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Theme: Part II - Education and The Creative Economy: Australia

Connections explored the theme of Education and The Creative Economy in its Sept. 2016 issue. This month, we continue to explore this topic by featuring exciting initiatives being undertaken in Australia, where media literacy is now embedded in the national curriculum through media arts, and where the Australian government has prioritized supporting and growing the creative economy.

A prime example of this priority is the Australian State of Victoria, where the Creative State initiative is providing more than \$115 million in new funding, designed to grow Victoria's \$23 billion creative and cultural economy while bringing social and cultural benefits to Victorians. Five focus areas are part of the Creative State initiative:

- Backing creative talent
- Strengthening the creative industries ecosystem
- Delivering wider economic and social impact
- Increasing participation and access, and
- Building international engagement.

While the Creative State initiative was formally launched in April 2016, efforts are the product of a wide consultation with people working across Victoria's creative industries and the public. In April 2015, a special Ministerial Taskforce was assembled to lead a public conversation about the value and future of Victoria's creative industries. More than 8,500 people visited the strategy website, contributing 200 discussion threads, and posting 370 ideas which attracted over 5,000 votes during the five-week open consultation.

Media literacy education is entwined in these efforts, since media education enjoys a long tradition in Australia, with steady progress towards acceptance of the field and towards institutionalizing the discipline.

To explore how the creative economy and media literacy fit together, CML interviewed two Australian education/media literacy leaders, one who works in higher education – Michael Dezuanni -- and the other in secondary education, Roger Dunscombe. Their first-hand perspectives provide insights and experience to learn from for media literacy practitioners throughout the world. Also in this issue, our MediaLit Moments activity asks students to consider the relationship they have to media and to others.

Interview with Michael Dezuanni

Associate Professor – Creative Industries Faculty, School of Media, Entertainment and Creative Arts, Film & Screen at Queensland University of Technology

CML: Michael, could you tell us about your role at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and the work that you're doing regarding the creative economy? Your background and expertise in media literacy makes your new role all the more interesting to us...

MD: I haven't left media literacy behind at all -- in fact, my work with the concept of the creative economy is due to the fact that I'm located in a creative industries faculty at QUT. About 15 years ago, QUT made a very specific decision to move away from having separate, traditional humanities and creative arts faculties, to combining those subjects into a creative industries faculty.

Internationally, that was seen to be quite a progressive thing to do. It was certainly controversial because it took the focus of the creative arts and put much more emphasis on the commercial applications of creative arts in society, whereas a traditional university focuses much more on what you may consider the conservative approach for the creative arts. But it was also an opportunity to combine that focus on creative arts with other areas of creative practice, so areas like design and architecture and fashion and so on.

As a result, we have this creative industry faculty which is a quite exciting place to be, and a number of people on our faculty over the years have done quite extensive research on what we mean by the creative economy and on the creative economy itself. Stuart Cunningham, who attended Screen Futures in July, has written a couple of books, as have other people like Terry Flew, who has written about the creative industries and their role in preparing young people for the creative economy. QUT was on the forefront in relation to what has now emerged as a focus for a number of scholars internationally around this idea that, particularly in post-industrial societies, our economies are increasingly relying on, not just the knowledge economy but also this idea of creative practice and innovative thinking.

CML: Yes, that takes the whole idea of being a knowledge economy a step further, because we're really looking at skills, we're looking at the knowledge that's necessary, but also applications for that knowledge in the broader sense. How do you see the role of academic inquiry involved in this whole space?

MD: The academic set within creative industries has very much aimed to combine creative practice with research. We have many folks on our faculty now who have come from, for example, a film-making background or a performance background. These individuals have completed creative practice PhDs, introducing a new methodology that's brought the notion of deep thinking and conceptualizing in ways that go beyond just the written word, such as you find in traditional settings. So, we will often have people who completed creative work as part of their PhD and then wrote a dissertation that complements their creative work. This research often

happens out in society more broadly, so there's an attempt to collaborate with industry, for instance, to find creative solutions within the economy, and those might be based around the development of new products and services and so on. But it certainly also relates to things like digital participation in society.

For instance, I've been involved with a project called Fostering Digital Participation in regional and rural Australia, and the idea has been to take this creative practice approach and to go into communities and assist people to participate more fully with digital technologies through a creative practice and an interest-driven approach, rather than a more traditional digital literacy approach where perhaps a local library might run workshops that are more information-based.

CML: It seems that you're breaking down those barriers of the classroom versus the so-called outer world, which really isn't so "outer" when you're trying to accomplish some meaningful change and to see how such change comes about. At long last academics are contributing to that outer world, to economics, and bringing an academic and research discipline to what has usually been private and kept behind closed doors.

MD: Yes, and one of my favorites is that Pixar, the animation studio, has had a very specific policy of engaging with academics over the years, particularly with universities in California. This respectful work with academics has enriched the culture of Pixar (and probably shareholders as well).

