MEDIA LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS: A CASE STUDY IN GERMANY

Senta Pfaff-Rüdiger :: Claudia Riesmeyer :: Anna Kümpel

IZVORNI ZNANSTVENI RAD / UDK 316.774:8(430), 004.738.5(430):303 / PRIMLJENO: 29.06.2012.

ABSTRACT *This article presents a skill-based media literacy model which can help to explain digital inequalities. The model integrates the everyday life of children and their developmental tasks. Under this concept, users are media literate if they are able to fulfil their developmental tasks successfully by using the media and to reflect upon the consequences and risks of their media use. In 2011, 82 German boys and girls were interviewed to gain a better understanding of the connections between internet use, media literacy and digital inequalities.*

KEY WORDS

MEDIA LITERACY, DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS, INTERNET, DIGITAL INEQUALITIES, QUALITATIVE APPROACH

Authors Note

Senta Pfaff-Rüdiger :: Department of Communication Science and Media Research, University of Munich, Germany **::** pfaff@ifkw.lmu.de

Claudia Riesmeyer :: Department of Communication Science and Media Research, University of Munich, Germany **::** riesmeyer@ifkw.lmu.de

Anna Kümpel :: Department of Communication Science and Media Research, University of Munich Germany **::** annakuempel@googlemail.com

IZVORNI ZNANSTVENI RAD / UDK 316.774:8(430), 004.738.5(430):303 / PRIMLJENO: 29.06.2012.

INTRODUCTION

Media literacy has become a buzzword today, especially in media regulation where educating media literacy aims to ensure child protection in an increasingly complex online environment. However, the concept itself is still "a patchwork of ideas" (Potter, 2010: 676) and, with regard to its aim, has very different implications. While some researchers still focus on the negative effects of media use (ibid.: 681), others stress the empowerment function of media literacy (Hobbs, 2011: 422). Media literacy is not only a way to *prevent* risks, but rather an opportunity to *enable* children and youths to use the various possibilities the internet offers. Hence, it can be seen as a chance both to understand and to overcome digital inequalities. The concept of digital inequalities assumes that different patterns of internet use influence the life chances of a user (Zillien and Hargittai, 2009). The more media literate a young user is, the more he or she can benefit from using the web – also in terms of solving youth-specific problems and fulfilling various needs.

Therefore we suggest placing the concept of media literacy in a broader theoretical frame: the everyday life of children and their developmental tasks. The internet has become an essential part of the younger generation's everyday life. They frequently go online, communicating with their friends, listening to music, watching videos on *YouTube,* or doing school work (Feierabend and Rathgeb, 2011: 304; Livingstone et al., 2010: 13). They work on their identity online, form and foster social relations with their peers, and have a space to themselves (Pfaff-Rüdiger and Meyen, 2009; Paus-Hasebrink, 2010a). Hence, they fulfil their developmental tasks (Havighurst, 1956). This is in line with our concept that users are media literate if they are able to fulfil their developmental tasks successfully by using the media and to reflect upon the consequences and risks of their media use (Schmidt, Lampert and Schwinge, 2010: 267). This approach allows us to integrate different online practices into a single concept of media literacy, instead of developing a separate concept for each (Friemel and Signer, 2010; Koltay, 2011). The aim of our paper is to demonstrate the theoretical potential of a skill-based media literacy model that can help to explain digital inequalities. In 2011, we conducted 82 interviews with German boys and girls between the ages of 9 and 19 from different social backgrounds to gain a better understanding of the connections between internet use, media literacy and digital inequalities.

MEDIA LITERACY

Media literacy plays a vital role in children's use of the internet. Although the time spent online does not necessarily coincide with diversity of activities (as shown by the example of excessive gamers – see Livingstone, Hasebrink and Görzig, 2012: 329), nevertheless the more children go online, the more online applications they are able to use (Livingstone et al., 2010: 30). Hence, media literacy is a way to benefit from the internet and close the gap between online opportunities and actual online practices (Sutter, 2010: 41). At the same time, media literacy has recently gained importance in terms of explaining digital inequalities (Paulussen et al., 2010: 362). Unequal distribution of media literacy skills therefore can lead to unequal opportunities – both on- and offline.

IZVORNI ZNANSTVENI RAD / UDK 316.774:8(430), 004.738.5(430):303 / PRIMLJENO: 29.06.2012.

Conceptualizing media literacy primarily as a response to negative effects certainly falls short of the mark and ignores the central dimension of empowerment (Hobbs, 2011: 419). Instead, media literacy has both a micro and a macro perspective. It aims to support the user's self-determination and emancipation and also help the user participate actively in society as an enlightened citizen (Süss, Lampert and Wijnen, 2010: 107-108).

The most well-known and widely adopted definition of media literacy, dating from a decade ago, distinguishes four media practices: to access, analyse, evaluate and create media messages (Livingstone and Helsper, 2010: 311; very similar in Baacke, 1999). *Access* integrates both the technological opportunities and skills to go online and the social situations of doing so (Livingstone, 2004: 6). With *analysis*, the definition focuses on knowledge about media structures, audiences or representations (ibid.). *Evaluation* stresses the critical abilities to comprehend this knowledge and to relate it to one's own practices, or as the OFCOM describes it, to "understand the material, and to have an opinion about it" (Rumble, 2011: 11). The new media support the importance of the fourth dimension: Media literate users should have the skills both to (technologically) create content and to share it with their networked communities (Livingstone, 2004: 7-8). The definition clearly focuses on literacy as *social practices*. Following this definition, the EU Children Online survey asked children, for example, about changing privacy settings on a social networking profile or comparing different websites to decide if the information is true (Livingstone et al., 2010: 31). However, it makes a difference whether users know about a practice or risk and act accordingly, if they are aware yet ignore it, or even if do not know it at all. Therefore, we suggest distinguishing between knowledge and practice (Friemel and Signer, 2010: 151; Paulussen et al., 2010: 362).

