

REWIND:



Looking back on making videos in Iglulik

It's hot in here. In this stuffy office.

It must be 27 degrees outside and humid. I'm not quite used to the heat here in Thunder Bay at the end of June. I'm trying to reach back only a month ago to the cool, clear reality of my experience in Iglulik, Nunavut. I miss the cold. The light. The laughter...

The plane is shaking. The landing might be rough. We're above the town, but clouds restrict our view. There it is – Iglulik. Sitting on its island in the northwest corner of the Foxe Basin. Inuit have lived here for over 4,000 years. My own history with it dates back only seven, but this place has become a part of me. Memories flood back as we circle the community for another approach to the gravel runway.

There's the crescent-shaped bay with ski-doo's, kamoutiks (sleds), and boats waiting for the summer thaw. There's also the stone church, the spaceship-shaped research

building, the High School, the Co-op, and the house I used to live in. The sea ice looks good too. Lots of snow around too, more than Iqaluit. Going on the land will be easier than I expected.

What adventures are awaiting me? Hunting, fishing, visiting...let alone the adventures making these videos with some of the high school students.

I already know my planned community partner has fallen through at the last minute. Finding someone else to work with us to make these videos will have to be a priority. We might be able to do it all from the high



Around town (research center in background)



Top: Stone church outside
Bottom: Stone church inside

school, but that's not what this project should be like. Community partnership is important in this project and arguably for education in general up here. With the strong history of filmmaking in Iglulik, I'm hoping it won't be too hard to find someone to help us out. It is last minute though.

I'm glad I have a bit of time to figure it out. I'm early and the high school students still have regularly scheduled classes until the end of the week. Block options start on Monday. Each student has signed up for the block option project they want. They have lots to choose from this year – seal hunting, kamoutik making, wrestling, canvas painting, among others. When I was teaching here, we made parkas for our two-week block option. I wonder how many have signed up for the video production block option? It's a good thing I have four days to get settled and organized. I wish I had a full week.

I can't wait to see the Arnatsiaq's. It's been two years since my family and I stayed with them when I was passing through by

dog team. How much can change in two years? Lots – who am I kidding?

Strong headwinds let the plane approach at a slower speed. As soon as the wheels touch the ground we quickly decelerate into a crawl and swing into the airport, before I'm felling really ready. In a town of 1,800 people, I'm bound to recognize people at the airport.

It happens before I expected...

There's Tommy Qaunaq! And Gordie! They're putting out pylons to guide us to the terminal. Tommy's firm handshake, big welcome and huge smile are more of a greeting than I could have asked for. He was a great student, and a bit of a friend. I wonder if the work placement with First Air that he did in our class had anything to do with him getting work there? I wonder how he remembers our class? I wonder if that year had an influence? I wonder if I made a difference?

I know he made a difference to me. They all did. That's part of why I'm back. All of my students made me think a lot about what is important to me as a teacher. In the end,

they, and the rest of the community, taught me a lot about trust, respect, generosity, laughter, and community.

Lorna was also a student of mine who made an impact on me. I call her from the airport. She would come get me but her brother, Mosha, has the Honda. More of my former students are at the airport too. They look older. It makes me feel older. Tommy and I have a moment after unloading the baggage:

"Tommy! How are you?"

"Good, thanks! Welcome back!"

"Thanks. What's new?"

"I have a son!"

"Me too!"

"My son was born November first."

"No way! Mine was born October 31st!"

"Your son is a day older than mine!"

"My son's one day older...I WIN!"

(a few moments of laughter)

"Hugh, you should come over sometime. I have a house now."

"That's great! I'd love to. I'm staying with Annie and Maurice Arnatsiaq, you know, Lorna's parents. 8952. Give me a call."

"O.K!"

Ben's picking up his father, David looks busy. I'll take the taxi. I don't mind paying the five bucks.

When I arrive Piita comes out of the house to greet me. He's a young man now - 15, 16. Yes, a lot can happen in two years. Inside I drop my bag and feel as at home as in my own living room. I turn the corner - the room is full. "Hugh! Welcome back, Cudloona [Kabloona]!" In Inuktitut, Annie repeats, "Everyone, welcome Hugh into our home."

