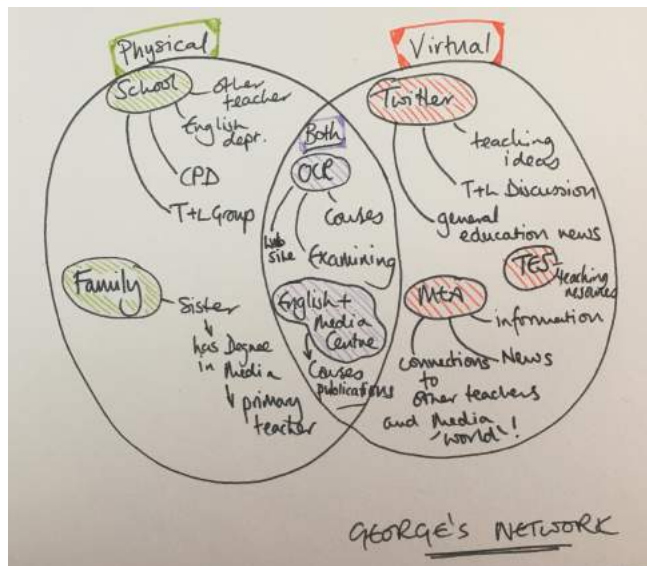


# Media Education Association: Field Scan



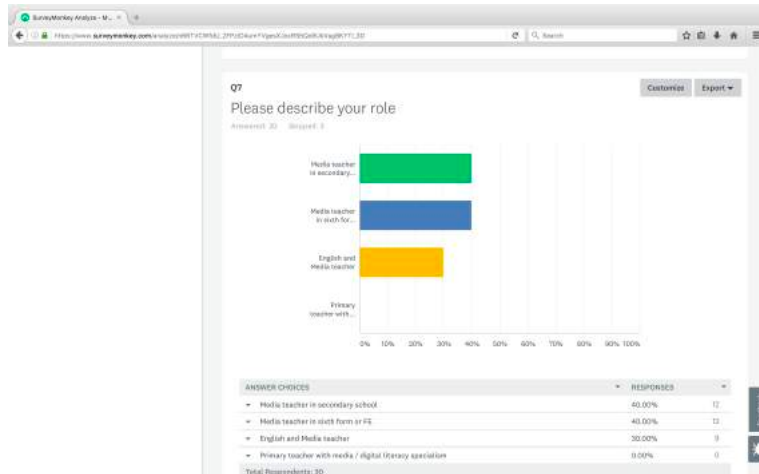
This report for the MEA executive consists of the following:

1. Findings from an online survey completed by teachers of Media, English / Media and primary teachers with a media / digital literacy specialism. The survey asked about awareness of MEA, use of MEA resources / engagement with MEA activities, awareness of subject associations more broadly and needs that could be met by MEA membership;
2. A summary of secondary research into subject associations;
3. Findings from primary research with subject association representatives, conducted through face to face interviews, email interviews and skype interviews. Semi-structured interviewing was used for 'live' interviews, a combination of set questions and semi-structured for the email exchanges.
4. A comparison of the associations researched in (2) and (3) with the MEA;
5. Findings from interviews and a visual exercise with teachers who had conducted the online survey and volunteered to be interviewed to explore their responses to the survey questions in more depth and to find out more about their networking practices and professional identities in relation to media education and the objectives of the MEA (the questions were pre-set in all cases);
6. "The Department": A comparison of the professional networking of media teachers, derived from the survey, interviews and visual mapping with the professional networking of PE teachers, using data from previous research (Potter and McDougall, 2017)
7. Summary findings and provisional recommendations to the MEA executive.
8. References / Links

## (1) Findings from online survey

A survey monkey link was distributed via email networks and social media, aiming to reach 100 teachers in the following categories – A Level Media teachers, teachers of English and Media in either AL or 14-18, Film Studies teachers (mainly AL), vocational media teachers and primary teachers with a specialism in media / digital literacy.

33 responses were collated, forming the following sample:



12 x Media teacher in secondary school (14-16 or 14-18)

12 x Media teacher in sixth form / FE (16-19)

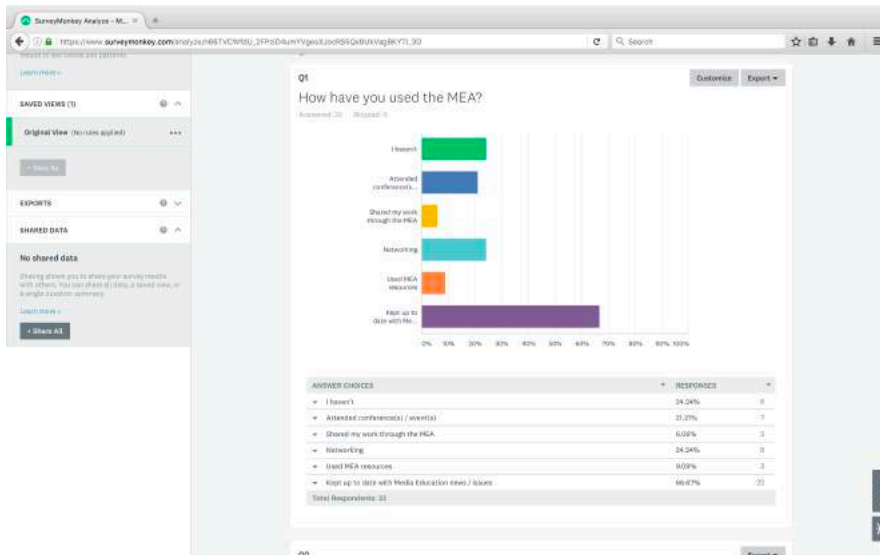
9 x English and Media teacher (11-16 or 11-18)

The three respondents whose role did not fit any of the categories offered or added an extra comment described their roles as Primary Consultant, Higher Education, English teacher and 14-19.

Asked to describe their career stage, 31 are experienced teachers (5 years or more), 2 are early career teachers (under 5 years). No trainee teachers or NQTs completed the survey. Undoubtedly this skews the research towards particular needs, perspectives and perhaps, given the ways in which the participants were reached, aspects of professional identity which are more reflexive than might be typical of the broader community MEA aims to serve.

### How have respondents used MEA?

Keeping up to date with media education news is by far the most common form of engagement. Attending the MEA conference / other events is the next most common, followed by limited evidence of networking and use of MEA resources. 25% of respondents hadn't engaged with MEA at all.



More detail on types of engagement with MEA:

*I have been to conferences and worked on the journal.*

*I gave some feedback and shared concerns with other teachers about future of subject.*

*Read updates on revisions to Media Studies curriculum on the ME A website.*

*Good for up to date news and debates plus curriculum change latest  
it is a useful resource for keeping up to date with new specs and issues around that*

*I went to the annual conferences, took students and started up a local cluster group.*

*I have attended sessions run by the MEA and also ran sessions for the MEA both regionally and in London. I have found the updates about the subjects being updated to be useful and these condensed a lot of information into a single place which was both accessible and insightful.*

*Used it to maintain knowledge of updates/key dates/changes.*

*I read the updates on website regularly*

*Feedback on reforming and new spec.*

*Attended conferences 2016 & 2017 Used MEA as 'go to' site for news on updated spec*

*Kept up with progress on media studies as a subject when we were waiting to see if the govt wanted to keep it or not*

*Delivered a presentation at one of the conferences a few years back. Have attended meetings and kept in regular contact.*

*I view it more of a media education/ qual news feed than anything else.*

*Accessing the MEA website to keep up to date on changes in the subject.*

*Looked at notifications re: news specs*

*Worked on small research project.*

*Have used it for info on exam specs and subject development ie. essentially for information.*

