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New tool for promoting media and information literacies at school:

Handbook on the Pedagogies of Media and Information Literacies

Media devices and the ways of using media are in constant change. In the 2010s, media are defined by variety, networking, and globalisation. Particularly in many metropolitan areas around the world, young people have grown up with internet videos and digital games. The importance of media and peer groups has increased, and a greater part of growing up takes place outside the traditional learning environments.

The surroundings of young people are changed by the possibility of constant online presence, which is enabled by information technologies. The needs for promoting media and information literacies are essential and these modes of new literacies are today recognized almost universally as being a part of the key competences in the educational system, especially in Unesco and other organizations with international orientations (see f.ex. Frau-Meigs and Torrent 2009; Perez-Tornero & Varis 2010; Wilson et .al. 2011). The main challenges seem to be local: How to help administrators and teachers understand the importance of promoting media and information literacies? How to encourage teachers with the pedagogies on media and information literacies as part of everyday practices at school?

Recognising these challenges, UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (<http://iite.unesco.org/>) together with the Finnish Society on Media Education (<http://en.mediakasvatus.fi/node/5568>) have produced a tool for promoting media and information literacies among youngsters aged 13-18 years. The publication(s) are created as followings to *Media and information literacy. Curriculum for Teachers* (Wilson et .al. 2011) and *Media Literacy and New Humanism* (Perez-Tornero & Varis 2010). Moreover, focus on youths arises from the authors work for the Finnish National Board of Education, an online course titled the *World of Media*, for upper secondary education (Tuominen & Kotilainen 2012/ first published 2005).

In the *Handbook on the Pedagogies of Media and Information Literacies* (2012) the focus is on youth centred perspective and pedagogic practices, tutoring how media and information literacies can be taught and evaluated in school with several examples. The role of information literacies is also visible in the handbook.

The aim of the handbook is for teachers themselves to become media and information literate and to encourage them to take up media education in the classroom. It provides

teachers basic knowledge on media and information literacy, the focus being on the way these skills can be taught. The publication includes informational texts, exercises for teachers, and exercises for the classroom. Classroom exercises have been chosen for their usefulness. They do not form a unified whole, but can be used in a variety of classroom contexts.

The Handbook on the Pedagogies of Media and Information Literacies (2012) is published as a book in English, online version in Russian and, hopefully in Finnish, too. The main target group for the handbook is teachers. This includes teachers on the secondary level who are either in training or in service. The material is also relevant to libraries, museums, NGOs, government officials and ministries, and other civic organizations.

Adding value to information literacies

In the Handbook on the Pedagogies of MIL (2012), media literacy is combined with the concept of information literacy, as it is in recent publication published by Unesco (f.ex. Wilson et. al. 2011). The combined media and information literacy forms a palette of skills, without which a 21st century citizen finds it hard to understand the surrounding world. This and other related concepts are discussed in the first module of the Handbook.

The first module reflects information sources, starting from their division into three categories: primary sources, secondary sources and tertiary sources of information. A skilful information user chooses several different types of sources, and uses them according to his or her needs. Comparison between the three categories according to University Libraries, University of Maryland (*Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Sources*. (2006), available at: <http://www.lib.umd.edu/guides/primary-sources.html#tertiary>):

SUBJECT	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	TERTIARY
Art and Architecture	Painting by Manet	Article critiquing a work of art	ArtStor database
Chemistry / Natural Sciences	Einstein's diary	Monograph on Einstein's life	Dictionary on The Theory of Relativity
Engineering / Physics	Patent	NTIS database	Manual on using invention

Humanities	Letters by Martin Luther King	Website on King's writings	Encyclopaedia on The Civil Rights Movement
Social Sciences	Notes taken by clinical psychologist	Magazine article on a psychological condition	Textbook on clinical psychology
Performing Arts	Film shot in 1942	Biography of the director	Guide to the film

Information literacy is understood as a set of competencies for obtaining, understanding, evaluating, adapting, generating, storing, and presenting information for problem analysis and decision-making. Information literate people possess basic skills for critical thinking, of analysing information and using it for self-expression, for becoming independent learners, producers, informed citizens, professionals, and for participating in the governance and democratic processes of their societies (see f.ex. Bundy 2004; Andretta 2005; Bruce 2003; Casacuberta 2007; Bates 2009).

