

Audiovisual Education: ... pathways and dead-ends

Audiovisual Expression Curriculum

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Introduction – Theoretical and Methodological Choices

Introducing audiovisual expression elements into the compulsory education curriculum (primary and secondary education) has been proposed by various authorities many times in drastically different and divergent ways:

- ▶ It has been put forward that there is a need for courses that will acquaint pupils with the art of cinema (film or cinema education), which will incorporate both film viewings in school and film production by pupils. It will be a course of aesthetic development, aiming at making young citizens conscious advocates of cinematic expression. Naturally, such a course can be given only by a professional expert (director, critic, cinema researcher, etc.).

Several questions are raised, and efforts to answer them have often led to dead-ends: Will it be a compulsory or an optional course? How will it tie in with other art classes? How many hours and at which grades? How many hours should be allocated to film viewings? Is professional expertise required? What will the qualifications be? Will pupils produce their own audiovisual work? When?

- ▶ Another need that has been formulated is to develop media literacy, i.e. a critical attitude to audiovisual products, so that pupils may be enabled to form their own opinions and develop their own personal choices when viewing audiovisual products in the media. This critical approach would be similar regarding any kind of text in any discipline: the audiovisual product is identified, the aim of its author is investigated, as well as the technologies used to produce its message, the expressive means that were chosen, the ideological framework being suggested, the author's particular traits, and, last but not least, the characteristics of the targeted audience. In other words, it is a critical approach using sociological research tools.

Several questions are raised, and efforts to answer them have often led to dead-ends: Can all educators keep a critical eye to their subject matter? Will pupils produce their own work? What kind of work? Would students be introduced to the art of cinema? Will a separate media course be required? Who will teach it?

- ▶ Lastly, the need to systematically educate pupils in contemporary digital information and communication technologies (ICT) has also been put forward, on the premise that once pupils become technologically adept, they will have also acquired the skill to use images as communication tools effectively.

Several questions are raised, and again efforts to answer them have often led to dead-ends: Will this be a separate course? How many hours will it take to complete it? Will technology experts be able to grasp the knowledge pool of all other disciplines? Does technology proficiency necessarily mean communication proficiency and ability to critically produce content, especially when developments in the information technologies are constantly adding new tools?

These three sets of proposals are usually formulated in ways that are not mutually exclusive but most certainly they appear as educationally incompatible. There is a definite link between means and technology present in all three approaches but this does not necessarily lead to the same educational goals.

While we were drawing up the proposed Audiovisual Expression Curriculum (Institute of Educational Policy - New Curriculum for the Compulsory Education), we adopted a different approach, which had been developed in the audiovisual expression workshop of the "Melina – Education and Culture Programme" (1995-2004). This line of thinking endeavours to combine individual components from all approaches. Audiovisual expression is viewed as a multimodal communication system whose particular characteristics link it to the goals and methodology of language teaching.

The Audiovisual Expression Curriculum in compulsory education

The officially approved pilot implementation of a brand new learning-teaching discipline in the compulsory education curriculum imposes an analytical review of its content, its proposed teaching methodology, and its educative contribution to the learning of young citizens. Our approach is divided in five proposal modules:

- ▶ Proposals for the casual utilisation of audiovisual expression activities within all curriculum disciplines, i.e. making the most of audiovisual expression in all courses;
- ▶ Elucidating teaching methodology on audiovisual expression;
- ▶ Proposals for systematic familiarisation of students with the artistic and communicative aspects of audiovisual expression in the discipline of Aesthetic Education (as well as selection of key concepts to familiarise pupils with artistic audiovisual expression);
- ▶ Key concepts of the audiovisual expression curriculum;
- ▶ Maximising the use of the curriculum to gain access to audiovisual expression.