For a long time, media literacy has concentrated on cognitive or evaluative skills (Koltay, 2011: 211). However, current social online practices like online gaming or cyber bullying indicate that emotional and social skills are often involved as well. The German media literacy research tradition, coming from a literary studies perspective, extends beyond the cognitive frame by integrating technological, social, motivational, emotional, evaluative and creative skills (Rosebrock and Zitzelsperger, 2002: 157-158). This research tradition stresses the *results* of a positive educational process, in order to know what users have to learn to actively benefit from their media use. Social skills, for example, include the ability to interact with others and to communicate about media content (Groeben, 2002: 178), a point recently integrated in the EU media literacy definition (Ding, 2011: 6). Motivational skills focus on what to expect from different media and on developing the right strategies to use the media according to one's own needs (Groeben, 2002: 171-175). Evaluative skills refer to the awareness of mediality, among other things, whereas enjoying media content, for instance, is part of the users' emotional skills (ibid.: 166-171).

In the future, a concept of media literacy should

>combine both *process* (social practices) and *results* (constitutive skills) of media literacy, since skills foster further media use (Sutter, 2010: 42) and media use influences skills (Livingstone, 2008: 105),

>be aware of the distinction between knowing and acting and

>integrate emotional, social and motivational skills.

IZVORNI ZNANSTVENI RAD / UDK 316.774:8(430), 004.738.5(430):303 / PRIMLJENO: 29.06.2012.

In the context of media literacy, a procedural perspective also includes environmental factors, as literacy is commonly developed in social situations (Sutter, 2010: 45). In the next chapter, we describe how self-determination theory and developmental tasks nourish media literacy.

A SKILL-BASED MODEL OF MEDIA LITERACY

Instead of taking the self-efficacy approach (Hargittai, 2005) and relying on self-disclosure of literacy, we suggest using self-determination theory and developmental tasks (Havighurst, 1956) so as to more closely examine the process of gaining media literacy. Moreover, self-determination theory clearly has a growth perspective: How can children benefit from their actions? Examining the everyday lives of children means integrating developmental tasks and asking *how* people gain experiences and become more competent (Paus-Hasebrink, 2010b: 197). Furthermore, by theoretically attaching media literacy to a broader context of needs and developmental tasks, we are able to recognize what influences media literacy.

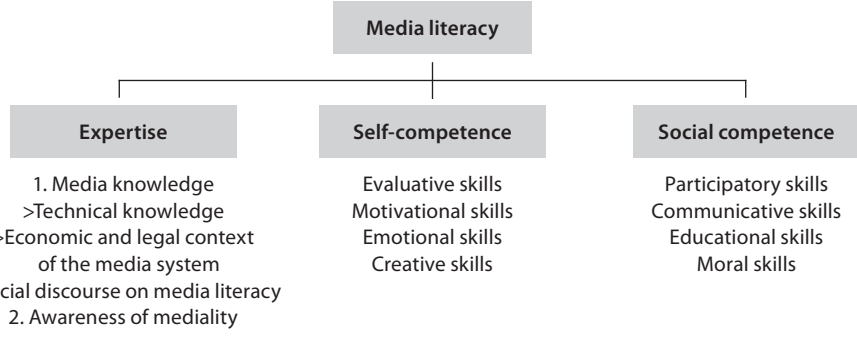
In self-determination theory, basic needs are the "central organizing concept" (La Guardia and Patrick, 2008: 202), they are "essential and universal" (Ryan and Deci, 2000: 328). Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan (2000) empirically identified three basic needs necessary for growth and well-being: *autonomy*, *relatedness* and *competence*. These needs guide every action, including media use, and the pursuit of these needs influences the development of children (ibid.: 327). These three needs often go hand-in-hand, and lead to psychological well-being if they are fulfilled. Developmental tasks can be derived from these needs as well. *Autonomy* means both the wish to become more independent (for example from parents), and the extent to which children can concur with the forces that influence their behaviour (ibid.: 330). Young people have to find a way to integrate the external forces into their own actions, an important condition for developing a coherent sense of self and for achieving emotional independence from parents and other adults (Subrahmanyam and Šmahel, 2011: 28).

Competence emphasizes the 'challenges' children have to confront while acting (La Guardia and Patrick, 2008: 202) and the gratifications they gain if they master these challenges. In their adolescence, young people have to learn the norms and values necessary for acting in society, involving moral considerations (Subrahmanyam and Šmahel, 2011: 29) and the need to reflect upon the world. *Relatedness* refers to "the desire to feel connected to others, to love and care, and to be loved and cared for" (Deci and Ryan, 2000: 231). Adolescents have to build relationships with their peers of both sexes (Subrahmanyam and Šmahel, 2011: 32), a need that becomes increasingly important as they get older.

