

The MEDIA LITERACY AWARD [mla]
A critical analysis of media education practices (*short version in English*)

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1.1 The *media literacy award [mla]*

As far as content is concerned, the *media literacy award [mla]*—the competition organised by the Department of Media Education in the Federal Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture—is characterised by an open structure. This means that within the framework of the *media literacy awards* the open, implicit cultural fields of society, school and their associated discourses can be explored and symbolically discovered by educators and pupils in the disciplines of media education and scientific. This is of importance here in as much as what is being opened up is not only the cultural framework of the school but also a field of communication in a *Workplace Studies* sense. This is then available, without danger, for educators to test out media and educational science theories in complete conformity with the laws relating to teaching in schools.

The open structure of the *media literacy awards* neither prescribes nor suggests formal criteria. The only parameter for participating is an invitation to “think critically”. Thus the autonomy of both educators and pupils is not only respected but explicitly emphasised. This structure already contains a nucleus that indicates the fundamental strategy of a media education which is oriented towards doing, towards empowering individuals in symbolic, media-generated communication and enabling and encouraging those participating in emancipatory learning processes.

“Thought”, with the adjective “critical” can, without doubt, be understood as having a double meaning since “thought” is, of course, always critical. Without critical faculties there can be no process of thought worth the name. It is “thought”, therefore, behind which there is a comprehensive programme of modern education aimed at a “free culture” and against the pervasive ‘event/sensation’ culture that has repeatedly flared up fuelled by economic and cultural hegemony.

It is exactly this autonomy that participating educators value most. The official schools policy of the Federal Ministry for Education, Art and Culture not only encourages and promotes an open teaching culture in its concern with media phenomena and systems with its basic guidelines but also with programmes such as “Future Learning” and similar activities. Thus educators are not only encouraged to take part but also experience, from the school organisation itself, a significant amount of autonomy and esteem for their applied teaching and learning methods – as the surveys carried out within the framework of the *media literacy awards [mla]* show.

It is in this sense that the *media literacy awards [mla]* are intended to “enable learning”, without fear and free of the dictates of ‘event/sensationalist’ culture, but as part of a free culture that ascribes a participative role in a free, democratic society not only to educators but also to pupils, which means taking part in forming a scientifically enlightened, perhaps even knowledge-based, society with relish and self-confidence.

Thus the projects in the *media literacy awards* do not show what media education is but rather what media educators have made out of it.

1.2 Educational practices in transformation

“What are we going to do, and why? What do we need to know and find out? What aptitudes, abilities and contacts exist within the group? How can we identify our training needs and where do we need to go to receive the appropriate skills and information? What is our audience, and how can we best reach them? How do we handle the material and co-ordinate the presentation? How can we edit and produce the material for the best effect”. (Schouten, Watling, 1997, p. 9)

The above quotation is a marker for media education issues in the 1990s. But are these questions as topical as they were – if yes, are they all part of media education practices in schools?

In the quantitative section of this work similar problems—and thus the project *media literacy awards [mla] 2007*—will be examined although with a much finer screen. Before that, however, I would like to talk about observed reality within the *[mla]* and to direct my attention first of all to those people who, in their educational endeavours, have invested a great deal of involvement, time, conscientiousness, emotion and creativity both during, before and after the project. Despite all the adversities, difficulties and complications in everyday life and in school too, it is apparent that there is increasing success in making the process of learning more enjoyable and exciting. The enjoyment of reading a text, in experiencing, in cognition but also in the discipline, perseverance and conscientiousness that is called for does not need to be emphasised.

My practical experience with the project allows me to state that the quality of the projects has increased over the last few years. What do I mean by quality in this context? An example: where, in this connection, ten years ago there were media projects with educational preten-

sions that consisted of filming a school event that took place in the school gymnasium this not longer happens.¹

Since 1996 the project work done within the framework of the Media Education Department has been collected, archived and evaluated. What can be clearly seen from these project works are the transformations that have taken place in the school culture, the learning culture as well as the general diagnostic changes in our society. It is less the aspects of contents and themes that have been affected—we will return to that in a moment—rather what can be observed is that there is a less formal way of dealing with everyday cultural phenomena that are apparently also an important part of a learning culture in transition. At the other end of the spectrum, from the presentations to the public as ‘best practices’ at different events and media festivals, it seems that an almost virtuoso level of dealing with media technology, media aesthetics, culture and politics has emerged over the years.

At the beginning of this work I sketched a short historical summary of the institutional history of ministerial education in Austria and with that defined my own position as an observer. Casually speaking, things don’t just appear out of thin air. Changes and their associated attitudes, values and norms are communication complexes that dovetail together in many ways. These require closer examination.

In her “Attempt at location-fixing from the point of view of a civil servant” Susanne Krucsay, one of the most committed proponents of Austrian media education, explains: “the following aspects/themes/assessments that are touched on will be subjective. This is anticipated in the title which allows at least hint of self-irony to flow into the deliberately objective and strict expression “civil servant”. It is ironical because the writer is aware of the ambivalence or, rather, the impossibility of encouraging—many would say demanding—critical, at times disobedient, thought by decree or by means of similar official documents” (Krucsay, 2005, p. 290).

For the moment it seems astounding in a number of ways that “critical thought” should be demanded by the republic. But here, too, consistency is discernable. From 1945 on Austrian educational authorities followed a policy in which the ideal image of a “new Austrian” was the goal: “the good, decent, democratic Austrian attached to his native country” (Blaschitz, 2005, p. 3). “Young people, Austria is within you!” was to become the reality even though the effects of the authoritarian national socialist education remained perceptible in Austria for a

¹ It is worth noting here that there can be no objection raised against any form of documentation carried out within the framework of the school culture as long as it is not in contravention of the parameters of media education.

long time, in the “disciplining of the young to fit into the system, relinquish the formation of the will to political and social consensus building and spontaneity and to prevent political experience as well as education about social utopias. In short, in the political and social disenfranchisement of young people” (Hellfeld/ Klönne, 1987, p. 345).

In contrast to Germany where, after 1945, a policy of “re-education” was the goal, Austrian policies were aimed rather more at a “reorientation” since the country always represented itself as the first victim of National Socialism. The educational agenda of the US American department of education foresaw that “narrow self-interest, class-consciousness, provincialism, and chauvinism” should be replaced in the form of discussions and critical re-examinations. “According to the will of the US Americans, the great task of those responsible for education in Austria should be to help those children and young people who had been conditioned by National Socialist education to be obedient, loyal and uncritical of authority towards a relativising mode of thought, to educate for critical ability, concern for alternative thought processes and ways of acting and to foster public discourse” (Blaschitz, 2005, p. 19).

The idea did not come out of thin air. The American philosopher and educationalist John Dewey was of the opinion that a democratic system of government was fundamentally dependent on the “way of life” of its citizens. In his “Theory of Democratic Education” (Dewey, 1996, S. 129, *The Public and its Problems*) Dewey developed experimental models for the practical realisation of his ideas. The levels of democratic society should be learned as early in life as possible as should also be anchored in schools and classes. “The clear awareness of a living together and with all that that implies is what constitutes the idea of democracy” (Dewey, 1996, S. 129). In his opinion learning has to be based on experience. Experimentation should take place in surroundings that are alive and practiced in cooperation. Teachers should simply accompany these processes. The “learning by doing” approach was developed by Dewey and his ideas have found resonance in numerous proposals for educational reforms.

But to return to the question, to questioning and criticism as a method and as the object of becoming a subject. There is a strong current in European educational politics which, with the transformation into an information society, no longer considers the above-mentioned process of becoming a subject as being appropriate to the times – or is this a misunderstanding? I’d like to go into this in a little more detail here. The IKT steering group of the Austrian Ministry of Education passed a strategy plan in 2007 with the title “Future Learning”. It is the follow-up to e-fit Austria. In it the authors give details of their educational concept: “Education and qualifications are aimed at the development of the whole personality as well as at par-

ticipation in society and employment potential. These three dimensions are woven together in such a way that they are inseparable although the necessary elements for this are subject to continuous change and different weightings” (Future Learning, 2007, p. 3) [W031].

