

學術對談

## 數字資本主義時代的媒介教育

對談人：大衛·帕金翰、龔偉亮、呂安娜



大衛·帕金翰教授  
(Prof. David Buckingham)

「媒介教育不是一種預防措施，也不是一種行為矯正手段。它的目的在於培養批判性的理解，包括理解社交媒體業務的運作方式，以及鼓勵人們檢視和反思自己對媒體的使用。我們每個人都必須學會做出自己的選擇，而為了做到這一點，我們需要得到適當的知識和教育。」

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Dialogue

## Media Education in the Age of Digital Capitalism

Discussants: David BUCKINGHAM, Weiliang GONG, Anna LYU

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### Abstract

This dialogue features Prof. David Buckingham, a leading internationally recognized expert on children's and young people's interactions with electronic media and on media literacy education. In this dialogue, Prof. Buckingham provides a theoretical and historical analysis of the cutting-edge theme of "media education in the age of digital capitalism." He emphasizes that in today's technologically driven business environment, media education is not just a preventative measure or a means of behavior modification but rather seeks to develop a critical understanding of the media. In response to the overemphasis on media studies and media education research, he stresses the need to understand media in a broader cultural, political, and economic context. Media education in the age of digital capitalism should make a difference, but ultimately, the issues at stake are not only about media or education. Regarding

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David BUCKINGHAM (Emeritus Professor). Loughborough University; Visiting Professor of Kings College London; Emeritus Fellow of Leverhulme Trust; Founder and Director of the Centre for the Study of Children, Youth and Media, Institute of Education, London University. Research interests: media education, media literacy, children's media, youth culture, media users and audiences.

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concerns about “fake news,” he points out the importance of moving beyond the simplistic dichotomy between “true” and “fake” and focusing on the use and learning of media analysis methods. He also looks forward to how China will develop its own unique path in media education.

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## 大衛·帕金翰教授簡介

大衛·帕金翰(David Buckingham)是英國拉夫堡大學(Loughborough University)名譽教授、倫敦國王學院(King's College London)客座教授、利弗休姆基金會(Leverhulme Trust)榮譽研究員、倫敦大學教育學院兒童、青年和媒體研究中心(Centre for the Study of Children, Youth and Media, Institute of Education, London University)創始主任，媒介素養教育方面國際公認的頂尖專家。他受聘於聯合國教科文組織、聯合國兒童基金會、歐盟、英國政府通信管理局等國際機構和政府組織，擔任專家顧問。帕金翰教授是30本書的作者、合著者或編輯，以及220多篇文章和書籍章節的作者，其作品被翻譯成15種語言，主要著作包括：《兒童談電視》(*Children Talking Television: The Making of Television Literacy*) (1993)、《童年之死：在電子媒體時代成長的兒童》(*After the Death of Childhood: Growing Up in the Age of Electronic Media*) (2000)、《媒介教育：素養、知識與當代文化》(*Media Education: Literacy, Learning and Contemporary Culture*) (2003)、《超越技術：數位文化時代的兒童學習》(*Beyond Technology: Children's Learning in the Age of Digital Culture*) (2007)、《物質兒童：在消費文化中成長》(*The Material Child: Growing Up in Consumer Culture*) (2011)和《媒介教育宣言》(*The Media Education Manifesto*) (2019)等。他曾在英國、美國、挪威、澳大利亞、意大利、香港和南非的多所大學擔任客座教授，並在全世界40多個國家授課和發表演講，是英國社會科學院(Academy of Social Sciences)提名院士、英國國家學術院(British Academy)當選院士。

DB：大衛·帕金翰

WG：龔偉亮

AL：呂安娜

**WG：**作為具有代表性的當代媒介教育學者，您能否首先從自身學術脈絡，簡單分享一下您對於「數字資本主義時代的媒介教育」的思考

**產生的過程？它與您提出的廣為人知的「超越保護主義」(moving beyond protectionism) 媒介教育理念之間有何關聯？**

**DB：**在許多方面，我目前的工作都在試圖強調連續性。我想說明的是，在我們的媒體格局似乎已然發生很大變化的今天，媒介教育的基本概念模式如何以及為何依然具有相關性。在20世紀70年代和80年代，英國的媒介教育工作者發展出一個「關鍵概念」(key concepts) 框架，它至今仍是學校媒介教育實踐的基礎。這個框架包含的四個概念——媒介語言、再現、生產和受眾——被用來選擇和組織課程內容，並指導課堂活動。它們為批判性的媒介分析和實際的媒體製作提供資訊，而媒介教育通常正包含這些層面。這個框架為「批判性思維」提供了一個明確的定義，使我們超越了此前盛行的保護主義或防禦性做法——儘管這種保護主義的媒介教育方式在包括美國在內的世界許多國家仍然具有影響力。須知我們的目的不是要把孩子們從某些人認為有害的媒體影響中拯救出來，而是要讓他們能夠獨立地進行批判性思考，做出自己的知情選擇。

隨著數位媒體的出現，特別是所謂「參與式」(participatory) 媒體的興起，一些人認為這種批判性思維已經過時、沒有必要。他們認為，孩子們只要通過使用和創建媒介的經驗，就能自動學會理解媒介。而我認為，創造力和參與性固然重要，但不能想當然地以為媒介消費者就必然能理解更廣泛的圖景：他們還需要研習諸如媒體是如何生產和傳播、怎樣再現世界，以及媒體在社會、政治和文化生活中的角色等一系列問題。在我看來，這些電視報紙媒體時代的「舊」問題在網路社交媒體時代同等重要。在我所寫的《媒介教育宣言》(*The Media Education Manifesto*) 中，我試圖展示如何將既有的批判性概念應用於這些新現象。我不認為這是「保護主義」，但同樣，我也不覺得僅僅為這些「參與性」的可能性而感到歡欣鼓舞是足夠的。