Beaming, I embrace the same family who welcomed me and my family into their home



Me and Tommy Qaunaq

two years ago, and who I knew seven years ago as the family of my student, Lorna. Annie, Maurice, Lorna, Mosha, Lila, Joannasie, Pauloosie, Shannon, Alec, Natalia, Rachel, Kalliraq, Piita, Vera, Leo - over the next few hours I reconnect

with all of them, and others too. I count later - 18 people. Mostly kids, but you would never have known it.

It's 5:30 pm before the dust settles; lots of stories, lots of catching up. I take my bearings; school's out, work is over. Thankfully, my work will have to wait until tomorrow.

As much as I want to have questions answered and details figured out, tonight will be about socializing. I'm offered some stir-fried caribou then a coffee. I'm back on the wagon. Two months ago I quit coffee cold turkey. In a house with a coffee maker that's running almost constantly, why bother putting up a fight? Besides, my little caffeine friend/foe might come in handy if we have late-night editing or early morning shooting.

The clock blinks 2:30 am as I lay my head down for the night. My room glows in the dull light from the meager job the garbage bags are doing keeping the 24-hour light at bay. My body is humming. I don't know if it's the coffee or the excitement. People are still up. I can hear their muffled chatter. Why not? There's still daylight. I'm going to be so dead tomorrow. At least I can sleep in.

Wrong. A voice in Inuktitut wakes me. I don't mind - I love hearing it. It's a beautiful language. It's Maurice waking the kids for school. I wonder how successful he is. I find out a little later when I come out, avoiding the morning rush. Only one is still asleep. Out of three, that's pretty good. It's so hard for kids to go to sleep early when there's light all the time. The warm temperatures also lure the kids out to play on the streets. Baseball, basketball, catch, tag, on

playgrounds, in puddles, you name it. After such a long, cold winter, who wouldn't be tempted to take advantage of the light and warmth when it's here?

I was. Last night walking around with Kalliraq and Joannasie through the dusty streets of Iglulik in the low nighttime light was a great way to spend the evening. But as a result, I'm dead tired. And I couldn't sleep in. My body is in the routine of waking up early with my seven-month-old son. I'd like to shift my clock though – stay up late and sleep in as much as I can. I want to be in the same rhythm as the students. It may be hard. This morning the coffee helps.

Candace is the first one I meet at the high school. She's one of my former student's stepmother and has been a vital link for me. Telephone numbers, contacts, directions, translations, advice – she has done it all for me. And she's always fun to talk to. As the administrative assistant at the high school, she has also been easy to get in touch with. It's great to see her.

Three teachers are still here since when I was teaching here. The turnover rate for teachers here is high. Lots stay only for one year, like me. Lately, though, there has been more stability. This year six are leaving. For a staff of around twelve, 50% is a fairly typical turnover.

Some of the other faces are familiar from two years ago, one of whom is the principal, Brian Kenney. He introduces me to Kristan Chaimbrone. She's young and energetic. Kristan has volunteered to work with me on this block option; I needed to have an official employee of Qikiqtani School Operations (the school board) to supervise the block option. She's already made a video with her class during the year and is eager to learn more about making videos. We've looked at the equipment the school has – two camcorders and a dozen Macs with iMovie and iDVD – and I realized that I could run this block option myself if worst came to worst.

After some introductions and offering an overview of my vision of the video production block option, Kristan and I turn to the task of searching for a community partner. After a phone call, we know that the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC) is out for sure. As our original partner, IBC months ago committed to offering equipment and expertise in exchange for a copy of the videos the students produce. Things change though. As it turns out they had a staff shuffle and are "no longer in a position to help us with our project." The two people slated to work with our project in particular have been let go.



Piita with Shannon in the Amouti



Strike one.

Our first visit is to Nunavut Independent Television (NITV). They were interested in the project, but were anticipating being busy getting ready to shoot their next film, *The Day after Tomorrow* (n.d.).

When Kristan and I arrive, Susan and Madeline, two elders in the community who are the directors for the film, are busy sewing sealskin kamiks (boots), caribou parkas, and a traditional game involving extracting seal bones from a bag using sinew. Both Susan and Madeline only speak Inuktitut, but I'm eager to connect with Susan. She is the elder who came in to teach my parka making block option when I was a teacher. She shows us the props they're working on and together we play a few games pulling the seal bones from the bag to see how many "fish" we've "caught."