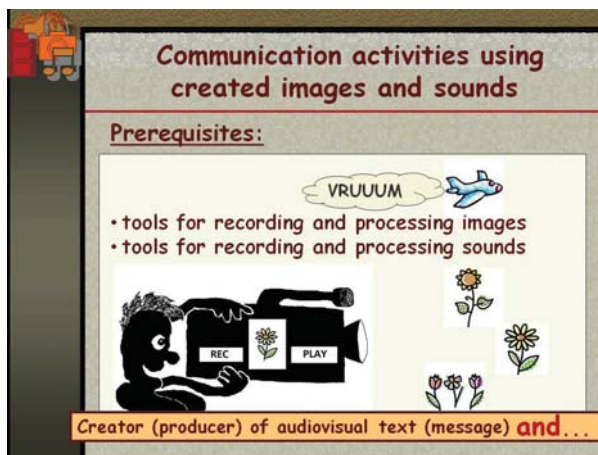
Audiovisual expression in the comprehensive curriculum outside Aesthetic Education

Audiovisual expression is an alternative, multimodal and integrated communication system beyond written and verbal language. We believe that audiovisual expression, i.e. formulating and narrating meanings with sounds and images, while not as rigid as written language, does possess the qualities of a communication system just like verbal or written language. It narrates a plotted story both through linear and non-linear development with jumps in time and space. It can diverge in several audiovisual forms such as poetry, es-

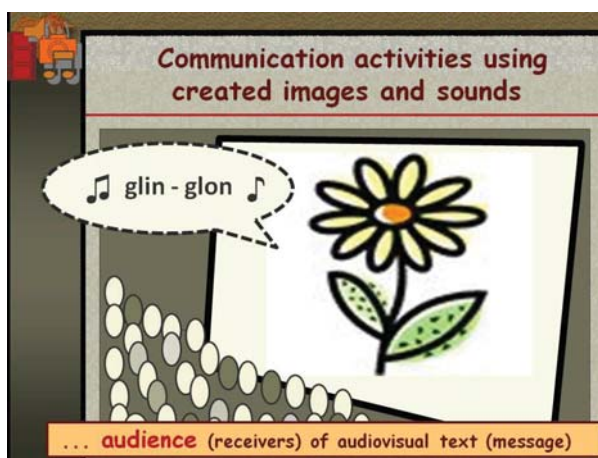
says, reports, proclamations, propaganda, advertising, etc. It can create symbolism, metaphors, similes, etc. Audiovisual expression can maximise its own styles and imagery and, without a doubt, it also possesses identifiable rhythms and structures.

Audiovisual texts are par excellence multimodal texts that combine stationary and moving pictures that are produced by widely differing means (visual, photographic, electronic), all sorts of sounds, and a plethora of written language genres. By combining these distinct modes together, we may create complex meanings and subtly nuanced symbolisms. Audiovisual texts usually have global reach and constitute a crucial parameter of contemporary life; hence they offer a wealth of opportunities to connect school subjects to everyday life and children's experiences.

Audiovisual education activities include:



Notice that the creator is faced with a "reality" (three blossoms), but chooses to record only one of them.



Notice that the audience are not looking at the original blossom but at its processed deliberately enhanced image. At the same time the audience do not necessarily hear the domi-

nant sound within the filming field, but the creator's sound selection; in other words, this entire construct unavoidably constitutes a message by the creator to the audience.

To this day, we assimilate this communication system through experience, as consumers of a deluge of audiovisual messages addressing to us every day. If, on the other hand, we decide to intervene in schools and systematically familiarise pupils with audiovisual expression, then this must happen through a series of audiovisual education activities, i.e. communication exercises with constructed images and sounds. Such activities have the following fundamental characteristics-prerequisites:

- ▶ use of image and sound recording and processing tools
- ▶ a determining contribution by one or more message creators-producers
- ▶ a determining presentation of the audiovisual work to an audience-message receiver.

Audiovisual education activities can be part of a systematic and at the same time casual compulsory education curriculum, which incorporates a lot of the characteristics inherent in language teaching:

1. Language teaching is enriched by its use in several school subjects. That is to say, language use in the fields of natural sciences, mathematics, history, humanities, philosophy, and so on, has a cumulative effect on how pupils experience everyday life linguistically to gradually acquire a comprehensive linguistic consciousness. In the same way, it is important that such a comprehensive linguistic consciousness be the result of activities that provide for utilising audiovisual expression in each and every subject in the curriculum. That is why, teachers of each subject must be able to use basic activities that on the one hand build towards the goals of their own subject matter while on the other, maximise the communication possibilities of audiovisual language.

