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## Participatory Culture at the Echo Park Film Center

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### Abstract

The Echo Park Film Center, a Los Angeles nonprofit media education organization, teaches underprivileged youth how to comprehend and make media in order to empower them to speak and be heard. Due to the organization's nonmainstream media courses and its connection to its community, the Center is able to create a participatory and socially inclusive environment that teaches young people a particular form of media-making and comprehension. In this article, I explore the participatory culture created at the Echo Park Film Center through an observational study of its "Origins" course and a contextual analysis of the organization's methods and philosophy.

*Keywords:* media literacy, after-school program, filmmaking

Media literacy has become the primary way to educate young people and concerned adults about the structures behind media-making, media's relation to society, its language, and its significance. At the same time, media literacy includes learning to create and use media. Instead of shielding young people from exposure, media literacy practices provide them with the skills necessary to confront, deconstruct, and actively engage with the material. Organizations and private programs continue to emerge to engage young people in media literacy and creative production (Collins and Halverson 2009, 5). Media literacy educators promote media comprehension among young people, yet have the freedom to define their own conceptions of media literacy. Due to the dynamic ever-changing quality of media and technology and the broad definition of media literacy (NAMLE, 2007), programs vary in concentration, motives, and priorities. The Echo Park Film Center (EPFC)—a nonprofit, neighborhood organization in Los Angeles—specializes in nonmainstream media-making, and promotes alternative filmmaking and exhibition. EPFC enhances art and cultural education through its media education classes for neighborhood youth. The social ramifications that the EPFC hopes to achieve are best summed up in the Center's mission statement:

We feel it is imperative that more members of marginalized and underserved communities become active, empowered participants in the creation and dissemination of experimental, documentary and narrative film in order to truly

reflect the many voices and visions that make up the fabric of contemporary American life. (Echo Park Film Center, par. 1)

The Center's commitment to empowering disenfranchised youth through nonmainstream media practices gives these young people the opportunity to politically, socially, and culturally engage in their community. The EPFC creates a participatory environment by incorporating the importance of its local community into its courses on media-making and comprehension, which this article illustrates through an observational study of its "Origins" course.

The EPFC has been located in Echo Park, Los Angeles, at the corner of Alvarado and Sunset since 2002 and is run by a group of volunteers. The Center functions in four ways: as a space to screen experimental or progressive movies, a filmmaking classroom, a retail store, and a home to film festivals. Executive director, Paolo Davanzo, and his former student, Ken Fountain, founded the EPFC in order to combine activism with education through filmmaking for the community. It was established as an outgrowth of Davanzo's traveling film festival, the Polyester Prince Road Show, and created in honor of his deceased activist parents. The social justice and experimental filmmaking roots of this organization continue to frame how it operates and teaches media education (Davanzo and Marr, pers. comm.).

In this article, I position the EPFC and its objectives within a larger discussion of how it situates itself as a microcinema in comparison to Hollywood media industries and how that has an impact on the

class it teaches and the types of media that are used in its courses. Media are not transparent tools but are intermediary technologies with social and cultural contexts. Hence, if media are subjective and dependent on the social and cultural contexts in which they are made and viewed, being media literate is also a subjective process that relies on social and cultural understandings and mandates. Media literacy scholar, Sonia Livingstone, contends: media literacy “comprises a set of culturally regulated competencies that specify not only what is known but also what is normatively valued, disapproved or transgressive” (2009, 192). The context of the EPFC gives insight into the “Origins” course’s approach to media education, which includes an emphasis on the social aspects of media literacy—media-making as a social process, and media as texts with meanings and messages that reflect and influence society.

Once the context of the organization and its media preferences are established, the article presents an observational study of a twelve-week course, titled “Origins,” taught at the EPFC to young people, ages twelve to nineteen. I provide examples and analysis of class discussions and assignments to demonstrate how the class operates and the critical thinking about media and community that it fosters. Next, I take an even closer look at how one particular student adapted to the participatory culture and media comprehension methods of the EPFC through the “Origins” course.

