

MAPPING MEDIA LITERACY

MEDIA EDUCATION 11-16 YEARS
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

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Contents

	Executive Summary	1
1.	Introduction	3
2.	What is media literacy? How is it promoted by media education?	5
3.	The policy context	7
4.	Where media education takes place The curriculum framework.	11
5.	Rationales Why teachers think that teaching about the media is important	17
6.	What kind of conceptual framework do teachers, trainers and youth workers use? Balancing practical production and theory	21
7.	How much media education takes place? Who has access to it?	25
8.	What do teachers teach about? Content	39
9.	Teaching approaches What makes good teaching?	45
10.	Assessment	49
11.	Teacher expertise and training	51
12.	How young people learn	59
13.	Creativity	67
14.	Standards: what young people understand and can do	71
15.	Resources	75
16.	Conclusions from the review	81
17.	Issues arising from the review	83
16.	Recommendations	85
	Appendix 1: Northern Ireland	87
	Appendix 2: Scotland	90

Executive summary

1. There is no clear and commonly agreed definition of 'media literacy'.
2. The evidence of this review suggests that, in media education, policy-making, planning and provision are fragmentary. As a result the levels of media literacy are unpredictable and inconsistent, but overall are likely to be low.
3. The arrival of new digital technology has changed media education radically. Authoring and reviewing in all media are now much more possible. The capacity of the new software and hardware currently exceeds the skills and knowledge of most teachers in how to get the most out of them. Technology, particularly in the new digital media, is developing faster than our capacity to train education professionals.

The formal sector

4. Within the formal school sector, there is some contribution being made to media literacy, largely through English, for all young people aged 11-16.
5. The school curriculum is full. In order to give young people increased access to practical media work, opportunities for learning outside the traditional school day, for example through Study Support and youth work activities, have to be maximised.
6. Activities involving practical media work are popular with young people, and often retain their interest and their continued engagement with educational organisations, and with learning.
7. Other than GCSE, there is no form of accreditation to record young people's proficiency or progress in a range of competencies in both analysing and creating media.
8. In both sport and the arts, there are now quality assurance awards for schools. It is timely to consider the potential of such an award for media education, particularly if this spanned the formal and informal sectors. Specialist providers could be pioneers in this development, as there is now no way for their media and pedagogic expertise to be recognised.

The informal sector

9. In the informal sector, the total number of young people involved in media education activities, as a percentage of the total cohort, is low.
10. Media education in the informal sector has the ability to engage young people who are disaffected with school and/or are at risk of criminal activity.
11. Sports and music have been recognised as subjects which can make a substantial contribution to promoting social inclusion, in both the formal and the informal sectors. The authors found evidence that the same is true of media education. The extent of anti-racist initiatives, drugs education, and active citizenship activities more generally in both Study Support and youth work, justifies the recognition of media education as a similar cross-cutting area of study. Increasingly, policy-makers are looking to the informal sector to re-invigorate the formal sector of schooling.

Issues of good practice

12. In both the formal and informal sectors good practice in media education requires appropriate levels of resourcing, experienced and skilled teachers, and a high ranking within the organisation's priorities. The limited number of teachers and youth workers with the relevant skills for practical media work restricts the scope and quality of practical work.
13. There is no forum to bring together practitioners in all types of education to explore, share and disseminate good practice. The planned increase in the number of specialist secondary schools makes the establishment of such a forum timely.
14. Training opportunities of all types - initial teacher training, post-qualification, training for technicians and youth workers - are inadequate. The researchers do not envisage formal courses only but also increased opportunities for young people, teachers and youth workers to work with professionals in apprentice mode, for example.
15. There is, however, a body of practitioners in both the formal and informal sectors who are researching effective learning through media education. This is a reassuring development, particularly when implications for more effective teaching are drawn.
16. The resource implications for work of quality in media education, whether in the formal or informal sector, are substantial. In particular, schools and generic youth work sited outside the major conurbations, where 'Excellence in Cities' funding is often available, find it hard to keep up with the cost of hardware and software requirements, and may also have difficulty in gaining access to high quality teaching resources, including media texts.

1 Introduction

1.1 This report sets out to map where media education takes place in UK schools and other more informal settings such as City Learning Centres study support projects and the youth service. It covers the age range 11-16 where the provision is arguably most diverse and affects most young people to some degree. The report draws on and draws together evidence from up-to-date research and inspection. Our aim is to explore how much media education takes place, where it happens and who has access to such opportunities. We look at the rationale for and content of such teaching and how that varies across the spectrum of activity, both within schools and in the range of provision around and outside schools. We have attempted to draw together the fragmented evidence there is about the quality of young people's media literacy - that is how they learn, what they know and understand about the mass media and what they themselves can create using communications technology.

1.2 The first type of out-of-school activity we call school-linked, that is those activities which are designed to enrich and extend the school curriculum or to support vulnerable or underprivileged young people to remain in school and benefit from their education. These include projects which take place out of school, often outside the school day, but which are initiated by teachers who liaise with the providing organisation. The pupils may be volunteers or they may be targeted groups. These activities may take place on school premises or offsite at City Learning Centres, Further Education Colleges or vocational placements. The second area we call the informal education sector, which young people attend voluntarily and which is not linked with school. This is partly youth work but also organisations, local and national, such as the Weekend Arts College in London, film clubs such as Watershed's 'Keeping it Reel', and journalistic activities such as Children's Express. Most work in this sector is not vocational.

1.3 The boundaries between these areas are quite complex: A number of organisations work both with schools and offer out of school provision. Others, such as the Active Citizenship network, operate largely out of school time but have close links with teachers and the school curriculum.

1.4 We have drawn together information from a range of printed sources: Research and inspection findings, resources and guidance available to teachers and other trainers. We have also held discussions face-to-face, by phone and email with a range of people who have knowledge and expertise in the field. The list of people we have consulted and the printed resources we have drawn on are included in the Acknowledgements. We are grateful for people's generosity in talking to us and, in many cases, making unpublished research available to us. We have heard in their responses a strong concern to promote better understanding of what media education can offer and to raise its profile at all levels, but also a realism about the variability of what is presently available and the limited numbers of young people involved. Many media educators are concerned to improve both the quality of teaching and learning and the advice and training available for teachers and other tutors.

1.5 We have tried to represent that spirit in this report. Our aim is to give a balanced picture of the current situation, to identify good practice and offer some advice on further research and activity.

2 What media literacy is, and how it is promoted by media education

2.1 We will use as our definition of media literacy one based on the Media Literacy Statement used by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in 2001. Whereas theirs emphasises moving image literacy, ours extends to take in print and still images.

Media literacy is:

- the ability to analyse and respond to a range of media, including print, moving image and other hybrid forms such as multimedia texts, and to think critically and reflectively about what has been 'read';
- the ability to weigh up how reliable the material is, whether it is fact or fiction, whether it is realistically presented or not, whether it is reportage or advocacy;
- the ability to explore the pleasures that media texts offer, and understand how these are communicated through the language of the medium;
- an understanding of the mechanisms of production and distribution of TV programmes CD-ROM games, interactive software, websites, magazines, newspapers and other print material which enables users to evaluate their purpose and reliability;
- an understanding of how they as individuals respond to and interpret experiences gained through media texts, and also that they are part of larger audiences, and that their responses are also shaped by that experience.

2.2 Media literacy is also the ability to 'write' media texts, increasingly using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) such as desk-top publishing, authoring multimedia packages, and video filming, photography and digital editing. Such texts will:

- be suitable for audience and purpose;
- make appropriate use of technology for presentation;
- reflect a critical selection of material, and a coherent representation of ideas;
- reflect the maker's creative skills.

2.3 There is also a value placed by many educators on how young people reflect on their own making and doing, and what they learn through the process. This will be discussed at greater length in the sections on learning and creativity. While currently such 'writing' capability is underdeveloped, it exists, and increasing access to digital technology, uneven though it still is, will make such activity possible for greater numbers.

2.4 Media literacy depends on, and has a complex relationship with, 'navigation' skills, sometimes called 'network literacy'. However, navigation skills do not in themselves constitute 'media literacy' as it is widely conceived. Such 'network literacy' would include the following skills:

- understanding how complex electronic texts are organised, and being able to build mental models to navigate them;
- an ability to search the vast range of data on electronic networks efficiently;
- judging the credibility and value of sources such as websites;
- knowing how to manipulate and select information; knowing how to use systems and equipment; knowing what tools and facilities are available and how to select the most appropriate for a purpose;
- understanding that information is not geographically fixed and that cultural reference may vary.¹

2.5 The use of the term 'literacy' to describe such skills is proliferating. Terms like 'visual literacy' are widely used to describe the skills needed to read still images and *'Moving Images in the Classroom'*² describes the equivalent for moving image media as 'cineliteracy'. For the moment these are all useful shorthand for skills which have parallels to print literacy while having features specific to those particular media. Inevitably the extension of the term becomes rather wearisome and it seems as though skills relating to all forms of communication media can be configured as a literacy of some kind.

2.6 Media education is the range of teaching strategies and activities which are judged to maximise opportunities for young people to become media literate. Using this term emphasises the importance for teachers of focusing on how young people learn and not just on what they themselves teach. Media educators argue strongly that it is not enough just to provide young people access to media texts. Nor is it sufficient to equip them with technology and the navigational skills, though this is clearly an important element of understanding and using a medium. The increasing accessibility of digital technology has the capacity to enable many more young people to create media texts, but most media educators see critical awareness as a necessary adjunct to technical dexterity.

2.7 The relationship between experiment, 'playing around', a process of learning much used in acquiring expertise with digital technology, and other forms of learning is also complex and under researched and will be discussed in Section 7. In the past, many media teachers rather despised technical skills but such attitudes are shifting. The report will illustrate the very marked differences in the emphasis placed on critical analysis and reflection in different sectors within education which are involved in media activity.

2.8 The key point is that media education, well done, has much to offer in enabling young people to extend their ability to analyse, create and reflect.

¹ This description of network literacy draws on an unpublished report by Jane Spillsbury at Becta.

² Produced by the BFI, Film Education and the English and Media Centre, supported by QCA.

3 The policy context

Summary

In English and Welsh schools the National Curriculum orders for English guarantee some teaching that promotes media literacy. The orders are a key factor in ensuring that some media education takes place in all schools. Media literacy is a lower priority than 'core' literacies such as reading and writing and the relationships between them are not well understood.

In the informal sector Government policies such as those on social inclusion, neighbourhood renewal, lifelong learning and the development of ICT capability provide valuable support for but do not steer on the development of media literacy. Much depends on how local authorities set funding priorities. Media education programmes may be entirely led by voluntary sector organisations or may be linked to school activities, or to a life-long learning strategy, for example summer universities.

Much activity which promotes or might promote media literacy happens in separate compartments and is often fragmented as a result. Opportunities are missed to co-ordinate, develop and consolidate.

3.1 At a national level the DCMS as the department responsible for the cultural industries has established a framework to underpin media literacy. Its role in determining New Opportunities Fund (NOF) priorities, for example for study support and training in information and communication technology for teachers has links with that of the DfES in enhancing aspects of provision in and out of schools. The DfES supports other developments in schools which have the capacity to improve the quality of media education and to provide a better understanding of how young people learn and what they are capable of understanding and creating. The development of media arts specialist schools and the availability of the DfES's Best Practice Research Scholarships are providing opportunities to produce some useful research and development. The role of the British Film Institute (BFI) is crucial here in terms of framing meaningful research and co-ordinating groups of teachers in the specialist arts schools. The DfES could take a more active part in co-ordinating activity designed to establish parameters of good practice in media education.

3.2 The BFI has played a crucial part in lobbying for the inclusion of media education within the remit and activities of government agencies and departments. It has increasingly come to focus on moving image media, which is indeed its remit from Government, though some of its work supports study of other media. Ofcom's brief will be exclusively for electronic media. The shift in focus to moving image and electronic media, which have been neglected, is valuable but there is a danger of fragmentation of advice and support if agencies focus attention on one element of media literacy. If the Office of Communications (Ofcom) has a brief for electronic media, whose job is it to promote media literacy in print forms?

3.3 The British Education and Communications Technology Agency (Becta) provides support through some activities for schools to develop work in using moving image media. For example, its pilot project '*Capturing Creativity*' has given schools who successfully bid into the project a video camera and an edit suite to explore how primary and secondary age pupils can use the medium creatively.

3.4 At a local level, LEAs are key intermediaries in supporting the implementation of government policy in schools and for youth work. In terms of school planning they have only modest scope to enhance provision for local priorities. Their priorities are increasingly driven by those of central government and where councils provide additional funding for advisers and advisory teachers, these are most likely to be for literacy, numeracy and ICT. There is support for citizenship, but media literacy is only a small part of this subject .

3.5 For the informal sector LEAs have the freedom to play a much larger role. Although funding from Europe and from sources such as the Single Regeneration Budget is most commonly tied to economic and social development objectives, authorities have the freedom to determine the methods to achieve these goals. Some authorities, for example Wigan and Liverpool, see the development of cultural industries as an important factor in local economic regeneration. Where such strategies are allied to Education Development Plans, which place a high value on informal education and lifelong learning and are supported by funding, media education could form a significant area of opportunity for young people's learning.

3.6 For schools the National Curriculum is the key policy framework. While it does enshrine some requirement for media education at Key Stages 3 and 4, this is a relatively small element of the English orders. Media literacy is in competition with other government priorities such as 'core' literacies: reading and writing, speaking and listening. Even speaking and listening have to struggle for their place at present, particularly in primary schools. The relationships between media literacy and other forms of literacy are not well understood.

3.7 The inclusion of media education within the statutory framework is crucial to its survival. Government agencies use the orders for planning their activities. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), which draws up the orders, also translates them into specifications for GCSE examinations. The requirement to read and interpret media texts is carried forward into other government initiatives such as the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) for Key Stage 3. The Teacher Training Agency (TTA) includes media education in initial teacher training for secondary English teachers. OFSTED monitors whether the orders are being translated into the curriculum of schools. However, the orders are not sufficient to ensure more than a very modest presence. Some growth takes place over time as the English orders are revised, though these revisions can be affected by the political climate of the time. The most recent revisions have included the study of the moving image for the first time.

3.8 All the government agencies mentioned above, though broadly supportive of some form of media education, have other higher priorities, often set by government. They often act as gatekeepers. For example, QCA has to decide what it is realistic to expect teachers to take on board at any given time. However, without a modest place in the statutory framework, media education would be unlikely to survive as some form of entitlement for all pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4.

3.9 Schools themselves have a key role in promoting or inhibiting media literacy. Heads and senior managers may well have many of the negative or uncertain attitudes to media education we describe in Section 5. In balancing competing claims for curriculum time they may rate the responsibility to make their pupils media literate lower than other skills, or conflate it with technical literacy in using ICT.

3.10 Opportunities are missed at all levels for 'joined up' thinking. The push on media literacy has not effectively been linked with the planning in schools for improvements in young people's skills in using information and communications technology (ICT). It remains to be seen whether the guidance for citizenship is strong enough to guarantee media education a larger place in the curriculum that it has at present.

3.11 The informal sector, for the purposes of this report, has the following elements:

- the youth service: projects and youth centres provided by local education authorities and the national youth organisations and their local branches;
- specialist organisations, either those not-for-profit organisations which have media education, or young people's social and educational development through the use of the media, as part of their charitable purposes; or small commercial media organisations, frequently in the field of digital technologies, where the directors, who are frequently the only staff, have a personal commitment to young people's development;
- study support activities linked to schools, and Summer University programmes, organised often by local education authorities and Education Business Partnerships.

3.12 What these disparate elements tend to have in common is a commitment to learning through doing, to working with disadvantaged young people, and an insecure funding base. OFSTED inspection reports show that the youth service, in the vast majority of LEAs, is effective in engaging with disaffected young people and those from disadvantaged groups such as travellers, refugees and ethnic minorities.

3.13 Where the youth service links up with the expertise in the specialist provision in the informal sector, it can play an effective role in achieving its aims for young people. Otherwise, media education activity can be short-lived and not contribute substantially to making young people better able to articulate their points of view

3.14 The informal sector receives, in many ways, stronger official support for the development of media literacy than schools, though government policy is more centred on ICT capability than media literacy. The Government's emphasis on social inclusion has supported a considerable amount of activity outside school, such as study support and summer universities. There is substantial activity supported by mixtures of government grant, charities and business for specialist centres which offer access to high-quality

equipment and expert trainers. This burst of activity is also supportive of schools in providing access for students, for example to tackle their GCSE coursework. It is hard to judge exactly what the activity in the informal sector adds up to, although it is clearly an important source of expertise and high-quality work. Are all providers equally effective in different ways? How many young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are able to compensate for lack of access to computers at home, or to gain the necessary social and organisational skills to improve their life chances?

3.15 The DfES and the DCMS, for example through policy directives to the New Opportunities Fund, support some developments in schools which have the capacity to improve the quality of media education and to provide a better understanding of how young people learn and what they are capable of understanding and creating.

3.16 A recent report for UNESCO³ concludes from contributions submitted that media literacy is not systematically developed through education provision, formal and informal, in most countries around the world. Most countries have some expectation of developing a media literate population, but the rationale and capacity to deliver vary considerably. Only in the curriculum of the state of Western Australia is the study of moving image texts a substantial part of the English language curriculum in primary and secondary schools (25%). In addition, media studies teachers are required to have a specialist qualification. Many other developed countries are following a similar path to that in the UK, with some requirement for media education in the curriculum, though not necessarily mandatory, and a parallel growth of activity around ICT outside school. It is not clear, however, to what extent real practice in these countries reflects official aspirations.

³ Domaille and Buckingham (2001)

4 Where media education takes place: the curriculum framework

Summary

Schools

The National Curriculum for England and Wales only explicitly cites media education in English and citizenship. In other subject areas, the National Curriculum orders offer opportunities for the development of media literacy skills, notably in history, geography, modern foreign languages, ICT and art and design, though these are more explicit in some subjects than others. These opportunities are often fleshed out in helpful ways in non-statutory schemes of work which demonstrate in some detail how curriculum planning, teaching and learning objectives can be drawn from the statutory programmes of study. Well taught, these schemes could make a significant contribution to media literacy. The evidence is that most media teaching takes place in English, and that statutory requirements are the strongest driving force.

The informal sector

There are no statutory frameworks to govern the place of media education in the informal sector. There is no nationally agreed youth work curriculum. Museums, media centres and voluntary projects often have charters or mission statements which direct them to target particular groups and provide particular types of opportunity, for example, enrichment or access to digital technologies. Their work shares many of the same ambitions as youth work, that is to help young people gain skills in working together with mutual respect. The work should ensure that young people take an active part in planning, executing and evaluating purposeful activities and acquire the communication, practical and learning skills to do this well.