2. As a rule, teaching verbal and written language in schools does not incorporate the development of a critical attitude to the various types of text, but focuses chiefly on acquiring reading and writing skills (cf. Davos, 2007). However, developing a critical attitude is an ideological decision that is not limited solely to audiovisual expression and mass media but equally to written language, which is currently studied in the language class. For example, examining the factors that influence the literature publishing industry, author promotion and award systems (Buckingham, 2008), as well as the specialised use and characteristics of written language in the fields of news, advertising and the like, is important in order to develop both an overall critical attitude and a more up-to-date understanding of written language. Therefore, some of the activities used to analyse audiovisual texts transferred to contemporary language teaching would definitely contribute positively to the wider ideological schooling of pupils. In other words, language classes could be broadened so that a critical approach to texts may incorporate both written and audiovisual texts.

3. As in language teaching, linguistic consciousness cannot be acquired solely by studying written texts, but needs to be accompanied by systematic activities aimed at producing written language. The same holds true for audiovisual expression; every such course ought to set up the necessary conditions that will allow pupils to develop skills in producing their own, simple audiovisual texts; that is, to formulate their own audiovisual language, by projecting their personal views and thoughts. Through the use of communication technology and contemporary audiovisual tools, children should be given the necessary opportunity to construct, compose and broadcast their own basic audiovisual texts.

The key to this is for pupils to produce short audiovisual texts in groups. Similar opportunities may also arise in every different curriculum subject, so that audiovisual texts may be enriched by the expression needs in each and every school subject:

a. In various school projects:

- ▶ related to historical memory topics (recording narratives, accounts, etc.);
- ▶ audiovisual recording of visits to public places (street markets, train stations, harbours, factories, etc.) or cultural points of reference (archaeological sites, monuments, historical landmarks, etc.);
- ▶ related to environmental awareness topics (research and collection of audiovisual material in natural habitats, forests, etc.).

Such projects can include video recording interviews, spaces, buildings and the like, all of which may serve as pre-research and documentation material, which, once gathered by pupils, may be processed in class and used for an audiovisual presentation or report to a wider audience. For example, a “targeted” photo shooting of a site with long, medium and close-up shots will allow pupils, once back in class, to process and re-observe this site based on criteria that were formed after the visit and will lead them to conceptually re-consider their experience.

Similarly, putting together an assortment of short interviews of passers-by with “targeted” questions offers scope for a contemplative processing of opinions held by the pupils’

wider community, which may include stereotypes, bias, as well as unforeseen ideas. Such a task will allow pupils to try more complex approaches to each subject matter.

In every school subject:

- “targeted” photo shootings will allow pupils to negotiate meanings and develop observation criteria
- short interviews using “targeted” questions to elicit, record opinions held by the wider community, which can be used in a variety of ways
- design and production of audiovisual presentations to an audience, encourages students to organize their thoughts and relate them to their everyday experiences



b. Shooting short films with the aim of familiarising pupils with various modes of media communication (reports, polls, advertising, propaganda, etc.). Once pupils are given the opportunity (possibly through interdisciplinary activities or courses focusing on social issues), they may attempt short audiovisual texts by following corresponding communication methods (identifying the target group, analysing strategic approaches, formulating concepts, measuring audience response, etc.). They may also plan and create personal blogs, short audiovisual works focusing on self-presentation or discussion of specific topics from their daily lives and so on.

c. In language classes, one can set up exercises asking pupils to work in groups in order to create short films based on a verse or a poem or a literary excerpt, in an effort to visualise language, i.e. transfer one kind of discourse to another (intertextual translation), using verbal language alongside images, substituting language with other expressive means and so on.

d. Short animation films (using various simple techniques with paper figures, modelling clay, small objects, drawings, etc.), which allow pupils to complete rudimentary



A “targeted” photo shooting of a site in varying frames: long shots (facts on the space), medium shots (facts on activities and relationships), close-ups (selecting significant details).

