MEDIA EDUCATION

SELECTED ASPECTS OF MEDIA LITERACY AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN EDUCATION AS A CHALLENGE OF POLISH REALITY

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ABSTRACT: Media education is a response to the challenges of reality permeated by the media. Proper functioning in such world will be possible not only when an individual acquires knowledge on how to properly use the new technology, but mainly when he or she develops a conscious, responsible and critical attitude towards media messages.

In the first part presentation describes the situation related to the formation of media literacy in Polish schools. The conducted analyses identify a problem with implementing the postulate of media education.

In the second part the author focuses on the presence of new media and technology in education. The phenomenon of supporting education with innovative technologies and tools is a trend which seems to be intensifying in the reality of development of new media and technologies. The author describes the example of the innovative ICT tool and its functionality, as well as the possibility of using it to support traditional teaching in higher education.

Such a combination constituted the implementation of the idea of complementary education - the so-called blended learning - where the designed traditional educational process is supplemented by using the ICT technology.

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Introduction

Developing of digital literacy, media education and media literacy education are the obvious and current challenges of the 21st century (Frania, 2012, pp.302-304). The media have become a natural part of the environment for human development (Nowicka, 2012, pp.157-158). The task of deepening the competences in the field of "media literacy" should not be limited exclusively to the skilful use of the new technologies, but it has to be based on critical, active and creative attitude and evaluation, which builds on the motivation to seek the advantages and opportunities as well as avoid media related risks (Jk Cindy, 2010, pp.74-76). The barrier to the gender, age and place of residence should be in this case completely abolished. Media education is a lifelong challenge (anywhere and everywhere, 24/7), taking the form of activity more or less formalized, individual efforts or institutional projects (Aqili, Nasiri, 2010: 452).

The media literacy in the Polish school has a long and sometimes complicated - for social and political reasons - history. However, the last dozen or so years will be the
most crucial for the considerations in this article. These time frames are a period of rapid development of new technologies and tools, which are present in many social spheres of human activity and are also used in education. Teachers and students now have access to vast collections of educational aids that promote: remembering new information, creating messages, development creativity; they serve the development of knowledge, skills and competences. In further deliberation, some examples of tools that can be used in education in a broad sense are presented.

Condition of school media education

Media education is a multi-dimensional process, and its most important pillars should be family education, school education, as well as operation of non-governmental organizations and institutions, including the media themselves. An important moment for the Polish school was the school year 1999/2000, when the core curriculum integrated an intersubject path: "Reading and media education." It functioned more or less successfully until 2009.

Currently in the legislation on the general educational basis there is a lack of media literacy as a separate subject or educational path (MEN, 2008). The legislator notes the importance of the issue recommending the teachers of all subjects to make all endeavours to develop the media competences among students. The content related to the media, communication and new technologies has been scattered and partially integrated in curricula of other subjects (Huk, 2011, p.43). The general and specific learning objectives and expected results in terms of knowledge, skills and competences within various subjects relate to the issues of media literacy. Such a solution involves to some extent the freedom of the teachers and the possibility of innovative activities. However, the lack of coherent and consistent programme can also lead to negligence of the problem, which is disadvantageous in terms of the needs of today's students, but also tendencies and recommendations of international bodies (Nitka, 2012, p.416).

NGO's activity in terms of media literacy - examples

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play an increasingly important role (Drzewiecki, 2010, p.48) in the formation of "media literacy" in Poland. In such a case, education that deepens the media competences is considered to be a little wider and is addressed not only to children and young people, but also - to a lesser extent - to adults and the elderly people. Foundations, associations, societies and cultural institutions co-create the projects for schools and individuals. Such initiatives include:

- Campaign of the Nobody's Children Foundation: "Child in the Web" operating since 2003 and covering the diagnosis, analysis and prevention of potential risks connected with the cyberspace in the context of the youngest children; the project, among others, aims to draw social attention to the problem, create an e-learning platform with on-line courses targeted at children and young people as well as their parents and teachers (fdn.pl/kursy), prepare professional materials for use during work with children (e.g.: sieciaki.pl) and handouts for everybody (e.g., Helpline.org.pl);

- Initiative of creating a knowledge base for teachers, in which the interested persons may find lesson plans with aids and source materials, the example of which may be the website of the Modern Poland Foundation - edukacjamedialna.edu.pl;

- Cooperation offer for schools, workshops conducted by experts, knowledge and skills contests, and one of the examples is the activity of the New Media Foundation under the "Youth Multimedia Campaign" (mam.media.pl), in which
school children may create their own newspapers “Qmam” on shared software, take part in media contests, and their teachers can take part in training programmes.

There is also a number of pilot activities conducted by the government bodies related to the “Digital School”, which does not focus solely on media literacy - considered as the media education - but rather on the use of modern technology in education based on three ideas: e-book, e-school and e-teacher (cyfrowaszkola.men.gov.pl).

New technologies supporting education

New technologies are present in a lot of spheres of human life, and they should be also present in education. The author is currently conducting a study scheduled for years 2012-2014, the aim of which is to verify the efficiency of selected tools, media elements, applications in pedagogic teaching at the university level. For a period of one semester in three groups the traditional teaching process will be strongly supported by the use of the new Internet-based technologies such as: QMINDShare™, ClickWebinar and TED&TED-Ed.

- QMINDShare™ is an American tool, an innovative application used in studies as a platform for active revision of the material that was learnt during the course. The students install software on their computers or other mobile devices and twice a week they receive a package of two tasks to perform. Questions may be either single or multiple choice, gap filling, matching or ranking an answer. Feedback is an important element, which is sent to an individual user after providing an answer, which contains a short text or educational video material. If the answer is incorrect, after a certain time the system will send the task again within the so called “attempt of a second chance.” The platform is based on the "spaced-learning" idea. The teacher can track the progress of individual students and the entire group on an ongoing basis. During the test, the application supported learning in the course: ICT in 2012/2013.

- ClickWebinar - the Polish platform that allows us to create and participate in video conferences and webinars. By using webcast technology the transfer based on the image, sound and text can be designed. Students may work together in the real time, they may share opinions, discuss using home computers or mobile devices outside the classroom. The use of this element is scheduled for educational meetings in the school year 2013/2014.

- TED including in particular TED-Ed is a constantly developing non-profit website, which initially gathered users in three areas: Technology, Entertainment and Design. With time the idea of the platform - which is a collection of free, accessible and translated into many languages short videos of speeches on various topics - has become a source from which not only enthusiasts may gain, but also educators. The use of broadcast materials as a mandatory part of the student's own work during the learning process is part of the research planned for the school year 2013/2014.

The purpose of the planned action is an overview or a diagnosis of students’ attitudes towards elements of new technologies that support traditional learning, analysis of the participants’ views and measurement of efficiency of the above mentioned tools in the acquisition of knowledge.

Conclusion

New technologies can support learning serving as a kind of teaching aids. By combining the capabilities of the new media and the advantages of the traditional
educational process, educational activities will fit the intensively developing trend of b-learning (Llorente Cejudo and Cabero Almenara, 2013, p.29). It is based on the idea of designing an educational situation, in which part of the learning process takes place in the traditional form, such as in a classroom or in a form of a lecture involving the teacher, and the addition to this is distance learning using the possibilities offered within e-learning and new mobile technologies.

It should be noted that for the successful use of the new technologies and media as educational tools the development of an appropriate and responsible attitude and an extensive media competence of the users are necessary. The media and technologies are not only instruments, but also the communication message. Deepening of "media literacy" (ML) or even more broadly understood "media and information literacy" (MIL) should serve this purpose. Action should be taken on two levels.

References


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