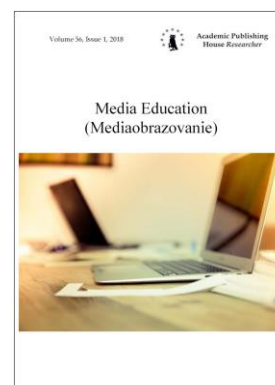




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Analysis of the State of Practice-centred Teaching and Learning about Media at Slovak Schools – Selected Examples of Good Teaching Practice

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to present research findings on the state of application of practice-centred teaching and learning about media at Slovak schools. The basis is the analysis and description of its curriculum status in the main stages of the development of media education at schools in the context of content reforms up to the present (2008, 2011, 2014/15). The focus is on examining the practice represented by 38 examples of practice-oriented media education at primary, lower and upper secondary education in Slovak schools over the period 2014–2019. By means of qualitatively-oriented methodological design applying content analysis and the deductive procedure, the method of implementation and didactic system of this teaching (topics, goals, methods, organizational forms, principles, material and technical means) are ascertained. In accordance with the core principles of German action-oriented concept of media education, the bases of which have been applied, the special focus is to investigate the application of reflexive-practical media work as a tool of learning about media in the process of practice-centred teaching and learning about media.

Keywords: practice-centred teaching and learning about media, good teaching practices, Slovak schools, media education, media competence, reflexive-practical media work

1. Introduction

Practice-centred teaching and learning about media (Kačínová, 2015a) is a concept of media education centered on practical or reflexive-practical knowledge and acquirement of media in the reshaping action of the learner. This type of learning involves developing the pupil's conativo potential in interacting with media, which become the object of targeted learning, as well as tools of self-expression of the subject (through creative media creation) in a participatory-communication media process set in a social context. In the learning process, with the assistance of media, developmental changes in the personality qualities of an individual could happen (emphasis is on practical skills, but also the cognitive and social-affective dimension), and the student, using media, could become a functional player in the development or transformation of his/her own personality and the surrounding reality. This type of teaching and learning corresponds to the action-oriented concept (Baacke, 1997; Tulodziecki, 1997; Schorb, 2009), pragmatic or practical model of media education (Fedorov, 2011), the "learning by doing" concept (Petranová, 2011; Vrabc, 2013; Vránková, 2004). The bases of pragmatic pedagogy, Dewey's theory of "learning by doing" and

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"experiential learning" or the category of action-oriented learning enshrined in the concept of communicative competence and media competence (Baacke, 1996), are behind this practice.

Practice-oriented media education has found significant application in the theory and practice of national education systems (Directorate..., 2014; Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2019; Hartai, 2014; Petranová et al., 2017). Similarly, in Slovak conditions, it is a widely used and an attractive concept for the educational agents due to its action-participatory and experiential nature. This has been proven by research into educational practice in the field of integration of media education into education system at Slovak primary and secondary schools (Kačínová, Kolčáková, 2013a, b). A framework for its application in Slovak schools has been provided since 2008, when media education was introduced as a compulsory cross-curricular topic in the Slovak *"Model curriculum of media education as an optional subject"* in the 5th-9th year of primary schools and 1st-4th year of eight-year grammar schools (Kačínová, 2008). At the same time, productive learning about media is enshrined in all core curricula, The National Educational Programmes (NEPs) and their annexes of 2008, 2011, 2014/2015, which regulate compulsory education at Slovak general education schools. However, these documents did not emphasize the above forms at all grade levels, it happened to a greater extent after 2011 (Kačínová, 2015b). They specified two recommended ways of media education: productive and receptive (Adamcová, 2011a; Adamcová 2011b). The productive form is defined in detail at the level of lower secondary education. Document *"Media Education. Cross-Curricular Topic. Annex ISCED 2. The National Educational Programme"* defines the required development of pupils' psychomotor skills: active use of media in the communication process, production of their own media contributions exploiting their creative potential, skills in operating technical equipment and new media technologies, ability to cooperate with other media creators in the communication process (Adamcová, 2011b: 3; Kačínová, 2008: 129). The methodological recommendations for fulfilling the objectives of the cross-curricular topic of media education (Biziková, 2015a: 1), which set out the outcomes for the individual grade levels, accentuate the development of analytical and critical media competence, more aware perception of media by students in relation to their own lives and their impact on their own personality and society. Competence in the production, control and use of media are subsequently considered *"also an important part"* of the goals and recommended outcomes of media education.