Emphasis is also placed on the fact that “learning competence has become an important survival strategy: [. . .] Learning how to learn requires a revolution in educational theory” (ibid). Here—in order to also demonstrate the wisdom of the many— the strategy paper refers to the entry in Wikipedia that describes the term ‘mathematics’: “In summary mathematical knowledge is, for example, not susceptible to technologised preparation for teaching and resists a teacher-centred ‘pushing on with’ the teaching material without keeping the pupils in mind.” It postulates undertaking a frequent change of perspective and that conscious, structured learning in class should always be seen anew, ‘holistically’ and from the pupil’s point of view which, as has already been mentioned, appears to be ‘constructively’ determined. The result for teachers is that they must be committed to a relativistic standpoint and are asked to assume an attitude in which their own judgments are always in question. The consequence of this is that, above all, teaching is to be seen as a structured, comprehensive offer to learners which not only takes place at the level of content but also at that of relationships. Thus on one hand it includes learning itself and, on the other, it talks not only about cognition but also about the learner’s emotions, motivation and volition” [W032].

That sounds really revolutionary, but also a little confusing: “. . . to commit yourself to a relativistic standpoint and to assume an attitude that continually questions one’s own judgment”? It is quite possible that behind this lies the programme we have seen flashes of in previous chapters since the programme just quoted sounds very like a cybernetic, self-regulating closed loop that continuously twists values and attitudes in order to keep the autopoietic system going. Perhaps we should just not let ourselves get confused.

Nowadays, in order to survive one has to understand the full implications of the change from the so-called social market economy to neo-liberalism and to be able to cope with that. This current change of values re-structures society and does not even stop at the individual level. Those who do not recognise the changes at the right time or who are not prepared to react to them fall rapidly behind. The results are often frustration, illness and depression. Only those who understand the new rules of the game have a chance of achieving something. Either one is in favour of the new system and participates in the distribution of social and economic goods or one is against it and is actively engaged in resistance. Many keep a low profile and wait for the next round of changes. However, those who miss the point in time for action will be run over. It is only with a conscious positioning for or against the system that one is again

able to assume responsibility for one's actions. One changes from being the victim to being the power shaper. But this decision can only be taken by those who understand the game (Bauer-Jelinek, 2007, p. 45).

It is in this sense that we must return to the beginning of this chapter and ask Shouten/Watling the question: "What are we going to do, and why?"

1.3 Values and social behaviour

Throughout life and within the framework of individual experience and socialisation every person develops their own hierarchy of values. Is fun more important than responsibility? Is success more important than time? The individual hierarchy of values is ordered with reference to patterns of collective values and every person judges his world on this basis. What one likes and what seems to be less worthy of striving for or even what one dislikes corresponds to the inner hierarchy of values. This is also true in the selection of brands, (media) products and ideas. We chose certain brands with the aim of creating harmony with our hierarchy of values. In the process we are striving for inner balance and are seeking agreement and harmony. It is from these elements that we order our personal goals. Values form as a result of processes of socio-cultural development and change within a society and are thus subject to continuous change.

"Values give our judgments a trajectory towards acceptance or rejection. Moreover, they provide the criteria by means of which we judge something aesthetically as beautiful or ugly; morally as good or bad and epistemologically as true or false" (AG Soziologie, 1999, p. 32).

Thus values serve to compensate insecurity, they give the individual security and support. People in Western democracies live in a world in which brands embodying values make a significant contribution to the satisfaction of personal needs (goals). For us these goals have a value. People do not (or rather cannot) assume just any stance and thus contradict their own values. The conflict of aims that thereby occurs can be seen in the diagram below. It is taken from a study with the title "Banken im Werte-Fokus der 'Winning Generation'" undertaken by the Axel Springer Verlag, HÖRZU 1999. The study examined the value horizon of the target group called the 'winning generation' as well as the communicated value horizon of various banks. The study is of special interest because what is shown here is a central model of the media advertising and lifestyle industries that has proven its worth as an apparently successful concept in everyday communication processes with consumers.

Values and Conflict of Aims

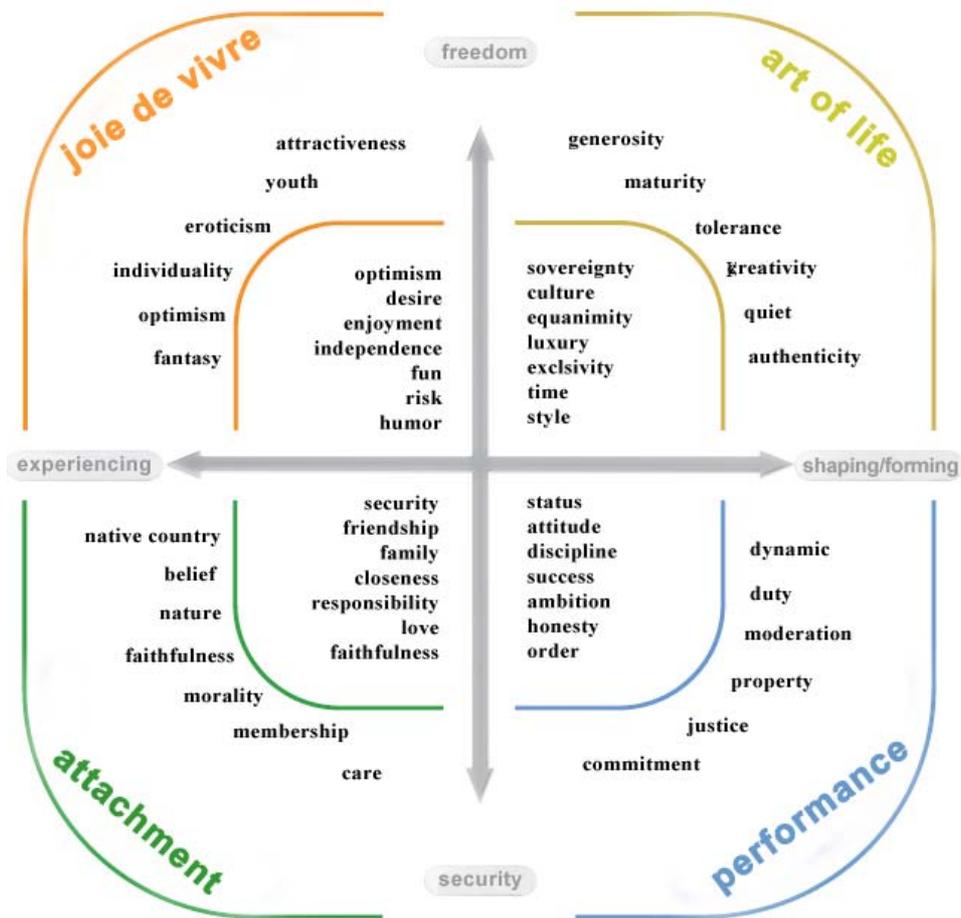


Illustration 3: Banks in the value focus of the “Winning Generation”. HÖRZU 1999

Education and teaching always reflect the fact that social as well as individual actions are guided by ideas of what is desirable and worth striving for. Here, too, values do not represent the objective qualities of things but instead follow historical and culturally specific lines that are both shaped and alterable. “Because values are not simply givens and unalterably valid but are lived, reflected, accepted, changed or replaced by a new sense of values, education and teaching are obliged to give young people the opportunity to acquire their own life values and an individual sense of values. That also includes opening up to the realisation that value orientation is relative and that in social and moral problems there is a life praxis that does not want to retreat from the valid claims that values make. In this sense value orientation excludes a dogmatic mediation of values. It also opposes, however, arbitrariness and disorientation because through them the individual would be denied conditions in which the possibility of reasonable discourse and consensus about value orientation could take place” (Schaub/Zenke, 2007, p. 701).

At this point the important role given to the values in the background of media-mediated communication also becomes clear : *media literacy*—and media competence too—is concerned, therefore, with the reflective handling of cultural codes and media symbols, intercultural aspects of media-mediated communication, epistemological and reality theory conceptualisations as well as the integration of historical, social and gender-differentiated approaches. Whether this ambitious programme can actually be realised within the framework of the *media literacy awards* are something that the following quantitative analysis will attempt to clarify.

“In the age of the media and information society, media education is fundamental for an individual’s active participation in the cultural and political life of the society, it is a significant foundation for freedom of speech and information and is thus education in democratic politics” [W033]. *media literacy* means understanding the game and playing it according to the rules.

