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Please contact: The Secretary at
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Election of MEA officers and executive committee for 2009/10

MEA will be holding its Annual General Meeting in London on **4 July**. The meeting will be incorporated into a half-day event for members. More details of this event will be sent to members in due course.

The most important element of the AGM is the election of the Executive Committee for the 2009/2010 academic year. Members of the Committee run the affairs of MEA and each member is encouraged to develop an area of their expertise on behalf of the Association. This may involve working with partner organisations in developing media education work, writing for our journal *PoV*, being part of MEA's conference organising team or producing items for the Newsletter or Website.

If you are interested, but a little uncertain about what you might be able to contribute, do please get in touch via <info@mediaedassociation.org.uk>

One slight hitch in our system we noticed last year was that, while it was easy for organisations with institutional membership to nominate and second one of their members, individual members might not have easy access to other members to support their candidacy. Therefore this year any paid-up member who is interested in joining the Executive should simply return the nomination form to the Secretary expressing her/his wish to be nominated.

Being on the Executive Committee involves attending six meetings a year which take place in London on Saturdays starting at 11am and we aim to be finished by 4pm. Members' travel expenses are reimbursed.

MEA's office

Apologies to members who have experienced delays in dealing with membership renewals or new memberships and other admin issues. Up to now, MEA has been run on the basis of voluntary labour and the goodwill and 'in kind' support of Film Education and the English and Media Centre – for which we are very grateful. The good news is that we are in the final stages of appointing a paid administrator and we hope to be able to improve our service to you in the near future. In the meantime, I hope you can see from the following short items that we are making progress in developing partnerships and funded projects that will help us achieve our goals for media education.

MEA wins grant from UK Film Council's Round 2 pilot fund for Film: 21st century literacy

The project we have put forward is called **Persistence of vision: Developing standards and progression in learning about animation**. This will be a developmental, investigative project to establish much-needed benchmarks for media literacy in relation to animated films and filmmaking, and will demonstrate how

media education can be embedded in the curriculum by being linked to teaching and learning about poetry.

The core activity of POV will be a training and advisory service for teachers of the 3-11 age range in partnership with three rural local authorities (LAs) in England through the academic year 2009-10. Approaches and techniques for teaching both animation and poetry will be modelled for selected teachers in each LA, who will then undertake to teach a minimum of three units of work during the year to the same classes of children, with ongoing support from the animation trainers and from the LA advisers. Based on this core activity, the main aim of POV will be to track the development of children's conceptual understanding and their critical and creative skills in both media, together with teachers' professional development needs, by focusing on one 'case study' school in each LA. The outcomes will be a publication offering accessible and practical guidance on teaching about animation, an online learning framework and a training package.

Other partners are Creative Partnerships, the Poetry Society, and the Centre for the Study of Children, Youth and Media (Institute of Education, University of London). Talks are under way with Scottish Screen to link them to the project as well.

For further information contact Cary Bazalgette at [<cary@mediaedassociation.org.uk>](mailto:cary@mediaedassociation.org.uk)

Web Filtering: MEA goes to BECTA

*Following the sizeable response from both MEA members and users of Examination Board websites on the problems created for media education by web filtering, MEA approached BECTA, the organisation charged with producing the framework to be followed in producing the software that makes web access safe for school students. While endorsing the essential need for child protection, MEA along with the examination boards identifies the particular access requirements of media education. A meeting was set up for representatives of MEA to have an initial discussion with senior staff at BECTA. **Rob McInnes** (Head of Media Studies at Forest Hill School) reports back.*

In a meeting with Ruth Hammond (Manager, Safeguarding Programmes) and other representatives from BECTA at their Headquarters outside Coventry, it was good to hear that BECTA clearly shares a large part of the agenda of the media education community. There was agreement from the outset that the current situation for many (most?) schools regarding internet access is less than satisfactory and there was a stated 'broad agreement' with MEA's concerns. Several issues have to be resolved, but we were also able to agree on some possible first steps towards addressing the concerns of MEA members.

