Media and Information Literacy Policies in Austria (2013)

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May 2014

1. Dimension	Historical background

Austria's history of media literacy and media education has been affected by general social, political, cultural and philosophical approaches and developments in Europe. With respect to this, analogies with similar movements in Germany, Switzerland, Hungary or even Great Britain can be found (Wijnen 2008:87-98; Süss/Lampert/Wijnen 2013: 77-84). This section focusses more on practical aspects of media literacy and media education in Austria. For details on the theoretical discourse on media literacy see dimension 6.

In the late 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th century pedagogical approaches of dealing with media were rather protectionist and resembled to the so called inoculative paradigm (Masterman 1998: viii; Masterman/Mariet 1994: 21) that existed in the UK at the same time. During those times pedagogues' attitudes towards media were primarily critical. Even books were judged negatively. Teachers and educators worried about women and young people to become reading addicted and tried to fight popular literature by promoting high culture literature works. These considerations were continued with regards to the new medium film. In 1912 the first films had to fight for authorization by the Austrian government because of child-welfare issues (Blaschitz/Seibt 2008: 12). The most popular arguments against films were the degeneration of cultural values, the causation of aggressive behaviour and the overexertion of young people's imaginativeness by the creation of an illusory world. But despite this primacy of protective considerations more didactic approaches that aimed to use this new medium in educational contexts existed as well. For example the first educational film was already produced in 1907 and starting with the year 1912 the association 'Wiener Kosmos' launched the first cinema for young people in Vienna (Blaschitz/Seibt 2008:12). Not only in the capital but also in other parts of the former Austrian Empire pedagogues were experimenting with the medium film as didactical tool at school as well as in the context of adult education. Especially pedagogues of Hungarian origin were pioneers in these early times of film education in the former Austrian monarchy (Jáki 1982: 8-27; Wijnen 2008: 157-159).

The 1920ies were a period of institutionalisation of media education; the 'Österreichische Lichtbildstelle' (Austrian photographic service) and the 'Österreichische Lichtbild- und Filmdienst' (Austrian service for film and photography) where the first institutions dedicated to the pedagogical use of still and moving images. At that time also several school cinemas emerged. The Viennese pedagogical association developed recommendations for the use of moving images in schools and in 1926 the ministry of education advised schools to use the medium film as a didactic tool (Blaschitz/Seibt 2008: 13). During those times of the enthusiastic beginnings of the use of films for educational reasons radio was discovered as didactical tool as well. In the early 1930ies the Austrian public broadcasting company (RAVAG) started to transmit educational radio programmes.

The 1930ies were also a time of the rise of the first alternative media projects like the labour radio association or the socialistic film association. Both strived for an empowerment of the working class people by using media to articulate their opinion and requests. At the same time catholic pedagogues founded a kind of theatre and film service that edited a collection of so called 'good films' (Blaschitz/Seibt 2008: 14). As in Germany all kinds of media were used for NS propaganda during the Third Reich. After the negative experiences of mass manipulation by the NS regime protectionist approaches towards media became popular again in the 1950ies (Süss/Lampert/Wijnen 2013: 77).

During the post-war period the Catholic Church started to become one of the most influential actors of the Austrian media education community. Unlike to Italy where the Catholic Church also became a leading player in post-war media education there didn't exist any noticeable counterpart like for example the Italian socialistic youth film clubs (Wijnen 2008: 169). A kind of discriminative approach – if one follows Masterman's (1998) terminology – that tended towards a distinction between 'good' and 'bad' media products took centre stage in this catholic way of media education.

From a rather conservative view corresponding to a fear of modernisation and even a certain uneasiness regarding Austria's process of finding a national identity in the post-war period, media products that were considered as too strongly connected to popular culture like comics, pulp fiction literature and films or illustrated (youth) magazines were judged as 'bad' while media products dedicated to knowledge transfer in the broadest sense or referring to the so called 'high culture' were judged as 'good'. The

intention was to empower young people in being able to judge media products and to advance their 'good taste'. This 'good taste' was primarily based on moral values and hardly on aesthetic or formal criteria like it was for example promoted by the Hungarian film aesthetic education movement during the same period of time (Wijnen 2008:160). In those days media literacy meant the ability of judging what 'good media' are and avoiding 'bad media'.