Despite greater didactic support for the media education process in recent decades, Slovak teachers are currently lacking teaching aids and methodological materials with suggestions and demonstrations of how to implement various forms of media education into the learning process: survey *"School, Teacher and Media Education"* (Biziková, 2015b), especially the practical form. The International Media Education Centre (IMEC) at the Faculty of Mass Media Communication UCM in Trnava, has set up several projects to collect the best examples of the teaching and make them available to educators in both printed and electronic form. Through the organization of the competition entitled *"Best Examples of Good Practice in the Teaching of Media Education at Primary and Secondary Schools"* (2014/2015, 2015/2016, 2018/2019), examples have been gathered and teachers have acquired two methodological guides (a third is under preparation). These examples have been the subject of our research.

2. Materials and methods

The analysis, evaluation and description of the state of practice-centred teaching and learning about media at Slovak schools were primarily based on the analysis, comparison and synthesis of professional debates on the topic. Taking into account the curricular perception of media education as a compulsory cross-curricular topic according to the National Educational Programmes, we focused on the analysis of incorporating this topic in the context of school practice. This is represented by examples of good practices in the teaching of media education at Slovak primary, lower and upper secondary schools during 2014-2019. With its descriptive and explanatory purposes as a part of a systematic examination of the level of media-educational practice in Slovak schools through the analysis of examples of good practices (Kačínová, 2015b; 2016), this research uses a qualitative methodological design.

The following research questions were formulated:

1. How is practice-centred teaching and learning about media implemented in Slovak schools? What can be said about the context of its position in the teaching, topics, goals, methods, organizational forms, principles, material and technical means?
2. Is any practical work with media use for the reflective cognition of media?

In accordance with the professional discussions (chapter 3), the overall objective, was to find out whether there is, in the implemented practice-centred teaching and learning about media at Slovak schools, any intersection between two paradigms of media education (critical and productive) in the form of reflexive practical work with media. We focused on the qualitative content analysis of practice-oriented examples (case studies) of so-called ‘good practices’ of the teaching of media education at the selected primary and secondary schools. The meaning categories – units of content analysis represent characteristics or principles of action-oriented teaching and learning about media based primarily on professional approaches (Anfang, 2001; Roll, 2006; Schell, 1989; 2009; Schorb, 1998; 2009; 2010; Tulodziecki, 1997). At the same time, in accordance with the research questions, the categories of analyzed documents which were selected – teachers’ applications for the “*Best Examples of Good Practice in the Teaching of Media Education at Primary and Secondary Schools*” (structured and published in Kačínová, 2015; Kačínová, 2017). In the third year they have not been published. Applying the deductive procedure, the research data were assigned to the categories presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Categories for the analysis

Name of good practice	Identification
Initial situation	Context of the teaching activity/output: (a) as an integrated part of subjects, (b) as an integral part of a separate subject (compulsory, optional), (c) within a circle, (d) a separate project, (e) in another form; specification of the level of education, grade level, hour duration.
Annotation	Characteristics of topics, the specification of learning objectives as required learning outcomes: (knowledge, abilities, attitudes, skills, competences); the principal mode of activity: receptive, productive.
Description of implementation	Detailed definition of the methodological procedure of the pedagogue in achieving the set learning objectives in the individual stages of teaching, or methodological description of the process of pupil product formation; specification of organizational forms (classified in the context of teaching concepts: frontal/class teaching; group and cooperative; individualized and differentiated; in different environments, e.g. excursions; projects; homework); teaching methods (combination of rating criteria – source of knowledge and activation of pupils: verbal (monologic, dialogical, written work; work with textual materials); demonstration; practical; activating (discussion, situational, role playing, didactic games, problem-solving) (Maňák, Švec, 2003; Skalková, 2007); specific tasks/assignments for pupils.
Material and technical means of teaching activity	Teaching, methodological resources, technical aids that teachers use in the activity and its preparation, including their own (presentation, questionnaire, worksheet, textbook and others.
Evaluation and contribution of teaching activity	Description of the benefit of the activity for the pupil/student, school, school surroundings, recommendations for other teachers, possible difficulties.
Documentation	Description of the benefit of the activity for the pupil/student, school, school surroundings, recommendations for other teachers, possible difficulties.