We see this with some international colleagues, people who collaborate with some of the researchers at QUT through the Digital Media Research Center. A number of our American colleagues are working for organizations like Facebook and Microsoft Research, for instance, and these are often people who have come through an Internet Studies course, or they've completed their PhDs in areas that are associated with creativity, so perhaps they've completed research in the area of audience studies or they've completed ethnographic work on how young people participate online. That knowledge is very much valued by these big social media companies in particular, and more established tech companies as well.

The other thing that we promoted at QUT is that our PhD graduates, in particular, should not be really thinking about an academic career as their number one priority in relation to future employment. Anyone who completes a PhD should be thinking about how that PhD can contribute to work environments beyond academia, because the reality is that there are limited positions in universities, at least here in Australia, and that having an industry focus is not only sensible, but also exciting in regards to research. Yet there will always be a place for university research, because often breakthrough research occurs when people are not constrained by some of the issues that the broader economy might be focused on.

CML: Are we looking at a balance here?

MD: Yes, we need to get the balance right. Some people are very good at doing very inward-

looking, important introspective work, and that should always be supported, but then we need to have a very substantial number of people also looking outward and facing outward towards industry and helping develop innovative economies.

CML: Please tell us about your project, called Fostering Digital Participation through Living Labs.

MD: This project is nationally-funded and is set in regional and rural Australian communities. We're in the final year of the project now, and it's very much a digital inclusion project, so it's addressing what is more traditionally being called the "digital divide," although that's become an increasingly complicated term. The project's aim has been to support people to participate with digital technologies in more effective and appropriate ways. Certainly, in the project, we have worked with some folks who have been very disadvantaged and who have not had much chance at all to engage with technologies. These people are increasingly at risk of social as well as digital exclusion. The project has worked in two centers in Queensland, primarily. One is centered on a town called Toowoomba which is about 150 kilometers west of Brisbane. It's a small regional city, and is the center for rural farming communities. So, if you go just a little bit further west or southwest or northwest of Toowoomba, you're very quickly in a traditional farming community.

We've had that mix of city or urban living, and people who are living on farms, where some folks who have to struggle to get access to services, including mobile phone coverage and internet. We worked in Toowoomba and also in the central Queensland city of Townsville, which is a port city and also a mining city. There's been a real downturn now in the mining sector, and so Townsville is a city that is struggling quite a bit and its economy is in transition. In each of those places, we have worked with some organizations that cater to people who are on the fringes and are potentially excluded. We worked with one community center which aims to help people to participate socially, and to step people through government services.

In that center, we identified that there was a young fellow who was already volunteering as a technology expert, and he was going to the center a couple of days a week to assist people with any of their queries or problems with their mobile phones or Facebook or whatever questions they had. We actually recruited him for the project and brought him on as a research assistant and gave him some training. Over the course of a couple of years, we developed an iPad kit which has about 10 iPads in it and a laptop computer. Those iPads have been used in the center for a variety of purposes. We've had a group of volunteers who work at the center with folks who are wanting to develop their English language skills. They've used the iPads to enhance that literacy work and there's also been a 3D printer installed in that center. The focus is not so much on learning the 3D printing skills as it is on bringing people together to do collaborative work around the technology. The technology is like a community magnet – you attract a group of people who would otherwise not have a reason to go to the center, but they're curious about this thing called 3D printing, so they go to the center to find out about it, and then of course they meet people and speak with people, and they hopefully form friendships and participate more in their community.

This project has shown how interest-driven participation is the key to digital participation. Our argument from the start, and what we feel has been borne out in the project, is that people are most likely to participate with digital technology if they have a reason to do so, and if it supports something that they're already interested in and passionate about.

Another example that comes to mind is a group of older people living in a small town called Pittsworth, which is near Toowoomba. It's a farming community, but once again it's in transition for a host of reasons. Even though the town historically has been a little isolated because of road upgrades, it's now very connected to Toowoomba and so lots of young people now move away from Pittsworth to go to school in Toowoomba, to go to university in Brisbane and so on, and there's a sense that there's a drift away from the town and a drift away from that traditional farming economy. But at the same time, of course, you have digital technologies that everyone is getting access to and some of the older residents, in particular, are quite challenged by that.

This Living Labs methodology that we use is about designing a solution to a problem. We're talking about the creative economy earlier, and the Living Lab approach has been used in Europe in particular for product development, so you will set up this thing called Living Lab while you're developing a new product and then you'll have people use this in situ. So, it might be put into the family home and researchers then come in and see how that product is being used in the home and so on, and that environment becomes a Living Lab. We've taken that approach and when we go into a community like Pittsworth, we identified the problem to be that people are feeling a little bit out of their depth on being confronted by technology, but there's also this broader problem of feeling as though the town that's in transition is losing its identity or its identity as a farming community is changing. All of this comes through conversations with people and spending time with folks, and asking them about the kinds of things that mean something to them and their lives, and so then we propose a digital participation Living Lab to respond to this. That might be something as simple as having people take digital photographs and write short pieces or record short pieces to go with those photographs, to preserve some of the memories of the town for instance.