Following the self-determination theory, a person is media literate if they are able to fulfil their needs successfully by using the media. Which skills are necessary depends on the basic needs and the everyday life of the user. The different media literacy skills can

IZVORNI ZNANSTVENI RAD / UDK 316.774:8(430), 004.738.5(430):303 / PRIMLJENO: 29.06.2012.

be (re)grouped by relating them to the corresponding needs[1]. Integrating the previously cited concepts of Livingstone (2004) and Groeben (2002), we suggest the following model that differentiates between three dimensions of media literacy (see Figure 1).



Source: Compiled by authors (following Dewe and Sander, 1996; Groeben, 2002 and Livingstone, 2004).

▲ *Figure 1.*
Expertise, Self-competence and Social competence:
A skill-based model of media literacy

Expertise focuses on the *need for competence*, including knowledge of technical, economic or legal contexts regarding the media system, media effects, the social discourse on risks and harms and an awareness of mediality. Technological skills mean mastering both hardware and software (Livingstone, 2008: 202) in order to find one's way in the online world. It indicates a clear sense of mastery: whether young users know (technologically) how to create an avatar or install software on their own (cf. analysis in the Livingstone model). Media knowledge, including technological, legal or social discourses, is a precondition for being able to benefit from the internet while avoiding risks. Following Norbert Groeben (2002), we include awareness of mediality as a skill to ensure expertise. Even if the major part of the younger generation's everyday life takes place in the online environment and the frontiers between online and offline blur, the question remains, if (young) users (still) know that online actions or offline actions can have different consequences. Young users especially, who define themselves by their competence, will try to achieve expertise.

Self-competence, on the other hand, concentrates on the *need for autonomy* (and identity). It covers evaluative, motivational, emotional and creative skills. Are users able to reflect on the benefits and risks of their usage? Are they aware of the consequences of their actions online? Are they able to relate online experiences to their previous, real-world experiences? Even if emotional and social skills have become more important, *evaluative* skills remain a key factor when it comes to benefiting from the internet. *Motivational* skills are concerned with whether users are able to fulfil their needs and are therefore also able to manage their identity by using the internet. *Emotional skills* include both mood

[1] On the issue of adult education, see Dewe and Sander, 1996.

IZVORNI ZNANSTVENI RAD / UDK 316.774:8(430), 004.738.5(430):303 / PRIMLJENO: 29.06.2012.

management itself and the ability to deal with emotional online experiences. *Creative skills* refer to the abilities to create a homepage or a profile on a Social Network Site (SNS), i.e. being an active internet user. Users, who strive for a coherent self, will especially require skills in self-competence.

Social competence is based on the *need for relatedness*, and involves participatory, communicative, educational and moral skills. With the new online practices, social skills are becoming more and more important as they often hold consequences for other social relations as well (Sutter, 2010: 47), and do not just concern access (Livingstone, 2004). Here, we distinguish *participatory skills* (how to *act* with others online, how to treat others online) from *communicative skills* (how to *talk about* online content). Talking about content helps in dealing with it: Do children know how to talk about their experiences online? To whom can they talk about it? As for *educational skills*, users show a greater level of mastery if they can show others how to use the internet. Developing or integrating social norms in one's own behaviour is a crucial developmental task in adolescence, but do adolescents actually know what is right and what is wrong in their own internet behaviour?

Most of these skills are not isolated but work together: For instance, moral skills require evaluative skills, and creative skills require technological ones. However, as the results of our study will show, differentiating them gives a clearer insight into what is actually missing in the younger generation's media literacy.

METHOD

Qualitative methods are superior to standardized quantitative methods when investigating media literacy in the everyday lives of users because of the qualitative focus on "the context, the setting and the subjects' frame of reference" (Marshall and Rossman, 1989: 46). Using these methods, respondents are able to speak freely about their everyday life, their needs, and their usage patterns. Although in-depth interviews cannot deliver representative results nor measure how common literacy is in the population, they can at least reveal and explain typical patterns. Theoretical sampling was used to select the participants in order to enable generalizations. Internet usage among German youth and the experience of opportunities and risks online still vary according to gender, age and education (Feierabend and Rathgeb, 2011; similar assumption in Livingstone et al., 2010: 19).

Since comparative studies like PISA and IGLU show that educational opportunities are (still) connected to social background and socioeconomic status (Nold, 2010: 138-139), we have conceived educational levels to be an indicator of social status. Hence, the quota sample of 82 young internet users was selected according to the following three criteria:

>Gender: 38 girls and 44 boys;
>Age: 13 persons younger than 12, 18 younger than 14, 24 persons between 14 and 16 years of age, 20 persons between 16 and 18, and 8 persons older than 18 years;

IZVORNI ZNANSTVENI RAD / UDK 316.774:8(430), 004.738.5(430):303 / PRIMLJENO: 29.06.2012.

>Education: 13 persons still in elementary school, 37 pupils at grammar school (*Gymnasium*) or with A-levels (*Abitur*), 32 at General Secondary School (*Hauptschule*) or after it.

The topics in the interview guideline referred to theoretical assumptions and concentrated on internet usage (patterns of use, motives), media literacy, and everyday life as a contextual factor. We conducted the interviews in 2010 und 2011. Most took place at the respondent's home or at school and lasted about 60 minutes. The interviews were recorded on tape and then transcribed into written form.

