilisation and alternation of physical spaces play a role in developing agency-supporting pedagogy.

We will start by examining the current conceptions of media literacy and identifying the production competences and contexts in this framework that has become an established notion to inform practical pedagogy. Thereafter, we will discuss the role of agency in media production

and related pedagogy, by focusing on developing agency. Our study design consists of selected cases outlined by the educators – so-called critical incidents – that are analyzed in terms of the experience and uses of space.

Production competences

Theories of media and information literacy (MIL) (Masterman, 1985; Aufderheide & Firestone, 1993; see also Livingstone, 2004), as well as the related global policy frameworks (Grizzle et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2011), place a significant emphasis on the reception and analysis part of literacy: they describe and elaborate processes related to decoding or deconstructing messages within a context, while mediating a much less conceptualized and specific model of content production. While reception, or 'the ability to access, evaluate and analyse media in a variety of forms' (Livingstone, 2004), is considered as a basic skill, the 'ability to create media in a variety of forms' (ibid.) remains a more situated and context-dependent process. The formal media-pedagogical practice has been criticised, above all, for lacking a between formal and informal spheres of the learners (Herr Stephenson, 2010) and separating content production from media consumption (see e.g. Pereira et al., 2019).

Production skills and competences of young people have been the most typically thematized in pedagogical approaches with an aim to generate civic-minded pedagogical designs and culturally inclusive practices as part of youth, urban, democratic or civic education studies. The recent core concepts have included participation, voice, and civic activity (Andersson et al., 2020; Forkby & Batsleer, 2020; Gaztambide-Fernández & Arráiz Matute, 2020; Hoechsmann et al., 2020; Waltheret al., 2019). Central characteristics of media production have been the community-based character of learning, learning by experience, and the utilisation of place-based dimensions of the activities to scaffold young people's agency, self-determination and self-positioning in society. Gaztambide-Fernández and Arráiz Matute (2020) propose a framework of learning that they call 'connective civics', which identifies learning at the intersection of participatory cultures (young people's interests and affinities), participatory politics (young people's agency and peer culture), and political interests (young people's civic opportunities).

Production competence refers to abilities that are needed to produce content to a given media channel or environment. According to Kellner and Share (2007, 63), teaching media production is typically defined less as a specific body of knowledge or a set of skills, and, rather, more as a framework of conceptual understandings involving the following basic elements: recognition of the construction of media and communication as a social process; some type of semiotic textual analysis that explores the languages, genres, codes and conventions of the text; an exploration of the role audiences play in negotiating meanings; problematizing the process of representation to uncover and engage issues of ideology, power and pleasure; and the examination of the production and institutions that motivate and structure the media industries as corporate profit-

seeking businesses. In a way, production competence encompasses the critical reception skills, as a content producer is expected to be familiar with the genres, modes, styles and registers, as well as the production conditions from specific production cultures, including the author roles of those who create the messages and the affordances of the media environment, needed to produce content that fits into a specific channel. Production knowledge is also situated; a number of different factors define what kind of skills are needed and developed in a given media project at a given point of time. We define that the production of content involves the following key components:

- Location: the production of content occurs in a selected room that has physical, techno-social, socio-emotional, and symbolic dimensions and essentially structures the social interaction, implying hierarchies of power for the agents involved.
- Roles and positions: the production of a specific kind of content implies adopting a role of an author in the creative process.
- Purpose: the production has a purpose, for example, accomplishing a pedagogical task (at school) or mediating a message to a group of people potentially interested in it (in social media).
- Patternized communication: the content is expected to show some shared patterns in its mode of address such to be classified as a certain genre or way of communication.

This said, it can be asserted that the location of learning plays a central role in the generation of production knowledge and competence, displaying multiple interconnections with roles and positioning, purpose, and the patternization of communication. Pedagogically speaking, the educators supporting production competence should create a relationship to the enlived and used environment (space), the positionings of those involved in the creative process (roles), the assignment (purpose) and patterns of communication (genre, style). Some of them tend to be more decided by the educators, while others can freely be left to the learners. More experienced and self-determined or autonomous learners are typically more capable of taking initiative in the key dimensions than the opposite. The key dimensions are essentially connected to spatiality and agency in more general, to be discussed next.