1.4 Cultural Turn

The *media literacy awards [mla]* and the website mediamanual.at associated with them form a core that unifies two traditions – the project method and constructivism. The project method that, from the beginning of the twentieth century, gained increasing importance due to its American proponents J. Dewey and W. H. Kilpatrick. Both of them attempted to make the connection between democratisation and learning in schools. Thought and action were to be preserved by problem-oriented thinking and doing it with a locus in reality. Since the Thirties learning in projects has become established in education in various forms and variants. It is now a fixed element of a lived learning environment. From the source literature Horst Schaub and Karl G. Zenker summarise the following criteria for project oriented lessons:

- “1. The starting point for projects are, generally speaking, situational opportunities and concrete conceptual formulations taken from the lived reality of the pupils (situation, subject, social and pupil orientation).
2. The objective is the cooperative and concrete working out of the problem and task in reality (orientation of product and action).
3. The organisation of the objective, planning, carrying out and evaluating the project work is undertaken by teachers and pupils together (self-organisation and joint responsibility).
4. Instead of exclusively specialist courses, priority is given to problem-oriented, interdisciplinary, integrative processes of learning and working (Interdisciplinarity, teacher cooperation/teamwork, extramural skills).
5. Cognitive, social, affective and motor requirements and performance are linked (holistic experiences and realities along with networked thinking in complex contexts).

6. Practical applications and solutions to problems are field-tested in order that individuals are able to comprehend the sense and social meaning of learning (sense and meaning of acts).

7. The end of the project can come about by slowing to a stop, failure, a review or a celebratory completion by means of a publication, exhibition, performance or action (meta-interaction, scrutiny of product and work)” (Schaub/Zenke, 2007, p. 514).

This is a precise description of the matrix of possible and observed project forms in the *media literacy awards [mla]*. The second important element in the context of project work is located in the general tradition of constructivism. Here, however, it is in the form of social constructivism (Ken Gergen) and/or in the form of interactionist constructivism (Kersten Reich) which replaces the individualistic view of constructivist theory with the idea that at heart the construction of the world is not individual but social. This takes into account the living environment, the social and cultural context and attempts to reflect thereon. This shifts negotiations as to meaning into the centre of educational intervention and thereby connects up with the tradition of *Cultural Studies*.²

“Social constructionism counters the established individualist vision of the self by emphasising the cultural practices of the self. In its critical reflection on ‘mainstream’ science it establishes a proof that allegedly objective knowledge is historically and linguistically contingent. It shows what, in the era of globalisation, it can mean for a science of the psychological to give up culture-centred ‘universalism’ and to understand psycho-social phenomena and functions as being always dependent on culturally determined meanings. At the same time it sets itself the goal of bearing in mind questions of inequality and power” (Zielke, 2007, S. 13).

Connected with project oriented learning, theories concerning situated learning (Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger amongst others) are also of importance. These contradict the assumption that knowledge can be transmitted in a hierarchical form from the teacher to the pupil. Here, too, learning represents a process of negotiated meaning. The basic components of a free culture is participation and a willingness to share knowledge(Lessig). In “Soziale Konstruktion und pädagogische Praxis” Kenneth J. Gergen suggests that we keep in mind the following: “Constructionists see all claims to knowledge as being initially embedded in special communities which determine meaning. An unavoidable result of this is that various knowledge groups favour specific visions of what is good – for example the continuous improvement of conditions (perfection), materialism before spiritualism, ‘rationality’ before ‘feeling’, individualism before collectivism. In this sense knowledge hierarchies fit in with totalitarian-

² Radical constructivism stands in opposition to this representing first and foremost a critique of naive realism.

ism. Or, to paraphrase Foucault (1979, 1980), the spread of knowledge expands the power relationships in which the user is, in the final analysis, like a pawn in a chess game. [. . .] Seen from the constructionist standpoint, however, categories of knowledge are primarily useful for those who are situated within a specific area of expertise. They place the community of knowledge workers in the position of being able to create something according to the conditions of their own tradition. Although there is much to be said in favour of these traditions, educational processes that are defined within disciplines are deeply problematic. [. . .] When students turn to the burning questions of their time they are not held back by the paucity of tools in a restricted thematic area. Instead they can roam all areas that are necessary and related to their goals – they can plunder, borrow, liberate, annex, combine, reformulate and mix; whatever is necessary for the most effective result” [W034].

There is no doubt that Kenneth Gergen’s argumentation is also a heavy blow for the scientifically-motivated specialty of media education. A glance at the “Jahrbuch 6, Medienpädagogik – Standortbestimmung einer erziehungswissenschaftlichen Disziplin” appears to confirm that in the continuous circle of specialty and deep-rooted traditions there is a mixture of valuable scientific appraisals and insights. However, at the same time they also appear to dissolve in different directions. Theo Hug proposes a diagnoses: “On the other hand convergences become apparent that may be regarded as changes – from victims who need protection to competent users; turning from a control-centred orientation to one of action; towards aspects and dimensions of media skills in the sense of prominent target values and relevance formulas; from the concentration on children and young people to taking account of all age groups; from an orientation biased towards the humanities and arts to one that leans towards media, social and cultural sciences (including cultural studies) as well as from disciplinary and international orientations” (Hug, 2007, p. 10 ff).

Generally speaking it is difficult to assess to what extent educators—while preparing or during the project work itself—integrate scientific media educational calls ‘from the wings’ into their practices. However, in 2007 the computer and, above all, the internet may be regarded as standard tools used in preparing lessons. That means that an information transfer is likely and possible. In the classroom situation itself the computer is still not a standard tool for every pupil. In addition there is the much quoted change from Web 1.0 to 2.0—to *user generated content*—that throws up many questions. “Previously, at a time when media were scarce and methods of reproduction costly, making media available was an important and typical element of educational ambition. [. . .] In the internet age the meaning of this ‘passion for collecting’ has become relativised since much of this material is already available in the web, perhaps on the teacher’s website or that of the school or is buried somewhere in the far

reaches of the web where it is not easy to find” (Kerres, 2006, p. 6). Michael Kerres concludes, therefore, “in the context of e-learning, ‘gateways’ to the web should be opened as signposts, so to say, that have their own contents, rather than offering hermetically sealed teaching and learning materials” (ibid).

One culture that has become visible on the web level and that has received much attention as a “free culture” (Lessig, 2004) is the “open source” movement [W035]. Here the willingness to share knowledge is regarded as a central aspect of a democratic knowledge society. While a kind of revolution has taken place in and with the web, for the real moulding of our biological existence one question (amongst others) remains: how can teaching be structured according to constructionist theory in schools and classrooms? This remains an open question and one which is often explored and re-written by people themselves in the form of models and projects.

In conclusion I would like to quote Kenneth J. Gergen again. In “Social Construction and Pedagogical Practice” he describes an initiative by Claire Eiselen who developed the following scenario for gifted pupils. It is presented here as a kind of metaphor and as *carte blanche*:

“Small groups begin each year with their teacher in an empty classroom. There are as yet no books, no papers, no curriculum. Nothing will enter the room except by way of a student’s bringing it. The meaning of things comes from the people bearing and using them. The value of ideas comes in the same way. Ideas and imaginings emerge with the youth and some of these begin to coalesce into projects. Life together begins to need some guidelines. Small groups begin to construct these; larger groups can critique them. Meanwhile projects and ideas begin to proliferate and out of these a larger cultural whole slowly emerges. By the end of the year the room is packed with student-designed items that speak movingly of the human experience while emerging from their constructed culture within our own human community.”[W033].

