

# Media Education Goes Professional?

## *Media Teachers' Self-Image, Positioning and Educational Focus*

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### **Abstract**

This article explores how media teachers' self-images, positionings and interpretative repertoires inform educational practices in media education. Media education is viewed as a critical element of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. However, we have very little knowledge of the implementers of this critical element, the media teachers. Based on a thematic literature review of historical positions of the Nordic media teacher, and supported by national survey data on the media teachers' backgrounds, motivations and practices (n=383), the subject is explored through focus groups and individual interviews with media teachers at two case schools in upper secondary media education in Norway. The findings suggest that there are different and conflicting understandings about being media teachers, resulting in different educational practices with wider implications for the future implementation of media education.

**Keywords:** media teachers, media education, media literacy, interpretative repertoires, professional cultures, communities of practice

### **Introduction**

Starting off as a marginal school subject, media education is now seen as a critical element of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning (Erstad, 2010; Frau-Meigs & Torrent, 2009). However, we have very little knowledge of the implementers of this critical element: the media teachers. Both in the Nordic countries and internationally, the research literature on media education has mainly been concerned with different understandings of why we need media education and how it can, and should, be taught (Erstad & Amdam, 2013; Martens, 2010). Who the media teachers are, their backgrounds and their own understandings of being teachers and forming media education, have not received much attention (Berger & McDougall, 2010; Hart, 1998). In this article, the historical conceptions of the media teacher within the Nordic media research literature are addressed, exploring whether they function as underlying discourses for how media teachers see themselves and their educational practice within a policy-framework of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.

Many countries have media literacy and media education as part of either basic skills, language or arts subjects or as smaller electives in their curriculum (Carlsson, 2008; Lavender, Tufte, & Lamish, 2003). However, the study programme of Media and Communication in Norway, hereafter called MC, provides a unique case in the

international field of media education in being a policy-answer to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Established in 2000, this upper secondary programme with full-time media teachers, gives access to both vocational diplomas and to further university studies. In the Norwegian school system, 16-19 year olds typically choose between a three-year general education programme qualifying for all higher education studies or a vocational programme with two years in school and two years in apprenticeship qualifying for vocational certification. The MC programme combines these outcomes. It has more media programme classes than academic core curriculum classes like languages, math, social and natural sciences in the first two years (12 core and 23 media classes a week the first year, 9 core and 26 media classes in the second). In the third year, which is a specific media elective for students who want academic qualification instead of going into a two-year apprenticeship in media design or photography, the students have 10 media classes and 25 core curriculum classes a week. By combining traditional academic subjects with media classes, the programme curriculum focuses both on educational goals of 'bildung' and on educating the future work force, thus encompassing many of the areas of tension within media education research (Amdam, 2016; Erstad & Gilje, 2008).

The goal of the article is to explore the MC teachers' self-images and positionings, and the implications for media education practices, through the research questions: *What self-images, positioning and interpretative repertoires do media teachers in the MC programme utilise in describing themselves as teachers, and how do they perceive these understandings as influencing educational practice?* The research questions are examined through focus groups and individual interviews with media teachers at two MC schools, based on a thematic literature review of historical positions of the media teacher, and supported by national survey data on the media teachers' backgrounds, motivations and practices (n=383). First, the analytical framework, methods, and materials are presented. Then the underlying historical conceptions of the teacher in media education research are discussed. Finally, teacher backgrounds, self-images and positioning in the findings are elaborated and discussed both on national and local levels. In conclusion, the implications of the tensions in and between the interpretative repertoires this specific group of teachers use are discussed.

### *Self-Images, positioning and interpretative repertoires*

Self-image is an essential part in shaping workers and professionals (Foucault & Sheridan, 1977). Professional self-image relates to both personal identity and working roles in specific contexts, and is considered to influence professional attitudes, values, positions, and actions (Collard, 2004; Niskala & Hurme, 2014). Professional self-image is also viewed as the sum of subjective and inter-subjective attitudes affected by past professional experience and context. Studies related to media education have underscored the significance of professional self-image for work processes and professional objectives, for instance in education and management (Collard, 2004), and in journalism (Volek & Jiráková, 2007).