In every school subject:

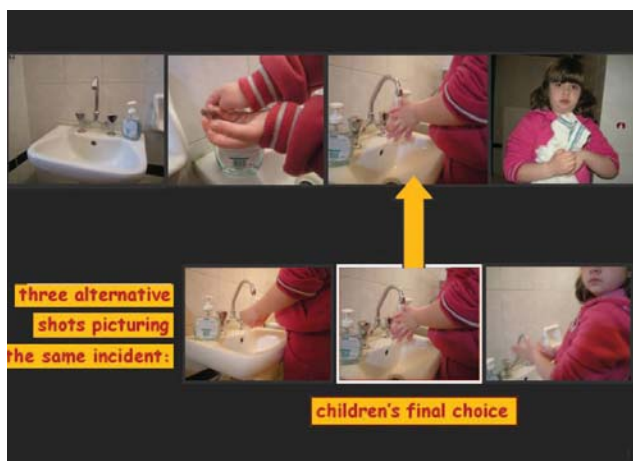
- "targeted" photo shootings will allow pupils to negotiate meanings and develop observation criteria
- short interviews using "targeted" questions related to a subject, **record opinions held by the pupils' wider community, which may include stereotypes, bias, as well as unexpected ideas triggering critical discussions**
- comparing different audiovi...

narratives and also help them become familiar with the idea of 'controlled production' (a concept that is not always immediately obvious or discernible in other types of audiovisual narratives due to the 'realistic nature' of photographic images and sounds. Such expression exercises are also appropriate for very young children, provided they are given the right guidance and technical material.

e. *Pupils in groups to record other pupils' creative efforts* (recording the rehearsals and the final result of a student play, recording pupils and athletes training or participating in school competitions, recording the preparations and end result of a school festivity, recording school life during breaks, school outings and the like).

f. A type of audiovisual pre-cinematic narration exercise, particularly well-suited to preschool and early school children is creating short *photocomics* or *photo-narratives*, incorporating 4-5 consecutive photographs that may relate to ordinary everyday activities, such as brushing one's teeth, putting on one's jacket or shoes, watering a plant, peeling a fruit and so on.

g. Interesting, complementary suggestions for activities aimed at producing audiovisual texts by older students using



literary cues are propounded by Renee Hobbs (Hobbs 2007).

It should be pointed out that all of the aforementioned proposed activities for producing audiovisual texts by groups of pupils should involve all pupils in every class and not just within a specialised subject but in any subject in the curriculum. Besides, the widely known project-based method of teaching is most conducive for the needs of group activities when it comes to producing audiovisual texts: mastering the relevant technology, collective decision-making through argument formulation and negotiation processes, developing skills in composing audiovisual texts and receiving feedback through audience response are but a few characteristic parameters that help build a critical attitude to audiovisual texts. This particular type of critical attitude can be better understood if we take into account that all of the above processes during audiovisual text production by pupils must be accompanied by discussion, negotiation and argumentation between group members. We may go as far as to maintain that the content of such discussions has greater value than the groups' product, in terms of media education.

4. Just like in language teaching, deeper linguistic consciousness cannot be achieved unless it comes from constant contact with language mechanisms. It must rely on the consideration and assimilation of pupils' everyday cultural milieu but also on literature, i.e. on language's artistic dimensions that predicate pleasure, unforeseen subjective readings and reflection. In the same way, familiarising pupils with everyday audiovisual culture (television, the Internet, etc.) and, naturally, with artistic audiovisual expression (i.e. with many different kinds of films, art photography, video art, video installations, virtual reality creations, etc.) reinforces the communication and aesthetic potential of audiovisual expression in their consciousness. It also offers scope for cultivating critical thinking, thereby contributing to developing a keener critical attitude to texts. It is exactly this dimension of familiarising pupils with artistic audiovisual expression that is absent from most audiovisual media training programmes, often leading to a shallow, mechanistic critical stance that has been attested by many researchers. (Buckingham, 2007). Approaching audiovisual texts in a critical fashion that posits not only sociological analytical tools but also semantic tools can be a key element to such an approach. If such a prospect seems daunting because it appears too complex, one can try activities that touch semantics to encourage multiple readings, subjective interpretations and discussion in small groups. Such activities that can be incorporated in the current curriculum include:

a. *Comparing different audiovisual texts.* Using as a starting point any of several thematic areas linked to the subject currently being taught, pupils can be asked to examine excerpts from audiovisual works of drastically different kinds and styles. For example, excerpts from 'rain' scenes (or 'family sitting down to eat' scenes, 'travelling' scenes, etc.), or from extremely different films (classic movies, documentaries, sitcoms and TV dramas, TV ads, children's cartoons, etc.) can be shown in class and then discussed in small groups, so that children may learn how to identify unexpected views by following a specific 'study protocol'.