Northern Ireland and Scotland

4.1 The situation in Northern Ireland is broadly similar to that in England and Wales in that mass media texts are part of the curriculum orders for English and separate media studies courses are available at 14+.

4.2 The situation is very different in a number of respects in Scotland in that the structure of assessment is different from that in the rest of the UK in being 'stage' rather than age related. The system of assessment has recently undergone a major restructuring. Opportunities for media education are primarily located within English and communication and art and design. It also has a small place as a cross-curricular issue. *The Curriculum Design for Secondary Stages: Guidelines for Schools, SCCC, 1999* states that 'media awareness' has four broad aims (similar to those described in Section 2 above):

'To understand media messages, know about the diversity of the mass media, better understand the processes of media production through practical production and explore reactions to the mass media through all forms of expression, individually, and collectively.'

Use of technology and understanding of its impact are seen as part of all these aims. In the most recent revision (2000) of *'Structure and Balance'* there is no explicit mention of 'media education' as a cross-curricular aspect, but there are implicit opportunities for media work in all five of the new aspects: personal and social development, education for work, education for citizenship, the culture of Scotland, and information and communications technology.

England and Wales

English

4.3 Since the National Curriculum was revised in 2000, media education has a requirement of the National Curriculum orders for Key Stages 3 and 4. It is not statutory at Key Stages 1 and 2, though it is included as an example of activity which could take place at Key Stage 2.

The orders for reading include the following statements:

Media and moving image texts

Pupils should be taught:

- a how meaning is conveyed in texts that include print, images and sometimes sounds;
- b how choice of form, layout and presentation contribute to effect;
- c how the nature and purpose of media products influence content and meaning;
- d how audiences and readers choose to respond to media.

4.4 The revision of the National Curriculum has made the place of media in English much more explicit than the previous versions and for the first time made the study of the moving image a compulsory element of the English curriculum. This change is recent, and although the OFSTED Subject Report on English for 2000-01 says that 'schools have generally responded well to the new emphasis on the moving image', it is impossible to tell from available evidence exactly what is going on in English departments, what is covered and how well teachers are equipped to deal with the moving image. The QCA Curriculum Review comments that teachers on the whole welcome its inclusion, but are not sure what to do in order to fulfil their responsibilities. *'Moving Images in the Classroom'* is cited in the QCA review as a useful guide. These issues will be discussed more fully later in the report.

4.5 QCA included examples of how to plan for study of the mass media in its model scheme of work for Key Stage 3. A unit for each year covered news, study of the opening of David Lean's film of *Great Expectations* alongside the text, advertising and representation of other cultures as part of a unit on travel writing. Evidence from school visiting suggests that departments pick up some of these units or use the structure as a model and add their own material, but that overall their influence has been moderate.

4.6 There have always been elements within the English orders which prompted some study of the mass media, but as in many other subjects where these have been less explicit, much remains open to interpretation. However, the existence of references to media texts in the orders has had a beneficial impact at Key Stage 4 in enabling the School Curriculum and Assessment authority (now replaced by QCA) to include in its regulations for GCSE English the requirement that there should be some study of the media. This guarantees that all candidates for GCSE English undertake some work on the media.⁴ The content most commonly taught in English will be discussed in Section 7. Although the new specifications from QCA for GCSE English courses (in force from September 2002) will continue to require some study of the media, they have not made the study of the moving image compulsory. Only two boards have included the media in their coursework requirements. In AQA (NEAB) syllabus it will be assessed for writing skills (the ability to analyse, review, comment); OCR offer the option of including study of the media as coursework where it will be assessed for reading skills.

Citizenship

4.7 As part of the provision for citizenship at Key Stages 3 and 4 schools will be expected to cover the significance of the media in society. The non-statutory guidance offers two main models for doing this: there are discrete units of work, one for Key Stage 3 '*What makes a news story*' and one for Key Stage 4, '*Producing the news*'. The guidance suggests a range of topics and activities, including simulations which schools might like to draw on. These are similar to activities that might form part of GCSE media studies courses or English units. The guidance also shows in its exemplars for planning citizenship how media topics might be part of other topics, such as national identity (how do the media represent national, religious and ethnic diversity?) and global citizenship (how do the media and the internet inform my view of the world?)

4.8 It remains to be seen how much emphasis schools will place on this aspect and how they deliver it. Advisers are aware that it is only one priority within citizenship and that others clamour even more loudly for their place, particularly health education and drugs education. With 5% of the taught curriculum as its nominal allocation, even with ingenious planning, there is a great deal on the agenda.

Media studies GCSE

4.9 The content commonly taught for GCSE media studies will be discussed in more detail later. Courses are based on the generally agreed concepts for the subject: understanding of how media texts are constructed and how they represent their subject matter (language and genre), understanding of how media texts are produced, circulated and understood by their audiences (industry and audiences). All include some practical production work, though the amount required can vary quite significantly. The way in which aims are expressed varies

⁴ Hart and Hicks discuss the impact of the statutory framework on teaching about the media in their book '*Teaching media in the English curriculum*', pp 50-59.

slightly as does the particular emphasis individual boards give, for example, to the creative and aesthetic. Neither of these is mentioned explicitly in the aims of the 2002 AQA/ SEG syllabus, but appear in the objectives. The aesthetic element of media studies is most strongly stated in the OCR syllabus as part of practical production work. The OCR syllabus also refers explicitly to studying the historical context of media texts. However, these variations are minor.

4.10 All boards assess by both coursework and examination. The examinations assess skills of critical analysis; coursework is not necessarily production. It is possible for candidate to undertake a very modest amount of practical production for some syllabuses.

Other subjects of the curriculum

4.11 Education about the media is not an explicit requirement of any of the National Curriculum subject orders other than English. However, many subjects have strands in their attainment targets which are very similar in focus to those described in section 2 above. They represent possible cross-curricular delivery of media literacy, as is envisaged for literacy and numeracy, though few schools have any explicit policy for so doing. The evidence we have indicates that where aspects of the curriculum are not statutory, they do not impact strongly on most teachers' thinking and planning.

4.12

- In **art and design**, pupils are expected to discuss and question critically, and to study 'codes and conventions and how these are used to represent ideas, beliefs and values in works of art, craft and design'.
- In **history and geography** students should have opportunities to select, combine, analyse and evaluate information.
- In **music**, some creative activities are identical to other media production activities, both understanding and creating 'resources, conventions, processes and procedures...used in selected musical genres'.
- The requirements in **modern foreign languages** are less explicit. The requirement to use authentic materials is not explicitly linked to considering how they represent the culture they describe.

4.13 As with English and citizenship, non-statutory schemes of work for Key Stage 3 make explicit how these broad requirements might be delivered and in history and geography, in particular, promote the development of media literacy, as the following examples illustrate:

EXAMPLE 1

History unit 9: the French revolution

- In order to distinguish facts from hypothesis pupils compare heroic revolutionary paintings of the storming of the Bastille with modern accounts.
- They should be able to 'explain how and why the storming of the Bastille has been interpreted differently'.
- Links with media education concepts: how reality is represented for different purposes, and the reliability of evidence.

EXAMPLE 2

Geography: unit 24: Passport to the World

This unit is intended to be a 'long thin' unit to which teachers return from time to time across the key stage. It invites them to draw out some key ideas. Among these are ways in which the world is represented in the mass media. For example, in the section *'What's in an ad?'* pupils are encouraged to look at the locations in which advertisements are set and to consider what is being represented. They might also look at the representation of the regions of the UK in different drama series in *'The geography of the arts'*. In *'What's in the news'* they are invited to consider what places are represented in the news, large or small, and whether the news is good or bad.

ICT

4.14 The orders for ICT at Key Stages 3 and 4 can similarly be seen as sharing some of the same objectives as media education, as with other subjects, the links are not explicit.

- In **Finding things out** pupils should be taught among other skills, 'to question the plausibility and value of the information found and how to collect, enter, analyse and evaluate quantitative and qualitative evidence'.
- In **Exchanging and sharing information** they should 'use a range of ICT tools efficiently to draft, bring together and refine information and create good-quality presentations in a form that is sensitive to the needs of particular audiences and suits the information content'.
- In **Developing ideas and making things happen** they should 'develop and explore information, solve problems and derive new information for particular purposes'.
- **Reviewing, modifying and evaluation work** as it progresses requires them to 'reflect critically on their own and others' uses of ICT to help them develop and improve their ideas and the quality of their work'.

4.15 Examples of moving image media given in the orders tend to be drawn from multimedia texts such as websites.

5 Rationales: why teachers think that teaching about the media is important

Summary

The reasons commonly given as to why we might study the media are complex and often conflicting and have changed as media education has evolved over the last 40 years. Contradictory views underpin the way most of us think about the media, and affect what we value in studying the media. Indeed, these views affect whether we think the media are worth studying at all. They underpin policy at all levels. They affect headteachers and parents, as well as specialist teachers and their generalist colleagues.

The rationales which underpin activity in the informal sector are different from those found in schools. They may emphasise the enrichment value of media activities: the importance of giving young people opportunities to enjoy the media, or access to and training in the use of equipment. They usually emphasise the social value of such activities: the importance of giving young people opportunities to take responsibility for themselves, enhancing their social skills and their opportunities to be active citizens. There is not always a clear rationale for developing media literacy, for example a framework of key ideas and concepts to underpin teaching and learning. Improving vocational skills is sometimes an element within the rationale of such activity.

5.1 There are several rationales which are commonly cited within formal education, and the relative emphasis placed on them has changed over time and between interest groups. Research illustrates the extent to which teachers' views vary, but also the way in which they can hold to competing and conflicting rationales at the same time.

EXAMPLE 3

Rationale for inclusion of media education within citizenship: Tameside LEA

'Media education has to be included within citizenship or contribute towards it because the easily led or unwary citizen is disempowered. Media understanding and awareness are a significant and possibly essential aspect of political literacy. Our definition of citizenship will include global citizenship, and awareness of how other countries are represented in the media will be part of that.'

5.2 There is a marked difference between the priorities of teachers working in the formal sector and most trainers and youth workers based outside schools, where the rationale is usually positive rather than defensive. What we might call the more specialist informal media activity, based around dedicated charitable organisations or museums or regional film theatres, exists precisely because the providers believe in the value of the moving image or of access to high-quality journalistic activity.

5.3 Youth workers and the media practitioners who sometimes lead sessions in youth clubs are most likely to relate to the fourth rationale listed below. The objectives of youth organisations are generally the personal and social development of young people, advocacy on behalf of young people and their interests, and empowerment of young people to

improve their own life chances or the services and circumstances of young people in their neighbourhoods. Media-based projects, both print and moving image, particularly video, are particularly suitable as means of achieving these objectives. Such activities tend also to be popular with young people because of the inherent attractions of using technology such as video cameras and digital equipment. The opportunity to articulate their own views on topics of concern or interest and to work in small groups with friends is also rewarding. A common weakness in such activities, where the youth workers are inexperienced in media activities, is that the process of enabling the group to work together predominates over learning the grammar of the medium and acquiring sound technical skills

4.4 There are four commonly cited rationales for teaching about the media, and individuals may hold one or more:

- young people and adults need to be well informed about the media and why and how information is communicated. People need to be able to make judgements about how reliable information is;
- the mass media are a central part of most people's experience and therefore we should study them as well as other forms of information and entertainment like books. We need to understand how different audiences respond to them and appropriate them for their own use;
- it is important to anchor learning in children's experience. If we use programmes like *EastEnders* to develop critical skills, pupils gain confidence and then can tackle other unfamiliar texts;
- the mass media are a key source of entertainment, part of our culture, and students should understand how they make meaning. They should also be able to enjoy making their own media texts: video diaries, new trailers for films, music programmes.

5.5 These rationales are not neutral. In the 1970s, the key reason for teaching about the media in schools was to enable young people to resist dangers and misinformation in the media. On the whole the media were a bad thing. Aesthetics were too suspect and problematic to consider and so there was little of the exploration of artistic qualities which had underpinned the first incarnation of study about the media, film studies.

5.6 This predominantly hostile view was partly replaced by a desire to enable young adults to discriminate between popular texts: to understand why one soap is 'better' than another. These views are less prominent nowadays in rationales for teaching about the media in schools, but are still there.

5.7 There has been, over recent years, an increasing emphasis on understanding the qualities of audio-visual media as popular art forms and the pleasures they offer to audiences. At the same time 'critical' understanding has come to mean analytical rather than hostile. Nonetheless, the rationale given by advisers for the study of mass media within citizenship tends to relate most strongly to rationale I, the need to ensure that citizens are

well informed. It is often articulated as a defensive rationale, to prevent manipulation of young people by powerful interests. Positive rationales for studying the media co-exist very uneasily with a number of other attitudes that many adults hold to some degree.

5.8 These other attitudes include:

- study of the media is a 'Mickey Mouse' subject, not a real discipline;
- literary texts are more important than media texts many of which are not worth study: for example, soap operas, game shows, computer games;
- it is important that we teach about quality media texts. It is fine to teach the film of *Jane Eyre* or *Lawrence of Arabia*. They are part of our cultural heritage. Teaching about game shows is a waste of time;
- there is already too much in the curriculum: media study is interesting but not as important as other things. Or, because of competition for time, we have to select only the most worthwhile media texts to study, for example, newspapers.

5.9 Added to this is the continuing anxiety about whether there is a link between viewing violent action on the screen and violent crime. It is not our intention to pillory the wide-ranging and often contradictory views about teaching about the media, or indeed, for not teaching about them, that prevail. Understanding them helps to illuminate why debates about teaching the media are so heated.

6 What kind of critical framework do teachers, trainers and youth workers use? How they balance practical production and theory

Key concepts:

- The language of the media - focusing on the ways texts are internally constructed;
- Producers and audiences - exploring the ways in which media texts are made and delivered to audiences;
- Messages and values - concerned with the interpretations of the world offered by media texts, and the effects these may have.

(adapted from *Moving Images in the Classroom*, BFI et al, 2001)

Summary

Formal education takes some account of the concepts above. They underpin specialist media teaching. Other subject teachers vary in the extent to which they are aware of the conceptual framework and which aspects of it they take on board. In the informal sector the degree to which the conceptual framework is influential varies. It may be implicit in the skills taught, but not consciously used to plan. Specialist centres which have some trainers with a teaching background alongside media practitioners can often provide more imaginative ways to engage with difficult concepts such as producers and audiences because young people are engaged with making real products. Youth work can be limited where it lacks clear aims for its work, when video making or photography are merely instrumental. The formal sector offers more experience in '*reading*' the media and the informal in '*writing*' them, though in the best work both approaches are present and mutually supportive.

6.1 **Within the formal sector, the degree to which teachers are aware of the key concepts underpinning media education varies. There is little disagreement about what the key concepts are among specialist media educators, but the extent to which they inform other teachers' thinking can vary significantly.**

6.2 **In different subjects the rationale for media education will be differently inflected. For example:**

- English teachers often teach about language and representation. They are generally more confident in handling concepts of audience in terms of a hypothetical or real reader than in terms of a wide audience. They rarely tackle the processes of production and distribution of media texts;
- ICT teachers are less likely to tackle issues of purpose and audience. They often fail to explain the use and effect of framing, type of shot, sound and visual editing conventions and to concentrate on technological skills, such as understanding how the equipment works. They are often more concerned with providing information than with developing critical skills in their students.

6.3 The rationale for practical and production work is in a process of change. In the past, partly because access to equipment was difficult and the equipment, for example, for editing film or video, so cumbersome, media teachers and indeed media studies examination assessment criteria, laid great stress on the processes students went through in planning and preparing practical work and these were valued more highly than the product which was typically raw and rough and often paper-based. The emphasis on practice activities persists, and is reflected in the tasks set in media studies examination papers, typically storyboards, draft posters and treatments.

6.4 Many teachers felt and still feel that they lack expertise in practical work. There is still a division between, say, teachers of English or history, who are more confident with theory and ICT teachers and technicians who know how to teach technical skills but lack a theoretical framework.

6.5 A legacy of this is the lack of agreed criteria for evaluating the quality of what students produce. There is still some debate amongst teachers about how important the quality of any production is, but the debate has significantly shifted with improved, though not easy, access to digital technology and a greater conviction that young people have a right to learn how to make good quality media products.

GCSE media studies: practical production

6.6 In GCSE Media Studies, practical or production work is required, amounting to 40% of the overall marks. However, the options within the syllabuses mean that schools may select quite a small proportion of production work as coursework where developed production tasks could be tackled. (It is around 15% of the overall mark in all three syllabuses, allowing for different patterns of choice and assessment.) There is an emphasis on pre-production as well as production tasks. In all syllabuses practical or production tasks are spread throughout the examined elements. The tasks set for completing during examinations are limited in scale but not necessarily easy to undertake successfully, for example, drawn posters and storyboards. All boards are looking towards more technologically sophisticated major production tasks, though these are most likely to use desktop publishing to which most schools have access. Examiners' reports for 2001 indicate that only a small number of candidates have access to digital video or editing equipment, but that the use is rising. Examiners report that a small amount of work is of poor quality, handwritten or cut and paste, paying little attention to the conventions of specific genres.⁵

6.7 These arrangements, while they accommodate the current shortage of digital video photography, filming and editing equipment in schools, are unlikely to drive forward the development of high quality practical work in the way that the 'A' level media studies syllabuses have.

⁵ OCR Report on the examination, 2001: p15. AQA report on the examination, 2001: p5.

6.8 Work in the informal sector is most often activity based, 'writing' in various media forms. In well-established, well-resourced centres it offers substantial enhancement of practical skills, for example, the Weekend Arts College and the Children's Express, where production skills are taught systematically. It can provide a real purpose and audience in ways that schools cannot, for example, in work undertaken by the Active Citizenship Network linking young people with charitable clients for whom they make publicity videos. This is often a key reason why schools get involved with such work. It usually provides access to skilled professionals.

6.9 Other work in the informal sector offers opportunities for young people to widen their experience of 'reading' the media, for example by viewing films and listening to expert presentations on them. Much of this may take place at regional film theatres.

7 How much media education takes place? Who has access to it?

Summary

In schools in England and Wales

- only in English and ICT do all school students have some access to analytical and practical work which contributes to their media literacy. The experience they have is limited in range and not sufficiently regular for them to build up strong critical and practical skills;
- more students have access to some media education in Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4;
- some opportunities at Key Stage 4 are likely to be more substantial than at Key Stage 3, for example in music and media studies. The numbers involved are relatively small;
- opportunities for media education appear to be very limited in some subjects, because of emphasis in teaching or because of limited access to equipment. They appear to be best in history;
- access to ICT in all subjects, though much improved, is very patchy and does not necessarily contribute to media literacy;
- media arts specialist schools are developing strategies for promoting media literacy through a wider range of subjects.