The research sample:

Through the three years of the competition, IMEC obtained 52 examples, of which 38 examples focused on the productive, practice-centred concept were selected and analyzed. The selection and inclusion of the teaching activity in the sample was conditioned by its educational objectives and outputs. Furthermore, the selected outputs of the examples of practice-centred teaching about media-websites of the selected projects, selected pupils’ media products – were analyzed.

3. Discussion

Developing the skills to act with media understood as creating and communicating their own media products and expressing the individual through the media is part of both traditional and newer models of media competence corresponding to the nature of societies of the last decade – information and networked societies (Aufderheide, 1993; Baacke, 1996; Ferrés Prats, Piscitelli, 2012; Livingstone, 2004; Schorb, 1997; Theunert, 1999; Tulodziecki, 1997).

In his model, B. Schorb (Schorb, 2010: 259) summarizes the approaches of the German action-oriented model and defines, as one of the dimensions of media competence, *media-acting* (Medienhandeln) perceived as *media-mastering* (Medienaneignung), *media utilization* (Mediennutzung), *media participation* (Medienpartizipation), *media creation* (Mediengestaltung). Other approaches consider instrumental abilities related to the application of media and media management - the 'media usage' dimension, 'application competence' (related to the use of tools) and 'operational competence' (related to the creative and productive use of media that have expanded user expression) or as the case may be 'media design' (Aufenanger, 2009: 3). The media competence model by J. Ferrés Prats and A. Piscitelli (Ferrés Prats, Piscitelli, 2012: 79-82) set in the context of digital participatory culture, presents as one of the basic required dimensions *Production and dissemination processes* encompassing the practical capabilities of the individual's work with media. At the same time, the area of expression including its indicators is, in addition to the area of analysis, an integral part of every other dimension of media competence (Languages, Technology, Interaction Processes, Ideology and Values, Aesthetics). The professional approaches also show the predominance of action-related dimensions in media competence models and the tension in defining media competence goals resulting from the relationship of critical competence (reflection and assessment of media content) and instrumental competence (Aufenanger, 2009).

Changes in the technological conditions of media, as well as the nature of the digitized culture conceived more globally as 'era of prosumidors', in which an individual, in addition to consumption, produces and disseminates media content, also significantly influence the current process of media education. Thus, media education is much more production-centred due to the reduced cost of media production and easier access to its distribution. At the same time, this corresponds to the nature of the an era that is rich in opportunities for media as a means of creative expression (Hoechsmann, 2012: 31). However, this practical focus, which has expanded in recent years, may be associated with fears of reductionism in media education stemming from its instrumental and technological perception, when media education is mistaken for the so-called 'technical capacity to use the media' (Gutiérrez, Tyner, 2012: 32), though even in the process of using it as a means of creation and sharing. Or, as the case may be, associated with the fear of losing the reflexive-critical dimension of media education, stemming from the heritage of critical mass media theories or critical hermeneutic tradition of reading (Hoechsmann, 2012: 31), analysis and interpretation of media texts (Vránkova, 2004), or its cultural dimension. The critical and cultural dimension implies "make creative media work meaningful and satisfying to the learner" (Bachmair, Bazalgette, 2007: 84). Thus, not every media production is media education.

The result of the educational process may be the media product itself, or it may be the result of the media learning process. In order to fulfil the aims of media education, conceived as the teaching and learning about media, media creation should become primarily a tool for understanding aspects of media reality, media production processes, expressive-aesthetic and technological ways and possibilities (including limits) of expression through different types of media. This, in part, is ensured by the media-productive process in which the students participate, but to a greater extent practical media work, enriched with (critical) reflection (Kačínová, 2016: 103).