1.5 Evaluation of the projects for the *media literacy award [mla] 2007*

Thematic spectrum of the prize-winning projects 2007

Almost without exception the thematic spectrum of the *media literacy awards [mla] 2007* integrates phenomena from everyday culture. The enjoyment of experimentation, of discovery, in questions and questioning, is common to all prize winners. Here, for the record, is a catalogue of the subjects dealt with in the prize-winning projects from 2007:

Fantasy worlds in which very different life forms meet each other (*Animalandia*). A digital re-working of bags and posters (*Ausstellung 18*). Time as the subject of a film (*Eine Einstellung zur Zeit*). A diary in a staccato rhythm (*Filmtagebuch Diagonale 07*). The first edition of a brand new school magazine with modern, provocative posters and an unusual web presentation (*Flooo*). Culturally determined differences and approaches to life taking into account world religions (*Gewand und Glaube*). Intercultural perception of foreigners by 32 pupils from seven different nations (*Heimat.welt.cd*). Ironic animated film on climatic change posing the question: what makes life worth living? (*Homo Sapiens*). The subject of television and advertising ran for a year with four classes and in various subject areas (*Medien rund um uns*). How does each media work? What effort is connected with that? What does the cost-benefit relationship look like? Which medium do I prefer to work with? Which is more difficult for me? (*Medienmatrix*). One open-air class was concerned with all of the senses and they documented their results. (*Mit dem Rocking Wurm durchs Web*). Recognising, understanding and assessing connections and “truths” in documentary film (*L.E.B.E.*). A fairy tale to help learning English playfully, written and illustrated. (*Mr. Egg*). You didn't wash your hands, did you? (*Platz zum Wasserlassen*). A walk through the Austrian newspaper landscape: democracy must be worth a forest of different papers! (*Printmedienkonzentration*). Transformation of one of the oldest works of children's literature into the present world of personal experience. (*Struwwelpeter*). Building digital dream houses: that looks more real than reality! (*Traumzimmer*). How we decided to write a book, publish and distribute it (*What is scho normal?*) [W036]

All of the prize-winning projects from 2001 to 2007 are integrated, on-going, into a Wiki and also published on the *mediamanual.at* website. All the projects that were sufficiently documented when they were submitted will also be added to the Wiki and will be available to the *media literacy community* – password protected. At the present time the best practice collection includes the documentation of several hundred project.

1.6 Methods

Asking question is a social process and as such it is neither completely predictable nor controllable. In the same way an analysis of content with statements about social reality can only partially capture them (cf. Atteslander, 2006, p. 161). I am therefore aware that the process of realising the answers and their assessment exhibits characteristics that are artificial and thus describe constructs. In this connection I found it important to structure the theoretical section in such a way that the course of events leading to the constructions and abstractions becomes intelligible.

The quantitative part includes:

- An overall depiction of the *media literacy awards [mla]* in the form of general quantitative data (see chapters 10.3.1. and 10.3.2.)
- The evaluation of a questionnaire: project leaders were asked to answer specific questions (see chapter 10.3.3.)

The qualitative part includes:

- A categorised analysis of content on the basis of a catalogue of criteria derived from the basic guidelines for media education (see chapter 10.4.1.)
- A categorised analysis on the basis of questions derived from cognitive science that examine whether conditions existed within the framework of the *media literacy awards [mla]* that in all probability “enabled learning to take place” (see chapter 10.4.2.)
- A cross analysis as to how far the eight EU key skills were touched on during the project work (see chapter 10.4.3.)

1.7 Quantitative Evaluation

1.7.1 General data 2007 – *media literacy award [mla]* / *mediamanual*

2500 (mostly Austrian) schools and subscribers to the *mediamanual* newsletter are informed twice a year about the *media literacy award [mla]*. Once a year the Austrian provincial school boards are made aware of the *[mla]*. Registration may take place at any time during the year. The deadline for submissions during the current school year is the last day on which schools close at the year’s end. There are no other PR measures.

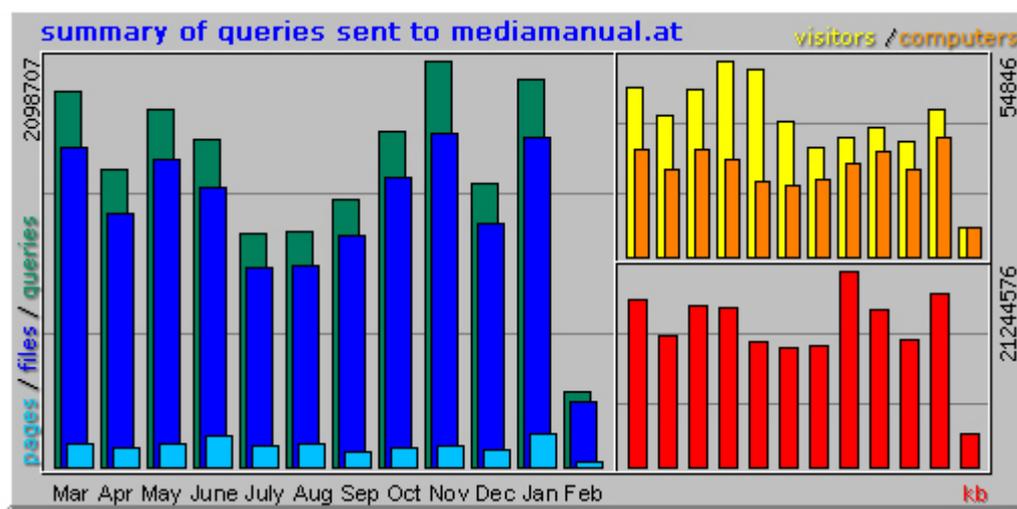


Illustration 4: Queries sent to mediamanual.at in the period March 2007 – January 2008

The mediamanual.at website registers an average of around 30,000 visitors per month. Google Page Ranking = 5.

Project support

During the *media literacy awards* participants can apply for project support. There is the possibility of asking for media educationalists and technical support for schools in the greater Vienna area. A complete video studio in the Ministry of Education can be used free of charge. In 2007, 15 projects were supported in this way.

Ascertaining the prize-winners

After the end of the school year in June 2007 all submitted projects were registered, all materials catalogued and filed. In the following weeks all 249 projects were assessed by a pre-jury. These were evaluated and reduced to potential prize-winners. In this way 40 projects were identified. A specialist jury consisting of five people then determined the prize-winning projects from those 40.

Presentation and Awarding the Prizes

The closing event took place in November 2007 in *Dschungel* in the Vienna Museumsquartier. One project leader and five pupils were invited from each of the prize-winning projects to present their project and receive their prizes during the three day event. The event was designed as a media festival by and for young people and offered the chance for participants to get to know each other. 700 people visited the closing event.

1.7.2 Quantitative Results of the Entire Project

A total of 249 projects were submitted. The international projects were not included in the quantitative evaluation since the primary concern of the survey was the situation in Austria. This gives a total of 212 projects (N=212). The quantitative analysis of the 212 submitted projects was carried out according to category, gender of the project head, type of school and province in Austria.

Frequency Distribution in Categories

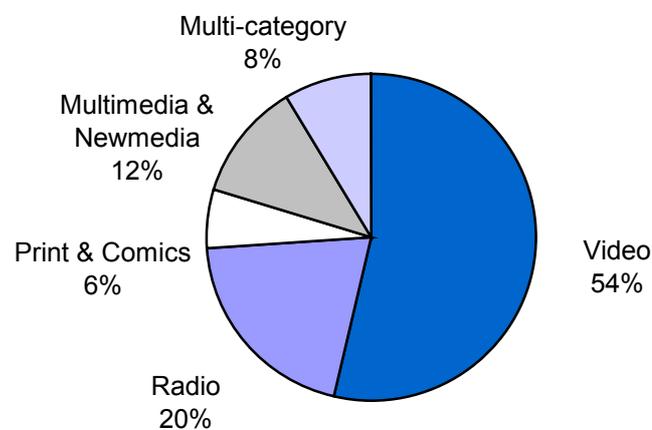


Illustration 5: Frequency distribution in categories (N=212)

The frequency distribution of submissions in the various categories tends to reflect the image of the *media literacy awards [mla]* and says relatively little about the popularity of a particular category. Project support in the category of radio takes place within the ORF school radio 1476. This explains the popularity ratings of the category radio in the *media literacy award [mla]*. So too with video projects – this can also be traced back to a number of institutional offers of project support. That allows one to draw the conclusion that institutional project support has a positive effect on the number of projects carried out in Austrian schools.

Project heads according to gender as a percentage

What is the distribution of project heads according to gender?

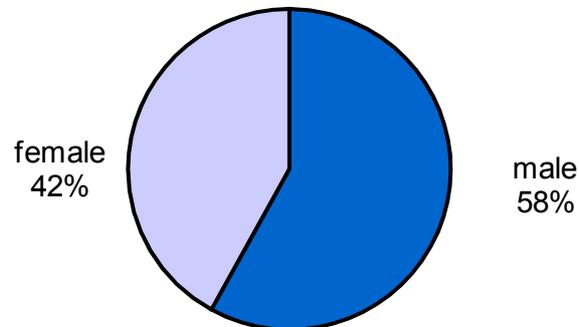


Illustration 6: Project heads according to gender as a percentage (N=212)

The majority of teachers in Austria are women. The results suggest that predominantly male educators feel themselves addressed by the *media literacy awards [mla]* programme compared to their female counterparts.