In Northern Ireland

Uptake of GCSE media studies is low; schools are on average smaller than in the UK and have poorer resources. (See Appendix 1)

In Scotland

There is little clear and consistent, up-to-date evidence about how much media education takes place in English and communication in Scotland. Changes in the formal assessment system for media education have led to a decline in numbers of students in the 14-16 age range who are entered for the course, but this seems to be a transitional issue, since numbers are rising steadily. The number entered for the three tiers of examination in 2002 (Intermediate 1,2 and Higher) was around 1500. (See Appendix 2)

In the informal sector in England and Wales

Only a small proportion of young people are active participants at any one time. Our rough estimate, is that between 6000 and 10,000 young people aged 11-16, and a maximum of 18-20,000 in the informal sector as a whole take part in media related activities. Various new streams of government funding related to social inclusion have enhanced the range of what is on offer, and made it accessible to more young people over the past five years.

Specialist work

- often provides substantial and significant experience of planning, making and presenting media products to a real audience;
- can contribute to young people's commitment, independence and staying power;
- is often linked to school aims and actively supports and enriches the school curriculum and therefore may support young people in benefiting from their school education;
- in urban projects disadvantaged groups and ethnic minorities are often well represented.

Youth work

- can do all the above, particularly where it draws on specialist expertise
- but is more likely to be ad hoc, short-term activities with unclear aims and planning;
- erratic attendance can inhibit what can be achieved.

7.1 In Northern Ireland there is less support for out of hours learning linked to schools such as study support. Youth work is well funded but as in England and Wales there is limited development of long-term projects and limited expertise among youth workers. Where expert trainers are involved the quality of provision is much higher. (See Appendix 1)

7.2 Many young people in Scotland experience media education in more informal settings - youth centres, Study Support, voluntary clubs, and cinema venues. Several of the large specialised cinema venues - in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee, for example - offer an outreach educational service to schools, as well as cinema-based events. Edinburgh Film House organises a scheme for young people to make films out of school (SKAMM - Scottish Kids are Making Movies).

Much of this work is practical, and involves young people in making movies or video. Animation work appears particularly popular with younger students.

What happens in schools in England and Wales?

7.3 The statutory orders for English and ICT ensure that all pupils at Key Stage 3 have some access to analytical and practical work which is capable of developing media literacy. There may be links made between the two subjects, typically through tasks like desk-top publishing. Access to computers and other equipment like digital cameras is patchy, though increasing, for example in art and design. Some widespread forms of use are very limited in their ambition: for example, students rarely compose text on screen, but mostly simply use word-processing to make fair copies. Images are usually 'found' images rather than original and often crude clip art whose effect on the whole text is not thought through.

7.4 At Key Stage 4 all students have to undertake some study of the media for GCSE English. Because of examination requirements this is likely to be analysis. Outside English, a minority of students at Key Stage 4 have certain access to teaching which may promote media literacy. GCSE ICT is an optional subject, taken only by a minority of students, though numbers are rising rapidly. It is not possible to tell from the OFSTED annual report on English the extent to which the subject contributes to media literacy. It clearly contributes to students' technical skills. In other optional subjects there is evidence of good teaching of a kind that is likely to promote media literacy, for example in music (see example 1) but only a very small number of students elect to take GCSE music. A larger, but still small, proportion of the cohort takes GCSE media studies. Uptake for GCSE media studies has remained stable at around 30,000+ entries per year, that is roughly 1-2% of the cohort. GCSE media studies is offered in approximately 800 (out of about 5000) schools in England and Wales.

Other subjects

7.5 Analysis of the OFSTED secondary subject reports shows up a number of factors which lead us to conclude that the critical skills needed for media literacy, such as the evaluation of evidence and sources, are under-developed except in history. The reasons for this include subject teaching priorities and teaching styles used which are very different from the models offered in the QCA schemes of work discussed above. Similarly access to and use of ICT in most subjects is patchy. The OFSTED Survey on ICT in Schools says:

'There remain large differences among and within schools in the incidence and quality of subject teaching using ICT. Across the range of subjects inspected, ICT has had some beneficial effect on teaching in over four in ten departments. However, nearly one third of departments have not been affected by the use of ICT. Between these extremes lie departments in which productive developments are taking place with some good teaching using ICT but where ICT has not yet had a significant effect on standards. There are also variations among subjects. The productive uses of ICT tends to be more advanced in design and technology, although even here there are wide variations.'

Specialist media arts schools

7.6 The specialist media arts schools (at present, 12) have policies and practice which may embed media literacy across a range of subjects, although some use media primarily in relation to other arts. All specialist colleges have to incorporate their specialism into the objectives of other subjects in relevant ways and to engage with their community, including other schools. Each school designs its own strategy. The media arts schools are relatively new. The longest established, Parkside in Cambridge and Charles Edward Brooke in

Lambeth, have very different priorities, reflecting their very different contexts. Media education has to be part of an overall plan for the school's development. In the case of Charles Edward Brooke, an inner city school, media and performing arts have been at the core of the school's strategy for raising standards and renewing the school's identity. Its successful work in the arts and media education has helped to give the students a sense of pride in themselves and a confidence in the school. Both schools began with a core of media education in the English department and strong provision for media studies GCSE, which is a popular option at Key Stage 4 but not compulsory. Both are at a stage where much has been initiated, in terms of activities in other departments. Neither is yet, unsurprisingly, at a stage where this range of activity constitutes a coherent whole-school drive. But there is a much higher level of understanding among other departments about how media literacy relates to their subject and much more activity, for example, developing teaching materials and teaching strategies. Some teachers are engaged in research on media education. In the Islington Arts and Media school, which is not a specialist arts school, a course of study has been designed for Key Stage 3, to be taught in a weekly lesson. This is designed to build up specific media literacy skills, linked with art and design, English and media studies. at Key Stage 4. The scheme of work systematically covers print, audio and moving image media.

7.7 Media education has a particular 'flavour' in each of these three schools, and each is pursuing its own interests and prioritising slightly different aspects of media education. A significant amount of information on how particular groups of students learn has come from these schools. The challenge will be to ensure that the growing community of specialist media arts schools and other schools with a focus on media education, while preserving their individual priorities, contribute in a coherent ways to our understanding of best practice in teaching and learning about the media.

EXAMPLE 4

Specialist media arts school: media and the community

Situated in Lambeth, Charles Edward Brooke is located in an area of socio-economic deprivation. The school ethos is particularly strong and cultural enrichment is a key element in raising self esteem and achievement. Turning our location in the inner city to our advantage, we have an ever-expanding programme of arts activities with our arts partners and with the community. In recognition of our achievement in the arts the school is only one of three secondary schools in London to be awarded the Artsmark Gold. In addition to our annual community conference, media/music master-classes, media summer school and computers for beginners evening classes, we have made the community and the arts central to the pastoral programme. This reflects our commitment to the arts as an essential part of the development of good citizenship. Each year group (approximately 150) participates in community projects which are designed to develop interpersonal and organisational skills, confidence and self-esteem, team building and an understanding of the development of a project from start to finish. Students have worked with senior citizens or with primary school students as part of these projects, which have focused on new technologies and the arts. By having the opportunity to teach others skills they themselves have acquired, students have an important affirmation and consolidation of their own demonstrable learning. For the Year 9 community project, for example, the whole year group went on two days' work experience in local primary schools with a Year 9 video team making a short documentary record, which they also edited to be shown in assemblies and at Speech Day.

(Linda Mann, media co-ordinator).

Main forms of provision in the informal sector

Study Support or 'out of school hours learning'

7.8 Study support programmes linked to schools have the potential to offer opportunities for media education, but as yet there is little evidence that any significant amount takes place. In the past 10 years and particularly since 1998 when the government published *Extending Opportunity: a national framework for study support* there has been a growth in opportunities for young people to engage in structured but informal educational activities. These take place before and after the school day, at break times and during weekends and holidays. The content, timing and structure of sessions are under the control of the school. Funding from the New Opportunities fund of £205 million has been very important in extending the amount of such provision. The purpose of study support is to improve motivation, self-esteem and to raise achievement, including attainment in public examinations. A number of LEAs for whom extending and enhancing the study support provision in their schools is a priority have made extensive use of the local learning grids (both web and LAN based) to provide opportunities to develop media skills. There is no evidence on how much use has been made of this potential.

7.9 However the study support initiative has significantly fostered the development of summer universities and the provision of learning programmes, more sustained than the educational visit or one-day workshop, by museums, galleries and arts and sports organisations. In this setting there is more evidence of sustained media activity and of its popularity with young people.

Summer schools and universities

7.10 Hands-on media projects are frequently a significant component of these with the 'news team' being a frequently used method. News teams are young people participating in summer schools for which the main learning activity is the recording and publishing of the activities of the whole project. Digital stills cameras, video and print are the most commonly used media. News teams are a standard element in the summer programmes of the University of the First Age, a national initiative sponsored by the DfES and running in some 40 LEAs to apply the principles of experiential learning, and the techniques of accelerated learning for students in Years 6 to 9.

In such programmes, the learning objectives and levels of skill vary. For some particularly in work with groups of students with low academic ability the function of the News Team is to raise the confidence and social skills of demotivated young people through conducting interviews and presenting the results of the groups work in a simple PowerPoint presentation.

7.11 At the other end of the scale, schools have used study support sessions to prepare for participation in the national competition to prepare a newspaper in a day. Summer Universities are large-scale programmes of short courses and experiential learning projects organised principally by local education authorities for students aged between 14 and 22 during the school summer holidays. University departments and professional artists and performers frequently provide the courses. The counterparts for upper primary aged pupils are the Children's Universities. Projects involving video and digital media feature heavily in summer university programmes and are extremely popular.

7.12 Courses may last one or two weeks and provide an intensive opportunity to acquire both the technical skills, the grammar and the creative processes involved in effective media use. Indeed, they provide more hands-on time than GCSE students may experience in a two-year course.

Specialist Voluntary Sector Providers of Media Education

7.13 In most of the major conurbations of the UK there are voluntary organisations providing opportunities for young people to acquire skills in using and analyse the media. They can be categorised simply into:

- arts centres with a strong media, particularly new media, aspect for which work with young people is merely one aspect of their educational provision. Examples would be the Watershed Arts Centre in Bristol and regional film theatres such as the Cornerhouse in Manchester;
- charitable organisations whose primary purpose is the personal and social development of young people through the vehicle of journalism, film or television/video. Examples of these would be Children's Express with full and part-time bureaux in seven cities across the UK and TakeOver Radio based in Leicester.

7.14 Because the staff in these organisations tend to have recent professional experience and hardware and software is at or near professional standards the young people will experience standards higher than those that can be achieved in all but the most well-resourced departments of media studies in schools.

The Youth Service

7.15 The Youth Service is the term given to informal educational provision for young people provided by local education authorities and voluntary organisations. Normally it focuses on young people between the ages of 13 and 19 but some projects include young adults up to the age of 25. The Youth Service is both wide in its scope, ranging from the traditional uniformed organisations to drugs education and sexual health programmes, and diverse in its patterns of organisation and working methods. A unifying theme however is the importance youth organisations place on learning from experience. This can mean both:

- learning about an activity from directly engaging in it, and
- taking responsibility for the planning and delivery of the activity.

In some organisations and projects major areas of the work of the organisation such as approving expenditure, plans or the appointment of staff are delegated to members committees of young people.

7.16 The major range of activities provided by this out of school provision is very varied. Most of the organisations described below are small and work with modest numbers of young people. The main forms the provision takes are as follows:

Supporting school inclusion

- Study support, for example at the High Wire City Learning Centre in Hackney where small numbers of students access activities such as magazine writing and video making. The Weekend Arts College provides media production inputs to study support in Camden schools.

- Alternative curriculum for students in Year 10-11: for example, that provided for part of the week for small numbers at the Weekend Arts College.
- Summer schools: for example the Tyneside Cinema offered a three-week film-making summer school for 60 young people in Peterlee who made short films. In summer schools for example, run by the University of the First Age, a national initiative sponsored by the DfES, news teams record and publish the activities of the whole group. Digital stills cameras, video and print are the most commonly used media.
- Summer universities: see Example 5 below.
- LEAs using local networks. Dudley LEA in connection with Trilby Media has developed a website, KidsMag.net, which provides the technology and the publishing locus for a variety of products. A sophisticated feature of the site is that it records and analyses the patterns of log-ons. Schools can therefore be informed which of their students are engaged in what activities. During summer activities programmes prizes are awarded to the individuals and schools with the highest rates of contributions to the site. The Movie in a Day project, suitable for both primary and secondary aged children, provides a basic structure for students to make a few minutes of video, edit it, and then publish it on the website.

EXAMPLE 5

Tower Hamlets Summer University

Summer universities began in Tower Hamlets in 1995, an idea of Lord Young of Dartington. They are large-scale programmes of short courses and experiential learning projects organised principally by local education authorities for students aged between 14 and 22 during the school summer holidays. University departments and professional artists and performers frequently provide the courses. There are in summer 2002 some 20 organised and involving of the order of 10,000 young people. The counterparts for upper primary aged pupils are the Children's universities

Projects involving video and digital media feature regularly in summer university programmes and are extremely popular. The Tower Hamlets summer university is the largest and longest established of these. Tower Hamlets summer university offers two courses on digital film making, two on web design and one on photography out of 44 courses, the bulk of which are sports activities. For its summer 2002 programme the senior summer university offers 19 media courses out of the 115 in its programme for 2002. Eleven of these focus on new media and web design (one specifically for young women). Four focus on various aspects of TV production direction, editing and camera-work. Two are on script writing for TV and for film and two focus on still photography. In addition a weekly magazine *Nang!* is written and produced by students during each of the four weeks that the Summer University runs. Since the programmes are developed in response to feedback from students in previous years a measure of the popularity of media based programmes can be gained by looking at the numbers of programmes in various categories.

Course content	Numbers of courses	%
Web design and new media	12	10.4
Video production direction and editing	4	3.5
Script writing	2	1.7
Magazine writing and editing	1	0.8
Total for media	19	16.4

Curriculum enrichment linked to work in school

7.17 There is a range of **video/audio/website production**:

- The most common form of support takes the form of regular opportunities to undertake practical coursework for GCSE media studies. High Wire CLC in Hackney, for example offers two-day courses during the school day for Year 10 pupils to tackle media coursework. Students are released from the ordinary school curriculum to attend. Many centres offer this form of support, including a few university departments like Reading which have specialist facilities and technical support. The pressure on this form of support is an indicator of the lack of equipment and expertise in many schools.
- It can be practical work designed as curriculum enrichment for school work. High Wire has planned an English project linked to work in science: ethics and genetics on screen. This will require students to debate ethical issues and genetics and set up improvised situations where these issues are brought out. They will then make digital videos of short vignettes of their work and make a multi-media piece by annotating these on screen with science facts, opinions and ideas.
- Some organisations offer a regular cycle of activity that schools buy into. For example, the Active Citizenship Network has a year-long programme, regionally located, but feeding towards an annual video competition, its video Oscars. Groups of Year 10 students, usually about 12, self selected, from each school, are trained in planning and making a video about transition for local year 6 pupils, using Year 7 as actors. Since few have any prior experience of making and editing videos this is designed to give them the basic skills necessary. After Easter those who stay with the project (about 70 to 90 each year) are partnered with a client and a media mentor and plan and produce a video based on an agreed brief for a charity. The video is designed for real use. The students are supported in planning, production and post-production activities by their media mentor. The videos are shown in October at an awards ceremony. This work takes place mostly outside the school day.
- LEAs fund and support specific projects. Cheshire LEA undertook a project linking Year 10 students taking GCSE drama with primary schools to research and prepare a video on drugs. They were involved in a range of drama activities as part of their research and the final video. A professional video production company came in to train

the students in the use of the camera. The audience of primary pupils was involved in planning the content and evaluated the final product and the video was disseminated. It also provided evidence along with journals for GCSE drama.

- Similarly, Watershed Media centre undertook a project with a secondary school and linked primaries in Bristol where they worked with a designer to make a website where each school contributed an item illustrating one of the 12 days of Christmas. Some of the work took place after school.

7.18 Examples of **print journalism** include:

- The Newspapers Education Trust in Docklands provides day long sessions for secondary students (usually Year 9 and 10) in groups of 10 to undertake a newspaper simulation activity within a day. An estimated 1000 pupils attend each year.

7.19 With reference to **film screenings (and talks)**, most regional film theatres which have education officers offer sessions for Key Stage 3 students and their teachers. Many such organisations offer resources for teachers, training in preparation for events or the chance to learn along with the students. A small number operate at a distance from schools, perhaps unintentionally not understanding what is going on in schools, or identifying how they contribute to, for example, literacy skills.⁶

Outside school

7.20 Some work outside school is based in well-established arts centres:

- **Weekend Arts College** offers a range of media production activities as part of its performing arts curriculum. There are junior (5-14 years) and senior (14-25 years) programmes lasting 22 weeks. There is a waiting list and applicants are interviewed. Likely commitment to the programme is a criterion for acceptance and attendance is high. Overall, 4-500 young people are involved in an activity each week, though of course not all in the 11-16 age range. Unusually for the voluntary sector, Weekend Arts College has some vocational aims, linked to its brief to increase social inclusion.
- The '**Making it Reel**' **Saturday film club** at Watershed media centre provides opportunities for young people aged 12-15 to watch films. Some take part in activities such as judging the best film for under 12s in the international Wild Screen festival.

7.21 There are a small number of specialist organisations that are dedicated to using one particular medium as a vehicle for learning:

- **Children's Express** provides experience of planning and writing journalism. Their aim is to get stories placed with newspapers. There are six bureaux around the UK (London, Belfast, Newcastle are full time, open six days a week and Sheffield, Plymouth, Birmingham have offices open part time, including Saturday. (See Example 6)

⁶ The best established media arts schools, such as Parkside in Cambridge, offer this form of support to others, such as feeder primary schools, and community users. They function as specialist centres.

7.22 Some youth work projects incorporate media work within the broad range of normal youth centre activities. For example,

- **Livewire Youth Project**, Saltash, Cornwall works with young people aged between 10 and 20 in excellent purpose built accommodation. It offers a range of activities including single gender group work, multimedia and IT, photography and video production, outdoor adventure activities sports and arts projects. OFSTED identified the project as not only providing opportunities for young people to improve their technical competence but also to consider and debate health and drugs issues.

7.23 Other projects bring young people together for a specific purpose:

- **The Nothing Serious Video**, Brighton Young People's Centre. This video, which won the Phillip Lawrence Award in 2001, was made to enable young people to voice their opinions on and to share their experiences of racism in Brighton and Hove, to encourage young people to report racist crimes and to create a dialogue between young people and policy makers. The young people learned filming and editing techniques in order to undertake the project and have continued to meet after the conclusion of the project. The film has been widely shown in local schools.
- **Peckham Young People's Magazine Project**. Established in 2000, this magazine put together by young people covers issues of direct relevance to young people in an entertaining and youth friendly manner and has helped to promote racial harmony in Peckham. The project has so far produced four issues and has involved over 400 young people.

