Current Trends of Media Literacy in Europe: An Overview

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the authors give an overview of the current trends of media literacy in Europe. The study titled “Current trends and approaches to media literacy in Europe”, commissioned in the second half of 2007 by the European Commission to the Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona, maps current practices in implementing media literacy in Europe and recommends measures to increase the level of media literacy in Europe. Starting with information from the study, this paper will examine the evolution of media literacy in Europe, its orientation, and its relationship with other related fields, such as media education and digital literacy to explore the emerging trends, innovations, changes, crisis points, alternatives, and so forth.

Keywords: Digital Literacy, ICTs, Information Society, Media Education, Media Literacy

INTRODUCTION

“To become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-driven economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion”, as the Lisbon European Council1 (Lisbon European Council, 2000) established, the European Union, both the Parliament and the Commission, have played an active role in the development of media literacy in Europe.

Among these initiatives we find the study titled Current trends and approaches to media literacy in Europe2 (Pérez Tornerio & Celot, 2007) commissioned, in the second half of 2007, by the European Commission to the UAB, Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona. Using document analysis, case studies and the analysis of media literacy in representative countries, the study maps current practices in implementing media literacy in Europe and recommends measures to be implemented in Europe to increase the level of Media Literacy.

The aim of this paper is to give an overview of the current trends of ML in Europe. Starting from the information given by the mentioned study, we will look at the evolution of media literacy in Europe, its orientation and its relationship with other related fields, such as...
media education and digital literacy to explore the emerging trends of the current situation: innovations, changes, crisis points, as well as alternatives, etc. All these aspects allow us to draw a panorama of Media Literacy in Europe.

**EVOLUTION OF MEDIA EDUCATION AND MEDIA LITERACY**

Educational interest in the media, which has centered on media education, or media literacy, has had different stages or origins which we will describe below, but these phases often correspond to specific focuses and models of media literacy (Table 1) and which, therefore, can coexist at the same time and in the same setting. We will still, however, present the phases in stages to facilitate comprehension and to explain the dynamic orientation of the media literacy.

- **During the 1960s and a large part of the 1970s**

The movie captured the attention of European teachers. Its rising influence and the emergence of new aesthetic and cultural trends boosted the interest in bringing films into schools.

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**Table 1. Models of media literacy (adapted from Pérez Tornero & Celot, 2007)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>Focuses</th>
<th>Privileged actors</th>
<th>Premises</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Priorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>MASS MEDIA</td>
<td>Moral protectionism</td>
<td>Tutors and Educators</td>
<td>Media represent risk to the moral development of children and young people</td>
<td>Condemnation of abuses. Protection of children and young people</td>
<td>Creation of control mechanisms</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ideological Protectionism</td>
<td>Social activists</td>
<td>Media have power of manipulation and ideological control.</td>
<td>Acts of resistance, suggestions for alternative reading.</td>
<td>Social debate: condemnation and criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>INTER-ACTIVE MEDIA (Small and social media)</td>
<td>Proposal of critical reading</td>
<td>Educators Education Authorities Regulatory authorities</td>
<td>Different ways of reading media messages can be developed.</td>
<td>Critical reading Awareness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(awareness and appropriation)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Production proposal</td>
<td>Education authorities Industry Professionals</td>
<td>New media facilitate the liberty to produce messages</td>
<td>Autonomy and personal initiative</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Web 2.0</td>
<td>Cooperative action proposal</td>
<td>Communities and associations Industry teamwork</td>
<td>Network communication boosts cooperative media</td>
<td>Mediation between citizens/media</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Social appropriation of media</td>
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</tbody>
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