1.7.3 Quantitative Results of the survey by questionnaire

Survey by questionnaire during the project work

249 projects were submitted to the *media literacy awards* in 2007. Of these 212 were from Austria. The heads of the projects were asked to complete a questionnaire, to attach it to the submission and to provide project documentation. A total of **44 completed questionnaires (N=44)** from Austria were returned. The subject of the survey was the expenditure of time, the priorities while the project was on-going, the educational goals and/or organisational conditions in the school and the technical pre-conditions.

Total expenditure of time

How much time, both during school hours and extracurricular time, was required to carry out the project?

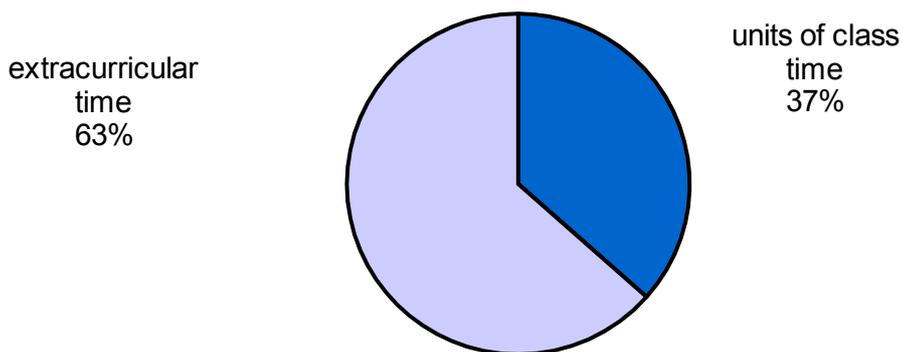


Illustration 9: Total expenditure of time (N=44)

This shows that project leaders used more time overall in the preparation and execution of the project. That permits the conclusion that the educators were highly motivated.

Teaching unit time required

How many teaching units were required per project?

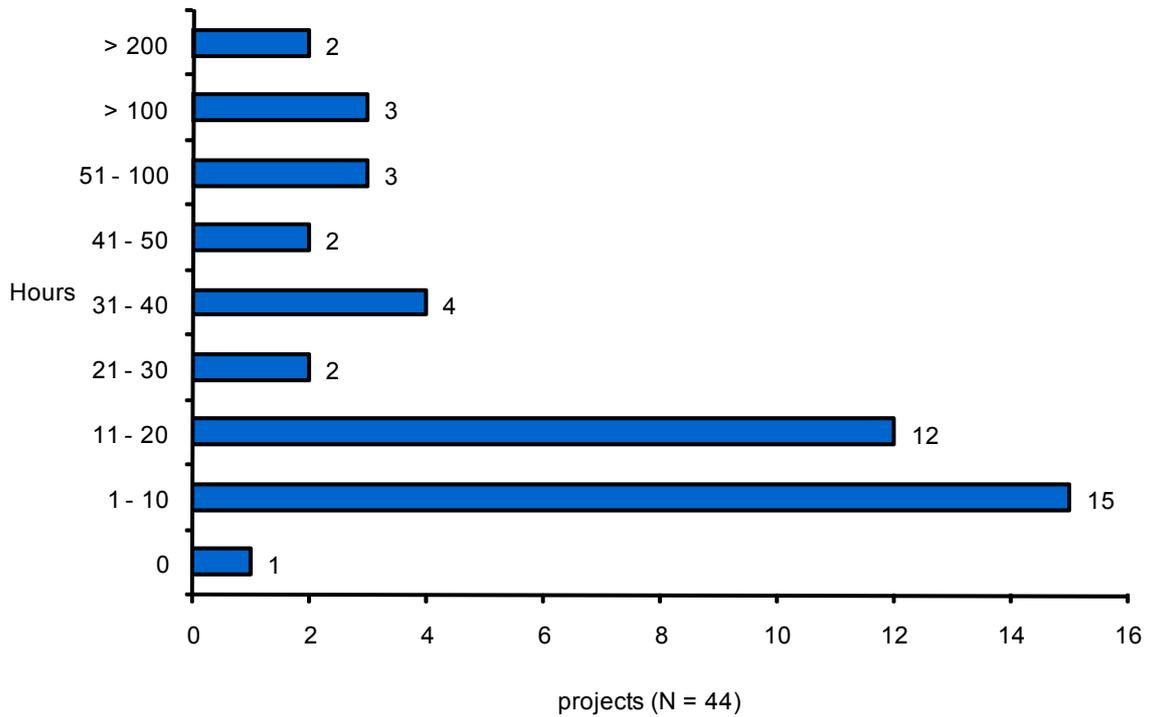


Illustration 10: Teaching units required (N=44)

The majority of the projects required 12–15 teaching units of time. Those projects which required a great number of hours were those which consisted of multi-part or multi-class projects or even involved an entire school.

Extracurricular time required

How many hours of extracurricular time were required?

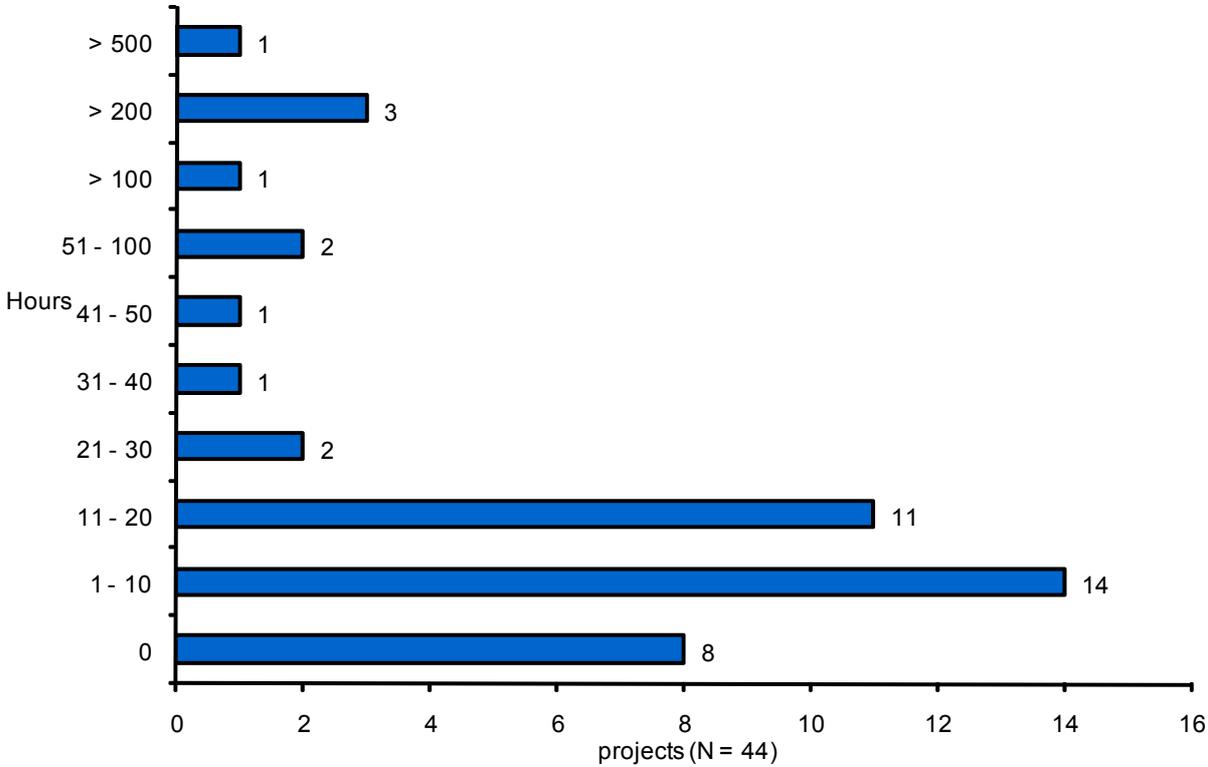


Illustration 11: Extracurricular time required (N=44)

In order to carry out a project successfully extracurricular participation is also required of the pupils. In the main between 8 and 14 free-time hours were spent working on the project. Those projects with a high expenditure of time are those that consist of a number of multi-part or multi-class projects or even involved an entire school.