There was clear agreement on the inadequacy of most of the internet filtering software provided by companies that schools and Local Education Authorities have contractually purchased. It was suggested that the commercial power of schools and LEAs to exert pressure to improve the range of software filters was considerable. But it was also recognised that the organisation within schools (i.e. of different departments, subject specialisms and key stages) was likely to produce conflicting demands on the levels of internet security required.

It also seemed that Ofsted's interest in safety might not be satisfied with a simple blanket ban on numerous websites etc. as such an approach would be likely to work against the kinds of understanding of safe internet use that all parties appear to support (and which are favoured by the Byron Report – "children must be empowered to keep themselves safe").

However, if there was at least a consensus over the need to empower students rather than restrict their access at school to sites they might readily access at home, it was a consensus contingent on a number of issues. It was pointed out that, for instance, many sites such as IMDB that teachers might wish to use with students carried age requirements as part of their terms and conditions of use, much as films carried age rating classifications (in the case of IMDB: 12 years and older). Those in charge of school IT systems are also likely to seek to control sites visited as these have implications for transmissions of viruses on to networks and the slowing down of networks due to heavy traffic.

As eSafety is clearly a prime responsibility, how will headteachers balance the needs of media studies departments and teachers developing media education in other parts of the curriculum against those of the whole school community in order to be able to assure parents that their children will not be able to access 'inappropriate' material at school?

With the promotion of technological solutions clearly at the heart of BECTA's agenda, it was unsurprising to hear of their support for controlled learning platforms as a means to address safer internet use. Colleagues were warned against using uncertified or free sites to host student blogs as part of coursework, as these would always be at risk of closing down without warning. A controlled learning platform should permit students to set up blogs etc. within safe parameters, but requires a school-wide investment. It was estimated that at least 80% of secondary schools and 50% of primaries already had these in place, although to what extent their potential is being exploited is not known.

An advantage of this kind of network management is that it offers good security and management of safety. A disadvantage might be that while a resource like <www.teachertube.com> might provide certain kinds of solutions (for downloading student videos, teaching materials etc.) it would not necessarily offer the same suitability as a media text as the original Youtube (still apparently blocked for many students and teachers). The contradiction for media teachers is that they may use a controlled learning platform as a way to communicate with students, but that same platform may actually deny those students access to specific study texts. Although, equally one could ask whether we would expect students to be able to access a complete subject textbook, film or a novel online?

BECTA reported that there were certainly schools that had eschewed Internet filtering provided by LEAs in favour of an unfiltered service, and it was the view of at least one of the representatives that a properly monitored service was preferable to a filtered one. Good network monitoring software offers the opportunity for teachers to control the classroom environment rather than filtering software and has (or should have) the added bonus of enabling teachers and network managers the ability to hold any student to account for their computer activity (as any network user's complete usage

If you do have access to YouTube in the classroom, you might know this 2007 gem. If not, treat yourself (and think about it as a useful resource?): <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFAWR6hzZek>>

history is recorded) This would enable a policy to operate in the true spirit of the Byron review where students themselves are empowered (and necessarily therefore educated) to surf freely.

Two initial possible strategies in which BECTA and the MEA could collaborate emerged from the meeting. The first entailed setting up a survey of members' experience of internet filtering in schools to try and ascertain the extent and scale of the problems facing media teachers. This would involve a questionnaire asking colleagues to describe the action they have taken to gain access to (unblock) an agreed short list of perhaps ten sample websites and to ask members specifically what kinds of activities they would like to undertake online that they cannot already do. The first might include a series of guided steps about how to go about this. The second would be to help produce a guide for members/media departments to assist them in using the internet effectively and safely with students, as well to help establish clear guidelines and policy for internet use. BECTA were happy to collaborate with the MEA on both these areas.

MEA goes to Parliament

On 28th April a small group of MEA members visited the House of Commons to make a presentation to the Associate Parliamentary Media Literacy Research Group (APMLG) on the status of Media Literacy in Schools.