7.24 Some youth projects maintain work with a particular medium bringing new groups of young people to tackle fresh projects of issues. For example,

- **It Matters Photography Project**, Connaughty Centre, Corby, Northants. Young people between the ages of 13 and 21 write, storyboard, photograph and act in photo-stories. Subjects so far tackled have been bullying, drugs, teenage pregnancy, racism and xenophobia. One group has made presentations on bullying to all secondary schools in Corby and the project's work has travelled to Belarus and China as part of youth exchange programmes

7.25 Some projects are hybrids, linking specialist institutional support to youth work approaches and objectives. For example,

- **Multiyouth project**: (linked to the National Museum of Photography, film and television). This project originated in a problem of vandalism in the Museum, where equipment and exhibits were being vandalised. It developed, through the mediation of the Bradford Foyer into a substantial project which broke down barriers with local young people and provided them with substantial opportunities to take part in media production. (Bradford Foyer specialises in taking young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, developing their confidence and skills, and helping them move into jobs

or higher education.) The project initially offered free access to a series of trial video production workshops at the Museum to give the young people a sense of what was possible. The group then decided that they would like a more in-depth TV production course. A six week course was designed. The first two weeks were spent on technical issues and skills, the next three on filming dance, music and interviews with the police about the recent disturbances in the city. The resulting material has been edited. The group is now involved in making video programmes on local issues and is fund-raising to ensure its continuation.

7.26 Some of the activities above are run by relatively high profile groups, all employing staff and usually well resourced in terms of space and equipment. Others are part of youth work activities, often arising from the needs and interests of specific groups of young people or on the initiative of youth workers. There are also numbers of freelance trainers, some with an industry or craft background, some teachers. Many of these successful projects offer much greater opportunities in terms of time to build up skills by working on a series of activities. For example, students on a two week summer university course may well have 50 hours of 'hands on' access to filming and editing.

7.27 The above outlines also illustrate the variation of the length of the activity. Some are one off events, others enable some young people to be engaged for long periods of time, up to three years. Single projects can lead to the establishment of a group which continues to work on similar projects, like Multiyouth. Bigger organisations often also have stages and progression: junior to senior; film club pre-16 to film production post-16. Overall, however, projects are much more likely to be one-offs than sustained provision. For more detail, see the joint BFI/NYA publication, *'Being Seen, Being Heard.'*

7.28 Overall, though the organisations described above engage viable numbers they are still reaching only a small proportion of young people. Well-subscribed, established organisations often have more applicants than they can provide for and so interview. Where centres and projects are well established and well supported they have good attendance. Newer provision, particularly activities like study support, may take a long time to establish and suffer in the early years from erratic attendance and limited staying power. Projects fizzle out. Evidence indicates that it takes time for such provision to become established and then attendance improves if the offering is good quality and matches needs. Erratic attendance is a problem in youth work, but good quality work with a clear brief, which young people themselves are engaged in planning, engages and sustains interest.

EXAMPLE 6

The Belfast Bureau of Children's Express

Situated in Belfast's city centre, a neutral ground for both communities, the bureau consists of a large open plan newsroom with an office and a meeting room leading off. Young people from 8 to 18 are supported by three full time staff, with a mixture of journalism and youth work backgrounds in the task of identifying, researching, writing, editing and placing stories. The selling of news-stories to commercial papers magazines and broadcasters is central to the ethos of Children's Express. The standards which CE members are being taught to achieve are those of professional journalism but at the same time, it is a young person's perspective and voice that it is being placed before the public.

In June 2002 a sample of the stories being worked on included: the role and Benefits of Children's Commissioner in Northern Ireland; perceptions of young people from the traveller Community in Derry, Facilities in Northern Ireland for young people with mental health problems; Football Scouting: are talented young footballers being exploited by professional football clubs.

However the purpose of Children's Express is not pre-vocational journalism training but the development of the skills of critical thinking, objectivity, empathy, team-working. Young people at CE work in mixed age teams on stories they choose to work on. Key decisions including the confirmation of staff appointments are made by young people and more experienced members are trained to act as peer educators to induct and train new members.

Louise, in an FE College doing GNVQ Media Studies described how her three years in Children's Express had brought her freedom and friendship through the growth in confidence in interviewing, writing stories and participating in a UK wide children's advocacy project jointly with the Save the Children Fund. Martin, doing GCSEs at a boys' secondary modern, had had a story placed in the Observer of his visit to New York to the UN Children's Assembly. He has also written about the effect of the troubles on school life and on HIV and AIDS.

8 What do teachers/tutors teach about?

Content

Summary

In schools:

Critical analysis

Most students will study:

- advertising
- newspapers

Many will study

- moving image texts (film trailers, Baz Luhrmann's Romeo and Juliet, historical documentary footage)

A few will study:

- television genres, such as soap operas.
- radio
- popular music

Practical work

Most students will, at Key Stages 3 and 4, through ICT lessons and other subjects of the curriculum, use computers to make the following texts:

- several desk-top published items such as leaflets, newspaper articles, advertisements
- a multi-media text such as a PowerPoint presentation or a web page

Most will also have opportunities to research and use some information from the internet or CD ROMs.

Some will use:

- digital cameras

A small minority will use:

- video cameras
- sound recording equipment
- video editing software

8.1 David Buckingham⁷ concludes from indirect evidence that the six most common forms of classroom activity in media studies classes are:

- **textual analysis**, the most widely used at present; for example analysing a film trailer, or a news broadcast;
- **contextual analysis**, for example studying the opening or closing of a film to consider the range of people involved in its making, or looking at how a given text was marketed;
- **case studies**, for example, of advertising campaigns or film launches;
- translations of one text into another medium, such as a newspaper story into a television news item. It could include analysing the differences between texts in different media, comparing the opening of '*Great Expectations*' in the book and in David Lean's film;
- **simulations**; the most commonly used is a newsroom simulation;
- **practical production**, for example, a promotional pack for a new product, a trailer for a film.

8.2 In the informal sector the most common activities appear to be:

- video making
- video editing
- print/magazine journalism
- music recording/editing
- Still photography.

8.3 Less common, but mentioned regularly are:

- film viewing
- planning and making episodes for a 'soap'
- creating websites.

English

8.4 Much of the media teaching in English is of well-worn though important topics such as news and advertising, with an emphasis on print. It is not possible to quantify how fast the study of moving image texts is increasing in response to the revised English orders but there is some evidence that teaching about the language of audio-visual texts is increasing though not yet embedded. In the past, although English teachers often reported that they used films in teaching English it was most often 'the film of the play/ book'.⁸ Films and television recordings of Shakespeare plays or Victorian novels were, and doubtless still are, used for teaching the text, and sometimes as in the case of dramatisations of novels, as a curious proxy for reading the book. While recorded performance is an invaluable part of teaching Shakespeare and other plays, little attention has been paid until recently to the language of the medium: the kind of shots used, the choice of music and sound effects. (Example 11 shows how this can be done.) There is some evidence of increased emphasis on the language of moving image texts. There is however, very little study of television drama.

⁷ Buckingham, D. (in press) p 75.

⁸ Barratt p 24.

8.5 This focus on the language of moving image texts is supported by the availability of good quality, up-to-date materials such as those available from the BFI, Film Education, the English and Media Centre, educational television and websites of teaching resources. These resources in themselves cannot bring about change in teaching, but as some of the examples in the report show, they can be very influential once teachers are aware of the need to teach about the moving image or audiences. They can, of course, be used badly. They support, but do not guarantee good teaching.

8.6 At Key Stage 4 all candidates for GCSE English are assessed on their understanding of the mass media. One board, AQA, has located the task for assessing candidates' understanding of the mass media in the coursework part of the examination, thus allowing for the study of audio-visual texts. The other boards, OCR and WJEC assess understanding of the media by examination and therefore focus on print texts. Students' achievements will be assessed through writing, mostly analytical essays. As Hart and Hicks point out⁹ in many examination questions there is no explicit encouragement to consider the context in which the text has been produced. They also analyse a sample of writing tasks from GCSE English examinations which ask candidates to write leaflets, articles for newspapers and magazines, radio scripts or publicity materials. These often have very fuzzy descriptions of audience and purpose. The type of 'publication' the article might be intended for is often very vague and, of course, it has to be handwritten.

Other subjects of the curriculum

8.7 The evidence of OFSTED subject reports suggests that that there is only significant likelihood of media literacy being substantially promoted in history and in music at Key Stage 4. The OFSTED report on standards in history in secondary schools indicates that teaching and achievement in history at Key Stage 3 were good in over half the schools inspected. One element of such teaching was described thus: pupils work successfully with historical sources and are able to explain why events and situations can be interpreted in different ways.

8.8 In geography, by contrast, teaching at Key Stage 3 is less often good, partly as a result of the use of non-specialist teachers. As a result students often 'record information rather than use it to solve problems. They are denied access to the higher levels of the geography curriculum by the nature of the tasks set and the organisation of the lesson. As a result teaching is competent though often cheerless'.

8.9 In science the report notes that 'scientific enquiry is developing slowly. In most schools, pupils undertake just two or three whole investigations a year often to a closely prescribed pattern. There is growing separation between practical activity and coursework assessment and its use as part of normal teaching. The ideas and evidence section of the programme of study has not become established, though a small number of school are teaching it'.

⁹ Hart and Hicks (2002) p55-58.

8.10 We can only conclude that while some teachers in these subjects do undertake innovative work which promotes understanding of how information is mediated this is not likely to be widespread.

GCSE media studies

8.11 The three GCSE media studies syllabuses (AQA, WJEC and OCR¹⁰) all include significant study of moving image media, including both film and television as well as print texts. Film is more strongly prescribed by the structure of the examinations in the WJEC and OCR syllabuses than in the AQA syllabus. All syllabuses include some study of popular television forms such as reality TV, sports programmes or hospital drama series and documentaries. All include print media, both newspapers and magazines.

8.12 In GCSE media studies, practical or production work is compulsory, amounting to 40% of the overall marks. However, the options within the syllabuses mean that schools may select quite a small proportion of production work as coursework where developed production tasks could be tackled. (It is around 15% of the overall mark in all three syllabuses, allowing for different patterns of choice and assessment.) There is an emphasis on pre-production as well as production tasks. In all syllabuses practical or production tasks are spread throughout the examined elements. The tasks set for completing during examinations are limited in scale but not necessarily easy to undertake successfully, for example, drawn posters and storyboards. All boards are looking towards more technologically sophisticated major production tasks, though these are most likely to use desktop publishing to which most schools have access. Examiners' reports for 2001 indicate that only a small number of candidates have access to digital video or editing equipment, but that the use is rising. Examiners occasionally report a small amount of work of poor quality, handwritten or cut and paste, paying little attention to the conventions of specific genres.¹¹

10 Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA); Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC); Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)

11 OCR Report on the examination, 2001: p15 AQA report on the examination, 2001: p5.

EXAMPLE 7

Music Year 10

A pupil reflecting on what he wished to achieve in his composing task:

My interest is in jazz, mainly piano from 'hip-hop' to traditional. In my new piece I wanted to compose a work in variation form. I have used four sections; the bass part is deliberately moving upwards, through different keys and using chords and arpeggios. I used the software to produce rolls on drums and vibraphone. I also used the 'events list' for special effects and a sense of climax. I used the track mixer to make some of the sounds louder than others. I wanted to emphasise the drum beat.

In this lesson, the teacher and pupil discussed all the effects which were aimed for in the new piece, recalling piano jazz they both knew. The pupil had many more musical ideas than he needed and the teacher helped to sort and refine them, but ensured that the pupil made the choices. Both were familiar with the facilities the software could offer and how these could be used to the full to give the piece individuality. The pupil spent a long time listening to the music and making adjustments to the length and balance of the sections. He demonstrated very good editing skills, working quickly and individually for most of the lesson. The teacher's time was maximised for a discussion of the musical results and the options which the pupil might consider for refining the piece.

(OFSTED: Secondary subject reports 2000/01 Music)

9 Teaching approaches

What makes good teaching?

Summary

There is considerable agreement about what constitutes good quality teaching. Much of what is good in the best teaching about the mass media is shared with all other good teaching. Probably many involved in the informal sector would be uncomfortable in describing what they do as teaching, because they associate it with formality and a lack of focus on what young people want to learn. We are using the term as a shorthand for all training and education, to avoid cumbersome phrasing. Good school teaching and effective youth work are on the same spectrum though subject to different pressures and with a different balance of priorities. Above all, good teaching is oriented to the needs of the learners and promotes their active engagement and provides a range of opportunities to suit different learning preferences. In the informal sector, particularly in youth work, the engagement of the young people themselves in planning what they are going to do and identifying its purpose is strongly promoted in good 'teaching'.

- 9.1 Our conclusion from available evidence is that in good teaching/tutoring:
- critical frameworks are introduced in context, for example using analysing shots, images, sound in a film trailer. These frameworks are sufficient to enable the students to engage in analysis, interpretation and debate, in filming and editing, but are not an end in themselves;
 - there are opportunities for students to explore and apply the frameworks in different contexts, for example in analysing sections of a film or television programme, in planning, creating and revising their own newspaper articles or web pages;
 - extended tasks such as editing or written analysis are well prepared and researched; students are helped to develop necessary skills, for example in interviewing or searching the internet; they are familiar with the different software programmes needed to undertake a major task such as designing a professional web page;
 - tasks are manageable at the early stages of work, and gradually demand more independent planning by students; for example, early filming tasks might be very modest (film someone opening a door and coming through it) and include a shot list to help students construct filmic sequences and avoid unstructured and poorly framed streams of footage. In analysis of moving image sequences students might work in pairs, each with a different question, for example: what different shots are used? What music is used? And then through feeding back and general debate gradually piece together the elements of the sequence and reflect on how each contributes to the meaning and impact of the extract;
 - students are prompted and supported to reflect as they undertake production work on how effectively they are achieving their effects and to try out alternatives, to see how different decisions produce different effects, for example in designing a magazine cover, or editing video material. One teacher as a matter of course records 'rushes' of filmed sequences - three or four versions of the same line or scene, which pupils then choose from;

- they are encouraged to modify their ideas in the light of the material they have, and what is possible with the technology at their disposal;
- there are opportunities to revisit and develop skills, for example undertaking a number of small filming or photographic tasks and learning from them before they undertake a major task such as editing a film trailer.

9.2 All this would apply to both the formal and the informal sectors, to critical and practical work. All good teaching seeks to activate what students already know. What they know about the media is rather different from much of what they know in other areas of the curriculum. There are subjects about which they are very knowledgeable, more knowledgeable than teacher or tutor. Their knowledge is, however, often uneven or at different levels from that of their teachers: they may know a great deal about particular types of film or magazine, but show very little interest in the ownership newspapers, for example. Their knowledge needs to be engaged and connected meaningfully with the teacher's knowledge and skills, to be part of a debate. Where they have particular expertise, this needs to be engaged.

This sounds very idealistic but is based on observed good practice. It is true, however, that this good practice is not universal for a number of reasons described elsewhere in this report. The most influential are:

- the time available in the curriculum and the priority given to media education;
- teacher/youth worker expertise either in conceptual or practical terms;
- access to suitable resources.

9.3 Common weaknesses in **teaching in school** include:

- insecure subject knowledge. This can lead to vagueness or lack of appropriate strategies to pitch ideas in ways that students can grasp.

EXAMPLE 8

In one lesson with a year 8 class, a teacher who was uncertain about teaching moving image media, introduced the term *mise en scene*, solemnly writing it on the board, but without explaining it adequately. The term was baffling to most of the class and the teacher seemed uncertain how to use it to engage pupils in analysis and debate. It would have been much more useful to look at the film extract (the opening of Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet*) and ask pupils to comment on the images, editing, sound and sound effects. In reflecting on the lesson, the teacher knew it had not worked and was keen to know how she could better tackle teaching moving image analysis

(Source: LEA monitoring)

- over teaching, particularly in preparation for examinations. The GCSE media studies examination reports comment on teachers over directing students' work, for example in preparation for coursework;
- lack of opportunities for students to make knowledge their own;
- use of tasks such as storyboards without adequate preparation. Students are allowed to draw 'stick men' because 'drawing skills don't matter' and do not know enough about shots and angles and sequences to communicate visually. The increased availability of digital cameras can help overcome this if students try out shots and then analyse whether they have created the effect they meant. They can then re-shoot the image to focus more clearly on angle of view, degree of close-up etc;
- inadequate attention to or difficulty in tackling contextual factors: where texts come from, that 'authorship' is complex in most media texts, that audience is more than a few readers. This remains very dry in much teaching, or is ignored;
- emphasis on written evaluations of what has been learned rather than evaluation as an informal process.¹² The prominence given to written evaluation results partly from its use as evidence for examinations;
- asking students to work in groups without considering fitness for purpose. Groups of five cannot edit efficiently. Working in pairs or threes allows active engagement by all but also encourages debate about choices. Similarly, group dynamics may well get in the way of effective learning for all, for example, if a dominant member hogs the camera, or if ideas are not listened to.

9.4 Common weaknesses in **tutoring in the informal sector** include:

- the same problems with group work as described above;¹³
- a lack of clarity about aims and purpose;
- undirected activity where young people film or audio tape without a proper plan or clear responsibilities;
- lack of technical preparation, and no opportunities to edit the final outcome;
- poor liaison between youth workers and specialist trainers brought for sessions. The youth worker does not engage with what is going on, but leaves the specialist trainer to poorly defined ground rules. What kinds of behaviour are acceptable?

OFSTED's role in judging the quality of teaching

9.5 HMI at OFSTED know that their evidence base on the quality of teaching and learning in media studies is thin. Because of the nature of school inspection contracts there is no requirement to comment specifically on media studies unless it is specifically stated in the contract. Individual inspectors may do so if they have a particular interest. Otherwise, only in inspections on the established media arts school is any extensive commentary likely. OFSTED undertook a specific search of its own inspection records for us. The sample (for a period of 18 months) included only three reports with an extensive commentary on media studies and relevant mentions in 29 other secondary or middle school reports. Often the

¹² Burn et al (2001), Buckingham et al (1995), pp 144-167, illustrate very well both the open nature of discussion as young people work contrasted with sometimes less open or stilted written commentaries.

¹³ These are described in detail in an account of media production work in Buckingham et al (1995).

comment was very brief. Overall, where teaching was mentioned it was judged to be good. Only in five reports was it described as satisfactory. It would seem media studies is more likely to be mentioned if the quality of teaching or examination results are good. The comments on the quality of teaching are on the whole telegraphic, most often describing it in terms of enthusiasm and subject knowledge. Where there are criticisms, they are of inconsistency between teachers and in one case 'over concentration on trivial subject matter'.