Fixing priorities – responsibilities

What do project leader see as the priorities in project work ? The following graphs are based on 44 questionnaires (scale: 0 – 6 points). The maximum point score is 264 (N=264).

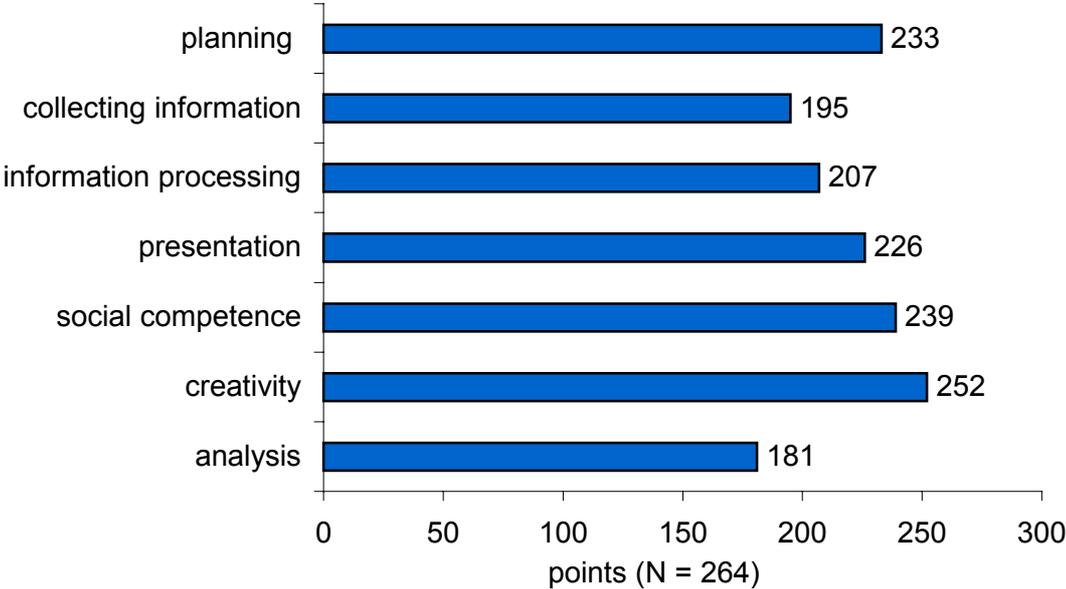


Illustration 12: Fixing priorities – responsibilities

A critical analysis of their own project work or a critical analysis of mass media phenomena were implicitly integrated into the project work by project leaders though it often did not form the explicit core of the project work itself. For the majority of the projects encouraging creativity took the foreground.

Fixing priorities – media education

What do project leaders see as priorities in the context of media education? (scale: 0–6 points).

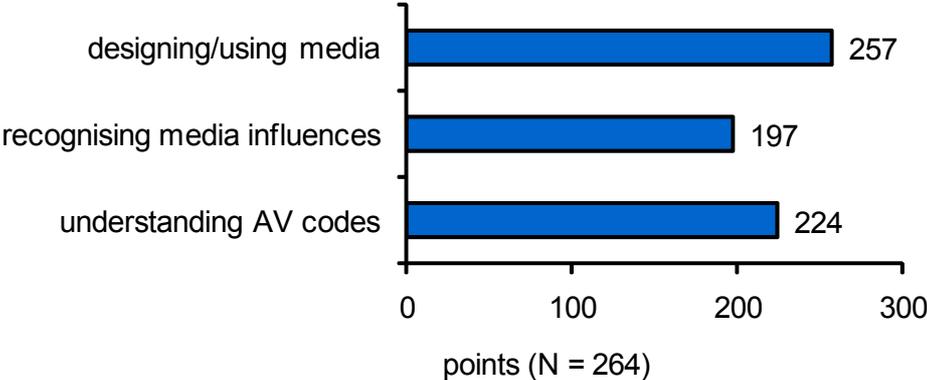


Illustration 13: Fixing priorities – media education

Within the framework of the *media literacy awards [mla]* project work, project leaders considered media design/use as having a high level of media educational value. Examining mass media phenomena was also accorded importance. It was somewhat more important for the project leaders to encourage understanding of audio-visual codes.

Organisational conditions in schools

How would you assess organisational conditions in the school?

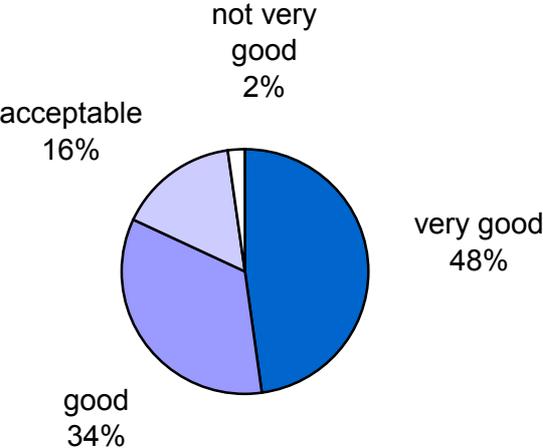


Illustration 14: **Organisational conditions in schools** (N=44)

The majority of educationalists assess the organisational conditions in their schools as good or very good, only 2 per cent were less satisfied with the organisational framework in their schools.

Technical preconditions

How would you assess technical conditions?

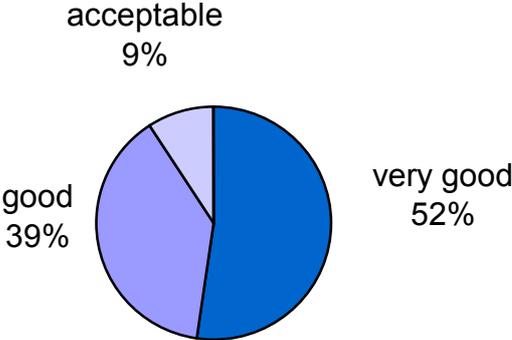


Illustration 15: Technical conditions (N=44)

The assessment of technical conditions in the schools was mainly positive. Nine per cent of those in the study found that the conditions in their schools were mediocre. There were no incidences where the technical conditions were regarded as inadequate.

1.8 Qualitative Evaluation - General questions of the jury evaluation sheet

Content-related aspects, documentation and best practice usability

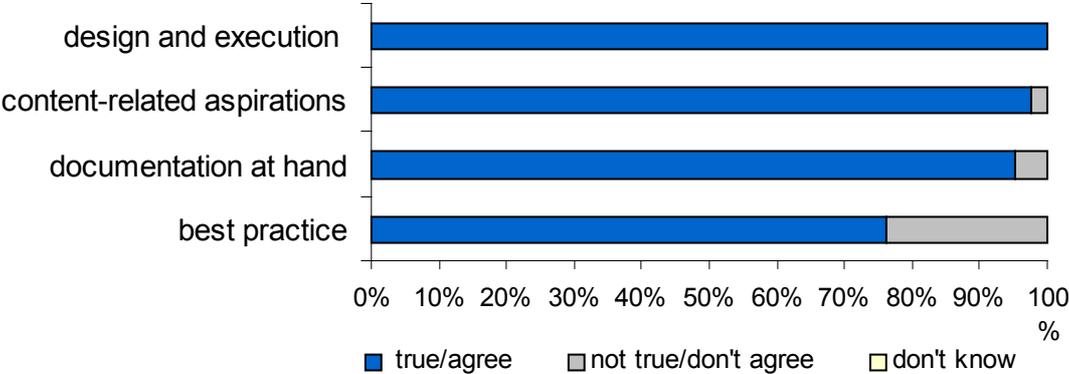


Illustration 16: Questions in the jury assessment sheet about content and documentation

It is noticeable that in all projects the focus is on an accomplished and clear design and media execution. The overall quality can be assessed as exceptionally high. Aspirations as far as content and dramaturgy are concerned are equally high and expectations are, in the main, fulfilled. Accompanying documentation is, as a rule, very comprehensive, extensive and care is taken with it. It can easily be seen that much time and effort has been invested in it.

Categorised questions in the jury assessment sheet

The catalogue of questions is derived from the basic guidelines for media education. The research questions based on the basic decree regulating media education are intended to show those aspects of content and project implementation defined by media education.

