

Whole Person Hermeneutic Media Learning  
in the Primary Classroom:  
An Intercultural Grounded Philosophy

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# Abstract

## Whole Person Hermeneutic Media Learning in the Primary Classroom: An Intercultural Grounded Philosophy by Markéta Zezulková

Media education and media literacy research and practice arguably incline towards reductionism by being focused on a single medium (e.g. film) or a group of media (e.g. digital) and by being predominantly preoccupied with learners' reasoning and critical thinking. Moreover, whilst literacy theory and practice is no longer seen as a causal factor but rather an enabling one (as equally discovered by this research), the direct correlation between critical and creative media literacy and individuals' as well as society's wellbeing seems to dominate academic, public, policy, and educational debates. Much research has therefore aimed at adapting media literacy education, which had mostly been developed at the secondary level, to younger children and primary classrooms whilst neglecting education as a staged progress and the multidimensional developmental as well as sociocultural changes novice learners arguably undergo within the first years of compulsory education. There indeed are many valuable studies about media literacy education at primary level that address these issues, yet they are often country specific and conducted in one school or one classroom.

This interdisciplinary and intercultural classroom research was instead interested in the current and potential 'media learning' – defined as intentional and naturally occurring learning about any media with, from, in, or even without the physical presence of, any media source – and was carried out in two Czech and two US public primary (lower elementary) schools across the first three grades with six to nine/ten year olds and their teachers. The research explored media's role in the child's in- and out-of- school collective and individual thoughts, actions, feelings, and relationships, whilst asking how the child learnt, and could learn, about media within these processes and how the teacher facilitated, and could facilitate, such media learning. 'Grounded philosophy' was developed as a philosophy-led, flexible and responsive research methodology suitable for intercultural inductive research that, although being grounded in participants' individual and collective sociocultural-historical context, is capable of arriving to transferrable and holistic conceptual understanding – or 'a grounded philosophy' that asks 'what is' as well as 'what could be'. The methodology itself represents an original contribution to knowledge. In total, twelve classrooms were observed of which the twenty-four teachers together with specialised and managerial staff were interviewed, and sixty-five children (thirty-three girls and thirty-two boys) were involved in photo-elicitation group and individual interviews.

The research discovered that, firstly, the teachers aimed to holistically address the whole learner, which was believed to be achievable only through acknowledging and drawing upon the child's unique historicity. Secondly, the child's media life was situated within his or her holistic system in which every experience was interconnected and dialogic – their past, present and future whole being and becoming, individual and collective media experience, classroom and media learning, as well as the diverse media platforms, texts, and practices – and thus hermeneutic. Such hermeneutic experience was an unfinalisable learning experience of which long-term value is arguably difficult to immediately evaluate, and thus instead of the adult judging the child's media life from reductionist and cause-and-effect perspectives while teaching objective truths about media, the learner shall be guided by the teacher through learning to reflect on his or her own individual and collective media experience. The original argument therefore is for replacing reductionist media-centric with holistic and hermeneutic experience-centric research and educational approach to the primary school child's learning that blends classroom and media experiences into one continuous and dialogic whole person learning. Honouring formal education as a staged process and primary education as a foundation of lifelong learning, the proposed (media and classroom) learning proceeds critical and creative media literacy education by building a foundation for lifelong learning about media.

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To myka and tykus.

# CHAPTER 1: Beginning

## Preface and Overview

‘I would like to become either a miss teacher in kindergarten or in school. You get to study with children, you get to help them. I could be playing with them, tell them fairy tales, and sing with them.’

*Janička, 1st grade, 6 years old, Czech Republic*

Janička, one of the research participants, summarised well the four main elements of the matter under discussion; teachers, young learners, education, and pan-media. She also pointed towards the importance of their academic, sociocultural, and emotional interrelationship, treating them as belonging to a complex whole. Her seemingly ‘childish’ and ‘simplistic’ thinking contained an understanding of primary education that this research was able to experience only after years-long thinking – if only my thinking was more childish. Instead this thinking was grounded in intercultural media inclusive qualitative classroom research about ‘media learning’ conducted in two Czech and two US primary (elementary) schools across the first three grades with the six- to nine/ten- year olds and their teachers. The research, being focused on commonalities rather than differences, discovered that for the child participants (Janička included) classroom learning and media learning blended into one hermeneutic and holistic continuous experience and learning, whereas the adult participants were prone to reductionism and varying media dichotomies – although the child was quick to repeat these. The stress will be on (classroom and media) learning as an ongoing, unfinalised, dialogic and lifelong process within which any media-related experience of the whole child, as well as the whole teacher, is being constantly re-thought and re-used in the light of new experiences. The suggestion will be for primary education and media research to acknowledge the child’s individual and collective experience-orientated media engagement and learning and therefore to move away from a media-centric approach towards a more people-centric outlook.

To give the reader a bit of a background while walking him or her through the paper and its four chapters, the thinking was set to be ‘philosophical’ and focused on media education since the origins of this research project were advertised by *the Centre for Excellence in Media Practice* at Bournemouth University as ‘Philosophy of Media Education’. The only academically and professionally familiar term in the title was ‘media’, a field incorporating marketing communications, which I had previously studied and worked at. It was originally through media I approached this study, which is reflected in the conceptual thinking that begins in this chapter with questioning media and their multifaceted role in people’s individual and collective lives. The thinking about media underpinned by the academic and public debates questioning their ‘goodness’ and ‘appropriateness’ for the society and the individual almost naturally and inevitably led towards considering media literacy and media education as a potential solution to ‘all’ contemporary issues. The bitter realisation of the realities surrounding these concepts has given a certain undertone to the discourse that comes after the first media (de)conceptualisation.

At this point I also began to further reflect on my other, non-media related, preconceptions stemming from my childhood experience of formal and compulsory education. I tended to judge schools as outdated and careless of the needs of individuals and society, and schoolteachers as malicious and ungenerous to those learners not embodying their idea of the perfect student. It might not be difficult to realise that these judgments were constructed in the head of a pretty stubborn and lively student rebelling against any rule possible and refusing to participate in established school processes and rituals. Entering the research from the perspective of a student who felt her voice was not heard and her ways of learning were not acknowledged within the primary school system, two things became clear; one, the inquiry had to treat young learners, rather than the researcher, as experts on and guides to their own lives, and two, if this project was to have any practical value whatsoever, it would be to their learning. The conceptual thinking, and consequently the first chapter alike, therefore continued with the exploration of 'child' and 'childhood' in general, and in the context of formal education in particular. Yet even the teachers were no longer seen as the ones to blame, because the deeper the project looked into the academic, policy and public media-related attitudes to teachers, the greater was the feeling of sympathy, especially with those teaching at primary school level.

The research therefore set out to explore primary school learners' as well as teachers' beliefs about, and experiences with, media and learning with the aim of discovering current and potential media learning in primary school classrooms operating within diverse contexts. The subsequent questions then asked [1] in what ways any media were involved in a variety of a child's actions, feelings, relationships, and meanings within a classroom environment, [2] how a child learnt, and could learn, about media through these processes, and [3] how a teacher facilitated, or could facilitate, these learning processes.

Media learning – defined here as both intentional and naturally occurring learning about media with, from, in, or even without the physical presence of, media – replaced the focus on media literacy education in order to make the inquiry less bound and more open to 'the complexities of everyday situations' happening in or penetrating classrooms (Elliott 2006, p.175). What is meant by diverse contexts is discussed in greater detail in the second *Researching* chapter, but in summary it refers to the intercultural nature of this research following British scholarly tradition while being conducted in two Czech and two US public primary schools ranging from low to high income, and from rural to urban areas. I consider myself to be an international scholar who, although originally from the Czech Republic, feels a strong sense of belonging to the British academic community with occasional teaching and researching trips to other countries such as the USA, Malta, Colombia, or China, and who has only recently moved back and begun to explore Czech academia. Intercultural thinking, therefore, was at the heart of this research and it laid the foundations for intercultural philosophy interpreting a current media learning for the purpose of considering a potential formal media learning, which does not refer to uniformity but rather to unity consisting of commonalities discovered by the research. This was not a comparative study and even though the contextually relevant differences are highlighted when appropriate, the intercultural philosophy of formal learning grounded in this research argues that 'understanding is possible beyond all centrisms [sic]' (Mall 2000, l.275).

'Philosophy' was the hardest puzzle that, however, when grasped became a powerful security blanket. It should therefore not surprise the reader that a considerable amount of attention is paid to it in the second *Researching* chapter and then again in the last fourth *Philosophising and Concluding* chapter. Philosophy is understood within this research as other than a hard science,

as Dosse (1999) suggested. The second chapter addresses philosophy as a metaphysical ground of the researcher and the research (Greenbank 2003; Kafle 2011), the third *Interpreting Parallel Cases and Shaping Justified Beliefs* chapter calls the teachers' and learners' beliefs their philosophies, whilst the first and last chapters treat philosophy as a practical reasoning informed by, and returning to, learning practices (Aristotle ca.350BC [1955]; Carr 2004). Despite this, all the approaches have a common characteristic here that collectively defines philosophy as a holistic belief system within which to know and to believe are equal truths about one's reality that is organic and dialogic, as a change in one belief arguably influences all the others.

A philosophy in the second *Researching* chapter therefore answers the essential ontological, epistemological, methodological, methodical, analytical, and ethical questions about the research nature, design, process, and presentation. The core quintet, which theoretically underpinned the research philosophy and justified the development of the research methodology termed as 'grounded philosophy', was formed of Edith Stein's phenomenology of fusion, Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics, Martin Buber's *I and Thou*, Lev Vygotsky's cultural-historical approach, and Carl Jung's archetypes and collective unconscious. Edith Stein, also known as St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, and her PhD thesis *On the Problem of Empathy* (1916 [1989]) marked the transition from reading any philosophical thoughts to narrowing the engagement with those contradicting, supporting, or extending hers. Not only do I share her (here irrelevant) deep interest in the symbol of the cross – always wearing a necklace with a cross made of Bohemian garnet and given to me by my parents when I moved to England – but it was her stress on empathy that interested me first; or as Rose (1994) similarly advocated for equal engagement of 'hand, brain, and heart' in science innovation and education progress.

The link from Stein and Buber to Vygotsky and Jung then was Gadamer and his understanding of historical consciousness and hermeneutical experience. The implications this research collectively gave to their thoughts will also retrospectively underpin and throw some light on, for example, why there is not a separate literature review chapter, why I suddenly refer to myself in the third person from the next section onwards, or why each chapter is titled with a verb in the progressive tense. More importantly then, this first philosophical part of the second chapter explores how the combination of their thoughts led the research towards development of grounded philosophy as a research methodology applied here. The second more practical part of the *Researching* chapter sets out to make transparent the research design, process and methods – these being interviews with primary school teaching staff and management, individual and group photo-elicitation interviews with six- to nine/ten year olds, and classroom observations in the first, second and third grades in each school.

Although the second chapter addresses analytical and interpretative thinking from a philosophical standpoint, the third *Interpreting Parallel Cases and Shaping Justified Beliefs* (commonly known as 'the findings') chapter begins with a more practical implications of analytical, intuitive and empathetic interpretative thinking. It portrays the hermeneutic circle through which the research themes led to the two main parallel cases formed of the commonalities and then further to the justified beliefs. The first parallel case focuses on the teachers' (adult's) pedagogic beliefs and practices in general and connected to media in particular, whereas the second parallel case centres on the learner's (child's) in- and out-of-school media-related practices and beliefs. Each parallel case is concluded with a summary of the justified beliefs while positioning them against newly identified academic literature. The

structure of the thesis therefore mirrors the inductive research process within which I could not know what thinking was relevant until I had asked and observed the teachers and the learners.

Some of the interpretations and constructions described and discussed in the third chapter might leave the reader pondering their relevance to the understanding of a 'current' media learning. Even though these could be seen as contextually relevant discoveries at least, their main purpose is to develop the ground for a 'potential' facilitated media learning on which the final fourth *Philosophising and Concluding* chapter concentrates. At this point the previously separated justified beliefs are brought together into one justified holistic belief system, or a practical philosophy, that simultaneously discusses the current with the potential media learning and the teacher's current and potential role within the process. Since the thinking is now generated from, embedded in and justified by arguably rich field research, it constitutes itself as a grounded philosophy – the term thus refers to the methodology as well as the outcome of this research. This part should be the highpoint, because only in the grounded philosophy of media learning in primary school classrooms is the thinking finally synthesised into original knowledge that is formed of interdisciplinary and intercultural research and relevant academic literature and that has both theoretical and practical implications. The grounded philosophy does not serve as the universal or generalisable absolute truth, but rather as a transferrable, or probably more inspirational, thinking about a guided media learning that may have value for those with a similar experience and/or beliefs. This fourth chapter is the concluding one, discussing in tandem and summarising the research, its discoveries, implications, limitations, and future research opportunities.

I will not return to a reflective first person account again, although it is important to note that reflection was, and still is, an ongoing and unfinalisable process that blends with the entire thinking introduced through this text. Even seemingly basic decisions that had to be made, such as choosing between male and female pronouns, led me to a cyclic thinking that often had no end. Some of these decisions might complicate reading fluency, particularly the use of both gender pronouns, but this in the end seemed to be a more inclusive and respecting approach. To compensate for these, as well as occasional academic and philosophical jargon, a number of media-related illustrative stories are used to share the thinking in a more approachable way while also highlighting some contextually relevant information, for example about the relevant countries' history and media culture. These stories deliberately come from and draw upon various media platforms, genres and practices; for which the reason will only be revealed in the final fourth chapter. As some of the sources were electronic books, a small number of quotes are referenced using 'location' (l.) instead of page (p.).

To conclude, the linear narration that begins on the next page with the initial conceptual thinking does not capture well the holistic nature of the research. This research was itself a lived experience and since the meanings and understandings were for a large part shaped through interpretative and dialogic writing, I now invite the reader to an interpretative and dialogic reading.

## Conceptual thinking begins

As the preface and overview highlighted, the discourse will now begin with conceptual thinking about 'media' – through which the research was originally approached – and their theoretical role in one's collective and individual life. It will then continue with academic, public and policy debate about learning from and about media. The attention will afterwards be on media learners and teachers, whilst looking closer at the concepts of 'child', 'childhood', and 'education', although these concepts (as well as media) are repeatedly questioned from various angles throughout the entire paper. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the conceptual thinking through which the research aim and questions, as well as some of the key research beliefs and practices, were developed at the early stage of the study. However, since the thesis has been written retrospectively, occasional connections are also made between the initial and the final thinking.

### (De-)Conceptualising Media

Not having a common definition and understanding of the term 'media' has been a concern of many media-related studies, including Corner (1995, p.147) who identified it as a 'knowledge problem', or Meyrowitz (1994, p.50) stating that 'many have simply adopted the belief that everyone knows what the media are'. For that reason, much recent research starts with a simplistic list, naming 'all' media – cinema, theatre, television, radio, music, newspapers, magazines, books, and the internet – or with categorisation of media such as new and old, interactive and mass, digital and analogue, along with others. Nonetheless, this research was based on a premise that media are interdisciplinary in nature (Williams 2003). As Silverstone (1994) wrote, media 'cannot be understood without attending to the complex over- and under-determining interrelationships of the medium and the various levels of social reality with which it engages', and added that it is crucial to think about media 'as a psychological, social and cultural form, as well as an economic and political one' (p.ix). The realm of media can therefore be entered through various rabbit holes, each having implications on how media are understood and studied (Watson 1998). The following paragraphs serve as tiny glimpses into these rabbit holes, illustrating the complex, whilst substantially ambiguous, views on and approaches to media, yet all in a way relevant to this holistic and interdisciplinary research.

To begin with one of the most pragmatic approaches to media, in the field of marketing communications and advertising a medium could be said to be anything that publicly conveys a message. This ranges from a *Swoosh* on a schoolgirl's trainers to the blimp saying 'BA Can't Get It Up' paid for by *Virgin Media* and flying above the Millennium Wheel when *British Airways* was having problems erecting it. Medium, from Latin *medius* meaning middle, then becomes a 'platform' for a message, or in other words a channel between a sender and the receiver in the communication process (Shannon and Weaver 1949). Inspired by studies of communication (e.g. Schramm 1964; Berlo 1960), marketers have traditionally focused on how a message could be effectively coded – given a certain form by the sender – so it could then be decoded with minimum bias by the receiver. The lesson to be learnt among contemporary marketers is that the consumer's interpretation of commercial message is always subjective, because rather than the meaning being transmitted, it is being co-created by the audience within the specific context (Pittenger *et al.* 1960). Although trying to create 'experience', the interest always is in financial

revenue, not on the experience itself. This research, on the other hand, was interested in the complex and subjective media experiences rather than their outcomes, which are not easy to determine when stripped of their financial measurability, although much media effects research would claim otherwise as will be highlighted later.

Some other media-centred thoughts of marketers might be, firstly, about media relevance to the audience and its perception of, and relationship with, diverse media. As McLuhan (1964) somewhat philosophically suggested 'medium is the message'. In this sense, the consumer who heard 'Red Bull gives you wings' during a TV commercial arguably should have a different experience than the one actively following the *Red Bull Stratos* space diving project with skydiver Felix Baumgartner. Secondly, special attention among marketers is often paid to media interactivity that offer two-way and many-to-many communication as opposed to one-way mass communication (Harrison 1981). This allows companies to gain precise and immediate feedback on which they can flexibly react, as well as to virally and transnationally spread well-targeted messages at minimum cost and effort. The triangle of success thus lies in the perfect equilibrium between media platform, media text, and consumer/producer. These three elements were repeatedly emerging and being rediscovered within this research. Whereas at the beginning they seemed to be equally important, platforms and texts had been gradually surrendering to the people until ultimately the person (the child and the teacher) overrode the other two – as will be illustrated in the following chapters while positioning it as a crucial justified belief.

The concept of media is therefore sufficiently pragmatic and straightforward from an advertising perspective. This might be why marketers have so often been criticised for their lack of interest in the wider sociocultural implications of media they produce and distribute. Thus leaving behind this capitalist identification of media with Smith's (1776 [1982]) invisible hand of the market, cultural studies instead recognise media rather as an immortal witness of a cultural plurality and diversity (Stocking 1968). This approach has reciprocally made culture substantive and material (Oswell 2006) and media inherently significant in themselves, encouraging further the media-centric outlook.

Depending on the ways in which culture is understood, media can subsequently be defined in various manners. When by culture it is meant a process of cultivation or learning (Arnold 1869 [2009]; Tylor 1871 [1920]), then media take up the role of educators and are thus cultural actors, upon which studies of educational media and media in education may usefully draw. Williams (1961 [2009]) additionally described culture as 'a particular way of life [that] expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behavior [sic]' (p.57). This has brought media into the context of everyday life and consequently built a bridge between cultural and social research, extending media into 'sociocultural' actors, where media education studies may feel more comfortable and so does this research. Yet when culture is seen rather as ideology (Cloak 1975; Boyd and Richerson 1985), then media are both products of memes, or in other words of ideas and behaviours spread among certain groups (Schatzki 2001), and can therefore be seen as art and/or symbolic communication (McArdle and Prowse 2010). Ideology, or in Hall's (1986) definition mental frameworks, are 'the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation, which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works' (p.29).



Somewhat interestingly, when combining these social and cultural views, media become sociocultural actors (media shaping society) as well as sociocultural products (society shaping media). This is only one of many media-related vicious circles the project had to deal with and why it inclined to holism, since learning processes, ideology, art and way of life ‘all act upon each other, and to understand one you have to understand all’ (Eliot 1948 [1973]; cited by Oswell 2006, p.120). A case in point is the Czech national anthem *Where Is My Home?* (*‘Kde domov můj?’* in the original).

Andante con moto. M. M. ♩ = 88.

WHERE IS MY HOME?

Where is my home, where is my home,  
Waters murmur across the meadows,  
Pinewoods rustle upon the cliff-rocks,  
Bloom of spring shines in the orchard,  
Earth's paradise on sight,  
And that is the beautiful land,  
The Czech land, home of mine  
The Czech land, home of mine

V Praze, dne 1<sup>ho</sup> srpna 1860  
F. Škroup

The story starts in December 1834 with the audience that had visited the Prague's Estate Theatre to see the farce *Fidlovačka, or No Anger and No Brawl* by Josef Kajetán Tyl on its opening night – it being the one day a week when Czech language was used at the theatre – and left disappointed. However, the very same audience was captivated by the scene with the blind violist Mareš nostalgically singing about the beauty of the Czech land, with music composed by František Škroup. The song had soon spread all over these lands, a part of the Habsburg Empire, nourishing the long lasting national revival promoting Czech above the German language and encouraging people to regard themselves as Czechs. The song became popular among ordinary people to whom it offered solace and defiance during politically difficult times. It was sung by Czechs with emotion and enthusiasm at various protests, assemblies, and celebrations for more than one and a half centuries. Step by step, the singers and listeners would spontaneously doff their hats and then over time routinely stand up, confirming that the song had been chosen as a national anthem by the will of the nation itself, a nation without a country (Sak 2013). Neither the following Nazi occupation, later communist regime, nor some intellectuals' objections against its poetic lyrics, affected the national anthem. The anthem was finally confirmed as official after the Velvet Revolution in 1989 and embedded in the *Constitution of the Czech Republic*, which came into effect after a peaceful dissolution with Slovak Republic in January 1993.

This is a poignant example of the close relationship between, and the interdependence of, culture, society, language, and media. The song *Where is My Home?* was created by two artists and brought to people through a theatre stage. Yet the people were the ones who accepted it as part of their ideology, who adopted it into their lives and passed it down through generations. As Sak (2013) described, '[i]t was as though the ground had opened up and swallowed the play for which the song was created, [whilst the song] continued to live separately and independently' (p.57). The collective experience and re-production of the song in its sociocultural and historical context carried a great importance in 'forming one of the milestones on the road to the creation

of a modern nation' (*ibid.*), whilst the original source and platform almost immediately lost their importance – a media experience and sociocultural practice that this research will argue is embedded in the primary school child's everyday life.

Oswell (2006) nevertheless suggested that since the 20th century 'cultural differentiation is no longer dominated by national differentiation, but by differentiations across transnational spaces' (p.191). For instance, there is a number Cinderella-like characters found for instance in ancient Egypt and Greece (e.g. Rhodopis), or in Asian (e.g. Ye Xian, Bawang Putih), Anglo-Saxon (e.g. Cordelia), Germanic (e.g. Aschenputtel), and Slavic folklore (e.g. Popelka), revealing the national and cultural variations of the story people themselves. Despite that, starting with Perrault (1697 [1993]), continuing with the Grimms (1812 [2009]), and mastered by Disney (1950), blonde-haired blue-eyed Cinderella with her little glass slipper is arguably the image known across these national and cultural spaces. Adorno and Horkheimer (1979) termed these processes and products as the culture industry and Storey (2009, p.56) as the 'realm of production for profit', where the elite takes control over the means of intellectual production (Marx and Engels 1970 [2009]).

Bernays (1928) wrote that 'those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of [a] country' (p.2). Remembering the *Cold War*, US politicians aimed media at the inner selves of Americans and their unconscious anxieties and desires in order to nurture economically and politically beneficial mass consumerism, whereas the Soviet Union used media to overtly hustle its inhabitants into accepting the collective 'comrade' identity. Yet both nations shared the frustration from being stripped of individualism by the ruling powers. In the sixties, while the yippies and hippies were protesting and developing new forms of anti-materialism lifestyles in the USA, the Czechoslovak anti-communist resistance and the political programme 'socialism with a human face' were challenging the Soviet Union's sovereignty. The era of the *Prague Spring* in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic had been put to an end by the military intervention of the *Warsaw Pact* armies in 1968, followed by the period of 'normalisation', when propaganda was once again dispersed through centrally produced or ruthlessly censored media (Končelík *et al.* 2010; Bednařík *et al.* 2011). Even basic human communication was under state control, since not addressing someone as 'comrade' would be treated as a hostile anti-Soviet act. The US government had chosen a diverse approach and instead actively fed through media the public's hunger for breaking their socially constructed identities and for prioritising their individual selves and self-acquisitions above society (*Century of the Self* 2002). The politicians hand in hand with the marketers had repeatedly promised that through choosing the new products and changed political programmes, people would express their selves and emphasise their liberation.

Comparing these two historical media environments, the Czech journalist and dissident novelist Zdeněk Urbánek told British filmmaker John Pilger during his visit to Czechoslovakia in the 1970s (Pilger 2006):

'In one respect, we are more fortunate than you in the West. We believe nothing of what we read in the newspapers and watch on television, nothing of the official truth. Unlike you, we have learnt to read between the lines, because real truth is always subversive.'

Urbánek (1917 - 2008) was an exemplary citizen, always maintaining a balance between legal and moral, 'with the former referring to the ideal of a world order and the latter meaning an essential moral relationship between human beings' (Pogge 1992, p.49). He actively participated in the civic community; informing, inspiring and encouraging with his writings, speaking up for those silenced by the communist regime. His role as a citizen involved rights, duties, participations, and identities, which are according to Delanty (2000) the key components of citizenship. As the Czech nation used the song *Where is My Home*, Urbánek was through media [1] participating in civic, political, local, national and international communities, [2] defining his identities, [3] claiming his rights and the rights of others, and [4] fulfilling his duties. Urbánek stood up for equal rights by signing the *Declaration of Charter 77* criticising that 'many fundamental civil rights for the time being are – unhappily – valid in [Czechoslovakia] only on paper', and pointing out that '[c]ompletely illusory is the right to freedom of expression' (Havel and Kohout 1977). When the only option was *the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia*, he would refuse to vote, yet when the country became democratic after the *Velvet Revolution*, he accepted the duties inseparable from freedom, including voting. Even though this research was interested in the commonalities, these specific sociocultural-historical differences – between collective-individual identities and responsibilities, free-censored media, and commercial-political powers – were discovered to be somehow persisting in the participating teachers' pedagogic and media beliefs and practices discussed in the third chapter.

The civic potential of media has been greatly extended with the gradually increasing interactivity of media, together with the advent of publicly affordable, accessible and user-friendly digital technologies facilitating today's media production practices (Reifová and Švelch 2013). The question of who is in control over the means of intellectual and art production now rises in importance, taking into account an average of 350 million pictures daily uploaded on *Facebook* with 127 photos on average per *Facebook* user (Wishpond 2015), 100 hours of video uploaded to *YouTube* every minute in 2013 which increased to 300 minutes in 2015 (YouTube 2013; 2015), 500 million tweets sent per day and with more than thirty billion photos daily shared via *Instagram* (Ahmad 2015). Strinati (1995) here usefully asked whether today's society and culture truly 'rise up from the people 'below', or [do they] sink down from elites 'on high', or if it rather is a question of an interaction between those two' (p.3).

Oswell (2006) aligned with Strinati's third option, saying that 'although media images and texts might circulate widely across the globe, these images are used and interpreted in local contexts, [hence although] Disney might be almost everywhere, [it] is read differently in different places' (p.192; citing Liebes and Katz 1990; Morley 1991; Drotner 2001, 2002). An apt example is the *Spice Girls' Talk* (1998, 2002) research analysing the reception of British pop-music among pre-teen age Israeli girls by Dafna Lemish, who applies cultural approaches to the study of media and children. Lemish's study revealed that the global message of 'girl power' had been interpreted by the girls as their own struggle with a social construction of gender and consequently stimulated discourse among them about the local unjustified claims portraying their male peers as more important and better than them. Initially, this led the research towards focusing on children and what their media experiences meant to them, rather than the other way round, whereas later in the research, this pointed towards collective understanding and experience of media within classroom peer culture.

Before one's sociocultural and historical identity, there however is a human as a living, and thus ever-changing, organism with an evolutionary history (Hess 1946 [1970]). The changes in sensory-motor skills, physical appearance, thoughts, emotions, and behaviours are apparent in each aspect of life and in every direction throughout the entire lifespan (Berger 2011). Nevertheless, the changes during 'childhood' are the most visible to 'children' themselves as well as to external 'adult' observers. Childhood 'has been, for more than a century, the territory of developmental psychology' preoccupied with stages and norms of the child's gradual growing up and progress (Greene and Hogan 2005, p.22), whilst considering children as 'incomplete, immature and irrational beings who acquire maturity and rationality over time' (Freeman and Mathison 2009, p.5). A number of prominent developmental psychologists have explored most comprehensively the processes of these changes (e.g. Piaget, see *Chapter 2* p.49) and reasons for those processes (e.g. Vygotsky, see *Chapter 2* pp.49-50). The point of disagreement, within developmental psychology as well as other natural and social sciences interested in the child and childhood, often is the relationship between 'nature' (genetic factors and inherited behaviours that come naturally) and 'nurture' (learnt behaviour that comes through experience with environment, including media, and memory) (Slater and Bremner 2011).

It has been challenging for developmental psychologists and biologists to resolve the matter of nature and nurture due to ethical and legal limitations of human research, leading them to more holistic approaches to human development and learning, as was attempted by this research. For instance, in the context of language, it has become commonly accepted that human has innate predisposition for language acquisition (Chomsky 1968), whilst it is sometimes also argued that there is a restricted critical period when learning must occur to ensure healthy language development (Lenneberg 1967). For this reason, Slater and Bremner (2011) argue that without both nature and nurture no development could occur. Berger (2011) however disagreed with Lenneberg saying that '[f]or most of development, no critical period is evident, but a sensitive period, when particular development occurs most easily, is common' (p.6). Understanding childhood as 'the most' sensitive period influenced media and education debates agreeing that a child should be living and growing up in an environment stimulating 'the right' experiences and sparing a child from 'the wrong' experiences.

Much attention has therefore been paid to the role of media in children's learning and development. On one hand, there are media that are considered educational and thus 'appropriate' and/or 'valuable' to children's development. For example, the children's programme *Sesame Street* orientated study with 10,000 children from fifteen countries conclude that 'the significant, positive effects on cognitive, learning, and socio-emotional outcomes observed in the current meta-analysis represent real educational benefits for the millions of preschool-age children around the world who visit Sesame Street via their televisions' (Mares and Pan 2013, p.149). On the other hand, there are media categorised as 'inappropriate' and/or 'harmful' to those in a sensitive period of life. One of the most debated potential cons of children's media engagements are aggressive behaviour and violence. An uncountable number of studies (undertaken predominantly in the USA) have suggested that childhood exposure to violent content of media has a *cumulative* effect on aggression over time (e.g. Gerbner *et al.* 1980; Bushman and Anderson 2009; Morgan *et al.* 2009; Comstock and Powers 2012), as a meta-analytic review conducted by Anderson *et al.* (2010) concluded, '[t]he evidence strongly suggests that exposure to violent video games is a causal risk factor for increased aggressive behavior [sic],

aggressive cognition, and aggressive affect and for decreased empathy and prosocial behavior [sic]' (p.151).

Strasburger *et al.* (2014) in contrast stated that '[t]he relationship between media violence and aggressive behaviour may be cyclical in nature, such that each reinforces and encourages more of the other' (p.149). Brockmeyer (2014) argued that media violence is attractive to different individuals for diverse reasons and that one's historicity, immediate state, and continuous reciprocal interaction between sociocultural environment and the person are important variables; suggesting a situational and contextual rather than cause-and-effect approach to media research. Gauntlett (2005) touched upon this by distinguishing 'the question of effects and the effect of wrong questions' (p.13). Burn (2015 [forthcoming]), for example, approached engagement with videogames from a production rather than a consumption point of view and, while drawing upon Heidegger (1954 [1977]), highlighted the multidimensional and rather positive role digital media have and could have in children's lives and learning. Guernsey (2007) in her book *Into the Minds of Babes: How Screen Time Affects Children from Birth to Age Five* provided a useful insight from a parental perspective on the inconclusive interdisciplinary debates about what makes some media more educational and better than others, which is an intriguing debate to which, although it was not the original intention, this research will contribute.

Returning to the question of nature vs. nurture, Berger (2011) proposed that behavioural traits are 'similar to a plastic', since they can be moulded by environment, including by media, but 'people maintain a certain durability of identity' (p.17). Identity defines who one is, used to be, will be, and wishes to be, or even wishes not to be (Oyserman *et al.* 2012). Within our *social identities*, we take on many social roles that are dynamically constructed in the moment and usually require someone or something else to play a complementary role (e.g. student-teacher, adult-child) (*ibid.*). In contrast, a personal identity, often interchanged with self, personality, psyche, or in philosophy possibly with soul, according to Owens *et al.* (2010) reflects the total of the behavioural and mental characteristics that separate an individual from others, throughout the process termed by Jung (1963 [1995], 1978 [2008]) as individuation. However, given that the recent media scholarship suggests that people live 'in', rather than 'with', media, they can develop dynamic virtual identities that are immersed in digital media (Deuze 2011), when 'the sender is sent' (McLuhan 1978). People act as authors or curators (Potter 2012) of themselves, editing, manipulating, fast-forwarding, panning, scanning, and zooming in (Deuze 2011; Martey and Shiflett 2012), whereas an inner 'true self' can be detached or hidden from this digital/virtual identity, which represents a worrying possibility on which an increasing number of social media academic and public debates focuses (e.g. Turkle 2011).

To explore the detachment, if there is any, of identity and true self, however, seems rather a task for psychoanalysts such as Freud (1920 [2013]) who believed that self can be brought to consciousness and therefore discovered. Here it is rather proposed that it is more reasonable to centre on the role of media in individuals' self-concepts. Self-concept is variously described as 'what comes to mind when one thinks of oneself [own personality] [...] and what one believes is true of oneself' (Oyserman *et al.* 2012, p.69, cites Stryker 1980; Tajfel 1981; Neisser 1993; Baumeister 1998; Forgas and Williams 2002). It combines humans' thoughts and feelings about their identities and selves and provides a 'meaning-making lens' and a 'perceptual, motivational and self-regulatory tool [...] even though the assumptions on which it is based are often faulty'

(Oyserman *et al.* 2012, p.69). In this sense media are an environment that offers individuals frameworks against which they can compare themselves and others and perhaps subsequently influences what one thinks feels about oneself and the world, and the ways one acts within different social roles.

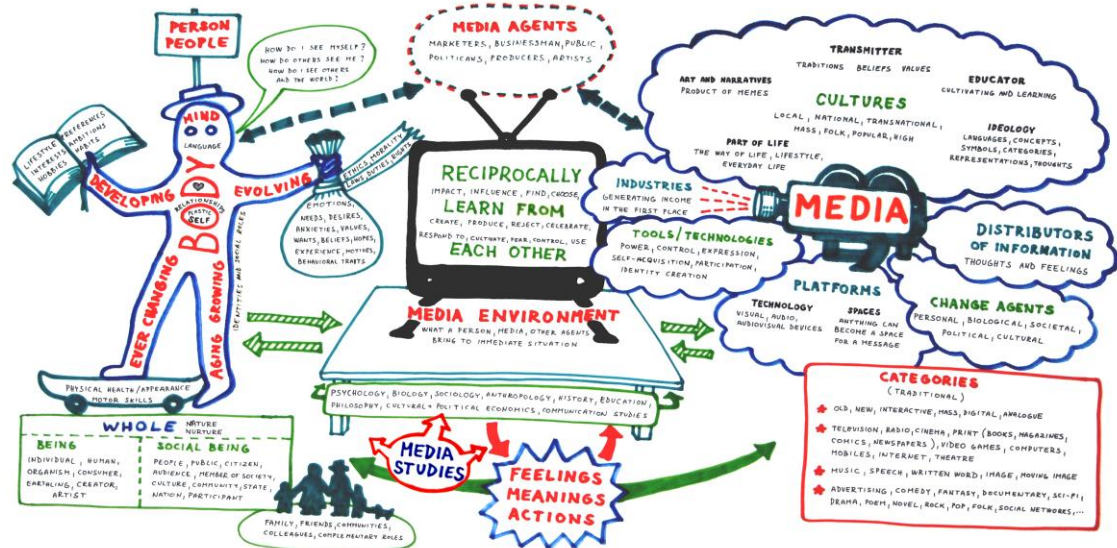
An example of media's role in one's view of the world is the well-known concept 'mean world syndrome' coined by Gerbner and his colleagues (1994) as part of their cultivation theory developed within the *Cultural Indicators Research Project* (1968 until the late 80s). Gerbner *et al.* (1978) concentrated on the social realities that television tended to cultivate and concluded that due to its violent nature, contained also in children's programming (Gerbner and Gross 1976), those watching larger amounts of television were more likely to 'integrate and absorb a sense of danger, of mistrust, of meanness in the world' (*The Mean World Syndrome* 2010), and consequently saw the world as a frightening and dangerous place (Gerbner *et al.* 1979, 1980, 1994).

An example of research exploring media's role in relationship to oneself and others is Holland's (2004) book *Picturing Childhood: The Myth of the Child in Popular Imagery* discussing how childhood is portrayed and represented in print media and how it might influence one's view on what constitutes child as the other, not adult, member of society; having a potential impact on both how a child sees herself or himself and how an adult sees a child. Childhood studies often use artworks and sociocultural artefacts, media included, 'to interpret the nature of childhood in various historical periods' (O'Brien 2003, p.362). O'Brien stated that 'artworks are of limited value in illuminating societies' attitudes towards children as well as the psychic realities and social experiences of children themselves' (*ibid.*). This research instead set out to explore children's own individual and social realities and experiences, as well as teachers' individual and social attitude towards children. Additionally though, the children's individual and social attitudes towards the adults, as well as the teacher's own media-related realities and experiences, were discovered by this research to be equally important to the understanding of current and potential media learning in primary school classrooms, as the third and fourth chapters will highlight.

In summary, each discipline – e.g. psychology, biology, sociology, anthropology, history, philosophy, and cultural, political, economic and communication studies – explores media and applies the knowledge in the context of its own field and within the matters it is specialised on. It is mainly within media studies where media claim their own separate right to be studied. Even though this research has originated in media studies, it soon expanded by engaging in 'a dialogue between approaches that have hitherto remained largely separate' (Buckingham 2000, p.53) and positioned itself as inter- rather than multi- or cross- disciplinary research. As the *Committee on Facilitating Interdisciplinary Research* concluded in 2005, 'interdisciplinary thinking is rapidly becoming an integral feature of research as a result of four powerful 'drivers': the inherent complexity of nature and society, the desire to explore problems and questions that are not confined to a single discipline, the need to [address] societal problems, and the power of new technologies'. This research identified predominantly with the first two drivers: the complexity of the relationship between media and person/people (see *Figure 1* or *Appendix 1* for more details) and the consequent need to draw upon a number of disciplines when exploring in what ways any media were involved in a variety of a child's actions, feelings, relationships, and meanings and how the child learnt, and could learn, about media through these processes. One of the relevant

disciplines key to this interdisciplinary research, which has not yet been addressed, is education, as learning in the context of media deserves a separate section that follows next, while carrying on the (de)conceptualisation media discourse.

Figure 1 Multifaceted relationship between media and person/people (see also Appendix 1)



### Learning ‘about’ Media after Learning ‘from’ Media

One of the first recorded debates about medium as a source for learning is portrayed in Plato’s written account of one of Socrates’s dialogues. Socrates himself only engaged in oral narration, despising the value of images and letters in learning processes (Rowe 2001) that he instead facilitated entirely through dialogue between learner and teacher; with distinction between these roles being blurred. In the dialogue with *Phaedrus*, Socrates talks about the Egyptian God Ammon’s (referred as ‘Thamus’) reaction to the invention of letters, when introduced by the God of Knowledge and Hieroglyphs Thoth (‘Theuth’) (Plato ca. 370BC [2014]):

‘O most ingenious Theuth, the parent of inventor of an art is not always the best judge of the utility or inutility of his own intentions to the users of them. (...) [F]or this discovery of yours will create forgetfulness in the learner’s souls, because they will not use their memories; they will trust to external written characters and not remember themselves. (...) [T]hey will be hearers of many things and will have learned nothing. (...) I cannot help feeling, Phaedrus, that writing is unfortunately like painting; for the creations of the painter have the attitude of life, and yet if you ask them a question they preserve a solemn silence.’

Ironically, while Socrates denounced the value of texts and arts for learning, the legal authorities of the oppressive oligarchy sentenced Socrates to death for ‘heresy and corrupting youth’ through his dialogues conducted publicly while attempting to motivate ‘interlocutors to examine their sincerely held beliefs’ and to ‘search for the meaning of virtue [knowledge of themselves]’

(Sichel 1996, pp.617-618). This story from Ancient Greece indicates several key issues concerning learners, teachers, media, and politics that merely mark some initial, and nevertheless ongoing, public, political, and academic debates surrounding learning about media, and by extension media (literacy) education, on which this section concentrates.

One of the observations plausibly derived from this story of Socrates is a tendency to doubt the utility or inutility of media inventions to 'common people' that can be traced back to the beginnings of arguably any medium. According to McLuhan (1964), for Plato it was poetic language and songs that were considered as 'a poison, and an enemy' of young people's 'impressionable minds' and an 'obstacle to reasoning', while the Archbishop San Carlo Borromeo accused the sixteenth century Italian play writers of 'stimulating [unfortunate] passions' in their audiences (pp.113-114). When the novel *The War of the Worlds* (Wells 1898) was adapted and aired as a radio drama (Columbia Broadcasting System 1938), *CBS Radio* was criticised for spreading panic among the New York listeners, who apparently did not realise that the news about the Martian invasion were fictional (McQuail 1983 [2010]). Moving images in cinemas were feared for shaping unwanted 'tastes' and 'addictions' in working class people and children in the first half of the twentieth century (Bolas 2009, pp.21,45), anxieties that were widened and empowered with regular TV broadcasting reaching into the households within the century's second half (Ellis 2000). TV and film violence became the locus of the sharpest controversies in England, stigmatising a number of films as 'video nasties' and banning them from distribution on video cassettes within the eighties and early nineties (see Barker 1984; Buckingham 1996). Public views on children's and youth's leisure activities and social lives were newly challenged with the popularisation of computers, videogames and the Internet towards the end and the beginning of a millennium (Livingstone *et al.* 2001 [2013]). Finally, the digitalisation of all media, the increase in user-generated-content, and the availability of portable multifunctional digital media, has become the trinity of current 'convergence fear', where old and new media fears collide.

This is a metaphorical reference to Henry Jenkins' book *Convergence Culture: Where New and Old Media Collide* (2006), a culture 'where the power of a media producer and the power of a media consumer interact in unpredictable ways' (p.2). The examples here and in the previous section outline fears of media power and concerns for those seen as powerless, which can be seen as embedded in a cause-and-effect media tradition and in elitism with paternalistic and prophylactic tendencies. To clarify the point made using academic jargon, it seems appropriate to involve a recent story for further illustration. Katniss, the heroine in *The Hunger Games* (Collins 2008) sci-fi book trilogy adapted into a film series by *Color Force Studio* (2011-), becomes one of the young competitors fighting to the death on live television controlled by the totalitarian government of the Panem nation. The aim of the Games is to destruct the starving 'citizenry with brutal, stylised entertainment', while simultaneously using fear as a motive for obedience since there is a 'good chance that they or a loved one might one day take part' (Bartlett 2012, p.10). Whereas the books have received several awards in children's literature categories, the films have been widely criticised for being child inappropriate. After the second film's premier in November 2013, the *Daily Mail* film critic, wrote that (Viner 2013):

'There is plenty of violence in this film and some decidedly disturbing images, not least a pack of frenziedly savage monkeys that might make even adults think twice about heading to a safari park, let alone impressionable children. (...) [T]he inescapable fact [is] that the heroine is both an inspiration



to millions of teenagers and a killer. (...) A 12A certificate means that youngsters of nine and ten will see *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*, and as a father myself, that makes me uneasy. (...) [A] 15 certificate might have been more responsible... It is a breathtaking sci-fi romp with all the bells and whistles... But be circumspect about taking young children.'

By suggesting that viewing the violence portrayed in the film could result in the acceptance of killing as something worth admiration and in a mean world syndrome (or mean monkeys syndrome), the reporter builds his unsupported claims on principles of causality. He neglects any possible intervening factors as highlighted in the previous section, such as the viewers' distinct natures, preceding and following nurtures, and immediate internal state, all together ultimately leading to diverse media readings and uses. Instead the audience is seen as impressionable passive consumers of the images. Such causality in media-related debates are a historically common phenomenon among reporters and politicians spreading media fears among the public – an act ironically remindful of Panem's social order.

Media education scholars, such as Buckingham, have made a series of useful interventions here. He argued that 'throughout history, assertions about negative influence of popular cultural forms have served as a focus for much broader anxieties about moral decline and social disorder' (1996, p.21), when '[i]n each case, the medium is seen as an attack on 'authentic' or 'essential human' values, and on "true' art and culture' (1993, p.8). Connell (1984 [2002], p.88) called the habit of passing the buck to media as 'popular mythology', which is, according to Barker and Petley (1997 [2001]) created by 'witch-hunters and their pursuits' (p.2). The term mythology is used because research findings on media effects, gathered predominantly through the behaviourist methodological approach experimenting with stimuli and responses, are rather inconclusive. The hidden agendas behind these mythologies can be seen as 'pursuits'. For instance, the first newspapers reporting the overstated incidents supposedly caused by the broadcasting of *The War of the Worlds*, while benefiting from the pre-World War II public tension in the USA, were those which had previously lost advertising revenue to radio (Pooley and Socolow 2013).

Furthermore, the *Daily Mail* reporter as an adult and parent excluded himself from the direct danger and passed it down onto children and teenagers. Elitist discourse about media stems from the superior feeling above underdeveloped, inexperienced, less educated, or simply any other group of fellow citizens (Gans 1974; Huysens 1984; Ross 1989). Children, and childhood, represent the easiest target as they can be superficially defined 'through what they lack' and their emotional and intellectual inadequacy (Bragg 1997 [2001], p.93). Buckingham (1997 [2001]) criticised the perception of children as 'a homogeneous social group' of which 'vulnerability, ignorance and irrationality are regarded as part of the inherent condition' (pp.64, 66), and Beazley *et al.* (2009) claimed that childhood is 'perhaps the most heterogeneous stage in the life cycle' (p.368). Buckingham's (1996) research with six to sixteen years olds however discovered that even the youngest children had already learnt the game of excluding themselves from potential media effects and instead passing them either onto their younger selves, younger children than them, or others with 'whom something must be wrong' (*author's quotation marks*). These beliefs are frequently followed by reserving privileges, such as the 'breathtaking' *The Hunger Games* films shall be enjoyed only by those who have reached a certain age, while the younger children should be left with the novels, revealing cultural hierarchy in which 'reading is

ok, but watching is not'. Such paternalism limits a child's autonomy and liberty in the name of his or her own, and society's, wellbeing.

Nevertheless, acting on this notion of responsibility towards children by limiting their access to media and controlling their media practices might become significantly challenging. Many find themselves living in an under-regulated or deregulated market-driven media environment, where potential harmful consequences are believed to be more effectively avoided through individual self-regulation instead of centralised governmental regulation (Wallis and Buckingham 2013). Those citizens face greater media choices, but have greater responsibilities and duties when making them (*ibid.*). For these and other reasons, such as the multifaceted role of media in one's life explored earlier, the prophylactic approach of providing children with skills and knowledge allowing them to make the 'right' choices has become a popular argument which is discussed next.

The early nineties in England were particularly rich on debates about the effects of violent media on juvenile delinquency. When two ten-year-old boys murdered two-year-old James Bulger on a railway line near Liverpool, most of the press, and some influential research (e.g. Newson 1994), claimed that there were similarities between the film *Child's Play 3* and the crime, contrasting the chief investigating officer who rejected any connections between the film viewing and killing (Buckingham 1996). Two years later, headteacher Philip Lawrence was stabbed to death by a teenage gang member in London, which once again increased the long-time cumulating pressure on the British government to respond (Wallis and Buckingham 2013). The government asked the BBC and other broadcasting commissions to form a working party to help with the education of viewers, an alliance that resulted in *Violence and the Viewer: Report of the Joint Working Party on Violence on Television* (BBC, BSC, and ITC 1998). Nevertheless, the responsibility came back to the government as *Chapter 5* of the report stresses the need for formal media education at schools as a national strategy, aiming to develop children's critical viewing skills, referred to as media literacy (BBC *et al.* 1998).

The words 'media literacy' became almost a common saying within the policy discourse of that time, as it allowed the neoliberal governance deregulating the market to assign individuals the responsibility of protecting themselves against media influences (Rose 1999, 2000; Wallis and Buckingham 2013). The initial emphasis placed on the government's role in bringing media education into schools, and 'ensuring that appropriate curricular initiatives are taken' (BBC *et al.* 1998, p.8), soon disappeared from the agenda. Instead, the responsibility of 'promoting' and 'researching' media literacy was fully given under *Section 11* of the *Communications Act 2003* to *Ofcom*, the independent regulator for British communications industries, but 'unlike most of its duties, *Ofcom* no power to enforce it' (Wallis and Buckingham 2013, p.12). *Ofcom* (2014) then specified media literacy partly as 'the ability to use and understand media', as a means of self-protection and safe media choices, and partly as 'the ability to create media', leaning towards the idea of self-empowerment and citizenship with morally and legally right choices. By adopting the critical and creative approach to media literacy, firstly introduced in *The Aspen Institute Report of the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy* (Aufderheide 1992), *Ofcom* puts equal emphasis on 'protection' – returning back to the 1980s – and 'participation' – keeping the neoliberal ideals alive.

The idea of media literacy as way towards greater protection and empowerment through participation aligns itself with the *United Nations* (1989a,b) in *Article 19 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UN 1989a) which states that everyone has the right and freedom 'to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers'. The UN holds that media information literacy (MIL) is 'essential to empower citizenries all around the world to have the full benefits of this fundamental right' (UNESCO 2011, p.4). Based on *The Alexandria Proclamation* (UNESCO 2005), MIL 'empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals'. In this sense, media literacy avoids discrimination and separation, because as Kellner and Share (2007) stated, a media literate person is an active citizen and a competent participant in social life. Butler (2010) explained that 'this position respects personal choice and pleasure, however, the underlying assumption is that with increased activism, personal choice and pleasure will shift to 'better' choices' (p.29, author's apostrophes), on which participatory democracy relies. The move away from a focus on others, replaced with the inclusion of everyone, represents a significant change in media debates, even though the emphasis is still put on those regarded as vulnerable. A case in point is media literacy in Sierra Leone that, quite ambitiously, hopes to create a more equal society through decreasing social differences between children with access to media and those without (Wai 2002). Another important landmark is the official acknowledgement of the positive role media can play in one's life, although still only if they are consumed and used wisely. This can be for instance observed in Nordic countries, Canada, Australia, or New Zealand, where media literacy is believed to serve children on their way of becoming beneficial members of society (Zanker 2002; Sirku 2010).

Comparing media literacy to a human right has brought attention back to a need for strategic media education in compulsory schooling. At this point, both the United Kingdom, with its globally recognised media literacy and media education research, and the United States of America, the world's largest producer and exporter of media, are in ironic positions, because they lag behind a number of countries in embedding media education into national and state curricula. Kubey (1998) believes that 'among many factors' complicating formal media education in the USA is 'the sheer physical size of the US, its highly heterogeneous population, resistance to the federal government's making central educational or broadcasting policy, the fact that the US exports far more media products than it imports, and a long-standing reluctance to take the popular arts seriously' (p.58). As an example of the complete opposite is the Czech Republic with some, but comparatively minor, media export, as well as academic research in the field. In spite of this, media education as a cross-curricular subject has become part of the *Framework Education Programme* (VUP 2004, 2007), assigning a responsibility to Czech pre-school, primary, and secondary state educational institutions to include media education in their curriculum plans. Nonetheless, the Czech Republic is not in any less awkward situation as they perhaps have been trying to implement in practice ideas developed within foreign contexts.

Organising media education aimed at developing and improving media literacy among children and young people from above could easily become nothing more than a political act of populism pretending to [1] sympathise with public concerns, [2] innovate state education, [3] agree with international and the UN's, and in the case of the Member States also the EU's, stand on the importance of media literacy. Some governments artfully assign the responsibility to third parties such as *Ofcom* in the UK or educational institutions in the Czech Republic, ensuring that there is always someone else to blame. Media education and media literacy serve well as rhetoric

proposals in moments of crisis and during campaigns, while no further support for the subject matter is provided in order to apply the ideas in practice. The study thus set out to explore educational practice by researching in the Czech and the US public schools whilst approaching the inquiry from a British academic tradition (more in the *Chapter 2*, pp.46-47).

Teaching and learning about media in schools being dependent on the enthusiasm of individual teachers and various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) is status quo ante, and therefore independent of any political discourse about media education and media literacy. Throughout the twentieth century a number of educators and researchers were exploring and advocating the undoubtable role schools could play in learning about motion picture appreciation (Dale 1933 [1976]), film appreciation (Lewis 1934; Mills 1936; Masterman 1973), film-making (Lauwers 1935 [1938]), popular arts (Hall and Whannel 1964), mass media and in teaching of information literacy (Zurkowski 1974; Henri 1988), television literacy (Anderson 1980), media literacy (Bazalgette 1988, 1989; Brown 1991), network (internet) literacy (McClure 1994), digital literacy (Lanham 1995), multiliteracies (New London Group 1996), and many more. Even though some might equate these literacies, above all information and digital literacy, with technology focused straightforward skill sets (e.g. Williams and Minnian 2007), this project inclines to their broader and multifaceted interpretations 'not restricted to any particular technology or form or information, and [instead] focusing on personal capabilities and attributes, hence [overlapping] with media literacy concept' (Bawden 2008, pp.21, 23). All these literacies can therefore be seen as falling under media literacy because it 'seems to cover 'panmedia', as it includes the interpretation of all types of complex, mediated symbolic texts made available by 'traditional' or electronic (digital) means' (Koltay 2011, p.214); and so does this research focused on panmedia learning in primary school classrooms and their rather collective than individual role in the child's actions, feelings, relationships and thoughts.

In educational terms then, USA studies usually refer to media literacy education, the United Nations to media and information literacy education, or also media education as it is called by EU Member States, including the UK and the Czech Republic. Yet since media education does not always mean education towards media literacy, this research uses the term 'media literacy education' when referring to education clearly focused on nurturing media literacy, 'media education' here stands for education centred on a certain medium or media, and 'media (literacy) education' is used when referring to both. A substantial body of current beliefs about media (literacy) education in schools is based either on research conducted with a limited number of teachers who were willing to 'try out' media education theories in practice (e.g. Hobbs and Moore 2013), or on the classroom practices of devoted teachers who were somehow able to find a loophole in the educational system, gain community support, extend their tight curricula, and sometimes even obtain external funding, to establish some sort of, usually short-term, media education projects (e.g. Dredger *et al.* 2010). Although taken out of institutional context, another important source of knowledge is presented by studies exploring the media focused afterschool or summer programmes, such as *First Star Academy* for foster children at the University of Rhode Island that includes media literacy courses of *Videography* and *Social Networks* provided by the *Media Education Lab* (e.g. Provorova 2013; Friesem *et al.* 2012). Regrettably, studies engaging more schools or conducted in diverse contexts are strictly quantitative and mostly preoccupied with 'mapping the situation' (e.g. Tyner 2011; European Commission 2012; NAMAC 2013; Hartai 2014; Ofcom 2006 – 2014). This research addressed this gap by being conducted with 'ordinary' – rather media non-specialised and non-enthusiastic – teachers' classrooms operating within

diverse contexts while applying qualitative research methods, but not a pre-designed media literacy or media education intervention.

Following in the footsteps of media fears, various media-related educations are almost ‘a pedagogic equivalent of a tetanus shot’ (Bazalgette 1997, p.72), protecting against disease through arming children with critical awareness as a way of decreasing media powers and educating them to discriminate popular over high culture (Leavis and Thompson 1933 [1942]; Buckingham 2003 [2010]). Other forms prioritise teaching of analytic methods deconstructing media texts in order to uncover their hidden agendas and consequently lead to students’ demystification and objectivity (Masterman 1980, 1985; Buckingham 2003 [2010]). This approach often organises critical and creative learning activities ‘around problem areas like violence, materialism, nutrition and body image, risk-taking behaviours, distortion and bias in reporting, racial, class, gender, or sexual identity stereotyping’ (Hobbs 1998, p.19, cites Anderson 1983). Although it is Masterman who is well known for theorising and popularising media education believing that ‘through the development of analytical skills, and through the provision of “radical information” about media institutions, teachers will “liberate” their students from mystification and false consciousness’ and replace it with ‘objective truth’ (Buckingham 1990, p.7, *quotation marks in original*), Czech academia credits such thinking to Jan Amos Komenský (internationally known as Comenius).

Komenský (1592-1670) was a Czech educator and philosopher who is often acknowledged as the father of modern education. His Latin-written piece *Schola Paedagogica* (1650–1651 [2015]) recommended that schools (for ages twelve to eighteen) should include the reading of, and critical and reflective discussion about, newspaper articles for at least one hour a week (Bednařík *et al.* 2011). Even though the primary goal was stated to be improving students’ general knowledge through learning *with* media, Komenský’s satirical allegory *Labyrinth of the World and Paradise of the Heart* (1631) reveals his critical attitude towards journalism and hints at his appreciation of news literacy. In the twelfth chapter *The Pilgrim Finds Himself among the Newsmongers*, news production and consumption is compared to playing and hearing whistles. When encountering the newsmongers the narrator asks (l.1063-4):

“What is going on here?” I inquired; “are they acting a comedy?” “No, indeed!” replied my interpreter; do not mistake this for a play. They are dealing with real matters, at which they amazed, amused, or angered, as the case may be.” “I should like to know,” said I, “what amazes, amuses, or angers them.” Then I perceived that they had some whistles, and leaning close to one another’s ear, they blew them. (...) [O]ne thing particularly puzzled me: the sound of the identical whistle gladdened some so greatly that they could not refrain from dancing for joy, while it so pained others that they stopped up their ears and ran away; or listening to it, burst out into lamentations and bitter tears. “Is it odd that the same whistle should sound so sweetly to some and so sourly to others?” I said. “The difference is not in sound but in hearing,” my interpreter answered. “For as patients are affected differently by the same, according to their disease, so in this case. It depends on the inner disposition and inclination to the thing how one is affected by the external sound, whether sweet or bitter.”

The passage yet suggests that in contrast to Masterman, Komenský seemed to emphasise an audience's inter-subjective media experience, and his or her understanding of it over the intention (ideology) of the original source, which is mostly overlooked by Czech media education theory and practice drawing upon Komenský (e.g. Mičienka and Jiráček 2006). If Komenský was placed within contemporary media education discourse, his thought would sit better within criticism of protectionist media education. A protectionist approach to media education has been widely criticised on the grounds that 'education should not be a behaviour modification therapy, a means by which adults prescribe how children are to see the world, or a moral crusade that makes teachers responsible for social ills that lie beyond their control' (Gauntlett 1997 [1998], p.105). Komenský could instead be among those offering a counterargument, predominantly the British 'scholarly educators' such as Bazalgette (e.g. 2007, 2010), suggesting that the dominant role of media education programmes should be personal, social, and civic empowerment focusing on participation and social inclusion. Yet Hobbs (2010) concisely suggests, 'rather than view empowerment and protection as opposing points of view, we must see them as two sides of the same coin'.

Accepting critical and creative media literacy as a fundamental condition for learner's protection and empowerment is slowly becoming the norm, and increasingly 'any' media education nowadays refers to education of media literacy (see e.g. Abreau and Mihailidis 2014; Kotilainen and Kupiainen 2015; or Hartai's (2014) *Report on Formal Media Education in Europe*). Even though media literacy is perhaps learnt the most effectively within naturally occurring social situations and cultural ecologies (Morduchowicz 2002; Burn 2009), the outcomes of such learning might be inconsistent with the ideal picture of a critical media literate person (Silverblatt 2013). However, by arguing that, firstly, a media literate person, even a primary school child, should be a critical and responsible information seeker and information producer (Buckingham 2009a), media education theory and practice often struggles to fully acknowledge the multifaceted role of media in children's lives (Marsh and Millard 2000), as explored in the beginning of this chapter. This research, on the other hand, aimed at exploring how children learn about media not only through cognition, but also through actions, feelings, and relationships. Secondly, such media literacy driven approach may also overlook the significant developmental (Piaget 1923 [1953]) and sociocultural (Vygotsky 1934) changes amplified by entering compulsory education (Langmeier and Krejčířová 2009), which take place roughly between the ages of five and nine. This research, acknowledging education as a phased progress (Dewey 1909 [2008]), centred on learning about media across the first three grades of Czech and US lower elementary – here termed in British terminology as primary – education attended by six- to nine/ten year olds, which is equivalent to Years 2, 3 and 4 in the UK (for more details see the *Researching* chapter pp.39-50).

The first large-scale systematic research about phased progress, titled *Developing Media Literacy: Towards a Model of Learning Progression* (2009-2012) was conducted with teachers of children aged from six to sixteen in England by Buckingham and his colleagues from the *Institute of Education* in London. The project identified that more attention needs to be paid specifically to primary education because to start the research from 'the widely accepted definition of media education 'key concepts'' (Buckingham 2013a, p.5) that have 'mostly been developed at the secondary level' (Buckingham 2013b) was found challenging. Instead the research project introduced here, which began almost two years before *the Developing Media Literacy* study, arose from the argument that even media (literacy) education studies that are child-centred,

rejecting cause-and-effect tradition, and informed by a detailed consideration of classroom practices, are often blinded by a researcher's quest for exploring ways of teaching and assessing critical and creative media literacy and, in the context of primary education, preoccupied with the adaptation and implementation of media literacy education to the lower grades and younger children.

This research appreciates the value of media education and media literacy theories and practices and is greatly influenced by their body of knowledge. For instance, being panmedia orientated, it set out to fill the gap that originates in media (literacy) education research paying attention to a single medium (e.g. film) or a group of specific media (e.g. digital), and by being conducted in two countries, it aimed at filling the gap of country-centred media (literacy) education qualitative studies. However, it decided not to focus directly on media education and media literacy, but instead on teachers' and young learners' own experiences with, and beliefs about, 'media learning'. Supporting further the holistic and media inclusive nature of this research, media learning is defined here as both intentional and naturally occurring learning about *any* media with, from, in, or even without the physical presence of, *any* media platforms, texts, or genres. The research therefore leaves behind the medium-focused media literacy education research studies, and instead focuses directly on 'child learners' and 'adult teachers'.

### Learners and Teachers as Experts

The set of beliefs one might hold about media discussed earlier is not the only directive factor in media learning debates and media educational practices. It has been clearly highlighted throughout this chapter that 'child' and 'childhood' are at the centre of these discussions, whereas they often have not been at the centre of the rather media-centric and/or media literacy-centric research. The reasoning for leaving these two concepts unaddressed up until this point was that by now the reader has engaged with a number of examples about adult notions of what constitutes child and childhood, as well as about how such outlooks influence adult approach to child-related matters.

To name some, the James Bulger case shook Britain hard and *the Hunger Games* series provoked international controversy, because '[i]f child-killing is the worst killing, then a child child-killing must be worse than worst, a new superlative in horror' (Morrison 1997 [2011]). The idea of children child-killers greatly contradicts the Romantic perception of an innocent child, which maintains its legacy (Cunningham 2006). Among the initial thinkers of the Romantic child was Jean-Jacques Rousseau who proposed in *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* (1754 [1998]) that 'nothing is so gentle as man in his primitive state, when placed by nature at an equal distance from the stupidity of brutes [animals] and the fatal enlightenment of civil man [adult]' (p.236). He criticised the Enlightenment philosopher Thomas Hobbes and his ideas in *Leviathan* (1651 [1998]) proposing that 'men [are] apt to invade and destroy one another' as they are born 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short' (p.176). They both compared children to 'savages', noble for Rousseau and brutal according to Hobbes.

These two contradictory views represent some of the main philosophical approaches determining the nature of debates concerning children and the subsequent adult decision making. To give an example of their impact on education particularly, Sir Rhodes Boyson was an experienced headmaster and a Conservative Member of Parliament under Margaret Thatcher

(1979-1990). He believed that 'children are not born good; they have to be disciplined, otherwise they are a threat to the rest of society' (1972, in Holland 2004, p.75). Holland (2004) remembered that he 'was part of a long campaign which brought about a radical change in educational policy, [driving] towards disciplined schooling, structured teaching, regular testing, inspections, and the measurement of schools against nationally established criteria of success' (p.86). This radical change was formalised by the series of *Black Papers* on education largely criticising aspects of progressive education that had been developing in England since the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; it was the beginning of the end of progressive public education in England.

Progressive education follows Rousseau's heritage preserved in *Emile* (1762) and its main characteristics remain child-centred education in which a child's learning is more directive than the teacher's pedagogy or curriculum content and where the focus is on experience instead of subjects to be taught. As Buckingham (1990) recalled, 'experience was a swear-word in the times against child-centred education' in England (p.6). Rousseau's progressive education was further developed by, for instance, Friedrich Froebel (1826 [1885], p.3) who argued that education should be founded upon 'the inward and innermost', and then by Maria Montessori (1936 [1996], p.7) who believed in the 'intact and delicious spiritual existence of the child'. They based their educational theories and practices on an individual child's freedom to learn in his or her own way and to progress at his or her own speed. Scholars usually agree that media (literacy) education must be learner-centred, respecting a child's individual needs and interests (e.g. Buckingham 2009a; Burn 2009; Vered 2011). Yet even the learner-centred media debates do not seem to be able to distance themselves from the perception of children as a homogeneous social group needing greater critical and creative media literacy, while exploring children's learning and experience with the direct purpose of informing and developing models and resources for 'teaching' media literacy; as was the case of Buckingham's and his colleagues' study mentioned above.

In between Rousseau and Hobbes, time and idea wise, was John Locke, who argued in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689 [2013]) that there is no innate mental content, while following the theory of mind as tabula rasa (blank slate) put forward by Aristotle (ca. 384BC [2013]) and clarified by Avicenna (1100 [1954]). Tabula rasa theory claims knowledge is formed solely by one's sensory experience. Since there are no natural intervening factors, everyone has freedom to fully define their self and identity. This approach possibly explains the origins of the idea of children's impressionable minds, popular especially in media discourse. Freire (1974 [2015]) argued for critical education 'which could help to form critical attitudes, for the naïve consciousness with which the people had emerged into the historical process left them an easy prey to irrationality' (p.27). Although seeing children as easy prey to the media industry is a view usually identified with protectionist media literacy education, both protection and empowerment are here viewed as two sides of the same coin.