*It is really good for keeping up to date with Media education issues.*

*The MEA has been my first port of call throughout the turbulent times of getting the subject approved and getting specifications accredited. I refer back to the website regularly. I have attended conference in the past but not the last couple of years.*

**For those who haven't engaged with MEA at all, what benefits would they expect from a subject association for media educators?**

*Sharing resources.*

*Networking, interesting publications, sharing experiences and New research*

*For Primary Education: Networking - info about local/national projects Online content/resources for staff/pupils*

*Updates with current news/issues Sharing of best practice Promotion of events (with discounts)*

*Good ideas/ resources from different sources for better teaching and learning.*

*-Resources -Pedagogic discussion -New spec discussion -Articles etc.*

*For the subject to be represented nationally/at policy level and for educators to be kept up to date with what is happening. Also to keep educators informed of developments in theory and practice for Media Education.*

*Specialist support and connecting colleagues*

*Would like there to be more network meetings in more areas.*

*Information on the new specification; an authoritative voice on and for media studies; good practice.*

*Guidance on subject and specification changes. Opportunities to share resources, ideas and experiences. Academic papers on education within our subject area.*

*News, curriculum development, resources*

*Conferences (across various locations) to disseminate good practice and discuss challenges of new curriculum - BTEC and A level). Often conferences are London-based, this needs to change (cost, impact on timetable & travel) particularly as cuts to CPD are getting worse. Exam tips for teachers (including new BTEC and A Level). Media teacher vacancies (country wide). Online social media-based discussion forum as a quick point of access. Video channel to exhibit student media work across all media qualifications.*

*Conferences, seminars, access to resources, information about subject-related opportunities for pupils.*

*Up to date resources and notifications.*

**Other Subject Associations respondents are aware of, from colleagues, and what they offer:**

*NATE - theory and practice discussion*

*S7 colleges - good practice and ideas.*

*English and Media Centre, Teachit, Alliance Francais, Business Review, Women and Business Development Forum - magazines, information, networking, conversations*

*Creative Education - CPD sessions on T&L skills in Art e.g. print making.*

NATE - not sure what benefits they get.

UKLA - conference, journals, funding, special interest groups

NATE - journals, events

PE network

From 3rd Spaces research, physical network

As media educators (broadly defined, what are the things a subject association could provide that would help respondents the most with their work?)

Conferences on the specific subject of media literacy and media education, a possible joint research and established agenda and arguing about it with the students

Articles Database for academic research

Relevance to teaching youth of today - ideas or new methods that can engage and inspire them to 'make' their own media products.

Forum

A variety of better ideas for all abilities. Mostly physical resources that can be swapped and shared.

Good practice

Student friendly resources, digestible media theory.

Resources Networking Policy changes

Up to date resources forums for discussion opportunities for meet ups

Sharing best practise, ideas and knowledge.

How to manage practical lessons, with limited equipment

I would expect a subject association to provide support on national issues, which I feel the MEA did during the consultation stage of the new specifications. It would be useful, if possible to have regional networks which allowed specialists across the different educational stages to meet and network.

Sharing sow. Standardisation. General networking.

Ideas on Teaching and Learning.

New ideas, identifying issues with new spec, campaigning for the subject.

Updates on new specifications and lesson resources/prompts. Opportunities to engage in academic research.

Ideas / resources for new A Level specs, being part of a network / community

Sharing practice, ideas and resources. Flagging up issues, difficulties and addressing possible solutions.

Resources and shared practice

Resources, networking opportunities, training, advice and guidance

Resources in relation to the changes in the specifications. Up-to-date news about the changes. Conference news.

*Online discussion/ forum as a point of access/ dialogue. One stop shop digital channel (with labelled 'genre'/ 'qualification' categories) to exhibit student media work and to be used as a pedagogic resource more generally across all quals (tends to be a focus on A Level). Bank of clips with discussion pointers... all to support new/ newly trained staff.*

*Resources Organising teach meets Lesson plans Student study days*

*More links to exam board assessments across a range of specs (CTs, BTECs etc) Careers progression for students*

*Opportunity for local networking. The opportunity to discuss curriculum planning with colleagues. Information about developments in qualifications and the academic field.*

*Resources tailored to new specs.*

*Local meetings as well as more London-based meetings. Plus advocacy for the subject within educational establishment / the media itself*

*Networking, CPD.*

*Advice/News Defending the subject to OfQual Training Resources Networking Teachmeets*

*Lobbying (subject voice), networking events, funding for projects, career progression advice and support.*

### Other subject associations participants are using

*mediaedu*

*English and Media Centre*

*#teamenglish*

*Examiner associations - but this is purely for info, I do not engage with much content.*

*Society for Education and Training Film and Media studies groups on social media networks*

*NATE*

*UKLA*

### **Key Findings**

1. Currently this sample of media teachers are using the MEA mainly as a news feed / for updates on institutional practices at Ofqual / exam board level, as opposed to networking or pedagogic development. However the status of MEA as a voice for media teachers / its lobbying role is clearly valued by these respondents. In particular, MEA's position on the recent curricular reforms and its regular updates on the website were frequently cited as important.
2. Physical meetings in different areas, combined with an online forum, might help these respondents to engage more directly with MEA and to share resources and network.
3. There is some evidence that this community would benefit from resources and continuing professional development provided by MEA, as opposed to / alongside what awarding bodies are offering.

## (2) Summary of secondary research into subject associations

Four subject associations are profiled here and, in the following section, representatives from five associations are interviewed, with three associations featuring in both. Three of the subject associations in this chapter are UK based for English, Physical Education and with a cross-curricular subject focus with clear overlaps to the work of MEA (literacy), the fourth is from the US, offering media education specific international equivalence for comparison.

The **United Kingdom Literacy Association** has similarities with the MEA, since both literacy education and media education are broader than one subject, but distinct in that UKLA draws its core membership from primary teachers. UKLA has existed for 53 years and, in 2014, published a half-century review of its work (Cook, with Littlefair, 2014). The UKLA was formed out of the United Kingdom Reading Association which had been the national affiliate of the International Reading Association. Like media education in the UK now, literacy education was not the explicit focus of teacher training and post-initial teacher development was scarce. Another similarity was the feeling of being outside of policy discussions and a 'poor relation' identity in comparison to NATE:

Nationally, the association was beginning to create a profile, albeit limited, and it was clearly surprised at not receiving an official invitation to submit evidence to the 1967 Plowden Committee, especially as one was issued to NATE, formed only a year after UKRA. (Cook, 2014: 6)

Once established as UKLA, the association's membership reached 3590 and national activities included conferences (large in scale, 3 day events, annual and international, with a different theme each year); research (funded through awards for teachers and a research guide, but it is noted that "*on the whole it has proved difficult to involve teachers*" – p12); publications (journals, monographs, a mini-book series, sold to members for a lower cost than for general circulation); local activities, organised by over fifty local UKLA councils; links with other agencies and associations (but the desire for a merger with NATE was never realised) and international activities (conferences, study tours, exchanges, pan-European committee affiliation).

A key distinction between media education and literacy education, and thus the role of a subject association in advocacy and lobbying, appears to be that literacy education is valued by Government, but the nature of literacy and the way it is learned (and taught) are sites of conflict, so the UKLA plays an important role in generating evidence in this field:

The post-2010 government's main response for literacy, aside from some funding for economically disadvantaged pupils, is to give reading a significant position in an otherwise slimmed down curriculum, and to institute the use of synthetic phonics as the first strategy in the initial teaching of reading, a phonics test for six year olds and the decontextualized testing of grammatical aspects of writing at the end of primary school in Year six. Some aspects of language and linguistic research – such as that concerned with social semiotic systems and the use of multimodal texts – supported the broadening of the literacy curriculum which underpinned curriculum developments in the earlier part of the period. These and others, such as the growth of interest in linguistic identities and the teaching of second language learners, have not found echoes in recent government documentation. (ibid, p26)

The MEA has been more concerned with advocating for the existence of media education itself, although currently the Association has been at the forefront of negotiations with Ofqual over the reform of the Media Studies curriculum.