Production space

The role and relevance of the location is well-acknowledged in cultural production, both as a given environment where cultural processes unfold (see e.g. Gallagher, 1994) and as a space that is created for the specific purpose of cultural production (see e.g. Lancaster et al., 2010). In formal spaces of schooling, the physical location is either constant (the classroom) or identified as extramural, and adults are placed the authorities; they are also those who are regulating the potential peer learning possibilities. In informal practices of pedagogy, space is of relevance in pedagogical situations that override the formal learning space or where the role of the space is

unsettled. Some spaces of in- or non-formal learning are pedagogically more pre-structured than others, and thus imbued by pre-defined roles related to power, both in terms of the learning situation (between teachers and learners) and the social interaction in more general (between citizens and other persons happening to dwell in the same space). The choice of a place to conduct a pedagogical incident thus plays a role that has a number of implications on the configuration of the interaction and, eventually, the learning outcome. Furthermore, the affordances of formal and informal spaces intermingle and alternate; a pivotal question becomes how to take the space into account by identifying possibilities for the 'activation of the space' or, further, 'domestication', as we will call them below.

We examine the creation of a learning space for the purposes of gaining production competences with the help of a concept that we define as *production space*. Production space is a result of negotiation between the learners, educators and the environment as an inhuman actor. Production space cannot be (pre-)created and passed on to the learners by the educators alone, because the learners' individual experience, identities, and agencies are at stake. Production space is a form of local situated and shared knowledge that comes into being as at the intersection of the *individual space* (personal and private experience of the room, including previous experiences of it or places similar to it), the *perceived physical space* (physio-social existence), the *symbolic space* (cultural meaning-making) and the *transformative space* (learning). The interrelationship of these spaces creates different conditions for agency, to be discussed next. Production space pedagogies are directed towards making the production competence possible to evolve through fully, partly or not at all structured engagement.

Towards pedagogy of agency and empowerment

A central concept for the production competence in contexts of learning is the learner's agency. Agency can be defined as 'the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices' (Barker, 2004, 448). Storey (1999, 159) conceptualizes agency as the 'capacity, within structures inherited from the past and lived in the present, to act in a purposive and reflexive manner', or 'to act in a way that at times may modify what is inherited and that which is lived'. Agency, perceived as an intertwined and mutually independent dualistic construction of individual acts and societal structures, is in the context of media production largely associated with authorship or creatorship of a specific kind of content. In the settings of learning that are typical of school and leisure-time video production, there are no professional objectives or expectations, but the purposes are typically relatively freely aligned to making content that departs from the learners' ideas and interests. Rather, agency puts forward the obvious fact that the past individual lifeworld experiences shape the production competence, affecting ways how the individual adopts the production roles and norms demanded for a specific project. 'Life agency', that is, how an individual sees herself as a citizen and a human being, is intermingled

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with 'authoring agency' related to what we previously called the production agency. Life agency implies the personal conception or narrative of oneself, constructed through self-authoring (Holland et al., 2001).

Groups in vulnerable conditions have been described in studies of video production as 'at-risk youth' (Pienimäki & Kotilainen, 2020), 'vulnerable youth' (Conn et al., 2017) or 'marginalized youth' (Rogers, 2010) youth. These terms refer to young people marked by unstable conditions and low socio-economic position of their family, accompanied with low societal interest and engagement as well as an experience of being an outsider or detached from the majorities' experiences, discourses and norms. In encounters with representatives of power they typically sustain a suspicious and ambiguous relationship to authorities and institutions, and, accordingly, to spaces governed or dominated by them. Instead of using any of the previous terms, which can all be criticized for emphasizing the risks and shortcomings related to the learners rather than the opportunities for learning, we refer to the young people as marginalized youth, underscoring their subordinate position based on whatever factors – socioeconomic, ethnic, cultural and/or linguistic background.