9.6 While teachers often report anxiety about teaching about the media during inspections because it is perceived as risky, HMI are concerned that lack of inspector expertise in this area results in unreliable and sometimes over-generous assessment. Those of us who have inspected know the difficulties of making reliable judgements about subjects where we do not have specialist knowledge and that we tend to be more generous in our judgements than a specialist would often be.

9.7 Inspection can provide useful case studies, as examples throughout this report illustrate. Recent inspections of specialist media arts colleges are much more detailed. They illustrate examples of effective curriculum planning and teaching which engages pupils actively:

'The units of work in Years 9-11 are stimulating and challenging, requiring rigorous thinking from the pupils, which they relish. The level of dialogue between teacher and pupils is often rich as a result. For example, an excellent Year 9 lesson on the horror genre, which applied a clear conceptual framework to horror conventions in the cinema, evoked insights from the pupils which were of A Level quality. This kind of critical analysis.... transforms the work of some pupils, notably boys.'
(Parkside Community College, Section 10 inspection 1999)

9.8 They also highlight issues to be addressed. For example, in the section on GCSE media studies at Charles Edward Brooke CE Girls' School (OFSTED 2001) the inspector writes:

'...teaching is resulting in good achievement because students are well prepared for the GCSE examination. The teaching is full of pace and covers a great deal of ground quickly. Its major strength is the knowledge shown of the subject... The quality of learning is generally satisfactory but could become good if more attention were paid to addressing the learning needs of individual students.'

9.9 The report notes that teaching and learning post 16 for GNVQ and A level media courses are very good, with more active learning by the students. The school recognises this as fair comment, partly a reflection of the stage of development. Much energy has gone into raising standards quickly in the school, with considerable success at GCSE and post 16. The school knows it has now to extend its successful teaching style post 16 into broadening the range of approaches in the 11-16 curriculum.

10 Assessment

Summary

There is no systematic assessment of students' media literacy except as part of GCSE media studies. In all other subjects the skills being assessed are subject based: for example, ability to interpret and communicate in English.

The assessment of what students know and understand about the media, and of the quality of their practical work is undeveloped in schools.

In the informal sector, outcomes and processes are rarely formally evaluated except in terms of attendance and completion. The evaluating of learning gains is undeveloped. There is a lack of accreditation for media capability, though many providers make use of available awards: the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, ASDAN Youth Achievement Award and key skills awards. Some devise their own schemes such as award ceremonies or certificates.

10.1 In schools the discontinuities in young people's experiences of studying the media have made it difficult to develop a model of progression such as those for many of the National Curriculum subjects where all pupils may study a subject from 4 to at least 14. The only models there are relate to GCSE and A level. Neither can be predicated on any expectation of prior experience, and their grade criteria have been established by comparison with what is generally expected at that level, and evolved over time as there has been more evidence from practice.

10.2 The BFI has proposed a structure for assessing levels of cineliteracy. It is based on 5 stages, recognising the lack of continuity in media education, so that achievements could be assessed for a learner at any stage. A more mature learner might well start at stage 3 because s/he was able to apply well-developed analytical or practical skills to new subject matter and concepts. The framework is based on the main conceptual areas of media study: language, producers and audiences, messages and values. This is a useful starting point, not envisaged as a definitive model, which the authors would like to see applied, evaluated and further developed in classrooms.

10.3 The difficulty of establishing progression models where there is such limited continuity of experience is a substantial block to development. It leads to a chicken and egg problem: if media education is not part of most pupils' experience, how do you develop models of progression? If there are no models, there is little support for teachers in trying to establish a curriculum for media education. For the foreseeable future any model will need to be stage rather than age related to reflect the different starting points for sustained engagement with the mass media.

GCSE media studies assessment

10.4 Assessment criteria for the three syllabuses reflect the key criteria for media studies and set benchmarks for candidates' ability to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding through analysis or task completion. In practical work candidates are expected to demonstrate understanding of the processes of production and to demonstrate production skills. These represent quite a small element of the overall grade descriptor. The SEG syllabus includes the following as part of the descriptor for grade A: 'production work demonstrates a high level of skill in using the techniques and conventions of the chosen medium and genre'. The WJEC grade A descriptor includes: pre-production work which demonstrates 'imaginative and creative ideas, and a narrative which demonstrates an excellent grasp of editing skills'. The requirement for production skills is least explicit in the OCR syllabus. The grade A descriptor includes selecting and presenting material in media forms; executing and evaluating production processes. The mark scheme for OCR's practical and production skills and techniques awards its marks for understanding. A candidate awarded top marks would show 'good understanding of production processes in some depth....good understanding of uses, effects of technology and of how technologies may determine form and meaning'.

10.5 In the informal sector assessment systems tend to focus on participation and not on learning outcomes. Where organisations are providing enhancement activities for schools they will tend to leave evaluation of impact on students to schools, mostly linking back into systems such as marks for GCSE practical production, or nothing at all. Established centres will usually ask for tutors' self evaluations and use evaluation forms to gain clients' views. There is no system of evaluating gains in young people's expertise and understanding. In youth work the emphasis is of gains in personal and social competence. Media literacy is only instrumental to these gains.

The Museum of Photography, Film and Television judged the success for the museum of its initial intervention with local young people in terms of a rapid reduction in levels of vandalism at the museum and the sustained engagement of three-quarters of the young people who had 'signed up' for the media production course when it had anticipated a likely 50% drop-out.

11 Teacher expertise and training

Summary

There is only limited training available to prepare schoolteachers for teaching about the media. Most acquire their knowledge in the process of teaching. Where schools have post 16 provision and offer A level media studies, the more extensive in-service training available can significantly improve teachers' expertise. Considerable expertise exists within the specialist informal sector and this supports good quality work in schools and in youth work. However, their expertise is only able to improve the skills of a limited number of teachers and youth workers.

- The New Opportunities Fund (NOF) training programme, designed to improve teachers' use of ICT, has had little impact on their teaching about the media;
- All trainee teachers in English have some preparation in teaching about the media, but given other pressures to cover the range of standards required for initial teaching training, only a modest amount of time can be given to media education;
- In-service training is very limited, though small number of teachers increase their expertise substantially. Some classroom based research is yielding high-quality evidence about how students learn and identify some effective teaching strategies;
- LEAs are unlikely to be able to offer much preparation for teaching about the media as part of citizenship.

11.1 In Northern Ireland the picture is similar with limited scope for teachers to acquire expertise through initial teacher training or subsequently. Within the Education and Library Boards for each region responsibility for media education is an additional responsibility of Advisers for Expressive and Creative Arts, or English. For example, in the South East Education and Library Board the Adviser has one day per week to support schools for both drama and media studies. The same picture pertains for HMI in the Education and Training Inspectorate.

11.2 In Scotland the two main groups which support media education in Scotland are the Association for Media Education in Scotland (AMES) and Scottish Screen. In 2000, after lobbying by AMES and the Educational Institute of Scotland, the General Teaching Council of Scotland recognised Media Studies as a subject for which teachers should be formally qualified and registered. It also established an Additional Teaching Qualification (ATQ) in Media Studies for teachers who did not necessarily have all the formal academic qualifications required, but who could thus gain credit for their experience gained in teaching the subject. Over 70 teachers now have the ATQ. Stirling University offers a designated Teaching Qualification based on students following a first degree in Film/Media, plus another teaching subject. In continuing professional development, teachers have access to a range of courses provided by AMES or Scottish Screen, though there is no coherent programme of development, or any clear record of how many teachers are reached. An exception to this was the training supplied for teachers for three years before the introduction of the 'Higher Still' Media Studies qualification.

11.3 Scottish Screen is currently inviting bids for pilot training initiatives from organisations which offer training for teachers, community or arts education professionals and others, who wish to develop skills in moving image education with children and young people, in either formal or informal contexts. The budget for this initiative is comparatively small (£4000).

The specialist informal sector

11.4 In the specialist informal sector, trainers are often expert, particularly when there is a match of teaching and technical experience. This sector is at the cutting edge of expertise and provides substantial support and training to school teachers. However, most providers are struggling to balance competing priorities and training for teachers is properly less of a priority than working with young people. A minority of trainers in the informal sector are out of touch with schools, do not plan for the upskilling and updating of other staff, or are not expert in working in youth work settings.

5.5 There is no forum for practitioners in media education, within the voluntary and informal sectors, to get together to share best practice. This has two effects:

- it inhibits the development of advanced practice by those organisations which have well established and sophisticated programmes;
- it hampers the development of skills amongst youth workers and other staff who have limited experience.

11.6 The lack of a central point of reference for the support and development of media-based projects also has the effect of hampering the development of media productions as a basic tool within youth work. Given that the new media are so popular and that training opportunities for web-design and desktop publishing are so plentiful there is a real danger that projects using film and television will increasingly be marginalized.

11.7 Youth worker training has group work and counselling at the core of its curriculum. Media-based activities therefore tend to be undertaken by staff with a low level of professional expertise or to be dependent on the input of external 'tutors' from specialist organisations. For these reasons the involvement of young people who are members of generalist youth organisations or projects tends to be short term, i.e. a couple of months, and lacking in opportunities to develop fluency with both tools and the language of the medium they are using.

Schools

11.8 If the summary of expertise in schools sounds gloomy, it is realistic. Most teachers who have become media studies 'experts' began as English teachers. Most schools have just one or two teachers with a higher level of expertise, or no-one at all, and the coverage of mass media in English can be quite restricted. Teachers skill themselves up through in-service courses or just through teaching themselves. Teachers with media expertise often move on, partly because there is little career progression for them in media studies. The more established specialist media schools are building up a higher level of expertise; more teachers here have certificates in media education or expertise developed through intensive media teaching. Some undertake research and hone up their ability to analyse key elements of learning and achievement.

11.9 Opportunities for continuing professional development are limited. There are a small number of postgraduate courses for keen practising teachers: for example, the BFI provides three modules for distance learning, one of which is accredited by the OU, one by Middlesex University, and one by the Institute of Education. There are also some shorter courses on specific topics such as editing.¹⁴ The most extensive training is provided for A Level, including two conferences run by the BFI and other training available from providers such as Film Education. The training offered reflects what schools see as their most pressing need. Other courses often have a poor take-up. A modest level of training is provided for GCSE media studies, much of it for new centres: the training provided by the examination boards is concerned with managing the specification rather than exploring ways of teaching the syllabus. Established centres like the English and Media Centre in London, which is a voluntary organisation, provide high-quality training and resources for analytical and production work. There is a concentration of such advice in London though some regional centres like Bradford and Cardiff provide training and access to technical resources, and others like the BFI locate training in London, in the regions, and through distance learning. LEAs have little opportunity to provide much training for media education; a few with long histories of engagement, find ways of sustaining teacher expertise, as Devon is currently doing by obtaining resources from the private sector and enrolling teachers for the DfES's Best Practice Research Scholarships through the BFI.

11.10 ICT teachers and technicians are rarely trained to reflect on the medium they are using. This has an impact on whether they consider audience and purpose sufficiently, or whether they know about filming or continuity editing conventions. By contrast, in specialist media schools, like Parkside, the existence of a trained media technician has a considerable impact on the amount and quality of work which can be done. She manages and supervises the editing suite, and can provide advice and guidance as students work. She sustains the expertise: teachers often find that their own knowledge of the editing software slips when they do not use it for some time. For most schools currently such support is a luxury, but more thought needs to be given to technician expertise in this area as the number of editing machines in schools rises rapidly.

¹⁴ In a survey conducted some time ago by Andrew Hart, 5 out of 14 higher education institutes who replied had some element of media education in postgraduate Certificates or Masters degrees. The main providers identified then were Southampton University, the BFI and the English and Media Centre.

New Opportunities Fund (NOF) training to improve teachers' use of ICT

11.11 The impact of the NOF training programme has been disappointing. The OFSTED report ICT in schools indicates that it has not impacted on teachers' practice overall as much as had been hoped. For media education it has been largely a missed opportunity. The training has not substantially extended the range of teachers' confidence in using ICT as a teaching tool beyond desktop publishing. In interviewing English heads of department in schools it was often clear that they had not made any connection between the moving image requirements in the English orders and the ICT training they were receiving. While desktop publishing was picked up as a relevant use, the link with the moving image was not made, mainly because training in school and by contracted providers did not make it explicit. Moving image tasks for the training tended to be modest PowerPoint presentations and sometimes web pages, though many teachers foundered at this latter point. Equipment and access remain problems, but so does the vision held by English teachers of how they might use ICT and lobby within school for the necessary equipment. Exceptions to this were a small number of schools where media education was well established. One department, though lacking in technical resources, had built in the use of simple editing of images and the addition of sound at Key Stage 3, using cheap and easy-to-manage resources such as the English and Media centre's Picture Power.

Initial Teacher Training

11.12 The Standards for Initial Teacher Training (ITT) make explicit the need for beginning teachers to be able to teach about the mass media, including the moving image. Trainers generally welcome this, and give it as much priority as they can within other more pressing demands, for example to prepare trainees for teaching the National Literacy Strategy. Those consulted are well informed about teaching frameworks, concepts and pedagogy for media education and many have come up with inventive ways of focusing on teaching about the media. However, most are only able to allocate around one or two days to this, though many try to squeeze in more coverage by emphasising the links between teaching strategies for media texts and other types of text. There is more emphasis on analytical approaches than on practical work, because of time and resources but most try to provide at least some experience of practical work, either through school visits or less frequently, chances for trainee teachers to try practical work themselves.

11.13 There are also standards for ITT designed to ensure new teachers' competence in using ICT. It is probably the case that in many teacher training institutions, as in schools, stronger links between media education and the standards for ICT would be beneficial.

11.14 **Examples of common teacher training strategies in English: PGCE courses:**

- a session specifically on moving image texts; this may be combined with work on reading;
- coverage of news writing and advertising, perhaps as part of persuasive writing.

11.15 **Other activities cited by individual institutions include:**

- a working visit to a partnership school where there is good practice, which includes watching A level moving image coursework and making and editing a short video;
- a visit to the National Museum of Film, Photography and Television in Bradford;
- an ICT task which encourages trainees to plan and teach a media activity, e.g. a sequence of lessons where Year 7 pupils scripted and videoed a film;
- working with a CD-ROM such as Picture Power to illustrate how modest activities suitable for Key Stage 3 can, in a lesson, give pupils opportunities to sequence still images and to add sound for effect.

EXAMPLE 9

Hope College, Liverpool

(This pattern of training reflects the College's individual approach to covering the mass media in training English teachers; the overall time allocated is typical.)

Three training sessions included some work on media education, including the moving image:

- a training session on reading included analysing the opening of the Blair Witch project, and a compilation of TV drama openings. This was led by trainees who had studied film or media in their degree;
- analysing the Levi advertisement campaign in a session on the language of persuasion;
- preparation for an assignment on a scheme of work linking citizenship with English. This was taught jointly to English trainees and another group taking a PGCE in citizenship with history. Trainees were introduced to the citizenship curriculum in one session. This was followed up by an introduction to media education. This included trainees identifying what learning outcomes for media education might be. Between them they identified 20 possible learning outcomes for students by the end of Key Stage 4, including appreciate how newspapers, TV etc all interact; appreciate how different groups in society are not represented in the media, distinguish between what is imaginary and what is real.

11.16 **Trainers also direct trainees towards sources of advice and teaching resources. Here is an extract from a report by one trainee which shows ingenious gathering and modification of material from websites.**

EXAMPLE 10

The majority of ICT resources and websites I have used either to teach or plan for English lessons during the last 10 months have been both relevant to the subject and promoted learning. Most recently I researched a 'Shakespeare on Film' site to help my Year 10 group with their media coursework. While ostensibly not relevant to the film they were studying (*The Full Monty*), researching the site allowed me to print handouts that focused on the technical terminology necessary to analyse film - an area that was proving problematic. Similarly the film/media studies section on the site provided similar material for the Year 10 group to see the difference between, for example, a long shot and a close up without me having to tape them onto video. Whilst the Film and Media sections on both websites are generally aimed at A Level, researching them before and either downloading material or bookmarking particular pages to use with an interactive whiteboard meant that they could be used in Key Stage 4.

(English PGCE trainee, Leeds University)

11.17 However, trainers are conscious that the work they do on the moving image is not sufficiently consolidated in many schools. Most trainees tend to base their teaching on what they find in schools, namely newspapers and advertising, so the training is not developed and many trainees forget what they have learned. Only a few seem to go on to build on their initial training, though one trainer noted wryly that recently qualified teachers often find themselves rapidly promoted to take over media studies when gaps occur. As a result media studies continues to be taught on a thin knowledge base.

11.18 There is concern among teacher trainers about this thin base of knowledge and the lack of specialist initial teacher training in media education/media studies. Only the Central School of Speech and Drama has a PGCE in media studies. Some other trainers would be keen to offer it as a second subject, which would include time to provide training in teaching practical production.

11.19 The following is a positive example of how training can impact on trainee teachers and how they can plan and teach imaginatively and move beyond what they find in many English departments.

EXAMPLE 11

'The best opportunity I had for teaching film was with my Year 10 class. I was doing the media course work (for GCSE) and was given free reign, which was good because the school tended to do rather small-scale comparisons of different car adverts or how Levi adverts change over time. I decided to copy the idea we saw at Baysgarth school and compare the use of sound and image in the Luhrmann and Zeffirelli versions of Romeo and Juliet. They really liked it, mostly because of the cool Luhrmann version, but also because, before we even touched the two coursework films we did lots of general stuff about media: camera angle, shot type, editing, special effects,.....loads of stuff and each lesson I'd show a relevant clip from a recent movie e.g. *The Matrix*, *Shrek*, *Psycho* (not recent, but still cool), *Ten Things I Hate about You*. That was also when I did the digital camera storyboard which they really liked. The whole thing seemed to go pretty well.'

(email from English PGCE trainee, York University)

Classroom based research

11.20 The best of this makes an increasingly good contribution both to the expertise of teachers and to a wider understanding of how students' learning, skills and understanding can be enhanced. Since the mid 1990s a small body of research has been based on a rigorous and disinterested evaluation, through case studies of teaching and learning in the media.¹⁵ It has examined the role of group work and been prepared to question strongly held beliefs about its value per se and begun to try and identify parameters for effective group work. Similarly it has looked closely at what young people know and understand and tried to identify the most effective teaching methods.