Professional self-images are affected by professional cultures, and how the teachers position themselves within these cultures – their communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). Conceptual understandings explored through attitudes and vocabulary can provide substantial information about both self-image and professional culture, defined as a configuration of beliefs, practices, relationships, language and symbols distinctive to a

particular social unit (Evans, 2008). Reflexive positions offer an alternative discursive notion to the concept of role (Davies & Harré, 1990). We make sense of ourselves, or position ourselves, within social interactions through the cultural and personal resources, the interpretative repertoires, that are made available to us.

Interpretative repertoires are relatively coherent ways of talking about objects and events, in terms that are already provided by history (Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001). Interpretative repertoires thus function as discursive tools teachers use to tell themselves and others about their understandings of, for instance, themselves as teachers and educational practice (Wetherell & Potter, 1988). People generally draw upon different repertoires to suit the particular needs at hand. By examining the media teachers' interpretative repertoires both in focus groups and individual interviews, we can both obtain an understanding of the professional cultures they are part of, the positionings and tensions within these cultures, and the underlying historical media teacher positions that are, or are not, thematised within these settings.

## Methods and materials

This article draws on a thematic literature review of the media teacher in Nordic media research and on data from an exploratory research study on the MC study programme. The study focuses specifically on two data sources where the first serves as background for the second: 1) quantitative descriptive data from a national teacher survey, and 2) qualitative case study data from two schools.

The thematic literature review was conducted through a literature search using Nordic library services, ERIC, Google Scholar, JSTOR and NCOM. The review used the search terms 'media teacher', 'teaching media', 'media literacy education' and 'media education', including studies written in English, Swedish, Danish and Norwegian for the period 1975-2015. As academic literature focusing specifically on the Nordic media teacher was found to be scarce, the search was supplemented by literature found to be relevant within the broader field of media literacy research (Erstad & Amdam, 2013). The literature was then analysed thematically, with representative literature of different positions quoted (Joffe, 2011).

The teacher survey was a national online survey conducted in the spring of 2012, sent to 77 schools with the full three-year MC programme. 383 out of 587 teachers responded (65% response rate). The material was analysed using SPSS. The survey material used in this article concentrates on descriptive data of educational and vocational backgrounds and motivations, also comparing data from this survey with a previous teacher survey from 2006 (Turmo & Aamodt, 2007). These data did not provide direct input to the discourse analysis, but rather a broader social framing of local discursive understandings, or what Jimarkon and Todd called a quantitative 'framework to guide the main qualitative analysis' in discourse analysis (2011, p. 45).

The case schools in the qualitative study were selected based on theoretical replication, with similarities in school and programme size and school context, and differences in educational traditions (Yin, 2009). One school mainly has vocational study programmes, while the other has mainly academic programmes. The two case studies included focus groups with 11 media teachers and individual semi-structured interviews with 14 media teachers (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The focus group conversations and

interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically using NVivo 10 (Joffe, 2011). Conceptions on teachers' backgrounds, self-images, positioning and educational practices were then investigated further to see how 'systematic clusters of themes, statements, ideas, and ideologies come into play' (Luke, 2000, p. 456), forming interpretative repertoires. These thematic occurrences and non-occurrences were then compared to the historical discursive positions described below, to obtain an understanding of what is perceived as common or natural and what are conflicting or absent understandings and constructions within the discursive practices (Foucault, 2003).

## **Historical positionings of the teacher in media education**

The media teacher is mostly described indirectly in the research literature, by descriptions of teacher practices. Through the thematic review, three historical teacher positions can be discerned in the Nordic literature: the media-interested innovative pedagogue, the critical media scholar and the production-oriented pedagogue. A fourth positioning of the media teacher was found in the international literature, that of the vocational trainer. These positions are in some cases intertwined, but they resonate with different and, in part, conflicting discourses of research internationally.

### *The innovative pedagogue*

In the Nordic literature, the media teacher is often portrayed as the innovator with a special interest, but not necessarily education, in media subjects (Erstad, 1997). Birgitte Tufte painted a typical picture of this teacher, describing Danish media teachers. They are:

[...] innovators (who) try to take the pupils' interest for the new, aesthetic media cultural forms seriously, [...] often trying to work interdisciplinarily with a form of teaching that is in dialog with the pupils' competences, a form of pedagogy that implies both a critical perspective and an aesthetic dimension (Tufte, 2007, p. 81, my translation).