According to F. Schell (Schell, 2009: 13), the addressees of active media work experience media products as something done and doable and in the actual creation of texts, sounds, images, they can also grasp the manipulative possibilities of media with the senses. However, critical assessment of media products and reflection of how they are used is not an automatic process. In the process of active work with media it is necessary to focus on the analysis and criticism of the media. The active work with media allowing reflection, analysis and criticism of the media (Schell, 2009) or "reflexive-practical work with media" (Schorb, 1998: 17) thus represents the central didactic method of conveying the knowledge of media in the action-oriented concept of media pedagogy. In its context, the acting with media as a process category is perceived principally as a reflexive-practical acquirement of media.

Consequently, (acting with media) is understood as processing the areas of social reality with the help of media, it means self-acting treatment of media and their use as a means of communication (Schorb, 2010) and social action (Tulodziecki, Grafe, 2012). F.J. Roll (Roll 2006: 17), including the approaches of G. Anfang (Anfang, 2001: 12) and F. Schell (Schell, 1989: 34), summarizes the intentions of practical action-oriented media education: education for self-empowerment (emancipation), gaining authentic experience, creating conditions for the development of media competence, clarifying media supply and structure, facilitating independent and critical media contact, promoting social participation and social competence, promoting technical competence, bridging the knowledge gap, dealing with personal living space themes, promoting the perception of one's own interests and needs, enhancing creative potential and self-confidence. Action-oriented learning, exemplary learning, group work, (re)creating authentic experience, mediating communicative competence and media competence are teaching principles and thus a methodological framework for this process (Schell, 2009: 10).

4. Results

The analysis of teaching examples shows that practice-centred teaching and learning about media is carried out at Slovak schools at all grade levels of primary, secondary schools providing general education (grammar schools), as well as secondary vocational schools such as business and services, arts and industry, even woodworking. In accordance with the ways of implementation of media education defined in the National Educational Programmes as a cross-curricular topic of education for primary, lower and upper secondary education (2014/2015) (Štátny vzdelávací program. Nižšie stredné vzdelávanie – 2. stupeň základnej školy, 2015: 10), it is implemented in practice:

a) as integrated part of the subjects: informatics, Slovak language and literature, art and culture, music education, art education, civics, national history, history, English language, information sources, personal finance management, graphics;

b) as part of an independent compulsory and optional subject of media education;

c) in the circles: media, media-journalism, film production, school television, school magazine;

d) in stand-alone projects (especially Security Week organized by the Orange Mobile Foundation on the Internet).

The prototype of educational activities aimed at supporting practical teaching (learning) of pupils about media are projects focused on the creation of school digital media: school newspapers, school radio, school online television, school web or Facebook page, blog, news agency, commercial or poster, or other media genres (school television, radio news), documentary films. These correspond to the so-called 'journalistic model' of product-oriented concept of action-oriented media pedagogy (Röll, 2006), or journalistic-oriented media production (Tulodziecki, 1997). The essence is to know the basics, procedures, technical and expressive means of print, television, radio, multimedia journalism, film production, advertising production and apply them in the production of their own individual or collective media output. By creating authentic experiences, students learn about how media perform the tasks of preparing, processing, and publishing products, i.e. as staffers, text editors, language proofreaders, graphic designers, presenters, screenwriters, cameramen, directors, actors, sound engineers, editors, video creators and other media professions. In particular, the aim is to develop the following capacities of the students:

- operative skills (as a sets of technical skills needed to use the technologies and media; include motor, perceptive and interpretative skills),

- creative skills (based on the operative skills with introducing of originality and innovation through existing discursive symbolic repertoires),

- communicative skills (sum of operative, creative and social),

- semiotic and cultural skills (capacity to use and act with the semiotic codes and cultural conventions) (Pérez Tornero, Varis, 2010: 82-83).

The fact that teaching is carried out in active contact with other objects of life reality (Anfang, Uhlenbruck, 2009) is in accordance with the bases of action-oriented teaching and active work with media. The development of the students' capacity thus occurs in symbiosis with the knowledge of the social environment which becomes the subject of exploration and processing in the media outcome. In the case of the learning activities it was primarily the school environment and its

activities, but also the wider environment (for example, during a homeland excursion) as well as the specific topics of the students' realities. These are elaborated hereunder.

