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Space for Media and Digital Literacy in the Context of Primary Education

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Abstract

The contribution focuses on current questions and issues in the area of mass media influence on the behaviour of pupils of a younger school age in Slovakia. It offers partial results of research that appeal not only to the importance of implementing media education into primary education, but also show the real status of teachers' readiness in the area of digital and media literacy. Research was quantitative-qualitative and in addition to the questionnaire method was realised interviews with headteachers of schools and focus interviews with the pupils. The aim of our research probing was to find out the contemporary state of the implementation of the media education into the education process as well as preparation of the teachers in the educational practices in regard to the specific sphere. Research is currently continuing to diagnose the digital literacy of teachers and future teachers in Slovakia.

Keywords: pupil, media education, teacher, readiness, primary education

Impact of mass media on the behaviour of a man and his customs has been shown in many researches. Mass media brought to the life of the contemporary man huge advantages, acceleration of communication but also many risks or negativities. Slovak educational system also reacted to these changes by implementation of media education to the state education program, whereby in the primary education it has taken place primarily as a sectional theme. Since 2008 when it started, many changes have occurred, we can observe first results of its implementation as well as issues connected with its implementation. The media education currently belongs among educations which are attached great importance.

Media education and primary school teacher

According to Brestovanský (2010, p. 17) the media education is not only critical reflective education but also “*education to competent and responsible media using: ability to look for and verify information, creation and convenient using of interactive web pages, behaviour in the anonymous environment of the Internet; creativity, pro-sociability but also discipline at the media utilisation – of mobile phones, videos, audio recordings*”, etc. Justness of the media education in the society is rising proportionally with the constant development of the communications technologies, with the possibilities of their utilisation and access to them but also with a great amount of offered media contents (Kostelanský, 2011). To be well oriented in a world full of various information is not easy. Developed literacy must overreach into the education process in order for pupils to know how to adopt the right attitude to various everyday problems (Vargová, 2013).

As McQuail (2009) states, new media go slowly out of the control of parents and society. The amount of media content is rising, regulation is decreasing and the threshold for what is considered to be acceptable was lowered. As a consequence it is possible that inconvenient media content and media violence will get to children more than up to know. In concordance with McQuail and other specialists (McLuhan, Postman, Toffler, Kerckhove, Berrou, Juszczuk, Vrabec, Petranová, Kačínová, etc.) many researches are showing that the age border when the children come to the contact with media and became their active users is decreasing relatively by rapid pace. The prevention issue against negative impact of media effect is proved by the implementation of the media education not only in the education but also in the family environment.

Last year many projects and activities which support enhancement of the implementation of the media education have been realised. It is in the sphere of formal as well as informal education. Among the big projects here belongs the foundation of *Centre of media literacy at Faculty of Mass Media Communication of The University of St. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava (IMEC)*, which significantly contributed to the orientation in the unexplored field of media impact as in particular their using by young people, primarily by pupils. Mainly in the sphere of informal education the project *Zodpovedne.sk* contributed to better orientation in the specific problems which focuses also more on the pupil age category of younger academic age. As this age is just the subject of our interest, as well as research, we agree there is still the lack of complex research oriented mainly on this age category while we meet increasingly more often with the problems arising by media impact in the praxis. For that reason we have decided to go more deeply to this problematics by project implementation which was in progress within the project VEGA implementation *Media literacy amongst the pupils of primary educations, in the context of the cooperation between the fami-*

ly and the school and now in project VEGA 1/0748/20 implementation *Research reflections on digital literacy of teachers in primary schools in the context of undergraduate training process and educational reality*. We also want to introduce partial research results in this article.

From the point of view of the school environment the activation of the teacher personality and his appeal on the pupil orientation in a media environment is the necessary aspect. The teacher's personality plays an irreplaceable role.