To analyse the data, we follow a theory-driven approach, which differs from classic grounded theory or hermeneutics. By means of theoretical coding, we used our theoretical concept (a combination of self-determination theory and media literacy) to interpret the qualitative data (Creswell, 2007). We developed a portrait of each person, analysing their different skills and contextualizing them by reference to their everyday lives. The following chapters describe the different skills of German youth, beginning with the internet in the daily life of our interviewees and their social online practices. The findings help understand the connection between developmental tasks, media literacy and digital inequalities.

INTERNET IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Internet has come to constitute an essential part of children's' everyday life. Teenagers especially are 'always on', ready to chat or to comment on friends' posts. Parallel use is also very common – the youngsters listen to music on *YouTube* while chatting with friends on *Facebook*. Typical web 2.0 sites like *YouTube*, *Facebook* and *Wikipedia* are the most frequently used applications (Livingstone et al. 2010: 37, Feierabend and Rathgeb, 2011). While *YouTube* offers free videos and music, *Facebook* is used to meet the need for relatedness. Furthermore search engines (e.g. *Google*) and online encyclopaedias like *Wikipedia* are an important part of youngsters' internet use as they are popular resources for research and school projects. Contrary to social expectations, content creation is of no importance among our interviewees. Except for creating profiles on SNS, the majority do not contribute their own content, but rather remain passive. Hence, the current usage of the web (e.g. for their need of autonomy and identity) is far from its full potential.

The extensive use of the internet may be partly explained by the wide range of technical equipment: Even the young(est) users own PCs or laptops, smartphones, iPods and game consoles and can access them in their own rooms mostly unrestricted. Most parents generally do not limit their children's internet use (e.g. block applications with security software), and only regulate it in terms of *time*. Thus, the internet can be described as a free space in the otherwise well-protected parental home – a possibility to act in private and relatively independently and to use it to fulfil their need for autonomy and emotional independence. Although family mediates the first (mostly very early) contact with the internet, parents are generally the last point of contact for problems and questions. Being digital natives, children often exceed their mothers and fathers in terms of expertise.

IZVORNI ZNANSTVENI RAD / UDK 316.774:8(430), 004.738.5(430):303 / PRIMLJENO: 29.06.2012.

The role of the school in mediating media literacy is also marginal – in general the curriculum only includes technical skills like typewriting and handling of Microsoft Word. Hence, for the most part, the youngsters have to face problems on their own.

EXPERTISE

Technical media knowledge

Usage determines knowledge: Without exception, all our interviewees know a lot about the applications they use regularly. However, a closer look reveals that most of them are lacking background knowledge (e.g. about hardware and technical details). Thus, if something does not work, the young people follow a trial-and-error approach, usually rebooting their PCs. If they are unable to solve the problem, they ask siblings or friends for help. Interestingly, they learn quickly and instantly what might have caused the error when it occurs again. Teenage girl Faranaz (14), for example, knows that a broken fan can cause problems: "That happens frequently. The computer gets too hot and shuts down."

The few youngsters that create their own content, generally older boys, almost inevitably have more technical media knowledge. These interviewees are more likely to conduct online searches in order to solve their problems (e.g. in specific online forums), score higher in interactive skills, and usually have no problems utilizing their knowledge to assist family and friends. Manuel (14), for example, recently uploaded software tutorials onto *YouTube,* so that "others can understand it more easily". At the same time, he demonstrates his own expertise and therefore fulfils his need for *competence*: Gratification is not only gained by solving the problem on his own but also by sharing his knowledge with the web community.

Knowledge about the legal and economic context

Boys and girls do not give much thought to media structures. They use everything the internet offers them, but – once again – lack further knowledge and/or have no interest in understanding broader contexts. With few exceptions, they know nothing about media owners, financing models or the general operating mode of the internet. The younger the interviewees are, the less they know – furthermore, this knowledge is rather unspecific: "Some people lie on the internet" says for example Laura (9).

The assessment of *Wikipedia* is a good example for this. Despite knowing that everyone can publish and edit entries for the encyclopaedia, most of the older interviewees use it and have no idea why teachers forbid it, nor how exactly it works. Although some of the interviewees even received bad marks for presentations based on *Wikipedia* entries, they do not change their behaviour, but simply resolve to be more careful next time.

Another example: illegal downloads. Whereas some are simply not able to detect legal gray areas (like torrent sites or converter software for *YouTube*), others are perfectly aware of their wrongdoing. For example, Natalia (17) reacts with disbelief to the question

IZVORNI ZNANSTVENI RAD / UDK 316.774:8(430), 004.738.5(430):303 / PRIMLJENO: 29.06.2012.

as to whether she pays for music online: "No, do you actually do this? Why should I pay for something that I can get for free?" The consequences are widely unknown or ignored. Only a small number of interviewees feel uncertain and are afraid of getting caught. A friend of Manuel, for example, (14) had to pay "[…] 500 euro all because of an audio book! So I don't do this stuff, it's too risky." Since knowledge of media structures is not of high standing among their peers, the youngsters cannot use it to fulfil their need for competence and thus widely ignore it.

Social discourse about risks and norms

The young users appear to have certain knowledge of internet risks. Almost everyone knows about the dangers of cyber bullying, data abuse, or the ease of changing identities. They pay attention to the media discourse on the (assumed) connection between online gaming and rampages (e.g. school shootings), internet addiction, and employers' interest in SNS profiles. Knowledge about social discourse certainly exists, but, again, it is rather general. Often, the boys and girls only replicate arguments they picked up somewhere, in the family, school or media.