In the late 1950ies various organisations like the labour union, the student union, provincial youth ministries or the Austrian film archive took interest in media education and new institutions like the 'Aktion der gute Film' (association for the good film, dedicated to the promotion of 'pedagogically good films' and the organization of film discussions for young people) were founded. In the 1960ies mass media in general were discussed very critically among pedagogues but unlike in the neighbouring Federal Republic of Germany this discourse was not influenced by the critical theory of the Frankfurt School (Baacke 1997: 47; Vollbrecht 2001: 46) but drew on the 'arcane educator' paradigm of the 19th century in which media were considered as rivalry to pedagogically intended education (Blaschitz/Seibt 2008: 16).

Parallel to this defensive approach more media euphoric pedagogues discovered the new medium television as an instrument for national education with special focus on socially disadvantaged people. As a result of this the Austrian public broadcasting company (ORF) started to produce the first educational television programmes in 1959. This kind of television programme boomed until the late 1970ies (Blaschitz/Seibt 2008: 17).

Since the late 1980ies this functionalistic approach, which was also supported by the Austrian Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, is continued with regards to ICTs and e-learning. Today the ministry's notion of media literacy and media education is still rather functionalistic and strongly focussed on technical innovation. This is to some extent the result of a reorganisation of the ministry's departments in the last years which lead to the termination of the former department of media education. With respect to this the perspective of the ministry changed from a holistic view of media literacy and media education to a narrow approach of media education that is primarily focussed on computer literacy. Before, the former department of media education promoted a broad definition of media literacy that referred to Baacke's (1996, see also dimension 6) four dimensions of media literacy: media critique; knowledge about media and the media

system; use of media; and the ability to produce creative and innovative media content. In this context the media education decree of 2001 was introduced. It fixed media education as an interdisciplinary objective for all subjects and all school curricula (Grundsatzerlaß Medienerziehung, see dimension 2). Further a website with teaching materials (mediamanual.at) was set up and a regular journal for media education (Medienimpulse) was distributed among all schools in Austria (see dimension 3). The decree is still in force after the termination of the department of media education and was revised in 2012. Also the website with teaching materials still exists and Medienimpulse has become an online journal but is not distributed anymore. But the main focus of the ministry has now shifted to computer literacy and digital literacy and particularily to e-learning.

Especially since the change of the millenium great endeavours have been made to modernise schools for the so called information age and computer literacy gained more and more importance. 1999 the so called 'qualification offensive Infotech' was launched. The aim was to train many young people as technical professionists for new jobs with different specialisations (e.g. technicians, experts in telecommunication, media design, network technique etc.). Therefore technical schools and buiness schools started to offer various possibilities for specification but teachers were not skilled to teach these new subjects, yet. Therefore the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) was provided as in-service qualification for teachers and later also as exam for students. Interested teachers also got further training for becoming so called 'network specialists' (Stangl 2000, 4). Most of these teacher training activities were not compulsory but voluntary for those who were interested (who were not the majority).

As result of the Lisbon strategy of the European Comission Austria invested 300 million ATS (about 21,8 million €) from 2001 and the following years for the support of e-learning, teacher training and the extension of internet access for the whole pupulation which was called 'education billion'. In 2002 two e-learning initiatives were launched: eLSA for young people from 10 to 14 years and eLC for older pupils. Since 2010 these initiatives are united as eEducation.at together with the younger initiative IT@VS for primary schools (Buchegger 2010, 10). To ensure the dispersion and the use of e-learning all over the country teacher networks were installed in each federal province. This e-learning strategy exists until today with regular network meetings for teachers who are responsible for e-learning activities at their schools. These meetings are

dedicated to the exchange of experiences and as motivation for the work at the schools because at many schools not all teachers and school principals are enthousiastic regarding the possibilities of e-leraning. Since 2007 the organisation of partnerships among schools which use e-learning and those who don't use it, yet, is promoted in order to get all Austrian schools to use e-learning. But also partnerships among different schools who use e-learning to develop shared projects are supported (Buchegger 2010, 10).

