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PHD TESIS
**MEDIA IN FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION OF
SCHOOLCHILDREN**
ABSTRACT

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Keywords :*communication, mass communication, indirect communication, media, effects, educationm formal, nonformal, informal, lifelong learning, criteria for the selection of media content/referential axiological, optional subject, grid of analysis of media content, cognitive development, metacognitive development, mediatic/media literacy.*

The motivation for the topic. We live in an informational society where we are actually being under the sign of communication which becomes so an attribute of present times, a challenge in fact, in which context the prospective guideline of education is an indispensable coordinate; by supporting it, and with my personal staff concerns as a background, i have chosen as the topic of this work-Media in formal and informal education of schoolchildren.

I was concerned ever since my early teaching career with solving conflicting situations between students and teachers, with supporting a genuine didactic communication and my perception as an open-minded and democratic teacher. So, i have tried to remove all the obstacles to effective communication with my students and i have discovered from the discussions with them that many aspects of their education they haven't mastered or formed from parents, school or loved ones but from the contents of media and within the group of friends, the "gang" they belong to.

Analysing more closely students' responses, both secondary schools and from high school , i realised, not without surprise, that the school has lost its privileged position as educational institution and began to be substituted by another institution, THE MEDIA, which also has "an educational function", but that does not characterize in the present nor invests appropriate expertise in school, unfortunately.

The influence of family,of the church,of the group of friends can not exercise continuously over the individual, at all stages of its ontogenetic development, for reasons more or less explicit.In antithesis, the media features a "permanent" time powered by the fact that timeliness has favored its extension through the fast pace of the scientific and technical revolution.

There is no person in this century of information that has not felt the acute burden of the massive development of the society, which means knowledge, evolution, value, but also work, stress and renunciation, not seldom, to the true principles and fundamental culture.

The media invades our lives and gives us a simplified knowledge of the reality, it relaxes us,it offers us entertainment, it informs us in order to be always connected to the latest findings , but gives us too little education. In fact, some media specialists nor acknowledge its educative function.The contents it forwards are addressed to a modal man, with an average crop,and it fetter

the high spirits(except for specialized content) by minimizing his own development and shaping others' personality by directing it pseudovaloric.

Its effects , whatever the manifestation, severity and persistence over time are visible, whether we agree it or not , begin to extend to an increasingly larger public.

Children are especially vulnerable as they have younger age, they begin to interact with media contents early on, when it replaces the parental attention and affection, becoming “nannies”, then “educators” and in the end “friends from home”.

How can, in these conditions, school polish the personality of pasive or extremly active children, which are prone to sedentarism and health problems, introverted, aggressive and with minor culture and false models to succeed in life?

Chronological we are in the age of soaps, of the successful people who only make compromises, of the upstarts and gym-shaped idols...the true values remain hidden in the shadows ...we don't know what is going to happen when these “mass MEDIST” will come to lead the society, what guidance and culture will remain..

Fear, alienation caused by the lack of some well-established value items are felt in an acute form at certain stages of individual development, especially in preadolescent and adolescent, periods of a fundamental role in a persons' character development and the formation of a certain referential axiological follows to be rewritten throughout life.

Aged-specific vulnerability, coupled with the invasion of media contents with their own “culture”, lack of family affection, of appropriate teaching, determines pre-teens and teenagers to live real dramas and become mature ”infants” before the time.

Contemporary school cannot be anymore a school of imitation, conformism, provided that the future of civilization is transformed into a race to be won by creativity. The current student cannot have and doesn't need to have an encyclopedic culture, but must have educated in the promotion of savoir, savoir-faire, in order tom be finally prepared for the “savoir-etre” (M.Ionescu, 2009)

From this perspective we wanted to capture the versatile relationships between media messages- as a separate section of the informal education- and those that are specific to formal education, in a period where the individual is at a problematic age, that of preadolescent, and at the same time we wanted to capture how to form a set of axiological criteria, a media literacy, included as a final purpose for the formal education. We wanted to provide answers, possible solutions to support the transformation of the media in an educational partner, a pillar of lifelong learning.

Even though until last century the individual was able to integrate itself socially active, after mastering a profession, now he must be endowed with professional mobility; the formal education cannot help him throughout his life anymore, only in so far he is transformed into a permanent

education vector, a corollary of interdependencies established between non-formal and informal education.