Before long, Carol shows up – she's been my contact at NITV. She loves the idea of the project, but as expected, they are just too busy to be involved.

Strike two.

Isuma Productions is the next logical place to turn. With years of filmmaking experience, including the Cannes Camera D'Or and Genie award-winning *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* (2001), Isuma would be an ideal partner. The problem is that when I contacted them months ago, they were anticipating being busy touring their new movie, *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen* (2006). Paul Irgnaut, Isuma's production manager and veteran journalist, is out for the day. We'll have to wait until tomorrow.

Time out. At least it's not a strike.

In anticipation of having to, at the very least, run the first few days on my own, Kristan and I rifle through whatever resources the school has on video production. It's surprisingly good. There are some lesson plans, handouts, and evaluation forms. Some of this stuff is pretty old

though, dating back to the late eighties. I'm struck by how much harder it must have been to make videos back then. The technology today is so much more user-friendly that it makes having a nice, polished, somewhat professional-looking finished product much more of a possibility. I'm starting to get really excited about the videos the students will be making.

After sorting through the resources, and looking at some of what I have brought with me, we come up with a detailed plan for the first few days and a general outline for the rest of the week. I resisted bringing a lot of resources for actually teaching the course. A course taught by me, using resources made in the south, would be dramatically different than one taught by professionals up here.

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To me this difference highlights what education was (and at times still is), and what it could be, up here in Nunavut. Courses used to be taught from a southern perspective, by southern teachers, with southern resources.

Education is in transition in the north with courses that are increasingly relevant, more teachers are Inuit and

teachers from the south are more culturally sensitive, and resources are being developed that are more applicable to living in the arctic. This process of change takes time though, and what matters most is the direction (increased cultural relevance, language, community involvement and control) and speed at which we're traveling. First things first for this project, though – we have to get this thing off the ground!

With Kristan busy getting ready for graduation, I head down to Isuma on my own. Paul is there. I tell him how I'm looking for help making some short films with the six students who have signed up for this block option. I tell him about my background and my motivation for being back to teach this block option. Without any

hesitation, he agrees to, at the very least, work with us in planning the videos, but he'll have to run any more commitment, including using equipment, by Zach Kunuk, the president of Isuma Productions. He says to call back on Monday and we'll figure things out.

A base hit! I wouldn't exactly call it a home run, but the ball is definitely in play. I hope things develop over the weekend.

My plan to get into the same rhythm as the students is coming into effect. After

Four kids show up in the morning. I introduce myself, talk about some of the students I have taught before (some of the kids in this block option are probably relatives), and relate some of my background in teaching. I also talk about how, recently, I've gotten into making videos, both home movies and videos for assignments for my M.Ed. classes. I also mention how I worked on a professional set last year making a short film and now have a job editing videos for educational research.



Ice fishing at Mogg Bay



spending the weekend fishing and hunting with the Arnatsiaq's, I find myself waking up on Monday morning with minimal sleep. Over the course of the weekend, I've probably caught 12 hours of sleep, total. The reward is that I return with maximal memories. We return with 40 fish caught collectively by jigging through ice holes eight feet deep, in sunny, clear weather. It was a remarkable weekend.

Monday. Back to work – day one.

Next, we go through an overview of the next two weeks, including some of the ground rules:

- Films must be less than five minutes long
- Nothing filmed can be illegal
- Filming only happens when supervised
- Permission must be granted by people being filmed

I also discuss the nature of the block option and how it is different than my

portfolio. I explain that they can decide to withdraw at any time from being included in my portfolio, and can still finish their video, and get their two career and technology studies (CTS) credits.

For the rest of the morning we look at examples of videos. One comedy/action (*Ninja Accountant*, 2004), one mockumentary (*The Filliter Project*, 2004), and two alternative videos (*Pact*, 2004; *Death of a Rose*, 2004) were from a DVD of short films (*The Archive Collection*, 2004) made by students who graduated from the film production program at Confederation College, in Thunder Bay. These videos are useful in that they're short films (like the ones we're going to make), they were made by students not much older than the ones in this block option, and they were easy for me to get hold of in Thunder Bay. Two other short films we watch are documentaries. One is an NFB film called *The Last Mooseskin Boat* (1993), part of an anthology (*First Nations, The Circle Unbroken – Video I*, 1993) of 13 films dealing with issues related to First Nations peoples. *The Last Mooseskin Boat* (1993), documents a families' journey preserving traditional knowledge by building and going on a voyage in a 40-foot moose hide boat. The second video, *Nanugjurutiga: My First Polar Bear* (2000), documents 11-year old Enuiki Kunuk's (Zack's son) experience hunting his first polar bear. We also watch a short film made in Kristan's class for AIDS day.