In that case, we did exactly that and then eventually, this led to both the physical and digital exhibition, so some of these people were involved with the local art gallery, and some of them are already quite expert photographers, but they didn't know how to take the photographs and put them online and add other digital components to the photographs like writing and audio recording. That's what we brought to the situation. Then we held a physical exhibition in the art gallery, so we printed some of the photographs out and mounted them in the gallery. We also had a couple of laptops there that had all of this work on it as well. So, that overall experience for people in the town was quite exciting, and they wanted to know about digital technology because they were very enthusiastic about preserving their town's memories. So, that's an example of interest-driven participation. I really do believe that when we're talking about media literacy or digital literacy that this is the way to go. You can't just force skills on to people. They have to want to learn these skills for a reason.

CML: That speaks volumes and it's supportive of all the recent brain research about how people learn -- people learn in a social way that is not linear.

MD: Yes, we were very keen to make sure that we enable people who might have already been participating to participate at a higher level. There is a sense sometimes that young people or people who already connected don't need any support because they're already digitally savvy. But all of the interviews that we've done on this project showed that although young people might be connected and they might be involved with technology, there are lots of things they don't know and there are lots of things that they want to learn about.

We also worked with a group of young people in Toowoomba on a project called Storyelling, where they developed a website and created photographic exercise and podcasts and written interviews. This notion of the creative economy applied because these were young people who are mostly involved with the arts in one way or another, but who wanted to know how they could present their work and to present their collaborators and piece work in a cohesive way, and so we brought a range of expertise to those young people including marketing experts and people who were more expert with audio recording and mixing and photography. We developed those young people's skills and enabled them to participate in a more sophisticated way. This idea of digital participation is not just about addressing the needs of folks who are not participating at all, but it's also necessary to support people to participate in more sophisticated ways if that's what they want to do.

CML: Yes, and when you're talking about something like digital media literacy, there is not ever going to be "mastery." The word "mastery" is inapplicable in this context because the technology is changing constantly and you can always be improving, always be learning.

MD: Yes, and knowledge can generally be applied in ways that are more productive for individuals --and potentially for the broader economy as well. Young people are being supported to take what they already know and to learn new practices and skills so that they can exploit their own expertise in ways that are more valued by the broader economy.

CML: How do you see media literacy playing a role in this new creative economy and in this new way of teaching and learning that you're working with?

MD: If we think about school-based education and begin with that, it's pretty clear now -- or researchers at least suggest -- that if we are only preparing young people to be proficient with traditional literacies, then we're doing them a disservice. We're only preparing them for one slice of one aspect of what they'll need to be able to do when they eventually graduate from school and go to college and university and then go into the workforce.

Many young people are digitally literate -- they know how to take photographs, they know how to use a Smartphone, they know how to communicate with others online, but they haven't had that opportunity to learn how to apply that form of literacy in a way that matters to the community and

to the economy in more productive ways. That's the end point of media literacy for me. Yes, it's about critical thinking and that's important, but it's also about how we look beyond written literacy to say that we can absolutely be literate through practice with still images and moving images. We can be literate with recorded sound, recorded voice. We can combine all of those things into familiar genres and we can then communicate in very rich ways drawing on those various multi-model elements. That would be one starting point: that media literacy should in fact be a focus across the curriculum and not just in specialized classes, because if a child is being asked to communicate an idea, let's say in English or History in middle primary school, then they should be encouraged to express that idea in a host of ways and not just in writing or in speaking, so that would be one starting point for it.

Beyond that, there is a place for more specialized focus on the media and on being literate with the media, so being able to “read” the media and “write” through the media, being able to think critically and creatively about the media, so that when we consume something or use something that is media-based, that eventually through our schooling we learn, we develop the skills and knowledge to be able to think critically about what we are consuming. That's certainly important, and so then if students do have the opportunity to apply these various stages in their schooling, they start to develop a very sophisticated relationship with the media, and that should be the ultimate goal of media literacy or media education.

Here in Australia, we have addressed media literacy for many years now. Since at least the 1970s, but certainly through the early 1990s, most Australian states have offered senior media studies courses. Here in Queensland, we have a subject called Film Television and New Media, which was first introduced in about 1978 with a small group of trial schools, but it's now offered across more than 150 secondary schools in the state, which is almost half the secondary schools.

It's taken a few decades to get to that point, but here we are in 2016. The same is true in Victoria, where the Screen Futures conference was held. The same is true in Western Australia and South Australia. There is a little less focus in New South Wales, which is interesting because New South Wales is actually the biggest state population-wise, and in fact has about a third of all the students in the country. Unfortunately, in New South Wales, for various historical reasons, there's never been a senior media studies course, which we think is to that state's and students' detriment.

Because we have had that established focus on media studies in the senior years of schooling, there's been a push down into the rest of the secondary school. So often, once a school has an established senior course, they will then over time begin to introduce media studies into the middle school, for instance, because they want to offer their students those same opportunities or the students demand it. The students say: “Oh, there is really exciting stuff happening with film production and website production and audio production in the senior secondary school.” So, students back in year nine and ten want to be doing that as well.