The current objectives of the UKLA are not only consistent with the general direction of the association during its 53 years – described as "flying the flag for an encompassing view of language and a research-based pedagogy" (p34) - but there is also a 'back to the future' feeling expressed by executive membership that the current context – reduction in government funded CPD and the



diminishing role of HE in teacher education – is very similar to the climate when the UKLA was founded.

The **Association for Physical Education (afPE)** is the only PE Subject Association in the UK. It aims to support both individuals and organisations teaching PE in schools and also in the community. Like the UKLA, it has a policy brief and lists its practices as including *responding to consultations, meeting with representatives from partner organisations and political representatives, and promoting the subject in a variety of forums*. (source: <http://www.afpe.org.uk/physical-education/who-we-are-a-what-we-do/>). The organization has a safety / safeguarding remit as well as a curricular remit. afPE provides resources, professional support and accredited continuing professional development, employs PE teachers, circulates a monthly newsletter, publishes three journals and offers dedicated helplines for health and safety and legal guidance for PE professionals. In addition, membership of the association includes professional insurance cover and discount opportunities for resources and CPD. Most of afPE's provision to members and activities are distinct from the work of the MEA.

The **National Association for the Teaching of English (UK)** has just under 3000 members currently, and membership covers 30% of secondary schools. NATE is affiliated to the International Federation of the Teachers of English. The association provides free to download resources along with discounted materials for sale, a range of conferences, events and professional development opportunities to members and publishes three editions of three journals each year, tailored to different constituencies (*Primary Matters, Teaching English, English in Education*). *English in Education* is a peer reviewed journal, the others are magazines in editorial terms. One area of NATE's work which makes the association distinct from the others reviewed here is the provision of consultancy by named associates (see <https://www.nate.org.uk/consultancy/>). Of the stated membership benefits of NATE, the following are shared with MEA: NATE News (e-newsletter); events and conferences; networking opportunities, lobbying role (however this is more formal liaison with Government bodies). The following are distinct: journals and magazines; membership enhances CV and career progression prospects (aligned with professional standards); professional development and INSET days; a password accessed members site with back issues of the association's journals and resources; tax-deductible membership fees.

The **National Telemedia Council (US)** is the longest-standing media literacy organization in the United States, since its birth in 1953 and has converged the objectives of a teacher network with industry and governmental representation. Projects named by Marieli Rowe in a recent account of the council's achievements include a 'voice on the air' with Wisconsin Public Radio, an annual audience opinion poll, sponsor recognition awards for 'quality programming', annual conferences with video and satellite links, the 'teacher idea exchange', summer workshops for teachers, a dedicated children's channel (Kids-4), collaboration with policy makers – for example, an enquiry on children's television advertising, contribution to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's policies (as an advisory council), the Journal of Media Literacy (now in its 64<sup>th</sup> volume) and the annual Jessie McCause award, notably awarded to ex MEA chair Cary Bazalgette at the close of the ML conference in 2010. The Council is distinct from MEA in both its 'interventionist' agenda and its sustained engagement with media industry agents.

*NTC's goal has always been to give agency to every child living in our rapidly changing media environment, We hold fast to the mission of creating a media-wise, literate global society which means seeking a transformative literacy in a changing world of multiple cultures, moving with the constantly evolving ecology of childhood and the mediated environment. (Rowe, 2017: 36)*

A further summary of comparisons with MEA is provided in section (4), drawing together the 'desk-based' secondary research and the primary research interviews.

**“The biggest challenge is to keep going”.**

**(3) Findings from primary research with subject association representatives.**

Interviews were conducted with David Reedy (United Kingdom Literacy Association), Gary Snapper (National Association for the Teaching of English), Simon Leach (Association for Physical Education), Carol Arcus and Neil Anderson (Association for Media Literacy, Canada) and Alison Butler (Action Coalition for Media Education, US).

The interviews were transcribed and interpreted for emerging shared themes. Respondents gave informed consent to be named in this report but, since the focus here is on shared objectives and experiences across subject associations, the extracts included here, whilst in some cases clearly related to specific associations, are not attributed to individuals.

**Purpose**

*ACME brings critical media literacy to teachers, libraries, and classrooms across the U.S. and hosts a biennial critical media literacy conference, designed for scholars, researchers, and practitioners of critical media literacy. ACME’s distinctive role is its emphasis on the critical inclusion in media literacy, as well as action-oriented research, both of which are, more often than not, found to be lacking in most U.S. media literacy work.*

*A subject association is a place where interested parties can become part of a community that supports you in developing that interest so it’s very much a collaborative, organised space where people can come and take part but also take forward the thinking of the organisation itself.*

*To promote the subject/discipline, to lobby for the subject/discipline with government and other institutions, and to promote good practice in the teaching of the subject/discipline.*

*To gather and apply current subject research, promote best practice, and support educators and their communities. AML’s distinctive role is to increase people’s understanding and enjoyment of how media work, how they produce meaning, how they are organized, and how media construct reality. This means helping people develop an informed and critical understanding of the nature of media, the techniques used by media industries, and the impact of these techniques.*

*Subject associations are a kind of repository of thinking, a place to come and be, a community of thinkers and it feels like home, a place where you feel comfortable. The annual conference is the main hub for the community.*

*According to the Department of Education and Skills paper in 2003, Subject Associations were described as having a key role to play in sustaining and strengthening subject specialises. There exists considerable diversity in size, history and constitutional arrangements. Whilst there is no core definition they do all have in common, the following:*

- *Membership organisations and work with active classroom professionals*
- *They exist to further the study and teaching of their particular subject*
- *They contribute to the development of a specialist professional community of practice*

*Some already do, but in the future they should support subject leadership, enhance the quality of specialist teaching, ITE and CPD.*

*Promoting good practice in the teaching of the subject in schools and in teacher-training, as well as good practice in curriculum and assessment formation and policy in relation to the school subject.*

*Demonstrate the distinctive role of physical education in children and young people's learning, development and achievement, Establish and sustain physical education at the heart of school life and whole-school development, through support for high quality learning and teaching; research; ethical leadership and politically informed advocacy and representation, Raise awareness of physical education's contribution to public health and well-being and increased participation, Play a leading role in the development of a workforce with the skills and qualities required to assure high quality physical education and sport in schools and in the wider community, Provide high quality, professional, sustainable services for members and partners.*

### **Constituency / typical member**

*Members tend to be teachers/departments who are passionate about the subject and keen to be part of networks of people and ideas in the teaching of the subject, and to be kept informed about developments from an independent perspective.*

*Academics, researchers, practitioners, teachers, policy-makers at a local level.*

*There isn't a typical member, we have four main constituents, teachers and schools, higher education and ITE, local authority advisers (diminished with the cuts) and increasingly librarians. In terms of the social aspects, though, we're not the most diverse, it's still quite white and middle class, unlike the constituencies we serve, we've been thinking about that for a while.*

*Members can contact paid staff through email, telephone or social media. There is no hierarchy. Alternatively they can work through their region or home country or via their Board member link. There is no typical member.*

*We are a volunteer organization with charitable status. Officially, it is presently run by a 10 member Board of Directors, who make joint decisions at monthly meetings about goals, planning and projects. There is also a list of about 150 members who subscribe to our newsletter and are also privy to advanced publicity about events. This membership is free.*

*The main policy-making body is the elected Council, consisting of committee chairs, regional co-ordinators), and association officers. Management committee (officers plus 2 regional and committee reps) administers the association and puts policy into practice. There is an AGM at conference each year. The association employs two full-time staff a Director and an administrator.*