- F01 Does the project promote participants communication skills and their ability to make judgments?
- F02 Does the project promote creativity and enjoyment in “one’s own creation”?
- F03 Does the project serve subject-specific goals (content in specialist areas)?
- F04 Does the project introduce a critical and reflective use of media?
- F05 Which skills were in the foreground during the project?
- F05a Technical abilities
- F05b Structuring abilities
- F06 Are one’s own role expectations, communication needs and deficits examined?
- F07 Are the structure, the means of production and the possible effects of individual media thematised?
- F08 Is consideration given to presenting identical content in different ways thus bringing about a different effect?
- F09 Does the project reflect on cliché representations of social and gender-specific roles?
- F10 Does the present project bring together practical activity with critical reflection?
- F11 “Media are never neutral containers for information”. Are terms such as ‘truth’ and ‘authenticity’ thematised?
- F12 Is the project appropriate for the age of the participants? Is the project oriented on the experience and possibilities (in real life surroundings) of the project participants?
- F13 Does the project bring together subject-specific and interdisciplinary aspects?
- F14 Was the ability to express feelings and thoughts verbally and non-verbally increased during the project?
- F15 Did the project enable the participants to gain experience in organising, planning and designing? Additional question:
- F15a Could this experience of organising, planning and designing be connected with cognitive insights?

Categorised questions in the jury assessment sheet – diagram

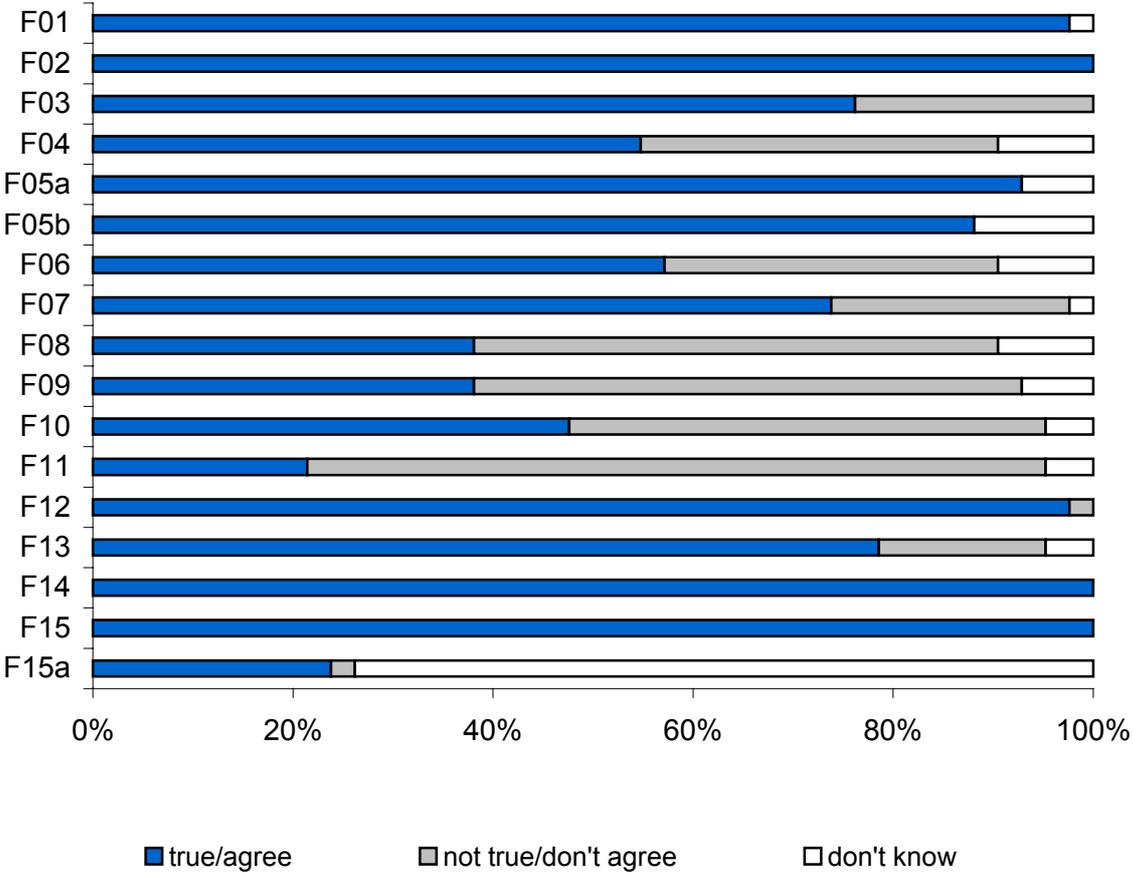


Illustration17: Categorised questions in the jury assessment sheet

An analysis on the basis of the catalogue of criteria derived from the basic decree concerning media education resulted in the following overall picture:

Running through all the results is a characteristic that indicates pleasure in one’s own creation and creativity. The media results express feelings and ideas both verbally and non-verbally. The on-site project work could well have enabled the participants to gather experience in the areas of organisation, design and communication. The individual points in the diagram above can also be interpreted in this spirit. That media never represent “neutral containers for information” and terms such as ‘truth’ and ‘authenticity’ are the points that can be least deduced from the documentation.

1.8.1 Research question: Was learning made possible?

Questions about the conditions for successful learning. The questions were constructed on the a basis derived from the cognitive sciences.

- A1 Were circumstances that might prevent learning eliminated e.g. fear?
(Group work)
- A2 Was the situation constructed so as to make learning possible and to encourage it?
(Independent and collective learning)
- A3 Were emotions stimulated??
(Someone who is indifferent learns with difficulty)
- A4 Were previous experiences and acquired skills included?
(Basic requirements for effective learning)
- A5 Was testing out possibilities encouraged?
(Creativity)
- A6 Was experimentation encouraged?
(Research)
- A7 Were there possibilities to test out conclusions?
(Experience oriented learning)
- A8 Was the negotiation of meaning stimulated?
- A9 Was the recognition of abstract and symbolic connections encouraged?
- A10 Was informal learning combined with learning in school thus integrating skills from daily life into the classroom situation?
- A11 To what extent was praxis-oriented teaching, i.e. constructivist methodology, used?
- A12 Was freedom of speech experienced implicitly or explicitly?