This position has roots in a discourse of progressive educational perspectives with a strong influence from John Dewey (e.g. Dewey, 1938), mainly interpreted as taking the perspective of the students and exploring ways that learning is made relevant and authentic for learners. It also entails 'learning by doing', emphasising practical work as a methodological approach – learning through media use (Drotner, 1991; Erstad, 2010). This position is also prevalent internationally, where: '[...] ideal images of media teachers portray them as popular culture enthusiasts closely in touch with their students' media cultures and committed to incorporating them into the classroom [...]' (Burn, Buckingham, Parry, & Powell, 2010, p. 192).

### *The critical scholar*

The second position is described as the teacher with a more theoretical, academic media studies background, not necessarily having vocational or practical media experience. In the Nordic literature, this position is linked to media education as subjects that highlight a redefinition of 'bildung' more attuned to the media cultures and shifting roles of young

people in our societies (Oxstrand, 2013; Thavenius, 1995; Vettenranta & Erstad, 2007). The position originates in a discourse of media studies, focused on text analysis, media structures and audience studies (Erstad, 2010). This has internationally been called a representational understanding of media in education, with a focus on learning about the media (Masterman, 1998).

### *The production-oriented pedagogue*

Focusing on professional production as an educational goal of media education, this position has grown out of a progressive educational understanding of project-based learning within an academic school tradition, with the end goal of critical awareness of the media industry. This media teacher position has been part of a pedagogical focus on project-based media learning both in and outside school within a Nordic context since the 1970s. The teacher is often positioned as progressive and innovative, but the practice has been an established way of teaching media education for too long to be called innovative (Amdam, 2016; Drotner, 1991; Erstad, 2010; Tufte, 1998).

### *The vocational trainer*

The conception of the vocational media teacher is not described much in the Nordic literature, but has been more prevalent for instance in British and Australian media education research (Buckingham, 2010; Quin, 2003). The teacher is positioned as a skills-oriented trainer or mentor, teaching the ways of the media industry. Originating in many of the same ideas as those of the innovative pedagogue, the goal of educational practice for these teachers is described as teaching the students how to make media productions. The focus is on skills and emancipation for the students: ‘to use vocational media courses as a way of turning their expertise with media and popular culture into something that can be accredited and, hence, lead to employment’ (Buckingham, 2010, p. 296).

## **Balancing pedagogy, theory and practice**

The teacher positions can thus be seen as overlapping, but also conflicting. All the positions harbour important media education values, focusing on the students’ interests and motivation in teaching through media, focusing on analytical and critical perspectives in teaching about the media, and focusing on emancipation through teaching to do media productions. However, there is an underlying duality between theoretical and practical aspects in the literature, often presented as an axis of conflict. The innovative pedagogue-position can be criticised for having too little focus on media subject knowledge, both in theoretical and practical terms (Erstad, 1997). The critical scholar-position can be criticised for having too little focus on practical aspects of media studies (Masterman, 1998). Moreover, the production focus of both the production-oriented pedagogue and the vocational trainer-position can be criticised for forgetting theoretical aspects (Buckingham, 2010). Thus, the question becomes: how are these historical teacher positions and conflicts reflected in current media teachers’ professional self-images, positioning and perceptions of educational practices?

## National indicators on media teacher positions

The research on the MC programme has so far focused on the students and the educational practices (Gilje, 2011; Schofield & Kupiainen, 2015). With no specific MC teacher education available and a broad curriculum, schools initially formed the study programme quite differently (Erstad & Gilje, 2008). This makes the national survey material on media teachers' backgrounds and motivations for being teachers interesting as a backdrop for discussing how the historical positionings interact with local positions, practices and professional cultures. Whereas the thematic review has a perspective emphasising the expected backgrounds and motivations of media teachers, the national survey data emphasises the actual backgrounds and motivations of the teachers. Together these perspectives frame the interpretation of the findings in the case studies.