Later, we brainstorm favourite movies, group them into genres (comedy, action, drama, documentary, etc.) and make connections between them. We realize that some movies are hard to categorize and sometimes that makes them better movies – i.e., they're not from a cookie cutter and they make you think. We also talk about what

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makes good movies (acting, directing, story) and make connections to what would be important for us to make a good movie (get good actors, write a good script). We also look at the video-making process: pre-production, production and post-production.

In the afternoon, we go out to the community to visit IBC and Isuma. I have two reasons for doing this: First, some of the students have never been in IBC or Isuma and only have a rough idea of what they do there. In both places, they are able to see equipment, someone editing, sets, props, and meet some of the people involved in film and video work in the community. The second reason is that I want to meet with Zach and Paul at Isuma, with the students

present. I want them to see the students they would be working with. I want them to feel their enthusiasm.

When we get to Isuma, my hopes were high. They get dashed when I find out that Paul had a mishap with his kamoutik over the weekend while fishing and will not be in today or tomorrow. Darn. Zach's in though. I ask him if Paul had mentioned this block

option to him. No. He knows nothing about it.

Luckily I had met Zach seven years ago when one of my students did her work placement at Isuma while they were filming *Atanarjuat* (2001). We met again two years ago. We talked about dog sledding, school, culture, religion, and education. At that time I was thinking about doing graduate work so I asked him what he thought might be worth investigating. He mentioned a couple of ideas, and one of them was looking at how well school prepares students for life outside of school, and in this context, most likely living in Iglulik.

I doubt that he even remembers the conversation. Whether or not Zach

Eric and Robby review some videos



recognizes this project as education that helps prepares students for life outside school, I don't even know. But I do know, after interviewing him that he saw this as an opportunity to be involved in community-based education, with a chance to give back to the community, and pass on skills involved in video production.

After talking about the project, among other things, for an hour or so while the students looked around Isuma, Zach agrees to work with us for the rest of the project. We can meet and work out of Isuma, use their equipment, and he will see who else might be interested in helping out. We're all ecstatic.

I'm so elated I buy everyone a pop. At four dollars a can, it's not a small treat, but worth every penny.

But wait. The rollercoaster has just started. We show up at Isuma the next morning (Tuesday), bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, only to have no one show up for an hour.

Not wanting to waste too much time, we head up to the high school, and cover filming techniques, including:

- Composition – how the different subjects in your frame fit together
- Rule of thirds – how shots generally look better if your subjects and/or horizon lines appear on the vertical or horizontal thirds of your frame
- Types of shots:
 - close-up – head & shoulders, like a news anchor
 - mid-shot – whole person in frame, like a person reporting weather
 - wide-shot – establishing shot of scenery, landscape, or surroundings. Usually wide-angle and/or pan

We also go over the following camera moves:

- Zoom in/out – frame moves in/out on subject using camera zoom

- Dolly in/out – frame moves in/out on subject by moving camera closer/farther from subject
- Pan – rotating camera horizontally or side to side while holding position
- Tilt – rotating camera vertically or up and down while holding position
- Track – camera moves in a sideways motion without rotating, usually on a track or dolly
- Combination / dynamic shots – any combination of the above shots

We then review the videos we had seen on Monday and deconstruct the film techniques they used. Using what they had just learned, the students then practice filming techniques in and around the school. We hook up the cameras to the TV to view their work, and deconstruct it in much the same way we had done with the professional videos. The biggest thing the students learn at this point is how very hard it is to keep the camera steady and that they should use a tripod or stabilizer whenever possible. And it's much better to keep camera movements slow, way slower than you think.

We end the day brainstorming ideas for the content of their videos, based on what we had already learned, their own interest, and time constraints.

The ideas come strictly from the students and at that time we make no commitments to any one idea. I want the students to sleep

on their ideas, and more importantly, I want folks at Isuma to be a part of this critical part of the planning. I have a feeling that things are going to work out at Isuma; we just need to be patient.