The EPFC fosters a *participatory culture* through its emphasis on the social and interactive components of media creation, use, and reception. Henry Jenkins explains: “Participatory culture shifts the focus of literacy from individual expression to community involvement” (2009, 6). He defines *participatory culture* as one in which people are easily able to engage in artistic expression and civic participation, with a strong support system for creating and sharing with others the work and knowledge that they feel matter (2009, 5-6). Jenkins suggests that after school and extra-curricular programs, like the EPFC, facilitate participatory learning environments (2009, xiii). He argues that both critical understandings and production are socially regulated processes:

The social production of meaning is more than individual interpretation multiplied; it represents a qualitative difference in the ways we make sense of cultural experience, and in that sense it represents a profound change in how we understand literacy. In such a world

youth need skills for working within social networks, for pooling knowledge within a collective intelligence, for negotiating across cultural differences that shape the governing assumptions in different communities, and for reconciling conflicting bits of data to form a coherent picture of the world around them. (2009, 32)

Due to the EPFC’s pedagogical focus on community, the diverse mix of students, the staff’s preferences for experimental and nonmainstream media, and the various field trips and speakers invited to take part in the courses, the EPFC pools its collective knowledge and negotiates cultural differences through its media education courses by creating a collaborative, social, and participatory environment to learn about media. The EPFC is a communal space that has the potential to generate critical thinking and social participation through media education because of its philosophy, approach, and emphasis on local awareness.

### Origins

The Echo Park Film Center directors and teachers allowed me to sit in and observe their Spring 2011 youth filmmaking class: “Origins.” The four teachers created the theme of the class and the concurrent curriculum. All four teachers were under thirty years old, two of them had previously taken classes as youth and worked their way up from teaching assistants to teachers, and the other two had college degrees in the arts and worked as part of the EPFC staff. The teachers who chose to work at the EPFC were hired by Davanzo and his partner, Lisa Marr, and share the EPFC’s promotion of outreach, as well as their appreciation for experimental work. All four teachers are active experimental filmmakers and have taught EPFC classes before. However, it was the first time the directors stepped back and let the teachers fully manage the class. The teachers chose “Origins” as the theme for the class because it combined their interests and specialties, while aligning with other EPFC projects. They saw this class as a way to explore the origins of Los Angeles’s Native American culture (two of the teachers were of non-Californian Native American descent), and its native plants and wildlife environment. At the same time, they would teach the class about the origins of storytelling and filmmaking. In-class and homework projects included cyanotypes<sup>1</sup> and pinhole cameras<sup>2</sup>, performing one’s own origins story, and writing one’s own lexicon. For the first four weeks of

class, the teachers would show different experimental and documentary films and clips—such as work by avant-garde artist Michael Snow, or documentaries such as *The Garden* (2008)—hold discussions about the screenings, and assign small creative assignments. Then, students would spend the middle four weeks discussing their main film assignments and checking out equipment to shoot their projects. The last four weeks would be spent editing and finishing up the films. Workshops on the weekends and field trips throughout the twelve-week period supplemented the course. Two teachers were paired up to teach a class of students on Wednesday afternoon, and two teachers were assigned Friday's separate class of students. The teachers would choose their assignments and screening lists as a foursome and bring the separate classes together on the weekends. Both classes consisted of about twenty students, ages twelve to nineteen, from local private and public schools. The classes were racially and ethnically mixed. The ratio of male to female students was fairly even. The students in the Friday class skewed older and had taken more classes from the EPFC before. The media education strategies I observed during the twelve-week course demonstrate how the Echo Park Film Center produced media literacy education that reinforced collaboration, experimentation, and critical thinking.

### Methodology

In order to complete my case study of the Echo Park Film Center, I sat in on both the Wednesday and Friday courses and weekend workshops to observe and take notes on the teaching strategies and class dynamics. In addition to my observational study, I also interviewed the teachers with a recorder before the course began, in the middle of the course, and after it ended. These interviews gave me insight into how the teachers perceived the course at different stages, the preparations they made before the course, and their opinions on the student work and dynamics. I also interviewed the co-director, Marr, to supplement a 2007 interview I completed with her and executive director, Davanzo, on contextual information about the EPFC and its relationship to its community. The students received anonymous surveys at the beginning, middle, and end of the course to write about their experience with the EPFC, how they felt about the course, and what they took away from the course. In addition, I was given access to their final projects and was able to observe the set up and exhibition of their final screening.

