

CEMP 10: Where are We Now?

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This journal was launched as part of the remit of the Centre for Excellence in Media Practice, where both editors are based. In 2005 the Higher Education Funding Council for England accredited CEMP as the only 'CETL' (Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning) in Media. Over the decade since, the centre has developed a suite of unique blended distance-learning programmes: the MA in Creative & Media Education has offered professional development to teachers across the world; the Master's Short Course Framework has nurtured a new breed of professional practitioner researchers in media organisations; and the innovative Doctor of Education is now home to a global network of teachers, making original interventions in education and pedagogic research.

CEMP founded the annual Media Education Summit, now an international fixture on the conference calendar. MERJ is the only fully peer-reviewed journal publishing pedagogic research in the field. More recently, CEMP has also taken over editorship of the *Journal of Media Practice*. CEMP researchers have worked in Africa, Nepal, Hong Kong, US and across Europe, on funded projects for the EU, AHRC and ESRC, the BBC and with Ken Loach, the MEA and the BFI and current 'live' projects include research with the Football Association, Samsung, Reuters and the UK Literacy Association.

Taking MERJ and the Summit together as two connected branches, a lot of research has been shared at the conference and published in the journal over these ten years and so in this editorial we want to take stock of the related fields of media education, media literacy education and media *in* education, as represented by this range of outputs in the pages of the twelve journals and at the eight conferences CEMP have published and convened.

The approach we've taken here is broadly thematic rather than sector specific, geographical or mapped to funding context, but along the way we will discuss some important details such as who is publishing and presenting with CEMP, where the research has been coming from, and matters of scale and reach. But we're mostly interested in the research questions our community of practice has been asking, the methods we've been using, the people we've been talking to, and the conceptual frameworks we've been arranging for our interventions. At the opening residential of our Educational Doctorate programme (in Creative and Media Education) our students work through an activity called 'MERJ rewind'. For this, they take an article published in these pages and put themselves in the place of the author(s) at the start of the project – what would have been the key

research questions, what kind of data was generated, how was it collected and assessed, what theoretical position was taken (epistemological, ontological, methodological)? So here we've done that with every article published in the journal and every abstract printed in the Summit programme, and this is our 'executive summary' of this body of work and what it amounts to – *where are we now?*

Voices

We've published guest and joint editorials, invited features, extended 'inter-reviews' and given a keynote platform to lots of media education's key 'movers and shakers' over the years. We've heard from David Buckingham, Sarah Pink, Jackie Marsh, Sara Bragg, Anthony Lilley, Marc Prensky, Cary Bazalgette, Susan Orr, John Potter, Andrew Burn, Charles Leadbeater, Matt Locke, John Naughton, Jeff Jarvis, Michael Wesch, Paul Mihailidis, Kevin Marsh, Andrew Chitty, Gina Stirling, Henry Jenkins, Divina Frau-Meigs, Lutz Hachmeister, Belinha de Abreu, Renee Hobbs, David Gauntlett, Eric Gordon, Carrie James, Will Merrin, Tom Loosemore, Stephen Heppell, Natalie Fenton and Stephen Jukes. All of those keynotes and guest MERJ pieces are online (see links at the end). But, while that is an impressive cast, our focus here is not on the canon of experts but on the community of practice we've tried to nurture more 'in the patch'. So, the professional identities of the authors and presenters whose work we are including in this analysis are as follows:

Secondary / further or tertiary educators 8%

University educators / affiliated researchers 81%

Other (training organisations / not for profits / employers, policy makers) 11%

The Data Set

The 'sample' here consists of the full sets of abstracts from eight conferences (including this year's, a week away at the time of writing) and full articles published in thirteen editions of this journal, including the current issue. That amounts to a total of 313 outputs, made up of 242 conference presentations (including our MERJ conversations, but not keynotes), 48 articles and 23 research reports ('in progress' developmental pieces, closer to the Summit presentations than full articles). In case anyone is checking in a hawk-eyed fashion, we have included the seminar pieces published from MES in issue 2.2 and one important caveat regarding 'sample hygiene' is that a significant number of MERJ articles in recent issues have been developed from summit presentations, so there is some duplication of outputs in those cases.

In CEMP we also supervise postgraduate research by media educators and professionals on our 'build your own MA' short course pathways, the MAs in Creative and

Media Education and Creative Media Practice and more recently our taught educational doctorate. Over the decade, a total of 170 professionals on these programmes have completed and exhibited ‘insider research’ into their practice. Often using action research, but also case study, ethnography and creative / digital methods, this work has ranged from media teachers exploring new assessment strategies, innovative schemes of work, employability and e-learning to designing prototypes for new digital platforms and exploring culture change at the BBC. This track record of working with professionals ‘in situ’ is now further embedded in CEMP’s new doctoral ‘Researcher in Residence’ scheme. PhD students have ‘successfully defended’ theses on assessing creative media work, the role of ‘play’ in children’s media learning, commissioning for children, cross-platform media and the philosophy of media education while our current crop of Ed D researchers are generating new knowledge in the fields of entrepreneurship, ‘creative habitus’, transformative learning and documentary film as life narrative. Like the keynotes and guest editors, it’s important to mention these, as they are a key part of our work in growing the research ‘environment’ but since these are not necessarily published ‘outputs’ they are not included in the data set in question here.