It would be an utopia to believe that we can isolate from the media and we can relive the life of past centuries; we are human beings whose fully revealing mystery existence requires as destiny creation, but the place where we learn to create is school, the one and only competent to educate us in this regard.

Briefly, the work comes to answer to questions such as:

- What are the opinions of teachers, parents and preteen about how influence the media content and its effects?
- What are the contents of media preteen prefer and what educational value have they?
- Why is it necessary preteens' education on the media?
- How can we form a set of axiological criteria, a media literacy in formal education activities, so that it becomes a good intellectual and cultural operational and in informal context?

Structure of the thesis: the thesis, named “Media in formal and informal education of schoolchildren” is divided into two parts: theoretical part(the first two chapters) and the section allocated to the experimental approach (chapters III-V), preceded by the Introduction. The paper ends with a chapter of Conclusions. Lines of action, followed by Bibliography and Annexes.

The first chapter, COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA NOWADAYS, sets the first two major theoretical concepts of this work, whose influence is overwhelming in all areas of private and social life: communication and media. For this purpose, we inventoried the main types and conceptualizations of the terms mentioned, have proposed their own meanings and we have made operational the existing ones, accepting their correlations and their effects on individuals, educational.

We emphasized the relationship between communication and the media, by analyzing the features of mass communication, especially its persuasive and gender dimension, namely the specific communication training.

In the second chapter of the paper, EDUCATION FOR MASS-MEDIA BETWEEN FORMAL-NONFORMAL AND INFORMAL, I framed the two concepts, communication and media in the area of PERMANENT EDUCATION, which we defined and valued as the interdependence of the three forms of education: formal, nonformal and informal, as integrative principle. Given the explicit studies, relatively few, about the problematic relationship between media and education, respectively lifelong learning, we considered it appropriate to provide a comprehensive picture of the discussion, valuing postmodern pedagogy paradigms.

Controversial, media contents relations with education, have become the essential concepts of this chapter in which we explained the interdependence between them in each and every form of education, insisting, as the thesis title anticipated, on the relations with formal and informal education.

Trying to provide guidance and trends in the conceptualization and contextualization thereof, detached from our experiment, we made operational the interdependence between the media and formal education, in such manner of implementing an optional subject, Education for media-Education for life as a part of the Curriculum, at the school decision.

By its values and attitudes, skills, content and teaching, respectively evaluative strategies proposed, the optional subject *has its purpose to prepare students for critical reception, the value of media content, so that they become formal partner.*

We have caught the interdependencies between the media and informal education, by subordinating them to formalities, by equipping the students with a relevant and individual set of selection criteria for media content, behind a media literacy. Learned in formal education, they are endorsed by competency and through their transposition into the individuals' daily life in the informal area they are going to converge its educative influences.

The section allocated to the experimental approach we have taken contains chapters III, IV and V showing the elements of design and its implementation, with specific details.

THE ASCERTAINING STAGE, the third chapter, provides a blueprint for how is perceived the relationship between the media and education with its specific aspects by students aged 9-15years, teachers and some of the parents.

Run until May 2006-October 2007, the ascertaining staged aimed to capture:

- How teachers, students and parents perceive/define media and its influence;
- Their knowledge about the media, a “trendy” concept;
- The media available at home and its physical location;
- Preferences regarding the content transmitted via electronic media (TV, T V stations, radio, internet), respectively printed media (magazines, newspapers) and their use as sources of information.
- The time that students consume by allocating to media content (we refer to leisure time) and the manner how parents would imply in its valuation;
- Criteria (if exist) by which students choose media contents;
- Models that they have chosen as “success in life” and what does this mean for them (the professional guidance and its report with the media);
- Medias' position as a source of information in the area of informal education and how is it valued in the curricular/extracurricular teaching activities;

- Subjects proposals for the media content optimization;
- Teachers' s style, the manner they use mass communication in a formal context, and strategies to develop students' autonomy in their learning, and training for an operational intellectual way of work so that they possess real skills which would target analysis, interpretation and selection of content.

The sample of research subjects from the ascertaining stage was composed by three categories, groups or classes of subjects: students, teachers and parents. The first category of the sample of subjects was represented by 461 students from classes IV-IX, from two different schools, Elementary School «Ștefan cel Mare»(classes IV-VIII, 405 students) and The School of Fine Arts «Corneliu Baba » (IX th classes, 56 students), both from Bistrita.