Many interviewees dissociate themselves from the public discourse, since their own experiences vary. But then again, the difference between knowledge and social practice is quite evident. For example, although they are aware of the discourse about data security, they do not adapt it to their own privacy settings on SNS. As Angelina (13) says, "We're not 5 years old anymore. We know the online risks – but without any risks it would be boring." Thus, overall, it can be stated that knowledge alone is not enough in terms of media literacy, since youngsters either ignore knowledge in order to fulfil their need for relatedness and social acceptance, or their knowledge is limited to what they need in their daily practices.

Awareness of mediality

As already stated, our interviewees consider the internet to be an additional space to their social practice, and thus as an extension of their private lives. In this space, they are able to move mostly without restriction and fulfil various needs. Contrary to the public discourse, the web is not seen as some kind of illusory world – rather, it offers the possibility to extend various schoolyard activities, like talking, playing and socializing, easier than ever before. Most of the interviewees only interact in closed networks with their existing friends and are very cautious in dealing with strangers – 14-year old girl Faranaz states: "I instantly deny friend requests from people I don't know! I only talk to my friends."

Thus, the problem is not that children are losing touch with reality, but rather that they often do not see that their online actions have implications, too. Awareness of mediality is therefore strongly linked to *evaluative* and *moral* skills. A person who lacks the ability to see the connection between virtual and non-virtual space is less likely to consider their behaviour sufficiently and thus more likely to hurt others with overhasty comments (see below). Hence, many youngsters still have to acquire the competency to act with others in a socially responsible way.

IZVORNI ZNANSTVENI RAD / UDK 316.774:8(430), 004.738.5(430):303 / PRIMLJENO: 29.06.2012.

SELF-COMPETENCE

Evaluative skills

As mentioned before, there is a big difference between knowing the risks and acting accordingly. Not everybody is capable of transferring knowledge to their actions (or willing to do so) – and it is striking that this is not a question of understanding. The children and teens who use SNS are perfectly aware of the fact that they reveal a lot about themselves online. Zoe (14) compares this to the behaviour of adult smokers: "They know it's totally harmful and they also know the consequences – but they're doing it anyway." In this case, the need for relatedness and peer acceptance seems to be of more importance than potential dangers. When asked about advice for new SNS-users the interviewees claim unanimously: "Don't give away too much about yourself!" But in contrast, only few can tell for certain which privacy settings they have chosen for their profiles or how many friends they have. While some of the interviewees continuously take time to reflect on their actions online, critical scrutiny is rather uncommon overall. Because of their lack of experience younger children, especially, have problems evaluating web applications thoroughly.

Motivational skills

All of the boys and girls interviewed are very goal-oriented and able to find what they need online (see chapter *Internet in Everyday Life*). Nevertheless, the actual usage of the web is far from its full potential: Surprisingly, although most of the interviewees have diverse hobbies, e.g. sports, music, pets and animals, they only rarely use the internet to improve their capabilities or gain further knowledge by interacting with like-minded people. It seems that solidarity and safety in the peer-group are more important than individual identity work online, in other words than fulfilling their needs for competence or autonomy. Especially for teenagers the desire to feel connected is much stronger than the desire to work on their personal strengths and capabilities. The high priority of SNS can be seen as an indicator for this.

Emotional skills

Not surprisingly, the internet is used as a kind of mood management tool by most of the participants. 19-year old Benedikt states quite frankly: "When I feel bad, I go online." When they watch funny clips, interact with friends on *Facebook* or play games, everyday frustrations seem easier to forget. But then again, the internet also confronts young users with situations that are hard to deal with: Shocking videos on *YouTube*, not getting comments on *Facebook*-posts of personal importance or even worse – mocking and bullying via SNS.

It is striking that boys and girls have almost no processing strategies and thus are often exposed to emotions that they cannot deal with properly. As stated before, juvenile internet use is generally a private, individual activity. While this separation might be helpful in the progression of motivational skills and coping with developmental tasks, it becomes a problem in the case of emotionally charged issues. Considering that almost

IZVORNI ZNANSTVENI RAD / UDK 316.774:8(430), 004.738.5(430):303 / PRIMLJENO: 29.06.2012.

every interviewee, especially the older ones, has been confronted with disturbing situations online, the lack of adequate processing strategies is an urgent matter.

Creative skills

Creative usage of the internet occurs only rarely among the interviewed youngsters. While most of the interviewees find it too tedious and time-consuming, some admit that they lack the required knowledge, or worry about negative reactions. The example of Melanie (16) shows that criticism online can be very discouraging – especially in teenage years: After receiving critical comments about a poem she posted in a forum, she never tried uploading her own content again. The opportunity to fulfil her need for competence *online* became irrelevant after this bad experience. Then again, some of the (few) active juveniles specifically seek feedback online: "On *YouTube* you can see the ratings and comments – and I quite like that! So you can see how talented other people think you are at sports" says Jonas (12). Due to the positive reactions he received, the internet was an important means for him to gain gratifications and experience competence. It is noticeable that it was primarily the male interviewees who became active on the internet while the female ones tended to remain passive.