In 2006, Turmo and Aamodt (2007) conducted a national survey on teacher backgrounds in upper secondary school in Norway. 127 MC teachers took part in this survey (n=4332). Based on comparison with the other study programmes, Turmo and Aamodt found that the group of MC teachers had the lowest percentage of those with formal pedagogical training (72 per cent). At the same time, the MC teachers had a different subject specific profile compared to other vocational programmes. Only 19 per cent of the teachers had a trade certificate, master's certificate or technical college. In the other Norwegian vocational programmes the norm was 60-80 per cent (Turmo & Aamodt, 2007, p. 54). 27 per cent of the MC teachers had a master's degree, which was low compared to general education programmes, but unusually high for a vocational programme, where the average was between 3 and 7 per cent (Turmo & Aamodt, 2007, p. 24)(see Table 1). Thus, the pedagogically motivated teacher in the thematic review was not overly evident in the survey, neither did the vocational trainer position seem to dominate.

In the 2012 survey, using the same question batteries with 383 MC teachers, there were however some significant changes (Table 1). Keeping the historical teacher conceptions in mind, certain tendencies and questions became evident.

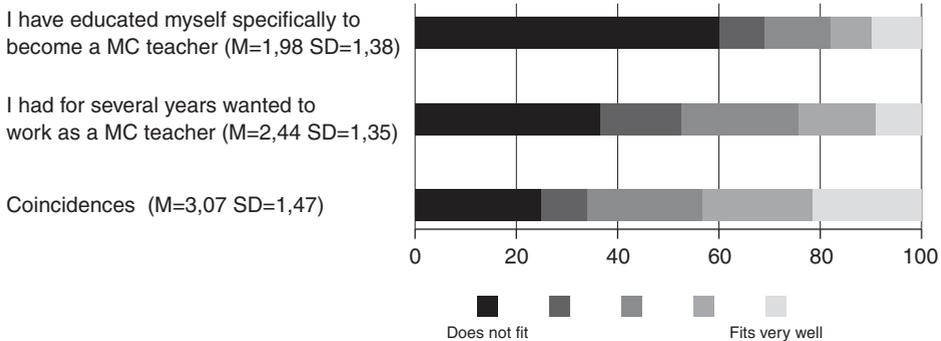
**Table 1.** Education for Program Media Teachers (per cent)

	2006	2012
Trade certificate / master certificate	14	13
Technical college / tertiary vocational college	5	2
University or university college / in media subjects	71 / 35	71 / 47
University or Univ.college, master's degree / in media subjects	27 / 9	27 / 20
2-4 years integrated teacher education	16	17
0,5-1 year pedagogicval certification	56	68
Number of respondents	127	383

Source for 2006: Turmo & Aamodt (2007).

First, there was an overall increase in teachers with pedagogical training. However, this increase can be due to pedagogical training being required to get tenure. A stable number came from an integrated teacher education background with some media classes, the background described as typical for the innovative pedagogue in the review (Table 1). Regarding motivations for becoming MC teachers, most of the teachers claimed they

did not plan or aspire to become teachers. Close to 70 per cent disagreed with having educated themselves with the intent of becoming MC teachers. Half of them also disagreed with having wanted to become a MC teacher, as much as 44 per cent responding it was a coincidence (Figure 1). Thus, the descriptive quantitative data did not indicate a widespread pedagogical motivation for becoming MC teachers.



**Figure 1.** Motivations for Becoming a Media Teacher (per cent)

*Question:* How well do the following factors fit with why you became a MC teacher?

Still, the media teachers in the survey reported an educational practice that is rather innovative. As much as 71 per cent of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that: *'The MC teaching at my school is mainly based on interdisciplinary production projects across the media subjects'*. 65 per cent of the teachers also reported that the curriculum borders between media subjects are erased in their timetables. What motivates this educational practice? Is it based on the historical positions of how to become a media teacher, or do other factors stand out in the teachers' interpretative repertoires?

Secondly, the survey indicated that there may be an increase in teachers positioning themselves as media scholars. There was a significant increase in teachers with media education from university or university college, both on bachelor's and master's levels, up to 47 per cent for bachelor's and to 20 per cent on master's level (Table 1). This provides a picture of the MC teaching staffs developing towards more media-theory focused backgrounds, but still half of the teachers did not have this background.