*Members may attend events and access the website freely (no password). There are no regular meetings to which members are invited. A typical member will be a practising or retired elementary or secondary teacher. Within this category, most likely members will be educators who have attended events in the past or taken a Media Studies in-service course at a university faculty.*

*The association comprises an 11-person Board of Directors, which includes a 5-person executive Board: 2 co-presidents, 1 vice-president, 1 secretary, and 1 treasurer. All members of the Board have input into decision-making and votes that are taken. The Board communicates regularly via e-mail and endeavors to meet in person 4 times a year. Respecting geographic and time limitations, the Board strives to meet around already scheduled events, such as conferences, where most members will be attending. Members who cannot meet in person are invited to meet via digital technology.*

### **Modes of engagement / Members' Voices**

*On a day to day process it's through the website and social media. The special interest groups meet physically but mainly virtually, but a lot of the communication that goes on, for example around the book awards, there are a lot of meetings for those.*

*Being a small charity the Association uses a range of communiques to engage with members, national partners and government. These include: Facebook, Twitter, Wakelet, Skpye, Webinars, journals, face to face meetings, telephone and newsletters.*

*Regional reps organise regional meetings and conferences (though many regions have become inactive in recent years). There are several committees (Primary, Secondary, Post-16, ITE, ICT, Drama, Multicultural) who meet termly to discuss issues for association action and to organise events such as seminars and workshops.*

*While members recognize and respect the value of in-person meetings, there are advantages to virtual communication. All board members strive to meet in person, coordinating conference attendance and travel plans whenever possible. However, when this is not possible, the association communicates with its members via social media and through the e-newsletter and Board members communicate regularly via email, phone, and in-person gatherings.*

*All members are engaged in research and scholarship, publishing in various academic and practical journals, as well as presenting at conferences both nationally and internationally.*

*Members receive a termly magazine and journal and fortnightly emails*

*The voice of membership is heard through structures such as special interest groups, feedback from those and we have the national council which is a massive meeting where we try to get representatives from every element of our constituencies, so that's 50 or 60 people coming together twice a year, feedback is obtained, ideas are generated.*

*Physical networking (ie, face to face conferences and events) is generally facilitated by virtual networking (blogs; resources; newsletters etc). However, workshops to non-members do help facilitate virtual networking, in that it encourages people new to us to visit the site and subscribe to the newsletter.*

*An annual conference is held each summer, and an annual primary conference each Autumn.*

*Members are kept abreast of activities through a bi-monthly e-newsletter, plus regular updates on its social media sites, including Facebook and Twitter. Members are informed about various conferences and gatherings of critical media literacy scholars and are invited to attend and participate. Through social media, the association shares relevant media events with its members and promotes members' latest scholarship and contributions to the field. If there is a typical member, it is a teacher/researcher interested in learning about and applying critical media literacy to their own work.*

*The association is governed by a Board of Trustees which is compliant with the charity commission guidance. The Association has a set of articles which the Board of Trustees use to ensure that the strategic vision for the organisation is appropriately set. Once a year we have an AGM which is held at the end of the national conference in July. One of the main aims of the AGM is to sign off the Trustees Report and audited accounts. The AGM is the formal forum for members to vote and put forward members' proposed ordinary resolutions. The Association also comprises of 9 regions and home countries where members meet with formal agendas and minutes. The operational direction and admin is carries out by paid staff, led by a CEO.*

*There is little in the way of virtual networking, but the association has a website, a twitter feed and a facebook account.*

## **Most significant achievements**

*Providing vocational accredited subject specialism routes for the wider workforce, ensuring the subject is delivered to a high standard.*

*The association was a powerful influence on the development of a modern approach to the teaching of English between its foundation in 1963 and the introduction of the national curriculum in 1989 and continues to promote that approach and provide an authoritative critique of policy, pedagogy and curriculum. Its conferences and publications have been and continue to be successful and authoritative forums for promoting good practice in the teaching of English.*

*Being part of a national team that has secured £150million per year to support the subject in Primary Schools.*

*ACME's most significant achievement in the last ten years was the organization and execution of the 2016 conference "Action in Media Education: New Directions for Media Literacy Education in the Digital Age," held in partnership with the Media Literacy and Digital Culture (MLDC) graduate program at Sacred Heart University (Fairfield, CT). There were more than 25 presenters and almost 100 educators and activists in attendance from across the United States and Canada. This conference was rare in American media literacy with its focus specifically on critical action in media literacy. This conference also marked the launch of the Global Critical Media Literacy Project (GCMLP), founded as a partnership between ACME, the MFF, and SHU's MLDC graduate program. GCMLP is an online resource that provides educational materials on critical media literacy and provides a venue for publication of CML-related writing by students, scholars, and practitioners on issues pertaining to critical media literacy.*

*I think over the past fifty years we've shifted and developed an understanding of what it is to be literate and how that changing understanding plays out in classrooms and educational contexts from early years right through to adult education and we continue to do that in what we do in terms of the encouragement of research, its dissemination and I think we are very good at showing how research plays out in practice and in making those connections between the two.*

*The AML successfully affected the insertion of media literacy into the public school curriculum K-12. The next challenge is effective implementation.*

## **Biggest challenges ahead**

*The biggest challenge is to keep going, I think all subject associations are experiencing challenges, retaining members is a big issue for us, we seem to still be doing OK at recruiting new members, particularly early career teachers, but the key issue for us is how do we retain and keep involved younger teachers, people just coming into higher ed and beginning their research careers, how do we make sure they feel, like I did, that this is a home? The whole of the educational terrain in the UK, whichever bit you are working in, life is much much busier, and policy over the last twenty years has meant that we've become more inward looking in our institutions so just knowing that there are subject associations out there and what they can do and the support they can offer and how they can make representations to government, I just don't think that information is quite as accessible as it once was even though it ought to be more so.*

*The AML successfully affected the insertion of media literacy into the public school curriculum K-12. The next challenge is effective implementation of media literacy in the school curriculum K-12. Some of the reasons this is a challenge are: Little or ineffective pre and inservice training in media education; The recent compartmentalization of literacies (digital; media; tech; critical etc) has tended to marginalize media literacy, which should be the umbrella term for all communications tools, their contents, and their environments. Media literacy has tended to refer more to the deconstruction of mass media texts than to critical thinking about media environments, or media production. (In Ontario, the media literacy curriculum resides in Language and English and therefore suffers from a narrower understanding and application); The emphasis*

*on the use of digital tools in the classroom without critical thinking (largely the result of lack of training in media education - especially in cross-curricular applications).*

*The biggest challenge ACME faces for the future is maintaining a level of structural organization that will allow for the execution of regular conferences, a robust communication with members, and classroom work. All ACME Board members are respected scholars in the field of critical media literacy and work in multiple avenues – including K-12, undergraduate and graduate classrooms, community and activist work, scholarship, research, and public speaking – and therefore are balancing multiple personal and institutional responsibilities on a daily basis. ACME strives to be the leader in critical media literacy, setting itself apart from its American peers. Despite 20-plus years of research, explaining the critical of critical media literacy is still a necessary conversation. ACME is avowedly anti-corporate and, especially in the face of the current US presidential administration, tackles political issues, corporate ownership and distribution, and the larger sociopolitical and economic context of the current mediated environment.*

*The biggest challenge we face is the eradication of the subject at secondary level due to the ebac and the reduction or loss of funding for primary schools post the snap election.*

*Declining membership and increased marginalisation in relation to national policy and curriculum development; not enough finances to support the developments needed to build the association's activity.*