Further the ministry tries to motivate teachers by an internal coaching concept. This means that one teacher who is trained in e-learning works as coach and helps the collegues at his school who are not that skilled, yet. Until the academic year 2011/2012 teachers were also offered online seminars and training materials with focus on computer literacy and e-learning (e-LISA academy). Today this kind of teacher training is offered as so called virtual university for education (Virtuelle PH, see also dimension 3). Besides this strong focus on computer literacy, digital and information literacy have gained importance as well. The aim is to get teachers and young people skilled for using digital media for e-learning and participation in society (which means e-government and civic engagement from the perspective of the ministry).

Since 2005 the awareness node of the European insafe programme is also one of the promoters of media literacy in Austria. It is not administered by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture but by the Austrian Institute for Applied Telecommunication (ÖIAT) which is a private association and independent from the state (also see dimension 3). The focus of the so called Saferinternet.at initiative is on supporting digital literacy for teachers, parents and young people.

2. **Dimension**	**Legal policy framework**

Regarding the legal policy framework the most important directive is the media education decree of 2001 (Grundsatzerlaß Medienerziehung) that introduces media education as compulsory part of all school curricula and all subjects. It defines media education as a part of every education and claims that it should be taught as interdisciplinary field at all schools. In this official paper media literacy is defined as being technically skilled as well as being able to select and judge media messages and

to use media for one's own communicative request. This holistic view of media education is very positive and reflects the current state of research but its biggest disadvantage is that it is formulated too open to force teachers to integrate media education in their classes.

The decree does not say how many hours of media education must be taught or how media education has exactly to be transferred into the single school subjects. This leads to the fact that the majority of teachers do not integrate media education in their subjects because they are not interested. The most common argument for that is that media education would better fit into the subject of a colleague or that other colleagues are already integrating media in their classes and that therefore more media education is not needed in order to fulfil the requirement of the ministry. So in fact it still depends on the engagement of a single teacher if and in what way young people are dealing with media at school.

The media education decree survived the restructuring of the ministry of education and was renewed in 2012. This latest version stresses that "the goal of the current decree (2012) is to generate measures that critically and analytically integrate both the traditional mass media and the new media, particularly the Internet, into education" (BMUKK 2012). This formulation shows that the ministry's view of media education is much more focussed on ICTs than it was before. In comparison to the version of 2001 the focus is more on digital literacy than on media literacy and media education is also much more seen as a part of political education as new media developments are seen as potential risks but even more as tools for supporting democratic processes and e-government. In this sense media education at school should also deal with media effects, different forms of media communication and the various backgrounds of the media system. Summarising, media education should help to educate reflective, active and democratic citizens. Again media education should be integrated interdisciplinary into school curricula but still there are no clear requirements that can force teachers to get more engaged in media education.

Parallel to the strategy of this directive the ministry of education tries to get Austria 'fit for the knowledge society' by promoting the use of ICTs. In this sense the ministry closely refers to the strategy of the EU. As effect of the Lisbon 2000 strategy which intends to make Europe more competitive the national eFIT initiative was launched. The objectives of this initiative focussed on computer literacy and were to improve the

Austrian school system, to open institutions of education for the public (e.g. universities), to make knowledge transfer and access to education easier and again to promote e-learning. This led to the improving of infrastructure: primary schools got computers and internet access and the first notebook classes were tested during that time. This was financed by the so called 'computer billion' that was invested in the years 2000 to 2006 parallel to the above mentioned 'education billion'. The eFIT initiative was displaced by the FutureLearning initiative in 2007 which was not so much focussed on infrastructure but more on teachers. Several projects and events to motivate and support teachers in e-learning and media didactics took place (e.g. mobileMoodle, game based learning initiative etc.) (Buchegger 2010, 8).

In 2010 the ministry of education released the digital competence directive (Schrack et al. 2010) with reference to the EC's initiative to support digital literacy and so called e-skills. In this paper digital literacy is defined as key competence for active participation, lifelong learning and the promotion of employability. The focus lies on the handling of new technologies with some references to a critical use of media and social competences. The latter is a result of the fact that besides the EC's definition of digital literacy Baacke's (1996) model of media literacy which is standard in the Germanic tradition of media education was integrated and tried to redefine with regards to ICTs. In this sense digital literacy involves computer and information literacy and comprises technical (e.g. using research engines), creative (e.g. designing a website) and critical skills (e.g. reflecting the influence of ICTs on society, privacy issues etc.) as well as social competencies (e.g. 'netiquette') and knowledge about legal issues (e.g. copyright). The directive stresses that these skills should serve as central focus of an interdisciplinary media education at school. But as there are no tools for monitoring media education it is still dependent on the engagement of the single teacher how these objectives are transferred into practice.