Lines of enquiry

To arrange the ‘outputs’ thematically, here we’ve used the same categories as for our ‘Research Excellence Framework’ unit in CEMP, where we lead on the education unit (but also work across Media – that’s units 25 and 36 for those ‘in the know’, at least in the current formulation). These categories inevitably overlap but to reproduce the arrangement here we’ve grouped the research into Media Digital Literacies; Practitioner Enquiry and Education Dynamics. This was a rather crude exercise and someone else surveying the material might have ended up with slightly different percentages, as the majority of outputs overlap two themes – for example, research into digital literacy and employability could go into DML or education dynamics, whereas a piece on teaching media literacy could go into DML or practitioner enquiry. And 4% of the articles overlapped all three so we have annexed them to “other / all”.

Digital Media Literacies

Broadly speaking, we have included research here which generates data in the broad field of ‘new literacies’ in relation to media education. This work has ranged from the application of situated, social literacy research in media education contexts to the more ‘Heppellian’ future-gazing and associated ‘2.0’ claims and counterclaims. Twenty-six per cent of the research falls into this category. The most commonly used methods have

been discourse analysis (of policy, curricular frameworks or assessment / evaluation frameworks); (digital) ethnography and action research and the methods deployed have been almost entirely qualitative. Conceptually, the research most usually starts out from theories of powerful literacies and new literacy studies, and often seeks to contribute new evidence to debates around digital natives and participatory culture. These fields are generally mapped with prominence given to the work of Buckingham, Jenkins, Prensky, Hobbs, Burn, Livingstone, Marsh and Potter, along with more 'local flavour' depending on the geographical and cultural contexts for the fieldwork. The kinds of research questions we've been asking in this category often relate to the integration of school / out of school or equivalent boundaries in higher education, what Potter refers to as the 'semi permeable membrane', sometimes conceived as 'third space' learning. Other areas of enquiry have typically concerned ways of measuring, or accounting for, new literacy development; degrees of *critical* media literacy and the relationship between media literacy, digital tools and *voice*. Gathering data to speak to new literacy practices, such as *curation*, from students' perspectives, has been a recurrent objective.

To exemplify the range and scope of research in this category, we'll pick out three outputs. Please note we have hundreds to choose from. Whilst not randomly pulled out of a hat, they are selected to represent the breadth of work rather than for any hierarchical criteria. For Digital Media Literacies, we'll point to Tzu-Bin Lin's discourse analysis of media literacy in East Asia in the first issue of MERJ (2010), BFI's Mark Reid sharing the work of the Screening Literacy consortia at the 2012 Summit and in both the previous issue of MERJ and last year's Summit, Eirini Arnaouti disseminated her media literacy research in Greek schools.

Practitioner Enquiry

In this category we place work which directly speaks to teaching and / or the training of teachers, so research developing empirical pedagogical material. Again, though, this ends up being rather like a 'genre tube map' with many intersections, For example we've included research here into the teaching or assessing of students' creativity, but other work on the rhetorics of creativity at work in contemporary media education has been put in the dynamics 'box'. This theme represents 34% of the research. Action research has dominated this strand, with a significant inclusion of participative methods and co-creation with students. Conceptually, the research is often grounded in the progressive pedagogies of Vygotsky and Freire and more media specific work by Masterman, Buckingham and, pleasingly for us, previous studies published in MERJ. The kinds of research questions we've been asking in this category relate to pedagogic methods for enhancing various

forms of expertise, creativity and reflection; strategies for ‘gamifying’ media learning and, more recently in the light of collaborations with European networks, the Salzburg Global Seminar and our American partners such as Emerson and JMLE, questions of pedagogy for engaged media citizenship. But this is a very broad church and at one end the research questions are more specific and immediate – how to improve student learning, engage students more, work more inclusively – and at the other more ‘game-changer’ questions about new modes of media learning and the pedagogic rationale required for those. In both cases, though – as is the case with most educational research conducted by educators – the dominant approach has been hunch – hypothesis – experiment and measure.

Again, to exemplify the range and scope of research in this category, we’ll pick out three outputs. For Practitioner Enquiry, we’ll point to Sara Bragg’s ‘Tales of the Classroom’ (2010, MERJ 1.2), in which she suggests that familiar pedagogical approaches to media production work in schools ‘embed’ stories that reinforce ideas about media and audiences that are in the interests of teacher identity. At this year’s Summit, Antonio Lopez and Sox Sperry present research-informed hands-on approaches to sustainable ecology work in media education. Converging teacher research with digital learning, Emma Walters shared ‘Chameleon: A Pedagogic Experiment in the Beta-age’.