The next day (Wednesday), our patience pays off. At 10:00 am, Zach and Paul are ready to go. We look at the brainstorming ideas again, each student saying which three

they would be most interested in. From there we identify two ideas that are most popular with the students. One group of three students will work with Paul and Kristan making a video about someone visiting Iglulik, while Zach and I will work with a group shooting a skateboarding video.

For the next three days (Wednesday, Thursday, Friday), the two groups plan and shoot the raw footage for their videos. The following four days (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday) the groups edit and put the final touches on their work (details to follow). Nine days after beginning this project, the videos are finished and DVD's are distributed. Exhale.

The block option is over, but several questions remain: How did it really go? What went well? What could have been done better? What advice could we give, as a group of teachers, students and professional filmmakers, to other people interested in working on a project like this?

Looking back, several interesting patterns emerged for me after reflecting on

List of ideas the students generated during their brainstorming session:

1. Filming while driving/walking around Iglulik (sped up)
2. Kung fu movie
3. Documentary – interview this year's high school graduates
4. Music video
5. Documentary – circus performers in town
6. Tape a performance of the circus performers
7. Film graduation ceremony
8. Skateboarding video
9. Comedy about coffee
10. Game show
11. Talk show – interview people
12. Mockumentary of the film *Jackass* (people doing stupid things)
13. Documentary about games played in Iglulik
14. Mockumentary about Iglulik
15. Video having to do with preserving Inuit culture
16. Sports – stuff teens like to do
17. Video on Inuit baseball
18. Video about food
19. Comedy about running away from the police

the post-production interviews I did, casual conversations I had, and re-reading the journal I wrote.

First, as the videos progressed, and the shooting began, attendance improved. By the time things were in full swing, not only was attendance consistently near 100%, we had students wanting to work over lunch and well past regular work/school hours. Needless to say, the level of motivation, grounded in ownership, was high.

The group I worked with was keen to learn all aspects of video production, despite the fact that they each had a designated role on the set (e.g. director, camera). They also enjoyed using professional equipment and learning how to use it from professionals. In fact, Jayson Kunnuk, who was originally supposed to work with us at IBC ended up volunteering his time to work on the project and contributed to it in many different ways (including organizing the audio interviews included on the DVD).

Also, Solomon Uyarasuk, who was a high school student when I was teaching in Iglulik, volunteered to come in and show us how to edit our raw footage. For the other group Paul remained their constant advisor throughout the project.

While I am not a professional filmmaker, I did have advice to give throughout the project, based on my skills and experience. I found that a bit of a tricky area to be in. I was constantly balancing giving advice with letting the students have the freedom to film how and what they wanted; balancing product versus process. I wanted the students to learn the skills to make a good

quality video, but at the same time, I didn't want to influence content or style too much. Wrapped up in this is a cultural component where I felt like I didn't want to inhibit any kind of cultural input, whether through content (what to include, language, expression), style (ways of shooting, transitions, framing shots), or any other way.

For example, earlier on in the project, Zach and I were keen to include a storyline component to the skateboarding video documenting how Eric got into

skateboarding, what it's like to skateboard in Iglulik now, and how he hopes to be involved in

skateboarding in the future. As the skateboarding video progressed, and we were nearing the end, it became obvious that we did not have enough time to include the storyline of Eric's involvement with skateboarding, even though we had done all of the legwork to include it.

Part of this had to do with time constraints, but some of it had to do with me not wanting to have too

much influence on what was included in their video. Part of it also had to do with our group having more people come and go in our project. Zach was very involved in the first few days, and then became more involved in other work at Isuma. Jayson came in to help us periodically throughout the project to help us with building props, camera work, audio interviews and technical support. Later, Solomon helped us edit the video.

The other group on the other hand had Paul as a consistent, strong voice

Kristan and Nikita working on some editing



Generally, the students really enjoyed the block option. They seemed to learn a lot and I witnessed their skills progressing firsthand.



The *Sk8boarding in Iglood* crew takes a break outside at Isuma

throughout their project. As an Inuk with years of experience as a journalist, he felt quite comfortable telling his group that their initial idea would need a storyline to make it more intriguing. Their original idea was to videotape going around Iglood by foot, all-terrain vehicle, and truck, speeding the tape up, and dubbing in audio and music. He didn't feel the cultural and ethical sensitivities around giving too much direction, like I did. As a result, my group dropped the storyline, while his group added it in.