Although the initiatives and directives to support media education are introduced by the ministry of education, the federal chancellery of the republic of Austria is in charge of co-ordinating the work of different ministries and advisory committees as well as of reporting the efforts made regarding all aspects of the so called information society to the EU (Bundeskanzleramt 2008).

3.1 Dimension	**Capacity-building: teacher training**

As already mentioned media education should be part of the general education in Austrian schools but in practice it depends on the dedication of the single teacher in which way it is integrated in class. But besides motivation successful media education also demands an appropriate teacher training. Which kind of formation future teachers get is dependent on the Austrian school system. The responsibility for the primary schools (class 1 to 4) and lower secondary schools (minimum of education one has to attend from class 5 to 8 before one enters the job market) lies by the federal provincial governments while the responsibility for higher secondary schools (starting with class 5 to 8 and continuing until class 12 where students finish with a-levels) as well as universities lies by the state. The formation of young teachers is dependent on the kind of school for which they are prepared during their study. This leads to the weird situation that on the one hand universities are responsible for the education of students that want to become teachers for upper secondary schools while special teacher training academies are responsible for the teacher formation for primary and lower secondary schools. But in both kinds of teacher formation media education is hardly found in the curriculum (Lenauer 2013).

At the moment the Austrian teacher formation is going to be restructured. The first step was to advance the former teacher training academies to so called universities of education and to force regular universities and the new universities of education to work together in the formation of upper secondary teachers by introducing so called schools of education where scholars from the universities as well as the universities of education must work together (which also causes many conflicts). This restructuring demands the development of new curricula for future teachers but still media education is hardly considered in these processes. If media are included in curricula the focus lies on computer literacy and using media for didactic purposes. In this regard the ministry of education insists on the integration of the European Pedagogical ICT-Licence (EPICT) in the curriculum. The focus of this programme lies on how to teach young people to work with computer programmes like word, excel and so on.

Besides, the majority of Austrian teachers are 45+ and many are not much interested in media education training. But for those who are very engaged and interested, it is hard

to find good teacher training possibilities. Often they have to invest a lot of leisure time and money for private post-graduate courses and their engagement is not always honoured at their schools.

But at a lower level there are some offers for in-service training that are supported by the ministry of education. Again there is a strong focus on computer literacy. As part of the eFIT strategy mentioned above the so called 'eBuddy' concept was introduced which means that technically skilled teachers help less skilled colleagues in questions of using media and e-learning tools in class. Another possibility is the training of a team of teachers of one school by inviting an expert from outside which is financed by the state (SCHILF). The topics of such trainings are chosen by the particular school. So it depends on the interest of the participating teachers if questions of media education are addressed in these seminars or not. Concerning e-learing online seminars were offered via the already mentioned platform e-LISA academy which has changed into the so called virtual university of education in 2010 (www.virtuelle-ph.at). The virtual university of education offers various online seminars for different topics; some of them also address questions of e-learning, technical skills regarding ICTs but also critical analysis of media content (e.g. TV series) and creative media use at school (e.g. how to produce podcasts). Participation in these online trainings is voluntary and there are no figures regarding the effectiveness of these seminars for the practice of media education at Austrian schools.

3.2 Dimension	Capacity-building: *Teaching/training Materials and other relevant content*

If teachers are interested, they are well supported in questions of media literacy education. Parallel to the media education decree of 2001 an online platform (www.mediamanual.at) for media education was developed. On this platform which is still offered and updated until today information on various aspects of media education and media literacy as well as teaching materials for all kinds of media are provided. Instructions on how to conduct hands on media projects with film, radio, or internet are published on the platform as well.

