

# Preface

## JEMMS Relaunch

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Ten years after launching the *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* (JEMMS) in 2009, it seems appropriate to look back and assess the journal's achievements, review its purpose, and address prospects for the coming years. As the only journal of its kind dedicated to the dissemination of international educational media research in the humanities, JEMMS has provided a platform for authors from sixteen countries on seven continents, including Chile, South Africa, Macedonia, and China.

The journal's aim, as stated in the introduction to the first issue, is to "inspire new research questions and encourage approaches that reach beyond established concepts, thus opening up international textbook research to fresh perspectives and new impulses."<sup>1</sup> The first ten volumes certainly do justice to this objective. The twelve special issues they contain address a broad range of topics ranging from history education and identity politics to memory studies and religious studies as well as traditional analyses of textbook revision and the evolution, transformation, and usage of educational media in schools. The geographical scope of the contributions is similarly broad, encompassing Europe, East Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, North and South America, and Australasia.

Other media examined include museum exhibitions, films, children's books, school curricula, atlases, learning machines, and mobile learning tools. A glance at the contents pages of the relevant issues reveals the multidisciplinary nature of educational media research, which combines approaches from various disciplines while raising context-specific questions, addressing theories prevalent in the field, and testing established methods of educational media research. While most of the contributions address topics relating to education or history, the journal has regularly featured other domains such as sociology, literature, and political science. The authors represent a wide range of disciplines, including anthropology, political science, cultural studies, geography, European studies, Middle Eastern studies, linguistics, romance studies, information studies, religious studies, environmental studies, economics, business administration, book sciences, philosophy, and journalism.

The diversity of the authors themselves becomes apparent when one considers the ten volumes of the journal in their entirety. Of the 177 authors, 54 percent are male and 46 percent are female. Twenty-three percent are from Germany, 44 percent are from other European countries, and 33 percent are from non-European countries, with the United



States and Canada (19 percent) being the second most represented countries after Germany. Other countries include India, South Africa, Indonesia, Japan, Colombia, Chile, and Australia. Of the 150 articles, 15 percent address topics pertaining to Germany, 50 percent focus on European countries, and 35 percent examine other parts of the world.

The journal's methodology is similarly varied. In addition to studying knowledge content in textbooks, some authors explore the reception and appropriation of educational media and compare various media formats. Gaps nevertheless do remain. Several of the journal's original areas of inquiry—including curriculum research, systematic textbook research, textbook language and design, and the "implementation and reception of educational media in the classroom"<sup>2</sup>—have not yet been sufficiently addressed. JEMMS has also so far limited its inquiries to social science subjects, with a primary focus on history and general knowledge textbooks. Studies of educational media from STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) or from informal education are still scarce.

Therefore, without minimizing our achievements, and in keeping with the journal's founding vision as an interdisciplinary platform for the study of the social, cultural, political, economic, and educational contexts of all varieties of educational media,<sup>3</sup> we intend over the coming years to expand its thematic and disciplinary range, and to broaden its current focus on educational media in the humanities to include

- a wider range of disciplines, including the STEM subjects;
- the contexts in which textbook knowledge is produced and appropriated;
- historical and contemporary processes of educational media development; and
- broader methodological and theoretical approaches to educational media research.

This focus on educational media and their contexts are what distinguishes JEMMS from complementary and equally worthy journals in this field, including *Educational Media International* and *Historical Encounters: A Journal of Historical Consciousness, Historical Cultures, and History Education*. While the former provides a platform for studies of educational technology in the field of educational sciences, the latter addresses people's relationship with the past generally as well as media representations that impinge upon this relationship. While recognizing these significant contributions to the fields of education science and history education, JEMMS offers a broader, genuinely transdisciplinary forum focusing on the contents, production, implementation, and appropriation of formal and informal educational media within and beyond educational institutions.

While we will continue to welcome submissions from a broad range of fields with a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches, we will now strive, with this relaunch, to redefine the aims and scope of the journal. In the future, we will therefore welcome contributions from both the humanities and the natural sciences—contributions covering both “old” and “new” media, drawing on case studies and theoretical innovations, and pertaining to *media used in schools* but also to *educationally effective media* used outside schools in museums, films, and literature and on the internet. The journal will thus seek to promote a pluralistic notion of “educational media” as institutional and extrainstitutional carriers of socially, politically, and ethically relevant canonical knowledge and understanding mediating between generations, social groups, nations, and regions.

The editors welcome articles about any topic, region, or period, provided that problems are treated systematically and focus on an original question and are clearly articulated and demonstrated with explicit reference to current debates in the field. Priority will be given to articles that raise new questions and develop new ideas pertaining to the *impact of educational media in relation to learning generally and in relation to collective memory in recognizable social (local, national, and international) contexts*, as indicated in the name of the journal.

Finally, we would like to thank our authors, readers, Editorial Committee members, and advisory board members, as well as Vivian Berghahn, Keara Hagerty, and Martha Hoffman at Berghahn Journals, who have ensured JEMMS’s success in garnering an enthusiastic readership and inspired authorship over the last ten years. We hope that you will join us in our endeavor to encourage and develop innovative and in-depth inquiry into educational media in the years to come.

The Editorial Committee

## Notes

1. Simone Lässig, “Editorial. Textbooks and Beyond: Educational Media in Context(s),” *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 1, no. 1 (2009): 1–20, 6. doi:10.3167/jemms.2009.010101.
2. *Ibid.*, 7.
3. *Ibid.*, 13f.