We selected as a category of subjects for the ascertaining research students aged between 9-15 years, enrolled in classes from IV to IX, in order to capture as detailed as possible the relationship between media and education and how those two are materialized in different chronological age with the aim of selecting the sample of subjects for our experimental approach.

The second category, group, or class of subjects was the one of the teachers from Elementary School « Ștefan cel Mare » from Bistrita, with a number of 46.

The third category of the sample of subjects was represented by the children from Elementary School « Ștefan cel Mare » parents, whose children were included in the first category of subjects from our ascertaining approach (405), as we consider useful their opinions, which we valued regarding the diagnosis of the optional subjects that we could include in the school's offer in the version of Curriculum at school's decision.

As research data collection methods I used: investigation and interviews, each with specific instruments, questionnaire, respectively the guide interview.

The survey method having as instrument the questionnaire consisting mainly of opinion questions related to factual questions and to knowledge, has been used in compliance with the particularities of each category, groups of subjects from the sample of subjects of the ascertaining stage.

Differentiated questionnaire as a tool applied in three different variants- for students (with version for grades IV, respectively V-IX),for teachers and for parents.

The questionnaire for student includes 15 items that capture issues of the media perception, the questionnaire for teachers includes 14 items that bring to the fore their opinion about the media contents and their use in formal, informal and the use of teaching strategies that support students' metacognitive and cognitive development by creating valuable teaching experiences ; the questionnaire addressed to the parents includes 13 items and tries to grasp how they guide their childrens use of media contents, the manner in which they perceive and explain to themselves the

media influence, favoring their rational use, supporting the creation of an optimal daily program for their children.

The interview method with both forms- individual and group was used in this ascertaining stage to ensure optimal organization having as specific instrument of research the interview guide. It was applied in two versions- the interview guide for students and the interview guide for teachers and focused on :

- For the students :
 - The knowledge of students opinion about how the teaching activities run in the classroom, respectively if they have to put their views, to analyse, explain and create different "problems"
- For the teachers :
 - Knowing the teachers opinion about the need to « educate » the students for the media and how it would streamline the overall education level;
 - Notification of teachers' availability to include media subordinated topics in the activities of counseling and guidance as well as new teaching strategies (where suitable) in their teaching.

As a result of the starting data collection the way said, I have got a wide and deep image on the media issue and following the quantitative and qualitative analysis that we made we resorted to delimit the sample of subjects of the experiment group.

A first step in this direction was the reduction of the sample of subjects from the ascertaining stage, from its three categories, students, teachers and parents, the students, as I considered them relevant for our research for the cognitive tools that I have implemented in the experiment and that the subjects are trained in formal education activities, managing to capture the education forms independence.

The criteria behind its composition were the students' registration to the optional subject "Education for the media-Education for life" and I made the initial pilot experiment, wanting to test students' interest in the content we proposed and the associated teaching strategies, a necessary under stage, because the actual experiment we started during an optional subject.

To the data collection methods listed were added a written assessment test, which was the Pretest and was built around three items, the answer to each of them scored as the sum of the results obtained by students to play the actual information and analysis/interpretation.

Finally, the sample of subjects was represented by students from VI and VII grades, which have signed up the optional subjects "The little journalist", "School journalism" and "Education for the media-Education for life".

After I set up two groups for the optional subject, following the entries on typed entries filled by the students from the School “Stefan cel Mare”, one with 29 students and the other with 26, to ensure the representativeness of the sample of students, I identified at Bistrita other groups of optional subjects, “The little journalist” and “School journalism”.

Working with teachers who have led and benefited from a specific training when I have presented the course material, the teaching strategies useful in its transmission as in training/developing of such skills as communication (oral and written), respectively media, I operated with a sample of subjects consisting of six groups of optional subject, from four different schools.

The optional first four groups were grouped two by two in the same schools, and the last two came from two separate units, amounting to a total of 163 students led by five teachers, four of them teach Romanian language and literature and the other one the technology of information.

In order to interpret the Pretest results I used two categories of data processing: first, we analyzed quantitatively the answers given by students at the initial assessment test, and then I analyzed qualitatively the results, aiming to identify their school performance.