In pedagogies where learners with developing agency are involved, the educational strategy attempts to build upon objectives of inclusion. Learners' inclusion is typically described with the help of a ladder of participation (Rocha, 1997; Hart, 1992), based on Arnstein's (1979) model of citizen involvement in planning processes. Inclusion includes adult-initiated activities that result in shared decisions with children (adults have the initial idea but children are in every step of processes), as well as child-initiated activities with shared decisions with adults (children have the initial idea and decide how the project is to be carried out, adults are available but do not take the lead). At the top of the ladder of inclusion, children invite adults to join with them in making decisions. Inclusive pedagogies relevant for media production include Paolo Freire's pedagogical thinking related to increasing empowerment and his strategies to make illiterate peoples voices heard through their own image making (Freire, 1968/2017). Some recent pedagogical approaches in film heavily draw on Freire's legacy, as well as photography and art therapy (Cosden & Reynolds, 1982), including the methods of PhotoVoice (Wang, 2010), life filming (Sjölander & Sternö, 2016), camera-pen (Astruc, 1948; Jaakkola, 2017), digital storytelling (Barber, 2016; Benmayor, 2008) and empowering photography (Savolainen, 2009). What these participatory action research and production strategies share in common is the engagement, inclusion and empowerment of the learners in the production process of media content. By curating a context where the camera becomes a tool for the young people to express themselves and where their expressions are taken seriously by an adult world, the participants are encouraged to develop an active and questioning relationship to their environment, supporting the emergence and deepening of their self-esteem and -efficacy. These methods of empowerment have been previously applied to a number of different vulnerable groups like marginalized youth (Pienimäki & Kotilainen, 2020) and refugees (Cun, 2020; McPherson, 2015; Sawhney, 2009).

Study design

Our research interest in this study is directed towards the question how space (as an enlived environment) can be used for pedagogical practice to support production agency that builds upon developing agency among marginalized youth. Our object of study are the activities carried out in the context of informal learning at a culture centre. With a focus on the affordances of space, we will identify different situations that are of pedagogical relevance, to arrive at an increased understanding of how production agency can be supported with regard to spaces available.

Research questions

Our research interest focuses on the pedagogical support of young people's place-based production competence in cases of developing agency. Our research question is the following: How is production agency constituted and supported in the production space? In particular, we ask how to sustain pedagogy to support agency in production space in the work with young learners with developing agency.

Our main aim is to put forward the concept of a 'production space' that we regard to bear important implications for media education. In particular, we want to examine the role of the production space with regard to a non-formal pedagogy applied to marginalized youth. This research objective entails a theoretical objective of conceptualizing relevant dimensions that render relevance to the pedagogies of production that is often examined as part of wider frameworks than as an object of study in its own right. It also includes an aim of outlining pedagogical practice drawing on previous models but taking the developing agency into account.

Context

Our observations derive from material collected in Fall 2020 at a film club in a suburban area of Sweden's next largest town. The film club, run by two experienced film educators, takes place every week in a local cultural centre and invites local children to participate in their leisure time. It is an open workshop and there are no other commitments for the children more than to show up. The initiative for a regular pedagogical activity was taken by the municipal culture centre that invited an association working with film pedagogy to organize the film club. The objective was to develop activities that would attract children to the newly built culture house and thereby develop ownership in the building and the activities taking place there. The suburb is defined by the police authority as one of the three 'exposed areas' in town, which means that there are a

number of major social problems such as a high criminality rate and experiences of socio-economic injustice.

Opened in 2019 next to a local public square and housing a local library and office space, the culture centre is characterized on the web page run by the municipality as 'your new living room'. With regard to the modern, sententious architecture created by a renowned architecture studio, the idea of a casual living room may, however, seem far away from the experiences of the inhabitants in the area that is now under rapid gentrification. The building's facade imitates a grandiloquent front curtain of a theatre scene, and inside the building, the decor of which won a Swedish design prize in 2020, is marked by large concrete surfaces and wide space. Neverthelss, the film club had access to a big entrance hall, a cinema with 150 seats and equipped with professional sound and light technology, media studios for music and film production and dance studios.

The children taking part in the film club were local children living in the area. The youngest among the regularly attending 10 participants was 7 years old and the oldest 14 years old. For all the children, no matter what specific living situation, socio-economic injustice and criminality is part of their everyday life. The children learn from the beginning that some people get more possibilities than others and this inequality is affecting the children's self-esteem and what roles are possible to imagine themselves taking in society in the future.

The film activities build on the Visual Practice model (VP model) where educators seek to encourage the participants to identify, strengthen and articulate their own interests, skills and ideas (Sternö & Björk, 2017). The children initiate different activities and then get the task to film them. The camera is seen as a tool to experiment with, aiming to visualise the children's view on the different activities. The filmed material is typically projected on the screen in the cinema and the group discusses what they see. The aim on a more profound level is to emphasize the children's own perspectives and acknowledge these as something important, something worth spending time with. Another dimension of the project is to show the childrens' visualisations to a public audience. This is aiming towards the children to articulate their minds and views in a wider context.