SOCIAL COMPETENCE

Participatory skills

Without a doubt, social networking is the most popular online activity among the interviewed youngsters. To fulfil their need for relatedness youngsters use a variety of applications like *Facebook* groups and wall feeds, private messages or chats. Overall, it can be said that all of the interviewed youth were able to participate in online interactions, but sometimes still lacked the ability to sufficiently think about the effects of their behaviour. Permanent availability, and thus the pressure to react, may be one of the reasons for insufficient evaluative and participatory skills, since there is simply not enough time to reflect on one's actions. Apart from that, online communication offers the young users many advantages. While it is sometimes difficult for teenage boys and girls to show their affection in school, it is much easier in a private chat: "The boys don't talk to us in the schoolyard – but on MSN, without their friends, they do" (Rebecca, 14). The developmental tasks of teenagers, especially the ones related to building relationships with peers of the opposite sex, therefore seem easier to achieve online.

Communicative skills

Only few of the interviewees regularly exchange online experiences and talk with others about problems and worries caused by the internet. As already stated, parents are generally the last point of contact: Not only because young people are afraid of punishment, but also because many parents are not familiar with applications used by their children and – more importantly – unable to see the personal relevance of these applications for the daily life of their children. Furthermore, talking to parents to some extent conflicts with the wish to become more independent and experience autonomy.

IZVORNI ZNANSTVENI RAD / UDK 316.774:8(430), 004.738.5(430):303 / PRIMLJENO: 29.06.2012.

Similar problems may be observed in a school context. Although the youngsters give accounts of teachers initiating debates about bullying and internet risks, the sustainability of such interventions remains questionable: "At some point it is just annoying" says, for instance, Erik (12). Instead, the juveniles are most likely to talk to their (older) siblings, who seem to understand them and their worries best.

It is astonishing that the young users talk online all the time and about almost everything – but do not go there to handle their emotions or find solace. Although this generally applies to all the interviewees, girls are a bit more likely to open up to others.

Educational skills

Helping family and friends to solve technical, moral or other problems requires certain knowledge of the particular subject. This may sound trivial, but it is a necessary precondition for the development and stabilization of educational skills. Thus, not surprisingly, the youngsters who know much about technical aspects in particular are the ones who support others effectively. Vice versa, those with a limited skill repertoire are usually not in a position to educate – rather, they need help themselves. It is predominantly the male interviewees who score higher in educational skills – a circumstance that is also confirmed by many of the girls interviewed: "I know what I have to do, but people rarely ask me for advice – that is rather a task for the boys" (Zoe, 14). Educational skills are strongly linked to the general need for *competence*: Youngsters who have a marked interest in experiencing competency are especially keen to share their knowledge with others.

Moral skills

It is striking that most of the youngsters do not have a guilty conscience about their immoral or even illegal actions online. Bullying is a very present issue among the interviewed teenagers – either because they were (more or less) involved in or affected by harassment, or because they had heard about such cases from friends. While some of the interviewees generally disapprove of this behaviour, many seem to try to justify it, like Philipp (12): "The teachers always blame us, but there is a reason why we mock him. He is actually kind of nice, but then again he is kind of an asshole and that is pretty annoying." Due to the growing use of SNS, mobbing is not only easier to *extend* beyond schoolyard boundaries to include leisure time and the private sphere, but also more visible – for the victim as well as for the spectators.

Furthermore, the bullies commonly have fewer inhibitions online, since the threshold is lower due to text-based communication and the possibility for anonymity. Contrary to common expectations, adolescents with better education, and/or from families with higher-status occupations, do not behave better or show more compassion for others. Rather, relevant factors influencing moral skills seem to be self-assurance, empathy and fundamental ethical principles. Hence, the internet does not support the developmental task of learning about social and moral norms and integrating them into one's own behaviour, since the young people act in SNS without having someone who can actually show them how to do it, e.g. parents. Therefore, moral skills seem to be all the more important.

IZVORNI ZNANSTVENI RAD / UDK 316.774:8(430), 004.738.5(430):303 / PRIMLJENO: 29.06.2012.

CONCLUSION

The concept of media literacy in an online environment must integrate everyday needs of youngsters, their developmental tasks and their patterns of internet use in order to understand digital inequalities and specific opportunities and risks more precisely. Following our concept, users are media literate if they are able to fulfil their developmental tasks (Havighurst, 1956) successfully using the media and to reflect upon the consequences and risks of their media use. As our study shows, needs determine media usage as well as knowledge and available media literacy skills. According to the developed model of media literacy (following Dewe and Sander, 1996; Groeben, 2002 and Livingstone 2004), skills can be grouped into three main categories – *Expertise*, *self-competence* and *social competence*.

While almost all of our 82 interviewees know a lot about the applications they use regularly, their knowledge about the legal and economic context is rather limited and unspecific. Furthermore, many of the interviewees do not understand that their online actions have implications, too, and are unable to see the connections between virtual and non-virtual space. Regarding aspects of self-competence, it is striking that all of our interviewees score high in motivational skills (i.e. are able to find what they *need*), but are lacking important emotional and evaluative skills. The largest deficits occur in terms of social competence. Increasing social needs lead, for instance, to increasing use of SNS but do not necessarily lead to greater social skills, due to the gap between knowledge and action. The interviewees are often well aware of the opportunities and risks of the internet, but nevertheless act in an inappropriate way, creating fake accounts, bullying others, or downloading music illegally. Hence, social practice alone does not create skills. This is all the more important, since the girls and boys transfer their online behaviour to offline interactions – their attitude of 'the end justifies the means' therefore is problematic in a broader social context.

