

The media literacy award [mla] 2004

by Renate Holubek

“The mla is aimed at thematizing media competence as a political, social, cultural and personal qualification; in other words the socially, critically and culturally sensible use of media in the everyday context of life planning.”

Thomas Bauer

Every year the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture organises the media literacy awards [mla]. In the school year 2004/5 it was for the fourth time. Media literacy means the ability to examine all the different kinds of media critically. That this involvement can be productive, creative and enjoyable is re-confirmed every year by the submissions .

The media literacy award is directed towards teachers and pupils who wish to make media products in class.

The media education aspect takes up the foreground, that is, the motivation to learn to understand media texts and through this to encourage critical thought. Reflection is just as important as creativity when making media products.

The most important tasks for the teacher in carrying out media projects are:

- Opening up free space where pupils can work independently on their projects
- Preparation of the project by analysis and deconstruction of the media genre in which the pupil project is to be carried out
- Deepening initial ideas and fostering scrutiny of the pupil's own texts
- Organisation of preparation for recording, de-briefing, reflection
- Making equipment available.

Active media work in schools is a long term process for both teachers and pupils. It has been shown that teachers who have supervised a number of media projects are much more relaxed, allow the pupils more freedom, optimise the surrounding environment and are more likely to place the work process in the foreground so that the projects gain in quality. In addition, it has become clear that it is not only the media competence of the teacher which is beneficial to the project but also the personal relationship of the teaching staff to their pupils.

Project participants are requested not only to write a description of the project and the work process, but also to fill out a so-called accompanying teacher questionnaire in which, amongst other things, the time for the project should be entered – time used both during class hours and afterwards. From this data it can be seen that the time invested in the projects varies enormously. It is obvious, however, that many of the projects exceed school hours and that pupils work on the projects in their free time.

It has also been shown that during work on the project itself, the more freedom the pupils are given the more interesting, authentic, exciting and powerful the projects produced.

Nevertheless it is worth asking the not uninteresting question as to what the media educator gets from a project – except for more work. The working process strengthens class identity, problematic areas can be identified and aired and a pupil's individual responsibility and team spirit are promoted. Alongside media education processes, social learning is part of the foreground.

The social skills the pupils acquire through teamwork can distinctly improve the working climate in the classroom.

[mla] 2003/04 – The Projects

“Funny, bizarre, chaotic, full of action and touching; with 55 sold videos and DVD up till now. The cult film of the year, produced by some of the pupils of 7c of GRG 3 Kundmannngasse. A lot of music, clever ideas, loving post-production and a thrilling story with a lot of atmosphere make this masterpiece to a must for film lovers. Rated worth seeing.”

So reads the DVD cover to one submission with the title “The Seb Sisters – the Film – Special DVD edition.” – A film about tradition, style, honour, family, betrayal and a teddy.

“The Seb/Sisters”

It is really astounding with what wit and irony young people send up mainstream media products, deconstructing them and putting them back together again and in the process producing their own media product. Here is a selection of the submitted projects:

Title:

We are against violence
Target object Woman – Dismissed
It is finished
Smoking is cool
No drugs, no probs,
Fateful leap
Re-examinations
Deadly affair
You ogle with your eyeballs
All Quiet on the Western Front
moment of disillusionment
EU eastern expansion
La casa del polacco (Italy)
Chiamata telefonica (Italy)
Nubbed and Perforated
Grabacion Mortal (Spain)
Orpheus und Eurydice
Brown Sugar
Ape, Elk & Co.
Yes, it's going to be a film
Takeshi in Schwechat (bilingual schools)
Media technology
The roller ball track
A Day with Christina Stürmer
The Forest of the Dwarfs
A Boy in Love
Albrecht the Dargon Slayer
The Power of Three
Olympic Stars (Germany)
Movie star
Maybe
Escaping
Albert's relaxing afternoon
Una Vita
Ars Morendi
I am afraid Auschwitz is only sleeping
School news
Blackbox
A leer otra vez (Spain)
Käthe Recheis
Fascination Space
Practical profession days