The Associate Parliamentary Media Literacy Research Group (APMLG) was launched in May 2006 and is chaired by Danny Alexander MP. The Group was established to promote greater understanding of the importance of media literacy and lobbies the Government to develop and implement policies that strengthen media literacy in the population. It also aims to encourage the Government to find effective ways of monitoring and understanding the social impacts of media use and content.

The APMLG exists in order to help parliamentarians fully engage with issues related to and developments in media literacy. The Group holds regular meetings and events, bringing together MPs, Peers and Ministers with the many outside stakeholders, including educationalists and representatives of culture industries, who take an active interest in media literacy. The Group aims for a varied and innovative programme, drawing on the input of the wide range of stakeholders who are Members of the Group. For further details please contact <apmlg@ofcom.org.uk>, or visit the Group's new website at <<http://apmlg.org.uk>>

Cary Bazalgette, Development Officer for the Media Education Association, opened the session with a brief overview of the general context. Cary pointed out that while there are a number of different constituencies and agencies currently involved in media literacy work in the UK, including the media industries themselves, a focus on the needs of learners should always be a priority; she highlighted the breadth and range of media education practice in schools, and suggested that the use of media, particularly film, in educational contexts generally improved standards of literacy and developed skills of critical awareness in pupils across the curriculum.

Chris Whitney, Primary English subject leader for the Lincolnshire School Improvement Service, then presented recent work with very young children, conducted by a team of literacy consultants and lead teachers who were developing a range of strategies for working with media in the primary curriculum from Early Years to Key Stage 2. Her presentation showed how primary school children benefit from working with simple film narrative – mostly through the medium of animation. It encouraged team working, critical thinking and increased confidence in shy or reserved pupils as well as an understanding of how any narratives were constructed, characters built and a variety of styles and generic components influenced the communication.

Finally, the meeting heard from Naomi Ward, an English teacher at The Charter School in Southwark, and three of her Year 10 students, who described media teaching and learning in Key Stage 3. Her presentation and the articulate contributions of the students underlined the way in which debates around film classification could open discussion about social, cultural and educational issues. As part of their scheme of work, the students had discussed and analysed Shane Meadows' *This is England* and the contention around its classification as an 18 Certificate film. They presented cogent arguments around the significance of this film and why they had disagreed with its classification. It was clear that classroom debate had been lively and that the results had not only led to confident and sophisticated responses but had also increased their interest in films that they might otherwise not have seen or valued.

Overall the event was considered successful in raising awareness of the experiences of 'real' learners and teachers, and the expertise of those delivering media education in schools. While attendance of MPs was inevitably small, the responses of group members was very positive, and Ofcom is keen for MEA to make a further presentation later in the year.
Jenny Grahame

Forthcoming resources for Initial Teacher Education

Thanks to funding from the Teacher Development Agency, MEA is now well on the way to providing a series of resources for those involved in initial teacher education.

On 27th March an initial seminar was held for a small group of PGCE course leaders either actively involved in, or seeking to develop, provision in media education for their students. The purpose of the seminar was to exchange information about practice, to identify some of the problems involved in routes into training for potential media teachers, to sample the material so far drafted, and to discuss future areas for development.

The resources in preparation will cover areas in ITE such as achieving QTS in Media Teacher Training, the taught curriculum in a GTP programme, subject knowledge, planning, assessment and monitoring, practical work, and assignment setting. Other sections in progress focus on Media Education in the Curriculum, key media concepts and practices, and the policy landscape for media education. They should be useful for PGCE tutors and their students, and offer introductory support for non-specialist teachers new to media education. The resources will be posted in stages on both MEA's own open site, and on TDA's Subject Resource site; we hope that the first range of material will be online in early June.

If MEA is able to gain further funding from the TDA for the next year, the next step will be to provide support and resources for the Primary Curriculum, specialist media studies courses, and the Creative and Media Diploma.