Some teaching examples were of cross-media nature (an activity aimed at creating several media products in one project), or they combined several concepts of media rendering. For example, there was a project where they actively worked with a school radio, a music studio recording their own CD, they made and edited short films on themes of "positive aspects of the media" (Borbélyová, 2017; Gondová, 2017). CD and film creation is a typical example of 'fictional-oriented media creation' (Tulodziecki, 1997) which is a means of expressing the desires and imaginations of a young person. A common feature of several projects was the perception of productive work as an instrument of media acquirement in conjunction with articulation of the students' interests and themes (Anfang, Uhlenbruck, 2009). This concerned the selection and method of processing the themes of media products, as well as the active work of students in groups according to the liking of a particular medium.

Students' communication skills were developed by letting them present their products on media platforms e.g. by presenting a CD on a local radio, placing articles in a local newspaper, disseminating recordings, videos, movies via the school's web or Facebook page or Youtube channel to the public, or through a school radio advertising campaign (attempting to sell advertising time for a symbolic price (Kinka, 2015: 16). Examples that were subject to content analysis presented pupils' products to the public in collaboration with the mass media (mostly local) only to a lesser extent. In comparison with foreign countries (Germany, Austria, Netherlands, USA, etc.), in Slovakia there are no institutions such as open channels or channels providing education and further education and the mass media do not provide special broadcasting for such purposes. However, the possibility of publishing products to students and teachers is provided by the project of the national news agency "TASR to Schools" and its web platform "*www.skolske.sk*" – the first school news website and another news website "TERAZ.SK". The presentation of pupils' products is also possible in the national competitions: audiovisual and multimedia production of children and youth "Zlatá Klapka", amateur film production "Cineama", amateur photographic production "Amfo", journalist competition of high school students and university students "Štúrovo pero" (school magazines, journalistic contributions, electronic magazines), animation "Animofest". In particular, animation is considered by teachers to be an instrument for the active entry of children into the art, film, and multimedia industries, a tool for developing their media literacy, as well as for learning to actively and meaningfully use digital technologies in a creative way (Gondová, 2018: 2). It is applied already at the first grade of primary schools as one of the forms of active work with the media (in the form of animated video clips).

In some of the product-oriented learning activities, their educational objectives, mostly cognitive or socio-affective, directly reflected an evaluative potential in relation to the medium on which the students were focused. For example, in the context of school television, the following pupils' capacities were developed: media orientation, to understand the influence of the media, to understand and process reality into a news article, to critically assess the choice of information that should be of interest to viewers as well as others related to the actual creation of media texts. As part of the development of evaluation judgment and socio-affective competence, they learned to assess the ethics of the broadcast, reject an offensive media contribution, and overall responsibility for the contribution created (Kokavec, 2015: 20-21). Or the approach was in the form of pupils' radio, aimed at educating a 'critical listener', capable of distinguishing the appropriateness of broadcast contributions, as well as the formation of a media professional capable of evaluating the school's actions and selecting the most up-to-date of them and broadcast them according to the listener's interest (Píšová, 2015a: 52). Advertising, perceived in the context of a "marketing move targeted at children" or an assessment of its veracity, intentions and persuasive or manipulative effects, has become an appropriate subject of the students analysis and criticism (Belanová, 2015; Píšová, 2015b). The pupils' independent outputs in the form of their own advertising posters or spots were preceded by a demonstration and analysis of the problem (through the documentary "Consuming Kids: The Commercialization of Childhood; USA, 2008, or current ads), followed by a reflection through a controlled discussion, a pupil questionnaire or a role-play in which the students performed a well-known commercial that were prepared by them in a group. Their creation was consequently the result of critical processing of the topic. It took the form of creating their own advertising products, which are not often displayed in commercials or "anti-advertising" placed in a common padlet (on-line notice board) published on the school's website. In addition to

the actual implementation of anti-advertising, pupils clarified what they intended to express with the advertisement and why it is nonsense. The outputs are an example of a public student protest against the persuasive impact of commercials and advertising and the expression of an independent emancipated attitude to the problem. An important element of learning was to stimulate pupils' mutual cooperation in the production of outcomes, whereby the project applied the principles of cooperative or group learning.