After the Pretest administration, using as criteria for stratification the number the number of students of a group and the belonging to the same school, I have established conventionally (convention validated by the results obtained by the students at the Pretest) that the groups with most students are considered experimental groups, to give so representativeness to the experiment itself, and I numbered the groups so that the “odd” ones, G1, G3 and G5 have become experimental groups and the “seem” groups, G2, G4 and G6-optional control groups.

We note here that the last two groups, G5 and G6, where we cannot use the school belonging grounds we have included in the experimental/control group based on the results obtained at the Pretest and some information related to the common consciousness and bring to the fore school test results obtained from the school to which they belong, in the previous year.

I then resorted to statistical comparison of groups based on the significance of difference between the average for sample pairs (G1-G2,G3-G4,G5-G6), by using the T test.

The differences between the average results achieved by students in optional groups G1, G3 and G5 of the experimental group and the average results of students in optional groups G2, G4, and G6 of the control group were statistically significant at $P=0,05$.

Chapter IV, which I called THE EXERIMENTAL APPROACH, circumscribes the theoretical and methodological formative experiment, having as key elements the hypothesis and research objectives, the system of research methods used, the features and content of the sample of subjects, and the stages of this approach.

The hypothesis I have tested was that using in the optional subject “Education for the media-Education for life” the scale of analysis, media content in learning “Evocation-Making sense-reflection” leads to a **set of axiological criteria** as foundation of media literacy, and will determine:

- *Improving students school performance;*
- *Developing some abilities/skills of analysis and argument;*
- *Changing attitudes and opinions regarding the media content.*

According to the research hypothesis, I determined as objectives of the research:

- The delimitation of the theoretical marks as keywords of course support of the optional subject proposed;
- The analysis of student learning in terms of its involvement in the capacity/skills of analysis and argument;
- The development of an intellectual tool useful in the formation of media content selecting criteria, accessible and attractive to VIth and VIIth grades students;
- The implementation and validation as experiment of the proposed scale in Evocation-making sense of learning-reflection;
- The analysis of the relationship between educational achievement and skills/capacity for analysis and reasoning of students, by studying the work products;
- The analysis of the relationship between school performance and use of media content analysis grid by interpreting quantitative and qualitative assessment of students achievement on tests administered;
- The interpretation of changes in students behavior across media contents as a result to their approach to the grid;
- The generalization , systematization of data and drawing conclusions and practical recommendations to the subordinated themes.

The research methods system used was composed of research methods used for data collection (teaching experiment, direct observation, study of school documents, content analysis of student work products, respectively, samples of written assessment) and methods of organization, presentation and processing data that bring into focus:

- a) Grouping the data by frequency indicator, comparing them with reference to the sample considered percent(percentage) of their graphics and their graphic rendering through structure and comparison charts;
- b) Determining of the statistical indicators of arithmetic average, median , standard deviation;
- c) Statistical comparison on the significance of the difference between the average for pair of samples, by using the T test.

The sample of subjects was represented by a total of 163 students enrolled in six groups of optional subject, three experimental groups, respectively three control groups. The research has an inter subjective experimental design, it used independent samples selected by parallel samples, the conducting educational experiment being achieved in the natural context of the education system to the optional groups formed to suit the students.

I have considered the best sampling probability as it “allows proper sampling, objective, uninfluenced by human choice, by the distortions due to the researchers’ presence (M.Bocos, 2003, p.48).

But, to ensure the representativeness of the sample of subjects and to minimize the influence of the research results by its structure and characteristics, I combined the initial probability sample with the rational sampling, using as criteria for stratification statistical sample population the results given by the Pretest evaluation and the membership of the optional subject group to the same school (wherever possible).

Next, I have analyzed the characteristics of the sample of subjects, concluding that the structure and composition of the experimental group and the control group is almost homogenous with respect to the three criteria we were interested in-the school affiliation, their gender and inclusion in VIth and VIIth grades, the homogeneity is reflected in the three experimental groups of control optional subject.

The sample content, as a result of data collection from the piloting of optional subject training materials proposed changed its structure, so that the proper experimental approach was composed of five learning units:

- Learning unit No.1: The media in the early third millennium
- Learning unit No.2: The functional styles of language. The journalistic style
- Learning unit No.3: The messages sent through media
- Learning unit No.4: The print media
- Learning unit No.5: The online media: newspapers, magazines, and specifically, newsletter.