One objective of the 2001 directive was also to promote practical media projects. Therefore the so called media literacy award was created. From 2001 until today young people get the possibility to submit their school projects in the categories film & video, radio, print & comics as well as new media. About 500 schools are participating at this contest every year. A jury selects the best submissions which are priced and honoured at a special youth media festival, where the best projects and ideas are shown to the public. The main categories for judging the media projects are the support of self-efficacy, critical and creative thinking as well as tolerance towards others and a global open-mindedness (Schipek/Holubek 2012, 1). In 2004 a similar prize was introduced for e-learning where schools get the possibility to submit their e-learning projects (Le@rnieAward).

The journal Medienimpulse can also be judged as relevant material for teachers. From 1992 until 2008 this journal which consists of academic papers as well as articles from practitioners has played an important role in the knowledge transfer in media education research and policy. Four times a year it was distributed to all schools and stakeholders in Austria for promoting media literacy. Also as effect of the restructuring of the ministry of education this journal does not exist as print version anymore but it was transferred into an online journal (medienimpulse.at). It still has four issues a year and has won in quality by introducing a peer-review process. But as it is only available online teachers have to get actively on the website, if they want the newest information on media education. Thus, engaged and interested teachers will use the journal while less engaged teachers will not be reached by the journal anymore.

Besides these materials from the ministry of education also regional initiatives can be found particularly in the field of e-learning. For example in the federal province of upper Austria successful moodle classes were collected and made available online (Lernm:IT). A similar project with special focus on environment education was conducted and published online also by the federal province of upper Austria in cooperation with the University of Salzburg (Naturele@rn) (Buchegger 2010, 12). But the teaching materials that were produced as outcome of these projects again only reach teachers who are very engaged and are actively researching online for support in media education or e-learning.

Media education at academic level

In dimension 3.1 the problems of teacher training in Austria have been addressed. Having a look on how media education is integrated at the universities in general is a little bit disappointing as well. In Austria media education is not found as a single subject at any university but by having a closer look several niches where aspects of media education are taught and where research on various fields of media literacy is conducted can be discovered. The field of media education is not much institutionalized and often it is closely connected with a special person that is doing research on that topic. Only at the department of education at the University of Vienna there exists a professorship that is explicitly dedicated to media education. At this department the so called Viennese Media Education research group deals with various aspects of media literacy and students are offered different courses in the field of media education and media didactics. At other Austrian universities there are no similar professorships established but nevertheless research on questions of media literacy as well as lectures and seminars on that topic can be found at the department of education at the University of Innsbruck, at the department of communication at the University of Klagenfurt and at the department of communication at the University of Salzburg. The Danube University offers post-graduate courses for teachers in the field of media education and at several new established universities of education some aspects of media education are taught as well.

Further media education is not integrated that good in academic societies in Austria as it is for example in Germany or in other countries or even at international level. There only exists a special section for media education in the Austrian association of research and development in education (OEFEB) but there is no similar section in the Austrian association for communication (ÖGK) or in any other professional or academic community.

Saferinternat.at

In the last years the Austrian awareness node of the insafe programme the Austrian Institute for Applied Telecommunication (ÖIAT) respectively Saferinternet.at, is also very engaged in media education at schools. The objective of this initiative is to teach young people a safe use of the internet and to make them aware of possible challenges and risks. Therefore a lot of information material for teachers, parents and young people is published online and distributed at schools. Also workshops for young people as well as for teachers and parents are organised all over the country. These workshops are

mostly conducted at schools, sometimes they are also offered at youth clubs or other organizations that are working with young people out-of-school. But one has to admit that most of these workshops are conducted in Vienna and the neighbouring countryside as well as in the city and countryside of Salzburg because most saferinternet trainers are situated in these two cities. In the more western parts of Austria the chance that young people, teachers or parents are offered workshops is not that good.

3.3 Dimension	Capacity-building: funding

The information and teaching materials that are offered on the website mediamanual.at are funded by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. Also the media literacy award, a best practice price for media projects at schools, as well as the online journal Medienimpulse are funded by the ministry. Other initiatives like the virtual university of education are funded by the ministry as well, sometimes also in co-operation with other institutions. In the last years the ministry has invested about 600.000 euros for media education and e-learning initiatives. Unfortunately there doesn't exist any public financial report that could give more detailed information or would enable a comparison of the amount of money that is invested in media education to the total education system revenues.