By comparing radically different audiovisual texts, such model study guides can combine both semantic approaches (by asking questions such as, 'in your opinion, which of the film segments about Hercules that we have just seen portrays him as the strongest and which one as the cleverest?' or, 'in which film about Hercules do his enemies appear the scariest? What is it exactly about them that scares you the most?'), as well as approaches that rely on sociology tools and refer to signifying topics that arise through the creative use of expressive media (e.g., questions such as, 'what kind of sounds can be heard while the two protagonists are eating? Is the music we can hear coming from the surrounding space they're eating in? Why did the music suddenly get so loud that it drowned all other sounds? Who turned up the volume and decided to drown all other sounds?')

b. *Studying and comparing segments from different films by the same filmmaker.*

c. *Intertextual comparisons*, e.g. comparing a specific scene from the narration of a written literary work with the same work's audiovisual transfer to the screen. As a matter of fact, such comparisons can frequently include scenes from different dramatisations of the same work carried out at different times, by different filmmakers.

d. *Intertextual comparisons*, e.g. depicting in films *visual compositions* based on specific, widely known paintings.

e. Studying (in selected audiovisual texts) the meanings suggested by the special relationship between image and sound (*picture - sound juxtaposition*).

f. Identifying and studying *soundscapes* that can then be described by pupils in written form or through visual media or theatre improvisation and the like.

g. Several other very interesting suggestions for audiovisual education activities can be found in the available bibliography translated in Greek (Buckingham 2008, BFI 2003).

Discussing things in small groups is a crucial factor in this type of work just as it is in audiovisual text production activities by groups of pupils. As a matter of fact, with the right kind of guidance, such discussions can take place even in groups of very young children, revolving around simplified questions such as, 'Whom would you like to be friends with: Superman or Batman? Can you draw where each of them lives?' 'Could Hermione (a Harry Potter character) become friends with Cat Woman (a Batman character)?' 'Draw each one's clothes hanging from a clothesline.'

At older ages, contact with original material of artistic audiovisual expression makes it imperative to organise school outings to view selected films, special features, festivals aimed at schoolchildren, but also visits to exhibition venues so as to familiarise them with other kinds of artistic audiovisual expression, e.g. photography, video-art, digital installations and so on. As it has already been stressed, such visits are fruitful to the extent that they form part of a wider framework favouring the development of critical thinking in small groups. In other words, it is vital to have prepared a methodology for approaching works, with questions that require comparisons between works, individual assessments and interpretations, connecting each work to its defining historical and social context and so on.

If children are taught from an early age to see audiovisual texts as an opportunity to have fun, to ask questions, to seek different viewpoints, but also to use them as a territory offering scope for personal interpretations, then their critical attitude to such texts will be not only meaningful but also guaranteed.

Teaching Methodology Considerations

Establishing audiovisual education officially in schools means setting up audiovisual education activities throughout the entire compulsory education curriculum, from kindergarten onwards; such activities should integrate harmoniously with school activities already used by most teachers in their teaching practice.

Some fundamental elements of this proposal include:

1. Audiovisual education activities should not be a separate subject but permeate the entire spectrum of subjects taught in primary and secondary education curricula. Further still, especially in primary education, using these activities should not require any special knowledge on the part of teachers. They should be given specially designed suggestions for activities to be worked on in groups and smaller subgroups involving both teachers and pupils, without teachers needing to be conversant with any particular subject in order to 'educate' their students. In those rare cases when expert know-how may be required, e.g. in the higher forms of compulsory education, the expert partnership model can be put to


use, whereby groups can seek extra assistance from experts in the relevant fields.

It should be stressed that setting up activities that familiarise pupils with artistic audiovisual expression in Aesthetics Education classes does not cancel out the need for a vertical development of audiovisual education in all the curriculum subjects, as was underlined earlier. What should happen is that the aims of audiovisual education should in part be met through artistic audiovisual expression activities, so that pupils may get a deeper understanding of the fact that just like with any other tool (tools for writing, building, processing materials, etc.), audiovisual recording tools can be used also for artistic expression, and that the sphere of artistic audiovisual expression includes many an important artwork that not only offers enjoyment but also food for thought.