11.21 More recent research, drawn on for this report, has been supported by the DfES Best Practice Research Scholarships, and co-ordinated by the BFI. It is cautious in generalising from individual cases. This research can provide ways of critiquing and improving teaching. It is still at too early a stage to use as a basis for definitive guidance on the most effective teaching strategies but it is providing valuable evidence that teachers can draw on now to improve teaching, learning and standards. The BFI has a critical role in this. Working with schools and teacher trainers it is providing well-grounded and measured evaluation of classroom based research. A good cycle of research is underway which should provide evidence about good teaching practices and how to support students' learning. It could also provide a better basis of information on standards and progression and a clearer definition of what creativity means in media terms.¹⁶

11.22 There is however, still some research undertaken which needs better preparation and a clearer rationale. It can be unfocused and too general, with insufficient support for participating teachers. Teachers need some hypotheses to explore and a focus for their investigation, as well as sufficient support in using unfamiliar equipment and software.

The role of the specialist media arts schools

11.23 This is evolving. Each school bids for specialist media arts status for its own reasons and has different priorities. The schools' prime role is not to undertake research but increasingly through working together, particularly on the best practice research scholarships, they are making a significant contribution to an understanding of how young people learn, how we can evaluate their achievements. The establishment of a working group for the specialist media arts schools, convened by the BFI is another important stage in making the most of what can be learned from an intensive focus on media education.

¹⁵ Making Media: practical production in media education (1995) by Buckingham, Grahame and Sefton-Green is a key example of this kind of rigorous evaluation.

¹⁶ Other research work in progress includes the use of digital video in classrooms, funded by Becta, and research on how media literacy might support social inclusion, co-ordinated by Jenny Grahame of the English and Media Centre, and funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Trust.

Citizenship

11.24 There is likely to be little training for media literacy in citizenship. LEAs have limited resource and limited power to impose training where there is not a specific national requirement. Currently schools are experiencing staffing shortages and can only release staff for training that is seen as essential. Some schools are planning to have expert teams for part of the citizenship teaching programme, though this seems to be most strongly motivated by the difficulties for non-specialist teachers of handling sex and relationship education.

English: The National Literacy Strategy

11.25 The Key Stage 3 literacy strategy incorporates the study of the moving image in its teaching framework. There is training for teachers as part of the national training for the Strategy, which is likely to begin in September 2002.

12 How young people learn

Summary

This section is almost entirely based on the evidence of case studies. It does not aim to present a picture of the situation nationally, but where relevant, draws on evidence from national reports such as GCSE media studies examiners' reports and OFSTED surveys. In fact, most of the examples drawn from OFSTED surveys also have the status of case studies, exemplars of good practice which are not presented as necessarily widespread. In this section we have not separated the formal and informal sectors, but discussed common issues. Contrasts and differences are drawn out where appropriate.

Situations where young people learn most effectively are characterised by:

- opportunities to learn in a variety of ways, to explore and try things out; to learn in ways which suit them and to develop new ways of working;
- careful planning and preparation by teachers and tutors; good learning is not a matter of chance;
- enough prior knowledge to get started and then opportunities to build on this;
- opportunities and challenges to revise, develop, modify;
- critical reflection on what they are doing and its meaning and implications; evaluation of the reliability of information and its source.

Learning and accommodating a range of learning styles

12.1 The evidence suggests that practical media production in particular, has the capacity to accommodate different learning styles. Some young people may achieve higher standards using audio-visual language or find the interface of digital editing programmes easier to use than books.

'Playing around': prior knowledge and experience

12.3 This is most apparent in practical work. Those young people with access to computers, the internet and computer games come with a greater background of technical facility and dexterity but also a knowledge of how particular types of texts work. Nonetheless, 'playing around' is not sufficient in itself to promote media literacy.

12.4 Much learning in this area depends on 'playing around'. Some learners seem to have a natural facility for this mode of learning, and it is widely held that boys are more at home with it than girls. There is evidence that some learners, who are already confident with computers, can learn effectively through experiment. However, research evidence indicates that it is not 'the answer' to all learning. Technological access alone will not make young people media literate, though it is an important element in that process. Given the inequality in access, prior experience cannot be relied on in any case.

12.5 Education programmes need to compensate in planned ways for a lack of prior experience when working with disadvantaged young people. In some activities such as digital editing and website design only a few young people will have had prior access, though if they are already experienced with computer use they will have added confidence in their ability to get to grips with new equipment and software.

12.6 Some knowledge is necessary, both of how to get started with the computer and the software, and of the codes of specific media languages, such as the language of continuity editing. Some activities, such as website design have high levels of technical demand and may require familiarity with a range of software such as animation, sound editing and image manipulation. Others are easy to get started on with little prior experience, such as video filming and some video editing programmes.

12.6 The interfaces of software have a significant role in tuition. Young people find it easier to get to grips with those which are more transparent. If they are less technically literate they may not find their way to 'hidden' facilities.

12.7 Some knowledge of form is important. Initial productions are likely to depend heavily on what young people already know about, to be a form of creative apprenticeship.

12.8 A clear purpose is essential so that inexperienced students are not seduced by the impressive but possibly facile effects that computer software can generate. These technical effects can mask a lack of purpose and skill, for example when students opt for a montage style of editing, such as used in music promotion videos, to make 'sense' of an incoherent collection of footage. Examination boards report on poorer quality practical work which relies on 'found' rather than original images.

EXAMPLE 12

The Weekend Arts College has offered courses in web design and creating computer games. They were targeted, as is all of the College's work, at disadvantaged young people.¹⁷

Comparison of two groups, one learning to create websites and the other designing and making computer games revealed that:

- neither group had prior access to specialist software programmes and needed to learn how to use these in order to create their own websites and games;
- this lack of experience affected what the young people could design and make.
Julian Sefton-Green writes: 'There is a relationship between a notion of technical skill and creativity, in that learners tend to imagine only what they know they can make; as they become more proficient in creative skills, so their capacity to think conceptually about what they are doing, changes:'
- Young people came with considerable prior knowledge of computer games but very little experience of using the Web;
- The young people on the games course had extensive knowledge of the language and conventions of games and some knowledge of the industry. The young people on the web design course knew very little about what web designers do;
- The quality of the young people's products was affected by prior knowledge. Those designing computer games were quick to come up with ideas, sketches and scenarios. The young people designing web pages focused on skills acquisition and had only limited ideas for original content.

¹⁷ We are indebted to Andrew Burn for this information, which is based on an unpublished report of research undertaken as part of the Best Practice Research Scholarship scheme, carried out by Jane Sweetlove at Turton High School, Bolton.

Peer tuition

12.9 A small, but growing body of research suggests that peer tuition can successfully promote learning, particularly for young people with little prior experience. For example, when groups of students at Charles Edward Brooke school are filming for the first time, a teacher may allocate the camera to a particular student in each group, quickly teach each of them to use it, and then expect them to teach their peers. Thus the young women can get started quickly. This teacher gives very tightly structured tasks to focus them on the construction of short sequences of moving images. In another media arts specialist school a teacher researched the most effective way of introducing iMovie II to pupils of different ages. Peer tutoring was found to be the most economical and successful, establishing rapport between tutor and tutee, sharing the screen, using accessible language without unnecessary explanation or elaboration.¹⁸

Planning

12.10 This is a complex issue. Schools largely operate a plan-do-review model for practical subjects such as design technology and drama but experience and observation show that it is difficult to plan when you have no experience of making and thus no idea of your options or how to go about it. Planning tools themselves, like storyboards and shot lists require specific skills and depend on knowledge: for example, of types of shots and how narrative sequences are constructed. Storyboards have their limitations: they do not help to understand the time-based nature of moving image media in the way that digital editing software does. Some people seem to function well without laborious planning, others need to think things out but are unwilling or unable to do so effectively. The example above, from the Weekend Arts College, illustrates just how complex and difficult planning can be.

12.11 On the whole evidence suggests that planning is not done well and that more attention needs to be given to the skills needed. Manageable, structured tasks which model the planning such as shot lists, required numbers of shots, or outlines may be needed for beginners. Moreover, such skills are built up through regular experience of learning through doing and reflecting on what has been learned.

12.12 Some media software supports planning, such as the interface of digital editing programmes which have frames for clips and visual models of the elements of the sound track. Accounts of the ease of selecting and capturing sections of footage from movies illustrate how good software can support planning. Similarly, digital stills cameras promote learning by trial and error: shots can be taken, viewed and retaken quickly and without incurring the costs of processing.

¹⁸ See Burn, A. and Reed, K. (1999) and Burn et al (2001).

Group work

12.13 The value of group work has been an accepted part of media education, partly because it emphasises the social nature of our experience of media texts but also as a way of stretching limited resources. It links with the prime aim of informal education of enabling young people to take charge of their lives and work together.

12.14 A kind of industry model was and is still popular, where group members take on particular roles. It is still popular for simulations, such as newsrooms, and can be effective if roles are rotated or if everyone has a specific and meaningful role to play. It can however, often lead to very unequal opportunities and access. The director and camera operator, or the person who controls the mouse, are in very different positions from the actors or the person holding the boom mike. Some media educators would argue that reflecting on the hierarchical nature of such ways of working can help young people understand how the industry works and what a complex process media authorship is.

12.15 Weaknesses in group work occur equally in informal settings, particularly in youth work when youth leaders are reluctant to intervene in the setting up and structuring of groups. The very rationale of empowerment can lead to some young people having limited opportunities, to a tendency to take the easiest choice in order to avoid conflict in the group, so that young people do not learn to debate and work through differences of viewpoints and some members can be marginalized.¹⁹

12.16 Another rationale for group work is to make pupils more conscious of how they learn, and to learn from each other. The evidence is that this is most effective when group sizes are small enough for everyone to take an active role, either by rotating tasks or because there are enough real jobs to do. Video editing in threes means that all can see and point to the screen and make decisions, thus contributing actively to the work and all take turns with the mouse.

12.17 Some young people also prefer to work alone. Example 2 shows a young musician at work on his musical composition. Julian Sefton-Green reports that when young people at the Weekend Arts College were working out how to use software, collaboration seemed like an interruption.²⁰

¹⁹ This is vividly illustrated in a case study of video production in youth work in Buckingham et al (1995).

²⁰ *ibid* p32.

12.18 Many media educators, and indeed OFSTED, report anxieties that opportunities for reflection and learning are lost when all students in a group have individual access to a computer. Examples of research demonstrate how critical such debate can be in choosing between alternatives and on deciding what is effective. However, we began this section by asserting that a range of learning styles can be accommodated in practical work, and that this is one of its virtues. What is essential is that learning opportunities are planned and do not just happen by default or without awareness of unintended outcomes.

Critical reflection: talk and learning

12.19 This is probably more strongly part of the ethos of formal education than informal settings. Some forms of reflection seem to be more effective than others. In schools, much reflection is in written form in order to demonstrate understanding and for assessment purposes. This has no place in informal settings. Written evaluation and reaction have their place, but they often fail to capture the learning which took place. Research has illustrated the gaps between what students say as they are working and the version offered in the final written report. At times, students are demonstrating that what should have happened, did. Occasionally, however, reflective logs do enable individuals to externalise and reflect on their own learning. Such activity often needs skilful teaching. The discussion between the GCSE music student and his teacher in Example 2 also demonstrates shared critical reflection on aims and choices which supports his solitary work and ensures that he explores the range of options open to him.

12.20 Reflection in talk and based on observation or practical work in process helps young people consolidate their understanding. This can happen just as significantly in lessons which are based on critical analysis, as the following example shows:

EXAMPLE 13

45 minute Year 7 English lesson: higher attaining class

As part of a unit of work in the language of moving images the class were analysing film trailers, using a resource pack from Film Education. The lesson followed the National Literacy Strategy model of starter, exposition, development and plenary. The class had already looked at some trailers and discussed how films can belong to more than one genre, and looked at framing, sequencing and sound. The teaching was strongly led, but provided many opportunities for active learning and critical reflection. The pupils had selected the trailers they wanted to study and write about from the selection on the videotape.

The starter activity: for five minutes pupils worked alone, making notes on whether they thought sound or image was more important in a film. This was designed to help them recall the previous lesson's work, but gave each a chance to express a point of view. The teacher asked volunteers to read out their answers and all were listened to and discussed. The starter focused pupils' thinking, activated prior learning and got the debate moving.

In the next part of the lesson, pupils watched the trailer for Lord of the Rings twice. They worked in pairs, each pair with a specific observation task: for example, to note the different shot types, to attribute it to one or more genres, to count the number of shots, to follow the sound effects, to describe the music or decide on its unique selling point (USP). Two pairs within the class undertook each task, making notes on a grid. The pupils discussed their findings in pairs and then fed back on each point while the teacher made notes on an OHP under each heading. For each feature, there was a comment to be made on the effect of the element under discussion. The two pairs who had responsibility for observing each element could compare findings and debate differences, and other pupils chipped in to the discussion. Then pupils watched another trailer twice, working in pairs to complete a whole grid. They would go on to write an analysis of this trailer.

The plenary was rather rushed, but the teacher used the time for a quick quiz on the meaning of the specialist terms they had been using.

What was pleasing to the observer was the energy and enthusiasm among the pupils as they talked in pairs and reported back and debated their views.

(LEA subject monitoring: lesson observation)

12.21 Talk and note-making in this lesson supported each other. Informal pair talk was used to prepare for more expanded explanation and discussion when pupils spoke to the whole class and the teacher. Observation of talk as young people undertake practical tasks indicates that it has a valuable role to play in learning. When students share the same vocabulary of technical terms and have been working together regularly talk can often be very elliptical and accompanied by pointing. Some more recent, tentative findings suggest that practical learning may often be silent, but that does not undermine the significance of the sharing of learning, of comparing and checking and agreeing.

Drafting and redrafting

12.22 Much of the discussion in this section has emphasised the importance of reworking. Observation across a range of subjects in school indicates that this is a skill which does not come easily. Young people are often reluctant to rework first attempts. Students in school using word processors rarely profit from the software's enormous capacity to support drafting and redrafting. Too often they use word-processing or desktop publishing to type in handwritten drafts to which they make only minimal changes. Part of the problem is access: teachers feel they need to make best use of computers and presenting work attractively pleases students. This results in under-use of the software to ease redrafting and to demonstrate its value. Young people with access to computers at home learn some of these lessons for themselves.

12.23 Those schools and informal settings with access to digital video editing have found that it eases and prompts reworking and refining. The young people's excitement in the ease of selection and reworking and a sense of their own power, promotes a staying power not often demonstrated with word processing.

EXAMPLE 14

Summarised from Digi-teens:²¹ four Year 10 students at Parkside School captured and edited it into a trailer designed for a re-release of the film.

Key editing decisions:

- Abby, Gwen, Holly and Lorraine moved on from linking together a selection of the most powerful images that represented for them a condensed version of the film when on viewing a draft they realised that it didn't make sense;
- they went back to find linking material from the less dramatic sections of the film's narrative to show links in time and plot;
- they realised that pace was a critical element and that when they trimmed shots precisely the narrative became fast moving and the use of slow motion added to tension;
- they used their knowledge of transitions deliberately;
- they selected their own elements for the music track from the CD of the film music.

It is clear from the account that the four young women learned a great deal through doing and redoing. They also drew on their knowledge of horror films in considering what should be revealed and what concealed in their trailer. They had been introduced by their teachers to the editing software and shown how easy it was to rework specific elements. The visual display of the editing software had helped them conceptualise the layers of the film and also prompted them about some of the choices available to them, like stretching clips to fit and altering sound levels. They had, in the English lessons at Key Stage 3 studied visual language, culminating in Year 9 with a study of *The Company of Wolves* looking at the representation of women in horror films and the meaning of werewolf transformation scenes.

21 Burn and Reed (1999)

Critical frameworks

12.24 Most of the examples used as illustrations in this report indicate the essential role that critical frameworks play in supporting young people's learning. They have perhaps been heavy handed in the past in specialist media studies teaching and often absent from practical work. Research evidence suggests that they have a key role in practical work, but that quite modest inputs can be sufficient to enable young people to get started better on practical work. The processes of reflection should extend and consolidate understanding.

Pleasure and motivation

12.25 Many of the examples also capture some of the excitement and the high levels of motivation that particularly, but not exclusively, practical work can generate. One teacher observed:

'Flurries of excitement that punctuated long periods of viewing and re-viewing as an editing decision was made. The students expressed shared pleasure, using language that strongly reflected the culture of their age group, and the relaxed atmosphere of working with friends.... On occasions, the pleasure of capturing and owning enjoyed moments in the film was explicitly in tension with the intellectualised goals for the trailer - a terrible dilemma - the needs of the author in conflict with the needs of the audience.

Ollie: *But we want that.*

Max: *It will completely ruin the film for absolutely everyone.*

Ollie: *So?!*

At other moments, the pleasure was derived from a sense of the reactions of the trailer's audience.... and illustrated the pleasure of.. the editor's control over an audience's responses'²²

12.26 What we do not know at this stage of researching young people's learning is whether this effect is lasting and how it links with creativity. Evidence from the informal sector of sustained interest and commitment would suggest that pleasure is an important motivator.

22 James Durran on work at Parkside in Burn et al (2001)

13 Creativity

13.1 This is the focus of much attention currently and some models of what it might mean in terms of media literacy are being developed. All work is at early stages. Becta has completed the first stage of a digital video pilot where schools bid for a digital video camera and a computer with editing faculties and a second stage is planned. The definition of creativity is based in that in 'All our Futures':

- thinking and behaving imaginatively;
- imaginative activity is purposeful;
- the process generates something original to the individual;
- the outcome must be of value in relation to the objective.

13.2 In terms of media production this might be tentatively seen in terms of:

- **Aesthetic choices:** what looks and sounds best, what makes most narrative sense, what best represents the makers' intentions. Aesthetic choices often successfully imitate moving image genres, but also produce new meanings from those models.
- **Creative apprenticeship** where some degree of imitation of conventional forms such as trailers, pop videos and TV drama is a necessary point of departure, from which more sophisticated creative work such as pastiche, parody and subversion of generic conventions can follow. For example the Becta pilot identifies ways in which young people might demonstrate a sophisticated level of creativity if they respond to the task in unpredictable ways, using a combination of intuition, logic, reason and spontaneity, and experiment, take risks, try things out and evaluate how successful each approach is. Young people need a number of opportunities to work with moving image media, to learn from experience.
- **Identity:** a creative piece of work always says something about the maker. This is sometimes clear in video work by students about themselves, or using themselves; sometimes in the investment of personal tastes and preferences in music or style; and sometimes in the ways in which media knowledges have informed the work. Digital video filming and editing and website design can enable young people to model and imagine new worlds, new ideas and new identities. The plasticity of digital media supports this process. It is worth, however, bearing in mind Julian Sefton-Green's comment in Example 10 above that learners tend only to imagine what they know that they can make and that technical proficiency can extend the range of their creative options.