Besides there can be found many NGO's that offer various kinds of media education in Austria. These have different financial structures. Some are funded by provincial governments and/or city governments, some get a kind of subsidization by the state and others have private sponsors; mostly one finds a mixture of various kinds of financing.

4 Dimension	Role of actors (outside school system)

Since the 1970ies media education out-of-school took root as hands-on media projects in different contexts, mainly in social work with young people. Since that time different

institutions that are engaged in media education arose. Today the field of media education outside the school system is diverse. Some organizations are well established and have a long tradition; other initiatives are younger and smaller but very active. As an example some of these institutions will be described in the following.

One of the oldest initiatives that are engaged in practical media work with young people is the Institute for Media Literacy in the City of Salzburg (former: Aktion Film Salzburg). Originally it was a part of the nationwide association 'Aktion der gute Film' (association for the good film) that tried to promote pedagogically 'good films' in the late 1950ies. While this approach of media education is not common anymore and this nationwide association was solubilised as well, the former district office of the province of Salzburg survived and changed its field of action as well as its pedagogical approach. Today the institution supports young people in realizing their own video projects. Special workshops are offered in schools but also outside school like for example in youth centres. But apart from these workshops teenagers as well as adults that come along and have any idea of making a film are supported as well and loaned equipment. Besides hands-on film projects the institute is also engaged in other aspects of media literacy training for young people as well as for teachers and parents (for example on the topics media and violence, a safe use of the internet, cyber bullying, gaming etc.). The institute promotes media literacy in a broad sense that includes information and digital literacy.

The Institute for Media Literacy is also one of the organizers of the youth film contest 'Klappe'. Young people at the age from 10 to 22 years are invited to participate at this contest and to submit their works. The best films are priced and presented at a youth film festival at a local art cinema. During this film festival young people get also the possibility to do different workshops like for example screenplay writing, film stunts, animated cartoon film etc. Besides this example there exist also some other film festivals for young people of different age in Austria. These could be seen as special events that show the importance of media education. Further the European Safer Internet Day is promoted every year at schools but also organisations outside school organise little media education events at this special day.

wienXtra is another institution that is very engaged in hands-on media projects with young people. It also promotes media literacy in a abroad sense that includes technical skills as well as information and digital literacy. At this institution workshops on the

topic film and video but also for radio, photo and the active and creative work with other media are offered. wienXtra is situated in Vienna and is the biggest institution with a special media centre where young people are able to experiment with different ways of self-expression by the use of media. Other institutions are mostly smaller and concentrate on one special kind of media; but in spite of that Austrian young people are offered many possibilities in discovering various kinds of media by actively acting and making hands-on projects.

Alike to the youth film scene there are also many facilities to work with radio. Especially community radios like Orange 94,0 in Vienna or Radiofabrik in the City of Salzburg offer various workshops for young people. These community radios provide also the possibility to create an own radio programme and several engaged young people use this for regularly broadcasting their own radio show. The Viennese community TV broadcasting organization Okto offers analogue ways of participation and of creating a personal TV programme as well as workshops for young people that are interested in broadcasting. Similar community TV projects which are also dedicated to media education were recently launched in the City of Salzburg (FS1) and in Linz (DorfTV).

Other institutions like for example Subnet concentrate their work on the various possibilities of the internet and offer young people a platform to express themselves and to discover ways of a critical, creative and participative use of the new developments of the social web. In workshops they learn how to create blogs and wikis and how to realize their ideas and creativity online, how to manage their personal online image or how to cope with possible challenges and risks.

As these examples show there are many ways for experiencing hands-on media work outside school in Austria. But this kind of media education community is not cross-linked very well. So, for young people or their parents and teachers it might sometimes be difficult to find out the range of different possibilities and workshops. In 2010 Viennese media education practitioners founded BIKUM as unincorporated association in order to build up a network for all people that are engaged in media education in Austria. But still, this association is very much focussed on Vienna and the situation of media education outside school has not much changed in the last three years.

The Austrian Regulatory Authority for Broadcasting and Telecommunications (RTR) as well as other media authorities are not engaged in media education.

5 Dimension	Evaluation mechanisms (inside and outside school)

Media education projects and initiatives are not regularly evaluated in Austria and it is hard to find any public documents on evaluation mechanisms. Since 2008 schools can apply for an e-learning certificate. Basis of this certificate is the evaluation of the offered e-learning modules by the pupils (Buchegger 2010, 11).