Developmental tasks and related needs appear to have specific influence on the repertoire of media literacy skills. While youngsters who define themselves by their competence are also keen to achieve *digital* expertise and, for instance, score higher in educational skills, the ones with a limited need for competence are not motivated to acquire it online. Interestingly, youth-specific needs can both *decrease* and *increase* literacy skills. The needs for relatedness and autonomy are often connected with ignorance of potential dangers (i.e. a lack of evaluative skills or awareness of mediality) or conflict with the willingness to talk about (online) problems – especially with adults (see for similar results Livingstone et al., 2010: 12). But then again, the need for autonomy enables the youngsters to develop a variety of motivational and participatory skills on their own.

Furthermore the application of our model revealed that skills form a bundle: technical knowledge goes hand-in-hand with evaluative and communicative skills. Awareness of mediality, evaluative and moral skills converges to properly reflect upon the consequences of online behaviour. Moreover, communicative and emotional skills work together to deal with harmful media content – a competence a lot of our interviewees were actually missing.

IZVORNI ZNANSTVENI RAD / UDK 316.774:8(430), 004.738.5(430):303 / PRIMLJENO: 29.06.2012.

Contrary to common expectations, adolescents with better education, and/or from families with higher-status, do not behave better or show more compassion for others online. Thus, deficiencies in media literacy, especially in terms of *social* competence, cannot be explained simplistically with educational or social status – rather, they are a problem of (self-) socialization. Hence, self-socialization, often used in a 'trial and error' principle, cannot be the cure-all. Whereas the technological skills are often sufficient, even older girls and boys need help in developing evaluative and social skills. Parents and teachers often lack the knowledge of online practices required to support their children in developing media literacy. Other ways of educating skills, maybe by teens, older siblings or friends, are necessary, since knowing is not enough in terms of media literacy.

Since the presented study followed a qualitative approach, it is not possible to establish causal relations or draw conclusions about the general population. Nevertheless, typical patterns emerged and should be considered in future studies. Thus, a next step for research would be to conduct a quantitative study that investigates the connection between the different literacy skills as well as their relation to developmental tasks and digital inequalities more thoroughly.

References

>Baacke, Dieter (1999) "Medienkompetenz": theoretisch erschließend und praktisch folgenreich, *medien + erziehung (merz)* 43 (1): 7-12.
>Cresswell, John W. (2007) *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design. Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
>Deci, Edward L. and Ryan, Richard M. (2000) The "What" and "Why" of Goal Pursuit: Human Needs and the Self-Determination of Behaviour, *Psychological Inquiry* 11 (4): 227-268.
>Dewe, Bernd and Sander, Uwe (1996) Medienkompetenz und Erwachsenenbildung, pp. 125-142 in von Rein, Antje (ed.) *Medienkompetenz als Schlüsselbegriff.* Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt.
>Ding, Susanne (2011) The European Commission's Approach to Media Literacy, pp. 5-7 in Livingstone, Sonia (ed.) *Media Literacy: Ambitions, Policies and Measures*. London: COST.
>Feierabend, Sabine and Rathgeb, Thomas (2011) Medienumgang Jugendlicher in Deutschland, *Media Perspektiven* 6: 299-310.
>Friemel, Thomas and Signer, Sara (2010) Web 2.0 Literacy: Four Aspects of the Second-Level Digital Divide, *Studies in Communication Sciences. Journal of the Swiss Association of Communication and Media Research* 10 (2): 143-166.
>Groeben, Norbert (2002) Dimensionen der Medienkompetenz: Deskriptive und normative Aspekte, pp. 160-197 in Groeben, Norbert and Hurrelmann, Bettina (eds) *Medienkompetenz. Voraussetzungen, Dimensionen, Funktionen*. Weinheim, München: Juventa.
>Hargittai, Eszter (2005) Survey Measures of Web-Oriented Digital Literacy, *Social Science Computer Review* 23 (3): 371–379.
>Havighurst, Robert J. (1956) Research on the Developmental-Task Concept, *The School Review* 64 (5): 215-223.
>Hobbs, Renee (2011) The State of Media Literacy: A Response to Potter, *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 55 (3): 419-430.
>Koltay, Tibor (2011) The Media and the Literacies: Media Literacy, Information Literacy, Digital Literacy, *Media, Culture & Society* 33 (2): 211-221.
>La Guardia, Jennifer G. and Patrick, Heather (2008) Self-Determination Theory as a Fundamental Theory of Close Relationships, *Canadian Psychology* 9 (3): 201-209.
>Livingstone, Sonia (2004) Media Literacy and the Challenge of New Information and Communication Technologies, *The Communication Review* 7: 3-14.

IZVORNI ZNANSTVENI RAD / UDK 316.774:8(430), 004.738.5(430):303 / PRIMLJENO: 29.06.2012.