2. Audiovisual education activities in the classroom should be carried out in groups. Already many established school activities (environmental projects, flexible zone, cross-curricular activities etc.) use the cooperative group work teaching model or, better even, the project method, which encourages decision-making during any collectively produced piece of work. This kind of framework offers an ideal backbone for audiovisual education activities through which negotiating concepts (i.e. children talking things through so that they may favour one choice over another) is more important than acquiring knowledge per se. Following that, the absolutely necessary production of a final composition-presentation targeted at some sort of audience will allow pupils to systematise their knowledge and relate it to their everyday lives.

In every school subject:

- "targeted" photo shootings will allow pupils to negotiate meanings and develop observation
- "targeted" questions record opinions held by unity well ussio audiov dy, b k to ptual
- design and production of audiovisual presentations to an audience, encourages students to organize their thoughts and relate them to their everyday experiences



3. Audiovisual education activities, just like all other artistic expression activities, familiarise children with the intrinsic value of being able to see things from different perspectives. It is the *subjective gaze of the other* on some quite ordinary things or everyday topics, their different view of the world surrounding us that is the paramount social aspect of all art. Through suitably designed activities, children are called upon to recognise that absolutely everything can take on different meanings, depending on which point of view one

adopts, and that gaining an understanding of every group member's subjective gaze enriches our capacity to assume a critical attitude to our surrounding reality, thereby refining our communication culture.

4. Coming to grips with the cognitive and conceptual aspects that the introduction of audiovisual education in schools would ideally cover (in other words, what content audiovisual education school activities ought to have), we shall define four main, separate but interrelated, areas of prime concern:

The first two areas should focus on familiarising children with *artistic audiovisual expression* (audiovisual arts - film education): cinema, photography, television, cartoons, creative sound-recording (radio-directing, sound-directing), comic books, video-art, all forms of computer-aided digital audiovisual expression (digital drawing, computer graphics, 3D animation, virtual reality installations, etc.). Ideally, all these topics should be addressed and worked on in class in a two-pronged way:

a. On the one hand, we would like children to become acquainted with a variety of representative artwork from each genre and be involved in relevant discussions. In other words, they should view and discuss films, examine and discuss artistic photos, choose radio programmes that make use of sound expressive means and discuss them, visit video-art exhibitions and talk about them and so on. All in all, they should be given lots of opportunities for guided study, intertextual comparisons between and deliberation of completed audiovisual works born out of artistic audiovisual expression (formulation of critical thinking strategies). The purpose behind this is for "*children to act as critical thinking art conscious citizens*" (receivers of art), to gain deeper understanding of the art world and have a hands-on experience of alternative ways of looking at things through the perspectives of different artists. Such activities aim to develop skills in observing, studying, classifying and critically analysing audiovisual products, but, more importantly, to create the mental foundations that children need in order to gain a sense of 'domineering' on audiovisual work, an option rarely given to them. This means that though once children only consumed and enjoyed films (by being entertained, moved or thrilled), they can now examine them, time shots, classify the types of conflicts they present, compare them to similar works, and so on and so forth, thereby determining their structural particularities, flaws and virtues and formulating all that in a critical manner.

b. At the same time, we would like to familiarise children with the means and tools of artistic audiovisual expression, i.e. treat "children as creators/producers" of artistic audiovisual work, both in terms of thinking and methodology. Such activities aim to develop audiovisual consciousness through hands-on familiarisation with the tools and methods used to produce audiovisual works and messages. Children will gain an understanding of the processes and choices utilised to make audiovisual products and will learn how to develop a basic methodological framework so that, without being inhibited by the lack of technological literacy, they may try to analyse audiovisual products created by other producers/creators in a critical fashion. Meanwhile, their practical in-

involvement in such activities encourages seeking new and alternative forms of expression, which can be put to use thanks to an unconventional use of already established or novel audiovisual tools. Needless to say, we would be very happy to see such artistic audiovisual production activities trying to cover as many forms of artistic audiovisual expression as possible (cinema, photography, creative sound-engineering, etc.).