Now, we have the Australian curriculum, which is our first national curriculum. Previously, curriculum documents were developed by each state in turn, which is one reason why New South Wales has never had a senior secondary course. But with the establishment of the Australian curriculum, there's now an imperative for all teachers across the country to introduce the Australian curriculum, which currently emphasizes what we call foundational preschool through year ten. Because we have had this strong presence of media studies in the secondary school, we were able to argue that we should have a subject within the arts -- media arts, and so we now have media arts content that is written and that exists for all schools across the country from foundation to year ten. There's an expectation that at least up to year six, all students will do media arts at regular intervals throughout their primary schooling. We feel that that's quite an achievement, really. One of the challenges with that has been to say, "Well, we know what media studies or media literacy looks like in the secondary school, but what should it look like for a child who's five or six?"

It's not the same thing at all, so there's been quite a bit of working through what basic skills and knowledge that we want very young children to start to develop, and we concluded in the end that what was distinctive about media arts was that it was ultimately the ability to tell stories through images, sound, and text for a variety of purposes and for a variety of audiences, so embedded underneath that are the traditional media literacy conceptual understandings.

CML: Yes – audience, purpose, text, construction, techniques.

MD: With the ability to tell stories, you have language and narratives through images, sound, and text, which immediately introduces technologies and codes, and conventions that relate to images and sound. You have institutional forms in there as well, or industry concerns if you are focused on a purpose and an audience. The media arts content descriptors are quite interesting to look at (<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/the-arts/media-arts/curriculum/f-10?layout=1>).

CML: This inclusion of media literacy on an institutional, systemic basis is very impressive and exciting!

MD: We're quite excited about it. ACARA, the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, has been developing samples of student work at these various levels to show the kinds of works that students should do at years two, four, six, eight and ten. Real samples that come from a school are on the website, to display work with annotations about which specific knowledge and skill is being developed in each of the samples. Not only is it exciting to have the existence of the curriculum, it's exciting to see examples from real schools of what this looks like. <http://resources.australiancurriculum.edu.au/worksamples/>

It has to be said that the most controversial aspect of media arts is that there tends to be more of an emphasis, particularly in the lower primary school or even up into the middle primary of the school, on doing or making than there is on critical reflection. It's not to say that critical reflection isn't there, and certainly students are supposed to be responding to media as they make media,

but because it's located within that art's framework, some people have been disappointed about there being less focus on "reading" the media than there might be. But, that's a battle for another day perhaps.

CML: Hopefully, a good teacher would build that in.

MD: Yes, yes, absolutely. I've been involved with curriculum development for long enough now to know and appreciate how it's one thing to be an advocate or champion for something like media literacy. It's another thing entirely when you sit down to write those standards or to write that curriculum and to think, well, every school in the country potentially has to implement this, whether the teacher is an expert or not. It does lead to restrictions on what can be achieved sometimes. But I'm a great believer in how we move along one step at a time, and if we went back and looked at those senior media studies courses from the 1970s and 1980s, there's been a lot of development over time and a lot more sophistication that's been brought to those documents over time. My hope would be that the same will happen with something like the media arts curriculum. As teachers become more confident with it, the next generations will hopefully just build on this early foundation that we've relayed. That would be the hope.

CML: Do you think technology will enable this cause?

MD: Yes. Looking back, the arrival of the digital technologies in so many ways breathes new life into the media literacy effort. Here in Australia, we went through this cycle of early excitement about having subjects that were focused on filmmaking and deconstructing advertisements and helping young people to become more critical thinkers and all of those kinds of things, but by the 1990s, some of that was really getting bogged down in theory and getting bogged down in debates over, "Okay, sure, that's a great film that that young person has made," but is what it's really saying just a replication of commercial culture?

But in a sense digital technologies have come along and disrupted a lot of our expectations for media literacy, and have forced us to rethink what it is we want young people to be able to do with media. There are of course new challenges. I mean social media brings a whole host of new challenges that didn't previously exist.

I'm not saying that the established concepts are not valuable. Sometimes we don't do enough to convince others outside our field that what we have established with our conceptual understandings of pedagogical approaches are very valuable for understanding new technologies and digital media. That's absolutely true.

But I also think that there is a need for a generation of media teachers to move forward with new ways of understanding digital media, too. There was this group of enthusiastic, revolutionary teachers who came through the 70s and 80s and into the 90s and they established media education here in Australia, but then they just wanted to keep "doing media literacy" the same way. At least at first, they thought all of that ICT and digital stuff was for someone else to do. But

we can't ignore it any longer. There is some really exciting work where teachers are starting to think in new ways about understanding media literacy in these digital times.

CML: Agreed. One of our approaches is, "Hey, you don't really need curriculum in the traditional sense. What you need is a framework that you can apply to curriculum and really help internalize a critical thinking process that can be related to media and the concepts that were developed." This means anywhere anytime learning.

MD: Part of the problem for the creative economy is that a schooling system really isn't set up to deal with the creative economy.