Education Dynamics

This category includes research into the many relationships within and between education and other agencies. This ranges from employability and enterprise / entrepreneurship to the enduring battles over the status of media education in schools, and more specific studies of media students’ lived experiences. Very roughly, the data generated by this sub-field is more likely to be from students, whereas practitioner enquiry is weighted more towards teachers, but this is far from a neat distinction! This is by a small margin the largest category, with 36% of the research placed here. Methods have been more varied in this sub-field, ranging from content analysis of curricular to reviews of literature and mixed methods where existing student data (eg in the UK, the NSS) is put in dialogue with more nuanced accounts of, for example, ‘cohort culture’ or ‘production habitus’. Likewise, this line of research starts out from more different places, conceptually – genealogies of media education, analyses of discipline epistemology, the sociology of vocational education or more country / sector specific debates. Therefore it is harder also to foreground particular citations, at one end of the continuum we see many references to Buckingham, again, with Terry Bolas’ historical account, provocations from Gauntlett and Jenkins and at the other very specific quality assurance frameworks, audits or commissioned reports, from the Cambridge Primary Review to Creative Britain and beyond, to the reports of

OFSTED, and OFCOM the Scottish Executive, the HEA in England, policy frameworks from almost every EU member state. One substantive area of the dynamics explored concerns relationships with media industries, and in this field the works of Hesmondalgh, Deuze and Dan Asthon are prominent, along with the material disseminated by Creative Skillset.

For this broad area, our three choices are Chukwudi Justus Anyianuka's research into journalism education in Nigeria, presented at the Prague Summit with a emphasis on 'dislocation between classroom and newsroom'; Dave Harte and Vanessa Jackson's 'Media employability 2.0' from MERJ 2.2 (2012) and Paul Mihailidis' analysis of empowerment narratives in global media education from the joint JMLE issue 5.2 (2015).

Any answers?

So, we've published a lot of research findings, analyses of policy, practice and discourse and a great deal of pedagogic enquiry, and we've enabled many practitioner researchers to share their work at our summit. We've provided a forum for the exchange of media education research across the UK, Europe and North America and we're starting to reach out to broader fields. But what are we closer to knowing after a decade 'in the game'?

The known knowns – from the research of our many authors and presenters, we have found out a great deal about what works in the areas of student engagement, collaborative working and the fusion of theory and practice. We know that media students value reflection, that e-learning requires a robust pedagogic rationale and equal, if not more 'craft' than classroom teaching. We can point practitioners and students to a field of new data, often generated through action research, which may tell 'small stories' rather than reveal generalisable patterns but nevertheless take us forward in knowing how media literacy works in relation to broader social literacies, what cohort culture looks like for media students, how younger children can more critically curate their mediated identities, what we are missing in relation to environmental, ethical and inter-cultural approaches, how digital ethnography can be pedagogised, what complexity (the 'cultural layer') the rhetorics of employability and enterprise need to be more open to; in what areas of media engagement we might need forms of 'new protectionism'; what we think we are talking about when we talk about creativity; how best to harness student 'voice' in media education and to what ends and on whose terms. To name but a few areas where we've made clear progress. Finally, we think it's fair to say MERJ has offered the most sustained and the deepest ongoing debate about whether we need a 'Media Studies 2.0'. We haven't taken a side, but we've devoted many pages to the key protagonists and to researchers working it through on the ground.

The known unknowns – in MERJ 3.2, our editorial presented a set of key objectives for media pedagogy research going forward, collated from views expressed by our editorial board. Of those, some are on the ‘in progress’ list above, but there are others which are still neglected in MERJ, at the Summit and among our postgraduate research community. These include finding evidence of the ‘end result’ of media education in terms of skills for employers, as opposed to the design of the learning. We’re still focussing, for better or worse, on the latter and we haven’t facilitated broad-scale or longitudinal outcomes that we can ‘serve up’ to the industry. We’ve also failed, so far, to enable primary teachers to produce research, as opposed to academics doing research in those settings. Our work with the United Kingdom Literacy Association will, we hope, take us forward, but there’s a long way to go. Another three very different areas where we’d like to do more are (i) within the ‘core’ of UK Media Studies classrooms – as opposed to extra / cross curricular media literacy or media education in Universities –, (ii) in creative methodologies, which we pay a great deal of attention to at the Summit but are still marginalised in the pages of MERJ – and, indeed the fact that we publish the vast majority of research as printed pages tells another story of distance to travel and finally (iii) further afield in terms of geographical scope, we’d like to publish more media education research from beyond Europe and North America, in particular. Finally, we talk a good game about transdisciplinary research, working across and outside of REF units and subject silos, but work spanning media, arts and beyond the social sciences has been less forthcoming, as has practice-led research, so we’re very keen to support such progressive, even transgressive work in the near future.

So, we’re doing OK but there’s work to do. The next decade is ‘unwritten’ for peer reviewed journals and the exchange of research with the ever-shifting landscape of open access, Research Excellence Framework (REF), the new proposed Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and the way the TEF might change the REF!! And, as has been ever thus, in the UK at least the purpose and value of media education is always up for grabs. But, regardless, onwards for the next 10!

To follow up the scope and range of research discussed here, see:

This journal - <http://merj.info/>

The Media Education Summit - <http://www.cemp.ac.uk/summit/2015/> (replace the year for previous events)