Data and methodology

Our data consists of descriptions of situations in pedagogical activity, recalled by educators involved in creating the interactions on site. A unit of analysis is a 'critical incident', which refers to a situation that seems as relevant with regard to the research topic. We thus approach situations of interaction with the help of the critical incident analysis, originally developed for self-reflection in teachers' education (Tripp, 1993). In a critical incident, something happens, and

it is the task of the analysis to find out the internal structures of the situation. The educators begun to collect critical incidents cases by identifying occurrences that had something to do with the environment. In these cases, something pedagogically important and potentially transformative happened.

The critical incidents were subjectively selected by the authors and reconstructed afterwards, based on their own observations in the situation. The cases were selected with a special focus on the environment by asking how the choice of place affected the perceived activity and paying attention to the involved persons' relationship to the venue. After the critical incidents had been collaboratively written down as narratives, they were grouped according to their relationship to the physical room where they had happened. This way, we could identify three types of environments that had the ability to form the positionings and agencies of the involved: the culture centre building (inside), the public square (outside) and spaces in negotiation (in-between).

Two of the authors were, as educators of the film club, involved in creating the situations. The third author had not been in contact with the informants and was not involved in the interaction but adopted a role of an external analyst of the data, thus interpreting and validating the observations retrieved from the critical incidents from an outsider perspective. The combination and dynamic dialogue of insider and outside approaches provided the researchers thus with a possibility to analyse the material from both emic (internal) and etic (external) perspectives.

Situations discussed in the empirical part were reproduced with respect to increased anonymity of the children involved in the activities (cf. Pienimäki & Kotilainen, 2018). When situations occurred, the children were not known that the specific occurrences would later be studied by researchers, but the children were informed about the research intent at the beginning of the film club activities in general and the educators discussed with them what research is and why it is being done. As many children's parents were in a vulnerable position and they could not be reached and a typical research consent approach was neither applicable nor appropriate. Because of these reasons, keeping the persons' anonymity is of high priority to us and we are describing the situations by remaining at the most general level possible and not disclosing any details that would refer to the actual individuals.

Analysis of cases

Our analysis focuses on three venues of production at the film club: extern to the culture centre, within the culture centre building, and spaces that are located in-between these two. All these venues evoke different types of agencies that unfolds in addition, in the interaction between participants and workshop leaders, a playful and experimental production space is created to

enable the production of video material. The core challenge of the film club pedagogy is how to invite children to produce something in different rooms, drawing on the existing agency that the room evokes.

Outside: Searching for self-imposed rules

At the first meeting with the participants in early September, the educators learned that the children were actually younger than anticipated. The children were dissatisfied with the formal arrangement the educators had set up and exclaimed that it was like at school. The children's reject made educators to discover cycling:

> 'Our plans did not pan out as we had wished and afterwards we stayed outside for a bit and talked about our experience and discussed how to plan ahead. There we met a few of the participants who were cycling about. So we asked them about their cycling and they said that they did it all the time and that they enjoyed it a lot. We thought about ways of building on this and came up with the idea of mounting a camera to their bicycles. For the next session we ran with that idea.'

This is why the filming activity was built upon an activity that the young people, who were all boys in this case, were already familiar with – an activity that was meaningful to them. Together, an idea was agreed upon: to use a camera mounted onto the bicycle. Here, a new layer was added to the activity that the boys had been regularly engaged in. The participants got to figure out by themselves how to mount the camera onto a bicycle, the educators only helped if they asked for it and if it was absolutely necessary. They self-organized and took turns to ride around with the camera. In this situation their roles in relation to the center went from being a potential nuisance to being expert technicians and researchers.

Cycling normally used to take place in the public square that is a public place open to everyone. Filming disrupted the conventional activity by turning the common activity into something an act of media production. When this was noticed, there were uncertainties from some young people who were not part of the workshop regarding why the participants were filming. There was also a mistrust among them towards the adults who ran the workshop. What if the workshop leaders would be collaborating with the police? Some of the older participants told the others not to film people's faces. Accordingly, when they cycled through one of this street, they covered the camera with their hand, applying a kind of self-imposed rule of ethics. When the film material was edited, the workshop leaders asked the cyclists to say something about what they enjoyed about cycling, but they were hesitant because they were not sure where or how the material would be used later and they did not want to be identified. Together, the educators and participants came up with the solution for them to use a voice changing app, which worked for them and they had fun with the app.