By the entering of new technology and innovation era the active access of the teacher to the vindicating and realisation of the targets of humanization and innovation of the teaching methods and forms of work in the primary education with the emphasis on human and aesthetic impact of the teacher on the pupils is needed. At the development of key competencies of the pupil the adequate level of the teacher's competencies has the important role. The most important task of every pedagogist, all the more teachers of First degree of primary school is to lead the small individual so that he will become in the future "*developed personality who manages himself*" (Kosová, 1998, p. 15).

The teacher needs to have competencies which help at education and in the overall activation on the pupil personality forming. Kasáčová and Kosová (2006) divide the teacher's competencies on the basis of the results of the expert group of the European commission (2002) in the European region into two groups, namely:

1) competencies relating to the teaching process (initial pupil characteristics, changing teaching conditions),

2) competencies relating to the teaching results where belong:

– competencies to the citizenship, being European and sustainable development;

– competencies for the learning society (where the digital literacy or the ability to solve problems, communication and cooperation are emphasized);

– competencies for the integration of the information and communications technologies into the teaching;

– competencies for the team work;

– competencies to the participation in the creation of the school curriculum, at evaluation;

– competencies for cooperation with the parents and social partners.

Here we meet not only with the competencies which are related to the using of information and communications technologies but in the context of which the acquiring of the skills in the sphere of digital literacy is emphasized and also by media literacy which is also related to the information literacy. In the context of media impact several competencies closely connected appear which are not mutually excluded, are rather complement and from the point of view of their definition as they are related together, they can not be presented separately. Appro-

vingly with our claim the *European commission* also states that the media literacy can not present itself separately as independent skill because it is a skill which involves next skills and forms of literacy as for example: reading and writing literacy, audiovisual, digital and informative literacy (Approaches...).

The teacher personality can not be substituted by the parent but we have to realise that in the modern bustling time the teacher of the primary education is with the child more often than busy parents therefore his responsibility at the development of the child personality for healthy and prosperous society is raising.

Irreplaceable Ness of the teacher's presence is indisputable. This was also the reason why we paid attention exactly to the teacher's impact in the sphere of media education. The teacher opinions themselves towards the media education in connection with his own media literacy are connected to it. If the teacher sufficiently realises the current problems which are related mainly to mass flow of information and frequent work with media, he will also certainly appeal to pupils for the prevention of the negative phenomena connected with them.

As the results of the realised research of Karasová have shown, pedagogists are satisfied with the realisation of the media education as the sectional theme. This attitude is often influenced by their unaccompanied attitude to media education and overall work with information and communications technologies because exactly here it is shown one of the main problems – non-informedness of the teachers in the differences between our mentioned literacies: informative, digital and media. From this research follows that a higher percentage of the teachers claim that only this man is concerned in media education who is really interested in it, eventually he perceives this need. Only almost 14.5% of the teachers of primary education think of the need to realise the media education by form of separate subject (Karasová, 2014). From our personal experience and also on the basis of our research we can conclude that the media education as sectional theme is at First degree of the primary schools realised in the minimal extent. In the case of many teachers the knowledge of the introduced problems is absent mainly in the context of understanding of the term information and communications technology and media literacy or media education. In regard to the informatization of the school system we perceive the tiredness of the teachers at the using of information and communications technology in the education process therefore when we ask whether they practise the media education, they often answer they are using it because the individual pedagogist uses the technique. These terms are thus considered for the synonym and from our point of view (and also from the point of view of the term of media literacy) we can not consider using any technical means, most often personal computer and interactive table for the de facto implementation of media education. As Kožuchová states, material means *“is the bearer of the content of the education process. By them the conditions for quicker acquisition of the new learning are created. With their support there is presumption that the pupil will remember adopted*

knowledge for a longer period” (Kožuchová, Šebeňová, Vargová, Pavelka, Stebila, 2011).