#### (4) Comparative summary of associations with MEA

Across the 'desk-based' research (section 2) and the interviews (section 3), a sample of 6 subject associations has been analysed for this report, 3 in the UK, 3 international, as follows:

| Association                    | Description  | Comparison  |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| UKLA                           | Cross-subject, cross sector                              | Media education and literacy education share objectives, beyond subject focus but clearly tied to subjects. |
| afPE                           | Subject focussed (PE) + extra curricular aspects         | Distinct from MEA through direct, v different subject focus and broader vocational aspects.                 |
| NATE                           | Subject focussed (PE), cross sector but mainly secondary | Distinct from MEA through direct, but similar subject focus and accredited INSET / consultation offer.      |
| National Telemedia Council     | Cross-subject, cross sector                              | Media education, but US, less aligned with school subject(s), distinct broadcasting industry links.         |
| Association for Media Literacy | Cross-subject, cross sector                              | Media literacy (vs education), Canada, 'advocacy' distinct through 'activist' aspects.                      |
| ACME                           | Activist, media education + societal.                    | Media education, but US and with 'reactive' objectives, beyond formal education.                            |

From the findings in sections (2) and (3), the following key comparisons between MEA and other subject associations can be made:

1. The other associations receive membership fees and in return provide specific services and resources to members.
2. All of the other associations have a clearer sense of remit – either a key service for members or an advocacy / lobbying brief, or both.
3. MEA is distinct from the other associations in its lack of *either* a subject focus (eg Media Studies Association), an activist objective (as for ACME) or an over-arching societal objective (eg literacy / media literacy).
4. Several associations provide either accredited professional development linked to career progression, professional services key to workplace practices for the membership or funding for teacher research.
5. All of the other associations provide journals or magazines to members.
6. All of the other associations convene a larger scale annual conference than MEA.

7. Governance structures are more formal and involve more activity for most of the other associations than for MEA.
8. Despite the appearance of more formal lobbying routes, all the organisations report frustrations and limited success in their advocacy / campaigning work, and the institutional practices of mainstream education appear only minimally affected by the work of these associations.
9. All the associations face significant challenges in the future due to the 'de-professionalising' of teaching and the reducing capacity for teachers to engage with networks beyond the institution, with the exception, on the basis of the 'desk-research' only, of NATE, due to its proximity to a 'safe' subject. However, most of the other associations can claim a significant achievement – eg shifting understandings of literacy; inclusion of ML in the K12 curriculum; providing accreditation; securing funding.
10. Arguably, MEA's lack of reliance on membership income reduces the challenges ahead, at the same time as preventing the association from offering many of the benefits provided by the other organisations.



## **(5) Findings from interviews with teachers and their 'network maps'**

25 survey respondents agreed to take part in an interview and contribute a visual exercise. Of these, 8 responded to the direct invitation and took part in the follow up research. These MEA's broad target constituency responded to a set of fixed questions, in the majority of cases by email with a small number audio recorded. The questions were designed to elicit more qualitative detail than the online survey and to provide the opportunity to group responses together / categorise them by emerging themes and profiles of respondents. The questions were designed to provide a snapshot of the community of practice the MEA seeks to represent with regard to:

- Their professional needs as media educators;
- Where such needs are currently met and where they are not;
- The potential role of MEA in meeting these needs;
- The nature of media teachers' current networking practices and the perceived benefits;
- The relationship between physical, virtual and hybrid networks media teachers are using;
- The level of interest in funding for research (as this is a feature of the other subject associations researched for comparison).

Of the 25 that indicated at the end of the online survey that they would be willing to respond to questions (and provided an email address), 8 provided answers and of those, 3 were A Level Media teachers, 2 were teaching Media and other subjects (mainly English), one was teaching vocational media qualifications, one was a primary teacher with a media / digital literacy specialism (self-identifying as such) and one was teaching Film Studies. It must be stated, however, that, as some of the answers below reveal, the respondents are all known to the researcher through professional networks such as A Level examining, postgraduate study, researching and writing for publications or working with the English and Media Centre. Attempts to reach other teachers, through social media and by asking people in these networks to forward on to colleagues, was unsuccessful, so the picture of the field presented here is skewed towards the engaged, networked / 'extra-professional' media educator.

**In your media teaching or media / digital literacy work, please describe something you have needed that could not be provided within your own institution but that WAS provided from elsewhere. Please tell me what it was and where you found it.**

*Anything I have ever needed to know about theory I have had to get from the internet. For a while there was a good go-to theory blog (Gauntlett's I think) but that's out of date now. Now I end up cross-referencing various sources from the internet and the original text of course (google books, usually). (14-18 Media teacher in school)*

*AQA coursework exemplar material: video work found on YouTube and critical investigations were sourced from various school/college blog sites e.g. <http://dsfcmmedia.blogspot.co.uk/> (AL Media teacher)*

*In recent weeks I have need guidance on planning for new specifications within Media and Film Studies. For this I have turned to the exam boards and have used the extensive resources provided by the subject specialists within those organisations. I also attended two days of CPD (free of charge) run by the exam board. The forums available on social media have also been a fantastic source of collaborative planning and discourse on the new specifications; the two WJEC groups have proved to be particularly fruitful. (14-18 Media teacher in school).*

*Support from other media teachers/media subject knowledge? Not sure what kinds of things others are saying. My institution are great at enabling any aspect of support I may need whether it's resources, trips, conferences. (14-18 Media teacher in school).*

*I've used the TES resources one or twice, but now they change, so have strayed away recently. (FE Media teacher)*

*Can't really think of anything here? Maybe visits from industry professionals, although not sure that's quite what you meant! I needed detailed research into the advertising costs for several local and national newspapers, and had to contact them directly for their press packs? (FE Media teacher)*

*We wanted children to make and present a film, however did not have the resources/expertise in school. We contacted a local film maker and a representative from English Heritage in order for the children to make a film about their own area and local history. Children also drew on their own resources from the community. We subscribe to many websites to support teaching and learning - which all students and teachers have access to. We have a strong focus on employability which is especially important within the areas we teach in - therefore we use volunteers from places such as Barclays, HSBC, local law firms etc to talk to children about their use/understanding of digital media in the work place, from initial job applications to using a variety of skills in different careers. Often our hurdle here is the children's access to digital media at home and parents understanding that we don't necessarily mean 'computer literacy.' (Primary teacher)*

*Technical advice on cameras / software: Media departments where I used to work, that have a dedicated Media Technician, are always really helpful and generous with their advice. (AL Media teacher)*

*Teaching ideas for postmodern theorists that were not just PowerPoints. I found ideas that could be adapted on Twitter and TES. (AL Media teacher)*

*I have used Long Road Sixth Form student produced video work as well as Vimeo and You Tube examples of student work to inform my own students and help visualize their ideas. I find referencing established/ famous artistes/ work e.g. music videos and experimental texts often feel too other worldly and unrealistic, particularly as most of us are running courses with limited equipment, resources and reduced timeframes. On average my students have 4 days to film and edit their video products. (Vocational media teacher in FE).*

*Over the years we have needed access to practical filmmaking training, this is not provided or paid for by my own institution so through my involvement with the BFI Network Academy's I have been able to work with a variety of filmmakers and question and observe their practice which in turn has been built in to projects and work we have done with our students. Primarily this has been through the Cambridge Network Academy, which I now run and the BFI Craft Residential at the NFTS. The link with the NFTS has been very useful. (AL Film teacher, sixth form).*

*We do lots of things within the curriculum but it's difficult to list or fit them into your questions! (Primary teacher)*

*\*Resources for BTEC Digital Creative Media Production course - Teach Meets with other Media teachers in our cluster.*

*\*Insets on new specifications - delivered by exam boards*

*\*Advice on marking and moderating coursework from examiner (about 5 years ago now)*

*\*Developed understanding of mark schemes - team members are examiners*

*\*Range of teaching creative teaching strategies - BFI Conference  
(FE Media teacher – AL & Vocational)*

**If you are involved in any professional networks related to your media teaching or media / digital literacy work, can you please describe the ratio of physical meetings to virtual / online interaction as a percentage.**