Inside: Claiming a room for oneself

The outside environment appeared to the participants as more the young people's environment, while the inside of the building was the adults' world. Inside the culture centre, the cinema room architecture, like a classroom, had a set of unspoken rules about how to behave. There are rows of seats facing the stage and the screen. The participating children know what is expected from them: to sit down and listen and be quiet. The pedagogical challenge is thus to invite the children to develop agency in this room: to become the ones producing the content *for others* to sit down and take part of – transitioning from the sitting audience to creators.

> 'The younger children adapt quickly. When they first arrived in the film club, they said they had never been in the cinema, but only after one session in the film club they had taken the stage. During the film screenings, when we watched all the children's work from the workshop and expected everybody to pay attention and show respect to each other's work, the tweenie boys had another strategy to act out and create agency – disruption. They run in and out of the room. They brought a loudspeaker and played either sound from porn films, fart sounds or racist speeches with the intention to interrupt the collective activity. This was a strategy to draw attention to themselves, but it was not the kind of agency we strove for.'

During the semester the educators report a change in the tweenie boys behavior in the film club. During the first weeks, they could throw garbage onto the floor, but the more they spend time in the room and create activities that are relevant to themselves, the less they repeat this kind of activity. At one session they suddenly staged a situation in the cinema:

> 'The boys suggested bringing a ping pong table into the cinema theatre. Ping pong is a common activity in the after-school club in another room in the culture center. One boy gave instructions to everybody to move the table into the room. We could see that this was not a way to try to disrupt collective activities but rather a strategy to organize a collective activity. They placed the table in the middle of the room. They turned off the lights and put one single spotlight from above onto the ping pong table. This created a very dramatic setting. They chose two children to play and ordered another child to be a DJ and play music. Suddenly, the children had initiated and staged a visually dramatic situation and everybody spontaneously brought out cameras and started filming, because they had created a visually interesting moment that all of us thought would be worth documenting.'

Another example of agency in the room is when the children during a session on a rainy day wants to play football inside in the cinema:

'The cinema is not a room for football. But one of the children who had never taken initiative before suddenly suggested to play football inside, and all children went for it. The question emerged how we could stage football play inside the room without breaking any lamps, equipment and windows: if we break something the whole film club might be in danger, since we might not be allowed to use the room anymore. Again, the children and workshop leaders had a collective problem to solve. How could we do this with respect for the room? One of us workshop leaders asked one of the tweenies who had earlier been disruptive to organize this. The boy collected everybody. He marked a line where everybody had to wait for their turn. He turned off the light in the room. He organized the filming: two children shoot from different angles. He gave another child the task to play music. He controlled that everybody gets the same amount of time with the ball on stage. The result: The children had acted out their ideas with care and taken the responsibility for the group and the room. They used and had activated the room in a responsible way.'

'Activating a room' through self-initiatied reclaims is a key for developing ownership of a room. The educators are positioned close to the participants' play, not controlling it but inserting ideas and suggestions that may – or may not – be accepted by the children. At first, the educators noticed that children tended to make things that they thought were expected from them, and developing a relationship of their own required that they spent time experimenting with their surroundings.

In-between: Disruptive transfers

In the creator-space-relationship the spaces of being 'in between' are of particular importance, as the meanings ascribed to spaces are then under negotiation and the roles of the creators in a flux. Basically, two kinds of in-between spaces were mentioned in the workshop leaders' observations: First, rooms with no articulated identity, similar to wasteland that no one owns, or a non-space (see Auge, 1995), could be reclaimed, used for one's one purposes and turned into one's own. Second, transitions between the established rooms and, accordingly, production spaces, turned out to be important.

During the strict covid-19 restrictions, the film club had to move out from the culture centre, and when it was too cold and rainy, together the participants and workshop leaders discovered an outside room that turned out to be of particular importance to them: the rooftop of a garage. It was a huge parking lot, an open space with a 300-degree view from above of the children's local area. There were almost never any cars parked there and shoppers of the nearby grocery store did not spend time there, so it was an empty space to fill. However, the garage was also a backdrop for another type of activity: drug dealing. With the drug dealing came sellers, buyers, security

guards and the police. With regard to the fact that the participants of the film club were sort of living in two worlds, the official world of order and the specific world of their areas of living, the rooftop had special significance.