The analytical-reflective approach to the media as a subject of learning in the context of productive learning activities resulted, in addition to specific educational objectives, from the characterized methodological design and teaching process as identified in the following examples:

1) The application of cooperative learning as a form of learning in the interaction group process, which is a tool for developing social and communication skills, but also to use higher-level reasoning strategies and build complete and complex conceptual structure in students (Johnson, Johnson, 1999: 73) in relation to the subject of learning;

2) The application of project teaching and learning is directly linked to the pragmatic pedagogy of J. Dewey and W.H. Kilpatrick, the concept of "learning by doing", the project method, and product-oriented students projects. It belongs to the preferred ones in the context of teaching with a view to enabling a practical-productive problem-oriented process: i.e. observational-explorative, focused on situation, life reality and interests of pupils using cooperative forms of work (Grecmanová, Urbanovská, 1997). This is related to the application of the relevant teaching methods. In terms of duration (Valenta, 1993), teachers used short-term projects (several hours to a day), medium-term (one week up to one month), long-term (several months to the whole school year), this form was used in addition to the classical lesson (45 minutes and more), trips, excursions to the media;

3) The application of activation teaching methods, especially the discussion of a problem: interview, discussion, brainstorming, Q&A, research, situational, role playing, didactic play; at the same time, typical methods for the receptive form of media education were also applied by teachers.

Other methods used in the individual phases of practice-centred teaching were: demonstration (demonstration and observation of subjects, activities related to media production), written works (scripts, journalistic texts, short stories, etc.), work with texts (media, teaching), practical (training of instrumental and practical skills to deal with diverse media technologies and information and communication technologies: take pictures, shoot, record, cut, edit, download, etc., training of production skills), monologic (explanation, narrative, lecture) by a teacher or invited specialist (psychologist, media staff);

4) The reflexive phase of teaching placed during or (mostly) at the end of the lesson – results from the above and other teaching concepts as well as the postulated didactic approach according to the teaching phases: evocation - exposure - reflection. It should purposefully allow pupils to reflect on their experience, for example through questions focused on description of experienced feelings, clarification of the preferred activity in terms of interest, as well as the educational benefits of activities in terms of usefulness and novelty of the knowledge. At the same time, it took the form of clarifying the acquired knowledge by the students, or directly the form of activity evaluation – e.g. in the case of a created film in the form of new ideas for its improvement, pointing out errors in the film (Gondová, 2017: 33).

Other cases of educational activities were an example of reflexive-active work with media, where the media became primarily a tool for processing the given areas of social reality. The objects of reflective cognition were related to learning objects according to integration into the subject. In the context of history teaching, for example, the aim was to show, in a creative way (provided that the sequence of historical facts and events is preserved) a self-understanding of historical themes through a media product (short video films including the writing of the script) and to demonstrate to their peers. Pupils posted amateur videos on YouTube (Bernoláková, 2015). In civic education, secondary school students recorded a news report, processed and published a video of simulated "fictional elections" organized to practice civic participation of students (Hazuchová, 2015).

The specific object of processing social reality through active work with media was the media itself, its factors or influences, which became the subject of analysis, critical reflection or (as the case may be) fulfilled protectionist intentions. This corresponds to the concept of media education in the Slovak curriculum, which from the beginning has a strong protectionist orientation. The occurrence of projects combining productive-protectionist-critical intentions is therefore no

exception in the context of school practice and good examples of teaching practice in Slovakia (Kačínová, 2015). These types include examples of productive teaching practice, the focus of which is protection from the media (mostly digital), and the media become a means of expressing this educational intention. An example are media products such as movies, video clips, internet magazines on the traps or risks of cyberspace, internet addiction, threats to communication in a virtual environment, and online shopping risks. In these cases, the communication of the pupil's output has the character of "instruction" or the enlightenment of others, or it is connected with peer learning (older pupils instruct the younger about the pitfalls of social networks). The benefits of projects for pupils are also defined as follows: "they know the pitfalls of social networks, they know how to use the Internet safely, they know the term "cyberbullying" and they can protect themselves against it" (Pňáčková et al., 2015: 25). At the same time, in the case of protectionist orientation it is not always a defensive approach, but is in the nature of "progressive protectionism". The aim of such projects is to highlight the positive aspects of digital media, such as: the issue of safe behaviour on the Internet (through a poster, leaflet, board game) as a way of preventing the negative phenomena associated with their use (Mínarovičová, 2017). Possibly also to point out the media as tools for helping people in various situations, especially in an emergency, in protecting their health (through an instructional film - video) (Borbélyová, 2017).