This research therefore did not align itself with critical education, nor entirely with child-centric nor teacher-centric educations, as usefully summarised by Kumral (2014, p.524):

'The group of Realism, Perennialism and Essentialism focus on the constancy of knowledge. The teacher is the one who will transfer this knowledge to students. In this sense, students are responsible for learning from their



teachers. The role of teachers or educational specialists is to decide what they should teach, and how they will create educational environments. (...) The group of Pragmatism, Progressivism, Reconstructionism, Existentialism and Humanist movements underlines the uniqueness of individuals, and supports that individuals and their experiences are valuable (Hamrah, 2012; Saeverot, 2011). (...) [T]hese movements suggest that it is necessary to create educational environments regarding the interests, needs and expectations of students.'

However, there certainly were traits of progressivism, as the emphasis was put on a child's media 'learning' rather than media 'education' and/or 'teaching' of media literacy, and since children were identified throughout this chapter as ever-changing sociocultural beings with subjective media uses and readings, individual needs, diverse predispositions, and unique ways of experiencing themselves, others, and the world. Teaching and learning were therefore separated as two distinct processes (Moon 2011), or as Wenger (1988, p.266) put it:

'[Teaching] does not cause learning; it creates a context in which learning takes place, as do other contexts. Learning and teaching are not inherently linked. Much learning takes place without teaching, and indeed much teaching takes place without learning.'

Yet the context of learning, as Wenger called it, was equally important to this research which therefore also aimed at exploring teachers' roles within media learning. Just to clarify here, by teacher/educator it is meant the professional status rather than anyone teaching/ educating/ facilitating learning, and so is by learner/ student/ pupil meant a sociocultural and institutionalised role rather than anyone who is a learner, which would be everyone, including teachers.

Teachers represent adults here that carry the 'collective guilt' of banning children from the world of adults by constructing their own separate realm termed as 'childhood'. The first to point out that childhood is an adult 'modern' construct was Ariès (1960 [1962]) who (while drawing upon artwork) claimed that 'in medieval society the idea of childhood did not exist' as the children were seen as 'miniature adults' (p.125). Cunningham (2006) however clarified that 'childhood is not, as has sometimes been thought, a simple story of progress', because '[t]he adults who define childhood are rarely in agreement with one another' as the ideas of childhood differ across time as well as within one's own time between individuals as well as societies and cultures (*ibid.*, l.104). Cunningham (2006) further claimed, the 'history of childhood can easily become a history of what adults have done to children' (l.163), especially in the context of child-specific laws and rights such as compulsory school attendance. Thus, it is arguable that there is a close interdependence and relation between childhood and adulthood as one becomes hard to define without the other, or as Jenks (1982, p.10) wrote:

'The difference between the two positions indicates the identity of each; the child cannot be imagined except in relation to a conception of the adult, but interestingly it becomes impossible to produce a well-defined sense of adult society without first positing the child.'

Childhood is nowadays commonly positioned as a developmental stage on the way to adulthood, as mentioned earlier in the context of developmental psychology, as well as a sociocultural-historical construct within which a 'child' is to have his or her own world with its own rules, laws, media, and cultures (Postman 1982 [1994]). In this sense, as Holland (2004) pointed out, schoolteachers carry 'the double task of dividing childhood from adulthood and of forming a bridge between the two states' (p.77). It therefore seems crucial to pay equal attention to the ways teachers are dealing with this double task within their own beliefs about, and experiences of, a child's current childhood and future adulthood, in order to gain complex understanding of child learners and their childhoods within the classroom environment. To gain such understanding of media learning, and of what it meant to be a learner and a teacher involved in processes of learning and teaching (in general and about media in particular), the research hence decided to treat both schoolchildren and schoolteachers as specialists on their own individual and collective lives.

The study then positioned itself rather as educational research than research on education, a distinction drawn by Elliott (2006). He described educational research as 'the development of educational insights and judgement, with regard to everyday situations in classrooms and schools' connected with learners' and teachers' 'ordinary commonsense experience' (2006, p.171), which is what this research aimed for. Elliott further argued that educational research should go beyond mere interpretation and evaluation of 'what is' by engaging in discussion about 'what could be', which he came to regard as 'practical philosophy' (*ibid.*, p.170). He based this thought on Carr's (2004) article *Philosophy and Education* arguing against the contemporary separation of these two and approaching them as 'interdependent parts of one ordered totality' (p.69). Carr continued that the philosophy of education is 'historically evolving and culturally embedded practice whose practitioners can only adequately answer the questions they now face' (*ibid.*). Although Elliott and Carr prioritised philosophies of education developed by educators themselves, Elliott (2006) created space for educational research conducted by a researcher as an outsider who through classroom research achieves 'quality of situational understanding' that then underpins the researcher's practical philosophy (p.173). He however warned against 'reductionist findings [that] defy common sense and are of little value in helping them [teachers and learners] to cope with the complexities of the everyday situations they experience in classrooms' (*ibid.*, p.175), which is one of the reasons this research positioned itself as holistic. The transition from 'what contextually is' to 'transferrable what could be' is according to Elliott subjected to discovering commonalities in teachers', and in the case of this research also of learners', beliefs and experiences. This led this research to be focused on exploring a singular and synthesised 'current' media learning in order to consider a 'potential' media learning in primary school classrooms.

### Research Aim, Questions, and Contribution to Knowledge and Practice

To summarise, the overall aim of this interdisciplinary intercultural research was to explore current and potential media learning in primary school classrooms operating within diverse contexts, with the partial questions asking [1] in what ways any media were involved in a variety of child's actions, feelings, relationships, and meaning-makings within a classroom environment, [2] how a child learnt, and could learn, about media through these processes, and [3] how a teacher facilitated, or could facilitate, these learning processes. At the heart of the research were learners and teachers who were treated as guides directing the research towards what was

important and relevant to them, and consequently towards original knowledge that is ultimately and directly preoccupied with their lives and not with media, media literacy, or society as a whole. The original knowledge further focuses on understanding a child's learning and teacher's current and potential participation in, rather than control over, such learning. The philosophy of media learning in primary school classrooms grounded in this research, towards which this writing is heading, offers original pieces of knowledge relevant to distinct disciplines and their theoretical discourses as well as practices on a transnational level, which touch upon primary school aged children's media-related engagements, development and learning and/or primary school teachers' pedagogy in general and in context of children's media learning in particular.

The following chapter continues with a discussion on philosophy in a more profound way, whilst ontologically, epistemologically, and methodologically positioning the research, which is followed by a detailed description of the research design and process. The literature review does not have a separate chapter, as the need for theoretical conceptualisation and underpinning was emerging and being addressed contextually throughout the entire research.

## CHAPTER 2: Researching

### Conceptual Thinking Continues

As the previous chapter concluded, the focus of this chapter will be profoundly on philosophy. Even though philosophy is going to be used and addressed differently here when compared to Carr's (2004) and Elliot's (2006) conception introduced earlier, it will share a fundamental understanding of philosophy defining any philosophy within the research as a holistic belief system. Belief is here classified as a 'propositional attitude', because 'to believe is to take the attitude of belief to some proposition' (Brandon-Mitchell and Jackson 2000, p.82). Propositional attitude then is 'a mental state that links a person to a particular proposition (...) [in] an evaluative and affective' manner (Marquez 2014, pp.28, 30). One's distinct beliefs are interconnected and united within an organic holistic system, where a change in one belief influences all the others (Glover 2000, 2011). Philosophy, or a holistic belief system, refers in this chapter to a conceptual framework as a metaphysical ground (Greenbank 2003; Kafle 2011). On this ground the entire intercultural and interdisciplinary research about media learning in primary school classrooms conducted with teacher and learners has been built, ensuring consistency between the ways of looking at, exploring, and interpreting social reality.

The first part of this chapter clarifies the metaphysical ground of the research whilst simultaneously developing a research methodology termed as 'grounded philosophy' that has been established by selecting and synthesising suitable aspects of accepted research paradigms and methodologies (Kuhn 1962). Since the 1960s there had been positive orientation towards the development of various social research practices (Alasuutari *et al.* 2008), whereas more recently the stress has been on abidance to already established methodologies offering strategic guidance to academic inquiry and prescribing how under a particular methodology social research should be undertaken, what methods it should use, and how its findings ought to be analysed and presented. Lather (2006), focusing on qualitative research in education and feminist pedagogy, strongly disagreed by saying 'I am against the kind of methodolatry where the tail of methodology wags the dog of inquiry' (2006, p. 47). Instead she proposed (*ibid.*, pp.48, 52):

'[Y]es to the messiness, to that which interrupts and exceeds versus tidy categories (...) [and to] a reappropriation of contradictory available scripts to create alternative practices of research as a site of being and becoming. (...) [T]he task [in this historical time, between no longer and the not yet,] is to produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently. (...) [It is about] a move away from a narrow scientism and toward an expanded notion of scientificity more capable of sustaining the social sciences.'

Equally, Bacon (1620 [1901], p.12) poignantly wrote much earlier:

'It would be madness and inconsistency to suppose that things which have never yet been performed can be performed without employing some hitherto untried means.'

Grounded philosophy is an ontologically and epistemologically, rather than textbook, led methodology with 'messy' differentiation between ontology, epistemology and methodology that becomes blurry due to the close interrelation between, and dialogic nature of, social reality, knowledge, truth/belief and inquiry within the holistic belief system of this research, as this chapter illustrates. To provide a more workable and clear account of grounded philosophy, the first part concludes with its tabular summary that tidies and ties the beliefs together. The second part of this chapter continues with a more pragmatic approach and demonstrates how grounded philosophy was applied in research practice, whilst making the research methods (interviews and observations), design, process and ethics transparent. The two parts are separated because the philosophy introduced in the first part serves as a ground not only for the development of the research design, but for the entire thinking, and it thus theoretically underpins all other chapters, including the previous one. Despite that, both parts relate and refer to each other as they did within this holistic research.

## PART 1: Towards an Ontologically and Epistemologically Led Methodology: Grounded Philosophy in Research Theory

### Subjectivist-Objectivist and Interpretivist-Positivist Dialogue

The main paradigms social research can arguably 'choose' from are subjectivism and interpretivism versus objectivism and positivism. The following subjectivist-objectivist and interpretivist-positivist debate begins here with the dream argument, or more precisely dilemma, explained well by Zhūangzi (ca. 369BC-286BC, in Soothill 1913 [2010], p.75):

'I, Chuang Chou, dreamt I was a butterfly. (...) Suddenly I awoke, and came to myself, the veritable Chuang Chou. Now I do not know whether it was then I dreamt I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly dreaming I am a man.'

According to Hill (2004) this 'raises a problem that seems to be both of the utmost simplicity and to be devastating in its impact on our claims to know things about the world around us' and our existence (p.1). This can be further illustrated using *The Matrix* film (Wachowski and Wachowski 1999) in which 'a computer hacker learns from mysterious rebels about the true nature of his reality and his role in the war against its controllers' (IMDb 1999), or as a popular *The Matrix 101* (2015) fan page summarised the plot:

'In the near future, Computer hacker Neo is contacted by underground freedom fighters who explain that reality as he understands it is actually a complex computer simulation called the Matrix. Created by a malevolent Artificial Intelligence, the Matrix hides the truth from humanity, allowing them to live a convincing, simulated life in 1999 while machines grow and harvest people to use as an ongoing energy source. The leader of the freedom fighters, Morpheus, believes Neo is "The One" who will lead humanity to freedom and overthrow the machines. Together with Trinity, Neo and Morpheus fight against the machine's enslavement of humanity as Neo begins to believe and accept his role as "The One".' (*Quotations marks in original*)

At first glance, Neo's story can be interpreted as an example of subjectivism, because the 1999 USA 'reality' exists only in his and the other humans' minds. However, there is an outer objective reality that can be found if the right method of inquiry is precisely applied. In order to reconnect his mind with his body, to become whole, and to be awakened from the dream reality, Neo has to make a choice given to him by Morpheus (named after the Greek mythological God of Dreams):

'You take the blue pill - the story ends, you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill - you stay in Wonderland and I show you how deep the rabbit-hole goes.'

*The Matrix* is therefore 'a simulated subjective experience within a larger objective framework' (Pavlina 2006), which is similar to Plato's (380BC [2007]) allegory of cave. Through Socrates' dialogue Plato narrated that from childhood people live with chained legs and necks in cave dwellings where they can only know and experience shadows of the real world. Gradually though, for example through education or research, one is able to break the chains, follow the light and with time see the real things behind the shadows. Below is a visual interpretation of Plato's cave by an unknown artist that was brought to psychotherapist and college lecturer Campbell's (2015) attention by his two- and four- year old grandchildren – captured on the second picture when learning with Campbell about Plato's cave.

**Figure 2** *Plato's allegory of cave (left) and two boys exploring its meaning (right) (Campbell 2015)*



The chains in Plato's cave and the artificial intelligence in Neo's story both resemble the Cartesian 'evil demon' who, as Descartes (1644 [1991]) reflected, is 'as clever and deceitful as he is powerful, who has directed his entire effort to misleading me' (p.173). Cartesian doubt similar to dream argument then encourages scepticism about all beliefs and suggests development and use of a rigid methodological approach – such as taking the red pill – to differentiate true and false beliefs. Therefore to know and truth do not equal to believe and belief within the objectivist worldview, which suggests that through a positivist approach to research one can attain valid knowledge – the verifiable truth – and distinguish outer from inner reality. In other words, the red pill is equivalent to a scientific research method and taking the pill to a research methodology, which makes it possible for the inquiry to be repeated by a variety of people while reaching identical results.

This position of reality and knowledge has been key to natural sciences, as well as to influential thinkers such as Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and Auguste Comte (1798-1857), who aspired to legitimate social science. They argued that social science could apply the same positivist approach (Giddens 1975), with 'empirical [sensory] observations that would be used to generate and test abstract laws of human organisation' (Turner 2001, p.31). Bacon stated that 'facts' about human beings and their social world existed and 'the study of these facts is a true science' (in Bryant and

Charmaz 2001, p.22). According to Comte (1830-1842 [2000]) 'all phenomena [are] subject to invariable natural laws', hence social research can achieve 'an accurate discovery of these laws (...), analyse accurately the circumstances of phenomena, and connect them by the natural relations of succession and resemblance' (p.31).

Translating philosophy into research practice, positivism is usually associated with quantitative methodologies such as surveys and experiments covering 'human behaviour by demonstrating that, in the light of the past, it is capable of being reduced to relationships of cause and effect, which, by an operation no less rational, can then be transformed into rules of action for the future' (Durkheim 1895 [1982], p.33). The focus on causality has been already criticised in the context of media (see p.11) and media education (see p.14), and it is not any less problematic in the field of education. Cohen *et al.* (2011, p.7) explained:

'[P]ositivism is less successful (...) where the immense complexity of human nature and the elusive and intangible quality of social phenomena contrast strikingly with the order and regularity of the natural world. This point is nowhere more apparent than in the contexts of classroom and school where the problems of teaching, learning and human interaction present the positivist researcher with a mammoth challenge.'

On the other side, bearing in mind Comte's hope for social science to be a science of progress directing the operation of society (Turner 2001), the objectivist approach to research about media and education is crucial to relevant policy making subjected to the majority rule. However, this research did not aim to influence education policies, at least not at the initial stage. Instead it sought to acquire deeper understanding of media learning by focusing on individual teachers and learners. As Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) stated, 'before society existed, there could only exist individuals (...) [and] it is from him that everything comes, it is necessarily through him that everything must be explained' (1895 [1982]), p.125). His *Rules of Sociological Method* (1895) introduced advanced positivism preoccupied not only with observable behaviours, the outer world, but also with the human mind, the inner world. However, Durkheim is still categorised as positivist for studying 'collective' social phenomena, 'common to all members of society, or at the very least to a majority, and consequently general' (p.56) – a categorisation that will be soon criticised as reductionist and dualistic, but first subjectivism and interpretivism must be introduced.

Returning to the story of Neo, a 'true subjectivist' would not take for granted that the real world into which Neo has woken up is truly real, as Chuang Chou questioned. He could be subjected to continuing deception not constructed by an evil demon but Neo's own mind. In contrast to Neo, the false awakening represented a real threat for Cobb, the main character in the film *Inception* (Nolan 2010), described by the *Nolan Fans* page devoted to Christopher Nolan, as follows:

'Dom Cobb (Leonardo DiCaprio) is a skilled thief, the absolute best in the dangerous art of extraction, stealing valuable secrets from deep within the subconscious during the dream state, when the mind is at its most vulnerable. Cobb's rare ability has made him a coveted player in this treacherous new world of corporate espionage, but it has also made him an international fugitive and cost him everything he has ever loved. Now Cobb is being offered a chance at redemption. One last job could give him his life back but only if he can accomplish the impossible-inception. Instead of the perfect heist,

Cobb and his team of specialists have to pull off the reverse: their task is not to steal an idea but to plant one. (...) This summer, your mind is the scene of the crime.'

Cobb and his team operate a technology that permits them to experience shared dreaming and to collectively enter a target's subconscious. In order to insert an idea into a target's mind in a way it would appear internal in origin after awakening, 'the perpetrators become deeply embedded within the target's psyche [through laying] dreams within dreams, each deeper in the psyche than the previous' (Baum and Thatcher 2010, pp.62-63). A return to the outer reality could be achieved only if a dreamer died in all the layers. Since the dreamers might forget which reality was the original, each team member carries a personal totem that ought to behave differently in a dream and in a reality, serving as an insuring technique. Nevertheless, when compared with the red pill that unerringly shows the reality, totems might be misleading, leaving death as the only unequivocal solution. With this trace of existentialism similar to Albert Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942 [1955]), such a fatal and absurd way of exploring the truth cannot lead anywhere other than to the acceptance of uncertainty – one can never know for sure if his or her own reality is real or if his or her beliefs are truths or truths are beliefs.

The film itself left the audience unsure whether Cobb had actually ever encountered the outer reality at any moment. The clues were all deliberately ambiguous (Johnson 2012). The key question, therefore, was that if the viewers were not able to decide with certainty whether Cobb was dreaming or not, how they then knew without doubt that they were not dreaming themselves. Equally Descartes' dream argument said 'there are never any sure signs by means of which being awake can be distinguished from being asleep' (1644 [1984], p.13). Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) suggested that as a result, people take for granted the ontological differentiation between 'being' and one's perceptions of being (1913, in Cisney 2014), which he named natural attitude, and instead suggested a shift to a phenomenological attitude that is reflective and reflexive with a sense of wonder and openness (1913, in Henriksson 2012) – an attitude taken up by this research, as will be highlighted throughout this chapter.

Alternatively, in the words of Max Weber (1864-1920), the 'infinite reality' is conducted by 'the finite human mind' (1949, p.72). Such scepticism about the possibility of any existence outside of one's mind is fundamental to an ontological position termed as idealism. Physicist Sir James Jeans (1930 [2009], p.134) captured its essence well:

'[T]he universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine. Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter; we are beginning to suspect that we ought rather to hail it as a creator and governor of the realm of matter.'

Another physicist, David Bohm (1980 [2002]), went even further, into extreme skepticism typical of metaphysical nihilism, by denying all existence and knowledge. Bohm was inspired by Heraclitus' *panta rhei* or everything flows philosophy, claiming 'all entities move and nothing remains still' (in Plato ca. 360BC [2006], 401d). He then talked about reality as 'the universal flux' and its 'unknown totality', because 'if all is flux, then every part of knowledge must have its being as an abstracted form in the process of becoming, so that there can be no absolutely invariant elements of knowledge' (Bohm 1980 [2002], p.63). Equally Shakespeare's metaphysical poem *The Phoenix and the Turtle* rhymes (in Chester, 1601 [1878]):

'Truth may seem, but cannot be:



Beauty brag, but 'tis not she;  
Truth and beauty buried be.

To this urn let those repair  
That are either true or fair;  
For these dead birds sigh a prayer.'

Bury (1986) brought all subjectivist views together and argued there are multiple realities and multiple interpretations of those realities and all knowledge thus entails ambiguity – a belief with which this research identifies. Being consistent with Bury (1986), Brandon-Mitchell and Jackson (2000), Glover (2011) and Marquez (2014), it could be argued that within any subjectivist social research to know and the truth/knowledge are not superior to believe and a belief as is commonly argued; instead they can all be regarded as propositional attitudes, with equal importance in one's holistic belief system, or one's own reality and its interpretations as meanings. All meaning is being constructed by the subjective world (Munhall 1989) that, as Dilthey (1900) taught, 'is rather first and foremost an inner reality, a nexus experienced from within' (p.236). Consequently, subjectivist social research does not seek truths about the external objective world but rather an 'understanding of individuals' interpretations of the world around them [coming] from inside, not outside' (Cohen *et al.* 2011, p.15), as well as 'the subjective understanding of the action of the component individuals' (Weber 1897 [1994], p.101) – in other words, such research, and by extension this research as well, is preoccupied with what one *thinks* and *does* and what *meaning* these thoughts and actions have for the individual. Yet if any reality and all knowledge entail ambiguity, then so does any research that explores them, which will be further addressed later (pp.41, 44).

According to Weber (1897 [1994]), understanding of one's subjective experience and meanings was 'never attainable in the natural sciences (...) limited to the formulation of causal uniformities in objects and events' (*ibid.*). This position raised the profile of interpretivism, seeing the exploration of humans' inner mental worlds as 'a tremendous opportunity and not something to be apologised for' (Hughes and Sharrock 1997, p.100). Similarly the 'mechanic[al] fashion of stimulus and responses' was dismissed within this social research (Hughes and Sharrock 1997, p. 102) and instead the ultimate aim became to understand, *verstehen*, teachers' and learners' realities – or rather *experiences* as explained later – and meanings of these realities (Weber 1922 [1968]) in both their variety and complexity.

Such an approach to research is often termed as qualitative, as opposed to a quantitative approach usually identified with positivism. Alasuutari (2010) claimed 'the strand of empirical social research nowadays routinely referred to as qualitative research is not entirely new in the sense that from early on there has been the humanistic approach which emphasizes [sic] the need to understand the actors' perspective and which promotes a case-study method' (p.141). In contrast, new is according to him 'an array of methods and practices [which] now go by the name qualitative research, and a whole industry of qualitative research treatises and textbooks [that] have advanced our knowledge about different ways of collecting and analyzing [sic] non-quantified data about social phenomena' (*ibid.*). However, Hammersley (1992) disputed many qualitative-quantitative methodological debates, saying 'it is striking how prone we are to the use of dichotomies, and these often come to represent distillations of all that is good and bad' (p.159). He continued that this dualistic approach is 'misleading in my view because it obscures the breadth

of issues and arguments involved in the methodology of social research' (*ibid.*), and this research agrees, prioritising research holism rather than reductionism beliefs.

Whereas this research leans towards subjectivist and interpretivist world views and a qualitative approach, its philosophical foundation is more complex and consequently so was its methodological development. As Hammersley (1992) claimed, in 'epistemology, as in methodology, dichotomies obscure the range of options open to us' (p.197). Consequently, the methodology of this research was framed in the light of five philosophies stemming from interdisciplinary inquiry: Edith Stein's phenomenology, Martin Buber's *I and Thou*, Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics, Lev Vygotsky's cultural-historical approach, and Carl Jung's archetypes and collective unconscious. As Vygotsky (1934 [1986]) pointed out, 'indeed many issues in the complex field of thinking in childhood border on epistemology, logic, and other branches of philosophy' (p.40).

A number of established methodologies were considered when reviewing the work of this quintet, but eventually the self-constructed methodology termed as grounded philosophy was chosen as the most suitable for this research aiming to explore current and potential media learning in primary school classrooms operating within diverse contexts, and asking in what ways any media were involved in a variety of child's actions, feelings, relationships, and meaning-makings within a classroom environment, how a child learnt, and could learn, about media through these processes, and how a teacher facilitated, or could facilitate, these learning processes. The following paragraphs thus highlight the main thoughts on which grounded philosophy is based, starting with those known mainly as philosophers – Stein, Buber, and Gadamer – and continuing with those whose work, although interdisciplinary, is primarily associated with psychology – Vygotsky and Jung.

### Individual *I and Thou* of the Research Philosophy and Practice: Stein, Buber, and Gadamer

It has already been established that this research is aimed at investigating experiences related to, and beliefs about, media and learning (and by extension about media learning) held by primary school children and teachers living within worlds meaningful to them (Weber 1922 [1968]). Since 'belief' has already been conceptually developed, at least partially, the discussion now turns to 'experience' by returning to Husserl (1931 [1950]) and his phenomenology, within which he termed humans' internal subjective processing and creating of these meaningful worlds as experience, or a phenomenon.

Husserl agreed with Marx's notion against *tabula rasa* (see *Chapter 1* p.22), claiming that 'objects' do not simply shine 'into a room of consciousness' (Husserl 1900-1901 [1970], p.232). Objects are 'first constituted as being what they are for us [subjects], and as what they count for us, in varying forms' (*ibid.*, p.385), meaning a researcher needs first to seek a more general understanding of, and the relationship with, the objects under study, for example, a child. He therefore suggested that in research where the objects being investigated are human beings, experience must be lived through with participants in their natural environment, such as a classroom as this research did (Husserl 1900-1901 [1970]). Only then can a researcher further explore 'aspects of [object's] consciousness' and centre on those aspects relevant to a concrete research issue (Ferguson 2001,

p.236), such as a child's media learning as a phenomenon, or 'lived experience'. Lived experience was, for Husserl (1900-1901 [1970]), the only way of obtaining knowledge about others' inner worlds as lived by them and not as objective reality separated from the person (Valle *et al.* 1989).

However, Husserl's lived experience was not a truly shared experience between a researcher and the research participants. In contrast, his PhD student Edith Stein (1891-1942) referred to those being the subjects of research as a psycho-physical and spiritual unity. She argued in her work *On the Problem of Empathy* (1916 [1989]) that every activity of thought, together with every bodily action, is coloured by feelings. She named it a phenomenon of fusion. Stein's epistemological position is more consistent with the potentially multifaceted role of media in children's (as subjects') lives, explored in the *Chapter 1* (see *Figure 1* on p.13), as it extends the research interest in what children and teachers do and think with what they *feel* – as the second research question summarises.

In the context of research itself, Stein's approach to phenomenology stressed the importance of empathy when investigating 'the origination of the knowledge an individual has of other such individuals' (*ibid.*, p.5). By empathy she referred to subject's, or 'I's', ability to understand foreign experience, allowing *I* to better comprehend the psychic life of fellow subjects (pp.10, 25):

'I feel the feeling, which was at first a foreign feeling, overflowing me. (...) I am now no longer turned to the content but to the object of it, am at the subject of the content in the original subject's place. And only after successfully executed clarification, does the content again face me as an object.'

Treating research participants as subjects, instead of only as pure objects, was key to this project distancing itself from the European colonial and imperial tradition of qualitative 'reports about and representations of 'the 'Other'' (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, p.1, *quotations mark in original*), and from elitist and paternalist tendencies of discourse about media and children, or even about teachers and education. In a way, Husserl (1900-1901 [1970]) carried traits of *object-ivism* in his philosophy as he claimed that a researcher-subject can distance himself or herself from participants-objects and describe, not interpret, their lived experience, whereas it could be argued that in comparison Stein (1916 [1989]) was more *subject-ivist* as she referred to both a researcher and a participant as equal subjects.

Similarly to Stein, Martin Buber (1878-1965) implied that *I* could not be separated from a researched subject, called *Thou*, one that *I* interacts with. Buber (1937 [2013]) wrote '[i]f *Thou* is said, the *I* of the combination *I-Thou* is said along with it' (p.5). He gave an example of love being 'between' *I* and *Thou*, never belonging to either of them. It can be applied to research (or any) *experience* involving humans that it always is between *I* and *Thou*. This makes every experience, and every subjectivist and interpretivist social research such as this one, unrepeatable and therefore impossible to scientifically test or verify – as mentioned earlier.

Buber continued that only when 'the relation has been worked out or has been permeated with means', can the knowledge about *Thou* be comprehended and articulated, because only then can *Thou* be 'taken into pieces' and interpreted by *I* as 'a sum of qualities' with 'a certain shape' (pp.12-13). This relates to the hermeneutic circle of which origin is credited to Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) (Kimmerle 1959 [1967]), although it was developed more precisely by Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). Heidegger (1927 [1990]) understood interpretation as a circular process within which the interpreter as *I* constantly moves between pieces/parts and the sum/whole, but

warned that 'it is not to be reduced to the level of a vicious circle, or even of a circle which is merely tolerated' (p.195). West (1979) clarified that '[i]nstead it is a productive and unavoidable circularity making explicit what was implicit, obvious what was obscure, familiar what was strange without ever completely removing what is implicit, obscure and strange' (p.77). Jung (1936/37 [1959]), to whom more attention is paid in the following section, argued that 'man woke up in a world he did not understand, and that is why he tries to interpret it', because '[i]nterpretations are only for those who don't understand; it is only the things we don't understand that have any meaning' (p.31) – a truly fitting approach to interpretation and meaning in the context of this research claiming to be initially unfamiliar with teachers' and children's worlds.

Meaning was, according to Jung, developed through analysis, interpretation, and synthesis (*ibid.*), as this research did throughout, but mainly at the writing stage, because as Gadamer (1960 [1998], p.389) stated '[understanding occurs in interpreting' and as Buber (1937 [2013], p.8) suggested 'to shape is to discover'. Hermeneutic circle usually refers to writing and reading of word-based texts such as this that has tried 'to construct a full interpretive description of some aspect of the lifeworld, and yet to remain aware that lived life is always more complex than any explication of meaning can reveal (...) [and thus] full or final descriptions are unattainable' (van Manen 1990, p.18). It is because of this unfinalisable nature of interpretative processes that the chapters are titled with verbs in the progressive tense. In particular, the last two chapters, preoccupied with analytical interpretation and implication of the research 'outcomes', then apply in practice Buber's *I* and *Thou* and Heidegger's hermeneutic circle.

Returning to discourse about experience, another reason why each experience between *I* and *Thou* is unique, according to Stein (1916 [1989]), is due to *I* and *Thou* being 'shifted over and drawn into [each experience] from another experience' (p.38). The remark of 'another experience' represents two crucial epistemological positions. Firstly, a research process is an experience 'where the present *I* [and *Thou*] once lived' (*ibid.*). Buber (1937 [2013]) equally stated that 'so long as *I* can do this he is no more my *Thou* and cannot yet be my *Thou* again' (p.13). The *I* who conducted this inquiry is referred to in the third person instead of in the first, specifying the past *I* of this research. Even though the beliefs persist, it is important to understand that they were co-created with *Thou* throughout the research, and it is therefore also specific to the past *Thou* of that experience – once again reminding of the unrepeatable and unverifiable nature of this research.

Secondly, having another previous experience suggests that every subject has a history. At this point Stein's phenomenology intersects with Hans-Georg Gadamer's (1900–2002) hermeneutics. Gadamer (1975 [2013]) turned to Hegel's *The Philosophical Propaedeutic* (1808-11) when arguing that gaining theoretical knowledge and reaching an understanding goes 'beyond what man knows and experiences immediately' and deals 'with something that belongs to memory and to thought' (*ibid.*, p.13). He further built upon the ideas of *Dasein* – being-in-the-world – and the mode of *being of historicity* put forward by his teacher Heidegger. Gadamer clarified that 'neither the knower nor the known is 'present-at-hand' in an 'ontic [of that which is]' way, but in 'historical [of that which was]'' (p.262). This implies that social science's 'deal is rather to understand the phenomenon itself in its unique and historical concreteness – to understand how this man, this people, or this state is what it has become or, more generally, how it happened that it is so' (p.4). Gadamer also extended Husserl's notion of consciousness to 'historical consciousness' and lived experience to 'hermeneutical [hermeneutic] experience' (pp.368-369):

‘Historical consciousness knows about the otherness of the other, about the past in its otherness. (...) [I]t seeks not the instantiation of a general law but something historically unique. (...) A person who believes he is free of prejudices, relying on the objectivity of his procedures and denying that he is himself conditioned by historical circumstances, (...) will fail to see what manifests itself by their light. (...) [In] hermeneutical experience I must allow traditions claim validity, not in the sense of simply acknowledging the past in its otherness, but in such way that it has something to say to me.’

Gadamer’s historical consciousness, or in Stein’s words experiential structure, meant that in order to understand what is now and what could be, the research had to explore what had been and which aspects of the past were of any relevance. To give an example, in order to understand the teachers’ views on the education of children, attention had to be paid to their experience in its historical and social context. The focus was on concrete events that the teachers themselves considered to be decisive and therefore meaningful. These experiences ranged from personal matters through to school management and national policies (as will be shown in the following chapter). As a more recent hermeneutical phenomenologist Max van Manen (1990) wrote, ‘pedagogic interest cannot be separated from my interest in human science’, and gave an example, saying ‘[i]t is because I am interested in children and in the question of how children grow and learn that I orient myself pedagogically to children in a phenomenological hermeneutic mode’ (p.40). Meanwhile, in order to grasp the complexity of media learning, the focus was on the children’s past (and fused) media (learning) experiences both inside and outside of the classrooms and the subjective meanings they had for the children. ‘Past’ is a relative term and the teachers and children therefore had the freedom to refer to phenomena taking place at any point in time, from a mere second ago to a distant past. If necessary, the researcher encouraged the participants to clarify their thoughts or provide more details.

Turning the discussion to a more methodological consideration and application of Stein’s, Buber’s and Gadamer’s thoughts now, at least two established methodologies were considered suitable to fulfil the last mentioned task: oral history interviewing and case study research. Oral history interviewing is useful firstly when choosing appropriate methods and designing research strategies aiming to explore past phenomena, and secondly when acknowledging the issue of memory. Truesdell (2014, p.1) clarified why:

‘Oral history interviews are grounded in memory, and memory is a subjective instrument for recording the past, always shaped by the present moment and the individual psyche. Oral history can reveal how individual values and actions shaped the past, and how the past shapes present-day values and actions.’

Whereas oral history interviewing works well as a technique in assisting the overall research strategy, there was not a solid methodological fit since the past was only one piece of the puzzle. The case study represented a more suitable solution after careful consideration, because it sets a phenomenon within its context (Yin 2009) and it is popular in cross-cultural educational research (Qi 2009). Verschuren (2003, p.124) noted the key to case study research is ‘holism’, meaning attention ought to be on the ‘whole’ subject such as a person, group, or institution – thus being consistent with the hermeneutic circle. Similarly, Sturman (1999) argued for in-depth investigation, because ‘human systems develop a characteristic wholeness or integrity and are not

simply a loose collection of traits' (p.103) – returning research back to multifaceted media role and to Stein's phenomenology of fusion.

Since there are 'many variables operating in a single case', case study research recommends 'more than one tool for data collection and many sources of evidence' (ibid.). In accordance with case study methodology, this research was interested in subjects' psycho-physical unity, or as Stein (1916 [1989]) phrased it the 'wholeness', and thus applied various research tools to investigate fused and hermeneutic phenomena. In addition, the research dissemination, such as conference talks (e.g. Zezulcova 2012, 2013, 2014a,b; Woodfall and Zezulcova 2015), academic publications (e.g. Zezulcova 2015 [forthcoming]; Woodfall and Zezulcova 2016 [forthcoming]), and this paper, have provided examples of real people in real situations illustrating abstract ideas about media learning (Yin 2009). The main difference between case study research and the methodology developed for this research was in their approach to context. Case studies recognise context as 'a powerful determinant of both causes and effects' (Cohen *et al.* 2011, p.289), leaving a researcher in charge of deciding what contextual information is needed and what the causes and effects are. Not only did this study reject general theories of causality, it also treated teachers and children as experts on their own lives and hence depended on their suggestions as to what was contextually relevant and what mattered to them; it was only then that the research drew upon other sources of information in order to fully understand the propositions made by the participants. As per Gadamer's (1975 [2013], p.369) words inspired by Buber:

'In human relations the important thing is to experience the *Thou* truly as a *Thou* – i.e., not to overlook his claim but to let him really say something to us. Here is where openness belongs. (...) [T]his openness does not exist only for the person who speaks; rather anyone who listens is fundamentally open. (...) Belonging together always also means being able to listen to one another. (...) Openness to the other, then, involves recognizing [sic] that I myself must accept some things that are against me, even though no one else forces me to do so.'

Other methodologies – for example action research, ethnography, and critical theory – were additionally reviewed when considering how fused and hermeneutical phenomena could be researched. Given the interest in participants' thoughts, actions, and feelings, and the acknowledgment of empathy and reflection, *action research* could have worked well for a teacher-researcher or if the research focused on a single teacher and classroom, possibly 'trying out' some type of intervention – as some media education and media literacy studies did, as mentioned in the previous chapter. The researcher did not have the necessary qualification for the former, nor did the latter fit in well with the research philosophy, aim and questions. Action research together with ethnography, which in contrast to action research initially seemed to be an ideal fit, usually require investing a long period of time with one group of children and their teacher, whereas this research set out to explore media learning within various contexts and across educational stages. Nevertheless, the research certainly shared commonalities with ethnography, as it investigated current media learning through field research applying similar methods – interviews (see pp.51,63 and observations (see p.54) – and, in a way, also with critical ethnography concerned with 'what could be' (Thomas 1993, p.4).

Carspecken (1996) and Madison (2005, p.5) explained that critical ethnography and *critical theory* can overlap with social inequality and oppression and therefore carry an 'ethical responsibility'. Thomas (1993) claimed that critical theory '[r]esearch is not simply a scientific, technical exercise,

nor is it simply a hermeneutic matter of understanding and interpreting a situation; it does not reject these, but it requires the researcher to move beyond them, to engage in different ways of ‘viewing the world’ (cited in Cohen *et al.* 2011, p.243, *quotation marks in original*). He continued (*ibid.*):

‘This inevitably involves disturbing accepted meanings and disrupting the status quo and purported neutrality of research, together with exposing taken-for-granted, ‘domesticated’, assumptions that perpetuate the power of the already powerful at the expense of the powerless and the dominated.’

Being consistent with this ethical responsibility, the philosophy of media learning developed within this research was ultimately preoccupied with the teachers’ and learners’ lives meaningful to them and not to policy and public concerns about teachers’ ‘incompetence’ and a greater protection and empowerment of so-called inadequate children.

To summarise this section, the combination of Stein’s, Gadamer’s, and Buber’s positions represent an important part of the project’s framework for exploring media learning in primary school classrooms. The hitherto introduced philosophical positions provide some key ideas on which grounded philosophy as a research methodology is based, as well as explain why some of the already established methodologies could not be strictly followed by this research. However, the belief system is not sufficiently holistic yet, needing a more complex conceptual framework for development and application of a sound and coherent methodology as well as research design. Furthermore, there is a one more established methodology – grounded theory – that although not being applied, carries many practical similarities with grounded philosophy and must therefore be addressed here. Consequently, the following section completes the research philosophy by drawing upon Vygotsky’s and Jung’s *collective* nature of one’s subjective reality and knowledge.

### Collective *I* and *Thou* of the Research Philosophy and Practice: Vygotsky, Jung, Mill and the Revelation of Grounded Philosophy

Whereas Stein, Buber and Gadamer touched upon the idea of interdependence between *I* and *Thou*, they did not sufficiently, at least not for the purpose of this research, address one’s sociocultural/collective nature and nurture, which should be taken into equal consideration by a research that positions itself as holistic. Here the research turns to a developmental psychologist and educational theorist Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) and to an analytical psychiatrist and psychotherapist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), whose philosophies and practices could be said to fall under Gestalt, or holistic, psychology focusing on ‘human psyche as a whole in its cognitive, emotional, [physical] and volitional manifestations (...) and, on the other hand, social (...) environment’ (Yasnitsky and van der Veer 2014, p.2). Vygotsky and Jung were both interested in ‘collective’ human understanding and understanding humans, however, Vygotsky’s collective comes from nurture rather than from nature as Jung’s collective does. Bearing in mind the first chapter arguing for the equal importance of nature and nurture (Slater and Bremner 2011), this section is focused on synthesising Vygotsky’s and Jung’s thoughts into one socioculturally-historically collective approach.

To begin with Vygotsky, his cultural-historical approach was never termed as such by Vygotsky himself, but instead by his readers and followers, who saw it as one of his main contributions to

knowledge (Yasnitsky and van der Veer 2014). Vygotsky (1925[1971]) put, similarly to Gadamer's hermeneutics, emphasis on historicity but instead of individual he focused on *collective* history and culture such are those of a classroom where, firstly, learners and teachers acquire similar experiences of their otherwise individual historicities, and secondly, culture is being collectively experienced and constructed – a process often described as 'social constructivist'. Vygotsky's central interest was in the development and expression of a thought, positioning himself against another developmental psychologist Piaget. Piaget differentiated between 'egocentric thought' of the child and 'socialised thought' of the developed human (Piaget 1928 [1969], p.208). He wrote (Piaget 1926 [1959], p.40):

'To put it quite simply, we may say that the adult thinks socially, even when he is alone, and that the child under seven thinks egocentrically, even in the society of others.'

Vygotsky (1934 [1986]) criticises Piaget for suggesting that the egocentric thought was free of social influence (pp.48, 35):

'To say such a thing means to claim that the external reality plays no substantial role in the development of a child's thought. (...) We prefer to use the term *communicative* for [what] Piaget calls *socialized* [sic], as though it had been something else before becoming social. From our point of view, [they] are both social.'

As opposed to constructionism, implying 'knowledge is always knowledge that a person constructs through internal mental processes' (Larochelle *et al.* 1998 [2009], p.3), which is similar to classical phenomenology, claiming 'knowledge is the construction of a whole school of thought and the idea about this whole is one's truth' (Patočka 1931 [2008], p.15, *author's translation*), Vygotsky's *communicative thought* argued that humans construct their subjective realities and knowledge in relation to one another (Berger and Luckmann 1966); thus social constructivism. This had, firstly, methodical implications guiding the research towards methods allowing active communication and social interaction, while bringing in the idea of 'double hermeneutics' put forward by Smith (2004) who argued that 'one can say human research involves a double hermeneutics [or interpretation]' and clarified 'the participant is trying to make sense of their personal and social world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of their personal and social world' (p.39). Secondly, it reminded and partly warned that *I* cannot be separated from *Thou* within these interactions and thus [1] implying a need for the researcher's reflectivity and reflexivity on her own role in knowledge creation such as influence on participants (more on pp.53-54), and [2] suggesting the importance of exploring classroom relationships in addition to actions, thoughts and feelings.

Vygotsky's concept of 'social thought', or human mind, of which inquiry he compared to criminal investigation, that 'must take into account indirect evidence and circumstantial [cultural-historical] clues' (*ibid.*, cited by Kozulin 1985, p.xxx), is arguably even more relevant to contemporary media-related research studies because, according to Jenkins (2006), one of the main characteristics of convergence culture is a 'collective meaning making' (p.4). The foundation of this concept was introduced by one of the first sociologists Durkheim who termed it a 'collective' or 'common consciousness' defined as '[t]he totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of a society', or a community (1893 [2012], p.39). This research therefore treated the



participants' actions, thoughts and feelings as both individual and sociocultural-historical, or in other words collective, expressions.

Jung (1936/37 [1968]) agreed with Durkheim that in addition to 'personal conscious' is 'collective conscious' and he further suggested that alongside 'personal unconscious' there also is 'collective unconscious, which however does not develop individually [or socially] but is inherited' (p.43). To take a step back, Jung belonged to the psychoanalytic school of thought and agreed with its founder Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) on the matter of 'personal unconscious' as being something 'made up essentially of contents which have at one time been conscious but which have disappeared from consciousness through having been forgotten or repressed' (Jung 1936/37 [1959], p.42). One's conscious *I*, that one is aware of, is 'not total psyche' (*ibid.*), as according to Jung 'people live on only one or two floors of a large apartment building which is our minds, forgetting the rest' (Dunne 2012, p.105). Jung however split with Freud and his followers when he broadened the theory of unconsciousness with 'collective unconscious' and archetypes. Jung (1936/37 [1968], p.43) wrote:

'[T]here exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. (...) It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes.'

Melvyn Bragg's radio discussion series *In Our Time* (BBC Radio 4 1998-present) broadcasted an episode on Jung (2 December 2004), within which the guest, Professor of Analytical Psychology, Andrew Samuels, readily summarised the two strands of collective unconscious, body and culture:

'Of course there is collective psychology. We all possess the same bodies, the same hormones, the same operators, the same brain structure. So isn't it obvious? This is the body argument of collective unconscious; that we will all function similarly, if not in the same way psychologically in a given situation. (...) This is very powerful and scientifically discussable idea. That out of our human bodies comes human psychology shared by all. (...) The culture aspect is much less scientifically discussable, but much more fascinating. (...) All over the world, at all times, our similarities lead to similar culture products. Fairy tales, myths, rituals, religious practices, and emotions can be all understood in that way.'

Taking the body strand argument as relatively straightforward, further attention is required on the cultural nature of collective unconscious connected to archetypes, which is also more relevant to research in both education and media. Jung (1936/37 [1959], p.43) ascribed the initial cultural idea of 'psychic unity of mankind' to the anthropologist Adolf Bastian (1860) who explored 'elementary' or 'primordial thoughts'. Yet he equally referred to other fields of knowledge, such as Robert Mayer's (1844) physical thesis, which have similarly recognised and named the phenomenon. Inspired by these writings and through research expeditions to East Africa and India, Jung defined archetypes as images and stories whose 'origins can only be explained by assuming them to be deposits of the constantly repeated experiences of humanity' (1917/1926/1943 [1983], p.70).

*The Matrix* transmedia story that became 'a cultural phenomenon' draws upon many of Jung's archetypes, most noticeably on the 'hero archetype' executed as the main character Neo

(Herbrechter 2005, p.205). The archetypal journey starts with a call to adventure the hero or heroine at first refused (Campbell 1949 [2008]), but then begins the quest which symbolised the individuation of self (Jun and Franz 1960 [1968]). This journey is almost identical to many fictional, mythical, and real life heroes and heroines, and can be virtually experienced by anyone playing the videogame *Enter the Matrix* (Warner Bros 2003). As Jung stated (1936/37 [1959]), '[i]n the end we dig up the wisdom of all ages and peoples, only to find that everything most dear and precious to us has already been said in the most superb language' (p.16), and further commented on the influential role of archetypal images and stories in cultural/media texts as follows (1922 [2003], p.96):

'Whoever speaks in primordial images speaks with a thousand voices; he enthralled and over-powers, while at the same time he lifts the idea he is seeking to express out of the occasional and transitory into the realm of the ever-enduring. He transmutes our personal destiny into the destiny of mankind, and evokes in us all those beneficent forces that ever and anon have enabled humanity to find a refuge from every peril and to outlive the longest night.'

Educational psychologist Clifford Mayes (1953-) then focused on Jung's relevance to education and through a number of journal articles and book chapters suggested that a greater understanding of learning processes can be achieved if their archetypal nature is acknowledged (e.g. Mayes, 2002, 2005a,b,c, 2009, 2012). He wrote (2005a, p.34, *quotation marks in original*):

'[T]he teacher' and 'the student' are themselves archetypal figures. (...) Throughout our lives, we are involved in educational acts – as teachers, students, and often both. No human culture has ever been founded or perpetuated without education about everything. (...) Something so fundamental to creating and sustaining individuals and cultures is necessarily archetypal.'

Although collective unconscious and archetypes were developed within Jung's extensive psychological and cultural research, they have been treated in the context of education (e.g. Mayes' work) and media (e.g. Campbell's work) as philosophical concepts with practical implications crossing the boundaries of cultures, nations, and societies – certainly an appealing belief to this intercultural research interested not only in what is but also what could be on a transnational level. Could this research explore archetypal media experiences and archetypal learning experiences and synthesise them into archetypal media learning? Could it be consistent with the subjectivist and interpretivist nature of this research in general, and of grounded philosophy as a research methodology in particular? This is where inductive reasoning becomes the last piece of the puzzle; the final belief making the diverse and plural belief system of this research holistic and united.

Heit (2007) claimed that inductive reasoning 'corresponds to everyday reasoning' – which seems appropriate to research interested in everyday situations and ordinary commonsense experience – and it therefore 'corresponds to probabilistic, uncertain, [and] approximate reasoning'. Induction thus replaces the 'certainty of' with 'confidence in' research results (Himmelsley 1992, pp.50-51). Despite the fact that inductive reasoning starts 'with detailed in-depth studies of

individual cases' (such as those of diverse teachers, learners and classrooms), many argue that it can lead to the development of a 'general model' (Taber 2000, p.469) – an outcome normally associated with the deductive reasoning of 'objectivist' research. These arguments usually draw upon John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) who suggested in *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive* (1875) that subjectivist social research is able to derive from a limited '[e]xperience to [g]eneralisation' (Mill 1875 [2014], p.223). However, Popper (1935 [2002]) criticised the expectation that theories derived from any social research, including positivist, can be generalisable, stating that 'in principle, [hypotheses] can never be justified, verified, or even shown to be probable' (p.135).

The question however was not about 'generalisability' but potentially wider intercultural and interdisciplinary relevance, or 'transferability' (Lincoln and Cuba 1985), of philosophical concepts and practical recommendations. Mill (1875 [2014]) usefully suggested here that induction 'consists in inferring from some individual instances in which a phenomenon is observed to occur', that it was to occur or happen again 'under sufficient degree of similarity of circumstances' (p.223.). Mill (1875 [2014]) named such phenomena 'parallel cases' (p. 223) similar to Jung's archetypal scenarios, although still dependent on Vygotsky's cultural-historical context. Parallel cases were in the case of this research formed of commonalities (Elliot 2006) discovered in the participating teachers' pedagogic and media-related beliefs and experiences as well as in the learners' media-related individual and collective actions, thoughts, and feelings

Parallel cases could then be used to develop 'justified true beliefs' rather than absolute truth (Socrates, in Plato ca. 369BC [1883]). Yet since the research earlier argued against categorising beliefs as true and false, the parallel cases are instead used as a ground for development of 'justified beliefs' about the child's media and classroom experience and learning and the teacher's role within them. It is consequently proposed here that a belief becomes *justified* if it is generated from, and embedded in, rich field research. Additionally then, if these justified beliefs, as plural and diverse as they might be, are based on parallel cases that are in a dialogue and synthesised/united, then they form a justified holistic belief system, or as termed here, a grounded philosophy. As Dewey (1964, p.3) argued:

'It is sometimes supposed that it is the business of the philosophy of education to tell what education should be. But the only way of deciding what education should be, at least, the only way which does not lead us into the clouds, is discovery of what actually takes place when education really occurs.'

The research therefore aimed at discovering parallel cases in primary school teachers' and learners' media and learning beliefs and experiences on which the justified beliefs about current media learning could be based (*Chapter 3*) with the direct purpose of synthesising and uniting these justified beliefs into a diverse yet united philosophy (as justified holistic belief system) of media learning in primary school classrooms (*Chapter 4*). Grounded philosophy as a research methodology as well as a research outcome has thus served this purpose. Before summarising grounded philosophy by tidying the beliefs on which it is based into a more straightforward and transparent table (see *Table 1* on the next page), it needs to be finalised by being positioned against a seemingly similar methodology known as grounded theory.

To begin with grounded theory and grounded philosophy as research methodologies, the intention behind grounded theory is also to explore 'patterned subjective realities, with full recognition that

meanings are continuous, emergent social constructions' (Simons 2011, p.25) and raise these realities to the abstract level of conceptualisation (Glaser 2002). Grounded theory predominantly focuses on formal institutional settings such as schools, as did this research, although this does not mean that grounded philosophy is developed for, or limited to, this. Grounded theory uses constant comparison as a research strategy which is philosophically similar to the hermeneutic circle, because it requires all research elements to be dialogically and constantly 'referring back to each other' (Bryman 2004, p.401). As Robson (2011) clarified, 'grounded theory is both a strategy for doing research and a particular style of analysing the data arising from that research' (p.147). In research practice though, constant comparison is a strictly set procedure tied to theoretical sampling and emerging theory that must be followed, as it is through theoretical sampling that relevant participants and resources are included into research as long as new concepts and categories are emerging (Glaser and Strauss 1967 [2008]). The process is concluded when a theoretical saturation is reached, or in other words an emerging theory sufficiently grounded in research is developed (*ibid.*). In contrast, grounded philosophy is a philosophically, and not methodically, bound approach to social research that encourages any interpretation and application for the same reasons expressed by Lather (2006) and Bacon (1620 [1901], p.12). Rather than using constant comparison, grounded philosophy turns to Bakhtinian dialogue as interpreted by Holquist (1990 [2002]); a dialogue that stresses 'a larger whole of [parts'] coexistence' (Faimau 2013, p.43) and that 'brings coherence to the whole' (Baxter 2004, p.108) while placing 'multiplicity, historicity and potentially at its core' (Sullivan 2007, p.110), as this research does.

Considering grounded theory and grounded philosophy as research outcomes, grounded theory is a practice-based methodology ultimately aiming to develop a straightforward generalised 'theory grounded in and generated from action scenes around a particular problem or issue on which participants are working [in order to bring about] desired changes, with a minimum of unintended consequences' (Simons 2011, p.27). Grounded theory thus focuses on one concrete problem, or as termed by Glaser and Strauss (1967 [2008]), on 'the main concern' practitioners are facing. Philosophy could be understood as 'a whole theory comprising of interconnected partial theories' (Block 2000, p.360), and thus a grounded theory arguably could be compared here to one of the justified beliefs forming the justified holistic belief system; simply differentiating grounded philosophy as a more complex and multifaceted outcome. Although grounded philosophy, as both a research methodology and outcome, is clearly more holistic than grounded theory, the main distinction lies in their ontological and epistemological beliefs. A grounded theory is believed to have the capacity to be verified or disproved and it therefore ultimately is not equal to a justified belief, in fact they are fundamentally different and so thus is grounded philosophy. Indeed, grounded philosophy as methodology and research outcome together reflects the shifting in educational research 'from objects to assemblages and from *proliferating and competing paradigms to meta-method across paradigms (...)* [and] the *ontological turn in qualitative research as a moment in the "fieldwork in philosophy"*' (Lather 2014, p.2, *quotation marks and emphasis in original*).

**Table 1** Grounded philosophy

Philosophy	Holistic belief system formed of propositional attitudes such as <i>believe</i> and <i>know</i> , and the study of it
Grounded	Generated from, embedded in, and justified by, rich field research
<b>GROUNDING PHILOSOPHY</b>	
Ontology	People live within worlds meaningful to them. Social reality is a product of one's holistic belief system blending individual with collective. There are multiple realities and multiple interpretations of those realities.
Epistemology	Knowledge is a human-made construct formed through interaction and constant negotiation between individual and collective conscious and unconscious. Knowledge is created through fused, hermeneutical, and social experience and probabilistic, uncertain, and approximate inductive reasoning. To know and to believe are equal.
Research	Fused/holistic; focuses on thoughts, actions, relationships and feelings – their processes and meanings. Seeks understanding of foreign and hermeneutic experience and its meanings. Human participants in the centre. Leads discussion in the 3rd person because <i>I</i> stands for <i>I</i> in that particular research experience which has now passed. Abstract ideas are illustrated by real world examples. Interdisciplinary. Reflects on, interprets and synthesises into parallel cases on which justified beliefs are developed. Asks what was and what is in order to suggest what could be through a grounded philosophy, or a justified holistic belief system, formed of justified beliefs.
Researcher	A psychophysical, spiritual, sociocultural and historical <i>unity, subject or I</i> , attempting to explore, interpret, and make sense of a foreign experience and whole <i>Thou</i> through both strategic and sympathetic inquiry.
Research participant	A psychophysical, spiritual, sociocultural and historical <i>unity, subject or Thou</i> , whose meaningful and holistic world is foreign to a researcher. Participants are thus experts on their own lives. Participants indicate what in their historicity and context could be relevant to the research. Their actions, feelings, thoughts, relationships and historicity have both individual and collective nature. Nurture and nature are reciprocal.
Researcher and participants	<i>I</i> cannot be separated from <i>Thou</i> . Knowledge is co-created by the researcher and participants. Control is shifting. The researcher gives a final shape to the knowledge about the phenomena explored. Trust, respect, and mutual understanding.
Methodology	Inductive reasoning, uncertainty and openness. Flexible research design constantly evolving and adapting. Field research. Contextualised. Dialogic process of on-going exploration, interpretation, synthesis, and reflection. Holistic and lived research experience. The outcome is a grounded philosophy drawn from real life phenomena, which was analysed and interpreted in close relation with the extant interdisciplinary literature.
Methods	Multiple methods enabling exploration of hermeneutical experience and the fusion of individual and collective thoughts or meanings, actions, relationships, and feelings of the participants, and benefiting from empathy while also allowing reflection on it. Flexible and constantly evolving. Preferably, but not necessarily, based on social interaction, communication and possibly observation. Attention to language and context.
Interpretation of phenomena	Double hermeneutics and hermeneutic circle. The ideas originate within an interactive social constructivist process and are simultaneously experienced and analysed by research through empathic reading and interpretative writing. The lived and fused phenomena explored then undergo a more critical and speculative reflection through which a researcher subjectively interprets thoughts that were once between <i>I</i> and <i>Thou</i> and synthesises them into parallel cases. After that the <i>justified beliefs</i> about <i>Thou</i> and phenomena under

	scrutiny, developed on the ground of parallel cases, are synthesised and given holistic shape by a researcher, developing a grounded philosophy, or a justified holistic belief system. Interpretation, reflection and writing move between parts – individual cases and whole.
Generalisation, validity	Every experience is unrepeatable and therefore impossible to scientifically test or verify. Research can be considered vague and ambiguous, especially when the process is not sufficiently transparent. Thus a study needs strong and rich support of the conclusion – justified beliefs that form a grounded philosophy. <i>Certainty of</i> is replaced with <i>confidence in</i> research results. However, patterned subjective realities can occur again under sufficient degree of similarity of circumstances, hence it is possible to raise these realities to the transferrable level of conceptualisation. Due to two strands of collective unconscious, body and culture, certain relationships can be referred to as archetypal. The research outcome shall not be generalised, but grounded philosophy can serve as a reference to a wider audience and therefore can reach a certain level of transferability. Yet the main aim for a grounded theory is to encourage multiple interpretations and implications.

## Concluding Part 1 and Introducing Part 2

The philosophical and methodological discussion above resembles the game *Pong* (1972-) with two opposite sides, like the dichotomies that Hammersley (1992) criticised, and a ball bouncing against the barriers that cannot be crossed, otherwise the game is over. Yet whereas *Pong* is two-dimensional with restricting trajectories, the issues and arguments involved in the methodology of social research are multidimensional despite the narrow fence surrounding them. Thus it cannot be simply said that this research was subjectivist, interpretivist, inductive, and qualitative. Even though it played on that side of the field, the path it took was not linear but holistic.

One of the main reasons to engage more broadly and deeply with the research philosophy and methodological framework was the complicated nature of the research aim and questions. To begin with, they were immoderately ambitious and wide-reaching. As a reminder, the overall aim was to explore current and potential media learning in primary school classrooms operating within diverse contexts. Not only is the concept of media learning broad – referring to intentional and naturally occurring learning about *any* media with, from, in, or even without physical presence of, panmedia – the focus was on ‘what is’ as well as ‘what could be’. Many would argue that this exceeds the scope of a doctoral research. To compound matters, the research positioned itself as interdisciplinary and intercultural, filling the academic balloon with even more gas. Moreover, the subsequent research questions were delicately balanced between being a tight string holding the balloon together and a sharp pin exploding it. They asked [1] in what ways any media are involved in a variety of a child’s actions, feelings, relationships, and meaning-makings within a classroom environment, [2] how does, and how could, a child learn about media through these processes, and [3] how does a teacher facilitate, or could facilitate, this complex learning process. There were obviously too many variables to be addressed and to be taken into account.

Acknowledging this, it does not come as a surprise that the established research paradigms and methodologies did not fully fit the scope of the research. They represented an inexhaustible

resource of research ideas and validated practices and through each of them a separate goal of the research could have been achieved. Yet by doing so the investigation would most probably have become too fragmented and unable to achieve holism. Instead, the necessary philosophical barriers had to be built prior to any methodological and methodical decisions. The thoughts of Stein, Buber, Gadamer, Vygotsky, and Jung, adapted to the purpose of this research, represented the additional dimensions to which the diverse yet unified could hold on. Here the discourse turned slightly 'metaphilosophical', as the subject under philosophical scrutiny became a grounded philosophy, developed to answer the needs of this initially ambitious and broad study.

The second part therefore becomes significantly more pragmatic, clarifying and making transparent the research design and process. The research participants and the research methods are discussed in tandem, as the decisions about them depend upon each other. The discourse about the participants refers back to the beginnings of conceptual thinking and therefore mainly to the first chapter, as some of this thinking preceded the philosophical and methodological clarity. It might therefore seem for a while that the second part of this chapter is disconnected from the first one. The link is more obvious within the research methods, as these were chosen and designed with the clear philosophical framework in mind and with grounded philosophy as the already developed research methodology, and it therefore draws more upon the first part of this chapter.

Additionally, throughout the discussion a contextually relevant interdisciplinary literature continues to be introduced by being occasionally positioned against methodologically relevant research reflection that had influenced the research design and process; including the teachers' and learners' quotes extracted from the interviews and photographs taken during the field research. The following discourse is structured from the largest in size but the smallest in importance, the countries, and to the smallest in size but the most important, the children – said with slight hyperbole. If the reader wished to obtain only a brief research overview, it is possible to refer directly to the *Tables 2 and 3* (pp.73-75) and *Figure 11* (p.77) that provide a comprehensive summary of the research design and process.

## PART 2 Grounded Philosophy in Research Practice

### Designing Intercultural Research: Through Countries to Specific Schools

It was pointed out in the first chapter that qualitative media education research is predominantly ethnocentric, in the sense that it refers only to the case of a single country. Hallin and Mancini (2004) criticised the tendency for those from countries with the most-developed media scholarship, including the United States and the United Kingdom, to often write 'in general terms, as though the model that prevailed in that country were universal' (p.2). They reference Blumer and Gurevitch (1975, 1995) and Bendix (1963), who stated that cross-cultural and cross-national research studies based on comparison make it possible to discover which aspects of the concepts vary and which do not, and to 'clarify the scope and applicability of the concepts (...) [because] if comparison can sensitize [sic] us to variation, it can also sensitize [sic] us to similarity' (*ibid.*). However, comparative analysis is strongly idiographic, restricting the dialogic process by focusing on separate country-specific cases at first and only then subsequently conducting cross-cultural or cross-national analysis. In addition, much like case study research, comparative analysis depends

heavily on a researcher to decide on what contextual information is needed, while this study followed the participants' guidance in this matter. In addition, Downey and Mihelj (2012) criticised that 'much of the research inspired by Hallin and Mancini's framework (...) has reverted back to a predominantly media-centric and descriptive approach' (p.4) inconsistent with this research.

By dismissing comparative analysis, it became challenging to theoretically underpin the development of a cross-national or cross-cultural study. To draw a potential distinction between the two, cross-national research perceives culture – learning processes, ideology, art and way of life – of collective groups as static constructs within national boundaries (Agarwal *et al.* 2010). Whereas cross-national research, according to Adams and Markus (2004), fails to acknowledge intracultural and intercultural variables, cross-cultural research treats culture as a dynamic construct going beyond the constraints of group national membership. By adopting Grein's (2009) view on culture as a holistic construct, culture-centric research adequately considers top-down and bottom-up cultural processes of collective conscious and unconscious. Erez and Gati (2004) and Leung *et al.* (2005) subsequently argue for investigation at the local level where culture is negotiated, for instance, within a classroom culture. As an alternative to cross-cultural research that is inherently comparative, this research was inspired by 'intercultural philosophy', which suggests 'understanding is possible beyond all centrisms' (Mall 2000, l.275).

Mall (2000) introduced his view on intercultural philosophy as a 'nonreductive, open, creative, and tolerant hermeneutics' searching for, finding, and cultivating 'overlapping centres' (l.337), or in other words parallel cases. He chose the prefix inter- pointing to 'an experiential core of existence', a phenomenon, in comparison to trans- indicating 'something beyond [that] makes us believe in a transition' (l.960). On the other hand, intercultural philosophy is also 'a pluralistic attitude' (Mall 2000, l.422) rejecting the intolerance to divergence and thus allowing 'unity without uniformity' (l.1165). This approach made it possible to develop an intercultural grounded philosophy of media learning unifying similarities and differences on multiple levels – ranging from individual and local, through regional and national to international – without applying complicated and rigid comparative procedures. As Mall justified, 'philosophy is by nature intercultural' (*ibid.*)

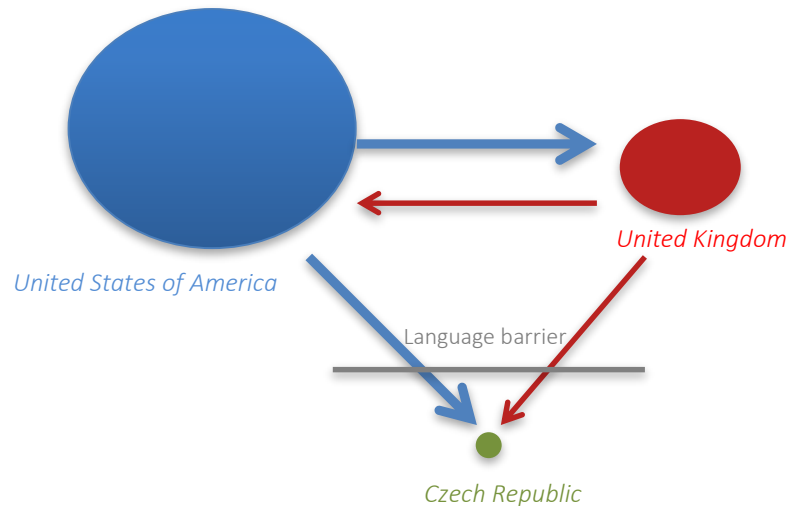
Despite the criticism of cross-national research, national borders represented pragmatic research barriers, making the project feasible and its process more transparent. As such, the countries chosen to conduct research in were the Czech Republic (CZ) and the United States of America (USA). The United Kingdom, or more precisely England, represented the academic point of reference or touchpoint, because even though no field research was conducted there, the entire project was formed under the guidance and support of the British academic community and its established scholarship. The more general reasoning behind the choice of the USA and the Czech Republic was partly introduced throughout the first chapter and it is therefore addressed more contextually here.