13.3 However, there is much uncertainty and woolly thinking in this area. Teachers sometimes confuse technical effects with creative intent. There are no widely shared criteria among teachers and trainers about how to judge quality of work. Sometimes teachers feel that in order to promote creativity they need to leave young people to get on with it as intervention will inhibit originality. What evidence there is indicates the contrary, that constraints for tasks and some knowledge of how moving images works (shot length, camera position, lighting and sound) are essential to enable and support young people to create good quality, and with experience, original work. Some criteria for judging quality are essential, not necessarily made entirely explicit but perhaps depending on well-developed instincts in teachers and students about what looks good.

13.4 The following example illustrates how good use of filming and editing can give disabled pupils access to creative experiences.

EXAMPLE 15

Special school, Lancashire: drama

A group of physically disabled students devised, filmed and edited a high-quality, five-minute film, '*Space Oddity*,' about a group of astronauts who go through a time warp and are visited by an alien from whose planet they have to disengage themselves by cracking a code. It was shot largely in the school light studio which is full of effects, colours, projections, sounds, and light tubes, that can be set up to produce quite stunning 'psychedelic' effects. It also houses a 'sound beam' - a microphone that projects an infra-red beam which, when interrupted physically, produces music. The group had used it to produce very eerie and effective incidental 'deep space' music.

The use of digital video alongside the school's already well-developed technology, essential to provide students with access to the curriculum, allowed students to take an active part in drama. The film they made enabled them to perform for others in ways which would not have been otherwise possible, typically because they have difficulty in projecting themselves or their voices, or accessing drama spaces from wheelchairs.

The teacher noted that pupils were highly motivated and delighted with the outcomes, that non verbal pupils were able to express their wishes clearly and that pupils demanded the highest of standards from each other and were quick to point out if a shot was not good enough..

(BFI evaluation of the Becta digital video pilot project)

EXAMPLE 16

Animation in Art: specialist Technology College in East Anglia, with 1400 pupils on roll

The teacher is also an artist (painter) and works for the school part time three days a week. She works part-time for Media Project East. She sees film and animation as predominantly creative media, with the power to 'bring children's work to life'.

A Year 8 class made group animations (some of them using modelled figures: claymations) based on African folktales. These were carefully and extensively designed, with elaborate storyboards, painted backdrops, scripts, drawn/painted title and credit sequences, and plasticine models for the claymation. Much of this work fed directly into the animation - however, it also allowed the teacher to orchestrate a complex sequence of activities to manage access to the single camera and editing workstation. All pupils were involved in some form of work - storyboarding, painting scene background, preparing haiku credits for the animation. Groups took turns to work on their own animation. There were typically three or four children at work at one time - usually one manipulating the models on the set, one filming, and one or two at the iMac capturing the images.

The teacher related the creativity of this work to the medium, to the processes and outcomes of animation, to the variety of work the children needed to do to accomplish the task.

Key elements in the success of the teaching in promoting high standards and creativity were:

- The insistence on quality, through exemplification of animation work by young people in previous projects (and this teacher having a clear idea of what good quality work looks like); by frequent quality checking of work in progress and insistence on redrafting, remodelling, refilming;
- The introduction of appropriate conceptual frameworks and metalanguages for moving image and animation work (in presentation; in work with groups; and on the word wall);
- The teacher's ability to handle the technical needs of the project - using the camera, finding a way round the lack of stopframe facility on the camcorder; editing the work-in-progress documentary - in short, working both as teacher and as technician.

(BFI evaluation of the Becta digital video pilot project)

14 Standards: What young people understand and can do

Summary

The formal sector

It is not possible to say anything substantial about the standards of media literacy achieved by students in any of the countries of the UK. Such evidence as there is suggests that:

- understanding of print language is stronger, or better articulated, than that of moving image, except for students taking GCSE media studies;
- students have a limited knowledge of concepts of production processes and audiences. They tend to understand these in terms of individual authors and small or vague groups of readers;
- their ability to identify the source of material from the internet, and evaluate its authority and reliability is often limited;
- there is significant variability in what students of similar ability achieve, as a result of variations in teaching;
- only a minority develop substantial skills in 'writing' their own media texts.

The informal sector

There is no strategy for evaluating the quality of what young people understand and can do as a result of interventions in this sector. There is some evidence that good quality work attracts and sustains the commitment of young people, and improves their sense of self worth and for a few leads to further engagement.

- Of the young people who take part in practical media work those who work with the specialist sector over time often develop skills and understanding of how to construct coherent moving image and print texts;
- those who use video in youth work settings are much less likely to have enough experience to achieve high standards;
- analytical skills are less well developed than in the strongest work in the formal sector.

Schools

14.1 Such evidence as there is of students' understanding of media concepts would indicate that they have a stronger, or better articulated, grasp of print media than of moving image, though the evidence of case studies suggests that this can be rapidly acquired. Most students understand the difference between fact and opinion in newspapers and advertising. They find it harder to evaluate reliability of material from the internet; this seems to be because they are not often aware of the authorship of the material and the likely motivation and interests of its authors. Often they do not know enough about a subject they are researching and become swamped by the mass of information that confronts them.

However, where they have enough background knowledge, students can evaluate the source and reliability of evidence if prompted to do so. Where concepts such as genre are integrated into teaching, students seem to take them on board confidently as examples 11,12 and 15 in particular show.

GCSE Media Studies

14.2 Around 60% of the entry for all three boards gained A*- C in 2001 and around 97% gained A*-G. Welsh Board figures show that this is very similar to overall performance in GCSE. The examiners' reports indicate the following: there is a wide range of performance, even when comparing candidates of apparently similar ability which reflects variability in the quality of teaching. This is reflected in a very vague grasp of concepts and a tendency to analyse in very general terms. Overall the standard of critical work is higher than practical production, largely but not exclusively because of lack of equipment. The best practical work is described by one chief examiner as being produced for a real audience and purpose, and by another as demonstrating good knowledge of, for example, the conventions of film posters.

14.3 Stronger areas of performance include moving image analysis, with one board reporting good understanding of choice of shots, music and sound effects. Storyboarding appears to have improved. Although some candidates clearly tackle issues around the production of media texts well, it remains a weaker area, for example with some candidates knowing little about news gathering, marketing or finance.

EXAMPLE 17

Year 11 religious education: researching and debating abortion

The purpose of the lesson was to detect bias on internet sites in preparation for researching abortion on the internet for GCSE coursework. Pupils analysed three sites and compared the authority, accuracy and objectivity of each. They had no difficulty in deciding the provenance of sites, but the process of judging accuracy and objectivity prompted lively and informative discussions. The pupils acknowledged that the lesson had considerably extended their insights into the use of the internet and they felt well prepared to undertake a balanced and critical investigation into abortion.

(OFSTED: ICT in schools)

14.4 This example shows good development of critical reading skills, assessing the source, purpose and reliability of text taken from the internet. The students were guided to consider who had produced the information and then to debate its reliability. The commentary implies that critical reflection took place and that media literacy was being developed as part of a critical understanding of complex moral and social debates.

EXAMPLE 18

English using ICT

Year 8 high-ability set

The pupils were working on a genre study of horror fiction. In the previous lesson, they had begun to write draft text and sketch design ideas for a horror fiction website home page. They had been learning about website page design in their ICT lessons and in the previous English unit. They were now working in the ICT suite, designing their home page with hypertext links to other pages. They referred to a worksheet which contained clear instructions for setting up hypertext links. The teacher stressed the primacy of purpose and audience rather than design for its own sake. Pupils worked quickly and effectively in pairs, constructing their home pages and incorporating image and text from the internet as required. Motivation was very high and the task forced pupils to summarise in a very accessible form what they had learned about the horror genre, which they did well.

Commentary:

The teaching skilfully integrated concepts of horror as a genre, of audience and purpose in pupils' own writing.

Appropriate emphasis was given to the form in which pupils were writing, as well as the one they were reading: the multi-layered website text.

ICT skills were developed and then used in a meaningful way. The pupils had sufficient technical skill to deploy it to learn about reading and writing.

The different activities supported each other, rather than competing for pupils' attention so that nothing was done well.

Media education concepts covered: language and form, representation and audience.

(OFSTED report ICT in schools)

14.5 **The examples and case studies in this report gives glimpses of the high standards young people are capable of in understanding a range of concepts and applying them in discussion, writing and practical work. However, we need to draw a distinction between the levels of media literacy which are widespread and what is possible. Other evidence from the small amount of high quality work with primary age children indicates just what might be possible if there were continuity of experience throughout schooling. The most striking feature is the unevenness of standards, depending on the quality of teaching and opportunities to study the media and to use ICT to explore how media messages are constructed and communicated.**

The informal sector

14.6 While examples demonstrate what can be achieved by young people in informal settings, and the quality of practical work is higher overall than in schools, no generalisations are possible. The case studies demonstrate the importance of prior experience and sustained access to build up skills and understanding of possibilities. Children's Express measure success by the ability to place a story in the professional press which is one measure of quality.

14.7 There is evidence based on young people's testimony that engagement with media activities develops a range of social and intellectual skills. There is however no means of measuring these important gains which can be summed up to give a national picture, or compared between different projects or groups.

14.8 Organisations in the informal sector seeking to evaluate and demonstrate the effectiveness of their work use proxy measures from which gains in technical or personal/social competence are inferred. Such measures can be length of participation or moving onto employment or further education. Sometimes external measures such as a decline in vandalism can be correlated with informal educational projects. All the projects we spoke to recognised the importance of evaluating outcomes. Some were working to develop ways of doing this with systematic self or peer evaluation being a method under consideration.

15 Resources

Summary

The pressure on the school curriculum, both in terms of time and equipment is leading to more use outside the teaching day. There has been a significant rise in out-of-school activity.

While funding has improved it remains a challenge for many schools and for the informal sector, where funding often comes from a range of sources, and is often insecure. The government, LEAs, charities and business are all contributing to the funding of media work, particularly but not exclusively in the informal sector.

Access to up-to-date computers, high-quality software and high-speed data transfer links are preconditions for substantial practical work, but does not guarantee that young people become media literate.

Although access to computers and software such as video and music editing packages has been improved, demand rises faster than availability and inhibits the development of practical media work.

Accommodation is under pressure. It is best in the specialist informal sector and has been upgraded in many schools. Much accommodation for youth work is poor.

Good teaching resources are available, especially for practical work, although there is a constant need for updating and extension to ensure that materials are current. Teachers also need advice on teaching approaches. Good resources tend to be recognised and well used by teachers already aware of what good media education looks like and less often accessed and used well by those who are less confident. There is a need for more 'anthologies' of moving image texts, such as collections of film clips, for analytical work.

Time

15.1 Within the school sectors time is at a premium and much of what is envisaged in curriculum terms, such as the inclusion of media education within citizenship has to be delivered in a finite and pressurised time frame. As a result, LEA advisers feel that schools are likely to see what is already delivered in English as a sufficient response rather than seeking out new and more imaginative strategies such as those outlined in the QCA guidance. Some flexibility could be achieved not by teaching more, but teaching differently, though most schools feel too pressured by the increasing range of content and skills they have to cover to have confidence in this possibility. Refocusing priorities in ICT, for example, could improve media literacy alongside technical capability. Practical work in media education is an important and exciting possibility but the evidence of this report is that the time often has to be found outside the school day: through special arrangements, or through access to equipment after school, in weekend provision, or study support or in summer holidays.

15.2 The out-of-school providers have a key role in providing access either out of school time or as alternatives within the school day. They too, have to make choices about the best use of their time and resource. It is not infinitely elastic.

Funding

15.3 Levels of funding have increased over the last five years both in the formal and informal sectors though there remain significant variations. In secondary schools the NGfL funding, enhanced from schools' own budgets and other funds, has improved both accommodation and resources, but demand still outstrips access. There is often a marked gap between the specialist schools of various kinds and others which may have not received or been able to allocate enhanced funding.

15.4 In the informal sector funding is often precarious, dependent on bidding. It is often from a combination of sources: government departments, LEAs, charities and business. The amount allocated by LEAs for youth work varies from 60 pence per head of the population aged 13-19 to ten pounds.

Equipment

15.5 The number of computers and the software available to young people have risen very significantly over the past six years or so, aided by the reducing costs of sophisticated machines and easy-to-use software. Digital stills cameras are available in most schools. Government funding, charities and self help have all contributed to the presence of more powerful computers and more sophisticated software in all schools. In the specialist out-of-school sector, the computers and software may well be at a professional level.

15.6 The level of demand tends to rise faster than the level of equipment and the more schools and other providers understand of the value of practical production to create opportunities for young people to become technically proficient and also media literate, the demand will continue to rise. The gap between those who have access to computers at home and those who do not is still very substantial, although much of the work described in this report taking place in the out of school sector is making a contribution to reducing this inequality. In some LEAs the strategy for study support, linked to lifelong learning development, has led to computers being made widely available in youth and community centres and public libraries. Some such as Barnsley have extended this to mobile provision with satellite links to the internet.

15.7 There are still significant inequalities and a constant need for funding. Charitable organisations often report the problems of bidding for funding to keep their work going, though there is substantially more government funding going into work supporting social inclusion. The quality of machinery and the amount of access possible is very much better in

schools which have enhanced resourcing through specialist status and in specialist out of school provision. The cost of regular updating is significant. One editing machine in a school provides very little access. An editing suite is likely to require the additional cost of a media technician to make it fully effective. Even a suite in school needs careful management and rationing of use, mostly at present to Key Stage 4 or even more, to post 16 students. Where providers have sophisticated software, say for website design at a professional level, a skilled tutor or professional is needed to teach the complex processes involved.

15.8 The BFI report on the Becta digital video project points out the additional costs of peripheral equipment which is essential to ensure good quality filming, such as microphones and lighting. They also note the problems posed for school systems by the demands of storing students' video work on schools' current networks.

15.9 There are examples of innovative solutions to support small projects: cheap deals on video cameras, computers and software both in schools and in the informal sector. Schools can buy simpler software packages which meet the needs of beginners, and some come already installed on computers. Younger students often do not benefit from being faced with complex software packages. Nonetheless, once younger students have experience of simple software, more sophisticated packages are required for older more experienced users.

15.19 Good quality education is not simply related to access to technology but it must be true that without such technology what is on offer will be impoverished. The speed and efficiency of communication, such as access to broadband makes a considerable contribution to access and efficiency, as Example 19 illustrates. But as with equipment, the access alone does not promote good media literacy.

EXAMPLE 19

The use of broadband to facilitate research and practical production

Example drawn from Year 11 physical education

The effect of broadband on pupils' learning is also significant. Pupils now have more opportunities to access resources that support their learning. Faster and more reliable access can enable pupils to become more discriminating users of information because they can explore a wider range of resources in a given time. They can also focus more on the use of the resources because they do not have to wait so long for resources to download. They are able to download a wider range of resources such as video clips, animations and sounds that can be used within their presentations to other users. For example a Year 11 pupil created a presentation on different ways to kick a rugby ball; this included video pictures, a voice-over, commentary and text.

(OFSTED: ICT in schools)

15.20 This example shows how speedy access to resources can help students' practical production when used well. It illustrates the student's ability to reconfigure information for a specific purpose using original video film as well as researched information from the internet. The student combined images and sound as well as written text. It clearly made a contribution to media literacy as well as to an understanding of PE. What the commentary does not tell us is whether the student reflected on how coherent the text was and how well it conveyed its meaning to an audience.

Accommodation

15.21 The commentary above illustrates the importance both of increasing levels of resourcing and also of increasing access to them. Much accommodation in schools has been substantially improved, together with electronic data transfer systems and cabling. It is still under pressure, as levels of demand rise. Some schools are under such pressure that there is limited scope for further expansion. The specialist media arts schools have had significant improvements to specialist accommodation, creating studios and workshops, but here too there are often physical limits. Charles Edward Brooke, for example, is on a split site. Currently, specialist media education facilities are on the upper school site. There are plans to make specialist facilities available on the lower school site, but there will always be some diseconomies and lack of flexibility of access. A survey by HMI in Northern Ireland found that there were links between better quality accommodation and good teaching.

15.22 In the informal sector there is a marked contrast between the facilities available, say, at a regional film theatre or specialist centre, by comparison with general centres for youth work.

Teaching materials and resources

15.23 Many of the examples in this report illustrate vividly the value of good resources, particularly in practical work. In many ways, these are not such a problem for schools to get hold of in that there are good resources available with a clear teaching rationale, such as those available from the BFI, English and Media Centre, and Film Education. The internet has facilitated the rapid circulation of teaching materials. It is not hard to find ideas and resources, say frameworks for teaching storyboarding or simple guidance on continuity editing. Websites²³ collect and pass on fresh ideas. The longstanding producers, including broadcasters, develop materials and resources that nudge teachers forward. It is probably true in schools, based on the evidence we have, that less confident teachers are less likely to access such resources and more likely to cling to the tried and tested units but they become weary and rather dull. There are examples throughout this report of alert teachers and

²³ Three of the most useful and relevant to media teachers are: www.mediaed.org.uk www.teachit.co.uk and www.mediaedwales.org.uk

trainee teachers recognising the potential of good new resources to underpin stimulating teaching. They are also more confident in adapting resources for students of different ages and levels of experience. Nonetheless, there is a need for regular updating to ensure that teachers have easily accessible, current materials to hand.

15.24 There may be more problems for teachers seeking teaching materials for analytical work. Though local, regional and national film archives are an important source of moving image material, teachers may find it harder to gain access to more contemporary texts. Many teachers are not clear about current copyright legislation, which does in fact allow them to reproduce moving image texts for specifically teaching purposes. Others believe their media teaching would be enhanced by access to anthologies of texts, such as collections of film clips, but potential publishers of such anthologies often find that copyright holders appear reluctant to release their material for such purposes. In current school circumstances, few teachers have time available to collect and edit these resources themselves.

16 Conclusions from the review

16.1 The evidence of this review suggests that, in media education, policy-making, planning and provision are fragmentary. As a result the levels of media literacy are unpredictable and inconsistent, but overall are likely to be low.

16.2 Within the formal school sector, there is some contribution being made to media literacy, largely through English, for all young people aged 11-16.

16.3 Activities involving practical media work are popular with young people, and often retain their interest and their continued engagement with educational organisations, and with learning.

16.4 In the informal sector, the total number of young people involved in media education activities, as a percentage of the total cohort, is low.

16.5 Media education in the informal sector has the ability to engage young people who are disaffected with school and/or are at risk of criminal activity.

16.6 In both formal and informal sectors good practice in media education requires appropriate levels of resourcing, experienced and skilled teachers, and a high ranking within the organisation's priorities. The limited number of teachers and youth workers with the relevant skills for practical media work restricts the scope and quality of practical work.

16.7 There is, however, a body of practitioners in both the formal and informal sectors who are researching effective learning through media education. This is a reassuring development, particularly when implications for more effective teaching are drawn.