**WG：**您認為我們應當警惕那種基於技術決定論 (technological determinism) 的烏托邦觀點，而實際上正如您留意到的，早在幾

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十年前，我們對於電視、錄像或電影的出現亦作出過類似的論點。而且可以想見，這種對於技術作為改變社會和個人的神奇力量的樂觀期待，還將很可能延伸到社會對大數據、人工智慧和區塊鏈的認知當中。技術的確具有民主的潛能，亦可能會帶來一種更具創造力的教育形式，但正如加拿大傳播政治經濟學者達拉斯·斯邁思(Dallas Smythe)在當年造訪中國後寫下的〈自行車之後是甚麼？〉(*After Bicycles, What?*)中對於技術中立性的質疑一樣，也正如美國學者喬迪·迪恩(Jodi Dean)批評互聯網媒體的繁榮帶來的恰恰是民主的使用價值的耗盡，數字技術在教育中的使用是否也出現了與教育的目的南轅北轍的問題？

DB：這些技術的發展史一直存在著一種深刻的矛盾性。互聯網畢竟誕生於「為軍事目的而開發的技術」與「反主流文化的理想主義夢想」之間的相遇。當Web 2.0到來時，狂熱者認為它將帶來一個民主參與、知識與創造力的「新黃金時代」。雖然其中一些好處已經兌現，但也有許多並沒有實現，更何況新的不平等和其他問題也層出不窮。社交媒體已成為謊言和錯誤資訊的重要來源，它們允許政府和商業公司進行新形式的監視——可以說，它們加劇了不平等，並導致民主的衰落。

在教育中我們可以看到類似的矛盾性。與早期技術出現時的情形一樣，早期的宣導者預言了一種「民主的教育烏托邦」：教師和學生的能力將得到增強，他們會獲得大量的資訊，並且有各種各樣的機會可以進行創造性的自我表達。然而，實際上，教育技術正更常被當成一種監視方式，以及商業公司進入新市場的手段。在許多西方國家，技術已經成為公共教育私有化的主要手段。這同樣顯示了技術的巨大的正面潛力，以及其共存的重大風險。我在學校裏看到了一些非常有創意和挑戰性的技術使用方式，它們確實超越了成規慣例的局限性；但在大多數情況下，在我看來，它的使用是非常受限和功能性的。

歸根結底，我認為技術並不必然和注定與你所說的「教育目的」相對立。無論技術如何使用以及為甚麼使用，它都無法施加

影響——而正是這些關於使用技術的教育目的的問題，才真正需要得到慎重嚴格的討論。

**WG :**您在〈反思數位素養：數字資本主義時代的媒介教育〉(*Rethinking Digital Literacy: Media Education in the Age of Digital Capitalism*)一文中，直言「技術解放的夢想正在變成一場噩夢」，並舉了許多科技公司的高管不允許自己的孩子使用某些電子設備的例子。事實上，據我們所知，賈伯斯(Steve Jobs)當年就對記者說過，他的孩子從沒用過iPad。其他許多科技巨頭對子女使用電子設備也設定了類似的嚴格限制措施，其原因正如《連線》(*Wired*)雜誌的前主編克里斯·安德森(Chris Anderson)所說：「因為我們最先見證了技術的危險性」。另一個例子是，此刻在美國矽谷的行政總裁和風險投資人間流行的「戒斷多巴胺」(dopamine detox)運動影響力正日益擴大，他們主要在一定期限內自我禁止使用高科技產品。我們很難說這些做法是「非理性」的「道德恐慌」或「媒體恐慌」，因為事實是幾乎所有現今的高科技產品和社交媒體的設計，都是為了激發下一刻的即時滿足感，而青少年尤其容易受到影響。當深諳媒體技術運作的技術精英和商業精英都別無他法，只能採取禁止子女使用以及自我戒斷的方式來擺脫「噩夢」，媒介素養教育究竟在多大程度上會是有用的？這種「科技鞭答」(tech-lash)是否也是一條抽打媒體教育研究者的鞭子？

**DB :**好吧，這些科技公司的高管們自己本身應該要對這些問題負上重責，但我不認為他們應該成為我們其他人的榜樣！毋庸置疑，這些產品和服務就是設計來讓我們不停點擊和滑的：這就是它們基本商業運作模式。我們所有的人——無論是成年人還是兒童——都需要瞭解這種模式是如何運作的，並且需要就如何使用這些東西(以及多常使用)做出明智的選擇。我還認為，父母有責任干預孩子對數字媒體的使用，儘管對於如何干預我們必須非常謹慎。當父母自己都無法控制自身的媒體使用時，由他們去禁止或限制孩子使用媒體(正如一些人所建議的那樣)，不可能非常有效。如果我們把「螢幕時間」變成父母和孩子之間的另一個戰



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場，那我們就誤入歧途了。父母需要與孩子就如何使用這些媒體進行建設性的對話——我會說這在很大程度上是一個教育過程。

不過，我對「噩夢」的看法是，關於這些問題的大部分公眾辯論都是非常誇張和戲劇化；而目前，大部分辯論似乎忽略了這些媒體的許多好處，以及我們如此頻繁使用它們的原因。當涉及到兒童時，我們念念不忘的是有關網路安全的一些非常狹隘的問題，而往往忽略了事關重大的、更廣泛的問題。我不太相信關於「成癮」的心理學觀點，而且我不認為腦科學(或類似「戒斷多巴胺」這樣的想法)會很大幫助我們理解一個主要是社會、經濟和政治現象的問題。我也不認為媒介教育的目的是鼓勵兒童減少他們的屏幕時間，或阻止他們使用特定的媒介：媒介教育不是一種預防措施，也不是一種行為矯正手段。它的目的在於培養批判性的理解，包括理解社交媒體業務的運作方式，以及鼓勵人們檢視和反思自己對媒體的使用。我們每個人都必須學會做出自己的選擇，而為了做到這一點，我們需要得到適當的知識和教育。

**WG：**您在文章中提到對傳播資本主義、平臺資本主義、監控資本主義等的批判思想，令人印象深刻，這些理論代表對資本主義的不同層面的深刻批判。在媒體教育領域，如何看待少數諸如FAANG(臉書、蘋果、亞馬遜、網飛、谷歌)之類的龐大公司主導媒體和技術領域這一事實及其影響？

**DB：**這些公司的主導地位是一個亟待解決的重大社會和政治問題。我認為它與氣候變化一樣，是我們時代最緊迫的全球挑戰。如果我們的主要傳播管道被這麼少的幾個有著巨額盈利的公司所掌控，這一點都不健康(或者說不民主)。似乎歐洲乃至美國的決策者都遲遲沒有意識到這一點，儘管世界各地的政客也知道他們已經越來越依賴這些技術。