The Czech Republic was a crossroads where every idea intersected, as it is the researcher's country of origin and foremost concern. Despite its rich historical and philosophical foundation of media and education, as well as its recent embodiment of media education into formal schooling, the Czech Republic has made only a minor and almost no contribution to the dominant English language academic discourse. In contrast, the United States of America has been a strong voice behind much international academic and public debate about media, education, and media education. Their global media production impacts media and sociocultural environment in the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, being located on continental Europe, and sitting behind inherent



language and cultural barriers, in many ways the Czech Republic has been open to a wider range of voices, and at the same time to its own distinct media production (Štětka 2012).

**Figure 3** Comparable representation of the flow of both media production and academic thought



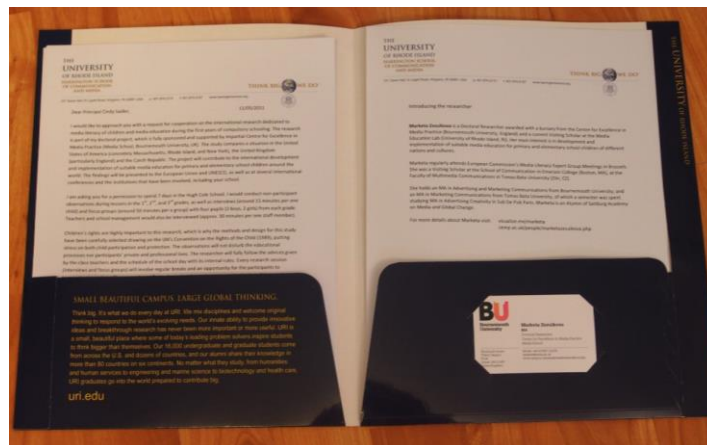
Although the United States, as well as the UK, could be argued to be in some way behind the Czech Republic in including media education in school curricula, the Czech Republic and its policy makers perhaps still look at these and other *louder* countries as the subject matter experts, instead of investing in its own tailored research. To address this issue, the field research began in the Czech Republic in early 2012 and continued in the United States of America in late 2012. The research process evolved while being carried out in the Czech primary schools then guided the field research conducted in the US primary schools. However, as the intercultural research aiming at ‘unity without uniformity’ suggests, none of the countries dominated the immediate, nor the post-hoc, dialogic interpretation of parts in relation to whole within the hermeneutic circle.

The intercultural rather than cross-national nature of the research further meant that to allocate the countries was merely the beginning. Since the project aimed to explore media learning in primary schools operating within diverse contexts, it sought variety within participants, not representativeness. The choice of the primary schools thus became crucial. The idea was once again to design boundaries, this time in the form of general ‘requirements’, and then search for suitable schools willing to participate. The first rule was for every school to be public and inclusive without any discrimination based on sex, race, nationality, religion, disability, or socioeconomic status (UNESCO 1948). The second requirement was for each institution to be situated in visible, distinct natural and artificial environments – from a mountain village to a world metropolis. The third condition, which applied mainly to the USA because unequal funding and social division is not common in the Czech public schools, was to research in a school district serving lower income children and a school district serving more affluent pupils. According to Vygotsky (1934 [1986], p.56) even Piaget (1926/1932) in his book *The Language and Thought of the Child* criticised his own research and the subsequently developed theories by saying ‘one should be able to study children in the most varied and contrasting social milieus’. The last requirement for the schools, or at least for the teaching staff, was to agree on active participation. Active participation, as opposite to simple toleration of the researcher, was crucial to the efficient research process, and

successful completion depended on the participants' guidance of the research – as explained in the first chapter – developed through engagement in a variety of ways and founded on the teachers' ability to take control when required or necessary (more e.g. on p.61).

The power had then shifted as it was ultimately the schools' choice to take part in the study by giving their informed consents. These are 'procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions' (Deiner and Crandall 1978, p.57); for the letter of information sent/taken to the schools see *Appendix 4*. To obtain informed consent in the Czech Republic was surprisingly easy and fast, as the first two primary schools contacted immediately agreed and signed the relevant forms. To gain access to US schools was initially significantly more complicated. The problem lay in the complicated regulations that were different in every state, region and school, and that the number of committees whose agreement would have to be personally sought varied. The interview with one of the school principals retrospectively revealed another possible reason, which was the excessive level of interest by researchers investigating in schools but subsequently never contributing anything back, forcing them 'to be more cautious and picky'. However, the issue of access was solved since the research was endorsed by the School of Communication at Emerson College in Boston (MA, USA), specifically Associate Professor in Media Literacy Paul Mihailidis, by the *Media Education Lab* at the University of Rhode Island (URI) in Kingston (RI) and by its Director Professor in Media Education Renee Hobbs, and lastly by *the National Association in Media Literacy Education* (NAMLE) and its Executive Director Michelle Lipkin. Through their community network two suitable US schools gave their informed consents (see *Figure 4*).

**Figure 4** Folder for the US schools with URI design and logo

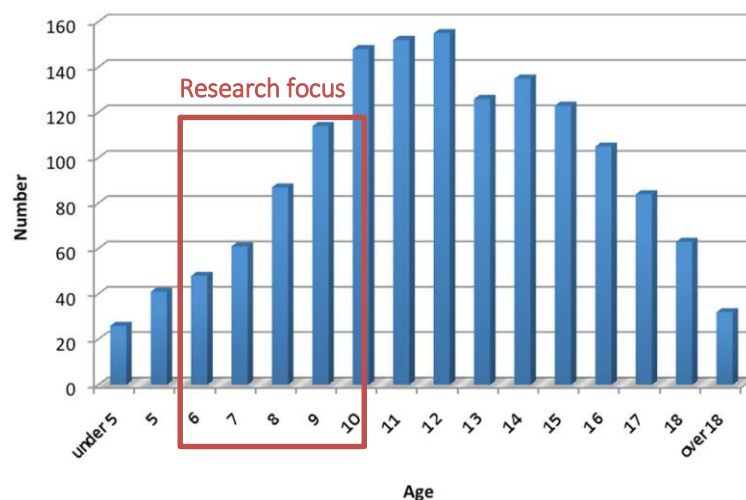


The final number therefore came to four primary schools, two in each country. These were given pseudonyms based on their location, beginning with the initial research at 'Village School' in the Czech Republic in January 2012 and then continuing in the same school but with the main field research from March to April; then researching in the second Czech school named here as 'City School' from May to June 2012; after that the research moved to the USA, starting at 'Town School' in November and concluding in 'Metropolitan School' in December 2012. More details about the individual schools and research schedule can be found in *Appendices 2* and *3*.

## Choosing the Suitable Primary School Grades

A consequential question was in which grade or grades of primary education should the research take place. The determining ground for making the decision was, as mentioned in the first chapter, that media education theory and practice have repeatedly neglected the foremost basic understanding of [1] a human as a constantly developing and ever-changing being and [2] of education as a phased progress. As Dewey (1909 [2008]) argued, that which should naturally be of the most interest is the progress made by the individual children of acquaintance, their improvements, advances, and growth in the knowledge, because 'it is from such standards as these that we judge the work of the school' (p.7). To address this research gap, at least in some respect, the project explored media learning across the first three grades of each primary school. These particular grades were chosen because they are associated with a number of significant external and internal changes that are often overlooked, or at least not taken sufficiently into account, by media (literacy) education theory and practice. Additionally, McNamee and Seymour (2012), who reviewed 320 empirical research articles published between 1993 and 2010 in 'childhood' journals, concluded that children under ten years of age 'show considerably less likelihood of being included in research samples' (p.162, see below *Figure 5*).

**Figure 5** Distribution of ages studied, whole sample of review conducted by McNamee and Seymour (2012)



Piaget (1926 [2003]) explored the internal, meaning developmental, changes children undergo roughly between the ages of six and nine years and suggested these years are when children move from late preoperational stage and early concrete operational stage. More specifically, he talked about the shift from egocentrism to the ability to see from others' perspectives and to sympathise, from non-verbal to verbal memory, from primitive reasoning to use of logic and problem-solving, and from dominant emotion and intuition driven behaviour to more rational based decisions. Some continue to support a staged developmental model (e.g. Roopnarine and Johnson 2012), whilst others criticise that it follows universality of Western logic (Beazley *et al.* 2009; Vourlekis 2009) and that children are from early childhood cognitive capable as much as the adults but simply less experienced and familiar with the world (Goswami 1992). It is however mostly agreed that the child roughly between the age of six and nine 'usually' significantly improves his or her metacognition and emotional, cognitive, social and behavioural self-regulation (Goswami 1992), as the participating teachers' equally agreed as the Chapters 3 and 4 will discuss.

Vygotsky (1934 [1986]) acknowledged Piaget's developmental and individuation principles, yet he criticised the fact that they neglect context. Vygotsky once again stressed the sociocultural-historical context – which includes the role of schools, teachers, peers, and media – influencing 'children and their experiences' (Miller 1993 [2011], p.171). This position drives attention to the external, meaning sociocultural, changes associated with the first years of compulsory education when children are entering and gradually exploring this new sociocultural environment. Langmeier and Krejčířová (2009) warned against the difficulties children of 'early school age' (roughly five/six to eight years) might encounter at this stage of transition to a structuralised environment with fixed rules, limited playtime, new learning approaches such as collaborative learning, and demands on a child's continuous attention and learning motivation. On the other hand, Langmeier and Krejčířová (2009) praised the eagerness of these novices to learn and Erikson (1959) called the moment of entering school as a great event themed as 'I am what I learn' (p.82). Erikson (1959, in Miller 1993 [2011], p.153) thus suggested that a successful transition and the first years of schooling 'give children (...) a feeling of competence and mastery, while failure brings a sense of inadequacy and inferiority'.

The child's educational and overall progress had to be taken into account in order to explore a potential formal media learning which would be developmentally suitable, relevant to the children's lives and at the same time would reflect the pedagogic beliefs and practices of primary school teachers. Since for various practical reasons the field research could not be carried out over a period of three years, following the same children from the first to the third grade, to conduct the inquiry across three grades in different classrooms represented a reasonable solution. Given there were four schools included in the study, the main field research was therefore conducted in a total number of twelve classrooms, four of each grade, six in each country.

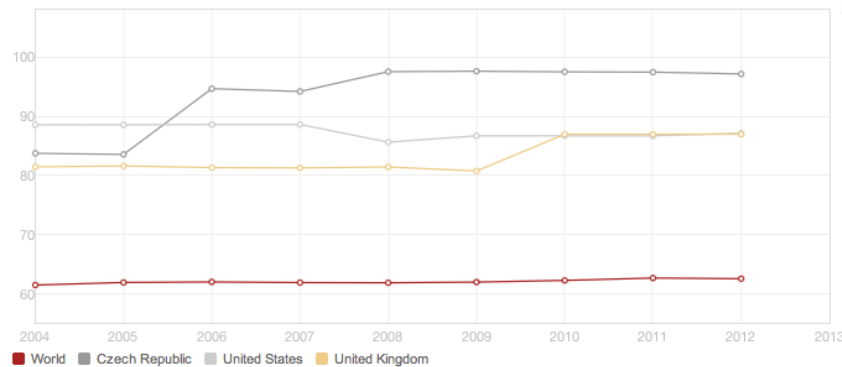
### Classrooms and Teachers Choosing the Researcher

The specific classrooms to participate within the given range were chosen through a dialogue between the schools' managements and the twelve teachers who volunteered. Since the researcher was left out of the negotiation, she had no power over choosing *the main teacher (T) participants*. The volunteering teachers were not necessarily media or media education enthusiasts, as criticised in the first chapter (see p.18), often it was quite the opposite as the following chapter will show. It was retrospectively discovered that the teachers' motivation to participate varied; some were curious or hoped to learn through feedback, others believed they had something to offer, and many simply wanted to help.

All of them were women. This unintentionally mirrored the overall situation of general primary education, with female teachers representing 97% of the total in the Czech Republic and 87% in the USA within the 2012/2013 academic year (*The World Data Bank 2014*) (see *Figure 6* below). The structure of the main teacher participant group could position the project among gender specific studies. However, as with childhood, gender is 'a socio-economic and cultural construct for differentiating between roles, responsibilities, constraints, opportunities and needs of women and men in a given context [which] are the result of learned roles, which change over time and vary widely within and across cultures' (Laurila and Young 2001, p.11). Since gender was not the subject of this study, being a woman or a female teacher simply refers here to 'the biological difference between women and men' (*ibid.*), yet a future media learning gender study about primary school teachers would indeed be worth carrying out. In contrast, the diversity of age and

number of years studying and practising education were a welcome variable, as it provided valuable insights into the participants' distinct historicities and contexts.

**Figure 6** Percentage of female teachers in primary education (World Data Bank 2014)



In addition to the main teacher participants, a ‘supporting’ group of school participants was formed over the field research. The inquiry had to draw upon other sources of information in order to gain more complex and contextual understanding of the relevant phenomena observed in the classrooms or heard about from the participating teachers and children. This process followed Mason’s (2002) strategic sampling from a wider universe, which suggests that selections other than the ones made prior to field research might become necessary (l.2519). Thus the researcher created two wider universe diagrams (see *Appendix 5*), including appropriate sources which could ‘provide useful and meaningful empirical contexts, illustrations or scenarios’ advancing the understandings relevant to the research aim and questions (*ibid.*). Among the final thirteen supporting school (SS) participants were four members of school management (SM), five specialised (music, art, ICT, library) teachers, a teacher assistant (TA), a parent volunteer (PV), a fifth grade learner (L), and a first grade teacher (T) from a classroom where the initial study was conducted; in total four male adults at the end participated in the research. The diagrams however served as a framework throughout the entire hermeneutic circle, allowing the research to draw upon other relevant information (re)sources such as media or policy documents. The full account of the adult participants can be found in *Appendix 6*.

### Researching with Adults: Cross-language Communication and Reflection

Since communication and interaction between *I* and *Thou* were previously identified as a valuable approach to knowledge co-creation, interviewing as an empathetic dialogue provided the possibility to observe gestural clues and listen to voice intention, thus allowing a more holistic understanding between *I* and *Thou*. This section thus introduces interviews as a research method in general, and in the context of research with adults in particular, because a separate section is devoted to interviews with children (see p.64).

Interview is here understood as a ‘basic mode of human interaction’ (Kvale 2007, p.1) and ‘conversation with a center [sic] but no sides’ (Isaacs 1999, p.17) as everyone engaged in a dialogue is involved in both individual and collective thinking and interpreting, in double hermeneutics. As

Cohen *et al.* (2011) suggested, interview 'is not simply about collecting data about life; it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable' (p.409). Similarly, just as Mall (2002) used the prefix *inter*-cultural referring to an experiential core of existence, Kvale (1996, p.14; 2007, p.1) talked about 'inter-view' and 'inter-action', emphasising an experiential core of knowledge construction (Stein 1916 [1989]). When comparing research interview with ordinary conversation or dialogue, however, research interview always has a specific purpose seeking explicit and detailed responses from the interviewees sharing their beliefs and experiences (Cohen *et al.* 2011); although implicit played as crucial a role as explicit in this research (West 1977) as teachers might not be explicitly aware of some of their beliefs and experiences within their holistic belief system – their personal philosophy.

Several types of research interviews have been introduced which differ predominantly in the degree of their structure (see e.g. Lincoln and Guba 1985; Bogdan and Biklen 1992; LeCompte and Preissle 1993). Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that 'the structured interview is useful when the researcher is aware of what she does not know, and therefore is in a position to frame questions that will supply the knowledge required, whereas the unstructured interview is useful when the researcher is not aware of what she does not know, and therefore relies on the respondents to tell her' (p.269). Since this inductive research was not aware of what it had not known prior to the first few interviews, it began with highly exploratory, unstructured, open-ended interviews, lasting between fifty to eighty minutes, and only gradually moved to more structured yet still open-ended interviews that were significantly narrower in focus and lasted between twenty to thirty minutes.

In addition to one focal interview (I) with each adult participant, which was usually performed during the last research day in a particular classroom, voice-recorded and transcribed (*Appendix 7*), the researcher and a teacher usually engaged in a few informal conversational interviews (CI) in a classroom. These emerged from the immediate context during, or usually soon after, observing or experiencing a particular phenomenon and were 'matched to [the] individuals and circumstances' (Cohen *et al.* 2011). The informal conversational interviews were not voice-recorded but they were summarised post-hoc within the hermeneutic circle. Whereas informal conversational interviews were entirely unstructured, generating heterogeneous knowledge through diverse issues, the concluding focal interviews with the teachers followed a guide (see below). The guide was constantly developed and the more specific it became, the more the interviews abided by it. Despite that, the general themes exploring the adult participants' philosophies formed of concrete beliefs and experiences embedded in their individual and collective historicities remained mostly unchanged:

- Motivation to become and to be a primary school teacher: general information about the participant's educational and professional history, accompanied by the direct 'why' questions
- Role of basic education, a specific grade, and a specific teacher in children's current and future lives: general questions combined with a focus on the specific phenomena previously observed or heard
- Media in classroom processes and relationships: first to ensure a shared understanding of media as *any medium* (literature, theatre and music included) but giving a teacher space to explain her/his own point of view, then engage in a free unstructured dialogue letting a participant explore the topic and reflect on her/his experience

- Childhood and media in children's lives: encourage a teacher to leave her/his thoughts on the classroom environment and to comment on her/his view on childhood/adulthood (depending on a teacher's angle) in general, and with media in particular
- Naturally occurring media learning: if there was still insufficient information about what a teacher believes children learn about media with, through, in, or without the physical presence of, media both in- and out-of- the classroom, then here to first focus specifically on what children learn about media through these processes, and then on what children learn about media without the physical presence of media
- Structured and formal media learning: what is media (literacy) education and what is the teacher's view on the current and ideal purpose and form of media (literacy) education as defined by her/him
- Any further insights to the relevant events previously observed and not yet covered
- Reflection/feedback on the research and researcher's presence in the classroom

The themes were more important than the sequence and wording of individual questions. As Oppenheim (1992) suggested, natural flow is key in enabling respondents to 'talk freely and emotionally and to have candour, richness, depth, authenticity, [and] honesty about their experiences' (p.65). He then talked about *stimulus equivalence*, indicating that instead of replicating the exact words, the aim should be to ensure that participants understand the questions in the same way (*ibid.*). This was especially relevant to this cross-language interview research engaged in Czech-English field research and hermeneutic circle. Winchatz (2006, p.85) criticised cross-cultural studies for ignoring 'the problematic issue of conducting research in a non-native language', and Temple and Edwards (2002, p.2) commented on the same problem in multilingual research saying it is 'a strange omission given that qualitative approaches are steeped in a tradition that acknowledges the importance of reflexivity and context'.

Fresh (2013) in her article *Meaning: lost, found or 'made' in translation? A hermeneutical approach to cross-language interview research* proposed a philosophically suitable and practically useful approach 'rooted in Gadamer's (1989) insights into meaning, language and translation' (p.87). She focused on 'the production of meaning in processes of interpretation and translation' and argued that 'reflecting upon and examining one's own fore-meanings is a necessary precondition for any researcher applying a hermeneutical approach' (pp.88-89). Fersch (2013) referred to an article in German on 'inter-cultural' research by Kruse (2009) who recommended a researcher must sensitise herself to her own 'concepts of relevance and their influence on the research process' (p.91). Such emphasis on the necessity of openness and reflectivity is consistent with Stein's approach to empathy. She wrote (1916 [1989], p.115):

'How much of [*Thou's*] experiential structure I can bring to my fulfilling intuition depends on my own structure. (...) I consider every subject whom I empathetically comprehend as experiencing a value as a person whose experiences interlock themselves into an intelligible, meaningful whole. (...) By contrast, I cannot fulfil what conflicts with my own experiential structure. (...) [But] I can be sceptical myself and (...) see his motive for his conduct. The correlate of this is not accessible to me, causing me to ascribe to him a personal level I do not myself possess. (...) In this way I [emphatically] understand it.'

Dewey, another key author upon whose work this research has also readily drawn, talked about *reflective thought* as a process deliberately seeking ‘the ground or basis for a belief’ and examining its ‘adequacy’ (Dewey 1910, p.1), which is particularly useful to research preoccupied with beliefs, justified beliefs, and holistic belief systems. As such, reflection can be seen as conscious exploration of one’s own experiential structure or historical consciousness with direct impact on one’s holistic belief system, and on the research project’s justified holistic belief system as for instance this paper’s overview and preface did (see p.1).

In another more pedagogic approach, Moon (1999 [2005]) suggested that reflection ‘pulls together a broad range of previous thinking or knowledge in order to make greater sense of it for another purpose that may transcend the previous bounds of personal knowledge or thought’, or in other words when one is “sitting back’ from a situation to review it’ (p.5, *quotation marks in original*). Moreover, reflection could be understood as internal dialogic process through which the researcher kept moving back and forth (Robinson 2011) and from parts to whole (Heidegger 1927 [1990]). Moon (1999 [2005], p.4, *quotation marks in original*), however, argued that reflection could occur also unconsciously when ‘conclusions to complicated issues can just ‘pop up’’, which overlaps with intuition, a psychological function that Jung (1921 [1991]) positioned on the same level of importance as thinking and feeling. For Moon, reflection necessarily involves retrospective cogitation on such reflection by being reflexive. Such part of reflection is then aimed at exploring the relationship between *I* and *Thou* in the research process and knowledge creation. As Dewey (1910, p.1) put it, reflective and reflexive thinking ‘alone [is] truly educative in value’, as doctoral research should be.

## Bridging Research with Adults and Children through Classroom Observations

Reflection was especially crucial to classroom observations (O), another research method that was chosen as particularly relevant to this research focused on media learning in primary school classrooms. Research observation in primary school classrooms as non-experimental settings provided a first-account view into naturally occurring situations as lived experiences and thus allowed moving beyond double hermeneutics that are characteristic of interviews. The classroom observations were nevertheless labelled as a complementary research method, because none of the beliefs were justified solely on their basis unless supported by the interviews with the adult and child participants. This was decided retrospectively due to practical reasons, as the high inconsistency between the observational processes in the individual classrooms impeded research transparency (as this section will show), and philosophical reasons, as this research focused on teachers’ and learners’ subjective meanings and interpretations of their experiences. The combination of interviews and observations, common in social science research such as childhood and educational (see e.g. Bondy 1990; Lindsay 2007) and media literacy (e.g. Buckingham 2013a,b) studies, was therefore suitable for this research. It enabled the researcher to gain understanding from the ‘emic’ standpoint of insiders and the ‘etic’ perspective of the researcher as an outsider (Fetterman 1998), but by treating the observations as secondary, the emic was superior to etic.

A researcher as an outsider looks afresh at everyday phenomena that might otherwise be taken for granted or ignored (Cooper and Schindler 2001), or simply unnoticed by a teacher who is potentially overwhelmed with other priorities and focused on, for him or her, more explicit beliefs and experiences. Two well-known observational studies conducted in US primary school



classrooms reported that the teachers engaged in over a thousand interpersonal exchanges in a day (Jackson 1968) and that there were almost two hundred changes in who listened and who talked (Adams and Biddle 1970). Although the main teacher participants felt confident to talk about media-related topics in general terms, given that they were neither specialised media educators nor media or media education enthusiasts, they sometimes struggled to recall concrete experiences to support their beliefs. Thus the classroom observations not only complemented the interviews and increased contextual understanding (Simpson and Tuson 2003), they allowed the generation of an authentic inside view to these beliefs through lived experiences observed by someone coming from a media rather than educational background and for whom media learning was the priority. This was particularly useful for speculative reflection addressing the issue of potential media learning in primary education and a teacher's possible role within it.

To be an outsider in a primary school classroom however also carries a negative connotation, as the meaning can be closer to an interferer or intruder than simply to a visitor – this also being one of the main reasons why teachers were being included into the study and asked to actively participate. A primary school classroom does not stand simply for a space in which a class meets and spends a considerable amount of time; on average, 924 hours per year is the total compulsory instruction time worldwide, 848 in the Czech Republic, 912 in England (OECD 2013), and 943 in the USA (Pew Research Centre 2014). It is more of a community within which 'teachers have both the right and the responsibility to develop a climate in the classroom which supports effective learning' (Martin 2007, p.40). Entering such a learning community, formed of members collectively engaging with each other on a daily basis over a long period of time (Brophy *et al.* 2010) necessarily brought about questions about the researcher's role.

Wragg (1994) simplified the researcher's position as 'an additional adult who is not normally present' (p.15). He claimed the presence itself influences what happens, but 'it is not easy to say exactly how things might change' (*ibid.*), and it was not easy to say within this research either. Gold (1958) and Wragg (1994) positioned a researcher in the centre of such discussion and focused equally on the demands put on him or her as an observer and as a person. Gold (1958) structured the demands around four diverse roles a social scientist conducting field research can theoretically take up. He derived from, but extended, Junker's (1952) scale ranging from being a 'complete participant' at one end to being a 'complete observer' at the other. The roles of complete participant, a full member of the group whose identity and purpose is hidden, and participant-as-observer, whose identity and purpose are not hidden but she participates more than observes and thus slowly becomes a member of the group, were dismissed immediately for the same reasons as action research and ethnography. The choice was then between complete observer and observer-as-participant.

A week long 'initial study' aiming to clarify the research methods and the researcher's role was carried out in the Czech Village School in January 2012. The study discovered that complete observation would have been impossible to conduct in the context of this project. Firstly, as Gold (1958) proposed, 'the complete observer role entirely removes a field worker from social interaction with informants' (p.221), which was not achievable for this project interviewing the same teachers and some of the same pupils that were being observed, as will be explained later. Secondly, moral and ethical commitments, and perhaps even legal concerns, obliged the researcher to be transparent about her identity and purpose at all times to all participants. This was particularly important since the project refused to view the participants as objects or inferior subjects. Therefore every first appearance of the researcher in a classroom was accompanied by

a brief introduction (see below) and the observer could therefore not avoid being taken into account (Gold 1958).

'Hi everyone. My name is Markéta, but you can call me Maky [and you can address me informally]. I am from the Czech Republic but I study at a university in England. I am here because I am interested in how you spend your school days, how you learn, what you learn, what you do during your recess and what things interest you. I will also spend a bit of extra fun time with some of you who agreed to help me out. Miss [name] will decide when this will be. The rest of the time I will be sitting there in the back, enjoying being here with you. Would you like to ask me anything?'

Yet it was only during the initial study and the first weeks of the main field research that it became absolutely clear that the researcher was going to have no or considerably little power over the level of her participation. The teachers and the pupils were the decision-makers on this matter. Despite the researcher's initial unsuccessful protests, she was variously directly or indirectly acknowledged and asked to participate in the organised and free activities. *Photograph 1* below is an example of indirect participation, portraying the second grade teacher writing down a sentence 'let's hope Markétka [diminutive of Markéta] will come tomorrow' formed by the pupils during a Czech language exercise. The next *Photograph 2* then illustrates direct participation, when the third grade US teacher called the researcher to the front of the class to informally chat about the Czech Republic. As another case in point, *Photograph 3* captures a mixed group of six to nine year olds during their collective recess. The group persuaded the observer to take part in a franchise board game of the European animated series *W.I.T.C.H* (*SIP Animation 2004*) they were playing.

**Photograph 1** Sentence dictated by the second graders in a Czech lesson: 'Let's hope Markétka [diminutive of Markéta] will come tomorrow.' [Taken in March 2012]



**Photograph 2** Left notes after a chat with the third graders and their teacher about the Czech Republic [November 2012]



**Photograph 3** Participating in, and taught how to play, the board game *W.i.t.c.h* during a collective recess [April 2012]



The researcher went with the flow in order to ensure smooth interaction and a comfortable atmosphere, which was acknowledged by the teachers.

Eliška (T2-ITR): 'I didn't pay attention to you, almost as if you weren't there, for me it wasn't different, but it was for the kids. Not at the very beginning, but with time. The more comfortable and familiar they felt with you, the more they were acknowledging you during the lessons. Turning to you, communicating with you, asking for your attention. (...) I didn't mind they were going to show you their notebooks, their drawings, or that they were waving at you from their desks. Or when they were creating the sentences - that was great, it motivated them.'

Researcher: [end of interview] 'Is there anything you'd like to add?'

Beatrix (T8-I): 'No, just that I hope you enjoyed your time you've spent here in our classroom. I know the children enjoyed seeing you.'

The researcher thus became aware of her position as an *observer-as-participant*, who interacts with the participants but places the research interests above the participation matters. Gold (1958) however criticised the fact that the contact between observer-as-participant and the informants is usually 'so brief, and perhaps superficial, he is more likely (...) to misunderstand the informant, and to be misunderstood by him' (p.221). A brief stay was, according to him, a one-visit observation accompanied by an interview, whereas this research consisted of longer and more frequent visits, as well as of several interviews conducted within one classroom. Observations in the participating classrooms were day-long and repeated on a daily basis for a period of two weeks in the first classroom and successively decreasing to a period of two days in the last one. Hence, even though the relatively 'brief relationships with numerous informants [exposed the] observer-as-participant to many inadequately understood universes of discourse that [she could not] take time to master', the longer and regular visits improved the contextual understanding, broke communication barriers, and made the researcher and participants more like 'congenial partners' (Gold 1958, p.221). Hatch (1990), focusing on research with young children, argued that to establish personal relationships with children increases the quality of research outcomes, especially in the interview context, and helps overcome a number of ethical issues (more on p.59).

The congenial partnership was supported by power shifts and, as Wragg (1994) argued, also by 'the statures of the person concerned and (...) even such matters as the age [and] dress' (p.15). Thus the friendly nature of the relationships naturally developed partly due to the researcher's personality and approach. She was in her early twenties, wore youthful clothes, constantly smiled, asked everybody to address her by her first name or nickname (as shown above) and, when relevant, to speak in informal Czech (also portrayed above). She positioned herself as a learner rather than researcher, when interacting with the adult and child participants, being open to dialogue and treating all participants as the experts, or her teachers.

The drawback with the lack of control was that it became difficult to decide what counted as 'evidence of, or a proxy for, an underlying, latent construct' (Cohen *et al.* 2011, p.456). Morrison (1993) differentiated between four types of 'settings' that observations can access – physical, human, interactional, and programme – a suitably holistic approach. The interactional setting was of the foremost relevance to the project as it covered all interactions within which media learning could take place: formal, informal, planned, unplanned, verbal, or non-verbal, happening between a teacher and a pupil, a teacher and a group of pupils, the researcher and the participants, among the children, or even with, in, and through media. The second element to observe was the programme setting, including resources such as media and technology, curriculum and the role of media learning within it, and especially pedagogic styles on which the teacher interviews were focused. Equally the physical setting, the classroom environment and its organisation, further illustrated the pedagogy. Lastly, the human setting was about describing the group's composition, such as the size of a group, its gender, age and more, rather than about interpreting it.

What the observations should exactly be looking for in these settings was nevertheless only explored gradually and clarified eventually within this inductive research process. Similarly to the interviews, the observations moved from unstructured and responsive, through semi-structured and unfocused, to semi-structured but focused (Patton 1990). The unstructured observations were simply exploring what was taking place. The unfocused semi-structured observations were then focusing on the meaning of what was happening and how it related to the research aim and questions. Finally, the focused semi-structured observations were clear on what to look for and how to look for it, which further justifies the adjustments in the observation length mentioned earlier. Alongside the structural came changes in recording techniques. The less structured the observations were, the more extensive and random the written field notes became, representing oral accounts, and the more photographs were taken as visual accounts. The settings were not voice or video recorded for ethical and legal reasons, because only some of the children and their parents provided informed consent and agreed to recording. The notes and photographs had allowed a revisiting of the phenomena once it became clearer what to search for. Thus the responsive and unfocused observations, when compared with the focused ones, had ultimately generated through the hermeneutic circle equally relevant beliefs.

Additionally then, observations contributed to the greater contextual sensitivity to which increased attention has been paid in empirical educational studies, drawing conclusions from cross- and inter- cultural research. Moreover, Dimmock (2002) stated that the need for raised sensitivity applies to those conducting research in or with culture or cultures other than their own, including national cultures and classroom cultures, or applying theories and practices drawn from elsewhere. Both these arguments applied to this research. The development and maintenance of sensitivity to context depended equally on constant reflection and ongoing contextual research including a process seemingly similar to content analysis, but in the end quite different.

Krippendorff (2004) described content analysis as ‘a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use’ (p.18). The difficulty of choosing the right artefacts and evaluating their authenticity and purpose, as key features of a content analysis, usually lies on the researcher’s shoulders (Barzun and Graff 2003; Robson 2011). In the case of this research, the focus was primarily on the written documents mentioned by the adult participants and the media artefacts the child participants engaged with. The documents varied from educational bills such as the *Framework Education Programme for Elementary Education* (VUP 2007) in the Czech Republic or the *No Child Left Behind Act* (USA Congress 2001) in the USA, to school textbooks or classroom curricula and timetables. Although the project originally thought of analysing a variety of artefacts created by the participating children (explained on pp.64-65), in the end the emphasis was instead on publicly available media products towards which the children directed the researcher. These were highly diverse, ranging from *Child’s Play* (MGM/UA 1988) *YouTube* videos to *Harry Potter* books (Rowling 1997-2007) and film series (Warner Bros. 2001-2011). Yet the process was less about analysing content and more about experiencing it as a whole when trying to empathetically understand the foreign experience of both the adult and child participants. It thus was not really a ‘content analysis’, but rather a ‘contextual experience’.

Probably most importantly though, the observations together with occasional contextual experiences eased the breaking of communication barriers and the development of congenial partnerships as mentioned earlier. These were a critical step in researching with the child participants, to whom attention is paid next.

## Main Learner Participants and the Ethical Doubts

Although every child present in the observed classrooms was considered to be a part of this research, a number of the main child participants ‘actively participated’ in the project; a reasoning that was explained throughout the first chapter and is addressed here from a research ethics perspective.

The decision had been informed by the United Nation’s *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989b) calling for treatment of *a child*, ‘every human being below the age of eighteen years’, as a social actor with a right to partake in the construction of his or her own life and the decision making that affects him or her (Lewis and Lindsay 2000; Tisdall *et al.* 2009). For instance, *Article 12* reads ‘the child who is capable of forming his or her own views [has] the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child’ (UN 1989b). *Article 13* writes ‘[t]he child shall have the right to freedom of expression’ and *Article 14* emphasises one ‘shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought’ (*ibid.*). Respect for children’s right to be heard, coupled with the idea of children being experts on childhood as a world governed by them (e.g. Danby and Farrell 2005; Rinaldi 2006), must, according to Coyne (2010), lead ‘to research which seeks to directly access children’s views and opinions [as it is] now recognizing [sic] the importance of recording children’s own perspectives in order to understand children’s lives in their own terms’ (p.452).

Balen *et al.* (2006) believed exploring these perspectives is important as they ‘may differ from, and be more sophisticated than, accounts on what adults think children think’ (p.31). Such research goes beyond ‘simply accepting that children grow to *become* an adult, it positions children as competent social actors, being, in their own right’ (Sargeant and Harcourt 2012, p.2). The view on

children as beings not only becoming according to Clark and Moss (2005) then leads to ethical research treating them as 'experts in their own lives, skilful communicators, right holders, and meaning-makers' (p.5); as this research attempted to do.

*The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UN 1948) and Ofcom (2014) put equal emphasis on participation and protection, as does the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UN 1989b). As with media debates, research theory and practice views children as especially vulnerable subjects needing adult protection. As a result, investigation with children 'requires negotiation with multiple layers of gatekeepers at different stages of the research process (Coyne 2010, p.452). Recognising children as competent social actors and knowledgeable subjects, while at the same time securing their protection, evoked tension, which was similarly experienced by other researchers accessing children through the hierarchy of gatekeepers (e.g. Balen *et al.* 2006).

The initial gatekeeper standing between the project and its participants was *Bournemouth University* (BU) requiring two actions to be taken. Firstly, it was mandatory for a researcher to undertake an e-module called *Ethics 1: Good Research Practice* and *Ethics 2: Working with Human Subjects*. Secondly, BU's *Initial Research Checklist* had to be written and approved by the ethics committee prior to opening a conversation with the participants, which included the passing of the Czech and British *Criminal Records Bureaus'* (CRB) checks. Passing the equivalent US criminal record check was found to be unnecessary, because the researcher had never stayed in the United States of America for longer than six months. Instead the US gatekeepers became Emerson College, the Media Education Lab, and NAMLE, as explained earlier (see p.48). The next gatekeepers were the school management and teachers as also already highlighted. In addition, equally important here was also what Morrow and Richards (1996, p.95) called 'informed dissent', allowing the participants to withdraw or refuse to participate at any point without stating a specific reason. The school managers and the teachers hold the power over their own participation as well as the children's. Whereas written consent to the classroom observations applied solely to the teachers, the active participation of the individual children required additional permission from their legal guardians (*Appendix 8*), being the fourth gatekeeper, and only then from the children themselves.

The strategy for acquiring legal guardians' and the children's initial permissions evolved over the course of the research. In the first classroom the researcher conducted the field research in, she asked all children to give the consent forms to their parents, believing only few would return approved, which would make 'a natural selection'. The number of returns with a positive answer was however much higher than expected, leaving the researcher responsible for *picking* the children herself and thus she asked the third grade Village School teacher Marie (T1) to assist in choosing as diverse a group of participants as possible. However, the children who had actively partaken in the research afterwards talked about their experience with their peers, which increased the desire of the other children with the approved consent forms to participate as well. Consequently, the researcher had to include another six third graders in addition to the previous seven. What is more, Marie became concerned about the few children without their parents' permission who expressed feelings of exclusion. Danby and Farrell (2005) faced a similar issue when researching with primary school children, on which they commented '[this] raised theoretical questions about adults contesting or even thwarting children's desire to participate as emblematic or adult governance of children's lives' (l.683). As a solution, Marie proposed that the researcher could lead a two hour art class, as a guest session rather than as an inquiry, devoted to collage making and talking about media (*Photograph 4*).

**Photograph 4** Learning about media in art class: making and describing collages guest session for the third graders in the Village School [Taken in March 2012 by a pupil standing on a chair]



After this research experience, the researcher always asked the teachers to select a small number of pupils whose parents would give permission and send the consent forms prior to the researcher's arrival to a classroom. It was then up to a teacher to justify the selection process if the children required an explanation, which was repeatedly confirmed as the most efficient way of ensuring the inclusion of the needed number of children with various capabilities and at the same time decreasing the feeling of exclusion among the others. The teachers had the kind of authority and trust that the researcher as an outsider lacked. The concern voiced by Danby and Farrell (2005) was for practical reasons dismissed in this project, even though it would certainly be worth further study, as Balen *et al.* (2006) for instance did by criticising the gatekeeping system for undermining child competency.

The children then equally had a right to informed dissent, ensuring that were aware of the choice to no longer participate or opt out completely. In one example, a group of the second graders (G19) in the City School found the research group activity rather boring and soon lost interest in any dialogue with the researcher whatsoever. Due to their teacher Jarmila's (T5) wish not to disturb the regular session running simultaneously but in a different room, the researcher could not bring the group back before the agreed time. The researcher had to thus give up the inquiry and focus on entertaining the children in order to keep them safe and relatively calm, as their first tendency was to shout and run around. Giving them the research equipment to play with luckily solved the issue (*Photograph 5*), which was at that point more important than the project itself. In another example, a nine year boy (P55) in the Metropolitan School wanted to terminate before the rest of the group had finished, because his favourite art class was about to begin (*Photograph 6*); another, younger boy (L50) in the Town School did so too because of a P.E. session. Danby and Farrell (2005) explained that by constantly inviting the children to 'reaffirm their decision to participate, consent continued to be constructed as ongoing throughout research [which] allowed the children themselves to act as gatekeepers of the research' (l.695-696).

*Photograph 5 Entertaining the children who gave their dissent to keep them safe [Taken in May 2012 by one of the learners]*



*Photograph 6 Boy preferring art class above research participation [December 2012]*



The consent process with children involved a constant clarification of the procedures, but only a sequential clarification of the research topic. The first opportunity for the child participants to ask questions was during the brief classroom introduction or anytime they approached the observer-as-participant during her stay. The main child participants then had more opportunities to discuss the research during, and mainly after, the group and individual research activities. The research focus on *media* could not be revealed immediately. This was particularly the case during a group activity, which slowly built towards posing the direct question ‘have you ever heard the word media?’, as will be explained later. This was followed by a short educational intervention at the end of a session, through which further information about the project was disclosed. For instance, one curious third grader kept reflecting on, and asking about, the purpose of the session. He began:

Fin (P54): So why are we doing this?

Researcher: I’m a student, like you, and I want to learn about the things you do and that interest you.

Fin: Hmm, ok. [*Doubtful tone*]



After attention was being paid to *television* during the first few minutes, he inquisitively looked at the researcher and replied saying ‘interesting’. After a little while Fin asked if it was ‘like an IQ test’, questioning the honesty of the researcher’s previous explanation. He joined the debate more actively once he was reassured that it was not an IQ test. Then the question about media was posed and the children were told that everything they had just discussed was collectively called ‘media’. Subsequently the debate about the research purpose arose again:

Lillian (P56): Now you can tell us what this thing is?

Fin: Is this like research about media?

Researcher: Yes, exactly, it’s about children like you and what they do with media. I want to find out how you could learn about media at school. Would you like that?

Fin: Yes, that’s good. Because you want to get the chance to use them, because it makes life a lot easier if you know how to do those things. It’s just cool.

Researcher: So can I tell other people about the things you all told me today?

Group (13): Yeah. [*Nodding*]

Researcher: Cool. Thank you.

Therefore, as Freebody (2003) wrote, ‘[t]he respective interactional rights and responsibilities among the speakers [...] were established by the end of what we may regard as the negotiation exchange’ (p.106). According to Albon and Rosen (2014) such a negotiation is part of the more complex process of ‘developing more reciprocal relationships between participants and researchers (...) [and] building common cause with children’ (p.118). This applied to any interaction between the researcher and a research participant, ‘no matter if [it is an] adult or child research participant’ (Danby and Farrell 2005, l.719). However, Skånfors (2009) differentiated between an adult participant and a primary school child and was against the uncritical views on child competency to construct informed consent or dissent. As Woodhead and Faulkner (2000) stated, respect ‘for children’s status as social actors does not diminish adult responsibilities’ (p.31).

Despite the researcher’s child-centred approach and careful use of wording, the understanding child participants had about the research, and their rights within it, varied between the groups as well as the individuals. The researcher empathetically focused on the children’s feelings, especially when they possibly indicated their wish to terminate a session, such as tension, fear, boredom, or impatience, and acted accordingly. Moreover, passing through the hierarchy of the gatekeepers meant that the child was the last person asked, despite the child being at the centre of the study (Coyné 2009). Coyné (2009) was critical that ‘[b]y the time the researcher approaches the child for assent/consent to participate, the child’s real possibility or right to decide about participation is questionable’ (p.454). In any case, it was through children’s consents and dissents the final composition and mixture of the sixty-five main pupil (child/learner) participants (P) was developed (see *Appendix 9*).

## Researching with the Main Child Participants: Individual and Group Photo-Elicitation Interviews

Skånfors (2009) cited an article in Swedish by educational researcher Johansson (2003) who suggested that in such situations, when the child’s competence or freedom to decide are

questionable, 'the researchers must give priority to showing respect for the children and their integrity throughout the [research] process' (p.4). This and the following sections thus introduce the ethically framed research process and methods.

Among others Macnaughton *et al.* (2007) advocated for 'child-friendly' research, which Punch (2002) concisely criticised by asking 'if children are competent social actors, why are special 'child-friendly' methods needed to communicate with them?' (p.321). She disagreed with two extreme tendencies in research with children; children being 'just the same or entirely different from adults' (*ibid.*, p.322). According to James *et al.* (1998), the methodological implication is that those considering children to be 'essentially indistinguishable from adults' apply the same methods when researching with both, whereas those seeing them as essentially different lean towards long ethnographic studies. Punch (2002) agreed with James *et al.* (1998) that the golden rule in research with children is to treat them as equal human beings but with different competencies and interests needing additional attention. Such research has become predominantly interdisciplinary in nature and has been built around the notion of children's 'voices' (Spyrou 2011). Consequently, a number of studies have stressed the importance of offering multiple opportunities for the children to speak up and for a researcher to listen (see e.g. Clark and Moss' (2005) *mosaic approach*). In other words, the common requirement in researching with children has become a multimodal research approach taking 'into account children's varied social competencies and life experiences' (Punch 2002, p.322).

The main reason for carrying out the initial field study was to make an informed decision about the need for, and suitability and purpose of, other than observational methods, which would be capable of exploring elements and processes of children's media learning both inside and outside of the school environment. The initial study conducted in the Village School was not about trying out established methods, or assessing reliability and testing validity, in the same way that a standard pilot study would (Wester *et al.* 2008). Instead, the aim was to gain a deeper understanding of what could be done, and how it could be done, within the scope of this inductive, interdisciplinary, and intercultural research.

A full school day was spent in each classroom of the first, second and third graders and their teachers. Through unstructured observations and informal conversational interviews, predominantly with the teachers but occasionally with the children, the pragmatic conclusion was made that even the youngest or the shyest children were 'competent' and willing enough to communicate verbally when given the right support or/and stimulus.

For instance, the researcher was invited by the first grade teacher Helena (SS7-T) to join the first graders during their 'circle time' on the rug. The children had to describe their weekend and comment on what the person next to them said before. Afterwards the children returned to their seats and were now drawing pictures of their weekends (see *Photograph 7*). The researcher walked around the classroom and talked with the individual pupils while they were working. Without applying any psychological projective interpretation, simply looking at the pictures did not reveal anything new or additional to what the children described before. Instead, the pictures served well as the starting points for discussions, through which the pupils were encouraged to share other, often more research relevant, weekend memories. Moreover, those who seemed to be timid in front of the group were confident and open when given individual attention. Even though the creative activity was enjoyable for the children, the preparation, the task itself and the cleaning up was time consuming, leaving little space and time for discussing topics meaningful to the research as well as to the children.

**Photograph 7** Examples of some of the children's drawings that portrayed media [January 2012]



Creative and visual methods have become a popular approach taken by educational studies (e.g. Kaplan and Howes 2004; Noyes 2004) and media research (e.g. Goodman 2003; Moran 2002; Soep 2006) – with filming, photographing, collage making and drawing being the most common techniques. These visual and creative methods are believed to at least partially increase children's 'control about how to contribute' (Darbyshire *et al.* 2005, p.424). However, Piper and Frankham (2007) and Buckingham (2009b) criticised overstated claims about empowerment of children's voices made by these and similar studies. They added that the majority of such research suffers from an uncritical celebration of representation and leads to simplified empiricist interpretation. Spyrou (2011) summarised this point well (p.151):

'By accessing the otherwise silenced voices of children – by giving children a voice – and presenting them to the rest of the world, researchers hope to gain a better understanding of childhood. The disempowered social position of children and the need to attend to children and childhood from a social justice and rights perspective also add a moral imperative to the cause. Yet, this preoccupation with children's voices, which is well deserved both in an ethical and a research sense, has mostly failed to scrutinize [sic] itself and to attend critically to issues of representation.'

Visual and creative methods worked well in the context of Goetz *et al.*'s (2005) cross-cultural study exploring the role of media in children's imaginative fantasy worlds, but Buckingham (2009b) argued that most of the time these methods do not provide a transparent and easy to decode reflection of children's realities, beliefs, and experiences; as the initial study also suggested. Even media education theory and practice often encounter difficulty when it comes to analysis and assessment of children's media products. Another possibility is to analyse the production processes instead of the final product, which was done within this research, but only if they occurred naturally among the children or intentionally with the teacher within the classroom environment. On the other hand, in their obesity-focused study, Darbyshire and his colleagues (2005) concluded that creative activities 'helped engage and interest [the child participants] while demonstrating that we recognized [sic] them as active agents in the creation of their worlds'

(p.424). Hence using visual and creative methods to construct knowledge is one thing, but to use them for the participants' engagement and enjoyment is another.

Drawing upon the initial study and relevant interdisciplinary literature, the combination of group (GI) and individual (II) photo elicitation interviews was chosen as a sufficiently appropriate, efficient and ethical method for researching with the main child participants.

### *Reasoning behind photo elicitation interviewing*

Conducting group as well as individual interviews with the same children, aimed at giving them more and distinct opportunities to participate, was equally beneficial to the research. Arksey and Knight (1999) edited Arksey's (1996) list of advantages and disadvantages, stating that joint interviews might more easily establish an atmosphere of confidence, which is why, for instance, Eder and Fingerson (2003) preferred group to one-on-one interviews with children. Yet this differed between individuals, especially when there were one or more dominant informants silencing the others (Jordan *et al.* 1992), or participants shy to disagree with their peers. In return, this provided 'insights into the interactions and nature of relationships' among the peers (Arksey and Knight 1999, p.76). Group interviewing generated a more complete account, as the participants were filling in the gaps and memory lapses and were developing the discussion among themselves, instead of simply responding to a question (*ibid.*). At the same time it was challenging to fairly divide the interviewer's attention and to further explore the personal matters that emerged (Watts and Ebbutt 1987), which is why the individual interviews included follow-up questions specific to each member of a group.

However, Scott (2000) argued that interviewing alone may be 'beyond' children's capacity for abstract and reflective thinking (p.99), which is a particular concern for studies involving children under eight years of age (Dockett and Perry 2003), such as was partly this one. Yet even when researching with adults, photo elicitation is equally believed to stimulate the process of thinking more fully. As Harper (2002) argued, 'exchanges based on words alone utilize [sic] less of the brain's capacity than do exchanges in which the brain is processing images as well as words' (p.13). He continued that a photo elicitation interview not only 'elicits more information, but rather [it] evokes a different kind of information' (*ibid.*). Another point he made was that photo elicitation might lead researchers and subjects with diverse sociocultural backgrounds towards a common understanding, from which Epstein (2006) and her colleagues benefited when investigating with six to sixteen year olds speaking either English or French.

According to Epstein *et al.* (2006) and several more, photo elicitation makes interviewing more fun and distances it from being seen as a school test (e.g. Cappello 2005; Horstman and Bradding 2002; Clark 1999). Clark (1999) further argued that question-and-answer based on the sharing of information rarely happens in children's everyday and naturally occurring interactions, and argued it is instead characteristic of school oral examination done by adult authority. As a result, Harper (2002) regarded the photo elicitation interview 'as a postmodern dialogue based on the authority of the subject rather than the researcher' (p.15), making the method not only a practical but also a philosophically suitable option here.

Photo elicitation basically refers to the inserting of photographs, paintings, cartoons, public displays, or virtually any visual, and sometimes even audiovisual images into a research interview

(Harper 2002). At one extreme of the continuum the images used can be fully abstract, 'in the middle of the continuum are images that depict events that were part of collective or institutional pasts', whereas '[a]t the other extreme of our continuum photographs portray the intimate dimensions of the social – family or other intimate social group, or one's own body' (*ibid.*, p.13). Epstein *et al.* (2006) recommended involving the child participants in the taking of the pictures prior to interviewing them, whereas Harper (2002) claimed 'images may connect an individual to experiences or eras even if the images do not reflect the research subject's actual lives' (p.13). In the latter case the pictures serve as what Wagner (1978) called interview stimuli, which is the approach adopted by this research.

Photographs of people unknown to the participating children were used in the group interviews and two sets of cards with drawings assisted the individual interviews. The purpose of both was to 'invoke comments, memory, and discussion' (Banks 2001, p.87) in a more enjoyable and less authoritative way. Yet another aim, to which little attention has been paid in research with children, was to avoid being patronising, as, for instance, a puppet show for this age group would have been (see e.g. Eder 1990). Even the youngest participants of this project agreed that puppets are for 'babies and small kids'. Hence the photos and drawings were not overly childish and, although the interviewer used language carefully, she never inclined to use baby talk.

### *Photo-elicitation group interviews in practice*

A total of fifteen photo-elicitation group interviews (GI) were conducted with sixty children. Among the participants were thirty-one girls and twenty-nine boys, with the groups being mostly of mixed gender, except two male (GI1, GI8) and two female groups (GI2, GI6). The youngest participants were six years of age and the oldest had just turned ten years old. Seven groups consisted of the third graders (see p.60 for explanation), four of the second graders, and four of the first graders. The group interviews were voice-recorded and summarised in a scrapbook (see p.78).

Thirty-seven pictures on twenty-three *PowerPoint* slides were shown on a 13inch laptop to each group. Using a portable device allowed research to be conducted in any place assigned by a teacher, ranging from a hallway to an art atelier (*Photographs 8*). Moreover, the use of a laptop and *PowerPoint* was exciting for the children participating, who often took turns in changing the slides on the researcher's request. Some photographs were shown directly, whereas some were displayed only partially at first. The children were encouraged to guess 'what is on the picture', which served simply as an additional fun element (*Figure 7*).

### *Photographs 8 Example of spaces where the group interviews were conducted*



**Figure 7** *Guessing what is on the picture before revealing it fully*



The photographs (*Figure 7*) were carefully chosen according to various criteria. First of all, they reflected the panmedia approach taken up by this research and were thus grouped as follows; [1] television, film and theatre, [2] computing and the internet, [3] videogames, online games, and gaming consoles, [4] mobiles and touch-screen devices, [5] audio and music, [6] print and electronic books, magazines, comics, and newspapers. Secondly, since one of the goals was to explore the children's media experiences and beliefs, or in other words their media-related actions, feelings, relationships, and meaning-makings, the people in the photographs were central to the discussion. As a result the photographs were combined to individually and collectively address engagement with media from various angles, or in other words the phenomena of fusion; [1] social, individualistic or gender specific activity, [2] passive or active consumption, participation, and production, [3] in school and out of school engagement, [4] distinct feelings.

**Figure 8** *Examples of the photographs*



Thirdly, to investigate the participants' feelings connected to media, the photographs captured people with facial expressions showing various emotions. Charles Darwin's seminal work *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872) pointed out that facial expressions of emotions are inherently linked to interactions between people and their environment. He stressed the role of observers, because as Keltner and Haidt (1999) wrote, facial expressions convey the experience to others. A number of studies then argued that observers react to facial stimuli rapidly

and strongly even when portrayed on a picture (e.g. Bavelas *et al.* 1986; Burke and Edell 1989; Hatfield *et al.* 1993; Hess and Blairy 2000; Dimberg *et al.* 2000), which brought great value to this research. For instance, Izard (1977, 1983, 1994) and Ekman (1972, 1989, 1992, 1993) conducted a number of cross-cultural studies, including in the United States and the former Soviet Union, within which they presented the participants with photographs of various facial expressions. The researchers asked the participants to assign to each picture a word from a list of six basic emotions originally provided by Tomkins (1962, 1963); happy, sad, afraid, angry, surprised, disgust, or contempt. The studies concluded that there was a universal pattern in judgments of facial expressions across the various cultures (Ekman 2003). Russell (1994) did not question the conclusions but did regarding the way in which they had been reached. He criticised *the forced-choice list* used in Izard's and Ekman's research (*ibid.*, p.116):

'Subjects place the same facial expression (or emotion of another or their own emotion) into more than one emotion category. Forced choice treats each option as an either-or (present-absent) choice, which they are not: Subjects reliably rate different facial expressions as belonging to a given emotion category to different degrees.'

The possible disagreement in the reading of facial expressions was beneficial to this research as it stimulated a fruitful discussion among the child participants. It was due to this that the participants were always asked the open question 'how does the person/people on the picture feel?', without being presented with a predetermined list. In addition, some expressions were deliberately emotion free. Below is an example of an 'expressionless' photograph and a photograph that caused confusion among the participants between 'fear' and 'surprise' (Figure 9). A recently published study by Jack and her colleagues (2014) at the University of Glasgow agreed with the marginal differences between some of Tomkins' (1962, 1963) categories and even reduced the list to four. By showing computer-generated facial animations to sixty adult observers, they found that in Western society the only basic emotions possible to read in facial expressions were sadness, happiness, surprise/fear, and anger/disgust – a conclusion similar to the one of this research. Yet further to this, the face of a crying child was interpreted by the participating children not only as sadness – as the researcher had originally expected – but also as anger, fear, or surprise. This supported the suggestion that the children were 'the best source of information about themselves' (Docherty and Sandelowski 1999, p.177).

**Figure 9** Example of emotional and emotion-free facial expressions



The follow-up questions then explored the children's ideas about the causes and consequences of such media-related emotions and feelings in general, and of the participants' personal media-related feelings in particular. The latter continued to be further addressed within the subsequent individual photo elicitation interviews. Coan and Allen (2007) emphasised that the study of emotion is nowadays an established field with standardised research procedures, which Salas *et*

al. (2012, p.568) divided between 'external', such as emotional pictures, and 'internal' such as autobiographical recall. They argued that autobiographical recall has 'more ecological validity, since it uses personal events with individual meaning' (*ibid.*, p.569). Within the photo elicitation group interviews, quite naturally the general discussion about emotions, as short-term and immediate state, moved to talk about a wide range of personal feelings, as more stable and sustained products of emotions individually accumulated over time. For example, a comment about the photograph of a crying girl was 'she watches something scary', which led to a wider discussion about the children's subjective and past 'scary' media experiences. These, according to the children, formed their current feelings about certain media activities or content.

However, Nelson and Fivush (2004) examined the emergence of autobiographical memory, as a 'memory for the events of one's life' and argued that autobiographical memory is 'a functionally new human memory system, one that emerges gradually across the preschool years in the context of developments in language, memory, and self, supplementing the memory systems of early life' (p.486). Nelson and Fivush (2004) concluded that cognitively children over five years should have the ability to verbally recall the memories, yet they added that 'significant individual and gender differences and cultural variations characterize [sic] autobiographical memory in both early development and adulthood', because such 'a multicomponent dynamic developmental system [must necessarily] yield multiple pathways toward converging but also differing endpoints' (*ibid.*). The child participants' ability to recall and describe past autobiographical events shall therefore not be assigned simply to their age.

The photo elicitation group interview concluded with a direct question about the word 'media'. It was followed by a brief summary of what media might be and led to a discussion about the purpose and role of media in individual and collective lives (*Figure 10*). The sessions finished with the children taking *Polaroid Instant* pictures of themselves as a reward for their participation (*Photographs 9*). They were promised at the beginning that there was going to be a surprise at the end, which served as another motivational fun element. The children kept the pictures as a memento and as a way of sharing their research experience with their teacher, friends and family. The creative activity was therefore included to increase the participants' involvement and enjoyment, as Darbyshire *et al.* (2005) recommended, but the outcomes were not analysed and interpreted, as warned against by Piper and Frankham (2007) and Buckingham (2009b).

**Figure 10** Concluding PowerPoint slide of the photo-elicitation group interview





**Photographs 9** Free activity with Polaroid Instant camera



**Photo-elicitation individual interviews in practice**

The photo-elicitation individual interviews were conducted with sixty children, twenty-eight boys and thirty-two girls, of whom five had not taken part in the group interviews – not all of the participants joined in with both the group and one-on-one interviews for various reasons, such as illness, school duties, or lack of interest. Among the participants involved in the individual interviews then were twenty-eight third graders, thirteen second graders and nineteen first graders. The individual interviews were voice-recorded and transcribed (*Appendix 10*).

The media-centric cards and the accompanying child-centred questions together explored the participants' relationships with media. Two sets of cards were designed (see *Photographs 10* below). They both reflected the non-medium specific approach, with the first being focused on media platforms and the second on media texts and categories. The first was developed before the field research and remained unchanged along the entire inquiry, whereas the second was closely connected to the group interviews and was always adapted accordingly. The second set was therefore inspired by the child participants themselves, by the concrete media texts and categories they collectively put emphasis on during the group interviews; e.g. *Angry Birds*, *The Simpsons*, *Harry Potter*, *Disney*, *Nickelodeon* or *Animáček*, *Chucky* from *Child's Play* in the Czech Republic, and *American Girl Doll* in the USA, and more, all representing diverse media texts and categories.

**Photographs 10** Set of cards to be discussed during individual photo elicitation interviews (first platform-based set on the left, second text/category based set on the right)



Whereas the group interviews combined general and collective views with personal and collective experience, the one-on-one interviews focused on each individual child's media life and experience with collective as well as distinct media preferences and habits (Watts and Ebbutt 1987). At first, each child described the cards while placing them on a table. Then, when answering the questions, the child moved the relevant cards in front of him or her, so that the relevant media/medium could be further discussed (*Photograph 10*). For instance, the participant was asked to select the three media platforms that they would miss the most if taken away, or simply the three favourite ones. The child was given space and time to think and move the cards accordingly. It was only then that the researcher asked them for explanations of their choices. The list of the tasks reminded unchanged each time, while the follow-up questions were open-ended and situational. Wright and Powell (2006) argued that open-ended questioning is recommended when seeking to record children's own accounts, because as Fisher (1995) claimed, free narration allows the child to use their own words at their own pace. The additional set of open-ended questions penetrating the whole session was based on the preceding group interviews and classroom observations, as Bogdan and Biklen (1992), for example, also recommended. These questions usually began with phrases such as 'could you tell me more about this' or 'could you explain a bit more to me about that', or in the context of the text/category based cards, the question would always be 'could you tell me what this is'.

The participants felt able to talk about media after the group session, and since they were already familiar with the researcher and the study, they were also confident and comfortable in doing so (Arksey and Knight 1999). Naturally, some were more reserved than others; some were quieter or more talkative when compared with their own behaviour in a group; some were motivated and better behaved, while others were less so without their peers. It is worth mentioning that the researcher was always alone with the children during both the individual and group interviews. The decision on this matter was in the hands of the teachers, who often argued that their school was short on staff or that their schedules were too tight. The absence of a teacher or another staff member's authoritative presence encouraged the children to speak more freely and openly, which was equally constructive and detrimental to the field research process.

Without the barrier of traditional classroom rules, the children knew they could talk about things their teachers may not like to hear. For instance, Adam (P26) mentioned the *Call of Duty* videogame during a session, to which the teacher reacted by saying the game was inappropriate for young children and changed the topic. When interviewing Adam, he asked if he could now talk about the videogame since the teacher was not there (more on this in the Chapters 3 and 4), suggesting he understood the social roles within a situation. It could be said that the children were encouraged to speak up about their relationships with media without being silenced, judged, or preached at. On the other hand, there was no assurance that the children were not making things up, in some cases it was challenging to keep them attentive and involved, and it also put more responsibility on the researcher. Not only did the researcher have to navigate conversations away from sensitive topics, she had to decide whether the teacher should be informed about certain issues. In one case the researcher evaluated a situation as needing further attention and thus asked the teacher about the child's circumstances. She was informed that the family was being monitored and that the school was aware of these matters.

## Classroom Research Organisation: Bringing it all together

To conduct the formal interviews, informal conversational interviews, photo elicitation group and individual interviews, observations, and contextual research in each of the schools and every classroom, required the right balance of project management skills and flexibility. As long as the methodological barriers of grounded philosophy were not crossed or dishonoured, the research followed the lead of the individual teachers. They decided on a time and place convenient for them, as well as for the participating children. The children could then oppose the timing and refuse to participate, as two of the boys mentioned earlier and some other children did. When possible though, the schools and the teachers tried to meet the general schedule proposed in advance by the researcher. Given that the focus was narrow and that the field research in the US schools was significantly time limited, two schedules were developed to accompany the necessary adjustments (see *Tables 2 and 3* below).

**Table 2** Field research in the Czech schools

Week	Classroom	Observations	Participants	Photo-elicitation interviews with the main child participants	Interviews with the adult participants
1	3rd grade	During individual classes, breaks, and recess; 25-30 hours per week Monday to Friday	The main teacher (might be with an assistant), specialised teachers; 8-10 year olds	Groups if possible on Wednesday (45-55 minutes per group of three to six members); Individuals on Thursday and Friday (10-20 minutes per child)	One main and several informal conversational interviews (40 to 120 minutes in total) with the main teacher
2	2nd grade	During individual classes, breaks, and recess; 20-25 hours per week Monday to Friday	The main teacher (might be with an assistant), specialised teachers; 7-8 year olds	Groups if possible on Wednesday (45-55 minutes per group of three to five members); Individuals on Thursday and Friday (10-20 minutes per child)	One main and several informal conversational interviews (40 to 120 minutes in total) with the main teacher
3	1st grade	During individual classes, breaks, and recess; 20-25 hours per week Monday to Friday	The main teacher (might be with an assistant), specialised teachers; 6-7 year olds	Groups if possible on Wednesday (45-55 minutes per group of three to five members); Individuals on Thursday and Friday (10-20 minutes per child)	One main and several informal conversational interviews (40 to 120 minutes in total) with the main teacher

4	Open to further and contextual research			Unfinished interviews	Interviews with other teachers, assistants, and school management accompanied by content analysis of artefacts
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**Table 3** Field research in the US schools

Day	Observations	Group photo-elicitation interview with the main child participants	Individual photo-elicitation interviews with the main child participants and interviews with the adult participants
1	<b>3rd grade</b> the whole day (sessions, lunch, and recess) – 7 hours, approximately twenty 8 to 9 year olds, their main teacher (plus assistant and specialised teachers)	None	None
2	<b>3rd grade</b> the whole day (sessions, lunch, and recess) – 7 hours, approximately twenty 8 to 9 year olds, their main teacher (plus assistant and specialised teachers)	Group of three to five 3rd grade pupils for one school session (40 to 60 minutes)	None
3	<b>2nd grade</b> the whole day except one school session, 5-6 hours, approximately twenty 7 to 8 year olds, their main teacher (plus assistant and specialised teachers)	None	Individual interviews with 3rd grade pupils, approx. 15 minutes for one, all together lasting one school session; interview with the main teacher
4	<b>2nd grade</b> the whole day except one school session, 5-6 hours, approximately twenty 7 to 8 year olds, their main teacher (plus assistant and specialised teachers) approximately twenty 7 to 8 year olds, their main teacher (plus assistant and specialised teachers)	Group of three to five 2nd grade pupils for one school session (40 to 60 minutes)	None
5	<b>1st grade</b> the whole day except one school session, 5-6 hours, approximately twenty 7 to 8 year olds, their main teacher (plus assistant and specialised teachers), approximately twenty 5 to 7 year olds, their main teacher (plus assistant and specialised teachers)	None	Individual interviews with 2nd grade pupils, approx. 15 minutes for one, all together lasting one school session; interview with the main teacher

6	1st grade the whole day except one school session, 5-6 hours, approximately twenty 7 to 8 year olds, their main teacher (plus assistant and specialised teachers), approximately twenty 5 to 7 year olds, their main teacher (plus assistant and specialised teachers)	Group of three to five 1st grade pupils for one school session (40 to 60 minutes)	None
7	None	None	Individual interviews with 1st grade pupils, approx. 15 minutes for one, all together lasting one school session; interview with the main teacher; interviews with other teachers and school management

One of the requirements, as shown in the tables, was to always begin the investigation with the third grade and finish with the first grade. The initial study together with the first few photo elicitation interviews indicated that the third graders provided a substantial amount of information about the other grades as well. Some talked about their own experiences, others about their younger siblings or younger selves. This repeatedly helped to prepare for working with the youngest participants who required a more active and informed involvement by the researcher than the third or even the second graders. The second request was to spend at least a day simply observing before carrying out the photo elicitation interviews. One day was usually enough for the children to break the initial shyness with the researcher and to comprehend her role. It also meant that the researcher had time to generate at least some observational notes to be discussed with the children. The next requirements were to research with the group before interviewing the individual participants and to conduct the formal interviews with the teachers last, so they could also comment on the phenomena already observed or discussed with the children.