The elements of information literacy include (f.ex. Francke et. al. 2011; Bundy 2004) :

- Identifying/recognizing information needs: What do I want to find out? What kind of problem am I trying to solve?
- Determining sources of information: Do I use the internet, books or television? Do I use primary, secondary or tertiary sources?
- Locating or searching for information: Where should I look for information? Who can I ask for help?
- Analysing and evaluating the quality of information: How do I know the information is reliable?
- Organizing, storing, or archiving information: How do I efficiently organize information from multiple sources?
- Using information in an ethical, efficient, and effective way: How do I take copyright into account?
- Creating and communicating new knowledge: How do I present my information?

Media and information literacy concerns the role and function of media and other providers of information such as libraries, archives, and the internet in our personal lives and in democratic societies. It promotes individuals' rights to communicate and express, and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas. It encourages the evaluation of media and other information providers based on how they are produced, the messages being conveyed, and the role of the intended audience (f.ex. Wilson et .al. 2011).

Perspective on young people as users and participators

Young people use media more actively than the older generations do. They send pictures straight from their mobile phones into social networking sites, comment on news items, and catch up with each other online. As an audience, they are smaller than that of the main news broadcast, but they are nevertheless public agents. The laws regulating public broadcasting also cover the young people who upload pictures, videos, and texts online. The goal of focusing on the young in the Handbook on the Pedagogies of MIL (2012), is to make visible the media environment of young people, and to ponder the concept of 'an audience' as a base knowledge for teaching media and information literacies (Kotilainen et. al. 2011; Carlsson 2010).

The second module reflects young people and media participation asking whether they are targets, receivers, users or co-producers? Moreover, youths' relationships with media are reflected, from the perspective of developing identities among 13-18 years old. Global views into young people's relationships with media are covered by media diaries around the world. Finally, the question how media can be utilised in civic participation among youngsters is discussed.

Perspective on youths is present also in other modules, presenting main questions from the viewpoints of the young, also in exercises. The third module discusses the aspects of technological and media developments in human living environments. The fourth module focuses on interpreting and analysing several kinds of media texts. The fifth module concentrates to collaboration work between school and libraries and between school and youth organizations in pedagogic practices on media and information literacies.

Focusing on Teaching Media and Information Literacies

Focusing on the pedagogies, the Handbook on the Pedagogies of MIL (2012) puts effort on teaching, exercises and evaluation. Moreover, it reflects the techno-pedagogic differences of teaching media and information literacies.

Every teacher can be a media educator, conveying to his or her students the skills they need for living in a media culture. There is strength in the diverse ways teachers approach media in their work. Media and information literacy education, however, is not any different from any other kind of education: basically, it is about encountering one's pupils. Although media and information literacy education makes use of different media tools, at its heart lie educational goals and methods, and the interaction between teacher and pupil (f.ex. Kotilainen & Arnolds-Granlund 2010).

The development of media and information literacy requires from the pupil an immersion in the production of media content. Experimentation is an important starting point in media and information literacy education. It is important that pupils get the chance to experience different roles in media production and agency. It is equally important, however, that a reflective aspect is added into these experimental media lessons - teaching the pupils to ask, 'What did I learn about media through this exercise?' (f.ex. Kotilainen & Arnolds-Granlund 2010).

The Handbook suggests three levels of teaching media and information literacies: elementary, basic and advanced levels. They differ in several aspects, for example, in technological learning environments, in students' media skills, in library resources and in teachers' knowledge on media and information literacies. These differences have been taken account, for example, in planning exercises to the classroom. The three levels can be used as a tool as such, when, for example, planning local teacher education on media and information literacies.

Towards cultural variations

Starting from the Glossary of Terms related to media and information, the Handbook on the Pedagogies of MIL (2012) is divided into five modules, each of them concentrating to one topic area. All modules have short introductions from a special perspective to pedagogies on media and information literacies and, reflective exercises to the reader. Moreover, modules 1-4 are ending to classroom exercises which get more advanced from module to module. Only the last module number 5 has no exercises, but case studies and examples from Finland instead.

The contents are as follows:

Glossary of Terms

MODULE 1: Understanding Media and Information Literacy

MODULE 2: Young people as a global media audiences

MODULE 3: Media cultures and technologies

MODULE 4: How to Interpret Media

MODULE 5: Cooperation and Sharing Ideas

For the reader is left the task to apply the contents to each reader's own cultures of teaching media and information literacies, which is very much dependent on the national and cross-national media environments and communication policies, additional to educational policies. They frame the uses of media among young people and, their possibilities to learn media and information literacies at school. The Handbook on the Pedagogies of MIL (2012) gives one kind of model, which can and should be contested with cultural variations and local pedagogic applications.

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