在很多情況下，政府將培養「媒介素養」作為解決這個問題的方法之一。儘管在實踐中，媒介素養的定義往往很不明確。他們似乎不能(或不想)解決在這種情況下出現的問題，所以他們試圖把責任推回給公民個人，好像應該由我們自己來學習如何應對。



## 數字資本主義時代的媒介教育

政府或媒體監管機構通常所定義的「媒介素養」，往往與我們所需要的持續、系統的媒介教育計劃相去甚遠。何況即使是媒介教育本身也是不夠的。教育應當幫助我們分析和理解正在發生的事情，並助力我們在媒介環境中發揮更積極的作用。但套用一位著名的政治思想家的話來說，教育者只是想要瞭解世界，關鍵還在於改變世界。正如我說過的，媒介教育不僅僅是學習如何應對這個更加複雜的商業化媒體世界的挑戰，它還涉及想像這個世界可以如何變得不同，並且要求作出改變。

**WG :**您在2019年出版的著作《媒介教育宣言》以及〈反思數位素養：數字資本主義時代的媒介教育〉等文章中，旗幟鮮明地跳出學科的內部建制，把一種更為寬廣的視野和更具有批判性的思考方式帶入媒介素養教育領域，其核心是把媒介教育所面臨的問題視為「媒體環境以及更廣泛的社會、經濟和政治領域正在發生的更大變化的癥狀」，從而對「只看癥狀而不看原因，孤立地看待問題」會「不可避免地會產生非常零散的解決方案」的媒介教育理念與實踐的時代性痼疾產生觸動。這是一種打破媒介素養中心主義的認知路徑，體現了難能可貴的思考深度和行動勇氣。

在許多人為近二十年以來伴隨互聯網興起而愈發受到重視的媒介素養教育的發展而歡欣鼓舞的時候，您作為一名有著40年媒介教育經驗的國際著名學者，卻以數字資本主義的興起為背景，揭示了內嵌著問題產生的商業和政治邏輯的媒介教育背後的保守性、逃避性和局限性。這種思考和言說方式，在我們看來是非常獨樹一幟的。在媒介素養研究領域，「數字資本主義」(digital capitalism)本身就是一個不合時宜的詞彙，不是嗎？

**DB :**說到媒介教育，我一直都把自己既視為一個「傳教士」又視為一個「問題製造者」。一方面，我認為媒介教育應該是現代世界教育的一個核心層面，它應該是所有在校兒童的一項基本權利。提出這一論點一直是一場持續的鬥爭：在英國，就像在許多其他國家一樣，進展非常緩慢，我們經常遭到挫敗。然而另一方面，我認為我們需要不斷檢查有關媒介教育如何運作及其有效性的證據，而

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這往往意味著質疑我們的基本假設和目標。在媒介教育的修辭與現實之間一直存在著很大的差距，而如此真實潛藏的危機是：我們得意忘形地宣稱媒介教育將如何拯救世界，而忽視了其中的一些困難和局限。

我還感到，在更廣泛的媒介研究以及具體的媒介教育研究中，存在著一個過於以媒介為中心的問題。當然，我們的工作主要集中在媒介上，但我們需要從更廣泛的文化、政治和經濟背景來理解媒介。正如我所暗示過的，有一種危險就是，我們會把世界上幾乎所有的問題都歸咎於媒介；言下之意是，如果我們能解決媒介的問題，我們就能解決所有其他的問題。但是，媒介之所以採取這樣的形式，以這樣的方式運作，部分原因是更廣泛的社會和經濟力量。當然，我們可以在此對於何為「決定」進行一番大討論：一切都只是經濟生產關係的結果嗎？我的觀點是不能脫離這些更廣泛的因素來孤立地看待媒介：我們需要一種批判性的方法，而不僅僅是工具性的方法。這也是我對「媒介素養」的許多觀點——至少是政府和媒體監管者對它的理解——不敢苟同的地方：這種形式的「媒介素養」似乎就是關乎成為一個行為良好、自我監管的好公民。它在個人層面解決問題，從而使數字資本主義的現狀得以延續。

**WG：**2019年6月，在您應中國傳媒大學傳媒教育研究中心主任張開教授邀請來華演講時，我們就注意到您把「監管」置於「素養」之前。「監管」的實質，是代表公共利益的政府對媒體公司逐利行為的制約。如果媒介素養是政府監管的替代品、一種退而求其次的敷衍方案，只迴避政治、經濟和社會層面的更為根本的問題和責任，這種取向只能用中國的一個成語來形容：揚湯止沸。正如我們不能無視商業利益驅動，把解決問題的希望寄託於科技巨頭「不作惡」的道德自律，我們也不能寄望於通過捏受眾媒介素養這枚軟柿子來解決深層次的問題。媒介素養不能成為一種因為政府和公司不願監管而把責任拋給消費者自我監管的學術說辭。媒介素養或許是問題解決方案的一部分，但不能成為核心，不能成為中樞，不能成為全部。

**DB :** 我很喜歡你的比喻！我當然同意，但我也認為，我們需要認真思考監管的含義。如你所說，監管的部分內容是政府限制媒體公司的逐利行為——或者至少，這是它在資本主義制度下的運作方式。說到「FAANG」，特別需要解決壟斷問題，或者至少是不成比例的市場主導地位問題——例如，谷歌獨霸互聯網搜索、臉書及其子公司稱雄社交網路（你知道我也可以在這裏舉一些中國的例子！）。政府確實需要確保這些公司使用明確的服務條款，並確保它們的運作透明化，例如在收集和使用客戶數據方面——而現在的情況遠非如此。最起碼，這些公司應該繳納他們的應繳稅款——而這是他們非常善於逃避的。

但是，我們也需要從更加積極的角度來看待監管，它是一種確保公眾利益通過媒體得以維持和發展的手段。市場並不能為所有人提供平等的服務，這些不平等，或者說「市場失靈」，需要得到解決。這些公司需要確保所有的使用者都能得到公平和平等的服務，特別是那些可能會被邊緣化的少數群體，因為他們被視為不那麼有利可圖。這些公司需要為內容的公開使用提供機會；但它們也需要確保誤導性或仇恨性的內容不能被傳播和分享。它們應該將一部分利潤用於贊助以社區為基礎的活動，包括教育活動，而這些不應僅僅被視為另一種形式的公共關係。也許我在這裏過於理想化了，但在我看來，應該有一種更為平等的權衡：商業公司實際上獲得了經營許可證，作為交換，它們應該同意公開和負責，並能超越商業利潤驅動，支持各種形式的公共服務條款。