Genre & Theme:

video and newspaper, violence
video, sexism in TV format
radio, genetic research
video, drugs
video, drugs
video, bad marks
video, bad marks
video, crime story with a deadly ending
video, poetry in dialect
newspaper article, research
Experimental film, Feelings
radio, Europe
documentary film, history
feature film, love
video, advertising
feature film, violence
video, playmobil in action, mythology
music video, slavery
book, Noah's Ark
feature film, love
video, sport
school newspaper, school radio
multimedia, obstacles
CD Rom, Starmania
CD Rom, fairy tales
CD Rom, love
CD Rom, legend
CD Rom, fairy tale
Internet, construction of the media world
animation, construction of stars
video clip, love
experimental film, memory, flight
animation film, media
documentary film, aging
video, dying for dummies
radio interview contemporary witnesses
school newspaper
animation, chase
feature film, reading
radio, artist interview
radio, space
radio, video, choice of profession

Taller de Imagen (Spain)	animation, identity
Will o' the Wisp	video, drama
The black little figure (Spain)	animation, conservation
I am me	multimedia, identity
Advent	radio, Advent
An expedition to the Ice	TV programme, polar research
Why don't polar bears eat penguins?	internet, polar research
Red	Internet, colour red
Lichtenstein combination	web work, art
The morning after	video, sports news
Unbounded Love	feature film, love, death
eQUAL?	Print, mobbing, discrimination
Self images / ideal images	animation, identity
The 7 deadly sins	multimedia, ethics

The list above shows most impressively the creativity and multiplicity of the themes in the submitted contributions. Each year it becomes more difficult, for the pre-selection jury as well as for the jury itself, to choose the best projects. The jury instruction sheet which lists the qualifications according to basic regulations for media education serves to make the selection of the projects as objective as possible. The instruction sheet (see appendix to this article) also gives information as to what is considered a good media project. The jury (Edith Blaschitz, Head of Media Education at the Danube University, Krems, Austria; Florian Flicker, filmmaker; Siegfried Fruhauf, filmmaker and two pupils from the School Standard (affiliated with Der Standard daily newspaper) will have great difficulty choosing the best projects.

The presentation of the award winners will take place on the 24th November 2004 at the YOUKI, the Austrian Media Festival for Young People in Wels, Upper Austria.

A total of 127 projects were submitted to the [mla] including contributions from Germany, Italy and Spain. For the list given above it can be seen that most of the themes which the projects pick up on come from the world of young people so that some very authentic films, radio programmes, multimedia projects and newspapers result.

:: "12-M Santa Eugenia," Madrid :: "Why don't polar bears eat penguins?" Bremen ::
 Two particularly impressive submissions from outside of Austria are "12-M Santa Eugenia," – a Spanish video shot one day after the attacks of the 11th of May 2004 in Madrid in which the pupils lost some of their classmates and an internet project on the question "Why don't polar bears eat penguins?" which was carried out jointly with the Offenen Kanal Bremen and the Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar Research.

There are two suggested themes on offer this year too: Sport and Identity. The theme of sport is not taken up very much but a number of contributions are concerned with "identity," a very important theme for young people.

A compendium of the projects is in planning which will give an overview but also offer teachers who have never realised a media project with their pupils some suggestions that might help to remove any reservations about doing so. The media literacy award offers an incentive to schools to engage in active media work but it cannot replace a continuous learning process with and about media with fixed standards. A syllabus of media education over a longer period would be desirable in order to make media education as everyday and media consumption.

For the media literacy award 2004/05 projects can be submitted in the categories: **VIDEO / RADIO / PRINT MEDIUMS & COMICS / MULTIMEDIA:**

Information and registration:

<http://www.mediamanual.at/mediamanual/projekte/mla.php>

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