> 'We brought cameras and drums on us. We thought: the architecture is designed for cars, but now we run, dance and film with children and cameras in shopping carriers. Through noise, laughter and play, we created new possibilities and new associations in this space. We often returned to the rooftop regarding it as "our" space. We did not have to be careful about expensive technique or furniture, or keep our voices down as in the culture centre. Here we could move around and be as noisy as we wanted. The children had many ideas about how to enter the space – they wanted to play football and dance.'

The workshop leaders used the public square for spontaneous public screenings of the films. They took out a projector and a loudspeaker onto the balcony of the culture centre and projected the children's films on the ground, on the opposite buildings: the garage, the dentist's office and on the roof of a fish shop. The finished films were shown in the cinema several times; to all the participants of the film school, to family members of some of the participants and to a policeman who we invited because some of the participants had asked if he could make an appearance. The screening became to make a statement about who and what deserves to be shown in such a formal setting.

Showing a film marks a transition from a shared private space into a public space, potentially open to everyone. In this potentially public space the learners are seen as authors and, if this has not been the case before, turned into creators. The outcome of their collective work is acknowledged, in particular by those who have been representatives of the dominant culture and power structures (adults in the public sphere, policemen in surveillance of the area). Public shows thus constitute an in-between space where power structures are potentially disrupted or even turned (upside) down: the in-betweenness of the congent production space that emerges through public display enables the transformation from a disturbing actor within a place to an actor with an author identity.

Supporting agency in the production space

The physical locations described above entailed both institutionally regulated and vernacular rooms, in which both adult- and youth-initiated processes were feasible. Outdoors, the educators employed youth-initiated strategies in an institutionally regulated place; through cycling, an activity mastered and 'owned' by the youth, the educators could discover and introduce an entry into the creation of a youth-driven, more inclusive production space. Indoors, the physical locations were largely defined by the adults, but by the activation strategy it was possible to introduce the creation of agency in the cinema theatre. In the rooftop garage, the learners could

choose between institutional and vernacular uses, and by choosing the latter, they could claim the place for themselves. In all cases, a domestication of the space took place, and its central components were related to harnessing the individual, physical, symbolic and transformative inclusions imposed by the place.

Based on the critical incidents described in the previous section, we can say that the strategic creation of a production space on an agency-supporting basis for youth includes three phases, depicted in Table 1. First, an exploration of existing agencies in a given physical location is needed, to identify how individuals are positioned, that is, what kind of individual, physical and symbolic 'rules' are inpinged by the place onto the participants, and to find out where and to which extent their agency is at its most authentic. We call this phase as the *exploration of space*. Cycling on the public square turned out to be such an activity; the young boys had developed an activity that enabled them roles and positions where they could enact.

Second, the place needs to be re-discovered in a way that empowement can be supported by minimizing restrictions of the place. This phase is called the *activation of space*. In this phase, the workshop participants typically asked questions such as 'is this allowed' or 'can we…?', seeking for a permission from the adults to do something. Alternatively, they tested boundaries by introducing activities, relying upon adults' reactions. This phase required the educators' active intervention in being contesters of the adult-world and place-induced rules and co-creators of the new rules that were in the making. Transfers were important to create in-between spaces or even non-spaces in which no institutional actor had dominance but where learners could themselves take distance to places and re-settle in the location.

Third, a place-dependent set of rules has to be created, to 'domesticate' the place, or to place it into the idiosynchronic activity that is taking place. We call the reclaiming phase as the *domestication phase*, in which the place is turned from someone else's to 'ours' by rearranging the points of inclusion and exclusion. By re-defining the possible activities in the place, the roles and positions could be reclaimed in a way that enabled a construction of a production space that enabled contesting the rules of the environment enforcing the developing agency. Public film displays, cycling and play turned out to be activities that contributed to creating a production space enhancing the situated production agency of the involved. A typical outcome of the domestication phase was actualized when members of the group took initiative to organize the rest of the group.