For the basis of the success of the development of the media literacy of the pupils at schools we can consider the strenuousness of the teachers for this sphere as well as the theoretic and practical preparation. For that reason we consider it important to look for the answers on these questions: How are the teachers prepared to practise media education at schools? Do they have enough knowledge and skills at the realisation of media education? How do they evaluate the preparation at high schools and their competencies? We posed these and similar questions which led us to the practising of next research directly at schools. For these reasons we decided to pay our attention to the teacher’s perception of the media education, mainly from the point of view of their experience and needs in the realisation of this subject. In the following part we want to introduce the contemporary state of the practising of the media education with the focus on the needs of the teacher of primary education.

Research probing

The aim of our research probing was to find out the contemporary state of the implementation of the media education into the education process as well as preparation of the teachers in the educational practices in regard to the specific sphere. The research was released in 2015–2017. Within the main research tools we have also used questionnaires of our own provenance, which were given to the teachers of the chosen primary schools. By questionnaires for teachers we were mapping the state of implementation of the media education, mainly preparation and competencies of the teachers in the sphere of the media education, we have been also finding out the opinions of the teachers on the realisation of the media education in primary education and on the methodics to the media education.

At the creation of the questionnaire structure we were also coming out of the following research questions:

1. *How do the teachers evaluate their preparation in the sphere of the realisation of the media education?*
2. *Are the teachers interested in the development of their competencies in the sphere of media education?*
3. *Is the media education in primary education from the teacher’s point of view needed?*

Sampling set

Sampling set was created by the teachers of the First degree of primary schools in Slovakia. The criterion for the choosing of the population into the set was the representation of the respondents from every county of Slovakia, namely from villages as well as from the towns. Sampling set was created by 151 teachers.

Research findings

In regard to the limited range of the article we will only mention the choice of acquired data and our basic findings.

We were interested in the attitude of the teachers on the fact how they evaluate their preparation (their knowledge, attitudes, skills) in the sphere of the media education in regard to its realisation in the educational process in the primary education.

Research question 1: *How do teachers evaluate their preparation in the sphere of the realisation of the media education?*

Respondents had the possibility within the specific item to evaluate their preparation for the implementation of the media education. In the evaluation it was mainly concerned with preparation within university study. The following table 1 brings these findings.

Table 1. Evaluation of the preparation of the teachers on the media education

uo01

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percenc
Valid ,0	3	2,0	2,0	2,0
1,0	66	43,7	43,7	45,7
2,0	15	9,9	9,9	55,6
3,0	35	23,2	23,2	78,8
4,0	7	4,6	4,6	83,4
5,0	25	16,6	16,6	100,0
Total	151	100,0	100,0	

In Table 1 we can see that the possibility with the highest countability represents those respondents who did not meet during their university preparation with the terms related to the media education or media literacy, what amounts to 43.7%, what can be considered for the relatively high number of respondents. It is also connected to the possibility 2 which represents the respondent group whose study did not prepare in the satisfactory extent for the teaching of the media education. Despite the evaluation of 23.2% respondents, that their study did not prepare them to the satisfactory extent for this sphere, information of media education would be useful for them. Only 16.6% respondents consider their preparation during the study in the specific sphere for the sufficient, whereby they also utilise the acquired knowledge in the practise. On the basis of mentioned results we can state there is an increasing need for quality preparation during university study also in the sphere of media education.

In connection with the mentioned findings we wanted to know whether the teachers are interested in the development of their competencies in the sphere of media education, which is our second research question.

Research question 2: *Are teachers interested in the development of their competencies in the sphere of media education?*

We find the answer on the second research question in the table which is related to the deepening of the knowledge and skills of the teachers in the sphere of media education.