Here in Australia, we have this constant referral back to Australia slipping behind the rest of the world and therefore the need to focus on high stakes testing and to improve literacy which just means traditional literacy and numeracy. Then, there's this rhetoric around STEM. Politicians don't seem to see the disconnect between the over- emphasis on standards and then the inability for anything else like STEM or media literacy to get a decent foothold in the school.

It's one reason why we are excited about the media arts Australian curriculum content, because teachers will have to do it. It's there and it will be mandatory up to year six. Teachers will be forced to engage with it in one way or another. They'll have to find time in their busy school schedules, which would be much easier for them if there wasn't all this focus on standards and PISA and international league tables of how students were supposedly travelling.

There seems to be this attitude that if you prepare students well in the basics up to year 12, then they will go out the door, and they'll suddenly become innovative and creative and they'll be able to build on those basic skills in interesting ways to make things happen. But I firmly believe that unless you start to develop dispositions towards innovation and creativity from an early age, it's unlikely that young people will even know how to be innovative or creative post-school.

CML: Does the Australian education system have some unique characteristics that have helped the support for teaching media arts more likely?

MD: We do have quite a different school system in Australia to what you have in the United States. The vast majority of our students attend what we would call a state school or a public school. Those are run at the state level. There are no district-based level of control of a state school. Typically there are local Parents and Citizens Associations. You might even have a school board, but for all intents and purposes, that board doesn't have any control of what the students are going to be studying and so on. So, it's the state level that counts. Probably 70% of our students attend a state school run by one of the state education departments, and then we have about another 20% of students who attend often a Catholic systemic school. Historically, when Australia was established, most towns had a school set up by the church and a school set up by the state. So, in many small towns here in Australia, parents can send their children to either the local state school or the local Catholic school (and it does tend to be a

Catholic school). Then, the rest of the students would attend what we would call an independent school, and those schools are run by other church organizations, so they might be Anglican schools or Baptist schools or Islamic schools or they might be addressing a specific local need or they might be informed by a particular philosophy, like a Steiner school or Montessori school. What it means is that there's a lot of control at that central level which is both a good and bad thing. It's good because when you have something like the Australian curriculum being rolled out, there really is a policy imperative and teachers are held accountable to implement at that higher level, and school principals are answerable back to the central office to make that happen.

But the downside is of course that you don't perhaps get as much diversity of experimentation, so we don't have, for instance, schools like those in the U.S. that are entirely based around video games curriculum. We don't have that kind of flexibility.

Timeline Snapshot of Media Education in Australia and Victoria

1960s: In Victoria, media education began in English classrooms in ad-hoc way. No formal curriculum; production model favored. Promoted by individual teachers with no formal training.

1970s: Study of film and media studies legitimized in Australia at tertiary level at variety of universities, but otherwise remained province of individual teachers working in isolation, as before. Emphasis on production and alternative forms of literacy or the engagement of academically challenged or “at risk” students. Victorian universities began to graduate teachers with a formal teaching method in Media Studies, which led to a second discourse of Media Studies as an oppositional reading of existing media and societal power structures.

1980s: The first Victorian Curriculum Frameworks were devised, creating the first attempt at a curriculum document that covered all aspects of primary and secondary education, including Media. Media was placed in Arts. Media had poor status – it was not counted for university entrance nor available to most academically able students; it was offered in technical schools with emphasis on production. The idea of empowerment was emerging, with the making of a product seen to give an understanding not only of the product but also of conceptual understanding of media.

1992: In Victoria, the Victorian Certificate of Education was introduced and all subjects became equal for tertiary entrance. Theory became a dominant part of media courses; emphasis changed from the practical – the learning by doing – to the process of learning, with the product just being one of the outcomes of learning.

2008: Australia adopts a National Curriculum for K-Year 10, with Media as one of the five disciplines of the Arts. Media education is available to students in all states. K-Year 6, art forms are compulsory. Secondary school, two art forms are elective.

Today: In Victoria, media is taught in over 400 schools from Primary to Secondary, with about 10,000 students taking Media courses across their final two years of schooling. Parents who took media education courses in school are now demanding that their children study Media.

Structure of Media Education in Victoria

Four overarching areas addressed, illustrating students’ relationship with media and the classic “Media Triangle” of production (producer), audience, and text (product):

- The Producer: who created the product, for what purpose and under what conditions.
- The Product: how the text or product itself communicates ideas or concepts, including the language of the medium.
- The Audience: how the text may be read by diverse audiences and the conditions and contexts of that reception.
- The Student as Creator: understanding the student’s own process and understanding.

Six Key Concepts:

- Media Language: how audiences read and make sense of media texts; formal qualities of construction.
- Technology: qualities of technologies used to communicate stories, ideas or concepts.
- Institutions: understanding of institutions’ roles and constraints.
- Audiences: how media texts and products are received and responded to by individuals and groups, and how meaning is created through interactions between the audience and the text.
- Representations: how media texts are constructions of a reality and how they become reality.
- Contexts: how media texts are produced within a specific context and also received within a specific context; the idea that media texts are products of society and creative fields that exist at the time the texts are made, and that media contains the values and discourses of that time.