The detailed contents of the five learning units subordinated to them, I illustrated in the optional subject course support.

The main stages of the formative experiment with its characteristics we render in tabular form, as follows:

The experiments stages	The experiment stages description	The sample of subjects	The period
<i>I.the ascertaining stage</i>	<p>I.1.the application of the opinion questionnaire for parents, stdents, teachers and reduce sample of subjects, from data obtained so that for the formative intervention the sample of subjects was represetes only by students</p> <p>I.2.the interviews with students and teachers</p> <p>I.3.the piloting of the optional subjesct content and its review</p> <p>I.4.identifying other optional subject groups with similat thematic, establishing the experimental group and control group and administration, training teachers in the team of collaborators and the analysis of the initial assessment sample(the Pretest)</p>	<p>I.1.1.students from IV-IX grades (461 subjects)</p> <p>I.1.2.teachers (46 subjects)</p> <p>I.1.3.parents of children from IV-VIII grades(405 subjects)</p> <p>I.2.1.teachers (46 subjects)</p> <p>I.2.2. students from IV-IX grades (55 subjects, randomized)</p> <p>I.3.1.students from VIIIth grades (22 subjects)</p> <p>I.4.1.students from VI-VII grades (163 students enrolled in 6 groups, 3 experimental and 3 of control)</p>	<p>I.1. and I.2. academic year 2005-2006</p> <p>I.3.academic year 2006-2007</p> <p>I.4.academic year 2007-2008 (september-october)</p>

II.Experiment propriu-zis	II.1.Introducing the dependent variable in the experimental groups; II.2.Monitoring the formative activities by selected research methods-direct observation, interview,content analysis of student products;		II.1.academic year 2007-2008 (october-february)
III.Posttest	III.1Administration and analysis of teh final assessment test (Posttest) immediately after the compection of the experiment (qualitative and quantitative analysis of the results by comparing the experimental and control groups)	II.1., III.1, IV.1.sample of students-3 experimental	III.1.academic year 2007-2008 (the end of february)
IV.Retest	IV.1. The „remote” management and analysis of the evaluation sample te retest the hypothesis to distrance test (quantitative and qualitative analysis of the results comparing the two groups, exeperimental and of control);	groups, 3 control groups	IV.1.academic year 2007-2008 (june)

The analysis grid of media contents, the independent variable of the research, which we proposed as a tool for the cognitive development of the students with the aim of developing some sets of criteria of value selection of media content has as a theoretical foundation, a constructivist paradigm with elements that are specific to Feuerstein’s theory of mediate learning and to Sander’s multiprocesual questioning taxonomy

Its efficiency is not reduced to its use as a “tool” for quality intellectual work during the optional classes. It can extend to the level of the student’s entire intellectual arsenal.

The grid will form in fact a “competence”, developing thinking (especially the ability of analyzing) as a complex mental process inherent to any human activity of this type.

The penultimate chapter “THE ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE EXPERIMENTAL DATA” (chapter V) offers a comprehensive picture of the formation of the axiological selective criteria of media content based on the grid of media content analysis, the rule of the 5C’s combining analyses of inter-group type with those of intra-group type. Thus we compared the results obtained by the groups of optional classes belonging to the experimental group

of subjects(G1, G3, G5) with the results obtained by the control groups of the sample of subjects (G2, G4, G6) that were included in the experiment. We evaluated the differences between the results obtained by the “experimental” optional classes and the “ control” groups in order to be able to find the statistic significance of the evolution of the subjects belonging to the whole experimental group.

Intra-group type analyses were used to identify, as much as possible, the correlations of detail, which offered us an insight into the evolution of the experimental optional groups during the experiment.

Besides these types of data processing, we have also used the qualitative analysis by analyzing the students grids, which gave us the global picture of the development of the abilities or skills of analysis and interpretation and of the development of cognitive and meta cognitive structures. This picture was also outlined and based on qualitative and quantitative analysis of the scores obtained by the students separately for the analysis of the information at Pre-test, Post-test and Retest level.

In order to achieve these analytical approaches we used the quantitative processing of data by using methods which tried to evaluate the student’s school performance as well as the student’s abilities / skills of analysis and interpretation.