**WG :** 儘管您對數位資本主義時代媒介教育的批判性思考方式超脫了既有的概念框架，但按照我們的理解，您最後的落腳點或主旨仍然在於專業的媒介素養教育的自我更新和重新定向，即擴展「媒介教育的既定概念框架和教學策略」以「應對數位和社交媒體帶來的新挑戰」。媒介教育研究和教學理念的擴展的核心是甚麼呢？

**DB :** 正如我所指出的，媒介素養只是一個更大圖景的一部分。要想使大眾真正具有媒介素養，那麼我們就要有系統的、全面的媒介教育方案；我們需要把它作為義務教育的核心內容，從很早的時候

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就開始實施。這也意味著我們需要對專業的媒介教育者提供適當的專業培訓。

有人認為，媒介教育應該是教育中一個橫向的、跨學科的主題，所有的教師都應該是媒介教師。這似乎是一種理想的情況，但在實踐中，人人有責很容易變成無人負責。媒介素養會被當成只是忙碌的教師關注清單上的另一個專案而已。我們可以口口聲聲說要教孩子們掌握媒介素養，但實際上卻並沒有做多少工作。我的感覺是，如果我們真的希望媒介教育得以實現，那麼我們需要訓練有素的專業教師。

同樣，有時人們會認為媒介很容易理解，因而關於媒介的教學應該也很容易。但我覺得，專業的媒介教育工作者需要大量的培訓。如果一個老師自己從來沒有學過歷史，你就不會允許他去教歷史。這裏也是如此。從事媒介教學的老師需要對各種不同的媒體形式有廣泛的瞭解；他們需要了解傳媒業和媒介歷史；他們需要理解媒介分析的學術理論和方法；他們需要跟上當前的發展，尤其是他們的學生所身處的媒體世界的發展。這需要深入的初始培訓，以及持續的專業發展。如果真的要認真對待這個問題，我們就要付出更多努力而不只是口頭說說而已。

**AL：**您一再強調媒介教育應當以批判性思維為核心。如何理解這種「批判性思維」？

**DB：**「批判」是一個相當有問題的詞。我們都同意，我們希望學生成為「批判性思考者」——畢竟，沒有人會說我們需要「不批判思考」的人。但這是甚麼意思呢？在某些情況下，「批判」是「政治激進」的「暗號」；在另一些情況下，負面的評判（例如關於媒體的）似乎是批判性思維的一種保證。「批判」和「憤世嫉俗」之間也有區別：不信任一切的人不一定是「批判」的，憤世嫉俗可能是一種相當具有腐蝕性的、功能失調的反應。「批判」總是帶有一點「我們和他們」的意味：如果你同意我的觀點，那麼你就是批判的，但如果你不同意，那麼你就不是。在教育中，還存在著這樣一種危險：那些被認為是最「批判」的學生是那些同意老師意見的人——他們只是服從於老師的權威。所以我們使用這個詞的時候一定要加倍小心！

有些「批判性思維」的要素是通用的，在不同科目或學科領域都能發揮作用。對證據來源採取懷疑的態度、仔細評估修辭主張的可信度、評估不同種類數據的可靠性和有效性、評估論證中的邏輯步驟——這些都是眾所周知的批判性思維的要素。關於這些素質是否可以作為「可轉移」技能以通用的方式有效地傳授，或者是否最好根據背景和特定類型的知識來理解這些素質，存在著爭議。我認為爭議雙方都有一定的道理：我們在媒介教育中尋求推廣的一些批判性思維技能，也可以應用到文學、歷史、社會研究甚至自然科學的教學中。正如我所說的，媒介教育的「關鍵概念」模式仍然是批判性思維的一個有用的定義，而且它可以擴展到其他課程領域。然而，重要的是要始終記住：這本質上是一個問題清單，而不是一套答案。它為學生提供了一種審視媒體的方法，但他們從分析中得出的結論將始終是可以進一步辯論的。

**AL：**假新聞是媒介素養教育的熱點問題。正如您所說，它是「更大的經濟和政治變化的一個癥狀」，從中也可以看到新聞傳播的社交化對於新聞專業主義的侵蝕，在這方面，回顧關於新聞教學的悠久歷史是否能有所說明？

**DB：**「假新聞」不是甚麼新鮮事，歷史上故意捏造新聞故事的例子也不少。但毫無疑問，隨著網路和社交媒體的出現，這種現象有所加劇：這些媒體使任何人都可以更容易地創建「新聞」並進行分享傳播，而不再受編輯和監管機構等「把關人」的控制。從經濟角度講，「假新聞」是一種點擊誘餌，它為大型媒體和科技公司創造了豐厚的利潤：事情越離譜，我們越生氣，我們分享它的可能性就越大——而所有的點擊和分享都會產生數據，這些公司可以收集和售賣。在政治上，我想說的是，很多情況下假新聞已經被證明是那些想要獲得支援的民粹主義政客們非常有用的工具——尤其是通過傳播離奇的陰謀論。

然而，「假新聞」並不局限於新媒體，在「舊」媒體中也有很多，而且一直都有。媒介再現不可避免地具有片面性——它們並不是簡單地反映現實。說到底，我不認為「假新聞」是一個非常有用的術語。它意味著由專業記者製作的「真」新聞就一定是真實的；它還假定「假」和「真」之間的區分是一目了然的——雖然有



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時的確是這樣，但在黑與白之間往往有許多灰色的陰影。還有一個棘手的問題是，為甚麼有些人在「假新聞」已被證明為假的情況下仍然選擇繼續相信？所有這些都意味著，我們不能簡單地套用一張清單來分辨甚麼是「假」的，以為隨後的問題就會迎刃而解。