16.8 The arrival of new digital technology has changed media education radically. Authoring and reviewing in all media are now much more possible. The capacity of the new software and hardware currently exceeds the skills and knowledge of most teachers in how to get the most out of them. Technology, particularly in the new digital media, is developing faster than our capacity to train education professionals.

17 Issues arising from the review

- 17.1 There is no clear and commonly agreed definition of 'media literacy'.
- 17.2 The school curriculum is full. In order to give young people increased access to practical media work, opportunities for learning outside the traditional school day, for example through Study Support and youth work activities, have to be maximised.
- 17.3 Other than GCSE, there is no form of accreditation to record young people's proficiency or progress in a range of competencies in both analysing and creating media.
- 17.4 In both sport and the arts, there are now quality assurance awards for schools. It is timely to consider the potential of such an award for media education, particularly if this spanned the formal and informal sectors. Specialist providers could be pioneers in this development, as there is now no way for their media and pedagogic expertise to be recognised.
- 17.5 Sports and music have been recognised as subjects which can make a substantial contribution to promoting social inclusion, in both the formal and the informal sectors. We have found evidence that the same is true of media education. The extent of anti-racist initiatives, drugs education, and active citizenship activities more generally in both Study Support and youth work justifies the recognition of media education as a similar cross-cutting area of study. Increasingly, policy-makers are looking to the informal sector to re-invigorate the formal sector of schooling.
- 17.6 There is no forum to bring together practitioners in all types of education to explore, share and disseminate good practice. The planned increase in the number of specialist secondary schools makes the establishment of such a forum timely.
- 17.7 Training opportunities of all types - initial teacher training, post-qualification, training for technicians and youth workers - are inadequate. We do not envisage formal courses only: increased opportunities for young people, teachers and youth workers to work with professionals in apprentice mode is well worth considering.
- 17.8 The resource implications for work of quality in media education, whether in the formal or informal sector, are substantial. In particular, schools and generic youth work sited outside the major conurbations, where 'Excellence in Cities' funding is often available, find it hard to keep up with the cost of hardware and software requirements, and may also have difficulty in gaining access to high quality teaching resources, including media texts.

18 Recommendations

18.1 There should be further research in the following areas:

- what is effective learning and teaching for digital technologies?
- improving links between media education and ICT;
- the potential of 'citizenship' as a vehicle for media education.

(We believe the potential is great, but precedents in other cross-curricular aspects of the curriculum are not encouraging);

- 'hands-on' training in moving image equipment which takes account of varying levels of expertise and confidence.

18.2 There should be a consultative forum to bring together practitioners, in both formal and informal sectors, across the range of media. Teacher educators should be involved in this forum.

18.3 Higher priority should be given to media education in both initial teacher education and in teachers' continuing professional development.

18.4 The DCMS should consider media education in the informal sector as a priority for the New Opportunities Fund.

18.5 The DCMS and DfES should co-operate further to establish clarity about their level of commitment to media education, and how such commitment may be reflected in strategic and coherent policy-making and implementation.

18.6 Many of the most interesting initiatives in this review have been reported to us by those introducing them, or who have some other professional interest in them. There has, for most in the informal sector been no evidence of quality presented to us, and in most cases such evidence is non-existent. Our belief is that some of this work is likely to be of excellent quality, some not. The DCMS, DfES and Ofcom should, in consultation with professionals in the field, develop methods of assessing the quality of the very wide range of current initiatives designed to promote media literacy in young people.

Appendix 1: Northern Ireland

1. Take up of Media Studies at KS3 and 4

1.1 The term post primary is used to describe schools in Northern Ireland serving pupils at Key Stages 3 & 4 because Northern Ireland retains a grammar and secondary modern structure as well as having schools for the two principal denominations, Catholic and Protestant, and a small number of integrated schools. A higher proportion of schools in Northern Ireland than in the rest of the UK is single sex.

1.2 Of 250 post primary schools in Northern Ireland 48 offer Media studies GCSE. A recent survey by HMI found that lack of adequate resources for the teaching of media was a significant contributory factor to the low level of take-up of this subject. Because so many post primary schools are denominational and single sex they tend to be much smaller than secondary schools in the rest of the UK. It is therefore much more difficult to resource expensive subject areas such as media studies. Arrangements for support for the subject and the professional development of teachers.

1.3 Within the Education and Library Boards responsibility for media education is additional responsibility of Advisers for Expressive and Creative Arts, or English. For example in the South East Education and Library Board the Adviser has one day per week to support schools for both drama and media studies. The same picture pertains within HM Inspectorate of Schools.

1.4 In response to a perceived lack of coherence in provision and support The Northern Ireland Film and Television Commission and the BFI have recently established a Policy Working Group to develop a strategy to enhance the place of moving image education within post-primary formal and informal education. The Department of Creativity Arts and Leisure at Stormont has recognised the importance of media education in laying the ground for an expansion of creative and media based industries and has instituted a grants programme to provide seed funding for voluntary sector projects working in this field.

1.5 Initial teacher education in Northern Ireland, which trains the majority of teachers in the Province, provides very few opportunities to study to teach media studies. There is a six-week option within the Postgraduate certificate of education programme at the University of Ulster, very little on the B.Ed programmes and no such courses at Queen's University, Belfast.

1.6 The province does not have arrangements, which apply in other parts of the UK, such as Beacon Schools or City Learning Centres that provide nodes of best practice and curriculum innovation for others to learn from. Dissemination of best practice and awareness raising of the potential contribution of media studies is limited to networks such as the media studies Panel of Belfast Education and Library Board. The Northern Ireland Media Education Association has in the past provided staff development courses for teachers of media studies but the membership and levels of activity have fallen off considerably over the past few years.

2. Media literacy within the informal education sector

2.1 The youth service in Northern Ireland is much better funded than the equivalent services in the rest of the UK. Education and Library Boards provide funding and staffing for a range of generic youth centres and projects. In some Board areas these are largely based in post primary schools. Most of the national voluntary youth organisations have branches or counterparts in Northern Ireland. Voluntary sector projects for young people and young adults flourish across the province because of the level of funding, some such as Peace and Reconciliation Fund and unique to the Province, and the needs arising from the troubles.

2.2 A recent survey by the Education and Training Inspectorate identified similar patterns of provision and problems as those we have identified in England. Projects involving the media are frequently part of creative arts activities. The lack of training and expertise of youth workers in media activities hampers the development of young people's skills and talents after what they find as exciting and challenging initial projects. Where good partnerships are made with professional artists and directors work of a high standard can be achieved. Such partnerships take much time and effort to establish and are subject to the vagaries of short term competitive funding.

Specialist Media Studies providers in the Voluntary Sector

2.3 There are a few specialist organisations in Northern Ireland that provide opportunities for sustained involvement with particular media forms: for example, The Nerve Centre in Derry offers professional facilities and highly qualified staff to support both schools and youth projects in work with moving image and new media. The Belfast Bureau of Children's Express works directly with about 50 young people to provide a programme of learning through journalism.

2.4 Where well-resourced partnerships are established between specialist organisations and youth service organisations and schools then innovative and highly effective programmes of work can result. A project between CineMagic in Belfast and the Ardoyne Youth Club with unemployed older adolescents led to 23 out of 24 young people gaining employment in media industries.

2.5 The power of moving image and digital media to engage young people disaffected with formal education has been demonstrated by a joint project between Synergy Learning and Castle High School, Belfast, for 15 and 16 year old boys who were seen as likely to withdraw from school before taking any examinations. This three day per week programme off the school site developed not only technical competence in moving image and digital technology but developed their social skills and desire to return to education at a further education college.

3. Conclusions

3.1 Media studies in Northern Ireland is in a somewhat weaker position than the rest of the UK because of the structure of the post primary school system and the absence of vigorous support structures. The Province's small scale and the relative ease of communications by car make it likely that a co-ordinating and development body could flourish with relatively little financial and staff support.

3.2 The opportunities, and need, to engage young people through the informal sector are great and any such body should deliberately span post primary schools, the further education colleges, which are a significant but under-used resource for learning about and through the media, the youth service and voluntary sector of independent professional workers and organisations.

Appendix 2: Scotland

1. Schools

1.1 In Scotland the curriculum provides for media literacy in four main categories:

- as part of English and Communication;
- as part of Art and Design;
- as an element of cross-curricular work;
- at later stages in the secondary school (mostly post-16), as Media Studies, or within a Modern Studies course.

1.2 There is little clear and consistent evidence about the extent and quality of work in the first two categories. Some time ago, HMI commented in 'Effective Learning and Teaching in Scottish Secondary Schools: English' that more and more English departments were incorporating the study of mass media, particularly film and television, into their courses, and in the late 1980s The Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum (SCCC) was producing curriculum packs of media study materials, such as 'Standard Grade: Teaching the Media' (1988) and 'Higher Grade English: Media Education' (1989). Stimulated by a general curriculum review which started in 1983, the later 1980s and 1990s were a period when media education/studies was given high priority by those responsible for the curriculum in Scotland.

1.3 In the 'Higher Still' review of English and Communication (1997), the place of media study was strengthened. Its approach is distinguished from Media Studies as one primarily concerned with textual analysis. Within the examination framework, there are several particular opportunities for students to study mass media texts.

1.4 Courses in Art and Design from 5-14 through to Higher comprise the three elements of expressive, design and critical/evaluative activities. Media are specified in all three areas: for example, in design, particular stress is laid on 'approaches involving the use, individually or with others, of technologies such as photography, film, computer or electronically generated images and/or text.' (Higher Still: Art and Design Study Guide, 1997)

1.5 The SCCC also published in 1993 'Media Education Across the Curriculum' as part of its Curriculum and Assessment 5-14 approach. Curriculum review in Scotland has been less subject-specific than in England, and there has been a consistent effort over the last 20 years to keep alive the concept of a whole curriculum, within which media education has played a small, if inconsistent, part. In the document the SCCC argue for media education as a 'cross-curricular enterprise', as no one curriculum area is necessarily equipped to deal with the range of skills and techniques involved in composing, distributing and marketing media products. The SCCC also direct teachers' attention to the desirability of reading texts across the media, studying the techniques, approaches and concerns of the producers, and analysing the influence of these conditions on the texts themselves. While the paper is clear on why a single subject base is inappropriate for media education, and offers various themes and opportunities for media study, there is little acknowledgement of the organisational difficulties which many schools find in implementing cross-curricular aspects of the curriculum.

1.6 Media Studies in Scotland has its origins in the vocational courses offered by the Scottish Vocational Education Council (SCOTVEC) in the 1980s. Although these were based in post-16 Further Education Colleges, there was some take-up in schools. With the revision of the 'Highers' examination system in 1999 which combined academic and vocational qualifications and extended them to all student ability levels, Media Studies finally achieved some clear position in the senior secondary curriculum. It is now possible to take Media Studies at all levels of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework from 'Access' (offered in special schools) to Advanced Higher (offered in first year University courses). Intermediate and Higher courses are available to students coming to media as a separate subject post-16. Unlike many other subjects, Media Studies is not available at Standard Grade.

1.7 Uptake for Media Studies has been very low, but is increasing sharply. Candidates over the last three years have been as follows:

	2000	2001	2002
Intermediate 1	20	66	140
Intermediate 2	174	429	544
Higher	361	641	861
Advanced Higher	n/a	7	10

Evidence from the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) suggests that standards are patchy, but that overall teachers may be entering students at too high a level.

1.8 The syllabi offer a combination of analytical and practical work, depending on the level. Assessment of the practical work excludes assessment of the quality of the finished product, concentrating instead on the student's contribution through diary, production log, tutor observations, etc. Most levels require coverage of both print and non-print media, both fiction and non-fiction. The key features of the subject (categories, language, narrative, representations, audiences, institutions, technologies) are largely those implied in media education 5-14.

1.9 Media education was a specified 'cross-curricular aspect' in the Scottish Education Department's *'The Structure and Balance of the Curriculum: 5-14'* in 1993. In the SCCC's *Curriculum Design for Secondary Stages: Guidelines for Schools* (1999), 'media awareness' is an important cross-curricular issue, and students are expected to 'understand media messages, know about the diversity of the mass media, better understand the processes of media production through practical production and explore reactions to the mass media through all forms of expression, individually and collectively.' In the most recent revision (2000) of *'Structure and Balance'* there is no explicit mention of 'media education' as a cross-curricular aspect, but there are implicit opportunities for media work in all five of the new aspects: personal and social development, education for work, education for citizenship, the culture of Scotland, and information and communications technology. In their current consultation paper, *'Education for Citizenship in Scotland'* the Scottish Executive and Learning and Teaching Scotland note several opportunities for teachers to engage in media education.

1.10 Two groups which have played a major role in media education in Scotland are the Association for Media Education in Scotland (AMES), and the Scottish Film Council, which gave way to Scottish Screen in 1997. AMES is a grass-roots organisation for teachers interested in media education, and organises an annual conference, produces two journals a year (Media Education Journal - circulation of about 300) and regular newsletters for members. AMES has campaigned for years for media education to be part of every young person's entitlement in the curriculum, both as a distinct discipline and as a permeating element. It is a major provider of in-service training for media teachers, and has produced an extensive database and six teaching packs. Originally it received some core funding from the Scottish Film Council, but this has now been withdrawn by Scottish Screen - a bone of contention.

1.11 Scottish Screen exists to promote every aspect of film and television in Scotland, including education about the media. Helping to foster links between education and the screen industries is one of Scottish Screen's chief objectives and the core aim of their annual festival, '*Scottish Students on Screen*'. To meet the growing interest of young people in practical film-making, Scottish Screen seeks to promote a range of activities and offers advice, contacts, tutors and information. In 1998 Scottish Screen produced a helpful digest of where media education opportunities existed in Standard Grade and Higher Examinations: English, Art and Design, Modern Studies, History, Music and Drama. It also organises relevant training for teachers. Scottish Screen recently wrote for the BFI the CD ROM '*An Introduction to Film Language*', which is written specifically for media teachers.

2. Informal education

2.1 Many young people in Scotland experience media education in more informal settings - youth centres, Study Support, voluntary clubs, and cinema venues. Several of the large specialised cinema venues - in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee, for example - offer an outreach educational service to schools, as well as cinema-based events. Edinburgh Film House organises a scheme for young people to make films out of school (SKAMM - Scottish Kids are Making Movies).

2.2 Much of this work is practical, and involves young people in making movies or video. Animation work appears particularly popular with younger students, and may be offered at a variety of venues - or on a one-off basis by independent peripatetic companies such as 'D Fie Fo'.

2.3 Frequently young people do this work as a 'one-off', and there is no framework of progress or continuity to develop their critical or practical skills. There are various opportunities for this work to be shown and celebrated: for example, Scottish Screen organise a two-day event, '*Scottish Students on Screen*', at which young people's films in a variety of categories are shown.

3. Teacher training and professional development

3.1 In 2000, after lobbying by AMES and the Educational Institute of Scotland, the General Teaching Council of Scotland recognised Media Studies as a subject for which teachers should be formally qualified and registered. It also established an Additional Teaching Qualification (ATQ) in Media Studies for teachers who did not necessarily have all the formal academic qualifications required, but who could thus gain credit for their experience gained in teaching the subject. Over 70 teachers now have the ATQ.

3.2 Stirling University offers a designated Teaching Qualification based on students following a first degree in Film/Media, plus another teaching subject. In continuing professional development, teachers have access to a range of courses provided by AMES or Scottish Screen, though there is no coherent programme of development. An exception to this was the training supplied for teachers for three years before the introduction of the 'Higher Still' Media Studies qualification.

3.3 Scottish Screen is currently inviting bids for pilot training initiatives from organisations which offer training for teachers, community or arts education professionals and others, who wish to develop skills in moving image education with children and young people, in either formal or informal contexts. The budget for this initiative is comparatively small (£4000), but Scottish Screen suggests bids in the following areas:

- **moving image and education:** where does it fit, what does it contribute in terms of curricular and educational priorities, and how is it evaluated?
- **developing stories** with groups of young people;
- **technology:** camera, sound, desktop editing, animation;
- **sound and music:** technology, craft, copyright;
- **managing production projects:** the group, the budget, the schedule.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Pupils in Scottish schools are likely to have some media education within their English and Communication curriculum, and, more inconsistently, in cross-curricular subjects. The strength of Media Studies lies in post -16 courses, although there is some evidence of an increase in interest pre-16. The Scottish school curriculum is less subject specific than the English, and therefore cross-curricular aspects may have higher standing and be more likely to be realised in classrooms. A range of media education opportunities is offered outside formal schooling, some provided by specialised film venues. As in England, Citizenship is expected to be a potential vehicle for media education work.

4.2 There is a need for much more systematic training of teachers, both in initial training and in continuing professional development, in media education. The current uneasy relationship between the two major providers of INSET - AMES and Scottish Screen - hinders systematic development of provision.

Acknowledgements

Discussion face to face/telephone/ email with:

- John Aldridge, Director ,Active Citizenship Network
- Ingrid Arthurs, CineMagic
- Tom Barrance, Media Education Wales
- David Buckingham, Institute of Education, London
- Andrew Burn, Institute of Education, London
- Mary Connolly, Assistant Adviser, Creative Arts and Drama South Eastern Education and Library Board, Northern Ireland
- Gerry Connor, English and Media Studies teacher, Belfast
- Stephen Clark, University of Leeds Department of Education
- Peter Daw HMI
- Scott Donaldson, Scottish Screen
- Iain Farrell, Scottish Qualifications Authority
- Andrew Goodwyn, Reading University Dept of Education
- Faustina Graham HMI : Department of Education, Northern Ireland
- Jenny Grahame, English and Media Centre, London
- Viv Lachs, High Wire City Learning Centre, Hackney
- Phil Livers, Coventry LEA
- Linda Mann, Charles Edward Brooke Performing Arts and Media School, Lambeth
- Ann Marshall: KS3 Adviser for the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
- Karen McFarlane, CineMagic
- Pat McGill, PSHE adviser, Cheshire
- Nick McGuinn, University of York Department of Education
- Anna Pangbourne, Director, Newspaper Education Trust
- Cathy Poole, Watershed Media Centre, Bristol
- Mandy Powell, Association of Media Education in Scotland (AMES)
- J. Provost, Islington Arts and Media School, London
- Mark Reid, BFI
- Julian Sefton-Green, Director, Weekend Arts College
- Jean Sloan, Hope College, Liverpool
- Maurice Smith, Tameside LEA
- Jane Spilsbury, Becta
- Alan Stewart, HMI Scotland (telephone and email)
- Marcella Turley, teacher of English and Media, Northern Ireland
- Arthur Webb, Adviser, Creative and Expressive Arts Belfast Education and Library Board
- Alastair West, QCA
- M-L White, Charles Edward Brooke Arts and Media School, Lambeth.
- Christopher Wylde, Director, Children's Express
- Andy Widdowson, Head of Visitor Services, National Museum of Photography, Film and Television

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