Therefore we introduced in the data base each mark obtained by the students in Pre-test, Post-test, and Retest (hence a final mark) in order to analyze the presented information. We obtained a final score for the whole group belonging to the optional class by calculating separately the score of each group by adding the score obtained by each student for the information analysis of each of the three tasks of the evaluation test. For example, the mark for the pre-test is obtained by adding up one point granted initially and the scores obtained for the three exercises. In its turn each of these marks is obtained by adding up a mark obtained for reproducing information and one for analyzing it.

For short, the results obtained by the students in Pre-test, Post-test and Retest, which were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively (including the divisions that formed the final mark for the students’ ability/ competence of analyzing information), confirmed the initial hypothesis, supporting the relevance of the grid for analyzing media content in order to form a set of axiological criteria filtered by the person’s subjectivity. It also confirmed the resistance in time of the formative effects at the level of higher cognitive activities.

The students understood that the patterns of life offered by the media are fascinating but should be analyzed taking into account the intentions of the media institutions, by comparing the “ public person” with the person’s personality and by eliminating the issues related to imagination and commercial aspects.

The same analysis of the media content is also necessary when we want to consider it as a main source of information. In such a context a selection is indispensable. The personal analysis of the messages involves selection criteria which were crystallized after a synthesis of the information provided by specialized external authorities, parental or didactic authorities. This synthesis is triggered and sustained by the use of the suggested grid.

Besides offering the students pertinent personal selection criteria of media content, the independent variable of our research played an important role in guiding the students to achieve quality media products. Thus, the media products produced during the optional classes are the result of the change of the students' behaviour concerning mass-media,. They are also the results of the acquisition of a set of axiological criteria, of their cognitive development at higher levels, of their ability to value personal experience and of their creativity, offering the students the feeling of satisfaction obtained after an affective intellectual work. Making certain kinds of texts helped the students to improve their writing and speaking skills, which are considered to be final aims of certain school subjects.

The last chapter, chapter VI. CONCLUSIONS. COURSE OF ACTION" is meant to be a synthesis of all the data that have been collected and analyzed during the research, which is, from our point of view an action research aimed at optimizing the teaching strategies by experimenting with new models of action. I took part in the experiment directly, being involved in the education process and being subsequently supported by four collaborating teachers. Its relevance for the further development of the students' personalities persuaded us to analyze its features and to try to improve its educational effects providing a viable solution.

During our research we encountered a series of difficulties, which are connected to the way in which optional classes are wrongly understood and implemented in the Romanian school system; the operationalisation of the chosen theme, the mentality of those involved in the re undertaken research, the existence of too few bibliographic sources, the emergence of some works with the same topic during the development of the study, the use of active and inter active modern means of teaching by the teachers; the lack of the capitalization of personal experience and of the knowledge with which the students interact in an informal context in order to be used in the formal didactic activity; the existence of a faulty learning style, the prejudice according to which success can be achieved without intense personal effort, etc.

We grouped our opinions which had an ascertaining nature at the level of the subjects involved in our research. Thus we differentiated the ascertaining opinions concerning mass-media, students, teachers and parents, and we tried to put them in order (whenever it was possible) at the level of the three forms of education, the next step being the statement of the conclusions in the same manner.

I. Ascertaining views concerning media(referring obviously to the transmitted contents):

❖ *The level of formal education*

- Mass-media are used more and more as didactic aids. Theoretically their implementation was suggested and studied in the second half of the 19th century, still in Romanian school there isn't yet a logistic basis, software for all school subjects and personnel specialized in using it.
- The education process does not have curriculum documents to actually support and implement the use of mass media in the teaching process. We refer here for example to school programs designed to allow a connection between the educational aims, the contents they suggest and the existent media products (didactic films, documentaries, software for all subjects of the curriculum areas)

❖ *The level of non formal education*

- Romanian media market provides contents subordinated to non formal education, though they are fewer than the media contents of a informal kind. They bring forward specialized TV programs, or similar sites.
- The media content subordinated to non formal education of scientific or technical type is less than the one referring to "education for everyday life".

❖ *The level of informal education*

- The media contents subordinated to informal education hold the first place
- Thus, the media content related to a healthy life style, look, clothes, culinary information prevails.