*The social media networks are clearly 100% online. However, some members of this group have now started to arrange working groups who will meet face to face regionally. Sadly there are none in my region yet, but hopefully there will be in the near future. (14-18 Media teacher in school).*

*70% virtual 30% physical (AL Media teacher)*

*60/40 though increasingly more virtual with everyone setting up sites to help each other with new specs. (AL Media teacher).*

*Physical 80, Virtual 20. (Primary teacher)*

*I am a member of the MEA and 100% of my interaction with the association has been virtual. (English and Media teacher in school)*

*50/50 Thinking about Bournemouth University residentials (1-1 contact) and online forum interaction. I think the balance has to be equal to ensure a successful dialogue develops. Face to face interaction maximizes the potential and thus enables online interaction to thrive. Ideally you need the two but CPD strategies are changing in Further Education where governmental educational agendas for what is considered staff development do not take into account the actual subjects we teach – therefore online is more realistic for most I should imagine. (Vocational Media teacher in FE)*

*\*Osiris Education - with 16 other teachers completed this course this year 100% physical, developing T&L skills (engagement, feedback, challenge)*

*\*City Excellence in Teaching - as PCM working with other teachers in the borough to deliver training to SD, TF, and PGCE. 100% physical (feedback to Media department ideas taken from Inset sessions e.g. Literacy)*

*\*ELTSA - another inner London school network where Teach Meets and Twilight sessions are held. 100% physical, followed up by e-mail sharing (sharing BTEC resources so far). (FE Media teacher – AL & Vocational)*

*I'm not a member of many 'professional' groups, but I'd like to be. I obviously receive emails from the MEA, but the rest of the support groups are basically Facebook grounds, and in fact they have just been created very recently due to the A level reform. I also receive emails from OCR, and the training sessions. The only physical meeting I have attended has been OCR training, and the Media Studies conference in London. I have only attended that once or twice over the years. I am course leader for OCR Cambridge technical at my college, and my Media Studies course leader attends them (It's pretty difficult to persuade work to let 2 of us go) unfortunately there's very little available for the OCR technical. I do find them incredibly useful though. (FE Media teacher)*

*I did try and set up a physical network in my area but it fizzled out. The Hackney learning trust has one but the meetings are not useful. I've attended a couple presentation-led of teachmeets at the English and Media Centre which were more useful, more purposeful and focused. (14-18 Media teacher in school)*

**How do the networks that influence / support your teaching have an impact on your students?**

*Updates from the MEA on the reform of A Level Media Studies enabled me keep up to date with developments and respond to the various Ofqual / exam boards consultations. Input from Media teachers (if they're listened to) should have a positive impact on future students. (English and Media teacher in school).*

*I think they're great for sharing ideas, although can be quite time consuming, and I have to be honest, I haven't tended to search for documents. (maybe just because of the time of year??) I find myself searching the internet for other college blogs for ideas and resources. I find them useful for teachers to discuss the set up for the new course though – I think over the next year they will be invaluable with the reform. I also try to promote student networks groups to the students too. (FE Media teacher)*

*The social media networks have provided a scaffold for my lesson planning which gives me greater confidence that my resources are effective and rooted in the assessment objectives. Hopefully this will lead to engaging, creative and successful lessons for students! (14-18 Media teacher in school)*

*My experiences networking (face to face) at residential on MA Creative & Media Education and Doctorate of Education (Creative Media) courses as well as Media Education Summit (MEA) conferences (via CEMP/ Bournemouth University) have instilled a sense of confidence to implement new ways of working both conceptually (how I now see the subject is much more open and now focuses on learner biographical knowledge as the primary canon to work with/ from). This impacts on planning strategies (e.g. project module briefs are now written from learner perspective and even modules I now plan are often guided/ decided via learners prior to writing the brief). Approaches/ topics therefore can only be implemented on a yearly basis, as they need to be current. Media education can very quickly seem out of date/ irrelevant to student – this is a key challenge for all media 'teachers,' hence engineering a curriculum plan around the students wherever possible works best (for me). The latter is becoming increasingly important in FE as you can often have 3 different qualifications running in the same classroom (e.g. Level 2 Media students alongside 60 and 90 credit learners in the one space but working on different modules). All in the name of efficiency and productivity. (Vocational media teacher in FE)*

*I teach English curriculum in the north of Scotland, so the virtual networks I belong to give me the most support and have the most influence on me and therefore my students. They provide ideas for me, and access to other students and the Media world for my students. They mean we don't feel so cut off as we might. Although I produce a lot of teaching resources myself and publish everything we do on my blog ([mrsblacksmidia2.wordpress.com](http://mrsblacksmidia2.wordpress.com)), the networks allow me to make sure I am on the right track on all levels. (English and Media teacher, Scotland).*

*The work I have been involved in with the BFI Academy's is currently the most beneficial as I am currently teaching the OCR Cambridge Technical (2012 model) and this is primarily practical in its focus. The influence has been on raising expectations of what learners can produce in terms of practical work. This has been through trying to stay current with technology and speaking to filmmakers about their practice. Ironically the new A-Level NEA is so far removed from the collaborative approach needed for successful filmmaking it will mean that the future of British Cinema is destined for films about playgrounds with empty swings or really shit copies of a video off Youtube. (AL Film teacher)*

*Professional networks within local trusts/ school clusters has a big impact on product/resource purchasing. (Primary teacher)*

*Huge impact. Sharing resources means better prepared lessons, sharing knowledge helps to cover any gaps in knowledge which, because of the nature of the subject (ever-changing) and the way it is staffed (English teachers) there often are. Also it's invaluable for students to see work produced by other students. (14-18 Media teacher in school)*

*\*Osiris has led to much better understanding of how to engage students in learning, how to provide purposeful feedback and involve students in that process, as well as developing questioning skills to promote challenge. Lessons have been more varied and better differentiated leading to better outcomes.*

*\*As above, ideas brought back to the team to be delivered in lesson. Wider variety of activities and more focus on media literacy.*

*(FE Media teacher – AL & Vocational)*

Essential in able to compare work, ideas so that students feel confident that their work is being assessed accurately and that they can gauge general standards. (AL Media teacher).

**If you are a member of MEA, please identify one thing the association doesn't do already that you would really benefit from. If you are not a member, please identify one thing it could do or provide that would tempt you to join.**

I'm not currently a member. If the MEA were to provide a greater range of practical resources and activities to inspire creative teaching of Media and Film, I'd be more interested in joining. I would also like to be able to read and reflect on relevant research within the field and attend regional events; being based in the South West means that these opportunities are limited within the subjects of Media and Film, and the cost of travel to London or elsewhere means they are often impractical. (14-18 Media teacher in school)

More regional networks (beyond London). (English and Media teacher in school).

It would be beneficial if it was possible for the MEA to pair up teachers with similar interests and cohorts so that regardless of geographic area they could share and develop ideas. Essentially a high end dating service for the more discerning Media practitioner, where we have done this we have exchanged ideas which is always useful as it requires you to reflect and justify your practice to other professionals based on pedagogic views as opposed to management and KPI's. (AL Film teacher).