In all other matters the project was easily adaptable to most situations, especially when a unique opportunity promising to generate relevant and valuable insights appeared. Consequently, the research schedule and process was able to be appropriately altered. For instance, in the Town School the fourth and fifth graders ran a *Movie Making Club*, to which the researcher was invited. She therefore skipped the last session of the day on this occasion where she was about to observe the first grade, and instead went to observe the club and interview ten-year-old Megan (SS12-L) who was in charge of this (see below).

**Photograph 11** *Movie Making Club's team leader [November 2012]*

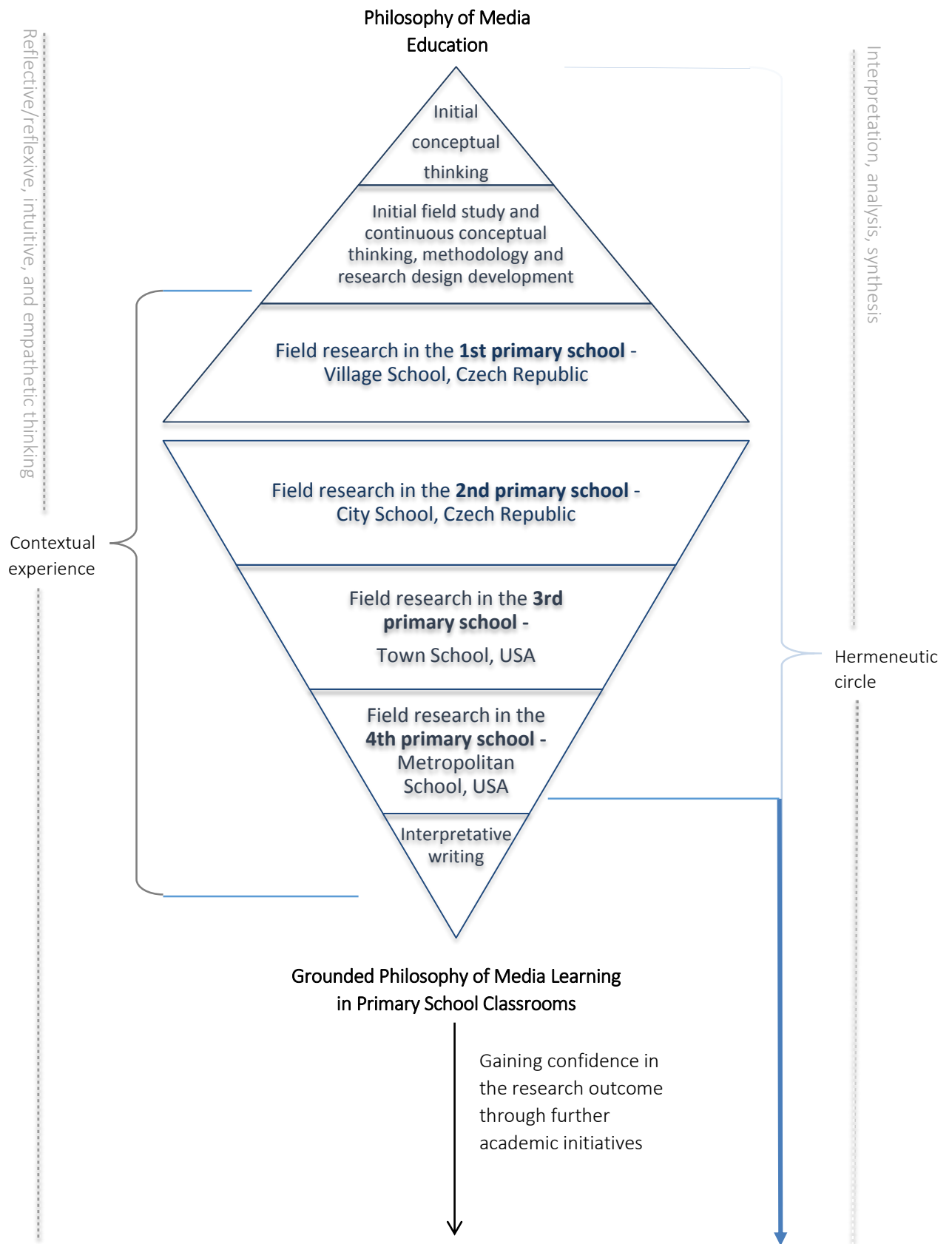


## Summary of the Research Philosophy and Practice

As the next *Chapter 3: Interpreting Parallel Cases and Shaping Justified Beliefs* will demonstrate, the use of photo elicitation groups and individual interviews based on social interaction and communication, together with classroom observations of naturally and intentionally occurring situations and to them relevant contextual research, enabled the exploration of the participating children's lived and fused media-related thoughts, actions, feelings, relationships and individual and collective meaning-making. Although these were developed and carried in distinct contexts, they were synthesised here into a parallel case of the child participants' media experiences and beliefs, and through this the research was led towards justified beliefs about media learning in general, and media learning that is meaningful and enjoyable to the primary school children in particular. The focal and informal conversational interviews with the adult participants, as well as the additional contextual research and classroom observations, investigated the adult participants' beliefs about and experiences with children's both learning and media engagement, and by extension with media learning. The research with the teachers as well as with the learners as socioculturally constructed 'counterparties' provided insights into and shaped justified beliefs about their conflicting and agreeing experiences with and beliefs about the child's current media learning and the teacher's role within it – which is where the following third chapter links to the last *Chapter 4: Philosophising and Concluding*. Only in the fourth chapter does the intercultural philosophy of media learning grounded in the interpretation and justified beliefs about 'what was' begin to explore 'what could potentially be', while summarising the original contribution to knowledge.

*Figure 11* below then visualises for better readability and transparency the research process leading to the development of, and confidence in, the grounded philosophy of media learning in primary school classrooms. As explained in the *Chapter 1: Beginning*, the research began with the idea of *Philosophy of Media Education* that initially seemed to be narrow and straightforward. Yet the longer and deeper the engagement with the interdisciplinary literature was, the more intangible and open the focus had become, hence the broad research aim and questions. The initial study and the field research in the first primary school expanded the project even further, as the previous reading suddenly appeared irrelevant to the practice being researched. Somewhere during the second field study the first commonalities and ideas about possible parallel cases began to form. Investigation in the third primary school represented the turning point, as the two main unified and sound parallel cases started to take shape, making the fourth field study significantly more focused, almost having a 'confirming' purpose. Yet to generate justified beliefs and to unite them into a holist system needed considerably more time of immersion in the hermeneutic circle. This hermeneutic circle went beyond the field research as the justified beliefs were being, separately as well as a whole, dissimilated and exposed to feedback (from diverse audiences, including teachers and learners) through conference talks and organisations, publications, and other relevant initiatives (*Appendix 11*) within the following two years (April 2013 – June 2015); thus increasing the confidence in the research outcomes as Hammersley (1992) recommended. The return to the participating school is scheduled for autumn/winter 2015, as the researcher will organise *Youth Media Education Summit* and co-organise *Media Education Summit* in Boston (MA), that will allow her to return to the US schools, and she will hold an academic position at Charles University in Prague, allowing her to re-visit the Czech schools.

Figure 11 Research process



# CHAPTER 3: Interpreting Parallel Cases and Shaping Justified Beliefs

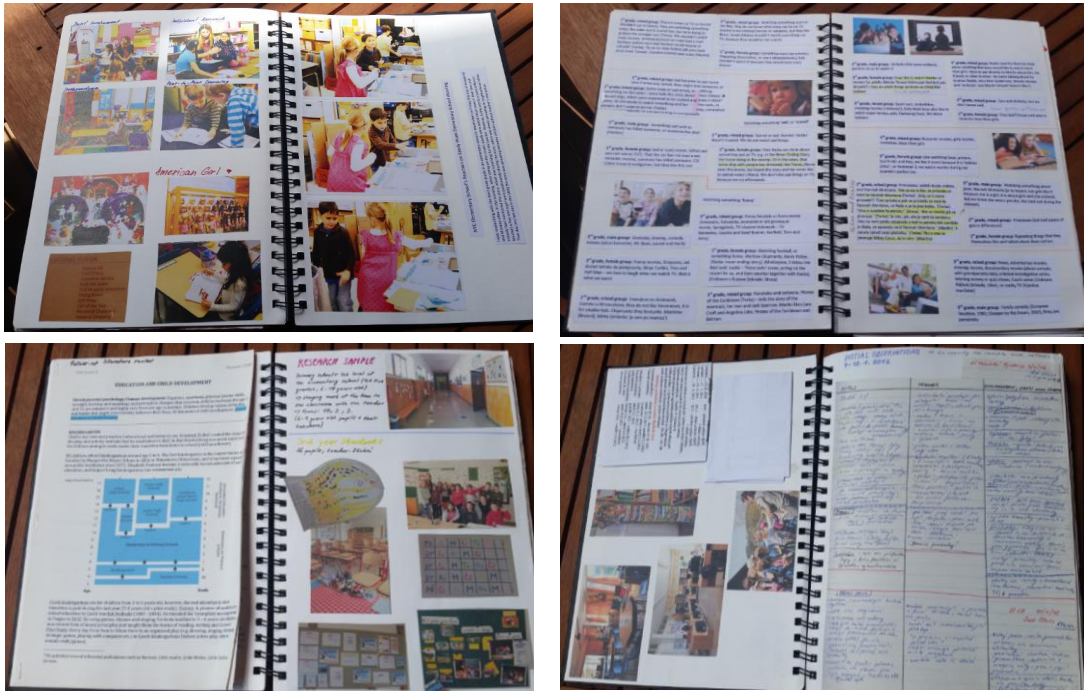
## Analytical, Intuitive and Empathetic Interpretative Thinking

The researcher engaged in an ongoing unfinalisable process of analytical thinking about, rather than in an analysis of, the adult and child participants' individual and collective beliefs and experiences formed of their past and immediate actions, thoughts, and feelings; on which this chapter concentrates. Although analysis can be termed in various ways, this research found it difficult to escape its connotation of rigid examination of data, which would be fundamentally inconsistent with the research philosophy. The fused phenomenological and hermeneutical nature of the research, and of grounded philosophy as its methodology, suggested that the interpretative analytical process could not be 'reduced to a 'cookbook' set of instructions [because] [i]t is more an approach, an attitude, an investigative posture with a certain set of goals' (Keen 1975, p.41, *quotation marks in original*). The certain set of research goals was to explore parallel cases, if there were any, in primary school teachers' and learners' media and learning beliefs and experiences against which diverse justified beliefs about current, as well as justified holistic belief system about potential, media learning in primary school classroom could lean.

The research aim and questions served mainly as rabbit holes through which the teachers' and learners' diverse yet complex meaningful realities were entered. According to Gadamer (1960 [1998]), understanding of *Thou* only comes from the experience of the *Thou* which consisted, in the case of this research, of lived field research experience (discussed in the previous *Chapter 2*) and hermeneutic textual experience (addressed here). The research texts were not to be decoded, coded and encoded while trying to tailor them to the research aim and questions, instead they were to be experienced openly, as Eco (1989) suggested, while putting emphasis on 'interpretation and response as an interactive process between reader and text' (Robey 1989, viii). Responsive and dialogic engagement with the research texts therefore sat in the heart of the hermeneutic circle constantly moving back and forth and between parts and the whole. Given the mixed method research approach, which aimed to benefit from the multiplicity of modes that communication and interaction consist of, the main research texts included voice recordings (approx. 35 hours), transcripts and summaries of individual and group interviews (approx. 500 pages), photographs (approx. 1,000), a handmade scrapbook of two volumes (see *Photographs 12* on the next page) with observational, summarising, contextual and reflective notes, illustrations, and artefacts, and lastly this dissertation itself has been a research text. Scrapbook was chosen for its ability to capture lived field research experience, incorporating 'contradictions that cannot be expressed otherwise (...) [and/or] elsewhere', while the expression 'ultimately remain[s] free' to further interpretation (Trucker *et al.* 2006, pp.2-3).



**Photographs 12** Scrapbooks (Vol 1, 2) with observational, contextual and reflective accounts

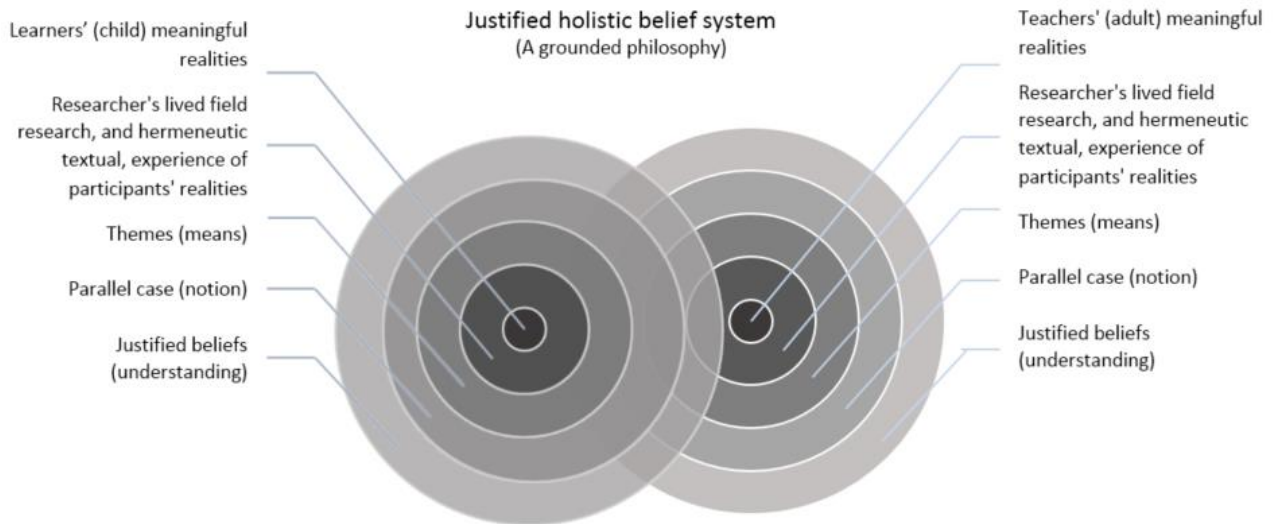


The research print, digital and audio texts were constantly analytically-interpretatively revisited throughout the entire field research and when shaping, in Buber's (1937 [2013]) words, the research discovery. As Gadamer suggested (1960 [1998]), the understanding occurred during the interpretative writing, which van Manen (1990) further explained, saying '[w]riting separates us from what we know and yet it unites us more closely with what we know (...) distances us from the lifeworld, yet it also draws us more closely to the lifeworld (...), decontextualises thought from practice and yet it returns thought to praxis (or thoughtful action)' (pp.127-128). The translating, writing, reading, re-writing and re-reading therefore played an important role in analytically interpretative thinking. This thinking however was also intuitive and empathetic, because even a 'rigorous human science is prepared to be *soft, soulful, subtle, and sensitive* in its effort to bring the range of meanings of life's phenomena to our reflective awareness' (van Manen 1990, p.18, *emphasis in original*). Despite that, the text always 'falls short of what one wants to say (...) [because o]ne can never say fully what one wants to say' (Gadamer 1986/1988 [1992], p.69).

Thematic analysis is often prioritised within hermeneutics for discovering what to say and how to say it, and it is an approach that certainly inspired analytical thinking applied here. Although van Manen (1990) claimed that the concept of theme is irrelevant, as it 'may be considered simply as a means to get the notion we are addressing, (...) [an] order to our research and writing' (p.97), he did further – and usefully for this research – reflect on his understanding of theme and thematic analysis. For van Manen, *thematic analysis* is based on openness and desire to make sense through the process of insightful invention, discovery, and disclosure. In the context of this research, 'invention' is the multiple research texts, 'discovery' is the responsive and dialogic engagement with the research texts, and 'disclosure' is the meaning given to the text according to the researcher's understanding of the participants' experiences and beliefs. Themes' purpose is then to give the meaning, to illustrate, as they form the structure, the core, of experience and consequently of the main research text; specifically this chapter. The main mean (or means) of

each theme is emphasised in bold. Since theme is ‘always a reduction of a notion (...) [they] *give shape to the sharpness*’ by forming ‘*the content of a notion*’ (van Manen 1990, p.88, *emphasis in original*). Themes were therefore used here as meaningful paths to a parallel case as a notion, making from themes the smallest and most fragmented interpretations of the whole (*Figure 12*).

**Figure 12** *Parts of the whole in the hermeneutic circle of this research*



Being closest to the learners’ and teachers’ diverse and seemingly fragmented experiences and beliefs, themes were developed with the intention of bracketing out the researcher’s presupposition and judgements about the phenomena in order to see and describe it more objectively (Husserl 1936 [1970]). Although this is not truly possible in Heidegger’s and Gadamer’s hermeneutics due to one’s historical consciousness with its subjective and interpretative way of experiencing the world, it still illustrates well the theme’s (although unachievable) ‘intention’. This makes themes intentional (Husserl 1936 [1970]) rich textual ‘descriptions of (...) the life world and human experience as it is lived, (...) illuminating details and seemingly trivial aspects within experience that may be taken for granted in our lives’ (Lavery 2003, p.7); still bearing in mind that any description is always an interpretation. The themes lean occasionally against the academic literature, but they are mainly developing the ground on which the richer academic debate is based within the justified beliefs and especially when exploring the grounded philosophy of media learning in the final *Chapter 4*. A number of ‘codes’ serve here to identify the source of a quote or anecdote, to which the reader can repeatedly refer as these are situated in alphabetical order at the bottom of each page, as well as by returning to *Appendix 6* (adult participants) and *Appendix 9* (child participants). The list of codes is as follows:

- P** Pupil (child/learner) participant
- T** Teacher (adult) participant
- SS** Supporting School participant
- SM** School Management

-M	Music teacher
-A	Art teacher
-ICT	ICT teacher
-L	Librarian
-TA	Teacher Assistant
-PV	Parent Volunteer
-L	Learner
-T	Teacher

I/ITR	Interview/Interview <b>T</b> ranslated from Czech to English
GI/GITR	Group Interview/Group Interview <b>T</b> ranslated from Czech to English
O/OTR	Observation/Observation <b>T</b> ranslated from Czech to English
IC	Informal <b>C</b> onversation

As suggested earlier, the themes were given a structure and narrative that partially synthesised/shaped the parallel cases. The two main parallel cases identified within the hermeneutic circle of this research were that [1] the primary school teacher aimed at facilitating the child's multidimensional and complex development and lifelong learning, and [2] the primary school child was experiencing media diversely, holistically and continuously. The research turned to addressing the participants collectively as *the child/learner* or *the teacher/adult* referring to *the archetypal child/learner* and *adult/teacher* of this research; offering an understanding that might be transferrable, but not generalisable. The first parallel case is based mainly on the adult, whilst the second on the child, participants' accounts and both are supported with observations and to them connected photographs. Despite the fact that each parallel case is initially introduced through the themes, it is only through the justified beliefs that a parallel case is properly discussed while giving the discovery a more holistic and explicit disclosure. Both parallel cases thus conclude with their own relevant justified beliefs offering a sense of understanding as shaped by the research. The dialogue between the two starts alongside the second parallel case, but it is only in the last chapter when their related justified beliefs are truly discussed in tandem, synthesised and applied to practice within a justified holistic belief system.

## PARALLEL CASE 1:

### Teacher facilitating the child's multidimensional and complex development and lifelong learning

*(Grounded mainly in the teachers' accounts, classroom observations and contextual research)*

The themes and justified beliefs introduced in this section concentrate primarily on learning processes as explained by the adult participants and observed in the classrooms, and secondarily on the educators' views on, and attitude towards, the media's role in children's lives, learning and development. The discussion begins with exploring the tension between the context-dependent external educational requirements and the teachers' own pedagogic beliefs and practices. The

following themes, however, leave behind the state and institutional regulations specific for each country and school and instead focus on the commonalities in the teachers' personal beliefs and experiences (Elliot 1978, 2006) that seemed to have a certain collective nature (Durkheim 1895 [1982]; Vygotsky 1925 [1971]; Jung 1953 [1991]) – even though some comparisons are made when contextually significant. These commonalities are, for the sake of shaping the notion and understanding, divided into six main themes as reductions of the whole; these being [1] teacher-learner relationship, [2] child's progress, [3] child's emotional literacy and wellbeing, [4] sociocultural and civic development, [5] critical and creative media literacy teaching, [6] and lifelong learning. Each of these themes begins with the teacher's belief(s), continues with relevant lived (observation based) or hermeneutic (interview based) experiences, and concludes with the teacher's beliefs and experiences about the role of media in the particular matters highlighted in the first two parts of the theme. Since the themes are in a close interrelation, the artificially constructed borders separating them are erased in the end when the justified beliefs synthesise and summarise the themes and simultaneously the parallel case as a notion they shape throughout this section.

Background Theme: Balancing external demands with the teachers' own pedagogic beliefs and practices

### *Sociocultural-historical context: What do governments write?*

The national documents most referred to by the educators were *The Framework Education Programme for Elementary Education* (FEP EE) among the Czech participants and *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) by the US participants. FEP EE is one of the *Framework Education Programmes* formed in accordance with the white paper *the National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic* (2001) and since the year 2007 represents the major curricular documents for the education of pupils between the ages of three and nineteen years (FEP EE 2007; *Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports* 2014). This 'newly' established system of curricular documents developed on two levels – state (or national) and school – was embodied in the *Act On Preschool, Elementary, Secondary, Higher Vocational and Other Education*, or 'Education Act' [‘Školský zákon’] as it is called by the participants, in 2004. The ministerial *Research Institute of Education* (2007, p.5) explained:

‘In the system of curricular documents, the state level is represented by the National Education Programme (NEP) and Framework Education Programmes (FEPs). Whereas the NEP formulates the requirements for education which are applicable in initial education as a whole, the FEPs define the binding scope of education for its individual stages (for preschool, elementary and secondary education). The school level is represented by School Education Programmes (SEPs), on the basis of which education is implemented in individual schools. The School Education Programme is created by each school according to the principles prescribed in the respective FEP.’

In the USA, the *NCLB Act of 2001* was not at the time of the field research the latest amendment of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) - the latest was *Common Core State Standards* (CCSS) effective since 2008, but back in 2012 it was not applicable to the participating US schools and teachers just yet. In any case, they both share a push for standardised tests and K-12 public schools' and teachers' accountability as criticised by the participating educators.

To give the matter some sociocultural-historical context first, it was briefly mentioned in the *Chapter 2: Researching* that, in contrast to the Czech educational system, in the USA the 'school districts serving lower income students often receive less state and local funding than those serving more affluent children' (The Federal Education Budget Project 2014). President Lyndon B. Johnson (1963-1969) focused on this within the poverty reduction strategies known as the *War on Poverty*. The to-date seven reauthorisations of the federal legislation ESEA originally passed by Congress under Johnson's administration have brought various changes to the original programme, whilst 'its central goal of improving the educational opportunities for children from lower income families remains' (*ibid.*).

Since the implementation of NCLB, individual US states have been required to test annually 'mathematics and reading or language arts' in grades three to eight (student ages ranging from eight to fourteen years), and to test science 'not less than one time' during the grades three through five and six through nine (U.S. Department of Education 2005). Schools failing to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) then face consequences scaled in *Figure 13* below. The overall aim was for 'all' public schools students, including those 'economically disadvantaged', 'from major racial and ethnic groups', 'with disabilities', and 'with limited English proficiency', to 'meet or exceed the State's proficient level of academic achievement' by the year 2014 (*ibid.*) – so no child would be left behind.

**Figure 13** NCLB school improvement timeline illustrated by *The Federal Education Budget Project* (2014)

<b>Years Not Making AYP</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>One</b>	No Action
<b>Two</b>	No Action
<b>Three</b>	<b>Year One of School Improvement</b> Implement Public School Choice
<b>Four</b>	<b>Year Two of School Improvement</b> Continue offering public school choice. Implement Supplemental Education Services
<b>Five</b>	<b>Corrective Action</b> Continue offering school choice and supplemental education services
<b>Six</b>	<b>Restructuring Planning Year</b> Continue offering school choice and supplemental education services
<b>Seven</b>	<b>Implement Restructuring</b>

Interestingly, both the *No Child Left Behind Act* in the USA and *the National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic* were first introduced in the year 2001, at the turn of century and new millennium. Facing such a milestone in human history might have strengthened the public and policy belief of living in times of ‘unprecedented change’, which, according to Taylor (2010), is ‘characteristic of all modern and many pre-modern eras’ (p.7). As *the National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic* begins (2001, p.13):

‘We live in a time of major and unpredictable social changes whose impact goes far beyond our own country. In addition to subtle but sweeping changes in everyday life – technological, political, social and even human – there are European and global processes that inevitably influence both the status and the mission of education systems, education and learning as a whole, of everything that aims to educate people.’

*The Framework Education Programme for Elementary Education* used this opportunity to include the cross-curricular subjects, or ‘the thematic areas of current problems of the contemporary world [which] have become a significant and indispensable part of elementary education’ (FEP EE 2007, p.91). The document stated that every public school must incorporate the six defined cross-curricular subjects in the education at both *Stages 1* (first to fifth grades; six- to eleven- year olds) and *2* (sixth to ninth grades; eleven- to fifteen/sixteen year olds which equals middle schools in the USA). These were [1] moral, character and social education, [2] civic education for democracy, [3] education towards thinking in European and global contexts, [4] multicultural education, [5] environmental education, and [6] media education. Whereas the research participants agreed these themes were important, they also disliked, in the words of the Village School Principal Pavel (SS2-SM-ITR), that ‘whatever new problem comes, the society always asks the schools to deal with it’, as also Bazalgette (1997 [2001]) and Gauntlett (1997 [2001]) criticised in the context of British education. Principal Pavel continued, ‘when there is a problem with drugs, we have to run drug prevention programmes. When there are floods, we have to teach how to prepare evacuation kits. Whatever happens, the school is assigned to be responsible, and there are simply too many immediate agendas alongside the responsibility of educating the future generations’. The same was believed to be the case of media education, that was according to Pavel set by the government as a way of ‘correcting what bad media do to the society’ without schools and teachers knowing what ‘is wrong according to the government with the current graduates’.

Despite this particular response of the Czech educators to the FEP EE, there was an obvious move on a national level towards wider, more flexible and open curricular demands and less centralised state control over them. Hence, even though more responsibility was assigned to the schools and the teachers, the pressure on them had not increased, as there was not any actual penalty for failing to meet the requirements. Media education as a cross-curricular subject being included into the classroom curriculum and instruction has therefore depended on the individual schools and teachers, as was common in the USA and England throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. Dale 1933; Lewis 1934; Hall and Whannel 1964; Lovell 1969; Zurkowski 1974; Bazalgette 1988).

Thus, while the Czech educational system of compulsory education has been becoming more decentralised since the democratic and neo-liberal wave that began after the *Velvet Revolution*

(1998) and the separation of the Czech and Slovak Republics (1993), the US educational system, traditionally democratic, has been becoming more standardised and centralised.

*Classroom context: What do teachers say?*

The US educators agreed that ‘the biggest change’ brought by the *No Child Left Behind* was ‘the pressure on teachers and the lack of flexibility (...) in classrooms’ (Maryam, T12-I). Maryam made the comparison that ‘before (...) there was no-one watching over and there wasn’t the set curriculum I had to follow. [It] was kind of like, design my own’, whereas now she and her colleagues felt pressured to strictly follow the national/state/school curriculum. She explained:

‘They’re using now, all the testing to evaluate teachers, which is why teachers are upset. (...) They’re talking about paying teachers’ salaries [and bonuses] based on student performance (...) [and] achievement. (...) I have a friend who teaches (...) [and] in her school, their test scores weren’t good. They bottomed out last year. So now they’re all over every teacher, closely, having to do all these reports on top of everything, all the day long, day to day, to drive their instruction. (...) So the teachers now are teaching to the tests so that they perform well, but so [what], the students are prepared to take this test... But they’re missing out on all those other things.’

The US teachers argued that it was not a fair assessment of the learner’s and the teacher’s year performance, because it did not take into account the other important variables of the child’s complex progress. They reiterated that the child is not just a test taker but a complicated and unique individual who lives and is growing up in particular social settings that influence him or her in multiple ways. The social dynamics in the child’s home and classroom were, according to the educators, inseparable from their learning and test taking, so the teacher could not only focus on testing strategies but instead had to be reaching out to the child, making sure he or she was ‘okay’.

The second grade teacher Beatrix (T8-IC) remembered a little boy to whom she had offered a snack as he did not bring his own to school. He politely refused to eat since it was his sister’s turn to eat on that day. Beatrix then angrily argued that the national tests could not provide real evidence about a child’s readiness and a teacher’s merit, when the child taking the test had not eaten for a day, when his or her parent was arrested the night before, or when a child spent the last year living in a car. Maryam (T12-I) added that on top of everything happening in the children’s lives, the tests put additional and ‘unbelievable’ pressure on them to do well:

‘The children get very stressed out. (...) I had one girl who just broke down because she didn’t do well in the test, even though she worked hard and she did okay in school. (...) She didn’t get a good enough score to even be considered by the good middle schools which put her in the pool of kids that had behavioural problems, came from not the greatest families... And this was a quiet, shy little girl (...) so the parents had to move. And she felt responsible and she was crying that “mom doesn’t even like New Jersey”. (...) I mean, my own daughter is now in

the third grade and she's in a testing grade and she keeps saying I'm worried about the test, I'm worried about the test. I'm not going to do well in the test.'

Although the Czech primary school teachers worked in a different sociocultural-historical context, they agreed with the struggle described by the US teacher Jane (T9-I) who said 'it's hard to find the balance between getting caught up in [what is dictated to do in a classroom] and doing what you believe in and what is right in doing a good job - it's a fine line, it's a tightrope that we walk'. The participants' experience as educators taught them that their profession required far more than what was 'written in their job description' (Milada, MTS3-I). Within the first years of compulsory education, each child as an individual and social being had to be addressed in a complex, not only basic literacy focused, manner. This was, as the teachers claimed, crucial to the child's immediate and future learning and overall wellbeing, as this parallel case will illustrate through six themes.

The educators portrayed these years as the child's sensitive period (Berger 2011) of which the nurture was equally demanding and rewarding. As Charlotte (T7-I) reflected, 'I've been teaching third graders for seven years and I think it is the hardest thing I've ever done. It makes you feel every emotion possible. It's the best thing I've ever done'. It was *hard*, because the child often kept the teacher busier than the curriculum, as for example Milada (T3-ITR) noted with a slight hyperbole, 'it's all the time something that requires constant preparation and immediate attention (...) so the teacher runs here and there, almost not having time to go to the loo'. Madeleine (T6-ITR) then explained that this pressure follows them also out of school, because 'the time one spends preparing on top of teaching itself, morning, afternoon, evenings, seven days a week, because one cannot stop thinking about it', as also Eliška (MTS2-ITR) confirmed, saying 'it is not the kind of job where you come home, close the door, and the next day go back to work – the work follows you everywhere – you constantly think about the children and how to work with them'.

There was a sense of the Romantic child, as the choice of working as a primary school teacher was, for the adult participants, closely connected to their appreciation of the child at this particular stage of life. They shared a number of beliefs about the primary school child who as a *being* tends to be more appreciative and nice (Simone, SS9-M-I), funny and sweet (Anne, T10-I), respectful (Maryam, T12-I), attentive (Věra, SS5-SM-ITR), forgiving (Pavel, SS3-SM-ITR), and motivated to learn and explore (Božena, T4-ITR). The Village School Assistant Principal Martin (SS3-SM-ITR) then talked about the unique position the teachers working with the younger romanticised children have:

'At the lower elementary school, the motivation is the teacher herself, right, so the children are working and learning because miss teacher said so, or because miss teacher wants so. They start complaining that kindergarten is starting to bore them, that they really are ready for going to school and learning new things. As a matter of course, this enthusiasm fades already during the second or third grade, but still there is the influence from home and relationship with a teacher that keeps children motivated to learn for a bit longer. Yet almost inevitably the motivation for learning disappears. Of course something makes even the older kids interested, especially if a teacher knows how to get them engaged, but to be



coming to school excited about learning something new, that I don't believe is happening after the second or third grade.'

Similarly, approaching the child as *becoming* was also gratifying as well as challenging. On one hand, the teachers found their profession 'fulfilling and meaningful', because they believed that they could 'give to children more than I would have in any other profession' (Marie, T1-ITR). They felt capable of, and responsible for, 'moulding' the developing being that is, or should be, undergoing a number of significant internal (Piaget 1926 [2003]; Goswami 1992) and external (Vygotsky 1934 [1986]; Langmeier and Krejčířová 2009) changes whilst being eager to learn from/with the teacher. The potential of having an 'impact on individuals and community' (Charlotte, T7-I) was a driving force of the teachers, more than money (Věra, SS5-M-ITR) or test results (unless, quite understandably, the child's overall wellbeing, and the teacher's job, depended on it). Of foremost importance to the teachers was the child's *learning*.

'If you have a child who is not challenged enough or who is struggling and you just let that go, you just lost an opportunity for that child to learn and shame on you. (...) Everybody should have the opportunity to learn and be challenged and if I don't take advantage of that, I don't think I'm doing my job.' *Charlotte (T7-I)*

The educators held a collective belief that in order for primary education to be a truly enriching and transforming learning experience, a certain pedagogy had to be in place. This is further discussed throughout the discovered themes surrounding and forming this pedagogy, starting with the importance of having a personal relationship with each student.

### Theme 1: Learning importance of developing and maintaining the teacher-learner relationship

The third grade teacher Charlotte (T7-IC) mentioned a book *Becoming a Legendary Teacher: To Instruct and Inspire* (2009), written by a high school principal, Freeman, and a high school teacher, Scheidecker, which put a great emphasis on the role of the teacher-learner relationship in student learning and motivation. Freeman and Scheidecker wrote, 'a strong foundation of mutual trust and respect must be laid, [but] that foundation is possible only when based on personal relationships with every student' (p. 201). Trust and respect grounded in personal connection was agreed by the teachers to be essential to the learning of primary school students. In the words of the first grade teacher Jane (T9-I), the adult participants agreed that 'it's more important [that] you make a connection to each kid before you worry about the academics, because the academics will only come if they believe that you believe in them and that there's a mutual respect, [because] if they know you really genuinely care for them and care about them as little people, the rest will fall into place'. The teachers criticised the adult who does not pay appropriate attention to what the child says, because whatever matters to the learner should matter to the teacher. As Jane concluded, 'I always try to connect to my students, to their personal life, to their home life, to each kid as a person', because as the assistant principal Věra (SS5-SM-ITR) confirmed, 'the kids will then pleasantly repay this to the teachers during the instruction time'.

**Photographs 13** Teacher calming a learner (who had been struggling at school since his father's arrest) upset about his difficulty reading



The teacher's participation in the learner's media life was rarely considered as a potential 'binder' that could bring the teachers closer to their students, to their life, as they tended to do in other contexts of children's lives. The exceptions were the first grade teacher Maryam (T12) who argued that media are 'a huge part of their lives' and explained that 'I have young children also, so I kind of relate to them [the pupils] that way', and the Teacher Assistant Jacob (SS4-TA) who was preparing for next year's full time teaching position by assisting Božena (T4).

'The kids engage with those things that the teacher cannot discuss with them if he doesn't know them. (...) I will be 28 soon and I have found that even I 'atrophy', I'm not able to keep up with them, they all already have touch screen phones and I am learning with it just now, no really, just now. I even held an iPad in my hand for the first time not long ago. (...) But of course I am doing much better than some female colleagues who struggle even with a computer. For example, all the kids are playing *Minecraft* now –building with those blocks. They all play it and [Božena] doesn't know at all what it is. Nor did I. So I searched for it immediately, to learn about it, so I could talk about it with the kids. I installed it and found out I cannot really keep playing it, because it's rubbish [kravina]. But they like it, so at least I know it now.' *Jacob (SS4-TA-ITR)*

The majority of participating teachers related to the frustration of trying to 'keep up' with the child's media interests and practices as mentioned by Jacob. When building a personal relationship with the child and making a connection to her or his life, the educators felt rather limited and burdened with the difference between their and the child's media experiences. The child was considered to be more skilful with and knowledgeable about 'new' media technologies than the

teacher, who felt insecure and thus often avoided the topic. Furthermore, the child's preferences and habits connected to digital and electronic media were mainly seen as needing modification, whilst at the same time this was viewed as out of the teacher's reach and hence remained mostly unaddressed.

'I know some of the games they're talking about and you see them advertised a lot on TV. Some of the games children come in and tell you they've played are very adult games and it's pretty scary. (...) But do I listen to it, am I familiar with them? Some of them, yes I am and some of them I go home and talk to my husband and my son and they say, 'I can't believe a small child is playing that'. (...) You can guide them but it's the parents' choice ultimately as to what they're going to be doing and watching. You can say, "Should you really be doing that?" or, "Isn't there something you like to play more?" but as far as making the choices for them, you can't. They have that freedom themselves.' *Beatrix (T8-I)*

'Since I'm a bit older already, some directions the technology is taking are scaring me. Because I'm quite conservative, I don't really like it.' *Marie (T1-ITR)*

'It's hard 'cause you don't know what the parents are saying, if they are even allowed to watch TV or if they are, well the parents will say, "Oh no. This is okay." Or they don't say anything.' *Anne (T10-I)*

Lastly, although the educators aimed at treating the child as an equal and honouring his or her choices (Butler 2010; Wallis and Buckingham 2013), the teacher had to represent authority, which was thought to be harder nowadays partly due to media being sociocultural cultivators (Arnold 1869 [2009]; Tylor 1871 [1920]) of the child's understanding of the world (Gerbner *et al.* 1978). On one hand, the teachers claimed that a teacher should be setting a good example rather than abstractly lecturing the student, or as Hillary (SS11-PV-ITR) described, the teacher is 'a major influence and a role model to a child', and as Helena (SS7-T-ITR) said 'adults should be role models to the children, rather than trying to control their lives, they should lead by example'. On the other hand, public expectations on the teacher to be a positive role model were, according to the participants, too high, especially when compared with human representation in media.

'Media are failing to offer positive role models. The focus is constantly on those who are bad, so one comes to wonder if the worst people are the ones who become heroes of the young. (...) [Whereas] the teacher is expected by everyone, or at least by those not working in education, to be a positive example of everything. (S)he is even expected to be infallibly fair, which is absolutely impossible. Especially when they argue among themselves. The teacher inexhaustibly tries to be a perfect role model – moral model, but sometimes ends up being a fool in front of these children.' *Helena (SS7-T-ITR)*

For these and other similar reasons the teachers perceived the child's media engagement more as a danger that could make them look unknowledgeable or foolish and consequently harm the teacher-learner relationship, than as an opportunity that could enhance and strengthen the relationship as was suggested by Maryam (T12) and Jacob (SS4-TA).

## Theme 2: Learning importance of closely and constantly monitoring and assessing the child's progress in all areas

Being connected to each learner then, as the teachers argued, allowed them to better understand, formatively assess, and meet the child's unique needs. *Photographs 14* below illustrate a teacher combining one-to-one, pair, and group learning approaches. The teachers agreed that giving individual support and having a tailored approach to each child was at the heart of their profession, although it was often demanding and tiring.

'The challenge is, there's only one of me [and 20 of them]! To have an individual approach is exhausting at the end of the day but how it works is I look at all their work and I'm constantly making lists on who needs help with what area. From those lists, I create groups or if there isn't a group a child fits in, then they're in their own group and I'll make sure their learning is tailored, so they can see that they can learn. (...) It's definitely hard. I'm exhausted at the end of the day. However, is it important? Absolutely.' *Charlotte (T7-I)*

'You have to have an individual approach. Your instruction has to be differentiated. You know the children in your classroom (...), you get to know what they're capable of doing (...) and what is a real reach for them behaviourally, educationally.' *Beatrix (T8-I)*

### *Photographs 14 Individual approach in the teachers' pedagogic practice*



Within the first three years of compulsory education, the child is believed to undergo significant changes in which learning plays an inseparable role (Roopnarine and Johnson 2012). The teachers acknowledged, as Slater and Bremner (2011) argued, that both nature and nurture were indicative in human development and consequently treated the child's self as similar to a *plastic* that maintains a certain durability but can be moulded (Berger 2011). The teachers tried to balance the respect for who the child is with their own and general idea of who the child should become. According to the educators, what is shared among primary school students is complex growth and academic progress, yet the form and speed of the process itself is individual, discrete to the child, which makes the teacher's job even more challenging.

'I love to see the growth, there's tremendous growth in first grades. They come in very immature and very little and you never know how you're going to get them from point A to point B but you always do. (...) But there's a fine line between high expectations and developmentally inappropriate things for kids. (...) I have high

expectations but I also think you have to look at every kid as an individual with individual needs and individual talents and they all bring something different to the table. (...) You have to push kids but you have to also realise everybody is different, as much as we want everybody to be exactly the same at the end of high school, it's impractical to think that. Everyone has something to offer but it's not always going to be the same thing and everybody's talents are different. Right now, that's my biggest challenge.' *Jane (T9-I)*

The approach to the primary school child's 'basic literacy' – reading, writing, arithmetic [čtení, psaní, počítání] as it is known in the Czech Republic, or language arts and mathematics as it is known in the USA – together with overall academic learning of social and natural sciences was described by the teachers as being 'spiral' (Eliška, T2-ITR). As they explained, in each grade the skills and knowledge nurtured were arguably the same, but they were being gradually addressed in more breadth and depth (Buckingham 2013a). For example, Maryam (T12-I) clarified this saying 'the same themes keep coming up, just different books and different entry points for teaching it'. Anne (T10-I) further added that 'each year kind of builds on the one before, so it's not that they're learning anything so new, they're just getting better at everything'. She continued, 'I want them to get more confident at the end of the year, to be doing whatever they're doing now but better – writing longer stories and better stories – it's like everything just getting a few notches better'. The outcomes of academic and literacy learning were then monitored and assessed formally, mostly in standardised and established ways, e.g. through writing assignments. It was therefore in some ways easier for the teachers to know what aspects of academic development they should be interested in and how to track and assess the individual child's progress in them (*Photograph 15*).

**Photograph 15** Writing process tracker displayed in a classroom for the child's self-monitoring purposes



The teachers were, however, interested in the child's development and learning beyond basic literacy and academic performance towards overall progress in thoughts, actions, social relationships, and understanding of feelings. Sociocultural and emotional learning was partly spiral

and curriculum based, as it was part of the '4Rs - reading, writing, respect, responsibility' curriculum in the USA, or of the cross-curricular subjects such as 'moral, character and social education' in the Czech Republic. Maryam (T12-I) gave an example, 'in the first grade, things like name-calling don't go much past that it hurts our feelings, but it definitely goes into more detail and depth and explicit in the upper grades'. For the larger part though, social, cultural and emotional learning was episodic and responsive, as Anne (T10-I) stated, 'if there's any kind of personal challenges they have, I want them to be able to improve there too, like if there's someone who's really shy, by the end of the year, I'd like them to be more outgoing'. To achieve this, Anne and her colleagues would draw upon various classroom events as they arose, turning the naturally occurring situations into teachable moments. The potential outcomes of both spiral and episodic sociocultural and emotional learning were monitored and assessed mainly informally, usually through the teacher's own methods tailored to the specific issues a child or a group of learners were facing.

The observations and interviews discovered that a spiral approach was not applied when delivering the cross-curricular subject media education in the Czech participating schools, nor when anything media literacy related, such as reading of online *Scholastic News*, was being taught in the US participating schools. Media learning was instead happening episodically and more in the context of sociocultural and emotional, instead of basic literacy and academic, learning and development. As the teacher assistant Jacob (SS4-TA-ITR) observed, 'the teachers are including [media] in their lessons without even being aware of it, without being conscious of it, that in this moment I am focusing on [media], because in reality they have to deal with things such as kids' moral and social behaviour on a daily basis, and media are simply part of it'. The next two parts will therefore pay closer attention to these dimensions of learning, starting with the emotional.

### Theme 3: Learning importance of the child's emotional wellbeing and emotional literacy

The teachers believed that if learners feel safe and confident in the classroom, 'then they will be open and willing to cooperate with the teacher and among themselves' (Milada, T3-ITR), and thus be more easily 'empowered with the knowledge and skills' (James, SS8-M-I). The emphasis was therefore on both the child's protection and empowerment in his or her learning, as is considered desirable in the child's media learning (Ofcom 2014; Hobbs 2010). Yet although the child's *happiness* was the ultimate goal, he or she was regularly asked to explore other emotions on which the teacher drew when supporting the learner's emotional development.

It was suggested that the primary school child needs to gradually learn to acknowledge, manage, listen, and respond to his or her own, and others', emotions and feelings – to become *emotionally literate/intelligent*. The child would therefore often be asked, as Joan (T11-I) listed, 'how did that make you feel?, why did it make you feel that way?, [or] what can the other person do to change the way that you feel?' Nevertheless, the actual strategies of emotional learning facilitation greatly varied among the teachers, who found themselves in different situations and contexts. For instance, Anne's (T10-I) students were taught to instantly reflect on their feelings about newly learnt knowledge and skills:

'I'll put my thumb up and say, "If you feel really good about it [what you have just learnt], you can do it on your own". I put my thumb to the side and I'm, "If you feel okay, you can work with a partner". I put my thumb down and say, "if you feel that this is really new for you and challenging, you can work with me and sit on the rug".'

**Photographs 16** The children expressing their feelings about the knowledge/skills just learnt through showing their thumbs



At the time of the observations, the pupils already knew the drill, so when Anne asked how they felt, they immediately pointed their thumbs in different directions (*Photographs 16*). In contrast, Eliška (T2-ITR), who was new to teaching, did not have a general method and instead dealt differently with individual children and issues as they occurred (first quote). Maryam (T12-I) then focused on prevention by having established ways of supporting the child's socioemotional learning and development (second quote), whilst Marie (T3-ITR) used emotions to primarily support the child's learning, and only secondarily to nurture emotional literacy (third quote).

'There's [P16] with whom I have to work immediately when the issue occurs. She is an extremely over-solicitous little person [človíček]. She has to have everything perfect [tužu ňužu]. She wants to precisely follow a textbook. I had quite big issues with her at the start. She worried about everything. If she, for example, hadn't understood the assignment and did the task incorrectly, if she failed a test, which happened only once or twice, or if she hadn't understood something instantly, she immediately cried. I say, [name], first ask me, I will explain it to you, that's why I'm here, don't cry. (...) Luckily it's much better now.' *Eliška (T2-ITR)*

'Some days, we'll do an activity called 'community' where we cut out a paper heart and we go round in a circle and talk about all those things that hurt our heart. And then we unfold the heart at the end and everyone folds a piece. And then when it comes to the end, we can say sorry and that kind of unfolds it but there's still a crease; there's still a mark that the hurt is never fully gone. You have to be really careful.' *Maryam (T12-I)*

'The kids love the folk tales and legends, especially from around this region [from the Wallachian Mountains]. The scarier the folk tales are, the more they will concentrate and listen or watch quietly. The scarier, the better.' *Marie (T3-ITR)*

**Photograph 17** A learner turning away from her peers while trying to cope with her feelings



Not only did the teachers have different ways of nurturing the child's emotional literacy and of using emotions and feelings in their classrooms, they also needed to differentiate between seemingly same media-related emotions and feelings based on their context – which is where media in the context of the child's emotional development and well-being came into play. For example, while Marie (above) talked about using *fear* evoked by a *media story* for enhancing learning experience, the US educator Anne (T10-I) was dealing with a different *fear* evoked by a very different *media story*. Anne was interviewed on Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> December, the day of the *Sandy Hook Elementary School* shooting, when twenty children and six adult staff members died, some of them while protecting their students (CBS News 2012). Less than two hours after the incident, Anne was worrying and considering if, and how, to address it in her classroom.

'There was a school shooting in an elementary school. Just today. So that's something kids will probably hear about over the weekend and how do we... I would like to know how to address that 'cause I know... I want kids to feel safe when they're here. And it's like, I don't want to just say, "we're not talking about it". But it's hard. I also don't want parents to be, "why did you talk about this with my child?", for kids who didn't know. (...) I wouldn't want a parent to get upset that we had a whole big conversation about it. (...) But then the kids who do know... it's tricky, as a teacher. (...) If all of them are talking about it, then yeah. Maybe a little bit. And it also depends on the maturity of the kids. When I was a first grade teacher, they're so young...they're just like, "yeah, bang bang". They'll almost joke about it. They don't know how to talk about it. Third grade, they're a little better. Some of them will still laugh. They have inappropriate reactions. I think you just take the temperature of the room and see well, who is it, just two kids who are talking about it, or is it a lot of kids? Do they seem upset? And then you just have to go there.'

Anne thought the children would mention the *news* during the Monday morning circle time, because media would cover the story intensively over the weekend, making it difficult for any parent to 'protect' the child by withholding the information. It was only at the last session, an art



class delivered by a specialised teacher, when some of the students spontaneously begun to discuss the shooting. As Anne predicted, it was approached as an exciting story to share rather than a serious issue. It began with a couple of students and then spread over the classroom (*Photographs 18*), whilst the art teacher kept angrily asking them to stop. As the scheduled observation in Anne’s classroom was over, she was asked to follow-up through email, as she did.

‘As far as the shooting in CT [Connecticut], a parent emailed me asking if I was going to bring it up because if so, she’d like to talk to her daughter about it first. (The tone of her email implied that she did NOT want me to bring it up.) I responded that I was not planning to bring it up; however, if the kids started talking about it/asking questions, then I certainly would address it. It turns out that none of the kids talked about it in front of me so we never discussed it as a class. But after school when I work with a smaller group of students – I think this day there were two – one of them asked me if I had heard about it (I forget their exact wording) so I said, “Yes.” Then I waited, he made another comment about it – I forget exactly what he said but something about the guy shooting and killing kids, so I kind of nodded, paused, and then said, “But you guys know you are safe here, right?” They both said yes. The little girl said she knows we are safe because of the security guard. And that was about it. I should also mention that the boy who brought it up is Israeli and tends to be more aware of “bad” things in the media. I think his parents are less protective than the American parents and more “realistic” about things.’

**Photographs 18** Peers discussing how the killer proceeded during the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting



The degree of parental involvement in their child's school life influenced the degree of teachers' confidence to address media-related issues, and here there was a clear difference between the greater autonomy of the Czech classrooms when compared to the US participating schools. The Czech teachers were theoretically required by the national curriculum to address all media whilst the US teachers' responsibility was seemingly limited to high culture media (even though CCSS does consider all media to fall under language arts), making it more challenging for them to justify their media-related pedagogic actions. The teachers were caught between the public's and policy's ambivalence on the issue of media in young children's lives; on one hand being asked to and needing to address the child's media-related thoughts, actions, and feelings, while on the other hand being limited to fully draw upon the child's media choices, as these could be considered by parents and other stakeholders as controversial or child-inappropriate. Yet even the teachers themselves were worried about the potentially negative effects their reference to certain media could have on learners.

'The cartoon Dora specifically targets teaching certain Spanish words which goes really well with elementary Spanish because they're all pretty basic, but I wouldn't play the videos at school. (...) I don't like that they sell Dora backpacks, I don't want to be promoting something the kids are going to want to buy, I don't know. I don't like it. I don't show Disney cartoons either, I would never show a Disney movie. (...) I don't want to be promoting that consumerism.' *Andre (SS13-T-I)*

These uncertainties and worries complicated not only learning with/in/through and about media, but the teachers' overall pedagogic beliefs and efforts of developing classroom community when the child not only learns but lives, as the next theme discusses.

#### Theme 4: Importance of nurturing sociocultural, and partly also civic, development

The teachers put a great emphasis on facilitating the feeling of classroom community and family, where the child not only learns as an individual, but lives as social being and partly also a citizen. As Věra (SS5-SM-ITR) argued, 'a human is a social being. (...) Individualism and a child-centred education adapting to the children's unique abilities and knowledge, yes, but they also need to be aware that they aren't alone and that people are diverse and that they need to take responsibility for their actions and to accept, respect, and appreciate each other'. The purpose of classroom community was therefore, firstly, to create a supportive environment where enriching learning experiences can occur (Martin 2007), and secondly, to nurture sociocultural and civic development (Bazalgette 2007, 2010).

To begin with the former, the educators aimed to encourage learners to collectively build and maintain the classroom as the best functioning room, a home, where everyone can succeed at one time, and where everyone feels 'good'.

'I think I try, right from the beginning, to focus on making a community here – having them really care about one another. (...) Everyone has a job to do. I enforce that this is their classroom and I'm helping them live here for six hours a day. (...) So I try to just, on a daily basis, intermingled with the lessons that are maths,

reading, writing, social studies, try to just take the time to make them feel like this is a home. And that we all care for one another and we're a team.' Joan (T11-I)

'From day one when the kids come here, I tell them that's what we are, we're a classroom family and if I see kids having anxiety or problems because they're having tough times interacting with one another, we'll have a family meeting on the rug. My job as a teacher is to make sure that when the kids are here and when they're with me, they're safe and happy and they know they're respected and that I expect them to respect one another too. For some kids, they don't have that at home, they don't have that family unit at home. So I try to run it as a family unit.' Jane (T9-I)

**Photographs 19** Transforming classroom to a home through displaying the children's photographs and awards and through allowing the child to have his or her personal space and tools in the classroom



Now turning to the second purpose, the teachers explained that to nurture social literacy/intelligence was equally important to the child's immediate and future life. Firstly, the child's immediate wellbeing and learning was thought to be reciprocally connected with the child's social literacy and development. It was suggested that the child who does not know how to behave with, and deal with behaviours of, his or her classroom peers, would find it more challenging and difficult to learn in formal settings and would probably be less 'happy'. Secondly, the potentially unpleasant classroom experience caused by social difficulties was then feared for having negative

impact on the child's sociocultural development and future life in community and society. As Marie (T1-ITR) said, 'it is very important to learn to live in a collective, which has its own bigger challenges'. For this and the previous mentioned reason, the teachers paid a considerable amount of attention to the child's social life and learning.

They stated that it is within the first years of compulsory education when the child is both cognitively more capable, as Piaget (1923) thought, and socially more expected, as Langmeier and Krejčířová (2009) and Erikson (1959) argued, to move from egocentrism to more selfless interest in, and understanding of, self and others (Goswami 1992, Beazley *et al.* 2009).

'Still too, developmentally they're young. They're still thinking that the centre of the universe is themselves and seven, eight years old they're starting to branch out to think, to know and be aware that other people have good ideas too, it's not only my idea that's good. I have to listen to other people.' *Beatrix (T8-I)*

The foremost crucial issue was, according to the teachers, the peer-to-peer relationships, which should be friendly, supportive, and respectful. Together with drawing upon the naturally occurring social events of the classroom, the teachers applied pedagogic strategies of which the most prominent were group work and classroom discussion – especially circle time. Within these the child was to learn to share, listen, reflect, readjust/strengthen his/her own thoughts, collaborate, and compromise, among other things. When the main purpose remained academic, the educators argued for the effectiveness of peer-to-peer learning, acknowledging childhood as a world with its own rules, cultures, and languages (Postman 1982 [1994]; Cunningham 2006). As for instance Milada (T3-ITR) suggested, 'a first grader explains things to another first grader in their own manner and in their own language, so they might really understand and learn better in this way, and no doubt it is also more fun for them', or as Joan (T11-I) extended the thought by linking it to the development of the child's metacognition (Goswami 1992):

'A higher way of learning is to be able to take what someone says and say it in another way that is clear to you and to teach it to someone else. So, it's basically that they're internalising what I'm teaching and then being able to even say it in another way would be even higher learning.'

**Photographs 20** Peer-to-peer individual and group learning



When the aim was primarily sociocultural, the classroom discussions and circle times served as organised and supervised social events nurturing social literacy in a safe and supportive environment. The child would simply be given ‘a chance to talk and just kind of share, tell stories’ (Maryam, T12-ITR), whilst the teacher would try to gradually ‘step out when they share because (...) there’s a time to have an adult conversation together (...) so they become part of a classroom together without me telling them that they have to’ (Joan, T11-I). Throughout the first three years, the amount of circle time, such as weekly and Monday morning meetings, was observed and confirmed by the teachers to be decreasing, as the child was gradually more socially literate and less teacher-dependent. Group work and classroom discussion would, however, remain as means of offering distinct learning opportunities, because ‘some kids might learn better together, while others might need more explanation and guidance from the teacher, so the combination of both is the best’ (Marie, T1-ITR).

**Photographs 21** Circle time



The teachers agreed that the topic of media ‘comes out in this time during the day that is more about social versus the academic’ (Beatrix, MTS8-I); interestingly now separating social and academic in the context of media. They perceived media as mainly a sociocultural element of primary education and admitted that the majority of debates and activities related to media were initiated by the child, not by the teachers, which was equally observed within this research. The role of the child’s media engagement in social learning and development was seen in two dominant ways: as impacting peer-to-peer relationships and as being a sociocultural framework from which the child learns social behaviours and against which they compare themselves and others. Blending popular discourses with their own experience with the child’s social behaviour, the teachers argued that the child could potentially develop a negative self-concept through consuming media texts stereotyping them (Holland 2004; Cunningham 2006), their gender, or people in general in the process of collective meaning making (Jenkins 2006) and cultural ideology (Hall 1986; Schatzki 2001).

‘Sometimes you see it more with the girls, the way they get along, “You don’t look like this,” or “You’re not dressed like this,” I love that BFF, “You’re my BFF.” (...) I hear the kids talk about pop culture and about, “I have an iPad and I have an iPhone,” and talk about certain TV shows. (...) Their social relationships are more impacted by that than their academic part.’ *Jane (T9-I)*

‘If something in media catches their attention, then they re-act or perform here what they had seen, which might end badly.’ *Eva (SS1-L-ITR)*

‘In these first grades, a lot of kids don’t correctly read those social cues in media. I would like to help them to be able to do it, so they can be able to relate to others and to respond appropriately to people in the world.’ *Madeleine (T6-I)*

‘The children should learn about media in order to be able to find their own way to learning, play, life, it is important that already the children as small as these were capable of this. So they wouldn't let themselves to be swallowed/absorbed by media.’ *Marie (T1-ITR)*

‘The society isn't making it any easier for these kids. Just by looking at the commercials in between the kids’ programmes, one must disagree with the sexualisation of childhood, telling girls to put make-up on, do their hair and use their charm [vnady] to succeed. (...) Children must know that it’s ok not to be who media tell us we should be, and not to have what media tell us we should have. We want them to feel good about themselves.’ *Věra (SS5-M-ITR)*

The educators further agreed that the children learnt about media mainly within naturally occurring social situations and cultural ecologies (Murduchowicz 2002; Burn 2009), and most of the teachers were not pleased with what the children were learning (Silverblatt 2013). Their first thoughts were about modifying the child’s media engagement, so depending on the context the child would not be either excluded from (first quote), or treated badly within the classroom collective (second quote), and/or would be learning from the right/appropriate sources (third quote).

‘We have a girl in the class, who doesn’t have [electronic and digital] media at home and she isn’t interested in them. It’s a nice way of life, but then it’s hard for her to make friends. (...) She often doesn’t have anything to say when children discuss video games or TV shows they like. It isn’t right to force her, but on the other hand, the gap is increasing and we want her to be part of the collective, so we need to find a way of helping her with that.’ *Jacob (SS4-TA-ITR)*

‘With time the kids start ‘I am somebody, you’re nobody’. (...) So we have to help them understand that the child cannot do anything about the financial situation of his family. So you say ‘don’t do this, don’t say this, it isn’t his fault.’’ *Eva (SS1-L-ITR)*

‘Sometimes they ask me if I have seen something, like Star Wars, so I tell them I don’t watch things like that and that they shouldn’t either.’ *Marie (T1-ITR)*

The Czech teachers were then more concerned about the child’s citizenship and about media as political power rather than about consumerism and protection of the child’s innocence as the US teachers tended to be (see the quote about *Dora* on p.96). They believed that the child must learn to respect and obey externally given rules for the sake of his or her sociocultural and community life, starting with the basics and gradually moving towards active participation in the public sphere (Habermas 1962), and consequently learning the key components of citizenship that Delanty (2000) summarised as duties and participations.

‘To develop and maintain some kind of order is crucial with the little ones. For example, to keep the habit of standing up as a way of greeting each other or raising hands when they want to speak.’ *Milada (T3-ITR)*

‘It is also very important that they are living in a community here, in a kind of social order. This has a great value as they learn to communicate with people. I let the children come up with their own rules during the first months. Since they live and communicate together on a daily basis, the problems occur naturally. Through this they are forced to co-create their own rules, with my assistance of course, in order to solve the issues they gradually encounter. I would tell them, ‘kids, a week is behind us, how was it, what did you like, what didn’t you like, what can we do about it?’ I encourage them to collectively decide what would be best for all.’ *Eliška (T2-ITR)*

Although the US and Czech classrooms alike operated as *culture*, described by Williams (1961 [2009]) as a particular way of life with its meanings and values expressed in learning, institutions, and ordinary behaviours, the US teacher was focused mainly on the individual’s wellbeing whilst the Czech teacher also emphasised the wellbeing of society as a whole.

‘I’m thinking of (...) being an active member of whatever community they choose to be in whether it’s an academic community, whether it’s actually reaching out to their own community, to make a difference in the world, in some way. To be a good person (...) that someone else can look up to and respect.’ *Joan (T11-I)*

‘They need to learn to honour the rules and laws. (...) Above all they have to acquire the fundamental moral rules of society and to develop their own ethical and moral boundaries.’ *Věra (SS5-M-ITR)*

The post-communist thinking was apparent in the interviews with the Czech educators, who kept stressing that with greater freedom comes greater responsibility, which contrasted with the US teachers who have only experienced a democratically driven society, and it thus seemed that they took freedom and responsibility for granted. The Czech teachers regularly talked about the ‘old regime’, ‘previous regime’, or the time ‘before the Velvet Revolution’, when discussing education, children, and media. They remembered when propaganda media were the only nationwide publicly available source of information, and agreeing with Bernays (1928), who called media an unseen mechanism of society and an invisible government, some of the teachers argued that political manipulation of media might be less visible in the current democratic regime, but it has not disappeared. Similarly to Urbánek, the Czech teachers raised and educated in the communist regime learnt to believe that the truth in media was subversive and they wanted the child to learn this. Moreover, the teachers did not trust the Czech government to have a real interest in supporting the public’s media literacy, despite media education having been included into the national curriculum.

‘The children should especially become familiar with what media are, what power they have, how they can be harmful, how they can be beneficial, and be conscious why media were established and how they develop. Even though in so doing we are stepping on thin ice, because we can encounter ideological conflict with the visions of our rulers. Can we really tell our children that media were developed to influence and control society, and that they have always served this purpose, or that they are here to generate huge financial incomes? In this, education and media are identical. Even [a queen] Maria Theresa – most probably she saw the societal and financial power she could obtain from educating her subjects. However, the governments soon realised that a well-educated and intelligent

person might with time become dangerous to them. Hence the struggle with media education in schools.' *Věra (SS5-M-ITR)*

Yet even though the Czech as well as the US educators argued that compulsory education aims to nurture active citizens and competent participants in social life through teaching the child about media (Kellner and Share 2007; Zanker 2002; Sirkku 2010), they agreed that this might not be a task suitable for the first two, possibly three, years of primary education, as the following part explores.

## Theme 5: Postponing critical and creative media literacy learning

The teachers argued that the child should reach a certain socioemotional and cognitive level before he or she is formally taught critical and creative media literacy skills and knowledge. They had sound and clear understanding of what critical media literacy was when they talked about the ability to search, access, choose, analyse, and think critically about media texts, whilst only few, in particular the Czech and US specialised teachers, considered creative media literacy learning focused on media production activities as being equally important. The agreement among all however was, that the child should ideally reach a certain developmental level, to mature adequately, before he or she can learn about *certain media* within formal education.

'I mean, with the older kids, you can be more... you can reason with them and have a conversation. With little kids, it's more black and white. This is wrong; this is right. With older kids, you can just talk, asking them questions, "Well, what do you think?" Maybe, you still do that with little kids but you're able to have a more mature conversation with the older kids.' *Anne (T10-I)*

'I think the younger kids are not mentally ready for thinking critically about media. I think it is too hard for them. I don't know, it is just my opinion.' *Eva (SS1-L-ITR)*

'In order to understand the world they're in, they have to know what's available to them and how to use it. Do I feel it's appropriate at younger ages? Slowly. I don't think it's anything they have to master right now. I think it's used as a complement.' *Beatrix (T8-I)*

In addition to socioemotional and cognitive 'maturity', the developmental level of sensory-motoric skills was mentioned in the context of creative media literacy, as well as critical media literacy if taught through learning-by-doing. This can be illustrated through the example of the Town School's long-term media production project and *Movie Making Club (Photographs 22)*, established and supervised by a parent volunteer and a high school teacher Hillary (SS11-PV-I). Although the filming crew consisted of the fourth and fifth graders (ten to twelve years old) and thus older children than those participating in this research study, pupils across all grades participated in different activities such as producing weekly news announcements and monthly assemblies, filming special presentations and concerts, or the *Students of the Month* videos (*Figure 14*).