The other two cognitive areas covered by audiovisual education activities must relate to media literacy, that is to fields such as news, interviews, reporting, advertising, audiovisual entertainment media, interpersonal audiovisual communication media, the Internet and the like. As above, we would also like these areas to be approached in the following two ways:

c. On the one hand to allow children to engage in systematic examination and analysis of completed audiovisual products by encouraging their critical thinking. In other words, to bring into class representative samples of articles, TV and radio programmes, websites, and the like, which can then be systematically studied. At this point, we should tap into the six key concepts, summarised by Cary Bazalgette (Bazalgette 1989) in one of her earlier pieces for the British Film Institute. Such analytical criteria allow children to classify the audiovisual samples brought into the classroom, distinguish them by “genre”, determine the “technological means” used during their production, pinpoint the “languages”, i.e. the adopted expressive means and codes, comment on the “representations”, i.e. the ideological dimensions referred to by each different representation angle, identify the “production agents” of audiovisual works, i.e. the producers and motives behind each work, and lastly, ponder on the receivers of audiovisual work, i.e. their “audience”. As a matter of fact, it is a study of the communication aspects of audiovisual work using sociological tools.

d. On the other hand, media literacy production must be approached in the same manner as with activities aimed at students’ becoming acquainted with artistic audiovisual expression: teaching children to use tools and expressive means, i.e. producing their own audiovisual products in the fields of news, and communication: take interviews, do investigative journalism about various topics, create their own advertising spots, design webpages and websites and so on.

What we are trying to accomplish is a synthesis of cinema education and media training trends that is not the product of any “realistic compromise” but the result of treating audiovisual education as a communication skill that allows citizens to follow complex audiovisual texts, express their own thoughts in communicative ways that go beyond written language, vent their concerns and visions in non-verbal ways and enjoy audiovisual texts created through artistic audiovisual expression. Apart from studying audiovisual expression texts in the field of news, advertising and entertainment, such educational efforts will unavoidably pivot on examining artistic audiovisual expression, whose main arena is cinema. Therefore, cinema will be treated educationally not as an end in itself, or as a special cognitive field, but as an “ideology and communication resource”, a form of artistic expression that belongs to a broader communication system.

It should also be stressed that audiovisual education in school is not proposed as a rigorous mental guard against media products but as a way of familiarising children with an integrated communication system in a similar vein to how language is taught.

We have thus outlined in brief the content of audiovisual education activities in school and their chief methodological guidelines. What remains now is to look to what degree such activities are compatible with current school practice.

As a matter of fact, current mainstream discourse on pedagogic guidelines for formal education in Greece is quite favourable. Group work, synthetic creative project methods, flexible zones, and cross-curricular classes rank among the options propounded by the Pedagogic Institute, while they are also important prerequisites for audiovisual education activities.

All teachers in all standard school subjects should be capable of incorporating and using a series of simple audiovisual education activities scheduled in the educational daily routine of their respective classes, just like every teacher in each school subject already administers written tasks without having to resort to language teachers. At the same time, all teachers should be in a position to avail themselves of visiting experts from the field of artistic audiovisual expression and media, who may be called in to offer additional support and expertise for rather more ambitious activities, whenever school finances allow it.

Needless to say, such educational perspectives require a series of decisions on the top of the rank, as well as rethinking priorities at several levels of the educational system. Meanwhile, such initiatives must be cultivated and promoted following the example of farsighted teachers with zeal and goodwill, teachers who are already reporting the benefits of such praiseworthy applications in the sphere of audiovisual education.

Audiovisual expression as a component of artistic expression in the field of aesthetic education

Proposals for a systematic familiarisation of pupils with audiovisual expression’s artistic and communicative dimensions in the framework of Aesthetic Education

Audiovisual artistic expression can be defined as any form of artistic expression that results from using audiovisual tools and means. These may be technological tools that allow recording images or sounds, either in a real environment or in related original production settings, processing them, and finally replaying or presenting at will the constructed visual and/or aural product to selected wide or limited audiences. This rather general category of tasks comprises several forms of contemporary artistic expression, such as art photography, cinema, cartoons and animation, video-art, creative sound-engineering (sound- and radio-directing), comic books, all forms of computer-aided audiovisual expression (digital drawing, computer graphics, 3D animation, virtual reality installations, etc.).

Contemporary pedagogic premises about educational literacy aim at empowering tomorrow's adult citizens by imparting knowledge, skills and ways at looking at things which will allow them to be part of the audiovisual reality of their culture. For this to happen, it is necessary to familiarise young people with audiovisual expression by responsibly educating them on key concepts which, in the writers' pedagogic and theoretical opinion, best promote the aim of audiovisual literacy and cultivation of audiovisual consciousness in pupils.