Enable children to access resources and especially expertise outside of school. Children have been able to relate their own experiences and lives to projects - however they initially think of them as separate to their education which is often viewed as fixed and solid. Teachers are encouraged to think more critically about their ideas/projects e.g. Examples at a very basic level - blogs instead of written diaries, digital art/animation alongside traditional media. (Primary teacher)

To have local events in the north of England. (FE Media teacher)

Host media teaching events in north of England to showcase student work (good and bad) and discuss challenges of delivery, particularly with new Specification (including A level and BTEC) about to hit us. The problem is Pearson events are often very corporate and avoid the nitty-gritty of issues faced, teachers attending are often fearful of appearing incapable, particularly within a professional culture where progression, capability and success are based on data and not pedagogy. (Vocational media teacher in FE)

Online forum/network. Probably smaller communities for each specification. Resource sharing/creation. Moving image clips (for media studies at all levels). Either clips of real media products or, sometimes I have created short bots of footage for students to adapt and edit to understand certain skills and concepts. (14-18 Media teacher in school)

I am a member of the MEA but have tended to be silent on message boards etc.. It has been about 5 years since I went to an MEA even in person. The institution which I work at was part of the Cambridge Film Consortium involving Anglia Ruskin University, the Parkside Federation and the Cambridge Arts Picturehouse but this has since been mothballed, this network was always based upon physical meetings. (AL Film teacher)

I am unsure what the MEA could offer me as a professional- even after visiting the website. (Primary teacher)

I am a member and I wish it would provide more resources or a sharing platform, or perhaps a forum to share ideas. Something on the key concepts or universal ideas. (AL Media teacher)

\*Like the Artsmark, develop a Media award

\*Twilight sessions on new courses - sharing resources, approaches.

(FE Media teacher – AL & Vocational)

*I'm not so sure of their role currently. I used to attend their annual meetings but haven't heard from them in a while. (AL Media teacher).*

**How interested would you be in being funded by MEA to conduct research into the teaching of media? Please state one of VERY – POSSIBLY – NOT and, if it's possibly, please state what it would depend on. If it is VERY, please give an idea of the kind of research you'd like to carry out (optional).**

*POSSIBLY – it would depend upon the amount of time required and other commitments next year. (14-18 Media teacher in school)*

*Possibly- dependent on time, cost, resources and whether it fitted with school priorities. (Primary teacher).*

*VERY. I would be but only when my thesis is complete, 2018/19. Selfish but necessary (time wise). It would be good to streamline lessons learnt from my doctorate and see how 'transferable skills' manifest with other cohorts, media courses and institutions outside of my own insular 'insider' knowledge base. (Vocational media teacher in FE)*

*Possibly, depending on amount of time involved and whether my location would be a hindrance. (English and Media teacher, Scotland)*

*Possibly, dependent on work load with new A Level, new GCSE, and second year of new BTEC course, plus other independent study. (FE Media teacher – AL & Vocational)*

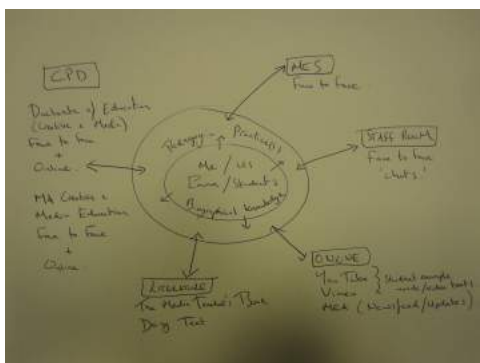
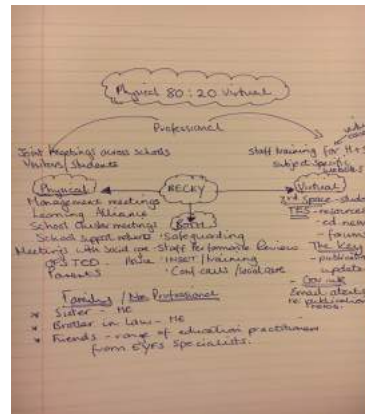
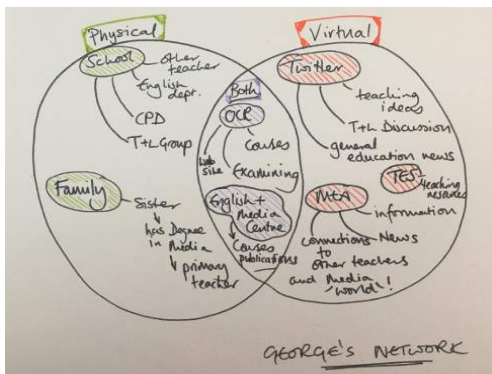
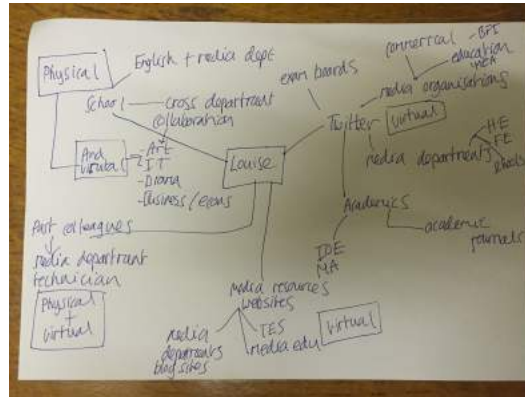
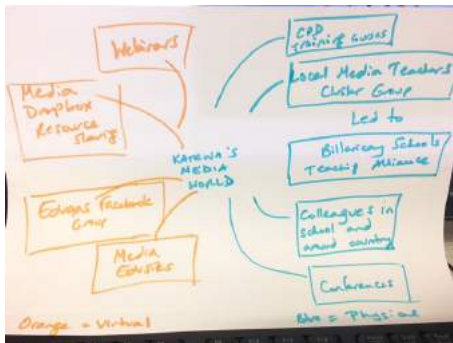
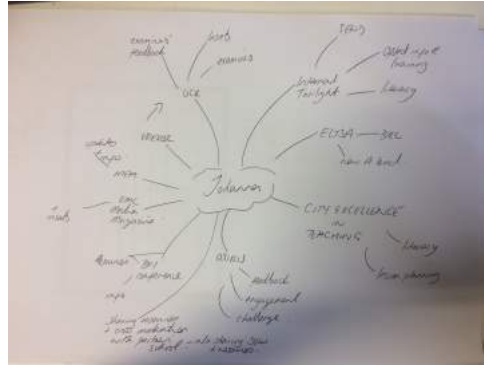
*POSSIBLY but if I do any research this year it will probably be on behalf of the EMC. I want to conduct audience research to try and work out better ways of distributing Media Magazine (and possibly other resources) to students, via platforms students would be most likely to use. In a year or so, I might be more towards VERY interested. (14-18 Media teacher in school)*

*Very interested in researching the impact of the new A Level specs on both teachers and students. (English and Media teacher in school).*

**VERY! (AL Media teacher)**

*Possibly, but please take note as of this September I will just be teaching the OCR Technical Diploma, (2012 spec) so not sure if this would be suitable. (FE Media teacher)*

*Possibly - I am not sure what area would be useful. Currently I have an interest in students making practical work and have some idea about the new A Level in Film. (AL Film teacher).*



**Selection of networking 'maps'**

7 of the teachers' visual mappings of their networking practices are above. Taking the interview responses and the diagrams together, we can draw out the following conclusions:

1. The specific professional networking practices reported are, perhaps surprisingly, mostly physical / regional when the detail is explored, despite the percentages provided. Online activity is often resource repository access / 'push media' updates, combined with everyday social media engagement. Where a network appears to offer a more reciprocal, blended community experience, this is in most cases framed by a 'third party' agent – eg an awarding body, postgraduate programme, CPD provider (eg EMC), rather than a subject association.
2. Key colleagues / family members play an active '2 step' / gatekeeping or 'conduit' role for many respondents in providing advice, connections and routes to networks.
3. There is sufficient evidence of teachers' interest in being funded to carry out research for MEA to consider this as a productive use of funding.
4. A majority of respondents expressed a desire for physical, regional MEA networks or clusters.
5. Most of the respondents are actively engaged in CEMP and 50% of respondents named CPD and training as services MEA could offer. However neither the survey nor the interviews asked respondents whether they would re-join MEA on a subscription basis, which would be necessary for such activities to be funded.
6. None of the respondents named the provision of a journal, magazine or physical newsletter as either desirable from MEA or valuable from other associations. This is, perhaps surprising, considering the prominence of these publications in the other association's narratives.
7. On the basis of the process of conducting this research, as well as the findings, it is difficult to identify a role MEA can play in primary teachers' professional lives at this point.
8. The Times Educational Supplement, Media Edusite and Awarding Body forums are the networks most cited as helpful in media educator's work. Whilst BFI/NFTS appears as a network, BFI teaching / study resources or conferences do not feature in the responses.
9. Whilst forum exchanges / "sharing ideas" are identified as things MEA *could* offer more of, more 'one way' resource updating / new teaching ideas were the two most common examples stated as directly useful existing / previous engagements with networks in general.
10. For obvious reasons, respondents often link existing / previous engagements or desired future activities with networks or subject associations to specific qualifications as opposed to pedagogic practice or media education more broadly.