Photographs 22 Town School's production studio



Figure 14 Example of the Student of the Month video posted on the School's websites



Based on this experience the parent volunteer Hillary argued that media production activities were suitable for children of all ages, because 'if they can watch it and play with it, they are also able to know how to work and create with it'. However, she suggested that it directly cultivated children's ability to deconstruct media messages – in order to become critical and analytic media consumers (Masterman 1980, 1985; Buckingham 2003 [2010]) – only when they reach a certain developmental benchmark. According to her, the level of emotional maturity, independence and cognitive and sensory-motor skills was decisive. Hillary claimed that working with the first graders meant to simply 'point and shoot, because they can push the button, they can take the film, they can walk around with it, but you're still going to get a lot of shaking'. She continued, 'if you put it on a tripod they are little bit better with it, and they are excited, but they are still limited in their eye-hand coordination (...) and they 'won't think about the outcome and the audience'. She stated that the second graders could make more strategic decisions such as following the speaker and catching the action and they were more attentive to what they were shooting and why. Hillary believed that the third grade was when it all came together allowing the children to fully deploy

their imagination as young filmmakers. She remembered that the third graders had a clear mental image of their creative goals and were able to construct a variety of expressive forms of communication to convey ideas and information while keeping the audience in mind. Hillary thus argued that ‘at this point the child could move forward towards more complex tasks’ and consequently also connected to it a more complex understanding of media industry and their role within it.

When compared to the parent volunteer Hillary, the primary school teachers felt in general more comfortable and confident to facilitate learning with and about the more familiar and officially approved media platforms, texts and production technologies when working with children at a certain developmental and educational stage, as well as when facilitating the child’s academic, cognitive, emotional, sensory-motoric, social, cultural and political learning. For example, the research discovered that a considerable amount of time across the first and second grades was devoted to learning about movement coordination and manipulation with non-digital tools and management of all senses (*Photographs 23*). Even using basic tools such as pens or scissors, or the ability to use only one sense for learning, represented a challenge that needed to be gradually improved. Similarly sharing the outcomes of the child’s production work was taken seriously, as the teachers argued about the positive benefits of presenting, performing, and having exhibitions for a selected, relatively small, and physically present audience with relatively predictable reactions.

**Photographs 23** Children learning about their senses – hearing on the first picture and smell on the second – and a hand-made present for the researcher made by the Village School first graders



Some teachers, however, incorporated popular media into the traditional media production activities in the classrooms. For instance, by using painting tools, the child would reproduce existing or create fictional commercial posters in art class (*Photographs 24*), or in music education would include popular songs in their curricula (*Photographs 25*).

‘We start off the year with a survey and I ask the kids what they are listening to, it has all questions, such as who is the popular artist, what genre do they like, what is their favourite movie, video game... and then I go through the file and if there is a song that is accessible, doesn’t have foul language, and would be easy for them to play, I pull it. A couple of years ago we played *Carol of the Bells* by *Trans-Siberian Orchestra*. This year I’m gonna arrange Katy Perry, last year it was Bon Jovi. (...) There are some popular songs from the movies that the kids have seen, like the *Shrek* movie. Or last year the *Muppet Movie* came out and one kid was totally into *the Muppets*, so I arranged three Muppets theme songs and we

play and record those in class. The kids were going crazy. Or we did something similar when *Harry Potter* was popular.’ James (SS8-M-1)

**Photographs 24** Art class exhibition



**Photographs 25** Music class and school music performance singing and playing popular songs



The problem with critical and creative media literacy, as it was understood by the teachers and even described in the Czech national curriculum (*Appendix 12*), was its apathy to educational progress. Drawing upon their experience of working with different children, the educators argued that it is wrong to think that primary school children should, for instance, learn to analyse online texts without acknowledging that ‘they have to first know how to turn the computer on’ (Madeleine, T6-ITR). The educators therefore found it difficult to clearly distinguish between teaching and learning with, from, through, and about media, as well as between media/technology/information literacies. Marie, for instance, illustrated how theoretically distinct concepts applied in her pedagogic practice when unconsciously recreating Jenkin’s (2006) convergence culture in the classroom.

‘The children learn about media when using them at school, or when we go to the theatre and discuss the experience. We analyse the story, the characters, compare the play with the original story, if it was based on a book. (...) We also often dramatise Czech classical fairy tales in Czech language and literature sessions, which they enjoy a lot. When we performed *Bad Boy [Budulínek]*, we for example had to have more foxes, so everyone could participate. We did the same in natural science when we were learning the planets of the solar system. We were running around the Sun, the kids even brought wigs and basic costumes. I am sure they learnt the planets faster seeing the fast and hyperactive George running around them. Given there are twenty six children in the class, we had to have each planet at least twice or three times. (...) Technology belongs to media

education. For example, when we were learning a poem, I asked them to search online for information about the author, or when we were preparing the play they researched the planets. (...) I would also include in media education the time on Monday morning when we share our weekend experiences. Even when children don't mention media, and say they played outside, I can ask them to compare playing outside with playing on the computer. (...) We created robots in our art class out of branded packaging, talking about waste and responsible shopping.'

**Photographs 26** Cross-curricular media learning in Marie's class



In Marie's and her colleagues' teaching experience, everything was interconnected, not only media and technology related to learning, but everything happening in the classroom. Yet even despite having this holistic experience with media in their pedagogic practice, their beliefs about, and attitude towards, media remained dualistic. Although the curriculum was centred on high culture and educationally approved media (music, theatre, literature, art), their superior position was arguably implicit until the teachers' personal opinions about, and attitudes towards, popular culture and digital and electronic media were clearly stated and demonstrated by the teachers when interacting with their students. As Marie (T1-O) for example drew the distinction in Czech language class, saying 'media such as the Internet mean easy access to information and entertainment, while theatre and literature are culture nurturing the soul'. Among the participants only Anežka (SS6-ICT-ITR) questioned how the teacher's antagonism towards, and trivialisation of, various media could potentially influence the child's openness and willingness to share his or her media experience with the teacher. She said, 'the youngest kids come and say 'I heard it here, I have seen it there''. Yet as they learn to understand the adult's tendency to discriminate popular over high culture (Leavis and Thompson 1933 [1942]; Buckingham 2003 [2010]), then as Anežka continued, 'the kids, especially the older they get, they take precautions [davaji si majzla] – they don't tell you where they read it or heard it, or what they did'. Thus, although the teachers argued against critical and creative media literacy being taught to younger children, they did not seem to be concerned about potentially teaching the child the adult ways of media cynicism, elitism and paternalism. These 'other media' were rather appreciated in the context of the child's lifelong learning as explored next.

## Theme 6: Learning to learn and enjoy learning, or how cross-curricular media learning finds its place in primary education

Primary education was, according to the participants, 'for a big part about building the foundation' (Milada, T3-ITR). The teachers suggested that learning to learn and enjoy learning was key to the child's immediate progress and lifelong learning. To nurture the child's ability to learn and passion for learning was therefore imperative to the teacher's pedagogy.

'With the first grades, it's more about preparing teaching tools and thinking about teaching methods, to teach them everything correctly, because these are the fundamental basics. If they don't learn them correctly, they'll struggle to learn in the future.' *Madeleine (T6-ITR)*

'They don't always remember the little things they learn in maths or this or that. They remember the things that are really exciting or fun, so I want to teach them in a fun way where they think learning is fun. That's my role, I guess, if I was to say it in just one sentence is to make learning fun. And to best get them motivated and not just 'You will learn this' but that they want to learn and to have that enthusiasm when they get older, just to still love learning.' *Anne (T10-I)*

'You have to teach them things that will help them, supply them with their own educational tools they're going to need to improve themselves to get them from point A to point B and then from point B to point C. (...) The main impact I want to make on children is that they know that learning comes from them, that learning is inside them and that they are smart and capable of learning anything. When they have discovered that, it's pretty amazing. That's a powerful impact.' *Charlotte (T7-I)*

'The main thing they are learning is how to learn. (...) What they learn is not as important as how they learn, and also what they learn now, might only be important later, which is often too abstract and distant for the children. So they need to continue learning to be able to make sense of it when they actually need it.' *Martin (SS3-M-ITR)*

The previously discussed beliefs and practices – nurturing teacher-learner and learner-learner relationships, facilitating social child-centred learning, encouraging a supportive and respectful environment, running a classroom community, and more – all aimed at a transformative learning experience that would be pleasant, supporting the child's love for learning. Although media were believed to penetrate all aspects of learning, they had more explicit roles and were more appreciated by the teachers when stating their value to lifelong and enjoyable learning. Firstly, when it came to lifelong learning, the teachers felt it was of the foremost importance for the child to acquire transferrable and problem-solving skills, giving the recently witnessed fast development of technologies and their almost instant impact on ways of living and working.

'In general, basic education should prepare students for their future studies and work, but which direction it should take or which mind-set children should adopt, that is not easy to say. (...) It is hard to know, because one really doesn't know. With the continuous development of new technologies, nothing might be the same in just few years, and the demands on the future students and employees

might be completely different. That is why to nurture transferrable skills in ethically and morally conscious lifelong learners is probably what compulsory education should be about now. (...) The kids must learn to be truly able to efficiently and flexibly react to the changes, evaluate new risks and opportunities, to prepare themselves and learn from their previous mistakes' *Věra (SS5-SM-ITR)*

Secondly, in the context of enjoyable learning, the educators agreed that whatever can increase the child's motivation and willingness to learn, and whatever makes learning more fun, should be used in primary education. For example, Charlotte (T7-I) claimed, 'I believe in having a lot of fun - they're just six year olds too so I think you have to laugh', while Jarmila (T5-ITR) stated, 'the teacher's role is difficult, because what used to engage students, what proved itself over time, does not engage them as much anymore'. The teachers saw digital and electronic media as both the cause of, and the possible answer to, the need for enhancing and innovating their pedagogic practice (*Photographs 27*). They however emphasised that 'whatever is new excites them, while anything stereotypical bores them, because with time anything we do regularly, for example using modern technologies, will become stereotypical and it won't interest and excite them anymore' (Eliška, T2-ITR).

*Photographs 27 Learning with media and technologies*



The educators therefore suggested that developing enjoyable and varying media-related activities and tasks mattered to learning more than media themselves. They continued by saying that, although their young students might be capable of learning about media and technologies on their own, they usually appreciate 'a human connection, some relationship, some interaction, because that is truly important to us, humans, and to children even more' (Madeleine, T6-ITR). Moreover, the less formal and the more entertaining the nature of learning about media was, the less the teachers worried about their own media illiteracy. For instance, returning to the example of the *Movie Making Club*, the parent volunteer Hillary could not fully commit to the media production project anymore and thus the fifth grade teacher Kelsey (SS10-AT-I) stepped forward and took

over the initiative. Yet since ten-year-old Megan (SS12-P) was more experienced in media production, Kelsey decided to leave her in charge of filming while learning from her (*Photographs 28*) – shifting the teacher-learner roles.

‘I love filming and anyone else who wants to do it they should try it too, it is really fun. It would be cool if every kid could try it. (...) So when [Hillary] got a job elsewhere, Mrs. [Kelsey] says she is going to take over and I said ‘I did it last year, so maybe I can help you’, that is how I started doing this.’ *Megan (SS12-P-I)*

‘The most important thing to me is that the kids are earning that privilege being involved in the process that they love, enjoy and that opens them new opportunities. Those are kids who are working every day to do it right, they are the ones who are controlling themselves and they are really showing the important terms of integrity, respect, team work, and I just want to make sure that it continues for them, I want them to have that opportunity. (...) I don’t have any background in media studies, so when it comes to actual filming, I learn from [Megan]. (...) As a teacher I am a lifelong learner. I am ready to learn anything from anybody. (...) I love learning with the kids and I think it is good for them to see too. We live in the age where there is so much information available. It is not my goal to teach my kids everything they need to know to be adult, but instead teaching them to be thinkers and problem solvers, and working through something together – them observing me dealing with the unknown enriches those problem solving skills.’ *Kelsey (SS10-AT-I)*

**Photographs 28** Megan filming the Student of the Month November 2012



Since the Czech as well as US educators believed that media learning – explained to the educators as learning about (all) media from, with, in, or without the physical presence of, any media – was important to the child’s lifelong learning, beneficial to enjoyable learning, and naturally penetrating various aspects of the child’s life, learning, and development, they began to believe in its current and potential value to primary education. They however rejected the idea of media education as a separate subject and instead argued that it should be facilitated cross-curricularly. In this way, media learning would, according to them, be contextual and responsive to the emerging needs of the social child, the classroom as a whole, and the educational goals set by the teachers as well as by external agencies. Given the interconnectedness that the teachers believed surrounded the child, primary education was, according to them, blessed with having one main

educator per class, from which media learning should try to equally benefit. The US teachers talked about this hypothetically, as shown in the example of Beatrix, whilst the Czech teachers reflected on their experience with the cross-curricular subject media education, when arguing for cross-curricular media learning.

‘Everything has a little joining thread (...) [and] you can make everything cross. Learning about media too. You can find a way to do it.’ *Beatrix (T8-I)*

‘The lower elementary school has it easier to organise cross-curricular subjects, because theoretically there is only one teacher teaching. It has anyway always worked like that, even when it wasn’t given a name. It means that if you read Mammoth Hunters, it is not a problem to draw mammoth hunters in art lesson and to discuss further the history and locations in regional studies [vlastivěda]. (...) In every subject you do similar things and they all link to each other.’ *Martin (SS3-SM-ITR)*

‘[Talking about media] It just comes. We are talking about something and they say they have heard or seen it somewhere. They don’t start talking about media out of nowhere. It is more evoked by other topics. (...) This makes media education a good cross-curricular subject. (...) This is my first year teaching so right now I need to focus on the main issues and subjects, but with time, I see great potential in exploring the potential of media education. (...) We anyway won’t be able to avoid it in the future. (...) I can imagine organising my own *Riskuj* for the kids. (...) They could even create these games themselves.’ *Eliška (T2-ITR)*

‘I prepare teaching of cross-curricular subjects, such as media education, a rough outline to know what to address, but sometimes we encounter a completely different topic and the lesson is in the end about something completely different. But it works out well, because then they really learn, when it is set in the context.’ *Božena (T4-TR)*

To formally deliver and assess media learning, however, was seen as tricky, as was teaching primary school children critical and creative media literacy. The teachers thought that formalising and standardising media learning in primary school classrooms would instead make it less beneficial for the child, even though it could possibly make it easier for the teacher.

‘Some teachers would prefer to have everything pre-designed and dictated – to have media education as a separate subject that would have to be taught. It’s easier to limit and simplify media education by including it into the fixed curriculum, instead of having space and responsibility for designing and delivering media education in one’s own manner.’ *Věra (SS5-M-TR)*

The teachers were therefore aware that by arguing for cross-curricular media learning, they were taking upon themselves a responsibility for incorporating it into their own pedagogic practices as well as beliefs that were guiding these practices.



## Justified Beliefs about Media Learning based on the first Parallel Case: Holistic Approach to Media Learning

Building upon the themes discussed up to now, this research began to view an ordinary primary school teacher as, metaphorically speaking, an extraordinary tightrope acrobat. As the ropewalker Charles Blondin repeatedly crossed the Niagara River in 1859, each time performing different hazardous acts captured in a series of photographs, so the participating teachers engaged in a constant negotiation, balancing many variables surrounding the child's learning. On a daily basis they sought, among many other things, the right equilibrium between teacher's control and learner's autonomy, child's individuation and socialisation, teacher's idea of who the child should become with who the child was, teaching to tests and learning for life and for learning, basic literacy and social, emotional, civic, and physical complexity of the child, empowerment and protection, serialist and holistic teachings, and/or spiral curriculum-driven and situated learnings.

The individual schools and teachers were dealing with diverse changes in educational and curricular systems with varied consequences. They had to answer to the stakeholders, who were involved and supportive at various degrees, they were expected to live up to each interested party's, often contradictory, ideas and requirements, and yet they all collectively put a tremendous responsibility on themselves for their young students' immediate and future wellbeing. Although being a *teacher* was necessarily seen as an institutionalised occupation with externally set demands and rules, the teachers referred mainly to their personal motivations and beliefs when reflecting on their pedagogic practice and experience. *Being a teacher* was above all a state of *being* (Quinn *et al.* 2000, Quinn 2004), or as Russell (1950 [2006], p.83) wrote:

‘The teacher, like the artist, the philosopher and the man of letters, can only perform his work adequately if he feels himself to be an individual directed by an inner impulse, not dominated and fettered by an outside authority.’

The teachers honoured the children's learning experiences as much as the outcomes of such experience. Consequently they aimed at developing and improving both personal and instructional relationships with their pupils. Such complex interactions allowed them to explore and constantly evaluate what was in each child's reach and subsequently decide about the intensity and form of support a child needed in order to progress to that achievable level. Their approach was similar to Vygotsky's (1930 [1978], p.85) 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD). Much like the educators, Vygotsky objected that only 'those things the children can do on their own are [considered] indicative', and added that '[w]e give children a battery of tests or a variety of tasks of varying degrees of difficulty, and we judge their mental development on the basis of how they solve them and at what level of difficulty' (*ibid.*). Even though Vygotsky used the term *mental development*, by drawing more precisely upon his developmental theories and cultural-historical approach it could be argued that the concept incorporated 'the whole child, as an integral person' (Chaklin 2003, p.39), and so the participating teachers directed their efforts towards the learner in all his or her intellectual, physical, emotional, and sociocultural complexity as a harmonious whole (Mayes 2012). This was portrayed through the themes above, and it is summarised here by the teachers themselves:

‘At primary school level the children are still very small, so they should be educated in all areas. To nurture a person who is able to differentiate between good and bad – to develop their own views and attitudes. Emotional and social education should not be forgotten. Physical education equally, not to educate a professional sportsman, but rather a child with all-round strengths.’ *Helena (SS7-T-ITR)*

‘I love them to grow in all the areas. (...) I want them to be doing whatever they’re doing now but better. (...) If there’s any kind of personal challenges they have, I want them to be able to overcome it. (...) So I’m thinking of sort of the whole student. (...) To teach them both of those things; to be successful at the things that are your strengths (...) and the things that make you happy that you like to work on (...) and also just be someone that someone else can look up to and respect.’ *Anne (T10-I)*

Vygotsky (1930 [1978]) therefore argued that whilst individual test taking only assesses the actual developmental level that has already been achieved through the reciprocal relationship between learning and overall development, in education the focus should be on the potential development a child can achieve with others’ support, or scaffolding (Bruner 1960). Dewey (1915) reminded of the need for understanding education through the child’s progress and quoted Horace Mann who apparently said, ‘where anything is growing, one former is worth a thousand re-formers’ (p.5). Vygotsky (1930 [1978]) therefore explained that the zone of proximal development is ‘*the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers*’ (*ibid.*, p.86, *emphasis in the original*), and clarified that ‘what the child is able to do in collaboration today he will be able to do independently tomorrow’ (p.87). Among other things, the thumb system used by the third grade teacher Anne was a poignant practical example of this.

However, Palinscar (1998) argued that ZPD is ‘probably one of the most used and least understood constructs to appear in contemporary educational literature’ (p.370), especially ‘in the context of research about the negotiated nature of teaching and learning’ that neglects Vygotsky’s emphasis on the tight interdependence of learning and development (Chaklin 2003, p.39). According to Vygotsky (1930 [1978]) ‘analysis of teaching cannot be correctly resolved or even formulated without addressing the relation between learning and development in school-age children’ (p.79), which he suggested was ‘interrelated from the child’s very first day of life’ (p.84). The teachers agreed with Vygotsky that children learn a great deal within family, peer, and out-of-school experiences, and added that their life in the classroom cannot be separated from the one outside; suggesting the important role of the child’s historicity and a dialogue between the child’s informal and formal learning and life. This was, according to the educators, true in all spheres, but in the matter of media even more so (Murduchowicz 2002; Burn 2009).

The teachers seemed to feel limited and burdened by the perceived difference between their limited amount and the child’s quantity (not necessarily quality, as they noted) of media experiences. Inconsistently then, although the teachers suggested that formal learning in schools should be a little in advance of development in order for the learners to be challenged and encouraged to progress, as also recommended by Vygotsky, in the context of media the teachers

would seem to rather slow down the process and make learning lag behind socioemotional, cognitive and sensory-motoric development.

Such conflicting views, however, were part of a much larger contradictory matter that Holland (2004) named as the educators' double task of separating childhood from adulthood while at the same time forming a bridge between them and guiding learners while crossing the said bridge. Similarly Dewey (1915) commented that 'it was the weakness of the 'old education' that it made invidious comparisons between the immaturity of the child and the maturity of the adult, regarding the former as something to be got away from as soon as possible and as much as possible; so it is the danger of the 'new education' that it regards the child's present powers and interests as something finally significant in themselves' (p.112). The adult ambivalence on the issue of media in young children's lives the teachers were facing was of a similar nature; asking, and being asked for, education modifying the child's media habits and preferences in a way that would make the child's approach to media more *critical adult*-like while his or her media consumption more *innocent child*-like.

'What is the most important thing that the first grader should know about the media? I don't know what that is. I want them to be kids. It'll be interesting going forward to see how people negotiate that.' *Andre (SS13-T-I)*

The apathy to gradual progress of critical and creative media literacy, as it was understood by the teachers and as it is often described in academic and policy papers (BBC *et al.* 1998; FEE PP 2007; Ofcom 2014), seemed to be one of its major weakness in the context of primary education. Critical and creative media literacy could certainly be, and it is in the Czech Republic, part of the subject-based curriculum. Subject-based delivery was, however, understood by this research as approached spirally and serially, which media (literacy) education was not. Spiral and serialist education is guided by an established curriculum and a set hierarchical programme (Bruner 1973), which episodic media education did not have. As the themes highlighted, the subjects taught within the first three years of compulsory education revisited the same ideas repeatedly, 'building upon them until the student has grasped the full formal apparatus that goes with them' in order to be successful in tests and assessments, as well as to build a necessary foundation for meeting new, more complex and difficult task requirements in the next educational stage, or grade (*ibid.*, p.13). Teaching about media established in education and connected to basic literacy were embedded in spiral and serialist education, and it could therefore be argued that teaching about all media connected to media literacy should be too. Yet even though this approach might be suitable for critical and creative media literacy education at primary school level, it does not deal with the other criticism pointed out in *the Chapter 1: Beginning*, and equally suggested by the participating teachers, that argued against teaching media and neglecting informal social situations, cultural ecologies, and the multifaceted role media possibly have in the child's life, development and learning.

Learnings facilitated by the teachers within the classroom community and its naturally occurring situations, where the child's media-related individual and collective engagements were argued to play a more crucial role, were mainly holistic, situated and social constructivist in nature. The aim of the teachers' holistic education was to foster 'the development of whole human beings' (Miller 1998, p.48), as mentioned earlier. On the one hand, the approach was about the individual wellbeing and development of each child as a unique being and thus about his or her individuation (1963 [1995], 1978 [2008]), because as Holdstock (1987, 2000) argued, education treating learners

as a homogeneous group would be like producing robots. On the other hand, it was essentially social, and partly cultural and civic, because 'it attempts to define everything about an individual in relation to environmental aspects associated with learning' (Taylor *et al.* 2008, p.144), media included. Schön (1983) described it as reflective dialogue with a situation in which knowledge and skills are developed in context of activities, contexts, and cultures in which they are learnt and used (Brown *et al.* 1989; Visser 2011). Media were addressed episodically within the naturally occurring situations; as the teachers reflected and the observations confirmed, not all but the majority of debates and activities related to media were initiated by the children, not by the teachers. Since these episodes involved or were related to other human beings – happening within peer-to-peer, teacher-learner, child-adult, and learner-media (as sociocultural agents) interactions – the child's learning was social constructivist as explained in the *Researching chapter* (see p.38).

Given the multidimensional learning of the primary school child within which his or her complex past, present and future all played a part, holistic learning grows in importance as it aims at connecting 'all aspects of child education (...) in order for learning to be meaningful' (Taylor *et al.* 2008, p.144). Connection in learning was defined by Miller (2007) as one of the three basic principles of holistic pedagogy, the other two being 'balance' and 'inclusion' (p.6). His understanding of balance was identical to the balance in primary education discussed earlier. By inclusion Miller meant offering schoolchildren a variety of learning opportunities so each child could learn and actively participate in classroom life, which was equally important to the participating teachers. Harman and Koohang (2005) called a holistic approach to education that is situated and social constructivist – like the one discovered by this research – a 'learning-by-heart' learning strategy that comes from, as well as nurtures, intrinsic motivation and lifelong love for learning.

Learning about media arguably was situated and social constructivist, but it did not seem to be approached and understood holistically among the teachers. This is despite the fact that the adult participants [1] stressed the importance of media within the child's emotional, social, and civic life, development and learning, [2] recommended media learning to be facilitated cross-curricularly as it is, and could be, connected to everything, and [3] agreed that media learning was important to the child's lifelong learning and love for learning. The stumbling block could be here that the teachers' experience of the child's media-related engagements was possibly clouded, or driven, by public and policy media discourse and myths, as addressed in the first chapter (see p.15). The teachers' experience with media in their pedagogic practice, as interpreted and understood by this research, seemed to be holistic – dialogically penetrating all aspects of their efforts connected to the child's multidimensional learning and complex development. Despite this, they excluded media from the primary school child's academic and cognitive development, as well as maintaining their dualistic and hierarchical approach to media. Learning about high culture and media established in primary education was explicit and anodyne, whereas learning about popular culture and digital and electronic media was implicit and controversial. The socioculturally and educationally constructed differentiation between media explicit/anodyne and implicit/controversial in compulsory education is here understood as the main issue prohibiting the primary school teachers from facilitating holistic media learning that could potentially address the issues the subject-based spiral and serialist delivery of media literacy would arguably struggle to.

It is however important to note here that holistic media learning does not replace media (literacy) education. Instead holistic media learning shall build a foundation of lifelong learning about media, as this was identified as the ultimate goal of primary education, and thus proceed media (literacy) education while honouring education as a gradual process. As Dewey (1916 [2013], p.) explained well the relationship:

‘The educator’s part in the enterprise of education is to furnish the environment (...) [that] directs the learner’s course (...) [towards] the formation of desirable intellectual and emotional dispositions. (...) [Then there] is the necessity of a social environment to give meaning to habits formed. In what we have termed informal education, subject matter is carried directly in the matrix of social intercourse. It is what the persons with whom an individual associates do and say. This fact gives a clue to the understanding of the subject matter of formal or deliberate instruction. (...) As the social group grows more complex, involving a greater number of acquired skills which are dependent, either in fact or in the belief of the group, upon standard ideas deposited from past experience, the content of social life gets more definitely formulated for purposes of instruction.’

Yet although the first parallel case and its themes led to the greater understanding of the primary school child’s learning and the teacher’s role within it, the child’s media experience as lived and interpreted by him or her remains unexplored. The next parallel case fills this gap that is crucial for the development of a justified holistic belief system, or in other words a grounded philosophy, of media learning.

## PARALLEL CASE 2:

### The child experiencing media diversely, holistically and continuously

*(Grounded mainly in the children’s accounts and classroom observations)*

The second parallel case focusing on the child’s media experience, and by extension on media learning, is grounded predominantly in the classroom observations and the photo-elicitation group and individual interviews with the child participants. To make the themes, upon which this parallel case builds, more easily comparable and synthesisable with the previous parallel case and its themes, this section is divided into three main themes: the child’s [1] emotional, [2] sociocultural, and [3] cognitive and creative, media experience. Each theme then starts with a brief reminder of some of the relevant elements of the participating teacher’s pedagogic beliefs and/or practice and continues with a summary of the particular theme, which is then illustrated through the participating children’s media experiences and beliefs as described by them and/or as observed. The reader should however keep in mind that these, as all the other themes, are interconnected and thus the borders separating them will ultimately be undone by the justified beliefs concluding this section as well as the whole chapter.

## Theme 1: Experiencing wide-ranging and meaningful media-related emotions and feelings

One of the teachers' pedagogic aims was to nurture emotional literacy and support emotional development by encouraging the child to explore different emotions, and gradually learn to acknowledge, manage, listen, and respond to his or her own, and others', emotions and feelings. In the context of the child's experience with implicit/controversial media, the educators focused predominantly on the child's media-related happiness and fear, ranging from beliefs about using media to make learning more enjoyable and fun, to more serious concerns about the child's feelings of confidence, acceptance, and security. Instead of considering how media learning could be used to support the child's emotional literacy and development (and/or vice versa), they argued that the child shall first acquire a certain level of emotional maturity before learning about these media in the primary classroom.

The research with the learners however discovered that the child was experiencing wide-ranging and meaningful media-related emotions and feelings. Through these the child learnt about media texts, platforms, and practices in the context of his or her own life, while reciprocally improving his or her ability to be aware of, handle, listen, and respond to a variety of emotions and feelings. Similarly to Stein's (1916[1989]) *phenomenon of fusion*, every activity of the child's thought and body was coloured by feelings as the child was exploring and responding to emotions and feelings evoked by media, or in relevance to media, as well as using media to evoke the desired emotional experience. Moreover, the media-related emotions and feelings relevant to the individual child were acknowledged and enjoyed for their diversity and complexity. These media experiences were evaluated by the child based on the intensity of emotions and feelings they aroused. The research found both the choice of preferred emotions and the level of their intensity to be subject to the child's individual and collective historicity as well as the immediate contextual situation.

To illustrate these interpretations in the context of the distinct emotions, Sroufe's (1975) three affect systems is combined with the four basic emotions by Jack *et al.* (2014), grouping them into [1] sadness, [2] anger/frustration/annoyance, [3] fear/wariness, and [4] joy/pleasure – as these were repeatedly addressed by the children when sharing their media experience. Some of the participants' discussed and observed interactions could be interpreted as connected to *self-conscious emotions* related to the children's sense of self and other's reactions to them (Thompson 2006). Additionally, in different contexts the basic emotions were accompanied above all by pride, shame and guilt. Other emotional states that did not fall under basic or self-conscious emotions, but that played a prominent role, were boredom, desire, ambition and curiosity, to which partial attention will also be paid. It is equally important to point out that the child's media-related emotions and feelings discovered by this research were experienced in two dominant spheres; one discretely between the child or a group of children and the media, another socially between the child and others while referencing media. The latter is only partially highlighted here as it is discussed more fully within the next theme focused on the social child and the classroom media culture.

### *Sadness, anger, frustration, and annoyance*

To begin with the emotions brought about through the child's interaction directly with the media, empathy with media characters' misfortune and struggle and *sad* media narratives were identified

by the children as the main cause of their media-related sadness or even grief. The first grader Terka (P19-GITR5) said about *The Smurfs* (2011) film, 'I cried half of the whole day - it was sad, when they were taking papa Smurf away', and Kačka (P23-GITR6) about *The Never Ending Story* (1983), 'the horse dying in the swamp was like the saddest thing ever'. Heart-warming moments were also identified by the children as causing *sadness*. Abby (P46-GI11) for instance recalled an episode of *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* (2003-2012) that made her cry, saying 'there was a show, and their house wasn't really good for them. And they needed special needs. So someone came and built a new house'. The children seemed to embrace sadness evoked by the media narratives, as if it was enriching their media experience. Together with the concrete narratives or scenes, they recalled and almost relived the emotion it evoked, pulling sad faces and using dramatic voices. In other contexts, the children suggested that 'the right' media engagement helped them to cope with sadness by cheering them up or distracting them, as Tomáš (P41-ITR) explained drawing upon an example from media, 'I like about *The Smurfs* that they are cheerful and when they feel sad, they always find a way of amusing themselves'.

Some media were, in contrast, criticised by the children for annoying them. Irritating and deceptive advertising was mentioned the most frequently and passionately. The second grader Hanička (P33-GITR9) explained, 'we don't like ads because they're long and uncool – they always show the same things', to which Michal (P36-GITR9) responded, 'I like only those ads in which they show toys like bows. But the others, those for grown-ups like lose weight, put on weight, to gain bigger butt, then lose again, those bore me'. Another second grader Impra (P60-GI14) agreed saying 'sometimes you're watching something exciting, but maybe a grown-up thing comes on and you don't like it. You are like 'I just want my TV show back''. The first grader Adam (P40-ITR) then complained that 'advertising wants to allure consumers and then after they sell it, sometimes again it won't be working, but they got your money and they will be rich. (...) And when I was buying *Hnusáci Lepáci*, they lied a lot in some ways. Lukáš had that one which screams and he squeezed it and it didn't scream. (...) When you squeezed it, it only did aaaa'. The same annoyance was expressed with pop-up online ads or telemarketing, as a group of the third graders discussed:

Honza (P25-GITR10): I don't like when on the Internet they have some offer, like that you can win a million.

David (P27): You play some game and suddenly over the whole screen is written 'one million of money will come to your post, please pick it up'. (...)

Adamek (P26): And O2 is calling my mobile all the time. Like that I pay fifteen crowns per hour of the Internet and if I take their offer, I will only pay like one crown for twenty-four hours. So I always tell them that I'm not an adult and hang up.

Boys: Yes, they do it all the time!

Focusing now on media-related emotional experiences between the child and others, some of the children expressed sadness, while others anger and/or annoyance, mainly about adult prohibitions and limitations. They disliked not being allowed to fulfil their media-related wants, significantly more at home than in the classroom, mentioning mainly limited screen time or being denied free access to certain media texts, forms and platforms. Nikola (P6-ITR) was upset about not being allowed to watch *The Simpsons* (1989-), because 'grandma says it is not for kids, but I think it is'. Honza (P25-ITR) complained that he could not watch *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1*

(2010) and *Part 2* (2011), as his parents thought ‘it was too scary’, although as he said by pointing at his media historicity, ‘I have already seen almost all the *Harry Potter* movies, even the sixth one. I read the books and listened to the audio books. It quite annoys me that I am not allowed to watch the seventh and the eighth films’. Similarly Kristian (P3-GITR) said ‘I grew up with Harry Potter, I started when I was only five’, and continued arguing that since he ‘already watched an action horror with [his older brother] Pavel’, he felt qualified to watch *Harry Potter* films and thus did not understand why he was not allowed to. Like these third graders, other children also experienced unpleasant feelings when their media engagement was not understood by the adult and/or given appropriate consideration based on his or her individual media historicity.

When the child had no understanding of these prohibitions and/or thought they were unfair, or when the child felt that he or she had no control whatsoever, the child became more prone to emotional meltdown in the form of crying or aggression. For instance, Kristina’s (P9-OTR) mobile phone rang loudly in the middle of instruction time observed in the Village School’s third grade. This greatly upset the teacher Marie (T1-O) who sent Kristina ‘behind the door’ not allowing her to come back for almost the entire session – a traditional and still common punishment used in the Czech educational institutions for misbehaviour interrupting the educational process. Kristina was sitting on the bench next to the classroom door, crying grievously. When asked by the researcher what exactly was going on she explained she did not know how to put her phone on silent. Kristina did not want to turn it off because she did not remember her pin and thus she would not be able to call her mum once school was over. Kristina continued saying that an unknown number kept bothering her, sending messages and calling, which was what happened in the classroom. Since it had not been the first time her phone rang during a session, and Kristina knew her teacher had a strict ‘no mobile phones’ policy, she admitted her ‘mistake’ and in a way felt guilty. Yet at the same time she felt angry and sad for being left alone to deal with a situation she did not know how to deal with. Whereas she talked about it with her friends who were not able to advise her, Kristina felt ashamed to ask the adult for help. Reading the messages she had received, it became clear that the person on the other end had a wrong number, which made the situation quickly solvable for someone who had, or heard about, a similar media experience.

In contrast, if the prohibitions made at least partial sense to the child, they either tried to adopt the adult view or to redirect their attention to something equally or more important to them. They for example suggested that their parents might have understandable reasons such as money issues or protection, as the second grader Norha (P59-I) claimed, ‘their job is to keep me safe’, or as Nikola (P6-ITR) said, she did not mind that going to the cinema was hard to afford for her mother, explaining that ‘when I’m at home I’ve cinema all around me. (...) There are a lot of adventures to experience at home. Every day I can enjoy a new one’. Often the children became fixed on the feeling more than on the media, leading the conversation towards non-media related hurtful, disappointing or frustrating experiences, such as not being invited to a friend’s party/sleepover – to name the most common one. In contrast, sadness caused by a feeling of exclusion in relation to media, as the teachers greatly worried about, was not found as relevant to the participating children, which will be discussed later.

### *Fear and wariness*

Similarly to sadness, fear evoked within the child’s interaction with the media was assigned by the participants to their experience with *scary* narratives and characters, mainly those portrayed in



literature and film. The feeling of pleasant tension and moderate fear was praised by the majority of participants. For example, Jindra (P12-ITR) from Marie's (T1) class (see p.) reflected on the classroom streaming of *Wild Flowers (2010)*, the film adaptation of *A Bouquet of Folk Legends (1853)* by Karel Jaromír Erben. He said, 'it wasn't so scary, not for me, but *The Water Goblin*, that was awful, but really good'. As Jindra did, other children also suggested that the level of fear media texts could stimulate depended on the individual person. Tomáš (P41-ITR) shared that he enjoyed 'fighting fairy tales a lot, (...) like *Transformers 3*'. He remembered, 'I went to the 3D cinema to watch it (...) [with] my dad, but my [younger] sister wasn't there, she would have cried'. Whilst ten-year-old Honza (P25-ITR) thought he was old and experienced enough to watch the last *Harry Potter* film, seven-year-old Terka (P19-ITR) said that although she was curious, she preferred to wait for when she was older as the bits she saw, when her older sister was watching, were 'really scary'. The intensity of fear or other emotions however was not simply age/grade dependent, as the six year old Owen (P50-GI12) said *Harry Potter* 'is just a fantasy, it isn't like watching war or killing in the news', whilst the third grader Lauren (P57-GI14) admitted that the 'books were already too scary' so she avoided the film series.

The classroom media culture also played its role, as Marie's (T1) students were as a collective more attuned to horror movies when compared with the other child participants. At the time of the observations one of the favourite social activities of these classmates, especially the boys, was to watch on *YouTube* scenes from various horror films, mainly *Child's Play* [or *Chucky* in Czech] (1988), *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (2003), and *The Ring* (2002). They often streamed the online videos when unsupervised in the school library or at home, and then re-told or re-enacted the scenes in the classroom. The children involved were proud and felt admired for this kind of bravery, because even if they found it scary, they still claimed to be less scared than those outside of their classroom culture.

Researcher: Have you ever watched the whole 'Chucky' film?

Jindra (P12-ITR): No, only the trailers and I am already a little scared of them. (...) When he [Chucky] went there, he had two daggers in his hands and a lady who was taking a shower, he then opened it, and like that killed her from behind. That was disgusting. (...) I showed it also to my sister and a cousin who is as old as me. They couldn't sleep for a week - from the trailers. (...) I'm scared but not so much.

The children agreed that having *bad dreams* was the main risk they were undergoing by engaging with scary media texts, and covering their eyes, changing the channel, and turning off the platforms were the common solutions when dealing with this type of fear and its consequences. However, more than by the media texts, the children were seriously and anxiously scared by, and worried about, the stories of potential media effects. It was almost as if they were experiencing *mean media*, rather than *mean world, syndrome* nurtured in the child by others – parents, teachers, peers, and media – instead of being developed within the child's own experience.

Lilian (P56-GI13): I don't think games can make you violent but my mom told me that. I think maybe because they're so much fun, and that some kids never stop playing the murdering games, then they actually want to do it and then you can't stop it.

Researcher: Do you think it could happen to you?

Lilian: I don't know, maybe, I don't really want to. I want to be free, not in jail. I want to be a free man. And get a job.

Barča (P5-GITR2): I think videogames can influence. I saw in the news, that there was some small boy who played those shooting games. His father was a policeman and he took his gun and threatened people with it at school.

Fin (P54-GI13): When kids play a lot, like my cousin, they can think 'I want to do what they're doing in these games, because it looks awesome' and they start to do these kinds of things. And you're kind of not knowing what are you doing, like if you watched violent TV. It's like side effects. When you're younger you have more unconscious mind and you don't know as much, and you also tend to remember more, so TV can be worst for you.

Janča (P21-ITR): A girl was saying that *Facebook* is bad luck. That it brings misfortune to everybody.

Leila (P49-I): I wouldn't go on *Facebook*! It is dangerous [singing voice] because they know where you live, I can tell youuu [still singing voice].

Although it was exceptional, a few participants expressed concerns about wider societal issues in the context of media. These were related to the suffering of animals, nature, and humans, and through sadness, prosocial feelings, thoughts and sometimes even behaviours were nurtured in these children (Hobbs 1998). The child's contextual media experience made him or her more productively and effectively aware of, and interested in, the possible impacts of his or her own media engagement and consumption when compared with the adult's out-of-context warnings that made the child rather anxious, worried and scared as the previous quotes illustrated.

Eilah (P58-I): *McDonalds* is where I never eat, because they cut down trees for burgers. (...) My sister [name] searched that on the Internet. She told me. (...) I have BEEN there once, but I will NEVER go again.

Johan (P13-OTR): Oil is bad. This ship sank and the oil it was transporting spilled into the water. I saw on the news animals dying – covered in oil.

Marie (TS1-OTR): Yes, but for what do we need oil?

Adelka (P14-OTR): It's fuel for cars and airplanes.

Johan: Yes, but then the Americans start wars to get oil, so it's still bad. (...)

Johan (P13-ITR): Dad watches news on *BBC*. Yesterday I was translating ten words for half an hour. (...) We go to *BBC Home*, or I also watch *BBC Nature*, that is about animals. (...) I prefer *BBC* to Czech Television, because there are some of those terrorist attacks and sometimes there is even war. For example there was a war in Libya. Or that wave Tsunami in Japan. Where the electric power station exploded. This news is sad, but important.

Theon (P65-I): I like watching TV and the news with my babysitter. Like you know how the hurricane Sandy, so a lot of people lost their homes, so on Thanksgiving they had a big feast [unintelligible 00:11:51]. And now we're collecting money for them. So we did so too.

However, the actions remained on a personal level as these children had not yet entered Habermas' (1962) public sphere as active participants, hoped for by the UN (1989a,b), OFCOM (2014) and *the Czech Educational Framework*. The virtual public sphere and many-to-many communication (Harrison 1981) was especially seen by the participants as intimidating and risky/scary.

Eilah (P58-I): *Facebook* is where you can share your pictures, text with the world, go wherever you want to go.

R: Do you have *Facebook*?

P58-I: Only my parents have *Facebook*.

R: Would you like to have a *Facebook* profile?

P58-I: No. Sending things to the whole world seems embarrassing.

### *Joy/pleasure*

Media were praised by the majority of children for offering them joy and pleasure, but each child's media preferences and practices, that he or she found enjoyable, were as a whole unique. The children moved across media texts and platforms, creating their own personal media mix, and engaging with, in and through media in great plurality. They agreed that media texts and platforms helped them to avoid boredom and to transform ordinary, uncomfortable, or stressful situations into more enjoyable moments. For example, Impra (P60-I), who regularly travelled from the US to Mexico to visit her family, said that she was getting an *iPad Mini* before Christmas, and clarified 'I get really bored on a trip, because I don't sleep as much as my dad and my sister, they sleep like the whole time, but I don't, so I get to be on the *iPad*'. She added that on the *iPad* she could get engaged in many activities such as reading, watching, and playing games 'like *Angry Birds*'. Lucka (P22-ITR) on the other hand preferred MP4 while travelling, saying 'I always stretch to my sister like this [demonstrating], and each of us has one earphone in an ear'. Nicki (P11-ITR), using an MP3 player, instead listened to songs when doing chores or studying.

The children valued the variety that their engagement with media offered. From using one medium such as music for resting, falling asleep, working, travelling, or dancing, to using multifunctional, and ideally portable, platforms allowing them to read, write, watch, listen, play, learn, go online, take photographs, record, and communicate at almost any time and place. As Leila (P49-I) explained, she liked her grandparents' *iPad*, 'because I can read, play and learn, for example in the car, instead of bringing a lot of stuff to the car', or as Kačka (P23-GITR6) argued, 'a mobile phone is better than a normal phone, because you can listen to music, watch things, play games and you can put it into your pocket'. The children's opinions on digital and electronic media making their academic learning more enjoyable were mixed, with many claiming it was better with the teacher, whilst others said that although it could make learning more fun, it barely taught them anything.

Nikola (P6-GITR2): It's too easy to learn on the computer, it's cheating.

Petka (P7): It's better with Mrs. Teacher.

Adamek (P26-GITR7): At school we only keep ticking things on a computer.

Honza (P25): We do extremely easy tests.

Evička (P28): I struggle more with this new type of computer than with the tests.

David (P27): We only like them, because it is on a computer.

Adamek: We only sit at school, and on a computer too, but least that we enjoy.

Honza: And if we finish fast, we can play games.

Evan (P47-I): The first time I played [on a computer] I learnt how to spell 'cookies'.  
(...) I also play *Cool Math* games. But it is not actually maths. They just trick your parents and teachers, so they think it's maths, but it's actually a game.

Researcher: Can you learn anything from the game?

Even: Nope.

Enjoyable experiences related to media were predominantly [1] sense of achievement, [2] daydreaming and [3] media talk and play as social events. Firstly, the children were particularly proud of their media-related skills and knowledge, when for instance overcoming their personal challenges or when comparing themselves with the others.

Impra (P60-I): *Angry Birds* it is a game. I like it because the birds are protecting their eggs against bad piggies and you destroy them. I am very good at this game. I am an expert! But there is also this new game *Angry Birds Star Wars*, which my dad has and I am on the 33rd level, but I cannot pass that, it is too hard. So my dad helps me.

Dušan (P4-ITR): I understand computers better than my mum does.

Daton (P42-I): I don't use Google much, because I just know what to type in. I just go to the top, put backspace and type in. If I want YouTube, I just type Y and then click Youtube. But my mum goes like Y O U space T U B E. And I am like you just have to type Y.

Terka (P19-GITR6): I like about her that she admitted that she isn't Hannah Montana.

Researcher: When did she admit it?

Terka (P19): She was singing and then she admitted that she isn't that Hannah Montana, that she lied and that she's that other girl.

Janča (P21): She took that wig off.

Terka (P19): But I don't remember anymore what her name is.

Ríša (P20): Her name is Miley Cyrus. I know it!

Secondly, daydreaming inspired by media was for instance about experiencing a fantasy world, as Owen (P50-I) explained, '*Disney* is as kids say a magical world'. When asked what it meant, he explained that the kids 'believe that the fairies are real, which they just dress up. But some fairies are real, but these fairies usually hide. They can't find fairies so they just dress up as one when they are making a TV show. They are also in Disneyland with a bunch of other characters, the princesses, the dressed-up princess, not the real ones.' Another common type of media-related daydreaming was about a certain professional occupation, which was however connected to the child's individual interest and *real life* experience. For Ríša (P20-ITR) it was to become a singer, because he 'love[s] music a lot and like[s] to sing a lot', or for Peter (P1-GITR) to become a photographer 'like the *National Geographic* people', because he loved nature, animals and being

outside, or to become a magician ‘like *Criss Angel*’ as he was already practicing with his ‘two set boxes and DVDs’. The first grader Roman (P41-ITR) and the second grader Eilah (P58-I) both wanted to become a professional football player and agreed that the life of a football star is really ‘hard and exhausting’ as they would have to spend hours on the field, which was what they both enjoyed. Eilah added that he even ‘made a non-fiction book about sports’, because he played and was interested in many sports. Roman mentioned that a professional football player needs a lot of money, and when asked what for, he explained that ‘if he came late for the game, he would have to pay, otherwise they wouldn’t let him in’, drawing upon his own experience from a junior football team. The children had many ideas about their adult life and everything – their career, economic situation, family and social life, their physical appearance or level of intelligence – was believed to be achievable, and thus they did not seem (at least not yet) to be experiencing unpleasant feelings when comparing themselves and their life to the public and media characters and their life stories.

Thirdly, although media-related talk and play are discussed in the following parts, two extracts from the children’s discussions are used here to illustrate *fun* that was often, but not always, experienced in the child’s media-related social situations (*Photographs 29*).

Abby (P46-GI11): Splatalot!

Leila (P49): Ohhh, I love Splatalot!

Even (P47): It’s the best ever!

Abby: It’s actually pretty funny, I like it, it makes me laugh a lot.

Even: I like the level two, it was like foam.

Others: Oh, yeah!

Leila: They try to get all the things to get to the top. Who[ever] would win the round would be a Splatalot queen or king.

Abby: I love the crown.

Gavin (P48): Yeah, it’s awesome!

**Photographs 29** A group of girls talking about an online game about horses on *Superhry.cz*



Media-related joy and pleasure was therefore not only connected to entertainment, as sometimes misunderstood by the adult, but to wide ranging individual and social, as well as internal-mental and external-communicational/cooperative, activities coloured by various other feelings such as pride, curiosity or ambition. Moreover, all the media that the child engaged with (including both

implicit and explicit media in their education) were experienced with emotions and feelings, literature included.

The following theme then addresses more specifically the collective and social nature of the child's media engagement, which was only touched upon in the context of the child's media-related emotions and feelings.

## Theme 2: Classroom media culture as a continuous sociocultural experience

Within the teachers' efforts of nurturing the child's social development and encouraging supportive and friendly peer-to-peer relationships, the child's media experience and media-related social interactions were viewed and approached by the educators mainly from a negative standpoint. They worried about [1] the media sources that the child potentially imitated, learnt from, and used as a reference framework, and [2] about the child's socialisation/individuation and peer inclusion/exclusion influenced by the child's interaction with implicit/controversial media texts and platforms. Although the teachers tended to believe that they should be modifying the child's media preferences and habits for the sake of the child's immediate and future learning and wellbeing, they felt, [1] that their hands were tied in the context of implicit/controversial media, [2] uncertain for thinking their own media experience was incomparable with the one of the child, and [3] respectful to the child's own choices and out-of-school and family life.

The teachers did not consider more fully the reciprocal relationship between the child's media experience and his or her learning to share, listen, readjust/strengthen his or her own thoughts, collaborate, and compromise, and/or to actively co-create or voluntarily stand aside his or her peer culture and its rituals. Whereas the teachers were interested in the social rather than cultural element of the child's sociocultural life, within the child's own experience his or her media culture was only barely separated from his or her classroom community (as termed by the teachers) and peer culture. *Classroom media culture* here refers to the child's collective beliefs and experiences related to media that develop and evolve within, or in relevance to, the child's classroom community life. The classroom media culture was discovered to be, although united, formed of a number of subcultures, allowing each individual to contribute to, and be a part of, the classroom media culture in his or her unique way, as this theme will illustrate.

### *Fitting in while being 'different'*

Although both the child and adult participants shared a collective belief that 'all' children played, watched, listened, read or engaged with *the same* media texts and platforms, this actually never seemed to be the case as far as this research was able to ascertain. There always seemed to be examples of children who did not seem to mind that they did not participate or had a different point of view. When standing aside of a certain media practice or media-related social activity that was popular within the classroom peer culture, the children did not claim to feel excluded. Most of the children plainly stated that they enjoyed different media texts or forms than it might had been socioculturally expected of them, without making a big deal about it, as Jindra (P12-ITR) for example said, 'the guys like watching sports, but I am more interested in theatre', or Riša (P20-ITR) commented, '*Winx Club* is for girls, but I like it' (Photographs 30).

**Photograph 30** The six year old Ríša proudly showing his unfinished Winx Club drawing



Similarly the children admitted that, as Nicki (P11-GITR3) put it, they ‘influence each other’ without giving it great importance. However, being familiar with adult expectations, the children talked with pride and openness about not participating in a shared peer media engagement, while they hesitated and showed signs of guilt when admitting the possibility of being influenced by their peers.

Kikina (P9-ITR): I watch *Pokémon*. I like it, because... Hmm, our class is watching it too. [Doubtful look at the researcher]

Researcher: Anything else you and your class likes to watch?

Kikina: I used to watch *Chucky [Child’s Play]*, because we all did. But then my friend started to talk about it a lot, so I stopped. I don’t like when someone talks about something too much. [Proud look at the researcher]

Gavin (P48-I): I’d like to get a smartphone.

Researcher: Why?

Gavin: So I can call people.

Researcher: But you said you have a phone. Can you call from that one?

Gavin: Yes.

Researcher: So why is a smartphone be better?

Gavin: Well, because some of my friends have it and I want it too. [Uncertain voice and guilty facial expression and body posture]

Despite the fact that on some level each child contributed to and co-created the whole classroom media culture, they arguably did not feel too pressured to be a part of everything that was simultaneously going on. For example, returning to the Teacher Assistant Jacob (SS4-TA-ITR) who was concerned that one of his students (see p.100), Evička (P28-ITR), could feel excluded for not having electronic/digital media at home, Evička did seem to feel this way. Her access to these media was limited by her parents and she did not play any online and video games as Jacob mentioned, but she did use a computer at home, mainly for searching for pictures which she would print with her parents and then cut and glue or display. Although to the adult it might seem a

minor media engagement, it was greatly enjoyed by many of the participating learners, especially by the Czech ones who often based their online browser preference on the image search results.

Researcher: What would you miss if it was taken away from you? [Pointing at the cards]

Evička (P28-ITR): I don't really know, I can live easily without it. (...) Well, maybe a book, because I learn archaeology from it. So I wouldn't have anything to learn from. And *Google*.

Researcher: Why *Google*?

Evička: I search for archaeology pictures on *Google*, like dinosaurs and bones.

Researcher: What do you with them?

Evička: My parents print them. Then I cut them and then display them or glue them to my notebook.

Petka (P7-ITR): I search for various pictures [when on a school computer].

Researcher: What do you do with the pictures?

Petka: Sometimes I copy [meaning print] them with Mrs. Teacher, for example about *Winx Club* or about *Jahůdka [Strawberry Lady]*.

Pavlík (P34-ITR): I love very much to search for the pictures.

Researcher: Why?

Pavlík: I'm making a huuuge web of pictures in my bedroom.

Jindra (P12-ITR): We [classmates] used to search on *Seznam*. Well, we still do. But on *Google* we can find much more, so we prefer *Google* now. On *Seznam* there're only a few pictures, while on *Google* there're many.

The children enjoyed having common media interests, but at any point the participants gave the impression of trying to form a homogenous social group of which all members would be interacting with the same media platforms and texts. When conducting a group photo-elicitation interview with Evička (P28-GITR7) and her classmates – Honza (P25), Adam (P26), and David (P27) – the three boys often led the discussion away from media towards their shared interests, excluding the researcher rather than Evička. For instance, when Evička mentioned 'I don't use a mobile phone, only sometimes I call', Honza turned to her and with a friendly voice and smile said, 'you don't use any electronics, you prefer to be outside, right?', after which the group happily began to discuss their outdoor activities. Similar peer inclusion and adult researcher exclusion was experienced also in the other Czech and US classrooms when media were the topic of group discussions. The child's media experience was not bordered and defined by media and if the adult researcher did not accept it, the children repeatedly excluded her from the discussion rather than their peer(s) who did not share the same media interests. Moreover, the children were often observed to be teaching each other how to use digital and electronic media during instruction as well as recess time (*Photographs 31*).



**Photographs 31** Peer-to-peer media learning



Additionally, the media texts and characters transposed into classroom culture were not simply imitated by the children, but instead re-told, re-imagined, re-created, and re-enacted according to the children’s individual and collective lives, so even the child unfamiliar with the original source could participate. The third grade classroom in the City School was transformed into a battlefield by a group of boys running, jumping, crawling, and hiding, when pretending to be in a war. The boys then explained that they were playing *Call of Duty*. When asked if they played *the Call of Duty* videogames, only three out of nine boys said they did. The others had either heard about the franchise from their friends or watched related videos on *YouTube*, whilst they also talked about one of the boys’ father who was in the army. Comparably the US children of mixed ages and gender played a traditional playground freeze tag game on the Town School’s playground which was now called *Angry Birds* and the players were divided into ‘piggies’ and ‘birdies’. Another case in point, the Village School’s first graders Terka (P19), Ríša (P20) and Janča (P21) decided to finish the group interview (GITR5) by performing an improvised theatre play for the researcher. The characters the group impersonated were partly inspired by classic fairy tales and partly by *Alvin and the Chipmunks* (2007-) film franchise, as they explained, but the actual story was being spontaneously and collaboratively created by the children as their performance went on, taking ownership of the original media sources.

**Photographs 32** ‘Call of Duty’ war play and theatre play drawing upon *Alvin and the Chipmunks*



The sources upon which the children drew and which they considered currently as popular in their classroom were evaluated by the children as dependent on their immediate individual and collective interests, which were however ever-changing and evolving, and so was consequently the classroom media culture.

Researcher: What is *Jahůdka*?

Peťka (P7-ITR): It is a kind of film. It is not on *Animáček* [kids TV programme] much anymore. I, when I was small, when I went to the first grade, I was crazy about her.

Kinsley (P44-I): [Talking about classroom *trends* in collecting cards] When I was like in first grade, it was like *Pokémon*. Second grade was like [unintelligible 00:15:39]. This year is like football.

Abby (P46-I): *Sesame Street* is a show for little kids.... I watched it when I was like three. And I remember watching it a lot! (...) When I was like this tall [shows] I used to watch *Smurfs*. (...) Now we [classmates] like to watch *iCarly*, before it was *Hannah Montana*, like *Miley Cyrus*.

The first grader Daniel (P40-OTR) for instance claimed that his classmates began collecting *Pokémon* (1995-) cards after he inherited his older brother's *Pokémon* collection and brought it to school. Another first grade classroom media culture was passionate about *Winx Club* (2004-). *Winx Club* as a TV show was known to the majority of these children due to their regular watching of the TV programme *Animáček* (2010-), however, it was apparently thanks to Kačka's (P23-I,GI,OTR) older sister that *Winx Club* as a cross-platform franchise became popular in Kačka's classroom. Yet these intergenerational cultural processes would probably have to be traced further back and outside of the classroom environment. As the second grader Lawrence (P61-I) for instance said about his pre-school aged younger sibling:

'My brother likes watching *Sesame Street* movie. He keeps watching it over and over again. Sometimes I watch it with him. He watches with me too... hmm... he likes *Star Wars* I would say, because he keeps playing with my shotguns.'

How the collective classroom media trends were being set and replaced, as well as if there was some kind of hierarchy among the children, ranging from agenda setters to mere followers, was not discovered within the scope of this project. It would be valuable to explore this further in future research as it could generate new knowledge about how classroom media cultures are not only being formed, but even passed onto, and transformed by, the younger generations who were found to be influenced by their older peers' media culture.

### *Shared media time with the adult*

To exclude the adult from the peer media culture however was not the child's intention, in fact, the children claimed to enjoy shared media time with their adult family members as much as with their peers, sometimes even more (especially those with younger siblings). They especially appreciated when the adult joined the child media culture by, for example, playing a favourite

videogame, or when the child was allowed to join the adult media culture by, for instance, watching news, adult shows, or producing media under the adult's supportive guidance. The second grader Impra (P60-GI14) said she 'love[s] taking pictures of other people', and continued that 'my dad inspires me, because he works at the hotel, but he wanted to be a photographer. So he still takes pictures and he shows me how. Like, if the light is over here [points at the window] you take a picture from there [points], so the light doesn't reflect on the camera'. Daton (P42-GI10) also talked about his father, saying 'I like watching what my dad is watching. (...) Just boys in my family get together and watch the *Terminator*' and added that they also played *Call of Duty* together. Consequently, Impra, Daton, and the other children alike, often cherished certain media texts and practices for the personal socioemotional value attached to it. Norha (P59-I) explained she 'would really miss music', because 'I love music. I like the Beatles. My dad used to listen to them a lot and he talked about them all the time. We listen together.' Nikola (P6-ITR) would instead miss books the most, as she clarified, 'books are important to me. I have this favourite book about *Little Sorrel Squirrel [Veverka Zrzečka]*. (...) First my grandma had it, then my uncle, then my mum and now me. So it's my most favourite book.' Horimir (P15-ITR) would miss TV, 'because every time I stay at my grandpa's over night, when mum and dad are having the night shift, we always watch either sport, documentary movies, or detective stories'.

In contrast, when talking about shared media time with adults, the teachers were not spontaneously mentioned by the children, not even in the context of media explicit/anodyne in education unless directly asked by the researcher. When asked, the children's first reactions to learning about or with implicit/controversial media in a classroom were to deny it. Only when it was explained it would be with the teacher's permission, did they reconsider their answers.

Adámek (P26-GITR7): We talk about media in school, but only with our friends, not with teachers.

Researcher: Would you like to learn about these media in school?

Barča (P5-ITR): Ee [no].

Researcher: Why not?

Barča: I don't want miss teacher to get angry.

Researcher: But what if she asks you to learn about media at school?

Barča: Then yes!

Leila (P49-I): I love creating.

Researcher: What about creating with media?

Leila: I don't know how to do it, but I'd like to know.

Researcher: Would you like to create with media at school?

Leila: NO!

Researcher: Why not?

Leila: You can get into trouble if you use it at school.

Researcher: What if the teacher says to use it?

Leila: Well then yes, I would love that if she teaches us that.

Researcher to GI15: Would you like to learn about media in school?

Theon (P65): Yes... but we would have to be careful so the teacher doesn't notice.

This brings the research back to the first parallel case within which it was mentioned that the majority of the teachers did not consider participating in the learner's media life and instead they tended to act against and trivialise various media text and platforms the learners engaged with. Here then the teacher was correlated with reprimands when it came to implicit media and a fear of bringing them up in class, pointing back to the child's hesitation, as opposed to openness and willingness, to share his or her media experience with the teacher. The young learners welcomed adults who were willing to erase the borders between the child and adult media cultures and/or who appreciated their media culture with openness and possibly supportive guidance. Yet they did close their peer culture to the adults who were unable to follow their lead – as the researcher was repeatedly guilty of – and to those whose intention was to rebuke and modify their media culture – as most of the teachers (possibly unconsciously) did. The following theme then looks closer at how the teacher's dualistic approach to media is reflected in the child's media beliefs while being inconsistent with the child's media experience.

### Theme 3: Clash between the media-centric adult and the experience-centric child

The teachers argued that the child should reach a certain social, emotional, cognitive, and sensory-motoric developmental level before he or she is capable of effectively learning about implicit/controversial media in general, and through discussion and/or hands-on production activities in particular. Whereas the curricula were built around the child's skills and knowledge of explicit media, implicit media were instead associated with socioemotional, and alternatively civic, development and learning. Explicit/anodyne and implicit/controversial media were believed among the educators to hold a detached role, to occupy an isolated place, in the child's immediate life, learning, and development; this being so, even though their experience of the primary school child's holistic learning suggested otherwise.

A crucial disagreement was discovered between the media-centric adult and the experience-centric child, and between the child's pan-media experience and the adult's reductionist understanding of it. The learners were aware of the adult dualistic perspective on, and approach to, media and it influenced their understanding of their own media experience, which when lived was holistic, but when retrospectively explored turned dualistic. This tendency increased alongside the child's age/grade as the child learned adult ways of media cynicism, paternalism and elitism. The child appreciated his or her own childhood, but did not appreciate when external conception of childhood limited his or her media engagement repertoire.

#### *Appreciating childhood, while learning ways of adulthood*

The teachers' (as well as parents' and public's) dualistic approach to media was apparent in the child's media talk and often also media-related feelings, as highlighted within the first theme of this second parallel case (see pp.119-120). Yet although the children seemed to be getting better and more trustworthy in imitating the adult's media cynicism – often misunderstood for critical thinking – they were not necessarily interested in adopting what was presented to them as adult-like behaviour. For instance, the City School's third grade teacher Božena (TS4) was observed facilitating a day of critical and creative learning about advertising and consumption as part of the

cross-curricular subject media education (*Photographs 33*). At first the learners solved shopping maths problems. In the reading session, they were asked to read aloud and discuss print ads during circle time on a rug. Lastly, the writing session was devoted to copywriting and the art class to the designing of posters incorporating the pricing strategies and promotional texts. While discussing the print ads in the reading session, Božena asked if the students thought ‘that advertising can negatively influence’ them. After several *guesses* Honza (P25) gave the desired answer, to which Božena was nodding in agreement and then moved to another topic.

‘Negatively, like we think that everything they want to sell us is good, because they say so, because we’re not as smart as adults yet. Adults already went through it and learnt, that maybe the cheaper yogurts are healthier than the expensive ones with toys showed on TV. They know it’s just waste of money.’

**Photographs 33** Cross-curricular critical and creative learning about advertising



The next day a group interview was conducted with four of Božena’s students who were asked several follow-up questions, among them which yogurt they would buy now. Honza (P25) admitted that ‘the one with a toy – it doesn’t taste as good, but the toys are fun’, whilst the others nodded. David (P27) then clarified, ‘because why should kids want the healthier yogurt, if they can have the one with a toy? Kids will always want toys. I think it’s normal’. These answers did not demonstrate what the students learnt or did not learn the day before, but it does arguably illustrate [1] the child’s strategy of finding and giving the desired answer the adult might anticipate, and [2] the child claiming the right to childhood.

Increasingly with age/grade the child interviewed by the adult researcher tended to demonstrate his or her critical thinking rather than freely reflect on his or her unique media experience. Within any arguably *critical discussion* about media, the child became almost automatically attentive to constructed media dichotomies, even when these positions seemed not to mirror their own holistic and lived media experience.

First grader Lilly (P53-GI12): I think it is inappropriate, because it's like a big kid show, and young kids shouldn't see it.

Researcher: Why shouldn't they?

Lilly: They'd go coo coo.

Second grader Gavin (P48-GI11): Isn't media something bad for your brain?

Even (P47): I think TV rots your brain. I heard it on *SpongeBob*.

Leila (P47): Except books. Or iPad because you can use it for learning, and maybe also music isn't so bad.

Abby (P46): I think all these are good for you, because you can learn.

Third grader Emelia (P43-GI10): TV is dangerous, because if a baby sees something and then they want to do it, they can get hurt. Like punch someone on the face.

Mason (P45): Oh this TV show I was watching with my dad, it was only for like my age, it was funny, and it said a bad word. Then my sister said it and she said it twice, so I was like 'stop it'. She is five.

Kinsley (P44): TV is like teaching them like bad stuff to do... I know, because you just hear now how people are bad, stealing and stuff, so then a little kid wants to do it, because it looks cool. (...) But when you watch a movie, you can learn something good. Like my book *Moby Dick* is about revenge, and so I think it's making you like never get revenge, because it could really hurt you and you could die from it.

Within this media negotiation, explicit media became the benchmark of *good* media with which the implicit media were compared as the quotes showed. Books and then theatre were at the top of this cultural hierarchy. As Abby (P46-GI11) suggested, 'books are very good for you, they help you learn stuff and books are a nice way to spend time', or as Samuel (P31-GITR8) argued, 'books nurture your imagination' and Lauren (P57-GI14) explained, 'I like plays more, because movies are not so good for you. Plays are healthy for learning. I'm not allowed to go to a movie theatre, because my mom says I'm an artist and a good reader'. Moreover (and maybe consequently), the child's language and vocabulary connected to media explicit in their education improved and expanded with age/grade, whilst the reasoning behind preferring various implicit media remained based on a media story and/or personal experience. Additionally, consistent with Piaget's (1926 [1959]) developmental psychology, a shift was present, firstly, with the younger child being more likely to incline to simplistic narration accompanied by sounds, lively gesticulation, and physical demonstration to the older child being more likely to engage in verbally more elaborated and thought-through narration.