The examples of good practice of the Secondary Technical School Svidník, the winner of the last two years of the IMEC competitions, are a prototype of the principles of practice-centred teaching and learning about media. Their first project, in the sense of the motto of reflexive-practical media pedagogy, or action-oriented teaching and learning about media (Schorb, 1998), "*Media Education: From Passive Consumers to Active Creators*" (2014–2016), was carried out in cooperation with partner schools from Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain under the Erasmus + KA2 project. Its intention was to implement practical media education in secondary schools through the creation of an online "bank" of teaching materials, lesson plans, pupil outcomes - the *European Media Education Lab* (EMEL) website (<http://www.europeanmediaeducationlab.com/>). An important aspect was their "universality" or "transnationality" with the possibility of their use in the school curricula of the countries concerned (Stredná priemyselná škola Svidník, Erasmus + KA2 From Passive Consumers to Active Creators, 2014-2016). The aim of the project was based on NCTE - The Code of Best Practices in Fair Use for Media Literacy Education: "Making media and sharing it with listeners, readers, and viewers is essential to the development of critical thinking and communication skills. Feedback deepens reflection on one's own editorial and creative choices and helps students grasp the power of communication." (Code..., 2018; EMEL, 2014-2016)."

The lesson plans on Media Education" created correspond to five media forms (Video recording, Photography and images, Texts and articles, Radio and podcasting, Advertising). In the category Advertising there is an award-winning example - implemented in the environment of Slovak secondary school – "*Internet – my smart friend*". It is an example of effective implementation of reflexive-practical media teaching, where the active work with media connected to pupils' interests develops their critical thinking towards the media as a topic of social reality and articulates their own attitudes in the process of participation in media communication. In a learning activity integrated in the teaching of English and Graphics, the 3rd year students of Graphic Design and Fashion, in group and cooperative lessons, designed and created an advertising education campaign entitled "*There is more to the internet than Facebook*" pointing to the Internet as an inexhaustible source of individual self-education and personal growth. At the same time, it aimed to divert young people's constant attention from the Facebook social network and focus it on websites and resources on the Internet that are useful and interesting to them. The areas of interest, on which the campaign's advertising products (advertising spots and advertising posters) were focused, were selected by students: music, movement (dance, sports), communication, foreign languages and skills development. The contribution of the project was to stimulate a critical reflection of the prevailing influence of Facebook on the daily life and experiencing of a young person, which was mainly stimulated by a productive process. Furthermore, students gained practical knowledge about the creation and mission of "educational advertising campaigns" and their impact on the change in human behaviour (Kocurová, 2017: 10). In addition to the practical-critical orientation of the activity, its protective impetus is evident. By publishing student media products on the site (partly), on the project activity page <http://mediaerasmus.weebly.com/educational-campaign.html>, as well as in the Teachers'

Methodology Guide (fully) students were involved in the process of public media communication of the topic.

Another international project “*Erasmus+KA2 „Filmmaking journey: From scratch to screen“* (2017-2019), (website <https://filmmakingerasmus.weebly.com/>), which is the main coordinator, continues the activities of this school focused on practice-centred teaching and learning about media. Its goal is to „develop filmmaking digital skills of students and teachers by creating program of filmmaking basics and producing short films around the five core concepts of Media education and literacy“ (Filmmaking journey: From scratch to screen, 2017–2019) in line with the CML concept. Students are specially trained in the use, creation and distribution of film video as a means of communicating with the outside world with a specific focus on media literacy. Topics (media literacy topics) of the international student film competition were current topics of media / digital education: Social media, Cyberbullying, Sexting, Gender in media, Consumerism in media, Ethics in advertising, Stereotypes in Media, Body image/Beauty in the media, Internet safety, Digital citizenship, Digital literacy, Fake news / The news industry, Reality TV. Three teams of Slovak pupils (eight pupils in all) of the 3rd year prepared films during the lessons of vocational subjects and English. Their output – films on the alienation of young people and the weakening of their social relationships due to hyperconnectivity (“*Stone*”, “*Disconnected*”) are an example of the application of practice-centred learning about media where creation of own products serves an individual to cope with the area from his/her own life reality in the form of critical self-reflection (Schorb, 2009).