The use of the platform mediamanual.at is evaluated by user statistics but they are not made public. The initiative "media literacy award" (prize for best practice school project) is valued by the feedback of the teachers and by the evaluation of the best practice projects. But the media education policy as a whole is not evaluated and there are no legal mechanisms to ensure and measure the efficiency of it.

6 Dimension	Main concepts and legitimizing values

Theoretical discourse on media education

In reflecting the development of Austria's media education during the last decades it is conspicuous that it has not been discussed very intensely on a theoretical level for a long time. In general, the centre of reference concerning theory was the German community of media education and even today most of the relevant literature on media education is of German origin. International approaches from countries beyond the German language area are not common or not discussed very intensely.

In the 1960ies Austrian pedagogues were influenced by the work of Martin Keilhacker and referred to his research on the psychological effects of watching film (Blaschitz/Seibt 2008: 20). The theoretical discourse on media literacy stayed rather critical and cultural pessimistic for a long time. Again with reference to German scholars action based approaches that focused on a self-determined and active recipient gained more and more importance in the 1970ies. At the end of the 1970ies Thomas A. Bauer (1979a; 1979b; 1980) published a three-part introduction into media education with a strong focus on practical questions. The theoretical basis of this work (that is still

the only introductive publication with special focus on media education in Austria) are theories of mass communication, system theory as well as symbolic interactionism as a main frame of reference. Further, Bauer describes in his introduction the functionalistic paradigm, the reflexive paradigm as well as the interactionistic paradigm as the main pedagogical references for media education. So, he also refers to theories that were discussed in Germany at the time when his books were published.

Similar as in Germany the term media competence is used similar to media literacy. In the last twenty years it has been employed within many societal and academic discourses but most definitions draw on Baacke's approach. He divides four elements of media competence: media critique that means the ability of a critically reflection of media and media content as well as one's personal media use; knowledge about media and the media system; receptive and participative use of media; and the ability to produce creative and innovative media content (Baacke 1996).

In the middle of the 1990ies a group of researches of the University of Klagenfurt (Boeckmann, Hipfl, Nessmann, Schludermann & Stotz) established the approach of media maturity that was developed as delineation against the discussion of competency and media literacy in the German speaking countries. The main difference of this concept is not primarily to focus on a list of skills or abilities but to understand a successful handling of and interaction with media as a situational and personal process that mainly refers to the self-determination and social responsibility of the individual. So, from this point of view media maturity cannot simply be taught or learned. It develops in an individual process of cognitive and emotional dealing with media (Schludermann 2002: 53). With reference to the Klagenfurt approach a media mature citizen must be able to reflect the motives and consequences of his or her individual way of dealing with media respecting the social environment in which he or she is acting. In comparison to Baacke's concept of media competence this approach also shows similarities with the concept of media literacy that was discussed in Anglo-American countries at the same time: in this regard being a media mature citizen also means actively participating at the development of a democratic society by the use of media.

Today media literacy is discussed on a rather interdisciplinary level. The main protagonists of the Austrian community do not only come from the field of educational science but deal with the subject from the perspective of different disciplines like for

example cultural studies (e.g. Hipfl 2008; 2002), audience research and media socialisation (e.g. Paus-Hasebrink/Bichler 2008; Paus-Hasebrink/Bichler/Wijnen 2008), game studies (e.g. Mitgutsch/Wagner 2008; Rosenstingl/Wagner 2008; Wagner 2008) or arts (e.g. Pasuchin 2005). While the perspective of cultural studies draws on its tradition of dealing with media as a part of popular culture and in this regard focuses on media literacy as empowerment of people to participate actively in the so called media society, the perspective of audience research is more focussed on the process of socialisation and the relevance of media in people's daily lives pertaining to their management of developmental tasks. In the context of game studies media literacy is discussed against the background of knowledge transfer and the acquirement of certain skills and competencies by the use of computer games. Based on this, considerations on the use of computer games for teaching and learning are made.