❖ *At the level of non-formal education:*

- They prefer contents which are subordinated to this type of education, the contents of immediate importance for their personal life, selected according to their interests (manifested in areas such as makeup, fashion, contents about modern machines, news about computer games, etc.). Few students opt for quality scientific and technical content such as those offered by National Geographic, for example.

❖ *At the level of informal education:*

- they assign a large temporal budget to the consumption of media messages, to the detriment of other activities (the contents offered by electronic media, especially the computer connected to the Internet and TV prevail);
- they do not dispose of a set of selection criteria about media contents and are therefore they are exposed to a wide range of influences exerted by these media contents;

- they absorb without selecting: ideas, opinions, attitudes, and even behaviours spread by media contents, elements which instead of supporting personal development they have a negative influence;

II. Ascertaining views concerning students

❖ *at the level of formal education*

- They are not familiar with using them during the instructive- educative activities, with using the media as a means for teaching, nor with the modern teaching strategies. They came into very little contact with the media as pedagogical resources, and thus they do not know how to use it and value it in this respect because they have not been 'educated' in this respect. Initially, when we used modern teaching strategies in our approach, students considered it on the one hand easy, real 'games', 'waste of time', or on the other hand 'complicated'. After they became aware of the rules, they were really captivated of it. They admitted their useful role and expressed their disappointment of not using them even sporadically in other classes as well.
- They lack the powers of free speech, of personal reasoning of certain ideas based on a set of personal axiological criteria.
- They lack a system of intellectual work operationally structured on an optimal cognitive and meta-cognitive development.

❖ *at the level of non-formal education*

- From the contents which are subordinated to this type of education they prefer the ones with an immediate importance to their personal life. These are chosen according to their own interests (and met in areas such as fashion, makeup, contents about modern cars, news about computer games etc).Very few of them choose quality scientific and technical contents such as, for instance those on National Geographic.

❖ *at the level of informal education*

- They allocate a vast period of time to the consumption of media messages over to other activities the electronic media contents are predominant especially the computer connected to the Internet and the television)
- They lack a set of criteria of selection of the media contents and thus they expose themselves to a wide range of influences exerted by these.
- They accept non-selectively ideas, opinions, attitudes, models and even behaviour patterns from the contents conveyed by the media. These are valueless. Instead of

helping them develop their personal development these contents influence then in a negative way.

III Ascertaining views concerning teachers

❖ at the level of formal education

- They lack the scientific training, so they cannot engage in teaching activities which exploit the media contents relating them to the children's life experience. They are unable to establish a wide informal education.
- They do not use mass communication means during teaching activities (as teaching materials). These are very often used in subjects such as Technology, Mathematics, Science and the Man and Society Curriculum. They use it very seldom in other subjects. The teachers accuse the lack of educational software.
- They do not use the interactive teaching strategies although they theoretically agree with using them. They transform them into a 'fashionable' teaching slogan. Consequently they perpetuate the traditional teaching strategies. These strategies implicate memorizing as a learning technique for students and they are followed by the same type of evaluation exams.

❖ At the level of non-formal education

- The media contents subordinated to informal education hold the first place on Romanian market and they impose on the audience a media culture with a reference system and a specific language. This gets often in contradiction with the values of the real culture.

❖ at the level of informal education

- Although they are aware of the impact the informal media contents have on students, the majority do not take the responsibility of initializing something in this respect.

IV Ascertaining views concerning parents

- They are aware of the influence of the media sent contents, but they do not involve themselves enough in educating their children as to prepare them for a quality reception of these contents. The parents give as reasons for these actions the lack of time or of education in this respect. They take little or no responsibility in teaching their children how to watch a TV show, how to read a newspaper or how to surf the Internet.
- They think that the school should be almost exclusively responsible for the media education and as for the general education as well. They do not involve themselves enough in their children education, they do not spend time enough with them. This is the reason why there can appear lacks in the parent- children relationship. All these

because of the lack of communication. The parents do not know their children well enough, nor their preferences regarding the media contents. The absence of daily schedule of the students leaves it entirely to themselves the spending of the free time. They accept the media contents also because of boredom, no matter how useful these are or are not.