Table 2. Answers of the respondents in regard to the school residency

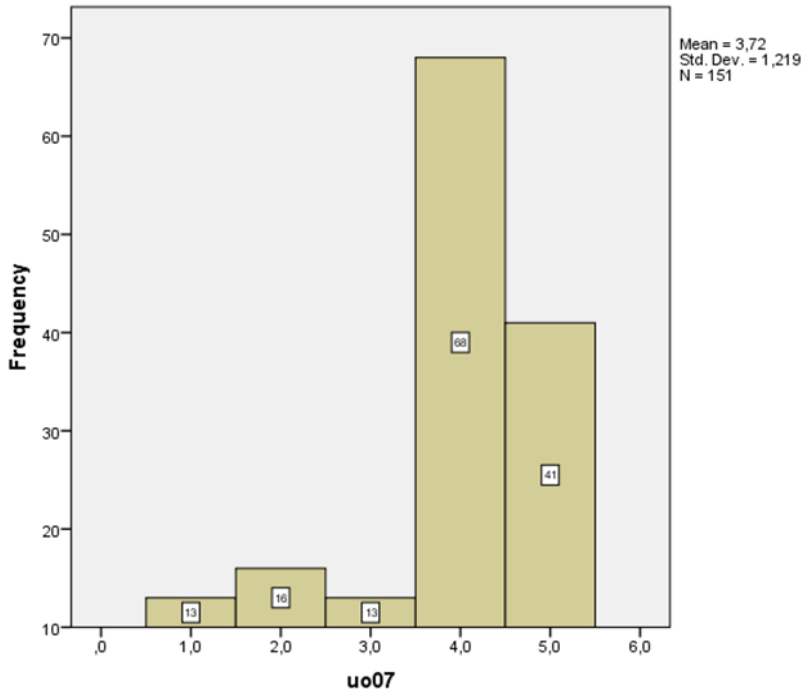
uo02 * u_mesto Crosstabulation

Count		u_mesto					Total
		1,0	2,0	3,0	4,0	5,0	
uo02	2,0	6	0	2	9	6	23
	3,0	16	2	6	29	41	94
	4,0	0	0	0	4	6	10
	5,0	2	1	1	10	6	20
	6,0	0	0	0	1	2	3
	7,0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Total	24	3	9	53	62	151

The mentioned sample indicates the extent of the dependency in regard to the place where the specific school is located. As we can see in Table 2, dependency in regard to the place is not confirmed. Self-education is the most often form of the deepening of the knowledge of the teachers in the sphere of the media education – in all categories (62.3%). The second most often form is the participation in the courses (15.2%), whereby some respondents concretized that it was connected to the training. The possibility of self-education within the courses as a way of acquisition of media literacy was repeated more times. However the similar percentage of the respondents specified the possibility of lifelong education (13.2%). As many pedagogists perceive the courses within the lifelong education within the courses as what was their second most often answered, the duplicity of the answers occurred. In very small extent the respondents specified the possibility of the preparation during master study (eventually bachelor study) and several of them even specified that they do not deepen their competencies which represents 6.6% of the respondents. With the last possibility we see the interconnection between the results of the having mentioned research of Karasová (2014), where the respondents specified that only those teachers are interested in media education who are interested in it and thus only those improve the quality of their knowledge and skills.

Research question 3: *Is the media education in primary education from the teacher's point of view needed?*

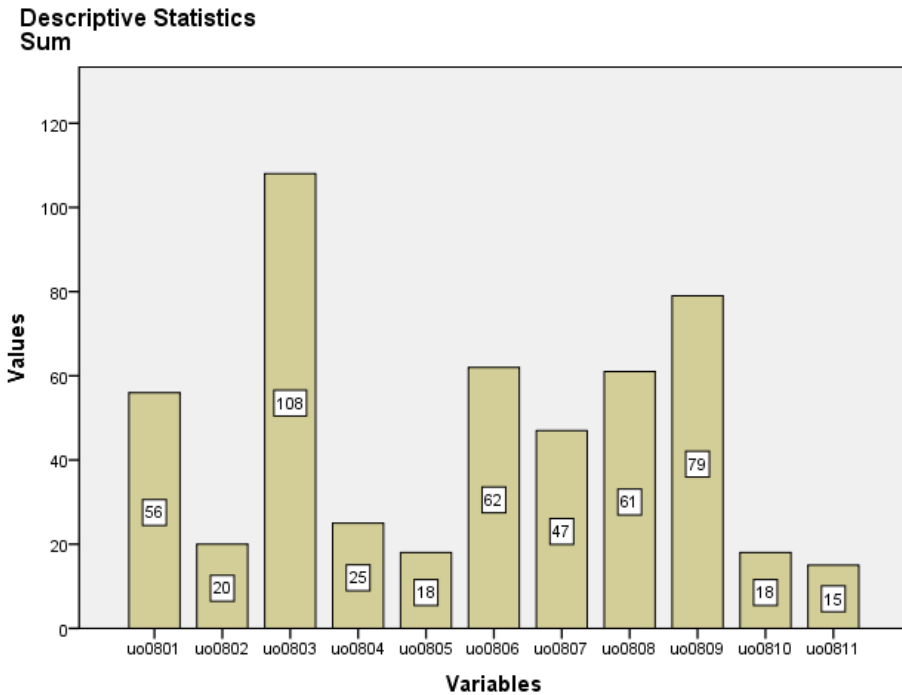
The following Graph 1 provides the overview of the teachers on the need of realisation of the media education at First degree of the primary school.