Second grader Norha (P59-I): I like to play *Angry Birds* on my mum's and dad's phones. It is about a bird who was angry at the pigs, because the pigs took their eggs and wanted to eat them. But there is actually little chicks inside and they're gonna eat their chicks so they're very angry at them and they wanna kill their houses. Szszszsz pu aaa puppuu [gesticulating a sling shot being stretched and let go and the boxes exploding]. And like that.

Third grader Kinsley (P44-I): *Angry Bird* is a bird that you like sling-shot, and they're angry because they're like trapped-in birds, and it's like you like sling on, and then they crash boxes, and cages, and if you hit the cage then all the birds go out. (...) You're setting them free. They're like bursting forth cages, but they're actually like... When you're done, when they hit up anything. They like explode, like knock out.

Researcher: So are you setting them free or killing them?

Kinsley: Well, we really don't... Well, I think they do that thing, because they want to die, for being trapped.

The children were aware of their own developmental changes and learning progress whilst viewing *childhood* in the context of their media experience as both a developmental stage on the way to adulthood (Piaget 1926) and a world in its own right (Postman 1982). Considering childhood as a developmental stage and the child as *becoming*, the participating children categorised media as those for 'babies/small kids', then themselves as 'kids/children', afterwards 'bigger children/teenagers', and lastly 'adults or big/old people'. The third grader Peter (P1-ITR) explained, 'I watch *Animáček, Večerníček* is for small kids', and similarly the third grader Daton (P42-I) said, 'I have to watch it [*Sesame Street*] because of my sister, she is already five, but she still likes it. (...) We have a little kid shows channel, so I have to watch that with her sometimes'. The second grader Norha (P59-I) claimed that '*Nickelodeon* has a lot of things with teenagers on it, so it is all funny and pretty', and her classmate Impra (P60-ITR) described *Facebook* as 'it's where friends bigger than me chat, put pictures, they show people, and they write comments'. Kinsley (P44-GI10) recalled an ad for *The Guilt Trip* (2010) film that popped up when she was playing the online game *Papa's Pancakeria* at *Cool Math*, commenting that it 'definitely [was] not a movie made for this audience' but for adults. Magda (P10-GITR3) then considered the senior audience, saying 'black and white movies are for old people'. The child had a good sense of the individual's belonging to these social groups being shifted alongside his or her maturing and life-cycle.

When the learners discussed those younger than them, or when referring to their younger selves, they seemed to adopt an adult elitist and paternalist discourse treating *the child* as underdeveloped, inexperienced, and more impressionable (Gans 1974; Huyssens 1984; Ross 1989) and someone whose access to certain media should be limited until they reach a certain age, as the *Daily Mail* film critic suggested about *The Hunger Games* films (Viner 2013).

Jindra (P12-ITR): *Walt Disney* draws really weirdly I think.

Researcher: How weird?

Jindra: Because they have such big eyes, which I find weird. (...) I also don't like *Pokémon*. Because they are weird. For example they have only one eye and things like that. (...) Even my mum says that it's kind of bad. Because for example these weird drawings can completely mess up children's heads.

Researcher: What about your head?

Jindra: Now it's fine, but it could have when I was smaller.

Adámek (P26-GITR7): If kids are already a bit more able to think [rozumější], they can already use them [smartphones and touchpads] in kindergarten [meaning age, not the institution].

Honza (P25): I found it weird seeing only like a five year old boy already using some advanced technology.

Joe (P55-GI13): I think it's crazy that people buy phones for kids, like five or six years old, they don't need it.

However, the child would not, firstly, spare adults from the criticism, and secondly, the child would not consider being a child, or being childish, as something negative from which he or she should get away as soon as possible and as much as possible (Dewey 1915). They even talked about their media-related feelings, such as anger or jealousy, and certain media practices unapproved of by the adult with a certain unworldliness and humour.

Lilly (P53-GI12): I'm addicted to my grandpa's *iPad*! So he has to share. [Laughing]

Daton (P42-I): My mum goes on *Facebook* all the time. Talk to her friends, look at pictures, see what is going on, reading emails, like when my baseball practice is and stuff.

Researcher: Would you like to have *Facebook*?

Daton: No, it is too addictive. She is addicted! She is there way too much.

Vojta (P39-ITR): Advertising is when something is for example written somewhere, somebody sees it, somebody likes it and then wants it and mum says [to that someone] that they only show it so the kids would want it. [...] Sometimes there are terrible 'rubbishes' and someone simply wants it and his mum doesn't allow it, so he gets angry and swears at her.

Researcher: Do you do that?

Vojta: Sometimes YES! [Laughing]

Abby (P46-GI11): I'm a couch potato, I watch *SpongeBob* all the time! [Laughing]

Yet here the child referred to childhood and child-like behaviour as constructed by the child himself or herself, as the child participants did not appreciate being held back based on externally given criteria, such as their age or grade, as mentioned earlier in the context of *Harry Potter* films (see pp.117-118). As Jindra complained (P12-ITR), 'I would like to have a computer or mobile, but I will get a mobile when I am ten', and Eilah similarly said, 'I would like my own computer, which I'm getting only when I'm in the 6th [grade]'. They claimed a right to partake in the construction of their own lives (Lewis and Lindsay 2000; Tisdall *et al.* 2009) and to make their own choices (Butler 2010; Jenkins 2013) based on their own unique media historicity (Gadamer 1975 [2013]). The participants viewed themselves as competent social actors, or beings, in their own right (Sargeant and Harcourt 2012) and they disliked when not only the adult but also media produced, and technologies designed, specifically for *children* limited their media engagement repertoire.

Hanča (P32-ITR): I have my own laptop. It is just not real like this one [pointing at the picture]. It is different.

Researcher: What do you do with it?

Hanča: Nothing, just playing games. There is nothing else.

Researcher: So playing games is your favourite?

Hanča: No, there is just nothing else on that laptop.



Researcher: What else would you like to do?  
Hanča: For example, write emails.  
Researcher: To who?  
Hanča: To my grandma and grandpa, my aunt, to everybody.

Anička (P37-ITR): I am saving for a laptop.  
Researcher: But you already have one you said, no?  
Anička: Hm, but a real laptop, because I only have the one for children. I can't do much with it.

Impra (P60-I): I also do recording. When my sister she is two, actually three, I interviewed her. I asked her how old are you, where do you live, what is your name?, and then she said her name, how old she is, where she lives. And then I moved camera to my mom and then to my dad when he came home. It is still on my camera, because I can't transfer it from my camera, because it is like a *Kitty* camera, not real like yours.

Although many expressed a desire to learn how to produce digital media, only a few children, including Impra, considered the production of media implicit in their education, such as digital and electronic media, to be an important part of their media experience. As the first grader Lilly (P53-I) shared; 'My dad takes pictures of me and I take pictures of my brother, and my mum, dad, and my dog. (...) I like you get to see it on a camera and then you can keep them. (...) I already used the camera to take pictures of the whole class. (...) Daddy got a video camera at Christmas. And I made a video of Will and daddy making funny sounds'. Jindra (P12-ITR), who previously said he would get a mobile phone when he is ten, further clarified he needed it in order to take pictures and film videos. He said it was thanks to his older cousin who 'has a touchscreen mobile [dotykáč]' he realised he enjoyed filming and taking photographs, as they used it to 'record radio [podcast] and film TV news - just for fun, you know'. The children appreciating digital media production activities were therefore mainly those who were encouraged and given guidance/support to do so by an older family member. Moreover, what mattered to the child was not the medium or technology, but the experience related to it as discussed next.

### *Media-centric researcher versus experience-centric child*

Although the research project was non-medium specific, rejecting any reductionist and dualistic approaches to media, the photo-elicitation group and individual interviews remained media-centric as they attempted to explore the child's media experience in a structuralised and linear platform-based manner, addressing one medium after another. The child, on the other hand, appeared much quicker than the researcher in moving across media texts and platforms by putting media experience in the centre of their attention. Firstly, a short extract from the interview with the third grader Samuel is used to illustrate the child's platform agnostic approach to his or her media experience.

Researcher: What would you miss the most from these or other media that come to your mind?

Samuel (P31-ITR): I guess computer.  
 Researcher: Why computer?  
 Samuel: I wouldn't have books. You see it somehow develops my imagination - because I have these good books, written in a special font, which I can read faster.  
 [Dyslexic]  
 Researcher: So that is why you like computers?  
 Samuel: No, books.  
 Researcher: I'm sorry, I'm confused. So what would you miss the most, computer or books?  
 Samuel: Books on computer. [Lifts the card portraying a book and puts it on top of the card with a computer].  
 Researcher: Ahhh! [Feeling silly]

Secondly, the child's holistic approach to media experience became apparent from the child's stream of thoughts when sharing his or her media experience. For instance, what began with discussion about the cinema and *Star Wars: The Clone Wars (2008)* film, soon moved to the child's holistic experience with anything related to *Star Wars*. This included the original, new, and upcoming *Star Wars (1977)* films, the animated series *Star Wars: The Clone Wars (2008-)*, Volkswagen's commercial *The Force (2011)*, *Kinect Star Wars (2012)*, *Angry Birds Star Wars (2012)*, *Star Wars* books, audiobooks and comics, *Lego Star Wars (1999-)*, *Lego Star Wars* videogame series (2005-), *Lego Star Wars* online videos, games and websites, *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed* game series (2008-) available for Nintendo DS, PC, PlayStation, Wii, and Xbox. The children enjoyed and appreciated the complexity of their pan-media holistic and lived experience.

Lillian (P56-GI13): Watching relaxes me. When you just watch you have blank mind, you don't really think about anything, you're just watching. (...) I prefer a play than 3D cinema, because you're more in the moment if you're at a play. (...) Videogames are good because you're interacting. You're interacting with something besides just sitting there and watching. Especially with Kinect you're interacting more, because you're jumping up and down, or throwing something. (...) iPad is good for playing, but for reading I prefer books.

The complexity of child's media experience went beyond media. When asking the child about his or her media experience, the discussion would move in all possible directions, entering and exiting media experience through a number of rabbit holes. For instance, the child would move from *Angry Birds* mobile application, through *Angry Birds* books published by *National Geographic*, to a documentary film 'probably by *National Geographic* that was about killer ants' (Johan, P13-O, I-TR) streamed at school while learning about insects. The third grader Johan would continue explaining that he was interested in 'the hymenoptera order of insects' as he and his dad bred honey bees. Johan remembered that not all of his classmates liked the documentary film, especially 'the girls found it disgusting and scary'. He on the other hand thought that 'watching things like real wars on the news is scarier'. Johan then continued by returning to his shared media moments with his dad, saying 'we always watch these wars with my dad online on *BBC*', and concluded by mentioning learning once again, 'it's all in English, so I can practice by trying to remember some words'. Thus *everything*, not only media platforms, texts and practices, but also the child's past, present, and future actions, thoughts, feelings, and learning were interconnected and dialogic within the child's media and school experience.

## Justified Beliefs about Media Learning based on the Second Parallel Case: Hermeneutic Approach to Media Learning

The first parallel case led the research towards justified beliefs about the appropriateness and suitability of a holistic approach to media learning in primary school classrooms. The child's media experience was equally interpreted and understood by this research as *holistic*, engaging the child in his or her wholeness while reaching far beyond medium-bound experience, which then guided the research further towards acknowledging the equal importance of the child's hermeneutic (media and school) experience. Dewey's thought, once again, summarises well the understanding of the child's holistic and hermeneutic (media and school) experience shaped by this research while exploring in what ways any media were involved in a variety of child's individual and collective actions, feelings, relationships, and thoughts, and how the child learnt about media through these processes.

'[T]he child's life is an integral, a total one. He passes quickly and readily from one topic to another, as from one spot to another, but is not conscious of transition or break. There is no conscious isolation, hardly conscious distinction. The things that occupy him are held together by the unity of the personal and social interests which his life carries along. Whatever is uppermost in his mind constitutes to him, for the time being, the whole universe. That universe is fluid and fluent; its contents dissolve and reform with amazing rapidity. But, after all, it is the child's own world. It has the unity and completeness of his own life.' (Dewey 1916, p.9)

The child's media life and learning was discovered to be an integral, a total one, as the last theme concluded and summarised, 'everything' was interconnected and dialogic. To begin with media platforms and texts as one element of this everything, the child was passing quickly and readily from one sociocultural role to another (learner-teacher, being-becoming, consumer-author) and from one source to another; as the child's media experience was not bordered and defined by a single-discrete medium and to it connected by unified action, feeling, or thought, but instead by the child's diverse individual and collective historicity as well as the immediate state and contextual situation. For instance, the children's media-related school play illustrated by the examples of *Call of Duty*, *Angry Birds* and *Alvin and the Chipmunks* indicated that even though the child participants referenced popular media, 'the source text/artefact [was] not drawn upon in an extended manner' (Marsh 2014, p. 125), and instead the children acted as 'authors of their own games' (Burn 2014, p. 18). The sources were situated within the children's personal and social interests, as well as within their classroom culture when, for example, remixing these media texts with folkloric forms of play (Willett 2014). Therefore the child's media life fuelled the 'convergence' classroom media culture, which was 'participatory' and 'collective' and that drew upon, rather than directly used, 'multiple media' (Jenkins 2006, pp.3-4), while the classroom peer culture reciprocally fuelled the child's out-of-school/classroom media engagement. This child's holistic and hermeneutic media experience can be illustrated by bringing back together extracts from the group and individual interviews with the third grader Jindra, which had been previously taken apart and thus out of their dialogic and united context.

‘Playing in a theatre is my favourite. (...) Those diverse ways of creating theatre, those various scenes. (...) I guess I’d also miss a DVD player, because that’s where I play songs, and stuff like that, for my theatre. (...) If there’s a song or melody good for a theatre play, I use it. (...) Sometimes I sing and dance. (...) I’m putting money aside. I want to buy a witch mask. (...) On YouTube I watch almost every day. I just watched Disney’s *Sleeping Beauty* and *Snow White*. (...) Because there’re evil queens and I love the evil. (...) I want to play evil in theatre. That’s why I need the witch mask. (...) I like scary and spooky stories. In our class we all do. (...) Our miss teacher played *A Bouquet of Folk Legends [Kytice]* by Karel Jaromir Erben and (...) it wasn’t so scary, not for me, but the *Water Goblin [Vodník]* – that was awful, but really good!’

This ‘wholeness’ made from media and learning one continuous hermeneutic experience. Neither the child’s primary school, nor the media, experiences developed and evolved in isolation, as if they were separated by the classroom walls or by a media platform or text from each other and from other experiences once and immediately lived – as Jindra’s diverse yet united statements equally portray. Instead they were a single united and complete experience belonging to one ‘geodesic sphere – an interlocking network that suggests integration, interrelationship and a sense of the whole’ (Meier 1985, p.45). The child was arguably experiencing a wide ranging individual and social, as well as internal-mental and external-communicational/cooperative, media engagements coloured by various feelings, immediate physical state, and negotiated within the child’s historical consciousness, or experiential structure (Stein 1916 [1989]; Vygotsky 1934 [1986]; Gadamer 1975 [2013]). In this hub then the child learnt about media, as Meier (1985, p.45) invited *the adult* to ‘look at children’:

‘They learn holistically. That’s why they are such accelerated learners. (...) [F]or children, the world is geodesic – they plunge right into the whole of it.’

The adult’s role in the child’s media experience, and by extension in media learning, was by all means a peculiar one. On one hand, the child appreciated the shared media time with the adult, as also the first year of Ofcom’s long-term research study *Children’s Media Lives* (2015) discovered in the context of TV viewing, saying it ‘was a valued way for the children to spend time with their parents’ (p.6). The involvement of a parent, or an older family member, in the child’s media learning extended and enriched the child’s media experience with diverse media production activities (Vygotsky 1930 [1978]). The child even cherished certain media artefacts for the personal socioemotional value attached to them, which was often connected to one or more family members. The primary school child’s individual media life and collective media culture was therefore understood here as open and inviting to the adult who was willing to participate, and possibly even to offer supportive and relevant guidance. On the other hand, the child experienced unpleasant feelings when his or her media engagement was [1] not understood by the adult and not given *sufficient* consideration specific to the child in the context of his or her own media historicity, and/or [2] held back on the basis of the child’s perceived and generalised *underdevelopment* and *inequality* (Bragg 1997 [2001]; Buckingham 1997 [2001]). For the child, the teacher was correlated with the adult who rebukes instead of guiding him or her through media learning, which was in agreement with the teacher’s wish to slow down and postpone the child’s media learning as was highlighted within the first parallel case.

The media dualism seemed to be prohibiting the adult from seeing the full potential of the primary school child's diverse media engagements. Even the seemingly trivial aspects within the child's media experience (Laverty 2003) – such as searching for, printing, cutting and displaying or collecting images – were meaningful to the child's immediate and social life. They could also be useful to the child's development and media learning, building a foundation for the future multimodal self-representation and/or understanding through/in digital media, termed by Potter as a new form of *curatorship*, a process that incorporates 'at least the following: *collecting, interpreting, cataloguing, arranging and assembling for exhibition and displaying*' (2014, p.189, *emphasis in original*). The dualistic approach separating media, as well as emphasising the child's offline and online 'discontinuities' rather than 'continuities' (Marsh 2014, p.109) and ignoring their 'overlap' (Marsh 2010, p.28), might however cloud one's openness to these possible connections that although implicit, might be seen as belonging to one multidimensional and complex media learning. Yet it is hard for the adult to comprehend and accept this and it is 'tiresome for children to be always and forever explaining things to (...) [g]rown-ups [who] never understand anything by themselves', as Saint-Exupéry (1943 [2004], p.5) wrote in *The Little Prince*.

To achieve openness (Husserl 1913 [2012]); Gadamer 1975 [2013]; Van Manen 1990) to the child's media experience that would allow the adult to understand the child's foreign experience is, however, a challenging task that this research not only witnessed but repeatedly experienced. A reductionist approach to media seems to be embedded deeply in the nature of human, so deep that even holistic and media inclusive research struggled to escape it. How deep it runs was socioculturally-historically highlighted in the *Beginning* chapter as well as contextually illustrated within both parallel cases of this research. The media dualism together with media cynicism, elitism, and paternalism was not foreign even to the youngest children participating in the research. The children expressed greater concern for children younger than them when it came to negative media effects, as Buckingham (1996) equally observed. In contrast to Buckingham's study, the participating children however did not exclude themselves and they felt worried and frightened about the possible causes of their engagement with *implicit/controversial* media, which could be interpreted as a sign of even greater and more successful media reductionism than previously anticipated.

Given the suggested depth of the issue, it is argued here that it cannot be simply undone or reversed by a holistic approach alone. As discussed earlier, holism in education seeks balance of diverse but interrelated elements of one's being, that are arguably all equally important to everyone's life, learning and development. Holism could potentially guide media learning beyond cognitive-rationalist form and purpose towards media learning nurturing the whole child. Yet holism in the context of media cannot simply claim that all media are equally important to everyone's life, learning and development, and that externally defined balance should therefore be sought. Any attempts to bridge media dichotomies could be seen as an oppositional reification; that in trying to close a gap, one brings it into further being. It would therefore seem that for anyone with a media-centric (educational or research) intention/purpose in mind, the matter of the child's holistic (media) experience becomes essentially intangible and ungraspable. A possible way out suggested on the ground of this research, that represents an original contribution to knowledge, consequently is an argument of replacing reductionist media-centric with holistic and hermeneutic experience-centric research and educational approach to the primary school child's

learning that is diverse yet united, blending classroom learning and media learning into one continuous and dialogic whole person learning. Honouring education as a gradual process and primary education as the foundation of lifelong learning, this learning shall further critical and creative media literacy education by building a foundation for lifelong learning about media.

The following and final chapter will therefore address this argument while focusing on a philosophy grounded in this research – or in other words the justified holistic belief system that supports this original contribution – and asking about the purpose and form of holistic and hermeneutic media learning in primary school classrooms. This grounded philosophy is a research discussion as well as conclusion that addresses simultaneously [1] the current media learning and the teacher's role within it as discovered by this research, as well as [2] the potential media learning facilitated by the teacher as grounded in this research. As well as educational, also research issues with reductionist media-centric approach to the child's life and learning will be highlighted, leading to another contribution to knowledge, which is the execution of intercultural inductive classroom research about media learning conducted in more than one school across the first three grades of primary education with young children and their teachers.

## Chapter 4: *Philosophising and Concluding*

### Conceptual and analytical thinking turns philosophical

The purpose of this final chapter is to further discuss, summarise and conclude the original contribution of this research by synthesising the parallel cases and justified beliefs introduced in the previous chapter. The aim is to honour the diversity and plurality of the fragmented pieces, but bring them into a dialogic and united whole – a belief system that is justified by the research as well as the underpinning literature. This justified holistic belief system has been previously termed a grounded philosophy and explained as the anticipated outcome of this research; which is on what the chapter concentrates. This grounded philosophy is preoccupied with both media learning research and primary education, addressing them in tandem while also highlighting research implications, limitations and future opportunities.

The stress however is here on *philosophising* rather than philosophy, following Kant (1792 [2006]), who argued that one cannot ‘learn philosophy, but rather how to philosophize [sic]; all else is just imitation’. Philosophising in the context of this research means thinking grounded in justified beliefs and in underpinning academic thoughts that collectively aim at offering a holistic and intercultural understanding of the current and the potential media learning in primary school classrooms, and partly the research of it. Standish (2010) argued that the philosophical approach in education is unavoidable, because as Gutek (2009, p.7) explained, ‘decision making in curricular matters not only determines what is included and what is excluded from the school’s curriculum, but also rests on assumptions about the nature of the universe, of human beings, of society, and of good life’. Sandbothe (2000) stressed the importance of philosophy in media studies, and Potter (2011) in media education, stating ‘[a]ny debate about media education quickly leads to a debate about the purpose and scope of education more widely and moves further out into (...) the future of humankind and beyond’. Phillips (2008) explained that since education is believed to play a crucial role in individual and collective lives, it has been the locus of the sharpest controversies for centuries, which as Vacínová (2009) summarised, have addressed questions about the nature, purpose and form of ideal education. This chapter similarly asks about nature, purpose and form of *potential*, instead of ideal, guided media learning.

The nature of potential media learning has already been identified as holistic and hermeneutic within the previous chapter; as the themes, parallel cases and justified beliefs led the research towards understanding of [1] primary school learning as a holistic and hermeneutic experience, and [2] child’s media experience as holistic and hermeneutic learning. As primary school learners and teachers have been at the centre of attention since the beginning and throughout the research, so they remain at the heart of this philosophising deriving from, and returning to, the commonalities that are understood by this research as important and relevant to their lives. The aim is to explore media learning that brings together the classroom experience the teachers aimed at facilitating, with the media experience the children lived and appreciated. The nature, purpose and form of such media learning must ultimately be consistent with, and grounded in, the original knowledge the previous chapter concluded with.

To remind and elaborate further on this original knowledge that partly guides the grounded philosophy and partly is generated through it; it argues for a holistic and hermeneutic experience-centric approach to media research with, as well as to education of, the primary school child that [1] acknowledges the child's classroom learning and media learning as one multidimensional, dialogic and continuous learning that builds a foundation for lifelong learning and [2] is against reductionist media-centric research and educational approach to the exploration and/or guidance of this diverse yet united (media) learning, as well as [3] against a reductionist approach deconstructing the whole child into separate elements, and lastly [4] that prioritises situated and subjectivist, rather than cause-and-effect and objectivist, understanding of (media and classroom) learning and the teacher's guiding/facilitating role within it. The following section addresses these points simultaneously while discussing guided media learning (and research) as holistic, hermeneutic, and archetypally reflective interdisciplinary and intercultural philosophy and practice.

## From Media-Centric to People-Centric Media Learning and Research in Primary School Classrooms Operating within Distinct Contexts

### Whole Person (Media and Classroom) Learning

Media learning has up to now been approached and discussed by this thesis from a number of reductionist and dualistic perspectives – one of the intentional, another of the naturally occurring learning; one of a child, another of a teacher; one of explicit media, another of implicit media; one of being, another of becoming; or of cognitive, emotional, sociocultural, sensory-motoric, creative, and civic dimensions. Yet as grounded philosophy is a holistic research methodology, so is a grounded philosophy of media learning holistic and focused on overcoming any ontological and epistemological reductionism. On one hand, this necessarily means that the individual elements will not be given the same depth and breadth within the holistic approach as they would be within a study preoccupied solely with them. Although this probably represents the main limitation of holistic research, it on the other hand allows to explore and discuss usually separated beliefs and experiences within a united holistic framework that acknowledges their interconnectedness and dialogic relationship, which might be otherwise neglected or completely overlooked.

This however might not be an easy task in the context of education, as the European and Northern American education systems have historically adopted a reductionist approach to human nature and nurture, deconstructing a person into separate pieces. Although the teachers tried to balance a number of dualistic tensions and to facilitate a more holistic learning experience, they were limited by the current as well as the long and established reductionist tradition in public education. The newly established compulsory schooling in the late nineteenth century set out that its purpose was to educate the learner's mind, while the (emotional and social) body, as criticised by Dewey (1916 [2013]), was thought to be an 'irrelevant and intruding physical factor' of education (p.78). To educate one's intellectual mind was pragmatic and straightforward in this context as the aim was to 'teach basic literacy' – reading, writing, arithmetic or mathematics and language art. Nurturing basic literacy in 'common people was increasingly needed in order to answer the employability demands of consumer societies



brought about by *the Industrial Revolution* (ca. 1760-1820). The idea of wholeness and unity was violated not only by neglecting the body, but also by excluding the spiritual essence of the mind now distinguished as the soul, reinforcing reductionism in education even further. Dewey (1915 [2011]) commented that '[i]t may be seriously asserted that a chief cause for the remarkable achievements of Greek education was that it was never misled by false notions into an attempted separation of mind and body' (p.79).

Even though this research discovered the intellectual mind and basic literacy to be continuously viewed as the officially main and externally set purpose of compulsory education, the primary school teachers understood literacy beyond this, for instance as the 4Rs or moral/social education, and argued that it cannot be fostered through intellect alone as a human is a united substance, a 'meaningful [psycho-physical] whole' that 'senses, thinks, feels, and wills' (Stein 1916 [1989], pp.115-6). They perceived this unity from a holistic rather than reductionist perspective, seeing cognitive, sociocultural and civic, emotional, creative and physical domains to be inseparable. As Smuts, who coined the English term 'holism', wrote in his book *Holism and Evolution* (1926), only through this view-point can the fundamental *unity* and *continuity* of matter, life and mind be reached.

The argument that 'in all likelihood, all dimensions of student wellbeing, including academic learning, might be better served through holistic approaches to learning' has been proposed by educational critics since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Lovat 2013, p.77). Advances in the field of psychology provided scientifically more grounded views on the person and his or her development and learning (e.g. Dewey's and Vygotsky's thoughts), whilst simultaneously the ideas of holism well established in Eastern cultures were becoming increasingly popular in the West (e.g. Jung's and Smuts' contributions), for instance as *gestaltism* in Germany. Yet it was Spinoza (1677) who first directly opposed Descartes' dualism. Puolimatka (2001) wrote that, according to Spinoza, the '[e]ducational competence involves the ability to lead people to construe themselves at the highest possible level of knowledge (...) capable of a holistic rational intuition' (pp. 402, 400). The neuroscientist Damasio (2003) argued that Spinoza is relevant to any discipline dealing with human emotion and feeling, and concluded in his book *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain* that both neurobiology and holistic philosophy agree that cognition is not detachable from affection and sociality – and the participating teachers agreed with this, however, only in the context of explicit/anodyne media.

In the context of implicit/controversial media, the teachers followed the emphasis on 'analytic competencies' and 'critical evaluation' long prioritised within media literacy and media education discourse (Koltay 2011, p.211). Even though the teachers argued that media penetrated all aspects of the child's development and learning – most significantly the socioemotional, and least the academic aspects – when reflecting on their own pedagogic experience, they mainly believed (and some also demonstrated) that formal media learning should be predominantly concerned with critical reading/consumption and secondarily with writing/production. Therefore, the teachers approached literacy seemingly connected solely to explicit media holistically, while media literacy seemingly connected only to implicit media in a reductionist manner. They reduced media literacy to basic literacy and focused mainly on one aspect that 'all [literacies] share (...) even within their various different theoretical perspectives, [which] is an attempt to describe a process by which meanings are both transmitted and received' (Potter 2012, p.19). Here the teachers reduced their focus to [1] 'media language' exploring 'how media produce meanings, codes and conventions, [and] narrative structure', [2]

‘representation’ referring to ‘the relation between media texts and actual places, people, events, ideas, stereotyping, and its consequences’, and [3] ‘media agencies’ asking who they were, what was their ideology, intentions and results (Buckingham and Sefton-Green 2001, p.290).

While questioning the appropriateness and suitability of media literacy education for primary school children – suggesting it should be postponed until the child is capable of thinking critically and analytically and acting seriously and respectfully, or in other words until he or she is more like *an adult* – they at the same time argued about its importance to the child’s protection against the influence of media, as well as to the child’s sociocultural and civic empowerment – as discussed in the first chapter. The teachers seemed to believe that the greater the critical media literacy, the better the child’s sociocultural, emotional, and civic life will be. In the context of explicit media, however, the teachers argued that, firstly, literacy could not be facilitated without addressing the child’s socioemotional being and becoming, and secondly, literacy itself would not lead the child to independent lifelong learning, happiness, moral and civic life, and other ‘goodness’ and ‘greatness’ they wished for their learners. It seems that, as media have been blamed for various social ills (Gauntlett 1997 [1998], p.105), so media literacy might now be linked to imaginary hopes from which literacy has already freed itself, recognising the rather populist origin and unprovable premise of such claims. Graff (1987) explained this in his book *The Legacies of Literacy: Continuities and Contradictions in Western Culture and Society*, saying that ‘scholarly and popular conceptions of the value of the skills of reading or writing have almost universally followed normative assumptions and expectations of vague but powerful concomitants and effects presumed to accompany changes in the diffusion of literacy’ (p.9), and continued:

‘For the last two centuries, they have been intertwined with post-Enlightenment, “liberal” social theories and contemporary expectations of the role of literacy and schooling in socioeconomic development, social order, and individual progress. These important conjunctures constitute what I have come to call a “literacy myth”. (...) Literacy is for the most part an enabling rather than a causal factor, making possible the development of complex (...) structures, [but] whether, and to what extent, these will in fact develop depends apparently on concomitant factors of ecology, intersocietal relations, and internal ideological and social structural responses to these.’ (*Quotation marks in original*)

Whilst literacy theory and practice no longer sees ‘the possession of literacy skills [as] automatically linked with what they were formerly thought to have achieved’ (Bogdan and Eppert 1996, p.361), the direct correlation between critical and creative media literacy and its wider outcomes such as social participation and civic activism has only recently begun to be empirically researched (Banaji and Buckingham 2013). Increasingly this causal relationship is seen as equivocal (McDougall, Berger, Fraser, and Zezulcova 2015), suggesting that much of what has been said about media literacy could simply be yet another ‘myth’. A myth that might have had a more negative than positive impact on the ability of primary school teachers to facilitate media learning in their classrooms. It might be that this inconsistency between the holistic understanding of literacy, developed on the ground of their own pedagogic experience and inquiry, and the cause-and-effect understanding of media literacy, arguably developed on the ground of popular and policy discourse, has unconsciously led the teachers to believe that the primary school child as a whole should be challenged when learning about explicit media,

whilst his or her learning about implicit media should be held back until he or she reaches certain developmental level, as also Graber and Mendoza (2012) and Bauman and Tatum (2009) wanted the children to be developmentally ready.

In contrast to much media (literacy) education discourse treating sociocultural, emotional and sensory-motoric as secondary to, and an additional aspect of, critical and analytical thinking (e.g. Provorova 2013), this research discovered them to be fundamental to education at primary school level (parallel case 1), as well as to the child's media experience and embedded media learning (parallel case 2). A number of studies, especially within German media literacy theory and practice, have already addressed this neglect of social, emotional and motivational *skills* (Rosebrock and Zitzelsperger 2002). For instance, Pfaff-Rüdiger *et al.* (2012) explained that [1] social skills may refer to one's ability to communicate and interact with other within their shared media engagement as aimed for by the participating teachers, [2] motivational skills are about understanding what to expect and gain from different media and use them accordingly as was discovered crucial to the child's media choices and holistic repertoire, and [3] emotional skills can then be understood as understanding and handling media-related emotions, which was relevant to the learners and the teachers alike. Social, emotional, and motivational dimensions were discovered by this research as equally important to the child's media and primary school experience, and basically inseparable from physical and cognitive aspects of learning and development. The argument here however is not for the child being taught pre-defined socioemotional and motivational skills within media (literacy) education, as this would be inconsistent with the primary school teacher's child-centred holistic and situated learning aimed at the whole person. Instead the original argument is for a situated and whole person approach to the whole child's media learning embedded in his or her multidimensional and unique media experience. The following section explores this experience.

### Hermeneutic (Media and Classroom) Experience

The reductionist understanding of, and approach to, the child's media learning discovered by this research did not lie only in emphasising the child's critical mind over the whole in the context of media literacy, but also in the media dichotomy as hinted above and illustrated in the previous chapter. In the adult participants' perception, media platforms, texts and categories were divided and fixed in certain groups based on their role in education and their perceived value and appropriateness to the child's life, learning and development. Not only primary education, but media education theory and practice alike are 'still very much wedded to the idea of medium specificity' (Berger and Woodfall 2012, p.117). In contrast, the child lived in an all-at-once panmedia sphere which he or she actively co-created and orchestrated while crafting his or her unique media engagement repertoire in the context of the child's own collective and individual life, as also Parry (2013) discovered in film-centred literacy research with young children.

Immediate media engagement with, or related to, any one platform or text became just punctuation to an on-going dialogue, because no part of the holistic lived (media and classroom) experience could be considered isolatable (Woodfall and Zezulkova 2016 [forthcoming]). Similarly Berger and Woodfall (2012) argued that children's and young people's 'social practices are largely (if not always) non-medium specific – they fail to recognise the misguidedly imagined distinctions between different media' (p.119), as also Dyson (2002) discovered when conducting classroom research with the first graders. The participating children, however, did not fail to be

attentive in their retrospective reflection to constructed media dichotomies mirroring the ways in which the child perceived the adult might recognise and value each media platform, category, or text rather than mirroring his or her own lived media experience. Moreover, in contrast to Buckingham's (1996) research, the children did not exclude themselves from media-related fears, worries and uncertainties that were based on what they had heard rather than experienced.

Potter (2012) here usefully explained that in addition to transmitting and receiving meanings, education of all literacies should be equally preoccupied with 'a sphere in which competencies are developed, demonstrated, and measured' (p.19). A division might however be constructed by the adult between where and how competencies and understandings are developed, measured and demonstrated, because school and home are not usually represented to the child as 'one social/physical domain' (Bulfin and North 2007, p.247). The main media-related distinction between home and school lay in the explicit/anodyne and implicit/controversial media divide. For instance, teachers tended to focus on the potentially negative role of implicit media, whilst often uncritically praising the role of explicit media, in the pupil's actions, thoughts and feelings and consequently also complex learning and development. They believed that their role was, or should be, to rectify and modify children's existing media preferences and practices for the sake of their immediate as well as future wellbeing, which was apparent from their but also from the children's testimonies. The children at first rejected the idea of turning the implicit into explicit media within their formal learning, as their instant thoughts were about being judged and rebuked by the teacher. Despite that, the child's meanings and practices spread across the in- and out-of- school domains, being 'traced and sourced from the [child's] whole life world of experience' (*ibid.*). It is arguably in this experience where all the domains of his or her life and learning (that the adult attempts to separate and differentiate) dialogically intersect, leaving researchers and educators pondering the potential of (media and classroom) learning capable of crossing 'the home-school divide' (Marsh 2009, p.202).

A number of studies had consequently focused on reconceptualising literacy by opening it to the child's multimodal modes of 'composing and consuming' (Wissman and Vasudevan 2012, p.325) that are 'interconnected in very complex, multifaceted ways using a plethora of image, sound, and print' (Tierney *et al.* 2006, p.361), as well as 'movement (...) and gesture' (Walsh 2011, p.106). Marsh and Millard (2000), for example, observed that '[c]hildren are constantly engaged in decoding the reality represented in the world around them, interpreting it according to their own sociocultural practices and experiences and then encoding it, using whatever range of materials are available to them (...) [and hence] challenging prevailing notions of what constitutes literacy within the usual confines of a (...) classroom' (p.48). As a primary school teacher Krause (2015) wrote to *The Journal of Media Literacy Education*; '[a]s educators, we need to make ourselves aware of the harmonious blend of authentic modes of communication afforded to children through our increasingly multimodal literacy environment' (p.72).

This thesis itself has served as an example of forming understanding and generating new knowledge by using a range of materials available through diverse media: for example, the theatre play *Fidlovačka, or No Anger and No Brawl* and its music and the Czech national anthem *Where Is My Home?*, *The Matrix* and *Inception* films and fan pages, the book and film series *Hunger Games*, the online newspaper *Daily Mail*, the poem *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, *Melvin Bragg's* radio show, *Red Bull's* promotion, adaptations of the *Cinderella* fairy tale, *Charter 77* as an informal civic initiative of Czech artists and writers, or the painting of Plato's allegory of cave.

Not only does 'academic literacy' (that is indeed reductionist when it comes to sources of knowledge) not require this form of media (as multimodal) literacy, it might even evoke objections and be despised. Yet still it seemed almost inevitable, natural, to draw upon diverse media when interpreting and comprehending the academic reality around this particular research project that was itself a lived experience situated in a specific sphere of meanings and practices concerning children, education and media. Ironically, by trying to be media inclusive in its theoretical as well as practical approach, the research became panmedia-centric and panmedia-specific by being overly attentive to media platforms and categories, trying to 'bring them all in' and to give them 'balanced attention', sometimes to the point of annoying the participating children. The researcher was forcing onto the child her own idea of an 'all-at-once panmedia sphere', which was diverse and unique to each individual child, with no artificially constructed harmony or balance in sight.

Media education studies and pedagogic practices that seem to be more successful and authentic in exploring child's media engagement and facilitating learning that disturbs media dichotomy and the home-school divide are those moving away from medium/technology-first approach and instead inviting young learners to lead the dialogue by drawing on their experiences (see e.g. Parry 2014). Willet (2005, p.143) argued that '[m]aking use of their media experiences in the classroom allows children to express themselves, not just as students, but also as social individuals' revealing to the adult that in their experience media stories and characters overshadow media platform (Willet 2005; Jenkins 2013) – which this research equally discovered, but only after a considerable struggle. The proposition therefore is 'for a corrective away from platform first or platform only approaches' to research and education and 'to undo an adult media-centric outlook and acknowledge the experience-centric child' (Woodfall and Zezulkova 2016 [forthcoming]).

As Gauntlett (2008) usefully encouraged, media education practice and research, and by extension (media and classroom) learning, should be more interested in the people and less so in the media technology. Rowland (2013, p.11) equally claimed that the focus should be on 'the reader as the location where meaning is debated, constructed and imagined' rather than upon the medium. McDougall (2011) captured it well by saying 'the problem has been our belief in the idea of 'the media' and its separation from ourselves, just as the category of literature imposes an alienating model of reading' and instead he argued with his colleagues to begin with pedagogic thinking *after the media* (Bennett *et al.* 2011). As an alternative, this research points towards the understanding of the child experience 'before the media', before he or she learns to pay attention to the medium and to the varying media dichotomies. It thus suggests that media learning in primary school classrooms could potentially take a step back, before the adult reductionist and cause-and-effect media beliefs and practices, towards the before the media experience of the child. As Smuts (1926, p.1) argued, everything arises, meets, and intermingles in human 'experience', because as Stein (1916 [1986]) further explained, '[k]nowledge is blind, empty, and restless, always pointing back to some kind of experienced' (p.20).

A distinction however must be made about what the research means by 'exploring and drawing upon the child's experience', because the focus on the learner's experience is by far not an original approach to (progressive and social constructivist) media (literacy) education. Social constructivist critical and creative media literacy education often identifies itself with Dewey's (1915 [2011]) warning that not 'all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. Experience

and education cannot be directly equated to each other. For some experiences are mis-educative. Any experience is mis-educative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience' (p.25). The aim of such media education thus is to transform 'the wrong' experiences and to stimulate 'the right' experiences leading to the desired and pre-determined educational outcomes. This was for instance the case of the cross-curricular session designed by a Czech third grade teacher around the topic of advertising (see *Chapter 3* pp.130-1) and so was, for example, the media literacy project by Buckingham, Fraser and Nayman also focused on advertising but conducted in two London schools back in 1987.

Buckingham and his colleagues self-critically reflected on this study in the book chapter *Stepping into the Void: Beginning Classroom Research in Media Education* (1990), offering a view into a number of striking similarities between their and the Czech teacher's interventions set more than twenty years and two thousand kilometres apart. The British researchers as well the Czech educator sequenced their teaching activities in a way 'which most media teachers would recognise as good practice: 'analytical' work precedes 'practical' work, rather than vice versa' (Buckingham *et al.* 1990, p.23, *quotation marks in original*). The interventions equally assumed that 'hidden' meanings can be recovered if the right 'analytical tools' are used and that 'analysis will result in a single conclusion about the meaning of the text' (*ibid.*, p.35), in agreement with Masterman's contradictory suggestion (see *Chapter 1* p.19) that although readings might be subjective, ideology is objective and can therefore be revealed if something similar to the red pill in *The Matrix* is applied. Consequently, the processes were being 'far from open-ended', as Buckingham and his colleagues realised:

'[Teachers] are effectively requiring students to identify aspects of the text which teachers themselves have previously defined as important, and thereby to lead to certain predetermined conclusions [while casting around until they get them].' (*ibid.*)

In both cases the learners were being discouraged from acknowledging their experience as being significant in itself, and instead were asked to move beyond the experience and objectively evaluate themselves as 'consumers of products and services' (*ibid.*, p.27). Buckingham *et al.* (1990) further reflected that '[w]hat is particularly interesting about this little game of 'guess what's in my mind' – apart from its shameless abandonment of the non-directive researcher [or teacher] role – is the difference between the teacher's and the students' judgment about what constitutes relevant information' (p.26). Larochelle *et al.* (1998) offered an explanation saying social constructivism in education is often understood as simply 'taking students' knowledge into account' (p.3), while they argued:

'[S]uch elicitation appears to obey no other end than to identify "what's wrong" with the students' points of view. Wrong, that is, from the perspective of the knowledge which is to be taught: no account is made of how potentially this sanctioned form of knowledge may present major divergences with student knowledge in terms of nature, scope, and viability.' (*Quotation marks in original*)

The authors criticised that the most importance is being given to 'narrowing the gap separating what the student knows from the subject matter to be taught' (*ibid.*), while following the adult's reductionist and cause-and-effect assumptions and expectations about a certain medium or group of media. The paradox then is that the learner, engaged in what constitutes itself as a

social constructivist media education, might acquire more substantial new knowledge about what the adult wants to hear, and skills of reproducing and sharing these thoughts, rather than about media's role in his or her own life – as this research has repeatedly criticised, and so did Dyson (2002) who wrote, '[a]lthough the particularities of childhoods vary across historical time and cultural space, children all over the globe (...) borrow voices from close-at-hand people, and also from close-at-hand technology' (p.4). The reason Dewey (1915 [2011]) and his media education followers might be worried about the right and wrong media experiences is that they believe that 'every experience lives on further experiences', which Dewey called 'experiential continuum' (p.27). Although this might seem to be pointing towards historical consciousness and hermeneutic experience, it is here understood as fundamentally different approach to experience and learning.

Hermeneutic experience was earlier introduced within this research as a methodical process of 'cumulative appropriation of findings (...) emerging from and reverting into practical life' (Buck 1978, p.31), whilst the focus now is on the everydayness of experience that 'is always to be acquired, and from it no one can be exempt' (Gadamer 1975 [2013], p.363). In hermeneutics it is argued that such basic human experience is inevitably a learning experience, because '[w]hatever one does or experiences, he or she acquires new impressions and attitudes, intentions and meanings, information and vocabulary skills and abilities, pieces of wisdom and mental schemes' (Zuckerman 2003, p.178). Yet in contrast to Dewey's educative and mis-educative divide, hermeneutics values all experiences and to them connected learning. Gadamer (*ibid.*, pp.361-2) explained that experience as a learning process either 'conform[s] to our expectation and confirm[s] it' or occurs as 'new experience (...) that is always negative (...) [because] this means that we have not seen the thing correctly and now know it better'. Hermeneutics acknowledges continuous historicity but within this continuity the past, present and future experiences are in a constant and unfinalisable dialogue (Holquist 1990 [2002]). Negative (what could have been once mis-educative) experience therefore has 'a curiously productive meaning' (Gadamer 1975 [2013], p.362) as it can be re-used and re-thought for the purpose of ongoing lifelong learning. Thus for Dewey what was once always remains a mis-educative experience, whereas for Gadamer no experience stays fixed as one or another. That is why this research leans towards hermeneutic understanding of the child's (media and classroom) experience.

A hermeneutic experience-centric media learning might be better understood if approached from the tradition of play and drama education instead of literacy education. Play, as Vygotsky (1930 [1978]) warned, should not be simply defined as the child's pleasurable activity as it can spark a whole spectrum of emotions and feelings while at the same time, as Willet *et al.* (2013) and Marsh and Bishop (2014) added, engaging the child in his or her cognitive, physical and sociocultural wholeness – an understanding consistent with the child's media-related play as discovered by this research project. This play or life drama 'as a whole' coincides in hermeneutics, especially thanks to Eugen Fink's *The Ontology of Play* (1960), with play as 'theatre' or 'drama' when speaking of it as 'a lived experience' (pp.97, 99).

'For play is itself a fundamental phenomenon of existence. (...) We play with the serious, the authentic, the real. We play with work and struggle, love and death. We even play with play. (...) Joy reigns in it as undisputed master at each moment, carrying it forward and giving it wings. (...) It is a joy rooted in the most special (...) activity, open to many interpretations. It can include

profound sadness, a tragic suffering. It can embrace the most striking contraries. (...) [M]oved to tears we may be, we smile at the comedy and tragedy which are our life and which the play represents to us.' (*ibid.*, p.101)

Buber (1937 [2013]) even argued that '[t]he theatre is an exemplar of life: it completes the human drama by making it whole', whilst stressing the (Holquist's and Eco's) dialogic relationship between theatre and the human drama as a negotiation that does not seek 'agreement or unanimity' (Courtney 1989, p.58) – and neither did the child's plural and diverse media engagements seek this. Although play is 'always a process that has a meaning' (Fink 1960, p.99), it resists determinism as it is not a code to be decoded but a 'labyrinth' of meaning (Eco 1984, p.56), as was the child's media experience. Courtney (1989) subsequently reviewed drama education following the hermeneutic tradition, summarising that each considers 'what is' as more important than 'what ought to be', which is the exact opposite of much of media (literacy) education interested in what is only in order to bring the learner closer to what ought to be, as the previous two cases highlighted.

Burton (1958), a drama educator following hermeneutic philosophy, argued that play did not exist apart from life, and neither did media in the child's life. That is partly why Burton drew upon hermeneutics as it fully acknowledges 'the irregular and accidental way' in which daily experience occurs both in- and out-of- school (Gadamer 1975 [2013], p.357), while aiming at benefiting from the learning processes it involves, especially those which are *negative*. For instance, Zezulкова and Estrada's (2013) conference talk *Learning Good Things from the Bad Guys* addressed the upcoming trend of narconovelas in Colombia that has sparked passionate media and education prophylactic debates about the media antiheroes' integral part in children's and young people's individual and collective lives, mirrored not only in media consumption but also production. Zezulкова and Estrada suggested that the right question for the media education of Medellín's youth is to first ask what it is that they are learning and doing with this knowledge, as an increasing number of studies have suggested that media engagement with these conflicting heroes has helped the young more than harmed them (Garcés 2011; Estrada *et al.* 2012). Although to ask such a question could be equally useful to the participating teachers who worried about the learner's engagement with negative media role models, this might be a controversial issue in certain, probably in the majority of, sociocultural atmospheres surrounding the formal education of young children.

The philosophical thinking here acknowledges this issue but agrees with Gadamer who opposed it, saying that '[a]lthough in bringing up children, for example, parents may try to spare them certain experiences' – as was found to be a common parental as well as educational way of being involved in the child's media experience – 'experience as a whole is not something anyone can be spared' (*ibid.*, p.364). As the research discovered, for the child every experience has multiple current and potential future interpretations subject to the child's individual historicity and collective sociocultural-historical as well as immediate context. Dyson (2002) for instance observed the six year olds borrowing texts aimed at older audiences, such as teenage rap songs, and appropriating these, in the adult conception inappropriate, material to their hermeneutic experience in complex and multifaceted ways often invisible to the adult. The philosophy grounded in this research thus argues that each of these experiences is valuable as it dialogically interacts with new experiences of the learning and developing whole. Although the adult might feel capable of deciding which of the child's media experiences are educative and which mis-educative in a narrow and immediate assumption, this research found it unfeasible when acknowledging the whole and its ever-changing being/becoming whose hermeneutic



experiences are being constantly re-produced and re-thought throughout one's life. The next section therefore discusses hermeneutic experience-centric whole person media learning in primary school classrooms as a foundation for lifelong learning about media.

## Learning to Learn about Media

The research was interested in commonalities forming the parallel cases, or archetypal scenarios, as a way of transforming what contextually was to the more transferable what could be, or in other words to ground philosophising about potential media learning and the teacher's potential role within it in the rich field research acknowledging the complexities of everyday experience in the classroom (Elliott 2006). The grounded intercultural philosophy of media learning in primary school classrooms returns here to Jung's archetypes, because the current (as discovered by the research) and the potential (as grounded in this research) teacher-learner relationship in the facilitated whole person media learning focused on the child's hermeneutic experience can be better understood by comparing the teacher to *an archetype of spirit*, specifically *the wise old man* (including woman), and the learner to *the hero* (including heroine) archetype. These belong, according to Jung (1936/37 [1959]), among the historically most prominent archetypes.

The archetypal hero's (the learner's) journey, as described in the second chapter (see p.40), necessarily involves the wise old man or woman (the teacher) playing a complementary role (Oyserman *et al.* 2012) by 'always appear[ing] when the hero is in a hopeless and desperate situation from which only profound reflection (...) can extricate him' (1936/37 [1959], p.217). This points back to hermeneutical appreciation of negative lived experience if one reflects on it in the context of his or her previous experiences, as children do in the context of their media and school experience (Parry 2013). Jung continued, 'since, for internal and external reasons, the hero cannot accomplish this [reflection] himself, the knowledge needed to compensate the deficiency comes in the form of a personified thought, i.e., in the shape of this sagacious and helpful old man' (*ibid.*, p.218), or the primary school teacher who guides the child through reflection on his or her media (and learning) experience as the learner is yet not able to accomplish this alone.

Jung (1936/37[1959]) compared reflection to 'an anamnesis (...) [and] a purposeful process whose aim is to gather the assets of the whole personality together at the critical' and/or learning moment (p.219). Jung (1928 [2014]) however cautioned educational theorists and practitioners, saying 'I must warn you again most emphatically that it would be very unsound to apply these methods directly to children' (p.58), because as Jones (2013) clarified, 'Jung assumed a sophistication of self-reflection that is developmentally unlikely in childhood (...) [as i]t involves not only the capacity to reflect on one's feelings, anxieties, or motives (which school-aged children can do), but also one's realization [sic] and desire for personal growth' (p.13). This research is in disagreement with the last point, because the participating children did demonstrate desire for personal growth and for being actively involved in the construction of their (media) life (Markström and Halldén 2009; Corsaro 2014). The children were, for example, interested in learning how to approach and deal with certain media-related events, relationships, feelings, and thoughts, as well as how to enhance, improve, and develop further their media practices and media-related engagements. Zuckerman (2003) threw some light on this disagreement, saying that the notion of primary school children being capable of learning to

reflect was attributed only to adults and children's intellectual elite until the Russian psychologists Elkonin and Davydov suggested otherwise with the support of their thirty years of educational research and practice.

Vygotsky's student Elkonin and his colleague Davydov introduced the argument that self-reflection 'can be developed in the majority of elementary school children under another system of education' than traditional (in Zuckerman 2003, p.182). The system they proposed was elaborated and developed within Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory (see pp.37-8) and zone of proximal development (ZPD) (see pp.111-2), as Elkonin and Davydov argued that '[a]t each point of development each child has multiple, as yet unactualized [sic] potentials for further accomplishments' among which belong the reflective abilities (*ibid.*, p.181). These however do not occur naturally in elementary school children, but rather they are 'the product of intentions declared by those educators who consider it to be essential to stretch the ZPD of elementary school children toward reflective intelligence' (*ibid.*, p.183). Conscious intra-personal reflection on one's experience as a nurtured/learned ability is increasingly seen as fundamental to lifelong learning (Thomas 1999, 2009, 2012), and so it is seen here as crucial to lifelong media learning and thus prioritised over critical thinking at primary education level.

As Thoutenhoofd and Pirrie (2015) criticised 'the narrow construction of learning to learn (...) [that] resulted in a striking denial of the dimension of learning as social performance and an over-emphasis on (...) pre-determined educational ends' (p.73), so reflective media learning differs to critical media literacy education with pre-determined educational ends. Distancing itself from media literacy education exploring what is in order to bring closer to what ought to be, facilitated whole person media learning focused on the child's hermeneutic experience prioritises reflection producing 'insights (...) rather than positive knowledge of the kind that can be framed in statements of universal validity' (Burns 1999, p.121). The primary school teacher's role therefore would not be to nurture critical thinking capable of uncovering positive and universally valid knowledge about media, but rather to *guide* the learner through reflection that produces insights about the child's unique media experiences and learning.

Jung (1936/37 [1959]) explained this guidance as an intervention of the old man who assists 'the who? where? how? why? to emerge clearly and in this wise[/wisdom] [to] bring knowledge of the immediate [or past] situation as well as of the goal' (p.220). Reflection then, hermeneutically speaking, has a potential to make lived media experience temporarily conscious through making the child aware of what he or she does, feels, and thinks and why. As Fink (1960) clarified, 'if we give ourselves over to [a lived experience] we are far from reflection' (p.97), and thus it must be differentiated between a lived experience in its immediacy when being lived and a hermeneutic experience in its historicity when being retrospectively reflected upon. Similarly Epstein (2003, p.2) usefully described reflection for primary school children as 'remembering with analysis', or as van Manen (1990, p.37) argued, '[l]ived experiences gather hermeneutic significance as we (reflectively) gather them by giving memory to them'. Van Manen continued that '[t]hrough mediations, conversations, day dreams, inspirations and other interpretative acts we assign meaning to the phenomena of lived life' (*ibid.*), which seems to be especially true in the context of the child's media life within which, as Parry (2014) argued, 'a strong connection between conceptual understanding and cultural experience' can be observed (p.21).

This connection arguably constitutes itself in language, 'because man's reflection of reality is carried out in generalized [sic] concepts' that allow one 'to convey one's experience or thought' to others and consequently make possible 'the higher, specifically human forms of psychological

communication' (Vygotsky 1934 [1986], pp.7-8). To convey their own media experience verbally was sometimes challenging for the participating children, especially the younger ones, which as an inability enslaved the child to the adult's conceptions of the child's media experience. The concepts about the child's media experience constructed by the adult were in some cases hard for the child to understand, because although he or she repeated them, they were 'just words without meaning'. Tolstoy (1903) explained that the child only learns the word if he or she is familiar with the concept to which the word refers, leading Vygotsky (1934 [1986]) away from the focus on learning words towards learning of *word meaning*. Vygotsky then argued that it is 'the internal aspect' – the child's own media experience – 'in word meaning, that thought and speech unite into verbal thought' allowing them to reflect on and communicate the experience (*ibid.*, p.5). Epstein (2003, p.3) clarified the gradual nature of language acquisition in connection to the child's increasing ability to reflect:

'As they grow older, children are increasingly able to form mental images that allow them to anticipate and remember objects, people, and events that are not there. Older children, with greater language and cognitive abilities, begin to function at a more conceptual level. They can rely on verbal and visual representations, including abstract images and printed words, to think through, carry out, and reflect on their ideas. (...) Reflection becomes increasingly detailed as children age. (...) As they plan and reflect on a daily basis, they develop the linguistic and conceptual structures that allow them to formulate and share complex thoughts.'

Guided reflection, according to Epstein (*ibid.*), helps with language acquisition, because when adults help children to think back on their experiences, they 'add complexity to the children's language, providing adjectives, adverbs, and new or rare words' that serve as general concepts referring to the meanings that the media experiences had for the children. Parry (2014) agreed, saying 'there is an important role for teachers to create spaces in which children can draw on their cultural experiences to formulate the systematic generalisations which lead to further conceptual understandings' (p.21). Therefore, instead of teaching the child media words and asking him or her to comprehend the general concept behind them, guided media learning suggests beginning with the child being asked about meanings behind his or her media experience and with the adult searching for words that would help the child to form his or her verbal thoughts. In this way, the child's development, language acquisition, and meaning-making grounded in experiences 'operate inseparably, in an uninterrupted connection with one another' (Vygotsky 1934 [1986], p.1) within a holistic and situated (media and classroom) learning process.

Through assigning meanings to a lived media experience – that has become temporarily conscious as a hermeneutic experience – the child might identify a potential need for self-change or change in others' attitude or behaviour towards him/her, which is similar to Jung's idea of therapy and, by extension, of education. Temporarily because both hermeneutics and psychoanalysis agree that the main goal of reflection (as a hermeneutical cycle, therapy, or education) is not to achieve an ability to be constantly aware and immediately conscious of lived experiences, as critical media literacy might hope for, but instead the ability to allow the understanding and potential change to fade into lived, and spread out into holistic and hermeneutic, immediate and future experiences. Jung (1936/37 [1959]) then continued that only when the wise old man had brought the hero to the point he or she assigned meaning to the experience, the wise old man 'could begin his good advice' (p.220). It is here then the teacher as

an archetype of spirit may offer tailored supportive child-centred, and not paternalistic or elitist media-centred, advice to the learner.

The spirit archetypes are all rooted in holistic care that constitutes itself in guidance given to one's child or student on his or her quest towards 'a humanly attainable whole' (Jung 1936/37 [1968], p.242), the psycho-spiritual and bodily unity (Stein 1916 [1989]) and 'full humanity' (Mayes 2010, p.10), without forgetting that there are 'multiple conceptions of what it is to be human and alive' (Greene 2000, p.142). Care for the pupil's overall and distinct being and becoming was prominent in the teachers' philosophies and so was the guidance into which this care was transformed. Jung proposes a form of guidance that is similar to both [1] the teacher's current holistic facilitation of learning and [2] the kind of adult participation in the child's media learning that he or she appreciated and enjoyed. Jung's archetypal guidance is therefore key to the child's media learning facilitated by the primary school teacher, as it is not only a child-centred approach 'encourag[ing] adults to consider a child's preferences or to follow the child's lead during interactions', it is an approach directly incorporating reflective insights by recognising that 'the interaction is actively shaped and constructed bi-directionally' between the teacher and the learner (Alper and McGregor 2015, p.3). The primary school teacher as the old wise man therefore rejects philosophical idealism starting 'with the idea of where the activity will lead us (...), which imposes our ideas on the child' (Courtney 1989, p.15), but instead starts and ends with the learner's unique lived media experience.

The wise old man as the teacher therefore not only 'represents knowledge, reflection, insight, wisdom, cleverness, intuition (...) [and] moral qualities such as goodwill and readiness to help' (Jung 1936/37 [1959], p.222), but like all archetypes it has a side that 'points down-wards, partly negative and unfavourable, partly chthonic, but for the rest merely neutral [shadow]' (*ibid.*, p.231). Jung claimed that everyone has *shadows* – 'parts of ourselves we don't like, don't know, or don't want to know' (Dunne 2012, p.106). A dualistic approach to the child's holistic and hermeneutic media experience might also be a shadow that the primary school teachers shared, although the teachers thought their main media-related shadow was the gap between their and their learners' media experiences. As Moran (2012), a middle school teacher, reflected in the book chapter *Lessons Learned from Young People's Everyday Literacies* written with her colleague Bulcher: '[s]ometimes I feel overwhelmed to think that no matter how much I try to keep abreast of the texts in students' lives, I am doomed to remain hopelessly behind' (p.65).

Jung (1936/37 [1968]) offered a solution, saying that the advice of the teacher as the wise old man does not necessarily need to be the best possible or even good, as the hero must learn that the answer ultimately lies within himself or herself. The wise old man can even speak in riddles (Mayes 2005b), complexifying and making more challenging, rather than simplifying and holding back, the media learning process. The wise old man guides the hero not to the pre-determined and seemingly objective answer, as media (literacy) education might do, but rather to the child's own conceptual understanding of his or her experience, because as the participating teachers suggested in agreement with Jung, the child must know that learning comes from himself or herself. Davydov (1988a,b) and Elkonin (1988) agreed that through nurturing reflective thinking in six- to twelve-year olds, the teacher helps the child to 'become the agent of self-change aimed at transcending the limits of one's own experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities and at acquiring methods for self-learning' (in Zuckerman 2003, pp.177-8). They positioned it as opposite to education that cultivates 'harmful habits of intellectual work (...) such as taking the opinion of an authority as a final truth, without seeking proof, and maintaining a black-and-white

attitude toward different opinions' (*ibid.*, p.184), which was found to be the main weakness not only of the child's but also the teacher's sociocultural learning about media.

Reflective media learning as such might even be compared with philosophy for primary school children that is becoming increasingly popular in British (e.g. White 2011, 2012), US (e.g. Gregory 2011, 2015) and Czech (e.g. Bauman 2013a, 2013b) primary school classroom research. Kierkegaard (1837 [1994]), Groethuysen (1947 [1994]) and Jaspers (1954 [1994]) emphasised the child's authentic metaphysical experience and argued that philosophy should belong to, and be constructed by, the child from an early age (see Campbell's example on p.28). As Juuso (2007) highlighted, '[t]he clearest proof of man's internal philosophical sensitivity is the excellent questions that children ask' (p.45), on which a BBC2 programme for children *What makes me, me? And Other Interesting Questions* (2014-) focuses. This research equally discovered that what started as a discussion about media experience often led to wider issues, some of which touched upon philosophical questions such as *freedom* (Steiner 1894; Fromm 1941), when a boy said he did not want videogames to make him violent because he wants to be a free man or when a girl interpreted the exploding freed *Angry Birds* as being a result of being trapped and wanting to die. Vansieleghem (2011), who conducted research with young Cambodian children, usefully explained that 'philosophy with children is not to be understood as something that orients us towards the making of valid knowledge claims, but as an act of becoming *present in the present*' (p.322, *emphasis in original*). She further explained the aim is not to become 'conscious of oneself in order to gain access to the truth but rather, and following Michel Foucault, [it is] a practice oriented by the care of the self—in the interest of a transformation of the self by the self' (*ibid.*), and in this, media learning and philosophy for children intersect and thus future research could open this interdisciplinary dialogue within both its theory and educational practice. As Professor Angie Hobbs from the University of Sheffield explained on *BBC Radio 4 (Desert Island Discs, 6 February 2015)*:

[What makes me, me] is a question of personal identity. Am I the same person as I was yesterday or the day before. Given that we all change all the time. At what point does change break down in personal identity?

The self-concept of personal identity, or selfhood, formed of experiences and assigned meanings is 'something still in the process of creation, something still bending toward the future', and so therefore is the self, described as a 'multiple phenomenon' and its existence as 'the unique and unified event of being' (Holquist 1990 [2002], p.23). As argued earlier, in hermeneutic understanding any experience and its interpretation is not unitary, fixed and finalised (Woodfall and Zezulkova 2016 [forthcoming]) and it is through guided reflection that the child can be encouraged to 'go beyond merely reporting what they've done (...) [by becoming] aware of what they learned in the process' (Epstein 2003, p.2), and thus become aware of their own developing and changing self in general, and in the context of media experience in particular. Only in this way, is every media experience/learning arguably allowed to retain its ultimately unfinishable and constantly negotiable nature, so any experience can be re-used and re-thought for the purpose of lifelong (media) learning. As Gadamer (1975 [2013]) suggested:

'The truth of experience always implies an orientation toward new experience. That is why a person who is called experienced has become so not only through experiences but is also open to new experiences. The consummation of his experience, the perfection that we call "being experienced", does not consist in the fact that someone already knows

everything and knows better than anyone else. Rather, the experienced person proves to be, on the contrary, someone who is radically undogmatic; who, because of the many experiences he has had and the knowledge he has drawn from them, is particularly well equipped to have new experiences and to learn from them. The dialectic of experience has its proper fulfilment not in definitive knowledge but in the openness to experiences that is made possible by experience itself.' (p.364, *quotation marks in original*)

Guided media learning in primary school classrooms could therefore create a space and opportunity for the child to explore his or her own media historicity, development, and learning through re-visiting and reflecting on his or her previous reflections. In this way, guided media learning touches upon the child's metacognitive development and 'learning to learn as a reflexive social activity' (Thoutenhoofd and Pirrie 2015, p.75). This was believed by Kuhn (2000) as well as the participating teachers to be a central goal of primary education nurturing lifelong autonomous, as well as empathetic and socially sensitive, learners. As Dewey (1915 [2011]) wrote, '[s]till more important is the fact that the human being acquires a habit of learning (...) [as h]e learns to learn' (p.28). Learning for the sake of learning and enjoying learning was discovered to be indicative at the primary school level, as it was believed to represent a vital part of the foundation on which continuous lifelong learning was built. Guided media learning could therefore seek for improvements in the primary school child's reflection and learning knowledge and skills, as learning to learn about media might be a more crucial task for the first years of compulsory education than learning about media; while bearing in mind that guided media learning is preoccupied with the first years of primary education and that, although being critical about its theory and practice, ultimately positions itself as a ground/base of critical and creative media literacy education.