>Livingstone, Sonia (2008) Internet Literacy: Young People's Negotiation of New Online Opportunities, pp. 101-122 in McPherson, Tara (ed.) *Digital Youth, Innovation, and the Unexpected*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
>Livingstone, Sonia and Helsper, Ellen (2010) Balancing Online Opportunities and Risks in Teenagers' Use of the Internet: The Role of Online Skills and Internet Self-Efficacy, *New Media & Society* 12 (2): 309-329.
>Livingstone, Sonia et al. (2010) *Risks and Safety on the Internet. The Perspective of European Children. Initial Findings from the EU Children Online Survey of 9-16 Year Olds and Their Parents*. London: EU Children Online.
>Livingstone, Sonia, Hasebrink, Uwe and Goerzig, Anke (2012) Towards a General Model of Determinants of Risk and Safety, pp. 323-337 in Livingstone, Sonia, Haddon, Leslie and Goerzig, Anke (eds) *Children, Risk and Safety Online: Research and Policy Challenges in Comparative Perspective*. Bristol: The Policy Press.
>Marshall, Catherine and Rossman, Gretchen B. (1989) *Designing Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park: Sage.
>Nold, Daniela (2010) Sozioökonomischer Status von Schülerinnen und Schülern 2008. Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus, *Wirtschaft und Statistik* (2): 138–149.
>Paulussen, Steve et al. (2010) Adolescents' New Media Literacy in Flanders (Belgium), *Observatorio* 4 (4): pp. 361-374.
>Paus-Hasebrink, Ingrid (2010a) Das Social Web im Kontext der Entwicklungsaufgaben junger Menschen, *Medien Journal* 4: 20-34.
>Paus-Hasebrink, Ingrid (2010b) Lebens-Herausforderungen: Medienumgang und Lebensaufgaben. Was muss kommunikationswissenschaftliche Forschung leisten?, pp.195-209 in Hartmann, Maren and Hepp, Andreas (eds) *Die Mediatisierung der Alltagswelt*. Wiesbaden: VS.
>Pfaff-Rüdiger, Senta and Meyen, Michael (2009) „Da sind einfach alle drin". Internet im Alltag von Jugendlichen, *Sozialwissenschaften und Berufspraxis* 32 (2): 184-197.
>Potter, W. James (2010) The State of Media Literacy, *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 54 (4): 675-696.
>Rosebrock, Cornelia and Zitzelsberger, Olga (2002) Der Begriff Medienkompetenz als Zielperspektive im Diskurs von Pädagogik und Didaktik, pp. 148-159 in Groeben, Norbert and Hurrelmann, Bettina (eds) *Medienkompetenz. Voraussetzungen, Dimensionen, Funktionen*. Weinheim, München: Juventa.
>Rumble, Jane (2011) Ofcom's Media Literacy Work, pp. 11-19 in Livingstone, Sonia (ed.) *Media Literacy: Ambitions, Policies and Measures*. London: COST.
>Ryan, Richard M. and Deci, Edward. L. (2000) The Darker and Brighter Side of Human Existence: Basic Psychological Needs as a Unifying Concept, *Psychological Inquiry* 11 (4): 319-338.
>Schmidt, Jan, Lampert, Claudia and Schwinge, Christiane (2010) Nutzungspraktiken im Social Web – Impulse für die medienpädagogische Diskussion, pp. 255-270 in Herzig, Bardo et al. (ed.) *Jahrbuch Medienpädagogik 8. Medienkompetenz und Web 2.0*. Wiesbaden: VS.
>Süss, Daniel, Lampert, Claudia and Wijnen, Christine W. (2010) *Medienpädagogik. Ein Studienbuch zur Einführung*. Wiesbaden: VS.
>Sutter, Tilmann (2010) Medienkompetenz und Selbstsozialisation im Kontext Web 2.0, pp. 41-58 in Herzig, Bardo et al. (eds) *Jahrbuch Medienpädagogik 8. Medienkompetenz und Web 2.0*. Wiesbaden: VS.
>Subrahmanyam, Kaverie and Šmahel, David (2011) *Digital Youth. The Role of Media in Development*. New York: Springs.
>Zillien, Nicole and Hargittai, Eszter (2009) Digital Distinction: Status-specific Types of Internet Usage, *Social Science Quarterly* 90 (2): 274-291.

IZVORNI ZNANSTVENI RAD / UDK 316.774:8(430), 004.738.5(430):303 / PRIMLJENO: 29.06.2012.

MEDIJSKA PISMENOST I RAZVOJNI ZADACI: SAVEZNA REPUBLIKA NJEMAČKA KAO STUDIJA SLUČAJA

Senta Pfaff-Rüdiger :: Claudia Riesmeyer :: Anna Kümpel

SAŽETAK *U radu je predstavljen model medijske pismenosti koji se temelji na vještinama. Pretpostavlja se da taj model može pomoći da se objasne digitalne nejednakosti. Model ujedinjuje svakodnevni život djece i njihove razvojne zadatke. Prema predloženom konceptu za korisnike se može reći da su medijski pismeni ako su sposobni uspješno ispuniti razvojne zadatke koristeći medije, a očekuje se i da promišljaju o posljedicama i rizicima korištenja medija. 2011. godine intervjuirano je 82 djece u Njemačkoj s ciljem da se dobije bolji uvid u poveznice između korištenja interneta, medijske pismenosti i digitalnih nejednakosti.*

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

MEDIJSKA PISMENOST, RAZVOJNI ZADACI, INTERNET, DIGITALNE NEJEDNAKOSTI, KVALITATIVNI PRISTUP

Bilješka o autorima

Senta Pfaff-Rüdiger :: Odjel za komunikacijsku znanost i medijska istraživanja, Sveučilište u Münchenu, Njemačka **::** pfaff@ifkw.lmu.de

Claudia Riesmeyer :: Odjel za komunikacijsku znanost i medijska istraživanja, Sveučilište u Münchenu, Njemačka **::** riesmeyer@ifkw.lmu.de

Anna Kümpel :: Odjel za komunikacijsku znanost i medijska istraživanja, Sveučilište u Münchenu, Njemačka **::** annakuempel@googlemail.com