關於新聞的學術研究由來已久，而關於新聞的教學也是媒介教育中非常熟悉的話題。新聞研究（以及對新聞消費和使用的研究）中使用的「議程設置」和「框架」等概念，讓我們遠遠超越了有關真與假的簡單觀念。這可能是一個相當具有挑戰性的教學領域，尤其是考慮到學生們似乎對新聞不感興趣。但是，學生們可以發現運用各種媒介分析方法是相當有效的，而且他們可以從新聞製作過程的實際類比中學到很多東西。在這裏，我認為我們需要的不僅僅是一個膚淺的「快速解決方案」：學生需要深入、持續的機會來學習新聞，來研究它是如何生產和傳播的。

**WG：**作為來自中國的訪談者，我們從您對資本主義政治經濟邏輯的批評中，恍惚看到了風起雲湧的1970年代的影子，不過在這種批評背後，社會主義作為一種與資本主義針鋒相對的社會制度安排和總體願景，在您的著作中鮮有提及。其實，無論是以分享和共有為核心的數字經濟的建立還是「使受教育者在德育、智育、體育幾方面都得到發展」（毛主席語）的教育方針的實現，都是必須依靠「主義」才能解決的「問題」。當然，這個問題是時代性的，這是我們從您的思考中讀解出的嚴峻感、無力感乃至無望感的一部分。您怎麼看？

**DB：**我想說我是一個民主社會主義者，但我也是一個現實主義者。在英國，我們唯一一次建立一個民主社會主義政府是在第二次世界大戰後的五年裏——比我出生的時間還要早！過去幾年裏，反對工黨的領導層似乎在帶領我們重溫舊夢，但卻被黨內右翼勢力以及右翼媒體破壞並最終被推翻。就像在美國一樣，我們越來越受到民粹主義運動的威脅——這些運動我認為比較接近法西斯主義。

所以，如果你察覺到一種無力感和無望感，你並沒有錯。和現在許多左派人士一樣，我也喜歡使用意大利馬克思主義者安東

尼奧·葛蘭西 (Antonio Gramsci) 的那句著名口號：「智力上的悲觀主義，意志上的樂觀主義」。我所關注的那些批判性媒介教育必須要解決的問題，並沒有簡單的、一蹴而就的解決方案。我們在討論媒體時，不能不看到那些政治和經濟層面的更大問題，以及我們需要甚麼樣的社會的問題：媒介教育應該有所作為，但歸根結底，問題關鍵並不只是在於媒體本身，或者僅僅關乎教育。

**WG：您對中國的媒介素養教育有何印象和期待？**

DB：對於回答這樣的問題，我總是非常謹慎。我曾多次訪問中國，但它是一個龐大而複雜的國家，外人很難理解。我有一種感覺，中國的學者和教育工作者在主張和爭取媒介教育方面正在取得進展——儘管，如同在西方一樣，我有時覺得我們並不是在談論同一件事。當我遇到來自其他國家的媒介教育工作者時，總是很難確定他們所代表的是甚麼：他們可能說得頭頭是道，但教育「專家」說的和普通課堂上實際發生的情況之間往往存在很大差距。

我還擔心，人們會把英國式（或美國式，或西方式）的媒介教育理念看作一種模式或秘方，可以進口到自己的國家（這裏常常有一種帝國主義在作祟）。顯而易見的是，中國的媒體體系、政治體系和教育體系與英國有很大的不同：你不可能與我有同樣的問題和困境，儘管我想你可能也會對其中一些問題感同身受。畢竟，我們必須應對的困難和機遇很可能截然不同。因此，雖然我認為我們都可以從國際對話中獲益——尤其是在平等對話的情況下——但我懷疑也就僅此而已了。對於中國將如何發展自身獨特的媒介教育路徑，我將拭目以待。

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*Media Education in the Age of Digital Capitalism*

Academic Dialogue with **David BUCKINGHAM**

**Media Education in the Age of Digital Capitalism**

DB: David BUCKINGHAM

WG: Weiliang GONG

AL: Anna LYU

**WG: As a prominent scholar in contemporary media education, could you briefly share how your thoughts on “media education in the age of digital capitalism” came about from your academic background? Additionally, how does this relate to your well-known media education concept of “moving beyond protectionism”?**

DB: In many respects, my current work is trying to emphasize continuity. I want to show how and why the basic conceptual model of media education is still relevant at a time when it seems that so much in our media landscape has changed. During the 1970s and 1980s, media educators in the United Kingdom developed a “framework of key concepts” that is still the basis for media education practice in schools. Four concepts—media language, representation, production (or institution), and audience—are used both to select and organize curriculum content and to guide classroom activities. They inform critical media analysis and practical media production, and media education generally includes both of these. This framework offers a clear definition of “critical thinking” that takes us beyond the protectionist or defensive approach that was prevalent before, although that protectionist approach to media education remains influential in many countries around the world, including the United States. Our aim is not to save children from what some believe to be harmful media influences but to make them independent critical thinkers who are able to make their own informed choices.

With the advent of digital media, and especially so-called “participatory” media, some people argued that this kind of critical thinking had become outdated and unnecessary. They suggested

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that children would automatically learn to understand media simply through the experience of using and creating media. I believe that creativity and participation are important, but I do not agree that users of media necessarily understand the wider picture; they also need to study, for example, how media are produced and distributed, how they represent the world, and the role they play in social, political, and cultural life. I believe these questions are just as relevant when it comes to online and social media as they are to “old” media like television and newspapers. In my *The Media Education Manifesto*, I try to show how established critical concepts can be applied to these new phenomena. I do not think this is “protectionist,” but equally, I do not think it is adequate simply to celebrate these “participatory” possibilities.

**WG: You argue that we should be cautious of utopian views based on technological determinism. Indeed, as you have noted, similar arguments have been made about the advent of television, video, or film decades ago. It is conceivable that this optimistic expectation of technology as a magical force for social and individual transformation will likely extend to social perceptions of big data, artificial intelligence, and blockchain. Technology undoubtedly has the potential for democratization and for fostering a more creative form of education. However, Canadian political communication scholar Dallas Smythe questioned the neutrality of technology in his essay “After Bicycles, What?” after visiting China. Additionally, American scholar Jodi Dean criticized the internet media boom, arguing it has led to a depletion of democracy’s use value. Is the use of digital technology in education also presenting problems that are diametrically opposed to the purpose of education?**

DB: There is a deep ambivalence that runs right through the history of these technologies. The internet, after all, was born of the encounter between technology developed for military purposes and the idealistic dreams of the counterculture. When Web 2.0 arrived, enthusiasts argued that it would bring about a new golden age of democratic participation, knowledge, and creativity. While some of these benefits have materialized, many have not, and new inequalities and problems have appeared. Social media have become an influential source of lies

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and misinformation; they have permitted new forms of surveillance, both by governments and by commercial companies; they have arguably accentuated inequalities; and they are contributing to the decline of democracy.