Issues around cultural sensitivity are easy to get too wrapped up in. I found I worked best when I had those notions of being culturally sensitive in mind, but at the same time, didn't think about them too much; just relaxed, joked around, and had fun making videos.

Each group's choice of topic influenced how they spent their time. Our group shot a skateboarding video (action/documentary) so we spent more of our time shooting

unscripted skateboarding tricks and building props such as ramps to do tricks. The other group was shooting more of a docu-drama, so they spent more of their time planning and script-writing.

For both groups, editing took a long time. As expected. Isuma is outfitted with one digital editing system, so our group used that system, using Avid software, while the other group shot and edited on Isuma's beta system. Both systems seemed to take about the same time and both seemed to have their share of technical glitches. For example, the group I worked with spent two hours capturing video from the camera to the computer only to find out that the computer was not capturing video, only playing it.

As things were wrapping up, I interviewed each group as well as each professional involved in the project. Also, Jayson offered to audio record my interviews with people working with us at Isuma, and also did one-on-one interview with most of the students, Kristan, and me. The interviews Jayson recorded are available to listen to on the DVD. Many common themes came up during the interviews.

Most everyone agreed that we did not have enough time. Amen. Find me a film crew and I'll find you a group of people that could do with some more time. With that said, while it may seem crazy to those with no experience with filmmaking, two weeks (9 days, technically) is not a lot of time to work from the ground up and produce a five-minute short film. As an experienced professional, Zach agreed that a month would be more ideal, and for a thirty-minute video ready to show to networks and festivals, a year would be needed.

With Zach, Paul, Jayson, and Kristan's advice in mind, I started to think about how things could be structured differently. Ideas and questions popped up during interviews: Could this block option be turned into a course? Run it over the course of the school year, or even a semester. Involve the students in the grant applications. Perhaps

have different students involved at different times, with some only working in pre-productions, script-writing, and making props. Others could be actors, directors, and camera that only work during production. Then later, during post-production still others could work on editing, packaging and distribution. Production companies are busy until their fiscal year end (for Isuma this was March), then after that they are relatively free to pursue other projects like this one. That leaves April, May and June to potentially work full-time with production companies like Isuma.

Another scenario might be to have students shadow a professional on a short film project, then switch and have the professional shadow the students on another short film project.

Another piece of feedback people at Isuma gave is to have the production company more involved earlier on. The way this project came together at the last minute definitely influenced how little Isuma had to do with the groundwork and planning.

Ideally, they should have been involved from earlier on, as was originally planned. Still, as important planning is, many of the professionals working on this project stressed how important it is to remain flexible while making a video. Plan for things, but always be open to change. A lot of the time, the best shots or ideas come up at the time of filming and could not have been anticipated beforehand. There are also many factors outside of your control, especially in the arctic, like weather and logistics.

Generally, the students really enjoyed the block option. They seemed to learn a lot and I witnessed their skills progressing firsthand. They also expressed interest in being involved in making videos in the future. As Paul expressed in his interview, the skills the students learned in this course were introductory and are really the tip of the iceberg. However, they are skills that can be shared and developed by participating in video production projects in the community with organizations like Isuma, IBC, Arnait,



Alannah composes an email at Isuma

or NITV. In fact, many people at Isuma got involved by volunteering at first, a little at a time on video production projects then slowly gained the skills to become a professional. Hopefully this block option has given them a head start in this regard.

People at Isuma also seemed interested in working on a project like this in the future, and Kristan mentioned that there has been talk of running a practical skills credit course in video production next year at the high school. Turning this into a half- or full-year course has lots of potential and has many of the attributes of successful schooling in Nunavut – community control over education, relevancy, useful in the community, freedom to express one's self/ explore personal identities. With an extended course, students may choose to look at content with more scrutiny and develop their finished product more. They may also choose to take on some of the issues I pondered while writing my literature review – what is important to Inuit students? What is it like to be a student in the education system in Nunavut? Then again, maybe they won't. In hindsight I think those are some of the questions I was hoping they would want to answer. But for education to be successful in Nunavut (and arguably anywhere) the questions should come from the students.