Third, the percentage of teachers with trade certificate or technical college backgrounds was further down by 3 per cent in 2012 (Table 1). However, the teachers had far more practical media experience than teacher experience. In the 2012 study, as much as 95 per cent reported having worked practically with media productions before becoming MC teachers, and 65 per cent responded that they had three or more years of media-related vocational practice before becoming teachers. In contrast, only 32 per cent reported that they had three or more years of teacher experience before becoming MC teachers. Does this imply that the common interdisciplinary production practices have vocational rather than pedagogical motivations in many collegiums?

Fourth, journalism stood out as the most common professional background, both when it comes to education (23 per cent) and vocational experience (32 per cent). The other groups for vocational experience were photographers (23 per cent), graphic designers (19 per cent) and PR/communications (16 per cent). The prominence of journalistic backgrounds is rather interesting since the vocational choices the students can make in

the programme are to be educated as photographers or media designers. Will dominance of a journalistic background affect educational practices locally?

These tendencies and questions lead us back to the initial research questions. *What self-images, positioning and interpretative repertoires do media teachers in the MC program utilise in describing themselves as teachers, and how do they perceive these understandings as influencing educational practice?*

### **Local professional self-images, positions and reflections on practice**

One of the case schools, hereafter called ‘the academic school’, is a school with a long academic tradition, a typical context for the previously described pedagogical innovators (Tufté, 2007) and the critical media scholars (Erstad, 2010). The other case school, hereafter called ‘the vocational school’, has a long vocational tradition and broad range of vocational programmes. This is a more typical context for the vocational trainers (Buckingham, 2010).

#### *The academic school – from critical private practice to community of pedagogues*

The collegium in the academic school consists of six teachers that all have higher education backgrounds, mainly 2-4 years of media professions training in journalism, PR and media production. Two had a master’s degree in media studies. Compared to the national survey, the teachers had more media education and shorter professional full-time experience from the media industry. Still, most had worked part time in media production over several years. They all had pedagogical training, some took the qualification after becoming teachers in the MC programme, and several claimed they became media teachers as a coincidence. Based on these more academic backgrounds, one could assume that most of them would adhere to a critical media scholar position.

However, when discussing themselves as teachers in the focus group, the interpretative repertoire they shared across age, gender and educational background adhered more to the innovative pedagogue position than to the critical scholar. The teachers described a shared self-image of the learning, collaborative and reflexive teacher. Mariel (in her 20s) provided a typical description:

We are not afraid of learning as teachers as well [...] we have a teacher role where we can dare to come into the classroom and start projects where we don’t know everything ourselves [...] we dare to learn together with them (the students).

In the focus group, the teachers all supported this position of being a companion in learning, open to failing, always reflecting and developing with the students. This was also evident in how they positioned themselves as different from other teachers in upper secondary school. As Herman (50s) stated:

We are not the authoritarian ones that stand there pointing to the curricular goals; you have to know this and here is the textbook, right. We are partners, fellow students, just as much as we are teachers in the project at hand.

In the individual interviews, the shared self-image was confirmed, but most of the teachers described the self-image as being a negotiated position, gradually developed as part of the specific MC teacher collegium. Several of the teachers described starting their MC teacher careers with what they saw as a typical teacher position in upper secondary schools, without any specific training to be media teachers, as described by William (30s):

When I came here in the spring of 2003 I was just thrown into it, and I started with ferocious presentations and talked and talked and talked. As time has passed I do much less of that and much (more) learning by doing, really just communicating alongside and focusing much more on just the motivation and the challenge, really.

Similarly, Emma (40s) described how the educational practice during the first years was private practice where one teacher had all media subjects in one class: 'If we had about design [...] I had to read up on that, right. We did not separate; you didn't do what you were best at (across classes)'. Gradually the collegium developed a shared understanding that is often described by the teachers using the Dewey term 'learning by doing', like William above, and also based on using and sharing their specialised media competences across classes and projects, as emphasised by Emma.