We can see a similar ambivalence in education. As with earlier technologies, the early advocates predicted a kind of democratic educational utopia: both teachers and students would be empowered, with a vast amount of information and a whole range of opportunities for creative self-expression at their fingertips. Yet in practice, technology in education is increasingly being used as a form of surveillance and as a means for commercial companies to reach new markets. In many Western countries, technology has become a primary means of privatizing public education. Here again, there is enormous positive potential but also some very significant risks. I have seen some very creative and challenging uses of technology in schools, which really do move beyond the limitations of established practice, yet for the most part, it seems to me that it is used in very constrained and functional ways.

Ultimately, I do not think technology is necessarily and inherently opposed to the “purpose of education,” as you put it. Technology does not exert an influence irrespective of how and why it is used, and it is precisely these broader questions about the educational purpose of using technology that really need to be debated much more rigorously.

**WG:** In “Rethinking Digital Literacy: Media Education in the Age of Digital Capitalism,” you bluntly stated that “the dream of technological liberation is giving way to a nightmare” and cited many examples of executives of many technology companies who did not allow their children to use certain electronic devices. In fact, as far as we know, Steve Jobs told a reporter back then that his kids had never used an iPad. Many other tech giants have similarly strict restrictions on their children’s use of electronic devices, for the reason that, as Chris Anderson, the former editor-in-chief of *Wired*, said, “Because we were the first to witness the dangers of technology,” something to that effect. Another example is the “dopamine detox” campaign, which is popular among CEOs and venture capitalists in Silicon Valley in the United States and whose important content is a self-imposed ban

**on high-tech products for a certain period of time. It is hard to call these practices “irrational,” “moral panic,” or “media panic” when the fact is that almost all of today’s high-tech products and social media are designed to inspire immediate gratification in the next moment, and teenagers are especially vulnerable. When the technical and business elites who are well versed in the operation of media technology have no choice but to ban their children from using it and self-abstain to get rid of the “nightmare,” to what extent will media literacy education be effective? Is this “tech-lash” also a slap in the face to media education researchers?**

DB: Well, the executives of these technology companies definitely have a lot to answer for, although I do not think they should be role models for the rest of us! I do not doubt that these products and services are designed to keep us clicking and scrolling; that is the basic business model on which they operate. All of us—adults as well as children—need to understand how this works, and we need to make informed choices about how (and how much) we use these things. I also think that parents have a responsibility to intervene in their children’s use of digital media, although we need to be very careful about how we do this. It is not likely to be very effective for parents to ban their children from using media or to restrict their use (as some people are suggesting) when parents cannot seem to control their own use. We will not get far if we turn “screen time” into another battleground between parents and children. Parents need to be engaging in a constructive dialogue with their children about how they are using these media, and that, I would say, is very much an educational process.

However, my point about the “nightmare” is that much of the public debate about these issues is conducted in very exaggerated, melodramatic terms, and at the moment, much of it seems to ignore the many positive aspects of these media and the reasons why we are using them so much. When it comes to children, we obsess about some quite narrow aspects of internet safety, and we tend to ignore the broader issues that are at stake. I am also not very convinced by psychological arguments about “addiction,” and I do not think brain science (or ideas like “dopamine detox”) will get us very far in understanding what is primarily a social, economic, and political phenomenon. Nor do I think the aim of media education is to encourage children to reduce

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their screen time or to stop them from using particular media; media education is not a prophylactic or a means of behavior modification. The aim is to develop critical understanding, which in this case includes an understanding of how the business of social media works as well as encouraging people to monitor and reflect on their own usage of media. We all have to learn to make our own choices, and in order to do that, we need to be properly informed and educated.

**WG: The references you make to critical ideas such as communicative capitalism, platform capitalism, and surveillance capitalism in your article are impressive. These theories represent a profound criticism of different aspects of capitalism that permeate everything. In the field of media education, how do you view the fact that a handful of huge companies such as FAANG (Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix, and Google) dominate the media and technology sector and its implications?**

DB: The dominance of these companies is a major social and political problem that urgently needs to be addressed; along with climate change, I would see it as the most pressing global challenge of our times. It is not at all healthy (or indeed democratic) for our primary channels of communication to be controlled by such a small number of massively profitable companies. It seems that policymakers in Europe—and even now in the United States—are belatedly coming to recognize this, although politicians everywhere also know that they have become increasingly dependent on these technologies.

In many cases, governments are looking to “media literacy” as one of the solutions to this problem, although in practice, media literacy is often very poorly defined. It seems that they cannot (or do not want to) address the problems that are arising in this situation, and so they attempt to push the responsibility back to the individual citizen, as though it should be up to us to learn to cope with it. “Media literacy,” as it is typically defined by governments or media regulators, often falls far short of the sustained, systematic programs of media education that we need. Yet even media education on its own is not going to be enough. Education should help us to analyze and understand what is happening and to take a more active role in the media environment. But to paraphrase a well-known political thinker, educators have merely sought to understand the world; the point is

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also to change it. As I have said, media education is not just about learning to cope with the challenges of this more complex, commercial media world; it is also about imagining how it might be different and demanding change.

**WG:** In your book *The Media Education Manifesto* (2019) and articles such as “Rethinking Digital Literacy: Media Education in the Age of Digital Capitalism,” you clearly move beyond the internal boundaries of the discipline and introduce a broader perspective and increased critical thinking to the field of media literacy education. At its core, you view the challenges in media education as “symptoms of larger changes occurring within the media landscape and the broader social, economic, and political spheres.” Consequently, your approach to the era-related issues of the concept and practice of media education, which often focuses on symptoms rather than causes and considers problems in isolation, inevitably leads to fragmentary solutions. This represents a cognitive shift that breaks away from the centralism of media literacy and demonstrates admirable depth of thought and courage in action.