## **(6) Comparison of professional networking**

The purpose of offering this extract from previous research is to broaden the focus to the networking practices of contemporary teachers in general, in this case in comparison with the networking practices of secondary school students (from Livingstone and Sefton-Green, 2016).

From Potter and McDougall (2017): *The Class vs The Department*

'The Class' was an ethnography of a group of 13 to 14-year-old secondary school students in a London neighbourhood. The researchers reported on the various ways in which the lives of the participants were / are shaped by pressures of individualisation and how schools, families and the young people themselves attempt to negotiate the meaning of education in the contexts of digital networks and increasing competition.

To start to think about how a similar approach might be used to explore teachers' relationships with professional, personal, social and blended networks, we asked a secondary school department to provide network diagrams and answer a similar suite of questions to those put to 'The Class'. We've attempted something similar, working the media educators – with a different lens each time – for several previous projects, and in each case the potential, as far as it is ever prudent, to generalize out from the findings has been obscured from the 'hyper-intertextual' and 'very digital' identity work encountered among this community. So for this work, we recruited a Physical Education department for two reasons:

1. Because there is an assumption that, whilst this discipline makes considerable use of technology (eg for sports science, performance simulation, recording physical activity for assessment), the social practices of PE are reasonably likely to be distinct from popular culture / text-based / screen-based learning;
2. Because the role of PE teacher in a secondary school includes a substantial 'out of hours' commitment and duty of care that might make the discipline more obviously 'network-friendly'.

As such, our uninitiated entry point to this research was an interest in how the PE department might be well networked but very differently so to our own community of practice.

As with the class, our initial department mapping suggested a fairly consistent profile of institutional and subject discipline relationships and network connections, but the individual diagrams provided richer complexity and, as with the younger people, the importance of family connections in managing professional identity. The distinction between home life and school / working life were much more readily, even happily, blurred, than for the students in Livingstone and Sefton-Green's account, but there was scarce evidence of hybrid pedagogy, with a generally clear distinction between functional use of digital resources – either for subject information, exam board updates or using apps to demonstrate skills from viral material, and a different, personal use networks for conversations – "*family and networking overlap due to family sports background. All appear in the real world, none are digital/ online.*" As with much research of this kind, at times the insulation between the two domains were as much a factor of the school firewall than any habits or strategies for identity performance.

The time-intensive demands of organizing and managing team fixtures emerged as a physical world networking opportunity for many, with this often blended across conversations at fixtures and subsequent digital interactions, but rarely was this a coherent network, more often one to one correspondence – participants gave examples of learning about other schools' enrichment activities and helping other departments beginning to teach new qualifications. Where participants were engaged in their own individual professional development or postgraduate research, the most obvious evidence of productive networking was presented, for example:

*I've been looking at the impact of students being withdrawn from normal lessons to go to additional literacy and maths lessons and my cousin who works in HE has sent me some links to networks to help with the theory behind the two sides of the argument. Online/digital world are twitter and TES online and subject websites. The AfPE website has specific areas for members only but they also send out a quarterly journal that has excellent articles in but isn't always practical for practising teachers. Recently I have attended a Regional meeting of AfPE where I was the only PE teacher and the others were mainly academics or retired academics. This is an area that will become more real life as we try to set up a regional committee to spread the information across the SW. This in turn may end up being more digital purely due to the massive area that the SW region has to cover.*

Whilst the students in 'The Class' maintained, or accepted, hierarchies in digital networks that had appeared 'flattened' in the classroom, this teacher here observes distinctions between domains and communities – the HE professional in the family is a resource for accessing new networks, however the professional journal's material reproduces a perceived boundary between theory and practice. This participant, despite holding two postgraduate qualifications, running a large, very successful PE department and now embarking on doctoral research, separates herself from 'academics'. Finally, the affordance of 'the digital' for the regional network is at this point to do with time and space.

The main distinction between the department and the class was around how the professional and the personal / familial is more blurred with much less work being put into keeping these distinct. This is hardly surprising, since a vocation is at the heart of the lifeworld for these participants, and their life-stage and professional status makes such laboured insulation less important and, if it were, far less viable. But that said the family patterning was marked, with every participant reporting significant others in the same profession and in most cases, the same subject area or broader community (ie PE teachers, athletes or in other areas of sporting employment).

There was no evidence of any members of the department ever having attended a Teachmeet and an air of skepticism about whether finding the time to do so was possible for a PE teacher doing their fair share of sports fixtures.

The most striking evidence of the 'networked educator' related to physical attendance at an event in London with regional sub-networks, engagement with this group "*allows me to network and speak to teachers from this area and then to present the information to the department with clarity and authority and this in turn helped us to create an assessment package that really focussed on learning and progress, not just putting a label on a child*". However, the network functioning here was largely 'old school', attending an event, meeting people, sharing ideas and applying new approaches through 'cascading' and implementation, accompanied by, but not driven by or reliant on, digital connections. However, evidence of 'blending' arose more around the 'border crossing' nature of educational discourse and the subsequent greater engagement with a multitude of voices – "*social media is online but when the conversations I have with students and colleagues are a result of a 'Tweet' the social network, I suppose, becomes the 'real world'. I think there is no restriction in the networks - at any time they can overlap and interlink. For example the use of social media can cross over to PE, pastoral, professional discussion etc. Social media makes me more aware of the teaching world and to some degree society. I have learned to be more empathetic with pupils.*"

## **(7) Findings and Recommendations to MEA Executive**

A Level Media Studies teachers dominate this report, as they were by far the largest respondent group and shared more evidence of engaging with MEA or desire to do so in future. Teachers of English and Media (at GCSE) were the other cohort showing potential for MEA engagement, primary teachers were almost impossible to reach and, when reached, articulated the least interest in the association and HE practitioners are served by MECCSA.

This creates a challenge for MEA, as the executive committee largely share the position taken in the assessment by Buckingham (2017) that the new specifications 'strangle' Media

Studies: <https://ddbuckingham.files.wordpress.com/2017/08/strangulation-final-2.pdf>

That paradox notwithstanding, the findings of this research lead to the following recommendations to the MEA executive:

- 1 Review the virtues and limitations of free membership, in comparison to the more common subscription model.
- 2 Consider regional, physical networks as a priority for future MEA work.
- 3 Consider the provision of research funding for teachers, accredited CPD and / or services linked clearly to career progression and / or vocational / pastoral / safeguarding support within a broader package of 'member benefits'. Alongside this, review other associations' more strategic approaches to linking research, publications and conferences in comparison to MEA's objectives.
- 4 Discuss the paradox that the new specifications offer MEA a clear opportunity to provide resources, activities and networking support for the membership, despite MEA's position on the reforms.
- 5 Review the relationship between MEA and Media Studies and the virtues / limitations of the subject association being less explicitly tied to a subject than PE or English counterparts in the UK.

Julian McDougall  
July 2017

## **(8) References / Links**

Action Coalition for Media Education - <http://www.acmecoalition.org/>

Association for Media Literacy - [http://jcp.proscenia.net/associations/canadian\\_links\\_AML.pdf](http://jcp.proscenia.net/associations/canadian_links_AML.pdf)

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