Table 1

Phases of creating an inclusive production space

Phase	Aim	Function	Methods	Example

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1. Exploration of space	Initiating interest based on existing agency	Discovering existing agency	Observing youth, identifying agency-producing practices	Cycling
2. Activation of space	Supporting active participation by minimizing restrictions for agency	Lifting exclusions for agency	Questioning and redefining rules, discovering alternatives	Negotiating where to cycle
3. Domestication of space	Claiming the space by setting up new rules	Building new agency	Setting up new shared rules for activity	Cycling transferred indoors

In all places, the educators were attentive to the children's own suggestions on the activities. If the children did not have any ideas, the educators suggested activities, however, drawing on the participants' authentic voice as much as possible. Once the children had suggestions, the educators flexibly adapted to their suggestions. Symbolically, the participants and workshop leaders thus became co-residents in the physical space; the adults did not take the privilege to define what was allowed and what not, but invited the children into this dialogue. This made the common space into a collective learning environment where the pedagogues explored filming and film production together with the children. There was no pre-set idea from the beginning what the end result would be, but rather it at all times built upon the children's activities.

Generally, the workshop participants did not show unprompted initiative in encounters with adults. At home, they were educated to obey their parents and their elderly; at school, they were typically seen as under-accomplishing pupils not living up to expectations, and at public spaces, their 'hanging-around', with any spontaneous noises or disturbances of the prevailing order, was defined as disruption. However, in play, the children's innate agency became better actualized. The films became different inside the building, in the formal and institutional settings, from the outside, that was more negotiable with the children's interests and gave more space to their own agency. The critical incidents showed that spaces are gradually domesticated; ownership is acquired, and with ownership comes agency that leads into play and, finally, into production of film material. By interatively and consistently opening up horizons through dialogue where these young people can discover a position within the order imposed by their environment, their agency to act and, further, level up themselves to the role of a creator through filming, could be supported.

Discussion

The cases presented above tell us about the pedagogical use of space, putting forward an important question of how to make use of the conditions or, in particular, strengths of the room to build and strengthen the agency of media producers with more or less feeble underlying agency. Learners show higher agency in places that are less formal and pre-defined and that thus leave more freedom for the learners to make their own choices from their positioning as a child, or a person, or a citizen.

As the outside settings call for less guidance and control than the formal settings that impose some institutional codes on the learners, educators can make more use of spaces that naturally invite into play and experimentation. The children were waiting less for the adults' initiative outside, while inside the building the children's own initiative needed to be consciously supported. Educators need to be conscious of what kind of codes environments such as the public square or a culture institution imply for the learners involved and act accordingly. The pedagogical action is a constant fluctuation between controlling and not controlling; encouraging activities that naturally derive from the young people themselves, based on their already formed agencies, and lifting restrictions for agency or minimizing the role exlusive structures.

The idea of three-phased inclusive strategies for inducing production spaces that invite young people, especially those in marginalized conditions, to find ways of producing media material in their own right, is also worth discussing in the formal contexts of schooling. Questions of how schools, as physical locations but also symbolic spaces, create exclusions by enabling certain types of production spaces while, at the same time, prohibiting others. As mentioned at the beginning of the article, the misalignment of formal media production programs with the naturalized creative environments of the youth can be overcome by actively employing the concept of production space, as it transgresses the formal and informal sectors of learning and enables reconfiguring the production context for the benefit of young media makers.

Conclusion

In this article, we examined the role of space in creating empowering film pedagogy with marginalized youth. We introduced two ideas. First, we outlined a theoretical concept of production space that enables the content creator's creatorship. Second, we found that the production agency leans on the pre-existing civic or individual agency that is evoked by the physical room, with all its material and symbolic implications, which we conceptualized as a three-phase pedagogical strategy aiming at empowerment, including the exploration, activation, and domestication of space.

The idea of production space may be fruitfully applicable to other contexts, and should be further examined, both theoretically and empirically. For example, in the context of schools, seeing teachers as curators and generators of production spaces would make us better aware of the

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multiple effects of space and its potential for learning. Our findings point out that the pedagogues' willingness to pivot and reimagine spaces in ways that empower marginalized youth entails great potential, and that the generation of engaging production spaces is largely dependent on the young people's own activity. Advancing theoretical and empirical study of production skills, which always appear in a specific (media[ted]) environment, will increase our understanding of the activities that will go beyond the specific area of film pedagogy and be of increasing importance in the 21st century citizenship, as the production of messages and pertinent action – produsership or prosumership – becomes more and more common.

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