In a time when many people celebrate the development of media literacy education, which has gained increasing attention over the past two decades with the rise of the internet, your perspective as an internationally renowned scholar with 40 years of experience in media education is unique. By using the emergence of digital capitalism as a backdrop, you expose the conservatism, evasiveness, and limitations embedded within the commercial and political aspects of media education. In the field of media literacy studies, the term “digital capitalism” is indeed quite challenging, wouldn’t you agree?

**DB:** When it comes to media education, I have always seen myself as both a proselytizer and a problematizer. On the one hand, I believe that media education should be a central aspect of education in the modern world; it should be a basic entitlement for all children in schools. Making this argument has been a continuing struggle. In the United Kingdom, as in many other countries, progress has been very slow, and we are frequently knocked back. Yet on the other hand, I think we need to be constantly examining the evidence about how media



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education works and how effective it is, and that can often mean questioning our basic assumptions and aims. There has always been a large gap between the rhetoric and the reality of media education. There is a real danger that we get carried away with our grandiose claims about how media education will save the world and ignore some of the difficulties and limitations.

I also feel there is a problem—in media research more broadly as well as in media education specifically—of being too media-centric. Of course, our work focuses primarily on media, but we also need to understand media in relation to the broader cultural, political, and economic context. As I have implied, there is a danger that we blame the media for just about every problem in the world, and by implication, we assume that we can solve all those other problems if we solve the problem of the media. But the media take the forms they do and operate the way they do, partly as a result of broader social and economic forces. Of course, we can have a big debate about “determination” here: is everything simply a consequence of the economic relations of production? My point would simply be that we cannot look at media in isolation from these broader factors; we need a critical approach, not just an instrumental one. This is my problem with many of the arguments for “media literacy,” at least as it is understood by governments and media regulators: this form of “media literacy” seems to be about being a well-behaved, self-regulating good citizen. It addresses problems at an individual level and thereby enables the existing status quo of digital capitalism to continue.

**WG: In June 2019, when you were invited by Professor Zhang Kai, Director of the Center for Media Education at the Communication University of China, to give a lecture, we noticed that you placed “regulation” before “literacy.” The essence of “regulation” is that the government, representing the public interest, restricts the profit-seeking behavior of media companies. If media literacy is seen as a substitute for government regulation, it is a superficial solution that avoids addressing the more fundamental issues and responsibilities at the political, economic, and social levels. This approach can only be described by one Chinese idiom: “stirring the soup to stop boiling.” We cannot ignore the driving force of commercial interests and rely solely on the moral self-discipline**

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**of technology giants to solve problems, nor can we hope to solve deep-seated issues by relying solely on the media literacy of audiences. Media literacy cannot become an academic rhetoric that leaves the responsibility of self-regulation solely to consumers when the government and companies are unwilling to regulate. While media literacy may be a part of the solution, it cannot be the core, the hub, or the whole.**

DB: I am enjoying your metaphors! I agree, of course, but I also believe we need to think hard about what we mean by regulation. As you say, regulation is partly about the government restricting the profit-seeking behavior of media companies—or at least, that is how it works in a capitalist system. When it comes to the “FAANG,” there is a particular need to address the problem of monopoly, or at least disproportionate market dominance—for example, the almost total domination of Google in internet search or of Facebook and its subsidiaries in social networking (and you know that I could give some Chinese examples here as well!). The government does need to ensure that these companies use clear terms of service and that they operate transparently, for example, in their gathering and use of customers’ data, which is very far from being the case right now. At the very least, these companies should be paying their fair share of taxes, something that they are very skilled at avoiding.

However, we also need to think of regulation in a more positive way as a means of ensuring that the public interest is sustained and developed through the media. The market does not provide equally for all, and those inequalities, or “market failures,” need to be addressed. These companies need to ensure that all users are fairly and equally served, especially minorities of various kinds who might otherwise be marginalized because they are seen as less profitable. They need to provide opportunities for content to be openly accessible, but they also need to ensure that misleading or hateful content cannot be distributed and shared. They should be using some of their profits to sponsor community-based initiatives, including educational initiatives, and these should not be seen as merely another form of public relations. Perhaps I am being unduly idealistic here, but it seems to me that there should be a more equal trade-off: commercial companies are effectively given a license to operate, and in exchange

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they should agree to be open and accountable and to support forms of public service provision that go beyond the drive for more and more commercial profit.

**WG: Although your critical approach to media education in the era of digital capitalism goes beyond the established conceptual framework, we understand that your ultimate objective is still centered on the self-renewal and reorientation of professional media literacy education. This involves extending the well-established conceptual framework and pedagogical strategies of media education to meet the new challenges presented by digital and social media. What lies at the core of these expanded ideas in media education research and teaching?**

DB: As I have suggested, media literacy is only part of a bigger picture. If we want to have a truly media-literate population, then we need systematic, comprehensive programs of media education, and we need this to be a core element of compulsory schooling right from the very early years. This, in turn, means that we need to have proper professional training for specialist media educators.

It is sometimes argued that media education should be a transversal, cross-curricular theme in education and that all teachers should be teachers of media. This might seem like an ideal situation, but in practice, something that is everybody's responsibility can easily become nobody's responsibility. Media literacy can be seen as just another item on busy teachers' lists of concerns. We can all pay lip service to the idea that we should be teaching children to be media literate without actually doing much about it. My feeling is that if we genuinely want media education to happen, then we need trained specialist teachers.

Equally, it is sometimes assumed that media are easy to understand and, therefore, that it should be easy to teach about them. However, I feel that specialist media educators require a great deal of training. You wouldn't allow a teacher to teach history if they had never studied the subject themselves. The same is true here. Teachers of media need to know a lot about a whole range of different media forms; they need to know about the media industries and the history of media; they need to understand academic theories and methods of media analysis; and they need to keep abreast of current developments, not least in the media

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worlds of their own students. This requires in-depth initial training as well as continuing professional development. If we really want to take it seriously, we need to do more than just pay lip service to the idea.