Students really enjoyed working with professionals from the community. A number of students said that they wished they had more time and more direction from them. I feel like this would have been the case if things were set up a bit more beforehand, and there had been time to carefully work out clearer roles and expectations.

The students also went away with a better understanding of what goes into making a video. One of them said, "I had no idea how much work goes into making a

film. I'll never look at a movie the same way again."

The people at Isuma really enjoyed working with the students and fed off their energy and enthusiasm. Jayson said during one of our conversations that he enjoyed using video production as a modern way of carrying on the tradition of storytelling. Zach mentioned that it was good for him to see young kids making films and it was an opportunity to see who in the community has potential. For Jayson, working with students made him want to work even harder. He wanted to be a good role model and show the students the best work that he could. They made him raise his bar.

The primary value in this project though, I now realize, was in the *process* of making the video. For everyone involved. Before going up to Iglulik I envisioned the students making film on whatever they wanted, and

It's clear to me now that Iglulik, the people and land around it, provided a fertile environment for this experience to grow in.

thus would define what is important in their lives. When I was facilitating the block option, I framed the content of the videos as whatever they wanted

to film about. This is different than what is important in their lives. Having them film about what they wanted I think was a good decision, considering this was their first course on video production, and the emphasis should be on process. I think in a subsequent course an interesting focus would be to have the students film about something that is important in their lives. The emphasis would then be more on the product, and they could focus on producing a high-quality film.

In hindsight I would have included more writing in my literature review on practical- or experiential-based education in Nunavut. In particular, I would like to know more about what education in Nunavut can gain from this particular type of education. Why is the block option format a good example of education in Nunavut? These, in fact could

have been other research questions I could have tried to answer. This realization of the importance of process made me realize that I focused a bit more on what the students would be producing when, with a ground-level course in video production like this, the emphasis should be on what the students have learned along the way.

Before I started this video production block option, I was hoping that the process

Still, being able to spend time with Isuma professionals and experience firsthand a vibrant part of the community was, judging from the feedback, a rewarding part of the experience for the students. The professionals at Isuma were role models and mentors for the students, and the students were able to explore the art of video production with them on a project of their choosing.



At right, top: Ice fishing equipment
Middle: Kids play on an abandoned boat on the beach
Bottom: Kids jumping from ice flow to ice flow

would help students reflect on and perhaps even enhance their cultural identity. Did this project do this? Can you even measure this anecdotally? Perhaps not. At least not explicitly. Given the introductory nature of the course and the need to build skills first I think to aspire broaching issues of cultural identity is best saved for a more advanced course in video production.

In the end, the process seemed to be valued by everyone and we produced a nicely polished DVD with the two short films on it. Each student, Isuma and the high school got a copy of the DVD. The Northern store donated the DVD cases, a long-time Iglulik resident printed up DVD labels for us, and we designed a simple cover for the DVD case.



Kalliraq with a nice pair of char

The volunteerism and generosity of the larger community was a constant thread throughout this project. It was also a thread throughout my entire experience in Iglulik. Alec gave me an umiakjuak (big boat) he made by hand to bring back to give to my daughter. I went to see a circus troupe made up of volunteers putting on a stunning show of athleticism and creativity for the community. And whatever was in the Arnatsiaq home was free for me to use.

On my last weekend there, the Arnatsiaq family and I went back out fishing and hunting. Freshwater rivers were flowing on top of the sea ice swirling into whirlpools down aglus (seal breathing holes). The snow was sugary and soft. The warm brown tundra was bearing itself more and more. And the fishing was outstanding. We returned with around 70 fish, two seals, a snow goose and a dozen eggs. Springtime in the arctic is a bountiful time. It was incredible. It felt like paradise.



Fish out to dry in town



The crew transports props

It was with tired eyes and a heavy heart that I left Iglulik. My time there was too short.

As the wheels of the plane lifted from the gravel runway, I thought of when I gave out the DVD to each of the students. I wondered what role it would play in the history of their lives? For some, maybe very small, but for some it may be a small piece in a much larger puzzle. As Paul Irgnaut said, when you make a video, you find out more about what you're filming, but you also document something – ideas, events, and perspectives. It becomes an artifact, history, as small as it may seem at the time.

It's clear to me now that Iglulik, the people and land around it, provided a fertile environment for this experience to grow in.

Taima (That's all)

