

# *MIE and a Curriculum for Excellence: Practitioner Perceptions*

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## **Introduction**

Cary Bazalgette, former head of education at British Film Institute and current chair of the Media Education Association, was commissioned by Scottish Screen in 2009 to produce a critique of recent research on moving image education (MIE) in order to assist in shaping future policy and direction. A key recommendation was that Scottish Screen should shift focus away from qualitative evaluation towards quantitative research, and concentrate on five lines of enquiry informed by studies such as those of Head et al, conducted by Glasgow University between 2006 and 2009. Potential research questions included:

- How does MIE actually contribute to the outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence?
- What are the key elements of continuing professional development for MIE?

To address those particular issues, further research was conducted by Glasgow in 2010 in collaboration with Scottish Screen (now Creative Scotland). This report describes that research and the subsequent national initiative resulting from it.

The Scottish 3-18 curriculum, Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), introduced in August 2010, seeks to develop four main capacities: Successful Learners, Effective Contributors, Responsible Citizens and Confident Individuals. Despite substantial lead-in time, many practitioners struggle with the manner in which this ambitious curriculum should unfold in their classrooms.

Practitioners undertaking MIE activities, however, have consistently commented upon the richness, relevance and quality of learning that arises from them. ITE and CPD providers regularly comment that practitioners report that MIE provides exemplification, in a natural and unforced way, of what the architects of CfE envisaged regarding approaches to learning and wider more-rounded learning gains.

In April 2010 teachers and student teachers who had recently undertaken MIE activities were invited to complete an online survey to determine their views regarding the extent to which they considered that MIE has relevance to the aims of CfE, and gauge what measures might be appropriate to support their use of MIE in the context of the new curriculum. Of 164 respondents starting the survey, 144 completed it fully.

## Methodology

The survey targeted BEd (Primary) Year three and four students, PGDE (Primary) students, Chartered Teacher course members who had undertaken one or both MIE modules and teachers who had undertaken CPD in MIE.

Participation was voluntary and anonymous. The only identifier-information collected was the broad constituency into which respondents fell to allow segmentation of the data. This could not be reverse-tracked to identify individuals.

The survey consisted of two parts. Part one focussed on the relevance of MIE to the four Capacities of CfE, while part two focussed on the participants' readiness, willingness and ability to use MIE in the classroom.

Initial analysis considered the responses of all participants to parts one and two to gain a broad impression of respondents' views. Further analysis, employing cross-tabulation, revisited those issues to identify potential differences between the various constituencies.

### Questionnaire Part 1 – MIE and the four capacities

Participants rated the relevance of MIE to each strand of the four Capacities on a 4-point scale - Highly Relevant, Relevant, Not Very Relevant and Not Relevant at all.

Participants were then asked to select which comment best described MIE approaches overall in relation to CfE - Particularly Appropriate, Moderately Appropriate, Not Particularly Appropriate or Not Appropriate at all.

### Key findings

Of the 148 respondents to that final questionnaire item of Part 1, 75.7 per cent considered that MIE was Particularly Appropriate in overtaking the aspirations of CfE, while 23.6 per cent responded that MIE was Moderately Appropriate. The remaining 0.7 per cent of respondents (one individual) responded that MIE was Not Particularly Appropriate.

The average Highly Relevant rating for MIE for each Capacity was:

- Successful Learners (SL) 67.1%
- Effective Contributors (EC) 67.0%
- Responsible Citizens (RC) 34.4%
- Confident Individuals (CI) 32.6%

This suggests a clear fault-line whereby practitioners consider two of the four capacities to be particularly appropriate but the other two less so. More research needs to

be undertaken to investigate what underlies this apparently stark division.

The following individual strands rated Highly Relevant according to less than 75 per cent of respondents:

- |      |  |       |
|------|--|-------|
| • SL | use technology for learning                          | 86.6% |
| • EC | communicate in different ways and different settings | 84.6% |
| • EC | create and develop                                   | 84.6% |
| • EC | work in partnership and in teams                     | 79.2% |
| • SL | think creatively and independently                   | 77.2% |
| • EC | apply critical thinking in new concepts              | 75.8% |

These are all aspects that the architects of CfE have been eager to promote as typifying the new style of pupil-centred learning that is not slavishly content-driven.