An interesting approach that has also emerged in the Austrian discourse is the attempt of bringing together the pedagogy of music and arts with media literacy education in order to develop an interdisciplinary pedagogy of inter-media, inter-arts, aesthetic and cultural literacy (Pasuchin 2007). This concept is primarily based on an integrative perception of media that refers to classical (mass) media as well as digital media and integrates music, dance and theatre as ways of human expression. But it also draws on an integrative perception of art as coalescence of artistic and aesthetic expression and media-communication that leads to a definition of art as the ability to create consciously one's way of life by actively participating in society. The objective of this inter-media and inter-arts pedagogy is a holistic advancement of communication literacies (for example encoding and decoding aesthetic information and media messages; using media to realize one's individual and artistic ambitions etc.) and social and reflexive competencies (for example deliberating media and arts with reference to social, democratic, ethical and creative aspects of communication and participation in society) as well as an encouragement of creative acting by the use of media and different ways of aesthetic expression (Pasuchin 2005: 316).

Summarizing the status quo of the theoretical discourse on media literacy can be described as interdisciplinary with regards to diverse approaches and the discussion of media literacy from rather different perspectives. But still there is a need for more interdisciplinary exchange that is dedicated to a consolidation of different approaches.

Media education in practice

The theoretical discourse on media education has not much influence on the practice in schools and outside schools. Institutions who offer media education outside schools are mostly focussed on creativity, the freedom of expression and active participation in society. As mentioned in dimension 2 media education initiatives at schools and in the field of teacher training are focussed on computer literacy and e-learning. With reference to the EU digital literacy is defined as key competence with a focus on handling new technologies but also creative and critical skills as well as social competencies and the knowledge of legal issues. Media education is seen as an interdisciplinary field that influences all aspects of education. Therefore it doesn't exist a special school subject for the study of media. Although this interdisciplinary perspective is very positive it leads to the negative effect that there are no specific guidelines for teachers how to integrate media education in their classes. This situation leads also to the fact that the realisation of media education at Austrian schools can hardly be evaluated.

7 Dimension	General appreciation (and recommendations)

Today the Austrian media literacy policy is too much focussed on computer literacy and e-learning. This is an organisational problem that results in the restructuring of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture which led to the termination of the former department of media education. Parts of the responsibility of this department went to other departments and those people who stress e-learning and technical innovation are much stronger now. Another problem is that the ministry's media literacy policy was very much pushed by a single person that has retired meanwhile. The main pillars of the former policy (the platform mediamanual.at, the media literacy award, the journal Medienimpulse and most important the media education decree) still exist but without somebody who is promoting it, it is not that effective. This is even more problematic because the media education decree as legal basis is very open (media education as a part of every education at school) and in practise not many teachers are really feeling responsible to teach media literacy. So it depends on the single teacher if young people get media education at school. Additionally it depends on the engagement of the single

teacher if he or she e.g. makes use of the teaching materials that are offered via mediamanual.at or saferinternet.at or if he or she uses the online journal Medienimpulse. Also co-operations with institutions outside schools (e.g. community media) are only made if teachers are interested in one of the various offerings from the NGO sector. Further, media education is hardly integrated into teacher training because the focus regarding media is on technical and didactical issues. And it again depends on the single person if he or she is doing special training in media education. Besides, it is hard to find really good in-service teacher training possibilities. Teachers interested improving their media literacy and knowledge about media education often have to invest a lot of leisure time and money for private post-graduate courses and their engagement is not always honoured at their schools.

Thus, to improve media education in Austria a more committing legal basis is needed. It has to be integrated more in daily school life and teachers have to be forced to train their media literacy and media education competencies. But this also needs a better integration of media education in teacher training curricula as well as more possibilities for in-service teacher training. Therefore it would be good not only focussing on computer literacy but also on digital literacy and media literacy in general.

8	Dimension	Good practices

Austria has two examples that can be called as best practice:

1) Mediamanual.at: This web platform offers various materials for teachers to improve their knowledge about media literacy but also to support them in class (teaching materials, best practice examples etc.). Most of the material is free for the public, special e-lectures are limited to teachers that are working at Austrian schools for a registration fee of 12 euros.

2) Saferinterent.at: The Austrian awareness node of the European insafe programme offers many information and materials for teachers, parents and young people as well as special workshops for schools.

9	Dimension	References (official documents are printed bold)

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