As a conclusion we suggest the following directions of action:

I Main directions of action regarding the Media

- Collaboration between the media institutions and the school in order to transform it into an educational partner. This collaboration should be materialized firstly through the implementation of a 'school subject' in the National Curriculum. This school subject could be the Media Education as a distinctive element of the common curriculum body (it should be included into the core curriculum) beginning with the secondary school level. This school subject, which we could place in the Counselling and Orientation curriculum, aims to familiarize students with the specific features of the media contents, with the way they are achieved and last but not least it aims at the students' endowment with axiological analysis criteria of the media contents which are the basis of the media literacy.
- Optimal communication of the contents which are specific to the non-formal education, of the TV shows, the Internet sites, the newspapers and magazines which are of real value in this respect.
- Achievement and promotion of certain media contents, either implicitly or explicitly adequate to a certain target audience (we refer in particular to pre-teenagers who have been the subjects of our experiment).
- Emphasis on the educational features of the media contents already existing on the media market by providing a favourable light on behaviours, attitudes, patterns success in life.
- Introduction of some clear explanations in the media contents, explanations regarding their educative character and how they should be perceived etc.
- Involvement of pre-teenagers as partners in the realisation of certain media contents, following the collaboration of the media institutions with the educational institutions.
- Restrictive access of the pre-teenagers to certain Internet sites having an inappropriate content, a vulgar language. This could be achieved by introducing some additional criteria when creating an account (the Personal Identification Number, for instance).

II. Main directions of action regarding the students

- Further experimental training programme to a set of value selection criteria made pertinent to the media content by extending the optional school subjects in other classes as well, after the necessary changes have been taken.
- Widespread use of the grid/ the rule suggested as a useful intellectual tool which could be applied in any educational activity or at the level of any educational influence.
- Application of the analysis scale of the media contents across multiple school subjects, but particularly across those subjects belonging to the Language and Communication curriculum, to capitalize on their applicability in real life and to develop skills for writing different types of texts and argumentation of personal opinions.
- Communication of the products of the students' activity in school magazines (for which the ISBNs have been obtained) and other types of activities.
- Dissemination of the results among colleagues from other schools following the carrying of certain after school activities, educational projects, partnerships etc.
- Achievement of a Student Guide containing suggestions and approaches to the issue of the relationship between the media and the education for pre-teenagers.

III Main directions of action regarding the teachers

- Real training of the teachers in using modern teaching strategies, the media as a means of teaching through initial training courses or continuing education training courses. Thus they will change their conservative and shallow mentality and they will optionally use the active and the interactive teaching techniques in the effective school practice. They will also use the evaluation strategies to support as a priority the students' cognitive and meta-cognitive development endowing them with an efficient intellectual working style, taking into consideration their age particularities.
- Organization and conduction of instructive- educative activities in such a way as to reflect their relevance to 'everyday life', by reorganizing the students' personal experiences. Thus the interdependence between the forms of education become a reality and not just a goal.
- Presentation during Counselling and School Orientation classes of the media as a factor of formal education which should become an educational partner, a source of information complementary to school.
- Initiation of exchanges, of educational projects, of partnerships with local media institutions and with other schools, as well as with other institutions which are

subordinated to non-formal education, aiming at the education of young people in the media.

- Dissemination of examples of ‘best practice workshops’ regarding the organization and the conduction of teaching activities of great value in terms of the reception of the media contents as educational contents and the training of the students to do so.
- Conduction of teacher and parents meetings, of lectures aiming at the reception of the media contents and their possibility of educational exploit.
- Achievement of a Teacher’s Guide containing suggestions and approaches to the issue of the relationship between the media and the education (especially for the pre-teenagers).

IV Main directions of action regarding the parents

- Participation in educational courses for parents to capitalize the media contents on family education.
- Involvement in activities organized by schools, such as teacher –parents meetings, lectures, round table debates, activities conducted with the principals, with the school counsellor, with specialists in pedagogy, psychology and with the representatives of the local media.
- Parents watching certain media contents together with their children (and then discussing them).
- Monitoring students’ daily schedule and establishing together an optimal programme.
- Carrying out some parent-teacher activities in their spare time, so that the parents become partners as well, the children’s friends. They will know and understand them better and will provide the necessary support for their personal development.
- Achievement of a Parents Guide containing suggestions and approaches to the issue of the relationship between media and education for pre-teenagers.