Of the 36 strands of the Capacities rated **Highly Relevant** or **Relevant** in relation to MIE:

- A total of 6 strands achieved 100%
- A further 13 strands achieved 95% or higher
- A further 11 strands achieved 80% or higher

Thus, 30 of the 36 individual strands of CfE's four Capacities achieved 80 per cent or higher.

Having established that Scottish practitioners consider MIE valid and valuable in terms of learning gains and behaviours in relation to CfE, it seems reasonable to propose that this could be of interest to other educational systems.

### **Questionnaire Part Two – MIE supporting and extending children's literacy**

The survey investigated three aspects of MIE commonly used in schools - Short Film Texts (various analytical, exploratory and creative activities), Animation Production and Digital Video Production - in relation to:

- access to resources
- training needs
- impact on children's literacy
- likelihood of use in the classroom

### **Key findings**

#### **Access to resources**

- Approximately eight per cent of respondents considered that all *teachers* had access

to resources to use short film but only two per cent and one per cent respectively considered that all teachers have access to resources for animation or digital video.

- 42.4 per cent of respondents considered that all or the majority of teachers had access to resources necessary to use short film, 33.6 per cent and 33.1 per cent respectively for animation or digital video.

#### Training needs

- 18.5 per cent of respondents considered that they would require no further training to use short film but only ten per cent and thirteen per cent felt this for animation with and thirteen per cent for digital video.
- 48 per cent considered that they would require no further training or very little further training for short film, with 34 per cent for animation and 38 per cent for digital video.

#### Impact on children's literacy

- Less than 70 per cent of respondents felt that short film would *significantly* support and extend children's literacy, while animation and digital video polled 55 and 60 per cent respectively.
- While the figures for animation or digital video both rise to approximately 94 per cent when the measure is expanded to include significantly and moderately, short film activities achieves 98 per cent. However, the figure of under 70 per cent achieved by short film activities on the measure of significantly on its own is arguably the more telling.

#### Likelihood of use in the classroom

- 56.2 per cent of respondents definitely see themselves using short film, placing it ahead of animation or digital video (41 and 44 per cent respectively).
- When this was expanded to definitely and possibly, short film remained ahead on 95.9 per cent compared to 89.7 per cent for animation and 89.5 per cent for digital video.

Thus, almost half of the respondents felt that they had access to resources and could begin using short film with little or no further training, while only a third felt that they could begin using animation or digital video. Almost three quarters felt that short film would significantly impact on children's literacy and more than half those surveyed could definitely see themselves incorporating short film into their practice.

### Analysis by constituency

Further analysis by constituency investigated which constituencies were saying what in response to each item. This stratified approach provided relative percentages for the responses of individual constituencies.

### Key findings by constituency

Revisiting the responses in relation to whether MIE is *particularly* appropriate in relation to CfE the individual constituencies responded as follows:

Chartered Teachers	92%
CPD Teachers	89%
PDGE(P) Students	72%
BEd 4 Students	67%
BEd 3 Students	69%

- This suggests there is more to MIE than youthful enthusiasm, and that professional experience brings with it greater recognition of its value.
- In part one, this pattern recurred across subsequent analysis of each individual strand of the Capacities.
- In part two, Chartered Teachers and CPD teachers consistently led with regard to the top-level positive responses on the four issues in relation to the three aspects of MIE.

### Conclusions

- There is agreement across all constituencies that MIE has a particularly strong resonance with CfE.
- Development of MIE in Scottish schools should focus initially on the use of short film.
- Access to resources and additional training while still significant, might not be insurmountable when balanced against the learning gains that accrue from MIE and willingness of teachers to consider using MIE approaches.
- MIE short film resources should be more accessible at classroom level.
- Appropriate CPD / training approaches be developed, accessible to all teachers.

### Outcome

As a result of this research, Creative Scotland and LTScotland, through their forthcoming literacy-focused Screening Shorts initiative, are providing 50 BFI short films freely available on-line, downloadable to registered users of GLOW (the Scottish schools digital network), complete with CPD activities and lesson exemplars. Further research into the subsequent

impact of this MIE initiative may be of interest to others outside Scotland.

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