Graph 1. Overview of the teachers for the need of the media education in the primary education

From the given sampling set it is shown that the fourth answer is the most numerous. In this possibility we used the scaling (1 – certainly not, 5 – yes, I fully agree), where the average of the respondent answers was 3.72, which means that the teachers rather agree with the need of the realisation of the media education. From this we can claim that by the time interval the perception of the teachers on the problems connected to the media impact on the behaviour of the pupils of the younger school ages is changing. In regard to the occurring problems during the education process, they must react in the present time necessarily to the arisen situations which are often connected with the media. In connection with the perception of the need for the realisation of the media education in the primary education we also wanted to know what would help the most to the teachers in the realisation of the media education and what they would consider for the needed, eventually where or how the realisation of

the media education should be realised within the education process. Graph 2 represents countability of the choice of the possibilities by respondents whose overall number was 11.



Graph 2. Needs and attitudes of the teachers in connection with the realisation of the media education in the primary education

From our sampling set the third possibility which represents the teachers' attitude in the case of the realisation of the media education as sectional theme (71.5%) considered satisfactory is the most numerous. In comparison with the realisation of the media education as a separate subject (possibility 2), only 13.2% teachers put emphasis on the fact that the media education would be a separate subject. Relatively high countability (possibility 6, what represents 41.1%) reached also the possibility where respondents claimed that every teacher should also practise the media education on the basis of his attitude and according to his knowledge. From this there is an evidence of the connection of the answers of the teachers with previous research on which we have referred to here. Thus still a great number of the teachers consider the media education needed only in the case that they are more interested in it and it is the subject of their interest. Those who do not have required knowledge and skills, they do not consider its realisation for the needed. The ninth possibility

represents the attitude of the respondents to the absent qualitative processed methodics to this subject, what is from the point of view of countability 52.3% teachers.

Conclusion

The important role at the solving of the problems of the media using in children's life has except for the family surrounding also educational school potential. Media education as one of the sectional themes should not be implemented into the education process only sporadically, but by a well elaborated way. Not only pupils but also their parents should be the target group. The personal teacher's preparation itself is obviously important. From the performed research we found out that the teachers evaluate their preparation in the sphere of media education as not satisfactory. They consider the media education in the primary education for the needs but they do not put emphasis on the fact it would become a separate subject. They consider its scope within sectional themes satisfactory. The clear conception and quality processed methodics are missing them which would help them at the realisation of the media education in the educational process. From the mentioned it results that it is needed to make the preparation of the future teachers during university study more intensive as well as to create increasingly more broadly possibilities for lifelong education of the teachers. In the present time increasingly more teachers are interested in continual education who have an attempt and are willing to develop their competencies in this sphere. Training courses would be also helpful, eventually as it is being realised within the project *Zodpovedne.sk* – the personal contact of the specialists in this sphere at schools with lectures adopted to the pupils and at the same time more concrete communication with the pedagogists themselves. We can utilise in this case media in behalf of the spread of the prevention against negative impact of media and information itself which will be for all the concerned useful.

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