As Told to CML: Media Literacy Education in Victoria with Roger Dunscombe
Chair, Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM), Member of Management Board Sticky Institute,
Melbourne, Australia

“We have been fortunate here in Melbourne (Victoria) to be in a cultural center of Australia, where the creative economy is strong and cultural experimentation is constant,” said Roger Dunscombe, (co-Chair of Australian Teachers of Media and Chair of ATOM Victoria). “Australia is a vast country, and Perth is one of the most isolated capital cities in the world, thousands of miles away from other Australian states and separated by a huge desert. Yet interestingly, in both Melbourne and Perth, there were media education pioneers who became passionate about the subject early on, and it is with thanks to these hard-working educators that media education has persisted and grown as a discipline in Australia, and is now part of the National Curriculum. Media is an important education subject in Australia – it is not seen as a ‘soft’ discipline, but it is seen as a key part of 21st century education.

“Media is one of the most important subjects a student can undertake. Media is a subject and a discipline that allows students to critically engage with and examine the world around them. The world of the student is one that is full of media experiences and usages, and it is a world that is mediated by the media and the student’s relationship to it.

“Students are constantly engaging with the media, and much of their world is experienced and mediated via the media. The media and its products surround our students, and our students are active participants in media culture.

“It is through the study of Media as a subject or discipline that we can give our students the tools with which to make sense of, put into perspective, or place within a social and political framework the media culture that they are immersed in. It is also through Media that students can discover and analyze the workings of the wider society and culture that produced these media products, the wider society that these students inhabit. With the rise of new media in particular, students are experiencing on-line cultures that may be very different from their own. It is Media education that enables students to see the media products they consume, engage with or participate in as products, artifacts or entities of a particular culture. That is, that the products contain elements, positions and values of the society that created or produced them. It is Media education that can reveal the constructions that allow students to gain a deep understanding of the role of the media and its products on the creation of a culture or society.

“In media studies, students are using skills and theoretical frameworks from multiple arts disciplines, from language and literary disciplines, from history, philosophy, anthropology and other humanities. Media education takes from and contributes to much of the school curriculum.

“Students are generally very engaged in media. They see it as immediately relevant to their lives and worlds; they see it as preparing them for their continuing life-long engagement with media products and cultures, and they too see the interconnection across their subjects and schooling. The act of producing a media product not only engages students, but also serves to illustrate the learning and connections in a concrete way.

“By placing Media in the Arts, Australia has recognized that Media shares much in common with other arts disciplines and this can allow for both theory and practice to occur. This positioning has also avoided the problem other jurisdictions have found, such as placing Media in

the Humanities, which then de-emphasises the production component and the fact that media productions such as films, videos, photography and print are art forms in themselves. It has also avoided the problem of sitting Media outside all learning areas and trying to incorporate Media as a cross-disciplinary domain where Media is claimed to be everywhere across the curriculum but is in fact no where.

“Media is one of the five disciplines of the Arts. That Media sits within the Arts Learning Area has been a bone of contention at a national level although it has sat comfortably in the Arts in Victoria for almost thirty years. It was a major feat in itself to get our discipline included and legitimated in the Australia National Curriculum in 2008.

“In a way, Media is unique and paradoxically it sits both outside all learning areas but also inside many of them. Media education is a subject or discipline that stands at the intersection of a number of other disciplines. While studying Media, students are using skills and theoretical frameworks from multiple Arts disciplines, from language and literary disciplines, from history, philosophy, anthropology and other humanities. At a most obvious level it is the production element that places Media in the Arts, and in Victoria it has been the production discourse which informed the early years of the subject that saw it initially placed within the Arts domain. The Arts standards have two dimensions that are common across the five Arts disciplines: these are “Creating and making,” and “Exploring and responding,” which equate, in essence, to practical work and theoretical work. In Media, theory informs practice as practice informs theory.

“Media has much in common with other Arts subjects, in that there is a degree of emphasis on a product. Media artworks or productions share the common processes of design, production/creation and critique or evaluation. In theoretical terms an analysis of media texts involves an understanding of the concepts of context and the creative/cultural field that the text/artwork was produced under. There are also differences in approaches between Media and the other Arts disciplines, in Australia these other Art forms are Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Art, but it is these differences between the Arts that make each of the art forms unique.

“By placing Media in the Arts, Australia has recognized that Media shares much in common with other arts disciplines, and this can allow for both theory and practice to occur. In contrast, although there are apparent parallels between Media and a variety of other subjects, usually in the humanities, the approach in English, for example, is markedly different from that of Media in examining a text – the two disciplines may examine the same text, but they do so in very different ways.