Choosing key concepts to promote familiarisation with artist audiovisual expression

1. *Audiovisual narrative mechanisms* (audiovisual expression aesthetics). The linear narrative flow that comes from apposing consecutive images (in photo-narratives) or time sequences (in cinema and animation). Basic description of simple action – Rudimentary recording of spaces – Short fiction.

2. *Semantics of rudimentary shots* (audiovisual expression aesthetics). Close-ups, medium shots, long shots.

3. *The creator's mediation* (sociology, communication, critical analysis). A creator's subjective perspective on their audiovisual product as it emanates from the selective use of audiovisual tools.

4. *Mediation degrees* (sociology, communication, critical analysis): Animation, Cinema Fiction, Documentary, News Reports.

5. *Created image content* (audiovisual expression aesthetics). Semantic interventions on still images.

6. *Types of sound* (audiovisual expression aesthetics, sociology, communication, critical analysis): Noise, Speech, Music, Voice-overs (off-camera commentary). *Types of speech*: Voice-overs (off-camera commentary), newscasters' language, guests' language, actors. Creating soundscapes. Simple aural rambles.

7. *Human presence in images* (audiovisual expression aesthetics, sociology, communication, critical analysis): Documentary protagonists, actors (leading actor, supporting actors), animation or stop motion clay animation protagonists, anthropomorphism in animation.

8. *Aesthetic parameters in technology* (audiovisual expression aesthetics, sociology, communication, critical analysis): Black and white films, colour films, silent movies, talking movies, sets, portable cameras, mobile phones. Star Trek, Star Wars, The Matrix.

9. *News reports, Interviews, Reports* (sociology, communication, critical analysis).

10. *Advertising* (sociology, communication, critical analysis): the concept of targeted audiences.

11. *Literature – Cinema* (audiovisual expression aesthetics). Different ways of narrating the same story.

12. *Film genres, the idiosyncratic universe of each filmmaker* as it emanates from the artistic use of expressive means and subjective readings by receivers (audiovisual expression aesthetics, sociology, communication, critical analysis).

13. *Shots (duration), rhythm, editing* (audiovisual expression aesthetics).

14. *Specialties in cinema and television* (sociology, communication, critical analysis).

15. *The production, distribution and broadcasting cycle of audiovisual products* (sociology, communication, critical analysis).

The following concepts will be added to the high school curriculum; they all refer to audiovisual expression aesthetics:

16. *Photography direction, light-engineering*

17. *Editing images and sounds*

18. *Camera movements*

19. *Styles - Filmmakers*

Accessing and making the most of the curriculum for audiovisual expression

The rationale behind planning the curriculum outlined in this paper is completed more concretely with some technical characteristics on accessing and using the curriculum; these can be found on [www.minedu.gov.gr/digital-school/new-pilot-programmes/Culture/Curriculum on audiovisual expression](http://www.minedu.gov.gr/digital-school/new-pilot-programmes/Culture/Curriculum-on-audiovisual-expression) (regrettably available only in Greek). Though this curriculum has been uploaded, its function is mostly complementary, in terms of supporting teachers' initiatives. It includes suggestions for simple audiovisual education activities for all compulsory education grades.

The activity suggestions are organised in four columns:

► The first and most significant one posits the minimum targets that should be accomplished for each age grade. In this way, teachers can not only design their classes but also evaluate their efficacy.

► The second column explains the object of each target in the first column, thus facilitating the pedagogic methodology that can be implemented.

► The third column mentions indicative activities that on the one hand help clarify targets and on the other hand give ideas for educational practices.

► The fourth column comprises all supporting material (either already available or producible) that may help in accomplishing the activities.

Teachers are free to choose any of the proposed activities that are realisable and also meet the needs of their subject matter and the potential of their pupils. On the same webpage (under B), we have uploaded the respective 'Audiovisual Expression Guide for Teachers', with detailed analytical guidelines, diagrams and practical advice for a more effective implementation of the activities mentioned in the curriculum (columns).

Further suggestions for audiovisual education activities, can be found on the Karpos website: www.karposontheweb.org (Educational Material/Suggestions for activities (photocomics, getting to know the language of photography, etc.).




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 www.karposontheweb.org