The message of the films communicates the young man's protest over the "domination" of the digital media and the need for effective self-regulation of media consumption to the benefit of consolidating his immediate social ties. Multiple presentation of outputs for different target groups at local and international levels is also an example of young people's participation in public discourse on a culturally and socially relevant and important topic and includes an emancipatory impetus. Winning an award for the output in the above mentioned project competition as well as the screening of “*Stone*” at the 21st Greek Children and Young People's Film Festival Olympia in front of participants from 30 European countries enables pupils to experience success, which is typical of this form of practical teaching and contributes to the development of young people's positive self-esteem and self-confidence (Schorb, 2009: 105; Šeďová, 2009: 789). The secondary aim of this project, including other examples of projects, was to create a positive and supportive environment for the development of social skills of students: cooperation, assignment of roles in team work, negotiating goals, meeting agreed deadlines, etc. (Kocurová, Sopková, 2018: 2). These resulted from the applied concepts of teaching and fulfilment of specific cross-curricular objectives.

The school carried out the partial practical activities with the material-didactic support of FMK UCM who provided a digital television studio, editing room and also educational activities of film production for educators and pupils in the form of workshops. The cooperation of schools with the external environment in terms of technical support of practice-centred teaching about media is not an exception in Slovakia.

The examples of the analyzed teaching practices have shown that schools usually have basic technological and instrumental equipment (PCs, laptops, tablets, cameras, tripods, microphones, amplifiers, speakers, mixing desks, burners, data projectors, interactive whiteboard, printer, scanner, etc.) and software such as Windows Movie Maker, Microsoft Office Picture Manager, Photoshop, Easy Photo Editor, Audacity, Lame Wordom, Video Editor, Hue Animation, Pinnacle Studio, Corel Draw, aTube Catcher, Nero, KaraFun. However, they lacked expert technology and, in particular, rooms. The existence of editing studios, purpose-built television, radio or graphic studios in schools is rather an exception. In Slovakia, there are also no special institutions focused on school support for active work with media – so-called “media (or multimedia) centers”. However, educators know how to be creative. For example, as part of a selected project activity, a provisional recording studio was established with the help of a professional in the classroom used for the lessons of another subject. The cooperation with external experts (from universities, regional and public media) is also carried out in order to ensure the necessary education of teachers (not all of them have it). It takes the form of seminars, lectures, workshops at schools, or excursions in an external environment. The aim of the KEGA project No. 010UCM-4/2018 “*Material and didactic support of the teaching of media education through the media training center at FMC UCM*” supported by the Grant Agency of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic (2018 – 2020) in cooperation with the partner institution of the Faculty of

Communication in Navarre, is to enable the creation of an environment for implementing practice-centred teaching about media through the creation of a training media center with practical educational courses in full-time and on-line form (e-learning course) for pupils and teachers.

5. Conclusion

In accordance with the research questions we conclude that one of the traditional and current trends in media education or pedagogy perceived in our study as practice-centred teaching and learning about media is applied in the educational practice at Slovak primary and secondary schools in the complexity of its implementation according to the core curricular documents (National Educational Programmes). The prototype of its implementation is the area of school media creation where pupils acquire knowledge of journalistic procedures, while their outputs are participatory in nature and are part of the broader communication and promotion strategy of the school – its activities, to which pupils contribute by their activities. The didactic system of the above mentioned teaching uses more effective educational concepts (project, problem-solving, cooperative teaching) and their didactic principles, methods and forms (research question No.1).

At the same time, they contribute to the implementation of practical teaching enriched with critical reflection of media production. The analysis of the examples has also shown that practical work with media is becoming a dual tool for reflective and critical learning about a) the media with which pupils work directly in the classroom (it is the object of the classroom) or b) the media as a subject of social reality which, through reflexive-active work with the media, become a special object of cognition (research question No.2).

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