### Echo Park Microcinema in Los Angeles

The Center, as a filmmaking cooperative, resides in Los Angeles, a city in which Hollywood and the entertainment industry pervade media arts. According to the organization's website, the directors conceive of the EPFC as a *microcinema* (Echo Park Film Center, par. 1). The term *microcinema* originated from David Sherman and Rebecca Barten, curators of the Total Mobile Home Microcinema in San Francisco in the early 1990s (Conway 2008, 61). Since then, the term, *microcinema*, has been used to describe nonprofit or for-profit small, temporary or permanent film- and video-viewing spaces with "intimate setting[s]" (Conway 2008, 61). Film scholar Kyle Conway situates his discussion of microcinemas within a discursive history of juxtaposing big and small media. In the 1970s, William Schramm designated media with a complex industrial and technological context, such as television, as big media while he interpreted small media to include simpler visual and auditory media, such as film slides and programmed texts (Conway 2008, 60). According to Conway, thirty years later, Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ali Mohammadi reconceived of small media as political in nature because it is understood "as participatory, public phenomena, controlled neither by big states nor big corporations" (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi 1994, 20). Conway contends, "implicitly it would seem, one quality of small media is that they allow people to say things that big media ignore, discourage, or outright disallow, making room for alternate voices or counter-public spheres" (2008, 60-61). The EPFC, as a microcinema within Los Angeles, counters Hollywood big media industry, for the very reasons Sreberny-Mohammadi, Mohammadi, and Conway use to define small media. No government or corporate entity controls the EPFC, and instead it acts as a space for disenfranchised youth from underserved communities to come together and make media. The Center was established with the intent of providing a space in which art and activism could coalesce through education in a manner in which the youth could be producers of their own ideas, which could then be communicated through filmmaking. This contrasts with the process of consumption and thus forces young people to be aware of their roles as consumers of mainstream media. The Center does not try to prevent students from enjoying commercial media but exposes them to alternative screenings of experimental and documentary films as inspiration for making their own

films and thinking outside of the stereotypes and tropes they witness in their day-to-day media consumption.

According to Davanzo, education is the foundation of the organization in which the EPFC's goal is to empower people by giving them media-making training and exhibition access (Davanzo and Marr, pers. comm.). The center offers free classes to youth and free drop-in workshops for senior citizens. The popularity of these classes led to additional classes in which the EPFC charges a minimal fee to adults. The adult classes range from traditional Super 8mm or 60mm<sup>3</sup>, to instruction on how to use computer-editing software. Each twelve-week youth course results in film productions, either individually or collaboratively. The Center loans out the camera equipment to the students so that they are free to capture wherever and whatever they want to shoot during the allotted time they possess the equipment. About seventy percent of the students come from Echo Park and the rest come from neighboring areas such as Boyle Heights, Highland Park, Silver Lake, and even Pasadena. Some of the youth come from Section 8 public assistance homes while others come from wealthy households in the Hills, and so the director believes the pool of students represent a microcosm of Los Angeles. Because of the EPFC's location between the more expensive hillside houses and the eclectic downtown area, a diverse enrollment is possible. Davanzo says, they do not check IDs at the door; their only requirement is that the students are committed to the classes once enrolled in a course that meets once a week for two hours, plus additional editing and one-on-one tutorial work (Davanzo and Marr, pers. comm.).

### Youth Courses

These classes are usually structured around students' media-making projects, but the teachers spend time teaching the critical components of media education by exposing students to other media and encouraging discussions about media. While the EPFC website states that it teaches narrative, documentary, and experimental film, documentary and experimental films were showcased the most in the course I observed due to the teachers' area of expertise. The EPFC's preference for nonmainstream media screenings and alternative media-making techniques provides young people with different perspectives for thinking critically about media. Jenkins states that after-school programs tend to be the best ways for students in the United States to take advantage of a well-rounded media education. He writes, "In these more informal learning contexts,

students may explore rich examples of existing media practice and develop a vocabulary for critically assessing work in these emerging fields" (2009, 109).

The teachers, like the founder, are experimental filmmakers themselves. Experimental filmmakers tend to use techniques that challenge mainstream filmmaking methods, purposely or unintentionally making the audience aware that they are watching a constructed text. Techniques include performers looking into the camera, shaky or unfocused camera work, fragmentation, abstraction, and the juxtaposition of unrelated sounds or images and non-narrative-based structure. These films can be personal and/or political in nature, sometimes with specific messages, and sometimes ambiguous in meaning. The institutional or disciplinary term for this type of filmmaking is *avant-garde*. The term originated to describe artwork during the French Revolution. According to Kathryn Ramey, "Anti-establishment, social outcast artist[s] and thinkers insisted that art must be political. Form and content must challenge the status quo" (2002, 23). Like the avant-garde artists and thinkers of the past, the EPFC draws volunteers and employees that are not only filmmakers but also likeminded in their progressive and often anti-establishment politics, which include an appreciation for environmentalism, nondiscrimination, and equality. The organization's respect for difference fosters an ideal space for critical discussion, while experimental filmmaking draws attention to how films are made and the relationship between the filmmaker and spectator. The aesthetic and political statements in the films exhibited spur questions and comments that eventually inspire students to experiment aesthetically and create media projects that make individual, communal, and social statements.