Several linked the use of specialist competence across projects to a vocational motivation, to how different media professions cooperate in the media industry. Thomas (30s) stated it this way in the focus group: 'what is guiding for the teacher role, I think is this closeness to the vocational field that you need to have [...] You have a closeness to the actual social mission (of the programme)'. Later he connected this vocational motivation to how the local educational practice has evolved, which the other teachers confirmed:

The teachers have changed due to how we are organised and the expertise, that you get to use your expertise, because this gives ambition and motivation to learn more (several teachers nodded and confirmed), to develop, and this rubs off, both in the collegium and also, of course, on the students.

Several used this understanding of closeness to the vocational field to motivate both teacher self-image and educational practice. The educational practice had a quite common organisation compared to the survey findings, with all media subjects merged into whole workdays and production projects lasting 2-6 weeks as the main methodological approach, but with two classes reserved for media theory every week.

In parallel with developing what they saw as a vocational educational practice, the teachers described a gradual development of pedagogical awareness. This awareness was attributed to different factors individually, such as increased teacher experience, pedagogical training, visiting and teaching at other schools and a new curriculum in 2006 that introduced a new project subject that challenged them in how to teach. However, what was perceived to be the strongest factor in the interpretative repertoire was being a stable collegium over time with freedom to form their position and educational practice. They all claimed their part in developing the new, shared teacher position, showing ownership of a shared professional culture, but this development did not come without conflict. Mariel (20s) described this:

We had much larger conflicts before, right, technique versus contents, communication versus production [...]. As we have started working towards this common goal of having competent, good students, and that teacher role has taken more hold, and that MC family culture has taken over more and more, we do not have these clashing positions anymore. We can of course have nuances of disagreement related to how important this and that is, but we find good solutions.

These tensions, recognisable from the historical discourses, were also somewhat evident in the individual interviews, with the more theoretical scholar teachers emphasising that they would like to have more theoretically oriented classes and the more vocationally-oriented teachers emphasising how for instance textbooks introduce theoretical concepts unknown in the media industry. However, these tensions were explicit and part of the shared understanding of how to develop practice through learning from each other.

Several of the teachers connected the teacher self-image and negotiated position to a perceived professional culture that only applies to the MC teacher collegium in the school. This was particularly evident in the focus group when the teachers were asked what they perceived the rest of the teachers in the school thought of them:

Emma (40s): We are sort of a satellite far away

Marjel (20s): A terror cell (several teachers laughed)

This positioning as something different from or even in opposition to the local school culture was evident both in the focus group and the individual interviews. The described teacher self-image thus left an impression of a teacher collegium that positions themselves as quite close to the historical position of the innovative pedagogue. Still, this position was not just motivated in a pedagogical discourse, but also had vocational and critical theory motivations, in developing practices that are close to how projects are run in the media industry, but at the same time focusing on theory and reflection around these practices. In contrast to the vocational school, the teachers initiated the projects in the academic school; they were not initiated by cooperation with the media industry. The outer frames and progression of the projects were also stable from year to year, and there was an explicit awareness of both theoretical and analytical perspectives when discussing the development of practice. The teachers thus seemed to operate more in line with the position of the production-oriented pedagogue than as innovators. The professional culture seemed to form a stable community of practice with a joint enterprise and a shared repertoire, negotiating meaning through productive tensions in forming practice (Wenger, 1998).

### *Vocational school – from media professionals to vocational mentors*

In the vocational school, eight teachers were interviewed. These teachers had more professional experience than media education, more in line with the survey findings. About half had specific higher media education of 2-3 years. Journalism dominated as the educational and professional background like in the survey, but teachers also had media studies, animation and photography backgrounds, varying from no higher education to a master's degree. Almost all had more than 10 years of experience from different media professions. About half of the teachers had pedagogical training; two were taking the training when interviewed. Here, most claimed they became teachers by coincidence.

In the educational practice, the media subjects were also merged in 2-6 week projects. Contrary to the academic school, there were no fixed weekly media theory classes, and projects were often based on entrepreneurship and cooperation with the local media industry, form and contents of projects varying from year to year.

When asked if they considered themselves as teachers or media professionals in the focus group, the teachers were somewhat inconclusive. Following up on this in the individual interviews, three different interpretative repertoires became evident in the teacher collegium: the pedagogic media scholar, the media professional and the vocational mentor.