Making and Learning: A look at the Creative and Media Diploma in practice

On Friday 8th May, a number of MEA members attended a conference which provided their first glimpse of what the Creative and Media Diploma might actually look and feel like, from the perspective of both students and teachers. The event, entitled *Making and Learning*, held in the Science Education Centre lecture theatre at Homerton College Cambridge, kicked


off with presentations from Long Road Sixth Form College Level 3 students sharing aspects of their work and commenting on their experiences of the new Diploma. Over lunch there was an opportunity to preview work from students from Cambridge Regional College, Parkside Federation and the Huntingdon Consortium, and to discuss it face-to-face with the producers.

In the afternoon, students were involved in activities designed to reflect upon their learning with artists from Cambridge Curiosity and Imagination. Meanwhile, teachers from the Cambridge Consortium and other parts of the country, along with an invited panel of academics/experts, discussed the question of Diploma organisation and management, debated issues raised by the student presentations and production work, and considered the role of the Diploma in relation to wider questions about creativity in education. This hugely thought-provoking and challenging conference was organised by MEA Executive member and Long Road Diploma tutor Nick Potamitis, who will explore the issues at greater length in *PoV3*, published later this term.

Jenny Grahame



Interested in Media Studies and Education?



- MA in Media, Culture and Communication offers modules in:
- Children's Media
- Computer Gaming
- Digital Video Production
- Film Theory
- Internet Cultures

Modules can be taken as stand-alone courses and are primarily taught online. Phone 0207 612 6314, email ma.media@ioe.ac.uk or see ioe.ac.uk

Dates for your diary

3 June Stepping up to OCR A2 Media Studies, INSET with Julian McDougall, English and Media Centre, London. Further details and booking online via http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/engine/course/base/course_home_base.html or phone 020 7359 8080.

19 June Doing TV Drama for GCSE and A level Media Studies, INSET with Jenny Grahame, English and Media Centre, London. Further details and booking online via http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/engine/course/base/course_home_base.html or phone 020 7359 8080.

26 June Postmodern Media – Videogames. Study day for A Level and Diploma students (**Free** for students of MEA members) led by Julian McDougall and Wayne O'Brien, Newman University College, Birmingham, 10.30-15.30. Details and application form from: j.mcdougall@newman.ac.uk

23 June 'Behind The Film Industry' a One-Day Conference for teachers at BAFTA, 195 Piccadilly, London, organised by Film Education. (See details in *Newsletter 14* or visit: www.filmeducation.org)

25 June – 9 July Showcomotion Young People's Film Festival, the annual extravaganza of screenings, workshops and events based at Sheffield's Showroom Cinema. Details of the programme will appear on: <http://www.showcomotion.org.uk>

26 June Closing date for entries to the **Co-operative Young Filmmakers Festival** (see below). To download an entry form and for useful filmmaker information, advice sheets and more information, log on to the website www.youngfilm-makers.coop.

1 – 3 July Showcomotion Children's Media Conference, the annual gathering for anyone interested in children's media, returns for the sixth time at the Showroom, Sheffield. Details on: <http://www.showcomotionconference.com>

1 – 3 July, The Media Studies Conference, BFI Southbank, Waterloo
Three days (Wednesday – Friday) of professional development for all Film and Media Studies teachers, including workshops, presentations, panel discussions and seminars. For full details visit: www.bfi.org.uk/education/conferences

3 July, A2 Concepts and Theories – Theoretical Concepts for AQA Mest 3 and 4, INSET with Steph Hendry, English and Media Centre, London. Further details and booking online via http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/engine/course/base/course_home_base.html or phone 020 7359 8080.

15-19 July CP3 Conference – Critical Practice, Creative Process, Cultural Perspectives, Liverpool Hope University (see details in *Newsletter 14* or visit: <http://www.cp3.org.uk>)
Or you can call us, on 020 7292 7330 or email enquiries@cp3.org.uk

8-9 October Co-operative Young Filmmakers Festival, screenings and events at the National Media Museum, Bradford.
www.youngfilm-makers.coop.

10 November Medway Media Conference (10th Anniversary event), Chatham Central Theatre, 9.30-3.30. Theme: 'Great beginnings'. Details from Andrew Webber on: webba004@medway.org.uk