In order for the child to be able to explore and curate his or her 'life story' (Habermas and Bluck 2000, p.748) or 'narrative self' (Gallagher 2000, p.14), the learner needs a personal database of reflective accounts, a reflective journal or diary (Moon 1999 [2005]). The role of such reflective accounts is 'to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence – in such a way that the effect of the text is at once a reflexive re-living and a reflective appropriation of something meaningful: a notion by which a reader is powerfully animated into his or her experience' (van Manen 1990, p.36). At this point media production integrates with reflection while blending into one united and continuous media learning, as 'writing', 'reading' and 'text' must bear in mind that media is plural and so is the whole child's engagement with them. The child's holistic being/becoming is capable of acting or playing out, gesticulating, drawing, cutting, gluing, talking and discussing, singing, playing a musical instrument, dancing, and most probably holding and operating (either independently or with help) voice recorders, photo and video cameras, or more recently smartphones, touchpads and other devices – all that could theoretically be available to the child when transforming lived experience into a textual expression that is media and technology/tools inclusive.

The child's reflective accounts ought to be stored and preserved in the form of a reflective journal that could be re-used and curated for the purpose of ongoing, unfinalised, media learning, with the learner 'indefinitely' creating, narrating, and acting as an audience to, his or her own media learning story to which the participating children were greatly attuned when discussing their past, current and future media engagements. As Dilthey (1862 [1996]) suggested, '[e]ven before the spirit of inquiry awakens in the child, which leads it to asks for the

why and then the why of the why behind every event, another kind of curiosity takes shape, which can be satisfied only by the telling of stories' (p.261). Moreover, when children read, tell and create stories, they draw upon their previous media experiences (Parry 2013), making engagement with stories and storytelling necessarily a hermeneutic experience.

An opportunity therefore lies here in Potter's (2012, 2014) curatorship and in acknowledgement of Deuze's (2011) media life, as the child participant did not consume/produce media but rather were *being with media in the world* (Jackson and Mazzei 2012; Kuby and Vaughn 2015), as a form of media *Dasein* (Heidegger 1927 [1990]). The child's own documented media learning historicity represents a truly child-centred learning (re)source, as the child (re)composes it from various pieces – previous multimodal reflective accounts – in a way that conveys meaning in a highly personalised way (Bezemer and Kress 2008) and in the context of his or her individual and collective identity as a learner. Learning to reflect therefore goes hand in hand with learning to produce/create in the guided media learning of a primary school child.

The question 'should media production be an essential feature of media literacy education?' was identified by Hobbs (1998, pp.20, 25) as one of *The Seven Great Debates in the Media Literacy Movement* as was titled her frequently cited article. Hobbs (1998, citing Fraser 1992; Lambert 1997) suggested that '[e]ducators have recognized [sic] that efforts to include media production in the classroom usually fall into one of two categories: expressive and vocational' (p.20). This dualistic categorisation of either-or does not correspond with the holism suggested and applied here, as the element of reflection and language acquisition necessarily makes the child's media production expressive, whilst the diverse production styles, forms and outcomes developed individually and in teams, as well as the element of technical language, lifelong learning and ability to plan and change the self, make the production activities partly vocational. Most importantly though, this holistic approach to media production, and to any creative and social activities relevant to it, is consistent with, and thus is fully incorporated in, the primary school teacher's pedagogy already in place.

Another question Hobbs (1998, p.25) listed was if 'media literacy [should] be taught as a specialist subject or integrated within the context of existing subjects'. She stated that '[v]irtually every educator recognizes [sic] the value of infusing media literacy concepts across the curriculum' (*ibid.*), and so did the participating teachers as well as the Czech, and the majority of EU Member States', educational framework (Hartai 2014). Hobbs (*ibid.*) clarified that the value refers to 'the importance of using texts as objects of inquiry' and to 'analysis and production activities as multi-dimensional opportunities to examine rich connections across disciplines and subject areas' (citing Bevort and Thierry 1997; Erstad 1997; Davison 1992; Kress 1992), as the participating teachers also argued. She then summarised that such 'approach carries with it the potential for all students in a school to gain exposure to media analysis and production activities even while it risks trivializing [sic] analysis and production activities as a result of under-qualified teachers engaging in the work' (*ibid.*). In contrast, guided media learning in the first years of primary education as being shaped here, firstly, is not preoccupied with media analysis and nor is it with media production as industry-focused professional skills and knowledge, and secondly, it believes that primary school teachers do not need media-centric preparation/qualification due to its experience- and child- centric nature, as is further discussed in the next section. Media are not seen here as a subject to be taught but rather a holistic and lived media experience to be hermeneutically reflected upon, and thus media reflection/production does not only cross the entire primary school curriculum while blending with spiral education, but also contributes to the

primary school teacher's holistic and situated whole learner-centred educational and nurturing efforts.

Reflection as production of one's evolving story of the self and the self's experience therefore sits well within the holistic and hermeneutic phenomenological approach to media learning grounded in, and proposed by, this research. One additional concept is however brought from Husserlian phenomenology – phenomenological reduction or bracketing – described in the previous chapter as bracketing out the researcher's presupposition and judgment (see p.80). However, Husserl (1939 [1997]) offered an extended understanding of phenomenological reduction as a way of gaining access to 'the universe of functioning subjectivity' (p.44). In this sense, bracketing is compatible with hermeneutics that allow temporary focus on a part of the whole by means of entering reflection, and so a medium or a certain aspect of the child's lived and holistic media experience can 'be addressed without denying intersubjective complexities, or recourse to reification' (Woodfall and Zezulkova 2016 [forthcoming]).

In pedagogic practice then, the child could be guided to reflection through one element of the holistic and hermeneutic experience. These could for example be: one medium (e.g. film as Parry (2013) did), one of Buckingham and Sefton-Green's (2001) key concepts of media education (media category, audience, language, representation, and technology), one of Mihailidis' (2014) 5As of media literacy (media access, awareness, assessment, appreciation, and action), or one of the child's media-related feelings (e.g. failure/pride), thoughts (e.g. fear of media effects), or practices (e.g. learning, playing, communicating, producing, consuming, having a relationship with a fictional character or public figure, or being immersed in and recreating a media narrative). Similarly Parry (2014), while drawing a particular primary school classroom case study from *the Developing Media Literacy: Towards a Model of Learning Progression* (2009-2012) project, reflected on the media education intervention saying that '[t]he primary teacher's decision to focus on scary stories across a range of media forms was a key decision which ensured that no one media form was privileged and that children could draw holistically on their experiences of popular culture texts in many forms' (p.15). Elsewhere Parry and Powell (2011) specified that thanks to this 'the children were able to share existing experiences and discuss meaning-making in relation to the multimodal composition of a wide range' (p.66). The chosen aspect thus represents only one of the possible entrances – rabbit holes – to the child's media experience and its meanings. Since there are many entry points, exits, and paths in between them, the learner should be free to pass readily and quickly from one aspect to another (as the participating children did within this research), while learning to relate 'the particular to the universal, part to whole, episode to totality' (van Manen 1990, p.36).

In return, the primary school teacher can draw upon the child's authentic media experience, instead of depending on prevailing public and policy, or even scholarly, conceptions of media and the child's media life (Zezulkova 2015 [forthcoming]). He or she can become a welcome adult figure in the child's media learning, while continuing to build the relationship that the participating teachers aimed for. Jung (1928, 1943) argued that it is the young learner's relationship with the teacher that provides continuity between school-home, historicity-immediacy, and individual-collective, whilst anticipating 'new holism' in which the educator himself or herself changes 'within the holistic educational process' (Rowland 2013, p.3). This dichotomy between teacher-centred and learner-centred education might be replaced with a teacher-learner relationship oriented understanding of, and approach to, media learning in primary school classrooms. The following and last section therefore looks at the primary school



teacher as, what is nowadays commonly termed, a *reflective practitioner* (Schön 1983 [1995]; Mayes 2001; Visser 2011; Khan 2014; Syslová and Hornáčková 2014) while leading to the concluding thoughts about holistic and hermeneutic media research with, and education of, the primary school learner.

## Reflective and Intercultural Pedagogic and Research Philosophy and Practice: Concluding Thoughts

The teacher's interpretation and understanding of the child's media experience was repeatedly claimed to be more consistent with the popular and policy cause-and-effect and reductionist approaches to media than with the teacher's own experience. As identified in this research, the teacher could potentially learn how to reason inductively with 'openness', accepting 'things' in *Thou's* reflective (media) accounts that are outside *I's* immediate – conscious – beliefs (Gadamer 1975 [2013], p.369); beliefs that might have been formed outside of the teacher's own experience and holistic belief system. One could argue that the teacher should bracket out his or her presupposition and judgements (Husserl 1936 [1970]), but as it was argued to be infeasible within this holistic and hermeneutic research, so it perhaps is within the whole child media learning exploring and drawing upon the child's hermeneutic (media and classroom) experience, as the teacher is also a whole being/becoming with historical consciousness (Gadamer 1975 [2013]) and experiential structure (Stein 1916 [1989]). Instead, the educator is an interpreter trying to understand the child's experience, and he or she therefore takes on a role of reflective (education/research) practitioner exploring not only the child's holistic and hermeneutic media experience but also his or her own media and pedagogic beliefs and experiences. As Jung (1926/46) reminded, '[i]t is not true that the educator is always the one who educates, and the child always the one to be educated' (in Main 2013, p.77), because as Mayes (2005a) clarified, '[t]he archetype of the teacher as spirit, then, is also the teacher as an *evolving* spirit; (...) not only a guide to his or her students but also a fellow-traveller, not only a liberator but also as the liberated' (p.714, *emphasis in original*).

The discussion at this point therefore returns to the teacher's shadows while comparing him or her to the *wounded healer* archetype (Jung 1933 [1951]). Through this archetype Jung explained that although one's shadows might be painful or/and shameful, they represent a deep and meaningful source of motivation and inspiration for healing others (Dunne 2012). Jung's original example of the wounded healer was Chiron, the centaur of Greek mythology who taught, among many other things, healing arts to Asclepius and hunting arts to Achilles (*Figure 12*). Not only *Heracles' arrow left the immortal god Chiron* eternally wounded – which explains his devotion to medicine – Chiron was also eternally wounded by being abandoned by his parents, although later adopted by Apollo – which clarifies his care for orphans. Chiron was a holistic teacher raising all-round heroes, as Rowland (2013) explained, '[h]ealing consists of an embodied education, one that mends the psyche, body, culture and vision of their universe back together' (p.6). Jung then wrote in his letter to a colleague Theodor Bovet; 'You may shake your head incredulously when I tell you that I would hardly have been able to form the concept of the shadow had not its existence become one of my greatest experiences, not just with regard to other people but with regard to myself. (...) My shadow is indeed so huge that I could not possibly overlook it in the plan of my life; in fact I had to see it as an essential part of my personality' (*ibid.*, p.106). Dewey and Bentley (1949, p.80) similarly argued for exploring one's limitations, constructed by what Vygotsky (1925 [1971]) called cultural-historical circumstances,

and accepting them ‘not as being a hindrance, but instead as a situation from which great gain may be secured’ – as it can be secured from *negative* experiences in hermeneutic reflection.

**Figure 12** Left: *Apollo entrusts his son Asclepius to Chiron* by Christopher Unterberger (18th century, oil on canvas); Right: *Education of Achilles* by Jean-Baptiste Regnault (ca. 1782, oil on canvas)



Deriving from Jung’s thought and a media education research project conducted in Maltese catholic single-gender primary and middle schools, Zezulkova (2013) argued that media educators as wounded healers should explore, reflect on, and draw upon their own childhood media memories when facilitating their students’ media learning. Those experiences of the teacher that would be identified through reflection as personally meaningful and pedagogically relevant to the teacher and to his or her practice could then be understood as the teacher’s shadows. These can be *negative* (as wounds) – presenting ‘us with a shortcoming to be overcome’ – but also *positive* – showing ‘us a meaningful part of ourselves we should recognize [sic] and live out’ (Dunne 2012, p.106) – yet all belonging to the teacher’s holistic and hermeneutic experience. Dirkx (1998) drew upon Boyd (1991), who was arguably the first to apply Jung’s idea of individuation to transformative education, by saying that the teachers as adult learners could be ‘making the unconscious conscious, becoming aware of aspects of themselves of which they are not conscious (...) [and] integrating these dimensions more holistically and consciously within (...) daily experiences of life’ and the classroom (p.3).

A similar argument might be useful here, as the participating teachers felt limited and burdened with the dissimilarity between their and the child’s media experiences, being attentive to differences rather than possible commonalities. To explore similarities between their and the learners’ past and present media experiences – which would also make for interesting and valuable research – the teacher could engage in hermeneutic reflection that has according to Henriksson (2012) ‘the potential to create a sense of wonder, openness, change, and readiness to reflect on pedagogical matters’ (p.125). Moustakas (1994) called this *heuristic research*, ‘a process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience and develops methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis’ (p.17). He continued, saying that the self of the teacher as researcher ‘is present throughout the process and, while understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge’ (*ibid.*). It therefore positions the

teacher in the role of reflective practitioner involved in a 'process of learning through the experience and from the experience in order to gain a new understanding of oneself and/or one's practice' (Pířová *et al.* 2011, p.43, *author's translation*).

Ricoeur (1969 [2011]) additionally suggested that through hermeneutic reflection one interprets 'in order to make explicit, to extend, and so to keep alive the tradition itself, inside which one always remains' (p.27). Through the teacher's self-reflection and interpretation of his or her own and the child's experiences, the primary school teacher might find contextually suitable ways of turning implicit media into explicit while extending and keeping alive the educational tradition within which he or she develops and practises. In such a way, the teacher's reflection and interpretation can lead to a truly 'reflexive and negotiated pedagogy' which recognises the complexity of the child's media engagement (McDougall 2014, p.3), and by extension, of media learning, while replenishing heritage (such as literacy and theatre educational traditions). As Ricoeur continued his thought, '[e]very tradition lives by grace of interpretation, and it is at this price that it continues, that is, remains living' (*ibid.*). Here the teacher may also philosophise (Haynes and Murriss 2011). This does not imply that he or she is engaging in 'classical rationality [as] the high point of both academic and ethical development' (Mayes 2002, p.705), as often noxiously interpreted (Foucault 1980), but rather that the teacher is exploring 'the possibility of physical, emotional, naturalistic, artistic and spiritual ways of knowing and being that are equally vital elements of the *whole* teacher and student' (Gardner 1983, cited by Mayes 2002, p.705, *emphasis in original*). Mayes (2002, p.714) therefore suggested that the teacher should engage in *archetypal reflectivity* - 'a powerful tool for teacher renewal' - helping the teacher to see himself or herself as an archetypal evolving spirit with shadows.

'[A]rchetypes can provide psychospiritually useful ways of seeing and being teachers. When the archetypes of the teacher as spirit are integrated and active in a teacher, his or her classroom is more likely to be a numinous space where vital forms of communication and presence occur. In such an environment, the teacher may also feel that his or her work is more exciting and satisfying. This is an important consideration in a time when teacher burnout has become a serious problem.'

Burnout was not directly mentioned by the participating teachers, but they did point towards *exhaustion*, and therefore partial attention is paid to this issue. The literature review accompanying the longitudinal study of teacher burnout conducted by Dworkin and Tobe (2014) identified Maslach's three dimensions of burnout inspired by Freudenberger (1974) as being validated over time by a number of research studies (e.g. Friedman 2003). The first listed, *emotional exhaustion*, seemed to be an apparent danger among the participating teachers who were emotionally involved in their job, making them feel, as one said, every emotion possible, which was according to the teachers the nicest as well as the hardest part of their profession. Maslach and Jackson (1981) further talked about cynicism linking this first domain with the second termed *depersonalisation*, meaning 'negative, cynical attitudes and feelings about one's [students]' (p.99), with the student being 'at fault' (Dworkin and Tobe 2014, p.126). The adult participants argued that those educating the older than primary school aged children were more likely to feel depersonalised, although the third aspect of burnout, that could be seen as a preceding condition to depersonalised, seemed to be relevant to both; this being *personal failure* or 'tendency to evaluate oneself negatively, particularly with regard to one's work with (...)

[students and to] feel unhappy about themselves and dissatisfied with their accomplishment on the job' (Maslach and Jackson 1981, p.99).

Dworkin and Tobe (2014) identified the standards based school accountability among the main causes of job stress and subsequent burnout among US schoolteachers, a finding that this research could identify with, as the participating US educators showed obvious distress about balancing teaching to the test with their own pedagogic philosophy and classroom reality. This research would thus additionally argue that the teacher's archetypal close and personal relationship with the child, and the enormous responsibility they said they felt for the child's immediate and future life and learning, could be a pedagogic belief and practice that plays a (probably substantial) role in their vulnerability to burnout. As the teachers expressed, they were almost constantly in their job, even when at home. Although the matter certainly needs further research, the argument grounded in this research is that the much promoted media-centric critical and creative media literacy, which the participating teachers had to or believed they had to be nurturing, may also be guilty of (unnecessarily) adding to the primary school teacher's stress and possibly also to cynicism, although directed to media and media (literacy) education rather than to learners. Although seeing value in facilitating the primary school child's media learning, they remained sceptical about its sustainability and their own capability due to, as they argued, the fast developing and constantly emerging media and technological innovations to which the child was believed to always adapt faster than the teacher. The need identified by this research therefore is for development of a more transferable and sustainable approach to primary school *teacher training* than for example was the media-centric *Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers* developed by UNESCO in 2008 (see *Table 5*).

**Table 5** MIL curriculum for teachers – content and module topics (UNESCO, 2008, p.4)

<b>Core Modules</b>	<b>Non-Core Modules/Units</b>
Module 1 Introduction: Citizenship - Freedom of Expression and information, Democratic Discourse and Life-long Learning	Module 9 Audience
Module 2 Understanding the News and Citizenship	Module 10 Media and the Global Village
Module 3 Representation in Media and Information	Module 3 Unit 5 Digital Editing and Computer Retouching
Module 4 Languages in Media and Information	Discourse on strategies to adapt or adopt the Curriculum
Module 5 Advertising	Glossary of Terms
Module 6 New and Traditional Media	
Module 7 Information and Library Skills	
Module 8 Making the link: Media and Information Literacy, Communication, Pedagogy and Learning how to Learn: (Capstone Module)	

The argument is that the training/support should not be media- but teacher- centric, focusing on the teacher's personal development and wellbeing by guiding the educator through reflection on his or her own media experiences at first, and then in the context of the teacher's pedagogic beliefs, practices, and classroom experiences. Although initially separated, the teacher's media and pedagogic experiences should ultimately become seen and approached by the educator as

one continuous holistic and hermeneutic experience (or shadow) upon which his or her educational philosophy and practice can fruitfully and sustainably draw. The teacher support in guided media learning consequently is partly a therapy [1] offering support, space and time for the teacher to explore and understand his or her own as well as the child's media experience and media learning and to feel motivated to and capable of guiding the student's media learning, and [2] taking away, or at least decreasing, the pressure of protecting or empowering the young learner through teaching objective truths about the media industry and media effects. It also is partly a philosophy as the teacher shall be encouraged to question his or her generalised concepts connected to media life.

It was pointed out in the first chapter that media as a word does not have a single generalised concept, which might in certain contexts, such as media research or education, represent a knowledge problem (Corner 1995). The *problem* can however be approached as an *opportunity* to escape 'the reductive leap to judgement [that] often prevents people from seeing and benefiting (...) and understanding the larger context of [media] presence' in the child's life (Anderson 2014, p.24). This research understood the role of media in the child's life to be in one way or another involved in *all* dimensions of his or her being and becoming, or as van Manen (1990) summarised, '[t]he nature and number of possible human experiences are as varied and infinitive as human life itself' (p.40). In the participating children's collective and individual lives media were, for example: a commercial as well as cultural industry; a nearly organic communication channel; a sociocultural actor that assisted learning and cultivation in the whole child's everyday life; a meme as well as a co-creator of memes and mental frameworks; a tool, a symbol of, and a catalyst for personal, sociocultural, political, economic, educational, environmental, power, and almost any other change and development; an environment formed by the child, inhabited by the child, and forming the child; a friend and a potential enemy; an opportunity and a threat; and countless more. The 'before the media' primary education and research that does not have a narrow and predefined conception of media (as well as child and childhood) arguably has a great potential to comprehend and benefit from the hermeneutic media experience of the living and developing whole child.

Ultimately then, guided media learning (and the related teacher support), as a grounded philosophy that represents an original contribution to knowledge, becomes sustainable over time as well as adaptable across varying contexts. This being because the purpose and form of guided media learning is arguably archetypal enough to be transferable, whilst its content and advices are flexibly and fluently subjected to the primary school teacher's and learner's life, development and learning and therefore naturally contextualised, situated and people-centred. Similarly grounded philosophy as a flexible and responsive research methodology contributes to knowledge by offering a philosophical framework suitable for intercultural and interdisciplinary classroom research centred on learners and teachers from more than one school and grade that, although being attentive to participants' individual and collective sociocultural-historical contexts, is capable of arriving at transferable conceptual understanding. The argument grounded in the research thus defies procedural knowledge of, and reductionist and cause-and-effect approaches to, research as well as to education, and instead leans towards conceptual knowledge exploring, interpreting and making sense of media learning in general, and in the context of the whole child's hermeneutic experience in particular. Plurality, historicity and potentiality of every dialogic and unfinalisable media and learning experience and belief must be honoured within such media research and education, because the infinite reality of research and learning is only limited by finite adult understanding.

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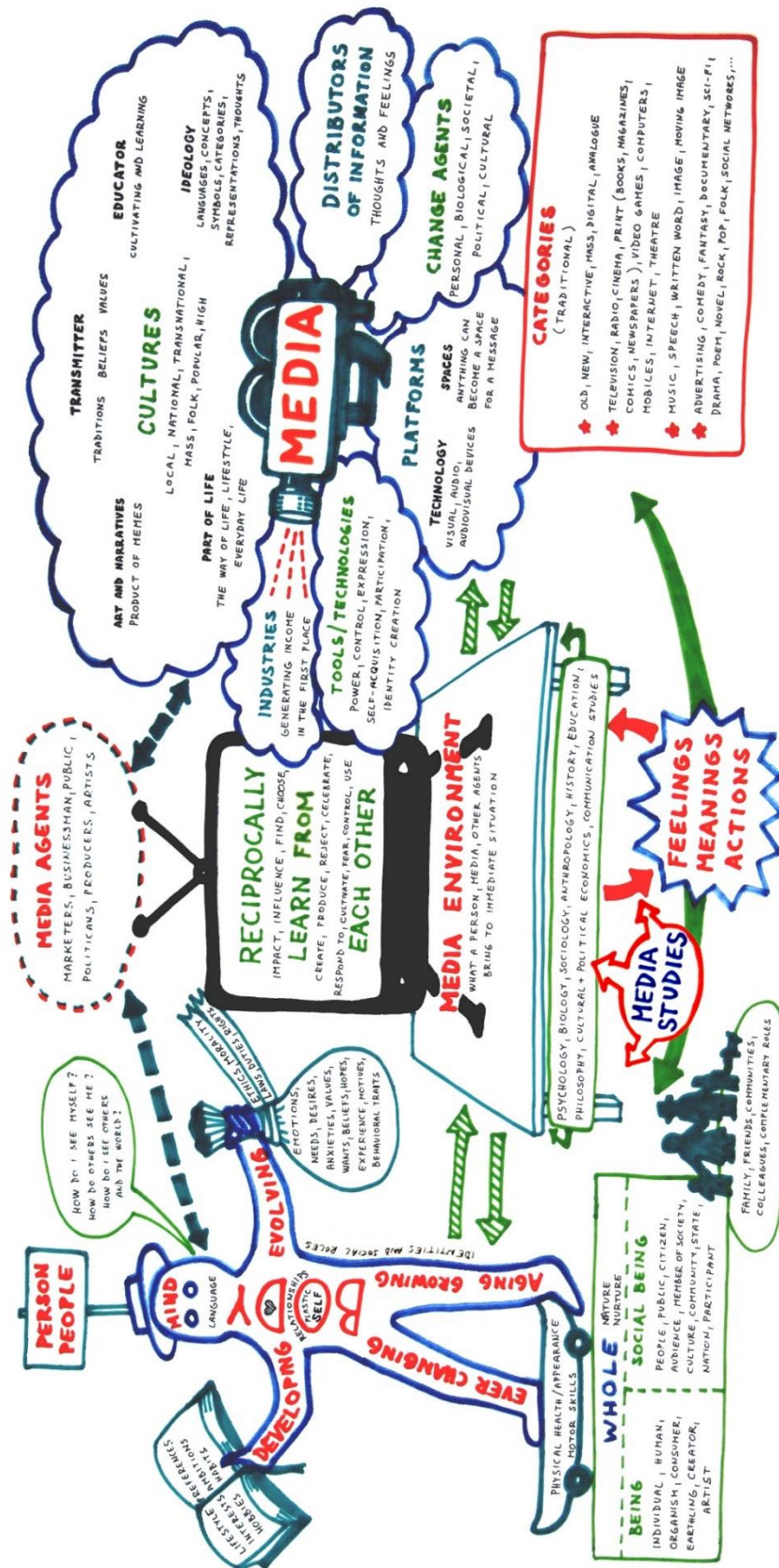
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# Appendices

## APPENDIX 1 Multifaceted relationship between media and person/people (close-up)





## APPENDIX 2 Participating schools

Village School: January 2012, March – April 2012	
Description	Location
<p>Established in 1779, after Maria Theresa's School Reform from 1774–1775. The school has a capacity of 350 pupils. There is a number of afterschool clubs and extra-curricular activities. Three out of forty were connected to ICT and one to media (Club of Young Journalists). Teachers were mainly female (only three men including the principal and his assistant), their age is mostly above 50-60 years (33%), then 30-40 (25%), or 45-50 (19%). The school received two EU grants between the years 2009 and 2012 - <i>Innovation and Individualisation of Education</i>, and <i>School Digitalisation</i>. Both led to the buying of new technologies (computers, interactive board, camera kits, etc.).</p>	<p>Village of 2200 inhabitants, 32km<sup>2</sup>, established in the first half of the 17th century. The village is culturally and naturally rich as it is situated in the Wallachian part of Beskid Mountains – a protected area. Religious (mainly Roman Catholics). Maintains the centuries old traditions and rituals.</p>
City School: May – June 2012	
Description	Location
<p>Established in 1999/2000 (it wasn't common to establish new school after the Velvet Revolution as the trend had been closing the schools down). The school has currently around 340 pupils. There were only eight afterschool clubs, one of them connected to media – Club of Journalists. However, the majority of teachers organised some extra-curricular activities from time to time. The teachers were mostly women (20), there were seven men including the principal. 17 teachers were under 35 years old, 10 teachers were between 36 and 50 years of age. The teachers had undertaken around 40 professional courses in the academic year 2010/2011, 13 of them were related to ICT, the plan was to even increase the number of ICT courses for the staff in the following academic year. The school received one EU grant (2009-2012) – Increasing knowledge and use of IT – the school bought apple computers, mac books, iPads, organised staff courses delivered by Apple lectures.</p>	<p>Second largest city in the Czech Republic, most important city in Moravia, with a population of 380,000 inhabitants and an area of 230km<sup>2</sup>. The city basin has been inhabited since the prehistoric era (Statutory city of Brno, 2011). Imperial architecture and rich culture, increasing international business and with it connected international population and influence.</p>
Town School: November 2012	
Description	Location
<p>Pre-kindergarten (special needs) through grade five school. Around 500 students, 30 classrooms, music room, art room, nurse's office, parent room, library, etc. Educators were allowed to bring distinctive teaching approaches to the school. School Improvement team (new staff), stress on literacy, math and community involvement. Closing the gap between children's learning was stated to be a priority. Good cooperation with local community – reading volunteers, parent volunteers, elderly volunteers, peer volunteers. The school received Reading Excellence Grant from the Rhode Island Department of Education, and for a [Media] Production initiative including Movie Making Club and iPads for lower elementary school and children with special needs.</p>	<p>Town of 10,000 inhabitants, 16km<sup>2</sup> of land and 6km<sup>2</sup> of water (Rhode Island is know as 'Ocean State'). 97% white, less than 1% are Afro-Americans, native Americans and Hispanic Asians. 50% of children has both parents, 13% live without father. About 5% of families and 7% of the population were below the poverty line, including 8% of those under 18. First explored by Europeans in 1621, permanent English settlement since 1630s. Historically important as a wailing port, shipbuilding and vessels industry town.</p>

Metropolitan School: December 2012	
Description	Location
<p>Opened in 1963. Kindergarten to grade five (K-5), each grade had 4 to 5 classrooms, 853 students, 35 classrooms, special classrooms (5 for cerebral palsy, 2 for brain injured, 1 for blind students). School is views as a collaboration between faculty, parents and students. Active School Leadership team, Parent-teacher association, and direct parent involvement. Moto 'Work Hard. Be Kind.'</p>	<p>The most populated city in the USA; approx. 8 million. Area of 1,200km<sup>2</sup> of which one third is water. The city has a significant impact upon commerce, finance, media, art, fashion, research, technology, education and entertainment in the USA and worldwide. 800 languages are spoken, making it the linguistically most diverse city in the world. Funded in 1624 as a trading port. The school was situated on Manhattan: 1,5 million inhabitants, 48% white, 25% Hispanic, 12% African-American. 59% of population over the age of 25 have a bachelor degree or high, one of the highest income places, highest average deferral income tax liability per return in country, since 2000 the number of children under age five living in Manhattan grew by more than 32%.</p>

## APPENDIX 3 Research timeline and locations

Timeline	Research development	Country of stay	Visiting countries
Spring 2011	Literature review and initial review	UK	
Summer and Autumn 2011	First conferences, research networking, developing research methodology	UK	Austria, Germany, Belgium
Winter 2011/2012	Field research preparation stage 1 - funding, agreements, ethical checks, initial field research and clarifying research methods	UK	Lebanon, Belgium
Spring 2012	Field research in the Czech Republic	Czech Republic	Slovakia
	February to June - Visiting Scholar at Tomas Bata University in Zlin		
	March/April - 1st primary school		
	May/June - 2nd primary school		
Summer 2012	Transfer document, preparation of the field research in the USA stage 2	Spain	Gibraltar
Autumn and winter 2012	Field research in the USA	USA	
	September to October - Visiting Scholar at Emerson College in Boston		
	November - Visiting Scholar at the Media Education Lab in Kingston		
	November - 3rd primary school in RI		
	December - 4th primary school in NYC		
Spring 2013	Transcribing, analysing, presenting at conferences	UK and Germany	Switzerland, Belgium
	May - Invited to conduct media education research in Maltese Catholic schools and present the findings to over fifty school teachers and head teachers	Malta	
Summer 2013	Visiting Scholar at the University of Antioquia in Medellin	Colombia	Spain
Autumn to Spring 2013	Presenting the developed grounded philosophy at the conferences, receiving feedback	UK and Germany	Finland, Estonia, Czech Republic, Belgium, France
Summer 2014	Visiting Scholar at the Chinese University of Hong Kong	China	
Summer 2014 – Summer 2015	Interpreting writing – hermeneutic circle	Czech Republic	UK

## APPENDIX 4 Letter to schools

Dear Principal [name],

I turn to you with a request for cooperation on the international research dedicated to media literacy of children and media education during the first years of compulsory schooling. The research is part of my doctoral project, which is fully sponsored and supported by impartial Centre for Excellence in Media Practice (Media School, Bournemouth University, UK). The study compares a situation in the United States of America (concretely Massachusetts, Rhode Island, NY), the United Kingdom (particularly England) and the Czech Republic. The project will contribute to the international development and implementation of suitable media education for primary and elementary school stage 1 children around the world. The findings will be presented to the European Union and UNESCO, as well as at several international conferences and the institutions that have been involved, including your school. I am asking you for a permission to spend four weeks in your school, doing observations during lessons, interviews with teachers and children, focus groups with children and content analysis of school material.

Children's rights are highly important to this research, which is why the methods and design for this study have been carefully selected drawing on the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), putting stress on both child participation and protection. The observations will not disturb the educational processes nor participants' private and professional lives. The researcher will fully follow the advices given by the class teachers and the schedule of the school day with its internal rules. Every research session (interviews and focus groups) will involve regular breaks and an opportunity for the participants to terminate at any time. The researcher will pay close attention to language and selection of the words, as well as behaviour appropriate while dealing with young children in general, and in the context of their cultural and social background in particular. All data will be anonymous, safely stored and only used in relation to the stated research project. If the material could spread an unfavourable light upon the research sample members, usage of it will be carefully discussed and decided with the concerned respondents. For the detailed research schedule and time requirements please see the table on the following page.

I would greatly appreciate if you were so kind and gave me a non-binding agreement to include your school in this project. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me by writing to [marketa@cemp.ac.uk](mailto:marketa@cemp.ac.uk), or call [8577563719](tel:8577563719). You can also contact my advisors, Professor Renee Hobbs ([hobbs@uri.edu](mailto:hobbs@uri.edu)), Professor Jenny Moon ([jenny@cemp.ac.uk](mailto:jenny@cemp.ac.uk)) and Associate Professor Richard Berger ([richard@cemp.ac.uk](mailto:richard@cemp.ac.uk)).

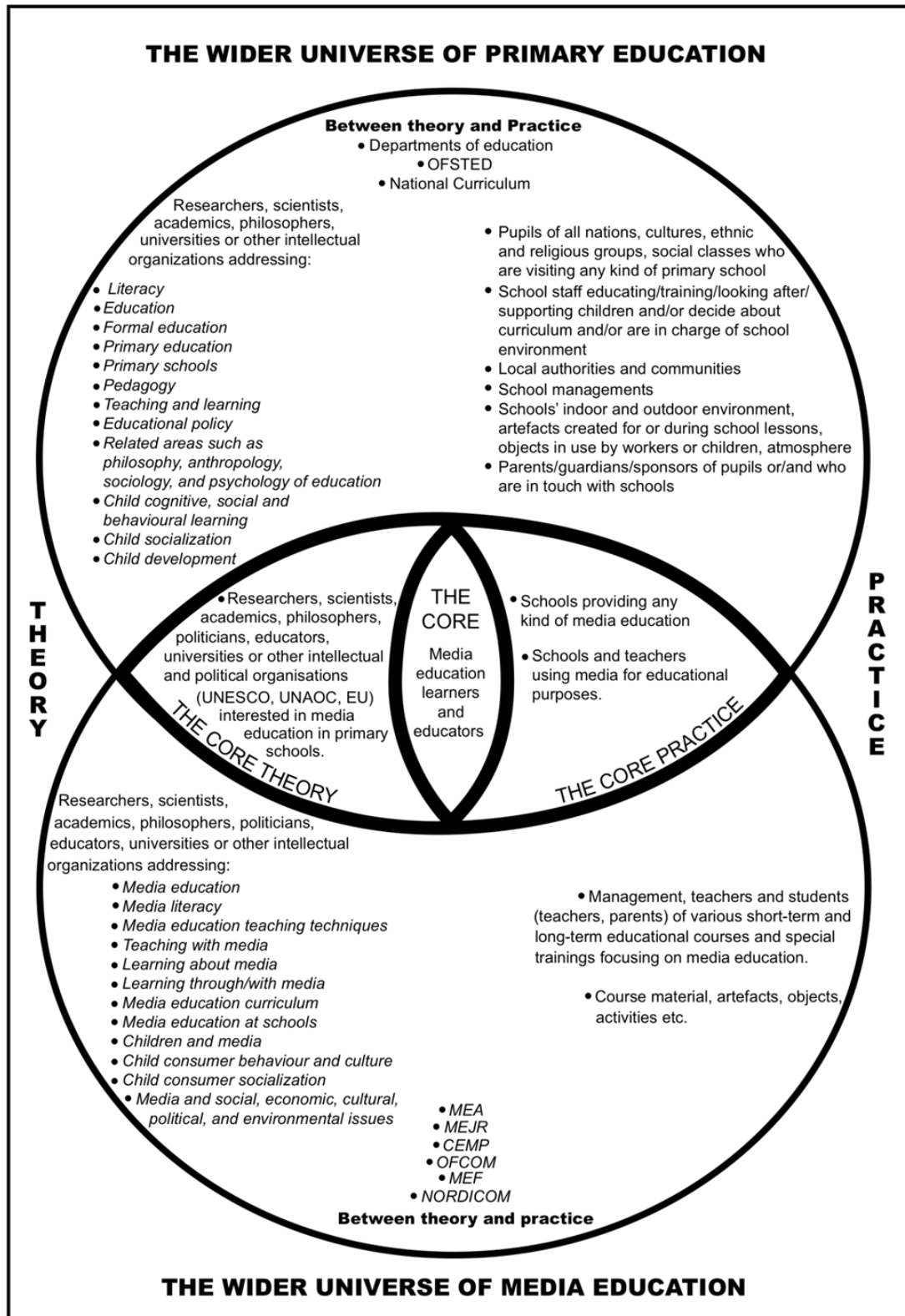
With kind regards,

Mgr. Markéta Zezulková, MA

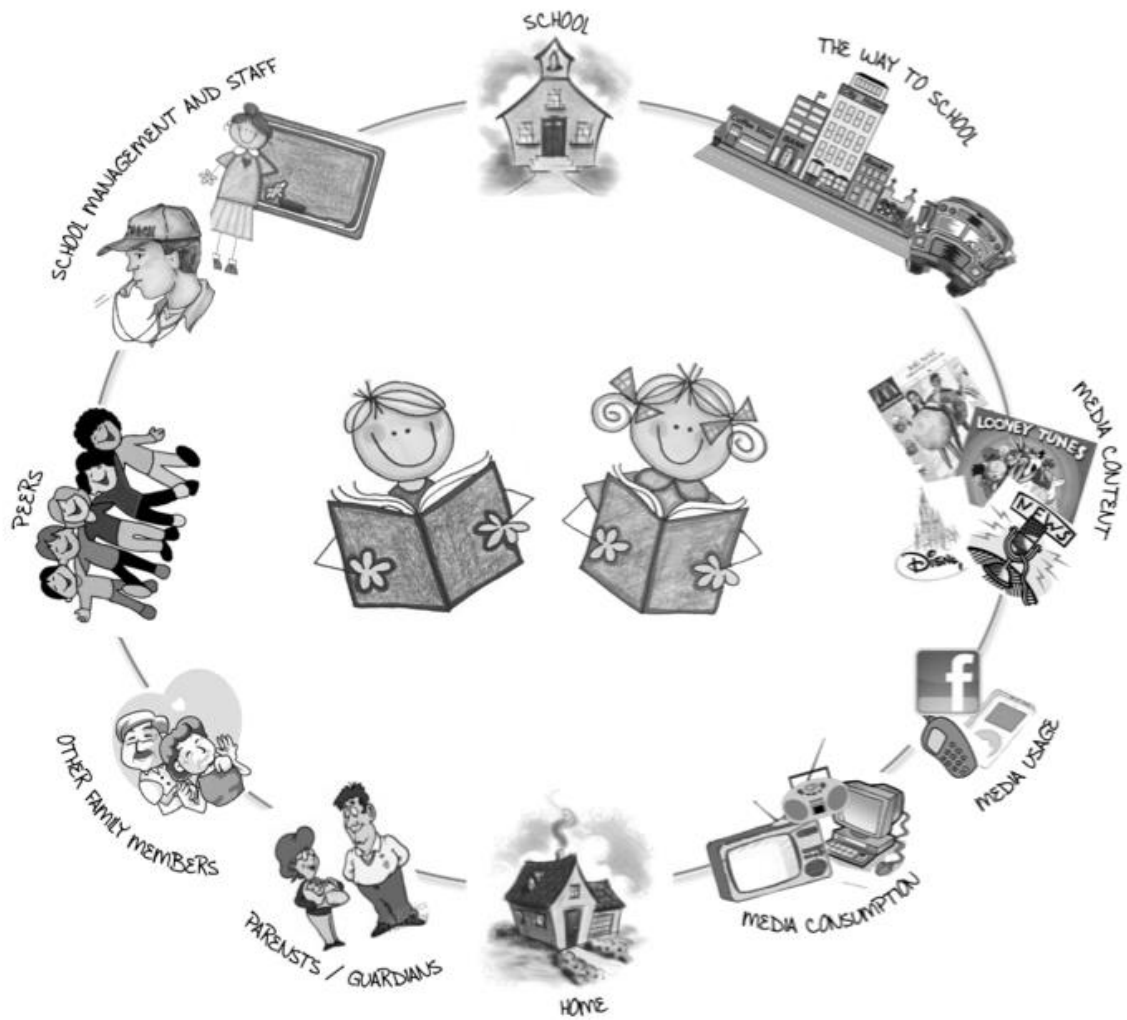
Doctoral Researcher | [marketa@cemp.ac.uk](mailto:marketa@cemp.ac.uk) | [+18577563719](tel:+18577563719)

<http://www.cemp.ac.uk/people/marketazezulkova.php>

## THE WIDER UNIVERSE OF MEDIA EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS



Wider universe of primary school children



## APPENDIX 6 Adult participants

	Pseudonym	Sample school	Grade and avg. No of pupils observed	Teaching experience	Pseudonym inspired by
T1	<b>Marie</b>	Village School	3rd, 27 pupils	20 years: 8 art/music private and school lessons, 12 primary, 10 in this school; has experience also with 4th and 5th graders	Maria Theresa (1717-1780) - Holy Roman Empress, established compulsory education for all (including Czech) children ages six to twelve (1775)
T2	<b>Eliška</b>	Village school	2nd, 18 pupils	First year of teaching; before as part of her degree teaching in the 4th biggest city in CR	Eliška Krásnohorská (1847-1926) - Czech feminist writer and the first truly eminent advocate of Czech girl's and women's right to education
T3	<b>Milada</b>	Village school	1st, 16 pupils	27 years: small village schools and in a town, since she was small she wanted to be a teacher, 3 years in this school	Milada Paulová (1891-1970) - the first female Professor in Czech lands (1939)
T4	<b>Božena</b>	City school	3rd, 17 pupils	29 years: always wanted to be a teacher, always at the same city	Božena Komárková (1903-1997) - Czech philosopher and educator, advocate of human rights (Nazi regime hold her in solitary cell and communist regime tried to isolate her from her students and society)
T5	<b>Jarmila</b>	City school	2nd, 21 pupils	17 years: always in the same city, 12 years in this school, comes from a family of teachers	Jarmila Jančaříková (1940s-) - Czech scientist living in the USA, an expert in the crystallography of organic substances – a new method that can be used in developing anti-HIV and anti-cancer medicines
T6	<b>Madeleine</b>	City school	1st, 15 pupils	2 years: 1st year teaching the 5th grade, 2nd year teaching this first grade, before worked with kindergarteners.	Madeleine Albright (1937-) - Professor of Diplomacy, Czech-born politician, the first woman to have become the United States Secretary of State, holds a PhD from Columbia University and numerous honorary degrees
T7	<b>Charlotte</b>	Town school	3rd, 22 pupils	25 years: 'I was 22 years old and I started teaching English as a second language to Portuguese speaking children down in the basement of a school' - did that for 16 years - now 9 years at this school teaching 3rd graders.	Charlotte Garrigue Masaryk (1850-1923) - First Lady of Czechoslovakia, US-born, involved in social, humanitarian, and cultural activities

T8	<b>Beatrix</b>	Town school	2nd, 19 pupils	15 years: 'How did I begin teaching? It was a long road and it was something I never expected to do. I didn't really have an opportunity to go to college when I was younger so the opportunity came when I was 40 years old and it took me ten years to go through college which I did. I never expected to end up in a classroom, had always thought about business or psychology or another field. But those were at the age where I really would have entered the workforce, I never really would've had a long career. My adviser said you need to be a teacher, you'd be a great teacher and he recognised those skills in me. So I started taking education classes and this is where I ended up and I've been here for 15 years.'	Beatrix Potter (1866-1934) - English author and illustrator of popular children's books featuring animals, such as the first one <i>The Tale of Peter Rabbit</i> (1902) and the last one <i>The Tale of Little Pig Robinson</i> (1930).
T9	<b>Jane</b>	Town school	1st, 24 pupils	14 years: 'I knew I was going to be a teacher from the time I was very little. I grew up in a family of teachers. My Mum's a teacher, her four brothers are teachers and I started in college as Pre-Law, I thought I'm going to go a different avenue, I'm going to go to law school and become an attorney. But then, six months into college, I got sucked back into education and I changed my major for elementary. This is my 14th year in 1st grade.'	Jane Elliott (1933-) - Former US primary school teacher and anti-racism focused activist. Know for the blue-eyed and brown-eyed experiment conducted with the third graders in 1968.
T10	<b>Anne</b>	Metropolitan school	3rd, 25 pupils	6 years - 4 years 1st grade, 2 years 3rd grade: '[G]rowing up I worked as a Camp Counsellor. I worked on teen tours with kids. And when I graduated college, I was not interested in education. I had other jobs in marketing and PR, but I wasn't passionate about it. [...] I saw the documentary movie 'Mad Hot Ballroom'. It was in New York city public schools. [...] I remembered I'd always really liked working with kids. [...] So I went back to Grad School to NYU. I got my degree in education and special education. And then I started working here.'	Anne Nightingale (1940-) - English radio and television broadcaster, the first female presenter on BBC Radio 1, who still has her own shows on BBC Radio 2 nowadays.



T11	Joan	Metropolitan school,	2nd, 18 pupils	<p>6 years - 3 years 3rd grade, 1 year looped to 4th grade, 2 years 2nd grade: I originally went to school at Penn State for psychology. And I ended up working for the American Cancer Society which is a not for profit organisation and I organised breast cancer work. And I realised I really do like teaching about breast cancer prevention but not so much sitting behind a desk and making phone calls and doing that. I went back to school at NYU for childhood educations 1 through 6 and I just loved it, so I went to school fulltime at Yale. Then I got a job teaching third grade in Brooklyn, where most of the students I had were English language learners so they were speaking Chinese or Russian at home. So I really wanted to go back to school even more to specifically learn about teaching reading and writing. So I went to Columbia University and I was in a literacy specialist programme. I graduated from there and then decided that I wanted to work in Manhattan so then I came to here, on the upper west side a year ago.'</p>	<p>Joan Ganz Cooney (1929-) - American television producer, co-creator of Sesame Street, funded a Joan Ganz Cooney Center focused on research about children's learning with media.</p>
T12	Maryam	Metropolitan school	1st, 20 pupils	<p>11 years - 3 years at this school: 'I used to help out my brother. He was a struggling learner in school and he would get private notes from school saying he wasn't doing well. And then I would help him and he would by the end of the year do very well. I just felt good about it. So I always wanted to be a teacher but my father was a doctor and he didn't think it was a good enough profession. He thought it was thankless and that it didn't pay very well and he wanted me to do something that would support me better in life. But, I just couldn't find my way and I always kept coming back to teaching. And so I finally just decided to do it and he said, "Okay." And I went back to NYU graduate school and got my Masters in Education.'</p>	<p>Maryam Mirzakhani (1977-) - Iranian mathematician, in 2014 became the first woman ever to be honoured with the <i>Fields Medal</i>, the highest possible achievement in mathematics. Married to Czech theoretical computer scientist Jan Vondrak.</p>

	Pseudonym	Sample school	Position	Experience
SS1-L	<b>Eva</b> (female)	Village School	Teacher librarian	37 years; natural sciences, ICT, PTE, reading, leads SICKO
SS2-SM	<b>Pavel</b> (male)	Village school	Principal	38 years; 26 as a principal: 'I'm like Tomas Bata, I went through every school related position - teacher, assistant to a principal, principal, inspector, and at ministry, but I haven't been a minister yet. [laugh]'
SS3-SM	<b>Martin</b> (male)	Village school	Assistant principal	10 years as English and PE teacher, 3 years as AP
SS4-TA	<b>Jacob</b> (male)	City school	Teacher assistant	2 years as part of the degree - long-term internships, next year will have the full position at the school; focused on special education
SS5-SM	<b>Věra</b> (female)	City school	Assistant principal	12 years; started teaching at high school then changed to elementary education
SS6-ICT	<b>Anežka</b> (female)	Village school	ICT Teacher	16 years; always in the same school - math, ICT from 4th to 9th grade, but leads ICT afterschool club Baltik possible to attend already from the 1st grade
SS7-T	<b>Helena</b> (female)	Village school	Teacher	16 years; 12 years in this school - 1st and 2nd grades - Observed during the initial study, interviewed during the main field research
SS8-M	<b>James</b> (female)	Town school	Music teacher	Runs Morning News, uses popular music to teach his music classes.
SS9-SM	<b>Simone</b> (female)	Town school	Principal	Over 30 years: 'I graduated from the University of New Hampshire and I majored in Home Economics. I was a teacher, I taught cooking and sewing and family life in New Hampshire for seven years. I was a department head, even though I was 27, that was pretty young to be a department head. I raised my two children until my younger one went to school and then I came back to teaching and I became a Science teacher at the middle school in RI. I taught there since 1993. [...] I did a lot of leadership ever since I was little. I was a middle school Assistant Principal for nine years but I really liked the change to elementary here. I was a Co-Principal with another person who retired but I'm really enjoying it, it's really fun. We have a huge school with 650 students and we have close to 100 employees and it's pretty busy. So I really enjoy it and I love it when people like you come to visit and see how we do things.'
SS10-A	<b>Kelsey</b> (female)	Town school	Teacher	5th grade, art, supervises the afterschool media production programme
SS11-PV	<b>Hillary</b> (female)	Town school	Parent volunteer	Established and led [Town School] Productions programme and Movie Making Club at the school: 'I started filming when I was pregnant. I am classically trained artist. I have a degree in Art History, degree in Painting, and a Master's in Art Education from the Rhode Island School of Design. So I picked up the camera, and it was consumer point and shoot, and I had iMovie on my Apple and I fell in love the media. So I started make films for people including for my daughter's elementary school. '
SS12-P	<b>Megan</b> (female)	Town school	Pupil	5th grader, involved in the Town School's HCS Productions and running the Movie Making Club
SS13-A	<b>Andre</b> (female)		Art Teacher	Boston based, currently on maternity leave

## APPENDIX 7 Example of teacher interview transcript

### Interview 9 with T7

3rd Grade

Town School, USA

[Start of recorded material]

Interviewer: Could you just tell me more about your own teaching experience, how did you get to do it, how long? It's about your teaching journey.

T7: I like that! My name Paula and currently I'm teaching 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade here at Hugh Cole school in Warren. I started in 1987.

Interviewer: That was when I was born!

T7: And I was 22 years old and I started teaching English as a second language to Portuguese speaking children down in the basement of a school that has now closed! It was one of the best experiences of my life. I did that for about 16 years and then this job opened up and here I am. I've been teaching 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders for seven years and I think it is the hardest thing I've ever done. It makes you feel every emotion possible but I think it's the best thing I've ever done. There was a time when I was away for maternity leave when my son was born and I was sad because I couldn't have an impact on the community and I needed that.

Interviewer: So you feel teaching is how you can make an impact?

T7: Yeah.

Interviewer: If you make your impact on children, what do you think is important, you as a teacher with the child relationship?

T7: That they know that learning comes from them, that learning is inside them and that they are smart and capable of learning anything. When they have that discover, it's pretty amazing. That's a powerful impact.

Interviewer: So that's what you say is the main impact, what you're trying to achieve.

T7: That they have the power to learn.

Interviewer: I saw that when you teach, you have a really individual approach to every child. Could you tell me more about it, how did you make the decision, how does it work, what are the challenges?

T7: The challenge is, there's only one of me! To do an individual approach, it's exhausting at the end of the day but how it works is I look at all their work and I'm constantly making lists on who needs help with what area. From those lists, I create groups or if there isn't a group a child fits in, then they're in their own group and I'll make sure their learning is tailored, so they can see that they can learn.

Interviewer: You keep track of their progression constantly?

T7: Constantly.

Interviewer: How many children do you have in your class?

T7: 23.

Interviewer: Which is really a lot. Very often when I did research in different schools, they said having a really individual

approach is hard when you have more than 20 students. What would you say on that?

T7: I would agree! It's definitely hard. I'm exhausted at the end of the day. However, is it important? Absolutely.

Interviewer: Why?

T7: Because if you have a child who is not challenged enough or who is struggling and you just let that go, you just lost an opportunity for that child to learn and shame on you! Everybody should have the opportunity to learn and be challenged and if I don't take advantage of that, I don't think I'm doing my job. And the best way to do that is either small group work or individual.

Interviewer: If we focus on what I'm interested in my research, the media, how important is the role of media in children's lives nowadays?

T7: It's huge. I've seen a change in the children from 26 years ago to now. The change is their attention spans are very short. They were short back then, they're shorter now! So I constantly have to change what I'm doing just to keep them engaged. Engagement is one of the biggest for me, that they have to be engaged and media, as far as screen time, takes away from that I believe. Media has its pluses and its curses. The pluses, you can get information at your fingertips and that helps a person grow but the negative, that there's so much out there and how to make a choice is difficult and it can be overwhelming.

Interviewer: What would you say is the role of parents in children's media consumption and interaction with media?

T7: I believe parents have to definitely regulate what's out there, absolutely know what their child is doing. Check the child's websites that they're looking at, have discussions, make sure it's open. Have a computer or whatever they're using in an open area, not in a bedroom. Make sure you know because you're the parent, you're ultimately responsible.

Interviewer: What would you say is the role of the older siblings or cousins? Do you think they have some influence on their younger ... ?

T7: Of course they do! And that's a challenge for a parent, it falls on them to make sure if they see a cousin – I want to say a cousin because if an older sibling, the parents should already have it in check – making a wrong choice, I think that's a great opportunity for a parent to discuss that with their child. Why is it a bad choice? There has to be that openness.

Interviewer: And then their peers, their classmates, how do you think they affect the children? Their preferences and the way children learn about media.

T7: Children are the most powerful, especially your peers. That kind of pressure can work in a positive way and a negative way. Again, I think parents have to be aware of that, if choices are being made that aren't good, then the discussion why. In here, we have a school psychologist and she comes once a month into the classroom. Last Friday she was here and talking to the

children about social influence and how to turn social influence into a positive. Hopefully the children internalised some of that where they can make better choices and help themselves. I don't know if I totally answered your question!

Interviewer: Yes you did. What are the role of the teachers in all of that?

T7: To help the children understand what a good choice is. To show them what is appropriate, especially when we're doing research together. We have safe sites for the kids to go to but sometimes you can't find exactly what you're looking for and I will allow some children to go on Google with me over their shoulder, talking about appropriateness and telling them there are going to be things on here that aren't appropriate. We're not going to click on them but it's out there and they need that awareness?

Interviewer: Why do you think they need that awareness?

T7: Because if you live in a world where you don't think there's anything bad, when you discover bad, you don't know how to handle it. But if you have an awareness that there's bad and it's a road I don't want to go down, you have an awareness.

Interviewer: So how would you describe a media literate 3<sup>rd</sup> Grader?

T7: How I do it in here is when we do research projects, the children generate questions and they're finding answers to their questions. So what's appropriate is what will answer their questions.

Interviewer: So who is a media literate person then? The one who is able to find the answers? How would you describe media?

T7: Any kind of secondary source, any kind of text, either printed or gained access through some kind of electronic device is media to me.

Interviewer: So a literate person, that he can read and write, how do you describe them?

T7: Someone who can read, write and speak. A literate person is someone who can think, definitely be able to think and have the confidence to read, to write, to speak but with ability to back it up. You have to say I believe this because it has to be, you have to have evidence as to why you think that and that's what a literate person is.

Interviewer: And what about media literate, is there a difference?

T7: No, you still have to back it up as to why you chose that site you chose or why you're using that information you're using.

Interviewer: If I said media education is something that helps children to achieve this, how do you think it should be done in schools? Should media education be a separate subject? Should the teacher be encouraged and trained to include it in their subjects? What do you think?

T7: I think it should be included in their subjects. I don't think it should be separate because it's so woven into everything we do. I don't think they should separate that, they should incorporate it.



Interviewer: In order to incorporate it, what would be the steps? For example, if someone told you, "You should incorporate it more," what would you say, "Yes, but I need ..."?

T7: I need more exposure and more training into more appropriate sites and I need obviously access.

Interviewer: So some materials you would use in your classes. Do you think something like that should be afterwards tested or evaluated, how children are becoming more skilful in media? Do you see it even possible to test that?

T7: When you asked the question, that's what I was thinking, of course it should be tested but how! I don't know how you would test it but it's a very important topic because their safety and the way they think is involved here.

Interviewer: Do you think in order to make it an equal part of education, we need to find a way to evaluate the progression?

T7: I guess you have to have a baseline. Maybe if there was a pre-questionnaire and then throughout a 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade experience, an end of the year with the same questions. Was there any growth?

Interviewer: Is there anything else you'd like to add or ask me?

T7: I'm all done.

[End of recorded material]

## APPENDIX 8 Consent form (English version)



Dear parents,

I am asking you for a permission to include your child/children in the research that will take place at his/her/their School in October 2012. It is an international project dedicated to media literacy of children and media education during the first years of compulsory schooling. The research is part of my doctoral project, which is fully sponsored and supported by impartial Centre for Excellence in Media Practice (Media School, Bournemouth University, UK). The study compares a situation in the United States of America (concretely Massachusetts and Rhode Island), the United Kingdom (particularly England) and the Czech Republic. The project will contribute to the international development and implementation of suitable media education for primary and elementary school stage 1 children around the world. The findings will be presented to the European Union and UNESCO, as well as at several international conferences and the institutions that have been involved, including the School.

Children's rights are highly important to this research, which is why the methods and design for this study have been carefully selected drawing on the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), putting stress on both child participation and protection. The research will not disturb the educational processes nor participants' lives. The researcher will fully follow the advices given by the class teachers and the schedule of the school day with its internal rules. Every research session (individual and group interviews) will involve regular breaks and an opportunity for the participants to terminate at any time. The researcher will pay close attention to language and selection of the words, as well as behaviour appropriate while dealing with young children in general, and in the context of their cultural and social background in particular. All data will be anonymous, safely stored and only used in relation to the stated research project.

I would greatly appreciate if you were so kind and gave me a non-binding agreement to include your child/children in this project, by filling in the short statement that can be found on the second page, and ask you child/children to bring it back to the School. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me by writing to [marketa@cemp.ac.uk](mailto:marketa@cemp.ac.uk), or call 8577563719. You can also contact my advisory team, Professor Jenny Moon ([jenny@cemp.ac.uk](mailto:jenny@cemp.ac.uk)) and Associate Professor Richard Berger ([richard@cemp.ac.uk](mailto:richard@cemp.ac.uk)).

With kind regards,



Mgr. Markéta Zezulková, MA

Doctoral Researcher | [marketa@cemp.ac.uk](mailto:marketa@cemp.ac.uk) | +18577563719  
<http://www.cemp.ac.uk/people/marketazezulkova.php>

I (parent's name)  giving a non-binding agreement to Marketa  
Zezulkova, to include my child (child's name)  in the  
following activities:

Individual interview

Group interview

Photographing

Voice recording

Signature:

Date and place:

APPENDIX 9 Child participants

	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Grade	GI	Notes	II time
<b>Village School - Czech Republic</b>							
P1	Petr	Male	9	3rd			00:12:12
P2	Adámek	Male	9	3rd	1		00:07:15
P3	Kristian	Male (twin of P9)	9	3rd	00:23:47		00:09:08
P4	Dušan	Male	9	3rd		Only GI	
P5	Barča	Female	9	3rd			00:14:09
P6	Nikola	Female	9	3rd	2		00:11:28
P7	Peťka	Female	9	3rd	00:44:03		00:15:02
P8	Adéla	Female	9	3rd			00:19:45
P9	Kikina	Female (twin of P3)	9	3rd			00:13:48
P10	Magda	Female	9	3rd	3		00:19:17
P11	Niki	Female	9	3rd	00:45:19		00:18:25
P12	Jindra	Male	9	3rd			00:23:55
P13	Johan	Male	9	3rd			00:10:24
P14	Adélka	Female	8	2nd		Coy during II	00:04:47
P15	Hori	Male	8	2nd			00:14:38
P16	Martina	Female	8	2nd	4		00:11:03
P17	Mirka	Female	8	2nd	00:26:40		00:08:01
P18	Šárka	Female	8	2nd			00:10:59
P19	Terka	Female	7	1st			00:17:02
P19	Martin	Male	6	1st	5		00:08:15
P21	Janča	Female	7	1st	00:55:55		00:14:31
P22	Lucka	Female	7	1st			00:07:54
P23	Kačka	Female	6	1st	6		00:06:11
P24	Simča	Female	7	1st	00:49:01		00:08:13
<b>City School - Czech Republic</b>							
P25	Honza	Male	10	3rd			00:15:00
P26	Adam	Male	9	3rd	7		00:16:41
P27	David	Male	9	3rd	00:41:22		00:17:23
P28	Evička	Female	9	3rd			00:13:05
P29	Martin	Male	9	3rd			00:11:55
P30	Jan	Male	9	3rd	8		00:12:09
P31	Samuel	Male	10	3rd	00:44:37		00:14:27
P32	Hanča	Female	7	2nd		GI not finished	00:13:09
P33	Leonka	Female	8	2nd		GI not finished	00:13:28
P34	Pavlík	Male	8	2nd	9	GI not finished	00:15:13
P35	Míša	Male	9	2nd	00:29:36	GI not finished	00:15:45
P36	Michal	Male	8	2nd		GI not finished	00:17:28
P37	Anička	Female	7	1st		Only II	00:14:05

P38	Valentýnka	Female	6	1st		Only II	00:20:38
P39	Vojta	Male	7	1st		Only II	00:13:20
P40	Adam	Male	7	1st		Only II	00:18:02
P41	Roman	Male	7	1st		Only II	00:20:31
<b>Town School - USA</b>							
P42	Daton	Male	8	3rd		Different GI	00:27:02
P43	Emilia	Female	8	3rd	<b>10</b>	Different GI	00:15:27
P44	Kinsley	Female	8	3rd	00:41:28	Different GI	00:25:53
P45	Mason	Male	8	3rd		Different GI	00:09:33
P46	Abby	Female	7	2nd			00:15:47
P47	Even	Male	7	2nd	<b>11</b>		00:19:35
P48	Gavin	Male	7	2nd	00:52:03		00:13:20
P49	Leila	Female	7	2nd			00:23:35
P50	Owen	Male	6	1st		Didn't finish II	00:06:37
P51	Ellen	Female	6	1st	<b>12</b>		00:11:53
P52	James	Male	7	1st	00:29:19		00:12:40
P53	Lilly	Female	7	1st			00:17:44
<b>Metropolitan School - USA</b>							
P54	Fin	Male	9	3rd		Only GI	
P55	Adam	Male	8	3rd	<b>13</b>	Only GI, not finished	
P56	Lillian	Male	8	3rd	00:52:31	Only GI	
P57	Lauren	Female	8	3rd		Only GI	
P58	Eilah	Male	7	2nd			00:15:31
P59	Norha	Female	7	2nd	<b>14</b>		00:19:07
P60	Impra	Female	7	2nd	00:37:13		00:21:25
P61	Lawrence	Male	7	2nd			00:10:08
P62	Amanda	Female	6	1st			00:10:24
P63	Shelley	Female	6	1st	<b>15</b>		00:15:06
P64	Sophie	Female	6	1st	00:26:45		00:11:10
P65	Theon	Male	6	1st			00:16:16

## APPENDIX 10 Individual interviews children transcript

### (II) TERKA P19: Full

Village School, 1st grade

- I: Pamatuješ si ještě, jak jsme se bavili o médiích spolu?  
P19: Pamatuju.  
I: A co bys řekla – co to jsou ty média?  
P19: Média je spoustu věcí jako třeba počítače, telefony a třeba nějaké hry na počítači.  
I: Hm super. A pamatuješ si ještě, k čemu je máme?  
P19: Počítače máme třeba na to, abychom mohli někomu psát, nebo to máme na hry, abychom se tam mohli učit, třeba matematiku a takové věci. Nebo češtinu, když tam bude.  
I: No super si to pamatuješ, šikovná. Tak já ti tady dám různé kartičky rozložíme a my se podíváme, co to tam je a pak si budeme o nich povídat, jo? Tak co to tam máme?  
P19: Počítače, kino, televize, noviny, cd, telefon.  
I: To je takové těžší, že? To je špatně poznat. Máme noviny a pak máme ještě?  
P19: Časopis.  
I: Na co si teďka hraje Simča?  
P19: Hm. Já nevím, jak se to jmenuje, ale je to takový malý počítač.  
I: Tablet se to jmenuje. Je to tablet.  
P19: Foťák.  
I: Anebo? S tou anténkou?  
P19: Hm – může to nahrávat?  
I: Anebo rádio.  
P19: Telefon, hm -  
I: To je ta mp3, nebo mp4, nebo přehrávač na hudbu.  
I: To co se hraje u televize?  
P19: To je – to co se hrajou různé hry a to se ovládá.  
P19: Knížka, hm – divadlo.  
I: Hm. Tak jo, tak to máme všechno už. A mě by zajímalo, co z toho máte doma?  
P19: Doma máme z toho počítače, telefon tenhle. Pak máme ještě tenhle telefon, pak máme televizi, časopis a rádio.  
I: Hm. A chodíte do kina, nebo do divadla?  
P19: Chodíme.  
I: A do čeho chodíš raději?  
P19: Asi do divadla.  
I: Do divadla? Tak jo. Tak teď mi řekni, co z toho je jenom tvoje? Co vlastníš ty sama? Nebo co třeba máte doma v pokojíčku? Máš sama pokojíček, nebo s někým?  
P19: S někým.