The repertoire of the pedagogic media scholar shared the self-image and positioning of the teacher collegium in the academic school. The teachers described the development of becoming a teacher with a broad understanding of practice and focus on 'bildung', without any sort of specific media teacher training, as well as through conflicts. Catherine (30s) represented this position:

I wasn't a teacher when I started. I was a media scholar, with a very keen interest in developing things [...] but I didn't quite know what school was. [...] There was kind of a clash in understanding the (media) subject, because the others thought they knew best what media subjects are about. And then I had kind of a broader understanding, I would say. (To them) journalism was the most important, while I said that media design and media history had to be emphasised too.

As in the academic school, pedagogical awareness and room to develop practice was seen as vital for the development of media education. However, whereas the collegium in the academic school seemed to have found a productive way to handle the tensions in the media subjects, this pedagogically motivated position was still viewed as somewhat conflicting with the other two interpretative repertoires in the vocational school.

The second repertoire, of the media professional, was typically used by the teachers who had been teachers for the shortest amount of time and who had a strong professional self-image linked to the media industry. As the photographer John (30s) stated it: 'No, I'm not a teacher. It's not a teacher role either, that I teach and learn them as much as possible. Make them as ready as possible for what will happen after upper secondary'. Similarly, Maya (50s) stated that:

I can't say that I feel like a teacher. [...] I'm in the journalist union still, I identify so strongly with them that I'll stay there until I'm kicked out.

*- When you are here, are you then a teacher or a journalist? How do you perform your vocational role here?*

Well, I sort of lean on this being a practical, subject-specific programme. So one can allow that I bring in the journalistic world. I probably do. And then I think we don't have to stand there and preach, one-way communication.

Becoming teachers comes with a self-image and position that these media professionals did not have or want. They seemed to connect being a teacher mostly to pedagogical motivations, but also to a specific understanding of teaching, as Maya explained: 'one way communication'. These teachers had a self-image as conveyors of a media profession, working in a practical, vocational way, much in line with the historical position of the vocational trainer. They typically oriented educational practice towards industry

standards, of what can be expected of a professional media product and of a professional work process, to make the students ready, as John said: ‘for what will happen after secondary school’.

However, in the interviews, several of the teachers with a long vocational background saw this repertoire as typical for when they started teaching. Ann (50s) explained how this affected her teaching in the first years: ‘When I came from the vocational field, I was like: No, this isn’t good enough, right. It has to be like this! And very strict that if you did not deliver on time I almost failed them (laughs)’. Gradually, the more experienced teachers had developed a new repertoire, that of the vocational mentor. The majority of the teachers shared this third repertoire. Typical for this repertoire was a self-image of using their own experiences from the media industry as a guide for teaching. The vocational experience was seen as the reason why they were recruited as teachers, and decisive for being good teachers, as phrased by Christian (50s): ‘If you have not been a professional, right, you lack some of the basics decisive to understanding what is important’.

This position came with pedagogical awareness and vocabulary, for instance awareness of varying teaching dependent on subject area and project phase, and focusing on continuous assessment, as Frank (40s) expressed it:

[...] in most contexts, you become more of a mentor than a lecturer. It of course varies a little depending on the kind of project you have and what phase you are in, in the project. [...] It is quite natural to do introductions and a few simple, basic, more theoretical introductions [...] but otherwise you are much more of a mentor. That is, give feedback and response. Feedback, continuous assessment and process response – that’s what recurs all the time, really.

However, the mentor conception also allowed for other positions when working with the students, as Christian (50s) stated: ‘Sometimes we are employers and colleagues too, right. You are somewhat closer in the processes with the students [...] you have a different kind of link to the rest of society than a teacher profession has. [...] We are part of a (vocational) context together with them’. Again, the tensions between what is perceived as a typical teacher position in upper secondary and the media teachers’ position is emphasised. Similarly, in assessing media projects and products, most of the teachers with this repertoire seemed to have a tacit assessment practice based on vocational experience. The main response to how they evaluated projects was that they know the quality of the media product based on their former profession. Martin (30s) exemplified this: ‘For instance for me, as a journalist, I know what a good case is and what a bad case is, to put it that way. Or what could be better. So I give feedback based on what is common in the industry’.