Was learning made possible? – diagram

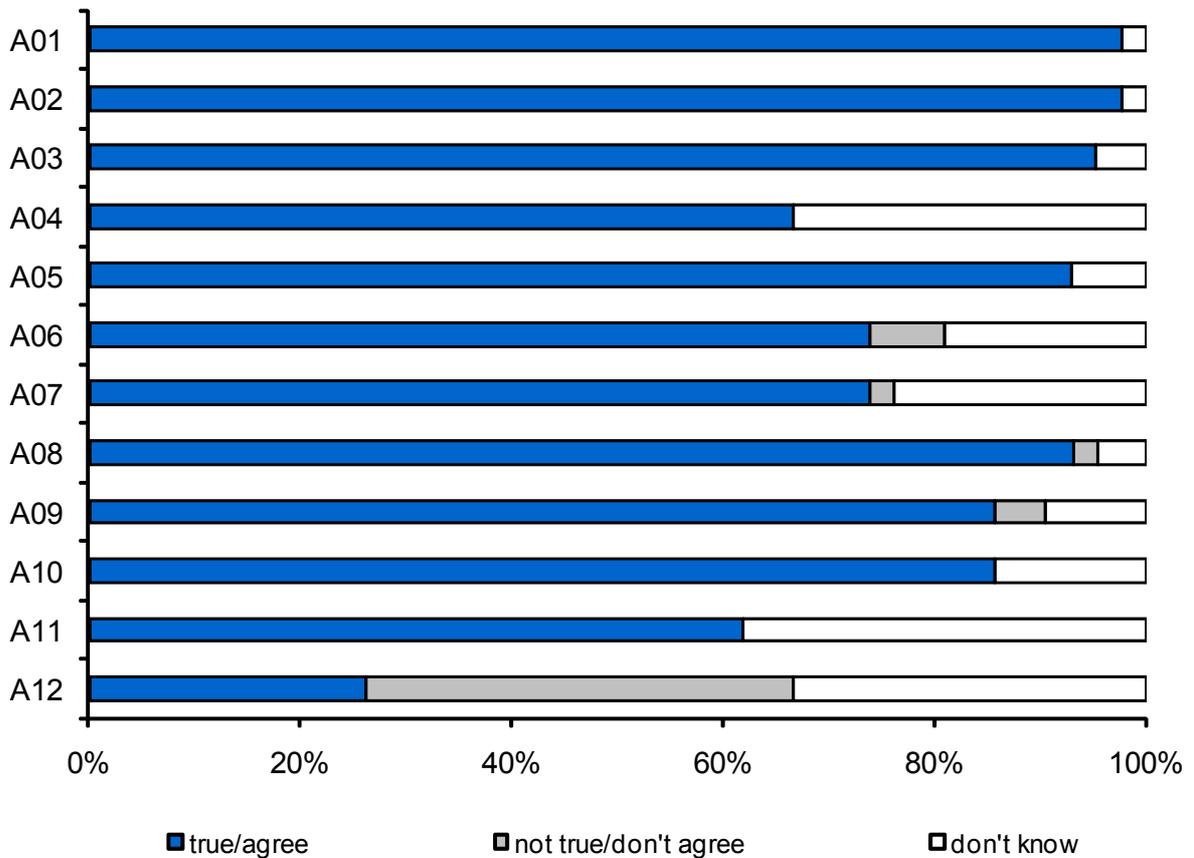


Illustration 18: Was learning made possible?

In general, on the basis of the available data it can be assumed that project work was carried out as with as little fear as possible and that the most important hindrance to learning was thereby eliminated. The educators and pupils organised and took part in situations that encouraged and made learning possible. The project documentation described testing out possibilities in many different ways right up to the final result and shows that experimentation was encouraged.

1.8.2 Research questions and EU key skills

Is it possible to make cross connections to the eight EU key skills on the basis of questions A1 – A12 and F1 – F15a?

- C 1 Were skills in the native language fostered?
- C 2 Were skills in foreign languages fostered?
- C 3 Were mathematical skills and basic natural science and technical skills fostered?
- C 4 Were computer skills fostered?
- C 5 Were learning skills fostered?
- C 6 Were interpersonal, intercultural and social skills and citizenship skills fostered?
- C 7 Were entrepreneurial skills fostered?
- C 8 Were cultural skills fostered?

EU key skills – diagram

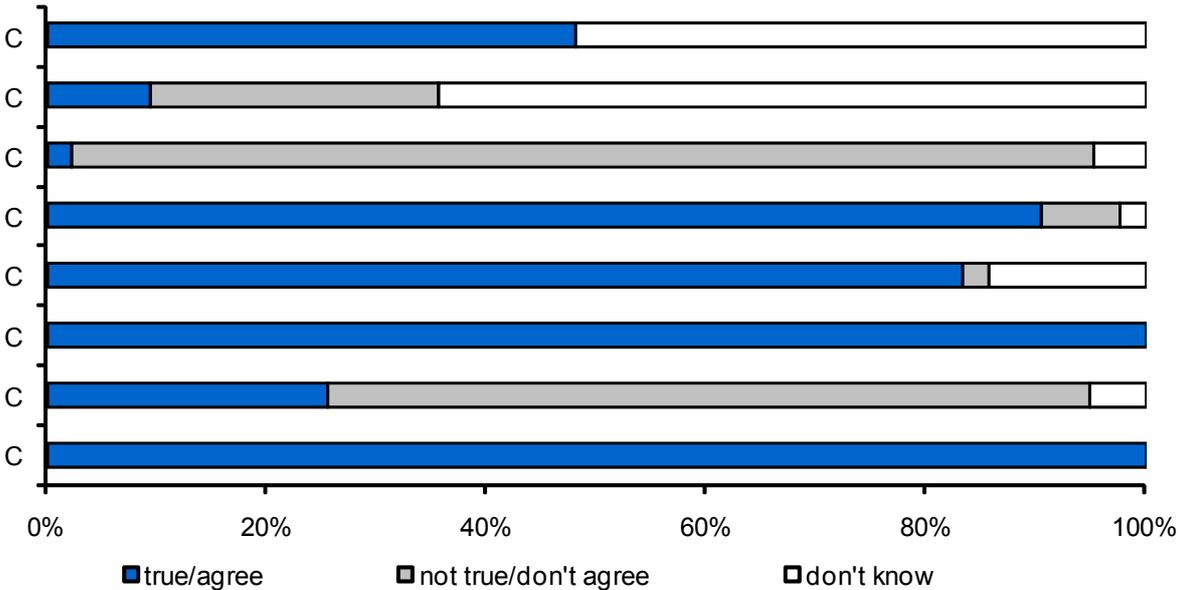


Illustration 19: EU key skills

An analysis of how far the eight EU key skills were touched on during the media projects revealed that cultural skills as well as social and computer skills were encouraged to a large extent. Mathematical, natural science and technological skills were almost not featured at all.

2 Summary

The analysis carried out during the *media literacy awards [mla]* confirmed a hypothesis that assumed that the climate of learning aimed for within the framework of the *[mla]* would encourage learning and this also confirmed the results of a study of the *British Educational Communications and Technology Agency* (BECTA, 2004). The results of this pilot study (Evaluation Report of the Teaching and Learning with Digital Video Assets Pilot 2003–2004) show that essentially three main areas are promoted in practical media work: learning, creativity and information and communication technology skills. [W038]

According to this study practical media work with digital video encourages collaborative learning, the division of labour in teamwork, critical reflection, the self-assurance of pupils e.g. by presenting the group's work, developing and carrying out projects, good practice experience e.g. by presenting results, pupil's creativity, the participation of all pupils, communication skills, insight into the creative process, negotiation and social skills, project management, preferred methods of learning and guided group work (cf. BECTA, 2004).

The results of this study also confirm my investigation that unearthed congruences and, in addition, the following results:

- Circumstances that hindered learning were removed e.g. fear (group work).
- Situations were designed to make learning both possible encourage same (independent and collective learning).
- Emotion is encouraged (whoever is indifferent will have difficulties in learning).
- Experience and skills that have already been acquired are included. (Basic precondition for effective learning).
- Testing out possibilities is encouraged (creativity).
- The desire to experiment is strengthened (research).
- Media tools are tried out (practice-oriented learning).
- Negotiating meaning is stimulated (cultural codes).
- The recognition of abstract and symbolic links is fostered.

These are all good conditions for successful learning. In addition the study provided the following results:

- Informal learning and (situated) learning in school are combined within project work and thus the skills from everyday life are incorporated into the classroom situation.
- Activity-oriented teaching, constructivist methodology, was used almost without exception.

- Freedom of speech is encountered implicitly.
- Media projects encourage creativity, cooperation, opinion-forming processes, the eight EU key skills as well as technical and social skills.

Conclusion

The full version of this study (in German) shows that terms such as creativity and critical thought represent an important part of our governmentality. That in the term 'education' the dispositiv of power is just as much in evidence as in 'skill' and 'qualification'. This is something I have attempted to point out in the course of the present study.

Media education and media culture are really paradigmatic terms in our present social order because they embody and express to perfection the components of the change of values deriving from a neo-liberal economic order that in effect penetrate our minds and bodies. On the other hand the term media education sounds so old fashioned to our ears because education reminds us of the "the true, the good and the beautiful" of the nation state, a concept which, as part of the EU population, has almost become foreign to us. Globalisation and the inherent idea of a transcultural community of values forms the core of our age.

Media and their representations are the glue in a modern, technologised and very complicated world. The educational system is regarded as one of the most important key economic factors in order to remain competitive. Whoever fails to be successful here is threatened with downward social mobility and exclusion from the social processes of distribution. For the time being (?) the idea of a social market economy belongs to the past and what we are concerned with is climatic change, possibly as a result of industrialisation and individualisation. This is the world, our world and that of our children. The demands made of educators and the educational system are, as with other areas in society, on the rise. It is possible that what we need is an education that is also media education as a matter of course. The traditional disciplines will not only have to become interdisciplinarily active but, above all, will have to be bound into social processes in a way that is transdisciplinary. The glue for this are the media, the web points in one direction: cultural turn! "What were media?"³

³ "Was waren Medien?" [What were media?] was the title of a series of events by Claus Pias (University of Vienna) that were concerned with the virulence of the media question in historical, systematic and methodological respects [W039].

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