I: Se sestřičkou, nebo s bratříčkem?  
P19: Hm.  
I: Je starší, si říkala, že?  
I: Tak co máte doma se sestrou třeba?  
P19: Doma se sestrou mám ségru, která má 11 a jmenuje se Esterka.  
I: Hm. Tak jo a co teda máš? Co je tvoje?  
P19: Knížka a cd a to je všechno.  
I: A jaké třeba cd?  
P19: Písničky a pohádky na poslouchání.  
I: Hm.  
P19: Akorát my máme přehrávač, a ten nefunguje na pohádky na dívání, takže na pohádky na dívání musíme si vzít normální televizi.  
I: A kde máte televizi – v obýváku?  
P19: Jo – v obýváku.  
I: Hm. Takže máš i nějaké dvd s pohádkama?  
P19: Hm.  
I: A jaké máš ráda?  
P19: Nejraději mám o vodnících.  
I: O vodnících? Hm – to jsem ještě ani neviděla.  
P19: To – to je taková pohádka. To jsme dostali od dědečka a to je hrozně hezká pohádka. Nejsou tam zlí vodníci a jsou tam hodní vodníci. A oni hledají potok nový.  
I: Nový potok? A podaří se jim to nakonec?  
P19: Jo podaří.  
I: Tak jo, tak teďka mi třeba ukaž, co z toho máš úplně nejraději. Co by ti chybělo nejvíc, kdybych ti to vzala? Co tak nejvíc používáš a nejraději?  
P19: Hm. Asi knížku.  
I: Tak hodíme knížku na první místo před sebe? Vem si kartičku.  
I: Tak a jaké knížky třeba?  
P19: Knížky mám ráda Pohádky ze zoologické zahrádky.  
I: Hm.  
P19: Pak mám ještě ráda za knížku O kocourkovi, které zachránilo papírovou lhotu. Pak ještě mám nejraději o líné babičce.  
I: A proč máš ráda knížky? Proč by ti to tak chybělo?  
P19: Protože pak bez těch knížek nevím co dělat a už se tolik vlastně poslouchání – to vlastně jenom posloucháš a přitom si u toho nečeš a takové věci, jakože něco děláš. A když si čteš, tak děláš to, že si povídáš vlastně – nahlas to říkáš. Protože ještě neumíš číst.  
I: No super. Takže čtení tě baví a knížky. A co bys dala na druhé místo?  
P19: Na druhé místo cd, dvd.  
I: Cd a dvd jo? A proč by ti to chybělo?  
P19: Protože pohádky na dívání by mi moc nechyběly, ale na poslouchání by mi chyběly, protože třeba večer můžu poslouchat pohádky na usínání a pohádky se taky můžou

- poslouchat přes den. Třeba když chceš jít spát přes den, tak si můžeš pustit nějakou takovou pohádku.
- I: Hm. Super. Tak jo – co dáme na třetí místo.
- P19: Na třetí místo.
- I: Divadlo?
- P19: Hm.
- I: A jaktože divadlo? Proč by ti chybělo divadlo.
- P19: Divadlo by mi chybělo, protože bych pak že. Kino mě moc nebaví, protože tam se koukáš vlastně na televizi a to nemám ráda televizi. Ale když je to divadlo, tak ti druzí tě potěší a zase je to s loutkami hezkýma, zase to není jenom tak, že se na to koukáš jako v televizi a navíc, když jsou to loutky, tak to je poznat, jakože je to skoro živé. Je vlastně tlustá loutka.
- I: Tak jo. Takže loutkové divadlo tě baví, jo?
- P19: Hm.
- I: Tak jo. A kdyby sis třeba z toho co nemáš, co by sis z toho přála jednou? Třeba na další narozeniny? Kdyby sis mohla vybrat – co by sis přála?
- P19: Na další narozeniny bych si asi přála asi počítač.
- I: Počítač? Jo? A co by si s ním dělala, kdybys ho dostala?
- P19: Mohla bych si na něm hrát matematiku a zkoušet tam třeba někomu psát.
- I: Hm. Takže tedka když nemáš počítač – chybí ti to? Nebo ani ne?
- P19: Ne – moc ne. Ale přála bych si to.
- I: Přála by sis počítač, jo? A kdyby sis mohla přát cokoliv na světě? Co by to bylo na narozeniny?
- P19: Na narozeniny z tohohle něco, tak to bych.
- I: Ne – cokoliv jiného úplně - nemusí to být tady z toho.
- P19: Dobře, tak to bych si asi přála, hm – takového pejska jsem viděla v obchodě a on byl na vodítku a chodil. A teď už ho tam nemají a tak bych si chtěla vzít takové hříbátko.
- I: Hříbátko tam mají?
- I: Hm. A máš doma nějaké zvířátka živé? Nebo ne.
- P19: Jedno – a to je křeček.
- P19: Jsme měli tři křečky, jenže všechny umřeli. A teď máme čtvrtého křečka, to je holčička a jmenuje se Rozárka.
- I: Hm.
- P19: A ještě budeme mít pejska – ale to budeme mít teprv a ještě možná kočičku.
- I: Kočičku a pejska.
- P19: Kočka bude muset být venku, protože mamka má na kočky alergie a pes bude moct být vevnitř.
- I: Takže pejska budete mít vevnitř, jo? A jak budete vybírat – spolu? Kdo vybere pejska?
- P19: Celá rodina. Kromě mě – já pejsky moc nemusím. Takže.
- I: Ty raději kočičky, nebo křečky, nebo co?
- P19: No, raději kočičky.
- I: Kočičky? Takže ty budeš vybírat kočičku, jo?



- P19: Ne, protože kočička by stála moc peněz – a i ten pejsek stojí moc peněz. Ale protože Eliška z 1.A mi nabídla, že oni mají hodně koček, tak že mi jednu dá – že se narodilo hodně koťátek.
- I: Jo. Tak jo – už víš jméno pro kočičku?
- P19: Jo. Buď to Packa nebo Ouško.
- I: No. Krásné jména máš. Hezky si to vybrala.
- I: Můžu se tě zeptat. Dostáváš nějaké kapesné? Víš, co je to kapesné, že?
- P19: Jo.
- P19: Hm. Za měsíc dostávám hm to. Nebo nevím, jestli za měsíc, nebo za půl roku. Ale myslím, si že spíš za měsíc a to dostávám 100 a to si šetřím buď na panenku, nebo na toho koníčka. Ale spíš na panenku, protože ta panenka – mě se jedna zničila, uměla mluvit a tak. A ona – mě se hrozně líbilo jak křičela. Takže si šetřím na panenku a ještě na to hříbátko a už mám 400.
- I: Teda to už máš dost penízku!
- P19: No.
- I: A co když ti zbydou nějaké penízky – šetříš si je potom na delší dobu? Nebo?
- P19: Na delší dobu asi jo.
- I: Jo? A co by si s nimi chtěla jednou dělat?
- P19: Třeba bych ostatním mohla něco koupit.
- I: Hm. To je hezké od tebe.
- I: A co bys chtěla jednou dělat, až vyrosteš?
- P19: Hm. Co bych chtěla dělat, jako čím bych chtěla být?
- I: No. Jakou práci? Čím by ses chtěla živit?
- P19: Tak to bych asi chtěla být buďto paní učitelkou ve školce, nebo ve škole. Ale spíš ve školce. Anebo bych chtěla být spisovatelkou anebo asi hrát v divadle.
- I: Hráť v divadle, být spisovatelkou nebo učit ve školce. A proč ve školce raději než ve škole?
- P19: Protože ve škole to je takové těžké a musím tam být třeba pět nebo šest hodin. To mě moc nebaví, ale zato ve školce to si tam s dětma můžu hrát, povídat jim pohádky, zpívat si s nimi.
- I: Hm. Tak to by tě bavilo, jo?
- P19: Hm.
- I: Tak jo, když jsme se ještě bavili. Vy nemáte doma televizi, že? Si říkala.
- P19: Hm. Jako máme, ale nefungují nám tam programy.
- I: Programy, že?
- I: Jo. Takže viděla si někde nějaké programy? Třeba v Hranicích, když jste ještě byli. Nebo třeba ještě v časopisech, že?
- P19: V Hranicích.
- I: V Hranicích si viděla reklamy?
- I: Viděla si tam někdy něco, co by sis tam přála?
- P19: Hm. Asi ne.

I: Asi ne? Hm. Tak jo. Tak já tady mám ještě další obrázky, které ti ukážu a povíme si o nich, jestli si je už někdy viděla, nebo jestli je znáš.

P19: To jsem neviděla.

I: A když řeknu slovo facebook? Slyšela si někdy slovo facebook?

P19: Jo.

I: A co si o tom slyšela?

P19: Facebook je počítač.

I: Hm. Je to na počítači, no.

I: Youtube?

P19: To nevím.

P19: To taky nevím.

P19: Hm – to bývá někdy na nějakých obchodech.

I: Hm. A Mc'Donalds?

P19: Jo.

I: A byla s i někdy v Mc'Donalds? Víš co to je Mc'Donalds?

P19: Jo, vím. Tam jsem byla hodněkrát.

I: Jo? a máš to tam ráda, nebo ne?

P19: Jo.

I: Jo? A co se ti na tom líbí nejvíc?

P19: Nejvíc se mi tam líbí asi – asi nic.

I: Asi nic?

P19: To bývá taky na nějakých obchodech, nebo na knížce.

I: Hm. Disney knížky, pohádky, třeba i v televizi pohádky.

I: Slyšela si někdy slovo Disneyland?

P19: Nee.

I: Nee? Tak jo. To je těžké – to asi nebudeš vědět. CNN?

P19: To jsem nevěděla.

P19: To jsem věděla – to někdy bývá. Si jenom vzpomenout.

I: Seznam – viděla si třeba v televizi reklamu na Seznam. To je na počítači, že?

P19: Hm. To jsem viděla. Google je.

I: Taky na počítači, že? Třeba. Něco lehčího.

P19: To bývá na některých hospodách, nebo na skleničkách.

I: Hm a je to i nápoj – pila si už někdy coca-colu?

P19: Jo. Hodněkrát. My máme sousedku a ta když u nás není mamka, tak nám vždycky dá hodně kofoly do ruky.

I: Jo?

P19: Jo.

I: A co máš raději? Coca-colu, nebo kofolu? Nebo ti to přijde stejné?

P19: Asi kofolu.

I: Kofolu raději?

P19: To jsou Šmoulové – to je z pohádky.

I: A máš ráda Šmouly?

P19: Jo – moc.

I: A viděla si i film, nebo jenom pohádky se díváš?

P19: Jo – viděla jsem i film.

I: A máš nějaké hračky nebo něco?

P19: Máme Šmoulu a kartičky jsem skoro vysbírala.

I: Fakt? Teda.

P19: A moje sestra už má všechny.  
I: Fakt?  
P19: Tohle jsem nikdy neviděla.  
P19: Tohle bývá v televizi.  
I: Hm.  
P19: Tohle jsem taky neviděla.  
I: Harry Potter.  
P19: To jsem viděla.  
I: Jo? A cos viděla? Filmy si viděla?  
P19: Hm.  
P19: Akorát poslední – sedmičku, to jsou dva díly sedmičky, tak to jsem neviděla, protože prý to je moc strašidelný, takže.  
I: Takže to už raději ne, jo?  
I: A podíváš se na to někdy, až třeba dorosteš? Až budeš větší?  
P19: Jo, budu zvědavá, už jsem stejně.  
I: Už si stejně?  
I: A knížky si četla nebo nečetla?  
P19: Nee.  
I: A chtěla by si?  
P19: Chtěla.  
I: A kdo ti říkal, že se nemůžeš dívat na ten poslední – že je moc strašidelný?  
P19: Já – Esterka mi říkala, že je hodně strašidelný ten poslední. Tak jsem se na to nechtěla koukat sama a přesto jsem zvědavá a maminka říkala jako že taky ne.  
I: Hm. tak jo.  
P19: To je Večerníček. To bývá vždycky když začíná Večerníček?  
I: A máš ráda Večerníček?  
P19: Jo. Akorát ho teď doma nemáme.  
P19: To jsme neviděli. A to je – jak se to jmenuje?  
I: To jsou Simpsonovi.  
P19: Jo – Simpsonovi.  
I: Viděla si někdy Simpsony?  
P19: Jo – hodněkrát, ale jenom u babičky.  
I: Hm. A líbí se ti to nebo ne?  
P19: Jo – líbí. Ta jsou to někdy srandovní věci.  
I: Hm. tak jo, tak super. A ještě jsem se tě poslední věc nezeptala. Když jsme se bavili o těch médiích, myslíš si třeba – chtěla by si, aby se používaly ve škole? Třeba když se učíš? Aby je paní učitelka používala – některé z nich třeba? Když těch médií je tolik.  
P19: Nee asi ne. Kromě tohoto. Tohle nám někdy pouští a to se mi moc líbí.  
I: To se ti líbí, jo?  
P19: Třeba při učení můžeš poslouchat. To je hezké.  
I: Hm. Tak jo. A jak se ti jinak líbí ve škole? Baví tě škola?  
P19: Jo, baví. Akorát víc mě sice bavila školka, ale.  
I: Školka? Jakto? Víc se tam hrálo?

P19: No, protože ve školce se tam může víc hrát a může se tam hezky hrát, třeba s hračkama jako je družina. Tak úplně stejné je to ve školce. Ve škole je zase družina. Ta se mi taky moc líbí, ta si taky můžou hrát, ale když mám školu, tak se musím učit třeba šest hodin a tak – podle toho, jak postupuju, ale zase se toho hodně naučím a nebudu, až budu dospělá hloupá.

I: Jo, takže to bys ráda, abys nebyla hloupá, jo?

P19: Hm.

I: Tak jo, tak děkuju.

Town School, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade

*Would like to be a singer (her parents are musicians)*

.....

P46: Media are everywhere.

Researcher: Is there a place where there are no media?

P46: Ahm, space.

...

**At home:** Camera, recorder, TV, computer, books, tablet, Wii, newspaper, magazines

**In the room:** Shares with younger sister, books, TV, camera, magazines, DS, phone (can interact and use media anytime she wants)

**Would miss the most:** Phone ('Because it helps me if I am in emergency, I can call'), DS ('Because my mum paid a lot of money for it, and because it was... I got that when I was about in kindergarten, so when I have it, when I am like twelve, I'm gonna have memories. I will keep it.'), books ('Because books are very good for you, they help you learn stuff, and books are nice way to [hmmm] spend time.')

**Would like to have:** Xbox, new Wii disks, laptop (for this Christmas, she would like to get new 3DS)

...

P46: Sesame Street is a show for little kids. There is a bunch of... like Elmo's on it.

P46 I watch Hannah Montana. [...] She keeps a secret and she puts a wig on and she sings, but nobody knows that, but her best friends, best friends. [...] She is real, her name is Hannah Montana, but lots of the time they call her Miley. [...] The show made her famous.

**Notes:** Watches Harry Potter, Pokémon are cards that her cousin owns, plays Angry Birds on iPad, sometimes watch Smurfs ('bunch of little people in a forest and some kind of wizard tries to get them and like attack them. Smurfs protecting themselves against a wizard', McDonalds is best for hamburgers and it is healthy, Coca Cola has a soda with a lot of sugar and caffeine and it is bad for you, doesn't know Simpsons much, Nickelodeon is 'like a bunch of kids shows', Dream Works makes Madagascar and other movies, WB makes Scooby Doo and other movies, CNN doesn't know, BBC doesn't know, Facebook, oh my, you go on Facebook and you got people, you talk to people and look at their pictures, how good it is or not. [...] I don't have Facebook. I would like to have.

She would like to have Facebook, people put videos on YouTube, she likes to watch funny videos and she would like to be able to make and upload her own funny videos as her cousin does, Google you type and search

P46: [Disney] Anyone can watch it really. There is Disney world, it has rides, it is about all the characters, they are there, it is vacation, go to Florida. I have been two times and I am going again in May.

### **Academic journals**

Woodfall, A., and Zezulcova, M., 2016 [forthcoming]. What 'Children' Experience and 'Adults' May Overlook: Phenomenological Approaches to Media Practice, Education and Research. *Journal of Children and Media - 10th anniversary special issue*

McDougall, J., Berger, R., Fraser, P., and Zezulcova, M., 2015 [forthcoming]. Media Literacy, Education and (Civic) Capability: A Transferable Methodology. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*

Zezulcova, M., 2013. Review: Children, Adolescence, and the Media, 3rd Ed. *Media Education Research Journal*, 4(2), 74-76.

Zezulcova, M., 2012. Review: Youth Media: International Perspectives, Cultures of Production and Education. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 4(3), 278-280.

### **Book chapters**

Zezulcova, M., 2015 [forthcoming]. Media Learning in Primary School Classroom: Following Teachers' Beliefs and Children's Interests. In: Kotilainen, S., and Kupiainen, R., eds. *Media Education Futures*. Yearbook of the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media by NORDICOM

Berger, R., Wardle, J., and Zezulcova, M., 2013. No longer just making the tea: media work-placements and work-based learning in higher education. In: Ashton, D., and Noonan, C., eds. *Cultural Work and Higher Education*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 87-109.

### **Conference talks**

Zezulcova, M., 2015 [forthcoming]. *Challenges and Opportunities of Researching Children's Holistic Media Lives*. Will be presented at Comparing Children's Media around the World: Policies, Texts and Audiences, London, UK, September 2015

Woodfall, A., and Zezulcova, M., 2015 [forthcoming]. 'Media is a Plural' – What Children Might Experience and Research May Seem to Forget. Will be presented at the 13th Annual International Conference on Communication and Mass Media, Athens, Greece, May 2015

Berger, R., McDougall, J., and Zezulko, M., 2014. *Media Literacy, Education and (Civic) Capability: A Transferable Methodology*. Presented at Media Education Summit, Prague, Czech Republic, November 2014

Oliver, J., and Zezulko, M., 2014. *Key Note: Media Management from Kindergarten to Boardroom*. Presented at Media Management Education Event by EMMA, Tallinn, Estonia, June 2014

Zezulko, M., 2014. *Holistic Media Learning*. Presented at Media Education Futures, Tampere, Finland, May 2014

Zezulko, M., 2014. *Media Making at Schools and the Rebirth of Holistic Education*. Presented at the 9th Global Conference Creative Engagements: Thinking with Children, Prague, Czech Republic, March 2014

Zezulko, M., and Estrada, F., 2013. *Learning Good Things from Bad Guys: Narconovelas in Colombia*. Presented at Media Education Summit, Sheffield, UK, September 2013

Zezulko, M., 2013. *Whole Person Media Education*. Presented at Media Trends Conference 'Crossroad Challenges: Children and the Media', Geneva, Switzerland, April 2013

Zezulko, M., Du, Y., and Rodriguez, A., 2012. *Cómo Entender la Libertad de Prensa y Represión Cobertura transnacional de la enfermedad del Presidente Hugo Chávez (Understanding Press Freedom and Repression: Cross-national Coverage of Chavez's Illness)*. Presented at the Media, Power and Citizenship Conference, Quito, Ecuador, March 2012

Zezulko, M., 2012. *Sharing as Part of Media Literacy*. Presented at the New York State Communication Association Conference, New York, USA, October 2012

Zezulko, M., 2011. *Cross-cultural Perspective on the Philosophy of Higher Education in Media and Promotional Studies*. Presented at the MeCCSA-PGN Conference, Bournemouth, UK, July 2011



## Relevant research grants

Date awarded	Award holder(s) and PI	Funding body	Title
Deadline May-15	Julian McDougall as PI, and Richard Berger, Isabella Rega, Roman Gerodimos, Divina Frau-Meigs, Mathy Van Buel, Anotnio Lopez, and <b>Marketa Zezulkova as CO-Is, and Marketa Zezulkova as WP5 leader</b>	EU Horizon2020: Funding call The Young as a Driver of Social Change	Digital Media and Information Literacy, European Youth and Social Change; WP5 Community Intervention and Data Collection and Analysis
Sep-14	Julian McDougall as PI, Richard Berger, Pete Fraser, and <b>Marketa Zezulkova as CO-Is</b>	The EU Academic Development Scheme (EUADS)/Bournemouth University (BU) for The UK Literacy Association (UKLA)	Media Studies for Media Literacy: Mapping the Impact
Sep-14	Marketa Zezulkova as PI	Santander Mobility Award/BU for research and Visitig Scholarship at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, China	Media Education and Literacy of Hong Kong Youth
Jul-13	Julian McDougall and Maurizio Borghi as PIs. Dinusha Mendis, Bartolomeo Meletti, and <b>Marketa Zezulkova as CO-Is</b>	European Commission MEDIA Programme, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, EU	Showing Films in European Schools
Apr-13	Marketa Zezulkova as PI	BU PGR Development Fund	Media education research networking in the Czech Republic
Apr-13	Marketa Zezulkova as PI	Santander Scholarship/BU for a Visiting Scholarship at the University of Antioquia, Colombia	Children, Media, and Media Education in Medellin's Public and Private Schools
Mar-13	Julian McDougall as PI, Mark Readman and <b>Marketa Zezulkova as CO-Is</b> , Dave Harte as Consultant	Communities and Culture	Digital Media Literacy for Children's Cultural Wellbeing in Changing Communities
Jan-12	José Manuel Pérez Tornero as PI, a number of CO-I including Hartai Laszlo as WP3 Leader on which <b>Marketa Zezulkova was a Contractor</b>	EU Lifelong Learning Programme	European Media Literacy Education Study (EMEDUS); WP3 Formal Media Education in Europe

## 6.6 Media Education

### Characteristics of the Cross-Curricular Subject

On the level of elementary education, the cross-curricular subject Media Education provides the pupil with elementary knowledge and skills related to media communication and work with the media. Media and communication represent a highly important source of experience, experiences and knowledge for an increasing circle of recipients. An individual's success in society greatly depends on the ability to process, evaluate and make use of stimuli coming from the surrounding world, which requires an ever greater ability to process, evaluate and make use of stimuli coming from the media. The media are becoming an important socialising factor with significant influence on the behaviour of both an individual and society and on shaping our lifestyle and on the quality of life in general. It should be kept in mind, however, that the messages offered by the media are inconsistent, characterised by a peculiar relation to natural as well as social reality and motivated by various (mostly unacknowledged and thus potentially manipulative) intentions. The correct evaluation of these messages in terms of the motivation for their creation (to inform, persuade, manipulate or entertain) and their relation to reality (factual accuracy, logical argument structure, validity) requires significant training.

Media Education is to equip the pupil with a basic level of media literacy. This includes familiarisation with certain basic knowledge on the functioning and social role of contemporary media (its history, structure of function) on the one hand and acquisition of skills facilitating the individual's informed, active and independent involvement in media communication on the other, primarily the ability to analyse the offered messages, consider their trustworthiness and evaluate their communication intent or associate them with other messages, but also orientation in media content and the ability to select the proper medium for the fulfilment of miscellaneous needs – from gaining information through education to leisure-time activities.

Media Education is closely linked with the educational area **Man and Society**, in particular because the media as a social institution participate in shaping the forms and values of the modern era, and make it possible to seek parallels between past and present events and to compare phenomena and processes on a European and global scale. Media Education is focused on the systematic formation of a critical distance from media messages and development of the ability to interpret a media message in terms of its informative quality (newscast in terms of the importance and trustworthiness of the news and event, advertisement in terms of expedience of the information offered, etc.). The interconnection of Media Education and the educational area **Language and Language Communication** concerns primarily the perception of spoken and written expressions, their structure, various types of content and the application of a corresponding range of means of expression, as well as the mastery of the basic rules of public communication, dialogue and argumentation. Within the educational area **Information and Communication Technologies**, the link consists in the use of printed and digital documents as sources of information. Attention is turned to the message's factual correctness and accuracy, both through the critical analysis of existing texts on the one hand and through own production, and to the formation of the habit to verify all data as thoroughly as possible on the other. The relation of the cross-curricular subject to the educational area **Arts and Culture** is based on the perception of the specific 'language' of symbolic codes used by the media and their combinations, specifically not only of natural language but also images and sounds. It contributes to the pupil's ability to perceive, interpret and assess the artefacts of artistic as well as common media production critically.

### Contribution of the Cross-Curricular Subject to the Development of the Pupil's Character

*In the area of knowledge, skills and abilities, the cross-curricular subject:*

- contributes to the pupil's ability to engage in media communication successfully and independently
- makes it possible to develop the ability of an analytic approach to media content and critical distance from it

- teaches the pupil to use the media's potential as a source of information and quality entertainment as well as for leisure-time activities
- makes it possible to understand the objectives and strategies of selected media content
- guides the pupil towards adopting the basic principles of the creation of important media content (especially news reports)
- enables the pupil to gain an idea of the role of the media in key social situations and in democratic society in general (including the legal context)
- forms an idea of the role of the media in everyday life in the region (locality)
- guides the pupil towards identifying the validity and importance of arguments in public discourse
- develops the pupil's ability to communicate, in particular during public appearances, as well as stylisation of written and spoken expressions
- contributes to the pupil's utilisation of his/her abilities in teamwork as well as within an editorial team
- contributes to the pupil's ability to adapt his/her activities to the needs and objectives of the team

***In the area of attitudes and values, the cross-curricular subject:***

- develops the pupil's sensitivity to stereotypes found in the media content as well as to the manner in which a media message has been treated
- guides the pupil towards realising the value of his/her life (in particular leisure time) and his/her responsibility for its fulfilment
- develops sensitivity to prejudices and simplified judgments of society (in particular of minorities) as well as an individual
- helps the pupil realise the possibility of freely expressing his/her personal attitudes and responsibility for how they are formulated and presented

**Thematic Areas of the Cross-Curricular Subject**

On the level of elementary education, Media Education comprises the basic knowledge and skills related to the media and media communication. Its thematic areas are divided into the Thematic Areas of Receptive Activities and the Thematic Areas of Productive Activities.

**Thematic Areas of Receptive Activities:**

- **critical reading and perception of media messages** – cultivating a critical approach to news reporting and advertisements); distinguishing the entertainment ('tabloid') elements in a message from informative and socially-significant elements; evaluative elements in a message (selection of words and scenes); seeking the difference between informative, entertainment and advertising messages; understanding the essence of a media message, clarifying its objectives and rules; identifying the basic deictic elements in a text
- **interpretation of the relation between media messages and reality** – different types of messages, how to distinguish between them, their functions; the difference between advertisement and news and between 'factual' and 'fictional' content; the main features of representativeness (distinguishing reality from stereotypes depicted in the media as a representation of reality); the relation between the media message and social experience (distinguishing between messages which reinforce prejudices and ideas from messages building on a knowledge of the issue and an unbiased attitude); identifying socially important values in a text, elements signalling the value on which the message is based; identifying simplified medialised messages, repeated use of certain means of expression (in news reporting, advertisement and entertainment)
- **the structure of media messages** – examples of regularities in the arrangement of media messages, in particular the newscast (news as storytelling, compiling contributions according to criteria); principles of compiling news, identifying these principles, positive principles (significance and usefulness), principles of adding entertainment to news (negativity, nearness, simplicity, immediacy); examples of structuring and organising the news (comparison of front

pages of various dailies) and other media messages (such as the composition and selection of messages in magazines for teenagers)

- **perception of the author of media messages** – identifying the author’s attitudes and opinions in a medialised message; means of expression and their use for expressing or clouding opinions and attitudes as well as for conscious manipulation; elements signalling explicit or implicit expression of evaluation, selection and combination of words, images and sounds as part of intent and value significance
- **functioning and influence of the media in society** – the media’s organisation and position in society; factors influencing the media, interpreting influences affecting the media’s behaviour; methods and consequences of media financing; the media’s impact on everyday life, society, political life and culture from contemporary and historical perspectives; the role of the media in the everyday life of an individual, the influence of the media on the organisation of our days, on our range of conversation topics, on attitudes and behaviour; the role of the media in political life (election campaigns and their significance); the influence of the media on culture (the role of film and television in the life of the individual, the family and society); the role of the media in political changes

#### **Thematic Areas of Productive Activities:**

- **creation of a media message** – application and selection of means of expression and their combinations for the creation of factually accurate messages and messages appropriate in terms of communication (socially and situationally); creating a media message for a school magazine, radio, television or an internet medium; technological possibilities and limitations
- **work on a production team** – editorial board of a school magazine, radio, television or an internet-based medium; building the team, importance of enriching the team with various age and social groups, communication and cooperation in a team; setting objectives and timelines, delegating tasks and responsibility; factors influencing teamwork; periodicity of media production

## **Media Learning in Primary School Classrooms: Following Teachers' Beliefs and Children's Interests**

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"I would like to become either a miss teacher in kindergarten or in school. You get to study with children, you get to help them. I could be playing with them, tell them fairy tales, and sing with them." *Janička, 1st grade, 6 years old, Czech Republic*

Janička well summarised three elements of formal education on which this chapter concentrates; teachers, young learners, and media. Building on an intercultural and interdisciplinary research project exploring *media learning* in primary school classrooms, this chapter brings teachers' pedagogical beliefs and practices together with children's multifaceted media engagements. As a result, it argues for media learning on a primary school level that addresses the child in his or her complexity instead of reducing itself to teaching *media literacy* skills.

### **Researching Media Learning**

Media literacy education focusing on learner's ability to access, analyse, and create media in a variety of contexts is commonly concerned with the development of critical understanding, at least in the majority of the EU member states (Hartai, 2014). Yet arguing that a media literate person, even a primary school child, is mainly a critical and responsible information seeker and information producer (Buckingham, 2009), might lead to primary education neglecting the diversity and plurality of children's media tastes and practices. Moreover, it may as well overlook the significant developmental (Piaget, 1923) and sociocultural (Vygotsky, 1934) changes amplified by entering compulsory education (Langmeier and Krejčířová, 2009), which take place roughly between the ages five and nine. As Jung (1934)

argued and Mayes (2005) elaborated, student is a living medium whose complexity cannot be fully acknowledged and efficiently nurtured by a cognitive-rationalist curriculum alone. Therefore, the research project introduced in this chapter distanced itself from studies preoccupied with the adaptation and implementation of media literacy education to the lower grades. Instead the project set out to investigate current and potential *media learning* – defined as both intentional and naturally occurring learning about media with, from, in, or even without physical presence of, media – across the first three grades of compulsory education. The reasoning behind was to explore a possible purpose and form of formal media learning grounded in classroom research conducted with primary school teachers and their six to nine year old pupils.

Applying inductive reasoning, the classroom research began with a three-month long inquiry into two Czech schools in 2012, which then guided investigation in two schools in the United States of America. The research sought strong evidence of the conclusions, or *justified true beliefs* (Plato, approx. 369BC), rather than absolute truth. Accordingly, the “certainty of” was replaced with “confidence in” research results (Hammersley, 1992, p. 50-51). To gain a greater confidence in the outcomes of the research conducted in the Czech and US public schools, further but significantly more limited investigation was carried out in two Maltese catholic single-gender schools and Colombian public and private schools in 2013.

The participating teachers, as well as school management and specialised staff, were interviewed when exploring their “holistic belief systems” – a whole theory comprising of interconnected partial theories (Block, 2000, p.360) – they hold about role of media and education in learners’ lives. Although the teachers felt confident to talk about media related topics in general terms, they sometimes struggled to recall concrete situations, as they were neither specialised media educators, nor media or media education enthusiasts. Consequently, the classroom observations were conducted to complement the interviews and generate an authentic inside view. Moreover, respect for children’s right to be heard, coupled with the idea of children being experts on childhood as a world governed by them (Danby & Farrell, 2005), has to, according to Coyne (2010), lead “to research which seeks to directly access children’s views and opinions, [...] in order to understand children’s lives in their own terms” (p. 452). Due to the unavoidable hierarchy of gatekeepers with whom I had to negotiate at different stages of the research process,

only the Czech and US children could be interviewed and thus actively participated in the project. A total of sixty-five pupils, thirty-three girls and thirty-two boys, took part in the individual as well as group photo-elicitation interviews. Fifteen photo-elicitation group interviews were conducted, the groups being grade specific and mostly of mixed gender.

Photo elicitation was used in the project as, what Wagner (1979) called, *interview stimuli*. The project used photographs of people interacting with media during the group interviews and a set of cards with drawings of various media platforms and technologies for the individual interviews. The aim of group and individual photo-elicitation interviews was to explore further in what ways *any* media were involved in a variety of child's actions, feelings, relationships, and meaning-makings, both inside and outside of the classroom environment, and to bring these together with the teachers' educational objectives and practices. *All* media platforms, genres, and media production technologies were included, although the inquiry bore in mind the prominent position of what is often referred to as high culture over popular culture (for a more detailed account of platform agnostic approach see Woodfall and Zezulkova (2016, in press)).

### **When Classroom and Media Lives Meet**

The study discovered a number of concrete contextual issues that were relevant to the individual cases only. Yet at the same time I listened and witnessed what Mill (1875) described as “parallel cases” (p. 223), which increasingly called for closer attention. Mill claimed that induction, as applied in this research project, “consists in inferring from some individual instances in which a phenomenon is observed to occur”, that it was to occur or happen again “under sufficient degree of similarity of circumstances”, making from such phenomenon a parallel case (*ibid.*). One of the two main parallel cases discovered by this projects was that despite the varying contexts within which the individual primary school operated, the teachers all aimed at holistically addressing the learner in his or her intellectual, physical, emotional, sociocultural, creative, and moral complexity as a *harmonious whole* (Mayes, 2005).

*1st grade teacher, Czech Republic:* “At primary school level the children are still very small, so they should be educated in all areas. To nurture a person

who is able to differentiate between good and bad – to develop own views and attitudes. Emotional and social education should not to be forgotten. Physical education equally, not to educate a professional sportsmen, but rather a child with all-around strengths.”

*3rd grade teacher, USA:* “I love them to grow in all the areas. [...] I want to be doing whatever they’re doing now but better. [...] If there’s any kind of personal challenges they have, I want them to be able to overcome it. [...] So I’m thinking of sort of the whole student. [...] To teach them both of those things; to be successful at the things that are your strengths [...] and the things that make you happy that you like to work on [...] and also just be someone that someone else can look up to and respect.”

The second parallel case found was that the children’s complex and multidimensional media-related experiences equally engaged them in their wholeness.

Each child’s *media life* (Deuze 2011) was situated within a unique holistic system whereby everything was interconnected and dialogic, and so were the diverse media platforms, texts, and practices that the children interacted with, as they seemed to be living in a non-medium specific “everything at once” media worlds.

*3rd grade boy (9 years, Czech):* Playing theatre is my favourite. [...] Those diverse ways of creating theatre, those various scenes. [...] I guess I’d also miss a DVD player, because that’s where I play songs, and stuff like that, for my theatre. [...] If there’s a song or melody good for theatre play, I use it. [...] Sometimes I sing and dance. [...] I’m putting money aside. I want to buy a witch mask. [...] On *YouTube* I watch almost every day. I just watched Disney’s *Sleeping Beauty* and *Snow White*. [...] Because there’re evil queens and I love the evil. [...] I want to play evil in theatre. That’s why I need the witch mask. [...] I like scary and spooky stories. In our class we all do. [...] Our miss teacher played *A Bouquet of Folk Legends [Kytice]* by Karel Jaromir Erben and [...] it wasn’t so scary, not for me, but *the Water Goblin [Vodník]*, that was awful, but really good!”

This holistic system constructed and orchestrated by the children was a fluid and fluent ‘lived experience’ (Husserl 1900/01[1970]), or as Dewey (1916)



described it, ‘a single continuous interaction of a great diversity (literally countless in number) of energies’ (p. 93). This complexity might be hidden to those trying to comprehend children’s media engagements in reductionist rather than holistic manner. This, however, was not the case of this research exploring the participants’ life in, with, and through pan-media as *a total one*, engaging them in their sociocultural, emotional, intellectual, physical, and creative being.

Although both primary education and media engagements represented holistic processes in these young children’s lives, constituting itself in a single lived experience, the teachers were unsure about the role of *media learning* in the context of their holistic pedagogy. I will illustrate this by focusing on the sociocultural and emotional dimensions, although cognitive, physical, and partly also spiritual, phenomena were also explored and found to be inherently embodied in the child’s lived experience.

To begin, the teachers described “friendly atmosphere” as one of the main conditions for developing and maintaining an “effective learning environment”. The classroom was repeatedly referred to as a “community”, “home”, and “family” with the sense of belonging, caring and tolerance. According to the teachers, children had to gradually learn to understand and appreciate each other. This corresponded with Piaget’s (1923) theory that somewhere around this age a shift from egocentrism to the ability to see from others’ perspectives and to sympathise should appear. The educators felt responsible for children’s wellbeing in general, and in a classroom in particular, which was connected to pupils’ sociocultural development (Vygotsky, 1934). The US teachers articulated this particularly well:

*2nd grade teacher:* “I think I try, right from the beginning, to focus on building a community. Having them really care about one another. [...] We need to see how we can make it the best functioning room, how everyone can succeed in this room at one time and what we need to do to help everyone be able to do that. [...] I try to just take the time to make them feel like this is a home and we’re a family.”

*2nd grade teacher:* “Still too, developmentally they’re young. They’re still thinking that the centre of the universe is themselves, at seven, eight years old they’re starting to branch out to think, to know and be aware that other people

have good ideas too, it's not only my idea that's good. I have to listen to other people. [...] It just takes practice.”

The educators agreed that the topic of media, as a Maltese teacher said, “comes out in this time during the day that it's more about social versus the academic”. They additionally argued, as a Colombian school principle put it, that media “are an inherent part of children's personal and social development, [influencing] them in their values, principles and even the way they are thinking”. Being consistent with Vygotsky's (1934) writing, they acknowledged that media played an important role in the children's lives from an early age and mainly outside of the school environment, which the teachers thought significantly limited their position and participation in the pupils' media-related engagements. They considered drawing upon media predominantly in the situations they evaluated as negatively influencing the classroom friendly community – due to mocking and feelings of exclusion – and when fostering the individual child's socialisation and individuation. By *individuation* is here referred to a process through which an individual separates from others, developing his or her unique self (Jung, 1963, 1969). The Czech educators spoke for their international colleagues:

*3rd grade teacher:* “The children should learn about media in order to be able to find their own way to learning, play, life, it is important that already the children as small as these were capable of this. So they wouldn't let themselves to be swallowed by media.”

*3rd grade teacher assistant:* “[Emily] from our class doesn't have [electronic] media at home and she isn't interested in them. It's a nice way of life, but then it's hard for her to make friends. [...] She often doesn't have anything to say when children discuss video games or TV shows they like. [...] It isn't right to force her, but on the other hand, the gap is increasing and we want her to be part of the collective, so we need to find a way of helping her with that.”

*Assistant Principal:* “One must disagree with the sexualisation of childhood, telling girls to put a make up on, make their hair and use their body to succeed. [...] Children must know that it's ok not to be who media tell us we should be,

and not to have what media tell us we should have. We want them to feel good about themselves.”

The worries expressed by the school staffs seemed to be of some, but relatively little, relevance to the observed and interviewed child participants. As media are, according to Stocking (1968), both witnesses and creators of sociocultural plurality and diversity, so were the children. Firstly, although it was common among the learners, as it was amongst the teachers, to argue that the classmates were “all” involved with a certain media text or in a certain media-related activity, there always were examples of those children who did not seem to mind that they did not participate or had a different point of view.

*Kristina (3rd grade, 9 years, Czech):* “I watch *Pokémon*. I like it, because...  
Hmm, our class is watching it too.”

*Marketa:* “Anything else you and your class likes to watch?”

*Kristina:* I used to watch *Chucky* [*Child’s Play*], because we all did. But then my friend started to talk about it a lot, so I stopped. I don’t like when someone talks about something too much.

*Group of US 2nd graders, all 7 years old:*

*Leila:* My cousin told me a new DS is coming out. [...]

*Gavin:* It’s good to get a new one, because it has more space to put games on.

*Leila:* I don’t think it’s good to get a new one, because your mum might not have enough money. You want to have a house to live in, you don’t want to live under a tree. You want to have TV. You want to have food to eat.

*Abigail:* If you have your own money to buy it, or if you get coupon, then you could buy it.

*Leila:* But if you don’t, you need to buy things you need to live with, not spend your money on like DS or Wii and stuff.

Secondly, a rich variety of subcultures were apparent in every classroom, which arguably allowed each child to be an active participant in at least one of these subcultures, and thus in one way or another to contribute to, and be included in, the “whole” classroom media culture. In particular, a Czech pupil Emily who had a limited access to electronic media – as the third grade teacher assistant talked about

in his quote above – actually had a computer with the Internet at home. It was truth though that over playing games or watching TV shows she preferred to search for images. Although not as popular as online and video games, image search was a common activity enjoyed by her classmate, as well as other Czech children involved in the research.

Thirdly, at any point these young children would suggest that they should form a homogenous social group of which all members would be interacting with the same media platforms and texts. When conducting a group photo-elicitation interview with Emily and three of her male classmates, the boys often led the discourse away from media towards their shared interests, excluding me rather than Emily. For instance, when Emily mentioned “I don’t use a mobile phone, only sometimes I call”, Jakub turned at her and with a friendly voice and smile said “You don’t use any electronics, you prefer to be outside, right?”, and the group happily began to discuss their outdoor activities. Moreover, the young research participants were not only aware of their own and the others’ media choices to be unique and constantly evolving, but the second and third graders viewed also their classroom media culture for what it was – dynamic, flexible and ever-changing.

*Abby (2nd grade, 7 years, USA): Sesame Street is a show for little kids.... I watched it when I was like three. And I remember watching it a lot! [...] When I was like this tall [shows] I used to watch Smurfs. [...] Now we [classmates] like to watch iCarly, before it was Hannah Montana, like Miley Cyrus.*

*Kinsley (3rd grade, 8 years, USA): When I was like in first grade, it was like Pokémon. Second grade was like [unintelligible 00:15:39]. This year is like football.*

Lastly, even though the learners transposed their favourite media texts, characters and themes into classroom culture, these were re-told, re-imagined, re-created, and re-enacted according to the children’s individual and collective preferences and in the context of their own sociocultural lives. Within these interpretative processes the children often referred to media, but “the source text/artefact [was] not drawn upon in an extended manner” (Marsh, 2014, p. 125). Therefore even a child unfamiliar with the source could participate. For example, a

Czech classroom was transformed to a battlefield by a group of boys running, jumping, crawling, and hiding, when pretending to be in war. The boys then explained that they were playing “Call of Duty”. When asked if they played *the Call of Duty* videogames, only three out of nine boys said they did. The others either heard about the franchise from their friends or watched related videos on *YouTube*, whilst they also talked about one of the boys’ father who was in the army. Comparably a mixed group of the US children played a traditional playground freeze tag game which was now called *Angry Birds* and the payers were divided into “piggies” and “birdies”. Both groups acted as “authors of their own games” (Burn, 2014, p. 18) while remixing popular media texts with folkloric forms of play with which they “all” were familiar (Willett, 2014). Similarly, a Maltese teacher remembered that not engaging directly with the media source usually did not exclude a child from the source related classroom interactions:

“There was a TV show with couple of the characters that children even used to imitate. One of them for example, she had a particular way of speaking and we would be in the middle of the lesson, talking about something, and they would say something in the way that character would say it. [...] Some parents didn’t allow them to watch it... but what I see a lot is that even though there is some peer pressure, in the most cases it is not excessive, pushing a girl aside because she doesn’t watch the show. I think the opposite happens, they fill her in, they tell her what is happening. So even though she is not watching by herself, she knows what is going on. It brings them closer.”

Corsaro (2011), who stressed that the “deep emotional appreciation of children’s membership in their peer cultures” was fuelled by media (p. 118), also suggested that “children seek, in adult caretakers and peers, the emotional bonds and feelings of security they first established in families” (p. 123). The teachers recognised this and put a great emphasis not only on a peer-to-peer but also a teacher-learner relationship. Yet although personal connection with each learner, trust, and reciprocal appreciation were seen as the base of a “good” teacher-learner relationship, only few perceived knowing about, and participating in, children’s media cultures as imperative, or at least helpful.

*1st grade, USA:* “I always try to connect to my students, to their personal life, to their home life, to each kid as a person. My biggest goal is to make sure that each student is happy, happy as a child. [...] I think it’s more important you make a connection to each kid before you worry about the academics because the academics will only come if they believe that you believe in them. [...] Popular culture is where they’re growing up, it is important to recognise that and learn how to benefit from it in classrooms.”

Although happiness was the ultimate goal, the children were being encouraged to explore distinct emotions and feelings upon which the educators then drew when supporting learners’ emotional development. The educators shared with me a number of stories about pupils learning to understand their feelings and control their emotions, yet none of them included media (except books in this case). They tended to overlook the children’s wide-ranging and meaningful media-related emotions and feelings. For instance, the children talked about sadness and even grief when asked about their media experiences, as the Czech first grader Terka shared, “it was sad, when they were taking papa Smurf away, I cried half of the whole day”. They felt *pride* about their, and *admiration* about the others’, media skills and knowledge. As the US first grader Impra said about playing *Angry Birds* “I am very good at this game - I am an expert”, but emphasised that her father was even better. On one side media were connected to *love/appreciation*, as a nine year old Nikolka remembered: “I have this favourite book about *the Little Sorrel Squirrel*. [...] First my grandma had it, then my uncle, then my mum and now me. So it’s my most favourite book.”. On the other side, the children felt *anxieties* and *uncertainties* about possible effects of media consumption and production.

*Fin (3rd grade, 9 years, USA):* “I don’t think games can make you violent but my mum told me that. I think maybe because they’re so much fun, and that some kids never stop playing the murdering games, then they actually want to do it and then you cannot stop.”

*Marketa:* “Do you think it could happen to you?”

*Fin:* “I don’t know. Maybe. I don’t really want to. I want to be free, not in jail. I want to be freeman! And get a job.”

In contrast, *fear* evoked directly by media, not by someone else's accounts of media, was not always evaluated as negative, as for example the seven years old Imagine described: "I love Harry Potter. [...] I'm on the fifth [book]. I love this book, because there are so many adventures, I love adventures. There are also mysteries. But in the second book, I was trembling. It was scary [laughing]! [...] But the movies I don't watch. They give me nightmares.". The children were talking even about *jealousy*, *anger*, or *disappointment* with a certain unworldliness and humour, as they appeared to accept these feelings and emotions as part of being a "child".

It seemed that it was no secret to the young participants that childhood is both a combination of a developmental stage on a way to adulthood (Piaget, 1926), as well as a world with its own rights, rules, media, and cultures (Postman, 1982). For instance, on one occasion I observed a Czech third grade teacher Milada facilitating a day of critical and creative learning activities around the topic of advertising. At one point Milada asked if the pupils thought "that advertising can negatively influence" them. One boy gave the anticipated answer:

"Negatively, like we think that everything they want to sell us is good, because they say so, because we're not as smart as adults yet. Adults already went through it and learnt, that maybe the cheaper yogurts are healthier than the expensive ones with toys showed on TV. They know it's just waste of money."

The next day I interviewed a group of four children and I asked several follow-up questions, among them which yogurt would they buy now. Samuel said, while others were nodding, "The one with a toy. It doesn't taste as good, but the toys are fun". Adam continued "because why should kids want the healthier yogurt, if they can have the one with a toy".

### **Reflexive and Negotiated Media Learning Towards Wholeness**

As illustrated, the primary school teachers tended to focus on potentially negative role of media in the children's lives as well as in their efforts of educating the whole student. They thought they were expected to rectify and modify, firstly, the role of media in the children's social relationships and development, and secondly, the children's media preferences and practices, for example by uncovering media's hidden agendas. If the finger was to be pointed at the most probable source

of this belief, it would be those scholarly and popular conceptions that ‘have almost universally followed normative assumptions and expectations of vague but powerful concomitants and effects presumed to accompany changes in the diffusion of’ critical and creative media literacy skills (Graff, 1987, p. 9). This causal and reductionist approach to media learning may overlook that both the primary school teacher’s pedagogy and the learner’s media life are holistic – engaging the child as a united whole – and consequently neglect the possibility of effectively co-operating within this common ground.

Drawing upon the research findings introduced in this chapter, the primary school teachers could, for instance, benefit from diverse media subcultures and plays the children co-create and engage in, when building and maintaining classroom community. The sense of heterogeneity and homogeneity connected to the individual and collective media tastes and practices, as well as classroom media trends, could assist the nurturing and balancing of sociocultural development and individuation. Teachers’ participation in children’s media cultures could possibly strengthen pupil-teacher relationships, while emotional involvement with media could be used as a valuable source and reference point for emotional development within which children explore their, and the others’, feelings and emotions. By practising such “reflexive and negotiated pedagogy that bear[s] witness to the complexity of” one’s media life (McDougall, 2014, p. 3), the child shall be encouraged to learn about media through exploring and reflecting on the unique role media have in his or her individual and collective life. In return, the primary school educators could draw upon the child’s concrete lived experience, instead of depending on general scholarly and popular conceptions, when nurturing the learner as a harmonious whole.

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## What 'Children' Experience and 'Adults' May Overlook: Phenomenological Approaches to Media Practice, Education and Research

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Media forms long seen as distinct are increasingly considered by many media practitioners as having structural links, or even as being inseparable – with the practices of those that produce media for children arguably at the forefront of much of this thinking (Berger & Woodfall, 2012). The suggestion within this paper is that just as some within practice have, in part, undone a media platform bound way of creating media, so children can similarly be said to engage with media in an open platform *agnostic* fashion - and phenomenologically speaking, cannot be addressed through any single media platform. We argue however that many of us within media practice, education and research have been slow to realign our understanding of the ways in which media is produced and consumed dialogically, and can perhaps be said to hold on to critical perspectives that underappreciate a child's holistic pan-media engagement. Children span complex inter-subjective systems whereby all media (indeed all aspects of lived experience) are interconnected (Zezulkova, 2015). They can be said to operate as a phenomenological *hub* to a multi-utterance lived media

experience and justification for recognising any medium as singular, finalised and isolatable stalls - and medium specificity becomes deeply problematic.

By means of (admittedly truncated) discussion, that which follows will look to address the ways in which the children's media practice landscape, education and research can be said to operate. To help further argument, and offer illustration, we will firstly touch on the findings of two recent qualitative studies conducted by this paper's authors. These studies, although separate, shared certain underpinnings and arrived at relatable findings. The first carried out in the UK adopted a creative-reflective approach to exploring children's media preferences. This study was conducted with children (aged ten and eleven) and those that create media for children professionally, with the researcher themselves having a background within children's media practice. The another study drawn upon in this paper was instead intercultural and addressed the philosophy(s) of media education. Classroom observations as well as photo-elicitation group and individual interviews were conducted in with children (between six and nine) and their schoolteachers in the Czech Republic and the US. Secondly, for conceptual purchase we will engage with phenomenology and dialogism and in drawing together the thought shared across the paper we note the ways in which children's media experience can be said to be *lived* and *holistic* – and therefore beyond strict platform delineation.

Even though much media may still be recognised as having been created from a *platform-led* perspective, or at least gravitate around a central *tent pole* media

platform, practices have emerged in which media intended for children are developed or operate *conceptually*, in near disregard of the technological platforms that they operate across. Our understanding aligns with that of Jenkins, who sees children reaching across 'media platforms – from television to records, books, stuffed toys, public performances, feature films, and much more' (2013, p. 4), regardless of whether that media is sited on what might traditionally be seen as a media platform (like television or a book) or expressed through another aspect of the child's holistic and lived experience. In turn we recognise *cross-platform media* as that which spans platform, irrespective of the (often top-down) intentionality of transmedia narratives (Ibrus & Scolari. 2012). Even though many others follow that path to much benefit, we do not turn to narrative as a pre-conceptualising frame to discussion, or on the particular affordances of each platform. Instead we focus on media experience as expressed by children themselves and for a (re-)centring of the *child's* experience within media practice, education and research. It is worth noting that we research and write firmly outside of those perspectives that consider children as in need of protection from or empowerment through media (perspectives that however important, could be said to be over-rehearsed in some quarters), and stand paradigmatically against research approaches that might preordain meaning-making in this light.

### ***Producing and Engaging with Media across Platforms***

Organisations like Disney and DreamWorks, long *implicitly* producers of cross-platform media, now talk *explicitly* about 'making products and content' (Deuze,

2013, p. 172) rather than programmes or films. The BBC similarly, and particularly within its children's department, is firmly wedded to a platform agnostic *360 degree* commissioning approach - one that *ideally* looks in all directions (across all *potential* platforms) throughout each production's development. These positions, or ambitions, may be seen as neoteric and forward-facing to many, yet they could equally be seen as reflecting only a *rhetoric of crossmediality*, which to some measure conceals unreconstructed platform-led industrial practices (Bennett & Strange, 2012). There may well be a tension between top-down *pan-media strategy* and the day-to-day, perhaps more siloed, activities of those that actually create media, but whatever the reality, children clearly access media *across* platform.

Within the UK media practice orientated study touched on here, those that made media for children were asked to reflect on children's media preferences, with these practitioners (perhaps operating *beneath*, and in opposition to, institutional crossmedial rhetoric) tending to self-identify as coming from, and align with, a particular area of practice. Whether it be television, publishing, interactive media and so on, practice appeared to think *platform first*. Significantly however, when asked to develop a *media concept* that they would want to engage with, children within the study offered little sense that they saw the platform itself as being of overriding significance to their *holistic* media engagement. There was mention of television, internet, mobile and so on, but the child participants appeared much quicker to discuss attributes like fun, kindness, play, story, connection and learning, than they did media platform – and addressed their media preferences in a near *platform*

agnostic manner. Focusing in on interactions with the child participant that created the media concept *Supercow* (see Figure 1), it was character, and the place within the media of the participant themselves, that appeared to be of most significance, not the platform. The participant seemed at ease with her pet bovine hero being equally accessible through television and online - and self-casting alongside Jack Black (playing *Supercow*) and Johnny Depp (playing the villain *Dr FrogEvil*) she positioned herself intimately within *her* media.

**Figure 1** *Supercow*: Media concept as created by a participant within the UK children's media practice orientated study.





Returning to the broader media landscape there will of course be examples of media that appear platform specific or bound, but if a production is a success it will soon step across platform, and in some ways this process could be said to be symbolic of that success. *Harry Potter* (1997-) for example, the highest grossing film series of all time started life as a short print run book, and similarly *Horrible Histories* (1993-), *How to Train your Dragon* (2003-) and *The Gruffalo* (1999-) were all conceived within publishing before they moved to screen, and stage, and beyond. Taking an alternative path Nintendo's *Pokémon* (1990-) started life as a video game before going on to span television, trading cards, CDs, toys, books and more. Whilst Disney's *The Lion King* (1994-) leaped on to the cinema screen before moving to stage, video games, books and toys (amongst multiple other media) - with the books and toys arguably being just as much a part of a child's engagement with *The Lion King* as the film itself. It might be worth reminding ourselves that children engage with media through a *doing* (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 2004); as part of the lived experience. We can for example picture a child doing *Star Wars* Lego as they draw on the full repertoire of platform spanning *Star Wars* texts (whether they be cartoon, film, book, comic, toy, games and so on), but significantly it is the child's lived experience that would actually tie these texts (pre or self-imagined) and platforms together.

### ***Media Experience as Lived and Reflected upon in Education***

The school playground acts as a unique platform agnostic space, in which a child's play can draw upon, and co-opt, "the source text/artefact" (Marsh, 2014, p.

125). The significance sits however in the lived experience of children and their social interactions (Vered, 2008), rather than within pre-ordained textual constraints, or in light of “media appliances, however sophisticated they may become” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 3). For instance, starting life as a mobile game, *Angry Birds* (2009-) has been catapulted across platform, with multiple textual utterances now including toys, numerous animated series and even a *National Geographic* educational book series.

Turning to the findings of the media education orientated study touched on within this paper, what appears to matter to children in the playground however is not the platform that they engage with *Angry Birds* through, but their experience of remixing the (‘Piggy’ and ‘Birdy’) main characters and basic plot with long-standing folkloric play (such as a freeze tag game) in light of their interests and “particular social circumstances” (Willett, 2014, p. 133). Intriguingly though, when these children were asked in the classroom to retrospectively discuss their *Angry Birds* media engagement, they become attentive to constructed media dichotomies; appearing to prioritise one platform over another, even when these positions seemed not to mirror their own holistic and lived media experience, but the ways in which they perceived *the adult* might recognise and value each platform.

Media texts and platforms (and the production practices relating to them) are often uncritically divided by curricula and instruction into the inherently *good* or *bad*, and school or age appropriate and inappropriate. Here pupils soon learn to

distinguish between those that feel more or less favoured within the classroom setting. When one US participant in the media education study stated that, “I like plays more, because movies are not so good for you. Plays are healthy for learning [...] Like in movies you learn bad words, not good things”, she appeared to be offering an understanding of those media platforms and texts that might be *educationally sanctioned* and those that might not be. One of the US participants similarly stated that she would like to learn photography and how to make videos, *but not at school*, because, “you can get into trouble if you use it at school”, whilst another child suggested that they “would have to be careful so the teacher doesn’t notice”. From the perspective of the educator, one of the Czech primary school teachers similarly noted how, as children get older, they are less likely to tell teaching staff about media engagement outside the more valorised media platforms.

In a way that can be said to shackle teachers and young learners to oppositional poles, compulsory education is especially prone to reductionism, with dichotomies appearing throughout its structures and processes, and thus we are prompted to address a richer palette of media texts and platforms, as well as to look towards a “properly theorized pedagogy [with the] capacity to disrupt the operation of the distancing dichotomies which lurk at center of our disease” (Sholle & Denski, 1993, p. 299). Any attempts to *bridge* these multiple dichotomies, however, could be seen as an oppositional reification; that in trying to close a *gap*, we bring it in to further being. Again we must be reminded that children are unlikely to see platform delineation in the same way as educators (and practitioners), and arguably, if we

follow the child's lead, rather than try and enforce (and then un-enforce) understanding, there might be no gap to close, or dichotomy to suture. Gauntlett (2008) usefully encourages educational research and media practice to be more interested in the people and less so in the media technology, whilst McDougall (2014) calls for a "reflexive and negotiated pedagogy" which recognises the complexity of media engagement (p. 3). These positions feel fitting to the ways in which children are "constantly engaged in decoding the reality represented in the world around them, interpreting it according to their own [...] experiences and then encoding it, using whatever range of materials are available to them" (Marsh & Millard, 2000, p. 48).

Children then, if we recognise them holistically, and their media engagement as dialogic and potentially pan-media, should not be contained within hierarchical distinction that appears to value one media platform, or text, over another; education might instead benefit from acknowledging the child's lived experience, and not only undo, or at least reduce, educationally sanctioned or ordained readings, but build understanding from the child up (rather than from the educator down). After all, and as within the discussion on the media practice landscape above, it is the child's lived experience that would actually tie media texts, platforms and, by extension learning, together.

### ***A Child's Holistic and Dialogic Phenomenology***

This paper clearly sees lived experience as being at the heart of the child's media engagement, and here we look towards a holistic and dialogic phenomenology by means of offering the footings to further argument. Initially we turn to Husserl's foundational phenomenology, in that it focuses on the moment experience is constituted, lived and shared ("as it is in itself" (1931[2014], p. 116)). Under a Husserlian reading life only comes in to *being* as we subjectively experience it and make meaning from that experience. To Husserl material objects are "*constituted as being what they are for us, and as what they count for us, in varying forms*" (1900[2001], p. 156, original italics). We can see how a child's phenomenological understanding and meaning-making is of significance; it is what children *attend to* that matters, not external conceptualisation. Yet experience is not simply a matter of subjective focus, it is socially situated and *inter-subjective*; and thus we are alerted to the dangers of isolating to the "individual" (Stawarska, 2009). Usefully Husserl validates a "we-subjective" everyday lived experience, whereby we all exist through "living together" (1936[1970], p. 108); a living together that, in the language of Bakhtin, spans a dialogic *co-being*.

To Bakhtin human experience is situated within an "encounter between human beings" and thus the "human situation is "participative"" (Steinby & Klapuri, 2013, p. xvi). In this light the *subject* of interest is not the individual, but the act of co-experience or co-being, in which the self is relational to others and shaped dialogically.

Dialogism is a way of looking at things that always insists on the presence of the other, on the inescapable necessity of outsidedness and unfinalisability. If Bakhtin is right, then nothing exists in itself and we live lives of buzzing, overlapping, endlessly ramifying simultaneity.

(Holquist, 2002, p. 195)

Bakhtin argues against the unitary so any meaning-making and understanding becomes contingent, open-ended and many-voiced; with experience being a co-experienced dialogic construction that cannot be recognised as having *fixed* labels applied to it, be completely understandable, or be finished. In the words of Dewey, experience “is a single continuous interaction of a great diversity” (1916[2011], p. 93). The diversity of lived experience cannot however be fully comprehended unless, as Husserl’s student Stein (1916[1989]) suggested, the “subject of experience living in experience” (p. xviii) is treated as “psycho-physical [whole that] senses, thinks, feels, and wills” (p. 5). To Stein human understanding and meaning-making should be explored beyond pure cognition; instead lived experience should be approached holistically, and in a manner that does away with awkward dualism. The child’s life is, as Dewey (1916[2011]) neatly encapsulated it, is “an integral, a total one” (p. 9).

He passes quickly and readily from one topic to another, as from one spot to another, but is not conscious of transition or break.

There is no conscious isolation, hardly conscious distinction. The things that occupy him are held together by the unity of the personal and social interests which his life carries along. Whatever is uppermost in his mind constitutes to him, for the time being, the

whole universe. That universe is fluid and fluent; its contents dissolve and reform with amazing rapidity. But, after all, it is the child's own world. It has the unity and completeness of his own life.

(*ibid.*)

Within Dewey's *universe* demarcation and hierarchies are flattened - as children fluidly and fluently move across delineation, that they themselves might not recognise. The media experiences of children, as they engage with and *do* various utterances of media, only hold phenomenological significance in light of the child's particular preferences and focus - and regardless of any other overlaid (pre-)conceptualisation.

### ***The Child's Lived Media Experience***

Bakhtin saw lived experience as being shaped across a plurality of interconnected utterances formed in relation to otherness. In this way each *lived* utterance, and therefore each media utterance, can be understood holistically 'as a part of a greater whole' (Holquist, 1998, p. 428). We can picture children's platform spanning media lives as being a (digitally destabilised) polyphony of utterances - that share the potential to feed off of, and inform, each other. In recognising each of the multiple utterances of media as sitting within a many voiced dialogism, with each utterance, upon each platform, operating relationally, then significantly no one platform can be seen as sacrosanct, inviolate or finalisable. Media engagement with any platform or text, in the singular, becomes just *punctuation* to an on-going holistic dialogue - and no part of lived experience can be considered strictly isolatable.

Bakhtin leaves us comfortable with the suggestion that texts (however much we may be tempted to separate them), and by extension media platforms and lived experience, should all be recognised as polyphonic, polysemic and permeable; as being open to multiple dialogic readings, re-readings, cross-readings and *writings*. At this point non-dialogic understandings fall down, and it becomes difficult (and maybe unnecessary) to force platform bound delineation, or to isolate children from their media experience. When each media utterance (books, cinema, television, etc.) can be said to be in dialogue with each and every other utterance, and children engage holistically with their own repertoire of media utterances, then the experience of *doing* media positions the *doer* as responsible for weaving these utterances together. The media doer can then perhaps be said to be a media platform in themselves – with the child intriguingly as the platform of unifying significance.

Returning briefly to the first of the studies touched on within this paper, it is worth reiterating how the near absence of platform specifics within interactions with children revealed something of a *negative space* significance. There was mention of television, internet, mobile and so forth, but predominantly only when the researcher mentioned them; children appeared quicker to discuss the preferred attributes of their media of choice, than the platform through which they engaged with that media. Children seemed aware of (a transition or break between) platforms, but they tended to be comfortable complicating and stepping across them



- with this *de-platforming* challenging understandings of the ways in which media is addressed.

In a way that resonates with much of the first study, the media education research found children's media lives to be holistic - with platform and texts, and the child, understood as part of a meaningful whole. Children's engagement with media was recognised as interconnectedly dialogic, and even at times promiscuously oppositional to adult oversight and sanction. Children favoured plurality in their media, passing readily from one text to another, from one media platform to another, from one role to another. In this light *all* platforms and texts were seen as positionable within a complex physical, emotional, sociocultural, and creative unity – one centred on and (partially) orchestrated by children themselves. These two studies offer some corroboration for each other and the arguments made to this point, with the findings of one suggesting that, regardless of any platform bound delineation, children tend not to turn to platform as a means of sharing on their understanding of media, whilst the other study suggests that children are quick to complicate and override any reductionist view of their media lives, even when the educational setting may privilege one medium, or group of media, over another.

### ***From Media-centric to Experience-centric Approaches***

We could recognise education and media practice as having created demarcation where children might not, and reiterating this point, why would a child

not assume that they should be able to access, co-opt and re-create media in a space, time and fashion of their own choosing? When children are immersed in a holistic lived experience, they are unlikely to picture any individual media platform to be of great significance – it is the overall platform spanning *repertoire of media* (Hasebrink & Popp, 2006) that we argue holds key significance. This is not to completely dismiss the conceptualisations and media production practices that have formed around individual platforms, or to undervalue the affordances of each; indeed there are significant questions to be asked on the ways in which children select and make use of the different platforms that make up their media repertoire. We argue not against acknowledging platform, but for a corrective away from platform first or platform only approaches. At this point we feel triggered to reassert a dialogic reading of media, whereby meaning is shaped within a polyphony of utterances, and perhaps also feel justified in reiterating a rejection of approaches that address media utterances as discreet - even if and when institutional structures and habits may hold on to isolating, and arguably siloed, ways of thinking.

Here may sit a useful note to practitioner and educator: to recognise that children engage with media in platform agnostic and holistic ways, and to undo an adult media-centric outlook and acknowledge the experience-centric child. There are also however significant implications at play for those that undertake media research with children, and argument is made in this paper that the child's holistic and potentially pan-media lived experience challenges any research approach that might continue to address media and/or children as unitary, fixed and finalised. Reworking

Gauntlett's (2008) earlier criticism, such research could be accused of fetishising the medium and underappreciating the child's experience. Much research does of course position children's experience at its heart, and to many this discussion here might seem a straw man argument in the making, but there are many studies that clearly isolate medium from medium - as well as media from child, and participant from researcher. Neither of the studies drawn upon within this paper could be said to be fully participatory, and are far from *ideal* (indeed under a dialogic reading there can be no one way of researching), but both researchers feel persuaded that instead of shaping research in light of media platform, or pre-ordained groupings of media (that may awkwardly separate children from their media), future research should look to the child to act as a guide through their holistic lived experience.

Research conducted under a child-centred dialogic and holistic phenomenology could of course be accused of leaving us exposed to a "relativist ontology" (Apelgren, 2003, p. 133) whereby the instability, inseparability and unfinalisability of experience and meaning-making becomes more troublesome than liberating. And if one argues against the unitary, and towards "the total experiential context" (Stein, 1916[1989], p. 39), then how can one find manageable conceptual footings from which to operate? A Husserlian *phenomenological reduction*, in which we place presupposition out of play and *temporarily* bracket out (other) media, or other aspects of lived experience, might appeal to some; the part within the whole could then be addressed without denying intersubjective complexities, or recourse to reification. Others may feel comfortable to quietly accept that the child's

experience in itself provides firm enough ground from which to research (develop or teach) media. Either way, we would be well served to remind ourselves that a child's engagement with media can be said to operate across a dialogic plurality. Children live media holistically, in a way that does not demarcate and delimit; something media practitioner, educator and researcher may be prone to overlook.

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