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Title: Media competence – Conditions and Challenges

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*In a media- and knowledge society context
understanding the reality
needs understanding media*

Understanding media:

- Normative-critical approach:
Use media as means and agency of cognitive, affective and active participation in public discourse and in societal conversation in order to get connected and synchronized with different and professionally based interpretations of events and decisions that are publicly supposed to be meaningful for personal and public management of life
- Empirical approach:
Use Media as a source of experience, of inspiration, of setting agenda and as a generalized frame of reference for public knowledge in order to get connected to the generalization of behaviour
- Pragmatic Approach:
Use Media as a resource of information and what is publicly supposed to be news in order to gain a preferred position within the social structures of competition for (active or passive) public attention (market)
- Emancipative Approach:
Use Media as an open source space of taking and giving contributions to the generalized interpretation of experience in order to multiply your and other's view of world - thus becoming your own actor in constructing the reality
- Cultural Approach:
Use Media as reflector of people's endeavour in styling their life according to traditions, narrations, stories, histories – in order to get connected to trends, myths and conversational measures.

Understanding Competence:

Where does the imagination come from?

Competence is not a natural quality, but is a category of the cultural interpretation of human attitude in relation to the natural, cultural, social, technical and symbolic environment. It says that mankind is able and capable to organize its position in relation to the environment in a cultural manner - thus forming personality and individuality in order to become an identifiable part of it.

Anthropological interpretation

The Competence term represents an anthropological interpretation of risks and chances of surviving by means that are only given to mankind: making decision by free will and by reflection - using means of intelligence, notion, cognition and consciousness. Within that tradition competence is a dimension of human performance of life that has to be supposed to be anyone's own. Competence values in that frame above all others is: winning margin, privilege

Psychological interpretation:

Competence of personal life depends to certain extent from different pre-conditions of socialisation: family structure, personality structure, culture of relationship. Media Competence is not a special competence, but more the reflection of understanding one's personal life styling under socio-cultural frame conditions: The social climate. Values of Competence within psychological interpretation are: authenticity, open mindedness, distinctiveness, reflexivity, critical distance against yourself and critical closeness o others

Development of competence needs a hygienic climate – in individual but also in societal dimensions. Non-hygienic climates lead to strategies of simulation and compensative inscenation of performing one's own life or the life of the society/community/organization.

Educational interpretation:

Competence always has been a goal for education and pedagogy insofar educational and learning programs aims to bring young people to the state of ability, capacity and responsibility in all socially relevant fields of behaviour. Education works theoretically and practically in the direction of an ideal typical assumption of an individual and tries to challenge the learning capacity of individuals according to a system of socialisation.

The problems behind that:

- Models of identity are not sacrosanct and could change,
- Models of social order are constructions and could be deconstructed,
- To compensate the dilemma of the society on shoulders of individuals of the upcoming generation might be a cynical way to demand competence from youngsters within a social environment with weak competence culture.

Competence-Model in General:

- Competence - a normative term: is directed to social agreements of social and individual values

- Competence - a critical term: is directed to distinguish between systems demands and environment-consciousness
- Competence - a pragmatic term: is directed to the possibility of learning and of development.

Media Competence:

The Media environment is a complex environment: technical, cultural, political, social, behavioural and economic structures are mixed and organized to a system for its own quality.

Living with and in media environment challenges skills of distinction, of differentiation and of decision of individuals insofar the media system represents and mediates other environments: public spheres, politics, education, art, religion and church life, scenes of diverse communities, fiction, faction, entertainment, conversation, discourse and discussion, advertisement and models of personal life styling.

The term of competence includes:

- Ability (to know what operations and how to do them in case of)
- Capacity (to have the cognitive, affective and active means and preparedness: skills)
- Responsibility (to be conscious of what it means for oneself and/or for others: consequences and possible effects)
- Morality (to be aware of the implicated values when making personal decisions)

Theoretical Model of graduation of competence:

- linguistic competence (syntactic and semantic use of language and symbols in order to understand and to make understandable / restricted vs. elaborated code)
- rhetorical competence (pragmatic use of language and behavioural language in order to persuade with believes and to convince with arguments)
- communicative competence (be aware of creating a symmetry of mutual participation exchanging meanings)
- media competence (be aware of – and reflect your own standards of ability, capacity, responsibility and morality using media as means of participation in public life)

Media Competence Development:

Two levels:

Professionalisation - for professional competence

Public Media Education – for Media Literacy

1. Professionalization:

Professional Use of media in context of function and organizational role (journalist, reporter, editor, news manager etc.)

Ability, Capacity, Responsibility and Morality –

Categories of communication culture within the media context (social practice of construction of reality under systemic conditions and within the organization of interests

- as a challenge of personality (vanity, VIP)

- as a challenge of professional know-how
- as a challenge of disciplinary knowledge and knowledge management
- as a challenge of professional self-understanding

Problems to be solved:

- Systems of recruiting
- Coordination between academic programs, institutional programs and media company training programs, life long learning for journalists
- Changes of understanding the professions: Interpretations of journalism:
 - Mass media related:
 - News transporting (decisional paradigm)
 - News distributing (market paradigm)
 - News path-finding (investigative paradigm)
 - News creating (competitive paradigm)
 - Net media related:
 - News connecting (community building paradigm)
 - Discourse agent (communication building paradigm)

2. Media Education:

All programs of enhancing ability, capacity, responsibility and morality of use of media in the position as a consumer. Media literacy – a programme of social (instead of socialised) use of media: literate the media technically, culturally, personally and politically.

- Conservative interpretation:
 - Restricted use of media; Protection of traditions, narrations and societal agreements
- Critical interpretation:
 - Selective use of media, Distinction of media reality and eventual/factual reality, realizing the economical, strategic and/or ideological criteria (owner's interests) of selection of formats and of duration of keeping in public attention
- Actional interpretation:
 - Use media by doing it yourself; Break the alienation of social communication and cross the segregation of competences in those of production and of consumption (programs of semi-professional journalism, development of "contra" or "alternative" public spheres – video movement)
- Politological interpretation:
 - Use media as means of (active) participation with public opinion building. Media education as a dimension of political education, media literacy as a dimension of political competence, political interest and political participation

Problems to be solved and extensions:

- Media still understood as means of communication and not (yet) as content of communication (M. McLuhan: the media is the message)

- Reading (literate) the media is not an one-dimensional work, where media does effect the consumer, reading media is a (more or less – competence!) selective and reflexive interpretation of information according to the cultural frames.
 - (Stuart Hall: encoding – decoding model: adapted, critical and rebelled reading and
 - Jean Piaget: Social Intelligence: Competence as the ability of balancing the risks and chances between assimilation and accommodation)
 - Cultural Studies: Media as a space of social practice: after disappointment and frustration by mass media – new hopes and new habits by net-media: Has the train for media education gone?
 - De-professionalized and systemically de- aesthetized spheres of productive use of media
 - New aesthetical levels (new literacy standards) for mailing, news groups, blogs – new culture of public communication (role of identity, responsibility, facticity)

- The structural dilemma of institution-driven Education: the educational circulation of schools does not reach (any more) the sphere of personal decision; schools became a part of the market system (competition, money as means of valuation – lack of intrinsic motivation)

JETiC as a European intervention

JETiC – a program of

- development of professional quality of media professions
- of establishing sustainable structures and professional relations in order to deepen function and effort of media for democracy building
- in the framework of democratization and re-discovering the social identity
- in context with European perspective and experience of a democratic system (highly economized)

Croatia is a country in transition

- an explicative process with normative goals
- European values?
- Specific culture vs. globalization effects
- Specific identity?