Thus, even though the teachers in this repertoire saw themselves as teachers more than media professionals, pedagogical motivations were seldom explicit in how they described their educational practice. The teacher collegium’s educational practice was rather dominated by what Catherine (30s) described as editorial thinking:

The organisation of the media programme has all the time been focused on flexibility and projects, [...] as opposed to normal class scheduling. [...] However, maybe one of the main arguments for this flexibility, in the collegium, has been kind of editorial thinking, what you have from newspapers and TV and so on.

That there you do not have anything rigid, that you should run things from editorial meeting to editorial meeting [...]The media programme is sort of run with an argument and a logic from editorial professions.

This motivation for educational practice, based on the dominance of teachers with journalistic backgrounds in the collegium, caused the main tensions in the professional culture. The teachers largely agreed on the practice of working flexibly and with projects, but not on the motivation for this practice, based on their different interpretative repertoires and teacher self-images. Catherine, for instance, went on to criticise the lack of theoretical focus in the perceived editorial practice: ‘I think we should have designated some parts to theory, that we had permanent classes that did not disappear in the project organisation’. Again, she was in line with the more theoretically oriented collegium in the academic school.

As opposed to the academic school, the teachers in the vocational school did not seem to share a community of practice with a joint enterprise (Wenger, 1998). Instead, the interpretative repertoire of the vocational mentor, close to the historical position of the vocational trainer, seemed to dominate. The educational practice was more innovative than in the academic school in opening up for flexibility and variation in project organisation, using actual media industry projects as part of the educational practice. This practice had both pedagogical and vocational motivations, also drawing on the historical position of the innovative pedagogue. However, in performing what was locally called an editorial educational practice, there was a danger that the critical dimension of media theory may be lost, as pointed out both by teachers locally and in the research literature (Buckingham, 2010).

### **Concluding discussion: professionalising media education**

By examining the media teachers’ self-images, positionings and interpretative repertoires, we gained an understanding of the local professional cultures they are part of, the positionings and tensions within these cultures, and how professional backgrounds and the underlying historical media teacher positions are, or are not, thematised within these settings. Summing up the findings, the tensions found in and between the historical positions in the thematic review were also evident in current media teachers’ repertoires. The teachers’ professional backgrounds and current professional cultures played into how these tensions affected educational practice. In the academic school, the professional culture has developed to a point where the shared culture triumphs the professional backgrounds of the teachers, resulting in a shared interpretative repertoire where tensions are addressed openly and reflexively, balancing theory, practice and pedagogy. In the vocational school, however, professional backgrounds seemed to triumph a shared professional culture. The teachers had three different interpretative repertoires on teacher self-image and educational practice, two of which are mainly guided by professional experience. The lack of a shared repertoire resulted in tensions and disagreements on educational practice.

The MC schools share the same 21<sup>st</sup> century policy framework and curriculum, but not a common interpretative repertoire across schools on how to be media teachers and how to form educational practices. This suggests that without a focus on developing the teachers’ professional understandings, local professional cultures and professional back-

grounds seem more determining of how educational practice is formed than policy and curriculum. This has not been a main concern in media education research. As pointed out initially and in the thematic review, media teachers' professional understandings and development are seldom addressed explicitly, but rather implied through focus on teacher and student practices.

The implications of these findings, and the wider challenge for media education in becoming a critical element of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, is the need to develop shared or at least explicit understandings of what is expected of the media teachers, of their professional self-image, positions and motivations for practice. The result of policy-change without this focus is that educational practice does not necessarily support the intended goals of 21<sup>st</sup> century media learning.

The MC programme is a typical example of how policy-focus is not enough. The programme was formed as a policy-construction, a hybrid education programme with both vocational and academic elements and a broad curriculum to cater the educational needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Erstad & Gilje, 2008). However, the differences and tensions in and between teacher repertoires and educational focus at different schools have left the MC programme open to criticism, resulting in new policy-changes. Beginning autumn of 2016, the programme will be re-established as an academic programme, without vocational certifications and with far fewer media classes. The question is whether this policy-change will include a focus on professional development for the media teachers, as the same teachers as before the policy-change will form the educational practice.

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