- English tends to look at a single text in isolation; Media tends to examine and link a number of texts through studies of genre, etc.
- English usually approaches a text to discover meaning, while Media approaches the text to see how meaning is created;
- English looks at text to examine the theme or issue, the personal effect on the viewer and emphasizes what the text is “about;” Media concentrates on the context in which the text was produced and received; how the text is an example of codes, conventions and institutional practices.
- English tends to focus primarily on the text itself and the personal response of the viewer; Media concentrates on the way the text carries meaning rather than on the meaning itself, and on the discourses, contexts and institutional practices that surround the text.

“Our experience in Australia has demonstrated that an over-emphasis on production leads to a host of problems – it focuses attention on the learning as solely doing and it ignores that there **is** and **should be** other learning going on. Students can learn about how to make a media product by making one, but simply making a media product does not cause a student to reflect on the multiplicity of discourses that surround a media product. In a production, the focus is not on the contexts that surround the production – the social values/discourses, ideologies within and surround the text – and a production emphasis does not give students an understanding of the arguments over the perceived power of the medium, the media and the institutional practices. It does not allow a student to acquire the theoretical tools to view the position of a work within a framework of discourses and constructs, including ideas of Media independence and interdependence.

“Currently, Media is in the Victorian curriculum from the early Primary years and is theoretically available to students at all levels, although in practice it tends to be most concentrated in the last three or four years of Secondary schooling with a lesser peak in the last years of Primary. In the Primary and Secondary years until year 10, it is part of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) which provide a framework with which teachers can create student learning programs and assess students.

“Looked at over the course of a student’s schooling in Media, the allocation of time given to theory and practice inverts. Generally, in Primary schools the emphasis is on the making of a media product – learning through creating, and most of a student’s Media time will be spent creating in diverse areas such as film/video, animation, photography, print, web-based media and radio. By the middle years of secondary school the time allocation is about even, and by senior high school the proportion is two-thirds theory and one-third practical.

“The future is bright for Media education in Victoria and Australia as a whole. At the moment, we are taking deep breaths and recovering from the long hard road that led to the national curriculum. We are focused on advocating for the arts, with the movement from STEM to STEAM, and for teacher training, to insure that implementing the national curricula happens in a quality way.

“We are finding that technology advancements are utterly liberating – we no longer have to teach the technology, the “how to” skills, because all these questions can be answered through YouTube or Google. Even so, technology is still often seen as a solution to all ills, and we have to insist that learning with technology isn’t just about pushing buttons, but about developing critical thinkers. Technology is a tool to complete a task, not to define a task.

“We have a strong community of Media educators who see ourselves as inside the media world and who wish to position our students critically within this world– we want our students to be inside the controversies defending the art not outside with a pitchfork. We see that our work will benefit students for the rest of their lives, and we’re looking forward to a third generation of students whose parents and their parents had the advantage of Media education, and who see that Media education has a key role to play in Australia’s future.”



New North American Chapter of UNESCO’s Global Alliance for Partnerships in Media and Information Literacy (GAPMIL) Formed

The North American Chapter, comprised of media literacy organizations and advocates from throughout Canada and the U.S., was formally launched at a foundational meeting Sept. 20-21 in London, Ontario, at Western University. CML's Tessa Jolls is co-chairing the chapter formation with Michael Hoechsmann, Associate Professor, Lakehead University, Orillia, Canada.

The Global GAPMIL Chapters are chaired by Carolyn Wilson, instructor at the Faculty of Education at Western University.

Read more about GAPMIL here:
<http://www.edu.uwo.ca/news-events/2016/UNESCO.html>

Join the North American GAPMIL Facebook community:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1777307879205261/>



Celebrate Media Literacy Week, Oct. 31 - Nov. 4

Media Literacy Week is quickly approaching. Want to get involved? Contact **NAMLE** today!

CML will stream live from media literacy conferences in Brazil and Rome. Follow Center for Media Literacy on facebook for more information.



Uniting for Development

About Us...

The Consortium for Media Literacy addresses the role of global media through the advocacy, research and design of media literacy education for youth, educators and parents.

The Consortium focuses on K-12 grade youth and their parents and communities. The research efforts include nutrition and health education, body image/sexuality, safety and responsibility in media by consumers and creators of products. The Consortium is building a body of research, interventions and communication that demonstrate scientifically that media literacy is an effective intervention strategy in addressing critical issues for youth.

Resources for Media Literacy

Australian Curriculum Resources

The following link illustrates aspects of the new Australian curriculum and its inclusion of media literacy through the media arts:

<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/the-arts/media-arts/curriculum/f-10?layout=1>

Creative Victoria Media Literacy Resources

Creative Victoria's research programs monitor trends in the cultural sector, evaluate performance, measure outcomes, and investigate in-depth key and emerging issues and initiatives.

Aboriginal State of the Arts Research report

Aug 2015

The Aboriginal State of the Arts Research project focused on finding out what support currently exists for Aboriginal arts, cultural and creative activities across the state.

Arts in Daily Life: Victorian participation in the Arts

Dec 2014

Presents Victorian data from a national survey undertaken for the Australia Council including perceptions on availability and quality of arts and entertainment options.

Audience Atlas Victoria

Apr 2014

Audience Atlas Victoria maps out in detail the profile of the culture market in Victoria.