### Inside the "Origins" Course

Due to the philosophy and approach of the EPFC, which encourage experimental and activist media, the teachers had to find ways to personally connect the media and subject matter to the students' lives. According to Gianna Cappello, Damiano Felini, and Renee Hobbs, media literacy education should embody three related objectives in order to balance critical readings with connections to students' mediated lives (2011, 71). These objectives manifested in different forms within the "Origins" case study due to the organization and teachers' prioritization of nonmainstream media and media-making techniques, and the class subject matter of "Origins." The authors argue that critical

thinking about media should be taught in congruence with “students’ lived media experience” (2011, 71). In other words, students’ preferences for popular culture and media use outside of the classroom should be incorporated into the classroom learning experience that includes thinking critically about abstract cultural, social, and economic power structures that affect their media preferences. There was little room for discussions about popular culture in the “Origins” course; however, the educators did integrate their teachings about media-making and the “Origins” subject matter into the lives of the students by focusing on local history and environment in media examples and on weekend field trips. These experiences were supplemented by discussions of more abstract notions like understanding the complexities behind representations and media’s relationship to local history and the environment.

The teachers deliberately chose to ignite debate and discussion about a field trip to a local pow-wow at California State University Long Beach put on by the Native American organizations at the school. During the field trip, the EPFC students shared cameras and film to document the event. After the event, a newspaper editor from the college paper, *Union Weekly*, wrote an editorial titled “Pow Wow Wow Yippee Yo Yippy Yay” that condemned the pow-wow as commercial, inauthentic, and clichéd (Kelly 2011). During both Wednesday and Friday courses, a teacher read the article out loud to discuss what the students thought of both the field trip and the article. Cappello, Felini, and Hobbs’s second media literacy objective states that pleasure should be included in students’ awareness and reflection about their media experiences (2011, 71). At the beginning of the discussion, students in both classes wavered between agreeing with the news article because they too felt that the pow-wow was commercialized, and disagreeing because they found the experience enlightening and pleasurable though it had commercial elements. Some students stigmatized commercialization as something that did not resonate with an “authentic” Native American experience. The teachers explained how pow-wows were different than Native American sacred ceremonies and that pow-wow customs have a history of including commercialized events. The students then became more specific about what they found pleasurable and what they did not like, which led to discussions about what an “authentic” Native American experience and representation means.

Eventually, the class moved into a recurring discussion topic about whether or not knowing the

authenticity of texts and experiences impact pleasure and cultural value. The teachers explained that people often assume that Native Americans must look and act like they did two hundred years ago to be authentic. The dialogue progressed into one about story-telling and documentation, and the students came to a consensus that the college newspaper editor did not properly research the facts and context of the pow-wow. This discussion had the potential for students to reflect on their opinions and judgments about the event. According to the surveys, field trips were many students’ favorite part of the course, demonstrating the pleasure they received from the experiences, like the pow-wow, that spurred critical discussion and self reflection about their own biases, social and cultural biases, representations, and documentation. Instead of pulling from students’ everyday media experiences, the teachers produced a communal media experience by setting up the field trip that may not have had a direct impact on the students’ lives but took place in their local community and directly impacted the local Native American component of the course.

The smaller homework assignments were intended to help the students connect their personal lives to the “Origins” subject matter. For example, in one of the early classes, students had to come to class prepared to perform their own “origins” story for the class. The teachers felt strongly that oral traditions were an important part of teaching the origins of media-making and the local Tongva tribe’s historical culture. Andrew Burn (2009) likewise emphasizes the importance of teaching oral and performance methods in media literacy education. He used the word “Lit/oracy” in the title of the first chapter of his book, *Making Media*, because reading and writing literacy metaphors that explain media comprehension do not include “performance, ephemerality [and] improvisation” (2009, 19). He argues, “These characteristics describe much better than the literacy metaphor what kind of work happens when students use digital camcorders, or when they meet as avatars in an online roleplaying game, or when they act a part in a digital film” (2009, 19). The origin story assignment was one of many homework assignments that offered students an opportunity to share personal connections to the class material and emphasized the importance of performance and oral stories in a course about media.