**AL: You have consistently emphasized that media education should focus on critical thinking. How should we understand this concept of “critical thinking”?**

DB: “Critical” is quite a problematic term. We can all agree that we want students to be “critical thinkers.” After all, nobody is likely to argue that we want uncritical thinkers. But what do we mean by this? In some contexts, “critical” is a kind of codeword for “politically radical”; in others, it seems that negative judgments (for example, about the media) are a kind of guarantee of critical thinking. There is also a distinction to be made between “critical” and “cynical”: people who distrust everything are not necessarily “critical,” and cynicism can be quite a corrosive, dysfunctional response. “Critical” is always somewhat of an “us and them” term: if you agree with me, then you are critical, but if you do not agree, then you are not. In education, there is also a danger that students who are seen to be the most “critical” are those who agree with the teacher and simply submit to the teacher’s authority. So, we need to take considerable care when we use this term!

There are elements of “critical thinking” that are generic and function across various subjects or disciplinary domains. Taking a skeptical attitude towards sources of evidence; carefully evaluating rhetorical claims for credibility; assessing the reliability and validity of different kinds of data; evaluating the logical steps in an argument—these are all well-known elements of critical thinking. There is a debate about whether these qualities can usefully be taught in a generic way as “transferable” skills or whether they are best understood in context and in relation to specific kinds of knowledge. I think there may be some validity in both sides of this argument: some of the critical thinking skills that we are seeking to promote in media education can also apply to the teaching of literature, history, social studies, or even the natural sciences. As I have said, the “key concepts” model of media education remains a useful definition of critical thinking, and it is one that can be extended to other curriculum areas. However, it is important to always remember that this is essentially a list of questions, not a set of answers. It offers students a way of

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interrogating media, but what they conclude from their analysis will always be open to further debate.

**AL: Fake news is one of the prominent issues in media literacy education. As you mentioned, it is “a symptom of much larger economic and political changes,” in which the erosion of journalistic professionalism by the socialization of news distribution can also be observed. In this regard, would it be helpful to review the long history of teaching about news?**

DB: “Fake news” is by no means a new phenomenon; we can find examples of deliberately fabricated news stories right throughout history. However, there’s no doubt that it has increased with the advent of online and social media: these media make it much easier for anybody to create “news” and to share it in ways that are no longer controlled by gatekeepers like editors and regulators. Economically speaking, “fake news” is a kind of clickbait, which generates excellent profits for the big media and technology companies: the more outrageous something is, the angrier it makes us, the more likely we are to share it, and all that clicking and sharing is generating data that these companies can gather and sell. Politically, I would say that in many cases, fake news has proven to be a very useful tool for populist politicians who want to gather support, not least through circulating outlandish conspiracy theories.

However, “fake news” is not confined to new media. There is a good deal of it in “old” media as well, and there always has been. Media representations are inevitably partial; they do not simply reflect reality. Ultimately, I do not think “fake news” is a very useful term. It implies that “real” news, as produced by professional journalists, is necessarily true. It also assumes that differentiating between “false” and “true” is going to be straightforward, and while this is sometimes the case, there are often many shades of gray between black and white. There is also the difficult question of why some people continue to believe in “fake news” even when they have been shown that it is not true. All this implies that we cannot simply apply a checklist to identify what is “fake,” and then the problem will be solved.

There is a long history of scholarly research about news, and teaching about news is a very familiar topic in media education. Concepts like “agenda setting” and “framing” that are used in news

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research, as well as studies of the consumption and use of news, take us well beyond simplistic ideas of truth and falsehood. This can be quite a challenging area to teach, not least because students often do not seem to be interested in news. But students can find it quite empowering to apply various methods of media analysis, and there is a lot they can learn from practical simulations of the news-making process. Here again, I think we need more than a superficial “quick fix”: students need in-depth, sustained opportunities to study news and how it is produced and circulated.

**WG: As interviewers from China, we have noticed in your critique of capitalism’s political and economic logic a hint of the turbulent 1970s. However, behind this criticism, there is little mention of socialism as an institutional arrangement and overall vision of society in contrast to capitalism in your works. In fact, both the establishment of a digital economy centered on sharing and common ownership, and the realization of the education policy of “enabling the educated to develop morally, intellectually, and physically” (as stated by Chairman Mao) are “problems” that can only be addressed by relying on a particular “ism.” Of course, this is a question of the times. This sense of austerity, powerlessness, and hopelessness is something that we can perceive in your line of thought.**

**DB:** I would say I am a democratic socialist, but I am also a realist. The only time we have ever had a democratic socialist government in the United Kingdom was in the five years immediately after the Second World War—some time before I was born! In the past few years, the leadership of the opposition Labour Party seemed to be taking us in a similar direction, but that leadership was undermined and ultimately overthrown by right-wing forces within the party as well as by the right-wing media. As in the United States, we are increasingly threatened by populist movements that I regard as close to fascism.

So if you perceive a sense of powerlessness and hopelessness, you are not wrong. Like many people on the left these days, I am fond of using the famous slogan of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci: “Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will.” The problems I am concerned with—the problems that critical media education has to address—are not amenable to simple, short-term solutions. We cannot

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talk about the media without raising bigger questions about politics, the economy, and the kind of society we need. Media education should make a difference, but ultimately the issues at stake are not only about the media or indeed only about education.

**WG: What are your impressions and expectations regarding media literacy education in China?**

DB: I am always very wary of answering questions like this! I have visited China several times, but it is a vast and complex country that is very hard for an outsider to understand. I have a sense that Chinese academics and educators are making progress in arguing for media education, although, as in the West, I sometimes feel that we are not all talking about the same thing. When I meet media educators from other countries, it is always hard to be sure what they represent: they may “talk the talk,” but there is often a big gap between what educational “experts” say and what actually happens in ordinary classrooms.

I also worry that people see the British (or American, or Western) idea of media education as a kind of model or recipe that they can import into their own countries. There is often a kind of imperialism going on here. To state the obvious, the media system, the political system, and the educational system in China are vastly different from those in the United Kingdom. You are unlikely to share my problems and dilemmas, although I imagine you might recognize some of them. The difficulties and opportunities we have to address may well be very different. So while I think we can all gain from international dialogue, particularly if it is an equal dialogue, I suspect this can only take us so far. I will be watching to see how things unfold as China develops its own distinctive approach to media education.

### Selected Works by David Buckingham

Please refer to the end of the Chinese version of the dialogue for David Buckingham’s selected works.