The Arts Ripple Effect

2014

The arts have the potential to bridge our worlds, harness the wisdom of our different views, engage our imagination to explore new ways of thinking and create experiences that can be shared by all people in our community.

Best Practice Models of Economic and Social Impact in Public Art Museums - 2013

November 2013

This study offers a novel approach to exploring economic and social impact in the arts, by sharing the experiences of four public art museums (Bendigo Art Gallery, Shepparton Art Museum (SAM), Linden Centre for Contemporary Art and Arts Project Australia).

Performing Arts Audiences Research - 2013

October 2013

Feedback from the performing arts sector in early 2013 suggested that ticket sales sector-wide had been in decline since at least November 2012. Creative Victoria needed to better understand what was behind this trend, the expected lifecycle of it, and what ways the trend could be stemmed.

[Economic Impact of the Victorian Arts and Cultural Sector](#)

2013

In 2010-11 the total contribution of the arts and culture sector was:

- \$11.4 billion of annual Victorian GSP and
- 110,000 Victorian full time equivalent jobs.

[Victoria-Asia Cultural Engagement Research Report: On The Ground & In The Know](#)

2013

[Researching Audiences - A Geo-demographic Approach](#)

2011

Takes a geo-demographic approach to help arts organisations understand audiences

[Live Music in Victoria](#)

June 2011

A study of venue-based live music industry in Victoria to determine its contribution to the State's economy, social well-being and cultural vitality

[Arts and Education Partnerships](#)

June 2009 and Nov 2011

Considers the impact of school/arts partnerships on student engagement and implications for future policy, programs and practice

[Picture This: Increasing the cultural participation of people with a disability in Victoria](#)

Sept 2008 and Sept 2009

[The Role of Arts and Culture in Liveability](#)

June 2008

An economic study into how the arts contributes to the liveability of a community

[Economic Impact Assessment of the Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre](#)

October 2013

Strengthening Local Communities: Arts in Community Settings evaluates the outcomes of two community focused grant programs *Arts Development for Communities* and *Arts Residencies*. The report demonstrates that the arts is a powerful and inclusive way to strengthen a community.

[Community Museums Pilot Project report and Evaluation report](#)

July 2013

October 2009

Community Museums Pilot Project evaluates the impact of a pilot Community Museum Officer program based in the Goldfields region.

[Arts and Renewal Case Studies](#)

2012

Creative Victoria commissioned Singing Bowl Media to produce video clips about two arts projects developed in collaboration with the State Government's Neighbourhood and Community Renewal programs, administered through the Department of Human Services. These programs are aimed at narrowing social disadvantage.

[The Role of the Arts in Rebuilding Community](#)

March 2011

As part of the government's contribution to the recovery efforts in communities affected by the devastating bushfires of February 2009, Creative Victoria and Regional Arts Victoria jointly supported two key initiatives - the Arts Recovery Quick Response Fund and the employment of an Arts Recovery Project Officer in the Murrindindi Shire. *The Role of Arts in Rebuilding Community* is an evaluation of these key initiatives.

[Touring Victoria Evaluation](#)

June 2008

Touring Victoria evaluation found that the program helps arts venues to build new audiences and expanded the skills of performers and staff.

[Arts Development Evaluation](#)

August 2007

Arts Development Evaluation is a report that demonstrates how arts development funding produces wide-ranging outcomes for artists and arts organisations.

[Strengthening Local Communities: Arts in Community Settings](#)

December 2006

Strengthening Local Communities: Arts in Community Settings evaluates the outcomes of two community focused grant programs *Arts Development for Communities* and *Arts Residencies*. The report demonstrates that the arts is a powerful and inclusive way to strengthen a community.

Med!aLit Moments

The Media and Relationships

“I love you more than my phone.” That’s what a popular refrigerator magnet says, but what does that say about our relationship with media and our relationships with those we love, and who love us? Having a healthy relationship with our media and technology means that we are thoughtful about the amount of media we consume, the type of media we consume, and the appropriateness of how we are consuming media in all its forms.

Ask students to talk about their relationship to media, and to others.

AHA! Meaningful relationships require time and care.

Grade Level: 4-12

Key Question #5 (Consumers): Why is this message being sent?

Core Concept #4: Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.

Key Question #4 (Producers): Have I communicated my purpose effectively?

Materials: Optional: Show students pictures or videos of people using smart phones in social situations. You can find stock photos online of people using cell phones in a variety of situations (restaurants, travel, schools...).

Activity: Discuss what students believe the sentence “I love you more than my phone” means to them. Does using a phone make them feel more connected – or disconnected – from others? Why or why not? Then, divide the students into pairs, and ask them to find different ways to identify some concrete ways of showing others love, attention and recognition in everyday life. Share these ideas with the group.

The Five Core Concepts and Five Key Questions of media literacy were developed as part of the Center for Media Literacy’s MediaLit Kit™ and Questions/TIPS (Q/TIPS)™ framework. Used with permission, ©2002-2016, Center for Media Literacy, <http://www.medialit.com>