Teachers relied on students to generate much of the class discussion and come up with their own project ideas. Discussions often moved into tangents based on

student interests and questions. The teachers welcomed students to screen their choices and also helped to generate dialogue based on student contributions. Cappello, Felini, and Hobbs's third objective focuses on how the media literacy educator must act as a "scaffolder of learning," which means, "In a way s/he must learn to step back and cede to the students part of her/his authority" (2011, 72). Teachers still administer and guide tasks and targets but take on more supportive roles as opposed to authoritative ones (2011, 72). The EPFC teachers approached learning in the same way, though at times they had difficulties with the freedom and responsibility they gave students. The EPFC used the theme of "Origins" as a starting point for creating dialogue, discussion, debate, and creative projects, but some students did not completely understand this theme. Teachers began with local and personal questions of belonging and ownership, such as, "Where are you from?" and, "Whose story is it to tell?" Students questioned the "Origins" theme on a few occasions throughout the course. One female, a nineteen-year-old veteran student of EPFC, Cynthia, asked about the theme and its relevance multiple times<sup>4</sup>. The teachers in Wednesday's class opened up the question to the whole class, but the students often could not completely articulate how the theme was related and preferred to remain quiet.

While most students seemed to grasp the theme through their final projects, the final class evaluation after the exhibition led to heated discussions in which some students were quite vocal about their frustrations with this particular theme. One thirteen-year-old, female student, who had not been especially talkative during the course said, "If we had been better guided, films would be better and not a bunch of shaky nature films." Another nineteen-year-old, male student, who has taken a lot of EPFC classes, felt that there were not enough personal connections between the projects and students and therefore the projects felt homogeneous. When one teacher asked what the students meant by more guidance, the first student said she would have liked more discussions about the theme, and the male student repeated his desire for more personal connections. These two suggestions demonstrated the students' desire for more structure from their teachers.

While observing the course during the semester, the question about the topic had come up on at least three occasions in the Wednesday class that the female student was a part of, but she and her classmates were reluctant to engage in the teachers' discussions about

it. With regard to the second critique, the homework assignments personalized the topics, but some students did not partake in the assignments. Students engaged in the first assignment of performing their own origins story for the class, but then slacked off. Very few students made their own lexicons, brought in biodomes, or made maps of their environments. Perhaps more structure from the teachers in terms of requiring tasks and reinforcing the theoretical construct of the course would have helped the students feel more engaged. At the same time, the students were given many chances before the final review of the course to ask for more theoretical and structural guidance. This final, open evaluation discussion provided the students with the chance to think critically not only about media but also about the course. The teachers respected the students' critique and engaged with it by asking students follow up questions to their responses and requesting suggestions from the students on how to improve in future courses.

### **Kurt's Experience**

One particular student demonstrated social growth through the participatory culture and personal responsibility afforded to him during this course. Kurt, a thirteen-year-old, male student in Wednesday's class, had a difficult time interacting with the other students when the class began. According to the teachers, this was Kurt's second class, and he had caused many disruptions in their previous class. He spoke out of turn, had issues with sharing, feared germs and chemicals, and had trouble trusting others and equipment. Early on in the class, he had an outburst about the footage he believed was his, and he interrupted people when he wanted to speak. He had about five different final project ideas and did not seem too interested in other opinions about which one he should choose, though he liked talking out his ideas.

Eventually, Kurt shot two separate films on Super 8mm. The first was inside his home with images of his cat and domestic family spaces without people. The second film was of streets and a park at an accelerated speed. The teachers agreed that this was a big step for him because using actual film seemed too untrustworthy and less reliable than a DV tape<sup>5</sup>, especially because they were allotted such a small amount. The teachers were further surprised when he decided that he would allow his film to be hand processed in the class because there was more risk that something could go wrong than if they sent his film to the lab. Because of his fear of chemicals, he even

allowed a fellow student to do the processing for him. He was in charge of sitting outside the dark room and timing each step. Teachers and students, who were going back and forth between rooms close to the dark room, stressed him out because they were allowing in light. He also was exact and panicked about making sure the student in the dark room stuck to his timing.

Kurt's film came out nicely, and ultimately, he was excited about the digital editing process. However, one of the teachers suggested that he choose to edit by hand and exhibit the film with an actual projector. Kurt dismissed this idea until the teacher set it up to show him. Because he had two films that he wanted to meld together the teacher showed him what they would look like superimposed with two projectors. This brought nineteen-year-old Cynthia over to admire the work. She asked Kurt many technical questions and she watched his film with admiration. Kurt seemed to appreciate her interest. Cynthia tended to stick to herself and not partake in Wednesday class discussions about projects; therefore her interest was especially noticeable. He agreed with the teacher that the live projection was better than a digital cut and chose to take on the stress of playing it live during the exhibition. By this time Kurt was very pleased with his work, incredibly complimentary of others' work, and a major participator in helping to set up the communal exhibition space. By trusting others and taking risks, Kurt not only learned about the social process of media production, but also was able to value others' help and opinions.

Kurt's film project also demonstrates Burn's argument that media education can absolve the tension between "aesthetic detachment" and "sensual proximity" (2009, 12). In Burn's case study, a group of teenage girls created a trailer for Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). They used an older text from a different social and cultural moment to make a trailer in the fashion of horror movies of their contemporary time (2009, 43-56). He writes, "And finally, pleasure here means some kind of accommodation, oscillation, between the uncomfortable remoteness of an old tedious-looking text and the gradual recognition that it is related to the visceral pleasures of the most recent slasher films" (2009, 13). Kurt's project had a similar effect but was done in almost the reverse. The subject matter was something that was close to him, his neighborhood and home interiors, which included images of his cat. However, he used older, less reliable processes and film equipment to create this film. He used black and white film, a Super 8mm camera, hand processing, and live

projection. He also chose to complicate the viewing process by superimposing his exterior environment on his home environment. The final film exhibition featured an intimate portrait of his habitat within an aesthetically removed experimental film.

### Conclusion

The organization and course created a space in which students could think critically and make media that was both close to them and their community. At the same time the course material was also somewhat detached from their lives, whether it was through subject matter that was not personal (i.e., Native American culture) or through experimental or historical filmmaking techniques. By introducing unfamiliar material to the students and finding ways to connect it to students' lives, the EPFC was able to teach Jenkins's definition of negotiation in media literacy. He defines it as: "The ability to travel across diverse communities, discerning and respecting multiple perspectives, and grasping and following alternative norms" (2009, 97). The diverse class of students, teachers, and experimental films and techniques, plus the field trips and invited speakers, created a class environment in which the students were exposed to a variety of media, ideas, people, and aesthetics.

This nonprofit institution's media education strategies demonstrate both production and critical engagement in a social and participatory space. Because of the communal space created by the EPFC staff and participants, many students take multiple classes. It becomes a place for them to learn, feel accepted and respected, and socialize with culturally diverse people. The egalitarian and unconventional nature rooted in this organization fosters a space to question media practices and spotlights youth media projects. By providing students with the freedom and trust to use equipment and by engaging them in discussions about complex topics and problem solving, the EPFC has provided students with communication, critical thinking, and technical skills. It also offers them a communal space to learn how to speak and be heard through visual media tools and informed dialogue about subjects both near and far from them.

### Notes

1. Cyanotype is a photographic printing process in which "paper is sensitized with an aqueous mixture of ferric ammonium citrate and potassium ferricyanide." Students would take various natural and filmic materials, like 35mm

film, and place it on the paper in the sun. The image of the shape placed on the paper will appear as a blue print on the paper. This photo process was developed in the early 1840s by Sir John Herschel, and by the 1870s commercial paper, such as the paper used at the EPFC, was available for retail. (Lawrence and Fishelson 1999, 1199).

2. A pinhole camera is a simple camera that can be made with DIY materials. At the EPFC the teachers taught students how to make them out of film cartridges that they poked small holes into so that the film inside the cartridges can be exposed to light. Then they fastened pens to the cartridges to act as cranks to move the film forward.

3. Super 8mm and 60mm are older film formats that require actual film and processing. These film formats are not as common since the emergence of digital video.

4. The names of the youth have all been changed to protect their privacy.

5. DV tapes are used in video cameras to store digital video. The DV tapes used at the EPFC could hold up to sixty minutes worth of footage which was a significantly greater amount of footage compared to the film rolls students were given, which could only hold about three minutes of footage. Unlike film, DV tapes can be wiped of footage and reused.

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